

Town of Leesburg, Virginia

Comprehensive 20-year Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails, and Greenways Master Plan

2017 Update

**Town of Leesburg Department of
Parks and Recreation**

November, 2017

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A. Introduction and Background

In 2001, the Leesburg Department of Parks and Recreation initiated the first comprehensive look at the direction that the Town of Leesburg might choose to take in terms of protecting its natural resources and developing parks and recreational facilities and programs for the future benefit of town residents. The firm of Rhodeside and Harwell Inc. of Alexandria, VA. was hired to coordinate the efforts, working with P&R staff, other appropriate Town staff and officials, and the public.

The collaboration resulted in the *“Comprehensive 20-Year Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Trails, and Greenways Master Plan”* (Hereafter referred to as the *“20-Year Plan”*), which was adopted by the Leesburg Town Council on October 8, 2002. This document had three main components:

1. An **Inventory and Analysis** of existing parks and trails, existing recreational programs, cultural and historic sites, and environmental conditions. It also analyzed planned developments and availability of land within the urban growth area, Town demographics, and recreational needs. The analysis concluded with an assessment of the Town's financial position and the Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget.

2. **Master Plan** After the inventory and analysis was completed, several alternatives were developed, each reflecting a level of commitment of public investment and spending. These alternatives were eventually combined into a single Master Plan that could be prioritized and phased in over a 20 year period. Actions and Improvements were recommended in the following categories:

- Open Space Opportunities
- Stream Valley Protection
- Greenways
- Trails
- Active Recreation Sites
- Historic Preservation
- Streetscape Improvements.

Details on these recommendations, in narrative form and accompanying graphic maps, can be found in the original 2002 *20-Year Plan* document.

3. **Implementation Strategies.** The 20-Year Plan included recommendations for strategies for implementing its various components. They included:

- Guidelines for Implementing Plan Recommendations
- Operational and Funding Recommendations
- Other Funding and Volunteer Programs
- Capital Funding
- Dedicated Funding
- Plan Priorities
- General Cost Estimate

B. Justification for 2017 Update

At the 15 year point of the *20-year plan*, it is prudent to re-examine the document and provide a fresh assessment of its recommendations to ensure that the Town's efforts have been in keeping with the original intent. Population growth, changes in demographics, evolving preferences in recreational and lifestyle activities, changing environmental requirements, fiscal realities, and other factors make it highly desirable and beneficial to take a fresh look at the plan and make amendments as needed. . The population of Leesburg has increased from 37,000 in 2002, to 50,000 in 2017, bringing an influx of new and diverse recreation consumers whose needs should be addressed in order to provide a relevant and effective level of service for the next 10-15 years.

C. Accomplishments 2003-2017

The *20-Year Plan*, coupled with unanticipated opportunities that have arisen, has been the guide for the development of Leesburg's park facilities and associated recreational programs over the past 15 years. These improvements have resulted in a comprehensive and well received program that has been recognized by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) with two Gold Medal awards, as well as numerous local and state level awards. Highlights include:

2003

- **Freedom Park** was opened, adding 2 little league fields, 2 softball fields, and a football/soccer field to the Town's field inventory.



Freedom Park

- A new **pre-school playground** was completed and opened at Ida Lee Park.
- The softball field and bench area at **Foxridge Park** were renovated.

2004

- The **Catoctin Street Trail**, connecting Ida Lee Park and the W&OD, was completed.
- For the first time in Leesburg, several regional and national tournaments were held at **Freedom Park**.

- **Rotary Park** was upgraded, with the assistance of a new support group, the *Friends of Rotary Park*.
- The inaugural **Freeze Your Gizzard** race was held.
- The department received notice that **Mrs. A. V. Symington** had willed 2.5 million dollars to the Town of Leesburg, with a possible 1.75 million in future distributions.

