

2014-2024 COMPREHENSIVE PARKS & RECREATION PLAN



January 20, 2015

Halifax County

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Little Fishing Creek at Medoc Mountain State Park

Executive Summary

PLANNING STUDY

In the fall of 2013, Halifax County, working with support from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, began a planning study to develop a county wide plan for parks and recreation. The planning effort was organized by county staff and guided by citizen stakeholders from across the county working together as the Halifax County Recreation Network. The Halifax County Recreation Network, convened by the Halifax Leadership Equity Project and the Halifax County Convention & Visitors Bureau, met regularly to brainstorm and co-create a shared vision of recreation throughout Halifax County. These meetings focused on identifying and subsequently addressing policy, program and infrastructure needs, as well as current assets. A theme that resonated from these meetings was the need for a county wide recreation plan to ensure that the unique needs of all residents are accurately identified and addressed.

The most important component of the planning process was public engagement. The public input process included over a dozen public workshops and a county wide survey. Over 600 citizens participated in the public involvement process for this planning effort.

The response from the public was unanimous. There is strong support for additional parks and recreation facilities and programs. Likewise, county residents believe Halifax County should take a lead in the development of these new parks and programs. The majority of the people surveyed or who attended the workshops supported new facilities and programs, even if these improvements require additional taxes. Section Two: The People of Halifax County provides detailed information on the public input process.

In addition to seeking input from the citizens of Halifax County, the planning report also reviewed how other counties across North Carolina are meeting parks and recreation needs. Section Three of the planning document looks at the standards for parks and recreation facilities used by other counties and develops guidelines for park development that are appropriate for Halifax County.

Utilizing the standards developed in Section Three, the planning report provides proposals and recommendations for meeting the recreational needs of county citizens. Section Four describes the recommendations in detail.

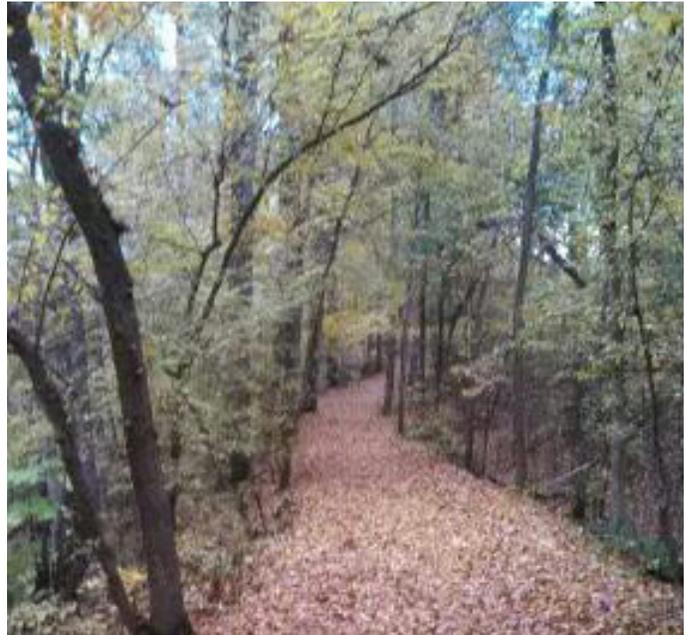
In Section Five, we identified strategies for meeting county wide parks and recreation needs. This section provides several options for providing both services and facilities. Ultimately, it describes how several counties have developed organizations/departments that provide both programs and service to rural areas.

The final section in this Master Plan presents an Action Plan for the County as it begins to meet park and recreation needs of its citizens. In addition to providing a list of capital needs, this section provides many sources for funding both programs and facilities.

The response during the public input process of this planning study provides compelling justification for the need for a county wide parks and recreation program. Beyond the outpouring of public interest in this issue, there are significant economic reasons for promoting a county wide parks and recreation program. Research shows that communities that have quality parks and greenways enjoy a higher quality of life and are more desirable places to live. As a result, communities with good parks are more likely to attract people and businesses; people and businesses result in a more robust economy and higher property values.

In addition to quality of life issues, parks and greenways provide opportunities for economic impact through attracting tourists to the county. Halifax County is blessed with wonderful water resources including the Roanoke River, Fishing and Little

Fishing Creeks, and two outstanding recreational lakes. Development of water access areas, trails, and camping facilities would greatly expand the County's tourism opportunities. Likewise, the development of additional ballfields to enhance existing facilities in Roanoke Rapids could create economic impact through tournament play.



The Roanoke Canal Trail provides opportunities for exercise and education

Last, but certainly not least, the development of parks and trails by the County could have an enormous impact on the health of county residents. There is extensive research that links improved health with active lifestyles. Currently, many county residents do not have adequate access to facilities that support active lifestyles. The development of athletic fields, walking trails, and other recreational facilities would greatly expand opportunities to all county residents.

The recommendations in this Master Plan will lead the County to improve the quality of life for all Halifax County residents. It is recognized that implementing all of the recommendations in this report will require additional funding in a time of limited resources. The Plan has been designed to allow elected officials to move forward with developing parks and recreation improvements incrementally. Recognizing that implementing all of the recommendations will take many years.

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One: Halifax County should establish a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

One of the first steps the County should take as it begins its parks and recreation development is the establishment of a Citizen Advisory Board to provide public guidance. The Recreation Network Steering Committee that guided the development of this plan provides a starting place for developing an advisory board.

The State of North Carolina through its Recreation Resources Services (RRS), can provide valuable guidance and training for the County as it establishes its Advisory Board. RRS staff should be consulted to assist staff and elected officials in determining:

- Board size and composition
- Structure of Board appointment
- Roles and authority over Advisory Board
- Organizational and reporting structure of Board

In addition to providing guidance on Board structure, RRS consultants can provide assistance with training and education of both staff and board members.

Recommendation Two: Halifax County should maximize facility use by encouraging joint use of existing athletic facilities at schools.

Schools provide a wide array of athletic facilities for their students. The majority of these facilities sit idle during the evenings and on the weekend. Citizens of Halifax County are served by three school boards; Halifax County Schools, Roanoke Rapids Graded Schools and Weldon City Schools. The County should work with all school systems to develop joint use agreements for athletic fields and indoor facilities. As part of these agreements, the County should help improve and maintain fields to support the additional use County programs will place on these fields.



Retired schools could be retrofitted to serve as county park facilities

Recommendation Three: Halifax County should create a position for a parks and recreation director and establish a Parks and Recreation Department.

This report recommends that Halifax County join the majority (81 of 100) of other North Carolina counties in providing recreation services. The first step in developing the new department should be recruiting and hiring a parks and recreation director.

This new director will be charged with creating the new department, developing ties throughout the county with agencies/individuals currently providing recreation services, creating liaisons with agencies having facilities for potential County use, and initiating recreation programming in the county. In the future, the new director will be responsible for initiating and coordinating efforts to begin construction of the County's new park facilities. Under these duties, the new director will identify and procure funding opportunities through grants, capital expenditures, and other funding mechanisms. Currently, there are several sources for grant funds for park development and recreation programming. The new director will play a key role in identifying these grants and procuring funding for County projects.

Recommendation Four: Halifax County should begin to develop county parks.

The new department director will be charged with guiding the new department through its formative years. The focus of the new department will be building facilities and expanding park and recreation offerings. The focus of capital improvements for this new department should fall into these general areas:

Create Opportunities for Indoor Recreation Activities

The desire for indoor recreation programs was expressed at the public workshops, as well as from the county wide survey. The County should explore opportunities to provide indoor recreation programming either by constructing indoor recreation facilities or partnering with other agencies in the county for joint use of existing facilities. One important potential partner in this effort could be the school boards. Joint use of existing school classrooms and gymnasiums would be a logical first step in providing facilities for indoor activities. Another option in school use may be renovation of school facilities that are not currently being utilized as schools. Several North Carolina counties utilize former school sites as recreation facilities.

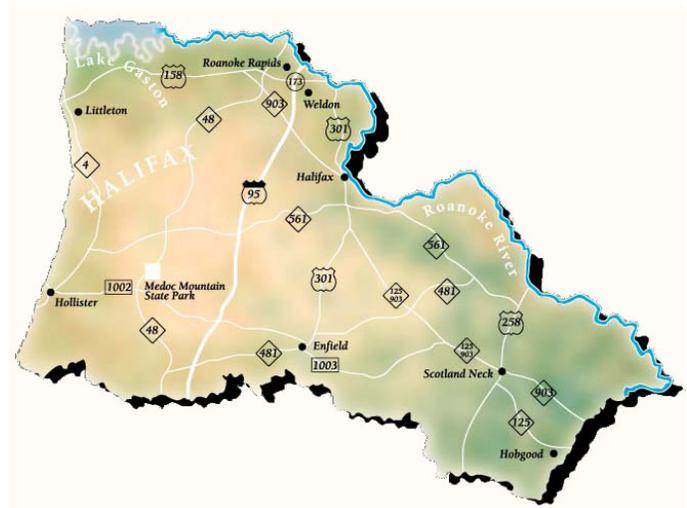
Expand Opportunities for River Access and Trails

Halifax County is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and especially water resources. These natural resources provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities for county residents and offer opportunity for economic development through tourism. In order for the County to capitalize on these natural resources there must be improved access to these assets. The development of water access, trail heads and trails would provide many rewards for county residents. The new department should look for community partners (Roanoke River Partners, The Nature Conservancy, etc.) to expand water access and trails.

Construct Two Community Parks

Halifax County should develop two Community Parks in the next ten years. These parks should be located in rural areas of the county, where county residents do not have access to a park. Proposed park locations include:

- Eastern Community Park: This park would serve residents in the eastern portion of the county, including residents of Enfield, Scotland Neck and Hobgood. One option would be to develop this park in conjunction with an existing or retired school facility.
- Western Community Park: This park will serve residents of the western section of the county, including the Town of Littleton and the community of Hollister. A potential location for this park would be in collaboration with North Carolina State Parks at Medoc Mountain State Park.



Community Parks are the basic building block of most county park systems. Usually in the 50 acre range, these parks are large enough to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities.

Construct a County Wide District Park at the 4-H Rural Life Center

Another important County park type is a District Park. These parks are typically over 100 acres and are used for both active and passive recreation. The County already has property suitable for a county wide District Park outside Halifax at the 4-H Rural Life Center. This property is a valuable county facility that provides camping, educational and historical programs. It is also the center of the County's equestrian programs/events. Development of facilities at the 4-H Rural Life Center could allow it to serve as a District Park for the County. New facilities could include athletic fields, walking trails and picnic/playground areas. Expansion and improvements to the existing equestrian facility should also be included in park development.

Work with Municipalities to Build Local Parks

In addition to these larger parks, the plan recognizes the need for smaller Neighborhood/Mini Parks to be located in each of the county's smaller towns. The County should partner with local communities in the development of smaller parks.



Municipal Park in Hobgood

County agencies do not typically become involved directly in the development or operation of small Neighborhood Parks. Instead they can assist the local municipality plan and develop these types of parks. This report recommends that in the future the County may allocate monies to assist the local agencies with the development of Neighborhood Parks.

OPERATIONAL & CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT COST

Operational Cost

The anticipated cost for the County Department for the first 10 years of operation are as follows:

- Years 1-4 ±\$125,000/annually
Director and minimal support staff.

- Years 5-7 ±\$350,000/annually
Director, Recreation Coordinator, and park maintenance staff operating one park.

- Year 8-10 ± \$500,000/annually
Director, Recreation Coordinator, and park maintenance staff operating two-three county parks.

Capital Development Cost

The development of several parks and an indoor recreation facility over the next 10 years will allow the majority of the County's park and recreation needs to be met. The development of these parks and recreation facilities will require a capital improvement budget of \$8.8 million.

The Capital Improvement Plan can be summarized into the following components:

Park Development	\$ 3,300,000
Greenway/Blueway Development	550,000
Facility Development	2,200,000
Park Renovations/Expansion	2,750,000
Total Capital Improvement Budget	\$ 8,800,000

Table 6-1 "Capital Improvements Plan" shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program. The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

Much of this funding can be off set through careful planning and grantsmanship. The new parks director will play a vital role in leading the County in procuring funding through Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, and many other funding sources.

Halifax County is ready to undertake an important step in providing park and recreation services to its citizens. Through the adoption of this plan, and the implementation of the recommendations, the County will ensure the park and recreation needs of its citizens are met.

Table 6-1
HALIFAX COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Park Development

Western Community Park	\$1,500,000
Eastern Community Park	\$1,500,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$300,000

Park Development Total **\$3,300,000**

Greenway/Blueway Development

Nature Trails/Water Access	\$500,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$50,000

Greenway Development Total **\$550,000**

Facility Development

Indoor Recreation Center	\$1,500,000
Equestrian Center	\$500,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$200,000

Facility Development Total **\$2,200,000**

Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements

4-H Rural Life Center Expansion	\$2,500,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$250,000

Renovation Total **\$2,750,000**

Land Acquisition*

Land Acquisition Total **\$0**

Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost **\$8,800,000**

* Ultimately there may be a need for acquisition of property for county parks; however, joint use opportunities with schools, State Parks, etc. should be explored initially.

Note:

Order of projects shown on Capital Improvements Plan does not indicate priority or schedule for proposed projects.



Medoc Mountain State Park

Section One Inventory

INTRODUCTION

The first step in the master planning process is to inventory and assess the existing parks and recreation activities currently serving Halifax County residents. In current economic times, it is extremely important to identify and utilize facilities to their fullest potential.

The majority of the publicly owned parks located in Halifax County are owned and operated by municipalities. These facilities include parks located in Enfield, Scotland Neck, and Roanoke Rapids. In addition to these municipal parks, there are a number of recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, shelters, etc.) located at schools throughout the county. Many of these school facilities are available for public use after school hours.

Halifax County also has a number of recreation assets operated by North Carolina State Parks, North Carolina Wildlife Commission, Roanoke River Partners, The Nature Conservancy, Tar River Land Conservancy, and Dominion Power.

Finally, the private sector offers recreational activities throughout the county. These private sector options range from outstanding golf courses to unique opportunities to watch and photograph beautiful waterfowl at Sylvan Heights Bird Park.

This section identifies the existing park and recreation facilities currently serving the citizens of Halifax County.

**Halifax County Inventory of Existing Facilities
Roanoke Rapids/Private Recreation Opportunities**

Type	Name	Acres	Adult Baseball Fields	Youth Baseball Fields	Men's Softball Fields	Women's Softball Fields	Soccer Fields	Football Fields	Multi-purpose Fields	Basketball Courts (Outdoors)	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts	Shuffleboard Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Bocce Ball Courts	Playgrounds	Picnic Shelters	Trail/Greenway (Miles)	Mountain Bike Trail (Miles)	Water Access	Fitness Equipment	Community Garden	Camp Sites	Swimming Pool/Splash Pad	Dog Park	Skate Park	Grass Area/Open Space	Restroom/Concession Building	Picnic Area	Gardens/Passive Areas	Golf Course	Disc Golf Course	Gymnasium	Meeting/Community Rooms		
Roanoke Rapids																																				
Community Parks																																				
	TJ Davis Complex *	21		1	1			1								1	3	0.5																		
	Emry Park	12.5			1						6			1		1	1	0.66										1	1							
	Chockoyotte Park	16.5		3			3									1	1	0.25									1	1								
	Ledgerwood Park	17		4			1	1			2			2													3									
		67	0	8	2	0	4	2	0	0	8	0	0	3	0	3	5	1.41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Neighborhood Parks																																				
	Rochelle Park	6.7									1					1	2										1	1								
	Tinsley Park	4.5																																		
	Chaloner Park	4								1	1					1	1	0.25						1			1	1							1	
		15.2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	3	0.25	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Mini Parks																																				
	Southgate Park	2														1												1								
	Wheeler Park	2.5								1	1					1																				
	Edward George Park	1.25														1																				
	Martin Luther King Park	2.4																																		
	Melody Park	1.2															1											1								
	CW Davis Park	0.86																																		
		10.21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Indoor/Special Use Facilities																																				
	Chaloner Recreation Center																											1							1	
	Jo Story Senior Center	1.25								1																		1							1	
	TJ Davis Recreation Center *			1			2				4	2									1			1			1						1			
	Kirkwood Adams Community Center	5.37																																		
	Aquatics Center																						1													
	Roanoke Valley Farmers Market																																			
	Doyle Field		1																																	
		6.62	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	
School Facilities																																				
	Chaloner Middle School																																		1	
	Manning Elementary School															1																				
	Belmont Elementary School															1		0.25																		
	Roanoke Rapids High School																	0.25																		
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	
Historical/Cultural																																				
	Roanoke Canal Trail	80																7.5																		
	Roanoke Canal Museum	3																																		1
		83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Private Recreation Facilities																																				
	Chockoyotte Country Club																						1													
	Scotfield Country Club										2												1													
	Sylvan Heights Bird Park																																			
	C.A.R.E./John 3:16 Center							1								1																			1	
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	
	Roanoke Rapids Totals	182.03	1	9	2	0	6	2	1	3	17	0	2	3	0	11	9	9.66	0	0	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	10	6	0	2	0	2	6		
	* Indoor & Outdoor Facilities at TJ Davis Complex																																			

ROANOKE RAPIDS SCHOOLS

- 1 - Belmont Elementary
- 2 - Manning Elementary
- 3 - Clara Hearne Pre-K Center
- 4 - Chaloner Middle School
- 5 - Roanoke Rapids High School

WELDON CITY SCHOOLS

- 1 - Weldon Elementary School
- 2 - Weldon Middle School
- 3 - Weldon STEM High School
- 4 - Roanoke Valley Early College

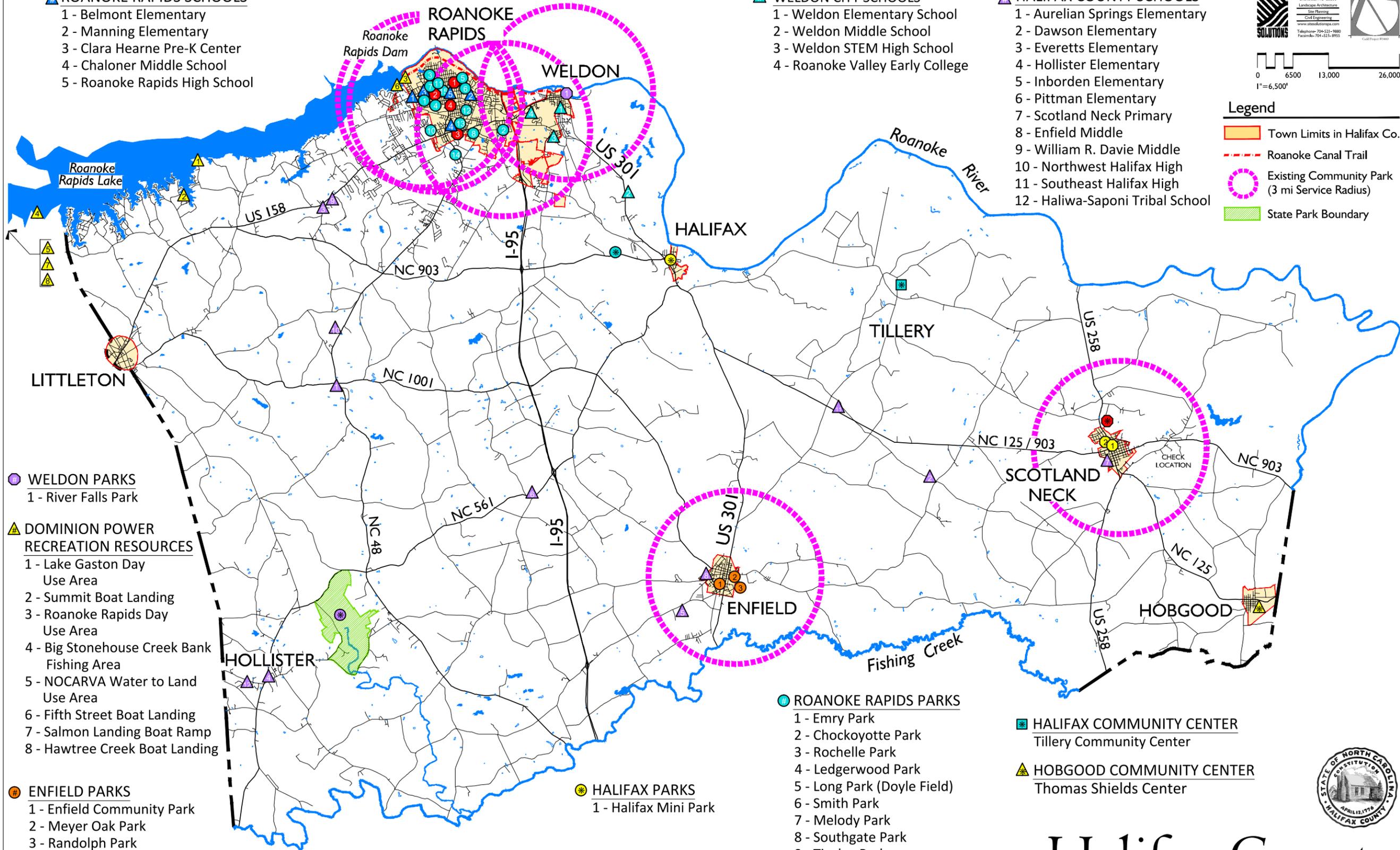
HALIFAX COUNTY SCHOOLS

- 1 - Aurelian Springs Elementary
- 2 - Dawson Elementary
- 3 - Everetts Elementary
- 4 - Hollister Elementary
- 5 - Inborden Elementary
- 6 - Pittman Elementary
- 7 - Scotland Neck Primary
- 8 - Enfield Middle
- 9 - William R. Davie Middle
- 10 - Northwest Halifax High
- 11 - Southeast Halifax High
- 12 - Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

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Legend

- Town Limits in Halifax Co.
- Roanoke Canal Trail
- Existing Community Park (3 mi Service Radius)
- State Park Boundary



WELDON PARKS

- 1 - River Falls Park

DOMINION POWER RECREATION RESOURCES

- 1 - Lake Gaston Day Use Area
- 2 - Summit Boat Landing
- 3 - Roanoke Rapids Day Use Area
- 4 - Big Stonehouse Creek Bank Fishing Area
- 5 - NOCARVA Water to Land Use Area
- 6 - Fifth Street Boat Landing
- 7 - Salmon Landing Boat Ramp
- 8 - Hawtree Creek Boat Landing

ENFIELD PARKS

- 1 - Enfield Community Park
- 2 - Meyer Oak Park
- 3 - Randolph Park

4-H Rural Life Center

- Halifax Co. Horse Complex

NC STATE PARKS

- Medoc Mountain SP

SCOTLAND NECK PARKS

- 1 - Scotland Neck Athletic Fields
- 2 - Scotland Neck Senior Center

Sylvan Heights Bird Park

HALIFAX PARKS

- 1 - Halifax Mini Park

ROANOKE RAPIDS RECREATION CENTERS

- 1 - T.J.Davis Recreation Center/
Roanoke Rapids Aquatic Center
- 2 - Jo Story Senior Center
- 3 - J.A. Chaloner Recreation Center
- 4 - Kirkwood Adams Community Center

ROANOKE RAPIDS PARKS

- 1 - Emry Park
- 2 - Chockoyotte Park
- 3 - Rochelle Park
- 4 - Ledgerwood Park
- 5 - Long Park (Doyle Field)
- 6 - Smith Park
- 7 - Melody Park
- 8 - Southgate Park
- 9 - Tinsley Park
- 10 - Wheeler Park
- 11 - CW Davis Park
- 12 - Edward George Park
- 13 - Martin Luther King Park
- 14 - Chaloner Park
- 15 - Centennial Park

HALIFAX COMMUNITY CENTER

- Tillery Community Center

HOBGOOD COMMUNITY CENTER

- Thomas Shields Center



Halifax County

Existing Features Plan

May 23, 2014



River Falls Park

Section Two

The People of Halifax County

INTRODUCTION

An important step in understanding the park and recreational needs of Halifax County is to develop an understanding of the people that make up the county. Section Two includes a review of the county's population and demographics, and looks at changes that are occurring in the community. This section will also discuss the importance of providing healthy options (programs and facilities) in the fight to improve community health.

In addition to reviewing the county's projected growth, demographic changes and community health, the Needs Assessment included several exercises to engage the public to gather information on public demand/expectations for future parks. These initiatives included:

- County Wide Survey
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Workshops
- Student Workshops

Through these efforts, considerable insight was gained regarding the public's desire for parks and recreation programs and facilities. This section discusses the information gathered in preparation of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

POPULATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

History

Halifax County is rich in history and is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. The County was founded in 1758 from portions of Edgecomb County. In 1774, the County was combined with portions of Tyrell and Martin Counties. It was named for George Montague-Dunk, 2nd Earl of Halifax, who served as President of the Board of Trade from 1748-1761.

Halifax was the site of the adoption of the “Halifax Resolves”, the first official move towards independence. The Halifax State Historic Site provides a wonderful resource for preserving and revitalizing this historically significant event.

The county is home to Native American history, as well. The Haliwa-Saponi Tribe is an important part of the county’s and the country’s history.

The region’s history is also reflected in Roanoke Canal Museum and Trail and remnants of the Weldon-Willimington railroads. The canal also has important links to affirm American History through its Historical Resources School and Remembering Tillery Project, a resettlement project.



Halifax State Historic Site

Just as important as its historical resources, the county’s natural resources define the county and provide valuable revenue. The Roanoke River runs through the northern portion of the county. The river and associated lakes (Gaston and Roanoke Rapids) provide a wide variety of water based recreation (canoeing/kayaking, fishing, swimming, etc.). Likewise, its rural landscape provides a paradise for outdoor sports and wildlife enthusiasts.

The combination of rich history, tradition and the abundance of wonderful natural resources make Halifax County a wonderful place to live and to visit.

The People of Halifax

Based on the US Census Bureau data, the 2013 population was 53,453. The 2010 population was 54,691; representing a $\pm 2.3\%$ decrease in population. An important aspect of this planning document is developing a plan for meeting current county wide park and recreation needs and establishing a ten year vision to identify future park and recreation needs. Based on past trends, it is anticipated the population of Halifax County will not increase and, at best, will remain stable.

In addition to looking at overall population numbers, the U.S. Census Bureau also looks at socio-economic features of the county’s population. In order to put the socio-economic features into perspective, the Census Bureau provides a comparison of the county figures with the state of North Carolina. A review of these figures shows that Halifax County has some unique socio-economic features.

The county’s population is slightly older than the remainder of North Carolina. The percentage of very young people (under 5 years) in Halifax County is approximately 5.6%, while the youngest segment of population comprise 6.4% of North Carolina’s population. Likewise, those under 18 years of age in Halifax County make up 22.2% of the population, while those below 18 years comprise 23.4% of North Carolina’s population.

The largest difference in age demographics is in the segment of population over 65. Over 17 percent (17.3%) of Halifax County’s population is over 65.

This is a higher percentage than the State's senior population (13.8%).

The county's demographic makeup is significantly different than North Carolina's. Black or African Americans comprise the majority (53.2%) of the county's population; while whites represent only 40% of the population. This demographic make up is significantly different than the State's population distribution where whites comprise 72% of the total population. Another important component of the County's demographic make up is the high percentage of American Indians. Almost 4% of the county is American Indian, as opposed to the State's American Indian population of 1.5%. The county's higher black and American Indian population is partially offset by much lower representation of Asians (0.7% in Halifax County versus 2.5% in North Carolina) and Hispanic/Latino (2.5% in Halifax County versus 8.7% in North Carolina).



Haliwa-Saponi Tribe

From an education standpoint, just over three fourths (76%) of those over 25 years of age are a high school graduate or higher. This is significantly less than the State's percentage of high school graduates (84.5%). Approximately 12% (11.7%) of the County's population over 25 years of age has received a Bachelor's Degree; approximately half the State's percentage of degrees population (26.6%).

These lower levels of education are reflected in the economic conditions in the county. The median household income in Halifax County is \$31,614,

considerably below the State's household median income of \$46,450. This lower income level is reflected in a lower median value of owner occupied housing (\$87,500 for Halifax County versus \$153,600 for the State). It is also reflected in the high percentage of Halifax County residents living below the poverty level (25.3% for Halifax County versus 16.8% for North Carolina).

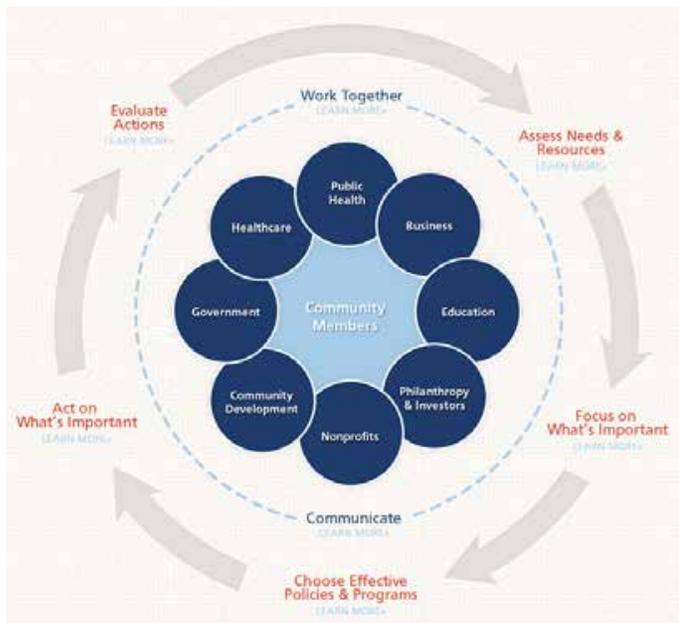
This quick review of demographics for Halifax County provides important factors that should be considered in the development of this parks and recreation master plan. These features include:

- Halifax County has a very diverse population with a much higher percentage of blacks and American Indians. The recommendations in this plan must include programs and facilities that reflect these demographics.
- Almost one fourth of the County's population is under 18 years of age. The plan should include programs and facilities to meet the needs of this younger population.
- Over 17% of the County's population are seniors (over 65). While not as large as the youth population, the number of people over 65 is significant. Programs and facilities should include this segment of the population.
- The median income of Halifax County residents is significantly lower than many North Carolina communities; the level of poverty is greater. This lower income results in the citizens of Halifax County having limited resources to pay for recreational opportunities. Proposed facilities and programs will have limited ability to recoup cost through memberships and user fees.
- The lower median value of owner occupied housing units reflects itself in a lower county tax base; placing greater demand on tax payer dollars and county spending. Recommendations and proposals in this plan should be cognizant of this issue.

RELEVANT PLANNING STUDIES

County Health Rankings & Roadmaps 2014 North Carolina

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program helps communities identify important solutions that enhance healthier schools, work places, and neighborhoods. The study provides a two part approach to improving community health. First, the County Health Rankings informs counties as to how they rank and what it making its residents healthy or sick. Next, the Roadmaps provide insight into what can be done to create healthier places to live, learn, work and play.



The Roadmaps to Health focuses on helping communities become healthier

Based on the 2014 Rankings & Roadmaps, Halifax County ranked 96th out of the State's 100 county in Health Factors and 99th in Health Outcomes. Factors considered in Health Outcomes include length of life and quality of life. Health Factors include health behaviors (tobacco use, diet/exercise, alcohol/drug use, and sexual activity), clinical care (access to quality care), social and economic factors (education, employment, income, family/social support, community safety), and physical environment (air/water quality, housing, and transit).

The County's Quality of Life ranking was the lowest of all North Carolina counties and Length of Life ranking was 93rd. The County's Health Behaviors was ranked 87th among the State's 100 counties and Clinical Care was 60th. The County's Social and Economic Factors ranking was 96th and the Physical Environment was 95th.

