



# Manassas, Virginia Parks, Recreation and Cultural Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan November 2016





# Acknowledgements

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# I. Executive Summary

## Introduction

The City of Manassas provides a comprehensive system of public parks, recreation, and cultural resource amenities that greatly contributes to the quality of life in the City and surrounding areas. In order to plan for the future of this valuable system, the City's Community Development Department began a planning process to develop this Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan. Development of the plan took place from October 2015 through September 2016 and included a public input process as well as a facilities and services inventory and analysis. The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan provides the framework to respond to the evolving parks, recreation, and cultural needs and demands of Manassas' growing population.



## City of Manassas Vision Statement

*"A community that takes pride in our authentic history, livable neighborhoods, quality schools, healthy economy, and outstanding quality of life."*

## City of Manassas Overview

The City of Manassas is a dynamic and growing community in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Over the past decade, the region and the City have both experienced healthy economic and population growth that is projected to be sustained into the future. As the City continues to increase in population, its parks, recreation, and cultural systems will need to keep pace with demands for accommodating new residents. Because the City's 10 square miles are nearly built-out, most new growth is anticipated to increase population density. Currently, the City has 19 public amenity areas to meet its residents' recreational needs. Along with these recreational facilities, the City operates walking trails, a public swimming pool, and cultural facilities and maintains partnerships to provide recreational and cultural opportunities for residents at the Hylton Performing Arts Center, Freedom Center, Boys and Girls Club, and at eight (8) City schools.

## Planning Process Summary

A project team, which included a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and City staff, provided input to the consultant team throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort creates a plan that fully utilizes the consultants' expertise and incorporates the local knowledge and institutional history that only community members can provide. All CAC meetings were open to the general public.

The project consisted of the following tasks:

- Community/Stakeholder Engagement and Statistically-Valid Survey
- Comprehensive Facility Inventory and Level of Service Analysis
- Trends and Demographics Analysis
- Community Needs Assessment
- Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

## Key Issues and Recurring Themes Summary

During the initial stages of the project, the key issues were identified for focus around the following aspects of service provision:

- Organizational Efficiencies
- Facilities and Amenities
- Level of Service (LOS)
- Programs and Service Delivery
- Finance

## Inventory Assessment Summary

As the first step in evaluating existing facilities, the City completed a facilities and inventory assessment that carefully documented existing conditions of outdoor amenities at parks and cultural facility locations. This inventory serves as an important foundation for the level of service (LOS) analysis completed in this study.

Overall, the City's park system meets or exceeds expectations in most areas. Neighborhood parks rated the highest overall for quality, and E.G. Smith Baseball Complex and Stonewall Park pool rated lowest overall. A summary of this inventory is provided in **Table 1**. Additional detailed information, field comments, and recommended upgrades for each park are provided in **Appendix E**.



*Kinsley Mill Park  
Credit: City of Manassas*



**Table 1: Parks Assessment Summary**

	Acres	Comfort	Convenience/ Accessibility	Functional Use	Quality
<b>Specialty Parks</b>					
E.G. Smith Baseball Complex	23.00	1	3	1	1
Harris Pavilion	1.23	3	3	3	3
<b>Regional Parks</b>					
Jennie Dean Park	77.15	2	2	2	2
Stonewall Park/Pool	24.40	3/2	3/1.5	3/1.5	2/1.5
<b>Community Parks</b>					
Baldwin Park	9.50	3	3	3	2
Byrd Park	9.00	3	2	2	2
Cannon Branch Fort	17.11	3	2	2	2
Jennie Dean Memorial/Manassas Industrial School	5.00	2	3	3	2
Liberia Plantation	20.62	2	2	3	2
Mayfield Fort	11.64	2	2	2	2
Oakenshaw Park	9.90	3	3	2	3
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>					
Cavalry Run Park	2.20	2	3	2	3
Kinsley Mill Park	3.30	3	2	2	2
Lee Manor Park	4.80	2	2	2	3
Nelson Park	2.10	3	2	2	3
Winterset Park	3.90	3	3	2	2
<b>Mini Parks</b>					
Walter Delisle Park	0.20	2	3	2	2
<b>Undeveloped Parks</b>					
Cedar Crest Park	2.23	-	-	-	-
New Britain Park	6.29	-	-	-	-

In addition to the facilities inventory and capacity benchmarking analysis, a geographic level of service (LOS) analysis was conducted to evaluate the spatial distribution of the City’s parks and park amenities. This analysis applies a primary service area of a ½-mile radius, or an approximate travel time of 15 minutes. The City’s traditional development pattern and grid of streets help support a relatively high level of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity. This connectivity can increase levels of service as it increases the likelihood of being within a ½-mile travel distance to a park.

In general, the overall impression of the City’s park system is as follows:

- The majority of Manassas residents live within a 15-minute walk of at least one publicly available park or recreation facility, including playgrounds and other amenities at City school sites.
- The public park system in Manassas includes 19 parks and recreation sites spread throughout the City. Additional recreation, fitness, and cultural opportunities are available to the public at the City’s numerous historic sites, and the nearby Hylton Performing Arts Center, the Boys and Girls Club and Freedom Center at George Mason University.
- Access to public aquatics facilities, community centers, and rectangular playing fields is more limited than other amenities, including playgrounds, open space, and basketball courts.

## Recommendations

After analyzing the findings of the public engagement process, facility inventory, and level of service analysis, a variety of recommendations have emerged to guide improvements to parks, recreation, and cultural amenities in the City of Manassas. Recommendations have been suggested to enhance the level of service through maintenance and improvements to facilities and amenities, financial opportunities, and improved programming and service delivery, as well as organizational efficiencies. The recommended goals are provided below and detailed objectives and action steps are provided in Section V.

Goal 1 – Improve the organizational efficiencies of the City’s parks, recreation, and cultural services.

Goal 2 – Better maintain and improve existing facilities and amenities.

Goal 3 – Increase recreational opportunities based on the results of this assessment, community demand, and industry trends.

Goal 4 – Increase financial support and opportunities for parks, recreation, and cultural facilities and programs.

## Summary of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs

The document recommends the development of master plans for each of the City’s parks. These detailed plans will maximize the program potential for each park and guide capital improvement plans. However, in order to provide Staff with an order of magnitude costs for the recommended improvements detailed in **Appendix E** the consultant team has provided the following Summary of Estimated Capital Costs.

**Table 2: Summary of Estimated Capital Costs**

Park	Range of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs						
	<\$75,000	\$75,000-150,000	\$150,000-500,000	\$500,000-1 Million	\$1-5 Million	\$5-10 Million	\$10-15 Million
Byrd Park			•				
Baldwin Park/Manassas Museum							•
Cavalry Run Park				•			
Cannon Branch Park	•						
Cedar Crest Park			•				
Center for the Arts (Hopkins Candy Factory) Expansion					•		
Dean Park (Sports Complex Development in Place of E.G. Smith)							•
E.G. Smith Baseball Complex-Reconstruction							•
Harris Pavilion			•				
Jennie Dean Memorial Site	•						
Kinsley Mill Park			•				
Lee Manor Park		•					
Liberia Mansion				•			

Park	Range of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs						
	<\$75,000	\$75,000-150,000	\$150,000-500,000	\$500,000-1 Million	\$1-5 Million	\$5-10 Million	\$10-15 Million
Manassas Railroad Depot	•						
Mayfield Fort	•						
Nelson Park					•		
New Britain Park			•				
Oakenshaw Park			•				
Skate Park at Dean Park			•				
Stonewall Park				•			
Stonewall Park - Walking Trail		•					
Stonewall Pool					•		
Walter Delisle Park	•						
Winters Branch Trail		•					
Winterset Park			•				

## Conclusion

Today, more than in years past, residents expect parks, open space, trails, and amenities that enhance their quality of life and add value to the communities where they live.

Manassas should demonstrate its commitment to these services by following the action plan outlined in this report. Of particular importance will be improving maintenance of existing facilities, expanding partnerships for programs and services, and making key capital investments both in aging facilities and new amenities at Dean and Stonewall Parks to ensure that the City continues to provide high quality services

to residents. Furthermore, the City will need to think toward the future to keep pace with the evolving recreation needs of its diverse and growing population. By following this plan, Manassas will realize the wide ranging benefits that parks, recreation, and culture can bring to a community.



*Winters Branch Trail  
Credit: City of Manassas*

## II. Project Background and Context

### Introduction

In the fall of 2015, the City of Manassas kicked off an effort to develop a Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan in order to provide a guiding vision for expansion and enhancement of its parks and historic resources.

The City, a 9.9 square-mile suburb of Washington, DC, is home to approximately 40,000 people and is largely built-out. Like the DC area in general, Manassas has experienced healthy economic and population growth that is projected to continue into the future. In Manassas, this growth will primarily occur as urban, compact infill and redevelopment along transportation corridors and within the downtown, with stable suburban neighborhoods maintained around these growth areas.

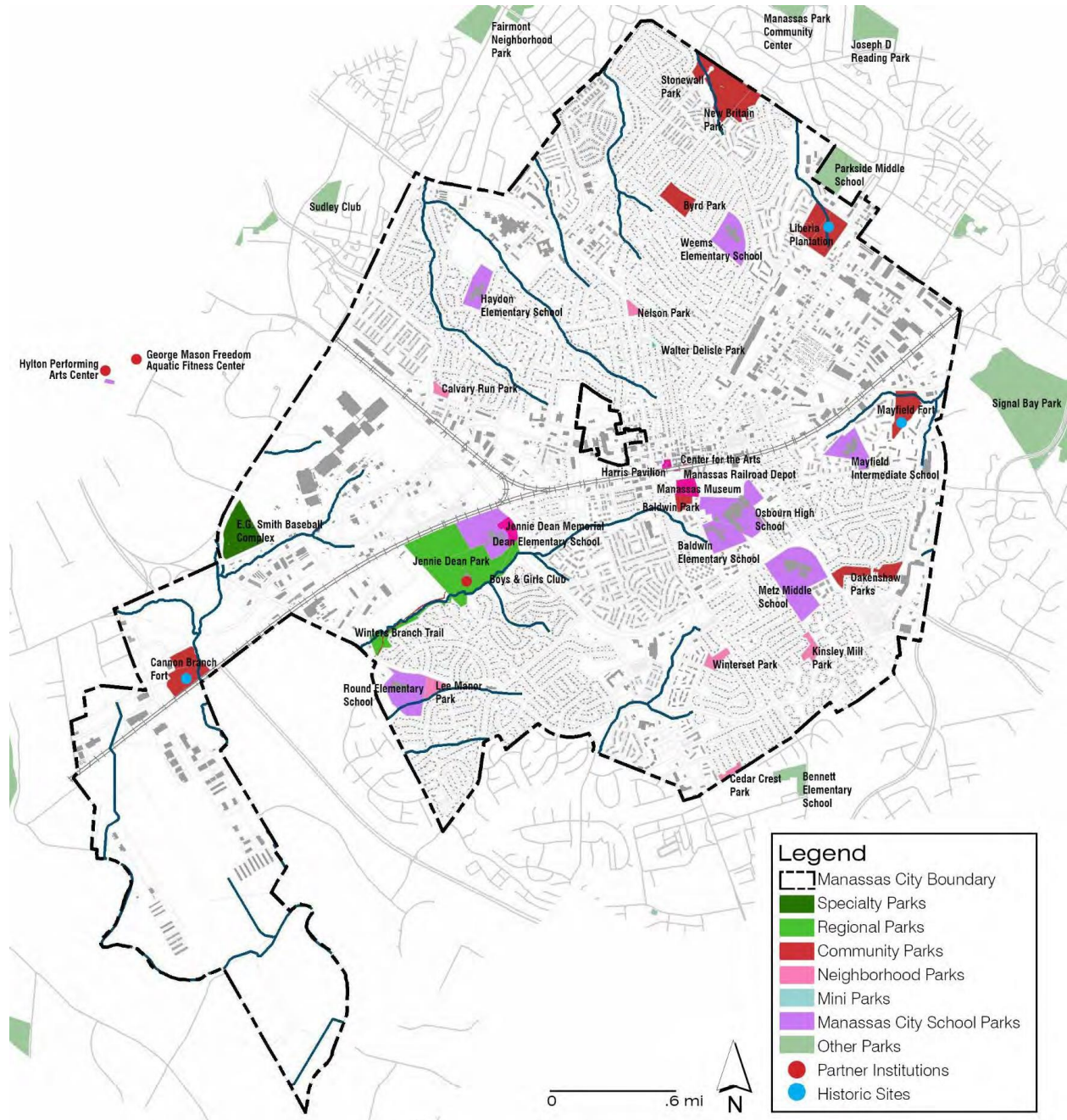


*Harris Pavilion Farmers Market  
Credit: City of Manassas*

As the City continues to increase in population and density, its parks, recreation, and cultural system will need to keep pace with demands of both existing and new residents. Currently, the City manages 19 public parks and recreation amenity areas, shown in **Figure 1**. Along with these facilities, the City operates a museum, schools, a public swimming pool, and a number of cultural facilities that offer residents additional recreational opportunities.

This Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan is the culmination of a year-long public outreach and planning effort that provides a deeper understanding of how well the existing system is meeting resident needs as well as a guiding framework for how the City should respond to the evolving recreation demands of its population going forward.

**Figure 1: Parks, Recreation, and Culture Facilities in Manassas**



## History of Parks, Recreation, and Culture in Manassas

In order to understand the context of this planning effort, it is important to understand the history and current administration system of parks, recreation, and culture in Manassas.

In 1994, the City hired its first full time Parks and Recreation Director. At that time, there was a need to improve much of the City's park infrastructure and a community desire to increase facilities and programming. A needs assessment was completed, and work began to improve existing facilities and identify additional programming opportunities for City residents. A number of Parks and Recreation projects were approved for the 1999 bond referendum, and over half a million dollars was set aside for park improvements. Earlier, in 1991, the City completed construction of the Manassas Museum and committed to a modern, professionally run museum to serve as a focus for community pride and an important tourist attraction. In 2003, the Museum initiated the planning for both the stabilization of an important historic property, the Liberia Plantation as well as an expansion of the museum to provide storage for its growing collection, changing exhibit space, and the creation of a children's gallery.



*Museum Visitors*  
*Credit: City of Manassas*

In 2008, the City, feeling the impact of the recession, ended its parks and recreation program and placed the operation of park facilities, including Stonewall Pool, within the Neighborhood Services Division of the Department of Community Development. The following year, again due to fiscal constraints brought on by the recession, the City cut cultural services and programming and placed the Manassas Museum System under the Department of Community Development. Maintenance for parks and historic sites was also curtailed, and cuts were made to the Department of Public Works that has continuously managed the maintenance of all parks and historic sites.

