

***FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS
AND RECREATION
2012 STRATEGIC PLAN***



(Approved, Dec. 2012 – Frederick County Parks and Recreation Commission)

FREDERICK COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 2012 STRATEGIC PLAN

Frederick County's Mission:

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

Frederick County Parks and Recreation (FCPRD) Mission:

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

Strategic Plan Desired Outcomes

1. Define the departments Mission & Vision
2. Provide a document with day-to-day relevance assisting FCPRD establish priorities and best serve the community.
3. Provide a clear framework to translate community needs into attainable, measureable actions.
4. Set priorities for Capital Improvements Plan
5. Position the department for national accreditation

Frederick County Parks and Recreation

The Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department builds community through its parks, programs and people. FCPRD manages a system of owned or maintained facilities currently including; 403 acres of land of which 220 acres are developed park land, 3.6 miles of paved multi-purpose trail, two (2) miles of unpaved trails, sixteen (16) picnic shelters, eight (8) playgrounds, two (2) fishing lakes, two (2) outdoor pools, five (5) community centers, two (2) fitness facilities, and administrative offices. Through a cooperative use agreement with the Frederick County Public Schools, activities are also offered at school facilities. Programs and services include; before and after school program, sports and recreation, camps, community events, trips, health and fitness, facility maintenance, park maintenance, customer service, and environmental stewardship.

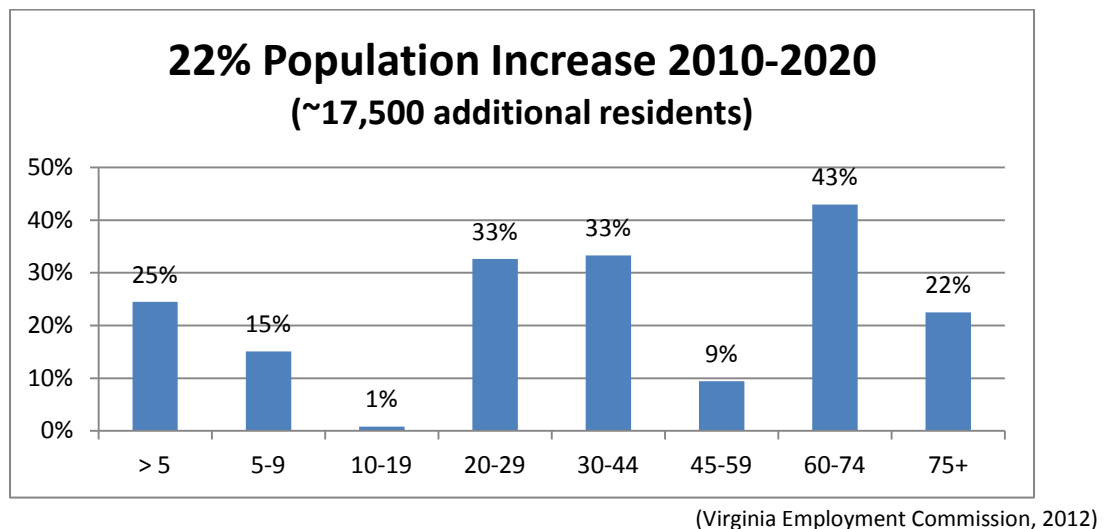
The majority of Frederick County households have used FCPRD facilities and/or programs in the past year. Sherando and Clearbrook Parks received approximately 450,000 visits in FY 12. The department coordinated recreation programs and activities for over 17,000 participants of all ages; 199 Frederick County youth participated in basicRec before school care, and 188 participated in basicRec after school care. FCPRD pools received over 35,000 visitors and provided over 1,600 swim lessons. Over 500 volunteers contributed their time and skills to a wide variety of programs and activities, from youth sports programming to special events to park development and maintenance. FCPRD created approximately 150 partnerships with outside private and public entities in the course of providing programs and services.

Information Gathering

The department continually seeks and responds to input from internal and external stakeholders for the purpose of improvement in the provision and delivery of services. Summary results from an internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Changes/Threats, survey are included below. Results from a randomized community survey created with the help of public input meetings and conducted in the spring of 2012 are summarized in Attachment 1.

Demographics

Frederick County's population increase of 32% over the past decade is nearly triple that of Virginia as a whole. The current (2010 Census) population of 78,305 is expected to increase 22% by 2020, bringing about 17,500 additional residents to Frederick County. Among youth, the largest growth (25%) will occur in children younger than 5, while the population of teens 15-19 is projected to decrease 5% from current levels. Adults 25-39 show growth greater than 40%, while those 40-54 show negligible if any growth. The Senior population, 55-74, is projected to grow at a rate greater than 40%. The graph below shows growth projections among groups with similar recreation programming needs. The different rates of growth illustrate where current programming may be adequate, and where expansion will likely be necessary.



Of Frederick County's race/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 2020 with 90% of the population White and most other groups shrinking in proportion and/or actual number (VA Employment Commission, 2012).

Employment

Frederick County's workforce has been impacted by the recent economic downturn. Unemployment, while several points lower than national levels, has been more volatile for Frederick County than Virginia

as a whole. Frederick County experienced higher unemployment than the state, but recovered faster than Virginia as a whole. Frederick County's unemployment rate as of May 2012 was 5.2% compared to Virginia's 5.6% and a national rate of 8.2% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). The percent of residents below the poverty level is 7.9% (U.S. Census).