The Roadmaps to Health section of the report is aimed at helping communities to look at the many factors that influence health and make changes that will improve community health. Facilities and programs offered by a parks and recreation department could be an important component in a county wide initiative to improve the health of county residents.

The Importance of Improving Community Health in Halifax County

As County leadership considers the need for expanding park and recreation opportunities in Halifax County, there are many reasons to justify expenditure of public funds. In addition to the obvious need to meet unmet demand from county residents as expressed in the public workshops and survey and in addition to the economic benefits parks and recreation areas provide through attracting people to the county, an important benefit of parks is improved community health. In Halifax County, the community health benefit may very well be the most compelling argument for a county wide parks initiative. The county is one of North Carolinas most unhealthy counties. The development of a parks system could be a factor in improving the county's health status.



There is growing evidence that public policy and the built environment impact community health. The following reports present strong evidence that parks, recreation facilities, and programming activities improve a community's health:

- Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity within a Generation, a report by the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity.
- Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States by the Center for Disease Control.
- Leadership for Healthy Communities: Advancing Policies to Support Healthy Eating and Active Living, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

One of the highly regarded references of community health, Action Strategies Tool Kits (Leadership for Healthy Communities), provides recommendations for community strategies and measurements to prevent obesity in the United States. This study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identifies a list of converging strategies on the built environment. This list of strategies includes:

1. Active Transportation

- **Improve Safety for Bicyclists and Pedestrians**
- **Expand Trails, Bicycle Lanes and Connections**

2. Land Use for Active Living

- **Reevaluate Urban Design and Land Use Plans to Improve Active Living**
- **Improve Community Design Features to Encourage Physical Activity**

3. Quality Physical Activity (in and) Near Schools

- **Support Walk to School and Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programs**
- **Facilitate Joint-Use Agreements**
- **Locating schools within easy walking distance of residential areas (IOM and CDC)**

4. Safety and Crime Prevention

- **Keep Communities Safe and Free from Crime to Encourage Outdoor Activity**

5. Open Space, Parks and Recreation

- **Increase Access to Recreation Facilities and Open Spaces, Including Parks and Community Gardens**

Those initiatives identified in bold are initiatives that could be acted upon with the recommendations presented in this Master Plan.

These are not simply recommendations with hypothetical outcomes. In studies found in The American Journal of Public Health (2001) it was reported that:

- People with access to Neighborhood Parks are nearly twice as likely to be physically active.
- Enhanced access to places for physical activity (like parks) increases the frequency of physical activity and weight loss.
- Public open space is associated with higher levels of walking and three times the likelihood of getting the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Youth with fewer recreational facilities nearby are less likely to be active and more likely to be obese.



When you consider the cost of poor health on the national and local economy, the investment in parks may be a very wise investment for county dollars; especially when you consider the many opportunities for grant funding (see Section Six: Action Plan Implementation). Currently the vast majority (88%) of what we spend on being healthy is on medical services, while a very small percentage (4%) is spent on promoting health behavior. Surprisingly, healthy behaviors can have a huge impact on making us healthy. Healthy behavior is by far the biggest influence (50%) in making us healthy. Health behavior can be significantly improved with access to facilities and programs that promote active lifestyles and healthy choices. A county wide parks and recreation program could promote those behaviors.

Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative

The Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative was established to empower residents in Roanoke Valley (which includes Halifax County) to adopt healthier lifestyles, access preventative services, and take positive actions to improve health throughout the community. To reach this goal, the initiative works to accomplish the following low-to-no cost changes:

- Promote healthy living through education, empowerment and health access.
- Improve access to healthy, affordable foods and opportunities for exercise and physical activity.
- Implement and expand evidence based programs and policies.
- Ensure families and individuals have the opportunity to lead healthy and productive lives.



Get Fit Stay Fit Roanoke Valley!

Strategies and activities planned to enhance community health include:

- Promoting healthy living through education.
- Improving access to recreational facilities and play spaces.
- Improving access to healthy foods.
- Improving workplace health and wellness.

Several of the strategic areas could be enhanced with the development of a county parks and recreation program.

PUBLIC INPUT

Perhaps the most important step in the planning process is gathering input from county residents with regard to their desires for public recreation. As part of the master plan process, the following initiatives were taken to gather public input:

Community Survey (controlled)

A telephone survey of county residents was conducted to gather public input on parks and recreation needs. 200 completed telephone interviews were made. A random sample of county wide telephone numbers was used.

Public Workshops

Eight information gathering public workshops were held to allow citizens to discuss community park needs. Another workshop was held to allow citizens to review preliminary recommendations and make comments. Over 350 citizens attended the eight workshops and provided valuable input on recreational needs.

Student Workshops

Community volunteers organized four student workshops at high schools across the county. Over 60 students attended the four workshops to voice their opinions on recreation needs.

Stakeholder Interviews

One on one interviews were held with fifteen key community stakeholders to learn more about park needs.

The following is a summary of findings from each of the public input initiatives:

Community Survey (controlled)

In February 2014, the County's research consultant (Clark & Chase Research) telephoned randomly selected residents located throughout the county. The questionnaire contained seven questions asking for input on current park use, conditions of existing parks, interest in various recreational activities, priorities for park improvements and funding options for parks.

BACKGROUND

An important aspect of this planning process is determining the public's desire for parks and recreation facilities. As a result, it is important to determine the level of support for this type of development among residents of Halifax County. To that end, a household telephone survey of Halifax County was conducted in February, 2014. The results of this

scientific poll have been weighted and projected to represent households in the county. The key findings of this survey are addressed below.

METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted February 10 - February 20, 2014 by Clark & Chase Research, Inc. A total of 200 telephone surveys were conducted with households in Halifax County.

Household selection was accomplished through random samples of listed and unlisted phone numbers purchased through Survey Sampling International (SSI), a nationally recognized sample provider. This method of sampling allows all telephone numbers – landline and wireless, listed and unlisted – a chance of being contacted. Three types of sample were utilized, in the following proportions:

- Random Digit Dial (RDD) sample of listed & unlisted landlines – 70 interviews
- Random sample of listed landlines – 75 interviews
- Random Digit Dial (RDD) sample of wireless phones – 55 interviews

Households were screened to ensure they were located within Halifax County.

Interviewers attempted to reach each selected phone number at different times of day and on different days of the week. The targeted respondent was the person most likely to be familiar with the household's recreational activities.

An iterative weighting procedure was used to ensure that various groups are represented in the survey according to their true proportions. The survey data was balanced by race, annual household income, and presence of children in the household to match parameters from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census and 2008-2012 American Community Survey. The weighting procedure also adjusts for differential patterns of landline and cell phone usage based on the most recent state-level estimates from the National Health Interview Survey (released December 18, 2013).

The maximum sampling error for the total sample of 200 interviews is plus-or-minus 6.9 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence. The sampling error for any subgroup will be larger because it is based on fewer interviews. For example, the sampling error for 100 completed interviews is plus-or-minus 9.8 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

In addition to sampling error, the difficulties involved in conducting public opinion surveys may introduce other forms of error that cannot be measured.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Decision-Maker's Gender	
Men	44%
Women	56%
Age	
18 to 44	23%
45 to 54	30%
55 to 64	18%
65+	29%
Race	
White/Caucasian	38%
Black/African American	51%
Native American	4%
Hispanic	1%
Multiracial / Other Race	1%
Ascribed Income	
Less than \$25k	43%
\$25k to less than \$50k	26%
\$50k to less than \$75k	17%
\$75k to less than \$100k	6%
\$100k or more	9%
Phone Usage	
Wireless Mostly	46%
Dual User	24%
Landline Mostly	30%
Children in HH	
Yes	26%
No	73%

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding, and because refusals are not shown.

HOUSEHOLD'S LOCATION

Town	41%
Roanoke Rapids	27%
Weldon	4%
Scotland Neck	4%
Halifax	2%
Enfield	3%
Other	2%
Rural Area	57%

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding, and because refusals are not shown.

SURVEY FINDINGS

Q1a – “Have you or any members of your household visited a park or recreation facility in Halifax County in the past year?”

Q1b – [If visited parks or recreation facilities] “Which facility do members of your household visit most often?”

- Forty-three percent of households in Halifax County have visited a park or recreation area in the past year.
- Respondents in the 18-54 year old segment (53%), households with children (57%) and households with annual incomes in excess of fifty thousand dollars (66%) are more likely to report visiting park or recreation areas in the last year.
- Park visitation is highly fragmented in Halifax County. The TJ Davis Complex (10%) is the park or recreation area visited most often, followed by Medoc State Park (9%).
- Other visited parks include:
 - Chockoyotte Park – 8%
 - Roanoke Canal Trail – 8%
 - Martin Luther King Park – 7%
 - River Falls Park – 7%
 - Emry Park – 7%
 - Bird Sanctuary – 4%
 - Lake Gaston – 4%
 - Roanoke Rapids Athletics – 3%
 - Enfield Community Park – 3%

Q2 – Respondents were read a list of facilities that might be available at a park or recreation area. They were asked whether someone in their household has great interest, some interest, or no interest in that type of facility. (Note: the list was randomized to address any order bias.)

- Among the fourteen facilities tested, eight record levels of interest higher than fifty percent on a top two-box basis (Great/Some Interest).
- The facilities that resonate most positively (top two-box basis) are a walking or biking trail (75%), open space or a natural area (72%), a picnic shelter (69%), and a fishing area (69%).
 - These are all outdoor facilities and not related to a specific sport. (See table on the following page.)

Facility	Interest (Top Two-Box Rating)	Great Interest
A Walking or Biking Trail	75%	37%
Open Space or Natural Area	72%	32%
A Picnic Shelter	69%	31%
A Fishing Area	69%	38%
A Playground	63%	36%
A Gymnasium	62%	32%
A Swimming Facility	60%	25%
An Outdoor Basketball Court	57%	23%
An Athletic Field	43%	22%
A Dog Park	39%	19%
A Tennis Court	36%	10%
A BMX Bike Park	35%	11%
A Skateboard Park	29%	9%
A Disc Golf Course	26%	5%

- Non-white respondents indicate a greater interest than whites in picnic shelters, playgrounds, gymnasiums, outdoor basketball courts, and skateboard parks.
- Whites show greater interest than other respondents in dog parks.
- Fewer than three in ten respondents are interested in a skateboard park or disc golf course. Among those who register interest in these two activities, the highest levels are expressed in households with children (47% and 41% respectively on a top-two box basis).
- Respondents were also asked if they are interested in “athletic fields,” and if so, what kinds of athletic fields.
 - Four in ten households have at least some interest in athletic fields.
 - The most-favored types of athletic fields are baseball and softball (26% of all households) or Football (19%).

Q3 – As a follow-up, respondents who expressed great interest or some interest in a facility were asked: “What percent of your needs for that facility are already being met?”

- The responses to this question suggest that existing park and recreation facilities are not always meeting the needs of residents in Halifax County (see table on following page).
 - The greatest unmet recreational needs are for a BMX bike park (77% unmet need), skateboard park (77%), and disc golf course (75%). Households with interest in these types of facilities currently have few options. However, these facilities also have the lowest overall levels of interest.
 - For the four types of recreational facilities receiving the most interest (walking or biking trails, open space or natural areas, picnic shelters, and fishing areas), four or five of every ten interested households say their needs for these facilities are not being met.
- A comparison of the responses for facility interest level (top two-box) and unmet need appears below:

Facility	Interest (Top Two-Box Rating)	% Unmet Need (Average)
A Walking or Biking Trail	75%	42%
Open Space or Natural Area	72%	45%
A Picnic Shelter	69%	48%
A Fishing Area	69%	42%
A Playground	63%	45%
A Gymnasium	62%	56%
A Swimming Facility	60%	56%
An Outdoor Basketball Court	57%	58%
An Athletic Field	43%	43%
A Dog Park	39%	65%
A Tennis Court	36%	59%
A BMX Bike Park	35%	77%
A Skateboard Park	29%	77%
A Disc Golf Course	26%	75%

Q4 – Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the public park and recreation areas in Halifax County. A scale of “1” to “7” was used, where “7” was Very Satisfied and “1” was Very Dissatisfied. Respondents could also use any number in between.

- On a top two-box basis (ratings of a “6” or “7”), one in three respondents (33%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the park and recreation areas in Halifax County.
- Households without children appear slightly more satisfied with Halifax County parks.
- Another one in five households (21%) rate their level of satisfaction a “5,” indicating they are at least somewhat satisfied with park and recreation areas in Halifax County.

- Fourteen percent rate their level of satisfaction a “4,” indicating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- Overall, about three in ten households (31%) indicate at least some level of dissatisfaction with Halifax County parks, with 22% of respondents indicating higher levels of dissatisfaction (a “1” or “2” rating).

Q5 – “Would you say there is a great need, some need, little need, or no need for additional park and recreation areas in Halifax County?” (Note: the response choices were read in either ascending order or descending order, at random, to address any order bias.)

- Two in three households (66%) feel there is a “great need” for additional park and recreation areas in Halifax County.
 - Households with children (81%) and non-whites (76%) are more likely to feel there is a “great need” for additional parks.
- One in ten households say there is little or no need for additional park and recreation areas, while 1% are not sure.

Q6 – “If extra funds are needed to cover the costs of building new facilities, or adding on to current facilities, would you support or oppose a tax increase earmarked for those costs?” (Note: the response choices were read in either ascending order or descending order, at random, to address any order bias.)

- Half of Halifax County households (51%) say they would support a tax increase earmarked to cover extra costs needed for building new facilities, or adding to current facilities.
 - Younger respondents (59% vs. 42%), non-whites (61% vs. 36%), and households with children (67% vs. 46%) favor a tax increase to pay for parks if necessary.
- Four in ten households (42%) oppose a tax increase to fund park and recreation areas. Seven percent are undecided.

SUMMARY REMARKS

A couple of items stand out in these survey results. While half of households in Halifax County support a tax increase to fund additional park and recreation facilities, the margin of support is close when taking the survey’s margin of error into consideration. However, those households that feel there is need for additional facilities in Halifax County are also likely to support a tax increase earmarked to address such costs. Thus, this segment recognizes that some financial sacrifice may be necessary to improve parks in Halifax County.

Halifax is largely a rural county. Only four in ten respondents reside in a township, with the rest living in a rural area. Rural households appear slightly more likely to support than oppose a tax increase for funding parks (59% vs. 52%).

Finally, it is notable that Halifax County households indicate a need for open spaces, trails, fishing and picnic areas that is greater than their need for specific athletic facilities.

Public Workshops

The most impressive component of this planning effort was the effort by the Steering Committee to reach out to the citizens of Halifax County to learn the public’s desire for parks and recreational opportunities. The Steering Committee visualized and implemented a very creative and bold program for gathering public input. Over a two week period volunteers from the Steering Committee held eight public workshops throughout the county. In a special effort to gather input from the county’s youth, they also held four workshops at high schools to discuss park and recreation needs with students. Findings from the student workshops are provided in the following section.

Public workshops were held in the following locations:

- Halifax Agricultural Center Auditorium, March 6
- Enfield, Enfield Municipal Complex, March 10
- Scotland Neck, Scotland Neck Town Hall, March 11
- Hobgood, Hobgood Town Hall, March 12

- Littleton, Littleton Volunteer Fire Department, March 13
- Weldon, Weldon Town Hall, March 17
- Holister, Chief W.R. Richardson Tribal Government Complex, March 19
- Roanoke Rapids, Lloyd Andrews Building, March 20



Attendees provided valuable input at the public workshops

Turnout for the meetings was phenomenal. Approximately 350 people attended the eight evening meetings. In addition to evening workshops, the youth workshops attracted 64 students (see the following section). It should be noted that this level of attendance to discuss a comprehensive park and recreation plan is very unusual. The high level of response that was made by the public is a strong indication of the need for parks and recreation facilities in Halifax County.

Each workshop was facilitated by several Steering Committee members. All workshops were organized and facilitated with the same format to ensure input received was in a consistent format. Each workshop began with a brief introduction and description of the planning process. Discussions then moved quickly to an input session designed to encourage citizens to voice their opinions on existing park and recreation facilities, desires for new/expanded parks and facilities, and expectations on agency responsibilities for parks. The meetings ended with attendees voting on recreation facilities currently being used and identifying activities/facilities that are needed.

The following is a summary of the input received from the eight workshops. Appendix D includes tables where the results from the individual meetings are reported.

Attendees (as a group) were asked to respond to the following questions:

Do you feel the existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax County are meeting your needs?

The response to this question was unanimous. Every person that attended all eight workshops felt existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax County are not meeting needs.

Are additional parks and recreation facilities needed?

The answer to this question was also unanimous. Every person in every public workshop felt there is a need for additional parks and recreation facilities.

What facilities are needed?

Over 50 different facilities or activities were listed from the eight workshops. There were 10-15 activities that were listed consistently at most all workshops. Those included:

- Aquatics
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Biking
- Fishing
- Hiking/Trails
- Horseback Riding
- Recreation Center/Gymnasium
- Senior Programs
- Skating/Skateboard
- Soccer
- Softball
- Tennis
- Water Access

A complete list of all activities/facilities suggested is included in Appendix D.

What park and recreation facilities are you currently using?

The list of facilities under current use was significantly shorter than the list from the previous question

(what recreational activities currently interest you). Likewise, some groups answered the question based on recreational activities (basketball, trail riding, etc.) and others provided information on special facilities (Canal Trail, TJ Davis) they are currently using.

As in the previous responses, there appears to be two areas of general interest. One group focused on traditional recreation activities that included:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Football
- Gymnasium
- Soccer
- Softball
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Track

A second grouping of responses focused on nature based recreational activities:

- Canoeing
- Equestrian Activities
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Off Road Sports
- Wildlife observing

What public agencies should be responsible for providing additional facilities and programs?

Every public workshop identified Halifax County as one of the agencies that should be providing park and recreation facilities and programs. In addition to holding the County partially responsible for parks and recreation opportunities, the public provided a wide range of community agencies that should be engaged in delivering park and recreation opportunities to county residents. Participants at every one of the eight workshops came up with 10-15 agencies that should share the mission. The list of agencies included:

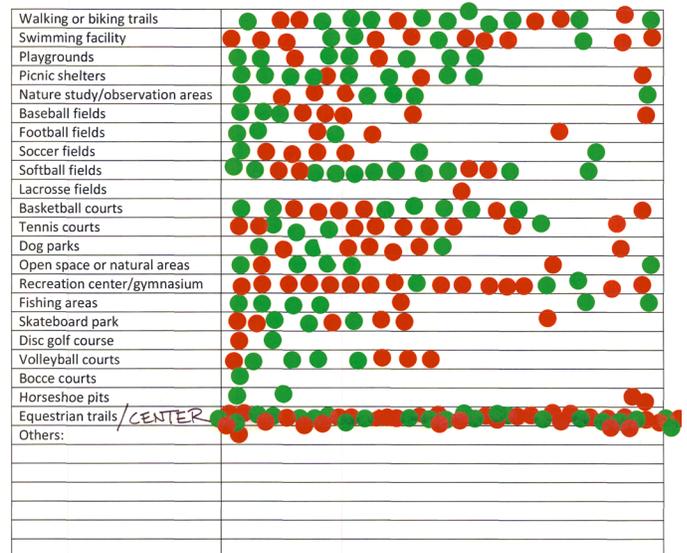
- Local Governments
- Federal Government
- State Agencies
 - State Parks
 - Department of Natural Resources
 - Department of Transportation

- Tourism
- Extension Services
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- School Boards
- Health Department
- Dominion Power/Duke Energy
- Halifax Regional Medical Center
- Faith Based Community
- Corporate Partners
- Volunteers
- CADA
- Kapstone
- Tony Hawk Foundation
- Roby Dyrdek Foundation
- Halifax Community College
- NC State University
- Foundations/Grants
- John 3:16

Would you say there is great need, some need or no need for additional park and recreation facilities in Halifax County?

The answer to this question was unanimous. Everyone attending the eight workshops said there is great need for additional park and recreation facilities in Halifax County.

Halifax County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan



Participants voted for facilities they would like to use and those that they currently use

Following the group discussion of each of these questions, attendees were asked to take colored adhesive dots and identify (vote) for (1) five facilities they are currently using and (2) five facilities they would like to use. Detailed results of all responses (broken down by each workshop) is provided in Appendix D.

A summary of the results from these follows:

Current Use

A cumulative listing of participants' responses to the question is provided below. Each participant was given five adhesive dots and asked to record the five activities/facilities they most regularly use. There was no strict "policing" of people as they placed their dots on the list of activities. It is apparent in some cases people placed all (or most) of their dots on one activity in an attempt to make a strong statement of support for that particular activity; therefore, the number of votes for any of the activities cannot be interrupted as a percentage of all participants. For example, 131 dots were placed by the equestrian trails in the summary listed below. This high number of dots implies there is a very strong interest in equestrian trails in Halifax County. This high response of dots does not indicate that roughly one third of those attending the public workshop were horse enthusiasts.

Facilities Currently Using

131	Equestrian trails/center
109	Walking or biking trails
76	Playgrounds
72	Basketball courts
69	Fishing areas
67	Picnic shelters
66	Softball fields
54	Swimming facility
53	Recreation center/gymnasium
46	Open space or natural areas
42	Baseball fields
40	Football fields
32	Nature study/observation areas
29	Volleyball courts
28	Soccer fields
26	Tennis courts
24	Dog parks

18	Skateboard park
16	Horseshoe pits
13	Campsites
11	Bocce courts
9	Disc golf course
6	Lacrosse fields
5	Racket ball court
3	Golf course
1	Water park
1	Covered arena
1	Shooting range
0	Paintball
0	Putt putt
0	Bike path
0	Indoor skating

By far the most popular activity of those attending the public workshops was horseback riding. A large majority (101 of the 131 votes) of those votes were recorded at the Halifax meeting. Relatively strong support for equestrian activities was also seen in Scotland Neck and Weldon.

The activity listed as the second most popular recreation activity was walking and biking. These activities are typically the most popular recreation activities in the majority of communities.

Fishing was identified as a popular recreational activity. The popularity of fishing and the high demand for nature based sports speaks directly to the unique natural resources found in Halifax County.

The next group of activities fall into the traditional activities one typically finds in most community or district parks; playgrounds, picnic facilities, athletic fields, and swimming facilities. The high response to these activities indicates there is a high level of demand for activities typically found in Community or District Parks. Based on the unanimous vote saying there is a great need for additional parks and recreation facilities, it can be assumed the demand for these activities is not being met.

Desired Use

As with the question regarding what recreational facilities attendees are currently using, attendees

were asked to identify five facilities they would like to use. The summary of all public workshops is listed below:

Facilities Would Like to Use

157	Equestrian trails/center
102	Recreation center/gymnasium
91	Swimming facility
82	Walking or biking trails
79	Picnic shelters
78	Skateboard park
67	Playgrounds
64	Basketball courts
63	Volleyball courts
60	Tennis courts
60	Dog parks
55	Covered Arena
50	Nature study/observation areas
49	Open space or natural areas
45	Baseball fields
43	Horseshoe pits
42	Softball fields
41	Fishing areas
41	Campsites
38	Disc golf course
35	Soccer fields
24	Football fields
18	Bocce courts
17	Lacrosse fields
14	Racket ball court
9	Water park
8	Shooting range
8	Bike path
5	Paintball
5	Putt putt
1	Golf course
1	Indoor skating

Equestrian trails/center was again the most popular activity. It should also be noted that more people indicated an interest in using or participating in equestrian activities than said they were currently participating or using equestrian facilities. Indicating there is an unmet need.

Perhaps one of the most interesting (and telling) statements comes from the high level of responses on the next two most listed activities. Those attending

the eight public workshops listed the second and third desired facilities as recreation center/gymnasium and swimming facility. The level of interest in a swimming facility was strong in all community workshops. The desire for a recreation center was strong in most all of the workshops (except Scotland Neck and Weldon). Based on response levels from other planning studies, this level of interest in swimming and indoor recreation is extremely high. Typically, these two activities rank in the “middle of the pack” with other recreational activities.

Several of the next few activities in the public’s rankings (walking trails, picnic shelters, playground, and court games) are typically the most popular recreational activities. The popularity of activities was slightly different in the county wide telephone survey. These activities ranked above gymnasium and swimming facility in the telephone survey based on a random sample of residents.

The next most popular activities (receiving 40-50 votes) were nature based recreation opportunities (nature study, camping, etc.) and field sports (baseball, softball, etc.). While not the most popular activities on the list, there was considerable interest in these activities; indicating a potential need for facilities to program these recreational interests.

The response and attendance at the public workshops was very positive. The turnout for the workshops was phenomenal and the general response to the County’s efforts in developing the plan was very positive. The input provided will be helpful as the County reviews its options for the development of a park system.

Student Public Workshops

In addition to the eight evening public workshops held throughout the county, four additional workshops were held at high schools to encourage input from county youth. These workshops were held at Roanoke Rapids High School, Southeast Halifax High School, and Weldon High School (two sessions). Over 60 students attended the four workshops. Attendees were asked generally the same questions that were asked in the evening workshops.

The following is a summary of their answers:

Do you feel the existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax County are meeting your needs?

The response to this question varied by school location. Students at both workshops at Weldon High School felt that existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax County are meeting needs, while the vast majority of students from Roanoke Rapids High School (0 yes, 19 no) and Southeast Halifax High School (2 yes, 22 no) felt existing facilities were not meeting current needs.

Are additional parks and recreation facilities needed?

The answer to this question was unanimous. Every student participating felt there is a need for additional parks and recreation facilities.

What facilities are needed?

When asked what facilities are needed the students gave a wide range of answers. Most of the responses included traditional park and recreational facilities:

- Recreation Centers
- Swimming Pools
- Teen Clubs
- Gymnasiums
- Soccer Facilities
- Basketball Courts
- Skate Park

The students also included some unusual recreation activities:

- Maze/Labyrinth
- Shooting Range
- Bowling Alley
- Ice Rink
- Go-Kart Track
- Zoo

In addition, a number of activities beyond the reach of this planning study were listed:

- Healthier Restaurants
- Chocolate Theme Park
- Bigger Shopping Mall
- More Clothes Stores
- Drive-in Movie Theater

What park and recreation facilities currently interest you?

When asked to list recreational activities they are currently interested in using, the activities included many activities discussed in the evening public workshops:

Swimming	Track
Football	Soccer
Baseball	Lacrosse
Basketball	Dance
Tennis	Cheerleading
Bowling	Hunting
Biking	Fishing
Jogging	Horseback Riding

But the student's list also included a much wider range of activities:

Rap Studio	ATVs
Drag Strip	Video Games
Go-Kart Course	Drum Line/Band
Amusement Park	Dodge Ball
Laser Tag	Bumper Cars
Paintball	Double Dutch
Cheerleading	Arts
Hopscotch	

What park and recreation facilities are you currently using?

The answer to this question varied based on high school location. Those attending Roanoke Rapids and Weldon High Schools listed Roanoke Rapids recreation facilities (TJ Davis Complex, Chockoyotte Park, Chaloner Recreation Center, Roanoke Canal Trail, etc.). Students from Southeastern High School listed Scotland Neck Parks, Enfield Parks, 4-H Rural Life Center, etc.

Facilities outside of Halifax County were listed by every group. Facilities in Rocky Mount (YMCA, Sunset Park and skating rink) were listed. Facilities in Virginia (YMCA Emporia, Yorkton Beach, and Patrick Henry Mall) were also listed.

What public agencies should be responsible for providing additional facilities and programs?

The students did a really good job of listing potential partners for recreation facilities and programs. Their list included many of those listed in the evening workshops:

- Local Government
- County Government
- State Government
- Federal Government
- Faith Based Community
- Corporate Partners
- Schools

Would you say there is great need, some need or no need for additional park and recreation facilities in Halifax County?

The majority of students attending the workshop felt there was a great need for additional parks and recreation facilities. Approximately 10 of the students attending the workshop (±15%) felt the need was less than great (some need). No student felt there was not at least some need.

Following the open discussion of each of the questions listed above, students were asked to take colored adhesive dots and identify (vote) for (1) five facilities they are currently using and (2) five facilities they would like to use.

Recreation Facilities Currently Being Used

The most popular facilities/activities currently used by the students were traditional recreational activities found in public parks and recreation centers. These activities included:

- Recreation Center/Gymnasium
- Basketball Courts
- Playgrounds
- Trails
- Swimming Facilities
- Softball Fields

A second tier of facilities included more park activities:

- Open Space/Natural Areas
- Fishing Areas
- Picnic Shelters

And some sports:

- Baseball Field
- Volleyball Courts
- Tennis Courts
- Soccer Fields

Desired Use

When asked what types of facilities they would like to use, by far the most popular answer was paintball; followed by a swimming facility and dog parks.

The second tier of answers included a lengthy list of recreation facilities:

- Fishing Areas
- Skateboard Park
- Horseshoe Pits
- Football Fields
- Walking Trails
- Picnic Shelters
- Natural Areas
- Soccer Fields

Summary

The input received from the four student workshops provided valuable information on activities and facilities that interest the county’s youth. The input from the student workshops reinforces and broadens the input received from the evening workshops. Student workshops were not the only opportunity young people had to speak out on the need for parks and facilities. Dozens of young people attended the evening workshops and let their voices be heard.

Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews with Community/Agency Stakeholders were held January 15 and March 6 – 7, 2014 with the following stakeholders:

- Ms. Lori Medlin – Halifax County Convention and Visitor Bureau CEO
- Mr. Thomas Ellis – Hobgood Town Manager
- Ms. Kathy White – Chair Friends of Canal Museum and Trail and on Tourism Board
- Mr. Tony Brown – Halifax County Manager
- Mr. Brent Lubbock – Sylvan Heights Bird Park
- Ms. Aubrey Hardy – Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative
- Mr. Ed Liverman – local sports association representative
- Mayor Julia Meacham – Town of Weldon
- Ms. Carol Shields – Roanoke River Partners Executive Director
- Mr. Chuck Peoples – Nature Conservancy Program Manager, Halifax Town Commissioner

Ms. Christiana Wells – Littleton Lake Gaston Area Chamber of Commerce (also serves Hollister area)

Mr. James Pierce – Chairman Halifax County Commissioners

Ms. Nancy Jackson – Scotland Neck Town Administrator

Ms. Rose Battle – Halifax County Aging Coordinator

Ms. EB Odum – Halifax County Health Department, Registered Dietitian

1. What do you like most about living in Halifax County?

Most everyone mentioned the friendly people and small town feel of the county. Many people also mentioned the beauty of the rural landscape and the unique water resource of the Roanoke River and the lakes (Gaston and Roanoke Rapids).

2. What do you like least?

Several people mentioned limited shopping and entertainment opportunities. Most people said the poor economy and the challenges of transitioning from a rural economy into an economy driven by business/industry. Finally, several people stated the overall poor health of county residents and the drain that has on the county's ability to grow and prosper.

3. What role do parks and recreation facilities play in the quality of life of this county?

4. What role should they be playing?

Most everyone interviewed felt the role of parks and recreation facilities varied depending on where you lived. For those people living close to Roanoke Rapids, or one of the smaller towns with existing parks, parks and recreation facilities are an important part of their lives. Unfortunately, the majority of Halifax County citizens live in unincorporated areas or towns so small, very few parks and recreation facilities are available for these residents. People living in these areas rely on church and school facilities for recreational activities such as playgrounds, walking trails, picnicking, etc., but the opportunities are extremely limited. Those living in very rural areas of the county either do not have access to recreation facilities or drive considerable distances to Roanoke Rap-

ids, Rocky Mount or other communities that have facilities. Many Halifax residents do not even have this option because they lack adequate transportation.

