

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. 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, public gardens, recreation centers, athletic fields 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 2006 FCPL was awarded the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award for its Early Literacy program that teaches literacy skills to preschool children. In 2004, 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

For the second time, in 2002, the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) awarded the highly coveted National Gold Medal Award to the FCPA, recognizing excellence in the field of park and recreation management. This award gives continuing recognition for the next five-year period. FCPA has also 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. The Park Authority Director currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Recreation and Park Association and a Division Director is currently serving as the President of the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society.

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 Libraries program area include:

- Enhancing Citizen Quality of Life
- 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

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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.

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 programs to address the **Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities** vision element include activities 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 expanded two existing programs: the 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 expanded 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 resulted 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 are responsible for developing and implementing a marketing plan to reach underserved populations and developing and implementing a gang prevention curriculum for elementary aged youth.

FPCA 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 Rec-PAC program. FPCA has increased Rec-PAC scholarships for income-eligible children serving 1,074 participants, who were enrolled in a total of 5,666 one-week camps in 2006. Additionally, FPCA continues to create other opportunities, such as summer camps for at-risk teens through partnerships with County agencies and private funding partners. The Urban Adventures camp allows police-identified, at-risk 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.

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 FASTRAN 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, through 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 continues to respond to the growing diversity of the community by building capability to provide services to citizens who do not speak English as their primary language. FCPA has also continued to improve citizens' access to all parts of the County by completing the expansion of 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. FCPA seeks to provide quality recreational opportunities through the construction and development of playgrounds and picnic areas, tennis courts, multi-use courts, trails, and irrigated and lighted athletic fields. Recent projects include the CLEMJONTRI accessible playground and carousel, irrigation of athletic fields, Lake Accotink and Difficult Run trails, Laurel Hill Greenway-Giles Run bridge, and Lake Fairfax fully accessible waterfront. Projects in progress include Patriot Park Phase I, Grouped Athletic field lighting, and Ossian Hall Park. In addition, 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. Finally CRS implemented 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 has expanded programming to the young adult population to provide opportunities for leisure exploration, health and wellness, and community involvement for 18-25 year olds to include the implementation of the Kids Serve Too recreational voucher program. Through partnership with the Salute our Services and General Dynamics, children ages 18 and younger that have a parent currently deployed in the military are eligible for financial assistance to participate in one recreational program or activity per year. Program partners also include the Park Authority and various community sports organizations. In addition, CRS continues 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. When expansion is complete, seven senior centers will operate a Senior+ program, the current programs at Herndon and James Lee being joined by new programs in South County, Little River Glen, Lorton, Lincolnia and Sully. As a means of engaging citizens, the FCPA will enhance opportunities for citizens to participate in Adopt-a-Field Programs through the publication of the Athletic Field Maintenance Manual, which guides staff and community Adopt-a-Field partners in proper field maintenance techniques. In addition, the FCPL will continue to recruit and retain volunteers. In FY 2006, more than 3,000 volunteers contributed more than 140,000 hours to libraries. The public benefits extensively from these efforts as a high level of customer service can be provided in a very cost-effective manner. Finally, the FCPL will continue to create community-building events by planning programs surrounding "All Fairfax Reads" book selections, which included Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress in FY 2006, and will continue to partner with George Mason University, the Washington Post, and the City of Fairfax to hold the Fall for the Book Literary Festival. This event includes author visits, writing workshops, children's programs and book sales.

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Program Area Summary by Character

Category	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years				
Regular	966/ 920.5	966/ 920.5	968/ 924.5	1002/ 951.5
Expenditures:				
Personnel Services	\$49,795,909	\$55,405,708	\$55,292,532	\$57,578,212
Operating Expenses	33,827,780	34,444,548	41,123,661	37,554,118
Capital Equipment	307,396	300,000	528,900	478,620
Subtotal	\$83,931,085	\$90,150,256	\$96,945,093	\$95,610,950
Less:				
Recovered Costs	(\$12,519,708)	(\$13,571,326)	(\$13,571,326)	(\$14,099,570)
Total Expenditures	\$71,411,377	\$76,578,930	\$83,373,767	\$81,511,380
Income	\$6,404,370	\$6,358,947	\$5,938,054	\$6,111,290
Net Cost to the County	\$65,007,007	\$70,219,983	\$77,435,713	\$75,400,090

Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2006 Actual	FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2008 Advertised Budget Plan
Department of Community and Recreation Services	\$14,641,280	\$20,434,272	\$21,381,464	\$21,864,006
Fairfax County Park Authority	24,348,931	25,766,192	26,247,812	26,110,649
Fairfax County Public Library	32,421,166	30,378,466	35,744,491	33,536,725
Total Expenditures	\$71,411,377	\$76,578,930	\$83,373,767	\$81,511,380

Budget Trends

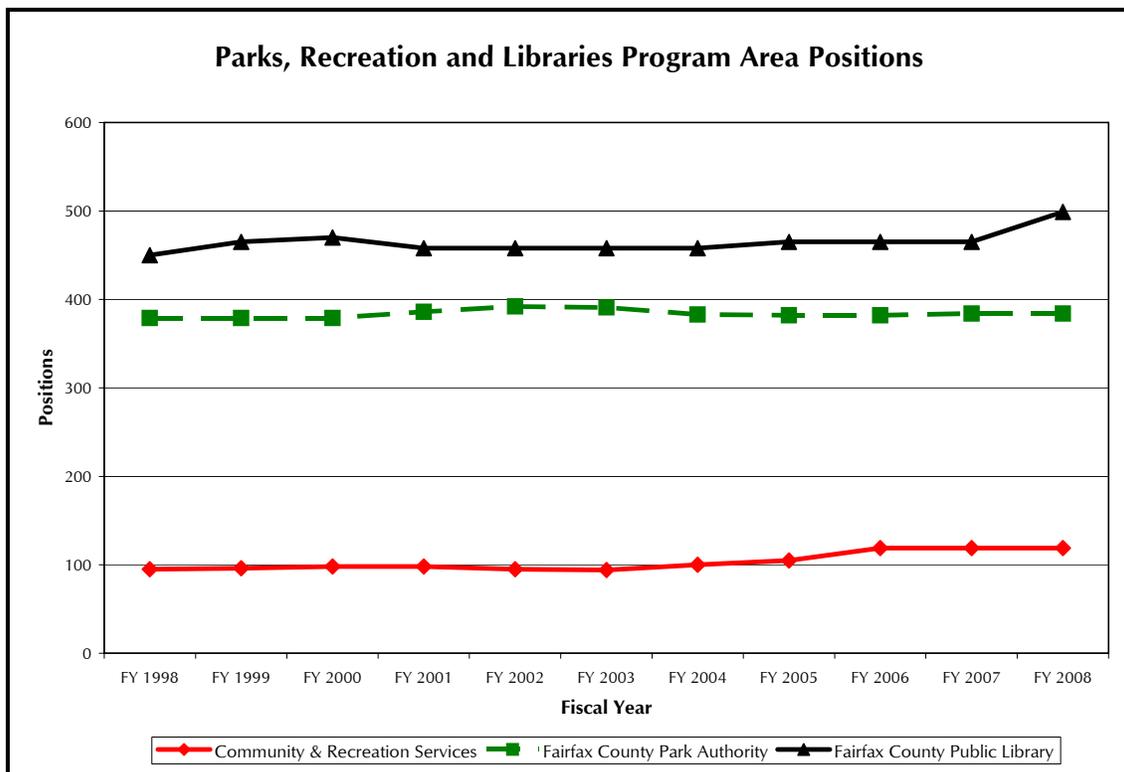
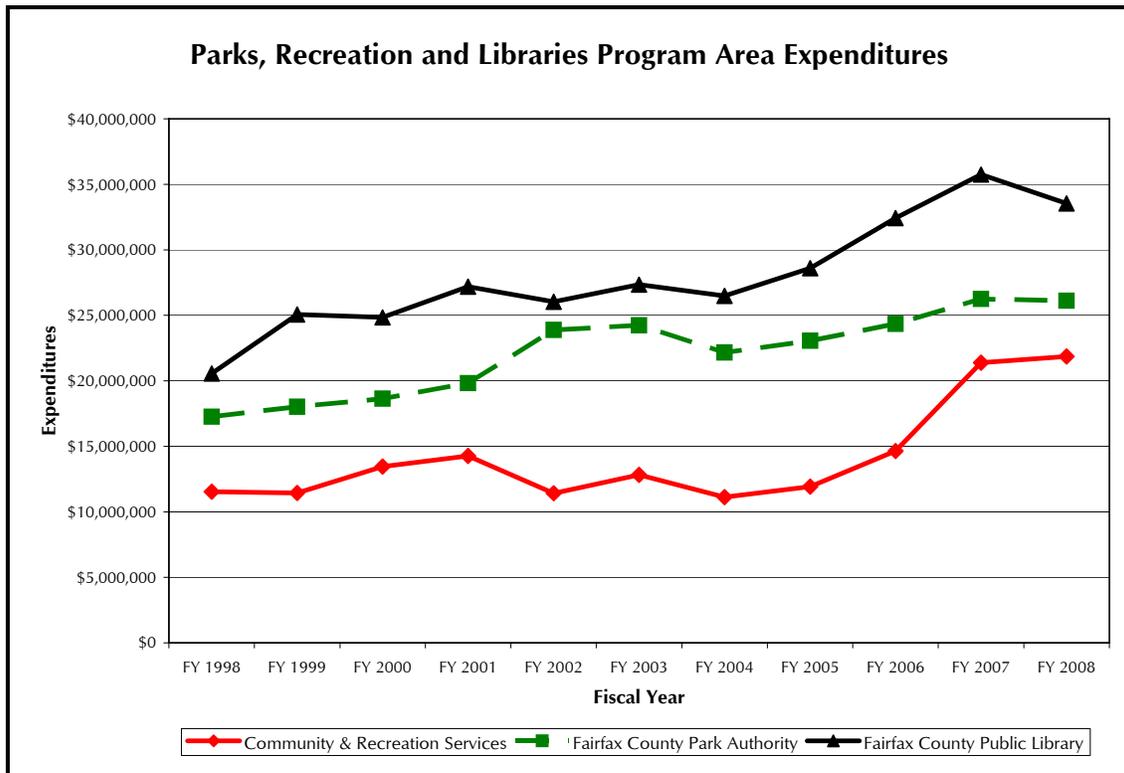
For FY 2008, the recommended funding level of \$81,511,380 for the Parks, Recreation and Libraries program area comprises 6.8 percent of the total recommended General Fund direct expenditures of \$1,203,872,635. It also includes 1,002 or 8.4 percent of total authorized positions for FY 2008.

