

Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan



Currituck County

January 3, 2011



Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Currituck County is a wonderful area with a wealth of water and other natural resources that make it a travel destination for the entire country. In addition to driving a thriving tourism industry, these water resources provide Currituck County's year round residents with a wide variety of recreational opportunities.

The County's natural resources are not its only asset or its only source of recreation. The County has an excellent park system that provides residents and visitors a wide variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. County leadership recognizes the value of its park system and realizes that through careful planning and development, parks could play a much more important role in community and economic development.

With this vision, the County commissioned this planning study to review existing park facilities, identify future recreation needs, and develop a plan of action to meet those needs. The planning process has included an assessment of the County's existing parks, a discussion with the public on future park needs, and a review (and in some cases modifications) of the standards the County uses for park development. Utilizing these updated standards, the master plan provides a plan of action for achieving current and future needs. This master plan document gives County staff and elected officials a road map for future development of the County's park system.

PUBLIC INPUT

The most important aspect of the planning study was identifying the public's desire for parks and recreation facilities. The public was offered the opportunity to participate in the planning effort through:

- A series of five public workshops held at different locations throughout the county to discuss park needs. Several hundred county residents attended the five workshops.
- A community workshop to discuss the proposed improvements for the expansion of the Maple Park.
- Informal surveys taken during the public workshops and through the County's website.

Findings from these public outreach efforts, as well as a summary of the methodology, can be found in Section Three - The People of Currituck County.

GROWTH AND POPULATION

In addition to gathering public input, a critical step in developing this plan is understanding the demographic and population changes that are occurring in the community. With the recent completion of the 2010 census data, very good information on population and demographics were available for use in this planning study.

The County has experienced tremendous growth over the past several decades. From 1970 to 1980, the County saw a 50% increase in population. The 1980s saw that growth slow to 24%, but in the 1990s the population increased 32%. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, from 2000 to 2010 the County's growth was 29.5%.

Current economic conditions imply that in the next ten years growth will be slower. Based on the current economic climate, the County's current Land Use Plan has a ten year projected population of the county to be approximately 27,700.

See Section Three - The People of Currituck County for additional information on the demographic characteristics of the County's citizens.

PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

As described in Section Four – Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment, a community park system is typically comprised of eight park types. These park types include:

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Parks
- District Park/Sport Complexes
- Regional Parks
- Greenways
- School Parks
- Special Use Facilities

Typically, each of these park types provide recreation opportunities that meet citizens' recreational needs. A number of public and private agencies/entities provide leisure services in the community.

As a coastal county, water access and water resources are an important aspect of the community. In addition to traditional parks, the County should be engaged in providing access to its water resources for both residents and tourists.

This master plan addresses all recreation providers in the community with particular emphasis on the County's role.

Park Needs Assessment

In the next ten years, the County should focus its park and recreation efforts in the following areas:

Mini Parks

Mini parks are the smallest park type. These parks typically range in size from one half acre to four acres and provide a limited range of activities (playground, picnicking, benches, etc.). The typical service radius of a mini park is one quarter mile.

The trend in public park development is to minimize reliance on mini parks for the delivery of park and recreational services. Their small size limits the recreational opportunities offered and the citizens

they can adequately serve. The limited service area provided by these parks also requires numerous small parks distributed throughout the community. This service pattern results in higher overall maintenance costs.

For these reasons, the County should minimize its efforts in developing this park type in the future.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks play an important role in providing both active and passive recreation opportunities in municipal settings. Preferably in the ten to fifteen acre range, these parks are large enough to provide programmed space (ball fields, play courts, playgrounds, etc.) and still provide some areas for open space (wooded or open). Ideally, neighborhood parks would have a one half mile service radius locating them one mile apart.

Community Parks

Community parks are the foundation of most county park systems. At a size of 20 to 50 acres, these parks are large enough to provide a wide variety of active recreation facilities and allow significant portions of the site to remain undeveloped while providing valuable open space.

The County has two existing community parks, Sound Park and Maple Park. These parks are servicing the southern and central portion of the mainland, but there are portions of the County that are underserved by community parks. Most notable, the upper area of the County (Moyock) does not have community park coverage. The County should build a community park in the Moyock area within the next ten years. See Section Four: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment for additional information on this need.

District Parks/Sports Complexes

District Parks with an emphasis on team sports (soccer, baseball, lacrosse) are a relatively new park type that focuses on active recreation. Typically the district park/sports complex is a large park (80-100 acres) dedicated to league and tournament play. Often these events provide opportunities for economic development.



With the development of the Currituck Community Park campus, the County will have an opportunity to expand the Maple Park into a district park with sports complex capabilities. The development of this facility has numerous advantages for the County.

The expansion of the ballfields will provide valuable program space for the County's existing athletic programs. In addition, the development of multiple fields to tournament level standards will allow the County to attract regional tournaments; providing economic impact in the Maple-Barco area. Finally, the development of a district park will provide the preservation of open space and wetlands. All of these important benefits of the expansion of the existing facilities will be in keeping with the proposal identified in the Maple-Barco Small Area Plan.

Regional Parks

Typically municipal agencies do not provide regional park facilities.

Regional parks are large (200 to 1,000 acres) tracts of land that provide environmental protection, education, and passive recreation opportunities. While a few large municipal agencies provide regional parks, most regional parks are provided by county or state agencies. As the name implies, these parks have regional service areas and are typically "drive to" facilities. The citizens of Currituck County have access to several regional park facilities including Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, Mackay Island Refuge, and other state/federal land holdings.

Through these large parks, the citizens of Currituck County have adequate access to regional parks. The County should not focus its financial resources on the development of a regional park.

Water Access

As a coastal county, water is a valuable resource of the County. The County's economy is dependent upon the tourism that is generated from the County's beaches and sound/backwaters. Access to the water surrounding the County is critical to tourism. Additional water access was identified as a community need by all of the meetings that were held in 2010 to discuss recreational needs.

An important aspect of the County's park system should be the expansion and improvement of the County's water access. While site specific recommendations are beyond the findings of this plan, the County should be prepared to seek opportunities to improve water access on both the ocean and sound.

Multi-use Trails

The County has begun development of an outstanding multi-use trail system in Corolla. The master plan for this trail proposes an 11.6 mile walkway that connects points of interest along the Outer Banks.

The initial phase of development provides several miles of trails and will be a valuable asset for County residents and tourists. The County should continue to develop additional links of the Corolla Greenway Trail.



Special Use Facilities

Currituck County celebrates its unique coastal culture through several special use facilities. Currituck Heritage Park, with the Whalehead Club, Currituck Beach Lighthouse, and the Light Keeper's House, is an excellent example of a unique park that provides a variety of interpretive and recreational activities. Likewise, the Currituck County Rural Center in Barco provides special use opportunities in equestrian sports, water access, and other unique recreational activities.

Both these special use facilities add to the County's interest and quality of life, and should be supported. Opportunities for additional special use facilities that highlight Currituck's unique history and culture should be explored.

FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The second component of a needs assessment is a review of existing facilities within each of the park types to determine if there are adequate recreation facilities (ball fields, playgrounds, etc.) to meet current and future demand. The needs assessment begins by establishing standards for facility development. The 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan established standards of development for some types of recreation standards. Based on public input and staff/planning consultant review of the 2002 standards a number of changes have been made to the County's standards for facility development. Utilizing the new standards, a needs assessment for recreation facilities was established. These changes are discussed in Section Four and listed in Tables 4-2 and 4-4, Recreation Facility Standards.

Based on the new standards for recreation facility development established in this planning report, the County will have the following facility needs by 2021:

- 2 Adult Baseball Fields
- 3 Softball Fields
- 1 Football Field
- 3 Soccer Fields/Multi-purpose Fields
- 3 Basketball Courts (outdoor)
- 1 Volleyball Court

- 2 Shuffleboard Courts
- 7 Picnic Shelters
- 4 Playgrounds
- 8 Miles Walking Trails
- 1 Community Center without Gym

The majority of these facility needs can be met in the improvements to existing parks, the expansion of Maple Park into a new district park, and a new community park in the upper part of the county.

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

The list of facility needs identified in the previous section contains a wide range of facilities. Some of the recreational facility needs are relatively small and will require only limited space and/or capital investment. Picnic shelters, shuffleboard courts, and playgrounds fall into this category of park improvements.

The needs assessment also includes a number of facilities that will require a greater investment of the County's resources. The development of these facilities will have significant impact on the County's recreation programming and delivery of services. These facilities include:

Community Centers/Gymnasiums

The development of the county recreation facility and YMCA will meet many of the County's indoor recreation facility needs. The new facilities at Currituck Community Park will provide state of the art indoor facilities for gymnasiums, aerobics, weight training, and classroom meeting space.

While this facility will meet much of the demand for indoor recreation on the mainland, there is a need for a community center building on the Outer Banks. This building does not need the active recreational space of gymnasiums and exercise rooms, but instead should be providing meeting space, classroom space, and other community event programming space. The need for this building was expressed in the community workshops held in 2010.

Greenways/Trails

The demand for walking trails was expressed in the public workshops, both surveys, and in the formal survey. The County has already constructed public trails on the barrier island to facilitate pedestrian circulation. These trails should be expanded and greater emphasis should be placed on public access to the water. Likewise, trails constructed in parks to provide safe places for walking and jogging should be expanded. Future expansion of Maple Park will provide wonderful opportunities for parks and natural trails.

RENOVATIONS TO EXISTING PARKS

Many of the County's existing parks are old and need repairs. Improvements should include creating accessible routes to existing facilities, providing visitor comfort stations, and the addition of amenities such as shade structures, seating, etc. While detailed assessment of parks is beyond the scope of this planning report, funding for park improvements has been included in the Capital Improvement Proposal in Section Five.

JOINT USE OPPORTUNITIES

The public is best served when government agencies work together. There are a number of public agencies operating in the County that have facilities and programs that potentially serve the public's need for parks and recreation. The County should explore working with other agencies to provide services and attain common goals.

The following agencies have missions that may be in alignment with the County's Parks and Recreation Department:

- Currituck County Schools
- NC Division of State Parks
- Whalehead Preservation Trust
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Private recreation providers
- NC Cooperative Extension

CAPITAL NEEDS

The development of a district park, a community park, and a number of water access sites will require a significant financial commitment from the County over the next 10-15 years. These new improvements, along with park renovations, will require a capital improvement budget of \$12.9 million if fully implemented.

Section Four: Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment and Section Five: Action Plan Implementation provide greater detail on improvements included in the capital improvements budget. Likewise, these sections provide strategies for funding the recommendations made as part of the master plan.

OPERATIONAL NEEDS

The expansion of park facilities described above will greatly improve the County's park and recreation offerings, but will come with a cost. In addition to the capital cost noted in the previous section, adding new parks and a new recreation building will require increased operational and maintenance cost. Section Five: Action Plan provides some general guidelines on anticipated staff needs, as well as program and maintenance cost.

TABLE 5-1 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

CURRITUCK COUNTY

| | Total¹ | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Cost Projection | 2012 - 2016 | 2017 - 2022 |
| Renovation To Existing Parks | \$500,000 | \$250,000 | \$250,000 |
| Accessible Routes | | | |
| Restroom Shelters | | | |
| Shade Structure at Southern Park | | | |
| Planning & Design | \$50,000 | \$25,000 | \$25,000 |
| Renovation Program Total | \$550,000 | \$275,000 | \$275,000 |
| Park Development Program | | | |
| Maple Park Recreation Complex (Phase One) | \$2,000,000 | \$2,000,000 | |
| Maple Park Recreation Complex (Phase Two) | \$3,000,000 | \$3,000,000 | |
| Moyock Community Park ² (construction only) | \$1,500,000 | | \$1,500,000 |
| Planning and Design | \$650,000 | \$500,000 | \$150,000 |
| Park Development Program Total | \$7,150,000 | \$5,500,000 | \$1,650,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Program | | | |
| Community Center (Corolla) | \$1,000,000 | | \$1,000,000 |
| Water Access Areas & Bath Houses | \$750,000 | \$500,000 | \$250,000 |
| Walkways/Trails (Mainland and OBX) | \$3,000,000 | \$1,500,000 | \$1,500,000 |
| Planning & Design | \$475,000 | \$200,000 | \$275,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Program Total | \$5,225,000 | \$2,200,000 | \$3,025,000 |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost | \$12,925,000 | \$7,975,000 | \$4,950,000 |

¹ Proposed cost is presented in 2012 dollar values and makes no allowance for inflation, increased construction cost, or land price increases.

² Proposed budget figures include construction cost only, no acquisition monies are included in this budget.

CURRITUCK COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Over the next ten years Currituck County should focus its park development efforts on the following:

1. Development of larger parks
 - Construct new facilities at Maple Park as part of Currituck Community Park
 - Build a new community park in the upper area of the county in the Moyock area
 - Minimize development of small parks (mini park and neighborhood parks)
2. Enhance water access at the ocean and sound
3. Expand greenways and public trails; with particular emphasis on the Corolla Greenway Trail
4. Construct the following outdoor recreational facilities in the next ten years:
 - 2 Adult Baseball Fields
 - 3 Softball Fields
 - 1 Football Field
 - 3 Soccer/Multi-purpose Fields
 - 3 Outdoor Basketball Courts
 - 1 Volleyball Court
 - 2 Shuffleboard Courts
 - 7 Picnic Shelters
 - 4 Playgrounds
 - 8 Miles of Walking Trails

Most all of these outdoor recreation facility needs could be met with the expansion of Maple Park and the construction of a community park.

5. Construct a community building on the Outer Banks.

ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan supports and reinforces the County's 2006 Land Use Plan, as well as the Maple-Barco Small Area Plan and the Corolla Village Small Area Plan.

- Development of the proposed parks and recreational facilities listed in the master plan will require the County to add park and recreation staff (one Recreation Program Specialist and two park attendants).
- The County should consider increases to the Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget to support new facilities. Facilities should not be constructed unless appropriate funding for operation and maintenance are budgeted.
- The County should strengthen its joint use agreements with Currituck County Schools to ensure continued use of school facilities.
- The County should seek to minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and re-use building materials as it constructs new facilities and operates its parks.

- The Department, with input from County management, should consider the establishment of a Departmental Revenue Plan.
- The County should consider updating the current revenue and pricing policy for parks and recreation services and facilities.
- The County should consider establishing a park foundation for supporting parks and recreation programs and initiatives.
- The County should actively pursue grants from foundations and trust sources on a regional and national level.
- The County should continue to seek funding opportunities through state and federal programs (PARTF, LWCF, etc.).
- The County should look to expand ways to increase revenue opportunities.
- The County should adopt a UDO plan that includes requirements for the dedication of parkland or payment in lieu for parks development. Acceptance of small, isolated parcels of land should be discouraged unless the property provides water access, preservation of a unique natural resource, etc.



Section One Project Overview

Benefits of Park and Recreation

Well-planned park facilities and recreation programs can have a number of positive impacts throughout the community. For the individual, parks can provide relief from the stress of everyday life and provide an opportunity for exercise, which is important in maintaining good health. Parks also contribute to the community by providing a setting for social interaction, thus fostering community awareness.

Besides their psychological and social value, appropriately planned parks and open space also have economic benefits to the community. Parks have the potential to raise the property value of nearby real estate. Additionally, companies considering locating a business in a particular city or county often consider quality-of-life issues including parks and recreation activities and facilities.

Finally, parks and recreation provide environmental benefits. Large tracts of land are often left in a relatively undisturbed natural state, thereby fostering environmental diversity and preservation.

Demand for Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation literature often cite increased leisure time and increased affluence as factors encouraging greater participation in recreation activities in the United States, and thus greater demand for parks and recreation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the industrial worker typically worked 56 hours a week, usually without paid holidays or vacations. Today, with holidays and paid vacations, the typical worker enjoys 20 to 28 “bonus days” per year, while the standard work week has been shortened to 40 hours or less. Today’s workers have more free time for recreation.

Increased affluence has contributed to increased demand for recreation. Between the end of World War II and the early 1970’s real income (adjusted for inflation) doubled. This increased affluence, coupled with increased vacation and shorter work weeks, has encouraged greater participation in recreation among Americans.

However, there is some evidence that these trends have been reversed. Since 1973, real incomes for many families and individuals have remained virtually stagnant. More recently, the economic downturn several years ago has significantly impacted families’ financial standing. As a response to the erosion of buying power, more families have both adults employed outside the home, leading to problems in synchronizing leisure time. The net effect is an increased need for close-to-home outdoor recreation.



Population, demographics, and trends in lifestyles may also affect the amount and type of recreation and parks that are demanded. Population increases create a greater demand, causing existing parks to become over-used. This is particularly true in Currituck County where population growth was extremely high (prior to the recent downturn). Demographic trends may dictate the types of recreation that are demanded. Examples include the aging of the American population, and the increasing number of single adults living alone or with children.

Finally, lifestyle changes, including the greater interest in physical fitness and increasing environmental awareness, have contributed to the increased demand for park and recreation and open space.

Purpose of the Master Plan

The purpose of this Master Plan for Parks and Recreation is to determine the recreation objectives, needs, and priorities of the citizens of Currituck County. It should serve as a long-range, comprehensive policy guide for public decisions related to the scope, quality, and location of park and recreation facilities, including recommendations concerning acquisition, development, or upgrading of park facilities.

With the development of the County’s largest park at the airport in the initial planning stages, it is important that the County take a broad look at community park and recreation needs. The development of facilities at Currituck Community Park will be a significant resource in meeting community recreation facility needs. This planning effort will produce valuable direction in the development of this site specific master plan for Currituck Community Park.

In addition to providing guidance to the development of the athletic facility at Currituck Community Park, this plan identifies recreational needs of all areas of the county. Section Four outlines specific needs for a variety of parks and recreation facilities.

