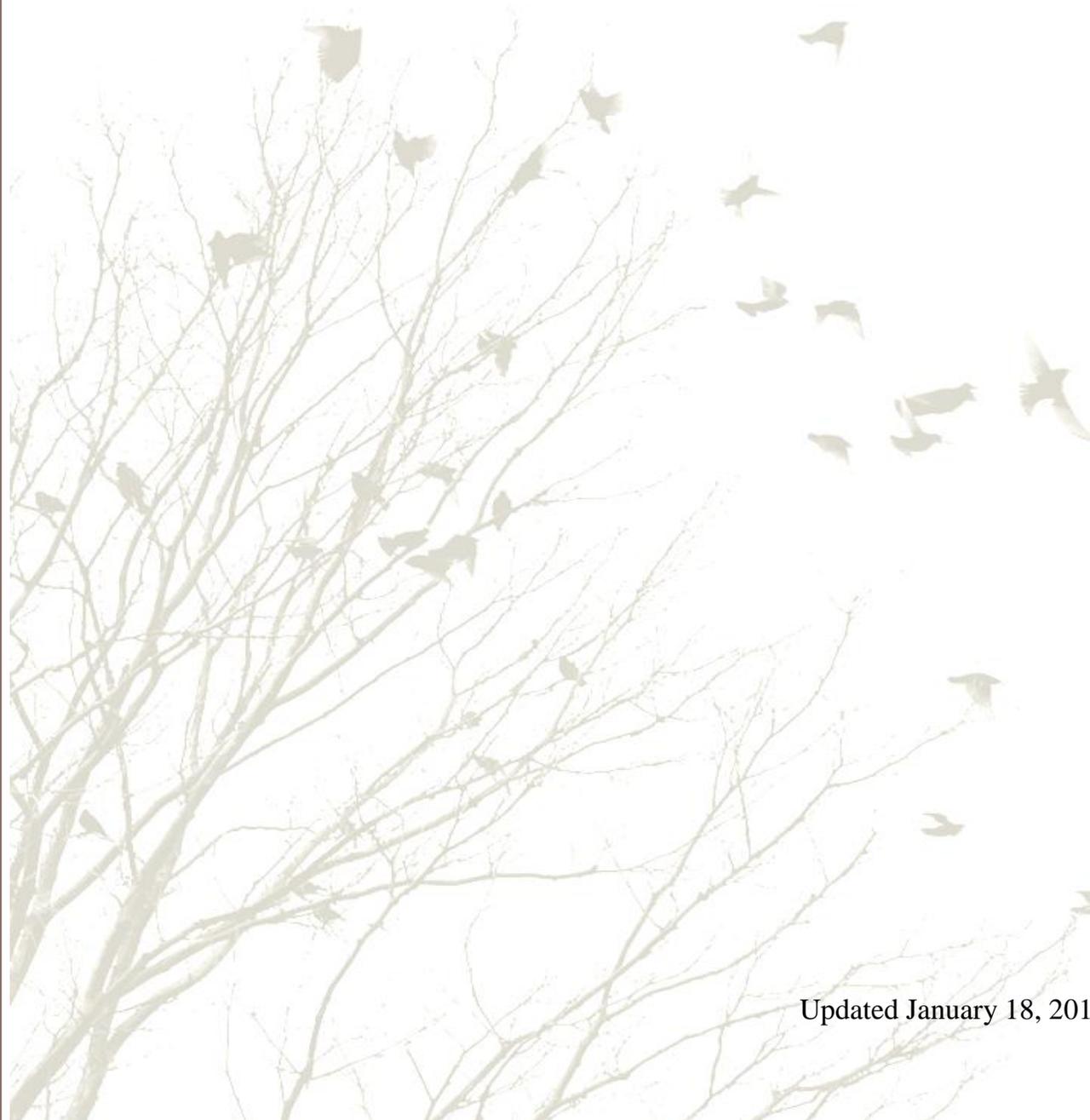


# **Village of Wesley Chapel Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Plan**



Updated January 18, 2011

**Fall 2009**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Village of Wesley Chapel Parks & Recreation Committee, the support of the Village Staff, and the input of the Council to prepare this document, and to our citizens, whose feedback made it all possible.

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## **Introduction**

### **The History of Wesley Chapel**

Although the Village did not become an official municipality until July 15, 1998, residents of this area have long identified themselves as residents of Wesley Chapel. In the 1800's the first "community center" in our vicinity was the McWhorter Campground and Cemetery, which eventually became the first church built in 1832. The Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church subsequently gave the community its name after John Wesley (1703-1791), the founder of Methodism.

Initially Wesley Chapel largely contained farms occupied by just over a dozen families. Many descendents of these families contributed to the development of the Village and to this day are still active in the community.

In the 1990's, as high taxes and congested roads in the Charlotte region created a need for new developments to the southeast, nearby municipalities began to annex land around the Wesley Chapel area. With the help of our local legislators, a group of dedicated citizens succeeded after three years in formally incorporating the Village of Wesley Chapel.

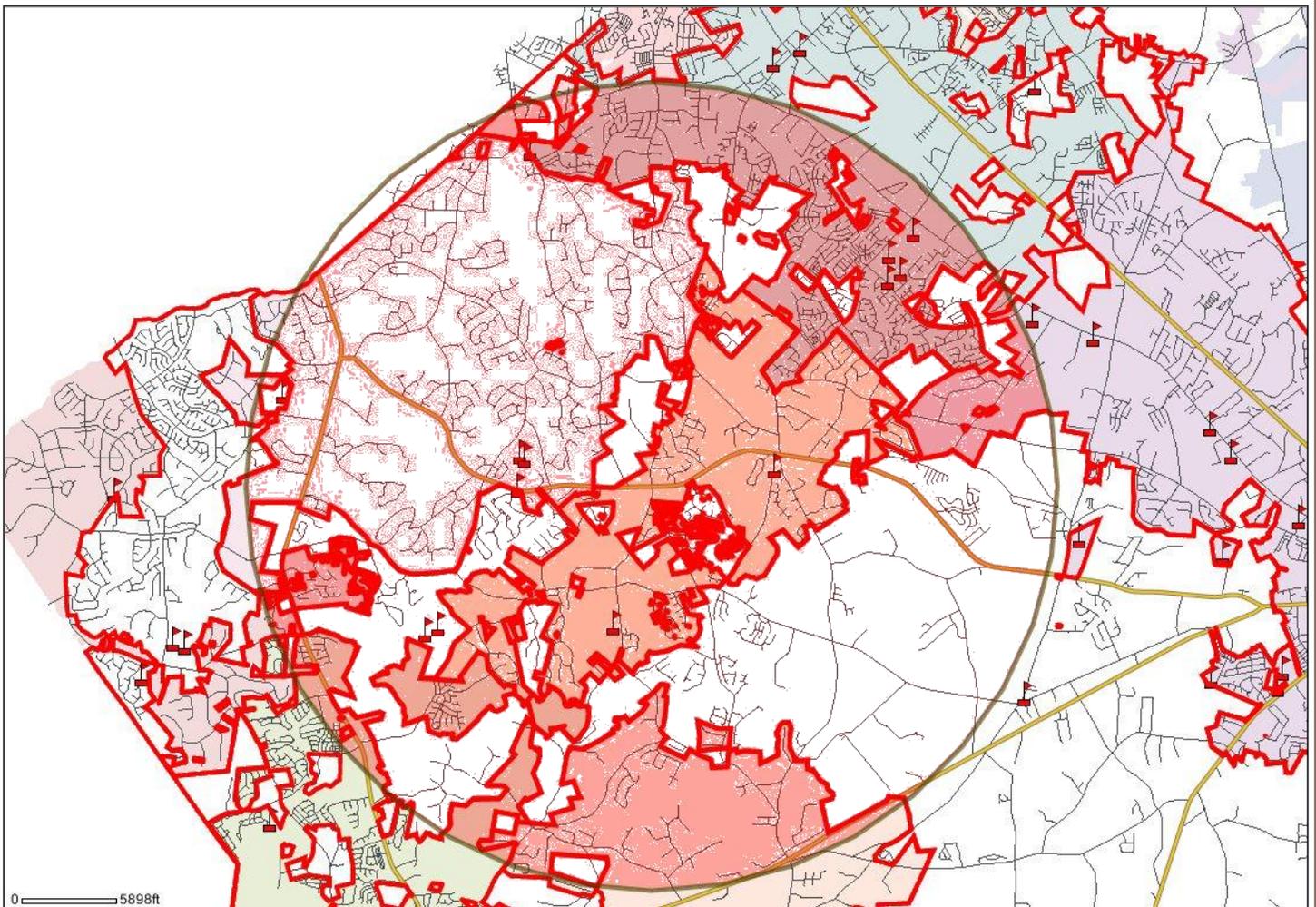
Wesley Chapel is committed to providing its residents zoning supporting an average 1 acre per household, preserving a rural small town atmosphere, maintaining a low tax rate, and managing its rate of growth.

