



# PARKS AND RECREATION

## TECHNICAL REPORT

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## 1. Introduction

This summary provides a comprehensive overview of the development of County-sponsored recreation activity. It describes the regional nature of organized recreation in this area and the existence of additional commercial, private-member, and private neighborhood recreation opportunities. Concern for the preservation of scenic, historic, and environmentally sensitive areas is noted, as is interest in providing access to such areas by a network of walking and biking trails and greenways. The establishment of parks and recreation opportunities is vital to the creation of a sustainable and healthy community, and availability of parks and programs spurs economic growth, enhances the social fabric, and creates a sense of ownership and belonging for residents.

## 2. History and County Characteristics

### 2a. Parks and Recreation History

Parks and recreation are integral parts of the County's public service system. For a number of years, the County contributed to funding for the City of Williamsburg's Recreation Department in order to secure access to recreation services for County residents while school grounds provided passive recreation space for nearby neighborhoods. In the mid-1970s, several small public playgrounds were also built or improved in selected older residential areas. In 1980, the County initiated certain pilot recreation programs on a trial basis. Response to these programs was so successful that, in 1981, the first full time Recreation Coordinator was hired. Starting with several neighborhood parks and a modest offering of recreation programs, the County formulated a plan of action in its 1982 Recreation Plan. Several of the recommended parks and facilities have been constructed as a result of that Plan including three community parks - Upper County, Mid County and Lower County (*James River Community Center*); a central multi-purpose community center (*the James City/Williamsburg Community Center on Longhill Road*); and a boat access at Little Creek Reservoir.

Recognizing that great changes had taken place in the County since the approval of the 1982 Recreation Plan, the Board of Supervisors adopted a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan in February of 1993. This plan represented a confirmation that well-planned parks, offering a variety of recreation opportunities and quality recreation programs for all ages and incomes, are essential for maintaining the high quality of life enjoyed by James City County residents. An update to this plan is anticipated to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors in mid 2009 and a draft is included in Appendix 13c. The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to develop a plan of action for meeting the growing needs for active and passive parks, facilities, open space, and recreational needs of James City County citizens over the next ten years. The Master Plan builds upon the accomplishments of the Parks and Recreation Division and aims to establish it as one of the most successful divisions in the country. The plan is heavily relied upon in updating the Parks and Recreation component of the Comprehensive Plan, and the recent revisions ensure that the Parks and Recreation component of the Comprehensive Plan offers an accurate depiction of the current status of parks and recreation in James City County and provides strategies that are appropriate for the County's current circumstances.

Today, the Parks and Recreation Division (of James City County Community Services Department) administers an annual budget of approximately \$6.1 million. James City County has 14 parks containing 1,491 acres (more detail is provided in Section 6a). Several school sites located in the County provide additional leisure time recreation opportunity (more detail is provided in Section 6b). In FY08, a staff of 54 full-time employees administered the program with the assistance of 21 part-time employees and an average of 128 part-time on-call, temporary, or seasonal employees. Over 40,258 volunteer hours were contributed in FY08. In addition, County staff from the Facilities and Maintenance Division provide the extensive maintenance necessary to keep parks, playing fields, and open areas maintained.

## 2b. Geographic Location and Climate

The Parks and Recreation Division influences the program offerings and recreation opportunities for a portion of the area of southeast Virginia known as “the peninsula,” a linear region bounded by the York and James Rivers and extending from Richmond to Newport News. James City County is located centrally in the peninsula with an extensive shoreline along the York, James, and Chickahominy rivers. Steeped in history, the County borders both Jamestown, a national historic park, and Williamsburg, a major colonial seat of government. The historic attractions of Williamsburg and Jamestown provide vacation focal points for a large number of tourists that visit James City County annually. James City County enjoys a mild climate that makes it particularly amenable to outdoor recreation activities.

## 2c. Population and Income Characteristics and Trends

James City County has seen a 28% increase in population between 2000 and 2006 and is projected to reach 84,772 people by 2020. With a growing and more geographically distributed population, additional recreation amenities are needed to meet the rising demands. Additionally, alternative means of accessing the amenities, neighborhoods, and commercial areas via bike and pedestrian facilities are growing in importance. The type of programs, events, and activities offered is also subject to change as the County’s demographics shift. When considering demographics and its relation to James City County Parks and Recreation, it is also important to remember that many programs and facilities are open to residents from other localities, so County demographics may not solidly indicate recreation trends.

The characteristics of population that are most relevant to the use of parks and recreation facilities are age and gender distribution. Recreation facilities are used at different rates at different peak hours by various age groups. In addition, special population groups, such as teenagers and the elderly, represent distinct challenges for providers of recreation resources. Finally, different genders participate in recreation at different rates and tend to participate in different activities.

As a whole, James City County has a generally older population than the rest of the Hampton Roads area. In 2000, the median age of James City County residents was 41, approximately 7 years older than the median age for the entire Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The age segment is anticipated to grow. For instance, in 2006, 19% of the County’s population was estimated as over the age of 65. Projections indicate that by the year 2020, 25% of the

population will be over the age of 65.<sup>1</sup> In the past, this would indicate a necessity for more passive recreation; however, in recent years, trends indicate that this generation is more focused on active recreational opportunities including fitness, wellness, life skills activities, and therapeutic recreation.<sup>2</sup> Other needs generated by an aging population are also important to examine, and many will be evaluated in the Housing, Population Needs, and Transportation sections of the Comprehensive Plan. Specific to Parks and Recreation is the need to consider a variety of mobility options, including meaningful sidewalks and trails, to connect non-drivers to recreation centers and to provide recreational exercise. AARP cites that walking accounts for more than three-quarters of all trips not made in personal vehicles by people over 50.<sup>3</sup> On the reverse, James City County has a lower percentage of younger citizens compared to the Hampton Roads Area (MSA) and the state. The under 19 population is projected to decrease slightly between 2006 and 2020, from 25% to 22% of the total population.<sup>4</sup> Despite the lower population, youth still have specific needs in regards to recreation including viable transportation, the need for a place to hangout, and day care.

Females represent about 51.7% of the total population of James City County, and as the median age increases, it is likely that women will represent an increasing percentage of the total population. At least 61% of women participate at least once a year in a sport or recreational activity. The most popular activities for women include walking, aerobics, general exercising, biking, and jogging. On the other hand, about 69% of men participate in recreational activity at least once a year. The most popular activities for men include golf, basketball, walking, jogging, and fishing.<sup>5</sup>

Ethnicity of recreation users can also have an impact on what types of amenities should be provided. The majority of the County, 78.3%, is white while 16.3% are black/African-American, and the remaining 2% fall into other ethnic groups. Activities with the highest participation rates for white individuals include swimming, walking, bicycling, bowling, and treadmill exercise, with several outdoor activities following close behind. The black populace is most likely to participate in walking, swimming, basketball, bowling, and running/jogging, and other team sports.<sup>6</sup>

Income is another key indicator of recreation facility use in that participation generally increases with income, except at the highest income levels. Relative to Virginia, James City County has a higher concentration of households with middle and upper income levels and a lower concentration of lower and moderate households. The median household income for James City County grew from \$39,785 in 1990 to \$55,594 in 2000 and is projected to continue to increase to \$82,107 by 2012. Based on differences in median household income from 1990 to 2000, James City County is becoming wealthier and experiencing income increases greater than regional and state averages. In conjunction with the rise in household income, James City County will continue to experience more demand for recreation facilities and will be challenged

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<sup>1</sup> James City County 2008 Comprehensive Plan Demographics Technical Report (DTR)

<sup>2</sup> 2008 James City County Parks and Recreation Master Plan (P&R MP)

<sup>3</sup> AARP. *Beyond 50.05, A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities: Creating Environments for Successful Aging.*

<sup>4</sup> DTR

<sup>5</sup> P&R MP

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

to provide increasing levels of parks and programs to meet this demand. However, the indicated presence of additional income also makes numerous private recreational options, such as the YMCA or Ironbound Gym, more economically viable for a larger segment of the population.

### 3. Recreation in the Region and State

#### 3a. The City of Williamsburg, the City of Newport News, York County, and New Kent County<sup>7</sup>

Regionally, the recreation activities of James City County are very much linked with those of the City of Williamsburg, the City of Newport News, York County (especially the Bruton District), and New Kent County. The three largest parks in the City of Williamsburg include *Kiwanis Municipal Park*, *Quarterpath Park* and *Waller Mill Park*, the largest park in Newport News is *Newport News Park*. The largest park in the Bruton District of York County is *New Quarter Park*, but the *Yorktown Waterfront* offers additional nearby amenities. The Parks and Recreation Map in Section 6 shows the locations of several of these facilities.

*Kiwanis Municipal Park* is located on Longhill Road behind James Blair Middle School. This 27-acre park provides lighted facilities for the youth softball program, a basketball court, numerous pieces of playground equipment, a shelter with picnic tables for a group of approximately 75 people, and seven lighted all-weather tennis courts. There are also plans to upgrade the facility for utilization in the City of Williamsburg's Youth Softball and Girls' Fast Pitch Softball programs including a third lighted ball field and construction of a new concessions and restroom building.

*Quarterpath Park* is located on Quarterpath Road, off Pocahontas Trail (Route 60 East). This 23-acre facility includes lighted softball fields, an outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, playground equipment and a picnic shelter that will accommodate approximately 75 people. It is also the site of the Quarterpath Recreation Center, a 36,144 square foot facility which opened in 1990 and was renovated in 2002.

*Waller Mill Park* is located on Airport Road (Route 645) between Interstate 64 and Richmond Road (Route 60 West). Waller Mill Park, the City of Williamsburg's 2,705-acre park situated around its reservoir, was opened to the public in July 1972. The 386-acre lake is open for fishing, boating, pedal boating, and canoeing with a tunnel connecting the upper and lower sections of the lake. Amenities include picnic tables, shelters accommodating 25 to 150 people, play fields, and playground equipment. Additionally, there are 6.5 miles of hiking trails and fitness trails for walking and jogging. A recent joint effort between the City of Williamsburg and James City County established a community dog park for use for a small membership or daily fee.

The closest major park facility in the City of Newport News is *Newport News Park*, located along Jefferson Avenue (Route 143) by the Interstate 64 interchange at Fort Eustis Boulevard. The park is approximately 8,138 acres and though the majority of the park is in conservation area,

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<sup>7</sup> 2006 City of Williamsburg Comprehensive Plan, York County's Charting the Course to 2025 Comprehensive Plan, City of Newport News Framework for the Future 2030, and New Kent County's Vision 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

recreational amenities such as camping, a boat launch, fishing, disc golf, nature programs, horseback riding, golf, picnic shelters, playgrounds, and hiking and biking trails are also available.

York County's largest park resource in Bruton District is *New Quarter Park*. New Quarter Park is a 545-acre tract of land set aside as a group recreation facility. Amenities include a lighted picnic pavilion and adjoining barbecue pavilion, a campfire circle, hiking trails, a regulation softball field, two basketball courts, disc golf, a sand volleyball court, a floating pier on Queens Creek, five and a half miles of mountain bike trails, two playground areas, and horseshoe courts.

The recently revitalized *Yorktown Waterfront* area also offers opportunities for access to the York River for nearby residents. Amenities include a public beach, stationary fishing pier, and two floating piers to accommodate boaters.

Several other parks in adjacent localities are in the development phases. Particularly, the City of Williamsburg has plans for an approximately 20-acre park along Quarterpath Road which will provide access to and interpretation of two earthworks (Redoubts One and Two) used during the Civil War's Battle of Williamsburg. The City of Williamsburg also has plans for a 37-acre park called Papermill Creek Park near South Henry Street and College Landing Park. Amenities in this area, such as picnic shelters, trails, and overlooks, will have an ecological orientation.

