

Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

Overview

The quality of life in Fairfax County is significantly enhanced by the high caliber of its parks and libraries as well as recreational opportunities. From libraries to beautiful parks, RECenters and community centers, Fairfax County provides many opportunities to learn, have fun and relax. The formal beginning of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) can be traced to the appropriation of \$250 by the Board of Supervisors in 1939 to establish a free countywide system, while for more than 50 years, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) has been protecting and preserving precious natural resources, ensuring that everyone will be able to appreciate and enjoy them. In addition to the major parks, there are also nature centers, historic sites and golf courses to explore and experience. Likewise, for over 40 years, the Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) has offered a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages through its community centers, teen centers, senior centers, and recreation programs for individuals with disabilities.

The three agencies in this program area are regularly recognized for high achievement in their respective fields. FCPL is the largest public library in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, as well as the largest in Virginia and was recently cited by a report in the American Libraries Journal as one of the top 15 libraries of its size in the U.S. Its director currently serves as the Past President of the Virginia Library Association. In 2004, the National Association of Counties (NACo) recognized the Department of Community and Recreation Services' Therapeutic Recreation Services Program with two awards - one for the Joey Pizzano Swim Program and the other for the Seniors+ Program. FCPA recently won two awards for publication excellence. One was the 2005 Telly Award for the educational video "The Sully Slave Quarter: From the Ground Up" an award-winning video used a training tool for docents at Sully Historic Site, and an introductory component of educational programs for local schools. The other was the Virginia Recreation and Park Society 2005 Best Promotional Effort Award for Electronic Media for the FCPA Spanish language public service announcements.

Strategic Direction

As part of the countywide focus on developing strategic plans during 2002-2003, FCPA, CRS and FCPL each developed mission, vision and values statements; performed environmental scans; and defined strategies for achieving their missions. These strategic plans are linked to the overall County Core Purpose and Vision Elements. Common themes in all three of the agencies in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural program area include:

- Accessibility
- Diversity
- Inclusiveness of all segments of the community
- Professional growth and staff development
- Lifelong learning
- Leisure opportunities
- Technology
- Partnerships and community involvement
- Stewardship of resources

COUNTY CORE PURPOSE

To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Building Livable Spaces
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- Connecting People and Places
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Maintaining Healthy Economies
- Exercising Corporate Stewardship

In recognition that government cannot meet all the needs in this program area, there is a strong emphasis on community-building and leveraging community, business and County resources to provide the services and programs that residents want. Each of the three agencies relies extensively on volunteers to achieve its mission. Changing demographics are affecting all three and their strategic plans are designed to address these conditions. More on each one's strategic focus can be found in the individual agency narratives that follow.

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Linkage to County Vision Elements

While this program area supports all seven of the County Vision Elements, the following are especially emphasized:

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Connecting People and Places
- Building Livable Communities
- Creating a Culture of Engagement

Common themes to address the **Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities** vision element include programs targeted toward youth, particularly those at risk, as well as the senior population. CRS has recently completed its final phase of the Teen Center Redesign, which is a new five-region service model. Since implementation of this initiative, attendance at teen centers has increased 61 percent. In addition, CRS is refocusing programs through increased community partnerships to support human services, including gang prevention and related after-school programs. In FY 2007, CRS will expand two existing programs: the expansion of after school programming providing middle school youth with diverse educational, social, and recreational opportunities in a supervised environment; and the Youth Worker Program, originally initiated in the summer of 2005 (FY 2006) in the Falls Church, Baileys, and Annandale areas. The after school programming initiative will expand services from three days-per-week to five days-per-week, a minimum of two hours-per-day, at Fairfax County middle schools. The expansion of the Youth Worker Program will result in youth workers being given specific project tasks and goals related to assessing and making recommendations for improvement to existing youth services in Fairfax County with specific emphasis on the effectiveness of these services in reaching youth at-risk for gang involvement. Additionally, the youth workers will be responsible for developing and implementing a marketing plan to reach underserved populations and developing and implementing a gang prevention curriculum for elementary aged youth.

FCCA is continuing to partner with several other County agencies including FCPL, CRS and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's Alcohol and Drug Services to incorporate elements of the Countywide "Character Counts" program into weekly themes of the summer RecPAC program. FCCA has doubled RecPAC scholarships for income-eligible children serving 840 participants through 4,428 weeks of camp and in collaboration with the Fairfax County Police Department, sent 60 children to Rec-PAC this past summer, doubling the number sent last year. Additionally, FCCA continues to create other opportunities, such as summer camps for at-risk teens through partnerships with County agencies and private funding partners. Urban Adventures camp allows police-identified, at-risk young teens to experience outdoor adventure programs and participate in career development activities. Ravens-Quest camp helps teens explore environmental stewardship and conservation issues and experience parks and potential career opportunities in the recreation field.

CRS also continued to expand the Senior+ program to provide therapeutic recreation, mental health and nursing support for seniors with physical and mental health needs at senior centers; and provide services for senior adults who require a higher level of assistance in senior activities. FCPL will continue to provide specially designed materials, programs and school visits to encourage young readers to keep up their reading skills during summer vacation. In addition, they will continue to introduce children, parents and caregivers to the pleasure and importance of reading aloud through Motherread/Fatherread, a national literacy project that partners FCPL and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

A number of creative initiatives are taking place in this program area to foster the **Connecting People and Places** vision element. CRS initiatives include implementing an online application process for athletic field requests, with the expectation that 50 percent of applications will be submitted via online access. CRS is continuing to implement service zones for FASTER clients as part of an overall effort to reduce customer travel time and increase system savings. These zones are being phased in over several years. The FCPL, during the renovation of older libraries will enable buildings to meet the technological requirements of 21st century library service, such as self check-out and wireless access.

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FCPA continues to make strides in connecting people by expanding its online historic and cultural resources, as well as its e-mail subscriber service for greater communication with residents who have natural and cultural resource interests. FCPA will also continue to improve citizens' access to all parts of the County by expanding the Cross County Trail, a trail connecting all nine magisterial districts along the County's two largest stream valleys. In addition, the agency plans on developing increased access to summer Rec-PAC programs by providing crossing guards and bus transportation for selected Rec-PAC sites that have unsafe access due to large and busy road crossings.

The County's vision element for **Building Livable Spaces** will be addressed within this program area by efforts to enhance and expand use of resources for recreational and learning activities including the development of CLEMYJONTRI Park, a donation of 18 acres from Mrs. Adele Lebowitz which will include the first fully accessible playground and carousel. The FCPA continues to sustain the viability of Park buildings and infrastructure through renovation, stabilization and repairs. Current projects include: Sully Plantation Manor House (currently on the National Historic Register and must be maintained to standards to remain on the register); Fryng Pan Meeting House; Mason District office; Grist Mill Barn; and South Run, George Washington, Mount Vernon, and Providence RECenters.

FCPL continues to respond to the needs of a growing community by helping to develop plans for the construction of two new libraries, renovation of four libraries and the relocation of one library. In each of these efforts, the community benefits from expanded facilities to accommodate increased demands for programs and services.

And CRS plans to implement policies developed by the multi-agency Walk-on Use committee to prevent unauthorized and/or unscheduled use of County fields. The implementation and enforcement of such policies will reduce the damage from field use abuse that has increased significantly over the past few years and undermined the efforts and resources the County and community have put into field improvements.