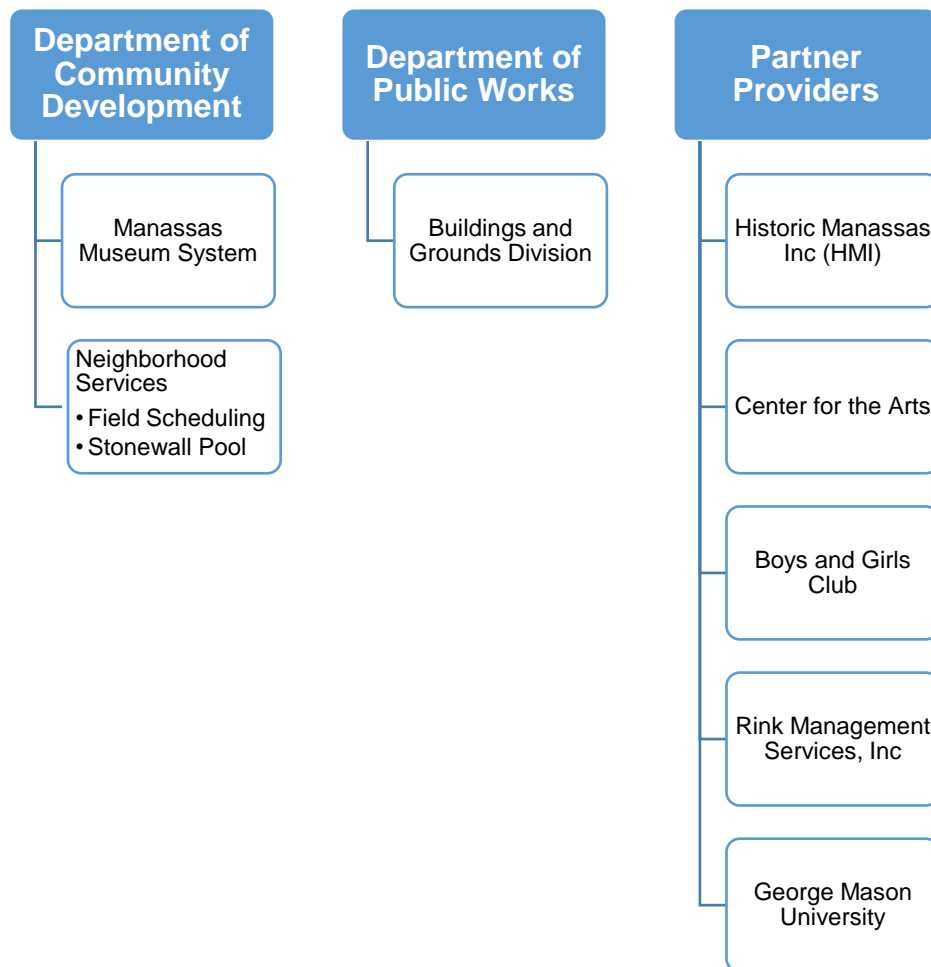
Since 2008, the Department of Community Development has limited its park operations primarily permitting fields for league play in the fall and spring, working with the Department of Public Works on an annual playground improvement program, administering a contract for ice skating at the Harris Pavilion in the winter and events in the summer and operating Stonewall Pool during the summer months. The Department has also continued work towards restoration of the Liberia Plantation property and reinstated educational programs and tours at the Manassas Museum. Recreational programs are primarily carried out by the City's partners such as at George Mason University, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Center for the Arts. In 2014, a citizens' survey found that City residents were somewhat satisfied with the state of parks, recreation, and culture but not enthusiastic.

In 2015, the City, recognizing that the last City-wide assessment of parks and recreation offerings had been 1999, issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain the services of a consultant to carry out a comprehensive parks, recreation, and culture needs assessment and to develop a facilities plan to provide guidance and policy direction for the maintenance and enhancement of the City's parks and cultural facilities in a manner that is consistent with, and meets, the community's expected level of service. The Department of Community Development intends to place renewed focus on parks, recreation, and culture, and this plan will serve as the framework for prioritization and decision-making going forward.

## Administration

Following the dissolution of the City's Parks and Recreation and Museum Departments, management of parks, recreation, and cultural facilities was divided among the Department of Community Development, Department of Public Works, and various partner organizations, as shown in **Figure 2**. The Department of Community Development manages the City's museum system, pool, and facility rentals and is responsible for Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning for parks and recreation. Limited maintenance for parks, recreation, and cultural facilities is provided through the Department of Public Works. With few exceptions, virtually all programming and events are managed through partner providers.

**Figure 2: Administration of Parks, Recreation, and Culture**



### Department of Community Development

- **Manassas Museum System:** Manages the City's museum, historic sites, and historic resources programs.
- **Neighborhood Services:** Manages the City's Stonewall Pool facility and contracts with private providers, oversees field and pavilion rentals in City-owned parks, responsible for parks CIP planning.

### Department of Public Works

- **Buildings and Grounds Division:** Provides maintenance services for all City-owned buildings, parks, schools, cemeteries, etc.

### Partner Providers

- **Historic Manassas Inc. (HMI):** The City's Main Streets organization manages events and marketing in Historic Downtown Manassas.
- **Center for the Arts:** Arts-related organization that provides private classes, theatrical performances, and community outreach programs.
- **Boys and Girls Club:** Provides child care and athletic opportunities to Manassas residents.
- **Rink Management Services, Inc.:** Manages Harris Pavilion rentals, events, and ice skating.
- **George Mason University:** Provides indoor pool facility, fitness center and recreational programming at the Freedom Center and performing arts at the Hilton Performing Arts Center

## Developing the Plan

In order to plan for the future and provide a framework for future investments, the Department of Community Development and its consulting team conducted a planning process to develop this Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan. The planning process included the following components, which are summarized in the sections that follow:

- Demographic analysis
- Parks, recreation, and culture trends report
- Community involvement through public meetings and surveys
- A facility inventory and level of service analysis
- An action plan to guide future planning

Development of this Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan took place from October 2015 to September 2016. The process included extensive public input as well as an inventory and analysis of facilities and amenities. The timeline for completion of the plan is as shown in **Table 3**.





### III. Demographic Profile and Trends Report

An important component of the master planning process is to collect and analyze relevant demographic and national trend data to provide insight into the potential markets for the City’s parks, recreation programs, and cultural services. In addition to informing the recommendations, demographic and national trends are utilized to customize the approach for the City of Manassas.

#### City of Manassas Population and Demographic Trends

The population data used in this demographic profile comes from Esri Business Information Solutions (Esri), based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census data. **Table 4** provides a summary of the current demographics in the City.

**Table 4: Summary Demographics for Manassas, 2015**

Summary Demographics	
Population	41,614
Number of Households	13,651
Avg. Household Size	3.04
Median Age	33.3
Median Household Income	\$77,170

#### Population Projections

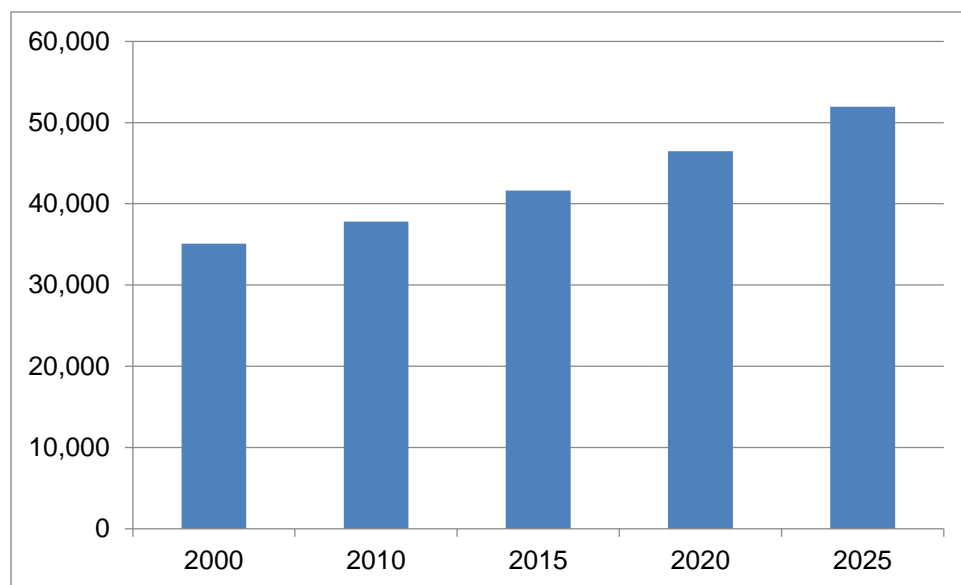
Although future population growth cannot be predicted with certainty, it is helpful to make growth projections for planning purposes. **Table 5** contains actual population figures based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census for Manassas as well as a population estimate for 2015 and population projections for 2020 and 2025. Esri’s estimated 2000-2010 growth rate for Manassas was 0.75%, and the projected 2015-2020 growth rate is 2.24%. This compares to a projected 2015-2020 annual growth rate of 0.99% for the State of Virginia and 0.75% for the United States as a whole. The growth trend is graphically represented in **Figure 3**.

**Table 5: Manassas Population Projections, 2000-2025**

US Census (2000 and 2010) and Esri Projections*	
2000 Population	35,109
2010 Population	37,821
2015 Estimated	41,614
2020 Projected	46,481
2025 Projected	51,934

*Source: 2000 and 2010 Census and Esri Business Information Solutions 2015 Demographic and Income Profile.  
\*GreenPlay, LLC, calculated projected populations for 2025 based on Esri growth multiplier of 2.24% for Manassas.  
U.S. Census does not create projections for 2015, 2020 or 2025.*

**Figure 3: Manassas Population Growth Trend, 2000-2025**



Source: Esri Business Information Solutions. GreenPlay, LLC, calculated projected populations for 2025 based on Esri growth multiplier of 2.24% for Manassas.

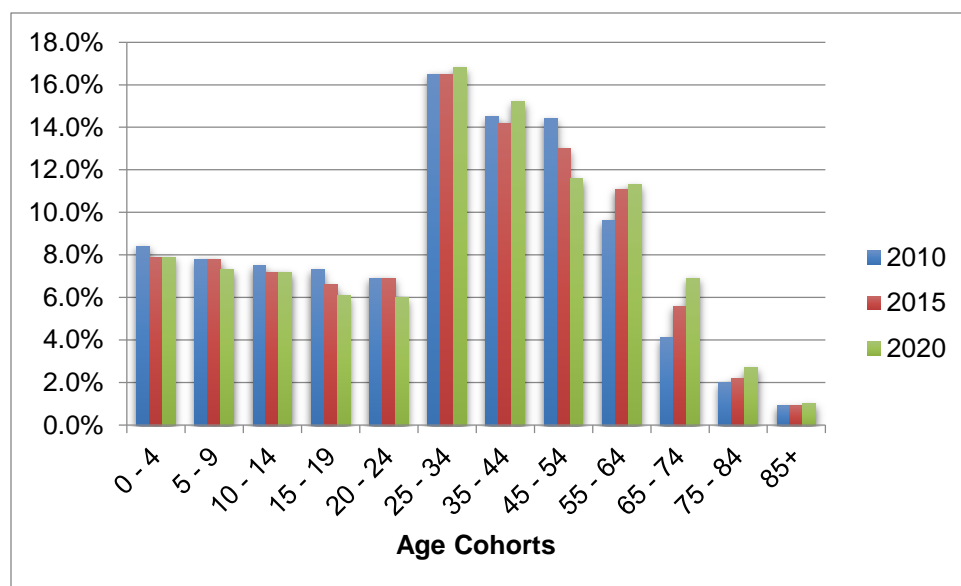
### Population Age Distribution

A comparison of the estimated population breakdown by age for the City of Manassas from 2010 to 2020 is shown in **Figure 4**. The gender distribution in 2015 was 50.2% male to 49.8% female, and the median age was 33.3.

The 0-14 age cohort was estimated at approximately 23% in 2015, and is projected to decrease by about 1% during the 10-year period from 2010 to 2020. The percentage of residents in the 15-24 age cohort is expected to decrease by about 2% during this period to represent 12.1% of the population in 2020. The 25-34 age cohort is predicted to remain at about 16.5% of the population from 2010 to 2020. The 45-54 age cohort is expected to experience the greatest decline, decreasing from 14.4% in 2010 to 11.6% in 2020.

The percentage of Manassas residents between the age of 55-85+ is expected to grow 5.9% from 16.6% of the population in 2010 to 21.9% in 2020, with the 65-74 age cohort experiencing the greatest percentage growth of close to 3%. Manassas seniors (age 65-85+) are expected to experience a percentage growth of 3.6% over this time period to represent 10.6% of the population in 2020.

**Figure 4: Manassas Population Age Distribution, 2010, 2015, and 2020**



Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2015 estimates and 2020 forecasts provided by Esri Business Information Solutions.

### Race/Ethnicity

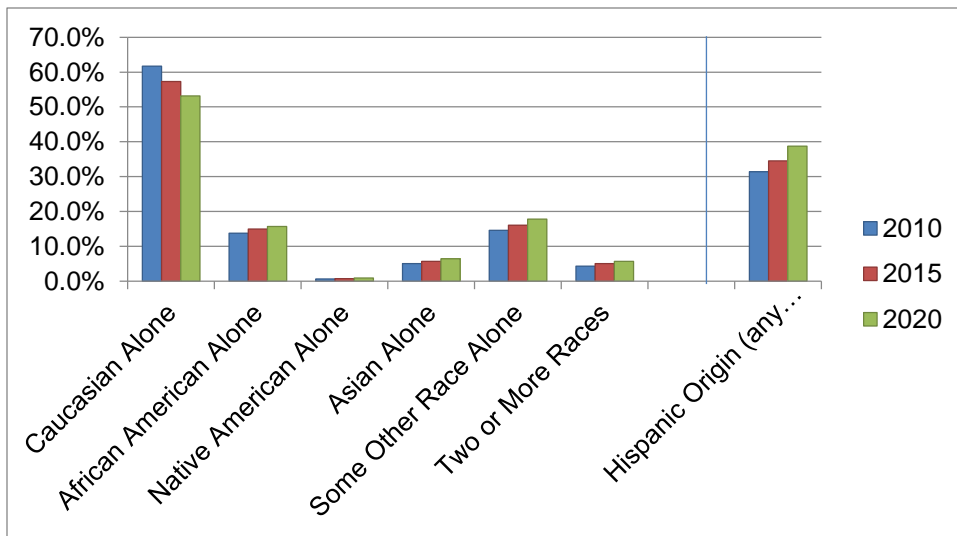
**Figure 5** reflects the racial/ethnic population distribution for Manassas, Virginia. In 2015, Esri estimates that the population was 57.3% Caucasian, 14.9% African American, and 5.7% Asian.

The population of Hispanic origin provides a separate look at population, irrespective of race. Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. This population was estimated at 34.5% of the population in 2015.

**Figure 5** also illustrates the following trends:

- The Caucasian population percentage is trending downward from 61.7% in 2010 to a predicted 53.4% in 2020.
- African American and Asian population percentages are expected to grow, respectively, from 13.7% in 2010 to 15.7% in 2020 (African American) and from 5% to 6.4% (Asian), with the largest segment other than Caucasian being “Two or More Races” increasing from 2010 to 2020 (from 14.6% to 17.8%).
- The percentage of the population of Hispanic origin (irrespective of race) is growing from 31.4% to 38.7% between 2010 and 2020.

**Figure 5: Manassas Race/Ethnicity Statistics, 2010, 2015, and 2020**



Source: 2010 U.S. Census; 2015 estimates and 2020 forecasts provided by Esri Business Information Solutions.

### Educational Attainment

**Table 6** shows levels of educational attainment in Manassas, Virginia. The highest ranking educational cohorts in Manassas are those with a high school diploma (21.9%), those with some college, no degree (20.4%) and those with a Bachelor’s degree (19.3%), followed by those with a graduate or professional degree (11.1%).