Almost everyone interviewed felt there should be better access to parks and recreation facilities. Likewise, almost everyone interviewed felt the County, working with other public and private agencies, should provide parks and recreation facilities to its citizens.

5. What parks and recreation facilities do you think are serving the community well?

Most everyone felt that Roanoke Rapids has a very good park system and these facilities are meeting many needs of the citizens of the city and the surrounding areas. It was noted by several stakeholders that there are gaps in service and needs even within Roanoke Rapids area, but overall the people in this service area do have access to a variety of facilities and programs.

Medoc Mountain State Park was also mentioned by several stakeholders as an excellent park with a number of low impact recreation opportunities (camping, picnicking, trails, fishing, etc.). This state park is a tremendous resource for the county. It provides recreational opportunities for county residents and also provides a valuable tourist attraction to the county.

In addition to "built" parks and more traditional recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, etc.), almost everyone interviewed talked about the importance of Halifax County's natural resources as recreational facilities. The Roanoke River, the area's lakes, the historical and cultural sites, and the Nature Conservancy's land holdings provide wonderful opportunities for nature appreciation, hunting, fishing, etc.

6. What parks and recreation facilities could be improved upon?

The answer to this question varied somewhat based on the stakeholder's position and location in the county.

Those from the smaller townships or unincorporated areas of the county felt the main issue was lack of

facilities. As noted in the inventory of facilities, the parks in Halifax County are predominately found in Roanoke Rapids, with a few smaller parks located in Scotland Neck, Weldon, Enfield and Halifax. The remainder of the county is void of park and recreation facilities. This dearth of county parks leaves large areas of the county without access to traditional park and recreation facilities.

In those communities that have municipal facilities, many of the existing facilities are inadequate to meet current demand. Likewise, many of the existing facilities are old and need renovation or improvement.

Several stakeholders referred to the county's 4-H Rural Life Center and the Equestrian Center as an important county asset, but felt it was being under-utilized. Recommendations for improvements ranged from improving the day camp facility to development of a large county wide park with tournament level sports complex.

7. What new parks and recreation facilities should the County consider?

Everyone interviewed felt the County should develop a parks and recreation department and develop some form of park system. Likewise, almost everyone interviewed realized that there are many demands on county funds, and in the current challenging times, the development of a county wide parks department may take time. The recommendations of this plan should be positioned to allow flexibility and phasing.

Likewise, almost everyone interviewed felt that future park development should be anchored by one, or possibly two, county wide District Parks. These parks should be large enough to provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. Many of those interviewed felt a large county park should also provide tournament level ballfields to provide a venue (along with fields in Roanoke Rapids) to attract regional tournaments.

The majority of those interviewed also felt a county wide park and recreation department should identify and incorporate the many wonderful natural

resources found in Halifax County. These resources include the Roanoke River, the area lakes, the county's creeks, the rural landscape, hunting and fishing resources and historical resources.

If adequate access and programming were provided, the county's natural and historical resources could provide a wide variety of recreation opportunities for county residents. In addition, these resources could provide additional attractions for tourist.

Another important theme that ran through the interviews was the importance of programming. Several of those interviewed said it is important for the County to work with all available partners in the region to make sure facilities are not simply built and then left unprogrammed. Engaging the public in recreation programs and activities is as important as building the facilities.

The County should work with Towns to support facility improvements (and possibly park development) in each community. Likewise, the County should recognize potential partners in each of the smaller communities to partner in developing programs for improving community health.

Transportation and access to facilities (existing and proposed) is an important consideration. Facilities serve little value to those residents that do not have access.

The Nature Conservancy has significant land holdings in Halifax County. This land is a tremendous resource for passive recreation and outdoor sports such as hunting. The County should work with the Nature Conservancy to protect valuable county resources, especially property along the Roanoke River and other natural drainage areas.

Improved trails and canoe access to the Roanoke River has great potential for tourism. Several people discussed a potential canoe launch at the State Historic Site in Halifax. It was noted that very little river access is available along much of the river.

Many stakeholders spoke of the importance of the Roanoke River Trail and Museum and the role it

plays in county recreation and education and attracting tourists to the area. The County should look for opportunities to create similar facilities to showcase the County's many natural and historical resources.

Several stakeholders talked about the need for additional active recreation facilities. Facilities listed included soccer and baseball fields, recreation center with gymnasium, swimming facility, playgrounds, picnic facilities, and walking/jogging trails. Most people that discussed these facilities felt they could be incorporated into a county wide park.

8. What role should schools play in providing facilities that offer opportunities for recreational activities?

Almost everyone interviewed felt school facilities should be used to meet the recreational needs of county residents when that use does not conflict with school programs. Likewise, almost everyone felt that joint use agreements should be developed between the County and the school boards to ensure public use of schools is made possible.

Several people suggested the County and schools should consider development of park schools where parks and schools are developed together; allowing the sharing of infrastructure and facilities. Likewise, several people indicated vacant schools that could potentially become county park facilities.

9. What role should the County play in providing parks and recreation facilities?

Everyone interviewed felt it was important for the County to become involved in providing parks and recreational opportunities to its citizens. As noted in other answers to the questions listed here, there was a wide variety of expectations about the County's involvement, but across the board, everyone felt the County (at some point) should invest in meeting park and recreational needs for its citizens.

10. Are there other thoughts or comments you would like to share with regard to this plan?

- Provide opportunities for active recreation to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Provide activities that reach all age groups (youth to seniors).

- Centrally located facility(ies) will provide equitable access to all areas of the county.
- Transportation to facilities is critical.
- The County should work with municipalities to develop parks and recreation facilities in all areas of the county.
- Special events (local and county wide) provide recreation activities and attract tourists to the county.
- Developing partnerships between the county and other public and private agencies is critical to the success of this plan. Partnerships are also favored in many grant applications.
- The County should not just focus on facility development. Programming is important.
- Look for ways to enhance river access and protect the river. Recognize its value to the county.
- The 4-H Rural Life Center is an important resource. The County should focus its resources on improving/expanding facilities at this location as a number one priority.
- The county's lake(s) are also important resources and should be utilized for park and recreation activities.
- Sidewalks and bikeways are important avenues for recreational experiences and for healthy lifestyles. The County and the municipalities should encourage the development of corridors that promote walking and biking. NCDOT should be considered a resource in development of these routes.
- Facilities should be designed to meet recreational needs of county residents first and provide tourism opportunities second.
- Weldon has an excellent river front park. There are additional opportunities for recreational access along the river. Camping and additional fishing access would bring tourists to this area and provide recreation opportunities for residents.
- Consider facilities that will promote healthy eating (community gardens, farmers markets, etc.).
- Consider facilities that will promote active lifestyles (trails).

Second Public Workshops

Public Workshop to Review

Draft Recommendations

Agricultural Center Auditorium Halifax, NC

May 29, 2014

A public workshop was held to discuss the County's Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation and review draft recommendations of the Plan. Approximately 30 citizens attended the meeting. The majority of those in attendance had participated in one of the initial public workshops.

Deputy County Manager, Dia Denton, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the workshop and thanking them for staying involved in the process. She stressed the importance of the planning process and the value of the input that has been received. She then introduced Derek Williams, the park planner working on the Plan.

Derek presented an overview of the planning process and provided information from the public workshops and the telephone survey. Detailed summary of both these public input efforts are provided in this section of the planning report.

It was noted that the results from both the telephone survey and the public workshops in Halifax County had some unusual responses that varied from other community surveys. Of particular note:

- The number of people attending the initial workshops (over 400) was the largest turnout for a comprehensive plan ever seen.
- The turnout and ultimate interest from the equestrian community in the public workshops was exceptionally strong; resulting in equestrian activities being the highest priority recreational activity from the public workshops.
- The interest, or demand, for an indoor recreation center and swimming pool was extremely high in both the public workshops and the telephone survey; higher than most communities.
- The interest for a skateboard park was much higher than usually seen in other communities/counties.
- The fact that everyone attending the workshops felt there is "great need" for additional parks in

the County is also very unusual.

- The telephone survey finding that a majority (51%) of county residents would support a tax increase to fund park improvements was also unusual; particularly in light of the economic times.

Following the summary of public input received, there was a brief explanation of how the County Needs Assessment was developed using standards of service similar to those used by other counties across North Carolina. It was noted that comparison counties were chosen based on their similarities to Halifax County; rural, economically challenged, etc.

From the discussion on the Needs Assessment, the presentation then provided specific recommendations for Halifax County. These recommendations included:

- Halifax County should establish a Parks and Recreation Department/Division.
 - Initial step should be creating a citizen led Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
 - Next step may include establishing the department and hiring a Director.
 - The primary focus initially will be to identify partners, joint use opportunities, etc.
 - Future steps may include identifying and using existing facilities/assets.
 - The ultimate goal may be facility development.
- A county department will focus on larger parks (± 100 acres) serving districts.
- Halifax County is extremely large. Park development will be based on a district concept.
 - Western District (Littleton, Hollister)
 - Eastern District (Enfield, Scotland Neck, Hobgood)
 - Northern District (Halifax, Weldon, Roanoke Rapids)
- Park/facility development should seek partners and utilize existing opportunities.
 - Improve 4-H Rural Life Center.
 - Convert park to District Park.
 - Expand equestrian facilities.
 - Explore opportunities for athletic fields.
 - Explore a partnership with NC State Parks at Medoc Mountain State Park.

- Utilize school facilities (existing and retired).
 - Seek opportunities with Nature Conservancy.
 - Consider facilities/relationships to expand tourism in the county.
 - Nature based recreation
 - Trails/greenways/bike routes
 - Paddling/blueways
 - Hunting/fishing/lake activities
 - Tournament athletics
 - Extreme sports
 - Historical aspects of the county
 - Equestrian activities are extremely popular in Halifax County.
 - Covered arena at 4-H Rural Life Center.
 - Development of equestrian trails in existing and future parks.
 - The County should develop programs and facilities that support healthy lifestyles.
 - Active living
 - Healthy diets
 - Avoid unhealthy habits
 - Wide variety of outdoor recreation needs.
 - Youth baseball fields
 - Softball fields
 - Soccer fields
 - Football fields
 - Tennis courts
 - Playgrounds
 - Picnic shelters
 - Walking trails
 - Amphitheater
 - Community garden
 - Dog park
 - Skateboard park
 - Disc golf
 - Roanoke Rapids has needs somewhat different than rural Halifax County.
 - District Park
 - Additional athletic fields
 - Tennis court renovations
 - Skate Park/BMX Park
 - Halifax County has an abundance of water based resources.
 - Roanoke River
 - Fishing and Little Fishing Creek
 - Roanoke Rapids Lake/Lake Gaston
 - These water resources should be utilized for local recreation and tourism.
 - Develop a matching grant program to assist municipalities with small parks.
- Following the presentation of the recommendations, the meeting was opened up to questions and comments.
- There was a question on how the list of facility needs was created. It was noted that basketball appears to be a popular activity in the public input, and disc golf did not appear to be very popular. However, there is no provision for outdoor basketball courts on the list of needs, while disc golf does show up as a need. A closer look at the list is warranted, but the list of recreation facility needs is also based on existing facilities. It could be that there are existing basketball courts meeting demand in the County, while there is no disc golf course.
 - One comment or discussion made several times was the need for balance and equality for all areas in the county. The district concept included in the recommendations seems to make sense, but it must be built on equal representation from all districts.
 - The importance of providing programs was mentioned by several people.
 - The need for athletic facilities, and possibly tournament level facilities, was discussed. The importance (and expense) of field maintenance was mentioned. It was noted that the County may not be in a position to maintain tournament level fields.
 - Someone pointed out the potential tourism value that development of equestrian facilities might provide.
- Following approximately 45 minutes of open discussion, the meeting was adjourned. Everyone was invited to attend the final public workshop sometime in July.



Roanoke Rapids Day Use Area

Section Three

Establishing a County Wide Level of Service for Parks & Recreation Facilities

INTRODUCTION

This section contains the analysis and assessment on which the recommendations of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based. The planning process includes a review of other North Carolina counties and the Level of Service (LOS) they use to provide park and recreation facilities to their constituents. As part of this review, we also look at national and state trends in park and recreation preferences (Appendices B and C). This review of similar agencies is based on a description of the park types that typically make up a park system (Appendix A). Using these park types as a backdrop, we establish a desired LOS for park and recreation facilities specifically for Halifax County. This LOS is then used as a basis for establishing a park and recreation facility Needs Assessment for the County.

It should be noted that the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), in its 1995 report “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, determined there are no “national standards” for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local “uniqueness” should be established. This section utilizes input from the public workshops and telephone survey, as well as a comprehensive review of other North Carolina communities, to develop LOS specifically for Halifax County.

This study looks at two types of service levels. First, we evaluate total acreage of park land within the service area and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study it is possible to compare the parks in Halifax County with other counties, both in overall park acreage and park types within this overall acreage. Since Halifax County does not currently provide parks and recreation facilities, the inventory of existing facilities (Section One) is a listing of municipal and State Parks and facilities currently serving residents of the county.



Playground at Ledgerwood Park

The second analysis in this section looks at recreation activities and the facilities required to program these activities. By establishing a population-based LOS for various recreation activities, this study establishes the type and quantity of facilities the County should develop in the future.

The service levels used in this study were derived from citizen input and input from the Recreation Committee. The development of these LOS is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.

As we begin the assessment process, it is apparent there are two very different conditions in Halifax County. The citizens of Roanoke Rapids have the advantage of having been served by an excellent parks and recreation department for over 50 years. During that period, elected officials in Roanoke Rapids have invested wisely in parks and recreation facilities.

In the past decade, economic conditions have made it difficult to maintain and improve existing facilities, so there are important park needs within the city, but from a facility level of service standpoint, Roanoke Rapids is covered in many areas.

On the other side of the coin, the small towns and unincorporated areas of Halifax County have only limited parks and facilities. Some of the county's small towns (Scotland Neck, Enfield, Hobgood and Weldon, etc.) have developed smaller, local parks, but for the most part are underserved with traditional park and recreation facilities.

This discrepancy between the urban and rural areas of the county makes it difficult to apply one assessment county wide. With this understanding, the Needs Assessment has been developed as a dual assessment. One assessment looks at Roanoke Rapids and the facilities that are needed by the city's 16,000 residents. A second assessment looks at the 37,500 county residents that do not have direct access to the facilities and services that are available in Roanoke Rapids.

It is important to recognize that while the plan utilizes a dual approach in assessing the park and recreational needs of the county; ultimately this plan must develop recommendations that will improve the recreational opportunities of all Halifax County citizens, regardless of where they reside.



River Falls Park in Weldon

It should also be noted that the LOS for development established for Halifax County are consistent with other rural counties in North Carolina. Likewise, the needs that are identified in the plan are conservative. Even taking this conservative approach, the recommendations in this document should lead the County to develop parks and facilities comparable to most other counties of similar size.

IDENTIFYING LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR PARKS & RECREATION IN HALIFAX COUNTY

The first step in developing a county wide park Master Plan is to establish a Level of Service (LOS) analysis for both park land and recreation facilities. Typically this process begins with a review of the LOS other counties are using as they provide park and recreation facilities. We have included a review of other county standards as part of this planning process.

The LOS for both park acreage and recreation facilities is expressed in a population based format. For example, a county may decide to provide District Parks to its residents at a LOS of 5 acres of District Park land for every 1,000 people that live in the county. If the county has a population of 100,000 there will be a demand for 500 acres of park land dedicated to District Parks (5 acres x 100 = 500). If that same county currently has a District Park with 200 acres, there is a county wide need for 300 acres of additional park land dedicated to District Park(s) [demand (500 acres) – supply (200 acres) = need (300 acres)].

The same process is used to determine recreational facility needs. If the same county determines that softball fields should be available to its residents at a LOS of 1 field for every 10,000 people, there is a demand for 10 softball fields in the county (100,000 population ÷ 10,000 LOS = 10 fields). If the county currently has 7 existing softball fields serving the recreational needs of county residents, there is a need for 3 additional softball fields [demand (10 fields) – supply (7 fields) = need (3 fields)].

IDENTIFYING PARK NEEDS FOR HALIFAX COUNTY

RURAL HALIFAX COUNTY

As noted previously, the Needs Assessment has been developed with an understanding that park and recreation needs in rural Halifax County are different than those within Roanoke Rapids. We first look at the park needs of rural Halifax County.

Mini Parks

A standard of .10 acres for every 1,000 people in the service population has been established for Mini Parks. This LOS of development is less than the standard used by many North Carolina communities, but reflects a trend in park development away from Mini Parks. Based on this service level, the County needs less than 4 acres of Mini Parks.

Enfield, Halifax and Hobgood all have playgrounds that fit the Mini Park standard. These playgrounds meet the needs for this small park category. County agencies very seldom develop Mini Parks.



Playground in Littleton

Neighborhood Parks

Like Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks are typically developed by municipal agencies. Weldon's River Falls Park is an example of a Neighborhood Park located in a municipality.

The service level set for Neighborhood Parks by this Master Plan is 1 acre per 1,000 people. Utilizing this level of development, there will be a need for over 37 acres of Neighborhood Parks. Assuming most Neighborhood Parks are in the 8-10 acre range, there is a need for several Neighborhood Parks.

The responsibility of developing these future parks should be on municipal agencies. The County may consider working with local agencies in some form of assistance, but development of Neighborhood Parks should not be a priority for the County.

Community Parks

County agencies usually focus their resources on large parks like Community, District or Regional Parks. There are currently two parks functioning as Community Parks (Enfield Community Park and Scotland Neck Athletic Field). These parks are extremely small and provide recreation opportunities primarily for residents of Scotland Neck and Enfield. There are significant rural areas of the county under-served by Community Parks.

Based on a park land/population ratio of 5 acres per 1,000 population, citizens of Halifax County have a current need for approximately 172 acres of Community Park land. Assuming a Community Park should be 50-75 acres, this indicates a current need for two new Community Parks.

District Parks

Utilizing a standard of 7.5 acres per 1,000 for District Park development, there is a need for one District Park to serve the citizens of Halifax County.

The County currently has a property that meets the size requirement for a District Park, but improvements are needed if this facility is to function as a District Park. The 4-H Rural Life Center would make an excellent District Park if existing facilities

are expanded and infrastructure added. See Section Four for more details on expansion needed.

Regional Parks

Halifax County is very fortunate to have an outstanding State Park. Medoc Mountain State Park is a valuable nature and recreational resource for county residents. This park meets the needs of a Regional Park for the County.



Camping at Medoc Mountain State Park

ROANOKE RAPIDS

The park needs for Roanoke Rapids are considerably different than the park needs for the remainder of Halifax County. Roanoke Rapids has over a dozen parks covering almost 200 acres. These parks and special use facilities provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation activities.

Based on the Level of Service identified in Table 3A-Park Acreage for Roanoke Rapids, and the Needs Assessment found on Table 3B-Park Acreage for Roanoke Rapids, there is not a significant need for new parks within the City. Roanoke Rapids has four Community Parks and nine smaller parks that meet current needs for these park types.

The one area where Roanoke Rapids does have a need is in the District Park category. These are one of the larger park types (150-300 acres) and usually provide both active and passive recreation opportunities. Often District Parks are provided by county agencies. The apparent lack of District Parks in

Roanoke Rapids is understandable since Halifax County does not have a parks department.

District Parks, particularly when provided by the county agency, are often not located in the city limits of the municipality.

The 4-H Rural Life Center could serve as a District Park for the residents of Roanoke Rapids if the property was renovated and improved to provide a wider range of recreation opportunities.



4-H Rural Life Center

IDENTIFYING FACILITY NEEDS FOR HALIFAX COUNTY

RURAL HALIFAX COUNTY

Level of Service for recreational facilities (i.e. ballfields, courts, picnic shelters, etc.) proposed for county residents were developed from a review of LOS used by other rural counties similar to Halifax, and from input gathered during the public input process. The LOS, identified in Table 3A-Facilities, and discussed in greater detail in Section Four: Proposals and Recommendations, are the minimum recreation facility LOS recommended for Halifax County.

Based on these LOS, the number of public facilities needed in the park system through the planning period (2014 to 2024) are identified in Table 3B-Facilities, “Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment” (page 3-8), and summarized on the following chart.

A more detailed discussion of each of the facility needs is provided in Section Four: Proposals & Recommendations.

The “Existing Facilities” column indicates the number of existing recreation facilities currently available in the county. The “Facility Needs” column identifies the total number of additional facilities needed.

As an example of how the Needs Assessment is presented, consider playgrounds. Currently the County has 14 existing playgrounds. Based on the Standards for Facility Development that have been recommended for the County (one playground for every 1,500 people in the service population), there is a current demand for 25 playgrounds ($37,500 \div 1,500 = 25$) therefore, there is a need to construct 11 additional playgrounds (demand of 25 – 14 existing playgrounds) to meet the demand.

	Existing Facilities	Facility Need
Adult Baseball Fields	0	1
Youth Baseball Fields	0	8
Softball Fields	2	6
Football Fields	1	1
Soccer Fields	2	3
Basketball Courts	7	1
Tennis Courts	0	8
Volleyball Courts	2	1
Horseshoe Pits	-	3
Shuffleboard Courts	-	3
Playgrounds	14	11
Picnic Shelters	7	11
Hiking/Jogging Trails (miles)	11.75	18.25*
Amphitheater	0	2
Community Garden	0	2
Swimming Pool	0	2
Rec. Center w/Gym	0	2
Rec. Center w/out Gym	5	-
Dog Park	0	2
Skate Park	0	1
Disc Golf	1	1
Bicycling Routes	0	37.5 miles

*In addition to hiking and jogging trails, there is a demand and need for non-pedestrian trails. Trails to support equestrian and all terrain vehicles (ATV).

ROANOKE RAPIDS

As noted in the section on Park Needs, the City of Roanoke Rapids offers its citizens a wide range of recreational programs and facilities. Even with the variety of existing facilities that are currently offered, there are some areas of facility needs. These include additional athletic fields and the need for an extreme sports facility for skateboards and BMX bikes.

In addition to these facility needs, there is considerable need for existing facility updates/renovations; especially with existing tennis courts and parking lots.

Refer to Table 3B-Facilities for Roanoke Rapids for more detail on facility needs.

**Table 3A - Park Acreage
Halifax County
Standards for Acreage by Park Classification
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies**

Park Types	North Hampton County***	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Nash County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	Old NRPA Standards	Halifax County 2014 Proposed Standards
Mini Parks	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-3 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-3 Acres/Park (.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-1 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	NA*	NA*	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.1 Acres/ 1,000)
Neighborhood Parks	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-15 Acres/Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	5-10 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	NA*	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)
Community Parks	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	40-100 Acres/ Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.25 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	50-100 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-100 Acres/ Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)
District Parks	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	±60-100 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	40-80 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	100-200 Acres/Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	±50 Acres/Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	50-80 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-150 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	100-150 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	150-300 Acres/ Park (7.5 Acres/ 1,000)
Regional Parks	NA**	NA**	100-250 Acres/ Park (3.25 Acres/ 1,000)	NA**	150-250 Acres/Park (3 Acres/ 1,000)	150-100 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	200-400 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	150-1,000 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	NA**	±200 Acres/Park (10 Acres/ 1,000)

*Many county parks and recreation agencies do not provide Mini Parks or Neighborhood Parks.

**Regional Parks are typically provided by State/National Agencies.

***NRPA standards were used in the plan *North Hampton County Parks-2010*.

**Table 3A - Facilities
Halifax County
Recreation Facilities Standards
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies**

	NRPA Guidelines	State Standard	North Hampton County	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Nash County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	Halifax County 2014 Standards
Fields											
Adult Baseball	1/20.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/12.000		1/10.000	1/30.000	1/30.000
Youth Baseball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5.000	1/6.500	1/6.000	1/8.000	1/8.000	1/25.000	1/12.000	1/5.000
Softball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5.000	1/7.500	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/8.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/5.000
Football	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/6.000	1/40.000	1/20.000
Soccer	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/7.500	1/8.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/4.500	1/10.000	1/7.500
Courts											
Basketball	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/3.000	1/20.000	1/5.000
Tennis	1/2.000	1/2.000	1/10.000	1/3.000	1/4.000	1/10.000	1/2.000	1/20.000	1/2.000	1/10.000	1/5.000
Volleyball	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/15.000
Shuffleboard	1/2.000	N/A	1/10.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/15.000
Horseshoe	1/5.000	N/A	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/15.000
Outdoor Areas											
Picnic Shelter	1/2.000	N/A	1/2.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/4.000	1/5.000	1/2.500
Playground/Activities	N/A	1/1.000	N/A	1/1.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/1.000	1/1.000	1/1.000	1/5.000	1/1.500
Trails											
Hiking/Fitness/Logging	1/region	.4 mile/1.000	1/region	.4 mile/1.000	.4 mile/1.000	.4 mile/1.000	.4 mile/1.000	.4 mile/1.000	.4 mile/1.000	.3 mile/1.000	.8 miles/1.000
Specialized											
Rec. Center w/Gym	1/25.000	N/A	1/25.000		1/16.000		1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/40.000	1/20.000
Rec. Center w/out Gym	1/10.000	N/A	1/10.000	1/20.000							1/15.000
Outdoor Pool	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/50.000		1/20.000	1/50.000	1/20.000	1/30.000	1/20.000
Golf Course	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/300.000		1/25.000				1/50.000
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000
Amphitheater	1/20.000		1/20.000								1/30.000
Disc Golf					1/50.000						1/20.000
Skateboard Park					1/100.000						1/50.000
Dog Park					1/50.000						1/20.000
Community Garden											1/20.000

*NRPA standards were used in the plan *North Hampton County Parks-2010*.

Table 3B - Park Acreage
Halifax County
Park Sites and Acreage Needs Assessment

Park Types	2014 Existing Facilities	Standard for Development	Current Demand 37,500*	Current Need 37,500
Mini Parks	3 Park 4 Acres	1-2 Acres/Park (.1 Acres/ 1,000)	3 Parks 3.7 Acres	Needs Met
Neighborhood Parks	3 Parks 4.5 Acres	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	5 Parks 37 Acres	3 New Neighborhood Parks 45 Acres
Community Parks	2 Park 15 Acres	30-100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	4 Park 187.5 Acres	2 New Community Park 172.5 Acres
District Parks	1 Park 350 Acres	150-300 Acres/ Park (7.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 281.25 Acres	Needs Met
Regional Parks	State Parks	±200 Acres/Park (10 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 375 Acres	Needs Met by Medoc State Park

Existing Parks:

Mini Parks: Meyer Oak (Enfield), Hobgood Playground, Halifax Playground

Neighborhood Parks: Scotland Neck Municipal Complex, Weldon River Falls Park

Community Parks: Enfield Community, Scotland Neck Athletic Fields

District Parks: 4-H Rural Life Center

Notes:

- Future Neighborhood Parks would be developed by local agencies with potential assistance from the County.
- The 4-H Rural Life Center meets the land needs of a District Park, but current facilities do not provide program/recreation opportunities typically found in District Parks. Significant improvements and expansion of facilities at this facility will be required for it to serve as a true District Park.
- The relatively small Community Parks in Enfield and Scotland Neck serve Community Park needs for the southern area of Halifax County. A new Community Park is needed in the western area of the county.

*Total Halifax County population 53,500 – Roanoke Rapids population 16,000 = 37,500

**Table 3B - Facilities
Halifax County
Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment**

	2014 Standard	Existing Facilities	Current Demand (37,000*)	Current Need
Fields				
Adult Baseball	1/30,000	0	1	1
Youth Baseball	1/5,000	0	8	8
Softball	1/5,000	2	8	6
Football	1/20,000	1	2	1
Soccer	1/7,500	2	5	3
Courts				
Basketball (outdoor)	1/5,000	7	8	1
Tennis Court	1/5,000	0	8	8
Volleyball	1/15,000	2	3	1
Horseshoes	1/15,000	0	3	3
Shuffleboard	1/15,000	0	3	3
Outdoor Areas				
Playgrounds	1/1,500	14	25	11
Picnic Shelter	1/2,500	7	18	11
Trails				
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	.8 miles/1,000	11.75 miles	30 miles	18.25 miles
Specialized				
Amphitheater	1/20,000	0	2	2
Community Garden	1/20,000	0	2	2
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	0	2	2
Recreation Center w/ Gym	1/20,000	0	2	2
Recreation Center w/o Gym	1/15,000	5	3	-
Dog Park	1/20,000	0	2	2
Skate Park	1/50,000	0	1	1
Disc Golf	1/20,000	1	2	1
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/1,000	0	37.5	37.5

*Total Halifax County population 53,500 – Roanoke Rapids 16,000 = 37,500

**Table 3A - Park Acreage
Roanoke Rapids
Standards for Acreage by Park Classification
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies**

Park Types	North Hampton County*	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Nash County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	Old NRPA Standards	Roanoke Rapids 2014 Proposed Standards
Mini Parks	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-3 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-3 Acres/Park (.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	.5-1 Acres/Park (.25 Acres/ 1,000)	NA	NA	NA	.25-1 Acres/ Park (.25-.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1-2 Acres/Park (.5 Acres/ 1,000)
Neighborhood Parks	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	7-15 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-15 Acres/Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	5-10 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	NA	7-15 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	NA	5-10 Acres/ Park (1-2 Acres/ 1,000)	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)
Community Parks	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	40-100 Acres/ Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.25 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	50-100 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	30-50 Acres/ Park (5-8 Acres/ 1,000)	30-100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)
District Parks	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	±60-100 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	40-80 Acres/ Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	100-200 Acres/Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	±50 Acres/Park (2 Acres/ 1,000)	50-80 Acres/ Park (1.5 Acres/ 1,000)	10-150 Acres/ Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	100-150 Acres/Park (2.5 Acres/ 1,000)	+75 Acres/ Park (5-10 Acres/ 1,000)	150-300 Acres/Park (7.5 Acres/ 1,000)
Regional Parks	NA		100-250 Acres/ Park (3.25 Acres/ 1,000)	NA	150-250 Acres/Park (3 Acres/ 1,000)	150-100 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	200-400 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	150-1,000 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	NA	±200 Acres/Park (10 Acres/ 1,000)

Notes:

- Municipal departments typically focus on Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks
- Regional Parks are typically provided by State/National agencies.
- County agencies often provide District Parks.
- Note the Level of Service (defined by acres/1,000 of population) selected for Roanoke Rapids is similar to other LOS in other NC counties.