Goal and Objectives

The planning goal and objectives provide direction and structure for the formulation of the Master Plan. Additionally, the planning goal and objectives can help define policies and aid in the decision-making during the implementation phase of the Plan. A successful parks and recreation system for Currituck County will require long-term commitment and coordinated action to achieve the following goal and objectives.

Planning Goal

The goal of this Master Plan is to provide the citizens, elected officials, and staff of Currituck County with a 10-year course of action that addresses the recreation needs of all citizens and provides an economically attainable timetable for administering, developing, and acquiring parks and recreation resources and facilities.

Objectives

1. To accurately identify existing and projected needs for parks and recreation land.
2. To ensure the Master Plan is responsive to Currituck County's projected long-range needs. The plan should be flexible to allow it to be updated to respond to unexpected changes in population and government finances.
3. To involve the public in the planning and implementation by the use of public meetings and making the plan accessible and understandable.
4. To ensure the Master Plan is consistent with other plans and ordinances, including policy in the County's Land Use Plan, and complements the facilities and programs provided by other public, private, and voluntary agencies.
5. To provide conveniently located recreation facilities to serve the needs of Currituck County's children, teenagers, and adults, including the handicapped, economically disadvantaged, and elderly.
6. To identify mechanisms for funding acquisition and development of park facilities.
7. To recognize, utilize, and protect the County's outstanding natural resources and to develop a variety of leisure opportunities.



Section Two Inventory

Existing Public Facilities

The citizens of Currituck County are having their park and recreational needs met through a combination of public and private offerings. The County is the largest provider of public park and recreation facilities and programs. It operates ten parks and water access areas with several hundred acres. The County's two traditional parks (Maple and Sound) provide a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities and are found in the central and southern sections of the county. Other County facilities (special use parks, boat ramps, etc.) also provide recreational opportunities for county residents and tourists. A detailed inventory of all public park facilities is included in this section.

Currituck County Schools also provides county residents with a variety of indoor and outdoor athletic facilities. These facilities provide valuable space for youth and adult athletics, but are predominately utilized as practice facilities. Under the current joint use agreement, the Parks and Recreation Department is unable to rely on these fields for game day programming. These facilities are listed on the facilities inventory spreadsheet, but are not considered in the development of the needs assessment identified in Section Four.

In addition to the publicly operated programs and facilities found in Currituck County, a variety of private recreation providers operate throughout the County. These private providers play an important role in park and recreation offerings for residents. Their programs and facilities are valuable to the public, but many of the services are fee based. While these agencies are providing valuable programs and facilities, and ultimately reducing the demand placed on public/government offerings, they do not replace offerings by the public agencies because not everyone can afford the programs and facilities. These private providers are shown on the map identifying recreational opportunities, but not included as part of the needs assessment.

DISTRICT PARKS

MAPLE PARK

19.5 Acres*

Maple Park is located adjacent to Currituck Regional Airport and provides a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities.

The park's baseball/softball field provides team sports for youth and adults. Volleyball courts, a badminton court, horseshoe pits, and a playground provide activities for family events and participants of all ages. Picnicking is offered through a large group corporate shelter (with restrooms) and four smaller gazebo shelters. Walkers and joggers can use the paved walking trail and can access natural trails that run through the County's adjacent property. In addition to the traditional recreational opportunities, Maple Park contains a skate park with concrete bowl and ramps.

Maple Park will soon be transformed and expanded. As part of the County's regional airport expansion, access to the existing park will change and the skateboard park will be relocated. While portions of the existing park will be changed, the facility will be expanded and incorporated into a county complex that will include a YMCA, NC Cooperative Extension, Currituck County Community Center building, and the Currituck County Regional Aviation and Technical Training Center. The proposed new park will be larger, contain more facilities, and be an integral part of a mixed use county complex.

A site specific master plan has been developed for this park.



*The existing facility at Maple Park constructed with PARTF funds covers approximately 19.5 acres. The development of the Currituck Community Park, and expansion of Maple Park's facilities will increase park acreage to +/- 110 acres.

Existing facilities include:

- (1) Baseball/Softball Field
- (1) Playground
- (2) Volleyball Courts
- (1) Badminton Court
- (2) Horseshoe Pits
- Walking Trail
- Skate Park
- Picnic Shelter/Restrooms
- (4) Gazebos
- Ponds
- Access to Natural Trails (walking and equestrian)

COMMUNITY PARKS

SOUND PARK

24.5 Acres

Located on the southern tip of the county in Harbinger, this community park offers traditional recreation opportunities and an outstanding water access. One of the County's newer parks, Sound Park includes facilities for team sports (baseball/softball, multi-purpose fields), tennis courts, playgrounds, skateboard park, and volleyball courts. The park also provides wonderful access to the Currituck Sound with a boat ramp, boardwalk, and wildlife overlook area. All facilities are connected with a paved walking trail. Individual pavilions, gazebos, and two group picnic shelters with restrooms provide excellent family gathering opportunities.

Existing facilities include:

- (2) Baseball/Softball Fields
- (2) Multi-purpose Fields
- (2) Picnic Shelters with Restrooms
- (2) Volleyball Courts
- (2) Playgrounds
- (2) Boat ramps
- Skateboard Park
- Boardwalk with Gazebos
- Paved Walking Trail
- Wildlife Viewing Areas



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

CAROVA BEACH PARK 5 Acres

This small park in Carova provides a valuable water access in the northern end of the Outer Banks. A volleyball court and horseshoe pits provide recreational activities. Picnic shelters (large and small) provide family/group opportunities. A boardwalk and boat ramp provide water access. Existing facilities include:

- (1) Volleyball Court
- (2) Horseshoe Pits
- (4) Picnic Shelters
- Boardwalk
- Boat Ramps

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK 5.7 Acres

This park, located on the Intercoastal Waterway, offers a fishing dock and water access combined with a civic memorial to honor the County's veterans. A picnic shelter and horseshoe pits offer family recreation activities. Existing facilities include:

- (1) Fishing Dock
- (1) Picnic Shelter
- (3) Horseshoe Pits
- Water Access

WALNUT ISLAND PARK 1.1 Acres

This small park neighborhood park located in a residential area of Grandy provides a playground and a picnic shelter with gravel parking. Existing facilities include:

- (1) Playground
- (1) Picnic Shelter

KNOTTS ISLAND

RURITAN PARK 9 Acres

This small park adjacent to the Knotts Island Senior Citizens Center provides a playground, picnic shelter with restrooms, and a skate park. Existing facilities include:

- (1) Playground
- (1) Picnic Shelter with Restrooms
- (1) Skate Park



WATER ACCESS

POYNER'S ROAD PARK 20 Acres
Located on Poyner's Road, Poyner's Road Park primarily serves as a water access point with a North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission boat ramp. This water access area provides areas for fishing and a shelter for picnicking.



SHINGLE LANDING BOATING ACCESS 3.75 Acres
This small boat access area is located in the Shingle Landing single family development in Moyock. The facility provides a boat ramp, canoe launch, boardwalk, and parking for cars and trailers. The County owns 20 acres of undeveloped property in the same subdivision.



SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

CURRITUCK HERITAGE PARK 34.5 Acres
Currituck Heritage Park, with the magnificent Whalehead Club, is truly the “crown jewel of the Outer Banks”. This park provides County residents and visitors from throughout the world with a unique opportunity to explore the coastal treasures of the Outer Banks. The park’s facilities include the Whalehead Club, Currituck Beach Lighthouse, and the Lighthouse Keeper’s House. Each of these historic structures provides historical tours and educational opportunities.



In addition to the historical structures, the park offers water access and outdoor picnic and passive recreation opportunities. Existing facilities include:

- Whalehead Club
- Currituck Beach Lighthouse
- Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education
- Original Boathouse
- Pedestrian Bridge
- Boat Ramp
- Picnic Tables
- Gazebo overlooking Currituck Sound

CURRITUCK COUNTY RURAL CENTER

105 Acres

The Currituck County Rural Center is maintained as a center for education, cultural and recreational enrichment of the public for the benefit of the citizens and visitors of Currituck County. The property provides a wide variety of unique indoor and outdoor activities. Existing facilities include:

- 220’ x 110’ Indoor Equestrian Riding Arena
- 300’ x 150’ Outdoor Riding Arena
- Roping Arena
- 2 Fishing Ponds
- 1500’ Bulkhead

Activities Include:

- Sound Access
- Equestrian Riding Rings (indoor and outdoor)
- Special Events
- Fishing
- Horse Shows
- Dog/Cat Shows
- 4-H Events
- Bike Riding
- Canoeing/Kayaking

Currituck County Facilities

| Name | Acreage | Adult Baseball | Youth Baseball | Softball | Football | Soccer | Basketball | Tennis | Volleyball | Shuffleboard | Racquetball | Badminton | Horseshoe | Picnic Tables | Picnic Shelter | Playground | Trails | Skate Park | Boat Ramp | Fishing | Boardwalk | Restrooms | Senior Center |
|------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
|------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------|

| Neighborhood Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Carova Beach Park | 5.0 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Knotts Island Ruritan Park | 9.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Veterans Memorial Park | 5.7 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Walnut Island Park | 1.1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Neighborhood Parks Total | 20.80 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| Community Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Sound Park | 24.5 | | 2 | | | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 1.6 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | |
| Community Parks Total | 24.5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| District Parks | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Maple Park Recreation Complex* | 110 | | 1 | | | | | | 2 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1.4 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | |
| District Parks Total | 110.0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

| Water Access | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Poyner's Road Park | 20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Shingle Landing Boating Access | 3.75 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | |
| Water Access Facilities Total | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| Special Use Facilities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Currituck Heritage Park | 34.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Currituck County Rural Center | 105 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Special Use Facilities Total | 139.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Total County Facilities | 318.8 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

*Includes expanded acreage, see page 2 of this section for more information.

Currituck County School Facilities

| Name | Acreage | Adult Baseball | Youth Baseball | Softball | Football | Soccer | Basketball | Tennis | Volleyball | Shuffleboard | Racquetball | Badminton | Horseshoe | Picnic Tables | Picnic Shelter | Playground | Trails | Skate Park | Boat Ramp | Fishing | Boardwalk | Restrooms | Senior Center |
|------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------|
|------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|--------|------------|--------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|------------|--------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------------|

| School Facilities (Practice) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Jarvis Elementary | 4 | | | | | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Griggs Elementary | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Central Elementary | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Shawboro Elementary | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Moyock Elementary | 2 | | | | 4 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Knotts Island Elementary | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Moyock Middle | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Practice Facilities Total | 0.0 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

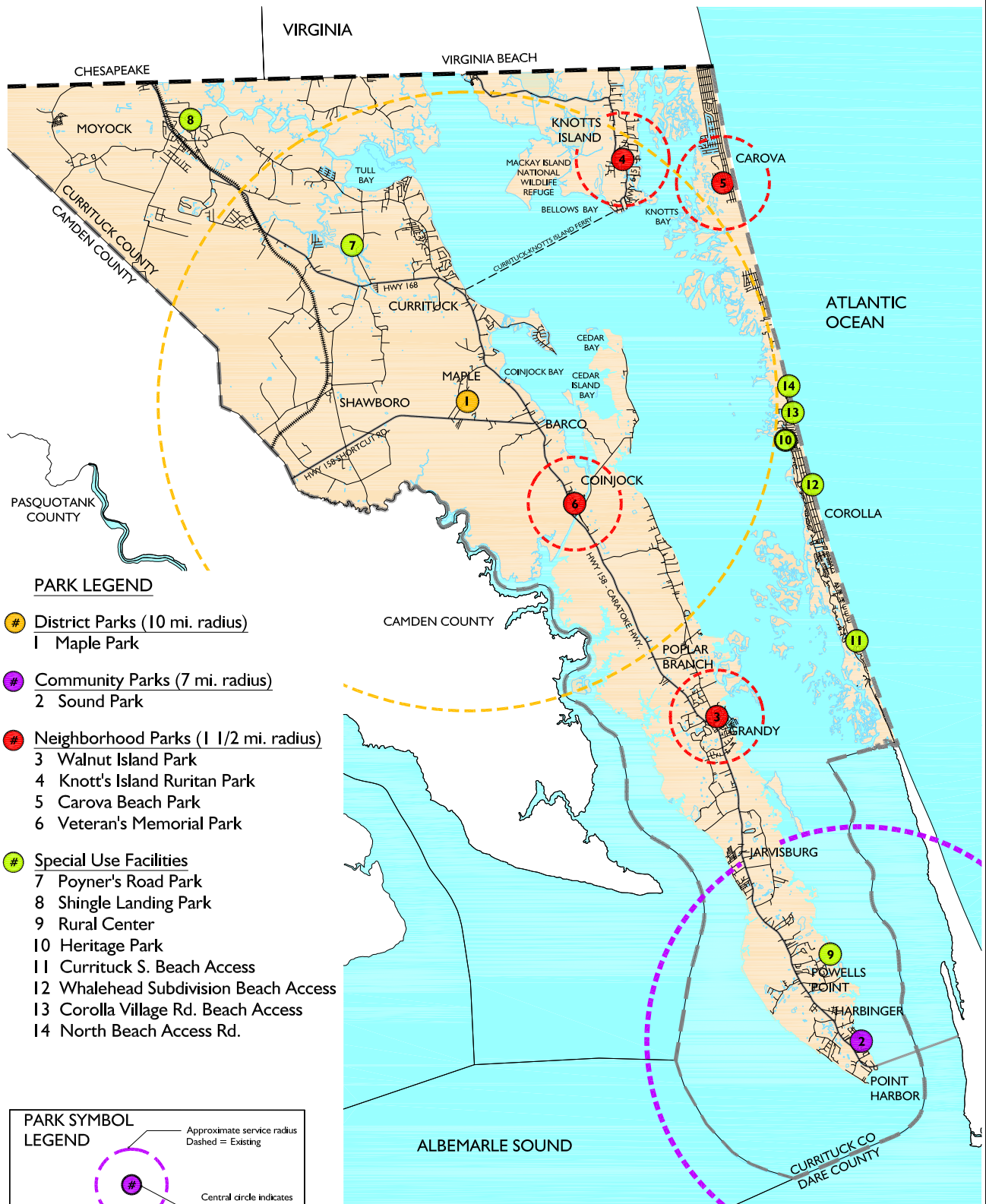
| School Facilities (Game/League) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|
| Currituck High/Middle | 2 | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Knapp Early College | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Game Facilities Total | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| School Facilities Total | 18 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 10 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|

| Regional Parks/Preserves | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Currituck Banks Coastal Reserve | 954 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N.C. Estuarine Research Reserve | 960 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Currituck National Wildlife Refuge | 3213 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

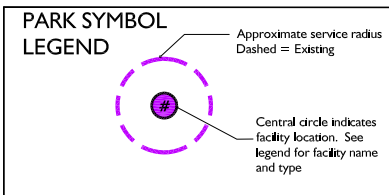
| Conservancy Areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Northwest River Game Land | 1251 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| North River Game Land | 8430 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Wilderness Areas | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Currituck National Wildlife Refuge | 6000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge | 8646 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



PARK LEGEND

- # District Parks (10 mi. radius)**
 - 1 Maple Park
- # Community Parks (7 mi. radius)**
 - 2 Sound Park
- # Neighborhood Parks (1 1/2 mi. radius)**
 - 3 Walnut Island Park
 - 4 Knott's Island Ruritan Park
 - 5 Carova Beach Park
 - 6 Veteran's Memorial Park
- # Special Use Facilities**
 - 7 Poyner's Road Park
 - 8 Shingle Landing Park
 - 9 Rural Center
 - 10 Heritage Park
 - 11 Currituck S. Beach Access
 - 12 Whalehead Subdivision Beach Access
 - 13 Corolla Village Rd. Beach Access
 - 14 North Beach Access Rd.



SITE SOLUTIONS

2 3 2 0
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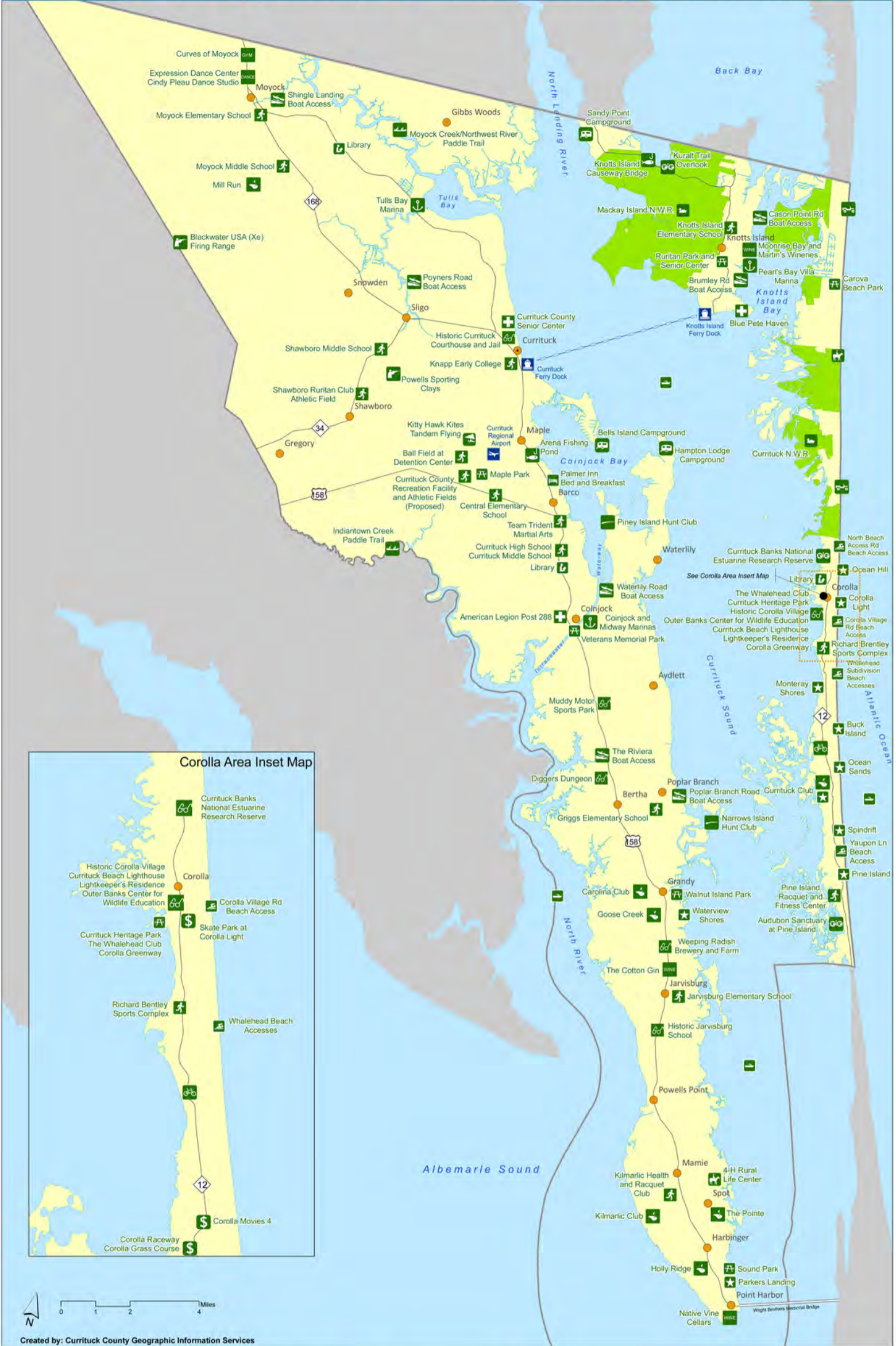


Currituck County,
North Carolina

Existing County Parks

Comprehensive Parks & Recreation
Master Plan
December 2011

Recreational Opportunities: Currituck County, North Carolina



- | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
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Section Three

The People of Currituck County

The first step in planning for the park and recreational needs of Currituck County is to obtain an understanding of the people in the community. This understanding comes from reviewing the population and demographics of the County, looking at the changes that are occurring within the community, and discussing community needs with the public.

