

PARKS, RECREATION, AND GREENSPACE MASTER PLAN FOR: CITY OF SUGAR HILL

PREPARED BY (IN COOPERATION WITH): CPL APRIL 30, 2024





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CPL expresses our gratitude to the Mayor and City Council, Parks and Recreation department, and all members of the City of Sugar Hill staff and community who participated in the process of developing a Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace (PRG) Master Plan for the City of Sugar Hill.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 - INTRODUCTION (Why are we undertaking this exercise?)	4
Purpose	4
Questions	4
Meet the Team	5
Master Planning Process	6
Community Profile	7
City History	7
Demographics	7
2 – INVENTORY (What do you have?)	12
Sugar Hill Parks & Recreation	12
Park Assessments	
City Inventory	
Non-City Inventory	
County	
HOAs	
Churches	
Schools	
SCHOOIS	
3 - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (What do you want?)	18
Stakeholder Interviews Summary	18
Public Meetings	
Online Survey	
Process	
Results	21
4 - MASTER PLAN (What do you need?)	28
Gap Analysis	28
Needs Assessment	30
Proximity Map	38
Recommendations	40
Parks and Facilities	40
Greenspace	48
Staffing	
Cost Estimates and Phasing	54
APPENDIX 1 - SURVEY	56
APPENDIX 2 - INVENTORY & ANALYSIS CHARTS	68
APPENDIX 3 - TALLIES	74
APPENDIX 4 - GAP ANALYSIS & NEEDS ASSESSMENT	88
DIGITAL APPENDIX	90

1 – INTRODUCTION (Why are we undertaking this exercise?)

PURPOSE

The goal of the City of Sugar Hill Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace Master Plan (Master Plan) is to provide the City with an inventory of current resources as well as a road map for future recreational program and facility development. The Master Plan utilizes National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) benchmarks and professional expertise of recreational planners to evaluate research data, citizen input, staff & stakeholder interviews, demographics, and other community assets to provide a 10-year, comprehensive analysis of the recreational resources and needs of the City of Sugar Hill community. This information helps clarify the community's vision for recreation facilities and services and guides future decisions regarding planning and budgeting for the City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department (SHPRD). It also provides Sugar Hill administrators and elected officials with essential information to assist in establishing policy and allocating resources over the next 10 years. This document serves as a guide and is meant to be a living document, reflecting the pulse of the community during the ten year planning horizon. Recommendations are descriptive, not prescriptive.

QUESTIONS

Public input is key to understanding the wants and desires of the local population relative to a Master Plan of this nature and focus. In order to get actionable input from the citizens, the planning team worked together to develop a series of questions that gather important data for the team to use in evaluating the needs of the City and determining reasonable recommendations.

The team developed two questionaries for the study. One to use for the stakeholder and citizen interviews, and one for the Online Public Input Survey.

Stakeholder & Citizens Questionnaire

The City of Sugar Hill contracted with CPL to initiate a master planning process designed to help continue providing outstanding recreational services to the community. Your insights, thoughts, and experience are a critical component of this effort. Please take a few minutes to share your expertise by answering the questions below.

Name: _____ Organization: _____

- 1. Explain your organization and interest in the project.
- 2. What do you think the city needs in their Recreation program?
- 3. What do you <u>not</u> want to see in the Cities Recreation program?
- 4. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, & threats for Sugar Hill?
- 5. How do you want people outside the city to describe/perceive Sugar Hill?
- 6. How do you use Sugar Hill Parks?
- 7. What are one or two things you cannot experience in Sugar Hill Park that you wish you could?
- 8. What is your favorite non-Sugar Hill Park and why (local, national, or international)?
- 9. Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?

Thank You - Your participation is valued and appreciated.

Online Public Input Survey Questions

The planning team and city staff consulted together to develop a 16-question survey that was posted online by city staff to gather data from the citizens. The survey ran for a little over one month and gathered 176 individual responses. Those responses were used to develop assessments that indicated the opinions of the local citizens.

For the sake of brevity in this section, the survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 1C of this report.

Staff Survey Questions

The planning team needed to learn more about the programs and operations of the parks and facilities. The team collaborated to prepare a Staff Questionnaire to provide to the Parks and Recreation staff to secure the needed input.

A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1D of this report.

MEET THE TEAM

The planning team consists of the City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department and the planning and design firm of CPL Inc. of Suwanee, Georgia. The primary participants are as follows:

Parks and Recreation Director: Andy McQuagge

Andy McQuagge joined the City of Sugar Hill as Parks and Recreation Director in 2006 and has served in that capacity since that time overseeing the day-to-day operations of the department. Prior to joining Sugar Hill, Andy served as the Superintendent of Recreation for the City of Aventura, the Recreation Manager for the City of Plantation, and Operations Supervisor for SeaWorld Orlando, all in Florida.

Project Manager (CPL): Cyndee L. Bonacci, CPRP, CYSA

Cyndee Bonacci has a passion for community recreation and over 24 years of experience working with various municipal, private, and non-profit organizations. Cyndee joined CPL in 2019 and serves as Practice Manager for the Landscape Architecture Team. Her previous experience includes serving as Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Milton and the City of Snellville. Some of her primary responsibilities have included the creation of a Parks and Recreation Department from the ground up; master planning; program development; project management, hiring and staff supervision; budgeting and cost management; grant writing; event planning; marketing and public relations. Cyndee has been of member of the Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA) since 2003 and a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) since 2005.

Technical Principal/Project Planner (CPL): Mack R. Cain RLA LEED AP

Mack Cain is a Senior Landscape Architect and a Principal with the firm of CPL since 2017. He has over 48 years of experience as a planner and designer in the field of landscape architecture and planning. He has completed numerous Parks and Recreation plans for clients like Alpharetta, Johns Creek, Macon-Bibb, Hall County and Auburn, AL. He is currently completing plans for Peachtree City, Gilmer County, Cartersville, and Spalding County.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

A "Request for Proposal" for a Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace (PRG) Master Plan was requested by the city officials of Sugar Hill to CPL Vice President Rich Edinger. As a result of the request, the CPL landscape architecture team prepared a proposal to facilitate a Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the City of Sugar Hill Park and Parks and Recreation Department (SHPRD). The master planning team was composed of landscape architects, recreation planners, park designers, and specialized subconsultants with expertise in public input and recreation online surveys.

To effectively establish the future recreational needs of the Sugar Hill community, the team initiated a process that incorporated citizen input, stakeholder interviews, and staff participation to answer the following questions:

What does SHPRD currently have?

To identify what resources the community actually has, an initial investigation was conducted of all existing parks and facilities, and an inventory developed of the existing SHPRD facilities, programs, funding, and services. The team also developed inventories of the local Gwinnett County parks within and just outside the city limits as well as other city, state, and national parks just outside the boundaries of the City. The team also developed an inventory of all Schools, Churches, and Homeowner Associations (HOAs) within the City that had recreational facilities. With the assemblage of all these inventories, the team was able to clearly identify what was available to the residents of Sugar Hill for recreational activities.

What do the residents of the Sugar Hill community want?

To determine what the citizens want, information was gathered from sources that included an on-line community-wide public input survey (SHPIS), public input meetings, citizen questionnaires, citizen emails, stakeholder interviews, and interviews with parks department staff, city administrators, and other elected officials.

What does Sugar Hill need?

To determine where gaps exist in the SHPRD services, programs, and facilities, the master planning team used the city parks inventory to develop a 'Gap Analysis' based on national NRPA benchmark standards. Once the gaps were identified, the team worked with the Parks and Recreation Director to adjust the standards based on research and analysis of existing community inventories outside SHPRD control and by reviewing the local demographics, stakeholder input, SHPIS, and staff input. The new Sugar Hill Standards were applied against the existing SHPRD inventory, and a Needs Assessment was developed.

See Chapter 4 - Master Plan for the Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment.

What can be developed, re-purposed, or undertaken?

This Master Plan also includes recommendations, cost estimates, and park specific recommendations regarding programs and facilities development to assist the Sugar Hill elected officials establish priorities and plans for future allocation of local resources.

What does it cost?

An overall cost estimate is included at the end of the master plan document with each recommendation listed with an associated budget estimate for development of each of the proposed facilities. The recommendations estimate is prioritized into three (3) phases of development over the next 10 years. Determination and commitment to each recommendation can be made during the budgeting process undertaken annually.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

City History

Sugar Hill, Georgia is a suburban community in Gwinnett County between the cities of Buford and Suwanee north of metropolitan Atlanta. The City was first settled in the mid-1800's and officially chartered by the Georgia state assembly as the Town of Sugar Hill on March 24, 1939. The town was renamed the City of Sugar Hill in 1975. Before the City was incorporated, the area was a rail stop on the railroad between Buford and Cumming. The Town was named after an incident where a large shipment of sugar spilled, and the area became known as "the hill where the sugar spilled" or "the sugar hill". The City is sometimes remembered as the heart of Georgia's gold mining community and the birthing ground for moonshiners. Sugar Hill is the fourth largest city in Gwinnett County by population, which is one of the fastest growing counties in the country.

Georgia State Route 20 is the main highway through the center of Sugar Hill running between Lawrenceville and Cumming. US highway 23, better known locally as Buford Highway, runs north south on the edge of the City. Sugar Hill also shares a border with the Chattahoochee River and includes land that is part of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) of the National Park Service (NPS). Sugar Hill also sits in very close proximity to the south end of Lake Lanier, a 38,000-acre Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) lake.

Demographics

Sugar Hill, with a population of 25,076 that resides within the city limits of Sugar Hill and 8,271 households in 2020, is the fourth largest incorporated city in Gwinnett County. It was previously the third (3rd) largest until Peachtree Corners became a city in July of 2012.

It is important to note that the City of Sugar Hill owns and operates a natural gas distribution system that services a larger area than the city limits. The gas service area has a population of over 38,000 people, many of whom are also residents of Sugar Hill. The US census records also indicate that the greater metropolitan area of Sugar Hill has almost 50,000 residents within the area. That includes a lot of unincorporated areas of Gwinnett County scattered in and around the City. However, for the purpose of this study, the planning team restricted the demographics to the number of people who actually live within the city limits of Sugar Hill and are subject to the financial policies needed to support the SHPRD.

In the 2000 census, the City's growth rate was ranked 75 out of the 100 fastest growing cities in the country and one of the 20 fastest in Georgia. The population growth from 2010 till 2020 showed an increase of 35.4% in the ten years.

City of Sugar Hill Population Chart

Year	Population	Increase	Growth %
1940	599		
1950	783	184	30.7%
1960	1175	392	0.1%
1970	1745	579	48.5%
1980	2473	728	41.7%
1990	4557	2084	84.3%
2000	11399	6,842	150.1%
2010	18522	7123	62.5%
2020	25076	6554	45.4%

Source: Wikipedia

Sugar Hill population by Age

The 2020 census reveals that 7.3% of the population is under 5 years old and that 14.2% of the local population is in elementary – middle school ages of 6 -14 years old. The high school population between 15 – 19 years old represents 11% of the residents in the city. Young adults between the ages of 20 - 34 make up 15.3 percent of the citizens who will probably be young families and professionals. Adults between ages 35-50 account for 25% of the residents and represent the strongest segment of the working-class citizens. Ages 51 to 65 are the older more senior workers at 18% and the retired seniors from 65 to 85+ make up 9% of the City.

2020 Census Chart for Sugar Hill

Age	Number	Percent	Age	Number	Percent
-5	1823	7.3%	45 - 49 yrs.	1590	8%
5-9 yrs.	1576	6.3%	50 - 54 yrs.	1763	7%
10 - 14 yrs.	2055	8.2%	55 - 59 yrs.	1507	6%
15 - 19 yrs.	2746	11.0%	60 - 64 yrs.	1313	5%
20 - 24 yrs.	813	3.3%	65 - 69 yrs.	579	2%
24 - 29 yrs.	1472	5.9%	70 - 74 yrs.	617	3%
30 - 34 yrs.	1534	6.1%	75 - 79 yrs.	476	2%
35 - 39 yrs.	1970	7.9%	80 - 84 yrs.	144	1%
40 - 44 yrs.	2346	9.4%	85+ yrs.	272	1%

Source: US Census data.gov/tables

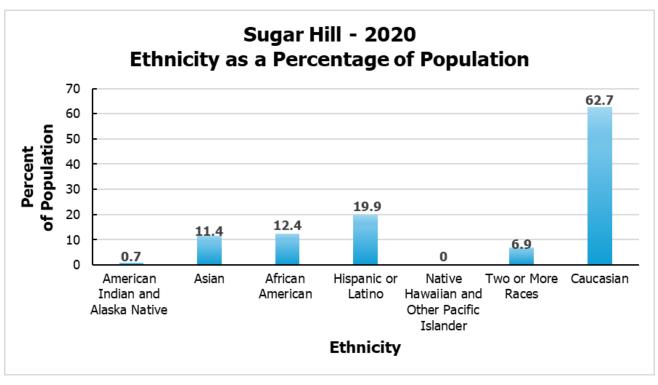
The various generations have a dramatic impact on the growth of an area and the expectations each generation has on the demographics and dynamics of a community. The GenX and Millennial generations represent almost half of the demographics of the City. As a group they have smaller families, do not want to commute, prefer working at home, seek Live, Work, Play, environments and are more likely to choose where they want to live, before they accept a job. As a result, this segment of the population will have a major impact on the growth of the City and the types of recreation they prefer.

Generation Age Chart

2022						
GENERATION	Age	%				
Greatest Generation	94 +					
Silent Generation	76 - 93	4.0%				
Baby Boomers	57 - 75	16.0%				
Generation X	41 - 56	23.0%				
Millennials	25 - 40	24.2%				
Generation Z	12 to 24	18.5%				
Generation Alpha	0 - 11	14.0%				

City of Sugar Hill by Race/Ethnicity

As of 2020, the racial and ethnicity composition of the city of Sugar Hill was 62,7% white, 12.4% African American, 19.9% Hispanic, 11.4% Asian, .07% Native American and 6.9% of mixed races. The minority communities represent almost 40% of the Sugar Hill population.



Source: US Census Bureau Quick Facts, 2020 version Note: Percentages exceed 100% due to error associated with sample size and rounding.

Conclusion

Based on future population projections, current and projected demographics of the people moving into Sugar Hill, the demand for future recreation facilities and services will rise as the population increases. With GenX and Millennials and their families being the highest percentage of the growth index, the future facilities should be concentrated on their interests and those of their children.

Programs and facilities will need to accommodate the needs of:

- · Children (0 15 years old)
- \cdot Those 25 55 years olds making up the largest segment of the population.
- The residents 56+ years and older based on their future retirement in 10 years.

There is a need to:

- · Work closely with economic development, schools, and community businesses to help attract and retain families with school age children.
- · Adjust programming and services to accommodate Millennials and their families as they grow older.
- Conduct periodic reviews to ensure there are programs and activities that meet the needs of an almost equal population of male and female community members.
- Develop programs to encourage and capture volunteer energy from the groups that want to participate.
- Develop more open space, passive, neighborhood parks to accommodate a denser population that prefers smaller living spaces.

As the SHPRD develops programs and services, efforts to obtain input from minority populations, especially the Hispanic community, will need to continue. Minority populations, especially the Hispanic community, are projected to continue to grow through 2030. Continuing and expanding efforts to include minority representatives in the planning and development process will help promote and enhance a greater sense of community.

Millennials

Millennials are expected to have a growing impact on the City. In 2013 Millennials overtook Gen-X as the largest percentage of the workforce. As a group, Millennials demonstrate some of the following characteristics:

- · Choose where they live, before they accept their job (U.S Census Bureau)
- Drive fewer miles (National Household Travel Survey, 2010 2019)
- · Have smaller family units and prefer smaller living units without yards.
- · Prefer to work remotely or go to the office on a limited basis.
- Prefer "Walkable" communities, with a preference for walking over driving as a transportation mode, living in an attached home walking distance from shops and other destinations, and are the most likely age group to use public transportation.²
- Set a premium on locations that are "Live, Work, Play," and that can accommodate their needs within walking/biking distances of their living quarters.³

Nationally, cities are working with business and developers to design communities that meet the lifestyle preferences of Millennials to attract this demographic to their communities. A critical element of this effort is the establishment of a diverse and walkable system of parks, natural areas, community centers and recreational opportunities.

As the Millennial generation begins to age, population projections suggest that there will be a need for Sugar Hill to target programming, services, and entertainment opportunities designed to attract and retain this age group. An example of such targeting includes efforts to aggressively pursue a connected, walkable, and bikeable 'Live, Work, Play,' community.

¹ Millennials surpass Gen Xers as the largest generation in U.S. labor force, Pew Research Center; 2020

^{2 2015} National Community and Transportation Preference Survey, National Association of Realtors

Today's Office Tenants Prefer Live, Work, Play Locations, NAIOP Weekly E-Newsletter January 6, 2020, NAIOP Commercial Real Estate Development Association

*In various articles, Millennials have been categorized as having birthdays ranging from 1976 (earliest) to 2004 (latest). Major news outlets (Newsweek, Time, New York Times) have placed this generation as having been born between 1978 and 2000. For the purpose of this report, Millennials are considered to be people who are currently between the ages of 27 and 42 (as of 2020.)

Seniors

It is important to note that the largest demographic group, 25%, (50+ years old) typically has the greatest disposable income and available time to volunteer. Devloping premium programs and services to attract seniors, opportunities to donate funds and volunteer time will provide significate returns to the SHPRD and the community.

2 - INVENTORY (What do you have?)

SUGAR HILL PARKS AND RECREATION

Department History

The SHPRD operates as a subdivision (Department) of the Sugar Hill City Government with a Parks and Recreation Director that answers directly to the City Manager.

The Town of Sugar Hill was incorporated in 1939 and changed to City of Sugar Hill in 1975.

The Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department began in 2003. The department hired its first full-time recreation director in 2006. The current director, Andy McQuagge, has served the department since 2006.

With the construction of Lake Lanier in 1957, the residents in the town of Sugar Hill had close access to four recreation areas from the US Army Corp of Engineers. The establishment of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) of the National Park Service in August of 1975 also preserved a large area of natural wilderness inside the Sugar Hill City Limits and provided a national park for the use by residents.

For most of the history of the City, it has depended upon Gwinnett County to provide parks and recreational services to its citizens.

Due to the rapid growth of the City over the last few decades, it has become necessary to develop additional parks within the city proper. The City now has 18 city owned parks and facilities within the city limits.

Parks Department Mission Statement

The Mission of the SHPRD is "to enrich the quality of life for the Sugar Hill community by providing recreational, educational and wellness programs within facilities, parks, and natural greenspaces."

Organizational Structure

Local parks and recreation departments are typically one of the largest land management stewards of public property in a community, as they manage the parks and often oversee the greenspace and natural areas as well. Adequate resources to maintain these resources are critical.

