

Town of Holden Beach Parks and Recreation Master Plan



MAY 2012

Prepared for the
Town of Holden Beach
North Carolina

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Table of Contents	Page
Executive Summary	1
Chapter 1 – Introduction	5
1.1 Master Plan Purpose	5
1.2 Study Area	6
1.3 Demographics	6
1.4 Public Involvement	7
1.5 Previous Plans and Initiatives	8
Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions Assessment	9
2.1 Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities	9
2.2 Inventory of Undeveloped Town Lands	15
2.3 Existing Recreation Programs, Special Events and Festivals	16
2.4 Inventory of Near-by Recreation Facilities	18
2.5 Recreational Needs Assessment	21
Chapter 3 – Plan Recommendations	33
3.1 Recommendations Existing Facilities	33
3.2 Recommendations for Undeveloped Town Lands	37
3.3 Recommendations for Recreation Programs, Special Events and Festivals	40
3.4 Additional Recommendations	41
3.5 Potential Funding Sources	42
Appendices	
Appendix 1 - Town of Holden Beach 2009 CAMA Land Use Plan Excerpts	45
Appendix 2 – Town of Holden Beach Zoning Ordinance Excerpts	48
Appendix 3 – Public Survey Results	51
Maps	
Map 1 – General Vicinity Map	
Map 2 – Existing Facilities - East	
Map 3 – Existing Facilities – West	
Map 4 – Olden Holden Bike Tour	

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan process is a vital resource for local governments to assist in identifying deficiencies in their current recreational offerings and to chart a path for future endeavors. Development of the plan includes public input and involvement through surveys and open discussion at public meetings. The process continues with an analysis of existing recreational programs, activities, and facilities managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. These existing recreational offerings are compared with the community's expressed needs culminating in a listing of recommendations for future offerings over a five (5) year period.

Funding for the Town's Parks and Recreation Department comes primarily from a room occupancy tax levied on the rental of rooms, lodging, or similar accommodations furnished by hotels, motels, inns, and private residences and cottages. Proceeds from the tax are allocated to a special fund known as the Beach Preservation/ Access & Recreation/ Tourism Fund (BPART). BPART fund revenues consisting of accommodation taxes collected from rental uses of property, interest on investments and transfers from the General Fund. A six percent tax is applied to all tourists and other rental property. As required by the State of North Carolina General Statutes, 50.01% of revenues generated by the tax shall only be used to finance tourism-related expenses (to include public beach preservation, public beach and water access, and public parking), 33.33% shall be used to support beach preservation, and 16.66% shall be utilized for promotion of the Town of Holden Beach thru the transfer of said percentage to Brunswick County for use by the Tourism Development Authority. Additionally, the Town, in accordance with state statute, has the authority to expend for its parks and recreation system any of its revenues not otherwise limited as to use by law.

Included with the recommendations set forth in this plan are sources of potential additional funding. Many of these sources may provide supplemental funding in the form of grants, whereby, the Town may use its BPART resources to leverage additional funds to assist with development of recreational programs and facilities. See pages 42 through 44 for a listing of potential funding sources.

Summary

The suggestions and recommendations in this plan generally fall into three categories, updates to existing facilities, planning and design studies that lead to development of new facilities, and addition of programs and activities facilitated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The following list summarizes recommendations proposed in this plan. See pages 33 through 42 for a full description of each recommendation.

Updates to Existing Facilities:

- Beach Access –Continue to seek opportunities to provide additional public beach access, upgrade the boardwalks to improve access and provide signage to identify the access points. See Page 33.
- Olden Holden Bike Tour – Make minor improvements to this facility with the addition of bike racks and benches at key intersections along the route. See Page 35. Map included.
- Holden Beach Pavilion – Make minor updates to improve accessibility for users with disabilities. See page 35.
- Sand Dollar Park – Make minor updates to the parking area and add site furnishings. See page 36.
- Sailfish Street Park - Make minor updates to the parking area and add site furnishings. See page 37.

Planning and Design Studies for New Facilities:

- Waterway Access – Seek opportunities to create formal launching sites for non-motorized vessels such as canoes and kayaks. See page 34.
- Boating Access – Initiate improvements to the parking area at the Wildlife Resource Commission’s (WRC) boat ramp area to maximize efficiency for boat users. See page 34.
- Holden Beach Pavilion - Develop a site design master plan to improve circulation patterns in favor of pedestrians and visually connect the pavilion to the retail shops in the commercial area along Jordan Boulevard. Consideration should be taken to locate activities away from the nearby waste water pump station. See page 35.
- Davis Street/ Water Tower Site – Investigate the feasibility of constructing a multi-purpose building to house recreational activities, and programs. Develop a site design that provides various outdoor facilities including but not limited to; non-motorized boat launch, playground and passive recreation venues. See page 38.
- Scotch Bonnet/ Greensboro Spoils Area Site - Develop a site design master plan to investigate the feasibility to provide various nature-based and passive recreation facilities. The suggested facilities include but are not limited to; trails, non-motorized boat launch, restroom and necessary supporting facilities. See page 38.

- Sand Dollar Spoils Area Site – Develop a site design master plan to investigate the feasibility to provide various nature-based and passive recreation facilities. The suggested facilities include but are not limited to; trails, non-motorized boat launch, playgrounds, and necessary supporting facilities and site furnishings. See page 39.
- Turkey Trap Borrow Pit – Develop a site design master plan to provide nature and ecological educational opportunities on this site after borrow material removal is complete. See page 39.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Study – A planning study is warranted to propose solutions to traffic congestion and transportation conflicts. The Plan recommends that alternative routes be considered to separate pedestrian and bicyclists from vehicular corridors. See page 41.
- Standardized Signage Manual – Develop a signage standard for the park and recreation system. It is suggested that the signage manual address all level of signage from park identification to simple facilities markers. See page 41.

Programs and Activities:

- Emergency Operations Center –Utilize this facility to provide activities and classes. See pages 35 and 40.
- Town Hall – This facility should be utilized to provide group meetings and provide functional space for a community and tourist book exchange library. See pages 35 and 40.
- Davis Street/ Water Tower Site – As noted in the Planning and Design Studies section above, a design plan is recommended to investigate the feasibility of constructing a multi-purpose building as a permanent location for indoor recreational programs. See pages 38 and 40.
- Programs - Provide various recreational programs primarily focused on fitness and exercise, historical walking tours, nature and ecology tours, and social group activities. See page 40.
- Special Events and Festivals – Existing festivals have been a success for the Town and should receive continued support. There are also suggestions for additional festivals and activities that may be added to the existing ones. See page 40.

Throughout this plan, the terms 'Town of Holden Beach', 'Holden Beach', and 'Town' refer to the governing body or the geographic boundaries within which the governing body has jurisdiction and governmental control. Where the phrase 'island of Holden Beach' is used; it is meant to reference the island landform upon which the Town of Holden Beach is located. Also, throughout this document, the Town of Holden Beach Parks and Recreation Master Plan is referred to as the 'Plan', or the 'Master Plan'

The Town of Holden Beach Parks and Recreation Master Plan is not a static document nor is it meant to control the functions of the Parks and Recreation Department, rather it serves as a guidance tool providing direction for planning and development based upon current data. The plan seeks to illustrate opportunities for change rather than to set limits. It should be expected that the Plan will include amendments over its life span.

The life span of the Plan is five (5) years. At the end of that period, the Plan should be re-evaluated and updated to ensure its relevance. With this understanding, the Plan provides generalized time frames for implementation of each recommendation. Implementation dates are noted as either falling within a 5 year period or beyond.

