



# FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

## Master Plan – 2018 –



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## INTRODUCTION:

### Master Plan Purpose

This plan provides the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department (FCPRD) with a 10-year master plan. The Frederick County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan) will serve as a component plan of the Frederick County 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2035 Plan) and provide standards for levels of park and recreation services and facilities in the county, along with development priorities and an implementation strategy (formerly Strategic Plan). It will help Frederick County to allocate services and to meet identified parks and recreation needs in the future.

The plan provides use and demand characteristics of the facilities, properties, and programs available to Frederick County residents. The plan also documents the public and stakeholder input obtained throughout the planning process. This community input provides a framework for confirming the master plan's goals. The combination of information, public feedback, and measurable and definable goals and objectives serves to help the community act and invest in a system-wide approach that aligns with community priorities.

## PLANNING FOCUS:

A key part of the master plan process is the community engagement process, a necessary source of a community-oriented park and recreation system. Community engagement is designed to create a collaborative process to work towards developing support for the master plan.

<b><u>Meeting/Action</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
Master Plan Committee	Outline, Scope, & Schedule	March 2017
Stakeholder Meetings	Focus Groups & Interviews	May 2017
Community Survey	Mail and Online	June-Aug 2017
Master Plan Committee	Level of Service	September 2017
Master Plan Committee	Plan Priorities	January 2018
Master Plan Committee	Draft Plan	February 2018
Public Input	Draft Plan	
Master Plan Committee	Plan Approval	
P&R Commission	Plan Approval	
BOS	Plan Approval	

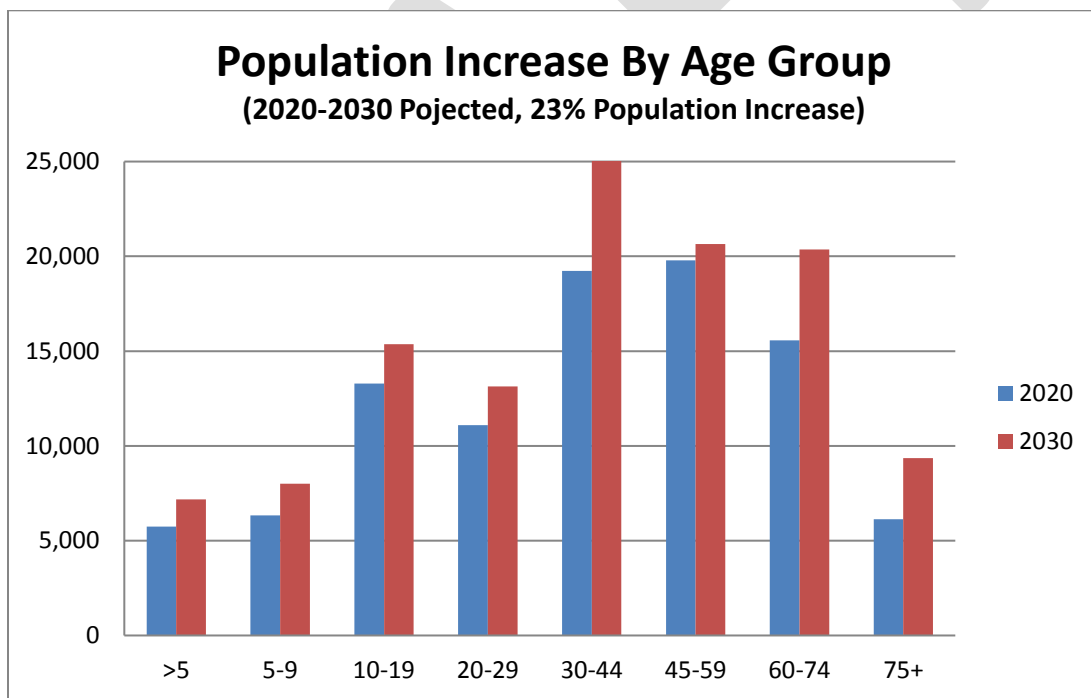
## Overview of Frederick County

With a 2015 population of 83,199, Frederick County is the 13<sup>th</sup> (of 95) most populous county in the state of Virginia. The population is projected to increase to 97,000 by 2020 and 119,000 by 2030, nearly double the rate of growth projected for the state of Virginia (Virginia Employment Commission).

Located in the Shenandoah Valley, Frederick County is the states northernmost locality. The county seat, Winchester City, population 27,284, is located in the eastern portion of the county. Interstate 81 is the largest transportation route in the county, and runs North-South through the eastern portion of the county.

## Demographic Projections:

The following demographic information was taken from the Virginia Employment Commission, Weldon-Cooper Center, and US Census Bureau. Demographics are important to consider in reviewing opportunities for specific recreation program and facility needs. Understanding overall population trends and current age cohort increases provides the backdrop for pursuing relevant park and recreation services.



Demographic shifts by race indicate overall increases in overall numbers for all racial categories, but a reduction in the overall percent of white residents (86% to 82%). Black (4%) and Asian (3%) ethnicities maintain a consistent percent of the total, while the Hispanic population increases 170% from 10% in 2020 to 14% in 2030 (Virginia Employment Commission)

## Supporting Framework

The Frederick County 2035 Plan provides a long-term vision to help guide the County's future growth and development. It is guided by Core Values and Vision adopted by the Board of Supervisors. In turn the plan is used to guide public decision making for County departments. The guiding framework for the 2035 Plan are stated as Core Values and include the following Vision Statement and Values:

Board of Supervisors Vision Statement:

"Insuring the quality of life of all Frederick County Citizens by preserving the past and planning for the future through sound fiscal management."

## Board of Supervisors Core Values

- A government that is accountable and dedicated to providing responsible stewardship for County funds and to insure the citizens receive the best services possible for the funds expended.
- A government concerned with long range planning that protects our rural heritage and directs its future growth through planned infrastructure.
- A government concerned with expanding commercial and industrial tax base in order to insure a viable and thriving economy.
- A government that looks to the future and implements plans to insure that the quality of life for future generations is preserved.
- A government that emphasizes a quality education through a cooperative effort with the school board.
- A government that recognizes the importance of maintain a highly trained public safety program to provide efficient services and protection to County citizens.
- A government that promotes the spirit of cooperation with its regional local government partners and, in particular, the City of Winchester.
- A government unit based on honesty, trust, integrity, and respect that understands the importance of clear communication and a willingness to listen.

## Parks and Recreation Mission and Vision Statements

FCPRD's Mission statement:

FCPRD is committed to promoting and providing quality parks and recreational facilities, programs, and leisure opportunities for our community.

FCPRD's Vision statement:

Making life better through people, parks, and recreation opportunities.



## 2035 Comprehensive Plan guidance for Parks and Recreation:

The 2035 Plan lists two specific goals for the Parks and Recreation department, these are:

- Contribute to the physical, mental, and cultural needs of the community; its economic and social well-being, and its sense of civic pride and social responsibility through the implementation of an integrated plan for recreation programs and park facilities, and,
- To have every resident of Frederick County's Urban Development Area (UDA) within walking or biking distance of a recreation area.

The goals developed through the Master Planning process directly relate to these Comprehensive Plan goals, ensuring that the Department and the County are in alignment with their activities and direction.

## 2012 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

In 2012 the Parks and Recreation department completed its first strategic plan document. Information gathering for the 2012 plan included public input meetings, stakeholder interviews, staff interviews, and a community survey. The 2012 Community Survey was the first performed by the department and was conducted to obtain statistical validity consistent with industry standards. In the assessment of gathered information, formation of strategic plan goals, and execution of strategies, the survey provided an objective basis by which to gauge various input sources.

The 2012 Strategic Plan outlined twelve aspirational goals and corresponding strategies. Identified goals included:

- Identify and secure funding to support FCPRD aspirations
- Develop culture of common purpose among FCPRD staff
- Increase capabilities and knowledge of staff
- Develop new and improve current facilities
- Increase environmental stewardship posture of department
- Provide the tools and equipment necessary for staff to effectively and efficiently carry out job functions
- Ensure alignment of program offerings with community needs
- Enhance customer service
- Increase awareness of Parks and Recreation Department
- Increase attractiveness and awareness of programs
- Demonstrate efficient operations
- Maintain relevance of Strategic Plan

It was the intent of the 2012 Strategic Plan to be updated after five years. One role of this Master Plan document is to serve as the five-year update to the 2012 Strategic Plan.

## CURRENT CONDITIONS

### Parks and Recreation in Frederick County

The Parks and Recreation Department manages 411 acres of parkland in four parks, maintains 25 acres of undeveloped parkland at a future park site, and offers hundreds of programs for Frederick County residents of all ages and abilities. The department is responsible for 5 co-located Community Centers at Frederick County Public School (FCPS) locations. Additionally, the department manages numerous park amenities, including 2 fitness facilities, 2 lakes, 8 playgrounds, 19 pavilions, 2 outdoor pools, 10 diamond ball fields, and 6 rectangle ball fields.