Regional cooperation with these localities for parks and recreation is particularly important. Since many of the above-referenced facilities are open to users living in any jurisdiction, it is key to provide sidewalk, bikeway, and greenway connections across locality borders to provide access to the facilities. For example, York County has greenway trails proposed for Airport Road, East Rochambeau Road, and on an existing power easement between Henry Street (Route 132) and Pocahontas Trail (Route 60). The City of Newport News has proposed bike trails on Warwick Boulevard (Route 60) and Jefferson Avenue (Route 143) which would be separated from the roadway and intended for recreation and commuting. Finally, New Kent County's Comprehensive Plan proposes on-road bike routes on Barhamsville Road (Route 30) and Richmond Road (Route 60) and several off-road bike routes connecting in to James City County. James City County should work towards an integrated system with neighboring localities by continuing to plan for these connections.

### 3b. State and National Parks

Located off of Riverview Road in the upper portion of the County, *York River State Park* offers visitors an opportunity to experience the environment of a coastal estuary. Although not maintained by the James City County Parks and Recreation Division, this park is an important component of the County's park system. This park is known for its rare and delicate environment, where freshwater and saltwater meet to create a habitat rich in marine and plant life. The main focus of the park is to preserve a portion of York River frontage and its related marshes while providing an area for passive day-use recreation for visitors. Attractions at the park include a 100-person amphitheater, fishing, boating, bicycling, hiking, horseback riding, picnicking, educational nature and history programs, and other passive recreation.

Additionally, the Virginia Outdoors Plan, which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, identified the counties along the James River east of Richmond as desirable locations for future state parks.

*Colonial National Historical Park* (NHP) administers two of the most historically significant sites in English North America and falls under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in North America in 1607, is administered jointly with the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and Yorktown Battlefield is the site of the final major battle of the American Revolutionary War in 1781. These sites are connected by the 23-mile scenic Colonial Parkway. Colonial NHP also includes Green Spring, the 17<sup>th</sup> century plantation home of Virginia's colonial governor, Sir William Berkeley, and the Cape Henry Memorial, which marks the approximate site of the first landing of the Jamestown colonists in April of 1607. 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.

The *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail* was authorized as the nation's first water trail in 2006 as part of the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails program by the National Park Service.<sup>8</sup> This water trail covers approximately 3,000 miles and connects to gateway parks, interpretive buoys, and other smaller water trails throughout the Chesapeake Bay following in the wake of John Smith's historic routes through the area. Trail spurs are located along the York, James, and Chickahominy rivers. Jamestown Island, Chickahominy Riverfront Park, and York River State Park all serve as gateways for the trail.

Locations of the above-mentioned state and national parks and trails can be found on the Parks and Recreation Map in Section 6. Each of these parks offers unique recreation opportunities for County residents and can help reduce the demand for facilities on the County's Parks and Recreation Division. It is important for the County to continue to support these recreational opportunities and plan for greenway connections between national, state, and local parks.

### 3c. Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)<sup>9</sup>

The *Virginia Outdoors Plan (VOP)* is an important resource for recreation planning in Virginia. This document assesses the demand for recreation through extensive citizen surveys and evaluates that demand by region. It also lists important recreation and natural resources in each region and serves as the official guidance document for the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF). The VLCF is supported by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and provides state funding used to conserve open spaces, parks, natural

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<sup>8</sup> National Park Service. *Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail*. <http://www.nps.gov/cajo/>

<sup>9</sup> Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. *2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan: Charting the Course for Virginia Outdoors*. [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/vop.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/vop.shtml) (VOP)

areas, historic areas, and farmland and forest preservation based on guidance provided by the VOP.<sup>10</sup> The VLCHF also establishes, administers, manages, and makes expenditures from the Virginia Land Conservation Fund and grant program. An example is the acquisition of the Jamestown Beach Campground and Jamestown Yacht Basin which were both recommended for acquisition by the 2002 VOP and purchased in part with VLC funding. The VOP, which serves as a guide for the public and private sectors in meeting Virginia's outdoor recreation, conservation, and open space needs, is issued every five years, with the most recent document published in 2007.

*Key Emerging Issues:*

In preparation for the 2007 VOP, the DCR conducted the Virginia Outdoors Survey which identified the top two recreation needs for the state. These needs included (1) public access to water and (2) walking and biking trails. The VOP also emphasized that these outdoor recreation opportunities should be linked to the conservation of environmentally and scenically valuable lands and vice versa as good outdoor recreational experiences can lead to the long-term support of conservation efforts. The VOP also identified seven key emerging issues related to the outdoors, including:

1. blueway planning,
2. watershed management,
3. environmental education,
4. healthy lifestyles and their connection to outdoor recreational opportunities,
5. the effects of climate change on outdoor recreation,
6. transportation alternatives in support of livable/walkable communities, and
7. the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques.

Most of these emerging issues are currently included in County plan review and policy development, particularly watershed planning, environmental education, healthy lifestyles, and the provision of transportation alternatives. Many issues also cross topical areas. For instance, climate change in general is addressed in the Environment section, transportation alternatives and livable communities are discussed in the Transportation and Land Use sections, and CPTED is included in Public Facilities section. Climate change and CPTED, as they directly relate to parks and recreation planning, are elaborated on below. Blueways are discussed in more detail in Section 8 of this report.

*Climate change*, which is typically associated with environmental concerns, is a long-term, significant change in the average weather, including average temperature, precipitation and wind patterns, predicted to increase heat waves, heavy precipitation events, areas affected by drought, intense cyclone activity, and sea level over the 21st century. All of these changes also have impacts on the availability and functioning of outdoor recreation, particularly in coastal areas. Many scientific studies predict that sea level will rise and storms could become more damaging due to the effects of climate change. These effects of climate change should be kept in mind when planning the location of outdoor recreational facilities. The County should also acknowledge that climate change can impact the duration of operating seasons (for example, warmer temperatures lengthen operating seasons resulting in a greater potential for overuse of facilities), the cost of transportation (suggesting that amenities be located closer to

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<sup>10</sup> Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. *Virginia Land Conservation Foundation*. [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia\\_land\\_conservation\\_foundation/](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/virginia_land_conservation_foundation/)

population centers with alternative transportation options provided), and the migration and health of native fish and wildlife.<sup>11</sup>

*Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)* consists of techniques utilized to plan spaces and uses on a site more appropriately to create areas that reduce or eliminate the opportunity for crime and where people feel safe.<sup>12</sup> This concept is particularly important when designing park spaces, which can be open to use at all times, to ensure that they are safe neighbors. According to CPTED, maintenance, program scheduling, and community support principles also play significant roles in successful parks.

*Hampton Roads Region Goals:*

In their evaluation of the Hampton Roads Region, the VOP identified the most pressing recreational needs as boating facilities, public access to beaches, walking trails, and playgrounds within walking distance of large population centers. Additionally, an increasing need for bike trails was identified as an alternative mode of transportation due to increasing road congestion. The following are some general goals that the VOP outlined for the Hampton Roads Region localities:

1. Support implementation of the regional green infrastructure planning initiative currently being coordinated by the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission.
2. Provide support and services for the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, James River Heritage Trail, and Powhatan Creek Blueway.
3. Acquire and maintain access to public beaches.
4. Implement development of the Chickahominy Water Trail.
5. Develop the Jamestown Campground and Yacht Basin to integrate the properties with surrounding recreation, tourist, and cultural resources.
6. Support and expand efforts to provide access to water, camping, fishing, and historic interpretation at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Powhatan Creek Park, Freedom Park, and Little Creek Reservoir Park while linking them into the larger system of surrounding parks and water trails.

James City County has already taken steps towards addressing several of the above goals, such as master planning the Jamestown Campground and Yacht Basin, and should continue to place a priority on these items to meet local and regional needs.

The VOP discusses the following river segments in James City County as they pertain to Virginia Scenic River designation<sup>13</sup>:

- The *Chickahominy River* in James City County from Bottoms Bridge/Route 60 to the James River (between James City County and the New Kent County line to its confluence with the James) is identified as being worthy of future study.
- The *James River* from the Charles City/James City County line to the City of Newport News/James City County line has been evaluated and designated as a scenic river. Other portions of the James River through Hampton Roads have been designated by the General Assembly as an Historic River and are identified as being worthy of future study for Scenic River designation.

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<sup>11</sup> VOP, 196.

<sup>12</sup> VOP, 192.

<sup>13</sup> VOP. Map VII-6.

- The *York River* in its entirety is recommended as a potential Scenic River component and is identified as being worthy of future study.

The intent of the Scenic Rivers program is to identify, designate, and help protect rivers and streams with outstanding scenic, recreational, historic, and natural characteristics of statewide significance for future generations<sup>14</sup>. Some benefits of designation include closer review of projects along the rivers by state agencies, eligibility for land use tax considerations, and allows for project review and monitoring of designated segments by the governor-appointed Virginia Scenic River Board. As a next step, James City County may wish to consider finalizing the designation of the Chickahominy and York River segments. Regardless of official designation, the County should continue to promote the historic and natural resources of all three rivers and pursue appropriate land development practices along these rivers to retain their value.

The VOP also has identified the following greenway/trail proposals for the area:

- The *Peninsula Trail* would follow existing Virginia Dominion Power, Colonial Pipeline, and Newport News Waterworks utility corridors to be integrated into the East Coast Greenway (a 3,000 mile off-road trail from Florida to Maine connecting major East Coast cities with a spur into coastal Virginia).
- The *Cross-County Greenway* would connect Historic Jamestowne to York River State Park. The corridor would also link the Powhatan Creek Greenway with the York River Greenway at the Warhill Sports Complex.
- The *Powhatan Creek Greenway* would be managed as a natural corridor along the Powhatan Creek and would be located within the Resource Protection Area (RPA).
- The *Williamsburg Inner Loop* is proposed to parallel Route 199
- The *Williamsburg Outer Loop* is proposed to parallel Centerville Road from Lightfoot and connect to Route 5 via Greensprings Road.
- The *Virginia Capital Trail* along Route 5, which is a multi-use trail that has been approved by all local jurisdictions, should be constructed in a manner that preserves the historic and scenic beauty of its unique tree corridor. James City County dedicated its portion of the trail from Jamestown to Chickahominy Riverfront Park in 2007. Projected completion for the trail connection to Richmond is 2012.<sup>15</sup>

All of the above-mentioned trails, with the exception of the Powhatan Creek Greenway, are depicted on the County's Greenway Master Plan, which was adopted in 2003. Additional information about greenways is in Section 7. The County should continue to pursue avenues to purchase land or easements and construct these trails in conjunction with adjacent localities and holders of utility easements.

### 3d. Quasi-Public, Commercial and Membership Opportunities

Facilities requiring more than a nominal entrance fee or restricted to members are not considered truly "open" to the public. However, such commercial and membership facilities do relieve some recreation demand. In assessing area recreation opportunities, it would be

<sup>14</sup> Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. *Scenic Rivers Program*. [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational\\_planning/srmain.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational_planning/srmain.shtml).

<sup>15</sup> The Virginia Capital Trail Foundation. <http://www.virginiacapitaltrail.org/index.html>

misleading not to acknowledge the importance of these facilities in meeting overall recreational needs. The 4-H Camp features outdoor activities and education for youth. Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown Settlement, Busch Gardens, and Water Country U.S.A are major commercial recreation operations that attract many visitors to the area and offer various types of “passes.” In addition, there are commercial and/or private member golf courses and tennis clubs, marinas, recreational vehicle parks, miniature golf, campgrounds, hunt clubs, and a bowling alley.