Change is occurring rapidly in Currituck County. Settled in the 1600s, the County has long been a center for hunting, fishing, and agriculture. The years following World-War II saw significant growth. Today, it's beautiful beaches and pristine backwaters have allowed it to become one of North Carolina's fastest growing counties. The County's population has increased dramatically since 1990. While that growth is expected to continue for coming decades, the rate of population growth has slowed in the current economic downturn.

It is not enough to simply understand the population growth and demographic shifts in the County. In order to develop a plan that meets the community's specific needs, County staff conducted public meetings in each of the counties sub-areas to hear the public's desire for parks and recreation facilities. Input from these meetings was instrumental in developing recommendations for this plan. In addition to this planning initiative, this report utilizes information gathered through previous planning efforts including the County's current Land Use Plan, several Small Area Plans, and findings from a countywide recreation plan developed in 2002.

Previous Planning Efforts

In the past decade, a number of planning studies have been conducted that provide insight and information that is relevant to this Master Plan. These studies include several community planning initiatives and a previous recreation and park master plan. The insight they provided is very helpful in the preparation of this plan.

2002 Recreation and Parks Master Plan

The Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at East Carolina University developed a Recreation and Park Master Plan for the County in 2002. This planning document provided a very thorough inventory and assessment of the County's existing facilities, and used census data to identify the County's service population. As part of this planning study, countywide development standards were established for park acreage and recreation facilities. Those standards can be reviewed in Tables 4-1 and 4-2 in Section Four of this document.

Based on the standards that were created as part of the planning process, the 2002 document recommended the County provide:

- 111 acres of neighborhood parks
- 163 acres of community parks
- 2 softball fields
- 1 soccer field
- 5 tennis courts

In addition to these facility needs, the 2002 plan made the following "Action Plan" recommendations:

- Develop a strategic plan for parks and recreation.
- Establish a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.
- Increase the capital improvement budget for parks.
- Seek federal, state, and local grants for park development/improvements.
- Seek funding for additional parks through user fees and taxes.
- Increase education and marketing activities for parks and recreation.

- Build upon and expand joint use opportunities with the schools.
- Expand recreation facilities and programs for middle ages and senior citizens.
- Expand youth programs.
- Increase opportunities for special populations.
- Improve maintenance operations by increasing the operational budget.
- Seek ways to expand the County's economy through tourism.

In the ten years since the development of this plan, Currituck County has worked hard to implement the recommendations that were presented. The department has made improvements in many of the areas discussed in the plan. Many of the policy and operational recommendations listed in the 2002 plan are ongoing responsibilities of the Department. Many of the recommendations from the 2002 plan are applicable today.

2006 Land Use Plan

The County developed a Land Use Plan in 2006 and amended the plan in 2008. As with any countywide land use plan, the purpose of the plan was to "develop a framework to guide County officials and private citizens as day to day decisions are made affecting development". Parks and recreation was one of the components the planning report addressed.

The following policies specifically related to Parks and Recreation were identified in the plan.

Parks and Recreation Policies

Policy PR1: Future park development and open space preservation shall provide for the rational DISTRIBUTION OF RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE opportunities within the County.

Policy PR2: In determining FUTURE SITES FOR PARK, RECREATION AND WATER ACCESS FACILITIES, multiple objectives for natural area conservation, visual enhancement, preservation of cultural and historic resources and watershed and flood prone area protection shall be considered.

Policy PR3: Currituck County shall continue to work cooperatively with the County school system to maximize the use of RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATED AT PUBLIC SCHOOL SITES, and to foster the joint development of additional public park facilities at new public school sites.

Policy PR4: The County shall seek to identify, plan for and develop a system of OPEN SPACE GREENWAYS, HIKING and BIKING TRAILS as opportunities may allow. The use of (1) natural corridors such as streams and floodplains, and (2) man-made corridors such as utility and transportation rights-of-way and easements, shall be emphasized.

Policy PR5: LAND ACQUISITION for new park, recreation, and open space sites in advance of need shall be encouraged to achieve desirable locations at cost effective levels.

Policy PR6: All new residential development shall provide for ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS including, as may be appropriate, funding in proportion to the demand created by the development. The amount of open space and improvements may be determined according to the number of dwelling units in the development and/or by a percentage of the total acreage in the development. Fees in lieu of land dedication shall be based on the inflation adjusted assessed value of the development or subdivision for property tax purposes.

Policy PR7: New park and recreation facilities, as well as improvements to existing facilities, shall give special consideration to the needs of HANDICAPPED PERSONS.

Policy PR8: New mixed use developments, office and business parks, and other non-residential areas shall be encouraged to include WALKWAYS WITHIN THE DEVELOPMENT.

In addition to the specific policy recommendations, several of the sub-area policies are related to parks and recreation elements. Special policies applicable to the mainland include:

Policy ML3: The interests of Mainland Area residents in having ACCESS TO THE AREA'S OCEAN AND ESTUARINE WATERS shall be fostered through County actions to increase the number of additional public access sites at a rate commensurate with the population growth of the Currituck County. Included in the actions taken to increase public access shall be a consideration given to transportation needs, including boat docks and ferry services.

Special policies applicable to Knotts Island include:

Policy KI1: The need for ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRUST WATERS in the Knotts Island area shall be met through periodic improvements to existing public facilities. The County also recognizes that private sector facilities may play a role in satisfying access needs to the water.

Policy KI3: Currituck County shall support efforts to improve community services in the Knotts Island area. Services which may warrant improvement include: (1) FIRE SERVICE, to address fire safety as well as reducing insurance costs and (2) COMMUNICATIONS following major storm events (3) access to LIBRARY SERVICES, and (4) access to INDOOR RECREATION facilities.

Another critical policy listed in the Land Use Plan under Policies on Planning and Paying for Infrastructure and Services is Policy PP3 which states:

Policy PP3: The costs of infrastructure, facilities and services (e.g. schools, parks, water supply, etc.) related to the DEMAND CREATED BY NEW GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT shall be borne, in equitable proportion, by those creating the additional demand. So as to lessen the burden on the general property tax payer, this approach may include a land transfer tax, impact fees on new development, upzoning fees, and user fees for new facilities.

As part of the Land Use Plan's "Action Plan", four action items were listed for Parks and Recreation.

| Actions Concerning Parks and Recreation | Policy Foundation | Priority | Time | Who Leads |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|--|
| Action PR-1: Commission of master parks and recreation plan to identify park and recreation needs, suggest park and recreation additions and improvements, set forth cost estimates, and propose the means of financing. | PR-1, PR-2, PR-5 | Priority | 4 to 6 years | County Commissioners, Parks Department |
| Action PR-2: Set forth, as a goal for the County, the establishment of a system of district parks, serving districts as identified in the master parks and recreation plan. | PR-1 | Low priority | Greater than 6 years | County Commissioners, Parks Department |
| Action PR-3: Implement a fee in lieu of land dedication, to be applied to new developments, for the purpose of generating revenues for the development of park assets and additional public access opportunities in Currituck County. Consider placing such revenues in reserve accounts, tied to the designated districts within which the fees were generated. | PR-6, PR-1, PR-5 | Priority | 4 to 6 years | County Commissioners, Parks Department, Planning Board |
| Action PR-4: Form an interdepartmental project team whose mission is to orchestrate the full utilization of (1) the County’s school properties for recreational use when not being employed for school purposes and (2) the County’s park and recreation assets for school use. Bring together school facility managers and parks department personnel, among others, to prepare a plan of action for review by the School Board and County Commissioners. | PR-3 | Low priority | Greater than 6 years | County Commissioners, County School Board |

Small Area Plans

Maple-Barco Small Area Plan

In 2009 the County’s Planning Department worked with a Steering Committee of local stakeholders and citizens to develop a small area plan for the Maple-Barco area of the County. The primary focus of this plan was aimed at “Balance growth and economic expansion with the integrity and character of the community”.

The small area plan for Maple-Barco is particularly relevant for parks and recreation because the County’s largest park will be located in the Currituck Community Park. The expansion of Maple Park, YMCA and Senior

Center will all enhance residential, professional, and personal services as identified in the plan's land use recommendations. The County park will also provide opportunities to enhance a number of the environmental and community heritage policies including:

- Storm water quality
- Appropriate development of poorly drained soils
- Preservation of open space
- Encourage preservation of local architectural vernacular
- Enhance entrance to Currituck Community Park with native vegetation and architectural features.

Corolla Village Small Area Plan

The County Planning Department is currently working on a small area plan for Corolla Village. The goal of this plan is “to balance growth in a way that preserves the physical and natural environments that make Corolla Village distinct from other coastal communities”. Recommendations in the plan that relate to parks and recreation include:

- Encourage the use of alternative transportation options; provide safe pedestrian and bicycle corridors.
- Protect Maritime Forest and specimen trees.
- Protect water quality to enhance tourism, outdoor recreation, and fishing.
- Develop a Recreation and Open Space Plan that identifies open space and possible sites for recreation.
- Expand the quality and location of public spaces including access to water, open space, and recreational areas.

County Population and Demographics

Currituck County is part of the Norfolk-Virginia Beach-Newport News Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). As noted in the County's 2006 Land Use Plan (LUP), Currituck County's growth was much greater than other counties in that MSA. From 1970-80, the County experienced 59% growth. From

1980-90 growth in the county slowed to \pm 24%, but increased to 32% from 1990-2000. The 2010 census listed the county's population at 23,547. This represents a 29.5% growth rate since 2000.

The 2006 Land Use Plan projects the county's population to be as follows:

Table 2.8 Projected Year Round Population Growth 2000-2025

| Year | Low Growth | Medium Growth | High Growth |
|------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| 2000 | 18,190 | 18,190 | 18,190 |
| 2005 | 20,591 | 22,500 | 22,500 |
| 2010 | 22,644 | 24,589 | 26,154 |
| 2015 | 24,917 | 28,142 | 30,376 |
| 2025 | 29,288 | 36,800 | 41,400 |

Current economic conditions imply the low growth scenario is most likely to occur; therefore this planning document is basing 10 year projected facility needs on a projected population of 27,700.

It should be noted that this planning report uses the year round, permanent resident population as the service population for parks and recreational facilities. This planning criteria is used because it is believed that most seasonal tourists are having the majority of their recreational needs met through the county's natural features (beaches, sound, water areas) in conjunction with amenities provided by rental properties and private recreational providers (private fishing piers, marinas, etc.).

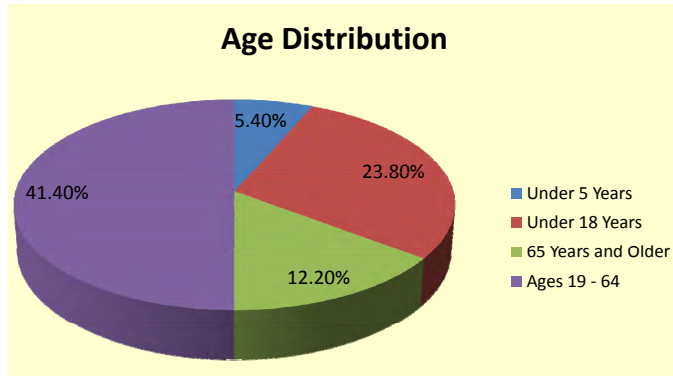
It is recognized that some county amenities (water access areas, trails, comfort stations, etc.) on the barrier islands are impacted by the seasonal population. This additional demand should be accounted for in some facility development to enhance access to the water (sound and ocean).

Demographics

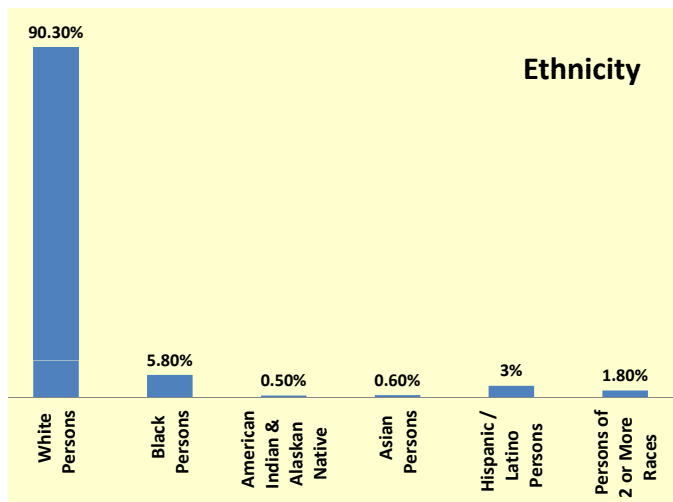
As previously noted, the County's 2010 population was 23,547. This figure represents a \pm 29.5% growth in population since 2000. This growth rate is significantly greater than the state's growth rate for the same period (18.5%).

The County's senior population (over 65) was 12.2%,

closely reflecting the state’s senior population of 12.7%. On the other end of the age spectrum, almost one fourth (23.8%) of the county’s population was younger than 18 years old. Again, this percentage is very close to North Carolina’s younger population (24.3%).



Currituck County has an extremely high percentage of white persons. Over 90% of the county’s population is white. This is significantly higher than the state’s white population (68.5%). The county’s black population (5.8%) is significantly less than the state’s (21.5%). Likewise, the county’s Hispanic and Latino population (3%) is significantly less than the state’s Hispanic or Latino population (8.4%).



Financially, Currituck County residents are more affluent than the average North Carolinian. Median value of an owner occupied house in Currituck County is \$233,100, while the median cost of a home in North Carolina is \$143,700. The higher value homes can be expected when considering the median household income in Currituck County is

\$51,997 over \$8,000 more (\pm 19% more) than the state’s median household income of \$43,754.

Another census statistic that speaks to the county’s financial status is persons living below the poverty level. The county’s population living below the poverty level is approximately 10%, while the state has over 16% living at this reduced capacity.

One last telling statistic from the 2010 census; the average commute time for North Carolina workers is 23.2 minutes. The average commute time for a worker in Currituck County is 31.8 minutes (over one third longer). This simple statistic speaks to the linear geographical layout of the county, and the difficulty with moving from one area of the county to another.

Demographics Highlights/Summary

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 2010 Population | 23,547 |
| 2000 Population | 18,182 |
| Population, Percent Change | +29.5% |
| Female Persons | 50.7% |
| Male Persons | 49.3% |
| Median Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units (2005-2009) | \$233,100 |
| Median Household Income (2009) | \$51,997 |
| Mean Travel Time to Work | 31.8 minutes |

Public Input

In 2010, the County’s Parks and Recreation Department hosted public workshops throughout the county to seek input from the citizens on recreational needs. In an effort to increase participation and minimize travel issues, five public meetings were held throughout the county. The public meeting locations included:

- Richard A. Brindley Sports Center
- Jarvisburg Elementary School
- Currituck County High School
- Moyock Middle School
- Knotts Island Elementary School

The public workshops were heavily promoted. Advertisements were run in the Daily Advance and

the Coastland Times. Announcements were also put on the local cable television information channel and fliers were handed out at locations throughout the County.

The County’s efforts were rewarded with outstanding attendance at the meetings. Several hundred citizens attended the five meetings.

The format of each meeting was standardized to ensure continuity of information and public access. Each meeting began with a welcome and overview of the meeting’s purpose. As part of the meeting’s process, participants were asked to identify recreational amenities they currently enjoy and were asked to identify facilities they felt were needed. At the end of the meeting participants were allowed to vote on their favorite facilities. A survey was also given to each person in attendance.

A quick inspection of a county map immediately indicates the county has a wide variation in location, landform, and water access. The residents living in the upper portion of the mainland (Moyock) and those living on the barrier islands, have different recreational needs and interests. The difference was reflected in the input received at the public meetings.

Overall, the facilities listed as most needed were indoor swimming pool and gymnasium. Approximately one-third of those attending the workshops indicated a need for these facilities. Both of these facility needs will be met with the construction of the County’s indoor recreation facilities at Currituck Community Park. These facilities are currently under construction and will be open by early 2012.

