Town of Boiling Springs

Boiling Springs Community Park Master Plan

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Section 1
Project Overview

In 2016 McGill Associates was contacted by the Town of Boiling Springs regarding assessment and recommendations for the Boiling Springs Community Park. As a Town directed initiative, the project included working with Town Council and members of Town Staff which provided oversight and assisted with developing recommendations of the park during the planning process.

As part of the planning process, McGill Associates developed a program to solicit community input on the project. A parks and recreation survey was conducted to gather input on facility and programming needs in the Town. In addition, community meetings were held to discuss the project and gather insight from the participants.

Utilizing the input from the community and Town Staff, a master plan was created for the property that meets the needs and recreation trends of the community.

Parks enhance the quality of life in communities by providing opportunities for health and wellness activities, social interaction, environmental conservation, and positive economic impacts. A well-designed and thorough planning process best positions the project to maximize the benefits of parks for the community. While an understanding of the local community and relevant studies guide the plan, the plan potential is determined by the analytical site review and public involvement process.
Demographics

Per the 2010 Census, the population for the Town of Boiling Springs was 4,642. The population in the year 2000, was 3,888. This denotes a population increase of approximately 84% over the last decade. The estimated 2013 population for the Town of Boiling Springs was 4,607 residents. The Town of Boiling Springs has decreased in population by only a few residents.

Age

The average age of a resident for the Town of Boiling Springs is just over 23 years. Per a 2016 American Community Survey the population of the Town of Boiling Springs is made up of 37.9% of people whom are under the age of 20 and a close 22.5% of residents whom are in their 20s. In the year 2015, the American Community Survey states the population being 4,636 and only 4.4% of that number being made up of people 70 or older. This data is evidence that supports the trend that younger adults represent most of the population segment within the Town of Boiling Springs. (City Data: http://www.epodunk.com/cgi-bin/genInfo.php?locIndex=19122 and http://www.towncharts.com/North-Carolina/Demographics/Boiling-Springs-town-NC-Demographics-data.html)

Race

Per 2010 US Census data, the racial makeup of the town was 92% White, 4.2% African American, 0.4% Native American, 0.5% Asian, 0.1% from Native Hawaiian, and 2.7% of residents were Hispanic or Latino.

Education Level

The 2010 US Census found that 81.2% of the population had a High School diploma and 18% of the population had attended college.

END OF SECTION
Section 2
Site Analysis

General

The Boiling Springs Community Park is at the core of the Boiling Springs downtown area and is adjacent to the Town Cemetery (west) and a wooded area (east). Also to the east (across South Main Street) is Gardner-Webb University. The northern portion of the park is next to the new Town Hall and Town police department on East College Avenue. The southern end of the park is bordered by East Branch Avenue. The site consists of multiple contiguous parcels currently owned by the Town of Boiling Springs.

The total tract is approximately 12 acres which include several Town buildings such as Town Hall, maintenance, etc. The actual park area is approximately 8.4 acres. Approximately 12 acres of undeveloped land is adjacent to the east of the park.

Manmade Factors

Zoning

Per the Cleveland County NC GIS maps, the site is zoned B1 Commercial. The Town land use map shows two classifications for the site. The northern portion where the Town Hall is located is “Central Business” where the main portion of the park is classified as “Institutional”.

The available 12 acres that future park expansion could move into is zoned R10 Residential, but Town maps classify this area mostly as medium density residential with some industrial.

Roads

East College Avenue borders the Park to the North, Main Street to the west, Branch Avenue to the South and Ava Street to the northwest side of the property (see the aerial image in Section 1).

Surrounding Land Use

The site is centrally located in the downtown area. Light industrial/commercial can be found to the northeast of the site. Town Hall is at the north end of the site; Boiling Springs Town Cemetery is to the immediate west. At the southeast corner is the Town Police Department. The residential and undeveloped land is to the east of the Park site.
Utilities

The property has both water and sewer available. The sanitary sewer runs from the existing park shelter/restroom building south toward East Branch Avenue.

Overhead power is located on the west side of the park site. One existing ballfield has field lighting in place. A buried power line feeds the existing shelter/restroom.

Existing Structures

The park site has an existing playground, picnic areas, one 200’ baseball/softball field with dugouts, bleachers and announcer’s booth, one 160’ baseball/softball field, one 110’ T-ball/ field, batting cages, open play areas, restroom/shelter building and associated parking.
Natural Features

Topography

The topography of the overall site is flat with slopes ranging from ¼ to 2 percent. This site is not prone to flooding.

Hydrology/Drainage

Based on information obtained from the USGS topographic map and the USDA soil survey mapping there are no jurisdictional streams located on the site. Water from the site drains into the ground, southeast towards Poplar Branch. Poplar Branch drains into Beaver Dam Creek and eventually to the Broad River.

