

PUBLIC FACILITIES

INTRODUCTION

As the population grows, so does the demand for public services and the facilities where they are provided. In planning for public facilities, it is important to consider not just the size of the County's future population but also its age, geographic distribution, and tourist population. Seniors and school-age children, for example, have very different service and facility needs. Additionally, the concentration of people in the lower County must be considered in facility planning, since facilities should be convenient to the citizens who use them. Public facilities planning is especially challenging in York County because of its geography: York is a linear county, with the upper County separated from the lower County by a vast expanse of federally-owned land. Consequently, without a central location that is readily convenient to a majority of County residents, it is sometimes necessary to have separate facilities for upper and lower County residents in order to meet the citizens' demands for conveniently located facilities.

Because it adjoins all other localities on the Peninsula, York County is uniquely suited to engage in a variety of regional efforts that allow communities to recognize facility *service area* boundaries, which are often more realistic than jurisdictional boundaries, in providing public facilities and services. Regional and cooperative partnerships provide opportunities for increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness not only because they can prevent needless duplication of effort but also because economies of scale can be realized.

The County reviews its facility construction and expansion needs annually and each year the Board of Supervisors reviews and approves the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which the Planning Commission certifies as being in conformance with the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan is divided into five sub-elements: Detention and Law Enforcement, Fire and Life Safety, Government Offices, Libraries, and Schools. Each sub-element contains a summary description of existing conditions. Following these sub-elements is a discussion of future planning issues. Like the other elements, this element concludes with a section detailing the Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Strategies.

PUBLIC SAFETY

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND DETENTION

The York County Sheriff is the County's chief law enforcement officer, serves as court bailiff for York County and Poquoson, and, until 1997, was responsible for operation of the York County Jail, which was demolished in 1998. York County's prisoners are now housed in the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail with prisoners from James City County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson. The Merrimac Center, a regional juvenile detention center serving a larger number of jurisdictions, was constructed next to the Peninsula Regional Jail site in 1997.

The Code of Virginia sets out the state's funding for the Sheriff's Office in Section 15.2-1609.1 and delineates the number of deputies based on each locality's population (one law enforcement deputy for every 1,500 residents, or 48 law enforcement deputies as of 2022). However, the Board of Supervisors has created and funds additional deputy positions beyond the state's allotment. As

Ratio of Law Enforcement Officers to Population				
Locality	2022 Officers	2022 Population	2022 Ratio	2017 Ratio
Poquoson	28	12,624	1/451	1/513
Williamsburg	41	16,224	1/396	1/405
James City Co.	94	79,488	1/845	1/770
Hampton	398	136,387	1/342	1/516
Newport News	607	183,504	1/302	1/423
York County	123	71,491	1/581	1/791

Source: Virginia Department of State Police

Table 1

shown in **Table 1**, York County has the second lowest ratio of officers to residents on the Peninsula, with one law enforcement officer for every 581 residents. James City County, which has its own police department in addition to a sheriff’s office, is the lowest with one officer for every 845 citizens. The City of Newport News has the highest ratio on the Peninsula with one officer for every 302 citizens. Since 2017, the ratio has increased in York County, while also increasing moderately in all other Peninsula localities, with Hampton having the largest difference. It should be noted that the total number of inbound calls to the York County 911 call center increased by 10% – from 164,026 to 181,763 – between 2017 and 2022.

The Sheriff’s Office headquarters is located in the Public Safety Building in the County Operations Center on Goodwin Neck Road. The Sheriff’s Office shares the first floor with the Department of Fire and Life Safety, while the second floor is occupied by the York-Poquoson Department of Social Services. The Sheriff’s Office utilizes the space for administration, criminal investigators, the Sheriff’s and captain’s offices, evidence room, squad room, computer support, interview room, evidence processing laboratory, and equipment/weapons storage. Additional storage space for the evidence room was obtained in 2010 with an addition to the 9-1-1/Emergency Communications building. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office has separate office space for the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program in the Washington Square shopping center and office space in the York County-Poquoson Courthouse.

The space constraints of the existing office locations will be addressed by the new Law Enforcement Building that is currently under construction and should be completed in the spring of 2023. The new facility will be located along Goodwin Neck Road north of its intersection with Service Drive, not far from the County Emergency Communications Center and Public Safety Building. This 51,500-square foot two-story building will include space for all divisions of the Sheriff’s Office, featuring a training wing, meeting spaces, and a community room. The Sheriff’s Office plans to use the community room to interact with community members and organizations and offer safety training seminars to the public.

Effective law enforcement is dependent more on manpower, equipment, and programs than on physical facilities, and because of the County’s linear shape, Sheriff’s deputies cover a great distance. The regional detention facilities built in the late 1990s eliminated overcrowding problems in York County facilities; however, these facilities do nothing to prevent crime from occurring or to make people (other than the jailers and perhaps the inmates) feel safer. Nevertheless, the number of incidents of crime in the County declined by 3% between 2017 and 2022 (**Figure 1**). The majority of the surrounding jurisdictions saw a decline in incidents of crime, with the largest reduction in the City of Poquoson (25%), while the City of Williamsburg experienced the largest increase in reported incidents (18%).

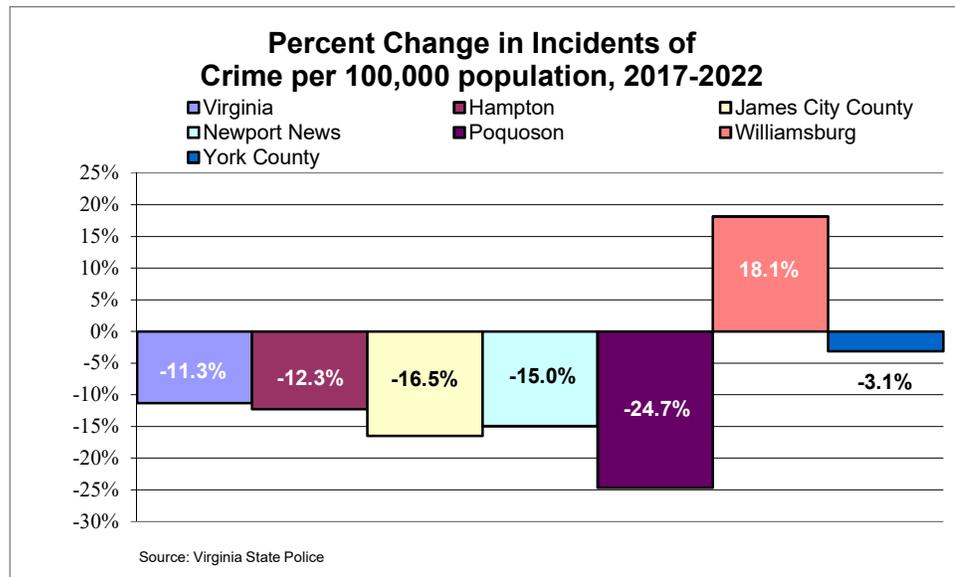


Figure 1

The Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail (VPRJ) is a regional facility that houses prisoners from York County, James City County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson. Located on Merrimac Trail (Route 143) in James City County, the 166,000-square foot detention facility occupies a 15-acre site. The facility began operation in 1997 and can house approximately 600 prisoners; it is designed to accommodate future expansion should the need arise. There are six housing pods, each a self-contained unit with 48 double-bunked cells for the confinement of prisoners. Other spaces include classrooms, a library, a full kitchen, laundry room, medical clinic, indoor recreation, and administration offices. VPRJ houses adult offenders, while the adjacent Merrimac Center houses juvenile offenders. The Merrimac Center is managed by the regional Middle Peninsula Juvenile Detention Commission, which consists of eleven counties and cities from the 9th Judicial District and seven counties from the 15th Judicial District.

The jail offers a variety of instructional, religious, and other programs to help inmates rehabilitate and prepare them for reentry into society. The population at the VPRJ consists of adult men and women. These individuals have charges ranging from simple trespassing to driving under the influence (DUI) to more violent crimes, including homicide and sexual battery.

The VPRJ’s Average Daily Population (ADP) has generally ranged between 450 and 520 inmates since FY 2015, except in FY 2020, when the ADP dropped to 406. The average ADP between FY 2015 and FY 2020 was 469. Individuals who were given non-consecutive sentences – so-called “weekenders” who serve their sentences during the weekends – were tallied separately. Data these “weekenders” is not shown in the chart. In FY 2020, 258 individuals persons were sentenced to serve non-consecutive sentences during the weekends, and between FY 2015 and FY 2020, an average of 29 different individuals were booked into the VPRJ every month to serve weekend sentences.

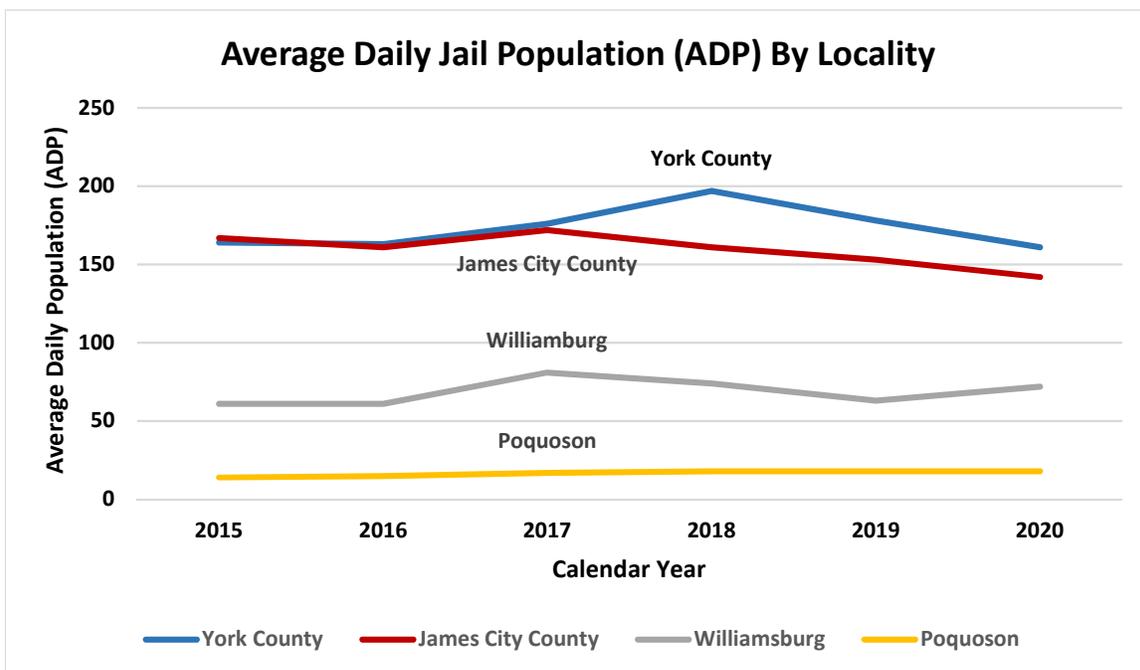


Figure 2

Inmates from York and James City Counties comprise a sizable majority of the jail’s ADP, while Poquoson has the fewest inmates. As shown in **Figure 2**, commitments from most localities, except Williamsburg, began to decrease in 2018, with York County’s commitments declining substantially from 197 to 161 in 2020. Williamsburg has seen a steady rise in its ADP from 63 in FY 2019 to 72 in FY 2020. As of August 2021, the VPRJ’s ADP stands at 357. This is largely because of the COVID-19 pandemic and joint attempts by

stakeholders in the criminal justice community to not commit individuals to a congregate environment who were not violent and not flight risks.

In addition to serving the four localities, VPRJ previously held an agreement with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) division of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. That agreement was discontinued in the fall of 2019, which, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, contributed to the reduced ADP numbers.

As stated above, York County participates in the regional Middle Peninsula Juvenile Detention Commission, consisting of the eleven counties and cities from the 9th Judicial District and seven counties from the 15th Judicial District for juvenile service needs. The Commission owns and operates the Merrimac Center – a secure juvenile detention facility located next to the Regional Jail that serves both male and female youths. The Merrimac Center opened in December 1997 with 32 beds and in July 1998 added 16 more beds. The Merrimac Center is a self-contained facility with 24-hour per day supervision of up to 48 juvenile offenders, ages seven to twenty-one under detention or commitment orders from a court. Overall, the length of residence at the Center can range from a few days to several years depending on the nature of the offense and the complexity of the adjudication by the courts.

The Commonwealth pays a portion of the operating costs and the member localities pay an annual rate based on average usage in the previous five years. During the five-year period between 2017 and 2022, York County utilized an average of 7% of the juvenile admissions to the Merrimac Center, with the highest usage being 18% in fiscal year 2016. Local utilization of the Center has been declining over the past several years, so the addition of the DJJ Community Placement Program, funded by the state, has been fiscally helpful for the local jurisdictions.

FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY

The York County Department of Fire and Life Safety is responsible for the provision of fire suppression, rescue, emergency medical services (EMS), emergency management, and animal services. The department's administrative offices and Emergency Operations Center are located in the Public Safety Building at the County Operations Complex on Goodwin Neck Road. Fire and rescue field operations are conducted from six fire stations, with a seventh expected to become operational in 2023, located strategically throughout the County. The department also maintains mutual aid agreements with surrounding localities and federal facilities that provide for the sharing of resources. The department is organized into the following functional areas: Fire and Rescue Operations, Technical Services and Special Operations, Prevention and Community Safety, Support Services, Emergency Management, Administrative Services as well as Animal Services. The Department participates in a variety of regional, state, and national efforts for coordination of emergency services.

The largest function is the provision of fire and rescue services, which includes fire suppression, rescue, and emergency medical services from each of the County's fire stations. The location of each fire station was strategically chosen to ensure that emergency units leaving the fire station would arrive at an emergency scene in most areas of the County on an average of five minutes or less. As response activity and demands increase, additional challenges are realized that may affect response time and emergency unit availability. Fire and rescue resources at the various fire stations include capabilities for fire attack operations (firefighting) as well as advanced life support emergency medical services operations. Additionally, the department maintains resources in both the upper and lower County ensuring aerial ladder, vehicle rescue/extrication, water tanker (for areas without fire hydrants), and brush/wildland firefighting capabilities. In 2019 construction of a replacement building for the outdated original Fire Station 1 (Grafton) was completed. The new fire station located on Dare Road ensures a more efficient and safer response to emergencies and includes much improved living quarters. The facility and bay space arrangement provides much improved space circulation and movement of personnel as well as vehicles, compared to the former facility, as they respond to emergencies. This combined with the location of the

facility make getting emergency vehicles in and out much faster and safer. In 2022, the County also began construction of a new fire station in the upper County. Fire Station 7, completed in spring 2023, will greatly improve response times in busy areas such as Mooretown, Waller Mill, Bypass, and Richmond Roads in the upper County. In addition to the tremendous benefit to York County, the new fire station will also enhance the long-standing automatic mutual aid system with James City County and the City of Williamsburg. This new facility will fulfill the long-established need for a new fire station in this area to ease the workload of the Bruton and Skimino fire stations. Both of these stations have seen rapidly growing demand as a result of tourism and new residential and commercial development. The County was able to utilize much of the infrastructure for the new building from the former regional Crossroads Community Youth Home that closed in 2020. In addition to moderate renovation of the space, new apparatus bay space will be added to house emergency response vehicles to complete the fire station.

