



# Public Input

The key to a successful plan is having the full support of the community. The master plan process used for the completion of the Suwanee Open Space and Recreation Needs Assessment included extensive input through interviews with city staff, council members, residents, four open public meetings, two half-day steering committee workshops and a citizen survey mailed randomly to 600 Suwanee residents.

Beginning April 6, 2001, the planning team met with city staff for an initial kick-off meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to determine the goals of the city regarding Recreation and Open Space, to identify issues related to the project and to establish a schedule for the various phases of the study.

The kick-off meeting revealed an ambitious goal that had been set by the comprehensive city master plan completed in November of 2000. The "Town Master Plan" set a goal of preserving or protecting 27 percent of the city's total land area for open space. With only 30 percent of the land area remaining undeveloped this goal would require immediate action by the city for a plan. The recreation and open space assessment was intended to identify the critical needs of the city regarding recreation and open space, as well as to develop an implementation plan for completing desired improvements. The final document was to establish a plan of action for the next four to five years. Stressed during the meeting was the importance of gaining citizen support and providing opportunities for citizen input and discussion.

## Interviews

The interview process, which included meetings with the Mayor, all members of the City Council, city staff and selected leaders in the community, began on May 1, 2001 and continued through the middle of June. These informational meetings provided further insight into the community leaders' vision for the future, as well as a historical perspective on where the city has been. Common issues that surfaced during the interview process included the need to:

- develop an identity for Suwanee
- make the community more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- purchase land strictly for preservation
- develop open practice fields and play space (Non programmed)
- become a regional leader for preservation of open space
- develop open spaces with playgrounds and picnic areas
- maintain a good tree canopy throughout the community
- meet national standards for parks and open space
- develop partnerships with schools and other community organizations for shared cost of facility construction
- provide more programming for adults
- address the swimming needs of the community
- develop smaller pocket parks along major thoroughfares
- provide the highest level of city services



- provide more affordable programming than is currently available through private organizations
- purchase critical pieces of undeveloped property around the city to prevent development by the private sector
- reduce high traffic congestion
- provide community-wide connectivity via trails, sidewalks and bike lanes
- minimize or eliminate the clear cutting of property in the community
- provide architectural controls within the community
- provide river access

## Steering Committee Workshop

On Friday, May 18, 2001, two steering committee workshops were conducted in the City Hall Council Chambers. A morning and afternoon session were held with participants who were chosen based on their ability to provide a view consistent with that of the typical Suwanee resident. These participants represented a variety of interests and perspectives from business leaders, educators and coaches to parents, park users, long time residents and newcomers to the Suwanee area.

The workshops addressed a variety of issues, from strengths and weaknesses of current parks and recreation programming, to identifying parcels within the city that should be acquired and preserved. Participants in the morning and afternoon session were divided into small work groups and each group was asked a series of questions related to recreation and open space in Suwanee. The following are lists of participants in the morning and afternoon sessions as well as the questions and answers as recorded the day of the workshops.

### AM Session

Mike Rook  
Richard Trice  
Penny Griffin  
Mary Rogelstad  
Chris Culpepper  
Ralph Sampson  
Ira Robbins  
David Hancock

### PM Session

Steve Agee  
John Rogelstad  
Hardy DeLay  
Phil Tickle  
Earl Mitchell  
Cary Zellers  
Hal Buck

1. **One of our goals is to determine whether the City of Suwanee should develop a Parks and Recreation Department. Discuss the levels of service provided by Gwinnett County and private business (i.e. Suwanee Sports Academy, local fitness centers) for the recreational needs of Suwanee. Identify strengths and weaknesses of current facilities and programming.**



Responses:

### **Group 1 – AM Participants**

#### **Strengths**

- Tennis and golf (private)
- Suwanee Sports Academy (private)
- Body Plex (Private)
- George Pierce Game Fields
- Richard Trice Trail
- Rampage Skate (Private)

#### **Weaknesses**

- Open green space for practice
- Lack of public aquatic center
- Lack of senior programs/facilities
- Youth playground/skate facility/programs

### **Group 2 – AM Participants**

#### **Strengths**

- Suwanee Sports Academy
- George Pierce Park
- Richard Trice Trail
- Sidewalk expansions
- City Hall park