It will be the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to prioritize the recommendations over the life of the Plan and to seek approval from the Town's Board of Commissioners before proceeding with implementation. Serving as a guiding tool, the Plan's recommendations and associated timeframes for implementation are intended to balance flexibility and progressiveness. As the Advisory Board moves forward with initiating the Plan, consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Grant funding cycles
- Availability of Town funding
- Creating a balance of large and small projects
- Environmental impacts
- Providing accessibility for all users

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Master Plan Purpose

The purpose of the Town of Holden Beach Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to analyze existing recreational offerings, match them with the public’s defined needs, and plan for future recreational offerings. Parks and recreation facilities and programs provide an essential component to everyday quality of life. Whether for health and fitness, social interaction, expansion of knowledge, or simply providing a restful escape from the day’s pressures, recreation programs and facilities are an integral component to a Town’s infrastructure and a community’s well being. As with all forms of infrastructure, planning, funding, managing, and maintaining a parks and recreation system is essential to ensure the right steps are being taken to sustain it.



In July, 2010 the Town of Holden Beach took its first steps in organizing its recreational resources by creating a department staff position and then passing an ordinance creating the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in October of the same year. The Advisory Board plays a vital role as advisor to the Recreation Department, Town Manager, and the Board of Commissioners on all matters related to the recreation system and the Town’s largest amenity, the shoreline.

One of the first acts of the Advisory Board was to recognize the need to develop a master plan for the Town’s recreation department. This plan endeavors to identify and provide the Town’s future recreational needs over a five year term. The process for developing the plan began with an assessment of recreational needs developed through a public input survey and community meetings. As this effort was taking place, an inventory was developed of existing Parks and Recreation facilities and programs and Town owned land. Each of these components were analyzed and compared with state and national standards for recreation facilities to develop recommendations for the future recreational offerings at Holden Beach. The conclusions developed in this Master Plan include recommendations for:

- Updates and improvements to existing facilities
- Development of Planning and Design studies for new recreation facilities
- Programs, special events, and classes
- Modification of existing special events and festivals
- Potential sources for funding

1.2 Study Area

The Town of Holden Beach is commonly referred to as a 'Family Friendly' beach town and many sources reference National Geographic Traveler magazine naming Holden Beach one of the nation's best family beaches. With the exception of one land parcel, the jurisdictional limits of the Town of Holden Beach match the boundaries of the island of Holden Beach, one of a string of islands along the southernmost border of Brunswick County, North Carolina.

The Town of Holden Beach is approximately 3.4 square miles in area, approximately 8 miles long and is nearly one half mile at its widest point at the western end of the island.

Vehicular access to the island is restricted to one bridge crossing (Holden Beach Road, NC Hwy 130) connecting to the mainland near the eastern end of the island.

The Town of Holden Beach is composed primarily of residential housing with small commercial areas. There are five areas zoned for commercial use approximating 35 acres in total. The remainder of the Town is zoned for residential or conservation uses. Two commercially zoned areas serve as the primary hubs for retail services for the public. These areas also contain recreational facilities for public use and are referenced by the Holden Beach Pavilion and the Holden Beach Pier.

Beyond the limits of the Town of Holden Beach, the plan considers recreational offerings within reasonable distance. Two county park facilities are within 10 miles of Holden Beach and provide active recreation facilities. Furthermore, area golf courses and tennis facilities were considered for the development of the plan.

1.3 Demographics

According to the United States Census Bureau, Holden Beach had a permanent population of 575 in 2010. Based on census data from 2000, the population was 792. This represents a 37% reduction in permanent residence living in Holden Beach. This drop in permanent population can be attributed to an increase in rental and second home ownership. According to US Census data, there was an increase of 273 housing units between 2000 and 2010. During the same period resident occupied housing dropped from 331 to 249 units while the long term rental units remained relatively steady.

As often as the housing stock changes from owner-occupied to rental properties, it can be concluded that short term visitation will grow in the future. And as most of the rental properties house larger groups than the typical family household, higher numbers of visitors will be on the island, creating a seasonal rise in the actual day to day population. This increase in seasonal population will place further demand on Holden

Beach’s recreational resources. The charts below illustrate population changes in Holden Beach and Brunswick County from 2000 to 2010 and the change in housing status for Holden Beach over the same period.

Permanent Population change year 2000 to 2010		
Year	Holden Beach	Brunswick County
2010	575	107,431
2009	904	98,712
2008	850	103,160
2007	848	98,966
2006	844	93,874
2005	839	88,287
2004	827	83,702
2003	814	80,901
2002	809	78,528
2001	805	76,137
2000	792	73,770

Source: US Census, Factfinder, 2010, 2000

Note: Populations for 2001-2009 are US Census Bureau estimates

Holden Beach Housing Status (in housing units)		
	2010	2000
Total Housing	2,335 (apprx.)	2,062
Owner Occupied	249	331
Renter Occupied (Long term)	47	48

Source: US Census, Factfinder, 2010, 2000

The Racial make-up for the permanent population at Holden Beach, based upon 2010 census data is, 97.6% white, 1.0% African American, 0.3% Native American, 0.2% Asian, and 0.9% other races.

1.4 Public Involvement

The most important part of developing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is assessing the needs of the stakeholders. Having community input provides the foundation for developing future recreational offerings and is essential to the success of the public recreation system and the Town’s Recreation Department. To do this, a survey was developed to provide the citizens and tourists of Holden Beach with an opportunity to indicate their individual desires. Additionally, two public meetings were held to facilitate open discussions about recreational opportunities.

The survey was distributed through the town's water bill to all of the town's property owners. Additionally, surveys were made available at the Town Hall and the Holden Beach Chapel. Announcements of the survey were published in the local newspaper, announced at the spring Property Owners Association meeting and at church services.

Two public meetings were facilitated to introduce the master plan and solicit additional input from the community. The meetings were held in the Public Assembly room at Town Hall on May 17 and 24, 2011.

1.5 Previous Plans and Initiatives

To assist in the development of the Master Plan it is essential to consider planning documents previously adopted by the Town that may influence or be impacted by the outcome of the effort in this document. The following documents were considered in the creation of this plan.

- Town of Holden Beach 2009 CAMA Land Use Plan
- Town of Holden Beach Zoning Ordinances
- Brunswick County 2009 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Chapter 2

Existing Conditions Assessment

Chapter 2 – Existing Conditions Assessment

2.1 Inventory of Existing Recreational Facilities

For the purposes of organizing this document, the recreational facilities provided at Holden Beach have been divided based upon geographical location on the island. The first group of facilities occurs at several locations through-out the town. The remaining recreational facilities fall under the heading of East, Middle or West based upon their location on the island relative to the central commercial core.

Town-wide Facilities

Beach and Waterway Access

There are currently twenty-two (22) public beach access sites on Holden Beach providing various levels of service and facilities to beach goers. These sites are intended to provide free, public, pedestrian access to the beach and protect the sensitive shoreline habitat and wildlife by limiting dune crossings to locations where boardwalks or dune crossovers are present. The beach access sites are generally described as CAMA Access Sites, referencing the Coastal Area Management Act, administered by the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC).



Development of CAMA Access Sites on Holden Beach are funded through matching grants provided by the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) and awarded by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) Division of Coastal Management (DCM) through the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program.

The Division of Coastal Management classifies CAMA Access Sites for beach access according to the site's intended service population and the facilities provided. The three beach access types are described as: Regional, Neighborhood, and Local.

Regional - generally the largest and often feature restrooms, showers, picnic tables, and ample parking (25+).

Neighborhood - generally have fewer parking spaces than regional sites and often do not have facilities such as showers or restrooms. However, there are exceptions.

Local - generally have simple dune crossovers with little or no associated parking and no facilities. However, bicycle racks may be provided. These access points are primarily used by pedestrians who reside within a few hundred yards of the site.

The Chart below describes the public beach access areas in Holden Beach.

