Quality of Public Facilities and Socioeconomic Trajectories: An analysis of historical suburban developments in Charlotte, N.C.

by

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ABSTRACT

Charlotte's West Boulevard Corridor has a high concentration of low-income African-American neighborhoods that are segregated and isolated from many resources. Reflections on the spatial distribution of resources across a municipality have been a long-running area of research within the urban restructuring literature. Parks and recreational spaces have been hypothesized to directly enhance quality of life to those living within walking distance. Within Charlotte, the stable Dilworth neighborhood has a high quality neighborhood park and two recreation centers that are assets to not only residents of Dilworth, but also the City of Charlotte. On the West Boulevard corridor, the challenged Reid Park neighborhood has an abandoned neighborhood park, and a recreation center that was closed down in 2010 due to Mecklenburg County budget cuts. This research explores Mecklenburg County's patterns of investments in Dilworth and Reid Park to begin to understand how investments for recreation opportunities have differed between the two areas.

This comparative analysis of the stable neighborhood (Dilworth) and challenged neighborhood (Reid Park) will explore the recreational spaces, historical developments, socioeconomic trends, patterns of investments, and civic engagement for both neighborhoods to determine why Reid Park's public facilities extremely differentiate from Dilworth's. This analysis can form a basis of examining similar neighborhoods within the context of Charlotte that are experiencing similar patterns of spatial inequality and disadvantage, and help uncover why some neighborhoods in Charlotte remain persistently disadvantaged.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Historically African Americans in the United States were discriminated against and were separated from facilities, housing, and rights afforded by whites. Spatially, segregation impacted African Americans on many levels ranging from asset accumulation and employment, to recreation. Segregation and discrimination impacted African Americans spatially within the context of cities, determining what neighborhoods they could live in, schools children could attend, and the types of public facilities and services that they could utilize. Segregation led to African Americans concentrating together where they could live in unity since pressures of trying to move outward to white neighborhoods led to detrimental consequences. African American individuals and households became fragmented from the total populations of cities and were residing in areas of cities that lacked services and were most likely disconnected from employment and highway systems (Massey & Denton 1993).

Neighborhoods are dynamic and constantly changing, and given high rates of residential turnover characteristic of contemporary American cities, their well-being depends to a great extent on the characteristics and actions of their residents. Decisions taken by one actor affect the subsequent decisions of others in the neighborhood (Massey & Denton 1993, 12). Historically, the interaction of intense segregation and high poverty left African American neighborhoods extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in the urban economy, because any dislocation that caused an upward shift in African American poverty rates also produced a rapid change in the concentration of poverty and, hence, a dramatic shift in the social and economic composition of African American neighborhoods. The concentration of poverty, for example, is associated with the wholesale withdrawal of commercial institutions and the deterioration or elimination of goods and services distributed through the market (Massey &

Denton 1993, 12). It is assumed that historically, African American neighborhoods received lower quality of public facilities in their concentrated neighborhoods, and environmental racism resulted in the location of undesirable land uses close to minority neighborhoods (Massey & Denton 1993). Civil rights legislation has outlawed much of what created the segregated neighborhoods but in reality many neighborhoods are still segregated. Many low income neighborhoods get stigmatized as challenged, full of crime, and harsh because African Americans and minority populations tend to make up large populations of low income neighborhoods (Massey et al. 1993). Because of feedback between individual and collective, neighborhood stability is characterized by a series of thresholds, beyond which various self perpetuating processes of decay take hold. Segregation increases the susceptibility of neighborhoods to these spirals of decline (Massey & Denton 1993, 13; Wilson 2011).

The historical and spatial context of segregation in the United States has isolated many African Americans from becoming upwardly mobile. As cities experience urban restructuring and globalization pressures, many inner city neighborhoods closest to the central business district, where the minority population lives gentrifies, and forces minorities to leave as property taxes increase and other pressures displace them. As neighborhoods gentrify and redevelop, quality of life tends to increase and investment increases (Hanchett 1998). Private investment of course increases, but does public investment increase in neighborhoods that are considered more upwardly mobile than the most disadvantaged neighborhoods?

One of the primary means by which individuals improve their life chances – and those of their children – is by moving to neighborhoods with higher homes values, safer

streets, higher-quality schools, and better services. As groups move up the socioeconomic ladder, they typically move up the residential hierarchy as well, and in doing so they not only improve their standard of living but also enhance their chances for future success (Conley 1999). Barriers to spatial mobility are barriers to social mobility, and by confining African Americans to a small set of relatively disadvantaged neighborhoods, segregation constitutes a very powerful impediment to African American socioeconomic progress. Despite the obvious deleterious consequences of African American spatial isolation, policy makers have not paid much attention to segregation as contributing cause of urban poverty and have not taken effective steps to dismantle the ghetto (Massey& Denton 1993, 14). Policy and planning in modern American cities should favor equitable planning in order to enhance quality of life for all, as is documented in the American Planning Associations' code of ethics ("AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct"). The American Planning Association's code of ethics states: "We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs" ("AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct"). However, it appears that policy and planning has not been effective in producing equitable outcomes in respect to disadvantaged and primarily African Americans neighborhoods.

1.1. CITY TRANSITION

In 1869, Charlotte's urban core was divided into four wards to ensure fair political representation. Through the first half of the twentieth century, these wards were characterized by both established residential neighborhoods and thriving commercial

corridors that were increasingly populated by burgeoning local banking institutions. In the latter half of the twentieth century, however, Charlotte's urban landscape experienced significant reorganization due to the top-down; federally funded Urban Renewal plan and the city's full embrace of suburbanization (Smith & Livingstone 147, 2010). First and Second Wards, historically African American communities, were directly impacted by urban renewal and were basically destroyed during the administration of urban renewal leading to fragmented communities that destroyed many aspects of capital in the African American community in Charlotte. Urban renewal developed public housing in place of the historic neighborhoods, such as Brooklyn in Second Ward, which was then again demolished to make way for Hope VI projects in the early 1990s due to the horrible state of many public housing projects, primarily in the inner cities of cities across the nation. The Hope VI program was developed as a result of severely distressed public housing. The elements of the program are to change the physical shape of public housing by lessening concentrations of poverty by placing public housing in nonpoverty neighborhoods and promoting mixed income communities ("About Hope VI" 2013). Mixed perceptions of Hope VI projects have been explored in the literature basking on if it has positively or negatively impacted public housing residents. Anecdotally, in Charlotte's case, it seems that it is positive for the select few who are able to stay, but for the rest of the residents, they are fragmented and forced to find whatever is the most affordable and available, so it typically results in not premier addresses.

In less than four decades, Charlotte has transformed itself from a regional backwater into a globally ascendant but still distinctively southern city. Once a regional manufacturing and textile center, Charlotte is now one of the nation's premier banking and finance cores

with tendrils reaching firmly into global markets. This once black-and-white, distinctively bicultural city has also emerged as one of the country's leading hyper growth metros and is now considered a rising immigrant gateway (Smith & Livingstone 2010, 1). Fourth Ward was Charlotte's premier residential address in the late 1800s and into the early 1900s, where many of the elite resided. Once the trends of automobile infatuation and dependency began, in the mid-1900s, Fourth Ward started deteriorating as more people followed suburbanization. The once ornate homes were either torn down, or divided into multi-family housing or commercial uses. The neighborhood became widely dangerous, and a hotspot for crime, vacancy, and prostitution (Smith & Livingstone 2010).

However, Fourth Ward was directly adjacent to the headquarters of North Carolina National Bank (NCNB), now known as Bank of America. Fourth Ward began to revitalize in the 1990s due to the local business community and NCNB realizing that Fourth Ward's revitalization being key to the survival of the city's central business district (Smith & Livingstone 2010, 148). With NCNB providing low interest rate mortgages, the City of Charlotte making infrastructure projects such as decorative lighting, brick sidewalks, granite curbs, and landscaping priorities, the neighborhood began to revitalize, even with the movement of old Victorian homes from other areas of Charlotte to lots in Fourth Ward (Smith & Livingstone 2010, 150). This example of revitalization and the production of a public-private partnership lead to other assumptions about the inner-city neighborhoods in Charlotte. Driving through Uptown, the Wards, and inner-ring neighborhoods identifies that a lot of infill development, gentrification, and revitalization is occurring. Many areas such as South End and Dilworth have fully gentrified, and one can build the assumption that the implementation of the light-rail systems' proximity has helped. However, there are

neighborhoods in Charlotte, primarily West Charlotte that have remained disadvantaged. West Charlotte is primarily low income and has a large minority population.

As advancements in transportation occurred in all cities, Charlotte's population followed as new advancements were made in transportation. As soon as street cars allowed people to move away from the center city, people moved, which led to the creation of neighborhoods such as Dilworth. As automobiles were more accessible and affordable, neighborhoods and businesses branched out as well. After more and more people moved to the suburbs and exurbs, and after countless annexations, Charlotte covers roughly 300 square miles of jurisdiction (Census 2010). The creation of a beltway, Interstate 485, has led to more sprawling developments of "vinyl villages," country clubs, gated communities, and commercial centers, i.e. Ballantyne. As the middle class and elite escaped the City, this left the underclass living in concentrated poverty with low accessibility to necessities and employment (Wilson 2011). However, the cycles of urban restructuring led to all the redevelopment of the center city and inner city neighborhoods, which resulted in the initial individuals who fled for the suburbs to move back in the city and invest.

Sun-belt cities, like Charlotte, across the United States have seen tremendous growth in the last few decades. Typically, growth in sun-belt cities sprawls outward from the central city, forming new neighborhoods for the upper income groups to move out and enjoy the American-dream. Recently, investments are being made into declining central business districts and people want to live in or close by the inner-city neighborhoods that most of the people and families originally moved from in order to follow employment and higher quality of life. Urban restructuring has played a key role in the redevelopment of inner-city neighborhoods primarily through the process of urban renewal and gentrification (Smith &

Livingstone 2010). Charlotte, North Carolina is no stranger to urban restructuring. The City of Charlotte has been experiencing ongoing pressures of urban restructuring as the city establishes pre-emerging global city status (Smith & Livingstone 2010). Post World War II, many disadvantaged neighborhoods in close proximity to the now destination-based Uptown have gentrified, paving the way for the elite to move closer to the central business district. However, some neighborhoods have remained persistently disadvantaged, many that are primarily African American. In these persistently disadvantaged neighborhoods, quality of life is poor, and residents have decreased mobility and accessibility due to poor services and public facilities.

The most salient feature of postwar segregation is the concentration of African Americans in central cities and whites in suburbs (Massey & Denton 1993, 67). Analyzing census data will show how vastly Charlotte's growth has transitioned, see Table 1. Charlotte, like many sun-belt cities, are the new hubs for industry and technology, much like the rust-belt cities were for manufacturing. The amount of urban restructuring that takes place in cities such as Charlotte are seen as impactful, both positively and detrimentally to the citizens who reside in an area that is experiencing restructuring and globalizing pressures. The process of gentrification has been one of the leading pressures of the urban restructuring regime in Charlotte. Neighborhoods have seen declining bungalows transform into a corridor of *McMansions*. The process of gentrification has mainly affected the neighborhoods that are in close proximity to Charlotte's central business district, or now known as "Uptown." However there are still neighborhoods in close proximity to Uptown that have persistently remained disadvantaged.

As Charlotte restructures and redevelopment of the inner-city neighborhoods begin to revitalize, more investment is placed in those neighborhood statistical areas. I assume that neighborhoods receive various amounts of public investments ranging from sewer infrastructure up to pedestrian scale lighting, etc. This particular study is focusing on the public investments in neighborhood parks and recreation centers, which are investments by Mecklenburg County, Parks and Recreation department.

This study will consist of a comparative analysis of one challenged neighborhood and one stable neighborhood, as indicated by the Charlotte Quality of Life Study. The challenged neighborhood for this study is Reid Park and the stable neighborhood is Dilworth. Amay James Park in the Reid Park neighborhood has interesting history that will be explored in tandem with Latta Park in the Dilworth neighborhood. Both neighborhoods are significantly different when analyzing the socioeconomic data for each neighborhood, but they have similar characteristics in their history that have led to selecting them for this analysis. I also want to mention that my role as a research assistant in Reid Park, conducting research with neighborhood residents, also tailored this comparative analysis of the Reid Park neighborhood and Dilworth neighborhood.