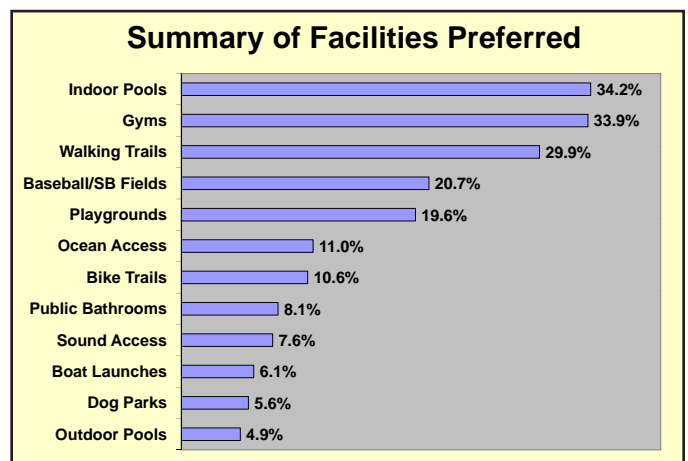
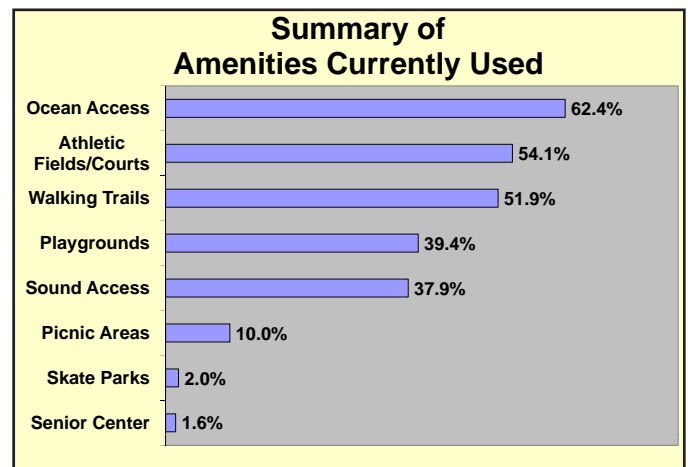
Walking trails were the third most popular facilities need. Over one-fourth (26%) of those present indicated a need for walking trails. The outdoor recreation facility need listed most was baseball/softball fields, followed closely by playgrounds (18% and 12% respectfully).

The next tier of requested facilities included bike trails and ocean access. Eight to ten percent of those present indicated those as needed facilities. Public

bathrooms and sound access were identified as needs by ± 7% of participants. Outdoor pool, boat launch, and dog parks received support from less than 5% of those attending.

While the overall numbers tell an important story for countywide needs, looking at the responses from the individual meetings provide additional information. Those citizens attending the public meetings located on the mainland (Jarvisburg, Moyock, and Maple/Barco) indicated a need for more traditional recreational activities (pools, gymnasiums, ball fields) than those attending at the more water oriented locations (Knotts Island, Corolla). The focus of these participants was more on trails and water access, as well as a community building.

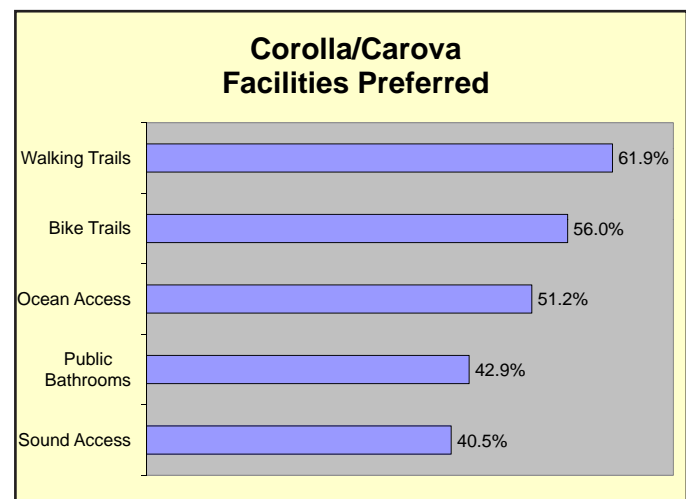
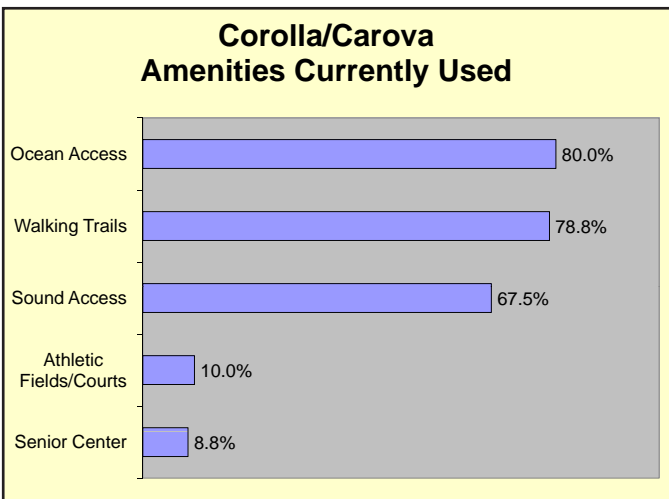
The information gathered at these five public meetings (as well as the tremendous turnout) indicates there is strong support for parks and recreational facilities by county residents.



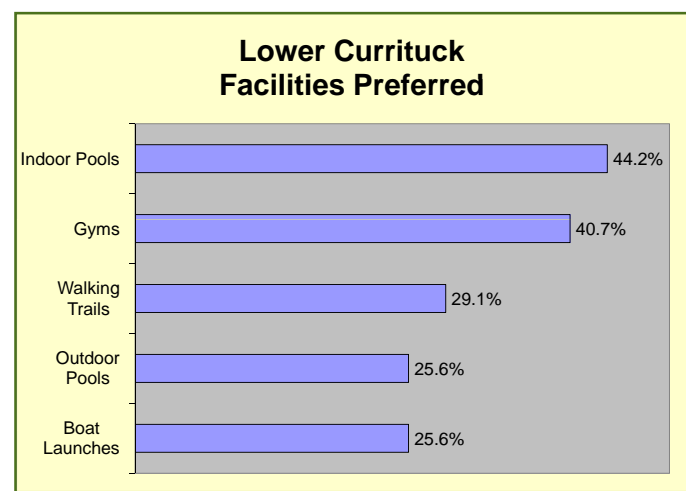
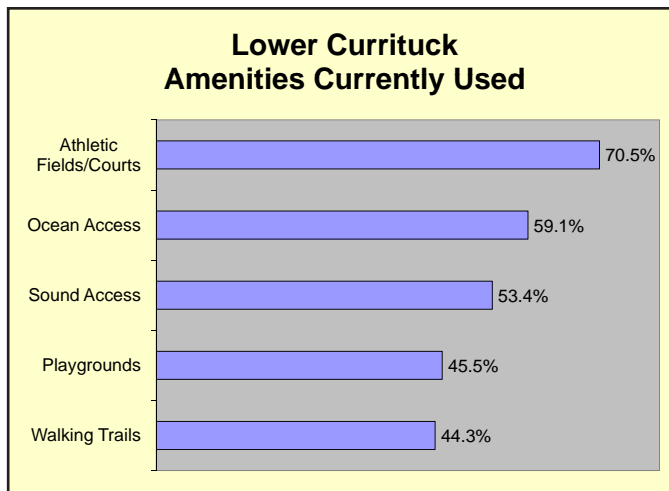
Survey Results by Location

| | Corolla/Carova | | Lower Currituck | | Mid-County | | Moyock | | Knotts Island | |
|--------|----------------|------|-----------------|------|------------|------|--------|------|---------------|------|
| Gender | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| M | 50 | 55.6 | 35 | 35.7 | 37 | 36.6 | 81 | 38.8 | 10 | 50.0 |
| F | 40 | 44.4 | 63 | 64.3 | 64 | 63.4 | 128 | 61.2 | 10 | 50.0 |

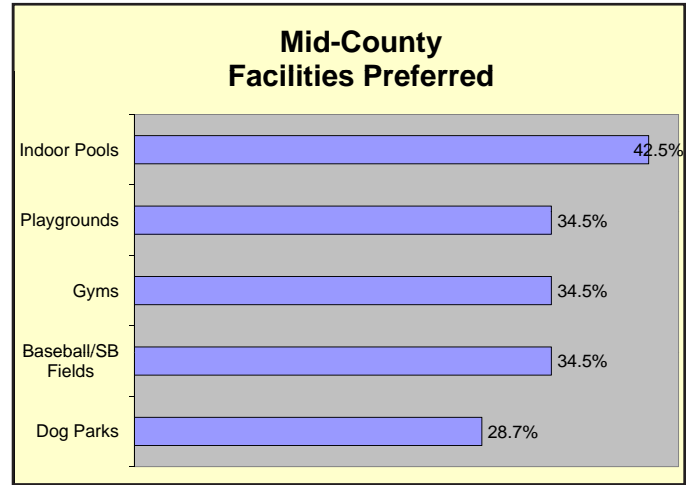
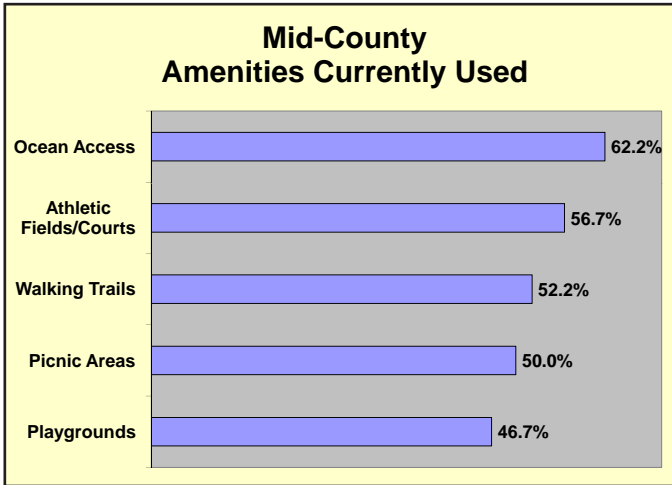
| Corolla/Carova | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|------|------|----------------------|----|----|------|--|
| Amenities Currently Used | 80 | # | % | Rank | Facilities Preferred | 84 | # | % | |
| Ocean Access | | 64 | 80 | 1 | Walking Trails | | 52 | 61.9 | |
| Walking Trails | | 63 | 78.8 | 2 | Bike Trails | | 47 | 56 | |
| Sound Access | | 54 | 67.5 | 3 | Ocean Access | | 43 | 51.2 | |
| Athletic Fields/Courts | | 8 | 10 | 4 | Public Bathrooms | | 36 | 42.9 | |
| Senior Center | | 7 | 8.8 | 5 | Sound Access | | 34 | 40.5 | |



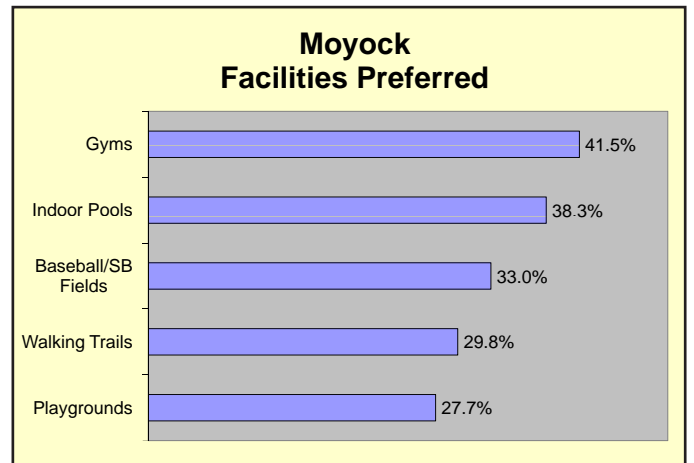
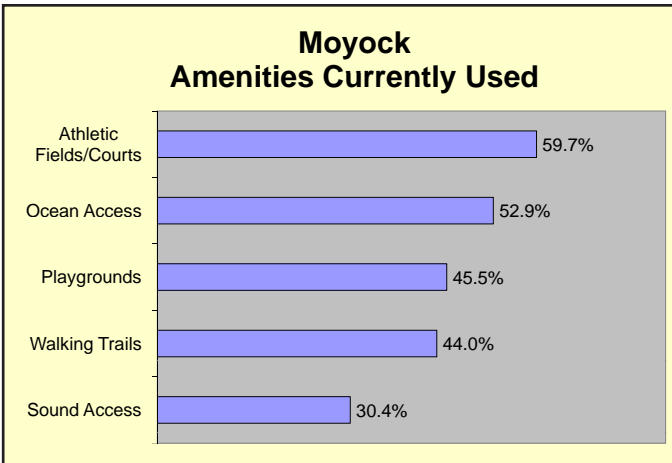
| Lower Currituck | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|------|------|----------------------|----|----|------|--|
| Amenities Currently Used | 88 | # | % | Rank | Facilities Preferred | 86 | # | % | |
| Athletic Fields | | 62 | 70.5 | 1 | Indoor Pools | | 38 | 44.2 | |
| Ocean Access | | 52 | 59.1 | 2 | Gyms | | 35 | 40.7 | |
| Sound Access | | 47 | 53.4 | 3 | Walking Trails | | 25 | 29.1 | |
| Playgrounds | | 40 | 45.5 | 4 | Outdoor Pools | | 22 | 25.6 | |
| Walking Trails | | 39 | 44.3 | 5 | Boat Launches | | 22 | 25.6 | |



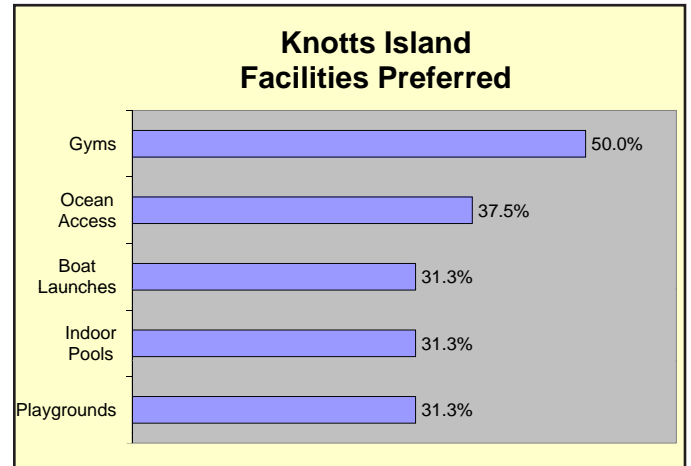
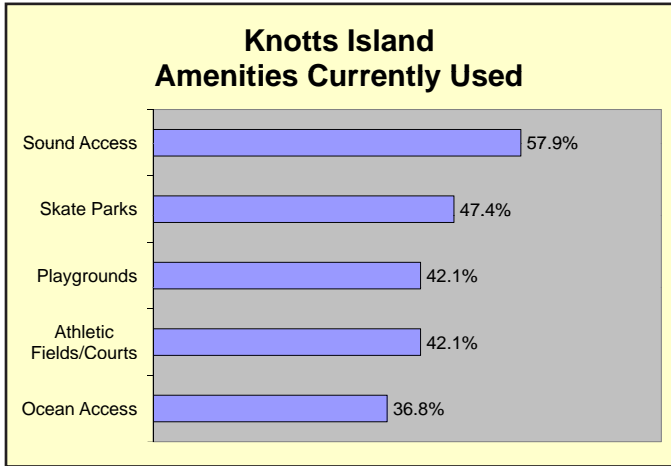
| Mid-County | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|------|------|----------------------|----|----|------|
| Amenities Currently Used | 90 | # | % | Rank | Facilities Preferred | 87 | # | % |
| Ocean Access | | 56 | 62.2 | 1 | Indoor Pools | | 37 | 42.5 |
| Athletic Fields/Courts | | 51 | 56.7 | 2 | Playgrounds | | 30 | 34.5 |
| Walking Trails | | 47 | 52.2 | 3 | Gyms | | 30 | 34.5 |
| Picnic Areas | | 45 | 50 | 4 | Baseball/SB Fields | | 30 | 34.5 |
| Playgrounds | | 42 | 46.7 | 5 | Dog Parks | | 25 | 28.7 |



| Moyock | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|------|------|----------------------|-----|----|------|
| Amenities Currently Used | 191 | # | % | Rank | Facilities Preferred | 188 | # | % |
| Athletic Fields/Courts | | 114 | 59.7 | 1 | Gyms | | 78 | 41.5 |
| Ocean Access | | 101 | 52.9 | 2 | Indoor Pools | | 72 | 38.3 |
| Playgrounds | | 87 | 45.5 | 3 | BB/SB Fields | | 62 | 33 |
| Walking Trails | | 84 | 44 | 4 | Walking Trails | | 56 | 29.8 |
| Sound Access | | 58 | 30.4 | 5 | Playgrounds | | 52 | 27.7 |



| Knotts Island | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----|----|------|------|----------------------|----|---|------|
| Amenities Currently Used | 19 | # | % | Rank | Facilities Preferred | 16 | # | % |
| Sound Access | | 11 | 57.9 | 1 | Gyms | | 8 | 50 |
| Skate Parks | | 9 | 47.4 | 2 | Ocean Access | | 6 | 37.5 |
| Playgrounds | | 8 | 42.1 | 3 | Boat Launches | | 5 | 31.3 |
| Athletic Fields/Courts | | 8 | 42.1 | 4 | Indoor Pools | | 5 | 31.3 |
| Ocean Access | | 7 | 36.8 | 5 | Playgrounds | | 5 | 31.3 |





Section Four

Recreation Standards and Needs Assessment

Introduction

This section contains the documentation on which the Master Plan is based. It begins with a description of the park types that typically make up a park system. Using these park types as a backdrop, national, state, and county/municipal standards (used by other North Carolina communities) are reviewed and used as a tool for establishing standards for park development in Currituck County. Standards reviewed in this study are based on standards proposed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), and other similar municipal/county agencies. In addition, standards established in previous master plan studies by Currituck County are used for comparison. It should be noted that the NRPA, in its 1995 report “Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines”, determined there are no “national standards” for park development. Instead, the latest NRPA study recommends that each community is unique, and that standards reflecting the local “uniqueness” should be established. With this understanding, this Master Plan develops local standards to evaluate the County’s current system and to establish goals to meet future growth.

