

PARKS AND RECREATION FOR ALL 2033

Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission
10-year Comprehensive Plan
Summer 2023 Final Plan





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BRAD TAGGART	Vice Chair
MICHELLE BRANDT	Secretary-Treasure
DEVON ANDREWS	Commissioner
COLLIN BRUNER	Commissioner
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Acronyms

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ADA	American Disabilities Act
CAPRA	Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
BCD COG	Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (Regional MPO)
CARTA	Charleston Area Regional Transportation Authority
CCPRC	Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission
CCSD	Charleston County School District
CCPF	Charleston County Parks Foundation
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CRP	Community Recreation Programs
CTC	County Transportation Committee
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association
PARD	Park and Recreation Development Fund
PARFA	Parks and Recreation for All
PROST	Park, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan
SCDOT	South Carolina Department of Transportation
TST	Transportation Sales Tax

Glossary

Accessibility addresses ease of access to a site from a large population in reasonable proximity to a CCPRC park/facility, and/or reflects a measure of remoteness from areas of dense population. May also be used to describe how navigable a park/facility is to people with disabilities, such as in accordance with the American Disabilities Act (ADA).

Community Recreation are recreation facilities managed and programmed by CCPRC that are areas in Charleston County not served by larger municipalities with their own Recreation Departments.

Conservation Easement covenants (apart from property deed/ deed restrictions) which restrict or constrain the development or use of a property, typically within defined parameters (e.g., limiting development to a specific square footage or percentage of a property, or specifying specific protections on certain structures/buildings). Conservation easements are permanent restrictions and monitored and enforced by third party groups, such as land trusts.

Contextual Impact references a site's ability to be developed in some manner without negatively impacting adjacent properties and both the current and historic cultural context of the immediate surrounding locale.

Cultural/Historic Value addresses a site's historic and archaeological value and contributions to the cultural relevance of the area and region.

Deed Restrictions addresses the existence of development constraints, restrictions, or easements within the property deed which could impact the development program of a site, typically assumed at the time of acquisition or in accordance with grant requirements. Restrictions are typically general in nature, such as requiring a property to only be used for recreational purposes.

Deep Water Access refers to the ability to navigate a waterway with motorized watercraft (used herein in context with boat landings or future potential boat landings).

Ecosystem refers to a community of interacting organisms and their environment. This term is commonly used to portray the interconnectedness of the land and all living things.

Events + Programs refers to organized group functions and gatherings provided by CCPRC. The term typically accounts for events such as Cajun Festival, Latin America Festival, yoga, triathlons, and the Holiday Festival of Lights (HFOL), among others.

Existing Structures recognizes whether the site has a building on it and if so what is the state of the building with respect to its ability to be utilized in future development plans.

Existing Trail Conditions reflects an evaluation of the quality and quantity of existing trails based on visual observations.

Exurban relates to an area beyond the suburbs (which are areas built around cities, see definition for *Suburban*) that are typically low density and residential in nature.

Facilities refers to physical structures and park spaces maintained by CCPRC including MOUs, leases, partnerships, and land owned by the Commission.

Focus Areas are the guiding principles towards which the PARFA plan strives to address. These include Access, Connectivity, Organizational Health, Relevancy, and Resiliency.

Habitat Diversity is based on visual accounts of the land parcel, reflects assumptions on the potential for diversity of wildlife founded upon observations on the variety of vegetative cover and type, wetland conditions, land forms, and the site's proximity within a larger local wildlife context.

Hydrology is the study of the movement, distribution, and management of water to better understand the potential for a flexible development program with reasonable costs.

Inventory / Assessment referenced throughout the PARFA plan was conducted in March 2022-April 2022 and provides both a high level understanding of the current conditions of each facility and a detailed documentation of current assets.

Land Acquisition the process of purchasing or receiving land. The PARFA plan typically uses this term to imply the purchase of land. However, strategies like partnerships, gifting, and land leasing are other mechanisms for land acquisition.

Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) A federally mandated and federally funded transportation policy-making organization responsible for carrying out the urban transportation

planning process in a specific urbanized area, made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities. The dedicated MPO for Charleston is the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments (BCD COG).

Multimodal is a transportation facility/system to simultaneously accommodate at least one "modes" of transportation, such as walking, biking, automobiles, public transit, and freight. Typically refers to streets or transportation networks that are designed to support a combination of these modes.

Off-site views represents a site quality that recognizes impressive distant views that stretch beyond property boundaries that will greatly contribute to the visual enjoyment of park users (i.e. the "borrowed landscape").

On-site views recognizes significant on site features natural or man-made that contribute to a lasting visual appreciation of the property.

Park and Recreation Development Fund (PARD) is funding CCPRC receives from the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism's Park and Recreation Development fund. The funding is to be used for permanent improvements to public park and recreation facilities.

Parks Districts the subdivision of Charleston County into multiple operations/service areas, as to facilitate adequate distribution of staff and equipment resources for managing the CCPRC parks/facilities within those service areas. District boundaries do not necessarily correlate to the same geographic subdivision of Charleston County as

the CCPRC Planning Areas (see “Planning Areas”). The term “District” is typically only used in reference to facility operations by the Parks Division, and is not necessarily applicable to other CCPRC divisions. As of this plan, CCPRC parks/facilities, staff, and equipment are divided between three Parks Districts.

Planning Areas are the five regions utilized throughout the PARFA plan to geographically organize and analyze Charleston County. Those regions are (from west to east) West County, Charleston Center, North Area, East Cooper, and East County.

Programs refers to typically recurring daytime activities, which may be educational, fitness, team building, outdoor, etc. in nature. Examples include camps, yoga in parks, triathlon series, 5k runs, inclusive recreation, natural history interpretation, cultural resource interpretation, challenge course team building, and youth sports and activities. (See “Events”)

Proximity to Population Centers is a category that focuses more on a site’s potential to draw significant users due to its proximity to existing or anticipated higher density, primary residential development.

Regional Parks (or Day Parks) These park facilities offer a variety of recreation amenities and serve as the cornerstones of the CCPRC system. The property itself is generally unrestricted (i.e. complementary or limited covenants or encumbrances), and therefore are favorable for development and expansion. There are currently four large regional parks including James Island County Park, Palmetto Islands County Park, Wannamaker County Park, and Johns Island County Park.

Rural refers to all people, territory, and housing that are not within an urban, suburban, or exurban area. Rural communities are typically low-density and characterized by agricultural and large lot zoned residential uses.

Shared-use paths A typically paved bicycle and pedestrian path separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space, barrier, or curb (often termed “sidepath” or “multi-use path”). Shared-use paths may be within the highway right-of-way or within an independent right-of-way or easement, such as on a decommissioned railroad bed or in a floodplain. Shared-use paths typically accommodate two-way travel and are open to pedestrians, in-line skaters, wheelchair users, joggers, bicyclists, and other non-motorized modes.

Special Purpose District is a district created by an Act of the General Assembly or pursuant to general law to provide any governmental service.

Special Use Facilities offer specific amenities and programs, including the skate park, historic/environmental sites, boat landings, beach parks, Community Recreation facilities, marinas, and fishing piers.

Suburban refers to lower density areas that are primarily residential and exist at the edges of an urban areas.

Topographic Variety recognizing that wide ranges of topographical relief are rare in the Lowcountry this category reflects the significant visual attribute that land elevation diversity brings to a site and its important contribution to identifying a property as a unique place.

Trails are paved or unpaved paths for a variety of users. Trails may be singular-mode (e.g., pedestrian use), dual mode (e.g., hiking and biking), or for multiple modes (e.g., walking, biking, and/or equestrian).

Undeveloped/Future CCPRC Sites have potential to become regional parks or special use facilities in the future. Once developed, these properties would be moved into the appropriate category as defined.

Unincorporated Areas are regions or territories that are not governed by their own local city government.

Urban refers to areas of high population density that are designated as cities or towns.

Wetland Quality refers to the ability of a wetland to function in groundwater recharge and discharge, flood storage, sediment retention, buffering storm events, and wildlife habitat. High quality wetlands and the presence of a variety of wetland habitats types on a subject property can add value to a park and strengthen appreciation of the property as a unique natural area.

Wildland-Urban Interface A transitional zone between human developed areas and land that is primarily unmanaged vegetation. This often refers to areas where housing has been developed very close to critical species habitats and ecosystems.



Figure 1.2 Explorers Camp at the crabbing dock, James Island County Park



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THE SYSTEM TODAY

In this chapter:

Plan Introduction

Mission + Core Values

System Snapshot

Relevancy

Access

Resilience

Connectivity

Organizational Health

Plan Introduction

WHY “PARKS AND RECREATION FOR ALL”?

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (‘CCPRC’ or “The Commission”) is a “Special Purpose District”, originally established by the South Carolina State Legislature in 1968. CCPRC’s primary function is to create and operate countywide parks and recreation facilities, and to provide technical assistance to existing park and recreation agencies and community groups. As defined through legislative act, CCPRC must provide park and recreation services in Charleston County, but not duplicate services provided by the other municipalities and special recreation districts in the area. The range of experiences and places within the CCPRC system make it one of the most diverse and innovative park and recreation agencies in the State of South Carolina.

Located on the Atlantic coast approximately two hours east of South Carolina’s capital city of Columbia, Charleston County remains the third most populous county in South Carolina with over 400,000 residents, and

the seventh largest county by land area, encompassing approximately 917.5 square miles (including highland, marshes, beaches, rivers, and wetlands), and spanning approximately 100 miles of coastline. The county is home to 16 incorporated municipalities, including the City of Charleston, City of North Charleston, and the Town of Mount Pleasant (the first, third, and fourth most populous municipalities in South Carolina, respectively). In addition, there are several named unincorporated communities in Charleston County.

Primarily occupying a coastal area, Charleston County is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean, with myriad wetlands, creeks, rivers, and otherwise marshy landscapes interwoven between its highland areas. Today, Charleston County continues to grow as a result of a desirable climate, thriving economic diversity, overall affordability, and the character of neighborhoods, beaches, parks, and facilities that draw people from all over.

EXISTING PARKS & FACILITIES

- 1 Caw Caw Interpretive Center
- 2 Johns Island County Park
- 3 Kiawah Beachwalker County Park
- 4 Meggett County Park
- 5 West County Aquatic Center
- 6 Folly Beach County Park
- 7 Folly Beach Fishing Pier
- 8 James Island County Park
- 9 Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve
- 10 McLeod Plantation Historic Site
- 11 Stono River County Park
- 12 Cooper River County Park and Marina
- 13 North Charleston Wannamaker County Park
- 14 SK8 Charleston
- 15 Isle of Palms County Park
- 16 Laurel Hill County Park
- 17 Mount Pleasant Pier
- 18 Palmetto Islands County Park
- 19 The Lake House at Bulow

BOAT LANDINGS

- 1 Sol Legare Boat Landing
- 2 Folly River Boat Landing
- 3 Martins Boat Landing
- 4 Penny Creek Boat Landing
- 5 Toogoodoo Boat Landing
- 6 Dawhoo Boat Landing
- 7 Steamboat Boat Landing
- 8 Cherry Point Boat Landing
- 9 John P. Limehouse Boat Landing
- 10 Bulow Boat Landing
- 11 Pierpont Boat Landing
- 12 W.O. Thomas Jr. Boat Landing
- 13 Riverland Terrace Boat Landing
- 14 Wappoo Cut Boat Landing
- 15 Remley's Point Boat Landing
- 16 Shem Creek Boat Landing
- 17 Gadsonville Boat Landing
- 18 Paradise Boat Landing
- 19 Wiltown Bluff Boat Landing

COMMUNITY RECREATION SITES

- 1 Baptist Hill Tennis Complex
- 2 Haut Gap Recreation Complex
- 3 Schroder Community Center
- 4 St. James-Santee Recreation Complex
- 5 Thompson Hill Recreation Complex

UNDEVELOPED/FUTURE CCPRC SITES

- 1 Ravenel Property
- 2 Spring Grove Property
- 3 Rantowles Creek Islands
- 4 Wiltown Community Center
- 5 East Arctic Avenue Property
- 6 Old Towne Creek Property
- 7 Secessionville Property
- 8 Ashley River Property
- 9 Dorchester Road Property
- 10 Rifle Range Road Property
- 11 Awendaw Property
- 12 McClellanville Property
- 13 Edisto Island Property
- 14 Bulow Property

CCPRC SMALL GRANT SITES*

- 1 South Santee Community Center
- 2 Sol Legare Community Center
- 3 Ten Mile Community Center

*CCPRC-supported development of small recreation sites in unincorporated Charleston County, primarily utilizing SCPRT-administered Park and Recreation Development (PARD) funds.

THE SYSTEM TODAY



As a nationally accredited park and recreation agency, every 10 years CCPRC creates a new comprehensive plan to make recommendations on its parks, facilities, and programs for its next decade of service to Charleston County residents. This plan – called “2033: Parks and Recreation for ALL!” (or PARFA) – identifies county-wide park and recreation needs and desires for the next ten years, and provides a blueprint to guide capital improvements, land acquisition, and the creation-of and prioritization of reinvestment in events, programs, and places. This plan helps CCPRC to:

- Understand existing agency resources and assets.
- Gather community and staff input about needs for programs, parks/facilities, and services.
- Establish goals and priorities for programs, parks/facilities, and services.
- Recommend strategies to accomplish those goals.

Mission and Core Values

The mission of CCPRC is to improve the quality of life in Charleston County by offering a diverse system of park facilities, programs, and services.

CCPRC has acquired approximately eleven thousand acres of land, approximately six thousand acres open for public access. The CCPRC system includes nineteen existing parks, fourteen undeveloped/future sites, five community recreation facilities, nineteen boat landings, and a wide variety of recreation programs and events.

CCPRC’s vision is to be distinguished as a nationally accredited and financially sustainable park and recreation agency through a commitment to preserving the area’s natural, historical, and cultural resources, offering a clean, safe, and exceptional visitor experience that is accessible to all.

CCPRC’s core values ensure a thriving park system for the next generation and include the following:

Community Enrichment: Enabling lives through education and programs

Stewardship: Preserving and conserving cultural, natural and historical resources

Fun: Delivering fun to customers

Diversity & Inclusion: Creating a park system that reflects the diversity of our community

Accessibility: Removing barriers to make programs and facilities accessible for all

Quality: Striving for quality throughout the park system

Health & Wellness: Providing and promoting healthy lifestyle opportunities

Exceptional Customer Service: Always focusing on you

Safety: Ensuring safe and secure environments

Leadership: Providing professional staff development

Building a Legacy: Maintaining a vision for the future while sustaining a healthy park system

CCPRC's vision is to be distinguished as a nationally accredited and financially sustainable park and recreation agency through our commitment to preserving our natural, historical and cultural resources, offering a clean, safe, and exceptional visitor experience that is accessible to all.



Figure 1.4 Whirlin' Waters Adventure Waterpark at North Charleston Wannamaker County Park.

System Overview

PUBLIC AND PROTECTED LAND IN CHARLESTON COUNTY

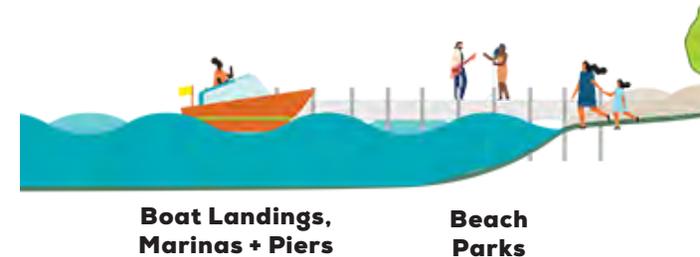
Today, there are approximately 283,000 acres of parks and protected open space within Charleston County – or approximately 48 percent of the county’s total 587,000 acres, not including conservation easement lands. These spaces include properties owned by CCPRC, the federal government, the State of South Carolina, local municipalities, other public open space providers, and private open space providers and conservation easements. These spaces include the following:

- **CCPRC park and recreation facilities:** approximately 11,000 acres of land acquired, which includes regional parks, beach parks, fishing piers, waterparks, culturally and naturally significant sites, trail parks, as well as boat landings and community recreation centers.
- **Federal lands:** The federal government owns/operates a variety of recreation-oriented properties in Charleston County, including a national forest, national wildlife refuges

approximately 115,000 acres of the over 259,000-acre Francis Marion National Forest are within Charleston County limits. This important natural resource provides important habitats for native flora and fauna. CCPRC operates its Thompson Hill Recreation Complex (a community recreation site in East County) on land owned by the National Forest Service. Additionally, 64,000 acres are encompassed within the Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, which stretches on the northern coast of Charleston County for about 20 miles.

- **State lands:** State lands are home to important historic, cultural, and natural resources. Within the county, there are two state parks, five heritage preserves, three seabird sanctuaries, two wildlife management areas, as well as land owned by state affiliated colleges and universities. Agencies and institutions owning/operating these lands include South Carolina Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (SCPRT), South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), College of Charleston, and

Clemson University, among others. The total land area of state owned and protected properties totals approximately 1,300 acres of land. Some examples of properties owned by state agencies and institutions include: Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site (SCPRT), Hampton Plantation State Historic Site (SCPRT), Dungannon Heritage Preserve (SCDNR), Botany Bay Wildlife Management Area (SCDNR), and Stono Preserve (College of Charleston).



**Boat Landings,
Marinas + Piers**

**Beach
Parks**

Figure 1.5 CCPRC Park Types from County-wide Public Workshops.

— **Municipal parks, open spaces, and facilities:** There are sixteen incorporated municipalities in Charleston County, with varying ownership-of and ability to operate park property. Municipal parks and open spaces include about 1,900 acres of land, which include amenities such as playgrounds, community centers, pools, farmer’s markets, beaches, events, therapeutic and outdoor recreation, and fitness facilities. Examples of well-known municipal parks include: Hampton Park (Charleston), Riverfront Park (North

Charleston), Memorial Waterfront Park (Mount Pleasant), Roxbury Park (Meggett), J. Marshall Stith Park (Sullivan’s Island), and McClellanville Town Park (McClellanville).

— **Charleston County affiliated agencies:** Charleston County-affiliated agencies and institutions own or operate over 1,800 acres. CCPRC partners with many of these affiliates through shared use agreements and memorandums of understanding and other methods to provide recreation amenities and programs across the county.

— In many cases, the land areas owned/operated by the above-mentioned public entities are protected in perpetuity by conservation easements. Additionally, there are thousands of acres of private land protected by conservation easements. According to a report by The Nature Conservancy, there are over 92,000 acres of **Private Conserved Land**, which includes conservation easements and other privately preserved open spaces, in Charleston County.



Trails

Campground

Waterparks + Pools

Regional Parks

Historic Sites

Adventure Sports

Community Centers + Recreation Complexes

PARFA Planning Process

PARFA FOCUS AREAS

The PARFA plan is guided by five key focus areas which were proposed by CCPRC at the beginning of the planning process. The planning team has used these focus areas to provide a thoughtful approach for understanding, analysis, visioning, and the creation of system-wide goals and strategies which benefit and respond to the needs of all.

- **Access:** Our parks provide high quality experiences to all.
- **Relevancy:** Our parks reflect our changing and growing communities.
- **Resilience:** Our parks thrive and adapt to our dynamic environment.
- **Connectivity:** Our parks connect our communities to nature and to each other.
- **Organizational Health:** Our parks commission is dedicated to providing exceptional performance in service of our communities.

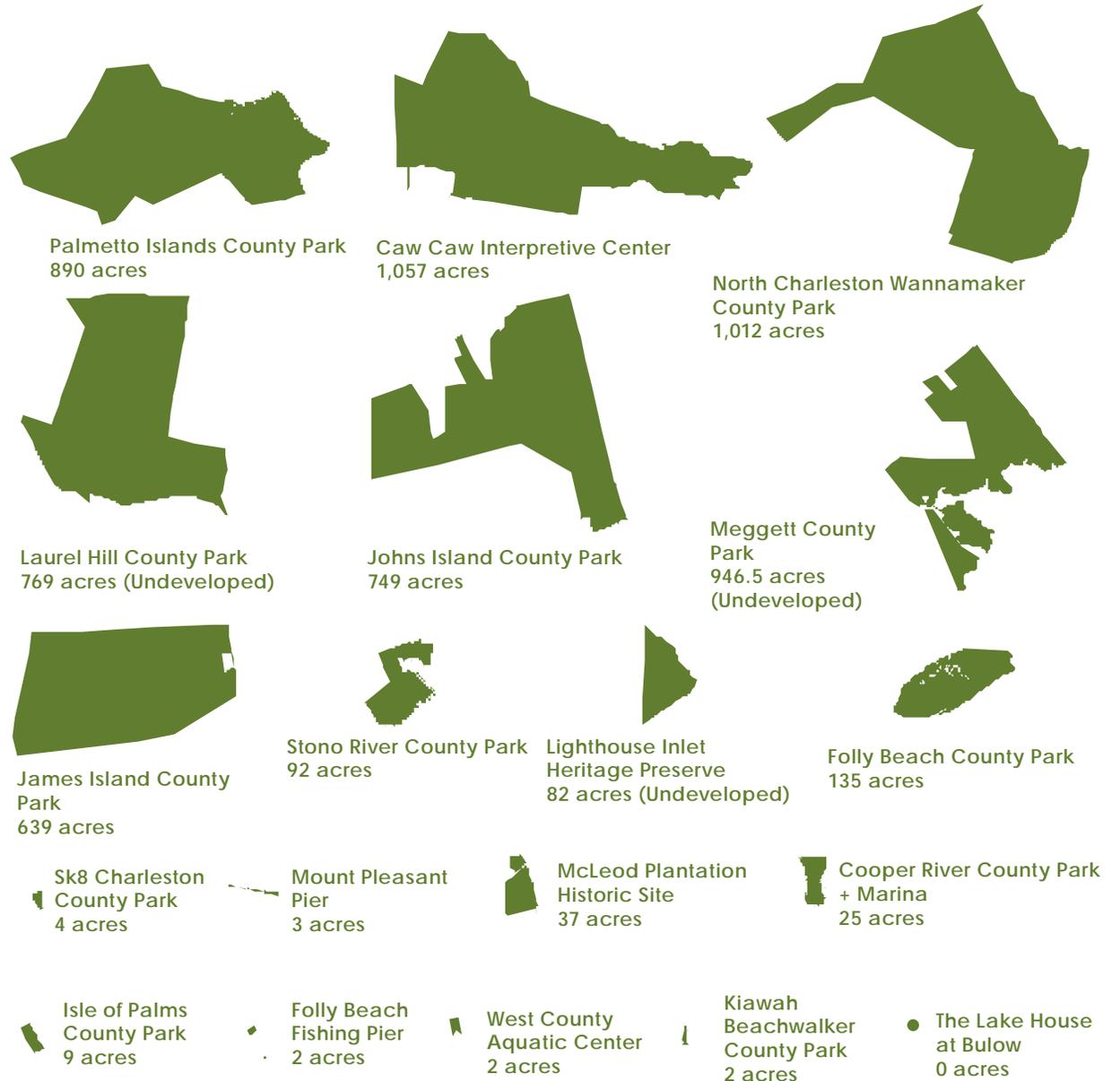


Figure 1.6 Nineteen parks (organized by scale above), 19 boat landings, and five community recreation sites are open to the public across the County.

THE SYSTEM TODAY



Figure 1.7 Fourteen undeveloped/future CCPRC sites (organized by scale above), are not open to the public.

PLANNING AREAS

CCPRC is a complex county-wide system, which varies greatly across its geographic areas. In planning for this system, PARFA not only studied the county as a whole, but looked to the specific and localized needs of the county’s five planning areas. These areas have very different levels of access to services and amenities provided by CCPRC and other similar providers, and also vary greatly in terms of demographic and geographic characteristics.

Residents and visitors of the five respective planning areas use the parks system differently. In part, this depends on what parks, facilities, and recreation destinations are currently available in their vicinity, how far they must travel to these destinations, what mode of transportation is available, and what other kinds of barriers exist to accessing programs and places. There is a clear contrast in access between the more urbanized planning areas of the county (Charleston Center, North Area, East Cooper) where parks are located much closer together and park programs and facilities support a wide range of audiences; and the more rural planning areas (East County and West County) where driving access is paramount to accessing these more remote places. In East and West County, where park access is more limited, CCPRC receives from the South



Figure 1.8 Charleston County Planning Areas

Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism’s Park and Recreation Development fund (PARD), which CCPRC distributes for permanent improvements to public park and recreation facilities. There are three such sites in the county.

West County Planning Area

The West County Planning Area spans from the southwest border of Charleston County with

Colleton County (along the Edisto River, just north of Edisto Beach), extending eastward – bordered on the north by Dorchester County, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. The Charleston Center Planning Area serves as the eastern border to the West County Planning Area (generally following the Folly and Stono rivers, and up Rantowles Creek). Major geographic features include Edisto, Yonges, Wadmalaw,

Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook barrier islands, as well as the various creeks and rivers that define the landscape. Additionally, the westernmost portion of West County falls within the Ashepoo, Combahee, and Edisto (“ACE”) river basin – a significant and mostly-protected estuarine ecosystem.

West County includes the incorporated towns of Hollywood, Meggett, Ravenel, Kiawah Island, Seabrook Island, Rockville, and suburban City of Charleston on Johns Island. The majority of West County is unincorporated Charleston County; however, named unincorporated communities

include Parkers Ferry, Adams, Run, and Wiltown, among others.

This planning area generally has a low population density and a high population of Black, Hispanic, or Latino residents. Of all the rural areas within the county, West County has the highest population of Hispanic or Latino residents. The highest population of Black residents is in the middle and westernmost parts of West County. This area also has the oldest resident population in the county, with the median age residents ranging from forty-five to sixty-five years old.



Figure 1.9 City of Charleston. Source: Creative Commons.

Charleston Center Planning Area

The western boundary of the Charleston Center Planning Area extends from the Atlantic Ocean up the Folly and Stono rivers, continuing up Rantowles Creek from the Stono River and Rantowles Creek. The planning area then extends eastward to its eastern boundary of the Ashley River, cutting across the “neck” of the Charleston peninsula, and south again on the Cooper River through the Charleston Harbor.

This geographic area captures the City of Charleston’s urban core and suburban areas of James Island and West Ashley; including in these areas the Town of James Island and unincorporated Charleston County, extending to the City of Folly Beach. Named unincorporated (but organized and active) communities in this planning area include Sol Legare (between James Island and Folly Beach) and Red Top (outer West Ashley near Rantowles Creek).

Charleston Center has the highest population density in the county, and is the largest city in the state of South Carolina. This planning area also includes areas with higher median household income than the North Area, East County, and West County. Overall, Charleston Center is fairly diverse in terms of age, with the youngest residents

living closer to the urban core, and slightly older residents (mid-thirties to early forties) living further south and east.

North Area Planning Area

The only planning area without direct access to the Atlantic Ocean, the North Planning Area is still bounded by several tributaries that make up Charleston County's unique geography, the Ashley River and Cooper River. The northern edge of this area is defined by the Norfolk Southern rail line and Berkeley County, and the southern and western edges are shared with Dorchester County.

The North Area is primarily comprised of the outer neighborhoods of the City of Charleston, City of North Charleston, the third most populous city in the state, and towns of Summerville and Lincolnville. All three municipalities extend beyond the county's boundaries. Some portions of the North Area remain as unincorporated Charleston County, including Ladson. North Charleston also includes the Charleston Air Force Base and the Charleston International Airport.

The North Area has a high population of Black, Hispanic, or Latino residents. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), the North Area also represents an area with high social vulnerability among all planning areas in Charleston County. The SVI measure is used to understand census communities in which households experience high stressors in terms of socioeconomic status, housing and transportation, household composition and disability, and minority status and language.

East Cooper Planning Area

Like most of the planning areas in Charleston County, the East Cooper Planning Area is primarily delineated by water bodies. The Atlantic Ocean, Cooper River, and Wando River bound East Cooper to the southeast, west, and north, respectively. To the northeast, the planning area meets the Town of Awendaw, the gateway to the East County Planning Area. The Planning Area provides a striking mix of experiences, stretching from the beaches and salt marshes of the Isle of Palms, Sullivan's Island, and Dewees Island which protect the Copahee Sound, to the dense higher grounds of inland Mount Pleasant and the backwaters of the Wando River.

The East Cooper Planning Area includes the City of Isle of Palms, and the towns of Mount Pleasant and Sullivan's Island as well as some portions of

unincorporated Charleston County. East Cooper is mostly comprised of dense single family to low-density multi-family residential and commercial and office land uses.

The suburban/urban character of this area contribute to the demographic makeup of its residents. East Cooper has the highest median household income of all planning areas, with a large majority of households earning \$100,000 or more annually. The median age of East Cooper aligns with the median age for Charleston County as a whole (mid-thirties to early forties). East Cooper also has the highest density of families in the county, and is the least racially diverse planning area in the county.

East County Planning Area

The East County Planning Area spans the length of the Francis Marion National Forest from the East Cooper Planning Area to Georgetown County. The National Forest is one of two significant natural resource areas that dominant the majority of the land area in this region, the second being the Cape Roman National Wildlife Refuge. This Planning Area is the most remote within the county. State Highway 17 is the only major route in East County - connecting the City of Charleston

to the City of Georgetown. The places along this route within the planning area are characterized by agricultural and commercial fishing uses and rural, residential communities.

The towns of Awendaw and McClellanville are the only incorporated places in this planning area, and both towns are quite small, with limited capacity to provide recreational services.

Less than two percent of Charleston County residents live in this area, and the population is much older on average than much of the county. The median age of residents in East County range from age forty-five to fifty-five years old. East County has a less racially diverse population than Charleston Center, but is significantly more racially diverse than East Cooper.



Figure 1.10 Isle of Palms in East Cooper



PARFA Focus Area Assessment

As CCPRC looks ahead to the next decade of system improvements, it is important for the PARFA plan have a comprehensive understanding a variety of topics that impact the parks and communities that surround them. The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

Information included in the Focus Area Assessment tables should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data the CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Figure 1.11 Summer Camp Counselor team building at the Challenge Course, James Island County Park

The averages (means) and medians (mid-points) provided in the Focus Area Assessment include approximate data for CCPRC parks/facilities currently open to public access (including Community Recreation Sites). Boat landings and future/undeveloped CCPRC sites are not included in these calculations, and if included, would have the potential to substantially alter the means and medians herein. Other exceptions to included data are noted in each individual table.

Resilience

- Flood mitigation**
- Natural and Cultural Resource Management Plans**
- Urban heat relief**
- Recent resilience-related investment**
- Conservation easement**
- Marsh/wetland coverage**
- Developable acreage**

Access

- Accessibility investment required**
- Accessible parking capacity**
- Entry fees**
- Internet access**

Relevancy

- Community demographics within a 15-minute drive**
- Anticipated growth**
- Recreation amenities**
- Specialized amenities**
- Years since last renovation**
- Recreation program hours**

Connectivity

- Trail amenities**
- Trail mileage**
- Neighborhood connections/gateways**
- Park walksheds and transit access**
- Population within walkable service area (15 mins)**
- Existing connectivity plan**

Org Health

- Revenue sources**
- Attendance/visitation**
- Master plan available**

Figure 1.12 PARFA Focus Area Assessment.

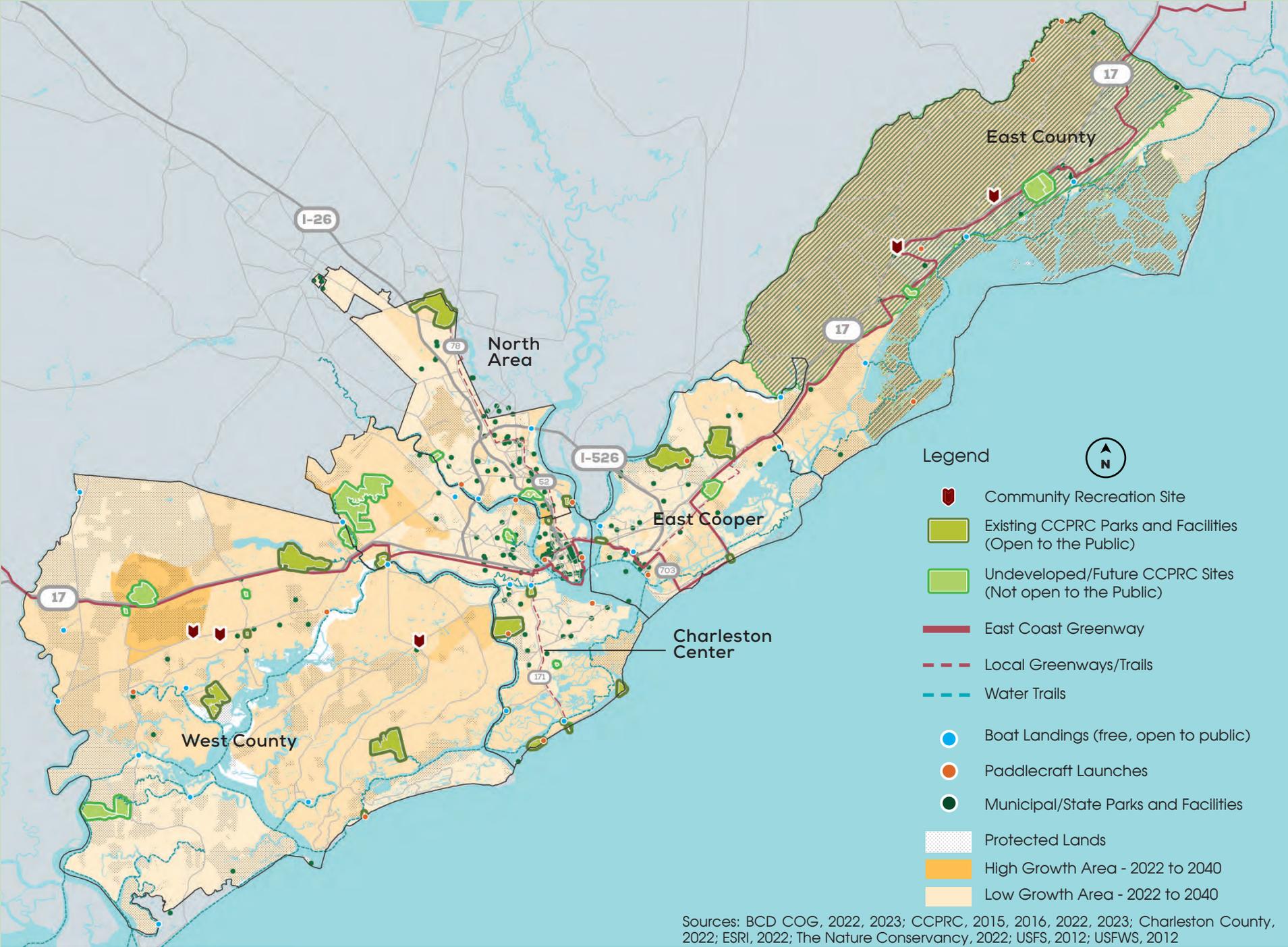


Access

Today, CCPRC manages approximately 11,000 acres of parks and recreation facilities across the county, about 6,000 acres of which are open to the public. The size of this system nearly doubled with the purchase of additional properties mostly prior to the 2013 PROST Plan, adding nearly 5,000 additional acres. This increase in acreage was aligned with CCPRC's land acquisition goals that were determined after CCPRC conducted an open space analysis in 2002, comparing the population projections for the year 2015 to the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) recommended acreage standards for parkland. The map on the next page highlights access to all CCPRC-owned or managed park and community recreation facilities. The addition of future parks on currently undeveloped property would expand access to West and East County, however there are still gaps in areas that are difficult to access based on the unique geography of the county and its waterways. In moving forward to its next ten years, CCPRC must determine the appropriate level of sustainable development, open space preservation, and strategies alongside other open space landholders to provide a balanced and improved level of service that serves all Charleston County residents.

Figure 1.13 Wheel to Surf, Folly Beach County Park 2023

THE SYSTEM TODAY



WEST COUNTY FACILITIES + PUBLIC ACCESS

The majority of all CCPRC-operated facilities in West County are owned by CCPRC, or operated in partnership with the Charleston County School District and other partner organizations. The range of CCPRC-operated parks/facilities in the area that are open to the public include trails, boardwalks, educational experiences, a dog park, beach access, an aquatic center, boat landings, and active recreation amenities. Facilities open and operated by CCPRC include five parks, three community recreation sites, and nine boat landings. Generally, the parks in West County tend to offer more passive, nature-based programming, with community recreation facilities fulfilling needs for more active programming, such as tennis, basketball, and multipurpose fields; and water access is available at boat landings, a beach park (Kiawah Beachwalker County Park), and swimming pool (West County Aquatic Center). There are approximately fifty miles of diverse trails, some of which include opportunities for natural and cultural history interpretation.

The rural nature of West County means that many residents may have to drive over 15 minutes to access a recreation facility operated by CCPRC.. There is currently little access to parks in the northwest and the southwestern parts of West County, and while access may improve with



Figure 1.14 System Amenities in West County

WEST COUNTY FACILITIES

Facility-Type	Facility Name	Public Access?
Boat Landing	Bulow Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Cherry Point Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Dawhoo Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Limehouse Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Martins Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Penny Creek Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Steamboat Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Toogoodoo Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Wiltown Bluff Boat Landing	Open to Public
Community Recreation Site	Baptist Hill Tennis Complex	Open to Public
Community Recreation Site	Haut Gap Recreation Complex	Open to Public
Community Recreation Site	Schroder Community Center	Open to Public
Park	Caw Caw Interpretive Center	Open to Public
Park	Johns Island County Park	Open to Public
Park	Kiawah Beachwalker County Park	Open to Public
Park	Meggett County Park	Open to Public
Park	West County Aquatic Center	Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Edisto Island Youth Recreation Site	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Ravenel Property	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Spring Grove Property	Not Open to Public
Undevelopable	Rantowles Creek Islands	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Wiltown Community Center	Opening 2024

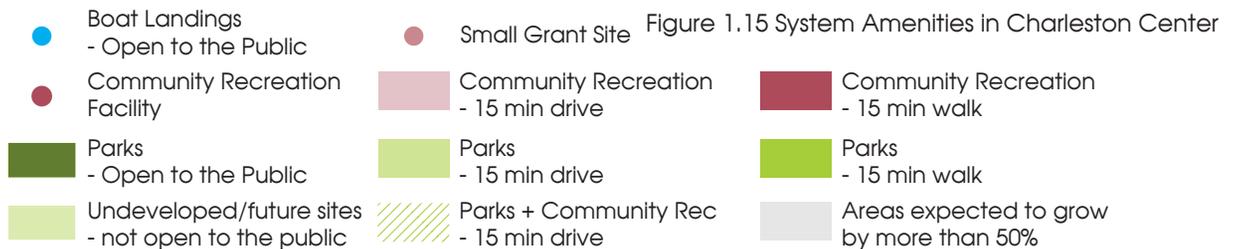
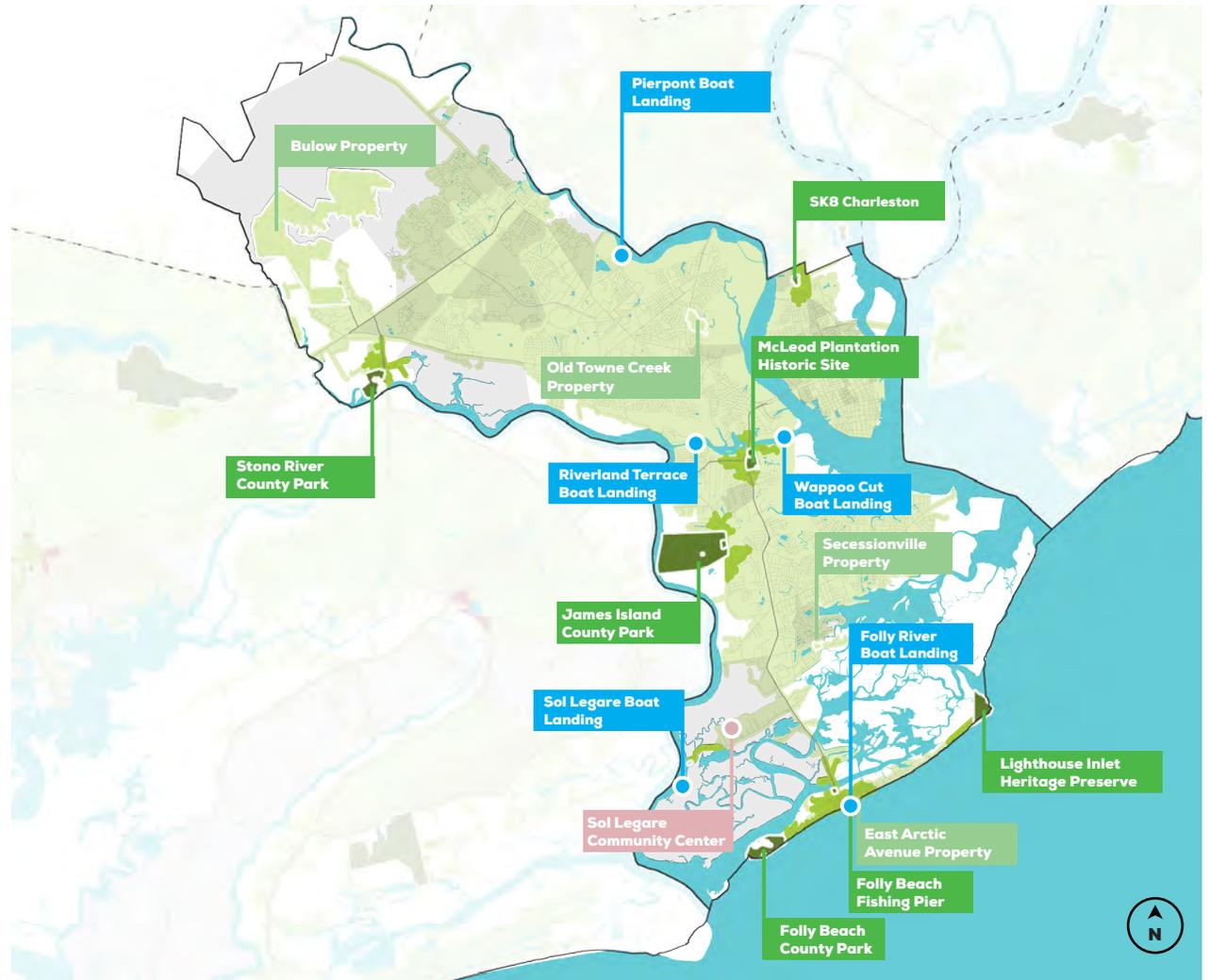


the future development of the two properties at Edisto Island and Spring Grove, both sites have conservation easements which limit the intensity of park development, as they fall within the ACE Basin. However, other parts of West County are poised for near-term growth and development, such as in Ravenel, Hollywood, and Johns Island, as people relocate to suburban and exurban communities away from central Charleston County.

CHARLESTON CENTER FACILITIES + PUBLIC ACCESS

In the Charleston Center Planning Area, CCPRC owns and/or operates five boat landings and six park facilities currently open to the public. CCPRC owns four additional potential park sites in Charleston Center, including Old Towne Creek County Park in West Ashley - currently under construction. One additional property in Charleston Center is not currently considered for public access at this point in time, due to it being comprised of only hammock islands.

Two of the parks in Charleston Center are considered to be historic sites: McLeod Plantation Historic Site and Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve. These sites are important places of cultural history. There are six other CCPRC parks located in Charleston Center that are open to the public, offering amenities such as a climbing wall, bouldering, disc golf, challenge courses, bike, boat, and kayak rentals, picnic areas, volleyball courts, shelters, camping, playgrounds, dog parks, concessions, and rental shelters. As one of the most developed and most diversely programmed park in the county, James Island County Park is incredibly popular, both for residents within Charleston Center and also for visitors from across and beyond the county.





CHARLESTON CENTER FACILITIES

Facility-Type	Facility Name	Public Access?
Boat Landing	Folly River Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Pierpont Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Riverland Terrace Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Sol Legare Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Wappoo Cut Boat Landing	Open to Public
Park	Folly Beach County Park	Open to Public
Park	Folly Beach Fishing Pier	Open to Public
Park	James Island County Park	Open to Public
Park	Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve	Open to Public
Park	McLeod Plantation Historic Site	Open to Public
Park	SK8 Charleston	Open to Public
Park	Stono River County Park	Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Bulow Property	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	East Arctic Avenue Property	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Old Towne Creek Property	Opening 2025/26
Undeveloped/Future Site	Secessionville Property	Not Open to Public
Small Grant Site	Sol Legare Community Center	Open to the Public

There are also miles of paved and unpaved trails with opportunities for interpretation and storywalks, and there is water access in the form of beach parks (Folly Beach County Park), waterparks (Splash Zone at James Island County Park), and fishing piers/boat landings/crabbing docks. There is currently less access to parks in the northwestern and southeastern areas of Charleston Center, however this may greatly increase with the future addition of Old Towne Creek County Park and Bulow Property. The most

populous part of the county is also well served by City and town-owned parks and programs. CCPRC continues to work with the City of Charleston, the Town of James Island, and the City of Folly Beach to ensure that future investments do not conflict with current and future plans for individual municipalities. Today, Charleston Center has equitable access, which could be improved in areas experiencing significant growth.

NORTH AREA FACILITIES + PUBLIC ACCESS

This area has a similar wealth of programs and amenities as Charleston Center, however there are fewer facilities overall that have diverse offerings. Here, there are five parks and one boat landing. The North Area is home to one of the more popular parks, North Charleston Wannamaker County Park, which includes Whirlin’ Waters Adventure Waterpark. The park offers some active amenities such as volleyball and the Wannamaker North (hike/bike) Trail (a detached, but complementary facility), a dog park, disc golf, playgrounds, picnic areas, and shelters, there is an emphasis on more passive activities such as walking on the 4.5 miles of trails and enjoying the beautiful woods and wetlands in the park. Wannamaker County Park has high walkable access to surrounding neighborhoods, due to the dense nature of the communities that surround it. Other parks in the area include SK8 Charleston skate park and Cooper River County Park. Currently, there is less access on the western side of the North Area along the Ashley River, however two undeveloped/future sites (Ashley River and Dorchester Road) indicate opportunities for increasing access in this area.

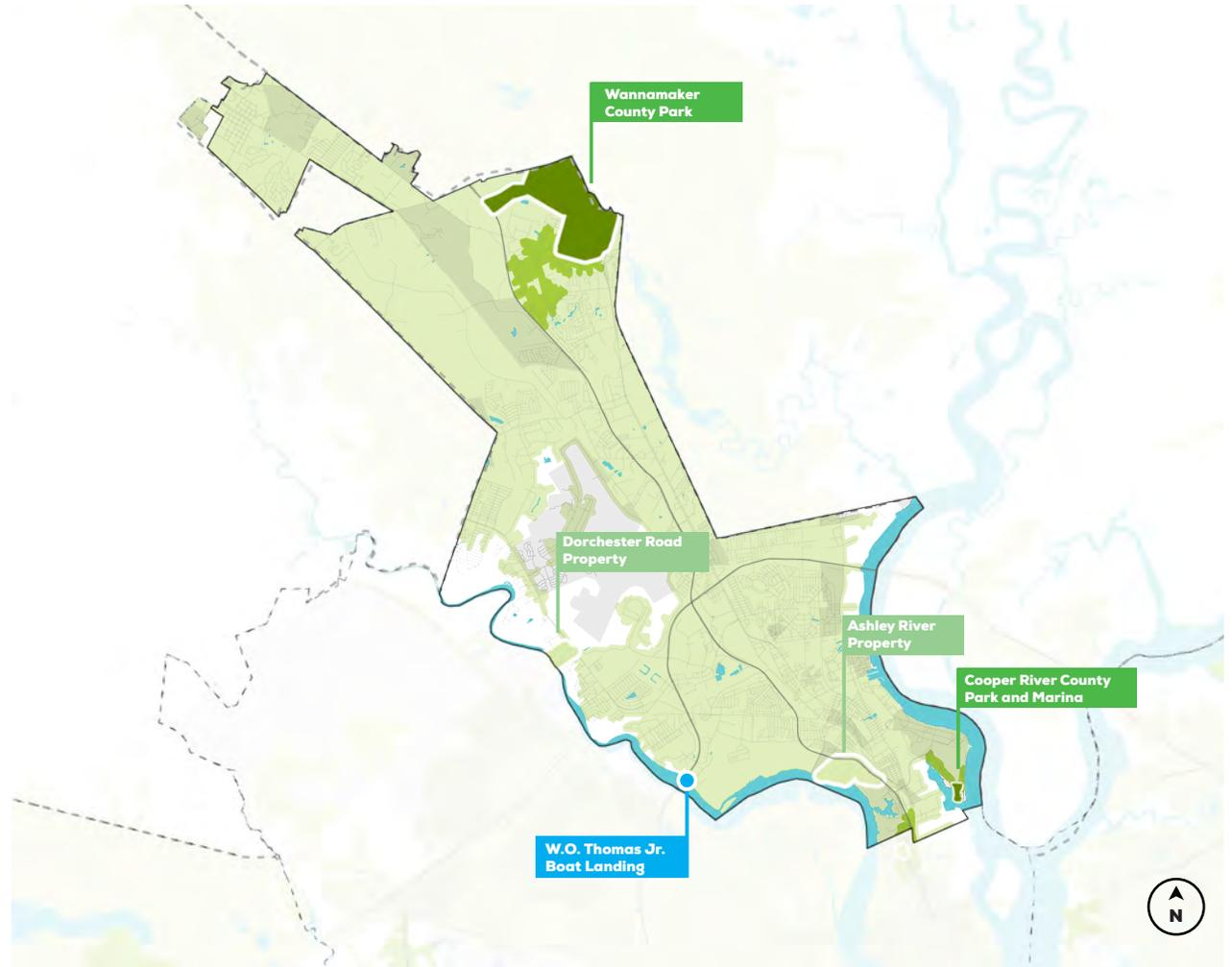


Figure 1.16 System Amenities in North Area

NORTH AREA FACILITIES

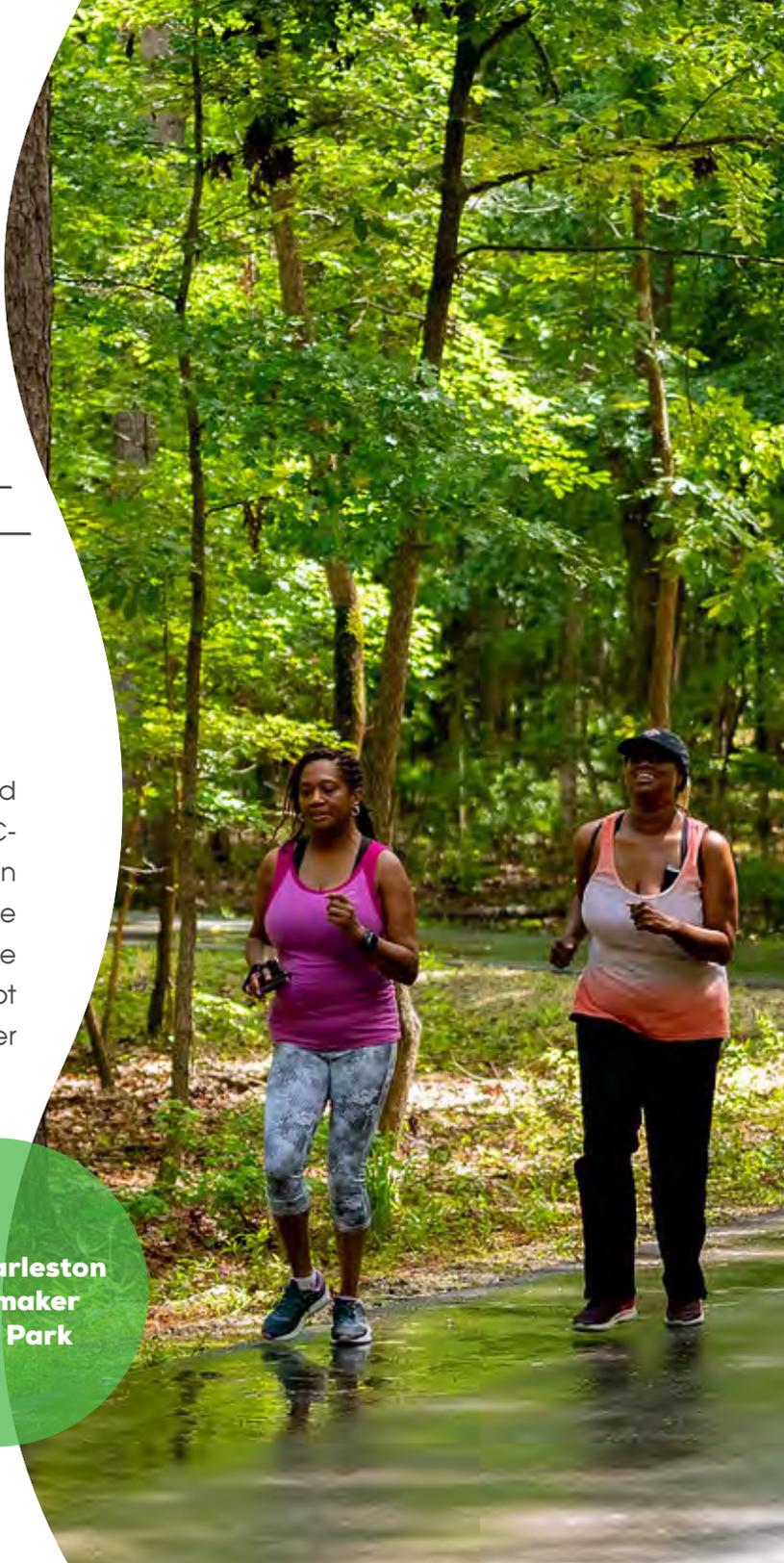
Facility-Type	Facility Name	Public Access?
Boat Landing	W.O. Thomas Jr. Boat Landing	Open to Public
Park	Cooper River County Park and Marina	Open to Public
Park	North Charleston Wannamaker County Park	Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Ashley River Property	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Dorchester Road Property	Not Open to Public

A dense and rapidly growing part of the county, the City of Charleston, the City of North Charleston, and the Town of Summerville’s local parks and recreation departments support traditional recreation activities and spaces, like youth sports and playgrounds. In community conversations and in the community survey, residents of this area identified a desire for more trail connections

between various city destinations and CCPRC park spaces. Investments in CCPRC-owned park sites mentioned previously can also expand outdoor access between large numbers of County residents and unique CCPRC offerings that support and do not conflict with the offerings made by other municipalities in this planning area.

