

## **PWC Park Authority Comments on the Citizen Group Drafts for Parks, Trails & Open Space Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Citizen Group worked with the PWC Park Authority, as directed by the Planning Commission, to identify key issues and recommendations for changes to the draft plans for Parks, Trails and Open Space Chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. The following is a list of the comments provided by the PWC Park Authority on June 25, 2007, with responses from the Citizen Group in italics.

- 1) Look at having a Park Authority representative on the Trails Commission. Park Authority would also be glad to host meetings in its Board Chamber.

*The Park Authority, Public Works, Transportation, Planning, Service Authority and Public Schools should have non-voting representation on the commission. Park Authority should provide staff support and meeting space for the commission.*

- 2) Desire to leave park nomenclature the same by adding a resource based park to park classification.

*Agreed, and incorporated in latest revision.*

- 3) For the upcoming Park Authority Comprehensive Plan update consider adding a section on Trails and Corridor Parks, a section that addresses open space, and add the new resource based park classification.

*Agreed.*

- 4) Parks chapter needs to be reviewed to determine what elements stay in the County Comprehensive Plan and which elements need to continue to be addressed in the Park Authority Comprehensive Plan (Park Authority Master Plan).

*Description of Park Types needs to be in both, so we can ensure developer proffers for parks are consistent with types of parks managed by county. Facility Standards (per population served) needs to be in both, to avoid confusion regarding LOS standards to ensure Park Authority gets what it needs.*

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- 5) Acreage standard of 10% of the total County acreage being County Public Park land may be high and difficult to obtain over 15 – 20 years. Would like to explore how additional communities set this standard. This is aggressive when we also have two major federal recreation facilities in the county.

*Goal is intentionally set high to trigger further discussion by Park Authority Board, Planning Commission, and Board of County Supervisors. Model is Fairfax County, where 10% of all county acres are owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority (additional acreage is owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and state/Federal agencies).*

*Less than 2% of Prince William County is owned by the Prince William Park Authority. If you count Federal, state, and non-government parcels (excluding Quantico Marine Corps Base), about 10% of Prince William County is already public park land. However, Federal and state parks limit recreational uses, and are not in walking distance of many communities. In addition, county parks are especially valuable for providing active recreation opportunities.*

- 6) Need to review the current policy of the Park Authority not accepting land parcels of less than 5 acres.

*Park Authority should consider revising current policy. Dale City and other developed areas need parkland for current and projected population. Small parks deliver great recreation opportunity per acre in higher-density neighborhoods, though small parks may require more resources per acre. Quality of life in Developed Area is a key factor to our success in steering development to that portion of the county, rather than to the Rural Area.*

- 7) The Park Authority will need to re-calculate our entire park inventory, and review the designation of *passive* and *active* acreage of each facility.

*Agreed. This is better addressed through the Park Authority Comp Plan process. As Master Plans for individual parks are developed, the location of active and passive recreation sites should be determined and the inventory updated.*

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- 8) The Park Authority should consider being the County agency that keeps a trails inventory and includes a trail plan as part of the Park Authority Comprehensive Plan.

*The Trails chapter in the Comprehensive Plan provides guidance for the development of the Trails Plan, and a map of planned trails should be added to that chapter after being developed by the Trails Commission. (This would require a Comprehensive Plan Amendment to add the map to the chapter.) The Park Authority (providing staff support to the Trails Commission) should maintain the inventory.*

- 9) Park Authority should consider a designated planner position to handle all County Planning reviews for parks, open space and trails. Discussions and negotiations to meet standards should be a Park Authority staff responsibility. Park Authority staff should consult with Park Authority Board or Trails Commission on projects that effect each districts facilities and planning for future facilities.

*Agreed. Park Authority Board would be involved if the project affected county parkland. The Trails Commission would be involved if the project dealt with all properties, including trails being constructed by VDOT, the Park Authority, and others.*

- 10) Trail Commission responsibilities can be addressed in the creating resolution and Park Authority Comprehensive Plan sections.

*Trails Commission responsibilities will be defined through approval of the Comprehensive Plan chapter. The specifics, including Park Authority involvement in staffing Trails Commission, will be established in the creating resolution, and detailed in the Park Authority Comprehensive Plan.*

- 11) Trails Commission should also include a representative from the Service Authority and County Schools.