#### **Weaknesses**

- Passive recreation/playground/sandbox
- Lack of green space
- Lack of connecting paths (i.e. pedestrian, bicycle)
- Lack of practice fields

### **PM Participants**

#### **Strengths**

- George Pierce playing fields (i.e. football)
- Town pavilion and center
- Lake at George Pierce Park
- Split uses at George Pierce Park
- City trail proximity to George Pierce Park
- Chattahoochee Park across the river (owned by the National Park Service)
- Opportunity still exists to make changes in community

#### **Weaknesses**

- Too many teams (lack of practice space)
- Teams from outside county are utilizing valuable time
- Level of maintenance at George Pierce playground
- Lack of community center with programs



- Fragmentation of city by roads and railroads
- Lack of smaller walkable parks
- Lack of bikeable routes
- No city sponsored programs for youths and adults (i.e. ballet, gymnastics)
- Lack of open play fields

**2. To address the current weaknesses and to improve on current strengths, what actions should be taken by the City of Suwanee? Prioritize these actions.**

**Responses:**

**Group 1 – AM Participants**

- Develop current city park lands for multi-purpose greenspace
- Purchase new land
- Require developers to set aside land for recreation
- Seek matching funds from community organizations
- Seek grants – Department of Human Resources
- Develop a community fund/corporate partners

**Group 2 – AM Participants**

- Improve Suwanee Elementary playground
- YMCA
- Purchase 7 acres on Martin Farm Road near Richard Trice Trail parking area

**PM Participants**

- Formal coordination with the county for making improvements
- City should take matters in their own hands to get things accomplished
- Explore ways to supplement the county
- Provide spaces for a community center and practice fields
- Identify potential land and right of way acquisition
- Create many parks along sidewalk routes (encourage differing routes of sidewalks)
- Construct trails to offer varied transportation (i.e. golf, bike and walks)
- Bridges over interstate 85 and the Chattahoochee to have bike/pedestrian lanes with a buffer
- Integrate parks into mixed-use developments
- Connect existing sidewalks
- Incorporate open green space into high density developments
- Create a positive entry to the city from interstate 85.

**3. If the city forms a Recreation Department, what should be the department's primary duties?**

**Responses:**

**Group 1 – AM Participants**

- Coordinate with youth associations, schools and the county
- Seek funding other than the city budget



- Supervise maintenance of facilities
- Identify new needs

#### **Group 2 – AM Participants**

- Land acquisition is more important than having a recreation department
- Identify recreation needs
- Maintenance
- Land acquisition
- Scheduling of practice facilities
- Marketing
- Create programs
- Solicit funding

#### **PM Participants**

- Promote sports activities that the county is not providing
- Activities administration
- Analysis of how Suwanee could manage programs
- Maintenance
- Change over time—initially position would be development and networking

**4. Please develop a list of pros and cons for the acquisition of lands specifically set aside as permanently protected open space. Identify particular parcels of land that should be protected.**

#### **Responses:**

##### **Group 1 – AM Participants**

###### **Cons**

- Maintenance cost
- Land cost

###### **Potential Acquisition**

- Areas adjacent to schools, especially middle
- Property adjacent to Richard Trice Trail
- Falcon complex

##### **Group 2 – AM Participants**

###### **Pros**

- Land protected
- Low development impact
- Increase surrounding land values
- No low maintenance

###### **Cons**

- Cost, lost revenue
- Policing open space



### **Potential Acquisition**

- Passive properties: Dollar Property on Buford Highway
- Open space properties: Across from City Hall, Peachtree Industrial Boulevard and Suwanee Dam Road (Lot 252), Suwanee Creek Road, Suwanee Dam Road
- Programmed Properties: Property along Richard Trice Trail, Martins Farm Road, Property behind Dilliard's, DeLay property off Main Street

### **PM Participants**

#### Cons

- Money
- Maintenance
- Rules for usage (i.e. who, when, how)
- Costs involved
- Police presence and impact on budget
- Possible non-benefits perceived by the community

