

# Memorandum



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**PROJECT:** Jefferson County Parks Master Plan  
**DATE:** September 18, 2015  
**PREPARED**  
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**To:** Jennifer Myers (JCPRC) and Project Steering Committee  
**cc:** Ann Toole (TRP), Matt Ward (S2), Logan Yeingst (SGA), Jessica Kartes (SGA)  
**SUBJECT:** Draft Blue Print – Overall System “Vision” Scenarios

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The follow set of scenarios are presented purely for discussion purposes. To a certain extent they are provide in levels of intensity (and costs) but not entirely. They are organized in fairly distinct packages for discussion purposes and to compare and contrast the pros and cons of each. The goal is to use these scenarios to establish a clear vision for the Jefferson County’s Parks and Recreation System (and the Department) to set a clear framework for decision-making for each aspect of the plan and its implementation.

The tag-lines for each scenario are used to convey a strategy for each scenario. They will likely not be used in the actual plan document and are for brainstorming purposes.

## **Scenario A – (Base Strategy) – “Making What You Have – ‘The Best’”**

Overview: Improve and provide a high level of quality in both the design and the maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities. Focus on maximizing the value and impact of what already exists through partnerships, aggressive management and programming. The emphasis on the base strategy and all following scenarios should be defining and achieving a high “quality” in the execution of all aspects of the department and the system.

### Drivers:

1. There are fundamental infrastructure issues within many of the parks in terms of adequate drainage, field construction, fencing, lighting, etc. that impact the level of utilization, the quality of play and the amount of maintenance required to keep them functional.
2. Most of the parks lack fundamental service facilities such as restrooms, comfort stations, adequate pavilions, etc.
3. Many of the existing parks have a utilitarian “look” at least in the developed areas within each park.
4. School facilities are current off-limits to the general public and if accessible could greatly expand the recreational opportunities of county residents.

Key Elements:

1. Address fundamental infrastructure needs in each of the existing parks, such as providing needed drainage improvements, regulatory requirements, ADA/Code compliance, etc.
2. Establish a base set of standards for support facilities and site furniture including restrooms, pavilions, drinking fountains, as well as site furniture. All parks should have the same equipment to convey they sense of being part of the county’s system and also to provide efficiency in repair and replacement. The County has a good start in a system-wide signing “brand” this should be executed further done into other signing types, including information kiosks, facilities signs, destination signs, trailblazers and regulatory signing. As described in the existing park-by-park assessments, most of the county’s parks need new or updated master site development master plans which will address these key issues.
3. Similar to site fixtures, a set of landscape management guidelines should be established for landscape plantings, including more manicured (selective accent plantings), canopy trees, parking lot plants, and naturalized areas of all types (meadows, forests, forest edges, wetlands, stream and riverbanks, etc.).
4. Pilot partnership opportunities with the School District should be developed which begin to open up facilities for shared use (and potentially responsibility for management and maintenance). This effort should form the basis of a formal MOU between the School District and JCPRC.
5. The most critical trail connections should be advanced which include the 340 trail or any new trail that connects directly to an existing park or recreational facilities (including county, city, school or other owned publically accessible facility). Policies which require trail connections through land development projects should be required to promote the maximum connectivity through private development.
6. New land acquisitions or acceptances should be limited to lands adjacent to existing facilities (that expand the potential of what already exists) or along the major waterways.

**Scenario B – “Taking it up a Notch”**

Overview: Scenario A improvements plus adding specialty facilities and landscape amenities to create a truly balance parks and recreation system.

Drivers:

1. In addition the Drivers described under Scenario A, there are facility needs and opportunities that have been identified that are current not being served, such as aquatics, as well as geographic areas of the county that are underserved now, or as likely population growth occurs.
2. Opportunities to expand the reach of parks and recreation with the county’s broader economic development goals exists, but are currently not being met.

Key Elements:

1. In addition the base improvements and polices described under Scenario A, new facilities within existing parks should be studied. These facilities might include adding spray pads to several of

the parks, a county-wide amphitheater, lacrosse fields, a regional history/environmental themed destination playground, rock climbing, skate parks, etc.

