

# Fairfax County Park Authority

# Five Year Strategic Plan

APPROVED JUNE 26, 2013



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# Fairfax County Park Authority FY2014-2018 Strategic Plan

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## Acknowledgements

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## Foreward


Fairfax County loves its parks! Continuing to connect park users and the community to their extensive park system is the key to the successful strategic direction of the Fairfax County Park Authority. Sound investments and public connections will ensure the public receives the full range of park benefits and value it expects and deserves. Public input, volunteerism, sponsorships, collaboration and contributions strengthen our community partnerships through rewarding personal investments and experiences.

Every day, parks make a difference in the lives of residents, visitors, and workers and build a stronger, healthier community. As a strong organization, we are focused on creating new opportunities to engage the community in positive activities. Our dedicated, knowledgeable and hardworking employees are inspired by park patrons and contribute their best efforts to improving our quality of life. It is only through our mutual partnership that we can ensure our community's needs are met, that natural and cultural resources are preserved and that facilities, services and programs continue to be delivered effectively. This is what we mean by Great Parks, Great Communities.

This strategic plan is a tool to enable us to focus on our most pressing concerns and opportunities over the next five years. In light of increasing demands and shrinking resources, it is more important than ever that we strategically determine priorities together. It is our pleasure to present the FY 2014-2018 Park Authority Strategic Plan that addresses critical areas of our work and will bring us one step closer to our vision of inspiring a passion for parks that enhances our community's quality of life. Thank you for joining our effort to ensure a great park system that truly responds to the diverse needs of Fairfax County residents, workforce and visitors.



William G. Bouie, Chairman  
Park Authority Board



Cindy Messinger, Acting Director  
Fairfax County Park Authority



## Executive Summary

*Great Parks, Great Communities* succinctly expresses the primary vision of the Park Authority Five Year Strategic Plan. Connecting individuals and communities with the many park benefits and creating greater understanding about how they positively impact our quality of life is the ultimate outcome of this plan. The value of parks to communities is generally considered to include six main categories of contribution: physical health, mental health, social functioning, youth development, environment, and economic impact. These contributions help to build healthy, vibrant communities.

**Total park visitation in FY12 was estimated at over 15 million.**

As stated in the Board of Supervisors' Environmental Agenda, the residents of Fairfax County have the right to access a healthy environment which "enhances our quality of life and preserves the vitality that makes Fairfax a special place to live and work." Fairfax County parks provide a broad array of services that touch everyone in the county in some way, preserving our heritage and providing places to play, get fit, have fun, socialize, contemplate and explore arts, nature and history. Our park system helps by protecting our natural resources which improve our quality of life, provide valuable ecosystem benefits such as cleaning our air and water, and supporting wildlife. Our stakeholders and customers believe that parks are an essential part of their lives and trust us to provide quality park experiences.

Economic changes have impacted the Park Authority's ability to serve the broad range of leisure needs provided in the past as well as the management and stewardship of the extensive natural and cultural resources in our care. A 25% reduction in tax-based support for county parks over the last five years makes it necessary to shift funding to fee-based services to cover the tax shortfalls.

**From an economic perspective, Fairfax County's 1.1 million residents each invested \$19.56 in FY 2012 allowing those residents access to a vast park system that includes over 23,000 acres and 420 parks.**

A strategic response has included a heightened focus on core services and financial sustainability, adjusted programmatic offerings and operational standards, and leveraging alternative funding and partnerships. These shifts have become essential business drivers. Since the economic environment will continue to challenge public agencies in the coming

years, in order to move forward successfully and strategically, the key focus areas will include:

- Emphasizing and communicating the park system's value and benefits
- Encouraging park users to utilize the park system from generation to generation
- Inspiring tomorrow's stewards

- Investing in aging infrastructure and natural capital
- Strengthening community partnerships
- Stabilizing funding sources and prioritizing core services
- Building leadership capacity to champion innovative solutions

Using the *Balanced Scorecard* approach and input from park leadership, staff, stakeholders, and the general public, the strategic plan is structured around four important perspectives: **Customer, Financial, Business Process and Learning and Growth**. Guiding visions provide a statement on the ultimate outcome desired for each perspective.

- The **Strategy Map** located on page 16 depicts the perspectives, guiding visions and objectives, graphically illustrating the cause and effect relationship of each objective and perspective culminating with the Customer perspective and *Great Parks, Great Communities* vision at the top.
- Key **strategic objectives** within each of these perspectives include background and planned direction including specific initiatives and a sampling of projects that may proceed over the next five years.
- The **Balanced Scorecard** at the end of the plan measures plan implementation progress against five-year targets. Annual implementation progress reports using the scorecard will measure annual progress and indicate where adjustments are needed.
- The **About the Plan** section on page 14 provides greater detail on the *Balanced Scorecard* strategic planning approach.

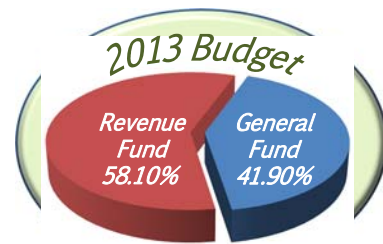
### The Four Perspectives and Guiding Visions

**Great Parks, Great Communities** is the overall aspiration of the strategic plan and represents the customer perspective. Meeting the needs of a diverse and rapidly changing community and enriching their lives by delivering great park experiences are the ultimate goals that align with the Park Authority mission, vision, and values. The community loves its parks and the essential role of parks in building community is evident every day on trails, playgrounds, fields and in RECenters, nature centers, historic sites, classes, programs and camps. Over the next two years, a comprehensive update to the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment will take place. This vital appraisal, conducted every ten years, will provide



critical data to ensure that we align our offerings and capital development plan with the park elements the community most values and needs. This needs assessment is essential to aligning Park Authority priorities with the community's priorities.

**Strengthening Financial Sustainability** for the Park Authority requires that our traditional funding and revenue sources become predictable and stabilized, that we continue to make capital investments in revenue-sustaining facilities, and that we foster expansion and development of alternative resources. Achieving improved financial sustainability will allow us to maintain and even expand services to meet the diverse needs of our growing population. We will maintain our strong commitment to operating an efficient and streamlined organization, managing costs through business process improvements, and seeking new revenue streams. New revenue sources will be critical not only for sustaining current services, but will also be needed to contribute to the long-term capital replacement requirements of the system. By applying concepts developed through a core services analysis, we will apply a financial sustainability test to every key activity, practice, program, and revenue operation.



*Fairfax County parkland provides at least \$18 million worth of ecosystem services per year. For every 20,000 acres of trees, the public gets about \$24 million in ecosystem services per year to include energy conservation, air pollution removal, carbon sequestration and stormwater treatment.*

A key objective to **Improve Business Practices** will be to enhance and bring focus to our protection of natural and cultural resources. This will be accomplished by employing an advanced system for prioritizing resource management activities and furthering the Natural Capital concept. Equally important are strategies for improving the management and protection of facilities and equipment. Utilizing facility and equipment lifecycle schedules to improve prioritization and seek funding for growing maintenance, renovation and replacement needs will better sustain a quality park system during these challenging times.

Leveraging technology will help the organization streamline operational systems, improve public engagement using new and evolving methods for communicating with customers, improve information collection and management.

A passionate, committed staff has been a long-standing hallmark of the Park Authority. **Promoting Organizational Excellence** is about building capacity throughout the



organization. In the Learning and Growth perspective, initiatives address workforce issues such as expanding succession planning efforts that will build leadership capacity within the organization and creating a work culture that will improve employee satisfaction. Conducting an employee satisfaction survey will identify the important areas to be addressed in the work environment and expand development opportunities in order to prepare staff to excel in their current and future positions. Working with the county's STRIVE initiative to restore a predictable compensation and performance evaluation system and enhance employee development and career progression will be an important aspect of these strategic efforts.



This strategic plan reflects the Park Authority's continued passion and commitment to ensuring that its valuable contributions to serving broad community needs and enriching lives is the ultimate result of a solid organization with secure finances, streamlined processes, and fervent, dedicated employees. More rapidly changing lifestyles, technologies, customer and stakeholder expectations will require the organization to be more nimble. Community support and input is essential to facilitating understanding of needs and quality of services. The organization's proven resilience provides a strong foundation for achieving the initiatives in this plan.

## Embracing Challenges Through Leadership

### Park Authority Strategic Planning Key Considerations

Underlying any planning project are assumptions and constraints that represent the “certainties” or likely conditions for the planning period and the “unknowns” that are harder to predict. For the purposes of this strategic plan, examining the knowns and unknowns is needed across the four perspectives of this plan--customer, financial, business process, learning and growth--and within each objective. A sampling of key data and general assumptions and constraints are presented here for each perspective and discussed further within each objective.

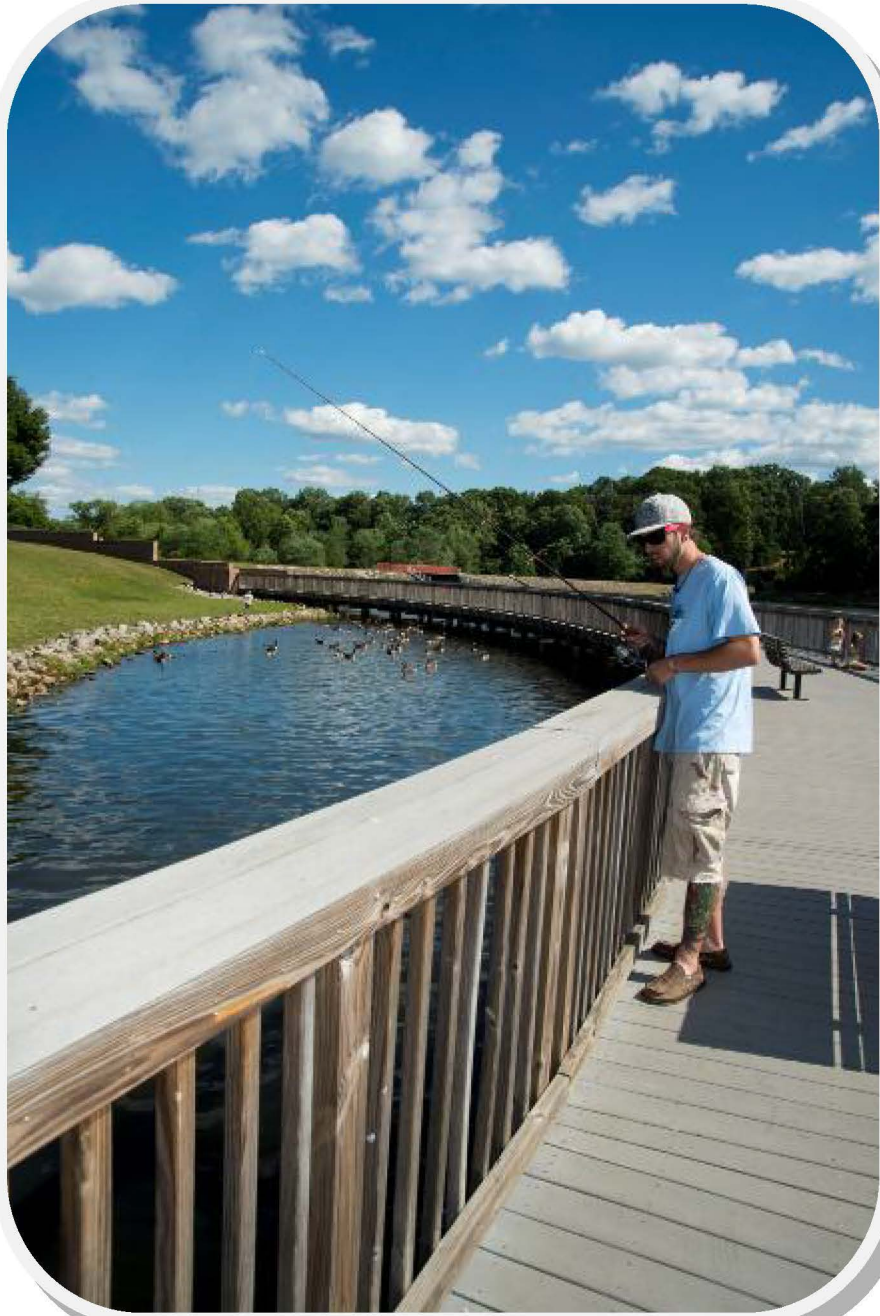
**Customer Perspective:** A key certainty is that people love our parks and the Park Authority has strong community support. The current array of programs, services, and facilities have all developed and evolved in direct response to park users’ interest and value over the history of the Park Authority. Demand for parks has never declined in our history of serving Fairfax County residents and we anticipate that over time it will continue to strengthen. We use robust demographic and needs data to drive our business and recognize that there are many shifts that will impact customer needs, preferences, and lifestyles. The county’s population is represented through a rich and changing tapestry of cultures, ages, interests, preferences, and abilities. Cultural and age diversification presents challenges of engagement and aligning offerings. Increasing income disparities in the county could result in the need for increased subsidies for paid services and higher quality expectations from the growing higher income sector. These shifts will need to be fully understood and met. The Park Authority has a strong history of using demographic, market, and survey data to inform its strategic planning in order to move the organization forward and to meet the community needs. By employing a strong public engagement ethic and current data – this customer and data driven strategic approach will continue.

