

# **TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL SPLASH PAD AND INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND SITE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**FINAL REPORT**  
**1 June 2023**

Prepared by



For  
**Town of Chapel Hill**  
**Parks & Recreation Department**



### **Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground Feasibility Assessment Project Acknowledgments**

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##### Parks, Recreation and Greenways Commission:

- Wes McMahon, Former Chair
- Tyler Steelman, Chair
- Leah Boucher, Vice Chair
- Alice Armstrong, Orange County Representative
- Shane Brogan
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- Hallie Montgomery
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##### 2022- 2023 Chapel Hill Mayor and Town Council

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### **FOCUS OF STUDY**

The Town of Chapel Hill contracted with Thomas & Hutton (formerly CJT PA) and 80 West Group to study 8 Town-owned properties and analyze their suitability for installation of a splash pad facility and/or installation of an accessible playground facility. The consultant was also to provide concept plans for such facilities with cost estimates. Recognizing an opportunity to examine options for both amenities collectively, this study was commissioned.

Thomas & Hutton's Durham-based Landscape Architecture and Civil Engineering office partnered with 80 West Group to study the sites with respect to splash pad use feasibility.

### **PROJECT CRITERIA**

Consistent with the Town's commitment to the One Orange Racial Equity Plan, the report recommends giving preference to locations for these amenities that expand rights and choices for marginalized populations, mitigate historical inequities, and reduce disparities in access to parks and recreation facilities. We have and will continue to use several tools to identify neighborhoods most impacted by these disparities and historical inequities. Qualified Census Tracts (as defined by the American Rescue Program Act) is a vital indicator of areas affected by historical segregation and disinvestment, and increasing access to amenities in these areas is our priority. Other related data include access to public transit, walkability, and proximity to public housing.

The selection criteria for the proposed facilities were developed using the Town's Goals including:

- Connected Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Vibrant and Inclusive Community

Advise on Accessible vs. Inclusive and Accessible Playgrounds; Pocket Park vs. Destination Splash Pads

- Park location assessment includes the following criteria:
- Diversity, equity and inclusion such as
  - A location that allows people throughout the community to walk, bike and/or ride the bus to enjoy these amenities
  - A location that provides an investment in facilities that are at or near the end of their life span, or that have not seen significant financial improvements such as older or underutilized parks with fewer recreational amenities
- Adequate site size
- Access and connectivity (public transit, pedestrian, bicycle)
- Availability of parking
- Infrastructure
  - Availability of utilities
  - Restrooms
  - Shelter
- Socioeconomic data of nearby neighborhoods
- Proximity to other parks and Town amenities (shopping, restaurants, etc.)
- Site impacts (utility relocation, environmental, cultural and natural resources, etc.)

- Evaluation of splash pad system types and pros and cons of recirculated water system versus a flow-through system
- Estimated design and construction, start-up, operations, and maintenance costs
- Community input options / processes
- Identification of most feasible build-out/phases of development

## OVERVIEW

The Town of Chapel Hill contracted with Thomas & Hutton (formerly CJT PA) and 80 West Group to study 8 Town-owned properties and analyze their suitability for installation of a splash pad facility and/or a playground with both inclusive and splash pad features to increase outdoor summer activities that include staying cool. The sites assessed are:

Cedar Falls Park - 501 Weaver Dairy Road  
 Community Center Park - 120 S Estes Drive  
 Hargraves Center - 216 N Roberson Street  
 Homestead Park - 100 Aquatic Drive  
 Southern Community Park - 1000 Sumac Road  
 Umstead Park - 399 Umstead Drive  
 Eastwood Public Housing Community - NE corner Piney Mountain Road and Eastwood Road  
 Oakwood Public Housing Community - 605 Oak Avenue

The Durham branch of Thomas & Hutton, a Landscape Architecture and Civil Engineering firm, partnered with 80 West Group to study the sites with respect to splash pad use feasibility. 80 West Group has been involved with design and installation of over 200 splash pad facilities in the past 20 years.

The Town was interested in investigating the possibility of adding one or more splash pad facilities to expand the recreational opportunities for the residents of Chapel Hill. At the same time, the Parks Department had planned to install an accessible playground at Cedar Falls Park, but plans have only been partially completed.

In 2021, a petition with over 800 signatures in support of construction a splash pad was provided to the Town Council. The Town established a splash pad work group and committee to further explore options for construction in Chapel Hill and this project started with a meeting between that committee, multiple parks staff, and the design team. After the project kick-off meeting, the consultant team looked at the 8 Town owned sites with respect to their suitability for both splash pad and inclusive accessible playground facilities. In addition to input from Town staff, there have been community and public information meetings, presentation and feedback from the Parks, Greenways and Recreation Commission during two meetings and initial presentation and feedback from Town Council.

### **PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

At the start of the study, the consultant team, with Town staff, made visits to all sites to get an overall view and impression of the facilities at each site and to talk to the staff about perceived assets and deficiencies with respect to additional facilities. Specifically, the team looked at site size and open space development availability, parking, restrooms, shelters, existing pedestrian connectivity, and utilities. At this time the consultant team also scanned the sites for appropriate locations for large- and small-scale splash pad facilities, and for appropriateness of accessible playgrounds.

Following these visits, the consultant team reviewed Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA) supply information, site accessibility, demographics, and through doing so gained a deeper understanding and analysis of each site's assets and deficiencies. Criteria used in analyzing suitability of each site includes:

- Site size and location
- Accessibility of the site
- Suitability of existing amenities to complement the proposed splash pad/playground
- Capacity of required amenities such as parking and restrooms
- Availability of splash pad space near parking and restrooms
- Capacity of existing utilities
- Staffing on site
- Age of existing facilities and whether they are due for replacement

The splash pad consultant investigated nearby splash pad facilities to analyze the product offered and installation costs for those projects. They have also investigated general costs for installing splash facilities on Chapel Hill properties, working with OWASA construction and operating costs used as a basis to compare different water circulation systems.



## SECTION 3 – Site Investigation and Site-Specific Recommendations

### CHAPEL HILL DEMOGRAPHICS

The Parks and Recreation Department asked the consultants to consider 8 sites, 6 of which are existing parks and 2 of which are Town-owned public housing communities. The consultant team along with Town staff visited all 8 sites on August 4, 2022.

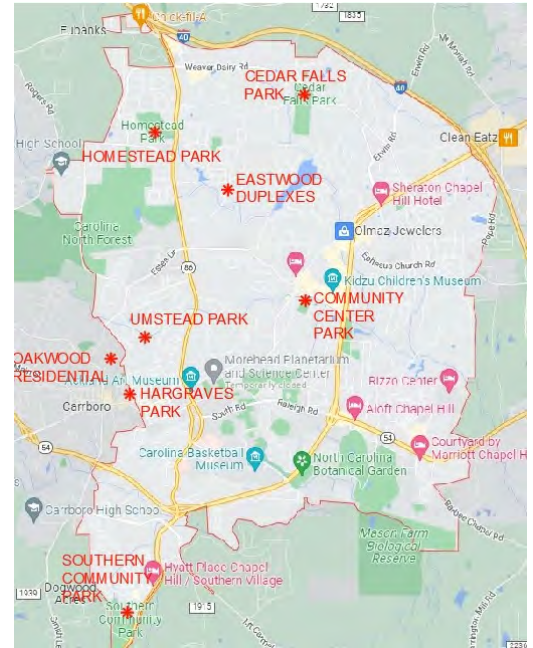
Census data reports that as of April 2020 Chapel Hill had a population of 61,906. By age the breakdown is:

3.8% under 5 years – approx. 2,355

17.1% under 18 years – approx. 10,600

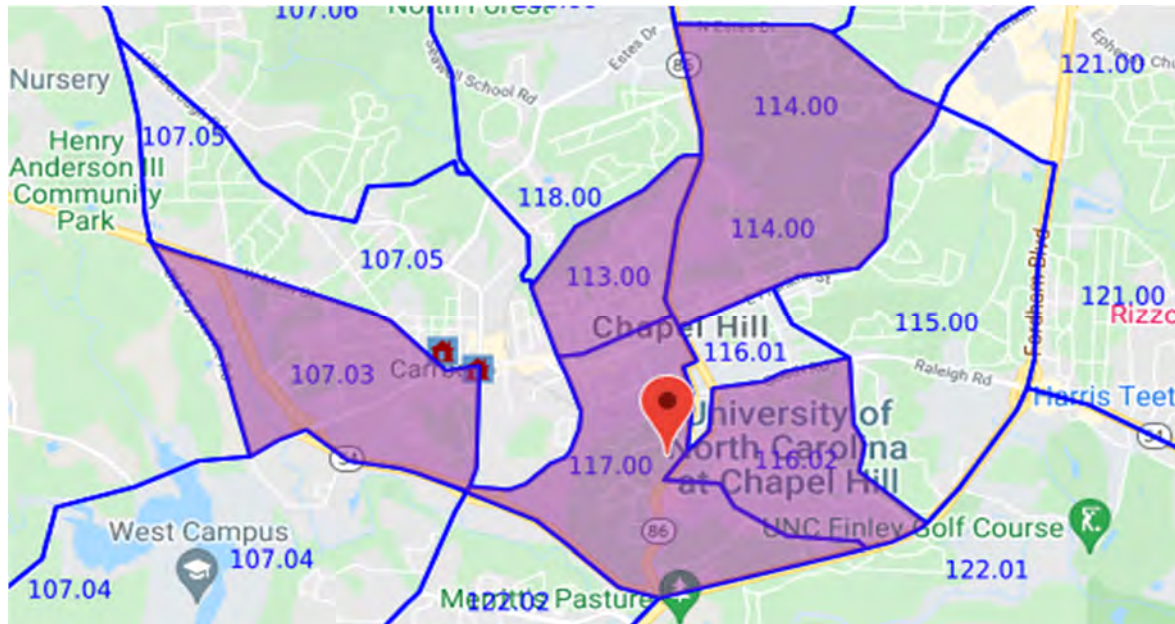
The parks investigated are concentrated along the western part of town, and also included Cedar Falls Park to the north and the Community Center Park just off Fordham Blvd.

Each of the park sites has different accessibility aspects related to their location, which will influence how easily users can get to the proposed new facilities. One quarter mile is a distance easily accessible on foot for most users. This is a distance frequently used by studies as an acceptable range that the average person will routinely walk to get to desired destinations. The following table breaks out uses and facilities within a quarter mile of each of the sites investigated.



<u>Town Site</u>	<u># Households within ¼ mile</u>	<u>Nearby Facilities</u>
Cedar Falls Park:	262	High school, gas station, restaurants
Community Center Park:	486	University Place, restaurants, retail, greenway trail
Eastwood Community:	299	n/a
Hargraves Park:	1286	Elementary school, daycare, downtown restaurants and services, greenway trail
Homestead Park:	582	Limited retail, daycare, multiple new residential projects proposed for the area, greenway trail
Oakwood Community:	785	Wilson Park, bike trail
Southern Community Park:	340	Elementary school, daycare, transit hub, Southern Village retail and restaurants, greenway trail
Umstead Park:	1252	Elementary school, greenway trail

This plan illustrates the census tracts within Chapel Hill where more than 50% of households are at an income level less than 60 % of the area's gross median income. In the summary chart on page 14 it has been noted which of the Town properties considered are in one of these qualifying census tracts.



*Census tract plan from the American Rescue Plan Act Program website.*

There is a summary of the facilities found at each park on the following pages.

# FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

CEDAR FALLS PARK

501 Weaver Dairy Road

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Park Size	66.58 acres		
Public Access	Weaver Dairy Road, pedestrian nature trail access from Cedar Fork Trail Rd (west) and from Lakeshore Lane (south)		
Public Transit:	1 route with nearby stops		
<b>PARKING</b>		COMMENTS	STAFF COMMENTS
# spaces	180 approx	gravel, 70 spaces in RCD possibly compliant with tree clearing	
ADA spaces	6		
Expansion	possible		
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground		not inclusive or ADA compliant nature trails, mountain biking bathroom building small attached to bathrooms	new insufficient facilities
Trailhead			
Bathrooms			
Shelter			
Multipurpose fields - 2			well used
Tennis Courts - 6			facility needs rebuilding
Baseball fields - 3		poor drainage	occasionally used
Recycling Center		in parking lot	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	from Weaver Dairy Rd
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	
Existing sanitary sewer?	no - septic, frequent failures during heavy rains		
Existing storm mitigation facility	No		
Existing building for splash pad equipment	No		
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	space, access	con:	no sanitary sewer, insufficient bathrooms
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	insufficient bathrooms & parking
inclusive playground			
pro:	parking availability	con:	insufficient bathrooms, tree clearing would be required
staff on site:	No	topography is hilly = major grading	
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
-The playground has 8-10 years useful life left -Additional amenities should include additional toilet facilities and replacement of existing facilities -Soccer fields are well used, and used for tournaments			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
Nearest sanitary sewer service is uphill at Country Road (1,600 LF) or uphill at Muir Lane (1,500 LF)			

# FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

## COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

120 South Estes Drive

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Park Size	12.06	acres	
Public Access	S Estes Drive, Plant Road, pedestrian access from Bolin Creek greenway trail and from battle creek nature trail		
Public Transit:	4 routes with nearby stops		
<b>PARKING</b>		COMMENTS	STAFF COMMENTS
# spaces	66	paved	-parking is often insufficient
ADA spaces	3	appear compliant	
Expansion	not easily accessible	new lot could be added from Plant Rd	
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground		not inclusive or ADA compliant	insufficient facilities
Trailhead			
Bathrooms		inside community building single stall restrooms (2)	
Shelter		gazebo in rose garden	insufficient staffing
Change space		in pool wing	
Gym		inside community building	
Climbing wall		inside gym	
Pool		limited hours	
Basketball, bocce ball		outdoor	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	8", from Plant Rd
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	8" DI to Estes	
Existing storm mitigation facility		No	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		No	
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	insufficient bathrooms & parking
	ex impervious deck available		
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	insufficient bathrooms & parking
inclusive playground			
pro:	public transit	con:	insufficient bathrooms & parking
staff on site:	Yes		
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
-The playground is nearing the end of its useful life			
-Additional amenities should include additional toilet facilities			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
-There is space off Plant Road that could be developed for parking			
-Well used playground and community center on site			

## FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### HARGRAVES COMMUNITY PARK

216 North Roberson Street

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Park Size	6.81	acres	
Public Access	N Roberson Street, Mitchell Lane		
Public Transit:	1 route with nearby stops plus 3 routes with stops 2 blocks away		
<b>PARKING</b>		<b>COMMENTS</b>	<b>STAFF COMMENTS</b>
# spaces	60	paved, 4 separate lots	
ADA spaces	7	some appear compliant	
Expansion	not easily		
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground		in community center	-nearing end of useful life -used for other purposes
Bathrooms			
Community Center			
Gym			
Pool - built 1970's		with kiddie pool	
Baseball		good shape	
Shelter			
Tennis Courts - 3			
Basketball		indoor and outdoor	
Daycare		in community center, use playground	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	from N Roberson & Mitchell
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	8" to Mitchell Street	
Existing storm mitigation facility		No	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		Possible	
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	utilities, access, change rooms	con:	limited parking for a large destination pad
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	
	on site daycare uses play area		
inclusive playground			
pro:	on site daycare uses playground	con:	
	playground nearing end of useful life		
staff on site:	Yes		
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
-Not much baseball played, but the green lawn used for other uses			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
This park is well used and centrally located. Lots of children live nearby.			
Street parking only for people coming from elsewhere in Town. Local streets are residential.			

## FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### HOMESTEAD PARK

100 Aquatic Drive

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Park Size	43.6	acres	
Public Access	Aquatic Drive north of Homestead Road, New Parkside Drive access pedestrian path connection from residential community to the west		
Public Transit:	1 route with nearby stops plus 1 route 2 blocks away		
<b>PARKING</b>		COMMENTS	STAFF COMMENTS
# spaces	288	incl 2 EV	paved appear compliant
ADA spaces	9		
Expansion	easier off Stateside		
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground	older aquatic center + playground		doesn't need immediate replacement
Bathrooms			
Pool - built 2008/9			
Soccer fields - 2			
Baseball - 2			
Batting Cage			
Skate park			needs renovating well used, needs renovating
Shelter			
Dog park			
Basketball	indoor and outdoor	needs repainting	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	8" from Aquatic Dr,
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	and line to the east
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	between pool building and baseball fields	
Existing storm mitigation facility		Yes	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		Possible, but not likely	
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	utilities, access, change rooms		con:
	space, parking, on-site staff		
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access		con:
inclusive playground			
pro:	parking, bathrooms, shade		con: playground not needing immediate replacement
staff on site:	Yes		
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
-The Town has a difficult time keeping all pools staffed with lifeguards			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
This park is centrally located with lots of nearby residential and plans for more residential. Has good accessibility, parking and access from two directions, and staff who could handle water quality maintenance. Appears to be appropriate for a large scale splash pad.			

## FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### SOUTHERN COMMUNITY PARK

1000 Sumac Road

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Park Size	71.08 acres		
Public Access	Sumac Road, Dogwood Acres Drive, pedestrian access from Southern Village greenway trail		
Public Transit:	2 routes with nearby stops		
<b>PARKING</b>		COMMENTS	STAFF COMMENTS
# spaces	117+ 40 (at dogpark)	paved	
ADA spaces	7	appear compliant	
Expansion	yes	adjacent to University of North Carolina (UNC) satellite lot	
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground		semi-inclusive, semi-ADA	in good shape
Trailhead		Southern Village greenway	
Bathrooms		bathroom building	
Shelter		large, leaning	
Soccer Fields - 3			well used, tournaments
In-link rink/Pickelball		boarded rink, lighting	
Dog park			insufficient staffing
Basketball		outdoor	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	from NC 15-501
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	assume to main west of park	
Existing storm mitigation facility		Yes	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		No	
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	insufficient bathrooms, parking
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	
inclusive playground			
pro:	good accessibility	con:	existing facility is in good shape
staff on site:	No		
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
-There was space designated for a splash pad in the original park master plan			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
This site appears to be appropriate for a large scale splash pad park			



## FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### UMSTEAD PARK

399 Umstead Drive

BASIC SITE INFORMATION			
Park Size	23.68	acres	
Public Access	Umstead Road, with pedestrian access from Tanyard Branch greenway trail and Bolin Creek greenway trail		
Public Transit:	1 route with nearby stops plus 1 route nearby		
PARKING		COMMENTS	STAFF COMMENTS
# spaces	42	paved, most in RCD	-parking is often insufficient
ADA spaces	2	appear compliant	
Expansion	not easy	new / separate lot could be added near volleyball court	
OTHER FACILITIES			
Playground		new, appears ADA compliant, not inclusive	-roof needs replacement -host tournaments
Trailhead			
Bathrooms		bathroom building one attached to bathroom, one near creek	
Shelter - 2			
Sand volleyball - 7			
Basketball		outdoor	
UTILITIES			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	8", from Umstead Dr
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size	
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	30" DI to Umstead Dr	
Existing storm mitigation facility		No	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		No	
FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS			
large splash pad facility			
pro:	utilities, access	con:	insufficient bathrooms, parking, most accessible area is in RCD
small splash pad facility			
pro:	space, utilities, access	con:	
handicap accessible playground			
pro:		con:	insufficient bathrooms, parking
staff on site:	Yes	playground is already fairly accessible	
STAFF COMMENT			
-The playground is fairly new and has many accessible features -Between the trailhead and the volleyball courts, parking is often insufficient -This park gets flooded often			
CONSULTANT NOTES			
This park has great accessibility due to its location on the Tanyard and Bolin Creek Greenway trails and all the neighborhoods that can access the park via those trails. Wouldn't put a recirculating pad system in an area that floods often.			



## FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

### EASTWOOD PUBLIC HOUSING

NE corner Piney Mountain Rd and Eastwood Rd

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>			
Parcel Size	5.5 acres		
# Residences:	32 units		
Public Access	Piney Mountain Road to Louis Armstrong Court, and Eastwood Road to Billie Holliday Court		
Public Transit:	No		
<b>PARKING</b>		<b>COMMENTS</b>	<b>STAFF COMMENTS</b>
# spaces		paved	
ADA spaces		appear compliant	
Expansion	minimal opportunity		
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>			
Playground		not yet	small facility being installed
Open Space		multiple locations	
<b>UTILITIES</b>			
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water	6" DI from Piney Mountain
Is there adequate water supply	yes		8" AC from Eastwood Road
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	8" ESVCP northeast to cross country main	
Existing storm mitigation facility		Yes - appears to be a bioretention	
Existing building for splash pad equipment		No	
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>			
large splash pad facility		con:	No public bathrooms
pro:		con:	insufficient nearby population and access is from residential streets
small splash pad facility			insufficient space, parking & accessibility
pro: utilities, space		con:	may serve only the immediate neighborhood & vicinity
inclusive playground		con:	no space, and would serve only a small population
pro:			
staff on site: No			
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>			
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>			
This site has an old basketball halfcourt in disrepair which could be removed to offset impervious additions. There are two locations that would be appropriate for smaller splash elements: one internal to site and one on the Eastwood Road frontage			

**FACILITY CONDITION ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST****OAKWOOD PUBLIC HOUSING**

605 Oak Avenue

<b>BASIC SITE INFORMATION</b>		
Parcel Size	5.96 acres	
# Residences:		
Public Access	Sumac Road, Dogwood Acres Drive, pedestrian access from Southern Village greenway trail	
Public Transit:	1 route with nearby stops	
<b>PARKING</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>	<b>STAFF COMMENTS</b>
# spaces	paved	
ADA spaces	appear compliant	
Expansion	minimal opportunity	
<b>OTHER FACILITIES</b>		
Playground	very small, does not appear to get a lot of use	
Open Space	very little	
<b>UTILITIES</b>		
Existing water?	yes	Nearest Water 6" DI from Geensboro Street
Is there adequate water supply	yes	Meter size
Existing sanitary sewer?	yes	southeast to Hillview Street
Existing storm mitigation facility		Yes
Existing building for splash pad equipment		No
<b>FACILITY APPROPRIATENESS</b>		
large splash pad facility		
pro:	con:	insufficient nearby population
small splash pad facility		lack of parking
pro: utilities	con:	would serve only this street
inclusive playground		lack of parking
pro:	con:	no space, and would serve only
staff on site: No		a small population
<b>STAFF COMMENT</b>		
<b>CONSULTANT NOTES</b>		
This site appears densely developed with little open space that feels communal. There is a small existing playground but it's very close to the adjacent residential units.		

## SITE SUMMARY TABLE

The chart below summarizes some of the basic park facility and location data from each of 8 Town owned properties under consideration for a new splash pad/and or inclusive playground facility.

Property	Size (ac)	Public Transit	Households within 1/4 mile	Water Service	Sanitary Sewer Service	Playground	Restrooms	Pool	Public Parking	Affordable Housing Community Within Walking Distance	Property Site in Qualifying Census Tract
Cedar Falls Park	66.6	Y	262	Y	N	Y	Y	N	180	N	N
Community Center Park	12	Y	486	Y	Y	Y	1980	1980	66	Y	N
Hargraves Community Park	6.8	Y	1285	Y	Y	Y	Y	1979	60	Y	Y
Homestead Park	43.6	Y	582	Y	Y	Y	Y	2008	288	Y	N
Southern Community Park	71	Y	340	Y	Y	2006	2006	N	157	N	N
Umstead Park	23.7	Y	1252	Y	Y	new	Y	N	42	Y	Y
Eastwood Public Housing	5.5	N	299	Y	Y	small	N	N	N	Y	N
Oakwood Public Housing	6	Y	785	Y	Y	small	N	N	N	Y	N

## SECTION 4 – Splash Pad Options

### **SAMPLING OF NEARBY EXISTING FACILITIES**

Prior to the start of this study, Town staff worked with other Parks and Recreation Department staff, and Parks, Recreation, and Greenway Commissioners, a Town Council representative, and community members (Kate Sayer and Danita Mason-Hogans). They toured some nearby splash pad facilities in Burlington, Mebane, and Pittsboro, which included meetings with Burlington and Mebane Town staff overseeing maintenance and operations and engineers involved in the design of these facilities. Details of these facilities have been included in the splash pad examples below.

Burlington Splash Pad has about 5,500 sq ft of total deck space and 3,800 sq ft of that as a splash deck. Their aquatic features and recirculation system and installation was approximately \$900,000. It opened in the summer of 2016. The cost of the building attached is unknown but it houses an approved recirculation system design. System start-up for season approx. 1.5 days, and shut-down 1 day for a recirculation system. A splash pad like this would require daily water sample log and daily maintenance checks. Expect 10-15 minutes on operation days to log water levels, calibrate systems, check and test features, and run a sequence.



Pittsboro Splash Pad has about 2,600 sq ft of splash deck space. Their turn-key project cost approximately \$750,000. The splash park opened in the summer of 2021. The building housing the recirculation system costs are unknown. The same maintenance listed for Burlington would apply to Pittsboro. The costs to budget for yearly operation would be hourly maintenance rates, water, sewer and electrical, and under proper operation and maintenance systems should last 8-15+ years well past newer technology to make systems operate with more automation and less staff maintenance.



Mebane Splash Pad was constructed in late 2018 and has about 3,400 sq ft of splash deck and 3,800 sq ft of deck space. This project is estimated turn-key around \$400,000. This is a pocket park designed for low flow drain to waste systems. It is a flow-through system and therefore does not require a health department permit, because water is not being captured and reused for human contact. The owner is paying for water and sewer costs associated with the gallons per minute required to operate for the hours of operation. The maintenance for this system is fairly low, approximately 8-10 hours per year for weekly checks on a manifold and controller and to check sequence and aquatic feature functions. There is no need for maintenance of pumps, filters, and water holding tanks for this flow-through system.



## DESTINATION SPLASH PAD FACILITY DEFINITION

Destination splash pads are aquatic spaces that are worth packing up the crew and making the afternoon of it. Typically destination splash pads are over 5,000 sf to accommodate larger groups, they have at least 30 spray features, and a wider array of water effects and experiences for all ages and abilities. These designs almost always have a system to capture the water, filter, and treat the water for reuse. Recirculated splash pads in North Carolina are regulated by the state health department. Destination splash parks are often themed which affects the outward appearance, but not generally the splash elements.