2. Look at partnerships for programming with major outside organizations and facilities such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Training Center, etc.
3. Partner with the School District to develop a joint indoor/outdoor aquatics program strategy and facility.
4. In addition to the most critical trail connections described under Scenario A at least one complete east-west and north-south trail route through the County should be pursued.
5. Development new community parks with a balance of active and passive recreation facilities at Harvest Hills and Heather Marriott Parks.
6. In addition to the land acquisition aspects of Scenario A, actively try to acquire additional land around Sam Michael's Park to double its size and make it the County's premiere "Central Park."
7. Considering adding a new park along the southern portion of the Shenandoah River in either the Summit Point/Kabletown or Mount Mission/Ridge Districts, or both.
8. Establish a formal MOU between the School District and JCPRC to open up all of the School District's facilities to the public in some form, including through joint programming, management and maintenance.

### **Scenario C – "Connecting the Dots"**

Overview: Scenario A improvements plus placing a major emphasis on connecting people to the existing parks, recreation, historical and natural resources within the County.

#### Drivers:

1. In addition the Drivers described under Scenario A, a way to increase the potential utilization of the existing parks and recreational facilities is through a major expansion of the trails and greenways to create a comprehensive and fully interconnect trails and greenway network within the county and to the greater regional trail system.
2. Opportunities to expand the reach of parks and recreation with the county's broader economic development goals exists, but are currently not being met.

#### Key Elements:

1. In addition the base improvements and polices described under Scenario A, the emphasis of resources would be placed on implementing numerous trails and greenways throughout the county. This effort would include extensive coordination with transportation projects to ensure that all roadway improvements along key corridors meet or exceed minimum multi-modal transportation/trail standards.
2. Actively pursue acquiring access easements and rights-of-way along proposed trail corridors to create an inter-connected and ideally, off-road multi-use trail network.
3. Look at partnerships with the County and local CVBs, Jefferson County Development Authority, the School District, Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission, the American Battlefields Protection Program, the Appalachian Trail, the National Parks Service, etc. for programming and

promotion of the trail networks as an important part of the county's overall tourism and economic development efforts.

### **Scenario D – “Building a Premiere Parks and Recreation ‘System’”**

Overview: Scenario A, B and C and adding new parks, major recreational facilities and programs to make Jefferson County's Parks System a premier model for parks, recreation, trails and greenways, nationally.

#### Drivers:

1. Jefferson County is located within a geographic sweet-spot to capitalize on its richness in beautiful landscapes, nationally important historic sites, close proximity to the Washington-Baltimore metropolitan region and its recent investments in new infrastructure to be a highly attractive and competitive place to visit, to live and to locate a business.
2. Many communities state that tourism is an important part of their economy, but few have the resources that exist within and near Jefferson County. Despite what exists, there are major gaps in terms of meeting the county's full potential.

#### Key Elements:

1. This scenario would set the stage for Jefferson County to compete with the best parks and recreation system nationally. The key to the scenario is the idea that premiere parks and recreation become a core part of the county's economic development strategy. In fact, the way to achieve this level of quality and diversity of facilities is through strategic public-private partnership, including potential jointly development major facilities together, such as a major east coast equestrian center/park, tournament level sports facilities with hotels, etc.
2. The JCPRC should be working with major developers in the county to promote partnership and connectivity between development and parks and recreation facilities to be used to promote development. If the JCPRC and developers can develop park planning district strategies together, truly cohesive district-wide parks, recreation and trail systems.
3. Build three to five additional county parks of minimum size of 150 acres within the following park planning districts: Charles Town/Ranson, Leetown (connect Hite Park to Leetown Park and the County Fairgrounds, Northport/Shenandoah Junction (adjacent to the major new town center proposed on the Jefferson Orchard property and the new NorthPort MARC station) and the Summit Point/Kabletown District (including at least one along the southern portion of the Opequon Creek).