**Financial Perspective:** Based on the recent past, it is likely that economic conditions will continue to be challenging. Reductions in tax support to the park system, 25% over the last five years, are likely to continue at least in the first few years of this plan or at most, be flat. Rising costs of doing business will continue and will need to be managed while balancing our mission to enhance residents’ quality of life through recreation and stewardship. The biggest challenge will be to reach consensus among Board decision makers about the appropriate level of tax support for core services to allow a basis for more stable financial and business planning. The need to stabilize our funding sources is a key goal of this plan and is a process that has already begun. In FY 2012, we responded to budget reductions by taking many positive actions including the adoption of a Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) where initiatives are currently underway. The foundation of the FSP is a core service analysis and sustainability model. This model will be applied to core services and financial decisions to help determine the balance of tax support and fee-based funding required and appropriate for each core service. Fur-

ther it will build in the needed reserves to be set aside to fund ongoing capital expenses which have been continually deferred. The Park Authority must work within its own funding structure to have the greatest flexibility and control over the delivery and quality of programs and services desired in Fairfax County.

**Business Processes:** For a park system of over 23,000 acres and 420 parks that has evolved over 60 years, management and care of aging infrastructure, equipment, and facilities continues to challenge the agency. Sustaining park assets can be more effectively achieved through creative stakeholder partnerships, including volunteers, park friends groups, and other county agencies; facility conversions to add capacity and address emerging needs; extending lifecycles and leveraging technology. The public will continue to expect full transparency, input and accountability in agency communications and decision-making. Engaging and informing the public through dynamic formats will be essential. The majority of our land consists of undeveloped areas containing natural resources that require an ecological understanding and adaptive management in order to thrive. Threats and impacts to natural areas from human activities, deer, invasive plants, and other factors produce the need for increased investment in monitoring and management to maintain our natural capital and the ecosystem services it provides. Partners, volunteers, friends groups, and stakeholders care about assisting with stewardship and will be an increasingly important stewardship asset. Managing natural and cultural resources and promoting stewardship through education and programming benefits all county residents. The Park Authority continues to be a leader in stewardship education for Fairfax County. More agencies and organizations are also taking a role in stewardship education and management providing new opportunities for partnerships.

**Learning and Growth:** A workforce survey was last administered in 2005. It is time to conduct a new survey to guide efforts in addressing workplace satisfaction efforts. Workplace quality is increasingly important in retaining and recruiting employees. An aging and retirement-eligible workforce provides challenges in retaining institutional knowledge, diversifying the workforce, attaining new skill sets, and building capacity. Building leadership strength in light of leadership turnover is important to stabilizing the organizational structure. Formal succession planning is essential to the success of building leadership skills within the organization. We will be participating in the county's STRIVE initiative that will focus on workforce development, a performance evaluation system and a more sustainable compensation program.



## Mission, Vision & Values

### Mission:

To set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations. To create and sustain quality facilities and services which offer citizens opportunities for recreation, improvement of their physical and mental well-being, and enhancement of their quality of life.

### Vision:

The Fairfax County Park Authority strives to inspire and sustain a passion for parks and leisure experiences that enhances our community's quality of life.

### Values:

These values describe the essence of our organization:

- **Enhancing Stewardship:** We are stewards for a wonderfully rich community trust of natural and cultural resources. We will provide leadership to expand awareness, appreciation and protection of this heritage.
- **Fostering Diversity:** We embrace the diversity of our community and seek to provide every resident with a wide variety of park experiences and recreational opportunities.
- **Developing Partnerships:** We believe seeking and maintaining active partnerships with neighborhood and community organizations and individuals are essential to becoming a vital and treasured component of the communities we serve.
- **Providing Quality and Value:** We are committed to providing high quality facilities and services that offer superior value and prompt efficient service to our customers and the community.
- **Communicating Effectively:** We strive for productive two-way communication with residents and our staff to allow all to participate fully in creating quality parks and services.
- **Valuing Our Workforce:** We believe our paid and volunteer staff is the key ingredient to our success and commit to creating a participative, team-oriented organization including career development opportunities and meaningful recognition.
- **Demonstrating Fiscal Responsibility:** We are committed to building and preserving a park system that meets the community's needs in a cost effective, fiscally responsible manner.

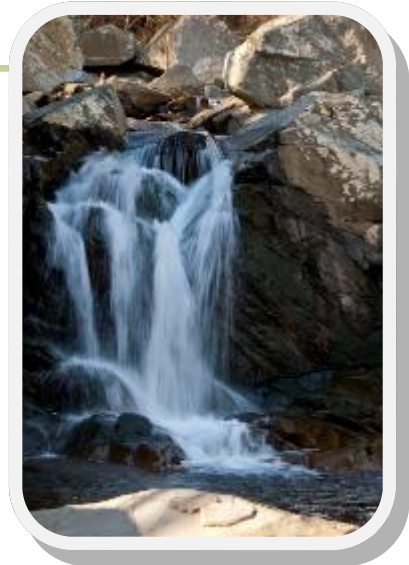


*Annually an estimated 2.2 million trail users hiked, biked, trotted and jogged on County park trails.*



## About the Plan

In 2002, Fairfax County adopted the Fairfax Framework for Excellence model to build and align leadership and performance at all levels of the organization to achieve our best work for the community. The County Executive selected the Balanced Scorecard/Strategy Map approach to strategic planning for all county agencies as a tool that supports the Fairfax Framework for Excellence model. The Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Map provide a framework that helps organizations translate strategy into operational objectives that drive both behavior and performance. It is also a management tool to fully align strategy and performance throughout the organization.



### The Strategy Map, Perspectives, and Guiding Visions

The Balanced Scorecard/Strategy Map Approach is based on developing a strategy map with four balanced perspectives. The Strategy Map is a one-page blueprint of strategic objectives and their cause-and-effect relationship across the four perspectives. The strategy map also serves as a model of how the Park Authority creates value. Within each perspective, guiding visions serve as the support-beam running through each of its objectives, initiatives, and projects. The four perspectives and guiding visions represent a way of focusing the strategic plan into a few key areas which include:

The **Customer** perspective is where we must determine how best to serve our customers in order to achieve our vision. The guiding vision is *Great Parks, Great Communities*.

The **Financial** perspective describes the financial objectives that we must meet in order to satisfy our customers. The guiding vision is *Strengthen Financial Sustainability*.

The **Business Process** perspective describes what internal business processes we must excel at to satisfy our customers and our financial obligations. The guiding vision is *Improve Business Processes*.

The **Learning and Growth** perspective, which appears as the foundation for the map, describes how we develop our employees to respond to our agency's mission and vision. The guiding vision is *Promote Organizational Excellence*.

### **Objectives, Initiatives, and Projects**

The FY 2014-2018 Plan is comprised of ten strategic objectives with associated initiatives, projects, and measures. The Plan proceeds from a general to a detailed level starting with broad objectives, then is further defined by initiatives and then detail is added with projects. The initiatives and projects will be undertaken over the course of the plan horizon – FY 2014-2018.

### **The Balanced Scorecard**

The balanced scorecard is a strategic performance management tool that provides decision makers and managers with a comprehensive set of measures to assess how the organization is progressing towards meeting its strategic goals. It also serves to help steer sound management decisions. By reviewing measures on a regular basis they can be evaluated in terms of the current business environment and when unanticipated events occur, adjustments can be made. Monitoring the scorecard enables the Park Authority leadership to monitor progress and make better strategic decisions about the effectiveness of initiatives or when new initiatives are needed.

### **Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan, which outlines the specific strategic objectives, initiatives, resources, needs, and projects that the agency will undertake during each year, is developed with annual measures, and adopted. Used with the quantitative balanced scorecard, the implementation plan gives a descriptive accounting of what has been accomplished. Progress on those objectives, initiatives, and projects is reported regularly to the Park Authority Board and posted on the park website.





# STRATEGY MAP

Customer

**GREAT PARKS,  
GREAT COMMUNITIES**

Meet the Needs of a Diverse Community  
▪  
Enrich Citizen Quality of Life

Financial

**STRENGTHEN  
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Stabilize Funding  
▪  
Expand Alternative Resources

Business Process

**IMPROVE  
BUSINESS PRACTICES**

Manage & Protect Property  
▪  
Inform & Engage the Public  
▪  
Leverage Technology  
▪  
Optimize Programs & Services

Learning & Growth

**PROMOTE  
ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

Maintain Quality Workforce  
▪  
Foster Positive Work Environment

## Guiding Vision - Customer Perspective

### Great Parks, Great Communities

“Great parks, Great communities,” the overarching theme for the FY 2014-2018 Park Authority Strategic Plan, reflects the recent evolution of thought about the role of parks in local communities. The traditional view held that parks merely contributed to the aesthetic quality of neighborhoods. An emerging new perspective, based on a growing body of evidence from a variety of academic and industry research, now recognizes that parks play a broader role and contribute to building healthy, livable communities in five essential ways.