Classifications For Parks, Open Space And Greenways

This study looks at two types of park standards. The first analysis looks at total acreage of parkland within the system and how this acreage is broken into park types. From this study it is possible to see how existing facilities within the County's system compares with other communities, both with overall park acreage and with park types within this overall acreage.

The second analysis looks at recreation activities and the facilities required to program these activities. By establishing a population-based standard for various recreation activities, this study establishes the type and quantity of facilities the department should develop in the future.

The design standards used in this study were derived from input from the parks department staff and citizen input. The development of these standards is perhaps the most important step in this planning process.

A comprehensive park system is made up of a variety of park types. These park types range from very large regional parks (often encompassing hundreds of acres) to very small mini parks (sometimes less than one acre). The descriptions on the following pages define the parks that should make up a comprehensive park system. A variety of agencies (federal, state, county, and municipal) play a role in providing a comprehensive park system. To understand the role of the various recreation agencies providing services to its citizens, one needs to understand the context that makes up a total park and recreation system.

The following sheets describe the various park types:

Regional Parks/Nature Preserves

Regional parks are typically very large sites, encompassing unique qualities that exemplify the natural features, the diverse land formations, and the variety of vegetation and wildlife found in the region. Examples of the types of facilities provided in a regional park are environmental centers, camping, nature trails, observation decks, and picnic areas. Open fields for non-structured activities, such as frisbee throwing or kite flying, are also generally found in these parks.

Land chosen for future preserves or the expansion of existing sites should contain the previously mentioned characteristics accompanied with natural water features such as beach areas, rivers, and creeks. The majority of the site should be reserved for passive recreation, with the remaining acreage used for active recreation.

Specific standards/criteria for developing regional parks are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Service Area: | Countywide |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Minimum Size: | 150 - 1,000 acres minimum with sufficient area to encompass the resources to be preserved and managed (10% of the site may be developed with facilities found in community parks) |

Typical Facilities:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Environmental Center | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| Equestrian Center | Restrooms/Vending |
| Primitive Camping | Beach |
| Group Camping | Swimming |
| Recreational Vehicles Camping | Boating |
| Nature Trails | Fishing Piers/Boat Docks |
| Observation Deck | Parking |
| Picnic Shelters with Grills | Caretaker's House |



Typical Regional Park 150 - 1,000 Acres

District Parks

District parks provide a full range of facilities to support tournament competition for athletic and league sports. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Activities that generate large crowds, such as special events and tournament competitions, are well suited for district parks, where adequate space and parking are provided. Fifty percent of the district park site should be developed for only passive recreation; these relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

District park sites should have varying topography and vegetative communities. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or creek should be included in district parks. Parkland should also be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the area they serve.

Development of these parks should be based upon the following standards:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Service Area: | 5 mile radius (typically serves population base of + 40,000) |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 5 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Range: | 50 - 100 acres |
| Desirable Size: | 100 acres (larger, if the park contains a golf course) |

Typical Facilities:

| | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Recreation Center | Picnic Shelters |
| Playgrounds | Picnic Shelters with Grills |
| Full Size Basketball Courts | Picnic Tables with Grills |
| ½ Size Basketball Courts | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Tennis Court (lighted) | Nature Trails |
| Tournament Tennis Courts | Parking |
| Tournament Baseball/ Softball Fields (lighted) | Restroom/Concessions |
| Multi-purpose Fields | Caretaker's House |
| Soccer Fields (lighted) | 50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped |
| Volleyball Courts | |

Alternate Facilities:

| | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Golf Course | Swimming |
| Environmental Center | Beaches |
| Amphitheater | Boating |
| Equestrian Center | Fishing Piers/Boat Docks |
| Observation Decks | Marina Operation |
| Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor | |

Specialty facilities may be added to (or substituted for) other facilities, depending on district need or special site characteristics.



Typical District Park/Sports Complex 50 - 100 Acres

Community Park

Community parks provide for the recreation needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. A range of facilities is typically provided and may support tournament competition for athletic and league sports or passive recreation. These parks also present opportunities for nontraditional types of recreation. Fifty percent of the community park site should be developed for only passive recreation; these relatively undisturbed areas may serve as buffers around the park and/or act as buffers between active facilities.

Community park sites should have varying topography and vegetative communities. Forested areas should have a variety of tree species. Cleared areas should be present for siting active recreational facilities. One or more natural water feature(s), such as a lake, river, or sound are desirable in community parks. Parkland should also be contiguous and strategically located in order to be accessible to all users within the neighborhoods it serves.

Development of these parks should be based upon the following standards:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Service Area: | .5 - 3 mile radius |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 5.0 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Desirable Range: | 30-50 acres |

Typical Facilities:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Recreation Center | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| Basketball Courts | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Tennis Court (lighted) | Nature Trails |
| Baseball/Softball Fields (lighted) | Restroom/Concessions |
| Multi-purpose Fields | Parking |
| Soccer Fields (lighted) | Playgrounds |
| Swimming Pool | Volleyball Courts |
| Amphitheater | Disc Golf |
| Observations Decks | Lakes |
| Picnic Shelters | Paddle Boat/Canoe Harbor |
| Picnic Shelters with Grills | Fishing Piers/Boat Docks |

Fifty percent of the community park site should remain undeveloped for passive recreation/open space.

Specialty facilities may be added to or substituted for other facilities depending on community need or special site characteristics.



Typical Community Park 30 - 50 Acres

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks provide the basic unit of the park system. These parks are usually located within walking distance of the area serviced and provide a variety of activities of interest to all age groups. While their small size requires intense development, fifty percent of each site should remain undisturbed to serve as a buffer between the park and adjacent land users.

The standards for neighborhood park development are as follows:

Service Area: 1/2 to 3/4 mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations

Acreage/Population Ratio: 1.0 acres per 1,000 persons

Minimum Size: 5-10 acres

Typical Facilities:

Playground

Court Games

Informal Play Field

Volleyball

Trails/Walkways

Picnic Shelters with Grills

Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter)

Benches or Bench Swings

50% of Site to Remain Undeveloped

Parking (7-10 spaces)



Typical Neighborhood Park 5 - 10 Acres

School Park

The trend in public agencies is toward joint use. Through joint use both schools and parks benefit from shared use of facilities and valuable land resources. The school park concept maximizes the joint use objective and provides a planned facility that maximizes public funds. The school park concept typically varies depending on the school. The elementary/middle school provides the ideal setting for a neighborhood park, while the middle/high school follows the function of a community park or youth sports complex.

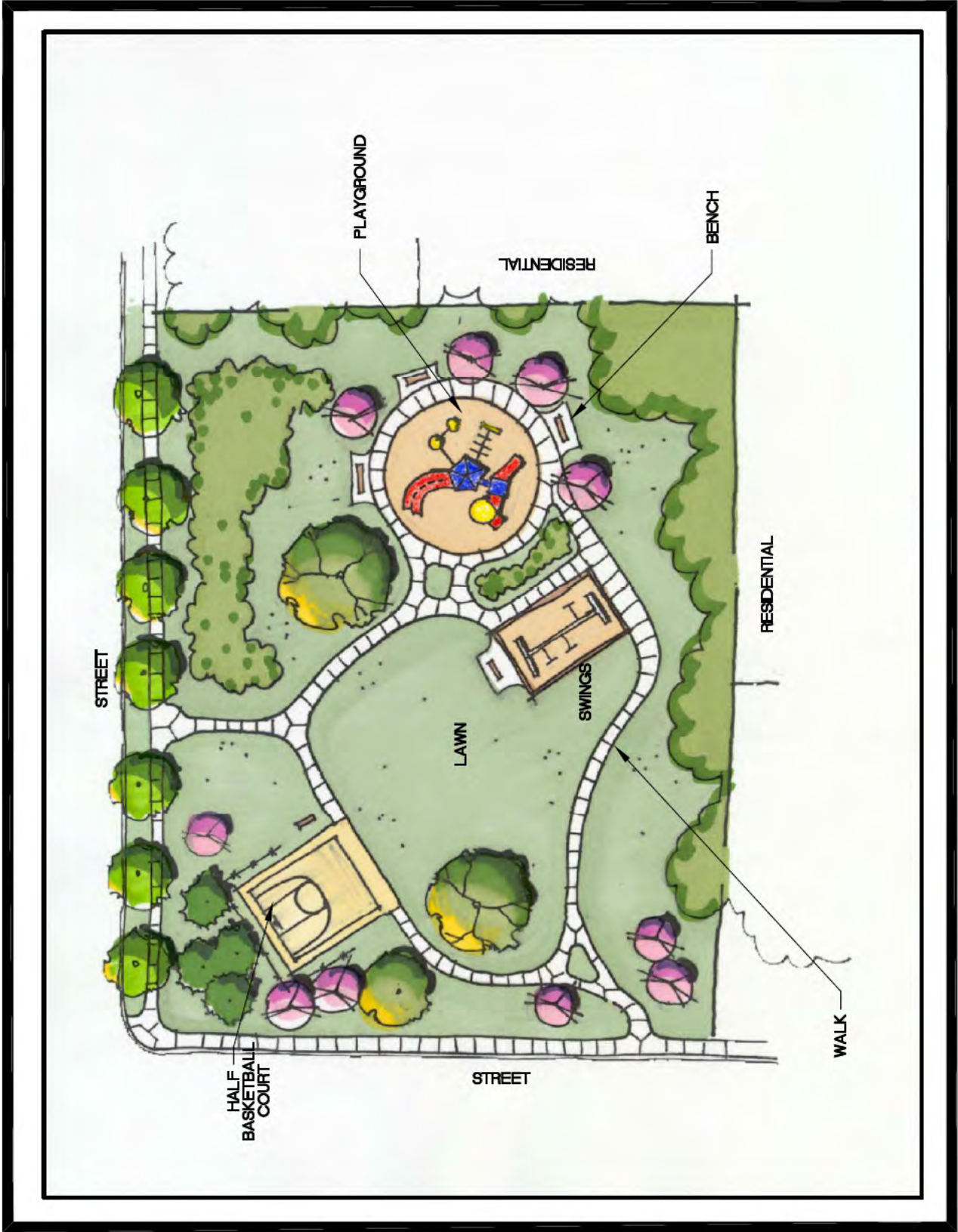
Service Area: Varies depending on school type and park type
Desirable Size: Varies depending on school type and park type
Typical Facilities: Varies depending on school type and park type

Mini Park

Mini parks are the smallest park classification. These parks are located within walking distance of the area serviced, and they provide limited recreational needs. Their small size requires intense development, and little to no buffer between the park and adjacent land users is provided.

The standards for mini park development are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Service Area: | ¼ mile radius to serve walk-in recreation needs of surrounding populations |
| Acreage/Population Ratio: | 0.25 acres per 1,000 persons |
| Minimum Size: | 1-2 acres |
| Typical Facilities: | |
| Playground | Picnic Tables with Grills (not under shelter) |
| ½ Sized Basketball Courts | Benches or Bench Swings |
| Open Play Area | Landscaped Public Use Area |



1-2 Acres

Typical Mini Park

Greenways

Greenways provide an important component of the overall park system. They:

- Provide links between park components
- Provide pedestrian links between points of interest (residential / commercial destinations)
- Emphasize harmony with the natural environment
- Provide safe pedestrian movement
- Resource based outdoor recreational opportunities
- Enhance adjacent property values

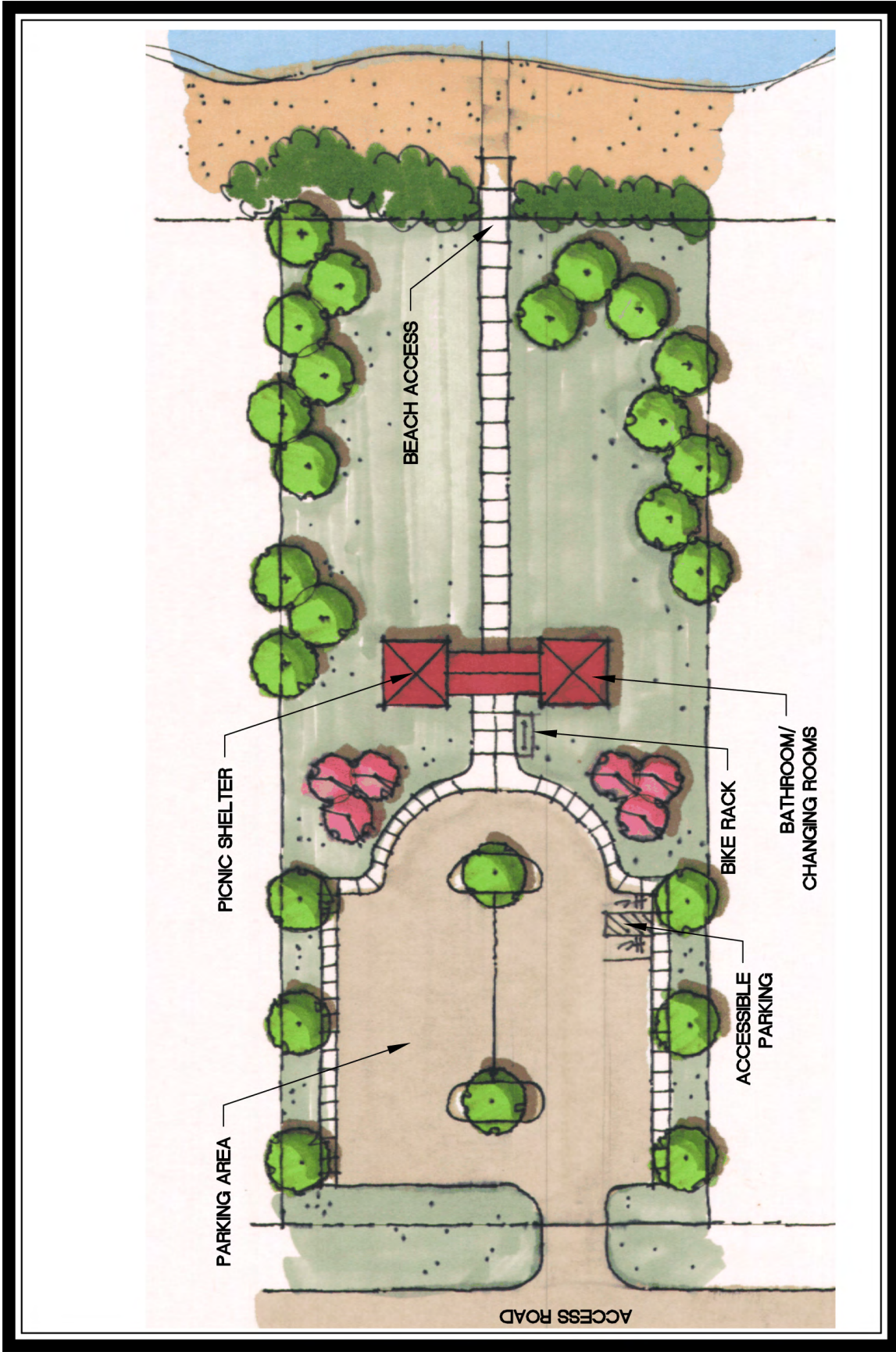
Greenways are very similar to natural resource sites; the primary difference is the emphasis on pedestrian trails found in the greenway system.

Desirable Size: Greenways form corridors that vary considerably in length. Widths of these corridors vary as well, although a 50' width is generally considered a minimum.



Special Use Facilities (Water Access Sites)

Most coastal communities provide local residents and tourists with park/community facilities that enhance access to the community water resources. These facilities vary in scope and location, so there are no defined standards for development. Typically the facilities include provisions for parking and pedestrian access to the water resources. Water access sites also typically include infrastructure to facilitate the use of the resource including restrooms, changing areas, picnic facilities, bike racks, pet stations, etc.



Typical Special Use Facility

+/- 2 Acres

Nationwide Studies on Park and Recreation Needs

President's Commission

The President's Commission Report indicated the following significant facts:

The top ten most popular outdoor recreation activities nationwide are:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Picnicking | Playing sports |
| Driving for pleasure | Fishing |
| Swimming | Attending sporting events |
| Sightseeing | Boating |
| Bicycling | Walking for pleasure |

Activities rapidly growing in popularity are:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Canoeing | Sailing |
| Bicycling | Hiking/backpacking |
| Attending outdoor sports | Walking for pleasure |
| Camping, all types | Water skiing |

The President's Commission report also noted that municipal agencies are providing 39% of the public recreation opportunities.