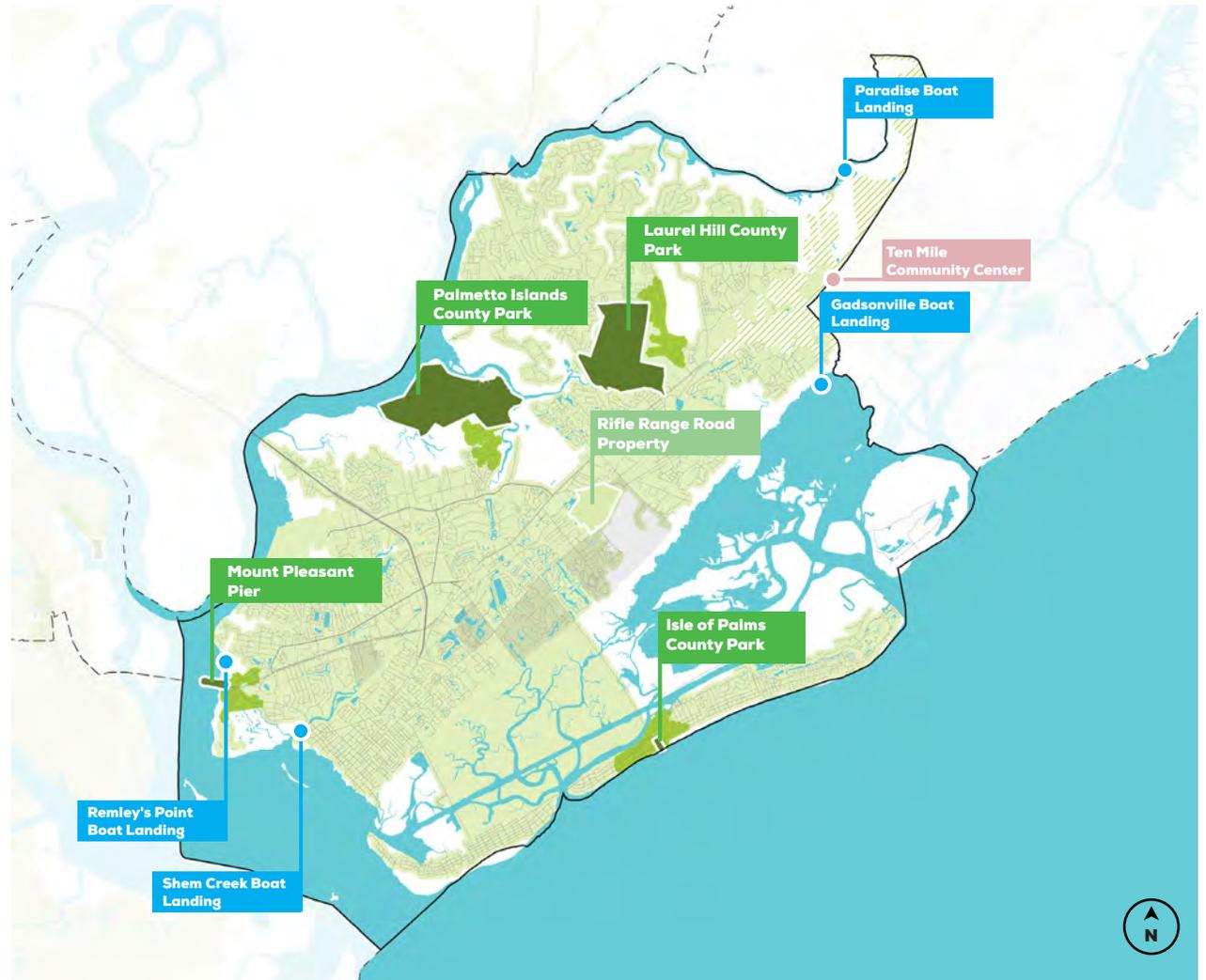


North Charleston Wannamaker County Park



EAST COOPER FACILITIES + PUBLIC ACCESS

Residents in this area enjoy access to four existing parks, each with varying natural settings and characteristics. East Cooper includes five parks and four boat landings. Palmetto Islands County Park is a nature-oriented park that offers trails and various bicycle paths and boardwalks that weave through open meadows and wetlands. There are also more active types of amenities such as Splash Island Waterpark, a volleyball court, a playground, kayak launch, and dog park. Throughout East Cooper there are parks that offer more passive recreation opportunities, such as several miles of walking and biking trails at Laurel Hill County Park, and access to the Cooper River at Mount Pleasant Pier. As the only CCPRC-operated beach park in the area, Isle of Palms County Park offers access to the beach and other amenities such as a playground and sand volleyball court. There is also the Rifle Range Road Property which represents a unique opportunity to provide further access and close existing access gaps to the eastern side of East Cooper, in an area of Mount Pleasant that is projected to grow rapidly.



- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ● Boat Landings
- Open to the Public | ● Small Grant Site | |
| ● Community Recreation Facility | Community Recreation
- 15 min drive | Community Recreation
- 15 min walk |
| Parks
- Open to the Public | Parks
- 15 min drive | Parks
- 15 min walk |
| Undeveloped/future sites
- not open to the public | Parks + Community Rec
- 15 min drive | Areas expected to grow
by more than 50% |

Figure 1.17 System Amenities in East Cooper

EAST COOPER FACILITIES

Facility-Type	Facility Name	Public Access?
Boat Landing	Gadsonville Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Paradise Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Remley’s Point Boat Landing	Open to Public
Boat Landing	Shem Creek Boat Landing	Open to Public
Park	Isle of Palms County Park	Open to Public
Park	Laurel Hill County Park	Open to Public
Park	Mount Pleasant Pier	Open to Public
Park	Palmetto Islands County Park	Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Rifle Range Road Property	Not Open to Public
Small Grant Site	Ten Mile Community Center	Open to Public



**Laurel Hill
County Park**

**Palmetto
Islands County
Park**

EAST COUNTY FACILITIES + PUBLIC ACCESS

East County residents have limited access to CCPRC-owned facilities, though CCPRC operates two Community Recreation sites (Thompson Hill Park and St. James-Santee Recreation Complex) that offer residents in the area access to amenities such as football, tennis, baseball, basketball, and picnic areas. CCPRC also offers limited community recreation programming at Lincoln High School, though Lincoln High School is not a formal Community Recreation site.

There are two parcels of land owned by CCPRC that are identified as undeveloped/future sites (McClellanville and Awendaw Properties) with 5.5 miles of future trails. These properties provide opportunity to consider how future capital investments are balanced between Community Recreation sites and already owned park site development, or a combination/hybrid facility. It should be noted that the majority of the land in East County is encompassed within the Francis Marion National Forest and Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge, and has limited potential for development. The Francis Marion National Forest is technically excluded from CCPRC’s special purpose district service area, but CCPRC provides park and recreation services to the communities/residents living in/around the national forest.

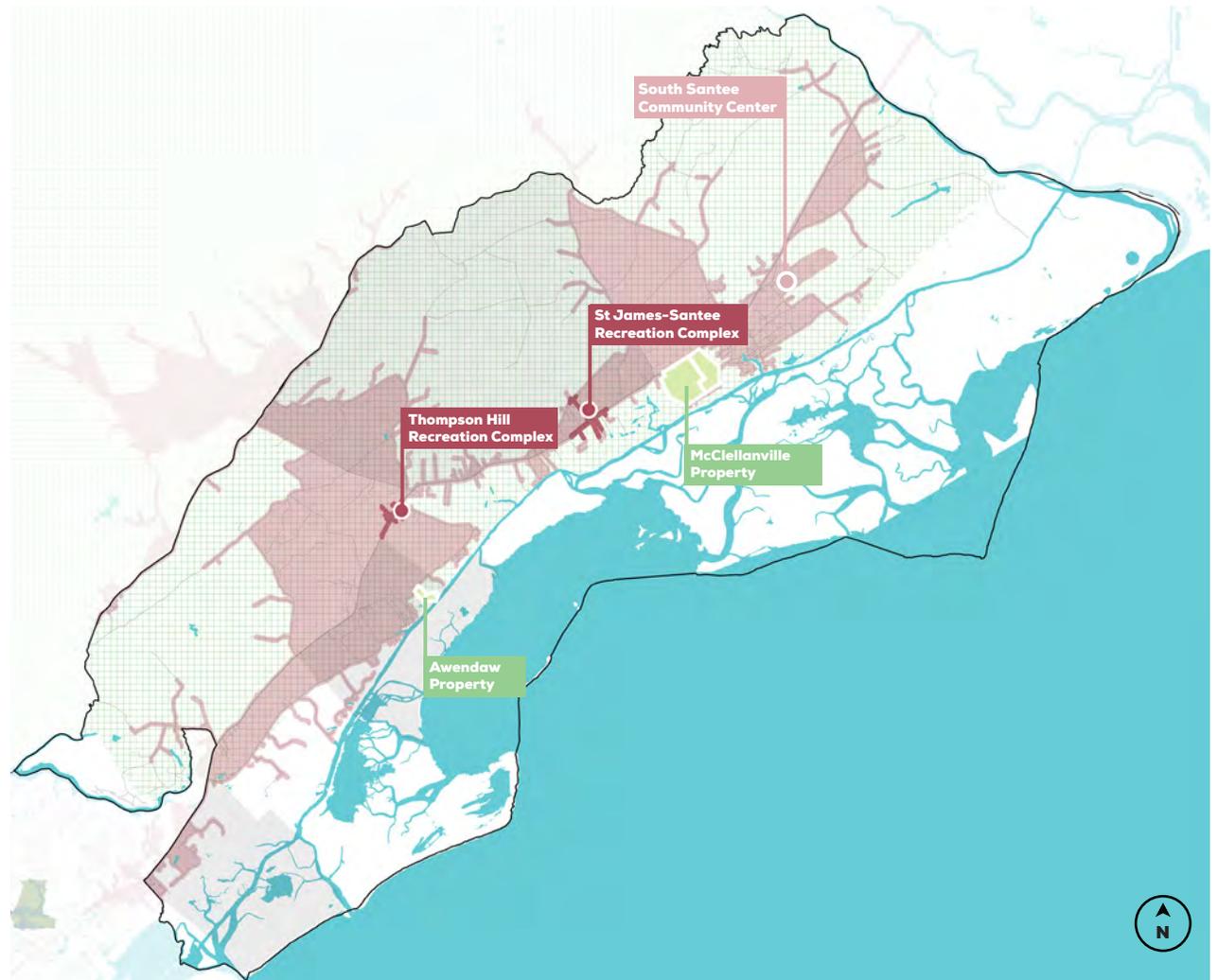


Figure 1.18 System Amenities in East County

EAST COUNTY FACILITIES

Facility-Type	Facility Name	Public Access?
Community Recreation Site	St. James-Santee Recreation Complex	Open to Public
Community Recreation Site	Thompson Hill Recreation Complex	Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	Awendaw Property	Not Open to Public
Undeveloped/Future Site	McClellanville Property	Not Open to Public
Small Grant Site	South Santee Community Center	Open to Public

Like in many other areas of the county, the McClellanville park site is encumbered with a variety of restrictions and easements that make a new park that supports all of the desires of the surrounding community difficult, without additional land acquisition or an approach that decentralizes various park experiences and amenities into separate sites across the planning area. Currently none of the towns of Awendaw, McClellanville, or smaller unincorporated area of South Santee provide recreation services to residents, though the Ten-Mile Community Center and South Santee Community Center have

benefited from the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism’s Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD) through CCPRC. The funding was used to provide physical improvements to public park and recreation facilities and increase physical and mental health and wellness of residents.



Genesis Swim Safety Fund



Community Recreation

Access Assessment

The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

This "Access Assessment" summarizes data from known and objective factors related to park access - including access by people with disabilities (e.g., ADA compliance), as well as cost and communication/awareness-related factors. The factors considered in the Focus Area Assessment are described at right.

Information included in this table should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data that CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Accessibility Investments Required

Per CCPRC's ADA Transition Plan, this is the estimated dollar value of ADA/accessibility improvements needed at CCPRC facilities (in 2020 US dollars, not adjusted for inflation).

Accessible Parking Capacity

An average and median for the total number of accessible parking spaces.

Entry Fees Per Individual

The cost for facility entry.

Internet Access

The percent of community members with access to broadband internet. Based on the American Community Survey (ACS), the facility's local community may or may not have adequate access to internet to learn about CCPRC's offerings.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

	West County		Charleston Center		North Area		East Cooper		East County	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Accessibility Investment Req'd per ADA Transition Plan	\$78,005.99	\$34,759.25	\$223,700.45	\$105,278.28	\$349,475.45	\$349,475.45	\$387,195.41	\$338,995.83	\$63,078.50	\$63,078.50
Accessible Parking Capacity	3.4	2.0	4.9	3.0	18.5	18.5	7.5	8.5	2.0	2.0
Entry Fees per Individual*	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.75	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$0.00	\$0.00
Internet Access	82%	85%	91%	93%	85%	85%	93%	93%	75%	75%

*Excludes McLeod Plantation Historic Site (MPHS) in Charleston Center and four CCPRC beach parks/piers. Although MPHS currently charges per individual, admission also includes entry to regularly scheduled interpretive tours. Kiawah Beachwalker County Park (in West County), Folly Beach Fishing Pier and Folly Beach County Park (in Charleston Center), and Isle of Palms County Park (in East Cooper) currently charge a per vehicle parking fee, with rates varying by season.



Relevancy

HISTORY + ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

Abundant Tidal Communities

Charleston County can be defined by its environmental history: an intermix of nature and culture that have evolved together over centuries of inhabitation. This landscape reflects the geological history of the region: a barrier island system made up of a series of harbors, estuaries, inlets, beaches, tidal rivers, creeks, islands, and upland areas created through multiple periods of an advancing and retreating coastline - a byproduct of the formation and melting of glaciers. Five tidal rivers now divide the local geography into basins.

Long before European colonization, this area was first inhabited by Native Americans representing nineteen indigenous tribes, who thrived on the bounty of the land and waters. These tribes farmed the lands, supplemented low crop yields by fishing and gathering, and migrated to inland hunting grounds to track deer during the winter months.

Figure 1.19 Church Creek

Despite several failed attempts by Spain, France, and England to settle Carolina, it was not until 1670 that British colonists succeeded. Exploring on behalf of the Lords Proprietors, these colonists first settled at Albemarle Point (known today as Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site) on what is now known as Old Towne Creek – a tributary just west of the Ashley River. Albermarle Point became the temporary home for these settlers until 1680. In 1680 the settlers relocated to the Charleston peninsula, for reasons related to defense, strategically located on the harbor, and straddled by the Cooper and Ashley Rivers.

As the United States emerged as a leading exporter of raw goods, enslaved Africans and African-Americans were an important shaper of the Lowcountry's landforms. Enslaved Africans constructed, farmed, and harvested the vast majority of the former rice fields and plantations that brought significant wealth to the region.

An Evolving Low Country

The natural systems of tidal wetlands and marshes in Charleston County historically determined patterns of living and settlement. More recently, the county has experienced significant growth, with the population rising 17.5% between 2010 and 2019. As of the 2020 census, the total population in the county is 408,235 residents. The consequences of a growing population go hand-in-hand with increased development pressures woods, fields, wetlands, and farmland built over; soft and resilient edges turned hard. As a result, there's more frequent flooding in communities, parks, and open spaces, with the South Carolina Lowcountry being especially vulnerable to the ramifications of climate change.

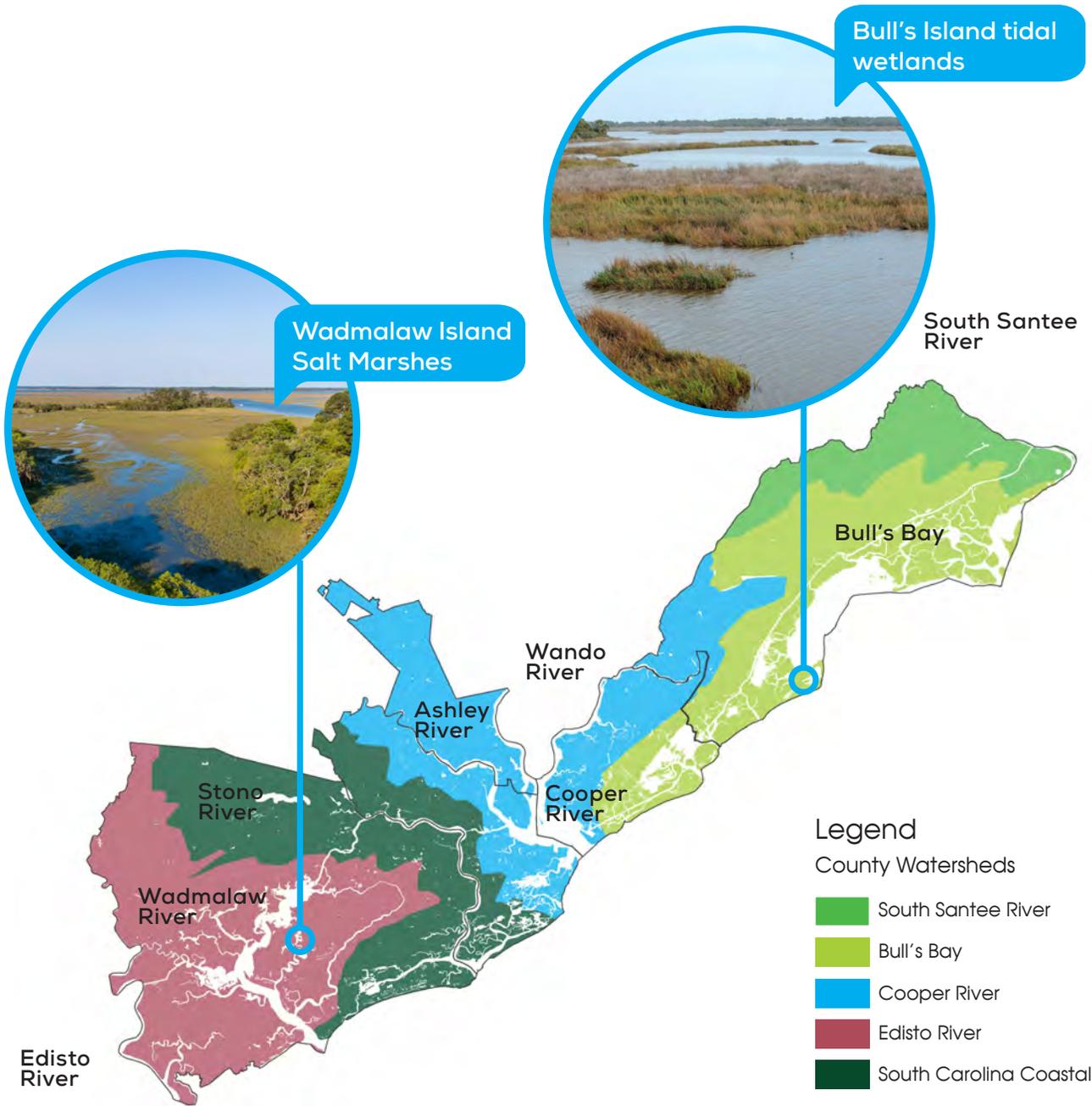


Figure 1.20 Watersheds throughout Charleston County.

Balancing Today's Recreation Needs with Long-term Growth Pressures

This trend of an increasing population is anticipated to continue, and the 2023 Draft Charleston County Comprehensive Plan Update projects that the resident population will grow to 438,222 people by 2030, and over 448,000 by 2035. The county's sustained growth signals how important proactive planning for future programs and facilities is, and that while we plan for today's needs, we must anticipate future pressures.

Residents of Charleston County are growing in number, aging in place, and expanding their interests. Additionally, Charleston County is an expansive geographic area, representing communities from rural, suburban, exurban, and urban areas. Because of this, communities across the county vary greatly and have inconsistent access to recreation amenities, wealth generation, education, and transportation choice.

Although CCPRC's primary motivation when acquiring land is to position itself to expand future parks, programs, and related services within Charleston County, much of the land acquired has the additional benefit of having high quality natural and/or cultural resources. Many of CCPRC's park properties are protected

in perpetuity by either conservation easements and/or deed restrictions. As a result, CCPRC is among the largest landholding agencies in Charleston County, protecting wetlands, forests, and historically significant sites for present and future generations.

Efforts to stabilize and improve the condition of natural and cultural resources within CCPRC parks and properties are highlighted in previous planning reports by CCPRC, such as the agency-wide Cultural Resources Management Plan (2013) and Natural Resources Management Plan (2014). As a good planning practice, CCPRC is incrementally completing site-specific cultural resource inventories and natural resource management plans on all of its properties

What's Next for Charleston County?

One of the prime responsibilities of CCPRC is the development of a countywide park system with parks of a general size and scope that would not be developed by other municipalities and public service districts. Parks in the system emphasize passive activities, outdoor recreation, environmental and cultural education, and water and public beach access. Parks/Facilities generally offer a variety of programming options

that incorporate a mix of active and passive use of the site, nestled among a natural landscape. As CCPRC plans for its next 10 years, site conditions, public input, and operational considerations will continue to shape the types of services, programs, and facilities that CCPRC provides to Charleston County residents.

RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Successful recreation agencies define their core role through their mission and in the high quality services they provide. Most agencies across the country attempt to be “all things to all people,” CCPRC, on the other hand, focuses on fulfilling needs that are unmet, which effectively balances community needs and desires against organizational capacity and the realities of operating such a large, diverse system.

Like many county systems, CCPRC provides recreation services that are not already provided for by municipalities. It means the Commission operates differently in different parts of the county - in places where basic recreation services are not available, CCPRC helps to close gaps and ensure all residents can meaningfully participate in leisure activities. In other places, the Commission

provides aquatics access and swim lessons, camps, and large regional events.

A detailed analysis of the recreation program offerings was used to identify the strengths and opportunities for future program direction. The resulting information identified program categories and future program considerations. The recreation assessment process was informed by data and reports from the Recreation Division, enrollment and participation data, and program revenue and expenses. Internal meetings and interviews with staff also provided insight. Community engagement from stakeholder meetings and a community needs survey provided insight into additional perspectives. The following summarizes the findings from the assessment.

CCPRC is a high functioning recreation agency - reflected in the wide variety of programs and far reaching services offered and the range of ways those programs support the Charleston County community. The Commission offers its programs in four core service categories: enrollment-based programs, custom experiences, special events, and drop-in leisure activities.

The Commission offers its programs in four core service categories: enrollment-based programs, custom experiences, special events, and drop-in leisure activities.

Enrollment-based programs require the participant to be registered through the Commission's registration software. Basic participant information is collected through the registration process, such as name, address, phone, etc. When enrolled, the participant attends the program at the activity's predetermined day(s), time, and location. Examples include lessons, practices, games, clinics, and some events.

Custom experiences are specially designed recreational experiences for school groups, corporate groups, and/or families. Often planned for education, team building, and/or celebrations, custom experience staff members contract with a single customer for coordination purposes and then provide services for various group sizes during the experience itself. Examples include customized skill development, trips, tours, and educational experiences.

Special events are gatherings of people for the purpose of celebrating, socializing, educating, honoring others, and/or observing. Planning for special events often involves the coordination of the patron experience, human transportation, safety, and the core activity itself. The core activity can take the shape of a festival, race, or other public gatherings. The size and scope of special events can vary greatly, from a handful of participants to thousands.

Drop-in leisure activities are those that participants may join in at any time during a prescribed timeframe. Examples of the Commission's drop-in opportunities include the open use of gyms, climbing wall, and plantation tours.

Reporting

For the programs that tracked participant's demographic data, 81.8% of participant households were from Charleston County zip codes in FY2019-2020. Most of those participants (93.5%) were from South Carolina. CCPRC's programs have a strong regional draw, but also attract visitors and participants from states across the country like Maine, Oklahoma, Texas, and Alaska.

The map highlights regional participation based on household address. The darker the maroon, the higher the participation by residents who live in that area of the map. Far west and east areas of the county had the lowest participant concentrations, while the Charleston Center region had the highest. While the information on this map does not comprehensively show all participation across all services CCPRC providers because CCPRC does not track participant addresses across all programs, there are opportunities to do so through registration software and point of sale methods.

Annual reports have consistently recapped the year's attendance figures at parks and facilities as well as special events and programs. The categories of program and events have shifted over the past four years of reports, from six categories in FY2018-2019, to seven in 2019-2020, 13 in 2020-2021, and nine in 2021-2022. There appears to be an opportunity to define the reporting categories with the same public-facing consolidated categories.

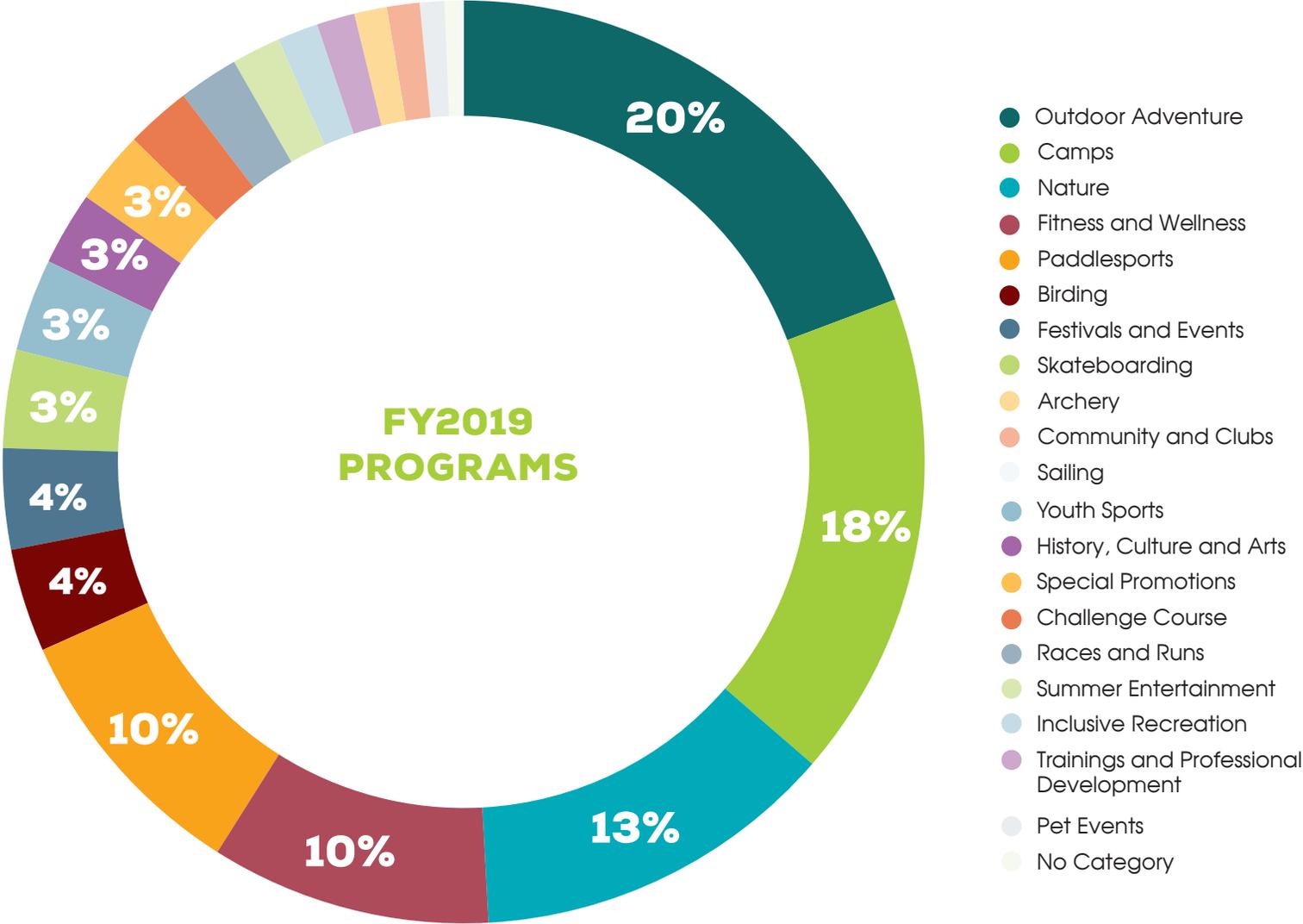


Figure 1.22 Fiscal Year 2019 Recreation Program Categories

Relevance Assessment

The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

This "Relevance Assessment" summarizes data from known and objective factors related to park relevance - including demographics, projected growth, recent facility renovations, the types of amenities offered, and the variety of number of recreation programs offered. The factors considered in the Focus Area Assessment are described at right.

Information included in this table should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data that CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Population Demographics

Demographic information from the 2020 census for residents who live within a 15-minute drive of

parks within that planning area. Each driveshed captures unique communities that have various needs and desires for their parks. Demographic information is broken down into the following topics:

- Population
- Households
- Average Household Size
- Median Household Income
- Median Age
- Child Population: 0-19
- Adult Population: 20+
- Senior Population: +55
- White Population
- Black Population
- Asian Population
- Hispanic Population

Anticipated Growth by Year 2040.

Metric based on the Growth Projection data from the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments.

Recent Major Renovation

Percent of facilities having undergone recent significant renovation or major investment

Recreation Amenities

This factor accounts for the number of different types of recreation amenities in each park. These numbers are preliminary and approximate.

Recreation Programs

Approximate number of programs and events held in FY 2019-2020 and organized by type of program (community recreation, interpretation, festivals and events, fitness and wellness, and outdoor recreation).

THE SYSTEM TODAY

	West County		Charleston Center		North Area		East Cooper		East County	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Population	14,648.4	8,598.5	69,508.1	58,833.0	116,978.5	116,978.5	78,011.3	63,549.5	3,745.0	3,745.0
Households	6,208.5	3,515.5	31,160.3	26,997.0	46,602.5	46,602.5	33,871.3	27,647.0	1,528.5	1,528.5
Average Household Size	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.4
Median Household Income	89,110.6	84,573.5	83,401.6	88,101.0	59,213.5	59,213.5	107,848.5	116,187.5	66,002.0	66,002.0
Median Age	46.7	45.5	40.4	38.7	33.7	33.7	40.6	40.9	48.4	48.4
Child Population: 0-19	3,208.8	1,761.5	14,877.3	11,271.0	31,300.0	31,300.0	17,438.8	13,875.5	779.5	779.5
Adult Population: 20+	11,430.9	6,801.5	54,630.0	47,563.0	85,678.0	85,678.0	60,572.8	49,675.0	2,965.5	2,965.5
Senior Population: +55	4,887.3	3,374.5	20,852.3	17,535.0	28,267.0	28,267.0	24,437.5	21,007.5	1,521.0	1,521.0
White Population	9,796.5	4,993.5	46,261.9	46,953.0	58,712.5	58,712.5	59,281.0	54,473.5	2,248.5	2,248.5
Black Population	3,280.6	2,645.0	16,312.4	7,228.0	35,782.5	35,782.5	12,040.5	3,979.0	1,316.0	1,316.0
Asian Population	243.8	51.0	4,208.9	871.0	3,126.0	3,126.0	1,505.3	1,415.5	27.0	27.0
Hispanic Population	949.8	659.0	3,776.0	1,997.0	14,728.0	14,728.0	3,266.5	2,220.5	81.0	81.0
Anticipated Growth by Year 2040	129%	75%	85%	3%	42%	42%	6%	5%	1%	1%
Recent Major Renovation	63%	100%	86%	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	0%	0%
Recreation Amenities	7.1	8.0	11.4	9.0	15.5	15.5	15.8	12.5	5.5	5.5
Community Recreation Programs	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Interpretation Programs	31.8	0.0	234.9*	2*	14.5	14.5	28.0	21.0	2.5	2.5
Festivals and Events Programs	0.3	0.0	4.1	0.0	6.0	6.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fitness and Wellness Programs	3.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0
Outdoor Recreation Programs	0.5	0.0	56.9	0.0	6.5	6.5	9.8	2.5	0.0	0.0

*McLeod Plantation Historic Site in Charleston Center hosted 1,552 programs in FY 2019-2020, including 1,463 'Tours' (included with admission), 14 'Public' programs (advertised in CCPRC newsletters), and 75 'Custom' programs (by reservation - such as school groups, seniors, etc.).

Resilience

One of the prime responsibilities of CCPRC is the development of a countywide park system with parks of a general size and scope that would not be developed by other municipalities and public service districts. Parks in the system emphasize passive activities, outdoor recreation, environmental and cultural education, and water and public beach access. Parks/Facilities generally offer a variety of programming options generally providing passive use of the site, nestled among a natural landscape. As CCPRC plans for its next 10 years, site conditions, public input, and operational considerations will continue to inform the types of services, programs, and facilities that CCPRC provides to Charleston County residents.



Figure 1.23 CCPRC Education programs

ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Undeveloped Land

There are over 283,000 acres of protected land in Charleston County. This includes wildlife refuges, the Francis Marion National Forest, historic sites and other cultural and natural resources. A little over half of CCPRC's land holdings are undeveloped properties, many of which are not currently open for public access. While this land is held for potential future development, it provides opportunities for land management in the interim. Much of this ongoing work has included habitat restoration, dune replenishment, controlled burns, and conservation of rare and critical species. While many of these investments may go unseen by the general public, these efforts work to protect public spaces and the environmental health of the county as a whole.

Natural Resources

CCPRC created its Natural Resource Management Plan in 2014 as a guide for management of natural resources on both undeveloped and developed properties. It outlines the permissible degrees of development within defined land use planning "zones" - including recreation, conservation, and preservation zones (as well as marine and cultural resource overlay zones). While previously developed properties may not have the same ability to manage wildlife and plant



Sacred Burial Site at McLeod Plantation Historic Site



**Laurel Hill
County Park**

communities as undeveloped land, these developed properties are still associated with important ecosystem services. Ecosystem services provide benefits to communities and neighborhoods just outside of park boundaries, and help to mitigate stormwater, flooding, air quality, and heat. The pervious surface (planted areas) in parks absorb and slowly release water, filtering it and resulting in cleaner runoff, while trees provide shade and carbon sequestration to provide relief from the heat while improving air quality.



**McLeod
Plantation
Historic Site**

CULTURAL RESOURCES

CCPRC has a wealth of cultural resources from historic structures, cemeteries, and archaeological sites to important cultural and ethnographic landscapes. CCPRC’s Cultural Resource Management Plan (2013) and Cemetery Preservation Management Plan (2021), outline the significance of these resources on CCPRC-owned and programmed sites, and the regulatory background that allows for the Commission to identify, acquire, preserve, and/or program these sites. Some of CCPRC’s existing historic sites open to the public include the McLeod Plantation Historic Site, Caw-Caw Interpretive Center, Laurel Hill County Park, and the Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve. Ongoing efforts to survey CCPRC-owned lands include archeological surveys on

undeveloped properties like Rifle Range Road Property and McLeod Plantation Historic Site’s historic cemetery. Similar to the CCPRC’s natural resources, these cultural resources are also at risk to the impacts of climate change and development pressures.

CLIMATE RISKS

Flooding

Access to water is one of CCPRC’s strengths, and a defining component of quality of life in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Flooding is one of the greatest threats to CCPRC investments. Coastal storm surge and neighborhood flooding have become more frequent and will continue to increase in severity in the coming years. CCPRC has already begun to prepare for these events by investing in more resilient materials and design, including such examples as the re-built Folly Beach Fishing Pier (with concrete piles and breakaway storm surge panels), building structures at elevations above minimum standards, using fiberglass piles on boardwalks (resistant to wood-boring marine worms), integrating unique stormwater management solutions into site design, and stabilizing shorelines with reinforced groins, hardened revetments, and “living shoreline” solutions, including oyster reef and marsh restoration.

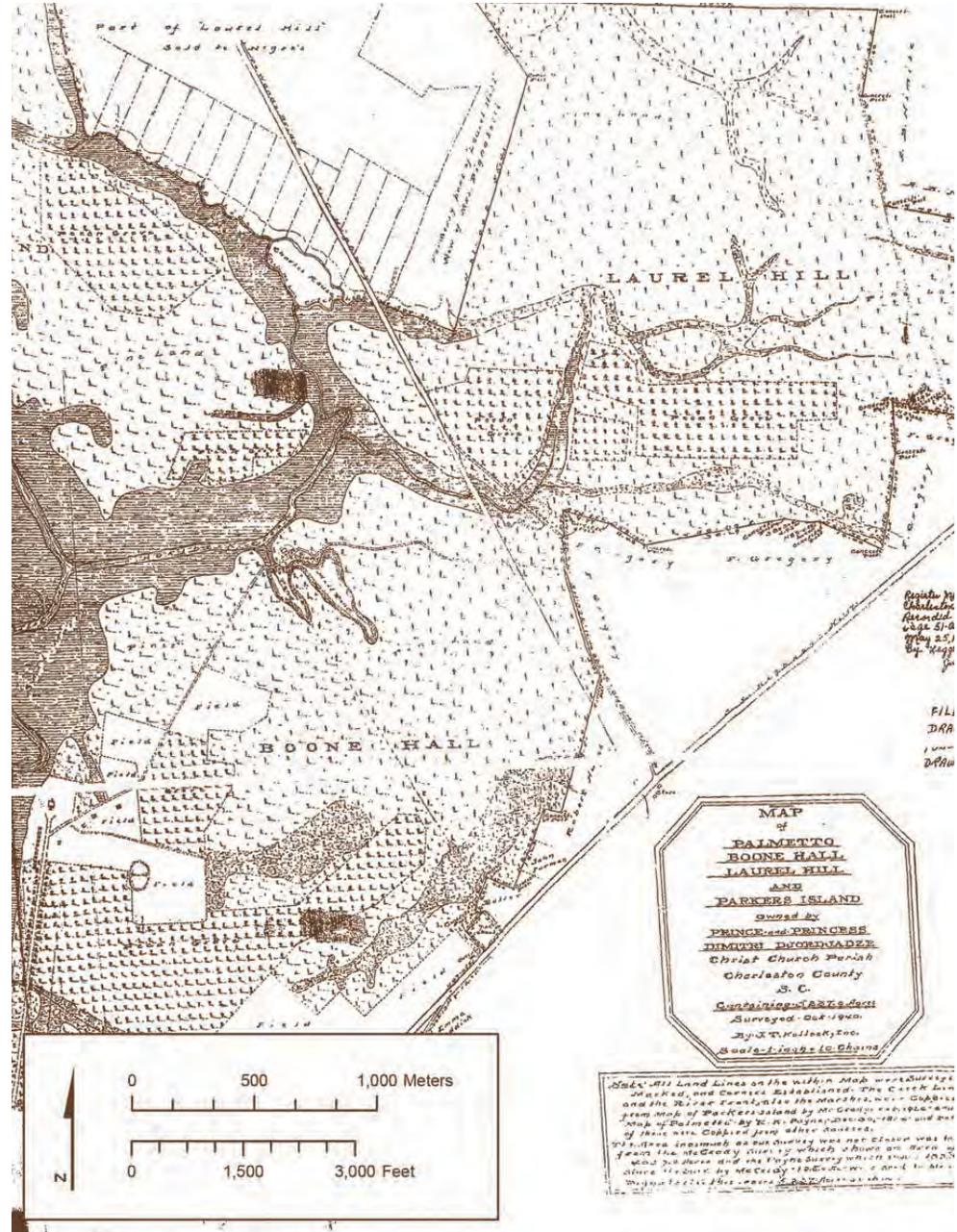


Figure 1.24 Historic Map of Palmetto, Boone Hall, Laurel Hill, and Parker’s Island

Heat

Due to the prevalence of impervious surfaces that absorb and retain heat and the humid Lowcountry coastal condition, parts of Charleston County’s most dense urban areas face extreme heat during the summer months. CCPRC’s parks and indoor facilities provide refuge from these conditions. Access to water for paddlesports and pools/waterparks is a major component in providing relief from heat, as are shaded trails, and shaded or conditioned comfort areas like picnic tables, drinking fountains, benches, and restrooms. A nice breeze can help cool people down too, like people may find at Sk8 Charleston or the Cooper River County Park – two of the more exposed CCPRC parks, with open views toward the Ashley River and Cooper River, respectively.

The following matrix highlights the natural events that impact Charleston County, according to the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan (1999, updated in 2018), and identifies which CCPRC facilities have greater or less risk based on their locations, programs, and elevation. The map on the following page also highlights the level of flood and heat risk overlaid by CCPRC facilities.

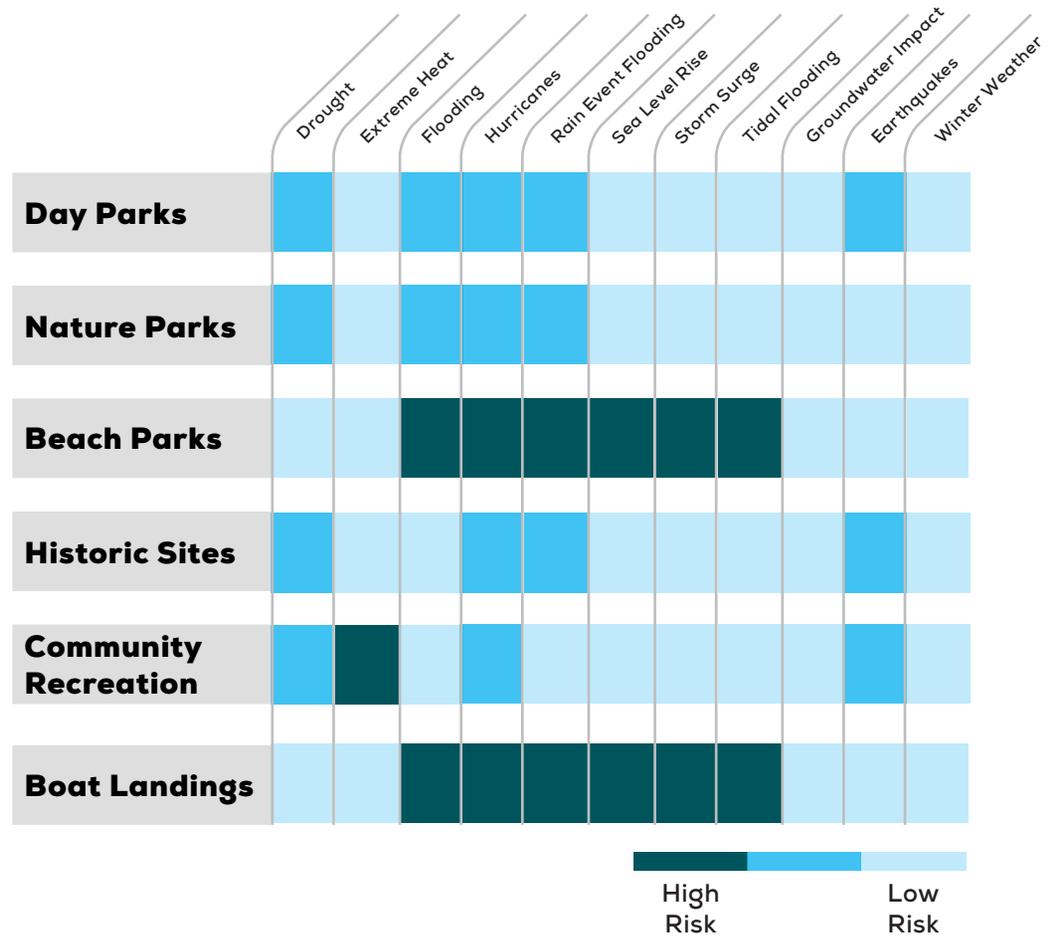


Figure 1.25 Resiliency Risks by County Park Type.

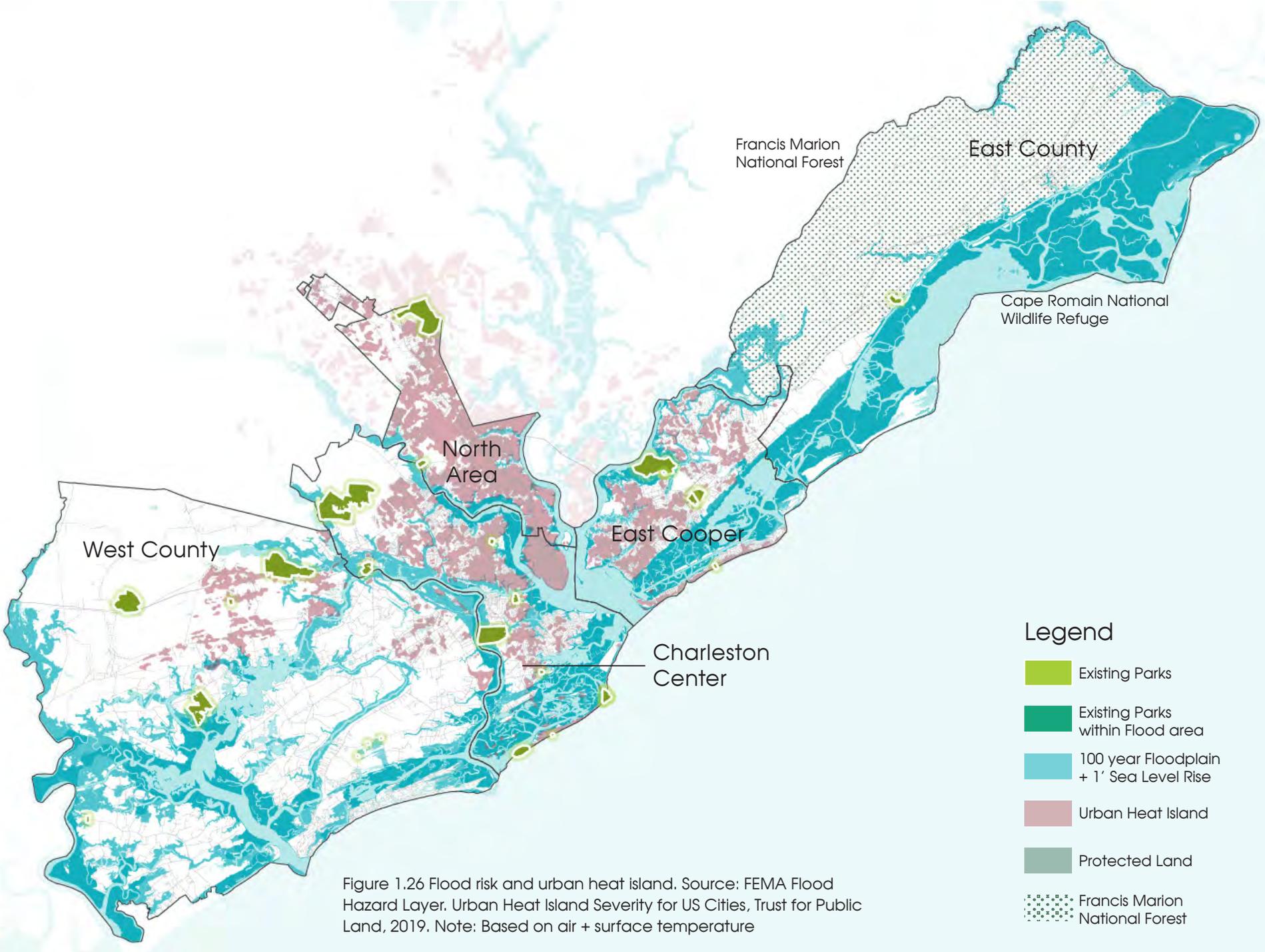


Figure 1.26 Flood risk and urban heat island. Source: FEMA Flood Hazard Layer. Urban Heat Island Severity for US Cities, Trust for Public Land, 2019. Note: Based on air + surface temperature

Resilience Assessment

The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

This "Resilience Assessment" summarizes data from known and objective factors related to park resilience - such as the availability of natural and cultural resource management plans, the ability of a park to provide relief from heat, recent investments in resiliency, protections by conservation easements, the percent of the park being marsh/wetland vs/ high/developable, and the known susceptibility of parks to potential flooding. The factors considered in the Focus Area Assessment are described at right.

Information included in this table should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data that CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Natural Resource Management Plan (Habitat Conservation + Enhancement)

Percent of facilities having a completed Natural Resource Management Plan, guiding and informing decisions about land resources.

Cultural Resource Management Plan

Percent of facilities having a completed Cultural Resource Management Plan, guiding and information decisions about cultural resources.

Urban Heat Relief (Access to Shade/Cooling)

Percent of facility/property acreage outside of Urban Heat Index.

Recent Resilience-Related Investment (Shore Protection from Storms)

Percent of parks having recent resilience-related investments.

Conservation Easement

Percent of facilities encumbered by restrictions per site-specific conservation easements.

% Marsh and Wetland Coverage

Percent of acreage that is categorized as a marsh, wetland, or tidal flat. Percentage of property predicted to be marsh or wetland is based on the National Wetland Inventory.

Potentially Developable Acreage

Percent of park acreage predicted to be outside of marsh or wetland (per National Wetland Inventory).