**Table 6: Manassas Educational Attainment, 2015**

Educational Attainment	Service Area Percentage
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	9.4%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	6.3%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	21.9%
GED/Alternative Credential	3.2%
Some college, no degree	20.4%
Associate’s degree	8.3%
Bachelor’s degree	19.3%
Graduate or professional degree	11.1%

Source: Esri Business Information Solutions 2015 estimate based on the 2010 U.S. Census.

## Household Information

**Table 7** shows housing information for the City of Manassas. In 2015, there were 14,156 housing units with a 59.2% owner-occupied rate and a 37.3% renter-occupied rate. The owner-occupied housing rate has declined since 2000 and is projected to continue to decline through 2020. The average household size in 2015 was 3.04.

**Table 7: Manassas Housing Statistics, 2000-2020**

	2000	2010	2015	2020
Total housing units	12,106	13,123	14,156	15,727
Percent owner-occupied	67.7%	61.3%	59.2%	59.0%
Percent renter-occupied	29.3%	34.2%	37.3%	37.5%
Percent vacant	3.0%	4.5%	3.6%	3.5%

Source:

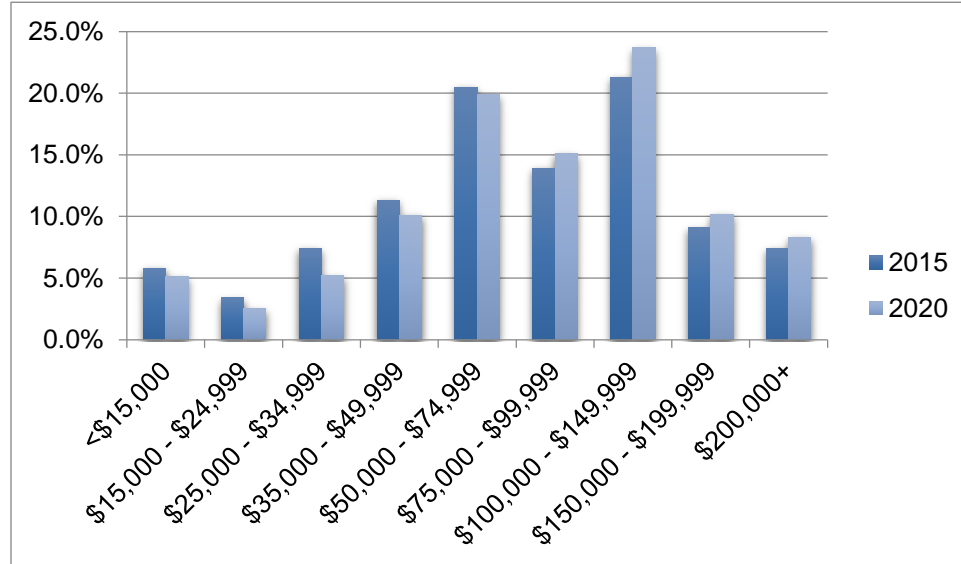
2010 U.S. Census; 2015 estimates and 2020 forecasts provided by Esri Business Information Solutions.

## Household Income

**Figure 6** illustrates the full income distribution estimated as a percentage of the total population for Manassas in 2015 and projected for 2020. The median household income for residents was estimated at \$77,170 in 2015 and is expected to grow to \$85,359 by 2020. **Figure 6** also highlights the following trends:

- In 2015, the largest income cohort was in the \$100,000-\$149,999 range (23.7%), followed by the \$50,000-\$74,999 income range (20.5%).
- Income distribution in the \$75,000-\$200,000+ income range is expected to grow by a total of 5.6% from 2015 to 2020.

**Figure 6: Annual Household Income Distribution Comparison, 2015 and 2020**

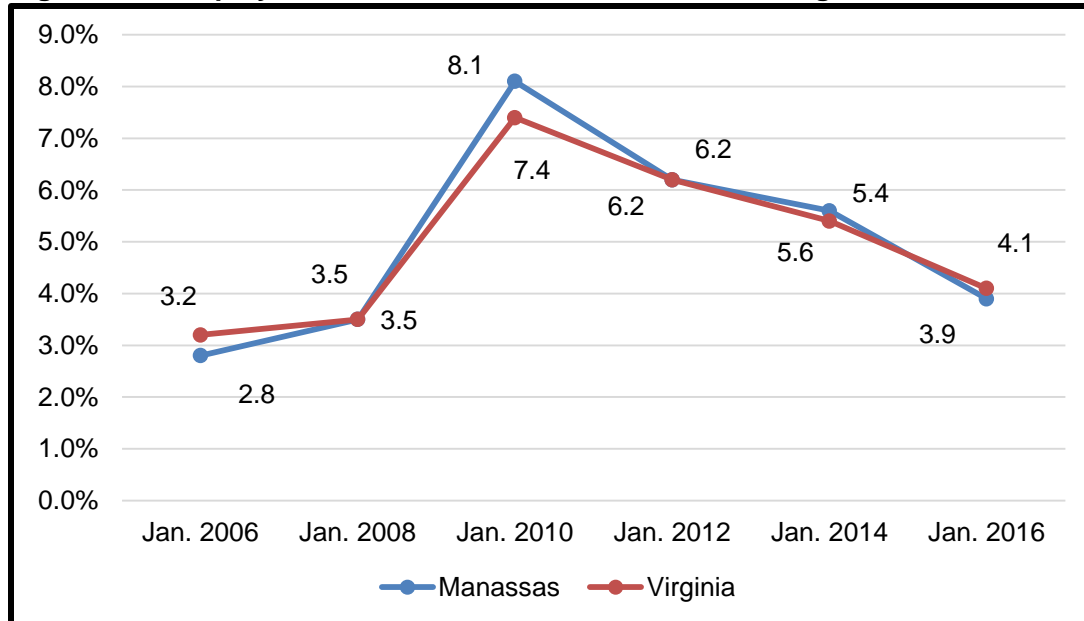


Source: Esri Business Information Solutions, 2015.

## Employment

**Figure 7** provides a snapshot of unemployment rates from January 2006 through January 2016 for the City of Manassas and for the State of Virginia as a whole. In January 2016, the unemployment rate was 3.9% in Manassas and 4.1% for the State of Virginia.

**Figure 7: Unemployment rates for Manassas and State of Virginia, 2006-2016**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Health Ranking

The United Health Foundation ranked Virginia 21<sup>st</sup> in its *State Health Rankings* in 2015, the same ranking it received in 2014. The State's biggest strengths include:

- Low incidence of infectious disease
- Low percentage of children in poverty
- Low violent crime rate

Some of the challenges the State faces include:

- Large disparity in health status by education level
- High prevalence of smoking
- Low per capita public health funding

In the 2015 Virginia County Health Rankings, the City of Manassas ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> out of 133 counties for health outcomes and 69<sup>th</sup> for health factors. Health outcomes rankings are based on length and quality of life, while health factors represent what influences the health of the county. Health factor rankings are based on four measures: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.<sup>1</sup>

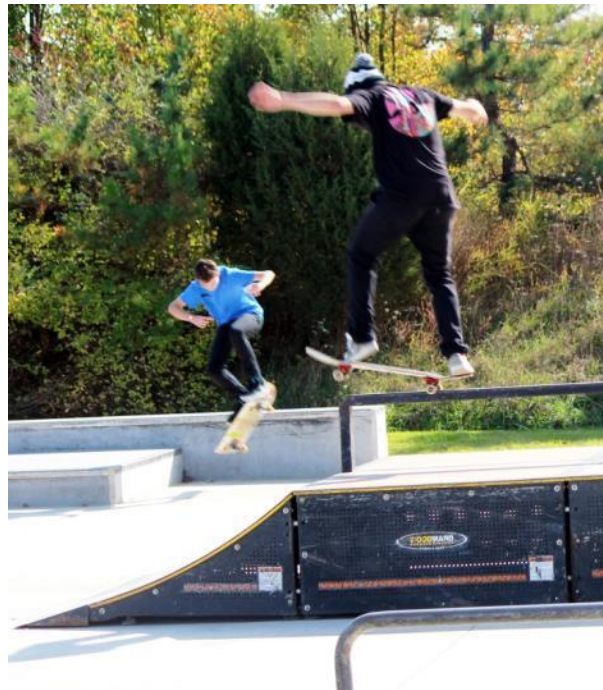
<sup>1</sup>Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "County Health Rankings and Roadmaps: 2015 Rankings – Virginia," <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/virginia/2015/rankings/manassas-city/county/overall/overall/snapshot>, accessed on March 23, 2016.

## Current Trends

It is a challenge and an opportunity for parks and recreation agencies to understand and respond to the changing recreation interests of serviced populations. In this fast-paced society, it is important to stay on top of current trends. The following information highlights relevant regional and national outdoor recreation trends from various sources that may influence Manassas parks, recreation, and cultural planning for the next several years. The full Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Trends Report relevant to Manassas is provided in **Appendix C**.

## Demographic Trends

- Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to experience the outdoors close to home, such as trails, bike paths, and community parks.<sup>2</sup> They, along with the Baby Boomer generation, highly value walkability. In a 2014 study by the American Planning Association, two-thirds of respondents noted that improving walkability in a community is directly related to strengthening the local economy. The study also noted that 46% of Millennials and Baby Boomers place a high priority on sidewalks, hiking trails, bike paths, and fitness choices. In fact, these community features were viewed by study respondents to be of higher preference than a great school system, vibrant centers of entertainment and culture, and affordable and convenient transportation choices.<sup>3</sup>
- The 2012 Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council noted that with varied life experiences, values, and expectations, Baby Boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports. Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means.
- A July 2012 *Parks and Recreation* magazine article titled “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” indicated that as Baby Boomers enter retirement, they are looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles.
- According to the 2016 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” minorities lagged behind in outdoor participation. Caucasians had the highest participation rates, and African Americans had the lowest.
- Participation in outdoor sports among Hispanic youth and young adults (ages 6-24) was at 10% nationwide in 2014.<sup>4</sup> Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 47 outings per year.



Skate Park  
Credit: City of Manassas

<sup>2</sup> “Sneakernomics: How The ‘Outdoor’ Industry Became The ‘Outside’ Industry,” *Forbes*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d>, accessed May 2016

<sup>3</sup> American Planning Association, “Investing in Place: Two generation’s view on the future of communities: millennials, boomers, and new directions for planning and economic development,” <https://www.planning.org/policy/polls/investing>, accessed May 2015

<sup>4</sup> Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2014 <http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2014.pdf>



- The most popular outdoor activities among African-Americans are running and jogging; fishing; and road, mountain, and BMX biking.
- Technology use for finding outdoor recreation opportunities is highest among Asian/Pacific Islander populations. The most popular outdoor activities among Asian/Pacific Islanders are running and jogging; road, mountain, and BMX biking; hiking; and camping (car, backyard, and RV).
- Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older

## Facility Trends

- A community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking make a big impact on improving public health and life expectancy.
- The Trails for Health initiative of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has scientifically demonstrated that a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity. Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active.
- In 2014, dog parks were the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities in the country for the third consecutive year. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few.
- Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds, and pools, in response to rising concerns of skin cancer.
- Parks and recreation agencies have begun installing “outdoor gyms” with equipment comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, and pull down trainers. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities, while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community's interaction with nature.
- There is an increasing trend toward indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional amenities such as spray pads or interactive fountains are becoming increasingly popular as well. These amenities are defined as an artificially constructed depression or basin for use by children, into which potable water is sprayed but not allowed to accumulate.

## Programming Trends

- Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the “great outdoors.” It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life's basic elements was spurred as a response to September 11, 2001.
- Participation in walking for pleasure and family gatherings outdoors were two of the most popular activities in the U.S. as reported in a 2012 report. These outdoor activities were followed closely in popularity by viewing/photographing wildlife, boating, fishing, and swimming. There has been a growing momentum in participation in sightseeing, birding, and wildlife watching in recent years.

- From the early 1980s, a process of “festivalization” has been linked to the economic restructuring of towns and cities and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of “cultural experience.” There are also a growing number of smaller community-based festivals and events, most often supported by local councils as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide<sup>5</sup> on this topic.
- Some of the top ten athletic activities ranked by total participation in the U.S. include exercise walking, swimming, exercising with equipment, camping, and bicycle riding.
- Nationally, in the past three years (2014 Topline Report) adventure racing, triathlon (off-road), stand-up paddle boarding, kayak fishing, and recreational kayaking have experienced the greatest increase in participation.
- A national trend in the delivery of parks and recreation systems reflects more partnerships and contractual agreements to support specialized services throughout the community.
- The majority of Americans agree that preserving undeveloped land for outdoor recreation is important. A large percentage of outdoor participants also believe that developing local parks and hiking and walking trails is important and that there should be more outdoor education and activities during the school day.

## Museum & Cultural Resources Trends

- For many years, museums, historic sites, and art institutions have confronted what they viewed as a patronage problem: a declining number of older visitors and supporters relative to the increasing numbers and associated revenues required to deliver high-quality programs. These facilities have responded by recognizing that they can contribute value in multiple areas of community life and that they are not simple conservators and interpreters of cultural and information assets. A recent National Endowment for the Arts report outlined the contribution that arts (and arts institutions) make to community cultural, educational, social, economic, environmental, and political development.



*Civil War Weekend 2015*  
Credit: City of Manassas

- Historic sites are looking for creative and sustainable ways to make themselves relevant to their communities. Caretakers are rising to this challenge by looking beyond traditional models such as the house museum or interpretative signage. New forms of interpretation and programming are needed, particularly in small communities, for sites to become more sustainable.

<sup>5</sup> Ben Janeczko, Trevor Mules, Brent Ritchie, “Estimating the Economic Impacts of Festivals and Events: A Research Guide,” Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, 2002, <http://www.sustainabletourisonline.com/1005/events/estimating-the-economic-impacts-of-festivals-and-events-a-research-guide>, accessed October 2012.

- In *TRENDWATCH 2015*, the Alliance's Center for the Future of Museums (CFM) noted that wearable technology is a logical extension of BYOD (Bring Your Own Device). Museums are already taking advantage of the fact that many, if not most, visitors enter the building with a hand-held device (notably smartphones or tablets) that can deliver interpretive content. Museums should ensure that their content works on these emerging platforms as well.
- In 2008, the American Association of Museums reported that over time, museum audiences are likely to expect to be part of the narrative experience at museums. While the overall story might not change, how it is presented may change to allow visitors to take on a role as a protagonist themselves. While this is a dramatic departure from how some museums structure narrative, it provides an opportunity to create deeper, more immersive experiences for visitors.