North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey

The North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Survey provided a list of the most popular outdoor recreation activities in the state. The most popular outdoor recreation activities in North Carolina are:

1. Walking for pleasure
2. Driving for pleasure
3. Viewing scenery
4. Beach activities
5. Visiting historical sites
6. Swimming
7. Visiting natural areas
8. Picnicking
9. Attending sporting events
10. Visiting zoos

National Sporting Goods Association Survey

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts an annual study of sports participation. The survey lists the following top activities per million participants. A participant is defined as someone seven years of age or older who participates in a sport more than once within a year for all sports except aerobic exercising, bicycle riding, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, running/jogging, step aerobics, weight lifting, and swimming. For these seven fitness sports, participation is defined as six times or more during the year. The following information reviews the findings for the past ten years.

| Sport | 2010 | 2008 | 2006 | 2004 | 2002 | 2000 |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Aerobic Exercising | 38.5 | 36.2 | na | 29.5 | 29.0 | 26.7 |
| Archery (target) | 6.5 | na | na | 5.3 | 4.2 | 4.5 |
| Backpack/Wilderness Camp | 11.1 | 13.0 | 13.3 | 17.3 | 14.8 | 15.4 |
| Baseball | 12.5 | 15.2 | 14.6 | 15.9 | 15.6 | 15.6 |
| Basketball | 26.9 | 29.7 | 26.7 | 27.8 | 28.9 | 27.1 |
| Bicycle Riding | 39.8 | 44.7 | 35.6 | 40.3 | 39.7 | 43.1 |
| Billiards/Pool | 24.0 | 31.7 | 31.8 | 34.2 | 33.1 | 32.5 |
| Boating, Motor/Power | 20.0 | 27.8 | 29.3 | 22.8 | 26.6 | 24.2 |
| Bowling | 39 | 49.5 | 44.8 | 43.8 | 42.4 | 43.1 |
| Camping (vacation/overnite) | 44.7 | 49.4 | 48.6 | 55.3 | 55.4 | 49.9 |
| Canoeing | na | 10.3 | 7.1 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 6.2 |
| Cheerleading | na | 2.9 | 3.8 | 3.8 | na | na |
| Exercise Walking | 95.8 | 96.6 | 87.5 | 84.7 | 82.2 | 81.3 |
| Exercising with Equipment | 55.3 | 63.0 | 52.4 | 52.2 | 46.8 | 44.8 |
| Fishing | 33.8 | 42.2 | 40.6 | 41.2 | 44.2 | 47.2 |
| Football (tackle) | 9.3 | 10.5 | 10.1 | 8.2 | 7.8 | 8.0 |
| Golf | 21.9 | 25.6 | 24.4 | 24.5 | 27.1 | 26.4 |
| Hiking | 37.7 | 38.0 | 31.0 | 28.3 | 27.2 | 24.3 |
| Hunting with Firearms | 16.3 | 18.8 | 19.9 | 17.7 | 19.5 | 19.1 |
| Hunting w/Bow & Arrow | 5.5 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 5.8 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| In-line Roller Skating | 7.5 | 9.3 | 10.5 | 11.7 | 18.8 | 21.8 |
| Kayaking/Rafting | 5.6 | na | na | na | na | 3.1 |
| Mountain Biking (off road) | 7.2 | 10.2 | 8.5 | 8.0 | 7.8 | 7.1 |
| Paintball Games | 6.1 | 6.7 | 8.0 | 9.4 | 6.9 | 5.3 |
| Running/Jogging | 35.5 | 35.9 | 28.8 | 24.7 | 24.7 | 22.8 |
| Skateboarding | 7.7 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 10.3 | 9.7 | 9.1 |
| Skiing (alpine) | 7.4 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 5.9 | 7.4 | 7.4 |
| Skiing (cross country) | 2.0 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.3 |
| Snowboarding | 6.1 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 6.6 | 5.6 | 4.3 |
| Soccer | 13.5 | 15.5 | 14.0 | 13.3 | 13.7 | 12.9 |
| Softball | 10.8 | 12.8 | 12.4 | 12.5 | 13.6 | 14.0 |
| Swimming | 51.9 | 63.5 | 56.5 | 53.4 | 53.1 | 58.8 |
| Yoga | 20.2 | 16.0 | na | na | na | na |
| Target Shooting | 19.8 | 20.3 | 19.1 | 19.2 | 18.9 | 16.9 |
| Tennis | 12.3 | 12.6 | 10.4 | 9.6 | 11.0 | 10.0 |
| Volleyball | 10.6 | 12.2 | 11.1 | 10.8 | 11.5 | 12.3 |
| Water Skiing | 5.2 | 5.6 | 6.3 | 4.7 | 6.9 | 5.9 |
| Weight Lifting | 31.5 | 37.5 | 32.9 | 26.2 | 25.1 | 22.8 |
| Workout at Club | 36.3 | 39.3 | 34.9 | 31.8 | 28.9 | 24.1 |

SOURCE: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt Prospect, IL 60056

Establishing Standards for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Standards are used in various aspects of community planning in order to describe a “threshold or minimum level of space which should be provided for various uses”. In the past, professional organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) made recommendations for both outdoor recreation facilities and park acreage. The County’s previous master plan incorporated similar standards.

Since the previous master plan was completed, the trend in park planning has been away from the national and state standards, with the understanding that each community should develop standards that are specific to location and population. These local standards are typically based on a framework similar to national and state recommendations, but reflect local need/demand. Tables 4-1 through 4-2 reflect standards for Currituck County. Each table provides standards currently used by other North Carolina coastal communities, standards established for Currituck County, and standards that reflect current demand/need for both park acreage and recreation facilities.

The last two columns on the table provide a summary of the standards identified in the County’s 2002 comprehensive plan and the recommended standards for the 2011 plan. It should be noted the 2011 recommended standards are significantly lower than the acreage standards listed in the County’s 2002 plan, but very similar to other coastal counties in North Carolina.

| Table 4-1 Standards for Park Acreage by Park Type (Acres per 1,000 Population) | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Park Types | New Hanover County | Pasquotank County | Carteret County | Currituck County 2002 Plan | Currituck County 2011 |
| Mini Parks | 1-2 acres .25 acres/1,000 | .25 acres/1,000 | N/A | N/A | N/A* |
| Neighborhood Parks | ±5-10 acres 1 acre/1,000 | 1 acre/1,000 | 7 – 15 acres 1 acre/1,000 | 6-8 acres 6 acres/1,000 | 5-10 acres 1 acre/1,000 |
| Community Parks | 50-100 acres 5 acres/1,000 | 5 acres/1,000 | 200 to 400 acres 3 acres/1,000 | 10-12 acres 10 acres/1,000 | 30-50 acres 3 acres/1,000 |
| Sports Complex District Parks | ±100 acres 2.5 acres/1,000 | 2.5 acres/1,000 | 40-100 acres 5 acres/1,000 | 20-100 acres 20 acres/1,000 | 50-100 acres 3.0 acres/1,000 |
| Regional Parks | ±100 acres 2.5 acres/1,000 | Traditionally provided by state/ national agencies | 150 – 1,000 acres 10 acres/1,000 | 3,000 – 5,000 acres 3,000 acres/1,000 | 150-1,000 acres 3 acres/1,000 |

* Most county parks and recreation agencies do not provide mini parks.

** Regional Parks are typically provided by state or federal agencies.

The 2011 Standards for Park Acreage for the County will provide 10 acres of park land for every 10,000 county residents. This standard for parks is reflective of many communities throughout North Carolina and matches the old NRPA standard. It should be noted that NRPA no longer recommends communities use a national standard. Instead, they recommend communities should establish a standard specific to the location.

Table 4-2

Standards for Development

Recreation Facilities

| Facilities | New Hanover County | Pasquotank County | Carteret County | Currituck County 2002 Plan | Currituck County 2011 |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Fields | | | | | |
| Adult Baseball | 1/10,000 | 1/10,000 | 1/10,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Youth Baseball | 1/6,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/2,500 | 1/8,000 | 1/8,000 |
| Softball | 1/7,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/4,000 | 1/5,000 |
| Football | 1/10,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/5,000 | | 1/20,000 |
| Soccer | 1/6,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/6,000 | 1/5,000 |
| Courts | | | | | |
| Basketball | 1/5,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/2,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Tennis | 1/2,000 | 1/3,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/12,000 | 1/10,000 |
| Volleyball | 1/10,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/10,000 | | 1/5,000 |
| Shuffleboard | 1/10,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/10,000 | | 1/10,000 |
| Horseshoe | 1/10,000 | 1/5,000 | 1/10,000 | | 1/5,000 |
| Outdoor Areas | | | | | |
| Picnic Shelter | 1/3,000 | 1/3,000 | 1/5,000 | | 1/3,000 |
| Playground Activities | 1/3,000 | 1/1,000 | 1/1,000 | | 1/3,000 |
| Trails | | | | | |
| Hiking | .4 mile/1,000 | .4 mile/1,000 | .4mile/1,000 | | .4 mile/1,000 |
| Equestrian | | .4 mile/1,000 | .4mile/1,000 | | .4 mile/1,000 |
| Specialized | | | | | |
| Community Center (+20,000 SF) | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/14,000 | 1/20,000 |
| Gymnasium | | | | | 1/20,000 |
| Swimming Pool | 1/50,000 | 1/20,000 | 1/20,000 | | 1/20,000 |
| Golf Course | 1/Community | | N/A | | 1/50,000 |
| Bicycling/Urban | 1 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/1,000 | 1 mile/1,000 | | 1 mile/1,000 |
| Camping | 2.5 sites/1,000 | N/A | N/A | | |
| Archery Area | 1/50,000 | 1/50,000 | N/A | | 1/50,000 |
| Stream/Lake Mileage | .2 mile/1,000 | .2 mile/1,000 | .2 mile/1,000 | | .2 miles |
| Stream/Lake Access | 1/10 miles | 1/10 miles | 1/10 miles | | 1/10 miles |

Needs Assessment

Park Acreage Needs

Currituck County currently has eight parks and two boat ramps/water access sites. The County's existing parks include four small 5-10 acre neighborhood parks, two community parks (25-30 acres). In addition to these existing parks, there are plans to greatly expand Maple Park, creating the County's first district park. Once Maple Park is expanded, Currituck County's park system will contain all of the park types identified in this section typically found in county systems.

In addition to these traditional parks, the County has two outstanding special use parks. These unique parks include Currituck Heritage Park and the Currituck County Rural Center. Both of these special use parks highlight the unique cultural and historical beauty of the county.

As a coastal/barrier island county, geographical distribution and service areas for the parks creates challenges not found on mainland counties. With the challenges of travel distances found in the county, geographical distribution of the parks is important. Overall, the County has a good distribution of parks. Most all communities have access to some type of park.

The County should use the following guiding principles as it develops its park system.

Mini and Neighborhood Parks

In establishing a framework for the County's park system, it should be remembered that county agencies typically place greater focus on community parks and district parks. County agencies seldom provide mini parks, and usually only provide neighborhood parks when there are no municipal agencies to provide these smaller parks. Since there are no municipal agencies providing parks and recreation services in Currituck County, the County has taken on the role of providing smaller, neighborhood parks in four of its local communities. The County provides neighborhood parks in:



- Carova (Carova Beach Park)
- Knotts Island (Knotts Island Ruritan Park)
- Coinjock (Veterans Memorial Park)
- Grandy (Walnut Island Park)

These parks should continue to be operated and maintained by the County, but development of additional mini and neighborhood parks should not be a priority unless water access is available.

Community Parks

Currituck County currently has an excellent community park in the lower end of the mainland at Sound Park. This facility offers a variety of active recreation opportunities as well as sound access. It is meeting the needs of a community park for the residents of lower Currituck.

One area of park development that will need future attention is the lack of a community park in the upper portion of the county. The Moyock area contains one of the county's largest population centers and warrants a "full service park". The County currently owns twenty acres of land in Shingle Landing. The location and natural features of this property are not ideal for a community park. Noise and lights from athletic events may cause conflicts with the Shingle Landing residents, and the adjacent assisted living facility. Likewise, the site, which is open field and completely devoid of trees, provides little opportunity for passive

recreation. Further study of this site as a location for the community park is needed.

District Parks

Currently the County's park system does not include a district park. With the expansion of Maple Park in the Currituck Community Park, the County will have its first major park. While detailed plans for the park are still under consideration, anticipated facilities will include multi-use fields, baseball/softball fields, play areas, picnic facilities, and trails. The development of these facilities will meet the County's needs for a district park.



Concept plan for the expansion of Maple Park in Currituck Community Park.

The County is currently working on a site specific master plan for the new park. This master plan will identify specific needs for the park. The development of this new park in the Airport Corporate Park should be the County's highest priority for park improvements.

Regional Parks

The need for a regional park, which is a community's largest park type, is met with the extensive state and federal land holdings as part of Currituck National Wildlife Refuge, Mackay Island National Wildlife Refuge, and other state/federal land holdings.

Special Use Facilities/Water Access/Trails

In addition to these more traditional parks, the County offers unique amenities along the barrier islands at Currituck Heritage Park (operated by the Whalehead Preservation Trust) and through trail and walkway improvements currently underway to improve pedestrian access. These facilities provide recreational access to the County's water amenities, as well as historical and cultural education.

Currituck County has the unique opportunity to provide its citizens (and visitor's) with facilities to support water access. The need for these facilities is especially important to those citizens living along the barrier islands. Efforts to develop future water access and pedestrian/bike circulation should be encouraged in other locations in Corolla.

The County is currently working on an outstanding greenway project in Corolla. The proposed greenway will ultimately include 11.6 miles of multi-use trails to connect cultural, historical, and ecological points of interest along the barrier islands. When completed, the trail will connect a wide variety of local, state,



and federal sites. Points of interest will include the Whalehead Club, Heritage Park, Currituck Beach Lighthouse, North Carolina Wildlife Education Center, public beach access, historical Corolla Village, Currituck County satellite offices, post office, the North Carolina Coastal Reserve, and the National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Initial phases of the greenway trail have been constructed, through funding assistance from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). The initial phase of development will provide several miles of multi-use trails. The development of these trails along the Outer Banks should be a County priority in the future.

Park Acreage Needs Summary

The County's ten year park needs will be largely met with the development and expansion of Maple Park as a district park. The County will also need to explore the development of a 20-30 acre community park in the upper area of the county in Moyock. Finally, as a coastal community, the County should seek opportunities to create and improve public access to its water resources (ocean and sound).

Recreation Facility Needs Assessment

The County's ten existing parks provide a variety of recreation facilities to its citizens. As a coastal County, most of Currituck County's existing parks provide facilities that provide water access (boat ramps, fishing docks, boardwalks, etc.) and family activities typically associated with water access (picnic shelters, restrooms, playgrounds, etc.). While two of its parks contain ballfields (Sound Park and Maple Park), the Department is very limited in the athletic fields it currently controls. While joint use arrangements with Currituck County Schools allow practice and some game play on school facilities, these fields (with their limited access) cannot meet current and future demand.

Utilizing standards for development similar to other coastal counties and applying those standards to the County's population (current and projected) results in a facility needs assessment that reflects a need for the following facilities:

- 2 Adult Baseball Fields
- 3 Softball Fields
- 1 Football Field
- 3 Soccer Fields/Multi-purpose Fields
- 3 Basketball Courts (outdoor)
- 1 Volleyball Court
- 2 Shuffleboard Courts
- 7 Picnic Shelters
- 4 Playgrounds
- 8 Miles Walking Trails
- 1 Community Center without Gym

Many of these recreation facility needs can be met with the expansion of Maple Park into a district park at Currituck Community Park and a community park in the upper area of the county.

The development of these two park facilities should be a priority for the County.

Water Access

The expansion of Maple Park and the development of a community park in the upper area of the county will meet many of the traditional recreation facility needs listed above, but will not address another important County need: water access. As a county almost surrounded by water, public access to the water is very important. This issue was raised at most of the public workshops held in 2010.

Water access provides a valuable community amenity for both County residents and tourists. An important recreational need in the next ten years will be providing public access (and amenities to support that access) to the County's beaches and backwaters. This initiative will include acquisition or required dedication of property to provide public access, and development of infrastructure (parking, walkways, restrooms, etc.) to facilitate access. Identification of actual access sites is beyond the scope of this master plan, but acknowledgement of this need and recommendations for appropriate funding for these improvements is an important part of this plan.

Community Building

Residents along the Outer Banks have long expressed the need for a community building. The primary function of this building will be community meetings, special events, and classroom space. In addition, if strategically located, this facility could provide water access. The development of the community building should be planned to match the wonderful cultural, historical, and natural beauty of the barrier islands.

This building will not be a gymnasium/recreation center type facility. Instead, it will be a community center with meeting space and classroom space. The need for this building was expressed in the public workshops.