1. Access to parks contributes to a healthier community, improving both physical and mental health.
2. Parks promote a stronger sense of community belonging; what sociologists refer to as social cohesion.
3. Involvement in recreational activity promotes positive youth development.
4. Tree cover housed in parks provides pollution abatement, cooling effects, and helps to control storm water runoff, among other environmental benefits.
5. Parks contribute substantial economic benefit to communities, most notably through increased property values in communities adjacent to parks.



Fairfax County has long recognized that great parks help to make great communities. More than six decades of community support have led to the creation of a park system that is one of only a handful nationwide to be recognized as a three-time winner of the National Gold Medal for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. Through the initiatives summarized in the strategy map on page 16, we aim to continue this legacy and, in so doing, play an important role in maintaining healthy, livable communities throughout Fairfax County.

Within the base layers of the strategy map, the plan includes initiatives in eight strategic objectives targeted to promote organizational excellence, improve business practices and strengthen financial sustainability. Success in these foundational strategies will enable the Park Authority to enrich quality of life and meet the parks and recreation needs of the county's diverse population; the two keys to realizing the “great parks, great communities” promise.

*It is well established that physical activity helps prevent obesity and related medical problems. Parks provide places to exercise, which improves health.*

## Objectives

### Meet the Needs of a Diverse Community

*Provide programs, services, and experiences that respond to the diverse needs of the community.*

As the Park Authority's strategy map illustrates one of the two principal keys to building a great park system is providing programs, user and ecological services, and experiences that respond to the diverse needs of the community. Park-related needs may shift over time in tandem with demographic changes, so to stay relevant to the community the Park Authority must constantly monitor and respond to changing needs.

Population trends that will most affect park system use and development in the future include moderating population growth, population aging, and cultural and ethnic diversification.

While Fairfax County's population is still growing, it is doing so at a slower rate than previous decades. County projections anticipate that the population growth rate in the current decade will be about half what it was in the last decade. In addition, growth is expected to be more concentrated in select demographic groups and in certain geographic areas of the county. As a result, across-the-board growth in park use, fueled simply by population growth will be more difficult to achieve in the future.

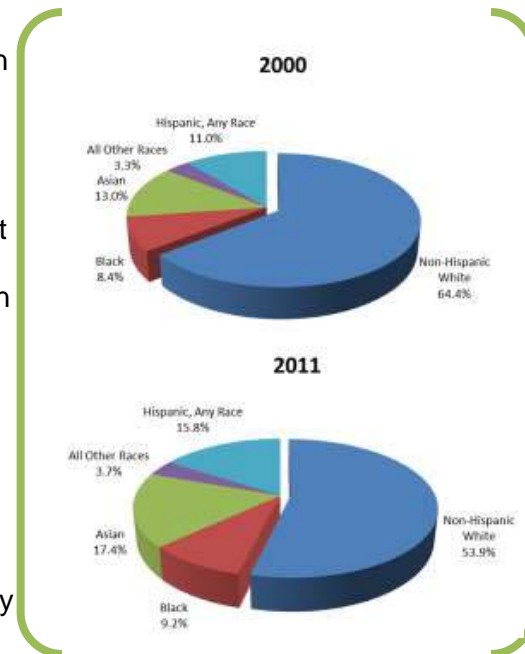
The number of older Fairfax County residents (age 65 and above) grew nearly six times faster than the overall population in the last decade, and is anticipated to grow rapidly during this decade as well. While this group is, by far, the fastest growing segment of the population, it will remain comparatively small as compared to other groups who use parks heavily. A comparison with another key park user group – children 14 and younger – is illustrative. 2020 projections estimate the number of children 14 and younger at almost 230,000; two-thirds more than the anticipated number of seniors age 65 and older (about 137,000). While children age 0-14 will still be a much larger demographic group than seniors, county trend spotters speculate

- *Fairfax County's 2010 Census population of 1,081,726 persons exceeds that of eight states...With its current comprehensive plan, Fairfax County has the capacity to add more than 300,000 additional residents, and 63,000 of these additional inhabitants are expected to be added to Fairfax County over the next ten years.*
- *As of 2011, the oldest boomers turn 65 but the greatest impacts will occur when the boomers reach age 80 beginning in 2026.*
- *Although children may decline slightly as a proportion of total population, children are not expected to decline in number.*

that the rapid growth in senior population may fuel funding tensions between youth and senior programs in the future.

Cultural and ethnic diversification also continues in Fairfax County. Today, more than 45% of the county's population consists of ethnic or racial minorities, compared with nearly 36% ten years prior – a rate of growth more than twice that of the overall population. Cultural and ethnic diversification locally is part of a greater nationwide trend. Unlike many areas of the country, however, diversification in Fairfax County has not resulted from the growth of one predominant minority group but rather from a wide variety of ethnicities from across the globe. County trends indicate that increased heterogeneity will likely result in shifts in cultural norms that may have implications for service delivery.

Strategies aimed at ensuring the Park Authority meets the needs of an ever more diverse community are found primarily in the business process perspective of the strategy map. Full-scale public engagement will enable the Park Authority to identify shifts in preferred park needs but will be more challenging with an ever changing population. The update to the Needs Assessment scheduled for completion in 2014 will include extensive opportunities for public engagement and greater understanding of shifting leisure needs. It will also provide current community park needs data that will include a program element for the first time and geo-spatial



analysis to guide decisions on aligning the right offerings in the right places. As needs are assessed and prioritized, the organization will optimize its facility, program and service mix by incorporating them. Some park needs will continue to be addressed with in-house facility and service delivery, but the Park Authority will rely increasingly on partners to aid in service provision in the future.

### Enrich Citizen Quality of Life

*Provide full access to a wide range of quality park experiences to support healthy, active lifestyles, create appreciation of the park system's stewardship of natural and cultural resource bounty, and enable lifelong learning and discovery.*

Creating quality park experiences that enrich residents' quality of life is the second key to building a great park system. Residents of Fairfax County enjoy a high quality of life to which most feel parks contribute a great deal. Community surveys have consistently validated the importance of parks to the quality of life here. Overall use of the park system also attests to the popularity of parks. Total visits to parks in FY 2012 were an estimated 15.3 million, which translates to nearly 14 park visits per capita annually.

*Nearly 2 million visits were recorded at nine RECenters in FY 2012 where visitors enjoyed a wide range of healthy activities, including swimming and fitness programs as well as sports, adapted programs, dance and more.*

Growth in many areas of park use has outpaced population growth. Since the start of the last strategic planning cycle, for example, program enrollment has grown 34%, nearly six times the population growth rate of 5.7%. RECenter visitation grew 3.5 times faster than total population, and use of staffed parks outpaced population growth by about 50%.

To remain a valued part of residents' quality of life, the Park Authority will have to keep pace with the changes that are sure to alter the community in the future and reinvest in traditional and natural capital infrastructure to ensure continued service levels. Demographic transformations and urbanization top the list of change agents likely to affect the kinds of park experiences desired by county residents.

The Park Authority will need to identify and address significant emerging needs to stay relevant to the community's evolving leisure interests. Resource limitations will challenge the organization's ability to maintain quality facilities and expand its efforts to improve the management of park natural resources, ecosystems and the ecosystem services they provide.

Reprioritizing scarce capital resources to tackle facility renovation priorities and expanded management of the park system's natural capital resource base will be necessary. Greater public awareness of the benefits of parks to the community is

*Park Authority Resource Management sites hosted over 855,000 visitors in FY12 who were exposed to a wide range of stewardship education and experiences.*

also needed to ensure the Park Authority maintains adequate resources to fulfill its mission in the future. Wholesale community engagement, both countywide and at the local level, will be essential to make sure that the agency understands the community's constantly evolving needs, and that the community properly understands the challenges of maintaining a vibrant, fully- functioning park system.

These are some of the central challenges addressed by the eight strategic objectives found within the financial, business process, and learning and growth perspectives of the Park Authority's strategy map. Implementing initiatives outlined in these areas will enable the Park Authority to play its role in enriching quality of life in Fairfax County.

***“No matter what income, age, gender, ethnicity, or address, everyone has a need and right to breathe clean air, to drink clean water, and to live and work in clean surroundings. A healthy environment enhances our quality of life and preserves the vitality that makes Fairfax a special place to live and work.”-Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Environmental Agenda***



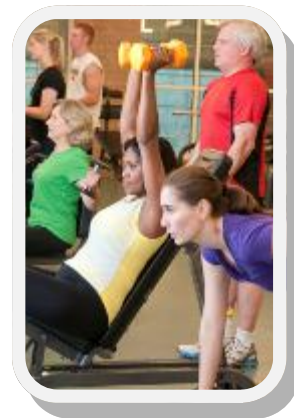
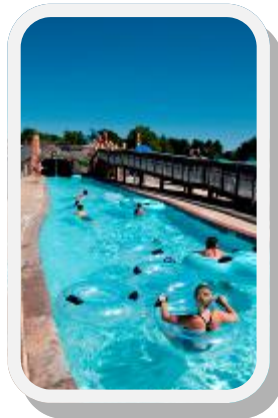
## Guiding Vision - Financial Perspective

### ***Strengthening Financial Sustainability***

*Park Authority viability is dependent upon remaining relevant in meeting community expectations in an era of declining public funding. Balancing the use of public funds while managing fee-based services and garnering additional resources is vital to maintaining the public's investment in parks.*

*The Park Authority must work to ensure the greatest flexibility and accountability in the delivery of its mission. Persistent challenges with the economy, budget limitations, rising business costs, unforeseen weather events, aging infrastructure and increased competition must be addressed in order to move forward. Creating a better understanding of the Park Authority's complex funding structure, along with transparent fiscal planning and reporting, will further our stakeholders' willingness to invest in and understand the true value of parks. Clearly parks make a significant contribution to the quality of life in Fairfax County.*

*The Park Authority's Financial Sustainability Plan is the framework that outlines specific actions necessary to carry the Park Authority forward through improved efficiency, increased flexibility, entrepreneurial activity, capital investment and enhanced transparency.*



## Objectives & Initiatives

### Stabilize Funding

Address the continued instability in the Park Authority funding environment by optimizing various funding sources to accomplish targeted financial and service goals.

The citizens of Fairfax County, through their taxes and support of bond referenda, have made a significant investment in their park system and have enjoyed and expected a broad range of services and facilities in return. Some of those services are expected to be provided at no additional cost (e.g., trails), while some are widely accepted on a pay-as-you-play basis (e.g., golf). One of the Park Authority's largest financial challenges is finding the appropriate balance of fee-based versus tax-based services in a climate of declining tax-based support.

There has been a significant funding shift over the years. In 1993, the General Fund/Revenue Fund proportion of the Park Authority's budget was nearly 50/50. Twenty years later, the budget reflects 58% Revenue Fund and 42% General Fund. This shift towards reliance on the Revenue Fund will continue should general tax support dollars continue to decrease.