### Park Classifications:

Park systems generally provide a wide array of diverse settings for diverse uses. A park classification system widely used in the industry was created by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) to help categorize and plan park land. NRPA classifications include:

- Mini- Park. Typically one acre or less with a service area of approximately ¼ mile, Mini Parks are used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.
- Neighborhood Park. 5-10 acres with a service area of up to ½ mile, neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and are intended to serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.
- School-Park. Variable size parks with a service area dependent on the available amenities, the school-park combine the resources of two public agencies allowing for the expansion of recreation opportunities. The important outcome in the joint-use relationship is that both the school district and the park system benefit for shared use of facilities and land area.
- Community Park. Usually between 20-50 acres with a service area of ½ to 3 miles, community parks serve broader purposes than neighborhood parks. Focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. They should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities.
- Regional Park. 50+ acres serving the entire community. Regional Parks serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. The focus is on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.
- Trails. Multipurpose trails emphasizing recreation and/or safe travel in natural areas or to and from points in the community. Can be paved or unpaved depending on the target user group.

### Other Land Types:

- Undeveloped. Frederick County currently has 25 acres of undeveloped land at a future park site currently named Snowden Bridge Park. According to park planning documents and direction, parts of Sherando, Clearbrook, and Frederick Heights Park could also be considered undeveloped. Of these, Sherando Park has a significant amount (>100 acres) of undeveloped land, while the others have areas where fill-in amenities could be sited.

#### Recreation Centers:

FCPRD manages 5 recreation centers at Frederick County Public School locations. Depending on the specific location, Recreation Centers provide programming and meeting space, as well as gymnasiums, racquetball courts, and fitness rooms.

#### Other Providers:

FCPRD is not the only provider of park and recreation services in the community. Organizations from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors all play a role in offering programs and/or facilities that relate to parks and recreation.

#### **Other Providers of Parkland, Recreation Facilities, and Programs:**

##### Frederick County Public Schools

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) owns land around school properties, and these lands are frequently used as public park land by the community. These properties include facilities such as; playgrounds, athletic fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and track facilities. Through a cooperative use agreement with FCPS, FCPRD activities are also offered using indoor and outdoor school facilities.

##### Winchester City Parks and Recreation

Winchester City Parks and Recreation (WPR) manages 13 parks offering over 270 acres of parkland in the City of Winchester. Being surrounded by Frederick County, many county residents live near the jurisdictional boundary with Winchester and use WPR parks and programs. WPR's Jim Barnett Park offers many facilities including some not available in the greater Frederick County area. These include; a competition size indoor pool, BMX track, and public dog park.

##### Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) manages approximately 598 acres of Civil War Battlefield property in Frederick County. Third Battle of Winchester Civil War Site is the bulk of this publicly accessible land, the remaining 6 acres are found at the Star Fort location just north of the City of Winchester. The Third Battle site is a popular destination for walkers, Civil War enthusiasts, and recreational cyclists. The property holds approximately 3 miles of shared-use path and various side trails for pedestrians only. Both Start Fort and Third Winchester are open to the public free of charge and have interpretative signage explaining the significance of each site.

##### Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) manages two properties in Frederick County. A 30-acre parcel along Red Bud Run in eastern Frederick County provides fishing, hiking, and natural areas. The 226-acre Lake Frederick in southeastern Frederick County, mostly comprised by its namesake lake, is a major recreation site providing fishing, non-motorized boating, and hiking opportunities.

##### National Park Service



The Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park preserves and interprets key historical sites and the rich cultural heritage of the Shenandoah Valley. Offering a Visitors Center in Middletown and the Belle Grove Plantation House the park provides hiking and driving tours on over 500 acres in southern Frederick County.

#### Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

The Tuscarora Trail is a 252-mile alternate route for the Appalachian Trail spanning from central Virginia to central Pennsylvania. Approximately 35 miles of the trail traverses western Frederick County in a north/south orientation. Opportunities for hiking and camping exist on and along the Tuscarora Trail.

#### Middletown and the Town of Stephens City

Both Middletown and the Town of Stephens City have neighborhood parks within their jurisdictions. Stephens City also owns the Passage Road Ballfield complex used by Little League.

#### Body Renew Fitness Sportsplex

The Sportsplex is a privately-owned facility with a multi-purpose arena and synthetic turf field. The Sportsplex provides various indoor league recreation opportunities.

#### Public Golf Courses

Rock Harbor and Appleland Sports Center provide opportunities for Golf in Frederick County. Rock Harbor has two traditional 18 hole courses, while Appleland is a 10 hole par 3 course. Both sites have practice driving ranges.

#### Youth Sports Partners

Frederick County Parks and Recreation partners with several youth sports partners to facilitate the provision of recreation opportunities for Frederick County youth. These include:

- Youth Development Center
- Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association
- Frederick County American Little League
- Frederick County National Little League
- Winchester Frederick County Youth Tackle Football

#### Private Fitness Clubs

Several private health clubs are in the area and provide users with exercise equipment and in some cases indoor swimming. Area clubs include: Winchester Medical Center Wellness Center, Body Renew Fitness, Planet Fitness, and Golds Gym.

## Recreation Programs

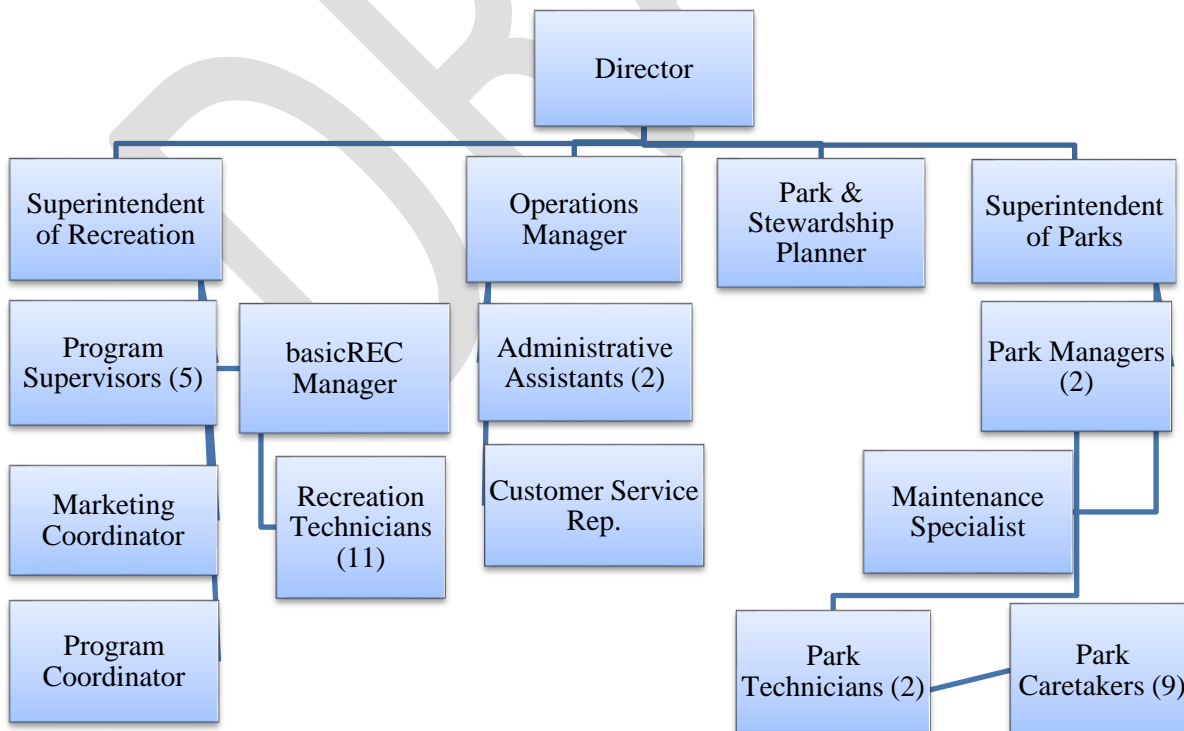
FCPRD offers a variety of recreation programs and service to area residents. Program areas include sports and athletics, senior programs, trips, before and after school recreation, and enrichment activities. A number of special events are also offered by the department throughout the year, including notable events such as; the July 4 celebration, Battlefield ½ Marathon, and Winter Wonderland holiday light show.

The department benefits from strong partnerships that it has throughout the community. Area youth leagues such as Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association, Frederick County American Little League, Frederick County American Little League, and Winchester Frederick County Youth Tackle Football have agreements with FCPRD to host leagues on FCPRD fields. These agreements provide significant budget relief for FCPRD as staffing and league organization are handled by the partner organization.

Facility partnerships allow the department to expand recreation programming beyond the limits of County owned amenities. Agreements with private and public recreation providers allows for a broader recreation programming scope than otherwise possible. The department hosts programs at a variety of locations such as; Snowden Bridge, Kernstown Battlefield, Body Renew Sportsplex, and Northside Lanes among others.