The Department currently employs 21 full-time, 26 part-time and seasonal employees. The majority of these employees (30) are located at the Sugar Hill Golf Club which leaves the remaining staff (17) to handle administration, recreation and maintenance throughout the City. A significant number of programs and services are also provided throughout the City and by contract services.

The Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department has four (4) distinct areas of responsibility: Administration, Athletics, Facilites, and Parks Maintenance.

- **Administration:** Includes the office of the Director, administrative support, marketing and public relations, and programs and special events.
- Athletics: Includes staff and responsibility for managing, coordinating, and administering all youth and adult sports.

- Facilities: Includes the staff and management of the facilities which include the E- Center, The Bowl, The Landing, Splash Park, Gary Pirkle Park, Community Garden, Ridge Lake Park, Gold Mine Park, Sugar Hill Greenway, Retreat at Orrs Ferry, and the Sugar Hill Golf Course.
- **Parks Maintenance:** Includes staff and responsibility for all maintenance needs, which include trash cleanup, turf management, trails maintenance, landscaping, golf course maintenance, and general maintenance.

PARKS DEPARTMENT ASSESSMENT

For assessment purposes, the Sugar Hill Parks & Recreation Department facilities can be divided into six (6) major categories.

Downtown "Campus": E-Center Gym, Bowl, Landing, Cornerstone Park, Gober Plaza, Splash Park, Cemetery, Champion Tree, and Veterans Memorial

The City of Sugar Hill has been aggressive in the development of the downtown area of the city for over 20 years, developing a new City Hall, parking deck, apartments, Eagle Theater, and a variety of other parks. The downtown has become a hub of activity as a Live, Work, Play development.

Gary Pirkle Park

The Gary Pirkle Park, a floodplain property donated to the City in the early 2000's, is a recreation complex that hosts youth, adult league, and tournament play. In partnership with All-in Futbol and I-9 Sports, the city provides youth soccer programs and related athletic services to City of Sugar Hill.

Sugar Hill Golf Course

The golf course was opened in the spring of 1992 as an 18-hole, par 72, 6423-yard course. It is operated by the city and open to the public. Facilities include a pro shop, full-service Bar & Grill, driving range, practice green, banquet hall & conference center.

Sugar Hill Greenway

The Greenway offers 4.7 miles of completed multipurpose trails connecting downtown to EE Robinson Park N, EE Robinson Park S, and then new Gold Mine Park trail head and extension. The current Greenway Master Plan offers another 11 miles of multiuse trails to be developed as a completed loop around the city center.

Parks and Recreation Services to Gold Mine, Ridge Lake Park

Is responsible for administration, general maintenance, natural and historic protection, and cleanup for special events.

Undeveloped Land & Greenspace: Orrs Ferry, Riverlands, South Richland Creek Greenspace

The City has recently acquired several undeveloped properties to utilize for the continuation of the Sugar Hill Greenway, preservation more green space, and for providing land for the expansion of the necessary parks and recreation facilities needed by the City to sustain their 25,000+ residents.

SHPRD also has two (2) major private program partners.

All-in Futbol Club

All in Futbol is a private, for-profit independent contractor that leases fields from the City parks and recreation department to develop a recreational soccer program in the City. All in Futbol is based in Gary Pirkle Park.

I-9 Sports

I-9 Sports is the nation's largest multi-sport provider focused solely on high-quality, community-based youth sports programs. The I-9 organization agreement is based in Gary Pirkle Park.

Other program partners include GA Force Home School Athletics, Lanier Athletic Association and North Gwinnett Athletic Association. Both athletic associations serve as youth feeder programs for the local high schools.

CITY INVENTORY

The following is a general summary of the inventory of parks and recreational facilities and acres in the City of Sugar Hill.

Sugar Hill currently has the following facilities:

· 18 total parks throughout the downtown and city limits.

Park Facilities 179.2 acres
 Lakes and Water 12.2 acres
 Greenspace 368.5 acres
 Total Parks 471.3 acres

The Park Land and Greenspace inventory managed by SHPRD includes:

One golf course Sugar Hill Golf Course	171.00 acres
One greenway / multiuse trail system Sugar Hill Greenway	4.70 miles
Three (3) undeveloped properties Orrs Ferry Riverlands Property South Richland Creek Greenspace	88 acres
Two (2) passive parks Gold Mine Park Ridge Lake Park	
Nine (9) Downtown Parks: Champion Tree Cornerstone Park E Center gymnasium Gober Family Plaza Splash Pad Sugar Hill Cemetery The Bowl / Amphitheater The Landing Veterans Memorial Park	.25 acres .150 acres .20 acres .20 acres .6.00 acres .2.04 acres .50 acres
One (1) Athletic Park with a Community C Gary Pirkle Park football/soccer fields Community Garden	64.00 acres

A complete inventory of the city's existing park facilities can be found in Appendix 2A Facility Inventory and Gap Analysis.

Overall Condition of Inventory

One of the two (2) major predictors of a visitor's perception of their park and recreation experience is the level of maintenance. A park's appearance and cleanliness, especially the restrooms, are among the biggest predictors of a return visit.⁴ It is also important to note that facilities can be exceptionally clean but, because of the age and degree of wear, the facility appears to be "unkempt". Thus, older facilities take more time and cost more to maintain in good condition, but the public may still consider them "unsuitable."

The City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department does a good job of maintaining the City's resources and inventory. Maintenance needs have been addressed as needed and so an extensive backlog does not exist in Sugar Hill.

NON-CITY INVENTORY

County Parks within the City Limits

The City of Sugar Hill has a city limit that is intermingled with unincorporated areas of Gwinnett County. Many of the residents in these areas feel that they are part of the city of Sugar Hill, although they do not pay city taxes. Gwinnett County maintains several parks within the city limits and the greater metropolitan area of Sugar Hill. Therefore, the planning team felt it was necessary to inventory the county parks within the city limits because they provide facilities and services to the citizens of Sugar Hill. A careful analysis of these facilities helped the planning team define the new Sugar Hill Standards to avoid providing duplicate facilities or competing with county programs that already meet the basic needs of the citizens. These facilities were not included in the Gap Analysis population demographics because the city does not own or control the county facilities. The county facilities could be taken completely by the county whenever it deems necessary. The county parks located within or near the city are as follows:

1.	Rock Spring Park	128 acres
2.	Bogan Park and Natatorium	83 acres
3.	EE Robinson Park North	51 acres
4.	EE Robinson Park South	64 acres
5.	George Pierce Park	304 acres
6.	Settles Bridge Park	268 acres
7.	Heritage Environmental Park	233 acres

A complete Inventory of the six (6) parks is included in Appendix 2B of this report and identifies all the facilities and uses in the parks. The inventory for these parks were carefully considered when establishing the Sugar Hill Standards in the Needs Assessment and when writing the Recommendations for SHPRD.

Other Parks

The City of Sugar Hill is in close proximity to Lake Lanier USACE, the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, (CRNRA) adjacent to Forsyth County, and the cities of Buford and Suwanee, Georgia. Therefore, the residents of Sugar Hill have easy access to a number of Federal and adjacent parks to meet their recreational needs. A careful inventory of the facilities was assembled and used to evaluate the new Sugar Hill Standards to avoid duplication of facilities and services that are already offered by these local entities.

⁴ Manageable Predictors of Park Visitor Satisfaction: Maintenance and Personnel; Journal of Parks and Recreation Administration, Volume 21, Number 1, pp. 22-37, Spring 2003

The Federal Parks within or near the City of Sugar Hill are as follows:

Bowman Island CRNRA	234.0 acres
Buford Dam Overlook USACE	71.5 acres
East Bank Park – Lake Lanier USACE	352.0 acres
Lower Pool Park – Lake Lanier USACE	8.3 acres
Orrs Ferry Section – CRNRA	530.6 acres
Lanier Beach – Lake Lanier USACE	31.5 acres
West Bank Park – Lake Lanier USACE	

Adjacent City Parks Include:

Legions Fields – Buford, GA	31.2 acres
Suwanee Creek Park – Suwanee, GA	. 85.0 acres
Shoal Creek Park – Private Ownership	171.6 acres
Sims Lake Park – Suwanee, GA	62.0 acres
Windemere Park – Forsyth Co	38.2 acres

A complete Inventory of the other parks is included in Appendix 2C of this report and identifies all the facilities and uses in the parks. The inventory for these parks was carefully considered when establishing the Sugar Hill Standards in the Needs Assessment and when writing the Recommendations for SHPRD.

Homeowner Associations in Sugar Hill (HOA)

The City of Sugar Hill has a number of residential subdivisions that provide swim / tennis and other recreational amenities for their homeowners. The public input survey and interviews revealed a desire by the residents for a swimming pool. The planning team felt it was important to look at the number of pools that are available to residents in the City to help evaluate the need for a pool or natatorium in the city. The HOA inventory revealed the following data:

The City has 28 Homeowners Associations that provide private amenities.

SUGAR HILL - (HOA) PRIVATE RECREATION SUMMARY								
Facility	#	# of Homes	Clubhouse	Pool	Tennis	Trails	Play Structure	Pavilion
HOA TOTALS	28	3564	15	25	39	1	14	5

The HOA facilities provide pools & tennis courts to the following residents.

HOA Summary				
Facility	Qty	Households	People/Ho	# of People
Tennis Areas	39	1613	x 3	4840
Pools	25	2516	x 3	7548

A complete Inventory of the 28 HOA amenities is included in Appendix 2D of this report. The inventory for the pools and tennis courts was considered when establishing Sugar Hill Standards for tennis and pools and when writing the Recommendations for SHPRD.

Churches in Sugar Hill

Churches often provide recreational facilities to their congregations such as gymnasiums, playgrounds, and ballfields. The planning team wanted to identify the number of recreational facilities offered by local churches within the city limits. After assembling a list of church recreational facilities, it was determined that the churches had a minimum to no effect on the needs of the City for recreational facilities. The following chart tabulates the actual number of recreational facilities offered by the local Sugar Hill churches.

Church Name	Gym	Playgr	Sand Vb	Shelter	Basketball
Big Sky Community					
Buford Presbyterian	1	2			
Chom Joeun Korean					
Gwinnet Church	1	1			
New Hope Baptist					
Lighthouse Church					
Riverside Baptist					
Church on the Hill	1	3			
Sugar Hill Church	1	4	1	1	
The Tree of Life		1			1
TOTALS	4	11	1	1	1

Schools in Sugar Hill

There are eight (8) public schools and one (1) Preschool within the City of Sugar Hill city limits. These schools have athletic fields and other amenities that could serve as joint use facilities by agreement with the City. A careful review of the available inventory was made to determine if joint use agreements would be a viable option to constructing new facilities. Although joint use agreements are possible, the planning team felt that such agreements may have little effect on the overall needs of the City, so the school facilities were not considered when establishing the Sugar Hill Standards for facilities.

The following summary of fields and facilities was determined by the inventory.

Facility @ School in City Limits	Qty
Gymnasium	9
Football Field	2
Baseball Field]
Softball Field	1
Tennis Court	4
Youth Basketball Court	3
Track	3
Soccer / Multiuse field	7
Play Structure	4

3 - PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT (What do you want?)

STAKEHOLDERS

- 1. The planning team worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Director and staff to identify specific individuals and groups to interview as part of the stakeholder involvement process for the study. The stakeholders list included parks staff, city officials, department heads, recreational groups, volunteer organizations and others with a vested interest in the master plan. A complete list of stakeholders is included in Appendix 1A.
- 2. A senior member of the planning team met with each individual or group on the stakeholders list to discuss their issues and concerns relative to parks and recreation. A copy of the stakeholder questions is included in Appendix 1B after the stakeholders list.
- 3. Each interview was documented by the planning team and used as a resource during the planning phase of the study. A list of recommendations showing the most consistent responses of the stakeholders was combined with the responses from the citizens questionnaire and is included in Appendix 3.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The planning team hosted one (1) public input meeting, "Open House," with two (2) sessions, to solicit input and comments from the public. The meetings were held at the E-Center to make it easier for residents to have a chance to participate. The planning team worked with SHPRD to schedule and offer the open houses on a date and time to attract as many people as possible. At the sessions, the planning team gave a short presentation about the recreation planning process and provided attendees with the opportunity to present their concerns using questionnaires and small group discussions. Master Planning consultants attended and hosted the meeting:

• Sugar Hill E Center – October 26, 2022 (2 sessions @ 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

Copies of the stakeholder questionnaire were handed out to all attendees to complete. The planning team received 12 citizen responses that were reviewed and tallied together with the 25 stakeholder interviews. All public comments were recorded and used as a resource by the Planning Team and SHPRD staff in the process of preparing final recommendations for the Master Plan. The following Citizens Response Assessment includes a summary of the responses and the top 10 requests as determined from a combined tally of the stakeholder interviews and citizen questionaries. An exact copy of the Citizens Questionnaire and Stakeholder Questionnaire is found in Appendix 2B & C of this report.

Citizens Response Assessment:

Because of the limited number of responses and the fact that some respondents gave multiple answers, and many respondents did not answer all the questions, it is difficult to garner a lot of valuable information from the results of these 12 questionnaires. The answers in this tally were compared to the consensus responses of the Stakeholder interviews and the Public Input on-line survey tally to get an idea of what was most in common between these results.

Conclusion:

There seems to be a consistent desire by the citizens of Sugar Hill to have more greenspace, passive parks, and multiuse trails in the city. One item in Question 6 was referenced the most times of any responses in the entire questionnaire. Six (6) out of the 12 citizens stated they most used the City facilities for walking their dogs.

- 1. Responses indicate a keen interest in walking, passive parks, trails, and dog parks.
- 2. Favorite parks were named by only three (3) people, all three (3) were passive parks.

Recommendations:

Based on these responses to the general questions by 12 residents, CPL makes the following basic recommendations.

Protect existing Greenspace and develop more Passive Parks and multiuse trails:

The results of this questionnaire are consistent with most Parks and Recreation Surveys. Trails and Passive Park are usually at the top of the list. Dog parks and walking trails are always near the top and are considered passive activities, not active sports.

Combined Stakeholder Interviews and Citizens response Summary:

There were 25 Stakeholders interviewed that consisted of parks staff, city officials and interested parties. The twelve (12) questionnaires were completed by local citizens who attended the public meetings. Although the assembled responses were a little disconnected, there were a number of consistent items that were common between both groups.

The stakeholders and citizens were also asked if there were any items they did not want to see in the City. They identified certain problems and some consistent 'Don't Wants'. Many of the respondents also identified what they consider to be special assets in the City.

The following list identified the top 10 most common and consistent requests made by the stakeholders and citizens, which indicates a sufficient idea of "What is Wanted" by the residents of Sugar Hill.

The final list is generally consistent with every other park and recreation study prepared by CPL in the Atlanta metro area over the last ten (10) years. The choices are listed in the order in which they were most often mentioned. These responses are a good indication for a direction for the facilities recommendations of the Master Plan.

The collective information from the interviews is included on the list below if a comment showed up consistently in the 25 interviews and 12 questionnaires.

Top 10 Requests: What do you want to see developed in the City?

- 1. Greenway, trails, (walk, bike, hike, nature) connection to the river
- 2. Passive Natural Parks with flexible open space and amenities (on the river) with picnic areas, trails, open space, forest preservation, fishing, canoe, kayak, etc.
- 3. Pocket parks in neighborhoods, interconnected by trails, paths and sidewalks
- 4. Sidewalk connections downtown, neighborhoods, and out to the river by Ga. 20
- 5. Community Recreation / Senior Center with Gym, and flexible meeting spaces
- 6. Dog Park with trails in a natural setting
- 7. More restaurants downtown (not a park facility, but was mentioned often)
- 8. Aquatic center, indoor pool, with splash pad
- 9. Pickleball courts both indoors and outdoors
- 10. Disc golf course Expand the 9 holes or add a new 18-hole course.

Don't want these items: What do you not want to see in the City?

No more sports fields

No pool (This seems to be staff and city officials, but the public is opposite.) No more apartments (this is a downtown issue)

Problems: What are the problems you foresee in the City?

Not enough parking downtown

Too many apartments downtown

Disconnected and sporadic sidewalks

Keeping parks and maintenance staff, too much turnover

Not enough access to the River and Greenspace

Assets: What are the City's best assets?

Great place to live

The bowl and adjacent amenities

Greenway (needs completing)

Active and exciting downtown

Green Space and near the river

A complete tally of the Stakeholders / Citizens interviews can be found in Appendix 3.

ONLINE SURVEY

As an integral part of the research and evaluation for the 'Needs Assessment' of the City, the planning team prepared an in-depth on-line public input survey. The SHPRD Survey consisted of 16 parks related questions that were targeted for learning how the public felt about the current Sugar Hill parks program and what they would like to see improved or added to the program. The Survey also included seven (7) personal identity questions so the planning team could extract data based on demographics. The goal is to identify responses based on zip codes, age, ethnicity, gender, family size, and residency. In the process of doing such studies, it has proven beneficial to be able to extract responses based on gender, race, age, and family size to determine what each segment of the population desires without those results being watered down by other groups. The general location data is used to help the team identify needs in different areas of the city. This allows the team to better locate facilities in the areas where the demand is the highest. It also helps the team evaluate cultural and ethnic responses that often translate into different preferences in programs and facilities when fairly evaluated based on percentage of the total population. In many surveys the breakdown of the number of respondents does not correlate to the same breakdown in the percentages of the population demographics. Therefore, the planning team can extract data and evaluate it based on weighted percentages of the various population demographics. This allows the planning team to get a more accurate picture of what the overall population wants.

Process

The SHP Survey was posted on the Sugar Hill Parks website and was advertised and announced at public meetings as well as other events and activities. The City also sent notices via email to the prescribers to the SHPRD website and other email lists available to the City. Additionally, emails were sent to specific individuals in the city and asked to pass the notice on to the members of their respective organizations and groups.

The Survey remained posted on the City website for 1 month during the period when the planning team was assembling data, holding public meetings, and assessing the parks inventory. The SHPRD Survey was taken by over 176 Sugar Hill residents.

A copy of the online survey questions is in Appendix 1C of this report.

Results and Assessments

SUGAR HILL ONLINE PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY ASSESSMENT:

ZIP Codes for Sugar Hill:

86% of respondents were in the 30518-zip code for Sugar Hill and Buford. 5.7% of respondents were in the 30024-zip code for Sugar Hill and Suwanee.

1. On average, how often do you or your household visit the following parks?

Based on the responses to this question the following was determined:

Most Used Park: EE Robinson North Park.

Top 3 Total Parks: EE Robinson North, South and Gary Pirkle Parks

Most Used City Park: Gary Pirkle Park

Top 3 City Parks: Gary Pirkle, Greenway, & Splash Pad downtown

Least Used Parks: Haw Creek, Cemetery and Bowmans Island Trails

The most frequent choice is: "A few times a Year."

Assessment:

The larger regional parks get the most traffic while the more remote and smaller parks with no amenities get the least traffic.

