



# Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

PLANNING FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

---



**Mecklenburg County  
Park and Recreation**

*The Natural Place  
To Be...*



# The Impact of Parks

**Access is Key:** Living close to parks is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. One study showed **children living within 1/2 mile of park or playground are 5 times more likely to be a healthy weight**, rather than overweight, as compared to children who didn't have a park nearby. Another 3-year study concluded children have a much better chance of avoiding obesity if they live in neighborhoods where they can safely bike, walk and have access to parks.

**Significant health care cost savings** are realized by individuals living near parks and utilizing them. Adults under 65 who are moderately active in parks experience approx. \$300 in health savings per year. This rises to \$700/year for individuals over 65.

**Parks and open spaces create community, strengthen relationships & build caring qualities.** Park users who are more physically active and make frequent contact with friends during their leisure are less likely to report feeling depressed.

**Close proximity to green spaces and parks is associated with less depression, anxiety, and other health problems.**

**Increased Social Capital:** Research shows residents who live near outdoor green space and parks are more familiar with their nearby neighbors, socialize more with them, and express greater feelings of community and safety than residents lacking nearby parks.

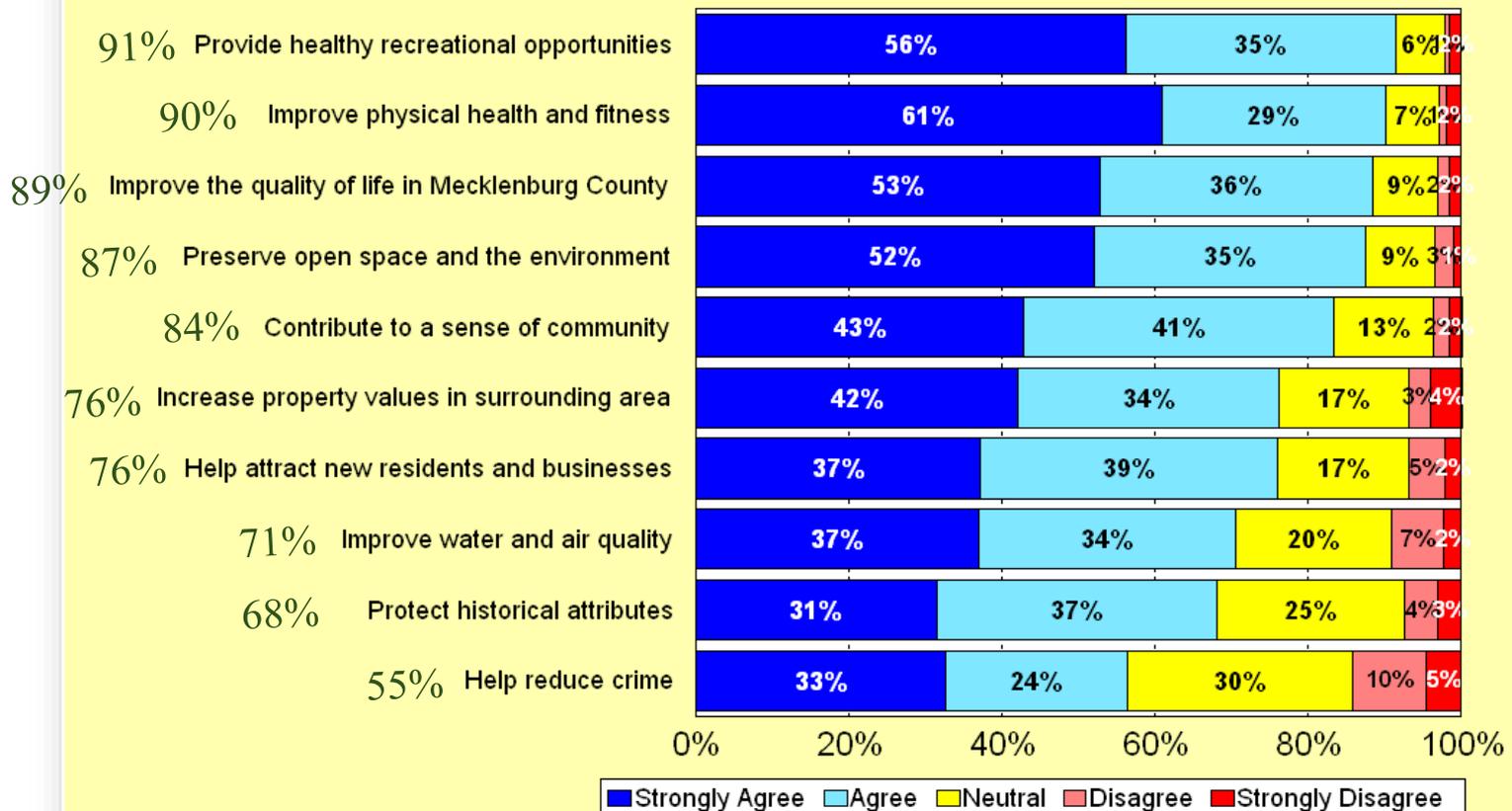
# The Impact of Parks



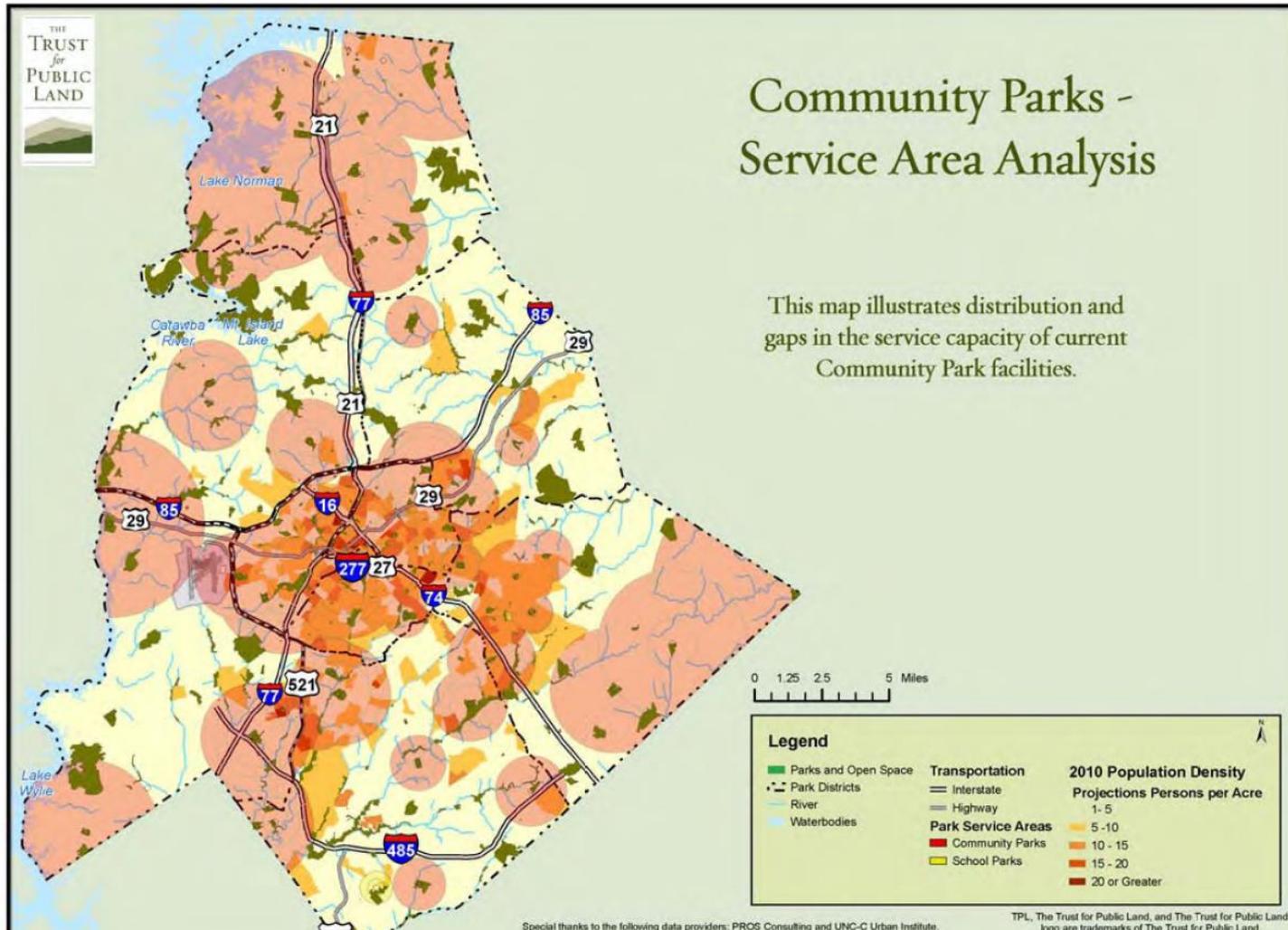
# The Impact of Parks – Residents Agree

## Q13. Level of Agreement with the Benefits Being Provided by Parks, Nature Preserves, and Greenways

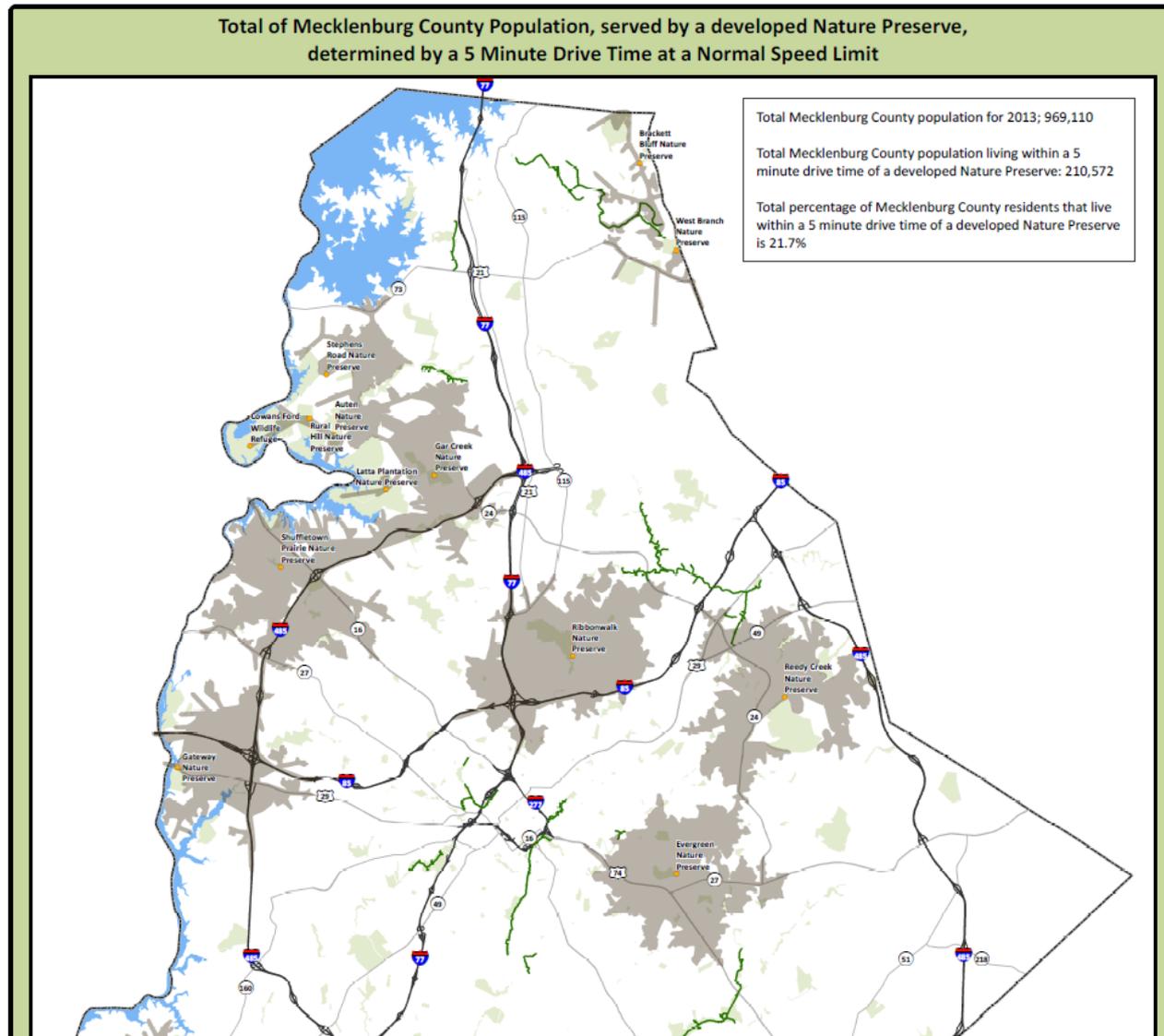
by percentage of respondents (excluding "don't know" responses)



