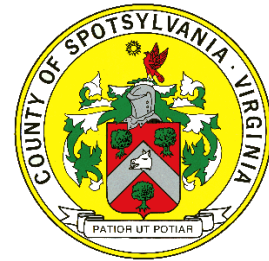


## County of Spotsylvania

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# MEMORANDUM

TO: Jeremy Bullock, Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman  
Spotsylvania Parks and Recreation Commission Members

THROUGH: Wanda Parrish, AICP, Planning Director

FROM: Jacob Pastwik, AICP, Planner III

DATE: April 18, 2019

RE: Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Facilities Update

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**Summary:** The Parks and Recreation Commission was provided for review and endorsement request a draft of the Comprehensive Plan Parks and Recreation Element at its December 20, 2018 meeting. During that meeting, a number of issues were raised and discussed concerning the draft as proposed. Due to the length and content of the issues identified, staff expressed interest in reviewing and addressing each of the comments that were expressed in writing and read aloud during the meeting. Staff feels this is the best way to identify potential issues, resolve others, further explain the background for a number of the recommendations suggested, and explain how the Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Plan update “fits” into County processes and the Code of Virginia requirements. Staff would like to present this feedback to the Parks and Recreation Commission prior to seeking an endorsement recommendation from the Commission at their next scheduled meeting. Comments received have resulted in a number of additional amendments to the draft document including suggested clarifications and re-organization of the recommendations portion of the draft. Staff has acknowledged the suggested edits within the feedback to comments received. Staff also notes that feedback received has helped further improve the draft and a number of amendments have been made since the last Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. The attached draft includes the aforementioned improvements. In response to comments received at last meeting, staff has provided the following responses:

**Commissioner Comment-** What is the value of moving the Trailways Master Plan into the Transportation Element rather than the Parks & Rec Element? The trailways have a different purpose from Transportation.

**Response-** Spotsylvania County adopted the Trailways Master Plan in February, 2011 that included plans for both roadside and off road greenway trails. In 2011 the Virginia Chapter of the American Planning Association bestowed the 2011 Outstanding Plan Award- Plan Element upon the Plan.

Due to the extent of the planned trail system it is not expected that the Parks and Recreation Department nor the County will be the sole owner or responsible for maintenance of the entire system. When adopted, the Board of Supervisors established a preference for system development through non-County funding sources. Support for trail development paired with targeted road improvement projects (constructing typical sections with bike/ped accommodations) was also exhibited. There are a variety of different tools to help implement and extend the existing trail system outside of bona fide Parks including but not limited to trails within VDOT rights-of-way, via easement upon private property, through linkages to battlefield trail systems associated with the National Park Service, Civil War Trust, etc. Implementation of the Trailways Master Plan is not and has not been solely assigned to the Parks and Recreation Department. Thus far, the Plan has chiefly been implemented in conjunction with County Utility projects, grants or VDOT transportation funding opportunities, and private development projects in the form of frontage improvements or proffers. Implementation through private development occurs through Planning Department review with frontage requirements and via public facilities levels of service considerations for project proffers, supported only if identified within the County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) whose projects must be clearly supported by the local Comprehensive Plan as per State Code. Incorporating the Trailways Plan as an element of the Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is not intended to shift responsibility or remove public trails as a consideration for Parks and Recreation projects. Currently the adopted Parks and Recreation Public Facilities Section of the Comprehensive Plan only references the County adopted level of service standard for trailways. For clarity, within the draft Parks and Recreation Public Facilities Section the Trailways Plan could incorporate by reference the Plan's location in the Transportation Element that is located within the same document. Staff sees no need for duplication of the Trailways Plan within both the Transportation Element and the Parks and Recreation Public Facilities draft.

Planning staff in collaboration with County Transportation staff are in the process of reviewing and drafting updates to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. One part of that Plan includes transportation alternatives offering different modes of transportation with the ultimate goal of providing more choices and reducing demands upon roadways, especially during peak hours. Transportation alternatives focus on concepts like telecommuting, rail, ridesharing, van pools, mixed-use development (live, work, play concept reducing need to drive long distances for work, etc.), bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, bus/ transit services. Transportation Alternatives as part of the Comprehensive Plan Transportation Element are required by the Code of Virginia in Sect. 15.2-2223.

Presently, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity is addressed in the Transportation Element as a transportation alternative but points elsewhere to the standalone Trailways Master Plan. Staff wants to assure the trailways plan does not become outdated or inconsiderate of opportunities that may arise from changes elsewhere within other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. As a result, staff is supportive of shifting crucial plan elements into this Comprehensive Plan recognizing its applicability to both Transportation planning (road based) and Parks and Recreation. Staff feels that incorporating the Trailways Master Plan into the Comprehensive Plan better positions it for continued monitoring, pursuit, and review and updates consistent with the 5-year review and update cycle. Otherwise staff has found there tends to be little impetus to update standalone plans that may become outdated or to proactively amend to reflect new opportunities or routing alternatives. Considering the development activity and wide array of tasks associated with the Planning office, staffing resources are not plentiful enough to continue to review and monitor standalone plans on a regular cycle.