Flood Risk (Rising Sea Levels, Flooding in Neighborhoods)

Flood Risk is based on the developable percentage of the site outside of the 100-500 year floodplain, as defined by the "AE" designation in FEMA Flood Hazard Layer.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

	West County		Charleston Center		North Area		East Cooper		East County	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Natural Resource Management Plan	38%	0%	29%	0%	0%	0%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Cultural Resource Management Plan	25%	0%	57%	100%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%
Urban Heat Relief	46%	34%	41%	30%	98%	98%	51%	53%	100%	100%
Recent Resilience-Related Investment	63%	100%	86%	100%	100%	100%	75%	100%	0%	0%
Conservation Easement	0%	0%	29%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Marsh and Wetland Coverage	19%	0%	44%	58%	34%	34%	35%	26%	0%	0%
Potentially Developable Acreage	81%	100%	56%	43%	66%	66%	65%	74%	100%	100%
Flood Risk	57%	49%	17%	2%	50%	50%	42%	40%	100%	100%



Connectivity

CCPRC parks act as destinations, but reaching parks by walking and biking is currently challenging. Overall, the existing county-wide road infrastructure network lacks bike facilities, sidewalks, and transit connections to parks, and some of the existing connections do not serve people of all ages and abilities. While CCPRC designs, funds, and advocates for infrastructure and facilities which directly or indirectly connect people to CCPRC parks/facilities, its influence is limited beyond CCPRC property and road frontage.

CCPRC regularly coordinates with Charleston County and other entities on bike/pedestrian and road improvement projects that serve to benefit CCPRC and its patrons. Charleston County Government administers two local funding sources in the Transportation Sales Tax (TST) allocation and County Transportation Committee (CTC) fund ("C" fund). TST funds major transportation projects, Charleston County's Greenbelt Program (open space acquisition and protection), as well as an annual funding allocation for municipal projects via competitive request and award. TST is accrued via a 1-cent countywide sales tax, and requests are evaluated by County staff and approved by Charleston County Council. "C" fund is a

funding source derived from a percentage of the gas tax collected within Charleston County, and requests are evaluated by County staff and awarded by the CTC.

CCPRC submits TST and CTC funding requests for projects (typically within the public right-of-way), and if awarded, Charleston County Public Works staff manage the design, permitting, and construction of the requested improvements. Both the TST and CTC programs are competitive funding sources among other Charleston County municipalities. Examples of recent access-improvement projects awarded per CCPRC request include: Folly Road multi-use path, improving access to CCPRC's McLeod Plantation Historic Site; Riverland Drive sidewalk, improving access to James Island County Park; Old Towne Road multi-use path, providing access to the future Old Towne Creek County Park. All of these examples are in various stages of design, permitting, and construction. (Due to the competitive nature of the funding programs, CCPRC prioritizes project requests which are most achievable, and scaled appropriately based on the available funding and evaluation methodology.



**Sharrows or
Bike Route**



**Shared-Use Path/
Greenway**



**Paved
Shoulder or
Bike Lane**



**Separated or
Buffered Bike
Lane**

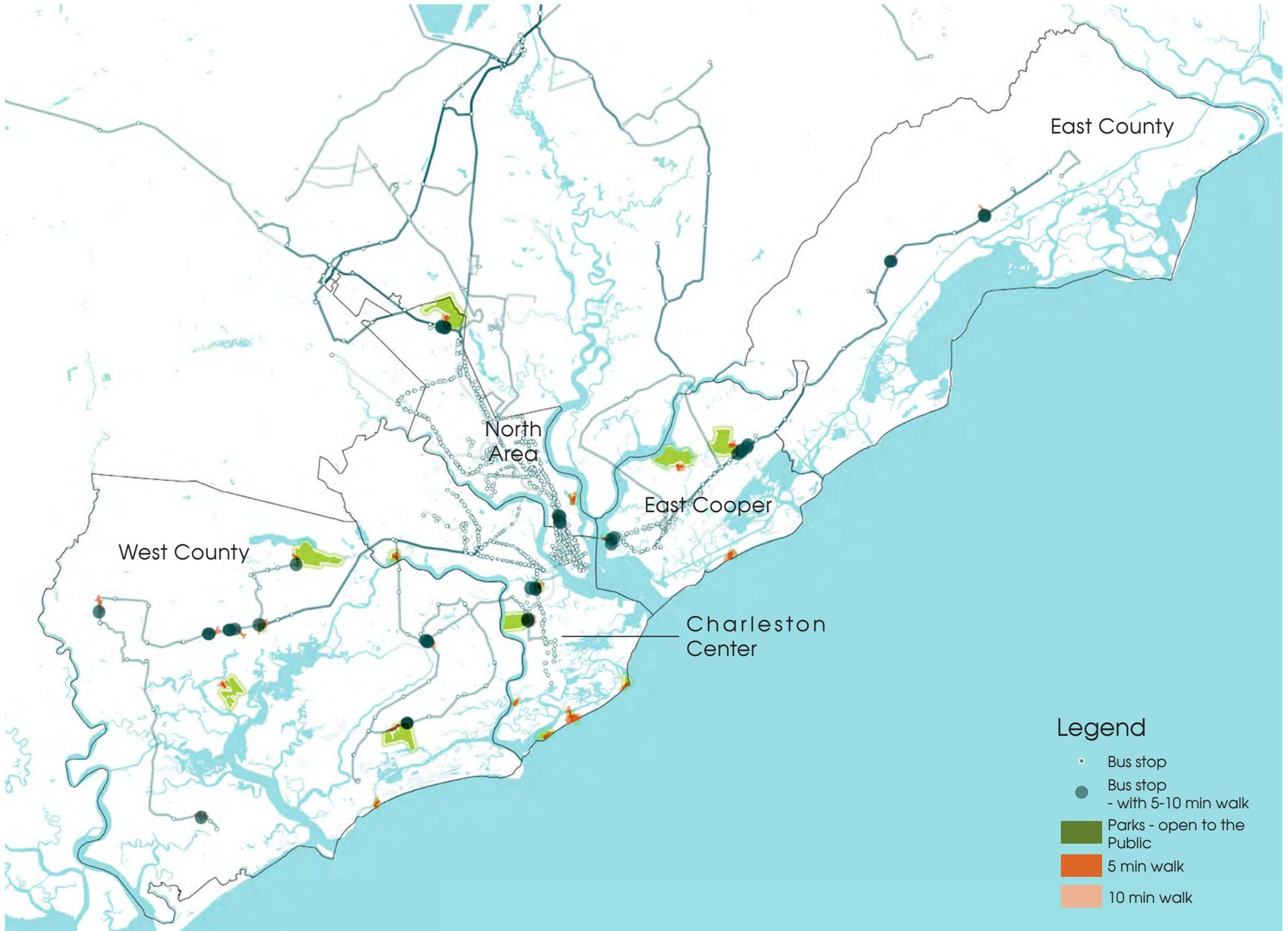


Figure 1.28 Existing Charleston County Transit Access

Other familiar funding sources for access-improvement projects include: Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding, administered by the South Carolina Department of Transportation; or funding through the Charleston Area Transportation Study (CHATS), administered by the Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Council of Governments (BCD COG), the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In many instances, CCPRC may submit grant support letters (for these funding sources or others) on behalf of other partnering municipalities, where the requested project serves to directly or indirectly benefit CCPRC.

Several planning processes have resulted in recommendations to improve the multimodal transportation network in Charleston County, including CCPRC's People 2 Parks Plan and BCDCOG's Walk Bike Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester. The 2016 People 2 Parks Plan envisioned "a future where all residents are connected to destinations via a network of safe, comfortable, and convenient infrastructure." Throughout these planning processes, residents

expressed a strong interest in walking and biking in the county. As a result of past planning, transit choice has expanded throughout the county. All of the existing Community Recreation facilities currently have bus stops within a five to ten-minute walk and about half of the existing park facilities currently have stops within a ten to fifteen-minute walk of the park's main entrance.

Several named, regional routes pass through Charleston County, including the East Coast Greenway, and the Battery to Beach bike route. The City of Charleston has its West Ashley Bikeway and West Ashley Greenway on former rail beds, and is pursuing a major river crossing project to link West Ashley with the Charleston peninsula. Similarly, the Town of Mount Pleasant is progressing on their "Mount Pleasant Way" bike/pedestrian infrastructure project. These facilities and projects will help to fulfill some of the priorities identified in CCPRC's People 2 Parks Plan (e.g., portions of the north-south / east-west "spine routes"), and by partnering with various municipalities, CCPRC can work to establish safe connections to/through county parks.

Connections Assessment

The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

This "Connections Assessment" summarizes data from known and objective factors related to park connectivity - such as calculated trail mileage within parks, potential neighborhood connections to/from parks, number of bus stops in proximity to parks, the number of people known to live within 15 minutes of a park, and the availability of a connectivity plan in the vicinity of CCPRC parks. The factors considered in the Focus Area Assessment are described at right.

Information included in this table should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data that CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Trail Mileage (Expand Access to Trails)

Understanding the existing trail mileage at CCPRC Parks.

Neighborhood Connections/Gateways

Potential opportunities for CCPRC to close connectivity gaps by considering new entrances/gateways.

Park Walksheds and Transit Access

0 - 10 minutes

Number of bus stops within a 10 minute walk of park entrance, summarized by region.

10 - 20 minutes

Number of bus stops within a 20 minute walk of park entrance, summarized by region.

20 - 30 Minutes

Number of bus stops within a 30 minute walk of park entrance, summarized by region.

Service area

Service area that identifies the number of people who live within 15 minute walk of the park.

Existing Connectivity Plan

Percent of facilities within or adjacent to routes identified in local connectivity plans.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

	West County		Charleston Center		North Area		East Cooper		East County	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Trail Mileage*	7.5	7.0	1.5	0.6	9.7	9.7	3.9	4.3	NA	NA
Neighborhood Connections/ Gateways	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.9	2.3	1.0	1.0
"Park Walksheds and Transit Access 0 - 10 minutes"	1.3	0.5	1.6	0.0	2.5	2.5	0.8	0.0	2.0	2.0
10 - 20 minutes	0.8	0.0	6.1	3.0	1.5	1.5	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
20 - 30 Minutes	0.9	0.5	7.3	0.0	3.5	3.5	2.8	1.5	0.0	0.0
Service area	99.5	59.5	580.0	542.0	1,840.5	1,840.5	656.3	665.0	7.0	7.0
Existing Connectivity Plan	88%	100%	86%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

*Excludes Community Recreation Sites and some special-use facilities where trail/pedestrian experiences are limited and/or unable to be quantified (e.g., SK8 Charleston, Folly Beach County Park).



Organizational Health

Since the 2013 PROST plan, CCPRC has continually worked to build awareness about the Commission throughout the county; meeting the recreational needs of residents by expanding services and programs – all while continue to remain fiscally responsible. It is no small feat that CCPRC recently received re-accreditation under CAPRA with a perfect score and was awarded by the NRPA for the Commission’s innovative approach to expanding resources to provide access to all residents.

COMMISSION BACKGROUND: TIMELINE

1968: Park, Recreation and Tourism Commission

The Charleston County Park, Recreation and Tourism Commission was created in 1968 as a county special purpose district by an act of the South Carolina legislature.

Figure 1.29 Pee Wee Soccer, Baptist Hill 2023

1972: Expanding our Role

The original act was amended in 1972, authorizing the Commission to promote Charleston's historical and tourist attractions, to create and operate countywide parks and recreation facilities, and to provide technical assistance to existing park and recreation agencies and community groups.

1985: Park & Recreation Commission

In July 1985 the Commission's tourism function was transferred to the Charleston Trident Chamber of Commerce and the Commission was renamed Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC). CCPRC represents one of the most diverse park and recreation agencies in the State of South Carolina.

CCPRC has specific areas of responsibility that are defined through a legislative act. The Commission is charged with the responsibility to provide park and recreation services, but not to duplicate services provided by the other municipalities and special recreation districts

existing in the area. As a special purpose district, CCPRC is a separate governmental entity and not a department or division of Charleston County Government, nor the State of South Carolina. As a special purpose district, Charleston County Government is not involved in the Commission's overall direction or management; however, Charleston County Council does have budgetary oversight of the Commission's tax-related budget. Additionally, County Council members nominate CCPRC's commissioners, who are then appointed by the governor.

FUNDING STRUCTURE

In order to continue to maintain the parks system, funding needs to be pursued for operations and capital improvement projects. To fund improvements to the system, staffing, and operations, CCPRC primarily utilizes the following funding sources:

- Tax millage is received from the Charleston County Treasurer's office at the current rate of 4.3 mills in the General Agency Fund and 1.8 mills in

the Debt Service Fund. Millage is the tax rate applied to South Carolina real estate and personal property which is expressed in mills, or millage rate, which is a unit of monetary value that is always equal to one tenth of one penny, or one-thousandth of one dollar. Therefore, a tax rate of 150 mills is equal to \$.150, or 15 cents, tax per one dollar of assessed value. The amount of revenue changes as the value of property changes in the county.

- Miscellaneous Revenue includes categories such as grants, donations, reimbursements, sale of assets and interest earned.
- Fees and Charges are made up of all revenues collected for agency programs and services. This category includes revenues such as Campground and Cottages, Waterparks, Holiday Festival of Lights, Resale and Concessions, Sponsorships, Programming.
- Bond Proceeds are received from issued General Obligation Bonds and fund major capital projects over \$50,000.

Transfers from other funds include funding from the General Agency Fund to the Capital Improvement Projects Fund to self-fund Capital Projects, and from CCPF to the General Agency Fund to fund activities and programs.

Using fiscal year information related to recreation program revenue from 2018 – 2022, the average FY expenditures were \$4,090,670 to provide activities, programs, and services accounted for within the core recreation programming service areas. The identified and assigned average FY revenues were \$1,158,896. CCPRC continues to experience significant demand related to activity and program participation. Furthermore, because of the unique nature of programs and services provided by CCPRC, many core service revenues are cyclical, tend to fluctuate widely on an annual basis, and are dependent on macro-economic and socio-economic trends well beyond the control of CCPRC (including the COVID-19 pandemic*). Despite these challenges, revenue generation in FY 2022 is pointing to a return to normal for CCPRC and for many other organizations across the country.

CCPRC organizes its fees and charges environment to support its annual revenue requirement goal of 50% of total operational costs to deliver programs and services. Other funding sources such as taxes and grants revenues

Core Operational & Service Categories' Revenue		
	FY 2018 – FY 2022 *	FY 2018 – FY 2022
Category	Average Annual Fees & Charges Revenue	Average Annual Non-Fees & Charges Revenue
Waterparks	\$3,177,316	-
Admissions	\$2,527,428	-
Cottages & Campground	\$2,310,332	-
Beach Parks	\$1,911,274	-
Holiday Festival of Lights	\$1,784,424	-
Facility Rentals	\$1,833,415	-
Recreation Programs & Services	\$1,158,896	-
Net Resale	\$924,980	-
Property Tax Support	-	\$17,559,554
Other Revenues	-	\$527,180
Sponsorship Revenues	-	\$99,254
Total	\$15,628,065	\$18,185,988
Percent of Total	46.2%	53.8%

*Years shown include the COVID-19 pandemic, and should not be assumed to be an accurate representation of CCPRC's financials during non-pandemic years.

Figure 1.30 Core Revenue Generation and Funding, FY2018-2022

help fund the additional 50% of operational and service delivery costs. However, CCPRC has become increasingly aware, despite some recent recovery gains in participation and revenue generation, that expenses may significantly outpace revenues as programming is expanded into underserved areas. In order to help ensure that all CCPRC programs and services continue at current levels, and that increased program delivery and service levels can be achieved to accommodate CCPRC customer demand in underserved areas, careful attention will need to be paid to CCPRC's core revenue generating activities, programs, and services. This will help ensure that CCPRC continues to operate on its thus far successful fiscal framework of roughly 50% of operational and service delivery costs supported by user fees and charges and the remaining 50% is supported by non-fee sources. This particular framework also allows for service delivery expansion to continue into areas where new services are needed, but where it may not be feasible to generate revenue sufficient to fund operations and service delivery solely from user fees and charges.

As is evident from the table at left, CCPRC continues to meet, and some years, exceed its goal of achieving roughly 50% of funding from non-fees and charges sources.

ADAPTING TO THE PANDEMIC

During the COVID pandemic, CCPRC swiftly launched an electronic onboarding system to process seasonal employees and continue to provide the highest quality services for all residents. CCPRC also continued to expand and develop other innovative programs, special events, and marketing approaches to keep the community engaged with each other and excited about the future. The strength of its nationally renowned leadership, of the Commission's mission and vision, and unparalleled dedication of staff and volunteers all contribute to an extraordinary experience for Charleston County residents. While sustaining the current excellent level of services is the baseline for CCPRC's future, the comprehensive master plan process provides a roadmap to leverage organizational strengths for growth, and also provides data and recommendations for the Commission to explore new avenues for innovation and success.

PEERS

Benchmarking with agencies of similar characteristics as CCPRC can facilitate a deeper understanding of the operations and budgets of high-performing agencies. Comparing factors such as agency size, organizational structure,

service population, and service area can provide clarity on how other agencies manage their budgets, bring in revenue, offer programs, and operate their facilities.

Benchmarking is not simply a direct comparison to other agencies, as each community has its own unique identity, ways of conducting business, and distinct community needs. The political, social, economic, and physical characteristics of each community influence the policies and practices of each park and recreation agency. Additionally, organizations do not typically measure or define various metrics the same way for parks, trails, facilities, and maintenance.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics is the most comprehensive source of data standards and insights for park and recreation agencies. This tool provides an opportunity to select agencies that meet certain criteria and develop customized reports for comparisons between peer agencies. This tool provides greater consistency than other methods; however, organizations may measure or define various metrics differently. It is important to contextualize all of the data in a benchmarking analysis. Although benchmarking can be a great comparative tool, it does not necessarily lend itself into being a decision-making tool.

For this study, criteria was customized to align with CCPRC’s governance as a “special purpose district”, and represents data from agencies with populations more than 300,000 from the 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review. The following agencies were compared in this study:

- Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission (CCPRC)
- Cleveland Metroparks
- Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD)
- M-NCPPC Parks & Recreation/Prince George’s County (M-NCPPC)
- Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District (RivCo Parks)
- Three Rivers Park District (TRPD)

The agencies in this study have communities similar in population size and square mileage. They also fall in the National Recreation and Parks Association’s “over 300,000” jurisdiction population category. CCPRC was on the lower range in terms of population – but was on the higher end in terms of size of jurisdiction. In addition, CCPRC fell in the middle range in terms of number of residents per park (approximately 24,200).

SIMILAR PROVIDERS

The nineteen municipalities and hundreds of private and non-profit organizations also support

Charleston County residents’ recreational needs. Based on community feedback, the following four programs were identified as the highest unmet demand for residents.

- Outdoor concerts, performing arts, & festivals
- Cultural events
- Adult outdoor recreation programs
- Adult athletic/fitness programs

There is also a strong desire for swimming pools, which indicates a more general desire for aquatics programming.

Programs for people with disabilities were also identified as a gap in the county by CCPRC staff.

Based on demographic analysis of the county, there are 33,000 households with a need for programming for people with disabilities.

Based on all analyses, the following programs were selected as a focus for the similar provider review:

- Events (a combination of concerts, performing arts, festivals, and cultural events)
- Outdoor Recreation
- Fitness/Wellness
- Therapeutic Recreation (TR)
- Aquatics

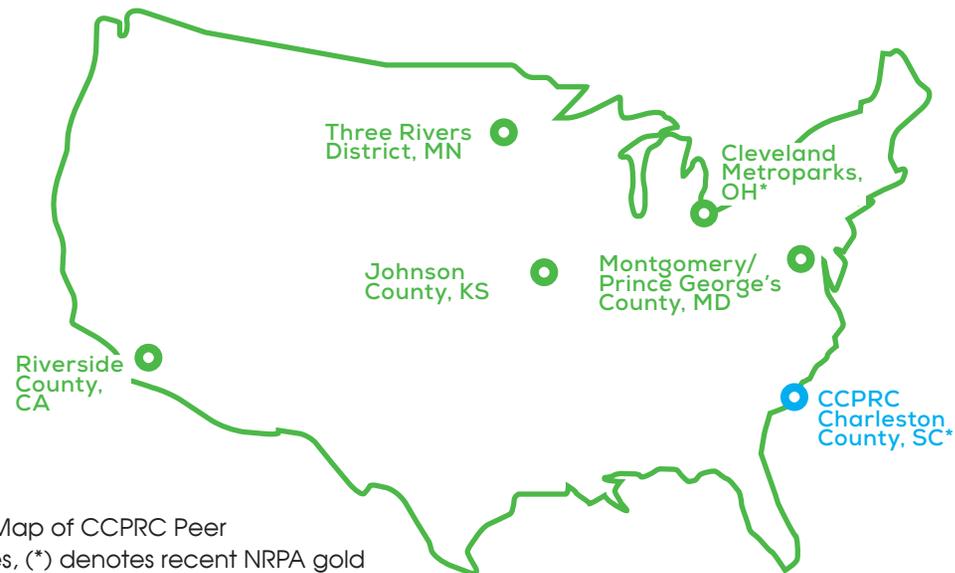


Figure 1.31 Map of CCPRC Peer Communities, (*) denotes recent NRPA gold medal recognition

PREVIOUS PLANS

The 2033 PARFA Plan builds on recent and ongoing efforts such as the Charleston County Comprehensive Plan. It is also informed by documents like the Parks for Tomorrow: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan which details how CCPRC has invested in parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and trails in the county over the past decade. The data and analysis in this report represents a snapshot in time, reflecting available information as it was developed. This report utilizes information from CCPRC, Charleston County, as well as other local municipal and regional planning efforts. These include the following:

CHARLESTON COUNTY PLANNING EFFORTS

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Parks for Tomorrow: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan (September 2013)

Ten-year growth plan that focuses on immediate, short-term, and long-term capital development and improvement strategies that correspond to the needs of communities throughout the county. The vision of the plan is to identify and serve current and future parks, provide recreational diversity, establish updated greenways/ trails within park facilities and County-wide greenway corridors,

and develop an action plan for implementation. The PROST included an extensive public input process throughout Charleston County.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Accessibility Audit (2020)

This plan and associated documents include an audit of all county parks and facilities. From this audit resulted an ADA-required transition plan which included a review of policies, programs, and communication methods, in addition to an approach for a phased retrofit or replacement transition schedule within an 11-year correction period. Two in-person community engagement events were conducted for this process while remaining feedback was provided through digital surveys.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission People 2 Parks: Bike-Walk Plan (2016)

Building on the 2013 PROST Parks for Tomorrow planning effort, People 2 Parks was completed in 2016 and includes an implementation plan for the county-wide bike and pedestrian system projects.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Natural Resource Management Plan (2014)

Developed to help guide resource maintenance and management decisions for the abundance of natural resources on both developed (or

“optional”) and undeveloped (or “future”) CCPRC properties. This includes ecologically-sensitive development strategies, and approaches to wildlife, plant life, soil, and water resource management.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Open Space Analysis (2002)

The purpose of the open space analysis is to determine the amount of parkland acreage needed to service the existing and anticipated population in each planning area. The goal is to provide a park facility within a reasonable distance to each citizen of Charleston County. Parkland availability is quickly becoming scarce as development quickly expands and land prices continue to rise, so it is recommended that some planning areas with geographical limitations should utilize connections to neighboring areas to service population needs.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Cultural Resource Management Plan (2013)

This document serves as a guide for the consistent management and treatment of cultural resources within park boundaries. It includes procedures for the identification and protection of cultural resources. “CCPRC promotes cultural resource stewardship within its parks to protect these resources for present and future generations.

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission Strategic Plan (2019)

This Strategic Plan document is based on the 2013 PROST planning process that outlines guiding principles, mission, vision, and core values. Using those guiding principles, the document includes strategic objectives and action plans for existing parklands, rural recreation, water access, undeveloped lands, financial sustainability, trails, programming, operations/management, and philanthropy (fundraising).

Charleston County Comprehensive Plan (1999, Update Underway 2023)

The Charleston County Comprehensive Plan outlines a future vision for preservation and development in the county, with a focus on strategies within the government’s control. It aims to guide public decision-making and enhance the quality of life by setting goals for land use, public facilities, economic development, housing, and resource preservation until 2023. The Plan’s vision prioritizes responsible growth, preservation of natural beauty and cultural heritage, regional cooperation, and economic diversification to create a vibrant and united community that upholds a high standard of living for residents.

Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan (2006, revised in 2017)

The comprehensive plan was crafted to guide the anticipated growth over the next 25 years in a manner that balances resource conservation with land development. The physical framework is based on the national concept known as “Hubs and Spokes.” Under this concept privately owned landscapes are linked to parks, preserves, and open space via greenway corridors.

Participants expressed they would most like to use the protected greenspace to 1) conserve native ecosystems and 2) to build a comprehensive network of bicycle, pedestrian, and greenway trails that would link residents to those resources.

Internal CCPRC Strategic Plan documents

The following documents were also reviewed as part of this plan effort: the CCPRC Strategic Plan (2019), CCPRC Annual Reports and five year plans for CCPRC divisions including the Recreation Strategic Plan, Human Resources Strategic Plan, Marketing Strategic Plan, Foundation Strategic Plan.

MUNICIPAL + TOWN PLANNING

The following plans were also reviewed during the PARFA Plan process to identify relationships

between municipal led planning and the impacts of that work on CCPRC’s own decision making:

Charleston City Plan (2021)

North Charleston Comprehensive Plan (2020)

Town of McClellanville Comprehensive Plan (2020)

City of Charleston Climate Action Plan (2019)

City of Charleston Dutch Dialogues (2019)

Plan West Ashley (2019)

Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan (2019)

Town of Ravenel Comprehensive Plan (2019)

Town of Meggett Comprehensive Plan (2014)

Partnership for Prosperity: A Master Plan for the Neck Area of Charleston and North Charleston (2009)

West Ashley Greenway Master Plan (2009)

ADDITIONAL REGIONAL + TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Regional and transportation plans were evaluated during the PARFA Plan process to understand opportunities for CCPRC to coordinate efforts. The plans that were reviewed were:

Walk + Bike: Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester (2017)

Francis Marion National Forest - Revised Land Management Plan (2016)

Charleston Moves Battery 2 Beach (2011)

LEARNING FROM PREVIOUS PLANS

ACCESS

West Ashley Greenway Plan (2009)
Laurel Hill County Park, Natural Resource Management Plan (2014)
Charleston County Comp Plan (2018)
Plan West Ashley (2019)
CCPRC ADA Transition Plan (2019)

RESILIENCY

CCPRC Cultural Resource Management Plan (2014)
CCPRC Natural Resource Management Plan (2014)
Francis Marion National Forest - Land Management Plan (2016)
Dutch Dialogues Charleston (2019)
City of Charleston Climate Action Plan (2021)

RELEVANCY

PROST Plan (2013)
Town of Meggett Comprehensive Plan (2014)
Town of Mount Pleasant Comp Plan
Town of McClellanville Comprehensive Plan (2019)
North Charleston Comp Plan (2020)
Charleston City Plan (2021)

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Partnership for Prosperity: Dorchester, Charleston, Berkeley (2019)
CCPRC Strategic Plan (2019)
Recreation Strategic Plan
Human Resources Strategic Plan
Marketing Strategic Plan
Foundation Strategic Plan

CONNECTIVITY

Charleston County Greenbelt Program - Comp Plan (2006)
Palmetto Trail Statewide Master Plan (2014)
People 2 Parks Bike-Walk Plan (2016)
REVISED Charleston County Greenbelt Program - Comp Plan (2017)
East Cooper Trail Health and
Pedal People Downtown Bike Plan by Charleston Moves (2017)
Economic Impact Study (2017)
East Coast Greenway
Low Country Rapid Transit Existing Conditions Report - Multi-modal
Access chapter
Walk + Bike: Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
Battery 2 Beach
Low County Lowline Conceptual Master Plan

Operations Assessment

The Focus Area Assessment was a matrix created to assess all open/operated CCPRC parks based on several factors within each of the five focus areas. Data for each park is summarized as a median and average for each of the five CCPRC planning areas.

This "Operations Assessment" summarizes data from known and objective factors related to park operations - such as available revenue-generating amenities, known park attendance, and the availability of individual park master plans. The factors considered in the Focus Area Assessment are described at right.

Information included in this table should not be construed to be 100% accurate or comprehensive; but is provided for general context about the types of data that CCPRC staff and commissioners may reference when making recommendations and decisions about parks/facilities and programs.

Revenue Sources

Evaluating the facility by the number of revenue generating assets available (e.g., equipment rental, entry fees, program fees, and concessions)

Attendance/Visitation

This assessment is based on average facility visitation, which can be indicative of facility/organization awareness and relevancy.

Park Master Plan Availability

Whether or not the park has a park master plan (1, yes and 0, no).

THE SYSTEM TODAY

	West County		Charleston Center		North Area		East Cooper		East County	
	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median	Average	Median
Revenue Sources (Multiple Funding Sources)	0.7	0.5	2.7	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.3	2.5	0.0	0.0
Attendance/ Visitation (Build Awareness)	34,843.2	17,820.0	217,441.3	107,829.0	466,569.0	466,569.0	205,605.8	249,658.5	NA	NA
Park Master Plan Available	50%	50%	86%	100%	100%	100%	25%	0%	0%	0%



2

COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROCESS

In this chapter:

- Engagement Approach + Outreach
- Public Engagement Events
- Pop-ups
- Community Survey
- Staff Engagement
- Steering Committee Feedback
- Focus Group Conversations
- Commission Engagement

Approach to Engagement + Outreach

The primary goal of engagement for the PARFA plan was to facilitate a truly inclusive and community-driven planning and decision-making process that cultivates a shared vision for the future of CCPRC. This approach targeted a range of stakeholders and created opportunities for dialogue for groups and individuals familiar with the municipal planning process, while also informing, educating, and inviting input from individuals that were less familiar and left out of previous planning processes.

This approach focused on four key goals:

- **Broad, diverse input:** Obtain feedback from all people and communities who currently enjoy CCPRC parks, facilities, and programs, as well as people and communities who could enjoy CCPRC resources in the future. Special efforts were made to engage historically underrepresented communities in the county such as: Black, indigenous, people of color (“BIPOC”) residents, non-English speaking residents, and local youth. In the more “rural” parts of Charleston County, CCPRC’s Community Recreation staff engaged their customer base to increase participation among residents less familiar with CCPRC. CCPRC also directly communicated with website visitors via its listserv of passholders, email subscribers, and social media followers.
- **Education & Inspiration:** Promote a greater understanding of CCPRC at a local and county-wide level. Inform residents of the variety of facilities, programs, and services CCPRC offers to frame its forward-looking planning process.
- **Keep It Fun!** Make participation in the engagement process an informative and enjoyable activity by using interactive and effective input methods, such as games, comment writing opportunities, fun graphics, and positive conversation.
- **Grow Stewardship:** Build a community of civically engaged residents for the long-term success of the CCPRC system.

Methods of Outreach

The PARFA process included three phases of public engagement. Phase One included intimate Community-Led Conversations, Pop-ups, and a Statistically Valid Survey (SVS) (engagement methods are described in more detail below). Phase One outreach was conducted throughout the Spring of 2022. In late Spring 2022, Phase Two outreach included seven public workshops across the county, one virtual public workshop, and an online community survey. Phase Three of public engagement occurred towards the end of the planning process as plan strategies and recommendations were identified and shared unofficially with CCPRC passholders and external stakeholder groups.

Throughout all three phases of public engagement, the PARFA planning team engaged with CCPRC staff stakeholders, the staff project steering committee, and the Commission throughout the project through surveys, focus groups, and presentations.

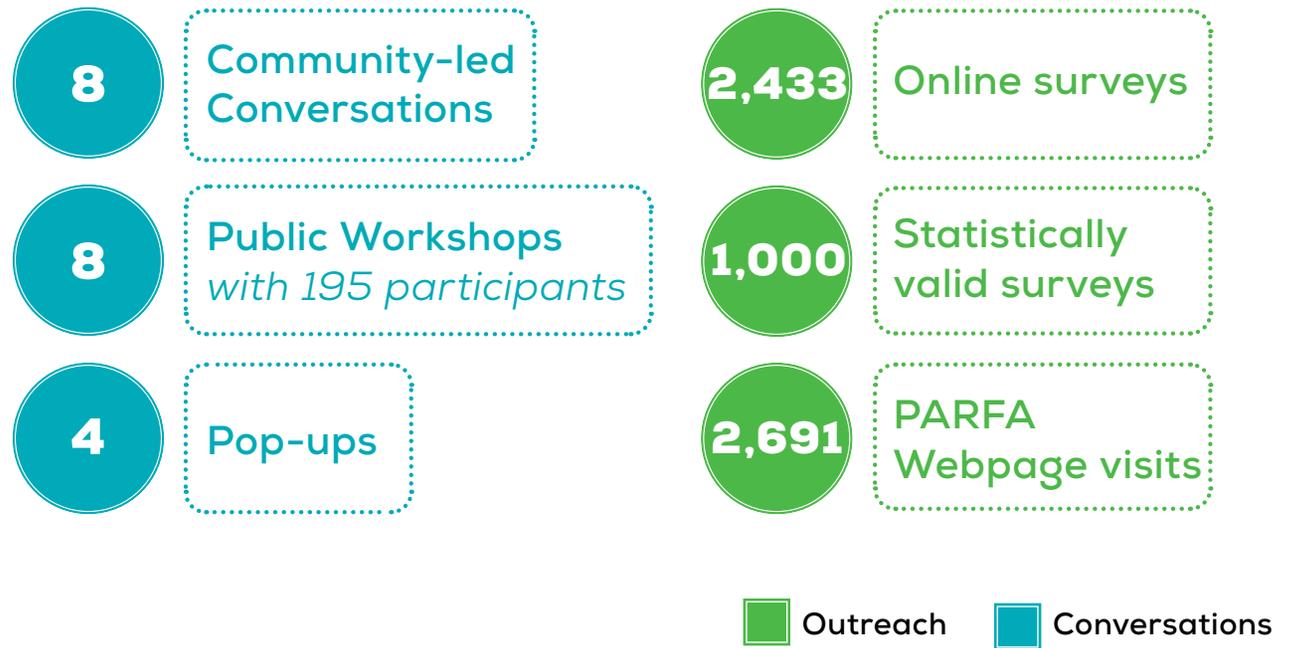


Figure 1.33 PARFA engagement by numbers

COMMUNITY-LED CONVERSATIONS

During the first phase of engagement, the consultant team led eight community-led conversations that were held across the county, and focused primarily in the more rural planning areas. Community-Led Conversations were also offered in other more populated parts of CCPRC service area, generally in predominately minority neighborhoods and communities. These conversations were a small group format (10-15 people), and aimed to engage with residents who are typically underrepresented throughout the planning process. Awareness about the respective meetings was spread by word of mouth, flyers and postcards, and direct contact through the planning consultant's network and CCPRC's Community Recreation staff.

Key Takeaways

- Need for **targeted outreach**: newsletters, booklets, program guides, printed materials; flyers at churches, schools, grocery stores, outreach to PTA
- A desire for **community liaisons** to build trust in hard to reach communities (in addition to Community Rec Staff)

- Public expressed desire for activity **"hubs"**, with diverse recreation opportunities for all ages in a concentrated area
- High need for **access to water and swimming programs for kids** in underserved communities
- Programs for kids with special needs
- **Multi-generational programming** (teens, adults, parents, and seniors) and space for skills training (trades , tutoring, computers/Internet)
- **Transportation challenges** make it hard for residents in underserved areas to participate in programs



**Community-led
Conversations**

COUNTY-WIDE PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

In July 2022, the planning team hosted a series of public workshops at seven different locations across the county over a three-day period, to allow for ample participation opportunities for county residents, particularly in more remote areas of East and West County. In addition to the in-person workshops, the planning team also hosted a virtual public workshop to provide further opportunities for individuals who could not participate in person. Overall, about 195 participants attended these workshops and stopped by to learn more about the plan and share their aspirations for the future of CCPRC.

The public workshops were hosted in libraries and schools that were close to population centers in each of the planning areas.

- Wando Mount Pleasant Library
- Otranto Road Library
- Charleston County Public Library
- St. Paul’s Hollywood Library
- Bee’s Ferry West Ashley Library
- St. James-Santee Elementary School
- St. John’s High School

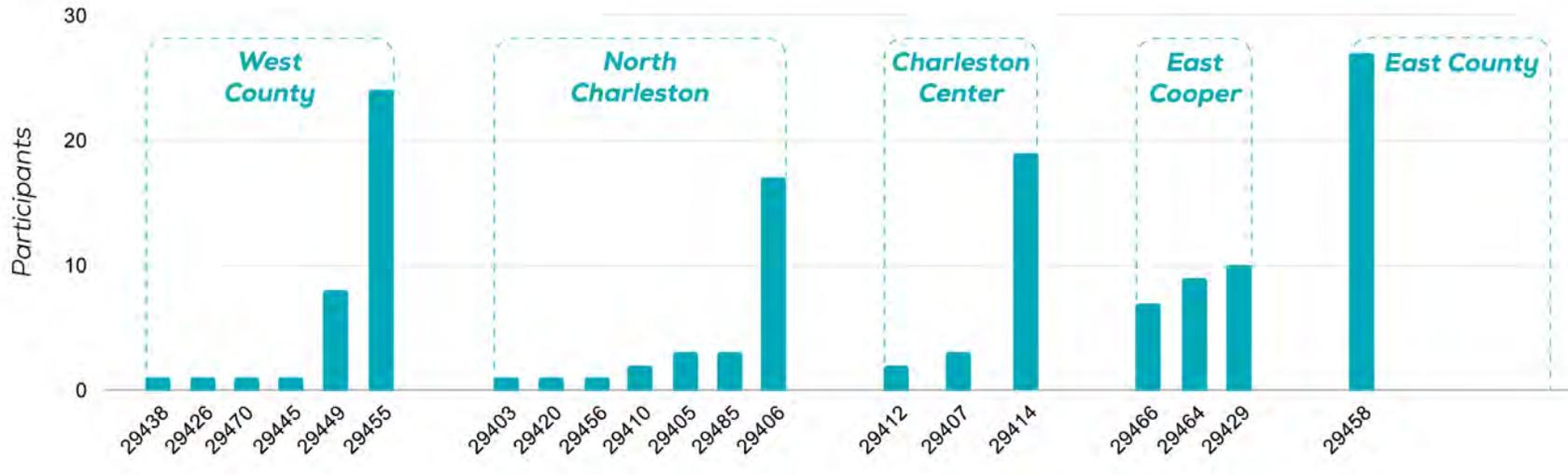


Figure 1.34 County-wide workshop attendee geographic distribution.

Key Takeaways

While feedback varied across geographic regions, common topics emerged among public workshop participants.

- A desire for more trail connections between parks and in parks
- High need for access to water and swimming programs
- Activity Hubs in each planning area which have amenities, multipurpose spaces, and recreational programs for all ages and abilities
- Excitement for innovative and creative recreation programs (which many participants seem to already enjoy!)
- Balancing needs locally with community focused programming vs more regionally.



**County-wide
Public
Workshops**



POP-UPS

During the first phase of outreach, the PARFA consultants hosted four Pop-ups at events around Charleston County during the Spring of 2022. These events were more informal and episodic ways to spread awareness about the plan and meet residents where they were in their own communities, at events they would already be attending. In addition to building awareness around PARFA, residents had the opportunity to provide feedback through comment cards and interactive game board activities, to help give the team a sense of the community’s priorities based on the five focus areas. This priority exercise was conducted at each in-person engagement event and yielded over two thousand votes that indicated Access was one of the community’s highest priorities for the PARFA plan.

Key Takeaways

The game board activity highlighted that priorities for the public include programs and events (top priority), community recreation services (second highest priority), and natural spaces and wildlife habitat (third highest priority).

COMMUNITY SURVEY

In May 2022 CCPRC administered two different types of community surveys to better understand resident and park visitor satisfaction and unmet needs. The first was a mailed statistically valid survey to 4,000 households across the county. The survey captured 1,000 responses across the county, resulting in a precision of +/-3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This high degree of confidence ensured that the survey captured a snapshot of the county’s diverse population across geographic planning areas, income, race, and age, among other factors. Particular attention was given to the areas of emphasis desired by staff, including: Recreation Trends Analysis, Needs Assessment, Community Inventory, and Level of Service Standards.

The goal of the survey was to achieve a level of statistical validity within each CCPRC “Planning Area”, as to inform future decision-making about parks, facilities, programs, and services at a local level.

The goals for participation included:

- **Reach both current CCPRC users and non-users** – Statistical validity is critical to understanding what CCPRC can be doing differently to reach new users

- **Yield statistically-valid results** – The SVS is critical to understanding why people do – or do not – use CCPRC facilities and/or programs. Achieving statistical validity within each Planning Area will help CCPRC to target facility and program improvement strategies where people desire them most.
- **Be accessible** – The 3,000 survey recipients will be able to fill-out and return a printed version of the survey OR they can take the survey online. The survey will include instructions for additional languages that can be provided over the phone.

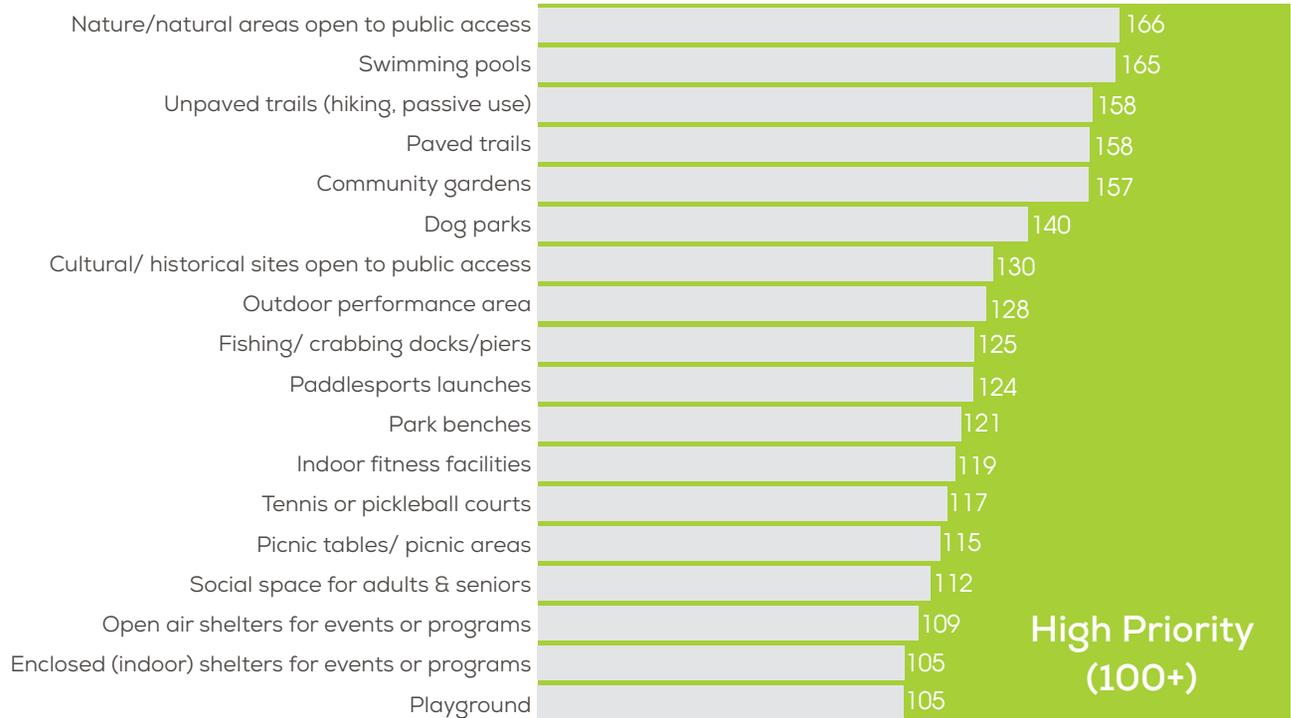
The second survey was shared via an online platform with the broader public and included the same questions as the statistically valid survey. The two surveys conducted gathered feedback from a wide range of the community. The online public survey reached 2,433 people while the statistically valid survey was sent to over 3,000 households and was returned by 1,000 households. The statistically valid survey received responses that were evenly distributed across the county’s planning regions and reflected a demographic snapshot of the Charleston community. The online survey gathered the most feedback from Charleston Center and East Cooper planning areas.

The surveys captured input from different demographics. While the online survey did reach a variety of people, respondents were 91% white, a number greater than the county’s demographic composition which is only 70% white. This finding made it even more critical to complement the surveys with additional methods of engagement, such as the community-led conversations and county-wide public workshops, which helped reach a more representative demographic audience.

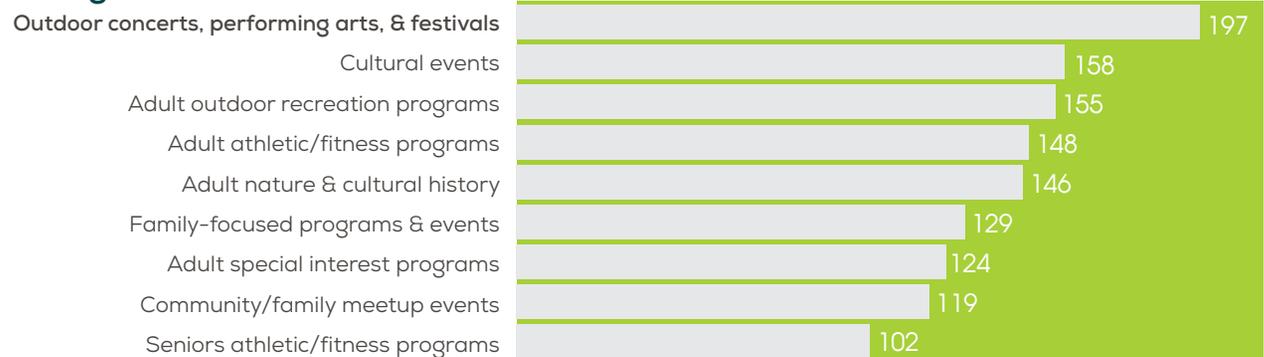
Key Takeaways

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) identifies priorities for investments based on community identified unmet needs. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on each program or amenity and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the program or amenity. The priority for amenities in Charleston County are for “natural areas open to public access” and the priority for programs is for “outdoor concerts, arts, and festivals”.

Amenity Priorities



Program Priorities



STAFF ENGAGEMENT

The PARFA plan also included engagement with various staff members, the Commission, and partner organizations at different milestones during the process. Over 300 people shared insights about the Commission, how they collaborate with CCPRC, successes, and opportunities for growth or change in a variety of venues.

STEERING COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Throughout the planning process, the consultant team regularly shared findings and progress with the Steering Committee and were committed to consistent and inclusive communication. The consultant team presented to the Steering Committee six times to garner feedback and guidance on the analysis and visioning phases. During three of these meetings, members of the steering committee were encouraged to participate in workshop-format activities to understand priorities and guide plan actions.

FOCUS GROUP ENGAGEMENT

Staff perspectives were critical to the planning process and understanding the health of the organization system. The consultant team led twenty-two internal focus groups with 10-15 staff attendees from each level of each division within

CCPRC. These meetings focused on their roles within CCPRC, the strengths of the Commission, and the ways in which CCPRC's operations could be made more efficient to help staff meet their goals in service of the mission and the public.

Staff feedback focused on the following key topics:

- **Communication:** Many staff members indicated opportunities to enhance communication regarding key decisions especially between levels of the Commission, and sometimes between divisions.
- **Staff Capacity:** While CCPRC was able to continue to thrive throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many staff members have felt stretched thin with the growth of CCPRC's user groups and offerings while the number of full time staff has remained the same. Staff shared that part time staff and volunteers continue to provide valuable support to offset capacity challenges.
- **Organizational pride:** The most common theme from each of the staff conversations centered around a feeling of pride in the quality of CCPRC's offerings and the culture

of the Commission, as many staff members have spent decades in various roles. This creates a passion for serving the public and a shared interest for providing the best parks and recreation system for Charleston County residents.

COMMISSION ENGAGEMENT

The project team shared regular updates with the Commission at key plan milestones. This included presentations to the Commission in March and July 2022, as well as a presentation of the draft plan to Commissioners during the review of the plan document.

COMMUNITY DRIVEN PROCESS

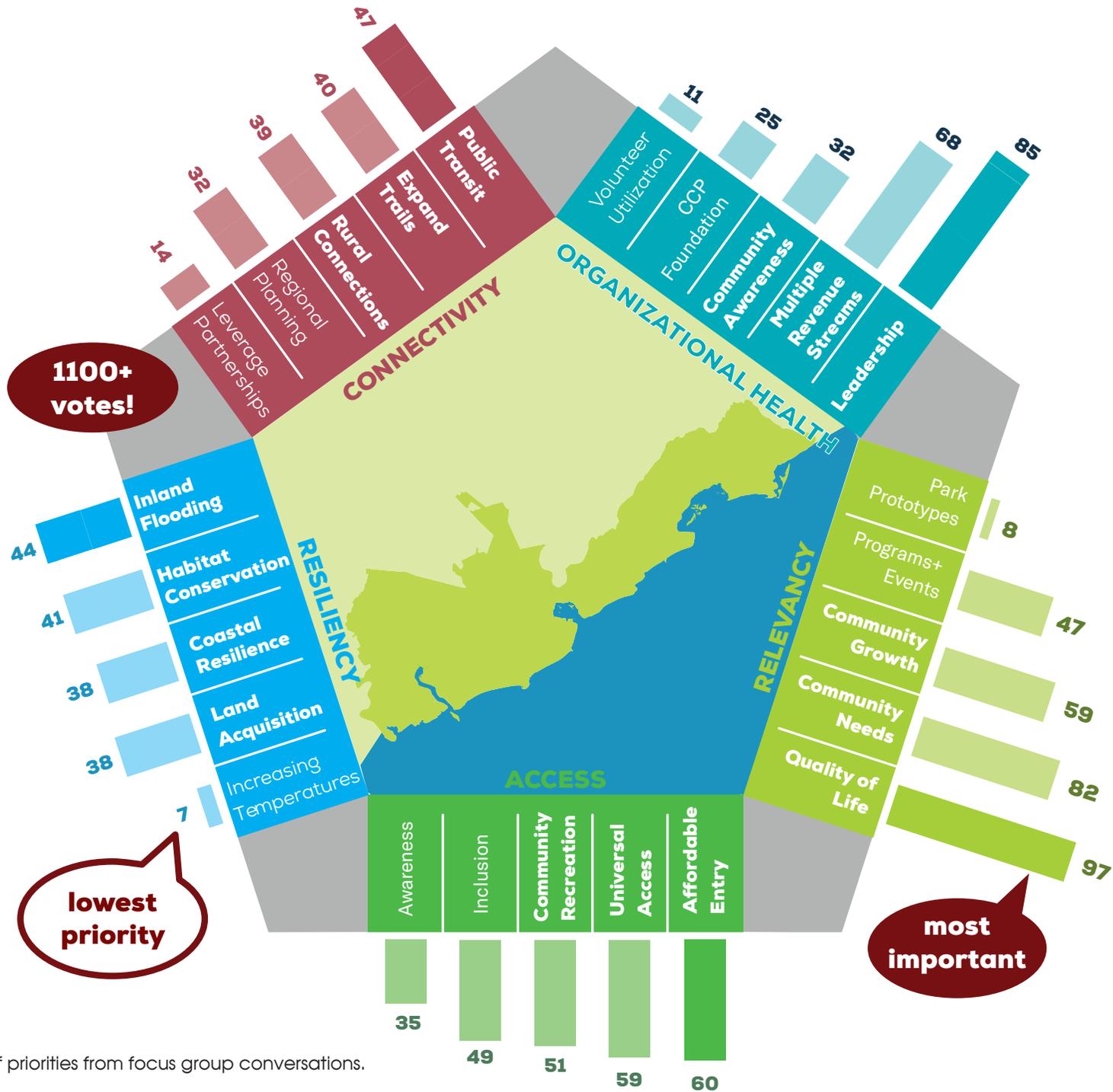


Figure 1.35 Staff priorities from focus group conversations.