Fire and rescue personnel are required to respond to a wide variety of emergency types including, but not limited to, emergency medical incidents, fires, rescues, hazardous materials incidents, vehicle accidents, unique/specialized circumstances etc. In order to ensure response to most potential emergencies within the County, the Department of Fire and Life Safety has developed contingencies for special incident responses, either locally or regionally. Special/unique incident response teams use personnel normally assigned to normal/traditional fire and EMS response duties; however, in addition to their normal/traditional duties, personnel obtain and continue training in specific specialties. Special incident response teams include technical rescue, hazardous materials response, maritime/waterborne fire and rescue, dive rescue/recovery, drone operations (jointly operated with the Sheriff's Office), and a Metropolitan Medical Response Strike Team.

The Department of Fire and Life Safety is regularly developing mechanisms and processes that support ongoing emergency response effectiveness. For example, fire and rescue response units have the ability to control traffic signals through what are known as pre-emption devices. This allows for a safer and more efficient response through signalized intersections. Other examples include the implementation of electronic EMS field-based reporting capabilities that can be interfaced with receiving hospitals. In partnership with the Sheriff's Office, the Department established an aerial and underwater robotics team that uses drones with specialized cameras, sensors, and payload delivery/recovery devices to assist with tasks such as providing situational awareness to incident commanders and critical decision makers, search and rescue operations, and delivery of equipment and supplies to inaccessible areas. These are but a few examples of ongoing improvements to emergency response systems and processes.

The technical rescue team includes rope rescue, confined space, trench/excavation, structural collapse, and large/heavy vehicle rescue. This team is also a part of the larger Peninsula Regional and Tidewater Regional Technical Rescue Teams. Team members also participate as members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Urban Search and Rescue – Team/Virginia Task Force – Two and have responded to major federally declared incidents such as the Olympics, the September 11, 2001, attack on the Pentagon, major hurricanes such Katrina and Rita, an earthquake in Haiti, and many others.

The presence of roadways, railroads, waterways, and Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport contributes to the County's vulnerability to a variety of hazardous materials emergencies. All County fire and rescue personnel are trained to provide defensive and some minimal offensive tactics should a spill, leak, or fire occur with limited types of hazardous materials. A more specialized group of County fire and rescue personnel are trained as Hazardous Materials Technicians and Specialists that operate as part of the department's Hazardous Materials Response Team. If the capabilities of the County are exceeded, then additional regional hazardous materials response resources/teams can be requested through the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to augment the department's team.

York County maintains a maritime/waterborne fire and rescue capability for water rescue, waterborne firefighting, and EMS because of the large amount of water area and many miles of shoreline/waterfront properties including residential, commercial, and federal establishments. The personnel assigned to this

capability have specialized training in maritime fire and rescue operations and boat operations. Some of these members are also part of the regional Hampton Roads Maritime Incident Response Team.

The Department of Fire and Life Safety has been involved in a variety of planning efforts to improve medical response to major medical incidents including mass casualty events/disasters and the potential of terrorist incidents involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives weapons. To address these needs, the Hampton Roads region established a Hampton Roads Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS), including an associated response team known as the Metropolitan Medical Response Strike Team. As an MMRS partner, members of the Department of Fire and Life Safety serve in key positions such as command leadership, logistics, and communications functions. Currently, York County manages and maintains the Strike Team's logistics equipment caches for the Peninsula component. Members of the department are also a part of the federal (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services--HHS) Virginia – One Disaster Medical Assistance Team and have responded to major federally declared incidents including hurricanes such as Katrina and Rita, the earthquake in Haiti, Presidential inaugurations, the President's State of the Union Address, and many others.

The Department of Fire and Life Safety coordinates and/or conducts most of the training required for its responders. Much of this training is required by various regulatory agencies and standards organizations. This training, which often requires certification and recertification at the state level, is critical to the County's continued readiness for response and service. The department participates on a regional basis for its firefighter recruit and officer development training and routinely conducts in-house drills, training classes, continuing education, and refresher training. Through the department's cooperation with state agencies and other localities in Hampton Roads, York County is a partner in the Peninsula Regional Live Fire Training Facility and Training Tower located in the Lee Hall area of Newport News. The department operates (in partnership with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management) the York County Hazardous Materials/CBRNE training facility. Additionally, Fire and Life Safety persistently pursues further provision of training resources with such things as hazardous materials and technical rescue training props/capabilities. The department is continuously seeking ways to conduct in-service training for on-duty crews, utilizing strategic training locations, so fire companies/crews can remain available for emergency calls.

The Prevention and Community Safety function conducts plan reviews of new developments as well as existing commercial, industrial, and public facilities to ensure compliance with the life safety aspects of the Building Code as well as local ordinances and standards. This division also enforces state and local laws, codes, and ordinances pertaining to fire prevention and life safety. This service area also conducts inspections, along with tests of fire suppression and alarm systems for commercial and public buildings. Division staff, with support from specially trained firefighters on each operational shift, determine cause and origin of fires and investigate arson and fires of unknown or suspicious origin/cause. In addition, this division provides a variety of prevention and public life safety education programs.

Unlike structure fires, medical emergencies, and vehicle accidents, which are often isolated to one or two buildings or individuals; large-scale (major) emergencies and/or disasters affect many more people with significant damage to structures and infrastructure over larger geographic areas. The department's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) develops and maintains emergency operation plans to guide mitigation and preparedness activities and education, plus response and recovery actions for major emergencies and disasters. These vulnerabilities include hurricanes, winter storms, tornadoes, various types of flooding and storm surge, brush/wood/wildland fires, and manmade hazards, such as transportation and industrial accidents, potential acts of terrorism, and incidents/events that effect those portions of the County that are within the ten-mile emergency planning zone for the Surry Nuclear Power Plant.

York County, through the OEM continues to improve emergency disaster sheltering. Through coordination with the School Division, a number of schools have been identified and designated as emergency disaster shelters, two of which have full generator back-up electrical power and two more that have limited back-

up generator electrical power. Other County schools serve as supplemental shelters and open according to need and circumstances. At the regional level, the OEM has coordinated planning efforts for persons with functional needs, debris management, a regional hazard mitigation plan, and have been directly involved in a regional catastrophic disaster planning initiatives. Further, a number of critical County facilities are equipped with back-up power capability, contributing to the County efforts to ensure continuity of operations during major emergencies, disasters and/or extended power outages.

In addition to the Fire and Life Safety response to disasters or major emergencies, public preparedness programs were created and expanded to promote public response during these events. A Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program was created to provide basic response training to people who live and/or work in York County. Furthermore, neighborhoods that have 10 or more adults can participate in the CERT training and prepare a neighborhood disaster plan to become a recognized CERT neighborhood and receive a sign to post in their community.

Getting accurate information out to the citizens is one of the biggest challenges in responding to a disaster or major emergency. As a result, there are a number of means through which the County disseminates disaster information to the public. These include the use of the York Alert notification systems, various disaster publications, multiple social media platforms, variable/digital message signs, routine media communications, and cable channel broadcasts.

While response capabilities are important, the department has created several programs designed to avert emergencies or reduce an emergency's severity. Some examples are:

- A "Storm Surge Look Up" tool on the County's website which helps a property owner determine what level of storm (water) surge they may be at risk for (if any).
- Collectively with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, a "Know Your Zone" evacuation information tool was developed so that areas of the County that may be required to or recommended for evacuation is identified and the public can be easily informed.
- Child seat Awareness and Restraint Education (CARE): provides inspection and instruction free of charge for the proper installation of child safety seats.
- Safety Smartz: teaches school children about fire and life safety practices and educates them on ways to prevent fires and injuries.
- "Heads Up" program: managed through the County 9-1-1 Center (using a unique database) allows 9-1-1 dispatchers to provide responders with lifesaving information about pre-existing medical conditions or unusual situations that are then relayed to emergency responders as they respond to identified locations.
- Emergency Medical Dispatching program: allows 9-1-1 dispatchers to provide emergency medical telephone instructions, allowing them to provide medical care to victims until emergency responders arrive on scene.
- The County, in cooperation with other Hampton Roads localities has developed a regional hazard mitigation plan.

The Department's Animal Services Bureau is responsible for the enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to animal control and protection. Animal Control Officers respond to threats posed by domestic animals running at-large, diseased animals and dangerous/vicious animals. They also promote the humane treatment and prevention of cruelty to animals and conduct educational programs.

The reporting of emergencies by the public are routed through the Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Center. This center provides dispatch services for the department as well as other agencies. The Fire and Life Safety Department has emergency radio communications capabilities to coordinate responses with surrounding localities during day-to-day emergencies, major emergencies, and/or disasters. Additionally, processes and capabilities are in place for the use of radio technology, web-based technology, conference call systems, and RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services) for ongoing communications (among

numerous entities locally, regionally, and with the Commonwealth of Virginia) during major emergencies and/or disasters.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

York County has two major government office complexes—one in Yorktown and one on Goodwin Neck Road—and five offices in the Washington Square shopping center. The Waste Management Building,



York Hall, Finance Building, and Vehicle Maintenance buildings

transfer station, and compost facility operated by the Virginia Peninsulas Public Service Authority (VPPSA) is also located on Goodwin Neck Road, while the Griffin-Yeates Center is located on Government Road in the upper County. The Washington Square offices include the Parks and Recreation, York/Poquoson Virginia Cooperative Extension, and D.A.R.E. offices, as well as the Senior Center of York, and the Office of the Registrar. An additional Registrar's office for upper County residents is located in the Victory Village shopping center on Mooretown Road. The County also operates six fire stations, two libraries, and several parks and recreation facilities that are discussed in other sections of this plan. Additionally, the County has a new Law Enforcement building under construction on Goodwin Neck Road and recently completed an expansion of the Yorktown Library and construction of Fire Station 7 on Mooretown Road.

Government offices and meeting facilities located in Yorktown include the Administration, Economic & Tourism Development, Dockmaster's, Finance, and Post Office Buildings, as well as York Hall. The Administration Building, originally built in 1929 as a school building, has undergone many renovations over the years and includes offices for County Administration, Community Services, the County Attorney, and Human Resources. The Economic and Tourism Development Building was leased and renovated in 2019. The Dockmaster's Building, managed by the Department of Economic and Tourism Development, was originally built in 1977 as a lifeguard building. Funding for construction of a new larger building to replace the existing building is programmed in the FY2023-2028 Adopted Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for FY24 and FY25. The Finance Building was built in 1980 as the Courts and Office Center (which later became the District Court Building) and was renovated in 2001 to house the Finance Department, and since then also houses Information Technology (IT), the Real Estate Assessment Division, the Treasurer's Office, and the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office. Additionally, a portion of the IT Department is housed in the Post Office Building, which serves as a secure site for equipment critical to the operation of the County's computer network. This building was built in 1958 and was renovated in 2000. The most historically significant structure, York Hall, has had many reincarnations since first being built in 1955. In 2000, the structure underwent extensive renovations, with the Circuit Court having moved to a new building in 1997. Currently, York Hall serves as a meeting space for the Board of Supervisors, School Board, Planning Commission and other County Boards and Commissions. Civic groups and an arts center/gallery also utilize the building. In 2005, improvements were made to the basement, where the York County Historical Museum maintains exhibits.

In addition to being one of the County's major government centers, Yorktown is home to the York-Poquoson court system. The Circuit Court, General District Court, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Commonwealth Attorney's office, and Court Security/Civil Process Division for York County and Poquoson operate out of the York-Poquoson Courthouse in Yorktown, which opened in 1997. This 59,680-square foot courthouse was built to accommodate the rapidly growing number of caseloads at that time and to

address numerous deficiencies in the former Circuit Court and District Court Buildings. Since 2000, court filings have declined slightly but remained relatively stable overall. With a few minor renovations, the courthouse is expected to meet the County's court space needs at least through the year 2028 and at most through 2032.

The second major government office complex, the 52-acre County Operations Center, is located on Goodwin Neck Road. The Buildings and Grounds Maintenance, Development Services, and Vehicle Maintenance buildings were all constructed in 1992-93. These were followed by the construction of the Public Safety and Building Safety buildings in 1993-94, Public Works Administration building in 1995, the Planning Division building in 1997-98, and the Emergency Communication Center in 2004-05, which was expanded again in 2010 to add dispatch area and office spaces. Plans are underway for a 5,564-square foot building addition that will connect the Development Services building with the Planning Division building and create office space to be occupied by the Building Safety Division, thereby a single Planning and Development Services building that will house the entire department and centralize services for citizens. The Public Safety Building houses multiple departments/agencies for the County and serves the Sheriff's Office, Fire and Life Safety, and Department of Social Services. Once the new Law Enforcement Building is complete, the current Public Safety Building will experience renovation and space adjustments to meet the space needs of the Department of Fire and Life Safety as well as the Department of Social Services. It will also provide an opportunity to have a permanently set up Emergency Operations Center. Some opportunities for future expansions on this campus exist but will be constrained by the presence of non-tidal wetlands and Dominion Energy transmission lines.

The Griffin-Yeates Center, located at 1490 Government Road in the upper County, was built in 1953 as a public school. The building has undergone several renovations and was conveyed to the County in 1978. The Center houses York County's Head Start program and the First Steps program operated by Child Development Resources, along with storage for other Community Services divisions.

The Parks and Recreation, York/Poquoson Virginia Cooperative Extension, and D.A.R.E. offices, as well as the Office of the Registrar in both the Washington Square and Victory Village shopping centers were all leased and renovated in 2019. The Senior Center of York was leased and renovated in 2001 and expanded in 2011. The new Law Enforcement building and is scheduled to open in the winter of 2023. The expanded Yorktown Library opened in the spring of 2023 and Fire Station 7 will open in the late spring 2023.

LIBRARIES

Library services are an integral part of the County's educational ecosystem by supporting literacy, providing opportunities for life-long learning, and contributing to a high quality of life for York County residents. Libraries help foster a sense of community and serve as a focal point for citizen interaction. Modern public libraries continue to evolve as "information commons" or "learning commons" to describe what they are to their communities. The library system is open to anyone who wishes to use its facilities and services, and the libraries welcome patrons from both inside and outside the County. The County's libraries also recently became "fine-free" to erase financial barriers that were preventing the utilization of library services. The libraries are a place for learning and teaching as well as a platform for people to incubate ideas and engage in constructive discourse. In 2019 there were a total of 557,764 checkouts for materials (416,402 physical, 141,362 digital) to 52,592 registered patrons and 432,344 patron visits to both libraries, with 607 programs servicing 17,091 people.