2. Please tell us how you or your household enjoy using the following parks.

174 people selected from six (6) use choices for 20 local city, county, state, and federal parks.

Rankings for total choices made of the six (6) uses:

Exercising	27.7 %
Relaxing	24.5 %
Socializing	18.3 %
Special Event	10.9 %
Other	11.9 %
Athletics	6.8 %

Assessment and Recommendations:

Note that the top four (4) preferred uses are all Passive.

Athletics is the last choice, indicating a lack of desire for more fields.

These results indicate that more passive parks are needed.

3. Which of the following, if any, prevents you or your household from using parks and recreational facilities in Sugar Hill?

The main reason people don't go to a park is 'Distance'. 27%. The 2nd most chosen reason is 'Not enough parking'. 23%

Assessment and Recommendations:

The city needs to focus on developing more parks in underserved areas. Increasing the available parking at the existing parks will increase use.

4. In which programs have you or your household participated in a Sugar Hill Park or recreational facility?

There were 174 people who responded to this question with 261 selections.

Top three (3) reasons for using a local park facility are:

Open Gym @ E Center 26% (39% of the people) I-9 Sports 16% (26% of the people) Fitness 14% (24 % of the people)

Assessment and Recommendations:

It appears that more gymnasiums and enclosed spaces (recreation centers) are needed.

5. How do you usually travel to and from Sugar Hill's parks and recreational facilities?

The car is the overwhelming way people travel to parks at 86%.

The 2nd most common travel is 'Walking' and 3rd is 'Bikes'.

Assessment and Recommendations:

The city needs to create more inviting and safe connections with sidewalks and trails.

6. From the list, please select the activities in which you or your household are most likely to participate or attend, even if not currently offered. Select up to five (5).

154 people each selected five (5) choices totaling 770 separate choices.

Walking and Hiking were the most common choices for activities.

Swimming, Dog Park, and Playground round out the top 5 choices.

All the preferred choices were passive.

<u>Assessment and Recommendations:</u>

The results indicate a strong desire for more trails, walkways, paths and passive facilities.

7. Select which amenities you would like to see or add more in existing parks? Pick up to five.

There were 596 choices by 170 people. The strongest selections are:

- 1. Trails had 105 choices, representing 17% of the total choices made.

 That represents 68% of the total number of people responding to the question.
- 2. Shade and Trees 16%
- 3. Dog Park 11%

In contrast, Athletic Fields were at 10 total choices by only 2% of the respondents.

Assessment and Recommendations:

These statistics indicate a strong desire for more Trails and for adding Shade Trees to the current facilities. It also indicates a low demand for more Athletic Fields, perhaps because the county provides an adequate number of fields for the city.

8. From the following list, select the active sports, activities, or facilities you or your household are most likely to participate in or attend. You may select up to five (5).

146 people responded to this question. It is obvious that not all selected five (5) activities. Some may not be interested in more than a few active sports.

Responses for Active Facilities indicate a strong desire for an Olympic Pool and Disc Golf. These two (2) activities are not usually at the top of the desired activities list and probably represent a strong group of participants living within the City.

No mention of a pool or disc golf appeared in the Stakeholder Interviews nor in the questionnaire responses. It is an anomaly that these two (2) would ever surpass Basketball or other indoor recreational facilities in a public survey.

Assessment and Recommendations:

The City may consider a pool or disc golf course but should do a more detailed market study to validate the actual need for such facilities.

A nine (9)- hole or even an 18-hole disc golf course is not a major investment or large operations cost. The city may consider one of the undeveloped properties near the river for either of these two facilities.

A swimming pool comes with high costs in capital funding as well as long-term operations costs. The city needs to do another level of investigation if a pool is considered.

9. From the following list, please select the events you or your household are most likely to participate in or attend. Select five (5).

146 people made 730 selections to identify events they are most likely to attend.

Festivals, concerts, and public celebrations topped the events list.

The weakest events seem to be sports tournaments and film festivals.

Assessment and Recommendations:

Large scale public events seem to have popular local support.

This result lends itself to developing larger more flexible open spaces that can accommodate a variety of events that cannot be accommodated in the Bowl.

10. Which of the following community groups are you or your household most likely to participate in? Select all that apply.

138 people responded to this question providing 403 choices.

The top three (3) choices for groups that citizens would likely join are:

- 1. Friends of the Greenway is top with 51% of the people.
- 2. Running Club or Outdoor Fitness Group was 2nd 33% of the people.
- 3. Community Garden was the third most with 30% of the people.

Assessment and Recommendations:

The City needs to complete the current Greenway plan and connect the various sections and destinations together to accommodate running and fitness.

The current community garden is on one side of the City. A second one should be considered in a different less-served location in the City.

11. How would you prefer to travel to and from Sugar Hill's parks and recreational facilities?

These results are compared to results of question #5 and show the following:

The number of people preferring to drive dropped from 86% to 52 % or a 34% decrease.

There is a dramatic increase in the preference for walking to a park from 9% to 28%. Biking preference increased from 5% to 19%.

Assessment and Recommendations:

These statistics obviously point to a desire by the local citizens to get out of their cars and walk or bike to the park. This result encourages the need to build more trails, sidewalks, and paths to connect the various parks and attractions in the City to the residential areas. This makes a strong case to complete the Greenway.

12. Please rate the following qualities related to Sugar Hill and its regional Parks and Recreation facilities and programming.

The results of this question indicate that citizens are generally satisfied with the current conditions of the City parks. Of the 700 ratings given by 171 respondents, 77% of the ratings were good to excellent. Only 6% of the respondents gave Sugar Hill Parks a poor rating. That is an excellent report on how well the city is providing and maintaining the parks system.

Assessment and Recommendations:

The rating indicates there may not be as much delayed maintenance as perceived. Maintenance is always a challenge. The current conditions are a compliment to the staff and management of available resources.

13. There are currently 2,000 acres of land in publicly owned greenspace or parkland in the greater Sugar Hill area. Please select the benefits of greenspace preservation which mean the most to you or your household.

The question is designed to learn what citizens envision for the 2000 acres of land.

There were 400 responses by 157 people relative to how to develop the greenspace.

The overwhelming choice was a Natural Park by 135 of the 157 citizens or 86% total.

Assessment and Recommendations:

The 2000 acres should be preserved as greenspace and developed with programs that are consistent with natural areas and passive recreation.

14. If greenspace preservation is important to you, would you be willing to preserve your own property or neighborhood?

1.	65%	Yes
2.	26 %	Maybe
3.	8%	No

Assessment and Recommendations:

Preserving Greenspace is a high priority for the residents of Sugar Hill. This lends credibility to the development of the 2000 acres as a passive nature park and for completion of the Greenway.

15. How would you like to get your information regarding Sugar Hill's recreational programs, events, and activities?

The question was answered by 156 people.

- 1. 65% identified email as their preference.
- 2. 62% also selected social media. (Facebook and Instagram)

Assessment:

Unfortunately, the results of this question are not clear because respondents obviously chose more than one preference. Therefore, we must assume from the total choices as to what the single preferences may be. It appears that the majority prefers email. The second most preferred choice is social media.

Recommendations:

The City should assemble an email list of all citizens for email blast notifications to the citizens for upcoming programs, events, and activities.

The City should maintain a Facebook, Instagram and / or Nextdoor account to post news, events and activities on a regular basis. The email blast can direct the receiver back to the social media page for more information about any upcoming event.

16. What social media platforms do you use? Select all that apply.

The question was answered by 146 people.

- 1. 86% of residents selected Facebook
- 2. 61% of residents selected Instagram
- 3. 44% of residents selected Nextdoor

Assessment and Recommendations:

Unfortunately, the results of this question are not clear because respondents obviously chose more than one preference. Therefore, we must assume from the total choices as to what the single preferences may be.

Based on the preference of choices, the City needs to maintain Facebook, Instagram and Nextdoor accounts for information to be posted.

See completed Online Survey Tallies in Appendix 3.

Consolidated Responses - Citizens Preference List

The CPL planning team assembled a graphic chart showing the lists of facilities identified by the Needs Assessment and placed it adjacent to the results of various Public Input questions. This identified which of the facilities on the Preference Lists coincide with the Needs List. Below are the top five (5) requests from each of the Online Survey items which identified preferred facilities. Comments to the right indicate how the CPL team interpreted the responses to match identified facilities on the Needs List. See Consolidated Citizens Response Graphic in Appendix 3.

1. Stakeholders Interview Question #1.

"What Recreational improvements do you want to see in Sugar Hill Recreation?"

Expand the Greenway Multiuse trails
 Nature/Soft Walking Trails Nature trails

3. Natural Greenspace4. Pocket ParksPreserve GreenspacePlaygrounds / Tot lots

5. Bike Paved Trails Multiuse trails

2. Online Public Input Survey request for Open Comments

"What do you want to add?"

- 1. Multiuse Trails
- 2. Preserve Green Space
- 3. Limit greenspace lost to development
- 4. More Parking
- 5. Nature/Soft Trails

3. Online Public Input Survey question #6

"From the list, select the activities in which you or your household are most likely to participate or attend even if not currently offered."

Walking Multiuse trails
 Hiking Nature or soft trails

3. Swimming *Pool*

4. Dog Park5. Playground

4. Online Public Input Survey question #7

"Select which amenities you would like to see or add more in existing parks."

1. Trails/Paths All trails

2. Shade Trees and Greenspace

3. Water fountains Trails

4. Dog Park

5. Bathrooms

5. Online Public Input Survey question #8

"From the list, select the active sports, activities, or facilities you or your household are most likely to participate in or attend."

- 1. Olympic Covered Pool
- 2. Disc Golf
- 3. Basketball Courts
- 4. Golf 9 hole short course
- 5. Golf 18-hole

Citizens Preference list: Top Five (5)

Using the above lists, the planning team has identified the top five (5) most desired new or expanded facilities requested by the Citizens of Sugar Hill.

- 1. Multiuse Trails Paved trails connecting and expanding the Greenway
- 2. Nature / Soft Trails
- 3. Preserve Greenspace
- 4. Dog Parks
- 5. Playgrounds / Pocket Parks / Tot lots

All five (5) of these preferred choices show up as deficits in the Gap Analysis and are listed on the Needs Assessment. Due to the high ranking of these five (5) choices, CPL recommends that all five (5) be placed on the priority list of facilities to be developed.

Comments Assessment - Online Survey

The Sugar Hill on-line public input survey had an open-ended question that allowed the citizens to state what they would most like to see to improve the parks and recreation environment in Sugar Hill.

Citizens commented in the comment box to identify facilities, programs, and ideas about what would improve the system. The survey was answered by 174 individuals, many of whom listed more than one item in their comments.

Below is a list of the requested items identified in the survey and how they ranked in the overall tally. If a suggestion appeared only once or twice, it was not put on the list.

Tally List of Comment Items in the Online Survey

1	Multiuse trails	36
2	Save the Green Space	26
3	Other/Miscellaneous	21
4	More and safer parking	18
5	Nature / soft trails	17
6	Dog Park	12
7	Disc Golf	11
8	Pool	11
9	Skate Park	10
10	More Playgrounds	9
11	More trees and shade	9
12	More sidewalks	8
13	Larger Town Green	8
14	Pickleball	7
15	More restaurants and dining	7
16	Mt. Bikes	7
17	Senior Center	6
18	Traffic is Bad	5
19	Restrooms - Public	4
20	Farmers Market	4
21	More benches and seats	4
22	Picnic Area	3
23	River Connection to Greenway	3
24	Community Garden	3
25	Better Lights downtown	3

The comment results align closely with the results of the On-line survey and other methods of gaging the public interest in the parks program.

A tally graphic of the results of each survey question can be found in Appendix 3.

4 - MASTER PLAN (What do you need?)

GAP ANALYSIS

National Standards and Benchmarks

National standards and benchmarks have been developed by industry and professional organizations to guide parks and recreation professionals in evaluating the existing resources of an organization, defining existing and future needs, and recognizing when excellence has been achieved.



The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) is one of the leading professional agencies in the parks and recreation field. NRPA compiles data on park and recreation systems at a national level and relies upon decades of expertise and experience from practitioners, researchers, and other experts in the field to establish national standards and benchmarks. It also certifies professional staff and accredits parks and recreation agencies. The NRPA publishes an annual survey of parks and recreation departments throughout the United States and provides statistical data based on these findings. In years prior to 2017, the information was provided through a "Field Report." Starting in 2017, the NRPA renamed the report, entitling it as the "Americans' Engagement with Parks Survey."

In addition to NRPA standards, the Master Plan utilized standards, benchmarks, and industry trend data from federal, state, local, and industry organizations. A selected list of these sources for national and state standards and benchmarks are listed below; this list is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather is representative of the major organizations that provide data, trends, benchmarks, and standards used to evaluate parks and recreation programming, operations, and facilities:

- American Time Use Survey
- American Trails
- American Journal of Preventive Medicine
- Bureau of Transportation Statistics
- Forest History Society
- Harris Interactive, September 2013 leisure activities poll
- Physical Activity Council, 2016 report.
- President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
- National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- National Standards for Youth Sports (compiled by the National Alliance for Youth Sports)
- Outdoor Foundation
- Outdoor Industry Association: Outdoor Recreation Economy
- Sports and Fitness Industry Association
- Georgia Plan for Outdoor Recreation 2017-2021
- The Trust for Public Lands, various reports, and studies
- US Department of Agriculture Forest Service
- Urban Land Institute
- World Health Organization (WHO)

Establishing a Gap Analysis

A gap analysis identifies the difference between an organization's existing resources and the resources needed to meet national standards, both currently and in the future. To establish this gap, the existing facilities and programs are first assembled in list form to effectively identify exactly what the city has in their parks and recreation inventory. This existing list is matched against the NRPA standards to determine where the gaps occur.

The gap analysis of SHPRD programs and facilities utilizes the NRPA standards as a preliminary benchmark to determine how the city's program and facilities inventory measures up against what is typically standard for a city the size of Sugar Hill in the southeast region of the county.

Unless otherwise stated, for the purpose of establishing benchmarks for comparisons, the NRPA median for a community population the size of Sugar Hill city limits was used. The population data used as the foundation for establishing the median was the 2020 census* data for Sugar Hill. The total was used to establish the median benchmark for the SHPRD.

*Based on Georgia Office of Planning and Budget data

Defining a Gap Analysis

The Gap Analysis compares the existing facilities inventory against the national standards for the same facilities for the City and the difference represents the deficit of Gap in standard facilities needed. The gap identifies two major categories of the land.

Park Land

Park land is generally considered to be light to heavily developed land primarily devoted to active and passive recreational and outdoor activities; it may include multiuse open space, event lawns, ball fields, trails, hardscape, plazas, splash pads, amphitheater, shelters, buildings, lakes, roads, parking lots and anything developed and used for recreational purposes.

Greenspace

Greenspace is generally considered to be undisturbed or minimally developed natural areas that are addressing ecological and natural system needs; this land is devoted primarily to ecosystem services, biodiversity, and wildlife habitat/travel corridors; Greenspace can include woodland edges, and/or educational activities that have limited or minimal impact on natural systems/habitat; land designated as greenspace generally includes some level of permanent protection from development.

The result of the comparison produces a Gap in what facilities the city has and what it needs to meet national standards. The result is considered as a Preliminary Gap from which to begin the Needs Assessment.

A copy of the Gap Analysis for City Parks can be found in Appendix 2E of the report.

Establishing a Sugar Hill Standard/Benchmark

The gap analysis identifies the difference between an organization's existing resources and the resources needed to meet national standards. However, every community is not the same and standards vary across the country due to demographics, culture, climate, and many other factors. One major factor includes what adjacent communities or organizations offer in the form of parks and recreation that the study area residents may utilize. These factors need to be taken into consideration and used to adjust the national standards to a more appropriate local standard for the City of Sugar Hill.

During the master planning process, the planning team also developed inventories of all other parks withing or near the city. These parks fell under the jurisdiction of adjacent cities, county, state, and nation. These inventories were used to adjust the availability of specific facilities in order to avoid duplication or over providing of a resource.

Copies of the County and Other inventories can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

A master plan also requires understanding the specific resources, needs, and vision of a community. The SHPRD Master Plan process gathered information from citizens, staff, stakeholders, administrators, and government officials to establish "Sugar Hill Standards" that reflects the unique nature of the community, its local conditions, and specific needs.

The planning consultant team and city staff collaborated to review the results of the Public Input data and additional inventories to evaluate each facility on the Gap Analysis. A new benchmark standard for Sugar Hill was developed for every facility as part of this process. Replacing the national standard benchmarks with the new Sugar Hill standard benchmarks produces the Needs Assessment, which is a list of those programs and facilities lacking in the City that are wanted or needed by the local citizens.

The new "Sugar Hill Standards" are used to define both existing needs and those anticipated in the future based on the projected changes in the population through 2030.

Benchmark Population Data Used for SHPRD

Chapter 2 of this report outlines the findings and implications of the changes in Sugar Hill's population through 2030. National Benchmarks are generally based on a community's population related to jurisdictional responsibilities and control over their park facilities. For this study, the planning team used the city limits as the population boundary for the study rather than the Sugar Hill Metro Area or the city's local Gas Service area.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The needs assessment takes the new Sugar Hill Standards and replaces them for the NRPA Benchmark Standards to determine the true needs for the community. The Sugar Hill Standards take into consideration the following factors:

- 1. Public input on the specific wants and desires of the citizens
- 2. Other facilities in and near the city limit owned by the county, state, etc.
- 3. Local regional popular sports and activities
- 4. Specific ethnic and cultural segments of the demographics
- 5. Directives and input from the local community and parks leadership
- 6. Parks Department budget for operations and capital improvements
- 7. Local climate and weather

The consultant team and city staff consulted together to develop standards that are inserted on the Gap Analysis to create a Needs Assessment that is more in keeping with the vision, goals, budgets, and desires of the local community. The final Needs assessment is used to generate a list of facilities that are needed in the community.

The Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment Charts are too big to insert into the body of this report and a copy is included in Appendix 2E.

List of Needs

The following list of needs was identified in the Needs Assessment and is listed for the 10-year plan of what the city should complete by the year 2034. The top five (5) choices from the Public Input Survey are highlighted in green.

