



# CITY OF SUFFOLK

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## ADDENDUM NO. 2

City of Suffolk  
RFP #2014-00053-JS  
February 13, 2014

Purchasing Division  
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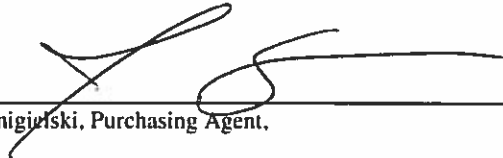
## UPDATE OF CITY OF SUFFOLK'S PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The Request for Proposal (RFP) for Network Infrastructure and Telecommunications Systems Implementation issued January 31, 2014 has been amended as follows:

The following hereby incorporated in the RFP:

The current Master Plan is attached. This Addendum has four parts. This is 3 of 4.

Contract Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Jay Smigielski, Purchasing Agent.

If you have any questions regarding this Addendum, please contact Jay Smigielski, Purchasing Agent at [jsmigielski@suffolkva.us](mailto:jsmigielski@suffolkva.us)

Acknowledged by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter Five: System Development – Let's Get Started

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### 5.1 Introduction

Goals are set, cornerstones of the revitalized system are established, funding, maintenance and promotion strategies accepted, and the Parks and Recreation Department is restructuring and has a vision clearly in mind. To implement this master plan, the actions taken during the first few years will be critical. Credibility must be established, negative images changed, and the momentum shifted from survival to leadership.

Each park and special use facility plays a role in the Master Plan, and recommendations for each are presented herein. In addition, a short-term action plan for gaining momentum and establishing baselines for long term planning and funding is outlined. Finally, the ultimate system is summarized from a few different perspectives, such as facilities planned per borough by facility type. Additional comparisons of Suffolk's system to the Parks and Recreation systems of similarly sized cities in the South and Midwest are presented in Appendix A.

### 5.2 System Development by Type

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#### Existing/Proposed Facilities

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##### **Sports Complex**

Driver Park/Monogram Field

##### **Natural Resource Area**

Crump's Mill Pond

Lone Star Lakes/Lodge

##### **Community Parks**

Bennett's Creek Park & Boat Ramp

Cypress Park & Pool

Lake Kennedy Park

Lake Meade Park/Howard Mast Tennis Courts

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#### Existing/Proposed Facilities

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##### **Neighborhood Parks**

Constant's Wharf and Boat Ramp

Holland Athletic Field

King's Fork Athletic Field

Peanut Park

Planters Park

Whaleyville Community Center and Athletic Field

##### **Mini-Parks**

Belleville Meadows Playground

Coulbourn Park

Ida Easter Park

Joyner Park

Lakeside Park Tot Lot

Mary Estes Playground

Pughsville Park

Turlington Park

Tynes Street Playground

Wellons Park

Wynnewood Park

##### **Schools-Joint Use**

Booker T. Washington School Tennis Courts

Forest Glen Middle School Tennis Courts

JFK Middle School Athletic Fields

Mack Benn Jr. Recreation Center

Northern Shores Recreation Center

Oakland Recreation Center

##### **Special Use Facilities**

Birdsong Recreation Center

East Suffolk High School

National Guard Armory

Planters Club

Senior Citizen's Center

Suffolk Museum

### 5.3 Sports Complex

The primary focus of the public park component of the redeveloped Naval Radio Transmitting Facility at Driver will be on a large-scale athletic complex to accommodate local baseball, softball and soccer leagues, as well as traveling tournament leagues. Centrally located in the buffer area between the two most intensely developed areas of the City, the facility is anticipated to meet the city's demands for facilities of this scale for the twenty-year master planning period. This facility will be one of the cornerstones of the system and an example of a recreation facility that can provide secondary economic benefits to the City.

#### ***Driver Park/Monogram Field Summary - Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Driver Park is part of the Community Reuse Plan for the Naval Radio Transmitting Facility. For the reuse planning, a preliminary master plan for the site was developed with extensive public involvement, adopted in 1996 and amended in 1998. The plan incorporates three major use areas: an intensely developed public park (referred to herein as Driver Park), an environmental education center, and the Nansemond National Wildlife Refuge. Driver Park was recommended for transfer to the City of Suffolk. The plat for the transfer has been approved, but the land has not been transferred at this time. Further assessment of the Driver Park site was performed as part of this study. Throughout the input session process there was continued support for an intensively developed tournament athletic facility at Driver Park.

Monogram Field is a lighted ball field located just outside the transmitter site. The current preferred plan shows it being incorporated into Driver Park.

- **Opportunities**

Located between the two population centers and with over 350 acres of public parkland, Driver Park is extremely well suited to serve immediate recreational needs for the City. The site can accommodate a revenue generating regional tournament facility that can further fund other park improvements and initiatives as well as provide secondary economic benefits. All vendor relationships must be approved by the National Park Service per the land transfer agreement. Providing additional fields can relieve pressure on other existing facilities and allow smaller parks to diversify. In addition, the location of Driver Park creates an opportunity to develop facilities for group special uses such as a skateboard park and in-line hockey. High profile partnerships are a natural opportunity.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- Develop a detailed master plan, phasing plan and budget for the park.
- Pursue high profile partnership and/or sponsorship of park facilities.
- Develop a first class, regional scale tournament athletic facility to generate revenue and establish Suffolk as a premier stop on the tournament circuit. Emphasize economic benefits to the community and generate interest in facilities that support traveling athletic teams.
- Develop a skateboard park.

#### Long Term

- Continue to develop additional park facilities.
- Explore private revenue sources that also support the athletic field use.

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## 5.4 Natural Resource Areas

Natural Resource Areas such as Lone Star Lakes and Crump's Mill Pond help preserve the natural diversity and culture of Suffolk and provide opportunities that can't be found in most other parks. In addition to the recreational benefits, Natural Resource Areas enhance environmental quality, protect viewsheds, provide buffer zones between divergent uses and provide living outdoor classrooms. The two existing Natural Resource Areas are or have the potential to become regional attractions and both will help support the goal of developing the ecotourism industry in Suffolk. There is a need for establishment of additional Natural Resource Areas, either through acquisition of significant lands or through long-term partnerships with landowners.

Biological resources in the Southwest corner of Suffolk include the Blackwater River, which is being considered as a heritage tourism route between Franklin, VA and Murfreesboro, NC, the Union

Camp Holding Pond with its nesting sites and diversity of waterfowl and Somerton Creek and related wetlands. Low development densities, rural scenery and low traffic volumes allow for bike touring and leisurely drives. A designated Natural Resource Area in this sector would support efforts to develop an ecotourism industry in Suffolk and support economic development in nearby villages, particularly in the Village of Holland, which is recommended as a gateway community for ecotourism and heritage tourism.

A related program that is feasible in the rural southern half of the city is a Farm Park or agri-tainment attraction. While not necessarily a natural resource in the strict sense, preservation of the agricultural traditions supports the Comprehensive Plan and tourism efforts and provides another cornerstone for economic diversification.

## Crump's Mill Pond Summary – Facility Evaluation

- **Summary Description**

Crump's Mill Pond is a unique part of the village of Chuckatuck's history and is a picturesque natural resource. The pond is currently being used as a major pumping facility for the City water supply, so preservation and protection of water quality is critical on the site. Across the street from Old Crump's Mill, the Department's building is being used for offices and storage, and was not evaluated at City direction. Staff reports the need for extensive heating and plumbing repairs. The site is not identified as a public resource and there is no delineation of public and private property.