**Table 3A - Facilities
Roanoke Rapids
Recreation Facilities Standards
Comparison of Level of Service Used by Other NC Agencies**

	NRPA Guidelines	State Standard	North Hampton County*	Elizabeth/Pasquotank County	City of Fayetteville/Cumberland County	Iredell County	Nash County	Robeson County	Surry County	Yadkin County	Roanoke Rapids 2014 Standards
Fields											
Adult Baseball	1/20.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/12.000		1/10.000	1/30.000	1/15.000
Youth Baseball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5.000	1/6.500	1/6.000	1/8.000	1/8.000	1/25.000	1/12.000	1/2.000
Softball	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/5.000	1/7.500	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/8.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/5.000
Football	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/10.000	1/20.000	1/6.000	1/40.000	1/5.000
Soccer	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/7.500	1/8.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/4.500	1/10.000	1/2.000
Courts											
Basketball	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/3.000	1/20.000	1/5.000
Tennis	1/2.000	1/2.000	1/2.000	1/3.000	1/4.000	1/10.000	1/2.000	1/20.000	1/2.000	1/10.000	1/2.000
Volleyball	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/10.000	1/12.000
Shuffleboard	1/2.000	N/A	1/2.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/7.500
Horseshoe	1/5.000	N/A	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/15.000	1/20.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/20.000	1/7.500
Outdoor Areas											
Picnic Shelter	1/2.000	N/A	1/2.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/5.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/4.000	1/5.000	1/1.500
Playground Activities	N/A	1/1.000	N/A	1/1.000	1/3.000	1/5.000	1/1.000	1/1.000	1/1.000	1/5.000	1/1.500
Trails											
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	1/region	.4 mile/1.000	1/region	4. mile/1.000	4. mile/1.000		4. mile/1.000	4. mile/1.000	4. mile/1.000	3. mile/1.000	8. miles/1.000
Specialized											
Rec. Center w/ Gym	1/25.000	N/A	1/ 25.000		1/16.000		1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/40.000	1/15.000
Rec. Center w/o Gym	1/10.000	N/A	1/10.000	1/20.000			1/20.000	1/50.000	1/20.000		1/15.000
Outdoor Pool	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/20.000	1/50.000		1/20.000	1/50.000	1/20.000	1/30.000	1/15.000
Golf Course	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/25.000	1/300.000		1/25.000				1/community
Bicycling/Urban	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/2.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000	1 mile/1.000
Amphitheater	1/20.000		1/20.000								1/15.000
Disc Golf					1/50.000						1/15.000
Skateboard Park					1/100.000						1/15.000
Dog Park					1/50.000						1/50.000
Community Garden											1/15.000

*NRPA standards were used in the plan *North Hampton County Parks-2010*.

**Table 3B - Park Acreage
Roanoke Rapids
Park Sites and Acreage Needs Assessment**

Park Types	2014 Existing Facilities	Standard for Development	Current Demand 16,000	Current Need 16,000
Mini Parks	6 Parks 10.21 Acres	1-2 Acres/Park (.5 Acres/ 1,000)	5-6 Parks 8 Acres	Needs Met
Neighborhood Parks	3 Parks 15.2 Acres	3-10 Acres/Park (1 Acres/ 1,000)	3 Parks 16 Acres	Needs Met
Community Parks	4 Parks 67 Acres	30-100 Acres/Park (5 Acres/ 1,000)	4 Park 80 Acres	Needs Met
District Parks		150-300 Acres/Park 7.5 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 120 Acres	1 New District Park
Regional Parks	State Parks	±200 Acres/Park 10 Acres/ 1,000)	1 Park 160 Acres	Needs Met by State Park

Existing parks

Mini Parks: Southgate, Wheeler, Edward George, Martin Luther King, Melody, CW Davis

Neighborhood Parks; Rochelle, Tinsley, Chaloner

Community Parks: TJ Davis Complex, Emry, Chockoyotte, Ledgerwood

Notes:

- Roanoke Rapids has adequate smaller park types (Mini, Neighborhood, Community). Likewise, its regional park needs are met by Medoc State Park.
- Roanoke Rapids is not served by a large District Park. District Parks are usually provided by large municipalities or county agencies.
- A county District Park, in relative close proximity to Roanoke Rapids, could meet this need.

**Table 3B - Facilities
Roanoke Rapids
Recreation Facilities Needs Assessment**

	2014 Standard	Existing Facilities	Current Demand (16,000)	Current Need
Fields				
Adult Baseball	1/15,000	1	1	0
Youth Baseball	1/2,000	9	8	0
Softball	1/5,000	2	3	1
Football	1/5,000	2	3	1
Soccer	1/2,000	6	8	2
Courts				
Basketball (outdoor)	1/5,000	3	3	0
Tennis Court	1/2,000	15	8	0
Volleyball	1/12,000	-	1	1
Horseshoes	1/7,500	3	2	0
Shuffleboard	1/7,500	2	2	0
Outdoor Areas				
Playgrounds	1/1,500	10	11	1
Picnic Shelter	1/1,500	9	11	2
Trails				
Hiking/Fitness/Jogging	.8 miles/1,000	9.6 miles	12.8 miles	3.2 miles
Specialized				
Amphitheater	1/15,000	0	1	1
Community Garden	1/15,000	0	1	1
Swimming Pool	1/15,000	3	1	0
Recreation Center w/ Gym	1/15,000	2	1	0
Recreation Center w/o Gym	1/15,000	5	1	0
Dog Park	1/50,000	0	-	0
Skate Park	1/15,000	0	1	1
Disc Golf	1/15,000	0	1	1



Kayaking on the Roanoke River

Section Four

Proposals & Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The majority (81) of North Carolina's 100 counties provide some form of park and recreation services to its citizens. The Level of Service and facilities offered by the 81 county agencies across North Carolina vary considerably. Currently, Halifax County does not provide parks or recreational services to county residents. The primary provider of recreational facilities and programs in Halifax County are municipal agencies. As noted in previous sections, the absence of a county wide parks and recreation department has resulted in a wide variation of recreational services to county residents depending on their place of residence.

Those citizens of the county that live in Roanoke Rapids have relatively immediate access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities. To a lesser extent, the residents of Enfield, Halifax, Hobgood, Scotland Neck, and Weldon also have access to limited recreational opportunities because those municipalities provide facilities and some programs. Those residents living in smaller towns or unincorporated areas of the county are unfortunately left unserved or underserved.

As the result of this absence of a county wide provider of park and recreation services, there are significant needs for both facilities and programs in Halifax County. This section discusses those needs in greater detail and makes recommendations on how those needs might be met.

Identification of these recreational needs/opportunities come at a time when Halifax County (like many counties in North Carolina) is attempting to grow out of the nation's worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Halifax County has been especially hard hit by the economic downturn, because it was also struggling with an agricultural based economy in a time of urban and metropolitan growth.

Halifax County should not approach this task alone. There are a number of public and private agencies and organizations throughout the county that can share in that role.

School facilities are often used to meet community recreational needs during non-school hours. There are three school systems currently operating in Halifax County. The indoor and outdoor facilities of these three school systems could play an instrumental role in meeting recreational needs of all county residents. The exploration and development of joint use agreements with the three school systems is critical to the success of this parks and recreation master plan. In Section Five we will discuss an option for recreation service delivery that could include Halifax County Schools.

The City of Roanoke Rapids is the primary provider of parks and recreation facilities in the county. The development of a county wide parks and recreation department should be coordinated with the facilities and services offered by the Roanoke Rapids Parks and Recreation Department. There is great value in collaboration of the existing and planned agencies. Financial and human resources are too valuable to duplicate. Where possible, the City and the County should work together for the betterment of parks and recreation programming. One option for recreation service delivery throughout the county is to utilize the City of Roanoke Rapids' Parks and Recreation department as the county wide provider.

In addition to Roanoke Rapids, Enfield and Scotland Neck have parks and recreation programs. The County should work with these municipalities to seek opportunities for collaboration on programs and facilities.

Other major players with the mission of improving community health and quality of life are Halifax Regional and Halifax County Public Health System. The County should look for opportunities to partner with the hospital and the Health Department in the promotion of healthy lifestyles.



Halifax Regional

Finally, the private sector plays an important role in providing recreational opportunities in the county.

A number of fitness clubs, neighborhood swim clubs, churches, and other private or quasi-private organizations provide valuable recreation opportunities to the citizens of Halifax County. The facilities and programs these private sector organizations provide should be considered as the County plans development of future facilities.

In Section Five we will discuss several options for delivery of recreation services and development of parks and recreation facilities. Regardless of the ultimate delivery method the County chooses, it is essential to clearly understand how the County will interface with the other recreational providers in the community. This cooperative effort will eliminate duplication of facilities and services. The proposals in this Master Plan are based on what each recreational provider is anticipated to offer through the ten year planning period (2014-2024).

State of North Carolina

An outstanding State Park (Medoc Mountain State Park) is located within Halifax County. It is anticipated that the State of North Carolina will continue to maintain and operate this outstanding facility. The County, along with other nearby government agencies, should express their interest to see this park enhanced to its utmost potential. This may include the expansion of facilities and recreational opportunities. The State should continue to offer a variety of recreational facilities and programs on a regional basis. In addition, the State should be the provider of regional State Parks that include opportunities for camping, fishing, biking, and special facilities of regional and statewide interest.



Medoc Mountain State Park

Medoc Mountain State Park is already actively engaged in a wide variety of outdoor recreation activities (camping, kayaking, hiking, nature education, etc.). The programming and facilities offered at the park are heavily used by county residents as evidenced by the response in the telephone survey indicating this park is one of the most used parks in the county.

The possibility of a strong partnership relationship between North Carolina State Parks and the County should be explored. One option for this joint collaboration would be the utilization of the Medoc Mountain State Park for some county recreational uses not typically found in State Parks. This collaborative

effort between the state and local agencies has been used in other regions.

County School Systems

There are three school systems operating in Halifax County. These school systems are:

- Halifax County Schools
- Roanoke Rapids Graded Schools
- Weldon City Schools

These three school systems operate four high schools, four middle schools, and eleven elementary or primary schools. In addition to these functioning schools, there are a number of retired school facilities located throughout the county. The recreational facilities offered at these schools provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities (gymnasium, ballfields, playgrounds, etc.). Any plan for the development of a county wide parks and recreation department must include the use of some school facilities for non-school use.

Halifax Regional

Citizens of Halifax County have access to an outstanding medical facility in Halifax Regional. This facility provides residents of Halifax County and the surrounding area with excellent healthcare. Recent studies on obesity and healthy lifestyles have made it apparent that a community's health is linked to regular physical activity. Many of these activities are currently offered by the Roanoke Rapids Parks and Recreation Department and several of the County's smaller communities. The development of a county wide department would expand benefits to all Halifax County residents.

The County, working in conjunction with Halifax Regional, should look for programs and facilities that can improve community health.

HALIFAX COUNTY PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted in Section Three, the first step in meeting the public's need for parks and recreation is establishing a department or division focused on those needs. Section Five describes several options of organizational structure the County could take as it takes on a greater role for providing parks and recreation facilities.

Once the new agency is in place, the focus will be finding/developing facilities to meet park and recreational needs. This section focuses on the park and recreational facilities that will be required to meet these needs.

The future Parks and Recreation Department must work with other agencies in the community to provide the park land and facilities that will be required. This collaborative effort should include working with the school boards, the surrounding counties, and existing municipal departments to minimize duplication of facilities by developing and maintaining joint use agreements wherever possible.

Park Needs

Through the planning and public involvement process, standards for park acreage and recreation facilities have been developed. These standards were defined in Section Three: Standards and Needs Assessment, and identified in Table 3A- Park Acreage, and Table 3A- Facilities.

Utilizing the standards for development and applying them to the County's current and projected population, a Needs Assessment for both parks and recreation facilities was developed. The summary of this Needs Assessment is found in the tables at the end of Section Three.

While the tables provide "the numbers" of the Needs Assessment, this section will define the reasoning behind the numbers and a description of how the numbers are used to provide recommendations that

will ultimately guide the Department in the coming decade.

We begin with an overview of the different park types found in a county system, and how these parks should be developed in the future.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are typically large, passive oriented parks that highlight, utilize and protect a unique feature. These parks, as the name implies, serve people from across a region; therefore, most people have to travel to enjoy these park types. As noted in Section Three, Regional Parks are typically offered by national, state, or county agencies. Occasionally, municipalities with populations of 100,000 or more may provide a Regional Park.

Halifax County is very fortunate to have Medoc Mountain State Park. This outstanding park provides a wide variety of nature based recreational activities. The park's facilities provide valuable recreation opportunities for county residents and bring visitors to Halifax County from across the region. The park's popularity was evidenced by the high number of people that said they visited the park in the telephone survey.

Based on the current lack of a county park system and the limited resources in the county, Medoc Mountain State Park may be called on to provide more recreation opportunities than typically found in a State Park.

One option could be a partnership agreement between the County and the State of North Carolina for development of facilities in the park to serve the western portion of the county. Under this scenario, facilities not typically developed in State Parks (active recreation, sprayground, etc.) could be developed on State property. The potential collaborative use of this facility should be further explored.

This excellent State Park meets the needs of a Regional Park facility for the citizens of Halifax County and could potentially help meet the needs of a Community Park as well.

District Park

District Parks are another large park type often provided by county agencies or larger municipalities. These parks are typically in the 100 acre range and provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

Unfortunately, without the County actively involved in parks and recreation, there is no District Park serving county residents. Fortunately, the County does have property that could be developed as a District Park. The 350 acres of the 4-H Rural Life Center and equestrian center has the size and physical characteristics to serve as a District Park.

The development of facilities at the 4-H Rural Life Center would provide a much needed large park in the northern area of the county, and could meet the District Park needs of all county residents, including residents of Roanoke Rapids and Weldon. Potential facilities could include active recreation (ballfields, playgrounds, tennis courts, etc.) and passive recreation (picnicking, walking trails, nature preserves, etc.)

One of the strongest voices in the public workshops was from the equestrian community. There are many active horse enthusiasts in the county and there is strong demand to improve the existing equestrian facilities. Plans for the improvements at the 4-H Rural Life Center property should include expansion of the equestrian facilities and possible development of a covered show area.

Development of facilities at the 4-H Rural Life Center could possibly include activities that would bring tourists to the area. The development of a covered horse arena, the development of a ballfield complex for tournament play, and expansion of the historic aspects of the property could all attract tourists from outside Halifax County.

It should be noted that additional assessment is needed on the feasibility of development of the property. There are development obstacles that will need further study. Lack of public utilities and poor soils could limit development potential, but the possible advantages of property development make further study warranted.

Community Parks

Community Parks are an important component in many county park systems. These parks are usually large enough (30-100 acres) to provide both valuable active recreation opportunities and preservation of undeveloped open space and passive recreation areas.



Enfield Community Park

There are several parks in Halifax County that function as Community Parks. All of these parks are located in municipalities. Roanoke Rapids has four Community Parks (T.J. Davis, Emry, Chockoyotte and Ledgerwood). Enfield has one Community Park (Enfield Community Park) and Scotland Neck has one Community Park (Scotland Neck Athletic Fields).

All of these Community Parks are playing important roles in their communities and are the most visible form of outdoor recreation in the county. Unfortunately, all of these parks are extremely small by Community Park standards (30-100 acres) and their service population is limited largely to those living in municipal areas.

Community Parks are typically an important component of county department park systems. Based on a LOS of 5 acres per 1,000 population, there is a need for two new Community Parks in Halifax County.

There is a need in Halifax County for additional

parks to serve those residents that live in the smaller towns or unincorporated areas of the county.

Halifax County is one of North Carolina's largest counties. In order for all county residents to have access to a Community Park, the County should be divided into geographic areas. Looking at a map of the county, there appears to be a logical east/west divide of the county represented by I-95 or US 301. Under this scenario, Littleton and Hollister fall in the western section of the county while Enfield, Scotland Neck and Hobgood are located in the eastern section. Roanoke Rapids, Weldon and Halifax create a third northern section.

Under this geographical breakdown, a logical approach to providing adequate access to parks for all county residents would be the development of two Community Parks to serve the eastern and western sections of the county. These two rural community parks, along with an expanded facility at the 4-H Rural Life Center would provide a triangle of county parks that would provide reasonable equal access to all areas of the county.

One option for the development of the western Community Park could be exploring joint use opportunities with North Carolina State Parks at Medoc Mountain State Park. Another option for the development of these Community Parks is reuse of retired school facilities.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation in most municipal park systems. These parks, usually in the 5-10 acre range, are large enough to include both active and passive recreation opportunities. Typically, county park systems do not focus on development of Neighborhood Parks. Instead, Neighborhood Parks are typically constructed by municipal agencies.

Based on a very conservative Level of Service (LOS) for Neighborhood Park development (1 acre/1,000 population), there is a need for three to four new Neighborhood Parks. These smaller parks should be built in the County's smaller towns and crossroad

communities. Development of these smaller parks would be the responsibility of the municipality or township, but the County should be supportive of any effort to develop these smaller parks.

Mini Parks

Mini Parks are the smallest of the park types. These parks typically are less than an acre and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnic shelter, benches, etc.). Mini Parks, like Neighborhood Parks, provide relatively limited recreation facilities, but are located in close proximity to the service population they serve. County agencies typically do not develop Mini Parks.

Utilizing a very conservative LOS for development (.1 acre/1,000 population), there is not a need for additional Mini Parks.

Greenways/Trails

The most popular outdoor recreation activity in the nation is walking. This popularity was reflected in the survey that was conducted as part of this planning study and in comments made during the public workshops. Greenway trails are typically off-road trails that meander through neighborhoods and natural areas providing transportation corridors and recreational opportunities for walkers, joggers, roller bladers, and cyclists. The trail surface can either be natural or paved. Paved trails are normally eight to ten feet in width. Natural surface trail widths can vary based on conditions.



Roanoke Canal Trail

In addition to providing environmental protection and recreation opportunities, Greenways can produce economic development. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation recently conducted a study on a bicycle trail constructed along the northern Outer Banks region. This study determined that a \$6.7 million investment in off-road bike paths and shoulder improvements produced an estimated \$60 million annually in economic benefit. In addition, the study found that:

- Bicycle facilities in the area are an important factor to many tourists visiting the region.
- Investments in the bicycle facilities improved the safety of the area's transportation system.
- Bicycle activities include the benefits of health, fitness, quality of life, and the environment.

Greenways also offer a valuable alternative to automotive transportation. A Greenway trail often provides a linkage between communities, schools, churches, businesses, and parks.

The Roanoke Canal Trail is an example of a Greenway trail. The Roanoke River and the county's numerous creeks offer great opportunities for trail development. The County should explore working with other organizations in the area to develop additional trails along the county's water resources.

Bikeways

Halifax County is already recognized as a desirable destination for bikers. Cycle NC has conducted rides through the county with overnight stays in Roanoke Rapids on its annual Mountains to Coast Ride. This event brings over 1,000 riders to the area. Bike Virginia has organized rides through the county as well.

The need for bikeable roads and the development of Greenways for biking was mentioned in many of the interviews and in the public workshops. With the focus on healthy lifestyles, the environment, and alternative transportation, there is a great need to develop and implement a bike plan.



Bicycling in Halifax County

The County should encourage the State to include bike lanes whenever roadway improvements are made or new roads constructed. The County should also address their subdivision process to ensure developers provide bicycle (and pedestrian) routes in the roadway improvements they construct as part of the development process.

The County should consider applying for federal SAFETEA program non-vehicular transportation funds that encourage alternative means of transportation. These funds have been used to construct bike lanes and Greenway trails in communities throughout North Carolina.

Through careful planning, bike routes that will connect all of the county's towns and points of interest (Sylvan Heights, Medoc Mountain State Park, etc.) will provide both a tourist attraction and a valuable resource for active recreation for county residents.

Water Access and Blueways

Halifax County is blessed with an abundance of water resources. The Roanoke River, Fishing Creek, Little Fishing Creek and the area's lakes (Lake Gaston and Roanoke Rapids Lake) provide a wide range of fishing, kayaking, boating and swimming opportunities. These water resources provide recreational opportunities for economic impact through tourism.

The value of these water resources have been recognized by many citizens and a number of organizations are at work to preserve these valuable resources

and enhance their appreciation and use. Some opportunities that should be taken include:

Expand water access on Lake Gaston and Lake Roanoke Rapids

Currently Dominion Power provides some access for boating and fishing, but these water access sites should be expanded. Additional access sites should be developed, and opportunities for canoeing, paddle boarding, and kayaking should be improved. Cooperative efforts with Roanoke River Basin Association (upper reach), the Lake Gaston Chamber of Commerce, Dominion Power and other organizations should be explored to expand, improve and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities on both lakes.

Expand access and use of the Roanoke River

This beautiful river runs the entire length of the county (over 50 miles). Approximately 6.5 miles of the river that runs through the county are in a transition zone between Piedmont and the Coastal Plain. This section of the river has beautiful class two and three rapids. This section of the river provides a wealth of wildlife (including bald eagles) and world class fishing opportunities.



Roanoke River

Currently, there are only three public boating access points on the 50 miles of river as it winds through the county. Additional access points should be developed.

In addition to new boating access, outdoor recreation opportunities should be expanded along the river. Currently the most visible recreational opportunity along the river is the Roanoke Canal Trail. This wonderful trail connects Roanoke Rapids Lake Park with River Falls Park in Weldon. Efforts should be made to expand and enhance areas of water access and extend them to other areas of the river.

Expand facilities and access along the Roanoke River Partners Paddle Trail

Roanoke River Partners oversees and guides the 130 mile Paddle Trail that runs from Roanoke Rapids/Weldon to the Albemarle Sound. The Paddle Trail has three campsites along the river in Halifax County. Efforts should be made to improve and enhance this blueway by adding access, enhancements and amenities. One important potential site is at the State Historic Site in Halifax.

Expansion of State Historic Site at Halifax

The State Historic Site at Halifax is located on the Roanoke River nine miles from Weldon. In addition to the historic significance of the site, it has great possibilities as a water access point to the river for boating, canoeing, kayaking and general park use.

The opportunities for recreational use of the site could be expanded beyond the current limits of the State's property.

It is recommended that consideration be given to establish a more extensive State Recreation Area or State Park that could become a multi-county linear State Park similar to Lumber River State Park. Ultimately, this concept could include parks and recreation areas along the Roanoke River, from Roanoke Rapids Lake to the Albemarle Sound.

Obviously a vision this big will take a number of organizations working together. Organizations that should be included in these discussions include Historic Halifax, the Nature Conservancy, Halifax County CVB, the Roanoke Canal Commission, the Town of Weldon, Dominion Power, Halifax County, the Roanoke River Partners, the North Carolina Paddle Trails Association, N.C. Recreation Services and N.C. Division of State Parks.

Expand access along Fishing and Little Fishing Creeks

The Roanoke River is not the only outstanding water resource in Halifax County. Fishing and Little Fishing Creeks offer outstanding opportunities for canoeing, kayaking and fishing in the Hollister, Medoc Mountain State Park and Enfield areas of the county. The streams ultimately flow into the Tar River and find their way to the Pamlico Sound. The Pamlico Tar River Foundation has expressed interest in working with appropriate groups in Halifax County to develop access, amenities, and “blueways” on both creeks. It is recommended that this be pursued.

In addition to the Pamlico Tar River Foundation, the Tar River Land Conservancy is actively engaged in land conservation and promoting public access to these important creeks. They currently own 70 acres of land in Halifax County and additional acreage in Nash, Warren, and Edgecomb Counties. Halifax County should look for opportunities to work with the Tar River Land Conservancy to protect land and promote access/fishing along these creeks. Other potential partners in this effort include Nash County, the Town of Enfield and the NC Wildlife Resource Commission.

FACILITY PROPOSALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends the County should expand the 4-H Rural Life Center, develop two Community Parks, possibly assist in the development of several smaller parks, and expand trails. The improvements that will be made as part of these expansions and renovations will add many new facilities to the parks inventory. The County should consider the list of facility needs established in Section Three and described in greater detail in this section. It should be noted the facility needs listed here are rural Halifax County needs and (unless specifically noted) do not reflect needs in Roanoke Rapids.

Adult Baseball

Over the past five to ten years, the popularity of adult baseball has waned, both locally and across the

nation. Based on this trend, a LOS of one field per 30,000 people for the development of adult baseball fields is recommended. Utilizing this standard of field development, the County does not have a pressing need for an adult baseball field, but may build one in the future if demand arises.

Youth Baseball

Youth baseball is a very popular sport in North Carolina and that popularity is evident in Halifax County. The County does not have a youth baseball field. If the County becomes more engaged in youth sports programming, there will be a demand for youth fields. Utilizing a LOS of one field for every 5,000 people (a relatively conservative LOS), there will be a need for eight fields. These fields could be located at future Community Parks and in the proposed expansion of the 4-H Rural Life Center.



Softball

Men’s adult softball has traditionally been a popular sport in North Carolina. NRPA and NCDENR standards (one field per 5,000 people) reflect that popularity. This plan recommends a LOS development of one field per 5,000 people (comparable to other North Carolina communities). Based on this standard, the County currently has a need for six softball fields. These fields, as the well as the little league fields, could be located in the proposed Community and District Parks.

It should also be noted that changes in demand have now placed additional emphasis on women’s softball. In the future, softball fields should be designed

to accommodate this new area of play, or some of the existing fields should be retrofitted to allow for women's play.

Football

Football's popularity as a community based youth sport has been reduced by the emergence of soccer and (most recently) lacrosse. The LOS for development of football fields is one field for every 20,000 people within the service community. This standard results in the need for one additional field.

Soccer

Soccer is one of the fastest growing sports in America. Some local demand for the sport was expressed in the survey and during one on one interviews. This Master Plan reflects this demand by establishing a LOS of one field for every 7,500 people within the service population. Utilizing this standard for development, the County needs four additional fields.

The County could consider lighting athletic fields, which effectively doubles their use. Likewise, the development of synthetic turf fields could greatly increase playing time on existing fields and reduce the number of fields needed.



A final note on soccer, the demand for multi-purpose fields will be made more intense by the new interest in lacrosse. Played on a field very similar to a soccer field (they are slightly larger than soccer fields), lacrosse will likely increase in popularity and should be considered as the County reviews its soccer field needs. This new sport should be taken into consid-

eration since play for both sports can be programmed on similar fields. One method to accommodate the variety of field games (soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football) is to develop larger multi-use fields that can be used for a variety of field games.

Basketball (Outdoor)

Basketball remains an extremely popular sport in the United States. Played by a variety of ages, and increasingly by females, this sport can be played either indoors or out. Currently there are seven outdoor basketball courts, but does not provide any indoor facilities. Based on national and state LOS of one outdoor basketball court per 5,000 people, the County currently has a need for one new outdoor court.

In addition to outdoor courts, there is a need for indoor basketball, as well. See the section on Community Centers and Gymnasiums for the community's need for indoor courts.



Tennis

Based on input received in stakeholders interviews and the public workshops, tennis is a relatively popular sport in Halifax County. Currently there are no public courts in the county and the courts in Roanoke Rapids are in poor condition and need to be improved.

Utilizing a LOS of facility development significantly less than the national and state standards (one court

per 5,000 people) there is a current need for eight additional courts throughout the county. In addition to these new courts, the existing courts in Roanoke Rapids need renovation.

Volleyball

The county has two outdoor volleyball courts. An additional court could be constructed in the future if demand is expressed. Volleyball courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Shuffleboard

The county currently does not have any shuffleboard courts. Based on a very conservative LOS (one court per 15,000 people) there is a need for several courts. This activity provides a recreational outlet and opportunities for social interaction, particularly for older citizens.

The County may consider building shuffleboard courts in parks if there is a demand for this activity in the future. Like volleyball courts, shuffleboard courts are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.



Horseshoes

There are no public horseshoe courts in Halifax County. This activity provides a recreation outlet for social interaction, particularly for older citizens. The County may consider building horseshoe pits if there is additional demand for this activity in the future. Like shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits are relatively small and can easily be added to existing parks.

Picnic Shelters

Picnicking was one of the most popular recreational activities listed by respondents in the County's survey. There are currently seven picnic shelters serving county residents. Based on a LOS of one shelter per 2,500 people, there is a need for eleven additional shelters.



Playgrounds

There are fourteen public playgrounds serving county residents. Playgrounds were listed as a popular recreational facility in the survey and public workshops. Additional playgrounds are needed. As new parks are developed, the County should look for locations for additional playgrounds. Larger parks may warrant more than one playground. Safety inspections and ADA accessibility audits should be conducted at all existing playgrounds.

As new playgrounds are completed and existing playgrounds renovated, wood fiber and sand surfaces should be replaced with poured in place (PIP) safety surfacing. PIP surfaces provide wheelchair accessibility and reduces maintenance and lifecycle costs of the playgrounds.

Pedestrian Trails

Walking is the number one outdoor recreational activity in the United States. Walking or biking trail use scored high in the public survey ($\pm 75\%$ indicated they are interested in using trails). Almost half (42%) stated their need for trails were not being met.

With this level of public demand, the development of walking trails should be a priority for future park

development. A priority should be placed on walking trail development in all existing and future parks. A paved walking trail is an important component of all park types, and should be provided in all Neighborhood, Community and District Parks.

In addition to walking trails in existing and future parks, the water and natural resources found in Halifax County offers many opportunities for the development of nature trails.

Pedestrian trails should be included in all parks as the County develops its park system. In addition to park trails, the County should look for opportunities to work with partner agencies/organizations to explore opportunities for trail development along the Roanoke River and other natural areas.

Biking Trails

Biking is a rapidly growing outdoor recreational activity. The County should expand opportunities for biking through the development of a Greenway trail system, including paths suitable for biking in existing and future parks, and through encouraging NCDOT to develop roads with bike lanes or wider shoulders to accommodate bikers. The County should work with other stakeholders to help promote and facilitate new bikeways throughout the county.



Amphitheaters and Outdoor Performing Areas

Currently, there is no public amphitheater in the rural areas of the county. An amphitheater could provide a site for concerts and special events. An amphitheater could provide a visible facility for recreation pro-

gramming in the county and serve as a highly valued community asset. Several stakeholders identified the desire for creating economic impact through festivals and community events.

The County should also make provisions for smaller, neighborhood gathering places for plays, small concerts, and other special events. These facilities would provide a small stage and space for gathering in a more informal manner when compared to a large amphitheater.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

Community Centers & Gymnasiums

Based on input received at the public workshops and from the county wide telephone survey, many Halifax County residents would like to have access to indoor recreation facilities, and that need is going unmet.

The construction and operation of a multi-use recreation center is a significant undertaking, but it is the recommendation of this report that the County carefully explore this option. Many of the stakeholders in one on one interviews discussed the importance of providing parks and recreation facilities and programs that will enhance the quality of life of Halifax citizens and attract people and business to the county. The development of better indoor recreation facilities will help give the County the type of park system that will reach that goal.



A recreation center also provides space for classes and programs that can promote healthy lifestyles.

The County should explore all options for providing indoor recreation opportunities. The joint use of school facilities or the renovation of retired schools may be an option for providing indoor facilities.

Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds

In the past, NRPA and NCDENR provided a standard for pool development of one pool for every 20,000 people. This standard was based on the concept of multi-neighborhood or community pools. Today, with the high cost of operation and construction of swimming pools, very few agencies develop neighborhood/community pools to that old standard. Instead, agencies typically provide more centralized facilities where one pool may serve a greater population.



The City of Roanoke Rapids offers its citizens both an indoor and outdoor swimming pool. These pools provide for the aquatic needs of city residents and also serve many county residents.

Unfortunately, many county residents live many miles from Roanoke Rapids and do not have good access to these facilities.

The demand for an aquatic facility was expressed in the survey and the public workshops. Almost two thirds (60%) of those interviewed in the telephone survey expressed interest in a swimming facility. Over half (56%) said their aquatic needs are not being met. Even with the high cost of construction and operation, the development of a swimming

facility to serve rural county residents should be considered. Based on the response from the public workshops and survey there appears to be county demand for a public pool.

The development of a swimming pool would allow swim lessons and courses on water safety. A pool would also allow an opportunity for lap swim, water aerobics and other healthy lifestyle activities.

The final decision on an aquatic facility should be worked out in future planning studies, but the County should take the initiative to carefully consider providing some form of aquatic facility.

Spraygrounds are growing in popularity across the country. In addition to offering a water-based play experience, the play structures, sprays, etc. afford children of all ages a total play environment and are much more economical to operate than a standard swimming pool. A properly designed, large water park sprayground can serve as a regional draw, provide revenue to the County, and provide a beneficial economic impact to the surrounding areas.



TRENDS IN PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES

The list of recreational activities developed for this Comprehensive Plan is based on national and state standards that have been used in park planning

for decades. As noted earlier in this section, these standards are used as a point of reference, with the understanding that each community should develop standards that are unique to their specific needs.