2012 Community Survey

In February and March 2012, surveys were mailed to 1,800 randomly selected households in Frederick County. Survey responses provide statistical significance with a 95% confidence level and margin of error of +/-4.9%. A summary of survey findings is included in Attachment 1.

The 2012 Community Survey shows FCPRD as most cited provider of parks and recreation services with six out of ten Frederick County households having used a FCPRD facility or program in the past year. Survey results indicate the following findings with relevance to the strategic direction of the department:

- Multi-use trails are the overwhelming facility interest/need
- Adult Fitness is the overwhelming recreation programming interest/need
- Print mediums are the preferred communication method

Additionally the primary benefits households feel FCPRD contributes to include:

- Making Frederick County more desirable
- Improving health and fitness
- Improved quality of life
- Providing alternatives for youth
- Preserving open space

SWOT Analysis

Separately, the Parks and Recreation Staff conducted a SWOT Analysis of the organization. The following represents the findings:

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current facilities• Staff• Programs• basicRec• High department stature and reputation• Customer Service• Affordability• Safety• Stewardship of resources	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited program areas• Program & Agency awareness• Customer service• Level or decreased funding• Lack of professional development• Market and trend knowledge• Communication• Connection to Mission• Aging equipment• Long list of park and facility needs
TREND/CHANGE – OPPORTUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Development• Develop partnerships for service delivery• Keep costs affordable• Develop alternative funding• Promote benefits of Parks and Recreation• Develop new, and improve current facilities• Increase environmental posture and facilitation• Obtain agency certification• Invest in equipment to increase efficiency	CHANGES/TRENDS - THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition / Alternative providers• Population and demographic shifts• Emergence of new program trends• Impact of changes with FCPS• Economic conditions• Insufficient funding to keep pace w/ new demand• Increased emphasis on efficient gov't services• Increased demand for new facilities

Strategic Goals, Strategies, and Action Plans:

A. Goal: Identify and secure funding to support FCPRD aspirations

Strategy: Create alternative funding pool with identified revenue streams

Action:

- Develop mechanisms to attract non-tax base funding

B. Goal: Develop culture of common purpose among FCPRD staff

Strategy: Encourage Mission to guide day to day staff actions

Action:

- Create staff committee to review current mission statement
- Meet with staff to relate job function with mission
- Create internal newsletter/communication piece

C. Goal: Increase capabilities and knowledge of staff

Strategy: Encourage professional development and training

Action:

- Match individual staff plans and agency goals to develop department training program
- Prepare for changes resulting from demographic shifts
- Budget for annual professional development

D. Goal: Develop new and improve current facilities

Strategy: Refocus efforts to realize identified facility needs

Action:

- Align Comprehensive Plan policies with community survey results
- Review/Update Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities with survey results
- Identify potential partnership opportunities in achieving CIP priority items
- Engage Commission in advocacy for facility needs
- Utilize demographic trend information in need assessments

E. Goal: Increase environmental stewardship posture of department

Strategy: Integrate environmental stewardship into park and recreation operations

Action:

- Identify natural resource inventory at parks
- Identify best management practice (BMP) resource opportunities
- Develop a process for resource use, balancing environmental, budget and user expectations
- Encourage 'green purchasing' by comparing items to be purchased with 'greener' alternatives

F. Goal: Provide the tools and equipment necessary for staff to effectively and efficiently carry out job functions

Strategy: Address equipment and vehicle replacement needs

Action:

- Maintain an updated inventory of vehicles and equipment
- Assess rental vs. ownership opportunities for equipment and vehicles
- Develop equipment and vehicle replacement schedule and plan
- Budget to plan

G. Goal: Ensure alignment of program offerings with community needs

Strategy: Offer wider range of programming

Action:

- Inventory programming opportunities identified in community survey
- Encourage implementation of identified programs
- Identify partnerships to provide program offerings
- Develop programs to meet demographic trends
- Enhance marketing efforts

H. Goal: Enhance customer service

Strategy: Develop understanding of customer and market perspective

Action:

- Implement Customer Service training program
- Create a consistent method of capturing customer feedback across department activities
- Respond to feedback and develop service baselines for future comparisons

I. Goal: Increase awareness of Parks and Recreation Department

Strategy: Update / expand exposure of Department

Action:

- Create logo to better reflect whole of FCPRD
- Develop civic group presentations
- Develop interactive map of parks and park facilities
- Optimize use of Press Releases
- Identify and promote agency position

J. Goal: Increase attractiveness and awareness of programs

Strategy: Redesign Calendar of Events

Action:

- Prepare new program and activity guide
- Drive relevance of website

K. Goal: Demonstrate efficient operations

Strategy: Pursue CAPRA accreditation

Action:

- Inventory and pursue National Recreation and Parks Associations' CAPRA requirements
- Budget of accreditation expenses

L. Goal: Maintain relevance of Strategic Plan

Strategy: Schedule periodic progress reviews

Action:

- Create quarterly assessment and review for staff
- Create annual assessment and review for Strategic Plan Committee