- **Opportunities**

The historical and natural history of the site and area could be the focus for a nature or ecotourism center. The location is along a route connecting several other natural and cultural resource points of interest and could support visitors as well as locals. Providing limited and controlled access to the pond could provide increased control of the water quality. The traces of the former mill site offer opportunities for heritage interpretation, and a fossil pit is another potential attraction.

- **Recommendations**

### Short Term

- Determine long range plans for the pond as a drinking water source and consequent management implications.
- Evaluate building for potential long-term use.
- Continue to use for storage and offices.

- Control invasive bamboo plantings on dike.

Long Term

- Develop site as a nature and regional ecotourism center.
- Develop floating dock for canoe and kayak launching.

**Lone Star Lakes/Lodge Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

One of Suffolk's signature parks and a favorite of locals, Lone Star Lakes is also the City's largest holding at over 1000 acres, about half of which is water. Development of the site has been limited to lake access points, picnic areas, a small playground, archery range, model airplane field, trails and a lodge that the community can rent. Two new boat ramps were recently added under a grant to the City. The Nansemond Indians hold an annual pow-wow at the lodge on the banks of the Nansemond River that draws participants from across the region and outside the state. The property is prone to flooding and road and pier construction and maintenance have been an ongoing challenge. Refurbished parking and the new boat launches in the northern portion of the park have begun to provide handicap accessibility.

- **Opportunities**

The park has the potential to provide revenue producing activities as well as the basic low cost opportunities currently available. A preliminary golf course study illustrates how a course could be developed in the southwest sector, and the river frontage offers an ideal site for a marina. A corporate retreat center may also be

feasible. Development and management of specialized uses could be by private sector.

The Nansemond Indians are also interested in developing a Native American Cultural and Community Center on the site (and ecotourism programs could be easily supported with creek access points) and have requested 25 acres for this purpose. Their funding sources for the project require that they own the land. This is an excellent use for the site and will complement other park uses. It is important that adequate river frontage be retained as part of the public park lands in order to allow river access.

Lone Star Lakes also provides an excellent site for further development of nature and hiking trails, and offers potential for the development of tent camping.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Develop a master plan for the park to address potential public/private partnerships, the Nansemond Indian Cultural Center and trail uses.
- Develop RFP(s) for the golf course and a retreat center on the site in areas that will not compromise the overall character and function of the park, including a market analysis as part of the RFP.
- Design and construct a visitor center near the park entrance with maps, ranger station, informational materials and restrooms.
- Develop a land transfer with reverter and use agreement with Nansemond Indians for Cultural and Community Center.

- Maintain Lodge with minor repairs until long term plans are met.
- Relocate model airplane field (approx 6 acres) within park or to a different site.
- Provide identification sign and internal directional signs consistent with Parks and Recreations image.

#### Long Term

- Implement master plan elements.
- Maintain the public's ability to use riverfront area and facilities for group events.
- Continue to improve accessibility to basic park elements, including boat and fishing access to lakes.
- Improve and expand trail and hiking system.
- Implement Blueway access and information points on Chuckatuck and Cedar Creeks and investigate potential for water-accessed campgrounds.
- Upgrade infrastructure to better withstand flooding.

## **5.5 Community Parks**

Strategically located on near population centers, on bus routes or on the shores of major lakes and rivers, the existing Community Parks are valuable recreational assets with the potential to become prominent and well used resources. These parks have not been developed and programmed to serve the widest diversity of users. With acreage to support a balance of active and passive diversions, the Community Parks require careful planning to increase levels of service in a manner that does not overwhelm the natural characteristics of each (in the case of Bennett's Creek and Lake Meade),

or the relationship with the surrounding neighborhoods (in the case of Cypress Park and Lake Kennedy Park). Cypress Park is undergoing a transformation that reflects a higher level of attention to quality, diversity of experience and mitigating impacts to the neighborhood than in previous City park development. Lake Kennedy Park could benefit from an adjustment in programming, redesign, facilities upgrades and application of varying levels of maintenance. These two parks are recommended for continued improvement as models for Community Park development and operation. Lessons learned from these examples can be applied to the further development of new and improved Community Parks. Lake Meade and Bennett's Creek are well positioned to serve densely populated central and northern core areas and need to be master planned prior to further improvement of facilities. Community Parks can support specialized uses such as recreation centers and even revenue producing venues like water parks. They are lacking or scarce in all sectors of the City and as opportunities arise should be a primary goal for system expansion.

#### ***Bennett's Creek Park & Boat Ramp Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Bennett's Creek Park and Boat Ramp is a place to feel close to nature and apart from the quickening pace of northern Suffolk. The open fields, woodland trails, tidal creek and fringe marshes set the character for the limited development of picnic facilities, playgrounds and fishing areas tucked around the woods and the well used boat ramp. The boat ramp was constructed by the state and is minimally maintained by them. The ranger building is minimalistic and the restrooms, like the rest of the park features, are not accessible. The park is used for a few seasonal programs, but is generally underprogrammed. Past use of the site as a Nike Missile launching ground has environmental implications, including a

series of tunnels and underground storage areas.

- **Opportunities**

With its central location and substantial acreage, Bennett's Creek could be developed incrementally to serve as one of northern Suffolk's primary community parks or community centers. The central open space could be programmed for a variety of uses, including concert series, day camps and a staging area for water related events. A multiuse recreation center, aquatics center or well appointed group picnic area with a multiuse field could be developed on a portion of the site close to the road, while still preserving open space. With shallow water access, the site lends itself for use as a primary Blueway access and paddle sport training area.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Conduct Phase One environmental analysis, research missile site closure procedures and document soil collapse occurrences for potential geotechnical investigation.
- Determine use levels and refine northern residents use preferences.
- Update 1986 Master Plan based upon results and implement priority recommendations.
- Develop a community recreation center program and preliminary plan based on user desire.

Long Term

- Replace inaccessible restrooms as part of park or community center developments.

- Improve accessibility to group picnic areas, portions of the woodland trail, playground, water fountains, and pier.
- Define circulation and parking areas more clearly.
- Develop perimeter trail system with rest areas, overlooks, and site interpretation.
- Develop Blueway access point with information, staging area and floating pier section and potential overnight parking by permit.

***Cypress Park & Pool Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Cypress Park is the primary community park serving central Suffolk and contains the only public pool in the City. Due to recent renovations a full assessment was not performed. The first phase of redevelopment serves as a model for park improvement, illustrating a commitment to higher quality of materials and diversity of experience, as well as better spatial organization, than most parks of its size in the system. In addition to the pool the park includes a walking trail, parking lot with neighborhood screening plants, a large group shelter, basketball court and new playground equipment.

- **Opportunities**

Use Cypress Park as a new benchmark to see how much improvement can be made in similar parks and to evaluate where to improve even more.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Proceed with phased development plans.

- Develop maintenance standards for the new construction and track costs and success implementing them.
- Provide park signs and entrance planting consistent with new Parks and Recreation identity (2001).

#### Long Term

- Provide commitment to park maintenance.

