SECTION 2

DEMOGRAPHICS

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Section 2: Demographics

Located in the northernmost extent of DeKalb County, the City of Dunwoody takes pride in maintaining its long and rich history. From its beginnings as a Cherokee Indian camp just south of the banks of the Chattahoochee River, Dunwoody has rediscovered itself as a picturesque community featuring some of metro Atlanta's most popular shopping and dining destinations. Much of Dunwoody's past growth can be directly attributed to the rapid expansion of nearby Atlanta, particularly the development along Dunwoody's southern border, Interstate 285. Following the City's formal incorporation on December 1, 2008, leaders of this highly developed area recognized the need to promote the growth and conservation of green space within the City limits. To better meet this agenda, City leaders recognized the need to develop a Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan in order to establish and plan sufficient parks and recreation services to its citizens.

Providing adequate recreation opportunities to the citizens of Dunwoody requires a thorough understanding of the community's population, both past and present. Comprehending these demographic trends will aid City officials by providing insight into their ability to meet current service levels and by projecting future demands based on anticipated population levels.

Creating a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan also requires an in-depth analysis of a community's profile in order to understand the composition of the population and their respective needs. To begin the demographic analysis, the planning team gathered information from an online subscription-based resource, DemographicsNow, which compiles U.S. Census data and also provides population estimates and projections. By assembling a demographic profile for Dunwoody and studying trends in population, the planning team was able to better ascertain the needs of each community and substantiate recommendations found throughout this master plan. The aggregate of information contained in this section highlights some of the more notable and relevant statistics in terms of parks and recreation services. Much of this information includes projections to better guide recommendations made over the life of this master plan. In addition, Dunwoody's data will be compared to that of similar cities, the State of Georgia and the nation as a whole to provide benchmarks against which the City may be measured. Gauging where population growth will occur and the composite nature of that growth is the most effective way to determine the level of service required in the next decade. Providing for the future is the key to a successful present.

Dunwoody Population Trends

An analysis of the data obtained through DemographicsNow provides researchers the information needed to understand the population trends occurring in Dunwoody. In addition to the overall growth patterns, an analysis of the population trends occurring within the City's census tracts allows researchers to understand the dynamic population changes occurring within a specific area. Researchers note that prior to the 2010 Census, information collected for this area was for the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Dunwoody, which does not accurately reflect the City's boundaries. It should be noted the CDP for Dunwoody includes both an area that is not within the incorporated limits of Dunwoody, as well as leaving out a second significant area of the municipal boundaries of the City of Dunwoody. Despite this disparity, this information aids researchers by placing a perspective on the nature of the City's growth and allows researchers to anticipate future demand levels associated with a park or recreation facility.

In order to gain a more thorough understanding of these statistics, Dunwoody's was compared to similar local cities such as Decatur, Johns Creek, Roswell and Sandy Springs. In a similar fashion, Dunwoody was compared against long-established local parks and recreation programs, such as Gainesville, GA and Doral, FL, to gain insight on its program meets the needs of its citizens. Researchers have also drawn data from other samplings such as DeKalb County, the State of Georgia and the United States to further support their findings.

Given the data obtained through DemographicsNow, researchers estimate the current population of Dunwoody at approximately 40,231, representing a 22.4% increase over the 2000 Census figures for the CDP Dunwoody, which placed the city's population at 32,865. Current projections indicate continued growth of 23.8%, bringing the population to 49,822 residents by the year 2015. Due to the current economic state, researchers determined that the City's population growth will likely level-off over the coming years. As a result, the planning team anticipates that Dunwoody will continue to grow by another 11,857 (23.8%) by the year 2020, bringing the projected population to 61,679. Incorporated Dunwoody encompasses 13.2 square miles, resulting in a current population density of 3,431 persons per square mile. Naturally, as the city's population continues to increase, so will its density. Proper planning requires the City to take the necessary steps to ensure that sufficient park land remains available to accommodate this growing population.

Table 2.1 shows Dunwoody's growth compared to other benchmark communities. These statistics indicate that, historically, Dunwoody continues to grow each year at a moderate rate compared to the other data tracts. However, population projections into 2015 indicate that Dunwoody is the only city to have an increase in its rate of growth. In fact, it will be the fastest growing city by 2015, in comparison to the other benchmark communities.

