Parks and Recreation/Aquatics

Recreation and parks are vital to the health of a community. These programs and places protect watersheds and wildlife habitats, preserve open space, increase property value, and enhance quality of life. The Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Aquatics are responsible for the provision of public recreational opportunities in Town. The Department of Parks and Recreation exists to promote and implement leisure programs and services that enhance the quality of life for all ages. The Christiansburg Aquatic Center seeks to provide a state-of-the-art aquatic facility that enhances the health, fitness, recreational, and competitive needs throughout the region and to increase health, water safety, and the aquatic education of Christiansburg citizens and aquatic organizations. Other localities, organizations, and agencies also provide recreational opportunities to Town residents and visitors. There are over 180 acres of land for public recreational enjoyment serving the Town's residents and visitors.

As noted in the proposed FY2013-2014 Budget, the Department of Parks and Recreation will draft and adopt a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Master Plan will provide a long-range vision for Christiansburg's recreational parks, facilities, and programs. It will include an inventory of existing facilities, programs, and parks. It will identify future needs to serve the full community and include priorities for budget purposes. It will identify short-term and long-term improvements and include recommendations to create a fully integrated park system. The Master Plan will be a working document requiring regular updates to maintain consistency with the needs of the community.

Primary Parks and Recreation/Aquatics Goal

Provide and maintain diverse, safe, accessible parks, facilities, and recreation programs and promote health and wellness for citizens of all ages according to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Parks and Facilities Map

Parks

Six neighborhood parks serve the residents and visitors in addition to a number of other local parks including Kiwanis Park, the skate park, Montgomery County Mid-County Park, and the Montgomery County Coal Mining Heritage Park and Loop Trail. Amenities at neighborhood parks include playground equipment, athletic fields, basketball courts, horseshoe pits, trails, and picnic areas. Several undeveloped vacant parcels are flagged for future park development including approximately 60 acres along Route 114 (Peppers Ferry Road NW). The needs of the full community regarding future park space must be considered in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Primary Parks Goal

Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the growth of the park system. Increase the number and diversity (location and type) of parks within and near Town. Create multi-modal connections between parks within the system. Enhance existing parks through regular maintenance and improvements.

Implementation Strategies

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- Ensure new park space is designed for safety and accessibility.
- Inventory existing park space to ensure safety and accessibility.
- Develop a dog park.
    - Include water access, separate areas for large and small dogs, benches, and waste cleanup.
- Develop a large central park for general use as well as events and festivals.
- Develop additional park space to serve specific neighborhoods based on an inventory of existing parks.
- Create park space along the 460 Bypass corridor and along Crab Creek.
- Construct outdoor amphitheaters and/or other appropriate venues for large-scale cultural events.
- Construct picnic shelters for community use at parks and facilities.
- Analyze development applications for park space.
- Require dedication of private land for public open space and park space and create incentives for increased dedication. See Environment Strategies.
    - Consider density bonuses for planned developments.
    - Utilize publicly dedicated land for passive and active recreation.
- Prepare a comprehensive strategy for developing and promoting community parks throughout the Town.
- Continue to promote the Huckleberry Trail and coordinate regionally for future extension of the Trail. See also Transportation.
- Connect public sites including recreation centers and neighborhood parks through the use of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
    - Connect Rosa Peters Playground with the Depot Park and the Aquatic Center.
    - Connect the future park along 114 with the rest of the Town.
- Create consistent design standards for public parks and facilities.
    - Include signage, landscaping, lighting, benches, shelters, and restrooms in these design standards.
- Create maintenance standards for parks including landscaping, upkeep of trails, and equipment.
    - Ensure maintenance standards are upheld using cost-effective and environmentally sound measures.

Facilities

Christiansburg and its partners operate a variety of facilities which offer both indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities. Indoor facilities include the Christiansburg Recreation Center, the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, the Senior Citizens Center which is housed inside the Recreation Center, and the National Guard Armory which is utilized for programs and classes. The Christiansburg Recreation Center, located at 1600 North Franklin Street, houses the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Senior Citizens Center as well as athletic courts, an indoor track, fitness rooms, a weight room, multiple meeting and multi-purpose rooms. The Christiansburg Aquatic Center, located at 595 North Franklin Street, houses the Department of Aquatics as well as a leisure pool, competition pool with diving boards, therapy pool, locker rooms, wet classrooms, observation deck, fitness areas, and multi-purpose rooms. The Christiansburg Aquatic Center is home to the Virginia Tech Men's and Women's Swimming and Diving teams and the Christiansburg High School Blue Demon Swimming and Diving teams.