One of the downsides of the national and state guidelines is that they are not updated often and fail to incorporate newer trends and activities. In the past decade, several new activities have been growing in popularity and should be considered in future park development. These activities include:

Skateboard Parks and Extreme Sports

Skateboarding has been popular for several decades. In the past decade, many communities have recognized its popularity and have tried to provide a safe and vandal resistant setting for this creative sport. There was interest in a Skateboard Park expressed in the survey and several of the public workshops; especially in the public workshop in Roanoke Rapids. While not an immediate priority in the county, a Skateboard Park seems to be a priority for citizens of Roanoke Rapids.



Disc Golf

Disc golf did not receive significant demand in the survey, but nationally the popularity of the sport continues to grow. There is currently one disc golf course in the county. Disc golf courses are inexpensive and have minimal impact on the land. The County may consider development of a second disc golf court in the future.

Off-leash Dog Areas

Off-leash dog areas are one of the newest trends in park development. The popularity of these facilities (also known as Dog Parks), is a response to the nation's love of pets. Communities throughout North Carolina are now constructing Dog Parks. Several people suggested a Dog Park at the public workshops.

Dog Parks take many forms, but are primarily a place within a park where park users can bring their dogs to run, walk, and recreate. They usually include a fenced open area where dogs, accompanied by their owner, are allowed to run free. Often the off-leash dog area is divided into sections for large and small dogs.

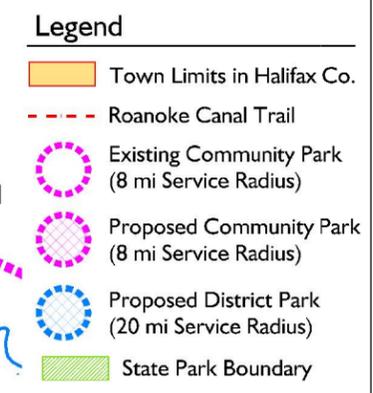
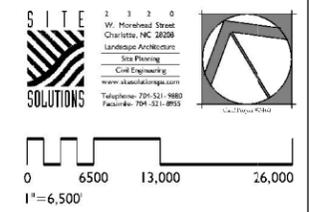
The County may consider development of a Dog Park in one of its parks in the future.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide a wide variety of community enhancements. They offer health benefits by providing local gardeners with fresh vegetables and increased exercise as they tend the gardens. They also provide environmental benefits by reducing transportation cost for food production and providing more plant cover, which reduces urbanization impacts on climate change. In addition, community gardens provide a venue for social interaction that reduces isolation and supports community involvement.

With the many benefits provided by community gardens, many parks and recreation agencies are implementing community garden programs.

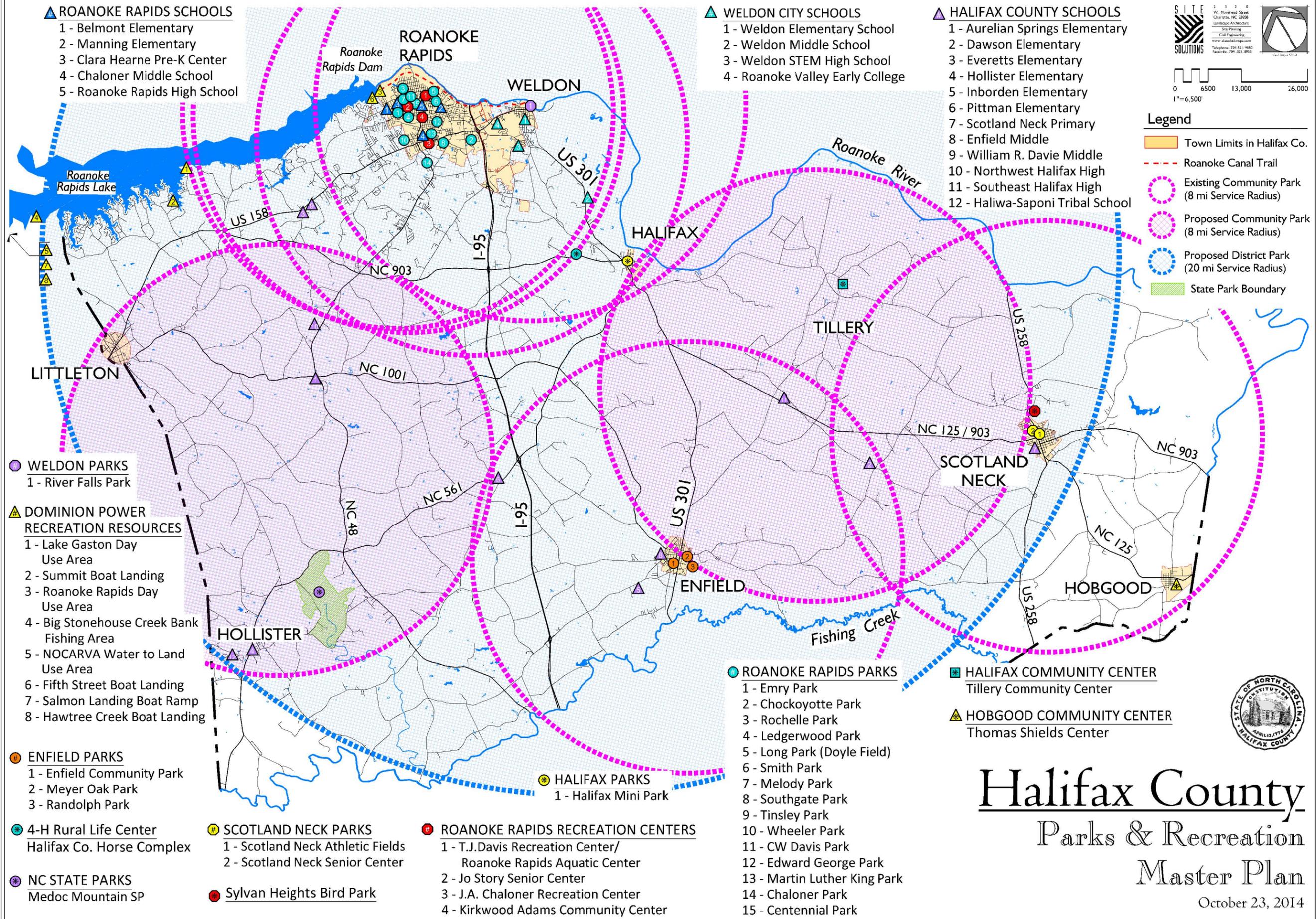




Halifax County

Parks & Recreation Master Plan

October 23, 2014



- ▲ ROANOKE RAPIDS SCHOOLS**
- 1 - Belmont Elementary
 - 2 - Manning Elementary
 - 3 - Clara Hearne Pre-K Center
 - 4 - Chaloner Middle School
 - 5 - Roanoke Rapids High School

- ▲ WELDON CITY SCHOOLS**
- 1 - Weldon Elementary School
 - 2 - Weldon Middle School
 - 3 - Weldon STEM High School
 - 4 - Roanoke Valley Early College

- ▲ HALIFAX COUNTY SCHOOLS**
- 1 - Aurelian Springs Elementary
 - 2 - Dawson Elementary
 - 3 - Everetts Elementary
 - 4 - Hollister Elementary
 - 5 - Inborden Elementary
 - 6 - Pittman Elementary
 - 7 - Scotland Neck Primary
 - 8 - Enfield Middle
 - 9 - William R. Davie Middle
 - 10 - Northwest Halifax High
 - 11 - Southeast Halifax High
 - 12 - Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School

- WELDON PARKS**
- 1 - River Falls Park

- ▲ DOMINION POWER RECREATION RESOURCES**
- 1 - Lake Gaston Day Use Area
 - 2 - Summit Boat Landing
 - 3 - Roanoke Rapids Day Use Area
 - 4 - Big Stonehouse Creek Bank Fishing Area
 - 5 - NOCARVA Water to Land Use Area
 - 6 - Fifth Street Boat Landing
 - 7 - Salmon Landing Boat Ramp
 - 8 - Hawtree Creek Boat Landing

- ENFIELD PARKS**
- 1 - Enfield Community Park
 - 2 - Meyer Oak Park
 - 3 - Randolph Park

- 4-H Rural Life Center**
Halifax Co. Horse Complex

- NC STATE PARKS**
Medoc Mountain SP

- SCOTLAND NECK PARKS**
- 1 - Scotland Neck Athletic Fields
 - 2 - Scotland Neck Senior Center

- Sylvan Heights Bird Park**

- ROANOKE RAPIDS RECREATION CENTERS**
- 1 - T.J. Davis Recreation Center/
Roanoke Rapids Aquatic Center
 - 2 - Jo Story Senior Center
 - 3 - J.A. Chaloner Recreation Center
 - 4 - Kirkwood Adams Community Center

- HALIFAX PARKS**
- 1 - Halifax Mini Park

- ROANOKE RAPIDS PARKS**
- 1 - Emry Park
 - 2 - Chockoyotte Park
 - 3 - Rochelle Park
 - 4 - Ledgerwood Park
 - 5 - Long Park (Doyle Field)
 - 6 - Smith Park
 - 7 - Melody Park
 - 8 - Southgate Park
 - 9 - Tinsley Park
 - 10 - Wheeler Park
 - 11 - CW Davis Park
 - 12 - Edward George Park
 - 13 - Martin Luther King Park
 - 14 - Chaloner Park
 - 15 - Centennial Park

- HALIFAX COMMUNITY CENTER**
Tillery Community Center
- ▲ HOBGOOD COMMUNITY CENTER**
Thomas Shields Center



Canal Trail Race

Section Five

Strategies for Meeting County Wide Needs

INTRODUCTION

Currently there is no county wide program for parks and recreation services in Halifax County. County residents are having their recreation needs met through a combination of public and private providers. Unfortunately, without a county wide agency in place, many recreational needs are likely not being met.

Over one third of Halifax County's population lives within the city limits of Roanoke Rapids, Scotland Neck or Enfield. These municipalities provide some recreational opportunities to their citizens. As one would expect, these agencies are also providing facilities and programs for some county residents who live in close proximity to municipal facilities. All municipalities report use by county residents.

For county residents living too far from these municipal programs, finding recreation opportunities becomes a larger challenge. In rural Halifax County park and recreation opportunities are limited to school facilities, a few town parks, Medoc Mountain State Park and a variety of private providers.

Youth athletic associations, providing programming on a skeletal collection of school facilities, offer the majority of organized youth athletics throughout the County. In addition to these youth athletic associations, several churches in the area provide league opportunities.

While Roanoke Rapids and Enfield are the only municipalities with a designated parks and recreation department, several of the County's towns provide small parks for their residents. Weldon has a small neighborhood type park which contains a playground, open play field, boat ramp and a picnic shelter. The Town of Halifax has a small Neighborhood Park with a playground and picnic facilities. The Town of Hobgood has a small Civic Park and playground in the downtown areas.

Private recreation opportunities in golf, tennis and swimming are provided by Scotfield Country Club and Chocoyotte Country Club.



Swimming Pool at Scotfield Country Club

It is apparent, even with a quick review of these facilities, that park and recreation opportunities outside the Roanoke Rapids area are very limited. For this reason the County is considering expanding County services to include provisions for parks and recreation.

OPTIONS FOR PROVIDING PARKS & RECREATION SERVICES

North Carolina enabling laws provide opportunities for the creation of a variety of systems to meet the recreation needs of citizens within communities and

counties. A County may establish and conduct a system of supervised recreation, including the appropriation of funds and the acquisition or development of land and buildings for the provision of recreation and park services (Ch. 160A, Article 18). Of the 218 local park and recreation systems in North Carolina, 73 are organized at the County level. County park and recreation systems vary in their scope of services from simply providing parks and open space for passive recreation to providing full service recreation and park programs similar to what is traditionally found in cities and towns. A third approach is for counties to provide parks and facilities for others to use, including community recreation agencies, youth sport organizations, and other groups that sponsor organized and supervised recreation programs.

North Carolina state law also provides the opportunity for local governments, school systems, and other public entities to enter into agreements for the joint use of property and buildings by other governmental units (Ch. 160A-274). In addition, state-enabling law also permits the creation of a county service district in order to finance, provide, or maintain recreation services for a segment or segments of the County (Ch. 153A-300).

There appears to be three primary options for the provision of a system of recreation and park services for those residents of Halifax County that reside outside of Roanoke Rapids and Enfield, the two municipalities that have recreation and park agencies. These options are (1) the development of a county recreation/park agency, (2) the development of an agreement for the Roanoke Rapids Parks and Recreation Department to provide extended services throughout the County, or (3) the development of an agreement with Halifax County Schools to work together in developing recreational opportunities for county residents.

Option I – Creation of a Halifax County Park and Recreation Department

County commissioners have the authority to pass a resolution creating a county recreation and parks agency that would operate independently from existing or future community-based systems. Options

for consideration include establishing a citizen led committee to advise county staff on park and recreation issues, the employment of professional staff, securing financial support, planning, and the implementation of recreation programs and services. It is anticipated that initial staffing needs would include a director, part-time on-site program supervisors, and one secretary. Staff needs would increase over time with the development of park and recreation areas and facilities.

Option II – Agreement for City of Roanoke Rapids to Provide Park & Recreation Services throughout Halifax County

The Roanoke Rapids Parks and Recreation Department provides a comprehensive system of recreation programs and services ranging from sports for all ages to outdoor and cultural activities. One option for providing a county wide program would be developing an agreement with Roanoke Rapids to expand recreation programs and services at satellite locations throughout Halifax County. It is anticipated that this arrangement would result in the employment of two on-site program supervisors with administrative functions provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. Ultimately this agreement would make provisions for the development of parks outside of Roanoke Rapids to meet the park and recreational needs outlined in Sections Three and Four. From the standpoint of cost, such an agreement would likely cost less than the establishment of a county agency, although the amount may not be significant in that it is anticipated that administrative overhead expenses may be charged. Other benefits of creating an agreement to extend Roanoke Rapids services throughout the County include the elimination of “non-resident” fees for program participation, access to a number of special use facilities and a rich array of recreation programs such as cultural arts and outdoor programs that may not be possible with a small staff of a county park and recreation agency.

Option III – Agreement with Halifax County Schools

As noted in previous sections of this report, the majority of existing parks and recreation facilities in

Halifax County are located in Roanoke Rapids and the northern section of the county. The remainder of the county has very limited access to parks, recreation facilities or healthy lifestyle programs.

There is one agency that is already “on the ground” in rural Halifax County and has facilities and people located throughout the county. Halifax County Schools operates eleven schools across the county and has several retired facilities as well.

One option for the county wide delivery of recreation facilities and programs could be a partnership agreement between the County and Halifax County Schools. Under this partnership agreement, Halifax County would fund staff position(s) specifically for recreation programming. These programs would take place initially at existing school facilities, but ultimately could be funded to build additional facilities.

Examples of this format for delivery of parks and recreation service can be found in other North Carolina Counties. A successful example of this delivery method is the parks and recreation facilities and programs offered by Pitt County Schools (see Case Studies).



Retired Halifax County School

Under either system, a logical approach to providing recreation services is to utilize existing public land and facilities where possible, and in unique cases, to lease land and facilities from private owners. One

strategy would be to negotiate agreements with public schools and other agencies to use gymnasiums, sport fields, meeting rooms, auditoriums, and other appropriate areas and facilities for the delivery of recreation services. Specific contractual agreements would include costs of using areas and facilities, as well as considerations such as maintenance, security, and future capital improvements. It may also be beneficial to explore the potential of delivering some youth sports programs through agreements with existing youth sport organizations. Joint use agreements would provide an opportunity to implement recreation services quickly as opposed to waiting for the availability of funds to acquire and develop parks and facilities. Such agreements might serve as a stop-gap measure until park and recreation areas and facilities can be developed, or might serve as a permanent part of the Halifax County park and recreation delivery system.

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Regardless of the format chosen, the County's efforts in providing parks and recreation programming should be guided by citizen involvement. One of the first steps the County should take as it begins its parks and recreation development is the establishment of a Citizen Advisory Board to provide that guidance. The Recreation Network Steering Committee, that guided the development of this plan, provides a starting place for developing an advisory board.

The State of North Carolina, through its Recreation Resources Services (RRS), can provide valuable guidance and training for the County as it establishes its Advisory Board. RRS staff should be consulted to assist staff and elected officials in determining:

- Board size and composition
- Structure of Board appointment
- Roles and authority over Advisory Board
- Organizational and reporting structure of Board

In addition to providing guidance on Board structure, RRS consultants can provide assistance with training and education of both staff and board members.

CASE STUDIES

As stated previously, North Carolina has 81 county operated agencies currently providing some form of park and recreation services. While there are many similarities between these agencies, no two departments function exactly the same. In order to better understand the County's options as it establishes its parks and recreation program, we have selected several counties to use as case studies.

Gates County (Population 11,869)

Gates County, located in northeastern North Carolina, is one of the State's smallest and most rural counties. The County's ±12,000 residents are spread across 340 square miles; giving it a person/square mile density of 35.8. This is significantly less than North Carolina's 196 person/square mile density or Halifax County (75.5 persons/square mile). Like Halifax County, the County is home to a State Park (Merchants Millpond State Park) and the Great Dismal Swamp.



Merchants Millpond State Park

Gates County's parks and recreation facilities and programs are provided through a collaborative effort of the Gates County Board of Education and the Gates County Board of Commissioners. The Department was started in the late 1970s with the development of the Gates County Community Center. The community center (indoor and outdoor facilities) was greatly expanded in 2009 with a grant from the Golden Leaf Foundation. A substantial grant from the Roanoke-Chowan Foundation helped establish a wellness center.

The Community Center Complex provides a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities including:

- 1 - 330' Baseball Field, with lights
- 1 - 200' Youth Baseball Field/with lights
- 1 - 200' Softball Field/with lights
- Soccer Fields in outfields
- Disc Golf Course (9 holes)
- 1/2 mile Paved Walking Trail
- 5 Tennis Courts/with lights
- Horseshoe Pits
- Bocce Courts
- Outdoor Basketball
- Skateboard Park
- Gymnasium
- Meeting Rooms
- Fitness Center (requires membership)



Gates County Community Center Complex Fitness Center

Activities/programs include:

- Youth Football (6-12)
- Basketball (girls and boys 4-18)
- Volleyball (girls 8-12)
- Soccer (boys and girls 4-18)
- Zumba Classes
- Family Fun/Fitness Day
- Girl Scout meetings
- Special Events
- Karate Classes
- GED Classes

The Community Center is operated under Gates County Public Schools, but is partially funded by the County. The Department includes four full-time employees (Director, Recreation Director, Maintenance/Field Director and Fitness Specialist). The Center's operating cost is \$220,000, which is mainly the salaries. Programs are self funding; fees are charged for all programs.

Scotland County (Population 36,094)

Scotland County is a rural county located in southeastern North Carolina. The County's population of ±36,000 is spread out over 321 square miles; giving a population and land area of less than half Halifax County's. Laurinburg, its largest town, has a population of ±16,000 or roughly 45% of the entire county population. Laurinburg does not have a parks and recreation department.

Scotland County created a parks and recreation department in the late 70s. The Department's mission statement is "To actively encourage, provide and promote quality leisure, recreation and cultural opportunities, facilities and environments that are essential to the enhancement of the lives of our citizens."

Scotland County Parks and Recreation Department is a stand alone department with five full-time employees and five part-time employees. The staff includes:

- Director
- Athletic Superintendent
- Assistant Athletic Supervisor
- Recreation Center Supervisor
- Office Manager

Regular part-time staff includes:

- Senior Programs Coordinator
- Maintenance Technician
- Building Supervisor
- Custodian
- Recreation Center Assistant

In addition to their regular staff, the Department also utilizes seasonal staff and inmate workers (2) and Older Americans Act Title V workers (3).

The Department has approximately a dozen parks. These include four small Neighborhood Parks and five Athletic Parks with ball fields, multi-purpose fields, etc. The County's park land covers approximately 125 acres.

The center of the Department's outdoor recreation programs/facilities are located at James L. Morgan Recreation Complex, a 53 acre park with four soft-ball/baseball fields, five soccer fields, splash pad, walking trail, playground, and picnic shelter. Much of the funding for this complex came from PARTF, LWCF and CBDG grants.

In addition to outdoor facilities, Scotland County operates several indoor recreation facilities including:

- Wagram Recreation Center (with gymnasium)
- Scotland Place Civic/Senior Center
- Laurel Hill Community Center

The Department offers a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation programs:

- Senior Exercise
- Senior Games
- Art
- Grandparents Support Group
- Summer Camps
- Tennis Lessons
- Youth Soccer
- Youth Basketball
- Youth Football
- Youth Softball & Baseball
- Adult Basketball
- Adult Softball
- Adult Kickball
- Volleyball

The 2013 operating budget for the Department was $\pm 413,000$, with revenues of $\pm 41,000$. The Recreation Complex has separate operational expenditures of $\pm \$36,000$, offset by revenues of $\pm \$39,000$. The splash pad operation paid for itself in 2013.

The County's largest indoor recreation facility (Wagram Recreation Center) has a separate operating budget of $\pm \$56,000$, offset by $\pm \$78,000$ in revenue.



Scotland County Soccer Program

The County's Building and Grounds Department does all mowing and repairs. The Parks and Recreation Department does maintenance directly related to sports and other recreational activities.

Pitt County (Population 172,000)

Pitt County has a significantly larger population than Halifax County, but does have some similar characteristics. A larger percentage of the County's population (approximately half) live in the Greenville Metropolitan Area. The remainder of the county is largely rural. The City of Greenville has a very good parks and recreation department with a wide variety of parks and recreation facilities. Several small towns, (Ayden, Farmville, and Winterville) also offer parks and recreation.

Pitt County took an unusual approach to provide parks and recreation facilities to citizens living in unincorporated areas or in towns too small to provide a parks and recreation department. Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation is a department established in Pitt County Schools. Over 36 years ago the County established the program to provide facilities in all areas of the county. The original goal was to make school resources available to all county residents. The Department provides youth, adult, and senior sports programs using school facilities. The Department also provides special programs within the school day for students and teachers.

In 1998, Recreation was added to the Department title. Eight years ago the County took steps towards

more definitive recreation programming by building a recreation center and park. In the recent years the County has begun funding a part-time position for recreation. In addition, the County funds directly building and lawn maintenance for the new facility.

The center is run by the school system while the park is operated as a County facility. These new County park operations are under County Planning.

The Community Schools and Recreation Department has nine full-time employees:

- Director
- 2 Assistant Directors (1 Program and 1 School Facility)
- Bookkeeper
- After School Coordinator
- 2 Recreation Coordinators
- Secretary
- Custodian

In addition to the full time staff the department hires 50 part-time staff for after school programs and 20-30 part-time staff for recreation. The Department also hires ±80 sports officials and oversees over 1,000 volunteers and coaches.

The Community Schools and Recreation Department oversees a wide variety of recreational activities including:

- Youth Flag Football (2 sessions)
- Youth Volleyball (3 sessions)
- Youth Basketball
- Youth Soccer (2 sessions)
- Adult Sports (softball, volleyball, exercise Classes)
- Summer Day Camps, Sports Camps and Specialty Camps (cooking, art, etc.)
- 12 After School Programs
- 3 Summer After School Extension Programs

The annual operating budget for the Department is \$1,000,000. The after school programs take up \$650,000 of the Department's budget with recreation costing \$500,000. Very little funding is budgeted for capital improvements because most of the programs are run from school facilities.



Pitt County Summer Basketball

The Department works in conjunction with other community partners to minimize duplication. Agencies that partner with Pitt County Community Schools and Recreation include:

- Babe Ruth Softball
- East Carolina University
- Pitt Community College
- Greenville Parks and Recreation
- Ayden Recreation
- Winterville Recreation
- Farmville Recreation
- Boys and Girls Club

Warren County (Population 22,576)

Warren County, the county's neighbor to the west, has some features that are very similar to Halifax County. Warren County is very rural. It covers 443 square miles (Halifax County is larger, covering 731 square miles) and has a population of 22,576. The County's economy, once driven by tobacco and textile mills/manufacturing, is now focused on agribusiness, biotechnology, and tourism. Like Halifax County, Warren County has tremendous water based resources. Lake Gaston, Kerr Lake, the Roanoke River Basin and the Tar-Pamlico River Basin provide a wide variety of water based recreation opportunities.

Warren County's largest municipalities are Warrenton, Macon and Norlina. None of the County's municipalities have a Parks and Recreation department. The County has a recreation department that was established in 1985. Initially, the Department

used school facilities for all of its recreation programs, but through the years they have utilized County funds, enhanced with PARTF and LWCF grants, to develop a county wide park system.

The hub of their outdoor recreation programs are provided at an outstanding Recreation Complex on US Hwy 158 Bypass. This multi-purpose complex covers ±31 acres and provides very well developed facilities including playground, walking trails, three baseball/softball fields, multi-purpose field and picnic shelters. This facility provides facilities for county wide programming in youth and adult athletics, and has been used for some travel team and tournament play.



Recreation Complex

The County also operates Rotary Park in Warrenton. This park, located beside John Graham Gym, offers playground equipment, a ballfield and skateboard ramp. A third county park (M.E.R.P. Park), located in Soul City provides outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, swimming pool and picnic area. In addition to these parks, the County has also developed six playgrounds throughout the county. They are currently planning a passive recreation area with water access.

The primary focus of the Department's programming is for county youth. They offer youth programs in almost all sports (baseball, softball, soccer, volleyball and football). They offer men's and women's softball as well.

In addition to athletics, they offer special events such as their annual Easter Egg Hunt.

The County Recreation Department has three full time employees; a director, a recreation programmer, and a park superintendent. The Department also relies on part-time employees, volunteers, and program teachers/leaders. The Departments 2014/2015 budget is approximately \$425,000.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT

The review of the preceding case studies clearly shows that there is a variety of approaches to providing park and recreation services on a county level. Each of the departments provide their citizens services, but each has chosen a different system or delivery. While the organizational system of delivery is different in each of the case studies, there are elements that are common to all. Any county initiative for providing park and recreation services should include the following philosophy:

Cooperative Partnerships

There are a number of partnership opportunities in the county. These include partnerships with municipalities, the State of North Carolina, healthcare agencies, faith based organizations and other non-profit organizations. The concept of park and recreation agencies partnering with other groups and organizations can lead to program enrichment, cost savings, and community support. At the same time, every community has its unique features and characteristics that make it necessary to consider each case based on local conditions. Factors that can influence the development of partnerships include:

- Philosophy and attitude of community and agency leaders.
- Fiscal climate that determines the potential of agencies and organizations to provide services independent of others.
- The need to address programming voids.
- The recognition of strengths and weaknesses in the provision of services.
- The availability of areas, facilities and other

resources by the park and recreation agency to accommodate program development.

- The development of agreements that benefit all parties.

In considering the development of partnerships to provide community recreation services, it may be advisable to partner for those services that can be provided by others at a lower cost, of higher quality, or where existing resources are under-utilized.

Joint Use Agreements with Schools

The use of public schools for public recreation services makes sense based on the following:

- They are built with public funds and, as a result, their use should be maximized.
- School schedules and calendars result in many indoor and outdoor areas being vacant after 3 PM during the week, all day on weekends and holidays, and during the summer break.
- Schools typically have areas and facilities very similar to those found in quality recreation centers, including sport and multi-purpose fields, auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries, meeting rooms, cafeterias, etc.

The use of schools for recreation avoids the duplication of areas and facilities.

Halifax County has the unique distinction of being served by three separate school boards. Developing joint use agreements with all three boards will be important, but each school system is unique. The structure and importance of the joint use agreement will be different for each school system. Each school system has specific geographic areas of service. Likewise, each school system operates independently. Joint use agreements for the non-school related activities should reflect the uniqueness of each school district.

The development and continuation of school joint use agreements is often the result of the philosophy of the superintendent of schools and/or the school board. As a result, a change in leadership can result in changes in the agreement that can add to budget requirements, or even the elimination of the agreement. As a result, a sound joint use agreement

should commit all parties to its long-term success. Issues that should be considered in developing the agreement might include:

- Cost of using the areas and facilities, including rental fees, payment of utilities, maintenance, utilities, etc.
- Cost-sharing or total responsibility for outdoor site development by the park and recreation agency.
- Maintenance of fields and grounds by the park and recreation agency.
- Site supervision during recreation use.

While the concept of school joint use agreements makes sense, perhaps the most critical criterion for their success is to develop an agreement that assures that all parties benefit significantly from the partnership. The primary benefit to park and recreation departments is access to existing areas and facilities that were developed from public funds, and that are centrally located relative to the population served. Such arrangements should result in a reduced need for acquiring park lands and the need for building indoor and outdoor areas and facilities. Benefits to the school can vary from generating additional revenue from rental fees, to transferring the maintenance responsibilities of outdoor facilities to the park and recreation department, and even the acquisition of land and the development of areas and facilities for use by the school and by the park and recreation agency.

Youth Sport Organizations

While in some communities youth sport programs are provided by the park and recreation agency, it is more typical to have sport-specific organizations that provide those programs. There are youth sport organizations that focus on nearly all team sports, and in some communities there are also groups that provide for specific individual sports such as swimming, tennis and track and field, to name a few. There are many cases where conflict has developed between youth sport organizations and park and recreation agencies, mostly due to the availability of facilities, facility maintenance, quality of coaching and leadership, the desire to promote a single sport to the exclusion of others, over-emphasis on competition vs. participation, etc. At the same time, youth

sport organizations provide voluntary leadership in the provision of their respective sports, thus saving the park and recreation agency the cost of providing that sport program. Issues of concern that should be considered in working with youth sport organizations include:

- Allocate resources equitably so as not to jeopardize other programs.
- Avoid non-participation based on gender, age, social condition, and inability to pay.
- Facility maintenance standards and responsibility.
- Future improvements and expansion.
- Fiscal responsibility.



Roanoke Valley Youth Soccer Association

As important as organized team sports are to most communities, it is also important to realize that many youth are not being served, yet they have the need for engagement in physical activities for sound physical development. Also, while most team sports provide benefits beyond physical activity, it should be recognized that many youth simply do not like organized team sports, lack the ability to succeed, or have other limitations that limit their participation. As a result, efforts should be made to provide other recreation programs and services to meet the interests and needs of others, including individual sports, outdoor activities, cultural arts, etc.

RECOMMENDATION FOR PROVIDING RECREATION, PARKS FACILITIES & SERVICES

After thoughtful review of all options for providing park and recreational services on a county wide basis, and after carefully listening to the citizens of Halifax County, through the Steering Committee, public meetings and surveys, it is apparent that the most logical delivery of these services is through the development of a County Parks and Recreation Department. The development of a new County Parks and Recreation Department incorporates two parallel areas of investment. The first includes the personnel and operational side of the Department. The second area of investment is in the area of facilities and capital improvements. In a new Department, both areas of investment will occur simultaneously.

DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

An Operational Needs Assessment (ONA) is a valuable tool for estimating the fiscal impact a newly instituted Park and Recreation Department will have on the County's operating budget. An ONA projects staff salaries, operation and maintenance costs, capital outlay for maintenance equipment, and revenue generation within the Department. The County should consider developing an ONA for a Department as a next step in exploring the feasibility of starting a new department. While not a fully developed ONA, we have included a scenario for starting a department to give County officials an order of magnitude cost for developing a Parks and Recreation Department.