Overall the Parks, Recreation and Libraries program area expenditure level decreases by \$1,862,387 or 2.2 percent from the *FY 2007 Revised Budget Plan* level. This decrease is primarily attributable to one-time carryover funds included in the FY 2007 Revised level, partially offset by Personnel Services and Operating Expenses increases associated with the new Burke and Oakton Community Libraries and the renovated Dolley Madison and Thomas Jefferson Libraries as well as increases to support the County's compensation program. It should be noted that the FY 2008 funding level reflects an increase of \$4,932,450, or 6.4 percent, over the FY 2007 Adopted Budget Plan funding level. The Oakton library is currently scheduled to open in late summer 2007 while the Burke library is scheduled to open in spring 2008.

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 \$6,111,290 for FY 2008. This is 7.5 percent of total expenditures for this program area.

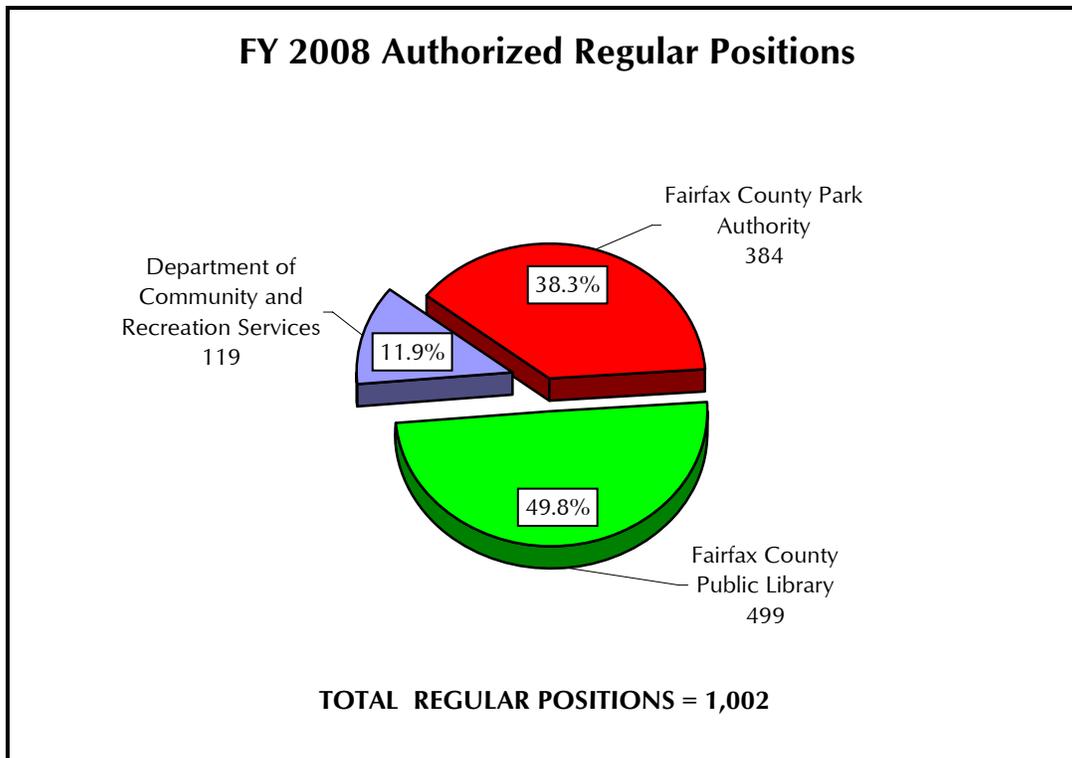
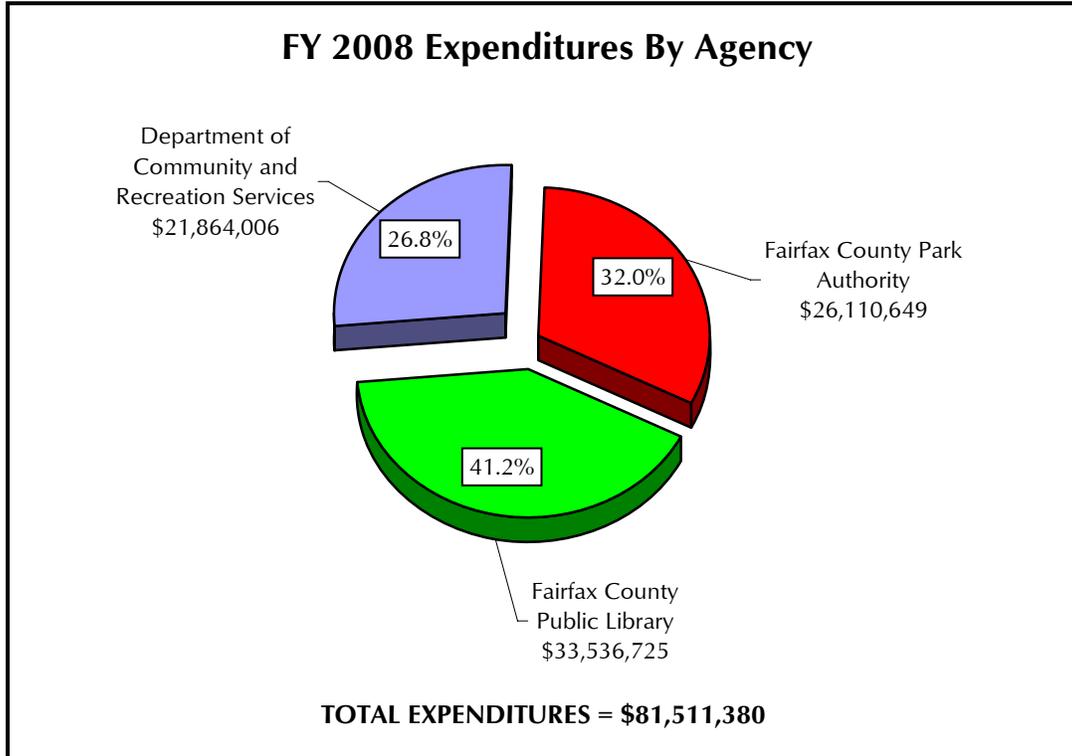
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Trends in Expenditures and Positions



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FY 2008 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.

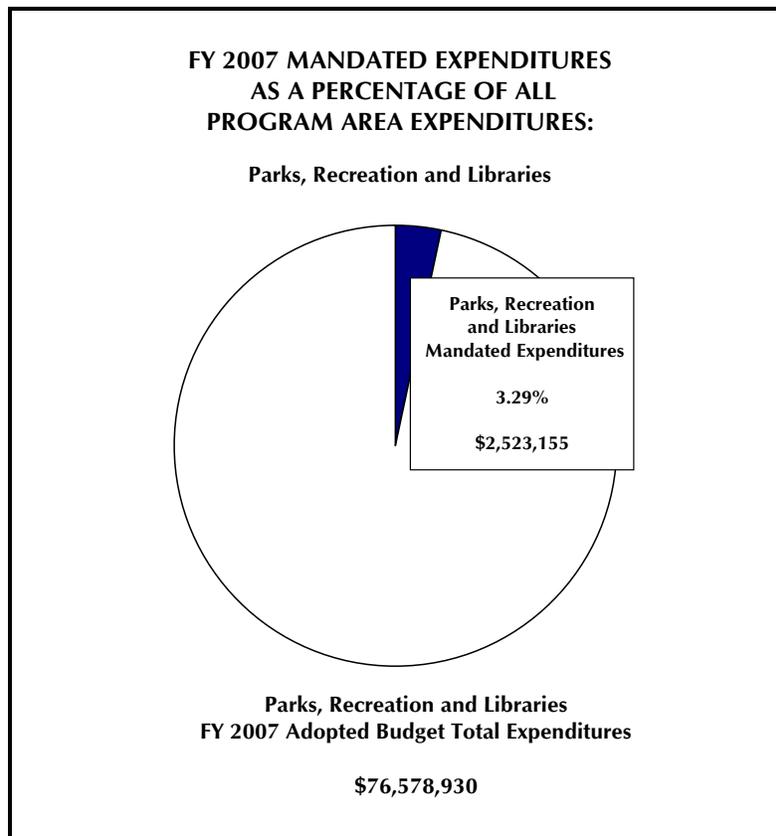
The largest mandate driver in this area is the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Federal law requires public services be barrier free for individuals with disabilities and agencies such as the Department of Community and Recreation Services and Park Authority are mandated to ensure equal access to 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 2007 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 2007, the agencies in this program area anticipated spending \$2.5 million to comply with federal and state mandates, receiving \$1,400 in revenue, for a net cost to the County of \$2.5 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

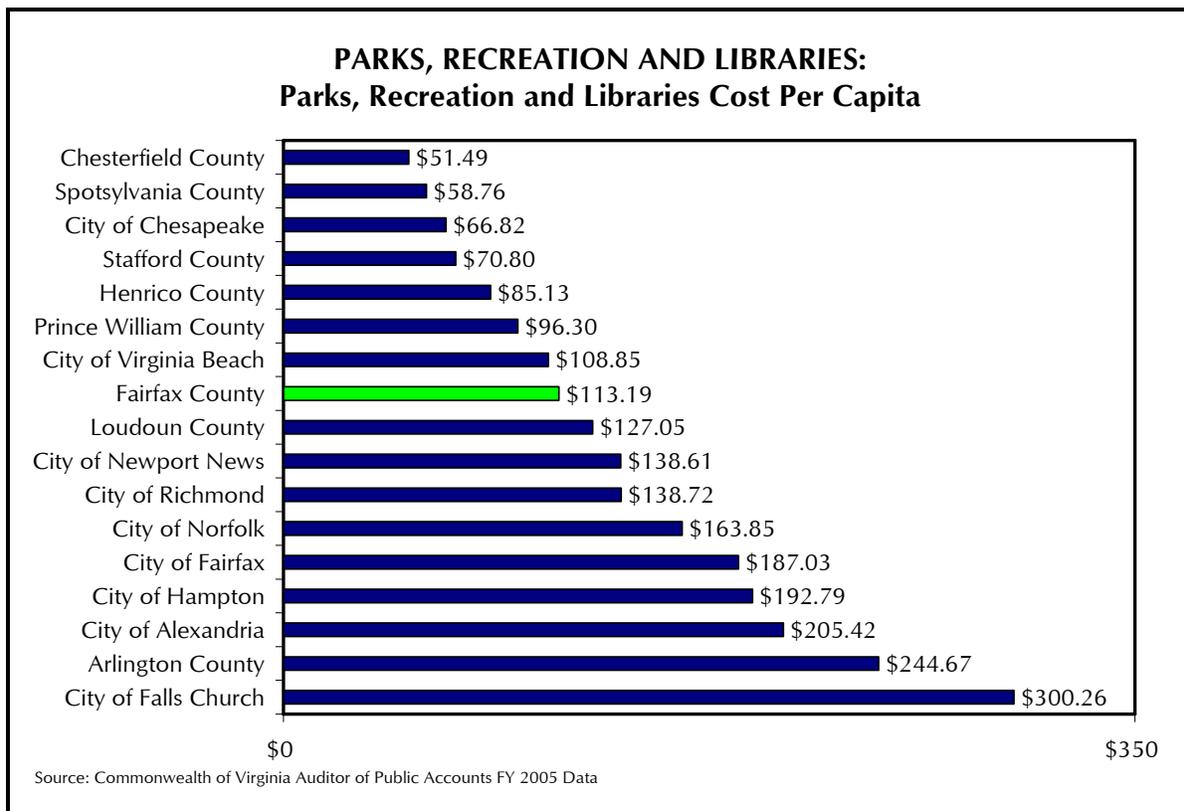
As a means of demonstrating accountability to the public for results achieved, benchmarking data have been included in the annual budget since the FY 2005 Budget. These data are included in each of the Program Area Summaries in Volume 1 (General Fund) and now in Volume 2 (Other Funds) as available. The first benchmarking statistic presented for each program area is a cost per capita comparison collected by the Auditor of Public Accounts (APA) for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Due to the time required for data collection and cleaning, FY 2005 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, and particularly the other Northern Virginia localities.

