

Parks and Open Space Plan

INTENT

A Countywide system of well-maintained parks, park and recreation facilities, and public open space that meet a variety of the active and passive recreational needs of Prince William County citizens of all ages is an important service the County provides to its residents. These parks and open space also preserve trees and green areas that make the County more attractive to those who live here, those who visit and those who wish to invest in the County.

Parks and open space in Prince William County are to be provided Countywide according to level of service (LOS) standards accepted by the Prince William County Park Authority and contained within this Plan. These standards address the kinds and size of parks and other recreation facilities needed to meet the needs of County residents.

The LOS standards are based upon existing conditions within the County (such as land and building construction costs, as well as average household size) and on recognized and accepted national, state and County standards. They also reflect resident demand for these facilities. The LOS standards ultimately quantify per capita monetary costs for providing Countywide parks and other recreation facilities to new residential and non-residential development in the County. These LOS standards are the basis for the County's Capital Improvement Program and for County requests for monetary contributions for park and recreation facilities to serve this new development.

The Parks and Open Space Plan implements LOS standards, as contained in REC-POLICY 1, Action Strategy 1. These LOS standards quantify monetary costs for providing quality recreation facilities, according to these established standards, associated with development impacts where existing or projected and already funded recreation facilities cannot accommodate that new development at established LOS. These LOS standards are the basis for County requests for monetary contributions for additional park and open space facilities for this new development. Such contributions fund additional park and open space facilities, where existing facilities and already funded improvements to park and open space facilities cannot accommodate that new development at established LOS. Where adequate LOS standards have not been developed, the Plan calls for the creation and development of appropriate or additional standards.

The components of the Parks and Open Space Plan are:

- Intent, Goals, Policies, and Action Strategies
- Baseline LOS standards and criteria guidelines
- Long-Range Park Needs by Park Type (Figure 1)
- Projected Park Land Needs (Table 1)
- Projected Park Facility Needs (Table 2)
- Level of Service Standards for Parks and Open Space (Appendix A)
- Parks and Open Space Map (fold-out map)
- Trails Plan (fold-out map)

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The Parks and Open Space Map and Trails Plan is conceptual in nature and does not show the actual alignments of the Class I, Class II, and Class III trails along public roadways and/or publicly owned and/or privately conveyed or donated "greenway" alignments. Individual land features, unsuitable terrain, property ownership, and citizen needs will dictate specific alignments.

The Parks and Open Space Map and Trails Plan delineate already dedicated or proposed public walking, biking, hiking, and horse riding trails adjacent to public rights-of-way and already dedicated or donated greenways, or linear corridors of open space that connect and protect natural, recreational, and cultural resources in the County. Additions to the Parks and Open Space Map and Trails Plan may take place on public property, within the public right of way, or on private property, through voluntary donations by citizens and through negotiated proffers from land owners and/or the development community as development occurs. Private property owners are not obligated to participate in the trails and greenways program. Private property immediately adjacent to the proposed trail or greenway shall not be affected by that trail or greenway without consent by the owner of that property. Implementation of the Parks and Open Space Map and Trails Plan shall not negatively affect the environment. Neither the County nor the Park Authority will condemn private property to implement the Parks and Open Space Map and/or the Trails Plan.

GOAL: Provide a park system and programs of a quantity, variety, and quality appropriate to the needs of the residents of Prince William County.

GOAL: Ensure the adequacy of sites and facilities needed to carry out an effective park and recreation program, meeting established levels of service standards for the provision of park sites and facilities.

REC-POLICY 1: ENSURE THE CONSISTENCY AND COORDINATION OF INTER-AGENCY PLANNING TECHNIQUES FOR THE PROVISION OF PARK SITES AND FACILITIES.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Implement baseline LOS standards and criteria for park sites and facilities, as outlined below, based on the characteristics of the development and proximity of park sites and facilities. Such standards shall be applied Countywide throughout the development review process. The standards are as follows:

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Acreege Standards for Park Sites:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS:

General Definition: Relatively small local parks designed to serve densely populated areas and that include specialized equipment and facilities.