The history of Reid Park and Dilworth provide a justification for this comparative analysis. Analyzing archival documents has indicated that both neighborhoods were developed for working class people, however, Dilworth housed the elite. Dilworth was developed for working class and elitist whites and Reid Park was established for working class African Americans. Dilworth began to transition when further sprawling development was the ticket to the American dream, but has since fully gentrified into one of Charlotte's premier neighborhoods (Hanchett 1998). Reid Park has always seemed disadvantaged with

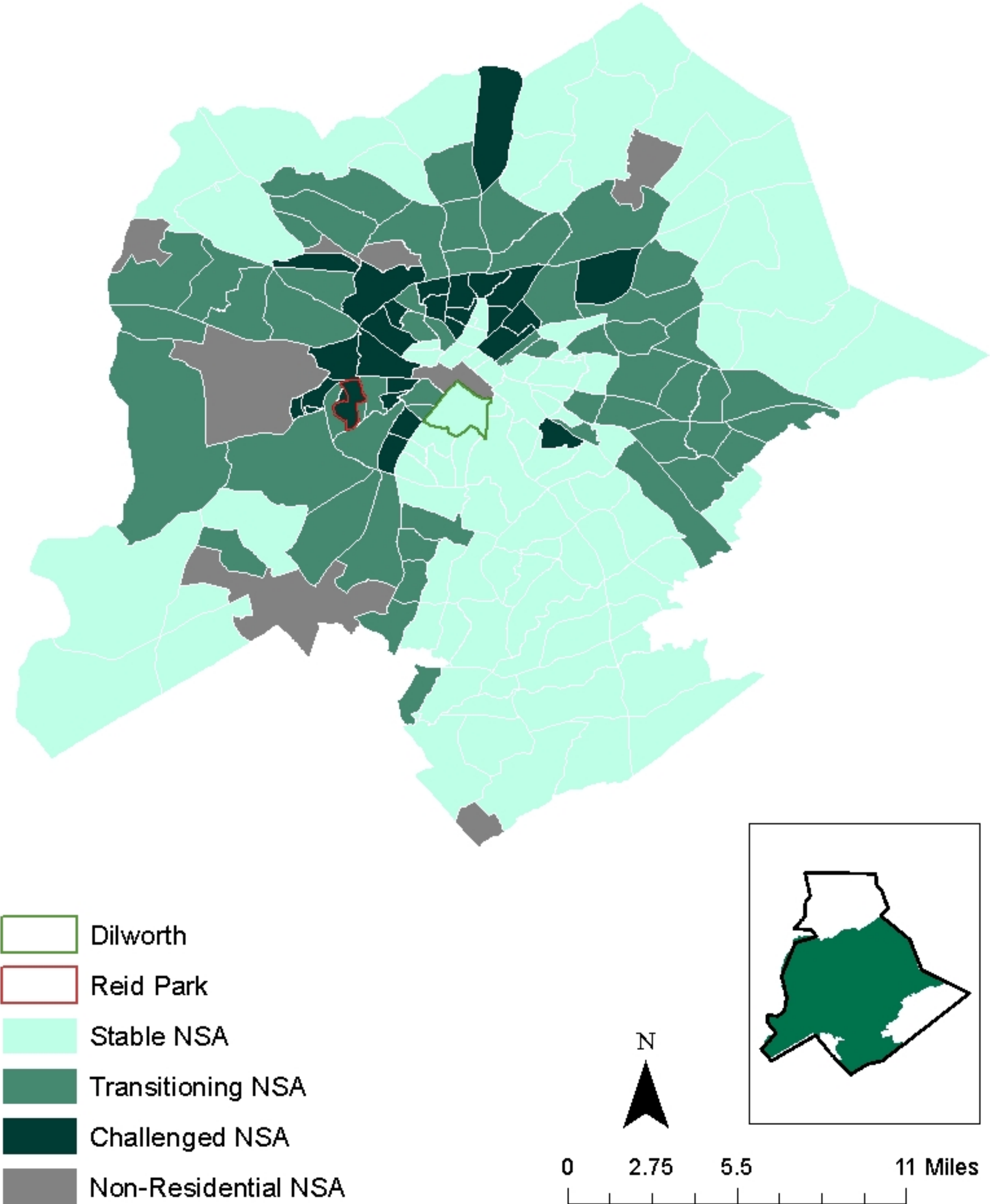
respect to levels of services and socioeconomic characteristics. Both Reid Park and Dilworth have a neighborhood park and recreation center. Latta Park in Dilworth has historically been an asset in Dilworth and is an aesthetic asset to the neighborhood. Latta Park's adjoining recreation centers have multiple programming and activities that cater to the Dilworth Elementary School and surrounding neighborhood. Reid Park on the other hand has a non-functioning park and closed recreation Center.

TABLE 1. POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR CHARLOTTE AND MECKLENBURG COUNTY, 1850 – 2010.

Year	City of Charlotte		Mecklenburg County	
	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change
1850	1,065	n/a	13,914	n/a
1860	2,265	112.7%	17,374	24.9%
1870	4,473	97.5%	24,299	39.9%
1880	7,094	58.6%	34,715	40.6%
1890	11,557	62.9%	42,673	24.9%
1900	18,091	56.5%	55,268	29.5%
1910	34,014	88.0%	67,031	21.3%
1920	46,338	36.2%	80,695	20.4%
1930	82,675	78.4%	127,971	58.6%
1940	100,899	22.0%	151,826	18.6%
1950	134,042	32.8%	197,052	29.8%
1960	201,564	50.4%	272,111	38.1%
1970	241,420	19.8%	354,656	30.3%
1980	315,474	30.7%	404,270	14.0%
1990	395,934	25.5%	511,433	26.5%
2000	540,828	36.6%	695,454	36.0%
2010	731,424	35.2%	919,628	32.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

FIGURE 1.1. QUALITY OF LIFE IN CHARLOTTE'S NEIGHBORHOODS.



Source: Charlotte Quality of Life Study, 2010.

Amay James Recreation Center was closed in 2010 due to recent budget cuts across the County, and with Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation. Amay James Park has simply been abandoned and is extremely unmaintained and causes blight to Reid Park. Reid Park residents have identified spatial justice and equity issues, as I spent one year working in Reid Park as a community liaison to the City of Charlotte and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's CHARP project. This issue is very important in the context of Charlotte and Reid Park because it will help frame an exploration of the ways in which quality of public facilities correlates to socioeconomic characteristics. Residents have consistently and repeatedly indicated concern over Reid Park's lackluster park and recreation center, Amay James Park and Amay James Center – both County owned. They often reflect on the possibility of planning for a new park that would be similar to Dilworth's Latta Park. The neighborhoods have very interesting histories and development patterns that have the potential to explain issues of equity and spatial justice.

As stated, some neighborhoods in Charlotte are persistently challenged over long periods of time. The Charlotte Neighborhood Quality of Life Study has helped identify Charlotte neighborhoods that have consistently suffered from high rates of crime, poverty, and substandard housing. Several explanations are available in the literature to help individuals understand why that is the case – including social, physical and economic aspects of community development. The scope of this research is to explore the following questions:

1) **What are the conditions/histories of the two neighborhood parks and recreation centers, and how do they differ?**
2) **In what ways do socioeconomic characteristics influence the quality of public facilities?**

3) **What explains the contrast between the two neighborhoods?**
   a) **Why does the Reid Park neighborhood have a non-functioning park and recreation center?**
   b) **Why does the Dilworth neighborhood have a thriving neighborhood park and recreation center that is considered an asset to the neighborhood?**

These research questions will explore the fact that the Reid Park neighborhood has a non-functioning park and recreation center versus Dilworth having a great neighborhood park and recreation center that are seen as assets. This study will include an in-depth analysis of the investments made in Reid Park and Dilworth by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation coupled with illustrated stories that have led to the state of both neighborhood parks' and recreation centers. Briefly, the city of Charlotte's history and how it links to Reid Park and Dilworth is discussed, as well as a literature review providing justification and the linkages between Charlotte, its neighborhoods, and other similar findings. This is followed discussion of methods and analysis chapters with a concluding chapter bridging the entire research.

1.2. HISTORICAL GROWTH OF CHARLOTTE

The first settlers arrived in Charlotte in 1753 on accident. Charlotte had no natural resources that were key for settlers at that time. Most major settlements were near some waterway, mainly on the coasts. The settlement remained relatively small until the 1800s when Charlotte was deemed the first gold mining center in the colonial states. The discovery of gold and the coming of the railroad assured Charlotte would grow as a trading town. As more gold discoveries occurred around Charlotte, the U.S. Treasury decided to open a branch mint in Charlotte. Charlotte's new recognition brought miners, engineers and metallurgists to town and is credited to the establishment of banks in the town. As Charlotte grew, so did

the railroad system much like many other cities at that time period. The rise of cotton mills situated in Charlotte as steam power took over from water power, which was the leading source to many mills being located in northeastern towns for their rocky river water ways (Hanchett 1998).

As industrial growth transformed Charlotte, the town's physical transformation into a city was largely driven by one person, Edward Dilworth Latta. Latta, educated at Princeton University, moved to Charlotte and opened a clothing store that eventually led to a pants manufacturing operation. Latta formed the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company, known as the Four Cs, with five associates, which became the initial development of Charlotte's urban image. By 1890, the Four Cs developed the first electric trolley car line, replacing existing horse-drawn streetcars as the main mode of transportation within the town. The Four Cs continued to extend the line past the edge of the city into farmland where the Four Cs developed the first suburb, Dilworth. The town of Charlotte was still small enough that it was easy to walk the entire area, although it had a suburb and a costly trolley line. Industries continued to grow in Charlotte, as well as Charlotte's banks. Not only did the banks provide capital to Charlotte, but also to the surrounding piedmont region. The first decade of 1900 saw tremendous growth up and outward in Charlotte with the completion of the first steel skyscraper in Charlotte in 1909 and the development of more suburbs banding the center. By 1917, nine streetcar lines gave access to the downtown of Charlotte. Streetcar suburbs developed from the nine streetcar lines that followed boundaries of old farm land which created a ring that completely surrounded the old town (Hanchett 1998).

Charlotte's first African American suburb was platted in 1913 called Washington Heights, named after Booker T. Washington. Shortly after, another African American suburb

sprang up called Douglasville. During this time period other iconic suburbs such as Myers Park and a new section of Dilworth developed which framed Charlotte's future growth of tree lined winding streets from its traditional grid network. However, the rate of expansion dropped due to World War I in the late 1910's. However, around 1923, the city underwent tremendous growth with which large sections of present day Charlotte date from this period of prosperity. Charlotte's boundaries expanded to a mere twenty square miles, reflecting the tremendous new growth, in 1928. Suburbs continued to grow but became increasingly segregated by economic class. At the depth of the depression new streets and homes remained building, however, at a slower pace. However, all building dropped to nothing by the beginning of World War II. By 1948, the country was ready to build again and the next boom of development occurred. The development of the Veterans Administration mortgage program offered almost all to afford a house, entitling the "suburban dream" to families and individuals other than the middle and upper class which was during the pre-war era. With the suburban dream, the development of the highway systems and increase in trucking and the decrease in textile manufacturing led to the growth of banking in Charlotte, which has forever shaped Charlotte to present day (Hanchett 1998).

1.3. THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN HISTORICAL CHARLOTTE

In the city center, African Americans were concentrated in the First, Second, and Third Wards. By the early twentieth century, the African American population of First Ward was concentrated in the eastern section of the neighborhood, away from North Tryon Street, and the heart of downtown. As in Second and Third Ward, the African American residents represented all socio-economic levels. The heart of Charlotte's business district was along the principal downtown corridors of Tryon and Trade streets. The trolley lines also

met at The Square, or the intersection of Trade and Tryon streets, pouring out scores of passengers who worked and shopped in the area. Professional offices, retail merchants, cafes and restaurants, banks and movie theaters lined these streets; all of them owned by whites. African Americans could patronize these businesses, but no African-American owned businesses on these streets, at least not near the center of activity. The African American district of Second Ward, informally known as Brooklyn by the 1920s, was the heart of the African American business district. The boundaries of the business corridor ran along South Brevard and East Trade Streets. Within this area was a dense concentration of a variety of businesses owned and patronized by African Americans both of and out of the neighborhood (Hanchett 1998).

