







2024

Isle of Wight County

PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

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CHAPTER 1 // EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Isle of Wight County's parks, recreation, and open space offerings help make the county an outstanding place to live, work, and play. Parks are a cornerstone for community vitality, economic growth, environmental and infrastructure services, and public health and well-being.

The 2024 Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan examines current conditions of parks, facilities, programs, and operational and maintenance procedures. The findings and recommendations presented in the report enables planners and administrators to prioritize resources and make decisions for new facilities and rehabilitation projects, programs, and services in a manner that is fiscally responsible, environmentally sound, and responsive to residents' needs.

The core principals which guide and organize this needs analysis are rooted in the tenants of sustainability and include conservation, health and wellness, and social equity. These are the three pillars of the National Recreation and Parks Association and they are extremely meaningful in the context of the Isle of Wight County's physical and economic condition. They provide an appropriate context when considering the value of existing and proposed improvements to parks and programs.

Parks and Recreation Department's Mission Statement:
Your community partner in fun and wellness.



Parks and Recreation directly serves many priority County goals and provides a variety of benefits and services.

Goals of the Plan:

1. Identify opportunities and constraints facing the Department.
2. Understand the needs and sentiments of the community through public input.
3. Recommend methods for addressing current and future needs in amenities and programming.
4. Prioritize those recommendations.
5. Analyze cost and budget to implement those recommendations and priorities.

Parks and Facilities

The park system is well used and the community views its parks and facilities as important. There are gaps in service; however, expressed unmet need for new facilities and services is limited to a few amenities. This report identifies recommendations for how Isle of Wight County can enhance existing popular and unique facilities to create a world class, destination quality parks and open space system.

Findings

- Existing facilities have issues related to use and age
- Need for trail network expansion
- Need for additional water access
- Need for additional indoor recreation space
- Need for improved access to park facilities across the County
- Need for additional neighborhood level parks

Identified Priorities

- Repairs and improvements
- Trail network expansion
- Water access
- Indoor recreation
- Neighborhood parks

ISLE OF WIGHT PARKS AND FACILITIES SNAPSHOT

2,897 acres total of park land owned by IOW, including…

50 acres of undeveloped parks

2,348 acres of natural area

255 acres of additional park land in Smithfield

14 Parks, historical sites, greenways, and special use facilities

2 Community/recreation centers

1 Senior Center

11 Miles of trails and greenways

Key Recommendations for Improvements

- Repair and improve existing amenities, focusing first on safety, ADA requirements, deferred maintenance, and outdated equipment.
- Establish additional multi-use and hiking trails, focusing on connecting parks with neighboring communities.
- Develop additional water access points, including fishing and canoe/kayak launches.
- Develop a blueways trail.
- Develop Heritage Park as a District Level park.
- Invest in Camptown Park and Nike Park.
- Expand access to Neighborhood Level parks through shared use agreements with schools and developing new park sites.
- Develop a new indoor recreation center.
- Develop a splash pad.

Programs

Isle of Wight County offers a wide range of recreational programs and manages a range of recreational facilities. This report evaluates the current programs and program operation based on industry best practices, community demographic analysis, public input, and recreation trends and then develops recommendations. The overall focus of programs should respond to community needs and demographics.

Findings

- Programs with the greatest unmet need were adult fitness and wellness programs, exercise classes, community special events, and senior health and wellness programs.
- The Department offers over 50 different programs that serve a broad range of interests and age groups.
- The Department has multiplied services through program partnerships and a strong volunteer program.
- Lifecycle distribution of programs is uneven.
- The Department does not classify program by service category - core-essential, important, value added.

Identified Priorities

- Core programs
- Program tracking
- Balance age groups served
- Plan for cost recovery
- Expand active adult programming

Key Recommendations for Improvements

- Implement the classification of services and cost recovery goals.
- Develop new pricing policy and strategies.
- Rebalance program lifecycle distribution, phasing out declining and introducing new annually.
- Develop separate programming classification and opportunities for active older adults.
- Expand adult and senior fitness and wellness programs, exercise classes, and community special events and implement historic interpretation programs.
- Improve the strategy for public feedback.
- Develop and implement a Marketing Plan.

2022 Public Survey Results

75% of survey respondents have visited Isle of Wight Parks and Rec Facilities in the last year.

Top Facility Priorities for Investment

1. Walking and biking trails
2. Beaches
3. Fitness & exercise facilities
4. Outdoor performing arts venue
5. Fishing piers

Top Program Priorities for Investment

1. Adult fitness and wellness
2. Community special events
3. Exercise classes
4. Senior health and wellness classes
5. Historic park programs

71% agree that P&R makes Isle of Wight County a more desirable place to live.

Top Five Amenity Needs of Households

1. Beaches (5,595, or 38%)
2. Walking and Biking Trails (4,936, or 34%)
3. Outdoor performing arts venue (4,773, or 33%)
4. Fitness & exercise facilities (4,631, or 32%)
5. Indoor walking/jogging track (4,309, or 29%)

Maintenance and Operations

Operational systems determine the quality of facilities, services, and communication with the public. The community holds the quality of parks and recreation staff in high regard. This report identifies ways that this high level of service can continue to keep pace with the community's needs.

Findings

- The functions and services performed by the Parks Maintenance Division are numerous, many go beyond the traditional responsibilities of parks maintenance employees.
- Staff have the equipment and skills to perform tasks, but lack necessary staffing levels.
- The Department does not have the staffing capacity to manage systems at a Level 2 maintenance standard for developed parks and a Level 3 standard for natural areas. The Department is currently short staffed by 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees.
- The Department has good partnerships with area organizations.
- The Department does not track its own unit cost activity, and therefore cannot analyze the efficiency of contracting services.
- When facilities in Isle of Wight County were initially evaluated by consultants, the County did not have a work order management system in place for park maintenance. However, following recommendations from the draft report, the County adopted the Facility Dude management system.
- The Department operates with a park maintenance level outlook, but with no formal standards.

Identified Priorities

- Consistent measurement and tracking system.
- Park system standards
- Deepen and expand partnerships
- Planning for staffing and maintenance budget
- Sustainability

Key Recommendations for Improvements

- Deepen existing and establish new partnerships with other area organizations; formalize partnerships in written agreements.
- Enter into an equitable shared-use agreement with the county school system for recreational use and access.
- Develop a quantitative performance measurement and tracking system.
- Hire ten additional full-time equivalent (FTE) employees to have the recommended staff/park acre ratio. Maintain this ratio as the system expands.
- Increase annual park maintenance funding and staff by $950,000 annually, adjusting for inflation.
- Budget for lifecycle costs and maintenance and coordination lifecycle budget allocations with the work order management system.
- Create a park standards manual.
- Undertake periodic citizen surveys to keep track of trends.

10- Year Phased Implementation Plan and Cost Analysis

An important piece of the plan is to determine how much to budget for the recommended improvements identified in the conditions assessments, shortfalls identified in the Level of Service analysis, and the recommended system-wide improvements. A comprehensive assessment of capital investment costs with an achievable implementation plan is essential for CIP planning. The cost analysis in this report shows gross approximate figures and is not intended to be used for specifical financial determinations. The purpose of this analysis is to provide the Department enough information to begin thinking about planning efforts related to funding and priorities. Cost estimates are provided in 2024 dollars, and should be re-evaluated in future years.

These improvements address the projected needs of the County over the next 10 years. The long-term (10+ year) phase acknowledges the needs identified in the report, but extends the investment allocation over a longer time frame to direct prioritization of funding. If the County has the resources or the opportunity arises, the long-term projects should be implemented in 5-10 years. All identified improvements, recommendations, and shortfalls identified through the report process are included in this 10 year implementation time line.

As well as planning for capital improvements, it is also important to plan for funding maintenance and operation activities. The Department requires an additional 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members to meet existing park acreage to staff ratios. As the park system expands, additional staff members will be needed.

IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET PLAN

Near Term

Next 5 years (by 2029)

Improve existing facilities and practices; build out to the capacity of existing facilities; set groundwork for long-term actions

$6,674,000

Mid Term

5-10 Years (2032)

Expand operations of the Department and meet population growth needs

$17,353,00

Long Term

10+ Years

Expand park system with new land purchase and development

$3,919,000

On Going

continue on-going efforts, as issues arise, or as land or funding becomes available

$26,695,000 Total 10-Year Construction Cost

$950,000 Annual additional maintenance and operations funding required to serve existing facilities

+10 FTE Additional staff are required to meet 2022 operational and maintenance needs. This staff increase is included in the $950,000 increased annual funding need.

Completed Actions

As this report was being developed, the Parks and Recreation Department has proactively implemented numerous key improvements and best practices, many of which directly respond to the recommendations outlined in the draft report. Throughout the report, you will find where these recommendations were made and how the County specifically addressed them.

Notable actions include the following:

- The adoption of the Facility Dude work order management system in January 2023, which has streamlined maintenance and operations.
- The replacement of outdated kitchen appliances at Otelia J. Rainey in 2024,
- Upgraded playground equipment at Nike Park in 2022,
- Resurfaced basketball court at Nike Park in 2023,
- Reconstructed tennis courts at Nike Park in 2022,
- Resurfaced tennis courts at Riverview Park in 2022,
- Completed the construction of the Heritage Park ATV Trail.
- Additionally, the County has ensured the safety and accessibility of playgrounds by replacing engineered wood fiber (EWF) surfacing across all sites.
- Expanded recreational opportunities by double-striping tennis courts to accommodate both tennis and pickleball in 2024.



The basketball court at Nike Park was resurfaced in 2023.

These actions underscore the Department's commitment to aligning with the comprehensive master plan's goals, ensuring that the County's parks and recreation facilities continue to evolve to meet the community's needs. The following report provides an in-depth analysis of these initiatives and further recommendations for future improvements.

CHAPTER 2 // INTRODUCTION

Isle of Wight County commissioned this plan to better understand existing community needs for parks and recreation and how to address current and future needs within the next 10 years. The County should consider this Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan a flexible guideline for making positive changes – one that must continually consider current trends, changing public opinions, and available funding sources.

Parks and Recreation Department's Mission Statement:

Your community partner in fun and wellness.

Goals of the Plan:

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3. Recommend methods for addressing current and future needs in amenities and programming.
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Core Values

The core principles which guide and organize this needs analysis are rooted in the tenants of sustainability and include conservation, health and wellness, and social equity. These are the three pillars of the National Recreation and Parks Association, and they are extremely meaningful in the context of the Isle of Wight County's physical and economic condition. They provide an appropriate context when considering the value of existing and proposed improvements to parks and programs. The Department's Mission Statement is also a key guide in the development of this plan.

National Recreation and Parks Association Three Pillars

Conservation—Parks are critical in the role of preserving natural resources that have real economic benefits for communities. The Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department is a leader for protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and providing education and programming that helps the county engage in conservation practices.

Health and Wellness—The Parks and Recreation Department leads the county in improving the overall health and wellness of its citizens and is combating some of the most complicated and expensive challenges our country faces –poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Social Equity—Universal access to public parks and recreation is a right, not just a privilege. Each day Parks and Recreation Department is working hard to ensure that ALL members of the community have access to available resources and programming.

CHAPTER 3 // METHODOLOGY

The consultant team collaborated with the Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department to gather information related to parks and recreation operations, to understand how the Department and parks system functions, and to offer recommendations for addressing opportunities and constraints.

PROJECT SEQUENCE



The first step of the process examines existing conditions within and influencing the County's Parks and Recreation system, including demographics and trends, park site conditions, recreational programming, and operation and maintenance practices. The second step of the process expands upon this basis of understanding to identify and prioritize needs and develop an implementation plan.

The consultant team, with the assistance of County staff, assessed the existing physical conditions of parks, greenways, and facilities using assessment score sheets. For this report, parks were considered outdoor space and facilities were considered built structures. The consultant team analyzed the data and created recommendations for physical improvements and related costs.

The public and stakeholder feedback component involved receiving input from Department staff, results from a statistically valid survey of Isle of Wight County citizens conducted in 2022, public input gathered during public meetings, and stakeholder interviews.

Findings from the analysis of existing conditions informed recommendations for improvements to the parks system, both physical and operational. The goals of the recommendations are to offer potential solutions to current problems and to ensure that future needs are addressed. The Implementation Plan categorized each recommendation into short-term, mid-term, long-term, and on-going priorities to help the Department plan for funding and staffing needs necessary to carry out the recommendations in a feasible manner.

The final step in the process was to apply costs to the recommendations and reassess priorities based on funding feasibility. Preliminary estimates related to park and facility conditions were developed using spreadsheets that incorporated generalized costs per improvement. Note that these planning-level costs are not intended to be used for design and construction purposes but for the Department to gain a broad understanding of funding levels necessary to implement various recommendations.

CHAPTER 4 // EXISTING CONDITIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

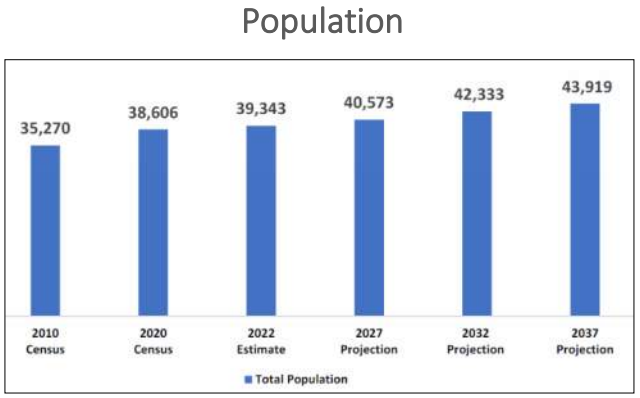
Part of a Needs Assessment is determining who the expected users of the park system are now and in the future. For this comprehensive plan, this was accomplished by reviewing demographic data to understand what the population of Isle of Wight County looks like now and how it is proposed to change in the future. These findings will be compared in Phase 2 of this report with the recommended number of parks and facilities per population. The results of this analysis guide the plan as to what types of parks and facilities should be added, expanded, or prioritized. It is important to note that future projections are all based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections. The following is a summary. Refer to **Appendix B** for the complete Demographic Analysis.

Methodology:

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and from ESRI, the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in July 2022 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2020 Censuses and estimates for 2022 and 2027 as obtained by ESRI. Straight line linear regression was used for projected 2032 and 2037 demographics.

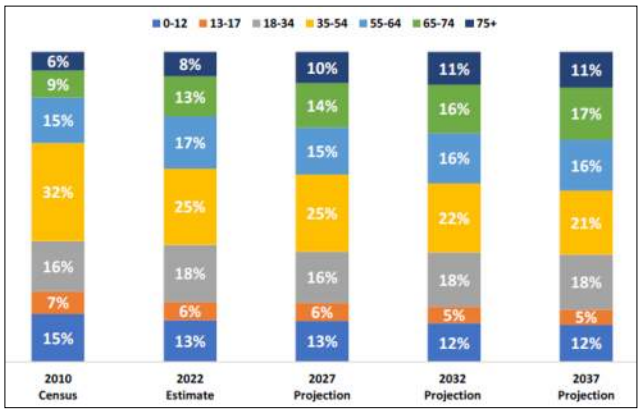
Population:

- The population is increasing and is projected to experience a 12% growth over the next 15 years.
- With a modestly growing population, park and recreation services will need to strategically invest, develop, and maintain parks and facilities in relation to current and future housing development areas.



Age Segment:

- Isle of Wight County currently has a very unbalanced age segmentation with the largest group being 55+ making up 38% of the population. By comparison the 55+ age segment comprises 30% of the United States population
- Over the next 15 years, the 55+ age segment, which currently is the largest age segment, will increase by 6% while most of the younger age segments are expected to remain the same or experience slight decreases in population percentage.