### **Lake Kennedy Park Summary – Facility Evaluation**

#### • **Summary Description**

A small community park surrounded on three sides by homes, Lake Kennedy Park provides basic recreational facilities: a playground with new equipment, picnic shelter, baseball field, volleyball courts, open practice field and basketball court. New volleyball net stretchers are not strung correctly and posts are sagging. There is no overall sense of organization and with the exception of the playground the facilities are in marginal condition. The basketball court immediately adjacent to the parking area creates the potential for groups establishing turf at the park entrance, which can discourage use. Houses backing up to the park and fingers of dense underbrush create blind spots within the park. The parking lot has recently been paved. Broken glass and alcohol bottles suggest after hours use of the park.

#### • **Opportunities**

Since the park is not intensely developed and not particularly well organized, there is the potential to redevelop the park to meet community needs and to support programming deficiencies. Working with rangers and surrounding residents to patrol and enforce use restrictions could reduce trash and improve the image of the park. The Department could consider this as a model park to illustrate it can provide facilities, maintain them and work with the community to make sure they work well.

#### • **Recommendations**

##### Short Term

- Determine use levels, appropriate maintenance levels and resident concerns for the park.



- Secure parking lot at night.
- Define park boundaries where there is no fencing between private backyards and park.
- Resurface dead end path and extend to play equipment and picnic tables.
- Selectively clear dense undergrowth along drainage ways to increase visibility.
- Reset volleyball posts and string nets adequately.
- Determine a compatible use that is not being met in the community, develop facilities to support it, and then program for it. For instance, a sand volleyball league playing weekly or more often at new courts at Lakeside.

#### Long Term

- Develop a master plan for the park to provide a variety of experiences in a resource efficient and supportable manner.
- Address site drainage issues and swales bisecting the site.

#### **Lake Meade Park / Howard Mast Tennis Courts Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

The Howard Mast Tennis Center is a ten court complex and is the only park improvement that has been developed so far at the 25 acre Lake Meade Park. Located just north of downtown and buffered from residential development by Lake Meade and a major shopping center, the park is well sited to further development as a community park. The Tennis Center is cooperatively operated by the Suffolk Tennis Association and the City, is in very good

condition overall and plays host to regional tournaments and lessons. The next development planned for the park is the construction of KidZone, a two-acre playground complex. Steep slopes are predominant along the lakefront and use in the area will need to be carefully planned.

- **Opportunities**

With a prime location and good access this park holds a lot of potential to become a primary community park for Central Suffolk. Future use should be carefully programmed and planned to make the best use of this unique property. With high visibility and a prime location, there is a good potential for partnerships and sponsorships at this site. This is one of the sites in the system with water use access, and this should be a focus of future use. A rental facility for small boats, carry-in access, or a small amphitheater are potential uses.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- Develop program and master plan for Lake Meade Park (2001).
- Restroom will require alterations to be fully ADA compliant. Additional restrooms will be needed as the park is built out.
- Monitor park use upon completion of new playground to determine the need for new parking. Plan for an overflow area for peak times.
- Add picnic tables and grills (2001).

#### Long Term

- Implement master plan for water access and picnic shelters (2002).

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## 5.6 Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are the backbone of any park system and should be located throughout populated areas of the city, providing the opportunity for residents to congregate, play or just enjoy an open space in which to relax. While they can support casual and occasional use for structured activities such as baseball games, they should not be regularly scheduled for league or programmed use. Many of the existing parks classified as neighborhood parks are only designated as such due to their size range, within 5-10 acres, but serve as the primary recreational outlets for their small surrounding communities.

Whaleyville Community Center and Athletic Fields and the Holland Athletic Fields function more as Community Parks and should be expanded through land acquisition to accommodate more diversification of facilities and functions. Constant's Wharf will become a downtown focal point and a Special Use Facility with a broader purpose than a typical Neighborhood Park. King's Fork Athletic Fields and Peanut Park serve only as league baseball facilities. League games should be reprogrammed onto athletic fields in Community Parks, the Driver Park or School Sites. Planters Park is well used by the neighbors and needs to be upgraded in a similar fashion to Cypress Park consistent with the master plan that has been developed with the community. Planters Park and Holland Athletic Fields are designated as models for closer monitoring in the next few years.

Neighborhood Parks are deficient in all sectors of the city and should be planned into new developments. School sites can serve much the same function as neighborhood parks and expanded acquisition and development of facilities is an option to increase levels of service.

## Constant's Wharf Summary - Facility Evaluation

- **Summary Description**

This 12-acre parcel on the banks of the Nansemond River is a strategic gateway to downtown Suffolk, by water or by land. Existing uses include a parking lot, wastewater pump station and boat launch, but plans are currently being developed for a public waterfront park, marina, conference hotel and retail complex. Detailed analysis and planning consistent with the City's Downtown Initiatives Plan is being provided by consultants under current contract to the City.

- **Opportunities**

Constant's Wharf is a multidimensional project that will provide a wide range of opportunities to visitors and residents. With a rich history and sensitive natural systems it can support Department and City initiatives in heritage and ecotourism and provide a unique downtown waterfront park and activity center. Primary uses will be waterfront related, with a City marina and pedestrian walks at the river, and a pavilion space for downtown community gatherings. The project meets many criteria of the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Gateways Initiative and could be a candidate for grant funding.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Develop and implement the plan for the site.
- Plan for relocation of the boat ramp to another site down river of Constant's Wharf.

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### Long Term

- Develop programming compatible with the site and improvements.
- Develop a strategy for Parks and Recreation interface with the public or dissemination of information at this high profile contact point.

### ***Holland Athletic Field Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Located in the center of the village of Holland, the three ball fields and limited open space serve the town and surrounding agricultural areas. In good to excellent shape overall, the sense of pride and community involvement is apparent by the high level of sponsorship and donations acknowledged through the park. A new playground that needs safety surfacing, benches and tables in fringe green space and a well-landscaped Ruritan memorial entry round out the park, which hardly contains a foot of unused space.

- **Opportunities**

Farm fields providing opportunities for expansion border two sides of the park. Commercial buildings nearby could provide opportunities for mobile programming and a community use facility.

A community meeting facility could be developed on land currently owned and operated by a private organization. This site also offers the opportunity for future construction of a swimming pool.

Holland has the potential of becoming a heritage tour destination and support services hub for cyclists and ecotourists, capitalizing on its historic village character.

- **Recommendations**

### Short Term

- Acquire land for expansion to provide a diversity of experience besides baseball and to serve as a community park.
- Evaluate need for programming space and compare commercial building renovation within the village to new construction on expanded property.
- Add mulch to playground enclosure. Replace sagging bench slats.
- Expand passive opportunities and ornamental plantings adjacent to parking area. Capitalize on old Main Street character in furnishings and design relationships.
- Develop partnership programs with the Virginia Tech Agricultural Experiment Station.

### Long Term

- Develop and implement a master plan for expanded park limits.
- Consider the potential for a public-private partnership for the development of a Farm Park in the Holland area.