- Acres/1000 persons: ----- **Total: 2** (Active: 1, Passive: 1)
- Size: ----- 5 to 20 acres
- Service Area: ----- 1.5 miles (5 minute drive)
- Population served: ----- 3,000 - 7,000

COMMUNITY PARKS:

General Definition: Larger recreation parks designed to serve urban and rural residents and that include wider range of equipment and facilities.

- Acres/1000 persons: ----- **Total: 3** (Active: 1.5, Passive: 1.5)
- Size: ----- 20 to 50 acres
- Service Area: ----- 1.5 to 6 miles (10 minute drive)
- Population served: ----- 7,000 - 17,000

REGIONAL PARKS:

General Definition: Large parks designed to serve a wide geographic area with a diverse range of equipment and facilities.

- Acres/1000 persons: ----- **Total: 7** (Active: 3.5, Passive: 3.5)
- Size: ----- 50+ acre
- Service Area: ----- 6 to 12 miles (20 minute drive)
- Population served: ----- 17,000 - Countywide

SPECIAL USE PARKS:

General Definition: Highly specialized parks designed to serve the entire County with unique facilities and activities, such as marinas, historic areas, recreation centers¹, golf courses, and similar facilities.

- Acres/1000 persons: ----- **Total: 1.8** (Active: 1.8, Passive: unspecified)
- Size: ----- unspecified
- Service Area: ----- Countywide
- Population served: ----- Countywide

¹ Recreation centers, while often located in Special Use Parks, may be located in neighborhood, community, or regional parks if they remain an accessory use therein.

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Standards for Park Facilities:

	<u>PWCPA Std.</u>
<u>ACTIVE FACILITIES</u>	(facility/pop. served)
<u>PLAYFIELDS</u>	
Baseball	1/6,000
Little League	1/4,000
Softball	1/4,000
Football	1/15,000
Soccer	1/2,000
<u>COURTS</u>	
Tennis	1/2,000
Basketball	1/5,000
Volleyball	1/5,000
<u>OTHER</u>	
Swimming Pool (25 meters or larger)	1/20,000
Gymnasium	1/35,000
Golf Course(18-hole)	1/50,000
Recreation Center ²	1/50,000
Bike/Fitness/Walking Trail	1 mi./1,000
Playground	1/5,000
Tot lots	1/1,000
 <u>PASSIVE FACILITIES</u>	
Nature Centers	1/100,000
Nature Trails	1 mi/1,000
Nature/Greenway Trails	1 mi/1,000
Outdoor Theaters (stage and seating for approx. 300)	1/100,000

2. Maintain capacity standards for parks and facilities based on participation rates/ recreational demand measurable in terms of activity days per park or facility.

3. Maintain an inventory of existing private sector and other jurisdictional parkland and facilities for use in future park analysis.

4. Apply current and future population data by Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Analysis Zones to determine needs analysis based on individual park LOS, rather than by magisterial district. Provide current and updated demographic data relevant to parks and facilities to the Park Authority on a regular and ongoing basis.

5. Assist the Park Authority in soliciting funding from appropriate governmental agencies for the purpose of acquisition, development, renovation, and maintenance of County parks, trails, open space, and recreational sites and facilities.

6. Where feasible, coordinate park and facility planning with the recommendations of the Virginia Outdoor Plan to optimize the informational gains and other benefits associated with coordinated intergovernmental planning.

² (Including, but not limited to, indoor pools, indoor and outdoor skating rinks [ice and roller], gymnasiums, game courses and areas, meeting and activity rooms)

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7. Coordinate interagency planning efforts to implement a Countywide, comprehensive trails and greenways system, including trails for pedestrian, nonmotorized vehicles, and horses under saddle and on harness.

