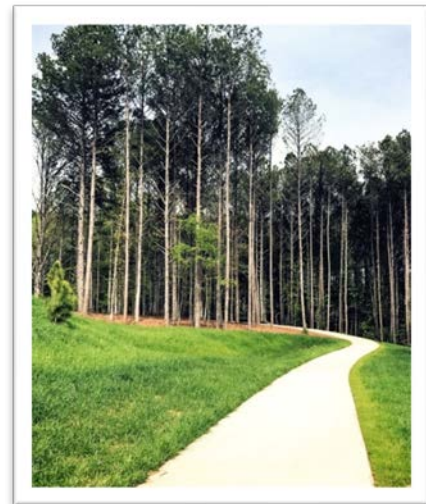




2020 - 2024

Strategic Plan

Bringing Our Vision to Life



Cherokee Recreation & Parks

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Milestones 2011 - 2020

2011

- Reorganized and Created Athletics & Recreation Programs Divisions
- Started Cherokee Youth Basketball (CYB) program
- Renovated Sequoyah Park, Union Hill Community Center

2012

- Opened Splash Pad in Cline Park
- Opened Badger Creek Park
- Renovated Hobgood Park Softball Complex

2013

- Opened Cherokee County Aquatic Center
- Renovated Blankets Creek Bike Trailhead & Parking Lot

2014

- Renovated Barnett Park, Dwight Terry Park, Hobgood Park Baseball Complex, JJ Biello Park, Recreation Center, Waleska Park, Weatherby Park

2015

- Recognized with NAYS Excellence in Youth Sports Award
- Opened Richard "Hunkey" Mauldin Sports Complex @ Kenney Askew Park

2016

- Opened Hobgood Park Artificial Turf Athletic Field

2017

- Hired first Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist
- Reorganized Parks Division into Three (3) Geographic Maintenance Zones
- Implemented Inmate Work Detail Program with Sheriff's Office
- Opened Patriots Park
- Opened Cherokee Veterans Park Phase I

2018

- Created Outdoor Recreation Program Coordinator position
- Opened Playground Addition @ Cherokee Veterans Park
- Opened Outdoor Fitness Equipment @ Hobgood Park
- Opened Monument @ Cherokee Veterans Park

2019

- Completed 2019-2028 Recreation, Parks, Green Space & Trails Master Plan
- Completed LB Ahrens Conceptual Plans
- Opened New Pavilion @ Cherokee Veterans Tennis / Pickleball Courts

- Replaced Seven (7) Vehicles in CRPA Maintenance Fleet
- Purchased 23 AC on Etowah River & Ball Ground Road for Future Park
- Launched New Website, www.playcherokee.org

2020

- Launched New Activity Guide Format - *Play Cherokee*
- Completed Renovations to Twin Creeks Softball Complex Field 3
- Completed Office Renovations at South Annex; Adding two (2) New Offices and Renovating the Conference Room
- Held First Staff Retreat Since 2013
- Redesigned Logo

Introduction

The Charge

The strategic plan will identify key priority areas and develop action plans to accomplish the goals and objectives set forth. The key priority areas are based on recommendations set forth in the 2019-2028 Cherokee County Recreation, Parks, Green Space and Trails Master Plan as well as input from stakeholders. The strategic plan will have the ability to measure different metrics and track progress toward our goals.

County Overview

Cherokee County is committed to providing a superior quality of life for our residents and to preserving the beauty, unique character, and desirability of the community where we live, work, and play. Recreation, parks, green space and trails play a vital role in maintaining a vibrant, livable community.

Located approximately forty-five minutes north of metropolitan Atlanta near the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Cherokee County encompasses more than 434 square miles. It includes six municipalities as well as most of Allatoona Lake, a 12,000-acre man-made lake managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Both the Etowah and Little Rivers flow south and west through the County and into the lake. As of 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated the County population at 254,149 and growing. The County is a unique mix of suburban living concentrated mostly in the south transitioning to rural communities in the north.

As a function of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners, Cherokee Recreation & Parks (CRPA) is the principal provider of recreation and park facilities and programs in Cherokee County. Our mission is making life better in Cherokee County by preserving our parks and facilities while creating more active and healthier communities through recreation. We operate 23 parks and recreation facilities throughout the county that encompass more than 2,443 acres including 40 baseball/softball diamonds, 27 athletic fields, 22 tennis courts, 17 playgrounds and more than 41 miles of trails. This includes the Cherokee County Aquatic Center, the South Annex Recreation Center and the Union Hill Community Center. CRPA provides a variety of recreation opportunities for youth and adults in the areas of athletics, aquatics, instructional programs, special events, older adult activities and therapeutic recreation as well as the upkeep and maintenance of our parks. We partner with a variety of other organizations throughout the county to maximize our resources and further expand recreation opportunities throughout the county.