The revised and updated Plan embedded within the Comprehensive Plan would address sidewalks, and recreational and/or commuter trails plan intended to create an interconnected network of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations as a connected system cognizant of established Parks and Recreation Level of Service Standards and trail deficits expected to grow to 159 miles by the year 2040 based on projected population

growth. The goal of this relocation and revision would be to create a hybrid master plan for Bike/Ped establishing vision previously approved in the Master Plan with updates focused on reducing potential duplication, identifying road corridors best suited for bike/ped improvements that may complement the recreational trails greenway plan (reducing off road trails through the woods) yet achieving like manner goals. Staff proposes avoiding a wholesale reboot of the Plan and is not presently looking to totally “reinvent the wheel”. Staff proposes a careful update that would establish a clear County vision for sidewalks and trails that can influence future updates to County Code and Design Standards Manual where issues have been identified related to required frontage improvements. It’s expected this update will also better inform and influence bike/ped related recommendations in case of rezoning and special use permit applications. Bike/Ped improvements add strength to transportation project applications for funding such as Virginia’s Smart Scale applications. Plans also lend support and basis for VDOT Project Scoping, Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) Projects, County comments on transportation projects managed by others, etc.

**Commissioner Comment- Abandoning the Parks & Rec Master Plan in favor of a chapter may further Planning Department’s goal of putting everything under their Comprehensive Plan, but where will the detailed tactical planning items go? The Comprehensive Plan must be driven by the Board of Supervisor’s Strategic Plan, and, in turn, it then drives the tactical planning done by each department.**

**Response-** The existing Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s content is “best fit” with the content required of the Public Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan and does not achieve the goals of a “tactical” or strategic plan. The chief goal of the Public Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan, including the Parks and Recreation Section is to establish county-wide Level of Service (LOS) standards and identify specific projects that will clearly establish Comprehensive Plan support for Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects consistent with the Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2223. Establishment of County LOS standards are used to calculate need based on population size to identify whether warrant exists for additional facilities or not. In an effort to meet and maintain LOS as population grows, identified Parks and Recreation deficits show warrant for new facilities that can then be planned for in a more detailed way. The Comprehensive Plan has a twenty (20) year planning view and looks into the future utilizing population projections. The County regularly monitors growth rates and development activity to determine the best population projections available based on trends. At present, the Weldon Cooper Center projections have been most consistent with exhibited County development and growth over time. The Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such a tactical/strategic plan effort would not be led by the Planning Department. As noted prior, the current Parks and Recreation Master Plan proposed to be consolidated into the Parks and Recreation Section of the Public Facilities Element does not achieve the intent of a tactical/strategic plan and therefore there is no loss expected in that respect.

Development of a department specific tactical/strategic plan does not dismiss the need to clearly establish a County LOS standard and express Comprehensive Plan support of specific CIP projects whose need is exhibited by adopted LOS standards in the Comprehensive Plan. Public facilities impact calculations for rezoning proffers are based on population increases associated with residential rezonings and by the Code of Virginia, Parks and Recreation proffers must be based on CIP projects. Warrant for such projects is established by LOS standards.

Additionally, CIP projects must be supported by the Comprehensive Plan by State Code. The Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2232 required that improvements be shown in the Comprehensive Plan, specifically identifying the “location, character and extent of each feature shown on the plan.” Sect. 15.2-2232 establishes:

... unless a feature is already shown on the adopted master plan or part thereof or is deemed so under subsection D, no street or connection to an existing street, park or other public area, public building or public structure, public utility facility or public service corporation facility other than a railroad facility or an underground natural gas or underground electric distribution facility of a public utility as defined in subdivision (b) of § [56-265.1](#) within its certificated service territory, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be constructed, established or authorized, unless and until the general location or approximate location, character, and extent thereof has been submitted to and approved by the commission as being substantially in accord with the adopted comprehensive plan or part thereof.

As a tertiary function the Comprehensive Plan can also lend support for various funding requests (grants, etc) in instances where governmental endorsement of a planned improvement needs to be exhibited.

**Commissioner Comment- The idea of a complete inventory of Parks & Rec. facilities and capabilities is not a new idea, and the usage data already exists.**

**Response-** Staff acknowledges that inclusion of a complete inventory of Parks and Recreation Facilities is not a new idea universally. Staff does not intend to suggest this is a new concept overall. Inclusion of this information with respect to the current Spotsylvania County Public Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan is new however. Staff recommends inclusion of this information within the draft Parks and Recreation Section as it does not presently appear there. The inventory is a major variable in calculation of level of service standards.

