

Strategic Planning Committee

DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

Mission Statement-

“Connecting people, parks and programs in support of a strong, healthy community and natural environment.”

Vision-

“We are committed to enhancing the quality of life, promoting a sense of community, facilitating learning for all ages, interests, and abilities while encouraging an appreciation of the natural environment and local history.”

Core Values-

Excellence- We are responsive to our community’s needs and expectations and strive to exceed them.

Innovation- We develop and deliver creative and quality solutions and outcomes.

Equity- We strategically maintain policies and provide services to be fair, relevant, and accessible to all.

Integrity- We earn the community’s trust through accountability, ethics, and open communication.

Legacy- We serve as responsible stewards of the community’s resources for this and future generations.

Collaboration- We promote, develop, and support community involvement to leverage resources.

Goals-

- 1- Provide the public with excellent customer service and the best user experience possible.
- 2- Limit dependence on local tax revenues by developing alternative funding sources.
- 3- Promote awareness and good stewardship of the environment through green initiatives.
- 4- Maintain a vibrant Park system by protecting and reinvesting in Carroll County Assets.
- 5- Promote healthy, safe communities that are supported by well-rounded program offerings and policy.
- 6- Expand recreation and parks programs and facilities to meet current and future needs.
- 7- Promote Carroll County’s natural, cultural, and historical legacies through the development of accessible programs and exhibits.
- 8- Enhance stakeholder value by fully developing revenue sources, contribute to local economic development and tourism efforts.
- 9- Maintain an organizational philosophy of continual improvement.
- 10- Develop, support, and recognize volunteer efforts to maximize community engagement.
- 11- Initiation and foster partnerships that result in increased value to Carroll County communities.
- 12- Enhance communication with stakeholders.

Initiatives-

Goal 1- Provide the public with excellent customer service and a positive user experience.

- A. Pursue upgrades in technology and upgrade website functionality to enhance capabilities and productivity for staff and enhance user experiences.
- B. Develop and track a citizen complaint/concern form and answer public questions/concerns in under two business days.
- C. Increase digital mapping of park trails and develop new trail maps.
- D. Market Communication for programs 30 days, 10 days, 7 days, and 3 days prior. Track feedback as possible with social media.

Goal 2- Limit dependence on local tax revenues by developing alternative funding sources.

- A. Explore availability of grant applications for Land, Water Conservation quarterly.
- B. Promote Park Legacy Fund at trail heads and other strategic locations.
- C. Increase number of grant applications and monitor success rate yearly.
- D. Explore additional revenue opportunities such as parking, concessions, special use permits, advertising, etc.
- E. Develop year-round schedule of fundraising events to serve as a revenue stream for the park legacy fund.
- F. Implement new special events at Piney Run, Hashawha, Hap Baker Firearms Facility, and Sports complex to increase revenue.
- G. Fund Recreational Trails Program and Maryland Heritage Area grants for Northwest Regional Park/ NW Rail Trail project.

Goal 3- Promote awareness & good stewardship of the environment through green initiatives.

- A. Quantify the ecosystem benefits of parkland related to natural resource protection and groundwater recharge at Piney Run Park.
- B. Identify acreage of tree canopy in parks and publicize with benefits to community at Hashawha.
- C. Identify environmentally sensitive areas in parks and implement controlled usage at Hashawha & Piney Run.

Goal 4- Maintain a vibrant park system by protecting and reinvesting in Carroll County Assets.

- A. Investigate public/ private partnerships to develop available land at Leister Park.
- A. Monitor nuisance wildlife at park sites and implement wildlife management strategies as needed.
- B. Develop repair and replacement plan and schedule for infrastructure in all parks.
- C. Establish a tiered maintenance classification program that specifies levels of maintenance based on a park's size, staffing, and usage levels.

Goal 5- Promote healthy, safe opportunities that are supported by well-rounded program offerings and parks to improve quality of life.

- A. Promote positive behavior and good sportsmanship among youth sports programs through various initiatives (signage, video, MARSPA awards).
- B. Maintain relationships with the Commission on Aging, Health Aging Leadership Team, and other organizations to promote recreational opportunities.
- C. Continue to offer diverse programs, facilities, and resources designed for growing senior population and EPIC.
- D. Promote parks and trails as an inducement to physical activity.
- E. Increase efforts to provide alternative sports programs and amenities such as futsal, cricket, and pickleball.

Goal 6- Expand recreation and parks programs and facilities to meet current and future needs.

- A. Monitor demand for dog parks and if needed investigate development of a third dog park in North Carroll area to meet public needs.
- B. Complete development of water trail with access points at Hapes Mill and Bridgeport.
- C. Continue to provide support to volunteer recreation councils by funding capital improvement and self-help projects.
- D. Improve tracking non-registered users of park facilities, including trails, to document usage with improved trail counters.
- E. Utilize existing space for temporary uses and pop-up programming.
- F. Transfer ownership of Mayeski and Kate Wagner from BOE to county owned park sites.
- G. Evaluate uses of existing program space to ensure max benefit.

Goal 7- Promote Carroll County's natural, cultural, and historical legacies through the development of accessible programs and exhibits.

- A. Offer at least one activity per program guide that teaches people outdoor skills and how to enjoy outdoor activities in parks.
- B. Install educational historical signage in County parks utilizing QR code technology to share additional information.
- C. Add public art and design in parks.
- D. Offer "how to" programs and opportunities for family camping at Piney Run and Taneytown.

Goal 8- Enhance stakeholder value by fully developing revenue sources, contribute to local economic development and tourism efforts.

- A. Expand current nature center gift shop models and develop online store.
- B. Develop and implement a comprehensive department wide marketing plan and communication strategy and branding.
- C. Prioritize opportunities to contribute to local economic development and tourism efforts.

Goal 9- Maintain an organizational philosophy of continual improvement.

- A. Develop department succession plan and review annually.
- B. Promote cross training that enables staff to perform their jobs effectively.
- C. Organize operating procedures in the department manual to include general security plan, county policies, and procedures.
- D. Quarterly assessment of the strategic plan with SPC members and report to the Advisory Board.
- E. Explore organizational alignment that brings park maintenance under Department of Recreation and Parks.
- F. Continue to expand social media outreach by growing number of followers to be documented in the annual report.

Goal 10- To develop, support, and recognize volunteer efforts to maximize community engagement.

- A. Track employer workdays to clean up parks, create new trails, and complete special projects as needed.
- B. Expand “Helping Hands Keep Parks Green” program to solicit the participation of neighborhoods, schools, local clubs, and civic groups to help maintain parks with a focus on park entrances and focal points.
- C. Encourage rec councils to wear R&P branded attire with rec council affiliations.

Goal 11- To initiate and foster partnerships that result in increased value to Carroll County Communities.

- A. Maintain partnerships with MORE (Mid Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts) to develop/ maintain use of trails.
- B. Develop and support ongoing relationships with donors to the Park Legacy Fund with the creation of donor societies and provide annual recognition of gifts.

Goal 12- Enhance communication with stakeholders.

- A. Increase usage of QR (Quick Response) code and smart phone applications to enhance experiences for park visitors and as a quick means for parents to verify approved recreation council volunteers.
- B. Explore holding an annual public open house to solicit input, display upcoming projects, and update the community on progress with the Capital Improvement Plan.