#	List of Facility Needs	Qty
1	Greenspace - acres needed	230
	Connect to River	
2	Swim Aquatic Center	0
	Splash Pad	0
3	Basketball Courts - outdoors	4
4	Gymnasium	1
	Indoor basketball courts	2
5	Baseball/Softball	0
6	Miracle Field (baseball)	1
7	Multipurpose rectangle field	2
8	Pickleball courts - indoor	2
9	Pickleball - outdoor	4
10	Football Field	1
11	Adult Soccer	2
12	Youth Soccer	2
13	Tennis Court	4
14	Sand Volleyball	2
15	Disc Golf - holes	9
16	Ropes Course / Climbing Wall	1
17	Model Airplane / Drone Field	-
18	Dog Park	1
19	Festival Field (with Drone Field)	1
20	Picnic Pavilion and Area	-
21	Playground	4
	Tot Lot	3
22	ADA & Destination Playground	1
23	Golf	0
24	Recreation Center/ Facilities	
	Indoor Track	1
	Fitness Room	1
	Program Room	1
	Skate Park	0
25	Archery Range	1
26	Boat Ramp	1
	Fishing Piers / decks	4
27	Natural Trails - miles	6
28	Multi-use paved trails - miles	2
29	Farmers Market Venue	1
30	Senior Center	1
31	Community Garden	1
32	Downtown	1

Needs Assessment Narrative:

The following is a descriptive narrative of each of the facilities identified in the Needs Assessment and shown on the above List of Facility Needs. The Recommendation narrative defines where each facility can be placed with improvements to each existing park.

1. Greenspace 230 Acres

There are a variety of methods used to identify adequate green space for a community. These methods can be reviewed in the Greenspace section in this chapter of the report. The planning team used the Georgia Community Greenspace Program method which recommends that 20% of a community's land be devoted and preserved as natural greenspace. Greenspace does not include golf fairways, ball fields, event lawns, and other manicured or manmade landscapes.

Sugar Hill is fortunate in that it is adjacent to the NPS-CRNRA which preserves a large tract of land along the Chattahoochee River within the city limits. The land can be included as preserved greenspace because it is accessible to the citizens and permanently preserved.

Sugar Hill has a total land area of 10.6 square miles of which .40 sq. miles is water. The 10.2 square miles translates into 6528 acres of land. To preserve 20% of the land as natural greenspace, the city needs to preserve .1307 acres of land within its city limits. The city, county and NPS inventories (see Appendix 2) identified 1,277.5 acres of natural greenspace already preserved within the Sugar Hill City Limits by these combined entities.

City Parks 279.7 acres

County Parks 235.2 acres within City (Settles Bridge, EE Robinson)

Federal Land 762.6 acres within the city (CRNRA)

TOTAL 1,277.5 acres of preserved greenspace

Due to the fact that Sugar Hill does not totally control the NPS or county greenspace and may lose greenspace when developing its own three (3) undeveloped tracts, the city should consider looking for opportunities to purchase and preserve additional greenspace, especially for extending and completing the Sugar Hill Greenway. The following estimates are made based on proposed developments and needs for additional green space.

Deficit in current greenspace	30 acres
Development of new Recreation Center #2	30 acres
Development areas in two (2) new passive parks	20 acres
Development of additional Ballfields	50 acres
Completion of 11 miles of Greenway	100 acres
TOTAL	230 acres

2. Swim/Aquatic Center:

None

Gwinnett County has excellent facilities near the city and 25 residential communities in the City provide pools for their residents. These communities contain 2516 housing units with a projected population of 7550 residents who enjoy access to a pool. Considering the proximity of the County facility and that 1/3 of the City's resident population has access to a community pool, there does not appear to be a need to replicate that facility in the City at the present.

Considering the current city budget for capital improvements and staffing, an Aquatic Center is an expensive facility to build and operate and should not be considered at this time.

3. Basketball Courts (outdoor):

4 - Outdoor Basketball Courts

The City has no outdoor basketball courts in any of their parks. The standard for a city the size of Sugar Hill is 4 courts. Even though Gwinnett County provides 10 courts, they are managed and controlled by the county. Because outdoor courts are in such high demand, the City should have basketball courts under their control. The four (4) needed courts should be paired in the larger parks and not developed single courts in small parks. Keeping them as double courts also helps keep them safe.

4. Gymnasium / Basketball:

2 - Court Gymnasium

The City should have a minimum of three (3) indoor basketball courts. One indoor court already exists at the E-Center downtown; however, parking and access is a challenge. The City should consider building a 2nd gymnasium in a different location to include two (2) courts along with other amenities. These courts should also serve other uses as identified in the Gap Analysis.

5. Baseball / Softball: None

The City is well served by ball fields provided by Gwinnett County so that no additional city owned ball fields are necessary at the present. The city has decided to not provide baseball/softball programs in competition with the county.

6. Miracle Field: 1 - Field

There is no Miracle Field in close proximity to the city. If the County has no plans to develop one (1) in the long-range future, Sugar Hill should consider developing one (1) for the residents.

7. Multipurpose field for football, soccer, lacrosse:

2 - Multipurpose Fields

A city the size of Sugar Hill will need three (3) multipurpose fields by 2034. The County already provides three (3) such fields inside the city. The City needs to own and control at least two (2) fields so it should consider building one (1) field now and one (1) future. Both should be turf or be developed so they can be converted to turf in the future.

8. Pickleball-indoor:

2 - Indoor Pickleball Courts

A city the size of Sugar Hill, with the current senior population, should have three (3) indoor pickleball courts. One (1) indoor court is currently provided at the E-Center. The city needs to add two (2) more indoor courts in conjunction with the proposed additional Gymnasium.

9. Pickleball-outdoor:

4 - Outdoor Pickleball Courts

Sugar Hill appears to have a strong senior population that is gravitating toward pickleball. The demographics require eight (8) total courts with five (5) of those being outdoors. Sugar Hill currently has only one (1) indoor and one (1) outdoor court. The outdoor court should be supplemented with four (4) additional outdoor pickleball courts. These new outdoor courts should all be developed in a single park as a social structure for the Senior population. These should be developed away from adjacent residential areas.

10. Football Field:

Sugar Hill needs at least two (2) recreation-controlled football fields to meet the projected demand by 2034. The City currently has one (1) football field at Gary Pirkle Park. Another football field should be built at a different location in the City in conjunction with similar facilities and support amenities.

11. Adult Soccer: 2 - Full size Soccer Fields

The population projection for the City by 2034 indicates that the city will need four (4) full size soccer fields to meet the projected adult and youth demand for fields. Sugar Hill currently has only two (2) soccer fields dedicated for adult use. The City should consider another two (2) soccer fields in conjunction with the proposed multipurpose field in a single park in another location within the City.

12. Youth Soccer: 2 - Youth Soccer Fields

The City of Sugar Hill will need six (6) more youth fields by 2034 based on the population growth projections. Currently the City has four (4) turf fields at Gary Pirkle Park that are under heavy use. The City needs to build an additional two (2) youth soccer fields in conjunction with the adult soccer fields and football field as a single park. These fields should be located in a different section of the City away from Gary Pirkle Park. The difficult challenge with grouping multiple rectangle fields is finding a site that is not topographically challenging for flat projects.

13. Tennis Courts: 4 - Tennis Courts

The City of Sugar Hill currently has no tennis courts in their inventory. However, the County provides 22 tennis courts in their county parks within and outside the city. Half of these are at Bogan Park which is about two (2) miles away. Gwinnett County has a robust tennis program that keeps their courts in high demand.

There are 39 local HOAs consisting of 1613 households in the city that provide tennis courts to their residents, which represents about 20% of the resident population of Sugar Hill.

Population projections for the City under the Sugar Hill Standards recommend five (5) courts for a city this size. Because 20% of the residents have access to their own courts, the NRPA standard was reduced to 4 courts., Since the City has no courts, and the County courts are outside the City's control, it is projected that the city should build at least four (4) courts of their own. The courts are best located in pairs or place all four (4) in a single park for the best use.

14. Sand Volleyball:

2 - Sand Volleyball Courts

There are currently no sand volleyball courts in the City. The County provides nine (9) sand courts in a local park, but they are not centrally located in the City. A city the size of Sugar Hill should have at least two (2) sand volleyball courts now and in 2034. The city should build two (2) sand courts together in a strategic location in a city park.

15. Disc Golf: 9 or 18-hole Disc Course

Sugar Hill is large enough to support a full 18-hole disc golf course. There is currently a 9-hole disc course inside the city limits at Ridge Lake Park. Based on the Gap Analysis and the fact that disc golf was one of the most requested items in the online survey, it is recommended that the current course be expanded to 18 holes or add a new 18-hole course somewhere in the city.

16. Ropes Course and Climbing Wall:

Privatized

There are no standards for a ropes course or climbing wall. It depends on the interest of the local population and the market demand. The proximity of Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) are significant attractions and catalysts for people who typically enjoy a ropes course or climbing wall. If the City has a suitable site for a facility, it should consider providing a space to a national provider who can establish a facility in the location. Due to liability, maintenance, and operations issues, it is recommended that an independent private provider be contracted to provide and manage the facility.

17. Model Airplane and Drone Field:

Joint use with another field.

With the growth and popularity of drone flying, the city should consider setting aside an open field or space where these activities can be enjoyed. The space can be designated for joint use with one of the open space areas or multipurpose fields other than build an exclusive facility. The City should establish safety procedures and guidelines for the designated flying area.

18. Dog Parks: 1 or 2 - Dog Park

With growing populations and communities like Sugar Hill, dog parks are expected to increase in demand. Sugar Hill currently has only a single dog park at Ridge Lake Park. The demographics and population projections for 2034 suggest that a 2nd dog park is needed. The City should provide at least one more dog park based on population standards and probably another one based on the projected growth.

19. Festival Field / Open Play:

1 - Large Open Space Field

Every small city should have a large open space for local festivals and community events. A large field can also serve as a drone flying location. Sugar Hill has a small green space near the amphitheater, but that is inadequate for large events and major festivals. The City should develop a large open space event field within the city limits and close to public services and utilities.

20. Picnic Pavilions and Open Areas:

Picnic Areas and Pavilions

There are no real standards for the number of picnic areas and pavilions a community needs. The proximity of Lake Lanier provides a variety of picnic areas and pavilions. However, Sugar Hill should consider additional picnic areas and pavilions based on the number and type of parks to be developed. Where there are greater natural resources like lakes, rivers and forested areas, the demand for public picnic areas increases. Sugar Hill has an abundance of such natural resources inside and within close proximity of the city core.

21. Playgrounds and Tot Lots:

4 - playgrounds and 3 tot lots

Based on the projected population and growth of Sugar Hill, the standard number of playgrounds to meet demand is three (3) tot lots and nine (9) 6-12 aged children's playgrounds. The County has provided eight (8) playgrounds within the City. Considering those as tot lots, the need was established for an additional three (3) tot lots and four (4) playgrounds within the City. These seven (7) facilities should be dispersed throughout the City as neighborhood parks, so they are close to where the children live.

22. ADA Destination Playground:

1 - ADA Playground

Every city should have at least one (1) ADA playground for the local population. Sugar Hill does not have an ADA playground nor does the County provide one nearby. Sugar Hill should add an ADA playground as part of a destination playground to be set in one of the new larger city parks to be developed.

23. Golf: none needed

Sugar Hill has a golf course that will meet the local demand well past 2034.

24. Recreation Center / Facilities:

Indoor track, Fitness & Program rooms

Additional facilities within a Recreation Center will be needed to meet the demands of the demographics in 2034. The Gap Analysis reveals the need for a fitness room, indoor track, and program rooms. The demographics of Sugar Hill also require three (3) indoor basketball courts by 2034 which translates into at least two (2) gymnasiums. Sugar Hill currently has one Gym at the E-Center; therefore, a second gymnasium is recommended. The second gym should combine with a Recreation Center to include a fitness room, indoor track, and program rooms, to round out the facility as a complete 2nd Recreation Center and Gymnasium.

25. Archery Range:

1 - Archery Range

There are no standards for archery ranges. It is based on the local demand and the proximity of natural areas that are suitable for development of an archery range. Sugar Hill has such natural areas due to the proximity of Lake Lanier and its attraction for outdoor activities. The City may consider including an archery range in a local nature park in the near future.

26. Boat ramp, canoe dock and fishing pier:

1 boat dock – 1 fishing pier

There are no standards for boat ramps and canoe docks. However, if there are usable natural bodies of water near a city, there is usually a high demand for such facilities. Sugar Hill is near Lake Lanier and the Chattahoochee River, which drive demand for fishing and boating activities. The City should consider developing a boat ramp and canoe dock for the City within one of the two (2) natural areas the City owns. Fishing piers can occur anywhere there is public access to the water's edge. In view of the proximity of the Chattahoochee River, it is recommended that the city consider a series of small fishing decks or piers on the creeks and tributaries in the natural areas leading to the river.

27. Soft Surface Natural Trails:

6 - miles of natural trails

There are no standards for soft surface nature trails. Such trail development is dependent on local demand by the population and the proximity of natural areas suitable for trails. The City has no natural trail systems even though the citizens expressed a high desire for such facilities in the Sugar Hill online survey. The city also owns significant acreage of natural areas near the NPS Chattahoochee National Recreation Area that is ideal for such natural trails. The City should consider adding six (6) miles of soft trails within the two (2) natural areas and connect them to the city Greenway Loop System that has been master planned to pass through these natural areas.

28. Multiuse Trails:

2 - miles of paved trails

There are no set standards for multiuse trails, although they are the number one requested amenity. The City is currently developing a paved Greenway Loop system over 14 miles long to connect the parks around the City. Greenway construction has completed 4.7 miles of the trail as an ongoing project. About 11 miles of the system still needs to be completed. The City has plans to build another 2 miles to close gaps in the current trails and connect to the residential areas. The online survey indicated a high demand for these trails and a very strong desire to complete the Loop.

29. Farmers Market: 1 - Market

Sugar Hill does not currently have a formal Farmers Market structure or permanent location. Adjacent cities like Flowery Branch, Suwanee, and Duluth have such Markets that have been successful. Because Sugar Hill is so close to outlying farm areas that grow produce and products, the City should consider developing a more formal Farmers Market structure or location to service the citizens of the City.

30. Senior Center: 1 - Senior Center

There is no Senior Center within the City and the County Senior Center is not in close proximity to the City. With a growing senior population, the City should consider a Senior Center inside the City in or near one of the current or future parks.

31. Community Garden:

2nd Community Garden

There are no standards for community gardens. The facility is determined by local interest, climate, and demand. Based on the use of the existing community garden and the public input survey, it is recommended that the City consider expanding the current garden or building a new one in a different location.

32. Existing Features - Downtown:

more parking and sidewalks

Sugar Hill has developed a vibrant downtown and town center that boasts an amphitheater, performing arts center, gymnasium, and a small Town Green. These facilities will meet the needs of the City for decades to come and were not considered in the Needs Assessment. However, the online survey, stakeholder interviews, questionaries and public comments indicate a serious need for more parking, traffic control and sidewalks downtown. Especially to accommodate the growing town center population. That demand itself is reflective of the success of the downtown development.

Specific Park Recommendations:

As part of the final recommendations, the planning team evaluated each existing park and located as many of the identified List of Needs in the existing parks as possible. A narrative of that effort is found in the Recommendations Section of this chapter of the report.

PROXIMITY MAP

Another factor in the quality of life and level of service a parks department delivers to a community is based on the proximity of the parks to the residential areas.

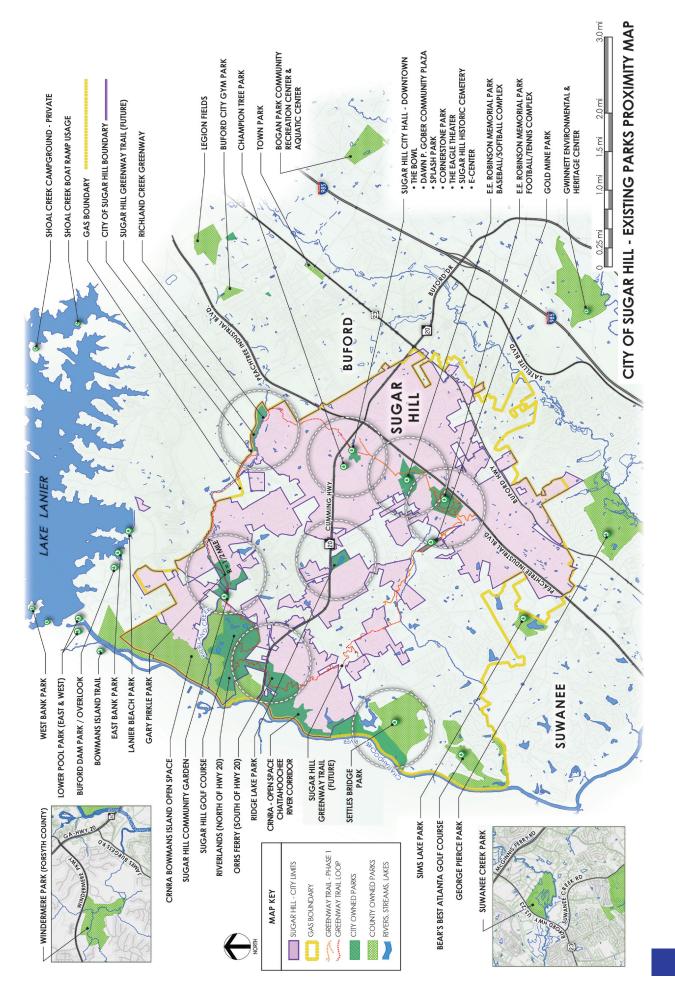
Under generally accepted standards, a park must be within one-half (1/2) mile of a residence or business to be considered accessible by foot and within three (3) miles to be accessible by bike. People who live within walking distance of a park are 47% more likely to walk the daily recommended distance and are significantly more likely to participate in programs in that park. Most people with neighborhood access are twice as healthy as people without access to facilities. Walkability is even more important to low income and disadvantaged populations because they often lack access to cars or public transit. Additionally, proximity of residential properties to parks and green space can significantly increase home and property values. In 2012, the National Home Builders Association reported that 1) the presence of parks and greenspace is a significant consideration for 65% of home buyers (with 50% indicating it is #1), and 2) is a major reason for a home purchase. The report also showed that home buyers are willing to pay more for property close to a park.

The public input survey identified that 19% of the citizens would prefer to bike and 28% would rather walk to the park. These statistics and public desire to complete the Greenway support the need to develop more tails and connection link with the Greenway.

Proximity is improved by the presence of other parks in and near the city that can be connected by the same local Sugar Hill Greenway. A list of the other parks and their facilities in found in Appendix 3C of this report.

The CPL planning team assembled a Proximity Map showing the locations of all the local, county, federal and other cities' parks, and facilities within or near the City of Sugar Hill. The maps identify a one half (1/2) mile radius around as walking distance. The city is 3 miles long and 2 miles wide so that every resident is within biking distance of a park, if adequate bike trails, lanes and paths are provided.

See the following page for the Proximity Map.



Evaluation of the Proximity Maps generated the following considerations that were used in writing the final recommendations for development of parks in Sugar Hill.