**Commissioner Comment- Will the Annual Report we see be added as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan?**

**Response-** Because the Comprehensive Plan update process tends to occur on a five-year cycle, staff would suggest including a reference to where the annual report is located and include a hyperlink within the Plan to the resource online as opposed to updating a Comprehensive Plan appendix annually to include a new annual report. Staff would rather reference the most recently approved annual report as opposed to going back in year after year and updating the Comprehensive Plan appendix with the new report. As an informational resource staff is supportive of enhancing awareness and accessibility to available information.

**Commissioner Comment- While it is right that facilities that are not County owned should be recognized, how will the existence of these facilities be properly included in the analysis of needs? Should they reduce the populations in general, or for a specific type of facility?**

**Response-** This question was raised through the development of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and again during the 2013 Comprehensive Plan update process. During the '08-'09 time frame a concept was presented that would have reduced the satisfactory level of service (LOS) standard for park acres and facilities to 75% of standard, a 25% reduction cognizant of non-County owned Parks and Recreation type facilities. When the subject was discussed at the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 16, 2008 (minutes attached for reference), the Parks and Recreation Commission had supported the reduced standard.

The 75% of standard concept was ultimately not supported by the Board of Supervisors and a 100% of standard including County schools shared use recreational spaces (open to public use) was adopted at public hearing on March 10, 2009 (minutes attached for reference). There were a number of reasons why the LOS discount was not supported including: (1) not all outside facilities could be considered open to all County residents (limited to paying members or residents of a specific community or HOA); (2) purpose and management of outside

facilities may have focus that deviates from that of a public park; (3) standard was adopted as a County Parks and Recreation services standard and should not be discounted by outside resources. Further discount essentially diminishes the quality and quantity of County Parks and/or their facilities.

If it's the will of the Commission, the Parks and Recreation Commission could vote to recommend that the LOS standard be further amended along the lines of a standard reduction as had been considered in the past as part of this update.

In consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department, Planning staff believes the current LOS standard of 100% with Public Schools shared use facilities is appropriate and effective. Discounting the LOS standard ultimately reduces the resources provided by County Parks and Recreation when considering population growth over time resulting in fewer ball fields per capita, etc.

**Commissioner Comment- Two different evaluation criteria are discussed – levels of service and demand. But these have very different characteristics, and how will they be reconciled? In the end, it is likely that politics and budget will be the real deciding factors – as they are now.**

**Response-** County level of service (LOS) standards for Parks and Recreation facilities are established as a county-wide standard considering population. The LOS standards based on population represent parks facilities that are fairly common throughout Park systems universally. These are more common park facilities with wider popularity that in many cases already exist within the County Park system that may already have organized managed sports leagues activities, etc. County Parks and Recreation staff can more easily gauge engagement and trends within these types of facilities and have expressed support for the level of service methodology presently in place. If the County were to do nothing and add no additional park facilities as population growth continues the expectation is the availability and quality of service would ultimately be degraded as demands slowly exceeded supply. As a result, LOS calculations are used considering a snapshot of the existing inventory of facilities against county-wide population. Additional population growth would inevitably result in warrant for additional parks facilities to ensure LOS maintenance.

Since the list of parks facilities identified within the LOS table are not exhaustive of all potential park attractions, as part of this Comprehensive Plan update process staff has looked to acknowledge the potential for less common, more unique or niche facilities that may be highly specialized or have heavy acreage demands or startup costs such as disc golf courses, golf courses, skate parks. For these types of facilities staff believes citizen requests, survey research, expressed community demand may be the best way to give insight and support for one of these more specialized facilities. As part of this Comprehensive Plan update process, staff is not looking to establish a unit per population level of service standard for facilities that may or may not have demand or implementation feasibility.

The Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such an effort would not be led by the Planning Department. The Plan could employ a survey research element to better gauge demand for certain facilities. The Plan could further “drill down” to where best to locate new facilities within the Park system considering available land and nearby densities, etc.

The Comprehensive Plan is meant to serve as a guide and does not trump the decisions of the Board of Supervisors where a wide array of community services need to be considered, prioritized, budgeted. As per the Comprehensive Plan Introduction, “The Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan presents a long range land

use vision for the County. The Comprehensive Plan sets forth principles, goals, policies, and implementation techniques that will guide the development activity within the County and promote, preserve, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.”

