

2

the plan & the community



OVERVIEW

The Town of Holly Springs (the Town) is a little more than 17 square miles and extends urban services to an extraterritorial jurisdiction that extends more than 13 miles outward. In 2019, the Town updated section one- Future Land Use and Community Character, as part of the Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan. Vision Holly Springs, the Town's Comprehensive Plan, serves as a policy guide on future land use; transportation; parks, recreation and open space; community character; business development; community facilities; infrastructure and utilities; and natural resources. This Parks, Recreation and Greenway Master Plan (the Plan) will replace the current section 3- "Beyond the Green" within the Vision Holly Springs document that will help guide future growth and asset management while preserving the small-town community feel that Holly Springs' residents love.

The Holly Springs Parks and Recreation Department provides excellent parks, facilities and recreation services to the community with committed staff, diverse amenities, a diverse array of athletic, life skills, and arts and culture programming, and community events. It maintains six parks, a nature center, cultural center, recreation center, athletic fields and more than 12 miles of trails. The Department prides itself on providing exceptional programs and amenities. Holly Springs is also home to the Holly Springs Salamanders, a collegiate summer baseball team which began play in 2015 as part of the Coastal Plain League.

The Town has received many awards and accolades over the past decade. It has been ranked the safest municipality consistently since 2004. The Town's Farmers Market, which is run by the Department, has consistently been voted as a top farmers market in North Carolina and the United States by the American Farmland Trust. The Town received an award for 2007 Pedestrian Transportation Plan as well as 2018 Great Main Street in the Making award from the N.C. Chapter of the American Planning Association. Most recently, it ranked 5th in best places to raise a family and 4th in best places to live.

Some of the noteworthy achievements of the Holly Springs Parks and Recreation Department include:

- 2012 - Acquired Sugg Farm, 100-acre park
- 2015 - Opened Ting Park (formerly North Main Athletic Complex), 1700 seat multi-sport stadium
- 2016 - Launched new registration software (RecTrac)
- 2019 - Farmers Market in NC, by American Farmland Trust
- 2020 - Acquired new park land (55.9 acres), west of Highway 55 along Cass Holt Road

The last Parks and Recreation Master Plan, “Beyond the Green”, was completed in 2007. Holly Springs has seen significant growth and changes since this plan including change in demographics, land development within and around Holly Springs, as well as community’s needs and trends. The plan update comes at a critical point when the Town is investing in other planning efforts to envision its future.

The Parks and Recreation Department established three overarching principles for developing the new parks, recreation and greenways master plan- **“connect, inspire and play”**.

CONNECT

Physically connecting our parks through new greenways ... Bringing people together through new programming opportunities ... Connecting us to nature while preserving and celebrating it.

INSPIRE

Supporting new programs and facilities that encourage people of all ages to try something new.

PLAY

Exploring the many ways we play, including the visual and performance arts ... Increasing options for recreation close to where people live ... Providing thoughtful and innovative programming for people of all abilities.



This comprehensive parks, recreation, and greenways master plan will:

- ▶ Replace the previous Parks and Recreation Master Plan as an update to the Town-wide comprehensive planning effort;
- ▶ Coordinate with the coinciding Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) update to replace the 2007 Bicycle Transportation Plan and Chapter 4: Bicycle and Pedestrian Element of the 2011 Comprehensive Transportation Plan (Adopted in 2011, and updated in 2013 & 2017) in an effort to unify the planning of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Town;
- ▶ Define the role that the park and recreation system will play in the future of Holly Springs;
- ▶ Provide a framework for the Department to address the Town’s rapid growth;
- ▶ Accommodate additional demand new residents generate while evolving to meet emerging recreation trends;
- ▶ Qualify to access certain state and national funding sources required to improve and expand the system by having a comprehensive plan adopted within the past 10 years;
- ▶ Guide improvements to parkland and facilities, programming, operations and maintenance, finance and budget and greenways and trails;
- ▶ Develop a resource for officials and the public alike to understand current park and facility offerings and learn about the future direction of the Department;
- ▶ Develop the action and implementation plan to aid the decision makers with a framework to guide, validate and prioritize project implementation.



Figure 1- Diagram explaining the master plan components

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PURPOSE + PROCESS

Comprehensive planning provides the information a town requires to make informed, equitable and responsible decisions for meeting diverse community needs. Some of the reasons for pursuing a comprehensive planning process include the following:

 <p>Qualify for State and Federal grant funding opportunities</p>	 <p>Validate decisions related to parks and recreation</p>	 <p>Catalog community needs and wants</p>
 <p>Create a 10-year work plan for department staff</p>	 <p>Engage community, staff, stakeholders and decision makers</p>	 <p>Generate population-based goals for new parkland, trails and more</p>
 <p>Benchmark against other agencies to inform department goals</p>	 <p>Identify and resolve gaps and deficiencies</p>	 <p>Prioritize goals for a 10-year planning horizon</p>

Figure 2 – Reasons for pursuing master planning process

Comprehensive planning provides a structure for evaluating the needs and setting priorities. The planning process captures the status of the Department at a moment in time, creates a vision for the future and identifies steps to achieve that vision. The plan will guide the Department's decisions and priorities for the next 10 years.

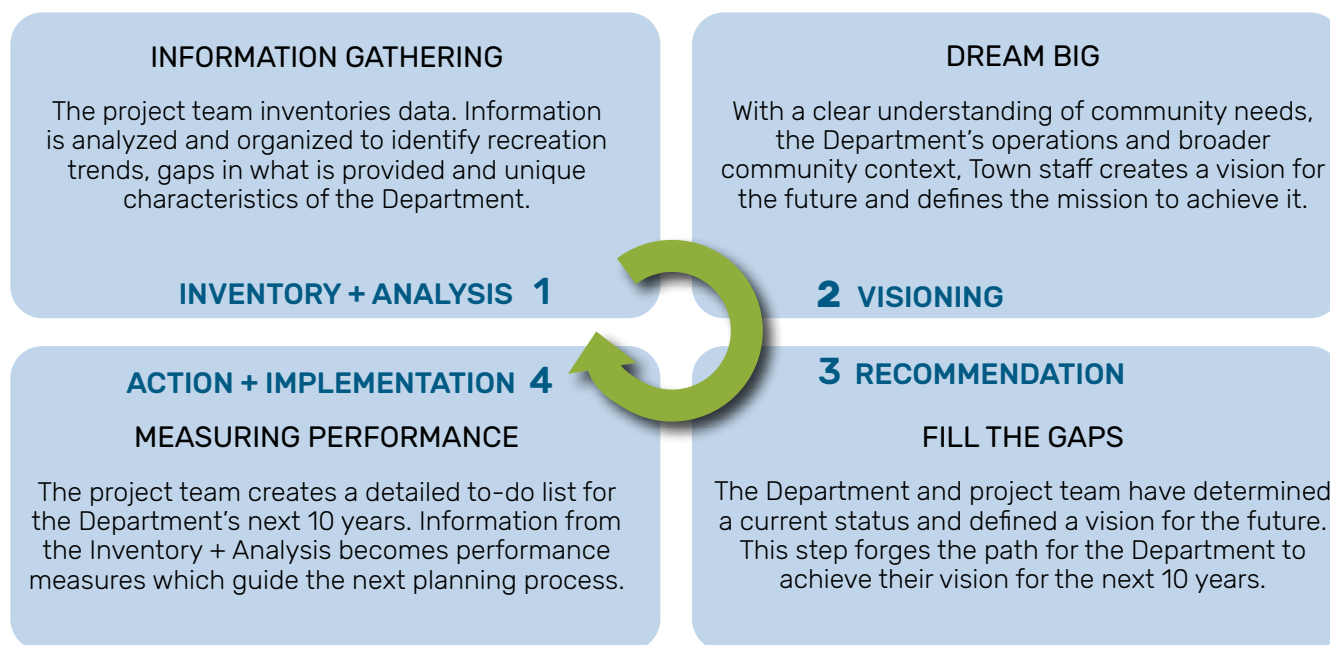


Figure 3- Diagram explaining the master planning process

PLAN OUTLINE

This plan is based on robust community and staff engagement and data-driven recommendations determined through an analytical approach. From the initial inventory and analysis through the recommendations and action and implementation plan, the team engaged stakeholders, special interest focus groups, and acknowledged local, regional and national recreation needs and trends, demographic shifts and agency performance. The project team studied current facilities and programs to evaluate the overall operational successes and challenges of the Department and its mission. Finally, the project team alongside Department staff developed a set of guiding principles that prioritize recommendations to improve recreational offerings and meet growing expectations from an increasing population.

