

Explanation of Amendments: Parks and Recreation Technical Report

Technical Report Text Amendments and Responses to General Questions:

The following details questions and comments from the Steering Committee and includes a summary on how each has been addressed within the Technical Report text or through other means:

1. **Colonial National Historic Park language on T-6-8.** Language has been amended to separate out Historic Jamestowne and Green Springs Plantation. Additional information was added to descriptions of Jamestowne, and the Colonial Parkway. Revised paragraph is below:

Colonial National Historical Park (NHP) administers the following historically significant sites in English North America and falls under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service:

Historic Jamestowne, the first permanent English settlement in North America in 1607, is administered jointly with the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. In addition to the visitor center, interpretive signage, reconstructions, and archaeological museum, Jamestown Island contains a three- and five-mile road through forest and swamps that can also be used for walking and biking.

The Colonial Parkway is a 23-mile three-lane road that connects Historic Jamestowne to the Yorktown Battlefield, which is the site of the final major battle of the American Revolutionary War in 1781. There are also several pull-offs with interpretive signage and beach access along the route.

Green Spring Plantation is the 17th century plantation home of Virginia's colonial governor, Sir William Berkeley. The site is located on both sides of Centerville Road between John Tyler Highway and Monticello Avenue and is currently not open to the general public. The County should pursue working with the National Park Service in order to realize the full potential of the property for recreation and cultural education.

Besides significant historic resources, the Colonial National Historic Park contains a diversity of natural resources including extensive wetlands, miles of stream and river shoreline, forests, fields, and many species of animals and flowering plants. Colonial National Historical Park's 9,400+ acres lie within the boundaries of the counties of York, James City, Gloucester, Surry and the City of Williamsburg and most of the park extends along either the York or James rivers. This location provides visitors with the opportunity to enjoy the natural and historic resources of the park while walking, bicycling, birding, fishing, sightseeing or driving along the Colonial Parkway or tour roads.

2. **Swimming access along the Colonial Parkway.** The National Park Service confirmed that swimming was permitted but discouraged. Table 2 was amended to add the following footnote for the Colonial Parkway's swimming category: *Swimming is permitted at College Creek and Archer's Hope; however, it is strongly discouraged due to dangerous currents (Mike Litterst, National Park Service).*

3. **Sidewalk ordinance revisions.** Staff is aware of the difficulties of applying the ordinance, the different circumstances that can pertain to sidewalk waivers, and the desire of the Committee to create a “sidewalk fund.” An evaluation of this section will be pursued through the upcoming comprehensive zoning ordinance revision and the following action will be reviewed as part of the Transportation section (to avoid duplication, it has not been included in the Parks and Recreation GSAs): *Update the James City County Sidewalk and Trail Plan and ensure consistency with the Regional Bicycle Facilities Plan to avoid duplication of similar facilities. Amend the zoning ordinance to provide for more design flexibility to implement pedestrian goals.*
4. The following additional data that was requested will be forwarded as available:
 - a. Per capita capital outlay and comparisons
 - b. Revenue recovery rate and comparisons
 - c. Visitation/utilization statistics for County facilities
5. **Status of the County’s Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program.** Please note that a response to this question, while primarily addressed in the Community Character and Land Use sections, is presented in this document for your information, but has not been formally included as part of the Parks and Recreation Technical Report text. As of December 2008, the PDR program has secured permanent protection for 469 acres of land. Most recently, PDR closed an easement on December 31, 2008 for 103 acres on Diascund Road and deed templates are being developed for five applicants to begin negotiations. Two applications were received between January and March 2009 and will be presented to the PDR Committee this month for review and recommendation.
6. **Relationship of Greenway Master Plan and draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan.** The 2002 Greenway Master Plan indicated that it was guided by a ten-year action plan, which should be revised concurrently with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This update was not pursued simultaneous with the current Master Plan update; however, staff believes that the two documents are still generally in accordance with each other. The Action Plan also notes that opportunities presented may be “advanced or delayed depending on funding schedules, community support, corporate sponsors, and development proffers” and the plan was flexible in implementation. As noted in the technical report, greenway trail development and implementation of the action plan has not progressed as initially anticipated for a number of the above reasons. Furthermore, numerous action items in both the Parks and Recreation section of the Comprehensive Plan and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan encourage implementation of the Greenway Master Plan. Staff continues to see the trail corridors in the Greenway Master Plan as important and has adjusted implementation based on current conditions and opportunities.