Finally, there are numerous private gyms and swimming facilities in the area. The newest additions are the R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA, which is adjacent to the Sentara Williamsburg Community Hospital on Mooretown Road in York County, and Ironbound Gym, which is in New Town. The YMCA features a physical therapy center, six-lane pool, two-lane family pool, multipurpose rooms, gymnasium and exercise studio, and a kid’s adventure center. Ironbound Gym includes fitness and spin classes, free weights, cardio equipment, and personal training.

### 3e. 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. Again, while the general public does not have access to these facilities, their existence is designed to and does in fact relieve some pressure to have the County provide public facilities in their stead.

### 3f. Natural Resources

James City County and its surrounding area are abundantly supplied with waterways, marshes, forests, open fields, and scenic vistas. There is increasing concern for protecting and preserving these natural resources for their recreational value as the County comes under mounting pressure from rapid development and environmental degradation. More detail about the County’s natural resources is available in the Environment section. There is also a growing interest in developing a network of connecting trails and greenways that would provide some degree of public access to such resources, as well as preserve recreational access for future generations. More about greenways can be found in Section 7.

## **4. Programming**

The Parks and Recreation Division currently offers numerous programs for active and passive recreation for both youth and adults. Youth programs include summer camps, trips, sports leagues, swimming, before and after school programs, teen leadership and volunteerism, and instructional classes (i.e. art, outdoor, fitness, and therapeutic recreation). Adult offerings include group fitness classes, wellness seminars, swimming, sports leagues, and instructional

classes (i.e. fine art, multi-media, dance, therapeutic fitness, self-defense, and outdoor). In addition, the Parks and Recreation Division offers numerous special events such as Splash-in Movies, Riverbank Rhythms, the Haunted Forest, and Family Fun Fest. The Parks and Recreation Division also offers several other specialized services. One example is the award-winning *Inclusion* service, which provides accommodations and accessibility to persons with disabilities for participation in recreation programs, facilities, and leisure activities offered to the community. The Historic Triangle Senior Center, which is located in the James City/Williamsburg Community Center, also offers numerous programs geared toward the County's senior population. Some highlights include recreational, leisure, and social opportunities such as dances, trips, luncheons, special interest clubs, walking, and other activities. Finally, as with many of the facilities operated by the County, Parks and Recreation continually seeks creative partnerships with private providers and adjacent localities to meet some programming needs and reduce cost to the County.

As noted, these programs serve a variety of age groups, from infants to senior citizens, and cover a broad range of interests. As the County's population shifts and changes, the types of programs that are in demand and barriers to serving the youth and senior populations change as well. As noted in the Population Needs section, it continues to be important for Parks and Recreation to be flexible in revising the programs offered to meet the changing needs of the population. The Parks and Recreation Division is also successful in promoting the offered programs through the quarterly *Destination Recreation* brochure and other mailings.

The 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan makes several suggestions for reorganizing programming to create more efficient ways of operating and evaluating customer satisfaction and the need for new programs or revisions to old programs. One suggestion was that volunteerism should be added as a core program to facilitate and capitalize on the college and retiree resources available in the area. Other areas in programming that are gaining popularity nationally include outdoor activities and wellness classes (particularly for adults). Parks and Recreation, through participation in the School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) and other internal initiatives has increasingly incorporated health and wellness instruction into all programs offered, including the types of snacks served at events, nutrition tips exchanged at classes, and games played at Before and After School Programs. Some citizen comments have centered on the affordability of various recreation programs and ensuring that both facilities and activities are open to all citizens with the desire to participate. Parks and Recreation currently offers a number of financial aid programs to youth, adults and families. The Parks and Recreation Division should continue to revise these policies to ensure those most in need of aid are receiving it.

## **5. Public Facilities and Service Standards**

Facility standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population and can change over time as the demographics of the County change. With the recent update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the County worked with PROS Consulting to evaluate the County's standards based on standards set by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), best practices for other systems of the caliber of James City County, American Sports Data pertaining to recreation activity participation, community/stakeholder input, and the goals of

the Parks and Recreation Division.<sup>16</sup> 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 not included, and only a percentage of school facilities have been included because the space is only open to the public during restricted hours.

In comparison to NRPA standards, James City County standards call for slightly higher facility/population ratios for regional and special use area open space, bike lanes, youth competitive softball fields, and multi-purpose fields based on community demand, high program participation, and citizen interest to preserve open space for conservation and recreational purposes. County standards are slightly lower than the NRPA standards for adult competitive softball fields, playgrounds, and outdoor pools/family aquatic center partially due to decreased demand and the observation that many private gyms, developments, and adjacent localities tend to provide these facilities. The following is more specific detail about the facility classifications and standards to be used for recreational amenities:

1. Maintain twelve acres of public recreation space for each 1,000 residents in the County. The twelve acres should consist of approximately 3 acres of community park land, 5 acres of regional open space natural areas, 2 acres of linear parks/greenways, and 2 acres of special use areas. Currently the County exceeds these standards.
2. Total combined indoor recreation space (including gymnasiums, recreation center, community center, and indoor aquatic center) should total 2.5 square feet per person. The County needs an additional 24,609 square feet of indoor recreation space to meet the current needs of the population.
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. The County does have some existing shoulder bike ways (four-feet-wide); however, these do not meet the AASHTO definition of a bike lane (six-feet-wide) so were not included in the facility inventory.
4. Again, recognizing the needs for alternative modes of transportation and the desire of County residents to have more outdoor recreation opportunities, standards have been suggested for trails. The standards detail 0.4 miles of hard surface trail per 1,000 residents and 0.4 miles of soft surface trail per 1,000 residents. Currently, the County is short by 14 miles of hard surface and 15 miles of soft surface trails.
5. Other standards for fields, picnic shelters, pools, courts, skate parks, and off-leash pet areas are included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (see Appendix 13c) and more detail regarding size and location of facilities can be found below in Section 6. Generally speaking, tennis courts, outdoor pools/flat water, off-leash areas (such as Waller Mill

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<sup>16</sup> P&R MP, 24. Population data compiled in December 2007 and based on data and projections from the Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI).

dog park), and skate parks meet current standards while all others do not meet the County population's current needs.

## 6. Categorization of Parks

James City County parks are categorized as mini-parks/neighborhood parks, community parks/athletic complexes, regional parks, greenways and multi-purpose trails, special use areas, blueways, or recreation centers. Descriptions are based on the guidelines of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and national benchmarking standards developed by PROS Consulting. More information on each category is available in the 2009 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

### 6a. Mini-Park or Neighborhood Park<sup>17</sup>

**Size:** 1-10 acres or as appropriate for the use and facilities offered at that park

**Service Area:** Within ½ mile or 6 block radius of the residences it serves

**Purpose:** The primary function is to provide space for impromptu close-to-home recreation activities for the entire family within easy walking distance and is not intended to generate revenue. Neighborhood parks can serve a variety of age groups.

**Character:** These parks can include active and passive recreation areas, but tend to focus on about 85% active recreation and 15% passive recreation. Neighborhood parks serve the immediate neighborhood, should have activities tailored to the needs of neighborhood residents, and tend not to attract visitors from outside the neighborhood. Again, most recreational activity in neighborhood parks is not organized, except for the occasional team practice.

**Potential Facilities:** One signature amenity (e.g. a major playground or gazebo); playground for children ages 2-10; loop trails; sport court; practice or game sports field (generally unlighted); benches; and small picnic shelters. Safe walking connections to the surrounding neighborhood are critical and the park may or may not include parking.

**Existing Examples:** Forest Glen and Ironbound Square Parks

### 6b. Community Park and Athletic Complex

**Size:** 10-100 acres

**Service Area:** Approximately 1-3 mile radius and accessible to multiple neighborhoods

**Purpose:** Community parks primarily support active recreation activities (about 65%), both organized and informal, for the entire family. While capable of withstanding intensive use, they still should contain a fair amount of natural open space for passive activities such as wildlife watching (about 35%). Community parks serve several neighborhoods. Access is more often by car, transit, or bicycle than by walking. Community parks are also excellent opportunities for partnerships with nearby schools or other organizations. Athletic sports complexes are usually developed for soccer, softball, and baseball, include support facilities (bleachers, concessions, playgrounds), and are designed to produce revenue to offset operational costs.

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<sup>17</sup> Neighborhood parks are increasingly provided by private developers for each neighborhood constructed and can potentially cause maintenance difficulties for Parks and Recreation if ever transferred into County ownership. As such, Parks and Recreation does not dedicate significant resources towards acquiring and constructing neighborhood parks.

**Character:** Such parks should contain a large portion of flat open space in addition to more wooded natural areas. The land should be adaptable to a wide variety of recreational activities, with a focus on organized activities.

**Potential Facilities:** Four signature amenities (e.g. trails, sports fields, shelters, recreation center, pool, sports courts), public restrooms, ample parking, security lighting, and ball field lighting. One to two amenities should be revenue producing. Athletic complexes usually include 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, or 16 regulation size fields in one setting and include appropriate lighting and support facilities.

**Existing Examples:** Upper County Park and Mid County Park

#### 6c. Regional Park

**Size:** 100+ acres

**Service Area:** 15-25 minutes driving time, but may attract visitors from up to 60 miles away

**Purpose:** The regional park serves the recreational needs of the entire locality and often of adjacent localities as well. Although regional parks often have a combination of active and passive facilities (about 50% each), they are likely to be predominately natural resource based parks.

**Character:** Regional parks include recreational opportunities such as golf, boating, camping, conservation, wildlife viewing, and fishing, which often cannot be provided at the neighborhood or community level. They should also be linked to major trail systems and other area parks.

**Potential Facilities:** 10 to 12 amenities to create a signature facility (e.g. golf course, tennis complex, sports complex lake, regional playground, reservable shelters, camping, pool, gardens, trails, outdoor recreation/extreme sports amenities), public restrooms, concessions, restaurants, ample parking, and special event site.

**Existing Examples:** Freedom Park, Warhill Sports Complex, and Chickahominy Riverfront Park

#### 6d. Special Use Park

**Size:** Variable

**Service Area:** Depends on the size and significance of the recreational experience being offered

**Purpose:** Purposes can vary depending on the type of park, but are likely to serve special activities such as a boat launch.

**Existing Examples:** Diascund Reservoir Boat Ramp, Little Creek Reservoir Park, Brickyard Landing, and Powhatan Creek Park

#### 6e. Greenways and Multipurpose Trails

**Size:** Variable

**Service Area:** Variable. Trails and greenways are intended to connect people and places and can serve as a safe, alternative form of transportation.

**Purpose:** A greenway is a linear park that often parallels other linear features, such as streams, roads, utility or abandoned railroad right-of-way. Greenways are maintained as green, vegetated open space for passive recreational use. Some greenways are set aside for environmental protection purposes and may not include any public access; they often parallel streams and wetlands and connect important natural resources, such as unique or productive wildlife habitats or rare plant areas. Trails included within greenways can be utilized for walking, hiking, biking, or equestrian activities and designed to meet the needs of the targeted user group.

**Character:** A good greenway system connects important recreation or cultural resources, such as parks, schools, and historic sites, providing a pleasant way to travel from one park to another or from one's neighborhood to a park or school.

**Potential Facilities:** Parking, restrooms at trailheads, safety/emergency phones, and mini-parks along the trails with benches or water fountains. Educational and directional signage/maps as well as mileage markers are also encouraged to make trails more safe and user-friendly. Some lighting may also be appropriate at trailheads and high usage areas. Trails are suggested to be a minimum of 10 feet wide.

**Existing Examples:** Greensprings Trail

#### 6f. Blueways

**Size:** Variable

**Service Area:** Variable. Can serve local, community-wide, regional, statewide, or multi-state/nationwide needs and typically cross jurisdiction boundaries.