2005

- The Leesburg Department of Parks and Recreation was selected as a finalist for the **National Gold Medal Award**, the highest honor a public park and recreation agency can receive.
- **Edwards Landing Park**, a 32 acre site with Potomac River frontage, was added to the Town's inventory of parks, with an expected opening date in mid-2006.
- The inaugural **July 4th parade** was held, with great support from the Town's citizens and organizations.
- The **Freedom Park 9-11 Memorial** was designed and constructed by Town staff and was the scene of a memorial observance.
- The **R. O. C. K. (Recreation Outreach to Community Kids)** program was introduced to bring neighborhood based recreation based programs to kids in disadvantaged areas of the Town.



R.O.C.K

2006

- The Department was awarded the 2005 **National Gold Medal for Excellence in Parks and Recreation**.
- A perimeter walking trail was constructed through **Ida Lee Park**.
- A **new soccer practice field** was constructed at Ida Lee Park.
- The **Robinson Park baseball field** was renovated and its maintenance was transferred from the County to the Town.

2007

- **Ida Lee Park trail , phase II**, was completed, linking N. King St. with the previously completed Catoclin Circle Trail.

- A ground breaking ceremony was held for the **Ida Lee Park indoor tennis facility**.
- **New stone bridges** were completed along Ida Lee Drive.
- **The R.O.C.K. program** was the recipient of the *Best New Program* award from the Virginia Recreation and Parks Society.
- The department received a **\$98,000 Community Development Block Grant** to fund the installation of an accessible playground at Brandon Park.

2008

- The **Virginia Tech Memorial Grove** in Ida Lee Park was completed and dedicated in memory of the students and faculty lost in the 2007 campus tragedy.
- The **historic barn** at Ida Lee Park was fully renovated.
- The **accessible playground at Brandon Park** was completed.
- A significant increase in the number of **recreation classes (39%)** was offered.
- The **new indoor tennis center and renovation of the tennis pavilion** were dedicated and opened.
- **10 new planters** were installed on King St.; the first phase in the streetscape renovation of the Downtown area.

2009

- The Town's first **dog park**, at Olde Izaak Walton Park, was dedicated and opened in May.
- The **A.V. Symington Aquatic Center** was officially opened at a dedication ceremony on May 22nd.
- Design began on the new **parks maintenance building and operations yard**.
- In a slow economy, the **Ida Lee Tennis center and recreation programs** continued to increase revenue and add new offerings to the public.
- The annual **Flower and Garden Festival** had a record 125 vendors, and attendance was estimated at a record 30,000.



Leesburg Dog Park

2010

- The new **parks maintenance building**, featuring a partial earth-shelter design and green roof system, was opened at Ida Lee Park.
- **Nine shade structures** were added to the A. V. Symington Aquatic Center, and the facility was listed by *Aquatics International* as one of the most innovative aquatic facilities in the world.
- A record number of **athletic games/practices** were held on the departments 12 fields.
- The department hosted the **first annual "Dog Swim"** at the A.V. Symington Aquatic Center in partnership with Leesburg Dogs Inc.

2011

- **Batting cages and a shade structure** were installed at Robinson Park.
- **The Town Hall rose garden** was redesigned and constructed by in-house staff.
- The Department assumed responsibility for the **Town's Urban Forestry Program** and liaison duties to the Tree Commission.
- A major replacement effort updated the **cardio equipment in the fitness center** to incorporate the latest technology.
- **Living History panels** were installed in Ida Lee Park Rec Center.
- **Martin Luther King trail markers** were installed along E. Market St.

2012

- Town Council adopted **New and Revised Master Plans** for each of the 16 parks.
- The Department hosted the **Virginia State Little League Majors Baseball Tournament** at Freedom Park.
- Completed **trail heads for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail**, with interpretive signage, at Edwards Landing Park in cooperation with the National Park Service.
- Constructed a **"bike depot" at Raflo Park** that features a drinking fountain, portable toilet rest room, air pump, seating, and signage.
- The Department was named as a **National Gold Medal Finalist** for Excellence in Parks and Recreation.
- Constructed **shade structures** over the bleachers at Freedom Park.
- Hosted, for the first time, **the Annual Leesburg Airshow**.