Economic realities over the past five years have resulted in a 25% reduction in General Fund baseline support, yet park acreage, facilities and amenities, population and public expectations continue to increase. The struggling local economy is projected to continue for the next several years as the federal budget challenges trickle down and impact the Washington metropolitan area. Revenue stability is critically impacted further by unpredictable and extreme weather patterns, storm events, rising utility and maintenance costs, and growing emergency repairs that have increased in the last few years. A full understanding of the funding sources is key to addressing this issue.

Basic facilities and services, such as open space, trails, playgrounds, athletic and court facilities and access to healthy natural areas appeal to a broad spectrum of the community and, therefore, are supported by General Fund tax dollars with no additional fees charged by the Park Authority. Citizens generally expect these overall basic park provisions to be provided via tax funding.

*To sustain our status as a National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal winning park agency, the Park Authority must employ sound financial practices that focus resources on supporting the park system into the future, while concurrently enhancing capacity to manage costs and grow revenue.*



The largest portion of funding for park services and facilities is collected in the Park Revenue Fund that supports entirely, or in part, broader offerings including RECenters, golf, classes, camps, and programs. These offerings may have fees charged, as authorized under the Park Authorities Act. This Act provides a mechanism to expand access to programs and services beyond those supported by tax dollars. In general, the benefits of fee-based services are derived primarily by individual participants rather than the community as a whole. In addition to operating, maintenance, and administration costs the Revenue Fund must also recover debt service associated with revenue bond obligations.

Establishment of the Revenue Fund in the 1960s provided additional recreational services and opportunities to county citizens beyond tax funding. Fifty years later, the Park Revenue Fund now supports 58% of the Park Authority's activities ensuring a much richer park experience and broader offerings. User fees are established and maintained at levels that balance affordability and access to services with full operational cost recovery while ensuring that facilities and offerings are competitive with comparable local facilities and services and reflect relevant market, economic, and financial considerations.

*Park Revenue has grown into a \$42.4M business and supports 58% of the Park Authority's overall budget ensuring a richer park experience and broader offerings.*

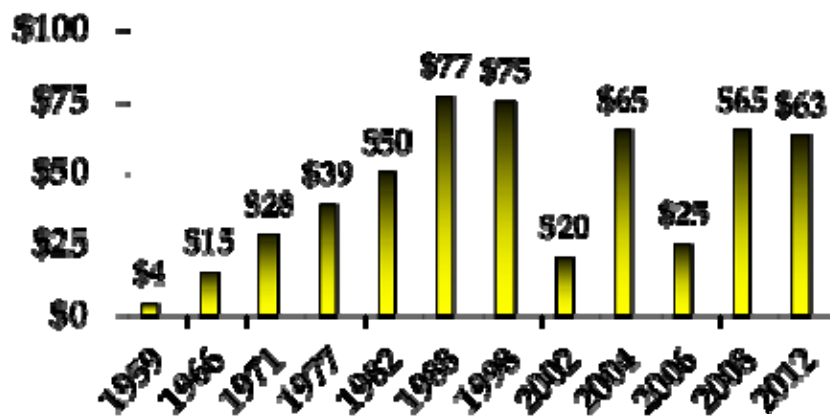
Years of experience and market research tell us that park customers are willing to pay for fee-based park services but the discretionary nature of such purchases requires that the Park Authority understands the local economic and demand forces, shifts in the leisure industry, and reflects these factors in strategic pricing and offerings.

Nature centers, historic sites, lakefront parks, and athletic fields are funded through a combination of user fees and General Fund support. These operations could not successfully operate on a full cost recovery basis, yet are core park services expected to be provided by taxpayers. As General Fund allocations have decreased, pressure increases on the Revenue Fund to contribute more to these mixed fund operations. The constrained capacity of the Revenue Fund to offset General Fund reductions is finite and near its limit. Future General Fund reductions will not be sustainable without passing on costs to the customer by increasing or imposing additional fees or eliminating services.

General Obligation Bonds have supported capital repair, construction, renovation, and expansions. We are fortunate the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors supports issuing bonds and that the Fairfax County residents love their parks and have

always supported park bond referenda. However, a significant unfunded backlog of capital needs exists systemwide. As the park system matures, our facilities age and the deferred maintenance cannot be delayed indefinitely without impacting customers and revenue. Better data collection and facility assessment tools provide a truer picture of capital investments needed. Dedicated resources are needed to support this aging system, similar to an individual's long-term care insurance. The cost of business continues to rise and community needs are dynamically changing. To continue to meet these changing needs we must stay ahead of the wave and be positioned to provide a variety of relevant and consistent services, facilities, and programs.

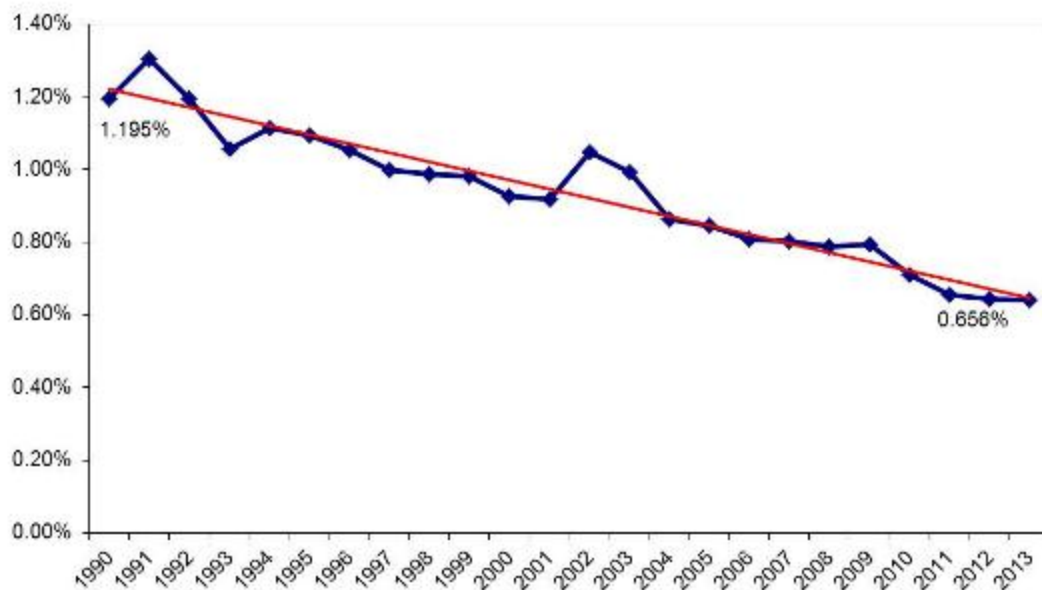
### Park Bonds (in millions)



To sustain our status as a National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal winning park agency, the Park Authority must employ sound financial practices that focus resources on supporting the park system into the future, while concurrently enhancing capacity to manage costs and grow revenue. Building and utilizing a comprehensive tool box that is embraced by the Board of Supervisors and understood by our customers and stakeholders will provide the fundamental groundwork for future business decisions. An important tool is the Financial Sustainability Plan approved by the Park Authority Board in December 2011. This Plan was created to guide operation and revenue stabilization in an environment of declining funding as a solid business model that enables the Authority to be and remain financially sustainable. Further, incorporating this sustainable fiscal model at all levels of funding and programming decisions is critical to the overall financial viability of the Park Authority. Once the comprehensive array of financial tools are in place, all levels of the organization will be held accountable for utilizing the sustainability

model and other tools in all aspects of the business. That plan must be transparent and flexible to effectively deliver core services, actively manage costs, and continuously grow revenue.

**Ratio of Park Authority General Fund Budget to County General Fund (Fund 001)**



#### **Strategic Initiatives:**

- **Utilize a comprehensive set of tools to ensure funding stability throughout all aspects of the Park Authority's business.**
  - Obtain policy maker agreement on what the General Fund appropriation should support and get commitment for a stabilized tax-supported funding level.
  - Secure a means to track the true cost of business and evolve the sustainable business model in all lines of business.
  - Maximize efficiencies for core services by adopting principles and best practices to meet financial recovery targets and plans.
  - Adopt policies and measureable performance targets that support the various core lines of business.

- Increase internal capacity by evaluating reserve balances and designating sources to support deferred maintenance needs, and natural and cultural resource management plans.
- Establish a revenue stabilization reserve to provide relief for unanticipated revenue facility closures, inclement weather or natural incidents.
- **Continue to manage costs as a means to achieve financial stability.**
  - Promote continual implementation of cost saving initiatives at all levels.
  - Reevaluate and repurpose underutilized facilities and programs.
  - Expand energy management initiatives.
  - Continue to evaluate the feasibility of contracted services.
  - Realign operational and business support staffing to improve efficiencies and better meet the needs of the organization.
- **Grow revenue to ensure adequate funding is available to support facilities and services.**
  - Invest in revenue facilities to grow programs and services to improve operating cost recovery.
  - Expand marketing efforts and resources.
  - Grow the customer base and strengthen customer loyalty.
  - Expand concession offerings and lease revenues.
  - Increase revenue from athletic fields.

### Expand Alternative Resources

*Secure non-traditional funding sources and in-kind services that supplement and further enhance the Park Authority programs, services, facilities and mission*

The Park Authority is very fortunate to have a wide network of volunteers, partners, and friends that help deliver the broad array of high-quality programs and services expected by the public. In FY 2012 alone, we received over 200,000 hours of volunteer support, valued at over \$4.3 million by the state of Virginia. At the same time, our land and facility assets continue to grow while traditional funding for upkeep and replacement is limited and in some cases diminishing.

*In FY2012, over 200,000 hours of volunteer support valued at over \$4.3M helped deliver the broad array of high quality park programs and services.*

Leveraging additional support through grants, alliances, partnerships, sponsorships, fundraising, and volunteers is essential to supplement and enhance service delivery capacity. A coordinated approach to seeking alternative revenue sources will minimize duplication of effort.

Over the years, the Park Authority has implemented management initiatives to supplement traditional budgets to sustain the delivery of quality services and facilities. Adopt-a-park, adopt-a-field, friends groups, and other partnerships have provided cash and in-kind services to the Park Authority. Partnerships leverage resources that enhance facilities, programs, services, and activities with mutually aligned outcomes and goals.

The Park Foundation, established in 2001 as a 501(c)3 independent entity serves as the primary fundraising arm. The Park Foundation raises private

*In FY2012, 49% of RecPAC participants received scholarships supported by general fund and Park Foundation contributions*

funds, obtains grants, and creates partnerships to benefit Park Authority programs, services, and facilities. Park funding needs are high, however, and the Foundation's added funding sources are limited. Increasing awareness of park investment benefits in the county's corporate

community is an ever growing opportunity as Fortune 500 companies continue to locate within the county's borders.

The Park Authority is not currently positioned to implement entrepreneurial related business initiatives such as sponsorships, naming rights, and advertising programs due to the lack of dedicated resources. Other agency efforts such as fundraising, outreach, and volunteer management are conducted on an ad hoc basis and need to be given a higher priority across the Park Authority. A more coordinated and aggressive plan needs to be developed to form beneficial partnerships and conduct outreach to potential contributing corporate, business, community service groups, and alternative organizations. As many of these are new initiatives, it will take time to implement and grow the programs.