**Purpose:** Blueways are water trails generally for use by non-motorized watercraft such as canoes and kayaks.

**Character:** A good blueway system contains looped water trails or a series of water access points to eliminate back-tracking. They often follow environmentally important areas.

**Potential Facilities:** In addition to boat put-in and take-out locations, blueways should feature route markers and maps and educational information.

**Existing Examples:** Powhatan Creek

6g. Recreation Centers may be found at neighborhood, community, district, and large urban parks. At neighborhood parks, the center is usually around 15,000 to 20,000 square feet. It generally will include multipurpose rooms, arts and crafts area, game room, kitchen, lounge and lobby, restrooms, and office. If a gymnasium is not available in a neighborhood school, the recreation center also may include a gymnasium and locker room facilities.

The recreation center in a larger park serving a community, district, or city will be considerably larger, from 20,000 to 80,000 square feet, and will include several multi-purpose rooms, gymnasium, childcare facilities, aerobics room, racquetball courts, shower and locker rooms, game room, arts and craft area, auditorium or areas for performing arts, classrooms, concession stand, kitchen, large meeting room, restrooms, office, lounge or lobby, and some specialized areas such as a ceramics workshop or weight room. Frequently, larger centers have an indoor pool used year-round for recreational, instructional, and therapeutic purposes. An important consideration in all recreational facilities is adequate storage space for equipment and supplies.

National guidelines recommend facility standard of 1 square foot of recreation center space per person. James City County has combined the recreation center standards with other spaces (including community center, gymnasium, and indoor aquatic center) to develop a 2.5 square foot per person standard for total indoor space.

**Existing Examples:** James City/Williamsburg Community Center, James River Community Center

## 7. Greenways

### 7a. Greenway Master Plan

Recognizing the importance of greenways, the Board of Supervisors appointed the Greenway Steering Committee in March 2001 to take an active role with County staff in the development and review of technical information for the Greenway Master Plan. The Greenway Steering Committee worked for twelve months to prepare the Greenway Master Plan, endorsed by the James City County Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on June 25, 2002.

The Greenway Master Plan establishes a framework for a countywide system of interconnected greenways and trails for the benefit of the community quality of life. James City County has defined greenways as linear open spaces that are managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation uses. Greenways often follow natural features (such as ridgelines, stream valleys, and rivers) and cultural features (such as canals, utility corridors, abandoned rail lines, zoning buffers, roadways). Although each greenway is unique, most greenways are networks of natural open space corridors that connect neighborhoods, parks, and schools to areas of natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historical significance. These passageways link people and places to nature for the enjoyment and enhancement of the community.

The plan should become a component of a broader green infrastructure plan, which would be an important planning tool particularly if combined with the initial groundwork assembled by the HRPDC. The Parks and Recreation Division will manage the Greenway Master Plan whose main goal is to balance environmental protection with the need for recreational amenities. Six additional goal areas were developed based upon the benefits associated with greenways.

#### **1. Economic Development Goal**

Address both the appropriate costs of implementing the greenway system (including land acquisition and capital improvements) and multi-objective benefits resulting from its creation that will have a positive economic impact on the community.

#### **2. Recreation/Health and Wellness/Safety Goal**

Design the greenway system as a recreational resource with public access connections to other recreational resources, offering a full spectrum of recreation and exercise opportunities that are safe for all users.

#### **3. Transportation Goal**

Provide corridors that bicyclists, pedestrians, and others can use to get from one place to another, free from motor vehicle conflicts, as an alternative to motor vehicle use.

#### **4. Environmental Goal**

Design a plan that preserves, promotes, and enhances awareness of the County's environmental assets, including developing a comprehensive greenway system that is sensitive to environmental, historical, cultural, scenic, and open space resources.

#### **5. Education Goal**

Educate the public about the need for and benefits of greenways and educate the greenway system user about the area's natural and cultural history.

## 6. Quality of Life Goal

Design a greenway system that maximizes accessibility for greenway system users, nearby property owners, and neighbors to achieve a walkable, livable, and sustainable community.

While most greenways are green and natural, greenways do change within a variety of changing cultural contexts. Five main types of greenways include vehicular, cultural, recreational, aquatic (blueways), and environmental.

1. **Vehicular Greenways** recognize the importance of improving the driving experience through enhanced roadway aesthetics, such as scenic viewsheds, gateways, billboard restrictions, sign ordinances, wildflower meadows, tree canopies over the road, landscaped medians, etc. This plan makes specific recommendations to create scenic buffers and multiuse pedestrian and bicycle trails parallel to existing roadway corridors.
2. **Cultural Greenways** provide opportunities to elevate the green quality of streetscapes as they weave through suburban, urban and commercial areas. Given the heavy reliance of the County's economic base upon tourism, this plan recommends implementing Main Street USA design guidelines as a way to enhance the attractiveness of our roadways to visitors and the greater community.
3. **Recreational Greenways** respond to citizen requests for more walking and biking trails. Recreational enjoyment by citizens remains one of the single greatest factors in promoting greenways and trails. Walking continues to be the number one recreation activity in America, and in James City County, the 2008 Virginia Tech citizen's survey revealed 78.6% of citizens feel that bike and walking trails for all age groups are somewhat or very important. The timing and location for future trail development over the next ten years is outlined in the Action Plan. These trails should be integrated with the sidewalk and bicycle plans to partner resources when these systems overlap.
4. **Aquatic Greenways**, also known as blueways or water trails, combine the benefits of recreational and environmental greenways. James City County's three primary blueway corridors are the James, York, and Chickahominy Rivers, in addition to numerous streams and tributaries (see Section 8 for more information). The Virginia Tech citizen's survey indicated that 72% of respondents find it very or somewhat important to have public access to waterways for boating and swimming.
5. **Environmental Greenways** represent stream, river, and wetland corridors that are protected under the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act, as well as other natural and contiguous open space. The plan recommends giving special attention to those sensitive areas because of their environmental significance. Two goals of environmental greenways are to preserve open spaces and provide access to natural areas that permit trail construction without damaging the natural environment. In many instances, trails are recommended as part of the multi-objective open space protection/acquisition strategy. Environmental greenways also provide essential "gene-ways" for plants and animals that allow them safely migrate between larger wildlife areas. Ten of the larger protected waterways include Powhatan, College, Gordon, Yarmouth, Diascund, Ware, Taskinas, Mill, Skiffe's and Wood creeks.

The Greenway Master Plan includes elements pertaining to greenway planning and design, maintenance and management, and implementation strategies and funding mechanisms. The

Greenway Steering Committee developed an action plan to implement the strategies outlined in the Master Plan. This action plan prioritizes trail development projects based on community input. Each proposal details corridor recommendations, land acquisition or easement strategies, capital expenditures, potential funding sources, and timelines for completion. An associated end product of the Greenway Master Plan is a map with an inventory of significant sites, parks and open spaces, pedestrian and bikeway trail corridors, technical information, and the action plan. The current economic climate, budgetary priorities, and the need to find and collaborate with willing private property owners have delayed implementation of the action plan. While the information contained within the Greenway Master Plan is critical to balanced land use planning, the format of maps can be difficult to use practically. In addition to reviewing and updating the plan, a next step could be to create GIS data to ease the incorporation of proposed greenway corridors into current planning.

### 7b. Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is a strategic approach to planning open space networks which may help communities meet multiple goals. The Conservation Fund defines green infrastructure as "... our Nation's natural life support system - an interconnected network of protected land and water that supports native species, maintains natural ecological processes, sustains air and water resources and contributes to the health and quality of life for America's communities and people."<sup>18</sup> The opposite, but often easier to understand concept, is that of grey infrastructure. Grey infrastructure is the network of built amenities including roads, water, and sewer. Everyone can agree that in order to maintain an effective community, grey infrastructure items need to interconnect and provide ways for service to reach residents and vice versa. The same concept applies to green infrastructure, but with the focus being on wildlife, recreation, and conservation. While this technique is often seen as a way to protect environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife corridors, green infrastructure planning can contribute significant opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Green infrastructure often consists of a network of cores, or hubs, connected by linear corridors of greenspace, can be public or private land, and accessible or inaccessible to the public. Examples of cores include public parks, natural areas, or working forests and farms. Corridors can include scenic rivers, stream buffers, trails, and even scenic byways.<sup>19</sup>

Several tools to help local planners with green infrastructure have recently been developed at the regional and state levels. In April 2007 the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation developed the Virginia Recreation Model as part of the Virginia Conservation Lands Needs Assessment.<sup>20</sup> The Recreation Model represents the public recreation value of lands in Virginia based on datasets compiled from a variety of state and federal recreation resource agencies. Datasets included public beaches, hunting areas, boating areas, federal, state, and local parks, trails, and byways. Values were assigned to land areas from a high value of six to a low value of one based on the number of overlapping existing recreational opportunities in a given area. For example, if a given area was park and had a trail, it would receive a recreation

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<sup>18</sup> The Conservation Fund, *Definition of Green Infrastructure*  
<http://www.greeninfrastructure.net/search/node/definition>.

<sup>19</sup> VOP. 44-46

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. *Virginia Recreation Model*, April 2007.  
[http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural\\_heritage/documents/RecreationModelReport.pdf](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural_heritage/documents/RecreationModelReport.pdf).

value of two. Some general categories where this model can be applied include targeting new recreation areas, prioritizing conservation lands, and public education. Several areas in James City County were identified as having low to medium recreation values, including York River State Park, Freedom Park, and Jamestown Island.

The Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) created a green infrastructure plan called “The Hampton Roads Conservation Corridor Study” in May 2006.<sup>21</sup> This plan was crafted in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage as well as environmental organizations and local jurisdictions. The goal of this plan was to illustrate how core ecology areas can be connected to meet local and regional planning objectives and included data about opportunities for connectivity and suitability for conservation. Linkage of parks, trails, and other recreation areas to the corridor network has the potential to buffer critical habitat areas from encroachment by new development. A next step would be to take the HRPDC and DRC regional information and use local knowledge and tools to create a parcel-specific County level green infrastructure plan that can be utilized daily in land use planning.

## **8. Blueways, Water Trails, and Water Access**

Public access to water and blueways planning was one of seven items identified by the Virginia Outdoors Plan as a key emerging issue. Not only does water access provide for excellent recreational opportunities, but the personal interaction with local rivers that feed into the Chesapeake Bay can also help residents become aware of the connection between the value of the Bay and individual interests in protection and preservation. James City County is uniquely situated to provide excellent access to a variety of different types of waterways including the James, York, and Chickahominy rivers, the Diascund and Little Creek reservoirs, and the Powhatan Creek. According to the 2006 Virginia Outdoors Survey, more than half the respondents thought that the most needed outdoor recreation opportunities included public access to water for boating, fishing, swimming, and beach use.<sup>22</sup> Additionally, according to HRPDC, by the year 2010, the demand for water access for water-based recreational activities can be expected to increase 25% from year 2000 levels. The study indicates that by 2010, the County will be short 141 acres of beach and 12,891 acres of available lake and bay to meet demand. To address these rising needs and apparent shortage, the Chesapeake Bay Program outlined a series of goals related to public water access in 2000. The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership among states, federal agencies, and citizen advisory groups that has led and directed the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 1983. One adopted goal is to expand the system of public access points to the Bay, its tributaries, and related resource sites by 30% (for a total of 805 access points) by the year 2010.<sup>23</sup> To date, the program has achieved 98% of that goal.