	Location	Access Type	Parking	Street Parking	H/C Parking	Overlook	H/C Access	Restroom	Shower	Picnic Table	Bike Rack
1	McCray Street	Neighborhood	50								
2	Avenue D (317 Ocean Blvd East)	Neighborhood	14								
3	Dunescapes Drive	Local	0								
4	Avenue B	Neighborhood	12								
5	Avenue A	Neighborhood	15								
6	220 Ocean Blvd. East	Neighborhood	15								
7	Ferry Road	Neighborhood	22								
8	124 Ocean Blvd. East	Local	2								
9	Quinton Street (112 Ocean Blvd. East)	Neighborhood	8								
10	Jordan Blvd.	Regional	65								
11	Jordan Blvd #2 (111 Ocean Blvd. West)	Local	0								
12	301 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
13	329 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
14	357 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
15	389 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
16	567 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
17	679 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
18	801 Ocean Blvd. West	Neighborhood	12								
19	885 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
20	917 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
21	1017 Ocean Blvd. West	Local	0								
22	Holden Beach Pier (Courtesy Access)	Regional	50								

Waterway Access

The Division of Coastal Management (DCM) defines Waterway Access separately from Beach Access, as providing pedestrian access to estuarine shorelines, coastal rivers and urban waterfronts as opposed to ocean front access. Although DCM does not currently recognize any waterfront access sites on Holden Beach, several sites exist, informally along the Intracoastal Waterway. Many of the waterway access sites are associated

with neighborhood park sites and are indicated in the descriptions of those parks in the following pages.

Boating Access Location

The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) maintains one boating access location on Holden Beach. The facility is located beneath the Holden Beach Bridge on the ICWW and consists of two concrete surface ramps separated by a floating dock. According to the WRC website, the boat launch facility provides 15 parking spaces for cars with boat trailers. The website indicates that non-motorized boat facilities are not available and accessibility features for persons with disabilities are limited to accessible dock handrails. During peak boating season, it is evident that parking provided at this location is insufficient to meet the demand as many boaters park trailers within the public right-of-way along the nearby public streets.



'Olden' Holden Bike Tour

The bike tour provides a self guided tour of the island with 23 marked historical or significant features along the tour route. The entire route extends approximately 20 miles and is divided into three shorter routes designated as the Eastern, Middle and Western routes. Map included.

- Eastern Route (pink)- 3.5 mile circuit with markers highlighting the bulk of the island's historical sites and the town's central commercial area.
- Middle Route (blue) - 5 miles in length and focuses on scenic views of the waterway and marsh areas and joins to the Holden Beach Pier.
- Western Route (orange)- The longest route extending approximately 10 miles. This route runs primarily along Ocean Boulevard with side routes along neighborhood streets that provide access to small parks along the ICWW and several of the beach access sites along Ocean Boulevard.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

This Town owned facility is located in Brunswick County, just a few miles off the island of Holden Beach, and is zoned under the jurisdiction of the Town of Holden Beach. This facility houses the Town's emergency operations and vehicle fleet and contains a training room with an occupancy load of 40 people and a kitchen.



East

Halstead Street Park

Located at the northern end of Halstead Street and overlooking the ICWW, Halstead Park is approximately 0.14 acres in size and functions as a neighborhood park providing pier fishing, a picnic shelter, a small open lawn space, and uncovered picnic tables near the water's edge. Off-street parking is provided for 4 cars and bike racks are available for cyclists visiting the park. The primary features of the park are accessible to those with disabilities. Water access from this park is not available.



Central

Holden Beach Town Hall

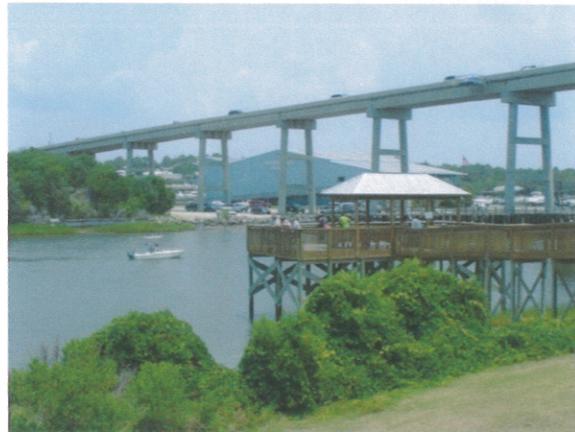
The Town Hall building houses the Town's administrative offices, Commissioner's Chambers, and the police department. The Commissioner Chambers, which is also used as public assembly, seats approximately 300 people and provides audio visual equipment for presentations. Beyond its use for council meetings, the space is available for groups to provide educational seminars and meetings. Also available at this facility is a multi-purpose room providing opportunities for small classes to be conducted. On-site parking is provided at the facility with overflow parking available along the adjacent streets. Additionally, public wireless internet (Wi-Fi) access is available in and around the facility.



Holden Beach Pavilion

Built in 2007, the pavilion acts as center stage to the Town's festivals and summer concerts. The pavilion site is located near the boating access facility beneath the Holden Beach Bridge and is adjacent to the Island's commercial district. The pavilion is approximately 40' wide and 60' deep allowing enough space for a variety of activities and performances. Adjacent to the pavilion is a fishing and observation pier that extends into the ICWW. The pavilion shares its site with a utility pump station and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredge boat dock.

Restrooms are provided on an adjacent lot approximately 400' from the pavilion. Parking for the pavilion is provided along the network of streets and gravel areas beneath the bridge. Depending upon the event taking place at the pavilion, some of the parking areas are restricted for use by vendors and exhibitors. Additional recreational features of the site include; a paved dance floor in front of the pavilion, covered picnic shelters, electrical hook-ups, Wi-Fi, and potable water. Wheelchair access is provided on the boardwalk leading to the pavilion and fishing pier, but wheelchair access from the parking area to the boardwalk is not provided.



West

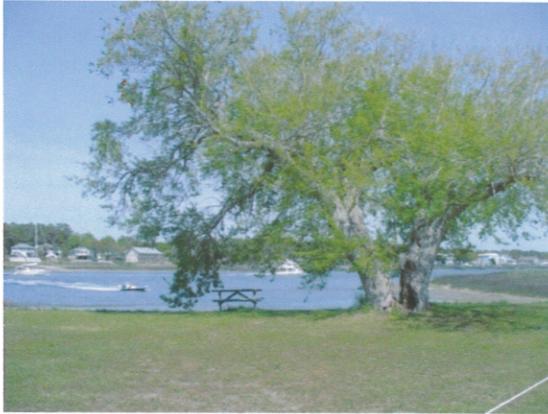
Sand Dollar Park

Located on Sand Dollar Drive and Scotch Bonnet Drive, the park site is 5.83 acres in size and is divided by a canal inlet. The bulk of the land at this park is composed of coastal marsh with no paved walking paths and few amenities. The park fronts the ICWW and provides opportunities for fishing, sand access to the water, and views of the marsh. Parking is limited to unmarked spaces on the shoulders of adjacent streets.