### **Potential Acquisition**

- Suwanee Dam Road
- Front of Wal-Mart property (I-85)
- Moore Road property (mini park)
- Property in commercial parcels for mini parks (with irrigation or water source)
- Martin's Farm Road (near Richard Trice Trail)
- Low-lying areas near Annandale
- Space near Suwanee Elementary School (Georgia Power easements)
- Acquire historic properties and homes in old town
- Former Vernon property near old town

## **5. Develop a list of and prioritize the needs for un-programmed open space and active recreation facilities and programming.**

Responses:

### **Group 1 – AM Participants**

#### **Non-programmed**

- Picnic tables
- Horseshoe pits
- Shuffleboard for seniors

#### **Programmed**

- Irrigation
- Maintenance
- Parking
- Backstops
- Lighting



## **Group 2 – AM Participants**

### **Non-programmed**

- Trails/wooded areas
- Parking
- Open grass area
- Playground
- Picnic facilities
- Bike racks
- Trash cans
- Restroom/water
- Community garden

### **Programmed**

- Sports fields
- Irrigation
- Lighting
- Meeting/special events
- Concession stand
- Skate park
- Aquatic
- Petting zoo

### **PM Participants**

- Athletic practice fields with scheduled use times
- Unique facilities that draw people to the community (i.e. BMX, skateboarding)
- Passive parks that are non-auto friendly (no parking)
- Something similar to Bunten Road Park in Duluth
- BMX track operated
- Things not available in George Pierce Park (i.e. handball, tennis, hockey, play grounds)
- Community center that does not compete with George Pierce county-operated community center.
- Possible trail link behind new Burger King

## **6. List any potential roadblocks to funding a recreation department and/or acquisition of lands.**

### **Responses:**

#### **PM Participants**

- Money
- Possible litigation by people wanting parks by their homes
- Narrow vision by swim/tennis community
- Politics
- Resistance for fear of property and criminals in their backyards
- Federal regulations



**7. List any ideas you have for possible funding sources.**

**Responses:**

**AM Participants**

- Corporate sponsors
- Corporate community fund
- Trust for public land
- Georgia green space fund
- State grants
- User fees
- Youth organizations
- Civic Organizations

**PM Participants**

- Bonds
- Local government
- City tax
- Bond issue
- Grants
- Land trust organizations
- Grant and fund development staff position for the city
- Business support (sponsorship) volunteer
- Association dues paid by business
- Proceeds from police fundraisers

**8. Identify the top five priorities, as relate to the open space and recreation needs assessment.**

**Responses:**

**AM Participants**

- Open space for youth activities
- Small Non-programmed spaces
- Trails for connection
- Senior facilities
- Keep community green

**PM Participants**

- Funding
- Developing a clear strategy
- Identifying property
- Building community support/education
- Update web page to keep residents informed



## Public Meetings

On May 30, 2001, the planning team kicked off the first of a series of four public meetings to offer residents the opportunity to voice their opinions about recreation and open space in Suwanee. The following represents comments recorded at each of the four meetings.

Chattahoochee Run Subdivision.....May 30, 2001

- Basketball facilities at Suwanee Sports Academy are very adequate and are used by many residents.
- The playground and other facilities in Webb Park in Alpharetta are excellent.
- Suwanee residents need a comparable park in their city.
- George Pierce Park does not meet the current needs for the city.
- There is a need to slow down the apartment growth in Suwanee. The concern is that too much open space is being lost to large-scale apartment developments.
- Need to employ better control of buffering provided by developments.
- There is a need for increased open space and better preservation of trees.
- Most residents in Chattahoochee Run are unfamiliar with the needs for recreation facilities in other parts of the city. (Everyone in the meeting has lived in Suwanee less than 5 years.)
- Open space is not a concern for residents in the Chattahoochee Run neighborhood because they have adequate open space provided by the development.
- There are very few buffers and trees in this area compared to 15 years ago.
- A “hometown feel” would be better with more control of growth practices.
- The entrances to Richard Trice Trail are very difficult to find; therefore, many residents do not use it.
- Need signage to access points of Richard Trice Trail.
- Hometown feel could be accomplished by: more trees, sidewalks and a more walkable community.
- Peachtree Industrial needs sidewalks like McGinnis Ferry.
- Moore Road is an excellent example of what they would like to see implemented throughout the city.
- Satellite Boulevard is a good example of an industrial development that is fairly well done.
- Residents currently have no ability to walk to city hall. Crosswalks are needed with access points over or under Buford Highway and Peachtree Industrial Blvd.
- Traffic is the biggest complaint about living in the city of Atlanta.
- Would like to make community walkable and bikeable, with separation from roadways.
- Festival in Old Town requires everyone to drive and find parking.
- Sidewalks should be required in all new subdivisions so that children are not required to ride and play in street.