This 2020 Parks and Recreation and Greenways Master Plan includes the following components:

The Plan and The Community

The project team reviewed the planning context of the Town's Parks and Recreation Department to understand past planning efforts and the Department's evolution. Comprehensive plans, specific park master plans and long-range recreation planning were reviewed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the plans that guide the growth and development of the Town. It is the goal of this plan that the recommendations presented herein will be seamlessly integrated with other Town plans.

The project team completed a demographic and trends analysis to consider national and local recreation trends and cross-referenced Census data with the Town's demographic data and national publications to draw conclusions about current and future recreation trends and participation levels.

Inventory and Analysis

The inventory and analysis takes a full account of the existing parks and recreation and greenway system. The inventory and analysis chapter covers parkland and facilities, programming, arts and culture, operations and maintenance, finance and budget, and greenways and trails.

Vision and Guiding Principles

Visioning allows Department staff to develop a future direction for the department and each of its component parts. Guiding principles are developed based on community engagement and information gathered through research and inventory and analysis process. The visioning session validates the guiding principles that inform the creation of recommendations. Each of this plan's recommendations and action items are in service to achieving this vision.

Community Engagement

The project team performed a robust public engagement process which gathered input through staff, stakeholder groups, focus groups and community meetings. The process was designed to be transparent, equitable and engage the widest range of residents possible. The engagement plan consisted of virtual public meetings, focus group meetings, steering committee meetings, scientific surveys, online engagement, and several collaborative meetings with Town staff as well as meetings with neighboring agencies.

Benchmarking and Level of Service

Benchmarking and level of service evaluate current and future needs for park acreage, greenway trail mileage, and operational standards compared to national standards, best practices and peer agencies. These metrics are population based to allow the department to expand to meet future demand for parks and recreation services. The level of service standard includes current and future standards for parkland, facilities and trails.

Benchmarking communities provide a comparison for the existing state of the Department's amenities and informs level of service standards for the ten-year planning horizon. Metrics for parks, trails, parkland acreage, staffing and budget are evaluated for each benchmarked community which informs the development of an appropriate level of service standard specific to the Town. Such standards are normalized by population so target metrics can evolve to meet demands of the rapid population growth Holly Springs is experiencing.

Recommendations and Action + Implementation Plan

The recommendations and prioritized implementation plan provide a framework to guide park, facility, open space, greenways, programming, and operational improvements for the future. It is structured to guide decision making for Department policy. Each recommendation is further prioritized as short term (1-3 years), mid-term (3-7 years) or long-term (7-10+). Criteria for recommendation prioritization vary based on the context and criteria may range from land availability to financial implications but are firmly rooted in community preferences.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Historic Context

Town of Holly Springs is a community with more than 150 years of history. Tuscarora Indians had occupied the area prior to European settlements. Since acquiring its charter in 1877, the Town will be celebrating its official 150th anniversary in 2027. The town was constructed around the freshwater springs amid mature holly trees from which it received its name. One of the important pieces of Holly Springs history is the contribution and commitment of the African American community and leadership in setting the town on the path of success and moving it forward during the challenges of wars and great depression era. Historically a small commercial hub in an agricultural area of the state, Holly Springs has retained elements of its rural history in the form of its natural resources and low-density suburban development pattern.



Figure 4- Historic Holly Springs Depot. Source: Holly Springs Area Historical Society

There are three properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) including the Leslie-Alford-Mims House, the Holly Springs Masonic Lodge, and the Samuel Bartley Holleman House, located at Hollemans Crossroads. The Town has developed a master plan for passive recreation opportunities for Mims property.

Regional Context

The Town of Holly Springs' location in the context of its proximity to cities like Durham and Raleigh, and major employment hub of Research Triangle Park, the RDU airport, and connectivity to the greater region via NC 540 Triangle Expressway, Highway 55, and US Highway 1 have contributed significantly to the Town's exponential growth in the last decade. Many new residential developments have been permitted to accommodate the influx of new residents wanting to make Holly Springs home. In addition, Holly Springs business park expansion and investment in downtown business development has sparked a wave of new local as well as international businesses coming to the Town. In 2017, Holly Springs became the first town in North Carolina to become a Certified Entrepreneurial Community that is attracting entrepreneurs from all over the state to launch their unique and creative businesses.

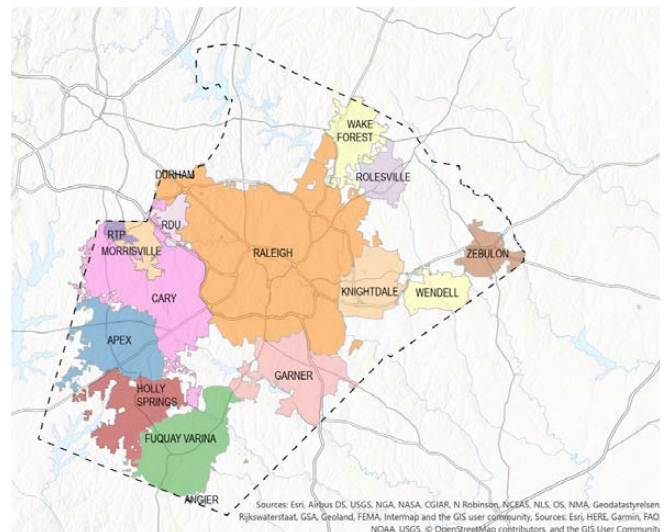


Figure 5- Municipalities in Wake County

NATURAL RESOURCES

Holly Springs is located in the piedmont region of North Carolina and exhibits many natural features typical of this area. The ridge line that separates the Cape Fear and Neuse River Basins runs right through the Town. Approximately 20 percent of the area is within Neuse River basin and 80 percent is within Cape Fear River basin. Presence of an inactive fault line known as the Jonesboro Fault lies just east of Highway 55, close to downtown area, has created a distinct geology for the eastern versus western Holly Springs. Utley Creek, part of the Cape Fear River watershed, runs through the southeastern portion of town and flows into Shearon Harris Reservoir, one of the town's most well-known natural features. Area around Shearon Harris Lake is forested land mainly owned by Duke Energy. Middle Creek, Little Branch and a few other unnamed tributaries through the Town. The majority of the Town's floodplain area is within the stream buffer zones.

The typical piedmont flora in Holly Springs comprises of pines, oaks, maples, sweet gum, sycamore, and red cedar. A signature resource area identified in the western region, close to the Harris Lake, is Long Leaf Pine Forest. While there are many federally listed wildlife species identified in the Wake County region, the two state listed species found within Holly Springs are Eastern Tiger Salamander and the Dwarf Wedgemussel. The Town has established a 40 acre preserve in the floodplain area along Middle Creek, north of Holly Springs Road. Bass Lake is stocked with catfish by the Town and is known as a key fish habitat in Wake County.

Continued growth and new developments coming up in Holly Springs are putting pressure on the preservation of natural resources. The Town has some key ordinances in place to save the riparian buffers, floodplain management, open space preservation requirements and stormwater quality and quantity management.