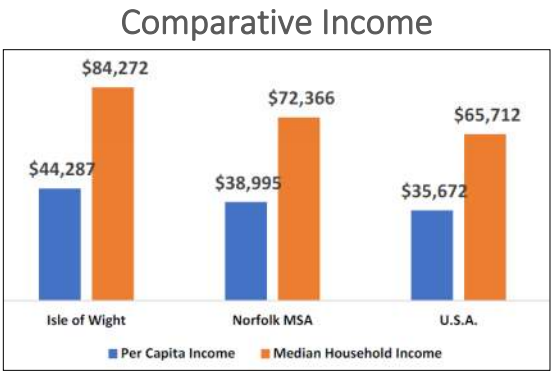
- This is assumed to be a consequence of a vast amount of the Baby Boomer generation shifting into the senior age segment.
- Given the differences in how the active adults (55 and older) participate in recreation programs, the trend is moving toward having at least two to three different program age segments for older adults.
- When developing the park and recreation system, the County should evaluate recreation experiences that would cater to active adults who are 55-64, 65–74, and 75+ age segments.

Ethnicity

- A slightly diversifying population will likely focus the County on providing traditional programming and service offerings while always seeking to identify emerging activities and sports.

Income:

- With median and per capita household income averages exceeding that of the Metro Area averages and above national averages, it is important for the County to prioritize providing offerings that are first class with exceptional customer service with a general focus on seeking opportunities to create revenue generation.





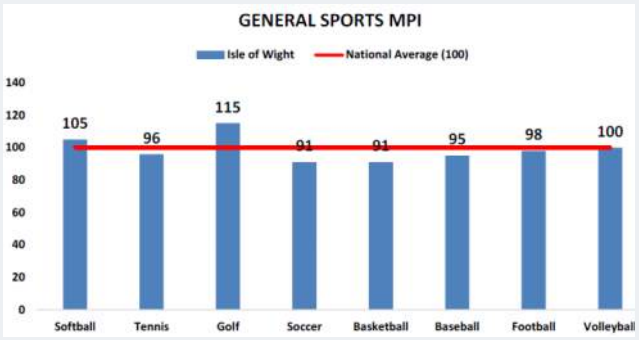
Group in elegant Sunday attire at Mary W. Wells Senior Center

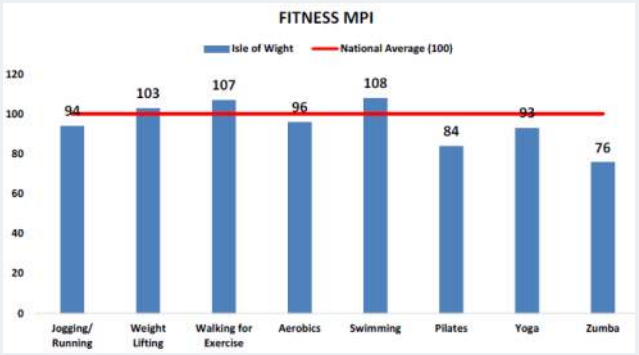
MARKET ANALYSIS/RECREATIONAL TRENDS

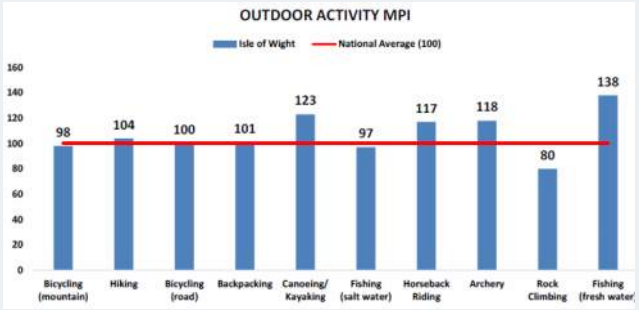
The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data from ESRI. A Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the County. The MPI shows the likelihood that a resident of the target area will participate in certain activities when compared to the US National average. The national average is 100, therefore numbers below 100 would represent a lower-than-average participation rate, and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rate. The following tables illustrate and summarizes the indexes of the general sports, fitness and outdoor recreation general sports market potential for the County as a whole. The full report can be found in the **Appendix B** as part of the Demographic and Recreation Trends Analysis.

Overall, Isle of Wight County demonstrates average to above average market potential index numbers. Looking at the three categories (general sports, fitness, and outdoor activity), Isle of Wight County's MPI percentages show that Isle of Wight County has relatively strong participation rates when it comes to outdoor recreation activities; general sports and fitness activities are generally in-line with or below the national averages though a few anomalies do exist (golf, walking for exercise, and swimming).

Market Potential Index – Isle of Wight County Compared to National Average:







Conclusion:

It is critically important for Isle of Wight County to understand the national participation trends in recreation activities. In doing so, the department can gain general insight into the lifecycle stage of recreation sports programs and activities and thereby anticipate potential changes in need and demand for the programs and activities that it provides to the residents of Isle of Wight County.

COMMUNITY INPUT FINDINGS

One of the first steps in a needs assessment is to gather feedback from interested parties including parks staff, stakeholders, and the general public. This input provides a baseline of community sentiment, expressed demand (what the community expresses a need for), and if that need is met or unmet by the current facilities. When this input is compared against participation, usage, and demographic statistics, a holistic view emerges showing needs, shortfalls, and priorities related to the parks system.

For this plan, community input consisted of a statistically valid survey conducted in 2022, a SWOT analysis conducted with Department staff, stakeholder interviews, and two public input meetings.

The following are key findings from the from the surveys, comments, and interviews, and public input meetings. Refer to the **Appendix C** for the complete survey results, stakeholder notes, and results from the public input meetings.

- **Isle of Wight parks are highly valued**: 80% agreed that parks and recreation preserves open spaces and protects the environment, and 71% agree that it makes Isle of Wight County a more desirable place to live.
- **Park and Recreation facilities are well used**: 75% of survey respondents indicated they had visited an Isle of Wight County park, trail, sport, or recreation facility during the past 12 months. Of those who visited, 25% visited at least once a week.
- **Isle of Wight Parks are seen to be well maintained:** 79% of survey respondents rated the facilities either good or excellent.
- **Greenway trails for walking, biking, and hiking are well used and highly valued:** Nearly twice as many survey respondents said greenways were the most important to them (39%), as the next highest

2022 Public Survey Results

75% of survey respondents have visited Isle of Wight Parks and Rec Facilities in the last year.

Top Facility Priorities for Investment

1. Walking and biking trails
2. Beaches
3. Fitness & exercise facilities
4. Outdoor performing arts venue
5. Fishing piers

Top Program Priorities for Investment

1. Adult fitness and wellness
2. Community special events
3. Exercise classes
4. Senior health and wellness classes
5. Historic park programs

71% agree that P&R makes Isle of Wight County a more desirable place to live.

Most Important Facilities to Households

1. Walking biking paths (39%)
2. Beaches (23%)
3. Fishing piers (20%)
4. Fitness & exercise facilities (17%)
5. Outdoor performing arts venue (16%)

Top Five Amenity Needs of Households

1. Beaches (5,595, or 38%)
2. Walking and Biking Trails (4,936, or 34%)
3. Outdoor performing arts venue (4,773, or 33%)
4. Fitness & exercise facilities (4,631, or 32%)
5. Indoor walking / jogging track (4,309, or 29%)

responses, beaches (23%), fishing piers (20%), and fitness & exercise facilities (17%). During the input meetings, the public indicated a demand for specific amenities such as pickleball courts. There was also a call for nature/hiking trails and greenway/linear parks and a desire for more outdoor recreational opportunities

- **Beaches came on top as having the highest unmet facility need:** An estimated 5,595 households of 14,611 (38%) not having sufficient access, followed by walking & biking trails (4,936 households, or 34%).
- **The most needed programming is adult fitness & wellness programs and community special events:** In the public survey, the highest scoring need for program expansion were for adult fitness and wellness (34% of respondents) and community special events (26% of respondents). Program preferences from the public input meeting indicated a desire for more youth sports programs followed by senior fitness and wellness classes.
- **Residents value investment in existing park facilities:** Funding allocation results of the public input meetings regarding indicated that residents prefer allocating additional funds towards improving and maintaining existing parks and facilities.
- **The Department is efficient with resources but requires additional funding and staffing.** As found from the stakeholder interviews, the Parks & Recreation Department is perceived as understaffed and underfunded, though it also is regarded as having great staff and beautiful parks & properties. Strengths include youth and senior programming, community partnerships, and openness to input.
- **There are opportunities for the Department to improve offerings, services, and operations.** Key areas for improvement found from the stakeholder interviews include increasing resources, better geographic distribution of programming, enhancing staff recruitment and retention, expanding facilities, and improving outreach. Priorities include diverse recreational activities and serving both youth and older adults. In 10 years, the vision is for expanded parks, trails, and facilities, with a focus on inclusivity and staying current with trends.

SWOT Analysis Summary from Project Kickoff Meeting:

- **Strengths:** Creative and committed staff, efficient resource use, unique properties, award-winning County Fair, youth camps, strong school relationships, supportive Board of Supervisors, and high program attendance.
- **Opportunities:** Partner with local corporations, create new facilities (pickleball, indoor rentals), expand Windsor area programs, enhance public awareness, develop therapeutic recreation, and add unique, low-maintenance facilities (e.g., ATV trails, frisbee golf).
- **Weaknesses:** Limited resources and community awareness, poor condition of playgrounds, insufficient maintenance budget, uneven service, outdated facilities, lack of revenue control, and IT connectivity issues.
- **Threats:** Policies inconsistent with conditions, inequitable use agreements, funding and revenue sources, changing politics, improper site use, and ineffective communication outreach methods.

PARKS AND FACILITIES

The Isle of Wight County Park system consists of 12 developed recreation sites and two (2) indoor recreation centers, totaling 2,842 acres. The County also has an additional 50 acre park site that has not yet been developed. In addition, there are four (4) recreational sites in the Town of Smithfield, totaling 254 acres, that also provide open space and recreational opportunities to the county citizens. The County has a wide variety of parks and recreational amenities, including athletic fields, hard courts, trails, boating and fishing access, historic sites, and a fairgrounds facility.

Park Classifications

The County's recreation and parks holdings can be grouped into seven categories: neighborhood parks, community parks, district parks, greenways/trails, special use, natural areas, and indoor recreation centers. Park sites are classified by size, service radius, and types of recreation use.

Neighborhood Parks

Less than 20 acres, 1 mile service radius, provide 2 acres/1,000 people

Neighborhood parks serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. Amenities should support standard neighborhood activity needs, like playgrounds, picnic facilities, and open spaces. Access is essential to neighborhood parks, so it is important to have sidewalk and trail connections to the surrounding community and adjacent parks.



Robinson Park (Neighborhood Park)

Community Parks

20-50 acres, 5 mile service radius, provide 1.5 ac./1,000 people

Community parks are intended to be accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscape and open spaces. Community Parks have the potential to serve as Neighborhood Parks for the local area. Community parks offer multiple amenities and serve large groups of users simultaneously. Active recreation amenities, often athletic fields, as well as passive use areas are included in the park. Share-use paths and trail connections to surrounding areas or other parks are important for access to the park.

District Parks

50 acres or greater, 7 mile service radius, provide 4 ac./1,000 people

A district park functions as a destination location that serves a large area of several communities or residents within a county. Although district parks usually have a combination of passive areas and active facilities, they are likely predominantly natural resource-based parks. A district park focuses on activities and natural features not included in most types of parks and often contains specialized amenities unique to the county. District parks can and should promote tourism and economic development. District parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region.

Greenways/Trails

no acreage or service radius standard

Greenways are recognized for their ability to connect people and places while serving as active transportation facilities. Greenways can be located for recreational or scenic value, or for linking neighborhoods, parks, recreation facilities, attractions, economic enterprises, historic sites, community partners, and natural areas.



Park to Park Trail (Greenway)

Special Use (Historical, Water Access, Athletic)

no service radius standard, provide 2.5 ac./1,000 people

Special Use parks are those spaces that don't fall within a typical park classification. A major difference between a special use facility and other parks is that they usually serve a single purpose whereas other park classifications are designed to offer multiple recreation opportunities. Special use facilities include historic/cultural sites, water access facilities, and athletic complexes.



Nike Park (District Park)

Natural Areas

no acreage or service radius standard, 40% of all park acreage

Natural areas are municipal perseveration areas whose primary purpose is to preserve the indigenous vegetation and wildlife habitat, for conservation and public enjoyment. Each site requires a unique master plan to guide the management and programming of the site. Facilities and activities at a natural area park and include non-motorized trails, blueways, environmental education, wildlife viewing, public fishing, water access, and boat ramps.



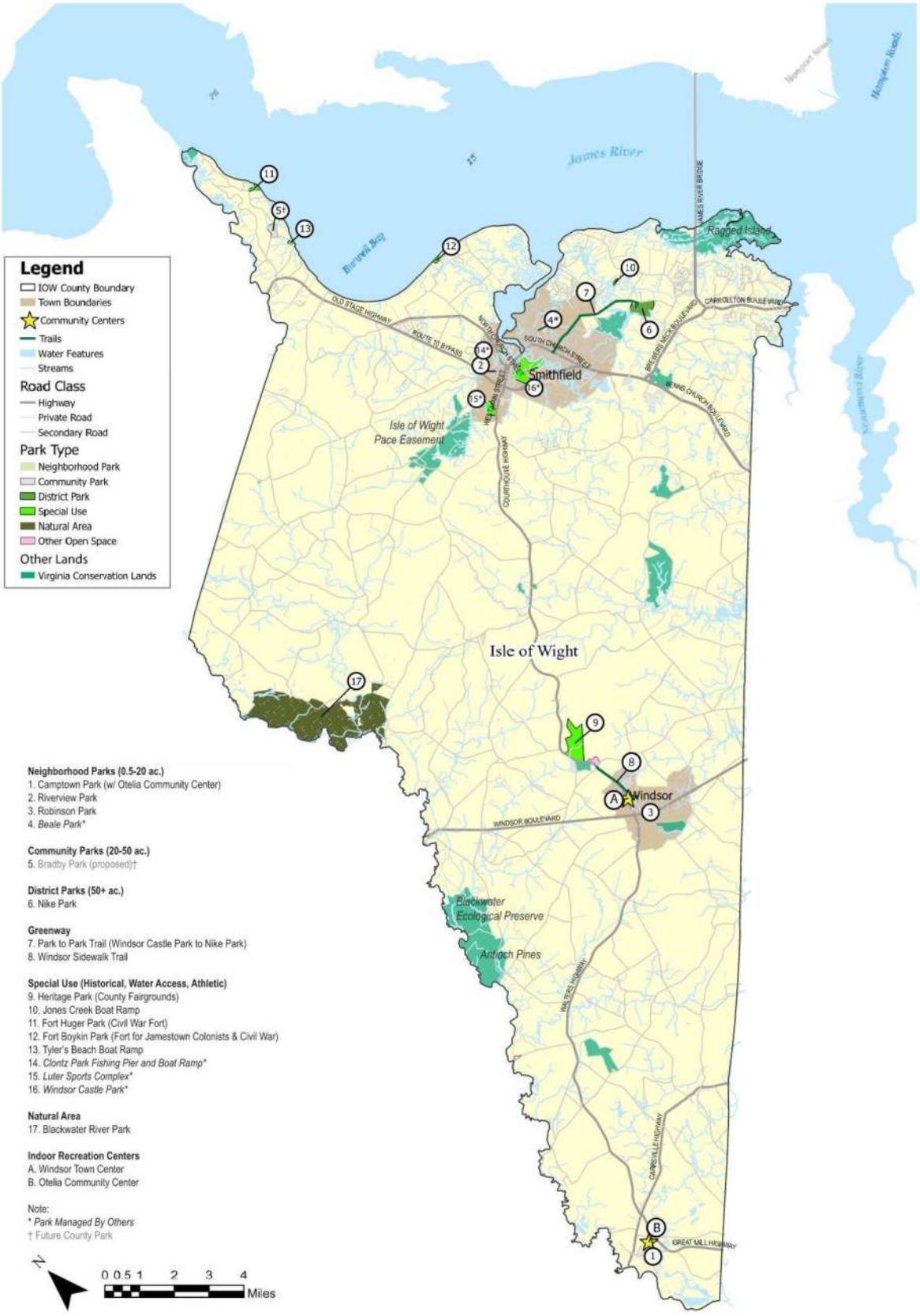
Fort Boykin Beach (Special Use Park)

Indoor Recreation Centers

no service radius standard, .75 sf/person

Recreation Center sites provide publicly accessible indoor passive and active recreation facilities, including meeting spaces, program support facilities, and exercise facilities.