At the time of its inception, Wesley Chapel covered 2,500 acres and contained 1,100 residents. In the past 10 years those numbers have burgeoned to over 5,000 acres and 6,320 residents due to internal development and voluntary annexation. Wesley Chapel is located in the western half of Union County, which was ranked the 7<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing county in the nation in 2008.

Due to this rapid rate of growth and development, it is imperative that Wesley Chapel provide a variety of solutions to our citizens' recreation needs while protecting the natural beauty of this formerly rural area.

## Demographic Community Profile

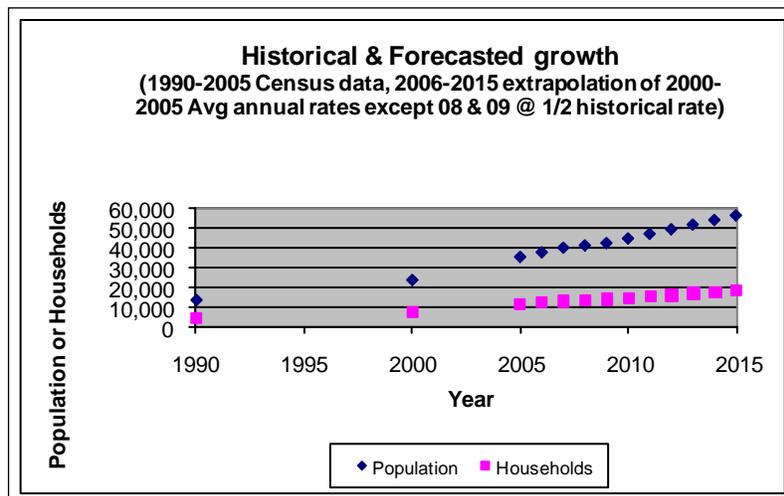
Several sources of published data provide Wesley Chapel area population and demographics. A commercial real estate developer, Aston Properties, compiled a summary of US Census data for an area representing a 5 mile radius from the Wesley Chapel 'Town Center' (the intersection of Hwy 84 and Waxhaw-Indian Trail Road). The Village of Wesley Chapel, marked in orange on the map below, is central to this area, making this data perfect as a potential 'capture zone' for demographics relating to our Parks & Recreation facilities.



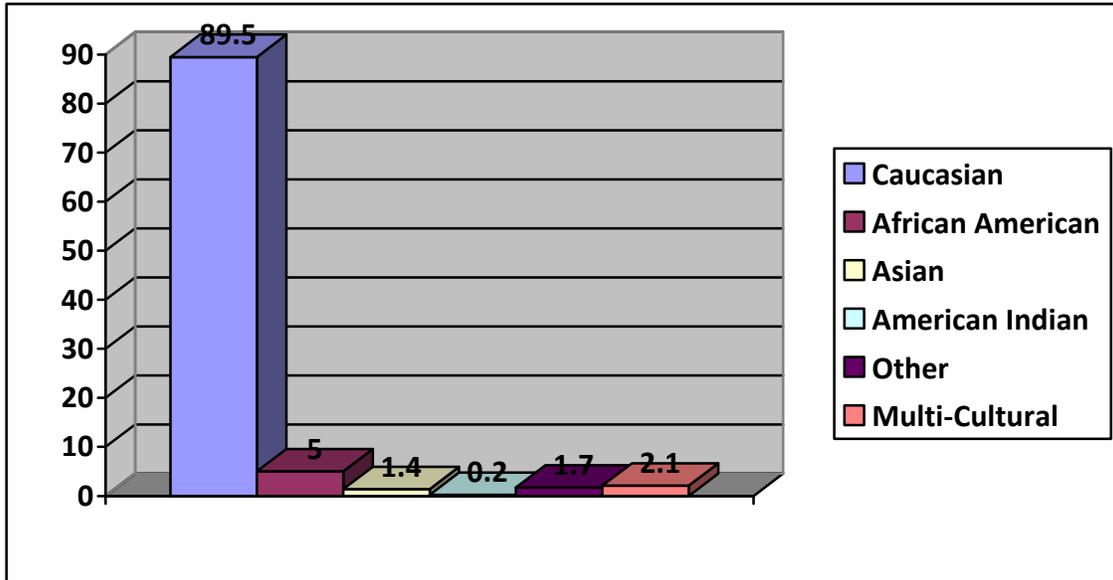
Wesley Chapel has recently experienced very rapid development and growth. Census data show that over 7,000 new households were added within a 5-mile radius of our Town Center over the last 15 years. Population in the same area almost tripled from approx 14,000 in 1990 to almost 36,000 in 2005. During this period of extraordinary growth no parks were developed in the five mile radius ‘capture zone’.

<b>Population 5 mile radius from Wesley Chapel Town Center 1990-2005 growth</b>			
Year	1990	2000	2005
Population	13,614	23,935	35,806
Households	4,599	8,086	11,882
Persons per Household	2.96	2.96	3.01
Population Avg annual growth		2,064	2,374
Households Avg annual growth		697	759

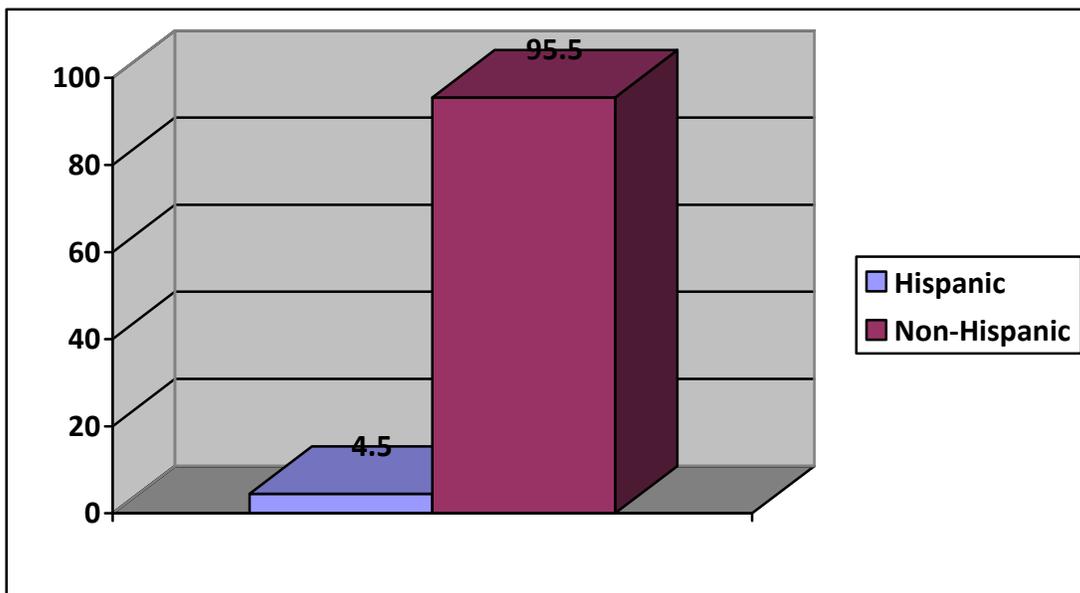
During the five years between 2000 and 2005 (per the most recent Census data) new households increased by 759 on average annually and the population increased by 2,374 on average annually. The rate of growth started to slow in 2007 and is not expected to return to previous levels until the economic recovery anticipated in 2010. The following chart indicates historical and forecasted growth based on the last 5 years. The years 2008 and 2009 have been reduced by 50% of the previous 5 years to account for the current downturn in construction.