Flower Concept layout,  
destination sized splash parks.

Jungle Theme,  
Blue Springs MO, Landscape Structures



Quarry Splash Park, Austin TX



## RECIRCULATION WATER SYSTEMS VERSUS FLOW THROUGH SYSTEMS

A recirculation system involves filling the splash pad system from the local water authority initially, then catching the water in a holding tank where it is filtered and treated before sending the water back to the nozzles at the splash pad surface – similar to how pool water is treated. This system has higher water rate turnover and water cleanliness can be improved with secondary ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system.

A flow-through or pass-through system takes potable water from the local water authority and pumps it through the splash pad system where it then drains into either a sewer drain or into a holding tank or pond to allow the chlorine to air out before letting the water seep into the ground.

The pros and cons of each system are listed here.

System	Pros	Cons
Recirculation	-better water conservation	-more expensive to install and requires a rainwater bypass system -requires scheduled water monitoring and use of chemicals -more maintenance by staff and for owner
Flow-through	-access control personnel are not always required on site -grey water could be used for irrigation -lower maintenance by staff for owner	-wastes water -may mean splash pad wouldn't operate during droughts / dry hot summers



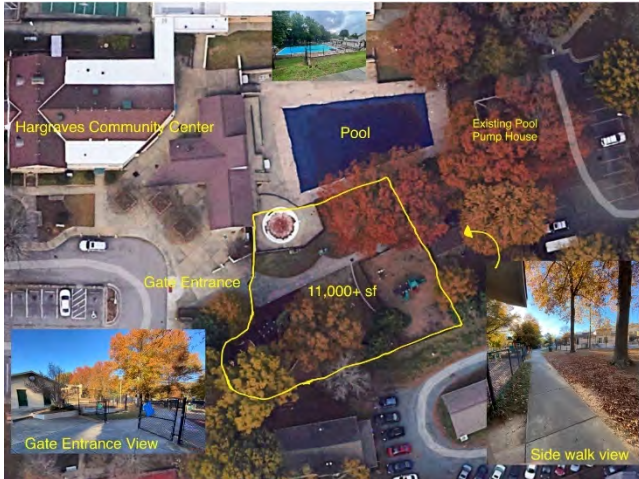
Recirculation mechanicals



Recirculation mechanicals need to be protected in a small shelter

## SUITABILITY OF CHAPEL HILL PARKS AND PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES FOR A DESTINATION SPLASH PAD

Three Chapel Hill parks can be feasible locations for any size splash pad from destination to pocket park. All have aquatic staff and/or staff on site, available space, utilities from existing building (Tap fees). A secondary water treatment system with ultraviolet disinfection would be used at all locations.



### Hargraves Park / AD Clark Pool

Hargraves Park is recommended to accommodate any size splash pad up to 4,000 sq ft with the existing playground for a total of over 11,000 sq ft. This park also has older facilities so a splash park would contribute to updating some of the auxiliary facilities (access, play areas) and would provide water play in the event that the pool needs major repairs or replacement which would preclude use during a summer season.

### Chapel Hill Community Center/Pool

Chapel Hill Community Center has current outdoor pool deck space over 6,000 sq ft and could accommodate any design up to 8,000 sq ft. This site is central in Town, and historically has had shorter pool hours due to staffing shortages. A splash park would provide a cooling water feature to extend outdoor recreation play time for Town residents. A splash pad at this location would need a change/restroom facility separate from the pool facilities as the pool facilities would only be available when a lifeguard was available. The splash pad would be located close to the playground and with the new change/restroom facility would provide an accessible restroom which would benefit other park facilities.



### Homestead Aquatic Center

Homestead Aquatic Center has an 8,000+ sq ft cleared grassy area in front of the building to accommodate a new aquatic play space. Previously this was envisioned as the future location of a gym. It is somewhat removed from the playground area.



## SMALL POCKET PARK OR MEDIUM SIZED SPLASH PAD FACILITIES

Pocket park splash pads are typically smaller - from 3-8 features - and usually low flow (less than 72 gallons per minute or gpm). Medium sized pads range from 8-16 features and usually low flow (60-150+ gpm). Pocket or Medium pads have one big question to answer with several factors to weigh. Should I pay for water and sewer or recirculate?

Single Use:

- - Water and sewer costs are important to calculate during the design phase.
  - Hours of operation and sequences are ways to control water budget.
- For maintenance expect 2-3 visits weekly (10-15 minutes per visit for splash pad duties) Depending on use, add time for items like trash and clean-up, 1-2 hour season start-up and 1-2 hour season shut down.
- Here are a few example project budgets for pocket parks with your water and sewer costs calculated.

### EXAMPLE 1:

This flow through design is 800 sq ft with one above grade spray feature and 7 ground sprays. This design would need 7,000-15,000 gallons per day of use sequenced between 5-10 hours or cost \$126-\$251 per day. (37 GPM)

Turn-Key Splash Pad Estimated \$180k +site prep and utility connection.



### EXAMPLE 2

This single use Pad is 970 sq ft with a couple of tall features and 6 ground sprays. This design would use 13k-26k gallons of water per day or cost \$200-\$420 per day. (60 gallons per minute (GPM))

Turn-Key Splash Pad Estimated \$210k +site prep and utility connection.





### EXAMPLE 3

This 1,110 sq ft design pass through has 4 above grade features and 4 ground level sprays. This would use 16k-33k gallons of water per day or cost \$270-\$540 per day. (80 GPM)

Turn-Key Splash Pad Estimated \$225k +site prep and utility connection.

Recirculate:

- The State Health Department dictates the requirements for each design and must give approval for order of equipment.
  - Highlights
  - (3) "Public swimming pool" means public swimming pool as defined in G.S. 130A-280. Public swimming pools are divided into five types:
    - (d) "Water recreation attractions" are pools designed for special purposes that differentiate them from swimming pools, wading pools, and spas. They include:
      - (i) water slide plunge pools and run out lanes, which transfer the kinetic energy of the users' velocity through friction to the slide;
      - (ii) wave pools;
      - (iii) rapid rides;
      - (iv) lazy rivers;
      - (v) interactive play attractions that incorporate devices using sprayed, jetted, or other water sources contacting the users and that do not incorporate standing or captured water as part of the user activity area;
- Higher initial costs, with minimal operating costs
- Many more design capabilities for 8-16 features and range in sizes from 2k-4k sq ft
- Expect 15-20 minutes daily to sample and log water sample, perform backwash or swap out cartridge filter
- See page 35 for the section in the NC Public Swimming Pool Code for Water Recreation Attractions

## SUITABILITY OF CHAPEL HILL PARKS AND PUBLIC HOUSING PROPERTIES FOR A POCKET PARK SPLASH PAD

Seven of the eight sites visited would be appropriate places to install a smaller splash pad facility. The single location where even a small splash facility would not be practical is the Oakwood Public Housing site. At this site there is no green space which truly feels like community space. All the open space at this location is either right next to a parking lot or feels part of individual residential unit outdoor space. There is also no public parking at this location, and not much local street parking.

### Cedar Falls Park



A pocket park sized facility would be appropriate at this location. A small splash facility near the restrooms or near the existing playground would provide a welcome cooling spot for families enjoying the playground or the tennis courts, and misters would provide a very beneficial amenity for the same group as well as athletes and spectators at the play fields.

This park does not currently have OWASA sanitary sewer service, and the existing septic field does not function properly when the park is overcrowded or when there has been a large rain event. The small splash

area or misting station would not require sanitary sewer facilities, and though it would act as an amenity for park users, it would be unlikely to attract a larger user group.

### Community Center Park

A small splash facility could be accommodated near the playground and act as a beneficial extension of that play area. This is the most used playground in Town, and adding a water feature would provide a feature that would extend users' time at the park.





## Eastwood Public Housing

There are two locations at the Eastwood development appropriate for a small splash feature. In the center of the community there is an older basketball half court which is in disrepair. This feature could be removed and provide a space for a smaller splash facility. There is also a large grassy space on the Eastwood Road frontage which is handy to the water utility service. Development of a small splash feature at this location would feel more like a public park and would be visible but slightly screened from the street. There is some availability of public street parking in this neighborhood. The argument against a facility in this location is that there is no public transportation available, and all nearby streets are residential and may not be appropriate for increased park traffic.



## Homestead Park

There is a suitable location near the playground and restroom area for a small splash facility in this park. The restroom building contains an extension which is a sheltered picnic area. There are also many playfields at this park which see routine and tournament type use. A small splash facility in this park would also serve the athletes and spectators on the baseball and soccer fields.





## Hargraves Park

Hargraves Park has an opportunity for a small or medium sized splash facility between the pool and the playground areas. This park has the highest number of households within walking distance, is close to downtown and public transit, and has multiple options/locations for parking. This park is older - the pool was built in the 1960's – and the neighborhood has been underserved historically. A splash facility at this location would provide an additional amenity at a popular community park.



## Southern Community Center Park

Southern Community Park has a master plan which includes a splash feature, though this amenity was not built. There is space within a fenced playground area which could easily accommodate a small or medium size splash pad, which would be a complementary amenity to the playground, shelters, and walking trails already in place.



Like Cedar Falls and Homestead Parks, this park also has multiple playfields which attract large groups, and a small splash feature or mister located between the shelter and playfields would be a welcome amenity to field users as well as to families using the playground and picnic facilities here.

## Umstead Park

There is a partially accessible playground at Umstead Park. This would be an appropriate place for a small to medium splash facility as a complimentary facility to the playground. This location has walking accessibility for almost as many households as the Hargraves Center Park and is located on the Tanyard Branch Greenway Trail.

There is an existing restroom building with picnic shelter.





### ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that newly constructed and altered local government facilities be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This generally focuses on designing for people with physical accessibility issues. The minimum requirements to meet ADA compliance include:

- An accessible route from accessible parking to the playground facility must be at least 60" wide with a running slope of 5% or less and a cross slope of 2% or less. Accessible routes must be in the same area as the general circulation path.
- Within the play area accessible routes must be at least 36" wide, with the maximum 5% slope/2% cross slope, and overhead clearance of 80". At least one accessible route shall be provided within the play area connecting ground level play components and elevation play components, including entry and exit point of the play components.
- Within the play area safety surfacing allowing wheelchair maneuverability is required between the accessible route from entry to the play areas to at least one connection to each accessible play component, including any clear space requirement adjacent to accessible play components.
- Transfer stations shall be permitted to connect elevated play components where there are fewer than 20 elevated components. Larger number of elevated components requires direct access to 25% of those components. Transfer stations must be at least 24" wide x 14" deep, between 11" and 18" from the surface below, with a minimum 24" x 48" landing along the length of the transfer station and at least 1 means of support for transferring.

Playground companies offer a wide range of play products which are ADA compliant, and which can be combined with additional non-ADA compliant elements. Playground designers can ensure compliance in all elements of a new or modified play system, including the play element, railings, landings, access, and fall zones.

When existing playgrounds are not accessible, some modifications can be made to make these spaces more accessible including:



*Landscape Structure, glider swing*

- Safety surfacing from the access sidewalk to the equipment
- Modified swings – this can range from saucer type swings to swing seats that have back support and a harness
- Addition of ground level activities to be accessed from an accessible surface
- Include some brightly colored or color contrasting equipment to help children with vision problems see the equipment from a distance

Elements not included in the ADA requirements, but which would encourage people with disabilities to use the space include: handicap accessible bathrooms close to the playground, seating, paved spaces for wheelchair seating adjacent to standard benches,

### **SAFETY SURFACE OPTIONS**

- Poured in place rubber – This surface requires the least maintenance but is the most expensive option
- Tiles – bonded rubber in 2'x2' tiles with interlocking sides
- Engineered wood chips – processed wood ground to a fibrous consistency, randomly sized with a maximum length of 2". This is not the same as wood bark which is often used as landscape mulch.