Map X – Existing Isle of Wight Parks



Parks and Facilities Assessment



Nike Park – ADA accessible fishing pier and kayak launch

Park properties and facilities are the physical backbone of the recreation, parks, and open space system which support and facilitate all programming, user experiences, and access to recreational opportunities. It is paramount that these properties and facilities be well maintained, meet current standards, and accommodate the highest and best use. The upkeep, repair, and improvements to existing facilities should be a top priority for any Parks and Recommendation Department. Periodic assessment of their physical condition is critical to the department's ability to budget and implement priority repairs and improvements in an organized and timely manner.

Methodology

The design team performed and facilitated the assessment of physical conditions of parks and facilities operated by the department. The objective of the assessments was to identify and quantify conditions which ultimately have a direct effect on the quality of programming, user experiences, and public health, welfare, and safety.

Assessments were conducted by LPDA staff, with over 50 years combined experience with conditions assessments and facility planning, with assistance from Departmental staff. Assessment forms were customized to gather specific information. Forms required reviewers to inventory park and facilities features, such as infrastructure, parking, and amenities, and then to evaluate their condition using a numeric scoring system. The forms also included qualitative assessments of development potential for infill and connectivity. The scores for all categories were added together, to yield the total score for the site's condition. Higher scores denote worse conditions and a greater need for maintenance and repair. A facility with many amenities may garner a high score because of the quantity of amenities rather than because the park or trail is in terrible condition. To more fairly evaluate the relative condition of the park, trail, and school sites, the percentage of points scored is also determined. The percentage is between points scored compared to possible scorable points at a park. The lower the percentage the better condition of the site.

Park conditions were assessed on a scale of (0) to (4) in a range of categories. A score of (0) indicates no concerns, and a score of (4) indicates immediate major problems. The maximum total score possible for a park to receive is 80, which would indicate that there are immediate major problems in every category evaluated. Refer to Appendix E to review the completed assessments by facility.

Park Evaluation Categories

- ADA accessibility
- Ball fields
- Equipment (playground, backstops, hoops, etc.)
- General cleanliness/appearance
- Hard courts (tennis, basketball, etc.)
- Irrigation systems
- Landscaping (ornamental and natural)
- Neighborhood linkages/connections
- Parking availability
- Parking facilities
- Person safety
- Sidewalks/paths/trails
- Storm water drainage
- Turf
- Vehicular access

Facility conditions were assessed on a scale of (0) to (4) in a range of categories. A score of (0) indicates no problems, and a score of (4) indicates immediate major action needed. The maximum total score possible for a facility to receive is 71, which would indicate that there are immediate major problems in every category evaluated.

Facility Evaluation Categories

- ADA accessibility
- Adequacy of space
- Auditorium
- Classrooms
- Gymnasium
- Interior lighting
- Kitchen
- Mechanical equipment
- Overall facility conditions
- Offices
- Parking
- Security
- Storage areas
- Vandalism

A development potential evaluation was included as part of the park conditions assessment. During the site evaluation, the reviewer noted opportunities for infill and connectivity. Reviewers identified the available space for infill development, selecting from 'no development potential without replacing an existing amenity'; infill space for small (fitness station), medium (basketball court), or large (full size 90' ball diamond) sized facilities; or 'significant portions of the site are undeveloped' and multiple amenities could be added. The reviewers also noted if there were marginalized areas that could be developed for environmental benefit, potentially including wildlife/pollinator habitat, stormwater treatment, and integrated flood management. Opportunities for connectivity both within and to areas outside of the park were noted on the forms.

Space was also provided on the forms for reviewers to note specific observations that were not encompassed by any category, or to expand in further detail about the conditions of a category. These observations are incorporated into each site's assessment summary.

Summary of Findings

Isle of Wight Parks and Recreation is an established institution with a long history of providing recreational opportunities to residents and visitors. Some of the facilities are very new, so were built with contemporary planning standards and their materials are still at the beginning of their lifespan. Other facilities are older and show the years of use and intermittent investment.

LPDA staff evaluated the condition of the 11 parks and 4 facilities managed by the County. The scores for the condition of parks ranged from a near perfect 97% condition score (Windsor Sidewalk Trail) to 45% (Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp). The parks' scores were in a broad range, with four sites scoring good or very

good, at 88%-97%, five sites scoring fair in the 70-percentile, one site scoring poor at 61% (Blackwater River Park), and two sites scoring less than 50%, or very poor (Camptown Park 49%, Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp 45%) The facility condition scoring ranged from 98% (Nike Senior Center) to 50% (Nike Park Recreation Center). Overall, the facilities were in good condition, with three of the sites scores 82% or higher. Only the Nike Park Recreation Center is in very poor condition. The low-scoring sites have conditions mainly related to deferred maintenance and standard issues for older facilities and amenities reaching the end of their lifecycles.

Over the course of assessing the condition of the parks and facilities, several issues were noted as recurring in multiple places. Common deficiencies/opportunities are listed alphabetically below, with issues affecting health, safety, and accessibility in bold:

Parks

- **Lack of or limited ADA accessibility**
- **Lack of or limited universal accessibility design and site amenities**
- **Safety hazards (cracked sidewalks, tripping hazards, broken equipment)**
- Aging and damaged site furnishings
- Aging and outdated play equipment
- Aging sports fields, hard courts, and sports equipment such as field fencing and backstops are in poor condition, needing repair or replacement
- Athletic field turf in poor condition, requiring weed eradication, aeration, and overseeding
- Damaged turf and bare spots
- Faded or no striping at parking areas, and lot surfacing in poor condition
- General appearance and upkeep of facility
- Hard court surfacing is in poor condition and should be resurfaced and striped
- Infill development opportunities ranging from small to significantly sized areas.
- Lack of or limited internal park loop trails
- Outdated or lack of park master plans
- Poor neighborhood connectivity
- Regular and routine maintenance tasks have been deferred, including repainting, repairs, and landscaping
- Stormwater erosion
- Underutilized areas could be developed for habitat, stormwater, and/or flood management services



Nike Park – Sidewalks are cracked and overgrown, limited ADA accessibility



Tylers Beach Boat Launch – Parking area is poorly defined



Camptown Park – aging furnishing and basketball court needs resurfacing

Facilities

- Building security
- Limited ADA accessibility
- Safety concerns regarding insufficient outdoor lighting
- Aging buildings with general condition issues
- Inadequate storage space
- Limited or lack of connectivity to surrounding area
- Poor condition of some rooms
- Outdated facilities, amenities, and rentable space

Several of the parks contain positive features that promote better usability and experience for park visitors. These include, in alphabetical order:

- Accessible playgrounds
- Amenities that serve emerging trends, like mountain biking and skateboarding
- Historic sites
- Mature canopy trees provide shade and habitat value
- Public water access
- Recent investment in a multi-use trail, providing connectivity and recreational opportunities
- Well-maintained event park

The general condition and themes for each park and facility are summarized on the following pages. The tables illustrate the assessment percentage score of parks and facilities, with a gradient of green to red to highlight those in best to worst condition, based on the percentage of total points accrued compared to total possible. Refer to the individual park condition summary narratives in Appendix D for details on specific conditions and development potentials. It is important to note that even though a park may have scored well on overall conditions, there may be an issue such as inadequate ADA access or faulty equipment which requires immediate attention.



Otelia Community Center – kitchen facility had aging and outdated appliances; however, per draft report recommendations they were replaced.



Nike Park –Updated playground equipment installed in 2022 under mature shade tree.



Fort Huger – historical interpretation and events are held on site

Isle of Wight County Parks Assessment Summary - Parks

Facility Name	Overall Score	Potential Total	Condition Percentage	Primary Issues	Development Potential
Windsor Sidewalk Trail	1	36	97%	Trail is in good condition, with some minor repairs needed to the sidewalk	Opportunity to extend the project to connect with nearby Windsor Youth Sports Complex and Heritage Park and fairgrounds, add furnishings, install landscaping for environmental and beautification benefits, and to install SWM BMPs.
Park to Park Trail	2	40	95%	The trail is recently constructed and in very good condition. There are some minor safety concerns related to the pedestrian bridge adjacent to the old base housing and the crosswalk striping at commercial entrances could be improved.	There are opportunities for landscaping for environmental benefit, both habitat and stormwater along the trail, as well as opportunities for SWM BMPs.
Robinson Park	3	44	93%	Overall good condition; lacking ADA accessible sidewalks within the park and minor improvements should be made to address turf bare spots.	Opportunity for sidewalk connections to neighborhood and stormwater management BMPs.
Heritage Park (County Fairgrounds)	5	40	88%	Park is in good condition, requiring only regular maintenance; some areas have limited ADA accessibility	Loop path, sidewalk, and trail connection potential; ATV trail potential; potential for native and habitat landscaping; stormwater BMPs.
Fort Huger Park	10	48	79%	Park generally in good condition, with routine maintenance needed for sidewalks, parking lot, and landscaping; erosion along river embankment. Lacks neighborhood connectivity due to remote location.	Recommend pedestrian access to the James River and picnic shelter for visitors; stormwater management BMPs to address erosion; potential for community connections to the park via public transportation.
Riverview Park	15	72	79%	Some minor issues; ball fields and hard courts need minor repairs; restrooms and picnic shelters need minor repairs; minor maintenance needed for turf and landscaping; parking lot needs routine maintenance.	Potential for loop trails with the park, additional small amenities, creation of pollinator/wildlife habitat, and SWM BMPs.
Fort Boykin Park	14	52	73%	Some minor issues; general maintenance and repair required; minor damage and aging to pathways and steps; garden benches are in poor condition; steep slope to the beach is a safety concern; parking lot is unstriped and not sufficiently sized for peak-use; lacks neighborhood connections.	Potential for community connections to the park via trails, sidewalks, or public transportation. Opportunities for environmental improvements and stormwater management BMPs.
Jones Creek Boat Ramp	12	44	73%	Park generally in good condition, with some improved access management necessary for parking and ADA site access. Limited neighborhood connectivity.	Improved ADA access and usage of the site, shade shelter and fish cleaning station would complement uses; there are opportunities for environmental benefit and stormwater BMPs. Potential for community connections via sidewalks or public transport.
Nike Park	24	68	65%	Some major issues; Turf fields in poor condition and need restoration; basketball courts surfacing cracked and equipment in poor condition; aging playground in poor condition; parking area at the skate park and tennis area in very poor condition and in need of complete renovation.	Sidewalk, and multi-use path connection potential. There is space for infill of a large-sized amenities like additional fields; potential for native and habitat landscaping; stormwater BMPs. Opportunities for concession area at the multi-use soccer fields.
Blackwater River Park	17	44	61%	The park is largely undeveloped, with very limited amenities, no supporting facilities, very limited signage and access, and no ADA accessibility. Lacks neighbrhood connectivity due to remote location.	The park is fully open for development of natural area compatible facilities, including trails, kayak launches, parking, restrooms, picnic shelters, and ADA accessible facilities. Additional connections and access points for connectivity should be explored
Camptown Park	37	72	49%	Several major issues; no ADA sidewalk connections within the park or designated parking; tennis and basketball courts surfacing cracked and equipment in poor condition; aging playground equipment; ball field in poor condition; poor condition of turf, unstriped parking lot with insufficient lighting; lacks neighborhood connections	Loop path, sidewalk, and trail connection potential; space for infill of up to medium-sized amenities like basketball courts; potential for native and habitat landscaping; stormwater BMPs.
Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp	22	40	45%	Several major issues; limited ADA accessibility within the site, personal safety concerns related to lighting, undersized parking and lot needs extensive renovation, key amenities missing like restrooms and a shade shelter. Lacks neighborhood connectivity due to remote location.	There is space for several small amenities to be added; trail connection potential to future adjacent parks; Opportunities for environmental improvements and stormwater management BMPs.
				Themes: Some ADA accessibility issues; parking lot renovation; limited neighborhood connectivity; repair and renovation needed to playing fields and hard courts; bare turf; shelters and restrooms are older/ have cosmetic issues	**Themes: Opportunities for loop trails within park, sidewalk connections to neighborhood, infill development of small or medium sized amenities, landscaping for environmental benefit, stormwater BMP opportunities.**
Color Key:	89%-80%	79%-70%	69%-60%	59%-50%	49%-40%

Isle of Wight County Parks Assessment Summary - Facilities

Facility Name	Overall Score	Potential Total	Condition Percentage	Primary Issues	Development Potential
Nike Park Senior Center	1	60	98%	Facility has some minor cosmetic issues related to building age.	Minor building repair and refurbishment.
Windsor Town Center	4	64	94%	Very good condition, limited neighborhood connectivity and gymnasium requires a few improvements like resurfacing and additional seating.	Potential for crosswalk connections to sidewalk network for increased connectivity; gymansium improvements to flooring and additional seating.
Otelia Community Center	11	60	82%	Facility is older and requires renovation to modernize facilities; outdoor lighting is inadequate in some areas.	Potential for facility renovation and modernization; site improvements to Camptown Park for parking and connectivity.
Nike Park Recreation Center	26	52	50%	Facility is older and requires extensive renovation to modernize and increase usability of facility; portions of facility are not ADA accessible; outdoor lighting is inadequate and indoor lighting needs improvement; some security weaknesses; shortage of storage space; mechanical equipment is in poor condition	Potential for extensive facility renovation and modernization.
				Themes: Older facilities require minor to extensive repair and renovation	**Themes: potential for facility renovation and repairs, opportunities for neighbhorhood connectivity**
Color Key:	99%-90%	89%-80%	79%-70%	69%-60%	59%-50%

Parks and Recreation Level of Service Standards

Parks and recreation Level of Service (LOS) standards help to define the appropriate number of amenities needed to serve the population to ensure demands are met now and in the future. Standards can and will change over time, as population grows, demographics shift, and recreation trends evolve. It is important to periodically reevaluate LOS to determine if the Department's actions have been meeting the standards and if the LOS should be revised to meet changing conditions.

Population-based LOS standards are communicated as a unit of recreation needed per some thousands of population. For example, one standard of service might be 1 playground per 5,000 people. A custom LOS was developed for Isle of Wight based on citizen input, National Recreation and Park Associate (NRPA) guidelines, national and regional recreation trends, and the County's ability to financially sustain a high-quality park system. By applying these standards to the population of Isle of Wight County, gaps and surpluses in the inventory of park and facility/amenity types are revealed.

The existing parkland and amenity level of service was calculated based on current inventory lists provided by the Parks and Recreation Department and compared to the 2022 Isle of Wight County population of 39,343 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). To account for future projected use, an estimated 2032 population of 42,333 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; ESRI, 2022) was used. All publicly available sites and amenities are included in the LOS inventory, including Isle of Wight County and Town of Smithfield parks and facilities. Private or fee-based club amenities and land are excluded from the total, as these sites are not available to the general public, though the County would need to consider them during market feasibility studies for new facility development.