The County operates two libraries and has a memorandum of agreement with the Williamsburg Regional Library. The Yorktown Library opened in 1984 and was renovated in spring 2023. It is currently a 22,000 square-foot building located on George Washington Memorial Highway (Route 17) at Battle Road. The Tabb library opened in October 1999 and is a 32,000 square-foot facility located on Hampton Highway (Route 134) and Long Green Boulevard. These two facilities primarily serve lower County citizens.



Williamsburg Regional Library

Upper County residents are served by the Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL). The Regional Library operates two facilities – one in the City of Williamsburg (40,000 square feet) and one in upper James City County (35,000 square feet). Both library locations are geographically convenient for upper York County residents. York County citizens constitute 12% of its registered borrowers.

Measures of Service and Quality

State standards for public libraries are published in the Library of Virginia’s *Planning for Library Excellence: Standards for Virginia Public Libraries*.

Service-Level Ratings

The document establishes the following service ratings: essential, enhanced and exemplary, accompanied by a corresponding star rating for ease of use and advocacy.

- E= “Essential” services meeting the basic needs and expectations of a public library, including circulation, internet access, and basic reference assistance, as mandated in the Code of Virginia. ★
- EE = “Enhanced” services, providing a robust array of services beyond basic needs and expectations, such as community programming for all ages, a responsive digital environment, and specific research assistance. ★★
- EEE = “Exemplary” services with advanced features in service provision on all fronts. ★★★

Currently the library administration focuses on four strategic planning areas from *Planning for Library Excellence* to gauge service: staffing, collections, facilities, and technology. The goal of the Library Board is to strive for EEE ★★★ ratings in all aspects of library service.

Staffing

The success of a library system depends on the competency and commitment of its staff. Libraries cannot meet community needs without sufficient staffing to provide high-quality service. In addition to the director, each library requires skilled employees in the following areas: youth, reference, circulation, technical services, technology, administration, and building maintenance.

The current York County rating is a EE ★★ (based on the number of full-time Equivalent (FTE) Employees per capita and professional librarians per capita). The current WRL rating is EEE ★★★.

Collections

An effective library collection requires the selection of materials in a variety of formats as identified by an ongoing process of community analysis including demographic information, library-use patterns, collection-use data, and public input. Collection development also takes into account other library and information resources in the community, region, and the state.

York County currently has a rating of EEE ★★★ (based on collection development policies and acquisition of printed books, eBooks, and other digital resources). The WRL is currently rated with a EEE★★★.

Facilities

A public library building should be designed to encourage citizens to enter, read, listen, and learn. The building design should be flexible in order to respond to the changing needs of patrons and service patterns. It is important that facilities be able to accommodate the dynamic technological needs of patrons. The design of the building needs to encourage extensive public use, support staff efficiency, and encourage economy.

York County has a facility rating of EE★★ (based on square feet per capita), but it will improve to EEE rating with the opening of the 10,000-square foot expansion and renovation of the Yorktown library meeting the per capita standards for the lower county citizens. The WRL facilities are rated as EE★★ with the downtown facility needing expansion. The libraries offer a variety of services for filing taxes and filling out government forms, as well, as offering space for tutoring for homeschooling and research.

Technology

Information technology is paramount to the modern public library. Through technology, patrons and library staff access information within and outside the library. To use technology effectively, the library must plan carefully, provide ongoing support and training, and continuously evaluate, upgrade, and replace hardware, software, and information resources.

Technology within the York County Library's current system has a rating of EEE ★★★ (based on high-speed internet connectivity, networking capabilities, and utilization of latest automated and emerging technologies). The WRL is rated at EEE★★★.

TOURISM

The Yorktown Waterfront is York County's downtown, "front porch", and "shining crown" all rolled up into one and it was a long time in the making. The process of developing the Yorktown Master Plan began in 1988 with the Yorktown Revitalization Steering Committee. The master plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1993 set the vision that led to the



Model showing Riverwalk Landing design.

village as it exists today and continues to guide the County's efforts to create a vibrant downtown where citizens and visitors can come together and experience this beautiful venue. With the grand opening of

Riverwalk Landing in 2005 and the events and celebrations that followed, a precedent for a robust schedule of events, tall ships, vibrant dining, retail, and history-making celebrations was set in motion. The work of Tourism Development staff is focused on enhancing the experience and connection to the waterfront for citizens and stays vibrant as a destination for visitors who sleep in the village’s hotels and bed-and-breakfasts, eat in the restaurants, and spend money in the Yorktown retail stores. Additionally, the Tourism Development staff is committed to maintaining Yorktown and York County as a vital component of the Greater Williamsburg destination brand through integrated and targeted marketing campaigns including robust social media and digital presence. These efforts solidify Yorktown as a premier destination in the region.

The **Yorktown Waterfront**, which occupies approximately 12.5 acres along the York River in historic Yorktown, provides opportunities for swimming, sunbathing, beach picnicking, fishing, and boating. In July 2003 the County assumed ownership of two acres of the property that was previously owned by the Yorktown Trustees and managed by the County. The remaining 10.5-acre portion comprising the National Park Service’s Beach Picnic Area was turned over to County management in 2004. Originally improved in 1977 with a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Yorktown Waterfront is the only public beach facility in York County. In 2005, the County completed Riverwalk Landing, a 21,000 square-foot retail/restaurant destination that consists of eight new buildings, the renovated Freight Shed, and a parking terrace. As part of the project, the Yorktown Pier, which was damaged by Hurricane Isabel in 2003, was renovated into a fishing pier. Annually, the County obtains a permit that allows residents and visitors to fish and crab from this pier without a personal fishing license.

Riverwalk Landing includes two additional concrete floating piers. The large 395-foot T-pier located at the foot of Ballard Street can accommodate tall ships, visiting military vessels, medium- and large-sized private vessels, as well as regional commercial cruise ships. Electrical service, water, Wi-Fi, and sewer pump -out facilities are available on the pier-side. The second pier located behind the restaurant and between the larger pier and the Coleman Bridge is intended to accommodate transient overnight and pleasure boaters visiting the village shops and restaurants as well as smaller craft such as day-trippers. The piers provide for overnight stays with restroom and shower facilities specifically available for overnight boaters and ship crews. The piers have also become homeport to a commercial tall ship that provides day and evening sails.



The open space at Riverwalk Landing referred to as Chischiak Green has become the hub for activities and special events on the waterfront. Currently it is the site of the well-attended “Sounds of Summer” and “Rhythms on the Riverwalk” concert series as well Yorktown Market Days, art shows, festivals and tall ship events. The County’s Freight Shed rental facility, performance area, and beach have become popular spots for hosting weddings, receptions and other special occasion events.

The open space at Riverwalk Landing referred to as Chischiak Green has become the hub for activities and special events on the waterfront. Currently it is the site of the well-attended “Sounds of Summer” and “Rhythms on the Riverwalk” concert series as well Yorktown Market Days, art shows, festivals and tall ship events. The County’s Freight Shed rental facility, performance area, and beach have become popular spots for hosting weddings, receptions and other special occasion events.

Below is a sampling of annual events that have evolved throughout the years in Yorktown:

1979

- 4th of July

1996

- Christmas Lighted Boat Parade

2005

- Grand Opening of Riverwalk Landing
- First Tall Ship at Piers (see below for other dates)

- Fall Concert Series Launches
- 2006**
 - Summer Concert Series Launches
 - 225th Anniversary of Victory at Yorktown
- 2007**
 - 400th Anniversary of Jamestown
 - Yorktown Market Days Begins
- 2008**
 - Pirates Invade Yorktown
 - Toyland Parade Begins
- 2009**
 - Cabin Fever Series Launches (discontinued because of COVID-19)
 - Movies on the Green (moved to MAC)
- 2010**
 - Market Days Fall Festival
 - Yorktown Wine Festival
- 2011**
 - Summer Series Moves to Thursdays
 - Schooner Serenity Joins Alliance
- 2012**
 - Opsail Maritime Weekend
 - Yorktown Art Stroll
- 2013**
 - Art at the River
- 2014**
 - Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival

- 2015**
 - Lafayette’s Hermione Voyage
 - Sister Cities French Market
 - Riverwalk Landing 10th Anniversary
 - YMCA Race
- 2016**
 - Oyster Roast in the Freight Shed
 - El Galeon & Hokule’a Visits
- 2017**
 - Vintage Market at the MAC
- 2018**
 - Market Days Harvest Festival
- 2019**
 - Market Days Paws at the River
 - Market Days Maritime Festival
- 2020**
 - Market Days First Responders Market
 - Market Days Mistletoe Market
 - Expansion of Christmas Market on Main
 - Yorktown Trolley 20th Anniversary
- 2021**
 - Market Days Winter Markets
- 2022**
 - Market Days Fun in the Sun Market
 - Vintage Market & Car Show on Main Street
 - An Enchanted Evening on Main Street

PARKS AND RECREATION

Recreational Programs

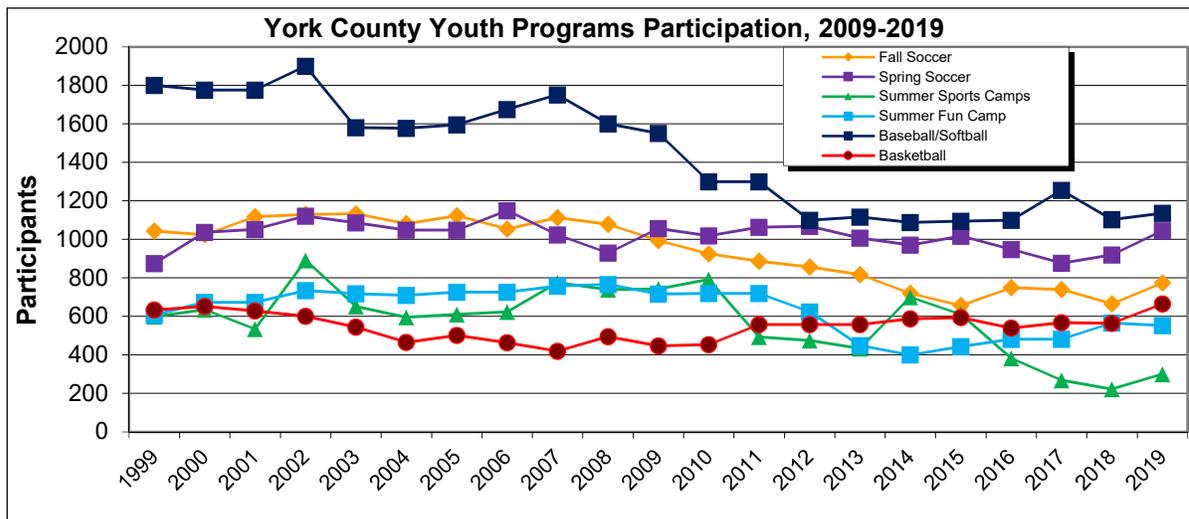


Figure 3

York County offers a variety of programs for active and passive recreation for both youth and adults. Available to young people are a wide range of programs including soccer, tennis, basketball, summer day camp, sports and recreation camps, kayak tours, a variety of instructional classes (art, educational Tae Kwon Do, etc.), and a recent addition of outdoor programs. Adult programs include softball, tennis, fitness classes, educational, and instructional classes. **Figure 3** below shows how various programs have grown and declined over the years. Because of severe limitations on public gatherings during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic on, no data on participation in recreation programs is provided for 2020. Programs during this period were cancelled and participation was extremely limited or nonexistent. The above chart shows that County-sponsored youth sports leagues have seen a 10% increase while sports camps have declined by 50% since 2015. The primary reason for declining sports camps is the increasing number of program offerings provided to residents by private organizations and other public agencies as well as the fact that some youth are playing a single sport year-round. Some of these are recreational while others offer a more competitive structure. Summer Fun Camp participation has also seen a 25% increase since 2015. Another sports organization that has grown in popularity is the York County Little League, which has a contractual agreement with the County to provide recreationally-based youth baseball and softball, with a 4% increase in overall participation. Though the County provides sports leagues, it should be noted that there are several private organizations sponsoring programs in both the upper and lower County. These include three youth baseball/softball associations; over 50 private Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) baseball and softball teams; five youth football/cheerleading associations; four soccer clubs; three swim team/aquatic clubs; two church-sponsored and three AAU organizations offering youth basketball; two youth wrestling associations; and two lacrosse organizations. While youth sports leagues have seen an increase, **Figure 4** below shows that participation in adult softball decreased by almost 70%, whereas adult and family programs have experienced some increases since 2015.

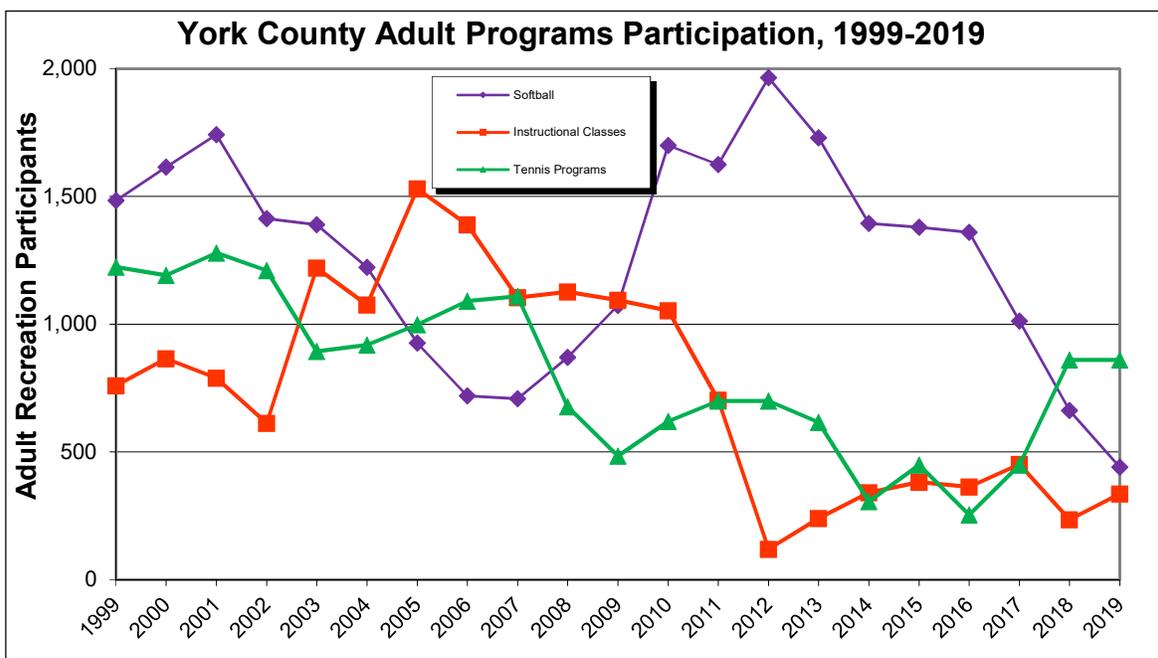


Figure 4

Residents of all ages can participate in the County’s instructional classes, such as the “Skate, Rattle, and Roll” roller skating program, disc golf, and multiple special events at various outdoor parks. The skating program is operated in the Dare Elementary School gymnasium, while New Quarter Park houses an 18-hole championship disc golf course. In addition, instructional classes are taught at various locations throughout the County in the evenings and on the weekends. Special events such as “Movie in the Parks” are offered at New Quarter Park, Charles Brown Park, and the McReynolds Athletic Complex (MAC).