A number of other benchmarks are shown that are provided through the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) comparative performance program. Fairfax County has participated in ICMA's benchmarking effort since 2000. Approximately 150 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.

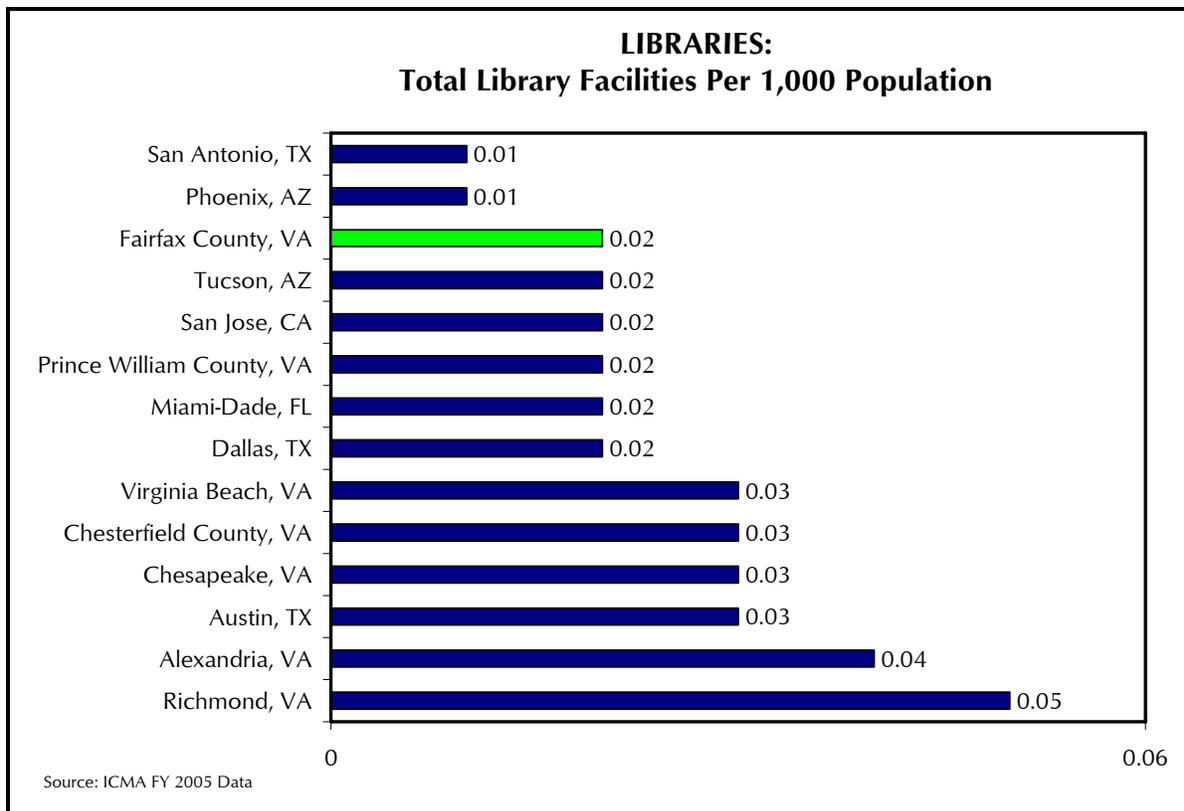
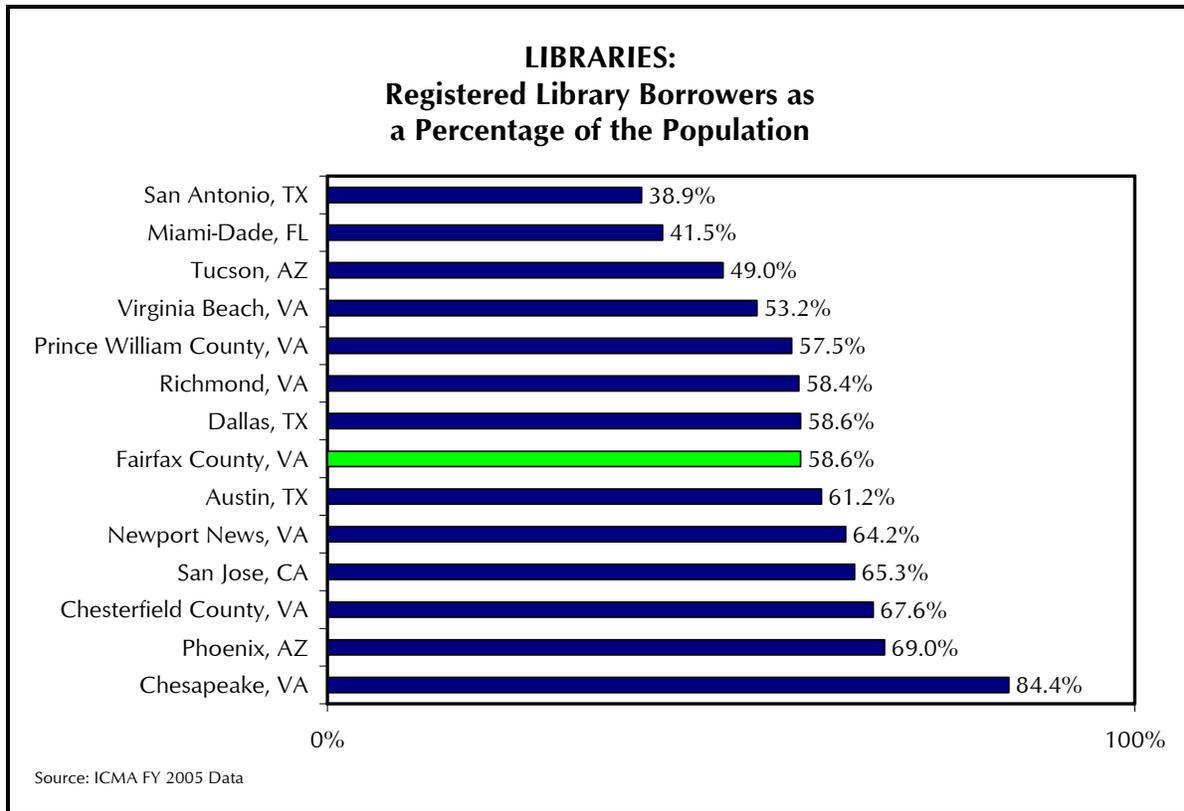
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Participating local governments (cities, counties and towns) provide data on standard templates provided by ICMA in order to ensure consistency. ICMA then performs extensive data cleaning to ensure the greatest accuracy and comparability of data. As 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 2005 data represent the latest available information. The jurisdictions presented in the graphs below generally show how Fairfax County compares to other large jurisdictions (population over 500,000). In cases where other Virginia localities provided data, they are shown as well.