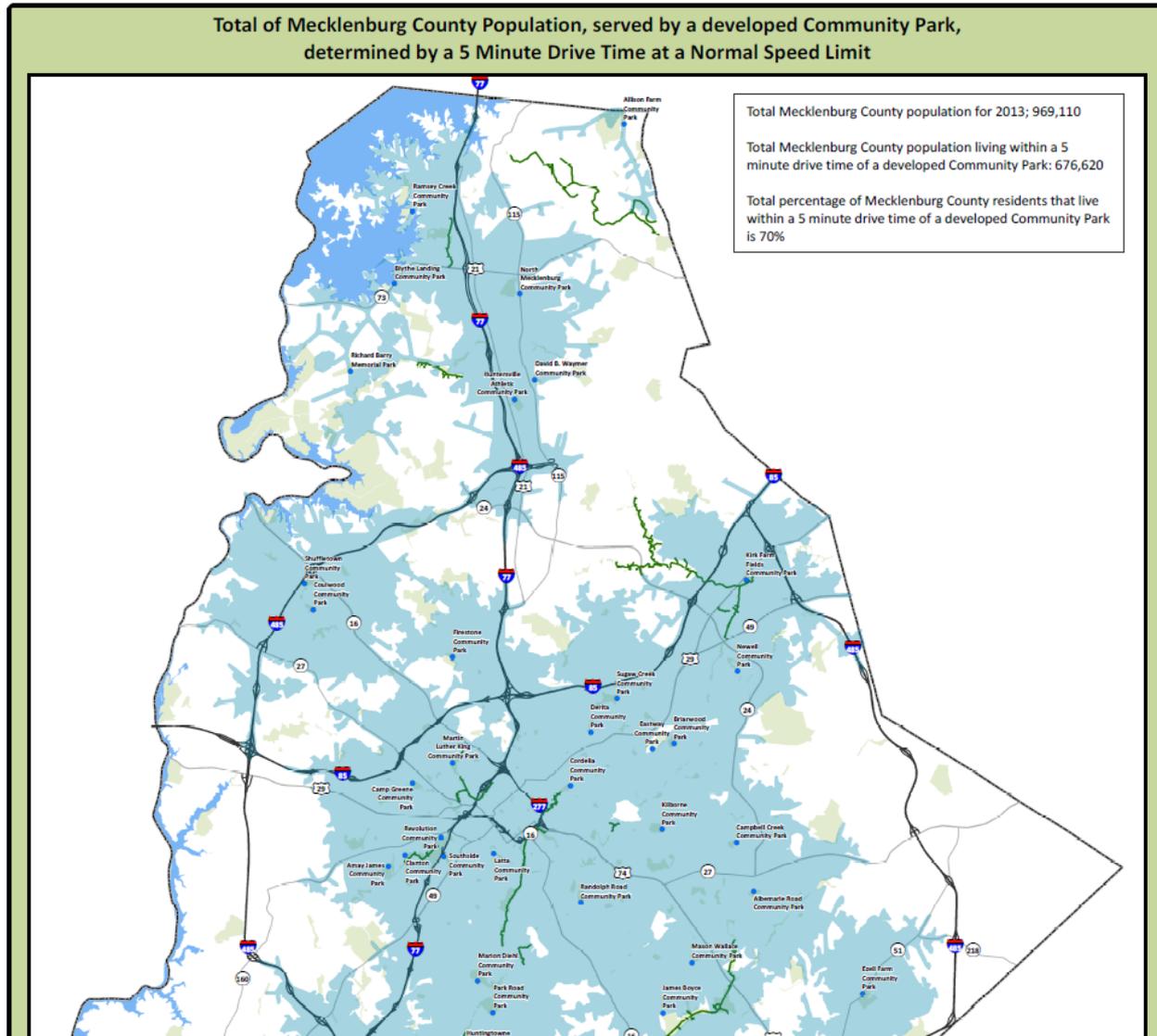
# Initiatives – Access & the Old Analysis Method