Phase One: Department Start Up (Years 1-4)

As Halifax County begins development of its park and recreation program, its departmental operation needs will change. Initially the Department will include very little capital assets, and will be limited in its program offerings. During these formative years, the primary cost of operation will be salaries, and supplies with some funding for programs. With this understanding, the County will initially hire a park and recreation director, who will be responsible for:

- Setting up the Department
- Establishing an identity throughout the county
- Developing relationships with school officials, youth athletic associations, and municipalities throughout the County
- Initial planning/development of park facilities
- Programming of recreational activities

The parks and recreation director will be assisted by current county administrative staff and a part time recreation coordinator in Year 2. The recreation coordinator's responsibility will be to initiate the development of park and recreation programming opportunities for the citizens of Halifax County. Potential programs will need general supplies and tools in order to provide successful programs. In these early years, little funding will be needed and consequently little revenue will be generated. The primary purpose of the coordinator is to initiate program offerings and obtain a critical mass of participants so that when the County's first park facility is constructed and comes on-line by Year 5, there is already bona-fide demand for the park's facilities.

Another important activity of the new director and Department during these early years will be to initiate and promote the development of some of the facility needs listed in Section Four. At this point in the planning process it is difficult to determine the actual project(s) that will be developed initially, but there should be steps taken to implement some of the Proposed Projects:

- Indoor Recreation Center
- Expansion of 4-H Rural Life Center
- Eastern or Western Community Park
- River Access/Trails
- Equestrian Center

It is important to note that some of the initial expenses will be for the acquisition of non-capitalized assets and will not recur in subsequent years. Non-capitalized assets include office equipment including furniture, computers and other business machines; office and programming supplies; and finally hand tools and power equipment for program set up and maintenance. It is anticipated that much of this equipment might be found from surplus furniture and fixtures within the county. As noted, there will be little revenue generated through programming during these first four years, but some can be generated through athletic league fees if field space is leased somewhere within the County.

Annual estimated operating cost for the new Department in these early years will be ±\$125,000/year:

Phase Two: Initial Facility Development (Years 5-7)

By the fifth year of operation, the new Department will have established an identity within the community, and will have established an array of recreation programs throughout the County. By year 5 at least one of the proposed parks and/or facilities should be constructed. As this facility is developed, the operational cost of the Department will increase substantially as there will now be the added responsibility of operating and maintaining a park facility.

For the purpose of this illustration, it is assumed that this first county facility would consist of four soft-ball/baseball fields, multi-purpose field, playground, trails, restroom(s), picnic shelter(s), parking, and other miscellaneous amenities. It is also assumed that all athletic fields will be irrigated and lighted in order to provide the optimal amount of programming opportunities. Another option may be the development of an indoor facility.

In addition to the continual operation of the administrative section of the Department, operation funding will need to be provided for the new park facility. Additional staff, supplies and other operational expenses need to be funded in order to operate the facility efficiently. Some of these expenses may be offset by user fees, but it is not anticipated that fees/charges will offset all additional cost.

With a new county wide District Park, Community Park or indoor facility, it is recommended that a minimum of one full time and one seasonal grounds maintenance worker be hired to maintain the facility. The grounds maintenance worker(s) will handle such daily activities as trash pick up and restroom cleaning, weekly maintenance such as mowing, and seasonal maintenance such as painting, field fertilization, and general repairs. A full time recreation coordinator should be hired or promoted from the part time position to adequately program the new park and assist or replace the existing part time coordinator. Two part-time field supervisors may also be necessary to coordinate game day athletic league activities at the facility.

Utilities will be required for electricity, water, and sewer services. Water will be needed for restroom and irrigation. Various supplies will be needed to operate and maintain the facility. Janitorial supplies such as paper products and cleaning agents will be required. Material for field maintenance such as fertilizer, weed control, insect control, and top dressing will add operational cost. General supply items such as replacement light bulbs and irrigation heads will be required. Fuel will be needed for power equipment and vehicles. There will also be the potential for contracted services and equipment rental for maintenance beyond the expertise and equipment supply of County staff. Finally, tipping fees for the disposal of site trash will be required.

Though the facility will be new, there should be funding for maintenance and repairs. Unfortunately, equipment breaks down or vandalism occurs where costly repair will be necessary. Also, equipment utilized to maintain the facility will need maintenance and repairs.

There will be a need for capitalized and non-capitalized equipment to operate the facility. Equipment includes a truck, tractor, equipment for the tractor, mower, and miscellaneous power and hand tools. A budget figure of \$75,000 - \$100,000 should be reserved for this equipment. It should be noted that equipment funding will only be needed for year one of the facility as this equipment should last several years before needing replacement.

Facility expenses can be offset some by rental fees. League athletic fields can generate several thousand dollars per league season. It is estimated that the Department will have two seasons. This means that the athletic fields could generate \$8,000 - \$10,000 annually.

The total operational cost for a District or Community Park is estimated to be approximately \pm \$250,000. It is important to note that \$75,000 - \$100,000 of this cost is only incurred in the first year of operation in order to purchase capital equipment. Subsequent years where no additional development occurs would be far less. Annual estimated operating cost for the Department and new park will be \$350,000 - \$375,000. This operational cost will be larger if an indoor facility is developed.



Youth Football Program

Phase Three: Facility/Program Expansion (Years 8-10)

During years 8-10 the Department will continue to mature and expand. The Department will have established ties to the community and the schools and will be providing program opportunities (athletics as well as class activities) in both existing facilities (schools, community college, etc.) and the County's new park facilities. By Year 8 a second major county park facility will be constructed, and work on additional parks will be underway. With the essential doubling in size of park facilities, the Year 8 operational budget will not only consist of the

existing administrative budget and operational budget for the first county park, but one new additional county park as well. The second county park will, in all likelihood, closely resemble the amenities in the first county park. Consequently, the same budget line item estimates have been utilized with an annual inflationary/salary increase rate of three percent (3%). Two exceptions to this include the additional capital outlay for a trailer to transport the tractor and other equipment between parks and the addition of a full time parks superintendent. The parks superintendent will manage the daily, weekly, and seasonal maintenance for the parks system and has been budgeted with an inflationary adjustment of \$50,000 per year in Year 8. The annual estimated operating cost for the Department and two county parks will be \$475,000 - \$500,000. As noted previously, these operational cost will increase if the County develops an indoor facility.

DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTY PARK SYSTEM

Section Three: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment identified the parks and facilities that will be required to meet County residents' park and recreational needs. This section provides a scenario for facility development of the new Parks and Recreation Department.

District Park

The County should provide a District Park to meet the recreation needs of citizens in the northern area of the county and provide citizens of Roanoke Rapids with a District Park. A District Park in this area would provide a wonderful benefit to Roanoke Rapids as well as county residents. The County should approach Roanoke Rapids to explore the development of a joint use district facility.

The County's 4-H Rural Life Center is large enough to provide facilities and programs typically associated with a District Park. The expansion of facilities at this site could meet the active and passive recreation needs of county residents. An important aspect of park development should include an athletic field

complex with potential for tournament play. A second component of the proposed improvements should be development of the equestrian facilities with strong consideration for a covered show area. As noted in previous sections, a detailed master plan should be developed for the 4-H Rural Life Center that identifies any development limitations of this site and determine the feasibility of future development.



Equestrian Facilities at 4-H Rural Life Center

Community Parks

In the future, the centerpiece of this concept is the development of facilities at the 4-H Rural Life Center and the development of two Community Parks in the rural areas of the County. These parks would be located strategically in the County in areas of greater population. One of these parks should be located in the western area of the county to serve Littleton and rural areas of southwest Halifax County. One potential location for this western county park would be in association with Medoc Mountain State Park. Joint development of this park would be an excellent example of joint use of facilities. A second Community Park should be built in the eastern portion of the county, in the Scotland Neck, Enfield, Hobgood area of the county. The County should consider working with the school board to find property adjacent to existing schools or look for abandoned school property that can be re-used for parks and recreation.

Neighborhood Parks/Municipal Park Opportunities

In addition to the large Community and District Parks, there is a need for smaller Neighborhood Parks or Municipal Parks throughout the county. These local parks should be located in the smaller communities throughout the county. Typically counties do not become involved in the development of small Mini Parks or Neighborhood Parks. The scattered nature of these parks on a County perspective make them very difficult to operate and maintain. Instead, the County should work with and encourage local municipalities to develop these types of parks. The County can assist in this park development process by providing planning and grant writing assistance, or possibly by partially funding some of these local improvements.

Several communities have already identified projects that would benefit their citizens.

Town of Littleton

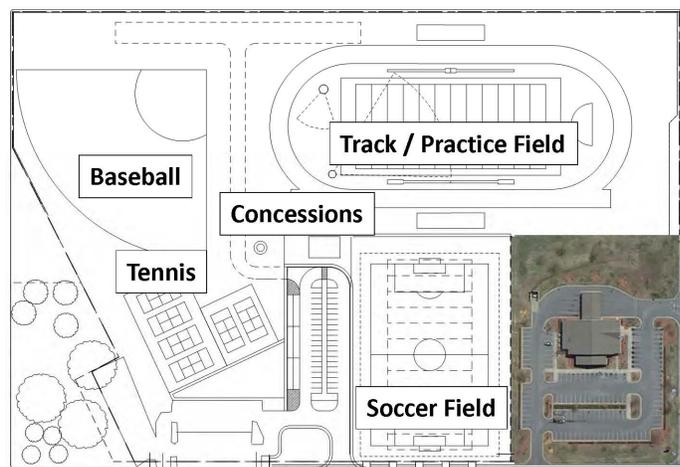
The Town of Littleton has established collaborative relationships with various organizations to pursue healthful, living recreational opportunities for the citizens surrounding the Littleton town area. Some of the areas which are under discussion are a historical site adjacent to one of the most active performing art centers in Halifax County. The abandoned rail corridor provides an outstanding opportunity to revitalize a walking trail and provide a fitness trail. A fitness trail was of great interest to citizens. A vacated school under the Halifax County School Board jurisdiction and owned by Halifax County is an area that could be developed into a recreational complex for young people to senior citizens. The existing school facility includes a gym and a building which could house exercise, nutrition and obesity clinics for the citizens in the area. Space in this area could provide community gardening for fresh vegetables. An advisory committee for a CBDG grant listed establishing such area as described above as one of their priorities, if funds were available. Littleton's public workshop during this study had 78 people who attended. This was the highest number of people in attendance at any public workshop in Halifax County.

Weldon/Roanoke River Access

The Roanoke Canal Trail is an important community asset and provides active recreation and historical education opportunities to county residents and tourists. As described in other sections of this document, the trail connects Roanoke Rapids and Weldon from Roanoke Rapids Lake Park to River Falls Park in Weldon. The Edwin Akers Aqueduct Park provides an excellent interpretative area. A Confederate cemetery and breastworks in Weldon immediately east of the Aqueduct provides another opportunity for park expansion. Weldon is currently investigating options for development of a park adjacent to the river that would provide camping, trails and enhance river access.

City of Roanoke Rapids

The City of Roanoke Rapids is currently working collaboratively with Roanoke Rapids Graded School District to develop athletic facilities on a former industrial site. The proposed facility will provide tennis, soccer and running track. These facilities will help meet student needs as well as community recreation needs. The City is also exploring major renovations of existing parks and recreation facilities, such as the Emry Park tennis courts, Aquatic Center and playgrounds.



Scotland Neck

Scotland Neck, working with the Upper Coastal Plains Council of Government, is currently working on a Town Development Plan. This Plan identified the need for community improvements to promote neighborhood and community health and wellness. The Plan identifies several projects relevant to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

- Develop a feasibility study for the potential development of the old train right-of-way into a greenway to enhance north/south pedestrian and bicycle circulation; both in the town and potentially to link with other communities. The first phase of that project could be improved to provide access to the Food Lion from 8th Street to Food Lion Road.
- Re-develop Scotland Neck athletic fields for a variety of sports and healthy exercise activities.
- Improvements to the walking path around the Town Hall.
- Improve all city parks, providing ADA access.
- Develop greenway connections to enhance pedestrian access to Community Hospital Nursing Home and Bird Park.

Halifax

The Town of Halifax is exploring working with the NC Department of Cultural Resources, the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau and others to lease ±10 acres of property along the Roanoke River at the State Historical Site. This property can be used for canoe/kayak access, nature trails, and water access. This initiative will be a wonderful opportunity to provide a valuable access to the river and provide views to truly unique natural features of this area.

The Town of Halifax is also exploring developing recreation areas on existing Town land near downtown Halifax. They are considering developing a playground, a fitness trail and other recreation amenities on these Town owned properties.

In addition to the efforts to develop water access, Halifax County in conjunction with Travel and Tourism, is working with the NC Department of Cultural Resources to establish a lease for the amphitheater

on the State Historic Site. The amphitheater was once used by the State Historic Site, but is no longer programmed. The County is exploring opportunities to reuse this unique facility for community events and to provide opportunities for tourism.

Hobgood

The Town of Hobgood has developed a wonderful Civic Park and renovated train depot. The Town may explore developing plans to expand its downtown park and develop a walking trail along an abandoned railway corridor. Ultimately this trail could provide a walking amenity for local residents and potentially provide a walking/biking connection to other nearby towns north towards Scotland Neck (see plans for Scotland Neck) and south toward the Tar River.

Enfield

The Town of Enfield has completed a comprehensive plan for parks and recreation in 2010 and is currently working on an update that will include recommendations for improvements to its parks. The improvements anticipated will provide enhanced opportunities for active lifestyles, will promote community health, and should be incorporated into this plan.

School Facilities

A significant component of the County's new facilities could be school facilities. The County should work with each of the three school boards to develop joint use agreements at strategic locations throughout the County. Along with the joint use agreements will be County responsibilities on maintenance and facility improvements. With this understanding, the County should include some monies in both its operational and capital budgets for school facilities.

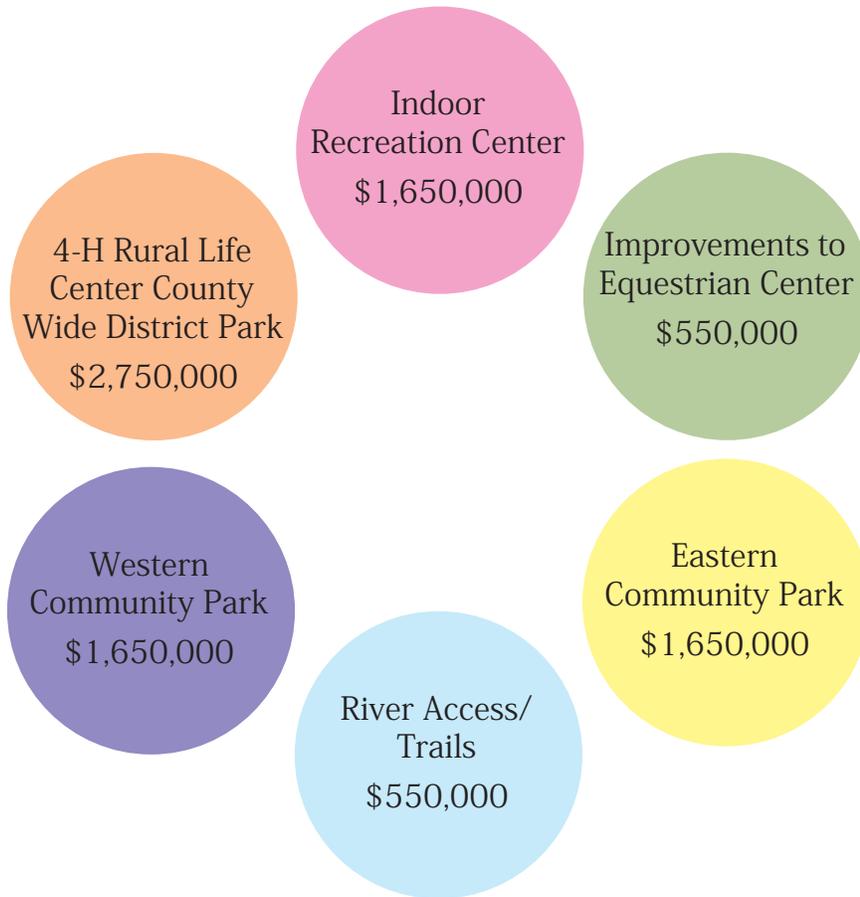
Land Acquisition

It appears there may be opportunities to develop a county park system with minimal need for land acquisition. Under the recommendations of this Plan, the County could develop its park system on County owned property (the 4-H Rural Life Center), state property (Medoc Mountain State Park), and school property.

CAPITAL NEEDS

Vision Projects

While the initial stages of park and recreation development in the county will be focused on establishing an advisory board and department, the development of parks and recreation facilities will also begin in the next 3-5 years. Implementation of some of the proposals and recommendations in Section Four will result in a number of capital needs. These needs include the projects identified below. County staff and elected officials will begin to identify priorities and select projects for development.





Adult Softball in Roanoke Rapids

Section Six

Action Plan Implementation

INTRODUCTION

In the previous section, several options for providing a county wide parks and recreation department were discussed. Regardless of the approach taken by County officials, careful planning and strategic thinking will be required. This section will identify funding sources for implementing some of the recommendations of this Plan and identify possible strategy for funding the proposed recommendations.

Instrumental to the implementation of the Master Plan is the identification of adequate funding for facility development and improvements. Finding adequate funding is particularly difficult in this time of lower tax base and limited budgets. Limited budgets place even greater importance on careful planning to meet projected needs. In addition to capital cost, the Master Plan must also consider operational and management issues. This section reviews some of these issues.

While much of the focus of previous sections has been on capital needs and facility improvements. Physical improvements are only part of the needs if the County is to offer its citizens parks and recreation services. As the County plans for the future, they should also consider a number of operational and management issues that will position them to meet county wide needs. This section reviews some of those issues.

This section will look at a Capital Improvements Plan for addressing recommendations found in Section Four and provide a strategy for raising funds to construct the proposed improvements and new facilities.

Implementing the recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and recreation services. If the needs identified in this report are to be met, the County must establish annual budgets for projected staffing, operations and maintenance costs, and for capital improvements for parks and recreation. This Action Plan is designed to give County staff a viable option to help finance the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

REVENUE PLAN

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, County staff, with input from civic leaders, should consider the establishment of a Revenue Plan for parks and recreation. A Revenue Plan incorporates all available funding resources, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a Revenue Plan, the following funding alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs:



Key Funding/Revenue Sources

There seems to be strong public support for the County to become involved in providing parks and recreation programs, but innovative measures will be required to meet the needs identified in this plan. The proposed new facilities and expanded operations

will require dollars from a variety of sources. The following funding sources are provided to help the County evaluate funding options:

General Tax Revenues (operational & capital)

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle source of funds for general operations and maintenance of municipal and county recreation and parks systems. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in annual budgets established by the governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. This tax base is then used to fund the majority of county services. Currently, only minimal funding is available in the County's budget for parks and recreation programs. The 4-H Rural Life Center is the only recreational facility and program offered by the County. If the County wishes to offer a park and recreation system that provides quality of life and healthy lifestyle opportunities for its residents, the current level of funding for parks and recreation must be increased; regardless of what organizational structure the County decides to use (see Section Five for alternative delivery methods).

Park Foundation (operational & capital)

A park foundation can be instrumental in assisting the County in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for park and recreation needs. Park foundations typically create funding strategies for generating funds to support park projects. These include foundation membership fees, individual gifts, grants from other recognized and national foundations, long term endowments, and a land trust for future acquisitions.

There seems to be very strong support from a core of park and recreation community boosters, but currently there is no organized park foundation. Development of a county wide citizen group to support, promote and fund park programs and facilities would be an excellent way to mobilize those in the community who would like to see improved parks.

Friends of the Canal, which supports the Roanoke

Canal and Museum, is a good example of a foundation developed to support a facility or project.

General Foundations (operational & capital)

Another source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from state and national General Foundations. Foundation funds should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. Funding sources should include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations with local connections.



AN INITIATIVE OF THE
KATE B. REYNOLDS CHARITABLE TRUST

Foundations Specific to Halifax County

As a Tier One County in North Carolina, Halifax County is in a position to receive grant funding from a wide variety of public foundations and trusts. Below is a list of funding sources that are particularly applicable. A number of these fundings/trusts are currently at work in the county:

- The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust has been instrumental in funding a number of projects in Halifax County. Their focus is to improve the quality of life and health in poor, rural counties.
- The Trust for Public Land and NC Rails-Trail have been instrumental in providing financial and technical assistance for open space conservation and development of Greenways in North Carolina.
- The Golden Leaf Foundation is actively engaged in providing grant assistance to improve community health and for economic development for communities in tobacco dependent regions of North Carolina. They were the primary funding source in the development of facilities in Gates County.
- The Halifax County Unrestricted Fund is within

the North Carolina Community Foundation that is aimed at enhancing the quality of community life within the county.

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) is the nation's largest philanthropic organization devoted specifically to the public's health. RWJF promotes change through partnerships and collaboration, with the goal of building a culture of health for all Americans. RWJF generally supports public agencies, universities, and public charities that are tax-exempt. An example of a RWJF grant that would be appropriate to Halifax County, is the Culture of Health Prize. This is a \$25,000 grant given to ten communities to assist in building a culture of health.
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation places optimal development of children at the center of all of their grants. They concentrate on early childhood development within the context of families and communities. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation's areas of focus are: educated kids, healthy kids, secure families, community and civic engagement, and racial equity.
- KaBOOM! is a national non-profit dedicated to saving play for America's children. They envision a place to play within walking distance of every child. KaBOOM! works with communities, volunteers and funding partners to build playgrounds throughout the country. KaBOOM! funding is already at work in Halifax County.
- BlueCross BlueShield of North Carolina Foundation has invested millions of dollars in communities across the state. They support opportunities that impact the health of our state. Their areas of focus are: health of vulnerable populations, healthy active communities, and community impact through non-profit excellence.
- Playworks Grants Database is a good resource for grants. Examples found within this database are:
 - The philanthropic arm of Safeway Groceries has established the Safeway Foundation to support non-profits whose mission is aligned with the company's priority areas; hunger relief, education, health and human services and assisting people with disabilities. Safeway Foundation offers grants up to \$25,000.

- Cigna Health through its Cigna Foundation supports organizations that enhance health in individuals, families and communities. They offer grants up to \$5,000.
- Home Depot, through its Community Impact Grants Program, offers grants up to \$5,000 to non-profits that use volunteers to improve community health.
- People For Bikes provides a community grant program that provides grants up to \$10,000 to improve infrastructure and programs that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to bike.

Another source of local assistance may be large corporations with foundations established to provide grants for public projects. Companies such as Bank of America, REI, and Dominion Power may have available funding through existing grant programs, or they may be interested in creating a program or partnership for specific projects.



The County should actively pursue grants from foundation and trust sources on a regional and national level. Information on trusts and foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076 (<http://foundation-center.org/>) and the Non-Profit Gateway to Federal Government agencies (<http://www.usa.gov/index.shtml>).

General Obligation Bonds (capital)

General tax revenue for parks and recreation are usually devoted to current operations and maintenance of existing facilities. General obligation bonds are often used to finance capital improvements in parks. The State of North Carolina gives municipal and county governments the authority to accomplish this borrowing of funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). For pur-

poses of paying the debt service on the sale of these bonds, cities are often required to increase property taxes. Total bonding capacities for local government is limited to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

Halifax County has not used this method of financing park improvements in the past. In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in this plan, borrowing of funds to acquire new land and develop facilities may be a consideration. Response from the telephone survey indicated there may be support for bond spending to develop parks.

An added value of a governing agency's bonding authority and capacity is its ability to use those funds to leverage other funding opportunities. Bonding enables government agencies to utilize funds to match federal grant-in-aid monies or state funds. General obligation bonds are still the greatest source utilized to fund park projects in North Carolina. Through a well thought out and publicly presented bond campaign, voters would be given the opportunity to choose to support park improvements through the sale of bonds.

Revenue Bonds (capital)

Revenue bonds are used for financing high use specialty facilities like golf courses, aquatic centers, tennis centers, and complexes for softball and soccer. The users, and other revenue sources, pay for operations and sometimes repay the bonds. This revenue source would only be of use to the County if they choose to change their tax subsidy policy for using this type of funding. The County most likely would not seek out this option.

The legal requirements for utilizing these funding mechanisms are extremely complicated and can actually require approval from the state legislature. Use of revenue bonds seem to be unlikely at this time.

Limited Option or Special Use Tax (capital)

Limited option or special use taxes can be established in various ways. A municipality or county can establish the tax by determining the source, such as property valuation, real estate transfer taxes, or sales tax.

This option requires legislative approval. Typically, special use taxes are structured on sales tax or transfer taxes and are earmarked for a specific project. A governing body can approve a tax that is identified or earmarked on property valuation; however, other sources may require state approval. The idea behind a special option or limited option tax is that the tax is identified or limited for a special purpose or projects and the duration can also be limited to accomplishing the projects.

The County currently levies an occupancy tax on hotel rooms to help fund travel and tourism operation and promote local tourism. Many travel and tourism authorities throughout North Carolina utilize this funding source to make improvements to recreation facilities that attract tourists. This funding source could be considered in the development of athletic fields, trails and river access, or equestrian facilities that might enhance tourism.

Federal and State Assistance (capital)

Federal funding sources are available to assist financing capital improvement recommendations found in this plan. One of the oldest park funding sources has been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Several of the existing parks in Roanoke Rapids were funded with monies from this funding source. Unfortunately, funding through this program has been sporadic over the past few years.

Other potential federal funding sources are the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 1994 creating a consistent source of funds for parks and recreation in the state. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides money for capital improvements, repairs, renovations, and land acquisition in state and local parks. Revenues from the state's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax support the fund. Revenues vary from year to year. Since 2007, funds from real estate taxes have been significantly lower.

Of the funds allocated, 65% go to the state parks system, 30% provide matching grants to local governments, and the remaining 5% go to the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The maximum matching grant is limited to \$500,000 for a single project. The PARTF system allows an agency to apply for a 50/50 cost-sharing grant to develop or acquire park land and facilities.

PARTF and LWCF funds have been used by Roanoke Rapids and Enfield to build parks. In the future, the County should consider applying for funds through this program on a regular basis.



The structure of this funding source has recently gone through changes based on legislative action. While the funding structure for this fund has changed, it appears PARTF will continue to fund park and recreation facilities in North Carolina.

Additionally, the State can fund projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed Greenway system. Local communities can also apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for "NCDOT Enhancement Funds."

Another source of state administered funding is through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). These funds are set aside for the acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, stormwater mitigation and stream bank restoration projects, support

for greenways, and some planning programs. The acquired or purchased property can be used for recreation while protecting valuable water resources from the affects of urban encroachment. Money from this grant is particularly applicable to the preservation of open space, greenway development, and water access.

Unfortunately, since the economic downturn that started in 2008, all of these funding sources have been greatly reduced.

An excellent source to find government grants is on the website www.grants.gov. This website clearing house provides information for all federal grants. Grant opportunities exist in the following categories:

- Community Development
- Environment
- Health
- Natural Resources
- Transportation

Any of these categories could have grants that could be used to develop programs and facilities for parks.

User Fees (operational)

User fees are often charged by park and recreation departments to offset operational cost, and (occasionally) provide funding for the construction of facilities. Every agency must establish its philosophy with regard to cost recovery through the use of fees. The County has historically charged fees for some facilities and programs at the 4-H Rural Life Center, but these fees have typically not been set to cover the total operational cost of the program and have never been used to finance construction of facilities.

Ultimately, the County may consider a change in user fees that will help offset more of the cost of some activities. Based on elected officials' direction, the revenue generated by increased fees could then be used to offset impacts on the general fund and possibly be used for capital improvement funding to help make park improvements.



Many of the proposed facilities in this Master Plan are outdoors (playgrounds, open space, athletic facilities, etc.) and offer only limited opportunity for cost recovery. There may be some areas where greater cost recovery could be achieved. Examples may include rental fees for shelters, fields, etc. or for requiring permits for Dog Parks, disc golf, etc.

Revenue Opportunities

User fees are not the only means of generating revenue. The County should also explore additional opportunities for generating income. Some of these opportunities include:

- Sponsorships from local private businesses. Sponsorships typically come in the form of products, events, programs, cause-related, and in-kind. Sponsorships can also take the form of naming rights for a facility or program. Roanoke Rapids is currently using this revenue tool on the athletic fields. Sponsorship or naming agreements should include very specific details related to sponsorship cost, duration, use of promotional materials, etc.
- Grant applications from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals are typically created by staff. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require extensive tracking of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.
- Partnerships are a relatively new method of sharing funding resources to provide services. These partnerships can be formed with a wide variety of

other public or private agencies. Many times the partners are two or more government agencies. Through these partnerships, the County receives direct benefit in either facility use, programming assistance, or volunteer man hours. All of these benefits add value and help offset cost; thus creating earned income. This earned income requires both agencies to have common visions, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. Examples of partnerships include:

- Church facilities or recreation services. Several churches or religious organizations in the county are providing facilities and programs, examples include programs and facilities offered at John 3:16 in Littleton.
- Youth sports associations that help provide the services to the community for the sports that they represent.
- Trail sponsors that adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
- Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain park lands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and businesses that are in proximity to parks.
- School partnerships where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff. This investment may be financial, or may include other means of support.
- Special event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
- Program partners who assist in providing services to the community.
- Advertising and licensing in programs, facilities, and events sponsored by the County. The County could leverage highly exposed advertising space to businesses willing to pay a fee for the right to advertise. Roanoke Rapids is using this method of revenue generation by selling naming rights to the athletic fields.
- Volunteer development programs can reduce staff costs. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an opportunity that is used by communities when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or a concession

operation. This gives the government agency a management tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping into their own resources. Facilities that are typically considered for privatization may include golf courses, marinas, camping and RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.

- Marketing strategies are an important component in developing untapped revenue opportunities. Promotional activities improve awareness of the activities provided by the County and assist in bringing more revenue to the system by filling programs and facilities.

METHODS FOR LAND ACQUISITION & DEDICATION

Currently, the County has very limited park and recreational facilities under its direct ownership/operation. In order to meet the needs identified in this report, the County may need to significantly expand its park and recreational lands. While it is anticipated that much of the County's future park development may be on land owned by others (school property, State Parks, etc.), there may be a need for future land acquisition. Methods available for acquiring the land include the following:

Fee Simple Purchase

Outright purchase is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining park land. Fee simple purchase has the advantage of being relatively simple to administer and to explain to the general public to justify a particular public expenditure. Unfortunately, fee simple purchase often is the most expensive means of obtaining and utilizing a property.

Fee Simple Purchase with Lease-Back or Resale

This technique of land acquisition enables the County to purchase land to lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions that would protect the land from abuse or development. This method is used by governments who impose development

restrictions severe enough that the owner considers himself to have lost the major portion of the property's value and it is more economical for him to sell with a lease-back option.

Long-Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is considered to have potential future value though it is not desired or affordable at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the County agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the County has the right to exercise its option. The first benefit of this protective method is that the option may stabilize escalating land cost and establishes land use for the property. Secondly, the County does not have to expend large sums of money until the land is purchased. Thirdly, the purchase price of the land is established. The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

This approach to acquiring park land eliminates the need for fixing the selling price of a parcel of land, yet alerts the County of any impending purchase which might disrupt the park land acquisition goals. The County would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.

Land Trust

The role and responsibility of a Land Trust is to acquire park land and open space while maintaining a well-balanced system of park resources representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation made up of key knowledgeable leaders in the area who represent a cross section of interest and experience in recreation, historic properties, conservation, preservation, land development, and environmental issues. Their goals and responsibilities are to work with landowners to acquire park land for current and future generations. The individuals appointed to the Land Trust must have knowledge

of land acquisition methods and tools used to entice land owners to sell, donate, provide easements, life estates, irrevocable trusts, or a combination of all. This includes seeking out a knowledgeable land acquisition attorney who is trained in these areas to provide the most efficient and effective processes to achieve the balance of types of land to meet the goals of this Master Plan.

