

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Previous park, recreation, and open space plan

Jefferson County has continued to change since the accomplishment of the last park, recreation, and open space plan in 1995. The choices that confront Jefferson County at the present time are significant and could alter the character and quality of park, recreation, and open space facilities and services if not adequately planned. This document outlines the choices that are available and the means for implementing preferred actions of most benefit to Jefferson County residents.

This park, recreation, and open space planning process was undertaken concurrently with the planning of non-motorized transportation systems including off-road trails. Proposals for non-motorized transportation systems are documented in the Non-motorized transportation and trails plan – and should be reviewed in order to consider the combined implications of the two plans.

1.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of this planning effort were to:

- ***Define the setting*** – within which park, recreation, and open space facilities should be provided within Jefferson County including climate, environment, wildlife habitat, history, culture, and current development conditions.
- ***Inventory*** – existing public and private park and recreational facilities that have been developed to-date within Jefferson County by the state, port, county, city, and school districts.
- ***Forecast demand*** – for future park and recreation facilities and services that may be provided by the state, port, county, city, school districts, or other agencies.
- ***Determine the costs*** – involved in maintaining and/or improving park and recreational levels-of-service (LOS), particularly the possible use of innovative financing tools or methods such as growth impact fees, establishing a parks and recreation metropolitan district, and general obligation bonds.
- ***Identify appropriate roles and responsibilities*** – that should be undertaken by Jefferson County to meet critical recreational facility and programming needs.
- ***Develop the elements of a comprehensive plan*** – for developing and/or refurbishing needed park, recreation, and open space facilities including wildlife habitat and conservation areas, open spaces and natural resource areas, trails,

athletic fields and facilities, indoor community and recreation centers, and other special purpose facilities.

- Define an implementation program – outlining the actions necessary to realize the plan's development including supporting actions necessary to resolve agreements with the state, port, city, and school districts, adopt growth impact fees, create a park and recreation metropolitan park district, and/or initiate general obligation bond referendums.

1.3 Approach

This study analyzed the supply, demand, and need for public and private park and recreation facilities and services within Jefferson County. The inventories include a comprehensive assessment of public and private facilities and services within the county on a countywide basis.

The proposed development strategies are the result of this comprehensive analysis. Generally, the proposed strategies recommend the county focus its resources where park and recreation needs are most critical, and the county most effective.

1.4 Public involvement

The Jefferson County Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Board, Non-Motorized Transportation Task Force, and the Jefferson County Public Works Department oversaw the planning process.

Public workshops, forums, and surveys were undertaken during the process, including a telephone survey at the conclusion. The proposals contained within this document represent the consensus opinions developed during these events.

1.5 Documentation

This report is organized into 11 chapters dealing with major topic issues.