Current Level of Service Findings

The current acreage, facility, and amenity inventory was evaluated using the proposed LOS to determine if there are current shortfalls based on 2022 population levels, and potential future shortfalls based on projected 2032 population levels. Based on a thorough review of the parks and recreation system and public input, it is recommended that the County pursue further development of specific parks and recreation amenities to meet the needs of the community and address the gaps per park type to increase the current LOS standard for the projected population in 2032. Some highlights from the analysis are:

- The current total LOS for active parkland (neighborhood, community, district, and special use parks) is 19.15 ac./1,000 people, which exceeds the minimum standard of 10 ac./1,000 people by 360 acres.
- There are shortfalls in the types of park acreage provided, however. There is a calculated shortfall of 50 acres of neighborhood park land and a shortfall 59 acres of community park land in 2022, which rises to a shortfall of 56 acres and 63 acres, respectively, in 2032.
- Nearly half of the active parkland acreage is categorized as Special Use (greenway, historical, water access). Some of the neighborhood park shortfall could be met by adding appropriate amenities to these sites.
- The County has a shortage of useable indoor recreation space. Approximately 14,000 additional square feet will be necessary to serve the County populace in 2032.
- The County will need to add amenities to the park system to meet 2032 standards for many outdoor park amenities. The amenities with the greatest shortfalls are trails, playgrounds, picnic facilities, and water access facilities.

- There are several types of recreation amenities that are not currently offered in the County, that the County may consider expanding to include, including pickleball, volleyball, amphitheater, outdoor fitness, or blueway trails.

Future Level of Service Findings

As Isle of Wight has developed over the last decade, several parks and facilities have been conceptualized, but not yet developed. Developing the park site will address some of the acreage shortfall identified in the existing LOS analysis. The comparative LOS table on the following page shows the impact that developing the park site will have on the County's ability to meet the LOS standard needs. The development of the future park has an impact on the community park classification and is summarized below:

- Developing the 50 acre Bradby Park site will almost entirely address the 2032 shortfall of community park land, reducing the shortfall from 63 acres to 13 acres.



View from Jones Creek Boat Ramp

Table 1 – Population Based Level of Service Analysis and Recommendations

		2021 Inventory				Existing Service Levels						2022 Standards			2032 Standards (per 2032 pop. of 42,333)		
RIORITY	TYPE	County Inventory	Proposed County	Other Inventory	Total Ex. Inventory	Current Service Levels (per 2022 pop. of 39,343)			Proposed Service Levels			Meets Standard/ Shortfall Exists	Shortfall/ Surplus		Meets Standard/ Shortfall Exists	Shortfall/ Surplus	
	Parks																
	Neighborhood Parks	22.2		6.30	28.5	0.72	acres per	1,000	2.00	acres per	1,000	Shortfall	-50	Acre(s)	Shortfall	-56	Acre(s)
	Community Parks		50.00		0.0	0.00	acres per	1,000	1.50	acres per	1,000	Shortfall	-59	Acre(s)	Shortfall	-63	Acre(s)
	District Parks	150.0		208.00	358.0	9.10	acres per	1,000	4.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	201	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	189	Acre(s)
	Special Use (Greenway, Historical, Water Access)	326.6		40.4	367.0	9.33	acres per	1,000	2.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	269	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	261	Acre(s)
	Natural Area	2,348.0			2,348.0	76%	of total park		40%	of total park		Meets Standard	1,107	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	1,107	Acre(s)
	Active Parkland Acreage (excludes natural areas)	**498.8**	**50.0**	**254.7**	**753.5**	**19.15**	**acres per**	**1,000**	**10.00**	**acres per**	**1,000**	**Meets Standard**	**360**	**Acre(s)**	**Meets Standard**	**330**	**Acre(s)**
	Total Parkland Acreage	**2,846.8**	**50.0**	**254.7**	**3,101.5**	**78.83**	**acres per**	**1,000**	**no standard**			**no standard**			**no standard**		
	Indoor Recreation Centers (sf)	17,700.0			17,700.0	0.45	sf per	person	0.75	sf per	person	Shortfall	######	Sq Feet	Shortfall	-14,050	Sq Feet
	Amenities																
	Amphitheater				0	1	site per	0	1	site per	30,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Archery Range				0	1	site per	0	1	site per	50,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	ATV Trail	0	1		0	1	site per	0	1	site per	40,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shorfall	-1	Sites
	Basketball (Full)	3			3	1	site per	13,114	1	site per	12,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Beach	2			2	1	site per	19,672	1	site per	15,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Boat Ramp/Slide	3		1	4	1	site per	9,836	1	site per	10,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Canoe/Kayak Launch	1		2	3	1	site per	13,114	1	site per	10,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Diamond Field	4		8	12	1	site per	3,279	1	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	4	Sites	Meets Standard	4	Sites
	Dog Park			1	1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	30,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Event Pavilion	3			3	1	site per	13,114	1	site per	15,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Fishing	4		1	5	1	site per	7,869	1	site per	6,000	Shortfall	-2	Sites	Shortfall	-2	Sites
	Hiking/Nature Trail (miles)	1		3.8	4.8	1	mile per	8,196	1	mile per	4,000	Shortfall	-5	Miles	Shortfall	-6	Miles
	Historic Site/Museum	2		1	3	1	site per	13,114	1	site per	20,000	Meets Standard	1	Sites	Meets Standard	1	Sites
	Horseshoe	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	30,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Indoor Gymnasium	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	40,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Mountain Bike Trail	1		0.5	1.5	1	mile per	26,229	1	mile per	10,000	Shortfall	-2	Miles	Shortfall	-3	Miles
	Open Play Area	4		2	6	1	site per	6,557	1	site per	6,500	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	-1	Sites
	Outdoor Fitness Facility	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	20,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Paved/ Multi-Use Trail (miles)	1			1	1	mile per	39,343	1	mile per	5,000	Shortfall	-7	Miles	Shortfall	-7	Miles
	Pickleball					1	site per	0	1	site per	25,000	Shortfall	-2	Sites	Shortfall	-2	Sites
	Picnic Area	2			2	1	site per	19,672	1	site per	10,000	Shortfall	-2	Sites	Shortfall	-2	Sites
	Picnic Shelter	5			5	1	site per	7,869	1	site per	5,000	Shortfall	-3	Sites	Shortfall	-3	Sites
	Play Equip. Age 2-5	3			3	1	site per	13,114	1	site per	12,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Play Equip. Age 5-12	3		2	5	1	site per	7,869	1	site per	5,000	Shortfall	-3	Sites	Shortfall	-3	Sites
	Recreation Hall	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	25,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Rectangular Fields	15		1	16	1	site per	2,459	1	site per	5,000	Meets Standard	8	Sites	Meets Standard	8	Sites
	Running Track	0		1	1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	35,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Senior Center	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	32,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Shared Hiking/ Equestrian Trails (miles)	4			4	1	mile per	9,836	1	mile per	5,000	Shortfall	-4	Miles	Shortfall	-4	Miles
	Skate Park	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	40,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Soccer	1			1	1	site per	39,343	1	site per	30,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Splash Pad				0	1	site per	0	1	site per	50,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites
	Tennis	6			6	1	site per	6,557	1	site per	7,000	Meets Standard	0	Sites	Meets Standard	0	Sites
	Volleyball	0			0	1	site per	0	1	site per	40,000	Shortfall	-1	Sites	Shortfall	-1	Sites

*Note: For multiuse and hiking trails the inventory column reflects total mileage, not number of trails.

Please note: the proposed ATV trail was constructed and opened in 2022 and the County no longer has a shortfall.

Park Service Area Access Equity Mapping

Another method to evaluate park service levels is to map service radii to see what geographical areas and population centers of the County are under-served by particular park types. A service radius (or service area) is the total distance that a person can be expected to travel to reach a park and is indicated in miles. Larger parks with more amenities tend to attract people from farther distances and therefore have larger radii. Below is a listing of service radii used for this plan:

- Neighborhood Parks: 1 mile radius
- Community Parks: 5 mile radius
- District Parks: 7 mile radius

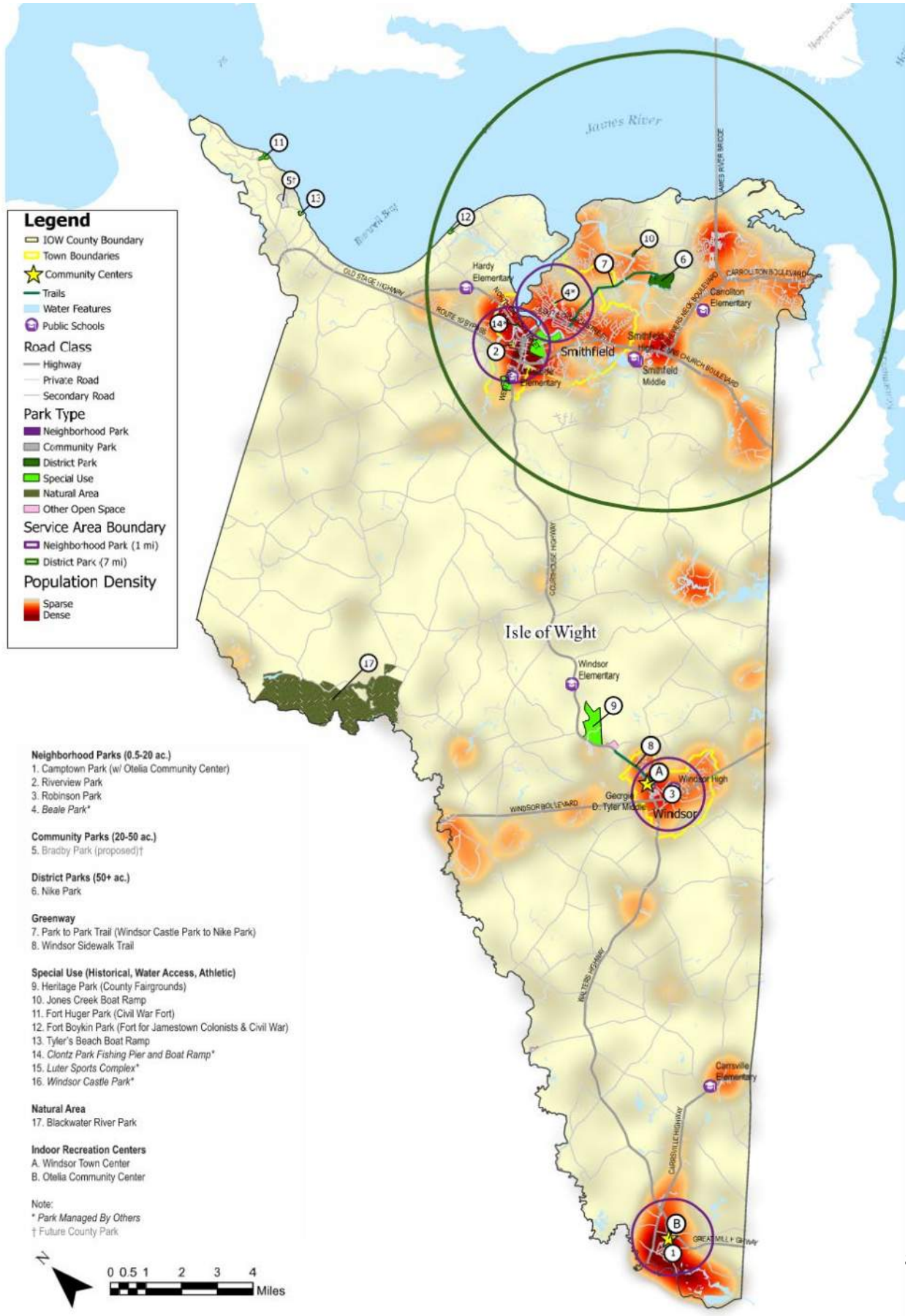
Specialty facilities, trails, and recreation and community centers are unique place-based or destination facilities and do not have a service radius associated with them.

Refer to the map on the following page for the park service areas overlayed onto population density maps. Population density was mapped using data from the 2020 American Community Survey. (U.S. Census Bureau). Refer to Appendix J to view the Existing Park Locations and Park Service Area maps.

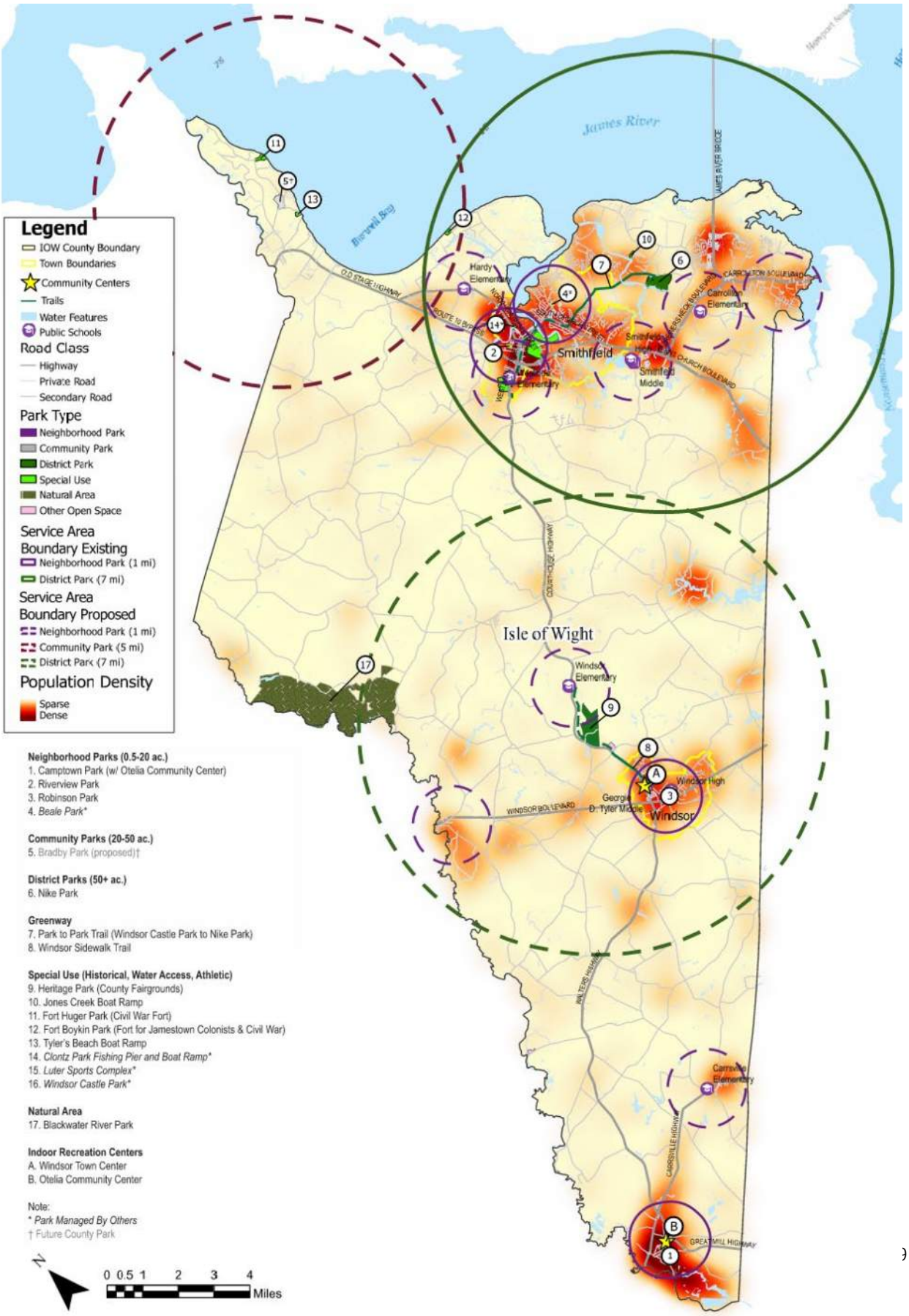
Some highlights from the geographic analysis are:

- The majority of parks are clustered at the northern end of the county, along the James River and around Smithfield.
- The service radius of Nike Park, a District Park, includes the densest populated region of the county: the Town of Smithfield and the Carrollton, Bartlett, Benns Church, and Battery Park area.
- The three municipal areas of Smithfield, Windsor, and Camptown are served by neighborhood level parks, but there is limited service coverage by neighborhood parks for other population clusters in the County.
- The southern two-thirds of the county is not served by any larger community or district style parks with a diverse offering of recreational resources.
- Elementary schools are located in some more densely populated areas that are underserved by neighborhood parks. There is the opportunity to manage the school grounds as a park to address recreational shortfalls.
- Developing Bradby Park as a Community Park will provide recreational opportunities for residents in the northern tip of the County.