*Partnerships with other public agencies and the schools leverage public tax investments and provide more efficient ways of sustaining the park system and delivering park services.*

Volunteers are one of the Park Authority's greatest assets and dedicated support for this program is necessary to grow and enrich the volunteer experience and benefit. Additional and coordinated resources to develop outreach programs and streamline volunteer recruitment and management are imperative for success. Comprehensive management of volunteers and support groups will become more critical to respond to community needs, recreation trends, improve efficiencies, and minimize facility and maintenance costs.

#### **Strategic Initiatives:**

- **Diversify entrepreneurial efforts to expand funding sources**
  - Increase capacity to develop and manage partnerships and fundraising efforts to enhance the success of major initiatives.
  - Align Park Foundation and Park Authority fund raising goals and initiatives to grow donors and maximize overall contributions.
  - Implement a sponsorship and naming rights program.
  - Develop a comprehensive advertising program.
  - Maximize grants and other philanthropic initiatives.

- **Cultivate partnerships to support and enhance service delivery**
  - Emphasize alliances with other governmental, non-profit, and private agencies.
  - Strengthen partnerships with public and private schools to pursue mutual benefits of providing stewardship education, meeting standards of learning requirements, enhancing child and youth health and fitness and supporting school and community athletic programs.
  - Identify priority projects for which to seek alternative funding or partnership opportunities with a focus on revenue opportunities.
  - Formalize partnerships with friends groups.
  - Forge new partnerships to support stewardship activities and development of athletic field, parks, facilities, and trails.
  - Expand adopt-a-park/adopt-a-field programs.
  - Educate the corporate community of the value of investing in parks.
  
- **Enhance and grow the Park Authority's volunteer program**
  - Interface and utilize the county's Volunteer Management Software system.
  - Develop a centralized Park Authority Volunteer Program Manual.
  - Create a comprehensive volunteer orientation and training program.



## Guiding Vision—Business Process Perspective

### ***Improve Business Practices***

*Improve business practices by reducing costs, improving efficiencies and using industry benchmarks and best practices to gauge improvements. Using effective tools and processes to meet our obligation to properly care for our assets and resources will be more important and challenging in the current economy.*

*Four objectives in the process perspective have different outcomes, however, share a common thread to positively impact the way work is carried out. Positively managing and influencing processes within our control will lead to high achievement and the best use and management of park resources.*





## Objectives & Initiatives

### Manage and Protect Facilities and Property

*The Park Authority will continue to lead collaborative efforts of managing and caring for our parks, facilities and infrastructure, and protecting and preserving natural and cultural resources.*

The Park Authority has defined stewardship as “the careful and responsible management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us by the citizens of Fairfax County in order to ensure their integrity for present and future generations.” While the mission, direction, and commitment are clear, progress is limited by available funding.

***Park maintenance includes over 1.1M square feet of structures, 777 athletic fields, 421 parks, 320 miles of trails, 204 playgrounds, 8 golf courses, 388 courts, 90 historic sites, and many specialty facilities.***

The Park Authority has committed to the Board of Supervisors and public to expand comprehensive stewardship efforts to actively manage and preserve our natural capital and historic resources. This stewardship commitment is supported by our mission, policies, and plans.

The term “natural capital” has become synonymous with the term “natural resources” since the last strategic plan. Natural capital includes living organisms, air, water and soil ecosystems, and the environmental services they provide, including cleaning our air and water, supporting wildlife, and contributing to the county’s quality of life. Natural capital is not self-sustaining, but requires deliberate care. To guide resource management actions, it is critical to know what resources we have, where they are located, and prioritize the most critical needs. Rather than just focusing on individual areas, a more holistic approach will be more impactful and sound. This approach can be called “adaptive, landscape-scale resource management.”

Extensive parks and open space areas contribute significantly to the quality of life of residents. From small urban parks to large natural areas, the presence of wildlife, open space, and habitat areas are essential to human well-being and livability. Preservation and protection of natural and culturally sensitive areas from encroachments by park neighbors is essential to the health of our community. Encouraging the public through outreach and education to better support stewardship practices and cease encroachment, is an essential part of meeting this mission.

Park facilities, amenities, infrastructure, and equipment continue to age in the absence of a viable life cycle management program. Deferred maintenance and

repair is the norm due to a lack of dedicated funding. A comprehensive life cycle management program would include a renovation/replacement schedule for all facilities, building systems, site amenities, and infrastructure assets owned by the Park Authority, based on estimated life cycles.

There are great challenges associated with maintaining thousands of facilities in over 400 parks. Park maintenance standards vary by park type, area, park design, facility mix, use patterns, and physical features. Much of the park system was built in the 1960s and 1970s and many facilities have reached the end of their useful lives. Focused and phased maintenance and renovation is needed to keep the system safe, vital, and functioning as a community asset. While our goal is to replace, renovate, and maintain all park and recreation facilities at the highest quality level, sufficient funding may not be available to meet maintenance standards or replace facilities when the end of useful life is reached and/or condition deteriorates.

The Fairfax County Park Authority will maintain parkland to a quality level where staff and users are proud of their parks. Leveraging alternative funding, technology, partnerships, practices, and capital investment are necessary strategies but will only extend not replace adequate funding levels. Past experiences, great successes, and countywide support by committed staff and stakeholders is the foundation that will further successful implementation of these initiatives.

#### **Strategic Initiatives:**

- **Manage and protect natural & cultural resources**
  - Develop site-level cultural and natural resource plans in designated parks.
  - Expand dedicated funding to manage and protect natural capital and cultural resources.
  - Develop and implement methods to holistically manage large park areas.
  - Adopt an agency natural areas ranking system to guide decision making.
  
- **Foster and promote natural and cultural stewardship**
  - Expand stewardship awareness and involvement through programming and volunteer opportunities.
  - Increase partnerships to preserve and protect valuable cultural and natural resources.
  - Expand existing public school partnerships to support standards of learning.

- Strengthen encroachment education to encourage voluntary compliance.
- **Manage and protect facilities and equipment**
  - Complete conditional assessments of facilities and amenities to validate life expectancy.
  - Establish work plan for facilities, infrastructure and site amenities renovation, replacement and/or repurposing.
  - Establish comprehensive capital replacement plan for grounds maintenance equipment.



### Inform and Engage the Public

*Engage the community to raise awareness of park benefits, value, offerings and challenges; broaden support for the park system; increase public involvement in park planning and decision making; and stimulate growth in park use and volunteerism.*

Ensuring that the public has the information needed to make informed choices about recreational opportunities and the ability to influence park policy and decision making is essential to the success of the Park Authority. As a public agency that serves the vast majority of the county's population, our essential community role and significant value must be clearly understood and communicated. "Corporate" messages and market positioning reinforce the agency mission as well as our fiscal value.

The Park Authority actively conducts multi-faceted community outreach to keep the lines of communication open between the general public, consumers, special interest groups, park stakeholders, and advocates. These include the use of many communication tools including social media, the Internet, email, traditional media methods, community engagement through public meetings and forums, and surveys. Key efforts and new initiatives are outlined in the agency's Marketing and Communications Plan. By informing the public we enable them to understand the issues and advocate for system improvements, new programs, general support of park enterprises, and community values such as stewardship, open space preservation, park bonds, and similar park-related community topics.

Our efforts to communicate effectively with the public must be dynamic in order to resonate with our patrons and stakeholders.



The increasing bombardment of messaging in today's typical household requires that our message be distinct and relevant. Continual sharpening of our communication tools is necessary to understand our customers, how they receive information, and to ultimately raise the awareness of the value and benefits provided by park facilities, services, and programs throughout the county.

Implementation of this strategy will continue to ensure that park programs and services are responsive to community needs and desires.

Fairfax County park stakeholders have proven time and again that they desire a significant role in the decision-making process related to park planning. New approaches to public outreach and participation will enhance understanding of how diverse needs and input are balanced by decision makers and how decisions are communicated. Public engagement helps the agency better understand and

***Public engagement helps the agency better understand and successfully provide offerings that reflect rapidly shifting demographics related to age, culture, ethnicity, urbanization, and emerging leisure interests.***

successfully provide offerings that reflect rapidly shifting demographics related to age, culture, ethnicity, urbanization, and emerging leisure interests. The value and important role of parks can be demonstrated and communicated in addressing significant health and social challenges such as obesity and the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Creation of an engagement index will allow measurement of specific communication initiatives and will provide a better understanding of the agency's successes and challenges in reaching particular segments of the population.

Strategic initiatives include the "strengthening of our brand and value" and "engendering broad public support for the parks system". These initiatives reflect a maturing agency communications approach that focuses limited resources on enhancing public information and communications. It utilizes and leverages the latest technological advancements and also capitalizes on the reservoir of goodwill which already exists in the community.

***In 2012, an average of 487,000 folks visited the Park Authority website per month (5,846,420 for the year.) Our venture into social media started in 2011 and has grown to 3,284 Facebook friends, 1,010 Twitter followers and 11,796 views on the Park Authority blog.***

Continued use of electronic surveys and other tools will be beneficial in better understanding our customer's wants, desires, and experiences. Keeping current use of E-commerce, web-driven and social media platforms creates new and robust avenues for expanded outreach and communications.

Broadening the park support base will require a renewed emphasis on branding and strengthened coordination between the Marketing Branch and Public Information Office aimed at capitalizing on early and ongoing communication and marketing initiatives. Increased support for the county park system can be accomplished through improved value-based communications and messaging resulting in greater volunteer recruitment, higher participation in events and programs, and most importantly, a deeper understanding of why parks are an essential and valuable attribute worthy of support.

### Strategic Initiatives

- **Engender broad public support for the parks system**
  - Position Park Authority offerings as an integral part of solutions to evolving community challenges.
  - Promote and quantify the value of natural and cultural resources in the county to increase stewardship awareness and relevance.
  - Improve volunteer awareness and recruitment.
  - Support collaborative advocacy with friends groups and other community organizations.
- **Strengthen Park Authority brand and value**
  - Begin agency branding assessment and multi-phased effort to evaluate existing branding and signage.
  - Expand and improve marketing and communication of services to the community through continued development of image management, electronic publications, print materials, and other communications tools.
- **Maximize effective community engagement**
  - Expand public information programs focused on regularly informing and educating about the benefits and value of parks.
  - Improve customer service and relationship building through social media platforms and new online enhancements.
  - Improve utilization of industry and demographic data to communicate park system benefits and value.
  - Strengthen public participation process in planning and development projects.



### Leverage Technology

*Utilize technology solutions to constantly improve customer experiences and increase efficiencies and accuracy in internal business processes.*

Technology touches many aspects of the park system from class registration to athletic field lighting controls. Technological improvements are a critical component in making Park Authority services more efficient and accessible. The Park Authority must maximize utilization of existing technologies and investigate new applications that will deliver value in the future.



