

Parks and Recreation

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the County's recreational policies and to identify implementation methods for accomplishing recreational facilities, programs, studies, and plans. It is not meant to be a detailed recreation plan, but rather it is a part of the County's continuing planning process and a guide to decision making.

Facilities

The County currently owns and operates two regional parks. Clearbrook Park, located five miles north of Winchester on Route 11, consists of approximately 55 acres and Sherando Park, located two miles east of Stephens City on Route 277, consists of approximately 330 acres. Both regional parks currently serve the County's population with both active and passive recreational programs and facilities. In addition to these regional parks, five neighborhood parks have been developed which serve a more specific group with more limited facilities than those in the regional parks.

The neighborhood parks are located at: Reynolds Store Fire Company and Gainesboro Fire Company in the Gainesboro District, and Round Hill Fire Company in the Back Creek District, and at Frederick Heights subdivision in the Shawnee District. These neighborhood parks consist primarily of playground equipment for young children. The Parks and Recreation Department also maintains two tennis courts at Senseny Road Elementary School for community use.

In 1987, master development plans were adopted for both Clearbrook and Sherando Parks. These master plans establish development goals for each park, identify unmet recreational needs, provide unified facility plans, and propose a development program for each park. The master plan for both Clearbrook and Sherando Parks reflect the recommendations of the County residents and national standards as outlined in the Virginia Outdoor Plan. These plans emphasize the development of a swimming pool complex and additional sports, picnic, maintenance, and other support facilities. Funding has been provided to update the Sherando Park Master Plan. The revisions are scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2001.

Since the adoption of the master plans, the County has completed the construction of two outdoor swimming pool complexes, four soccer fields, a maintenance building, one shelter, two playground areas, two sand volleyball courts, and two fields of a four field softball complex. The County has also purchased an area to house the maintenance operation for Clearbrook Park. Additional recreational facilities currently provided are athletic fields, playground, and picnic areas with a variety of recreational opportunities such as horseshoes, fishing, paddleboats, and volleyball, open space areas and support facilities. Clearbrook Park, Sherando Park, neighborhood parks and all public school athletic fields and grounds are maintained by the Parks Division of the County Parks and Recreation Department. As a result of a joint operating agreement with the County School Board, the Parks and Recreation Department has use of the following Sherando High School facilities when they are not in use by the high school: lighted football field and track, baseball field, eight outdoor lighted tennis

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courts, and four outdoor lighted basketball courts. The Parks and Recreation Department's Community Center, which was built adjoined to Sherando High School, opened in September of 1993 and contains two racquetball courts, a weight room and a multipurpose room.

The Residential Performance Zoning regulations require that open space be provided in most types of suburban development. In addition, recreational facilities are required in any residential development which contains lot sizes of less than 5,000 square feet. It is required that such open space and facilities be dedicated to homeowners associations. There is a need to examine recreational and park needs in suburban and urban areas, specifically, the development of a bikeway and trail system. One need that has been identified is the development of a bikeway and trail system. To date, the County has constructed a 2.40 mile bicycle facility to serve several residential areas east of Stephens City. The County has also committed to the construction of a .60 (3,200 l.f.) bicycle facility to serve residential areas on the northern perimeter of Sherando Park. These bicycle facilities will link those residential areas with Sherando Park and Sherando High School. Additional trails would provide residents the ability to travel safely from their homes to schools, stores, work or recreational areas without having to share the overcrowded arterial and collector roads with automobiles. Also, there is a need to examine Residential Performance Zoning regulations to determine whether the recreational needs of the single family homeowner are being met.

Programs

The Recreation Division of the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department was created to provide a comprehensive and accessible program of recreational services and activities for the residents of Frederick County. A diverse range of recreational and enrichment programs are provided for all age groups. This broad base of activities includes, but is not limited to, instructional classes, outdoor recreation programs, sports and athletics, health and fitness programs, cultural and special events, and trips and excursions.

Programming responsibilities are assigned within the Division's four interest sections--Community Recreation (Children's Programs, Cultural Arts, etc.); Senior Citizens; Aquatics; and Sports and Athletics. Staff members work together to identify, develop and implement those activities which most closely meet the interests and desires of the community. The Division typically implements programs along age group stratifications such as preschool, youth, teen, adult and senior adult; however, a shift in programming emphasis has resulted in the development of broader activities to appeal to family units. In particular, holiday events are planned to include parent and child in a variety of leisure opportunities.