## Organizational Structure

The departments' organizational structure is designed to provide the efficient provision of parks and recreation services and is outlined in the following graphic:



The Department is led by a Director, who is appointed by the County Administrator. The Director oversees four divisions; Recreation, Operations, Planning, and Parks all of which assist the Director in providing services for the community. The Recreation Division is responsible the development and execution of the recreation program for all ages and abilities. The Operations Manager develops administrative systems, policies, procedures, and budget management. The Park and Stewardship Planner prepares park use plans and manages park development. The Parks Division is responsible for maintenance and operation of the park system.

### Organizational Assessment

Changes in the organizational structure in the past 5 years have occurred in an effort to align job function with division duty. All divisions of the Parks and Recreation Department have seen changes to their structure. In the Recreation division, an additional Recreation Technician and Recreation Coordinator position were added to help with programming. Recognizing and emphasizing the importance of marketing, a Public Information Officer position was changed to Marketing Coordinator and moved from the Administration division to the Recreation division. Responsibility for facility reservations was shifted to the Recreation division due to the fact that the bulk of reservations are for recreation programs.

In the Parks and Administrative divisions, the Operations Manager and Park and Stewardship Planner were moved from Parks to Administration division, reporting to the Park Superintendent, and now report directly to the Director. The Operations Manager is tasked with overseeing the Administrative Assistants and Registration Specialist, a function that has seen a reduction from two to one Registration Specialist.

Future structures of the organization will continue to evolve to best meet community needs. As facilities develop and community demands change the organizational structure should reflect current public expectations.

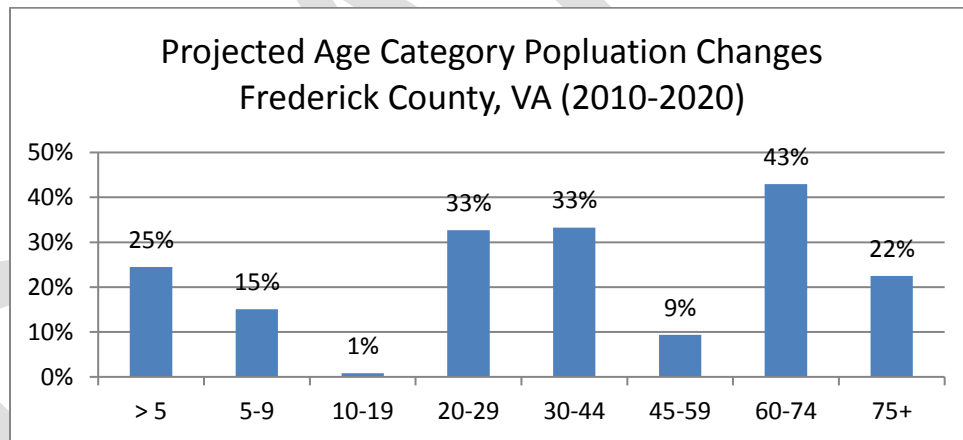
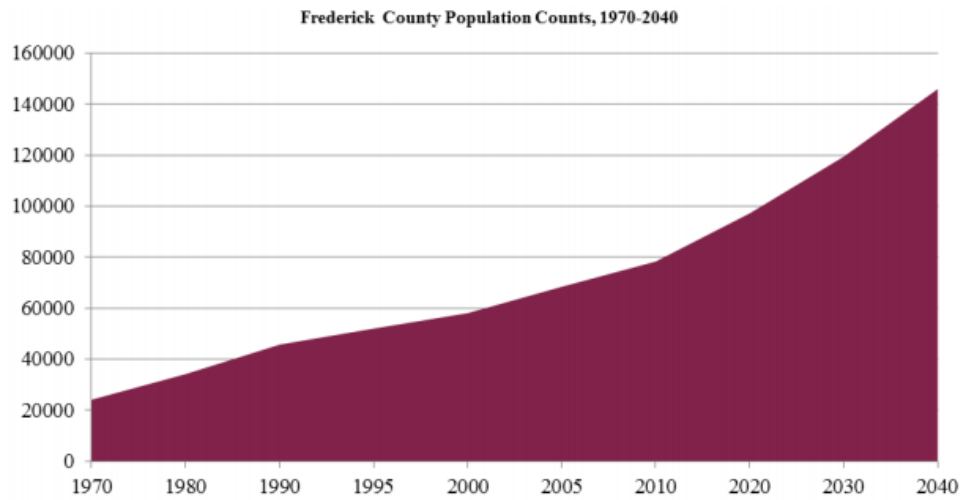
## PROJECTION ANALYSIS

Examining evolving trends in the community provides a backdrop to other findings and helps put together an accurate, comprehensive depiction of community needs. These issues and trends provide a backdrop for the strategic recommendations of this plan.

### Frederick County Population:

Frederick County's population increased approximately 20% over the past decade, nearly double Virginia's population, and only behind growth found in Virginia's major metropolitan areas. The current (2017 Weldon Cooper estimated) population of 86,574, and is expected to continue to increase at a rate

of approximately 20% in the next decade. As shown in the graphic below, the population of Frederick County is changing more rapidly every year.



(Virginia Employment Commission, 2017)

Of Frederick County’s race and ethnicity makeup in 2010, 86% of the population was White. Hispanics were the second largest ethnic group making up 7% of the population. Projections show an increasingly homogeneous population in the next decade with 90% of the population White and most other groups shrinking in proportion and/or actual number (VA Employment Commission, 2017).

### Employment

While Frederick County’s workforce was impacted by the recent economic downturn, unemployment has returned to pre-recession levels. Manufacturing, Government, and Retail are Frederick County’s largest employment sectors. Healthcare and Education are sectors with the greatest anticipated growth in the next 10 years (VA Employment Commission, 2017).

## Education

The level of education in Frederick County is higher than the state of Virginia as a whole and largely mirrors national levels. Of those 18 and older, 51% have received education past the high school level and 12% have not completed high school. Of those not having completed high school, the age cohort contributing the most to this attainment level are those older than 65 years (VA Employment Commission, 2017).

## Development Patterns

The Frederick County 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2035 Plan) speaks to development in both Urban and Rural areas of the county. As has been the case for the past few decades, growth is intended to primarily occur in the Urban Development Area (UDA). The UDA generally follows the I-81 corridor and areas to the east, and is designated for both residential and commercial development. Approximately 2/3 of Frederick County's population resides in the UDA, even though the area comprises just under 10% of the county's total land area. Further delineating the development emphasis for urban areas is the availability of sewer and water services. The Sewer and Water Service Area (SWSA) boundary defines the limits of public sewer and water service, and an expectation that new development will utilize public sewer and water as opposed to private sanitary systems. As a general rule, the SWSA and UDA share a common boundary.

In the UDA, targeted higher density residential development areas include Neighborhood Villages and Urban Centers. According to the 2035 Plan these development areas are intended to be walkable communities with community facilities such as parks, schools, and libraries serving as focal points.

Located outside the UDA boundary, the remaining 91% of Frederick County's land area is primarily rural with a few higher density recreation communities and rural communities found throughout. According to the 2035 Plan, "The Rural Areas best exhibit the nature, beauty, view sheds, and tranquility for which Frederick County is known. The primary land uses in the Rural Areas are agricultural and forestall operations. The Rural Areas of the County have traditionally seen about 30% of the County's new residential growth." Development in rural areas is based on 5-acre zoning, with an option to offer cluster zoning to preserve residual lots on larger tracts. Preservation of open space and the rural character of the County is identified as a priority in the 2035 Plan.

Development of recreation opportunities in the Rural Areas is identified as a priority in the 2035 Plan, and supporting rural recreation is a stated goal. The accompanying strategy to this goal directs the County to, "Identify and support local, regional, and national rural recreation opportunities within the County's Rural Areas." One unique type of high density development existing in the Rural Area is; Residential Recreational Community District (R5). R5 is typified by rural communities centered around recreation amenities. Densities are greater than typical Rural Area allowances, and recreation amenities are provided to attract and retain residents. Primary examples include developments at Lake Holiday, Lake Frederick, Shawneeland, and Mountain Falls.

The final areas of higher density development in the Rural Areas are the Rural Community Centers. These areas are village type development of mixed commercial and residential uses. No public water or sewer utilities are found in these centers, the 2035 Plan calls for recreation amenities to be located in Rural Community Centers to help create “more walkable, livable communities.”

## Wellness

According to the Virginia Health Rankings, Frederick County ranks 20<sup>th</sup> of 133 counties for health outcomes related to Quality of Life. Health related quality of life is a “multi-dimensional concept that includes domains related to physical, mental, emotional, and social functioning. It goes beyond direct measures of population health, life expectancy and causes of death, and focuses on the impact health status has on quality of life.” The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined health-related quality of life as “an individual’s or group’s perceived physical and mental health over time.”