For senior adults, York County operates the Senior Center of York, which is located in the Washington Square Shopping Center and offers a wide variety of activities, classes, clubs, special events, and trips. For seniors living in the upper County, James City County Recreation Center offers “The Lounge” membership for a non-resident fee. In addition, throughout the year, the County offers programming in partnerships with community organizations and local, state, and federal agencies for seniors.

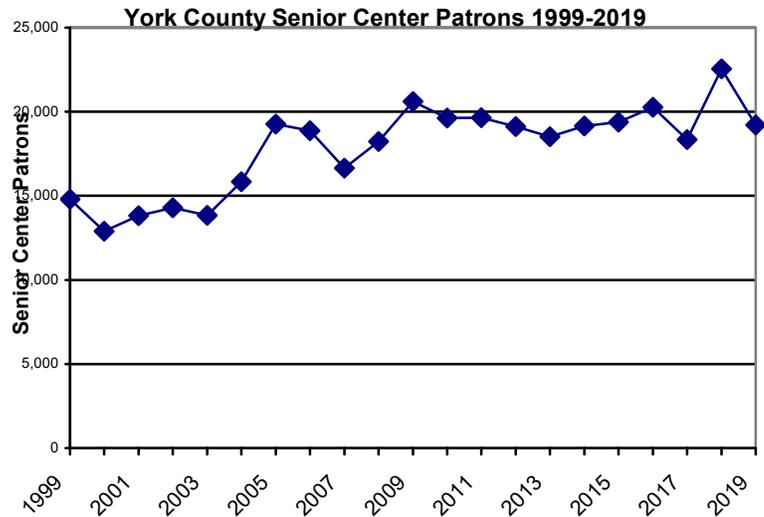


Figure 5

As the population continues to age, senior programs have grown in popularity, increasing from 15,000 to

19,000 in 2019 (Figure 5). Since 2001, the Senior Center of York has occupied over 6,300 square feet of leased space in the Washington Square Shopping Center. In 2011, adjacent storefront space was added, increasing the total area to 8,817 square feet. Activities offered to seniors include a computer club, preventative health services, annual health fair and flu shots, dining club, and educational seminars on such issues as scams and identify theft. Seniors can also take advantage of AARP driver safety classes and tax assistance programs. There are a variety of monthly programs that include knitting, crocheting, quilting, bridge club, canasta group, and the “Birthday Bash.” There are also a variety of special events as well as regular classes and groups in exercise, art, crafts, and line dancing for all levels.

In the past, budgetary constraints and low participation rates have resulted in several programs being discontinued. These included the Hershey Track and Field programs, adult basketball and volleyball as well as the roller skating program in the upper County that was held in the Historic Triangle Community Services Building. With respect to the upper County, it should be noted that York has partnership agreements with the City of Williamsburg and James City County Parks and Recreation Departments to make programs and facilities available to upper County residents. These localities use York County facilities for some of these programs and help meet a significant portion of the demand for recreational activities in the upper County at a non-resident rate.

School/Park Facilities

York County’s development of recreational facilities at school sites for community use, known as the “school/park” concept, has proven to be an effective means of providing athletic fields, gymnasiums, playground areas, basketball and tennis courts that serve both school and community needs. In fact, if the County were to provide separate facilities comparable to what is found at the 18 school sites, millions of additional dollars would have to be spent just to duplicate the basic infrastructure that already exists at these school sites (land, utilities, parking, etc.) in addition to recreation facilities themselves. Citizens have been well served by the school/park concept and will continue to be for years to come. In this regard, the County is a model for other communities seeking to provide recreational facilities in a cost-effective manner, and in fact was recognized for this initiative by the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Development of school/park facilities began in 1985 after a joint effort by County and School Division staffs to develop master plans for each school site was completed. In addition to utilizing the sites to the fullest extent possible for community and school purposes, the master planning effort also tried to achieve equity among the schools by establishing a basic set of core facilities that should exist at each site. For example, each elementary school master plan includes these core facilities: a gymnasium, two playground

areas, a youth baseball/softball field, a soccer field, and two outdoor basketball courts. In addition to these core recreational facilities, some elementary school sites may have a larger soccer field that is lighted, two baseball fields, or even tennis courts. Additional recreational amenities like these depended on what the site was able to accommodate and if there was a need for certain recreational facilities within that particular geographic area of the County. These plans have been revised periodically over the years as the need arose to expand school buildings and/or provide additional recreational facilities.

Because of this commitment to the school/park concept, many of the County’s recreational activities take place on school grounds. In order to maximize the community’s use of these facilities, the Board of Supervisors and the School Board entered into an agreement in 1991 whereby the Parks and Recreation Division assumed responsibility for scheduling after-school use of gymnasiums and outdoor facilities at all elementary schools and middle schools. The elementary and middle schools are the primary school/park sites since they do not have as many school-sponsored after-school activities as the high schools. In 2005, this agreement was revised to reflect facility changes that had been completed. An additional benefit of this centralized scheduling approach is that valuable usage data is compiled and analyzed in order to assess the existing demand and long-term needs for recreational facilities throughout the County. There are many challenges that impact facility availability such as Virginia High School League (VHSL) allowing year round practices, more gymnasium hours needed during winter seasons, tennis courts being covered by portable classrooms, storage limitations at facilities, and facility space that could be utilized during school hours.

Athletic Field Reservations

The number of reservation hours of athletic fields at schools and parks was at an all-time high in the first two years after the McReynolds Athletic Complex opened. Since 2015, reservation hours have fluctuated between 23,000 and 30,000 for outdoor facilities (Figure 6).

Reservations at school facilities have decreased by 30% since 2015. Because of the use of natural turf fields at all County facilities, weather affects reservation hours at outdoor facilities. Community organizations continue to be the largest user of athletic fields at middle and elementary schools and at park sites as they reserve 76% of the overall usage time. By comparison, the County-run recreation programs reserve 18% of usage time while high school interscholastic teams and programs reserve 5% of the usage time.

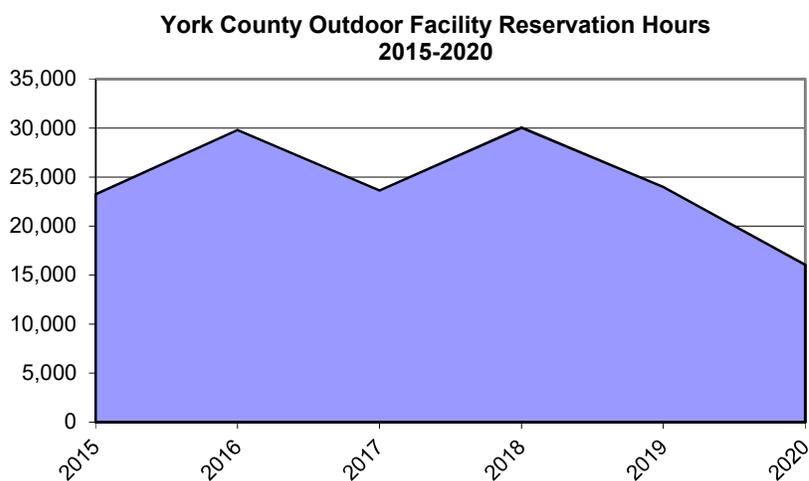


Figure 6

Another important issue relating to recreational facility use is the effect that inadequate high school facilities have had on other school and park facilities that are supposed to be available for community use. The usage time required by high school interscholastic sports has often created scheduling restrictions for community usage elsewhere. For example, the Tabb and Grafton High School boys’ and girls’ varsity and junior varsity teams have to use Tabb Elementary School, Mount Vernon Elementary School, Tabb Middle School, Coventry Elementary School, Kiln Creek Park, and Wolf Trap Park for their practices. Furthermore, the athletic fields at these high schools simply cannot support all of the school’s teams’ needs for space.

Another area of concern is the time and intensity of school competition and its detrimental effect on the condition of the fields. In fact, the time demand for school usage has increased since the VHSL approved year-round practices for interscholastic teams. Previously, high school teams could only practice during their specific season. The increased demand by school teams limits the time available for community recreational usage and makes it difficult to schedule a time for renovating over-used fields.

Outdoor Park and Recreational Facilities

Complementing the outdoor school/park facilities are a variety of other park and recreational facilities, including Back Creek Park, Charles E. Brown Park, Chisman Creek Park, Wolf Trap Park, Kiln Creek Park, New Quarter Park, the McReynolds Athletic Complex, and the Old Wormley Creek and Rodgers A. Smith public boat landings. Also located in the County are several non-County parks, Waller Mill Park (City of Williamsburg), and Harwoods Mill Park (City of Newport News). Finally, many subdivision and apartment complexes in the County have private recreational facilities – such as swimming pools, playing fields, tennis courts, and exercise rooms available for their residents’ use. **Table 2** lists recreational opportunities available in various areas of the County.

Type of Facility	Upper County			York/Dare Area			Grafton/Tabb Area			Total County		
	2004	2010	2022	2004	2010	2022	2004	2010	2022	2004	2010	2022
Instructional Soccer	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	3	3	6	7	7
Soccer/Football	4	4	5	8	10	10	10	13	13	22	27	28
Youth Baseball/Softball	5	5	5	6	8	8	7	11	11	18	24	24
Regulation Softball	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	3	3	4	5	5
Regulation Baseball	2	2	2	3	5	5	5	4	4	10	11	11
Practice	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Track	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	4	5	5
Tennis Courts	8	8	8	20	20	18	6	8	6	32	36	32
Outdoor Basketball Courts	7	11	8	18	10	9	11	17	11	36	38	28
Boat Ramps	0	1	1	5	5	6	2	3	3	7	9	10
Picnic Areas	14	14	14	3	3	3	0	0	33	17	17	50
Playgrounds			7			10			16			33
The York/Dare area includes facilities north of Dare Road up to Charles Brown Park in Lackey												

Table 2

Back Creek Park is located on Goodwin Neck Road in Seaford. The Amoco Oil Company donated these 27 acres of waterfront property on Back Creek to the County in 1978, and the park was opened for use in 1981. Facilities include six lighted tennis courts, a boat launching facility, a fishing/crabbing pier, a small picnic area, and a restroom building with a small office for seasonal staff who oversee park activities and kayak rentals. Back Creek Park serves as the hub for the County’s tennis and Pickleball program, which includes leagues, lessons, camps, and tournaments for youth and adults. The boat launching facility is considered to be one of the finest on the Peninsula and is heavily used.





Situated on a 10-acre site on Route 238 in Lackey, **Charles E. Brown Park** was opened in 1978 as the County's first park. Park facilities available for public use include the 3,000-square foot Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Building, two basketball courts, a baseball field, a playground, a picnic shelter, and a restroom facility. Constructed with a combination of federal and local funds, the Community Building features a large meeting room with a kitchenette that is available for recreational programs as well for the

public to rent. The facility is utilized to host family receptions, birthday parties, meetings, trainings, and events such as the "Grinch's Night Out". There is also a "Wetlands Interpretive Sanctuary for Education" (WISE) trail at Charles E. Brown Park, which is a quarter-mile trail, and interpretive area that borders approximately two acres of wetlands. Additionally, a 12,000 square foot community garden was installed in the park with two ADA compliant garden beds and twenty-eight other garden beds.

The County leases two reclaimed EPA Superfund fly ash sites from Dominion Energy for recreational use. **Chisman Creek Park** is a 13-acre parcel on Wolf Trap Road in Grafton that opened in the spring of 1991. This park has two lighted softball fields and a restroom facility and is utilized for the adult softball league program, tournaments, and community athletic organizations. The second reclaimed fly ash site is **Wolf Trap Park**, which is also located on Wolf Trap Road and opened in 1992. This 28-acre site features four soccer fields and a restroom facility.



Kiln Creek Park is a 20-acre site on Kiln Creek Parkway in Tabb. It was dedicated to the School Division by the developer of the Villages of Kiln Creek for a future school site. The site was master-planned as a school/park facility, so the possible future construction of a school building on the property will have minimal disruption to the existing recreational facilities and parking lots. A lighted soccer field, lighted baseball field, youth baseball/softball field, two half-basketball courts, a playground, small picnic shelter, and restroom facility were

completed in 1999. The athletic fields were developed during the first construction phase in 1997 and opened for use in the spring of 1998. Lighting was added in 2000.

New Quarter Park is located in the upper County, adjacent to the Queens Lake subdivision and the Colonial Parkway. This 545-acre tract was acquired free of charge in 1976 from the federal government through a surplus land program. Today it remains the largest single parcel of County-owned park acreage. Park facilities include 14 picnic shelters, with three available for group rental, a campfire circle with seating for 100 people, multi-purpose field, two half-basketball courts, horseshoe courts, and, a floating pier on Queens Creek. Between 2004 and 2006 the park was renovated with the addition of 5.5 miles of mountain bike trails (developed by the Eastern Virginia Mountain Bike Association), a sand volleyball court, a one-mile asphalt pedestrian bike path, 18-hole championship disc golf course, three miles of natural surface hiking trail (developed by the Tidewater Appalachian Trail Club), and two playground areas. In 2017, the mountain bike trail was expanded to slightly over 7 miles. In addition, one of the two playgrounds was replaced in 2019.





In 2005, the County entered into a lease agreement with the City of Newport News to develop a public park on 187 acres of property owned by Newport News Waterworks. Also known as the MAC, the **McReynolds Athletic Complex** (originally named the York County Sports Complex) opened in May 2009. The 70 acres of developed park area have been well received by York County citizens and patrons from neighboring localities alike. Featuring 13 lighted athletic fields, the athletic complex is for County-run adult softball, fall and spring youth soccer programs, and for summer youth sports camps. It also serves as a home for the York County Little League and is available for rent to other organizations and users for games, tournaments, and sports camps. This complex is also utilized for special events such as “Movie in the Parks” and the Vintage Market.