The era of Jim Crow culture stifled entrepreneurial growth, since most African American shop keepers and service providers could only cater to a African American clientele. Segregation also limited employment opportunities for African Americans. Although textile mills became a familiar aspect of the city landscape, they employed very few African Americans and if they worked inside the mills, they worked in different rooms from white operatives. The majority of African Americans in Charlotte worked as common laborers or in the service sector. A minority were merchants or small business owners, and an even smaller minority was in the professional class.

By the late nineteenth century, thanks to the new demands of segregation laws, concentrations of African Americans occurred in particular sections of the city. Neighborhoods at the periphery of Charlotte's city limits also developed around African American institutions such as Biddle Institute, or along trolley lines. Incorporated towns such as Davidson and Matthews were also home to discrete neighborhoods for African American

citizens. Most of the historic African American neighborhoods, such as Brooklyn in Charlotte's Second Ward have been razed to accommodate varying visions of urban growth and improvement. Other black neighborhoods, such as Greenville, built in North Charlotte in the 1880s-1920s have been completely demolished and rebuilt in the spirit of urban renewal and exist today as historic neighborhoods in name only.

1.4. DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN SUBURBS

Prior to 1900, Third Ward was the center of African Americans in Charlotte. Third Ward was home to several African-American churches, schools, but had no black business district, and less than half of its residents were African American. Washington Heights, named for Booker T. Washington, was the first Charlotte streetcar suburb developed exclusively for African Americans. White developer W.S. Alexander hired C.H. Watson, an African American real estate agent, to promote the community to Charlotte's African-American middle class. In advertisements, Washington Heights was endorsed as the up and coming African American neighborhood showcasing the best aspects of the African-American experience in Charlotte. The booklet included a section from a white civic organization that implied respectable African American people could easily advance in Charlotte; the advertising in the booklet suggested that the upwardly mobile, and therefore respectable African American potential home owner should live in Washington Heights, a mere two miles from town with housing at reasonable prices. Washington Heights did not have any of the elegant homes found in the inner city wards. Modest bungalows were the prevailing style, and although many residents of Washington Heights were renters (Hanchett 1998).

On the east side of Beatties Ford Road from Washington Heights, was another African American neighborhood originally named Douglasville, and later renamed McCrory Heights after Biddle Institute president H.L. McCrory. A new trolley line that extended up Beatties Ford Road to Booker Avenue served both neighborhoods, with shops clustered at the end of the trolley line. The majority of shops and professional services for African Americans was located in Second Ward, since there were no services in the individual neighborhoods, yet most of them had a few shops that supplied most daily needs. If professional services were needed, residents of these neighborhoods could take the streetcar to downtown and Second Ward (Hanchett 1998).

The Cherry neighborhood was platted in 1891 from a cotton plantation belonging to a white couple, and homes increased after a trolley line was extended up Elizabeth Avenue to the new and fashionable white streetcar suburb of Elizabeth. Cherry was built and modeled to offer new opportunities for homeownership to African Americans. The intent of the original plantation owners was to settle African Americans into a new suburb with neighborhood amenities similar to those found in white streetcar neighborhoods, such as new homes, a school, churches, and a park, and by so doing placate African Americans, who had to be content with separate rules and separate spaces, with living space similar in trend and desirability that white citizens enjoyed (Hanchett 1998). Cherry's residents were blue-collar workers, and approximately three quarters of them were renters. Lots were less expensive in Cherry than they were in Washington Heights, priced from $40.00 to $100.00 in the early 1900s, but even at those prices, they were still out of reach for the average common laborer. The rental situation was probably more comfortable in Cherry than it would have been in the city wards. Cherry was less crowded and designed with a suburban feel with tree-lined

streets, and there were no shotgun houses, found in the Wards. The neighborhood experienced a small building surge after the First World War, the period in which the neighborhood's bungalows were put up (Hanchett 1998).

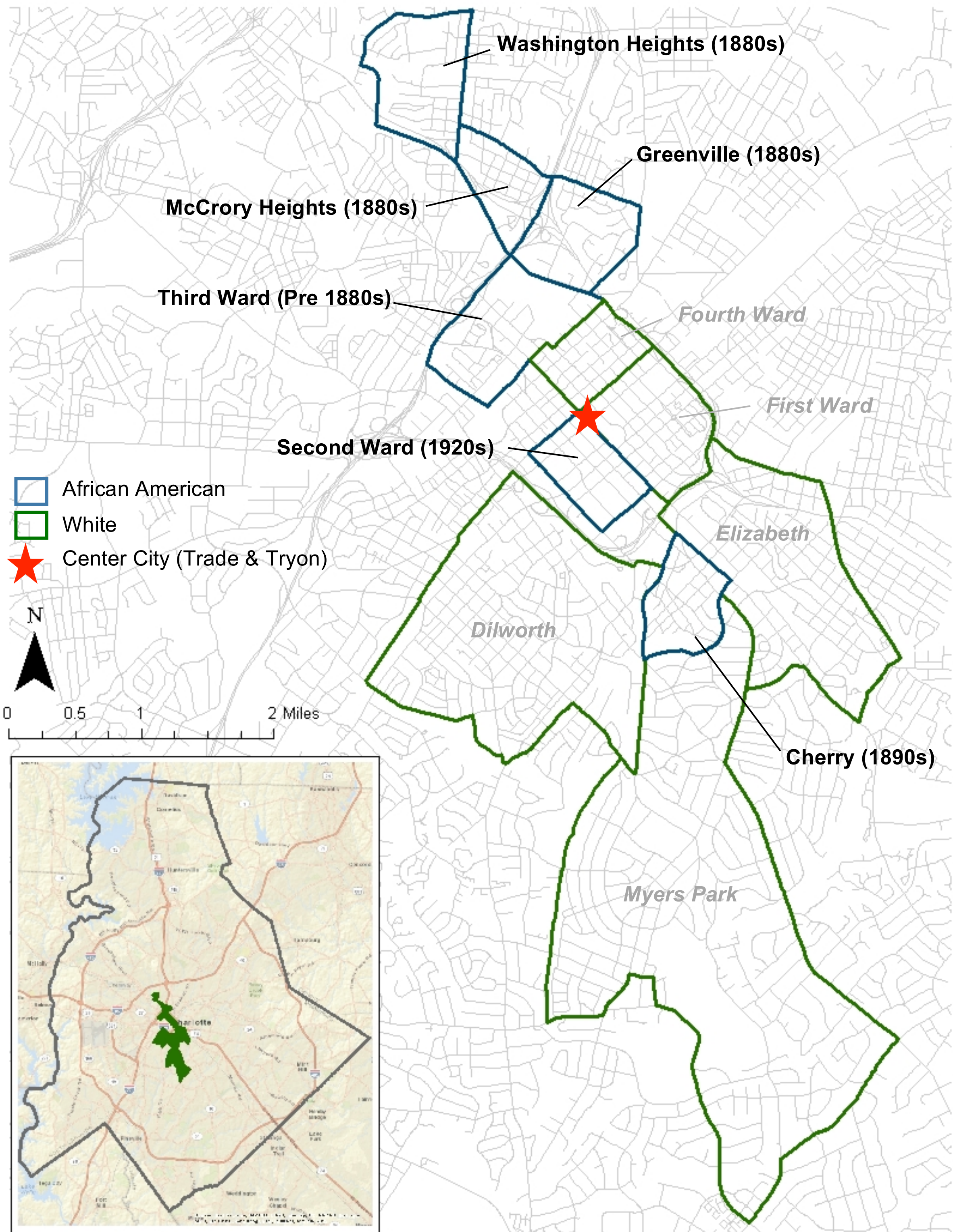
Greenville's history dates to the late nineteenth century, establishing in the 1880s. Greenville was a community of bungalows, a neighborhood school, Fairview Elementary, churches, small retail shops, restaurants and barbers. Similar to other African American neighborhoods, Greenville was mixture of renters and homeowners (Hanchett 1998). However, through Greenville's establishment, it was slated for a massive urban renewal program and was flattened in the 1960s. Rebuilding took nearly thirty years because the Nixon administration cut the federal rent and home building subsidy. Greenville, unlike Second Ward, still exists, but not in its original form. Although dislocated residents intended to move back into new housing, the interruption of funding destabilized the community, making it impossible for the neighborhood to reconstitute itself (Hanchett 1998).

Since African Americans were relegated to certain areas in town, the city's African-American upper classes often lived in close proximity to the African American middle and lower classes. Jim Crow laws and restrictive covenants effectively separated the races by the 1920s. Socio-economic class defined the new white neighborhoods, but this stratification would not occur to the same degree for African American residential areas until after the Second World War (Hanchett 1998). Parts of the African American neighborhoods became the sites of the worst urban poverty and living conditions in the city. Conditions were so bad in some areas that newspaper articles in the 1930s exploited and condemned the poor quality of housing and the general poor living conditions in the neighborhoods that white Charlotte

did not wish to notice. Some of Charlotte's older African-American neighborhoods were torn down in the 1960s for urban renewal (Hanchett 1998).

The historical developments of Charlotte's neighborhoods and African American neighborhoods illustrates an assumption to why Reid Park was developed. The historical African American neighborhoods established in the late 1800s, and early 1900s, started deteriorating by the 1930s, which in Charlotte's case, as the housing stock aged, people tended to move to newer parts of the city, as it expanded. Like historical African American suburbs, Reid Park was developed roughly two miles from the center of the city, but with no streetcar line. Historically, with the exception of the Cherry neighborhood, historical developments of neighborhoods seems to show African American Neighborhoods developing on the north and west side of the original wards, with white neighborhoods developing on the south and east side of the wards. Figure 1.2 illustrates this pattern. Historical white neighborhoods in Charlotte, such as Dilworth, Myers Park, and Elizabeth all had classical and aesthetic styles of architecture that afforded the neighborhoods to have a timeless housing stock. History on historical African American neighborhoods point out that the neighborhoods consisting of shotgun style houses, and other styles with no aesthetic appeal comparing to the white neighborhoods. Anecdotally speaking, housing stock in Charlotte seems to have played a major role in the revitalization and gentrification of many inner city neighborhoods in the last few decades. Less desirable neighborhoods close to the inner city seem to not gentrify based on the existing housing stock, since there isn't much to work with in terms of the first wave gentrifiers bringing life back to the old homes, and then with the next waves of gentrifiers eventually tearing down and building modern style homes.

FIGURE 1.2. PATTERNS OF HISTORICAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT



Source: (Hanchett 1998); Cartography by: Author.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The historical developments of Charlotte's neighborhoods and Reid Park and Dilworth display how realities of spatial inequality and justice, underclass development, and municipal planning agglomerate within the ongoing issues around urban service delivery. The experience of the underclass replicates many experiences of Reid Park residents and the development of the neighborhood and how that has created spatial justice and equity issues. The political process of urban service distribution, in this case expenditures for parks and recreation centers is very interesting in the case of Charlotte, due to the city's embrace on suburbanization and inner city revitalization. The historical developments of Charlotte's growth plays a key role in the urban service delivery to neighborhoods of different socioeconomics.