### **DEFINITION OF INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUNDS**

Building to ADA code is a requirement for new playground installation. But the ADA code does not generally promote design requirements for people with disabilities other than accessibility related disabilities. For example, the ADA does not regulate to accommodate children with Down syndrome, sensory disorders, intellectual disabilities, or sight and hearing impairments. Inclusive playgrounds allow all children and their caregivers to play with their peers regardless of physical or social or cognitive needs. Playgrounds which are defined as inclusive include both the elements required to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and also to cater to children with social and sensory issues. Creating an inclusive playground does not necessarily mean removing an existing facility and starting from scratch. Many existing playgrounds can be modified and adapted to allow increased accessibility and inclusiveness. Inclusive playground elements should be incorporated into the main playground, not to be in a separate area of the park

### **INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND COMPONENTS**

- Include a variety of materials and textures available for touch – for example activity boards, sandy spaces for play, water play
- Incorporate music panels or instruments and other sensory play items
- Include elements with sliding, spinning, and swinging components
- Include adaptive swings
- Include cozy spaces for a small group of children
- Provide a calm quiet place to escape the busy playground
- Play space within view of but separated from larger pieces for quieter play
- Stress relief elements – equipment with kick or punch pads for kids to relieve stress
- Include gathering areas that can accommodate large groups of children
- Include ground level activities and wide even spaces
- Group play facilities that can be used with a friend, such as tandem slides or double swings
- Alter heights of equipment to accommodate different ages and risk levels
- Add shade and seating





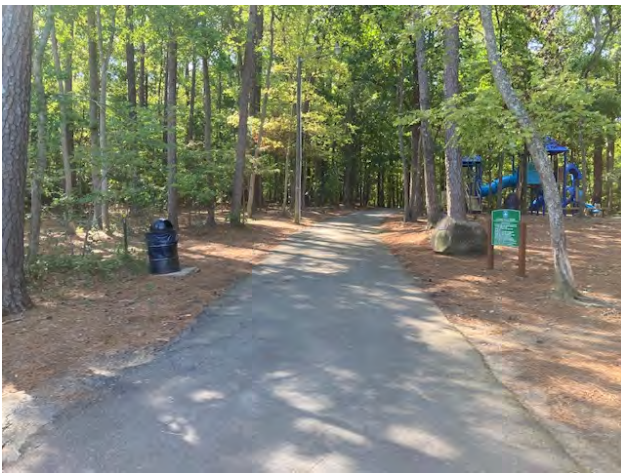
## EXISTING FACILITIES IN CHAPEL HILL

The consultant team examined play structures and space at 6 parks in Chapel Hill. Umstead Park and Southern Community Park are two of the playgrounds which included accessible elements. They could easily have a few more components added to make them more inclusive. But even in those parks some improvements should be made to expand access to equipment, especially where the accessible route involves leaving the fenced play area to access equipment via a walkway outside the fenced area. The other parks would need more extensive overhauls to make them accessible, and all the parks really need additional elements to make them more inclusive.

All of these facilities would be appropriate for a combination playground /splash area. And any of these parks could have splash pad features included with reconstruction of a new playground, or with expansion of existing well-functioning playgrounds.

### Cedar Falls Park

Cedar Falls has a playground which is not inclusive and not completely accessible. There were plans to add an accessible playground adjacent to the existing facility. Though there is a lot of space at this park and the new playground could be located here, the accessible/inclusive playground shouldn't be a separate play space from where all other children can play. The existing playground does have some real benefits – it is shaded and wooded, the surfacing appears ADA compliant, and some of the equipment has transfer stations. This playground could be made more accessible and inclusive with improvements to the access route from the parking lot, expansion of and small adjustments to improve access into the play area, and replacement of bathroom facilities to be fully ADA compliant which should be done anyway to serve the other park facilities. One option would be to expand the playground area and to



reconfigure the trail to make it fully ADA compliant. This would allow continued use of the existing playground equipment while incorporating/adding inclusive and accessible features.

*Trail from Cedar Falls parking lot to the playground. Trail could be relocated to the left to make it ADA compliant and to enlarge the playground area for expansion of inclusive equipment.*

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Clearing, regrading, and relocation of access trail:
- Expansion of playground facilities and surfacing
- Addition of an adaptive swing
- Accessible bathrooms
- Sanitary sewer service

## Community Center Park

The playground at the Community Center Park is due for replacement and would be an ideal place for a very inclusive playground. This is a well-used park with good accessibility including accessibility from the Bolin Creek Greenway. It is close to the parking lot, there are some adjacent facilities such as the rose garden and gazebo that extend and expand the play experience, and there is some existing shade from mature trees. There is also a great hill adjacent to the playground which could be the basis for some embankment elements.



*Landscape Structures embankment climber*



*Playground balance and climbing structure  
Museum of Life and Science, Durham*

There are two accessible single stall restroom facilities available to all park users, located inside the gym/pool building. Staff has noted that the bathroom facilities are insufficient for the number of people using the playground and other park facilities. Additional restroom facilities are located in the pool changeroom area and are not available to the general public. Staff has also noted the parking lot is overfull frequently.

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Replacement of playground facilities and surfacing
- Additional accessible restroom facility

## Hargraves Park

The playground area at Hargraves would be suitable for an inclusive/accessible park. There is good accessibility from the west within the park which is nicely shaded and already has a picnic shelter. There are accessible bathrooms about 300 feet away from the playground. Some adjustments to the site might be needed to provide compliant accessibility along the walkway that runs between the pool and the playground. Parking is available from two locations close to the playground area, but ADA compliant access is available only from the west. Holmes Childcare currently utilizes the park during specific weekday hours. There is a mid-age playground (5-12 y-o) which has poured in place surfacing, shade, benches. There is a need for better transfer stations in that playground. The elementary playground (5 y-o) gate is not accessible, and the wood bark surfacing is not engineered wood chip.

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Replacement of sidewalk to provide ADA compliant access to all playgrounds and shelter
- Expansion of playground facilities
- Addition of adaptive swing
- Surfacing in under 5-year-old playground





*Under 5 y-o play area, Hargraves Park*



*5-12 y-o play area, Hargraves Park*

### **Homestead Park**

Homestead Park would be an ideal place for a new inclusive accessible park. There is an existing playground at the park which is more accessible from the Stateside parking lot than the larger parking lot. The playground is at least 15 years old and nearing the end of its useful life. When it is replaced, it should include accessible and inclusive elements. This playground is old enough that improvement to fully accessible and inclusive facility should be for the whole playground. The playground is surrounded by trees which allows for some shade and nearby play in the woods. There are also nearby bathrooms and a shelter. There is more parking at this facility than at any other park in Chapel Hill.

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Replacement of playground equipment and surfacing
- ADA compliant bathroom facilities



*Homestead Park – wooded area adjacent to playground*

## Southern Community Park

This park contains a nicely fenced playground which has accessible play elements and incorporates a picnic shelter playground equipment which is in good condition, and there are shady and grassy areas for quiet or separate play. Some additional transition zones would help make more of the equipment accessible. The playground is large enough that additional accessible and inclusive features could be added. With replacement of some swings and additional equipment, this site would be ideal for a fully accessible and inclusive playground.



*Southern Community Park - swings*



There is sufficient parking at this site, and good accessibility from the parking lot. The bathrooms need improvement to meet ADA code and to be useful and fully inclusive. The ramp to the largest piece of equipment is accessible only by leaving the playground and coming back through a different gate – accessibility to each piece of equipment needs to be reworked so all equipment is accessible without going through gates or leaving the playground area.

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Improvement of access to playground ramps
- Expansion of transfer stations
- Adaptive swing
- Accessible toilet facilities

*Southern Community Park playground entrance – accessible ramp to play structure*

## Umstead Park



*Umstead Park play structure*

Umstead Park also has a playground facility which appears to be ADA compliant. There are appropriate handicap parking spaces, and a paved sidewalk between those spaces and the playground area approximately 250 feet away. The playground is located outside of the Resource Conservation District (RCD) area and is close to existing bathrooms and a picnic shelter. The bathrooms are not ADA compliant.

Elements required to improve this playground space:

- Improvement of access to playstructure ramp
- Addition of adaptive swing
- Accessible toilet facilities



## DEFICIENCIES AT EXISTING PROPERTIES

A general shortfall at all the parks visited is the lack of truly accessible bathroom facilities. Many of the facilities are older (built in the 1970's or 1980's) and have tight spaces within which don't allow for turning and which don't have space to allow for an adult to help a disabled child. Nor are there any "family" restrooms to allow older children to be attended by a caregiver of a different gender. Additionally, none of the park bathroom facilities have door openers. It is worth noting that in the survey answered by 902 Chapel Hill residents, 68.5% of respondents listed new restrooms or improvements to restrooms in their top 5 "wants" for playground amenity features. More information about public input can be found in Section 6, the next section of this report.

Swings are some of the most popular playground elements, and none of the parks visited have adaptive swing equipment. This equipment can be added, or swings on existing equipment can be replaced with adaptive swings.

Park staff identified parking shortages the Community Center and Umstead parks. Any addition of facilities at these parks should include parking accommodation.

## PUBLIC INPUT

A large component in the consideration of new recreation facilities in Town is receiving public input on what residents would like to see in their parks, and which parks they would like improved. This involves reaching out to the public to let them know what is being considered, listening to their concerns and wishes, quantifying the incoming information and using it toward determining a direction for improvement.

Various opportunities for public input were made available between early December 2022 and mid-February 2023. These opportunities ran the gamut from in person to virtual events, events specific to getting park improvement input to simply informing large groups of people meeting for other reasons.

A major component of public input came from a survey designed by the Town Parks & Recreation staff and distributed in person and via multiple websites.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION FEEDBACK

Preferred locations for the various facilities presented:

Facility	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
New inclusive playground	Hargraves Center Park (11 responses)	Community Center Park (6 responses)	Homestead Park (4 responses)
Inclusive upgrades to existing playgrounds	Cedar Falls Park (12 responses)	Southern Community Park (9 responses)	Umstead Park (6 responses)
Large Splash Facility	Community Center Park (13 responses)	Hargraves Center Park (11 responses)	Homestead Park (9 responses)
Small Splash Facility	Community Center Park Umstead Park (6 responses each)	Southern Community Park Eastwood Public Housing (5 responses each)	Homestead Park (4 responses) Hargraves Park (3 responses) Cedar Falls Park (2 responses)

Specific comments from people attending the public information sessions:

- Shade is needed at Umstead and Southern Community Parks
- Town needs an inclusive and adult playground
- Cedar Falls needs an older kid playground
- Legion Road should have a splash pad and an inclusive playground
- At Hargraves, redevelop the picnic area and expand the playground or add a splash pad
- At Hargraves, expand the gym and move the pool to expand the play area
- A natural themed splash pad will increase upwards the age of users that will take advantage of it

- Place the splash pad at a park that doesn't already have a pool to improve accessibility to water recreation for all neighborhoods
- Include interactive water play features like water wheels and streams with dams at multiple levels
- Parking is a problem at the Community Center
- The Hargraves playground area needs to be expanded
- Buy the Mitchell Lane property next to Hargraves to expand the playground
- Look at NY City's Governor's Island for playground inspiration
- Add inclusive features to every existing park
- Prefer upgrades to all parks versus one big new inclusive playground
- Add water fountain to walking trail
- All parks should be inclusive!

## SURVEY DATA SUMMARIZED

There were 904 survey responses altogether. The surveys were distributed in person and via various websites. The survey was available on the Town's website, linked to web news reports, distributed to neighborhood listserves, and the link generally made available at all the in-person events listed in Appendix B.

Total survey responses: 906

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
Lives in Orange County	753	153	
Cares for Children or Grandchildren	772	129	
Supports development of an inclusive playground at a Town park	871	12	13
Currently travels outside of Chapel Hill to use an inclusive playground	234	672	
Supports development of a splash pad at a Town park	894	5	5
Currently travels outside of Chapel Hill to use a splash pad facility	448	457	

Note: Some respondents left some questions unanswered. No all calculations total 906 responses.

Of the 906 survey respondents, the majority prefer to have one larger splashpad location. All respondents answered this question, even those who do not support development of a Town splashpad.

- Prefer one large splashpad location (514 respondents)
- Prefer smaller spray features at more than one park location (273 respondents)
- No preference/Unsure (119 respondents)

The elements most wanted in an inclusive playground:

- Shade (716 respondents)
- New or renovated restrooms with changing facilities (618 respondents)
- Benches, tables (552 respondents)
- Public art (374 respondents)

Other elements that were desired in inclusive parks in order of respondents include: lighting, concessions, outdoor showers, splash pad, and fencing.

Amenities receiving a single vote include art instruction, dog waste station, heat lamps, a communication board, disc golf, and a natural area.

One comment received noted that parents of disabled children need playground fencing.

The elements most wanted in a splash pad facility:

- Shade (664 respondents)
- New or renovated restrooms with changing facilities (627 respondents)
- Benches, tables (579 respondents)
- Public art (328 respondents)

Other elements that were desired in inclusive parks in order of respondents include: lighting, outdoor showers, concessions.

Preferred park for a new inclusive playground: (top 3 choices)	Community Center Park 353	Homestead Park 216	Hargraves Center Park 118
Preferred park for a new splash facility: (top 3 choices)	Homestead Park 425	Community Center Park 360	Hargraves Center Park 124

Regarding style of splash pad, respondents were asked: In viewing the splash pad designs below, which do you prefer? Not all respondents answered this question. Total responses were 893, with the majority preferring a nature based look to the facility.



Splash Pad Design Preference	Respondents
Nature Based	518
Contemporary	247
Traditional	66
Theme	61

The full survey can be found in Appendix C.



### **PERMITTING**

Improvements made at any of the parks or housing sites will involve getting permits from the Town and Orange County.

Improvements to the parks which do not include more than 2,500 sf of new building square footage could generally be permitted through a Zoning Compliance Permit. This permit takes between 3 and 6 months depending on the size of the project. The time frame would be at the low end for a pocket park splash pad but would be at the long end for a facility that included a new bathroom or equipment building and storm management facility.

### **SCHEDULES**

#### *Pocket Park Splash Pad*

The time frame for permitting and construction of a pocket park splash pad would be about 5-6 months.

Starting the process, the Town could expect the design of a pocket park to take about a month before it would be sufficiently detailed to apply for permits. A simple park would require the following permits:

- Administrative ZCP approval through Town of Chapel Hill – Approximately 3 months
- Erosion Control permit through Orange County – Concurrent with ZCP

A flow-through system would not require Health Department permits.

The construction of a small park could be completed in about 6 weeks.

#### *Destination Splash Pad Park*

The time frame for permitting and construction of a destination splash pad park would be about 12-14 months.