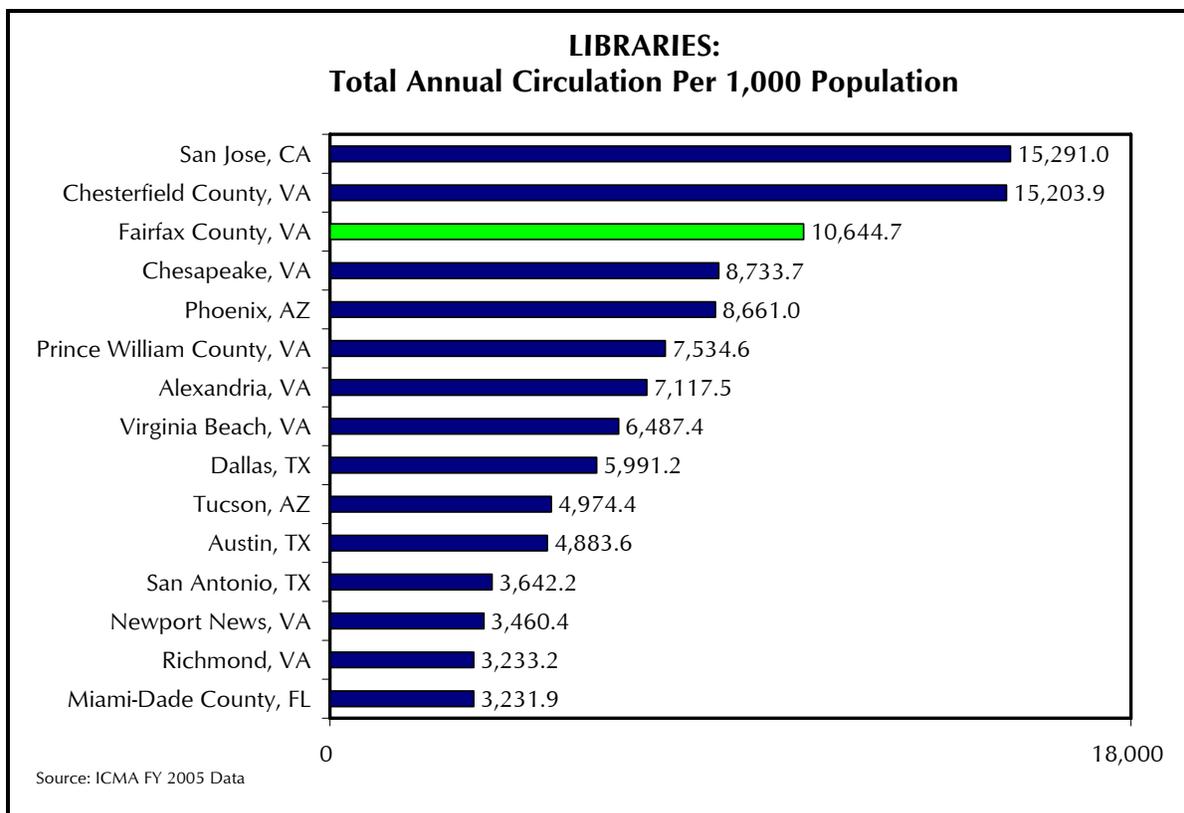
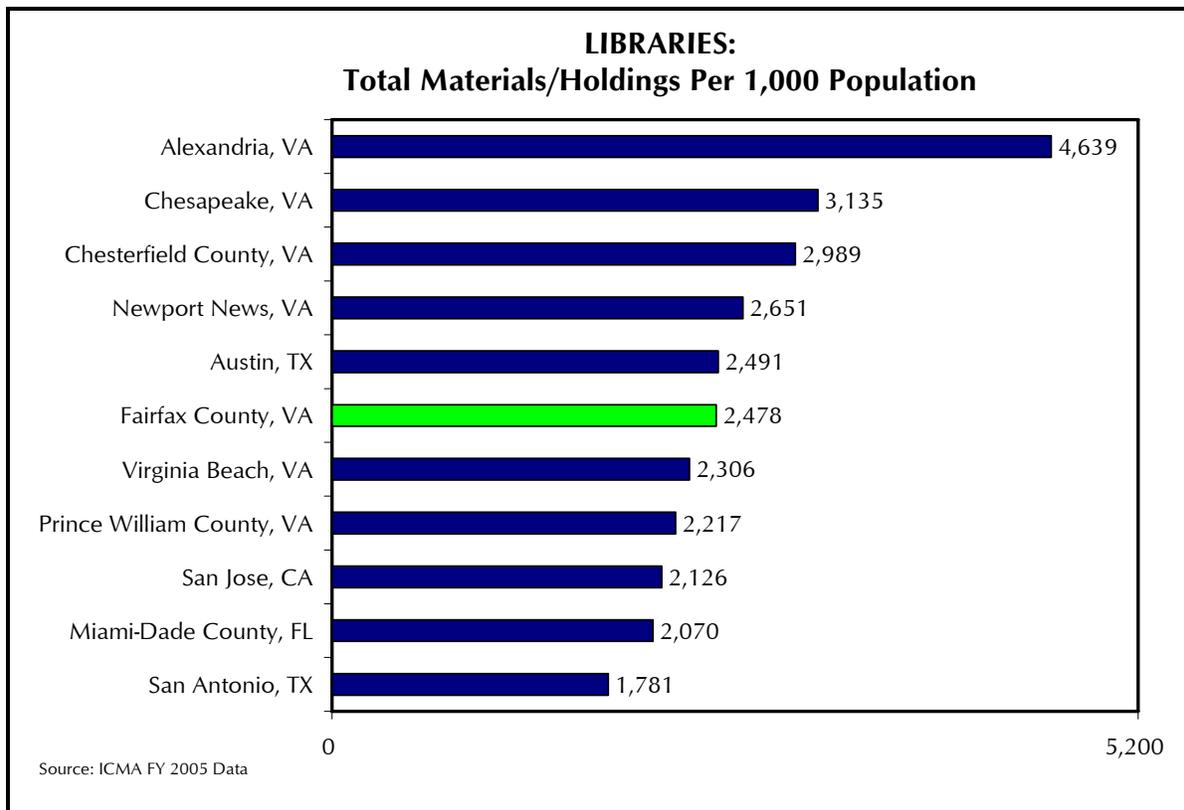
An important point to note in an effort such as this is that since participation is voluntary, the jurisdictions that provide data have shown they are committed to becoming/remaining high performance organizations. Therefore, comparisons made through this program should be considered in the context that 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.