The three agencies in this program area will also play a critical role in **Creating a Culture of Engagement**. Each seeks to engage citizens as volunteers and stakeholders, as well as expand partnerships with the community in order to address the growing service demands resulting from an increased population. CRS recently held a community leadership conference attended by 39 community leaders from diverse backgrounds, and offers other leadership programs for youth and advisory councils in order to strengthen effectiveness of community advisory groups and planning committees. As another means of engaging citizens, the FCPA will continue to participate in the Partnership for Youth's After-school Network, a county-wide initiative bringing together County agencies, businesses and parents to focus on programs for middle-school aged children. The FCPA will also soon explore an initiative between the Park Authority, United States Tennis Association (USTA) and the Thai Tennis Organization to provide access to court times for which the Park Authority will stand to receive significant grant money through USTA community tennis diversity initiatives. This has potential to expand minority use of facilities through similar ethnic community tennis organizations. The FCPL will continue to recruit and retain volunteers. In FY 2005, more than 3,000 volunteers contributed more than 152,000 hours to libraries. The public benefits extensively from these efforts to provide a high level of service very cost-effectively. And the FCPL will continue to create community-building events by planning programs surrounding "All Fairfax Reads" book selections, which included *The Kite Runner* in FY 2005; and partner with George Mason University, the Washington Post, the City of Fairfax and others to hold the Fall for the Book Literary Festival. This multi-day event includes author visits, writing workshops, children's programming and book sales.

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Program Area Summary by Character

Category	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	952/ 907.5	961/ 915.5	965/ 919.5	966/ 920.5
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$47,497,894	\$52,234,259	\$52,343,365	\$55,405,708
Operating Expenses	27,162,676	28,775,941	34,854,075	34,444,548
Capital Equipment	636,427	300,000	300,000	300,000
Subtotal	\$75,296,997	\$81,310,200	\$87,497,440	\$90,150,256
Less:				
Recovered Costs	(\$11,719,663)	(\$12,981,663)	(\$12,981,663)	(\$13,571,326)
Total Expenditures	\$63,577,334	\$68,328,537	\$74,515,777	\$76,578,930
Income	\$7,538,969	\$7,185,622	\$6,331,385	\$6,358,947
Net Cost to the County	\$56,038,365	\$61,142,915	\$68,184,392	\$70,219,983

Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006 Budget Plan	FY 2006 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2007 Advertised Budget Plan
Department of Community and Recreation				
Services	\$11,920,230	\$14,491,205	\$16,200,754	\$20,434,272
Fairfax County Park Authority	23,063,012	24,387,617	24,407,017	25,766,192
Fairfax County Public Library	28,594,092	29,449,715	33,908,006	30,378,466
Total Expenditures	\$63,577,334	\$68,328,537	\$74,515,777	\$76,578,930

Budget Trends

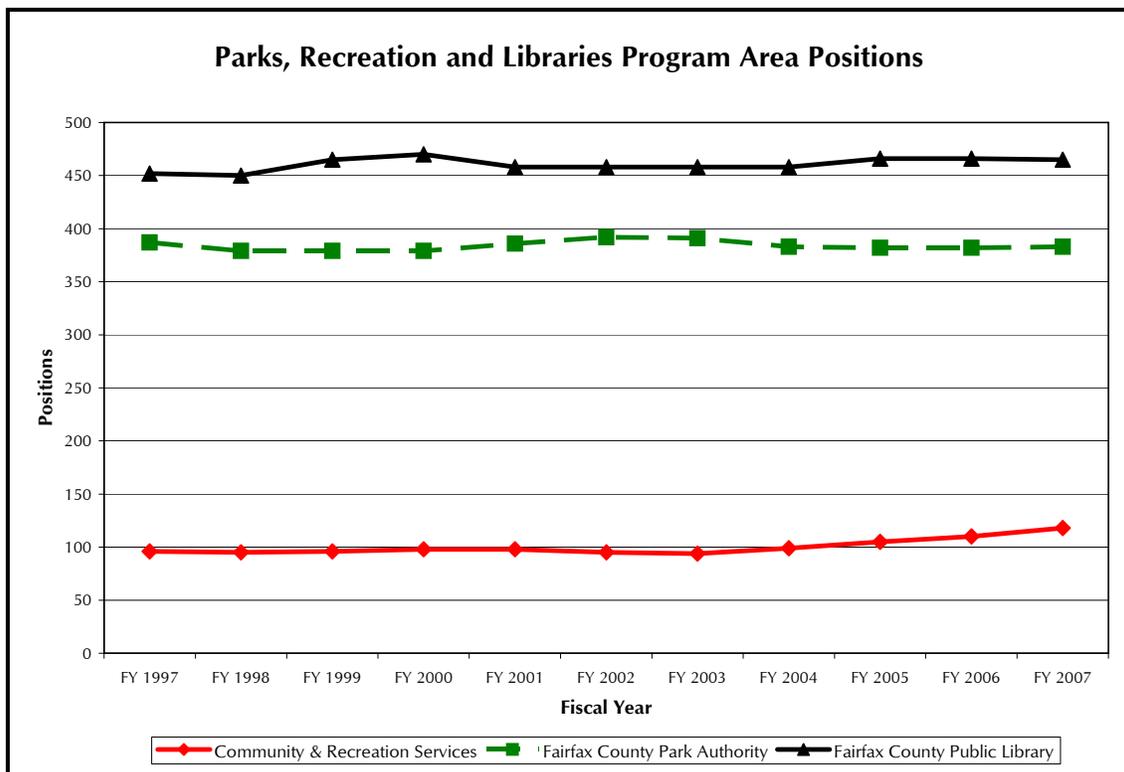
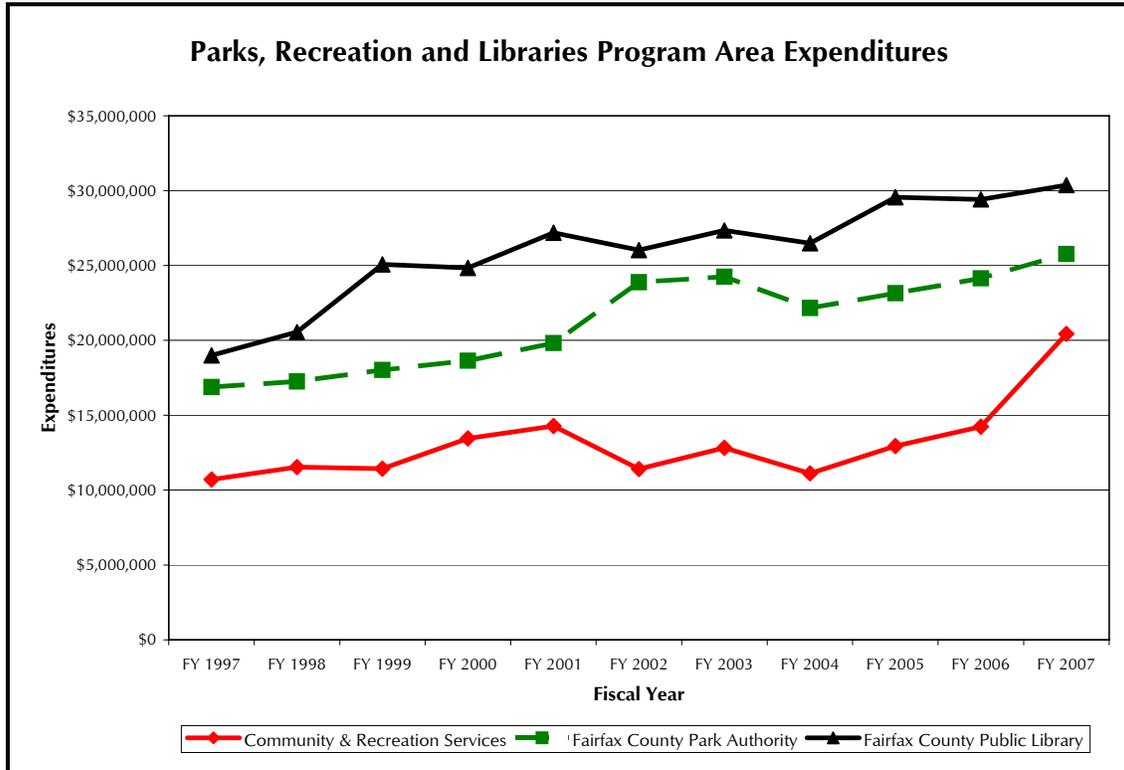
For FY 2007, the recommended funding level of \$76,578,930 for the Parks, Recreation and Libraries program area comprises 6.6 percent of the total recommended General Fund direct expenditures of \$1,166,552,092. It also includes 966 or 8.1 percent of total authorized positions for FY 2007.