Table 4-3
Currituck County
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Park Needs Assessment

| Park Types | Currituck Standards | Existing Parks | 2011 Demand 23,500 Population | 2011 Need | 2021 Demand 27,700 Population | 2021 Need |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Mini Parks | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Neighborhood Parks | 5-10 acres 1 acre/1,000 | 4 parks 21 acres | 4 parks 23.5 acres | Needs Met | 4 parks 27.7 acres | Needs Met |
| Community Parks | 30-50 acres 2 acres/1,000 | 1 park 24.5 acres | 2 parks 47.5 acres | 1 park 16 acres | 2 parks 55.5 acres | 1 park 31 acres |
| District Park Sports Complex | 50-100 acres 3 acres/1,000 | 1 park 110 acres | 1 park 70 acres | Needs Met | 1 park 83 acres | Needs Met |
| Regional Parks | 150-1,000 acres 10 acres/1,000 | State Parks | 1 park 235 acres | State Parks | 1 park 277 acres | State Parks |

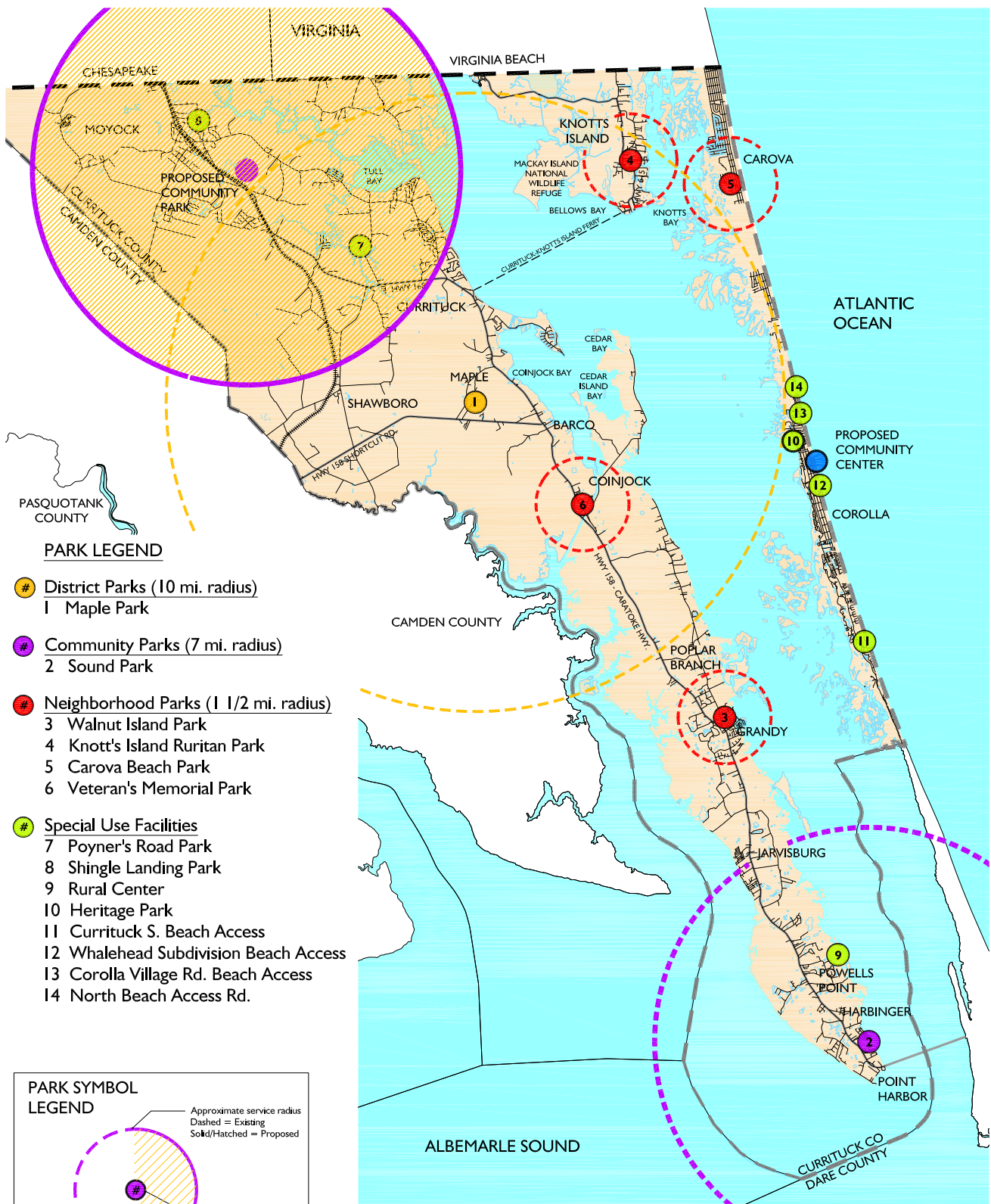
Table 4-4
Currituck County
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Recreation Facility Needs Assessment

Utilizing national and state standards as a guide and based on public input, the following Standards for Recreation Facility Development are recommended.

| Facilities | Existing County Facilities | 2011 Standards | 2011 Demand Population 23,500 | 2011 Need | 2021 Demand Population 27,700 | 2021 Need |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Fields | | | | | | |
| Adult Baseball | 0 | 1/10,000 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Youth Baseball | 3 | 1/8,000 | 3 | - | 3 | - |
| Softball | 0 | 1/5,000 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Football | 0 | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Soccer | 2 | 1/5,000 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Courts | | | | | | |
| Basketball | 0 | 1/10,000 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Tennis | 2 | 1/10,000 | 2 | - | 2 | - |
| Volleyball | 4 | 1/5,000 | 4 | - | 5 | 1 |
| Shuffleboard | 0 | 1/10,000 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Horseshoe | 5 | 1/5,000 | 5 | - | 5 | - |
| Outdoor Areas | | | | | | |
| Picnic Shelter | 7 | 1/2,000 | 11 | 4 | 14 | 7 |
| Playground Activities* | 5 | 1/3,000 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 4 |
| Trails | | | | | | |
| Walking | 3 miles | .4 miles/1,000 | 9.4 miles | 6.4 | 11 miles | 8 miles |
| Equestrian | | .4 miles/1,000 | 9.4 miles | 9.4 | 11 miles | 11 miles |
| Specialized | | | | | | |
| Community Center (+20,000 SF) | 1** | 1/20,000 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Recreation Center w/Gym | 1** | 1/20,000 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Community Center w/out Gym | - | 1/20,000 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Swimming Pool | 1** | 1/20,000 | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Bicycling/Urban | | 1 mile/1,000 | 23.5 miles | | 27.7 | |
| Stream/Lake Mileage | | .2 miles/1,000 | 4.7 miles | 4.7 miles | 5.54 | 5.54 |
| Stream/Lake Access | | 1/10 miles | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

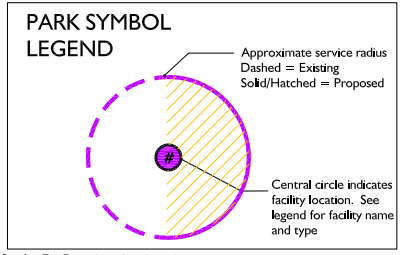
*Standards for playgrounds are expressed in play activities. Each playground contains 3-5 activities.

**YMCA



PARK LEGEND

- **District Parks (10 mi. radius)**
 - 1 Maple Park
- **Community Parks (7 mi. radius)**
 - 2 Sound Park
- **Neighborhood Parks (1 1/2 mi. radius)**
 - 3 Walnut Island Park
 - 4 Knott's Island Ruritan Park
 - 5 Carova Beach Park
 - 6 Veteran's Memorial Park
- **Special Use Facilities**
 - 7 Poyner's Road Park
 - 8 Shingle Landing Park
 - 9 Rural Center
 - 10 Heritage Park
 - 11 Currituck S. Beach Access
 - 12 Whalehead Subdivision Beach Access
 - 13 Corolla Village Rd. Beach Access
 - 14 North Beach Access Rd.



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Currituck County,
North Carolina

Master Plan

Comprehensive Parks & Recreation
 Master Plan
 December 2011



Section Five

Action Plan Implementation

Introduction

The Currituck County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is based upon a review of the county’s demographics, an inventory of the existing park system, the development of recreation standards, and the identification of user needs. From this assessment, recommendations are made and an action plan is developed. The plan is intended to be “action-oriented”; designed to provide a framework for the County to enhance the parks and recreation system.

Adequate funding to make recommended improvements is critical to the implementation of the Master Plan. Unfortunately, the recent economic downturn has made balancing local and county-wide budgets throughout the state increasingly difficult. The North Carolina Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan identified inadequate funding for park facilities and recreation programs as a key issue to be addressed in the next five years if government is to maintain basic minimum services. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, per capita funding for parks and recreation services throughout the State of North Carolina is 33% below the national average. Even though funding is currently low statewide, it does not appear to reflect the high value citizens place on parks and recreation.

Implementing recommendations made in this Master Plan will result in meeting the future needs for parks and

recreation services. Likewise, implementing the action items of this plan will assist the County in reaching the goals and objectives outlined in their land use and small area plans. **The Department needs to continue to establish annual budgets for projected capital improvement costs, staffing needs, operations, and maintenance costs that will support the recommendations of this report.** The Action Plan is designed to give the County a realistic approach to financing the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan. Additionally, as strategies for land use are developed, this plan can be used as a guide to identify needs for additional recreational land.

Capital Improvement Recommendations

The capital improvement recommendations for this master plan include:

First Five Years (2012-2016)

- Construction of Currituck Community Park Expansion Phases One and Two
- Improve water access with public walkways, parking, and restroom/changing areas
- Expand public trails
- Renovate existing parks; providing accessible routes to facilities; adding restrooms and shade structures

Second Five Years (2017-2022)

- Construct a community park in the Moyock Area
- Construct community building on Outer Banks
- Improve water access with public walkways, parking, and restroom/changing areas
- Expand public trails
- Renovate existing parks

The capital improvements budget for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks for the planning period was prepared with input from County staff and input received at the public meeting held last year. All of the proposed costs are shown in 2011 dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site preparation, site utilities, and facility development. The capital improvement plan also includes estimated planning and design fees.

The capital improvement program can be summarized into the following components:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Renovation/Improvement Program | \$550,000 |
| Park Development Program | \$7,150,000 |
| Special Use Facilities | <u>\$5,225,000</u> |
| Total Capital Improvement | \$12,925,000 |

Table 5-1: Capital Improvements Budget shows the costs associated with the capital improvement program (10-year planning period). The table reflects the proposals and recommendations as outlined in Section 4 of this Master Plan.

Operational Recommendations

In addition to looking at future facility needs of the Department, this master plan must also address some of the operational issues that will face the Department in the coming decade. These issues relate to the manpower and organizational changes that will be required as the Department adds new parks/facilities. Likewise, these recommendations address some of the critical operational issues the Department needs to identify as it works to become not only a bigger department, but a better department.

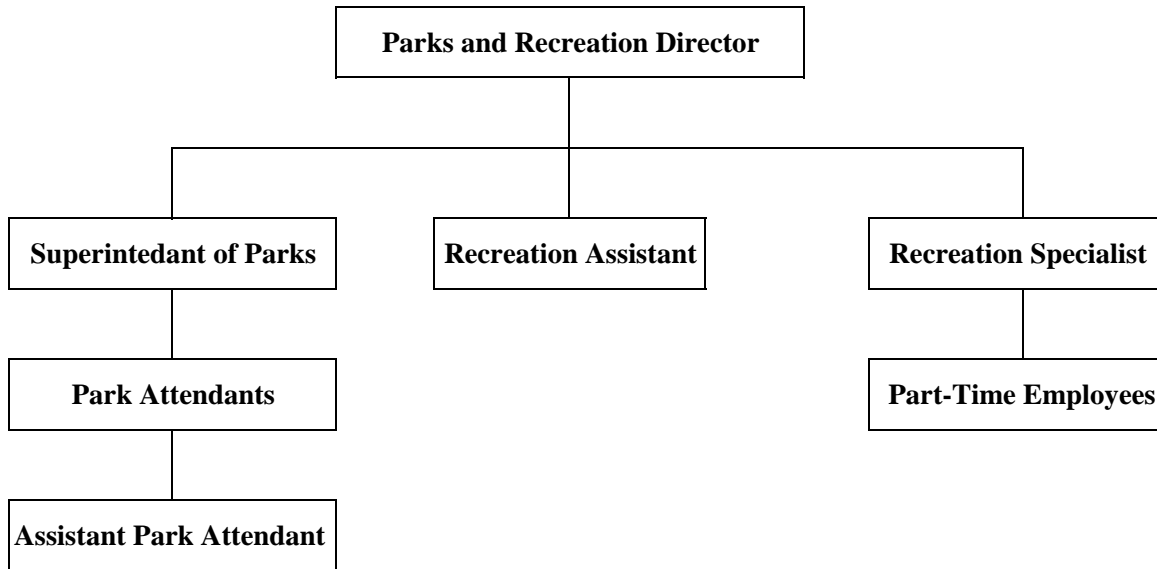
Staff Needs

With the expansion of park facilities over the next decade, there will be the need for additional staff to program, operate and maintain these facilities. Currently the Parks and Recreation Department has four full time employees including a director, two recreation superintendents, and a recreation assistant. Park maintenance is provided with a park staff including a park supervisor and two park attendants. In addition, the Department relies on part time help and volunteers.

Staff expansion will predominately be in the area of maintenance workers/grounds maintenance crew. The only supervisory level positions anticipated as part of this expansion will be a recreation program specialist/athletics coordinator.

In the next ten years, the Department will need to

**Currituck County Parks and Recreation Department
Current Organization Chart**



add the following positions in order to operate and maintain current and proposed facilities:

- (1) Recreation Program Specialist
- (2) Park Attendants

As the Department Grows, there may need to be a definition of organization with a Recreation Division and a Parks Division.

Operational Costs

As noted above, the development of new recreation facilities will require additional staff for the Department. These new staff positions will add to the annual operational budget in both staff and equipment costs. The expansion of park facilities will also add significantly to the energy and utility cost of park and recreation facilities. Based on recent increases in energy cost, these operational costs could be substantial. The recommended facility improvements included in this Master Plan will increase the Department’s facilities by 50-75%. Expansion of this magnitude will have significant implications to the operational budget. The Department’s management staff and elected officials

must carefully consider the financial impact of each major capital improvement project as projects are considered. No capital improvement project should be undertaken without the commitment of support for adequate ongoing operational funding. Likewise, consideration should be given to the positive economic impacts that some facilities may have on the County’s economy, and if applicable, their potential for revenue generation.

Value of Joint-Use Agreements – Parks, Recreation and Schools

The County has a tradition of collaborating with other agencies and organizations in the delivery of quality leisure experiences. The County has a partnership with Currituck County Schools in the indoor and outdoor facilities that serve the needs of both the schools and citizens as public park facilities. The joint use of school facilities should be continued and expanded.

The justification for the creation of joint use agreements is based on the premise that the majority of costs for developing and operating schools and recreation facilities come from the same source,

local taxpayers. The development of duplicate facilities by those entities would constitute a waste of public funds. A shortage of affordable land and rapidly increasing construction costs are reasons enough for encouraging the efficient use of land and tax revenue. Combining resources allows for greater potential in the development of school and recreation facilities that neither entity is likely to afford if pursued independently. Other potential advantages of joint development and management include:

- The development of centralized public facilities usually requires less land than would be required if the schools and the parks department were to develop separate facilities. The creation of a Capital Facilities Review Committee for Parks and Recreation would be a very positive step in helping to assure the coordination and cost-effectiveness of any new facilities.
- Centralized locations for county services (including schools and parks) allows for the convenience of all citizens, particularly parents, by facilitating their children's participation in various education and recreation pursuits.
- Centralized school/park developments eliminate the duplication of maintenance functions and result in overall cost savings.
- Many of the outdoor areas and facilities needed for schools are also necessary for park and recreation services. Partnering in the development and management of facilities minimizes the duplication of land acquisition and development needs and represents an efficient use of public resources.
- Joint developments are eligible for grants from the North Carolina Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF).
- School/Park partnerships encourage the development of positive after-school and weekend enrichment activities focused on the development of the "whole child".
- Park systems usually have the resources for developing and maintaining higher quality sports fields than can be found in most school systems.

Joint use agreements between park and recreation agencies and school systems are very prevalent across the country. Examples of school/park and

recreation joint use agreements in North Carolina can be found in Cumberland, Scotland, Watauga, Wake, and New Hanover counties.

With all of the advantages, Currituck County should work diligently to ensure joint use agreements are enacted and maintained wherever feasible.

Greener Operation

As the world's population expands and environmental concerns over global warming, conservation of resources, and preservation of our fragile natural systems become more apparent, greater environmental responsibility by public and private agencies has become critical. As a government agency, particularly one that is involved with the management of public open space and the improvement of the public's health, the Parks and Recreation Department should make a concerted effort to minimize its environmental impact.

With this understanding, the Department should evaluate its maintenance and operational procedures with an intent to minimize waste and environmental impact. Where economically feasible, the Department should look to implement operational procedures that emphasize conservation, recycling, and sustainability. **Likewise, as the County looks to build new facilities, it should consider constructing facilities that minimize environmental impacts, conserve energy, and reuse building materials where possible.**

As a starting point for this conversion to a "greener" operation, the Department should establish a committee of operation, maintenance, and construction stakeholders to study the options available and develop a plan for becoming "greener".

Key Funding/Revenue Sources

The County's Parks and Recreation Department has good public support for parks, programs, and services. Innovative measures will be needed if the Department is to keep up with the future park

and recreation needs of the county. The proposed additional facilities and expanded operations will add to the demand for funding dollars. The Department will need to create a combination of revenue sources to meet the future needs of local residents. The following funding sources are provided to help evaluate funding options:

Revenue Plan

Upon adoption of the Master Plan, the Department, with input from County management, should consider the establishment of a revenue plan.

A revenue plan incorporates all available funding resources in a community, prioritizes them, and puts each option into a funding strategy. In a revenue plan the following funding alternatives are evaluated for their appropriate use in funding capital improvements and programs:

General Tax Revenues

General tax revenues traditionally provide the principal source of funds for general operations and maintenance of municipal and county recreation and parks systems. Recreation, as a public service, is scheduled along with health, public safety, schools, etc. in regular budgets established by the governing authority. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base. **If the County wishes to offer a park and recreation system that provides a desirable quality of life for the community, the current level of funding must be maintained as a minimum.**

User Fees

Recreation facilities such as athletic fields, courts, and boat/water access areas are typically covered by a combination of general tax revenues and user fees. All park and recreation systems have different strategies in place for how they fund various portions of a recreation experience. The County will need to determine the level to which it expects facility users to pay for facilities and services used.

The County may need to update their current revenue and pricing policy as part of an overall revenue plan. Additional revenues may be generated through a more aggressive approach to fees and

rentals. Development of tournament level athletic facilities at Maple Park could provide opportunities for revenue generation through shelter/facility rentals, concession sales, etc.

General Obligation Bonds

General tax revenue for parks and recreation are usually devoted to current operation and maintenance of existing facilities. In view of the recommended capital improvements suggested in this plan, borrowing of funds to acquire new land and develop facilities may be considered. The State of North Carolina gives municipal and county governments the authority to accomplish this borrowing of funds for parks and recreation through the issuance of bonds not to exceed the total cost of improvements (including land acquisition). For the purpose of paying the debt on these bonds the local government is empowered to levy a special tax. Total bonding capacities for local government is limited for parks and recreation to a maximum percentage of assessed property valuation.

The real value of a governing agency's bonding authority and capacity is not simply the funds made available for capital improvements. Bonding enables government agencies to utilize funds to match federal grant-in-aid monies or state funds; thus expanding the value of monies raised through bonds. General obligation bonds are still the greatest source utilized to fund park projects in North Carolina.