- There is a concern about providing public access to neighborhoods via trails.
- Concerned about increased traffic brought into neighborhood. Feel it may jeopardize safety of the neighborhood.
- Had problems in the past with fishermen accessing the river through private properties.
- Thinks it should be the consensus of the neighborhood to have trails brought there. If residents choose to buy near a park or trail that is okay, but not vice versa.
- Sidewalks in front of the subdivision would be acceptable.
- Not opposed to requiring developers to build greenways, if that is the desire of the citizens of Suwanee.
- Most residents would probably be willing to walk 2 miles round trip to recreation facilities.
- Need for public pool facility in city (indoor and outdoor).
- Regarding YMCA: encourage construction on behalf of county or city.
- Pool at Bogan Park would be ideal.
- Services typically provided by a YMCA are provided at Suwanee Sports Academy.
- YMCA usually requires a community sponsorship of \$3-4 million dollars.
- YMCA is membership based and does not fill a public need.
- Develop Suwanee to meet citizen needs; do not take a debt we cannot pay for.
- Spend money purchasing property rather than developing property.
- Run-off in Brushy Creek needs to be addressed. It used to run clear; now it runs very cloudy.
- Land around Scales Road has been stripped to bare earth and is the biggest contributor to the Brushy Creek problem.

**Ideas for funding include:**

- Donations by those wanting to leave things for future users. (Shorty Howell is a good example.)
- Acknowledge those who give funds, similar to the way the adopt-a-highway program works (recognition for sponsorship).

**Top priorities for the city should be:**

- Preserve large tracts of land 20-25+ acres in size.
- Acquire wetlands for less and preserve in natural state.
- Obtain large tracts with greatest environmental impacts.
- Enforce conservation districts to prevent developers from stripping the earth bare.
- Need to preserve corridors and buffers.
- Save as much land on McGinnis Ferry Road as possible.
- Preserve Buford Highway across from city hall and also on the four corners of Buford Highway and McGinnis Ferry Road.
- Employ architectural standards (i.e. signs and sign height).
- Help Suwanee to become unique through sign standards.



**North Gwinnett High School.....May 31, 2001**

- It would be nice to see a newer, bigger park with a playground.
- George Pierce is too wooded and doesn't feel safe for women.
- Webb Park in Alpharetta is a private park that was built with no government money. It is an excellent example of what residents would like to have in Suwanee. It has a very nice covered sand box with toys.
- Metal edging is dangerous at City Hall Park.
- There is not enough open space available in Suwanee.
- Swim, tennis and playgrounds in many neighborhoods are insufficient.
- Shade is important in parks but not seclusion.
- There are no accessible public swimming pools for residents without neighborhood association swim facilities.
- Subdivision with seventy-six homes on the north side of Suwanee does not have a pool facility. Many others are in a similar situation.
- Path in the back of George Pierce Park is excellent for running. It has a pervious surface.
- Rivermore Park has a lot of open space and recreation facilities.
- Curious about what Suwanee would or could have.
- Would like to see longer hiking and biking trails.
- Would like to see four wheelers and dirt bikes discouraged in this area.
- Part of the land in River Moore belongs to the National Park Service and has problems with all terrain vehicles.
- Would like trails to have a destination. (For Example: The end of Moore Road has a shopping center, but the parking area is too dangerous to cross on foot or on a bike because motorists are not cautious.
- Sees conflicts with hikers and joggers.
- Place an emphasis on the land along the Suwanee Creek corridor. Focus on preserving the wetlands on the other side of Buford Highway.
- Has there been any discussion of acquiring parkland in the Old Town area?
- Can Peachtree Industrial Boulevard be beautified?
- Pulling sidewalks 6-10 feet from the street is acceptable and desirable. It is also viewed as safer.
- Suwanee Sports Academy does not have an indoor gymnasium or programming for toddlers. It is best utilized in the winter months.
- The use of facilities in Bogan Park requires that you be enrolled in a class.
- The library will be great for some indoor programming.
- The county offers indoor programs but they are too far from Suwanee.
- Question was raised about a YMCA.
- Indoor programs are not extremely high on the list of priorities.
- Playgrounds are a top priority.
- Make major intersections in Suwanee unique and beautify medians.
- Push buildings back on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard to provide a buffer.
- Clustering restaurants works very well.
- Would like a community that is friendlier to pedestrians (i.e. signage).
- Establish buffers with tree requirements that emphasize tree canopies.