Despite Frederick County’s relatively strong health ranking within the state of Virginia, the county still faces health challenges. Obesity rates in Frederick County are rising faster than state averages, as well as inactivity rates. In order to address these issues, Parks and Recreation programs and facilities provide a means to increasing health and wellness in the community. Goals identified in this document will contribute to a healthier community, especially the pursuit of recreation amenities and programs available to underserved populations.

## Recreation Trends

The Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department is known by many because of Clearbrook and Sherando Parks. These parks provide community members with program venues and fitness opportunities. Among the most popular active recreation pursuit in the community is walking for pleasure, and adult fitness is identified as the top recreation need in the 2017 Parks and Recreation Community Survey (2017 Survey). Identified as a top aspirational recreation activity, swimming for fitness is a consistently high ranking category with local interest in an indoor aquatics facility demonstrated in the 2017 Survey.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Accurately assessing needs is one of the primary parts of planning. Accurate data is key to developing meaningful goals and strategies. Methods utilized for obtaining public input include; community engagement, research, and benchmarking. Community input included public input sessions, stakeholder meetings, and the 2012 and 2017 Community Surveys. The Community Surveys provide a randomized, statistically valid representation of the opinions of County residents; Parks and Recreation users and non-users alike. The 2017 update survey allows for comparison of results providing an indication of changes in opinions and trends of the community.



Research drawn from industry reports provides a broader perspective on services provided by FCPRD in relation to national and state perspectives. Benchmarking was used to assist FCPRD in comparing its park and recreation facilities, programs, and administration to national averages.

### Recreation Demand

By far the most desired facility is shared-use trails, comparison between the 2012 and 2017 survey results shows that the desire for trails is increasing. Developing shared-use trails would connect more citizens to recreation opportunities and promote health and wellness through physical activity. Following trails, desire for small parks and an indoor aquatics facility is identified in the surveys and has increased in importance. Access to close-to-home parks, playgrounds, and picnic areas is also highly valued by residents. This aligns with research suggesting that proximity to parks provides greater opportunities for residents to engage in physical activity.

Priorities for recreational activities found in the 2017 survey include Adult Fitness and Special Events. These findings are consistent with 2012 results and are trending higher by comparison. Special Events remain a significant focus for FCPRD and should remain so given the community’s expressed desire. Providing greater opportunities for Adult Fitness should continue to be a recreation priority and the department should strive to find a niche in this area to avoid conflicting with services of the many private adult fitness providers in the community.

### Level of Service Analysis

Needs are expressed through a Level of Service (LOS) analysis that considers all findings. Numeric LOS metrics are most commonly used when analyzing parkland and recreation facilities so as to express acreage or availability in per capita terms. It should be noted that assessments of recreation programs often rely more heavily on other factors, such as specific programming trends.

The following table lists the level of service for recreation facilities available to Frederick County residents. The order of the items follows the 2017 Survey ranking of amenities as ranked by the community. For items with a target or national average service area, local surplus or deficit of the amenity is shown. Taken as a whole, the table provides a starting point for discussions on amenity prioritization for Frederick County. Service levels shown are derived from National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) and/or are NRPA national median numbers. Some amenities identified in the Frederick County 2017 Community Survey do not have a NRPA target or benchmark average but are listed as desired by Frederick County residents.

### Level of Service Table:

	Total Inventory	NRPA Pop Standard	NRPA Median	LOS Measure	Surplus / Deficit	Unit
Multi-Use Trails	4.7		10		-5.3	Total Miles
Small parks	763.4			6.8		Acres Per 1,000
Indoor Pool	1.0			111,937		# per Population

<b>Large parks</b>	<b>936.1</b>	10.0		8.4	2	Acres Per 1,000
<b>Natural Areas</b>						
<b>Fitness Facility</b>	<b>3.0</b>		40,946	37,312	0	# per Population
<b>Lake/Pond Access</b>	<b>3.0</b>			37,312		
<b>Playgrounds</b>	<b>30.0</b>		3,633	3,731	-1	# per Population
<b>Creek Access</b>	<b>1.0</b>			111,937		
<b>Dog Park</b>	<b>1.0</b>		42,500	111,937	-2	# per Population
<b>Pavilions</b>	<b>46.0</b>			2,433		
<b>Ice Rink</b>	<b>0.0</b>	100,000	30,642	0	-1	# per Population
<b>Senior Center</b>	<b>1.0</b>		48,822	111,937	-1	# per Population
<b>Outdoor Pool</b>	<b>3.0</b>	20,000	33,040	37,312	-3	# per Population
<b>Camping Area</b>	<b>0.0</b>			0		
<b>Rec Center</b>	<b>1.0</b>		24,591	111,937	-4	# per Population
<b>Soft-Baseball Fields</b>	<b>36.0</b>	5,000	6,453	3,109	14	# per Population
<b>Open Play Areas</b>						
<b>Outdoor Track</b>	<b>5.0</b>			22,387		# per Population
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	<b>32.0</b>	2,000	4,375	3,498	-24	# per Population
<b>Rectangle Fields</b>	<b>19.0</b>	10,000	12,468	5,891	8	# per Population
<b>Amphitheater</b>	<b>0.0</b>		48,000	0	-2	# per Population
<b>Outdoor Basketball</b>	<b>27.5</b>	5,000	7,080	4,070	5	# per Population
<b>Ropes Course</b>	<b>0.0</b>			111,937		
<b>Golf Course</b>	<b>1.0</b>			111,937		# per Population
<b>Spray Decks</b>						
<b>Indoor Basketball</b>	<b>6.0</b>			18,656		# per Population
<b>Equestrian Trails</b>						
<b>Skateboard Park</b>				0		
<b># of Parks</b>	<b>35.0</b>		2,401	3,198	-12	# per Population

As in every community Frederick County's inventory is uniquely counted and largely influenced by the interests and desires of the citizenry. It should be noted that NRPA recognizes that their own reference numbers are intended to be only a reference. With virtually unlimited variability of the interests, geography, and values of a community, the ultimate pursuit of a need reflects an individual community's makeup. Frederick County is fortunate to have many providers of publicly accessible recreation amenities and space to take advantage of. As identified in the earlier section identifying Parks and Recreation in Frederick County, the LOS table takes into consideration County owned amenities as well as many of the assets of other providers. Most notably included in the assessment are the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS), Winchester City Parks and Recreation, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Most notably excluded is the nearly 7,000 acres of US National Forest Service (USFS) land within the jurisdictional boundaries of Frederick County. To include the USFS land in the acreage counts would greatly skew the perspective and overemphasize the role this land has in the recreation lives of most Frederick County citizens.

Another unique aspect of the LOS table is that it includes the 27,500 City of Winchester residents in the population count. The addition of the City population to the LOS was done to accurately reflect how recreation amenities are used locally. The fact that City amenities are regularly used by County residents, and County amenities are regularly used by City residents provided the rationale for including City amenities and acreages in the LOS. To count only City amenities and not the City population in the LOS calculations would produce a less accurate accounting than doing otherwise.

A good example of the rationale to include the City of Winchester population is the use of the City's Jim Barnett Park. Located just inside the City boundary with Frederick County, Jim Barnett Park is the closest park to many County residents and is open and used by County residents on a regular basis. Jim Barnett Park houses the only competition level indoor pool in the area, this pool provides recreation for City and County residents alike and provides the practice and competition venue for all Frederick County High School swim teams.

#### Shared-Use Trails

Ranked by far the most desired recreation amenity, and increasing in overall desirability from 2012 to 2017, shared-use trails should be a priority for development in Frederick County. Shared-use trails are typically 6'-10' wide, paved surface trails designed for shared use by varied users. Shared-use trails can be used for recreation, utilitarian, or a combination of the two depending on the termini of a particular trail. Associated median NRPA numbers for agency managed trails show Frederick County is significantly behind the national average.

#### Small Parks

A desire for small parks was the number two desired amenity for Frederick County residents in both 2012 and 2017. Despite not having an associated NRPA reference, the 2035 Plan provides direction to provide small parks near high density population centers in both Urban and Rural areas of the County. Even with the inclusion of City of Winchester Parks and FCPS sites, the total number of park sites within Frederick County's border is below the national average provided by NRPA. The acquisition and development of small parks will help meet community desires, as well as the goals of the 2035 Plan and this Master Plan.

## **FUTURE FOCUS:**

### Key Issues

While the community continues to perceive the department favorably in terms of overall satisfaction, challenges still exist to maintain or improve the quality and quantity of the system. Through research, observation, community engagement, and analysis, several benefit areas frame the overall key issues facing the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department.