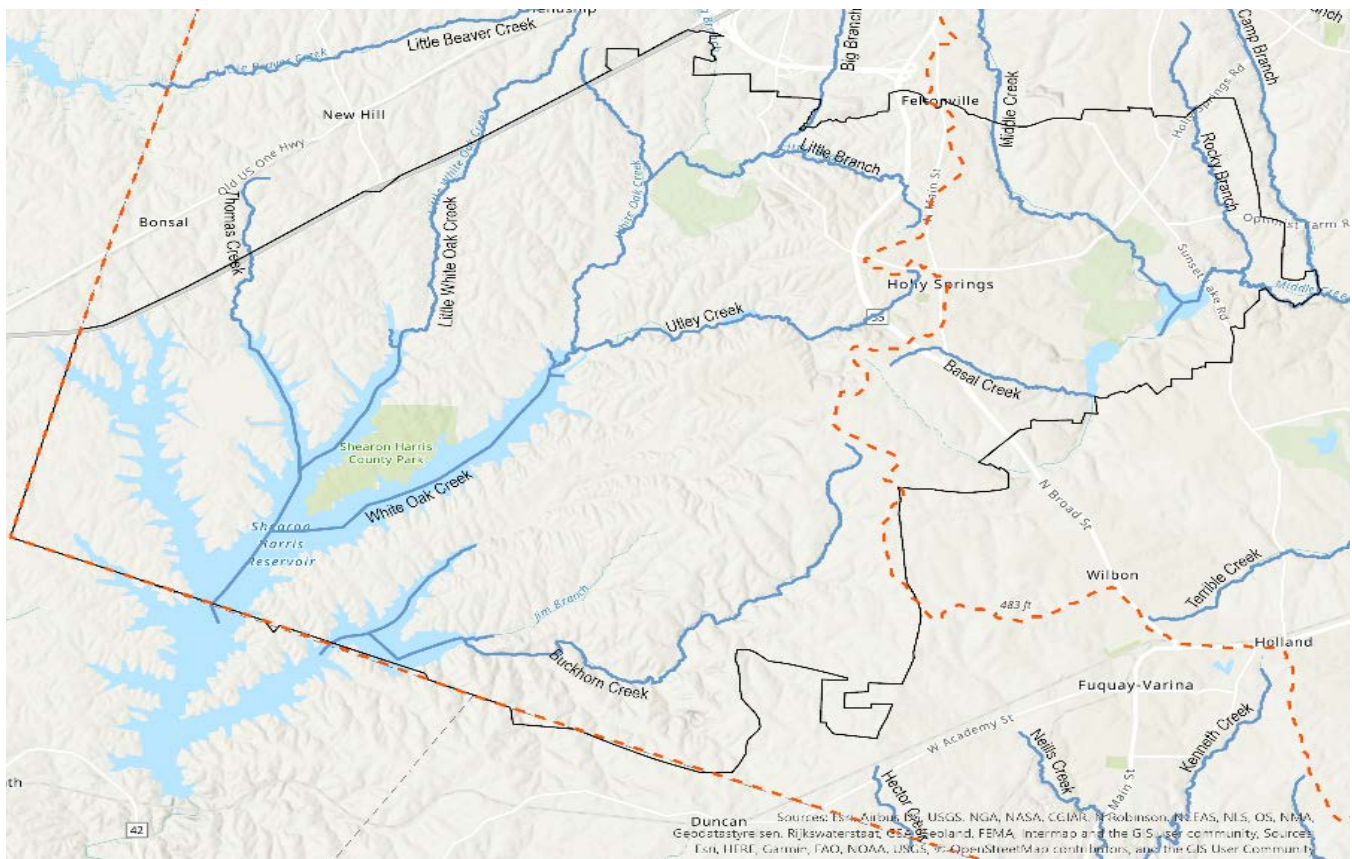


Figure 6- Hydrology within the Holly Springs area

PLANNING CONTEXT

Town-wide areas of growth, current planning documents and development ordinances all form the planning context in which this plan was developed. This master plan is responsive to the existing policies, Town-wide planning efforts and regional growth patterns that influence Town of Holly Springs now and in the future.

Growth Centers

Town of Holly Springs Development Services Department has 21 projects approved for construction drawings, close to 60 projects or project phases under construction and more than 30 development applications under review as of January 2021. Many of the new projects under review or under construction are located west of Highway 55. There are some annexation projects in the pipeline as well which include mixed use commercial development, residential developments, and a new Wake County school site in the western part of the Town.

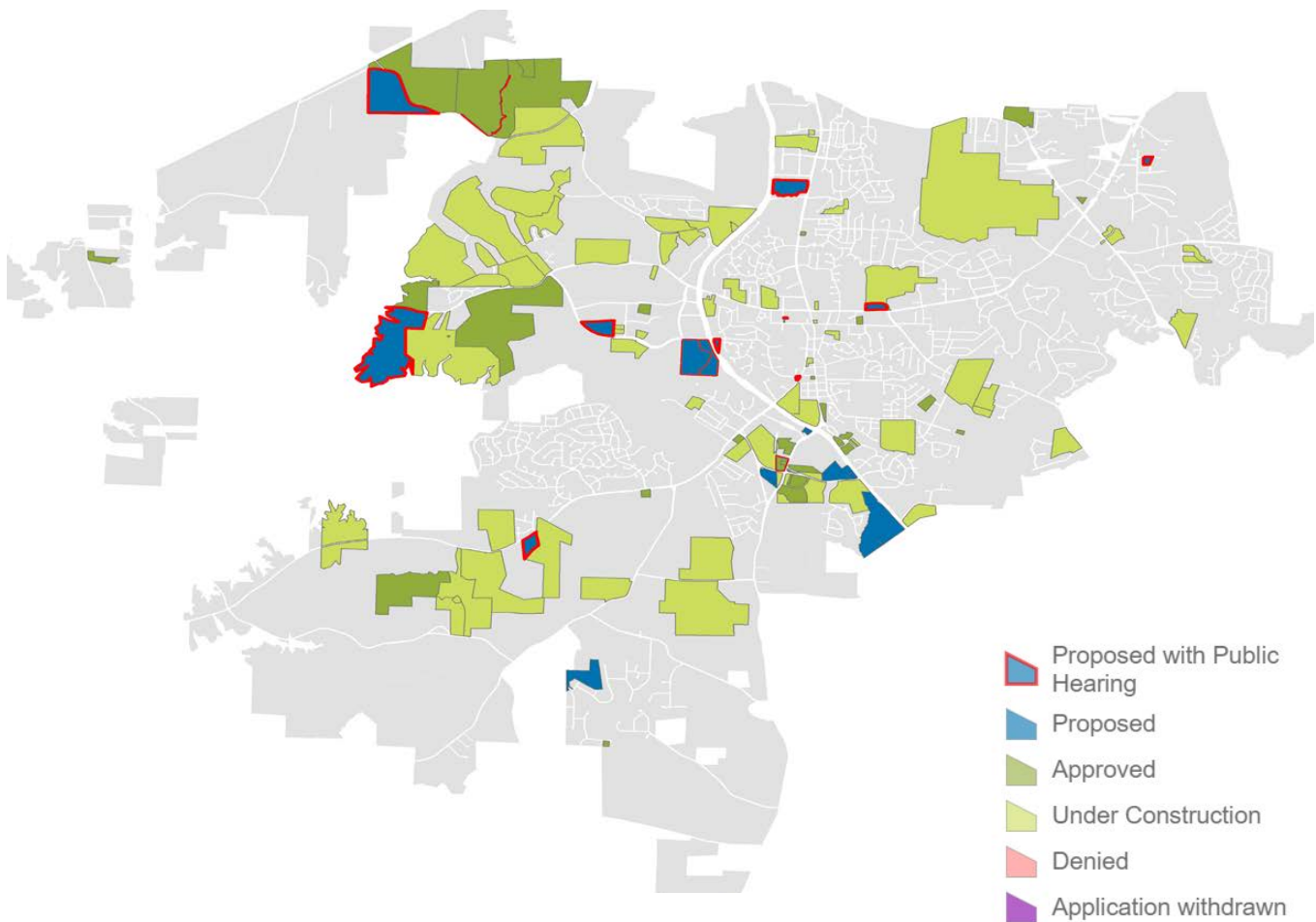
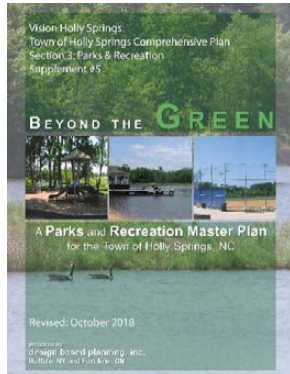