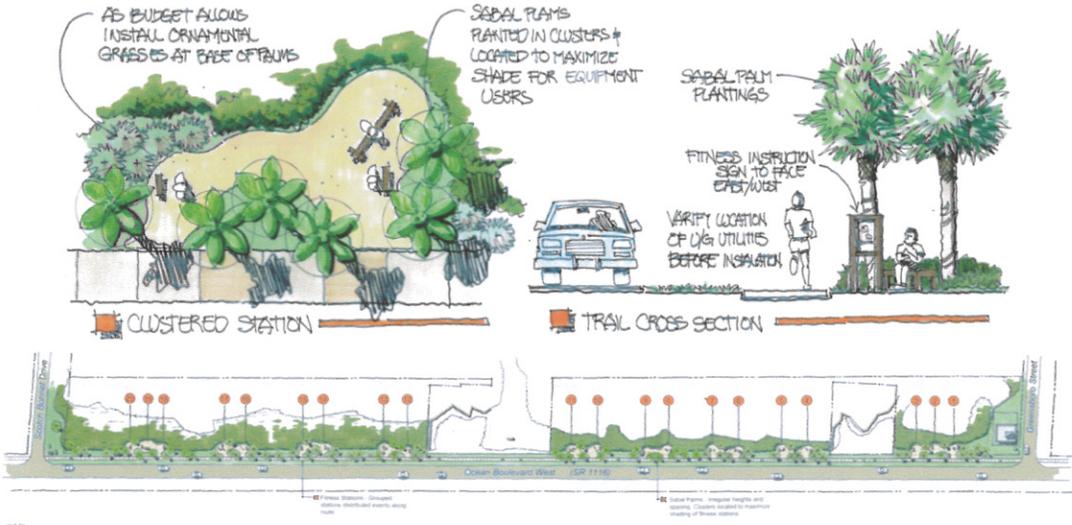
Sailfish Drive Park

Located along Sailfish Drive and Swordfish Drive, this park site encompasses 9.75 acres and like Sand Dollar Park, is divided by a canal inlet. This park provides limited off-street parking adjacent to Sailfish Drive but is sufficient for a neighborhood park of its size. This park can be identified by its large mulberry tree and scattering of eastern red cedars that provide shade for a picnic table. Opportunities for fishing are present at this site along the canal that has a bulkhead and the sandy waterfront. Canoe and kayak launching is possible from a set of stairs leading from Sailfish Drive to the canal. The portion of this park fronted on Swordfish Drive is undeveloped, providing only on-street parking, and functions primarily as a scenic estuarine shoreline along the ICWW.



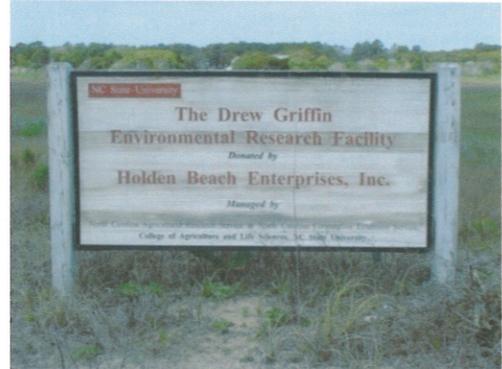
Holden Beach Fit Trail

This planned facility will include a twenty station fitness circuit composed of exercise stations adjacent to the existing sidewalk. The site for the Fit Trail is comprised of twenty-one Town owned lots located along the northern edge of Ocean Blvd West between Greensboro Street and Scotch Bonnet Drive. Each exercise station is intended to include exercise apparatus with instructions for its use. By way of its linear layout, the fit trail will provide the user with an opportunity to walk a total of approximately ¼ mile between the first and last stations to complete the exercise circuit. Planned installation of the Fit Trail is scheduled for early 2012.



The Drew Griffin Environmental Research Facility

This site is owned by the NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc. and is used for coastal marsh research and education. The land is managed by NC Agricultural Research Services and NC Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NC State University. The land was donated by Holden Beach Enterprises, Inc. The site offers scenic views and functioning to preserve native wildlife habitat. No Facilities are provided at this site. This site is 29.9 acres in size and adjoins the Scotch Bonnet/ Greensboro Spoil Area Site, which was recently purchased by the Town and is currently undeveloped. Along its Ocean Boulevard frontage, this site also adjoins the future Holden Beach Fit Trail site.



2.2 Inventory of Undeveloped Town Lands

Davis Street/ Water Tower Site

An assemblage of three parcels of land totaling approximately 1.4 acres in size, this site sits across Brunswick Avenue from the Town Hall building and fronts the ICWW. This site is adjacent to the town's water tower, a prominent feature on the island and way-finding structure. Currently there are no other structures on this site.



Scotch Bonnet / Greensboro Spoil Area Site

This site is 18.6 acres in size and consists of two dredge spoil areas. The site abuts the ICWW on its northern border and The Drew Griffin Environmental Research Facility on its southern border. To the west, an undeveloped street right-of-way separates this site from Sand Dollar Park. The site is divided by an estuarine creek. Approximately 10 acres of the site has the characteristic perimeter dike outlining the dredge spoils area. The remaining land, approximately 8 acres, is relatively flat and has a densely vegetated border. The 8 acre site is currently being used as a temporary materials stock pile site by the town and can be accessed from Scotch Bonnet Drive.



Sand Dollar Spoil Area Site

This site is 116.39 acres in size and is the largest of the dredge spoil sites. The site is bordered to the north by the ICWW, to the south and west by residential properties and to the east by Sand Dollar Park and Sand Dollar Drive. A 36 acre upland island, owned by the NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc., sits in the center of the site. The land consists primarily of coastal marshlands, estuaries and maritime forest ecological communities. The dredge spoils area on this site is approximately 35 acres in size. The



perimeter of the spoils area is defined by a dike running approximately one mile around a spoils pit and is approximately 15 feet above the adjacent land. The top of the dike is flat, used for maintenance vehicle access, and is approximately 12 feet in width and can be accessed from Sand Dollar Drive. From the top of the dike, one is afforded unique views of the ICWW and the marsh lands that are not available from any other land features in the area.

Turkey Trap Barrow Pit

This Town owned site is located in Brunswick County approximately 2.6 Miles from the Town's corporate limits and occupies two parcels of land totaling 31.3 acres. The site is under zoning jurisdiction of Brunswick County but is within distance limits for voluntary annexation by the Town. The site is designated to be used for sand mining operations providing 400,000 cubic yards of material for re-nourishment of the Town's beachfront in the event a storm causes shoreline erosion requiring emergency repairs. Mining permits for the site are held by the Town with rights extending for ten years. At the time of this writing, seven years remain on the current permit. Upon completion of mining operations, the site will be left with a meandering pattern of water bodies and uplands and has the potential for supplying recreational opportunities.

2.3 Existing Recreation Programs, Special Events and Festivals

As the Parks and Recreation Department is less than a year old, few recreation programs are currently organized and sponsored by the Town of Holden Beach Parks and Recreation Department. With the exception of the MS Bike Ride, the programs are generally single day events, and utilize the Pavilion and beach as their venue. At this time exercise and activities classes are not provided. Many of the festivals and events are sponsored and organized by the Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association. The following is a listing of the festivals and special events provided at Holden Beach.

Tree Lighting

At the beginning of December the Town facilitates an annual tree lighting ceremony with activities for the family and a chili cook off. The event is held at the Holden Beach Pavilion and usually falls on a Thursday evening.

Halloween Trunk or Treat

This event takes place at the Pavilion on Halloween night as a means to offer a safe and organized event for trick-or-treaters and their families. Kid-friendly activities such as mummy wrapping, spider eating contests, and a costume contest are organized.

Pirate Day

This event takes place in the spring on the beach and at the pavilion. Participants follow a treasure map and look for buried treasure. Additional activities include movies shown at the Town Hall.

Sand Sculpture Contest

This event is located on the beach from the Quinton Street public access to the Jordan Boulevard public access. It takes place every Thursday during the summer at varying times due to high tide.

Community MS Bike Ride

This event occurs annually in May and benefits the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. There is no entry fee and two different routes are planned; a 35 mile route and a 55 mile route. This event is organized by the Town and the Holden Beach Chain Gang, a local bicycle group.

The following events and festivals are sponsored and organized by the Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association.

Day at the Docks Festival

This one-day festival occurs in April or May of each year and hosts food and arts and crafts vendors. Other activities include a fishing tournament, horseshoe tournament, and inflatable amusements for children.

NC Festival by the Sea

This two day festival occurs on the last weekend in October and involves a fishing tournament, parade, and family activities. Vendors provide food, arts and crafts, amusement rides and other activities. Live musical entertainment takes place at the pavilion. Most of the festival is organized near the pavilion in the commercial district.