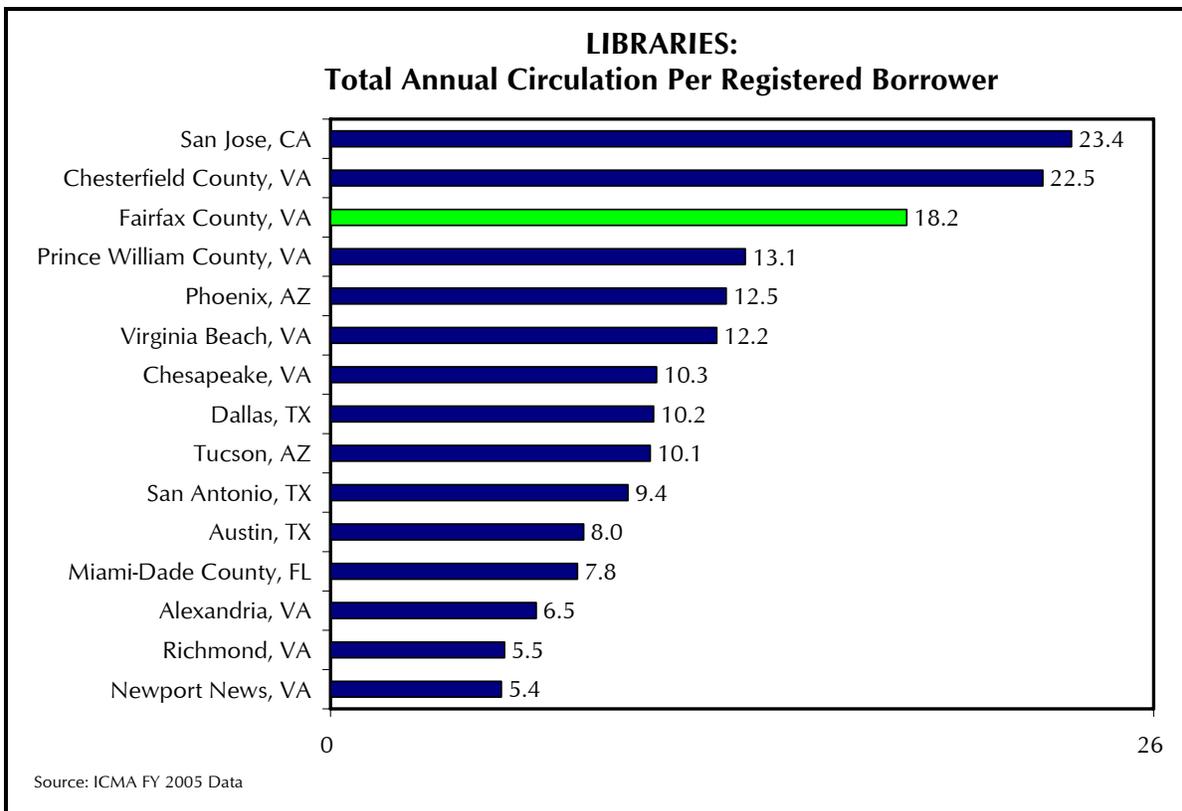
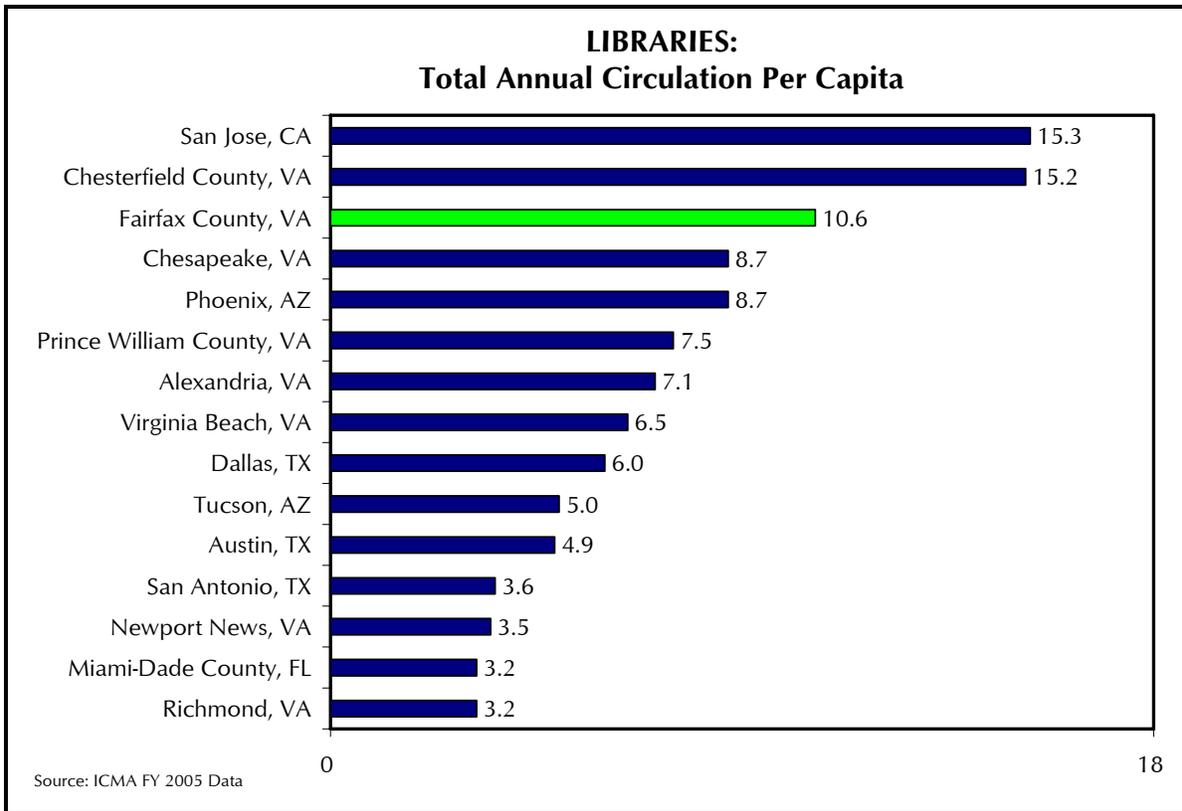
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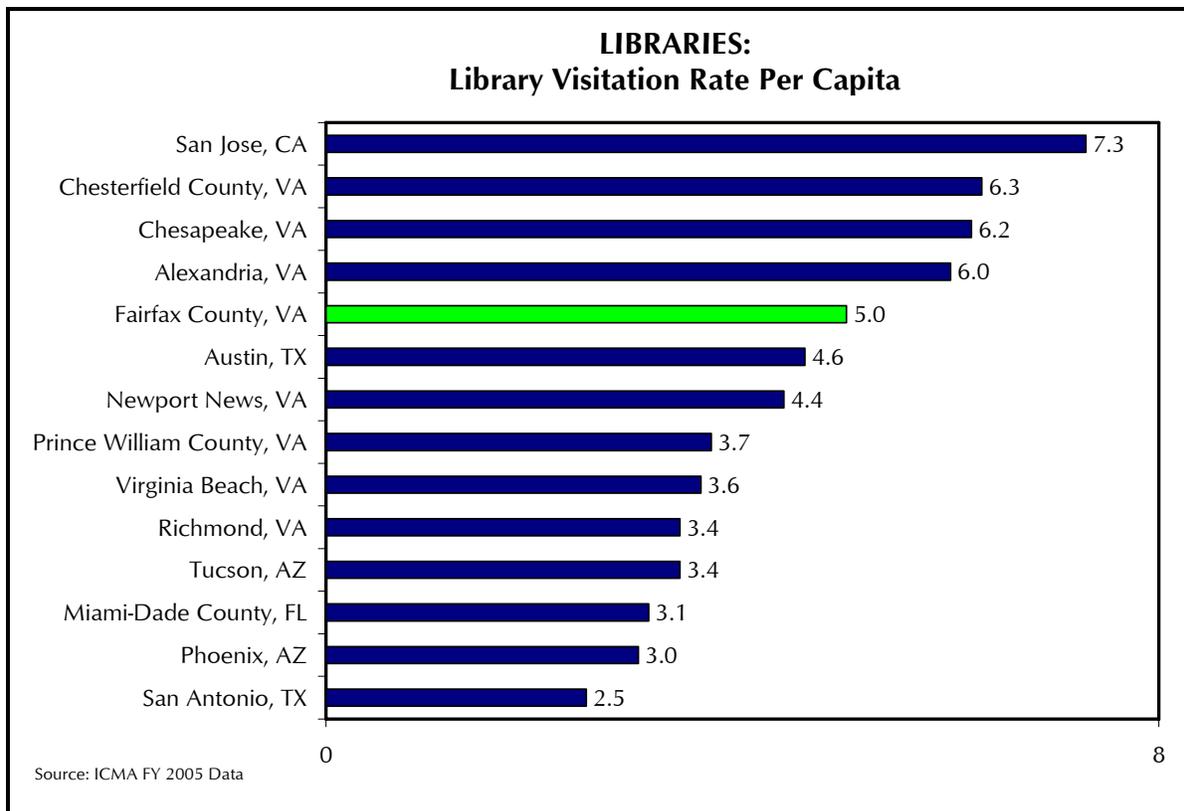
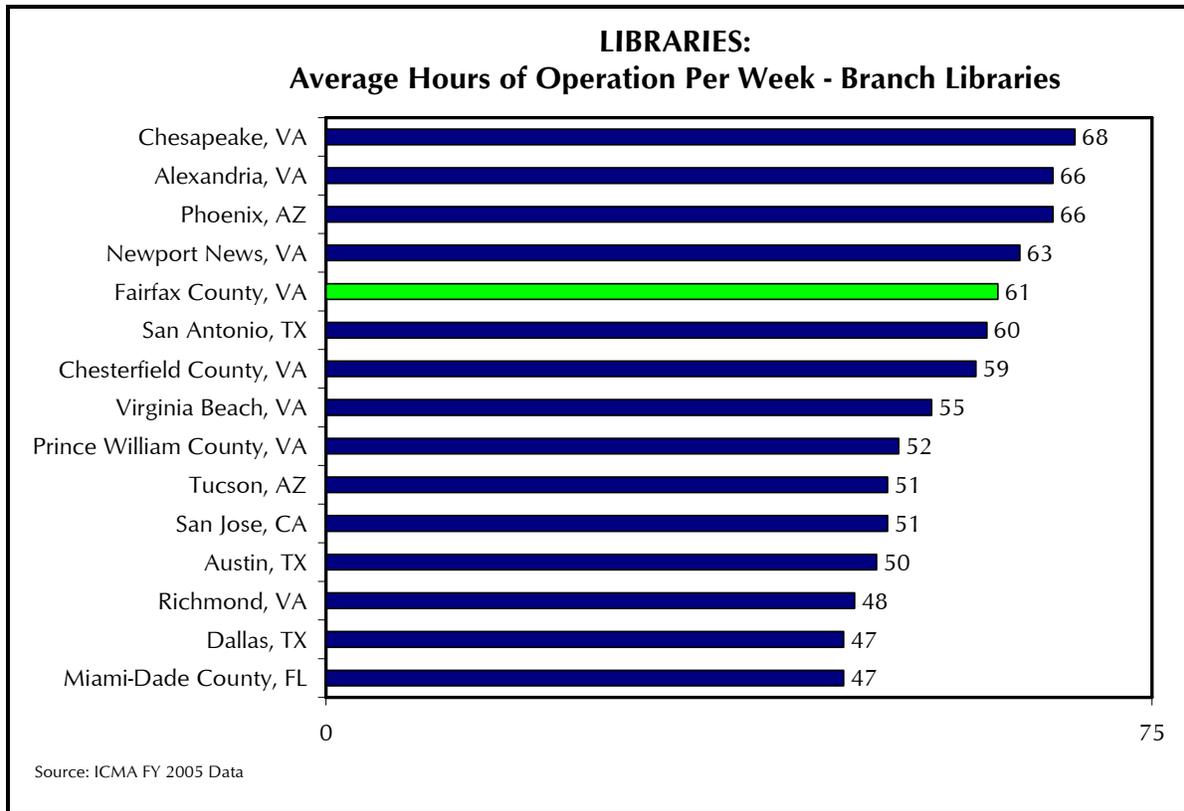
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