Table 2.1- Dunwoody, CDP Population Trends with Benchmarks

Location	1990 Census	2000 Census	Percent Change	2010 Estimate	Percent Change	2015 Projection	Percent Change
Dunwoody	26,330	32,865	24.8%	40,231	22.4%	49,822	23.8%
Decatur	17,513	18,444	5.3%	19,710	6.9%	19,805	0.5%
Johns Creek	33,794	96,879	186.7%	130,337	34.5%	145,728	11.8%
Roswell	56,670	78,769	39.0%	96,781	22.9%	99,332	2.6%
Sandy Springs	68,035	85,704	26.0%	99,724	16.4%	104,040	4.3%
Gainesville	19,163	25,197	31.5%	30,928	22.7%	35,241	13.9%
Doral, FL	6,330	20,382	222.0%	34,603	69.8%	33,410	-3.4%
DeKalb Co.	585,840	665,865	13.7%	749,466	12.6%	780,876	4.2%
Georgia	6,478,221	8,186,453	26.4%	9,960,907	21.7%	10,878,486	9.2%
United States	248,710,012	281,421,906	13.2%	308,332,907	9.6%	322,581,814	4.6%

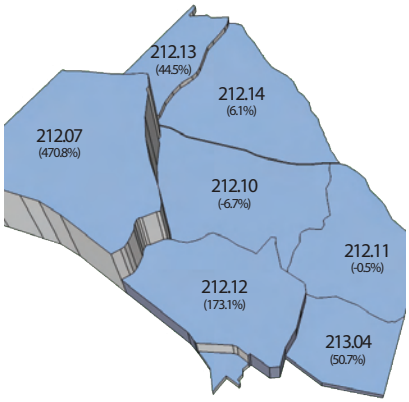
Note: Numbers from the 1990 and 2000 Census reflect the Census Designated Place (CDP) of Dunwoody, and do not accurately represent the City's boundaries at this time.

Table 2.2- Dunwoody Population by Gender

	2000 Census	Percent	2010 Estimate	Percent
Male	16,027	48.8%	19,817	49.3%
Female	16,837	51.2%	20,413	50.7%

Breaking down population trends into census tracts allows researchers to isolate growth patterns within the city. While the most southwestern tract, 213.04, contains portions of unincorporated areas, this analysis provides a valuable insight as to the regions of the city in need of special consideration. Insert Table 2.3-Dunwoody Population Trends by Census Tracts Table 2.3 shows the population totals compiled since the 1990 census, along with current and projected totals for each census tract. According to this data, Dunwoody witnessed sustained growth, particularly in tract 212.07, which encompasses the city's southwest corner, including Perimeter Center. In fact, this area remains one of the fastest growing portions of the city, even into the coming decade. Tract 212.12, located along I-285, also shares a similar trend of being one of the fastest growing areas within the city. While the population of the rest of the city is expected to grow slowly and, in some cases, decline, these two tracts are expected to rapidly become more densely populated over the next decade. These fluctuations in population indicate the need to redirect parks and recreation services to accommodate the changing population. With the majority of growth occurring in the southwestern portion of the city, additional land and services may be required in these areas.

Figure 2.1- Graphic: Fastest Growing Census Tracts 1990-2015



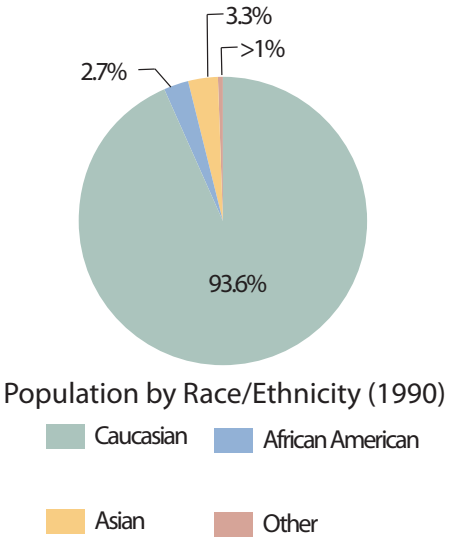
Fastest Growing Census Tracts
1990-2015

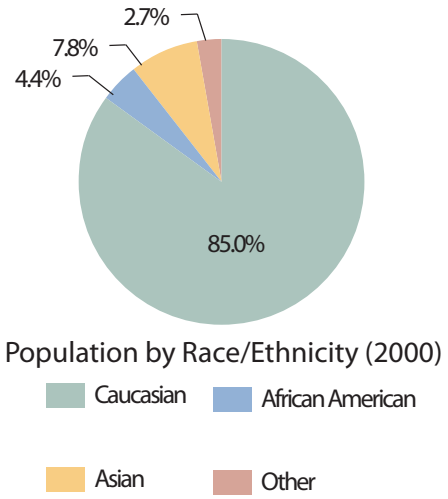
Knowing the quantity of people served by a parks and recreation system is important; furthermore, understanding the specific characteristics of the population is just as critical to providing adequate services to the public. Demographic features to consider in addition to population trends include race, ethnicity, age and other community factors. An effective parks and recreation system takes all of these characteristics into consideration when customizing programs and facilities to meet community needs.