2.1. UNDERCLASS DEBATE

Public opinion polls in the United States routinely reflect the notion that people are poor and jobless because of their own shortcomings or inadequacies. In other words, few people would have reflected on how the larger forces in society-including segregation, discrimination, a lack of economic opportunity, and failing public schools adversely affect the inner-city poor (Wilson 2011, 10). William Julius Wilson provides political, economic, and a cultural framework for understanding the emergence and persistence of concentrated urban poverty (Wilson 2011) that in turn can reflect upon the level and quality of public services and facilities. Neighborhoods of highly concentrated poverty are seen as dangerous, and therefore they become isolated, socially and economically, as people go out of their way to avoid them (Jargowsky 1994). Wilson's extensive research on urban poverty develops the reasoning for the research on the parks and recreation centers in both Reid Park and

Dilworth. Wilson outlines how historic political forces lead to inequality with the development of the Federal Housing Administration during the Great Depression, and process of redlining has led to the construction of urban poverty that has greatly impacted many inner-city neighborhoods (Wilson 2011, 11). Other policy decisions and the suburbanization of the middle class also aided to the trapment of African Americans in the inner city. The Federal Highway Administration also led to the devastating impact on the neighborhoods of African Americans across the country (Wilson 2011, 12). These developments not only spurred relocation from the cities to the suburbs among better-off residents, the freeway systems themselves also "created barriers between the sections of cities, walling off poor and minority neighborhoods from central business districts" (Lineberry 1975, 12).

Lineberry (1975) analyzes the sensitively to more fundamental questions of the impact and distribution of governmental social policy on citizens, their burdens and benefits. His concern was with the conjunction of two issues: urban public services and the problem of equality. This is a fundamental concern, especially in challenged neighborhoods today. Reid Park is a prime example because it historically is an African American neighborhood that has persistently remained disadvantaged. This ties in with the era of segregation and the issues of public services simply being of higher quality in white neighborhoods versus minority and African American neighborhoods. However, the linkage to present day, post segregation, is that there is a great deal of evidence that low income neighborhoods within most municipalities remain less served than high income neighborhoods in most municipalities. If public services are differentially located to various neighborhoods, any number of explanations might be found. Some allocative choices might be unintentional, accidental or

beyond the ready control of decision makers. Others may reflect the natural lag of public sector expansion catching up with private sector growth, when, for instance, a new subdivision is built but public services have not yet fully expanded to accommodate it. Still other allocations may take on a malevolent coloration, and it is at this point that the urban underclass hypothesis emerges (Lineberry 1975, 69). Lineberry (1975) disaggregates the underclass hypothesis into three variants, the Race Preference, the Class Preference, and the Power Elite hypotheses.

According to Lineberry, in an earlier day of segregated public services, the location of service facilities contributed forcefully to a segregated pattern of housing within a city. When segregated schools, parks and other facilities were the legal dictum, it became essential for blacks to cluster together if they were to receive any public services at all. Reid Parks initial development as an African American neighborhoods identifies that the neighborhood is closely linked to the literature. Building a homogenous group of people (Reid Park) could have been what Mr. Ross Reid would have said, if able to interview him today. If a black family intended to send its children to a school close to home, to enjoy a park nearby, to hook up to a public sewer, it would be well-advised to 'vote with its feet' by moving to a segregated neighborhood. In this sense, public services had a magnet effect, attracting minorities to some areas and repelling from others. The conventional wisdom still holds that in large and small, north and south, black citizens and other minorities receive the poorest public services within a city (Lineberry 1975, 69). Analyzing green space and recreational facilities without any context in Reid Park and Dilworth would hint at that there may possibly be the race preference in the underclass theory in these two neighborhoods.

The class preference hypothesis is perhaps more democratic than the race preference one, holding that the economically disadvantaged in general, rather than minority groups in particular, get service leavings. There is a world of constitutional difference between discrimination as a function of income alone and discrimination as a function of race (Lineberry 1975, 70). Applying the class preference hypothesis to public investments in the City of Charlotte is out of the scope of this research agenda but it closely links with ideas that may have influenced such investments which will be explored in the analysis of this project.

One of the grand subjects of inquiry in urban studies is the power structure. Power may be distributed differentially not only among classes and groups, but spatially as well. Elites themselves are not scattered randomly about the urban landscape (Lineberry 1975, 70). Distribution of power elites holds true for the case of Charlotte when analyzing the quality of life map of Charlotte's NSAs. It is evident that Charlotte's "wedge of wealth" has significant political power over West Charlotte. As Hunter points out, higher incomes points to more elites. Hunter (1953) observed in Atlanta that there was a clustering of residential quarters of leaders and that they meet in common places and live in proximity to each other. This is structurally significant (1953), which holds true for most of South Charlotte, simply because the mayor and elites historically have lived in neighborhoods such as Myers Park. It does not require a very radical interpretation of political power to imagine that those who have power will have more clout in securing public services for themselves and their friends and neighbors (Lineberry 1975, 70). Lineberry hints at empirically tracing back the loci of power to the neighborhoods and see whether the clustering of powerful persons is associated with the distribution of public largesse (1975). Empirically tracking quality of life data in

Charlotte with the content analysis will help determine if Lineberry's concept of clustering of powerful persons with the distribution of services correlates.

Lineberry's testing of the underclass hypothesis in San Antonio determines urban service delivery systems discriminate against minorities and the poor in respect to the case of fire protection and proximity to quality parks. His findings represent that urban services cannot literally be provided equally to every citizen. But, the object rather is to secure roughly proportionally equivalent services to various neighborhoods. The goal in each case is the equalization of public services to areal units, rather than to individuals (Lineberry 1975, 81). This leads into effects of community development and participation to lead to better quality of services and raising a voice if service delivery is not to individuals.

2.2. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES

Exactly how much redistribution of public tax money to services should occur is, of course, an ethical and highly political question, which different societies have answered in different ways. If we are to achieve a chosen income distribution, we must have a very clear idea of the mechanisms that generate income inequalities in the first place (Harvey 1973). One of the overarching equity issues that arises in Reid Park is the issue that residents feel that they are not given the opportunities that more wealthy areas of Charlotte are given.

Harvey (1973) defines the concept of a resource, as a commodity, which enters into production, is no longer adequate and probably would have been abandoned long ago, were it not for the fact that this concept is basic to conventional forms of economic analysis. Most social policies are directly framed as attempts to maintain a given distribution of income within a social system or to redistribute income among the various social groups that make up a society. It has generally been accepted that some redistribution must take place since

there are always those elements in a population who by ill-luck, bad judgment, age or frailty, cannot attain adequate standard of living through the usual means (Harvey 1973, 52).

Amay James Park and Latta Park justify the issue of equity and spatial justice in the literature. The two parks prove that there is a level of disinvestment occurring – it just has to be identified for justice to occur. There are often "hidden mechanisms" of income redistribution in a complex city system which usually increase inequalities rather than reduce them (Harvey 1973), which displays how politics can often play a pivotal or detrimental role in quality of life. Linking the externalities that arise from proximity – for example, a dilapidated park and the externality that has created the detrimental image of that portion of the community and the effects of illegal dumping (Harvey 1973, 57-58), relates directly to the case of Amay James Park. Multiple externalities, including illegal dumping and the creation of an unsafe, wooded space that is not monitored have created a stigma for the rear of the neighborhood that faces the neighborhood park. Neighborhood parks are assumed to be assets to neighborhoods and in most cases increase property values based on proximity to the asset. However, basing off of externalities and the stigma of the portion of the neighborhood bordering Amay James Park, this is not the case.

We can generalize and think that services in particular areas are not being distributed equally based on aesthetics, or just the generalization that Lucy (1981) makes regarding disadvantaged areas with indicators of low socio-economic characteristic. However, social researchers such as Talen (1998) are indicating fairness based on case studies employing methods from Geographical Information Systems technology to visualize fairness with the production of equity maps for planners. Planners continue to be called on to act as disseminators of social justice and the allocation of public facilities is one arena where social

inequities can be mitigated, or at least offset by compensatory distribution. To the extent that disadvantaged groups can be spatially defined, the locational distribution of public facilities affords planners a rare opportunity to relieve the condition of those with fewer resources (Talen 1998, 23). The use of maps can elucidate equity variation, and by analyzing the spatial incongruity between resource need and resource distribution, planners can explicitly reveal the distributional choices being made about "who gets what" (Talen 1998, 23). Talen's methodological approach of equity mapping allows an individual to map both the distribution of accessibility measures and the distribution of socioeconomic data in such a way that spatial variation in equity can be scrutinized (Talen 1998, 25).

Similar to Talen, Nicholls (2001) builds off of the literature and methodology of measuring accessibility and equity through the use of mapping. Nicholls notes that accessibility and equity are widely recognized as important indicators of well-functioning urban systems, so it is crucial to use those variables for a methodology. Similar to Lucy and Talen, Nicholls (2001) terms equity as referring to the fairness or justice of a situation or distribution. Fairness and justice fall into realms that build theoretical concerns such as the concept of equity asking the question if "everyone gets a piece of the pie." Funding streams are very political and in order for planners to be advocates for all, it is hard to plan for justice when working under governing boards who make all of the final decisions. Harvey (1973) points to the idea that policy is lacking stabilization to promote economic vitality and sustainable equity for all. It seems that the equality of outcome is trying to mitigate the equity issues and goals. Also, the issue of neighborhoods being dynamic and not homogeneous plays a vital role in the issue of distribution of resources. The literature in this

way builds a justification for this study of Reid Park and Dilworth to determine who or what gets the investment.

2.3. SPATIAL JUSTICE OR UNJUSTICE?

There are multiple competing theories of social justice and each has its flaws and strengths. Egalitarian views (promoting equal rights for everyone), for example, immediately run into the problem that "there is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals." (Harvey 1996, 342) Leading us closer to the search for spatial justice is still another fundamental realization. Since we construct our multi-scalar geographies, or they are constructed for us by more powerful others, it follows that we can act to change or reconfigure them to increase the positive or decrease the negative effects. These efforts to make changes in our existing spatial configurations, whether they involve redecorating our homes, fighting against racial segregation in our cities, creating policies to reduce income inequalities between the developed and developing countries, or combating global warming do not express innocent or universally held objectives. They are the target and source of conflicting purposes, competing forces, and contentious political actions for and against the status quo. Space is not an empty void. It is always filled with politics, ideology, and other forces shaping our lives and challenging us to engage in struggles over geography (Soja 2010, 19).

Social justice, for all of the universalism to which proponents of a particular version of it might aspire, has long turned out to be a rather heterogeneous set of concepts. Furthermore, "situatedness," "otherness," and "positionality" also become crucial elements in defining how particular differentiating discourses arise and how such discourses are put to use as part of the play of power. There can be no universal conception of justice to which we

can appeal as a normative concept to evaluate some event. There are only particular, competing, fragmented, and heterogeneous conceptions of and discourses about justice which arise out of the particular situations of those involved (Harvey 1996, 342).

The production of unjust geographies calls for the political responses at multiple and interacting scales to deconstruct the spatial disadvantage. Soja's (2010) work outlines a basis for future planners to work to answer this realization that is occurring at the micro scale across the unjust geographies. Looking for equity in local service distribution is one of many ways of measuring the scale of unjust geographies. It may seem clear to few that quite possibly particular areas of a city are receiving more investments over a period of the years. The public investments are conducted and planned for at the municipal level in budgets that do outline just investments, however, the realization that all of these investments are getting funded is the other realization that is leading to the theories equitable resource distribution across the urban landscape.

Politics is the study of who gets what, when and how, and some might argue that the politics of local service is both routine and banal, and such services affect the quality of daily life for the majority of citizens of the nation (Antunes & Plumlee 1977). Looking at disadvantaged and advantaged communities as quantified by the Charlotte Quality of Life study and correlating investments such as parks will show that it's possible that a disadvantaged community and an advantaged community are receiving the same amounts of public investments but at different scales. When the different scale of investments is mentioned, I am referring to *necessity* investments, such as water and sewer lines versus *aesthetic* investments, such as complete street road designs or adequate signage. The disadvantaged community may be receiving the *necessity* investment, where the advantaged

community may be receiving an *aesthetic* investment because the community has already had the necessary investments implemented for decades.

Linking necessity and aesthetic investments is particularly interesting to this analysis due to the historic developments of both Reid Park and Dilworth. Linkage with spatial justice and amount of public investments distributed were issues particularly in the past due to the issues of race and accessibility and the fight for social justice. There is an obvious sense in which this questioning of the concept is not only proper but imperative – too many colonial peoples have suffered at the hands of western imperialism's particular justice, too many African-Americans have suffered at the hands of the white man's justice, too many women from the justice imposed by a patriarchal order and too many workers from the justice imposed by capitalists, to make the concept anything other than problematic (Harvey 1996, 342).