Figure 7- Source: Town of Holly Springs Planning Department
Interactive Development Map (Snapshot taken as of January 2021)

Related Planning Documents

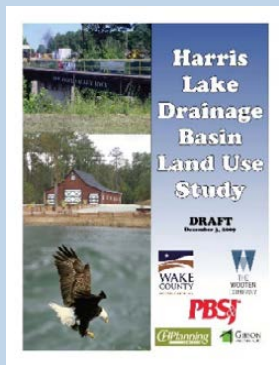
The following represents a summary of planning documents that guide growth and development throughout Town.

<p>TOWN OF HOLLY SPRINGS FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN</p> <p>Adopted April 10, 2019</p>	<p>The strategic plan is identified as a ‘roadmap’ to the Town’s vision and strategic priority areas. The priority areas include economic prosperity and diversity; engaged, healthy and active community; organizational excellence; responsible and balanced growth; safe and friendly community. Specifically, under the engaged, healthy, and active community priority area, the plan focuses on expanding the Town’s comprehensive system of sustainable facilities, greenways, and park spaces and making it equitable, accessible to a diverse and growing population while integrating the natural resource management as part of the overall strategic plan.</p>
 <p>Adopted October 15, 2019</p>	<p>Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan Section 1: Land Use & Character Plan – Vision Holly Springs, the Town’s Comprehensive Plan, serves as a policy guide on future land use; transportation; parks, recreation and open space; community character; business development; community facilities; infrastructure and utilities; and natural resources. The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) was adopted by the Town Council on October 15, 2019. It focuses on character evaluation of the Town based on places to conserve, preserve, and innovate. The elements identified in the plan that have significant impact on the character of place include land use patterns and development intensity, open space and natural resources, street and block patterns, transportation network, parking, lot size and building placement, building scale and massing, private frontages, streetscape, and historic preservation. There is emphasis on ‘Public Realm’ that supports safe and walkable neighborhoods, excellent schools, and variety of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities.</p>
 <p>Adopted June 2011, Updated 2013 & 2017</p>	<p>Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan Section 2: Town of Holly Springs Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) – This plan focuses on recommendations for building a comprehensive transportation system for growing Holly Springs and unincorporated areas in Wake County. The plan proposes a multimodal transportation network that supports growth while preserving the environmental, cultural and social character of the area. The document is divided into five chapters including social and environmental resources, roadway element, bicycle and pedestrian element, transit element and funding and implementation. For bicycle and pedestrian element, the plan recommends a coordinated set of sidewalk projects, intersection improvements and greenways. The new CTP process is underway with expected adoption in 2022. The 2019 Future Land Use & Community Character Plan (FLUCCP) also recommends a focus on connecting residents to regional trail network.</p>



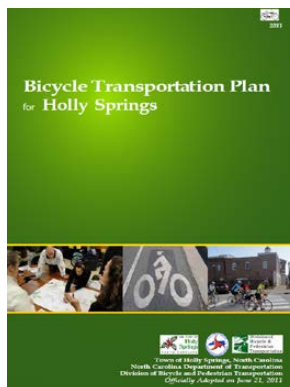
Adopted August 2007

Vision Holly Springs Comprehensive Plan Section 3: Beyond the Green Parks and Recreation Master Plan – This 2007 plan is predecessor to the 2020 comprehensive parks, recreation and greenways master plan. It considers the unprecedented growth of Holly Springs for the period of twenty years from 2006–2025. Some of the focus areas mentioned in the plan include land acquisition recommendations, park classifications based on ‘community center’ themes instead of acreage, greenway system recommendations, programming and recreation trends benchmarking, and capital improvements recommendations. This plan document will serve as a reference guide for the current parks and recreation plan in terms of what goals have been achieved to date, what goals are still valid for the latest demographics and what elements can be dispensed.



Draft December, 2009

Wake County Harris Lake Drainage Basin Land Use Study – This study was the result of action items proposed at the completion of Wake County Southwest Area Land Use Plan. The purpose of the study was to examine the area surrounding Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant to determine a preferred development pattern for this area of Wake County. Out of approximately 39,000 acres within Wake County, 43% of study area is occupied by Duke Energy and the surrounding municipalities including Apex, Fuquay-Varina and Holly Springs are interested in the development in this area. Being undeveloped forested land, this area is a vital natural resource that is home to old growth longleaf pine forest, and a habitat for many rare wildlife and plant species, including bald eagles. The area is also home to game lands managed by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission. The plan describes scenarios of development based on infrastructure improvements including transportation, water and wastewater management. The plan also mentions a desire by Triangle Rails to Trails Conservancy to connect Harris Lake County Park to Eno River Park.



Adopted June 2011

Bicycle Transportation Plan – This 2011 plan provides framework on how to incorporate bicycle facilities (on and off-road) into transportation planning and considerations for the Town. Some of the focus areas mentioned in the plan include prioritized corridors to consider based on existing conditions and the most viable opportunities.

Related Codes + Ordinances

Well written policy requiring exactions related to open space dedication or the development of recreation facilities has the potential to influence the level of service and recreational opportunities available to Town residents. Investment by the development community is critical to distributing the capital costs and long-term maintenance burden among multiple stakeholders.

The current Unified Development Ordinances in Article 8, state open space requirements for single family and multi-family residential, mixed use local business districts, commercial and industrial districts. The open spaces are described as spaces for recreation, social gatherings or for the preservation of existing trees and vegetation. The open space ordinance also states that these regulations are intended to guide the development or preservation of open space to assure that such open space is safe, visually attractive, useable, naturally sustainable and maintained.

These regulations are comprehensive in terms of their widespread application across all types of land use, and specific in the type of development while limiting the dedication of “unusable” open space such as wetlands and floodplains.

During the development of this Plan, the Town is also in the process of rewriting the codes and ordinances to align them with the Section 1– Land Use & Character Plan. The recommendations related to land acquisition best practices including fee in lieu, dedicated fees for improvements, greenway trail development and public private partnerships are described in detail in the appendices.



demographics + trends

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the Town of Holly Springs' population and demographics is an essential foundation for creating an effective long-range plan. Population growth drives many of this plan's goals and objectives. This analysis ensures the Town's parks and recreation offerings keep pace with demand generated by the increasing number of residents. Additionally, the analysis determines what types of parks and recreation services the Town may need as demographics related to age, race and income change and influence preferences for leisure time activities.

The demographic analysis tracks projected changes in proportional allocations of age, household income and race and ethnicity of a growing population. While the population is growing overall, changes in the proportions of demographic characteristics suggest changes in recreational needs. For example, as residents over the age of 55 become a larger proportion of the population, the Town can consider expanding recreation facilities, amenities, and programs to target that age segment.