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Outdoor facilities serving Christiansburg include multi-purpose fields and playground equipment at the public schools, neighborhood parks, multi-purpose field with walking loop trail at Depot Park, baseball fields, multi-purpose fields, and a walking track at Harkrader Sports Complex, multi-purpose fields and equipment at Kiwanis Park, the Skate Park adjacent to the Aquatic Center, the Huckleberry Trail, the multi-use mountain biking Coal Mining Loop Trail, the College Street Downtown Trail, and US Bike Route 76 (as mentioned in the Transportation chapter). In addition, private recreational facilities serving the Town include the Meadows Golf and Country Club, 118 acres owned by the Izaak Walton League of America, the Ridgewood Swim Club, Crimper's Climbing Gym, and the Rosa L. Peters Playground.

Other regional recreational facilities serving Christiansburg include the Jefferson National Forest with Pandapas Pond and Cascades Waterfall, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, the Blue Ridge Parkway, Claytor Lake State Park, and the New River with the New River Trail State Park.

Primary Facilities Goal

Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the development of recreation facilities. Update and maintain existing recreation facilities and provide new recreational facilities sufficient to meet the needs of the full community.

Implementation Strategies

- Continue to maintain and update equipment as needed at the Christiansburg Recreation Center.
- Continue to maintain and update equipment as needed at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center.
- Encourage development of on-site recreational facilities within new residential developments appropriate to the needs of the residents.
- Accept proffers for off-site recreation construction and expansion from developers.
- Encourage location of compatible small-scale cultural, recreation and entertainment facilities in or near the Town limits.
- Identify locations and/or develop social centers for events and meeting places within the Town.
- Identify locations within the Town that are appropriate for elderly social gatherings.
- Encourage more open use of community centers for social needs of the community.
- Encourage development of softball fields and rectangular multi-purpose fields for football and soccer.
- Ensure indoor and outdoor facilities are aesthetically pleasing and maintained for residents and visitors.

Programs and Activities

The Town operates a variety of recreational programs and activities to accommodate the needs of the full community. These programs and activities are held at facilities throughout Town including the Recreation Center, Aquatic Center, National Guard Armory, and the public schools. Parks and Recreation Department programs include youth athletics and community programs, adult athletics and community programs, special interest programs, senior programs, and special population programs. Youth and adult athletic programs include t-ball, softball,

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baseball, volleyball, football, basketball, cheerleading, and wiffleball. Community programs include tumbling and gymnastics, art, zumba, martial arts, horsemanship, and aerobics. Special interest programs include dog obedience classes, body fat testing, blood drives, book swaps, and homebuyer education classes. Senior and special population programs include basket weaving, blood pressure screenings, pickleball, photography, nutrition, and bingo. Aquatics Department programs include swimming and water safety, water fitness, lifeguard training, scuba diving, and birthday parties. Christiansburg is also served by neighboring jurisdictions and private organizations offering recreational programs and activities.

Large-scale indoor and outdoor programs also boost tourism and economic development in the community. According to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) 2007 Virginia Outdoors Plan, communities can attract investment and boost tourism through recreation, tourism, and conservation of open space. Attracting and marketing local, state, and national events increases visitors' support of local businesses and builds local tourism.

Primary Programs and Activities Goal

Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the development of recreational programs and activities. Maintain existing programs and activities and provide new programs and activities sufficient to meet the needs of the full community.

Implementation Strategies

- Increase the number of evening activities and events to accommodate families.
- Increase the diversity of cultural activities in Town.
- Increase communication of events to citizens through creation of a community events calendar.
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure complementary programs and facilities, avoid duplication, and discourage conflicting or overlapping events.
- Provide adequate and accessible programs for our aging population.
- Provide adequate and accessible programs for the physically handicapped.
- Work with the local schools to develop youth programs and activities.
- Continue to attract local, state, and national athletic and aquatic events to the community to further develop tourism and increase economic impact.

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