



# PARKS & RECREATION

## GOAL

Provide, improve, and expand parks, public places, and recreational opportunities to ensure equitable access for the whole community.

### Sustainability Goal

Preserve and support a network of parks, open spaces, and recreational programs to enhance the physical, social, and mental well-being of the community. Provide equitable and affordable access to the outdoors, enjoyable settings, and recreation opportunities for all of Blacksburg's residents. Restore natural areas on park lands to protect water quality in streams and aquifers while also preserving and improving natural wildlife habitat cores and corridors. Strategically work to expand open space park land in places where park access is limited, or where critical wildlife habitat or ecosystem services are at risk.

### Community Engagement

Meaningful community engagement is key to the Town's ethic of governance. To foster an inclusive planning process, the Town should ensure that all community members feel welcome and empowered to participate. This can be achieved by providing a wide range of convenient opportunities, providing transparent and responsive communication, and applying innovative engagement methods. In addition, there are a number of standing committees and working groups that advise staff and Town Council on parks and recreation topics such as the Recreation Advisory Board and the Corridor Committee. Community members are also encouraged to attend and share their priorities and concerns at Planning Commission and Town Council public hearings when recreation topics are being discussed.

## OVERVIEW

Park lands and recreational programs can contribute to improved mental and physical health and serve as a way for residents to build community. In order to create a healthy community, the Town must ensure equitable access to these recreational facilities and programs. The park system consists of more than 500 acres, including 100 acres outside the Town limits. The Town has 27 park facilities including a dog park, a mountain bike skills park, a disc golf course, a 9-hole golf course, an arboretum, and 39 miles of public and private trails. Additional information about open space can be found in the [Environment chapter](#). Activities and facilities available include golf, swimming, tennis, volleyball, picnicking, playgrounds, nature trails, bike trails, athletic fields, dog park and other outdoor opportunities. Indoor activities are centered at the Blacksburg Community Center, built in 1981, and the Aquatic Center, built in 1992.



***Blacksburg Community Center and Blacksburg Aquatic Center***

The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of programs and special holiday events for individuals of all ages and abilities. The Parks and Recreation Department continues to serve the community by constantly providing new and innovative programs as well as high quality facilities and parks. Detailed programming information is available at [www.blacksburg.gov/recreation](http://www.blacksburg.gov/recreation) and in seasonal Town publications. For additional information on arts and culture, placemaking, and tourism, see the *Economy & Employment* chapter. For information about community events and programming, as well as community engagement, see the *Equity & Community Wellbeing* chapter.



***Art Class offered by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation***

## **2008-2028 PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

The 2008-2028 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, adopted by Town Council in October 2008, provides a 20-year vision for the Town of Blacksburg's Parks and Recreation facilities and programs. The plan includes assessments and recommendations for all park land, the Community Center, Aquatic Center, Golf Course, a wide range of programs, future parks, fields, and facility needs for the community. The Master Plan is a tool to create an integrated park system for the Town by defining and illustrating recommended short- and long-range improvements.



***Municipal Park***

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan uses the existing park classification system to make specific facility and program recommendations for the community and to guide the acquisition and development of all future park facilities. The park classification system, developed by professional park planners, Town recreation staff and public input, includes recommended facility standards based on identified Town recreational needs.

Since the Plan was adopted in 2008, several improvements have been made to parks and recreation facilities and additional park land has been acquired. The Huckleberry Trail has been extended to Heritage Park, creating a continuous trail from Christiansburg to the Jefferson National Forest. The Municipal Golf Course underwent significant renovations to enhance playability including reconstructing greens, re-grassing fairways, and improving drainage features.