### ***King's Fork Athletic Field Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

These three ball fields and concession stand are the home to the King's Fork Athletic Association. A grass parking area and a three small climbing pieces are the only other facilities at this park. A grove of large oak trees breaks up the site and provides shade. While the fields are fairly well

maintained, (Widener and Warner Fields better than

Field 1), there is old fencing material stored on site, an old building foundation and a decaying pitching lane that should be removed. The concession building appears solid and has a new roof, but was not fully evaluated (at the City's direction). The site is visible from Pruden, Kings Fork and Robb Roads. Diamond Springs Park, Suffolk Youth Athletics Association's sports complex, the new Middle School and several elementary schools are close to this site.

- **Opportunities**

There is some unused space within the park to diversify use, with the option of providing picnicking and seating areas.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Evaluate the potential to accommodate league play on other fields in the area, such as the new middle school.
- Remove hazardous materials (foundations, pitching lane, fencing materials).

Long Term

- Dependant upon short term, either sale or diversification of use.

***Peanut Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Peanut Park is a double ball field complex located in the midst of roasting and processing plants in the Philadelphia area south of downtown. The complex is fenced and gated and only open for games, and currently only one of the fields is in regular use. The concession stand may not meet health codes and the restroom building is not ADA compliant. Field lighting is functional, but starting to show signs of

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deterioration. The central maintenance and fleet storage compound is located next to the park. The maintenance building was not evaluated in detail, but is in very poor condition, and needs to be replaced by a new facility either on this site, or combined with other maintenance functions of the City.

- **Opportunities**

As the facilities at Peanut Park age and need to be replaced, the Department will have to determine the level of use and the costs involved to upgrade. As newer ball fields at other locations are developed, the functions of Peanut Park are likely to change. In a transitional neighborhood on a busy corridor, other uses for the site may be better than a small neighborhood park. With the relocation of the maintenance operation, room will be available to develop much needed parking for the site. The site offers the potential for a small downtown recreation center.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Remove existing restroom facility.
- Track field use and costs to maintain and operate. If groups using the site can be scheduled onto other fields over the next few years, consider phasing out the facility for league use and use it for practice fields. This would eliminate the need to add new lighting and restrooms.
- Evaluate potential need for site as part of maintenance activities.
- Develop a plan to provide visual screening of the adjacent junkyard.

Long Term

- Track program demands in the neighborhood to determine an appropriate redevelopment program for the park.

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### **Planters Park Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

Planters Park is a neighborhood park serving the Southside Meadows neighborhood in south central Suffolk. The park includes a walking track, play equipment that is missing entire sections, picnic tables and an open track infield. The park receives a high level of use and the track seems to serve as much of a social function as an exercise role. Facilities are still very basic and there is very little shade on site. A small ditch between the on street parking and the park and track limits accessibility. This park is across the street from Suffolk Industrial Park.

- **Opportunities**

With a high level of neighborhood involvement and visibility, there is the potential to continue to improve this park and diversify the activities available. The image of the park can influence potential buyers interested in Suffolk Industrial Park.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- Replace play equipment and install proper safety surfacing.
- Install signs consistent with Parks and Recreation image and implement enhanced planting plan, complementing buffer plantings at Suffolk Industrial Park.
- Install security lighting.
- Begin implementation of community generated master plan.

#### Long Term

- Maintain dialogue with residents about how the park functions and how it could be improved.

- Improve park access with ditch crossings.

### **Whaleyville Community Center and Athletic Field – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

The Whaleyville Community Center is an aging building that is structurally sound overall but needs numerous repairs. It is currently underutilized for programming. Upkeep of the building has been a problem, leading to long-term damage. The park areas surrounding the center include outdated play equipment, dilapidated benches and tables, a basketball court that abuts directly against the entrance driveway, and two ball fields in good to fair condition. Soil collapse has been reported on the site.

- **Opportunities**

As the primary recreational outlet for the village and surrounding areas, the park is well located to serve the population, play a more important role in the community, and reinforce the rural and village character. With additional City owned property and open farm fields adjacent to the site, there is the potential for expansion and reorganization of the site. Partnerships with the fire squad next to the site could be developed. This is an appropriate site for development of a new community center for the southern portion of Suffolk as program demand increases.

Residents also need additional ball fields and a batting cage to support their active program. A desire for a library at the community center offers a partnership opportunity.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- 
- Replace play equipment, benches, tables, backstops and bleachers (2001).

- Determine programming and staffing needs for the area and renovate building to accommodate use and make more accessible.
- Replace HVAC.
- Provide ongoing maintenance and repair as needed.
- Eliminate basketball court by drive.
- Evaluate expansion potential on City or adjacent private land.
- Develop an ongoing maintenance program to avoid long-term problems (2002).
- Provide an informational sign to better apprise citizens of hours and programs.

#### Long Term

- Create a master plan to diversify use of entire site, with active and passive uses and to provide expanded sports facilities.
- Replace building with a new community recreation center which reinforces rural village character and serves the needs of the southern areas of the City.

### **5.7 Mini-Parks**

Suffolk's Mini-parks reflect older standards of park planning and old patterns of development. Most are in the urban core in neighborhoods that have changed since park construction and which may not support the demand for the features in place. Often these reflect a rubber stamp or buck shot approach to park planning, where features from one park are duplicated in several

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others without regard to setting, or where facilities are distributed evenly across a site without regard to creating organized and varied environments.

Maintenance is a challenge and drain on resources as the Department tries to keep substandard facilities from deteriorating further.

While some of these facilities still serve nearby residents and could be upgraded with attention to standard materials and improving accessibility and safety, others should be dismantled until public need increases or better uses for the properties are determined. An outreach effort to the surrounding neighborhoods is required to determine the appropriate course of action for each park. Development of new Mini-parks is only justified in special circumstances, such as in small isolated new residential developments, in remnant rights-of-way along greenways or highways or in commercial or urban settings. Coulbourn Park and the new Pughsville Park would be appropriate to serve as models for community outreach and redevelopment, while Belleville Meadows, Mary Estes, Joyner and Tynes Park should be considered for minimized use until appropriate programs are determined.

***Belleville Meadows Playground Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Belleville Meadows is a small somewhat isolated neighborhood in northern Suffolk. The half-acre Mini-park provides basic recreational opportunities for residents: a playground, picnic tables, half court basketball and benches. The park may have been built adjacent to wetland, and one corner of the park has drainage problems. Mature trees provide shade and interest, but otherwise there is little visually or spatially interesting about the park. Overall the facilities are in poor condition and need to be repaired or upgraded, particularly the play equipment or else they should be removed, allowing the park to remain as a lower-maintenance neighborhood green area. Neglect can indicate user apathy or a



sign that the facilities do not meet user needs.

- **Opportunities**

Because of its location at one of two neighborhood entries and because it is so clearly tied to the neighborhood, there is the opportunity to enhance Belleville Meadows into a park that serves the people and is a source of pride. The formulaic program of tot lot and basketball court may not be serving the population. With a very defined and limited service area there is the potential to contact and work with the residents to define a program for revitalizing their park as an attractive neighborhood green area.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Repair existing benches and tables as soon as possible.
- Install park signage and attractive street front perimeter control.
- Upgrade of play equipment with safety surfacing and appropriate equipment or remove equipment from the park.
- Poll residents about how the park functions and how it could be improved. Potential action items to discuss with the neighborhood include the following:

Remove basketball court.

Improved picnic features  
(currently no grills or shelter).