In November 2008, Cherokee County voters were asked if the County should issue general obligation bonds up to \$90 million for the purpose of improving and expanding recreation and parks opportunities within the County. Voters overwhelmingly approved the measure and, in 2009, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners began issuing those bonds for the purpose of fulfilling the commitment to the citizens of Cherokee County.

From 2009 through 2018, the multiple projects were completed that increased and improved recreation and parks facilities in Cherokee County. These projects are listed in the Milestones section. For detailed descriptions, see the *Capital Improvement Program 2008-2018 Report*, available [online](http://www.cherokeega.com) at www.cherokeega.com.

The most recent *Cherokee County Recreation, Parks, Green Space & Trails Master Plan* was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in May 2019. This plan identified gaps in services and made recommendations for future park development and recreation services.

Based upon the current level of service, the community standards and the projected growth in the county over the next ten years, the findings from this assessment include the following recommendations.

- Develop a countywide plan for a system of Linear Parks & Greenways that connects high priority locations throughout the county and coordinates with plans for Greenways within the cities.
- Develop a multi-generational Recreation Center at Cherokee Veterans Park.
- Develop a Community Park in the southwest portion of Cherokee County on property already available for this purpose.
- Develop additional synthetic multipurpose athletic fields by converting natural grass fields in existing parks.
- As part of any new active park, the county should consider adding the following facilities that show a deficit over the next ten years; Rectangular Athletic Fields (football, soccer, lacrosse) including synthetic and natural turf; Running Track; Tennis & Pickleball Courts and a Skate Park.
- Develop canoe/kayak launches at strategic points along the Etowah and Little Rivers.
- Develop more parks that are passive and/or expand existing passive parks. The county should continue to develop the following amenities that show a deficit over the next ten years; Dog Parks; Trails; Canoe/Kayak launches and Disc Golf Courses.
- Develop pickleball courts to meet the growing demand.
- Renovate those parks that were not improved under the most recent capital improvement program.
- Develop a multi-generational recreation center in the southwest portion of the county to serve this growing and underserved population with indoor recreation space.
- Develop a Community or Regional Park at the Thacker Property.
- Develop a Community or Regional Park at the Yellow Creek Road Property along with a canoe/kayak launch and other passive amenities.
- Seek to acquire land for Neighborhood and Community Parks in areas where service gaps exist and growth is expected to continue.

Additionally, the plan identifies and recommends several operational improvements.

- Develop a Cost Recovery, Resource Allocation Plan and Revenue Policy for CRPA.
- Update Maintenance Standards for Parks.
- Expand programming in areas identified through the community survey.
- Pursue CAPRA Accreditation.
- Hire additional staff and increase operations budget as new facilities come online.

For detailed recommendations on both capital and operations, see the full master plan available [online](http://www.cherokeega.com) at www.cherokeega.com.

Scope & Scale

The *2020 - 2024 Strategic Plan* provides a comprehensive set of objectives and action plans enabling Cherokee Recreation and Parks to move forward in accomplishing our mission and bring our vision to life. This strategic plan covers a five-year period (2020 - 2024); however, given the complex and fast-changing nature of our county, CRPA staff along with the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Advisory Board (CCRP) will review this document annually and update it as needed to adapt agency resources in response to or in anticipation of changing conditions.

The current version of this plan was reviewed and adopted by CCRP Advisory Board at their June 10, 2020 meeting and by the Board of Commissioners at their July 7, 2020 meeting.

Stakeholders

The audience for this strategic Plan document remains Cherokee County stakeholders. They include, but are not limited to:

- Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
- County Staff
- Cherokee County Recreation & Parks Advisory Board
- Cherokee County Residents
- Other Park User Groups



Mission, Vision & Values

Our Mission: Making life better in Cherokee County by preserving our parks and facilities while creating more active and healthier communities through recreation.

Our Vision: Cherokee Recreation & Parks Agency, a distinguished leader in the parks and recreation field, provides a diverse system of high-quality public parks, recreation facilities and programs enabling Cherokee County to remain the place to visit, live, work and play.

