

Parks and Recreation

Goals

The City will:

- Ensure that new parks and recreation facilities are designed and located to reinforce and support the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Provide parks that meet the needs of special needs citizens and youth.
- Create more recreational facilities sufficient to meet the City's adopted service standards.
- Develop parks and open space on existing city lands.
- Provide trails and bikeways to link parks and neighborhoods.



Overview

Chesapeake residents value highly their outdoor environment and its quality. The quality of life enjoyed by City residents is enhanced by the wealth of natural, cultural, historic and open space resources. They cherish the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors by visiting parks, participating in activities at community recreation centers, traveling scenic roadways, viewing farms and forested land, and enjoying a myriad of educational programs. The benefits of parks and recreational areas associated with physical and mental health are substantial - from the personal physical fitness gained through active outdoor recreation to the mental benefits of passive recreation, parks and open space. Community design which allows for adequate recreation facilities ensures that Chesapeake neighborhoods are attractive places to live with parks and open spaces for exercise, recreation, and enjoying nature. Finally, local economies prosper as businesses and economic investments are drawn to attractive, high-quality living environments that utilize sustainable design and carefully manage future growth.

A recent study by the Chesapeake Health Department found that unplanned suburban-style development is associated with high levels of driving, which contributes to air pollution and its associated health risks, as well as increased back pain, cardiovascular disease and stress levels among commuters. Suburban residents drive twice as far, walk and cycle one-third as often, consume twice as

much energy and produce twice as much air pollution as their urban counterparts who live where land use tends to be mixed. The Surgeon General of the United States cites a correlation between obesity and lack of exercise and high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart attacks and calls for increased recreation opportunities close to home where all Americans can play, exercise and improve their health.

Topping the list of benefits provided to us by natural areas, parks and open spaces are those associated with health, fitness and wellness. When parks and recreation areas are close to home, physical activity can become part of daily life, and enhance everyday living. Individuals and families can be active, both safely and conveniently. Local parks and recreation areas are home to many opportunities. From jogging and walking to playgrounds, athletic playing fields and tennis courts, parks support a variety of activities which contribute to the City's quality of life.

Planning for the City's parks and recreational programs is important to its overall quality of life. The City adopted its Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 1991, with an update to the implementation section in 1998. The basic objectives of the Plan include:

- Acquire land for parks and open space.
- Plan for and construct a comprehensive trail system.
- Construct additional athletic fields to meet existing and projected needs.
- Phase the development of park sites in relation to service demands.
- Enhance and expand existing facilities.
- Increase utilization of existing athletic fields.
- Maintain parks and facilities in good repair.
- Provide diverse indoor recreation and leisure opportunities.
- Develop a tournament-quality tennis complex.
- Increase the availability of water-related recreation.

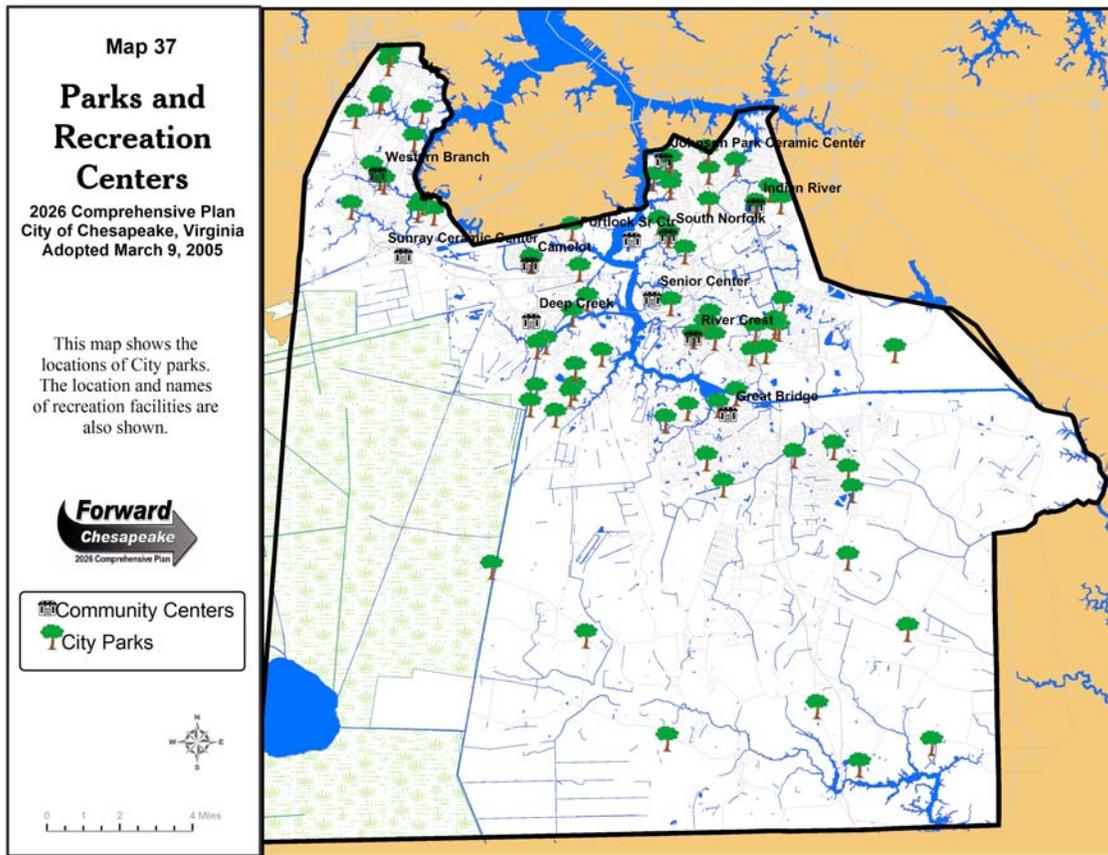
Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