*Agreed; see response to #1.*

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- 12) Trail relationship between public access trails and HOA and private trails need to be defined in comprehensive plan.

*Not clear what is requested here. No LOS standard is defined for trails proffers in this Comprehensive Plan chapter. Inventory should track status of public access and maintenance responsibilities.*

- 13) LOS standard should be included in Park Authority Comprehensive Plan and mentioned in the County Comprehensive Plan to refer to the Park Authority Comp plan.

*Agreed.*

- 14) Most Action Strategies and policies in Parks section can be folded into Park Authority Comprehensive Plan update.

*Need to be more specific, if we plan to edit chapter prior to July 11 discussion with Park Authority Board.*

- 15) County Comprehensive Plan should review the process of allowing land to be given directly to Park Authority, rather than to the County and then transferring to the Park Authority.

*Agreed - proffers to BOCS prior to transfer to the intended managing agency is adding complexity and confusion to the decision process.*

- 16) Recommendation of specific land purchase or transfers should be addressed in the Park Authority Comp Plan.

*Agreed. Comprehensive Plan chapter should highlight some specific opportunities, but detailed park acquisition planning should be in Park Authority plans.*

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- 17) Both Comp Plans need to recognize the need for both land and facilities development and the Park Authority Comp Plan needs; to establish a plan that meets the needs established by the standards-
- a. PACP example –
    - i. Add 10 soccer fields by 2010
    - ii. Add 40 miles of multi-use trails by 2015
    - iii. Add 250 acres of community parks by 2020

*To avoid complicating approval of the three chapters, these metrics should be established first as part of the Park Authority Comp Plan. Need to recognize that some trails will be developed outside Park Authority responsibilities (such as VDOT trails).*

- 18) The strategy to acquire and develop mini parks should be considered to add acquire and develop or facilitate the acquiring, developing and maintaining by others. (HOA's)

*Agreed - see note at bottom of page 25 (Projected park land needs for neighborhood parks may be reduced after evaluation of HOA facilities that meet neighborhood park standards and provide perpetual public access under easement).*

- 19) The 50% of park land for active and 50% for passive should be a goal of the over-all acreage of the system. This will allow flexibility for higher percentages of either type of use at each park facility.

*Agreed - will revise page 11 to say "AS 4: To protect surrounding communities and environmental resources, at least 50% of the land area of a park should be left undeveloped for resource protection, open space or passive recreation. This percentage can be much higher depending on the resources on site especially in Resource-Based Parks and may be lower in Mini-Parks in urban areas."*

- 20) Need to put more teeth into LOS standards being met by developers in relationship to contributions of land, money or improvements. Alternatives that mix and match donations must be approved by the Park Authority Board.

*Agreed - cost of land in current proffer schedule should be consistent for parks as well as for other LOS proffers. Park Authority Board has authority now to comment on projects, and we agree that it should act on mix-and-match proposals.*

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- 21) The LOS facility standards are generally a way off from current Park Authority standards – these must be set by the Park Authority. Should be included in both Comp Plans. (i.e. soccer fields 1/5000)

*We will review again. Standards in Comp Plan chapters and Park Authority plans need to be consistently high.*

- 22) General: with limited resources and lack of commitment for Park development and land purchase, the Park Authority has chosen in recent years, to concentrate on larger parks and sports fields. There needs to be a balance in our communities between Active and Passive recreational uses and revenue sources will need to be created to allow for a balanced development approach and operating revenues for future operations. Generally passive lands are less cost per acres to maintain.

*Agreed. Bond authority offers county a chance to catch up on acquisition.*

- 23) Open Space section appears to be geared to establishing new and updated county policies. Parks and trails must be counted here.

*Agreed. Passive portion of parks and trails are counted, while active recreation acreage is not counted. See p. 3 on Open Space plan.*

- 24) In LOS standards, we welcome additions such as nature centers, dog parks, horticultural gardens, equestrian facilities and sportsman facilities. These facilities contribute to a balance of a large park and recreation agency. They may be others the Park Authority Board will want to consider adding.

*Agreed - and added in revised draft.*