Our Values:

- Service with Integrity
- Accessibility & Inclusion
- Stewardship & Sustainability
- Quality & Continuous Improvement
- Health & Safety
- A Sense of Community
- Fun & Play



Priorities

Summary

Priority	Actions
Develop high priority parks and recreation facilities as recommended in the current master plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 Complete design, permitting, bidding and construction of the LB Ahrens Recreation Center at Cherokee Veterans Park.1.2 Complete small area plan for parks and trails in southwest Cherokee.1.3 Complete site plan for new property on Highway 372 & Etowah River.1.4 Complete evaluation of Old Hickory Flat gym for renovation.1.5 Add a dog park in north Cherokee County.1.6 Add shade structures to parks.1.7 Convert natural grass athletic fields to artificial turf.
Improve the maintenance and overall appearance of parks & facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">2.1 Reduce the overall maintenance workload by identifying areas in parks where low maintenance, natural settings are appropriate.2.2 Create and staff a fourth maintenance zone for the northwest quadrant of the county.2.3 Increase covered and indoor storage for park maintenance materials and equipment.2.4 Replace or renovate aging playgrounds.2.5 Evaluate Riverchase Park for conversion to unprogrammed green space.
Increase available operating and capital funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">3.1 Complete an evaluation of athletic field use fees with recommended changes to be approved by the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board.3.2 Work with Cherokee County Planning Department to evaluate and update Impact Fee schedule.3.3 Add more seating and cabanas at the Cherokee County Aquatic Center Oasis.3.4 Pursue grant opportunities.
Expand programming and recreation opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">4.1 Add outdoor programming opportunities.4.2 Increase summer camp opportunities.4.3 Evaluate undeveloped properties for hunting and/other outdoor recreation components.4.4 Work with Property Management to develop a plan to renovate South Annex kitchen/concession area into kitchen/programming space.4.5 Develop soft-surface nature trails at Cherokee Veterans Park.
Ensure continued viability of the organization through organizational improvements, staff development, fiscal responsibility and public awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5.1 Achieve national accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).5.2 Complete a marketing study and branding effort that includes a new agency logo, brand guide and annual marketing plan.5.3 Update existing signs in county parks to new standards and logos.5.4 Increase the number of staff members that hold professional certifications.5.5 Complete a Cost Recovery Plan.5.6 Prioritize parks & facilities for increased security based on vulnerabilities including honor boxes and history of vandalism.5.7 Work with stakeholders in the community to form a non-profit parks foundation that will support the efforts of the agency.

Priority Area 1

Goal -

Develop high priority parks and recreation facilities as recommended in the current master plan.

Actions -

- 1.1 Complete design, permitting, bidding and construction of the LB Ahrens Recreation Center at Cherokee Veterans Park.
- 1.2 Complete small area plan for parks and trails in southwest Cherokee.
- 1.3 Complete site plan for new property on Highway 372 & Etowah River.
- 1.4 Complete evaluation of Old Hickory Flat gym for renovation.
- 1.5 Add a dog park in north Cherokee County.
- 1.6 Add shade structures to parks.
- 1.7 Convert natural grass athletic fields to artificial turf.

Key Performance Measures

- Submit Construction Documents for Phase I of LB Ahrens Recreation Center at Cherokee Veterans Park by July 31, 2020.
- Complete construction and open LB Ahrens Recreation Center at Cherokee Veterans Park by October 1, 2021.
- Complete the SW Cherokee Parks and Trails plan by December 2020.
- Hire consultant to complete site plan for Highway 372 property by August 30, 2020.
- Complete the evaluation of the Old Hickory Flat gym and make a recommendation on the viability of the project by August 1, 2020.
- Submit concept plan to GA-DNR to convert Buffington Park into a dog park in June 2020.
- Complete 1st phase of Buffington dog park within 9 months of GA-DNR and NPS approval.
- Complete Business Plan for LB Ahrens Recreation Center and present to the Advisory Board by October and to the Board of Commissioners by December 2020.
- Add one (1) prototypical pavilion to Cherokee Veterans playground area and two (2) or more shade structures to Hobgood Park Softball Complex in FY21.
- Complete a feasibility study and cost estimate to convert Sequoyah Park athletic field to artificial, increase parking and add high mast sports field lighting in FY21.

Priority Area 2

Goal -

Improve the maintenance and overall appearance of parks & facilities.

Actions -

- 2.1 Reduce the overall maintenance workload by identifying areas in parks where low maintenance, natural settings are appropriate.
- 2.2 Create and staff a fourth maintenance zone for the northwest quadrant of the county.
- 2.3 Increase covered and indoor storage for park maintenance materials and equipment.
- 2.4 Replace or renovate aging playgrounds.
- 2.5 Evaluate Riverchase Park for conversion to unprogrammed green space.

