



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) approved a 10-year master plan in 2017 that includes seven guiding principles, six goals, and 32 recommendations that set the policy framework for all FCPA plans, programs and initiatives. The master plan is guided by the Parks Count! Needs Assessment findings and provides a long-term vision for the park system.

The Park Authority will focus its efforts and resources in alignment with the guiding principles, goals and recommendations included in the master plan. This means we'll revisit what we're doing across the park system, addressing programming, capital improvements, partnerships, communications, stewardship activities, business operations, and land management, among others.

The seven guiding principles are the Park Authority's core ideals and beliefs and convey the long-term vision for the park system. They are threaded throughout the master plan. The principles are: inspire a passion for parks; meet changing recreation needs; advance park system excellence; strengthen and foster partnerships; be equitable and inclusive; be great stewards; and promote healthy lifestyles.

The six goals are the desired results that the Park Authority plans for and commits to achieve. These provide focus for agency efforts. They aspire to improve and promote natural resource protection and management; ensure protection, conservation, preservation and interpretation of cultural resources; improve access and opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles; enhance and maintain park system quality and condition; advance as an innovative, responsive and adaptable organization; and provide sustainable financial management to advance the Park Authority mission.

The 32 recommendations are the priority activities and actions necessary to achieve the goals. They are detailed across ten pages of the master plan.

The FY2019-FY2023 Park Authority Strategic Plan will be a key tool for implementing the goals and recommendations of the master plan. As part of the strategic plan, S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Results-Focused, and Time-bound) objectives were developed along with specific action steps for implementation. The Strategic Plan includes 12 objectives.

The strategic planning process also provided the opportunity to review and update the Park Authority Mission and Vision to reflect the direction set by the master plan guiding principles and goals.

Annual action plans and annual reporting will be a key part of the strategic plan. These will ensure we're remaining accountable to the goals and recommendations, while also providing flexibility to course-correct as needed.

For each Master Plan Goal and Strategic Objective, the strategic plan lists Action Steps and Performance measures.

These plans are available to the public at the following link:

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/planning-development/fcpa-masterplan>

RECENT STRATEGIC PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Park Authority recently completed implementation of the Great Parks, Great Communities FY13-FY18 Strategic Plan. The strategic plan was structured around four important perspectives: Customer, Financial, Business Process and Learning and Growth. A Strategy Map depicted the perspectives, guiding visions and objectives, graphically illustrating the cause and effect relationship of each objective and perspective culminating with the Customer perspective and *Great Parks, Great Communities* vision at the top. The strategic objectives are outlined below with a sampling of the accomplishments for each objective.

EXPAND ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES - Secure non-traditional funding sources and in-kind services that supplement and further enhance the Park Authority programs, services, facilities and mission.

- Partners provided \$14,124,254 for facility improvements throughout the park system, including but not limited to; synthetic turf fields, picnic shelters, pump tracks, a roll top observatory, and athletic field upgrades.
- The Park Authority obtained \$6,534,670.63 in proffers from Private Developers, the proffers are used to build new parks and renovate existing facilities. Private developers provided new fully developed parks valued at \$25,450,000.
- The Park Foundation contributed \$3,923,117 in donations and in-kind donations valued at \$217,866 to the Park Authority.

INFORM AND ENGAGE - Engage the community to raise awareness of park benefits, value, offerings, and challenges; broaden support for the park system; increase public involvement in park planning and decision making; and stimulate growth in park use and volunteerism.

- The use of social media to inform and engage the public has proven to be a successful and cost-effective communications tool. Annual organic reach increased from 198,000 impressions in FY 2014 to more than seven million in FY 2018.
- A taskforce made up of Friends Group representatives and staff developed a template for Memorandum of Understandings that will guide the development of partnerships with Friends Groups for the future.

FOSTER A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT - Ensure an inclusive work culture with two-way communication, and a collaborative work environment that supports recognition of valued employees

- During FY15 72% of FCPA merit employees completed an Employee Survey. The feedback was used to inform initiatives that enhanced communication, accountability and employee development.
- An agency-wide internal communication group was created to assess internal communication needs and recommend strategies to improve communication agency-wide. As a result, several new strategies were implemented to enhance communication including a director's blog/enhanced park blog, enhanced director's office site outreach and lunch and learns.

LEVERAGE TECHNOLOGY - Utilize technology solutions to constantly improve customer experiences and increase efficiencies and accuracy in internal business processes.

- The Park Authority launched a new recreation management system that enhances the customer's registration experience, provides enhanced reporting and marketing capabilities. This replaced an aging system that had been used for more than 25 years.

- Trails are used more than any other amenity in the park system. To better serve our trail users the “Trail Buddy” application was created to assist users with navigating the 400+ miles of trails in Fairfax County.

MAINTAIN A QUALITY WORKFORCE - Align the organization to achieve consistently excellent performance and prepare for future challenges by expanding professional development opportunities and fostering diversity.

- To improve employee safety, Drive Cam was launched in 100% of Park Authority vehicles to encourage safe driving and to discourage risky driving behaviors. In the first year of implementation cost of claims decreased by 52%, and frequency of claims was reduced by 80%.
- With 40% of the FCPA’s workforce eligible to retire by 2020 several programs were initiated including mentoring, cross-training, and enhanced focus on cross-team participation.

MANAGE AND PROTECT PROPERTY - The Park Authority will continue to lead collaborative efforts of managing and caring for our parks, facilities, and infrastructure, and protecting natural and cultural resources.

- As a result of a renewed focus on facility renovations close to \$70 Million has been appropriated to fund projects that will address aging park infrastructure.
- 75% of land has been assessed and ranked using a Natural Area Ranking system geospatial model.

OPTIMIZE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES - Ensure continued provision of a wide range of facilities, programs, and services to serve the needs of an increasingly diverse population in a manner which is financially sustainable.

- The Park Authority remains committed to educating the next generation of environmental stewards, and since FY 2014, 6485 stewardship programs were provided to 102,679 people.
- The FCPA implemented the Tobacco Free Play Zone initiative by installing 400 signs at various park amenities including playgrounds, athletic fields, skate parks and picnic shelters.

STABILIZE FUNDING - Address the continued instability in the Park Authority funding environment by optimizing various funding sources to accomplish targeted financial and service goals.

- Strategic RECenter and Waterpark Facility expansions and renovations to improve customer service and stabilize the Park Revue Fund resulted in an increased net revenue for these facilities of 200%.
- By the end of FY18 the Park Authority avoided over \$1,265,000 (based on cumulative cost savings for FY14-18) in utility costs due to Energy Management Improvements.

Many accomplishments linked to the agency’s strategic vision are also contained in our FY2018 Annual Report located here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/publications/strategic-plan-annual-report>