- 1. There is a lack of passive and active facilities on the west side of the city. Even though the city now owns two large tracts of land on the river, there are no amenities yet developed. That fact makes these two site prime for adding more amenities.
- 2. There are no city parks on the south side of Ga Highway #20.
- 3. The recommended recreation center #2 should not be located near the existing 3 gyms but to the west near the larger population centers.
- 4. A dog park is needed in the SW quadrant of the city.
- 5. The loop trail needs to extend toward the existing parks as a priority to improve bicycle access to the parks.
- 6. Neighborhood and Pocket parks need to be developed in the non-serviced areas of the City between the city center and the river.
- 7. All new parks should be connected to the proposed Sugar Hill Greenway.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General Park Recommendations:

In conjunction with the assembled data, the planning consultant proceeded to prepare general recommendations based on the citizens input and identified needs as determined by the Needs Assessment.

Top Citizen Requests:

A comparison of all the public input identified the top four (4) requests in the following order.

- 1. Passive Parks: Develop more passive parks that include nature trails, picnic areas, picnic pavilions, and greenspace preservation especially in underserved areas.
- 2. Sugar Hill Greenway: Finish, expand and connect the Sugar Hill Greenway to downtown and throughout the city, especially through underserved areas.
- 3. Gymnasium: Add a 2nd gymnasium with multiuse courts, pickleball, fitness room, meeting/classrooms, indoor track, flexible use community room, and support facilities on the west side of the city.
- 4. Neighborhood Parks: Locate smaller pocket parks along the greenway and in communities to include playgrounds, tot lots, shelters, and open play fields.

Parks and Facilities

Existing Parks Evaluation:

The CPL planning team evaluated each existing park and any undeveloped city owned property to assess the local site conditions. The site conditions were used to determine which facilities identified in the Needs Assessment could be effectively accommodated in the current parks or on the existing undeveloped park land. This last exercise culminated in the generation of the Final Recommendations of the study.

Final Parks and Facilities Recommendations:

The Final Recommendations process includes defining where each of the facilities included on the List of Needs can be placed in the existing parks. Additional land acquisition is recommended for any identified Needs that cannot be accommodated in existing parks.

Aquatic Center:

An Aquatic Center and pool were high on the citizens request list because the City does not currently have a pool. The greatest challenge for an outdoor pool is that it is both expensive to develop and to operate for only a portion of the year. Close review of the local HOA inventory revealed that 25 residential communities inside the city limits provide a swimming pool. The 2516 housing units within those 25 communities represent almost 7500 residents or almost a third of the city's population. That statistic along with the fact that Bogan Park Aquatic Center is within 3.5 miles of downtown Sugar Hill, led the team to recommend that the city postpone consideration of a pool until the next Recreation Master Plan cycle. See HOA inventory in Appendix 2D.

Recreation Center:

The CPL Planning Team recommends that the city develop a 2nd Recreation Center / Gym based on public input and the results of the Needs Assessment. The E-Center gym is downtown and there are also gyms at Bogan Park, Buford City Park, and George Pierce Park. The city needs a 2nd gym because it has no control over the programs at three (3) of these gyms. Even though three (3) of these gyms are controlled by others, it makes practical sense to place the requested new Recreation Center/Gym in a location not easily served by any of the four (4) existing gymnasiums. Based on the proximity of these four (4) gyms, it is best to locate the new gym on the west side of the City.

Candidate sites for such a facility include City-owned tracts within the Riverlands district, Gary Pirkle Park area, or other property in the west Sugar Hill area. The Recreation center needs to include the following amenities:

Recreation Center #2

- · Two (2) indoor multiuse courts (basketball, pickleball, volleyball)
- · Indoor overhead /walking running track
- · Fitness/weight Room
- Multipurpose / program room
- · Two (2) meeting / classrooms
- · A computer lab/teen space for after school students
- Enclosed / secure outdoor open space connected to the building
- · A Multipurpose rectangular field

Four (4) Outdoor Pickle Ball Courts

Two (2) Outdoor Basketball Courts - no lights

Four (4) Tennis Courts - lighted

A Large picnic pavilion

Two (2) Small picnic pavilions

An ADA destination playground and a 6-12 play structure

A School Bus drop-off station

Parking to accommodate the projected level of use

Library: Consider providing an internal space to accommodate a branch library.

Sugar Hill Greenway: Route the greenway through the recreation center site.

Trail head for the Greenway near the recreation center.

Riverlands: New Passive Park / Greenspace

Riverlands is a 90-acre recently acquired tract of land north of Ga. Highway 20 and adjacent to the National Parks Service (NPS) Bowmans Island Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA).

The front portion of the site has a 500 linear foot frontage along Ga Hwy 20 which is considered prime commercial frontage. The property is completely forested, adjacent to the Sugar Hill Golf Course and is crossed by a small 'no name' creek. The first 20 acres along Ga 20 have a 500' wide (frontage) x 1500' deep forming a narrow parcel of land between the 4-lane highway and a 50-acre natural area tract.

<u>Commercial Tract</u>: The first 500 feet off Ga. Highway 20 should be retained for commercial development by either the city or sold to a developer with certain zoning restrictions on what can be developed. The commercial zoning classification should encourage uses compatible with a Live, Work, Play, development that is compatible with the long-range parks program. Zoning includes apartments, restaurants, spas, small grocery stores, and boutique shops. Excludes motels, gas stations, repair shops, maintenance companies, fast food restaurants, warehouses, etc.

<u>Nature Passive Park</u>: The remaining 70 acres of forested land is to be developed as a natural passive park with some active amenities as follows:

- · Preserve most of the land as natural and undisturbed.
- · Complete the Sugar Hill Greenway as it passes through the property.
- · Connect spur trails to the NPS Orr's Ferry trails and Sugar Hill Golf Course.
- · A Mountain Bike course (can be built by independent companies)
- · Two (2) miles of natural trails that can also serve as a Cross Country track
- · Multiple picnic areas and shelters both large and small
- · Two (2) Sand volleyball courts near the largest pavilion close to the creek
- · Two (2) tot lots in in the picnic area
- · A large destination playground with a forest adventure theme
- · Restrooms as needed throughout the park
- · Rock weirs in the creek to create pools and waterfalls
- · A natural trail along the creek connecting to Fishing decks and stations
- Possible Additions:
 At a later date
- Archery Range based on demand and interest
- · Ropes Course and Climbing wall leased to a private provider
- · More intense and advanced mountain bike courses

Orrs Ferry: New Passive Park / Outdoor Education

The City has recently acquired a 72-acre tract of land south of Ga. Highway 20 and adjacent to the National Parks Service (NPS) Bowmans Island Unit of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA). Because the land is heavily forested and connected to protected lands of the CRNRA, the planning team recommends that the property be minimally developed exclusively as a passive park with the following recommended facilities and amenities:

- · Preserve most of the site as undeveloped greenspace.
- · Set a park entrance gate off Ga. Hwy 20.
- · Route the Sugar Hill Greenway through the property and connect to internal trails.
- Establish trailhead at entrance for Greenway with a restroom, parking, and shelter.
- · Connect entrance to the NPS parking lot with a ¼ mile multiuse trail along Hwy 20.
- · Renovate existing house into a Community Center, park office and event lawn.
- · Establish a botanical garden around the house to be managed by the Garden Clubs.
- · One-way loop road around the main hilltop with parking dispersed on the roadside
- · Parking scattered beside the road and between the trees at various amenity sites
- · Picnic pavilions in singles and groups of large and small shelters along the road
- · Tot lots near the largest shelters and in the cluster locations
- · Two (2) restrooms in proximity to picnic areas and connecting to the trail system
- · Nature trails with educational signage and exhibits around the site
- · Small natural outdoor classroom for 30 to 50 people on the nature walk
- · A 1.5-mile natural walking trail weaved through the site and connected to NPS trails
- · A woodland trail on Crayfish Creek with parking spots and fishing docks/stations
- · Small rock dams and weirs in Crayfish Creek to create small pools and waterfalls
- · Spur trails from Twin Creek and Wild Timber communities into the park trails

Ridge Lake Park:

Ridge Lake Park is a city park that has recently been upgraded with a restroom, parking lot, picnic shelter, picnic area, natural trails, dog park and a fishing dock on the three (3) acre pond. There are also two (2) natural open spaces on each side of the pond. The open fields along with the space over the pond can be designated as drone or model plan flying areas. The pond can also be designated as a training site for water activities such as canoeing, kayaking, paddleboarding, rowing, etc. Such a designated use requires appropriate storage, boat dock, teaching shelter, parking and a first aid station. Additional natural trails are recommended to form a loop around the outside edge of the park and originate at the parking lot restroom as a trail head. Develop a connection trail to the Sugar Hill Greenway.

Sugar Hill Greenway:

The Sugar Hill Greenway is a multiuse trail system planned as a loop greenway around the City of Sugar Hill. To date, only 5.18 miles of the 16.5-mile trail has been completed. It has proven to be a very popular amenity and received very good reviews in the online public survey. One of the single most requested items in the survey, comments, and stakeholder interviews was to complete the Sugar Hill Greenway and connect it to downtown.

The Gap Analysis identified a need for another 14 miles of multiuse trails. By completing the proposed additional 11.5 miles of the Sugar Hill Greenway by 2034, the city will reach the identified needs of the community.

A completed Greenway Loop will work like a wagon wheel, where downtown and a number of parks act as nodes along the outer tire, surrounding the wheel hub that is centered on Ridge Lake Park. Connecting trails and sidewalks radiating out from the hub like spokes in the wagon wheel is a great concept to connect neighborhoods and users to the greenway network. This configuration provides the City with a complete network of trails to tie the entire community together.

<u>Downtown Pedestrian Study</u>:

There were also significant comments on the public input survey about adding sidewalks to the downtown area and connecting them to the Greenway. The CPL Planning Team recommends that the city commission a sidewalk / pedestrian study for the downtown area to accommodate better and safer connectivity for the people living downtown and to access the Greenway without using cars and generating traffic.

Gold Mine Park:

Gold Mine Park is a new park that has been recently completed as a trail head for the Sugar Hill Greenway. No recommendations are made for this park.

Gary Pirkle Park:

This Park is a very popular park accommodating a variety of athletic sports on multiple fields. Because of high use, the park needs another restroom on the east side of the park to accommodate the three (3) turf fields south of Richland Creek. There are paved loop trails around each of the two (2) groups of fields with a linking trail crossing Richland Creek and connecting to the tails around the south side soccer fields. There is a 2nd bridge crossing the creek to the south connecting to the parking lot across Austin Garner Road.

A third pedestrian bridge is needed to cross Richland Creek between the restroom and the NE parking lot. This link will reduce some of the pedestrian congestion on the trails and in the parking lot during games. It will also create a direct link to the trail that crosses from the NE parking through the woods to the south fields making a better loop trail.

Connecting spur trails to Barker Station Walk NE and Pierless Avenue NE will allow adjacent residents to walk to the park rather than drive. Both communities have unbuildable vacant lots that can serve as neighborhood access to the park.

Consider placing a dog park in the woodland area between the NE parking lot and the southside fields. This accommodates the patrons who bring dogs to the park during games.

An important consideration in planning future improvements to the park should keep in mind that much of the park is in a protected, highly regulated floodplain as well as in a dam breach zone below Lake Lanier's Saddle Dike 3. Careful planning and rigorous permitting is required in order to accomplish these improvements. In addition, safety measures should be considered whenever there are additional improvements that attract more people and put them potentially in this high hazard area. Risk management measures should be evaluated before any additional facilities are constructed at the park.

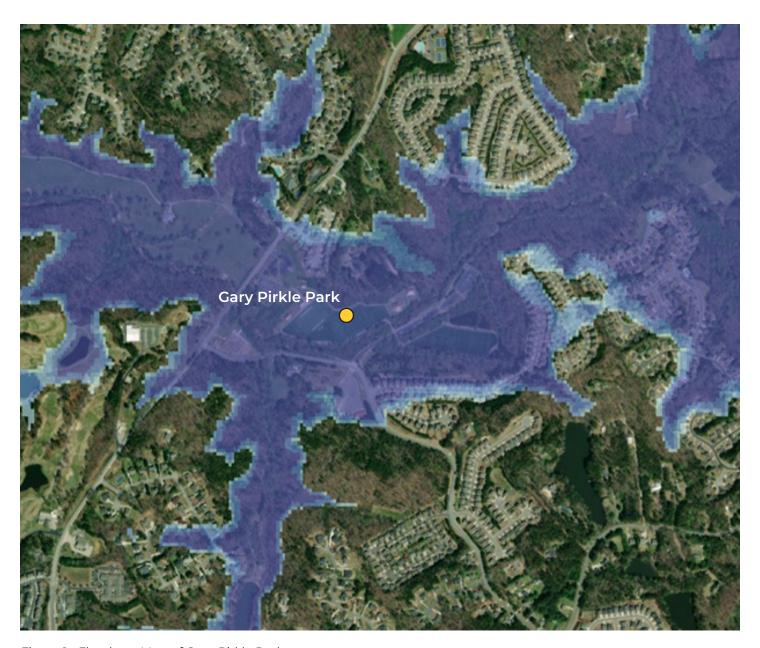


Figure 1 - Floodway Map of Gary Pirkle Park

Dog Park:

The Needs Assessment and public input indicated a strong demand for additional dog parks. The City has a new one currently being developed at Ridge Lake Park. The Needs Assessment identifies a need for at least one (1) more for a community the size of Sugar Hill and potentially another one by 2034. The County provides dog parks at Settles Bridge and two (2) others nearby, Windemere (Forsyth) and Rock Springs Parks. Since dog parks are typically destination amenities, the dog parks provided by other entities can service some of the local demand.

The CPL planning team has recommended a dog park at Gary Pirkle Park. Because of the attached residential development, the team has recommended another dog park be considered somewhere near and between E.E. Robinson Parks and just off the Greenway, effectively meeting the local needs and effectively spacing the dog parks around the City.

Athletic Recreational Fields:

The Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment identified the following athletic fields as needs for the community. These facilities have not been assigned a specific location because they will not fit onto any of the current parks. Athletic fields need gentle sloping land that is conducive to development of fields, but flat land is expensive, scarce, and not currently available. Flood plain is an option for rectangle fields that do not require extensive fencing.

Two (2) Basketball courts outside	.5 acres
A Miracle Field & Shelter	1.5 acres
Two (2) Multipurpose Rectangle fields	5.0 acres
A Football Field	2.5 acres
Two (2) Adult Soccer	4.5 acres
Two (2) Youth Soccer	4.0 acres
Total Field area Needed	18.0 acres

The City will have to consider buying more land to accommodate these facilities. The fields themselves need a total of 20 acres. The City needs to find at least a 30+ acre site to accommodate the above listed fields, parking, roads, detention, and auxiliary amenities required for the fields.

South Richard Creek Greenspace:

The 31-acre property lies between Richand Creek on the south and South Richland Creek Drive on the north. The drive dead ends at the Buford land fill. A large sanitary sewer line runs along the south edge of S. Richland Creek Drive that is cleared and grassed about 40' wide. The Sugar Hill Greenway is planned to run through this property. A clear access path runs through the site from S Richland Creek Rd to the residential area south of the property. The cleared route can be used to develop a connecting trail to the Greenway from the residential development. Most of the property is low and wet, so it is not conducive to development. There is very little that this property can support in the form of recreational amenities, other than trails and preserved Green Space.

Other Recommendations

The following additional items were identified in the gap analysis but did not rank very high in the public input responses. They are as follows:

Farmer's Market:

Permanent location and facility to hold a regular Farmers Market and other events.

Senior Center:

Separate facility for the seniors which are becoming a growing demographic in the city. The recommended new recreation center can accommodate some of these needs as well as the renovated house on Orr's Ferry. A dedicated Senior Center may need to wait until the next study or until there is enough projected demand to support such a facility.

Community Garden:

The one (1) community garden at Gary Pirkle Park does not seem to meet all the demand for a city the size of Sugar Hill and certainly not by the year 2034. The city may consider expanding the current Community Garden to gain a few more plots or consider a smaller garden at Ridge Lake Park in one of the open fields.

Greenspace

Greenspace is an essential component of modern parks and recreation departments. The parks and recreation department is typically the largest public land management steward in a community, as they manage parks, greenspace and natural areas as well. Adequate resources to maintain these properties is critical. Although there are no specific national standards for natural resource management, NRPA benchmarks recommend that a parks and recreation department that manages Greenspace should have:

- · Policies related to land acquisition, dedication/donation and development
- · System-wide and site-based natural resource management plan
- · Protective, preventative, and corrective maintenance programs
- · Inventory and asset management systems to account for the land

National studies have found that most residents will use passive parks, open space, greenspace, and trails. In contrast, specialized facilities such as tennis centers, golf courses, or athletic fields are generally used by less than 10% of a community.

Value of Greenspace

Research has proven that, over the long term, establishing accessible natural parks and greenspace increases home values and associated tax revenues. Property tax increases are unpopular but remain a viable tool for needed funds. In the short term, additional revenue may take the form of increased millage rates. When property tax revenue, before greenspace development, * is compared to post park creation, the increased revenue generally offsets significant operating expenses.

The community need for greenspace is even more critical when "nature benefits" are considered:

- Research found that a 20-minute walk on a trail resulted in improved concentration among youth diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).⁵
- National studies have found that contact with nature not only improves overall physical health, but also helps people recover faster from injuries or illness.
- Further, contact with nature also improves psychological health by decreasing stress, improving coping skills, and promoting social interaction.



Taylor, Andrea Fabor et al, Could Exposure to Everyday Green Spaces Help Treat ADHS? Evidence from Children's Play Setting, Applied Psychology Health and Well-Being (2011)

Greenspace also plays a key role in maintaining a community's biodiversity and ecological balance. Locally, trees and forests mitigate the heat build-up that occurs in suburban environments; the difference between forested land and downtown streets may be +10 degrees during the hottest months. Greenways and natural areas within parks also:

- · Provide critical habitat and wildlife corridors essential for animal and plant diversity.
- Provide rainwater filtration, reduce flooding, provide floodwater storage, and retain critical moisture needed in dry summer months.
- Play a key role in maintaining or improving water quality by filtering runoff before it enters a stream.
- · A 2017 NRPA 6 study found that:
 - 82% of Americans indicate it is important for local government to set aside land for the sole purpose of preserving natural landscapes.
 - 66% of people indicate that preserving the natural environment is very or extremely important.
 - These two (2) statistics are validated in the Sugar Hill public input survey question #14 with 68% of Sugar Hill citizens wanting to preserve greenspace.

Greenspace Acquisition

SHPRD parks and natural areas were compared to national benchmarks for communities the size of Sugar Hill. See Needs Assessment Narrative 1. Greenspace Chapter 4.

- Based on the Georgia Community Greenspace Program the city needs to preserve 20% of the land within the city limits to meet minimum standards.
- The city is 10.2 square miles of land and .40 square miles of water which translates to 1307 acres of greenspace needed within the city.
- The city, county, and federal park lands within the city contain 1277.5 acres of dedicated greenspace, over half of which is National Park Service land.
- Using those figures, the city has a deficit of only 30 acres. However, the city should proceed to acquire 230 acres as defined in the Final Recommendations in Chapter 4 of this report. The land is needed to compensate for the land lost to developing the new parks and greenway.