2013

- **Jingle Jam concerts** were introduced at the newly renovated Tally Ho Theater.
- Ida Lee Park maintenance facility was named **'Best new Facility" (Bricks and Mortar)** by the Virginia Recreation and Parks society.
- Leesburg Airshow was named **"Best New Event"** by the Virginia Recreation and Parks society.
- The Department hosted the National Recreation and Parks Association **National Playground Safety Institute** in cooperation with the Virginia Parks and Recreation Society.
- Recreation Classes **doubled the number of contract classes** to provide offerings in many non-traditional areas such as computer games, Lego robots, and fashion design.
- **Grass infields** were installed on the baseball diamonds at Freedom Park.

- Loudoun County opened **Philip Bolen Park** which provide additional athletic field to residents of the Leesburg area.

2014

- A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in November for the opening of **Potomac Crossing Park**, which offers a playground, picnic shelter, open space, and a trailhead for the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail.
- The **Leesburg Flower and Garden Festival** celebrated its 25th anniversary.
- **Mervin Jackson Park** was opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony in April. Named after former vice-mayor Mervin Jackson, the park include amenities including decorative landscaping, benches, interpretive signage, and a drinking fountain.



Mervin Jackson Park

2015

- The first season of **“Movies in the Park”** was completed.
- Major upgrades were completed to the **fitness room** at the Ida lee Rec Center.
- The Leesburg Today readers’ poll named Ida Lee Park Recreation Center as the **“Best Recreation Facility”** and **“Best fitness Center”** in the Loudoun county Area.
- The **Downtown improvement Project** was completed, which added widened sidewalks, safer pedestrian crossings, benches, planters, trees, and upgraded lighting to King St.

2016

- The Town held public input sessions and hosted a Facebook page to receive feedback on the proposed **redevelopment of the Catoctin Skatepark.**
- Maintenance responsibility for the **“Downtown Park”** was transferred to Parks staff.
- Construction was started on the new skate park at the newly named **“Catoctin Park.”**

- Potomac Crossing Park received the Virginia Parks and Recreation society’s award for **“Best New Renovation/ addition.”**
- **Raflo Park underwent a major renovation** which included new tables and benches, new asphalt trail, and street-side parking spaces. Working with the Leesburg commission on Public Arts, **5 new sculptures were installed in the park.**
- In Partnership with the Leesburg Garden Club, a **Native Tree Walk** was planted at Ida Lee Park to celebrate the club’s 100th anniversary.
- Construction was completed on a **new events stage** on the Town Green.

2017

- The initial phase of the **Town’s bike trail** system was opened with a ribbon cutting in April
- **Renovation of three existing playgrounds** was completed.
- The **Town’s new skate park**, named after Eric Brown, one of the founders of the original skatepark, opened in the newly named **“Catoctin Park.”**



Catoctin Park

D. Unrealized Initiatives 2002-2017

There are a number of areas where the Town has not made significant progress in addressing recommendations from the *20-Year Plan*. The reasons for the lack of movement in these areas vary. Factors such as changing public priorities, funding constraints, political differences, and unforeseen private development opportunities or the lack thereof have affected these particular components of the 2002 vision. Examples are:

- **Open space opportunities.** The Town has not acquired significant open space as recommended. Of the 13 potential sites identified in the 20-year Plan, the Town has not acquired property in any of those locations, or elsewhere. It is anticipated that, in 2017, a 20ac parcel will be transferred to the Town as a proffer from the proposed Leegate development at the intersection of Battlefield Parkway and E. Market St.
- **Greenways and Stream Valley Protection.** The acquisition of stream valley corridors and development of associated trails has been limited. Of the five Greenways identified in the 20-Year Plan, three (Cattail Branch, Goose Creek, and Sycolin Creek, are outside the town boundary. The Potomac River Greenway has been secured in public ownership and a system of natural trails has been developed. The proposed Tuscarora Creek Trail is included in the Town's Capital Improvement Program, and as a part of future private development projects and will be will be implemented over time.
- **Historic Preservation.** The Town has not been active in the preservation and management of the eight historically or culturally significant sites referenced in the *20 Year Plan*. Almost all of these sites are privately owned, with limited opportunity for Town participation in preservation efforts. Most of these sites have been protected, and with the exception of the Truss Bridge over Goose Creek, have been preserved. The Town owns, and has taken steps to preserve and interpret the Civil War encampment and trenches on the Carr Tank property.
- **Active Recreation Facilities in the Southwest Quadrant.** The lack of active recreational facilities in this area was noted in the 20-Year plan. No new facilities have been built in the SW quadrant since Greenway Park in 2000.
- **Establishment of stronger partnerships with Loudoun County Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department, Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, and the National Recreation and Parks Association.** The Town works in cooperation with all of these entities, but few significant cooperative efforts are in place. The Town did recently enter into an agreement with NVRPA to swap certain land parcels between Veterans Park and Balls Bluff Regional Park with the intent of providing connectivity between the existing NVRPA holdings and a recently acquired parcel designated for the location of a new Balls Bluff Park administrative office. The swap will also allow for a shared entrance for the two parks.
- **Provide Public Golf Facilities.** Through 2017, no real opportunities have emerged to pursue this initiative. Discussion of potential opportunities for golf development opportunities is anticipated for 2018.

E. Needs Assessments

2011 Parks Recreation Service and Needs Assessment

The purpose of this effort, conducted in September of 2011, was as follows:

“To identify needs, satisfaction levels, and potential gaps with regard to facilities, programs, and services provided by the Town of Leesburg Parks and Recreation Department. By doing so, the Department can act accordingly to strive to continue meeting its own standards and the community’s high standards for parks and recreation services. The assessment, which was led by consulting firm GreenPlay LLC, used on-site focus groups, a public meeting, a web-based household survey, and a project website to collect and organize data that reflected the opinions and desires of the Leesburg community. The responses, which are documented in full in the 2001 report, can be summarized as follows:

Strengths:

Administrative

- Quality staff- professional and competent
- Clean facilities
- High maintenance standards
- Safe Facilities
- Quality programs
- Good communication with community
- Visionary

Services

- Variety of programs for all ages and abilities
- Variety of facilities
- Ida Lee
- Hours of Operation

Weaknesses/ Challenges:

Administrative

- Athletic field allocation-flag football
- Lack of athletic field lights
- Response to minor mechanical failures
- Marketing information for facilities and scholarships
- Fees& charges
- Awareness of school calendar

Services

- Hard to get access to indoor tennis courts
- Lack of lights on fields and dogpark
- Capacity issues in women’s /family locker room and fitness area classes
- Lack of youth programs for working parents
- Parking lot security
- Lack of programming for 10-14 year olds.

1. 2017 Future Facilities Survey

The purpose of this effort, conducted in April 2017, was as follows:

“To identify needs, satisfaction levels, and potential gaps with regard to facilities, programs, and services provided by the Town of Leesburg Parks and Recreation Department. By doing so, the Department can act accordingly to strive to continue meeting its own standards and the community’s high standards for parks and recreation services.”

The survey used the Town’s “Leesburg Listens” electronic feedback platform to reach as many respondents as possible. Some specific facilities were identified and listed by staff in the survey and the respondent’s preference for those facilities is shown below: (in order of desirability)

<u>Facility</u>	<u>Interest level</u>
• Improved bike trails and signage, including bike loop	High
• Perimeter trail improvements at Ida Lee Park	High
• Preservation/ Restoration of Natural Areas	High
• Urban Park amenities in Downtown Leesburg	High
• Expansion of Ida Lee Recreation Center	High
• Olde Izaak Walton Park Improvements	Moderate
• Paved trail between Olde Izaak Walton Park and Douglass Community Center	Moderate
• Additional Dog Park	Low
• Build out of Improvements at Veterans Park at Balls Bluff	Low
• Spray Ground at AV Symington Aquatic Center	Low
• Accessible trail between Edwards Landing Park and Veterans Park	Low
• Robinson Park ballfield lights	Low

Other facilities mentioned by respondents included:

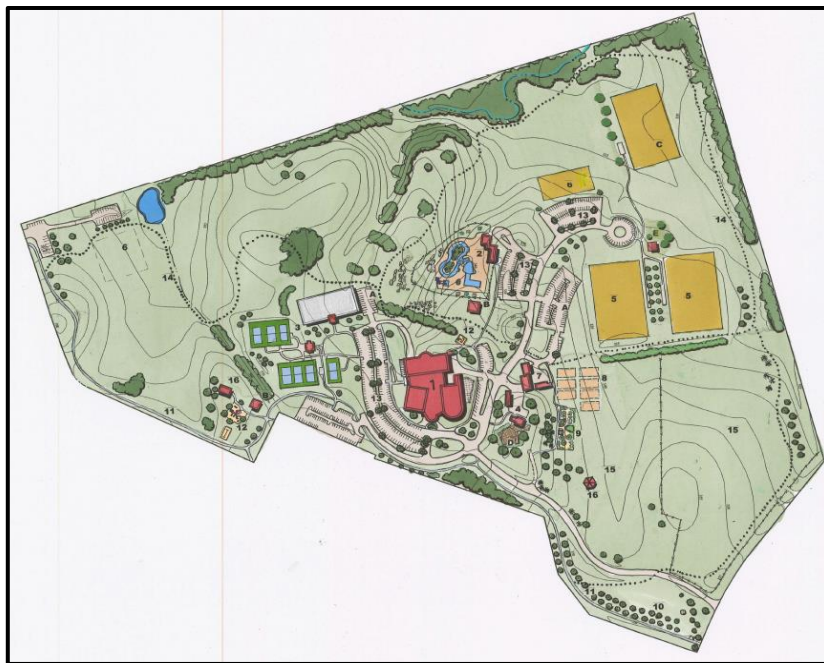
- Outdoor Volleyball Trail connection to Bolen Park Performing arts venue Develop Carvalle Park
- More playgrounds and better equipment Sports center for adult volleyball and basketball
- Indoor turf fields increased utilization of Ida Lee to achieve self-funding Olympic size outdoor pool
- Trendier amenities at Ida lee to compete with newer fitness centers Outdoor pool on the south side of Town
- Pickleball courts Bathroom facilities at Potomac Crossing Park Dedicated cycle room at Ida lee
- Ninja Warrior obstacle course Updating playgrounds for broader ages and increasing their numbers
- Picnic area by Goose Creek and new bridges Indoor/outdoor skating rink
- Roller hockey rink Outdoor art Town center park at the courthouse Preserve natural habitats
- Better river access from parks Fruit trees and edible gardens Birdhouses and a natural interpretation trail for kids

F. Overview of Future Direction and Initiatives

The Town of Leesburg is committed to advancing the goals of the 20-Year Plan in future years. Although much has been accomplished, there are still components of the plan that have not moved forward, as well as yet-to-be identified opportunities. The continued population growth and evolving leisure time preferences make it imperative the Town continue a proactive course aimed at meeting and exceeding the needs and expectations of its residents. The staff, using a combinations of public input assessments, recreation industry trend analysis, and governing body direction, has developed a blueprint of initiatives that would enable the Town to keep pace with this growing and evolving need.

G. Park Master Plans

Town staff has developed individual master plans for each of Leesburg's 17 parks. These plans document improvements and facilities that are currently in place and depict features that have been proposed for each site. It is standard procedure to create a master plan for any new park. All master plans require approval by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Town Council and the plans become the basis for creating projects in the Town's Capital Improvement Program. (CIP). Master plans can be modified, with public input, to reflect changes in recreational preferences, funding opportunities, etc. It is prudent and desirable to review each master plan every 5-10 years to ensure that it appropriately reflects the Town's mission.



Ida Lee Park Master Plan

H. Specific 10-year Initiatives

Natural Resources Protection and Management

The protection and management of the Town's natural resources has been identified as a priority by residents and the Town's governing body. Since 2002, there has also been an increase in federal and state requirements regarding the management of storm water as it relates to development projects. As previously noted in the 2002 "20 Year Plan", the protection of these resources also provides an opportunity for the town to identify and develop recreational amenities and programs in these protected areas.