Parks, Recreation and Libraries program area expenditures will increase a net \$2,063,153 or 2.8 percent over the *FY 2006 Revised Budget* expenditure level. This net increase, which is partially offset with the carryover of one-time expenses as part of the *FY 2005 Carryover Review*, is primarily associated with Personnel Services salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program; the completion of the phased-in expansion of after school programming designed to provide middle school youth with diverse educational, social, and recreational opportunities in a supervised environment; a six month contract in the Senior Plus Program to provide services for senior adults who require a higher level of assistance to participate in senior activities; and the implementation of enforcement policies for the Athletic Field Walk-On Use Program to preclude unauthorized and/or unscheduled use of County fields. Additionally, included in FY 2007 is funding and one position associated with the opening of Turner Farm (January 2006) and CLEMYJONTRI Park (April 2006). CLEMYJONTRI Park in McLean was made possible through a donation of 18 acres from Mrs. Adele Lebowitz. It will be the County's first fully accessible playground serving disabled children, and also include open spaces, trails, gardens and the family house. Turner Farm in Great Falls will provide a wide-range of equestrian activities, increasing the availability of these activities in the County. These parks are located approximately nine miles apart, making it possible for one employee to service both parks

It should be noted that income for this program area, primarily comprised of user fees including fines on overdue books and class fees, is projected to be \$6,358,947 for FY 2007. This is 8.3 percent of total expenditures for this program area.

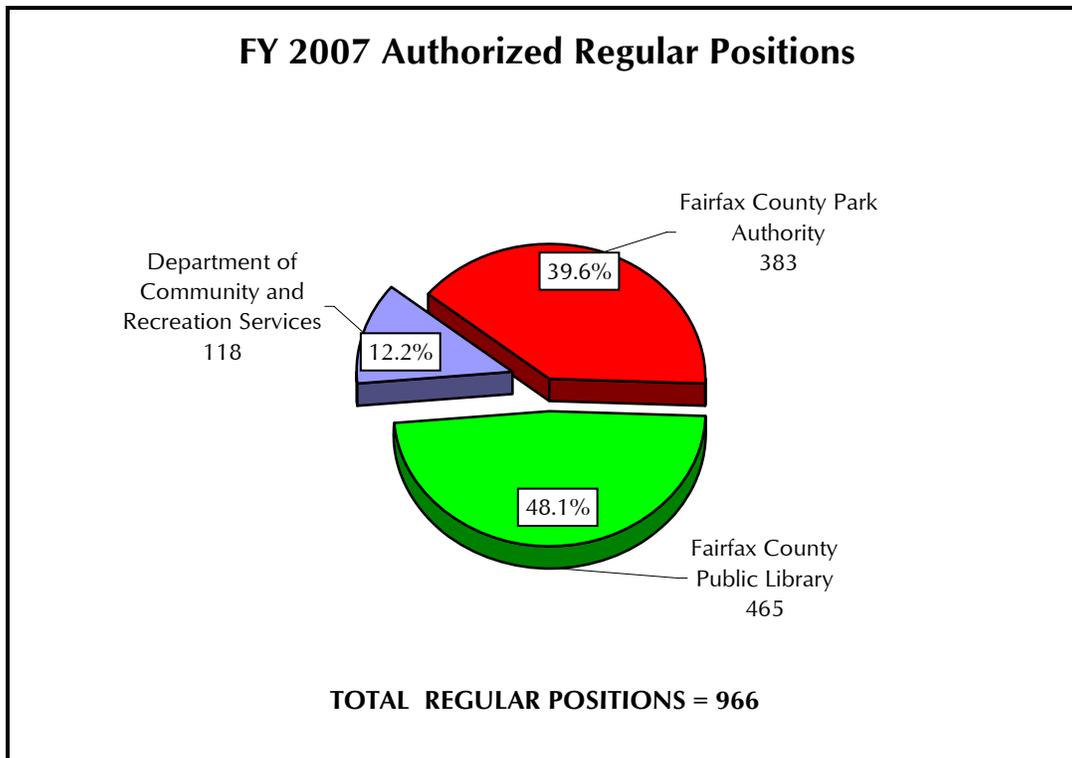
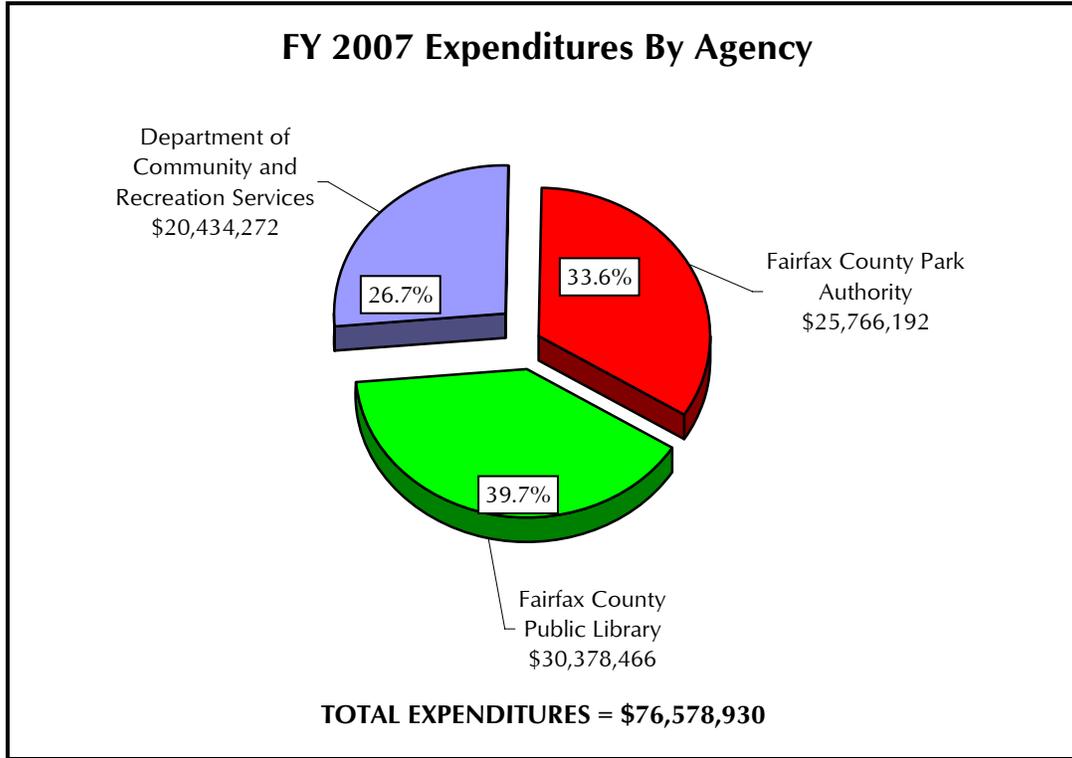
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Trends in Expenditures and Positions



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FY 2007 Expenditures and Positions by Agency



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Federal and State Mandates

Compared to other Program Areas, Parks/Recreation/Libraries has relatively few mandates. Much of the public policy and planning around recreation centers, libraries and parks are not mandated by other levels of government, but rather by the locality itself. This is true for Fairfax County.