Other amenities at the MAC include a multipurpose path, bike lane, playgrounds, and 31 picnic shelters. Three concession stands and restroom buildings serve the park’s visitors.

Utilization of the MAC in recent years has not been as heavy as when it originally opened. In 2019 the site hosted over 3,007 activities (a 20% decrease) and over 120,000 vehicles (a 1% decrease) when compared to 2010. Attendance have been affected by a decrease in adult sports and some user groups relocating to our other parks. The County has started to offer additional special events at the facility to increase the range of activities offered as well as increase usage when it is not being utilized for athletic events. The park has hosted a variety of local, state, and regional tournaments and sports events including baseball, softball, soccer, kickball, lacrosse, and flag football. The trails, playgrounds, outdoor fitness stations, and picnic shelters provide opportunities for individuals and families to enjoy the park as well.

The **Rodgers A. Smith Boat Landing** is one of the most popular landings in the County. Located on the Poquoson River at the end of Tide Mill Road in Tabb, this landing features many grant-assisted improvements completed in FY 2006. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission awarded the County two grants to help fund the Smith Landing Waterfront Improvements Project. This grant program paid 75% (\$472,500) of the total project cost, and required that the County pay the remaining 25% (\$157,500). Improvements included the replacement of two boat launching ramps with redesigned concrete ramp areas that increased the boat launching depth from four to five feet of water; the replacement of aging all-wooden piers with new ADA-accessible floating aluminum piers and ramps as well as new wooden support pilings and approach decks; the replacement of the adjacent fishing/crabbing pier with a wider, ADA-accessible one that provides a larger T-area and increased the fishing depth by one foot; and, extensive site improvements for traffic flow, parking, and lighting. The facility, which now includes restrooms as well, is widely used by boating and fishing enthusiasts alike. In 2018, an Eagle Scout troop added a kiosk and bench to the facility.



Old Wormley Creek Landing is a much smaller facility at the end of Old Wormley Creek Road. It consists of a small boat ramp and adjacent fixed wooden pier used for fishing and crabbing. The Virginia Marine Resources Commission awarded the County a grant to assist with adding a boardwalk and an ADA canoe/kayak launch at this facility. This feature was opened in 2019 and received a 2020 National Association of Counties Award.

Indoor Park and Recreational Facilities

As mentioned above, the **Senior Center of York** is located in 8,817-square feet of rented storefront space in the Washington Square shopping center in Grafton. The Center was first located in a 1,000-square foot unit in the Patriot Square Shopping Center in 1991 but was moved to a larger 3,000-square foot facility in 1993 because the number of citizens participating in senior adult programs had outgrown the capacity of the original facility. The Center moved again in 2001 into its current space and added an adjacent storefront in 2010 to reach its current size. In addition to its regular activities, the Center serves as a nutrition site for the Peninsula Agency on Aging. This facility is open during the day, Monday through Friday.



In response to citizens advocating the development of a community center, land on Route 134 adjacent to the Tabb library facility was made available by the County for development of the **Victory Family YMCA**. This YMCA opened as a 46,000-square foot facility in January 2003 and was expanded by an additional 11,000 square feet in 2006 to serve more youth, teens, and families. This total included 3,400 square feet of space for Mary Immaculate Hospital to use for physical therapy. In 2011, an 11,000-square foot renovation was completed to further enhance family wellness programs at the facility. The Victory Family YMCA serves the residents in the lower County and in 2019 had 12,400 members and 17,133 participants in the YMCA's programming annually. The existing 57,000-square foot building features an eight-lane swimming pool, gymnasium, health and wellness areas for adults and families, walking track, group exercise studios, climbing wall, two racquetball courts, teen center, and child watch area. In 2019, the branch distributed \$464,000 in financial assistance. In fact, approximately 20% of its members qualify for reduced membership fees as it practices its mission.

In 2007, the **R.F. Wilkinson Family YMCA** opened its doors to upper York County residents. Located on the Sentara Williamsburg Regional Medical Center campus on Mooretown Road, the 37,000-square foot facility includes a warm water family/therapeutic pool, lap swim/aqua fitness pool, whirlpool, sauna, gymnasium, child watch, and group exercise room and wellness center. The facility also includes an additional 6,845 square feet dedicated to Sentara physical therapy services. The Wilkinson Family YMCA in 2019 had 4,296 members and over 12,000 program participations annually. The branch distributed over \$178,203 in financial assistance to allow over 10,000 individuals each year to participate in YMCA programs and services. A full 57% of its members qualify for reduced membership fees.

In addition to the York County-based Wilkinson Family YMCA, upper County residents can also utilize recreation facilities located in James City County and Williamsburg. York County residents can join (as non-residents), purchase day passes, and/or participate in programs and activities at several facilities including: the **Abram Frink, Jr. Community Center** (8901 Pocahontas Trail), which has a full-size gymnasium, fitness room, multipurpose room, and rentable meeting rooms and locker rooms with showers; the **James City County Recreation Center** (5301 Longhill Road), which features a gymnasium, indoor track, dance/fitness room, teen area, senior area, arts and crafts area with kilns, a fitness room, racquetball court, a 275-seat multi-purpose room, smaller meeting rooms, whirlpool, and a 25-meter x 25-yard swimming pool with zero depth entry and wheelchair accessibility; and the **City of Williamsburg's Quarterpath Recreation Center** (202 Quarterpath Road), featuring a large double gymnasium, a dance/fitness room, two classrooms, and a large multi-purpose room.

The **York County Boys & Girls Club** opened its doors in June 2010 as a unit of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula. Thanks to the partnerships and support provided by the County, the School Division, Cox Communications, Dominion Energy, and various private businesses and individuals, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula were able to establish a new facility at the Yorktown Middle School site that serves

as the York River Academy during the school day and as a Boys & Girls Club during the afternoons and in the summer. With the contributions from the County and the School Division of \$1 million each toward the total construction cost of \$4.3 million, the vision for this facility came to fruition. This 24,000-square foot space includes a full-size gym with stage, a games room with a kitchenette, an arts and crafts room, a reading room, a video games room, a computer lab and classrooms to better serve the youth. The York County Boys & Girls Club has 63 registered youth, ages 6 through 18, from York County who participate in after-school programs and approximately 90 to 100 youth in the summer program.

Water Access

In 2000 Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (representing the federal government) signed agreements to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay's ecosystem. The agreement committed the organizations to nurture and sustain a Chesapeake Bay Watershed Partnership and to achieve certain goals. The Chesapeake Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014 and amended in 2020 and outlined five themes, goals, and outcomes. The following were established for the public access component:

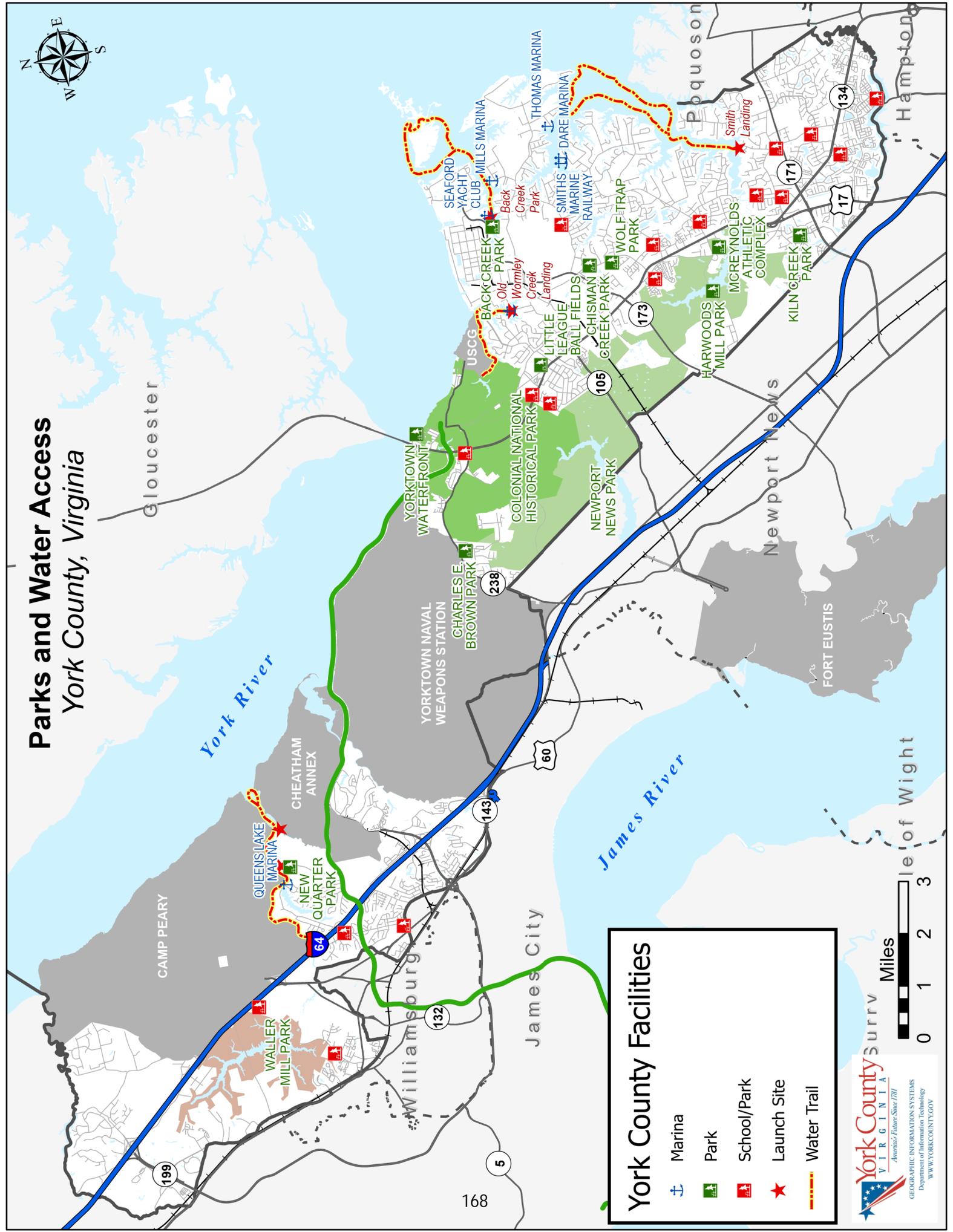
- Goal: Expand public access to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries through existing and new local, state, and federal parks, refuges, reserves, trails and partner sites.
- Desired Outcome: In addition to meeting the goal of 300 sites by 2025, the document cites a desire for partners to focus on improving the quality of new public access sites. Where feasible, the partners are ensuring that there are ample parking spaces, amenities, and multilingual signs to meet the needs of diverse communities. Efforts will also be aimed at adding new access opportunities at existing sites to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

Since the adoption of the original goals in 2000, the York River Water Trail has been established, along with several Chesapeake Bay Gateway Network sites, including the Yorktown Visitor Center and Battlefield. The York River Water Trail follows approximately 120 miles along the tidal York, Mattaponi, and Pamunkey Rivers. Connecting multiple Gateway sites (Yorktown, Gloucester Point, York River State Park, and the Pamunkey Indian Reservations), the route spans a diverse landscape. In 2006, the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail was dedicated. This is a series of trails on the Chesapeake Bay that make up the routes Captain Smith traveled between 1607 and 1609 while mapping and exploring the area. The various routes combine for over 3,000 miles, and this Historic Trail is one of only two water trails that are part of the National Trail System.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation published the *2018 Virginia Outdoors Plan*, which is the state's official conservation, outdoor recreation, and open space plan. It is intended to serve as a guide to all levels of government and the private sector. During the plan development, a survey of Virginia citizens was conducted to identify the most popular outdoor recreational activities in the state. Among the ten top-ranked activities were water access and land trails (tied for third), swimming/outdoor pool (fifth), sunbathing/relaxing on a beach (sixth), swimming/beach/lake/river (eighth), and fishing (tenth). The Plan determined that in spite of the importance of water-related activities to Virginians, there are only 29 miles of public tidal beachfront land in the entire state. In other words, less than 1% of Virginia's tidal shoreline is publicly owned and accessible to all of its citizens and visitors.

The state also conducted a Virginia Outdoors Demand Survey in 2018. In this survey, 60% of the respondents stated that, "public access to state waters for fishing, swimming, and beach use" are "most needed in Virginia." In fact, in rating the most desirable water-related activities, respondents ranked "sunbathing/relaxing on a beach" (47%) and "swimming at a beach" (37%) as numbers two and four, just behind the top-ranked "swimming in a pool" (48%).

Parks and Water Access York County, Virginia



York County Facilities

- Marina
- Park
- School/Park
- Launch Site
- Water Trail

York County VIRGINIA

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 Department of Information Technology

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Miles

 0 1 2 3

York County's commitment to providing public water access is evidenced through its six public boat ramps, which are all located in the lower County except for the canoe/kayaking access at New Quarter Park. The County's proximity to the York River and the Chesapeake Bay makes boating an extremely popular activity. However, proximity does not guarantee access, as much of the County's shoreline is in federal ownership (National Park Service, Camp Peary, Cheatham Annex, Naval Weapons Station, and the Coast Guard Training Center). This contributes to the shortage of boat landings in the County, which has led to overcrowding at the Rodgers A. Smith and Back Creek Park facilities. The County has also identified and created a Water Trails map outlining over 27 miles of trail routes from several of its parks.

York County has stayed committed to providing improved water access, making improvements to existing public access sites. The Rodgers A. Smith boat ramp underwent a complete renovation in 2005, replacing the boat launching ramps, floating piers and fishing pier. The County has also added public restroom facilities at this location in conjunction with the extension of sanitary sewer. In addition, through a grant from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, a crabbing and fishing pier was built at Back Creek Park, and the County replaced the floating wooden dock with a concrete floating dock. In 2019, improvements were made at Old Wormley Creek Landing with the addition of an ADA canoe/kayak launch access with the assistance of a grant from the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

The following suggestions would require partnerships with the federal government (National Park Service and/or military installations) for accommodating increased water access in York County.

- Additional boating access for areas west of the Coleman Bridge and east of York River State Park;
- Analysis of the lands along the Colonial Parkway to identify potential sites where water access could be improved by providing additional parking areas.
- Additional boating sites on the Poquoson River in order to relieve the heavy boat traffic near the mouth of the York River;
- Increased accessibility to the large tidal marshes along the creeks of the County for nature study, and to foster environmental education opportunities.

The County's Parks and Recreation Division has identified the following potential access areas or potential site improvements to increase water access in the County.

- Identified land along Queens Creek;
- A public boat launching facility on Chisman Creek, which has deeper water suitable for launching larger boats;
- Expansion of the parking lot at Back Creek Park;
- Increased accessibility to the large tidal marshes along the creeks of the County, which could provide an opportunity for nature study and environmental education.