The site is not located within any special flood zones.

Floodway regulation per the local ordinance will allow for development on this site; recreational use is not prohibited.

Wetlands

As part of the site analysis, wetland information was obtained from USGS Topographic maps and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetlands Survey Mapping. There are no significant wetlands located on site.

Vegetation

Most the site is existing parkland/open space. Some wooded area borders the far eastern side of the existing park site. A large portion of the wooded areas contains hardwood forest with only a few pocket areas containing pine forest growth.

Park landscaping includes several mature Crape Myrtle trees and field turf.

Soils

As part of the site investigation, soil information was obtained from the USDA soil survey mapping. The site has one predominant soil type present. The CeB or Cecil-Urban Land Complex soil type can be found throughout the site. This soil is composed of a sandy clay loam. Often found to have slopes of 2-8 percent, this soil drains well and is not known for flooding. This soil type is suitable for construction of dwellings without basements, paved trails, and roads. This soil type should not limit future site development.
END OF SECTION
Section 3
Public Input

Community Meetings & Workshops

To facilitate community input, two public meetings were conducted during the initial phase of the Master Plan process. These meetings were held at different locations in Town. The workshops were held on two separate occasions to offer multiple opportunities for residents to voice their opinions on the topic of recreation. The first community meeting was held at the Boiling Springs Community Park on October 18, 2016, the second meeting was held at the Town’s Fall Festival on October 31, 2016, at the Ruby C Hunt YMCA. Various methods to encourage sharing of ideas included open discussion and question and answer opportunities. Participants were also asked to complete a questionnaire and fill out comment cards. The questionnaire was made available online as well to provide another method to gain public input. The questionnaires solicited participant views on needed recreational amenities and desired recreational programming. Questions were also asked about funding and the types of parks they envisioned for their town’s future. Along with the questionnaires, participants were encouraged to participate in map exercises aimed at identifying and locating any desired amenities. In total, there were 254 survey participants representing approximately 500 individuals.

Specific discussion concerning what participants wanted to see at the proposed Boiling Springs Community Park and what concerns they may have with the existing park resulted in the following summary:

- Dated Playground
- Needs paved walking trail
- Seating for ballfields
- Improved parking
- Improved lighting

Community Meetings Questionnaire

Questionnaire participants were asked specific questions related to their recreation desires. Some questions were designed to provide Boiling Springs with public opinion concerning the Boiling Springs recreation. The following graphics represent the survey questions and results:
Q1: Do you live in Town limits?

Q2: Do you live within a 1/2 mile of a public park or recreational facility?
Q3: What is the greatest household barrier to more regular use of a park or recreational facility?

- Not enough time
- Too far away
- Program too expensive
- Facility or program not...
- Physical health...
- Lack of transportation

Q4: Ethnicity origin (or Race): Please specify your ethnicity

- White
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African...
- Native American or...
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Other:
Q5: Select the number of persons in your household including yourself who are in the age brackets below:
Q6: Check below how frequently you or others in your household have visited the following facilities in the past year.

- Boiling Community Park
- Springmore Park Ave. Park
- Lutz Yelton Convocation...
- Gardner-Webb Tennis Complex
- Gardner-Webb Disc Golf...

Q7: Overall, how would you rate the existing recreational facilities in the Boiling Springs?
Q8: Overall, how would you rate the recreational programs offered in Boiling Springs?

Q9: In which of the following Town recreation programs and special events do you or others in your household participate on a regular basis?
Q10: Check below improvements that could be made to EXISTING parks and list facilities

- Add lighting to facilities
- Improve parking areas
- Add more public... (not fully readable)
- Expanding parks and open spaces
- Add picnic and sitting areas
- Increasing beautification
- Add/Improve trails
- Add signage to facilities

Bar chart showing percentages of responses for each improvement.
Q11: The following is a list of recreation activities that you could do at a public park or recreation facility. Rank the importance of each activity with 1 being most important and 5 being least important. Please consider other members of your household.
Q12: Do you use any school or private facilities (YMCA or Gardner Webb University) for recreation or leisure activities?

Yes

No

Q13: Within the last year have you traveled out of Boiling Springs to use a recreation facility or program?

Yes

No

Q14: Would you favor or oppose expanding recreational opportunities in the Boiling Springs?

Favor

Oppose
Q15: What, if any, sources of funding are you willing to support in order to make improvements, build new facilities, and create programs? Check all that apply.
Participant Preferences Map Exercise

Participants at each of the two community meetings were asked to take part in a preference exercise. Boards with precedent images of amenities that could be included in the park site were presented along with pens and stickers. The participants were asked to use the stickers to vote for what amenities they desired. If an option they wanted was not listed they had the opportunity to write in what they wanted. The participants were encouraged to discuss their concerns and ideas with others at the meeting.