Although Reid Park has had some attention in the political agenda with suggestions of investments that were implemented, this idea leads into (Antunes & Plumlee1977) work that focused on local streets and uneven distribution of services. Antunes& Plumlee notes that older subdivisions did not include full facilities before the cities adopted its present rules. Developers kept the costs of lots and homes to minimum by not paving streets or putting in water and sewer lines. In spite of low prices, some of these subdivisions have remained only partially developed. The *50% rule* applies, when a subdivision becomes fifty percent developed, the city will install (at public expense) water and sanitary sewer trunk lines. Once water and sewer lines are in place, the residents become eligible for additional improvements – paved streets, curbs, sidewalks, and storm sewers (Antunes & Plumlee 1977, 322). This particular example in Houston is relevant to the story of Reid Park.

Building on ideas of the roots of planning for social justice is critical in equity planning because planners, according to the code of ethics, are to be advocates for all, and especially the disadvantaged. Davidoff (1965) and Krumholz (1982) say the practice of plural planning requires educating planners to engage as professional advocates in the contentious work of forming social policy. The planner isn't solely a *value-neutral* technician. Planning should be pluralistic and represent diverse interests, especially minority interests. So-called “citizen participation” programs usually react to official plans and programs instead of encouraging people to *propose* their own goals, policies and future actions.

Planners speak out and choose to represent the socially and economically under-represented or excluded clients. Davidoff (1965) outlines advocacy planning by responding to the pluralist view of competing groups getting issues on the political agenda and addressing lack of access for marginalized groups. His critique on mainstream physical planning and its neglect of minorities and the poor is a basis for equity planning and spatial justice.

2.4. PLANNING FOR EQUITY

The American Institute of Certified Planners’ Code of Ethics outlines that we as planners shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. “We as planners shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such need” ("AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct"). The role of equity planning in cities today is crucial to the wellbeing of all people, not dependent on socioeconomic status, and the role of the planner in seeking

social justice for the disadvantaged is vital to the quality of life for individuals. The planner's role of empowerment and planning for equity and equality is also crucial to the distribution of resources, in particular, public investments that are vital for influencing quality of life in neighborhoods.

City regions are not only sites of economic competitiveness; they are also territories in which social reproduction — a process intimately tied to the notion of quality of life — takes place. The disjuncture between these two views of regional livability creates a tension in contemporary city- regionalism that is worked out through political struggles over such mundane issues as housing affordability and infrastructure provision (McCann 189). Public investments in neighborhoods are vital to the economic and social development of the individuals who are at the smallest micro scale in the urban environment. The incorporation of equity into the core planning process is important to planning for social justice, but the implementation of the plan is crucial to the integration of the social justice of equity in resource distribution. Equity is a cross-disciplinary term that has different meanings in the literature of geographic urban restructuring, urban planning research, and social equity and justice research. Lucy (1981) produces a number of alternatives to how a planner should conceive equity. Lucy suggests five conceptions of equity for planners dealing with issues that have spatial dimensions – equality, need, demand, preference, and willingness to pay – be considered.

For the purpose of this study, equality will be the focus on the conception of equity. Ruling out need, demand, preference, and willingness to pay will be deducted from the analysis based on the generalization that disadvantaged communities are not given those opportunities. Lucy also notes that in the realm of local government services, the first

statements of the quality issues are simple: everyone should receive the same service (Lucy 1981, 448). Lucy also notes that in terms of need, low income, poverty, and minority race are crude indicators of need. Based off of the realization that need will refer to lower socioeconomic characteristics, it also fits in the basis of equality. He also notes that the demand for services concept implies that at least a minimum threshold of service quantity and quality should be met.

Similar to Lucy, Talen (1998) notes equitable distribution as equality, in which everyone receives the same public benefit, regardless of socioeconomic status. Lucy's research focuses on whether there is a systematic relationship between the location of poor people or minorities and the receipt of fewer local public services. Lucy's in depth analysis contributed to the literature by conducting an analysis of service characteristics compared to relevant population and social characteristics indicators, by arraying them geographically, which his objective makes recommendations for investment priorities.

CHAPTER 3. DATA AND METHODS

The history of Reid Park and Dilworth and the state of their neighborhood recreational facilities and the context of the urban development of Charlotte has led to an analysis on determining if there has been an issue of equity in regards to investments from Mecklenburg County in the Reid Park and Dilworth neighborhoods. In order to feasibly operate this comparative analysis, the methods have been tailored to the available data and information on both neighborhoods. The original intent of this project was to develop a quantitative study of all expenditures spent on each neighborhood since there initial establishment, and pair that with the socioeconomic characteristics provided by the Census Bureau. However, this was not feasible, and the project has since been revised. The

reasoning the original intent of the project was not feasible was because 1) census data at the tract level was not developed and publicly available in the City of Charlotte until the 1960 decennial census; 2) public expenditures were not publicly available for release on spending in regards to parks and recreation centers until the fiscal year 1992. Since both neighborhoods were developed decades before 1960 and had parks and recreation centers prior to 1992, measuring how equitably expenditures are distributed by Mecklenburg County was not a feasible way to compare both neighborhoods in respect to the study. Due to the lack of information, this study has been shifted into a mixed methods approach that will include the data on spending from Mecklenburg County. The new outline of the research will provide separate chapters on both neighborhoods, with subchapters that will fully explore the history, including socioeconomic characteristics for available decades (1960 to 2010), physical characteristics of green space/recreational space in both neighborhoods, spending by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation from 1992 to 2012, and civic engagement. The intent of doing this will be to identify common themes that will provide the outcomes to address if socioeconomic characteristics influence public facilities. The research questions for this agenda are:

1) What are the conditions/histories of the two neighborhood parks and recreation centers, and how do they differ?
2) In what ways do socioeconomic characteristics influence the quality of public facilities?
3) What explains the contrast between the two neighborhoods?
    a. Why does the Reid Park neighborhood have a non-functioning park and recreation center?

b. Why does the Dilworth neighborhood have a thriving neighborhood park and recreation center that is considered an asset to the neighborhood?

The following list of methods outlines the research agenda and determines the mixed methods approach:

1. Analysis of green space/recreation in Reid Park and Dilworth.
2. Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation investments in Reid Park and Dilworth between 1992 – 2012.
3. Content analysis of archives to supplement history of both neighborhoods and development of investments, and civic engagement.
4. Empirical Analysis of Reid Park and Dilworth for socioeconomic characteristics.

TABLE 3.1. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition	Level of Measurement	Data Source(s)	Justification
Equity	Equal distribution of public investments/facilities	Nominal	Mecklenburg County	(Davidoff 1965)
Spatial Inequality	Spatial distribution of resources and service	Nominal	Census Bureau Quality of Life Study	(Soja 2010)
Urban Service Delivery	Analysis of green space and quality of space	Nominal	Mecklenburg County	(Talen 1997)
Equity Planning	Analysis of advocates in the planning for disadvantaged NSAs	Nominal	Mecklenburg County/City of Charlotte	(Lineberry 1975)

The analysis of green space/ recreational facilities and conditions in both Dilworth and Reid Park will be analyzed and documented through field work and windshield surveys. The windshield survey is a simple checklist that identifies assets, infrastructure, physical size, and use of both parks which will be used for comparison. Equity will be defined between the two

neighborhoods by all expenses by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation for Latta Park, Latta Recreation Center, and Tom Sykes Recreation Center in Dilworth and for Amay James Park and Amay James Recreation Center in Reid Park since 1992 to 2012. All expenditures will be analyzed and averaged to determine if the dollar amount per person in each neighborhood has been equitable. This will be skewed since both neighborhoods vary in population size, however, the physical conditions in both neighborhoods will compliment dollar amount per person. Once expenditures and history are outlined, spatial inequality and civic engagement will be explored by a content analysis of archival Charlotte Observer newspaper articles.

3.1. JUSTIFICATION OF DATA AND METHODS

The Reid Park neighborhood was selected for this study because of personal work with the neighborhood for a graduate research assistantship. Working with the Reid Park residents as a community liaison indicated the types of issues that the challenged neighborhood was enduring. Starting work in Reid Park as a senior in my undergraduate career and for the majority of two years of graduate school led to development of trust amongst the neighborhood association and myself. The identification of inequitable distribution of public investments while working with residents of the challenged neighborhood developed the framework that would be applied to a research agenda and in order to assist the neighborhood with their needs of identifying inequitable distribution and spatial justice issues. This led to many informal conversations that tailored the project, which created secondary data. The second neighborhood, Dilworth, was selected for the study because of its neighborhood park. Many Reid Park residents identified in conversation that Dilworth's neighborhood park is similar to Reid Park's planned neighborhood park,

which was planned in the late 1990s. Latta Park and Reid Park's planned neighborhood park are similar in size, and similar in topography since they both center in the neighborhoods in a ravine.

Anecdotally, Charlotte is a very wealth-divided city, with much of the wealth being located in South Charlotte, and there is drastic difference between the social characteristics when driving down streets in South Charlotte versus West Charlotte. Barriers of divide in socioeconomic characteristics are blunt in many sectors of Charlotte. My case for analyzing the equity is very important for Charlotte's case, because there has been much investment in the city as it globalizes, and as national corporations call the queen city its headquarters. However, it seems that investment is continually distributed in the same neighborhoods and areas of Charlotte.

Working in challenged communities across Charlotte poses the question that there is a divide between service distribution, accessibility, and quite possibly funding streams from political jurisdictions to neighborhoods. Since the majority of residents in Reid Park have interest in the issue of their abandoned park and recreation center, this analysis will be based on investments by Parks and Recreation. Spatial inequality coincides with the statement, "who benefits and why," within the context of territorial justice (Talen & Anselin 1998). This research will be aiming to answer what factors account for higher levels of service in certain neighborhoods in Charlotte. The distribution of investments plays a key role in spatial inequality and the agglomeration of equity. Patterns of public investments, such as parks, will help build the consensus of spatial inequality and accessibility. The particular case study in Reid Park and Dilworth can expose inequity and inequality.

3.2. DATA

The original scope of the project was intended to be a larger quantitative study, but accessing feasible data proved problematic. The process of acquiring the data pertaining to the number of investments made in Reid Park and Dilworth regarding Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation department yielded results that could not quantify and answer the research questions fully. The process of obtaining the data from the Parks and Recreation Department was a lengthy process. Contacting employees through emails and phones calls simply did not work. However, working a previous internship with the Planning Department at the Town of Cornelius, in North Mecklenburg County was my way-in with accessing the data that was needed. Cornelius' current Parks and Recreation Director and Assistant Director both worked for Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation during the period of the merge of the City and County Parks and Recreation Departments. Having contact and conversations with both the director and assistant director lent access to Mecklenburg County's Park and Recreation's current Planning Division Supervisor, the individual who has the information. Networking through past jobs was the only feasibly way to obtain the investments that were implemented in Reid Park and Dilworth, as well as the conversations that were shared about Mecklenburg County employees during the time of the merge of the two departments.

The mixed methods approach to answer the research questions outlines the need for quantitative and qualitative studies. The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County had separate Parks and Recreation departments prior to 1992. When both departments merged in 1992, they were forged under Mecklenburg County (DeKemper 2013). The quantitative approach for this study will begin with data of investments by Parks and Recreation of both

departments after the merger. The merger has justified the time period that will be analyzed for this study. Socioeconomic data for this research has been extracted at the census tract level from the Neighborhood Change Database, which provides census data at the tract level between 1970 and 2000. A Planning Commission report highlights characteristics during the 1960s, which will be explored for both neighborhoods. Census data from the 2010 decennial census was extracted via American Fact Finder and the U.S. Census Bureau. Population was explored to see how growth occurred over the forty year period. The history of both neighborhoods outlined the reasoning to explore the racial make-up of both neighborhoods by using the variables Total White population and Total African American population. Median Household income was used to display movement on the economical ladder. Total Households with Public Assistance was used as a variable to determine households that were in need of assistance. Total Renter Occupied Housing Units and Total Owner Occupied Housing Units were used to determine the housing tenure in each neighborhood. The level of measurement for this study was extracted at the census tract level. Dilworth is encompassed in two census tracts (tracts 3400 and 3500) that have not changed or subdivided since the development of the tracts in 1960. This has made it feasible to explore the statistical socioeconomic characteristics in the neighborhood. Reid Park, however, was included in tract 3900, which was subdivided into census tract 39.02, 39.03, and tract 39.01 solely for the airport for the 1990 census. Both neighborhood boundaries have been explored provided by historical information and boundaries provided by the City of Charlotte through the Quality of Life Study.