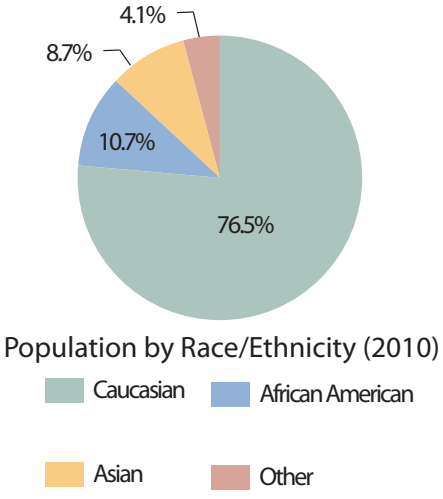
Population by Race and Ethnicity

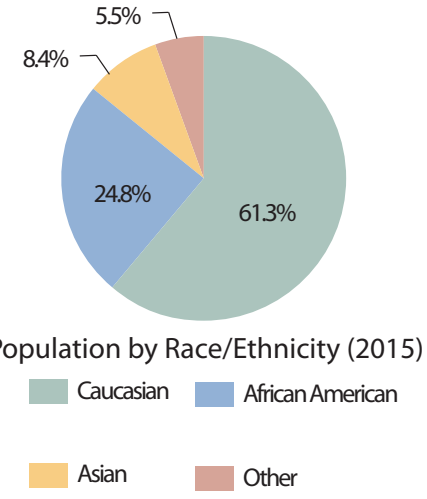
An analysis of Dunwoody's racial and ethnic makeup reveals a predominantly Caucasian population that has been gradually diversifying over the last two decades. Statistics since 1990 show a slight decrease in the Caucasian population, along with an equally slight increase in the African American and Asian populations. Such diversity is indicative of a stable population, particularly in a large metropolitan area such as Atlanta.

Figures 2.2-2.5- Graphic: Population by Race/Ethnicity 1990-2015



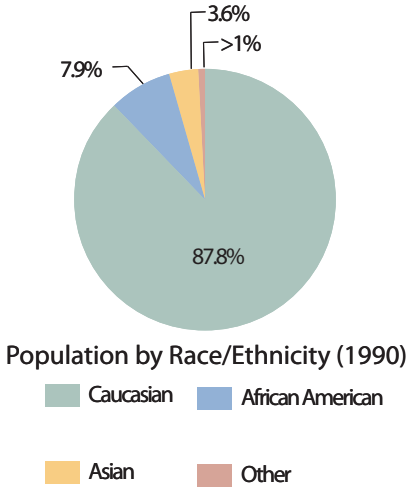






Concurrent with this trend of diversification, researchers noted that the Hispanic population has also grown over the last two decades. Following a boom from 1990-2000, the Hispanic population continues to grow at a rate concurrent with the remaining minorities in the city.

Figure 2.6- Graphic: Hispanic Population Trends 1990-2015



A further breakdown of these trends into census tracts reveals a contrast in Dunwoody's racial/ethnic profile by geography. All but the two southeast tracts, 212.12 and 213.04, are comprised of 75% or more Caucasian residents. Current estimates show that tract 213.04 is the most diverse of the city's areas with 59% of the population representing minorities. In fact, current estimates show the population being comprised of 26.6% African Americans and 40.7% Hispanics, whereas other areas in the city only contain an average of 9.8% and 5.8%, respectively.

Population by Age

The age of the city's population plays a critical role in determining the proper amounts and varieties of recreational programming to all age groups. Since the age of a population is constantly changing from year to year, it is pertinent for a recreation provider to understand the current demands of the population to meet this need. Younger populations tend to require more active and structured forms of recreation. Football, soccer, baseball and softball are popular programming preferences for these younger populations. Older populations, while still considered to be "active," tend to prefer more unstructured programming. Parks and recreation systems nationwide are beginning to notice a growing demand for programs and services gears specifically towards senior (55+) citizens and they are making efforts to stay ahead of that demand.