Starting the process, the Town could expect the design of a destination park to take about 2 months before it would be sufficiently detailed to apply for permits. A destination park would be more likely to have buildings, increases in impervious surface, additional parking, and stormwater management facility requirements. It would require the following permits:

- ZCP approval through Town of Chapel Hill – Approximately 5-6 months
- Erosion Control permit through Orange County – Approximately 2 months concurrent with ZCP
- Health Department Approvals – State level – Approximately 1 month concurrent with ZCP

The construction of a destination park could be completed in about 3 months after approval of site permits.

### SPLASH PAD – DESTINATION PARK

Assumes the inclusion of these elements:

- Splash pad surface and features
- Small building for equipment
- Service connection for water (assumes nearby main or water source)
- Recirculation system
- Drainage to sanitary sewer or a leach field
- Construction of accessible sidewalks
- Possibly includes construction of a new restroom/change facility
- Possibly includes construction of additional parking
- Possibly includes construction of a stormwater mitigation facility.



*Sample small splash park*



*Sample medium splash park*

Cost for a large destination splash pad would be in the \$ 2,020,000 - \$ 2,220,000 range.

Splash facility including equipment building, and surfacing, and 24+ spray features:	\$1,000,000-1,200,000
Restroom/change facility:	600,000
Parking Expansion:	200,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000
Shade and seating:	105,000
Bioretention/Storm mitigation:	100,000
Expected annual recirculation system operating costs:	\$ 15,000

Cost for a medium splash pad would be in the \$ 1,670,000 - \$ 1,770,000 range.

Splash facility including equipment building, & Surfacing, 16-24 spray features:	\$ 650,000-750,000
Restroom/change facility:	600,000
Parking Expansion:	200,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000
Shade and seating:	105,000
Bioretention/Storm mitigation:	100,000
Expected annual recirculation system operating costs:	\$ 15,000

### SPLASH PAD – POCKET PARK

Assumes the inclusion of these elements:

- Splash pad surface and features
- Small shelter for equipment
- Service connection for water (assumes nearby main or water source)
- Drainage to sanitary sewer or a leach field
- Pedestrian access
- Possibly includes construction of a stormwater mitigation facility



*Pocket Splash Pad example*

Cost for a pocket park size splash pad would be in the \$ 430,000 - \$ 530,000 range.

Splash pad with 5-10 spray features:	\$ 170,000 - 250,000
Dedicated water / sewer taps:	165,000 – 185,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000
Bioretention/Storm mitigation:	80,000
Expected annual operating costs:	\$40,000-\$60,000/per season in water and sewer costs, plus \$3,500 annually for maintenance expenses.

#### **ACCESSIBLE INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND – NEW CONSTRUCTION**

Assumes the inclusion of these elements:

- Playground equipment equivalent to the size of the playground at Southern Community Park
  - o Approx. 15,000 sf
  - o Approx 30-40 play elements
- Safety surfacing
- Benches and picnic tables
- Tree and shrub installation
- A tent style shade structure
- Accessible sidewalks
- Possibly includes construction of additional parking
- Possibly includes construction of improved bathroom facilities
- Possibly includes construction of a stormwater mitigation facility

Cost for a new inclusive playground would be in the \$ 1,040,000 - \$ 1,165,000 range.

New playground and surfacing, and miscellaneous site work (grading, plantings, etc):	\$ 325,000-450,000
Restroom/change facility:	600,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000
Bioretention/Storm mitigation:	100,000

#### **ACCESSIBLE INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND – EXISTING FACILITY EXPANSION/ADAPTATION**

Assumes the inclusion of these elements:

- Additional Playground equipment and associated safety surfacing
- Benches
- Tree and shrub installation
- Accessible sidewalks

Cost for an inclusive accessible playground adaptation would be in the \$ 50,000 + range.

New playground equipment:	\$ 35,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000

## SPLASH PAD AND INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT COMBINATION

Assumes the inclusion of these elements:

- New playground facility including standard, accessible, and inclusive play elements
- Splash pad surface and approximately 20 splash features
- Small shelter for recirculation equipment
- Service connection for water (assumes nearby main or water source)
- Drainage to sanitary sewer or a leach field
- Pedestrian access
- Possibly includes construction of a stormwater mitigation facility
- New restroom facility with change rooms

Cost for an inclusive accessible playground and splash park combination would be in the \$ 1,995,000 – 2,220,000 range.

New playground equipment & surfacing	\$ 325,000- 450,000
Splash facility including equipment building, Surfacing, 16-24 spray features:	650,000-750,000
Restroom/change facility:	600,000
Parking Expansion:	200,000
Pedestrian access improvements:	15,000
Shade and seating:	105,000
Bioretention/Storm mitigation:	100,000
Expected annual recirculation system operating costs:	\$ 15,000



### SPLASH PAD – DESTINATION PARK

During the preliminary presentations to the Parks, Greenways and Recreation Commission and to Council, the feedback the design team received was for support of the following elements:

- Co-locate the splash pad and playground to take advantage of shared elements like parking
- Leverage existing facilities as much as possible
- Transit access needs to be available, and connections to greenway trails should be stressed
- There was support for multiple locations, though maybe not all at the same time
- A moderately sized splash pad facility as the priority
- General consensus that a recirculation system would be a more sustainable way to install a splash pad

Survey respondents indicated these as the top preferences for parks where they'd like to see a splash pad facility built: (top 3 choices)

Homestead Park	425
Community Center Park	360
Hargraves Center Park	124

### INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

During the preliminary presentations to the Parks & Recreation Commission and to Council, the feedback the design team received was for support of the following elements:

- A destination inclusive playground is needed in Town
- Also want more accessibility and inclusion at all the Town playgrounds
- Prioritize what could be approved and installed quickly
- Co-locate the splash pad and playground to take advantage of shared elements like parking
- Leverage existing facilities as much as possible
- Transit access needs to be available, and connections to greenway trails should be stressed

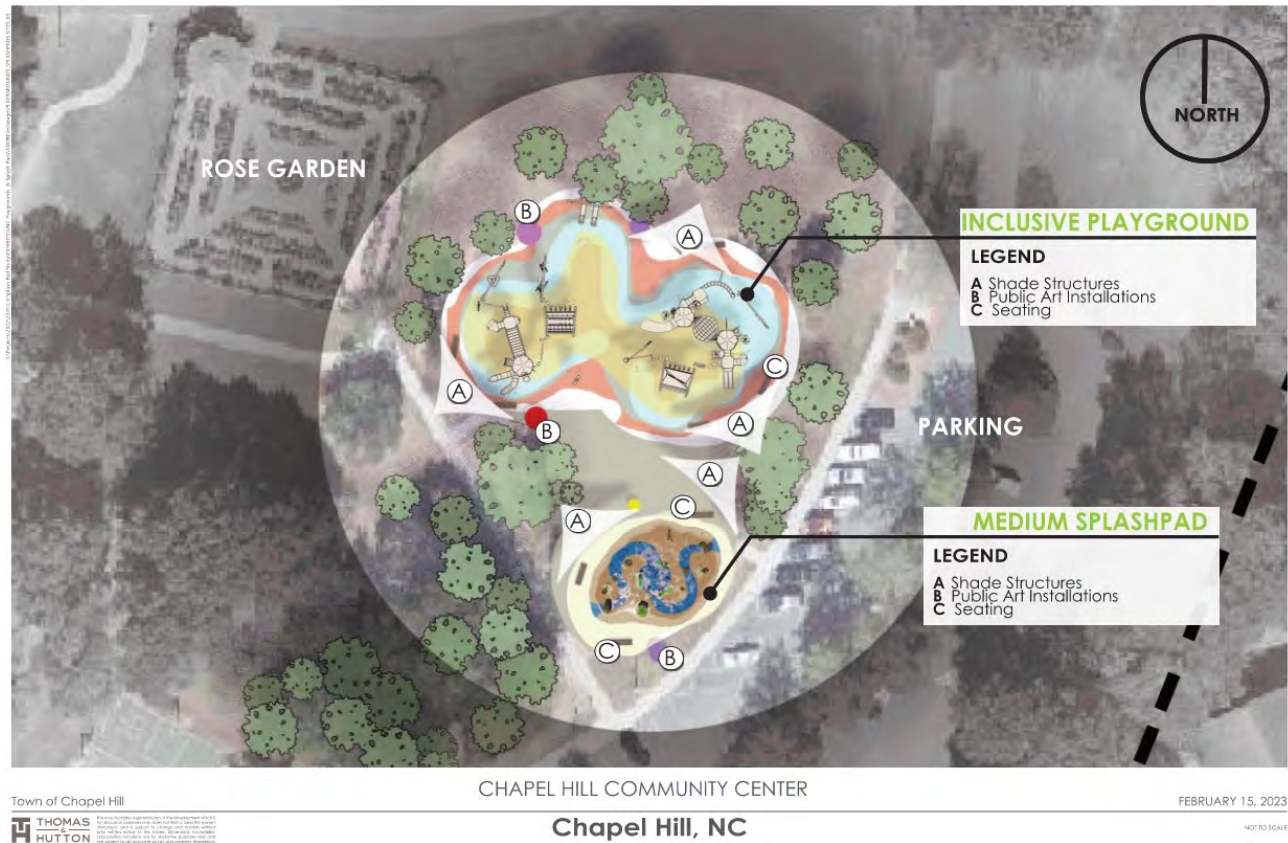
Survey respondents indicated these as the top preferences for parks where they'd like to see a new inclusive playground: (top 3 choices)

Community Center Park	353
Homestead Park	216
Hargraves Center Park	118

Conceptual layouts have been done to illustrate how these facilities would lay out at the three parks.

## COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

The existing playground area would be expanded to accommodate a new inclusive playground and a new restroom facility. If both a playground and a small splash pad were to be located in this park, they could be located adjacent to each other and share seating and shade amenities.



## COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

A large splash facility would be better located close to the building. The concrete deck space is currently not efficiently used, and by locating the larger splash facility in that area the splash facility would be close to utilities and parking. The change and restroom facilities in the pool cannot be accessed from this area unless there is a lifeguard on duty. Staff at the park have also noted that the restroom facilities are not adequate for all park users. In this case, a new restroom / change facility would be recommended in conjunction with the larger splash pad. That restroom facility would be incorporated with some change space and would be located between the playground and the splash pad for convenience to all park users.