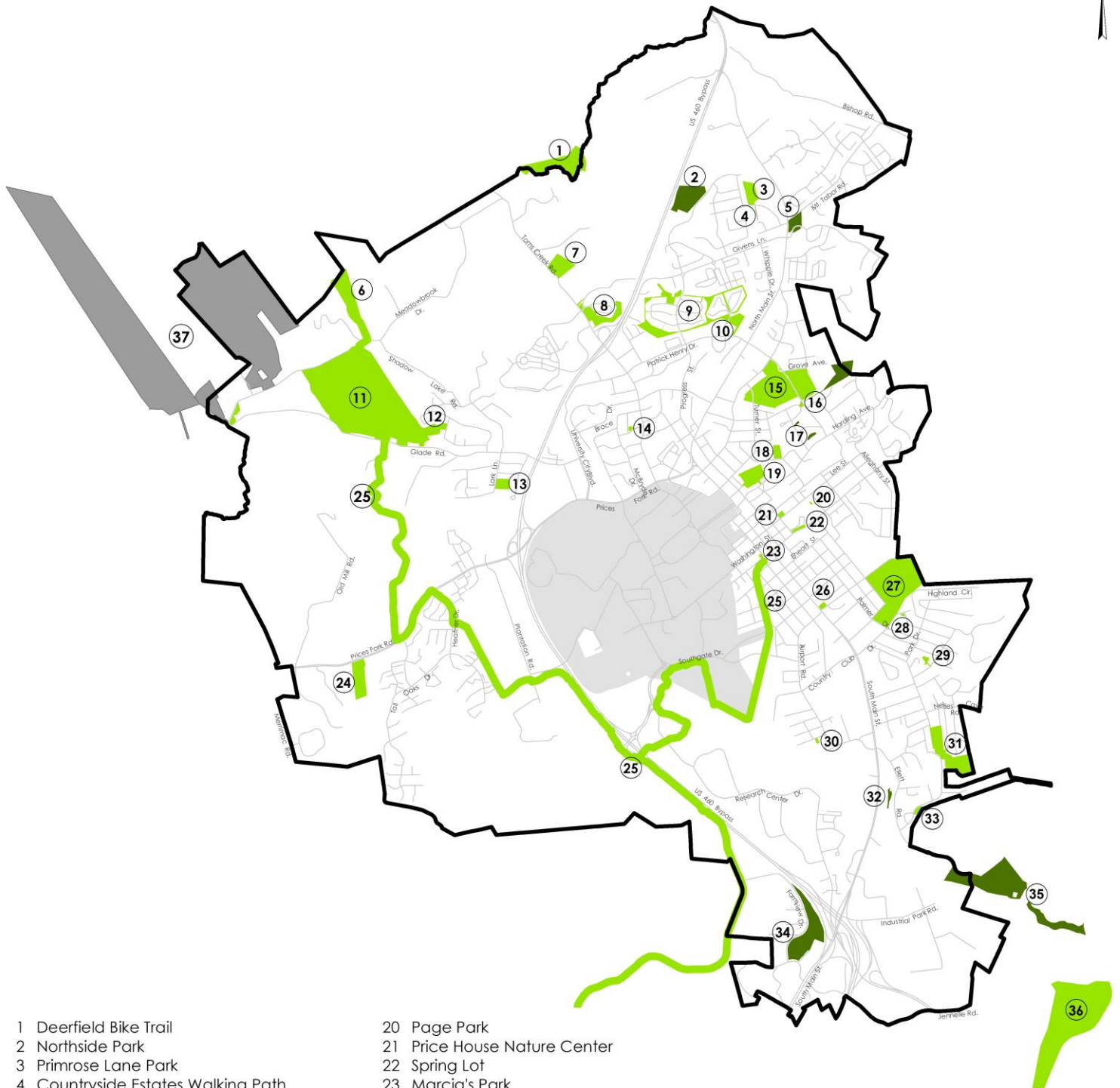
***The Hill: Blacksburg Municipal Golf Course***

In 2019, the New River Land Trust (NRLT) received a \$1.2 million grant award from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation to purchase 552 acres of intact, undeveloped forestland located mostly on the south face of Brush Mountain to permanently conserve the forestlands and develop a non-motorized trail system. The NRLT will transfer the Brush Mountain properties to the Town in the near future, which will double the Town's acreage of park lands.

Located on the next page is a map of current Town-owned parks. The limited amount of open space remaining and more limited public funding restricts the Town's ability to purchase land. The varying topography of parkland further limits potential for acquiring property conducive to active recreation, such as athletic fields and associated parking. Even with these limitations, acquiring land for recreational use is a top priority. Further information on park classification standards, park service areas, and future park needs can be found in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

There have been increasing demands for additional parks, fields, recreational facilities, and programming for outdoor and year-round indoor activities provided by the Town, or supplemented by recreational opportunities elsewhere in the community. To determine the most pressing community demands, the Town of Blacksburg conducted an indoor recreational needs assessment. The 2013 assessment recommended an indoor multi-generational recreation center should be constructed. A feasibility study to determine the best size, location, and funding of the recommended indoor recreational center has been completed. Long term planning for this new facility continues but cost and other competing public facility needs will affect when this new facility can be provided to the community.

# Town Park Land



- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Deerfield Bike Trail                    | 20 Page Park                        |
| 2 Northside Park                          | 21 Price House Nature Center        |
| 3 Primrose Lane Park                      | 22 Spring Lot                       |
| 4 Countryside Estates Walking Path        | 23 Marcia's Park                    |
| 5 Mount Tabor Park                        | 24 Winfrey Fields                   |
| 6 Gateway Park                            | 25 Huckleberry Trail                |
| 7 Toms Creek Park                         | 26 Graves Park                      |
| 8 Brookfield Village Park                 | 27 Municipal Golf Course            |
| 9 Shenandoah Bike Trail and Park          | 28 Crestview Tot Lot Playground     |
| 10 Seneca Drive Park                      | 29 Sunrise Park                     |
| 11 Heritage Community Park & Natural Area | 30 Dehart Street Tot Lot Park       |
| 12 Westover Park                          | 31 Nellies Cave Park                |
| 13 Lark Lane Park                         | 32 Cedar Run Greenway               |
| 14 McBryde Tot Lot Park                   | 33 Cedar Hill Park                  |
| 15 Municipal Park                         | 34 South Point Park                 |
| 16 Lucas Drive Lot                        | 35 Ellett Springs Lot               |
| 17 Cork Street Lot 1 & 2                  | 36 Ellett Valley Recreational Areas |
| 18 Owens Street Park                      | 37 Brush Mountain Properties        |
| 19 Wong Park                              |                                     |

- Corporate Limits
- Roads
- Developed
- Undeveloped
- Future Park Land
- Campus Core

Town of Blacksburg  
Engineering & GIS  
April 27, 2021  
Map is Not to Scale

## **OTHER RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Paths to the Future**

Complementing Blacksburg Parks and Recreation opportunities is the Paths to the Future Map, which is the Town's master plan showing existing and proposed on-street and off-street facilities that contribute to the Town's sustainability goals and quality of life, including creating a walkable and bikeable community. These linear parks provide a transportation network where people are able to choose between different modes of travel to access goods, services, and amenities. The Paths to the Future Map is discussed further in the *Transportation* chapter and *Land Use* chapter.