## Funding Trends

- The *2016 NRPA Field Report: Parks and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks* reports that the typical parks and recreation agency:
  - Has annual operating expenses of \$76.44 on a per capita basis/\$6,476 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency.
  - Has \$96,055 in annual operations expenditures for each employee.
  - Personnel services represent 55% of the operations budget.
  - Derives three-fifths of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support.
  - Generates \$795,500 in non-tax revenues on an annual basis.
  - Recovers 29% of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenue.
  - Have \$2.981 million in capital expenditures budgeted over the next five years.
  - On average, just over half of the capital budget is designated for renovations while 30% is geared toward new development.
- According to *Recreation Management Magazine's* 2015 State of the Industry Report, survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2012 through 2014 indicated a continued recovery from the impact of the Recession of 2008. From 2013 to 2014, 44.1% of respondents reported that their revenues had either had increased and another 44.1% reported revenues staying steady. About 48.7% of respondents said they expected revenues to continue to increase in 2015, while 44% expected no change.
- Parks and recreation operating and capital development funding typically comes from conventional sources such as sales, use, and property tax referenda voted upon by the community, along with developer exactions.
- Alternative funding sources include a variety of different or non-conventional public sector strategies for diversifying the funding base beyond traditional tax-based support.
- Creating synergy based on expanded program offerings and collaborative efforts can be beneficial to all providers as interest grows and people gravitate to the type of facility and programs that best suit their recreational needs and schedules. Strategic partnerships can be found where missions run parallel and mutually beneficial relationships can be fostered.
- Taxing districts can be established to provide supplemental funding for additional improvements that benefit a specific group of affected properties. Special Districts (or local improvement districts) are the beneficiaries of pass-through funding from cities or counties, which have responsibility for their interests.

## Marketing Trends

- The San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies specializing in reaching Hispanic and non-Hispanic markets of the United States, suggests that today's multicultural population, or the "new majority," is 107.6 million, which translates to about 35.1% of the country's total population.

- Parks and recreation trends in marketing leisure services continue to emerge and should be taken into consideration in all planning efforts, as different cultures respond differently to marketing techniques.
- Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social marketing electronic tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.<sup>6</sup>

## What These Trends Mean for Manassas

Based on the demographic trends in Manassas and recreational and cultural trends nationwide, Millennials, Baby Boomers, and those of Hispanic/Latino origin will be the driving demographic forces for parks, recreation, and cultural needs in Manassas.

Manassas should focus investment in recreation and cultural amenities desired by these groups. For example, Millennials and Baby Boomers desire inexpensive ways to get outdoors that are close to home and work, such as trails, bike paths, and activities in public parks. Millennials also grew up playing organized sports and many still choose to socialize in this way, so adult sports leagues of all sorts, such as competitive volleyball, flag football, casual kickball and pick-up soccer, will be important facility and programming trends for the City to follow. Additionally, the Hispanic community prefers to participate in outdoor sports as a way to be physically active, but more importantly, as a means of socializing for the entire family. Providing space for family-oriented activities, such as playgrounds and picnic areas in conjunction with field amenities, will be key for this demographic. Finally, the use of mobile devices and mobile data applications dominate technology today. Provision of Wi-Fi and mobile internet access could help Manassas increase marketing, participation, and knowledge of programs, services, and facilities.

In conclusion, it will be important for the City of Manassas to continue to invest in connectivity and walkability, preserving open space, increasing opportunities for outdoor fitness, increasing access to athletic facilities, and investing in mobile applications for programming, marketing, and wayfinding.

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<sup>6</sup> Jacqueline Woerner, "The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015," Emarsys Blog, <http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/>, accessed February 26, 2015.

## IV. What We Want: Community Involvement

A comprehensive public participation process served as the foundation of this Parks, Recreation, and Culture Needs Assessment and Facilities Plan. Public participation included targeted focus group meetings, public forums, citizen advisory committee meetings, and citizen surveys. In addition, all draft documents were posted on the City's website, and the public was encouraged to sign up for email notifications of new documents and meetings and provide comments on the draft documents. Together, this process provided a wealth of quantitative and qualitative information that helped identify key strengths and weaknesses of the City's parks, recreation, and cultural amenities and ultimately guided the recommendations and strategies provided in this plan.

### Community Meetings

Community meetings were held in November 2015 and March 2016 at various locations within the City of Manassas. These meetings included focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and an open public forum. Focus groups were advertised by direct invitation as well as by open invitation through social media with the idea of mixing residents and stakeholders with differing points of view to solicit broad-based perspectives. Each meeting was approximately 90 minutes long. A series of questions were facilitated by the consultant team to ensure that adequate input was received from all attendees. In total, nine (9) community meetings were held, and 68 individuals participated to give their input. A detailed summary of these meetings is provided as **Appendix B**.



*Participants discuss parks, recreation, and cultural facility issues during a focus group at the Manassas Boys and Girls Club.*

### Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

The residents of Manassas expressed satisfaction in the diversity of parks and associated amenities. The City's parks are generally well distributed geographically and have a variety of amenities at each location, with a small portion of underserved areas. A significant strength of the park system is the City's ability to leverage partnerships to facilitate a comprehensive parks, recreation, and cultural offering. Examples include the Hylton Performing Arts Center, Freedom Fitness and Aquatics Center, and Boys and Girls Club. Moreover, participants were complimentary of the Community Development staff and noted that staff is very responsive and accommodating. Conversely, participants expressed displeasure with the condition and availability of some park amenities, specifically athletic fields. Lack of community access to school-owned facilities and the shortage of rectangular multipurpose fields are major sources of consternation. Participants also expressed the need for a community center/library, enhanced connectivity between public spaces, and greater safety at parks facilities. Along with physical improvements, communication and availability of information were also identified as areas for improvement.

## Programming

The City of Manassas does not currently facilitate parks and recreation programming. Rather, the Department works cooperatively with nonprofit associations to offer limited programs. Traditional recreational offerings such as group fitness, swim lessons, and after-school enrichment programming are facilitated by private organizations or neighboring localities. Participants indicated a demand for more program offerings, such as community gardening, youth activities, exercise/fitness classes, and special events like runs and festivals celebrating the City's culture and diversity.

## Improvements

When asked to "dream big," the following were suggestions for new parks and recreation facilities in the city:

- Renovate existing parks and amenities
- Enhance landscaping and overall quality of park amenities
- Complete Liberia House restoration
- Provide additional multiuse paths and trails that link parks
- Provide a multiuse community center/library
- Provide additional multipurpose rectangular athletic fields and tracks
- Enhance athletic fields with lights, adequate drainage, and synthetic turf
- Provide an indoor aquatic facility
- Provide a splash pad at the pool
- Provide additional restroom and storage facilities at parks

## Values

Manassas residents value their parks system. Users would like to see an increased focus on safety within the parks as well as greater connectivity between parks and public spaces. Citizens value a healthy, active lifestyle and wish for the City to continue to be an attractive place to live and work in order to keep people in the City. The City's commitment to cultural and historic preservation is also greatly valued by the community.

## Priorities

Focus group participants were asked to prioritize projects and improvements for the next 5-10 years. Participants indicated that connectivity should be a top priority, as having a walkable and bikeable community was very important. Additional and improved bike paths, a community center or a smaller neighborhood center with a library, and improved maintenance of facilities and amenities also were identified as priorities. Participants also noted increased outreach to the Hispanic community, leveraging the relationship with GMBL, and staying current with trends as other priorities.



*Liberia House*  
Credit: City of Manassas

## Community Survey

In addition to community meetings, the City of Manassas conducted a citizen survey on parks, recreation, and culture. The purpose of this survey was to provide a quantitative measure of the public's opinion on facilities, services, and programs and assist Manassas in establishing priorities and planning for capital improvements. A summary of key findings from the survey are included in the discussion that follows, while a complete analysis is provided in **Appendix C**.

This community survey section is a summary of the survey results. The complete survey results are provided as **Appendix C**.

### Methodology

The community survey was conducted using three primary methods:

- 1) An invitation, resident-only, mail-back survey
- 2) An online, resident-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample
- 3) An open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample.

The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation survey, which provided a statistically-valid sample. Analysis of additional segments is included where differences were apparent and omitted where trends were similar to the overall sample. The open link responses are also analyzed and discussed in a separate section of the report, highlighting differences from the invitation sample.

### Summary of Results

The results of the citizen survey generally validated the qualitative information gained during the community meetings, while offering additional insight into the priorities of residents. The following is a summary of major findings from the survey:

- **Existing Facilities.** Three facilities fell into the category of high in importance to a majority of households yet not fully meeting the needs of the community: pathways and trails, passive open spaces, and a community/recreation center. Improvements in these areas would likely have a positive impact for a sizeable portion of the community.
- **Programs and Special Events.** Wellness/health/yoga programs and fitness classes were the two areas deemed important to a majority of households yet not fully meeting the needs of the community. Enhancing or expanding these programs could improve the degree to which respondents feel their needs are being met by the City. In addition, a large majority of respondents expressed a high level of importance for community events (78%) and concerts/live performances (73%). When segmented by age, it showed that respondents under the age of 35 have an especially strong interest in community events (91%).
- **Values and Vision.** The top areas that invitation sample respondents most want focused on are pathway and trail connectivity (30%), maintenance of parks and facilities (28%), family-oriented activities (26%), and safety and security (25%).
- **Future Facilities, Amenities, and Services.** Pathways and trails were rated as a top priority for future investment by 39% of respondents (14% ranked this as a first priority, 11% as a second priority, 13% as a third priority), and improved park amenities were a priority for 36% of respondents (12% first priority, 12% second priority, 11% third priority).

- **Financial Choices/Fees.** While a number of comments were voiced about fiscal responsibility and against additional or increased taxes, a strong majority of respondents (82%) reported that they would likely or definitely support a real estate tax increase of \$5 per year. A majority also said they would support a \$10 increase (66%). Support declined to below half of respondents for larger increases.

Furthermore, when given the opportunity to allocate a hypothetical \$100, respondents allocated the largest amount of funding toward improving, renovating, or maintaining existing park facilities with an average allocation of \$16. This was followed by average allocations of \$13 for expanding aquatics and providing additional pathways/trails.

**Figure 8: Survey Response – Respondent Allocation of \$100**



**Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix – Facilities and Amenities**

To better illustrate areas for future facility improvements, the “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix shown in **Figure 9** compares the level of importance and the degree to which community needs are being met for each facility. The matrix is sectioned into four quadrants using the midpoints for both questions. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.7 (the median importance rating across all programs), and the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.5.



The upper right quadrant depicts facilities that have high importance to households in Manassas and adequately meet community needs. As these facilities are important to most respondents, they should be monitored and maintained in coming years but are less of a priority for immediate improvements as needs are currently being met:

- Community parks
- Libraries
- Cultural facilities
- Museums
- Historical sites
- Playgrounds (borderline low in needs met)

Facilities located in the upper left quadrant have a high level of importance but a lower level of needs being met, indicating that these are potential areas for enhancements. Improving these facilities would likely positively affect the degree to which community needs are met overall:

- Pathways and trails
- Passive open space
- Community/recreation center

Shown in the lower right quadrant are facilities that are less important to most households and are meeting the needs of the community well. Future discussions evaluating whether the resources supporting these facilities outweigh the benefits may be constructive:

- Ice skating rinks
- Ball fields (baseball, softball, etc.)
- Athletic fields (on the cusp of low needs met)
- Courts (basketball, tennis, etc.) (borderline low in needs met)



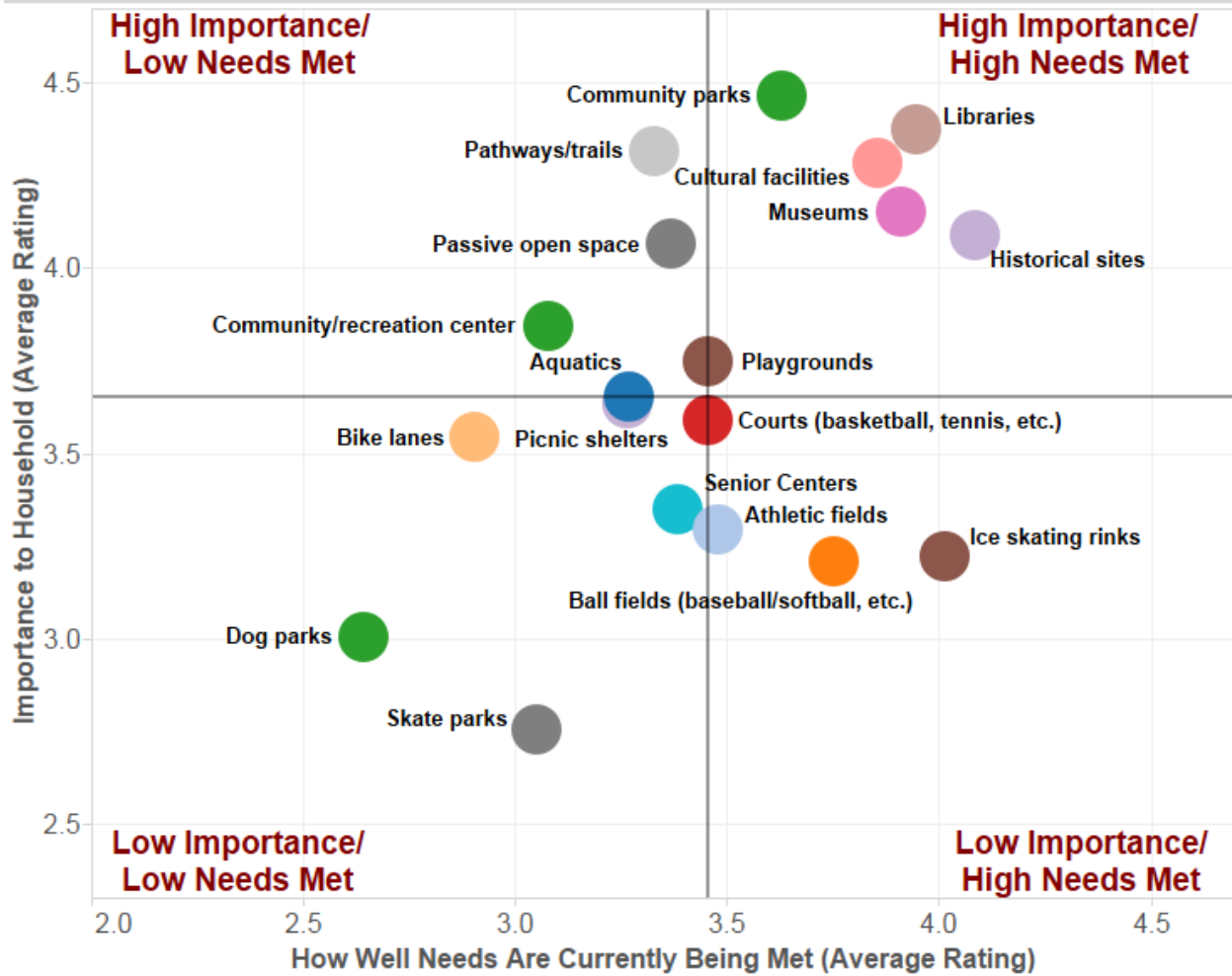
*Harris Pavilion Ice Skating*  
Credit: City of Manassas

Finally, facilities found in the lower left quadrant do not meet community needs well but are also important to fewer in the community. Deemed “niche” facilities, these amenities may have a small but passionate following, so measurements of participation in discussions of future improvements may prove to be valuable:

- Aquatics (borderline high in importance)
- Picnic shelters (on the cusp of high importance)
- Bike lanes
- Senior centers
- Dog parks
- Skate parks

Figure 9: Current Facilities – Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix

Level of Importance vs. Needs Met for Current Manassas Facilities (Invitation Sample Only)



## Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix – Programs and Services

Another “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix allows a similar comparison of programs based on the level of importance and degree to which community needs are being met. Scores are illustrated in the matrix in **Figure 10** by using the mid-points for both questions to divide the grid into four quadrants. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.5 (the median importance rating across all programs); the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.4.