National trends in recreation preferences change continually, influencing local demand for new activities and programs. Even when other demographic factors remain constant, changing preferences influence and alter a population's demand for parks and recreation facilities.

This chapter summarizes the Town of Holly Springs' demographic characteristics, and projects these characteristics through 2030. The analysis includes population growth projections, overview of demographic characteristics and a summary of national and local recreation trends.

METHODOLOGY

This demographic analysis uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau, which gathers data on a continual basis, and Esri, which uses U.S. Census data and other sources to conduct demographic analyses. The Town of Holly Springs Development Services Department projects future population growth through 2024 based on trends in building permits and construction of new residential units.



Figure 8 -Elements influencing local demand for parks, amenities, facilities, and programs

The project team projected population growth to 2030 based on the average annual growth rate of the Town's population projections from 2020 to 2024. The analysis of age segment, household income, and race and ethnicity are based on Esri's analysis of U.S. Census data, then projected to the year 2030. Estimates provide a count of the population at a specific point in time, while projections provide a scenario for a future population, based on certain assumptions such as building permits issued or past growth trends.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Population Growth

The Town of Holly Springs’ 5-year population projections prepared by the Development Services Department are available on the Town’s website. The data from the prepared graphs (Figure 9) conveys the Town’s continued population growth. The population almost doubled from 24,807 residents in 2010 to 41,726 residents in 2020.

The Town of Holly Springs is projected to continue growing but at a slightly slower rate. The Town saw an average annual growth rate of 5.1 percent between 2010 and 2019, but the population is expected to grow at 4.9 percent annually during the next 10 years. The Town’s Long-Range Planners have estimated that the Town can expect to grow an annual average of 2,292 residents through 2024, based on the anticipated rate of new residential development. This expected growth rate will expand the Town’s population from an estimated 41,726 residents in 2020 to a projected 64,160 residents in 2030.

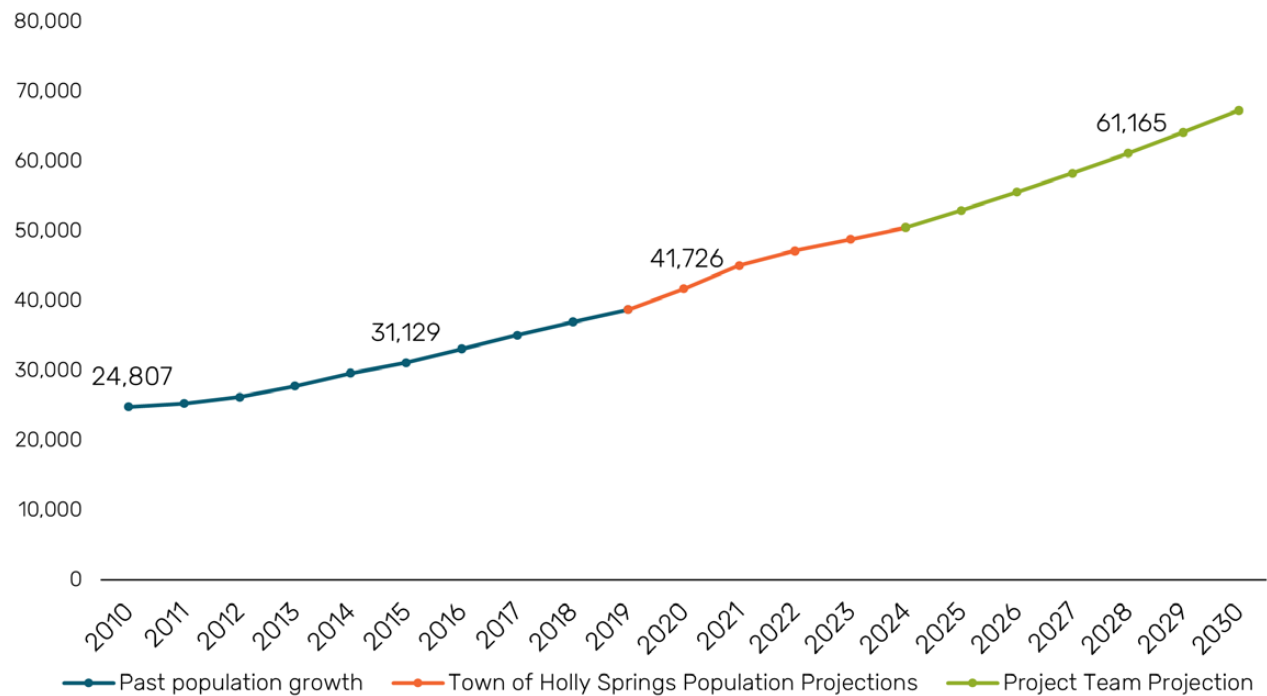


Figure 9 – Past and projected population growth for the Town of Holly Springs from 2010 to 2030.

The population growth rate for the state of North Carolina is one percent per year, and the population growth rate for the United States is 0.7 percent per year. Though Holly Springs is not continuing the exponential growth of the most recent decade, Holly Springs’ population will continue to increase at a rate nearly five times the growth rate in North Carolina, and seven times as fast as growth in the United States.

TOWN OF HOLLY SPRINGS	NORTH CAROLINA	UNITED STATES
4.9%	1%	0.7%

Table 1 – Average Annual Growth Rates for each jurisdiction

Households and Employment

Holly Springs population is highly educated with more than 66% residents with a secondary degree. Higher education level has also resulted in higher incomes for residents which is described in detail under the income subsection. The percentage of unemployed residents is smaller at 2.5% as compared to Wake County at 3%. The average household size is 3.05 people per household and more than 55% of households have one or more children.

EDUCATION

66.4%

of Holly Springs residents have some form of secondary degree.



UNEMPLOYMENT STATUS

2.5%

of Holly Springs residents in the workforce are unemployed.



HOUSEHOLD SIZE

The average household size in Holly Springs is

3.05

people per household.



HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

55.5%

of Holly Springs's households have one or more children.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024.

Age Segment

The Town of Holly Springs will experience little change in the proportion of age cohorts during the 10-year planning horizon. Figure 10 shows a slight increase in the proportion of the population over age 55, but little change overall.

National demographic trends show that the portion of the population over age 55 is growing faster than other age segments and becoming a larger portion of the overall population. Adults age 55 and over are the only age segment that will increase proportionally within the next 10 years. This indicates that even while the population grows rapidly, the proportional spread of age segments will remain stable. This is indicative of a population growing through relocation rather than through the natural replacement cycles of birth and death.

The median age of the population of North Carolina and the United States is approximately 39 years of age. The Town of Holly Springs’s median age is lower at 34. This further supports the demographic trend of a younger population with more children and young families in Holly Springs than seen in the wider population of North Carolina and the U.S.