- A main concern is Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. It seems it will never be completed.
- Need more unique businesses and restaurants in the community.
- Make Suwanee unique.

**Ruby Forest Subdivision.....June 11, 2001**

- Access to open space is difficult.
- George Pierce Park is accessible by walking from adjacent neighborhoods but not from other neighborhoods in the community. Other residents must drive to get to the park and residents in adjacent neighborhoods must drive to a limited number of pedestrian access points within their subdivisions.
- There are no parks west and north of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard. It would be too dangerous to allow children to cross.
- There are many users of Webb Park in Alpharetta. It has a great playground for children.
- Residents reported using George Pierce Park, Richard Trice Trail, City Hall Park, indoor pools and volleyball at Bogan Park and the Sports Authority for Basketball.
- Feel there should be a 70% support vote of the citizens on all matters that pertain to parks and greenway impacts on existing homeowners.
- Support is mixed. Maybe we should try to supplement the county in providing recreation facilities in Suwanee.
- There is a need for more playgrounds.
- The playground in George Pierce Park needs improvements. Views into the area need to be opened up and parking needs to be located adjacent to the play area. Currently it is located across the road.
- There is a need for more small parks in neighborhoods, with open green space where kids can play.
- There is a need for sports team practice space, which could serve as public open space as well.
- Need to link all parks and open space with trails and sidewalks.
- Sidewalks need to be separated from roadways. No one will walk on the new sidewalk behind the curb along Peachtree Industrial Boulevard because it is unsafe to walk that close to cars traveling at 55 miles per hour.
- Need more trees and landscaping along roadways.
- Need more bike lanes along roadways.
- Need to beautify Peachtree Industrial Boulevard where it goes through the city.
- Need year-round programs for toddlers.
- Link more trails to the Chattahoochee River to provide better public access.
- Need parking area near McGinnis Ferry Road to provide access for fishermen.
- Trails should provide links to libraries, schools, old town, parks and the Chattahoochee River.
- Need more restrictions or incentives on new developments to save trees.
- Need to reduce erosion from new construction.



- Forego making improvements on trails and other projects now and spend money to buy open space.
- Buy open space now, as it will only get more expensive or disappear all together.
- Critical lands to protect:
  - Lake property near Settles Bridge and Suwanee Dam Road.
  - Low areas near Suwanee Sports Academy.
  - Buford Highway corridor starting at McGinnis Ferry Road and running past George Pierce Park.
  - Land across from City Hall.
  - Land around old town.

**George Pierce Park Community Building.....June 12, 2001**

- There are not enough small walkable parks in the city.
- All parks should be linked for walking and biking access.
- Having a parks and recreation department is not as important as buying land today and developing a department in the future.
- Large green tracts should be protected.
- Need outdoor basketball courts.
- Need better access to Richard Trice Trail.
- Need local facilities to support swim teams.
- Make Suwanee a homier town by providing more parks, trees, sidewalks, landscaped roads and connected community functions.
- Require sidewalks in all new developments.
- Provide more playgrounds for all different age groups.
- Provide year round pools for small children.
- Provide more trails in George Pierce Park.
- Provide better maintenance in existing parks.
- Provide park patrols on greenways.
- Provide adequate parking areas at all greenway and park access points.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings for major roads to improve access to parks.
- Preserve as much green space as possible to help make Suwanee special.
- Residents are willing to pay more in taxes to protect green space.
- Supplement private recreation programs at George Pierce Park because private programs are very expensive.
- Provide more indoor programming facilities at George Pierce Park.
- Critical lands to protect:
  - Land near new county library site.
  - Land at intersections of McGinnis Ferry Road and Buford Highway.