Long Term Greenspace Preservation

6

The 10.6 square miles of the city is intermingled with unincorporated areas of Gwinnet County. Many of the people living in these areas are part of the Sugar Hill gas service area who consider themselves residents of Sugar Hill. Assuming that one day the city may annex most of the Gas Service Area into the city makes the municipality of approximately 20 square miles or 12,880 acres. In that scenario, the number of acres needed for greenspace will almost double the current city. Projected greenspace acreage needed if the city proceeds to annex the gas service area is as follows:

- 279.7 acres of city owned greenspace (refer to page 32 for needs assessment of green space).
- 1,116 acres of Federal and county owned greenspace in the city.
- · 2,560 acres needed as 20% of the city. (1 sq mile = 640 acres)
- By 2034, SHPLSD may have a deficit of approximately **1,450** acres of Greenspace

The following are suggestions for consideration as part of a comprehensive Greenspace Program. This information has been provided by the SHPRD master planning team in response to the PRG Master Plan. While development of a Greenspace Program is beyond the scope of the SHLSD master plan, the master plan team included this information with the hopes it will prove helpful to the city's greenspace efforts.

Determining what properties to acquire

Establish preferred acquisition criteria to include:

- · Connectivity between protected properties or parks.
- Protection of cultural sites, heritage corridors, or archeological and historic resources.
- · Protection of high quality agricultural and forestry lands.
- · Protection of wildlife corridors and native habitats.
- · Opportunities to accommodate proposed Parks and Recreational programs and facilities.
- · Reduction of erosion through protection of steep slopes, erodible soils, and stream banks.
- · Scenic protection and connection to the existing USACE and NPS lands.
- · Water quality protection for wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, and riparian buffers.
- · Protection of threatened forests within suburban areas.

Finding High Quality Properties

Ultimately, walking on a piece of property is the only true way to establish its greenspace value. However, there are tools that include mapping software (such as ArcGIS from ESRI) that can help identify potential locations/sites. Items that can be mapped and reviewed include:

- Overstory/cover types and the presence of wildlife habitats. Infrared imagery is helpful as well. Imagery is available via: http://gio.ga.gov/high-resolution-statewide-imagery-now-available-to-all-georgia-government-employees/
- · Buffers and environmentally sensitive areas (ex: floodplains, wetlands, swamps, etc.)
- Lidar maps (Digital Elevation) provides information on land formations and past/current land uses.
- Steep slopes and soil types
- "Legacy Forest" forest that have been present for 80-100+ years. Historic Imagery is available through:
 - United States Department of Agriculture Farm Services Agency https://www.fsa. usda.gov/programs-and-services/aerial-photography/imagery-products/index
 - University of Georgia Digital Library System https://dlg.usg.edu/
 records?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=hall+county+aerial+photography&search_field=all_fields&collection_record_id=dlg_gaph
- Historic or culturally important resources; information available through local historic groups and the University of Georgia | College of Environment + Design (https://ced.uga.edu/pso/findit/)
- · Potential for the presence of rare, unusual, threatened, or endangered species

Establishing Permanent Protection

Permanent protection status is best placed on acquired properties through two main tools:

- Restrictive Covenants (Deed Restrictions) imposed when land is preserved or purchased through by the city (as part of their Greenspace Program), by a landowner, or through a granting agency or donor.
- Conservation Easements held by a third party such as an accredited land trust; sources
 of information include the National Conservation Easement Database (https://www.conservationeasement.us/)

Funding Sources

Examples include:

- · Private and local Donations
- Reduced Price or Bargain Sales
- · Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- · Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GaDNR)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Georgia Land Conservation Program (GLCP-GEFA)
- National Parks Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- Forest Legacy Program (FLP-GFC)
- · Natural Resource Conservation Service Agricultural Easement Program (NRCS ACEP)
- Community Forest Program (USFS-CFP)
- · Foundation grants and private gifts

Greenspace Recommendation

- Consider acquiring an additional 230 acres of Greenspace by 2030 (See page 32 of this report for a list of the needed 230 acres).
- · Develop evaluation criteria for selection of greenspace for purchase by the city.
- Utilizing the SPLOST program, create a dedicated Greenspace Acquisition Fund; provide flexibility to allow the program to utilize donations, gifts, grants, bargain sales, etc. to augment SPLOST funds; Consider deed-restricting properties upon acquisition to ensure permanent protected status.
- · Establish dedicated SHPLSD staff positions to oversee.
 - · Acquisition, planning and cross- department coordination of land uses.
- Modify development codes to encourage preservation of greenspace within new developments by including neighborhood and mini parks, and greenspace to be maintained by Homeowner Associations.
- Modify local transportation standards and work with Georgia DOT to set standards to construct underpasses to accommodate greenways and multiuse paths when building or replacing a bridge or culvert.

Green Infrastructure, Stewardship and Land Management

- · Adopt land management strategies, staffing, and funding to ensure that acquiring greenspace continues to be a major goal of the city.
- Consider adopting stream, river, lake, and greenway standards with a target goal of creating a minimum of a 100-foot conservation buffer from the bank of all perennial streams, lakes or ponds or sensitive natural areas.
- Consider promoting a standard on both public and private lands, with incentives to private landowners to maintain natural areas within the 100-foot buffer by potentially providing tax reduction incentives to homeowners.
- Leverage greenspace, conservation easements, zoning, and buffers as instruments to provide greenspace acquisition for protection of CRNRA and its tributaries.
- · Adopt a city-wide tree canopy coverage standard, consider a target of 50-60%.
- · Allocate adequate funding to SHPLSD for the staff to manage greenspace properties.

Staffing Recommendations

The current staff that comprise the Parks and Recreation Department have managed to operate and maintain the department to date without significant evidence of delayed maintenance or limited operations. Public perception is positive related to the appearance and condition of the parks and facilities. The current staffing totals are:

Parks and Recreation Staffing (17 - including Director)

· 1 - Director

Recreation (E Center, programming, events) - 8 Total Staff

- · 1 Manager
- · 2 Full-Time
- 5 Part-Time

Parks (Gary Pirkle Park, Downtown Campus, Water Features, Gold Mine Park, Greenway)

- · 2 Park Managers
- · 6 Full-Time

Golf Course Staffing - 31 Total Staff

- 1 Golf Operations Pro/Manager
- 1 Full-Time Golf Operations
- · 20 Part-Time
- · 1 Golf Maintenance Superintendent
- · 7 Full-Time Maintenance
- · 1 Part-Time Maintenance

However, with the addition of new parks and facilities, additional staff will be needed to continue to meet demand. The current staff is adequate for current offerings but are at max capacity to take on any new assignments. Maintenance and operations positions will be needed as the master plan is implemented. With the recent additions of Gold Mine Park, Ridge Lake Park, and the Greenway, a minimum of 4 new positions are needed to meet demand and prepare for the implementation of the master plan. These recommended positions are as follows:

Assistant Director (Full-time) – Assists the Director in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and services; Serves in the Director's absence; Supervises and manages staff responsible for park maintenance, recreation programs, and facility operations; develops and monitors budgets; collaborates with other City departments, develops and implements public engagement opportunities; ensures compliance with regulations and policies pertaining to parks and recreation, evaluates and responds to customer feedback and complaints to ensure high-quality services; trains and develops staff to enhance their skills and promote professional growth, oversees cross-training of staff; represents the department at various community meetings.

Recreation Program Coordinator (Full-time) – Performs the planning, implementation, coordination, and supervision of recreation programs, events, and activities; recruits, coordinates, and supervises the activities of regular, temporary, and volunteer staff; serves as a liaison for privatized service providers; prepares program budgets and monitors expenditures; administers the rental, scheduling, and use of recreation facilities; performs related work as required.

Parks Maintenance (Full-time) – Maintaining parks and facilities within the department including mowing, fertilizing, aerating, watering and weeding; planting and caring for trees, shrubs and flowers using a variety of equipment; inspects and repairs playground equipment, picnic tables, benches, and other park amenities; ensures spaces are ready for use; keeps trails and paths safe, clear, and in good condition; collects trash and other debris from parks and facilities.

Parks Maintenance Technician (Part-time) – Assists with the maintenance and upkeep of grounds and facilities on a part-time or seasonal basis

Additional positions should be considered relative to perceived safety concerns along the Greenway, should those issues arise.

Operations Recommendations

The Sugar Hill Parks and Recreation Department contracts the majority of program offerings which is advantageous for conserving funds. Seven (7) classes/programs are currently offered by an independent program provider. Three (3) subcontractors currently provide team sports for Sugar Hill – 19 Sports, All-In Futbol Club, and Lanier Athletic Association. This approach does not work in every City, so as long as it continues to serve the needs of Sugar Hill, the recommendation would be to continue but reevaluate the contracts annually so that SHPRD is receiving the maximum benefit.

Operating Budget (expenses and revenue)

2023 Recreation Expenses	\$ 1,810,350
2023 Recreation Revenues	\$ 303,500
2023 Golf Course Expenses	\$ 1,438,775
2023 Golf Course Revenues	\$ 1,438,775

The national average for cost recovery for parks and recreation departments is approximately 25%. The recommendation would be for Sugar Hill to adopt practices and guidelines to meet this average at minimum. The golf course breaks even and is considered "revenue neutral", which is highly unusual for a public course operated by parks and recreation. That is quite an accomplishment. However, the recreation revenue only makes up 16.67% of the recreation expenditures. A thorough analysis of direct costs (directly related to a product or service) and indirect costs (not related to a product or service, fixed) should be conducted to determine modifications that could be made to generate more revenue or lower expenditures going forward.

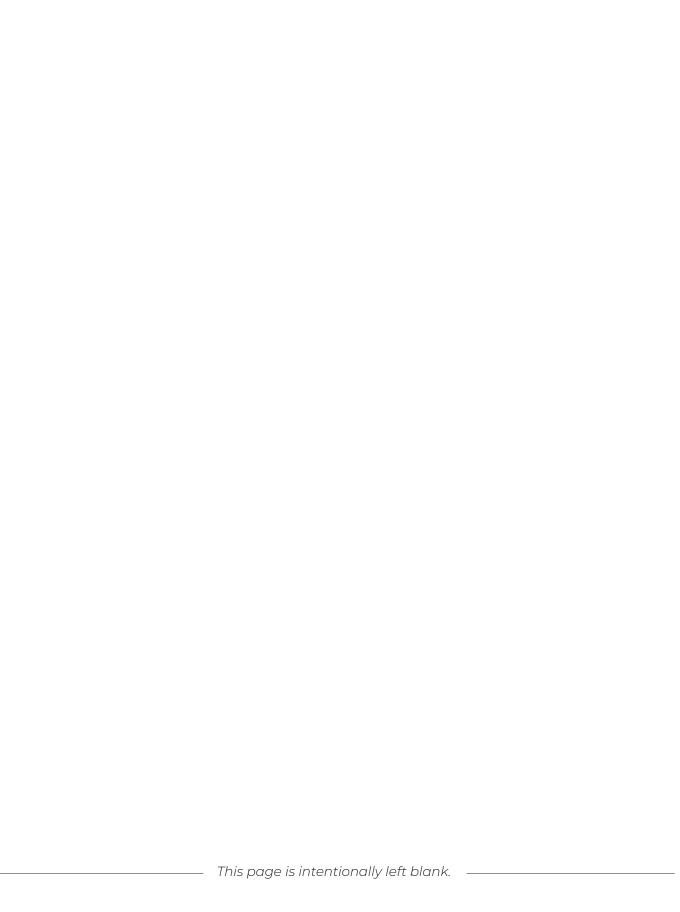
Suggestions would include reviewing contracts, raising user and activity fees, adding additional rental opportunities and programs.

As part of the cost recovery strategy, it is also recommended that a review of each program be conducted. Determinations should be made for which programs are successful and which are underperforming. A minimum number of participants should be defined for each program as "revenue neutral" or revenue positive. If the minimum number of participants isn't met for a program to align with cost recovery goals, then the program should be reevaluated, repurposed, or removed.

With regards to capital funding, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) is the City's primary source for capital improvements. This designated sales tax is voted on by Gwinnett County voters every 4-5 years. The tax revenue is then allocated to each City based on population so that each receives a percentage of the SPLOST revenue. This mechanism is ideal for ensuring that capital funds are readily available for future projects and improvements. However, due consideration should be given for associated operations and maintenance costs for each SPLOST project. Having the capital funds for new parks, amenities, and facilities, but not adequate operations and maintenance funds is a major concern and should be reviewed along with each list of SPLOST allocation requests for parks and recreation.

Cost Estimates and Phasing

The Final Recommendations include the number, type, and potential location of parks, greenspace, and facilities, along with projected cost estimates. Utilizing the information provided through the master planning process and cost estimates, elected officials and the community have the planning tools that will help inform and guide what should be built, when it should be built, how to best fund it, how to phase over time, and pay for the facilities needed to meet the growing community's need through 2034.



APPENDIX 1 - SURVEY

A. Stakeholders:

The following is a list of stakeholders and organizations interviewed by the Master Planning team during process for development of the Sugar Hill Recreation Master Plan.

Sugar Hill Mayor and City Council

Brandon Hembree Mayor
Mason Roszel Post 1
Marc Cohen Post 2
Jenn Thatcher Post 3
Alvin Hicks Post 4
Taylor Anderson Post 5

Sugar Hill City Administration and Parks

Paul Radford City Manager

Troy Besseche, Assistant City Manager

Andy McQuagge, Director of Parks and Recreation Logan Witter, Sugar Hill Planning Department

McKay Neidert Downtown Coordinator Kathryn Baskin Historic Preservation

Matt Parent City Staff
Matt Philips City Staff

Sugar Hill Downtown Development Authority

Jack Wolf

Alan Jorgensen

Organizations in Sugar Hill

Steve Graessle Pres. Community Garden

Mark Mackain All in Futbol Club Julie Adams Fitness Coach

Todd Cass SORBA

Matt Josey CRNRA planner

Sugar Hill Resident Citizens

Varessa Butts

Nichole Klein

Denise Hoelt

Georgia Hall

Craig Magram

Lesley Reilly

Appendix 1 - A **57**

B. Stakeholders Questionnaire:

The City of Sugar Hill contracted with CPL to initiate a master planning process designed to help continue providing outstanding recreational services to the community. Your insights, thoughts, and experience are a critical component of this effort. Please take a few minutes to share your expertise by answering the questions below.

Name: _	Organization:
1.	Explain your organization and interest in the project.
2.	What do you think the city needs in their Recreation program?
3.	What do you <u>not</u> want to see in the Cities Recreation program?
4.	What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Sugar Hill?
5.	How do you want people outside the city to describe/perceive Sugar Hill?
6.	How do you use Sugar Hill Parks?
7.	What are one or two things you cannot experience in Sugar Hill Park that you wish you could?
8.	What is your favorite non-Sugar Hill Park and why (local, national, or international)?
9.	Are there any other issues you would like to discuss?
	Thank You – Your participation is valued and appreciated.

C. Public Input Survey

The City of Sugar Hill is where communities come together in perfect harmony to gather for shared experiences and to spend time with family, friends, and neighbors. Thank you for showing interest in taking this survey. The City of Sugar Hill's planning and parks staff is conducting research on regional parks, greenspace as well as recreational facilities and programs to develop recommendations for future improvements to Sugar Hill's existing parks and development of new recreational programs.

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete a survey that should take approximately 15-20 minutes. All information submitted in this survey is confidential and will be used only for research purposes. For privacy concerns, we have included the options to opt out of certain demographic questions.

Yes, I acknowledge the statement above and agree to participate in this survey.

No, I do not agree to participate in this study.

The parks and recreation facilities discussed in this survey are listed below. Some belong to the City of Sugar Hill and others to Gwinnett County but are within the Sugar Hill city limits.

Gary Pirkle Park:

Three (3) synthetic turf fields, two (2) artificial turf fields, a large, covered playground, 1.7 miles of paved walking trails, picnic pavilions, restroom, concession, and a community garden with a barn.

Sugar Hill Golf Club:

The golf club is open to the public, featuring a full-service pro shop, driving range and practice green, full-service bar and grill, banquet and conference facility, free Wi-Fi, and an 18-hole course.

Downtown Splash Park:

The Splash Park is a water foundation/splash pad tucked behind City Hall and borders a large outdoor open space just above The Bowl with tables, umbrellas, and plenty of turf to spread out a picnic blanket.

E.E. Robinson North:

Gwinnett County owned baseball and softball fields, pickleball courts, sand volleyball courts, a covered playground and a community garden with storage buildings.

E.E. Robinson South:

Gwinnett County owned football/multi-purpose field with track, tennis court, playground, open play lawn, and a splash pad with shade structures.

E Center:

The E Center is a gymnasium with a basketball court, indoor six-layered padded walking and running track, treadmills, bikes, ellipticals, row machines, free weights, and a multi-use strength gym. It's also known for its variety of classes tailored to every age, workout preference, and fitness level. It also includes classrooms, meeting space and martial arts/dance training rooms.

Sugar Hill Greenway:

The Sugar Hill Greenway is a 16.5-mile loop trail that is master planned to complete a perimeter trail system around the city. It currently has 2.7 miles of completed paved trails. The trails are designed for shared use by pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, joggers, and other non-motorized users. The long-range goal of the city is to complete the loop.

Incentive

The City of Sugar Hill invites you to take the survey. If you would like to enter a Raffle, upon completion of the survey, please enter your email address in the space provided. Your email address will be used only to notify you if you are selected as a winner.

For the duration of the survey, every Friday we will randomly select one winner! The winner will receive a special Sugar Hill gift basket valued at \$150. This survey will allow us to collect valuable information about the city's Parks & Recreation facilities and initiatives from Sugar Hill residents and visitors.

D. Sugar Hill Parks & Recreation Online Public Input Survey Questions

The survey was posted on the city website and Facebook page. Email notifications and public meetings were used to promote the survey to the local population.

Thank you for your participation. This section will solicit information about your overall usage of the City of Sugar Hill Parks and Recreational facilities and your use of other regional Parks & Recreation facilities within the confines of the Sugar Hill city limits.

Demographic Questions:

- A. Which zip code do you live in?
 - b. 30024
 - c. 30518
 - d. Other
- B. What is your age?
- C. What is your ethnicity/race?
 - a. White/Caucasian
 - b. African or African American
 - c. Hispanic/Latino or Latino-American
 - d. Asian or Asian-American
 - e. Native American
 - f. Pacific Islander
 - g. Other (please specify)
- D. What is your gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. I prefer not to answer
- E. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?
- F. What is your connection to the City of Sugar Hill?
 - a. Sugar Hill Resident
 - b. Sugar Hill Business Owner
 - c. Work in Sugar Hill
 - d. Visitor
 - e. Other (please specify)

If you would like to be considered for the Raffle, please enter your email address.