Supporting community goals  
gardens, neighborhood gateway.

Ranger and neighborhood  
relations.

Volunteer opportunities.

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Long Term

- Implement changes based on resident input.

***Coulbourn Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Coulbourn Park is located on Constance Avenue near downtown on a heavily vegetated site bisected into four quadrants by small drainages. The spatial segregation and topography add interest and challenges not typical on most Mini-parks. These traits also make the site popular for BMX bicycling and in an effort to make an unauthorized course more challenging, locals have begun digging trenches, cutting off tabletops and hauling in household appliances to build jumps. Staff has been working to develop an authorized course on a portion of the site. Other features include off-street parking, a small picnic shelter and play equipment.

- **Opportunities**

The Department has seized the opportunity to develop a rapport with neighborhood users in limiting BMX use of the site, and should continue to enforce agreements reached. The park provides a cool, quiet oasis near downtown and could become a highly visible model for Mini-park redevelopment.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Implement vegetation management to increase visibility at corner of Constance and Lakeside.
- Repair damage from trailblazing and implement authorized trail.

- Plan for use throughout park, with active uses separate from passive.
- Upgrade playground; consider relocation to southwest quadrant.

Long Term

- Improve accessibility throughout site with bridges and root free paths.
- Upgrade group shelter and picnic facilities.

***Ida Easter Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Ida Easter is a Mini-park with two street frontages in the center of the Saratoga Place and Collander Bishop Meadows neighborhoods in central Suffolk. The level of use in the park appears to be fairly high and play equipment is relatively new although lacking safety surfacing. Basketball courts have been squeezed into a space next to homes and the street. The park has benches and picnic tables and a small path across the site. There are no trees, shade or supplemental planting.

- **Opportunities**

Since Ida Easter is in the middle of a residential block and has many close neighbors, it has the potential to be a source of pride and use in the neighborhood. What has been provided in the park may or may not reflect resident's desires.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Install park signage and planting and street front perimeter control.

- Poll residents about how the park functions and how it could be improved. Potential action items to discuss with the neighborhood include the following:
  - Remove basketball court.
  - Improved picnic features (currently no grills or shelter).
  - Supporting community goals gardens, neighborhood gateway.
  - Ranger and neighborhood relations.
  - Volunteer opportunities.
  - Install safety surfacing.

Long Term

- Monitor wood playground equipment for deterioration and splintering and replace with new equipment.

**Joyner Park Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

Located between the downtown historic district, the railroad tracks and the East Washington warehouse district, Joyner Park is basically an unused open lawn and dilapidated asphalt court. There is nothing to identify it as a park and very little activity has been observed on the site. The Salvation Army operates an office and food distribution site from a building on the block, but the park does not offer amenities the Salvation Army's clients could use. This was reportedly a very nice park with gardens and a gazebo earlier in the century, but there is no indication of that now.

- **Opportunities**

Joyner Park could provide a green buffer between the historic and warehouse districts (through urban reforestation), although with high train traffic it will not be a tranquil oasis. If a program that would serve

surrounding residents could be developed, it might have a chance to be successfully resurrected, however its location on the fringe of highly mixed-use areas could continue an apparent pattern of apathy until land use changes create new demand.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Remove the existing fence and asphalt court and implement an appropriate maintenance program.
- Seek urban reforestation grant for tree planting.

Long Term

- Potential reuse or redevelopment as downtown redevelopment occurs, when its previous use as urban square might be appropriately restored.

**Lakeside Park Tot Lot Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

The Lakeside Park Tot-Lot is located above a finger drainage of Lake Kilby in an established downtown neighborhood. Mature canopy trees and a wide range of older playground pieces characterize the park, which appears to attract a fairly high level of use. There is no real spatial organization or clear age segregation of equipment and no other recreational features besides tables and benches, but the overall use seems compatible with the neighborhood.

- **Opportunities**

Work with residents on use and preferences will help create a successful model for a neighborhood play area. Lakeside Park has been a part of the neighborhood for decades, and appears to be on good terms

with its neighbors. New play equipment and a few tables are potential short-term upgrades.

- **Recommendations**

- Short Term

- Remove and update old play equipment, particularly painted pieces. Redesign locations for new equipment in clusters for different age groups.
    - Add accessible walkways to use areas.
    - Provide park signs and entrance plantings consistent with new Parks and Recreation identity.

- Long Term

- No change in function.

***Mary Estes Playground Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Mary Estes Park is a Mini-park located in the South Suffolk neighborhood. It appears to be underutilized, and staff reports that it has the image of being a local group's turf. Consisting of an open field with an aging tot-lot in one corner and four basketball courts in another, it does not have features to serve a wide range of users. Staff has also reported apathy in the neighborhood about what happens in and to the park.

- **Opportunities**

As with other underutilized Mini-parks, the formulaic program of tot lot and basketball court may not be serving the population. With a very defined and limited service area there is the potential to contact and work with the residents to define a program for revitalizing their park. In the process it can be ascertained if the problem lies in the facilities and the age groups they serve, in enforcement of rules, resident apathy, or just a negative image.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Poll residents about how the park functions and how it could be improved. Potential action items to discuss with the neighborhood include the following:

Remove basketball courts.

Improved picnic features (currently no grills or shelter).

Supporting community goals gardens.

Ranger and neighborhood relations.

Volunteer opportunities.

- Remove deteriorating play equipment.

Long Term

- To be determined.

***Turlington Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Turlington Park serves a small residential development south of Lake Kilby and provides a basketball court and play equipment. The boundaries are not well defined and the park blends into a neighbor s backyard. The equipment is outdated and scattered over half the site. Other than the wooded buffer along a ditch defining a boundary there are no supplemental plantings or amenities.

- **Opportunities**

Identifying and defining the boundaries of the park and determining resident desires are the opportunities presented here, as well as updating the playground area, providing benches or tables and supplemental planting. With a small and well-defined service area, a compatible program is an achievable goal.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Poll residents about how the park functions and how it could be improved. Potential action items to discuss with the neighborhood include the following:

Ranger and neighborhood relations.

Volunteer opportunities.

Whether Basketball Court should be removed.

- Consolidate and upgrade play equipment.
- Add tables and benches.
- Add signs consistent with Parks and Recreation identity.

Long Term

- Enhanced planting.

***Tynes Street Playground Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Located in the mixed-use neighborhood near the Planters plant, Tynes Park is a minimal facility with a few pieces of very old play equipment and an asphalt court. There is nothing to identify it as a park and very little

activity has been observed on the site. There is broken glass throughout the site.

- **Opportunities**

Perhaps the best opportunity for Tynes Park is to remove existing hazards and place the park under a minimum maintenance program until it can be determined if there is any recreational demand for the site. There are two churches across the street that could be potential partners or a source for volunteer maintenance and additional information about neighborhood sentiment.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Remove the existing equipment and asphalt court and land bank the property.
- Track the demand for park facilities in the neighborhood in conjunction with Joyner Park to determine a future development plan for both.

Long Term

- Potential reuse or limited Mini-park development.

***Wellons Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Wellons Park is a downtown park that was reduced in size by the recent construction of the City Human Resources Building. The remaining element is a lighted ball field and concession stand, a few picnic tables, and horseshoe pits that are precariously close to the office building parking lot. The railroad runs along one side of the park, houses on another, the blank three story building on another and Oak Lawn Cemetery is on the other. The Downtown Suffolk Initiatives Plan calls for the extension of Pender Street and the elimination of the park; therefore

the park and buildings were not assessed in depth.