The qualitative approach of this study required data collected through a content analysis composed of archives of The Charlotte Observer Newspaper between the time

period of 1980 to 2010 in order to capture crucial developments in both neighborhoods and to help illustrate civic engagement in both neighborhoods that may have led to the outcomes of both recreational activities in both neighborhoods. As discussed the development of this thesis occurred from past work experience in the Reid Park neighborhood. Conversations with residents in Reid Park have dictated the issues and reasoning behind this research. A further discussion with one resident of Reid Park and their experience will be explained further to supplement the content analysis and prior conversations held during working in Reid Park.

3.3. DATA COLLECTION

Feasible data was needed to answer the research questions regarding the quality of public facilities. In order to analyze and answer the research questions, available monetary data on the public investments was needed, as well as the locations implemented. The process of acquiring the correct data for this study was not only time consuming, it was in fact very difficult to obtain. Anyone that knows anything of public funding and funding streams knows that it is not a simple process. Funding is typically skewed depending on the type of project, infrastructure, person, or thing it is being distributed to. The development of this project first began with the process of outlining the types of public investments that would be analyzed based on the feasibility and availability of data available from various entities, organizations, and people. It seems like a quite simple task of asking a City department for a spreadsheet, not expecting the data to be perfect (all data have to be cleaned up for projects).

Essentially this study began with an idea of analyzing public investments across all of Charlotte's neighborhoods. The types of public investments to be used are any investment

that is assumed to improve quality of life. The public investments sought out for this project were projects such transportation projects – such as road calming projects (street humps, streetscape projects); community development projects such as community development block grant monies used for various projects; housing projects, such as monies used towards grants to build affordable housing, upfit and remodel existing housing stock, and all other general funds that are allotted from the county and other organizations for projects such as parks, recreation centers, and the like.

First, this proved to be problematic based on the instance that neighborhood boundaries have changed over periods of times. This was also an issue because simply obtaining some of this data was not feasible. Another issue was the fact that this project started evolving overwhelmingly into a project that could be scaled larger than a doctoral dissertation. The scope of the project evolved into a larger requirement than a master's thesis. That being said, the scope of the project was narrowed down into a more manageable research project. I also want to mention that this study is solely occurring due to my experience working in the Reid Park neighborhood and the Reid Park Neighborhood Association. The use of action research, simply working with residents who feel that there is a sense of inequity across the line of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County's funding streams was the impedance for this project. Working with key residents in the neighborhood helped identify the spatial justice issues and the equity issues. Reid Park residents played a key role in designing what public investments are to be observed. The driving issue in Reid Park is the issue of the abandoned park, recreation center, and planning/designing of a new park.

Socioeconomic characteristics of Reid Park and Dilworth were obtained through the Charlotte Quality of Life Study. The Charlotte Quality of Life Study has dictated the study

boundaries of each neighborhood. The Quality of Life Study includes an array of socioeconomic data that was used in tandem with the qualitative illustrations of the spatial justice and equity issues in Reid Park. Pairing the historical developments of both neighborhoods with the socioeconomic characteristics since 1992 and the public investments implemented in both neighborhoods illustrated the issues of socioeconomic characteristics influencing the quality of public facilities. Although the original intent was to identify inequality across Charlotte, this exploration of Reid Park and Dilworth will contribute to a larger picture that can be modeled to explore other neighborhoods experiencing issues of inequality.

CHAPTER 4. HISTORY OF CHARLOTTE/MECKLENBURG PARKS

In a market society such as the United States, opportunities, resources, and benefits are not distributed evenly across the urban landscape. Rather, certain residential areas assumedly have more prestige, greater affluence, higher home values, better services, and safer streets than others. The geographic differentiation of American cities by socioeconomic status does more than conveniently rank neighborhoods for the benefit of demographers, however; it also creates a crucial connection between social and spatial mobility (Massey & Denton 1993, 149). Socioeconomic achievement is not only a matter of individual aspirations and effort, however; it is also a matter of collective action in the political arena (Massey & Denton 1993, 153). Neighborhoods are seen to achieve higher quality of life through strategic community development. Particular neighborhoods such as Reid Park and Dilworth have interesting histories that are assumed to have shaped the reasoning for their state today. The following chapters will explore the histories of each neighborhood and the development of their recreational spaces. The history of each

neighborhood and their recreational uses will be coupled with socioeconomic characteristics dating back to 1970. An analysis of expenditures regarding investments by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation will be explored in tandem to socioeconomic characteristics and maps.

After a city-county parks merger in July 1, 1992, Mecklenburg County took title to more than 150 parks. Prior to the merger, the small county department that had roughly a dozen rural parks, now was in charge of recreation centers with leaky roofs and inner city parks noted as "glass factories" due to the amount of beer and wine bottles littered throughout them. In 1992, Mecklenburg County estimated it would have to spend roughly 60 million over the following ten years for major park maintenance (Whitacre 1992). The inheritance of parks placed a new tactic in the department from simply developing new parks, to now having to upgrade old ones, i.e. the city parks. However, before the merger, not all city parks were in bad shape. After the merger, the county outlined that the worst city parks were in neighborhoods that outgrew their parks. The parks were assumed to be abandoned since all of the neighborhood children during that time period have grown up and moved away, leaving elderly parents to not use the park. As neighborhood demographics change, they possibly outgrow their park (Whitacre 1992). When neighborhoods stop using its park, other people will use it, and those other people are often alcoholics and drug dealers who are looking for secluded areas. The County also indicated that residents who demand action on their parks can be the difference between a park being a drug dealer's delight, or an asset to their neighborhood (Whitacre 1992). While the County was dealing with a merger of parks, the City was also hatching plans to save inner-city neighborhoods. The city indicates these neighborhoods in 1991 as vulnerable inner-city neighborhoods teetering between the

possibilities of greater vitality or deterioration. The City worked with residents to develop plans to combat deterioration and work towards vitality (Smith 1991). The west side of Charlotte is the historical area of the city that leaders stuck less desirable, yet essential, municipal needs – such as landfills, industrial parks, public housing and the airport (Chapman 1998). This is no surprise, since the Westside of Charlotte, has consistently remained minority, due to forces and external effects placed by the city.

Speaking with two former planners for Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation during the period of the merger with the City indicated that few City parks were actually in good condition, in comparison to others. It was indicated that Freedom Park and Latta Park were well maintained and in overall good condition when they were handed over to the County. Parks on the west side were indicated as deteriorating and in horrible condition, with issues such as drugs in the parks and vandalism across the recreation centers (DeKemper 2013). Once Mecklenburg County stepped in to combat deterioration against the struggling parks on the west side, employees of Parks and Recreation held multiple community meetings across the city to determine the new vision and strategies for deteriorating parks. Park planners held meetings in both Dilworth and Reid Park to determine what the necessities were for improvements of both parks. Although Latta Park was in fair condition, it did have a deteriorating playground and restroom shelter. The former employees indicated that the community meetings in Dilworth, in respect to Latta Park, had high attendance and overwhelmingly amounts of input. The former planners also indicated that Dilworth residents were very involved with community meetings because residents indicated that they needed to have the most input as possible since it was their neighborhood park and property values that could be affected (DeKemper 2013). The park

planners indicated a very different story of community meetings in Reid Park in regards to Amay James Park. It was indicated that there was very little turnout and input, and the main input was to get rid of the park altogether. Residents in Reid Park indicated they were not interested in the park due to its location in the rear of the neighborhood which built the general consensus that the park was unsafe (DeKemper 2013).

A few years after the initial merger, residents in West Charlotte continued to indicate that their parks have been shortchanged and needed better maintenance (Whitacre 1995). The County started allocating funds within the budget to rebuild Westside parks, but their dollar amount would not be sufficient to stretch across the area and the long list of needs. A total of one million was available in 1994 to rebuild the parks and recreation centers, but the County sought after partners within and outside the county to help fund issues (Whitacre 1994). As some parks were rebuilt, some others were not. Amay James Park in Reid Park continued to decline and become abandoned. A working Community Development Corporation in the neighborhood, Reid Park Associates, had a competing vision of creating housing on the tract of land that the Amay James Park was located. The City Council approved a land swap that would move the park from the secluded area at the end of Amay James Avenue to an open space in the neighborhood's center, and creating a subdivision of 46 homes on the once Amay James Park (Ly 1997). Then and now, residents in Reid Park stay away from the park since it is dark, heavily wooded, and commonly referred to as a "hole." The land where the new park was planned to go would be situated on a large parcel of land that Reid Park Associates owned which is a ravine that splits the neighborhood, as indicated by residents. The new park was visioned after Dilworth's Latta Park, to make it easier for residents to get from one side of the neighborhood to the other. The County

planned to clear out trees and put in trails, benches, picnic sites, and a potential playground, which gave the price tag for the new park, then, at more than $200,000. Planners originally wanted to renovate the existing Amay James Park but decided to plan the new one because more residents would use a park in the middle of the neighborhood (Ly 1997). The County also indicated during this time period, 1997, that the Irwin Creek Greenway extension would be finished within the next two years, creating connection for Reid Park on the greenway system. Police also indicated in 1997 that even though Amay James Park had a bad reputation amongst residents, it didn't attract unusual amounts of crime. However, the Police agreed that moving the park would clear out open space and help the neighborhood's image (Ly 1997). Presently, it is 2013, the new subdivision was not built, the greenway extension has not been built, and Mecklenburg County still owns the land for Amay James Park and the planned park in the neighborhood's center. Both areas are unmaintained and abandoned and have become illegal dumping sites for shady contractors across the City.

By 2000, budget cuts continued across the City and County and the Parks and Recreation department typically took blows which resulted to hours being cut at recreation centers in Westside neighborhoods (Pilla 2000). By 2008, a proposal for a new Parks and Recreation bond package was approved for a 250 million dollar price tag. The projects, recommended by the park and recreation commission, were among 60 projects that would be paid for by the bond package. Included in the 2008 bond package are the resurfacing of the new Reid Park neighborhood park and Irwin Creek Greenway extension. However, price tags associated with both projects have changed, indicating a $600,000 price for 'planning and some construction' for the park and $1.233 million for the one-mile extension of the greenway (Bethea 2008). By 2010, Mecklenburg County went through drastic budget cuts,

especially in the Parks and Recreation Department. Parks and Recreation closed four of its twenty-nine recreation centers. The four centers that closed were in the City's jurisdiction, one of which was the Amay James Recreation Center in Reid Park, See Figure 4.1. The continued abandonment of Amay James Park and the closing of Amay James Recreation Center in Reid Park has caused many social issues and continued blight in Reid Park. However, in adjacent Dilworth, Latta Park is immaculate, and there are two recreation centers in the neighborhood, and they happen to be located right next to each other. The further analysis will explore the history of both Reid Park and Dilworth, an observation of park and recreation space in both neighborhoods, the socioeconomic characteristics and trends over the last forty years, public expenditures by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation, and the level of civic engagement in both neighborhoods.

4.1 MECKLENBURG COUNTY BUDGETING

Allocations of investments are made through the process of operating and capital budgets. The operating budget is a fiscal year budget; where as the capital budget is based off of a five year projection and is revisited each year. The capital project budget is paid for in bonds, grants, and partnerships. Mecklenburg County's revenue is derived from property taxes, investment incomes, local ABC profits, law enforcement service districts, licenses and permits, state sources, charges for services, federal sources, sales tax, and other revenues. Revenue money is allotted towards seven different programs that make up the operating budget including education services, sustainable community, debt service funds, social education and economical opportunity, general debt services, effective and efficient government, and community and health safety ("2012 Budget" 2013).