REC-POLICY 2: ACQUIRE AND MAINTAIN PARK ACREAGE AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AT A RATE CONSISTENT WITH POPULATION GROWTH AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH ADOPTED STANDARDS, THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND OTHER MEANS, AS APPROPRIATE.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Update the number of persons/dwelling unit size coefficient within the Design and Construction Standards Manual to reflect figures derived from the Prince William County population forecasts for MWCOG.
2. Update periodically the property value coefficient, upon which the calculation of fair-share contributions is based, to more accurately reflect existing and varying property values throughout the County.
3. Encourage voluntary monetary contributions from developers where land dedications would not meet minimum acreage standards for each park category.
4. Accept only those dedications of public park sites and facilities that are readily accessible to the general public and not just to residents of the proposed development.
5. Encourage the use of conservation easements or restrictive covenants as appropriate, by private landowners in order to protect and preserve historic sites and sensitive environmental areas.
6. Encourage the use of public-private partnerships for the purposes of acquiring, constructing and/or operating parks and park facilities.

REC-POLICY 3: ENSURE THAT PARK SITES ARE LOCATED AND DESIGNED IN A MANNER WHICH OPTIMIZES THEIR ACCESSIBILITY, SAFETY, AND USEFULNESS TO THE POPULATIONS INTENDED TO BE SERVED.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Locate, where possible, community and regional parks on major collector and arterial roadways to minimize the potential traffic impacts on residential neighborhoods.
2. Provide convenient, well-marked, well-defined entrance points of access for trails within the Countywide trails and greenways system at activity centers, such as

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park locations, public facilities (such as schools, libraries), public transit, residential communities, and private businesses, where appropriate, and where such trails and greenways have been provided through voluntary conveyance, or are on public property.

3. Utilize the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) practices of the Prince William County Police Department for points of access to trails and greenways and in trail and greenway designs.
4. Increase access for boating, fishing and beach activities along the Potomac River.
5. Assist and support state efforts to locate and develop public fishing lakes in Prince William County.
6. Coordinate with the Prince William County Area Agency on Aging to ensure that there are adequate park facilities, located in the proximity of senior citizen centers, to serve the specialized needs of senior citizens.
7. Collocate parks and schools to optimize the shared use of facilities.

REC-POLICY 4: PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COUNTYWIDE SYSTEM OF BIKING, HIKING, AND HORSE TRAILS AND GREENWAYS, CONSISTENT WITH THE PARK AUTHORITY'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MAP AND TRAILS PLAN.

ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Promote the implementation of the Park Authority's trails and greenways system, with the assistance of citizen groups, the development community, and the Virginia Department of Transportation, in order to link public property and the County's natural/historic/recreational resources, neighborhoods, employment centers, transit, and public facilities.
2. Include in planning for the trails and greenways system and working with the various public and private groups assisting the Park Authority in implementing that system all floodways, existing utility and conservation easements, abandoned railroad beds, and other appropriate sites as potential trail and/or greenway segments.
3. Create designated stream valley (linear) parks to be incorporated into the County-wide trails and greenways system, to be provided through voluntary contributions by landowners or through Park Authority purchase of the land within the proposed stream valley park.

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4. Coordinate efforts between the Park Authority and the County to establish standards and guidelines for the dedication of land and the acquisition of easements from private property owners for the Countywide trails and greenways system. Such standards should recognize that the system will provide a variety of benefits including recreation, environmental protection, economic development and non-motorized transportation. These standards shall address:
- Topographic standards for trail construction, including maximum slopes and drainage.
 - Environmental concerns for wildlife, water quality, and plant life.
 - Trail destinations and connections.