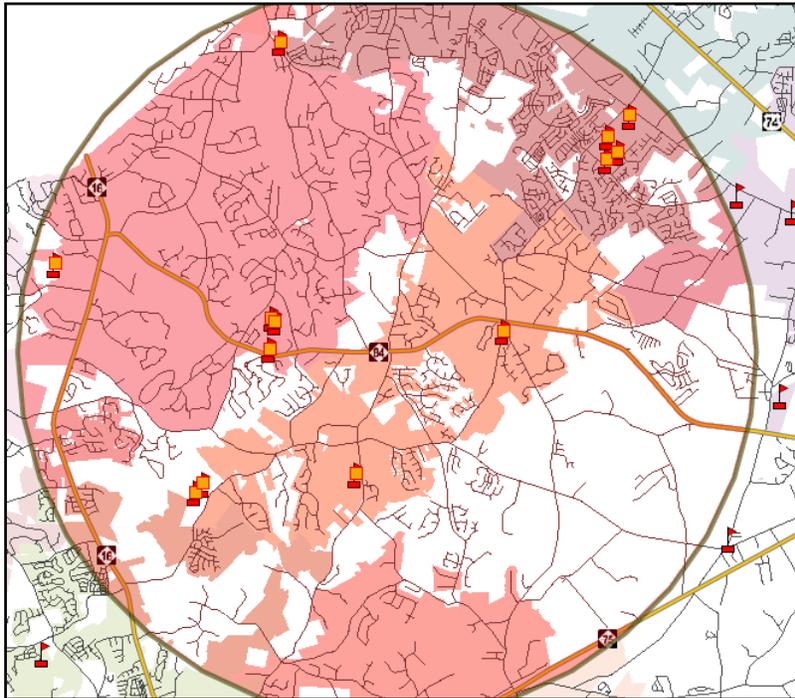
Ethnicity data within a three mile radius of the Town Center indicates a fairly homogenous population as of 2008.



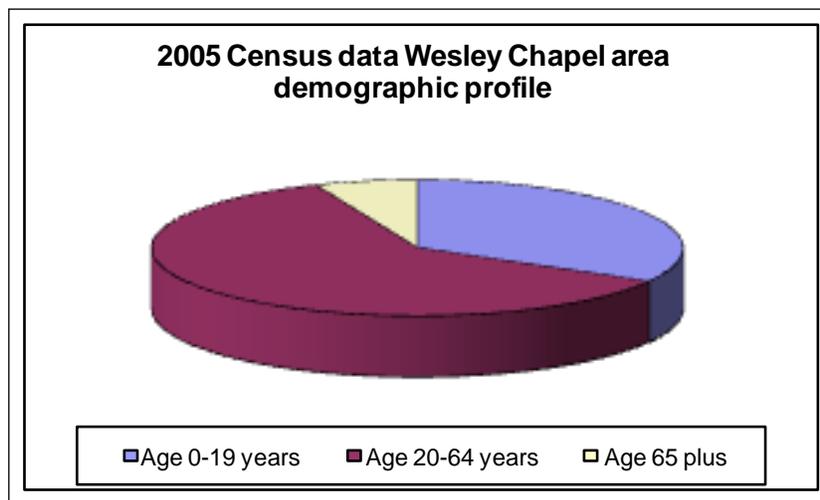
While the data above did not specifically take into account the Hispanic population, the results were also broken down into Hispanic and non-Hispanic background within the same three mile radius.



Another useful source of population data is Union County Public Schools (UCPS). Locations of area schools are identified on the map below by red flags. UCPS data from 3 area schools that Wesley Chapel children attend were used in the analysis that follows. (Cuthbertson Middle and High Schools just opened in the Fall of 2009 and were therefore not included in this analysis.) The three schools are located as follows: New Town Elementary at the southern end of Wesley Chapel; Wesley Chapel Elementary just east and north of the Town Center; and Weddington Elementary, Middle and High just outside the western border of the municipal area near the center of the capture zone.



Census data providing profiles by age group allows us to extrapolate school enrollment data published by UCPS to the general population and make other predictions about age appropriate facility requirements.



By comparing UCPS data for the three school districts to census data for our 5 mile radius area we can see that over a third of the area growth has occurred within school districts that fall mostly within the Village boundary.

School district population data (UCPS)	2000	2005
Weddington	4,905	5,900
Wesley Chapel	2,354	3,810
New Town	1,462	3,440
Other	15,214	22,656
Total 5 mile radius	23,935	35,806
Wesley Chapel Area Districts	8,721	13,150
Wesley Chapel districts as % of 5 mile radius	36.4%	36.7%

Applying the same 36.7% factor and 2005 Census demographic profile to the forecasted population for our 5-mile radius area, we gain some understanding of the population the Village will be required to provide for in the area of Parks & Recreation. The tables on the following page clearly indicate a rapid increase in population in the Wesley Chapel area over the next five years as this area continues to develop. The population in a 5-mile radius of the Town Center is expected to increase by 12,000 people during this timeframe, and the youth in the Wesley Chapel school districts alone is expected to increase by 1,400.

The demand for additional municipal services will undoubtedly increase as well during this timeframe, so planning now for the future is critical to meeting the needs of our current and future citizens.

<b>Extrapolation of last 5 year Avg Annual growth rates in the '5 mile radius'</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Households</b>
1990	13,614	4,599
2000	23,935	8,086
2005	35,806	11,882
2006	38,180	12,641
2007	40,554	13,400
2008	41,742	13,780
2009	42,929	14,160
2010	45,303	14,919
2011	47,677	15,678
2012	50,051	16,437
2013	52,425	17,196
2014	54,800	17,956
2015	57,174	18,715

<b>Extrapolation to Wesley Chapel area School Districts and forecasted demographics</b>			
<b>Total</b>	<b>0-19</b>	<b>20-64</b>	<b>65 plus</b>
5,000	1,661	3,026	313
8,790	2,920	5,321	550
13,150	4,368	7,959	822
14,022	4,658	8,487	877
14,894	4,948	9,015	931
15,330	5,093	9,279	959
15,766	5,237	9,543	986
16,638	5,527	10,070	1,040
17,510	5,817	10,598	1,095
18,382	6,106	11,126	1,149
19,254	6,396	11,654	1,204
20,126	6,686	12,181	1,258
20,997	6,975	12,709	1,313