The youngest of the Baby Boomers have finally entered into the 50+ age group, joining the older Baby Boomers in their sixties commonly referred to as "senior citizens." Many professionals have predicted that these seniors will never think of themselves as growing old; therefore, we are compelled to find new terminology when referring to them. In response to this new generation of seniors, a trend has been growing across the nation to design Active Adult Communities (AACs) that cater to the empty-nest adults along with the early and recent retirees. In general, this is an energetic and participatory group in park and recreation activities, as its members have more available time than when they were raising families. Retirees in the 65 to 75 age group also fit this active lifestyle. As a result of this changing demographic, attention should be given to some of the activities most often utilized by this age group, including tennis, swimming, golf, walking, hiking, gardening, wellness programs and facilities, and off-road running facilities.

According to one nationally recognized consultant for Active Adult Communities, William Parks of CDP in Scottsdale, Arizona, the three most highly rated features of an AAC are natural greenways and trails, nature areas and golf availability. This is important to keep in mind during program and capital planning for a parks department after an evaluation of the 50+ age group.

Table 2.3- Dunwoody Population Trends by Census Tracts

	0-19	Percent Change	20-54	Percent Change	55+	Percent Change
1990 Census	6,351		14,399		5,580	
2000 Census	6,948	9.4%	17,771	23.4%	8,144	45.9%
2010 Estimate	7,466	7.5%	19,968	12.4%	12,799	57.2%
2015 Projection	8,743	17.1%	24,011	20.2%	17,072	33.4%
Percent Change (2000-2015)		25.8%		35.1%		109.6%

As shown in Table 2.4, each age group continued to grow in size over the last two decades, keeping in pace with the overall population growth. This data also reveals that a majority of the population in Dunwoody is comprised of adults between the ages of 20-54. The growth pattern between these adults and children 0-19 years of age is relatively consistent, showing a stable influx of new families within the City. Data such as this tends to indicate that little change is expected over the coming years in terms of accommodating these age groups which will likely be interested in youth and adult athletic programs as well as other child-oriented services. As shown in Table 2.4, Dunwoody can compare itself to cities with similar ratios of households with children, such as Decatur and Sandy Springs, to gauge the relative amounts of programs and facilities being provided to accommodate this demographic.

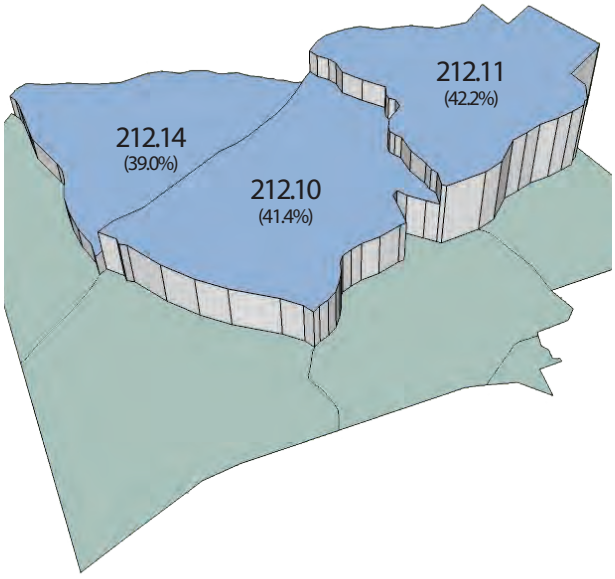
Table 2.4- Benchmark Household Child Comparison

Location	Households with Children	Households without Children
Dunwoody	26.2%	73.8%
Decatur	21.0%	79.0%
Johns Creek	49.7%	50.3%
Roswell	34.2%	65.8%
Sandy Springs	20.4%	79.6%
Gainesville	36.2%	63.8%
Doral, FL	36.2%	63.8%
DeKalb Co.	30.9%	69.1%
Georgia	36.8%	63.2%
United States	50.9%	49.1%

Additional analysis of Dunwoody's age trends reveals that the senior population has consistently been the fastest growing age group over the past two decades. According to this data the 55+ age group has grown over 109% in the last fifteen years, whereas younger demographics have only grown less than 40% over the same time period. In fact, the median age reported in the 2000 Census for the City was 38.4; however, current projections anticipate the median age to be 45.5 by 2015.

A breakdown of these trends by census tracts reveals that the northernmost portions of the city have the highest rates of senior growth. Conversely, the southern portions of the city represent the highest rates of child population growth. Tracts 202.10 and 212.11 were also identified as having the majority of their populations classified as seniors.