Development of all new park facilities should incorporate, as a part of the standard planning process, the following considerations:

- 1. Storm water Management.** The Town is required to meet the most recent LOMAR regulations which are designed to reduce the amount of runoff and improve water quality. New park construction should be designed to meet or exceed these requirements.
Features which help retain storm water runoff and / or attract and enhance wildlife survivability should routinely be considered. Examples of such features are:
 - Rain gardens
 - Butterfly gardens
 - Permeable paving
 - Natural erosion control structures
 - Bio-engineering streambank reinforcement
 - Stream corridor plantings
 - Wetland preservation. (ponds, bogs, and vernal pools)
- 2. Urban Forest Tree Canopy Retention.** The Town has established a goal of 40% tree canopy coverage. Current coverage is about 24%. Though the recent upswing in commercial development has caused a slight overall reduction in canopy, the continued planting of new trees mandated as a part of new development projects, increased planting as a part of Town urban forestry efforts, and the maturation of the existing canopy as the Town becomes built out, should begin to reverse this trend. New park and downtown construction projects should include as many new trees as is practical. Species variation is important, as is the use of native plants wherever possible.
- 3. Open Space Acquisition and Stream Valley Protection.** As noted in the 2002 plan, the Town should continue to pursue open space acquisition opportunities as they arise, with an emphasis on acquiring and protecting stream valley corridors. Such corridors offer a multitude of benefits, ranging from maintenance of air and water quality to offering potential recreational trail routes. A few sites with acquisition potential are shown on the resources map.

Active Recreation Facilities

The Town of Leesburg has developed a well- rounded and high quality inventory of active recreational facilities in the past 25 years. Many of these have been constructed since 2002, as evidenced in Section C. Continuation of this

effort should continue as a part of a near and long term plan to meet the needs of the Town, which has a population that is rapidly expanding in terms of numbers, interests, and diversity.

Facilities and amenities that should be considered:

1. **Multi-purpose trails.** In national surveys, pedestrian and bike trails are consistently ranked as the most requested recreational facilities. Leesburg is no exception. The Town has made significant progress in providing such trails since 2002, but several of the projects that were envisioned then have not been completed. Trail priorities for the next 10 years should include the following:

Tuscarora Creek Trail

This trail would follow Tuscarora Creek, connecting S. King St with East Market St via Old Izaak Walton Park, Brandon Park, Catoctin Park and Douglass Community Center. It is anticipated that the private Crescent Parke mixed-use development would include construction of the section from South King St. to just west of Harrison Street. By constructing the remaining section (approximately linear ft.) a key pedestrian and bicycle connection between the SW quadrant, four parks, and the E. Market St commercial corridor would be established. It would also provide a connection, via Harrison St., for bicyclists to access Downtown without out having to use S. King St, which has no bicycle provisions.

Blue / Green Bicycle Loop

In 2017, two sections of existing multi-use trail were designated, by the installation of identification signage, as the Green and Blue bicycle routes providing connection from the northern parts of town to the W&OD Trail. It would be highly desirable to connect these routes, using both new construction and additional signage. A means of crossing the Rt 15 Bypass, as well as securing the ability to designate a section of existing trail that runs through the Exeter subdivision, are the keys to establishing a complete Blue/Green loop.

Trail Connection to Whites Ferry

Connection of the Town's trail system, including the W&OD trail, to the C&O Trail in Maryland, would have a significant regional impact on expanded opportunities for hiking and biking. The key missing component of such a connection is a trail link from Battlefield Parkway to Whites Ferry Road. The town should continue and intensify cooperation with VDOT and Loudoun County to find a way to design and construct this trail.

Other Trails

Numerous additional trails are planned to be constructed as components of future land development projects. The Parks and Recreation should encourage and support construction of these trails and seek out opportunities to connect parks to the trail network.

2. **Athletic Facilities** At the present time, staff has determined that the number and scope of the currently available athletic facilities operated by the Town, combined with additional facilities operated by Loudoun County, are sufficient to meet the existing level of demand. Town staff should continue to proactively monitor the participation in sports leagues and consider any opportunities to acquire suitable developable land, in order to be able to respond to future needs.