3

VISION & GOALS

In this chapter:

Vision Statement

System-wide Recommendations



Vision Statement

OUR PARKS, OUR COMMUNITIES

As Charleston County experiences significant growth over the past decade, now more than ever the value of parks and trails stands out. CCPRC has consistently maintained its 11,000 acres of parks and open spaces, a systemwide plan and annual reports, highlighting investments in its parks, programs and services in keeping with community needs and trends. Since the 2013 plan, the Commission has doubled its land holdings to increase levels of service and invest in a system that provides access to all residents.

Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission continues to exceed expectations around what it means to amplify and manage irreplaceable environmental resources, to foster health and wellness, and to create transformative experiences that all can enjoy.

The vision of this plan, Parks and Recreation For All!, is to ***grow and innovate*** alongside changing community needs, ***sustain*** the Commission’s mission, core services and beloved spaces, and ***advocate*** for a connected, resilient, and equitable parks system countywide.



Reinforce



Grow



Partner

Access for All

Our parks provide high quality experiences to all.

- Strategy #1: Continue efforts to close identified gaps in service to deliver high quality services to all areas of the county.
- Strategy #2: Maintain and strengthen partnerships to improve access to park and recreation facilities and recreation programs.
- Strategy #3: Expand access opportunities for underserved population groups.
- Strategy #4: Continue emphasizing the broad range of financial assistance options and the ways people can access them.
- Strategy #5: Increase awareness and visibility to residents by expanding data-driven strategic media engagement and messaging to under-reached groups.
- Strategy #6: Expand access to water-based activities for all residents.

Staying Relevant

Our parks reflect our changing & growing communities.

- Strategy #1: Provide unique and complementary programs and facilities countywide.
- Strategy #2: Offer and introduce programs and amenities aligned with community desires and population trends.
- Strategy #3: Reach all communities through broad, creative, and inclusive communication methods.
- Strategy #4: Develop a consistent feedback loop to reinforce relationships and trust with county residents.
- Strategy #5: Adapt CCPRC’s park/facility planning and development process to capture broad stakeholder input, maintain project awareness, and reinforce CCPRC’s identity.
- Strategy #6: Continue to communicate with municipalities as needed about national and local trends in programming, events, and facility development.

Staying Resilient

Our parks thrive & adapt to our dynamic environment

- Strategy #1: Use the park/facility planning/design process to identify opportunities to strengthen CCPRC's resiliency.
- Strategy #2: Expand maintenance and building standards to factor in long-term sustainability and resilience.
- Strategy #3: Expand the role of parks to provide heat relief, support water and air quality, and mitigate flood risks for residents.
- Strategy #4: Continue to build on and communicate CCPRC's cultural, natural, and historical stewardship initiatives.
- Strategy #5: Continue to partner with resource management agencies and professionals to effectively manage invasive species and stay up to date on sustainable and resilient management practices.
- Strategy #6: Continue to demonstrate leadership in management, awareness of, and interpretation of natural, historical, and cultural resources.

Making Connections

Our parks connect our communities to nature and to each other.

- Strategy #1: Continue to plan, establish, and maintain quality trails within parks.
- Strategy #2: Expand, strengthen, and clarify physical connections within parks.
- Strategy #3: Advocate to improve access to parks from neighborhoods and population centers.
- Strategy #4: Advocate for local multi-modal connections between parks and destinations, as well as for large, regional walking and biking routes.

Optimizing Operations

Our parks commission is dedicated to providing exceptional performance in service of our communities.

- Strategy #1: Build a talent acquisition and retention approach that reflects the diverse and unique perspectives and experiences of Charleston County communities.
- Strategy #2: Invest in part-time and full-time staff professional training and development to build and strengthen their knowledge, skills, abilities and qualifications essential to individual and Commission success.
- Strategy #3: Continue balancing financial resources to provide recurring investment in operations, maintenance, programming, facility rehabilitation, and capital improvements throughout CCPRC's service area.
- Strategy #4: Continue to leverage the role of CCPF and other creative funding sources.

“Communication regarding offerings provided by CCPRC could be better advertised, and work to reach those with limited internet access.”
- Mount Pleasant Community-Led Conversation

1. Access for All

OUR PARKS PROVIDE HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCES TO ALL.

CCPRC parks are known for having high quality amenities that are maintained to a high standard. However, communities across the county have varying access to CCPRC facilities, and park and recreation amenities in general. These communities also have uneven access to transportation options, and wealth generation and educational opportunities. These challenges highlight the need to provide accessible and diverse offerings of park and recreation facilities across the county – but especially where there are identified gaps in service. The following strategies and actions provide guidance toward improving access to CCPRC parks/facilities, services, and programs, ensuring that CCPRC is aligned with its mission of improving the quality of life for all Charleston County residents.

“We should utilize additional partnerships to further increase access.”
- Steering Committee Workshop



1.1. Continue efforts to close identified gaps in service to deliver high quality services to all areas of the county.

CCPRC has access to a variety of resources and tools to expand its presence in underserved areas. These tools may include planning/developing existing landholdings, opening up existing landholding for “preliminary access”, acquiring new property via direct purchase or through partnership with external groups, offering programs and/or operating facilities on partner-owned land. CCPRC should prioritize sites that have the opportunity to fill existing gaps in service. Partnerships with land trusts, local governments/municipalities, local philanthropists, or other interested parties have the potential to secure land for future CCPRC facilities. In planning for future land acquisition opportunities, as in the past, acquisition of new property may be contingent on development restrictions and specific land protection criteria, so CCPRC will need to strike a balance between conservation and public access, with respect to recreation needs and potential development scenarios.

1.1.1. Continue prioritizing planning and developing of existing landholdings (“undeveloped/future sites”) to expand CCPRC reach in underserved areas and advance CCPRC's mission.

CCPRC’s “undeveloped/future sites” (i.e. undeveloped properties already owned by CCPRC) can be evaluated alongside level of service data to determine which properties have the highest potential for filling gaps in service. Once this is determined, properties can be prioritized for planning and development. Through its typical planning process, CCPRC could solicit public input and integrate the types of park and recreation facilities desired by community stakeholders. For these land holdings, it will also be important to evaluate and compare land management planning and recreation needs in order to determine the appropriate level of development and public access on each undeveloped/future site.



Figure 1.37 Meggett County Park

1.1.2. Consider opening additional “undeveloped/future sites” for preliminary public access, learning from previous CCPRC preliminary access parks.

CCPRC owns several “undeveloped/future site” properties that are closed to public access. Reasons park properties may be closed to public access include: cost of operations and maintenance, conflict with active and ongoing land management activities, providing public access would duplicate other park and recreation providers/facilities in the vicinity (i.e. not closing a known gap in service), and lack of funding availability for meaningful facility design and development. In recent years CCPRC opened several properties for “preliminary access”, wherein CCPRC or a partnering organization established a small parking area on or near the CCPRC property, installed a kiosk/map, monument, and wayfinding signage, and dedicated roving/mobile maintenance staff to monitor and upkeep the facility. Examples of such sites open today include: Laurel Hill County Park, Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve, Meggett County Park, and the Wannamaker North Trail. These facilities each offer diverse trail access opportunities within naturally and/or culturally significant settings. Where gaps in service occur at or near existing CCPRC landholdings, making minimal access

improvements and dedicating staff resources for regular maintenance/monitoring may be an option for furthering CCPRC’s mission.

1.1.3. Continue evaluating land acquisition opportunities that close identified gaps in service through direct purchase by CCPRC, or in coordination with land acquisition partners.

Partnerships with land trusts, local governments/municipalities, local philanthropists, or other interested parties have the potential to secure land for future CCPRC facilities. In planning for future land acquisition opportunities, CCPRC should prioritize sites that have the opportunity to fill existing gaps in service. As in the past, acquisition of new property may be contingent on development restrictions and specific land protection criteria, so CCPRC will need to strike a balance between conservation and public access, with respect to recreation needs and potential development scenarios. For certain properties that CCPRC owns, there may be limitations on the volume or type of development that is allowed, due to reasons such as ecologically sensitive areas or significant conservation goals. In order to achieve their goals and fill service gaps, CCPRC can utilize partnerships within the area to strategically fill recreation gaps while still protecting their land and use a new mobile recreational program to provide access near-term.

VISION & GOALS: ACCESS FOR ALL

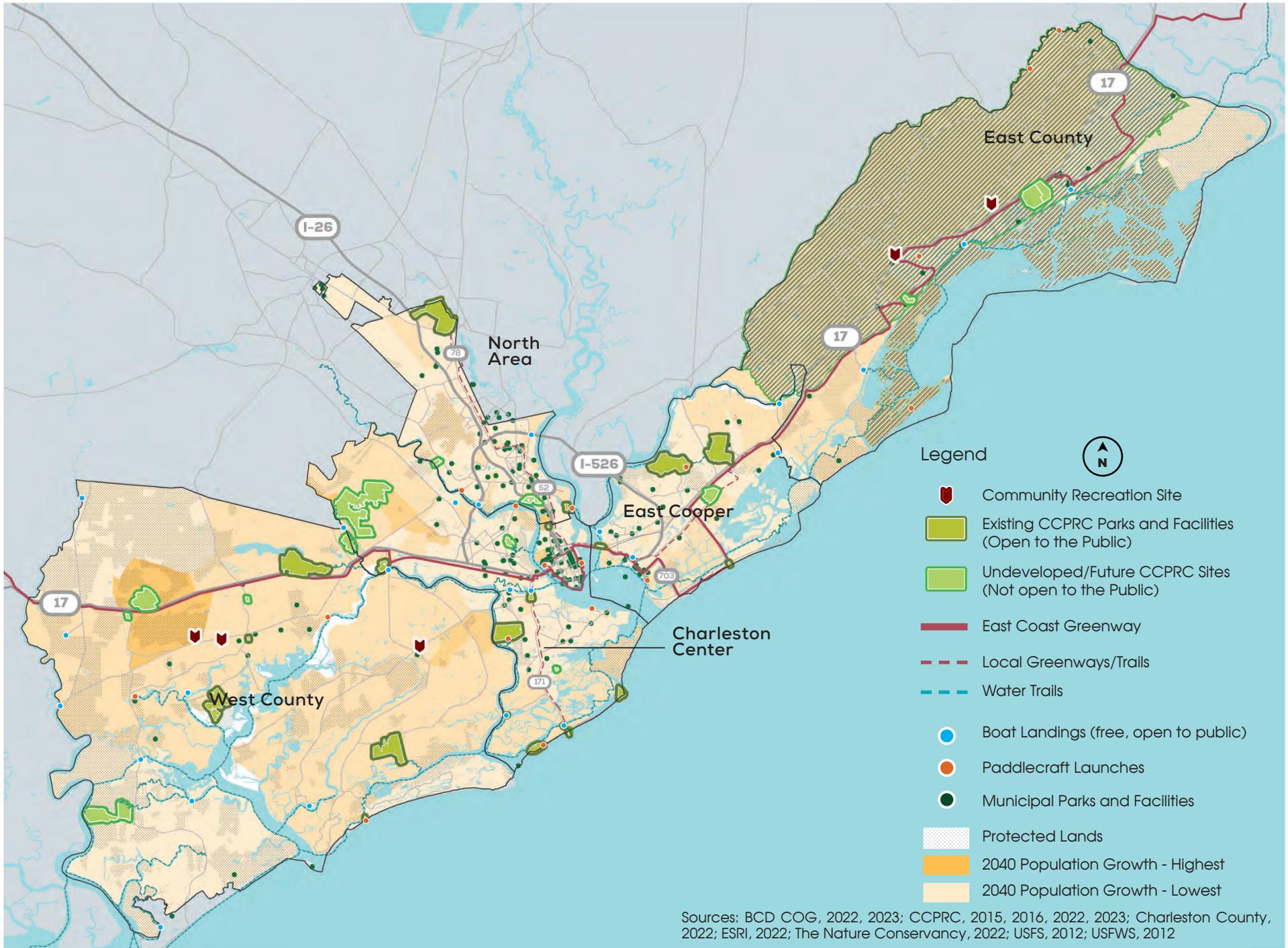




Figure 1.38 Youth Basketball, 2022

1.1.4. Assess current Community Recreation programs, spaces and demand, and use this information to develop a strategic framework for long-term investment.

While the Community Recreation programs have been very successful, oftentimes, the facilities are not at the same standard as other CCPRC facilities. In order to continue providing high quality services for all areas in Charleston County, CCPRC should develop a strategic framework (or master plan) for long-term investment in Community Recreation. This framework can evaluate how Community Recreation can evolve to meet changing needs and provide programming spaces to support demand.

1.1.5. Continue evaluating opportunities to close gaps in service by operating facilities and offering programs on partner-owned land.

Although CCPRC should stay open-minded about all acquisition opportunities, it is unlikely that CCPRC would be able to own land everywhere CCPRC’s presence is needed. In such situations where land - or the financial resources to acquire land - is not readily available, CCPRC should continue exploring opportunities to partner with local landowners with similar access-oriented

missions. By identifying opportunities to operate park and recreation facilities and/or offer recreation programs on partner-owned land, CCPRC can avoid the cost of land acquisition, and redirect investments to improvements, operations, and programming. Any land use partnerships require robust agreements to protect CCPRC and its investments long into the future; and similarly, potential partners may expect a shared responsibility over certain aspects of land use. See Strategy 1.2: Maintain and strengthen partnerships to improve access to park and recreation facilities and programs.



1.2. Maintain and strengthen partnerships to improve access to park and recreation facilities and recreation programs.

CCPRC currently has a variety of creative partnerships to provide parks, recreation facilities and programs to residents throughout Charleston County. These partnerships occur in both the more populated parts of the county, as well as in the more rural, underserved areas. Typically, these partnerships exist officially between CCPRC and other public entities in the form of operating agreements for shared facility use. In other examples, CCPRC partners with other entities to

provide no- or low-cost park access opportunities to residents as a means of reducing financial barriers to access. During the engagement process, the value of these partnerships was communicated by both staff and the community.

1.2.1. Pursue partnerships and entertain agreements which align with CCPRC’s mission, vision, and values, and ensure co-benefits.

CCPRC has been working to expand mission-aligned partnerships in areas of the county with the greatest unmet needs. A major

example of this is in CCPRC’s facility use agreements (e.g. Memoranda of Agreement/ Understanding) with other public entities in the East and West County planning areas. Through these agreements, CCPRC operates five Community Recreation sites in otherwise underserved parts of the county. Generally, the use agreements allow CCPRC to construct/improve and operate active and passive recreation amenities, and provide recreation programs at the facility. Partnership with Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) allows CCPRC to offer recreation facilities and programs at

three sites in West County, and two sites in East County. Additional facility use agreements with other entities are pending.

Examples of successful facility use partnerships in the more populated areas of Charleston County, include:

- Laurel Hill County Park – CCPRC operates a trailhead at the Town of Mount Pleasant’s Park West Recreation Complex.
- Mount Pleasant Waterfront Pier – CCPRC operates the Town of Mount Pleasant-owned pier.
- Wannamaker North Trail – CCPRC operates a trailhead on City of Goose Creek property (trail accessed via Berkeley County roads).

Each facility use (or operating) agreement varies in CCPRC’s obligations to maintenance, repair, and replacement of facility resources (e.g., furnishing replacement, plumbing repairs, ballfield maintenance, etc.).



Figure 1.39 Community Recreation Program - Wrestling



1.2.2. Consider opportunities to continue CCPRC’s funding assistance for improvements to small, local parks in underserved areas.

In recent years, CCPRC has facilitated a grant application process, through which community groups/organizations in unincorporated Charleston County request funding and technical assistance toward design and construction of recreation facilities (e.g., playgrounds, picnic tables, basketball courts, and similar facilities). In requesting project support, the community groups/organizations are striving to provide or improve recreation facilities for the community in an underserved area. Much of the funding CCPRC provides for this grant process comes via CCPRC’s allocation of the South Carolina Park and Recreation Development Fund (PARD), with CCPRC subsidizing unanticipated overages. In exchange for CCPRC’s project support, the community group is obligated to maintain the new/improved facility. Examples of CCPRC/PARD-supported community projects include:

- Ten Mile Neighborhood Community Center
- Sol Legare Community Center
- South Santee Senior and Community Center

1.2.3. MOUs/MOAs related to long-term development and programming (e.g. property rights) should be reviewed by CCPRC’s legal counsel, and should minimize both short and long-term risks to CCPRC and its associated investments.

In order to minimize short- and long-term risks, CCPRC could limit MOU/MOA terms to give themselves more agency to negotiate the terms. They could also develop a process around enforcement of MOUs/MOAs to ensure that organizations are aligned with CCPRC’s expectations about maintenance, access, liability, and other potential risks. Formalized shared-use agreements are critical tools to address these challenges and to specify terms and responsibilities. Potential terms can determine what is comfortable for both CCPRC and partners, and can range from scenarios such as “unlocking the gates” for after-hours use, to reciprocal access between both groups’ facilities, allowing indoor and outdoor access.

Figure 1.40 H2O Moves at West County Aquatic Center, 2020

1.2.4. Continue reviewing MOUs on a regular cycle by legal, Executive Divisions, and other divisions (as applicable) to ensure agreements are representative of CCPRC’s evolving standards and expectations.

As the county grows, where land acquisition is not possible, and/or where existing landholdings present development constraints (e.g. conservation easements), CCPRC may desire to expand formal partnerships to meet increased demand. CCPRC can be proactive about reviewing agreements before their expiration dates and ensure that agreements are aligned with new policies or legislation. Examples of potential policies that this could be beneficial for include new standards around ADA access or safety regulations for playground equipment.

through facility design and creative programming (e.g., minorities, people with disabilities, seniors, kids, etc.). Actions should address access-related improvements for people with disabilities, including specific programming opportunities mindful of minority groups, and diversifying engagement methods during public planning processes that will help CCPRC understand better what underserved communities desire in park and recreation facilities. Other methods for increasing access may involve forming advisory committees or coordinating with CCPRC ambassadors to spearhead excursions to county parks in other planning areas.

ADA Coordinator, identifying sign language interpreters, acquiring assistive listening systems, monitoring the development of the website accessibility requirements, and developing an ongoing series of disability training resources for employees that requires employees to add access and inclusion subject matter to their continuing education.

1.3.1. Continue implementation of the ADA Transition Plan.

CCPRC conducted an Accessibility Audit in 2019 to assess the accessibility of its parks, facilities, programs, and services. The report found that CCPRC has made significant progress in improving accessibility, including installing accessible parking spaces, making beach/water wheelchairs available at beach and water parks, and improving pathways and restrooms. However, the report also identified areas for improvement, and proposed several implementation strategies to work on over the next decade. These strategies included maintaining a strong relationship with disability advisory groups, maintaining a Certified



1.3. Expand access opportunities for underserved population groups.

CCPRC is well known for offering a welcoming environment for visitors across its breadth of facilities and programs. Based on conversations with staff and the public, there may be opportunities to engage direct user groups



Figure 1.41 Beach wheelchair, Kiawah Beachwalker Park



Figure 1.42 Silent Disco event at Edisto Hall in James Island County Park, 2023

1.3.2. Prioritize projects that support public health, safety, and accessibility.

The CCPRC ADA Transition Plan aimed to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities by identifying barriers to accessibility in CCPRC park and facilities and providing recommendations for removing these barriers. Throughout the community engagement process for the ADA Transition plan, the highest priority of community members was beach access, including all elements at the beach, from access, parking, and restrooms. Additionally, community members prioritized making high traffic/most visited sites such as trail systems at parks, accessible, as well as parking, restrooms, and sites that are accessible by public transportation. One project included in the ADA Transition Plan that CCPRC can work to implement is making at least one of every three playgrounds accessible.

The community also advocated for more adaptive equipment to be purchased including beach wheelchairs, hand cycles, adaptive bicycles, kayaks and paddleboards. Other feedback included adding adult changing areas in park sites, improving the registration process for programs, events and equipment rental/use, and improving communications about accessibility and inclusion by improving the website, signage, and offering information in multiple languages (such as Spanish).

1.3.3. Expand festivals/events and other targeted programs for special user groups.

CCPRC also offers targeted programming catering to specific user groups, but should consider opportunities to broaden the variety of programs offered, and expand the variety of user groups being targeted. Examples of current programs/events include inclusive dances and “wheels to surf” beach access programs – emphasizing access for people with disabilities, but typically open to all Charleston County residents. Similarly, CCPRC currently offers events/festivals like Latin American Festival and Cajun Fest, which celebrate cultures and traditions. In the future, CCPRC could look to diversify the variety of programs and events being offered to celebrate and highlight other audiences, such as seniors, kids, families, and Gullah-Geechee culture.

1.3.4. Leverage CCPRC resources to increase access throughout the park system.

Work with CCPRC staff and access ambassadors (see Action 1.4.3.) to increase awareness about the diversity of CCPRC facilities and programs, and identify opportunities to connect people (primarily in underserved communities) to CCPRC resources. Examples from recent PARFA

public engagement included an inquiry from a North Charleston neighborhood to coordinate a bus trip for seniors to visit North Charleston Wannamaker County Park. Recently, CCPRC staff coordinated with the Town of Hollywood to provide transportation for Seniors to access the Mount Pleasant Pier. Future “ambassador”-type coordinated activities could involve expanded partnership with CARTA for transportation support.



1.4. Continue emphasizing the broad range of financial assistance options and the ways people can access them.

Providing affordable facilities and programs is key to increasing access to CCPRC for all Charleston County residents. When potential customers need financial assistance, CCPRC currently offers a few options, including discounts, scholarships, and a Gold Pass partnership with Charleston County Public Libraries. Unfortunately, many Charleston County residents are not aware of these opportunities, and because of financial barriers, do not participate. In the future, it will be important for CCPRC to explore how to improve communication with potential users about financial assistance opportunities;

especially to underrepresented user groups such as lower-income residents. Additionally, CCPRC can evaluate the efficacy of existing financial assistance opportunities, and explore where awareness about financial assistance can be improved or expanded as-needed. The Charleston County Parks Foundation – whose mission is to improve access to CCPRC facilities and programs – may continue to be a viable funding partner to offset the cost of providing scholarships, discounts, and other assistance measures.

1.4.1. Track the success of focusing discounts to intended audiences, such as geographic areas, income brackets, racial and ethnic minorities, or other identified groups.

There are several methods CCPRC can use to track the success of focused discounts. CCPRC already collects demographic data from users, so this data could be used to compare annually the number of users from intended audiences accessing discounts compared to the total number of visitors. This data could be analyzed over time, before and after new discounts have been implemented, to see how effective new discounts are at achieving higher participation rates with intended audiences. CCPRC may also gather qualitative feedback from intended

audiences to understand how financial assistance options are better meeting their needs and what improvements may need to be implemented to provide better support.

1.4.2. Continue the successful Gold Pass partnership with Charleston County Public Libraries to provide Charleston County residents with free/ discounted access to CCPRC facilities.

CCPRC’s Gold Pass program grants pass holders a full year of unlimited admission into many of CCPRC’s parks. In 2021, CCPRC began a partnership with Charleston County Public Libraries (CCPL) which allows library patrons to check out a CCPRC Gold Pass, providing free admission for up to four people to many CCPRC facilities. This program is aligned with both CCPRC’s and CCPL’s missions to provide equitable access to community resources. In the future, it will be important that CCPRC continue this partnership so that all residents are able to experience Charleston County parks/facilities and programs.

CASE STUDY: AUSTIN PARKS FOUNDATION AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

The Austin Parks Foundation's "Park Ambassador" program trains volunteers to provide assistance and support to park visitors, including educating and creating greater awareness about park resources and amenities. Ambassadors are a crucial link between park users and

the Austin Parks Foundation, and provide valuable feedback to help identify areas of need, especially in diverse communities. The program also aims to build a stronger connection between the community and the parks, encouraging residents to take ownership of their local parks and become advocates for their preservation and improvement.



Figure 1.43 Austin Parks Foundation, 2018. Copyright Austin Parks Foundation

1.4.3. Identify/Designate "access ambassadors" to help connect individuals and communities to available discounts, scholarships and programs or other financial assistance opportunities.

Throughout the PARFA community engagement process, many Charleston County residents voiced that there was a need for greater awareness regarding financial support options to make it easier (and more affordable) to access CCPRC's facilities and programs. CCPRC currently offers a number of discounts, scholarships, and programs to promote access - such as the CCPL Gold Pass partnership, scholarships for youth programs and summer camps, discounts for military members and seniors, and a fee assistance program which provides discounted rates to those who meet certain income requirements. In order to increase transparency of these programs, CCPRC could establish an ambassadors program focused around increasing awareness to community members about CCPRC parks/facilities and programs. By establishing (or maintaining) trust with individuals and communities, these ambassadors could direct residents to the proper point of contact(s) at CCPRC to request financial assistance. For example, ambassadors may already be leaders in their community, HOA board members, non-profit organizations,

or even CCPRC staff. CCPRC Community Recreation staff already demonstrate many of the functions described above in the East and West County Planning Areas, but the need for such ambassadors was observed countywide.



1.5. Increase awareness and visibility to residents by expanding data-driven strategic media engagement and messaging to under-reached groups.

Based on results from the PARFA needs assessment, the most popular way that residents find information about CCPRC is through the CCPRC website and by word of mouth. In order to better increase awareness and visibility of CCPRC park/facilities and programs, CCPRC should continue to employ methods that are most effective for respective/potential user groups. While online marketing is strong, many residents voiced desires to stay informed via non-digital means, such as mailers or flyers.

1.5.1. Allocate portions of the marketing budget to direct mail (in process, 2024 budget).

Throughout the community engagement process, many community members voiced desires to stay informed of updates through physical rather than digital means. While CCPRC's digital marketing is very strong, many Charleston residents have limited access to the internet¹, and therefore may not receive digital communications. Additionally, the highest percentage of the county population without access to the internet was in areas with high rates of poverty, primarily in areas of East and West County. For CCPRC to continue to raise awareness and increase equitable access, it will be important for marketing communications to further diversify outreach towards methods that can reach all community members, such as printed forms of communications.

1.5.2. Explore the potential to use CCPRC-owned properties to showcase and promote the system through signage at key gateway properties.

CCPRC already has a consistent brand that is evident across all of its marketing materials. This brand could be made even more visible throughout the system by implementing physical materials (e.g. billboards) that could be placed

at key gateways along county road/highway corridors. These materials could help reinforce CCPRC's consistent marketing style and brand, helping to increase marketing presence in areas where Charleston residents may be less aware of opportunities provided by parks, facilities and programming.

1.5.3. Enhance tracking of where customers are coming from as a datapoint to inform Marketing strategy.

In coordination with the Parks Division and Recreation Division, Marketing should make it a priority to expand upon current efforts that track where customers are coming from. This detailed data would then be used to analyze where there is a gap in participation, and lead Marketing staff to explore what strategies might help implement to improve that gap. For instance, if customers in areas with limited internet access are not accessing CCPRC facilities, marketing strategies could potentially pivot towards approaches that may be more accessible, such as print materials, mailers, billboards, or flyering at existing community destinations such as churches or schools.

¹ American Community Survey, US Census



Figure 1.44 Johns Island County Park.

1.5.4. Partner with transportation services when possible to build awareness about CCPRC offerings and opportunities.

CCPRC can partner with transportation providers such as CARTA to advertise program offerings, special events, and other opportunities. This can include placing ads on buses, at bus stops, and on digital platforms such as mobile apps. Advertisements should include clear calls to action, and include items such as QR codes that link to CCPRC's website to sign up for updates or for a specific program or event. This can help generate interest and encourage potential visitors to act while staying informed for future opportunities.

1.5.5. Target marketing reach to areas within relative proximity to CCPRC parks/facilities.

CCPRC operates a wide range of facilities throughout Charleston County, but in some cases the neighborhoods or communities near a facility may not be aware that it is operated by CCPRC and open to the public. Similarly - if cost is a barrier to access - they may not be aware that financial assistance opportunities are available. Marketing may identify opportunities to enhance communications to neighborhoods and/

or communities that are within relative proximity to existing parks, especially those with diverse recreation amenities to offer.

1.5.6. Implement county-wide wayfinding enhancements to increase visibility within public rights-of-way.

CCPRC's brand is already very strong, and represents a clear opportunity to be applied to county-wide wayfinding enhancements. A clear and consistent wayfinding system along roads/highways and bike/pedestrian networks is crucial for enhancing awareness and access throughout any park system. Throughout the community engagement process, some community members were unsure of what parks in Charleston County were CCPRC-owned/operated versus municipality-owned/operated. Using the strength of the CCPRC brand and logo, the Commission should lean into the logo's use in signage that communicates connections to CCPRC spaces. Evaluating wayfinding opportunities and constraints countywide would clarify ownership of facilities, improve orientation and navigation to parks, and reinforce and strengthen the overall identity and branding of the system.

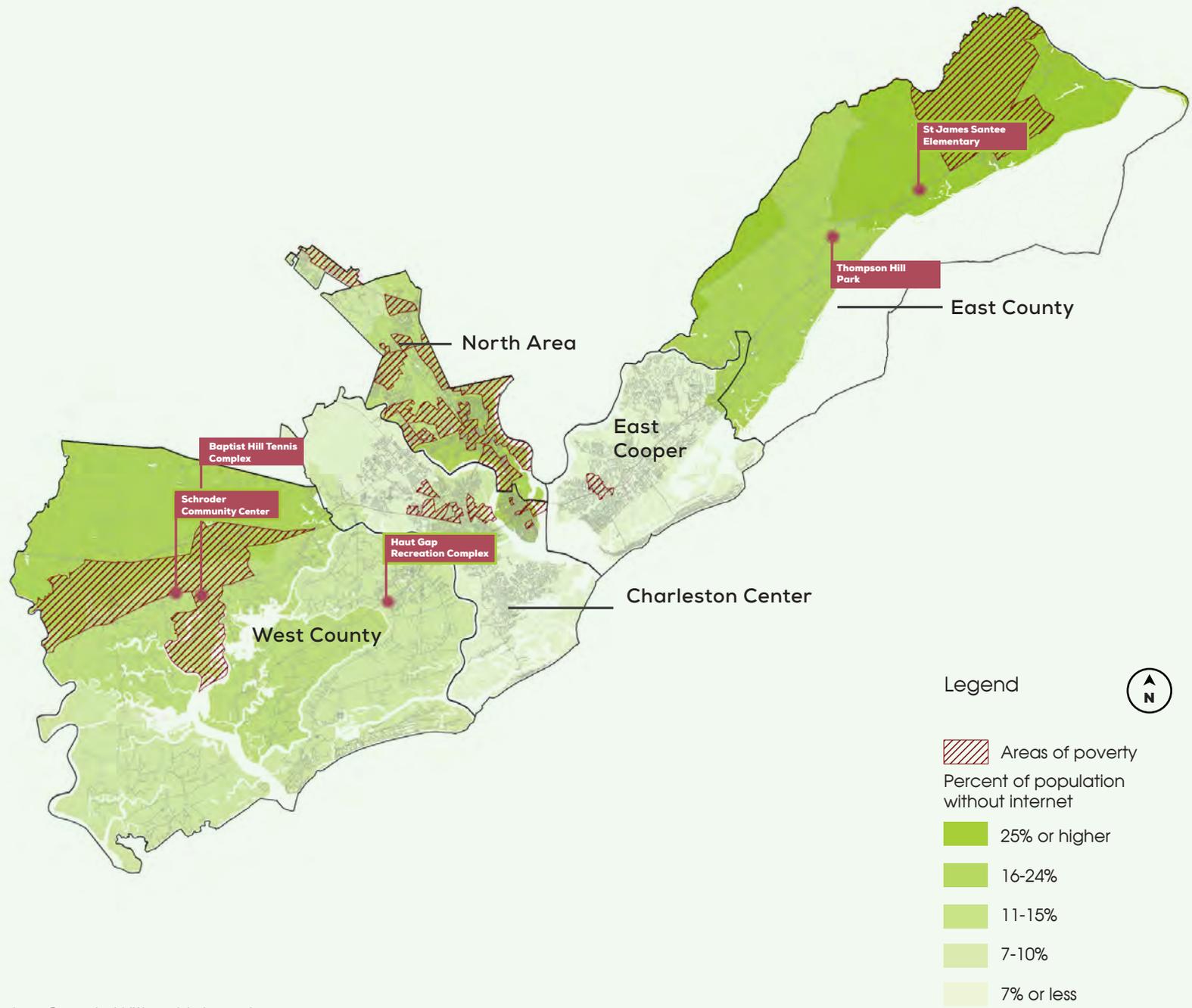


Figure 1.45 Areas of Charleston County Without Internet.
Source: American Community Survey, US Census



1.6. Expand access to water-based activities for all residents.

Water access continues to be a high priority for residents across the county. This feedback came up throughout the community engagement process, where residents both advocated for increased access to active water recreation such as swimming lessons, in addition to passive water recreation opportunities such as being able to walk along a trail nearby and access a small stream. In addition to prioritizing this access to water at CCPRC parks, CCPRC can also work to increase water access together with for-profit and nonprofit similar providers.

1.6.1. Partner with like-minded organizations that provide water access, programming, or provide outfitting for on water activities to share use of CCPRC launches and facilities when possible.

There are many organizations within Charleston County that CCPRC could partner with to provide water access to more residents. As an example, the Lowcountry Land Trust works to conserve and protect natural lands in the Lowcountry region, and offers several programs related to water access. There are also organizations that provide adaptive sports and outdoor recreation

programs for people of all ages and abilities, such as Adaptive Expeditions. This organization offers health and wellness programs to individuals with physical and sensory disabilities, including several water-based programs such as kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding, and sailing.

1.6.2. Continue to work with CCPF to ensure all youth have access to swim lessons.

CCPF has implemented several successful funds to support access to programs across the county. One program that has had great impact is the Genesis Swim Safety Fund which was established after the tragic drowning of 13-year-old Genesis Holmes in Hollywood, SC. This program has supported aquatic safety programs in the Johns Island, Awendaw/McClellanville, and Ravenel/Hollywood areas. Over the next ten years, CCPRC will continue to work with CCPF to expand on this program in order to ensure that all youth have access to swim lessons and high-quality aquatic safety programming.

1.6.3. Create additional water access opportunities within future parks (including marsh, wetlands, lake and ponds).

In planning for the development of future parks, CCPRC should prioritize implementing water access opportunities. CCPRC's waterparks



Figure 1.46 Kayak Launch at Palmetto Islands County Park

and beach parks are well-loved by community members. Throughout the community engagement process, many participants advocated for swimming programs available across the county, as well as a desire to be able to access more passive water recreation on a daily basis without needing to drive in order to access that experience. In the Statistically Valid Survey, the highest priorities to invest in for facilities included swimming pools, fishing/crabbing docks/piers, and paddlesports launches. As for public park items that were most important to households, views of rivers, creeks, and lakes were ranked in the top three most important items.



Figure 1.47 Portable Pool Angel Oak, 2022



Figure 1.48 West County Aquatic Center Swim Meet, 2023



**"I'd like to see more camping areas
across the County."
- Virtual Public Workshop #2**

**"Recreational activities are a much
needed community asset in rural areas
- we would like to see emphasis beyond
passive park facilities and programs."
- Wando Mount. Pleasant Library
Workshop**

2. Staying Relevant

OUR PARKS REFLECT OUR CHANGING & GROWING COMMUNITIES.

Charleston County is growing and diversifying at a pace that exceeds expectations of governments, developers, and residents. Retirees are flocking to Isle of Palms, Folly Beach, and Mount Pleasant for the warm weather and access to beaches. Working adults are moving to the City of Charleston and surrounding areas for jobs in growing sectors like aerospace, energy and life sciences. These demographic changes to the character of the county are also indicating evolving desires for different expectations of recreation and open space use.

National recreational trends and the community survey point to a desire for more variety in what CCPRC offers, including more interest in programs and activities that appeal to various age groups. Youths appreciate "risk" play, such as outdoor

adventures and fitness; young adults are drawn to concerts and festivals; adults make use of trails and natural spaces; and older adults report that they want a balance of age-specific and intergenerational activities and aquatics. At the same time, the mission of CCPRC requires that the Commission prioritize the needs of underrepresented residents, by connecting residents in parts of the county without local municipal park departments with recreation programming and park space, engaging residents with disabilities in therapeutic recreation offers, and growing the system to provide equitable access to open space.

The following strategies identify opportunities to keep pace with change, and ensure the system continues to exceed visitor expectations.



2.1. Provide unique and complementary programs and facilities countywide.

Charleston County households participate in a wide range of programs, yet there are still places where programming could expand to meet community needs. The programs that had the greatest unmet need were adult fitness programs (74,000 households), adult outdoor recreation programs (72,600 households), and outdoor concerts or festivals (71,000 households). While "social space for youth & teens" was ranked medium on the priority index, the need for teen programming consistently came up in community conversations and public workshops as an unmet need.

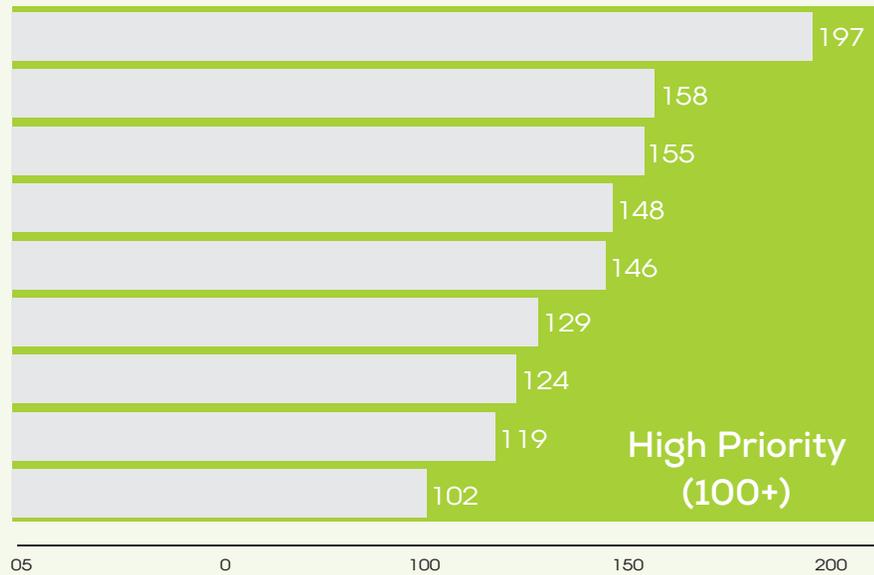
What we heard from you!

TOP PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT

Programs

1. Outdoor concerts, performing arts, & festivals
2. Cultural events
3. Adult outdoor recreation programs
4. Adult athletic/fitness programs
5. Adult nature & cultural history
6. Family-focused programs & events
7. Adult special interest programs
8. Community/family meetup events
9. Seniors athletic/fitness programs

Top priority!



PRIORITY INVESTMENT

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on each program and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the program.

Figure 1.50 Top Priorities for Investment. Statistically Valid Survey Summary

2.1.1. Source ideas for new types of events and programs from staff and the community.

When staff focus groups were asked to describe the most popular programs and services, several were mentioned throughout the groups. The Cajun Festival, summer camps, Wine Down Wednesday, custom school programs, youth sports, and the various runs/races were mentioned with the most frequency. Additional highlights included the Master Naturalist Program because it is offered two times per year and sells out in minutes, and the Wheel to Surf program that offers free, adaptive surfing events for individuals with different abilities.

2.1.2. Pilot new or expanded events and programs in less visited parks.

This could be especially relevant for inclusive and adaptive programming and expanded cultural history interpretation. There is also an opportunity to adapt community recreation facilities for neighborhood events, community-oriented festivals, senior programs, and summer camp growth, especially in support of the underrepresented populations mentioned previously. CCPRC could focus on hosting larger one-time or annually recurring events rather than small programs that are already provided by similar providers and municipalities.

2.1.3. Balance high demand programs and services with programs and services that are valuable to staff and community.

The Sports and Leisure Market Potential Report, created by Esri, measures the likelihood of the county's population to participate in recreational activities based on the national trends in recreation activities. A Market Potential Index (MPI), assigned to each activity, measures the likelihood of a person to participate in the activity compared to people elsewhere in the United States. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average. The top active recreational activities Charleston County residents will likely participate in (based on an MPI over 100) include: hiking, swimming, yoga, jogging/running, weight lifting, bicycling, camping, golf, bowling, and dancing. These 10 activities ranked highest in both percentage of expected adults and MPI top-20 individual rating analyses and are therefore the top potential active activities for growth. The figure on the following page depicts the activities with the highest combined rating of percentage of expected adults and MPI.

CCPRC also identified many groups of people they felt were not being fully served. Lower income households were the most frequently mentioned group, and staff felt there was not

enough awareness built around the scholarship program. Similarly, programming in rural areas was described as having lower service quality than the suburban areas. Adults and seniors—especially in the rural communities—were also frequently mentioned as being underserved. Additional audiences identified as being underrepresented in programming and events offered by CCPRC were the Hispanic/Latino community, LGBTQ+ community, and teenagers.

2.1.4. Provide more flexible and multi-use open space.

As Charleston County continues to grow and rural parts of the county become more dense, park use also increases and is used in a range of ways they haven't been used before. By designing parks to be more flexible, CCPRC parks can support increased and more diverse use, programs, and events. CCPRC should consider the expansion of multi-use spaces to support a range of activities, from family gatherings and CCPRC-sponsored events to places that support overflow parking or serve as staging for camps. Park amenities such as open-air pavilions with electrical and water access and multi-use open spaces will support new ways of park activation with a low impact on the natural park setting.



2.2. Offer and introduce programs and amenities aligned with community desires and population trends.

Charleston County’s median household income has increased by \$23,000 over the last ten years. The residential population is also increasing - the share of persons over 65 years old has increased by 5% while the share of youth under 18 years old has decreased by 2%. Community needs in each region of the county are changing alongside the demographic shifts happening county-wide. What the community requested ten years ago is different than what the community expects today.

2.2.1. Limit services where other entities (e.g., municipalities) are providing services and grow/strengthen services in underserved areas.

Most of the programming offered by other providers throughout the county are concentrated in the Charleston Center region. These providers have an emphasis on fitness and events. There are opportunities for CCPRC to continue investment in therapeutic recreation, which provides specialized and inclusive programs for individuals of all abilities, and outdoor recreation, which provides

nature-based programs and other non-traditional outdoor activities. The following map locates similar providers for therapeutic recreation, outdoor recreation, fitness and wellness, events, and aquatics in the county. Most of the programming offered by similar providers are concentrated in the Charleston Center, with a strong emphasis on the fitness and wellness offerings, and events.

Outdoor Recreation

Most of the outdoor recreation offerings in the county that are not provided by CCPRC, are related to water sports with the most popular being surfing, paddleboarding, and kayaking. There are very limited opportunities offered from similar providers for climbing, zip lining, or mountain biking.

Water sports appear to be well represented in the County. If CCPRC determined that providing new outdoor recreation opportunities were a priority, a bike park that includes mountain biking trails, a pump track, and jump lines should be considered. In some locations, bike parks are coupled with climbing attractions and zip lines to create a comprehensive outdoor recreation experience.



Figure 1.51 Top-Ranked Future Potential Activities (Active).

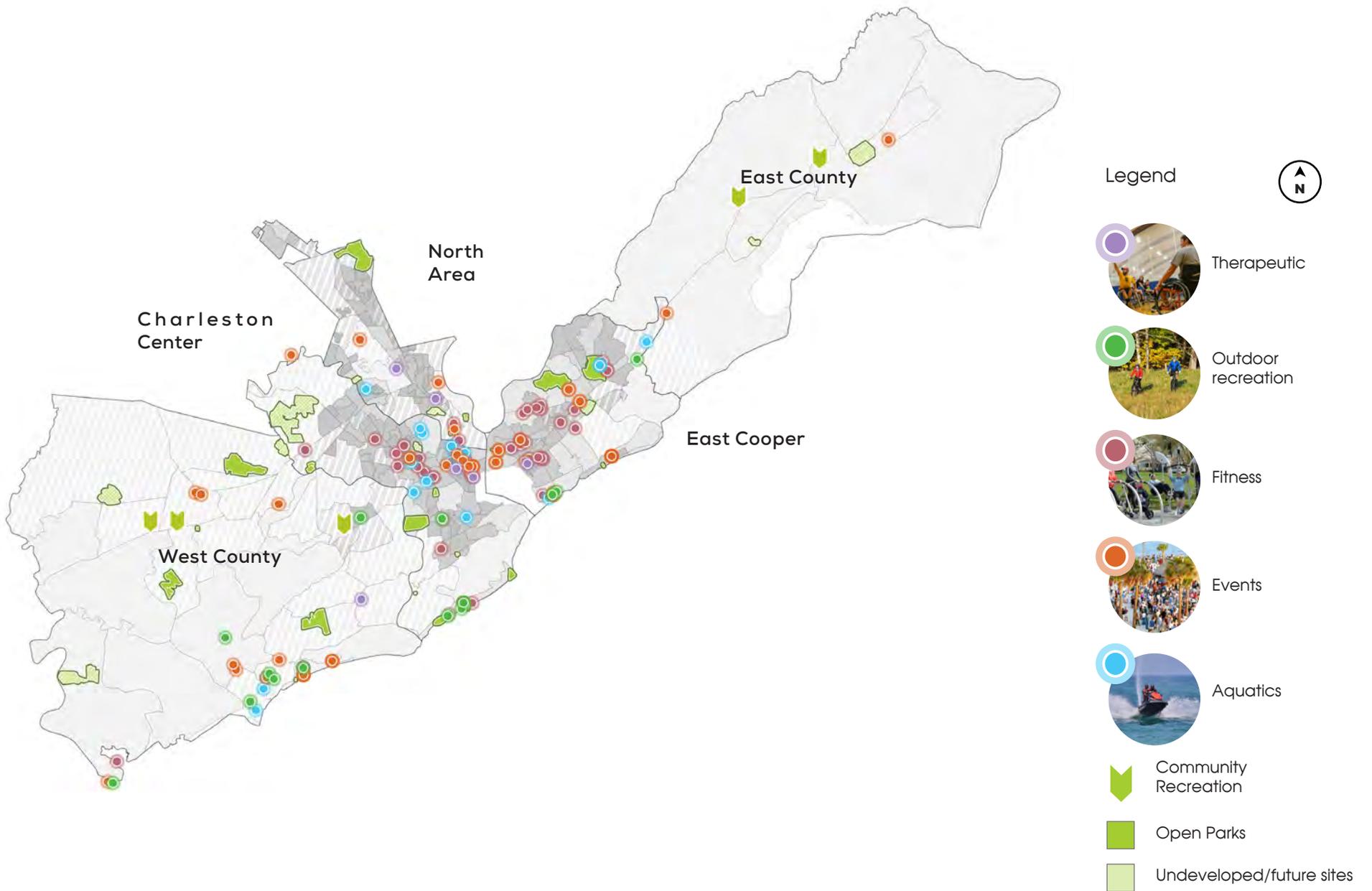


Figure 1.52 Similar recreation providers. Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission Recreation Assessment, Figure 15.

CASE STUDY: CHARLESTON COUNTY PARKS FOUNDATION

The Charleston County Parks Foundation is an important partner in expanding swimming programs to youth and adults who do not know how to swim. The Foundation finances the Genesis Swim Safety Fund, which was established after the tragic drowning of a 13 year-old child in Hollywood, SC named Genesis Holmes. It aims to raise funds and offer aquatic safety programs in the Johns Island, Awendaw/McClellanville, and Ravenel/Hollywood areas to reduce the number of drownings in Charleston County. CCPRC should continue to strive towards a goal for all children in the County to know how to swim.



Figure 1.53 Swim lessons through the Genesis Swim Safety Fund

Events

There are many events provided throughout the county by a variety of organizations. Most are offered by a municipality, a few by non-profits, and a handful of events are private and only available to members or residents of a particular community. Events include traditional holiday events, music festivals, concerts, art exhibits and sales, with only a few cultural events. Of the 19 communities within Charleston County, the communities of Charleston, Isle of the Palms, Kiawah Island, Mount Pleasant, and North Charleston have the most event offerings within the county.

Events hosted by CCPRC are very popular, and are planned as large regional draws, which sets CCPRC events apart from city-led or private events, which typically draw smaller community scaled engagement, or larger scale national events. CCPRC should continue to prioritize events that are regionally attractive, and events that reflect the cultural diversity of the community.

Fitness and Wellness

The private sector has filled in most fitness and wellness gaps throughout the county. Fitness offerings are readily available in Charleston, Mount Pleasant, and North Charleston, however there are limited options in the smaller communities.

Therapeutic Recreation

Programs in the county for children and adults with disabilities are limited to those provided by the City of Charleston and Mount Pleasant and private providers in Johns Island and North Charleston.

CCPRC should consider expanding therapeutic/inclusive recreation to areas of East and West County where there are higher levels of residents with disabilities and limited programs to support resident needs. According to the American Community Survey, between 2017-2021, the communities with over 20% of residents with disabilities were McClellanville (27%) in East County, and Hollywood (23%) and Ravenel (20%) in West County.

Aquatics

Swimming opportunities in the county are limited as well. Charleston, Mount Pleasant, and North Charleston have the most options for swim lessons.

When CCPRC has resources to add new facilities or expanded programming, outdoor recreation, therapeutic recreation, and aquatics would be areas in which to focus. The priority should be adding therapeutic/inclusive recreation opportunities throughout the county by creating partnerships with other organizations.

Outdoor recreation can be another area of focus, and it is recommended that CCPRC add amenities that have been identified as a need. As seen in the statistically valid survey and gaps analysis, an option could include an outdoor bike park with mountain bike paths, a pump track, and dirt jump lines. Additional pools could be added in the county in municipalities that do not already provide this type of facility. Since many of the existing pools are seasonal, CCPRC might consider indoor options in areas where swimming opportunities are minimal or non-existent.

2.2.2. Allocate funding for programming based on existing park and facility capacity (operating hours and square footage) and identified community needs from statistically valid surveys and community conversations.

Enrollment-based programming accounts for approximately half of the Commission’s participant base; therefore, the following data only represents half of total Commission participation.

Total participation in enrollment-based programs was 65,978 in FY2019-2020. Festivals & events had the highest enrollment with 20,766 participants, followed by history, culture & arts with 19,105, and nature with 9,652. To strengthen participation reporting and to equitably distribute program funds to various facilities, CCPRC should consider the following:

- Develop standardized methodology for reporting attendance/participation across time, clearly articulating which types of data points are reported where. For example, codes used for sponsorship and vendor registration should be tracked separately from recreation program code enrollment.



Figure 1.54 Teen Venture Camp, Wannamaker North Trail, 2022



Figure 1.55 Adventure Camp, James Island County Park, 2023

- Consider establishing Key Performance Indicators beyond attendance. For example, grow the number of programs provided per 1,000 residents.
- Monitor the average attendance per custom program, and seek opportunities for replication, where appropriate, to leverage efficiencies.
- Collect demographic data (race/ethnicity) from participants as an optional question during registration

2.2.3. Align resources, planning efforts, and service menu in a way that keeps the current participation base front of mind (approximately 80% resident, 20% tourist). Balance future funding, capital improvement, service development, and human resource growth to align with the 80/20 ratio.