Programs located in the upper right quadrant are identified as having a high level of importance and are perceived to be meeting community needs adequately. While improvements are less of an immediate priority for these programs, they are important to monitor so that community satisfaction stays strong:

- Community events (festivals, concerts, etc.)
- Cultural events/programs
- Performances (music, theater, etc.)
- Volunteer programs
- Youth sports
- History lectures/tours (on the cusp of low importance)

Depicted in the upper left quadrant are programs that are generally important to households but are not fully meeting the needs of the community. Therefore, enhancing or expanding these programs may boost the degree to which respondents feel their overall community needs are being met:

- Wellness/health/yoga programs
- Fitness classes

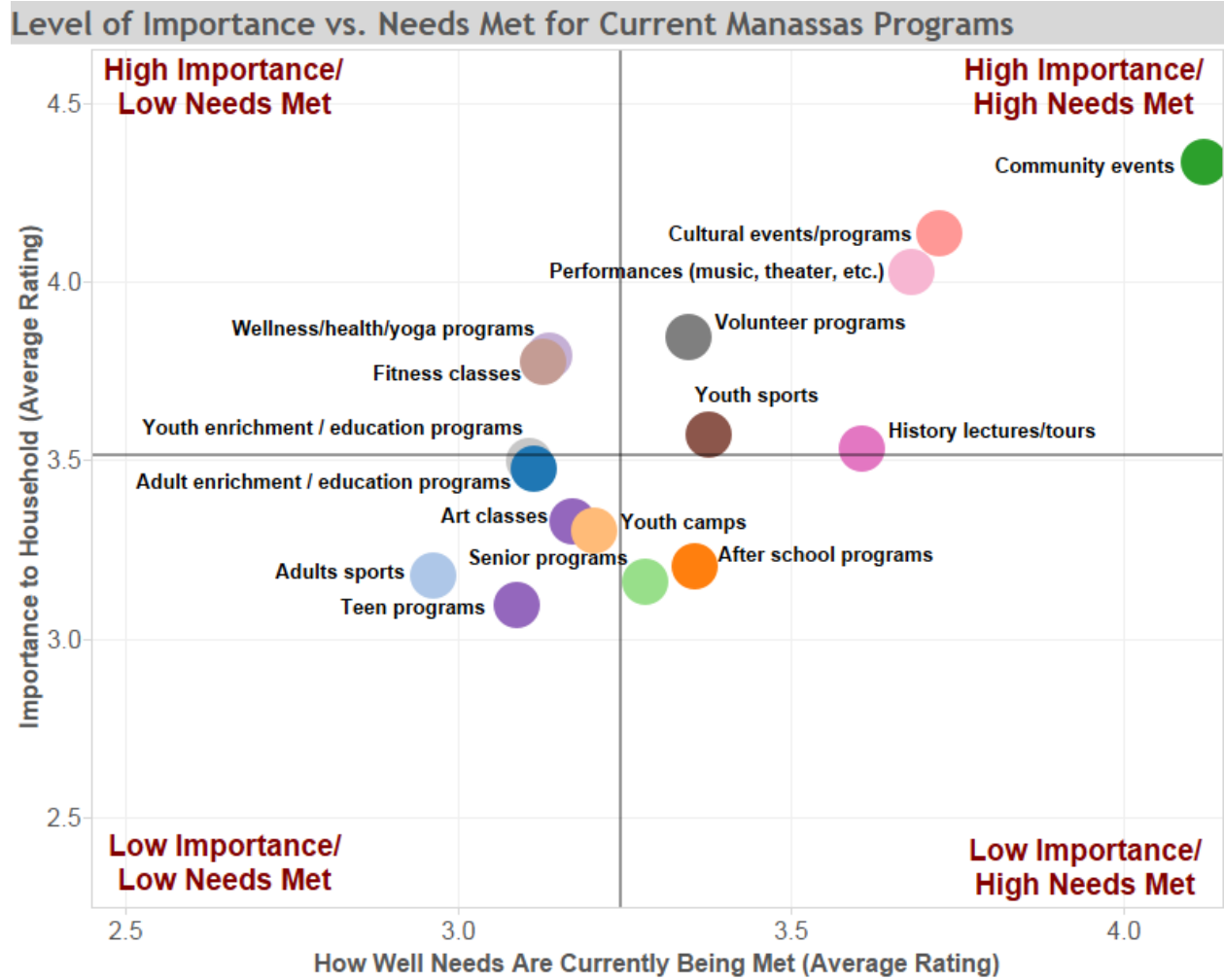
The programs in the lower right quadrant are less important to most respondents and are currently meeting the needs of the community. Current levels of support appear to be adequate, so future resource allocation discussions should consider community needs:

- After school programs
- Senior programs

Finally, lower left quadrant programs have a low level of meeting community needs even though they are only important to a smaller group of households. These “niche” programs are typically not critical for the satisfaction of the whole community, but should be monitored to understand whether or not improvements would be constructive:

- Youth enrichment/education program (on the cusp of high importance)
- Adult enrichment/education programs
- Art classes
- Youth camps
- Adult sports
- Teen programs

Figure 10: Programs and Services – Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix



## V. Parks, Recreation, and Culture Inventory – Facilities and Services

As the population of Manassas grows, the City's parks, recreation, and culture system will face increased demand on its current assets. In order to effectively plan for the future, the City took inventory of its current facilities and analyzed these assets in comparison to baseline and level of service standards.

To evaluate the City's current parks, recreation, and cultural system, the design team utilized a range of best practice methods including:

- Site visits and inventory of existing parks, recreation, and cultural resources
- Classification of existing park types and functions based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines recommendations, but adapted to the City's particular context
- Benchmarking of community resources to national averages and communities of similar size
- Spatial analyses of parks, recreation, and cultural amenities

Based on this assessment, the consulting team found that:

- The public park system in Manassas includes 19 parks and recreation sites spread throughout the City. Additional recreation, fitness, and cultural opportunities are available to the public at the City's numerous historic sites, the Hylton Performing Arts Center, the Boys and Girls Club, and Freedom Center at George Mason University.
- The City has a deficit in park acreage in comparison to communities of similar size.
- Despite the deficit in acreage, parks in the City are well distributed and most residents live within a 15-minute walk of at least one publicly available park or recreation facility, including playgrounds and other amenities at City school sites.
- Access to public aquatics facilities, community centers, and rectangular playing fields is more limited than other amenities, including playgrounds, open space, and basketball courts.

These and other findings are summarized in the following sections and further detailed in **Appendix D**. Combining this understanding of the performance of the existing system with future population growth forecasts provides a basis for strategizing how the City should consider providing parks and recreation services now and into the future.

### Inventory and Assessment

As the first step in evaluating existing facilities, the City completed a facilities and inventory assessment that carefully documented existing conditions of outdoor amenities at parks and cultural facility locations. This inventory serves as an important foundation for the level of service (LOS) analysis completed in this study.

As part of this study, the design team also evaluated the quality and condition of amenities (e.g. pavilions, court/fields, restrooms) at each facility. To quantify findings, each facility was rated on a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high) based on condition and the extent to which the amenity was likely to meet residents' needs and expectations for functional use, comfort, convenience/accessibility, and overall quality. The descriptions of each rating are as follows:

- 1 – Does not meet expectations for general parks function
- 2 – Meets expectations
- 3 – Exceeds expectations

Overall, the City’s park system meets or exceeds expectations in all areas. Neighborhood parks rated the highest overall for quality. E.G. Smith Baseball Complex is the only park to be rated as, “does not meet expectations for general parks functions” for comfort, functional use, and quality. A summary of this inventory is provided in **Table 8**. Additional detailed information, field comments, and recommended upgrades for each park are provided in **Appendix E**.

**Table 8: Parks Assessment Summary**

	Acres	Comfort	Convenience/ Accessibility	Functional Use	Quality
<b>Specialty Parks</b>					
E.G. Smith Baseball Complex	23.00	1	3	1	1
Harris Pavilion	1.23	3	3	3	3
<b>Regional Parks</b>					
Jennie Dean Park	77.15	2	2	2	2
Stonewall Park/Pool	24.40	3/2	3/1.5	3/1.5	2/1.5
<b>Community Parks</b>					
Baldwin Park	9.50	3	3	3	2
Byrd Park	9.00	3	2	2	2
Cannon Branch Fort**	17.11	3	2	2	2
Jennie Dean Memorial/Manassas Industrial School**	5.00	2	3	3	2
Liberia Plantation**	20.62	2	2	3	2
Mayfield Fort**	11.64	2	2	2	2
Oakenshaw Park	9.90	3	3	2	3
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>					
Cavalry Run Park	2.20	2	3	2	3
Kinsley Mill Park	3.30	3	2	2	2
Lee Manor Park	4.80	2	2	2	3
Nelson Park	2.10	3	2	2	3
Winterset Park	3.90	3	3	2	2
<b>Mini Parks</b>					
Walter Delisle Park	0.20	2	3	2	2
<b>Undeveloped Parks</b>					
Cedar Crest Park	2.23	-	-	-	-
New Britain Park	6.29	-	-	-	-

## Capacity Benchmarking Analysis

Benchmarking allows planners and recreational professionals to compare certain elements of parks and recreation agencies. Although no two parks and recreation agencies are exactly the same, comparison can be a functional and valuable tool in locating, managing, and improving city park systems and can aid in policy and decision making. The tables below benchmark a capacity analysis of the size and number of parks and facilities in Manassas against national averages outlined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

## Traditional Parks Space

The table below provides a summary of park acreage for Manassas' "Traditional Parks." These parks have been formally designated by the City and provide active and passive outdoor recreation opportunities. The data shows the total estimated current (2015) park acres by park type, then provides the number of acres per 1,000 residents in 2015 (5.61 acres/1,000 residents) and projected through 2025 (4.57 acres/1,000 residents). It is also important to point out that the City of Manassas average includes undeveloped park acreage that is not currently available for residents to use.

**Table 9: Traditional Parks: Acreage per 1,000 Residents**

	Acres	Total Acreage Per Park Type	Acres per 1,000, Residents (2015)*	Acres per 1,000 Residents (2025)*
<b>Specialty Parks</b>				
E.G. Smith Baseball Complex	23.00	24.23	0.58	0.47
Harris Pavilion	1.23			
<b>Regional Parks</b>				
Jennie Dean Park	77.15	101.55	2.44	1.99
Stonewall Park	24.40			
<b>Community Parks</b>				
Baldwin Park	9.50	82.77	1.99	1.63
Byrd Park	9.00			
Cannon Branch Fort**	17.11			
Jennie Dean Memorial/Manassas Industrial School**	5.00			
Liberia Plantation**	20.62			
Mayfield Fort**	11.64			
Oakenshaw Park	9.90			
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>				
Cavalry Run Park	2.20	16.3	0.39	0.32
Kinsley Mill Park	3.30			
Lee Manor Park	4.80			
Nelson Park	2.10			
Winterset Park	3.90			
<b>Mini Parks</b>				
Walter Delisle Park	0.20	0.20	0.005	0.00
<b>Undeveloped Parks</b>				
Cedar Crest Park	2.23	8.52	0.20	0.16
New Britain Park	6.29			
<b>Total</b>	<b>233.57</b>	<b>233.57</b>	<b>5.61</b>	<b>4.57</b>

\*Assumes no net loss or gain of park land. Population data used in this analysis is provided by Esri. City population is estimated at 41,614 in 2015 and projected to increase to 50,934 by 2025.

\*\*Historic sites are used primarily for passive recreation and not available for active recreation development.

**Table 10** illustrates traditional park acres per 1,000 residents for the City of Manassas in comparison to recreation amenity national averages and communities of similar size. Based on this benchmarking analysis, the City of Manassas is currently underserved in terms of park acreage with a deficit of approximately 4.1 acres per 1,000 residents (or 169 acres) in comparison to communities of similar size. This deficit is expected to grow to approximately 5.1 acres per 1,000 residents (or 261 acres) by 2025.

**Table 10: Traditional Parks: Acreage per 1,000 Residents Benchmarking Analysis**

	City of Manassas Average	National Average*	Median Acres per 1,000 Residents in Communities of Population 20,000 to 49,999*	Median Acres per 1,000 Residents in Communities of Population 50,000 to 99,999*
Traditional Park Acres per 1,000 Residents 2015	5.60	9.5	9.7	9.2
Traditional Park Acres per 1,000 Residents 2025	4.50			

\*National average and median acres per resident data is sourced from the 2016 National Recreation and Parks Association Field Report

### School Outdoor Recreation Space

A number of City school facilities provide additional recreation opportunities after school hours. This includes playgrounds, courts, and unfenced fields and open space. The table below provides a summary of outdoor recreation space available at City of Manassas school sites. The data shows total acres of school amenity space, as well as the number of acres per 1,000 residents in 2015 (1.21 acres/1,000 residents) and projected through 2025 (0.97 acres/1,000 residents).

**Table 11: School Outdoor Recreation Space: Acreage per 1,000 Residents**

	Acres	Acres per 1,000 Residents (2015)	Acres per 1,000 Residents (2025)
Baldwin Elementary	6.20	1.21	0.97
Haydon Elementary	2.60		
Jennie Dean Elementary	17.40		
Mayfield Intermediate School	2.20		
Metz Middle School	8.80		
Osborn High School	1.70		
Round Elementary School	2.10		
Weems Elementary School	9.30		
<b>Total</b>	<b>50.30</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>0.97</b>

\* Assumes no net loss or gain of school outdoor recreation space. Data used in this analysis is provided by Esri. City population is estimated at 41,614 in 2015 and projected to increase to 50,934 by 2025.

### Traditional Parks + School Amenities, Acres per 1,000 Residents

Considering traditional parks and school outdoor recreation space together increases the overall availability of recreational amenities. **Table 12** compares the combined acreage of traditional parks and school amenities to national averages and communities of similar size, using acres per 1,000 residents as the measure. Based on this comparison, the City has less acreage per resident than national averages and communities of similar size. Including school outdoor recreation space, the current deficit is approximately 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents (or 169 acres) in comparison to communities of similar size. This deficit is expected to grow to approximately 4.2 acres per 1,000 residents (or 261 acres) by 2025.



**Table 12: Traditional Parks + School Amenities: Acreage per 1,000 Residents Benchmarking Analysis**

	City of Manassas Average	National Average*	Median Acres per 1,000 Residents in Communities of Population 20,000 to 49,999*	Median Acres per 1,000 Residents in Communities of Population 50,000 to 99,999*
Acres per 1,000 Residents 2015 <i>(including school amenities)</i>	6.82	9.5	9.7	9.2
Acres per 1,000 Residents 2025 <i>(including school amenities)</i>	5.47			

\*National average and median acres per resident data is sourced from the 2016 National Recreation and Parks Association Field Report

### Residents per Park

Another benchmarking measure that can be used to analyze a City's parks system is the number of residents per park. **Table 13** illustrates residents per Traditional Park (only). The number of residents served by each park is generally consistent with the national average and similarly-sized communities.