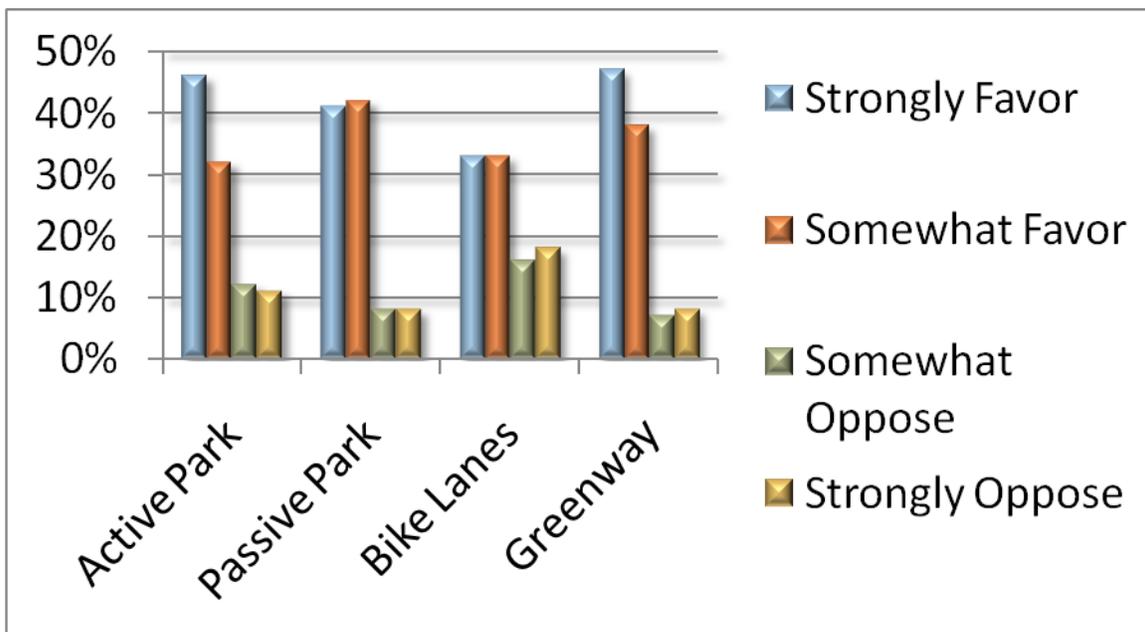
## The 2008 Master Plan

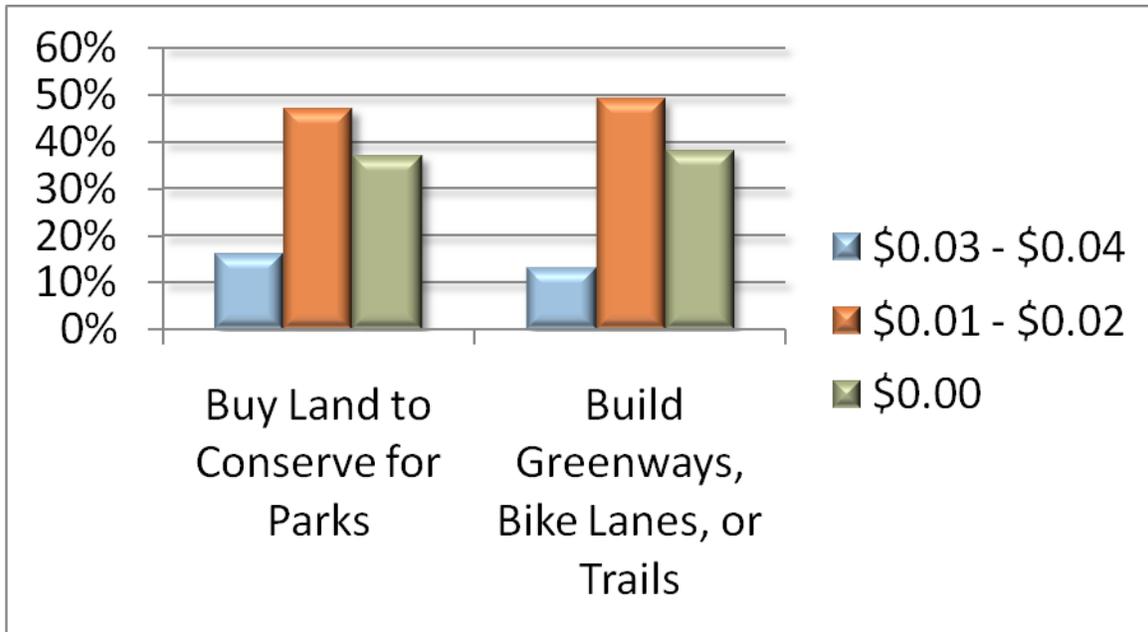
In 2007, the Wesley Chapel Village Council partnered with staff and students from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) to compile and produce a Master Plan to steer the growth and development of our Village.

UNCC and the Council sent out a survey asking residents to prioritize their vision for the future of our community. Of the roughly 2,500 surveys mailed out to Village households as well as the population in the immediate surrounds, 641 surveys were received, approximately a 25% return rate.

UNCC also held meetings with community stakeholder groups and hosted numerous information sessions to vet their findings with the public. The culmination of these efforts created the 2008 Master Plan document which included the results of the community survey, a land capacity analysis, an analysis of existing zoning regulations, and a transportation study.

The results of the survey indicated strong support for pursuing Parks & Recreation initiatives. Approximately 77% of respondents favored developing an active park, and 83% supported passive parks. Additionally, 84% approved of developing greenways in the community.





A strong majority were also willing to pay additional taxes to facilitate Parks & Recreation facilities in Wesley Chapel. Approximately 63% of respondents would accept at least a \$.01 tax increase to pay for parklands, greenways, and other means of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.

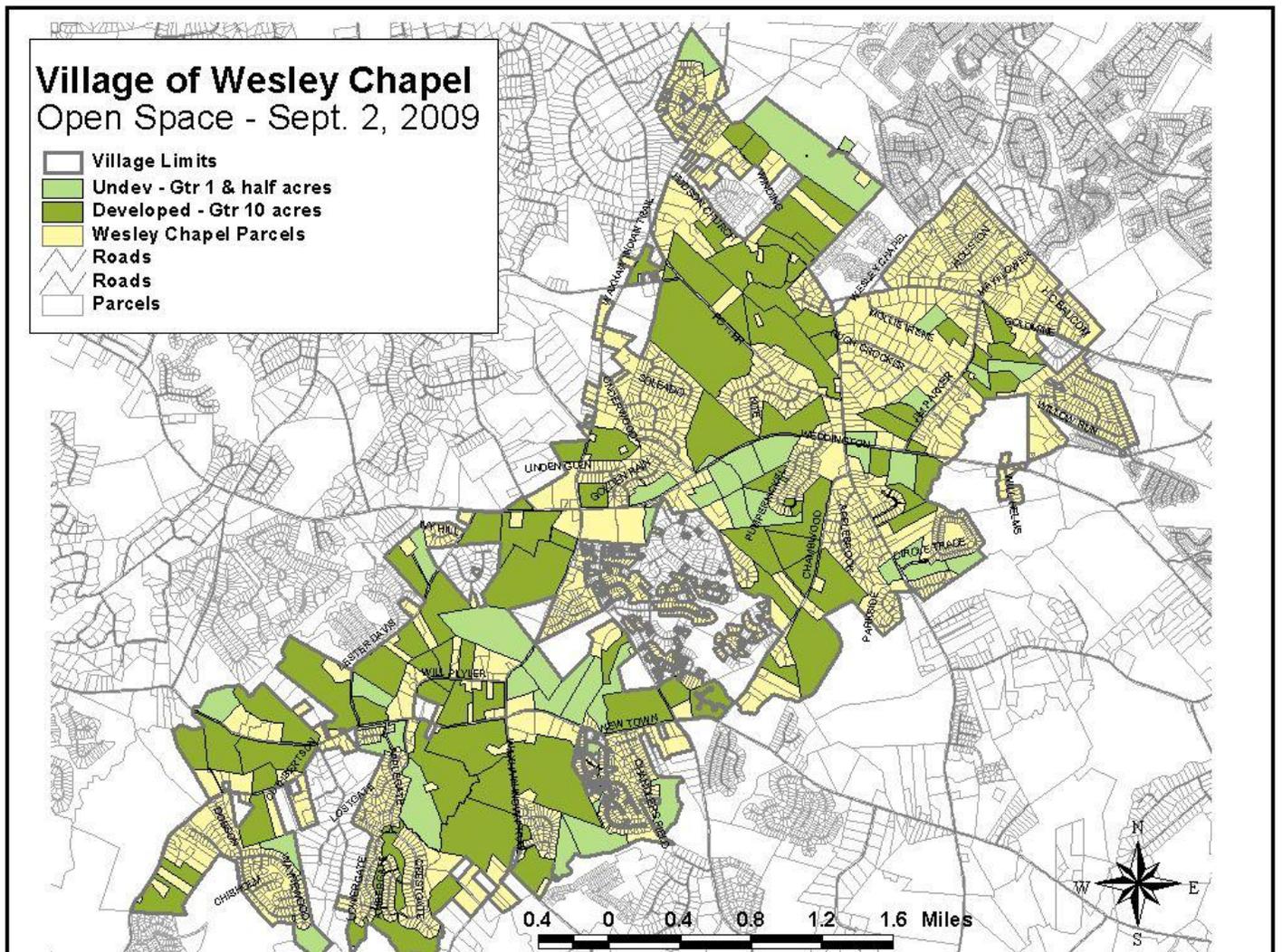
In answer to the strong community support for Parks & Recreation, as evidenced through the results of the Master Plan, the Village Council formed the Wesley Chapel Parks & Recreation Committee in the Fall of 2008. This group's scope of work is to prepare the Parks & Recreation Master Plan for our community, to identify prospective park and pedestrian connectivity projects, and to research grant opportunities.

# Inventory & Analysis

## Inventory of Open Space

A significant amount of land in Wesley Chapel as shown on the map below is either undeveloped or sparsely developed on large tracts of active or former farmland.

Open space contributes greatly to the pastoral setting valued so highly by our residents, as evidenced in the results of the Master Plan survey in which 92% indicated it was important or very important to preserve our rural, small town atmosphere. It is critical that Wesley Chapel procure park land before overdevelopment limits our options to preserve the Village's rural heritage.



## **Existing Public Recreation Facilities**

The closest thing to public recreation facilities currently within Wesley Chapel's municipal limits are the playgrounds at Wesley Chapel Elementary School and New Town Elementary School, both located at or near key intersections.

Weddington Middle and Upper Schools and Cuthbertson Middle and Upper Schools are located just beyond municipal limits. Use of the facilities at these sites is technically restricted to the students, but members of the community do take advantage of available amenities such as the walking track.

Union County Parks & Recreation provides recreation facilities for county residents, but none are terribly convenient to Wesley Chapel. Cane Creek Park is the largest facility, located in the southwest corner of Union County approximately 21 miles (34 minutes) from the Wesley Chapel Town Center. Amenities at this approximately 1,050 acre facility include a soccer field, a softball field, camping, a fishing pond, and an amphitheatre.

The county also operates two smaller sports-oriented facilities, Fred Kirby Park in Lake Park, NC, approximately 9 miles (18 minutes) from the Town Center, and Jesse Helms Park, located in Wingate, NC, approximately 15 miles (26 minutes) from the Town Center.