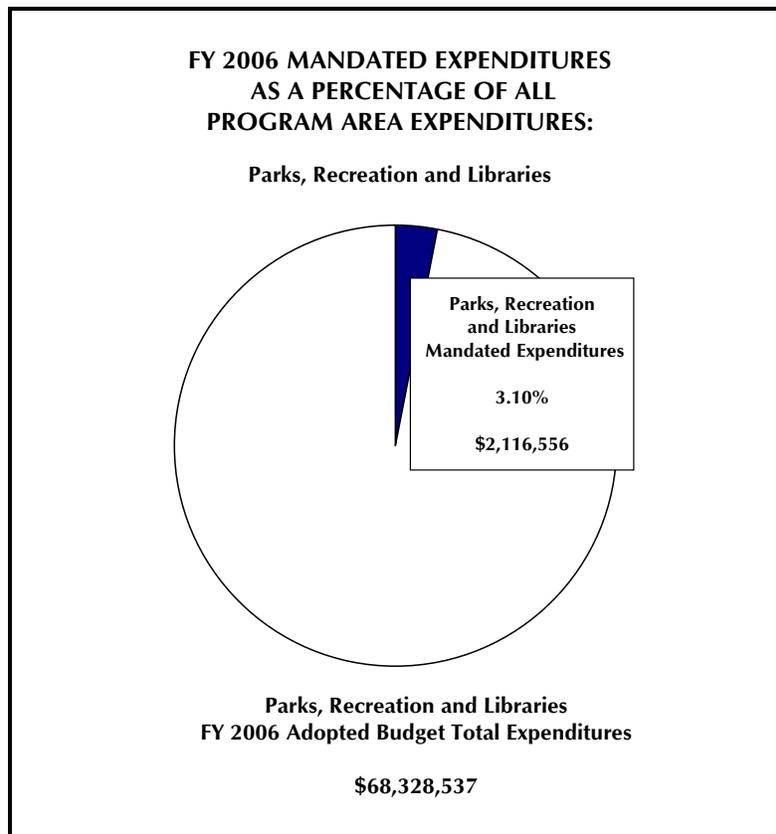
The largest mandate driver in this area is the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Federal law requires public services be barrier free for individuals with disabilities and agencies such as the Department of Community and Recreation Services and Park Authority are mandated to ensure equal access to their program.

The Department of Community and Recreation Services operates the FASTRAN paratransit bus service for human service agency clients unable to use transit to reach needed services due to a disability. FASTRAN riders include senior residences within the County, senior center clients, consumers with mental retardation, mental health patients, and Adult Day Care participants. FASTRAN also schedules rides for clients needing dialysis, chemotherapy and radiation treatments. In providing reasonable accommodation for riders with disabilities, in compliance with ADA requirements, over 70 percent of FASTRAN buses in service are equipped with a wheel chair lift, and many new buses are purchased with that feature included.

The County also must make its facilities accessible. The Park Authority ensures its facilities are ADA compliant and in FY 2006 will retrofit multiple facilities throughout the County targeted in its Transition Plan for ADA compliance. In recent years, to ensure Park property is readily accessible, funding has been provided for modifications to several facilities, including features such as Huntley Meadows Nature Center, Oak Marr Park, Colvin Run Mill, Great Falls Grange, Audrey Moore RECenter and Dranesville Tavern. In addition, when new facilities are constructed or older facilities are renovated, the Park Authority incorporates accessibility standards to the greatest extent possible. The Park Authority also provides program access accommodations (inclusion services) to approximately 400 plus persons with disabilities annually in camps, classes and activities.

In FY 2006, the agencies in this program area anticipated spending \$2.1 million to comply with federal and state mandates, receiving \$1,210 in revenue, for a net cost to the County of \$2.1 million. It should be noted that all revenue in this Program Area is derived from user fee/other revenue. No revenue is reported directly from the Commonwealth or federal government to support the state and federal mandates.

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Benchmarking

Since the FY 2005 Budget, benchmarking data have been included in the annual budget as a means of demonstrating accountability to the public for results achieved. These data are included in each of the Program Area Summaries in Volume 1 and now in Other Funds (Volume 2) as available. The first benchmarking statistic presented is a cost per capita comparison collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia, included here for the first time. Due to the time necessary for data collection and cleaning, FY 2004 represents the most recent year for which data are available. An advantage to including these benchmarks is the comparability. In Virginia, local governments follow stringent guidelines regarding the classification of program area expenses. Cost data are provided annually to the APA for review and compilation in an annual report. Since these data are not prepared by any one jurisdiction, their objectivity is less questionable than they would be if collected by one of the participants. In addition, a standard methodology is consistently followed, allowing comparison over time. Fairfax County's cost per capita for this program area is highly competitive with other large jurisdictions in the state, as well as other Northern Virginia localities.

