

COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKET

Parks and Recreation Master Plan Engagement Summary

Shaping spaces, enriching lives... together we grow and thrive!

Engagement for the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan took place throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall of 2025. Resident input will help the Town decide the types of parks, recreation facilities, programs, connectivity, and open spaces that will serve our community today and in the future. This report provides a high-level summary of the engagement phase of the Master Plan process. The consultant will be presenting a detailed analysis and recommendations for the final plan this summer.



Our Town interpreter facilitating a focus group at the Seymour Center for Mandarin speaking residents



Staff from Parks & Recreation and Communications & Engagement outside Davis Library at UNC Chapel Hill

9,000 Touchpoints: Reflecting an Inclusive and Collaborative Planning Process

The process was expansive, intentional, and collaborative. Key highlights:

- Focus groups hosted in all of our primary languages
- In-person, digital, and paper formats
- Received feedback from town staff, community partners, and residents
- 48 in-person opportunities for engagement

Strategic Approach

Parks & Recreation staff, Berry Dunn consulting group, and Strategic Communications and Engagement staff led the community engagement phase. We worked together to exemplify the Town's commitment to equitable engagement with every component:

Reduce barriers to public participation

Center the voices of residents most impacted by Town decisions

Include under-engaged populations in the Town's decision-making processes

Collaboration

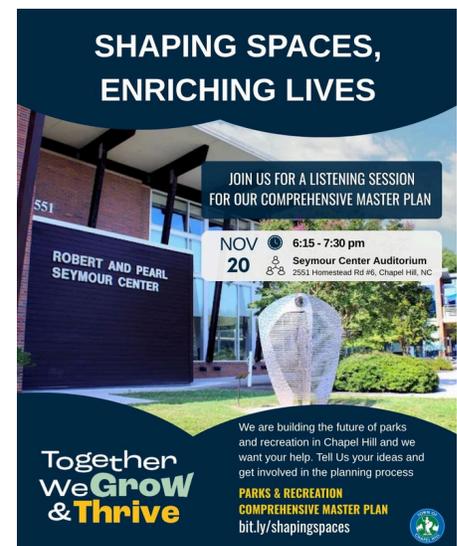
Collaboration and leveraging relationships were essential to this process:

- We collaborated with Town departments to plan, develop, and deploy effective engagement that was specific and relevant to this project.
- Staff worked closely with the consultant to ensure that their engagement strategies were informed by our townwide approach.
- We leveraged relationships with a wide range of community partners to meet residents where they are, whether on campus, at a community event, or in their neighborhood.

Marketing and Promotion

The strategic Communications and Engagement Team worked closely with the consultant and Parks and Recreation team to create vibrant and multilingual marketing materials. These were shared via:

- Our Town
- Parks & Recreation program guide
- Social media channels
- Flyer kiosks
- Email lists
- Engage Chapel Hill



One of the many flyers that was posted online and at event locations and shared via communications channels



One of the many pieces of creative collateral that was translated into one of our primary languages.

Internal Engagement

Workshops with Town Staff

We know that our staff interact frequently with the public and can share perspectives from an operational and service point of view. We hosted six informational and feedback sessions with Town staff to share updates and strengthen collaboration.



Town staff at a listening session hosted by BerryDunn

External Engagement

Workshops with Community Partners

Intentional, relationship-driven engagement was conducted with a broad cross-section of nonprofit organizations, institutional partners, and community leaders to ensure the Master Plan reflects diverse perspectives and shared priorities. Over the course of two days and six targeted engagement sessions, the project team facilitated meaningful dialogue focused on collaboration, service alignment, equity, and long-term community impact.

- **128 invitations** to diverse sectors (education, housing, arts, sports, and social services)
- **89 participating organizations**

This external engagement effort strengthened cross-sector collaboration, surfaced opportunities for shared programming and facilities, and reinforced the role of parks and recreation as a convening platform that supports health, equity, education, and community well-being across Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and the broader region.

PARTICIPATING TOWN STAFF

8 departments participated

82 employees contributed feedback

PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Advocacy Groups
- Athletic Fields and Courts Users
- Carrboro Parks and Recreation
- Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools
- Chapel Hill YMCA
- Community Home Trust
Community Review Board Table
- Downtown Chapel Hill Partnership
- Durham Sports Commission
- El Centro Hispano
- Eno Community Tennis Association
- Friends of Parks and Recreation
- Habitat for Humanity
- Historical Society
- Orange County
- OWASA
- P&R Volunteers
- Porch
- Refugee Community Partnership
- Various Sports Leagues
- Table
- The Arts Center
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

External Engagement Cont.

Community Engagement (In-Person)

Our in-person engagement included pop-ups and tabling events held at various locations and times to connect with residents, with a focus on reaching under-engaged populations.

- **30+ events across Chapel Hill**
 - Pop-ups, festivals, and tabling events held in neighborhoods, parks, libraries, and community centers.



Good Neighbor Initiative Community Cookout

- **Major High-Impact Events**
 - Family Fun Day & Book Bag Giveaway
 - CHCCS Community Resource Fair
 - Other notable events: Pride Promenade, Juneteenth, Independence Day Celebration, Open Chapel Hill Day.



