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“2033: Parks and Recreation for ALL” Plan: Charleston County Parks launches a comprehensive master plan update for parks, open spaces, trails and facilities

(CHARLESTON COUNTY) – The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission is embarking on a comprehensive planning process to establish community goals and recommendations for the agency’s parks and facilities, open spaces, trails, programming and land acquisition strategies for the next 10 years.

The plan will be called “2033: Parks and Recreation for ALL” (abbreviated as PARFA). This title points to the importance of creating a truly inclusive and community-driven planning process where the recommendations are directly informed by community priorities, needs and ideas. Those interested in learning more about the PARFA planning process and its progress can sign up on the PARFA webpage, ccprc.com/PARFA.

“This plan will develop implementation strategies for making our parks, facilities and recreational programming more resilient, relevant, accessible, connected and equitable as our county grows and changes. I hope every Charleston County resident, stakeholder and park user will participate in this process to help us identify priorities for the next 10 years of Charleston County Parks,” said Charleston County Parks’ Executive Director David Bennett. “With your support, Charleston County Parks will be well-positioned to continue providing high-quality programs, well-maintained facilities, transformative experiences and a great quality of life for all.”

PARFA is Charleston County Parks’ second 10-year comprehensive parks, recreation, open space and trails plan; the first comprehensive plan (called Parks for Tomorrow) was completed in 2013. As Charleston County Parks’ foundational comprehensive plan, Parks for Tomorrow laid the groundwork for enhancements at existing parks, the acquisition and development of new parkland, and the expansion of programs and services.

Public Engagement

Project information, resources, and updates will be posted on the PARFA webpage at ccprc.com/PARFA. Public feedback will be encouraged through two primary modes: surveys (questionnaires) and workshops.

The *Charleston County Park and Recreation Needs Assessment* (a statistically-valid survey process) will kick-off the public engagement phase of the planning process. The survey will be mailed to approximately 4,000 randomly-selected Charleston County residences in May, to ask residents about their level of satisfaction and priorities for a wide range of park and recreation services. Additional surveys and other opportunities to share feedback will be available both online and at several public workshops for all county residents to voice their opinions.

Save the date! The PARFA planning process will include a series of six workshops throughout Charleston County during the week of June 27 – July 1, 2022. Exact times and locations of these workshops will be finalized and posted on the PARFA webpage in the near future.

Additional public engagement measures will include web-based and printed surveys; targeted community-scale workshops; pop-up-style information stations; and focus group meetings with community advocacy groups, existing and potential public and non-profit partners, park and recreation-oriented businesses, mobility and accessibility advocacy groups, and cultural and natural resource agencies and organizations. For more information about upcoming events and ways to participate, visit ccprc.com/PARFA.

About the Project Team

The consulting team leading the PARFA planning effort is Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Agency Landscape + Planning. The project team also includes Alta Planning for connectivity and trails, BerryDunn for recreation programming and operations, and ETC Institute to develop and deploy a statistically valid community survey. Charleston-based Community Solutions Consulting is also on the team and brings recent, hands-on knowledge of reaching area communities from their work on the Charleston City Plan. Dr. Tiffany Johnson of Rocket Solutions brings her expertise in organizational structures in parks and recreation. Lead consultant Agency Landscape + Planning is a mission-driven, women-owned practice dedicated to addressing social equity, cultural vitality and environmental resilience through design excellence, strategic planning and community-engagement on projects across the country. The firm has led parks and open space planning projects for over a decade, including system-wide plans for communities including Denver, CO; Mecklenburg County, NC; Howard County, MD; Greensboro, NC and Jersey City, NJ, among others.

About Charleston County Parks

The mission of the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs and services. The large park system features over 11,000 acres of property and includes four day parks, three beach parks, three dog parks, two landmark fishing piers, three waterparks, 19 boat landings, a climbing wall, a challenge course, a historical plantation site, an interpretive center, an equestrian center, cottages, a campground, a marina, as well as wedding, meeting and event facilities. The park system also offers a wide variety of recreational services – festivals, camps, classes, programs, volunteer opportunities, and more. For more information, call 843-795-4386 or visit www.charlestoncountyparks.com.