1. On average, how often do you or your household visit the following parks?

PARK	Daily	Few a Week	Once a Week	Few a Month	Once a Month	Few a Year	Once a Year	Never
Downtown Splash Pad								
Dawn P Gober Plaza								
Cornerstone Park								
Champion Tree Park								
Sugar Hill Cemetery								
Sugar Hill Greenway								
Sugar Hill Golf Club								
EE Robinson Park N.								
EE Robinson Park S.								
Settles Bridge Park								
Gary Pirkle Park								
George Pierce Park								
Haw Creek Park								
Buford Dam Park								
Lanier Park (USACE)								
Lower Pool W (USACE)								
Lower Pool E (USACE)								
West Bank Overlook								
West Bank Park								
Bowmans Isl. Trails								

2. Please tell us how do you or your household use the following parks. (%)

PARK:	Athletics	Exercising	Socializing	Relaxing	Special Events	Other
Downtown Splash Pad						
Dawn P Gober Plaza						
Cornerstone Park						
Champion Tree Park						
Sugar Hill Cemetery						
Sugar Hill Greenway						
Sugar Hill Golf Club						
EE Robinson Park No.						
EE Robinson Park So.						
Settles Bridge Park						
Gary Pirkle Park						
George Pierce Park						
Haw Creek Park						
Buford Dam Park						
Lanier Park (USACE)						

Lower Pool W (USACE)					
Lower Pool E (USACE)					
West Bank Overlook					
West Bank Park					
Bowmans Isl. Trails					
	,				
Which of the following, if any,	prevents you or yo	our househol	d from usi	ng parks & re	ecreational
acilities in Sugar Hill?			d from usi	ng parks & re	ecreational
	om my home/reside	ence.	d from usi	ng parks & re	ecreational
acilities in Sugar Hill? a. Facilities are too far fro	om my home/reside are not currently av	ence. vailable	d from usi	ng parks & re	ecreational
a. Facilities are too far fro b. Facilities or programs	om my home/reside are not currently av	ence. vailable	d from usi	ng parks & re	ecreational

	a. Tacilities are too lar morning nor	
	b. Facilities or programs are not cu	
	c. No public transportation availabl	ole to or from parks
	d. Fees are too high.	
	e. Do not feel safe in the parks.	
	f. Not enough parking.	
	g. Other.	
4.	In which program have you or your house	usehold participated in a Sugar Hill Park or recreational
••	facility? Select all that apply.	
	a. Open Gym at the E-Center.	
	b. I-9 Sports	
	c. Fitness	
	d. All-In Futbol	
	e. Golf	
	f. Other	
	α. Dance	
	h. Pickleball	
	i. 35+ Basketball League	
	j. Martial Arts	
_	_	
5.	How do you usually travel to and from S	Sugar Hill's parks and recreational facilities?
	a. Car	
	b. Bicycle	
	c. Walk/Run	
	d. Rideshare	
	e. Other	
6.	From the list, please select the activities	s in which you or your household are most likely to participat
•	in or attend even if it is not currently offer	
	a. Arts/Crafts/Ceramics	(4)
	b. Aerobics/Fitness	
	c. Biking	
	d. Bingo and Group Games	
	e. Boating	
	f. Canoe/Kayaking	
	I. Carloe / Nayakiriy	
	g. Camp Sites	

h. Community Center/Multi-Purpose

i. Dance/Balletj. Dog Park

	k. Fishing	
	1. Four Square	
	m. Gardening	
	n. Horseback Riding	
	o. Horseshoes	
	p. Jogging/Running	
	g. Nature Center	
	r. Open Event Fields	
	s. Picnic Shelters	
	t. Playgrounds	
	u. Swimming Pool	
	v. Splash Pad	
	w. Summer Camps	
	x. Theater / Performance	
	y. Walking Trails / Hiking	
	z. Zumba/Other Indoor Activity	
	aa. Other (please specify)	
	aa. Other (piedse speeliy)	
7.	Select which amenities you would like to se	ee or add more in existing parks?
	a. Bathrooms	
	b. Concessions	
	c. Athletic Fields	
	d. Dog Park	
	e. Parking	
	f. Playground	
	g. Multi-Use Courts	
	h. Pool	
	i. Splash Pad	
	j. Picnic Pavilion	
	k. Trail/Paths	
	 Shade and Trees 	
	m. Other (please specify)	
8.	From the following list, select the active spolikely to participate in or attend. You may s	orts, activities, or facilities you or your household are most select up to five (5).
	a. Badminton	
	b. Baseball/Softball Fields	
	c. Basketball Courts	
	d. Boxing Facility	
	e. Cheerleading	
	f. Disc Golf	
	g. Football Field	
	h. Golf	
	i. Gymnastics	
	j. Lacrosse Field	
	k. Olympic Covered Pool	
	1. Skate Park	
	m. Soccer Fields	

	o. Swim Team p. Tennis Courts q. Volleyball Courts r. Ultimate Frisbee s. Other (please specify)	
9.	From the following list, please select the events you in or attend?	or your household are most likely to participate
	 a. Sugar Hill Live b. Movie Under The Stars c. Splash Night d. \$2 Tuesdays e. Memorial Day Ceremony & Market f. Veterans Day Ceremony g. Art Gallery h. History Museum i. Sugar Hill Live On Stage Concert Series j. Broad St. Film Festival k. Holiday Celebration 1. Sugar Rush Arts Festival m. Sparks In The Park n. E Center Recreational Classes o. Sugar Hill Golf Club p. Sugar Hill Ice Rink q. Sports Tournaments r. 5k/10k "Road" Race s. Other 	
10.	Which of the following community groups are you related events? Select all that apply.	or your household most likely to participate in
	 a. Sugar Hill Arts Commission b. Black Woman's Association of Sugar Hill, c. Broad Street Concert Band, d. Sugar Hill Golf Association e. Sugar Hill Business Alliance, f. Community Garden, g. Downtown Development Authority, h. Friends of the Greenway, i. Sugar Hill Historic Preservation Society, j. Players Guild, k. Running Club or other Outdoor Fitness Group l. Sugar Hill Planning Commission, m. Sugar Hill Area Women's Club, n. Youth Ambassadors, o. Youth Council) p. Other 	

n. Skate Park

11.	How would you prefer to travel to and from Se	ugar Hill's p	arks and	d recreat	ional faci	lities?
	a. Car					
	b. Bicycle					
	c. Walk/Run					
	d. Rideshare					
	e. Other					
12.	Please rate the following qualities related to Su	gar Hill and	its region	nal Parks	& Recrea	tion facilities and
	programming.		Ü			
	CHOICES:	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Undecided
	Access to parks & recreation facilities					
	Access unprogrammed/flexible greenspace					
	Condition of parks					
	Condition of recreation facilities					
	Variety of parks					
	Variety of recreation facilities					
	Variety of recreation programs					
	variety of recreation programs					
14.	d. Screening of developmente. Just enjoy looking at trees If greenspace preservation is important to you or neighborhood?	ı, would yo	u be will	ing to pr	eserve ye	our own property
	a. Yes b. No					
	c. Maybe					
	C. Maybe					
15.	How would you like to get your information reactivities?	egarding Su	ugar Hill'	s recreat	ional pro	grams, events, an
	a. Billboard					
	b. Email					
	c. Social Media (Instagram, Facebook)					
	d. Homeowners Association					
	e. Local Magazines					
	f. Newspaper					
	g. Flyers/Handouts					
	h. Radio/TV Announcementsi. Website					
	j. Mailers					
	k. Banners					
	A. Dallicio					

16.	What social i	media platform	s do you use?	Select all tha	t apply.
-----	---------------	----------------	---------------	----------------	----------

a.	Twitter	
b.	Facebook	
c.	Instagram	
d.	Tumblr	
е.	Reddit	
f.	Nextdoor	
g.	Snapchat	
h.	Yelp	

Thank you for completing this Survey.

Graphics of the answers to these questions can be found in Appendix 3

E. Staff Questionnaire:

The City of Sugar Hill has contracted with CPL to initiate a master planning process designed to help
continue providing outstanding services to the community. As professional staff, your insights, thoughts,
and experience are a critical component of this effort. Please take a few minutes to share your expertise
by answering the questions below.

ame:	

- 1. What are the top 5 recreation services you think are needed to provide or expand over the next 10 years (in priority order)?
- 2. What are the top 5 acquisitions and/or new facilities you think will be needed in order to continue to provide quality services over the next 10 years (in priority order)?
- 3. What do you think are the department's top 3 greatest challenges (internally and externally) over the next 10 years?
- 4. What are the top 3 biggest changes you think the community will undergo over the next 10 years that will have an impact on Parks and Recreation services and facilities?
- 5. Please provide additional feedback, thoughts, or comments you think would be helpful to know.

Thank you – your participation is valued and appreciated.

Appendix 1 - E **67**

APPENDIX 2 - INVENTORY & ANALYSIS CHARTS

A. Sugar Hill City Parks Inventory

The Sugar Hill inventory spreadsheet includes 18 parks. The facilities and amenities in each park were listed and quantified to establish a true accounting inventory of what the City owns. Only City owned inventory was included on this list. The inventory was developed on an excel spread sheet that is too large for this report format. Therefore, the final inventory is issued on a flash drive that the city can load into their system. The spread sheet is designed so the city can add more parks and additional facilities and amenities in each existing park as they are developed. This sheet provides the city with the tools necessary to keep track of all improvements and additions to their inventory. Each time a new park is constructed, or a new facility added, this inventory should be updated.

See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory.

B. Gwinnett County Parks Inventory (Inside Sugar Hill)

The Gwinnett County spreadsheet includes 6 parks. The facilities and amenities in each park were listed and quantified to establish a true accounting inventory of what Gwinnett County owns inside the city limits of Sugar Hill. These county parks are in close proximity to the residents of Sugar Hill and provide valuable amenities to the citizens of the city. The inventory was developed on an excel spread sheet that is too large for this report format. Therefore, the final inventory is issued as a supplemental file that the city can load into their system.

See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory.

C. Other Parks Inventory (Inside or near Sugar Hill)

The other parks spreadsheet includes 13 parks owned by the USACE, NPS, Forsyth County, City of Buford. The facilities and amenities in each park were listed and quantified to establish a true accounting inventory of what other facilities were available to the residents of Sugar Hill. The inventory was developed on an excel spread sheet that is too large for this report format. Therefore, the final inventory is issued as a supplemental file that the city can load into their system.

See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory

Proximity Chart of County and Other Parks Inventory

The proximity of the County and Other parks facilities had an impact on establishment of the Sugar Hill Standards and recommendations. The closer the park was to residential areas of Sugar Hill the more it was considered in the adjustments of the NRPA standards to Sugar Hill standards. Below is a chart showing a list of facilities in these parks.

OTHER INVENTORY TOTALS - PROXIMITY									
	Facilities provided by other entities.								
#	Facility	Location							
1	Natural Open Space in City	Gwinnett Co. Parks	County	469					
	Federal Properties in City	ACOE & NPS lands	Federal	1209					
2	Aquatic center - Swimming	Bogan Park	County	1					
	Splash Pad	EE Robinson Co							
	Swim Beach	Lake Lanier Parks ACOE							
3	Playgrounds / tot lots	Local Parks	County	9					
		Lanier Beach	ACOE	1					
		Other cities		3					
4	Gymnasium / Rec Center	Bogan Park	County	2					
		George Pierce	County	2					
5	Dog Park	Rock Springs	County	2					
		Settles Bridge	County	1					
		Windemere	Forsyth	1					
6	Disc Golf	Suwanee Creek Park	Suwanee	1					
7	Skate Park	Settles Bridge	County	7					
8	Trails - Multiuse	Bogan Park	Bogan Park County						
		EE Robinson	County	1					
		George Pierce	County	2.6					
		Settles Bridge	County	1.6					
NPS ACOE		NPS ACOE	Federal	0.5					
		Others	Cities	4.4					
9	Trails - natural	George Pierce	County	1.2					
		Rock Springs	County	1.9					
		Settles Bridge	County	2.9					
		NPS ACOE	Federal	80					
	Others		Cities	2					
10	Community Garden	EE Robinson	County	1					
11	Nature Center	Heritage Center	County	1					
12	Senior Center	George Pierce	County	1					

D. Sugar Hill HOA Inventory of Private Facilities:

The Homeowners Association (HOA) Inventory of facilities spreadsheet includes 28 residential communities that provide private facilities for their residents. The facilities and amenities in each HOW were listed and quantified to establish a true accounting of what other facilities were available to some residents of Sugar Hill. The purpose was to assess pools and tennis court availability in the city. The inventory was developed on an excel spread sheet. The final inventory is also issued in electronic form so the city can load it into their system.

See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory.

SUGAR HILL - HOME OWNERS ASSOICATION INVENTORY PRIVATE FACLITIES miles									
Community Name	St	Street Name	# /Homes	Clubhouse	Pool	Tennis	Trails	Play Gr	Pavilion
Lakefield Forest	4680	Allison Dr	131	1	1	2			
Saddle Tree	5539	White Cedar Tr	106	1	1	2			
Abbingdon	376	Ayelsbury Ct	147	1	1	2			
Wild Timber	6235	Wild Timber Rd	324	1	1	5	1	1	1
Twin Creek		Brookcliff Tr	213	2	1	4		1	
Emerald Lake		Emerald Pkwy	220		1	1		1	
Secret Cove		Secret Cove Dr	110	1	1	2			
The Oaks at Lanier	5285	Arbor View Wy	182	1	1				
Princeton Oaks		Oakly Ln	148		1	2			
Links at Suga Hill Golf	620	Links View Dr	46			1		1	
NA	5116	Thorin Oak Cr	30		1			1	
Glen at Level Ck		Glen Level Dr	102	1	1	2			
Arbor Clos	5600	Wintersweet Wy	200	1	1	2		1	
River Falls	6310	Gr. Magnolia Dr	136	1	1	2		1	
Ashford Crossing		La Perla Dr	86		1	2		1	
Primrose Creek		Primrose Pk Dr	255	1	1	4		1	
Riverside Walk		Riverside Wy	230		1			1	
Daniel Creek		Daniel Ck Ln	38					1	1
?		Pierless Av	214	1	1	4			1
Avonley Creek		Avonley Ck Dr	101	1	1			1	1
Roberts Landing		Woods Ck Dr	45						
Kendrix Ridge	325	Ridge Walk Ct	78	1	1			1	
Lake Forest Estates	6	Daniel Ck Ln	40	1	1				
Roberts Crest		Roberts Cr Dr	54		1			1	
Hadley Township		Bridling St	140	1	1	2			1
Paradise Landing	4933	Pine Knob Cir	51	1	1				
Preserve @ Addison Wd	77	Addison Wd Dr	62		1				
Lanier Parkl		Lanier Vista Dr	75	1	1				
HOA TOTAL	•		3564	19	25	39	1	14	5

Swim/Tennis Centers

HOA Summary

 Qty
 Facility
 Households
 Residents

 9
 Tennis
 1613
 X 3
 4840

 19
 Pool
 2516
 X 3
 7548

9

E. Sugar Hill School Facilities Inventory:

The local schools Inventory of facilities spreadsheet includes 9 school that provide facilities for their students. The facilities and amenities in each school were listed and quantified to establish a true accounting of what other facilities were available to some residents of Sugar Hill. The purpose was to assess whether these facilities were available to the parks department for partial use. The final inventory is also issued in electronic form so the city can load it into their system.

See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory.

City of Sugar Hill Local School Recreational Facilities Inventory

#	School Name	Address	Gym	Foot	Base	Soft	Tennis	ВВ	Track	Soccer	Play
	HIGH SCHOOL			ball	ball	ball	court	court		multiuse	Struct.
1	Lanier High	918 Buford Hwy, Buford	1	1	1	1	4		1	1	
2	No. Gwinnett	20 Level Crk Rd, Suwanee	1	1		1	4		1	1	
	TOTALS		2	2	1	2	8	0	2	2	0
	MIDDLE SCHOOL										
1	Lanier Middle	6482 Suwanee Dm, Buford	1								
	TOTALS		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	ELEM. SCHOOL							Youth			
1	Riverside Elem.	5445 Settles Brig, Suwanee	1							2	2
2	Roberts Elem.	251 Buford Hwy, Suwanee	1					2	1	1	
3	Sugar Hill Elem.	939 Level Crk Rd, Sugar Hill	1					1		1	1
4	Sycamore Elem.	5695 Sycamore Rd, Sugar H.	1							1	1
5	White Oak Elem.	6442 Suwanee Dm, Sugar H.	1								
	TOTAL S		5					3	1	5	4
	PRIVATE										
1	Preschool	1199 Level Crk. Rd, Sugar Hill	1								
	SCHOOL	TOTALS	9	2	1	2	8	3	3	7	4

APPENDIX 3 - TALLIES

A. Citizens Questionnaire Talley and Assessment

The city of Sugar Hill handed out independent paper surveys to interested citizens. They received 12 returns. Below is a tabulation of the responses.

1. Explain Your Organization and Interest in the Project.

Twin Creeks 1 Local Resident 11

2. What do you think the city needs in their Recreation Program.

Dog Park	3	Greenway access	2	Natural Space	2
5k Marathon	1	Tennis center	1	Lighting EE R park	1
Pool	1	Trails	1	Soccer fields	1
Basketball outdoor	1	Adult activities	1	No response	2

3. What do you <u>not</u> want to see in the Cities Recreation Program.

Splash Pad	1	Bike Trails	1
Privatize It	1	No response	9

4. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to Sugar Hill?

<u>Threats</u>	<u>Strengths</u>
Loosing Greenspace 3	Parks/trails 3
Traffic 2	Green Space 2
Parking 2	Bowl 1
Other / Miscellaneous 1	No response 1

5. How do you want people outside the city to describe / perceive Sugar Hill.

Walkable city w Parks	3	Great place to live	2	Accessible	1
Up and coming	1	Active	1	Clean	1
Don't care	1	No response	3		

6. How do you use sugar hill parks.

Walking & dogs	6	Splash Pad	2	Putt-Putt	1
G Pirkle Park	1	Gazebo	1	Zipline	1
Relax	1	No response	0		

7. What are one or two (2) things you cannot experience in a Sugar Hill Park that you want.

Natural Trail	3	Natural areas	3	River Access	3
Picnic Areas	2	More restaurants	2	Pool	1
No response	4				

8. What is your favorite non-Sugar Hill Park and why. Where?

Silver Comet	1	Sweetwater Park trails	1	
Suwanee Town Green	1	No response	9	

9. Are there any other issues you would like to discuss.

Complete the Sugar loop	4	Sidewalks along Ga 20	3	
Lack of communication	1	More Restaurants	1	
No response	5			

Red indicates the most common or consistent responses.