Such standards should recognize that the system will provide a variety of benefits including recreation, environmental protection, economic development, and non-motorized transportation. Such standards should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- **Consistency**--The acquisition of alignments for additional trails and greenways should be consistent with the County's Long-Range Land Use Plan Map and the standards established for the Park Authority's Parks and Open Space Map and Trails Plan.
 - **Connections**--Proposed land or easements to be dedicated should provide connections to existing or future trails or greenways.
 - **Accessibility**--Proposed land dedications and easements should serve multiple needs and be accessible to the general public. Potential sites and easements should be judged on location criteria that includes linkages to existing trails, trip origins, service to the greatest number of users, and linkages to public and private facilities.
 - **Maintenance and Liability**--Responsibilities for maintenance and liabilities associated with the type and use of a trail should be clearly defined, prior to construction of each segment.
5. Coordinate efforts between the Park Authority and the County to establish standards governing construction of trails. Standards should consider, but not be limited to, the following factors:
- **Surfaces and Widths**--Trail surfaces and widths should be appropriate to the expected user types, intensity of use, and maintenance levels expected.
 - **Access Points**--Frequency and location of access points should relate to activity centers and transportation facilities.

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- **Lighting**--Adequate lighting should be provided where trails traverse security risk areas and serve users of public transit facilities.
 - **Environmental Conditions**--Trails should be designed and constructed with minimal impact to the County's environmental, cultural, and historic resources.
6. Encourage the use of tax benefits as an incentive for property owners to provide trails and greenways and/or restrictive and conservation easements to promote connections between existing and planned trails and greenways where such facilities are identified on the Long-Range Land Use Plan Map.
 7. Cooperate with local, state, regional, and federal planning agencies to seek private donations of land or other voluntary means and conveyance of public property to develop the Potomac River National Heritage Corridor Trail along Prince William County's eastern boundary as a segment of a regional trails and greenways network.
 8. Provide, through private donations of land or other voluntary means and conveyance of public property, trails and greenways for passive recreational purposes along the Occoquan Reservoir and Lake Manassas to provide for passive recreation needs, with the added benefit of protecting the public drinking water supply.
 9. Assure the construction of Class I and Class II bicycle trails within the public right-of-way as development occurs and/or as roadways are upgraded, and encourage linkages of these trails with established trails in accordance with the Transportation Plan
 10. Promote cooperation with surrounding jurisdictions and regional planning authorities to provide an interjurisdictional trails and greenways system, through the cooperation and participation of the private and public sectors.
 11. Work with local citizens and private organizations with an interest in trails and greenways to assist in encouraging private participation in and maintenance of the trails and greenways system.
 12. Consider incorporating scenic vistas and natural viewsheds, identified through the Environment Plan, into the trails and greenways system, as appropriate.
 13. Encourage developers to collocate, where appropriate, trails and greenways within sewer line easements, utility corridors, utility easements, and buffers alongside stream valleys and roads, to minimize land acquisition and disruption of the natural environment.
 14. Encourage the construction and maintenance of trails and greenways within private developments that feed into the Countywide trails and greenways system.

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15. Encourage the Board of County Supervisors to consider conveying to the Park Authority any unused rights-of-way or other unused, abandoned County land.

REC-POLICY 5: OPTIMIZE THE USE OF EXISTING PARKS AND RELATED FACILITIES.