Amended Service Standards:

Following are amendments that were made to the Facility and Service Guidelines, based on input received at the March 16 and March 23, 2009 Steering Committee meetings. Additionally, comments are offered in response to several questions that were raised:

1. **Somehow include amenities in private developments into the existing inventory. Note the locations of competitive swimming pools throughout the County (can be private and outdoor).**

PROS Consulting has noted that approximately half of the localities that they have developed master plans for have included private facilities in the existing inventory and when they are, approximately 25% of the facilities are counted towards meeting the facility standard. Only a percentage is included because many of these facilities are only open to neighborhood residents and not the general public. Staff does not currently maintain an inventory of recreational amenities, but to give the Committee some idea as to the impact of private facilities, several larger communities were surveyed, including Kingsmill, Ford's Colony, Governor's Land, Powhatan Secondary, Windsor Forest, and Stonehouse. The results of these findings are in Appendix 13c in Table 5 and were incorporated into the technical report text and GSAs as detailed below.

To address this comment, the following text was also added to page T-6-12:

Neighborhood Homeowners Associations

Another unique aspect of the local recreation picture has resulted from the trend toward upscale subdivision development in the County and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Proffer Guidelines through the legislative development process. Many newer residential areas feature such amenities as swimming pools, tennis courts, baseball fields, tot lots, basketball courts, jogging trails, recreation buildings, and extensive open space. Some are designed around golf courses and some offer a beach, dock, or marina with access to waterways. Others feature nature preserves and wildlife management areas. These amenities are typically maintained by homeowners associations and restricted to use by neighborhood residents and their guests. *The development of these amenities is designed to and does in fact relieve some pressure for County provision of public facilities in their stead. Neighborhoods with a large array of recreational offerings such as competitive swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, and walking trails can serve to reduce deficits in some facility types as residents may choose to use local amenities rather than drive to use public facilities. It is important to acknowledge the positive contribution these facilities make to overall community quality of life and how they help make amenities accessible to individuals without requiring a vehicle trip. Table 5 in Appendix 13c provides a listing of some of the major residential neighborhoods and the recreational amenities they include. Additionally, to formally track and recognize the contribution of these facilities, it may be informative to develop an inventory of private facilities in the County.*

The following text was also added to page T-6-14:

Private recreational amenities outlined above are not included in the facility standards because they are not truly open to the general public. State and national parks (such as York River State Park and Colonial National Historic Park) were also not included, and only a percentage of school facilities have been included because the space is only open to the public during restricted hours. *All of these facilities do, however, serve to reduce the demands on the County to provide certain parks and recreation amenities. If a percentage of these private amenities were incorporated into the existing facility inventory, certain facility types may see reductions in the calculated deficit. For example, in the six neighborhoods surveyed during*

this update, a total of nine playgrounds were provided. If 29.3%¹ of these playgrounds (2.637) were included in the existing inventory, the current deficit would be reduced from seven playgrounds to 4.4 playgrounds. Other facility types where incorporation of private facilities could make a difference include hard and soft walking trails, where inclusion of private trails would reduce the current deficit to 9.96 miles and 11.2 miles respectively. Larger neighborhoods can also impact the tennis court and field deficits; however, these facilities are not typically provided within smaller developments. Finally, there are minimal existing deficits in some facility types that are provided by private developments, such as pools. The standards show the County short by one pool, and 15 pools were provided within private developments surveyed (29.3% or 4.4 pools added to inventory). If private pools were included in the inventory, a surplus of 3.4 pools would be indicated; nevertheless, citizen comment indicates that a competitive indoor facility is still in demand.

2. Survey the number of miles of four-foot wide enhanced shoulder bike lanes that currently exist and note those as part of the bike lane standard.