There are currently 11 private (Table 1) and 10 public (Table 2) water access facilities (see Map 2: Private and Public Water Access Areas). For purposes of this report, public facilities are defined as those owned and/or operated by a government entity (the County, National Park Service,

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<sup>21</sup> Hampton Roads Planning District Commission, *The Hampton Roads Conservation Corridor Study*, May 2006, [http://www.hrpdc.org/PEP/PEP\\_HRCCS.asp](http://www.hrpdc.org/PEP/PEP_HRCCS.asp).

<sup>22</sup> VOP. 106.

<sup>23</sup> The Chesapeake Bay Program. <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/publicaccessrestoration.aspx?menuitem=16774v>.

Department of Conservation and Recreation) that may or may not require a boat launch fee. Private facilities include both those located within private developments that are only accessible to a portion of the population (such as Kingsmill) and those operated as a private business but open to all individuals (such as Chickahominy Marina). Numerous private developments also allow property owners to maintain docks and piers on their lots. These amenities were not included in the summary, but include neighborhoods such as Cypress Point, Sycamore Landing, and Drummond's Field.

Several of the above mentioned public access sites have been designated by the National Park Service as Chesapeake Bay Gateways, including Chickahominy Riverfront Park, Jamestown Island, and York River State Park, and the Powhatan Creek Blueway. The Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network includes more than 1,000 miles of water trails, and designated gateways are the best ways to connect to the Chesapeake. Some gateways also feature museums, wildlife refuges, parks and hiking trails, and educational centers, but all reflect the tremendous influence and historic and natural value of the Bay's waters. Gateways also serve as connections to several regional water trails<sup>24</sup>:

- **John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail/Lower James River Water Trail** (*under development*) follows the historic voyages of John Smith from Richmond to Hampton Roads. Jamestown Island and Chickahominy Riverfront Park are two Gateways and numerous interpretive buoys have been placed along this route.<sup>25</sup>
- **York River Water Trail** (*under development*) follows 120 miles of diverse landscape along the York, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey rivers. This trail connects multiple Gateway sites (including York River State Park) and will contain 10 access sites with information kiosks at completion.
- **Chickahominy Water Trail** (*proposed*) would begin at the Chickahominy River's confluence with the James River and continue north up the Chickahominy River. Chickahominy Riverfront Park and potentially Brickyard Landing would serve as access points.

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<sup>24</sup> The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. <http://www.baygateways.net>.

<sup>25</sup> National Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov/cajo/>.

Table 1: Private\* Water Access Areas<sup>26</sup>

	<b>Water Body</b>	<b>Parking</b>	<b>Boat Launch Ramp</b>	<b>Wet Slips</b>	<b>Dockside Pumpout Station</b>	<b>Restrooms</b>	<b>Private Resident Docks</b>
Kingsmill Marina	James River	X	X	X	X	X	X
The Marina at Two Rivers (Governor's Land)	James River	X	X	X		X	
Chickahominy Marina	Chickahominy River	X	X	X		X	
Chickahominy Haven	Chickahominy River	X	X				X
Riverview Plantation	York River	X	X				X
First Colony	James River	X	X	X			X
Jamestown 4-H Educational Center	James River	X	X			X	
Stonehouse Marina**	York River	X	X				
Powhatan Shores	Powhatan Creek	X	X				X
Kingspoint	Powhatan Creek	X	X				
Jamestown Marina	Powhatan Creek	X	X	X		X	

\*Various developments also allow private owners to have docks/piers.

\*\*Stonehouse is a proposed facility. Guarantees for water access provided by proffers.

<sup>26</sup> Sources included: Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. *James City County Comprehensive Plan Shoreline and Ground Water Element*. October 2000.

John Carnifax and Phil Mease from James City County Parks and Recreation staff

James City County Geographic Information System 2007 aerial photography and site visits.

Table 2: Public Water Access<sup>27</sup>

	Water Body	Day Use	Seasonal Use	Fee or Permit to Launch	Parking	Boat Launch Ramp	Wet Slips	Dockside Pumpout Station	Fishing	Swimming Beach	Hiking	Camping	Picnicking	Restrooms	Handicap Access <sup>28</sup>	Cultural Resources
Colonial National Historical Park (Jamestowne Island) and Parkway	James River	X			X				X	X	X		X	X		X
Croaker Landing - York River State Park	York River	X		X	X	X			X		X				X**	
Diascund Reservoir Park	Diascund Reservoir	X			X	X*			X						X	
Little Creek Reservoir Park	Little Creek Reservoir	X	X	X	X	X*			X		X		X	X	X	
Jamestown Campground	James River	X			X				X	X			X			X
Powhatan Creek Park	Powhatan Creek	X			X	X*			X						X	X
Brickyard Landing Park	Chickahominy River	X			X	X										
York River State Park - Taskinas Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve	York River/Taskinas Creek	X			X	X*					X		X	X	X**	
Chickahominy Riverfront Park	Chickahominy River	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	
Jamestown Yacht Basin and Marina	James River	X		X	X	X	X	X						X	X	
Stonehouse Canoe Launches (2) <sup>***</sup>	Ware Creek	X				X*										

\*Launch restricted to non-motorized boats

\*\*Portions of park are handicap accessible: [http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state\\_parks/yor.shtml](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/yor.shtml).

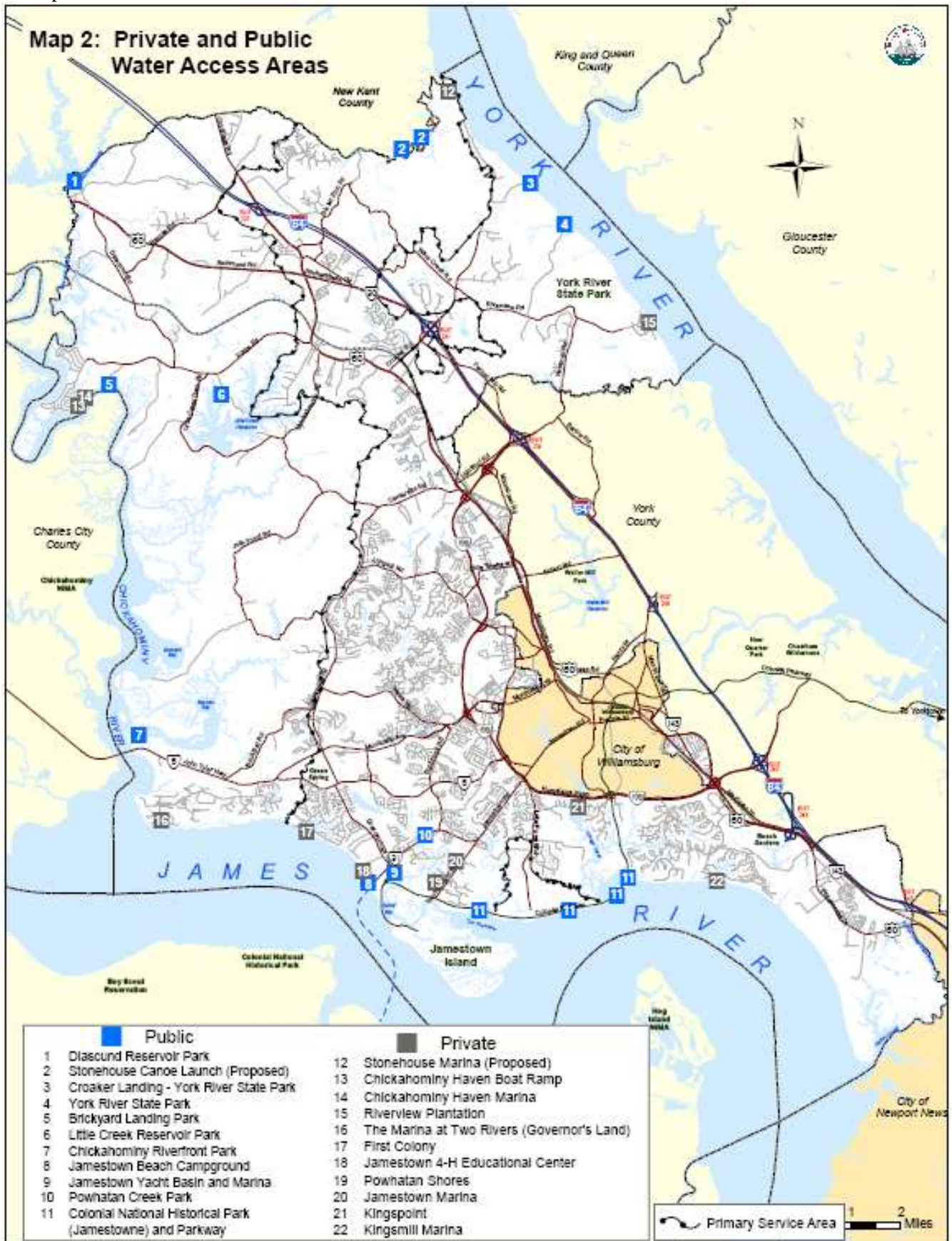
\*\*\*Two proposed public launch facilities. Guarantees for water access provided by proffers.

<sup>27</sup> Sources included: <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/publicaccess.aspx?menuitem=14805>, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission. *James City County Comprehensive Plan Shoreline and Ground Water Element*. October 2000.

Environmental Division and Parks and Recreation Division staff

<sup>28</sup> Handicap access for public launches: <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/accessible/>

Map 2: Private and Public Water Access



## 9. Future Park and Recreation Needs

Through the update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, PROS Consulting examined the future parks and recreation needs of the County. Through a facility and program needs assessment, PROS received input from focus groups and citizens to identify what they saw as priority facility and program needs.

The following were among high priority facility needs:

- Warhill Sports Complex,
- hiking trails,
- aquatic facilities and pools, and
- public boat ramps.

The following were among high priority program needs:

- adult fitness and health classes,
- senior citizen programs,
- youth programs (for ages 6-14), and
- before and after school programs.

PROS also examined facility needs in two ways: 2017 population projections and equity mapping. When evaluating these facility needs, it is important to note that not all areas are under the purview of the County's Parks and Recreation Division. For example, bikeways are a shared responsibility depending on how they are constructed (off-road multi-use trails may be developed by Parks and Recreation while shoulder bike lanes may be designed and built by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)).

Also, when evaluating these service standards and anticipated amenity needs within the County, user groups should also be considered. While the attitudes and desires of a sampling of County residents were included in the development of the standards, Parks and Recreation has to acknowledge that different user groups prefer different amenity designs which often conflict with each other. A prime example is bikeways. Many more experienced bike riders prefer to have shoulder lanes and share the road with motor vehicles. On the contrary, many families and beginning riders prefer to have a paved trail separated from the roadway by a grass area and curb. These dichotomies need to be considered when planning and designing new facilities to ensure maximum utilization.

### 9a. 2017 Projections

Using population estimates for 2017, staff can identify projected facility surpluses and deficits based on the established standards (see Section 4). This method assumes that no new facilities are added to the inventory and again, does not consider facilities within private developments. The following summarizes anticipated amenity deficits and projected community needs:

1. The County is expected to continue to meet the standard for total park acreage in 2017; however, the following deficits have been identified: 149 acres of community park, 73 acres of linear parks/greenways, and 36 acres of special use areas.

2. A deficit of approximately 84,251 square feet of total combined indoor recreation space (including gymnasiums, recreation center, community center, and indoor aquatic center) is projected to meet the needs of the projected population.
3. An 87-mile deficit is identified for six-foot wide bike lanes to meet projected population needs.
4. The County is projected to be short 24 miles of hard-surface and 24 miles of soft-surface trails in 2017.
5. Other 2017 standards for fields, picnic shelters, pools, courts, skate parks, and off-leash areas are included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan (see Appendix 13c) and more detail regarding size and location of facilities can be found above in Section 6. Generally speaking, all areas, with the exception of regional open space/natural areas, show projected deficits in meeting the needs of the County population in 2017.