However, regardless of the Boards ultimate decisions where best to allocate resources, decisions concerning adoption of the County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are guided by the Comprehensive Plan. As per the Code of Virginia, localities must be able to exhibit Comprehensive Plan support for public projects, including new Parks and Recreation facilities. The warrant for such facilities is based on county-wide LOS standards that are also established in the Comprehensive Plan. As noted earlier, the purpose of the Public Facilities Element in the Comprehensive Plan (including Parks and Recreation) is to establish County LOS standards and identify specific capacity building projects that help justify CIP inclusion as well as calculation of proffers concerning residential rezoning applications. In the Case of Parks and Recreation related proffers they are based solely on capacity expansion projects identified within the County CIP. Proffer values are determined considering population increases above the by-right potential of a project area resulting from a residential rezoning, and their proportionate per unit, per person share of the cost of the new facility.

**Commissioner Comment- Use of projected population is speculative, and may not consider population density or other environmental factors. Again, how will levels of service be defined in a way that will really be effective in future planning?**

**Response-** Level of Service (LOS) standards within the Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation are based on county-wide populations and warrant for new capacity building facilities is linked to growth in populations over time. There are no absolute certainties when trying to plan for the next twenty (20) years as unforeseen events, trends, economic downturns, etc. can and do have an interrupting impact. However, faced with looking to plan for the future based on county-wide standard, considering the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and use of the Public Facilities Element for Parks and Recreation, population projections are the best way to gauge the County’s existing inventory of Parks facilities to future expected populations to determine whether surpluses or deficits exist with the goal of LOS maintenance.

The Comprehensive Plan has a twenty (20) year planning view and looks into the future utilizing population projections. The County regularly monitors growth rates and development activity to determine the best population projections available based on trends. At present, the Weldon Cooper Center projections have been most consistent with exhibited County development and growth over time. The Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such an effort would not be led by the Planning Department. This Plan could provide better insight as to where to best locate new facilities within the Park system.

**Commissioner Comment- How will co-location of future schools, community centers and parks be managed? If not well defined, unnecessary conflict may arise.**

**Response-** Through consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department familiar with past co-location efforts in practice, co-location would be adjoining properties such as Patriot Park and Parkside Elementary. This example was the purchase of a large tract of land and then splitting of the property for a park and school site with a shared entrance road/access and the potential for shared parking/overflow parking for special occasions (for example). From Parks and Recreation experience, they do not believe the school system would be in favor of a truly shared site that would be utilized as a park and school during the same hours. The benefit of the idea

is that it would be a reduction in the infrastructure (overflow parking, entrance road from public road etc.) and potential savings in land development and purchasing price.

This co-location could potentially work with other amenities as well for facilities such as libraries, community centers, refuse collection/ convenience sites, etc. It wouldn't have to be considered with just schools. Existing examples of this would be the Harrison Road Park (Parks and Recreation), co-located with the Harrison Road Convenience Center (Solid Waste) or the co-location of the Lee Hill Community Center (Parks and Recreation) within Cosner Park (Parks and Recreation), upon the same parcel as the Massaponax Wastewater Treatment Plant (County Utilities).

**The following comments deal with the content of the proposed Chapter.**

**Commissioner Comment- Including undeveloped land designated for parks in the inventory seems misleading. While available, no budget commitment has been made to the development and maintenance of these facilities. It is doubtful that Keswick can be fully developed using only proffers, and any funds required might be better used elsewhere.**

**Response-** Undeveloped land designated for parks first appears within the draft Parks and Recreation Section of the Public Facilities Element within the Existing Public Parks and Recreation Areas Table on Page 27 of the draft. In all cases including the Hilldrup Tract, Keswick Park, and Fortune's Landing Park, the Table reports total raw acres and identifies no active or passive acres at this time. These parks also include an asterisk with note acknowledging that those parks are not developed, not open to the public, not yet accessible. The intent is to acknowledge the existence of these sites of which at least two are expected to be developed within the planning period.

The undeveloped park land is again acknowledged on Page 39 within the Spotsylvania County Comprehensive Plan Land Needs, 100% Standards with Schools Table. Since this table refers to level of service (LOS) for park acres, staff believes it is appropriate to report the acreage. To not do so would discount the County park acreage whether presently developed or not and potentially show warrant for the County to acquire additional acreage when the County already has acreage "on the sidelines" ready for Park planning and development. Again, the table makes note of the current status of those three park sites. This LOS standard applies solely to the existence of park acres. Development and maintenance of such facilities is tied more so to park facilities inventory and less to available land acreage.

The Keswick and Fortune's Landing Parks are to be privately developed and eventually turned over to the County system. These two parks were approved as part of proffers associated with residential rezoning projects. The Board of Supervisors approved those rezoning projects to include the Parks proffers with consultation of the Parks and Recreation Department and LOS support. Proffer statements have been attached for reference. These proffers are enforceable and tied to the implementation of the projects. The Keswick Project for instance at present has Site Plan under review for development of the Park.