Existing and potential water access sites in the County, both public and private, are depicted on the Parks map, with detailed information on each provided in **Tables 3, 4, and 5**.

Existing Public Shoreline and Water Access Points

Public Access Area	Day Use	Seasonal Use	Limited Parking Lot	Large Parking Lot	Boat Launch Ramp	Car Top Board Only	Dock	Bank and Pier	Swimming Beach	Hiking Trails	Nature	Picnicking	Restrooms	Handicapped Access	Wetlands	Natural Heritage	Cultural Resources	Pump Out
Back Creek Park	X			X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X	X			
New Quarter Park	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Old Wormley Creek Landing	X		X		X		X	X						X	X			
Rogers A. Smith Landing	X		X		X		X	X			X		X	X	X			
Public Access Area	Water Body		Remarks															
Back Creek Park	Back Creek		Tennis, crabbing, fishing, picnicking															
New Quarter Park	Queens Creek		Limited access – open to public seasonally															
Old Wormley Creek	Wormley Creek		Launch at high tide only, fishing pier, ADA kayak launch area															
Rogers A. Smith Landing	Poquoson River		Three ramps, pier for fishing and crabbing															
Source: <i>York County Division of Parks and Recreation</i>																		

Table 3

Existing Commercial/Private Marinas, Boat Ramps & Recreation Areas

Public Access Area	Water Body	Boat Launch	Number of Wet Slips	Dockside Pump Out	Restrooms	Remarks
Oyster Landing	Chisman Creek	X	25		X	Repairs, convenience store, shower
Camp Skimino	Skimino Creek					Girl Scout reservation
Dare Marina	Chisman Creek		52	X	X	300' floating dock, 132 dry storage racks, 175 outside storage racks, repairs and maintenance, gas, marine store
Marlbank Cove	Wormley Creek		12			Private
Mills Marina	Back Creek	X	57	X	X	Marine store, gas, electric, bait.
Queens Lake Boat Dock	Queens Creek	X	57	X		Private
Seaford Yacht Club	Back Creek		30	X	X	Private
Smith's Marine Railway	Chisman Creek	X	6			Repairs only
Thomas Marina	Chisman Creek	X	40		X	Dock, electric
Williamsburg KOA	Skimino Creek				X	Campground off Lightfoot Road (Rt. 646)
Wormley Creek Marina	Wormley Creek	X	72	X	X	40 dry storage racks, repairs, showers, gas, diesel, electric, beverages (seasonal)
Source: <i>York County Division of Parks and Recreation</i>						

Table 4

Potential Public Shoreline and Water Access Points

Public Access Area	Boat Launch Ramp	Car Top Boat Only	Bank and Pier Fishing	Swimming Beach	Camping	Nature Study/Education	Picnicking	Wetlands	Cultural Resources	Pump Out
Chisman Creek Site	X		X				X	X		
Back Creek Park								X		X
Poquoson River Site	X		X			X	X	X		
York River Potential Site		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	
Public Access Area	Water Body		Remarks							
Back Creek Site	Chisman Creek		Potential for pier or dock							
Poquoson River Site	Poquoson River									
York River Site	York River		Potential for pier or dock							
Source: <i>York County Division of Parks and Recreation</i>										

Table 5

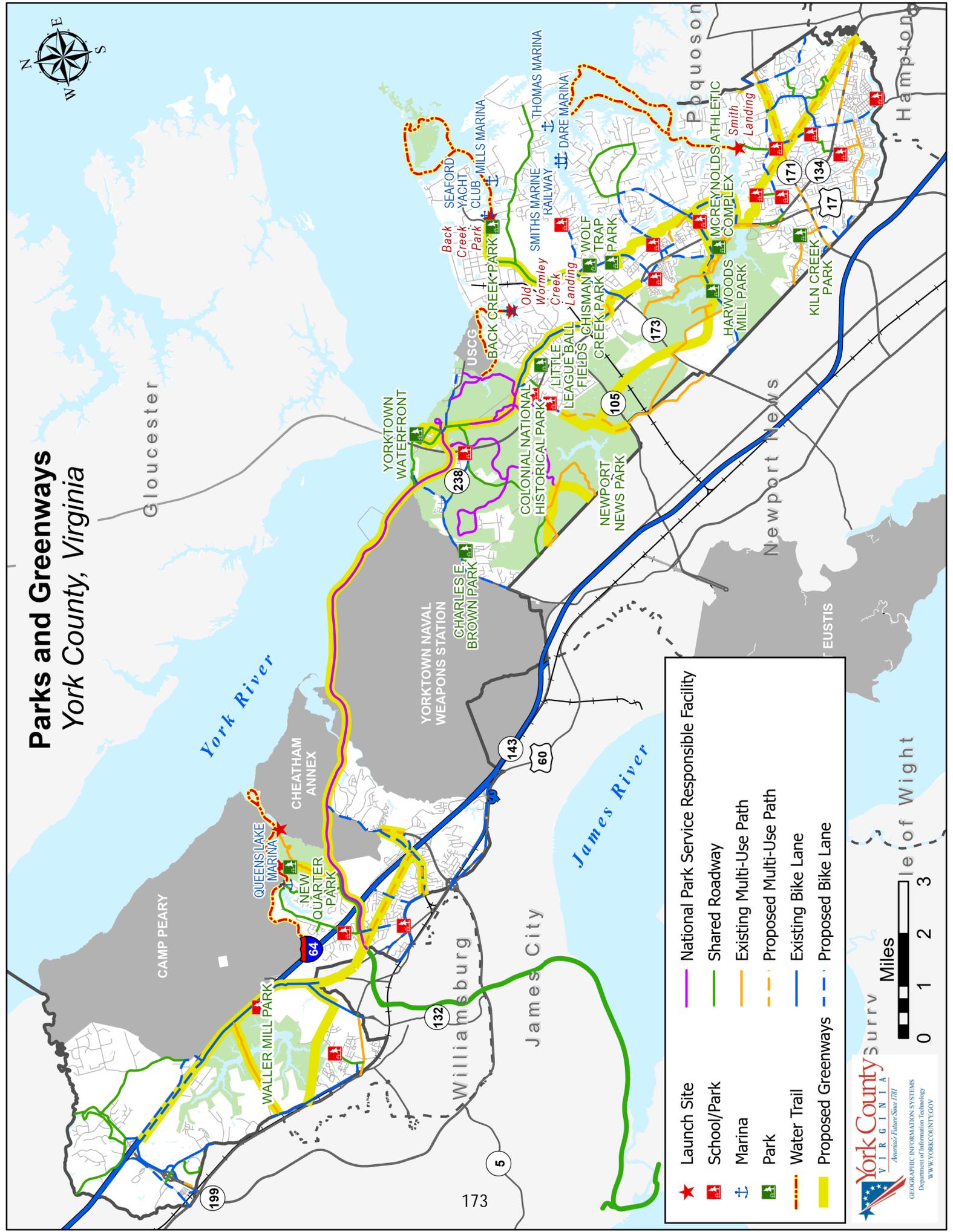
Greenways

The 1999 Comprehensive Plan recommended the establishment of greenways and trails throughout the County. Greenways can be defined as linear parks, alternative transportation routes, or other open space conservation areas that provide passive recreational opportunities, pedestrian and/or bicycle paths, and/or the conservation of open spaces or natural areas. Typically they include natural corridors (riverfronts, streams, valleys, and ridgelines), old railroad rights-of-way, power line rights-of-way, and bicycle or walking paths. A community greenways system can include scenic roads, parks, nature preserves, and cultural or historic areas, and should function to provide linkages between these resources, neighborhoods, and/or small commercial nodes.

There are many benefits to having greenways in a community. Economically, studies have shown that having greenways nearby increases real property values. They provide attractive views as well as easy access for homeowners to recreational activities. Additionally, expenditures by residents and tourists may increase because of the linkages established between shops, restaurants, recreational areas, etc. and neighborhoods. Furthermore, having greenways close to residential areas may encourage citizens to engage in recreational activities that they might never have participated in if it were not for the easy access that the paths provide. Greenways can provide opportunities for activities such as biking, walking, in-line skating, jogging, and even horseback riding. Some greenways and paths even provide alternative modes of travel to and from work or other activities.

The environment and a community's historical and cultural resources also benefit from the establishment of greenways. In some instances implementing a greenway plan can help to protect critical wetland and environmentally sensitive areas thus, creating a larger ecological system for migratory species of animals and also providing a link for isolated species. Greenways can offer walkable access to significant historical sites. They often make use of existing historic railroad corridors or canals that were used as primary trade or traveling routes. These routes often have historical buildings that are of interest to tourists and regular

Parks and Greenways York County, Virginia



★	Launch Site	—	National Park Service Responsible Facility
🏠	School/Park	—	Shared Roadway
⚓	Marina	—	Existing Multi-Use Path
🌳	Park	—	Proposed Multi-Use Path
—	Water Trail	—	Existing Bike Lane
—	Proposed Greenways	—	Proposed Bike Lane

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users of the trail, and the inclusion of historic buildings and places along a greenway helps to preserve history in places that might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

In recognition of these benefits, a preliminary Greenway concept has been developed (see Greenway Map), and the County is actively looking at opportunities for property acquisition for greenways and conservation where possible. The Greenways Plan shows the approximate routing that the trails might take, using a combination of natural area and roadside segments, and how the trails could link key public properties such as schools, parks, and government buildings to neighborhoods, shopping areas, and historical and recreational areas. With funding through the CIP and grant funds, and more detailed planning, design, property or easement acquisition, and construction, such a system could become a reality. Greenways could provide substantial recreational and aesthetic enhancements for County citizens.

SCHOOLS

The York County School Division consists of ten elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. In addition, the School Board owns property in Kiln Creek that is currently being leased to the County for use as a park, and a potential future school site in the upper County was proffered to the County by the developer of the Marquis in connection with a rezoning in 2013. The School Board also owns property next to the Yorktown Middle School campus, but it is too small for an elementary school site. The School Division operates four magnet school programs: the School of the Arts at Bruton High School; the Queens Lake Middle School Arts Magnet; the Math, Science, and Technology Magnet School at Yorktown Elementary; and the Fine Arts Magnet School at Waller Mill Elementary. York County's only charter school, York River Academy, located on the Yorktown Middle School campus, serves selected ninth through twelfth grade students with an innovative academic and career preparatory education in core subject areas with an emphasis on computer and web-based technology. The School Division also provides adult learning opportunities through GED (General Educational Development) classes for adults who want to get a GED diploma or just want to improve their basic math and reading skills. These classes are held at the Lifelong Learning Center/Adult Education Center at York High School. The School Division also offers ESL (English as a Second Language) classes at Tabb High School and Bethel Baptist Church.

In addition to the public school system, the County has private schools and parents who elect to home-school their children. There are seventeen private schools in the County, but the number of County residents attending them is unknown since many private school students could be from other jurisdictions and there is no requirement for reporting enrollment numbers to the state. Parents who home-school their children are required to submit a notice of intent to the local superintendent in August.

School Capacity and Enrollment

School capacities are calculated by the School Division on the basis of not just physical space but also the constraints placed on that space by programs. State education mandates, School Board policies, changes in educational philosophy, and desires and expectations of the community can influence program capacities over time. As of FY20, according to the School vision, the cumulative instructional capacity of the County's eighteen schools totaled 14,869 students. This does *not* include portable classrooms (trailers), which are not considered permanent classrooms and therefore are not included in the school capacity figures.

In 1993 the Board of Supervisors and the School Board agreed to use the following capacity targets in planning for school construction:

- Elementary Schools – 700 students
- Middle Schools – 1,000 students

- High Schools – 1,200 to 1,800 students

Most additional school capacity over the past two decades has been achieved with additions to existing schools. Coventry Elementary School was the last new building added to the elementary school inventory, opening in 1989. Magruder Elementary School was rebuilt and reopened in 1990. Grafton Middle School and Grafton High School were the last secondary schools built, opening in September 1996. The School Division has plans for several elementary school additions that will add space for an additional 352 elementary school students in the lower County, 132 elementary school students in the upper County, and 184 middle school students in the upper County. Funding for these capacity enhancement projects is programmed in the County’s adopted Capital Improvements Program for FY 2023 through FY 2028.

Most current school sites will not easily accommodate any further expansion of the school buildings. However, the sites at the following schools can accommodate limited future expansion: Seaford Elementary School, Waller Mill Elementary School, Queens Lake Middle School, Bruton High School and Yorktown Middle School.

The School Division reports Average Daily Membership (ADM) of each school on a monthly basis. These numbers can fluctuate dramatically from year to year and even from month to month. In the 2021-22 school year, for example, ADM ranged from a low of 12,187 students in March to a high of 12,753 in December. For projection purposes, the September ADM figures are used. As shown in **Figure 7**, enrollment declined fairly steadily from 2008 through 2013 and then reversed course, rising every year through the 2019-20 school year. ADM then dropped significantly in the 2020-21 school year during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and, although there was some rebound in 2021-22, it was still lower than it was five years ago.

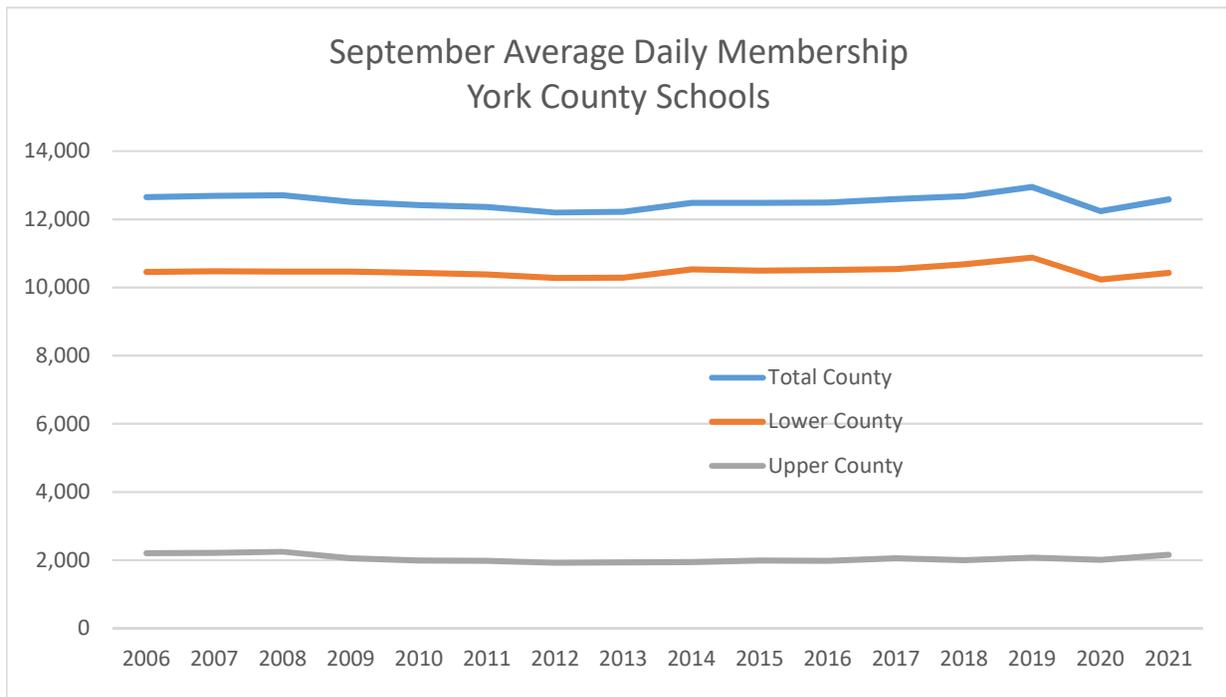


Figure 7

While school capacity exceeds enrollment in the aggregate by more than two thousand, there are six elementary schools in the lower County that are operating at or above their capacity: Bethel Manor, Coventry, Grafton-Bethel, Mt. Vernon, and Tabb. None of the middle schools are experiencing overcrowding.