#### 9b. Equity Mapping

PROS Consulting generated equity maps for existing facilities based on the estimated 2007 population of the County. These maps, together with the standards outlined in Section 5, will help the Parks and Recreation Division locate where services are available, how equitable the service delivery is across the County, and how effective the service is as it compared to the demographics of where the service is provided. Equity maps also can be used to identify gaps in service and assess where land should be acquired for the construction of new parks or facilities. Maps were produced, covering the following facilities: neighborhood parks, community parks, linear parks/greenways, special use areas, tennis courts, playgrounds, picnic pavilions/shelters, outdoor pools, trails (hard and soft surface), baseball fields (200 and 300 feet), adult and youth softball fields, adult and youth soccer fields, multi-purpose fields, skate parks, dog parks, and indoor facility space. These maps are available in Appendix 13c. Again, the maps do not include facilities provided by private developments or facilities to be constructed with the 4<sup>th</sup> middle school/9<sup>th</sup> elementary school on Jolly Pond Road. The following are some generalizations regarding service needs that can be developed from the equity maps:

1. Few service gaps were identified for facilities that currently meet the overall County service standards including regional open space/natural areas, special use areas, and outdoor pools.
2. The most apparent service gaps appear for facilities that are significantly under the service standards. While numerous facilities are often available, if they are all in an area of higher population density, they are seen to serve a smaller service radius. These facilities include hard and soft surface trails, indoor recreation space (with the exception of the Roberts District, which appears to be adequately served by the James River Community Center), youth and adult softball fields, and adult soccer fields.
3. The most underserved areas for several types of facilities are the northern (Stonehouse District) and southern (Roberts District) areas of the County. The most prominent gaps exist for neighborhood parks, linear parks/greenways, soccer fields, and baseball fields.

Table 3: Service gaps by facility type

<b>Facility type</b>	<b>Area with service gap</b>	<b>Areas adequately served</b>
<i>Neighborhood park</i>	Grove, Stonehouse, rural lands along James River	
<i>Community park</i>	Roberts, Jamestown, and western portion of Berkeley	
<i>Linear parks/greenways</i>	Stonehouse, Roberts, and northern portion of Powhatan	
<i>Regional open space/natural areas</i>	Southern tip of Roberts	Majority of JCC
<i>Special use areas</i>	Jamestown	Majority of JCC
<i>Tennis courts</i>	Stonehouse, rural lands along James River, northern portion of Roberts	
<i>Playgrounds</i>	Scattered	Areas adjacent to elementary schools
<i>Picnic pavillions</i>	Roberts, Jamestown, and eastern portion of Powhatan	
<i>Outdoor pools</i>	Southern tip of Roberts	Majority of JCC
<i>Trails - hard surface</i>	Majority of JCC	
<i>Trails - soft surface</i>	Majority of JCC	
<i>Baseball fields (200 ft.)</i>	Outside PSA, Roberts, and Monticello Avenue area	
<i>Baseball fields (300 ft.)</i>	Roberts, Stonehouse, and Freedom Park area	
<i>Youth softball fields</i>	Majority of JCC	
<i>Adult softball fields</i>	Majority of JCC	Area around Jamestown HS
<i>Youth soccer fields</i>	Stonehouse and Powhatan	
<i>Adult soccer fields</i>	Majority of JCC	Areas around Stonehouse ES and Warhill Complex
<i>Multi-purpose fields</i>	Northern Stonehouse, northern Roberts, southern Jamestown	Area around Warhill Complex
<i>Skate parks</i>	Majority of JCC	Area around Community Center
<i>Total indoor facility space</i>	Majority of JCC	Roberts
<i>Dog parks</i>	Areas outside the PSA and Roberts	Area adjacent to Waller Mill Park

## 10. Community Sustainability Spotlight

A sustainable community is one which is economically strong, socially responsible and engaged, and environmentally viable. Parks and recreation opportunities play a fundamental role in each of these sustainability pillars and serve to make James City County an attractive quality community for all residents.

- Economically strong:
  - Studies indicate that parks and open space increase the value of nearby properties, along with property tax revenue.
  - Interconnected systems of bikeways and sidewalks, coupled with development of employment opportunities near residential communities, can help alleviate traffic congestion and reduce household transportation costs by providing alternative modes of transportation.
  - Good recreation opportunities play a role in attracting businesses and trained employees that are in search of a high quality community.<sup>29</sup>
  - Opportunities and amenities also attract tourists, particularly if linked with eco-tourism opportunities or cultural resources, and boosts recreational spending.
  
- Socially responsible and engaged:
  - Support for exercise and recreation encourages residents to incorporate activity into their everyday lives and can help reduce obesity rates and lower health care costs.
  - If designed properly, community parks can serve to deter crime in neighborhoods and youth recreation programs may help reduce juvenile delinquency.
  - In developing parks, it is critical to ensure that different facilities and programs are available for all population segments (especially youths and the growing aging population), geographic areas, and socioeconomic groups.
  - Parks provide areas for people of diverse backgrounds to gather, gain knowledge about the County and world they live in, and socially relate to other residents.
  
- Environmentally viable:
  - Conserved open space helps safeguard drinking water, clean the air, and prevent flooding.
  - Open space, particularly when contiguous, provides opportunities for native wildlife and vegetation to flourish.
  - Connected sidewalks and bikeways encourage alternatives to driving.
  - Parks can promote environmental education by offering residents personal experiences with the natural environment. These connections are critical to promoting the conservation ethic because individuals typically do not feel passionate about protecting what they do not have an experience or connection with.

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<sup>29</sup> Economic Development Authority. *Business Climate Task Force*. January 2008.  
<http://www.jccgov.com/pdf/business/taskforce/08Jan02FINALReport.pdf>

In order to reap the community sustaining benefits that parks and recreation has to offer, the County should continue to support both the maintenance of existing facilities and development of new facilities where feasible, including acquisition of open space. Significant opportunities, partnerships, and amenities are already provided, but as County demographics change and growth continues, it becomes increasingly important to plan the location for amenities, connections to neighborhoods, and explore alternative funding and partnership strategies. The goals strategies and actions of the Parks and Recreation section aim to promote these opportunities in several ways:

- Encouraging private developments to incorporate recreational facilities and open space early in the planning process;
- Identifying key open space areas that are threatened by development, provide significant environmental protections, or would be available for recreational use in underserved areas of the County;
- Exploring opportunities to develop and expand blueways and public water access for boating, fishing, and swimming;
- Seeking opportunities to partner with schools, neighboring jurisdictions, and/or private sector service providers to deliver recreation opportunities to the community at lower costs to the County; and
- Coordinating the Greenway Master Plan and Sidewalk Plan to improve connections between residential developments and recreational amenities. This is also a key component of the Transportation section.

The goals, strategies and actions of the parks and recreation section serve to link the desire of residents to maintain a high quality community through the provision of a wide variety of indoor, outdoor, active, and passive recreation opportunities with the desire to create a more sustainable community that future generations can enjoy.

## **11. Summary**

James City County's unique geographic location on the Virginia peninsula offers numerous opportunities for continued expansion of the many recreational offerings. The County is in a strong position to provide ample and high quality recreational opportunities for its citizens. As the population continues to grow and change demographically, special attention will be required in trying to match the corresponding demand for recreation and the unique challenges of providing recreational opportunities for special populations such as teenagers and the elderly.

In order to adequately plan a comprehensive parks and recreation system, the James City County Parks and Recreation Division developed the Parks and Recreation Master Plan which acts as a plan of action for meeting the parks and recreation needs of James City County citizens. An early step in preparing a master plan is the inventory and evaluation of existing parks and recreation resources. For James City County, this includes not only County parks, but also school recreation facilities. A review of the public recreation resources, including those of adjacent localities, the State of Virginia, and the federal government is also needed to obtain a complete picture of other resources available to James City County citizens.

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June 2002, the Greenways Master Plan establishes a framework for a County-wide system of interconnected greenways and trails for the benefit of James City County citizens and the enhancement of the community's quality of life. The Parks and Recreation Division manages the Greenway Master Plan whose main goal is to balance environmental protection with the need for recreational amenities. However, as mentioned earlier in Section 7, numerous factors have delayed full implementation of the action plan according to the original schedule.

The above-mentioned plans both include a strategy matrix or an action plan to meet the goals of greenway and parks and recreation planning. The goals, strategies, and actions in the Comprehensive Plan attempt to highlight the implementation needs of both these plans while tying them into the larger goals for the County that are found throughout the Environmental, Population Needs, Transportation, and Public Facilities sections of the Plan. The citizen concerns and requests that surfaced during the public input phase of the update, such as the desire to promote pedestrian connectivity and various partnerships, continued preservation of open space, maintenance of facilities, and greater availability of amenities to the County's youth, were also included in the development of the goals, strategies, and actions. All of these plans, inputs, and strategies combined can help James City County achieve a higher level of community sustainability.

## 12. Glossary of Terms

### *Beach*

A strip of sand or gravel along the shore separating land from water. To gain beach designation, this strip must extend 25 feet in width between the dune or bank and landward of the mean high tide or normal high water.<sup>30</sup>

### *Blueway*

For the purposes of this plan, the term blueway and water trail are used synonymously. Blueways and water trails are managed systems of access points and support facilities that allow trail users to plan multi-day trips with assurances that access points, camping sites, rest stops, and re-supply sites are clearly identified on maps and on signs visible from the water. A trail may include both public and private lands, with some or all of the latter open only to users specified by the owners.<sup>31</sup>

### *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)*

Techniques utilized to plan spaces and uses on a site more appropriately to create areas that reduce or eliminate the opportunity for crime and where people feel safe.<sup>32</sup>

### *Ecotourism*

Environmentally responsible travel to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.<sup>33</sup>

### *Greenway*

Linear open spaces that are managed for conservation, recreation, and/or alternative transportation uses. Greenways often follow natural features (such as ridgelines, stream valleys, and rivers) and cultural features (such as canals, utility corridors, abandoned rail lines, zoning buffers, roadways). Include networks of natural open space corridors that connect neighborhoods, parks, and schools to areas of natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and historical significance.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> VOP, 110.

<sup>31</sup> VOP, 706.

<sup>32</sup> VOP, 192.

<sup>33</sup> World Conservation Union, <http://www.iucn.org/> and The Nature Conservancy, <http://www.nature.org/aboutus/travel/ecotourism/about/art667.html>

<sup>34</sup> James City County Greenway Master Plan

## 13. Appendix

### 13a. Citizen Commentary

#### James City County's Citizen Survey 2007 Input

- ◆ Overall, more respondents in 2007 rated Parks and Recreation facilities and services as “excellent” (38.4%) or “good” (44.6%) than in the 2001 Citizen Survey.
- ◆ Almost six in ten respondents (55.9%), from the Virginia Tech survey, rate the current recreational and cultural opportunities for youths in the County as either “excellent” or “good.”
- ◆ Almost eight in ten respondents (78.6%) felt that having biking and walking trails in the community for all age groups was “very important” or “somewhat important.”
- ◆ Public access to waterways for swimming and boating was rated as “very important” or “somewhat important” to 72% of respondents.
- ◆ 52.2% of respondents “somewhat disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with increasing user fees for public parks and recreation centers in order to support additional recreational services.
- ◆ When asked what services respondents would like to see the County invest in, the most prevalent responses included expanding programs, classes, and opportunities for youth, teens, and young adults, development of cultural or entertainment venues, expansion of parks, increased protection of greenspace and open space, and improving public access to water both for boating and swimming. Other responses included more bike paths and sidewalks that provide connections between residential areas and recreation facilities, more recreational opportunities for seniors, improve and expand the recreation center, and maintenance of existing facilities. Many of these thoughts were also echoed in the question about what respondents would most like to see change in the County.
- ◆ Specifically, opportunities within parks and recreation that respondents wanted to see improved for youth included more parks and recreational centers, more activities or places where teens could go at night, more after school and weekend activities for youth, including teen nightclubs, performing arts, sports programs, and arts and crafts.
- ◆ The National Citizen Survey contained several questions related to parks and recreation and this area was identified as a key driver (an area that strongly influences citizen’s perceptions of overall County service quality). “Good” or “excellent” ratings were given to recreational opportunities by 76% of respondents, to open space by 61%, and to availability of historic sites by 92%.
- ◆ Participation in parks and recreation opportunities in the last 12 months was also high, particularly regarding use of recreation centers (62%) and visits to County or neighborhood parks (80%).
- ◆ Finally, “good” or “excellent” ratings for County parks (91%), recreation classes or programs (87%), and recreation centers or facilities (86%) all fell above the national and Southern states benchmarks.