The County’s Capital Improvement Budget is adopted simultaneously with the Operating Budget. The County will participate in a joint capital planning process to ensure that coordinated planning and exploration of joint use of sites and facilities occur. Any capital project financed through the issuance of bonds is financed for a period not to exceed the expected life of the project. The County pursues a process for building linkages between the City and County capital programs to ensure that both governing boards have a perspective on community-wide needs and priorities and the community’s overall financial capacity. All capital projects are reviewed by the Citizen’s Capital Budget Advisory Committee for capital project standards for each project category. The County's Capital Improvements Program is composed of a one year budget of a five year comprehensive plan that is reviewed on a yearly basis. Projects mandated by state and federal government receive priority consideration. Projects which provide for the renovation of existing facilities, resulting in preservation of the community’s prior investment or which reduce maintenance and operating costs, receive priority consideration. Projects which preserve and protect the health and safety of the community also receive priority consideration. ("2012 Budget" 2013).

Capital projects are developed in four stages: Stage I – Setting Goals, Stage II – Developing Corporate Strategies, Stage III – Aligning Programs, and Stage IV – Budgeting for Results. In Stage I, Mecklenburg County’s vision statement is supported with key elements that are grouped into four focus areas, with long-term broad goals. The County operates under a three-year Strategic Business Plan, which sets the short-term direction for achieving the long-term goals identified in its vision. Every three years, the plan is updated and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. In Stage II, with broad goals set and

reaffirmed by the Board, strategies are developed for achieving these goals, and performance measures are established to gauge success. As part of updating the Strategic Business Plan, management assesses existing strategies and measures and makes adjustments where needed. Stage III involves making sure the programs and services are consistent with the strategies and aligned with the goals. In Stage VI, the annual budget process allocates resources according to the goals and consists of four phases.

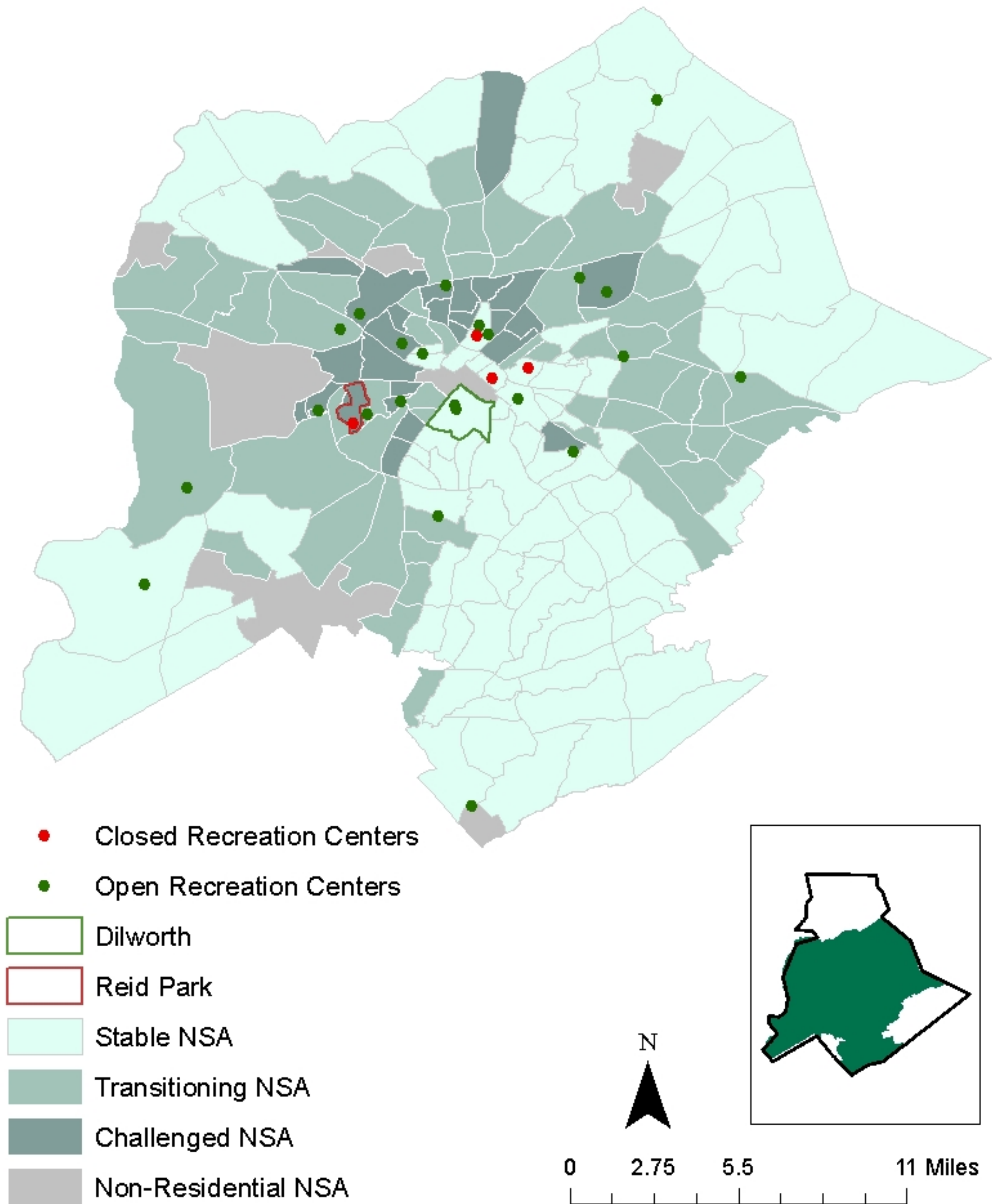
In Phase I, the Board prioritizes program categories during its annual Strategic Planning Conference. The resulting list of priorities serves as a guide for the development of the Manager's Recommended Budget. During Phase II the Manager shares the priorities from the Strategic Planning Conference with Department Directors and provides direction regarding the expectations of the budget process. In Phase III, departments are responsible for analyzing and projecting budget needs for their units and performing several other steps, including the following:

- Re-examining their unit's mission and performance.
- Costing out plans for addressing strategic impact issues, where applicable to that agency's services.
- Developing requests for "change orders" (e.g. new or expanded programs) and aligning them to the Board's Three Year Strategic Emphasis.
- Adjusting any revenue estimates.
- Realigning existing resources within the approved current service level budget, if needed, and Analyzing the need for any additional technology, capital, capital maintenance, or vehicle needs and submitting any requests through the appropriate reserve process ("2012 Budget" 2013).

At the end of phase III, each agency develops a requested budget, which is packaged and presented. The agency's budget ties together its plan and resource needs for service delivery for the upcoming year and includes analysis of trends and concerns, and descriptions of major accomplishments, in addition to all budget requests. The review process, which takes place in March and April, is driven by the Budget Executive Team. Discussions during this process are focused on service level funding adjustments, current year's accomplishments, re-engineering efforts and performance results. As a result of these discussions, each service request may be revised ("2012 Budget" 2013).

Capital Projects are ranked and prioritized by the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee which is a voluntary advisory board made up of citizens, appointed by each Mecklenburg County Commissioner that meets regularly during budget preparation to review departmental capital project requests for capital standards. There are a multitude of indicators and indexes that are used to rank and prioritize projects ("2012 Budget" 2013).

FIGURE 4.1. RECREATION CENTERS IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY, 2012.



Source: ("Recreation Centers" 2013); Cartography by: Author

CHAPTER 5. HISTORY OF DILWORTH

Since its inception in 1891, Dilworth has been one of Charlotte's most distinct neighborhoods (Hanchett 1998). The success of the initial development of Dilworth led its creator, Edward Dilworth Latta, to expand the neighborhood in the 1910's, under a plan by the Olmstead Brothers, then the nation's preeminent landscape designers. Although their plan was never fully implemented, the Olmstead's curved roads and dramatic landscaping set the tone for much of Charlotte's future character ("Charlotte's Historic Districts" 2012). Latta focused on developing in an area already proving successful with industry and manufacturing. The original homes, many still surviving today, were built by and sold to employees of the neighboring textile factories – white working class families, since covenants precluded African Americans from living in Dilworth (Hanchett 1998). The land purchase for the suburb included 442 level acres, which were divided into lots amidst a grid work of unpaved streets with a wider central street, now named East Boulevard (Baker 2012).

In 1891, the group of investors in Dilworth formed a subsidiary company – The Charlotte Railway Company, purchased the city's old horse drawn cars and hired the Edison Electric Company to build an electric car line connecting the new Dilworth suburb to the city – Charlotte's first trolley was born. The final stop on the initial trolley line to Dilworth was Latta Park. Latta Park was a retreat to entice the city's residents to visit Dilworth and ride the new trolley that was developed. The park featured fountains, terraces of gardens, a lake, a lily pad pond, and trails for walking and driving. Between 1891 and 1909, the ninety-acre amusement complex was the festive centerpiece of the entire community. Professional baseball teams, replete with baggy pants, knee-high socks and sprightly cloth caps,

entertained their faithful fans who came to Latta Park. The University of North Carolina and Davidson College played football games there. Men with high hats and ladies with parasols paraded around the pavilion, attended plays at the theater next door or strolled along the paths that meandered by the lake and the lily pad pond (Hanchett 1998). The water activities no longer exist, and it is smaller than the original, still the park remains a favorite for the local residents and is a strong attraction to the area (Baker 2012). Today, the trolley lines that once ended at Latta Park are gone, the fairground where the baseball games and other activities were held and is now Dilworth Road West and the expansion of Dilworth in 1911 added what is now the main shopping and entertainment location for the neighborhood (Baker 2012).

Fast-forwarding a century, Dilworth is still a special place to live. However, Dilworth fought decades of blight and deterioration as suburbanization embraced the City in the middle of the twentieth century. Deterioration was also impacted by the majority of the housing stock aging over sixty years ("History of Dilworth" 2012). The 2010 Charlotte Quality of Life Study indicated Dilworth as stable, with higher than average median household incomes than the city of Charlotte. Dilworth's median household income in 2010 was $65,849 where as the City's median household income was $52,148 in 2010. However as white flight to the suburbs occurred in the mid 20th century, Dilworth was not considered a premier residential address in Charlotte. However, by today's standards, especially since Charlotte has sprawled so much, the classification that Dilworth was a suburb of Uptown proves that significant sprawl has occurred in Charlotte. Dilworth is approximately one mile from the center of Charlotte, the intersection of Trade and Tryon Streets. Before Charlotte became the globalizing city it is today, it, like many other cities, it was an industrial and

manufacturing city. Dilworth served as the neighborhood for white workers and few elite in the manufacturing sector to live the essential *American Dream,* i.e. in the suburbs.

Dilworth's architecture reflects not only the many styles used from the very beginning, but shifts in fashion and economics as work continued through the boom of the 1920s, the Depression years of the 1930s, the war years of the 1940s and beyond (Bradbury 1992, 103). As newer homes were built as development continued further out of the center city and inner ring suburbs, people fled. An important indicator to identify in Dilworth's socioeconomic characteristics history, is with its original development of stately mansions in the first phase of development and with more modest, middle-income family homes built in the second phase. As white flight and sprawl progressed, original churches in Dilworth began to move as much of their congregation did, which led to an influx of different people into Dilworth. Younger groups of people moved into Dilworth because homes were affordable, which began Dilworth's transition (Bradbury 1992). As the inner city was seen less desirable, a change in land uses such as industrial uses started erecting around Dilworth.