The Park Authority embraces technology in all aspects of its operation. Use of Geographic Information System applications as both a planning and an operational aid has become common practice. Introduction of ParkNet refinements including web-based class registration options and a mobile application show the agency's focus on improving the customer experience. The

development of innovative tools has helped the agency cope with the increased workload and diminishing staff resources. Expansion of data management systems and the implementation of FOCUS, the county's integrated financial and personnel program, provide needed information for setting priorities and decision making. Our expanded presence on social media and our website are exciting to staff and customers.

Information technology is fast-paced and ever-changing. Staying current is challenging without a focused initiative. Mission-critical and legacy applications are nearing the ends of their useful lives or are not utilized to their fullest extent. Customer expectations in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century call for improvements in the systems that touch our customers. Reduced resources require improvements in the efficiency of internal business practices.

Creation of an information technology plan that combines technological advances with new business practices is a necessary first step to addressing the role of technology in the agency and complements its strategic plan. The

IT plan will include recommended actions for the replacement, updating, or more complete utilization of existing applications. It will integrate new technologies such as smartphones and other devices for connecting with customers and staff. Opportunities to partner with the county Department of Information Technology (DIT) on projects such as the implementation of the county's volunteer management application or document management alternatives will be essential to leveraging new technology and will be identified and implemented in the near future. The IT plan will seek ways to expand the use of technology-based solutions to enhance staff efficiency, improve customer service, and enhance park experiences by enhancing or modifying existing tools or creating new ones, and partnering with the county's Department of Information Technology (DIT) on projects which further the agency's mission.



### Strategic Initiatives

- **Develop an information technology plan that will address information technology, staff training needs and access issues**
  - Create a culture that embraces technology as a tool to improve business practices.
  - Assess information technology-related issues facing the agency.
  - Identify ways in which the customer experience can be improved.
  
- **Develop information technology solutions and enhancements that improve customer service or enhance the customer experience.**
  - Evaluate the use of current automated systems to determine whether they are optimized and if opportunities exist for public access to its information.
  - Identify more opportunities for customer self-service and seek ways to implement them concurrent with changes in the agency's core systems.
  - Identify and implement the next-generation replacement for ParkNet, the agency's customer service, information, point of sale, and registration system.



- Implement technology solution recommendations in the National Golf Foundation study, including a golf management application.
- Increase customer payment options consistent with commercial business practices.
- **Gain staff efficiencies by enhancing or modifying existing tools or by creating new tools**
  - Increase the use and application of Tririga or other integrated facility management software throughout the agency.
  - Develop and deploy a comprehensive automated management reporting system to summarize work plans, operational efficiencies, staffing, budget, dashboard items, and executive report.
  - Update Procurement Card Reconciliation Database.

## Optimize Programs and Services

*Ensure continued provision of a wide range of facilities, programs, and services to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse population in a manner which is financially sustainable.*

To optimize our service delivery, we must continually engage the community to understand its current recreational needs and ensure that service delivery reflects the public's interests. This is particularly important and challenging in a community like ours where continued cultural diversification is a long-term trend. Increased diversification is not particularly unique to Fairfax. It is, in fact, a nationwide trend. What is different about Fairfax is the complexity of our diversity. No particular minority group predominates. Instead, we are home to what a 2011 county report of demographic trends calls a "diverse tapestry" of people from across the globe, where almost half of those who moved into the county in the past year were ethnic or racial minorities and nearly one-third were immigrants.



Community surveys have regularly shown that parks are an important and valued component of Fairfax County's quality of life. That appreciation is reflected in the use of county parks – now estimated at 15 million visits annually. Attracting, serving, and retaining park users for a lifetime requires the right mix of park offerings, delivered at the right times, and in the right places. Doing so requires continually aligning the provision of facilities, programs, and services with community needs; a process we refer to as optimizing our mix of programs and services. This is the key to achieving the Park Authority's mission and remaining relevant in the future.

Focusing on core services which are most important to an ever-diversifying and growing community will allow the Park Authority to continue to enrich lives through effective recreational and stewardship programming and services. By concentrating resources on these "core services" the Park Authority can sustain programs over time and avoid spending limited resources in less critical areas.

The Park Authority currently offers a broad range of programming opportunities including a mix of amenities and services which address the needs of divergent age

groups, activities, and interests. From equestrian programs, to science camps, astronomy to historical interpretation and archaeology, hiking and aquatics, fitness and field sports the Park Authority offers nearly 10,000 programs each year throughout the county. As with any business, success demands that we meet the expectations of our many customers. Understanding our customers' needs and preferences is central to optimizing our mix of park facilities, programs, and services. To meet that challenge, the Park Authority will employ a broader and more sophisticated set of planning tools than in the past, and will continue to engage the community in various ways throughout the five-year term of this plan.



Gauging our users' recreational and stewardship education needs and interests is especially topical at the outset of this strategic plan cycle. Our last needs assessment was completed in 2004 and has to be updated to ensure that current leisure preferences are understood and reflected in the mix of facilities, programs, and services that will comprise the park system in the future. An updated needs assessment will be a centerpiece of this strategic objective.

For the first time, the needs assessment will include a program component to accompany the traditional assessment of facility needs, allowing programmers to fine-tune service delivery by identifying popular recreational interests for different

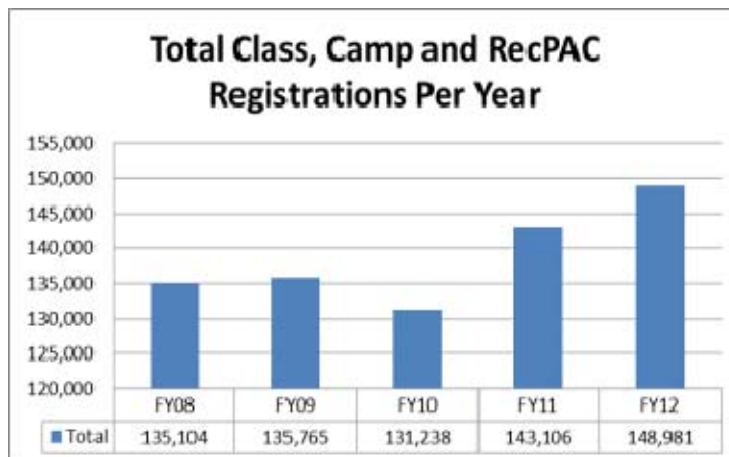


demographic groups. The study will also employ greater use of geo-spatial analysis and mapping to identify and optimize distribution of facilities throughout the county. Other forms of community engagement will include the reestablishment of regular countywide surveys, an expansion of park user surveys, and continuation of local community engagement through the park master planning process and other forums.

Some of the initiatives of this objective were identified during the last strategic plan cycle as areas worthy of long-term focus and will be continued. The nation's obesity epidemic, coupled with an emerging understanding of the health benefits associated with the use of parks, means that we will continue to promote opportunities for healthy

and active lifestyles. Similarly, recognition of growing needs to better manage our cultural and natural resources, and to reintroduce our youth to the outdoors to combat the negative effects of the “nature-deficit disorder” make it necessary to expand stewardship programming. It is essential that we understand the local impacts of national trends in order to address them.

Maintaining a mix of services that meets user needs in a financially sustainable way is also an important aim of this strategic objective. Prolonged stagnation of the economy and its spin-off impacts on agency funding has prompted a practical need for a long-term focus on financially sustainable service delivery. Projects to renovate and expand key revenue facilities identified in the Park Authority’s Financial Sustainability Plan will be addressed, as will efforts to seek efficiencies in service delivery and program management.



### Strategic Initiatives

- **Provide the planning tools needed to identify and meet the current and future needs of the community**
  - Update and interpret demographic data/reports to guide planning and programming efforts in a more efficient manner.
  - Complete Needs Assessment evaluation to address the recreation, open space and park needs.
  - Improve park connectivity through implementation of the trail development plan.
  - Conduct annual data analysis to improve core programs and services.

- Expand “voice of the customer” feedback surveys to increase customer satisfaction and continuous service improvement.
- **Renovate and expand revenue-producing facilities to ensure the growth needed to meet community needs and financial sustainability targets**
  - Maximize use of new and expanded facilities.
  - Establish and implement a Golf Enterprise business plan in accordance with National Golf Foundation Study as it applies to capital improvement needs, other development opportunities to increase revenue levels and enhance customer satisfaction.
  - Examine underutilized facilities and consider adaptive reuse to support the diversity of user needs.
- **Provide a broad array of program opportunities that address emerging community needs and contribute to financial sustainability**
  - Encourage healthy and active lifestyles.
  - Refine core set of programs and services to serve emerging community needs and attract new audiences.
  - Expand stewardship education/interpretation opportunities via programs/classes, signage, volunteer opportunities, and other media.
  - Continue to actively support the Healthy Initiatives Partnership and educate on the health benefits of parks.
  - Implement National Golf Foundation study technology-related recommendations including a golf information management system.
  - Improve operational efficiency, increase market share and revenues, and improve short-term and long-term financial performance of Golf Enterprise.
  - Apply customer satisfaction data to enrich core service delivery.



## Guiding Vision - Learning & Growth Perspective

### ***Promote Organizational Excellence***

*Organizational excellence requires the Park Authority to provide quality customer service by maintaining a quality workforce, inspiring staff, and ensuring a positive work environment. Leadership in this area will provide increasing opportunities for professional staff development to ensure career development and high performance, recruitment of outstanding future employees, and promoting a culture where employees work collaboratively and feel informed, included and recognized.*



## Objectives & Initiatives

### Maintain Quality Workforce

*Align the organization to achieve consistently excellent performance and prepare for future challenges by expanding professional development opportunities and fostering diversity.*

The Park Authority believes its employees hold the key to the agency's success and are its greatest assets. In a recovering economy, retaining and maintaining a quality workforce will continue to be a challenge. Providing professional development opportunities that enhance knowledge, skills, and abilities will communicate the high value placed on employees, build employee confidence and pride that will translate to the highest level of customer service.

***The Park Authority workforce consists of 599 merit positions and up to 3,850 seasonal employees. 354 merit positions are funded from the general fund and 245 merit positions are funded by the Revenue Fund. A majority of the seasonal positions are funded by the Revenue Fund.***

With 26% of the agency's Leadership Team and 18% of the workforce eligible for retirement before the end of 2013, continuing to address current and future attrition of senior and professional level staff is critical. The Park

***34% of current Park Authority merit employees are eligible to retire in the next five years***

Authority plans to expand succession planning efforts, in conjunction with the Fairfax County STRIVE initiative. This plan will address upward mobility for current employees, knowledge transfer from those who are leaving, and aid in

filling key vacant positions in a cost effective manner by developing in-house talent. Comprehensive succession management requires identifying, assessing, and developing employee talents in order to meet the future human capital needs of the organization. Identification of cross-agency skill gaps and strategies to fill gaps will be an important element of this effort.

As part of our continued efforts to reflect our diverse community, the agency is taking steps in succession planning and recruitment to prepare managers to build workforce diversity as turnover occurs. With a potentially high retirement rate looming, greater opportunities to address diversity will be created.