Concerts on the Coast Series

Live performances featuring local musical groups are held at the pavilion on Sunday evenings from late May to early September. The concerts are free of charge. Popcorn sold at the concerts is used to support the concerts and fund beautification projects in the area.

2.4 Inventory of Near-by Recreational Facilities

When analyzing existing recreational offerings, it is important to look beyond the Town's borders and local commercial offerings to gain a full understanding of the opportunities that are provided by other agencies with recreational facilities having a service area intended to include the residents of Holden Beach.

Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Facilities

According to the Brunswick County 2009 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan the following County park facilities are intended to serve the residents of Holden Beach.

Cedar Grove Park

This park is currently classified as a Community Park and is located approximately 4 miles from Holden Beach. With a current service area of 5 miles, this park falls within the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard for providing recreational facilities to support the needs of Holden Beach residents. According to the county's master plan, the park is slated for expansion with additional development recommended for 2011-2012 at which point, the park will be reclassified as a Regional Park with a service area of ten miles and will provide further recreational opportunities. Funding for the proposed additional facilities is noted in the county's 5-year Capital Improvements Budget according to the county's master plan.

Facilities Currently Provided

- 2 Baseball Fields
- Soccer Field
- Football Field
- 2 Tennis Courts
- 2 Basketball Courts
- Concessions/ Restroom Building
- Field house

Proposed Facilities 2010-2011

- 3 Baseball Fields
- 10 Soccer Fields
- 8 Tennis Courts
- 3 Playgrounds
- 2 Mile paved trail
- Bocce Courts
- Shuffleboard Courts
- Dog Park
- Fishing Pier
- 10 shelters/ Pavilions
- 2 Concessions/ Restroom Building

Shalotte Park

This park is located approximately 10 miles from Holden Beach and is currently classified as a Community Park. With this classification, Holden Beach currently falls outside of the NRPA's standard service area limits for the park. According to the County's master plan, recommendations are made for expansion and reclassification as a Regional Park with a service area of ten miles. With the expansion and reclassification of the park, the proposed service area will encompass the Town of Holden Beach. Funding for the recommended improvements, according to the County's master plan, will be stretched over an 8 year period with phased improvements initiated as funding and demand allows.

Facilities Currently Provided

- 4 Baseball / Softball Fields
- 2 Batting Cages
- 4 Soccer Field
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Basketball Courts
- Playground
- 3 Picnic Shelters
- Concessions/ Restroom Building
- Office/ Storage Building
- 5 Baseball Fields
- 8-10 Soccer Fields
- Skate Park
- Walking Trails
- Dog Park
- Restroom Building
- Updates to existing facilities

Proposed Facilities 2011-2018

Other Municipal Parks

Jessie R. Caison Park

This park is located approximately 2 miles from Holden Beach, is approximately 3.3 acres in size, and is owned and managed by the Town of Varnamtown. Based upon its size, this park would fall under NRPA's classification as a 'Community Park'. With this classification, Jessie R. Caison Park would fall within NRPA's distance limit standards for providing service to the Town of Holden Beach.

Facilities Currently Provided

- Softball Field
- 2 Playgrounds
- Basketball Court
- 2 Shuffleboard Courts
- Restrooms
- Picnic Shelter

Area Golf Courses

According to the Brunswick County Tourism Authority, there are twenty-three (23) golf courses or clubs within 30 miles of Holden Beach offering 567 golf holes. The following golf courses and clubs were noted:

- Carolina Shores Golf and Country Club, Calabash – 18 Holes
- Magnolia Greens Golf Plantation, Leland - 27 Holes
- Sea Trail Golf Resort, Sunset Beach
 - Willard Byrd Course – 18 Holes
 - Dan Maples Course- 18 Holes
 - Rees Jones Course- 18 Holes
- Rivers Edge Golf Club, Shallotte – 18 Holes
- Meadowlands Golf Club, Calabash – 18 Holes
- The Lakes Golf & Country Club, Boiling Spring Lakes – 18 Holes
- Old Fort Golf Course, Winnabow -18 Holes
- Carolina National Golf Club, Bolivia – 27 Holes
- Thistle Golf Club Sunset Beach – 27 Holes
- Oak Island Golf Club, Caswell Beach – 18 Holes
- Pearl Golf Links, Calabash - 36 Holes
- Crow Creek Golf Club, Sunset Beach – 18 Holes
- Ocean Ridge Plantation, Sunset Beach
 - Tiger’s Eye Golf Links – 18 Holes
 - Panther’s Run – 18 Holes
 - Lion’s Paw – 18 Holes
 - Leopard’s Chase – 18 Holes
 - Jaguar’s Lair– 18 Holes
- Cape Fear National at Brunswick Forest, Leland – 18 Holes
- Lockwood Folly Country Club, Supply - 18 Holes
- Oyster Bay Golf Links, Sunset Beach – 18 Holes
- Brunswick Plantation Golf Resort, Calabash – 27 Holes
- Bricklanding Plantation, Ocean Isle Beach – 18 Holes
- Oak Island Par 3 at South Harbour, Southport – 18 Holes
- Brierwood Golf Club, Shallotte – 18 Holes
- Farmstead Golf Links, Calabash – 18 Holes
- Sandpiper Bay Golf & Country Club, Sunset Beach – 27 Holes
- Bald Head Island Club, Bald Head Island – 18 Holes

Area Tennis Facilities

According to the Brunswick County Tennis Association (BTA) there are 24 public tennis courts within 40 miles of the Town of Holden Beach. The following tennis facilities were noted:

- Cedar Grove Park, Supply – 2 courts
- Ocean Isle Beach Park, Ocean Isle Beach – 8 courts
- Northwest District Park, Leland – 4 courts
- Lockwood Folly District Park, Supply – 2 courts
- Shallotte District Park, Shallotte - 2 courts
- Smithville District Park, Southport - 2 courts
- Waccamaw Park, Ash – 2 courts
- Town Creek District Park, Winnabow - 2 courts
- Navassa Park, Navassa – 1 court

Several private tennis facilities provide venues for tournament play near Holden Beach. According to the BTA the following public and private locations were sites for area tennis tournaments in 2010:

- Shallotte District Park
- St. James – Members Club, Founders Club
- Winding River
- Brunswick Forest
- Smithville District Park

2.5 Recreational Needs Assessment

To assess the current and future recreational needs of the citizens and visitors of Holden Beach, a survey was conducted. The survey was distributed by mail to each property owner through their water bill.

Estimates provided by the Town's police department indicate that the daily population of Holden Beach increases to approximately 15,000 during the summer as tourists and members of nearby communities visit the Town. In an effort to capture a sampling of input from the visiting population, additional surveys were made available at the town hall, chapel, and rental agencies for tourists who had an interest in participating.

The results of the survey were evaluated and are considered the primary driving force for defining near-term and long term recreational priorities at Holden Beach.

Parks and Recreation Survey Results

The following pages describe the results of the recreation survey as an instrument for determining the needs of the community. A complete listing of survey results is located in the appendices of this plan.

Survey Demographics (Questions 1 through 5)

A total of 1,225 surveys were distributed. Of those, 612 surveys were returned and tabulated representing a 49% response. Recent studies of this type generally seek to gain a 10% to 20% response to survey questionnaires. Beating expectations by as much as 20%, is a clear indication of the property owners commitment to Holden Beach and its recreation offerings.

Of the respondents, 599 were property owners and 154 were permanent residents. The 2010 US Census recognizes 575 permanent residents in Holden Beach indicating that nearly 27% of the permanent population took part in the survey. The average age of those taking the survey was 61 and the median age was 52.