Map A – Existing Park Service Areas



Map B – Proposed Park Service Areas



Programming Assessment

The Isle of Wight Parks and Recreation Department has a professional staff that annually delivers a comprehensive parks and recreation program to Isle of Wight residents. Department staff are responsible for the management and implementation of a diverse array of recreation programs, special community-wide events, and the operation of multiple facilities. PROS Consulting in conjunction with Department staff evaluated the Department's programming component. The assessment identified opportunities and constraints, programming gaps and issues, and areas for improvement. The full report is available in Appendix F.

Core Program Areas

The vision of the Department is to be a premier parks and recreation systems in the region providing all residents access to high-quality programs and experiences. Part of realizing this vision involves identifying Core Program Areas to create a sense of focus around activities and outcomes of greatest importance to the community as informed by current and future needs. However, public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people, especially in a community such as Isle of Wight. The philosophy of the Core Program Area assists staff, policy makers, and the public to focus on what is most important.

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

- Athletics
- Camps/ School Age Programming
- Centers
- Classes (Enrichment)
- County Fair
- Permitting & Rentals
- Seniors
- Special Events
- Therapeutic Recreation

The Core Program Areas provided by Isle of Wight currently appear to meet some of the community's major needs as identified in the survey results, but the program mix must be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that the offerings within each Core Program Area – and the Core Program Areas themselves – align with changing leisure trends, demographics, and needs of residents.

Lifecycle Analysis

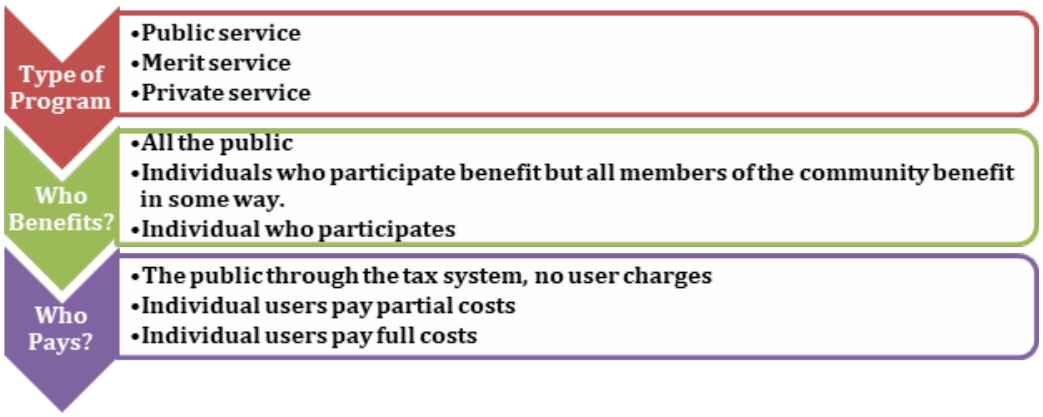
A lifecycle analysis involves reviewing every program identified by County of Isle of Wight staff to determine the stage of growth or decline for each as a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall recreation program portfolio. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, but rather is based on staff's knowledge of their program areas. The table below shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the Department's recreation programs. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed by staff.

All Programs: Lifecycle Stage				
	Percentage	Number	Actual Distribution	Best Practice Distribution
Introduction	13%	7	43.4%	50-60%
Take-Off	11%	6		
Growth	19%	10		
Mature	26%	14	26.4%	40%
Saturated	17%	9	30.2%	0-10%
Decline	13%	7		
Total	100%	53		

Overall, the lifecycle analysis results indicate a less than ideal distribution of all programs across the lifecycle. The County is close to the desired range for introductory and growing programs but has a much lower lever of mature programs and a much higher level of saturated and declining programs than desirable. It is recommended that the County phase out declining programs and use their resources to introduce new programs based on community needs. It is important to have stable core segment of programs that are in the Mature stage. Staff may want to reevaluate the classification of some saturated programs as mature; popular programs should not be dropped just because they are long-running. Staff should complete a lifecycle review on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance.

Program and Services Classification

The Parks and Recreation Department currently does not classify its programs and services. Classifying programs and services is an important process for an agency to follow in order to remain aligned with the community's interests and needs, the mission of the organization, and to sustainably operate within the bounds of the financial resources that support it. The criteria utilized and recommended in program classification is evaluated on the criteria of type, who benefits, and who bears the cost of the program.



PROS collaborated with the Department to assess all the programs and assign each into one of the following categories: essential, important, and value added. Recommendations were developed for how programs in each of these categories should be managed with respect to cost recovery and as it applies to public and private value.

CATEGORIES OF CLASSIFICATION

Essential	
1. Part of the program mission 2. Services a majority of the community 3. "This is a keystone program"	0% - 25% cost recovery
Important	
1. Meaningful to the community 2. Serves large portions of the community 3. "This is an important program"	25% - 75% cost recovery
Value Added	
1. Enhanced community offerings 2. Serves niche groups 3. "This is a desirable program"	75% + cost recovery

Understanding the Full Cost of Service

To properly fund all programs, either through tax subsidies or user fees, and to establish the right cost recovery targets, a Cost-of-Service Analysis should be conducted on each program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost-of-Service Analysis not only helps determine the true and full cost of offering a program but provides information that can be used to price programs based upon accurate delivery costs. The figure to the right illustrates the common types of costs that must be accounted for in a Cost-of-Service Analysis.



The methodology for determining the total Cost of Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, program, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per unit basis. Agencies use Cost of Service Analyses to determine what financial resources are required to provide specific programs at specific levels of service. Results are used to determine and track cost recovery as well as to benchmark different programs provided by Isle of Wight between one another. Cost recovery goals are established once Cost of Service totals have been calculated.

Currently, the Isle of Wight Parks and Recreation Department does track revenue, expenditures, and cost recovery goals for each program, but is not consistent in doing so.

Programming Assessment Highlights

The following are highlights from the program assessment:

- Age Groups Served: The Department offers 57 different programs that serve a broad range of interests and age groups. All age segments are targeted as a primary market for at least three program categories, except for preschoolers (ages 0-5).
- Program Lifecycle: Lifecycle distribution of programs is uneven, with more programs in the saturated and declining phase than recommended (30% currently, recommended maximum of 10%) and fewer programs in the mature stage than recommended (26% currently, 40% recommended). There is an appropriate distribution of programs in the introduction and growth phases.
- Program Classification: The Department does not classify program by service category - core-essential, important, value added. These classifications help to determine funding sources and department focus.
- Cost Recovery Tracking: Currently, the Isle of Wight Parks and Recreation Department does track revenue, expenditures, and cost recovery goals for each program, but is not consistent in doing so. Tracking cost of service consistently and accurately will aid in the Department's planning abilities.
- Program Evaluation: Assessment and evaluation tools to measure the success of programs and services are in place.
- Customer Satisfaction and Retention: The Department currently tracks customer satisfaction ratings, but not customer retention percentages.
- Staff Training/Evaluation: The Department has a staff training program and solid evaluation methods in place.
- Public Input: The Department does not utilize survey tools to continually gather feedback on needs and unmet needs for programming on a regular basis.
- Marketing: The Department utilizes several marketing strategies to inform County residents of the offerings of the community; however, it lacks a formalized Marketing Plan which can be utilized to create target marketing strategies.
- Volunteers: The Department has a strong volunteer program.
- Partnerships: The Department utilizes several partner providers to deliver programs to Isle of Wight residents and has developed a formal partnership policy.
- Competition: The Department has a general understanding of other service providers.



Yoga at Windsor Town Center.

Parks Operations and Maintenance Assessment

Parks, facilities and amenities that are clean and functioning efficiently are a critical element to delivering high quality programs and services. As part of the Master Plan development process, the consulting team performed a Park Maintenance Assessment of the services offered by the Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department.

The assessment offers a perspective of the maintenance program and standards and helps to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The consulting team based these findings and comments from a review of information provided by the Agency including maintenance standards, financial data, statistically significant survey feedback, park typology, third party contracted work, and workshops with staff. Refer to the full park maintenance assessment in Appendix G.

Park Operations and Maintenance Assessment Highlights

Key findings from the maintenance assessment are below:

- The core lines of service (functions) performed by the Park Maintenance Division are numerous. Many of the objectives assigned to the Park's maintenance teams go beyond the traditional responsibilities of park maintenance employees.
- Staff do not lack the necessary equipment or resources to perform tasks at a high level, however, lack of staff creates hardships when managing turf, landscaping, maintenance, and special events across county facilities.
- The Department does not have the staffing capacity to manage the existing park system at the recommended maintenance standard (Level 2 at developed parks, Level 3 at natural areas). There is a shortfall of approximately 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. Additional FTEs beyond this amount will be needed if the park system expands.
- Though the Department has not officially adopted a system of park maintenance levels, it does operate on this principle. Adopting a formalized maintenance management plan would aid in resource allocation and planning.
- When facilities in Isle of Wight County were initially evaluated by consultants, the County did not have

PARK MAINTENANCE

PARKS AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES RECREATION ACREAGE (2022)	
Developed Parks	497.7 acres
Natural Area Parks	2,348 acres
Total	**2,843 acres**

FUNCTIONAL MAINTENANCE WORK AREAS:

- General parks and grounds maintenance
- Trades
- Response team
- Athletic fields
- Urban forestry

STAFFING LEVELS

Current staffing: ~13.75* full-time equivalents (FTEs)
**does not include park planning positions*

Insufficient staff levels to manage system at recommend quality standard

Recommended staffing:
- 20 FTE devoted to developed parks
- 4-5 FTE developed to natural parks

FUNDING

$1,003,108	annual funding
$353	/acre average
$2,026	/acre developed parks (potential max)
($3,000)	*/acre national average for developed parks*
$1,950,000	annual funding needing

a work order management system in place for park maintenance. However, following recommendations from the draft report, the County adopted the Facility Dude management system in 2024. This system enhances the documentation of maintenance activities, asset replacement schedules, and tracks the time and resources required for fieldwork. Additionally, a work order management system can help identify unproductive time, such as staff travel between parks, allowing for more efficient allocation of resources.

- Currently, Parks does not contract with private sector to provide routine park maintenance services. The Parks Maintenance Division does not track its own unit activity costs and therefore cannot analyze the unit cost to perform work internally against the unit cost to perform work by a third-party vendor. Without this level of analysis, the division is unable to determine which lines of service are more effective and efficient to perform "in-house" or to "contract it out."



Cotton blooming on a warm summer day.

Priorities for Investment

Priorities for Facility Investment

Isle of Wight County enjoys an extensive parks, recreation, and open space system. Maintaining and improving the parks system should be a priority along with meeting existing shortfalls in service and future growth needs. Citizen preference as well as the order of safety improvements are two factors in determining the final phased implement plan, along with cost and feasibility.

Public Need Priority

The public need priority ranking shows the level of need for a variety of facilities in Isle of Wight County. The public need priority ranking evaluates several factors of public need, assigning a value in each category for the type of facility. The resulting totals are then ranked, identifying the high, moderate, and limited priority facilities in Isle of Wight County. The evaluation categories are public input from stakeholder interviews, the priority investment rating developed from the 2022 Needs Survey, gaps in service identified in the Level of Service analysis, and consultant evaluation based on demographics, trends, and conditions. Refer to **Appendix H** for the full evaluation matrix. High priority needs include multiple types of trails, water access and engagement, picnic facilities, pickleball courts, playgrounds, outdoor fitness facilities, amphitheater, and recreation center.

Order of Improvements

The order of improvements to the parks and recreation system is based on ensuring public safety and allocating resources efficiently. The first items to be addressed are the maintenance and safety of the existing facilities and amenities, then improving the existing system, and finally building new projects that expand the system. This priority framework ensures that there is a consistent level of safety and appearance throughout the entire recreation system and that the department will continue to operate and grow within its resource capacity, including staffing and budget.

Public Need Priority

Type of Facility	Priority
Paved Multi-Use Trail	HIGH NEED
Hiking/Nature Trails	
Beach	
Fishing Areas	
Pickleball Courts	
Neighborhood Parks	
Picnic Shelters	
Outdoor Fitness Facility	
Canoe/Kayak launch	
Playgrounds	
Recreation Center	
Ampitheater	
Picnic Areas	
Fitness Center	MODERATE NEED
Indoor Gym	
Indoor Walking/Running Track	
Community Parks	
District Parks	
Event Pavilion	
Sprayground	
ATV Trail	
Mountain Biking Trails	
Hiking/Equestrian Trails (shared)	
Basketball Courts	
Boat ramp/slide	
Dog Parks	
Open Play Areas	
Natural Areas	
Archery range	
Golf	SOME NEED
Soccer	
Swimming Pools	
Volleyball	
Restrooms	
Skate Park	
Diamond Fields	
Disc Golf Course	
Football Fields	
Rectangular Fields	
Senior Center	
Tennis Courts	
Outdoor Volleyball	
Historic Sites	
Horseshoes	

Priority Order of Repairs and Improvements

1. Safety *tripping hazards, broken railings, standing water, broken play equipment, surfacing*

2: Code *ADA, ingress/egress, lighting, fire*

3: Deferred Maintenance *paint, equipment repairs*

4. Obsolescence/ Replacements: *obsolete non-standard/non-code-complaint amenities, features*

5. Park Improvements: *to address program needs, current use, and add value*

6: System Expansion *innovations and additions to the county park system*

Priorities for Programming

Continuing high quality service of a diverse range of programming and streamlining the operation of programming services should be a goal of this Parks and Recreation Department. Priority recommendations are based on expressed public need, staff input, local demographics, recreation trends, and planning team observations. The chart to the right shows priority recreational program/services based on a weighted scoring system. Key priorities for programming are:

- Focus on implementing or expanding programming in areas of greatest unmet need, including active older adult programs, fitness & wellness, historic programming, and community special events.
- Prioritize and focus funds and staff resources on core programs, especially those that serve public health and safety, like swimming lessons.
- Keep programming relevant to citizens by annually introducing new programs and eliminating programs with declining participation. STEAM classes, outdoor education, water-based sports, and specialty fitness are all growing in popularity.
- Ensure vulnerable (specialty, boutique) population groups are served by programming, including therapeutic recreation and teen programming.