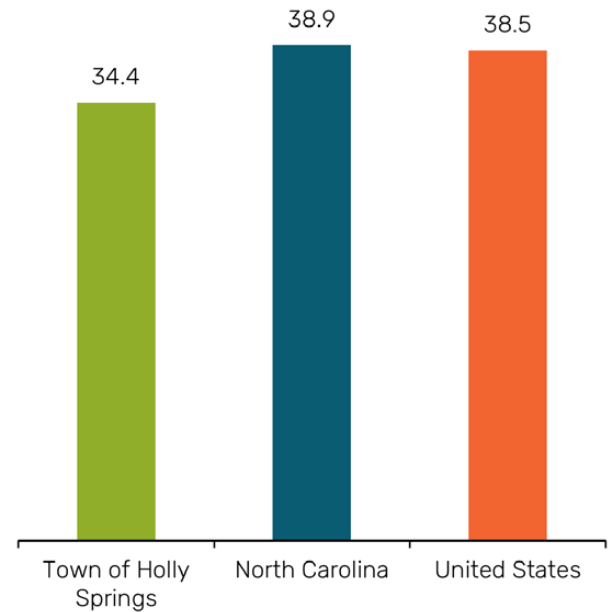


Figure 10 - Median age of residents by geographic area.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Project team projected data for 2020, 2025 and 2030

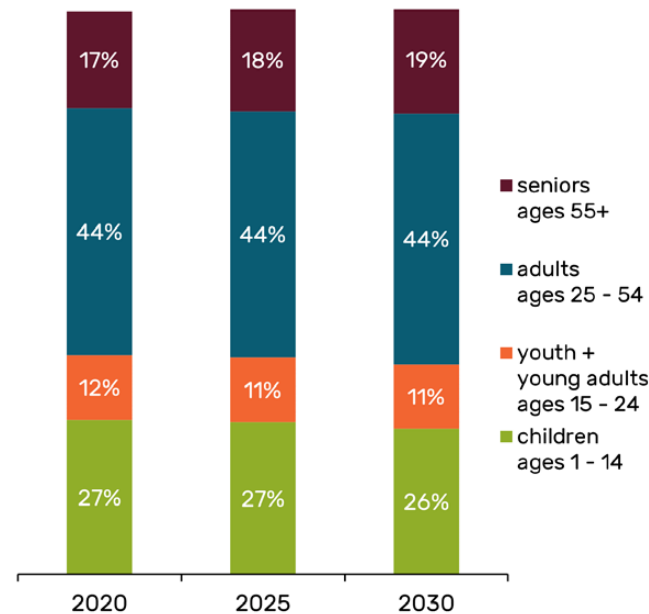


Figure 11 - Population proportion by age. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Project team projected data for 2020, 2025 and 2030.

TRENDS IN RECREATION FOR YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Parks and recreation departments are evolving to meet recreational needs of residents at all ages and life stages through the programs they offer and the park amenities they provide. Youth athletics remains an important cornerstone of parks and recreation programming, but agencies are expanding programs for adults, families and seniors to diversify programmatic offerings for the whole community. The active recreation spaces such as ball fields and tracks remain popular, but parks and recreation agencies are providing more opportunities for passive recreation such as trails, outdoor exercise equipment, public plazas and open spaces.

ALL-AGES PROGRAMMING – Programs catering to intergenerational participation



Caregiver and Child Events

Events and classes where parents or caregivers and children participate together. Examples include caregiver-child dances, exercise classes, music or art lessons and more.



Music and Movies in the Park

Music and movie series integrate into hectic family schedules and become highly anticipated community-wide gatherings.



Increasing Adult and Senior Programming

Many parks and recreation departments have expanded to provide adult and senior fitness, athletic and enrichment programming.

PASSIVE RECREATION – Self-guided activities without formal programming or reservation.



Greenways

Paved trails used for recreation or travel. Greenways provide locations for riding bikes, walking or jogging away from vehicle traffic, often in shaded settings.



Outdoor Exercise Equipment

Equipment includes instructions for workout use. People use equipment individually or meet up to workout in an informal group.



Open spaces

Traditional park lawns and open spaces provide space for picnics, pickup sports games.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The change in the proportional spread of the Town of Holly Springs household income levels shows an upward trend in household income over time (Figure 12). Despite this upward trend, the Town will need to ensure parks, recreation and cultural resources remain accessible to individuals of all income levels.

The median household income of the Town of Holly Springs is 47 percent greater than the median household income of North Carolina and 41 percent greater than the median household income of the United States (Figure 13). This indicates that residents may have more ability to pay for parks and recreation programming. However, it is essential for a public parks and recreation provider to meet the needs of all residents and provide access to low-income residents.

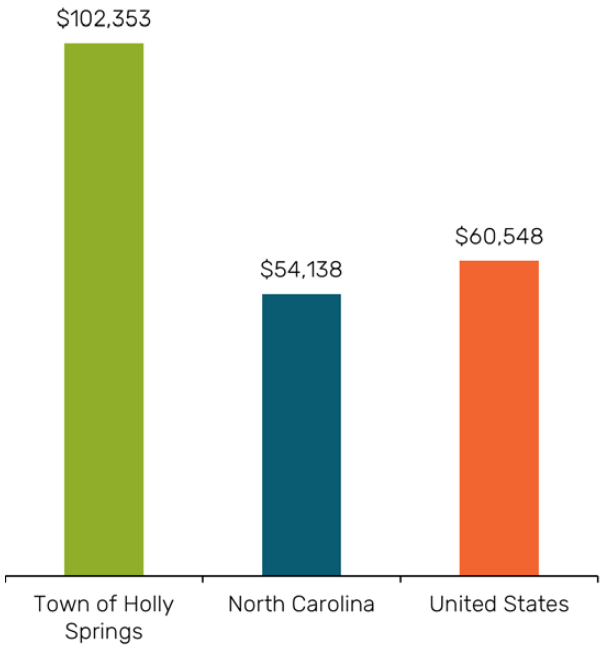


Figure 12 - Median household income of residents by geographic area in 2019.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024.

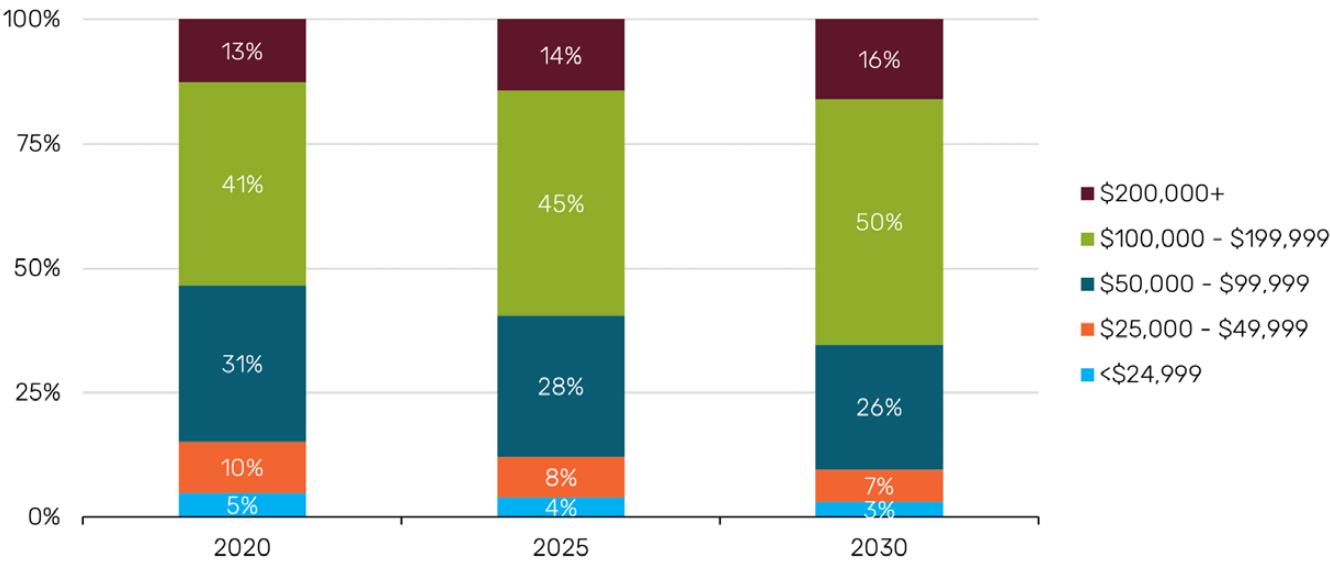


Figure 13 - Population proportion by household income. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Project team projected data for 2020, 2025 and 2030.

TRENDS IN ENSURING AFFORDABLE ACCESS

10-MINUTE WALK



Parks are free and open to the public and serve as important locations for people to play, socialize and gather as a community. Community members are only able to access free or low-cost parks and programs if they can afford the trip to get there. Ensuring an equitable distribution of parks and amenities throughout a geographic area means residents truly have affordable access to parks and programs.