The majority of recreation programs offered by the Parks and Recreation Department are held within the 15 public schools in Frederick County and the Parks and Recreation Department's Community Center. Consequently, a wide variety of recreation offerings has maximized use of the county school

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buildings. The joint efforts of the Frederick County School Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission/Department resulted in the inclusion of recreational facilities within Sherando High School. The Department's Community Center, which was built adjoined to Sherando High School, opened in September of 1993. On August 28, 2000, the Orchard View Community Center is scheduled to open. This facility, which is attached to the Orchard View Elementary School, will have a full-size gymnasium that will be programmed during non-school hours.

Citizen Participation

Citizen participation and input regarding recreation programs and park development have been actively solicited since the creation of the department in 1971.

The Parks and Recreation Commission consists of seven members, including one from each magisterial district, appointed by the Board of Supervisors for four year terms and two at-large members recommended by the Commission and appointed by the Board to serve staggered four year terms.

Future Demands

To help plan for the future leisure service demands, the Parks and Recreation Department has completed master plans for the County's two regional parks, studied national standards provided in the Virginia Outdoor Plan, and gathered survey information relating to the provision of leisure services. Through the utilization of these and any other available resources, it is projected that the following areas must be addressed if we are to meet future leisure demands:

1. Land acquisition to meet minimum standards
2. Facility development to meet minimum standards
3. Development of recreational centers
4. Increased programming for special populations
5. Increased programming for teens
6. Great diversity of programming so as to better meet the needs of the entire community.
7. Establishment of trail systems and bikeways

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Area Standards

As suggested by the 1996 Virginia Outdoor Plan, the area standard for local recreation and park sites in Virginia is ten acres of developed park land per thousand population.

Frederick County has a population of approximately 57,000 (based on 1999 provisional estimate data provided by the University of Virginia Center for Public Services) and currently maintains 404 acres of park land. Of the 404 acres assigned to the parks, about 240 acres would be considered developed.

By the year 2001, using the population projections provided by the Frederick County Planning Department, an additional 166 acres will be needed and by the year 2010, another 130 will be required if we are to keep pace with the recommended standard of the ten acres per thousand. It is estimated by the Department of Parks and Recreation that by the year 2020, Frederick County will need approximately 833 acres of developed park land to adequately serve the County's population.

In meeting the ten-acre per thousand minimum standard for park land, it is recommended by the Virginia Outdoor Plan to consider the following types of park development:

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NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Size: 5 - 20 acres
Plan at 3 acres/1000 Population

Service Area: Approximately 5 - 15 minutes walking distance or ½ mile to 1 ½ miles

Administrative Responsibility: Local Unit of Government or Homeowners Association

Purpose: The primary function of the neighborhood park is to provide limited types of recreation for the entire family within easy walking distance. Facilities should be provided for all age groups.

Character: Intensive use and easy access are characteristics of this classification. Ideally, the site would have areas that are level to gently rolling to accommodate the intensive use facilities, with shaded areas for passive recreation.

Location: If possible, the neighborhood park should be located near a school and /or the neighborhood center and away from railroads, major streets and other hazardous barriers.

Potential Facilities:

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|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| *playground | *volleyball courts | *picnic facilities |
| *badminton courts | *tennis courts | *walking trails |
| *ball diamond | *fishing pond | *horseshoe courts |
| *swimming pool | *shuffleboard courts | *bikeway |
| *basketball courts | *recreation center | *football/soccer field |

Play fields usually serve a dual purpose in this type of facility. They provide an area for sports and running games and also serve as open space. Intensive use areas (the playground area and hard surfaced courts) are buffered from other activities by passive natural areas and pedestrian access corridors. Programmed activities such as organized athletics are often suitable in neighborhood parks. Although limited parking facilities are provided, site design should encourage pedestrian access to the greatest extent possible.

Rural communities may want to consider deleting neighborhood parks and include their function in larger community parks which could better serve the needs of widely dispersed local population. From an economic standpoint, it would be more beneficial for a rural locality to have a few strategically located, well designed, larger facilities than to invest in several small sites and not have the funds to properly develop and maintain them.

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COMMUNITY PARK

Size: 20 -50 acres

Plan at 3 acres/1000 Population

Service Area: Approximately 15 minutes driving time

Administrative Responsibility: Local Unit of Government

Purpose: Community parks should primarily support active recreation activities and be capable of withstanding intensive use, while still containing a fair amount of open space.

Character: The site usually varies from relatively flat open space to moderately sloping wooded area. Such a park should be adaptable to a wide variety of recreational activities. Access is gained by auto, bicycles, or walking.

Location: Locate when possible near the center of the community with good access and serviced by a public transportation system.