## **Citizen Survey**

Another form of public input employed during the master plan process was the random distribution of 600 surveys to Suwanee residents. The return rate on surveys was nearly 21 percent, a scientifically significant sample, providing an additional assessment of public opinion regarding open space and recreation in the city. Surveys were also distributed at a local grocery store to obtain further input; however, results were



kept separate to maintain the desired random sampling. The survey included eighteen questions regarding current recreation use patterns and programming, opinions of open space land preservation and acquisition and opinions for funding desired improvements.

Results from the mail survey revealed that Suwanee residents use recreation facilities provided by private homeowner's associations most frequently, followed closely by Gwinnett County facilities, other public facilities, the Richard Trice Trail, other private recreation providers and the Suwanee Sports Academy. The frequency of use reported by respondents showed that 50 percent of residents use association facilities on a weekly basis, while most other facilities are used on a yearly basis. Gwinnett County facilities had an equal number of respondents that reported using facilities on a weekly (28 percent) and monthly (28 percent) basis.

---

***"86 percent were in favor of the city purchasing land. The number 1 priority identified in the survey was the preservation of natural habitats found within the city limits followed by the acquisition of land for the development of safe pedestrian routes."***

---

When asked if they support land acquisition by the city strictly for preservation, 86 percent were in favor of the city purchasing land. The number 1 priority identified in the survey was the preservation of natural habitats found within the city limits followed by the acquisition of land for the development of safe pedestrian routes. Polling residents for a list of desired facilities yielded the following in order of most desirable to the least:

- Natural areas (82 percent)
- Walking/bicycle trails (72 percent)
- Picnic facilities (56 percent)
- Playgrounds (48 percent)
- Bicycle lanes (46 percent)
- Community centers (43 percent)
- Outdoor festival facilities (42 percent)
- Sports fields (40 percent)
- Cultural arts facilities (34 percent)
- Farmers market (30 percent)
- Tennis courts (24 percent)
- Fitness facilities/Swimming pools (19 percent)

Survey questions aimed at gathering information about current recreation trends within the community found that 64 percent of survey respondents drive to the recreation facility they use most often, while 31 percent walk and 5 percent bike. When asked how important the ability to walk or ride a bike to community recreation facilities was, 76 percent rated it as a high or medium priority. The remaining 24 percent said having the ability to walk or ride to a recreation facility was a low priority. Respondents willing to walk to a park (75 percent) said 0-2 miles would be a reasonable distance while 12 percent said 2-5 miles would be acceptable. Of those respondents willing to bike to a park (76 percent), over half (56 percent) said 0-2 miles was an acceptable distance, while 35 percent said 2-5 miles would be a fair ride and the remaining 9 percent said riding 5-10 miles was suitable. When discussing acceptable drive distances, 50 percent said 2-5 miles was within reason and 42 percent said 5-10 miles was acceptable. The remaining 8 percent felt 0-2 miles was the most they would be willing to drive to a recreation facility.



***“When asked to consider the justifications for acquiring land, 90 percent of respondents felt land should be purchased for natural habitat preservation and beautification of roadways.”***

Questions regarding program participation by Suwanee residents showed that 50 percent of survey participants were not sure if programs provided by various community organizations were adequate for youths. Of the remaining respondents, 27 percent felt programs were adequate, while 18 percent felt they were not. Similarly, 57 percent were not aware of the adequacy of program offerings for adults, while 16 percent felt programs were inadequate. The remaining respondents felt programs were inadequate for women (15 percent) or men (12 percent).

The survey also asked questions addressing a plan of action for acquiring land. The percentage of residents who felt open space should be required within various types of developments including residential, commercial, office/business and industrial made up 74 percent or more of all the respondents. When asked to consider the justifications for acquiring land, 90 percent of respondents felt land should be purchased for natural habitat preservation and beautification of roadways. A large portion of respondents (85 percent) felt it was important for Suwanee to develop its own identity within the larger Atlanta metropolitan area, while another 78 percent felt land should be purchased for the development of trails and non-programmed parks. A small portion of survey participants (9 percent) felt it was not in the best interest of the city to be acquiring land for the preservation of open space or public park facilities. Over half of all respondents (66 percent) agreed that the city should acquire land for the development of facilities to be programmed by a city-organized parks and recreation department.