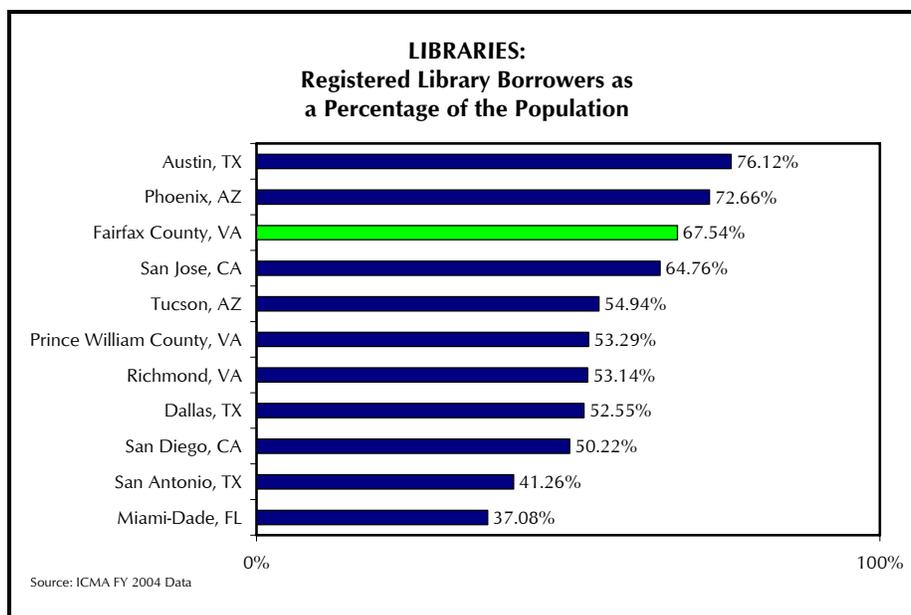
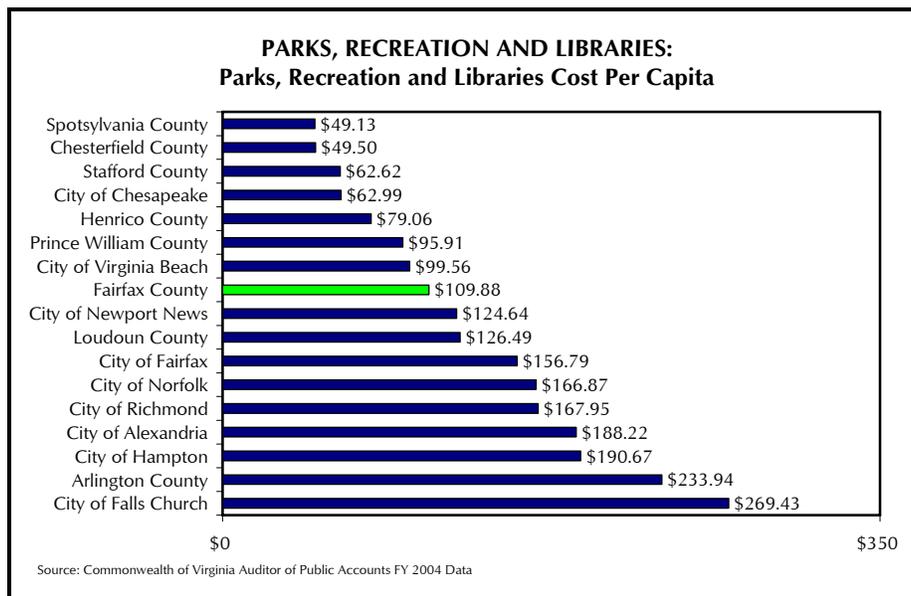
A number of other benchmarks are shown that are associated with the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) comparative performance program. Fairfax County has participated in ICMA's benchmarking effort since 2000. Approximately 100 cities, counties and towns provide comparable data annually in a number of service areas. However, not all jurisdictions provide data for every service area. Parks, Recreation and Libraries represent several of the benchmarked service areas for which Fairfax County provides data. Additional program-level performance measurement data are presented within each of these agencies' budget narratives.

Participating local governments (cities, counties and towns) provide data on standard templates provided by ICMA in order to ensure consistency. ICMA then performs extensive data cleaning to ensure the greatest accuracy and comparability of data. As a result of the time to collect the data and undergo ICMA's rigorous data cleaning processes, information is always available with a one-year delay. FY 2004 data represent the latest available information. The jurisdictions presented in the graphs below generally show how Fairfax

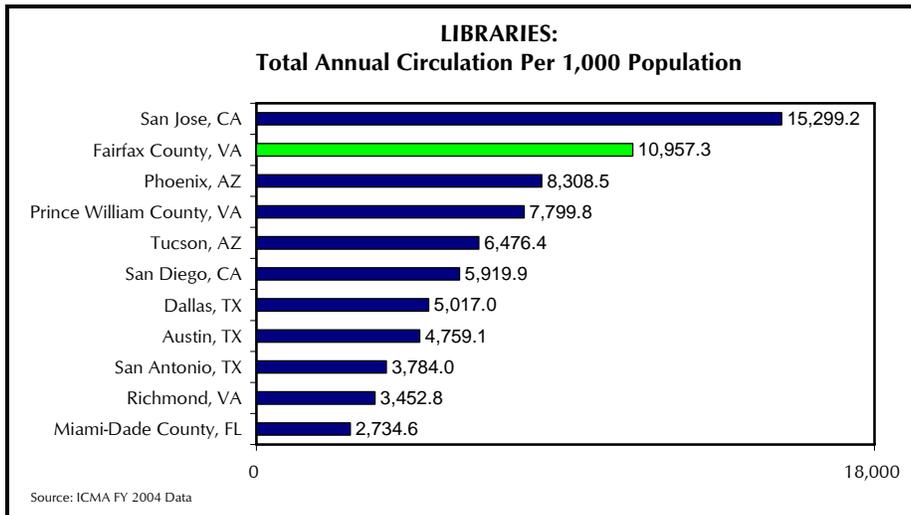
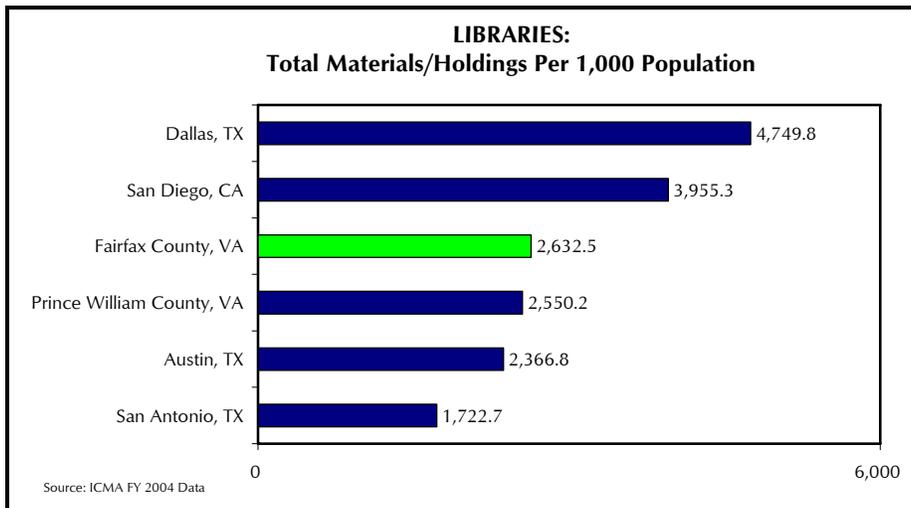
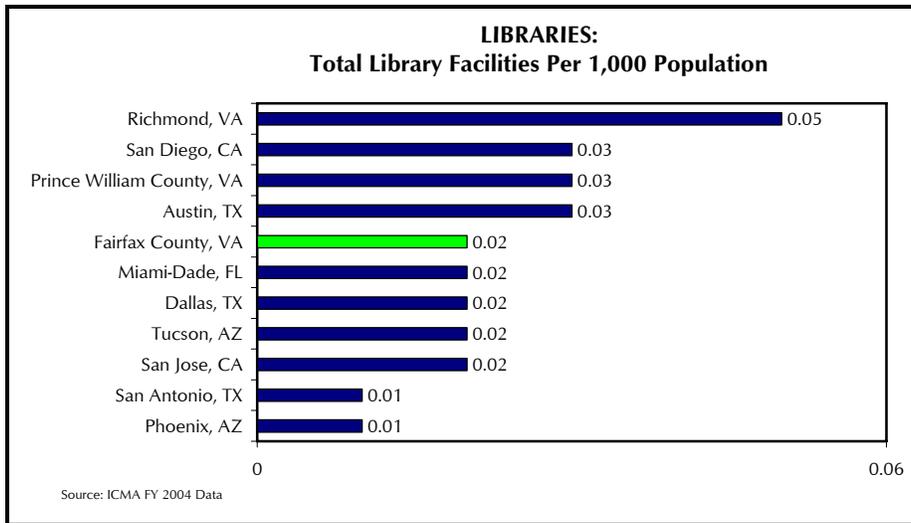
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County compares to other large jurisdictions (population over 500,000). In cases where other Virginia localities provided data, they are shown as well.