The County does not have to go through the time and expense of setting up a land trust to utilize this vehicle for land donation or conservation. The Nature Conservancy is an established land trust in the area. The County could partner with them to provide protection of valuable open space without creating a new entity.

Donations

A significant, and yet often untapped, source for funding acquisition and development of local park projects is through a well-organized local gifts program. Donations of land, money, or labor can have a meaningful impact on the development of the County's park system.

The most frequently used type of gift involves the giving of land to be used for a park. The timing of such a donation can correspond with a PARTF grant application, thereby providing all or a significant portion of the local matching requirement associated with this fund. A similar use of gifts involves donated labor or materials, which become part of an improvement project and help to reduce project costs. The value of the services or materials can, in some cases, also be used to match non-local grant funds.

Some agencies have developed a gift catalog as a tool for promoting a gifts program. Such a publication should explain the role and importance of the gifts program, describe its advantages, define the tax advantages that may occur to the donor, and identify various gifts (land, labor, play equipment, materials, trees, etc.) that are needed to meet local program needs. The gifts catalog should be prepared in a format that can be distributed effectively and inexpensively and should provide a clear statement of needs, typical costs associated with various gifts, and be made readily available to the public.

To aid this type of gift program, a strategy for contacting potential donors (individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, etc.) should be developed. An important part of this strategy should include contacting the local Bar Association, trust departments of lending institutions, and the Probate Court. Communicating with these groups regularly will make them aware of the potential for individuals to include a gift to the County as part of their tax and estate planning.

Life Estate

A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.

Easement

The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Property ownership may be viewed as a combination of rights. With this understanding, it is possible to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manner or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land. One advantage of this less-than-fee interest in the land is the private citizen continues to use the land while the land remains on the tax records continuing as a source of revenue for the County. Perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that the community purchases only those rights that it specifically needs to execute its park land objectives. By purchasing only rights that are needed, the County is making more selective and efficient use of its limited financial resources.

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations

Many communities in North Carolina have zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations that require a developer to donate a portion of the property they are developing to the government agency to be used for public park land. Through these regulations (zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications) developers may be required to provide new park land at no cost to the county. Regulations can require land to be dedicated and/or compensation made to the County for the development of park land.

A detailed evaluation of all subdivision ordinances for each of the municipalities in the county, as well as the County's subdivision regulations, should be made. Wherever feasible, subdivision regulations should include some provisions for the dedication of land for open space or recreational use. Care should be taken in developing any regulation requiring such dedication. Subdivision requirements should include terminology to ensure the permitting agency has the authority to review and approve any land dedicated as public open space or for recreational use to ensure it is usable for such purposes. Likewise, dedication ordinances should have a provision for payment in lieu to eliminate the dedication of property too small to provide community benefits or unsuitable for park development.

PARK FACILITIES AS ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS

John L. Crompton, in his publication "Parks and Economic Development", determined there are four economic development benefits that a community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include:

- **Attracting Tourists:** The features and programs that attract tourism to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments. The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).
- **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development of parks and preservation of open space.
- **Attracting Business:** Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, and open space are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.
- **Attracting Retirees:** A new growth industry for American communities is the retirement population. The decision to relocate by this segment of our population is primarily governed by climate

and recreation opportunities. This segment of the population is extremely attractive to local governments because retirees are unlikely to have children enrolled in the local school system and therefore are less of a burden on the community's tax base.



Athletic tournaments attract tourism

Through investing in parks, county officials can ensure that Halifax County provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for economic impact in Halifax County through tourism. Community leaders have recognized the potential for this economic impact by establishing the Halifax County Convention and Visitors Bureau. This organization is actively engaged in bringing visitors to Halifax County.

John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

- Theaters
- Art Galleries
- Museums
- Performing groups, Music
- Concerts

Heritage Places

- Ethnic cultural places
- Shrines/churches
- Historical sites and structures
- Educational institutions
- Industry factory tours

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks
- Recreation
- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

Some of these activities and facilities are already found within the County. Many of these potential tourism attractions are in the public realm or are a public/private venture.

OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

This Master Plan must also address some of the operational issues that will face the County in the coming decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as the County adds new parks/facilities. Likewise, these recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the County needs to identify as it expands the facilities and services it provides.

An important aspect of this planning report is to develop recommendations for the County to improve park and recreation opportunities for county residents. Ultimately, the provision of better parks and recreational programs includes both facility improvements and establishing a method of delivery of services. Currently, the County is very limited in the resources it directs to this mission. If the County is to become a provider of parks and recreation services, it will be required to add staff to manage/operate facilities and provide services.

Staff Needs

With the expansion of park facilities over the next decade, there will be a need for additional staff dedicated to develop, operate, and maintain these new facilities. These anticipated new facilities will also require program/operational staff. In addition, expansion of the 4-H Rural Life Center, two future community parks, and miles of new trails will require:

- Park superintendent or director
- Program staff
- New grounds crews (1 foreman, 2 laborers)
- Seasonal park staff

While the development of a true operation and maintenance program for these future facilities is beyond the scope of this Master Plan study, it is important that the County plan and budget for adequate staff positions for any new facilities that are constructed. Likewise, as these new facilities come on line, the County should actively seek the highest level of programming staff with strong educational experience in the various areas of park and recreation administration.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of recreational facilities could also add to the energy and utility cost of park and recreation facilities. The recommended facility improvements included in this Plan will increase the County's facilities significantly. Expansion of this magnitude will have significant implications to the operational budget. The County's management staff and elected officials must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on Halifax's economy, and if applicable, their potential for revenue generation.

Greener Operation

As the world's population expands and environmental concerns over global warming, conservation of resources, and preservation of our fragile natural systems become more apparent, greater environmental responsibility by public and private agencies has become critical. As a government agency, particularly one that is involved with the management of public open space and the improvement of the public's health, any park and recreation operation should make a concerted effort to minimize its environmental impact.

With this understanding, the County should evaluate its maintenance and operational procedures with an intent to minimize waste and environmental impact. Where economically feasible, the County should look to implement operational procedures that emphasize conservation, recycling, and sustainability. Likewise, as the County looks to build new facilities, it should consider constructing facilities that minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and reuse building materials where possible.



Promoting recycling is one initiative to reduce waste

As a starting point for this conversion to a “greener” operation, the County should establish a committee of operation, maintenance, and construction stakeholders to study the options available and develop a plan for becoming “greener”.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Capital Improvement Plan for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from County staff and public involvement. All of the proposed costs are shown in current dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development as well as estimated planning and design fees.

The Capital Improvement Plan can be summarized into the following components:

Park Development	\$ 3,300,000
Greenway/Blueway Development	550,000
Facility Development	2,200,000
Park Renovations/Expansion	2,750,000
Total Capital Improvement Budget	\$ 8,800,000

Table 6-1 “Capital Improvements Plan” shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program. The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section Four of this Master Plan.

MASTER PLAN FUNDING STRATEGY

This Master Plan identifies a Vision Plan for park development in Halifax County. It is understood that not all of the recommendations will be acted upon over the next decade. The County will ultimately have to prioritize the steps they will take to meet some of these park and recreation needs. It will require a combination of revenue sources to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. There are numerous combinations of funding strategies that can be explored and implemented. Upon careful analysis of past budget documents, current practices, available resources, and national trends, an example of a funding strategy is presented as one possible strategy.

General Funds

Allocations from the General Fund will need to increase to pay for operation of future facilities and programs. As noted in Section Five, this initial operational cost would be in the \$100,000/year range. This additional per capita funding could fund the majority of future operational costs, but will not provide the funding required for capital improvements.

In addition to this increased operational spending, the County should begin budgeting for capital improvements projects on an annual basis. Annual allocations of \$100,000-200,000 to capital improvements over the next ten years could provide several million in funds for capital projects and provide valuable matching funds for grants.

General Obligation Bonds

General Obligation Bonds could be used for major renovations and to acquire and develop new parks and recreation facilities. A successful bond campaign

for park improvements in the next ten years could generate \$3-5 million for construction and acquisitions. This would represent a significant portion of funds needed for the proposed capital improvements budget. These funds can be dedicated to funding the larger park development and making major park improvements. As noted earlier in this section (General Obligation Bonds, page 6-3), this level of bond sales will likely result in the need for additional tax revenues to pay for the debt service created by the sale of these bonds.

Revenues & User Charges

One strategy to accomplish the goals of this plan is to price services based on the value and benefits received by the participants beyond those of all taxpayers. Increasing the number of participants using the facilities and programs will increase revenue opportunities. A good time to price services to their value and benefits is after new facilities are constructed or when facilities have been renovated to enhance a participant's recreational experience. A proposed user charge revenue strategy designed to recoup a good percentage of program cost could be considered. This will create more revenue and capacity opportunities for the program needs of the County.

Currently, the County's only recreational programming is through the 4-H Rural Life Center. Revenues and user charges account for a portion of the operating budget. As facilities are developed, the County should consider a fee structure that will allow greater net revenue to be realized. Assuming the level of funding can increase, it could generate \$50,000 to \$75,000 annually, providing as much as a half million dollars in increased income over the next ten years that can be used for operating new facilities developed as recommended in this plan.

Partnerships & Gifts

The County should work to develop a park foundation to explore ways to raise sponsorships and gifts. This non-profit organization can engage private citizens and corporations to donate money and in-kind services for use for parks and recreational services. Through active involvement with a park foundation, the County may be able to raise \$20,000 - \$30,000

in funds annually. This could result in donations of as much as a quarter of a million over the next ten years. This level of funding would require the park foundation to become an active organization within the community.

Sponsorships & Naming Rights

Another excellent source of development capital is through project sponsorship/underwriting by corporations throughout the community. Quality facilities, properly marketed, provide an excellent venue for raising development funds. Naming rights for athletic fields, equestrian facilities, playgrounds, etc., can be used to raise tens of thousands of dollars.

Grants

As noted previously, several local agencies have been successful in finding and procuring funds from state and local grants. The County will need to renew those efforts to explore grants such as LWCF, PARTF, SAFTEA, clean water grants, etc. In addition to the grants focused on typical park development, the County should explore grants offered by foundations such as the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Fund, The Golden Leaf Foundation and other community health grants. Active pursuit of this funding could provide several million dollars in funds for capital improvements over the next ten years.

Overview

Together, these funding options could be used to raise millions of dollars of development capital over the next decade. It may be unrealistic to assume the County can fund ±\$8.8 million of park improvements in the next ten years especially during these challenging economic times. Actively pursuing the options that are available should provide funding for many of the needs listed in this Master Plan. Through the continued use of this document, County staff and elected officials can identify and prioritize community needs and actively seek funds to meet those needs over the next ten (or more) years.

FIVE YEAR VISION PROJECTS

Recognizing that this is a vision plan for park development, County staff and elected officials must prioritize the recommendations in this document based on the public's input and staff review.

The following park development initiatives should be considered in the next ten years:

- Establishing a county wide Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee.
- Establish a parks and recreation department or an alliance with another agency to provide these services.
- Expand facilities at the 4-H Rural Life Center.
- Explore options for developing Western and Eastern Community Parks.
- Explore access improvements along the Roanoke River, Fishing and Little Fishing Creeks, and area lakes.
- Develop an indoor recreation center.
- Improve facilities at the Equestrian Center.

Table 6-1
HALIFAX COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

Park Development

Western Community Park	\$1,500,000
Eastern Community Park	\$1,500,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$300,000

Park Development Total **\$3,300,000**

Greenway/Blueway Development

Nature Trails/Water Access	\$500,000
Planning and Design (10%)	\$50,000

Greenway Development Total **\$550,000**

Facility Development

Indoor Recreation Center	\$1,500,000
Equestrian Center	\$500,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$200,000

Facility Development Total **\$2,200,000**

Existing Parks Renovation/Improvements

4-H Rural Life Center Expansion	\$2,500,000
Planning & Design (10%)	\$250,000

Renovation Total **\$2,750,000**

Land Acquisition*

Land Acquisition Total **\$0**

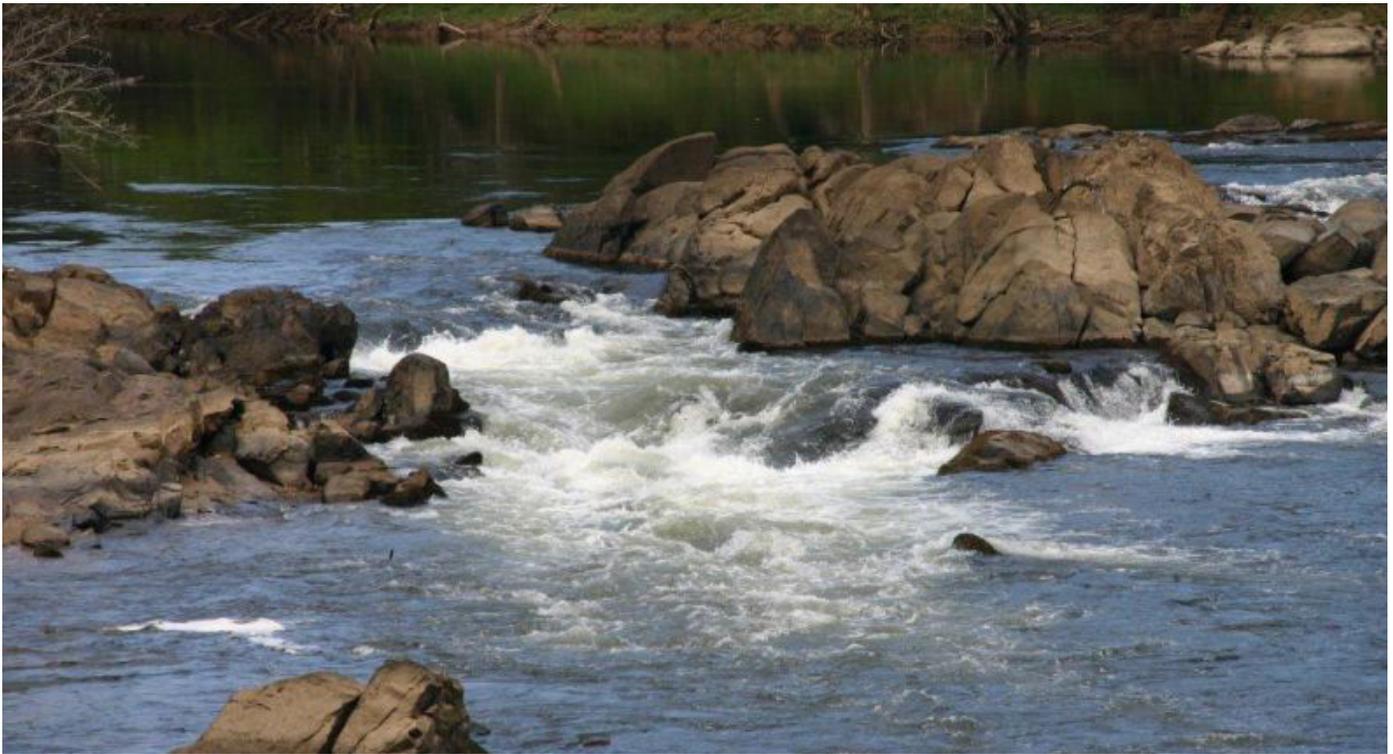
Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost **\$8,800,000**

* Ultimately there may be a need for acquisition of property for county parks; however, joint use opportunities with schools, State Parks, etc. should be explored initially.

Note:

Order of projects shown on Capital Improvements Plan does not indicate priority or schedule for proposed projects.

Appendices



Roanoke River

APPENDIX A: CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PARKS, OPEN SPACE & GREENWAYS

A well balanced park system is made up of several park types that range from very large Regional Parks (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to very small Mini Parks (sometimes less than one acre). The descriptions on the following pages define the parks that typically comprise a community's park system. Numerous agencies (federal, state, county, and municipal) play a role in providing this system. Looking at the entire system helps identify the roles of the various agencies.

The following park descriptions are based on park classifications outlined in the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publication "Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines". They are not intended to serve as park standards, but instead are used as a framework for describing the components found in a park system. Communities should structure their park types based on individual community needs. Table 3A-Park Acreage and Table 3B-Park Acreage reflect the standards for development that are recommended for the Halifax County. The recommended standards vary slightly from NRPA guidelines listed on the following pages.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features, diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife found in the region. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a Regional Park include environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found in these parks.

Land chosen for future preserves or the expansion of existing sites should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as beach areas, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

NRPA's guidelines for developing Regional Parks are as follows:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire county
Acreage/Population Ratio:	10 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	Sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed. Typically a minimum of 200 acres; up to 1,000 acres.

Typical Facilities:

Environmental Center	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Equestrian Center	Restrooms/Vending
Primitive Camping	Beach
Group Camping	Swimming
Recreational Vehicles Camping	Boating
Nature Trails	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks
Observation Deck	Parking
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Caretaker's House

Development of **Regional Parks** typically falls within the responsibility of federal, state and/or county agencies.



200 + Acres

Typical Regional Park

District Parks

A District Park provides more diverse recreational opportunities than the Regional Park. The District Park emphasizes passive recreational opportunities that are similar to the Regional Park in addition to including limited active recreational facilities. It is easily accessible by the population (typically 40,000) it serves and maintains a 2.5-5 mile service radius. The park contains a minimum of 5 acres per 1,000 population and should be a minimum of 100 acres in size.

An indoor recreation building/community center may be included in a District Park. These facilities typically reflect the character of the park with a historic, natural, or urban theme. Active recreational facilities located in a District Park include play areas, limited ball fields, hard surface courts, multi-purpose play fields, picnicking locations, and various types of trails.

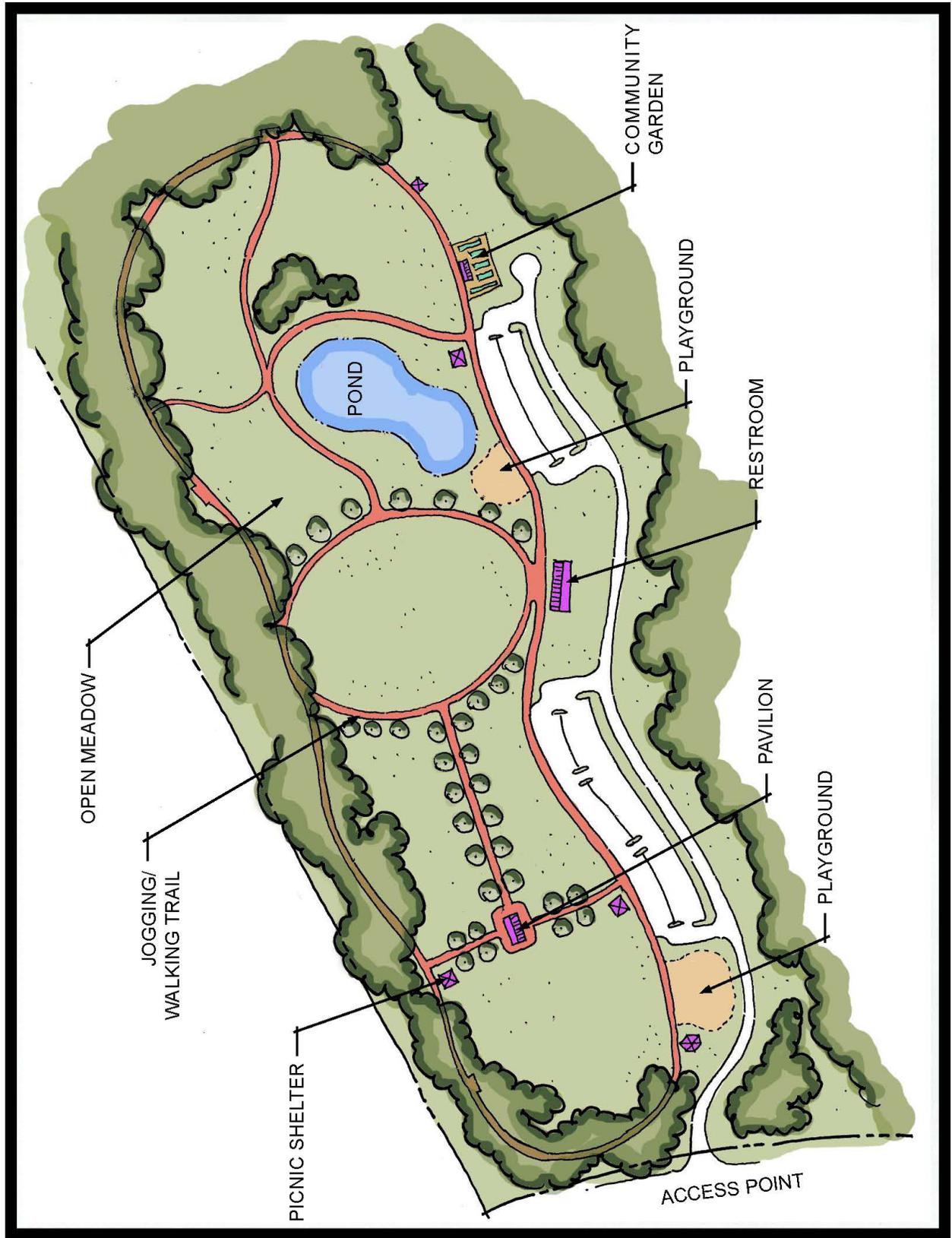
Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing District Parks:

Service Area:	Typically serve the entire community
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	40 acres minimum, 80-150 acres optimal

Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelter with Grills
Basketball Courts	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Tennis Courts (lighted)	Nature Trail
Tournament Level Tennis Facilities	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball Courts	Restroom/Concessions
Multi-purpose Fields	Parking
Tournament Level Soccer Fields	Service Yard
Tournament Level Baseball/Softball Fields	

Alternate Facilities:	
Recreation Center	Amphitheater
Tennis Center	Observation Decks
Running Track	

Development of **District Parks** typically falls within the responsibility of county or municipal agencies.



80-150 Acres

Typical District Park

Community Parks

Community Parks provide for the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. A range of facilities is typically provided and may support tournament competition for athletic and league sports or passive recreation. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Fifty percent of Community Park sites should be developed for passive recreation. These relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community Park sites should have varying topography and vegetation. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or creek, are desirable. Park land should be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

Listed below are NRPA's guidelines for developing Community Parks:

Service Area:	.5 - 3 mile radius
Acreage/Population Ratio:	5.0 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	30-50 acres

Typical Facilities:

Recreation Center	Picnic Tables with Grills
Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Tennis Court (lighted)	Nature Trails
Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted)	Restroom/Concessions
Multipurpose Fields	Parking
Soccer Fields (lighted)	Playgrounds
Swimming Pool	Volleyball Courts
Amphitheater	Disc Golf
Observations Decks	Lakes
Picnic Shelters	Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor
Picnic Shelters with Grills	Fishing Piers/Boat Docks

Specialty facilities may be added to or substituted for other facilities depending on community need or special site characteristics.

Development of **Community Parks** may fall within the responsibility of municipality or county agencies.



Typical Community Park 30 - 50 Acres

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks provide the basic unit of most park systems. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a variety of activities of interest to all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed, if possible, to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

The NRPA guidelines for Neighborhood Park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 to .75 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	2.5 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	5-10 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Shelters with Grills
Court Games	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
Informal Play Field	Benches or Bench Swings
Volleyball	50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped
Trails/Walkways	Parking (7-10 spaces)

Neighborhood Parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Neighborhood Park 5 - 10 Acres

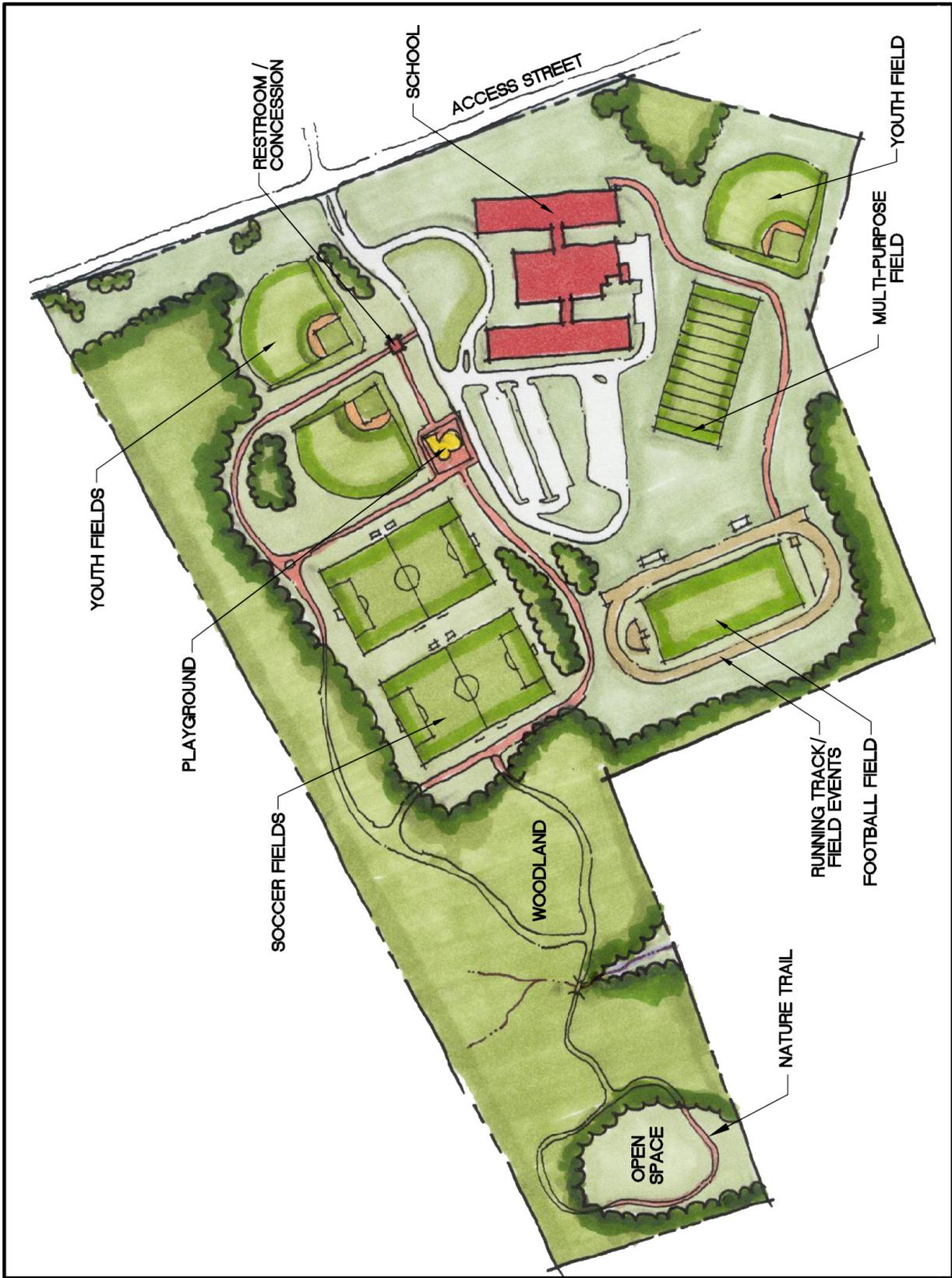
School Parks

Joint use is a mechanism that public agencies use to maximize resources. Through joint use, both the school system and the parks and recreation department benefit from shared use of facilities and valuable land resources. School Park facilities typically go beyond the simple joint use of school facilities. The parks and recreation agency will become a partner in the development of a school site and fund recreational facilities beyond those typically built with a stand-alone school. These facilities may be indoor spaces (gymnasiums, classrooms, meeting rooms, etc.) or outdoor recreation facilities (ballfields, playgrounds, picnic shelters, etc.). The cost of developing and operating these additional facilities is minimized when constructing them in partnership with school development. Savings are also found in shared infrastructure (parking, restrooms, etc.) and shared maintenance and operational cost.

The School Park concept maximizes the joint use objective and provides a planned facility that maximizes public funds. The School Park concept typically varies depending on the school. Elementary and middle schools provide the ideal setting for a Neighborhood Park, while middle and high schools follow the function of a Community Park or sports complex. Access to school sports facilities at high schools and middle schools can be difficult based on team sports needs. This concept only works if there is a mutually agreed upon joint use agreement to define roles, responsibilities, and use of facilities.

Service Area:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Desirable Size:	Varies depending on school type and park type
Typical Facilities:	Varies depending on school type and park type

Development of **School Parks** usually fall within the responsibility of municipalities, county agencies, or school districts.



± 50 Acres

Typical School Park

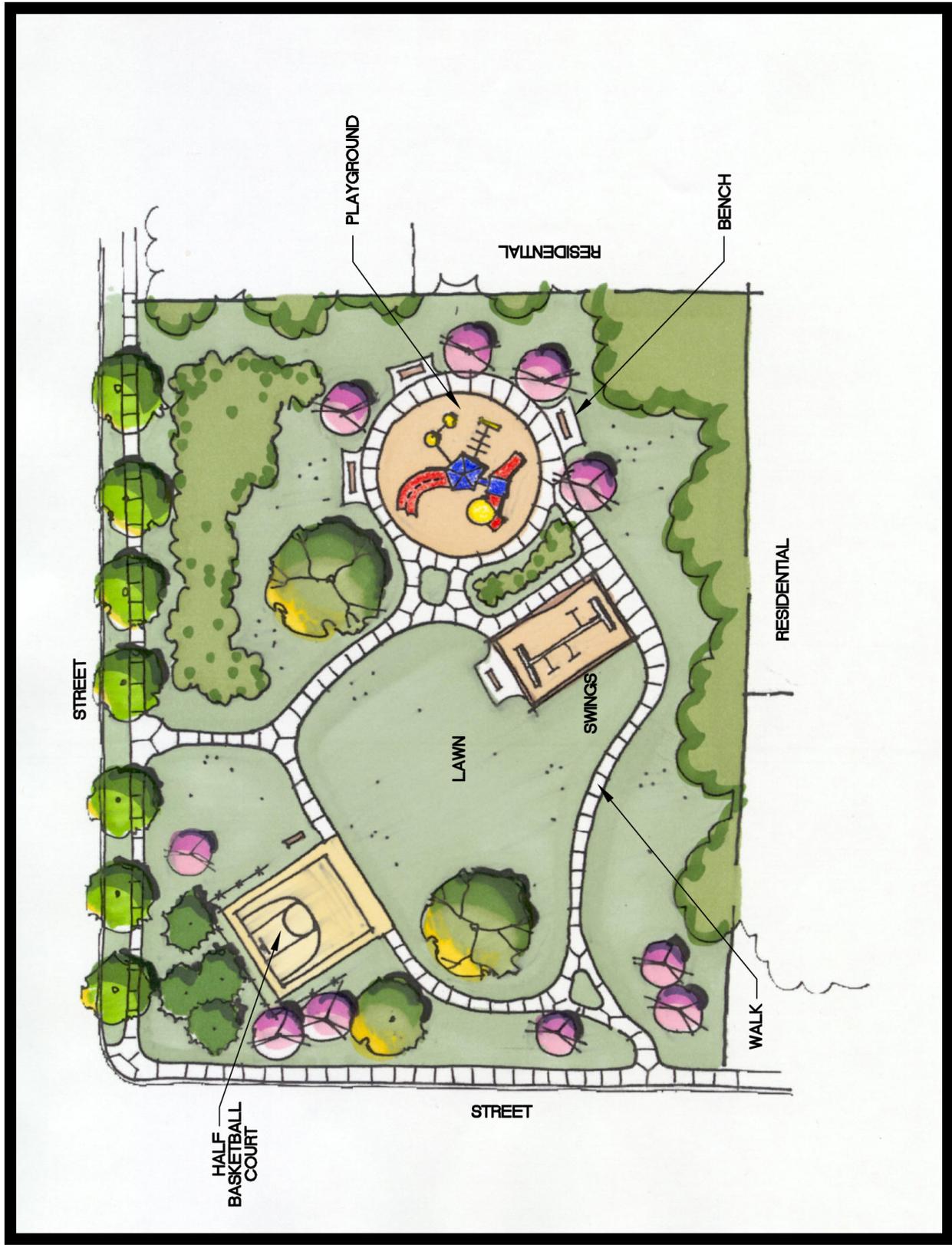
Mini Parks

Mini Parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide limited recreational needs. The small amount of land associated with Mini Parks usually results in intense development with little to no buffer between the park and adjacent properties.