**Commissioner Comment- To be clear, the text beginning with "Neighborhood Parks" (page 31), might benefit from an introductory statement such as: "The following areas are not owned by the County and are not operated by the Parks & Rec Department. Information provided is relevant in planning future parks and recreational facilities, as they affect both levels of service and demand."**

**Response-** For clarity sake staff is supportive of adding similar language and will include within the draft. Deviation occurs considering the second suggested sentence. Considering the way level of service standards are

calculated using 100% of standard, including schools, there is no impact on calculation of levels of service. “Neighborhood Parks” are acknowledged as a beneficial resource but are not included as public access parks with influence over levels of service.

**Commissioner Comment-** The same is true for the text beginning “Meeting Spaces...” (page 33). An explanatory statement could be: “The following facilities are either owned and operated by the County, or are maintained in part by the County through mutual agreement. Information is provided for planning purposes. Utilization data is included in the Parks & Rec annual report.”

**Response-** For clarity sake staff is supportive of adding such language and will look to include within the draft. Staff agrees the draft can include reference to the Parks and Recreation Annual Report. As noted prior, because the Comprehensive Plan update process tends to occur on a five-year cycle, staff would suggest include a reference to where the annual report is located and include a hyperlink to the resource online as opposed to updating a Comprehensive Plan appendix annually including a new annual report. As an informational resource staff is supportive of enhancing awareness and accessibility to available information.

**Commissioner Comment-** The statement at the top of page 39 talks of future, then looks reactive by discussing maintaining levels of service “after new development occurs”. Future facilities and their maintenance are the consequence costs that should be addressed during the development rezoning and special use processes. This “gap” between future need and budget planning is not new, and no solutions are offered here.

**Response-** There is no solution intended to be proposed by staff here. Ultimately the resulting recommendation is that the County recognize and seek to meet its adopted level of service (LOS) standards cognizant of the fact that there may be budgetary constraints or differing priorities that may need to be addressed. The Comprehensive Plan is meant to serve as a guide and not as a requirement. This is established in the Code of Virginia and expressed within the Introduction and Vision Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. Maintenance of LOS in this context is intended to suggest as populations grow that the County maintain a proportional amount of parks facilities for community usage based on the LOS standard. The intent is that the County meet its LOS standards. To do so would require growing Parks and Recreation offerings to coincide with population growth; demand growth.

As a factor of review for public hearing processes, staff is limited to consideration of the impacts of new demands (new residents) upon County facilities. For Parks and Recreation facilities, project mitigations on parks and recreation facilities can be tied to residential rezonings only within the parameters of an exhibited LOS deficiency and where a specific capacity increasing facility is identified within the County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Proffers for Parks and Recreation facilities are not applicable to non-residential projects, recreational facilities not identified in the CIP, or maintenance. The only other instance where Parks and Recreation related items may come up as part of review concerning the Comprehensive Plan would be instances where a County Plan like the Trailways Master Plan identify a specific site within a project area as part of a master planned trail corridor. In such cases you may see a special use permit or commercial rezoning project include development or right-of way dedication to accommodate the planned system.



**Commissioner Comment- The analysis on page 39 is faulty, and requires more detailed drill down analysis.**

**Response-** A county-wide population and park amenities level of service (LOS) standard set at 100% of standard to include schools shared use recreation facilities was initially supported and adopted by the Spotsylvania County Board of Supervisors at public hearing for the adoption of the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan on March 10, 2009. The methodology was carried over and supported with the adoption of the Park and Open Space Element addition to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, also adopted on March 10, 2009. This methodology was again supported with the adoption of the 2013 Comprehensive Plan approved by the Board of Supervisors on November 14, 2013 that remains in effect today.

As noted prior, LOS standards within the Comprehensive Plan for Parks and Recreation are based on county-wide populations and warrant for new capacity building facilities is linked to growth in populations over time. Decisions concerning adoption of the County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) are guided by the Comprehensive Plan. As per the Code of Virginia, localities must be able to exhibit Comprehensive Plan support for public projects, including new Parks and Recreation facilities. The warrant for such facilities is based on county-wide LOS standards that are also established in the Comprehensive Plan. As noted earlier, the purpose of the Public Facilities Element in the Comprehensive Plan (including Parks and Recreation) is to establish County LOS standards and identify specific capacity building projects that help justify CIP inclusion as well as calculation of proffers concerning residential rezoning applications. In the Case of Parks and Recreation related proffers they are based solely on capacity expansion projects identified within the County CIP. Proffer values are determined considering population increases above the by-right potential of a project area resulting from a residential rezoning, and their proportionate per unit, per person share of the cost of the new facility.

The Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such an effort would not be led by the Planning Department. This Plan could provide better insight as where to best locate new facilities within the Park system.