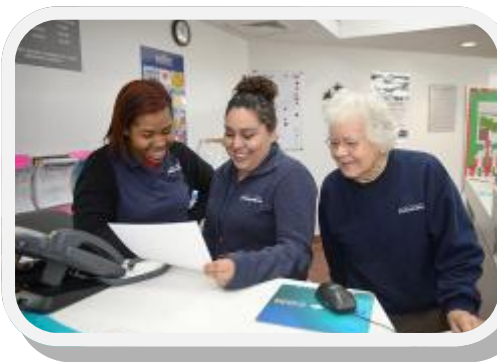


These steps to promote diversity in the Park Authority include increasing awareness among hiring supervisors and broadening recruitment efforts. A greater understanding of diversity by hiring managers and a culture of inclusion will allow them to play a more active role in expanding the organization's overall diversity. Cultural awareness and sensitivity training offered to all staff will increase awareness of cultural diversity as well as diversity in age, gender, physical ability, and other differences.

*“Better trained employees mean better services for the customer.”*

While funding for training has been drastically reduced over the last several years, creative methods for the provision of training have included use of alternative funding sources, more abundant, free web training resources and expanded free county training resources. Limited funding continued to support essential and mandated certifications.

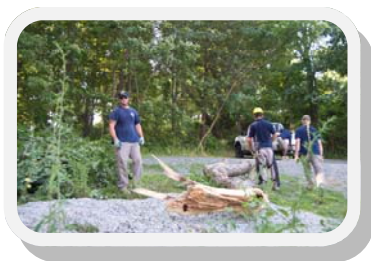
During this strategic planning cycle, the agency will develop a training plan which will provide pathways for growth and leadership to sustain the organization. There will be a renewed focus to establish leadership training and development programs to support succession planning efforts and employee development.



Rising public expectations and engagement require that the agency use staff in the most optimal manner. Reduced staffing levels resulting from budget cuts over the last five years will challenge the agency in meeting these expectations. During the workforce planning process, departments partner with the Department of Human Resources and the Department of Management and Budget to review their strategic plans and business needs and to align human capital planning with strategic objectives. Workforce planning training will keep managers current with agency and county efforts.

### **Strategic Initiatives**

- **Implement formal succession plan**
  - Expand existing succession plans for key positions in coordination with the county's succession tools and models.
- **Foster diversity in the workplace**
  - Provide cultural awareness and sensitivity training throughout the workforce.
  - Promote and utilize best hiring practices agencywide.
  - Broaden recruitment partnerships for entry-level jobs.
  - Ensure supplemental job advertising for part-time positions in the media that serve diverse communities.
- **Increase opportunities for leadership and professional development**
  - Develop a career progression program.
  - Establish a leadership development program.
  - Provide resources and programs for employees to expand capabilities in current roles.
  - Expand internship opportunities with local schools and universities to expand number of volunteers and introduce park career opportunities.
- **Implement effective workforce planning**
  - Present annual workforce planning workshops for managers.
  - Align workforce plans with organizational needs.



### Foster Positive Work Environment

*Ensure an inclusive work culture with two-way communication, and a collaborative work environment that supports recognition of valued employees.*

A positive work environment is essential for the physical, mental and emotional health of staff that in turn impacts the quality of services provided to the public. The happier employees are at work, the more likely they are to take pride in their jobs and show strong support for the agency.

*“A positive work environment is essential for the physical, mental and emotional health of staff that in turn impacts the quality of services provided to the public.”*

The last employee survey was conducted in 2005 and measured various satisfaction aspects. Generally, the survey found that Park Authority employee satisfaction levels were higher than the norm and employees overwhelmingly communicated their dedication and passion for the Park Authority. Part of the organization’s challenge is to maintain the same level of employee engagement. Anecdotally, there is great evidence in parks every day of the sustained employee passion for being part of the Park Authority family.

A renewed focus on employee satisfaction measurement and actions over the next five years will include creating and distributing an employee survey that gauges the work environment. Initiatives outlined in this strategic plan will strive to create a stimulating and rewarding place to work for Park Authority employees.

Cross-training, skill sharing, and collaboration across divisions and other agencies are key components to ensuring a positive work environment. Sharing of skills, perspectives, knowledge, and experiences will strengthen individual value, potential for career mobility, and the value provided to the public. By encouraging collaborative work environments and agencywide team building projects, employees will gain assignment variety, meet and build rapport with other park employees, and ultimately broaden their park system knowledge.

In an environment of limited compensation growth employee recognition and rewards becomes increasingly important to ensuring a positive work environment. Currently, internal agency award programs, although abundant, are generally carried out within the individual divisions or sites. The wide array of agency recognition, both formal and informal will be reviewed to determine equity, fairness, and motivational value.

### Strategic Initiatives

- **Promote a stimulating and rewarding work environment**
  - Measure and assess employee satisfaction with the work environment.
  - Develop and implement initiatives to improve the work environment based on employee survey findings.
  - Enhance employee communications.
  
- **Foster team building and a collaborative work environment**
  - Create agencywide team building projects and events.
  - Offer mentoring/employee exchange opportunities.
  - Increase opportunities for employees at all levels to participate in cross-divisional work teams.
  
- **Evaluate award and recognition programs**
  - Review award and recognition programs to ensure effective management and implementation.



## Balanced Scorecard with Measurements/Definitions

	Objective	Measure	Baseline	5-Year Target	Definitions
<b>CUSTOMER</b>	Meet the Needs of a Diverse Community	Facilities and Services Satisfaction Rating	73.9%	80%**	Percentage of park-using households who rated satisfaction with the overall park system 8-10 on a 10-point scale. "Park-using households" refers to those who said they used any park or park facility operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority in the past year.**
		Percentage of New Facilities Added to Satisfy Needs Assessment Goals	70%	TBD**	Percentage of new facilities added as compared to facilities needed, based on 2004 Park Authority Needs Assessment. The facilities needed are referred to as "contribution level goals" for 21 park facility types over ten years.**
		Total Visitors	15,349,442	16,884,350	Number of total Park Authority visitors. This estimate includes visitation at RECenters, golf courses, other staffed parks, and the visitation estimate for unstaffed facilities.
		Diversity Index	93	95	This index compares the percentage of racial and ethnic minority households that visit the park system annually with the same park visitation percentage for all households.
	Enrich Citizen Quality of Life	Citizen Quality of Life Rating	79.5 %	85%	Percent of Fairfax County households that rate Park Authority as either extremely or very important to their quality of life.
*New measure. Data to come from future survey/inventory.					
**New data generated from planned studies may result in adjustments during the reporting period					

F I N A N C I A L	Objective	Measure	Baseline	5-Year Target	Definitions
	Stabilize Funding	General Fund Support for Parks per Household	\$72.40	Pending BOS/PAB discussion	Amount of General Fund support per household. This figure shows public investment in parks by dividing the number of households in the county into Park Authority's General Fund 10001 plus Fund 80300 budgets.
		Revenue Fund Dollars Available for Reinvestment	\$289,349	\$1,825,000	Annual Revenue dollars (Fund 80000) available after obligations and requirements for transfer to Park Capital Improvement (Fund 80300).
	Expand Alternative Resources	Total Non-traditional Funding	\$3,620,358	\$3,982,394	Other dollars received by both FCPA and FCPF. Non-traditional funding sources are not fees, General Obligation Bonds, or General Fund Tax Dollars.
		Hours and Value of Volunteer Contribution	200,100 hours \$4,360,170	210,105 hours \$4,578,178	Number of volunteer hours worked. The contributory value of volunteer hours is derived by multiplying the Virginia volunteer hourly rate standard as determined annually by State Office on Volunteerism and Community Service.
	<p>*New measure. Data to come from future survey/inventory.</p> <p>**New data generated from planned studies may result in adjustments during the reporting period</p>				

	Objective	Measure	Baseline	5-Year	Definitions
<b>P R O C E S S</b>	Manage and Protect Property	Replacement of Grounds Equipment	TBD**	TBD**	Percentage of grounds equipment (ex. tractors, utility vehicles, mowers, etc.) that needs replacement due to expired life
		Replacement of Facilities and Site Amenities	TBD*	TBD*	Percentage of facilities and site amenities (ex. Buildings, HVAC systems, playgrounds, courts, lights, synthetic turf fields, etc.) that need replacement due to
		Parkland under Natural Resource Management	9% of total parkland	15% of total parkland	Approximate percentage of parkland being effectively managed for natural resources to include invasive plant control, native plant community management, wetland
	Inform and Engage the Public	Number of Web Visits	5,762,652	6,050,784	A visit is a series of page views from the same uniquely identified client within a 30 minute window. No activity for more than 30 minutes ends the visit.
		Number of Publications	167,507	192,633	Number of quarterly subscribers to the Park Authority's two primary subscriber-based
		Public Engagement Index	TBD*	TBD*	Index derived from compiling the number of electronic and in person contacts or engagements. Contacts include instances where the Fairfax County Park Authority is attempting to engage customers or the residents to either obtain feedback on
	Leverage Technology	Percent of Technology Plan Projects Implemented	0	80% completed projects in the plan	Percentage of technology projects completed from the FY2014-2018 Parks Information Technology Plan. Projects were either requested by staff or deemed necessary by Automated Systems Branch to improve efficiency.
	Optimize Programs and Services	Number of Class, Camp and Program	176,240	199,150	Number of registrations in coded programs includes classes, camps, programs and lessons both Park Authority operated and
		Total Staffed Park Visitations	2,949,970	3,244,967	Includes verifiable visitation at staffed parks to include RECenters, Golf Courses, and other staffed parks.
		Total # of Admissions for Special Events and	299,101	329,011	Includes paid admissions for special events and amusements including the train, mini-golf, hayrides, carousels and tour boats.
		Number of Visitors Engaged in a Stewardship	881,510	1,100,000	Includes Fairfax County residents directly served by stewardship education workshops, presentations, programs and projects.

\*New measure. Data to come from future survey/inventory.

\*\*New data generated from planned studies may result in adjustments during the reporting period.

	Objective	Measure	Baseline	5-Year Target	Definitions
<b>L E A R N I N G  &amp;  G R O W T H</b>	Maintain Quality Workforce	Average Hours per Employee of Annual Development and Training Completed	6.88	16	Average number of hours per employee of annual development and training completed. Hours will be calculated from training hours entered for merit employees into Plateau system.
	Foster Positive Work Environment	Employee Satisfaction Rating *	TBD	TBD	Percentage of Park Authority employees, from the most recent employee survey, who rated their satisfaction with the overall departments as 8-10 on a 10-point scale.

\*New measure. Data to come from future survey/inventory.

\*\*New data generated from planned studies may result in adjustments during the reporting period





## Park Authority at a Glance

The Park Authority was created by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1950 when the Virginia General Assembly passed the Park Authorities Act (Sec. 15.1-1228 to 15.1-1238.1, Ch. 27, Code of Virginia), which permitted counties to establish individual authorities to preserve open space and acquire and develop park facilities throughout the state. The Park Authority has been an important part of the county's landscape since then.