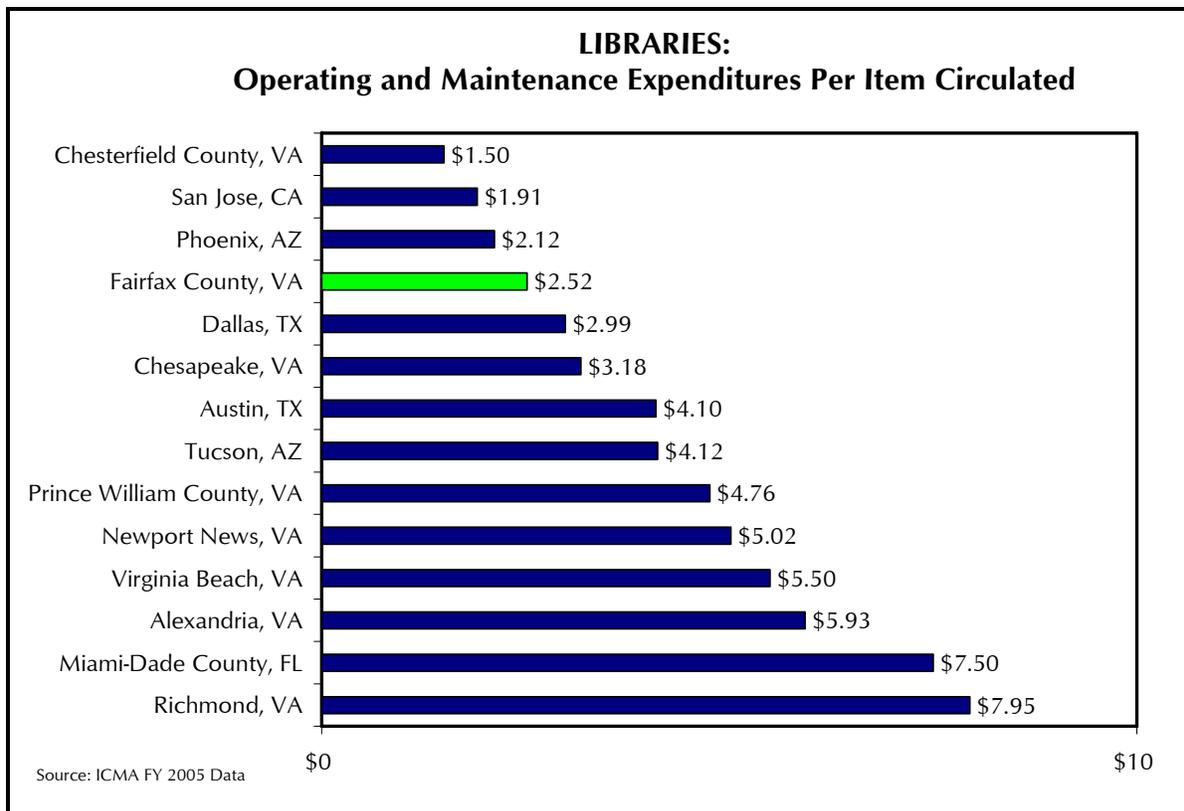
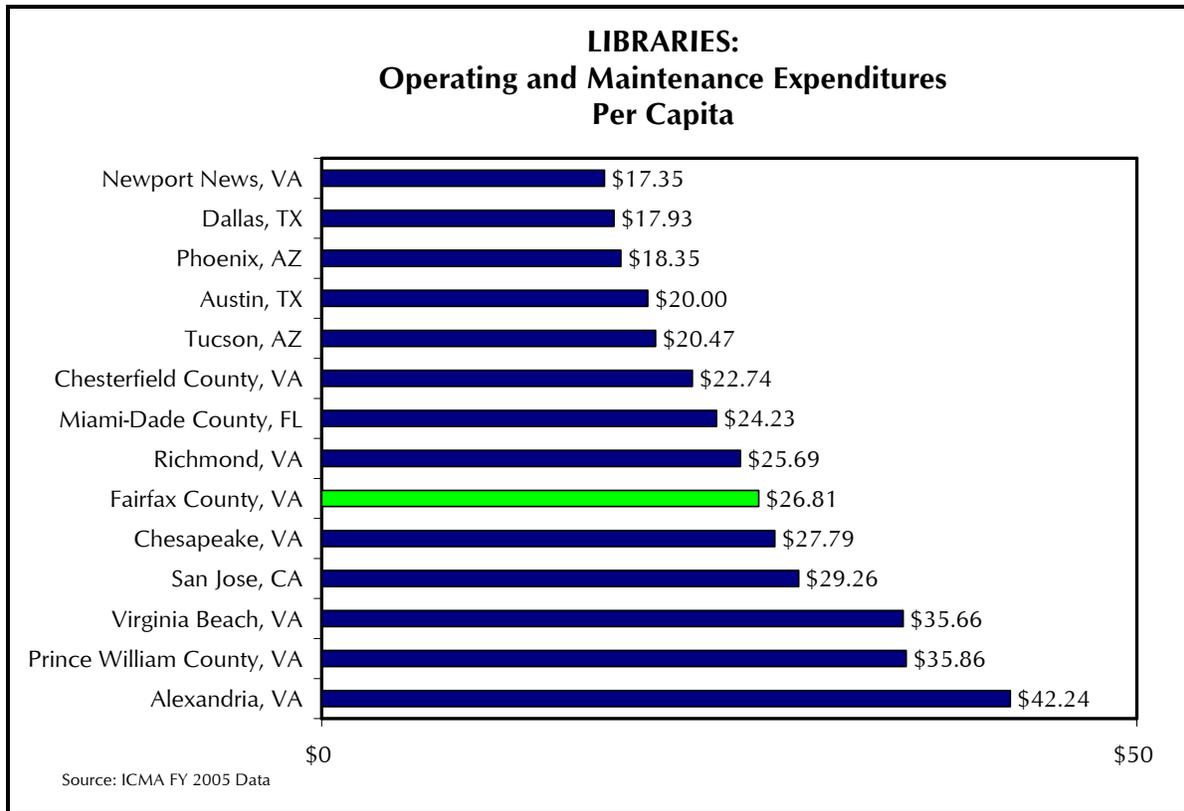
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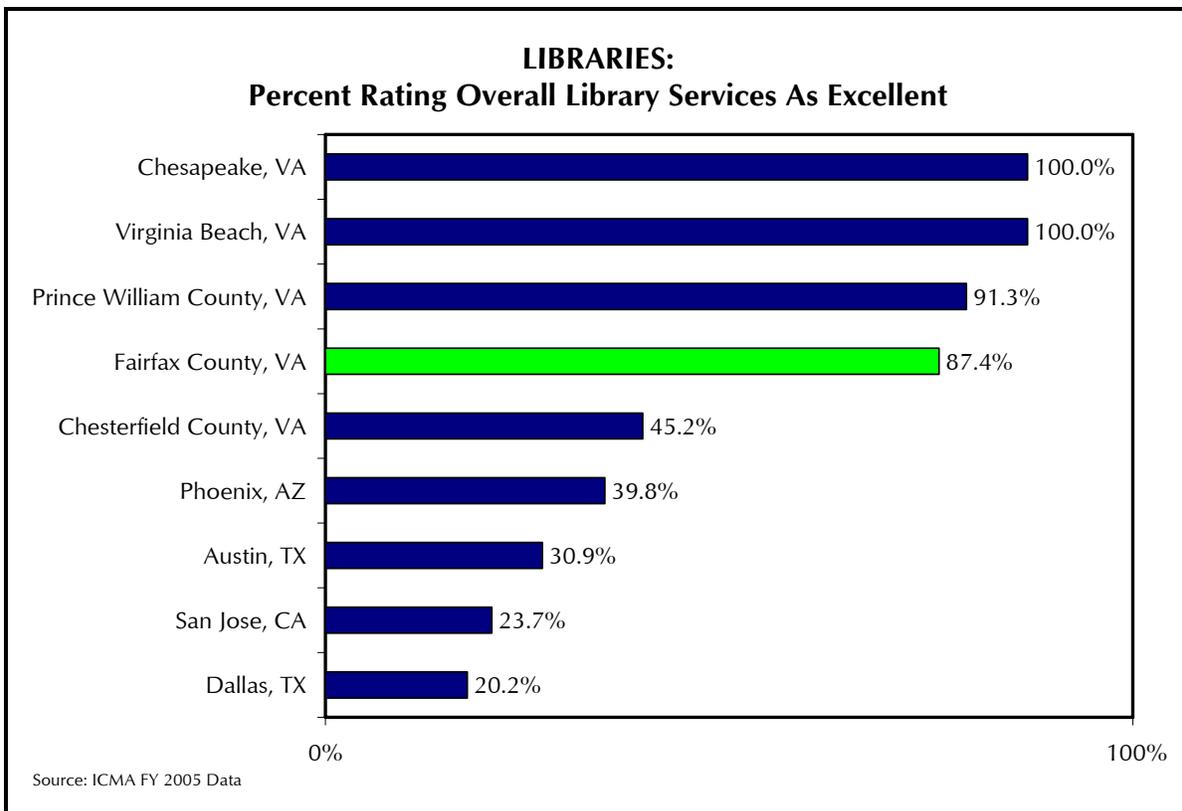
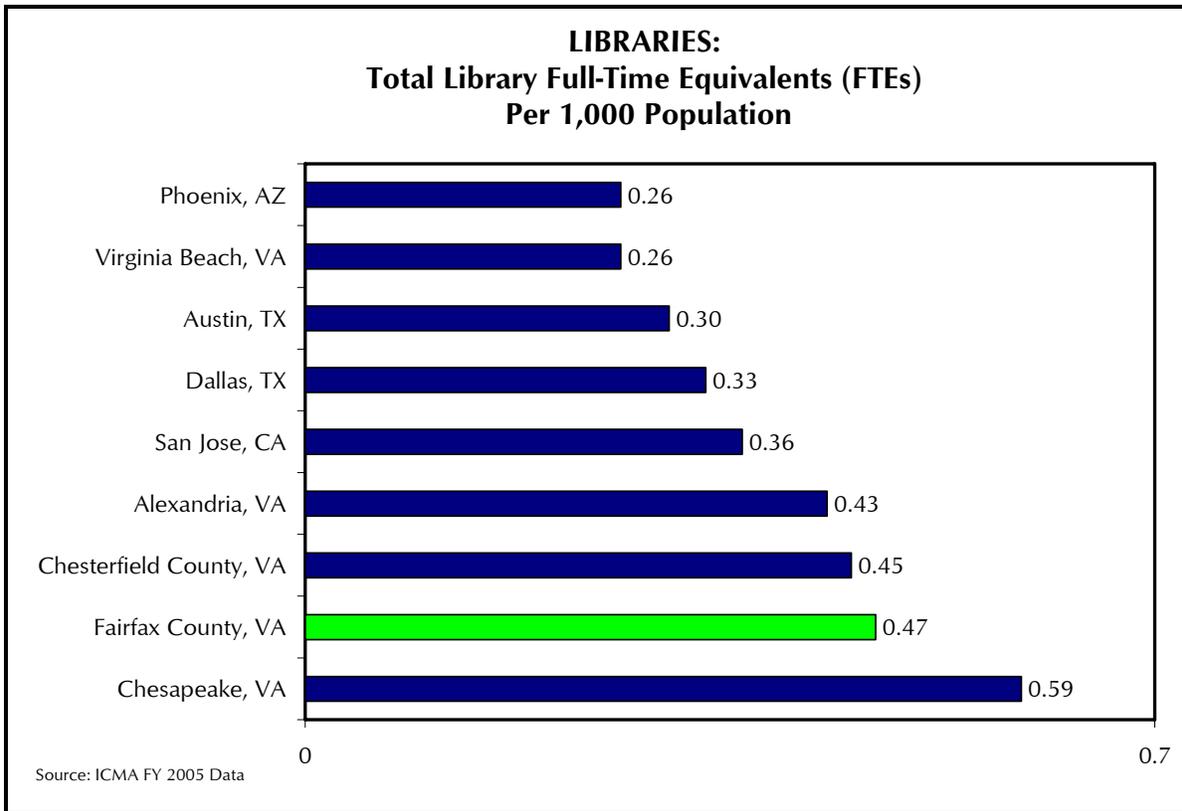
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