Survey participants were then asked to provide a rank order for possible funding solutions. The results showed that the most favorable fund raising methods as viewed by the respondents were, in order of importance:

- Existing city revenue
- Increase fees associated with development
- Public/private partnerships
- Increase bonded indebtedness
- Other
- Increase property taxes
- None of the abovementioned funding mechanisms

***“Over half of all respondents (66 percent) agreed that the city should acquire land for the development of facilities to be programmed by a city-organized parks and recreation department.”***

Review of the demographics for survey respondents found that 39 percent are between the ages of 35-44 and 31 percent are between the ages of 45-54. Participants who reported incomes in excess of \$100,000 accounted for 45 percent, while those with incomes greater than \$50,000 made up 82 percent of survey respondents. Those who have lived in Suwanee greater than ten years represented 18 percent, while those new to Suwanee within the last 5 years accounted for 54 percent. The majority of respondents (52 percent) were married couples with children, while 23 percent were couples without children. Nearly 47 percent of children were aged 12-18 while 38 percent were aged 6 to 11 and only 15 percent were under the age of six.

Participation in the survey distributed at a local grocery store brought an additional 65 responses for review and comparison. Results were consistent with those returned through the mail, with minimal deviation.



---

## Public Input Summary Analysis

***“The common idea was to see Suwanee develop an identity that hinges on green space preservation, so that visitors observe a noticeable difference when they enter the city limits.”***

---

The completion of the master plan public input phase brought many common ideas to the forefront. A popular opinion presented by an overwhelming majority was the need to purchase land for preservation. Residents of Suwanee, whether new or old, expressed a strong desire to see the city retain the features that make it unique compared to other highly developed cities in the county and the metropolitan Atlanta area. The common idea was to see Suwanee develop an identity that hinges on green space preservation, so that visitors observe a noticeable difference when they enter the city limits. Support was also strong for purchasing land to develop neighborhood parks that offer practice fields, playgrounds, picnic facilities and open space for passive recreation. A problem that was identified by the public was the dependency on cars for all movement around the city. Major thoroughfares such as Peachtree Industrial Boulevard or Buford Highway were seen as barriers separating neighborhoods from community services. Residents would like the ability to access community shopping centers, schools, parks and municipal buildings via a series of interconnected trails and sidewalks that offer safe pedestrian and bicycle passage free from vehicular traffic.

Problems uncovered regarding the level of service provided by Gwinnett County were related to inadequacies at George Pierce Park. Residents reported traveling to Bogan and Collins Hill Parks for many of their recreation needs, such as swimming, volleyball, indoor programs and other activities not found at George Pierce. Many residents mentioned Webb Park in Alpharetta, which they noted as having far superior playgrounds to any other in the region. Athletic teams sponsored by the county were said to have difficulty locating practice facilities. Similarly, residents of Suwanee not involved in organized athletics were said to have no place for pick-up games for field sports. These issues, coupled with the lack of adequate picnic and passive recreation facilities, were the most common in all the public forums.

***“Citizens who participated in the master plan recognized the need to acquire land in the very near future to prevent further development and destruction of natural habitats.”***

---

The public opinion regarding funding recreation and open space issues in the city took on many forms, from non-support to increasing taxes to complete recommended improvements. Citizens who participated in the master plan recognized the need to acquire land in the very near future to prevent further development and destruction of natural habitats. They were also cognizant of the fact that the remaining land is on the open market, requiring the city to compete with developers and pay premium prices for high-visibility properties. The most popular choice for funding land acquisition involved placing higher development fees on new construction and using funds from existing city revenue. Others, recognizing the limited funding potential of the previously mentioned sources, took the opinion that increased bonded indebtedness and property taxes would be the only realistic funding plan. Residents taking the second stance felt there would be majority support in the community, ensuring a future quality of life in Suwanee.