The 10 Minute Walk campaign¹ is working to “ensure there’s a great park within a 10-minute walk of every person, in every neighborhood, in every city across America.” Seven North Carolina Mayors have signed the pledge according to Trust for Public Land website

93%²

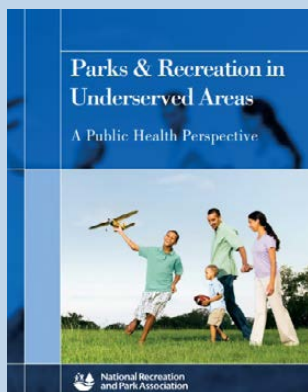


Percentage of Americans looking to local governments to increase affordable out-of-school time programming at their park and recreation agency

Parks and recreation departments frequently provide day programs and camps for children at below-market or discounted rates. This service provides an affordable alternative for families who must find childcare when school is out of session.

A recent study from the National Recreation and Parks Association found “93 percent of Americans believe providing affordable out-of-school time programs at local parks, recreation centers and libraries to families of all income levels should be a goal of their local government. Currently, 93 percent of park and recreation agencies nationwide administer or manage out-of-school time programs.”

Day programs and camps can benefit all children but are especially important for low-income families with few other options for daytime childcare options.



Parks and Recreation in Underserved Areas: A Public Health Perspective³ states “Several studies have documented that while parks and recreational facilities are available throughout the United States, there are several additional factors that affect park use and physical activity levels.” Factors include:

Park access

Easy park access is associated with increased park use. Park visits are more frequent and physical activity levels are higher.

Park distribution

Disparities in park distribution are particularly evident in areas with low income and racial/ethnic populations.

Park facilities

Within parks, there are certain types of facilities that encourage higher levels of physical activity than others, such as trails and playgrounds.

Park conditions

Park facilities that are consistently well maintained, aesthetically appealing and safe have increased public use and physical activity.

1 <https://www.10minutewalk.org/#Home>

2 <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/park-pulse/park-pulse-survey-affordable-out-of-school-time-programming/>

3 https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Parks-Rec-Underserved-Areas.pdf

RACE + ETHNICITY

Demographic trends indicate the proportions of the Holly Springs population identifying as any race other than “white alone” is increasing. The second largest proportion, after “white alone”, is “black alone”. The white alone category comprises 76 percent of the population, which is greater than the proportion of “white alone” population in North Carolina, at 66 percent. This indicates a lower degree of racial diversity in Holly Springs than in the State as a whole. During the next 10 years, the “white alone” category will decrease in proportion as other racial categories become a greater proportion. “Asian alone” is the racial category that will increase the most between 2020 and 2030 with an increase from 4 percent to 7 percent. All of the census’ racial categories are included in the chart, even though residents identifying as “Pacific Islander Alone” do not make up more than 1 percent of the population.

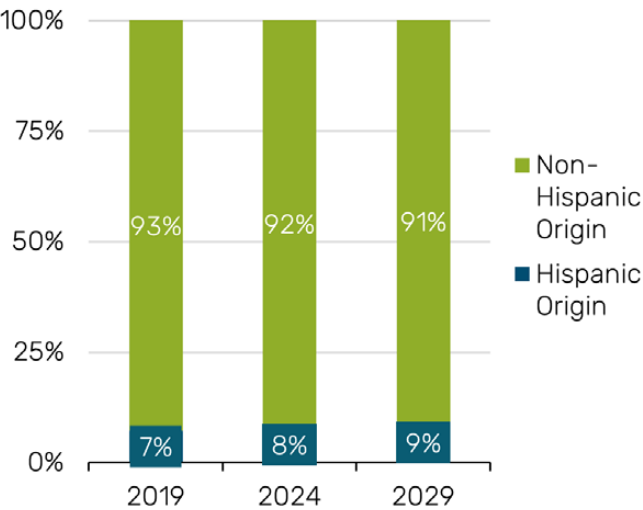


Figure 14 - Population proportion by Hispanic ethnicity. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Project team projected data for 2020, 2025 and 2030

Approximately 7 percent of the population currently identifies as “Hispanic origin”, and that population will increase in proportion in the coming years. The Town of Holly Springs has slightly lower proportion of “Hispanic origin” residents than the State of North Carolina, in which 10 percent of the population identifies as “Hispanic origin”. The census collects racial identity data and Hispanic ethnicity data separately as respondents with Hispanic ethnicity may also have a racial identity independent from their ethnicity.

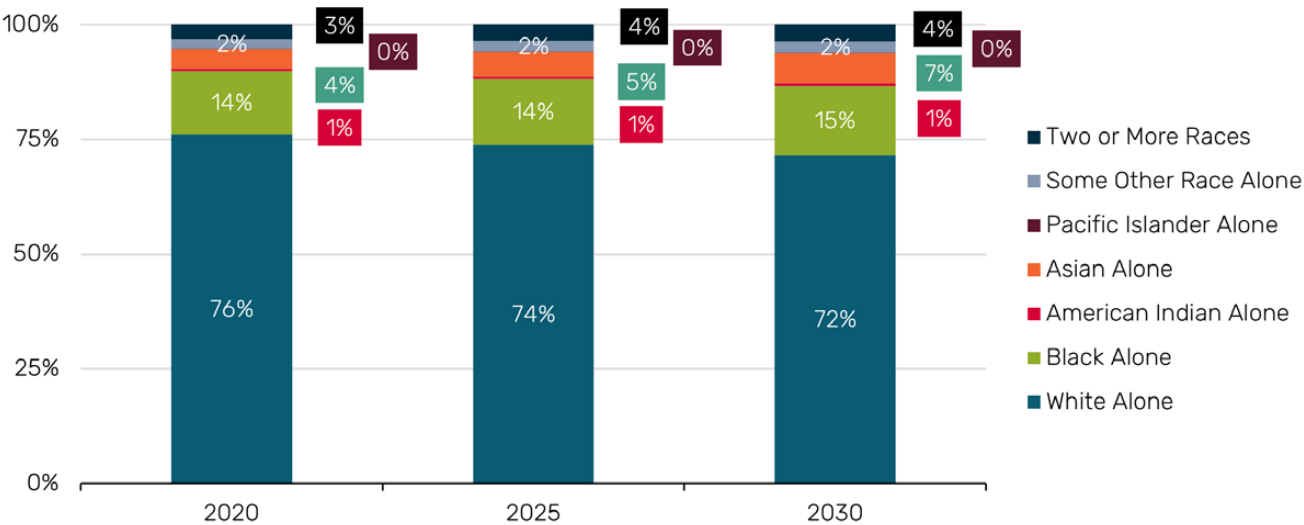


Figure 15 - Population proportion by race. Each bar represents 100 percent of the population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2019 and 2024. Project team projected data for 2020, 2025 and 2030

Trends in Achieving Racial Equity

Many communities are recognizing that intentions to equitably provide parks and recreation services to all community members has not resulted in equally positive outcomes for all community members, especially communities of color. Special attention is required to rectify historic disparities between resources available in white communities and communities of color. The following recreation trends indicate practices for improving outcomes for all community members by applying a racial equity lens.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) acknowledges that parks and recreation providers can be at the forefront of addressing racial equity due to their unique role as a public service provider of many quality-of-life programs and amenities. The NRPA recommends the following considerations for addressing racial equity in parks and recreation⁴:

- › **Normalizing conversations about race is the only way to develop effective strategies for racial equity.** One of the biggest challenges is the general discomfort many people experience in talking about race. This is a critical hurdle to overcome. Avoiding conversations about race means there is a greater likelihood that organizations will not develop appropriate strategies to address institutional and structural racism.
- › **Behavior drives attitude.** It is a common misconception that attitude drives behavior and expecting people to “understand” racism can lead to desired behavioral changes. However, changing behavior changes understanding. Providing common understanding of racial equity terminology and tools to use helps employees develop an increased understanding of institutional and structural racism.
- › **Equity is a process.** Embedding racial equity in the core operations of an organization takes continual learning and practice. It should be considered as an ongoing process of delivering business and not relegated to a checkbox or an additional step to an existing process.