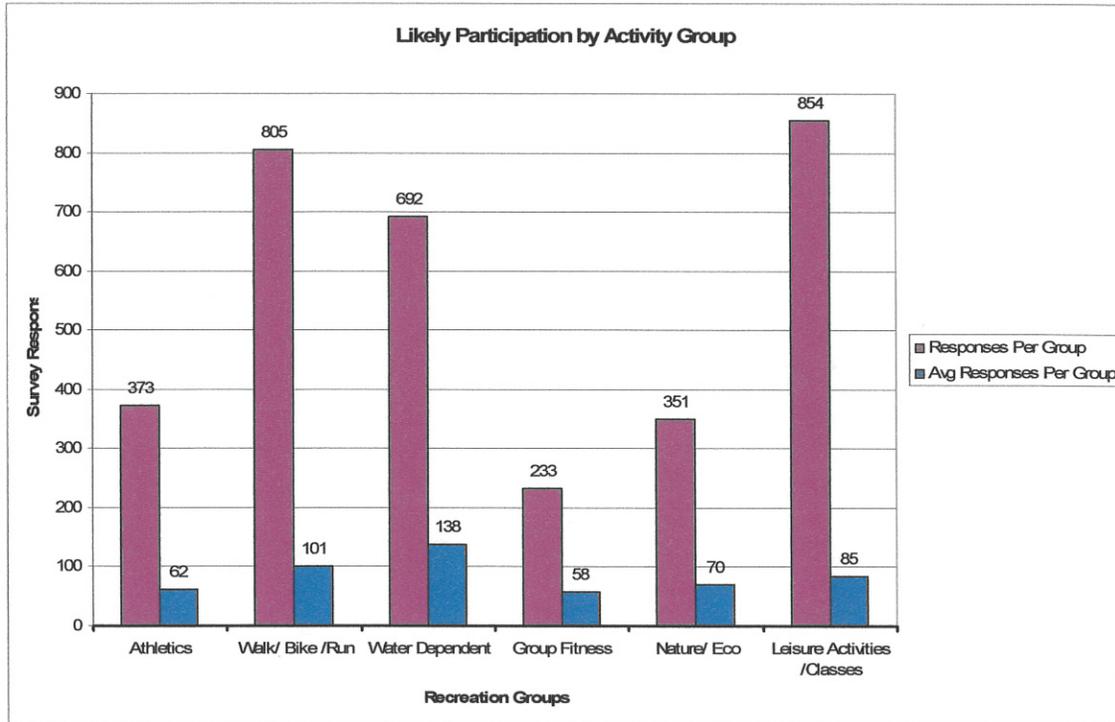
Respondents were asked to speak for all members of their household and to indicate how many members of their household fit into age ranges provided. The respondents indicated that their responses represented 1,538 people, the majority of whom (908) were age 51 or older. All age groups below the age of 50 were evenly distributed with approximately 100 members in each group.

Desired Recreation Activities (Question 6)

To gain a broad base understanding of recreational needs, the survey asked respondents to indicate five recreational activities that members of their household would most like to participate in at Holden Beach. Activities were grouped into six categories with each Activity Group providing several recreation options. With 854 responses, Leisure Activities/Classes ranked highest among the Activity Groups in which household members would most likely participate. The Walking/ Bicycling/Running Activity Group received 805 responses, while Water Dependant activities rounded out the top three groups with 692 responses.

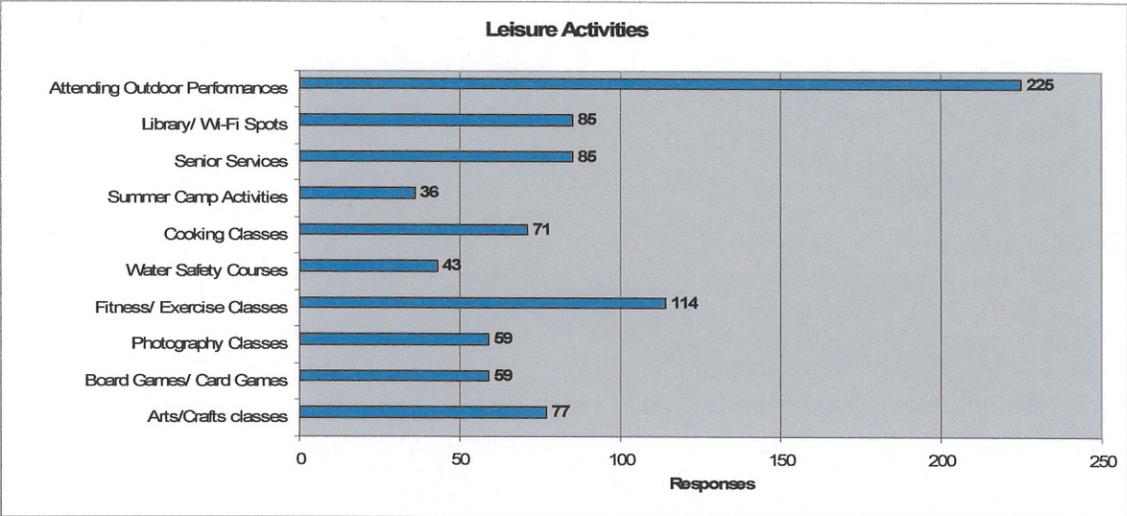
It was recognized that by providing differing numbers of options in each Activity Group for respondents to choose from, the results of the question may have weighed toward one Activity Group over another. To ensure that each activity group was weighed equally, an average number of responses per group were considered. These results indicate that the top three activity groups matched the overall results.

The table below describes the most chosen Activity Group by overall responses and the average responses per group.

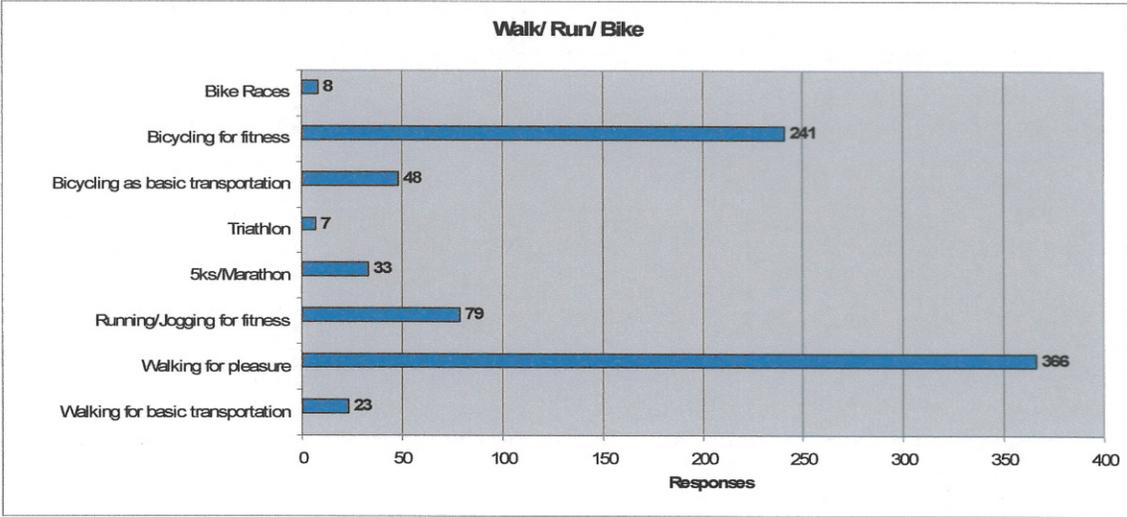


The results of this analysis are used to indicate which Activity Groups property owners, tourists, and residents desire that the Town of Holden Beach provide or continue to provide. Respondents to the survey have shown a strong support for Leisure Activities and Classes, Pedestrian and Bicycling activities and Water Dependent Activities.