CHAPEL HILL COMMUNITY CENTER

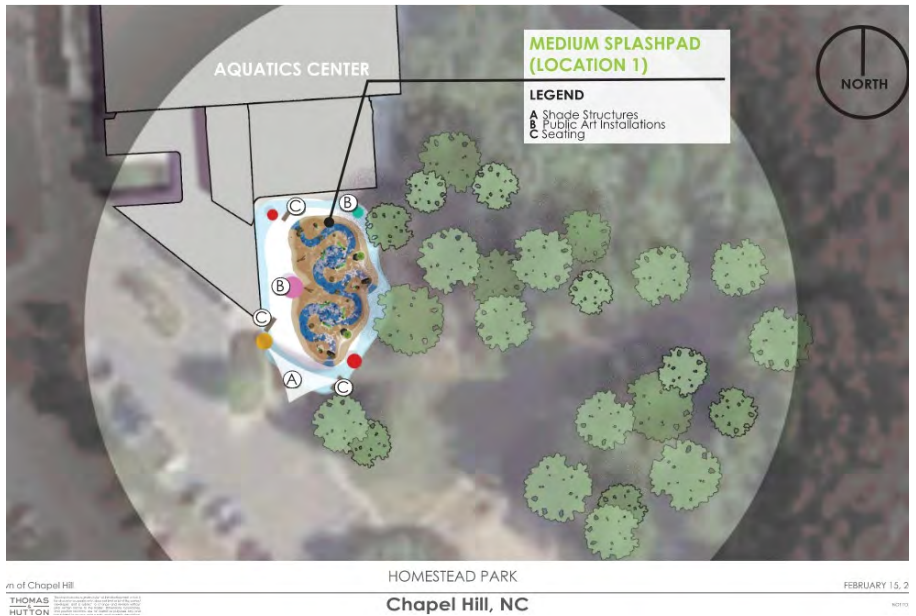
Chapel Hill, NC

FEBRUARY 15, 2017

NOT TO SCALE

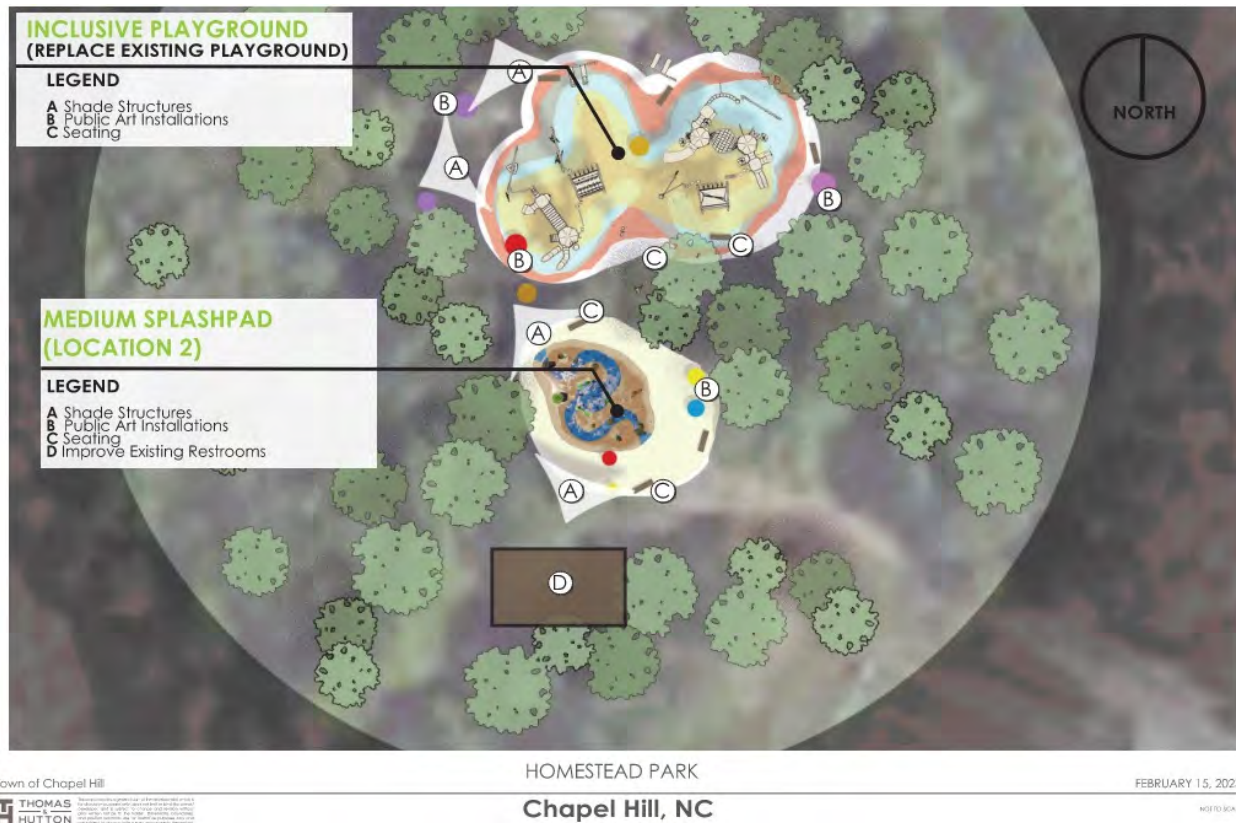
## HOMESTEAD PARK

A larger splash pad would be located in the grassy open space adjacent to the aquatic center. This is a flat open area close to a lot of existing parking and splash pad users could potentially use restroom and changing facilities within the aquatic center.



A new inclusive playground at this park would be located in the same place as the existing playground. There is space nearby where a small splash pad could be accommodated at the same time or at a future time. There is an existing restroom facility and picnic shelter nearby. Although that facility does have a covered area, the restroom is not accessible and there are no change facilities. The recommendation would be to replace the existing restrooms with a new restroom/change facility to serve the playground and other park users.





#### HARGRAVES COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

Splash pad and inclusive playground improvements at this park would all be located south of the existing pool. A small splash pad could be added here. A larger splash pad would likely involve removing or relocating some of the playground. The park would not accommodate all three facilities but could accommodate a new inclusive playground as well as either a small or medium size splash facility.



### **BUDGET CONSTRAINTS**

The Town has allocated ARPA funds of \$285,000 to add adaptive features to multiple/all playgrounds in the park system. They have also allocated ARPA funds of \$500,000 for a new inclusive playground at the Community Center Park. This choice is well supported by the public. The survey response supports the Community Center Park as the preferred location for a new inclusive playground.

The funds being provided for playground design and installations are a solid first phase of funding for playground improvements. Priority for funding of next phases should include amounts to provide a restroom/comfort station at the Community Center Park, restroom replacement at the other parks, and a new medium splash pad facility at either Homestead Park or at the Community Center Park. Public response indicates the two most popular locations for the splash pad would be at the Community Center Park or at Homestead Park. There would be some cost efficiencies by combining a splash pad with a new playground facility at the same park. Initial feedback from the Parks Commission supports these two locations (Homestead Park and Community Center Park) and supports a combined improvement at the same park. Improvements to restroom facilities are already in the Town capital improvement budget.

### **ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS**

*Can the splash pad and playground be incorporated into the same facility so that the splash area can be used as an expanded playground area when the water is off?*

The splash pad will have a different surface than the playground. The splash pad will have a concrete or hard non-slip surface and will not accommodate any fall zones. Additionally, any vertical elements within the splash park would be unsafe for climbing.

The splash pad area could be used for other purposes that do not include a playground extension. Above ground splash elements can be removed in the off season, leaving a surface which could accommodate temporary uses such as performance events, a small 1-day marketplace, or an outdoor classroom. That space could even support temporary tent coverage to make it useful in rainy weather.

*Does water run constantly at the splash pad?*

The system would be set to turn on during normal operating hours (for example 10 am – 7 pm). During that time water would be available to the spray elements when an activator button is pressed. Water generally runs for 4-5 minutes and then automatically shuts off. During the season, the recirculation system runs constantly but water does not spray unless the activation button is pressed. That means that during the season any rainwater falling in the splash pad also drains into the recirculation system.

*Can shade be provided by trees?*

Trees for shade would be great around a playground, though it will be some years before any new trees would be large enough to provide significant shade. Trees around the splash pad area are not recommended. Falling leaves stain the surface, and leaves and tree debris in general clog the recirculation system. Even if there are no trees planted nearby, a debris trap is recommended to reduce maintenance on the recirculation system.

*Is fencing required, or allowed?*

Fencing is not required for safety for splash pad facilities. If the Town prefers to limit users or to charge entry fees, a fence would be necessary. Fencing is allowed but would add cost to the project construction. Some fencing could be added to limit access to unsafe areas such as parking lots.

*Is the splash pad navigable by walkers and wheelchairs?*

Yes. The slope on the splash pad surface is <2%, the surface is rigid and smooth and accommodates walkers and wheelchairs. It is even possible to provide pool wheelchairs for use at the splash pad. These chairs are generally medical grade pvc plastic with graphite hand rims / wheels and mesh seating. They are totally submersible.

*Will rainwater collect in the splash pad area if the water is not operating?*

The site slopes toward drains, and even when the system is shut off any rainwater will be collected in the drains. When the recirculation system is not on, a rainwater trap opens, and water and small debris wash into the stormwater system. There shouldn't ever be standing water in the splash pad area.

*Does the North Carolina Department of Health require visitors to shower before entering splash pad?*

The NC DPH does not require showers before entering a splash pad that is not attached to an aquatic facility. If the splash pad is attached to an aquatic facility, the splash pad would need to follow aquatic facility guidelines in place. The splash consultant would recommend an outdoor fountain/drinking fountain combo for any recirculation system splash pad design even though it is not required. The cost for such an element would be \$6,000-\$10,000.



### SECTION .2500 - PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS

#### 15A NCAC 18A .2543 WATER RECREATION ATTRACTIONS

(a) Upon written request and approval by the Department, water recreation attractions including water slides, wave pools, rapid rides, lazy rivers, artificial swimming lagoons, and other similar features may deviate from the requirements of this Section with respect to pool profile, depth, freeboard, flow dynamics and surface skimming systems. The Department shall approve the request upon a showing that such deviation performs in a manner equally to or more protective of public health than the requirements of this Section based upon design plans and technical specifications by the designing engineer or equipment manufacturer. Water recreation attractions shall meet all other requirements of this Section.

(b) Water slide landing pools with a capacity of less than 60,000 gallons shall have a circulation and filtration system capable of turning over the entire pool capacity every two hours. Where automatic chemical controllers are used the turnover time shall be no more than three hours. Landing pool dimensions shall be consistent with the slide manufacturer's recommendation.

(c) When waterfalls are incorporated in water recreation attractions, they shall be constructed with no handholds or footholds to a height of four feet to discourage climbing.

(d) Interactive play attractions shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the rules of this Section and shall comply with the following:

- (1) The recirculation system shall contain a water capacity equal to at least three minutes of maximum flow of all feature pumps and filter circulation pumps combined and shall not be less than 1,000 gallons. Where the water capacity exceeds 10,000 gallons, the minimum capacity shall be based on the lesser of three minutes of maximum feature flow or 7.5 gallons per square foot of splash zone watershed drained to the surge container.
- (2) Access shall be provided to the surge water container.
- (3) A filter circulation system shall be provided and shall be separate from the feature pump system except that both systems can draw water from a common drain pipe if the drain and pipe are sized to handle the flow of all pumps without exceeding the flow velocities specified in Rule .2518 of this Section.
- (4) The filter circulation system shall draw water from the surge container through a variable height surface skimmer and a bottom drain located no more than 6 inches from the bottom of the container.
- (5) The filter circulation system shall filter and return the entire water capacity in no more than 30 minutes and shall operate 24 hours a day.
- (6) Automatic chemical controllers shall be provided to monitor and adjust the disinfectant residual and pH of the water contained in the system.
- (7) The disinfectant residual in interactive play attractions shall be maintained at a level of at least two parts per million of free chlorine. Chlorine feeders shall be capable of producing 12 parts per million of free chlorine in the filter circulation piping.
- (8) Valves shall be provided to control water flow to the features in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications.
- (9) Splash zones shall be sloped to drains sized and located to remove all feature water to the surge tank without water accumulating on the surface.
- (10) Deck or walkway space is not required outside the splash zone.
- (11) Dressing and sanitary facilities shall not be required.
- (12) Interactive play features shall not be required to have a fence except the wading pool fence requirements shall apply to interactive play features located inside a swimming pool enclosure.

- (13) The safety provisions of Rule .2530 of this Section shall not apply except a sign shall be posted prohibiting pets and glass containers.
- (14) Interactive play attractions built prior to April 1, 2004, that do not comply with these design and construction requirements shall be permitted to operate as built if no water quality or safety violations occur under Rules .2535 and .2537 of this Section.

(e) Training pools shall meet the requirements for swimming pools with the following exceptions:

(1) Training pools shall be equipped with a filter circulation system that filters and returns the entire pool capacity in no more than two hours.

(2) The free chlorine residual in training pools shall be maintained at no less than two parts per million. (f) Artificial swimming lagoons shall meet the requirements for public swimming pools except as specified in this Rule:

- (1) Pool shells shall not be required. Liners shall meet the requirements of Rule .2514 of this Section.
- (2) Underwater components of the artificial swimming lagoon or float lines with openings greater than one-half inch shall not be allowed in swimming zones.
- (3) All swimming zone float rope components shall be a color contrasting with the pool liner. Artificial swimming lagoons are not required to meet the float rope location requirements of Rule .2523(e) of this Section regarding breakpoint and slope. A contrasting color band shall not be required on the liner under the rope.
- (4) Each swimming zone and water feature shall meet water quality standards as required in Rule .2535 of this Section. If the water quality of a swimming zone or water feature does not meet the requirements of Rule .2535 of this Section, the operator shall close the swimming zone or water feature and post a sign at the entrance of the swimming zone with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "ATTENTION: THE SWIMMING ZONE IS CLOSED. SWIMMING IN THIS AREA IS NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME." The swimming zone or water feature shall remain closed until the water quality in the swimming zone or water feature complies with the requirements of Rule .2535 of this Section.
- (5) All non-swimming zones shall be maintained so the bottom of the lagoon is visible in all areas.
- (6) A sign shall be posted at all entrances to the artificial swimming lagoon with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "NOTICE – NO SWIMMING ALLOWED OUTSIDE OF DESIGNATED SWIMMING ZONES."
- (7) Signage shall be posted indicating swimming zones.
- (8) Depth markings and no diving markers shall be provided on decks in swimming zones as required in Rule .2523 of this Section. Signs shall be posted at all entrances to swimming zones with legible letters of at least four inches (10cm) in height stating "NO DIVING" and stating the maximum depth of the swimming zone in Arabic numerals and shall include the word "feet" or the symbol "ft" to indicate the unit of measure.
- (9) Decks at zero entry areas located within swimming zones are not required to meet the minimum deck area requirements in Rule .2522 of this Section. Access to swimming zones shall be provided for emergency vehicles and personnel. No decks shall be required in non-swimming zones. The requirements of Rule .2515(g)(1) of this Section shall not apply to swimming zones and Rule .2515(g) of this Section shall not apply to non-swimming zones.
- (10) Swimming zones shall meet all safety provisions as set out in Rule .2530 of this Section. Where swimming zones are separated by more than 75 feet, each swimming zone shall separately meet all safety provisions. Non-swimming zones are exempt from the requirements in Rule .2530 of this Section.
- (11) A water treatment system that does not meet the requirements of Rules .2518 and .2519 of this Section shall be approved by the Environmental Health Section of the Department's Division of Public Health when the treatment system performs in a manner equal or superior to the systems described in Rules .2518 and .2519 of this Section in terms of water clarification, disinfection, and removal of debris, and results in a disinfectant residual and pH level as required in Subparagraph (f)(4) of this Rule.
- (12) The requirements of Rule .2529 of this Section and Rule .2526(e)–(h) of this Section shall not apply. Sanitary facility requirements shall comply with the 2018 North Carolina State Building Code: Plumbing

Code, which is incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments or editions and available free of charge at: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/NCPC2018>.