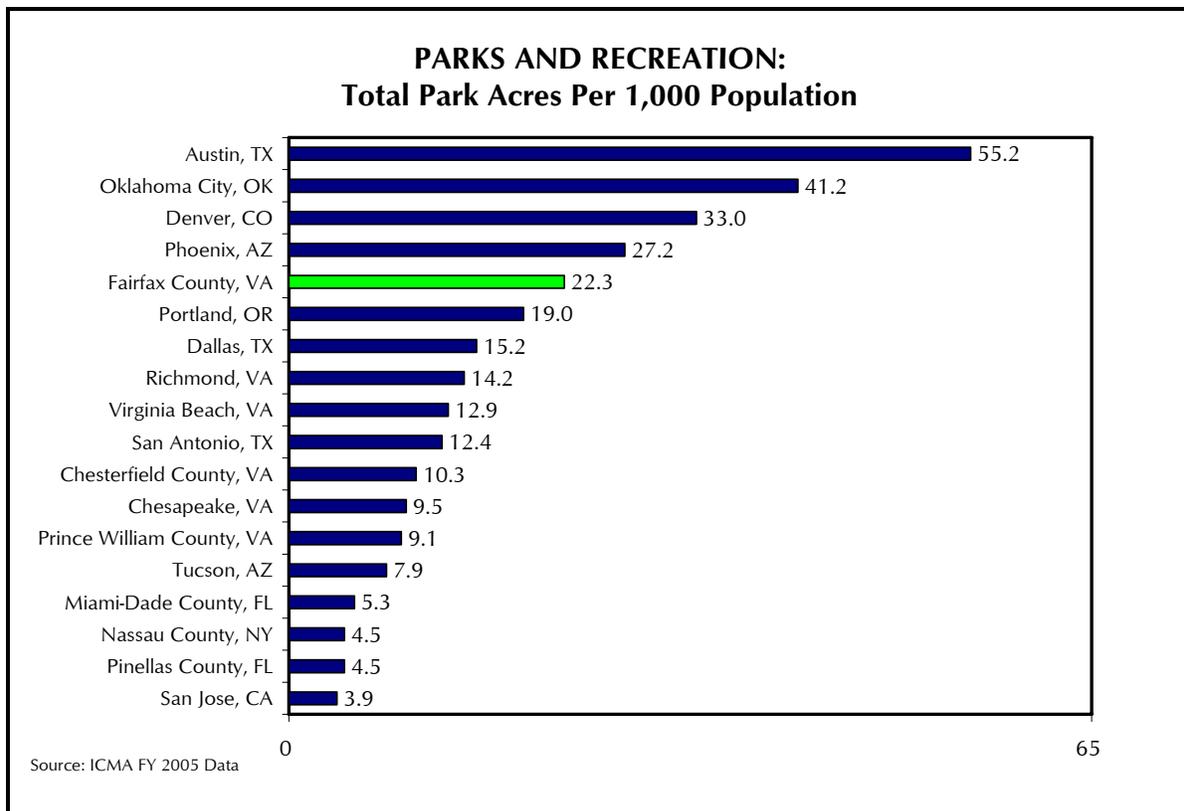
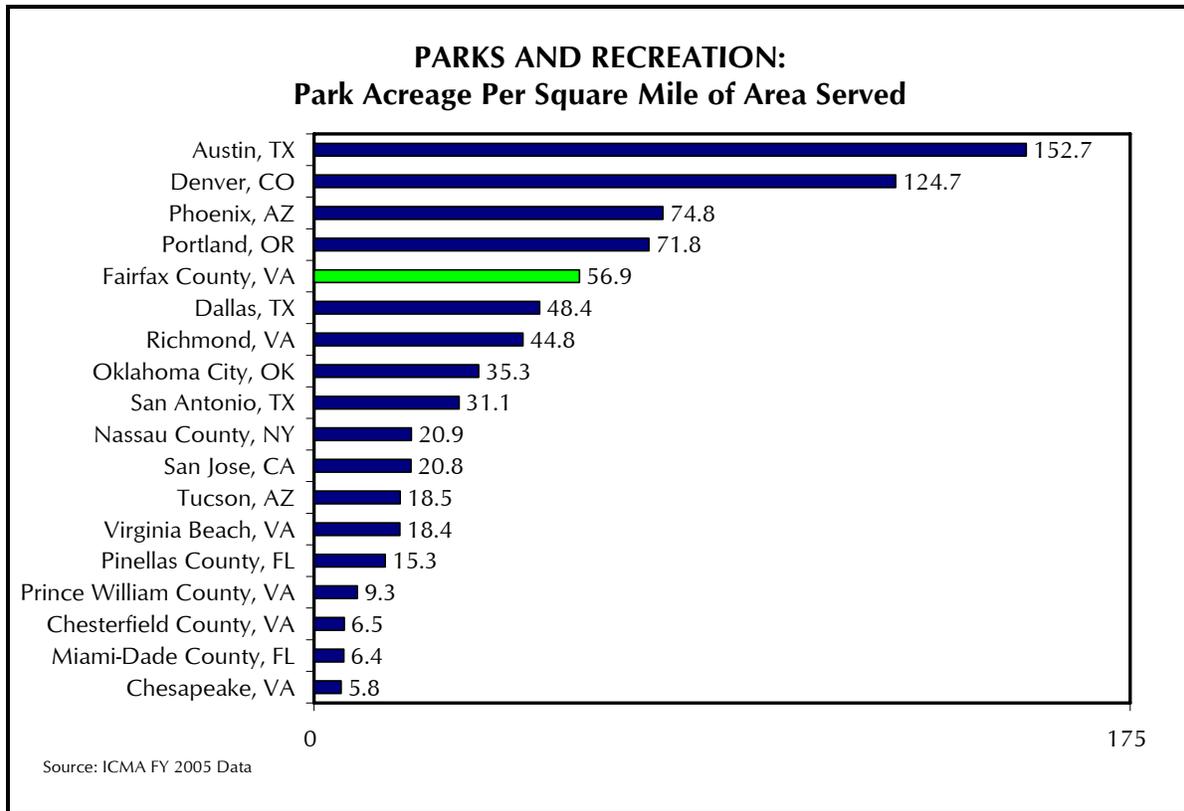
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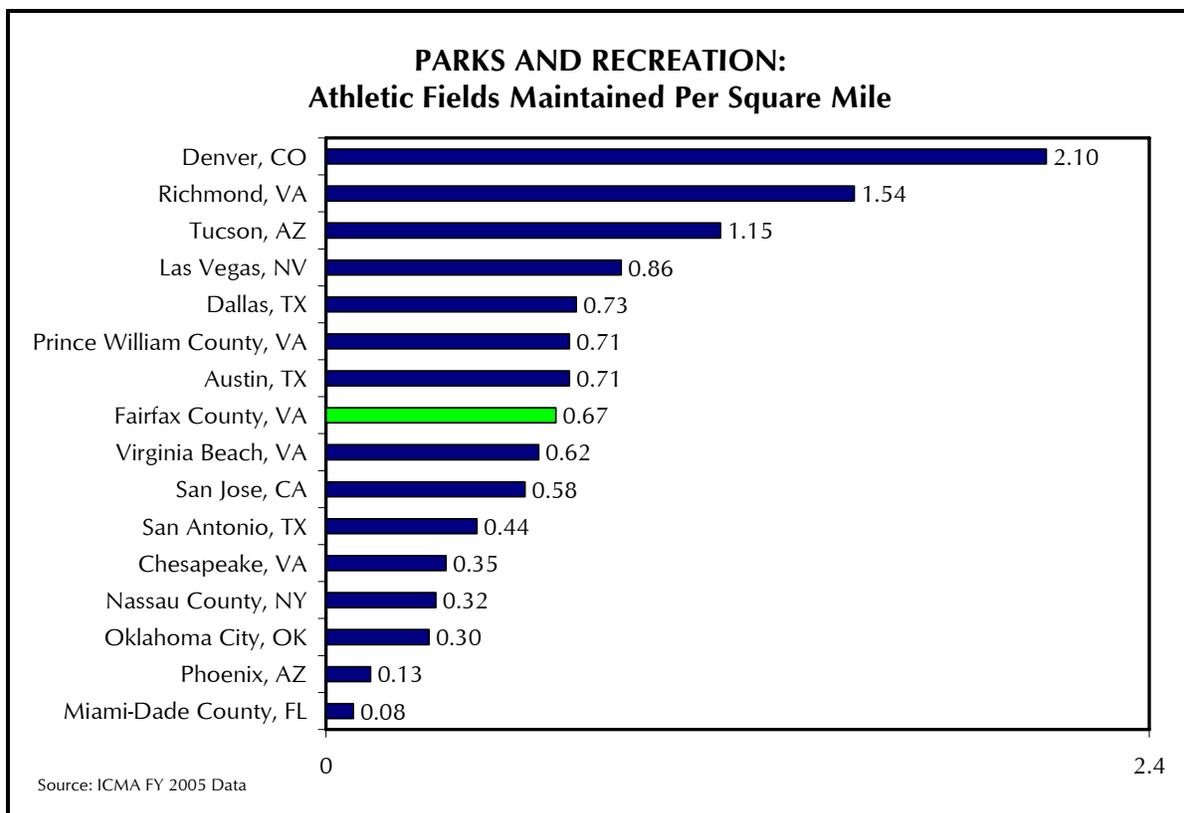
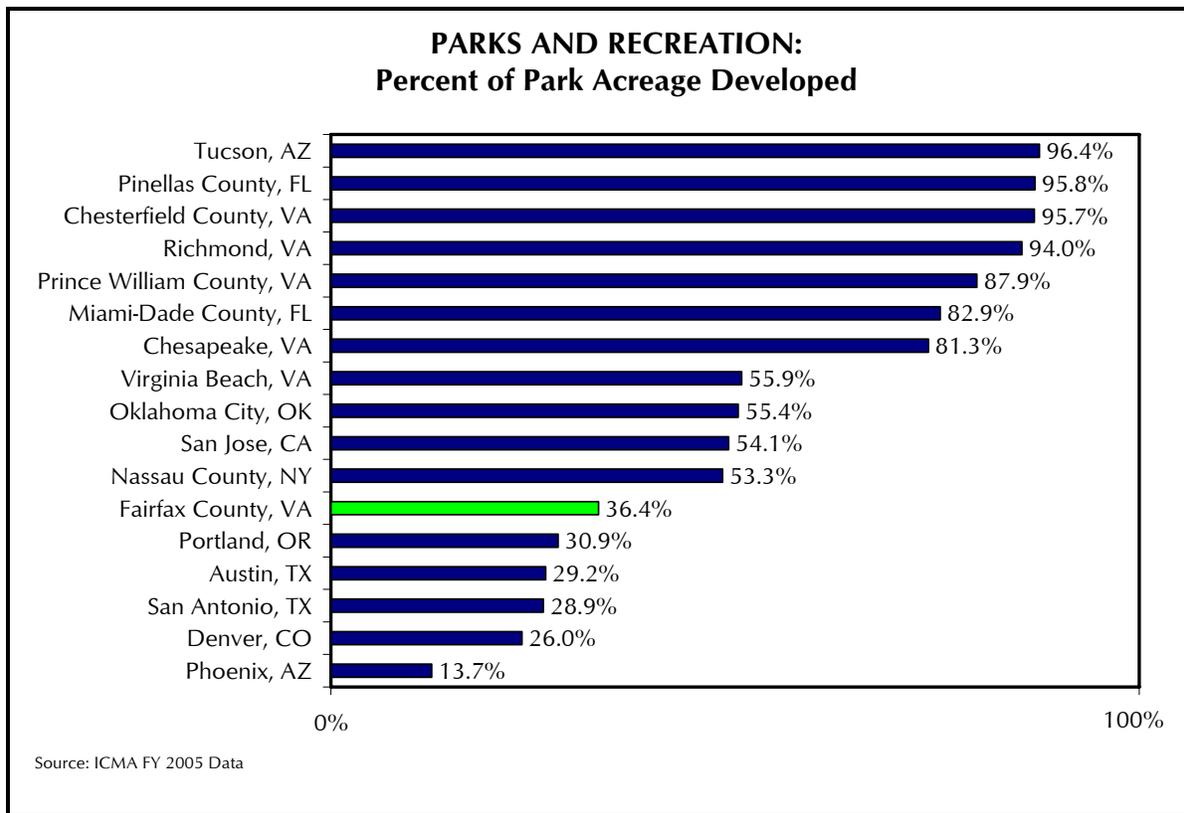
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