Through a well thought out and publicly presented bond campaign, voters would be given the authority to choose to support park improvements through the sale of bonds.

It is not anticipated that the County will consider bond sales to fund the improvements recommended by this master plan.

Limited Option or Special Use Tax

Limited option or special use taxes can be established in various ways. A municipality or county can establish the tax by determining the source such as property valuation; real estate transfer taxes, or sales tax. The County currently receives revenues from occupancy taxes on hotel/motel rooms and real estate

transfer taxes. These funds provide a steady source of funding that could be directed toward improvements that enhance tourism (water access, beach amenities, tournament level athletic facilities, etc.). Typically, special use taxes are structured on sales tax or transfer taxes and earmarked for a project need. A governing body can approve a tax that is identified or earmarked on property valuation; however, other sources may require state approval. The idea behind a special option or limited option tax is that the tax is identified or limited for a special purpose or project and the duration can also be limited to the accomplishment of the purpose or project.

Special use taxes are an important funding source in Currituck County.

Park Foundation (Partners for Parks)

A park foundation can be instrumental in assisting an agency in acquiring land, developing facilities, sponsoring programs, and buying equipment for the department. Park foundations typically create five funding strategies for raising money to build up their coffers. These include a foundation membership, individual gifts, grants from other recognized foundations, long term endowments, and a land trust for future acquisitions.

The County should consider establishing a park foundation for supporting departmental programs and initiatives. This foundation could be instrumental in promoting the recommendations of this Master Plan.

General Foundations

This source of revenue is the direct contribution of money from general foundations. These foundations may be local, statewide, or national.

Foundation funding should be sought for both development and construction of facilities as well as providing programs. Foundations include general-purpose foundations that have relatively few restrictions, special program foundations for specific activities, and corporate foundations found with few limitations and typically from local sources. The Trust for Public Land and NC Rails-Trail have been instrumental in providing financial and

technical assistance for open space conservation and development of greenways in North Carolina. The Carolina Coastal Land Trust is already active in North Carolina's coastal region. They provide a valuable source of support in identifying and procuring land for open space.

Other sources of assistance may be available through large corporations with a local presence. Companies such as Bank of the Commonwealth, Lowes Home Improvement, and Piedmont Natural Gas, may have available funding through existing grant programs, or they may be interested in creating a program or partnership for specific projects. **The County should actively pursue grants from foundation and trust sources on a regional and national level.** Information on trusts and foundations can be found through the Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10003-3076 and the Non-Profit Gateway to Federal Government agencies or online at foundationcenter.org.

Federal and State Assistance

Federal funding sources necessary to help finance master plan recommendations have historically been available from the U.S. Park Service's Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Potential funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is also available given certain conditions. Other potential sources for recreational funding are available through the National Foundation of Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a bill in 1995 creating a consistent source of funds for parks and recreation in the state. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) provides money for capital improvements, repairs, renovations, and land acquisition for state and local parks. Revenues from the State's portion of the real estate deed transfer tax support the fund. Unfortunately, the recent economic downturn and budget issue of state government, has caused funding for PARTF to be at an all time low.

Of the funds allocated for PARTF, 65% go to the state parks system, 30% provide matching grants to

local governments, and the remaining 5% go to the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The maximum matching grant is limited to \$500,000 for a single project. The PARTF system allows an agency to apply for a 50/50 cost-sharing grant to develop or acquire parkland and facilities. The County is currently utilizing funding from PARTF to make trail improvements on the barrier island.

The State also funds projects such as bikeways and pedestrian walks through the federally funded SAFTEA [formerly known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)]. The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) administers the funds and the local government agency can use these funds for developing portions of any proposed greenway system. Local communities can apply for assistance with pedestrian, bikeway, and greenway projects by applying for “NCDOT Enhancement Funds.” The State also makes funds available for development of facilities and programs through the Community Development Block Grant system (CDBG) administered by the Division of Community Assistance. Eligible communities can use these federal funds for development of projects such as recreation facilities, land acquisition, and neighborhood centers. Non-profit neighborhood groups can receive assistance from this program. The County can assist these groups by identifying possible projects.

Another source of state administered funding is through the Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF). These funds are set aside for the acquisition of riparian properties, financing of innovative wastewater management initiatives, storm water mitigation and stream bank restoration projects, support for greenways, and some planning programs. The acquired or purchased property can be used for recreation while protecting valuable water resources from the affects of urban encroachment. The General Assembly initially set aside \$88 million for the CWMTF to allocate grants to restore and/or protect water quality in the state’s rivers, lakes, and estuaries. Money from this grant is particularly applicable to the preservation of open space, greenway development, and water access. Unfortunately, current state budget issues have greatly reduced the availability of funds.

Currituck County has been successful in the pursuit of several of these grants in the past. **The County should continue to seek funding opportunities through state and federal programs.**

Earned Income Opportunities

The Department can generate some funds to offset operational and capital cost through developing earned income opportunities. There are a number of methods that could be explored to generate income for the Department. **The County is currently utilizing some of these revenue sources, but should look to expand ways to increase income opportunities.** Some opportunities include:

- Sponsorships from private businesses operating in the area. Sponsorships typically come in the form of product sponsors, event sponsors, program sponsors, cause-related sponsors, and in-kind sponsors.
- Grants and gifts from local foundations, state and federal agencies, or individuals have already been used by the Department to construct facilities and fund programs. Most grants take time to prepare and require coordination effort with other agencies or departments from within the community to create a quality submittal. Grants also require extensive tracking of expenditures and outcomes for attaining future funding.
- Partnerships are a new area of earned income that many communities are seeking to share costs in providing services. Often, the partners are two or more government agencies. This earned income opportunity requires both agencies to have common vision, values, and goals for the partnership to be successful. Examples of these partnerships include:
 - Church partnerships in providing neighborhood parks or recreation services.
 - Youth sports associations where volunteers help provide services (coaches, concessions, etc.) for the sports that they represent.
 - Trail sponsors that adopt sections of trails for maintenance and cleanup.
 - Adopt-a-park partners that help maintain parklands. These sponsors are typically in the form of neighborhood associations and

businesses that are next to parks.

- School partnerships where both partners invest in the development of facilities and programs based on shared use of facilities and staff.
- Special Event partners that assist with the development of community-wide events.
- Program partners who assist each other in providing services to the community. The YMCA or schools working with the Parks Department to co-sponsor programs is an example of this partnership. Currituck County has been extremely successful in building a strategic alliance with the YMCA on the development of the Currituck Community Park facility.
- Park foundation development is another earned income opportunity that park systems have embraced to achieve added dollars to their budget. Park foundations help seek out individuals who wish to invest in the system by providing donations of land, cash, or in-kind related services. These donations can add value to the county.
- Advertising and licensing in departmental programs, facilities, and events allows the agencies to leverage highly exposed advertising space where businesses will pay a premium for the right to advertise.
- Volunteer development programs are a highly valued earned income opportunity the Department can create through effective recruitment. Volunteers can create advocacy and bring down the cost of programs and services. Volunteers will be more important as the Department grows and offers more activities and facilities.
- Privatizing the development of facilities or services is an earned income opportunity that is used by communities when they are unable to control the cost of labor and are unable to find the needed capital to develop a recreational facility or concession operation. This gives the government agency a tool to create an asset or improve a service without tapping into their own resources. Facilities that are typically privatized include golf courses, marinas, camping/RV facilities, boat rentals, bike rentals, equipment rentals, and other forms of concessions.

The County should review these and other options and develop a revenue plan that includes appropriate earned income opportunities.

Other Methods for Acquisition and Development

In order to meet the future park needs of the county, administration and staff must be creative in acquisition and development of new facilities. The Department should explore a wide range of options for acquiring and developing parks. Other methods available for acquiring and developing parks as recommended in Section Four of this master plan include:

Fee Simple Purchase

The outright purchase of a property or facility is perhaps the most widely used method of obtaining parkland. Fee simple purchase has the advantage of being relatively simple to administer and to explain to the general public in terms of justifying a particular public expenditure. Unfortunately, this method is typically the most expensive and is the most difficult to accomplish with limited public resources.

Fee Simple with Lease-Back or Resale

This technique of land acquisition enables the agency to purchase land and then either lease or sell to a prospective user with deed restrictions. The deed restrictions would protect the land from environmental damage or development.

Long -Term Option

A long-term option is frequently used when a property is seen as having potential future value though it is not desired or affordable at the time. Under the terms of a long-term option, the government agency agrees with the landowner on a selling price for the property and a time period over which the agency has the right to exercise its option. One benefit of this protective method is that the land use of the property is stabilized because its future is in doubt and an expenditure of money for the property would be lost in the previously agreed upon selling price. Another benefit of a long term lease is the agency does not have to expend large sums of money until the land

is purchased. Finally, the long term option allows the purchase price of the land to be settled without additional price increases.

The disadvantage of this method is that a price must be paid for every right given by the property owner. In this case, the cost of land use stabilization and a price commitment comes in the form of the cost of securing the option.

First Right of Purchase

This approach to acquiring parkland does not fix the selling price of a parcel of land, but alerts the County of any impending purchase, which might disrupt the parkland acquisition goals. The County would be notified that a purchase is pending and would have the right to purchase the property before it is sold to the party requesting the purchase.

Land Trust

The role and responsibility of a land trust is to acquire parkland and open space to save a park resource representing outstanding ecological, scenic, recreational, and historical features. A land trust is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation run by a board of directors. This board is made up of knowledgeable leaders in the area who represent a cross section of interest and experience in recreation, historic, conservation, preservation, land development, and the environment. Their goals and responsibilities are to work with landowners to acquire parkland for current and future generations. The individuals appointed to the land trust board must have strong knowledge of land acquisition methods and tools to entice land owners to sell, donate, provide easements, life estates, irrevocable trusts, or a combination of all. This includes an experienced land acquisition attorney who is trained to provide the most efficient and effective processes to acquire land to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The Carolina Coastal Land Trust is a perfect example of a land trust and should be used as a partner in acquiring and protecting land for the public.

Local Gifts

A significant, and yet often untapped source of funding acquisition and development of local park projects

is through a local gifts program. Donations of land, money, or labor can have a meaningful impact on the development of the County's park system.

The most frequently used type of gift involves the donation of land (through a full gift or agreed upon below market value sale) to be used for a park. The timing of such a donation can correspond with a PARTF grant application, thereby providing all or a significant portion of the local matching requirement associated with this fund. A similar use of gifts involves donated labor or materials, which becomes part of an improvement project and helps to reduce project costs. The value of the services or materials can also be used to match non-local grant funds.

Some agencies have developed a gift catalog as a tool for promoting a gifts program. Such a publication should explain the role and importance of the gifts program, describe its advantages, define the tax advantages that may occur to the donor, and identify various gifts (land, labor, play equipment, materials, trees, etc.) that are needed. The gifts catalog should be prepared in a format that can be distributed effectively and inexpensively and should provide a clear statement of needs; typical costs associated with various gifts, and be made readily available to the public.

To aid this type of gift program, a strategy for contacting potential donors (individuals, businesses, foundations, service clubs, etc.) should be developed. An important part of this strategy should include contacting the local bar association, trust departments of lending institutions, and the Probate Court. Communicating with these groups regularly will make them aware of the potential for individuals to include a gift to the Parks and Recreation Department as part of their tax and estate planning.

Life Estate

A life estate is a deferred gift. Under this plan, a donor retains use of his land during his lifetime and relinquishes title to such land upon his death. In return for this gift, the owner is usually relieved of the property tax burden on the donated land.

Easement

The most common type of less-than-fee interest in land is an easement. Property ownership may be viewed as a combination of rights. With this understanding, it is possible to purchase any one or several of these rights. An easement seeks either to compensate the landholder for the right to use his land in some manner or to compensate him for the loss of one of his privileges to use the land. One advantage of this less-than-fee interest in the land is the private citizen continues to use the land and the land remains on the tax records continuing as a source of revenue for the County. Perhaps the greatest benefit lies in the fact that the community purchases only those rights that it specifically needs to execute its parkland objectives. By purchasing only rights that are needed, the County is making more selective and efficient use of its financial resources.

Zoning/Subdivision Regulations/ Mandatory Dedication

Zoning ordinances, subdivision regulation, and mandatory dedications may be utilized to create new parkland at no cost to the community. Regulations can require that land is dedicated and/or compensation made to the county for the development of parkland.

The County is currently working on a draft for a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The initial version of this document includes provisions for mandatory dedication of land for park and recreation use or payment in lieu. This is an important step in providing for countywide park and recreation needs, and should be adopted as the new County Development Ordinance.

Currituck County is following the lead of many communities in North Carolina that have developed zoning ordinances that require developers to provide for the recreational needs of the communities they build.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the new code is the inclusion of a clause to allow payment in lieu of land dedication. As noted in previous sections, the County should not accept dedication of small parcels of property in every residential development unless water access is available. This pattern of

development could create dozens of small (half acre to several acres) parks located all over the county. A county park system should instead be comprised of a few larger parks designed to serve communities or districts.

One potential exception to this preference to payment in lieu on smaller developments may be on proposed communities that could provide water access (sound or ocean). In this unique case, the value of a small property that would provide public access to the County's valuable water resources may be preferable to payment in lieu.

Under this requirement, developers of small and medium size residential communities (5 - 100 housing units) will pay a fee in lieu of dedicating open space or parkland. This payment will then be placed in a dedicated county fund for park and recreational development. **The ordinance structure should be established to ensure that fund spending be allocated to the areas of the County where the payments are made.**

By establishing a payment in lieu of component/option of the UDO, funds can be consolidated to pay for the acquisition/development of larger parks better suited to meet the County's needs.

Each potential development dedication (land dedication or payment in lieu) should be carefully reviewed by a Technical Review Committee comprised of planning, engineering, and parks and recreation staff.

Park Facilities as Economic Developers

John L. Crompton, in his publication "Parks and Economic Development", determined there are four economic development benefits that a community may derive from park and recreation services. These benefits include:

- **Attracting Tourists:** The features and programs that attract tourism to a community include parks, beaches, historic sites, museums, special events and festivals, and athletic tournaments.

The majority of these features are provided by public agencies (national, state, local park agencies, etc.).

- **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** Research shows people will pay more to live close to natural park areas. These higher property values result in owners paying higher property taxes, which in turn offsets some of the cost for the development parks and preservation of open space.
- **Attracting Business:** Quality of life issues influence where businesses locate. Parks, recreation, and open space are an important component of the quality of life equation. Good parks help cities attract and retain businesses.
- **Attracting Retirees:** A new growth industry for American communities is the retirement population. The decision to relocate by this segment of our population is primarily governed by climate and recreation opportunities. This segment of the population is extremely attractive to local governments because retirees are unlikely to have children enrolled in the local school system and therefore are less of a burden on the community's tax base.

Currituck County has traditionally placed a high value on parks and recreation programs and facilities that provide quality of life improvement. Development of this master plan update is further evidence that the County recognizes the importance parks play in the quality of life.

Through investments in parks over the years, County officials have tried to ensure that Currituck County provides the quality of life that helps attract new businesses, enhances real estate values, and provides an attractive option to the retirement community.

There are many more opportunities for attracting economic impact to the County through tourism. John Crompton lists the following opportunities for tourist attractions:

Tournament Sports

- Softball
- Soccer
- Baseball
- Basketball

Arts

- Theaters
- Art Galleries
- Museums
- Performing groups, Music
- Concerts

Heritage Places

- Ethnic cultural places
- Shrines/churches
- Historical sites and structures
- Educational institutions
- Industry factory tours

Parks

- National
- State
- Regional
- Local
- Beaches
- Theme parks

Recreation

- Events and festivals
- Aquatic and coastal areas
- Outdoor recreation (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting)

Arenas

- College sports
- Professional franchises
- Concerts and exhibitions

While some of these facilities may not be relevant for Currituck County, a number of them provide opportunities specifically for the County. The development of tournament level athletic facilities associated with the expansion of Maple Park could provide economic impact from tourism in the Maple Barco area. Likewise, the expansion of water access to the County's beaches and backwaters will also provide attractive vacation areas that will, in turn, expand revenue from tourism.

TABLE 5-1 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL

CURRITUCK COUNTY

| | Total¹ | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Cost Projection | 2012 - 2016 | 2017 - 2022 |
| Renovation To Existing Parks | \$500,000 | \$250,000 | \$250,000 |
| Accessible Routes | | | |
| Restroom Shelters | | | |
| Shade Structure at Southern Park | | | |
| Planning & Design | \$50,000 | \$25,000 | \$25,000 |
| Renovation Program Total | \$550,000 | \$275,000 | \$275,000 |
| Park Development Program | | | |
| Currituck Community Park (Phase One) | \$2,000,000 | \$2,000,000 | |
| Currituck Community Park (Phase Two) | \$3,000,000 | \$3,000,000 | |
| Moyock Community Park ² (construction only) | \$1,500,000 | | \$1,500,000 |
| Planning and Design | \$650,000 | \$500,000 | \$150,000 |
| Park Development Program Total | \$7,150,000 | \$5,500,000 | \$1,650,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Program | | | |
| Community Center (Corolla) | \$1,000,000 | | \$1,000,000 |
| Water Access Areas & Bath Houses | \$750,000 | \$500,000 | \$250,000 |
| Walkways/Trails (Mainland and OBX) | \$3,000,000 | \$1,500,000 | \$1,500,000 |
| Planning & Design | \$475,000 | \$200,000 | \$275,000 |
| Special Use Facilities Program Total | \$5,225,000 | \$2,200,000 | \$3,025,000 |
| | | | |
| Total Capital Improvement Budget Cost | \$12,925,000 | \$7,975,000 | \$4,950,000 |

¹ Proposed cost is presented in 2012 dollar values and makes no allowance for inflation, increased construction cost, or land price increases.

² Proposed budget figures include construction cost only, no acquisition monies are included in this budget.