- **Opportunities**

Opportunities associated with Wellons Park are limited to greenway development along the railroad tracks with a potential vest-pocket node for office workers and those visiting the cemetery. The Pender extension should include a bicycle friendly rail crossing section.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Program use of the ball field to other facilities to begin the phase-out and demolition of the concession building, lights, and fencing.
- Remove horseshoe pit.
- Eliminate tables.

Long Term

- Reduce use to athletic practice area until roadway extension and greenway development begin.

***Wynnewood Park Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Wynnewood Park is a Mini-park serving the Huntersville and Wynnewood neighborhoods, set on the fringe of the original development. Two ditches and a wooded buffer separate it from the original neighborhoods on two sides. The park includes full picnic facilities with small shelters, tables and grills and a playground set among scattered existing trees, and an open field area. Despite damage to one of the grills, it is cleaner and in better shape than most of the Mini-parks in the City. The

playground has no safety surfacing and exposed tree roots and aging equipment present safety hazards.

- **Opportunities**

Improving accessibility to the park with walkways to facilities and bridges over the ditches is being investigated. Continue to work with residents on use and preferences to serve as a successful model for neighborhood communication and facility development and maintenance. An opportunity may exist for the development of a small community center in an unused building in the Huntersville neighborhood, enhancing recreational proximity for area residents.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Repair broken grill pole as soon as possible. Currently it's a hazard.
- Install park signage and street front perimeter control.
- Upgrade play equipment and enclosure with safety surfacing. Maintain clear zones from trees and other hazards.
- Install an accessible walkway from street to play area and at least one picnic area. Install bridges linking neighborhood over ditch.
- Establish clear sight lines.

Long Term

- Work with residents to improve the park functions. Potential action items to discuss with the neighborhood include the following:
  - Ranger and neighborhood relations.
  - Volunteer opportunities.
- Enhanced planting.

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## **5.8 Schools - Joint Use Facilities**

Joint use of schools is a concept that is successfully being integrated into new and existing schools throughout Suffolk. It provides additional space for programming and after school use without the need for separate facilities. While there are problems at certain locations with identification of facilities and access to mechanical systems to support a comfortable environment, the initiative is successful overall. To make further use of existing facilities, new schools need to be brought on line in areas not well served by Community and Neighborhood Parks. As sites for new schools are evaluated, the potential of providing expanded outdoor park facilities should result in larger school grounds. Expanded hours of use to allow adult programming during school hours are also recommended.

### ***Booker T. Washington Elementary School Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Booker T. Washington Recreation Center is a new joint use center developed as part of the restoration and expansion of the existing elementary school in East Suffolk. There is separate parking and the building entrance is clearly identified. Due to the recent construction, no further evaluation was required for the facility, except for the three existing tennis courts outside the center. The tennis courts are in poor to very poor condition with grass growing through cracks, old surfacing and a missing net.

- **Opportunities**

The courts could be repaired and used as a programming site. A combination court with tennis and multiuse courts could be developed to support center programming. The courts could be demolished and replaced with turf, ornamental planting, a



tot lot, outdoor classroom or other use to support center programming.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements.
- Identify appropriate use for the area where the tennis courts are. If center programming will not generate regular use of the courts, they should be removed.

Long Term

- Develop programming to fully utilize the center to capacity.

**Forest Glen Middle School Tennis Courts Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

Joint use facilities at this west central Suffolk middle school are currently limited to two tennis courts located in the northwest corner of the parking lot. The tennis courts are in very good condition, although the facility sign has been vandalized or removed. Forest Glen should become a full joint use facility and recreation center in the very near future, which would provide additional athletic fields and programming in this park-deficient area of the city.

- **Opportunities**

Expanding joint use would provide programming opportunities without extensive capital improvements.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Replace tennis court sign.
- Expand joint use to include athletic fields, and, if programming demands, an indoor activity center.
- Identify site as joint use facility at school entrance.
- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements.

Long Term

- No change in use.
- Establish safe bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

**JFK Middle School Athletic Fields Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

John F. Kennedy Jr. Middle School is an existing school with newly constructed joint-use athletic fields. The lighted football and baseball fields were observed near the end of construction and exhibited a high level of quality and accessibility and should be well utilized. The existing restroom appeared to be in poor condition. Due to the brand new construction, a full assessment was not required, however the facility has been evaluated relative to its context in the system.

- **Opportunities**

Increased programming during non-school use can be facilitated.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for

programming refinements and develop use to capacity.

- Identify the fields with signs consistent with the Parks and Recreations image at driveway entrance and building entrance.

#### Long Term

- Establish safe pedestrian and bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods. Develop Shingle Creek Greenway connection to Lake Kennedy Park.
- Rebuild restroom facility.

#### ***Mack Benn Jr. Recreation Center Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Mack Benn Jr. Recreation Center is a new joint use school site in the Beamon s Mill area in east central Suffolk. Due to its recent construction, no further evaluation was required for the facility. The joint use program has been generally well accepted and is being expanded at other school sites. No specific comments about the function of this facility were received through the public involvement process.

- **Opportunities**

Increased programming could be accommodated at the center.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements.
- Maximize use of the facility.

- Identify the Recreation Center better at driveway entrance and building entrance.
- Work out bugs in computer programming for HVAC system.

#### Long Term

- Establish safe pedestrian and bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

#### ***Northern Shores Recreation Center – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Northern Shores Recreation Center is a new joint use school site in the Harbourview development in northern Suffolk. Due to the recent construction, no further evaluation was required for the facility. The joint use program has been generally well accepted and is being expanded at other school sites. Comments made during the public forums indicate that children living outside Harbourview need to cross major roads in order to use the facility.

- **Opportunities**

The center could be used for additional programming for northern residents.

- **Recommendations**

#### Short Term

- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements.
- Better identify Recreation Center at driveway entrance and building entrance.

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### Long Term

- Establish safe bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

#### ***Oakland Recreation Center Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

Oakland Recreation Center is a new joint use school site in the Oakland area south of Chuckatuck. Due to the recent construction, no further evaluation was required for the facility. The joint use program has been generally well accepted and is being expanded at other school sites. Comments made during the public forums indicate concern over children walking from the center along Route 10.

- **Opportunities**

Increased programming could be accommodated at the center.

- **Recommendations**

### Short Term

- Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements and develop use to capacity.
- Identify the Recreation Center with signs consistent with the Parks and Recreations image at driveway entrance and building entrance.

### Long Term

- Establish safe pedestrian and bikeway connections to surrounding neighborhoods.

## **5.9 Special Use Facilities**

Suffolk's Special Use Facilities accommodate special programming for seniors, the arts, gym related activities and provide large spaces for special events and private functions. Several facilities are leased and used by special arrangement by the Department and several are ready to be retired from their current locations. Specific characteristics and recommendations for each facility are detailed herein.