According to a recent Parks & Recreation survey discussed in detail later in this document, because of our lack of recreation facilities most residents use neighboring municipalities' parks instead. Colonel Francis Beatty Park, a 265 acre park loaded with amenities located near Matthews, NC, is the closest of these, approximately 6 miles (12 minutes) from the Village Town Center. It proved the most popular recreation venue, followed closely by the above mentioned Cane Creek Park.

The closest state park, Andrew Jackson state park, is actually across the border in South Carolina, approximately 20 miles (32 minutes) away. The 360 acre facility includes an amphitheatre, fishing pond, trails, and living history programs.

The lack of convenient public recreation options in the Wesley Chapel area, as discussed in the section "Where and When Residents Currently Participate in Recreation," creates negative impacts to our community that are both environmental and economic.

## **Existing Private Recreation Facilities**

One of the most popular private recreation facilities in the Village area is located just outside our borders. The Wesley Chapel-Weddington Athletic Association (WCWAA) technically resides in the neighboring town of Weddington. This organization provides athletic opportunities to area children and youth (starting in some sports as early as age 4) through programs for soccer, baseball/softball, football, lacrosse, basketball, and cheerleading. It also provides opportunities for children and youth with special needs. Organized in 1987 by members of the Weddington Optimist Club, WCWAA now owns 52 acres dedicated to serving over 3,900 area children and youth in the past year alone.

The Wesley Chapel Swim Club, located in the northern section of the Village, is a 10 acre facility that offers outdoor swimming, tennis, and a small basketball court to club members. This long-standing community fixture of 20-plus years provides for the needs of 58 families, six daycares, area swim teams, and other community groups.

Two churches in Wesley Chapel also provide recreational opportunities for residents. Southbrook Church offers team sports through Legacy Sport League, which primarily focuses on children and youth up to 6<sup>th</sup> grade and provides programs including soccer, flag football, and floor hockey. Siler Presbyterian runs a church softball league for adults but also allows the community (predominantly WCWAA) to use the fields on a first come first serve basis.

Additionally, several Home Owner Associations in Wesley Chapel neighborhoods provide amenities such as outdoor pools, playgrounds, and tennis courts to their residents.

While at first glance there appear to be many recreational opportunities in the area through the private sector, most of these options are sports oriented in nature, catering to young families with children rather than less active sectors of the population. More importantly, they provide neither a venue for the residents of Wesley Chapel to gather as a community nor a means to preserve the rural atmosphere our residents wish to maintain.

## Recreation Needs & Assessment

### Park Acreage Standards

Prominent agencies such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of the Environment, Health & Natural Resources (DEHNR) offer standards for determining how many acres of park land a municipality should acquire. The tables below were based on the July 1, 2009 population estimate for Wesley Chapel of 6,320.

Per NRPA guidelines, a municipality of Wesley Chapel's population should provide between 40 and 66 acres of parkland to support our citizens' recreational needs.

	<b>Suggested Acres per 1,000 citizens</b>	<b>Current Need (using minimum)</b>	<b>Current Need (using maximum)</b>
Mini-Park (.5 to 3 acres)	.25 to .5	1.58	3.16
Neighborhood Park (10 acres)	1 to 2	6.32	12.64
Community Park (50+ acres)	5 to 8	31.6	50.56
	<b>Total Need:</b>	<b>39.5</b>	<b>66.36</b>

In contrast, DEHNR recommends a municipality of Wesley Chapel's population should provide approximately 75 acres of parkland.

	<b>Suggested Acres per 1,000 citizens</b>	<b>Current Need (using minimum)</b>
Mini-Park (.5 to 3 acres)	0	0
Neighborhood Park (10 acres)	2	12.64
Community Park (50+ acres)	10	63.2
	<b>Total Need:</b>	<b>75.84</b>

Although some recreational needs are provided through churches and other private organizations as detailed on the previous pages, Wesley Chapel at present offers our citizens 0 acres of parkland, obviously falling far short of the standards set forth by these organizations.

## **Survey Introduction**

To guide the planning process for facilities in the Village of Wesley Chapel, the Parks & Recreation Committee designed a survey document to gather information about recreation activities practiced by residents, where they currently travel to participate in those activities and which of those activities they would like to see available in our own facilities. The survey was distributed between April and June 2009 via the municipal newsletter and at Village meetings, including the annual planning session. Of the approximately 2,800 surveys sent to area households within and just beyond the area of incorporation, 383 surveys (14%) were returned.

Upon receipt and data processing of the first 100 responses it became apparent that we were missing input from a significant segment of our population, our kids. Analysis of our demographic profile showed that 33% of our population is under the age of 19. To make sure the data reflected the opinions of our total population additional surveys were distributed to our young adults with the help of a local school principal and staff. We collected 141 surveys from area youth at Weddington High School to ensure we captured their opinions.

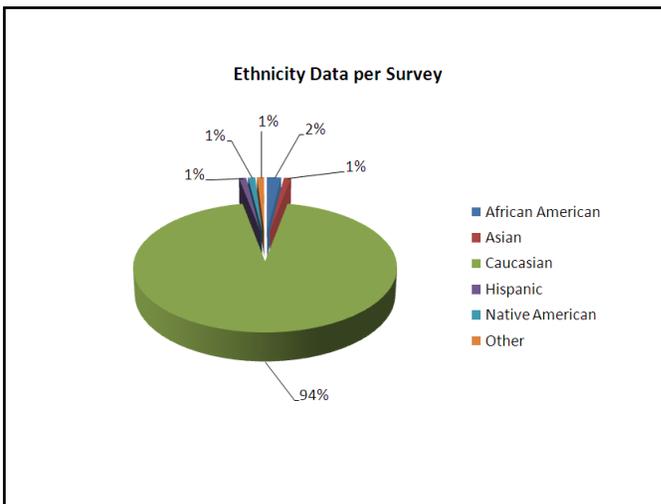
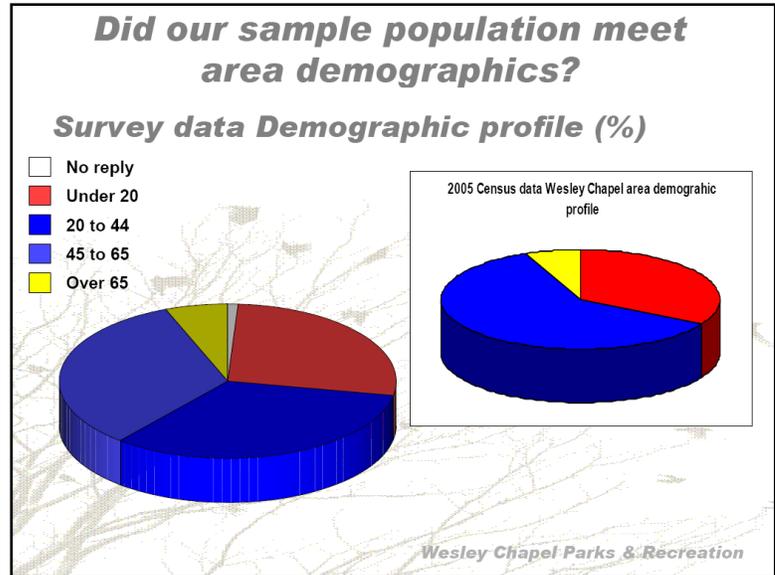
All total we received 524 surveys (18% rate of return). However, the survey sample at Weddington High School did not differentiate between residents and non-residents. Because the students were asked to indicate the subdivision in which they lived, we were able to determine that approximately half of the students surveyed were residents of our municipality, resulting in a 16% return rate for Wesley Chapel citizens.

The survey and its results were designed and compiled using professional software developed specifically for processing, analyzing and presenting survey data. (See [Appendix A](#) for a copy of the survey and [Appendix B](#) for complete survey results.)

