

Equitable, Safe, and Well-Maintained Public Spaces

OBJECTIVE: We need publicly available parks and natural and naturally landscaped areas, community centers, libraries, and outdoor recreation facilities that are safe to use, easy to get to, well-maintained, designed for everyone, and equitably located throughout Durham’s neighborhoods and rural communities. We need to make the most of existing public spaces and provide innovative and creative spaces for play. Everyone in Durham needs to be able to use and have convenient access to these community resources, particularly youth, seniors, people with disabilities, people who do not use a car, rural residents, and Black and Hispanic/Latino residents.

BACKGROUND: Not every Durham resident has a community park or recreation center near where they live, especially those in rural and historically disinvested communities. A lack of bus access, continuous sidewalks, and transportation options prevent some residents from easily and safely accessing public spaces. Even if residents can reach public spaces, they are often not designed for people with limited mobility, in that they lack ramps, railings, and a universal design. Facilities like playground equipment, basketball courts, gyms, and indoor spaces are not equally maintained across the community, with some neighborhoods seeing deteriorated and rundown equipment. Unmaintained equipment and facilities with poor lighting cause residents to feel unsafe and concerned about criminal activity. As Durham grows, purchasing land becomes more difficult, and residents would like to see innovative solutions to address recreational needs.

We want spaces to connect with our neighbors and build community relationships. We want innovative solutions that make the best use of existing space, like co-locating schools and recreational facilities, creating multipurpose community centers, or creating mobile recreational opportunities.

Quotes from Durham Residents

“school bus routes and public transportation more for residential parks for children and neighborhoods.”

"Safe spaces for our children to play and engage with one another. Outdoor space and parks that also accessible to children with disabilities.”

“Raleigh DPR has transportation through parks and rec for folks with disabilities”

“Durham in the future will have more fun activities to do and we will be more resourceful and it won't gloomy anymore.”

“Reimagine school property as public property (i.e. playgrounds)”

“Move community centers where people can meet--libraries are good, but would be good to have more neighborhood places for connection (information, hangout space, restrooms)”