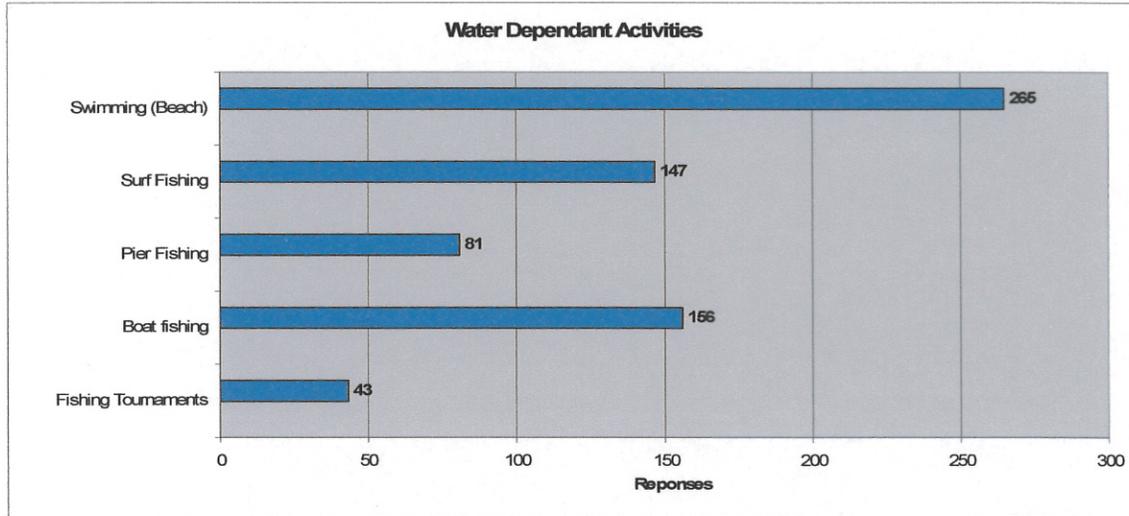
To gain a more specific understanding of which recreational activities respondents would most prefer within each Activity Group, individual activities were ranked according to the respondent’s likelihood of participation. The following graphs show the individual activities most desired by respondents in order of preferred Activity Group.



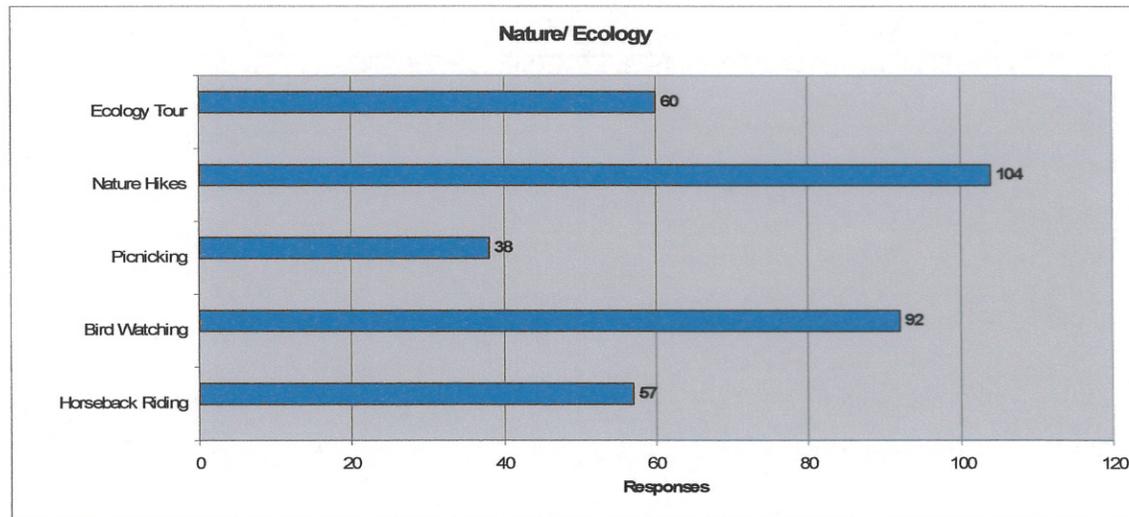
Of the responses for leisure activities, Attending Outdoor Performances ranked highest with 225 responses. Fitness and Exercise classes received 114 responses and Library/ WI-Fi spots tied Senior Service with 85 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group.



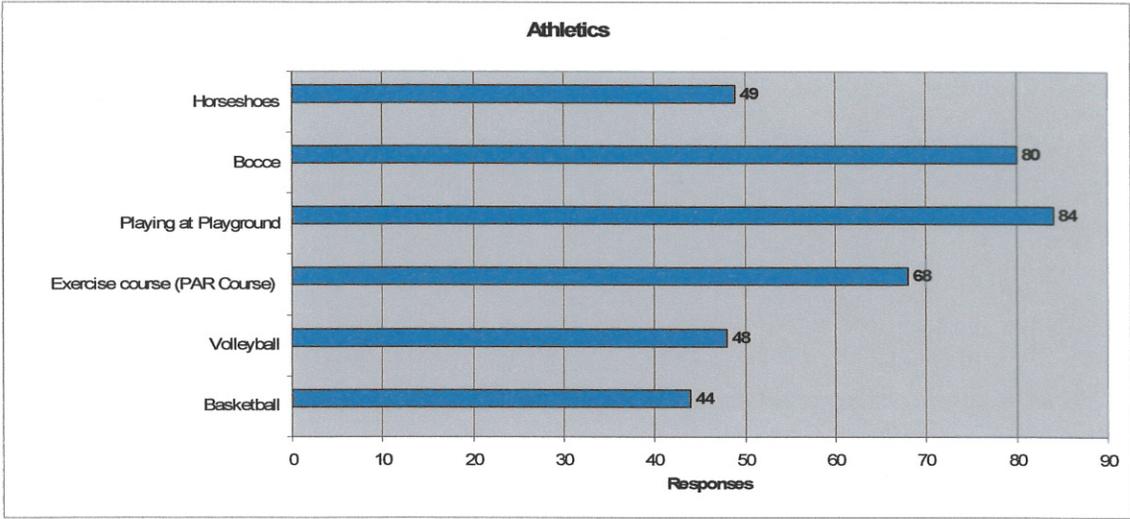
Of the responses for the Walk/Run/ Bike Activity Group, Walking for Pleasure ranked highest with 366 responses. Bicycling for Fitness received 241 responses and Running/Jogging for Fitness received 79 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group.



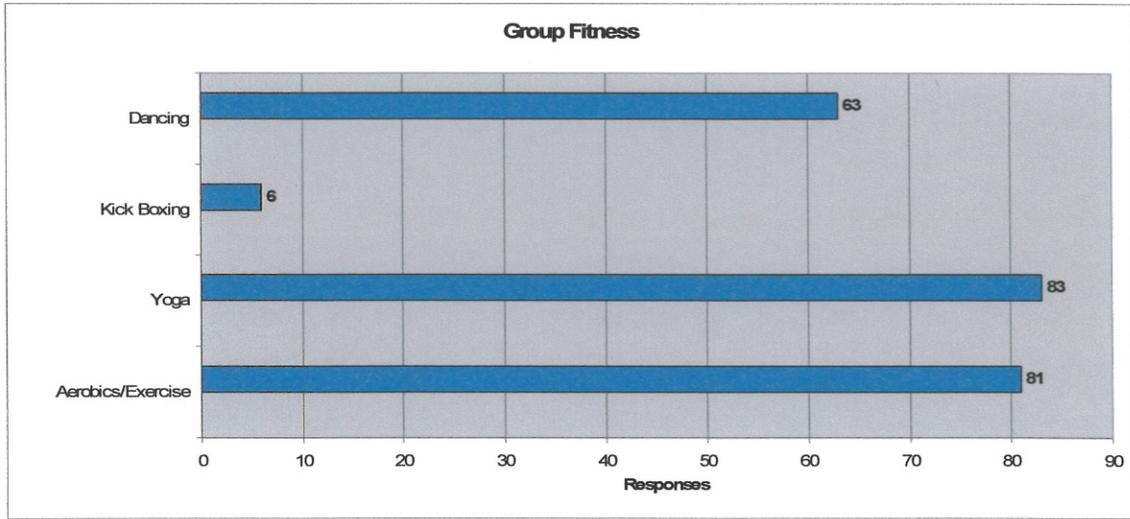
Of the responses for the Water Dependent Activity Group, Beach Swimming ranked highest with 265 responses. Boat Fishing received 156 responses and Surf Fishing received 147 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group.