Citizens Opinions Assessment:

Because of the limited number of responses and the fact that some respondents gave multiple answers, and many respondents did not answer all the questions, it is difficult to garner a lot of valuable information from the results of these 12 questionnaires. The answers in this tally were compared to the consensus responses of the Stakeholder interviews and the Public Input on-line survey tally to get an idea of what was most in common between these results.

Conclusion:

There seems to be a consistent desire by the citizens of Sugar Hill to have more greenspace, passive parks, and multiuse trails in the city. One item in Question 6 was referenced the most times of any responses in the entire questionnaire. Six (6) out of the 12 citizens stated they most used the city facilities for walking their dogs.

- 1. Responses indicate a keen interest in walking, passive parks, trails, and dog walking / parks.
- 2. The favorite parks were named by only three (3) people, and all three (3) were passive parks or trails. Parks.

Recommendations:

Based on these responses to the general questions by 12 residents, CPL makes the following basic recommendations.

Protect existing Green Space and develop more Passive Parks that include multiuse trails: The results of this questionnaire are consistent with most Parks and Recreation Surveys. Trails and Passive Park are usually at the top of the list. Dog parks and walking trails are always near the top and are considered passive activities, not active sports.

B. Stakeholder Interviews Tally and Assessment:

The CPL Planning team interviewed 25 Stakeholders in Sugar Hill to secure their input on recreational program expansion and concerns. Three (3) general questions were asked during the interviews and each stakeholder responded. The interviewee took notes during the interviews and documented the responses of each stakeholder separately.

The following list is a Tabulation of items that were expressed during the interviews and in order of the number of times each was mentioned. The stakeholders are not identified separately in this assessment, but a list of the people interviewed is attached at the end of this tabulation.

1. What Recreational improvements do you want to see in Sugar Hill Recreation?

15	Basketball courts	3
15	Pickleball courts	3
12	Community Garden	2
12	Ropes course	2
12	RV camping	2
11	Painted Bike Lanes	2
10	Tennis courts	2
8	Putt Putt	1
8	Climbing wall	1
7	Botanical Garden	7
6	Public Art	1
6	Playgrounds covered	1
6	Food Trucks	1
5	Activate cemetery.	1
3	Expand golf	1
	15 12 12 12 11 10 8 8 7 6 6 6 5	Pickleball courts Community Garden Ropes course RV camping Painted Bike Lanes Tennis courts Putt Putt Climbing wall Botanical Garden Public Art Playgrounds covered Food Trucks Activate cemetery.

2. What are the biggest challenges to Sugar Hill Recreation?

Connect more walkable	9	Trash collection	1
Parking	7	Crowded parks.	1
Crowded downtown	3	Meeting demand	7
Funding	3	Need artificial turf	7
Finding available land	1	Lack/organized sports	1
Expansion outside city	1	Time needed to do it	1
Lack of Athletic field space	1	Adequate restrooms	1

3. What are your current concerns?

Enough Parks Staff	9		Lack of maintenance equipment		
Population/fast growth	7		Lack of shade	1	
Maintenance	5		Security	1	
Traffic	3		Communications	1	
Need restaurants		1	Infrastructure		1

Stakeholders Opinion Assessment:

Based on interviews with 25 Stakeholders who are invested in the city or part of the city government, the following concerns were identified.

What the Stakeholders Want:

- 1. Develop the preserved natural open and green space as passive parks with trails, (walking, hiking, biking, nature etc.), picnic areas and natural amenities.
- 2. Complete and expand the Greenway to develop a more interconnected trail / walking system that connects the community and reaches out to the river.
- 3. Incorporate Pocket Parks, flexible open space, green spaces, passive parks and a town green into a comprehensive parks system connected by walking system.

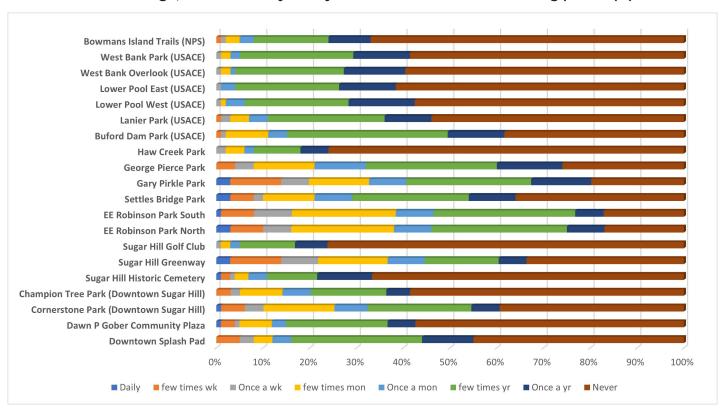
<u>Challenges and Concerns:</u>

- 4. Rapid growth and associated issues like parking, crowding, lack of sidewalks, etc. are the biggest challenges and concerns.
- 5. Adequate and trained staffing is a basic concern for the parks and maintenance.

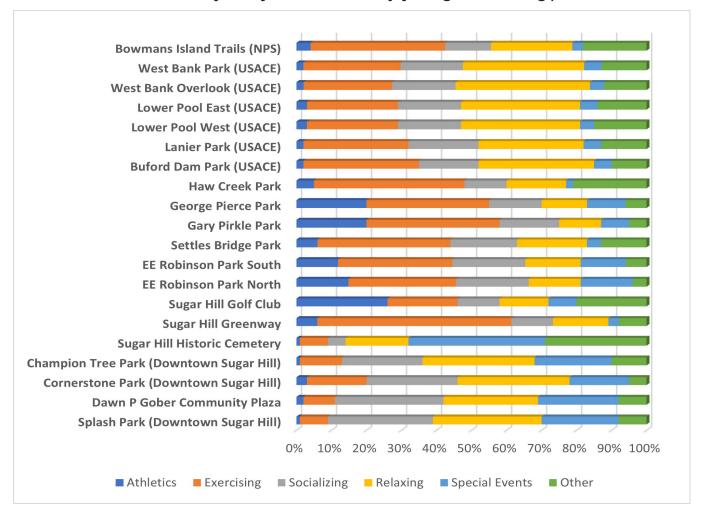
C. Online Survey Graphic Tallies:

The graphics below represent the answers provided from the online survey. More complete charts of the answers with these graphics are provided in a separate supplemental document. The final chart and graphic were so large that it would not fit into the format of this appendix and still be legible. See digital supplemental file provided to the city that contains this Inventory.

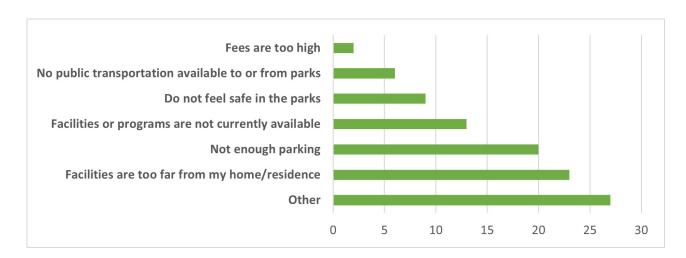
1. On average, how often do you or your household visit the following parks? (%)



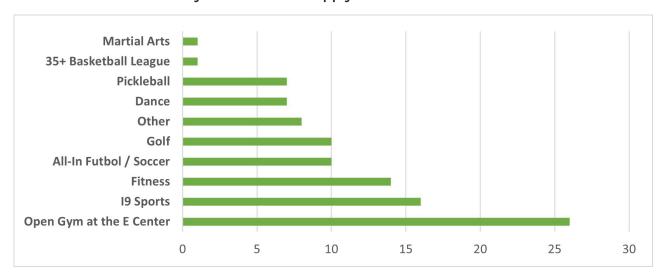
2. Please tell us how you or your household enjoy using the following parks.



3. Which of the following, if any, prevents you or your household from using parks and recreational facilities in Sugar Hill.



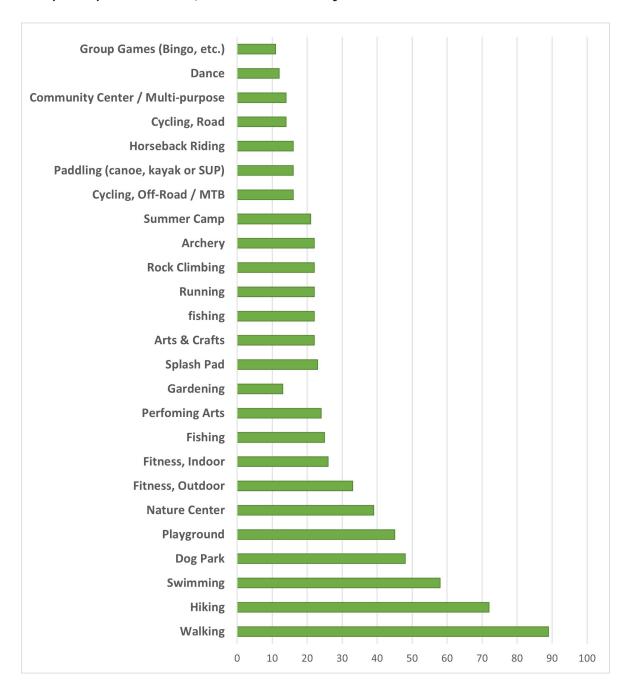
4. Which programs have you or your household participated in a Sugar Hill Park or recreational facility? Select all that apply.



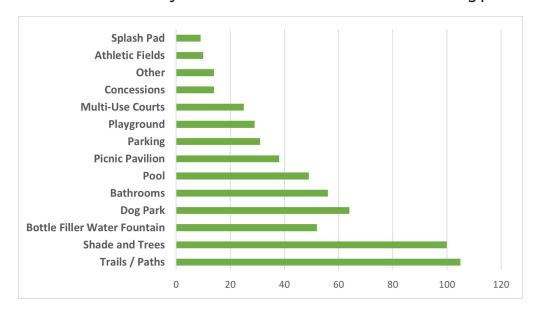
5. How do you usually travel to and from Sugar Hill's parks and recreational facilities?

		%	Count
Car		86	151
Walk/Run		9	15
Bicycle		5	8
Rideshare		0	0
Other		0	0
174 people	_	100	174

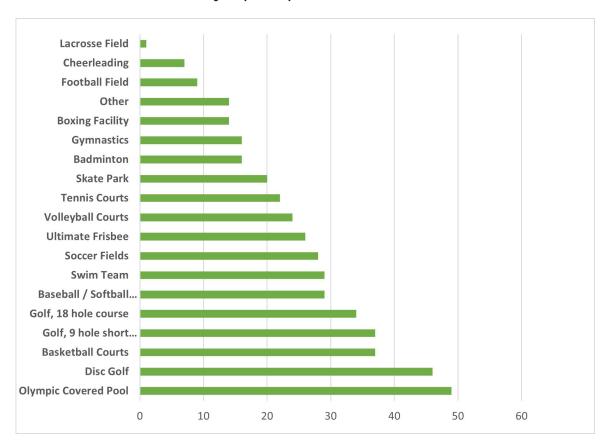
6. From the list, select the activities in which you or your household are most likely to participate or attend, even if not currently offered.



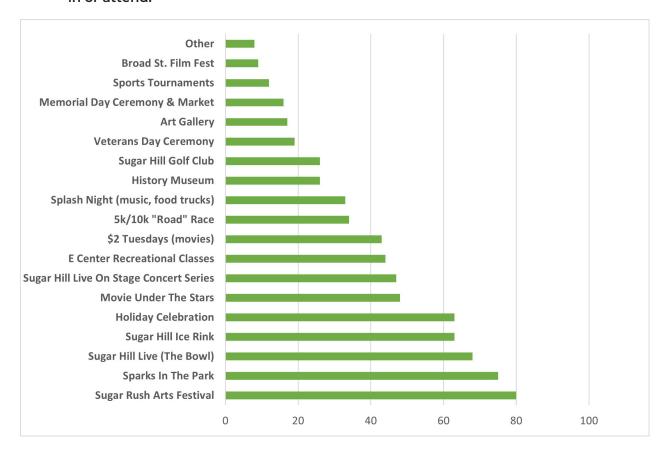
7. Select which amenities you would like to see or add more in existing parks? Pick up to five.



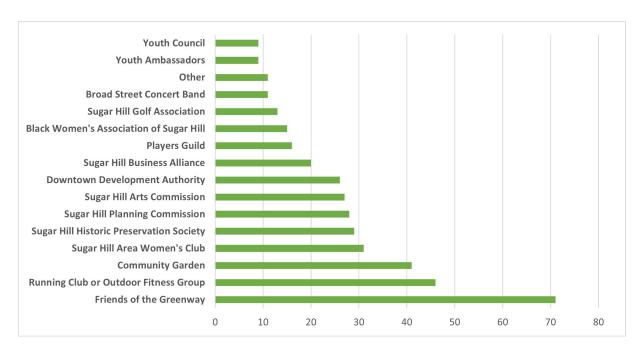
8. From the following list select the active sports, activities, or facilities you or your household are most likely to participate in or attend.



9. From the list, please select the events you or your household are most likely to participate in or attend.



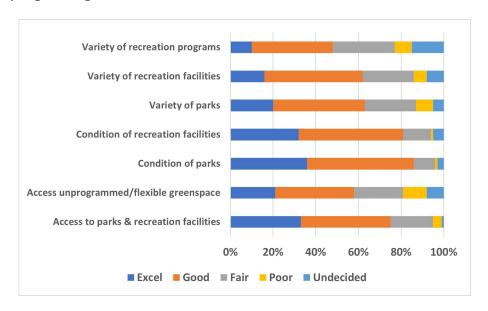
10. Which of the following community groups are you or your household most likely to participate in?



11. How would you prefer to travel to and from Sugar Hill's parks and recreational facilities?

METHOD	%
Car	52
Walk/Run	28
Bicycle	19
Rideshare	0
Other	2

12. Rate the following qualities related to Sugar Hill's regional Parks and Recreation facilities and programing.



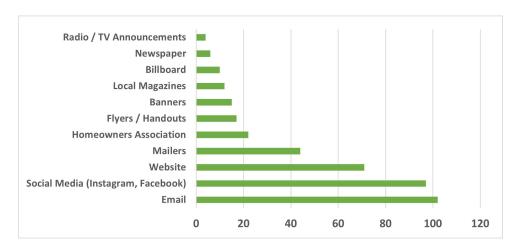
13. There are currently 2,000 acres of land in publicly owned greenspace or parkland in the greater Sugar Hill area. Please select the benefits of greenspace preservation which means the most to you or your household.

CHOICES	Count	Percentage
Other	2	1%
Access nature/escape urbanized environment	135	34 %
Air quality.	59	15%
Shade during outdoor activities.	86	22%
Screening of development.	61	15%
Just enjoy looking at trees.	57	14%
Total	400	

14. If greenspace preservation is important to you, would you be willing to preserve your own property or neighborhood?

Response:	%
Yes	68
No	6
Maybe	26
	100

15. How would you like to get your information regarding Sugar Hill's recreational programs, events, and activities?



16. What social medial platforms do you use/ Select all that apply.

Platform Choice	%	Count
Facebook	35%	125
Instagram	25%	89
Nextdoor	18%	64
Twitter	8%	29
Reddit	7%	24
Snapchat	5%	17
Yelp	3%	11
Tumblr	0%	1
145 People		360

A more complete chart and graphic can be found in the Supplementary Document provided to the city for the results of the online survey.



APPENDIX 4 - GAP ANALYSIS & NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. Gap Analysis and Needs Assessment

Gap Analysis:

The Gap Analysis was prepared by comparing the inventory of the City against the facilities recommended by NRPA for a city the size of Sugar Hill. A chart was developed that generated the gap of lack of facilities between the two standards. See chapter 4.

The Gap Analysis Graphic Chart is a complex spread sheet that uses these numbers to establish the final gap. It is too large to insert into the format of this report and still be legible.

The complete chart is provided in a Supplemental Document to the city.

Needs Assessment:

The Needs Assessment was prepared by replacing the NRPA standards with the new Sugar Hill standard that was developed from the research, interviews, and public input data. Comparing the existing inventory against the new Sugar Hill standard, a list of the facilities needed for a city the size of Sugar Hill. This list of needs is generated by the Gap Analysis spread sheet and was transferred to a list. The list is used to prepare a corresponding narrative of each specific need and how the Sugar Hill standards were applied. The top five (5) choices made by the public in the online survey are highlighted in green to show their strong preferences. The list is shown below.

	NEEDS ASSESSMENT LIST	
#	Facility	Qty
1	Greenspace - acres needed	230
	Connect to River	
2	Swim Aquatic Center	0
	Splash Pad	0
3	Basketball Courts - outdoors	4
4	Gymnasium	1
	Indoor basketball courts	2
5	Baseball/Softball	0
6	Miracle Field (baseball)	1
7	Multipurpose rectangle field	2
8	Pickleball courts - indoor	2
9	Pickleball - outdoor	4
10	Football Field	1
11	Adult Soccer	2
12	Youth Soccer	2
13	Tennis Court	4
14	Sand Volleyball	2
15	Disc Golf - holes	9
16	Ropes Course / Climbing Wall	1
17	Model Airplane / Drone Field	?
18	Dog Park	1

#	Facility	Qty
19	Festival Field (with Drone Field)	1
20	Picnic Pavilion and Area	?
21	Playground	4
	Tot Lot	3
22	ADA & Destination Playground	1
23	Golf	0
24	Recreation Center/ Facilities	
	Indoor Track	1
	Fitness Room	1
	Program Room	1
	skate Park	0
25	Archery Range	1
26	Boat Ramp	1
	Fishing Piers / decks	4
27	Natural Trails - miles	6
28	Multi-use paved trails - miles	2
29	Farmers Market Venue	1
30	Senior Center	1
31	Community Garden	1
32	Downtown	1

Recommendations:

Recommendations were written using this list and the Needs Assessment Narrative and can be found in Chapter 4 of this report.

Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate:

A cost estimate of the above list is also assembled to use as a budgeting tool for the decision makers of the city to set priorities and establish annual budgets. The cost estimate is included in a supplemental report provided to the city.

Supplemental Report:

A supplemental report is provided separately to the city that contains the Cost Estimate.

DIGITAL APPENDIX

Supplementary Documents

Due to the size of some of the inventory lists, survey graphics and maps that were too large for the report format, they were provided to the city in digital form for their use and reference. They are referenced in the documents and appendix. Below is a list of those items.

- 2-A Sugar Hill City Parks Inventory
- 2-B Gwinnett County Parks Inventory
- 2-C Other Parks Inventory
- 2-D HOA Inventory of Private facilities
- 2-E School Facilities Inventory
- 3-C Online Survey Graphic Tallies
- 4 Gap Analysis Needs Assessment

Recreational Proximity Map of Sugar Hill

CPL prepared a map of Sugar Hill showing all the city parks and their proximity to each other. The map was used to make certain recommendations on the locations of future parks. The map is inserted in the body of the Master Plan report but is too small to easily read. A digital version of the map is included for the city to reference and use.