### **Virginia Tech**

Many Virginia Tech students are residents of the Town, and they utilize Blacksburg Parks & Recreation programs and facilities in addition to recreational facilities on the Virginia Tech campus. An increase in graduate enrollment will have the greatest effect on the Town's recreational programs and facilities, since these students often have families who may use Town facilities and programs. Virginia Tech has numerous recreational facilities that are available only to students, faculty, and staff. These amenities contribute to the high quality of life in the Town but do not directly add to the Town's public recreation system. Virginia Tech's wide range of student athletic programs provides a multitude of events for sports enthusiasts to view collegiate athletics. These events are not only economic development opportunities for the Town but also contribute to quality of life in Blacksburg.

### **Surrounding Localities and Other Agencies**

In surrounding jurisdictions, there are a variety of parks and recreation opportunities, which include:

- Montgomery County parks and outdoor pool
- Montgomery County Public Schools athletic fields, gymnasiums, and community space
- Town of Christiansburg parks, recreation center and pools
- U.S. National Forests
- Appalachian Trail
- The New River

Joint-use of facilities with Montgomery County, including schools, parks, and other facilities, has been a success. Kipps Elementary School operates under a contract between the Town and County allowing community use of the facility after school hours. Portions of the facility are programmed for recreational use, including indoor gymnasium space and designated athletic fields and trails. This model should be used for future partnerships of school property between the Town and County.

### **Private Facilities**

A community's private recreational facilities are important for providing additional recreation amenities in the area. Most private facilities are located in multi-family complexes or newer neighborhoods. The Town has required multi-unit residential complexes to provide a specified minimum of open and recreational space for almost two decades. Subdivisions are also required to dedicate at least ten percent of their development area as private recreation space. It is important that these private facilities supplement, not substitute for, public recreation facilities. Additionally, private organizations, such as the YMCA, provide other recreational opportunities that complement Blacksburg recreational program offerings.

## PARKS & RECREATION Objectives and Policies

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- PR.1. Ensure Blacksburg's Park and Recreation legacy for future generations by providing a wide variety of high quality parks, recreational services, and special events for residents of all ages and abilities.
  - PR.1.1. Implement the Parks and Recreation Master Plan utilizing best management practices to guide the acquisition and development of park facilities and recreational programs.
    - PR.1.1.1. Plan for a new community recreation center.
    - PR.1.1.2. Consider redesign of Municipal Park in coordination with planning for the new Recreation Center space.
  - PR.1.2. Evaluate the need for additional parkland and facilities as the Town grows.
    - PR.1.2.1. Assess the demand for outdoor basketball courts, open performance spaces, and other non-green park spaces.
    - PR.1.2.2. Utilize metrics, such as residential walking distance and access to public transit, to consider locations for parks to ensure all residents are served by the Town.
  - PR.1.3. Evaluate the need for additional programming for all ages and abilities as the Town grows.
    - PR.1.3.1. In particular, consider additional programming to highlight the Town's natural mountainous setting.
- PR.2. Preserve, protect, enhance, and restore Blacksburg's natural resources, including its parks.
  - PR.2.1. Construct, design, operate and maintain parks, facilities and programs to the greatest and most economical extent possible in an environmentally friendly manner to help protect the dual purpose of the Blacksburg parks.
  - PR.2.2. Protect the environment while providing recreational space.
- PR.3. Create an interconnected regional and local system of trails and walkways.
  - PR.3.1. Ensure that recreational facilities and programs are easily accessible by the Blacksburg Transit system, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways and other pedestrian links.
- PR.4. Develop partnerships within the community and region to increase funding sources and sponsorships for recreation facilities, special events, athletic tournaments, and other exhibitions.
  - PR.4.1. Consider regional amenities when planning for future parks, facilities, and programming to reduce duplicative efforts and encourage diverse amenities.
- PR.5. Ensure that a well-balanced maintenance program is established and funded for all Town parks, recreational facilities, athletic fields, vehicles, and maintenance equipment, such as signage, lighting and bathrooms.

- PR.6. While the Town has no intention of selling park land, if the Town does dispose of park property, prior to the sale of the property, due consideration shall be given to protecting significant portions of open space on the property with a conservation easement or by other means. If the Town does dispose of park property, use the revenue generated by its sale for either acquisition of land for the Town park system or for the development of an existing park and recreation facility in conformance with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- PR.7. Market and promote Parks and Recreation facilities and programs.