PLANNING ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

As discussed in the Demographic Profile and Projections, the County's population is expected to continue to grow over the next few decades, adding an estimated 10,000 residents by 2040. This population growth will put pressure on public facilities and generate needs and demands for improvements. The results of the Comprehensive Plan telephone survey demonstrate citizen support for public facilities especially schools, which the respondents cited as the thing they like most about the County. In addition, 78% of the respondents considered it either important or very important to build or expand schools. This comes as no surprise, as the quality of the school system has long been a source of pride for York County residents, and maintaining the quality of the school system consistently ranks as a top priority in public opinion surveys. The second overall priority for public facilities, according to the survey, are parks for active recreation (66%). These two were followed in order by bike paths and sidewalks (61% and 60% respectively) with access to natural water bodies and fire stations at 59%. The survey also asked if there were any facilities other than those named that should be built or expanded in the next twenty years. On this question, the respondents were evenly divided: 49% said yes and 49% said no.

In recent years, the County has made significant capital investments through its Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to address longstanding public facility needs in the areas of schools, public safety, parks and recreation, libraries, and office space. These investments will yield huge dividends for many years to come in terms of enhanced service and quality of life for the County's citizens.

Public Safety

The construction of the new Law Enforcement Center will address the space constraints experienced by both the Sheriff's Office and the Department of Fire and Life Safety. Many of the Sheriff's offices will move into the new building. This will free up space in the Public Safety Building that can then be renovated and utilized by the Department of Fire and Life Safety as well as the Department of Social Services. This space should be renovated and be immediately adjacent to a permanent Emergency Operations Center in order to ensure effective coordination during emergency events as well as day-to-day operational efficiencies.

The Sheriff's Office has experienced a significant increase in calls for service in the past five years. This increase has led to deputies spending more time answering calls and writing reports, and less time patrolling the County and proactively engaging in community policing activities with citizens and businesses. Additional law enforcement deputies will be needed in the coming years to maintain the level of service residents and businesses have come to expect. The new Law Enforcement Center and increasing the number of law enforcement deputies will help to maintain a safe community.

As growth continues, public expectations increase and as buildings age, the activity level of each fire station will change accordingly. This will affect the ability to respond adequately to emergencies. The key to having an acceptable response time is the availability of apparatus and personnel capable of responding from within an acceptable distance. This requires an adequate transportation network with limited traffic congestion. As development continues, additional stations and resources are expected to be needed. Additionally, as public expectations, development needs, and the activity of fire/rescue/EMS units have increased and continue to do so, it is imperative that work continue on improving Fire and Life Safety staffing levels. This is especially imperative on fire apparatus and in other support positions. Fire Station 7, completed in spring 2023, will greatly improve response times in busy areas such as Mooretown, Waller Mill, Bypass, and Richmond roads in the upper County. The new fire station will fulfill the long established need for a new fire station in this area to ease the workload of the Bruton and Skimino fire stations. In the future, the Tabb area may require an additional fire station or increased resources and/or personnel at existing stations. Other existing fire stations will likely need additional resources and/or personnel to meet ever-increasing future response demands in their specific response areas.

Furthermore, residential growth will continue in potential hurricane/storm surge/coastal flooding areas and in proximity to a transportation network that already carries large amounts of hazardous materials. More County residents will also live within the ten-mile emergency protection zone (EPZ) of the Surry Nuclear Power Station. An efficient transportation network, not only in York County but throughout the region, will be critical to the ability of residents to evacuate from Hampton Roads. In addition, recent experiences with community-wide disasters, such as major storms and, more recently, the COVID-19 pandemic; have demonstrated the need to ensure that the County has in place critical emergency management facilities [shelters, a permanent emergency operations center (EOC), fire stations, and other support facilities] that are equipped with adequate emergency power generating capacity to allow them to effectively support operations during emergencies lasting several days to several weeks. The Department of Fire and Life Safety also has increasing needs for inventory management and maintenance requirements for equipment systems that are taxing the capabilities of their existing space. A logistical warehouse-type space is severely needed for storage and maintenance of required equipment such as medical supplies, fire hoses and appliances, uniforms, personal protective equipment, firearms, ammunition, and general supplies.

Additionally, with the amount of specialized didactic training necessary for the Department of Fire and Life Safety, a centrally located training facility with several large classroom spaces, multiple smaller breakout training rooms, specific training rooms for specialized training, technical library capabilities, and computer labs, would alleviate training pressures. The logistics and training facilities would also support County emergency management activities during major storms or other major disasters, by providing logistics support and employee respite areas.

Government Offices

In a steadily growing community, it is almost inevitable that the size of the government operations – particularly at the local level, where most government services are directly provided – will grow to meet the needs of its citizens. The County’s population in 1960 (which included Poquoson at that time) was approximately 25,900. As of 2021, the population was 70,319. York County’s continued progression from a rural county to a suburban one, facing ever more complex issues, will continue to affect the size of the County’s workforce. Between 2005 and 2020, the ratio of employees per thousand residents increased

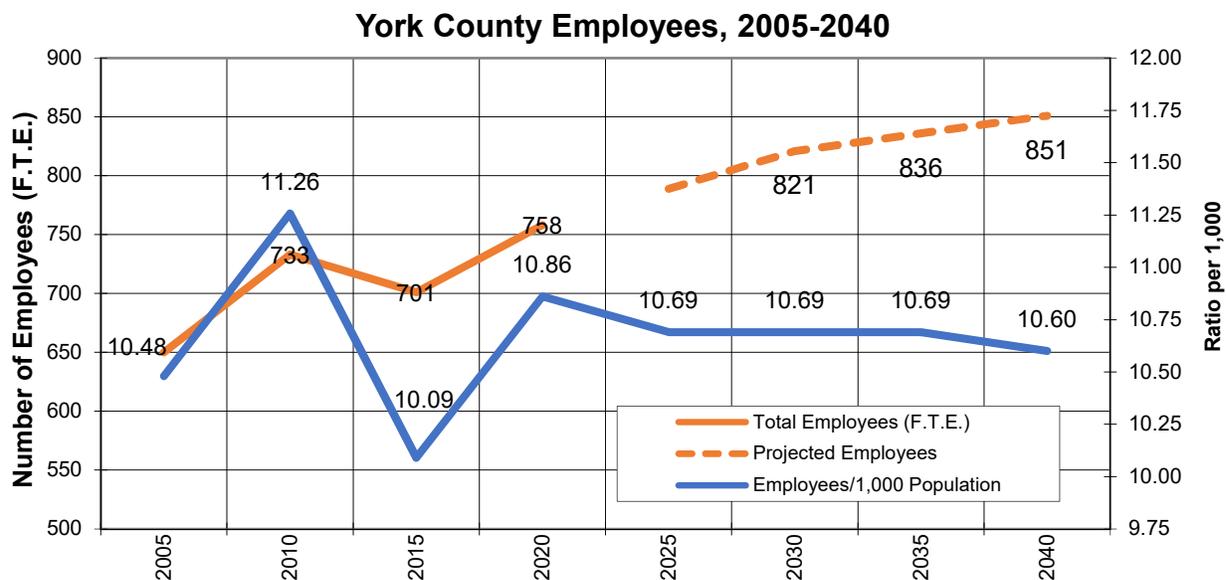


Figure 9

from 10.48 to 10.86 respectively (**Figure 9**), with the actual number of employees increasing from 650 to 758. The decline in the ratio from 11.26 in 2010 to 10.09 in 2015 reflects the cost-cutting measures (hiring freezes and employment reductions through attrition or layoffs) that were necessary as a result of the economic downturn and the effect on York County's budget. If the ratio of employees to population were to remain stable in the future as the population grows – or even to decline somewhat as a result of increased efficiency through technological advances – employee numbers are still expected to increase, but at a very slow rate, adding 93 employees in the twenty-year period.

To assess space needs within the County, a study was completed in 2018 which looked at the various facilities utilized by the County. The study outlined personnel and support spaces for each department and forecast space needs based on each department's estimate of personnel growth out to 2028. All the existing buildings were examined and options were outlined for how best to use the existing structures and opportunities for a variety of space adjustments. The study had the below recommendations:

- Construct new law enforcement building for The Sheriff's Office;
- Convert the Public Safety Building for Social Services and Fire and Life Safety;
- Renovate the Finance Building to accommodate financial office needs;
- Several options are proposed for the existing Administrative Building;
- Consolidate Planning/Development/Building Regulations at one site;
- Expand Public Works;
- Relocate Parks and Recreation Administration to the Sports Complex; and
- Minor renovations to the Courthouse.

Many of these recommendations have been completed or are underway and described in other portions of this element. The two main campus sites for County facilities, Yorktown and Goodwin Neck, have limited expansion capacity. There is little opportunity to expand office facilities in Yorktown other than at the Administration Center property, where the existing building is old and is not architecturally or aesthetically compatible with historic Yorktown. If the Administration Center were demolished, it is possible that a new building could be constructed that could address aesthetic issues and, if necessary, provide some additional office space. Additionally, The Goodwin Neck Operations Center is significantly encumbered by non-tidal wetlands and power line easements, so space for new or expanded buildings and facilities is limited.

New technologies will continue to provide opportunities to reduce the need for office space. Telecommuting, which the COVID-19 pandemic showed, allows employees to work in their homes, connected to the office by computer. This has been in use for years in private industry and in some public agencies that have found it to be more cost-effective than building, operating, and maintaining office buildings. Similarly, electronic file storage and retrieval has greatly reduced the County's record storage space needs and will continue to as the County digitizes its archives. The adequacy of and need for additional office space should be continuously monitored and assessed as York County's population increases throughout the next twenty years.

Libraries

According to the Library of Virginia's *Planning for Library Excellence: Standards for Virginia Public Libraries*, the York County Public Library meets the minimum standards and has the potential to meet and maintain EEE rating for all levels of service. The 10,000-square foot expansion of the Yorktown Library completed in spring 2023 allowed the library system to not only meet but exceed the EEE rating in facilities, based on the population of its service area of the lower County. In fact, with a total of 64,200 square feet of library space, the County will have enough library space to meet this standard for the foreseeable future. The estimated maximum build-out population of the lower County is approximately 60,000, and the EEE standard for facilities is 1.0 square feet per capita.

Upper County residents continue to receive quality service from the Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) system. The continuation of a contractual agreement with WRL will ensure that upper County residents have the benefit of access to adequate library services and programs. As noted previously, the WRL is rated as an EE for facilities by the standards. James City County and the City of Williamsburg are working toward programming improvements with the possibility of a new facility within James City County and the renovation of the downtown library or the demolition and rebuilding of the downtown library with a larger library.

Tourism

Facilities

Over the next 20 years it will be important to upgrade waterfront operations and facilities to allow increased use and County revenue growth at the waterfront. One of these identified facilities is the Freight Shed, a heavily used waterfront facility available for rent. The facility serves as a premier waterfront wedding venue in Hampton Roads and often stays booked for certain dates up to eighteen months in advance. It hosts many functions including weddings, reunions, parties, banquets, concerts, business meetings, and lectures. Ongoing management of



and improvements to the Freight Shed have brought a steady growth in revenue. The County has upgraded the audio-visual equipment and added Wi-Fi to make the facility more marketable at higher rental rates, continued upgrades and monitoring of this facility's condition will foster its ongoing success. The current CIP includes the replacement of the existing Freight Shed tent with a permanent structure that will allow for the expansion of not only paid usage but also year round events.

Improvements to the Fishing Pier have also been identified as a future planning consideration. The pier remains popular among residents and tourists and often is crowded on holidays and weekends. One proposed improvement would be to extend it farther into the York River to allow access to fishing in deeper water. The construction of an enlarged "T" section at the end of a new extension would also be beneficial as this space could accommodate more people, benches, bait cutting stations, and handicapped accessible stations, as well as additional lighting and security on the pier.



As identified in the FY2023-2028 Adopted CIP, funding for construction of a new Dockmaster's Building is programmed for 2025. This new multifunctional building will serve several crucial functions. The office manages cruise ship arrivals, waterfront events and activities, and pier operations. As the only facility that can house County Waterfront operations staff, it has become a de facto visitors center, lost and found, first aid station, and home base for Yorktown ambassadors and parking attendants. It is where boaters pay to dock, and visitors can reserve an amphibious wheelchair. Most importantly, it provides public restrooms for beachgoers and other visitors. The building will be climate-controlled and will include year-round ADA-accessible public restrooms. The ADA-accessible beach access mat, fishing pier, and trolley stop are all located near the Dockmaster's Office.

Placemaking

In recent years, the concept of placemaking has emerged as a strategy for enhancing the quality of life in a community and, in so doing, attracting and retaining talented young workers. Broadly defined, placemaking refers to the creation of accessible, comfortable, and attractive public spaces that invite activity and social interaction. The County should invest in targeted placemaking and connectivity initiatives at historic Yorktown. Additional sidewalks, signage, and the introduction of Wi-Fi would greatly enhance how community members and visitors enjoy the space.



More sidewalks would create a walkable connected community throughout the historic district. The ability to walk between Main Street and the Yorktown waterfront could result in a better experience, longer visiting hours, and ultimately more tourism revenue. Specifically, there is a need to add a brick paved sidewalk, to match the existing waterfront sidewalk, along the riverside of the National Park Service beach picnic area.

Developing a Wayfinding master plan with signage would increase the use of the sidewalk system and enhance the visitor experience by making it easier for to navigate the historic village, waterfront, and other attractions. This system would provide pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular signage, information kiosks, directional signage, mapping, and technology assisted parking.