## Community Conversation Input

- ◆ Bikeways and sidewalks, for use as both recreation and transportation, were high priorities. Particularly, participants wanted to see more of these amenities and better connectivity between them and to coordinate with adjacent localities.
- ◆ Many people felt that costs for recreational centers and programs were prohibitive. Respondents felt that these services should be available to all income levels.
- ◆ Another area emphasized in the first round of Community Conversations was public access to water for beach and boating, particularly at the Jamestown Campground/Yacht Basin, and access to indoor and outdoor pools.
- ◆ In the second round of Community Conversations, respondents stated that they either agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements (percentages of positive responses stated at the beginning of the question):
  - a. 89% “Increase the number of youth friendly gathering areas/activities.”
  - b. 96% “Promote community design that encourages walking and outdoor recreation (sidewalks, crosswalks, and parks).”
  - c. 76% “Provide community health care centers for persons of all ages and cultures within close proximity to where people live.”
  - d. 81% “Provide community arts and recreational activities inclusive of all ages and cultures.”
  - e. 77% “Even if it means paying more initially for construction, green technologies, including LEED certification, for site design for County buildings.”
- ◆ 42 and 41 respondents respectively felt that increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation and providing more public open spaces such as parks and trails would attract and retain young professionals in the area.

## Other Input (CPT forums, listening stations, additional surveys)

- ◆ In advance of the 2008 update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, several focus groups and a household survey were conducted. Participants noted the following:
  - a. Strengths of Parks and Recreation included: trails, numerous park facilities (like Freedom, Upper County, and Warhill), the Virginia Capital Trail, the skate park, swimming, and special events.
  - b. Areas for improvement included: more focus on maintenance of facilities rather than building new ones, more competitive facilities for some athletic groups (swimming, track and field), trail accessibility to parks and facilities,

ensuring adequate staffing, partnering with schools, and neighborhood parks.

- c. Future recreation facility needs including: interconnected trails, aquatic facilities, sports complexes, additional bike trails, hunting/archery facilities, and equestrian trails.
  - d. One thing that respondents would like to see changed in Parks and Recreation included: wanting the Parks and Recreation Division to stop trying to be all things to all people, strengthen historic preservation and interpretation, improve environmental stewardship, maintain current facilities, and improve neighborhood connectivity.
- ◆ Of the 69 students surveyed at Jamestown High School, a large majority of them identified having more “youth friendly” places or activities as a priority.
  - ◆ On the Youth Advisory Council survey conducted in 2007, most respondents indicated that they think that young people should have their own recreational facilities and buildings to gather.
  - ◆ Participants also felt that there should be more activities and places to go for the youth and families with young children in the County.
  - ◆ Several comments expressed support for establishing a botanical garden as part of the master plan of the Jamestown Campground property and interest in an additional skate park.
  - ◆ Reoccurring themes also included promoting connectivity of bikeways and sidewalks, continued preservation of greenspace, and restructuring fees at the JCC/W Community Center to make it affordable to all income levels.
  - ◆ Two organizations, the Active Williamsburg Alliance (AWA) and the Aquatic Center Development Commission (ACDC) presented at the CPT Forums. The AWA emphasized implementation of the adopted Greenways Master Plan and connectivity/construction of sidewalks and bikeways. The ACDC emphasized the need for additional competitive-sized indoor swimming pools and outlined a joint public-private venture to construct a world class aquatic center in the community.
  - ◆ In advance of the update to the Virginia Outdoors Plan, a state-wide survey was conducted in 2006 and the following results were gathered:
    - a. 56% of respondents said they had visited an historic site within the last year, making this second most popular outdoor activity in Virginia. Walking for pleasure was the number one most popular outdoor activity with 70% of the population participating.
    - b. The top three outdoor sports in terms of participation were golf, basketball, and soccer.
    - c. Participation in visiting natural areas grew from 24% in 1996 to 44% in 2006, moving it into the fifth most popular outdoor activity.

- d. For frequently repeated outdoor activities, respondents noted that an “acceptable” drive time to the destination was between 15 and 30 minutes.
- e. 20% of respondents noted that they biked on shared roadways, but 40% believed that separate bike trails are needed to increase participation and ensure for the safety of all age groups.

### 13b. Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

Directly resulting from the strategies of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the County has made significant contributions to the development of the parks and recreation system in the past five years. The Parks and Recreation Division has moved forward to develop active recreational facilities at the Warhill Sports Complex, Ironbound Park, and new school sites on Jolly Pond and Brick Bat roads, built new historical interpretation features at Freedom Park, picnic shelters and playground at Chickahominy Riverfront Park, and many other improvements. The County portion of the Virginia Capital Trail was also completed in FY07 with connections to the Church on the Maine and the Greensprings Trail. Finally, some portions of the recently acquired Jamestown Beach Campground and Yacht Basin, which is in the process of being master planned through the Shaping Our Shores initiative, will also contribute to meeting public water access and recreation needs. In addition to the inventory below, please see Map 1: James City County Parks and Recreation for facility locations.

#### 13b(i). Parks

Ironbound Square Park located off of Carriage Road in Ironbound Square, is 1.6 acres of attractive wooded and open land. Existing and planned recreation facilities at the park include: one softball field, one basketball court, shaded playground equipment, one picnic shelter and grill, parking area, and handicap accessible hard surface multi-use path. In conjunction with the housing development of Ironbound Square and Parker View Apartments, the conditions of the park have been significantly improved and the parking lot is being upgraded.

Forest Glen Park is located among residential homes at the corner of Forest Glen and Walker Drives on 0.4 acres of land. This small park includes: a half basketball court, playground equipment, one roofed picnic table and grill, and benches. The facilities at Forest Glen are in fair condition although the basketball goal is rusted. There is no parking area.

James City-Williamsburg Community Center is an attractive 84,000-square-foot multi-purpose athletic and community facility located on 33 acres of land on Longhill Road. The Community Center serves as a community center for meetings, instructional programs, general recreation, and other indoor activities for residents of James City County and the City of Williamsburg. Outdoor facilities provided at the park include: two soccer fields (lighted and irrigated), two softball fields (lighted), and a wooden picnic area with tables and grills. There is also a bike path adjacent to the park parallel to the Longhill Connector Road which was recently extended to create a three-mile hard-surface loop around the complex. Indoor facilities provided within the recreation building include a gymnasium with two full basketball courts or four volleyball courts, two-lane indoor suspended track, 25-meter by 25-yard swimming pool with zero depth entry and wheelchair accessibility, 16-person whirlpool, dry saunas in the locker rooms, two

glass-backed racquetball courts, two kitchens (one appropriate for fully-catered events), teen lounge, senior lounge with living room, T.V., meeting space and computers, craft room equipped with four potter wheels and kiln, fitness area equipped with free weights, two circuits of Cybex equipment, and Cardio equipment room with Broadcast Vision Theatre, parent-supervised play area and Child Care Room, dance/aerobics room, and family locker rooms.

Skate Park is located adjacent to the James City-Williamsburg Community Center. The 10,000-square-foot facility includes a gated area for skateboarding, inline skating, and BMX biking.

James River Community Center is adjacent to James River Elementary School located off of Pocahontas Trail (Route 60 East). The facility includes one indoor basketball court, a multipurpose room with game tables and a large screen TV, locker rooms with showers, meeting room, one soccer field, one glass-backed racquetball court, access to school cafeteria and kitchen area, award winning nature trail, and a fitness area equipped with a circuit of Cybex equipment, cardio equipment, dumbbells, and weight bench.

Upper County Park consists of 91 acres of rolling fields and woodlands located at the end of Leisure Road near the Old Stage Road (Route 30) interchange with Interstate-64. Recreation facilities provided at the park include one 25-meter outdoor swimming pool, a bathhouse for men and women, one concession facility, one large picnic pavilion with bathrooms and a fireplace that seats approximately 150 people, a wooden area with several individual picnic tables and grills, two picnic shelters that seat approximately 50 people each, fitness and mountain bike trail, one basketball court, one sand volleyball court, playground equipment and one multi-use field. In addition, there is a park office building located near the front gate that consists of approximately 1,300 square feet.

Mid-County Park is a 19.4-acre parcel of open land located on Ironbound Road that has been intensively developed with active recreation facilities. The park contains two baseball fields (lighted and irrigated), three lighted tennis courts, two lighted basketball courts, two sand volleyball courts, open field areas, two picnic shelters, Kidsburg (a 20,000 s.f. community built playground), restrooms, a 1,180-square-foot office/concession stand, maintenance facilities, and a 2/3-mile ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible paved multiuse trail. These facilities are in excellent condition.

Freedom Park (formerly known as the Hotwater-Coles District Park) comprises approximately 600 acres at the intersection of Longhill and Centerville Road. The park currently includes a one mile entrance road, parking area, the Williamsburg Botanical "Ellipse Garden," 1.8 miles of hiking trails, and more than five miles of mountain bike trails. A master plan for the park was approved in 2004 and amended in 2008 which includes an interpretive center, environmental education center, dog park, additional mountain bike and hiking trails, aquatic facility, amphitheater, and three historical areas representing the property's different occupation periods (historic area #1 includes 17<sup>th</sup> Century domicile and outbuilding, historic area #2 includes 18<sup>th</sup> Century free black settlement, and historic area #3 includes the Revolutionary War Battle of Spencer's Ordinary). Through a 2005 bond referendum for park improvements, structures at historic area #2 were completed in 2008 and plans are underway for construction of the interpretive center.

Warhill Sports Complex (formerly known as District Park Sports Complex) comprises 406 acres and is located at 5700 Warhill Trail off Longhill Road. The facility currently offers three lighted youth baseball fields, one lighted adult baseball field, four regulation soccer fields, seven multi-purpose fields (six with artificial turf and lights), three outdoor basketball courts, one 1.22-mile paved multi-use trail, one 3.69-mile soft-surface trail, two playgrounds, two concession and restroom facilities, and the 50,000-square-foot Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex. A portion of the 2005 bond referendum was used to construct several of the above improvements.

James City County Stadium includes a multi-use synthetic turf field and was opened in 2007. The 3,000-seat stadium supports football, soccer, and field hockey games, practices, championships, and tournaments for the three local high schools as well as a variety of community events.