# Initiatives – Access & the New Analysis

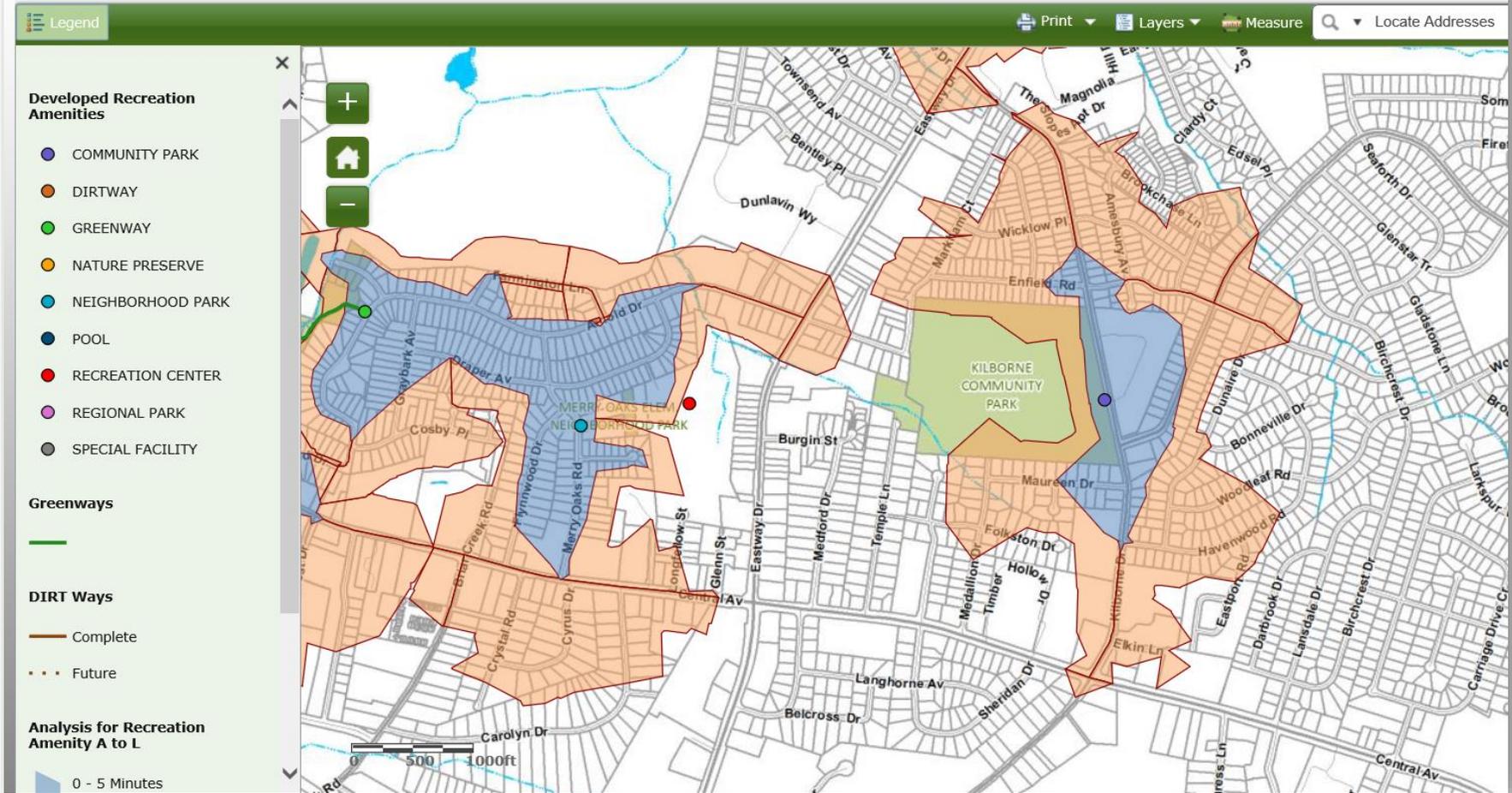


# Initiatives – Access



# Initiatives – Access

## Parks & Recreation - Access Analysis



# Initiatives – Fit Zones & Prioritization

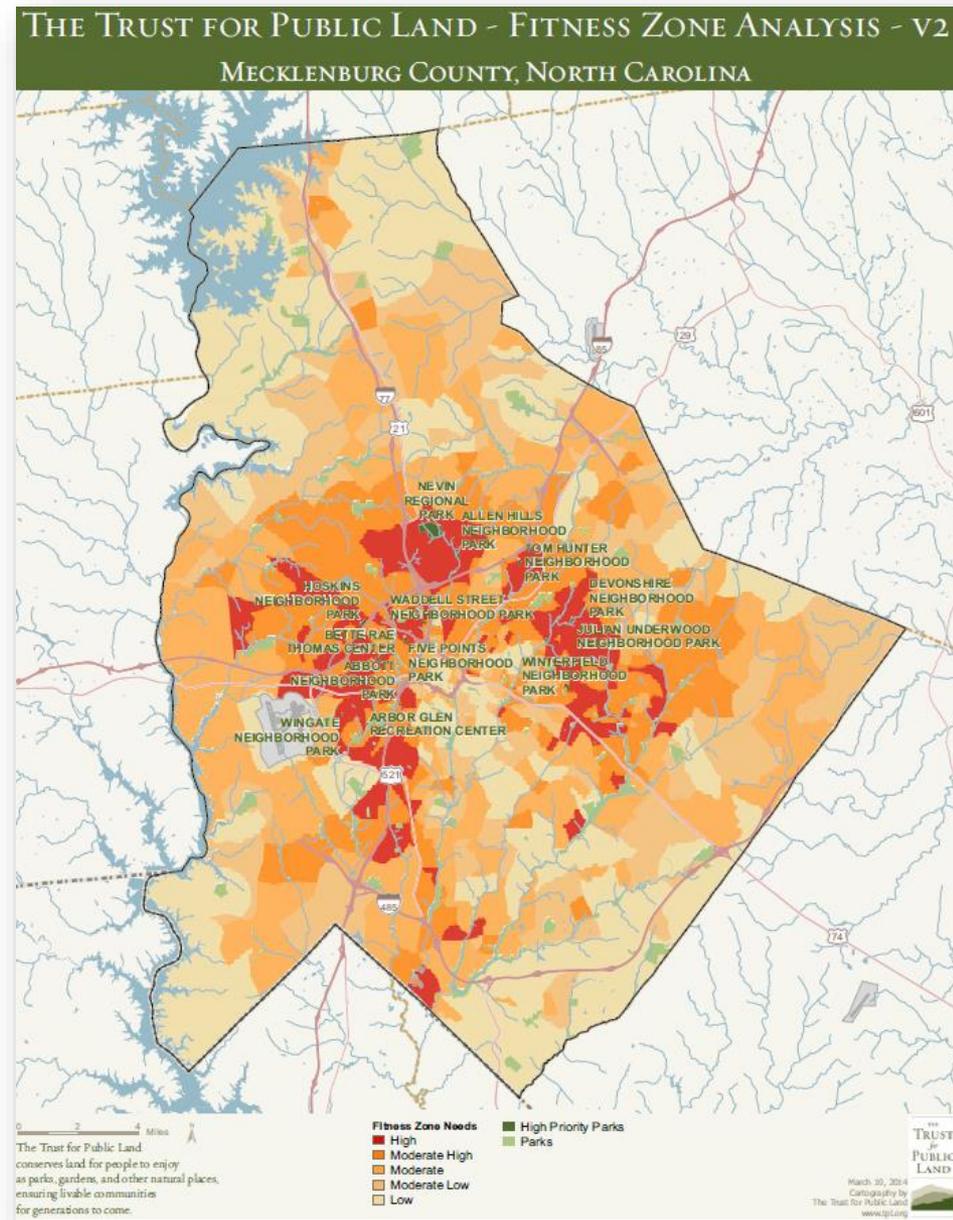


# Initiatives – Access

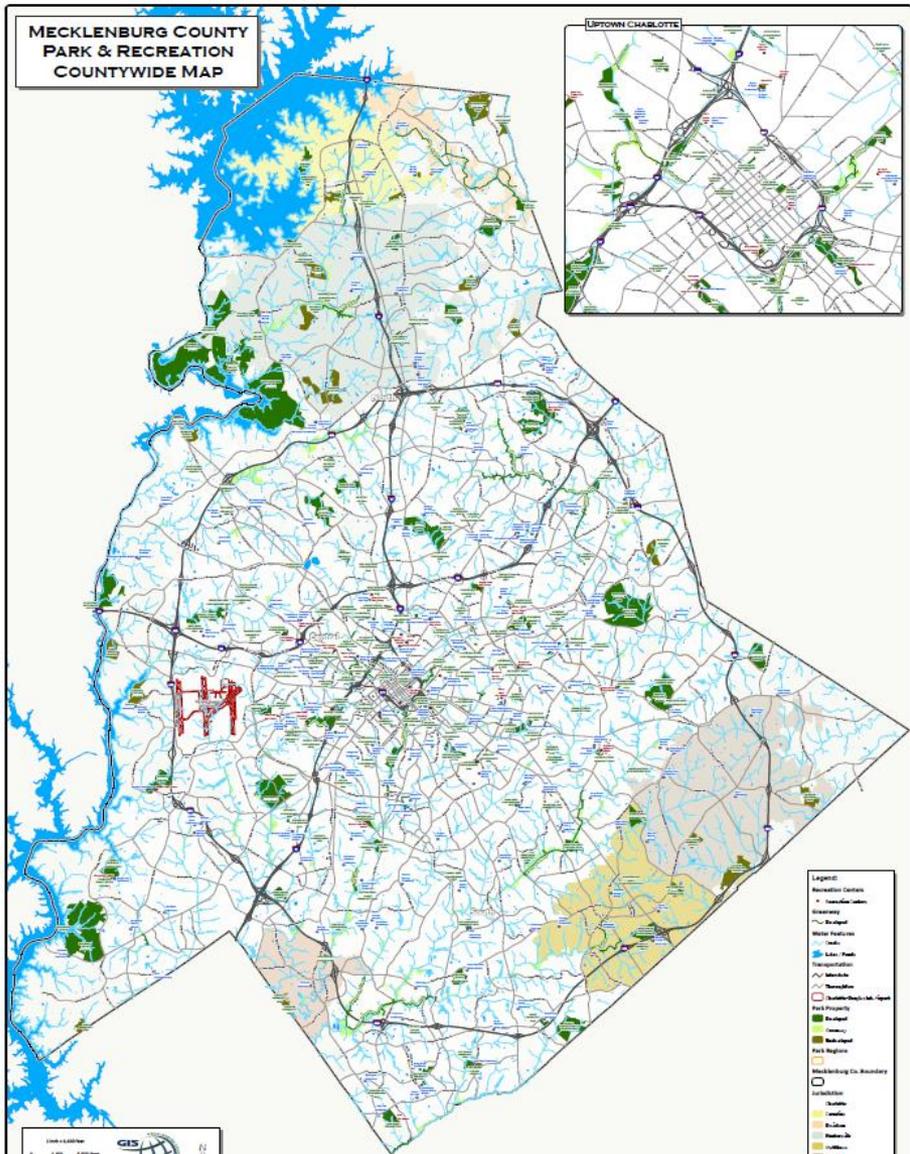
## 15 Park Sites Prioritized

### Methodology Included:

- Population Density
- % Low Income
- % Obese Children
- Diabetes Mortality Rate
- Heart Disease Mortality Rate
- Access to Fitness
- Likelihood of Adult Physical Inactivity



# Initiatives – Land Acquisition



- Currently 21,000+ acres
- Good progress since end of recession
- Approx. \$6.5M/year
- FY14 247 acres  
FY15 418 acres  
FY16 682 acres  
(247 of those leased by NC)

# Initiatives – Land Acquisition Priorities

Service Gap Areas for Parks

Expand/add to existing Parks when possible

Greenway parcels needed for trails

Expansion of existing Nature Preserves, high quality natural areas remaining, & watershed protection

(esp. Mountain Island Lake area)