4th of July event

Resident Participation

4,800 + residents (received info and/or provided input)

- **Focused on under-engaged populations:**
 - Public housing communities through neighborhood-based pop-ups
 - Youth via Teen Night and school-based events
 - Seniors through pop-ups and program-based engagement at the Seymour Center.
 - Culturally and linguistically diverse residents through focus groups and listening sessions in Mandarin, Spanish, Arabic, Burmese, and Karen



Refugee Community Partnership focus group meeting



Dotmocracy results from the focus group at the Seymour Center for Mandarin speaking residents



Magical Hill event at the Community Center

Inclusive Community Engagement

Community engagement was intentionally designed to meet residents where they already gather, participate, and recreate, resulting in a diverse and inclusive mix of pop-ups, festivals, focus groups, and targeted listening sessions held across the community. Engagement activities ranged from small, neighborhood-based pop-ups at public housing communities such as Colony Woods, North Columbia, and Oakwood, to large-scale community celebrations. These events created accessible, welcoming entry points for participation and helped capture input from residents who may not typically attend traditional public meetings.



Targeted Outreach

In addition to broad community events, the engagement strategy prioritized targeted outreach to ensure voices from historically underrepresented populations were heard. Public Housing residents, seniors, and recreation program participants were involved in community pop-ups throughout Town. Students, youth, and families participated in Teen Night, school events, CHCCS Community Resource Fair, Roll & Stroll, and UNC campus activities. General public spaces include the Farmers Market, dog park, and other public gathering spaces.



Cultural Responsiveness

Culturally responsive focus groups and listening sessions were conducted with Mandarin-, Spanish-, Arabic-, Burmese-, and Karen-speaking residents in partnership with trusted community organizations, reinforcing a commitment to equity, inclusion, and meaningful participation.

Summary of In-person Engagement

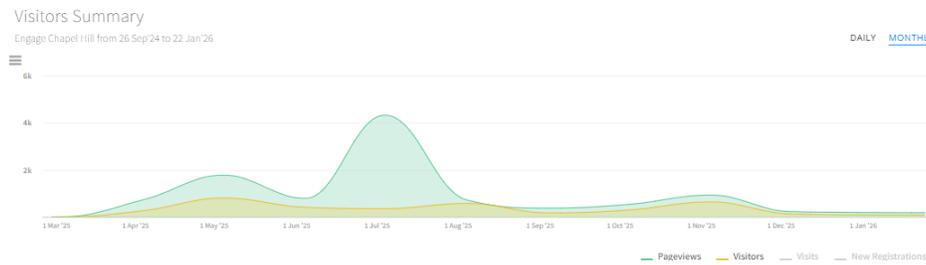
Engagement Type	Number of Events	Estimated Participants
Community Pop-Ups	6	78
Festivals & Large Events	8	1148
Youth	6	3308
Campus Events	3	206
Listening Session	6	87
General Public Spaces	4	63

Collectively, these efforts reflect a robust, community-centered approach that elevated local perspectives and strengthened connections between Parks & Recreation, and the people they serve.

Digital Engagement

ENGAGE Chapel Hill

From March 2025 to January 2026, our digital engagement site – Engage Chapel Hill captured additional feedback online. Not everyone is able or prefers to attend in-person events. The EHQ page provided an opportunity for people to learn more about the plan and provide input online. The Town’s digital engagement site enabled residents to access information and submit feedback remotely, expanding opportunities beyond in-person gatherings.



Highlights

TOTAL VISITS	MAX VISITORS PER DAY	NEW REGISTRATIONS
4.1 k	256	4
ENGAGED VISITORS	INFORMED VISITORS	AWARE VISITORS
141	640	3.1 k

4.1K
visits

26
idea board
contributions

87
Budget Prioritization
contributions

30
pins added to the
“Tell us on the map!”
activity

Statistically Valid Survey

Needs Assessment

The Town partnered with ETC Institute to conduct a Needs Assessment Survey. The detailed results of this survey will be shared with the Town Council and public this summer.

- **435 surveys** from Chapel Hill residents (mail and online)
- Provides precision of at least +/-4.7 at the 95% level of confidence

Plant Your Ideas

Your ideas can help shape spaces and enrich lives in Chapel Hill. We want to hear from you! Plant your ideas here and engage with the ideas of others— together we grow and thrive! Please submit your ideas, feedback, and suggestions on the idea wall.

What do you want to see in the future for Chapel Hill Parks and Recreation locations, amenities, and offerings?

To add a contribution, select **New Post**. Then add text, select a tile color, or add an image. After uploading your image, you can crop, rotate...

Feed

monroe 2 months ago
Expanding AD Clark or another outdoor pool

SSA 2 months ago
Softball/Baseball Fields Park

DC 2 months ago
More Mountain Biking Trails

alhono 2 months ago
More Early Child Community Programs

Save your only

Ideas Board

Interactive Map

Activity feed 1/17

1. **Feedback**
Agree on a solid and consistent in CH. Here would be a great option and available to all (parking)

2. **Feedback**
I would love to see more for early childhood programs throughout the year.

3. **Feedback**
Looking forward to the new park. Please remember to incorporate shade structures, water and water amenities.

Next Steps

The consultant BerryDunn, is currently working on the engagement data analysis. The consultant will provide a detailed analysis and recommendations early this summer. After the final Master Plan is approved, the Parks & Recreation Department will finish the necessary steps to apply for accreditation. Additional deliverables being prepared include Parks, Greenways/Trails, Open Space Inventory and Mapping, Local and National Parks and Recreation Trends Analysis and Benchmarking Comparisons, Operations Assessment Level of Service Evaluation, Funding and Financial Resources Analysis, and an Access and Opportunity Assessment and Toolkit.