Suburbanization, which Dilworth and the streetcars launched in Charlotte, accelerated as the decades rolled by. Fashion, like the city limits, left the central city behind (Bradbury 1992, 115). Commercialization transitioned Dilworth from residential to a mix of commercial uses and industrial uses on the fringe. Planning and zoning in the 1960s offered to protect the residential core of the neighborhood by buffering the changing thoroughfares with transitional office and apartment zoning (Bradbury 1992, 115). South Boulevard flourished as an industrial heartland and grand avenue in Dilworth's earlier decades. Parking lots, vacant spaces and latter-day commercial construction sit where mayors and tycoons once lived in great style (Bradbury 1992, 112). In the late 1960s, Dilworth residents worried

publicly about blight and decay (Bradbury 1992, 116). Gentrification immersed as the first wave of gentrifiers moved into Dilworth to take advantage of urban living. While much of Charlotte was still focused on the suburbs, the first wave gentrifiers saw the charm of the inner city's graceful neighborhoods (Bradbury 1992). The first wave of gentrifiers were recognized as graduates of the 1960s who brought their vision of alternative lifestyles to some of Dilworth's original streets where decay was advancing (Bradbury 1992, 117). The age gap of long time residents and the young couple-renovators and hippie radicals brought good to the neighborhood as the Dilworth Community Development Association developed in 1971. The association formed to combat blight and decay, attract a younger population, and rally around the negative externality of white flight and sprawl that caused the generalization that "many of the problems in Dilworth were arriving with low-income African American families" (Bradbury 1992, 119). Dilworth was primarily sound, however, it had severe pockets of serious blight that hurt the neighborhood and its perception in the wider community (Bradbury 1992, 120). A typical street in Dilworth in 1970 had a house for sale, apartment for rent, one house condemned, a shabby house with peeling paint, and one revitalized home (Bradbury 1992, 121). The association began to battle for better enforcement of housing codes, rejecting incompatible uses, and correction of zoning mistakes made by a city government with its eyes on the suburbs (Bradbury 1992, 121).

Preservation became a cause among those who were captivated by fascinating and affordable old houses along tree lined streets. Dilworth's revitalization coincided with a rejuvenation of historic consciousness in the larger city as well (Bradbury 1992, 123). New families continued to move in, making renovation the neighborhood avocation. Their presence ensured another generation of life for the many streets that were still thriving.

Other newcomers created a demand for homes on streets once all but abandoned to decline, and the neighborhood began to push back against commercial encroachment (Bradbury 1992, 124). By the early 1980s, the neighborhood was an economic and political success. In 1982, the city county approved the Dilworth Small Area Plan that called for wide-scale corrective rezonings, and developed the historic district within the neighborhood. Throughout the 1980s, efforts at planning, rezoning, and protection continued throughout the neighborhood. Dilworth transitioned increasingly and attractively to what it is today – one of Charlotte's premier neighborhoods. Though no longer a suburb, Dilworth is once again a prize location for homes and business on the edge of Uptown Charlotte (Bradbury 1992, 128).

Dilworth's first phase of development yielded a ravine that was not suitable for development of homes. The ravine had several springs and acres of woods, thanks to nature. The Four Cs developed Latta Park, a 90-acre amusement park and pleasure grounds that were to attract crowds of streetcar riders, into the 1920s (Bradbury 1920, 15). Facilities were always being added and improved during the years that the Four Cs owned the property, which opened the Latta Park Pavilion in 1891, which overlooked the lake in the park. A baseball stadium was added with grandstand seating of 2,500. A second pavilion was built in 1892, designated as the "colored pavilion." For ten years of the initial development, white and black shared the park, but in the separate way of separating pavilions (Bradbury 1992). However, the Four Cs decided that they would discontinue the pavilion for blacks in 1903, and build a new pavilion at Biddle, the current day Johnson C. Smith University. In Spring of 1893, a dam was under construction under the main dam in the Latta Park lake to create a new pool for swimming. Into the late 1890s, a race track, cycle track, and new grandstand for the stadium were developed. At that time, the Charlotte Observer noted how wonderful

the park was for those trying to get away from the 'maddening' crowds of the center city. The article also noted that suburban residents were able to breathe clean oxygen and that the park has beneficial effects and made people happier (Bradbury 1992, 19). Also, in 1897, a greenhouse was erected in the park as a conservatory strictly for roses. In 1898, a theatre was built on the other side of the main pavilion that housed music festivals. The theatre was described as "a resort that was to Charlotte what the roof gardens are to New York" as the building was designed by a noted architect at the time (Bradbury 1992, 20).

Seeking to improve their finances, the Four Cs offered to sell Latta Park to the City of Charlotte. However, the city government was not quite ready for public parks (Bradbury 1992, 21). In the meantime, the Four Cs continued to make improvements to the park by granting a ten year lease to the Mecklenburg Fair Association for forty acres of the park. The extended land that was leased to the fair association included a newly built ball park and three story building that was developed by the Four Cs (Bradbury 1992). During the first decade of the 20th century, Latta Park continued to host many of the leisure time activities of the growing city (Bradbury 1992, 24). Popular attractions such as a circuses, in addition to the fairs, were brought to the park, and allowed for one week of the attractions to be all white, and another week all black. However, as the decade ended, an era was ending for Latta Park (Bradbury 1992, 25). Malarial chills and fever struck Dilworth, by 1910, which ended with Mr. Latta complying to the city sanitary inspector to drain the lake in the park. The Four Cs continued to develop in the city, which led to the development of a new park, Lakewood. The new park was located just three hundred yards away from where the drained lake in Latta park once stood. Lakewood opened in 1910, along with the leases ending for the baseball park and fairgrounds in Latta Park. The Four Cs also sold their streetcar system

to Duke Power Company and planned to convert many of the acres in the former and park fairgrounds into housing sites. As developments advanced, Latta Park shrank in size and function (Bradbury 1992, 25). Latta Park was finally deeded to the City of Charlotte in 1920, and Latta Park Center, now Latta Recreation Center, was built in 1951 (Bradbury 1992, 25).

5.1. GREEN AND RECREATIONAL SPACE

The history of Dilworth has outlined the development of Latta Park as a destination based recreational attraction for much of Charlotte in the early years of Charlotte's history. Today, Latta Park is at the scale of what Mecklenburg County would identify as a neighborhood park. Nearby Freedom Park seems to have taken the present day identity of the former Latta Park. The park is thirty-one acres in size and boasts many amenities. A sprayground, basketball court, two multi-purpose fields, six tennis courts, volleyball court, picnic shelter with restroom, grill, playground, walking/fitness trails, and two soccer fields are housed within the park space. Latta Park is also very aesthetically pleasing as well, with pedestrian scale lighting, mature trees lining pathways, pedestrian bridges over streams, and accessibility throughout the park to Dilworth. The neighborhood park is centrally located in the neighborhood, and although the topography does create a ravine, there are good sightlines, which gives the park an open, airy feel. The park is well maintained and in good physical condition. The only signs of wear are to picnic tables and exterior grills placed throughout the park. The winding paths throughout the park create connection points that connect the park to the neighborhood.

Adjacent to the park space are two recreational facilities, Latta Recreation Center and Tom Sykes Recreation Center. Latta Recreation Center was built in 1951, but is open for use. The center remains listed on Mecklenburg County's Park and Recreation Website,

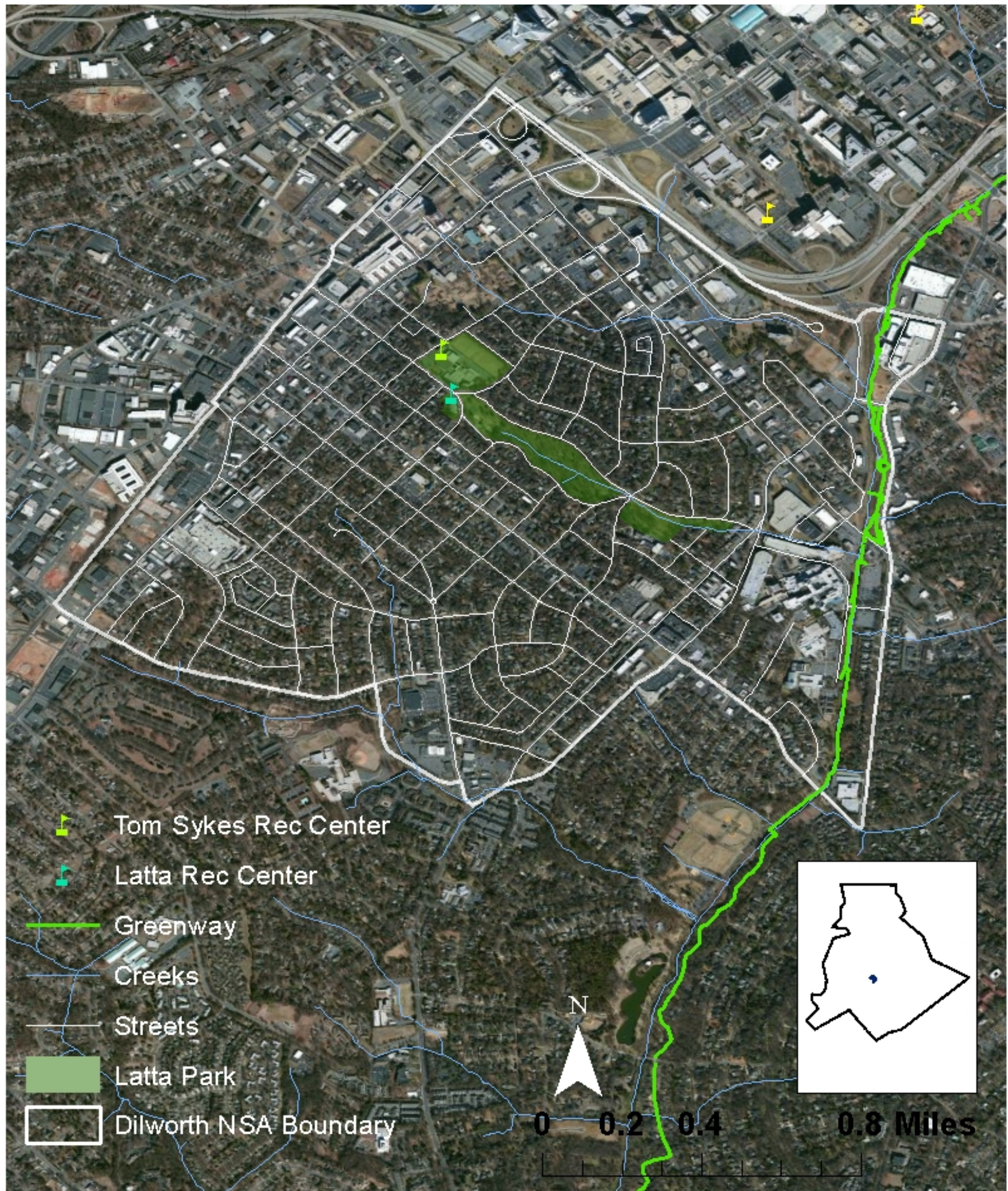
however it does not list the types of activities that take place there. Personal contact with Parks and Recreation staff did not lead to an answer on what the current use is for the recreation center. Tom Sykes Recreation Center is also adjacent to Latta Recreation Center and Latta Park. It boasts multiple amenities such as tennis courts, soccer fields, programming spaces, indoor basketball gym and rentable spaces for use by the community. The recreation center is also physically connected to Dilworth Elementary School, and was built in 1967. Table 5.1.1 inventories the amenities of Latta Park, and Figure 5.1.1 shows the current green and recreational space in Dilworth. The spatial cluster of both the recreation centers and the park works as an asset to the entire neighborhood. Figures 5.1.2, 5.1.3 and 5.1.4 show the amenities of Latta Park at the micro level, and figure 5.1.5 shows the recreation centers in the neighborhood.

TABLE 5.1.1. INVENTORY OF PARK/RECREATION AMENITIES

Dilworth Windshield Survey	
Acres	33
Recreation Centers	Tom Sykes & Latta
Playground	Metal playground, and sprayground
Trails	Natural and concrete
Athletic Fields/Courts	Basketball, volleyball, tennis
Other Infrastructure	Pavilion – restroom shelter, Pedestrian scale lighting, stone retaining walls, picnic tables, benches, charcoal grills
Landscaping	maintained
Usage	Highly utilized

Source: Author, Mecklenburg County.

FIGURE 5.1.1. GREEN/RECREATION SPACE IN DILWORTH.



Source: ("Latta Park" 2013); U.S. Census Bureau; Cartography by: Author

FIGURE 5.1.2. LATTA PARK.