## Demographic Analysis of Survey Respondents

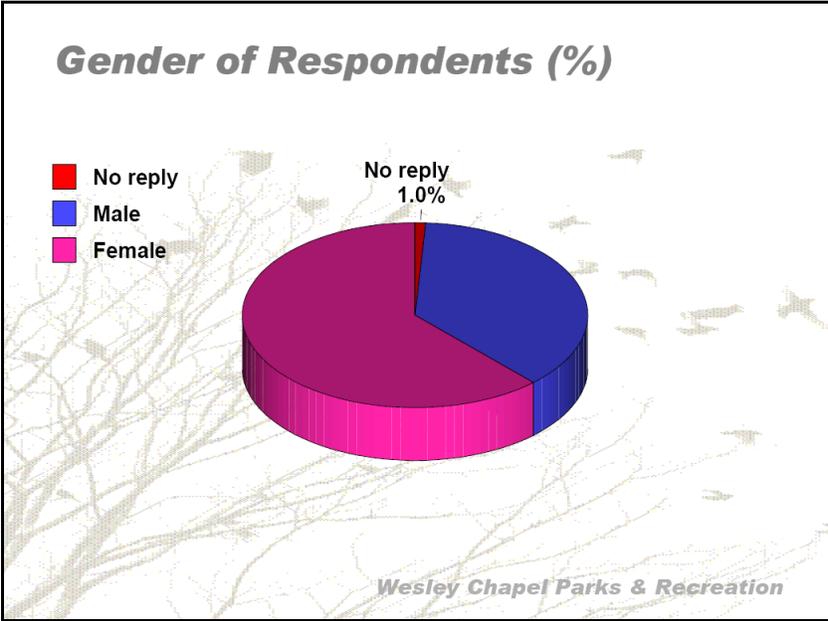
In order to ensure that our survey data represents opinions of residents with a similar demographic profile to our general population, we gathered data on age, gender, ethnicity, family size, general age group of children in the household, whether the household was in a subdivision and if the household had any members with disabilities or special needs.

The chart to the right compares the demographic age profile of survey respondents to those of our general population as described in detail in the “Demographic Community Profile” section. This comparison confirms that the survey data is a good model for the general population.



The graph to the left represents the ethnicity of the respondents to the survey. While close, this data does not exactly match the general population as presented in the “Demographic Community Profile” section, which indicates a higher percentage (around 5%) of African Americans and Hispanics. This may be due to the fact that the three mile radius study of the general population

encompasses a larger area than the Wesley Chapel municipal limits. Also, some households with multi-cultural families may have chosen the ethnicity of the respondent without indicating the ethnicity of the spouse and children.



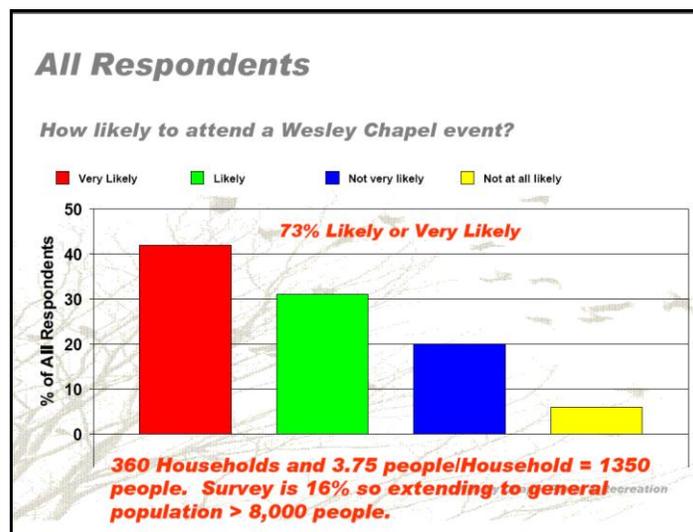
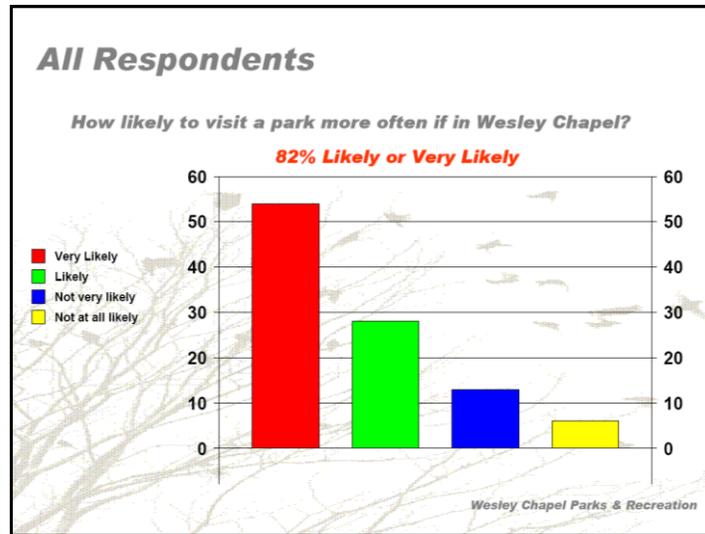
Census data for our general area indicates an almost even split of males and females within our population, but our survey results indicate that a higher percentage of females than males filled out the surveys. This may in part be due to a higher percentage of women than men working inside the home or pursuing jobs that allow them to pick up and drop children off from school, thus making them more likely to pick up the mail and fill out the survey. In any case the survey responses are intended to reflect the desires of the entire household, so the discrepancy in gender demographics should not compromise the results of the survey or their reflection of the overall desires of the community.

Charts detailing other demographic data from the survey can be found in Appendix B.

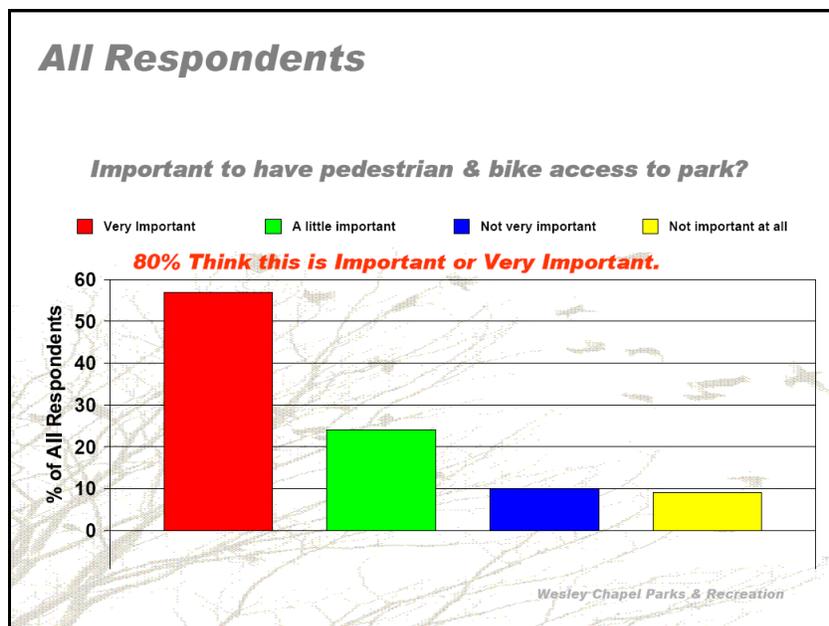
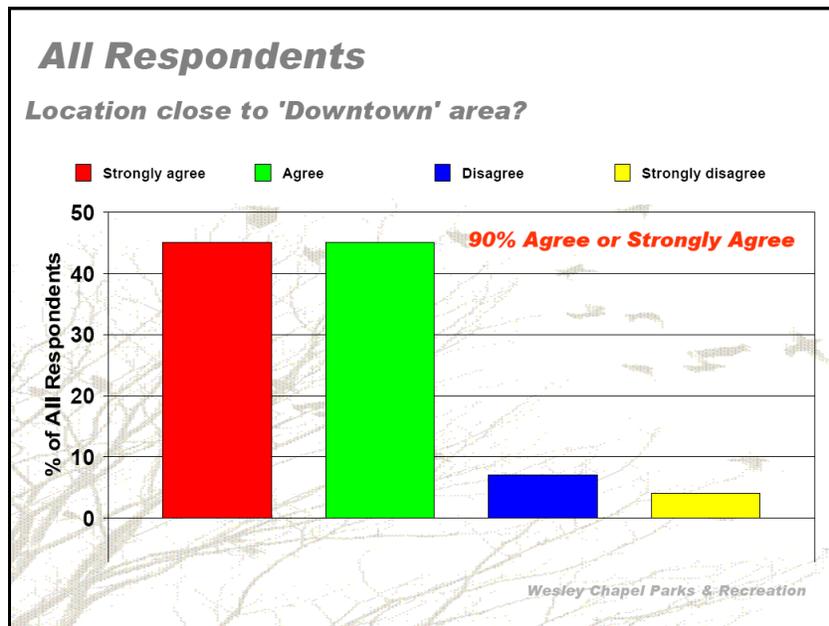
## Respondents' General Parks & Recreation Interests

Survey respondents were asked some general questions relevant to our parks and recreation planning process.