**Commissioner Comment- Likewise, the statement on page 40 regarding water acreage is not a plan for how to achieve any goal, and seems to mix in different elements of the issue.**

**Response-** The statement on page 40 is not intended to result in a plan related to water acreage. During development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and subsequent updates to the Comprehensive Plan, throughout draft development and the public hearing process, work sessions and the public hearing process there was expressed interest in acknowledging water surface related recreational opportunities that were available at County operated water reservoirs. There was no support for using water surface area to “skew” the park acreage inventory considered when calculating level of service surpluses and deficits however. The intent of reporting water surface area is not unlike the reason why National Park acreage and acknowledgement of other private recreational amenities has been mentioned in the draft document.

**Commissioner Comment- The inclusion of an architectural layout for a Community Center on page 41 is inappropriate as the needs and limitations as well as the amount of acreage that might be available vary considerably.**

**Response-** The Community Center layout was simply added as a graphic depiction of a fairly standard and popular Community Center size and layout that “works” with current demands. The Parks and Recreation

Department suggested this as a good model to portray. Consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan, the layout was placed as a guide or template only. Staff acknowledges varying sites may not be best suited to accommodate this particular community center model though staff also notes the most efficient and effective design layout to meet demands is likely the most efficient design to pursue from a cost to usage standpoint. Some sites may simply not be well suited or viable for a community center. A site that may require design of an undersized community center may not be advantageous.

The Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department to better guide the design and placement of individual community centers going forward. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such an effort would not be led by the Planning Department. This Plan could provide better insight as where to best locate new facilities within the Park system.

**Commissioner Comment- Statements made on page 46 ignore the concept of citizens being underserved based on distance from a facility – despite making that very point earlier in the chapter.**

**Response-** Unlike Schools or Fire and Rescue Stations that are assigned service/ response zones, Parks within the County are considered a county-wide accessible amenity as not all parks offer the same recreational opportunities universally. For instance, the only location one would find a County operated disc golf course would be off Leavells Road at Loriella Park. The same can be said for availability of a County public access outdoor pool. Additionally, various league based activities for County residents require travel throughout the County Park system for games.

As noted elsewhere, the Parks and Recreation Commission may like to recommend that a Parks and Recreation tactical/strategic plan be developed as an internal document managed by that Department to better guide and explore the potential for establishing park service areas that can result in equally distributed and assigned parks and park facilities factoring in County sub-region specific populations, accounting for population densities, and projecting populations likely with best fit census block level data. Such a goal could be included within the Comprehensive Plan as an implementation strategy. Such a tactical/strategic plan effort would not be led by the Planning Department. This Plan could provide better insight as to where to best locate new facilities within the Park system. Such a Plan would work within the county-wide parameters established in the Comprehensive Plan levels of service and look to assign warranted new facilities to specific areas of most need. Staff believes such an undertaking would require a financial commitment as a consultant managed effort in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Department; likely a costly endeavor.

**Commissioner Comment- The section on general recommendations is a hodgepodge of guidelines, goals and specific objectives and needs to be re-thought. Only the strategic sub-goals and guidelines for addressing future needs ONCE identified should be included here.**

**Response-** Staff will look to review and reorganize this section within the draft document. This section may benefit from reorganization for clarity sake. Staff maintains the importance of identifying specific projects that can be identified within the Comprehensive Plan as means to support future Capital Improvement Plan additions “2232 reviews” (referring to Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2232) and be a factor in proffer considerations for Parks and Recreation facilities resulting from residential rezonings.

**Some specific items are:**

**Commissioner Comment- #3 – why is Trailways Master Plan included if it is in Transportation?**

**Response-** The Trailways Master Plan is considered an integral part of Transportation and Parks and Recreation. However, staff does not believe the Trailways Master Plan needs to be duplicated within the same document in both Chapters. There are a variety of different tools to help implement and extend the existing trail system outside of bona fide Parks including but not limited to trailways within VDOT rights-of-way, via easement upon private property, etc. The Trailways Master Plan is not and has not been a solely assigned Plan of the Parks and Recreation Department. Implementation of the Plan also is not and has not been solely tasked to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Incorporating the Trailways Plan as an element of the Transportation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan is not intended to shift responsibility or remove Trailways as a consideration for Parks and Recreation projects. Staff has found that implementation of the Trailways Master Plan has been far more effective combined with road frontage improvements, VDOT based bicycle and pedestrian improvements funding opportunities, and road widening projects than through other means. Currently the adopted Parks and Recreation Public Facilities Section of the Comprehensive Plan only references the County adopted level of service standard for trailways. For clarity, within the draft Parks and Recreation Public Facilities Section, the Trailways Plan could incorporate by reference the Plans location in the transportation element, located within the same document.