The top five identified community benefits identified in both the 2012 and 2017 Community Survey are:

- Improve health and fitness
- Improve quality of Life
- Make Frederick County more desirable
- Provide alternative for Youth
- Preserve Open Space

Addressing these identified benefits are the key issues the department is currently either attempting to address or sees the near-term need to address. The key issues include:

- Improve and Expand Trails and Connections
  - Recognizing the overwhelming desire for trails in both the 2012 and 2017 Surveys, developing new and extending existing trails should be a department priority
  - Trails will promote wellness, leading to an improved standard of living in the community that will help stop and ultimately reduce Frederick County's growing obesity and inactivity rates.
  - Trails can provide an alternate route for local transportation, alleviating automotive congestion
  - Connections throughout the community will allow people more access to all Frederick County's publicly accessible lands, leading to increased use.
- Develop Aquatics Plan
  - With the indoor aquatics facility being a top CIP item for decades, and the existing outdoor facilities being decades old, addressing aquatics as a whole presents itself as the best way to meet community needs.
  - Recognizing the strong need for indoor aquatics, and the aging outdoor aquatics facilities, a comprehensive plan addressing the aquatics vision for the county should be a priority
- Secure Funding for Parks and Recreation Operations and Development
  - Reverse trend towards decreased Parks and Recreation general fund support
  - Secure stable funding streams to support Parks and Recreation needs
  - Continue to seek out grant and other partnership opportunities to advance parks and recreation services and facilities
- Pursue Park Acquisition and Amenity Development Opportunities to Meet Community Needs
  - The department should pursue opportunities for the development of existing and new parkland
  - Promote recreation amenities as part of new residential developments

## Goals / Strategies

Parks and Recreation plays a valued role in benefitting Frederick County's residents. The goals and strategic framework found in this section is intended to address the key issues and assign specific actions steps necessary to accomplishing change.

1. Goal: Develop new trails to provide recreation and transportation benefits  
Strategy: Prioritize key trail opportunities  
Action:
  - Inventory existing trails and trail segments
  - Inventory proffered trail segments
  - Develop trail map of current conditions
  - Develop criteria for trail segment prioritizationStrategy: Pursue key trail opportunities  
Action:
  - Seek funding to develop priority trail segments
2. Goal: Provide a comprehensive indoor and outdoor aquatics program  
Strategy: Consider repurposing existing aquatic facilities  
Action:
  - Determine aquatics needs
  - Develop Aquatics PlanStrategy: Pursue development of indoor aquatics facility
  - Seek funding for indoor aquatics facility
  - Explore regional partners
3. Goal: Align Parks and Recreation Department with Benefits Identified in the 2017 Survey  
Strategy: Emphasize specific benefits when determining Parks and Recreation activities  
Action:
  - Identify and promote connections between P&R activities and identified benefits
  - Inventory connections between FCPRD activities and identified benefits
  - Develop connections where none or a limited number exist
  - Promote FCPRD's support of identified benefits
4. Goal: Reverse FCPRD's trend of shrinking share of tax-based funding  
Strategy: Pursue tax and non-tax based funding streams  
Action:
  - Direct recovered equipment use costs from operations to a Repair and Maintenance fund in the Park Reserve Fund
  - Explore self-funded revenue sources for FCPRD operations and development
  - Articulate and educate the public and representatives on the negative impact shrinking Parks and Recreation budget funds is having

5. Goal: Meet Park Needs of Frederick County Residents  
Strategy: Identify and pursue needed park locations  
Action:
  - Identify potential parcels in and near areas identified on the 2035 Plan Park Locations Map
  - Pursue acquisition of parcels to satisfy need
  
6. Goal: Meet Recreation Amenity Needs of Frederick County Residents  
Strategy: Identify and pursue needed recreation amenities  
Action:
  - Ensure alignment of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities with survey and LOS findings
  - Identify and pursue partnership opportunities in achieving CIP priority items
  - Engage Commission in advocacy for facility needs
  - Review Frederick County Recreation Unit Requirements biennially
  
7. Goal: Meet Recreation Program Needs of Frederick County Residents  
Strategy: Identify and pursue needed recreation programs  
Action:
  - Inventory programming opportunities identified in community survey
  - Encourage implementation of identified programs
  - Pursue partnerships to provide program offerings
  - Develop programs to meet demographic trends
  - Identify and plan to reduce barriers to participation
  
8. Goal: Create a Customer Service Driven Culture  
Strategy: Integrate customer service in all aspects of agency activity  
Action:
  - Increase collection of customer feedback across department activities
  - Identify solutions for barriers to customer satisfaction
  - Develop staff training plans
  - Develop incentive for annual professional development
  - Budget for professional development
  
9. Goal: Obtain CAPRA certification  
Strategy: Utilize internal resources to meet certification requirements  
Action:
  - Inventory and pursue NRPA's CAPRA requirements
  - Budget for accreditation expenses
  
10. Goal: Maintain relevance of Master Plan  
Strategy: Schedule reviews and updates



- Create quarterly assessment and review for staff
- Create annual assessment and review for Strategic Plan Committee
- Update Community Survey on 5-year basis
- Update Master Plan on 5-year basis

## FINANCIAL DIRECTION

Following the economic downturn of 2009, FCPRD has endured a challenging budgetary period. The department has increasingly had to rely on fees and charges to keep up with increased operational costs and an undiminished mandate to meet the expectations of a growing population. Despite the difficult financial climate, FCPRD has strived to provide high-quality facilities, programs and services to the community. During this time the Department has been able to find short term ways to meet budget expectations and has used the Development Impact Proffer Funds to advance some capital projects. While the primary source of funding for Parks and Recreation is through fees and charges, there are two other significant sources of funding for FCPRD; the General Fund and the Development Impact Proffer Fund. Department funding reflects support towards the reason Parks and Recreation exists in Frederick County; to meet the “recreational needs of the people of the County.” Decreasing funding threatens to .The sources and implications of Parks and Recreation funding are discussed in this section.

### Understanding the Cost of Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department receives an annual expenditure appropriation and returns a majority of the appropriation through user fees and charges. Fees and charges are a vital source of income that reduce the tax-subsidy needed to operate Parks and Recreation. The net difference between the General Fund expenditure appropriation and user fees is the actual cost of Parks and Recreation to Frederick County taxpayers. In a 10-year average, the department recovered 52% of its’ General Fund allocation through fees and charges. The amount typically shown as the cost of Parks and Recreation, the appropriated expenditure amount, represents slightly more than double the actual cost of Parks and Recreation services to the community.

### Revenue Recovery – Fees and Charges

As noted, fees and charges are covering increasing levels of the Parks and Recreation budget. The department has increased revenues through fees and charges from 43% in 2008 to 52% in FY17. The national average for cost recovery through fees and charges is 29% of overall expenditures. The department is an outlier in charges and this position is putting a strain on the financial ability of the population to take advantage of their park and recreation services. Given that the department is already well above national averages for revenue recovery, it is likely that continuing to increase fees and charges would provide diminishing returns as community households find it more difficult to afford to participate.

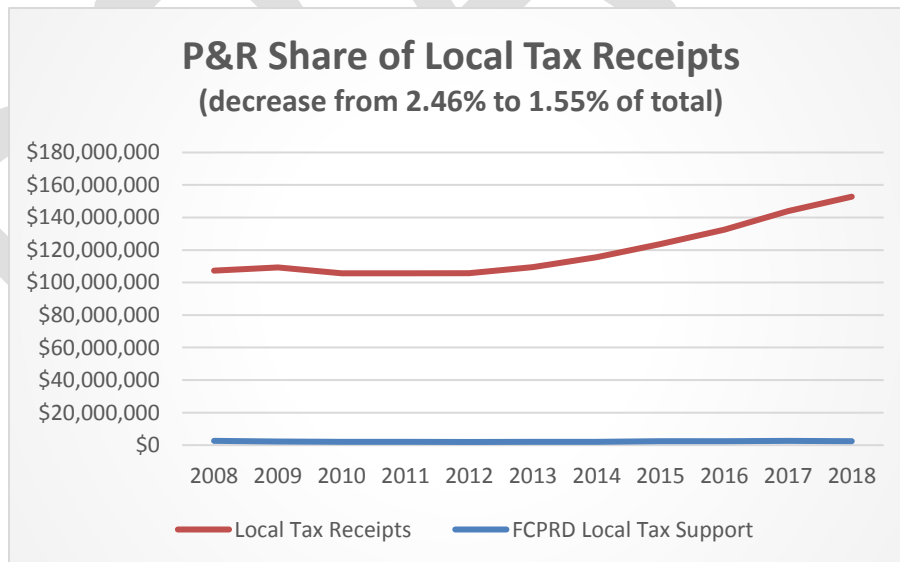
On several metrics the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department shows it is relying more on user support than other Parks and Recreation agencies throughout the country.