The area standard for local park sites is 10 acres per 1,000 population. The City of Chesapeake currently has 65 local parks consisting of approximately 2,042 acres serving its current population of 214,759. Local parks are divided into three major classifications based on size: neighborhood, community and district parks. All three types are used to meet park standards.

Neighborhood parks range in size up to 10 acres with a primary radius of ½ mile to 1 ½ miles or 5-15 minutes walking distance. The area standard is 3 acres per 1,000 population. Currently, the City has a total of 52 neighborhood parks with a collective acreage of approximately 237 acres.

Community parks range in size from 20-50 acres with a primary service radius of 5 miles or 15 minutes driving time. The area standard is 3 acres per 1,000 population. Chesapeake currently has five community parks with a collective acreage of about 163 acres.

District parks have a minimum size of 50 acres with a primary service radius of 5-15 miles and 15-25 minute driving time. The area standard is 4 acres per 1000 population. The City currently has eight district parks with a total acreage of about 237 acres.



The Open Space Ordinance

City Council recently revised fees charged to developers for the provision and development of open space for new subdivisions when public parks are not provided by the developer. The fee amount per recorded lot increases from \$50 to \$500 if a park site is provided within the subdivision and increases from \$100 to \$1000 per lot if no park site is provided within the subdivision. This change was necessary as the original fee had not been revised since it was adopted in 1989. The Open Space Ordinance addresses primarily neighborhood parks and there is also a need for development of more district and community parks.

As Chesapeake's population increases and demographics change, planning for the manner in which future parks and recreational services are provided is essential to maintaining the City's high quality of life. In this regard, it will be essential to provide new and different opportunities to all segments of Chesapeake's population while maintaining and enhancing existing facilities.

Issue One: Impact on Quality of Life

City parks and recreation services and facilities are a significant element of what defines quality of life for Chesapeake residents.

Chesapeake will provide a parks and recreation system that will serve all segments of its population with a variety of facilities and programs necessary to meet expressed needs.

Strategies:

- The City will develop a phased program to provide additional park facilities to meet park standards as demand increases.
 - Continue efforts to develop existing park sites.
 - Prioritize the neighborhood park sites obtained through the Open Space and Recreation Ordinance for development based on the funds provided by the ordinance along with neighborhood needs.
 - Continue efforts to purchase land of sufficient size to develop regional and district parks including the following types of amenities:
 - Regional community centers
 - Multi-purpose fields
 - Nature Trails (walking/biking/canoe)
 - Equestrian facilities
 - Passive activities
 - Other types of recreational facilities, such as athletic fields and recreation facilities, must also be built as demand increases.
 - The City will explore all possible funding options for district and community parks including opportunities for public-private partnerships.
- The location of local parks to serve residents should be consistent with sound neighborhood planning principles.
 - Opportunities to co-locate parks and other recreational facilities with other public facilities should be pursued where practical.
 - Park facilities should be designed as an integral component of the community and should be accessible to the residents.
 - Opportunities to link park facilities to the community through sidewalks, bikeways, and trails should be sought.
 - New park sites that are a part of new developments which are surrounded by existing development, should be located in such a manner that the park site is accessible to and convenient to those living in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The City or developers should provide a variety of recreational amenities to address the needs of a diverse population.
 - The City should consider including municipal swimming pools, teen centers, and equestrian facilities as alternative forms of recreational amenities.
 - A Feasibility and Program Development Study should be conducted as a prelude to developing a plan to construct mega-recreation centers. These centers could include a variety of amenities such as game rooms, swimming pools, fitness facilities, conference rooms, basketball courts, and day care facilities and could be incorporated as elements of the larger recreational complexes.
 - Citywide senior, therapeutic, and prevention programs should be developed to accommodate special population needs.

- Construct a comprehensive “connected” multi-purpose trail system by continuing to work with Planning and Public Works to implement the City’s Trails Plan as an element of the Master Transportation Plan (see also Transportation section of this Plan).
- Construct athletic facilities (softball, baseball, soccer fields, field hockey, etc.) in conjunction with park development plans to meet minimum athletic facility standards for Chesapeake.
- Existing parks and recreation facilities must be maintained as an integral part of the overall recreational network, and existing facilities should be enhanced as possible.
- Chesapeake’s unique environmental features and extensive waterways should be considered for their vast recreational opportunities (see also ‘Waterways’ in the Transportation element of this Plan).
 - A Scenic Waterway designation should be sought for certain key recreational waterways such as the Northwest River and the North Landing River.
 - Develop public waterway properties for boat ramps and canoe launch areas.
- As a means of enhancing economic development while providing for the recreational needs of Chesapeake citizens, the City should endeavor to develop world class sports facilities which may include multi-use playing fields built to tournament standards for local and regional tournaments.