For those activities that track participant’s demographic data, 81.8% of participant households were from Charleston County zip codes in FY2019-2020. Most of those participants (93.5%) were from South Carolina. These figures demonstrate that there is a substantial participation draw from the region—and in some cases—the nation. For example, while North Carolina residents had a strong presence in the

Commission’s programs, registrants also came from Maine, Oklahoma, Texas, and as far as Alaska.

The following map tracks FY2019-2020 participant households’ locations. The heat map format demonstrates higher concentration of participant households using more intense color. In this case, a higher number of participants is reflected as the red tone shifts from pink to burgundy.

2.2.4. Develop procedures to track additional participant demographics, such as age and address, including drop-in activities, custom programs, and events. Monitor which participant groups are, and are not, being reached.

Many of CCPRC’s services do not collect the participants’ demographic data; therefore, the age-based participant reach for the entire service menu is not available. That said, participant reach can be reviewed for enrollment-based programs, as age is captured during the registration process.

Of the enrollment-based programs that CCPRC gathered age as a component within the registration process, most (1,915) of the participants were adults, followed closely by youth (1,806). The adult attendance figures were largely a result of attendance at Wine Down Wednesday

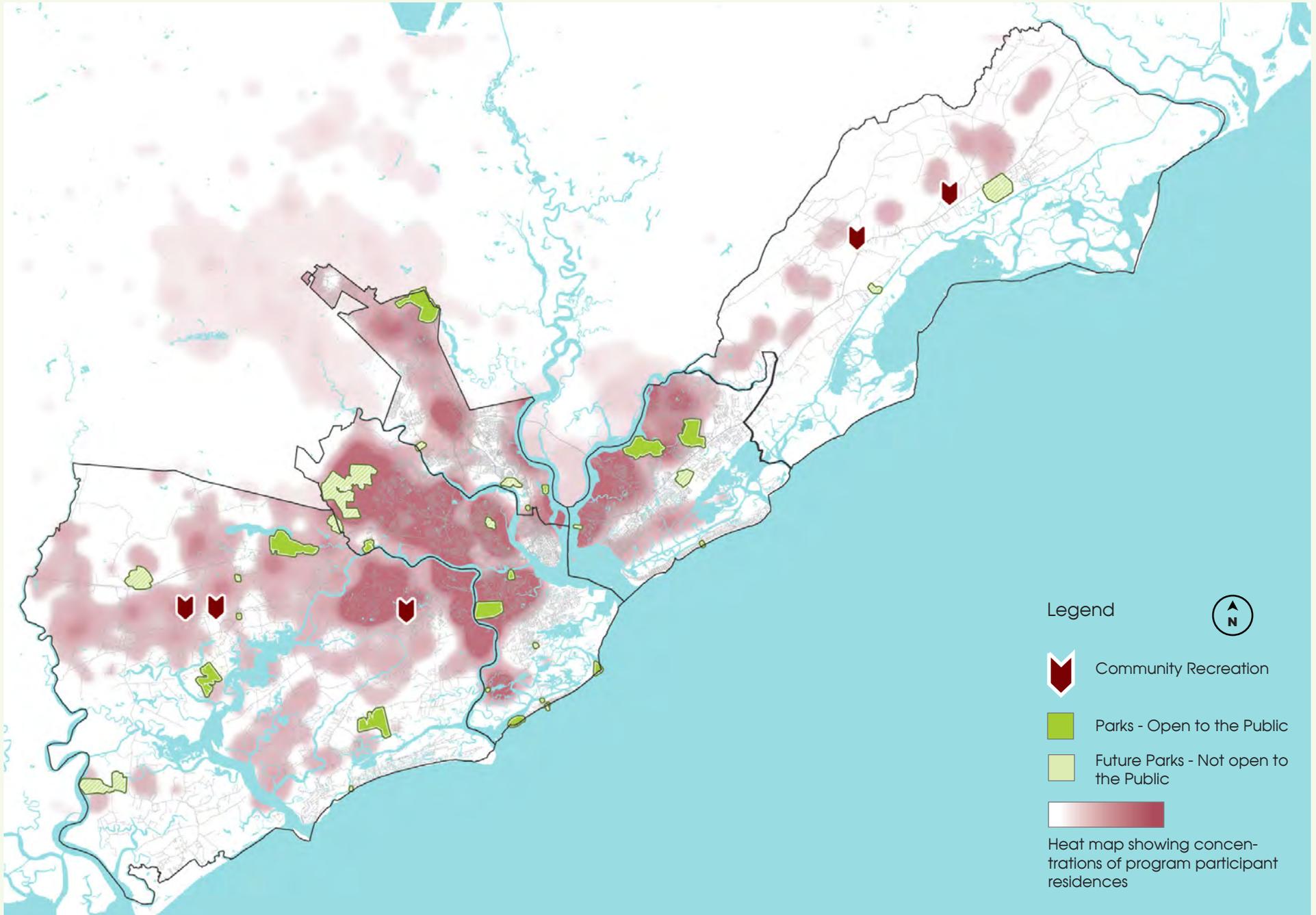


Figure 1.56 Participant Heat Map.

and Hops and Vines (festivals & events). Youth participation was much more spread out across camps (1,283), nature (203), youth sports (174), and other program areas. On a much smaller scale, 147 early childhood participants joined swim lessons and nature programs and 83 teen participants joined camps.

2.2.5. Align website communication of programs and events with program categories to ensure the public understands and has access to the full range of program options.

The Commission offered 1,121 enrollment-based programs in FY2019-2020. Climbing scheduled the largest quantity of programs (179). Camps offered the second-largest quantity of programs (134), and nature was the third-largest (103). Conversely, the areas with the lowest quantity of programming were sailing (2) and pet events (9).

A consolidation of internal program categories from 22 to nine can strengthen staff workflow and help staff and the Commission effectively communicate program offerings publicly. This chart shows one of many ways that programs could be recalibrated. As an example, today,

the fitness and wellness program area includes swim lessons and runs/races. Across the country, these types of programs are split between an aquatics program area and a fitness and wellness program area. Additionally, fitness and wellness typically include additional program types, such as group exercise classes, meditation, and wellness education classes. CCPRC has started to move in that direction with the inclusion of yoga. Additionally, unless a program area is so robust that it warrants its own tracking category, it should encompass a combination of program types. For example, fishing and birding could be included within the nature category.

When categories are consolidated according to website category, it offers the opportunity to digest the distribution in an easier manner. Nature and outdoor adventure courses (26%), climbing (19%), and camps (17%) account for more than half of all enrollment-based courses offered. Conversely, inclusive recreation accounts for less than 2% of the program menu.

2.2.6. Align and consistently communicate program categories between program users and internally for staff.

On the CCPRC website, there are four different program categories for residents to navigate to find a course, camp, or event. Behind the scenes, there are over 22 program categories. The simplified approach to communicating program categories at times makes it difficult for people to understand the range of activities available to them and their households.

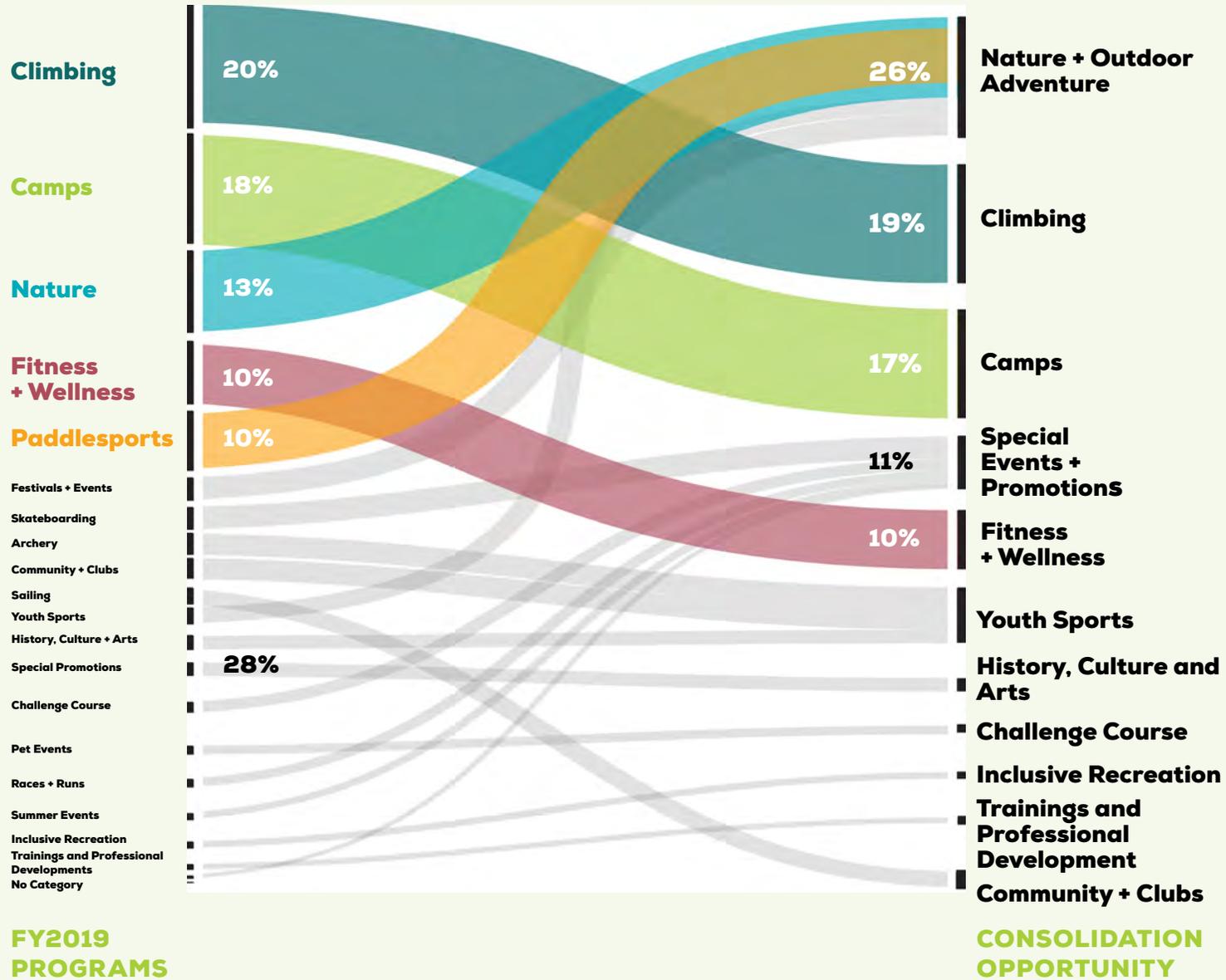


Figure 1.57 Program Consolidation Opportunities.

CASE STUDY: WESTMINSTER, COLORADO

By calibrating the demographic targets of audiences they were reaching through more visual mailers and pithy social media messaging, Westminster, Colorado marketing staff increased awareness and participation in an annual fitness drive. In prior years, the initiative brought in \$13,000 to \$16,000 in membership revenue during the first week of January. With the new approach, the program brought in \$185,898 in one week and continued to bring in over \$100,000 in new memberships in subsequent years.

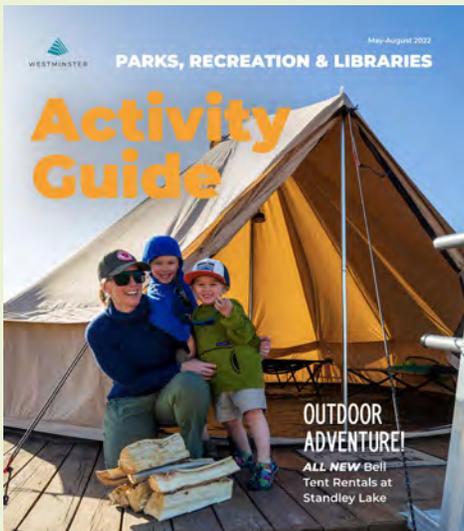


Figure 1.58 Westminster, Colorado Activity Guide May-Aug 2022



2.3. Reach all communities through broad, creative, and inclusive communication methods.

CCPRC as an organization is well-known for its parks and facilities. The Commission could expand awareness of its programs and events and increase participation. Eighty-five percent of the county residents know who CCPRC is and understand that their parks are different from other public open space owners/operators in the county, but 43% of residents do not know what programs and events CCPRC offers. This is higher than the national average of 22% of residents unaware of program offerings.

2.3.1. Distribute information about camps and youth programs through flyers in Charleston County and neighboring county schools.

The participant heat map reinforces that communications between CCPRC and residents who live closest to Charleston Center are strongest - participation among communities like Mount Pleasant, the City of Charleston and West Ashley are highest within the County. To expand awareness to residents who do not visit parks or engage

in programs, CCRPC could engage directly with residents in West and East County, where participation rates are lowest, by changing the way the Commission advertises programs to youth in those areas, whether in partnership with schools, religious institutions, or through existing participants in community recreation programs.

2.3.2. Continue to incorporate the Commission meeting calendar into the programs and events calendar to connect residents to their commissioners and CCPRC decision making.

The Commission represents the needs of residents in policy making and capital expenditures. Meetings occur monthly and are open to the public. Currently, the Commission has its own calendar and communicates meeting advertisements and updates separately from the rest of CCPRC communications, however these meetings are incorporated into the program and events calendar that is visible to residents. In order for the Commission to continue to stay connected to residents, it will be important to keep up this form of communication.

2.3.3. Expand CCPRC Marketing via mailers, and other non-internet-based forms of communication.

Integrating offline marketing tactics into the overall marketing strategy can yield excellent results by reaching audiences that remain untapped through digital channels alone. Expanding marketing via traditional direct mail can be a valuable strategy to reach those who may not be active online or who prefer offline channels. Exploring print advertising opportunities in relevant local publications that are popular among our target audience and strategically placing signage or banners in high-traffic areas can raise awareness of event and program offerings.

2.3.4. Continue communicating CCPRC investments and community impacts in the annual report.

As a CAPRA-accredited organization, CCPRC has developed a healthy system of performance measures and metrics. They are able to track progress against the annual report in concrete and measurable ways. The stories of these successes and challenges are vital to communicate to the public. It is recommended that CCPRC include more information about recent investments, not just

in facilities and parks, but in programs and services across the county, so that residents, community leaders, and park advocates can enable more active participation by those audiences in CCPRC milestones.

While it is important to measure CCPRC against its own goals, it is also helpful to ground these metrics in a larger context. CCPRC should continue to review peer organizations to better contextualize their funding and resource allocation (in addition to staffing needs) compared to others. The following list includes the peer cities analyzed and reviewed for this effort. While this list is not exhaustive, it is recommended that CCPRC continue to review against these same special districts for consistency:

- Cleveland Metroparks
- Johnson County Park and Recreation District (JCPRD)
- M-NCPPC Parks & Recreation/ Prince George's County (M-NCPPC)
- Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District (RivCo Parks)
- Three Rivers Park District (TRPD)



2.4. Develop a consistent feedback loop to reinforce relationships and trust with county residents.

It is important that CCPRC continue to develop best communication practices so that all county residents can stay informed about new programs and events. The CCPRC call center is a successful example of a communication tool that functions as a one-stop-shop for many residents seeking information about CCPRC places and programs. In the future, it will also be important for CCPRC to understand what communication methods are working or could be improved, and then adjust practices as needed.

2.4.1. Continue to engage Bandit the mascot in marketing materials and in in-park communications, and track frequently asked questions to evolve CCPRC's response to community needs.

The more that website users engage with “Bandit”, an AI driven chatbot and the organization’s mascot, the more information Bandit can collect for CCPRC to adapt their approach to website design and navigation, programming, and information sharing. CCPRC already tracks what questions are asked of Bandit, including what questions are able to be answered and

which questions necessitate engagement by the call center. By increasing Bandit’s repertoire in response to the questions typically asked, CCPRC can streamline call center operations and better support call center staff.

2.4.2. Consider a regular/annual/bi-annual mailed survey or short website survey to get input and track best communication methods over time.

A statistically-valid survey issued on a recurring/regular basis and having consistent questions and themes would help CCPRC to identify patterns/trends in responses. Additionally, a short, one question survey that pops up on the CCPRC website would be an easy method for visitors to provide feedback. The survey responses would help CCPRC to understand public sentiment about facilities and programs, and identify opportunities for improvement, expansion, diversification, etc.;



including building awareness and participation in programs and park attendance.

2.5. Adapt CCPRC’s park/facility planning and development process to capture broad stakeholder input, maintain project awareness, and reinforce CCPRC’s identity.

CCPRC Planning and Development staff follow a traditional land planning/design process when planning for development of CCPRC facilities. This process revolves around first understanding the landscape – and the variables (i.e. “Site Inventory”) which influence the potential development of a site (e.g., soils, wetlands/hydrology, topography, vegetation, access, flood zones, cultural resources, utility availability, conservation easements, deed restrictions, etc.). Then, a “Site Analysis” is developed to identify specific opportunities and constraints to guide decisions about what facilities, amenities, and programs can (or cannot) potentially be accommodated at a given CCPRC property. Finally, before design work can commence, CCPRC develops a Land Use Plan for the property, as a high-level reference for prioritizing developable and non-developable “stewardship zones”, as defined in CCPRC’s 2014

agency-wide Natural Resource Management Plan (see Action 3.5.5).

Later stages in the planning process include internal and external stakeholder engagement via steering committee workshops, public meetings, surveys, and other methods. CCPRC or its consultants prepare facility/park design concepts, to be reviewed internally and by external stakeholders (including the public). Once a final design is agreed-upon (often after multiple iterations), CCPRC may proceed with additional steps to carry the project through to construction.

Throughout the planning process, CCPRC staff from all divisions coordinate to ensure that Charleston County residents are delivered the best park/facility possible within given site, budget, and operational constraints. Thorough and detailed planning processes result in new (or renovated) parks and facilities which meet the needs and desires of residents, the resource demand of staff and equipment, and reinforce CCPRC’s excellent reputation.

2.5.1. New facility designs should provide for flexible-use spaces in structures and park spaces.

The greatest facility need identified by CCPRC staff in conversations throughout the process is

for large, flexible, adaptable spaces. This flexibility would allow the use of the same space for a variety of programs, including summer camps, which is a very popular program limited only by the capacity of indoor conditioned spaces managed or owned by the Commission. When designed and equipped appropriately, a single space can provide programs for user groups multiple times a day, with little down time between different uses.

The inclusion of larger, flexible and adaptable spaces will also allow the facility to meet future community needs. By including many smaller, program specific rooms and specialty finishes, or by excluding appropriate infrastructure, spaces are more likely to become less relevant, less efficient, and obsolete over time.

2.5.2. Scale master planning and design efforts to site conditions, site development potential, programming requirements, operability, and the established project budget.

As CCPRC develops Requests for Qualifications (RFQs) for design and planning projects, scopes of work and potential site programs should be scaled appropriately to the respective property’s known development potential, and its associated project budget. Planning efforts which are prioritized and



Figure 1.59 Yoga, Mount Pleasant Pier, 2021

funded by a capital funding source typically lead to development proceeding the master planning process; such projects should include detailed scopes of work, including extensive site surveys to fully understand existing conditions. RFQs for fully funded capital projects should anticipate future tasks for design development, construction documentation, permitting, bidding support, and construction administration. Alternatively, planning efforts which are more temporal in nature may be funded by an alternative, non-capital funding source, and have reduced scopes by comparison.

2.5.3. Engage internal stakeholders throughout the planning process to ensure project buy-in.

Early on in the RFQ development process, CCPRC Planning and Development staff should continue to facilitate internal project meetings among CCPRC staff stakeholders. These preliminary scoping meetings help to lay the groundwork for consistent expectations in the forthcoming planning process; informing staff of the site’s development potential, the associated project budget, a preliminary project schedule, and the intended deliverables for the project. A preliminary scoping meeting is especially beneficial to the Planning and Development staff preparing the

RFQ and managing the project, as the discussion at these meetings helps to identify a preliminary site (or building) program, and provides an understanding of anticipated operational and/or programming challenges. Internal project stakeholders on Planning and Development projects typically include representatives of the following divisions: Parks, Recreation, Executive (including Information Technology), and potentially Marketing and/or Finance.

2.5.4. Engage external stakeholders throughout the planning process, adapting engagement methods and scope as appropriate to the site and project circumstances.

Depending on the complexity and objectives of the planning project, in addition to including a public engagement process, a project may include an external steering committee with local community or municipal leaders, partnering agency representatives, resource subject matter experts, familial descendants of the property, or others. Project scoping and coordination should also consider the potential for political factors, such as relationships between external

stakeholders, nuances/requirements of potential funding sources, and level of involvement by community leaders and advocacy groups.

2.5.5. Provide updates to communities throughout site planning and development.

Master planning efforts should have robust public and internal engagement processes, and – depending on the visibility and development timeline of the project – may include recurring updates online (e.g., social media, CCPRC/project website), and/or via digital and print media (e.g. television coverage, kiosks or flyers at local libraries and town halls, etc.). Additionally, in specific areas of Charleston County, word of mouth is still a primary form of communication about local current events; thus, CCPRC should work through



its staff and Access Ambassadors (see Action 1.4.3) in these areas to help keep the community updated on the respective project.

2.6. Continue to communicate with municipalities as needed about national and local trends in programming, events, and facility development.

CCPRC has specific areas of responsibility that are defined through our legislative act. The Commission is responsible for providing park and recreation services, but not to duplicate services provided by the other municipalities and special recreation districts existing in the area. CCPRC should support community needs by providing programs that complement rather than duplicate amenities or programs that municipalities already provide. Where needed, CCPRC may consider supporting municipality investments in programs and amenities identified by residents as a priority.

2.6.1. Share statistically valid survey findings with municipalities and community organizations as guidance for their respective park and recreation planning efforts.

The results from the statistically valid survey should be shared with municipalities and park

organizations so that they can be aware of the top priorities and needs of county residents so that they can strategically invest where needed. From the survey, the top five priorities for investment for facilities/amenities were nature/natural areas open to public access, swimming pools, unpaved trails (hiking, passive use), paved trails, and community gardens. The top five priorities for investment for programs were outdoor concerts, performing arts, & festivals, cultural events, adult outdoor recreation programs, adult athletic/fitness programs, and family-focused programs & events. The top five most important public park items for households were active play areas, shade trees, views of rivers, creeks, or lakes, public restrooms, and quiet spaces away from the action.

There were also specific findings from the statistically valid survey that could be valuable for municipalities planning for greater access to public transportation to parks. From the survey results, while over 30% of respondents indicated that they would travel 30+ minutes for activities such as visiting a nature center, a historic site, a special event, or a large park that offers diverse recreation amenities, 30% or more of respondents indicated that they were very dissatisfied with public transit connections to their favorite county park, or very dissatisfied with the travel time between their residence and their favorite county park. These results provide valuable information

for municipalities and can be especially helpful for initiatives that are working to increase access to public transportation throughout the county.

2.6.2. Coordinate with municipal park and recreation providers to align investments toward serving Charleston County residents.

Strategy 2.2 identifies current gaps in recreation programming based on what municipalities and private recreation providers offer today, but CCPRC should look to recently completed master plans, municipal budgets and capital improvement plans to understand where municipalities plan to meet the needs of residents and where CCPRC can lead. Several current plans and budgets published by municipalities across the county are already working to respond to community desires through new programs, facilities and open space improvements:

- **One Charleston:** Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2021): This plan identified a deficit of multi-use fields to support team recreation and events and prioritizes investments in new fields wherever possible. The plan also recommends investments in splash pads, pools and



Figure 1.61 Fairy House Festival, Palmetto Islands County Park, 2021

- other aquatic facilities, as well as disc golf and amphitheaters to support local events and programming. The plan also recommends that the City should partner with CCPRC to develop Morris Island.
- Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Initiative:** The Town of Mount Pleasant is working on several renovation and new development projects. A few highlights from the initiative include:
- Mount Pleasant Way Project:** a proposed linear park and shared use path that will serve as a cultural trail and recreation corridor for the community. The park will run adjacent to Palmetto Islands County Park and Mount Pleasant Pier.
- Rifle Range Road Park Complex:** a new park development that was recently funded by a \$50 million referendum, and will include a 2-court gymnasium, program rooms for music, art, dance and camp activities, 4 lighted rectangular fields, performance stage, tennis courts, pickleball courts, beach volleyball courts, outdoor basketball courts, picnic pavilions, playground, disc golf, maintenance facilities, trails and a boardwalk along existing wetlands.
- Six Mile County Park:** The jointly owned park site was recently master planned and includes a range of recreational amenities to support Mount Pleasant residents and visitors, and preserve land for habitat and nature conservation.
- North Charleston Capital Improvement Plan:** Investments to parks throughout the city include inclusive park amenity investments like an inclusive playground in Park Circle Park.
- Plan West Ashley (2017):** West Ashley's recent comprehensive plan focuses on stormwater and green infrastructure projects to reduce the impacts of climate change and enhance the role of parks as places to go on hot days.

Of the sixteen municipalities in Charleston County - Awendaw, Charleston, Folly Beach, Hollywood, Isle of Palms, James Island, Mount Pleasant, and North Charleston all host events of varying sizes. Of these municipalities, Charleston, Folly Beach, Isle of Palms, James Island, Mount Pleasant, North Charleston, and Summerville already provide regular recreational programming and plan to expand or evolve programming to meet the changing needs of residents. CCPRC should



meet with these communities to confirm the program priorities of these communities and inform CCPRC’s own program menu.

2.6.3. Play to CCPRC’s and respective municipalities’ strengths in potential partnerships.

Consider MOAs/MOUs that enable municipalities to build facilities that CCPRC manages. Examples of this include the Mount Pleasant Pier, which was originally constructed by the Town of Mount Pleasant, but is managed by CCPRC. In a parallel relationship, CCPRC’s purchase of the SK8 Charleston property was supported by a combination of funding, including CCPRC’s own funding, as well as substantial financial contributions by the City of Charleston and local philanthropists.

Twelve of the county’s municipalities do not have a formal recreation department, and many of municipalities that do have a recreation department have limited staff capacity or experience to manage/operate a large-scale park investment. CCPRC could explore opportunities to expand its role as operator, if capital funding and project management oversight were provided by the requesting municipality.

Figure 1.62 Cheers on the Pier program, Mount Pleasant Pier, 2022

3. Staying Resilient

OUR PARKS THRIVE & ADAPT TO OUR DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT

Resiliency operates on a longer time scale in the context of climate change. While this plan looks to the next ten years, it is important for CCPRC to be thinking about and planning for the next fifty to one hundred years in order for certain parks to be able to adapt, change, celebrate, and respond to our dynamic environment. CCPRC is committed to protecting their natural and cultural resources found throughout its parkland properties that represent some of the highest quality publicly-owned natural landscapes and cultural heritage sites in Charleston County. As the county becomes even more vulnerable to flooding and storm events, increasingly hot days, as well as an expanding population coupled with increasing development, it will become even more important for CCPRC to continue to properly manage land for the preservation and protection of resources. Additionally, it is important that CCPRC continue to strengthen its interpretive programming to ensure that the vast history of Charleston County lives on for present and future generations.



“Our environment protects us and our communities and we need to protect it.”
- *Community-led Conversation*

“The County should prioritize acquiring new park lands to preserve trees and wildlife habitats.”
- *Bees Ferry Public Workshop*



3.1. Use the park/facility planning/design process to identify opportunities to strengthen CCPRC's resiliency.

As resiliency is a broad topic covering everything from park design to vegetation management and material selection, CCPRC will need to identify where and how resiliency-oriented solutions can be applied within the park system. One of the best opportunities for incorporating resiliency considerations in the park system is during new planning and park development efforts.

3.1.1. Consider opportunities to establish resiliency goals and incorporate resiliency trends into facility repair, replacement, and new construction projects.

Repair/Replacement and new construction projects are an opportunity to incorporate more resilient materials and products at CCPRC facilities (see Strategy 3.2). CCPRC staff have been working for years to capitalize on improvements in technology to achieve more durable, lower-maintenance, and more environmentally-friendly parks. Standardizing specifications for fixtures, finishes, and other materials and products; and even broader considerations like solar energy, "LEED" or green building certifications, and

stormwater management solutions, can be incorporated into the design program for new parks/facilities (see Action 3.2.6).

3.1.2. Challenge design consultants to research, communicate, and integrate resilient design and/or material options.

Although the concept of resiliency is front and center with many design consultants, more can be done to encourage integration into new park projects. CCPRC should expect that its hired design consultants are in-tune with emerging trends in resiliency-oriented design, and are able to articulate why landscape and/or building design details are advantageous for long-term resiliency. Examples include properly locating and orienting a building, creative trail or road paving materials and application, alternatives to conventional silt fencing, etc. Specific language should be included in RFQs to set expectations for resilient design solutions.

3.1.3. Educate and inform the public and staff about the importance of resilience-focused design during facility master planning workshops, internal project scoping meetings, and during the internal project Design Review Committee process.

During planning and design projects, CCPRC may consider the public and staff engagement process to be an ideal time to educate stakeholders about its desire to achieve high quality, highly durable, but low environmental-impact parks and facilities. CCPRC should work to increase public awareness of current and anticipated resiliency issues and challenges facing Charleston County, and highlight the critical role that parks play in addressing issues such as flooding, sea level rise, storms, and extreme heat. While CCPRC has an agency-wide NRMP, the Commission should consider a supplement/appendix to the NRMP to inventory and analyze resiliency assets and potential risks to those assets – including consideration for CCPRC's diverse natural and built landscapes. Similar types of plans in the region include the South Carolina Forestry Commission's green infrastructure guide (case study of Berkeley County), and the Awendaw Fire District Community Wildfire Protection Plan .

- Apply for resilience-related grant funding with the support of interpretive master plans, ideally in coordination with other local, state, and federal entities.
- Create visually rich resilience master plans and interactive resources for a user-friendly experience.
- Incorporate interpretive signage and wayfinding in parks that highlight resilience adaptation and mitigation opportunities.

CASE STUDY: MIAMI COMMUNITY RESILIENCE POD

The Miami Community Resilience Pod is a highly versatile, interactive, and mobile space that meets residents in Miami-Dade County parks and facilities - and allows them to explore resilience solutions to local threats like extreme heat, flooding, and sea-level rise. The Community Resilience Pod aims to build awareness of individual and community risks and help residents with emergency and disaster preparedness.¹

¹ Atlantic Council. n.d. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/news/press-releases/south-florida-officials-resilience-experts-deploy-first-ever-mobile-resilience-pod-for-rising-seas-increased-temperatures-and-pandemic-relief-efforts/>



3.1.4 Identify opportunities to leverage the diversity of CCPRC’s landholdings within the context of resiliency.

In order to calculate the carbon footprint of CCPRC, three main categories must be considered: energy, transportation and waste. Energy encompasses all sources of energy used to operate park facilities and what percentage of that is renewable versus non-renewable. Transportation means looking at all on-road vehicles as well as off-road maintenance equipment to determine their impact on carbon emissions. Waste is the contribution of both solid waste and wastewater being created throughout the parks system.

Carbon sequestration is the amount of carbon being taken up by natural features and stored within them. Carbon can be sequestered in soils, forests, grasslands and even the ocean. Each of these ecosystems have a different formula for their sequestration potential which can be practically applied throughout the CCPRC system. There are also existing tools like iTree Eco, which can aid in the development of carbon sequestration calculations by providing functional analyses of specific sites.

3.1.5 When input is requested by partnering agencies/organizations, provide resiliency-sensitive design suggestions where applicable.

CCPRC is often approached to provide input on project initiatives that involve natural resource and resiliency-based design. Recent examples include proposing solutions to minimize roadkill by providing drift fencing and under-road animal crossing infrastructure (e.g., pipes at varying elevations). Another example includes avoiding or minimizing impacts to the critical root zone of historic trees during a recent sidewalk design effort. Design recommendations like these typically come from CCPRC’s various resiliency-oriented staff (e.g., resource managers), who are engaged as stakeholders on behalf of CCPRC in local design and planning efforts.

Examples for resiliency-based design recommendations can include:

- Planting a wide variety of drought resistant native trees.
- Designing bioswales, rain gardens, and other best management practices (BMPs) to effectively divert, absorb and capture stormwater runoff.

- Link open spaces to provide wildlife corridors on a local and regional level.
- Coordinate prescribed burning and forest thinning projects to reduce threats from wildfires and enhance biodiversity.

3.1.6. Study implications for development on land with critical and rare species.

There are over 130 rare, threatened and endangered species and communities known to occur in Charleston County. It is vital that these species and communities be recognized and protected in order to preserve their populations from becoming extinct due to human activity. Development pressure, which brings with it flooding, soil erosion, reduced wildlife habitat, impacts to water and air quality, and increased artificial lighting, is a threat to the most critical ecologies in the Lowcountry.

Most important habitats to be protected from development:

- Dry, sandy beaches, which are crucial to imperiled turtle populations.
- Vegetated freshwater marshlands for several threatened bird species to catch their meals and nest.

- Wetlands, coastal mudflats and tidal flats for several threatened bird species as well as Red Knot, Pondberry and Seabeach Amaranth.
- Large, forested areas with frequent burn cycles, especially of Longleaf Pine for Frosted Flatwoods Salamanders, Northern Long-Eared Bats, Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and American Chaffseed.

3.1.7. Define resilient management practices for hard and soft infrastructure.

Hard infrastructure is the physical objects and networks that keep a system functioning. An example of a resilient hard infrastructure management practice might be the restoration of a wetland in order to protect homes inland from storm surges and flooding.

Soft infrastructure, on the other hand, is the less tangible systems that manifest as institutions, organizations and policies and have the ability to shape outcomes in the physical landscape. An example of resilient soft infrastructure management practice might be a policy put in place by CCPRC to prohibit development in wetland areas in order to reduce impacts on critical habitat as well as protect investments from future flooding.

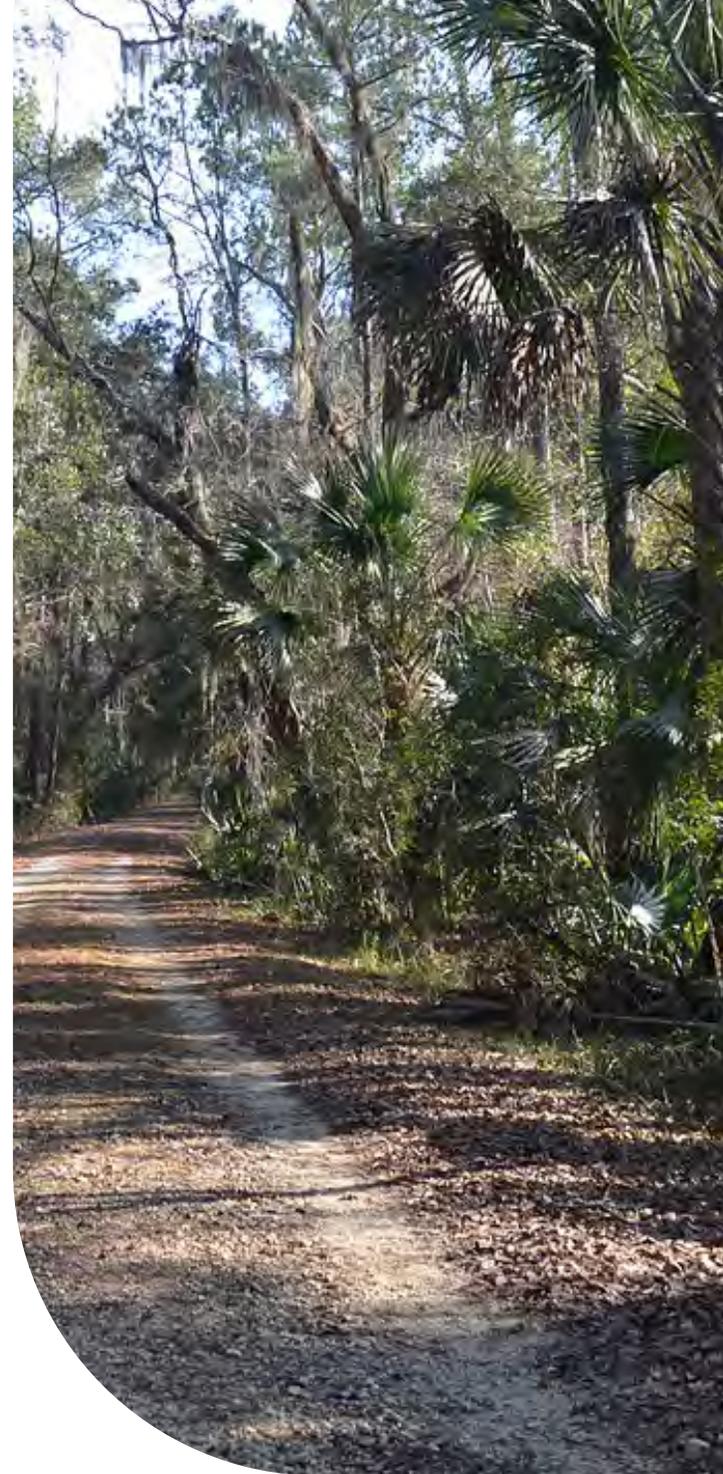


Figure 1.63 Laurel Hill County Park



Figure 1.64 James Island County Park, 2019

3.1.8. Explore “strategic retreat” by avoiding development in critical hazard or flood-prone areas.

According to the City of Charleston’s Flooding and Sea Level Rise Strategy, it is recommended to plan for two to three feet of sea level rise over the next fifty years. Strategic retreat is a proactive approach that CCPRC can take to address future damages caused by changes in climate and extreme weather events such as sea level rise by moving buildings away from known hazard areas and preventing future development in those areas. CCPRC should re-examine the land use of parks that lie within flood-prone and heat island areas, and consider if the implementation or enhancement of green infrastructure is needed to address future climate and weather events. The NRMP Open Space Planning and Managing Environmental Impacts sections should be updated or amended to address strategic retreat.

3.1.9. Consider known development constraints into long range planning efforts.

In many cases, CCPRC has a solid understanding of known development constraints when considering acquisition of new properties. Constraints may include conservation easements, deed restrictions, existing wetlands, cultural

resources sites and other factors which may limit future development, access and recreational opportunities. All constraints should be considered in long-range planning efforts to better inform CCPRC’s future ability to meet the level of service needs/expectations in a given area. Understanding constraints during long-range planning, will help CCPRC to understand where land acquisition and/or land use partnerships are needed.

3.1.10. Identify ways to strategize, implement, and manage CCPRC’s sustainability and resilience efforts.

CCPRC can look to the Charleston Climate Action Plan for some concrete goals for sustainability and resilience locally. The City of Charleston has utilized the FloodStat program to track its progress towards goals laid out in the Climate Action Plan. CCPRC should develop its own concrete goals in this area and determine a method for tracking progress. To help with these efforts, considerations should be made to create a “Sustainability and Resiliency Committee” and/or integrate this topic into relevant existing committees (e.g., Stewardship Core Value Committee). CCPRC may also serve an important role in project fundraising with resiliency-minded philanthropists and/or corporations.

CCPRC has made some progress in tapping into resiliency trends by installing a first of its kind, vehicle electric recharging station at Caw Caw Interpretive Center. To continue on this path, considerations should be made on the following:

- Assessing opportunities to install solar panels units/ arrays in open spaces or rooftops.
- Developing an internal goal for transitioning to hybrid or all-electric fleet (ex. 25% of all agency vehicles by 2030).
- Utilizing more battery powered small-equipment (leaf blowers, chainsaws, etc.) and all-electric small utility vehicles.
- Provide incentives for park visitors who utilize energy efficiency (ex. preferred parking for hybrid or all electric vehicles).



Figure 1.65 Caw Caw Interpretive Center, 2023



3.2. Expand maintenance and building standards to factor in all aspects of long-term sustainability and resilience.

CCPRC has already made significant progress in this area, investing \$22 million in projects that will bolster the resilience of both its natural resources and man-made facilities. Recently, energy efficiency measures have been implemented in facilities that will help reduce energy consumption and save money on utility bills. Water conserving improvements such as the installation of low-flow toilets and faucets, native plantings, and drip irrigation systems will reduce water usage and protect local water resources. Sustainable landscape decisions such as planting native species, using organic fertilizers and reducing the usage of pesticides and herbicides will bolster local biodiversity and make natural resources more resilient. Finally, the implementation of green stormwater infrastructure projects such as the use of permeable paving materials, rain gardens and bioswales will manage runoff, reduce the risk of flooding and improve overall water quality.

Though these initiatives have started CCPRC on the path to resiliency, there is still more that can be done to continue to improve and maintain its facilities and open spaces. CCPRC should

continue to prepare for future increased climate risks through strategic investments across the parks system.

3.2.1. Favor using contractors and builders who use sustainable materials and building practices as a part of the bid selection process.

As part of the bid process, CCPRC should incorporate a list of sustainability requirements based on best practices such as LEED for buildings and Sustainable SITES for landscapes. It is important for staff to be educated on the significance of this approach and the associated requirements in order to ensure sustainable practices are meaningfully incorporated into the bid process. Designating a group of staff members to become more knowledgeable on the topic can further enhance the implementation of sustainable practices by contracted teams.

3.2.2. Specify sustainable materials when conducting maintenance projects.

Specifying sustainable materials can be beneficial in a myriad of ways including waste reduction, long-term cost savings, lowering carbon emissions, reduction of harmful chemicals, enhancing local identity, and creating a healthier environment for humans and the overall ecosystem. To



Figure 1.66 SK8 Charleston, 2021

improve sustainability, CCPRC should build on its current use of sustainable local materials, while phasing out materials that are detrimental to the environment. Setting specific goals for material sustainability can be helpful in guiding staff members – these should be based on best practices such as the Sustainable SITES Rating System which includes recommended strategies for material selection.

When it comes to planting materials, CCPRC should continue the sustainable Vegetation Stewardship practices listed in the NRMP, such as sourcing native plants, using integrated pest management, and mulching for water retention. CCPRC can build on that effort by increasing the use of locally sourced native and site-appropriate perennial plants that require less water and machine maintenance, and in turn, eliminate the need for irrigation systems, and increase biodiversity. Planting should also be considered as a way to reduce impervious surfaces where they are not needed, with native perennial planting preferred to turf grass where appropriate. In places where paving is necessary, using permeable paving when possible will reduce flooding and stormwater runoff, and light-colored materials with high solar reflectance will reduce the heat island effect. On agricultural land, CCPRC should consider integrating agroforestry into the suggested practices of the NRMP.

SUSTAINABLE SITES STRATEGIES:

- Eliminating the use of wood from threatened tree species, helps to minimize negative effects on ecosystems
- Maintaining current on-site structures and paving extends the life of the material, slowing the need for replacement and reducing waste.
- Designing for adaptability and disassembly reduces material use and waste by specifying reusable products that can be rearranged, repaired or disassembled and recycled. Include instructions for replacing deteriorating or damaged components within the maintenance plan.
- Reusing locally salvaged materials, and healthy native plants (that are displaced due to development) can conserve resources and avoid landfilling useful materials.
- Specifying high-recycled content materials including in steel, asphalt, concrete, and plastic lumber reduces consumption and mining of new materials, and avoids landfilling useful materials.
- Using regional materials reduces energy use for transportation, and promotes regional identity - SITES breaks down material types and recommended associated distances for each type ranging between 50 miles to a max of 500 miles for the extraction, harvest or recovery, and manufacturing of that material.
- When using raw materials, support responsible extraction by using suppliers or manufacturers that have third-party verified corporate sustainability reports (CSRs) including environmental impacts of extraction and supply chain, and meet responsible extraction criteria (detailed by material in the SITES rating system, section 5.7.)
- Purchase plants, sod and seed from sustainable suppliers that use responsible practices in plant production such as reduced water use and runoff, recycling of organic matter, waste reduction, integrated pest management, sustainable soil and growing media, and non-distribution of invasive species².

² Sustainable Sites Initiative. SITES v2 Rating System For Sustainable Land Design and Development, 2014. <https://sustainablesites.org/resources>



Figure 1.67 Palmetto Islands County Park

3.2.3. Ensure maintenance and management plans are in place for applicable parks and updated accordingly.

Maintaining parks in accordance with a management plan is important to ensure that parks are continuously being kept to a high standard that is meeting community needs. As communicated in the Laurel Hill County Park Natural Resource Management Plan, actively managing park properties helps CCPRC to improve the natural conditions and existing infrastructure (roads, culverts, ditches) of parks, while also enhancing public awareness and increasing appreciation for land management. For interpretation-focused parks, like McLeod Plantation Historic Site, maintenance and management plans are crucial for ensuring historic landscapes and structures are maintained at an acceptable level, in accordance with prescribed standards. In this instance, effective and well thought out management plans also work to support park programming and interpretation. Examples of completed and ongoing development of maintenance and management plans include:

- McLeod Plantation Historic Site Maintenance and Management Plan

- Bulow Property Maintenance Plan
- Wannamaker North Trail Maintenance and Management Plan

3.2.4 Continue long-range planning for major park renovations and short-term planning for routine maintenance needs.

CCPRC is well known for having a high standard of quality across facilities. Based on conversations with staff and the public, it is clear that users expect a high-quality experience from CCPRC parks and programs. In order to continue to build on this legacy for the next ten years, it is important that CCPRC continue updating its long- and short-range plans for park renovations and routine maintenance, ensuring high quality facilities for future generations.

As a potential strategy, CCPRC can work to standardize park conditions across the system. Annually, CCPRC evaluates facilities and amenities within all CCPRC parks. These assessments contribute to the capital improvement plan, which prioritizes which facilities to invest in infrastructure improvements and amenity upgrades. The Focus Area Assessment can add a layer of information about the community, climate vulnerability, and development capabilities of parks to connect decisions back to the PARFA plan and its goals.

3.2.5. Enhance capabilities to identify and track asset life cycles to better plan for facility repair and replacement by creating a facilities management dashboard.

As a key part of the planning process, CCPRC staff created a geospatial inventory of all CCPRC facilities and amenities. Within this inventory, staff members also assessed and recorded conditions of assets within parks that they manage. This inventory data is crucial for highlighting what current amenities exist and where there might be additional needs to invest in. However, this data is also important for managing a consistent process for park renovations and maintenance. In the future, it will be important that this data be continually updated so that it can be used to track asset lifecycles and determine where and when reinvestment needs to happen across the system.

A GIS-driven dashboard accessible to all applicable staff can include georeferenced information on asset location, quantity, and condition for easy communication of investments within the Commission (or externally). The dashboard may also include information about asset installation dates, warranties, and any repair work orders. By incorporating GIS capabilities, staff have the potential to add or modify asset data in the field in real time.

3.2.6. Optimize procedures for addressing needs for facility maintenance in a timely manner.

Regarding resiliency in maintenance, CCPRC should first identify what “resilient” materials and products are available to CCPRC; then establish goals or benchmarks for their application at CCPRC facilities. Although CCPRC already strives to operate more resilient parks, compiling a list of resiliency-related resources and preferred materials/products would simplify the replacement/repair process, and provide an opportunity to track/quantify the use of resilient materials.

CCPRC should continue (and consider expanding) use of existing software/tools to allow staff to share observed maintenance needs in real-time. Create the ability for any division to submit work requests. CCPRC currently uses a digital work order system that allows staff to report maintenance issues on-site via a desktop or mobile app, and then track the issue’s resolution. The work order system also tracks the status of each work order, assigns responsibility for resolution, and provides notifications when issues are resolved. In addition to staff, any division should be allowed to submit work requests. By using this system, CCPRC aims

to ensure timely resolution of maintenance deficiencies and improve the overall accessibility of its parks and facilities.

For landscape-scale monitoring, CCPRC could also utilize a drone to identify issues like damaged equipment or overgrown foliage, or implement the use of sensors that can monitor water storage, irrigation systems, and other park infrastructure.



3.3. Expand the role of parks to provide heat relief, support water and air quality, and mitigate flood risks for residents.

The effects of climate change are already being felt throughout much of the United States and Charleston is no exception. According to the Trust for Public Land's Urban Heat Island Severity mapping, eleven of CCPRC's parks and facilities are in areas of significant urban heat risk. CCPRC's open spaces can have a significant positive impact on these areas by continuing to provide and prioritize spaces with public access to cool water and shady trails. Water and air quality have always been improved by green spaces, but their role is becoming even more critical as manufacturing facilities age and fossil fuels continue to pollute our environment. Flooding is also a significant risk to the CCPRC system as more than half of Charleston County's total parkland lies within the 100- or 500-year flood zones. Managed riparian buffers can help to shield nearby development from flooding by acting as a sponge for rising tides, but they must be properly maintained in order to continue to function. Proper management and planning for the future of these spaces can ensure that Charleston remains resilient in the face of these potential threats.

3.3.1. Leverage the role of park facilities in supporting year-round use and climate comfort.

Climate comfort in parks refers to the ability of outdoor environments to provide optimal thermal and sheltering conditions for human well-being, including temperature, humidity, breeze, and protection from extreme weather. CCPRC can highlight and enhance the wide range of park types that already perform various climatic functions throughout the year. Examples include the diverse offerings of water-recreation and dense forest canopies that provide cooling in summer months, as well as protective sand fences at beaches that control erosion.

- Design outdoor spaces to function year-round naturally cool/shaded or close to water and prevailing winds.
- Site trails to enhance climatic comfort in a variety of seasons: warm sunny trails protected from wind are great for cooler seasons, while shaded trails with cool breezes are preferred in hot summers.
- Evaluate parks in need of improved climatic comfort, especially to provide protection from the local threats of heat and flooding. One example is SK8 Charleston which has limited shade or vegetated spaces, creating an unfavorably hot microclimate through the heat-island effect. CCPRC can

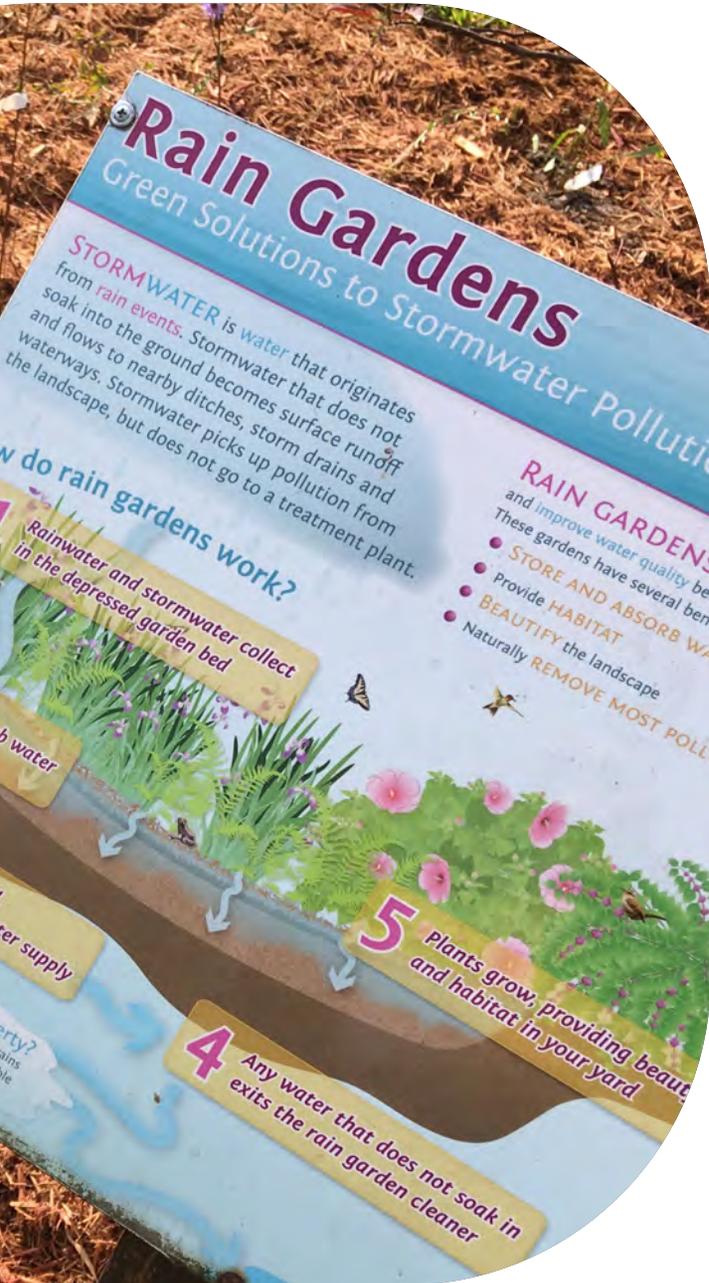


Figure 1.68 Rain Garden, Folly Beach Community Center

improve the climatic comfort of the skate park by providing shade trees and planted areas to generate relief from the summer sun and create a cooling effect through the evapotranspiration provided by vegetation.