	Frederick County	National Average
Revenue Recovery	52%	29%
Expenditure Per Capita	\$64.32	\$77.32
Revenue Per Capita	\$36.29	\$19.04

\*NRPA Park Metrics 2017

### General Fund Funding:

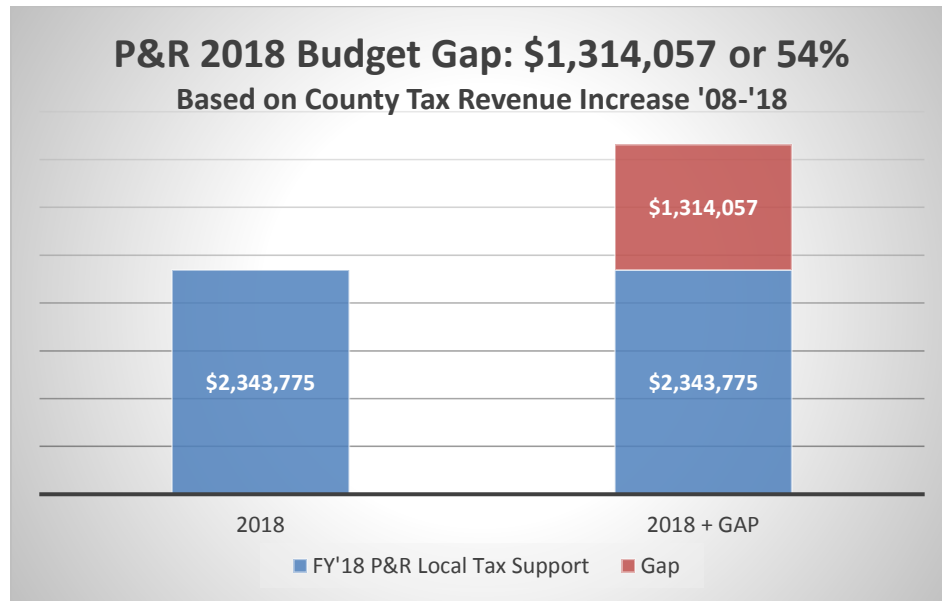
The General Fund provides the funding needed to operate the department throughout the year. As mentioned, the General Fund appropriation represents total anticipated expenditures for the year, the Revenues received from program fees and other charges are returned with the net difference being the local tax support. Local tax support for Parks and Recreation has remained relatively flat over the past decade even as overall county tax receipts have gone up. Therefore, as a percentage of taxes collected Parks and Recreation is receiving a smaller share. Local support has fallen behind the reality of increasing costs and forced the department to defer maintenance on park amenities and equipment replacement. In turn the department has been forced to pass costs along to users as increased user fees for programs and reservations. Both actions have had negative impacts on the ability of the department to fulfill its mission.



\*Source: Frederick County On-Line Budget Archives

As shown in the graph, Tax Receipts represent property and other taxes collected by the county. This is different from total revenue, which includes federal and state support to the county, permits, and fees. Tax Receipts are the portion of revenues impacted by the county tax rate.

Comparing FY '08 with FY '18 shows a 9% decrease in local tax budget support for the department at the same time local tax receipts from Property Taxes and Other Local Taxes have increased by 42%. When looking at the trajectories of tax receipts and Parks and Recreation local support, the result shows Parks and Recreation has lost significant ground as a percent of overall tax receipts; from 2.46% to 1.55%. Had the department's level of local tax supported funding kept pace with tax receipts, many more parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities would be being enjoyed by residents today.



If Parks and Recreation tax-based funding kept pace with increased tax receipts the department would be receiving 54% more in annual tax based funding in FY18. This gap represents over \$1.3 million in annual tax support, an amount that if received would go a long way to solving many of the departments shortcomings and capital aspirations. In the case that this hypothetical scenario was a consistent reality, the department would have more than adequate funds to support the debt service and operational costs of identified CIP items such as an indoor pool, vacant park land development, or community center.

#### Development Impact Proffers:

The Development Impact Proffer Fund has been supported by the development community on properties re-zoned for high density residential development since 1998. Funds collected through impact proffers are designated for specific uses, including Parks and Recreation capital projects. Impact proffer funds can only be used for new recreation amenities and not for replacement of existing amenities or maintenance equipment. The specific use for recreation proffer funds has provided the department one source of dedicated funding through the post-recession time of austerity.

A lesser dedicated fund, not associated with the General Fund, is the Recreation Reserve Fund. Created to provide a holding place for funds donated or directed to FCPRD, the Recreation Reserve Fund has three sub-funds for specific purposes. The three sub-funds include: a) The Recreation Assistance Fund,

created to subsidize program costs for youth, b) The Capital Projects Fund, created to provide a holding place for donations for specific capital projects, and c) The General Park Improvement Fund, an unallocated fund for general park improvements.

A fourth sub-fund to the Recreation Reserve Fund is being pursued by the Parks and Recreation Commission at the time of writing. This fund is the School Ground Maintenance Equipment Fund (SGMEF) and is intended to be funded by equipment fees currently charged to Frederick County Public Schools. Currently the department charges for equipment use attributed to FCPS maintenance operations, these funds are not earmarked for equipment purchases, but rather returned to the General Fund. In the past decade equipment use charges have far exceeded equipment replacement appropriations, leading to increased equipment repair costs and a backlog of equipment replacement needs. The proposed SGMEF seeks to remedy the situation by directing fees attributed to equipment use to a fund exclusively used for equipment replacement.

Another benefit of having the SGMEF as a dedicated source of equipment funding is that it will allow the department to change the funding conversation to recreation amenity needs. As the past decade has been one of consistent capital budget request cuts, the only opportunity to receive capital item funding for non-proffer eligible items has come through end of year supplemental appropriations. These requests have been dominated by equipment needs required to fulfill maintenance agreements while some recreation amenities have been forced into maintenance deferral or pressed into service beyond the anticipated use period. With the SGMEF in place, supplemental appropriation conversations can go towards supporting amenities citizens have identified as needed and desired, and at the same time convey the message that county funds are being used in ways that benefit taxpayers directly.

#### Financial Direction Focus:

The department will need to continue pursuing every opportunity to maximize efficiency and to seek the financial resources required to meet the increasing demands of a growing and modernizing population. Currently the department is using the Parks and Recreation Proffer fund fully to support new recreational amenities and leverage grant opportunities whenever possible. Seeking partnerships to achieve mutually beneficial recreation outcomes is also a strategy the department has and will need to continue to utilize to be as successful as possible in fulfilling its mission in the future. Development and new park projects such as Rose Hill Park, (a partnership with the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley), and continuing to partner with Youth Sport Partnerships, (such as with Blue Ridge Youth Soccer Association and Little Leagues), are vital to the cost effective and attainable provision of recreation to the community.

- Secure Funding for Parks and Recreation Operations and Development
  - Reverse trend towards decreased Parks and Recreation general fund support
  - Secure stable funding streams to support Parks and Recreation needs
  - Continue to seek out grant and other partnership opportunities to advance parks and recreation services and facilities

- Pursue Park Acquisition and Amenity Development Opportunities to Meet Community Needs
  - The department should pursue opportunities for the development of existing and new parkland
  - Promote recreation amenities as part of new residential developments

Two of the four identified Key Issues in this plan require a change in the financial direction of the department. To achieve the level of support necessary to meet identified needs, the department will have to find a consistent funding stream to increase current levels. To begin a discussion of adequately addressing the needs of a growing and changing population, the department will have to be given the opportunity to move beyond putting the bulk of its financial request effort into simply trying to keep the existing inventory up to expectations. As shown, funding levels over the past decade has trended slightly downward in relation to overall tax receipts, and while the department has worked to make due, the department is not keeping pace with population growth and evolving community expectations.

#### Moving Forward:

The path forward for Parks and Recreation to substantively move toward addressing community needs will require a change in the trajectory of funding demonstrated over the past decade. First in the process is a commitment to take care of what we have; to commit the resources required to keep the existing inventory of recreation and maintenance equipment in top operational shape. The creation of dedicated funding sources such as the School Ground Maintenance Equipment Fund and consideration of a similar dedicated fund for the maintenance and upkeep of recreation amenities would go a long way towards taking care of this basic need. Once the existing inventory has the resource structure in place to sustain a high level of serviceability, the department will have the opportunity to focus its attention and efforts toward pursuing the varied pathways towards meeting unmet community needs.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM DIRECTION**

The facilities, programs, and services provided by the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department for a quality parks and recreation system enjoyed by the community. This system offers health and economic benefits to Frederick County, and community members highly value the department’s facilities and services. The three inter-related elements forming the basis of the departments impact on the community include:

- Parks – the land base that provides areas for active and passive recreation as well as the location of parks and recreation amenities
- Recreation Facilities – these are the major amenities that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities, from playgrounds to picnic shelters to pools and community centers.
- Recreation Programs – these are the planned activities that provide instruction, socialization, competition, and learning to a wide range of community members.

These elements fit together to form a parks and recreation system that is enjoyed by the entire community. Residents place a high value on Frederick County’s facilities and services and have grown to expect high standards from the department. The local economy benefits through attracting a maintaining an educated and healthy workforce, the local tourism industry benefits through attracting visitors for special events, and local business benefit through increased sales, which in turn produce increased tax revenues for the County.