Potential Facilities:

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| * playgrounds | * picnic facilities | * trails: walking , hiking, |
| * tennis courts | * swimming pool | biking, fitness |
| * horseshoe courts | * shuffleboard courts | * natural area |
| * ball diamonds | * basketball courts | * fishing lake or stream |
| * volleyball courts | * parking area | access |
| * beach\swimming area | * football\soccer fields | * recreation center |

A multitude of activities must be provided by this intensive-use recreational facility. The recreation center is often the focal point of the park. Organized activities are grouped in the surrounding area. Their location is dependent upon the natural terrain, need for control, and vehicular access. Any existing natural qualities, such as topography, water features, and trees, should be preserved and utilized as natural buffers between activity areas as well as to protect the recreation environment from surrounding, incompatible influences. These natural elements should also be used to provide a space for more passive forms of recreation such as nature walks, picnicking, and fishing.

In the rural setting, this park category may take the place of the neighborhood park. It can better serve a widely dispersed population than two or three smaller sites. Community parks, along with neighborhood parks (where applicable), usually meet most of the close-to-home recreation needs of most localities.

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REGIONAL PARK

Size: 50- 150 acres
Plan at 4 acres/1000 Population

Service Area: 15 - 25 minutes driving time
5 - 15 miles service radius

Administrative Responsibility: Local Unit of Government

Purpose: Regional Parks should serve the recreational needs of large portions of the local population. They should contain a wide variety of intensively developed areas for day use recreation while providing ample open space with generous buffers between activity areas.

Character: The site could vary from flat open space to moderately to steeply sloping topography. It should be capable of supporting a wide variety of activities with ample buffer and natural areas. Sitting on a stream or lake is highly desirable. The regional park needs to be accessible by auto as well as pedestrians and bicycles.

Location: When possible, locate the regional park so that it is near the center of the service area. It should be on or near an arterial or major collector road providing good access to the facility. In urban or suburban situations, easy access to mass transit is highly desirable. The site should also be accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Potential Facilities:

*playgrounds	*trails	*lake or stream
*natural area	*tennis courts	*horseshoe courts
*ball diamonds	*fishing/boating	*volleyball courts
*parking areas	*basketball courts	*football/soccer fields
*recreation centers	*shuffleboard courts	
*swimming pool and/or beach with swimming area	*golf	
	*picnic facilities	

RECREATION CENTERS

The recreation center may be found at the neighborhood, community, district, and regional parks. At the neighborhood level, the recreation center is usually constructed between 15,000 and 20,000 square feet. It generally will include multipurpose rooms, an arts and crafts area, game room, kitchen, lounge and lobby, restrooms, and office. If a gymnasium is not available in a neighborhood school, the recreation center may also include a gymnasium and locker room facilities.

The recreation center in a large park that serves a community will be considerably larger, from 50,000 - 100,000 square feet, and will include several multipurpose rooms, gymnasium, indoor pool, shower and locker rooms, game room, arts and crafts area, an auditorium or areas for performing arts, class or club rooms, kitchen, large meeting room, restrooms, office, lounge or lobby, and some specialized areas such as a ceramics workshop or weight room. An important consideration in all recreation facilities is to provide adequate storage space.

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EXISTING REGIONAL PARK FACILITIES

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for operating and maintaining the following facilities:

Clearbrook Park

Clearbrook Park, covering 55 acres, is located approximately five miles north of Winchester, on Route 11. Clearbrook Park is open 365 days a year, from 8:00 a.m. to dark and includes:

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|---|----------------------|------------------|
| *four lighted athletic fields
with concessions | *three-acre lake | *fishing |
| *paddleboats | *horseshoe pits | *volleyball |
| *playgrounds | *vintage red caboose | *tables & grills |
| *outdoor swimming pool | *passive areas | *picnic shelter |
| *maintenance complex | | |

Sherando Park

Sherando Park is located on Route 277, approximately two miles east of I-81, near Stephens City. The park consists of 330 acres, approximately one-half of which is undeveloped. Sherando Park is open 365 days a year, from 8:00 a.m. to dark and includes:

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| *five-acre lake | *outdoor swimming pool | *paddleboats |
| *model radio airplane
facility | *fishing | *passive areas |
| *seven lighted athletic
fields with concessions | *four soccer fields | *volleyball |
| *four outdoor lighted
basketball courts | *horseshoe pits | *playgrounds |
| *eighteen-hole disc golf
course | *eight lighted tennis courts | *picnic shelters |
| | *hiking trails | *tables & grills |
| | *community center
facilities | |

Based on the demand standards established by the 1996 Virginia Outdoor Plan, Frederick County should use the following recommendations as a guide for future park development.