3. **Aquatic Facilities** The Town's existing aquatic facilities are modern, well-maintained and operated, and provide a very high level of aquatic experiences to the Town's residents. Opportunities to enhance and maximize the services provided by these facilities should be constantly examined. It is not anticipated that the Town will pursue additional facilities in the near future, but, should unexpected opportunities arise, staff should be prepared to evaluate the potential benefits of such, and act as needed.

4. **Passive Recreational Facilities** Passive facilities (open space, natural features, trails, outdoor seating, picnic facilities etc.) have consistently listed strong on both local and national surveys of most-desired park amenities. Leesburg should continue to explore any and all means to identify, protect, and develop such facilities in both existing parks and potential new park sites.

5. **Playgrounds and Tot-Lots** Leesburg's 7 playgrounds and tot-lots are generally operated and maintained in a state-of-the-art condition. Compliance with all current safety standards is consistently monitored. Several of the facilities were renovated in 2016-2017 and others are scheduled for updating in the near future. The number of playgrounds is somewhat low for a jurisdiction of Leesburg's size and consideration should be given to adding one or more additional sites, ideally in the growing SE and SW quadrants of Town. Many localities of Leesburg's size (and some even much smaller) have, in recent years, created large, destination-type playgrounds offering customized play features; Leesburg should consider whether such a facility might be a desirable addition to the Town's recreational infrastructure.

Recreational Programming

The 2011 Parks Recreation Service and Needs Assessment shall serve as the guideline to providing cutting edge services and opportunities to the increasing number and diverse nature of the residents of Leesburg. While recognizing that such services and opportunities will emerge as preferences and trends evolve, there are some general issues that are deserving of special attention in the near future:

- Expand the variety of programs to be inclusive of all ages and abilities
- Schedule operating hours to meet the needs of users; while recognizing the constraints of staffing and budgets
- Pursue opportunities to ease the class registration process
- Continue to manage the field allocation process to maximize opportunities for flag football
- Carefully consider all opportunities for new special events, balancing all requests with realistic staffing capabilities.
- Explore ways to expand access to indoor tennis courts
- Manage locker room and class capacities to maximize and balance patron accessibility and comfort level.
- Ida Lee parking lot security
- Explore the advantages and liabilities of introducing new lighting on athletic fields.

Cultural Resource Management and Urban Amenities

Leesburg is a town with a number of geographic advantages that have served to allow it to develop and thrive, from its founding in 1759, through the beginnings of the 21st century. What began as a county seat of a prosperous agricultural community evolved into a strategically located exurb of Washington DC, making it a highly desirable location to live and work. Leesburg has taken some steps to enhance its attractiveness and cultural identity, but

there are a number of initiatives that, if properly developed, could greatly enhance the Town's livability and economic strength.

1. Town Hall Campus Master Plan

The Town Hall, located at 25 West Market St., is a center of downtown activity. The building is surrounded by a number of adjacent buildings and open spaces that are either currently owned by The Town, or potentially could be acquired or leased and utilized as public facilities. The complex has excellent potential to become a vibrant, attractive, public hub for governmental, cultural, and recreational activities. A number of initiatives have been taken in recent years to upgrade this space, ie development of Mervin Jackson Park, Town Green Stage, etc., but the potential exists for much more. In 2017, staff began work on developing such a plan for this campus and it is strongly recommended that this plan be completed, adopted, and incorporated into the Capital Improvement Program for future realization.

2. Loudoun Museum

The Loudoun Museum is housed in a building located on the Town Hall Campus at 14 Wirt St. The structure is owned by the Town. The Museum offers interesting and important exhibits showcasing the history of Leesburg and Loudoun County; but in recent years, has struggled with funding and the ability to enhance and promote its offerings. The Museum has potential, if adequately funded and managed, to be an economic and educational asset to the downtown area. A joint effort between the Town, County, and private partners to refine the mission and stabilize/enhance the physical premises. (Or find a suitable alternative location), could provide the Town with a unique and valuable attraction.