#### ***Birdsong Recreation Center Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

The current home of the Parks, Recreation and Facility Management Department Administrative offices and the best basketball floor in town, the Birdsong Recreation Center has been reported to be functionally obsolete and is slated for demolition. Due to previous studies by the City, full facility assessment was not performed as a part of this study. The extension of Finney Avenue, part of the Downtown Suffolk Initiatives Plan, is planned to cross the existing site to improve downtown circulation. In addition to basketball, several annual events and other popular programs are held at the center.

Public comment primarily indicated that these programs should be relocated within the city core when the facility closes.

- **Opportunities**

The Parks and Recreation Administration should remain in the city core, but may be relocated to strengthen ties to other City departments and officials. It is not necessary to keep the administrative offices with the relocated community recreation site.

The redevelopment of Suffolk High School, next to the existing center, has adequate site space to accommodate relocation of administrative offices, and the East Suffolk High School site is proposed for a major core city community center. A small recreation center with gymnasium at Peanut Park will also help provide a distribution of facilities within core city neighborhoods.

- **Recommendations**

- Short Term

- Move recreation functions of Birdsong to the East Suffolk High School Site, and investigate potential for incorporating offices from Birdsong into the Suffolk High School complex. Consider the use of the adjacent learning center (used currently by other cities).
    - Evaluate possibilities for administrative offices in Municipal Center, Wachovia Bank, Suffolk High School or other core city locations.
    - Continue tracking use levels, preferences and problems for programming refinements.

- Long Term

- Relocate both the administrative offices and the recreational facilities.
    - Continue to adopt programming to support changing patterns of use.
    - Evaluate City bus service to develop programming times coordinated with service and a stop in close proximity to the relocated center.

### ***East Suffolk High School Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

East Suffolk High School is the collection of three former school buildings: the main building/cafeteria, the gym and the Action Inc. Suffolk Community Center, formerly the auditorium for the school. The former two have been unused since the 1970s and are in a state of severe deterioration. The auditorium was renovated in 1993 and began to be utilized by Action in 1994; it is in good condition and needs only minor upgrades for continued use in the immediate future. Action Inc. operates the current community center program emphasizing education, with numerous well-attended classes and community groups, including after-school tutorial programs, summer day camps, adult training and senior exercise and lunch programs. Community events and meetings are held at the building. A Suffolk Public Library station is also located in the building.

The site is only partially utilized by Action Inc. for parking and for a garden. The balance of the site is not maintained and does not currently serve any community or recreational purpose. Shingle Creek runs behind the buildings and has mature vegetation that is beginning to overtake the south façade of the administration building.

Public interest in reuse of the site is high. The site is strategically located within an area of major population density in the core city. An extensive architectural evaluation was performed for the City in 1997 and included specific recommendations for the buildings, including gutting and redevelopment. This was followed by the East Washington Street Neighborhoods Initiatives Plan prepared in 1999, recommending the development of a new Community Center at the site, including a new gymnasium building, a renovated high

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school building with classrooms and meeting rooms, new parks and recreation fields, and an enlarged parking area. Further public input has indicated the desire and need for an indoor swimming pool and state-of-the-art exercise facility in addition to previous programming.

- **Opportunities**

The East Washington Street Neighborhoods Initiatives Plan wisely calls for redeveloping the site to greatly expand its use as a true community center. This is a critical role for the facility to serve. In addition to providing the opportunity to expand current Action Inc. programs, this community center should include a broad range of other recreational and educational elements, among them multi-purpose rooms and meeting rooms, a new athletic gymnasium, a gymnastics gymnasium, an indoor swimming pool and a wellness and exercise center. This plan strongly believes that the East Washington Initiatives Plan should be modified, recommending that the entire site be utilized for the community center, since outdoor athletic fields have been provided in the neighborhood through recent site renovations at JFK Middle School. The Shingle Creek Linear Park trail should be developed with the community center to provide connection to the JFK fields. Also, consideration should be given to removing all of the existing buildings on the site in order to provide a complete community recreation/education center that is not limited by spatial arrangements of the existing buildings. This would also allow maximum use to be made of the site. It is critical to redevelop the site to serve as an attractive community focal point.

Partnerships with community colleges and other education institutions would provide expanded opportunities for workforce skills development as well as business training and business incubation.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Develop a community-generated detailed program for reuse of the site as a major community center.
- Develop a master plan and phasing plan for the redevelopment of the site based on the programming meetings and the East Washington Street Neighborhoods Initiatives Plan , modified to allow more intensive community center use of the site. Determine if additional land should be purchased in order to develop this site as a major community facility.

Long Term

- Develop site as a major community center.
- Develop Shingle Creek Greenway to Lake Kennedy Park and JFK Middle School.

***National Guard Armory Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description  
(This facility is the property of the Federal Government and is not maintained by the Department)**

The Department and public use the assembly hall and kitchen for large group events. There are no exterior facilities that are used by the public. The building is currently undergoing renovations, including some to the HVAC system. Accessibility is marginal and there are several areas needing repair or updating, primarily masonry walls, restrooms and a fire alarm system.

- **Opportunities**

This is a limited use facility that provides opportunities for gatherings, but which may

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become functionally obsolete. Better group meeting facilities provided within park settings could be more versatile and become more popular than the Armory.

- **Recommendations**

- Short Term

- - Maintain the option to use the facility as long as demand continues and the building remains safe.
  - - Forward the findings of the building assessments to the appropriate parties.

- Long Term

- - Evaluate the potential for a facility for large assemblies and flexible use at a park location within the system.

***Planters Club Summary – Facility Evaluation***

- **Summary Description**

The Planters Club is a community use building owned by The Richard Bennett Trust and operated by the City of Suffolk. Its primary use is rental by the public for social functions. The building is becoming functionally obsolete, as most facilities are not accessible and older systems have been abandoned in place. The integrity of the roof is questionable and new siding appears to be hiding damage that was not repaired. Although the site overlooks the Nansemond River and there is a deteriorating pier, the club does not take advantage of its setting. Similarly, the club is separated from the adjacent Sleepy Hole Park (Portsmouth) by a chain link fence. Sleepy Hole Park is an underutilized park that is currently poorly managed and not developed to its potential, a secondary priority to the adjacent golf course.

- **Opportunities**

With its riverfront setting, the Planters Club could be developed into a spectacular amenity for the City. The river frontage along the Club, Sleepy Hole Park, Sleepy Hole Golf Course, and the Obici House provides great potential for waterfront access and visibility if a partnership were to be established with the City of Portsmouth or if the park was brought into the City of Suffolk system. The Park, Golf Course, Planters Club and Obici House could become a well-integrated recreational complex, including revenue-generating opportunities such as corporate retreats, bed and breakfast facilities, and gateway access to the City Blueway System. Other revenue-generating partnership opportunities include the development of a public/private festival barn complex for group use or waterfront restaurant within the park. Improved access to and focus on the waterfront can help diversify use.

- **Recommendations**

- Short Term

- - Establish an initiative with the City of Portsmouth to investigate long-term joint use of the Planters Club and Sleepy Hole Park and Golf Course or the possibility of land transfer.
  - - Prepare a Master Plan with the City of Portsmouth and the operators of Sleepy Hole Golf Course for enhanced use of the combined site.
  - - Track use of the facility, revenues and expenditures.
  - - Investigate Planters Club roof structures and ceiling joist further for damage and then determine the overall stability of the roof.