Recreation Need Priority	
Type of Program	Priority
Senior health & wellness programs	HIGH NEED
Adult Fitness & Wellness	
Community Special Events	
Exercise classes	
Swim lessons	
Historic park programs	
Senior trips	
Adult sports leagues	
Senior educational programs	MODERATE NEED
STEAM classes	
Youth sports programs & camps	
Fishing programs	
nature camps & progams	
Water fitness programs/lap swimming	
Cultural enrichement programs	
Teen/tween programs	
Programs for youth with special needs	
Programs for adults with special needs	
Before/after school programs for youth	SOME NEED
Youth arts programs	
Youth fitness & wellness classes	
Youth summer employment opportunities	
Boating lessons	
Tennis lessons & leagues	
Youth dance/music programs	
Gymnastics/tumbling programs	
Preschool programs/early childhood edu.	
Virtual programs	
eGaming/eSports	
Adult arts programs	
Youth summer programs & camps	

Priorities for Operations and Maintenance

Isle of Wight County has a comprehensive system of park sites, facilities, programs, and historical and natural resources. Efficiency in operation is a primary goal. Specific priorities to reach this include:

- Implementing quantitative performance measurement and tracking system
- Developing park system standards
- Deepen existing and establish new partnerships
- Expand maintenance budget and staffing commiserate with new park and facility development
- Incorporate sustainability into all levels of operation/management

Recommended System Wide Priorities		
FACILITIES	**PROGRAMS**	**OPERATIONS**
repairs & improvements	core programs	measurement and tracking system
trail network expansion	program tracking	park system standards
water access	balance age groups served	deepen and expand partnerships
indoor recreation	cost recovery	staffing/maintenance budget
neighborhood parks	expand active adult programming	sustainability

CHAPTER 5 // RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Recommendations were developed through review of the parks and facilities existing conditions assessments; public, stakeholder, and staff feedback; and analysis of the needs assessment. Recommendations include improvement of existing parks and facilities, addition of new parks and facilities, and improvements to programming and operations and management. The following recommendations are prioritized based on need and interest. Methods for implementing and prioritizing these recommendations are offered in the Implementation Plan provided in this report.

Recommendations for Existing Parks and Facilities

Parks and Amenities

Address safety hazards:

Safety hazards including tripping hazards, broken railings, damaged wooden boardwalk and stairs, standing water, trash accumulation, and uneven surfacing should be addressed immediately at all county-maintained sites. The conditions assessments found limited instances of safety hazards, but all should be addressed immediately.

Review and address ADA accessibility:

Most of the parks and facilities assessments noted a lack of ADA accessibility in a portion of each site. Park staff should conduct a thorough ADA assessment to ensure that each site within the parks system is compliant with all current federal ADA requirements. This includes parking spaces, access (sidewalks), facilities, and restrooms. The Department needs a parks/facilities ADA access action plan for implementing ADA access county-wide. The creation of said access plan opens federal and state grant funding avenues.

Increase quantity of universally accessible amenities and design elements:

There is currently a limited amount of universally accessible features in the parks system. This includes access routes, furnishings, and play equipment. The County should increase their focus on providing these elements in the design of new parks, replacement or construction of new features, or addition of amenities. For example, a new park could be designed to include a universally playable ball diamond, aging playground equipment could be replaced with an inclusive playground, and ADA accessible picnic tables could be added at the parks.



An inclusive playground ensures that all children, regardless of ability, have the opportunity to play and connect with their peers.

Install engineered wood fiber mulch as the standard surfacing at all playgrounds:

Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) Mulch is the best practice safety surfacing material for play areas, providing ASTM fall attenuation for up to 12 feet. The surfacing also meets ADA access requirements. The County provides this surface at most playgrounds, but Riverview Park has a sand safety surface, which only meets fall attenuation standards for up to 4 feet. The draft report recommended replacing the sand at Riverview

Park with EWF and standardizing its use in all County play areas. Following these recommendations, the sand surface at Riverview Park has been upgraded with EWF. Additionally, poured-in-place surfacing, another best practice option, may be considered for specific locations such as high-use areas, thematically coordinated spaces, or sloped play surfaces.

Plan for equipment replacement:

A number of assessments noted that park or facility equipment was older yet still usable. At some point this older equipment will need to be replaced rather than repaired and the Department's budget must take this into account and begin to set aside funding. The assessments identified the following equipment as older: Camptown Park play equipment and hard courts, Nike Park play equipment and tennis courts, and Riverview Park ball field equipment. In response to these recommendations, the County has already refurbished the tennis courts at Nike Park and replaced play equipment.



Recently replaced play equipment at Nike Park.

Improve linkages to adjacent neighborhoods:

Several parks and facilities lack non-vehicular connections to adjacent neighborhoods or schools. Ideally, people who live near a park can walk, bike, or take mass transit to reach the park. This increases physical activity, reduces reliance on automobiles, and creates stronger ties between community members and the area in which they live. Several planning studies have been conducted in the past 15 years that examine these connections at a regional scale, including the Isle of Wight County Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (2006, 2009). The County should develop an action plan in line with previous studies to develop linkages to each park and recreation facility. Methods include adding or improving sidewalks; adding or altering bus service; implementing bike lanes; and constructing multi use trails. The plan should be coordinated among all county departments and boards- including Parks & Recreation, Community Development, Transportation, and Virginia Regional Transit - as well as local pedestrian and bicycle advocates. This improved linkage plan should align with any new county-wide Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Master Plan.

Install additional restroom facilities:

All park sites and major trailheads should have a restroom facility, typically 1 per 20 acres of park or sports complex. Only if there was no signature amenity (playground, sprayground, sport court, gazebo) at the park would no restroom facility be needed. It is recommended that Community Parks, District Parks, and athletic complexes install a restroom building rather than a porta-john. All porta-johns should have a screening shelter constructed around them. Parks currently lacking a restroom facility include Heritage Park (porta-johns provided during special events only), Tyler's Beach Marina/Boat Ramp, and Blackwater River Park.

Construct appropriate stormwater management facilities and erosion control measures:

All new park development or retrofits should follow Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act (CBPA) regulations and the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) regulations. Stormwater management features should be integrated into the park program as an amenity that creates spaces, habitat, and educational opportunities. Best management practices (BMPs) should be implemented in existing parks to address stormwater drainage and erosion issues. Multiple parks report standing water, bank erosion, washout, or sedimentation of water bodies including Camptown Park, Fort Boykin, Fort Huger, and Nike Park.

Stormwater management techniques like regrading, yard or french drains, or BMPs should be implemented to address these health and safety concerns and provide proper stormwater drainage. Erosion management techniques like fencing, regrading, planting, erosion control matting may be appropriate for the site situations. Stormwater management improvements can be spot improvements or integrated with site redevelopment, depending on the extent of the problem and the Department's plan for site redevelopment. Besides addressing drainage issues, there are opportunities to install landscape buffers to improve water quality on sites that drain directly to the James River, including Fort Boykin, Fort Huger, Jones Creek Boat Ramp, Tyler's Beach Boat Ramp. These buffers would be continuous landscape beds of native plants, potentially shrubs, trees, grasses, or perennials. They would intercept runoff entering the river, reducing the total runoff, filtering pollution and trash, reducing sedimentation, stabilizing banks, and providing wildlife habitat. The Department should develop an improvement schedule to address existing stormwater issues at managed parks and facilities.

Manage historic sites to enhance recreation opportunities:
Identify improvements and enhancements to historical sites to enrich the visitor experience and maintain the historic integrity. Explore viewshed and buffer easements and acquisition of adjacent property as development patterns dictate. Control of viewsheds and buffers around these sites is equally important to the preservation and quality visitor experience by mitigating contrasting development and other adjacent detrimental operations. Add visitor amenities like signage, picnic areas, play areas, and recreational water access as appropriate to the site and historical context.



Cannon artifact at Fort Hugor Park.

Convert Windsor Sidewalk Trail to a shared-use-path and extend to Windsor Elementary School:
The Windsor Sidewalk Trail should be converted to a shared use path 8'-12' wide, with a paved or stone dust surface. The improved Windsor Trail would then connect the Town of Windsor 4.8 miles north to Windsor Elementary School, with lateral connections to the Windsor Town Center, Windsor Youth Sports Complex (private), Heritage Park, and neighborhoods. This trail would function as a recreational feature on its own, potentially with fitness stations and benches along the route, as well as a multi-modal transportation opportunity and safe-route-to-school.

Update the site improvement plan for Camptown Park and invest in improvements:
Camptown Park is well used, but the facilities are aging, and the site is underdeveloped. A site plan update should be developed that would identify additional facilities needed by the local community, and an implementation plan put in place for development of new amenities and repair and renovation of the existing facilities.

Update the site improvement plan for Nike Park and invest in improvements:
Nike Park is the premier park for Isle of Wight County and the Town of Smithfield, providing diverse recreational opportunities, some of which are unique to the area. The park is well established, providing new amenities to meet changing citizen interests, while maintaining established amenities. A master plan was created for the park in 2009 that identifies improvements and new facilities. The County should revisit this plan, updating programming, amenities, and layout as needed, and implement identified improvements. Large scale improvements, like planning a new maintenance building or rebuilding the skate park and tennis court parking lot, identified in the site conditions assessment should wait until the

master plan's update. Smaller maintenance and beautification improvements can be made in the interim period, including screening the maintenance facility, addressing uneven trail and sidewalk surfing, and reseeding bare turf areas.

Update the master plan for Heritage Park as a District level park:

The development of Heritage Park as a District level park will provide much needed recreational access and facilities to the central and southern portions of the County. A 2009 master plan explores the options for adding athletic fields, an equestrian center, trails (hiking, equestrian, motorized), playground, dog park, and skate park, as well as improving the existing fairground facility. A new master plan for the site should be developed that reflects current park inventory and shortfalls and public recreational needs.

Develop a park master plan for Blackwater Park:

Develop a master plan for Blackwater Park that identifies programming elements, locations, and phased build-out plans. Blackwater Park is a dedicated conservation park and can include passive recreational opportunities including trails for multiple user groups, picnic facilities, water access, and wildlife viewing.

Update the park master plan for Bradby Park:

A master plan for the undeveloped Bradby Park was prepared in 2008. The master plan envisioned Bradby Park as a Community Level park with athletic fields, amphitheater, community center, and pools. The master plan should be updated, to bring it into alignment with interim park development and county master plans, as well as reassess the community's needs. Given the limited access to the park location and low population density in that section of the County, it may be appropriate to consider reclassifying as a special purpose park.

Buildings and Facilities

Renovate the Otelia Community Center:

The Otelia Community Center should be renovated to meet modern standards and improve function as a space for public events and private rentals. A full building assessment should be performed, addressing any structural needs. The kitchen should be remodeled for increased function, bathrooms updated, and the interior refreshed with new paint.

Recommendations for New Parks and Facilities

Parks and Amenities



Hugor bridge



Windsor Casle Park trail



Luau Event at Windsor Town Center

Address trail needs:

The citizens of Isle of Wight County want more walking, hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. The County should seek to create new trail systems within parks, like Blackwater River Park and Heritage park, and develop connections between existing trail systems, trail connections between parks, and paths between parks and the surrounding areas. The County is currently pursuing several trail projects, including the design and construction of Phases III and beyond of the Park-to-Park Trail. To function as a multi-use trail accommodating cyclists and pedestrians, the trail should be a minimum of 8' for the entire length. The County should continue these initiatives and look for additional trail connection possibilities. Greenways function as alternate transportation routes and are important piece of the County's transportation network. The County should also integrate some type of trail system into every park, be it walking paths, a paved multi-use trail, or hiking trails. A variety of experiences should be provided in the county trail system, with different trail surfaces, length of walking time, looping trails, and level of accessibility.

Develop blueway trails:

Provide blueways that enable county residents and visitors to access the James River, Blackwater River, Pagan River, Cypress Creek, Jones, Creek, Lake Burnt Mills, and other streams for water-based recreation and distance paddling opportunities. This recommendation is in alignment with the 2009 Isle of Wight County Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Blueways should be designed for variable length trips for a variety of skills levels, with appropriate signage, put-ins, parking, and support amenities. The County should market and advertise the blueways system to encourage resident and visitor use. The blueways should be integrated into the County's Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to ensure connectivity through multiple transportation modes.

Provide additional fishing access:

Provide additional fishing access points to rivers, streams, and lakes. Access can be from the bank or piers. It is recommended that there is at least one ADA accessible fishing location within the county.

Provide additional canoe/kayak launch sites:

There is high demand for recreational water access of all types in the County. Create additional canoe/kayak launch sites, preferably as part of a blueways trail development.

Develop an additional beach access point:

The County has over 30 miles of water frontage along the James River and only one recreational beach. The County should develop an additional beach access, either through improvements to an existing property or by purchasing a new property. The new beach access point should include support amenities like parking, restrooms, and signage.

Construct pickleball courts:

Pickleball is a recent sport with fast growing popularity. The County currently does not offer this amenity and has an immediate need for 2 pickleball courts. Pickleball is a social sport, so it is recommended that these courts be developed as a cluster. To further support this need, the draft report suggested double striping the existing tennis courts to accommodate both tennis and pickle ball. In response, courts at Nike Park and Riverview Park have been double-striped to serve both sports.



Pickleball courts / tennis courts at Riverview Park were double striped in 2024.

Construct additional picnic facilities:

The County should construct three additional picnic shelters over the next 10 years, as well as picnic areas. These picnic facilities will likely be included as an amenity during the development of proposed parks. New shelters should be easily accessible to restrooms, parking, and recreation areas. Existing shelters should be evaluated to assess the need for supporting amenities. As picnic shelter structures and amenities reach the end of their lifespan, their location should be evaluated. The County should explore the need for large and enclosed picnic shelters to provide event rental options for large groups. Large picnic facilities will require focused site planning to accommodate parking and support amenities.

Construct additional playgrounds:

There is high public interest in playgrounds and the County has a projected need for three additional playgrounds. Playgrounds may be integrated into the new neighborhood and community parks as well as included in park expansions. Themed playgrounds or unique equipment would diversify experiences. Playgrounds should be designed for inclusive and universally accessible play. As playgrounds are replaced, universal access play apparatus should be added. All playgrounds should be designed for 5-12 year olds, with additional toddler play as appropriate.

Construct an outdoor amphitheater:

The Department should consider constructing an outdoor amphitheater to host concerts, events, and ceremonies and to be available for public rental. The Department must ensure that parking, restrooms, and other facilities are adequate at the park site to support the events at the amphitheater. A geographically accessible location for the amphitheater is preferable.

Construct an additional basketball and volleyball courts:

The level of service analysis and public survey indicate a need for an additional basketball court and sand volleyball court by 2032. These facilities will likely be included as an amenity during the development of new parks.

Construct outdoor fitness facilities:

The public expressed a strong need for additional fitness and exercise facilities. Outdoor fitness equipment is a rising trend, providing accessible opportunities fitness, as well as increasing park usership. There are a wide variety of equipment options, from static bodyweight and machines to cross fit and obstacle courses. The equipment can be clustered or spaced along a trail. It is recommended that the County develop two outdoor fitness facilities, located to provide equitable access.



The basketball court at Nike Park was resurfaced in 2023.

Consider the development of amenities to support the Therapeutic Recreation program:

The Department is investing in the growth of therapeutic recreational programming. The needs and growth of this programming should be considered in the selection of equipment, park site amendments, and design of new parks.

Develop additional neighborhood level parks:

The level of service assessment and public input both show a strong need for additional neighborhood level parks to serve the basic recreational needs within easy access of population centers. There is an estimated shortfall of 56 acres of neighborhood parkland currently, rising to 63 acres in 2032. There are several possible options that the County may pursue in conjunction to provide this additional park acreage:

1. Enter into an equitable shared use agreement with the county school system so that the elementary school facilities and amenities can be open to public use outside of normal school hours. This will address 10-15 acres of the shortfall, without additional land purchases or facility construction.
2. Infill development of special use parks with neighborhood park level facilities, including picnic shelters, playgrounds, and trails. The infill development will need to be selected and located to fit the primary function of the facility and the constraints of the site. There is the potential to address up to 54 acres of shortfall, without additional land purchases.
3. Purchase and develop new land acquisitions as neighborhood level parks to address access equity. There are population centers within the County that are not currently served by a neighborhood park within a one-mile radius, including Benns Church, Chuckatuck Creek, and the village of Zuni. Some private residential developments may be served by HOA managed parks, so while a region may appear to be underserved by public parks, they have private park access.