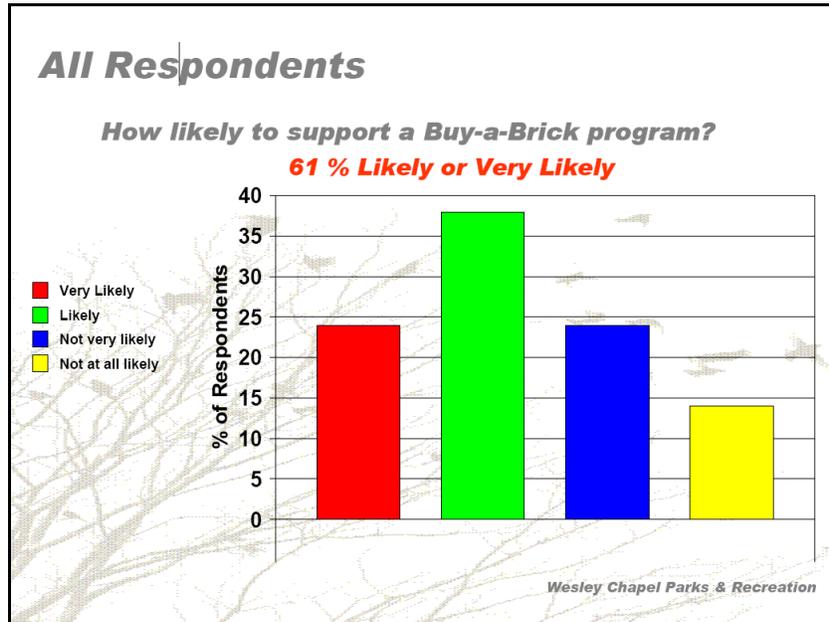
Several questions addressed the likelihood that respondents would use Wesley Chapel parks or recreation facilities. The charts below clearly show that a majority of residents would be likely or very likely to use Wesley Chapel parks instead of distant facilities to which they currently drive. The environmental and economic impacts of this trend are discussed in more detail in the section “Where and When Residents Currently Participate in Recreation”.



Two questions were asked specific to accessibility of a park facility: the first regarding location of the park relative to our Town Center and the second regarding access to the park for pedestrians and bikes. As can be seen in the charts below, residents showed a strong preference to have the park located central to the Village and accessible from surrounding subdivisions by bikes or walking trails. Sidewalks and greenways creating pedestrian connectivity therefore need to be incorporated into the planning process to satisfy this criterion.

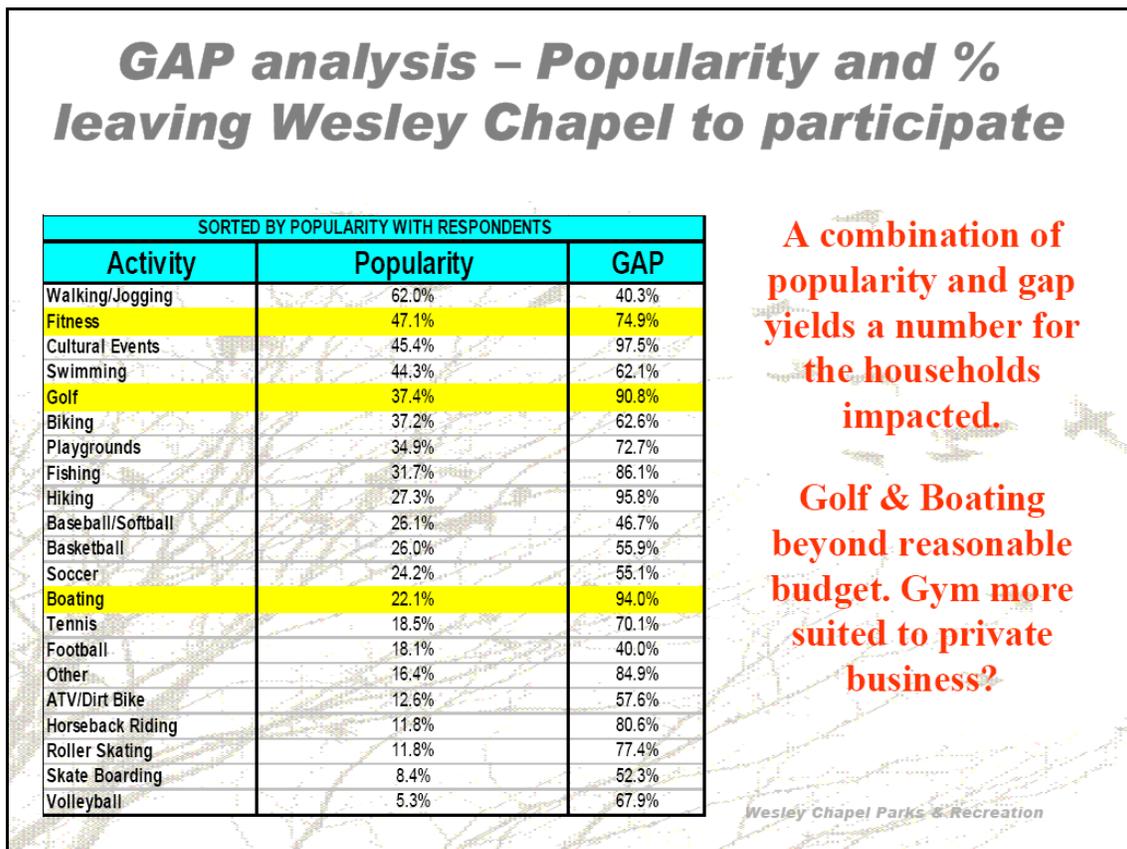


Respondents were also asked how likely they would be to support a ‘buy-a-brick program to help fund parks and recreation development. As the chart below shows, a majority would consider supporting a buy-a-brick program.



## Gap Analysis

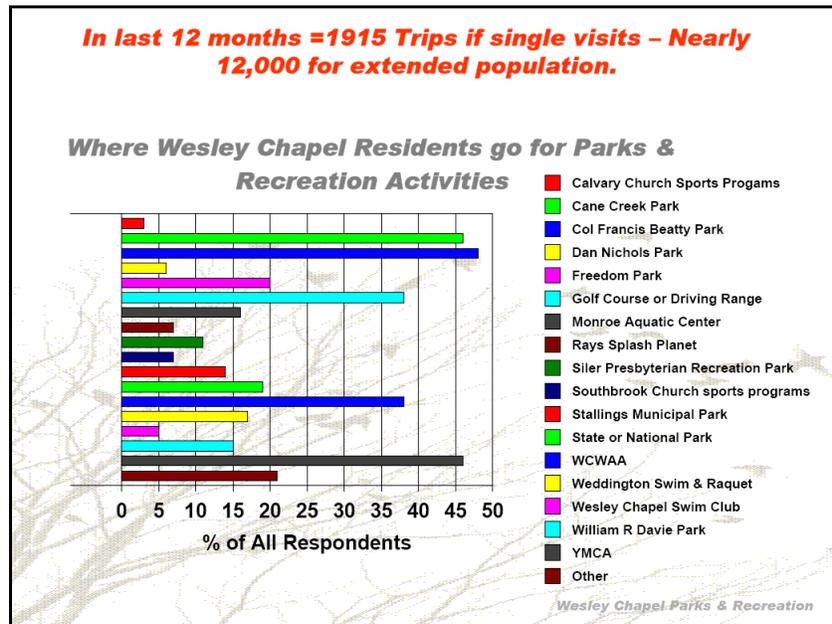
Respondents were asked which of 20 common activities members of their household regularly participate in and whether they travel outside of Wesley Chapel to do so. The responses to these questions are ordered based on the most popular activities. The ‘gap’ is illustrated by the % of residents participating in an activity but traveling outside of Wesley Chapel to do so. To take Walking/Jogging as an example, this activity is pursued by 62% of respondents; of those respondents, 40% leave the Village to walk or jog. In contrast, attending Cultural Events is popular with 45% of respondents, but 98% of them leave the Village to pursue this interest because we do not currently offer cultural events within our Village limits.



Since Wesley Chapel has no parks, recreation or cultural event facilities these responses are not surprising. The data provides us with some guidance on priorities where having facilities available would have the biggest impact for our residents.

## Where and When Residents Currently Participate in Recreation

When preparing the survey, members of the Parks & Recreation Committee compiled a list of parks & recreation facilities that Wesley Chapel residents are known to visit in surrounding communities. As can be seen in the graph below, some of these proved to be much more popular than others. The popularity of these remote facilities is consistent with the popularity of the activities offered as described in the previous section.



Using features of on-line mapping tools, the distance of the most popular facilities from Wesley Chapel town center was computed.