- (13) Bacteriological samples shall be collected by the operator in non-swimming zones and tested weekly. One sample shall be collected for every 250 feet of shoreline, with no more than 300 feet and no less than 25 feet between any two sampling locations. The samples shall be collected at least one foot below the surface, in at least three feet of water. The samples shall be analyzed by a laboratory accredited by the North Carolina Drinking Water Laboratory Certification Program, the North Carolina Wastewater/Groundwater Laboratory Certification Program, or the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program. The test results shall be maintained as part of the records required in Rule .2535(11) of this Section.
- (14) When the result of any test required by Subparagraph (f)(13) of this Rule exceeds the standards in Rule .3402(a) of this Subchapter, the operator shall:
  - (A) notify the local health department that permitted the artificial swimming lagoon and resample the water within 24 hours of receipt of the result from the laboratory; and
  - (B) close all non-swimming zones and post a sign at all non-swimming zone entrances with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "ATTENTION: ALL NON- SWIMMING ZONES ARE CLOSED. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA ARE NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME." This sign shall remain posted until resampling determines that bacterial levels do not exceed the standards in Rule .3402(a) of this Subchapter.
- (15) Non-swimming zones shall not be required to comply with the lighting requirements of Rule .2524 of this Section. When night swimming is allowed, the operator shall provide lighting in swimming zones as required for public swimming pools.
- (16) The requirements of Rule .2537(b)(16) of this Section shall not apply. Submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment shall not be used in swimming zones or within 25 feet of swimming zones when a swimming zone is open to bathers. If submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment are used in non-swimming zones when a non-swimming zone is open to users, the following conditions shall apply:

(17)

#### History Note:

- (A) A registered design professional shall provide design plans or technical specifications that demonstrate that any underwater suction outlets perform in a manner that is equally protective or more protective than the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance's ANSI/APSP/ICC-7 2013 Standard for Suction Entrapment Avoidance in Swimming Pools, which is incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments or editions, and available for a fee of one hundred sixty-five dollars (\$165.00) at <https://www.apsp.org/store1>; and
- (B) All floating components of submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment shall be labeled with a sign above the water line with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in a contrasting color stating: "DANGER: MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT IN USE. STAY BACK 25 FEET."

The requirements of Rules .2521 and .2516(f)(1) of this Section shall not apply to non-swimming zones.

Authority G.S. 130A-280; 130A-282; S.L. 2011-39; S.L. 2019-88;

Eff. April 1, 1999;

Amended Eff. March 1, 2004;

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019;

Temporary Amendment Eff. December 3, 2019; Amended Eff. October 1, 2020.

## 15A NCAC 18A .2544 SPECIAL PURPOSE AND THERAPY POOLS

(a) Special purpose and therapy pools shall comply with the requirements for public swimming pools and spas except as specified in this Rule.

(b) Float tanks:

- (1) The requirement in Rule .2522 of this Section for a deck or walkway continuous with the top of the pool wall does not apply to isolation float tanks where a clear floor space of at least eight feet by four feet is provided adjacent to the entrance to the tank.
- (2) The requirement in Rule .2532 of this Section for the minimum ceiling height of 7 1/2 feet above the rim of the pool does not preclude use of a canopy of a lower height to enclose an isolation float tank provided the canopy can be opened to allow users a standing entry and exit from the float tank.
- (3) The minimum lighting requirement in Rule .2524 of this Section does not apply to float tanks provided lighting is available for cleaning and is sufficient to provide visibility for entry and exit from the float tank.
- (4) The requirements in Rule .2518 of this Section that recirculation pumps operate 24 hours per day do not preclude turning off the pump during float sessions when a sanitizing cycle is provided that filters and disinfects the entire capacity of the float tank system at least twice before every user

enters the pool. When the float tank is not being used, the pump shall either operate continuously or

intermittently to filter and disinfect the capacity of the pool twice every hour.

- (5) The requirement in Rule .2518 of this Section that pool pumps three horsepower or smaller meet NSF/ANSI Standard 50 is not applicable when the mineral content of the brine in a float tank is incompatible with standard pool pumps. Pumps that do not meet NSF/ANSI standard 50 shall be approved by the Department when the viscosity of the mineral solution in the float tank requires a pump impeller or magnetic coupling designed to pump viscous liquids. Electrical safety of such pumps shall be verified by an independent third-party testing lab to meet applicable Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Standards.
- (6) The requirement in Rule .2532 of this Section for a caution sign at spas with a water temperature above 90 degrees Fahrenheit is not applicable to float tanks that do not exceed an operating temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Float tanks that exceed an operating temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit shall have a posted sign with the same warnings required for hot spas except references to spas may be reworded to reference float tanks or float spas.

## 15A NCAC 18A .2543 WATER RECREATION ATTRACTIONS

(a) Upon written request and approval by the Department, water recreation attractions including water slides, wave pools, rapid rides, lazy rivers, artificial swimming lagoons, and other similar features may deviate from the requirements of this Section with respect to pool profile, depth, freeboard, flow dynamics and surface skimming systems. The Department shall approve the request upon a showing that such deviation performs in a manner equally to or more protective of public health than the requirements of this Section based upon design plans and technical specifications by the designing engineer or equipment manufacturer. Water recreation attractions shall meet all other requirements of this Section.

(b) Water slide landing pools with a capacity of less than 60,000 gallons shall have a circulation and filtration system capable of turning over the entire pool capacity every two hours. Where automatic chemical controllers are used the turnover time shall be no more than three hours. Landing pool dimensions shall be consistent with the slide manufacturer's recommendation.

(c) When waterfalls are incorporated in water recreation attractions, they shall be constructed with no handholds or footholds to a height of four feet to discourage climbing.



(d) Interactive play attractions shall be constructed and operated in accordance with the rules of this Section and shall comply with the following:

- (1) The recirculation system shall contain a water capacity equal to at least three minutes of maximum flow of all feature pumps and filter circulation pumps combined and shall not be less than 1,000 gallons. Where the water capacity exceeds 10,000 gallons, the minimum capacity shall be based on the lesser of three minutes of maximum feature flow or 7.5 gallons per square foot of splash zone watershed drained to the surge container.
- (2) Access shall be provided to the surge water container.
- (3) A filter circulation system shall be provided and shall be separate from the feature pump system except that both systems can draw water from a common drain pipe if the drain and pipe are sized to handle the flow of all pumps without exceeding the flow velocities specified in Rule .2518 of this Section.
- (4) The filter circulation system shall draw water from the surge container through a variable height surface skimmer and a bottom drain located no more than 6 inches from the bottom of the container.
- (5) The filter circulation system shall filter and return the entire water capacity in no more than 30 minutes and shall operate 24 hours a day.
- (6) Automatic chemical controllers shall be provided to monitor and adjust the disinfectant residual and pH of the water contained in the system.
- (7) The disinfectant residual in interactive play attractions shall be maintained at a level of at least two parts per million of free chlorine. Chlorine feeders shall be capable of producing 12 parts per million of free chlorine in the filter circulation piping.
- (8) Valves shall be provided to control water flow to the features in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications.
- (9) Splash zones shall be sloped to drains sized and located to remove all feature water to the surge tank without water accumulating on the surface.
- (10) Deck or walkway space is not required outside the splash zone.
- (11) Dressing and sanitary facilities shall not be required.
- (12) Interactive play features shall not be required to have a fence except the wading pool fence requirements shall apply to interactive play features located inside a swimming pool enclosure.
- (13) The safety provisions of Rule .2530 of this Section shall not apply except a sign shall be posted prohibiting pets and glass containers.
- (14) Interactive play attractions built prior to April 1, 2004, that do not comply with these design and construction requirements shall be permitted to operate as built if no water quality or safety violations occur under Rules .2535 and .2537 of this Section.

(e) Training pools shall meet the requirements for swimming pools with the following exceptions:

(1) Training pools shall be equipped with a filter circulation system that filters and returns the entire pool capacity in no more than two hours.

(2) The free chlorine residual in training pools shall be maintained at no less than two parts per million. (f) Artificial swimming lagoons shall meet the requirements for public swimming pools except as specified in this Rule:

- (1) Pool shells shall not be required. Liners shall meet the requirements of Rule .2514 of this Section.
- (2) Underwater components of the artificial swimming lagoon or float lines with openings greater than one-half inch shall not be allowed in swimming zones.
- (3) All swimming zone float rope components shall be a color contrasting with the pool liner. Artificial swimming lagoons are not required to meet the float rope location requirements of Rule .2523(e) of this Section regarding breakpoint and slope. A contrasting color band shall not be required on the liner under the rope.
- (4) Each swimming zone and water feature shall meet water quality standards as required in Rule .2535 of this Section. If the water quality of a swimming zone or water feature does not meet the requirements of Rule .2535 of this Section, the operator shall close the swimming zone or water feature and post a sign

at the entrance of the swimming zone with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "ATTENTION: THE SWIMMING ZONE IS CLOSED. SWIMMING IN THIS AREA IS NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME." The swimming zone or water feature shall remain closed until the water quality in the swimming zone or water feature complies with the requirements of Rule .2535 of this Section.

- (5) All non-swimming zones shall be maintained so the bottom of the lagoon is visible in all areas.
- (6) A sign shall be posted at all entrances to the artificial swimming lagoon with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "NOTICE – NO SWIMMING ALLOWED OUTSIDE OF DESIGNATED SWIMMING ZONES."
- (7) Signage shall be posted indicating swimming zones.
- (8) Depth markings and no diving markers shall be provided on decks in swimming zones as required in Rule .2523 of this Section. Signs shall be posted at all entrances to swimming zones with legible letters of at least four inches (10cm) in height stating "NO DIVING" and stating the maximum depth of the swimming zone in Arabic numerals and shall include the word "feet" or the symbol "ft" to indicate the unit of measure.
- (9) Decks at zero entry areas located within swimming zones are not required to meet the minimum deck area requirements in Rule .2522 of this Section. Access to swimming zones shall be provided for emergency vehicles and personnel. No decks shall be required in non-swimming zones. The requirements of Rule .2515(g)(1) of this Section shall not apply to swimming zones and Rule .2515(g) of this Section shall not apply to non-swimming zones.
- (10) Swimming zones shall meet all safety provisions as set out in Rule .2530 of this Section. Where swimming zones are separated by more than 75 feet, each swimming zone shall separately meet all safety provisions. Non-swimming zones are exempt from the requirements in Rule .2530 of this Section.
- (11) A water treatment system that does not meet the requirements of Rules .2518 and .2519 of this Section shall be approved by the Environmental Health Section of the Department's Division of Public Health when the treatment system performs in a manner equal or superior to the systems described in Rules .2518 and .2519 of this Section in terms of water clarification, disinfection, and removal of debris, and results in a disinfectant residual and pH level as required in Subparagraph (f)(4) of this Rule.
- (12) The requirements of Rule .2529 of this Section and Rule .2526(e)–(h) of this Section shall not apply. Sanitary facility requirements shall comply with the 2018 North Carolina State Building Code: Plumbing Code, which is incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments or editions and available free of charge at: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/NCPC2018>.
- (13) Bacteriological samples shall be collected by the operator in non-swimming zones and tested weekly. One sample shall be collected for every 250 feet of shoreline, with no more than 300 feet and no less than 25 feet between any two sampling locations. The samples shall be collected at least one foot below the surface, in at least three feet of water. The samples shall be analyzed by a laboratory accredited by the North Carolina Drinking Water Laboratory Certification Program, the North Carolina Wastewater/Groundwater Laboratory Certification Program, or the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program. The test results shall be maintained as part of the records required in Rule .2535(11) of this Section.
- (14) When the result of any test required by Subparagraph (f)(13) of this Rule exceeds the standards in Rule .3402(a) of this Subchapter, the operator shall:
  - (A) notify the local health department that permitted the artificial swimming lagoon and resample the water within 24 hours of receipt of the result from the laboratory; and
  - (B) close all non-swimming zones and post a sign at all non-swimming zone entrances with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in height stating "ATTENTION: ALL NON- SWIMMING ZONES ARE CLOSED. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THIS AREA ARE NOT PERMITTED AT THIS TIME." This sign shall remain posted until resampling determines that bacterial levels do not exceed the standards in Rule .3402(a) of this Subchapter.
- (15) Non-swimming zones shall not be required to comply with the lighting requirements of Rule .2524 of this Section. When night swimming is allowed, the operator shall provide lighting in swimming zones as required for public swimming pools.

- (16) The requirements of Rule .2537(b)(16) of this Section shall not apply. Submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment shall not be used in swimming zones or within 25 feet of swimming zones when a swimming zone is open to bathers. If submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment are used in non-swimming zones when a non-swimming zone is open to users, the following conditions shall apply:

(17)

History Note:

- (A) A registered design professional shall provide design plans or technical specifications that demonstrate that any underwater suction outlets perform in a manner that is equally protective or more protective than the Pool and Hot Tub Alliance's ANSI/APSP/ICC-7 2013 Standard for Suction Entrapment Avoidance in Swimming Pools, which is incorporated by reference, including any subsequent amendments or editions, and available for a fee of one hundred sixty-five dollars (\$165.00) at <https://www.apsp.org/store1>; and
- (B) All floating components of submersible pumps or mechanical pool cleaning equipment shall be labeled with a sign above the water line with legible letters of at least four inches (10 cm) in a contrasting color stating: "DANGER: MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT IN USE. STAY BACK 25 FEET."