### Capital Improvements Plan

The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) is a schedule for major capital projects in the County. The CIP is intended to assist the Board of Supervisors in developing the annual budget and once adopted, serves as a link between identified needs and potential development proffers associated with rezoning applications. The adopted CIP becomes part of the county’s Comprehensive Plan (2035 Plan).

For the Parks and Recreation Department, the CIP provides an expression of the amenity needs identified to either bring existing amenities up to current expectations, or to satisfy unmet recreation needs in the community. The Department has identified items for inclusion to the CIP since 1993, the year the County started compiling capital projects in a formal document. Since that time, the Department has annually updated the projects, projected timeline, and cost estimates for inclusion in the CIP. Currently there are 18 items listed on the 2018-2023 CIP list submitted for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission totaling nearly \$66 million in estimated cost.

Dept. Priority	Project Title	FY 2018/19 Cost	FY 2019/20 Cost	FY 2020/21 Cost	FY 2021/22 Cost	FY 2022/23 Cost	Long Range Comprehensive Plan Projects Beyond FY 2023	TOTAL CIP Cost
1	Abrams Creek Greenway Trail	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,200,000	\$1,200,000			\$3,400,000
2	Clearbrook Parking	257,000						\$257,000
3	Sherando NW Restroom	\$275,000						\$275,000
4	Indoor Aquatic Facility	\$480,000	\$10,820,000					11,300,000
5	Water Slide / Spray Ground	\$624,000						\$624,000
6	SH Softball Complex	\$176,000	\$1,473,000					\$1,649,000
7	Snowden Bridge Park Development	\$300,000	\$4,250,000					\$4,550,000
8	SH Baseball Field Lighting Upgrade		\$720,000					\$720,000
9	SH Park Area 3 Development		\$2,150,000					\$2,150,000
10	Community Center			\$672,000	8,395,000			\$9,067,000
11	Community Park			\$990,000	1,100,000			\$2,090,000
12	Neighborhood Parks (6)			\$831,000			\$4,155,000	\$4,986,000
13	District Parks (3)				\$3,934,000		\$7,869,000	\$11,803,000
14	S. SH Park Development						\$2,035,000	\$2,035,000
15	Fleet Trip Vehicles						\$307,000	\$307,000
16	SH Park Area 1 Development						\$2,220,000	\$2,220,000
17	SH Park Area 2 Development						\$2,273,000	\$2,273,000
18	Indoor Ice Rink						\$6,180,000	\$6,180,000



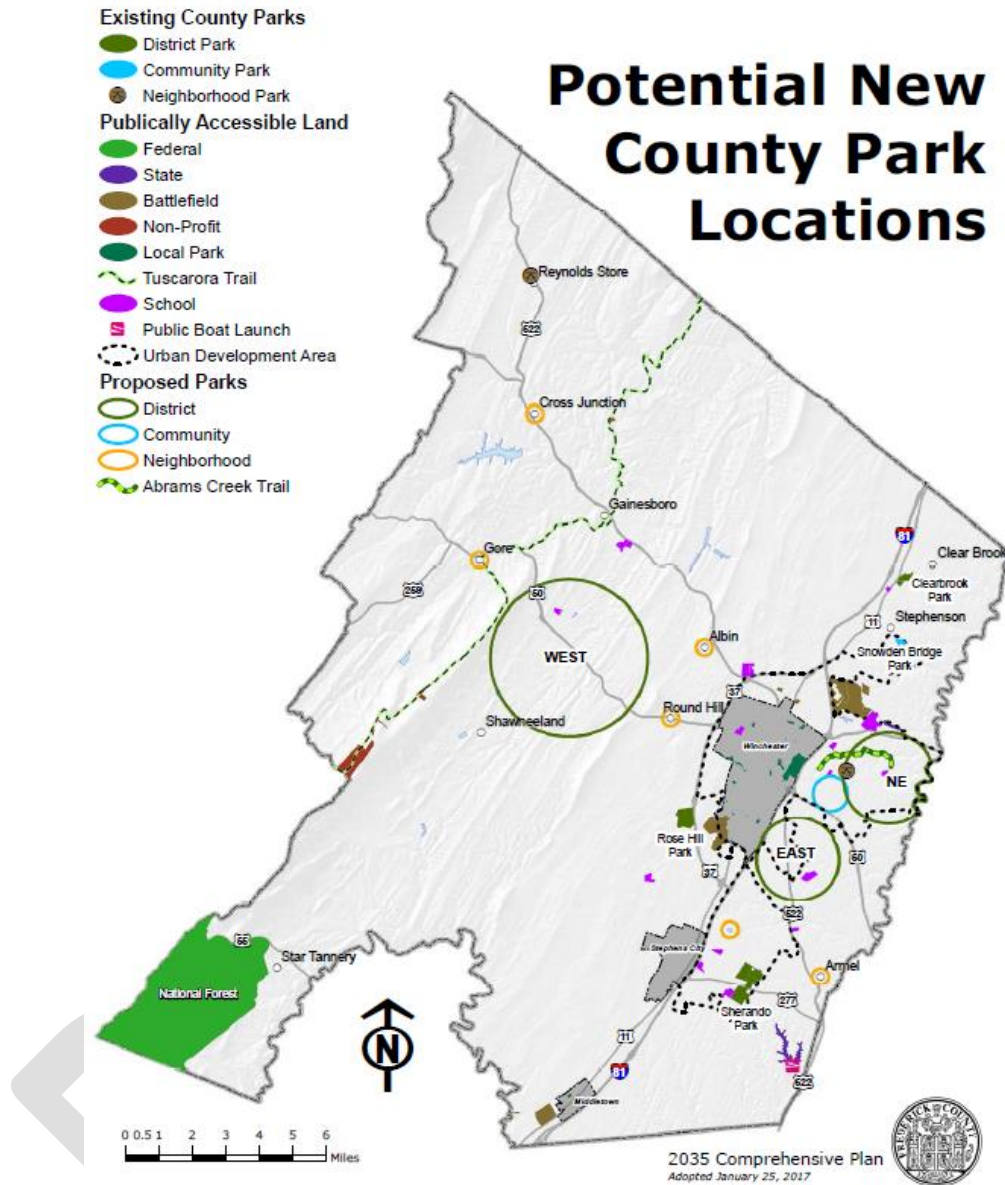
The top CIP priority for Parks and recreation is the Abrams Creek Greenway Trail. This facility would provide recreational opportunities for residents of the corridor along with the surrounding communities and is emphasized in the 2035 Plan. Other top priorities include parking at Clearbrook Park, restroom construction at Sherando Park, and the Indoor Aquatic Facility. Other requests include projects for Sherando park, pool upgrades at both regional parks, and new community and district parks.

Three items were removed from the previous years' CIP as they received funding allocations and are either underway or completed. These include; Rose Hill Park Playground, NW Sherando Park Entrance, Parking, and Outdoor Gym, and Parking and Trail at Frederick Heights Park. Except for the NW Sherando Park Entrance, which is receiving partial funding from the Virginia Department of Transportation Recreation Access Fund, all project funding was appropriated through the Parks and Recreation Proffer Fund. The Department has worked to generate relatively lower cost CIP items, such as the three removed, by either presenting items smaller in scope, or splitting larger project concepts into smaller components. While this will work for some projects, others will have to rely on other sources of funding to become reality.

Funding presents the greatest limitation on the fulfillment of CIP aspirations for the Department. Many larger cost items have been on the CIP list since 1993 when the County first compiled a CIP. The indoor pool continues to be a high priority capital project for the Department since its' addition to the list in 1994. CIP items represent identified community needs, and provide the basis for improving and increasing recreation opportunities and programming for the community.

#### Park Locations:

Parks are the essential first piece in the recreation system. Park land provides the opportunity to locate recreation amenities and provides the opportunity to then provide programming of those amenities. The determination in locating the desired parks is based on 2035 Plan guidance stating that; "new parks and useable open spaces should be located within the UDA, near or at the center of Neighborhood Villages and Urban Centers or in Rural Community Center is the rural Area to help create more walkable, livable communities." Taking into consideration existing public and privately-owned land meeting the intent of the 2035 Plan guidance, the Department has created a Potential New County Park Locations Map.