**Table 13: Traditional Parks: Residents per Park Benchmarking Analysis**

	City of Manassas Average	National Average*	Median Residents per Park in Communities of Population 20,000 to 49,999*	Median Residents per Park in Communities of Population 50,000 to 99,999*
Residents per Traditional Park 2015	2,190	2,277	1,894	2,396
Residents per Traditional Park 2025	2,733			

\*National average and median acres per resident data is sourced from the 2016 National Recreation and Parks Association Field Report

**Table 14** shows average number of residents per park and school amenity area (Traditional Parks and School Amenity Areas) both now (2015) and in the future (2025). When school outdoor recreation spaces are included, the City provides a healthy number of parks to its residents compared to other similarly-sized communities and national averages.

**Table 14: Traditional Parks + School Amenities: Residents per Park Benchmarking Analysis**

	City of Manassas Average	National Average*	Median Residents per Park in Communities of Population 20,000 to 49,999*	Median Residents per Park in Communities of Population 50,000 to 99,999*
Residents per Park 2015 (including school amenities)	1,541	2,277	1,894	2,396
Residents per Park 2025 (including school amenities)	1,924			

\*National average and median acres per resident data is sourced from the 2016 National Recreation and Parks Association Field Report

### Population Served per Amenity

The final benchmarking comparison analyzes the average population served by particular amenities within the parks system, excluding school amenities. The median population served per amenity in Manassas is compared to those offered by other communities of similar size. Based on this information, a projected deficit/surplus for each amenity is given. As shown in **Table 15**, the City is well served by general diamond fields and basketball courts, but is generally lacking in other amenities in comparison to other communities. While every community has different needs and desires, this information can be used to help guide decision making on future investments in City parks.



Color Vibe  
Credit: City of Manassas

**Table 15: Population Served per Amenity**

Recreational Use/Amenity	Average Median Population Served Per Amenity		Number in Manassas	Median Population Served Per Amenity in Manassas		
	20,000 - 49,999	50,000-99,999	2016	2015	2025	2015 Deficit / Surplus
Basketball Courts	6,874	7,788	8	5,201	6,367	<b>0</b>
Community Centers*	28,832	56,687	1	41,614	50,934	<b>(-1)</b>
Community Gardens	27,236	39,555	0	0	0	<b>(-2)</b>
Diamond Fields: Adult ( <i>Large Fields with 90' base path</i> )	18,553	21,650	2	20,807	25,967	<b>(-1)</b>
Diamond Fields: General ( <i>Field with less than 90' base path</i> )	6,502	8,317	13	3,201	3,918	<b>+6</b>
Dog Park	27,000	57,535	0	0	0	<b>(-1)</b>
Multipurpose Synthetic Field	23,625	28,541	0	0	0	<b>(-2)</b>
Multipurpose Courts- Volleyball	19,547	15,250	0	0	0	<b>(-4)</b>
Outdoor Swimming Pools*	34,646		1	41,614	51,934	<b>(-1)</b>
Playgrounds	2,833	3,493	12	3,468	4,245	<b>(-3)</b>
Recreation Centers*	24,350	39,187	0	41,614	50,934	<b>(-2)</b>
Rectangular Fields: Football**	16,664	33,496	1	41,614	50,934	<b>(-1)</b>
Rectangular Fields: Lacrosse	19,300	37,114	0	0	0	<b>(-2)</b>
Rectangular Fields: Multi-Purpose	7,163	15,288	0	41,614	50,934	<b>(-4)</b>
Rectangular Field: Soccer**	12,000	15,195	1	41,614	50,934	<b>(-3)</b>
Tennis Courts	4,295		13	3,201	3,918	<b>+1</b>

Statistics are sourced from the 2016 National Recreation and Park Association Field Report.

\*Excludes partnership sites including Boys and Girls Club, Hylton Performing Arts Center, and George Mason Freedom Center.

\*\*The Dean Park rectangular field, though located on School Board property, is generally considered a park facility.

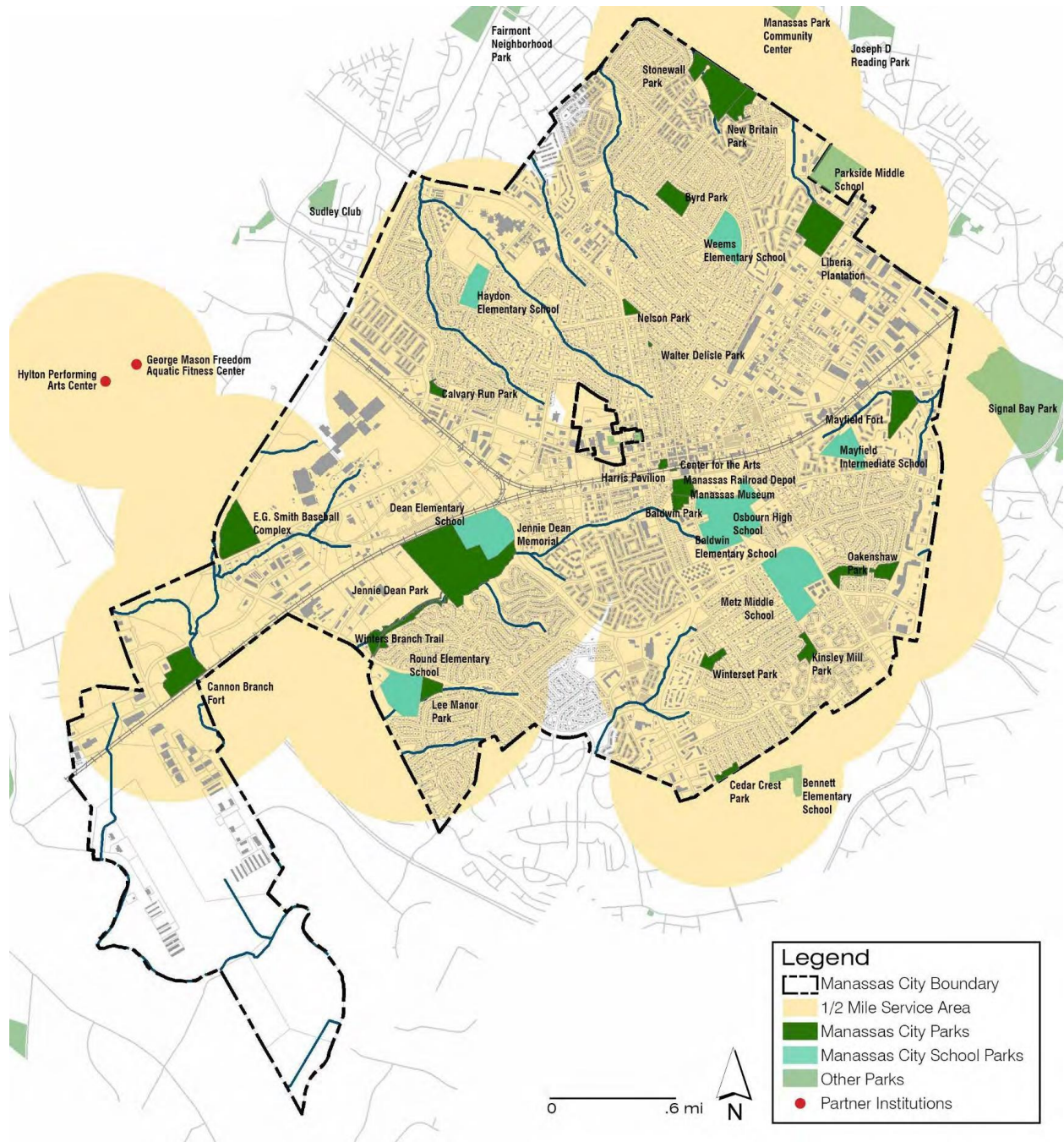
\*\*\*The Stonewall Park rectangular field is primarily used for soccer and does not meet regulation football standards.

## Geographic Level of Service Analysis

In addition to the facilities inventory and capacity benchmarking analysis discussed above, a geographic level of service (LOS) analysis was conducted to evaluate the spatial distribution of the City's parks and park amenities. This analysis applies a primary service area of a ½-mile radius, or an approximate travel time of 15 minutes. This ½-mile radius is based on an average walking speed of three miles per hour, but can account for longer walking distances if indirect (e.g., "cut-through") routes are used. The City's traditional development pattern and grid of streets help support a relatively high level of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity. This connectivity can increase levels of service as it increases the likelihood of being within a ½-mile travel distance to a park.

Consistent with the above methodology, a ½-mile service area was drawn around each park and amenity analyzed to illustrate potential community access to facilities as shown in **Figure 11**. Additional maps and analysis are included in the **Appendix E**. Provided below is a summary of findings from this analysis.

**Figure 11: Existing Park and School Amenity Service Areas**



## **Park Service Areas**

### ***Traditional Park Service Areas***

“Traditional Parks” refer to recreation and cultural facilities that are formally designated by the City and provide active and passive outdoor recreation opportunities; school amenities are excluded. Service area coverage within the City is generally adequate with small gaps in coverage in the northwest, southern, and eastern quadrants of the City. It is important to note that many multi-family developments within the City provide private common areas to residents living within these developments. While not publicly-owned, these common areas do provide facilities to help meet some resident need.

### ***Traditional Park + School Amenity Service Areas***

A number of school sites located within the City could provide additional recreation opportunities for City residents, if the sites’ facilities were available for public use after hours. Considering traditional parks and school amenities together increases recreation service coverage within the City.

### ***Traditional Park + School Amenity Service Areas, Relative to Residential Areas***

It is important to consider geographic proximity of parks and cultural facilities to potential users in residential areas. Overall, the service area coverage of parks and school amenities within the City related to proximity to residential areas is good. The City of Manassas is 10 square miles and nearly “built-out” with existing development; it is expected that any new development will increase in density. New, denser development could yield positive impacts, reducing urban sprawl and concentrating development in the City’s center. However, denser development could also have a negative impact on parks and amenities, increasing the number of residents needing to use existing recreational resources.

## **Amenity Service Areas**

Ten major park amenity types provided in City parks were evaluated for service area coverage. Provided below is a summary of findings; detailed maps are provided in the appendix.

- **Aquatics** – Service coverage for aquatics is low throughout most of Manassas. The Stonewall Park Swimming Pool is the only public aquatics center within the City and is located in the northern edge of the City. The Stonewall Park Swimming Pool is in need of extensive improvements to accessibility, safety, and quality. Supplementing this aquatic facility is the George Mason Freedom Aquatic Fitness Center, a regional facility offering signature aquatic amenities for public use. To alleviate gaps in service coverage, the addition of splash pads and other aquatic facilities can provide additional aquatic activities within the City for residents without the expense of developing additional City pools.
- **Diamond Fields** – There are a number of diamond fields located throughout the City. The largest concentration of diamond fields within the City is located at the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex, which is an aging facility in need of extensive renovations. Several diamond fields are in need of drainage and other improvements to increase performance quality. Service coverage for diamond fields within the City is good when considering school amenities as a potential resource. There are gaps in coverage in the central and southern quadrants of the City.
- **Basketball Courts** – Basketball courts throughout the City are strategically distributed and overall are in good condition. There are gaps in coverage in the southwest quadrant and central residential areas of the City.

- Community Centers – The City does not have a dedicated community center; however, community-oriented activities are provided through the Boys and Girls Club, Manassas Museum, and Center for the Arts. These facilities are limited in space and new facilities or expansion of existing facilities should be considered. Currently, the service coverage area for community centers is poor within the City.
- Open Space – There are a number of flexible, open space facilities located in both traditional parks and school amenities throughout the City. As the City continues to densify and vacant land decreases, new open space opportunities will be limited. Available open space within the City should be maximized to optimal use. Gaps in service coverage of this amenity type can be found in the southern, northern, and western quadrants of the City.
- Playgrounds – Overall playground coverage within the City is adequate. However, expansion, upgrades, and replacements of facilities are needed to improve the level of service for these amenities.
- Tennis Courts – Tennis courts are distributed throughout the City and are, overall, in good condition. Gaps in coverage are located in the central and northern quadrants of the City.
- Rectangular Fields – The availability of rectangular fields is limited in the City. Due to popularity of rectangular field sports, opportunities to expand rectangular field offerings should be considered.
- Trails –The City’s trail system is guided by a bicycle and pedestrian master plan that is primarily defined by shared-use paths, bikes lanes, and shared bike/vehicular roadways. A majority of the trails master plan recommendations have been implemented. Continual update and implementation of the master plan is recommended to provide greater bicycle and pedestrian access to key areas of the City.
- Shared Use Trails – There is decreased access to shared-use trails in the central area of the City. It should be noted that signed, shared roadways provide bike access in this gap area and many of the neighborhoods within this area include sidewalks that provide pedestrian access/circulation.

# VI. Great Things to Come – SMART Goals, Objectives, and Actions

## Recommendations

The following section provides a list of goals, objectives, and actions for the City to consider based on the consultant’s analysis of the citizen survey, staff and Citizens Advisory Committee input, focus groups, needs assessment, and Level of Service (LOS) analysis. The recommendations describe ways to enhance the level of service and the quality of the City’s parks and cultural facilities and programs.

The acronym **SMART** is used in this context to provide guidance to both the staff and the public to be specific and meaningful in our goal setting and to set goals that are achievable, relevant, and targeted. Specific recommendations from this report will be considered by the City Council as part of an update to the City’s Comprehensive Plan, FY18 annual operating budget, and Five-Year Capital Improvement Program. Additional public input will occur with each of those decisions.

### **Goal 1: Improve Organizational Efficiencies of the City’s Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services**

#### **Objective 1.1 – Centralize the management of parks, recreation, and cultural resources currently operating in disparate divisions under Community Development through the creation of a stand-alone department or as a single division within Community Development or Public Works.**

An unfortunate consequence of the economic downturn in the late 2000s was the elimination of the City’s Parks and Recreation Department. Since that time, those traditional services have been housed in Community Development, which also assumed responsibility for the Manassas Museum System during the same period. Maintenance of facilities and management of the Capital Improvement Program is currently housed in the Department of Public Works, as it was prior to the economic downturn. This has created multiple points of contact regarding facilities and services as well as a lack of consistent coordination of operations. Several citizens commented during the process that they did not know whom to call within the city government to address their questions or needs. A single point of contact inherent in centralizing the management of these functions could improve operations, better focus maintenance efforts, enhance user satisfaction, and strengthen existing partnerships. The City has already taken a step in this direction in the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program by organizing parks, recreation, and museum facility improvements under the heading of “Culture and Recreation.”

#### **Objective 1.2 – Improve internal and external communication regarding City parks, recreation, and cultural activities and services.**

A recurring theme throughout the assessment process was that the Manassas community did not know about the City’s parks, amenities, and partner providers. For example, many citizens did not know where Stonewall Pool was located or that the City is a partner in the Freedom Aquatic and Fitness Center. The development of a comprehensive marketing plan to guide the City’s communications and promotions efforts would create awareness and potentially improve participation, which could result in increased revenue.

Additionally, the City has long had a desire to improve directional signage throughout the City. Clear and consistent wayfinding and site identification signage, such as the recently installed signage at Dean Park, would contribute to a greater awareness of parks and higher utilization. Both the marketing plan and wayfinding signage should include partner programs and facilities.