3.3.2. Evaluate the potential to expand hours of certain parks and indoor facilities to the evening/cooler parts of the day to provide relief from heat.

CCPRC should evaluate which parks and indoor facilities can remain open longer in the evening for extended hours, especially on very hot summer days. While not all parks and facilities will be able to be open longer due to existing infrastructure constraints (adequate lighting, visibility, security, etc), the facilities where it is possible to extend hours could provide residents valuable access to parks and facilities that they otherwise would not have. CCPRC should expand opportunities to install misting systems, shade structures, canopy, and water features in the hottest areas in parks to make outdoor spaces more comfortable.



Figure 1.69 Yoga Fest, James Island County Park, 2023

CASE STUDY: PHOENIX PARKS AND RECREATION

The Phoenix Parks and Recreation department has expanded hours of operation for some of its parks to provide residents with access to cooler, shaded areas during the hottest parts of the day and to encourage park visits during the cooler times of day in the early morning and evening. The Department has also installed misting systems, shade structures, and water features to provide additional relief from the heat.³

3 Phoenix Parks and Recreation. "Take Advantage of Extended Summer Hours at City Trailheads," June 1, 2021. <https://www.phoenix.gov/newsroom/parks-and-recreation/1929>.

3.3.3. Identify where CCPRC parks have the potential to contribute to stormwater management efforts, such as storing floodwater during severe storm events.

Stormwater management is expected to be a high priority in the coming years, as rising sea levels, flooding and storm intensities increase. CCPRC is perceived as a key regional contributor in storing/absorbing water within park open spaces. CCPRC should therefore continue to be a stakeholder in larger stormwater-related planning initiatives developed by other municipalities and relevant agencies (e.g., Clemson Extension and Ashley Cooper Stormwater Education Consortium). In addition to external stormwater planning, CCPRC has many opportunities to address stormwater management efforts internally, including:

- Integrate stormwater management strategies into park master plans, natural resource management plans and maintenance plans.
- Design and implement stormwater management practices like rain water harvesting systems (rain gardens, cisterns, barrels) and bio-retentions in existing and future parks.
- Prioritize efforts to maintain stormwater infrastructure (ditches, drains, swales, culverts, retention ponds and drainage pipes) in both developed and undeveloped properties.
- Limit future development within critical flood zones.

- Coordinating with design consultants to ensure stormwater best management practices are part of design details in future park development.
- Train and educate relevant CCPRC staff on stormwater management, pond management, and rain garden construction offered by Clemson Extension and other agencies.

URBAN TREE PLANTING
BENEFITS OUTWEIGH COSTS TO PHOENIX

Healthy trees can increase surrounding property values by 20%. Apartments and homes located near parks have even higher values.

Large-scale reforestation areas can be as much as 1°F cooler than non-green city centers. Various functions of trees, such as their evaporative cooling effect, help to reduce urban heat island (UHI) effect and heat stress-related disease and fatalities.

Trees provide significant storm water retention benefits by intercepting and absorbing rainfall and by increasing the ability of soils to store water longer than 10% the amount of water that would otherwise be available.

Urban trees can improve air quality by absorbing particulate matter (PM_{2.5} and other air-borne particulates (SO₂, CO, and O₃)). They also help reduce atmospheric CO₂ levels by capturing and storing it.

Trees and the Importance of BVOCs
Biogenic Volatile Organic Compounds (BVOCs)

Examples of Low-emitting Trees for Phoenix:

- Acacia
- Ironwood
- Ash
- Palo Verde
- Evergreen Elm
- Pistache
- Desert Willow
- Pine

We have a choice: Be Smart... Design Sustainably... Plant Wisely.

3.3.4. Continue following all applicable water protection regulations.

To maintain clean water for drinking, swimming, fishing, fish and wildlife habitat, agriculture, and industry in Charleston County, CCPRC should continue to adhere to federal, state, and local water quality regulations. Several federal, state, and local agencies/entities are charged with protecting various aspects of water quality, and typically require permits for activities which have the potential to impact either water quality or supply. Most applicable to CCPRC are water quality issues pertaining to park construction (e.g., sediment/erosion control), constructed swimming facilities, natural swimming and fishing facilities, stormwater retention/detention facilities, and groundwater use and protection.

SCDHEC administers the Water Quality Certification program pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Clean Water Act, which requires State certification of actions requiring a federal permit and potentially discharging to state waters. SCDHEC similarly coordinates approvals with both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and local Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) to ensure compliance with the state National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), as well as applicable federal and local stormwater and groundwater regulations.

3.3.5. Identify combined sewer overflows (CSOs), water quality management areas, and locations with severe flooding where parks offer significant opportunities to improve conditions.

Parks can serve as a valuable tool for mitigating flooding and improving water quality, especially in areas of severe flooding such as combined sewer outflows (CSOs). Blue-green infrastructure such as trees, vegetation, and permeable surfaces can absorb and slow down stormwater runoff in water quality management areas, reducing the risk of flooding in urban areas. In addition, parks can be designed to include features such as wetlands, rain gardens, and bioswales that help retain and filter stormwater, as well as green spaces that absorb rainfall and replenish groundwater. According to the Natural Resources Management Plan, CCPRC's park system has approximately 3,507.8 acres of wetlands. These natural features also help improve water quality by filtering out sediment and reducing the number of pollutants that enter streams and rivers, therefore improving conditions for valuable aquatic plant and wildlife resources.

CASE STUDY: HOUSTON PARKS AND RECREATION

Following the devastating flooding that occurred during Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department has been an advocate for the use of parks as flood control infrastructure. The department has proposed creating large detention basins in parks that can hold stormwater during heavy rain events and help ease the burden on its more populated areas.⁴

⁴ "Resilient Houston." City of Houston, April 2, 2020. <https://www.houstontx.gov/mayor/Resilient-Houston-20200402-double-page.pdf>.





3.4. Continue to build on and communicate CCPRC's cultural, natural, and historical stewardship initiatives.

CCPRC's Natural Resource Management Plans (NRMPs) and Cultural Resource Management Plans (CRMPs) provide clear roadmaps for natural and cultural resource management and have supported a number of important environmental restoration and interpretation projects since they were completed in 2014 and 2013, respectively. In some instances, these management plans work in tandem to provide effective guidance for sites that contain both cultural and natural resource significance. The ecological restoration of McLeod Plantation Historic Site's agricultural field is a good example of this confluence. Other examples include cemetery management projects that work to protect funerary artifacts in conjunction with selective vegetative management. Public

tours, interpretive programming and signage and social media outreach are some ways to help communicate these interesting and nuanced projects to the public.

Highlights of recently completed and ongoing projects include:

- McLeod Plantation Historic Site:
- Historic cemetery survey
- Ecological restoration of former agricultural field
- Historic preservation and stabilization of cabins and outbuildings
- Stono River County Park – Removal of Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB) infested trees
- Caw Caw Interpretive Center – Treatment of invasive Chinese tallow trees and alligator weed



Figure 1.70 The Climbing Wall, James Island County Park

3.4.1. Re-evaluate the agency-wide Natural Resource Management Plan every five years.

The agency-wide NRMP (2014) prioritizes the acquisition of new sites that are key to the preservation of important wetlands, forests and historically significant places.

- Continue the creation of site-specific forest and natural resource management plans to maximize natural habitats and increase biodiversity within them.
- Continue to implement research, inventory and analysis programs recommended by this plan, to measure the success of conservation and recreation projects inform future decisions.
- Mirroring the master planning process, solicit input from Parks, Recreation and other agency divisions toward a plan update.
- Increase public education programming to bridge the gap between the local community and its ecological assets, and help visitors understand the impacts of preservation and restoration on both their lives and the health of the planet.

3.4.2. Continue to develop and update natural resource management plans created for individual parks to ensure that the agency-wide plan and site-specific plans support each other.

NRMPs for individual parks are created to assess the condition and needs of natural resources within that park. CCPRC should consider using metrics to effectively track and communicate change in current management versus future management of natural resources. Existing plans must be taken into consideration when producing new agency-wide plans and vice-versa.

The success of recent comprehensive and forward-thinking NRMPs like the Laurel Hill County Park NRMP highlights the importance of continuing to produce these individual plans in order to capture and consider the unique needs of each park within the system. Detailed plans enable CCPRC to pursue leverage or offset funding for landscape/natural resource improvement tasks. Examples include:

- Signing a federal Wyden Agreement with United States Forest Service to reduce costs associated with prescribed burning at McClellanville Property

CASE STUDY: PORTLAND PARKS AND RECREATION

Portland Parks and Recreation's Natural Areas Restoration Plan includes public engagement strategies such as passive learning through an interpretive programming that uses signage, brochures, podcasts and other outreach tools to emphasize the importance of habitat restoration and biodiversity for climate resilience.

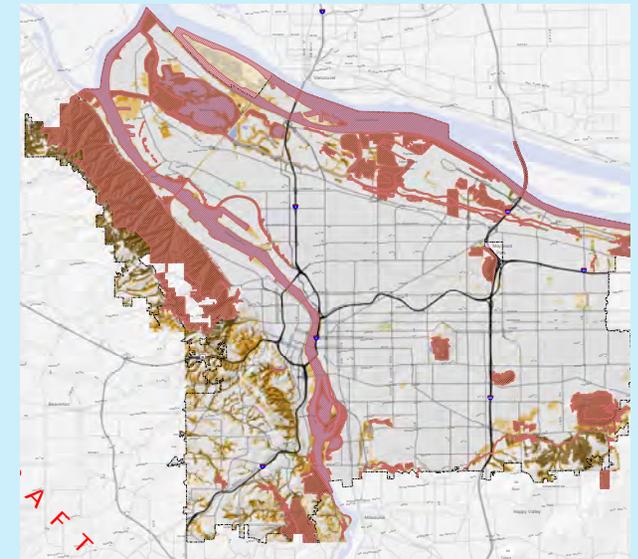




Figure 1.71 McLeod Plantation Historic Site, 2021

- Collaborating with Longleaf Alliance and Sewee Longleaf Conservation Cooperative to obtain 20,000 longleaf pine seedlings for a restoration project at McClellanville Property
- Coordinating with South Carolina Forestry Commission on obtaining Stephens Funds used for mechanical treatment to reduce fire fuels at Laurel Hill County Park

3.4.3. Create natural resource maintenance/management plans for developed parks and continue to update plans for existing parks.

CCPRC can utilize its agency-wide Natural Resource Management Plan along with individualized reports of the unique conditions in each park to inform the creation of specialized management plans for both developed and undeveloped properties. In the past, the priority has been placed on management plans for undeveloped parks, but they can also be useful for developed parks.

3.4.4. Continue to manage and be proactive about improving biodiversity within parks.

The agency-wide NRMP proposed to employ active and adaptive management programs

such as forest thinning, clearing of invasive plant species, repopulation of native plant communities and prescribed burns to increase overall biodiversity on park properties. There is also a particular emphasis placed on the establishment and protection of rare, threatened and/or endangered ecosystems within the parks. In order to measure the success of these programs CCPRC must also continue to produce baseline biodiversity assessments for any new land acquisitions and coordinate with staff and partners to conduct biodiversity reports for each site, as applicable.

3.4.5 Map, communicate, and maintain Land Use Stewardship Zones across all parks to balance land activation and natural resource protection.

First documented in CCPRC’s 2014 agency-wide NRMP, Land Use Stewardship Zones have helped CCPRC to identify desired levels of public access, development and maintenance within the parks. Areas defined as **Activity zones** can accommodate higher concentrations of visitors and require more active maintenance due to their levels of use. **Conservation zones** are areas of natural and cultural importance that ideally

offer limited public accessibility and therefore only moderate levels of maintenance. Maintenance of trails and comprehensive forestry plans help to preserve the health of the open spaces while still allowing visitors to enjoy them. Preservation zones restrict public access to rare and highly sensitive areas in order to protect them from any potential negative impacts. **Marine zones** designate areas with water access and may facilitate recreational water uses like swimming and boating. **Cultural Resource Overlay zones** identify specific resources

that are finite, non-renewable and that once destroyed cannot be returned to their original state. Specifically, these resources may include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic structures, bridges, cemeteries, and monuments, among others. If listed on the National Register of Historic Places, these resources fall under the purview of regulatory agencies like SC State Historic Preservation Office, who provide guidance on avoiding or minimizing detrimental impacts.



Figure 1.72 Isle of Palms County Park Interpretive Program, 2023

3.4.6. Communicate the value of natural capital to the public, to provide a clear understanding of the full value of a diverse and well-managed park system.

The concept of natural capital can be difficult to communicate. In short, natural capital is a way of placing value, often-times monetary value, on natural resources like water, soils, trees, wildlife habitat, open space and forests. Value is generally provided by a specific methodology that scores and determines the ecological benefits and services that local natural resources provide to our communities. In other words, the process of assessing natural capital helps to explain what values are gained by having parks in a community. By placing value on natural resources, their importance becomes more evident, resulting in greater protection, appreciation and awareness.

Natural capital can be determined for site specific areas like marshes and forests, individual parks, or agency-wide landholdings. Once determined, value can be effectively communicated in future park master planning efforts, interpretive signage and programming, as well as strategic marketing.

3.4.7. Embrace wealth of cultural resources through research, community-informed interpretation, and climate driven strategies for protection.

Charleston County is home to an abundance of historic and cultural resources, many of which fall within CCPRC-owned properties. CCPRC has already been recognized as a leader in historic resource interpretation, which is bolstered and reinforced by extensive cultural resource inventory/assessment, management, and planning, process. In addition to direct anthropomorphic (human-caused) degradation of cultural resources, CCPRC staff are aware of the potential impacts of climate change. Over the years, the Commission has worked closely with research institutions, agencies and community members to better understand and prioritize cultural research projects. The Commission should continue efforts to develop and maintain these critical relationships.

Examples of collaborative engagement include:

- Working with SCDNR to identify cultural resources and a historic cemetery at CCPRC’s Secessionville (Fort Lamar Road) property.
- Collaborating with SC State Historic Preservation Office (SCSHPO) for technical expertise related to preserving sensitive cultural resource projects at Old Towne Creek County Park.
- Engaging with a project steering committee including local historians and environmental educators to guide development of Old Towne Creek County Park’s interpretive master plan.
- Working with Clemson University’s Graduate School in Historic Preservation for analysis of historic structures at McLeod Plantation.
- Developing a local advisory group, including family descendants to guide studies and future projects aimed at preserving McLeod Plantation’s historic cemetery.

3.4.8. Continue implementation of the 2013 Cultural Resource Management Plan, and consider a plan update before 2030.

The 2013 agency wide CRMP recommended guidelines for the management of important cultural and historical resources within the CCPRC system. The 2013 CRMP highlighted the importance of stewardship education to increase both staff and community appreciation for the culturally significant artifacts within their open spaces. Since 2013, CCPRC has learned more about the cultural resources and historic significance of specific park sites. This new information should be considered when making updates to the CRMP. It is important to update management plans regularly so that plans grow alongside changing attitudes of the public, and CCPRC's management priorities.



Figure 1.73 Long leaf Pine, Master Naturalist Fall 2017



Figure 1.74 Caw Caw Interpretive Center

3.4.9. Continue to develop and update CRMPs created for individual parks to ensure that the agency-wide plan and site-specific plans support each other.

CCPRC continues to make important strides in developing CRMPs for all park properties. These reports typically provide historical context, and identify archaeological sites, cemeteries and historic structures. Recently completed CRMPs for James Island County Park, Palmetto Islands County Park and Spring Grove Property, will guide their ongoing and future master planning initiatives. The CRMPs for Wannamaker County Park has been identified as a future project—with an ultimate goal of having new or updated CRMPs for most parks.

3.4.10. Implement initiatives to reduce potential human impact on cultural, historic, and natural resources.

Humans can have significant negative impacts on cultural, historic, and natural resources, so it is important to implement measures to protect these resources. The Cultural Resource Management Plan identifies the most significant threats to



cultural resources as: development, relic hunting, vandalism, human erosion, geocaching, natural hazard and human action disaster impacts and unexploded ordnance hazards.

3.5. Continue to partner with resource management agencies and professionals to effectively manage invasive species and stay up to date on sustainable and resilient management practices.

CCPRC plays an important role in identifying and preserving the conditions where rare and critical species may thrive. Creating conditions for thriving critical ecosystems requires the careful management of invasive and aggressive species. Previous plans have focused on the identification, prioritization and removal of invasive species. Currently, a primary initiative is the development of a comprehensive management plan that identifies and prioritizes invasive species for control or eradication. This plan includes a range of control measures, such as manual removal, herbicide application, and biological control. In addition, the Commission has established

partnerships with local conservation organizations to promote invasive species management and education efforts and should continue this effort.

The Commission should also continue its focus on outreach and education programs on the topic of invasive species to help spread awareness of the harm caused by proliferating them in the region. The Commission has already implemented a policy that prohibits the planting of invasive species in their parks and public spaces, but homeowners must also be made aware of the negative impacts of planting them in their gardens.

3.5.1. Assess undeveloped lands for ecological value and identify restoration opportunities to inform development or future acquisition.

Properties with High Richness of Imperiled Species:

- Secessionville Property: 4-5 species
- Awendaw Property: 3-6 species
- McClellanville Property: 3-6 species

3.5.2. Establish a process to identify and prioritize management/control of invasive species in places of higher potential ecological value.

Invasive species can easily out-compete rare and threatened plant and animal communities, so it must be a high priority for CCPRC to effectively manage them in places with higher richness of threatened species.

Parks with High Richness of Imperiled Species:

- McLeod Plantation Historic Site: 3-5 species
- James Island County Park: 3-6 species
- Mount Pleasant Pier: 5 species
- Laurel Hill County Park: 3-5 species

Properties with High Richness of Imperiled Species:

- Secessionville Property: 4-5 species
- Awendaw Property: 3-6 species
- McClellanville Property: 3-6 species



Figure 1.75 CCPRC Education programs

3.5.3. Identify where historic and cultural resources are threatened by climate change to better prioritize resource management and protection.

Parks with historic and cultural resources at risk from climate change impacts (flooding, urban heat island effect):

- McLeod Plantation Historic Site
 - McLeod Plantation Historic Site
- Laurel Hill County Park
 - Laurel Hill Plantation
- Old Towne Creek County Park
 - Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site (adjacent)
- Caw Caw Interpretive Center
 - Stono River Slave Rebellion Site (adjacent)
 - Historic Rice Plantations
- Lighthouse Inlet Heritage Preserve
 - Morris Island Lighthouse
- Secessionville Property
 - Secessionville Historic District
- Edisto Island Youth Recreation Site
 - Prospect Hill Plantation (adjacent)

Non-site-specific historic and cultural resources at risk from climate change impacts (flooding, urban heat island effect):

- Gullah Geechee Sweetgrass Basket Making
- Historic Rice Industry
- McClellanville Fishing Industry

3.5.4. Build upon existing and create new relationships with local and national environmental programs.

There is potential to partner with several local and national environmental programs that are already doing work in the resiliency sector.

National Environmental Programs:

- National League of Cities (NLC)
 - The National League of Cities (NLC) is an advocacy program that encompasses multiple initiatives related to the environment. Relevant programs include: the Cities Connecting Children to Nature program which provides education, play and policy for youth; the Leadership in Community Resilience initiative which supports local resilience efforts connecting multiple stakeholders; and the Building Climate Change

Resilience initiative which focuses on supporting plans, policies and programs to create climate-ready municipal infrastructure.

Local Environmental Programs:

- The Sustainability Institute
 - The Environmental Conservation Corps (ECC) Program
- Low Country Land Conservation Partnership (Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation)
- Charleston Rainproof

3.5.5. Partner with local historic preservation entities to stay up to date on best management practices and to identify potential programming partnership opportunities.

Local Historic Preservation Entities to potentially partner with:

- Historic Charleston Foundation
- Preservation Society of Charleston
- South Carolina Historical Society
- International African American Museum
- Center for Family History
- African American Charleston - Voices: Stories of Change
- South Carolina African American Heritage Commission (SCAAHC)



Figure 1.76 CCPRC Master Naturalist program



3.6. Continue to demonstrate leadership in management and interpretation of natural, historical and cultural resources to broaden awareness and increase public participation.

Already leading in the areas of natural and cultural resource interpretation, CCPRC has the opportunity to be a leader in providing resilience education to county residents. CCPRC has several subject matter experts in ecology and cultural preservation, who have been invaluable resources internally to the Commission, whose roles could be strengthened in external communications. Similarly, Old Towne Creek County Park, Caw Caw Interpretive Center and McLeod Plantation Historic Site have established interpretive programming, but there are other opportunities to continue to expand these programs and develop programs on other sites.

3.6.1. Engage Marketing Division to determine how to effectively communicate CCPRC resilience efforts to the public.

Marketing can be crucial to helping communities understand the value of resiliency efforts, both locally and globally. There are many creative

ways to communicate to the public what CCPRC is doing to increase the resilience of not just the parks, but the whole community. As an example, the SF Parks Alliance used creativity and art to spread love and appreciation for its parks and open spaces during the Pandemic through their “Heart Your Parks” campaign.

While general outreach is absolutely necessary, it is also extremely important to make sure all

community members are being included in CCPRC’s outreach. The City of Austin, TX piloted the “Community Climate Ambassadors Program”, which aimed to reach more of those community members who have been historically and systematically left out of these conversations. This program pays ambassadors for six months to learn about climate justice, engage with their communities, and lead projects to support the implementation of Austin’s Climate Equity Plan.



Figure 1.78 Master Naturalist Program, Oyster shell recycling

3.6.2. Engage with Marketing Division to embed resilience education into external communications.

Given the complexity of Charleston County’s climate vulnerabilities (which are heavily influenced by its location along the Atlantic Coast), it is critical that resilience education is effectively communicated to the public. These local vulnerabilities include sea level rise, increased rainfall, extreme storms, heat island effect, and habitat degradation.

- Collaborate with the Marketing Division on external communications to reach a wider audience in public education efforts, including those who might not actively seek out resilience information. This can be an effective way to raise awareness on the importance of resilience, preparedness, and looking towards the future, and help to normalize the topic of resilience by making it part of the community conversation. Social media campaigns can be used to highlight the importance of parks through the lens of ecosystem services, such as parks’ cooling capacity compared to urban areas, and flood mitigation performance. An interactive website can be created for different park

habitat types, showcasing ecosystem services across the full scope of the local landscape, ranging from shorelines to wetlands to forests, etc. Within this, the importance of specific ecological zones can be highlighted, such as the significance of barrier islands, wetlands, and dunes in storm surge protection.

- Create printed and digital media to provide visitors with passive learning on the importance of ecological health and habitat through the lens of resilience.
- Work with the Marketing Division to create resilience tools that communicate the impacts of CCPRC facility investments on local and regional resilience. CCPRC should also ensure that this resilience education effort is integrated with its existing stewardship education plans.

3.6.3. Communicate the value of CCPRC’s “natural capital” services to the public.

Assigning monetary values to the “natural capital” services (i.e., the dollar value of storm mitigation, carbon sequestration, heat mitigation, flood mitigation, increased value of adjacent properties, etc.), provided by parks is a crucial step in recognizing their economic significance.

CASE STUDY: SF PARKS ALLIANCE: “HEART YOUR PARKS”

This campaign kicked off on Earth Day and continued for 30 days, popping up a new “heart” art piece every day in a different park. This campaign also functioned as a fundraiser and raised \$50,000 to support the functioning of the SF Parks Alliance, including renovation of the highest need parks and playgrounds in the city.



CASE STUDY: TOOLS TO QUANTIFY HEALTH AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PARKS

There are not many examples of tools to calculate the benefits of parks and green space, because each region and municipality is so unique. In 2018, the Florida Recreation and Parks organization created an Impact Calculator, which includes health and environmental benefits. This tool uses fairly broad assumptions to understand health

and environmental benefits in a monetary way. Health benefits are calculated by counting the number of park users over age 65 and those under age 65, then using a multiplier based on national data on the health savings associated with park use (\$2,406 for over age 65, \$1230 for under age 65).

This approach can communicate the value of parks to policymakers and the public and inform decisions on preservation land management, incentivizing conservation and restoration efforts. In addition, the proximity of well-managed parks to neighborhoods can also lead to increased property value adjacent to parks, which can help to recoup park expenses and generate municipal funding through increased property tax revenue.

3.6.4. Create new interpretive opportunities at developed parks.

CCPRC interpretive programs have over thirty thousand visitors per year according to the 2013 NRMP, and are seen as one of the most effective ways to communicate park management to the public. Interpretive programs raise visitor awareness and appreciation of ecological health and cultural context by using easy-to-understand engagement strategies that encourage curiosity and interest and develop a sense of place. Information can be effectively presented as stories and themes with unique visual and sensory experiences that are inclusive of all abilities and learning styles⁵. By introducing new interpretive opportunities, CCPRC has the opportunity to activate park areas and increase

⁵ American Trails. "Educating Trail Users: Advice for Planning Interpretive Trail Signs and Exhibits."



Figure 1.79 Caw Caw Interpretive Center Education Programs

visitor awareness in new creative ways. Signage can include multiple languages, including braille, to reflect the community and engage a range of visitors. Enhancing creative and engaging interpretive areas at Caw Caw Interpretive Center can improve its value as an educational hub and destination for park visitors, K-12 students, and tourists alike.

3.6.5. Collaborate with community members for culturally relevant programming and interpretation (i.e. collaboration with African American and/or enslaved descendants for McLeod Plantation Historic Site interpretive programming).

Methods for collecting data about cultural resources must be accessible to the communities who have a connection to those resources. The Cultural Resource Management Plan describes the importance of using professional historians to collect oral histories from descendants of communities being discussed or studied. It also emphasizes the need to consult all perspectives in instances where there are multiple cultures placing value on a cultural resource.

3.6.6. Identify opportunities to expand environmental and/or cultural history youth education programs.

CCPRC's youth education programs are quite impressive, especially for children ages 6-12. One of the most successful of these programs is the Junior Master Naturalist Program, which provides children ages 8-12 with valuable cultural and ecological experiences that are totally unique to the Lowcountry landscape. This program offers field trips that focus on the ecologies of barrier islands, salt marshes, wetlands and forests of South Carolina. It also offers programming on the impacts that humans have on our environment, which is critical to the education of the larger community about resiliency.

Summer camps, school field trips and partnerships with scouting organizations also integrate environmental education components. Specific parks with a focus on interpretive education such as Caw Caw Interpretive Center and McLeod Plantation Historical Site have site-specific programming that is open to the general public and sometimes specifically targeted to young visitors. There is an opportunity to expand these site-specific offerings to other parks within the



Figure 1.80 Caw Caw Interpretive Center Education Programs

system that have unique ecologies and historic sites. There is also an opportunity to expand these programs to target teens who currently experience a gap in programming that is typically only available to a younger or much older audience. While the Junior Master Naturalist program targets children age 8-12, and the Master Naturalist Program targets older adults, it could be beneficial for a similar program to target teens.

3.6.7. Continue to plan/design resource “demonstration areas” in existing parks in accordance with resource management planning.

Forest demonstration plots provide the public with a window into the way park forests are managed, giving the public a greater appreciation for forest management practices. In addition to public demonstration, they also act as test sites to inform the park’s overall forest management plans and influence future planning. Demonstration plots can include invasive species control areas, prescribed burn areas, and wildflower plantings,

and can also be an opportunity to test different seasonal plantings or measure the impact of episodic events on a particular area.

At Laurel Hill County Park, four pilot forest demonstration plots showcase different forestry techniques and management practices including longleaf pine restoration, oak regeneration, and understory management. These educational plots also support the previous land owner’s desire for a naturally managed park that benefits the public. Findings from these demonstration sites help CCPRC staff inform the way that the entirety of Laurel Hill County Park’s forests are managed.

Caw Caw Interpretive Center contains two pilot forest demonstration plots that showcase wildlife habitat enhancement and forest thinning. These are important educational resources that connect with the overall theme of education at this park, while also helping to inform the park’s overall forest management plan. The continuation of these pilot forest demonstration plots will be important to continue to provide the public with

immersive education in forest management practices, while continued research, observation, and testing in the forest plots will provide staff with valuable knowledge to ensure the health of the forests moving forward.

3.6.8. Engage with conservation, education and research institutions/ organizations to host research projects at undeveloped and developed parks.

CCPRC has already formed some strong partnerships with local universities and organizations such as SC Sea Grant Consortium, Clemson University and College of Charleston. Projects like the South Carolina BioDiscovery Project, a STEM based citizen science initiative focused around the study of biofouling communities, have shown the incredible value of partnership. There are likely many other possible partnership opportunities with local entities that could benefit both the education of the local communities and provide research to help combat the impacts of climate change.

3.6.9. Continue to support employee participation in national conversations and conferences to stay on top of resiliency trends.

Conferences can be a great way to make connections and stay up to date on trends in the resiliency sphere. Some national conferences employees could be encouraged to attend are the Climate Leadership Conference, Resilient Cities Summit and Climate Change Preparedness Conference. More locally there is also the Carolinas Climate Resilience Conference, which focuses on resiliency in the Carolinas specifically.

3.6.10. Establish benchmarks transitioning to efficient or alternative fuels by 2033.

As the climate rapidly changes, parks systems can lead by example in preserving the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Establishing benchmarks for transitioning to efficient or alternative fuels by 2033 is critical in addressing this issue. This transition can reduce the overall environmental footprint of maintenance

and operations while providing long-term cost savings associated with electrification. It is recognized that electric power based on renewable energy is more reliable, sustainable, and environmentally responsible than fossil fuels. This transition can also contribute towards aligning with Charleston Climate Action Plan's 2030 Reduction Goal, which aims to reduce emissions 56% below 2018 levels and achieve net zero by 56%.

While the cost of converting may be substantial, new funding will be available to states and localities from the Federal Inflation Reduction Act passed in 2022, including grants and matching funds that park and recreation agencies may be eligible for. These funds can go towards vehicle charging infrastructure and cost-sharing of clean-power vehicles and equipment. Alternative fuels such as biodiesel can also play a role in the transition, with the advantage that they can be used in existing diesel-powered equipment, therefore providing a more feasible option in some cases, though electrification is thought to be a more sustainable option in the long run.

CASE STUDY: SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION

Seattle Parks and Recreation, which manages 12% of the city's land and water, has set a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to align with Seattle's commitment to a 58% reduction by 2036. The parks department's reduction efforts focus on transitioning to electric equipment and heating systems, heat pump systems, supporting public access to electric vehicle charging, and using biofuels and other alternative innovations in park maintenance equipment.

6 Dolesh, Richard J. . "The Electrification of Parks and Recreation." National Recreation and Park Association, March 23, 2023. <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2023/april/the-electrification-of-parks-and-recreation/>.



**“Partnerships can go a long way in expanding connectivity across the county.”
- Steering Committee Workshop #2**

4. Making Connections

OUR PARKS CONNECT OUR COMMUNITIES TO NATURE AND TO EACH OTHER.

With an emphasis on connectivity and expansion of acreage, this plan has tremendous opportunities to close gaps and ensure safe, equitable access to existing and future parks. CCPRC has opportunities to improve connectivity within its parks as well as beyond its borders. CCPRC properties have the potential to serve as trailheads and connectivity hubs within the county-wide transportation ecosystem; for this reason, CCPRC has an important role to play as an advocate and champion for park connectivity in regional planning efforts. Providing multimodal connections between parks and nearby neighborhoods creates a more equitable parks system by offering low-cost transportation options for people to reach parks near them.

**“There is a need for greater connectivity between parks and neighborhoods, such as safer paths to connect kids from schools to parks.”
- Johns Island Community-Led Conversation**



4.1. Continue to plan, establish, and maintain quality trails within parks.

CCPRC offers over sixty-five miles of trails throughout parks and facilities, with a range of paved and unpaved trail types for walking, biking, and horseback riding. Sixty-six percent of households are either very satisfied or satisfied with the condition of park trails, indicating that high-quality trails are a key feature of Charleston County parks. The diversity of trail offerings appeals to a wide array of users.

4.1.1. When acquiring park property, anticipate the need for accessible trails and consider terms of acquisition agreements that might limit paved or impervious surfaces.

CCPRC's 2020 accessibility audit report¹ recommended that while not all trails must be ADA-accessible, a minimum of one trail of every three should be accessible. The report also recommended considering the geographic distribution of accessible trails so that every

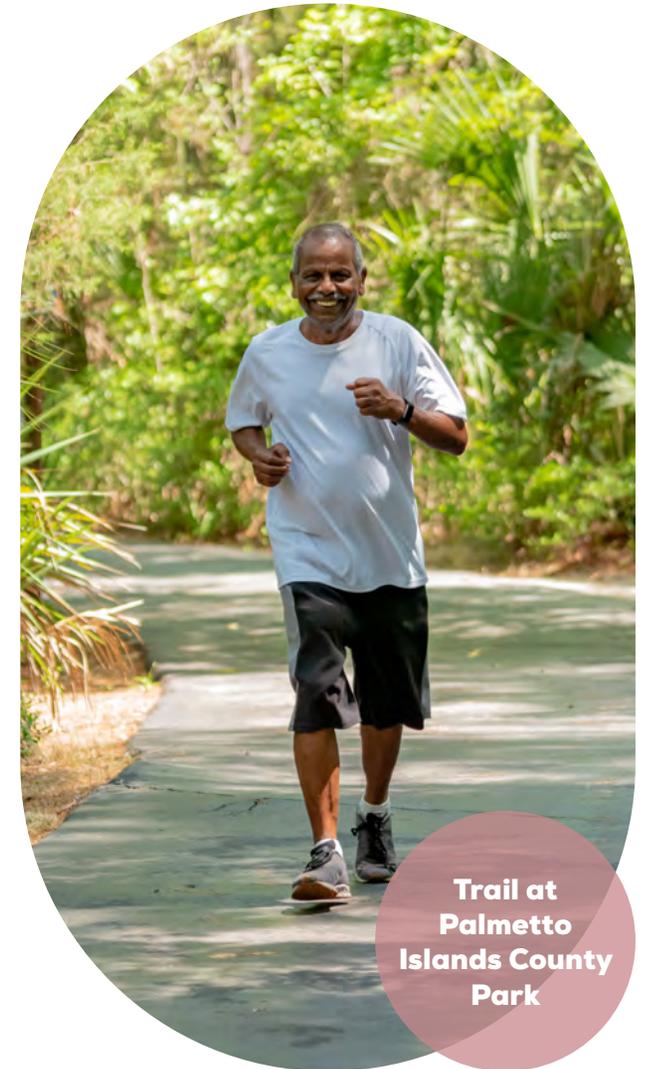
¹ Americans with Disabilities Act Access Audit and Transition Plan Report to Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission: Summary and Recommendations. WT Group. <https://ccprc.com/DocumentCenter/View/20559/CCPRC-Conclusions-Report-PDF?bidId=>

resident is close to an accessible trail. Much of CCPRC's landholdings – and “undeveloped/future site” properties in particular – are protected by conservation easements. Typically, conservation easements limit the area of impervious surfaces, such as conventional asphalt and concrete trails (or parking areas, rooftops, etc.). As crushed stone “pervious” trails can be challenging and time consuming to maintain to ADA requirements/recommendations, CCPRC should strive to pave trails where budget and feasibility allow (e.g., paved pervious concrete trails). However, during the acquisition of undeveloped/future CCPRC sites, CCPRC should attempt to negotiate the terms of the conservation easement in favor of paved trails, to at least reserve the right to incorporate these into a master planning process at a later date.

4.1.2. During park/facility master planning and design development, prioritize trail surfaces and alignment are feasible for CCPRC to maintain.

While all trails require maintenance, the cost, frequency, and type of maintenance can vary based on several key factors: trail surface, vegetation surrounding the trail, structures (e.g., bridges and culverts), amenities, and cleanliness. For example, mowing along trails is typically a significant portion of the maintenance budget;

using low-maintenance vegetation that does not require mowing or installing shoulders made of crushed stone (where possible) can save thousands of dollars annually in mowing costs.



Trail at
Palmetto
Islands County
Park

4.1.3. Inspect and record trail conditions during annual facility assessments.

Staff should evaluate conditions related to: trail surface condition, accessibility, vegetation impeding trail space or sight lines, trail crossings, pavement markings (for paved trails), signage, drainage structures, bridges and boardwalks, and trail amenities (benches, lighting, trash cans, etc.). Consider creating and using trail assessment checklists for paved trail inspections, using examples for references such as the Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program², or the Pisgah Conservancy³ to track trail conditions consistently across parks and over time. Checklists can be paired with a regular trail maintenance schedule.

² Paved Trail Inspection Template, Rails to Trails Conservancy, https://www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?name=sample-paved-trail-inspections-checklist&id=24009&fileName=MN_Inspection%20Checklist.pdf

³ Standards and Procedures: Trail Assessment, Pisgah Conservancy, <https://www.pisgahconservancy.org/trail-academy/trail-assessment.html>

4.1.4. Maintain quality trails by identifying and treating issues early and/or through preventative measures.

Through daily park/facility maintenance, staff should identify and report trail degradation, and coordinate with Parks and Planning and/or Development divisions toward appropriate solutions. A trails “best management practices” or similar guidance document would simplify the repair process. Ultimately the Parks Division should work to maintain/manage trail conditions in a way which increases trail longevity, and reduces the need for extensive and costly trail replacement projects. Conditions to look for include trail settling or sinking issues, shoulder erosion or sloughing, edge damage, and emerging root growth.

4.1.5. Continue to be receptive to feedback from trail users on maintenance concerns and overall satisfaction.

CCPRC should continue to receive and process feedback from trail users regarding ongoing maintenance and upkeep. Intercept surveys can be an effective method for collecting feedback from regular trail users. Online surveys sent out through existing mailing lists or advertised on CCPRC’s website can also capture input from trail users.

4.1.6. Install/Deploy trail counters on CCPRC park/facility trails to better understand use patterns and overall demand.

CCPRC should begin the collection of bike/ped count data on park trails using permanent counters and/or other available technologies. Collecting this data enables CCPRC to evaluate trends, such as increase/decrease in usage, peak usage periods, and high activity locations. This information can help to determine where investments are most needed and make projects more competitive for funding opportunities.

A variety of counter technologies exist; CCPRC staff should select a method that will be cost-effective and meet their needs. As an example, the North Carolina Department of Transportation published a comparison of available counter technologies, describing the costs, benefits, and tradeoffs of each method⁴.

⁴ State-of-the-Art Approaches to Bicycle and Pedestrian Counters, NCDOT, 2021. <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://connect.ncdot.gov/projects/research/RNAProjDocs/RP2020-39%20Final%20Report.pdf>

4.1.7. Collaborate with volunteer organizations for ongoing trail maintenance to ease staff burden.

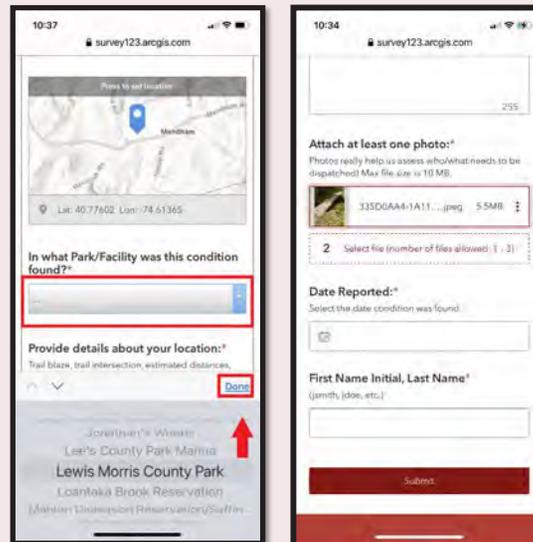
There are several methods that agencies can take to continue ongoing trail maintenance while not overburdening staff. For example, East Coast Greenway Alliance has a network of volunteers that help with regular trail maintenance. Similar groups could be engaged to maintain sections of the ECG that run through Charleston County as they are constructed.

4.1.8. Implement "adopt-a-trail" programs for regular maintenance and surveillance.

These programs encourage local businesses, organizations, or individuals to take responsibility for maintaining the appearance of a designated section of a trail. Volunteers may help pick up litter, repair vandalism, trim vegetation, or do other tasks. Signage on the trails can be used to recognize these groups' ongoing contributions, as well as signify to trail users that the trail is actively watched and maintained. Typically, an application process is used and applicants commit to maintain a trail section for a predetermined time period, such as a year.

CASE STUDY: MORRIS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION, NJ

Morris County Park Commission's robust Adopt-A-Trail program provides multiple ways for volunteers to get involved. "Trail Watchers" are trail users who serve as eyes on the trail and report specific conditions and issues to MCPC, like downed trees, vandalism, or trail erosion. "Trail Ambassadors" provide a friendly and helpful presence at trailheads during busy times, assisting trail users and maintaining proper trail conduct. "Trail Keepers" perform general trail maintenance on assigned trails.



MCPC has developed tailored resources for the program, including an Adopt-A-Trail Manual⁵ (for all volunteers) and a specific Trail Watchers Manual.⁶ These materials serve as training guides and references for volunteers, describing volunteers' roles and responsibilities, safety information, trail maintenance tips, equipment needed, and the process for reporting issues on the trails. The program also includes a monthly "Trail Fun Series," where volunteers complete more advanced and complex trail maintenance tasks under supervision of MCPC staff.

⁵ Adopt-A-Trail Manual, Morris County Park Commission, https://www.morrisparks.net/assets/images/PDFs/Volunteer_Applications/ADOPT-A-TRAIL-MANUAL-2021ED1.pdf

⁶ Adopt-A-Trail Manual:Trail Watchers,, Morris County Park Commission, <https://www.morrisparks.net/assets/images/PDFs/Commission/ADOPT-A-TRAIL-MANUAL-2021Watchers.pdf>



CASE STUDY: FAIRFAX COUNTY AND VDOT

Fairfax County, Virginia, has an MOU with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) allowing wayfinding signs in VDOT right-of-way in the Tyson's Corner urban center, subject to review and approval by VDOT.⁷ VDOT's existing signage standards did not sufficiently accommodate many of the urban features in Fairfax County's Comprehensive Plan; the MOU allows the County more flexibility to use its own standards, which were reviewed and approved by VDOT.

⁷ Memorandum of Agreement between Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County, Virginia, and Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Transportation for Design Standards and Related Responsibilities for Maintenance of Streets in the Tysons Corner Urban Area. https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/tysons/sites/tysons/files/assets/documents/pdf/transportation/transportation_design_standards_memorandum.pdf

4.2. Expand, strengthen, and clarify physical connections within parks.

There are opportunities to further unify signage standards and clarify movement throughout Charleston County parks and trails. During the engagement process, residents also noted a strong desire for more trails within parks. As more people walk, bike, and take transit to Charleston County Parks, park design should make it easy for all visitors to navigate to and through CCPRC's parks.

4.2.1. Develop and implement design guidelines and standards for signage and wayfinding within CCPRC parks.

Consistent signage across the system and/or within specific types of parks/facilities (e.g., within regional parks, trails parks, waterparks, etc.) will strengthen CCPRC's brand image, while providing visitors with useful navigational information. It may be helpful to convene a steering committee made up of stakeholders to lead the process of developing a unified wayfinding system.

4.2.2. Continue installing park maps (using kiosks or other signage) along sidewalks and trails where they intersect park entrances and main trail intersections.

A wayfinding system plan should be developed concurrently with the sign design guidelines. This plan will help CCPRC identify specific locations, sign types, and placement for wayfinding information. Coordinate with municipal partners on municipality-wide wayfinding efforts (e.g., Mount Pleasant Way, City of Charleston's West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway). These may also be opportunities to further CCPRC brand identity at the pedestrian scale.

4.2.3. Clarify CCPRC's role in enhancing safe internal and external wayfinding.

Collaborate with municipal and state agency partners to enhance wayfinding to CCPRC parks/facilities. For any desired signage outside of CCPRC's property (e.g., in SCDOT road right-of-way or on other public or private property), if necessary, agreements (e.g., MOUs) can help clarify rights and responsibilities of each party. As an example, the City of Isle of Palms recently designed and installed wayfinding signage for the island, including wayfinding signage for CCPRC's Isle of Palms County Park.



4.3. Advocate to improve access to parks from neighborhoods and population centers.

While CCPRC provides all county residents with the opportunity to access a park or recreation facility within a 15-minute drive, thousands of people currently live within a 15-minute walk of an existing park or facility. In fact, accounting for some overlap in residents who live within 15-minutes of multiple parks, the driveshed for Charleston County park spaces 544,000 households. Supporting the development of safe and convenient walking routes to parks is key to ensuring that people can access parks near where they live, regardless of age, ability, or income.

4.3.1. Advocate for safe multimodal crossings of roadways near park entrances.

WalkBikeBCD's Design Guidelines⁸ includes guidance on pedestrian crossing locations, facility selection, and crossing treatments.

⁸ WalkBikeBCD Appendix A: Design Guidelines. <https://apd.app.box.com/s/86bdjy3vs7hb4ut2mva6py2p3qwfbrl>

4.3.2. Coordinate with CARTA and municipalities to evaluate and improve first/last mile access to parks from transit.

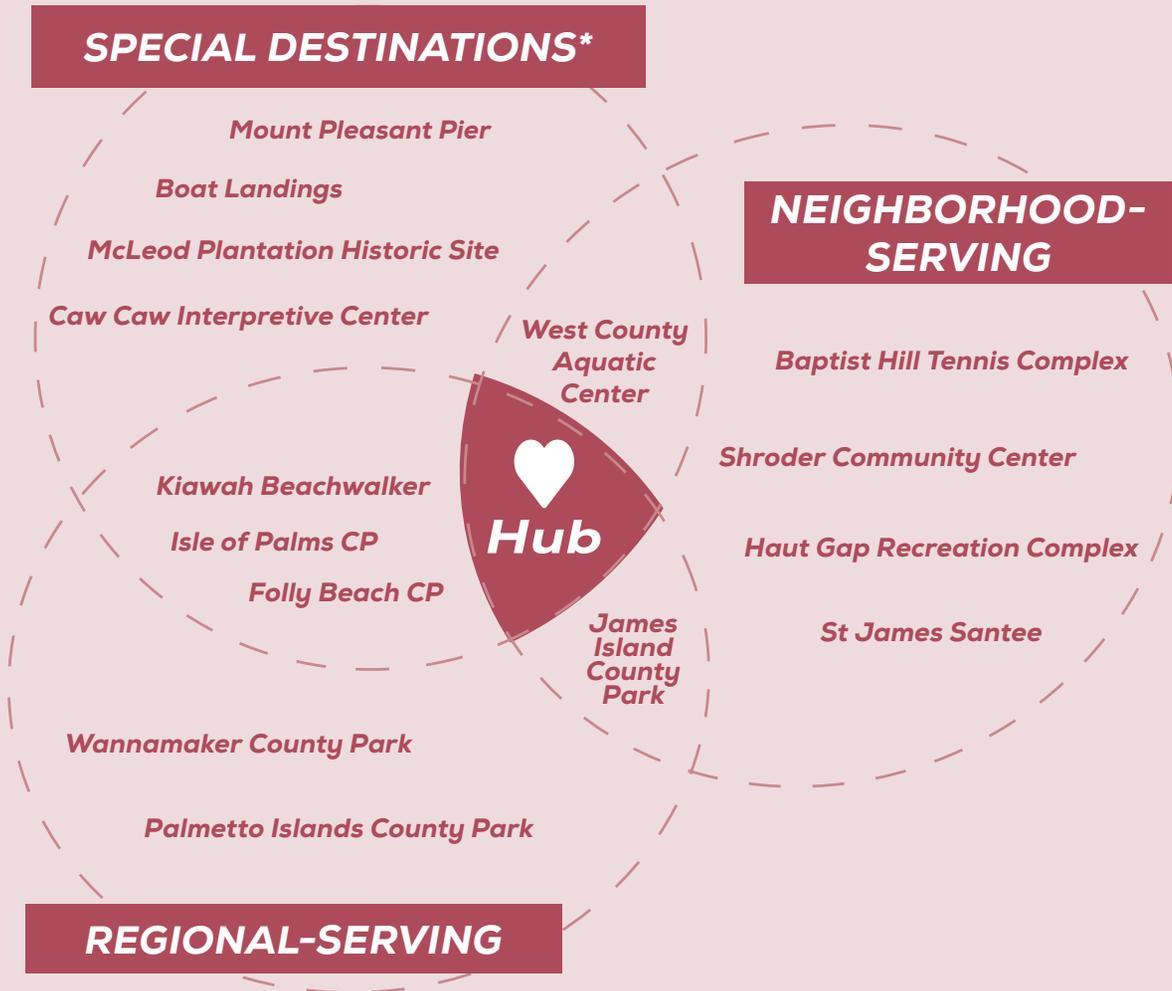
Conducting an analysis of bus stop locations near parks could help identify areas in need of improvement, or stop relocation (to be determined in coordination with CARTA). CCPRC should make sure there is a clear route from transit stops to park entrances, using wayfinding signage as necessary. Particular attention should be paid to locations where a transit stop is located on the opposite side of the road from a park entrance, including evaluating the distance to the nearest signalized intersection or crossing opportunity and the quality of the crossing (if any).

4.3.3. Identify and advocate for safe walking and biking routes to parks from neighborhoods.

The networks identified in the People to Parks and Walk-Bike BCD plans can serve as starting points to identify preferred routes. Maps of these nearby walking or biking routes could be included on park kiosks at trailheads. In the future, consider coordinating with municipalities to include walking/biking distances to nearby parks on existing or future municipal wayfinding signage.



Figure 1.82 Off-Road Duathlon at Laurel Hill County Park, 2022



* Facility designations may vary

4.3.4. Co-locate parks/facilities with other government/municipal functions to the extent practicable.

To enhance visibility and increase access (and potentially save on development costs), co-locate future CCPRC parks/facilities with other municipal facilities/functions. Parks/Facilities could be located in proximity to different types of destinations, such as community centers, libraries, and schools, as well as special destinations such as boat landings. Examples of this in the CCPRC system already are: West County Aquatic Center, which sits adjacent to the Hollywood Town Hall and CCPL’s St. Paul’s Hollywood Library; Laurel Hill County Park, whose trailhead utilizes a parking lot at the Town of Mount Pleasant’s Park West Recreation Complex.



4.4. Advocate for local multimodal connections between parks and destinations, as well as for large, regional walking and biking routes.

Local planners, developers, and current and prospective residents recognize the value of living in a community where amenities such as parks are a short walk or bike ride from home.

Figure 1.84 Community Hubs Diagram. Steering Committee Meeting #3

Walk- and bike-friendly development, as well as dedicated infrastructure for walking and biking, facilitate these connections between parks and nearby neighborhoods. CCPRC has played a role as an advocate in county-wide connectivity plans such as People 2 Parks.