### Park Governance

The Fairfax County Park Authority Board is appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. These 12 appointees are comprised of one representative from each of the nine magisterial districts, plus three at-large members. The park board sets policy and establishes priorities for the park agency. Board governance is guided by bylaws that establish the Board's officers, administrative, meeting, and committee structure. A memorandum of understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Park Authority establishes respective authorities, roles, and expectations between the two boards. Park rules and regulations are established by the Park Authority and govern how parks are operated and used. Park rules are intended to provide for the safe enjoyment of Fairfax County's parks while also fostering stewardship and the protection of natural resources. Park Authority employees and authorized volunteer staff have been trained and are obligated to enforce these rules and regulations. Park rules and regulations are posted on the website and within parks. The Park Authority partners with the Fairfax County Police Department who enforce county laws and park regulations within parks.



### Park Policies

The Park Policy Manual (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parkpolicy/>) provides guidance to the Fairfax County Park Authority Board for decision making in accordance with the goals, purposes, objectives, and policies of the Authority, and to the staff of the Authority in determining appropriate procedures for implementing those decisions. Park Authority policies are guidelines which allow discretion and latitude of choice or judgment to be exercised, within legal bounds, depending on different circumstances, situations, or conditions. Indiscriminate exceptions to Park Authority policies are to be avoided. A five-year review and updates are necessary to ensure that the objectives and policies reflect changing county needs; therefore, objectives and policies may be revised, added, or deleted upon action of the Park Authority Board.

### **Park System Funding**

Park funding is provided in three traditional fund types. County General Fund contributions from taxes fund general park administration and operation of non-revenue parks. The Park Revenue Fund consists of park revenues generated from fees and rentals that fund revenue producing site operations. Land acquisition and facility development and renovation are primarily funded through voter-approved General Obligation Funds.

Since the 1990s, a greater reliance on the Revenue Fund and revenue sources has been necessary as the percentage of the overall county budget allocated to parks has decreased from 1.2% to .7%. The absorption of operational costs by the Revenue Fund has added pressures to revenue facilities such as RECenters and golf courses, especially as these facilities age and competition increases. Shifts in pricing, cost centers, and fee generation have been necessary to sustain the Revenue Fund as it absorbs more General Fund costs. As a result of extreme budget cuts in the years from FY 2008-FY 2014, the Revenue Fund viability is extremely fragile. Continued revenue growth depends on facility development and reinvestment that require capital funding.

Following a detailed core services analysis, a fiscal sustainability model, and cost recovery targets were developed along with a list of key recommended initiatives needed in the near term to sustain and enhance revenue production. In 2012 the agency adopted a Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) with these key recommendations that is currently being implemented. Several FSP recommendations were for capital investments at revenue sites that received voter approval in the 2012 Park Bond.

Capital funding through voter-approved bonds has been successfully used since 1959 to purchase parkland and build the park system. From its first land purchase of a 16-acre tract in Great Falls, the Park Authority has expanded its holdings to include more than 23,196 acres, about 9.5% of the entire county acreage. Acquired through the consistent support of Fairfax County voters and the Board of Supervisors, 12 park bond referenda have been approved since the inception of the Park Authority, providing more than \$528 million for land acquisition and park development. Additional land contributed by public-spirited donors and through the land development process has greatly contributed to the county's open space network.

Alternative non-traditional funding for parks comes from several non-tax or fee sources including funds raised by the Park Foundation, grants, other contributions to the park system, development proffers, volunteer services, park support groups, park adoption programs, and partnerships. These alternative funding sources have provided cash and in-kind services to the Park Authority over the years.

### Park System Highlights

- 23,196 acres of parkland and open space
- Approximately 80% of parkland held is undeveloped
- 421 parks
- Three lakefront parks, two with campgrounds
- Nine RECenters
- Two skate parks
- Eight off-leash dog areas
- Eight golf courses
- One ice skating rink
- 241 athletic fields
- 32 synthetic turf fields
- 451 natural turf school fields
- 204 playgrounds
- Five nature centers
- 10 summer performance series including hundreds of culturally diverse performances and movies!
- Two equestrian centers
- Eight distinctive historic properties
- 668 garden plots
- One fully accessible playground and carousel where all children can play
- Three fantastic water parks, one in-door, and two under sunny skies!
- Five amphitheaters
- 320 miles of trails
- One horticultural center
- One observatory
- One working farm
- One working grist mill
- Over three million artifacts and historic objects
- 260 Tennis Courts
- 128 Basketball Courts

For more information on the Park Authority's programs and services visit <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/>.



Park System Trends	FY2001	FY2012	% Growth
Park Acreage (acres)	20,063	23,196	15.6%
Parks	363	421	15.9%
Picnic Shelters	17	35	105.8%
Dog Parks	1	8	700%
Irrigated Athletic Fields	82	119	45.1%
Lighted Athletic Fields	57	113	98.2%
Synthetic Turf Athletic Fields	0	32	New
Athletic Fields Maintained (FCPS + FCPA)	296	777	162.5%
Historic Sites	60	90	50%
Hiking & Fitness Trails (miles)	204	320	56.8%
Structures (sq. ft.)	863,302	1,183,127	37%
# of Capital Equipment Items Maintained	397	346	-12.8%
Classes, Camps and Programs	81,337	176,240	117%
Full and Partial Field Adoptions	129	124	-3.8%
Volunteer Hours	155,684	200,100	28.5%
FCPA Website Visits (beginning in 2004)	827,748	2,634,163	318%



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Fairfax County Park Authority Financial Management Plan (Internal document adopted by the Park Authority Board September 28, 2011)

Fairfax County Park Authority Financial Sustainability Plan (Internal document adopted by the Park Authority Board December 14, 2011)

Fairfax County Park Authority Great Parks Great Communities Park Comprehensive Plan (adopted by the Park Authority Board June 22, 2011)  
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## Glossary of Terms

- **Adopt-A-Park or Field:** This program is a cooperative venture between the Fairfax County Park Authority and interested community organizations and residents. Groups or individuals assume the maintenance responsibility for designated park areas or facilities. Adopt-A-Field is a venture between the Fairfax County Park Authority and interested athletic organizations whereby these organizations assume the maintenance responsibility for designated athletic fields.
- **Amenity:** In the Park Authority, an amenity is generally something that supports a facility and would encompass benches, lighting, fencing, signage, etc.
- **Cultural Resource Management Plan (CRMP).** An agency- adopted plan used to supply the Park Authority with the information, policies and practices needed to preserve and protect remaining cultural resources in Fairfax County; engage and educate staff and the public in resource stewardship; and integrate resource protection into all planning, development, and management activities. It identifies issues and proposes strategies in 11 topic areas, including cultural resource planning; archaeology; Civil War sites; archaeological artifacts and collections; historic buildings, structures, objects and traditional cultural properties; Fairfax County Historic Overlay Districts; Listings; cemeteries; cultural landscapes; human impacts on cultural resources; and education.
- **Core Services:** An array of programs and services that are considered to be of the highest value to the residents of Fairfax County are core to the mission and purpose of the Park Authority.
- **Facility:** In the Park Authority, a facility is generally associated with activity and would encompass not only a building, but tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, skate parks, water parks, picnic shelters, trails, golf courses, etc.
- **Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP):** Plan developed to identify the agency's core programs and services, to provide a sustainability model that can be applied to all programs and services, and deliver a cost recovery target for the overall operations of the agency.
- **Geographic Information System (GIS):** This is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present all types of geographical data.

- **Infoweb:** An internal website for all Fairfax County employees. The site includes online forms and services, employee benefits information, and other agency information.
- **Leadership Team:** A 17 person group comprised of Park Authority staff to include the Park Authority Director, Deputy Director, Division Directors, the Public Information Officer, the Director of Human Capital Development and Services, the Park Foundation Director, the Manager of Strategic Initiatives and Policy Development, the Park Planning Branch Manager, the Finance Branch Manager, the Automated Services Branch Manager, the Manager of Golf Enterprises, the Business Office Manager, and the Marketing Research and Planning Branch Manager. This team meets regularly to discuss items of critical importance to the agency.
- **Lifecycle:** Lifecycle is the estimated useful life of a structure, facility, amenity or equipment from original purchase, installation or construction through its estimated need to be renovated or replaced based on facility type and year of installation. A lifecycle schedule provides a basis to determine scheduled cost estimates for when specific equipment, facilities and amenities will need replacement, renovation, restoration or repair and forms the basis for estimating renovation.
- **National Golf Foundation (NGF) Study:** This study, performed by NGF Consulting, Inc., outlines the keys to the long-term success of the FCPA Golf Enterprises' golf operations.
- **Natural Capital:** This designation includes living organisms, air, water and soil ecosystems and the environmental services they provide, including cleaning air and water, supporting wildlife and contributing to the quality of life of our citizens. Natural capital is not self-sustaining, but requires deliberate care. Natural capital is ever lasting only if investments are made to enhance, protect and preserve it.
- **Natural Resource Management Plan (NRMP).** An agency-adopted plan used to supply the Park Authority with the information, policies and practices needed to preserve and protect remaining natural resources in Fairfax County; engage and educate staff and citizens in resource stewardship; and integrate resource protection into all planning, development, and management activities. The Plan identifies issues including planning, vegetation, wildlife, water resources, air quality, human impact and education.



- **Nature deficit disorder** refers to a hypothesis by Richard Louv in his 2005 book "*Last Child in the Woods*" that human beings, especially children, are spending less time outdoors resulting in a wide range of behavioral problems.
- **Parktakes:** A magazine-style publication published quarterly by the Fairfax County Park Authority that includes all Park Authority fee programs and classes as well as park and facility descriptions, registration information, and highlights of special events.
- **ParkNet:** The Park Authority's core business management information system which tracks point of sale transactions related to admission, pass, food and inventory sales. Permits the agency to monitor many performance measures and key indicators in areas such as facility attendance, class and program registration, revenue generation by activity, activity type, facility, and program area.
- **Parkmail:** A public access point via the Park Authority Website to e-mail the Park Authority regarding any topic, with assurance the correspondence will be directed to the appropriate division, branch, section, and/or site or responded to directly.
- **RECenter:** A recreation and fitness center operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The Fairfax County Park Authority has nine recreation centers serving over one million customers annually. These facilities offer a variety of aquatics and fitness programs as well as classes, camps, and the latest exercise equipment.
- **ResOURces:** An electronic newsletter published quarterly for the general public by the Resource Management Division that focuses on stewardship, cultural resources, horticulture, nature, history, and volunteers.
- **STRIVE:** STRIVE stands for Sustainable Training, Resources and Incentives for Valued Employees and is a comprehensive, multi-pronged program, combining compensation, succession planning and management, and employee performance management for the employees of Fairfax County.
- **Tririga:** A computer integrated facilities management system offering a number of reports to assist inventory, cost analysis, citizen requests, and current and past work requests. This system stores interim use agreements, rental leases, notes, documents, warranty information, life cycle assessments, property/parcel information, and easements.

- **Volunteer Management System (VMS):** This system, anticipated to be operational by the end of 2013, will enable the Park Authority to meet the project goals of improved efficiency for volunteer managers, more effective volunteer recruitment, consistency of practice across sites, complete and accurate reporting, and ease of use for the public.





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