Of the responses for the Nature/ Ecology Activity Group, Nature Hikes ranked highest with 104 responses. Bird Watching received 92 responses and Ecology Tour received 60 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group.



Of the responses for the Athletics Activity Group, Playing at Playground ranked highest with 84 responses. Bocce received 80 responses and Exercise course received 68 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group



Of the responses for the Group Fitness Activity Group, Yoga ranked highest with 83 responses. Aerobics/Exercise received 81 responses and Dancing received 63 responses. These activities represent the top three preferred activities for this Activity Group.

To further analyze the data, and better understand what recreation needs respondents most desired, a ranking of the top ten most recorded responses was prepared. Walking for Pleasure ranked as the most desired recreation activity with 366 responses. Swimming at the beach ranked second with 265 responses, Bicycling for fitness ranked third with 241 responses, and attending outdoor performances ranked fourth with 225 responses. The table below provides a ranking of the top ten most desirable recreation activities based upon survey response.

Top ten most desired recreation activities

Activity	Response	Rank	Activity Group
Walking for Pleasure	366	1	Walk/ Bike Run
Swimming (Beach)	265	2	Water Dependent
Bicycling for fitness	241	3	Walk/ Bike Run
Attending outdoor performances	225	4	Leisure Activities/Classes
Boat Fishing	156	5	Water Dependent
Surf Fishing	147	6	Water Dependent
Fitness/ Exercise Classes	114	7	Leisure Activities/Classes
Nature Hikes	104	8	Nature/ Eco
Bird Watching	92	9	Nature/ Eco
Library/ Wi-Fi spots	85	10	Leisure Activities/Classes
Senior Services	85	10	Leisure Activities/Classes

The survey provided opportunities for respondents to record their own activity if their preference was not listed. The results of the most commonly occurring write-in responses received are listed below. Tennis was the most noted of the write-in responses. Items noted with (#) indicate the occurrence of repeat responses.

- *Tennis (31)*
- *Non-motorized watercraft (8)*
- *Golf (4)*
- *Public Swimming Pool (3)*
- *Work-out equipment (3)*
- *Writing Group*
- *Kayak tours (3)*
- *Group fitness swim classes*
- *Family Bingo*
- *Bridge*
- *Pilates*
- *Tai Chi*
- *Boating Classes*
- *Fishing Classes*
- *Weight training*

Desired Special Events and Festivals (Question 7)

The survey asked respondents to note which special events or festivals they would like to see provided at Holden Beach. There were 218 responses to this question. Of the responses, 107 were in support of the current offerings. The festival and events most noted in response to this question were:

- Day at the Docks
- NC Festival by the Sea
- Concerts on the Coast Series

Beyond determining support for the existing events and festivals, this question allowed respondents to provide input by proposing new offerings that would be desirable in Holden Beach. The additional responses received on the survey are listed below. Items noted with (#) indicate the occurrence of repeat responses.

- *Music Festivals (18)*
- *Fourth of July Celebration /Fireworks/Parade/ Boat Parade (17)*
- *Seafood Tasting / Festival (15)*
- *Arts and Crafts (13)*
- *Food and Wine Festival (5)*
- *5k Runs (5)*
- *Out-door Movies (4)*
- *Triathlon (3)*
- *Cook-Off, BBQ, etc. (3)*
- *Car Shows / Car Rallies (2)*
- *Surfing Tournament (2)*
- *Plays (2)*
- *Chocolate Festival (2)*
- *Gospel Concerts (2)*
- *Chamber Music (2)*
- *Nature Educational programs (2)*
- *Antiques Shows*
- *Parades*
- *Historical tours*
- *Armed Forces recognition*
- *Fund raisers for Senior Activities*
- *Fishing, shrimping, crabbing classes*
- *Greek Festival*
- *Kite Flying*
- *Flea Market*
- *Teen Music*
- *Bluegrass music*
- *Classical, Orchestra, Big Band*
- *Beach Shag*
- *Labor Day Cook-out*
- *Easter Egg Hunt*
- *New Years Flotilla/ Fireworks*
- *October Fest*
- *Vesper Services*
- *Church Activities*
- *Half Marathon and Biathlon*

Some responses to this questions included suggestions to modify the existing events and festivals. Generally, these suggestions indicated a change in the time of the event to improve participation of the residents. Responses received relating to changes to existing events are noted below. Items noted with (#) indicate the occurrence of repeat responses.

- *Change Summer Concerts to Saturday (4)*
- *Change Summer Concerts to Friday or Saturday*
- *Change Summer Concerts to mid-week*
- *Change Turtle Talks to weekends*
- *Change Day at the Docks to Memorial Day weekend*
- *Town to take over Bike Rides*
- *Avoid scheduling Day at the Dock on Mother's Day*

Participation Obstacles (Question 8)

The survey asked respondents to identify influences that would improve participation by members of their household in recreation activities at Holden Beach. The following chart provides a ranking of responses to the obstacles prohibiting participation.

Obstacle	Response	Rank
I had more time	113	1
Public restrooms were provided	84	2
Programs were offered at the facilities	75	3
I knew where the facilities were	72	4
We could walk or bike to the facility	71	5
More public parking was provided	69	6
Wi-Fi was provided	51	7
The facilities were better maintained	28	8
The facilities were less crowded	21	9
The Facilities were barrier free	11	10
We felt safer at the facilities	4	11

Respondents were provided an opportunity to write-in additional comments to respond to this question. 56 respondents chose to do so and of those, 25 comments indicated no opinion or that the respondent did not feel there were obstacles prohibiting their participation. 13 responded that they were not aware of the recreation activities or facilities, or that better communication and advertising of the activities was needed.

The following are additional comments not noted above. Refer to the appendix to for all comments collected from the survey.

- *There were tennis courts (2)*
- *Handicapped access to beach (2)*
- *Central Island location (by pier) for activities rather than the bridge*
- *Easier access by water/ docking facilities*
- *Family friendly is important so is easy access, early hours, entertainment the entire family can enjoy*
- *Facilities that are available year round and don't close for the summer*
- *A means to get handicapped persons to the beach. Such as rubber wheeled wheelchairs*
- *Shelter from sun*
- *Start times were not too early in the morning or too late in the evening*
- *They were well organized activities for a good cause like beach sweep, cancer walks, bark at the beach, fundraises or educational. Increase public awareness of protection and preservation of coastal estuaries, shoreline, and habitat natural areas wildlife.*

Beach and Waterway Access/ Bicycling and Walking Facilities (Question 9-11)

Questions 9 through 11 focuses on specific facilities present at Holden Beach, Beach and Waterway Accesses and Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities. The input from these questions provides an overall sense of how well the facilities are currently serving the respondents and what specific improvements are needed.

Question 9 of the survey was a two part question asking for a general response to the quantity of beach and waterway access points and the adequacy of the pedestrian and bicycle facilities ability to serve the needs of the community. Question 10 and 11 ask for respondents to indicate specific problems that they feel need to be addressed at each of the facilities.

Beach and Waterway Access

When asked if Holden Beach provided enough Beach and Waterway Access points, approximately 77% of the survey respondents answered this question. Of the responses received, 350 noted that Holden Beach does have enough Beach and waterway access points to satisfy their needs, while 120 responded that the quantity of access points was not sufficient. 142 respondents provided no input on this question.