Large, regional routes like the East Coast Greenway and Spine routes have the potential to transform multimodal transportation in the region, while shorter neighborhood greenways round out local walking and biking networks. More than 125,000 people live within a 15-minute walk of the East Coast Greenway and CCPRC Spine routes. The East Coast Greenway, Battery to Beach, and CCPRC Spine routes directly connect to 12 existing county parks and four future county parks. Additional shared-use path projects recommended in previous plans will provide walking and biking connections to even more county parks.

4.4.1. Plan/Develop trailheads at parks along major Spine Routes and along the East Coast Greenway (similar to Stono River County Park).

The Spine Routes and East Coast Greenway route connect directly to several county parks, and could connect via shared-use paths to many more. These parks serve as de facto trailheads for

users of the trails. CCPRC should evaluate existing parks that connect to the Spine Routes and ECG routes and make improvements as needed to support trail use (e.g., wayfinding and amenities such as bike repair stations). Additionally, CCPRC should also evaluate “blue trail” connections via waterways, particularly paddling trails.

As an example, Stono River County Park is significant for its views of the Stono River, its long boardwalk and island trails experience, as well as the compact nature of the site. However, it is regionally significant for its future connectivity to the West Ashley Greenway and Johns Island pedestrian bridge. In that way, it functions as a premier trailhead, and reinforces CCPRC brand identity. This value of Stono River County Park is replicable throughout the CCPRC park system as local and regional greenways, blue trails, and shared-use paths are built-out.

At other parks, gatehouses or park admission main entrances are not near planned multi-use paths or greenways (i.e. there are trails inside the park, but not along the entrance road); design/construct paths into the parks, and consider addition parking/trailheads near the road right-of-way to increase visibility and convenience.



4.4.2. Continue CCPRC involvement on current transportation projects to capitalize on opportunities to improve walkable/bikeable connections to parks.

Charleston County's Greenbelt program may be an avenue for CCPRC to strategically improve walking and biking connections to parks. Municipalities, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for Greenbelt funding, which can be used to acquire land for greenway corridors and parks through fee simple acquisition. For example, the town of Mount Pleasant is using funding from this program to acquire land for three trails that are part of the Mount Pleasant Way project (~47 miles of linear park connecting the town and preserving land). The program can also provide funding to make improvements that provide public access to existing greenbelt properties, including boardwalks, foot bridges, unpaved trails, and small unpaved parking areas. More information about the application process and deadlines is available at: <https://greenbelt.charlestoncounty.org/>.

4.4.3. Coordinate with County and municipal zoning and planning departments to support walkability/bikeability connections to parks/facilities and connect municipalities.

Coordinate with local entities for multi-use paths and trails on adopted plans, such as CCPRC's People 2 Parks Bike-Walk Plan, BCDCOG's Walk-Bike BCD, and other municipal plans are important references, in addition to SCDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Possible outcomes with road projects might be to have right-of-way set aside during right-of-way acquisition, road shoulder pre-graded for multi-use path construction in later phases, etc.

4.4.4. Formalize CCPRC roles and responsibilities for communicating connectivity needs/benefits to municipal and transportation partners.

CCPRC should strive for staff presence and participation at regional transportation meetings that focus on leveraging bicycle, pedestrian, and trail funding and investment priorities. Formalizing these roles will allow for smoother ongoing communication with municipal and transportation partners regarding connectivity needs.

Figure 1.85 Wannamaker County Park, 2022

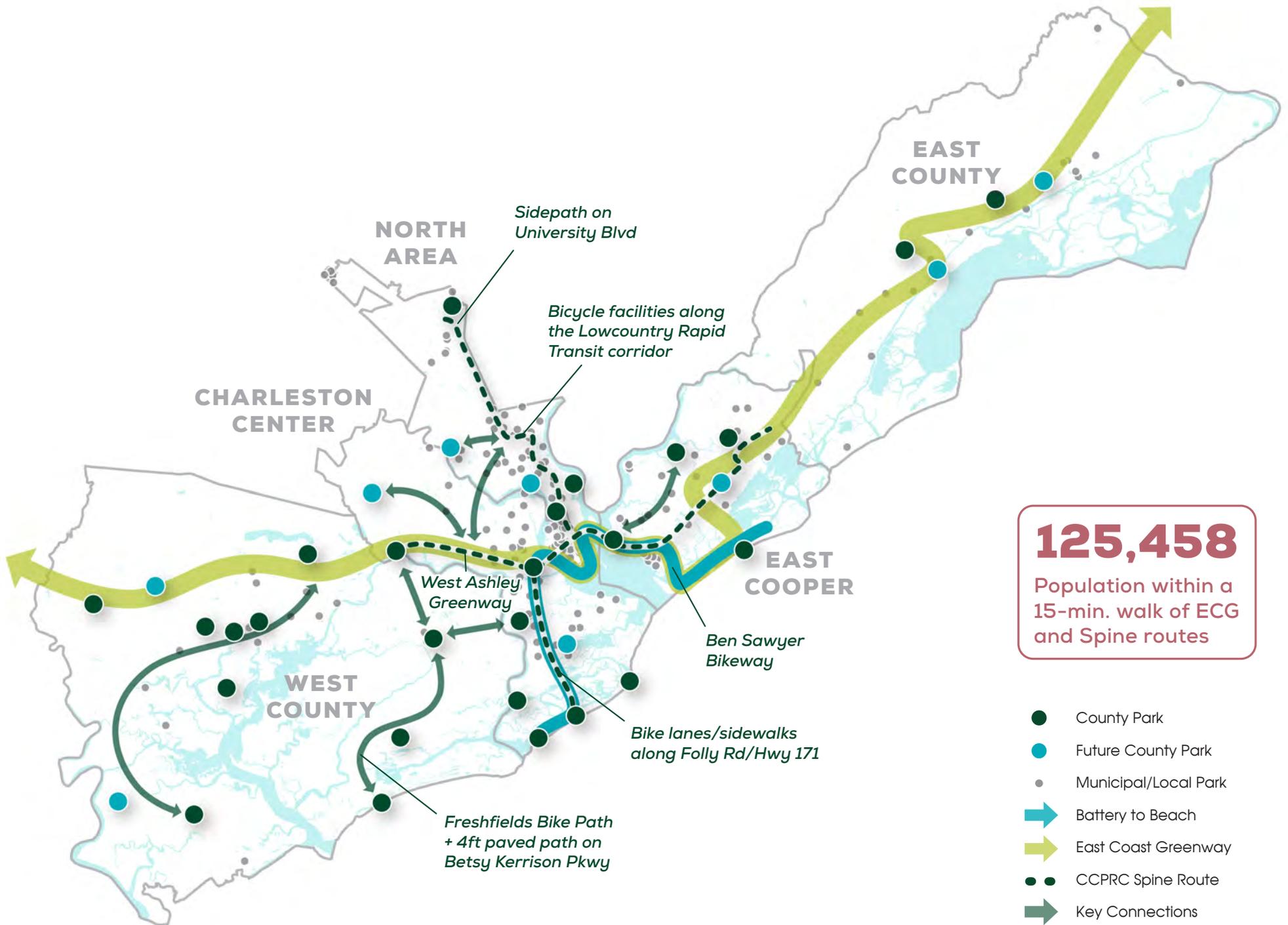


Figure 1.87 Park Gateway System Steering Committee Meeting #3

4.4.5. Allocate staff time within CCPRC to pursue increased local, state, and federal funding opportunities for multimodal connectivity to CCPRC parks/facilities.

CCPRC’s parks (especially its regional parks like JICP, PICP, WCP) attract visitors from throughout the Charleston metropolitan area; however, many CCPRC facilities are within reasonable walking and biking distance from residents. CCPRC’s contribution to regional transportation connectivity planning may include developing and sharing results from a “trail” economic benefits analysis, and trail visitor counts, or survey results to demonstrate increasing support for regional trails. Additionally, SCDOT’s Complete Streets Policy requires the department to coordinate with regional transportation planning agencies (such as BCDCOG) to include walking and biking facilities on its projects. It is critical to advocate for bicycle and pedestrian components as early in the project life cycle as possible; if a project with a bike/pedestrian component or facility is included in a qualified adopted plan, subsequent SCDOT roadway projects are required to include those components.

4.4.6. Take a leadership role in spearheading/facilitating connectivity projects in underserved areas, in accordance with CCPRC's enabling legislation.

In underserved, rural areas such as West County and East County, CCPRC should consider coordinating with regional planning partners to plan and implement the East Coast Greenway (ECG) in Charleston County (including spurs/connections to parks and population centers). Ideally, CCPRC would be a stakeholder in the planning process, along with other municipalities. The public in these generally lower-income communities would benefit from improved bike and pedestrian connections to parks and recreation facilities. In both East and West County planning areas, CCPRC owns a considerable amount of frontage on US-17 – the current alignment of the ECG, and has taken the future into account during recent park planning efforts. As an example, the USFS owns a substantial amount of land on US-17 in the East County planning area, and the Town of Awendaw partnered with USFS to construct segments of the ECG on USFS-owned land.

4.4.7. Conduct an economic benefits analysis of the East Coast Greenway (for sections in Charleston County), Battery to Beach, and Spine routes, and communicate the findings with partners.

Economic benefits analyses are a tool to quantify the expected benefits of a project. For example, the East Coast Greenway in Charleston County is currently a conceptual alignment on roadways shared with vehicle traffic but is planned to become a continuous walking and biking route separated from motor vehicles. Using data from existing shared-use paths in Charleston County and similar trails across the country, CCPRC could estimate the myriad impacts of completing this trail.

The analysis should seek to quantify a variety of benefits, such as:

- Economic benefits (e.g., money spent by trail visitors on food, retail, lodging, and equipment rentals; revenue from sales tax; revenue from increased visitors to CCPRC parks and trailheads)

- Health benefits (e.g., number of trail users, minutes of physical activity on the trail, healthcare savings from increased physical activity, vehicle crash reduction savings from mode shift)
- Environmental benefits (e.g., water quality, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat preservation, air pollution reduction, carbon sequestration)
- One-time benefits (e.g., number of temporary jobs created from construction, property value increases near the trail)
- Staff benefits (e.g., CCPRC part-time or seasonal staff who are still in school and/or do not drive)

Understanding and communicating the benefits of building shared-use paths to the public and elected officials/local government agencies can help justify further investment in walking and biking facilities. These quantitative, data-backed figures can also make projects more competitive for funding.

CASE STUDY: ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SHARED-USE PATHS IN NORTH CAROLINA.

A 2018 study of four greenways across North Carolina quantified the annual economic benefits that these facilities provide to individual trail users, businesses, and communities.¹

¹ Evaluating the Economic Contribution of Shared Use Paths in NC. The Institute for Transportation Research and Education and Alta Planning + Design, <https://itre.ncsu.edu/focus/bike-ped/sup-economic-impacts/>.



The study found that a one-time \$27.4 million capital investment in the greenways supported:

- \$19.4 million in estimated annual sales revenue at local businesses along the greenways
- \$684,000 in estimated annual local and state sales tax revenue from businesses along the greenways
- \$25.7 million in estimated annual savings due to more physical activity, less pollution and congestion, and fewer traffic injuries from use of the greenways
- \$48.7 million in estimated business revenue from greenway construction
- 790 jobs through greenway construction

5. Optimizing Operations

OUR PARKS COMMISSION IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE IN SERVICE OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

Since the 2013 plan, CCPRC has grown its acreage and staff capacity and pivoted to a vision and an organizational model that aims to build awareness in the community, fulfill the recreational needs of residents, and meet the conservation needs of the county's natural resources. It is no small feat that CCPRC was recently accredited under CAPRA with a perfect score and awarded by the NRPA for the Commission's innovative approach to expanding resources to provide access to all residents. Park and Recreation agencies across the country have been challenged with understanding the needs of their community through a different post pandemic lens. While other organizations have struggled to effectively respond, this new paradigm underscored CCPRC's strength as an agile and innovative system. The strength of its nationally renowned leadership, of the Commission's mission and vision, and unparalleled depth of team members all contribute to an extraordinary experience for the Charleston County community.



"Continue to maintain an efficient, effective and financially viable park system... financial viability is key!"
- Steering Committee Workshop

"Collaboration between other municipalities and organizations such as libraries and senior centers could lead to greater access to programs and facilities."
- Otranto Road Library Public Workshop



5.1. Build a talent acquisition and retention approach that reflects the diverse and unique perspectives and experiences of Charleston County communities.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been a focus throughout CCPRC for a number of years and is included as one of the Core Committees. Acknowledging this, there is room for improvement, and staff are interested in a stronger approach to talent acquisition that better reflects the demographic composition of Charleston County.

5.1.1. Formalize an agency-wide mentorship program for both future and existing staff.

CCPRC can establish a formal mentoring program as a companion to the Leadership Academy program. As part of its onboarding process, CCPRC can assign a mentor to each new employee to serve as a guide and primary point-of-contact for all questions and interests related to professional development within the system. For employees who wish to continue a career path with CCPRC, mentorship can grow and evolve, with these employees taking on mentors of their own. This way, mentorship becomes a cyclical process where anyone who wishes to receive support and guidance can throughout their time at CCPRC.

CCPRC encourages mentorship among its ranks but does not have a formal process to support and sustain this effort. Approaches to mentorship can take different forms. While some organizations have found one-on-one mentorship to be the most effective, other approaches to mentorship have included mentorship groups, where up to four staff members with varying levels of experience are organized in a group, and could range from interns to park managers to executive staff. Mentorship groups can be highly effective at allowing multiple individuals with different levels of experience to learn from one another all in a singular setting. Additionally, the group meeting setting can allow for a more relaxed and “low stakes” environment that can differ greatly from one-on-one mentorship that often feels more formal.

5.1.2. Collect and analyze existing staff satisfaction data to create incentives that work to retain employees.

CCPRC staff are dedicated, hardworking, and steadfast in their loyalty to the Commission, as seen in the high percentage of employees who have spent decades of their career with CCPRC. Longevity is one of the keys to the excellence CCPRC provides to Charleston County. A culture in the system has been created to allow experienced professionals to grow in place and



Figure 1.89 Evening in the Park, Folly Beach County Park, 2019

share knowledge and opportunity with newer ranks of employees over time.

In 2030, it is anticipated that a sizable number of employees who have worked for CCPRC for decades will retire. Additionally, it is projected that recruitment for full-time governmental agencies such as CCPRC will be much more difficult in the future as the pandemic allowed people a taste of remote working and most do not want to give it up. Gallup reports that 6 in 10 exclusively remote employees are "extremely likely to change companies" if not offered remote flexibility, and 3 in 10 hybrid employees are "extremely likely to change companies" if not offered remote flexibility. CCPRC relies heavily on a workforce that is front-facing and accessible to the community, and leadership will need to assess its current workforce needs and determine a plan to sustain for the future.

5.1.3. Document effective processes and techniques for more seamless staff transition.

CCPRC has transitioned significantly in the last few years, growing by one full-time position and responding to a significant amount of turnover

due to internal promotions. The team works well together and is efficient and effective with its duties. CCPRC recently started to use the project management tool Asana, which has helped organize and prioritize the demands made on the team daily and more long term.

Within the past three years, the Executive Director position has been vacated (by way of retirement) and filled by a different successor from within the Commission. Although internal transitions do not create nearly as much of a learning curve as filling the position with an external candidate, this amount of turnover has had an effect on the Commission, especially pertaining to knowledge sharing and communication below the director level. This is a typical outcome of leadership transition. The Executive Director and leadership team is aware and are making strides to improve by creating a more formalized, efficient system for communicating information so that the breadth of the Commission can feel more informed about decision timelines and CCPRC's overall direction. As one potential solution, it is recommended that CCPRC build a Workforce Planning Guide that helps preserve the knowledge, while helping to develop the skills and abilities of the workforce so

there is minimal interruption in operations when staff vacate a position.

5.1.4. Support professional growth and create new opportunities for promotions through re-classification, new positions or other means.

There are many ways for CCPRC to support professional growth and to provide opportunities for advancement of career and part time staff.

A priority would be to create a formal succession plan to identify potential candidates for higher level positions, paving the way for a pool of qualified internal candidates who are prepared for future promotion opportunities. CCPRC's newly established Training and Development program can also help staff chart out a career plan, identify skill and experience needed, and determine how best to acquire that knowledge in preparation for promotional opportunities.



Figure 1.90 Core Value Luncheon, Mount Pleasant Pier



CCPRC can also regularly review and update job classifications to align with industry standards and emerging trends in park and recreation. This will ensure that employees have a clear path for advancement and that new positions are created as the Commission evolves. Offering job rotation programs that allow employees to gain exposure to different roles and divisions will allow for cross training. This will enhance the CCPRC staff skill sets and broaden their understanding of operations, making the staff more versatile and eligible for promotions. CCPRC should also consider establishing clear criteria for promotions, including performance benchmarks, required skills and qualifications and other promotional considerations. Communicating these criteria to all employees will ensure fairness and promote a sense of transparency. Lastly, CCPRC can establish a formal mentoring program where experienced leaders guide and support employee professional growth.

Figure 1.92 Summer Camp at Palmetto Islands County Park



5.2. Invest in part-time and full-time staff professional growth and qualifications as a critical facet of the Commission.

CCPRC employs hundreds of part-time and seasonal employees, with numbers fluctuating throughout the year. The number of part-time employees increases most in the summer months (when school is out), when facility usage is at its peak, and programs are expanded to meet demand across the county. It is clear that part-time staff are a critical facet of CCPRC. Over the next decade, as the population of the county continues to increase alongside demand, it will be even more important for CCPRC to find ways to further attract and retain these employees, especially those individuals who wish to learn and grow professionally with the Commission and feel most connected to CCPRC’s mission and values (see Figure 1.93).

A large percentage of CCPRC full-time staff began as part-time employees, and have continued on to a career in management or even executive leadership. By 2030, it is anticipated that a large number of employees will be retiring with 20+ years of service. This trend further reinforces the idea that CCPRC will need to

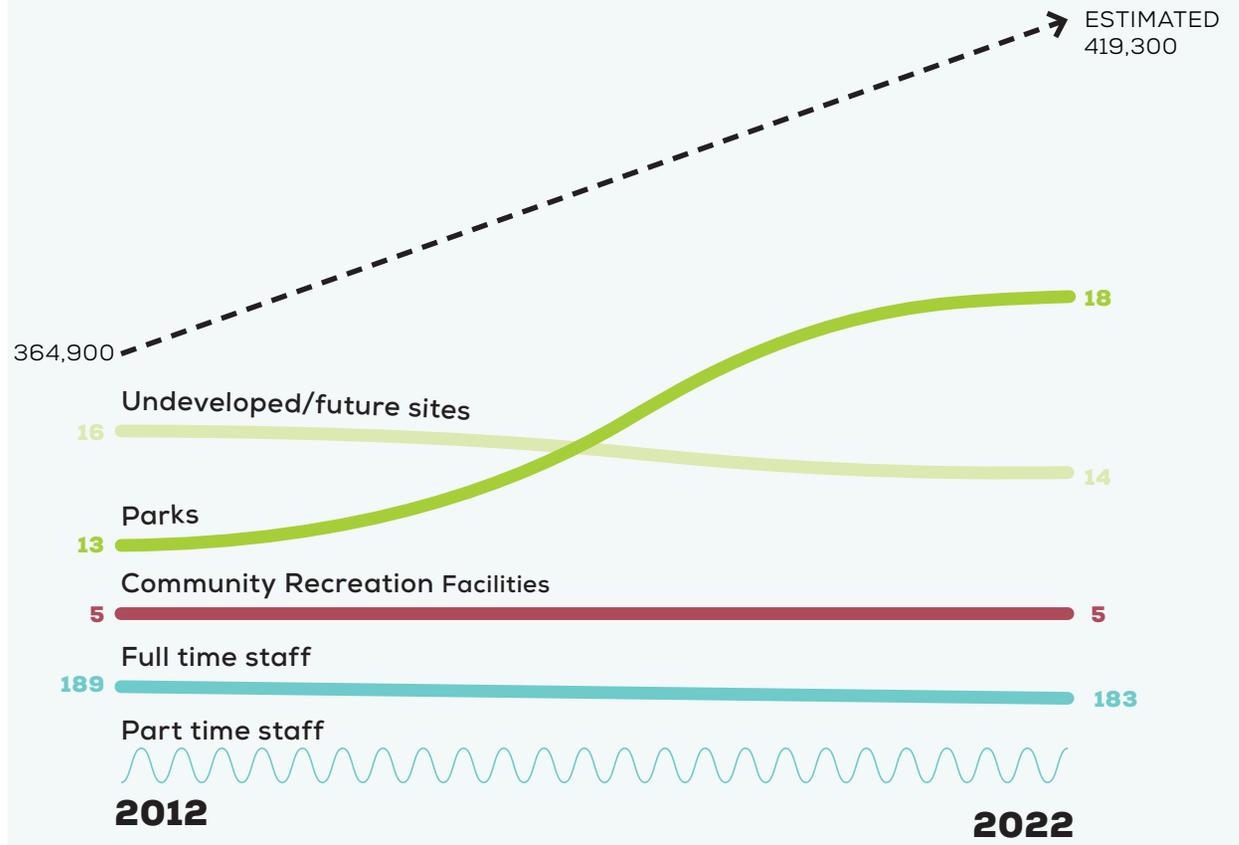


Figure 1.93 Fiscal Responsibility Diagram. Steering Committee Meeting #3



Figure 1.94 Partnerships Diagram. Steering Committee Meeting #2

continue to focus their efforts on succession planning in the next several years to ensure a smooth transition. Employee growth is just one way to respond to the growth of the system and resident population. Any decisions regarding incremental organization growth will need to be paired with a review of efficiencies gained through park standards, technology investments, and partnership outcomes.

5.2.1. Develop a process for identifying staff who desire specific professional development opportunities.

CCPRC has created a culture in the system which allows experienced professionals to grow in place and share knowledge and opportunity with newer ranks of employees. A large percentage of the staff are “homegrown,” so succession planning and development of employees throughout the Commission has been a focus that has in many cases allowed employees to begin as seasonal or part-time employees and continue to a full-time career in management or even executive leadership. Part-time staff particularly need to be included in more meetings and activities historically reserved for full-time employees only. This includes attending monthly General Staff meetings, participating in Welcome Academy orientation, becoming a member of our Core

Value Committees, and attending celebratory occasions such as the holiday and Core Values luncheons. This inclusion will not only keep part-time staff informed about important activities within CCPRC but will also lead to a greater sense of belonging and inclusion that can lead to full-time employment.

A variety of other internal resources for professional development are available for CCPRC employees. Welcome Academy is a formalized program for newly onboarded full-time staff to learn about the Commission and its organization. Leadership Academy is a formalized program for managers or supervisors that allows staff to self-select areas of special interest to continue a career path within the system. An employee typically completes the academy in a year or so, but due to workloads it has taken longer in recent years. CCPRC also encourages mentorship among its ranks but does not have a formal process to support and sustain this effort. Implementing a formal mentorship program could be a successful next step that many employees might become part of if it were offered. Additionally, the regular Employee Engagement Assessment process is another opportunity for employees to share their professional development aspirations. It is also recommended that CCPRC utilize certain tools such as The Society for Human Resource

Management (SHRM), which determines the appropriate HR staffing levels needed. SHRM is a well known and well respected organization in the HR profession, and they have come up with a formula to determine the best HR staff to employee ratio that is needed to help an organization achieve its goals.

5.2.2. Partner with various institutions and organizations to attract and retain new part-time and seasonal staff.

Part-time staff are heavily relied upon to manage events and programs. CCPRC currently partners with universities through their internship program that is offered over a 12-week period through the summer and again in the fall. Interns are directly supervised by CCPRC staff and receive professional experience according to their career goals or field of interest. During the program, interns get on-site work experience and receive exposure to aspects outside of their area of expertise through staff and commission meetings, group activities with other interns, and day-to-day park and recreation operations.

CCPRC can further expand on this program to partner with other institutions and organizations, such as senior centers, organizations that serve people with disabilities, or existing local, college,



and state apprenticeship programs. Partnering with these groups could help CCPRC attract staff with more diverse backgrounds, while allowing these individuals to gain valuable experience in the parks and recreation industry, and obtain training and development skills that they otherwise would not have the opportunity.

5.2.3. Create professional growth partnerships for future staff, such as with universities and public schools.

Partnerships with universities and public schools can result in programs such as internships, fellowships, or part-time employment with a focus on providing hands-on training and skill development. Opportunities may also include hosting workshops, seminars, and other professional development opportunities which can help attract new talent and retain current staff by providing opportunities for growth and advancement. Additionally, CCPRC can attend career fairs, host information sessions, and offer incentives and benefits to attract and retain part-time and seasonal staff, such as tuition reimbursement, discounts, health insurance, retirement plans, and flexible scheduling. CCPRC should also explore opportunities for professional growth partnerships with technical schools such as Trident Tech. Students in technical schools

have a unique skill set that could be a good fit for CCPRC (e.g. programs in HVAC or carpentry) but oftentimes these students are not aware of parks as an avenue for their careers.

5.2.4. Create targeted marketing for positions geared toward people with disabilities.

By creating targeted marketing efforts for positions geared toward people with neurodivergence or physical disabilities, CCPRC can attract a more diverse and qualified pool of candidates. When creating job postings, all marketing materials should use inclusive language that welcomes candidates from all ages and abilities. CCPRC should also ensure that their application processes are accessible to all candidates and include alternative application formats, such as braille or audio recordings. Additionally, materials should highlight any work accommodations that are available to neurodivergent individuals and people with physical disabilities such as flexible scheduling, assistive technology, or any other methods that aim to make candidates feel more comfortable in the workplace environment. CCPRC can also partner with disability organizations to reach a broader audience, and ensure that best practices are being used.

Figure 1.95 Master Naturalist program



5.3. Continue balancing financial resources to provide recurring investment in operations, maintenance, programming, facility rehabilitation, and capital improvements throughout CCPRC's service area.

CCPRC organizes its fees and charges environment to support its annual revenue goal of 50% of total operational costs to deliver programs and services. Other funding sources such as taxes and grants revenues help fund the additional 50% of operational and service delivery costs. However, CCPRC has become increasingly aware, despite some recent recovery gains in participation and revenue generation, that expenses may significantly outpace revenues as programming is expanded into underserved areas. CCPRC continues to meet, and some years, exceed its goal of achieving roughly 50% of funding from non-fees and charges sources to ensure that the organization offers high-quality experiences to all visitors.

5.3.1. Monitor revenue generation related to core service categories.

In order to help ensure that all CCPRC programs and services continue at current levels, and that

increased program delivery and service levels can be achieved to accommodate customer demand in underserved areas, careful attention will need to be paid to CCPRC's core revenue generating activities, programs, and services. This will help ensure that CCPRC continues to operate on its thus far successful fiscal framework of roughly 50% of operational and service delivery costs supported by user fees and charges and the remaining 50% is supported by non-fee sources. This particular framework also allows for service delivery expansion to continue into areas where new services are needed, but where it may not be feasible to generate revenue sufficient to fund operations and service delivery solely from user fees and charges.

Additionally, CCPRC should use its electronic registration and permitting system to the greatest extent possible to allow detailed tracking and analysis of revenues and annual participant volumes per activity, permit, or service type. Capturing this detail and incorporating it into a revenue requirement analysis will allow a more nuanced and accurate analysis of revenue generation levels per core service type and will allow staff to assess the impact of specific fee adjustments on revenues and expenditures in greater detail.

5.3.2. Enhance and communicate revenue policy and fund balance policy philosophies regarding revenue generation and supporting future community investments.

In order to help ensure that all CCPRC programs and services continue at current levels, and that increased program delivery and service levels can be achieved to accommodate CCPRC customer demand in underserved areas, careful attention will need to be paid to the CCPRC's core revenue generating activities, programs, and services. CCPRC continues to experience significant demand related to activity and program participation. Furthermore, because of the unique nature of programs and services provided by CCPRC, many core service revenues are cyclical, tend to fluctuate widely on an annual basis, and are dependent on macro-economic and socio-economic trends well beyond the control of CCPRC.

5.3.3. Continue to adjust pricing models to reflect community needs and ensure revenue requirements are being met.

Establishing a price for a program can be done through a variety of strategies. CCPRC should follow a revenue requirement pricing approach based on the 50% framework whereby 50% of

operations and service delivery is supported by user fees and charges and the remaining 50% is supported by non-fee sources. This method uses revenue requirement goals as a primary pricing strategy, followed by either market pricing (for services with low alternative coverage, i.e., few if any alternative providers) or competitive pricing (for services with high alternative coverage, i.e.,

other alternative providers who offer similar services). Another method that CCPRC could explore could be differential pricing, where different prices are charged for the same service depending on alternative factors such as a more desirable time or location, which may drive a higher price point.

5.3.4. Research demographics in county communities to inform finance-related policy changes.

Operating on CCPRC’s current fiscal framework of roughly 50% of operational and service delivery costs supported by user fees and 50% supported by non-fee sources has allowed for service delivery expansion to continue into underserved areas of the county, such as with the Community Recreation program. In addition to this policy, CCPRC should thoroughly research demographics across the county to determine what policies can be further implemented to serve areas with the highest need, while still meeting revenue requirements. The demographic composition of Charleston County varies significantly across the county, with the highest pockets of social vulnerability within the North Area, and eastern and westernmost parts of East and West County.



Figure 1.96 Evening in the Park, Folly Beach County Park, 2021

5.3.5. Continue utilizing stable and predictable funding resources for repair and maintenance projects.

Depending on the urgency, scale, and cost of repair, replacement, or new construction projects, CCPRC may access a variety of funding sources. Projects are categorized into three categories: Park Maintenance and Repair (PMR), Facility Repair and Replacement Projects (FRRP), and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). These project-types vary in scale from smaller, less-intensive (and less expensive) maintenance needs, to larger, major construction projects. With respect to the scale and budget of the project, PMR projects are typically funded through the annual General Agency budgeting process; FRRP projects are often funded through capital reserves (i.e. revenue from enterprise funding sources); and CIP projects are typically bond-funded, and planned years in advance.

5.3.6. Document the capital improvement decision-making process, and share identified priorities with the public.

CCPRC’s extensive public input process during PARFA, paired with various other operational and political considerations, feed into an extensive CIP

prioritization process. The CIP prioritization process is typically conducted every five years (based on its respective funding cycle), and strives to disperse CCPRC park/facility investments throughout CCPRC’s service area, with a general goal of providing (or enhancing) equitable access. Given that some projects can cost substantially more than others, staff must balance the available CIP funding for projects, and in some cases even spread project investments over multiple funding cycles. The CIP process is an internal effort, led by a staff committee, and ultimately approved by CCPRC’s Commission. CCPRC staff and commissioners alike work to ensure that CIP priorities speak to the Commission’s mission, vision, and values, as well as the goals identified through this PARFA comprehensive plan. Following Commission adoption, the CIP and CCPRC’s five-year strategic plan will be made available to the public.

5.3.7. Continue pursuing grants and cyclical funding resources to offset facility repair, replacement, and capital improvement costs.

CCPRC seeks funding from a variety of sources, including federal, state, and local grants, private donations, and partnerships with local businesses.



Other grant opportunities frequently pursued by CCPRC for repairs, replacement, and new development include:

- Park and Recreation Development Fund (PARD), to support recreation sites in small communities
- South Carolina Recreation Trails Program (RTP) for trail maintenance and development
- SCDNR grants for boat landing repairs and enhancements
- Boating Infrastructure Grants (BIG grants) for marina repairs and enhancements
- SHPO Undiscovered South Carolina grant, and various other grants supporting archaeological and cemetery research
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants for acquisition, repairs, and Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program (ORLP) grants, to fund park and recreation development in typically underserved urban areas

CCPRC should explore the applicability of federal funding opportunities, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) which provide funding for a wide range of community

Figure 1.99 Toast Under The Oaks, Johns Island County Park, 2021

development projects, including park and recreation facilities. Similarly, the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority (RIA) provides grants and loans to local governments and public entities for infrastructure projects that promote economic development in rural areas, including new recreational opportunities that support local tourism.

CCPRC can also look into more innovative funding models, such as establishing a public-private partnership to fund maintenance and repair initiatives, or working with the larger community to raise awareness of the importance of park maintenance and repair projects and to build support for funding initiatives. There are also opportunities with private foundations and nonprofits, such as the Coastal Community Foundation and the Central Carolina Community Foundation, which offer grant programs to support park and recreation-related projects in South Carolina.

Additionally, CCPRC has benefited directly and indirectly from acquisition grants by Charleston County Greenbelt and the South Carolina State Conservation Bank. Both funding sources have the potential to fund limited trail development and natural resource-related enhancements.

Historically, CCPRC has coordinated with Charleston County Government (Transportation/Public Works staff) on transportation-related improvements to enhance connectivity and safe access to CCPRC parks and facilities. Examples of previously pursued transportation funding sources include County Transportation Committee (CTC) funds, Charleston County Transportation Sales Tax (TST) funds, and the federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).



5.4. Continue to leverage the role of CCPF and other creative funding sources.

As a partner to CCPRC, the Charleston County Parks Foundation (CCPF) was established in 1990 to provide an additional and deeper level of connection to the community. The board was created to raise funds to assist in the mission of the Commission by helping to reach areas in the community that may have gaps in services or challenges in accessing services.

The vision of the CCPF is “to develop and sustain projects that enable people to access

the Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission’s facilities, programs, and services for living an active and healthy lifestyle.” CCPRC’s partnership with the foundation is an integral part of the Commission’s connection to the community. Under the direction of CCPF, the Genesis Swim Safety Fund was established after the tragic drowning of a 13-year-old in Hollywood, SC, named Genesis Holmes. The fund allows free access to aquatic safety programs in the Johns Island, Awendaw/McClellanville, and Ravenel/Hollywood areas to reduce the number of drownings in Charleston County. In 2022, over 100 people learned to swim at the West Aquatics Center.

Beyond (or in coordination with) the Parks Foundation, to offset development costs CCPRC could explore sponsorship opportunities or direct donation of facilities and/or amenities.

5.4.1. Communicate CCPF goals and accomplishments in the annual CCPRC report.

The mission of the Charleston County Parks Foundation (CCPF) is to improve access to CCPRC facilities and programs by being a successful funding partner who provides scholarships,

discounts, and other assistance measures to communities across the county. The Charleston County Parks Foundation served more than two thousand people last year in communities throughout the county. Some recent successes include:

- Introduced over 300 children to swim lessons and aquatic safety programs.
- Offered 87 fully funded public swim scholarships for all ages at West County Aquatic Center.
- Provided 30 fully funded summer camp scholarships.
- Made 100 Gold Passes available for check out at the Charleston County Public Libraries.
- Planted 250 indigenous seedlings and potted trees to assist in the reforestation of Stono River County Park.
- Connected with over 150 descendant communities throughout the Lowcountry and beyond.
- Assisted hundreds more families, community members and non-profit groups with access to our parks, programs and services.

5.4.2. Continue to build synergy between CCPRC and the Parks Foundation.

The Charleston County Parks Foundation provides financial support to CCPRC, to subsidize park and program access for residents requesting assistance. To further impact the public, the Foundation also coordinates with CCPRC to execute special projects and program support within four “funds”:

- Genesis Swim Safety Fund
- Park & Recreation Opportunity Fund
- Cultural History Fund
- Nature Stewardship Fund

Through these funds and the projects and programs they support, CCPRC is better able to provide access and make accommodations for financially challenged and underserved communities. Additionally, through the Cultural History Fund and Nature Stewardship Fund, the Foundation lends its support for important resource management work – particularly in high attendance facilities, where the various projects have high visibility (furthering CCPRC and Parks Foundation brand identities). CCPRC and the

Foundation should continue to work toward their similar goals, while articulating the value of their relationship to the public.

5.4.3. Standardize protocols for the Parks Foundation’s use of parks, facilities, and staff.

The Charleston County Parks Foundation’s mission is “...to help all residents experience the Charleston County Parks and Programs”. By design, CCPRC and the Foundation are inextricably linked, and the two organizations share staff, facilities, and other agency resources. CCPRC should evaluate the efficacy of the current Foundation structure, including its access-to and the responsibilities-of staff (i.e . evaluate staff availability to serve both entities).

5.4.4. Expand the role of the Parks Foundation board members to complement the proposed CCPRC ambassadors program.

Members of the Parks Foundation can act as Access Ambassadors (see Action 1.4.3) to create awareness about – and actively connect – underserved communities with park and recreation access opportunities. Opportunities

for increasing awareness may include having foundation members attend neighborhood meetings which happen (e.g., monthly HOA or neighborhood meetings), or participate in local events with community organizations, churches, or schools. In coordination with CCPRC staff, Parks Foundation board members would establish trust over time with the community, while increasing awareness. Foundation members can also conduct outreach and share printed materials to these communities to advertise new programs, events, or scholarship opportunities.

5.4.5. Create opportunities for donor-funded amenities.

CCPRC can develop park improvement plans which outline the needs and priorities of each park, identifying areas that require amenities such as bike racks, drinking fountains, etc. Once the park improvement plan is in place, CCPRC can work to identify potential donors who may be interested in funding the amenities, and then create a proposal process that outlines the specific amenities that need funding, the estimated cost, the potential benefits to the community, as well as a plan for how donations will be used and how donors will be recognized for their contributions.



Figure 1.100 Reggae Nights, James Island County Park, 2022.

4

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

In this chapter:

PARFA Implementation

Funding Options

Pricing Strategies

Measuring Progress



Figure 1.101 Community Recreation Youth Basketball Game

Successful implementation of the strategies and projects identified by the Parks and Recreation For All! Plan requires balancing and addressing community aspirations, partner and stakeholder goals, and the Commission's mission and vision. The following is a list of strategies CCPRC can employ to make implementing recommendations a success. These strategies are tied to the tables that follow, summarizing each strategy and action and communicating how and who will help to accomplish each action.

PARFA is a Framework: The goals, strategies and recommendations should serve as a framework for decision making. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the plan serves as a reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction. Because the plan is an integral tool for CCPRC, it may also be central to employee onboarding and can be used to promote accountability and motivation by individual staff members to champion the plan's implementation. No contribution is too small!

Track Progress: Publicly release the plan online by placing the plan on CCPRC's website and consider using the site to track plan implementation progress. CCPRC can share updates about recommendation implementation progress through progress reports or using the implementation tables below as working documents. As applicable, track and share progress with interested partners and community members as well as with key decision makers.

At the end of each fiscal year or aligned with the CIP process, reflect on the results of the implementation efforts to-date and include continued community engagement and progress made within each big idea. In addition to yearly

reviews, CCPRC should comprehensively reflect on accomplishments to-date and evaluate progress in equitable project completion that achieves the plan's goals. These comprehensive reviews are an opportunity to refine or change strategies and recommendations to reflect changing community needs and recreation trends. CCPRC may work toward providing data and metrics to clearly articulate plan developments and explain project benefits in a way various audiences can understand.

Identify the Plan Champion(s): Identify a team to guide the plan's implementation to ensure success. This team could be organized as a stand-alone committee, or incorporated into CEP, Core Value Committees. This Committee would track progress and implementation and potentially help inform 5-year strategic plan update. The group of staff representatives would be responsible for monitoring progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the plan into CCPRC operations and investments. The team should be knowledgeable of the planning process, design and community engagement values of the recommendations made by the plan. Additional staff members within each division should also lead specific goals and actions assigned to that division. These individuals can manage each recommendation

within a strategy to ensure implementation is followed through and communicated with the plan champions, other division leads for plan implementation, project partners, stakeholders and the broader community.

Empower the Community: Engage community members (residents, businesses, CCPRC partners, and non-profit organizations) early and often during the implementation process. A knowledgeable community is the best way to secure support and ensure the project(s) suit the needs of those who will benefit from them. Equity needs to continue to be at the forefront of all conversations and engagement with underserved communities must also be paramount to the implementation process. The following strategies can be used to help get the word out and provide a continuous feedback loop with community members:

- Engage the community through operational staff who interact with the community daily (e.g., via comment boxes, conversations).
- Set a regular meeting schedule to keep staff and stakeholders informed of the progress.
- Guide outreach in an inclusive direction and keep the dialogue adaptive by using formalized policies for outreach

advertising and messaging.

- Use strong, clear visuals paired with data and reflections on community input to frame the conversation.
- Hold meetings at times and places that make it possible for interested members of the community to participate.
- Partner with community leaders and project partners to maintain momentum for the plan.
- Identify methods to address language barriers, communication issues, cultural barriers, or differences of opinion.

Funding Options

As identified within the in Chapter One: The System Today, CCPRC organizes its fees and charges environment to support its annual revenue goal of 50% of total operational costs to deliver programs and services. Other funding sources such as taxes and grants revenues help fund the additional 50% of operational and service delivery costs. Paying careful attention to core revenue generating facilities, programs, and services will help ensure that CCPRC continues to operate on its thus far successful fiscal framework. This particular framework also allows for service delivery expansion to continue into areas where

new services are needed, but where it may not be feasible to generate revenue sufficient to fund operations and service delivery solely from user fees and charges.

CCPRC continues to meet, and some years, exceed its goal of achieving roughly 50% of funding from non-fees and charges sources. Further demonstrating efficient, high-value park and recreation service delivery to residents and visitors alike. It is for this reason that near-term increases to all fees and charges may not be needed but should continue to be regularly assessed and adjustments made to select fees, as needed.

Pricing Strategies

The following are common pricing factors CCPRC should continue to consider when developing new fees and charges, or updating current fees and charges:

- Cost to offer the program (limited direct costs only)
- History of fees charged
- Perceived ability and willingness to pay
- Number of participants per class/activity
- Affordability for target audience
- Ability to attract participants

Establishing a price for a program is done through a variety of strategies:

- **Market Pricing:** A fee based on demand for a service or facility, or what CCPRC estimates a participant is willing to pay for a service. Private sector businesses commonly use this strategy. One consideration for establishing a market rate fee is determined by identifying all similar providers (e.g., private sector providers, municipalities, non-profit providers) and, if it is determined that the service has excellent position in the market, establishing a fee that is higher than other similar providers.
- **Competitive Pricing:** A fee based on what similar service providers are charging. One consideration for establishing a competitive fee is determined by identifying all providers of an identical service (e.g., private sector providers, municipalities, non-profit providers), and establishing a fee that is at mid-point or lower.
- **Differential Pricing:** A fee that is grounded in the idea that different prices are charged for the same service when there is no real difference in the cost of providing the service. The same service might be offered at a more desirable time or location, or have other factors that attract a following, which may

drive a higher price point. Alternatively, there might be services offered that are struggling to maintain a minimum and need a boost to stimulate more interest, driving a lower initial cost.

Funding Opportunities

CCPRC should continue to employ its current revenue balance goals, inform decision-making regarding fees charged for programs, facilities, and services.

Staff should continue to consider annual adjustments to fee levels that would have the greatest impact in increasing revenue. This approach may be especially relevant when CCPRC adds/expands facilities and/or programs which have the potential to cost more than they generate.

CCPRC should continue to use its electronic registration and permitting system to the greatest extent possible to allow detailed tracking and analysis of revenues and annual participant volumes per activity, permit, or service type. Capturing this detail and incorporating it into a revenue requirement analysis allows a more nuanced and accurate analysis of revenue generation levels per core service type and allows staff to assess the impact of specific fee

adjustments on revenues and expenditures in greater detail.

CCPRC should continue to align pricing strategies to assist with the development of new fees for activities and services as well as to help guide methodologies for adjusting current fee levels according to desired outcomes.

CCPRC should continue to annually review all fee levels, once adopted, and adjust them in accordance with budgetary requirements, staff effort, and activity, permit, and service volume.

Measuring Progress

The PARFA plan sets forth an ambitious vision and series of goals for the growth of the system that are driven by community voices. These goals are the product of rigorous community conversations, multiple surveys, in-depth analysis, and stakeholder visioning. Going forward, CCPRC should use the plan as a tool to assist in decision making as it relates to investment strategies and resource allocation to ensure barriers to participation are removed and create a more equitable system. Finally, the PARFA plan should serve as a unifying document that helps align the needs of the community with the priorities and

actions of CCPRC in order to continue to grow an inclusive, loved, and connected park system.

The following tables identify each strategy and action and details the following:

Vision Alignment and Investment Type:

This column defines how the action relates back to the vision for the plan.

- **Sustain/reinforce** acknowledges actions that identify ways to continue the work the Commission already does very well and is core to strengthening the Commission’s mission. The groundwork for the majority of these actions has already been completed, and the plan acknowledges these actions to ensure the Commission continues to prioritize this work in the future.
- **Grow/innovate** identifies the actions that align with changing community needs and express opportunities for the Commission to expand or develop creative ways to meet community needs sustainably.
- **Advocate/partner** acknowledges important actions that emerged during this process that are important to

CCPRC but not directly aligned with the Commission’s mission, or a chance to share in opportunities for investment, activation, and connections with like-minded organizations.

Timeline: Expectations for when each action could be implemented, or created to support long term impacts. The timeline identifies actions that are ongoing, or projects that have already started and will continue, near-term quick wins (2023-2025) that can be implemented quickly or projects that will need to happen before other long-term actions can start, mid-term actions (2025-2030) that require initial work to begin, or are less of a priority to the Commission or community, and long-term projects (2030 - 2040+) which are often much larger in scale, or require other work to be completed within the plan to make these actions a reality.

CCPRC Lead: This column of the table communicates internal CCPRC strategy champions or division leads. As noted in the implementation strategies above, each division will need to engage with the plan’s implementation to make the vision and goals a reality. In several actions, this will require partnerships between

divisions that could both play leadership roles.

Support: This communicates partners to support the strategy’s implementation. These supporting groups can be internal or external to CCPRC.

Priority Action: This column within the implementation table denotes potential CCPRC priority actions by division (*to be determined*).

As noted in the implementation strategies at the beginning of this chapter, a report of the plan’s implementation should be developed regularly to communicate policy and project progress and to celebrate investments big and small across the system using these tables as a guide.

Access for All

Our parks provide high quality experiences to all.

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #1: Continue efforts to close identified gaps in service to deliver high quality services to all areas of the county.					
1.1	Continue prioritizing planning and development of existing landholdings ("future park sites") to expand CCPRC reach in underserved areas and advance CCPRC's mission.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.2	Consider opening additional "future park sites" for preliminary public access, learning from previous CCPRC preliminary access parks.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks	Planning & Development CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.3	Continue evaluating land acquisition opportunities that close identified gaps in service through direct purchase by CCPRC, or in coordination with land acquisition partners.	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	Planning & Development CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.4	Assess current Community Recreation programs, spaces and demand, and use this information to develop a strategic framework for long-term investment.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.5	Continue evaluating opportunities to close gaps in service by operating facilities and offering programs on partner-owned land.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Planning & Development Executive Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Access for All

ACTION		VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #2: Maintain and strengthen partnerships to improve access to parks and recreation facilities and recreation programs.						
2.1	Pursue partnerships and entertain agreements which align with CCPRC’s mission, vision, and values, and ensure co-benefits.	Advocate/Partner	Executive	Planning & Development Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.2	Consider opportunities to continue CCPRC’s funding assistance for improvements to small, local parks in underserved areas.	Advocate/Partner	Executive	Finance Planning & Development CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.3	MOUs/MOAs related to long-term development and programming (e.g. property rights) should minimize both short and long-term risks to CCPRC and its associated investments.	Advocate/Partner	Executive		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.4	Develop a process for reviewing MOUs on a regular cycle to ensure agreements remain current.	Grow/Innovate	Executive		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #3: Expand access opportunities for underserved population groups.						
3.1	Continue implementation of the ADA Transition Plan.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks Planning & Development Recreation	All other divisions ADA Steering Committee CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
3.2	Prioritize projects that support public health, life safety, and accessibility.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
3.3	Expand festivals/events and other targeted programs for special user groups.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Access for All

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #4: Continue emphasizing the broad range of financial assistance options and the ways people can access them.					
4.1	Track the success of focusing discounts to intended audiences, such as geographic areas, income brackets, or other identified groups.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Recreation Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.2	Continue the successful Gold Pass partnership with Charleston County Public Libraries to provide Charleston County residents with free/discounted access to CCPRC facilities.	Advocate/Partner	Marketing	Executive Parks Foundation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.3	Identify/Designate access ambassadors to help connect individuals and communities to available discounts, scholarships and programs or other financial assistance opportunities.	Grow/Innovate	Human Resources	Parks Recreation Parks Foundation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #5: Increase awareness and visibility to residents by expanding data-driven strategic media engagement and messaging to under-reached groups.					
5.1	Allocate portions of the marketing budget to direct mail (in process, 2024 budget).	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Executive Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.2	Explore the potential to use CCPRC-owned properties to showcase and promote the system through signage at key gateway properties.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.3	Enhance tracking of where customers are coming from as a datapoint to inform Marketing strategy.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.4	Utilize advertisements on transportation services as a way to build awareness about CCPRC offerings and opportunities.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Access for All

ACTION		VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
5.5	Target marketing reach to areas within relative proximity to CCPRC parks/facilities.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
5.6	Implement county-wide wayfinding enhancements to increase visibility within public rights-of-way.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Executive Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #6: Expand access to water-based activities for all residents.						
6.1	Partner with like-minded organizations that provide water access, programming, or provide outfitting for on-water activities to share use of CCPRC launches and facilities.	Advocate/Partner	Recreation	Executive Parks Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.2	Continue to work with the Parks Foundation to ensure all youth have access to swim lessons.	Reinforce/Sustain	Recreation	Parks Executive Parks Foundation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.3	Create additional water access opportunities within future parks (including marsh, wetlands, lake and ponds).	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Executive Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Staying Relevant

Our parks reflect our changing & growing communities.