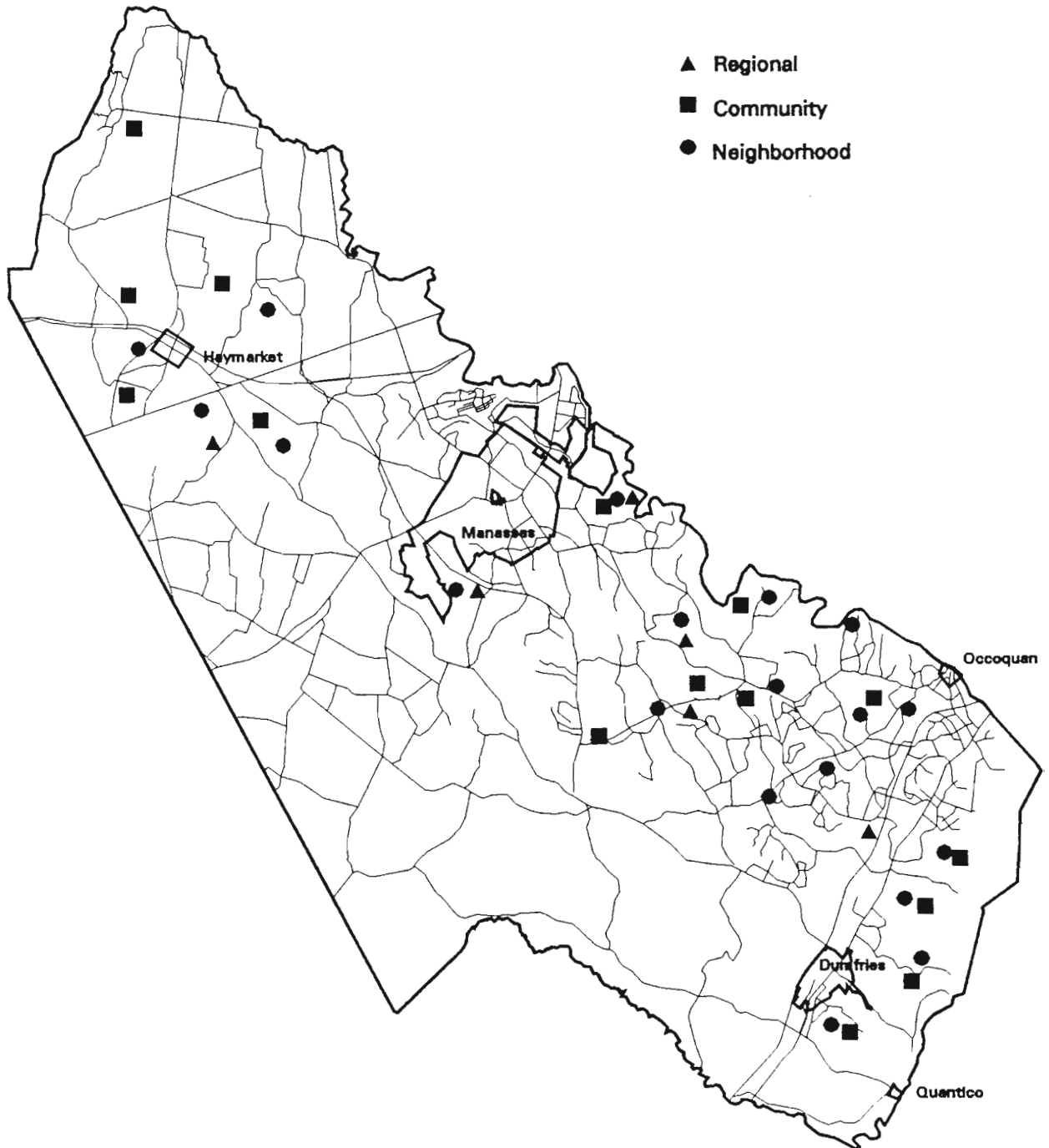
ACTION STRATEGIES:

1. Create capacity standards by surveying existing parks and facilities to determine participation (activity days) and recreational demand.
2. Utilize capacity standards based on recreational demand to allocate resources commensurate with identified needs.
3. Utilize, where possible, monetary contributions to provide needed facilities to existing park sites.
4. Where possible, renovate and expand, in accordance with the guidelines of the Community Design Plan, existing park acreage and facilities to address identified demands.

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Figure 1

Long-Range Park Needs by Park Type



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TABLE 1

PROJECTED PARK LAND NEEDS

Year Population (1)			1990 215,700	1995 245,900	2020 381,000
Park Type		Existing Acreage	-Deficit/ Surplus	-Deficit/ Surplus	-Deficit/ Surplus
Neighborhood	Total (2)	228	-203	-264	-534
	Active	52	-164	-194	-329
Community	Total (2)	318	-329	-420	-825
	Active	86	-238	-283	-486
Regional	Total (2)	1,422	-88	-299	-1,245
	Active	319	-436	-542	-1,015
Total	Total (2)	1,968	-620	-983	-2,604
	Active	457	-837	-1,018	-1,829

(1) Source: PWC Planning Office Employment, Population, and Household 5-year forecasts (1990-2020)

(2) Reflects only property owned by PWCPA

Note: Active development includes all developed land excluding trails, picnic areas, and all unusable parkland.