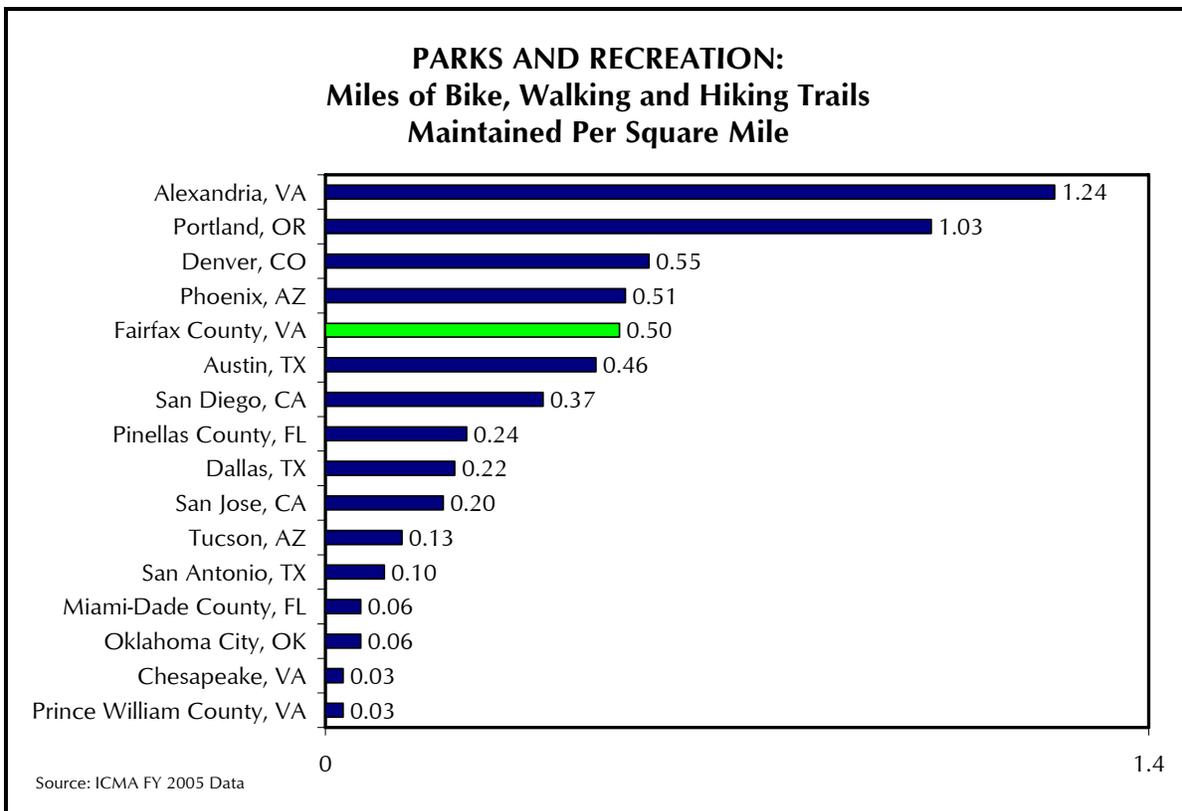
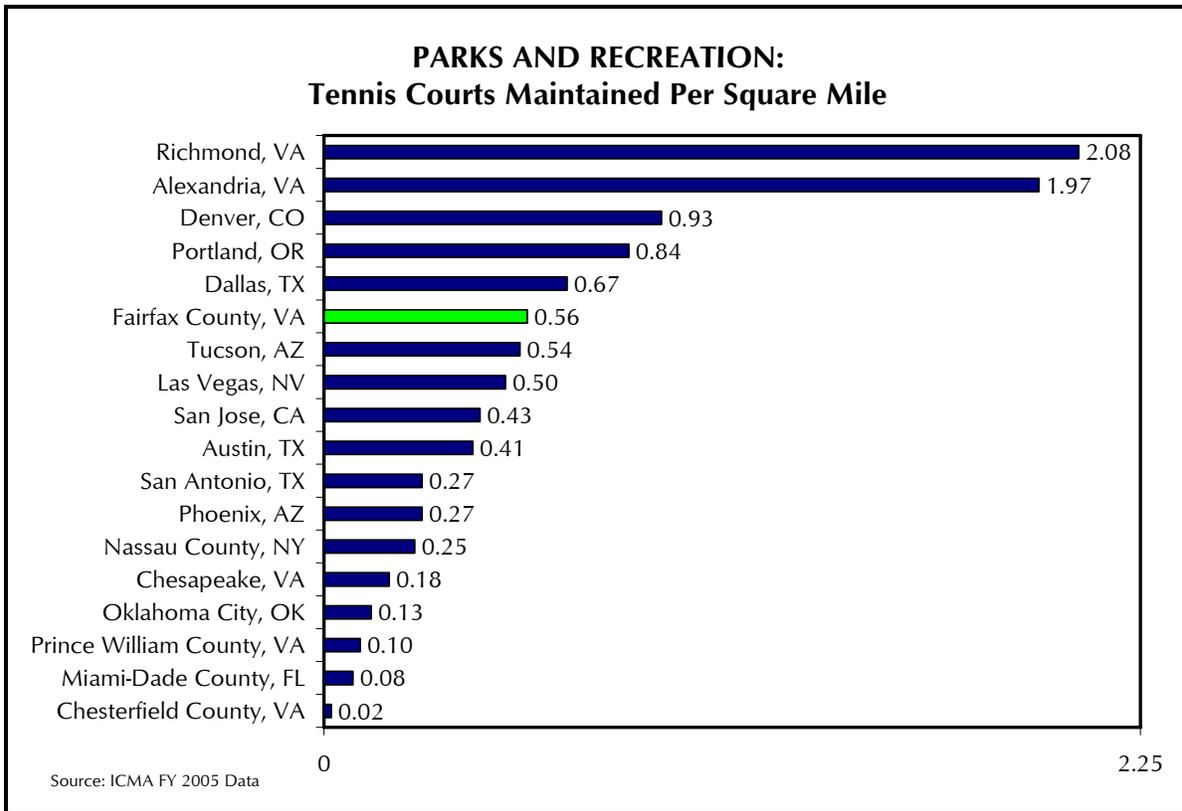
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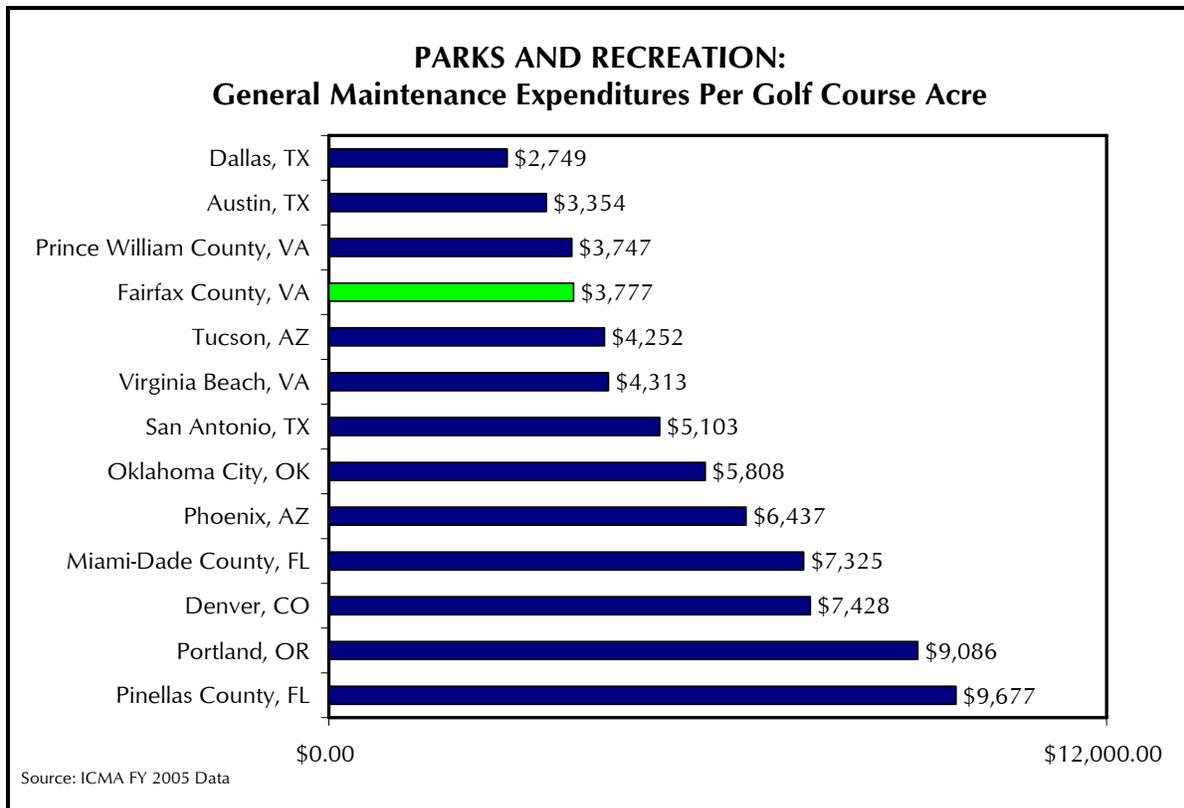
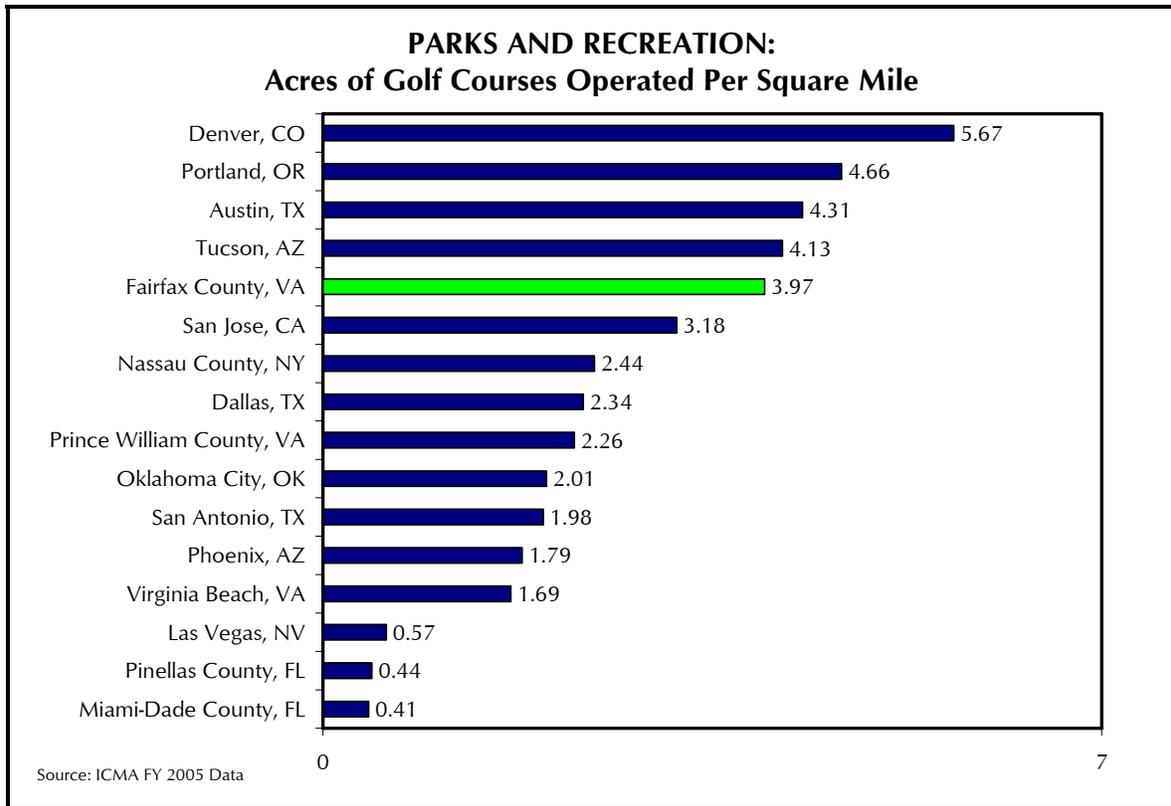
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