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #1: Provide unique complementary programs countywide.					
1.1	Source ideas for new types of events and programs from staff and the community.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.2	Pilot new or expanded events and programs in less visited parks.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.3	Balance high demand programs and services with programs and services that are valuable to staff and community.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.4	Provide more flexible and multi-use open space.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #2: Offer and introduce new programs and amenities aligned with community desires and population trends.					
2.1	Limit services where other entities (e.g., municipalities) are providing services and grow/strengthen services in underserved areas.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.2	Allocate funding for programming based on existing park and facility capacity (operating hours and square footage) and identified community needs from statistically valid surveys and community conversations.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Relevant

	ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
2.3	Align resources, planning efforts, and service menu in a way that keeps the current participation base front of mind (approximately 80% resident, 20% tourist). Balance future funding, capital improvement, service development, and human resource growth to align with the 80/20 ratio.	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	All other divisions CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.4	Develop procedures to track additional participant demographics, such as age and address, including drop-in activities, custom programs, and events. Monitor which participant groups are, and are not, being reached.	Grow/Innovate	Recreation	Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.5	Align website communication of programs and events with program categories to ensure the public understands and has access to the full range of program options.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.6	Align and consistently communicate program categories between program users and internally for staff.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #3: Reach all communities through broad, creative and inclusive communication tactics.						
3.1	Distribute information about camps and youth programs through flyers in Charleston County and neighboring county schools.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
3.2	Highlight commission staff who are field experts in natural resources, history, or cultural resources in marketing materials.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
3.3	Incorporate Commission calendar into programs and events calendar to connect residents to their commissioners and CCPRC decision making.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Staying Relevant

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
3.4	Increase the inclusion of data that communicates investments impacts to residents clearly and at an understandable scale in the annual report.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Executive Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #4: Develop a consistent feedback loop to reinforce relationships and trust with County residents.					
4.1	Continue to engage Bandit the mascot in marketing materials and in in-park communications, and track frequently asked questions to evolve CCPRC’s response to community needs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.2	Consider a regular/annual/bi-annual mailed survey to get input and track best communication methods over time.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #5: Adapt CCPRC’s park/facility planning and development process to capture broad stakeholder input, maintain project awareness, and reinforce CCPRC’s identity.					
5.1	New facility designs should provide for flexible-use spaces in structures and park spaces.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	All other divisions CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.2	Scale master planning and design efforts to site conditions, site development potential, programming requirements, operability, and the established project budget.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	All other divisions CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.3	Engage internal stakeholders throughout the planning process to ensure project buy-in.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	All other divisions CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.4	Engage external stakeholders throughout the planning process, adapting engagement methods and scope as appropriate to the site and project circumstances.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Marketing CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Relevant

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
5.5	Provide updates to communities throughout site planning and development.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Marketing CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #6: Communicate with municipalities as needed about national and local trends in programming, events, and facility development.					
6.1	Share statistically valid survey findings with municipalities and community organizations as guidance for their respective park and recreation planning efforts.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
6.2	Coordinate with municipal park and recreation providers to align investments toward serving Charleston County residents.	Advocate/Partner	Executive		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
6.3	Play to CCPRC's and respective municipalities' strengths in potential partnerships.	Advocate/Partner	Executive	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Resilient

Our parks thrive & adapt to our dynamic environment

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #1: Use the park/facility planning/design process to identify opportunities to strengthen CCPRC's resiliency.					
1.1	Consider opportunities to establish resiliency goals and incorporate resiliency trends into facility repair, replacement, and new construction projects.	Grow/Innovate	Parks	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.2	Challenge design consultants to research, communicate, and integrate resilient design and/or material options.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.3	Educate and inform the public and staff about the importance of resilience-focused design during facility master planning workshops, internal project scoping meetings, and during the internal project Design Review Committee process.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.4	Embed resilience and resource interpretation into the park master planning process.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.5	Identify opportunities to leverage the diversity of CCPRC's landholdings within the context of resiliency.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.6	When input is requested by partnering agencies/ organizations, provide resiliency-sensitive design suggestions where applicable.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.7	Study implications for development on land with critical and rare species.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Resilient

	ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
1.8	Define resilient management practices for hard and soft infrastructure.	Grow/Innovate	Parks	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.9	Explore strategic retreat by avoiding development in critical hazard or flood-prone areas.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.10	Consider known development constraints into long range planning efforts.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.11	Stay aware of resiliency trends and manage CCPRC's sustainability and resilience efforts.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #2: Expand maintenance and building standards to factor in all aspects of long-term sustainability and resilience.						
2.1	Favor using contractors and builders who use sustainable materials and building practices as a part of the bid selection process.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Finance CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.2	Specify sustainable materials when conducting maintenance projects.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
2.3	Ensure maintenance and management plans are in place for applicable parks and updated accordingly.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Staying Resilient

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
2.4	Continue long-range planning for major park renovations and short-term planning for routine maintenance needs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.5	Enhance capabilities to identify and track asset life cycles to better plan for facility repair and replacement by creating a facilities management dashboard.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Executive Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.6	Optimize procedures for addressing needs for facility maintenance in a timely manner.	Grow/Innovate	Parks	Executive Planning & Development CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #3: Expand the role of parks to provide heat relief, support water and air quality, and mitigate flood risks for residents.					
3.1	Leverage the role of park facilities in supporting year-round use and climate comfort.	Grow/Innovate	Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.2	Evaluate the potential to expand hours of certain parks and indoor facilities to the evening/cooler parts of the day in order to provide relief from heat.	Grow/Innovate	Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.3	Identify where CCPRC parks have the potential to contribute to stormwater management efforts, such as storing floodwaters during severe storm events.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Resilient

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
3.4	Continue following all applicable water protection regulations.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.5	Identify combined sewer overflows (CSOs), water quality management areas, and locations with severe flooding where parks offer significant opportunities to improve conditions.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #4: Continue to build on and communicate CCPRC's cultural, natural, and historical stewardship initiatives.					
4.1	Re-evaluate the agency-wide Natural Resource Management Plan every five years.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.2	Continue to develop and update natural resource management plans created for individual parks to ensure that the agency-wide plan and site-specific plans support each other.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.3	Create natural resource maintenance/management plans for developed parks and continue to update plans for existing parks.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.4	Continue to manage and be proactive about improving biodiversity within parks.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.5	Map, communicate, and maintain Land Use Stewardship Zones across all parks to balance land activation and natural resource protection.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Resilient

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
4.6 Communicate the value of natural capital to the public, to provide a clear understanding of the full value of a diverse and well-managed park system.	Grow/Innovate	Marketing	Planning & Development Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.7 Embrace wealth of cultural resources through research, community-informed interpretation, and climate driven strategies for protection.	Advocate/Partner	Recreation	Planning & Development Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.8 Continue implementation of the 2013 Cultural Resource Management Plan, and consider a plan update before 2030.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.9 Continue to develop and update CRMPs created for individual parks to ensure that the agency-wide plan and site-specific plans support each other.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.10 Implement initiatives to reduce potential human impact on cultural, historic, and natural resources.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #5: Continue to partner with resource management agencies and professionals to effectively manage invasive species and stay up to date on sustainable and resilient management practices.					
5.1 Assess undeveloped lands for ecological value and identify restoration opportunities to inform development or future acquisition.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Staying Resilient

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
5.2	Establish a process to identify and prioritize management/control of invasive species in places of higher potential ecological value.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.3	Identify where historic and cultural resources are threatened by climate change to better prioritize resource management and protection.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.4	Build upon existing and create new relationships with local and national environmental programs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
5.5	Partner with local historic preservation entities to stay up to date on best management practices and to identify potential programming partnership opportunities.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #6: Continue to demonstrate leadership in management and interpretation of natural and cultural resources.					
6.1	Engage Marketing Division to determine how to effectively communicate CCPRC resilience efforts to the public.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Planning & Development Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
6.2	Engage with Marketing Division to embed resilience education into external communications.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Planning & Development Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
6.3	Communicate the value of CCPRC's natural capital services to the public.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Planning & Development Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Staying Resilient

	ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
6.4	Create new interpretive opportunities at developed parks.	Reinforce/Sustain	Recreation	Planning & Development Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.5	Collaborate with community members for culturally relevant programming and interpretation (e.g., collaboration with African American and/or descendants of enslaved persons for McLeod Plantation Historic Site interpretive programming).	Reinforce/Sustain	Recreation	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.6	Identify opportunities to expand environmental and/or cultural history youth education programs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Recreation		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.7	Continue to plan/design resource demonstration areas in existing parks in accordance with resource management planning.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.8	Engage with conservation, education and research institutions/organizations to host research projects at undeveloped and developed parks.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.9	Continue to support employee participation in national conversations and conferences to stay on top of resiliency trends.	Reinforce/Sustain	All Directors	Executive Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
6.10	Establish benchmarks transitioning to efficient or alternative fuels by 2033.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks	Executive Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Making Connections

Our parks connect our communities to nature and to each other.

ACTION		VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #1: Continue to plan, establish, and maintain quality trails within parks.						
1.1	When acquiring park property, anticipate the need for accessible trails and consider terms of acquisition agreements that might limit paved or impervious surfaces.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.2	During park/facility master planning and design development, prioritize trail surfaces and alignment are feasible for CCPRC to maintain.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.3	Inspect and record trail conditions during annual park walkthroughs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.4	Maintain quality trails by identifying and treating issues early and/or through preventative measures.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.5	Continue to be receptive to feedback from trail users on maintenance concerns and overall satisfaction.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.6	Install/Deploy trail counters on CCPRC park/facility trails to better understand use patterns and overall demand.	Grow/Innovate	Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.7	Collaborate with volunteer organizations for ongoing trail maintenance to ease staff burden.	Advocate/Partner	Parks	Human Resources	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

Making Connections

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
1.8	Implement adopt-a-trail programs for regular maintenance and surveillance.	Grow/Innovate	Parks	Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #2: Expand, strengthen, and clarify physical connections within parks.					
2.1	Develop and implement design guidelines and standards for signage and wayfinding within CCPRC parks.	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.2	Continue installing park maps (using kiosks or locational signage) along sidewalks and trails where they intersect park entrances and main trail intersections.	Reinforce/Sustain	Parks	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.3	Clarify CCPRC's role in enhancing safe internal and external wayfinding.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #3: Improve access to parks from neighborhoods, prioritizing rapidly growing communities and socially vulnerable neighborhoods within the 15-minute walking service radius.					
3.1	Advocate for safe multimodal crossings of roadways near park entrances.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.2	Coordinate with CARTA and municipalities to evaluate and improve first/last mile access to parks from transit stops.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.3	Identify and advocate for safe walking and biking routes to parks from neighborhoods within the 15-minute walking radius.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Making Connections

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
3.4	Co-locate parks/facilities with other government/ municipal functions to the extent practicable.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #4: Advocate for local multimodal connections between parks and destinations, as well as for large, regional walking and biking routes.					
4.1	Plan/Develop trailheads at parks along major Spine Routes and along the East Coast Greenway (similar to Stono River County Park).	Grow/Innovate	Planning & Development	CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.2	Continue CCPRC involvement on current transportation projects to capitalize on opportunities to improve walkable/bikeable connections to parks.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.3	Coordinate with County and municipal zoning and planning departments to support walkability/ bikeability connections to parks/facilities and connect municipalities.	Advocate/Partner	Planning & Development	Executive	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.4	Formalize CCPRC roles and responsibilities for communicating connectivity needs/benefits to municipal and transportation partners.	Advocate/Partner	Executive	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.5	Allocate staff time within CCPRC to pursue increased local, state, and federal funding opportunities for multimodal connectivity to CCPRC parks/facilities.	Grow/Innovate	Executive	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.6	Take a leadership role in spearheading/facilitating connectivity projects in underserved areas, in accordance with CCPRC’s enabling legislation.	Grow/Innovate	Executive	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
4.7	Conduct an economic benefits analysis of the East Coast Greenway (for sections in Charleston County), Battery to Beach, and Spine routes, and communicate the findings with partners.	Advocate/Partner	Executive	Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Optimizing Operations

Our parks commission is dedicated to providing exceptional performance in service of our communities.

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
Strategy #1: Build a talent acquisition and retention approach that reflects the Charleston County community's diverse and unique perspectives and experiences.					
1.1	Formalize an agency-wide mentorship program for both future and existing staff.	Grow/Innovate	Human Resources	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
1.2	Collect and analyze existing staff satisfaction data to create incentives that work to retain employees.	Reinforce/Sustain	Human Resources	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.3	Document effective processes and techniques for more seamless staff transition.	Reinforce/Sustain	Human Resources		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
1.4	Support professional growth and create new opportunities for promotions through re-classification, new positions or other means.	Reinforce/Sustain	Human Resources	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #2: Invest in part-time and full-time staff professional growth and qualifications as a critical facet of the Commission.					
2.1	Identify staff desiring specific professional development opportunities.	Grow/Innovate	All Directors		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.2	Partner with local, college, and state internship programs to attract and retain new part time and seasonal staff	Advocate/Partner	Human Resources	Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Optimizing Operations

ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
2.3	Create professional growth partnerships for future staff, such as with universities and public schools.	Reinforce/Sustain	Human Resources	Executive Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
2.4	Create targeted marketing for positions geared toward people with disabilities.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	All other divisions	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
Strategy #3: Continue balancing financial resources to provide recurring investment in operations, maintenance, programming, facility rehabilitation, and capital improvements throughout CCPRCs service area.					
3.1	Monitor revenue generation related to core service categories.	Reinforce/Sustain	Finance		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.2	Enhance and communicate revenue policy and fund balance policy philosophies regarding revenue generation and supporting future community investments.	Reinforce/Sustain	Finance	Marketing	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.3	Continue to adjust pricing models to reflect community needs and ensure revenue requirements are being met.	Reinforce/Sustain	Finance Parks		Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.4	Research demographics in County communities to inform finance-related policy changes.	Reinforce/Sustain	Marketing	Executive Finance Planning & Development	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+
3.5	Continue utilizing stable and predictable funding resources for repair and maintenance projects.	Reinforce/Sustain	Finance	Executive Planning & Development CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+

Optimizing Operations

	ACTION	VISION ALIGNMENT AND INVESTMENT TYPE	CCPRC LEAD DIVISION(S)	SUPPORT DIVISION(S) AND COMMITTEE(S)	TIMELINE	PRIORITY
3.6	Document the capital improvement decision-making process, and share identified priorities with the public.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Executive Marketing CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
3.7	Pursue grants and cyclical funding resources to offset facility repair, replacement, and capital improvement costs.	Reinforce/Sustain	Planning & Development	Finance CIP Committee	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
Strategy #4: Continue to leverage the role of the Parks Foundation and other creative funding sources.						
4.1	Communicate Parks Foundation goals and accomplishments in the annual CCPRC report.	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	Parks Foundation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.2	Continue to build synergy between CCPRC and the Parks Foundation.	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	Parks Foundation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.3	Expand the role of the Parks Foundation board members to complement the proposed CCPRC ambassadors programs (see Access Action 4.3).	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	Human Resources Parks Recreation	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.4	Create opportunities for donor-funded amenities.	Reinforce/Sustain	Executive	Finance	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	
4.5	Establish Friends of groups to assist with minor park maintenance needs.	Advocate/Partner	Human Resources	Parks	Ongoing Immediate 2023-2028 2028-2033+	

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APPENDICES

In this chapter:

Appendix A. CCPRC Community Survey - Executive Summary

Appendix B. CCPRC Community Survey - Survey Instrument

COMMUNITY SURVEY INTRODUCTION

In May 2022 CCPRC administered two different types of community surveys to better understand resident and park visitor satisfaction and unmet needs. The first was a mailed statistically valid survey to 4,000 households across the county. The survey captured 1,000 responses across the county, resulting in a precision of +/-3.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This high degree of confidence ensured that the survey captured a snapshot of the county's diverse population across geographic planning areas, income, race, and age, among other factors. Particular attention was given to the areas of emphasis desired by staff, including: Recreation Trends Analysis, Needs Assessment, Community Inventory, and Level of Service Standards.

The goal of the survey was to achieve a level of statistical validity within each CCPRC "Planning Area", as to inform future decision-making about parks, facilities, programs, and services at a local level.

Appendix A. CCPRC Community Survey - Executive Summary

2022 Charleston County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Executive Summary

Overview

ETC Institute administered a Community Needs Assessment Survey for the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission during the months of summer 2022. The survey will help Charleston County plan for future recreation programs and facilities that meet the community's needs and preferences.

Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the Charleston County. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online at *CharlestonCountyParksSurvey.org*.

After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up by sending text messages and mailing postcards to encourage participation. The text messages and postcards contained a link to the online version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent people who were not residents of Charleston County from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered online with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not included in the final database for this report.

The goal was to complete a minimum of 1,000 completed surveys from County residents. The goal was exceeded with 1,009 completed surveys collected. The overall results for the sample of 1,009 households have a precision of at least +/-3.1 at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains the following:

- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 2)
- Priority Investment Rating (PIR) that identifies priorities for facilities and programs (Section 3)
- Importance-Satisfaction Analysis that examines Parks and Recreation services (Section 4)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 5)
- Responses to open-ended questions (Section 6)
- A copy of the survey instrument (Section 7)

The major findings of the survey are summarized on the following pages.

Charleston County Communications

Differences in Providers: Respondents were asked to indicate if they were familiar with the differences between Charleston County Parks and other municipal or private park and recreation providers. Most respondents (83%) were aware of the differences.

Communication Methods: Respondents were asked to select all the ways they learned about Charleston County Parks facilities, services, programs, and events. The highest number of respondents received communication via CharlestonCountyParks.com (67%), word of mouth (63%), and the local news (44%). Respondents were then asked to rank their top 3 preferred communication methods:

- CharlestonCountyParks.com (49%)
- Charleston County Parks email newsletter (40%)
- Local news (33%)

Charleston County Parks User Experience

Parks and Recreation Services. Respondents were asked to rate their overall level of satisfaction with 24 parks and recreation services. Respondents were most satisfied (rating either “very satisfied” or “satisfied”) with the cleanliness of parks and facilities (85%), condition of park and recreation amenities (83%), and customer assistance by staff (79%). Then residents were asked to select the four services of highest importance to their household. These items were selected most often:

- Cleanliness of parks and facilities (33%)
- Condition of park and recreation amenities (30%)
- Availability of information (27%)
- Connectivity of trails and pathways (24%)

Barriers to Use: Respondents were asked to identify all the reasons their household does not use facilities, programs, or services offered by Charleston County Parks more often. Respondents most often listed knowing what was available (43%), busy schedules (25%), and distance from residence or work (23%) as major barriers.

Future of Parks: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 18 potential actions towards enhancing the future of Charleston County Parks over the next 5 to 10 years. Respondents thought these items were most important (rating them “important” or “very important”).

- Purchase and preserve wildlife-rich natural areas (90%)
- Focus on maintaining existing parks and facilities (90%)
- Renovating or upgrading aging parks and facilities and purchasing land for trails and open space (85%)

Respondents were then asked to select the four items they would most support the county implementing:

- Purchase and preserve wildlife-rich natural areas (29%)
- Focus on maintaining existing parks and facilities (25%)
- Develop new walking/biking trails in parks (22%)

Transportation

Use of Primary Mode of Transportation: Respondents were asked to select their primary mode of transportation. Cars were by far the most popular with 97% of respondents indicating it as their primary mode of transportation. Respondents were then asked how long they would be willing to travel for 10 activities using their primary mode of transportation. Respondents were willing to travel the furthest (20 minutes or more) to visit a historic site (79%), attend a special event or participate in a family day outing (76%), or visit a nature center (75%). A majority of respondents (54%) were only willing to travel 10 minutes or less to visit their closest neighborhood park. Another majority of respondents (59%) would only travel 20 minutes or less to utilize a trail for walking, hiking, and running.

Satisfaction with Public Transportation Aspects. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with seven public transportation considerations. Overall, respondents were more dissatisfied than satisfied. Respondents were least satisfied (rating either "very dissatisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied") with the quality and availability of resources about public transit stops and destinations (52%), public transit connections to their favorite County park (46%), the quality of amenities at public transit stops (50%), and the travel time between their residence and favorite County Park via public transit (47%).

Satisfaction with Shared-Use Path. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with seven shared-use path considerations. Respondents were most satisfied (rating either "very satisfied" or "satisfied") with the availability of trailheads and path amenities (57%), path conditions (49%), and the availability of trailheads and path amenities (43%). Respondents were least satisfied (rating either "very dissatisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied") with the number of shared-use paths & greenways available (44%), and how well paths connect to their favorite County Parks (41%).

Satisfaction with Trail Services. Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with seven trail services. Respondents were most satisfied (rating either "very satisfied" or "satisfied") with the overall trail conditions (66%), availability of diverse trail types within county parks (59%), and the quality and availability of directional and informational signs on trails (58%).

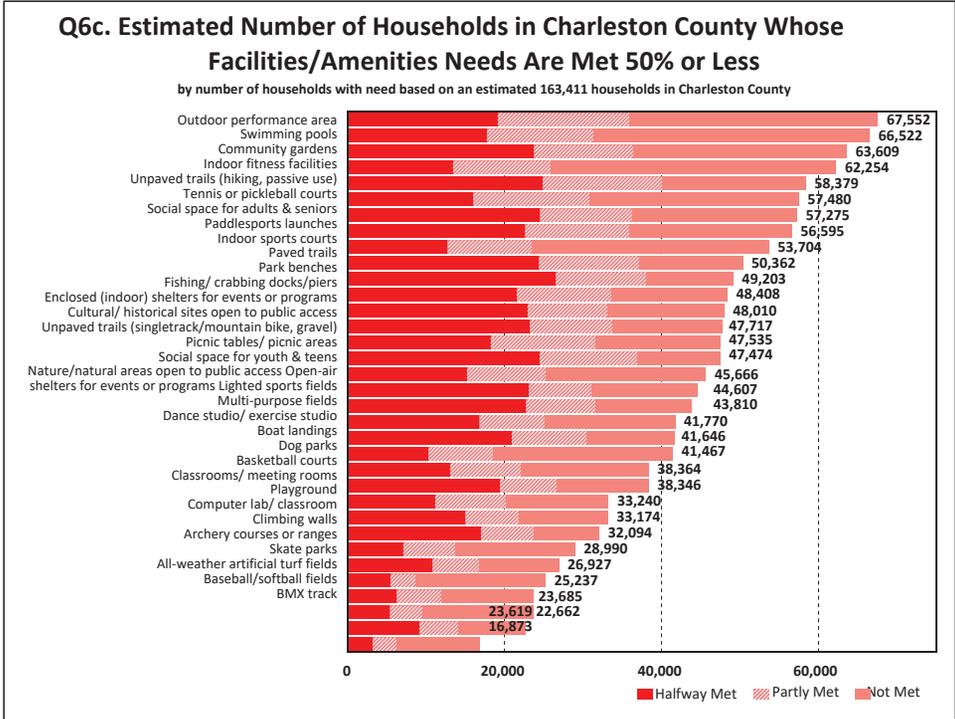
Parks and Recreation Facilities Needs and Priorities

Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 34 parks and recreation facilities and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

The three parks and recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Outdoor performance area – 67,552 households
2. Swimming pools – 66,522 households
3. Community gardens – 63,609 households

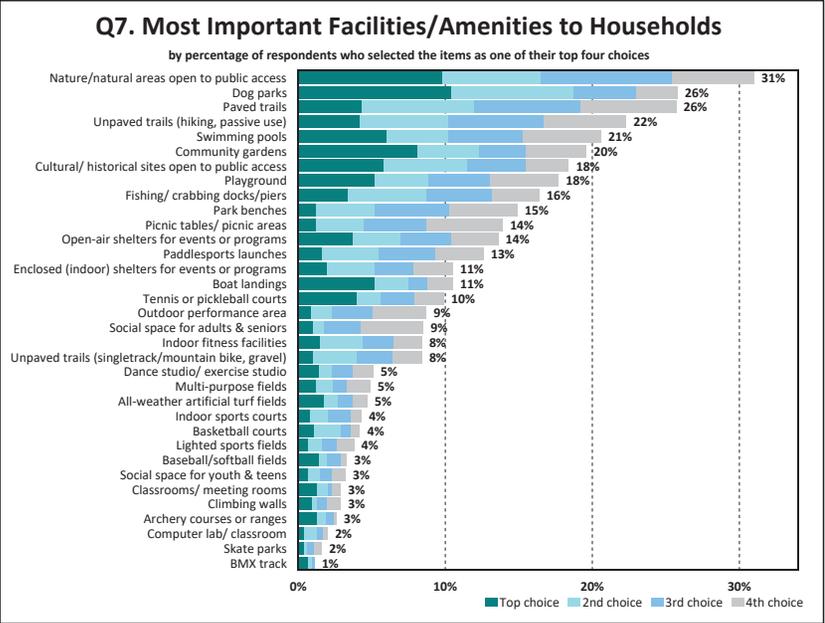
The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 34 parks and recreation center facilities assessed is shown in the chart below.



Facilities Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each Parks and Recreation facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, these were the four facilities ranked most important to residents:

1. Nature/natural areas open to public access (31%)
2. Dog parks (26%)
3. Paved trails (26%)
4. Unpaved trails (hiking, passive use) (22%)

The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.



Most Important Public Park Items. Respondents were asked to select all the items their household would find valuable to a public park. Shade trees (93%), public restrooms (90%), and places to sit (84%) were selected most often. Then respondents were asked to choose the top four most important public park items to their household. These items were selected most often:

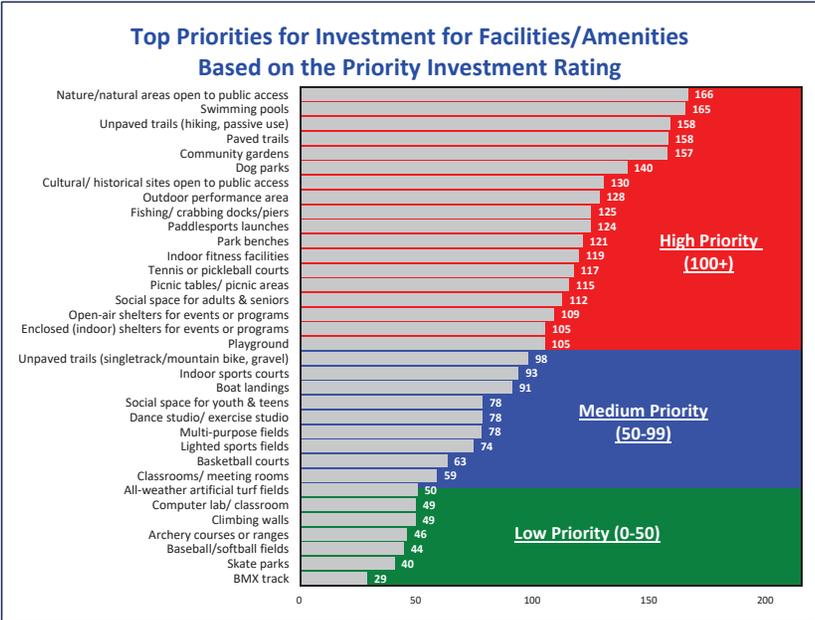
- Active play areas (29%)
- Shade trees (28%)
- Views of rivers, creeks, or lakes (28%)
- Public restrooms (27%)

Priorities for Facility Investments: The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on amenities/facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the amenity/facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 3 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following parks and recreation facilities/amenities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Nature/natural areas open to public access (PIR=166)
- Swimming pools (PIR=164.9)
- Unpaved trails (hiking, passive use) (PIR=158.4)
- Paved trails (PIR=157.5)
- Community gardens (PIR=157.4)
- Dog parks (PIR=140)
- Cultural/ historical sites open to public access (PIR=130)
- Outdoor performance area (PIR=128.1)
- Fishing/ crabbing docks/piers (PIR=124.6)
- Paddlesports launches (PIR=124.4)
- Park benches (PIR=120.9)
- Indoor fitness facilities (PIR=119.3)
- Tennis or pickleball courts (PIR=117)
- Picnic tables/ picnic areas (PIR=115.1)
- Social space for adults & seniors (PIR=112.2)
- Open-air shelters for events or programs (PIR=108.7)
- Enclosed (indoor) shelters for events or programs (PIR=104.9)
- Playground (PIR=104.6)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 34 recreation facilities assessed on the survey.



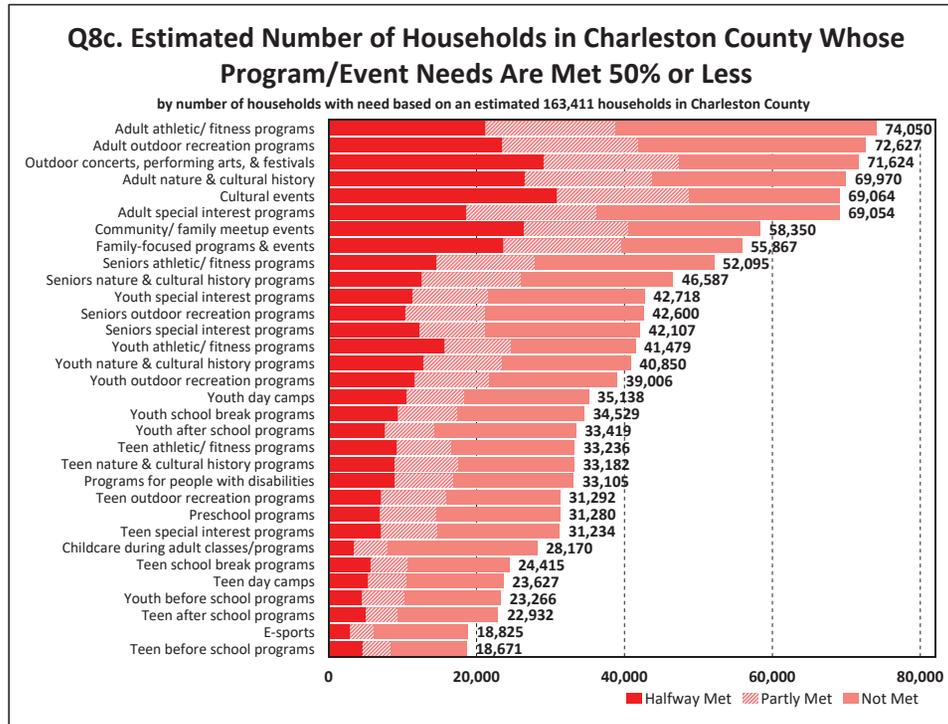
Charleston County Program Needs and Priorities

Program Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 32 programs and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities/amenities.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Adult athletic/fitness programs – 74,050 households
2. Adult outdoor recreation programs – 72,627 households
3. Outdoor concerts, performing arts, and festivals – 71,624 households

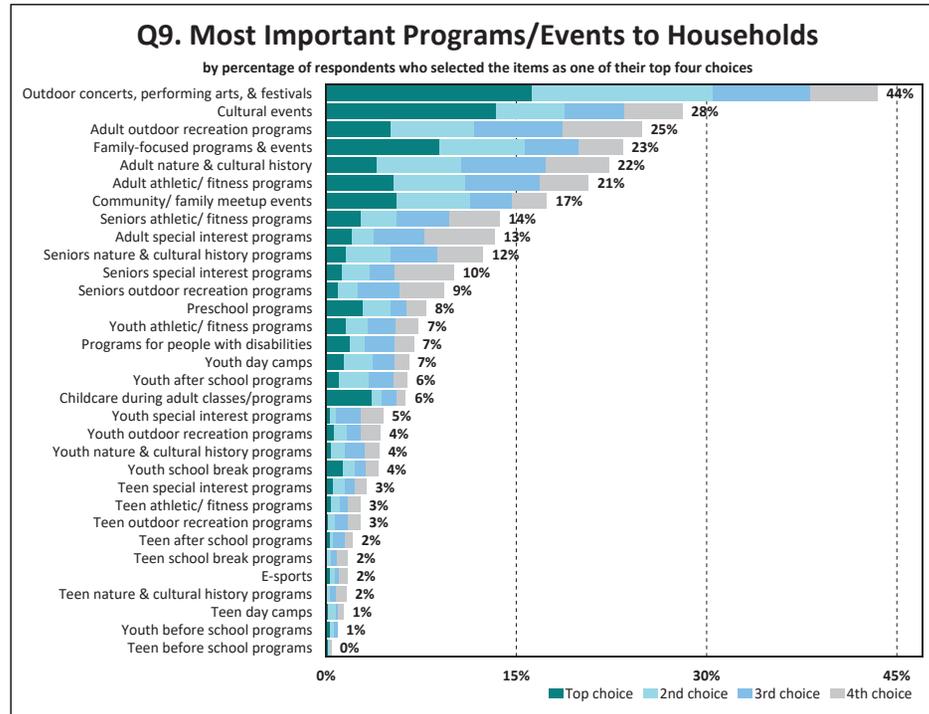
The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 32 parks and recreation programs assessed is shown in the chart below.



Programs Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, these are the four most important programs to residents:

1. Outdoor concerts, performing arts, & festivals (44%)
2. Cultural events (28%)
3. Adult outdoor recreation programs (25%)
4. Family-focused programs & events (23%)

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.

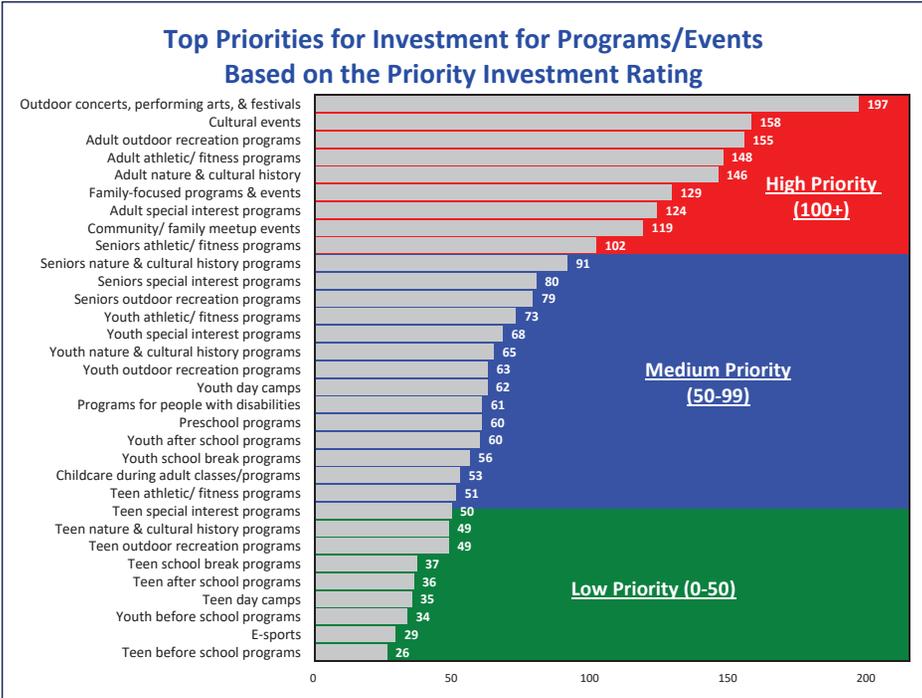


Priorities for Program Investments: The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on each program and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the program. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 3 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following Charleston County programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Outdoor concerts, performing arts, & festivals (PIR=196.7)
- Cultural events (PIR=157.9)
- Adult outdoor recreation programs (PIR=155.3)
- Adult athletic/ fitness programs (PIR=147.6)
- Adult nature & cultural history (PIR=145.8)
- Family-focused programs & events (PIR=129.2)
- Adult special interest programs (PIR=123.8)
- Community/ family meetup events (PIR=118.8)
- Seniors athletic/ fitness programs (PIR=101.8)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 32 programs assessed.



Appendix B. CCPRC Community Survey - Survey Instrument



May 2022

Dear Charleston County Neighbor:

The Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission is planning for its next 10 years of parks, recreation, open space, and trails! As an accredited park and recreation agency, every 10 years we reflect on how well we're serving the public, and we identify ways we can improve during our next decade. Charleston County Parks' 2023-2033 comprehensive plan will be called "2033: Parks and Recreation for ALL!" (or simply "PARFA"). This name represents our goal of gathering meaningful input from as many Charleston County residents as possible.

Your household was one of a limited number selected at random to receive the enclosed *Charleston County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment* survey. It is very important that you participate, as your household's responses will help us identify priorities for existing and future parks, facilities, programs, and services. By participating in the survey, you will be entered to win one of ten Charleston County Parks "Gold Passes" (a \$75 value!), which provides free admission to many parks and events.

The enclosed survey is being administered by an independent consulting company called ETC Institute. They will compile the data received, and present the results to Charleston County Parks in a way that protects your privacy and the confidentiality of your survey responses.

The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Please answer each question to the best of your ability, and return your completed survey in the postage-paid envelope to ETC Institute within the next two weeks: *ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061*. (You may instead choose to take and submit your survey online at: CharlestonCountyParksSurvey.org.)

For more information, please visit ccprc.com/PARFA to follow along with our planning process. Here we'll post project updates and additional opportunities for engagement as they're scheduled. If you have any questions or problems completing your survey, please contact ETC Institute directly at 913-254-4598. (Si tiene preguntas sobre la encuesta y no habla inglés, llame 1-844-811-0411.)

Thank you for helping us achieve Charleston County Parks and Recreation for ALL!

David Bennett
Executive Director
Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission

About Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (CCPRC)

Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission was created in 1968 as a county special purpose district, which means the Commission operates independently from Charleston County government. The Commission is charged with the responsibility to provide park and recreation services, but not to duplicate services provided by other municipalities and special recreation districts existing within the county. CCPRC manages over 11,000 acres of parks, community recreation sites, and other open spaces that support passive recreation, environmental education, and public boating and beach access. In addition, CCPRC offers a variety of programs, events, and other activities throughout Charleston County. CCPRC staff and commissioners are committed to maintaining high standards in the delivery of leisure services and facilities to the citizens of Charleston County.

861 Riverland Drive | Charleston, South Carolina 29412 | (843) 762-2172 | FAX (843) 762-2683
A Professional Member of the South Carolina Recreation and Park Association

Charleston County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

The Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission (Charleston County Parks) would like your input to help guide decisions regarding future and existing park and recreation facilities, programs, and services. Your opinions are very important to us. This survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete. When you are finished, please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid, return-reply envelope. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online at CharlestonCountyParksSurvey.org. We greatly appreciate and value your time!

GEOGRAPHY

1. **What is your ZIP Code?** _____
2. **How many years have you lived in Charleston County?** *[If you don't live in Charleston County, simply write "NA" for Not-Applicable.]*
_____ years
3. **Are you familiar with the differences between "Charleston County Parks" and other municipal or private park and recreation providers?** *[It's okay if you don't...just answer the following questions to the best of your ability!]*
____(1) Yes ____ (2) No

VALUES

4. **Please check ALL items that you find to be valuable to a public park.** *[Check ALL that apply.]*

<input type="checkbox"/> (01) Active play areas <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Quiet spaces away from the action <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Mowed open lawns for informal play <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Shade trees <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Natural meadows <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Attractive landscaping <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Forested/wooded areas <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Views of rivers, creeks, or lakes <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Paddlesports access to rivers, creeks, or lakes <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Motorboat access to rivers, creeks, or lakes <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Climbing walls <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Disc golf <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Places to sit <input type="checkbox"/> (14) Picnic tables/picnic areas <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Shelter rental options for group events <input type="checkbox"/> (16) Active recreation opportunities (skating, BMX, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> (17) Swimming pools/areas <input type="checkbox"/> (18) Fishing access <input type="checkbox"/> (19) Bicycle and walking access to parks	<input type="checkbox"/> (20) Public art spaces <input type="checkbox"/> (21) Easy access from public transportation <input type="checkbox"/> (22) Lighting for after dark activities <input type="checkbox"/> (23) How close parks are to your home (10-minute walk) <input type="checkbox"/> (24) How close parks are to your work (10-minute walk) <input type="checkbox"/> (25) Signs that are easy to understand <input type="checkbox"/> (26) Signs/information in multiple languages <input type="checkbox"/> (27) Natural and cultural history programs <input type="checkbox"/> (28) Clean park spaces and amenities <input type="checkbox"/> (29) Public restrooms <input type="checkbox"/> (30) Experiences for all ages and abilities <input type="checkbox"/> (31) Park has activities that are welcoming for my culture/community <input type="checkbox"/> (32) Presence of County Park staff <input type="checkbox"/> (33) Affordable admission/entry fee <input type="checkbox"/> (34) Access for people with disabilities (ADA compliant) <input type="checkbox"/> (35) Marshes, swamps, or wetlands <input type="checkbox"/> (36) Smoke/Tobacco free areas <input type="checkbox"/> (37) Other: _____
---	--
5. **Which FOUR items from the list in Question 4 are MOST VALUABLE to your household?** *[Write in your answers below using the numbers from the list in Question 4, or circle "NONE."]*
 1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ 4th: ____ NONE

6. Please rate how well your household's needs for each of the facilities and amenities listed below is being met on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means they are "Fully Met" and 1 means "Not Met." If your household does not have a need for the facility or amenity listed, please select "9" or "No Need." Example: If you or someone in your household have a need for picnic tables for gatherings with family or friends, and you never have a problem finding open picnic tables, then you would select "Fully Met" by circling "5." If you or someone in your household consistently have problems finding open picnic tables, then you would select "Not Met" by circling "1."

Type of Facility/Amenity	Please rate how well your needs for each facility/amenity are being met					
	Fully Met	4	3	2	Not Met	No Need
01. All-Weather artificial turf fields	5	4	3	2	1	9
02. Archery courses or ranges	5	4	3	2	1	9
03. Baseball/softball fields	5	4	3	2	1	9
04. Basketball courts	5	4	3	2	1	9
05. BMX track	5	4	3	2	1	9
06. Boat landings (motorized)	5	4	3	2	1	9
07. Classrooms/meeting rooms	5	4	3	2	1	9
08. Climbing walls	5	4	3	2	1	9
09. Community gardens	5	4	3	2	1	9
10. Computer lab/classroom	5	4	3	2	1	9
11. Cultural/historical sites open to public access	5	4	3	2	1	9
12. Dance studio/exercise studio	5	4	3	2	1	9
13. Dog parks	5	4	3	2	1	9
14. Enclosed (indoor) shelters for events or programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
15. Fishing/crabbing docks/piers	5	4	3	2	1	9
16. Open-air (outdoor) shelters for events or programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
17. Indoor fitness facilities (cardio/weights)	5	4	3	2	1	9
18. Indoor sports courts (basketball, squash, badminton, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
19. Lighted sports fields	5	4	3	2	1	9
20. Multi-purpose fields	5	4	3	2	1	9
21. Nature/natural areas open to public access	5	4	3	2	1	9
22. Outdoor amphitheater/stage/performance area	5	4	3	2	1	9
23. Paddlesports launches (canoe/kayak/paddleboard)	5	4	3	2	1	9
24. Park benches	5	4	3	2	1	9
25. Paved trails	5	4	3	2	1	9
26. Unpaved trails (singletrack/mountain bike, gravel)	5	4	3	2	1	9
27. Unpaved trails (hiking, passive use)	5	4	3	2	1	9
28. Picnic tables/picnic areas	5	4	3	2	1	9
29. Playground	5	4	3	2	1	9
30. Skate parks	5	4	3	2	1	9
31. Social space for youth and teens (music, games, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
32. Social space for adults and seniors	5	4	3	2	1	9
33. Swimming pools	5	4	3	2	1	9
34. Tennis or pickleball courts	5	4	3	2	1	9
35. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

7. Which FOUR facilities/amenities from the list in Question 6 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household? [Write in your answers below using the numbers from the list in Question 6, or circle "NONE."]

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ 4th: ____ NONE

8. Please rate how well your household's needs for each of the programs listed below is being met on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means they are "Fully Met" and 1 means "Not Met." If your household does not have a need for the facility or amenity listed, please select "9" or "No Need." Example: If you or someone in your household have a need for before or after school programs and you have never experienced an issue in finding open programs then you would select "Fully Met" by circling "5." If you or someone in your household consistently have problems finding an available program, then you would select "Not Met" by circling "1." (For the purposes of this question, "Youth" is defined as kids 12 years old and younger. Specific programs listed in parentheses are only provided as examples.)

Type of Program/Event	Please rate how well your needs for each program/event are being met					
	Fully Met	4	3	2	Not Met	No Need
01. Childcare during adult classes/programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
02. Cultural events (art exhibitions, local craft fairs, book readings, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
03. Community/family meetup events (field day, holidays, cookouts, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
04. E-sports (video gaming and virtual reality)	5	4	3	2	1	9
05. Family-focused programs and events	5	4	3	2	1	9
06. Outdoor concerts, performing arts, and festivals	5	4	3	2	1	9
07. Programs for people with disabilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
08. Preschool programs (ages <4)	5	4	3	2	1	9
09. Youth before school programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
10. Youth after school programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
11. Youth day camps	5	4	3	2	1	9
12. Youth school break programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
13. Youth athletic/fitness programs (swimming, baseball, dance, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
14. Youth nature and cultural history programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
15. Youth outdoor recreation programs (archery, challenge course)	5	4	3	2	1	9
16. Youth special interest programs (art, cooking, acting, science, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
17. Teen athletic/fitness programs (swimming, soccer, dance, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
18. Teen nature and cultural history programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
19. Teen outdoor recreation programs (archery, climbing, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
20. Teen before school programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
21. Teen after school programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
22. Teen day camps	5	4	3	2	1	9
23. Teen school break programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
24. Teen special interest programs (carpentry, cooking, science, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
25. Adult athletic/fitness programs (kickball, weights, yoga, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
26. Adult nature and cultural history programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
27. Adult outdoor recreation programs (kayaking, mountain biking, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
28. Adult special interest programs (art, sewing, job coaching, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
29. Seniors athletic/fitness programs (yoga, pilates, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
30. Seniors nature and cultural history programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
31. Seniors outdoor recreation programs (archery, kayaking, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
32. Seniors special interest programs (sewing, BINGO, computers, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
33. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

9. Which FOUR programs from the list in Question 8 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household? [Write in your answers below using the numbers from the list in Question 8, or circle "NONE."]

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ 4th: ____ NONE

10. Please rate your satisfaction with the following Charleston County Parks and Recreation services on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied". If you don't have experience with the service listed, please select "Don't Know" by circling "9."

Services	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
01. Advance and online ticketing	5	4	3	2	1	9
02. Availability of information about programs and facilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
03. Availability of shelters and/or meeting rooms	5	4	3	2	1	9
04. Amount of open greenspace	5	4	3	2	1	9
05. Cleanliness of parks and facilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
06. Condition of park and recreation amenities (useability, safety)	5	4	3	2	1	9
07. Connectivity of trails and pathways	5	4	3	2	1	9
08. Cost of recreation programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
09. Cost of park admission	5	4	3	2	1	9
10. Cost of special park amenities (climbing wall, bike rental, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1	9
11. Cost of shelter or meeting room rental	5	4	3	2	1	9
12. Customer assistance by staff	5	4	3	2	1	9
13. Ease of contacting County Park staff	5	4	3	2	1	9
14. Ease of registering for programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
15. Ease of renting shelters or meeting rooms	5	4	3	2	1	9
16. Flexible payment options	5	4	3	2	1	9
17. Park/facility accessibility (ADA-compliant access)	5	4	3	2	1	9
18. Park/facility rule awareness and enforcement	5	4	3	2	1	9
19. Proximity of parks/facilities to my residence	5	4	3	2	1	9
20. Number/variety of indoor amenities at parks/facilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
21. Number/variety of outdoor amenities at parks/facilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
22. Number/variety of parks/facilities	5	4	3	2	1	9
23. Number/variety of recreation programs	5	4	3	2	1	9
24. Number/variety of community recreation sites in rural areas	5	4	3	2	1	9
25. User friendliness of website	5	4	3	2	1	9
26. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

11. Which FOUR Parks and Recreation services listed in Question 10 do you think should receive the MOST ATTENTION from Charleston County Parks over the next FIVE years? [Write-in your answers below using the numbers from the list in Question 10, or circle "NONE".]

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ 4th: ____ NONE

12. Please check ALL the reasons why you or members of your household currently DO NOT use facilities, programs, or services offered by Charleston County Parks MORE OFTEN. [Check ALL that apply.]

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) The parks do not feel welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> (15) Rental shelters are not affordable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) I don't know what is available | <input type="checkbox"/> (16) My schedule is too busy (work, school, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Operating hours are not convenient | <input type="checkbox"/> (17) Not accessible for people with disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Registration for programs is difficult | <input type="checkbox"/> (18) Lack of recreational opportunities suitable for seniors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Programs I like are full | <input type="checkbox"/> (19) Lack of recreational opportunities that appeal to teens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Programs are not affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> (20) Lack of recreational opportunities suitable for ages 2-5 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Parks/Facilities are not affordable | <input type="checkbox"/> (21) Lack of parking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Parks are too busy | <input type="checkbox"/> (22) Presence of dogs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Poor customer service by staff | <input type="checkbox"/> (23) Better facilities are available elsewhere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Lack of comfort-related amenities | <input type="checkbox"/> (24) Too far from residence or work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Facility I want to visit is not offered | <input type="checkbox"/> (25) Lack of transportation to parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Facilities are not well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> (26) Lack of options to walk, bike, or take public transit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Boat landings are over-crowded | <input type="checkbox"/> (27) Nothing prevents us from using Charleston County Parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (14) Location does not appear safe | <input type="checkbox"/> (28) Other: _____ |

17. Regardless of your primary mode of transportation, please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied", with the following Public Transportation considerations in Charleston County. (An example of public transit is the "CARTA" bus service.)

Public transportation in Charleston County...	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1. Convenience of public transit route schedules	5	4	3	2	1	9
2. Proximity of a public transit stop to your residence or work	5	4	3	2	1	9
3. Public transit connections to your favorite County Park	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. Travel time between your residence and your favorite County Park via public transit	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Quality of amenities at public transit stops you use (wayfinding signage, seating, shade, lighting)	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Quality and availability of resources about public transit stops and destinations	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Travel time between your residence and your favorite County Park via public transit	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

18. Regardless of your primary mode of transportation, please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied", with the following Shared-Use Path considerations in Charleston County. (An example of a shared-use path or "greenway" is the bike and pedestrian lane on the Ravenel "Cooper River" Bridge.)

Shared-use paths in Charleston County...	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1. Access to parks by personal watercraft	5	4	3	2	1	9
2. Availability of trailheads and path amenities (parking, drinking water, restrooms, shade, wayfinding signage)	5	4	3	2	1	9
3. Convenience of walking or biking to destinations	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. How well paths connect to your favorite County Park	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Number of shared-use paths and greenways available	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Quality and availability of directional and informational signs to paths/greenways, parks, and other destinations	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Shared-use path conditions (surface repair, weeds, roots)	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

19. Please rate your satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 means "Very Satisfied" and 1 means "Very Dissatisfied", with the following trail services in Charleston County Parks.

Trail services in Charleston County Parks...	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
1. Availability of diverse trail types within County Parks	5	4	3	2	1	9
2. Availability of educational signs about nature and history	5	4	3	2	1	9
3. Availability of information on where to find trails	5	4	3	2	1	9
4. Availability of trails and trailhead amenities (parking, access to water, restroom access)	5	4	3	2	1	9
5. Overall trail conditions (surface repair, weeds, roots)	5	4	3	2	1	9
6. Quality and availability of directional and informational signs on trails	5	4	3	2	1	9
7. Quality of available amenities along trails (seating, drinking fountains, shade opportunities)	5	4	3	2	1	9
8. Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1	9

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

20. From the following list, please check ALL of the ways you learn about Charleston County Parks facilities, services, programs, and events.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) CharlestonCountyParks.com | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Digital advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Charleston County Parks Email Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Radio advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Charleston County Parks Facebook | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) TV advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Charleston County Parks Instagram | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Billboard advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Charleston County Parks Twitter | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Social media advertising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Local news (newspaper, TV, radio) | <input type="checkbox"/> (13) Word of mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Park marquee boards (or other signs/posters in parks) | <input type="checkbox"/> (14) Other: _____ |

21. From the list in Question 20, which THREE methods of communication would you MOST PREFER that Charleston County Parks use to communicate with you about facilities, services, programs, and events? [Write in your answers below using the numbers from the list in Question 20, or circle "NONE."]

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ NONE

DEMOGRAPHICS

22. Your gender: (1) Male (2) Female (3) Prefer to self-describe: _____

23. Including yourself, HOW MANY people in your household are...

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Under age 5: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 15-19: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 35-44: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 65-74: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ages 5-9: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 20-24: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 45-54: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 75-84: <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ages 10-14: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 25-34: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 55-64: <input type="checkbox"/> | Ages 85+: <input type="checkbox"/> |

24. Your age: _____ years

25. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? (1) Yes (2) No

26. Which of the following best describes your race or ethnicity? [Check ALL that apply.]

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Asian or Asian Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Black or African American | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> (99) Other: _____ |

27. What language do you speak at home?

- (1) English (2) Spanish (3) Portuguese (4) Other: _____

28. Which of the following best describes your total annual household income?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Under \$25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) \$75,000 - \$99,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) \$200,000 - \$249,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) \$25,000 - \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) \$100,000 - \$149,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (8) \$250,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) \$50,000 - \$74,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) \$150,000 - \$199,999 | |

29. Please share any additional comments that could assist the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission in improving parks and recreation offerings throughout the County.

30. Are you willing to participate in a follow-up conversation about your responses to this survey? (Your responses and any additional conversations will only be used to help Charleston County Parks in development of its "Parks and Recreation for ALL" 10-year comprehensive plan.)

- (1) Yes [Answer 30a.] (2) No

30a. Please provide your contact information.

Mobile Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed return-reply envelope addressed to:
ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061

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Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission