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Table 15:
Facility Needs Based on Minimum Standards Established in the 1996 Virginia Outdoor Plan

Facility	Units/1000 Population	Existing # of Facilities	Needs Gap Based on Population of 40,000	Needs Gap Based on Population of 60,000	Needs Gap Based on Population of 80,000
Archery Range	1/50,000	0	0	1	1
Baseball Diamond	1/6,000	*7	2	3	6
Basketball Court	1/5,000	5	5	7	11
Bicycle Trails	1 mile/1,000	2.4 miles	37.6	57.6	77.6
Soccer Fields	1/5,000	4	6	8	12
Horseshoes	1/10,000	8	-4	-2	0
Softball	1/3,000	**5	12	15	21
Swimming Pools ***	1/10,000	2	3	4	6
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	23	3	7	17
Park Land	10ac./1,000	404	-4	196	396
Ice Skating	1/30,000	0	1	2	2
Picnicking	10/1,000	400	0	200	400
Skateboard Park	1/80,000	0	0	0	1
In-Line Hockey	1/30,000	0	1	2	2
Amphitheater	1/40,000	0	1	1	2

Source: *Frederick County Department of Parks and Recreation*

* Because these facilities share time with softball, this figure has been adjusted according to percent of use.

** Because these facilities share time with baseball, this figure has been adjusted according to percent of use.

*** Jr. Olympic Pool

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Conclusions

As the population of the Winchester-Frederick County area continues to increase, there will undoubtedly be greater emphasis placed on the County's Parks and Recreation Department. As indicated by the standards provided in the 1996 Virginia Outdoor Plan, (referred to in this chapter), there currently exists a need to concentrate on further facility development just to meet present minimum standards, and a greater need to establish a long range capital improvement program to insure the provision of the physical amenities required to meet future leisure demands.

At this time, priority should be given to bring our park system up to the recommended minimum standard, but strong consideration should also be given to the acquisition of park land to meet future needs while desirable open space is still available at a reasonable cost.

In addition to the facilities that are needed to meet current and future demands, in eastern Frederick County and western Frederick County, the Parks and Recreation Department will also need additional professional staff if the County is to accommodate an already increasing demand for recreational programs.

Recreation Policy

***GOAL** - 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 a complete program of parks and recreation.*

Strategy 1 - Insure that appropriate open space and facilities are provided with new development.

Strategy 2 - Identify the recreational, parks, and open space needs of the County.

Strategy 3 - Make available a wide range of year-round recreational opportunities.

Strategy 4 - Seek alternative funding methods for the provision of existing and identified recreational needs.

Strategy 5 - Encourage cooperative efforts with private, semi-public, and public providers of recreational opportunities.

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Implementation Methods:

1. Prepare a County-wide recreation plan which identifies recreational, park, and open space needs.
2. Continue to solicit public opinion in planning parks and recreation.
3. Continue to encourage the participation and financial support of civic groups, businesses, and other organizations and individuals for recreational needs.
4. Continue to utilize State and Federal grants and loans for financing and programming County recreational needs and especially for major capital projects.
5. Continue to expand our cooperative relationship with the Frederick County School Board jointly meeting identified County recreational needs.
6. Continue to cooperate with the private sector, the semi-public sector, and other public providers of recreation in meeting identified recreational needs.

***GOAL** - Continue to develop the County's regional park as a major source of recreational facilities and activities.*

Strategy 1 - As finances are available, improvements to the Sherando and Clearbrook Parks should take place according to the adopted master plans.

Implementation Methods:

1. Use the capital improvements planning process to provide improvements to the regional parks.
2. Seek alternative sources of funding for park improvements.

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GOAL - Insure that appropriate open space and recreational facilities are provided in urban and rural areas.

Strategy 1 - Insure that appropriate open space and recreational facilities are provided in association with new urban development.

Strategy 2 - Provide for suitable recreational opportunities for all portions of the County.

Strategy 3 - Provide for a trail system and bikeway plan.

Implementation Methods:

1. Use a County-wide recreation plan to develop standards for open space and recreational facilities in new urban developments.
2. Use a County-wide recreation plan to identify the recreational needs of residents in all portions of the County.
3. Identify recreational needs associated with the Rural Community Centers.
4. Review land development regulations to insure that appropriate standards are provided for open space and recreational facilities in new developments.

GOAL - Provide recreational programs and activities based on identified needs and available funding.

Strategy 1 - Identify recreational program needs.

Strategy 2 - Solicit public opinion on recreational programs to be provided.

Strategy 3 - Coordinate with Frederick County School Board, the public sector, the semi-public sector, and private organizations for the provision of recreational program funds, services, and facilities.

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Implementation Methods:

1. Prepare a County-wide recreation plan identifying program needs.
2. Develop and maintain citizen participation in the identification of recreational program and facility needs.
3. Actively solicit contributions for the provision of recreational programs and program facilities, from all segments of the community, both public and private.
4. Structure the provision of all program facilities, such as indoor community centers, to recognize land use decisions and policies.
5. Actively utilize public, semi-public, and private facilities for the provision of recreational programs.