Chickahominy Riverfront Park, a 140-acre riverfront park located on the Chickahominy River off of John Tyler Highway (Route 5), was purchased in December of 2001. Parks and Recreation began operating the facility in February 2001 and the park serves to meet the important need of public water access and is host to the annual County Fair. The park is currently operated as a campground and includes a park and rental office, tackle supplies and concessions, two outdoor swimming pools, nature trail, boat ramp, fishing pier, a small driving range, two horseshoe pits, two playgrounds, two picnic shelters (one with restrooms), and campsites. Boat, canoe and kayak rentals are available. Gordon's Creek, Nettle's Creek and the Chickahominy River provide an unmarked blueway for motorized and non-motorized watercraft. The park is also a gateway to the NPS's Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and interpretive signs, brochures, and maps are available to visitors. Finally, this park is being master planned as part of the Shaping Our Shores (SOS) process. Recommended uses include primitive, RV, and cabin camping, public beaches, special event area and recreational fields, picnic areas, pools, boat launch areas, fishing pier, and additional boat docking and mooring space.

Little Creek Reservoir Park consists of 56 acres of attractive wooded land adjacent to the 996-acre man-made reservoir southwest of Toano. Year-round fishing, boating, and picnicking are available. The reservoir holds a variety of game fish including Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Crappie, Stripers, Walleye, Perch, Pickerel, and a variety of Sunfish and Catfish. The park has a park and rental office with restrooms, tackle supplies and concessions. There is a fishing pier and a boat ramp with canoe, kayak, and jon boat rentals available. One playground, two picnic shelters with grills, and a one-mile trail are also located on the park property and a new boat ramp and boardwalk were recently completed. Access to the park is afforded by Lakeview Drive.

Powhatan Creek Park provides access to Jamestown Island and the James River via the Powhatan Creek. The Creek is listed on the Natural Resources Inventory as the most biodiverse creek on the peninsula is also part of the Chesapeake Gateways Network. This facility consists of a small boat/canoe launch with parking for 20 vehicles, five observation/fishing piers, and educational signage. This facility is located off of Jamestown Road at Powhatan Creek. Although Powhatan Creek serves as an "out-and-back" blueway; development of additional water access facilities, such as the Jamestown Yacht Basin, would make this site a component of a larger blueway trail.

Greensprings Trail is a three-mile soft surface hiking trail consisting of two interconnecting loops through environmentally significant land and located within 100-acres of protected wetlands and uplands. The trail has a boardwalk over a beaver pond, is located one-and-a-half-miles from Jamestown Island, and is adjacent to Mainland Farm, the oldest continuously cultivated farm in English North America. Interpretive signage with over 30 stations along the trail document the area's rich historical and environmental features. A trail-head with parking to serve the trail was recently completed behind Jamestown High School. Trail spurs also connect to the historic Church on the Maine site, adjacent neighborhoods, and the Virginia Capital Trail and the trail is part of the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.

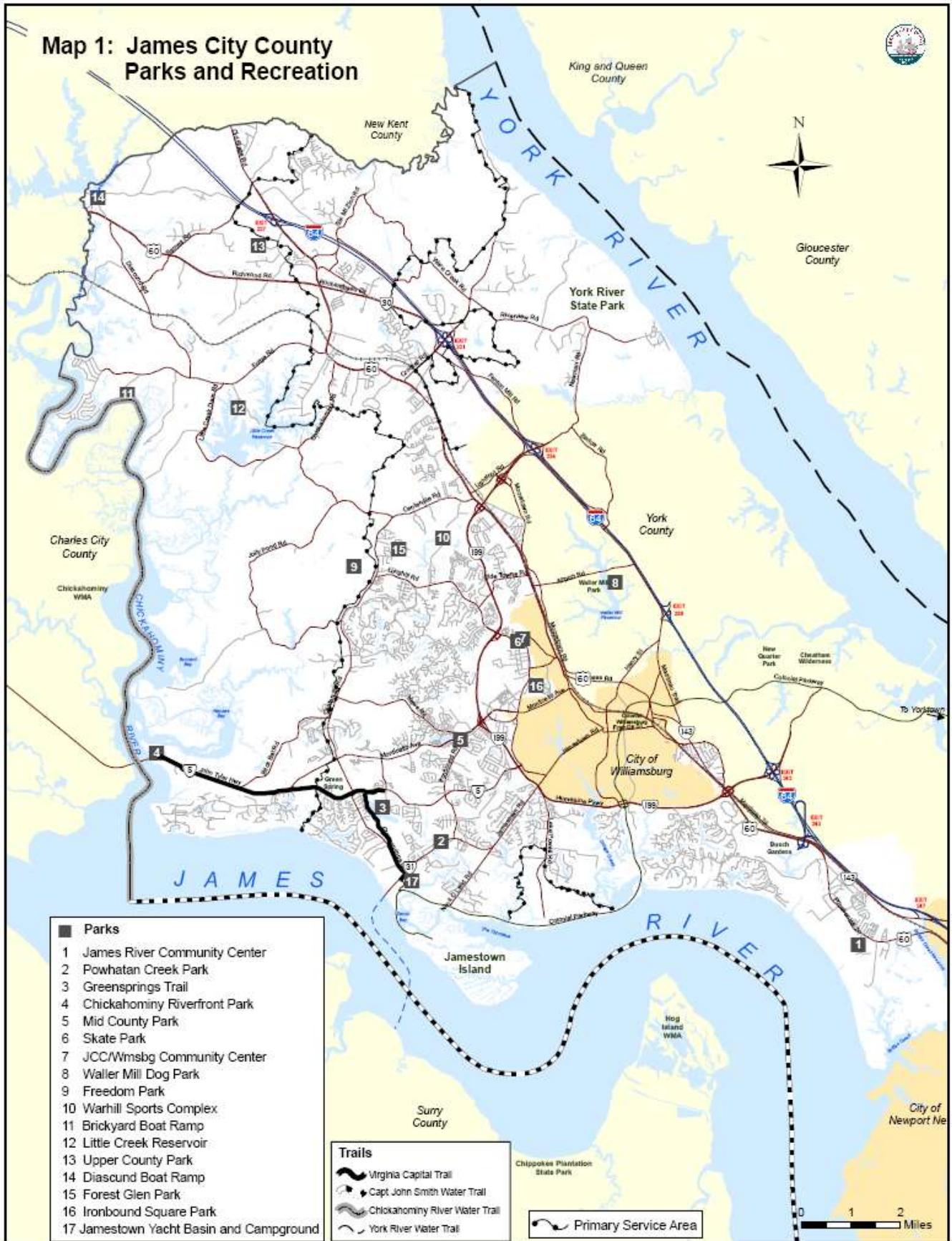
Virginia Capital Trail is a 7.51-mile paved multi-use trail that stretches from Jamestown Settlement, through Mainland Farm, and along John Tyler Highway (Route 5) to Chickahominy Riverfront Park. Several rest areas with benches are available at points along the trail. The trail will ultimately connect Jamestown to Richmond.

Diascund Reservoir is provided and operated in a joint effort between Newport News, James City County, and the Virginia Division of Game and Inland Fisheries. It is open to the general public for boating access and fishing. Electric trolling motors are the only motors permitted on the reservoir. Diascund Reservoir is located off Richmond Road (Route 60 West) past Toano.

Brickyard Landing Boat Ramp is located off of Brickyard Road, which connects to Forge Road, and provides public access to the Chickahominy River. The boat ramp can be used by James City County residents but parking is limited. The adjacent land is privately owned. Like the Powhatan Creek Park, additional access facilities could make this park part of a larger blueway trail.

Jamestown Beach Campground (JBC) and the Jamestown Yacht Basin (JYB) are the most recently acquired park and open space properties and are located at the end of Jamestown Road adjacent to the Jamestown-Scotland Ferry. Prior to the sale in 2006, the JBC operated as a public campground with tent and trailer camping, provided public access to the James River, and hosted special events. Since the purchase of the property, it was the site of the Jamestown 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2007. The JYB continues to operate as a 98-slip marina with slip rentals, boat ramp access, boat sales, and fuel/marine retail sales. Both properties are currently being master planned through the Shaping Our Shores process and provide excellent opportunities for public water access to the James River for swimming and boating. Some uses under consideration for JYB include boardwalks, boat launch, storage, and parking areas, mixed-use center with retail and residential uses, and educational/interpretive trails. Some uses proposed for JBC include public beach access, playground and picnic areas, special event area and performance venue, ropes course, cabin and tent camping, gardens, and opportunities for historical interpretation. JBC development is somewhat confined as a result of conservation restrictions associated with grants used to purchase the property. These grant restrictions also strongly influence the mix of passive and active uses that can be placed on the property and where they can physically be located.

Map 1: James City County Parks and Recreation Facilities



13b(ii). Schools

Coordination between Parks and Recreation and school planning has become increasingly important in recent years with the decline in available land for parks and schools. Many of the County’s recreational activities, such as baseball, football, and soccer, take place on school grounds and as a result, the amount of land necessary for school sites has increased. Since 2003, WJCC Schools and Parks and Recreation have begun using a new software program that enables both parties to enter scheduled events and practices to avoid conflicts in joint-facility use. It is key that Parks and Recreation and the schools continue to work together when planning for new facilities and develop guidelines and a joint-use agreement for the facilities that are included on school property. Locations of the below-mentioned school facilities can be found in the Public Facilities section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Table 4: School Facilities

<u>Jamestown High School</u> - Multi Use/Practice Field** (1) - Softball Field (1) - Baseball Field (1) - Tennis Courts (6) - Track - Soccer Field (1)	<u>Warhill High School</u> - Softball Field (1) - Baseball Field (1) - Multi Use Field (1) - Soccer Field (1) - Tennis Courts (6) - Track
<u>Lafayette High School</u> - Multi Use/Practice Fields** (2) - Tennis Courts (6) - Track	<u>James Blair Middle School</u> - Small Softball Field (1) - Baseball Field (1) - Multi Use Field (1)
<u>Berkeley Middle School</u> - Small Softball Field (1) - Baseball Field (1) - Multi Use Fields (1)	<u>Toano Middle School</u> - Baseball Field (1) - Small Softball Field (1) - Multi Use Field (1)
<u>Jolly Pond Middle School</u> ( <i>opens 2010</i> ) - Softball Field (1) - Baseball Field (1) - Multi Use Fields (3)	<u>Jolly Pond Elementary School</u> ( <i>opens 2010</i> ) - Softball Field (1) - Multi Use Field (1) - Playground (1)
<u>D.J. Montague Elementary School</u> - Small Baseball Field (1) - Small Soccer Field (1) - Basketball Court (1) - Nature Trail - Playgrounds* (2)	<u>James River Elementary School</u> - Soccer/Football Field (1) - Playgrounds* (2) - Nature Trail - Tennis Courts (3) - Basketball Courts (3)

<u>Matthew Whaley Elementary School</u> - Small Baseball Field (1) - Small Soccer Field (1) - Basketball Court (1) - Playgrounds* (2)	<u>Norge Elementary School</u> - Small Soccer Field (1) - Small Baseball Field (2) - Playgrounds* (2)
<u>Rawls Byrd Elementary School</u> - Soccer Field (1) - Small Baseball Field (1) - Basketball Court (1) - Playgrounds* (2)	<u>Stonehouse Elementary School</u> - Small Baseball Fields (2) - Small Soccer Fields (2) - Basketball Court (1) - Playgrounds* (2)
<u>Matoaka Elementary School</u> - Baseball Field (1) - Small Softball Field (1) - Soccer Field (2) - Basketball Court (1) - Playgrounds* (2)	<u>Clara Byrd Baker Elementary School</u> - Small Baseball Field (1) - Small Soccer Field (1) - Basketball Court (1) - Playgrounds* (2)

*\*Playground counts are based on equipment. There may not be a physical separation between playgrounds, but all have 2 sets of equipment geared towards different age groups.*

*\*\*Multi use/practice fields include area within tracks*

13c. Parks and Recreation Master Plan (DRAFT)

13d. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Strategy Matrix (DRAFT)