Buildings and Facilities

Construct a new recreation community center:

Based on the level of service analysis and public feedback, additional recreation center space is needed to serve all generations. The County currently operates two recreation centers that provide indoor recreation and community space. The County currently has a shortfall of 11,800 sf of indoor recreation space, which grows to a 14,000 sf shortfall in 2032. The need for a new recreation center is shown in public feedback and a geographic analysis showing a gap in service in the northern portion of the county. A new recreation center should be located in the northern portion of the county, preferably within a 10-minute walk/drive to population centers. The facility should include indoor fitness facilities, exercise facilities, athletic courts,

and community rooms. To aid decision making, a feasibility study should be conducted on a recreation center before any additions or relocations. Facility needs, building condition, and redevelopment requirements should all be considered.

Construct an outdoor splashpad:

The only semi-public pool facility in the County is the indoor pool at the Luter Family YMCA in Smithfield. The public has expressed a need for additional recreational aquatic facilities. Splashpads are growing in popularity across the country and region as a cost-effective way to provide engaging and accessible aquatic recreation. The County does not currently have a splashpad, so constructing one would provide an expansion of services to residents. The new splashpad should be located at a Community or District level park and be in the vicinity of population centers. The Department should select a site and pursue master planning for the splashpad. The splashpad could be developed in conjunction with the new recreation community center.



Skate Park at Nike Park.

Recommendations for Programs

Rebalance lifecycle distribution of programs:
The program lifecycle assessment revealed an appropriate balance of programs in the Introduction, Take-off, and Growth stages, but an imbalance in the Mature and Saturation/Decline stages. There is a smaller than recommended percentage of programs in the Mature stage (26% currently, 40% recommended) and larger percentage in the Saturation/Decline stages (30% currently, maximum 20% recommended). The County should eliminate or reposition the bottom 10% of programs in the Saturation and Decline stages and continue to show support for programs in the Mature and Growth stages.

Track program lifecycles:
Track program lifecycles on an annual basis to ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. There should be a decreasing number of programs in the saturated and declining stages while ensuring there is an increasing number of programs in the introduction stage. Eliminate or reposition the bottom 5% of all poorly performing programs. Establish a performance metric to ensure that a set percentage of programs only should be in the decline stage and any programs staying in that stage for two years should be repositioned and eliminated in favor of new programs.

Regularly evaluate the mix of programs:
The current Core Program Areas provided by the Department currently appears to meet some of the major needs of the Isle of Wight County community, but the program mix must be evaluated on a regular and reoccurring basis to ensure that the offerings within each Core Program Area – and the Core Program Areas themselves – align with changing leisure and recreation trends, demographics, and needs of residents.

Update the Age Segment Analysis of programming annually:
The County currently provides a strong balance of programs across all age segments. This balance should be maintained moving forward, and the Department should update this Age Segment Analysis every year to note changes or to refine age segment categories. Age Segment Analyses should ideally be done for every program offered by the Department. Program coordinators/managers should include this information when creating or updating program plans for individual programs. An Age Segment Analysis can also be incorporated into Mini Business Plans for comprehensive program planning.

Develop separate programming classifications and opportunities for those ages 55-64, 65-74, and 75+:
Given the growing population trend for residents ages 55 and over and the growing demand for services in this age bracket, it is also recommended that the Department further segment this group into 65-74 and 75+. These two sub-segments will have increasingly different needs and expectations for programs and services in coming years, and program planning will be needed to provide differing requirements.

Continue to support and expand the Therapeutic Recreation program:
The Department is investing in and expanding its therapeutic recreation programming. The Department should continue to do so, looking for partnership opportunities and coordinating with park planning for amenity and facility development.

Implement the classification of services and cost recovery goals:
All County programs were classified as essential, important, and value added and given an associated total cost of service recovery goal of between 25% and 75%+. The County should develop and implement a plan

to achieve these cost recovery goals within the next 5 years. Refer to the Program and Services Assessment in Appendix F for the complete list of programs and their associated cost recovery goals.

Develop new pricing policy based on classification of programs and services:

It is important to refocus the Department on cost recovery goals by functional program area or line of service. Pricing based on established operating budget recovery goals will provide flexibility to maximize all pricing strategies to the fullest. Allowing the staff to work within a pricing range tied to cost recovery goals will permit them to set prices based on market factors and differential pricing (prime time/non-primetime, season/off-season rates) to maximize user participation and also encourage additional group rate pricing where applicable.

Develop pricing strategies:

As the Parks and Recreation Department embarks on the implementation of a new pricing policy, it will be necessary to expand upon and implement pricing strategies that will not only increase sales but also maximize the utilization of the County's parks, programs, and recreation facilities. By creating pricing options, customers are given the opportunity to choose which option best fits their schedule and price point. It is recommended that the Department continue to explore pricing strategies that create options for the customer. Options include high-season and off-season rates, group discounting and packaging, primetime/non-primetime, cost recovery goal pricing, and age segment pricing.

Improve the strategy for public feedback:

The Department should update, refine and develop a strategy to seek feedback on the quality of existing programs being offered as well as residents' desires for new programming.

Develop and implement a Marketing Plan:

The Department utilizes several marketing strategies to inform County residents of the offerings of the community; however, it lacks a formalized Marketing Plan which can be utilized to create target marketing strategies. The Department should develop and implement a Marketing Plan that blends a system-wide marketing approach while creating methods to target specific populations (age segments, geography) through the most effective and efficient means.

Track and assess program evaluation data consistently:

Implement a program assessment and evaluation tool and track the data consistently. Data will provide input for future improvements to programming management.

Track program participation data consistently:

Through consistent participation data analysis across all core program areas, refine recreation program offerings to reduce low enrollment or canceled programs due to no enrollment.

Track customer retention:

The Department currently tracks customer satisfaction ratings but should also track customer retention percentages. Tracking qualitative data about retention as well will aid in marketing, program selection, and program management.

Expand programs and services in the areas of greatest demand:

Ongoing analysis of the participation trends of programming and services in Isle of Wight means staff will be able to focus their efforts on the programs and services of the greatest need and reduce or eliminate programs and services where interest is declining. Specific efforts should be made to increase programming in the areas of greatest UNMET need as identified in the statistically valid survey. Refer to

the Program and Services Assessment in Appendix F for the complete list of programs and recommended actions. The highest priority program recommendation areas are below:

1. Expand adult fitness and wellness programs and exercise classes.
2. Expand senior health and wellness programs.
3. Expand community special events.
4. Implement historic interpretation programs. These could be interpretive events, reenactments, or youth education, among others.

Recommendations for Park Operations and Maintenance

Deepen existing and establish new partnerships with area organizations and governing bodies:
The Department should continue to build existing relationships and look for new partnership opportunities to expand offerings, manage facilities, and share resources. Diverse partnerships are a method to multiply outreach.

Formalize partnerships:
The Department should memorialize all partnerships in formal agreements, including field access and management by athletic groups.

Continue coordination with other County departments:
Coordinate efforts with other departments to streamline maintenance services supporting maintenance and operational needs.

Consider County code revision for neighborhood park proffers in all new housing developments:
To address the local recreation needs of residents of new planned communities, consider adding a code requirement that all new residential communities include a park proffer. At a minimum the park proffer would require the construction of a neighborhood level park matching or exceeding county standards. There is the potential to also include a proffer for trails and/or passive open space This will ensure that new residents will have an accessible park to meet their needs and spreads the infrastructure impact away from existing tax-payers.

Coordinate with Economic Development and Tourism groups:
Work with, or continue to work with, Isle of Wight County and Town of Smithfield Economic Development and Tourism staff and revitalization groups in order to share resources and cross-market programs, plans, and activities. Parks and Recreation is an economic generator and sustainer for the County and Town and undoubtedly shared information between the Department and economic-related groups would be mutually beneficial.

Encourage volunteer opportunities:
The Department recruits volunteers for various park and recreation opportunities. The Department should continue to connect with volunteers as well as expand volunteer recruitment. Possibilities include creating centralized volunteer listing and sign-up on the Department's website and creating opportunities for youth volunteering, include school, scout, and church groups.

Undertake periodic surveys to keep track of trends:
Consider obtaining demographic and participation data using on-line public surveys every 2 to 5 years to keep track of parks and recreation trends in the county. Examining this data will ensure that the needs of

people of all ages, races, ethnicities, and genders are met to the greatest extent possible. These surveys will also help the Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department adjust priorities and funding.

Develop Park and Facilities Design Guideline Standards:

The County should develop and implement a Park and Facilities Design Guidelines Standards document. Design and development guidelines are intended to provide planning and site programming guidance to ensure equity of service, system cohesiveness, and ease of maintenance in the existing system and to guide the growth and expansion of the parks system over time. Guidelines will address development standards for each park type as well as standards for site furnishings, materials, architectural styles, amenities, and construction details. Design standards give cohesion and branding to the park's system, as well as ensure quality of construction and streamline maintenance actions. The Standards should be implemented at all new parks, and phased into existing parks as part of lifecycle replacement, infill construction, and maintenance.

Develop a quantitative Department performance measurement and tracking system:

The Department should develop a performance measurement tool with three to five key performance measures for each line of service, including but not limited to, cost recovery, program service delivery, facility maintenance, and marketing and technology solutions to determine and, in turn, communicate the level of success they are achieving on an annual basis.

Incorporate sustainability into all levels of parks and facility management:

The Department lists environmental protection as an objective but does not currently have specific sustainability and environmental protection goals or a plan. A sustainability plan is good public policy that protects the environment and often reduces costs. The Department might consider evaluating stream and river protection; pollutant management; maintenance fleet management (e.g. oil/fluid disposal policies; reducing idling times; investing in hybrid vehicles); and pesticide/herbicide management. Incorporating the use of best management practices for stormwater management in conjunction with plans for park improvements or new parkland is another positive move.

Explore new materials and methods:

Reduce maintenance cost, frequency, and labor as well as operating costs by switching materials or procedures. The Department should explore and adopt new technologies, materials, and procedural innovations to improve service delivery.

Budget for lifecycle costs and maintenance:

Facilities and equipment require periodic lifecycle maintenance and repairs to reach their full working lifespan. The lifecycle costs for each facility/amenity/equipment should be average over the lifespan of the asset and the averaged annual costs totaled. This expense should be included in the Department's annual budget to ensure that funding is available and the investment in the facility/amenity/equipment is maximized. Coordinate the lifecycle budget allocation with the work order management system. The department is currently facing a backlog of deferred maintenance; while addressing that the Department should also maintain a regular schedule of lifecycle repairs and maintenance of other facilities/amenities/equipment to ensure that the backlog is eventually eliminated.

Adopt a standards system of grounds maintenance and develop an associated work plan:

Maintenance standards are based on a Level (1), (2) and (3) modes (tasks and frequencies of each task) and follow best practices as established by the National Recreation and Park Association. The Division can continue to customize the standards based on the values of the Isle of Wight County community and need

to be adopted and implemented by staff and followed regardless of whether work is performed by County staff or third-party contractors. The grounds maintenance standards create a guide for the type and frequency of routine tasks, which will frame a maintenance management plan.

Develop a maintenance management plan:

A formalized maintenance management plan includes not only maintenance modes and standards for each park but also tracks the performance of the work against a set of defined outcomes as well as the costs expended to achieve each outcome. A maintenance management plan is typically memorialized within an asset-based work order management system.

Implement a GIS-based asset management work order management system:

A work order system should be used to track lifecycle maintenance requirements that are tied to weekly and monthly work orders. This will help the staff to stay ahead of preventative maintenance and limit breakdowns. Further, utilizing the system will provide staff the necessary "actual cost" data for work being performed. A work order management system can also determine the level of unproductive time expended by staff (i.e., travel time to parks).

Implement a systematic approach to contracting services:

Implement a unit activity cost tracking system as part of a work order management system. This will allow the Department to analyze the unit cost of performing tasks internally against the unit cost to perform work through a third-party vendor.

Hire ten additional FTEs to increase staff to park acreage ratio:

The Parks Division does not have the staffing capacity to manage the developed parks system consistently. Based on the best practice of 1:25 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs) to actively maintained acres and 1:500 FTEs to natural park acres, the Department does not have the capacity to manage the parks system. The Department needs to hire or contract ten additional FTEs to manage and maintain the existing system to the recommended service levels. This ratio of FTEs to acreage should be maintained as the system expands.

Developed parks and trail maintenance funding:

It is recommended that the Parks Maintenance Division develop line-item budgets for each functional area of work.

Increase annual park maintenance funding and staff:

It is recommended that the Park Maintenance Operation be allocated an additional $950,000 annually for enhanced management and maintenance of parks, in particular Blackwater River Park. Of this funding, $650,000 should be allocated for the addition of 10 FTES.

Regularly assess operation and maintenance funding:

It is recommended that the current cost per acre be adjusted annually and serve as a guide for operational budget development as the park system expands in commensuration with population growth.

Explore options to reduce maintenance expenditures:

Maintenance operations are typically spent in Divisions that do not have direct revenue sources that can offset expenditures. There are opportunities, however, to reduce expenditures through the following strategies:

- Adopt-a-Trail Programs: These are typically small-grant programs that fund new construction, repair or renovation, maps/brochures, and facilities (bike racks), as well as providing maintenance support.
- Adopt-a-Park Programs: These are small-grant programs that fund new construction and provide maintenance support.
- Operational Partnerships: Partnerships are operational funding sources formed from two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a public agency, or a private business and a public agency. Two partners jointly share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths of each partner.



Boat docks and scenery at Jones Creek Boat Ramp in Isle of Wight County

CHAPTER 6 // IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET PLAN

Implementation planning takes recommendations made in earlier sections and converts them into tangible results. The plan includes prioritization of recommendations and a phased cost estimate. The goal of the plan is to identify the most efficient way to sequence and fund the recommendations in order to balance citizen needs with County resources.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

Phasing is determined by overlaying the public need priorities, order of repairs, and cost and construction feasibility findings on the list of recommendations for sustaining the parks and recreation system. For example, recommendations that address safety, code, or access or could be implemented easily with low cost are categorized as an immediate priority. A facility that has high public need, funding could be readily available to remedy the issue, or would be easily feasible would be rated as a near-term project, to be completed within the next 5 years. Mid-term priorities, to be completed in 5-10 years, involve recommendations that require in-depth consideration, compilation of larger funding amounts, extended demographic shifts, and long-range planning. The recommendations classified as long-term priorities are needed to meet the projected needs of the County within the next 10 years but based on prioritization and implementation feasibility of investment allocation, are identified as being implemented in the next 10+ years. These projects are an expansion of the park system, with new site acquisition and development. If opportunities arise to implement these long-term projects sooner than 10 years, the County should do so. On-going efforts are implementation items that can be done on an as-needed basis, should be done on a periodic (seasonal, annual, or other cycle) basis, and as funding becomes available.

Phases are divided into the following categories:

Near-term – Complete within the next 5 years (by 2029):
Improve existing facilities and practices; build out to the capacity of existing facilities; set groundwork for long-term actions

Mid-Term – Complete within the next 5-10 years (by 2032):
Expand operations of the Department and meet population growth needs

Long-Term – Complete within the next 10+ years:
Expand park system with new land purchase and development

On-going:
Complete as on-going effort, as issues arise, or as land or funding becomes available

The order of recommendations should be reviewed every year to reflect budgets, staffing levels, new policies, usage trends, and citizen demand. Phasing may shift if opportunities arise to implement recommendations sooner than listed in this plan. To track and stay on top of changing priorities and needs the *Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan* should be updated every five years and coordinated with other county departments and planning documents.

10-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The recommendations for park and facility improvement, new development, programming, and operations and maintenance procedures are categorized below in a 10-Year Implementation Plan. Improvements with high priority are called out in italics at the beginning of each section. An item is designated as high priority either because of great public need, importance to Department management or function, or being a critical step before proceeding with other items.