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TABLE 2

PROJECTED PARK FACILITY NEEDS

Year					1990	1995	2020
Population (1)					215,700	245,900	381,000
Park Facility	Standard per Residents	Park Authority Facilities (2)	School Facilities (3)	Total Facilities	-Deficit/ Surplus	-Deficit/ Surplus	-Deficit/ Surplus
Baseball Fields	1/6,000	7	7	14	-22	-27	-50
Basketball Courts	1/5,000	24	18	42	-1	-7	-34
Bike/Hike Trails	2 mi./1,000	16.91	4.2	21.11	-410	-471	-741
Football Fields	1/15,000	4	20	24	10	8	-1
Golf Course	1/50,000	4	0	4	0	-1	-4
Gymnasium	1/35,000	3	27	30	24	23	19
Ice Skating Rink	1/100,000	1	0	1	-1	-1	-3
Little League Fields	1/4,000	21	13	34	-20	-27	-61
Greenway	1/100,000	11	0	11	9	9	7
Nature Center	1/100,000	0	0	0	-2	-2	-4
Outdoor Theaters	1/100,000	1	0	1	-1	-1	-3
Playgrounds	1/5,000	27	36	63	20	14	-13
Rec Center	1/50,000	2	0	2	-2	-3	-6
Soccer Fields	1/2,000	59	57	116	8	-7	-75
Adult		40	20	60			
Youth		19	37	56			
Softball Fields	1/4,000	17	6	23	-31	-38	-72
Adult		11	0	11			
Youth		6	6	12			
Swimming Pool	1/20,000	6	1	7	-4	-5	-12
Tennis Courts	1/2,000	36	64	100	-8	-23	-91
Volleyball Courts	1/5,000	12	0	12	-31	-37	-64

- (1) Source: PWC Planning Office Employment, Population, and Household 5-year forecasts (1990-2020)
- (2) Inclusive of all facilities owned by PWCPA
- (3) Inclusive of all school facilities programmed by PWCPA
- (4) Fields categorized by Adult (13 and above) and Youth (12 and under) to reflect actual inventory and use

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APPENDIX A

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

New development presents demands for Countywide parks and open space facilities. It is important that Prince William County provide both current and future residents adequate recreation services that meet current and future demand according to established levels of service. The future demand for parks, open space, and recreation facilities must be measured, and means must be identified for maintaining the established Countywide level of service for these important services after new development occurs.

All applications for a rezoning or special use permit for residential dwelling units shall contain the following information:

- Number of dwelling units proposed.
- Number of new residents anticipated in the proposed residential development.
- Names, locations and type of parks and park facilities serving the project area.

It shall be determined that LOS standards have been met if the following conditions are met:

- The applicant has provided a monetary contribution in an equitable amount to provide park and recreation facilities, at the established LOS standards contained in the Parks and Open Space Plan. Alternatively, the applicant can dedicate a park site or park sites, dedicate park facilities, provide adequate recreation sites and/or facilities on-site to address the identified shortfall, or funding for parks and park facilities, or a combination of one or more of these alternative mitigation measures, so long as that mitigation is acceptable to the Park Authority.

Rezoning and/or special use permit applications that are found by the Prince William County Park Authority to generate a shortfall between the new demand and existing and projected and already funded parks and park facilities without committing to mitigation measures that are acceptable to the Park Authority shall be found inconsistent with the Parks and Open Space Plan.

The methodology for determining equitable monetary contributions for new development is outlined in the *Policy Guide for Monetary Contributions, Prince William County Planning Office*.

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Parks and Open Space Map