The requirements of Rules .2521 and .2516(f)(1) of this Section shall not apply to non-swimming zones.

Authority G.S. 130A-280; 130A-282; S.L. 2011-39; S.L. 2019-88;

Eff. April 1, 1999;

Amended Eff. March 1, 2004;

Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. July 20, 2019;

Temporary Amendment Eff. December 3, 2019; Amended Eff. October 1, 2020.

15A NCAC 18A .2544 SPECIAL PURPOSE AND THERAPY POOLS

(a) Special purpose and therapy pools shall comply with the requirements for public swimming pools and spas except as specified in this Rule.

(b) Float tanks:

- (1) The requirement in Rule .2522 of this Section for a deck or walkway continuous with the top of the pool wall does not apply to isolation float tanks where a clear floor space of at least eight feet by four feet is provided adjacent to the entrance to the tank.
- (2) The requirement in Rule .2532 of this Section for the minimum ceiling height of 7 1/2 feet above the rim of the pool does not preclude use of a canopy of a lower height to enclose an isolation float tank provided the canopy can be opened to allow users a standing entry and exit from the float tank.
- (3) The minimum lighting requirement in Rule .2524 of this Section does not apply to float tanks provided lighting is available for cleaning and is sufficient to provide visibility for entry and exit from the float tank.
- (4) The requirements in Rule .2518 of this Section that recirculation pumps operate 24 hours per day do not preclude turning off the pump during float sessions when a sanitizing cycle is provided that filters and disinfects the entire capacity of the float tank system at least twice before every user

enters the pool. When the float tank is not being used, the pump shall either operate continuously or

intermittently to filter and disinfect the capacity of the pool twice every hour.

- (5) The requirement in Rule .2518 of this Section that pool pumps three horsepower or smaller meet NSF/ANSI Standard 50 is not applicable when the mineral content of the brine in a float tank is incompatible with standard pool pumps. Pumps that do not meet NSF/ANSI standard 50 shall be approved by the Department when the viscosity of the mineral solution in the float tank requires a pump impeller or magnetic coupling designed to pump viscous liquids. Electrical safety of such pumps shall be verified by an independent third-party testing lab to meet applicable Underwriters Laboratories (UL) Standards.
- (6) The requirement in Rule .2532 of this Section for a caution sign at spas with a water temperature above 90 degrees Fahrenheit is not applicable to float tanks that do not exceed an operating temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Float tanks that exceed an operating temperature of 95 degrees Fahrenheit shall have a posted sign with the same warnings required for hot spas except references to spas may be reworded to reference float tanks or float spas.



- An **online survey** was made available between November 28, 2022, and February 10, 2023. This was referenced in Town newsletters, public meetings, and as an add-on at multiple community and neighborhood events in town. The survey was made available in English, Spanish, Burmese, and Chinese.

Computing the listserve members, social media followers, distribution lists for activities, and participants at in-person events, it is estimated that 75,779 people were notified about the project and given an opportunity to complete the survey. There was no paid advertising for this information dissemination.

- **Public Meeting/information sharing**

- Hargraves Community Center - Thursday, December 15, 2022 - 5:30 - 7:00 pm – 13 participants (mostly individuals)
- Homestead Park Soccer - Friday, January 13, 2023 - 4:30 - 5:30 pm - 8 participants (3 adults, 4 teenagers & 1 child)
- Library Room C - Saturday, January 21, 2023 -11:30 am - 1:00 pm – 15 participant groups (mostly families)  
Some parents of disabled children say that they would not offer feedback as no one ever listened when they did give their time to share.  
I think this is important to include - if people spend the time giving feedback, it should be used and not just gathered. – Kate Sayer (Splash Pad and Inclusive Playground Project Advisory Committee Member)
- Friday Fun Night Program, Community Center - January 6 – 25 participants (ages 5 -55)
- Sensory Friendly Night, Kidzu Children’s Museum, January 18, 2 participants
- Autism Society of North Carolina’s Orange/Chatham Chapter Hargraves Community Center- January 22 – 60 people in attendance, (ages 2-55)
- Friday Fun Night Program, Community Center – February 2, 33 participants (ages 6-65)

- **Virtual office hours**

- Tuesday, January 24, 2023  
Noon - 1:00 pm – 1 Participant  
5:00 - 6:00 pm – 1 Participant
- Wednesday, January 25, 2023, 4:00 – 5:00 pm – 2 Participants
- Tuesday, January 31, 2023, Noon – 1:00 pm – 0 Participants

- **Information sharing**

- Chapel Hill Carrboro School Mothers Facebook page - 8900 Parents of school children, 3 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Special Needs Advisory Council (SNAC) for Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools – 47 Parents, 1 time (January 2023)
- Special Needs class and parents in person - 6 families, 1 time (January 2023)
- Special Needs Advisory Council Adaptive Curriculum Work Group Facebook page – 47 parents, 1 time (January 2023) -
- Westwood Neighborhood listserv – 346 members, 1 time (January 2023)
- Triangle Blog Blog Newsletter – Several thousand readers, shared 3 times (December 2022 & January 2023)

- Reddit – Unknown Number, shared 1 time (January 2023)
- Splash Pad Petition Campaign via the [change.org](https://www.change.org) – 948 people, shared 1 time (December 2022)
- \*Orange County Special Olympics – 500 on listserv “Athletes/Families/Volunteers” ages 0-80 +, 1 time (January 2023)
- Adaptive curriculum pre-k class– 8 people ages 2-11, 1 time (January 2023)
- TOWNnews –7555 subscribers, 3 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Parks and Recreation eNews - 2551 subscriber’s, 3 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Parks and Recreation RECREATE – 8640 subscribers, 1 time (February 2023)
- Social Media (Town of Chapel Hill)
- Facebook - 13,000 followers, 6 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Twitter - 20,000 followers, 3 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Social Media (Parks and Recreation Department)
- Facebook - 13,000 followers, 6 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Twitter - 751 followers, 2 times (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Signiacades – 3 Town of Chapel Hill locations - Community Center, Hargraves & Homestead Parks (December 2022 & January 2023)
- Door Hangers – 71 Town of Chapel Hill Community Housing units (January & February 2023)
- Email notification to 500 athletes/families/staff/volunteers targeting sports such as, swimming and soccer that have more youth involved. Recipients were all ages and genders.

- **In-person Events**

Let’s Talk Town - Town staff were all over Chapel Hill both in person and virtually throughout January and February 2023 chatting with community members about a variety of programs: People’s Academy, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Board and Commission Applications, Police Department Programs, Park and Playground Improvements, Connected Road Plan, Southern Youth Employment Program.

- ~ Wednesday, January 11, Town Hall 6:30-7:15 pm
- ~ Friday, January 13, Chapel Hill Public Library 9:45 – 11:00 am
- ~ Friday, January 20, Chapel Hill Public Library, 9:45 – 11:00 am
- ~ Wednesday, January 25, Town Hall, 6:30 – 7:15 pm
- ~ Friday, January 27, Chapel Hill Public Library, 9:45 – 11:00 am
- ~ Friday, February 3, Chapel Hill Public Library, 9:45am-11am
- ~ Sunday, February 5, St. Thomas More Church, 12:30-2pm
- ~ Monday, February 6, Virtual office hours, noon-1pm
- ~ Wednesday, February 8, Virtual office hours, 7:30-8:30pm
- ~ Friday, February 10, Chapel Hill Public Library, 9:45am-11am

### **Town of Chapel Hill Social Media Links and Data – Email and Webpage**

- Parks and Recreation eNews Subscribers 2551,  
<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/newsroom/chapel-hill-enews/-seldept-13>
- Town News Subscribers (formerly Town ENews Weekly Update) 7555  
<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/newsroom/chapel-hill-enews/-seldept-13>
- Parks and Recreation RECREATE (ParksRec Patrons) Monthly eBrief subscribers 8640, Open Rate 48%, Click thru rate 6.75%

<http://www.icontact-archive.com/cm/YJRqaxWvl8cHjFGv6x5KiCsJdhMvZ5XzYGUaeCJ6wqJJRWZiGWcpbA==?w=3>

- Web Page Visits Dec. 1, 2022 – Jan 31, 2023  
/government/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/planning-and-development/inclusive-playground-project  
  
Pageviews (Pageviews is the total number of pages viewed. Repeated views of a single page are counted.) : 464
- Unique Pageviews (Unique Pageviews is the number of sessions during which the specified page was viewed at least once.) : 435  
Avg. Time on Page : 00:01:27
- Entrances (Entrances is the number of times visitors entered your site through a specified page)  
338
- Bounce Rate % (The percentage of single-page sessions in which there was no interaction with the page. A bounced session has a duration of 0 seconds.)  
73.96%
- Exit Page (%Exit is (number of exits) / (number of pageviews) for the page or set of pages. It indicates how often users exit from that page or set of pages when they view the page(s).  
67.03%

# TOWN OF CHAPEL HILL PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT SPLASH PAD & INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND SURVEY

## INTRODUCTION

The Town of Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation Department is working with Thomas & Hutton, a landscape architecture and engineering firm and 80 West, an aquatics specialist, to assess the feasibility of the Town providing a new inclusive playground and a splash pad facility. This survey is designed to gather opinions and feedback from the community to help guide future planning efforts.

Images are also included to provide examples of some of the amenities referenced in this survey.

These projects are not currently funded. This information will be used to guide future planning efforts related to these amenities. For more information, visit the project webpage at :

<https://www.townofchapelhill.org/government/departments-services/parks-and-recreation/planning-and-development/inclusive-playground-project>

What is an inclusive playground? An inclusive playground allows children of all abilities to play with their peers regardless of physical or social or cognitive needs.

What is a splash pad? Splash pads come in many different sizes and shapes; they come with different water features and have various amenities. Typically splash pads avoid any water ponding. Water is sprayed through a nozzle. There's generally not so much "splashing" as there is "spraying".

### Section 1

1

Would you support the development of a new inclusive playground?

Examples of some inclusive play elements (swings, merry go round, and sensory play) images are shown below. Single choice.





Swing



Merry Go-Round



Sensory Play Equipment

## Inclusive Play Elements

Yes  
No  
Unsure

2

Please indicate your level of agreement with one of the following statements. (choose one)

Single choice.

I support the development of a new inclusive playground

I feel that additional resources should be dedicated to improving existing playgrounds to include inclusive elements (see images).

I agree with both statements.

I disagree with both statements

3

What other amenities would you like to see included at a new inclusive playground? (please choose all that apply)

Examples of some amenities are shown below. Required to answer. Multiple choice.



Tables & Chairs



Benches



Shade Structures



Sculptures



Shade Structures



Murals



Decorative Pavement



Sculptures

Furniture (chairs, benches, and tables) – Images included

Shade structures or small open-air pavilion – Images included

New Restrooms with changing areas

Renovations to the existing restrooms and changing areas

Outdoor shower

Public Art (Mural, Sculpture, Decorative Painting, etc.) – Images included

Concessions

Lighting

4

Which location(s) would you prefer for a new inclusive playground to be located?

Required to answer. Single choice.

Community Center Park

Hargraves Park

Homestead Park

5

Do you travel outside of Chapel Hill / Carrboro to use an inclusive playground? Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

6

If you answered 'YES' to question #5, please share the location of the inclusive playground you travel to that is outside of the Town of Chapel Hill / Carrboro. Required to answer. Multi Line Text.

Enter your answer

7

Please indicate your level of agreement with one of the following statements. (choose one)

Required to answer. Single choice.

I prefer one large splashpad location

I prefer smaller spray features at more than one park location

Unsure

8

Are you willing to pay a fee to utilize a splash pad within the Town of Chapel Hill?

Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

Unsure

9

In viewing the splash pad designs below, which do you prefer? (choose one)Single choice.



## Splash Pad Designs

Theme  
Nature Based  
Traditional  
Contemporary

10

Which location(s) would you prefer for a large splash pad to be located? Required to answer. Multiple choice.

Hargraves Park  
Homestead Park  
Community Center Park

11

What other amenities would you like to see included at a new splash pad?

Examples of some amenities are shown below. (please choose all that apply) Required to answer. Multiple choice.



Furniture (chairs, benches, and tables) – Images included  
Shade structures or small open-air pavilion – Images included  
New Restrooms with changing areas  
Renovations to the existing restrooms and changing areas  
Outdoor shower  
Public Art (Mural, Sculpture, Decorative Painting, etc.) – Images included  
Concessions

Lighting

12

Do you travel outside of the Town of Chapel Hill / Carrboro to use a splash pad?

Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

13

If you answered 'YES' to question #12, please share the location of the splash pad you travel to that is outside of the Town of Chapel Hill / Carrboro. Required to answer. Single line text.

Enter your answer

14

Do you live in Orange County, NC? Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

15

Do you have children, grandchildren or other youth 12 years of age or under that you bring to parks within the Town of Chapel Hill? Required to answer. Single choice.

Yes

No

16

How do you travel to the parks? (please choose all that apply) Required to answer.

Multiple choice.

By car (yours or rideshare)

By bus

I walk or bicycle

17

Please share additional comments. Multi Line Text.

Enter your answer