**Commissioner Comment- #4 – how is this different from what is in item #1a? Also, there are goals here that are very different from one another.**

**Response-** Staff will look to consolidate #1a into #4 concerning co-location of facilities. Co-location appears related to additional public facilities as an efficiency item in the Comprehensive Plan. Similar goals are in place within the Fire and Rescue Section of the Public Facilities Element concerning Fire Stations and Rescue Facilities. The Fire and Rescue Section also advocates for pairing additional public facilities at fire and rescue station sites.

**Commissioner Comment- #7 – is inappropriate for this document. If the County wants to do this, it should be in the Strategic Plan. It is not Parks & Rec's job to "encourage" or solicit development of private or neighborhood parks.**

**Response-** As part of the County Comprehensive Plan, implementation efforts of the Parks and Recreation Public Facilities Section have not been and are not solely assigned to or managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. As part of Comprehensive Plan analysis when reviewing rezoning and special use permit applications planning staff reviews the Comprehensive Plan goals to make an on balance recommendation weighing the strengths and weaknesses of a project proposal to determine whether a project is generally consistent or not with the Plan. Comprehensive Plan strengths and weaknesses are a factor to consider as part of the decision making process. As part of Comprehensive Plan review the Planning Department would acknowledge a proposed privately developed, maintained, managed park within a development as favorable from a review standpoint.

**Commissioner Comment- Short Term #3 – This is not appropriate here. At best, it is a tactical objective because it would address an identified level of service or demand need.**

**Response-** The County recently lost the Harrison Road Community Center due to a road improvement project. It also lost the Lick Run Community Center due to the Spotsylvania County Museum relocation project. These losses have resulted in a decrease of available community centers in a County that has been growing. Removing those two community centers from the inventory results in a community center deficit of -4 as of 2017 that will increase in time with population growth if nothing is done. In the interest of meeting and maintaining level of service standards the replacement of the two centers is warranted. For Capital Improvement Plan inclusion, the projects are best identified specifically within the Comprehensive Plan to exhibit Plan support for the projects. Staff maintains identification of such projects is warranted within the Comprehensive Plan as actionable implementation items to be pursued during the planning period. This is necessary due to Code of Virginia Sect. 15.2-2232.

**Commissioner Comment- Long Term #2 – besides not having the authority to mandate this, this is not appropriate for this chapter and would be better placed in the Strategic Plan.**

**Response-** The intent of the draft is not to suggest that anything is a mandate within the document. The use of “should” is a recommendation and avoids use of terms like “shall” that suggest something is required or mandated. The Comprehensive Plan does not have the power to mandate but rather to serve as a guiding document consistent with the Intent of the Comprehensive Plan and has been drafted with that in mind. Staff agrees the Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document like a County ordinance. Upon review of Long Term #2 staff believes the item can be consolidated into a revised Recommendation that combines General #1.a, #4 (a-e), and Long Term #2.

**Commissioner Comment- #3 and #4 – eliminate these. These are an unwarranted assumption about needs.**

**Response-** Staff will look to consolidate the two items recognizing duplication exists in the draft. Staff is not supportive of total removal of the concept to explore the acquisition or development of an indoor recreation center however. The intent is to explore or study, and not a charge to absolutely acquire or build at this time. Staff believes the “need” is established in the County adopted level of service (LOS) standard. #3 and #4 have basis in LOS standards as presently adopted and proposed as part of the Comprehensive Plan update. To dismiss the LOS standard is not in keeping with County efforts to meet and maintain LOS standards. The County standard for Indoor Recreation Center/ Pool Complex is one center per 50,000 residents. The County currently runs a deficit in such facilities based on the standard. 2017 population estimates for Spotsylvania County are 131,549. At present the County has no Indoor Recreation Center/ Pool Complex within the Parks system.

**Commissioner Comment- #5 and #6 – these are too specific to be included here. They are tactical objectives if warranted.**

**Response-** As noted prior, identification of projects that can exhibit support from the Comprehensive Plan for future Capital Improvement Projects identification, Parks and Recreation proffer calculations, and various funding opportunities (grants, etc) are critical for long term project implementation. Recommendation #5 seeks to further implementation efforts related to the Ni River Trail. The Ni River Trail is part of the adopted Trailways Master plan and the recommended project easily fits within goals to offset recreational trails deficits of over 100 miles as of 2017. The recommended trail segment represents a logical trail connection from the proffered Fortune’s Landing special use park to the future Hilldrup Tract Park site located up the road. As part

of the Fortune's Landing project the applicant constructed an asphalt trail along its Piney Branch Road frontage and dedicated right-of-way along Catharpin Road to further extend the Ni River Trail.