NRPA's guidelines for Mini Park development are as follows:

Service Area:	.25 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations
Acreage/Population Ratio:	.25 acres per 1,000 persons
Typical Size:	.25 - 1 acres
Typical Facilities:	
Playground	Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)
½ Basketball Courts	Benches or Bench Swings
Open Play Area	Landscaped Public Use Area

Mini Parks are typically developed by municipalities.



Typical Mini Park

.25 - 1 Acres

Greenway Trails

Greenways provide an important component of the overall park system. They:

- Serve as alternative non-motorized transportation facilities.
- Provide links between parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas.
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment.
- Provide safe pedestrian movement.
- Provide resource based outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Enhance adjacent property values.
- Provide linear parks and open spaces.

Greenways are very similar to natural resource sites; the primary difference is the emphasis on pedestrian trails found in the greenway system.

Desirable Size: Greenways form corridors that vary considerably in length and width. A 50' width is generally considered a minimum.



APPENDIX B: NATIONAL AND STATE STUDIES ON OUTDOOR RECREATION DEMAND

President's Commission

The President's Commission Report indicated the following significant facts:

The top ten most popular outdoor recreation activities nationwide are:

Picnicking	Playing sports
Driving for pleasure	Fishing
Swimming	Attending sporting events
Sightseeing	Boating
Bicycling	Walking for pleasure

Activities rapidly growing in popularity are:

Canoeing	Sailing
Bicycling	Hiking/backpacking
Attending outdoor sports	Walking for pleasure
Camping, all types	Water skiing

The President's Commission report also noted that municipal agencies are providing 39% of the public recreation opportunities.

North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey provided a list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the state. The most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are:

1. Walking for pleasure
2. Driving for pleasure
3. Viewing scenery
4. Beach activities
5. Visiting historical sites
6. Swimming
7. Visiting natural areas
8. Picnicking
9. Attending sporting events
10. Visiting zoos

APPENDIX C:

NATIONAL SPORTING GOODS ASSOCIATION SURVEY

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an annual study of sports participation. The survey lists the following top activities per million participants. A participant is defined as someone seven years of age or older who participates in a sport more than once within a year for all sports except aerobic exercising, bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, step aerobics, weight lifting, and swimming. For these seven fitness sports, participation is defined as six times or more during the year. The following information reviews the findings for the past ten years.

Sport	2010	2008	2006	2004	2002	2000
Aerobic Exercising	38.5	36.2	na	29.5	29.0	26.7
Archery (target)	6.5	na	na	5.3	4.2	4.5
Backpack/Wilderness Camp	11.1	13.0	13.3	17.3	14.8	15.4
Baseball	12.5	15.2	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6
Basketball	26.9	29.7	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1
Bicycle Riding	39.8	44.7	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1
Billiards/Pool	24.0	31.7	31.8	34.2	33.1	32.5
Boating, Motor/Power	20.0	27.8	29.3	22.8	26.6	24.2
Bowling	39	49.5	44.8	43.8	42.4	43.1
Camping (vacation/overnite)	44.7	49.4	48.6	55.3	55.4	49.9
Canoeing	na	10.3	7.1	7.5	7.6	6.2
Cheerleading	na	2.9	3.8	3.8	na	na
Exercise Walking	95.8	96.6	87.5	84.7	82.2	81.3
Exercising with Equipment	55.3	63.0	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8
Fishing	33.8	42.2	40.6	41.2	44.2	47.2
Football (tackle)	9.3	10.5	10.1	8.2	7.8	8.0
Golf	21.9	25.6	24.4	24.5	27.1	26.4
Hiking	37.7	38.0	31.0	28.3	27.2	24.3
Hunting with Firearms	16.3	18.8	19.9	17.7	19.5	19.1
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	5.5	6.2	5.9	5.8	4.6	4.7
In-line Roller Skating	7.5	9.3	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8
Kayaking/Rafting	5.6	na	na	na	na	3.1
Mountain Biking (off road)	7.2	10.2	8.5	8.0	7.8	7.1
Paintball Games	6.1	6.7	8.0	9.4	6.9	5.3
Running/Jogging	35.5	35.9	28.8	24.7	24.7	22.8
Skateboarding	7.7	9.8	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1
Skiing (alpine)	7.4	6.5	6.4	5.9	7.4	7.4
Skiing (cross country)	2.0	1.6	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3
Snowboarding	6.1	5.9	5.2	6.6	5.6	4.3
Soccer	13.5	15.5	14.0	13.3	13.7	12.9
Softball	10.8	12.8	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.0
Swimming	51.9	63.5	56.5	53.4	53.1	58.8
Yoga	20.2	16.0	na	na	na	na
Target Shooting	19.8	20.3	19.1	19.2	18.9	16.9
Tennis	12.3	12.6	10.4	9.6	11.0	10.0
Volleyball	10.6	12.2	11.1	10.8	11.5	12.3
Water Skiing	5.2	5.6	6.3	4.7	6.9	5.9
Weight Lifting	31.5	37.5	32.9	26.2	25.1	22.8
Workout at Club	36.3	39.3	34.9	31.8	28.9	24.1

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect, IL 60056

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

Do you feel the existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax are meeting your needs?

	Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	11	2	0
No	57	37	37	13	55 (78*)	38	34	54	0	0	22	19

*Many came late after the vote, most likely would have voted no

Are additional parks and recreation facilities needed?

	Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Yes	A lot!	A lot!	37	13	55 (78*)		34	54	10	11	24	19
No	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0

*Many came late after the vote, most likely would have voted no

Do you feel the existing parks and recreation facilities in Halifax are meeting your needs?

	Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Great Need	67	37		13		40	Great	54	7	11	24	9
Some Need	0	0	X	0		0	0	0	3	0	0	7
No Need	0	0		0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

Follow up to a previous question, are additional parks and facilities are needed? If yes, what facilities are needed?

Littleton 3/13/14 Workshop – What we want

- Lighted Areas for Recreation
- Lake/River Public Access for swimming, boating, fishing
- Fitness Trail
- Senior Center
- Dog Park
- Bull riding lessons and arena
- Running track
- Gymnastics
- Geakg resource center and rehab center in Littleton
- Public gardens - Square Foot Gardens for Public to grow veg
- BMX Park
- Exercise Classes here
- Yoga classes
- Dance for all ages
- Cooking Classes
- Rehab Center for older adults so they won't have to travel
- Picnic Shelters with bathroom facilities
- Canoe/kayak access
- Disc golf
- Adult/Youth league games, football, baseball, softball, volley ball, soccer
- Railroad path used for trails Warrenton to Weldon, walking, biking, horse trails.
- Tennis Courts
- Horse Trails
- Fields - baseball, Volleyball, soccer, football, softball
- Swimming center enclosed for use in winter
- Skatepark
- Laser tag
- Skating rink not a park
- Putt putt golf
- Public golf range

Hobgood 3/12/14 Workshop

- A gym – Basketball
- YMCA type facility
- County Residents use Roanoke Rapids Facilities no fee
- Youth sports facilities
- More facilities close to Hobgood so do not have to travel to Rocky Mount, Scotland Neck, Tarboro and other places for sports

Weldon High School 3/27/14 (am) Workshop

- Indoor Basketball Courts
- Pool/billiard room
- Indoor Pool
- Maze/Labyrinth
- Large Rec. Center (racquetball, lacrosse, indoor track, tennis football)
- Mixed Martial Arts Facility
- Skate park
- Multi-purpose (racquetball, rugby, boxing, hockey, handball, horse-shoes)
- Shooting Range
- Bowling Alley

Weldon High School 3/27/14 (pm) Workshop

- More gyms (free, cost friendly)
- Better healthier restaurants
- Chocolate Theme Parks
- New, bigger mall
- Vegan/Vegetarian Restaurants
- Cultural outlets
- Movie Theater (IMAX), at least 5 screens
- Multi-use indoor sports complex
- More clothing stores
- Drive in movie theater
- More locally owned restaurants
- Ice rink

Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14 Workshop

- Swimming Pool
- Teen Clubs/Centers
- Teen Exercise Equipment
- Hobgood Recreation
- Aquatic Centers
- YMCA
- Arcade
- Creative Place
- Community 4-H Sites
- New Parks
- Boys & Girls Club
- Studio (Dance, Art, etc.)

Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14 Workshop

- Skating rink/park
- Improve movie theater
- Teen Clubs
- Campground sites
- Airsoft
- Mall (more stores)
- Gymnastics
- Mini golf
- Community garden
- Arcade
- Go-Kart
- Amusement Parks
- Museums
- Zoo
- Shooting Range
- Buffet Restaurants
- Indoor Soccer
- Card Game Venue

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

What recreational activities currently interest you?

Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Horseback Riding	Kayaking	Horseback Riding	Shooting range	Walk/Fitness Trail	Basketball	Horseback Riding	Skateboarding (BMX, scooters, etc.)	Rap Studio	Football	Basketball	Swimming
Water Access	Bike Pathways Lanes	Water Access	Walking Trail	Swimming Pool	Softball	Water Access	Indoor/Outdoor Basketball	Drive-In Movie Theater	Basketball	Baseball	Biking
Paddle Boats/Fishing Creek	Tennis Courts	Paddle Boats/Fishing Creek	Swimming	Playground	Tennis	Paddle Boats/Fishing Creek	Walking Trails	Food Court / Arcade	Baseball	Cheerleading	Guard (color, winter)
Laser Tag	Access from Major Road	Campground	Lap Swimming	Putt Putt	Horseback	Laser Tag	Bike Trails/Paths	Town Recreation Ctr./Complex	Volleyball	Live Band	Mini golf
Pier-Fishing	Basketball	Hiking	Bicycle Trail	Nature Trails	Swimming	Pier-Fishing	Indoor/Outdoor Tennis	Skating Rink	Track	Music	Golf
Campground	Baseball	Walking Trails	Athletics, Little League, Softball, etc.	Baseball Field	Golf	Campground	Rugby	Mini Golf Course	Soccer	Art	Hunting
Hiking	Open Space	Bike Routes	Tennis (Want Courts in Hobgood)	Football Field	Indoor Sports	Hiking	Soccer Fields	School league bowling	Swimming	Drama	Fishing
Walking Trails	Summer Youth Programs	Tennis Courts	Arcade Center	Softball Field	Bicycling	Walking Trails	Softball-only fields	Public swimming pool	Dance	Cooking	Hanging in parking lots
Bike Routes	Library (expansion) with Restrooms	Basketball Courts	Joint Use of schools (public & private)	LaCrosse Field	Boxing	Bike Routes	No joint-use fields	Bigger mall	Weights	Newspaper	Basketball
Lake Access-Year Round	Pool	Aquatics Facility/Swim Tem	Bowling	Basketball Court	Laser Tag	Lake Access-Year Round	Canoeing	Game room/Rec. room for younger children	Cheerleading	Journalism	Football
Tennis Courts	Spray/Water Sprinkler Ground	Skating	Skating	Tennis Court	Volleyball	Tennis Courts	Athletic Facilities	Dance studio	Lacrosse	Helping Elders	Running
Basketball Courts	Fitness Center	Bowling	Soccer	Dog Park	Paintball	Basketball Courts	Bowling	Drag Strip	Kickball	Chorus	Gardening
Aquatics Facility/Swim Team	Indoor Basketball	Skateboarding	Skate Boarding	Open Space for picnics	Karate	Aquatics Facility/Swim Team	More rec. opportunities in Halifax Co.	Go-Kart Course	Drumline/Band	Glee Club	Band
Skating	Senior Center	Canoe Access	Horseback riding	Recreation Building/Gymnasium	Gymnastics	Skating	Multiple multi-use facilities	Amusement Park	Dodgeball	Skating	Dancing/Contra dancing
Youth Activities	Track & Field	Fitness Activities		Fishing Access	Rugby	Youth Activities	Cultural Arts opportunities	Laser Tag	Badminton	Karate	Riding ATVs
Bowling	Outdoor Concrete Chess Table	Fitness/Wellness Center		Skateboard Park	Yoga	Bowling	Fishing Areas	Paintball	Tennis	Boxing	Laser tag
Skateboarding	YMCA?	Road/Off-road Biking		Disc Golf	Line Dancing	Skateboarding	Pools	Archery	Golf	Dance	Riding around
Canoe Access	Affordable	Softball		Horse Shoe Pits	Lacrosse	Canoe Access	Wellness Opportunities	Gun Safety	Go-Karts	Football	Volunteering
Fitness Activities	After School Facilities	Soccer		Horseback Riding		Fitness Activities	Senior Activities	Wresting (school teams)	Bumper Cars	Reading	Car racing
Fitness/Wellness Center	Horseback Riding	Park & Trials that are pet friendly				Fitness/Wellness Center		Public weight room	Laser Tag		Painting/drawing
Road/Off-road Biking	Volleyball Courts	Make all trails in parks accessible to horse, hiking, camping, walking, exercise, biking, roller blading, skating				Road/Off-road Biking		Video game tournaments	Bowling		Tennis

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

What recreational activities currently interest you? (continued)

Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Softball	Theatre in the Park	Miniature Golf				Softball		Summer camps	Hopscotch		Soccer
Soccer	Amphitheater					Soccer			Double Dutch		Ultimate Frisbee
Park & Trails that are pet friendly	Bandstand					Park & Trails that are pet friendly			Ping Pong		Ice skating
Youth Group Center & Recreation	Art Museum					Youth Group Center & Recreation			Pool		Going to the mall
Make all trails in parks accessible to horse, hiking, camping, walking, exercise, biking, roller blading, skating	Peanut History Museum					Make all trails in parks accessible to horse, hiking, camping, walking, exercise, biking, roller blading, skating			Singing Venue		Parties
Water & public beach access more available there are too few in area	Aquatic Center					Water & public beach access more available there are too few in area			Teen Club		Going to movies
Miniature Golf	Trail from Scotland Neck to Enfield					Miniature Golf			Cosmetology Class		Restaurants
									Cosmetology Competition		
									Waterpark		
									Zoo		
									Amusement Park		
									Paintball		
									Kids' Bingo (non-smoking)		
									Archery		
									Hunting		
									Fishing		
									Horse riding		
									Larger Dog Park		
									Public Indoor & Outdoor Tracks		
									Bike riding		
									BMX/Skate park		
									Running events		

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

What park and recreation facilities are you currently using?

Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Volleyball	Parks	Equestrian Events	Baseball in Oak City	Horse Shoe Pits	Horse Complex		Volleyball	YMCA (Rocky Mount)	TJ Davis	4-H Center	TJ Davis
Track	Fishing Creek	Basketball	YMCA Rocky Mount	Equestrian Trails	Chaloner Middle School		Track	TJ Davis	Chockoyotte Park	Scotland Neck Parks	River Falls Park
Tennis	Yoga	Soccer	Some Tournaments Hobgood Academy	Open Spaces and Nature Trails	TJ Davis		Tennis	Chaloner Recreation	Chaloner Recreation	Enfield Parks	Canal Trail
Volleyball	Football	Fitness Activities	Walking trails in Rocky Mount, Scotland Neck (prefer not to drive so far)	Recreation/Gym Facilities	Knights Ridge Riding		Volleyball	Sports Complex (Greenville)	Manning Track	Enfield Recreation	Tinsley Park
Equestrian Events	Basketball	Road/Off-road Biking		Fishing Areas	Canal Trail		Swimming		YMCA (Emporia, Va)	Scotland Neck Recreation	Long Park
Tennis	Walking Trail	Fishing		Skateboarding Area	Aquatic Center		Baseball		Scoco Park	Schools	Smith Park
Gymnastics		Hunting		Baseball	Family Life Center (Garysburg)		Softball		River Falls Park	YMCA	Emry Park
Watersports		Trail Riding		Football	Riverfalls Park		Basketball		Sunset Park (Rocky Mount)	Franklin Center @ Bricks	Chockoyotte Park
Basketball		Softball		Soccer	Ledgerwood		Soccer		RR Lake Park/Boat Access		Akers Park
Wildlife Observing		Horse Rings		LaCrosse	Cockoyotte Park				Roanoke Canal Trail		Patrick Henry Mall (Newport News)
Soccer				Basketball	Country Club				Dog Run		Rocky Mount Skating rink
Fitness Activities				Tennis	Churches				Medoc Mountain		Yorktown Beach
Road/Off-road Biking				Dog Parks							Appalachian Mountains
Fishing				Walk & Bike Trails							Raleigh Ice skating
Hunting				Swimming Facility							Frankies (Raleigh)
Trail Riding				Playgrounds							Palace Point (Roxboro)
Yoga Classes				Picnic Shelters							Pow Wow (Hollister)
Karate Classes				Nature Area & Observation							County Fair
Softball				Disc Golf							Watermelon Festival
Horse Rings											Leaf Festival (Mountains)
											Chaloner Rec.

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

What public agencies should be responsible for providing additional facilities and programs?

Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Halifax County	NC Dept. of Transportation	Halifax County	Hobgood	County should do Parks & Recreation 4-H brought to this area	Tourism	Halifax County	Tony Hawk Foundation Rob Dyrdek Foundation	Local Govt.	KBR/Rec. Network	Mayors	Federal
Local Governments	NC State University	Local Governments	State		County/Park/Rec	Local Governments		State Govt.	Corporate Sponsors	Communities	State
Volunteer Agencies	Halifax Electric Membership Cooperative	Volunteer Agencies	Federal Government	CADA	Partnerships	Volunteer Agencies	County Commissioners	Federal Govt.	Accountants	Federal Government	Local & state rec. departments
Business/Industry Support (Dominion Power)	Halifax County	Business/Industry Support (Dominion Power)	Non-Profits	Local Fund Raisers	Faith Based Organizations	Business/Industry Support (Dominion Power)	Halifax Community College	Education Lottery	Education Lottery	State Government	Community orgs
Dept. of Tourism	Town of Enfield	Dept. of Tourism	County Schools	Non-profits	Cooperative Extension	Dept. of Tourism	HRMC	Faith-based Community	State Govt.	Churches	Schools
Local Health Departments	Private Industry	Local Health Departments	Halifax County	Dept. Natural Resources	Medoc	Local Health Departments	Faith-based organizations	Tax payers	Local Govt.	Fundraisers	Halifax Co. Govt.
Faith-Based Community	Schools	Faith-Based Community	Religious organizations	DOT – Bike Paths	Towns	Faith-Based Community	Local municipalities		Police Depts.	County Commissioners	Non-profits
Schools	Faith-Based Community	Schools	Churches	Town of Littleton	State Parks	Schools	Halifax County		CADA	Donations	Fundraisers
Extension Service	Medoc Mtn. State Park	Extension Service	Business	Duke Energy	Non-profit Organizations	Extension Service				Business Sponsorships	National agencies/ programs
Non-Profit Organizations	Health Department Public Systems	Non-Profit Organizations	User fees (affordable)	Churches	HCC	Non-Profit Organizations					Large companies (e.g. Kapstone)
Involve Sr. Citizens Community	Halifax Regional Medical Center	Involve Sr. Citizens Community		Halifax Regional Med	Businesses	Involve Sr. Citizens Community					
	Rural Health Groups			Halifax Health Dept.	State						
	Economic Development Initiatives			Kapstone	Personal Endowments						
	State of NC			Public Schools	4-H						
	Tourism			NC State Extension Services	Power Company						
	Federal Government			Halifax Co. Community College	Chamber						
	Police Department			Universities	School Systems						
	Private Foundations			Civic Organizations	Philanthropic Organizations						
	Non Profits			John 3:16							
	Local Businesses			Grants – Duke Endowment							
	User Fees			Grants – K Reynolds Foundation							
	Community Buy-in Investment			Grants – Golden Leaf							
				Fed Government							
				Volunteers							
				Halifax County Economic Development							

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

Identify facilities you are currently using with a green dot (top number) and identify facilities you would like to use with an orange dot (bottom number).

	Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Walking or biking trails	22	3	18	1	24	16	11	14	3	5	3	3
	10	17	4	13	23	2	2	11	3	3	1	0
Swimming facility	5	1	8	2	12	10	7	9	6	3	0	3
	18	9	8	8	19	8	14	7	2	2	14	0
Playgrounds	13	3	12	7	16	8	9	8	5	3	7	3
	5	3	0	1	14	7	33	4	2	2	2	0
Picnic shelters	15	9	7	1	12	5	12	6	1	0	4	0
	7	0	7	9	21	4	28	3	5	1	0	1
Nature study/observation areas	9	0	3	0	10	4	6	0	1	0	0	0
	5	6	6	2	13	0	16	2	1	0	4	2
Baseball fields	3	3	6	10	5	3	5	7	3	1	4	0
	5	6	2	1	6	4	16	5	4	2	0	0
Football fields	3	1	13	10	5	1	4	3	6	1	9	2
	3	1	0	0	6	0	12	2	3	3	1	1
Soccer fields	3	0	3	2	5	3	3	9	0	2	1	0
	5	5	4	2	5	2	10	2	4	1	1	1
Softball fields	12	9	14	10	5	3	7	6	2	2	8	0
	6	0	0	1	8	2	18	7	5	0	0	0
Lacrosse fields	0	3	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	1	2	2	0	1	1	10	0	3	0	2	0
Basketball courts	7	5	13	9	9	4	20	5	7	5	6	3
	9	5	0	3	8	3	28	8	3	0	1	0
Tennis courts	6	8	2	0	1	2	3	4	0	1	3	1
	12	5	6	3	10	3	17	4	4	0	0	0
Dog parks	9	3	0	0	2	4	4	2	1	1	0	0
	12	6	17	1	9	1	9	5	3	2	7	3
Open space or natural areas	9	8	1	6	10	5	3	4	3	4	0	0
	6	1	7	0	8	2	22	3	3	0	2	1
Recreation center/gymnasium	4	3	13	3	11	9	7	3	5	5	9	4
	20	12	1	7	22	2	28	10	4	0	2	0
Fishing areas	8	7	3	9	13	13	9	7	5	0	2	0
	6	0	11	0	8	0	15	1	0	5	3	1
Skateboard park	8	0	2	0	1	3	3	1	1	1	0	0
	11	6	7	3	0	2	20	29	2	1	5	1
Disc golf course	1	0	1	0	4	0	1	2	1	0	0	0
	3	1	6	1	7	4	11	5	0	0	0	0
Volleyball courts	5	1	10	0	0	1	11	1	3	0	0	0
	12	7	0	6	6	2	28	2	2	2	0	0
Bocce courts	1	0	8	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
	2	1	0	1	3	2	8	1	1	0	1	0
Horseshoe pits	2	3	2	0	1	1	7	0	1	0	1	0
	3	2	10	2	1	3	16	6	1	1	2	6
Equestrian trails/center	101	1	7	0	5	14	3	0	0	0	0	1
	99	3	14	1	8	17	13	2	0	0	0	0

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

Identify facilities you are currently using with a green dot (top number) and identify facilities you would like to use with an orange dot (bottom number). (continued)

	Halifax 3/6/14	Enfield 3/10/14	Scotland Neck 3/11/14	Hobgood 3/12/14	Littleton 3/13/14	Weldon 3/17/14	Holister 3/19/14	Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am)	Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm)	Southeast Halifax High School 3/28/14	Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14
Paintball			2 3	0 5					0 4	1 16	0 16	0 2
Racket Ball Court							5 14					
Campsites	2 18	6 8					3 12					
Golf Course						3 1						
Water Park						1 9						
Putt Putt						0 5						
Covered Arena						1 55						
Shooting Range						1 8						
Bike Path								0 8				
Indoor Skating								0 1				
Park												3 0
Amusement Park												0 5
Airsoft												0 3
Trading Card Game												0 2
Sushi Bar												0 2

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

The following comments were on post-it notes and placed on the comment board at each workshop:

Halifax 3/6/14 Workshop

- Halifax County, having a 4-H horse complex support the 4-H young people & programs in our local schools – facility is used.
- Halifax County 4-H complex needs repair and maintenance, need funding for that.
- Funding for covered arena at horse complex at Halifax.
- 4-H complex is beneficial for agricultural, 4-H & equine activities for Halifax County for fund raising for charities, citizens with medical needs, etc.
- Funding for maintenance of 4-H horse ring facility at Halifax.
- County wide parks and recreation department – some (most) municipalities have nothing.
- Covered arena at 4-H complex.
- Church collaborations/partnerships since churches are an important part of our culture – shared use agreement.
- After school organized recreation programs.
- There is a need for more county-wide recreation activities- leagues, football, softball, basketball.
- Basketball goals and courts throughout the county.
- Need transportation to get kids to recreation sites.
- Definitely need summer recreation programs.
- Need supervision at playgrounds.
- Greenways with recycling for plastic bottles.
- Funds needed for covered arena for our horse complex at Halifax.
- Halifax County horse complex needs expansion of riding trails.
- Facilities for horse activities draw new people to area – support area businesses that deal in products, feeds, supplies for livestock & equine owners.
- Same fees for county as well as City of Roanoke Rapids so that all children can enjoy all rec area and longer pool time.
- Need professional rec staff in county and adequate programming staff to cover county.
- Need community meeting/event spaces w/ catering kitchen (add or expand AG Center).
- Great interest in improving horse & livestock facility in Halifax.
- More public access for canoes/kayaks to Roanoke River and lakes.
- More public access to RR Lake and Lake Gaston (not just boat ramps).
- Better hours on facilities.
- Access to current/former school facilities.
- Need more horse ring maint. – covered ring, horse trails, horse activities.
- Offer more horse events, need covered arena, horse industry has always been a good thing in NC.
- Walking Trails, more playgrounds, a sports complex in which we could have local games or athletic activities. A large movie cinema, bowling facility.
- More lake activities, beach access, youth summer camps at Lake Gaston. I think the S. counties surrounding Lake Gaston should work together to create more opportunity in this area.
- More senior activities; highest population on Lake Gaston & surrounding counties. Walking trails, bike trails, open space w/pavilions.

- Our horse & 4-H complex in Halifax County needs to be kept up and expanded upon.
- Bowling Alleys?
- Need to improve horse complex.
- More public access dog runs/walking areas.
- We need a horse & trail expansion for the horse arena.
- Lazer tag.
- Need transportation option to cover outlying areas.
- Improvement of 4-H complex: covered arena, biking/walking/riding trails, more picnic tables, camp sites.
- Halifax County need a covered arena at the complex for horse shows.
- Affordable fitness facilities such as YMCA or Planet Fitness.
- More inside basketball courts.
- Access to swimming facilities around the county.
- Use 4-H Rural Life Center as recreation complex (close to I-95, public).
- Covered horse arena.
- Need more affordable fitness facilities in rural Halifax Co. Not enough recreation in areas such as Littleton, William Davie School area.
- Horse and equine activities generate a lot of business for Halifax County.
- Need better horse trails & covered arena in Halifax would be great – more trails at Medco Mt.
- Need to make Halifax Horse Complex better.
- Equestrian covered hall area.
- Cut trail Medoc Mountain.
- An equestrian facility can be used by all residents of Halifax County. Either by participating in the sport or attending an event. Horse riding develops strength, coordination, & self-esteem.
- Improve horse complex in Halifax.
- Community centers w/ teen programming.
- There is a need for an equestrian center in Halifax County. This center could provide an emergency service center since I-95 is a direct route through Halifax County. Provide therapeutic services for mental ill patients, stroke patients, etc. Provide an after school program for kids to come to. This will provide kids the ability to get off the streets and away from drugs. This will teach kids responsibility for taking care of horses. Horses provide an outlet for people that are going through hard times, not just kids but also adults. Halifax County has the land but it will need much improvement to make it happen. If a center is built/or improved not only can it be used as an equestrian center but it can be used for many other events. An example would be the Bob Martin Center in Williamston. The amount of revenue that this center can bring back into the county for improvement.

Enfield 3/10/14 Workshop

- Transportation for seniors and young people to recreation opportunities and facilities.
- Better/Improved access to facilities off main highways.
- Improve access to Fishing Creek with fishing and boating piers.
- Provide outdoor grilling areas at parks or open space area.

Appendix D: Information from Evening Public Workshops & Student Workshops

The following comments were on post-it notes and placed on the comment board at each workshop:

Scotland Neck 3/11/14 Workshop

- Yoga
- Dance
- Roanoke River activities

Littleton 3/13/14 Workshop

- Need Paid Positions - cannot strictly depend on volunteers
- Singles Club
- Bingo
- So many horses & no equestrian facilities/trails..people will not move here because there is nothing in this area
- Need dog friendly parks
- Activity - Play Coordinators
- Spaces in Natural areas for family/Company events with cooking facilities
- Need to utilize existing abandoned schools or factories to convert to Recreation areas within fiscal constraints of a Tier 1 county
- Bring KIPP to Littleton
- More Public Water Access b/c a lot of community kids can't swim- work with schools to provide
- Swimming lessons for all 2nd graders
- Picnics, outside bathrooms at historical sites other than Halifax - ie Person Ordinary and Hepinstall Hall

Weldon 3/17/14 Workshop

- Covered arena at horse complex.
- Canoe/kayak outfitter.
- Indoor arena at horse complex – more barns and a manager so we can be more organized.
- Fishing.
- Horseback riding facility for all abilities and after school programs including 4-H and people who cannot afford horses.

Holister March 19, 2014 Workshop

- Maximize use of Medoc Mountain State Park. This is a great existing facility; Need to add more components such as playground, volleyball court, and poll.
- More outside activity for the youth, so they can have more than one thing.
- Education programs for the young and the older. Maybe a small collage.
- A solar observation site at the park. Have it set up so you can go at any time.

Roanoke Rapids 3/20/14 Workshop

- At least 15 people brought up the need for a skate park. People are going to Rocky Mount, Dare County, Wilson, and using the Car Corner lot next to Sonic. There are concerns that this is not safe, and kids are forced to skate in an area they call the Trash Park.
- Chaloner Pool needs renovations and some shade for the older population.
- Convert Chaloner Tennis Court to basketball court. Younger kids could use the court because the older kids take over existing basketball courts.
- A new 8-field complex for baseball and softball. There are not enough fields to handle all the leagues, travel teams, middle school and high school, and soccer. Tournaments will bring money to area, and leagues would be willing to put money into the fields.
- Emry Park walking trail has 3 gulleys that need to be filled in. The bathrooms also need to be left open on the weekends and leaves cleaned up on a regular basis.
- Emry Park tennis courts need to be updated and painted.

Weldon High School 3/27/14 (11 am) Workshop

- School Autobody educational track in high schools
- School-based Youth Healthcare group spec. women's health
- Health fairs (age appropriate, pre-K – 12)
- Job shadowing/Part-time work
- Career opportunities through school systems esp. military
- Cosmetology/Barber track in high schools

Weldon High School 3/27/14 (1:30 pm) Workshop

- No comments

Southeast High School 3/28/14 Workshop

- Hobgood is in need of recreation opportunities and businesses.
- Transportation to various places.
- Need activities for the weekend to do.
- Need a place to just chill or able to express ourselves through art. (Painting, music, dance, etc.)

Roanoke Rapids High School 3/31/14 Workshop

- School sponsored events to make it easier for youth to get access to recreational activities

S I T E



SOLUTIONS