Facility	Distance from Wesley Chapel Town Center
Cane Creek Park, Waxhaw, NC	21 miles (34 minutes)
Col. Francis Beatty Park, Matthews, NC	6 miles (12 minutes)
YMCA, Matthews, NC	7 miles (14 minutes)

We did not include the popular golf range category in the table above as individual ranges were not specified in the survey. Also, we didn't include WCWAA, which is fortunately quite close to the Town Center (less than .5 miles).

The environmental impact of our citizens driving such distances for recreation is obvious in terms of carbon emission and traffic congestion. Moreover, the data also indicates a critical economic impact. As residents are forced to leave Wesley Chapel to pursue recreational activities, they also take their tax dollars with them and are more likely to spend money outside our Village on restaurants and shopping. Locating Parks & Recreation facilities within Wesley Chapel will not only encourage residents to stay home to shop, but will also draw residents of other municipalities to enjoy our facilities and hopefully enjoy our commercial center as well.

## **Desired Amenities**

The gap analysis indicated which activities our residents currently participate in versus which of those our residents must leave the Village to pursue. For planning purposes, however, we also presented a more comprehensive list of activities and asked residents to indicate their level of interest in each.

The chart on the following page indicates the community level of interest in each amenity, ranked by order of strongest interest. The Positive column indicates the number of “Very Interested” and “Somewhat Interested” responses, while the Negative column indicates those “Not Interested” and “Not At All Interested.”

It is interesting to note that many of the sports related amenities were only of moderate to low interest to the community. This is doubtless because of the excellent sports programs already available through organizations like WCWAA.

It is also interesting that despite the rural character of the area, equestrian trails and ATV trails were the least popular amenities. As our community transitions to a suburban environment, the popularity of more rural activities apparently is dropping off, while the desire for amenities available in more established areas, such as safe places to walk, bike, and hike, are becoming more of a focus.

Finally, there is an obvious desire for community activities such as fairs, festivals, and music/cultural events, supported also by the desire for an amphitheatre. Although Wesley Chapel has a developing commercial center, there have been few opportunities or venues to come together as a community, except town meetings or firefighter barbeques. In 2008, the Village held a festival to honor the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our incorporation, which was very well attended. Because of a lack of available venues, we had to hold it in a partially undeveloped commercial parking lot. Between three and five hundred area residents attended the event (no tickets were required, so an accurate count is difficult), and residents have since asked when we can do it again. There is obviously a strong desire to find a way to bring our new community together.

Some of the desired amenities are not typically provided by a municipality, such as a fitness center or miniature golf. While the Village probably will not be in the business of running such facilities as we attempt to keep our tax rate low, another value of our residents as expressed through the Master Plan survey, we may be able to use these results to encourage private businesses to establish these amenities within our municipal limits. Many parents and youth express that there is little for the youth to do in the area. Community events will certainly alleviate that issue, but private recreation facilities would help as well.

## Table of Desired Amenities

	<b>Amenity</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No Reply</b>
1	Walking/Paved Trails	386	57	81
2	Music/Performing Arts	370	67	87
3	Village Fair/Festivals	354	76	94
4	Outdoor Amphitheatre	342	87	95
5	Hiking/Unpaved Trails	341	82	101
6	Community/Cultural Events	337	82	105
7	Fishing Pond	331	101	92
8	Fitness Center	329	124	71
9	Picnic/BBQ	322	105	97
10	Nature Center/Gardens	319	108	97
11	Paved Bicycle Trails	318	100	106
12	Multi-Purpose	312	106	106
13	Miniature Golf	304	130	90
14	Indoor Swimming	289	131	104
15	Playground 5-12	283	139	102
16	Basketball	257	150	117
17	Tennis Courts	254	148	122
18	Splash Water Park	251	166	107
19	Baseball/Softball	246	168	110
20	Outdoor Swimming	243	168	113
21	Dog Park	239	172	113
22	Unpaved Bicycle Trails	233	154	137
23	Shelters	229	161	134
24	Playground 2-5	223	177	124
25	Soccer Fields	221	171	132
26	Batting Cages	198	198	119
27	Volley Ball	196	176	152
28	Camping Areas	184	211	129
29	Roller Skating	163	224	137
30	Meeting Rooms	160	219	145
31	Frisbee Golf	158	228	138
32	Paintball Park	157	237	130
33	Horseshoes	148	228	148
34	Skateboard Park	119	263	142
35	ATV Trails	117	291	116
36	Equestrian Trails	115	256	153
37	Other	72	75	377

## **Pedestrian Connectivity**

Because Wesley Chapel has been predominantly rural until recently, virtually no sidewalks connect surrounding neighborhoods to the schools or Town Center, and the density and speed of traffic coupled with the lack of shoulders on many of the roads prevent safe pedestrian and bike travel.

The 2008 Master Plan, noting the importance of pedestrian connectivity to our citizens, suggested a tentative greenway plan that would interconnect the main destinations of our Village. (See Appendix C.)

Additionally, in the Fall of 2009 the Wesley Chapel Village Council voted to adopt a Local Area Regional Transportation Plan (LARTP) that it worked on with three other municipalities: Weddington, Waxhaw, and Marvin. The results of this effort focused on prioritization of road improvements but also included a comprehensive pedestrian connectivity plan implementing greenways, bike lanes, and sidewalks throughout these four municipalities.

The Village is currently collaborating with the Carolina Thread Trail and other municipalities to create and execute a comprehensive greenway plan for Union county. In partnership with this effort, the Wesley Chapel Parks & Recreation Committee will prioritize pedestrian connectivity opportunities within our Village to provide our citizens with access to schools, parks, and the commercial center without having to rely on motor vehicles. The Thread Trail is holding public information sessions to get input on their proposed trail routes in Union County during the month of January 2011.

Recognizing the complexity of this project, the Parks & Recreation Committee decided to focus on our first community park before tackling this systemic issue.

## **Recommendations**

After reviewing the results of the Spring 2009 survey, the Parks & Recreation Committee held an information session to share them with the public on September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Of the 25 citizens and 2 staff attending, the great majority, 18, were “walk-ins” not involved in any municipal committees. In addition to the survey results, the committee shared four conceptual park layouts to receive feedback on. They included a park with a fishing pond as the central feature, a large passive park, a park at the commercial center, and a sports complex.

Responses indicated the public favored the large passive park and the fishing pond park. After preparing some preliminary cost estimates, the Village Council voted on October 20, 2009 to proceed with the fishing pond park, a donated property named Page Price Park located on Highway 84 across from the Price Mill subdivision and quite close to the Wesley Chapel Elementary School. Council favored this option largely due to the property donation, which significantly reduced development costs.

The Parks & Recreation Committee, with the assistance of the Haden Stanziale design firm, successfully obtained a \$500,000 PARTF grant in May 2010 for Page Price Park. Unfortunately escalating costs related to a high hazard dam on the property and potential difficulties with a required turn lane led Council to decline the grant and the donation in order to explore other park options.

During the Fall of 2010 the Parks and Recreation Committee sent a letter to owners of parcels 15 acres or larger within Wesley Chapel and invited them to sell or donate their property as a park. Of the 20 responses received, the Committee prepared a scorecard to evaluate each parcel for its suitability based on factors ranging from the presence of high tension power lines and high hazard dams to its proximity to the Town Center and its ability to accommodate the top amenities identified by our citizens in the Parks & Recreation survey.

In November the Parks & Recreation Committee presented the top five scoring sites to Council. At the meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Village Council selected Dogwood Acres, a large wooded property close to the Town Center. This property received the highest points from the Parks & Recreation Committee and was also the favored passive site at the September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009 information session.

The Village has again contracted with Haden Stanziale to assist us with the PARTF grant process for 2011. Over 34 citizens attended a public information session for Dogwood Park on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2011, despite some lingering icy

conditions on the roads. The Committee will also offer special meetings with community groups and Home Owner Associations during the latter half of January 2011.

Other park options are still being considered. The Village acreage by the commercial center designated for a town hall may include a small park component in the future. As the Carolina Thread Trail develops its recommendations for Union County, the Parks and Recreation Committee will also explore ways to promote desired pedestrian connectivity within our Village.

The Master Plan and Parks & Recreation survey results indicate a clear mandate to provide parks and recreation services to the residents of Wesley Chapel. We will focus on using recycled materials and green friendly construction practices in order to accomplish these goals. As we move forward pursuing Parks & Recreation opportunities for the Village, we will make every effort to continue to engage the public in the design of our first park in the hopes it will provide many opportunities to bring the community together and make Wesley Chapel a desirable place both to live and visit.