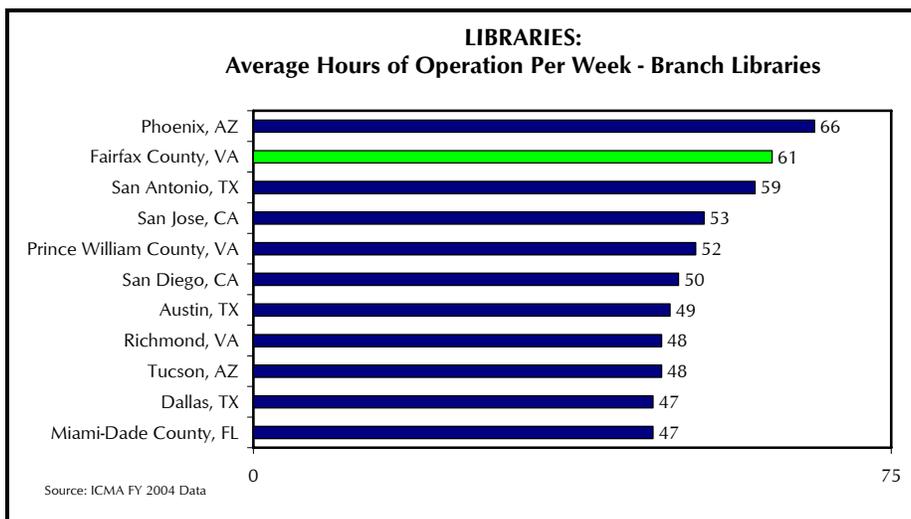
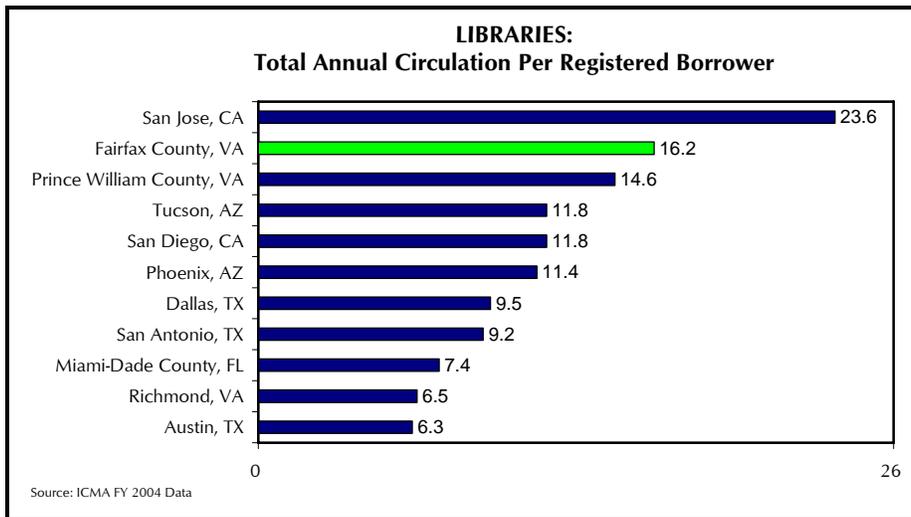
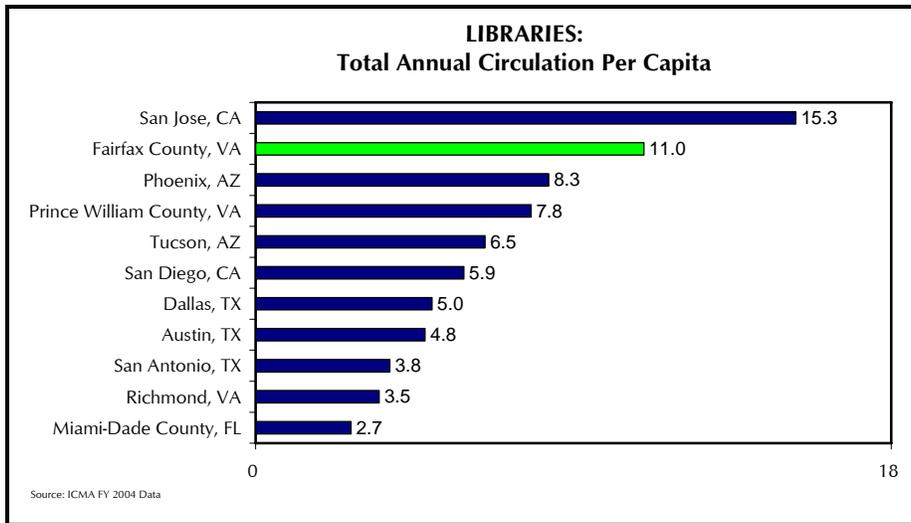
An important point to note in an effort such as this is that since participation is voluntary, the jurisdictions that provide data have shown they are committed to becoming/remaining high performance organizations. Therefore, comparisons made through this program should be considered in the context that the participants have self-selected and are inclined to be among the higher performers than a random sample among local governments nationwide. It is also important to note that not all jurisdictions respond to all questions. In some cases, the question or process is not applicable to a particular locality or data are not available. For those reasons, the universe of jurisdictions with which Fairfax County is compared is not always the same for each benchmark. As can be seen on the following pages, the County compares favorably in the Libraries and Parks/Recreation service areas in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness.