Near-Term (within 5 years)

Existing Facilities

- *Address safety hazards and ADA compliance.*
- *Repair and maintain existing amenities and facilities.*
- *Improve ADA access as identified in the "Conditions Assessment Report".*
- *Replace play surface at Riverview Park with engineered wood fiber surface. (Completed in 2024.)*
- Develop and implement an action plan for each park and facility to connect to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Install restroom facilities at Heritage Park, Tyler's Beach Marina/Boat Ramp, and Blackwater River Park.
- Address minor stormwater issues at parks and trails.
- Develop and implement Recreation Enhancement Plans for historical sites managed by the Department.
- Convert Windsor Sidewalk Trail into a paved shared-use path, 8'-12' wide.
- Develop a facilities replacement and refurbishment plan for Camptown Park and Nike Park and begin implementation.
- Update the master plan for Heritage Park as a District Level Park.
- Develop a park master plan for Blackwater Park.
- Update the master plans for Camptown Park, Nike Park, and Bradby Park, to reflect current needs and long-range county planning documents like the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan.
- Renovate the Otelia Community Center
- Assess parking needs and solutions at sites noted in the "Conditions Assessment Report".
- Replace the playgrounds at Camptown and Nike Parks, preferably with universally accessible and inclusive play equipment.
- Install picnic shelters at Jones Creek and Tyler's Beach boat ramps.
- Ensure standardized signage is installed in all parks, including identification, use allowance, orientation, and wayfinding.

New Facilities

- Construct 2 miles of nature trails and 2 mountain bike trail systems.
- Develop a new canoe/kayak launch.
- Construct 2 new pickleball courts.
- Construct an additional picnic shelter.
- Begin a feasibility study and planning process for a new recreation center.

Programs

- *Develop new pricing policy and strategies.*
- *Rebalance program lifecycle distribution, by eliminating or repositioning the bottom 10% of programs.*
- *Develop separate programming classification and opportunities for those ages 55-64, 65-74, and 75+.*
- Improve the strategy for public feedback.
- Develop and implement a Marketing Plan.
- Implement the classification of services and cost recovery goals.
- Expand adult fitness and wellness programs and exercise classes.
- Expand senior health and wellness programs.
- Expand community special events.
- Implement historic interpretation programs.
- Develop a method to measure and track customer retention percentages.

Operations and Maintenance

- *Formalize all partnerships in written agreements.*
- *Enter into an equitable shared-use agreement with the county school system for recreational use and access of elementary school grounds outside of regular school hours.*
- *Develop a quantitative performance measurement and tracking system.*
- *Implement a GIS-based work order management system, including a unit activity cost tracking system.*
- *Hire ten additional full-time equivalent (FTE) employees to have the recommended 1:25 staff/developed acre and 1:500 staff/natural park acre ratio.*
- *Increase annual park maintenance funding and staff by $950,000 annually, adjusting for inflation.*
- *Budget for lifecycle costs and maintenance and coordination lifecycle budget allocations with the work order management system.*
- Develop parks and Facilities Design Guideline Standards.
- Develop and adopt a standard Park Maintenance Manual, incorporating custom maintenance standards.
- Develop and track line-item budget items for each function area of parks and trail maintenance services.
- Implement a unit activity cost tracking system as part of a work order management system to analyze value of contracting services or performing internally.
- Investigate revising the County's code to require neighborhood park proffers within all new housing developments.
- Explore options to reduce maintenance expenditures.

Mid-Term (5 -10 years)

Existing Facilities

- Begin the first phase of development identified in the updated master plan for Heritage Park.
- Begin the first phase of development identified in the master plan for Blackwater Park.

New Facilities

- Extend the widened Windsor Shared Use Path (currently known as the Windsor Sidewalk Trail) an additional 3.8 miles north to Windsor Elementary School, with lateral connections to parks and neighborhoods.
- Construct three (3) miles of soft trails and one (1) mountain bike trail system or significantly expand an existing mountain bike system.
- Implement a county-wide blueways plan with facilities.
- Acquire and develop an additional beach access point.
- Construct an additional four (4) playgrounds
- Construct an outdoor amphitheater
- Construct one (1) new basketball court.
- Construct one (1) new volleyball court.
- Construct an outdoor fitness facility.
- Purchase land for the future development of a Neighborhood Level park develop a master plan.
- Construct a new recreation center to provide approximately 14,000 sf of additional indoor recreation space.
- Construct an outdoor splashpad.

Long-Term (10+ years)

New Facilities

- Purchase land for the future development of a Neighborhood Level park develop a master plan.
- Begin construction of the two new neighborhood parks, per the master plans.

On-Going

Existing Facilities

- Plan for equipment replacement.
- Develop underutilized areas in parks for environmental benefit.
- Consider the development of sites and amenities to support the Therapeutic Recreation program.

Programs

- Update program age segment analysis annually to note changes or refine offerings.
- Track program participation data.
- Track program lifecycles and remove programs with saturated or declining participation.
- Track program cost recovery.
- Regularly introduce new programming to match trends, demographics, and needs of residents.
- Continue to support and expand the Therapeutic Recreation programming.
- Track and assess program evaluation data consistently.
- Track customer retention.

Operations and Maintenance

- Deepen existing and establish new partnerships with area organizations and governing bodies.
- Continue coordination with other County departments.
- Coordination with economic development, tourism, and historical groups for partnerships, joint programming, and cross-promotion.
- Undertake periodic surveys, approximately every 3-5 years, to keep track of trends.
- Continue to encourage volunteer opportunities.
- Incorporate sustainability into all levels of park/facility management.
- Explore new materials and methods.
- Maintain staff to park acreage ratios of 1:25 FTEs for developed park acres and 1:500 FTEs for natural park acres.
- Regularly assess operation and maintenance funding.
- Update work plans based on maintenance standard and system expansion.



Heritage Park hosts many popular community and regional events.

ANALYSIS OF COST

An important piece of the plan is to determine how much to budget for the recommended improvements identified in the conditions assessments, shortfalls identified in the Level of Service analysis, and the system-wide recommendations. The cost analysis shows gross approximate figures and is not intended to be used for specific financial determinations. The purpose of the analysis is to give the Department enough information to begin thinking about planning efforts related to funding and priorities.

Methodology

The general approach to preparing this section was to identify current and proposed costs, including lifecycle and capital costs. Lifecycle costs are expenses incurred to maintain and improve a park or facility to prevent it from falling into disrepair. Capital costs are typically larger expenses for one-time improvements or new additions. When considered together, a more complete picture of overall expenses becomes evident. The specific costs are presented in Appendix I.

The total cost for park improvements was calculated based on individual park site needs and overall County recreational needs. A cost was developed for each park site based on the condition assessment findings. The cost includes lifecycle repairs for general maintenance and improvements of existing facilities and capital improvements for lifecycle facility replacement or new construction to meet specific gaps in service at the parks. This might be providing a restroom at a well-used park or building a sidewalk to provide ADA access to a picnic shelter. The needs for the County overall are calculated based on calculated Level of Service shortfalls and any other improvements identified in the recommendations section of the report.

A unit cost was assigned to each refurbishment, improvement, construction, and purchase, with a 25% contingency added to the total to account for design fees, mobilization, permitting, and shifting project costs. Please note, these costs are estimates in 2024 dollars and are intended for CIP planning. Specific costs should be developed per project for budgetary planning near to the planned time of development for a more accurate understanding of cost.

All improvements were then assigned a phasing unit of near-term implementation (0-5 years), mid-term implementation (5-10 years), or long-term implementation (10+ years). These improvements address the projected needs of the County over the next 10 years. The long-term phase acknowledges the needs identified in the report but extends the investment allocation over a longer time frame to direct prioritization of funding. If the County has the resources or the opportunity arises, the long-term projects should be implemented in 5-10 years. All identified improvements, recommendations, and shortfalls identified through the report process are included in this 10 year implementation time line.

10-YEAR PARK IMPROVEMENT COST ESTIMATE (2022-2032)

EXISTING PARKS/FACILITIES		
Lifecycle Repairs	$	920,000
Capital Improvements	$	10,850,000
Total	**$**	**11,770,000**

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS/FACILITIES		
New Parks	$	4,875,000
Indoor Recreation Center	$	7,500,000
Outdoor Splash Pad	$	1,500,000
Planning Studies	$	1,050,000
Total	**$**	**14,925,000**

Cost and Funding Overview

The conclusions from a preliminary review of the estimated improvement budget are discussed below. Refer to **Appendix I** for cost estimation and analysis spreadsheets.

- Projections of costs for required facilities recommended far exceed the department's current budget. For this reason, any large-scale improvements will need to be financed by Capital Improvements provided by the Board of Supervisors or some other revenue source capable of large fiscal appropriations.
- The total improvements calculated by this report for all recommendations is $26.70 million.
- The lifecycle and capital improvements costs calculated by this report for existing parks and facilities totals $11.77 million.
- The lifecycle and capital improvements expenditures for proposed parks, facilities, and master plans estimated by this report totals $14.93 million.
- The total of mid-term and long-term costs is $21.27 million. These are projects required to meet the projected needs of the citizens over the next 10 years. If possible, the County should install all these projects within 10 years. This report acknowledges the reality of potential difficulty attaining funding and identifies $3.92 million of projects that can potentially be deferred to a long-term 10+ year implementation phase.

Cost Phasing Estimate

Near-Term Costs (0-5 years)

EXISTING PARKS/FACILITIES	COST
Lifecycle Repairs	$ 732,500
Capital Improvements (assessment based)	$ 3,085,500
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 4,772,500**
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FACILITIES	
Capital Improvements (shortfall based)	$ 445,000
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 556,250**
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS/FACILITIES	
Planning Reports and Studies	$ 520,000
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 1,345,300**
Grand Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 6,674,000**

Mid-Term Costs (5-10 years)

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW FACILITIES	COST
Capital Improvements (shortfall based)	$ 5,597,500
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 6,996,875**
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS/FACILITIES	
New Park Land Purchase/Development	$ 800,000
Indoor Recreation Center	$ 6,000,000
Outdoor Splash Pad	$ 1,200,000
Planning Reports and Studies	$ 285,000
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 10,356,250**
Grand Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 17,353,000**

Long-Term Costs (10+ years)

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS/FACILITIES	
New Park Land Purchase/Development	$ 3,100,000
Planning Reports and Studies	$ 35,000
Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 3,918,750**
Grand Total (incl. 25% cont.)	**$ 3,919,000**

**This estimate represents 2024 dollars. Costs will need to be re-examined in subsequent years for increases in material and labor costs and inflation.*

- The Department may need to postpone other improvements past their identified phasing term. These decisions must be made after a thorough assessment of available funding and needs.

Addressing funding shortfalls will become a balancing act between increasing funding requests from the County, asking residents to help pay for the amenities they are requesting, and identifying new sources of money. These new sources may be bonds, tax increases, development-based proffers, new or increased user fees, or corporate partnerships that are not currently in place.

It is important to allocate additional maintenance funding to support capital expenditures and system expansions. These cost estimates do not include additional maintenance funding that would be required.

The Department should maintain and expand its grant funding whenever possible. It should be noted that, with limited exceptions, grant funding cannot support parks and recreation improvements on a large scale or for the long term.

Also, please note that the estimates in this report represent 2024 dollars. Costs will need to be re-examined in subsequent years for increases in material and labor costs and inflation.



Large oak tree at Heritage Park in Isle of Wight County.

Funding Strategies

The park system has accumulated approximately $4,772,500 in deferred maintenance and replacement costs as well as $7,553,000 in current projected improvement costs associated with level of service needs. As time passes, accrued maintenance and life cycle costs will continue to accumulate. Current maintenance and operations budgets and CIP allocations only cover a portion of previously budgeted items. This leaves significant gaps in funding that must be covered elsewhere. As population and the need for services increase budgets for maintenance, operations, and capital improvements will need to increase. The department may exercise several strategies that help to cover projected gaps while minimizing direct budget increases. These include but are not limited to the following:

Government Finance

This may involve creating direct business development efforts to create partnerships and earned income, asking the public to approve a bond or levy to cover lifecycle costs, partnering with other departments, and sharing budgets to implement cross beneficial projects.

Cost recovery and enterprise management strategies

Cost recovery strategies involve creating a business minded approach for certain aspect of parks, programs, and amenities. This may involve revenue positive business plans for higher cost services and facilities, revenue sharing with concessions operations, competitively bidding out higher cost services, and increasing charges for services and programs that are not core essential for the department's mission.

Operational management changes

This category involves creating efficiencies and maintaining operational efficiencies wherever possible. This may include conversion of excess land to unmaintained open space, conversion of that same land to more productive uses, or divestment in land and facilities.

Partnerships and Sponsorships

Partnership strategies should involve equitable agreements with complimenting public, private and non-profit groups for the use, maintenance, and cost sharing of facilities. The true costs of any agreement should always be understood.

Fundraising

Fundraising may involve an organized effort to establish and maintain partnerships with nonprofits, philanthropists, and others to meet mutual goals. It may involve the integration of dedicated staff to promote the parks system and cultivate partnerships though various outreach, events, and activities.

Grants

With the overlap of objectives in community wellness, infrastructure, environment and other areas, there are increasing opportunities for significant grant funding to pay for one time improvement projects such as land acquisition, park development, access, trails, playgrounds, stormwater quality improvements and other park infrastructure. It is important to carefully align each project with the grantor's mission and objectives to increase successful applications. Also, the department needs to fully understand the financial reporting and design standard requirements for each grant so that the level of effort and expenditure related to the grant source can match the scale of the project.

Funding Sources

Specific funding sources with potential for use in Isle of Wight County are listed below. The Department already employs several of these strategies, but there is the opportunity to expand and refine them.

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- CIP Budget (include park development projects in the County's short and long range Capital Improvement Plan)
- Parks Bond Referendum (voters approve the County borrowing money to finance park projects)
- Corporate Sponsorships (corporate investment in amenities and/or events)
- Partnerships (joint funding with shared risks, assets, and management)
- Grants (from foundations or through governmental recreation, transportation, community development, or environmental programs)
- Foundations/Gifts (funding from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations)
- Private Donations (donations of funds, land, facilities, or other items)
- Friends' Associations (special interest groups raising funds for a purpose)
- Irrevocable Remainder Trusts (individuals leave portion of wealth as a trust fund to be used by an agency)
- Special Fundraisers (luncheons, brick sales, or other events that trade donations for a good or service)
- User Fees/Charges (fees charged for usage of an amenity or service)
- Ticket Sales/Admissions (fees charged for admission to a special event)
- Permits (fee-based permits provided to use park property for financial gain)
- Reservations (fees charged to reserve public property for a specific time frame)
- Equipment Rentals (fees charged to rent tables, chairs, tents and similar items)
- Land Trusts (trusts set up to secure funding for land acquisitions)
- Volunteers (unpaid workers donating time and effort
- Concession Management (funds obtained from retail sales)
- Private Management (contracting with private entities to run a public facility resulting in financial savings and possibly additional percentage of income)
- Naming Rights (funding obtained from allowing private businesses to place their name on a public facility)
- Crowd Funding (smaller donation amounts provided by large amounts of people)

Higher-dollar-amount and more complex projects require funding sources with greater monetary resources and assured delivery methods. For example, a recreation center would benefit from a bond referendum, corporate sponsorships, and/or private management. Alternatively, funds for a picnic shelter could be raised through fundraisers, small grants, and small donations. Lastly, it is important to note that these funding sources can and should be mixed and matched to achieve the desired dollar amount.

Adjusting Priorities Based on Available Funding

Based on demand and current funding levels, the Department should focus on addressing repairs and maintenance, diversifying programming, improving departmental operations, expanding the trail network, increasing water access, planning for the redevelopment and build-out of existing parks, and the creation of new neighborhood parks.

The Isle of Wight County Parks and Recreation Department should use this report and their professional knowledge as a guide for how to move forward with necessary and desirable improvements, particularly for more costly enhancements that require long lead times.



Scenic views of Jones Creek from the fishing pier at Nike Park in Isle of Wight County.