Staff does not have access to a current inventory of four-foot wide enhanced shoulder bike lanes. Parks and Recreation began an inventory to update the Regional Bikeways inventory in 2005 and, due to time constraints, staff has partially updated the facilities. A table showing these facilities was included as Table 6 in Appendix 13c and the following text has been included on pages T-6-14 and T-6-15:

3. One mile of bike lane should be provided for every 1,000 County residents. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design standards for bike lanes require that they be six feet wide so currently a deficit of 63 miles of six-foot-wide bike lanes exists. *Based on preliminary updates of a 2005 Parks and Recreation inventory, it appears that the County has approximately 17.5 miles of enhanced shoulder bike lanes (four-foot wide or less). If included as part of the existing inventory, they would reduce the deficit to 45.5 miles of bike lanes. These, however, do not meet the AASHTO definition of a bike lane (minimum six-feet wide).*

The following was added to page T-6-28:

3. An 87-mile deficit is identified for six-foot wide bike lanes to meet projected population needs. *Again, if the preliminary inventory of existing four-foot wide (or less) enhanced shoulder bike lanes is included, there would be a projected deficit of 69.5 miles to meet 2017 population needs.*

3. Consideration of sidewalks in existing inventory of hard surface trails. The majority of sidewalks were not counted in the existing inventory for hard surface trails. While they do contribute to and promote connectivity, sidewalks are primarily designed with pedestrian transportation rather than recreation in mind. The narrow four-foot cross-section and joints make it difficult to for multiple user groups to use sidewalks. On the other hand, hard surface trails are typically asphalt and are six to twelve-feet wide.

¹ 29.3% figure was based on the ratio of the population estimated to live in the six neighborhoods surveyed to the estimated 2008 County population.

There are; however, instances where some existing sidewalks have been used adaptively as connections for multi-use paths, such as the loop around the Community Center, but this is not the ideal scenario for recreational trails.

An inventory was created in FY2003 as part of a Capital Improvement Request. This inventory indicates that there were 21.5 miles of public sidewalk within James City County at that time. An inventory update was begun in 2008, but not completed due to staff turnover, and miles of sidewalk has likely increased during this time due to both private development and County construction. The Transportation section includes several actions, including updating the Sidewalk Master Plan, which will give a better idea of how many miles of existing sidewalks are available and how they relate with hard surface trails to enhance pedestrian connectivity. The previous master plan focused on sidewalks along major roads and did not evaluate the availability of sidewalks within neighborhoods. It is anticipated that the inventory begun in 2008 would be completed in advance of any update of the Sidewalk Master Plan.

4. **Qualifications of how park acreage is defined in the facility standards.** The 2003 Comprehensive Plan standard of 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents was based on useable land area. The revised standard of 12 acres per 1,000 residents and the existing inventory of land are based on gross acreage.
5. **Comparison of standards to similar localities.** Data will be forwarded as available.

Amended Goals, Strategies, and Actions

The following details questions and comments from the Steering Committee at the March 16 and March 23, 2009 meetings and includes a summary of how each has been addressed within the Goals, Strategies, and Actions or through other means:

- Revised Goal- Provide a range of recreational facilities and activities that are *affordable, accessible, appropriate, and adequate in number, size, type, and location to accommodate the needs of all County residents and that promote personal growth, social development, and healthy life-styles.*
- Revised Action 1.1.1- Implement the specific strategies and tactics ~~proposed~~ *approved* in the 2009 James City County Parks and Recreation Master Plan Strategy Matrix.
- Added Action 1.1.7. Encourage regional cooperation in the development of recreation facilities and provision of programs whenever possible.
- Revised Strategy 1.2. Continue to develop an integrated network of linear parks, trails, bikeways, sidewalks and greenways with connections to a regional greenway system that allow foot or bike access to destinations and that preserve the diverse natural, cultural, scenic, and environmental resources of the community that contribute to recreation activities. ~~Encourage regional cooperation in the development of recreation facilities and provision of programs whenever possible.~~