*Consistent wayfinding and site identification signage, such as the recently installed signage at Dean Park, would contribute to greater awareness and utilization of the City's parks.*

**Objective 1.3 – Evaluate and strengthen existing parks, recreation, and cultural resource partnerships within the community.**

The City of Manassas currently partners with a number of agencies to provide facilities, programs, and activities to the community. Some current partnerships include:

- Manassas City Public Schools
- Boys and Girls Club
- Stonewall Park Swim Team
- Sports Leagues such as the Greater Manassas Baseball League
- George Mason University

However, in some instances, such as with the Manassas City Public Schools, there are no formal written agreements that specify the primary goal of the partnership, roles, and responsibilities. Developing and adopting a written agreement will better define roles and responsibilities and clarify expectations that show mutual trust and partnership. Without a written agreement, both partners may be missing opportunities to provide greater service to City residents. The City should seek to enhance or formalize all existing partnerships in signed partnership agreements while continuing to explore additional opportunities. (A Sample Partnership Policy will be supplied as a staff level document).

The City should also take opportunities to recognize “home” teams, such as the Stonewall Park Swim Team, and incorporate home team accomplishments into City announcements and promotions. Regional matches and tournaments should be coordinated with tourism officials for cross promotions of hotels and restaurants. Similar to high school football on Friday nights, hometown sports create and support community spirit and provide additional revenue for area hotels, restaurants, and retailers.



## Goal 2: Better Maintain and Improve Existing Facilities and Amenities

### Objective 2.1 – Prepare maintenance and capital improvement plans with specific standards and timelines for budget approval annually.

The overwhelming majority of citizen survey respondents commented that they would like to see better maintenance and improvement of existing parks and facilities. The consultant team recommends that the City develop a formal parks maintenance plan with specific standards to guide the maintenance of City parks. The maintenance standards should support the community’s vision of their parks and facilities. The plan would also serve as an informational tool for the public and as a standard for City employees. Additionally, once the base maintenance levels are set and published, the community can determine whether those levels are adequate or enhanced maintenance levels are desired and supported.

In addition, the City should address deferred maintenance items identified in the Level of Service (LOS) Analysis conducted as part of this plan. The LOS Analysis provides the basis for the City to develop a multi-year capital maintenance and capital projects plan for the improvement of the City’s parks and facilities.<sup>7</sup> The City should also consider capital maintenance projects organized by location as opposed to amenity (e.g., tennis courts or playgrounds) so that basic elements of each park get a refresh as one package that can be better appreciated by the community. The City should prioritize those parks that scored lowest in the LOS Analysis (i.e. Score of “1” for functional use, comfort, convenience and quality).



*A formalized maintenance plan can help ensure high quality facilities are provided to residents.*

### Objective 2.2 – Expand greenways, bike paths, and trails and connectivity.

Pathways and trails were identified by the community as a high priority amenity that is not currently being met. While the City proactively completes sidewalk infill projects and adds bike facilities as part of road projects, additional pathway and trail infrastructure should be a priority for the City. The City’s trails plan, which was adopted in 2007, should be updated to identify finished projects and missing connections both within the City and to partner institutions, such as George Mason University. Bike and pedestrian access should continue to be considered with every road project. Bike, fitness, and hiking trails should be incorporated into park and cultural facilities planning.

### Objective 2.3 – Develop additional and expanded recreational opportunities.

Based on feedback from focus group participants and the citizen survey results, the community feels that there is a need for additional recreation facilities and cultural space, including a new community center, additional rectangular fields, and expanded aquatic opportunities.

<sup>7</sup> Note that “capital maintenance” refers to improvements of existing facilities such as tennis courts and ballfields while “capital project” refers to a new facility or expansion of an existing facility. The City develops a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program that is reviewed annually with the current year budgeted.

The community expressed a desire for an indoor community center that could provide space for activities, such as indoor recreation and arts programming. The City should explore opportunities to address this desire through either partnerships, purchase of an existing facility, or construction of a facility that could serve as a community center. For example, prior to the economic downturn, the City provided personnel at some school facilities for indoor basketball in the evenings. Utilizing schools as community centers by programming extended hours to permit some community use for people of all ages could satisfy the need for indoor community space within neighborhoods. Indoor and outdoor community spaces are also recommended to be incorporated into the currently funded Museum/Library Feasibility Study. The Boys and Girls Club facility could also offer additional after-hours opportunities for community use.

Another critical recreation need identified by the community was multipurpose rectangular fields. As referenced in the stakeholder meeting, this was a significant concern of the City's Hispanic population. This need for rectangular fields is supported by the LOS Analysis, which shows that a City the size of Manassas would have ten additional fields on average (see **Table 15** in Section V). Other items lacking in a city the size of Manassas are listed in **Table 15** and include such facilities as additional playgrounds, multipurpose courts, a dog park, and an additional adult baseball field.

There are also currently plans to reduce or replace recreational facilities within the City. Current examples are Lee Manor Park and the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex, which have been proposed as development sites. Community Development should prepare and implement plans to replace existing facilities and amenities proposed for removal to maintain a minimum level of service to the community. Additionally, the department should complete the master plans for Dean and Stonewall Parks to provide additional multipurpose rectangular fields and outdoor recreational amenities for the community and look for opportunities to add new parkland by acquiring or leasing under-utilized outdoor facilities such as at Lockheed Martin and Marsteller School.

The City should also work with residents to develop and implement plans for undeveloped parkland at Cedar Crest Park, New Britain Park, and Lee Square Park to increase the amount of park acreage and provide additional recreational opportunities to the community. Formal consolidation of the Cannon Branch, Stormwater, and Mayfield Fort parcels will allow for expanded passive recreation opportunities at Manassas Landing and Gateway Business Park. Striking a balance between passive and active recreation was a priority for both focus group participants and survey respondents.

Lastly, Stonewall Pool, which opened in 1984, does not meet current ADA standards or community expectations. To help meet the community interest in increasing aquatic opportunities, the City should consider redevelopment of Stonewall Pool into a family leisure style facility in an effort to modernize the facility and expand its customer base while still maintaining a competitive swim facility for the Stonewall Swim Team.

**Objective 2.4 – Continue to improve ADA accessibility at all facilities.**

The City of Manassas currently does not have an ADA Accessibility Transition Plan, which identifies needed changes during a self-evaluation process. The City should conduct a self-evaluation and develop a comprehensive transition plan. Once the ADA Transition Plan is developed and adopted, it should be updated at least every five (5) years. In addition, the City should consider adopting a policy of inclusive play or consider developing a thematic destination playground that offers an inclusive design that allows all children to play together.

### **Goal 3: Increase Recreational Opportunities Based on the Results of this Assessment, Community Demand, and Industry Trends**

Due to budget cuts made during the recession, the Department of Community Development does not undertake any recreational programming beyond aquatic services, ice-skating, and cultural programming provided through the Manassas Museum. The City also provides support to the Center for the Arts and other arts groups and is part of the funding structure for the construction of the Hylton Performing Arts Center. Additionally, the City has a small grant program to support performances, concerts, and parades. Under a reorganized, central Division of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services, the department would be able to develop a comprehensive programming plan to look at existing program offerings by others, identify gaps in services desired by the community, and analyze the feasibility of additional programming. In the short term, with existing resources, the department should look to enhance specific recreational program areas requested in the citizen survey and focus groups.

#### **Objective 3.1 – Increase fitness/wellness, special needs, family programs, teens, and senior programs.**

Results from the focus groups and the citizen survey showed strong support for additional programs for all ages and continued support for special events. Specifically, the community would like to see additional offerings in fitness/wellness, special needs, family programs, teens, and senior programs. As a short-term solution, the City should look to partner with other service providers and private instructors to offer programs and classes at City facilities and parks. Increased marketing of existing programs and classes offered through partner organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, the Museum, the Freedom Center, and the Senior Center will create greater awareness and potentially increase participation. As a longer-term solution, the City may wish to consider providing additional programs that are desired by the community but are not being provided under existing partnerships.

#### **Objective 3.2 – Increase aquatic programming.**

A priority from the focus groups and the survey participants was to increase aquatic programming, though it is unclear if additional programs are needed or better marketing of existing programs and opportunities is warranted. In addition, the community expressed concerns about the cost of participating in aquatic programming at the Freedom Center. Therefore, as a first step, there should be increased cooperation and marketing of existing opportunities with the Stonewall Pool and the Freedom Center, which offer aquatic programs and swim lessons for individuals of all ages.

#### **Objective 3.3 – Continue support of neighborhood and community special events.**

Survey respondents and focus group participants overwhelmingly support the City's festivals, parades, and special events, the majority of which are provided by the City's support for Historic Manassas, Inc. (HMI) under the auspices of the Department of Economic Development and Tourism. Participants did identify a desire for additional concerts, live performances, and cultural events throughout the City and would like to see these festivals and events reflect the diversity in the community.

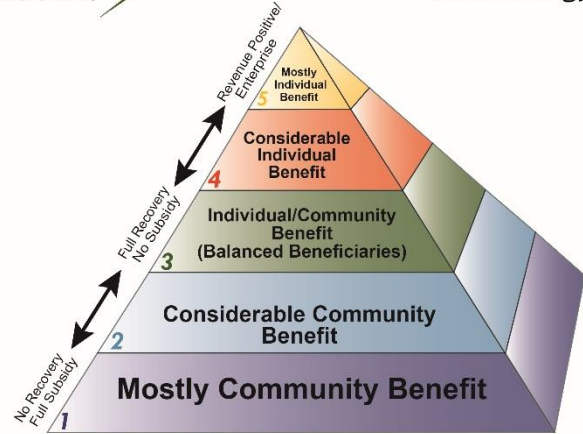
## Goal 4: Increase Financial Support and Opportunities for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities and Programs

### Objective 4.1—Establish a best practice cost recovery and pricing philosophy and practice.

The City currently has a practice of cost recovery, but it varies based on the different service areas. The City of Manassas should implement a Cost Recovery Policy such as the Pyramid Pricing Methodology (Supplied as a staff document) to determine a consistent method of pricing activities and services throughout the City that can also assist in guiding budget decisions. The new resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy should be grounded in the values, vision, and mission of the City of Manassas, while generating adequate revenues through a combination of general tax support and fees to sustain City facilities, parks, programs, and services. It should be reviewed annually.



The Pyramid Methodology



© 2001, 2008, 2009, 2013 GreenPlay, LLC

### Objective 4.2 – Explore opportunities to increase sponsorships.

The City currently has sponsorship arrangements for various events and activities, and it should continue to build on those arrangements and expand sponsorship opportunities beyond events. For example, many parks organizations successfully establish partnerships for the physical maintenance of parks and historic sites, such as a landscaping company adopting a sports field with appropriate signage acknowledging the sponsorship. All existing and future sponsorships should be evaluated to ensure that they are accurately portrayed in a signed sponsorship agreement (Sample Sponsorship Policy will be supplied as a staff document).

### Objective 4.3 – Pursue grant and philanthropic opportunities.

The City currently takes advantage of grant opportunities for facility improvements and should continue to pursue any and all grant opportunities at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. There are also many opportunities to improve citizen donations through online platforms that the City should explore.

## The Action Plan

The following Action Plan elaborates on the goals and objectives identified in the previous section and add specific action items for consideration. The primary focus of these recommendations is maintaining, sustaining, and improving existing parks, recreation, cultural resources, and greenways/trails/bike paths. Conceptual cost estimates are provided in 2016 figures to assist staff in considering the budget implications of certain recommendations but will require refinement prior to budget submission. The detail on individual park upgrades can be found in the following section on park and facilities recommended upgrades.

Timeframe to complete is designated as:

- Short-term (up to 3 years or FY17-FY19)
- Mid-term (4-6 years or FY20-FY22)
- Long-term (7-10 years or part of a future planning or CIP process)
- Ongoing (occurs on a continuous basis)

### Goal 1: Improve Organizational Efficiencies of the City's Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services

<b>Objective 1.1:</b> <i>Centralize the management of parks, recreation, and cultural resources currently operating under the Community Development Department through the creation of a stand-alone Department or Division within Community Development or Public Works</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.1.a</b> Prepare for review and approval a reorganization of the City's parks, recreation, and cultural resource operations to enhance service delivery, better focus and guide maintenance operations, and create single point of contact for the community and partners.	\$0	\$0 (with no immediate additional services)	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>1.1.b</b> Reestablish the Parks and Recreation Citizen Advisory Board to serve as a liaison between the City Council, the staff department, and citizens. The board would advise in matters affecting parks, recreation, and culture and provide input into long-range planning for capital projects and programs.	\$0	\$0	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>Objective 1.2:</b> <i>Improve internal and external communication regarding City parks, recreation, and cultural activities and services</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.2.a</b> Develop and prepare cost estimates to implement a comprehensive marketing plan for parks, recreation, and cultural facilities and offerings.	\$50,000	\$TBD with marketing plan	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>1.2.b</b> Develop and implement a coordinated Wayfinding Signage Plan that addresses directional signage to parks and historic sites as part of a citywide signage plan.	Cost will vary based on scope and design standards	\$0	Mid-Term

<b>1.2.c</b> Develop sign design guidelines for site identification and internal wayfinding for facilities. As parks are improved, include signage in those projects.	\$3,000 - \$8,000 per park	\$0	Design is current FY17 Project
<b>Objective 1.3:</b> <i>Evaluate and strengthen existing parks, recreation and cultural resource partnerships within the community</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>1.3.a</b> Review all existing partnerships and ensure that they are accurately portrayed in a signed agreement with all opportunities explored. Examples of those currently being used are in-kind, collaborative, intergovernmental, MOU, facility use, and youth sports provider.	\$0	\$0	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>1.3.b</b> Recognize and promote Manassas “home” team and partnership accomplishments within existing City announcements and promotions, including social media.	\$0	\$0	Immediately

## Goal 2: Better Maintain and Improve Existing Facilities and Amenities

<b>Objective 2.1</b> <i>Prepare maintenance and capital improvement plans with specific standards and timelines for budget approval annually</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.1.a</b> Develop a formal and comprehensive parks maintenance plan with specific standards to guide the ongoing maintenance of city parks and amenities.	\$0	Cost will vary based on the scope and schedule of the plan.	Current FY17 Project
<b>2.1.b</b> Develop a capital maintenance plan for budget consideration that systematically addresses deferred maintenance items, refreshes neighborhood parks on a regular cycle, and addresses deficiencies noted in the LOS Analysis for specific parks.	\$0 to develop CIP; (See Section C for CIP range of costs)	\$0	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>2.1.c</b> Conduct a feasibility study to renovate the Stonewall Pool bathhouse and concession area, enhance the pool with additional seating and shade structures, and add family leisure style elements to modernize the facility and expand its participant reach.	\$50,000 - \$100,000	\$0	Short-Term (FY18)
<b>2.1.d</b> Engage with the Greater Manassas Baseball League and adjacent localities to improve E.G. Smith Baseball Complex.	\$0	\$0	Immediately