Key Performance Measures

- Complete an audit of existing parkland with recommendations for creating low maintenance and naturalized areas that will reduce the highly maintained acres by 10% by March 2022.
- Complete an inventory of playgrounds with recommended replacement schedule by March 2021.
- Complete a feasibility study with cost estimate to construct a small regional maintenance facility at Weatherby Park, along with equipment needs and costs and personnel costs by September 2021.
- Create a prioritized project list for indoor and covered storage area(s) for each park maintenance facilities with a proposed construction schedule by March 2022.
- Complete a traffic study at Riverchase Park by August 2020. Based on this study, provide a recommendation to the advisory board by October 2020 on the feasibility and cost savings associated with converting Riverchase Park to unprogrammed green space.

Priority Area 3

Goal -

Increase available operating and capital funds.

Actions -

3.1 Complete an evaluation of athletic field use fees with recommended changes to be approved by the Recreation & Parks Advisory Board.

3.2 Work with Cherokee County Planning Department to evaluate and update Impact Fee schedule.

3.3 Add more seating and cabanas at the Cherokee County Aquatic Center Oasis.

3.4 Pursue grant opportunities.

3.5 Complete L.B. Ahrens Business Plan that will identify new revenue streams.

Key Performance Measures

- Present advisory board with recommendations on athletic use fees by June 2020.
- Present Impact Fee Update with recommendations to the Board of Commissioners by second quarter 2021.
- Add two (2) more cabanas to Oasis pool deck before summer 2021.
- Submit grant application to Georgia Outdoor Stewardship program for the development of the Hwy 372 property during the 2021-2022 funding cycle.
- Complete Business Plan for LB Ahrens Recreation Center and present to the Advisory Board by October and to the Board of Commissioners by December 2020.

Priority Area 4

Goal -

Expand programming and recreation opportunities.

Actions -

4.1 Add outdoor programming opportunities.

4.2 Increase summer camp opportunities.

4.3 Evaluate undeveloped properties for hunting and/other outdoor recreation components.

4.4 Work with Property Management to develop a plan to renovate South Annex kitchen/concession area into kitchen/programming space.

4.5 Develop soft-surface nature trails at Cherokee Veterans Park.

Key Performance Measures

- Increase outdoor programming by 100%+ by 2023.
- Increase Adventures Express Camp by 100% by 2023 (3 more).
- Complete a hunting and outdoor recreation component study with recommendations by March 2021 and begin implementation by October 2021.
- Develop a plan and budget to for the renovation of the South Annex Recreation Center kitchen/concession area by January 2021.
- Flag route(s) for Cherokee Veterans Park nature trails by February 2021. Develop at least one (1) mile of soft trails by February 2022.

Priority Area 5

Goal -

Ensure continued viability of the organization through organizational improvements, staff development, fiscal responsibility and public awareness.

Actions -

5.1 Achieve national accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

5.2 Complete a marketing study and branding effort that includes a new agency logo, brand guide and annual marketing plan.

5.3 Update existing signs in county parks to new standards and logos.

5.4 Increase the number of staff members that hold professional certifications.

5.5 Complete a Cost Recovery Plan.

5.6 Prioritize Parks & Facilities for Increased Security based on Vulnerabilities including Honor Boxes and History of Vandalism.

5.7 Work with stakeholders in the community to form a non-profit parks foundation that will support the efforts of the agency.

Key Performance Measures

- Complete and submit self-assessment report to CAPRA by January 30, 2021. Host CAPRA Site Visit in April 2021.
- Complete Brand Guide and Marketing Plan by September 2020.
- By December 2020, develop a list of all park signage and a prioritized plan to replace all signs by the end of 2024.
- Train at least one (1) Certified Trail Builder by September 2021. Add one (1) more by September 2022.
- Hire or train a Certified Spray Tech in FY22 to implement a plan and improve upon our curb appeal beyond the athletic field fences.
- Have all CRPA leadership team members achieve Certified Parks & Recreation Professional status by December 2020.
- Complete Cost Recovery Plan and present to advisory board at December 2020 meeting and to the Board of Commissioners by January 2021.
- Complete a prioritized list of parks and facilities where enhanced security is needed along with recommended types of security and implementation schedule by March 2023.
- Work with County Attorney to create Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, with IT department to create domain name and website tools, and key public figures to develop a non-profit parks foundation by October 2022.