- ~~Eliminated Action 1.2.1. Form an internal staff work group to evaluate recreation amenities, including but not limited to trails, open space, bike lanes, and sidewalks, provided in new public and private development proposals and construction projects with the purpose of providing enhanced connectivity.~~
- Revised Action 1.2.4.a. **Aligning** ~~Coordinating~~ the Greenway Master Plan with existing and planned sidewalks and bikeways, and **integrating** this plan with greenway plans of adjacent localities and interested organizations.
- Added new Action 1.2.6. **Work with the National Park Service to realize the recreational and cultural potential of Green Spring Plantation, including evaluation of a multi-use trail on Centerville Road between Monticello Avenue and John Tyler Highway.**
- ~~Eliminated Action 1.2.4.e. Creating a Greenway and Trail Advisory Committee to coordinate and promote greenway system development in accordance with efforts in the City of Williamsburg and York County.~~
- Revised Action 1.3.2. ~~Continue to support~~ **Reinstitute** the grant-in-aid program for neighborhood associations and other non-profit groups to make funds available for neighborhood park ~~capital~~ improvements **and maintenance**.
- **Incorporation of private recreational amenities.** Previously eliminated action kept and revised. Action 1.5.4. Maintain a comprehensive inventory of privately owned recreation facilities within the County **and consider counting a percentage of these facilities towards the overall Parks and Recreation Facility and Service Standards.**
- **Desire to focus on the need to provide areas of useable open space within private developments and look into how to require recreation facilities in by-right developments.** Staff has taken this concern into account in development of the revised proffer guidelines that are an appendix to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The guidelines specify that a neighborhood park is a required facility and that cash-in-lieu is not acceptable. The design specifications note that neighborhood parkland should be a minimum of "0.35 acres of relatively level, non-flood plain land outside the RPA" and a minimum of 70% be groomed. The guidelines also specify that areas in landscape buffers, medians, and parking islands are not acceptable to count towards neighborhood parkland. In terms of by-right development, an ordinance amendment to require recreational amenities would be required, which can be evaluated during the upcoming comprehensive zoning ordinance revision. Action 1.2.3 and Strategy 1.5 call for ordinance amendments to address design standards for bike lanes and complimentary facilities and encouragement of developers to provide bikeways, sidewalks, and greenways.

Kept and revised previously eliminated Action 1.5.5. ~~Maintain standards for recreational facilities within residential developments and~~ Amend zoning ordinance regulations to

facilitate development of recreational ~~these~~ facilities including, but not limited to, neighborhood parks, playgrounds, sport courts, fields, and trails within by-right residential developments in accordance with design standards.

- Previous Action 1.7.4. ~~Develop a sponsorship policy to support special events and programs~~ has been moved under Strategy 1.3, which pertains to exploring alternate funding strategies, and is now Action 1.3.6.
- Revised Strategy 1.8. ~~Support~~ ~~Stress~~ programs that promote healthy lifestyles, such as fitness, aerobics and wellness education, ~~and that stress emphasize conservation and environmental awareness.~~
- Relocated previous Action 1.10.3 and associated sub-actions to Strategy 1.11 and associated actions. Also deleted sub-actions 1.10.3.a and b as both were included in the Public Facilities section.

~~1.11. Design, construct, and operate facilities in a sustainable manner. by (see also Environment and Public Facilities):~~

~~1.11.1. Adopting a specific County policy governing the application of sustainable building standards to Parks and Recreation built and occupied facilities and buildings.~~

~~1.11.2. Developing sustainable strategies similar to LEED for the design and location of parks and incorporating the strategies into park development guidelines.~~

~~1.11.3. Utilizing energy efficient heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, (and similar) systems and designs for newly constructed facilities, and where feasible, for renovations of existing Parks and Recreation facilities. Innovation and technology (such as that found in geothermal heating and cooling systems, green roofs, and solar panels) should similarly be employed where feasible, and where appropriate levels of long term cost savings, efficiency, and durability can be clearly expected or demonstrated.~~

~~1.11.4. Building all new Parks and Recreation buildings and facilities to meet or exceed Silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) (or industry similar or successor) standard wherever applicable. The Silver LEED (or industry similar or successor) standard should also be sought for renovation projects whenever feasible.~~