

**Recreation Advisory Commission**  
**January 14, 2026**

Call To Order:

A meeting of the Durham Recreation Advisory Commission was held on this day in person, January 14, 2026. In attendance: Cedric Burke, Girija Mahajan, Karthik Sundaramoorthy, Gregory Williams, Mike Johnston, Dale McKeel, Gabrielle Rivero, and Mary Parsons

- I. Adjustments to the Agenda/Special Announcements
- II. Public Comment
  - a. Andy Stevenson – Pickleball Court Hours, submitted a petition to reinstate evening hours at Piney Wood Courts.
- III. RAC Community Engagement, Events & Committee Report
  - a. RAC Updates
    - i. Community Engagement is ongoing for the Aquatics Center
      1. There is a survey out and DPR is doing pop-up events. Tomorrow night is the last pop-up for this round of engagement.
  - b. DOST
    - i. Did not meet in December
    - ii. January 25 possible meeting, Dale will let everyone know.
  - c. Durham Parks Foundation
    - i. DPF will be holding a Parks & Pizza event tomorrow January 15.
- IV. Approval of the December Meeting Minutes
  - a. Motion to approve December Minutes with edit by Karthik Sundaramoorthy, seconded by Gregory Williams, motion passed unanimously.
- V. Old Business/New Business
  - a. \*Updated Land Acquisition and Acceptance Policy – Austin Bowman
    - i. Motion to endorse the updated Land Acquisition and Acceptance Policy by Cedric Burke, seconded by Mary Parsons, Motion passes with Dale McKeel dissenting.
      1. Dale McKeel comment: I was a no vote because the new Investment Priority Indicator tool does not align with the guiding principles in the 2025 Durham Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Systems Plan. The Plan calls for “balancing investment in high priority equity areas and new growth areas without access” (FFA 1.1, p. 249), but the tool gives three times greater weight to equity factors than to new growth area factors. This means that the tool will not prioritize new facilities in fast-growing areas of the city, despite the recommendations of the adopted Plan.
    - ii. Q: Is DPR responsible for land improvements if they accept an open space proffer?
    - iii. A: No
    - iv. Q: Do proffers occur when developers are fulfilling their required recreation area commitment?

- v. A: If the land is offered in a text commitment it cannot be used as their recreation commitment. Most land in text commitments is less than an acre which you can't do much with.
- vi. Q: There is language in the UDO about land for trails or recreation. Does this change that?
- vii. A: This strengthens that as it provides a way to move those proffers forward.
- viii. Q: The Investment Priority Index does a good job of addressing the recommendation from the System Plan but how does it address the high growth areas?
- ix. A: One of the items that is scored is growth intensity.
- x. Q: Looking at the map, most of the land where we are experiencing growth is shown as low priority.
- xi. A: That is because the need factors are weighted higher than growth.
- xii. Q: Would scoring this at the census block level change the scoring?
- xiii. A: The environmental justice information is only available at the tract level.
- xiv. DPR did layer this over the EGI map
- xv. DPR created a two-pronged tool so that we are looking at strategy along with need.
- xvi. The walkshed of parks was mapped and any parcel that is within a 10-minute walk receives no points, parcels that are outside the walkshed receive a point. The walkshed map does not factor in sidewalk access.
- xvii. Q: Do you have a mechanism built in whereby if a parcel scores low you can make a different recommendation?
- xviii. A: Yes, this does not take away DPR's discretion. This tool helps guide discussion and decision-making.
- xix. Q: Looking back at the last 10 years of proffers, have those parcels scored high?
- xx. A: We are reviewing proffers from the past using the index. This has led to planning reaching out on proffers that have been made to confirm we are still interested.
- xxi. Q: Is the scoring data being updated?
- xxii. A: As new census data is available, that information will be updated. The first two indicators are the most difficult as they were dismantled by the current federal administration.
- xxiii. Q: Is this tool used to approve the proffer or the development?
- xxiv. A: This is for the proffer.
- xxv. Q: How many proffers are offered to DPR?
- xxvi. A: Any rezoning over about 40 acres will include a proffer for a trail or open space land.
- xxvii. Q: Can you give an estimate of how many proffers for open space are made each year?
- xxviii. A: Last year it was probably about 10.
- xxix. Q: Is there a goal for DPR to add parkland in Southeast Durham outside of proffers?

- xxx. A: The Comprehensive System Plan does not say that we should only focus on proffers. The reason that SE Durham scores low on need does not negate the strategic value of land acquisition in that area of the City.
- xxxi. Q: The goal from the Comp plan said to develop a 15 year plan is that in the works?
- xxxii. A: This tool and policy is a foundation to develop a land acquisition strategy.
- xxxiii. Q: Funding for land acquisition is through the CIP?
- xxxiv. A: Yes, funding would come through the CIP or impact fees.
- xxxv. There is an ongoing discussion on creating a fund for open space.
- b. \*Naming & Renaming of Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails, and Features Policy Update – Emilie McIntosh
  - i. Motion to endorse the updated Naming & Renaming of Parks, Recreation Facilities, Trails, and Features Policy by Dale McKeel, seconded by Mike Johnston, motion passed unanimously.

VI. Director's Report

- a. Thanks to Austin for his work on the investment priority indicator and the land acceptance policy.
- b. We have been looking at many things to update our fees and charges that have not been reviewed and updated for many years. The goal is not to be a profit center, it is to understand and communicate the value of the programs we offer.

Meeting Adjourned 9:02am

Next RAC Meeting – Wednesday, February 11