Group Exercise Results

The top results included walking trails, playground improvements, and exercise stations. The participants also support the idea of an outdoor gathering space.

Summary of Survey Findings

Community desired recreation facilities

The survey data provided support for the development of new trails, baseball/softball field improvements, additional parking, new picnic shelters/tables, and a new playground.

Future Needs and Facilities

Respondents to the survey felt that the trails and paths, playground, and facility improvements were the most important of their recreation needs. They also expressed the desire for an outdoor gathering space.

It should be noted that public comments from public outreach indicated that Community Park provides both faculty and students of Gardner-Webb University with recreation prospects. While the University offers its own recreation and fitness opportunities to this population, Community Park remains a popular recreational resource for them. The Town should partner with the University to periodically gauge programming desires of students to support the park’s relevance with this user group. Potential revenue sources may be discovered through this type of partnership.

Community Input Summary

The community input program of community meetings, the public survey, and community preference activities served to provide a comprehensive look at the recreational needs and concerns of the study participants. The three elements of the program point to a clear desire for the recommended park improvements. Concerns that were expressed dealt mainly with having enough parking, lighting, and security.
END OF SECTION
Section 4
Preliminary Concept Plans

Program Description

Utilizing information from the site analysis and input from the public meetings and survey/questionnaires, McGill Associates began developing the alternate plans for park development. Based on the input from the community, project oversight group, and the Parks and Recreation Department, McGill Associates could develop the purpose and need for the park as well as how the public would use the park.

Concept Plan #1

The purpose of this park should be to serve Town residents with multiple desired recreational amenities. The strategic planning elements of the park should offer a variety of activities compatible with both passive and active recreation while also preserving open space. Baseball/softball remains a desired activity at this location according to Town Staff. There is also a desire from the community to provide open space and incorporate passive recreational amenities such as improved walking trails, picnic areas. In addition to the traditional recreation amenities planned for the park property, additional parking spaces and better accessibility were incorporated into park design alternatives.
Alternative plans were developed that included a combination of park amenities composed of active recreation and passive recreation. These designs focused on the feedback from the community meetings, questionnaire/survey, project oversight committee, and Town Staff. The alternate plans were similar with a balance of active recreation and passive recreation.

Meetings with Town staff resulted in the final concept layout for the park (see image above).

**Physical Needs**

Capital improvements will be necessary to develop, operate, and maintain the park improvements. These capital improvements will provide service to restroom/concession facilities as well as park lighting and communications. Waterlines and electrical service will also be required for the athletic field in regard to any new field irrigation system.
Section 5
Final Master Plan

Based on the response from Town Staff and input from the initial public input, the Town decided on a slightly revised version of Concept 2. This revised master plan closely reflects the needs of the parks and recreation department and meets many of the desires of the community as expressed in the public meetings.

Walking Path and New Playground

It was felt that this proposed plan is sensitive to the surrounding area and is respectful to existing nature and existing space dimensions and also provides many of the recreational amenities that are typically found in contemporary active community parks. The park design allows for two distinct but integrated areas. The first area is the more program centric, athletic north end of the park with the improved ball fields. The remainder of the park site contains the less programmed play areas of the playground and picnic areas. The ½ mile walking trail ties both areas together while also offering fitness stations along the path.
Preliminary Opinion of Probable Costs

A preliminary analysis of probable cost was developed for the Master Plan. The anticipated cost (in today’s dollars) for the entire Boiling Springs Park Improvements is approximately $655,000. This estimate includes all proposed elements for the Park including the walking path, playground, shelters, athletic viewing areas, parking, landscaping, lighting, and utilities. It should be noted that this estimate is based on master plan level design. Final construction documents must be completed in order to present a more accurate cost estimate.

Phasing

It is anticipated that the Town will implement the park improvements in multiple phases. By approaching the development of the park in this manner, the Town will be able to apply for grants and other funding strategies and maximized funding opportunities. With the understanding that it is undetermined which park elements will be implemented in future or other phases, this master plan allows some flexibility towards implementing park elements as the Town gauges recreational needs with the Town residents. With this approach the following list of park elements is divided into two phases: Phase 1 and Future Phase.

Phase One Construction may include: the parking area improvements with associated utilities. In addition to infrastructure, this phase will include:

- ½ Mile Paved Walking Trail
- Improved Lighting
- Accessibility Improvements
- New Playground
- Fitness stations
- Small Park Picnic Shelters
- Landscaping

The following is a list of park elements for future phases.

- Restroom/Concession Building
- Baseball/Softball Field Bleacher/Dugout improvements
- Signage
- Small Game Courts
- Restroom Building upgrades at Playground
- Other Remaining Recreational Features (as determined by Town Staff)