4 <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2015/december/racial-equity-in-parks-and-recreation/>

LOCAL RECREATION TRENDS

This section uses information from a database of sports and leisure spending that estimates overall participation in a variety of sports and leisure activities. The tables below indicate the sports and activities that have the highest rates of participation as estimated based on spending trends for associated equipment. This analysis reviews overall participation in sports and leisure activities, fitness and outdoor activities. While this publication captures participation across all providers and provides a good indication of participation, it is not suggested that Holly Springs provide ALL popular programs or activities.

Most Popular Sports and Leisure Activities

2019. Esri. Methodology Statement: 2019 Esri Market Potential. <https://downloads.esri.com/esri_content_doc/dbl/us/J9672_Market_Potential_DB_Methodology_Statement_2019.pdf

The following analysis is based on information from Esri's 2019 Market Potential Analysis, which measures likely demand for sports and leisure activities in an area. The project team produced this analysis specifically for the Holly Springs area.

The five activities below are overall the most popular sports and leisure activities among Holly Springs residents. The most popular activities can all be undertaken individually and have relatively low barriers to entry. Walking and jogging can be done nearly anywhere with minimal specialized equipment. Swimming and hiking require special facilities or locations, but pools, trails, and natural bodies of water are commonly found, and these activities otherwise require little specialized equipment. Walking, swimming, jogging, and hiking are activities that can be adapted to a wide range of physical ability levels and are common activities that people pursue at any age throughout a lifetime. Weightlifting requires a specialized facility, some specialized equipment, and a degree of specialized knowledge to participate and avoid injury. Participation in weightlifting has likely grown in response to national trends indicating an increase in personal training and cross fit in recent years.

Holly Springs currently offers greenways and trails for walking, jogging, and hiking. The Town also offers the Hunt Recreation Center, which includes a fitness center for weightlifting. The Town does not currently offer facilities for swimming.



FITNESS WALKING
30.2%



SWIMMING
20.6%



JOGGING
18.9%



HIKING
16.3%



WEIGHTLIFTING
15.8%

Most Popular Sports Activities

Four of the five activities listed below are team sports. People can participate in these sports by enrolling in a formal league or by playing informal pickup games. Golf frequently requires access to private facilities and can be expensive to pursue. Holly Springs does not offer a public golf course, but there are nearby private golf courses for people to participate. Holly Springs offers facilities for basketball, baseball, football, and soccer. Programming is provided by the Town and program partners.



GOLF

11.7%



BASKETBALL

9.5%



BASEBALL

5.7%



SOCCER

5.6%



FOOTBALL

5.3%

Most Popular Fitness Activities

Fitness activities are often pursued individually, but classes, programs and events such as races can increase people's participation in fitness activities. The Town offers hiking trails, greenways, fitness loops, outdoor exercise equipment and yoga classes to support residents pursuing these activities.



FITNESS WALKING

30.2%



SWIMMING

20.6%



JOGGING

18.9%



WEIGHTLIFTING

15.8%



YOGA

10.2%

Most Popular Outdoor Activities

Outdoor activities are those that enable people to interact with the natural environment while pursuing physical activity. Many people pursue hiking and road biking for the combination of physical activity and communion with rural areas and natural landscapes. Freshwater fishing, canoeing and powerboating are all activities that take place on bodies of water. Holly Springs offers trails for hiking and greenways for road biking. Nearby Bass Lake and Harris Lake County Park offer opportunities for fishing and canoeing. Harris Lake County Park also offers power boating access.



HIKING

16.3%



**FRESH WATER
FISHING**

13.2%



ROAD BIKING

12.6%



CANOEING

7.1%



POWER BOATING

6.4%

EMERGING TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has been providing annual information on top trends in parks and recreation. These trends range from parks operations and recreation programming to design interventions and some trends are predictions based on agencies' response to changes happening at the community, state and national levels. City Parks Alliance and Trust for Public Land are two other national organizations that provide resources on parks and recreation trends. Some of the trends mentioned in the last three years are described below.

Climate Change Impacts

Parklands in dense urban areas are credited to reducing heat island effect through tree canopy coverage and help mitigate stormwater runoff by allowing infiltration on the large expanse of pervious lands. Parklands have been recognized as a vital component of infrastructure development strategy to help mitigate climate change effects.

Economic Impact of Quality Parks

According to a NRPA study, parkland has been recognized as an "economic development infrastructure" as many businesses are choosing their employment location strategically where their employees will have quality of life with an easy access to quality parks and greenway trails. Many private donors are giving millions of dollars as gifts to develop signature park projects as a way of giving back to the communities.

Diversity of Park Locations

As real estate becomes a more limited resource, many agencies are proposing public open spaces as green roofs, stormwater management amenities, rails to trails projects and most recently underground such as the New York's Low Line project.

Technology

Embracing various technological innovations in the parks system has become a consistent trend nationally. Some of these innovations include drone use for parks surveillance and management, recreational drone use, harnessing solar power to provide charging stations, low level lighting, and technological advances in managing park infrastructure such as stormwater management, irrigation schedules, trash pickup etc. With rapidly improving technology, solar powered video surveillance is gaining popularity and according to NRPA predictions, more than one-third of parks and recreation agencies will have video surveillance in their facilities and parks in 2020.

Children and Nature

Providing children access to natural areas and opportunities for daily interaction with nature has been a growing trend over the last decade. Extensive research in the health and environmental behavior fields has proved many health and wellness benefits to younger generations. Nationwide, this trend is now evolving into policy, programs and partnership development⁵ to ensure equitable benefits across the population spectrum, according to the Municipal Action Guide developed by City Park Alliance.

5 <https://cityparksalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CCCN-Municipal-Action-Guide.pdf>

Response to Global Health Crisis

While this comprehensive planning process is underway, the Trust for Public Land published a report on Parks and Pandemic in response to the global health crisis caused by COVID outbreak. While this report emphasizes the increased use of open spaces and greenway trails for health benefits, it also raises challenges faced by municipal agencies such as a decrease in tax revenue and targeted budget cuts resulting in employment loss. Looking at the future, the report also mentions an emerging trend of newfound appreciation for open spaces and parks bringing the focus to easy access to a high-quality park within a ten-minute walking distance.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- ▶ As Holly Springs' population grows and changes in the coming decade, the community's recreation needs will grow and change.
- ▶ The overall population growth indicates a need for expanding parks and recreation services and suggests a growing tax base to support that work.
- ▶ A younger population suggests the need for adult and youth athletics as well as family-oriented and intergenerational programming. Despite the overall younger population than statewide trends, it is important to ensure that older adults are adequately served through facilities and programming. All parks and facilities should feature amenities and design elements that universally include people with and without mobility challenges.
- ▶ The increasing household income levels indicate the ability to pay for parks and recreation services. Regardless of rising income for some community members, residents with lower incomes must still have affordable or no-cost access to parks and recreation services.
- ▶ The area's racial demographics will remain relatively unchanged during the next ten years, but there is still a need for equity, diversity and inclusion efforts to ensure equitable provision of parks, facilities, amenities and programs.
- ▶ In addition to Holly Springs' specific community context, emerging trends in parks and recreation include understanding the many far-reaching benefits of parks and incorporating parks and greenway planning into larger connected networks of urban infrastructure.

