

## Fairfax County Park Authority Mission

To set aside public spaces for and assist citizens in the protection and enhancement of environmental values, diversity of natural habitats and cultural heritage to guarantee that these resources will be available to both present and future generations. To create and sustain quality facilities and services for recreation, improvement of physical and mental well being, and enhanced quality of life.



## The Park Authority Vision

We strive to inspire and sustain a passion for parks and leisure experiences that enhance our community's quality of life.

## Help Plan Your Parks

See our website <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks> for a list of parks currently being planned. Or contact us by e-mail at: [Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov).

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Planning and Development Division  
12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 421  
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# Planning Your Parks



**Fairfax County Park Authority**

## The Park Development Process



### Why Master Plan Parks?

Like the population, the county's park and recreation needs are growing. Park master plans provide the public a way to help determine the best uses for a specific site and to optimize management of the site's resources. We use your input combined with analyses of current trends and future needs identified in the *Countywide Parks and Recreational Needs Assessment* to help craft a long-range blueprint for use of a park site.



### What is a Park Plan?

A park master plan (MP) is a general guide for appropriate park uses and their approximate location within a specific park site. The plan serves as a long-range vision (10 -20 year timeframe) for future development and programming. Issues typically addressed include planned park elements, natural and cultural resource management, and general design concerns. The plan is conceptual in nature and not intended to address detailed issues related to engineered site design or park operations. These issues are addressed later in the park development process (see "Park Development Process" banner above).

### The Park Planning Process

We depend on you to help us plan your parks. No plan can be successful without the benefit of park users to identify needs, desires, and local community issues. Typically, there are at least three public meetings throughout the planning process to seek public involvement.



The first is a public information meeting to introduce the project and existing site conditions; explain the planning process; identify community issues and respond to preliminary questions. Later, there is a planning workshop where the community is invited to evaluate alternative park uses and conceptual designs. After a preferred alternative is identified, a draft park master plan is developed, and a formal public hearing is held to gather further comments.

The draft plan may be further refined after each public meeting. Eventually, the Park Authority Board is presented with a final plan for adoption. While not all individual preferences can be accommodated, the Park Authority strives to provide a fair and balanced park system.

### Public Use Approval

Virginia law, Section 15.2-2232, requires local Planning Commissions to review public facility uses to determine if their general location, character, and extent are substantially in accord with the County Comprehensive Plan. Following adoption of a park master plan, the Park Authority submits an Application for Determination or a "2232 Review" to the Planning Commission for a finding of conformance to the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission may hold its own public hearing prior to acting on the application.



### Park Development

Park development does not always closely follow adoption of a park master plan process. The Park Authority Board must identify project funding sources, typically through voter-approved bonds, private developer contributions, and/or cooperative agreements with local user groups. Once funding is secured, the Park Authority uses the Park Master Plan and funding budget to determine the project scope, prepare detailed engineered site designs, and construct park improvements. Engineering and construction are generally contracted using the county procurement process. Following successful site permitting and inspections, the park or new facility opens to the public.

### The Park Planning Process