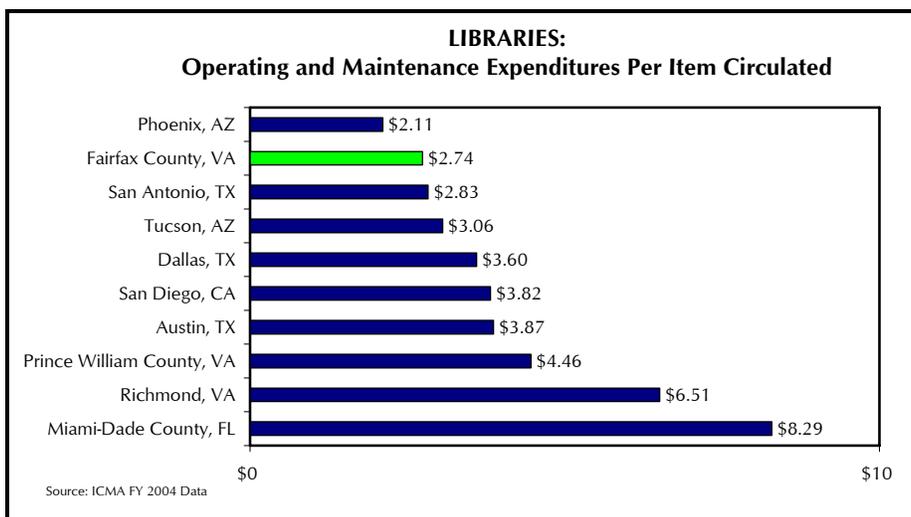
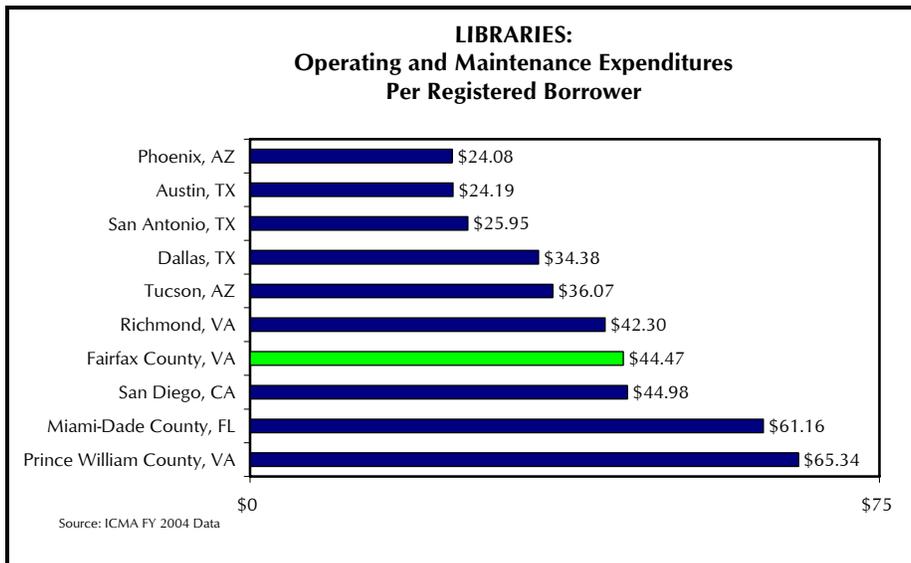
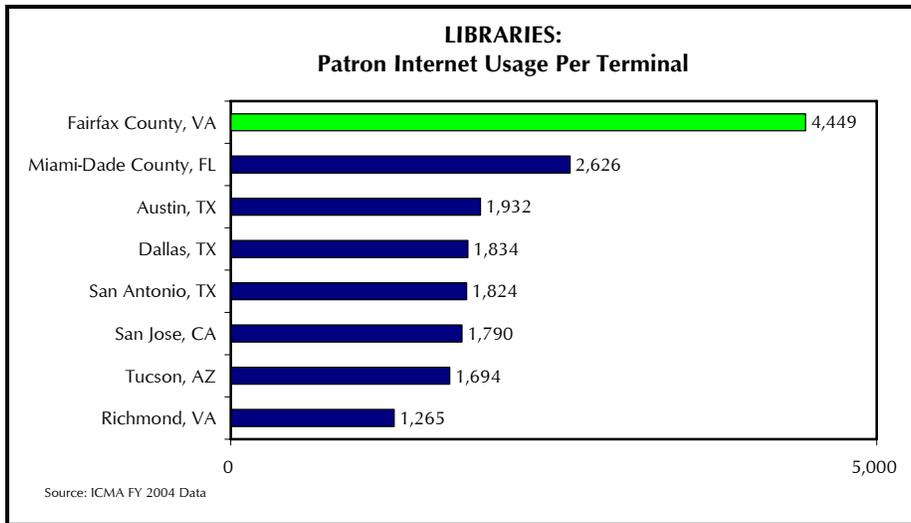
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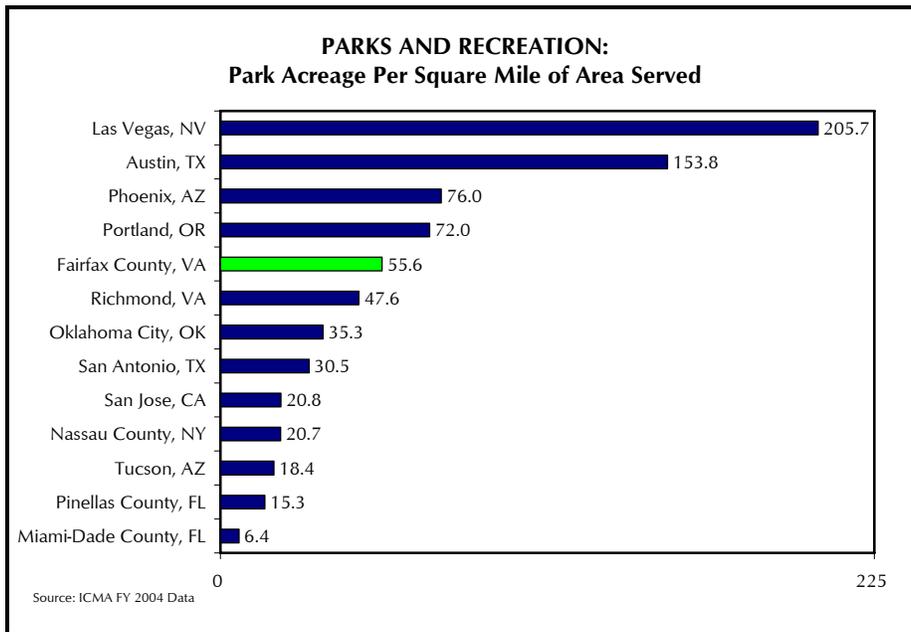
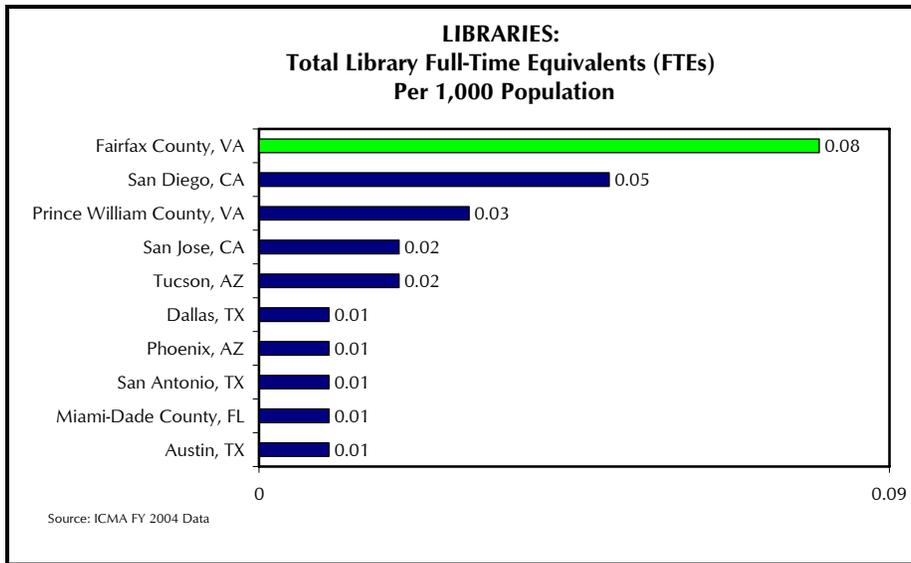
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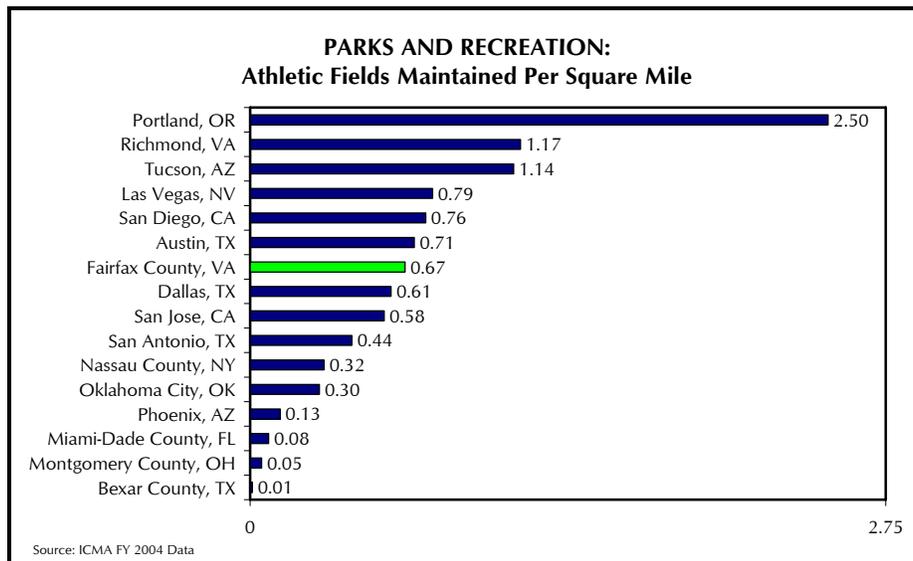