Figure 2.7- Graphic: Fastest growing Senior Populations (2010)



Fastest Growing Senior Populations
2010

Education, Employment and Income Profiles

Another aspect of parks and recreation services that is often overlooked is the effect that a population's education, employment and income characteristics place on service demands. These three profiles often correlate with one another and substantiate the trends found in the others. Typically, lower levels of each of these components tend to indicate a population that would seek more local recreation opportunities, as well as public programs and facilities, rather than private ones. These data sets also provide insight into a population's ability to financially support a growing parks and recreation department.

Table 2.6 shows that Dunwoody falls mid-range across the board in comparisons to the identified benchmark cities. However, these numbers also indicate that Dunwoody is well above the average when compared to larger demographics, such as DeKalb County, the State of Georgia and the United States. By ranking higher among these baseline data sets, researchers can conclude that Dunwoody's population is largely dependant on the City's parks and recreation services. However, the population should be able to sustain increased funding to promote and preserve these services throughout the area.

Table 2.6- Benchmark Income, Education Comparison

Location	Average Household Income	Employed Blue Collar	Employed White Collar	Did not graduate high school	High School Graduate	Education Beyond High School
Dunwoody	$108,217	19.7%	80.9%	6.8%	13.7%	79.5%
Decatur	$79,894	18.9%	81.1%	11.1%	16.0%	73.0%
Johns Creek	$146,455	13.2%	86.8%	2.2%	11.1%	86.7%
Roswell	$118,409	21.7%	78.8%	5.5%	14.9%	79.7%
Sandy Springs	$126,356	19.7%	80.3%	4.4%	12.1%	83.6%
Gainesville	$65,564	56.3%	43.7%	31.7%	25.2%	43.2%
Doral, FL	$103,401	17.3%	82.8%	5.8%	17.6%	76.7%
DeKalb Co.	$73,320	32.5%	67.6%	12.6%	24.3%	63.3%
Georgia	$68,917	40.5%	59.5%	16.4%	30.2%	53.5%
United States	$72,148	39.7%	60.3%	14.8%	29.7%	55.4%

Additional analysis of this data by census tract reveals a disparity within the city. Areas along the city's southern edge encompassed by census tracts 202.07, 202.12 and 203.04 contain a population with average household incomes lower than the rest of the city's averages. Tract 213.04, in particular, has both an average household income and educational attainment level of nearly half of what has been listed for the city overall. Special focus will have to be placed to provide affordable services locally in the southeast corner of the city to provide for these citizens.

Summary

The unique combination of a historic setting within a major metropolitan area makes the City of Dunwoody an attractive option for those looking for a balance between a relaxed suburban lifestyle and the shopping, dining and business associated with a large city. As Dunwoody continues to grow, park and recreation service providers must adjust to meet the needs of an ever-changing population.

In anticipation of the city's increasing population density growth, Dunwoody will be challenged to seek out additional park land to meet service level requirements for its growing population. Fortunately, the rapid growth experienced during the 1990s has passed and the population is growing at a more sustainable level. When planning for future park land and recreation programs, additional consideration should be given to the south and southwestern portions of the city, which are expected to grow faster than other data tracts.

With each passing year, the racial/ethnic composition of Dunwoody is becoming more diverse. Previously, the vast majority of the population was comprised of Caucasian residents. However, this trend has been consistently decreasing, giving way to an increase in both African American and Hispanic populations. This trend is expected to continue over the life of this Master Plan. Researchers noticed a growing concentration of Hispanic residents in southeast Dunwoody. Additional consideration may have to be given to meet the recreational needs of this particular demographic.

Establishing the trends within the population's age groups is a critical factor in providing adequate and appropriate recreation services. Like many communities, Dunwoody has a stabilized population comprised mainly of young and middle-aged adults. The youth population continues to grow in stride with the aforementioned adults, indicating consistent demand levels for both youth and adult athletic programming. Conversely, Dunwoody has witnessed a surge in the senior population, particularly in the north and northeast areas of the city. This growing population of active adults will require additional consideration to provide an appropriate diversity of programs and facilities to accommodate the senior population.

Dunwoody is fortunate to have one of the most affluent and highly-educated communities in Georgia, which stems from a strong economic base that draws on nearby Atlanta. This level of prosperity allows the community to support quality recreation as well as opportunities for expansion of existing services. Researchers recommend investigating joint ventures with education and private recreation providers to accommodate the diminishing quantity of developable park land.

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