Opportunity acquisitions



# Initiatives – Land Acquisition Gap Analysis

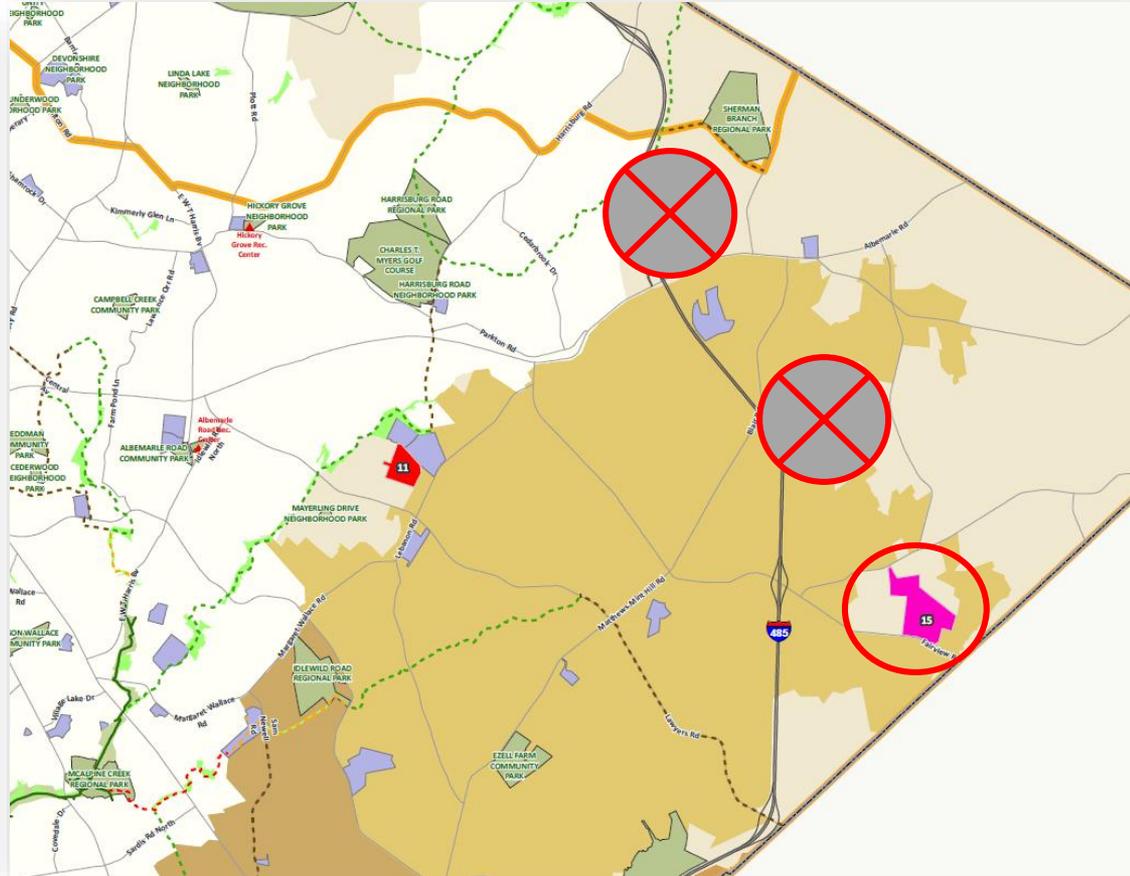
Using GIS Greenprinting first ID parcels that meet criteria that may be potentially acquired.

- Example shows Greenprint of potential locations of future Community or Regional Parks in Eastern Mecklenburg County (parcels that meet size requirements and that are undeveloped).

County contact owners of parcels to gauge interest.

If interested, acquisition process initiated.

Success! Parcel purchased Spring 2015 for future Regional Park (140 acre Hagler property). The other two pink colored parcels no longer a priority as the service gap is closed.



# Initiatives – Acquisition Outcomes

- Position County to have land to plan for future recreational needs. (Most Parks and Preserves being developed purchased between 1998-2004.)
- Increase public access to recreation – health & social benefits.
- Realize tax benefit. (On average a 3.3% park effect in Mecklenburg County, or an average of \$8,032 more per sale for homes within 500 feet of a park.)
- Realize environmental benefits. (Improved air quality, improved water quality, significant cost savings, and significant health care savings.)





# Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director  
5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte NC 28216  
(980) 314-1014 office  
[Michael.Kirschman@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov](mailto:Michael.Kirschman@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov)



**Mecklenburg County  
Park and Recreation**

*The Natural Place  
To Be...*