<b>Objective 2.2:</b> <i>Expand greenways, bike paths, and trails connectivity</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.2.a</b> Update the City's trails and sidewalk plans to identify finished projects and missing connections both within the City and to partner institutions, such as George Mason University.	\$0	\$0	Mid-Term
<b>Objective 2.3:</b> <i>Develop additional recreational facilities and amenities as identified by the community</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>2.3.a</b> Incorporate community center features into the feasibility study currently funded for a Library/Museum in historic downtown.	\$0	\$0	Included in current FY17 project
<b>2.3.b</b> Complete conceptual design for Dean and Stonewall Parks to provide additional multipurpose rectangular fields and outdoor recreational amenities for the community and develop multi-year CIP for park improvements for budget consideration.	\$70,000 Funded FY16-17	Cost will vary based on the scope and design to maintain and operate	Current FY17 Project
<b>2.3.c</b> Avoid loss of existing parkland and amenities such as the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex and Lee Manor Park and identify opportunities for additional parkland and facilities.	Cost will vary based on land acquisition and facility	Costs will vary based on additional acreage and facilities developed	Ongoing
<b>2.3.d</b> Develop and implement plans for undeveloped parkland at Cedar Crest Park, New Britain Park, and Lee Square Park.	\$35,000 ea. for master plans	Cost will vary based on final design	Mid-Term Long-Term
<b>2.3.e</b> Consolidate Cannon Branch Stormwater and Cannon Branch Fort parcels to allow expanded passive recreation opportunities at Manassas Landing and Gateway Business Park.	\$5,000 – \$10,000 for survey and new signage	N/A	Short-Term

### Goal 3: Increase Recreational Opportunities and Programming

<b>Objective 3.1:</b> <i>Expand program opportunities for fitness/wellness, special needs populations, families, teens, and seniors</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>3.1.a</b> Improve partnerships with other service providers and private instructors to offer programs and classes in city facilities and parks.	\$0	Cost will vary based on programs and classes offered	Mid-Term
<b>3.1.b</b> Increase marketing of existing programs and classes offered by partner organizations to create greater awareness and potentially increase participation.	\$0	\$TBD based on marketing plan (Action 1.2.a)	Short-Term
<b>Objective 3.2:</b> <i>Increase aquatic programming</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>3.2.a</b> Evaluate opportunities at Stonewall Pool to provide additional neighborhood-based aquatic programming.	\$0	Cost will vary based on programs provided	Short-Term
<b>3.2.b</b> Increase marketing of existing opportunities at both Stonewall Pool and the Freedom Center.	\$0	Cost will vary based on marketing methods used	Short-Term
<b>Objective 3.3</b> <i>Continue support of neighborhood and community special events</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>3.3.a</b> Continue to support neighborhood and community events that expand concerts, live performances, and various other cultural programs and events throughout the City.	\$0	Cost will vary based on level of support provided	Ongoing



## Goal 4: Increase Financial Support and Opportunities for Parks, Recreation and Cultural Facilities and Programs

<b>Objective 4.1</b> <i>Establish a best practice cost recovery and pricing philosophy</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>4.1.a</b> Develop a resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy that are grounded in the values, vision, and mission of the City of Manassas.	\$40,000-50,000 (consultant cost)	\$0	Short-Term
<b>4.1.b</b> Conduct a Fee Study and establish a pricing methodology that continuously reflects community values, while generating adequate revenues to sustain City of Manassas facilities, parks, programs, and services (Review annually).	Consultant cost, included in the study above 4.1.a	\$0	Short-Term
<b>Objective 4.2</b> <i>Increase the number of parks and facility sponsorships</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>4.2.a</b> Identify naming opportunities and sponsors for parks and facilities to assist in physical improvements and ongoing maintenance.	\$0	Staff Time and potential increased revenue or decreased expenses	Short-Term
<b>4.2.b</b> Prepare sponsorship policy, marketing plan, and sample sponsorship agreement for soliciting potential sponsors.	\$1,000	\$0	Short-Term
<b>Objective 4.3</b> <i>Increase grant and philanthropic opportunities for capital improvements</i>			
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Capital or One-Time Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Operational Budget Impact</b>	<b>Timeframe to Complete</b>
<b>4.3.a</b> Identify staff responsible for pursuing grant opportunities and philanthropic donations; prepare appropriate materials and improve ease of online platform for donations.	Cost will vary based on scope and outcomes of the grant	Increased staff time and potential matching funds for grants	Mid-Term

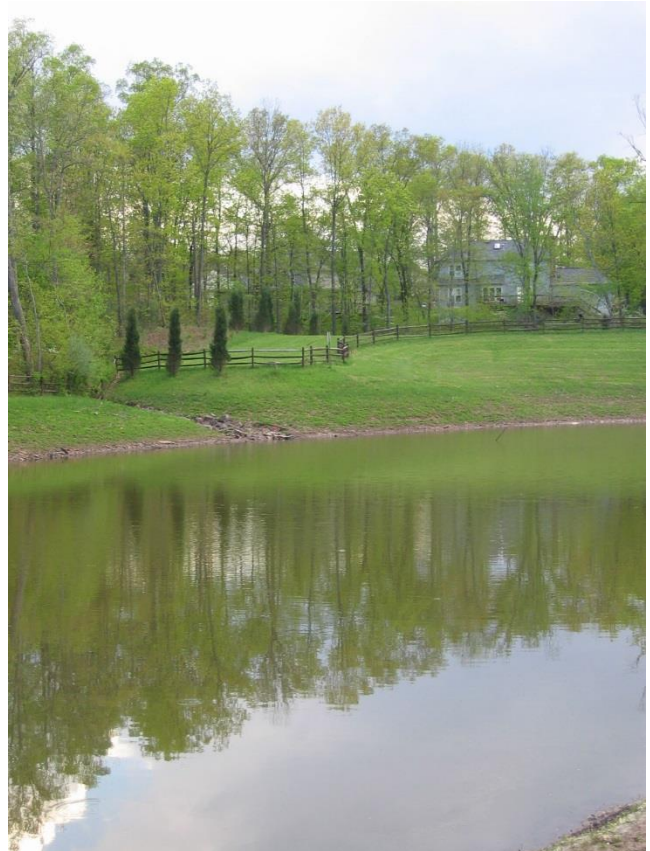
## Park and Cultural Facility Recommended Upgrades

Based on the results of this planning process, the consultant team has provided the following priority, site-specific recommendations for improving and enhancing specific parks, recreation, and cultural sites. “Order of magnitude” costs are provided for planning purposes but will require additional refinement as specific enhancements are identified, engineered, and designed. **Appendix E** provides a comprehensive list of all recommended enhancements. These recommendations are consistent with the overall goals and recommendations of this plan.

### **Jennie Dean Park** **9501 Dean Park Lane**

Jennie Dean Park comprises approximately 77 acres and includes the Boys & Girls Club facility. The park is the largest in the City’s park system, and its multiple sporting amenities attract visitors. Dean Park is home to a newly relocated skate park, two baseball fields, batting cages, tennis courts, and the Boys and Girls Club. Although the undeveloped portion of the site is cleared, current site grading and the level of maintenance are not suitable for athletic fields or sporting events. Jennie Dean Elementary School is located immediately adjacent to the park and provides the additional amenities of a playground, ballfield, football field, and running track. The public currently has limited access to these school amenities but they are heavily used after school hours.

Existing conditions do not take advantage of the expansive property and shared facilities potential with Jennie Dean Elementary School. A new master plan for Jennie Dean Park is currently underway that will provide two alternatives for the park, including the relocation of the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex as one alternative and additional rectangular fields and community recreation facilities as the second alternative.



*Pond at Jennie Dean Park  
Credit: City of Manassas*

Based on public input from both the focus groups and the survey results, there is a great need for additional rectangle fields and it is unlikely that this need can be met at another location. It is the consultant team’s recommendation that rectangle fields be a major component of the future development of Jennie Dean Park. This site is the most suitable for a multi-field development, and the existing amenities at the park and the school greatly enhance the overall development.

### **E.G. Smith Baseball Complex** **9698 Godwin Drive**

E.G. Smith Baseball Complex is a 23-acre specialty park conveniently located at the intersection of Highway 28 and Godwin Drive. The complex includes eight diamond fields for practice, games, and regional/state tournaments and is home to the Greater Manassas Baseball League.

The complex is showing many signs of disrepair and age. Fences around fields are worn, damaged, and in need of replacement. Field nets and infield mix are replenished on an as-needed basis annually. Fourteen of the 16 dugouts were replaced in the spring of 2016 due to storm damage in the previous year; field 6 contains the only remaining original dugout. The complex has only one permanent restroom attached to the concession building and requires temporary restrooms during peak season. Five batting cages are scattered around the complex. The site is furnished with a gravel parking lot and walking paths connecting the parking lot to fields and amenities are unsafe and need replacement. Overall, the baseball complex is aged and is no longer a strong regional representation of the City of Manassas or as in demand for hosting recreational events/tournaments.

While the City is considering relocating the complex to allow for future commercial development of the site, the consultant team recommends a major capital investment in the E.G. Smith Baseball Complex. Because of its location and past history of success hosting regional and state tournaments, not only is the complex a great recreational amenity but also has potential to serve as a greater economic draw with a more coordinated effort between the partners. Sports tourism has become a major economic driver for communities and has been a growing trend nationally for the past several years. In addition, the cost to renovate and upgrade the fields and lighting at their current location would be less expensive than a new site, particularly if land needs to be purchased.

## **Stonewall Park**

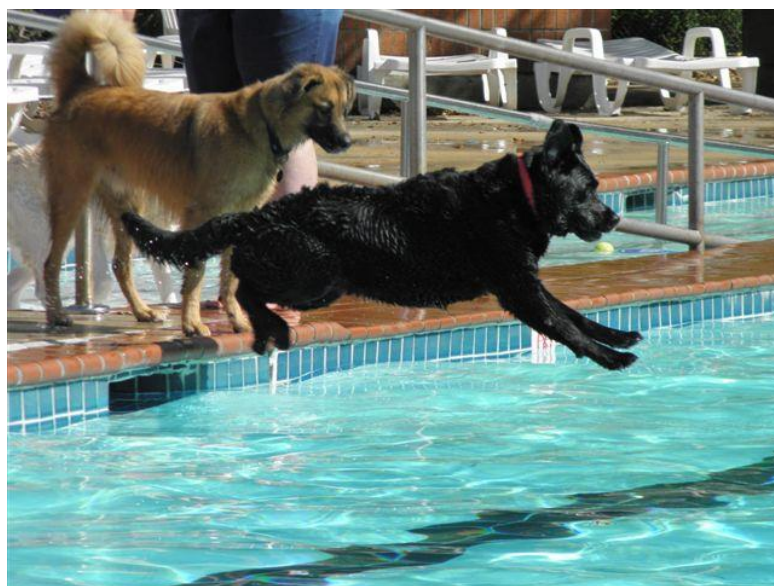
### **8300 Stonewall Road**

Stonewall Park is a 24-acre community park that provides a variety of recreation amenities. The park features four tennis courts, a picnic pavilion, two basketball courts, two playgrounds, a rectangular field, and walking trails. Overall, the facility shows signs of age and wear, and users express concern over safety. The basketball court pavement is cracked and unlined. The playgrounds show signs of age and lack ADA access from the parking lot. The rectangular field is undersized for football and is overused with inadequate drainage and exposed soils under goals and in the middle of the field.

A master planning process is currently underway for Stonewall Park. As part of that process, the consultant team recommends prioritizing upgrades to the existing rectangle field and adding a hard surfaced, fenced sports court to relieve the LOS deficit for rectangular fields and reduce maintenance costs for the tennis courts, which are frequently damaged from users playing soccer. The surrounding tree canopy and undeveloped wooded areas may provide an opportunity to develop an additional rectangular field and a system of either hard surface or soft surface trails on the perimeter of the park and within the wooded areas. Focus group participants as well as survey respondents expressed a desire for additional trails, parking, improved playground equipment, and enhanced safety and security within Stonewall Park.

## **Stonewall Pool** **8351 Stonewall Road**

Stonewall Pool, located in Stonewall Park, is an aging facility that opened to the public in 1984. The site has a large main pool and a baby pool. The main pool recently underwent several mechanical and aesthetic updates, and in 2006, the baby pool was renovated, and a concession stand was added. Despite these renovations, there are many deficiencies with the existing facility. The admissions building experiences flooding, facility bathrooms are not ADA-compliant, and there is no family restroom or shower facility. Pool components, including lifeguard stands, pool ladders, and diving board, are rusting and pose



*Dog Plooza at Stonewall Pool*  
*Credit: City of Manassas*

significant safety hazards. Both the focus group attendees and the survey respondents indicated that the pool was an asset for Manassas and that upgrades were needed. Additionally, customers complain about the lack of shade and seating at the pool and have expressed a desire for additional leisure style amenities, such as a splash pad for young children.

As noted above, the pool has aged and is in need of a major renovation to bring it up to current standard, make it more energy efficient, and become an attraction for the residents of Manassas. In addition to the competitive pool renovations, consideration of other recreational components, such as zero entry, spray, and splash components, is needed. A comprehensive assessment and feasibility study for renovation or redevelopment of Stonewall Pool is recommended to identify the best approach to address the community's desire for improvement and expansion of this facility.

## **Park Master Plans and Other Capital Improvements**

This document recommends the development of master plans for each of the City's parks. These detailed plans will maximize the program potential for each park and guide capital improvement plans. However, in order to provide staff with an order of magnitude costs for the recommended improvements, the consultant team has provided the following Summary of Estimated Capital Costs.

To determine the range of costs for recommended upgrades, the City's parks and related facilities were organized into the following order of magnitude cost ranges and details on the recommended improvements are included in **Appendix E**:

### **<\$75,000**

These parks are in need of general maintenance and minor upgrades (e.g. clearing of invasive vegetation, landscape enhancements, addition of small site furnishings, play equipment upgrades, and play surface maintenance).

### **\$75,000-\$150,000**

Parks within this cost range may include general upgrades and improvements that will require design and engineering (e.g. trail connections and parking lot enhancements).

**\$150,000-500,000**

These parks may include general maintenance and upgrades; large site features such as shade structures; and amenities that may require design, engineering, and utility infrastructure modifications.

**\$1-5 Million**

Parks within this cost range are in need of complete park renovations including upgrades of significant site features such as pool facilities and major building expansions.

**\$5 Million+**

Recommended improvements within this cost range include complete site construction/reconstruction of signature amenities such as sports complexes and community centers.

**Total Estimated Capital Improvement Costs**

The total estimated cost of identified recommended upgrades to the City’s park and cultural system will range between \$26,112,500-52,825,000.

**Summary of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs**

Park	Range of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs						
	<\$75,000	\$75,000-150,000	\$150,000-500,000	\$500,000-1 Million	\$1-5 Million	\$5-10 Million	\$10-15 Million
Byrd Park			•				
Baldwin Park/Manassas Museum							•
Cavalry Run Park				•			
Cannon Branch Park	•						
Cedar Crest Park			•				
Center for the Arts (Hopkins Candy Factory) Expansion					•		
Dean Park (Sports Complex Development in Place of E.G. Smith)							•
E.G. Smith Baseball Complex-Reconstruction							•
Harris Pavilion			•				
Jennie Dean Memorial Site	•						
Kinsley Mill Park			•				
Lee Manor Park		•					
Liberia Mansion				•			
Manassas Railroad Depot	•						
Mayfield Fort	•						
Nelson Park					•		

Park	Range of Estimated Capital Improvement Costs						
	<\$75,000	\$75,000-150,000	\$150,000-500,000	\$500,000-1 Million	\$1-5 Million	\$5-10 Million	\$10-15 Million
New Britain Park			•				
Oakenshaw Park			•				
Skate Park at Dean Park			•				
Stonewall Park				•			
Stonewall Park - Walking Trail		•					
Stonewall Pool					•		
Walter Delisle Park	•						
Winters Branch Trail		•					
Winterset Park			•				