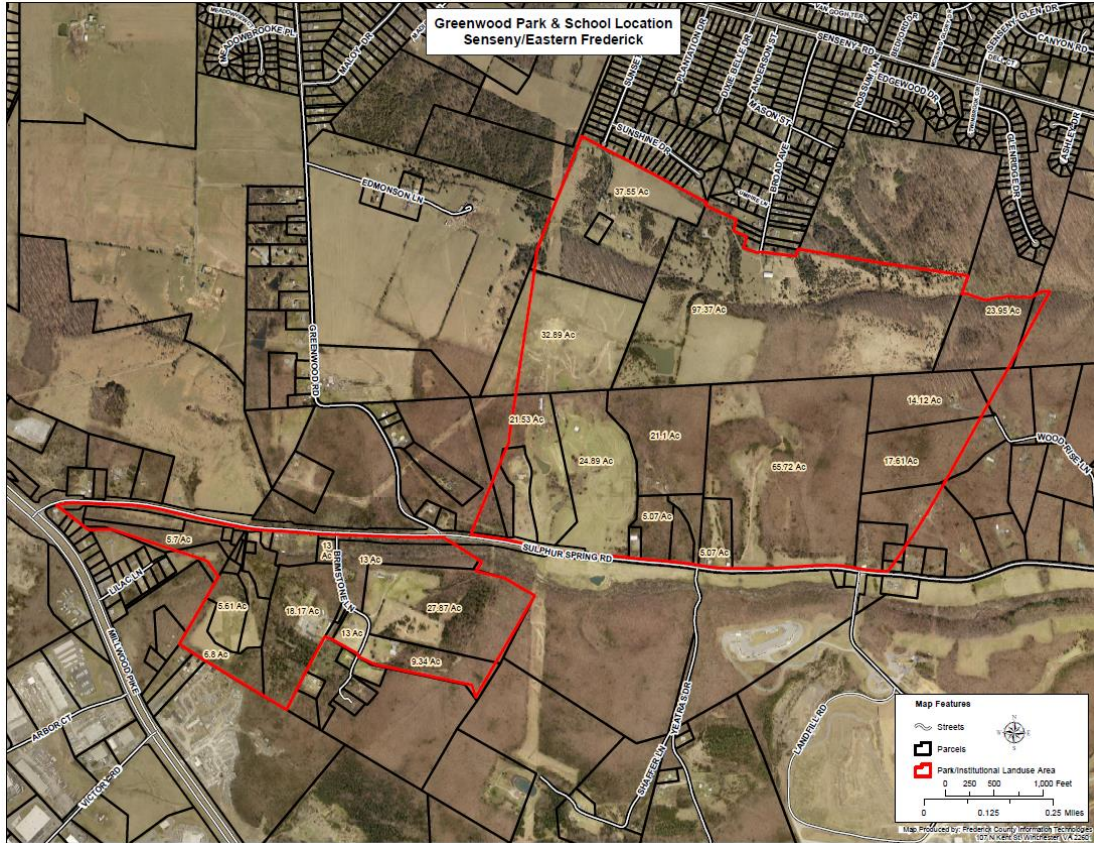
### Park Location Detail:

Following the guidance of the 2035 Plan, development infill projections, and derived Level of Service figures the map outlines the desired locations for future parks. Neighborhood park locations are identified at Rural Community Center locations without existing nearby opportunities. The one exception to this is the circled area where the Bowman Library is located. Development of the outside grounds of the Bowman Library would provide a unique recreation and leisure site for area residents to enjoy. Neighborhood parks should have a minimum of 5 acres per location.

The one identified Community Park location is located in the high-density eastern land area of Frederick County. Identified area in the 2035 Plan could site this park on land located west of the current landfill, an area located between Sulphur Springs Road and Rt. 50. Currently the County owns some parcels in this area that are being used as a Sheriff impound area, shooting range, and a model airplane flying field. Some consideration to soil stability would have to be taken into account as much of this area is the cover of a former landfill, leaving soils unsuitable for structures. Community parks should have a minimum of 20 acres per location.

Three Regional Park locations are identified on the park location map, two in the eastern part of the county and one to the west. These park locations should have a minimum of 50 acres per site and host a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities. Currently the proposed location identified as “East” is the most defined as within the circle boundary, and identified on 2035 Plan maps, is a property of approximately 300 acres the county anticipates becoming parkland in the future as part of the estate plan of the current owner. The ‘West’ location area is the largest in size and therefore the most flexible in terms of location and having the greatest number of large parcels in the vicinity. The department has looked at potential property in this area for consideration, but at this time no actionable steps can be taken towards land acquisition.

The park circle location identified as Northeast (NE) also benefits from 2035 Plan guidance in terms of anticipated future use. An area of approximately 366 acres and comprising 12 parcels is identified in the 2035 Plan as future Institutional use. Schools, parks, landfills, and libraries are typical institutional uses and as such the Department would anticipate sharing the area with other agencies. The two areas shown on the following graphic highlight parcels consistent with both the Potential Park Locations Map and the 2035 Plan. The area to the west is encompassed by the community park circle, and the area to the east (and north of Sulphur Springs Road), is within the NE regional park circle. Specific properties or combinations of properties could be pursued at this time to ensure adequate land to meet current and future park needs.

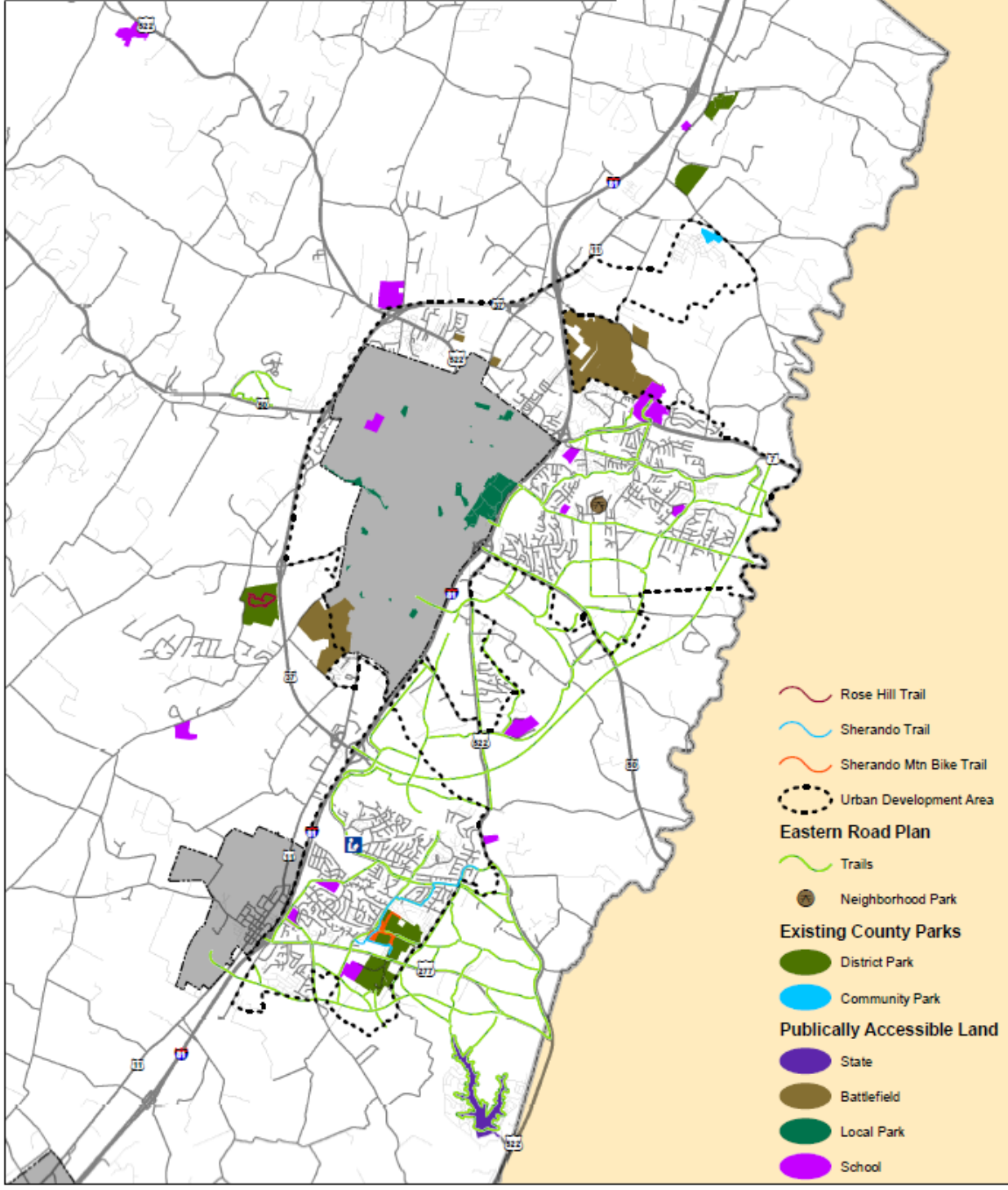


## Trails and Connections

With walking for pleasure identified as the top recreation activity, and shared-use trails identified as the top recreation amenity, the Department is looking to expand trail opportunities for area residents. The following map shows the planned shared-use trail network for the eastern portion of the county. As identified in the Goals and Strategies section of this document, staff is currently working to develop a contrasting map of current conditions to allow greater understanding and prioritization of gaps.



# Frederick County Trails and Public Spaces



As can be seen, there is much opportunity to seek fulfillment of the trail vision outlined in the 2035 Plan.