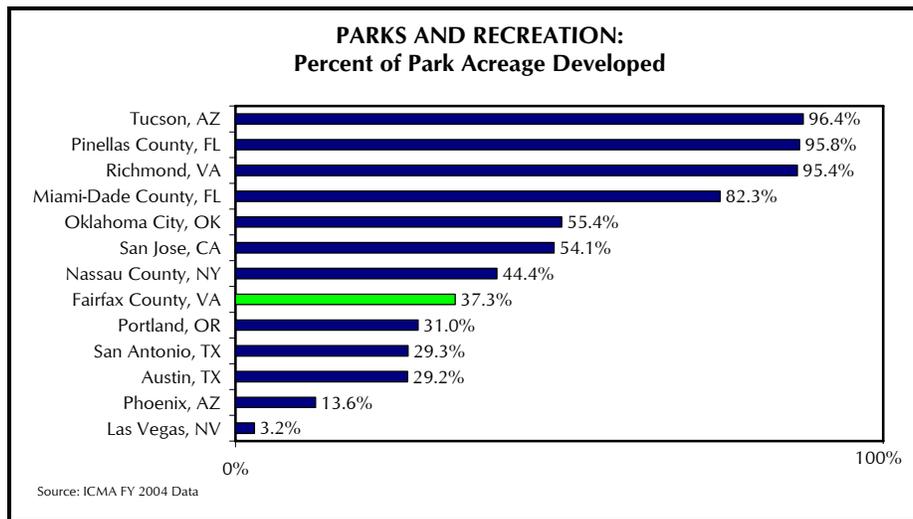
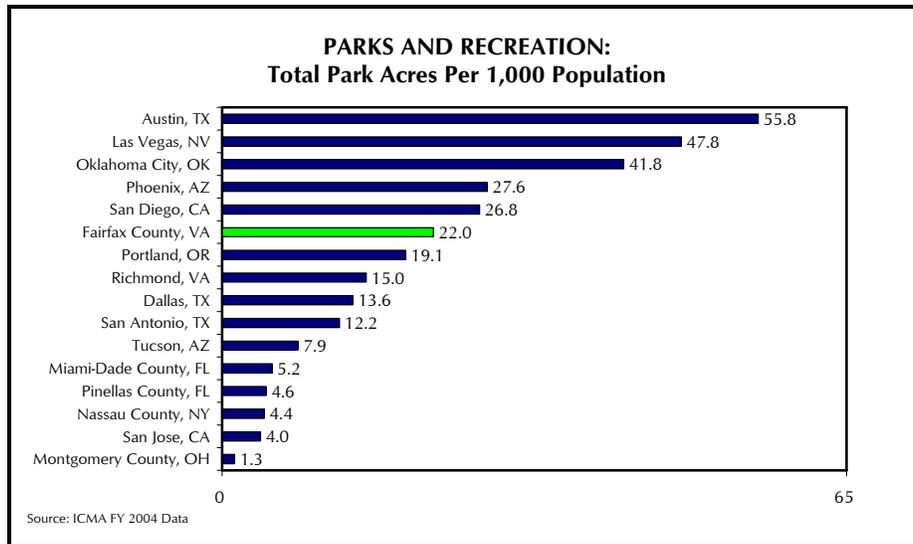
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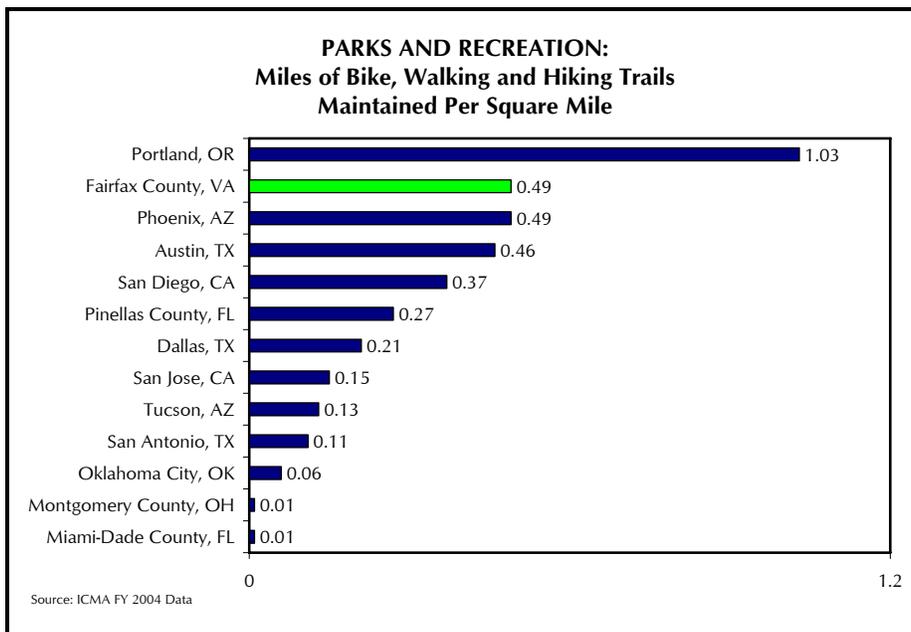
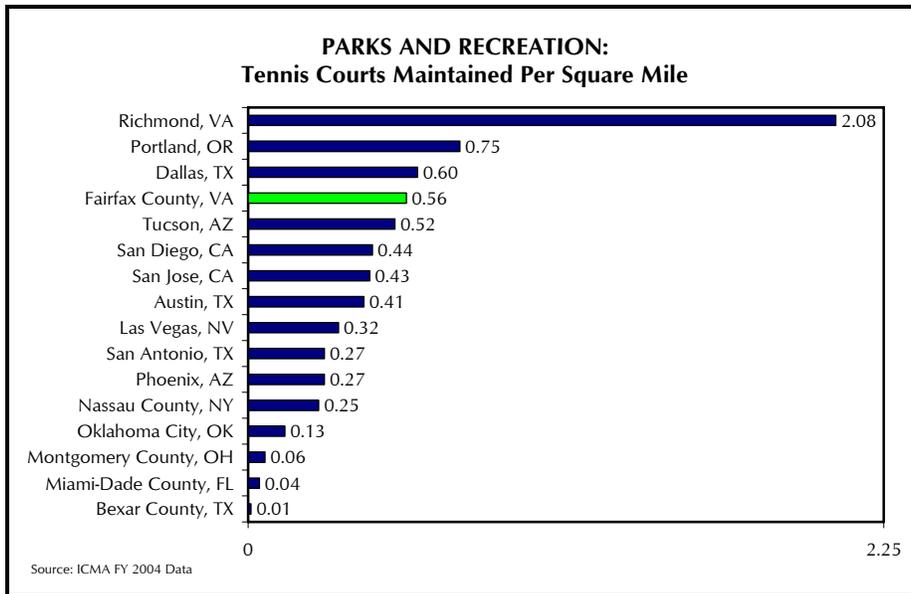
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