Recommendation #6 relates to County owned lands fronting the Rappahannock River that include a significant historic site associated with the Civil War that remains generally inaccessible and un-interpreted. The Recommendation addresses numerous Comprehensive Plan and Trailways Master plan goals including improving access to waterfront areas, implementation of the trailways plan, historic resource protection, historic resource interpretation, and tourism. Again, the recommendation fits within level of service goals to meet standards. A Trailhead has been specifically targeted in this area of the Deep Run Trail corridor.

**Commissioner Comment- #10 – Delete this as also too specific for the Comprehensive Plan.**

**Response-** As noted prior, identification of projects that can exhibit support from the Comprehensive Plan for future Capital Improvement Projects identification, Parks and Recreation proffer calculations, and various funding opportunities (grants, etc) are critical for long term project implementation.

Following adoption of the Spotsylvania County Trailways Master Plan in 2011, the Board of Supervisors supported staff efforts to submit a grant application to secure a recreational trail easement along roughly 2 miles of the Virginia Central Rail corridor between Brock Road and Jackson Trail East. The County submitted the necessary application materials and received a Virginia Land Conservation Fund (VLCF) award in 2011.

Staff believes pursuit of project design and construction is the logical next step to implementing the County Trailways Master Plan. The Virginia Central Trail is part of the adopted Trailways Master plan and the recommended project easily fits within goals to offset recreational trails deficits of over 100 miles as of 2017. Portions of the Virginia Central Trail have already been constructed within the County between Salem Church Road and Gordon Road, further to the east. This particular section of the Virginia Central Trail has National Park Service interest with a number of historic interpretation opportunities.

**Commissioner Comment- #11 – This presumes too much and should be a tactical objective after development of a needs case.**

**Response-** The area was noted due to the amount of growth in residential development from recently constructed or approved apartments, town houses and single family homes.

**Commissioner Comment- Overall, the last section is much too specific for this document and belongs in a more detailed tactical plan that Parks & Rec can develop and maintain without having to run to the Planning Department and the Board of Supervisors every time a change needs to be made.**

**Response-** Staff has worked closely with the Parks and Recreation Department to update and identify candidate projects meant to expand Parks related facilities offered. The Planning Department is tasked with coordinating the update of the County Comprehensive Plan. As noted prior, identification of projects that can exhibit support from the Comprehensive Plan for future Capital Improvement Projects identification, Parks and Recreation proffer calculations, and various funding opportunities (grants, etc) are critical for long term project implementation. Staff knows of no instance where the Parks and Recreation Department has needed to amend the Comprehensive Plan outside of a Comprehensive Plan update process where the Planning Department coordinates and consults with appropriate departments and boards to develop an implementation schedule that applies to the planning period. The Parks and Recreation Department does not work exclusively independently

of the Board of Supervisors and it is necessary for Board of Supervisors ultimate approvals for inclusion of projects in the Capital Improvements Plan just as acceptance of grant funding requests is Board authorized.

**Commissioner Comment-** In summary, this proposed chapter contains unresolved conflicts of guidance and either too vague or too specific objectives. It does not appear that it is fully aligned with the Strategic Plan, and is not well integrated with the Comprehensive Plan as a whole.

**Board Committee/Other Committees:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**Review Date:** December 20, 2018

**Status:** Work Session

**Attachments:**

- Revised DRAFT Public Facilities Parks and Recreation Element
- Commissioner Comments concerning Draft
- Code of Virginia 15.2-2232
- Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes (10-16-2008)
- Board of Supervisors Minutes (03-10-2009)
- Fortunes Landing Approved Proffer Statement
- Keswick Approved Proffer Statement

**Staff Contacts:** Jacob Pastwik, Planner III; Wanda Parrish, Planning Director; Kevin Brooks, Parks and Recreation Director

**Additional Background/Other Considerations:** Following consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission, staff intends to discuss the draft with the Planning Commission at a future meeting. Staff will be sure to acknowledge and identify any guidance received from the Parks and Recreation Commission during this meeting.

**Consequence of Denial/Inaction:** The Parks and Recreation Section of the Comprehensive Plan Public Facilities Element adopted in 2013 with proffer law specific amendments in 2016, will become increasingly outdated and inevitably inconsistent with the requirements of the Code of Virginia Section 15.2-2230 that states *“At least once every five years the comprehensive plan shall be reviewed by the local planning commission to determine whether it is advisable to amend the plan.”* Additionally, the 2009 adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan will remain a standalone document reporting outdated Parks and Recreation Inventory information, resulting levels of service surpluses or deficits, or implementation goals.

**Recommendation:** Staff is seeking Parks and Recreation Commission endorsement of the revised DRAFT Public Facilities Parks and Recreation Element. This endorsement will be forwarded along to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors as the Plan element progresses through the public hearing process.