- Long Term

- Based upon the outcome of the initiative, implement plans for new joint development of the sites, or of improvements only at the Planters Club.
- Replace the building with a more up to date and flexible building, rather than retrofitting the existing building.

develop economically feasible strategies to continue programming and transportation at other locations.

**Senior Citizen’s Center Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

The Senior Center serves the community from a leased building in the downtown historic district. Within a year, the Department will discontinue use of the facility that is becoming functionally obsolete. Currently most users are bussed in to use the facility. During the public forums a few people expressed the desire that the Senior Center stay downtown, but the overwhelming sentiment was that seniors programming needed to be integrated into other programs and held throughout the system.

- **Opportunities**

Seniors programming has been suggested to be strong element at proposed facilities such as Suffolk High School and East Suffolk High School. If the Center is discontinued before seniors programs can be established at other facilities, the potential of providing temporary programming at Birdsong Recreation Center or other existing recreation centers should be explored.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- Plan for discontinuation of programs at the Senior Center: evaluate use patterns and transportation needs and

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Long Term (New Locations)

- Develop facilities and programming to support intergenerational use rather than segregated for all community centers and recreation centers.
- Plan for a more active senior population.

**Suffolk Museum Summary – Facility Evaluation**

- **Summary Description**

The Suffolk Museum, just west of downtown, hosts changing exhibits and related events organized by the Civic Art League. In addition to the flexible gallery spaces, there is an outdoor courtyard for sculpture exhibits, office space and meeting rooms. Overall the building is in good condition and has off street parking, but is not in a highly visible location.

- **Opportunities**

With development of the Suffolk High School as an arts oriented civic center, the opportunity to expand cooperative educational and performance programs is anticipated.

- **Recommendations**

Short Term

- No change to existing use.
- Develop additional signage to increase visibility.

Long Term

- Evaluate impacts of utilizing space in Suffolk High School to supplement existing space in order to create new programs and expand existing ones.

- Replace HVAC system.

**5.10 Greenways, Blueways and Trails**

Currently there are no trails or greenways within Suffolk's Parks and Recreation system, outside of trails within specific parks. Greenways and trails are critical components of a parks and open space plan, providing numerous community benefits, and would support several Comprehensive Plan goals. The master planning of greenway and trails systems is a complex undertaking that should be undertaken by the City as soon as possible.

Trails can range from rustic off-road paths, to paved lanes in roadways for bicycle commuting and touring, to designated sidewalk routes through urban areas. Greenways can accommodate many modes of users or be established more for other functions such as habitat protection or floodwater conveyance. With existing and proposed public and semi-public water access points along the northern creeks and rivers, the beginnings of a blueway system is in place. Access, support facilities and an information package require further development along the waterways and adjacent parks. General guidelines and opportunities for greenway and trail development in Suffolk include the following:

- Provide safe, visible linkages between existing and proposed park facilities, neighborhoods, schools, commercial and business areas.
- Expand the use of utility and roadway corridors, floodways and flood prone lands to include recreational and alternative transportation modes.
- Provide buffers between different land uses, residential developments, and along waterfronts, wetlands or other fragile environments.
- Establish a hierarchy of trail types and corridors, using NRPA classifications: Park



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Trails (3 types), Connectors Trails (2 types), Bikeways (2 types) and all-terrain bike and equestrian trails.

- Link water access points within the city and other destinations in the region. Map opportunities and provide guidelines for responsible use and the respect of private property.
- Link birding, ecotourism and heritage tourism sites. Establish tourism visitor centers to City trailheads at Holland, Crumps Mill, and in association with Federal Agencies at the Great Dismal Swamp.
- Link agricultural, antique, nursery and other personal interest sites along scenic byways that can be used by drivers or cyclists.
- Utilize the abandoned railway in the south sector to link Franklin, the Blackwater River, southwestern resource areas, villages and the Greta Dismal Swamp.
- Develop regional trails with surrounding municipalities.

### **5.11 Park Development Standard Models**

- **Model Park Upgrades**

In order to create a Resource Management Plan for the system, and to track the annual costs of different types of parks for defined maintenance standards, the following should be designated as Model Parks. One park from each borough has been selected, representing the three basic park classifications, plus a natural resource area.

- Pughsville Park - Sleepy Hole Borough  
Pughsville Park is a Mini-park that is being added to the system in 2000. This new park development offers the opportunity to demonstrate safety,

identity and accessibility. The design process will also serve as a model for the Department's outreach to civic leagues.

- Coulbourn Park - Suffolk Borough  
With the potential for different use and maintenance zones, off-street parking, drainage areas and an ongoing user involvement process, this Mini-park should yield useful insights for more challenging sites.
- Holland Athletic Field - Holy Neck Borough  
Issues involved with the action plan for this neighborhood park include acquisition and expansion, development of passive and social features supporting a village identity, ball field maintenance, and maintenance of outlying facilities.
- Planter's Park - Whaleyville Borough  
This Neighborhood Park includes a community center building that is in need of repair and expanded programming. A master plan for development has been generated during the neighborhood planning process that should be implemented during the model park development. It is similar to Holland in that park facilities need to be expanded and upgraded, it has a village focus and it involves remote maintenance obligations of the building and the grounds.
- Cypress Park & Pool - Nansemond Borough  
With the first phase of improvements complete and with facilities brought up to higher standards, this community park should also set standards for maintenance of groomed turf, semi-natural perimeter trail areas, shelters and tables, ornamental plantings, and the pool.

- Lake Kennedy Park - Cypress Borough  
Underutilized but accessible by bus, Lake Kennedy is an appropriate Community Park in which to track usership increases as a result of strategic programming and promotion, as well as changes in patterns of use as result of increased neighborhood and ranger involvement. Boundaries around the park need to be defined and secured, and maintenance of large turf areas in perimeter or open fields could be reduced if not programmed for use. User areas need to be highly visible.

- Lone Star Lakes (Partial) - Chuckatuck Borough  
Tracking patterns of use (how many people are using what portions of the park) and the maintenance requirements of this Natural Resource Area will yield valuable information to guide future development and management of Lone Star and similar resource conservation areas. This park is also a model for potential revenue producing facility development. The park is in immediate need of a gateway visitor center and entrance enhancements, and working with the Nansemond Indians to provide a Cultural Center site will provide an additional partnership model.

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**Highlights**

- **Zone 1**

Zone 1 includes the rapidly developing northern core area and Driver areas of and does not include a variety of public

Parks and Recreationa great potential in the area, however, with an undeveloped regional park that has been

emphasis and parkland resources along the Nansemond River and Bennett's Creek.

c Neighborhood and Mini parks, although private homeowners associations and athletic

some extensive private facilities.

Develop a tournament level athletic

to satisfy local demand and to

and community.

- Short term potential includes a floating dock for canoe and kayak access as

open field to monitor maintenance

c

fields. Long-

include a major community center, if environmental conditions do not

Develop a joint use agreement with

conditions and connectivity between

Club. Capitalize on the waterfront location by focusing on the river.

the storage yard at the entrance and enforcing limited stay policies in the and or by changing the uses programmed for the site.

- Provide Mini-Community parks throughout the zone by acquisition, the private

joint use school facilities. Utilize trails to provide recreat

underserved areas, and explore the potential for use of utility easements