3. Civil War sites

Within the town's boundaries are located several Civil War fort, battlefield, or entrenchment sites.

- Balls Bluff Battlefield and National Cemetery
- Entrenchments on Battlefield Parkway just north of Fort Evans Rd.
- Balls Bluff Masked Battery and Infantry entrenchments near the intersection of Edwards Ferry Road and Battlefield Parkway.
- Fort Evans, just north of Fort Evans Rd.
- Fort Beauregard, near Sycolin Rd

Of these, only Balls Bluff Battlefield and Cemetery is managed and interpreted. (By the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority)

The entrenchments on Battlefield Parkway have received some minimal maintenance and interpretation through a joint effort by the town staff and local Boy Scouts. There is potential for significantly more efforts on this site.

The other sites are located on private property and have generally been protected from deterioration and abuse. There remains a strong opportunity for further enhancement and interpretation of these sites.

Downtown Parks and Public Facilities

In recent years, the Town has chosen to view the downtown streetscape as a desirable public amenity rather than simply basic operational infrastructure. The American public has increasingly expressed their desire to shop and spend leisure time in urban-style settings where all activities are intermingled. The town has already taken some steps to make the streetscape more hospitable by widening sidewalks and esthetically improving the paving palette,

improving street furnishings and utility structures, and instituting a stronger maintenance and landscape program. The Acoustics on the Green and Bluemont Concert Series have been proven successful at drawing people downtown and there are still additional programs and amenities that could be initiated in order to upgrade the downtown experience.

Urban Children's Facilities

The Historic District, H-2 District, and the Crescent District are experiencing residential growth and a resurgence in business openings well beyond what existed in 2002. Families with children are moving in and outsiders are visiting the downtown with their children to patronize the family-friendly breweries and restaurants that have opened. The development of amenities attractive to children would strengthen the drawing power and livability of these areas of the Town. Play grounds, water features, public rest rooms, music and arts spaces, etc. could help ensure that the Town continues to grow and prosper.

Courthouse Grounds

The Grounds of the Loudoun County courthouse provide a very desirable island of green space in the downtown core. Historically, this area has not been utilized to its maximum potential. The Town and County should look to establishing a working partnership to explore the possibilities for using this space in a way that capitalizes on its location and historical significance to provide both efficient support to the courts operation, as well as recreational and interpretive opportunities.

Promenade from S. King St to Catoclin Circle.

The section of the of the W&OD trail that connects Georgetown Park and Catoclin Circle is one of the busiest on the entire W&OD. With the completion of the mixed-use Crescent Place development and the future development of the South King St residential development, there will be close to a thousand new residents moving in to this corridor. In addition to the commercial component of Crescent Place, other new business have opened on South King St and more are anticipated. This stretch of trail has the potential to be the primary link between Downtown and the heart of the Crescent District. Enhancing this trail section with, paving upgrades, new lighting, street furniture, interpretive signage, etc, could help create a destination –type amenity that would service the increased number of recreational trail users and attract casual strollers, art enthusiasts, shoppers and tourists.

Public Art

In 2002, public art was non-existent in Leesburg. In recent years, the Town has taken some limited steps to incorporate art into selected locations. The Commission on Public Art (COPA) has worked with the Department of Parks and Recreation to integrate art into several parks. Opportunities exist to further develop this relationship and to view art as a desirable addition to any and all of Leesburg's public spaces. The department should consider all appropriate opportunities to add art to future development projects where applicable.

Treewalk

The Leesburg Tree Commission has developed a "Tree Walk", which is essentially a self-guided tour of large and historic trees in the Historic District. Such "tours" have proven to be very popular in other jurisdictions.

I. Appendix

List of Documents referenced:

- *Comprehensive 20-Year Parks, Recreation ,Open Space, Trails, and Greenways Master Plan 2002*
- *Leesburg Town Plan*
- *2011 Parks and Recreation Service and Needs Assessment (Leesburg Department of Parks and Recreation)*
- *2017 Future Facilities Survey (Leesburg Department of Parks and Recreation)*

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