Likewise, providing Wi-Fi at the waterfront would also improve the visitor experience. Increasing and making internet speeds more reliable will help visitors access County websites, social media, and the newly established trolley tracking app more easily. Improved accessibility to these County and business resources could increase visitation to the adjacent attractions and help bring awareness to special promotions by local businesses. Furthermore, with growing visitation to the waterfront and an increasing number of events, open wireless broadband internet service would be an important public safety tool. A sufficient broadband system could be used to promptly reach those in the area and inform them of public safety related warnings. These notifications would address emergencies such as impending weather, lost children or family members, and other emergency scenarios through cell phone notifications.

Parks and Recreation

The demand for recreational programs and facilities to accommodate them is evident in the number of County residents participating in such programs. Participation in recreational programs will likely continue to grow as the population grows, provided that the programs and facilities are available, and the availability of adequate parks and recreational facilities continues to be rated relatively high as a priority in the citizen input process.

In planning future recreational programs and facilities, it will be increasingly important to consider the age structure along with the size of the population. Demographic trends indicate steady aging of the population as the baby boom continues to move through the life cycle. York County's population is projected to grow by about 10,000 people in the next twenty years, while the 65 and older population is projected to grow from 16.8% of the population in 2020 to 19.6% by 2040. The youth population as a percentage of the population will remain relatively constant in the next twenty years, fluctuating around 21%. In terms of raw numbers, both age groups are projected to see continuous growth over the next 20 years, with a net increase of 2,500 school age and 4,000 senior residents by 2040.

The seasonal opening and additional amenities at New Quarter Park as well as the opening of the McReynolds Athletic Complex have greatly helped to meet the ongoing need for recreational opportunities in the County. Potentially desirable future parks and recreational facilities might include such things as an outdoor pool, indoor facilities, picnic areas/facilities, walking/bicycle trails, waterfront

property, etc. Citizens have also expressed the desire for more “passive recreation” areas in the County, as currently there are very few places at public parks that are not developed into athletic facilities or adjacent to program areas. These passive areas would allow citizens to enjoy the outdoors and nature by providing areas to read a book, enjoy nature, have a picnic on a blanket, fly a kite, take a quiet walk, throw a Frisbee, play ball, etc. The *2018 Virginia Outdoor Demand Survey* asked respondents to identify the “most needed outdoor recreation opportunities in Virginia.” The top three were “natural areas” (53%), parks (51%), and “trails” (55%).

Currently, the majority of indoor community recreational programs either takes place in schools or leased space. While leased space has served the County well in the case of the Senior Center, the use of school space is more problematic. School programs on top of school maintenance and construction priorities necessarily cause scheduling difficulties at times for community recreational use. These issues often require Parks and Recreation programs (and/or privately sponsored community recreational activities) to be cancelled or relocated, sometimes with little notice. Also some programs have had to be altered, reduced, or discontinued due to the limitations of school facilities.

The installation of synthetic turf playing fields could help both the schools and the County as these fields could be used year-round without the need to be taken out of service for field repair/renovation. The surface remains even, and its texture does not change to provide a safer and pleasant experience. Currently, many natural turf fields are shut down in the summer to allow for repair of the turf, which in turn affects programming. Natural turf fields are also not able to be used in the winter as the fields can be damaged by playing on them when the grass is dormant. As a result, synthetic fields with year-round playing capabilities are becoming an increasingly desirable and potentially viable option, albeit a costly one.

The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation has agreed to give land around the Visitors Center to the City of Williamsburg to build a future regional indoor sports facility, with cooperation from James City County and York County. The main purpose would be for providing more sport facilities and increasing sports tourism. York County has several hotels, restaurant, and other tourist facilities in proximity to the proposed facility which would see benefits from increase sports availability to the area.

For many years citizens advocated the development of a community center that could accommodate the needs of different age groups and thereby serve a large segment of the population. It was largely in response to these concerns that the County acquired land on Route 134 adjacent to the Tabb library site and made it available to the YMCA to construct a recreation facility serving lower County residents. Similarly, upper County residents are served by another YMCA on the Sentara hospital site. Both YMCAs provide recreational services to the community. Looking to the future, it will be important to assess whether these fee-based facilities, in combination with continued use of school facilities, meet the needs of all segments of the population for indoor community recreational programs and opportunities.

As the Back Creek Park and Rodgers Smith Landing boat ramps increase in popularity, it will be important to continue maintaining these facilities and ensure that the launching areas do not become blocked with sediment. Periodic inspection of the channel and dredging may be needed to ensure these docks can continue to support the size of boats using them.

Schools

School enrollment growth or decline is driven by net migration, which is largely a function of residential development, and resident births. Enrollment can be highly volatile and unpredictable, and the margin of error for developing projections increases dramatically the further out one projects. As part of the build-out analysis conducted for this Plan, an attempt was made to project how many school students there would be if the remaining developable residentially zoned land in the County were developed at its maximum allowable density. The purpose of this exercise was to try to get at least a rough picture of what

the County’s ultimate school facility needs might be. Based on this analysis, it is estimated that at full build-out, there would be approximately 1,800 students in the system – about 1,000 in the lower County and 800-900 in the upper County.

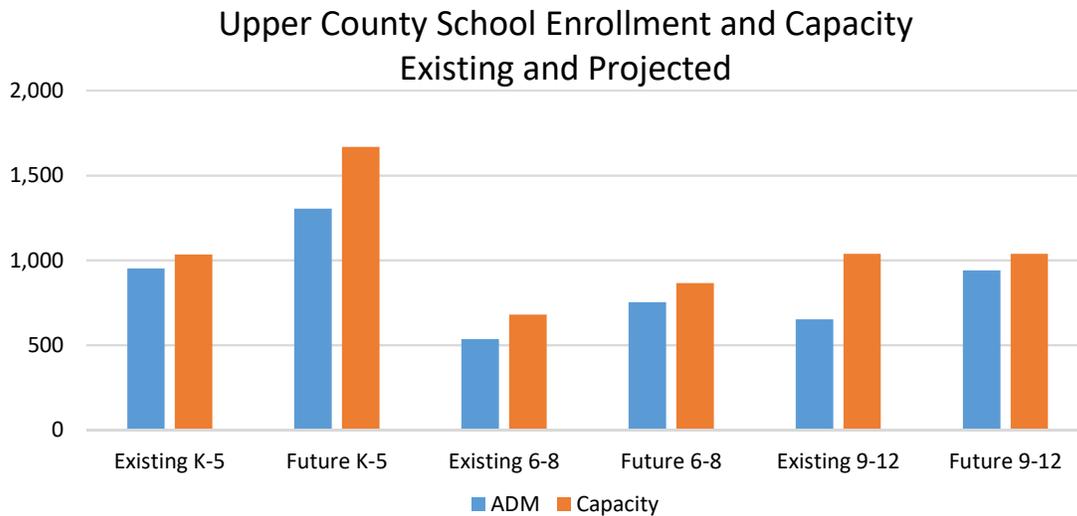


Figure 10

Figures 10 and 11 graphically show the relationship between school enrollment and capacity both currently and at ultimate build-out in both the upper County and the lower County. The calculation of future capacity includes existing capacity plus the additional capacity programmed in the adopted CIP, which includes several classroom additions as well as a new 500-student elementary school in the upper County. The charts indicate that there would appear to be sufficient capacity – either existing or planned – throughout the school system except at the elementary school level, which would have an estimated aggregate capacity deficit of about 100 students.

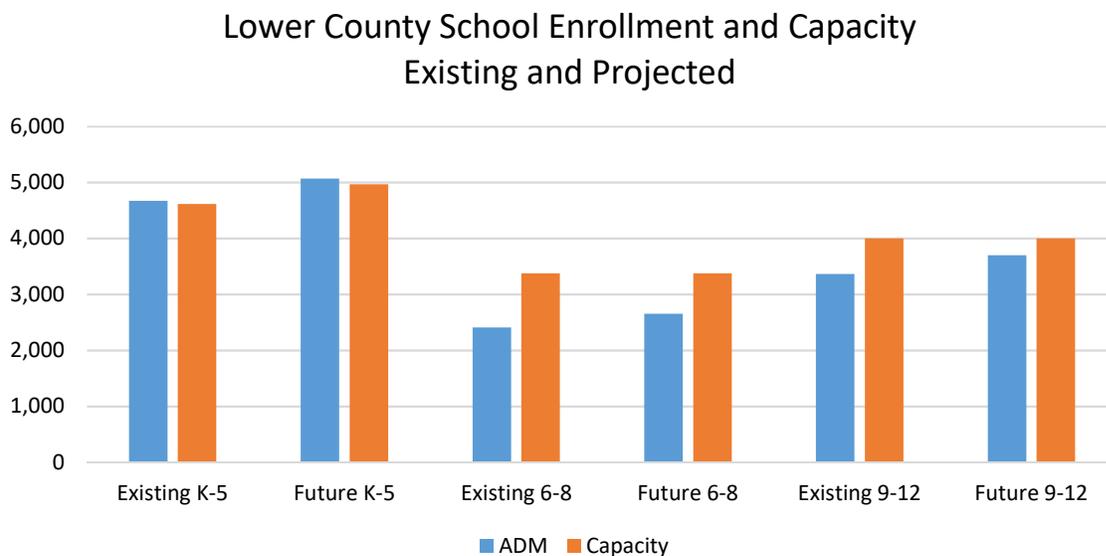


Figure 11

It should be emphasized that this is a very broad, long-range analysis, and many things can change in the next fifteen to twenty years. For example, if history is any guide, there will likely be program changes in

the future – at the state, local, or federal level – that will reduce school capacity, perhaps significantly. It would not be realistic to make school construction decisions based on long-range projections. Instead, the six-year horizon of the County’s CIP is more appropriate for school facility planning and construction decisions.

There are several ways to address school overcrowding. The least costly and most efficient method – although often the least popular among students and parents – is to change school attendance zone boundaries to provide for a more equal distribution of students among schools. This allows surplus capacity to be put to use while reducing the burden on overcrowded schools. Another cost-effective solution, also not particularly popular, is to use portable classrooms that are less expensive to lease than additions are to build. These solutions are particularly appropriate for dealing with crowding that is temporary and/or relatively minor in scale. For sustained crowding conditions that cannot be effectively addressed by changing the attendance zones or installing trailers, additions to existing schools – or construction of new schools depending on the extent of the shortage of space – is the appropriate solution. For economic reasons, building additions are the preferred choice. This is why a Memorandum of Understanding between the Board of Supervisors and the School Board states that no new school buildings will be constructed until all existing schools have been expanded to their maximum allowable capacity. Of course, cost-effectiveness is not the only consideration, and it must be balanced against the need to keep schools to an appropriate size. When the enrollment at any level in either the upper or lower County begins to approach the program capacity, and opportunities for expansions do not exist because of site constraints, maximum desirable school size, or other factors, it will be necessary to plan for new construction.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

GENERAL

Goal: York County should be a community where the citizens feel safe from crime, receive prompt and effective emergency services when needed, have a first-rate public education system, and have convenient access to public facilities at appropriate locations to serve them economically and efficiently, contributing to a better quality of life for citizens.

Objective 1: Coordinate the location and timing of public facilities in recognition of existing and anticipated needs and characteristics – including the age distribution and location – of present and projected future populations.

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan to guide the budgeting of County funds for capital improvement projects and annually review and update the six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and include a process for Planning Commission review, and certification by resolution, of its conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.

The County should continue to utilize the CIP process to identify needed improvements to accommodate the needs of the citizens. The Code of Virginia requires the Planning Commission to review the CIP and ensure its compliance with the Comprehensive Plan. This is a key feature to making sure the public is involved in the continued process of public development.

2. Provide public buildings that set an example for quality development in the County

Government buildings are viewed as structures that the citizens would like to reflect back on commercial and residential development in the County. New York County buildings should replicate these high standards.

3. Provide regular, ongoing inspection, maintenance, and repair of all public buildings

It is important for public facilities to meet certain standards for security, safety, and accessibility that exceed citizen and visitor expectations. The County should continue to provide ongoing efforts to make sure all facilities go above and beyond the requirements for all those using them.

Objective 2: Avoid wasteful duplication of effort in the construction and operation of public facilities.

1. Where feasible, cooperate with neighboring localities to establish and maintain regional public facilities and programs for the use of residents of multiple jurisdictions.

Partnerships and cooperation with neighboring localities (Williamsburg, James City County, Newport News, and Hampton) and area military installations allow for the sharing of resources to best serve and protect residents of the peninsula. Mutual emergency aid agreements allow for timely and adequate response to emergency incidents. Maintaining cooperative agreements across the region will continue to provide excellent services to the region's residents and visitors.

2. Design public buildings to accommodate a variety of uses.

It is important that public building provide flexibility in space, design, and usability. New libraries, school buildings, and other public facilities should be designed to serve multiple needs within the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Goal: Create and maintain a safe community by providing protection and life safety, to prevent emergencies when possible, to respond quickly, and to minimize pain, suffering, and loss when emergencies do occur.

Objective 1: Ensure adequate fire stations, supporting facilities, and personnel in order to provide prompt and effective fire and emergency medical response to all areas of the County.

1. Increase the number of firefighters to ensure that there is adequate staff responding on fire/rescue/EMS apparatus so that safe and effective firefighting operations can be accomplished. Further ensure that there is sufficient support staff to meet other associated needs (i.e. training, prevention, administrative services, etc.).

With population increases and tourists' continued visitation to the area, public safety personnel should be assessed for adequate staffing levels performing in the field and within support roles. Additional staffing should increase to meet the needs for response and appropriate training.

2. Add replace, expand, and/or renovate fire stations when circumstances warrant.

There are many factors that can affect an emergency response including but not limited to facility upkeep, operational response changes/additions, and/or development/geographical changes that would warrant the replacement, expansion, or renovation of a fire station. The ability of fire stations to have the necessary operational resources to respond to emergencies should be constantly measured to determine if a fire station needs to be updated or added. Specifically, the Tabb area has been identified as possibly requiring an additional fire station or increased resources and/or personnel at existing stations in that area in the near future.

3. Provide adequate facilities and resources to support fire and life safety operations

Fire and Life Safety requires many facilities and resources to operate effectively in addition to the fire stations. These include but are not limited to training space, office areas, and logistics space that is vital to having adequate responses to emergencies, especially new and emerging technologies (e.g. electric vehicles). A logistical warehouse-type space is especially needed for storage and maintenance of required equipment such as medical supplies, fire hoses and appliances, uniforms, personal protective equipment, firearms, ammunition, and general supplies. Additionally, a centrally located training facility with several large classroom spaces, multiple smaller breakout training rooms, specific training rooms for specialized training, technical library capabilities, and computer labs, would alleviate currently significant training pressures. This space could also be an important facility supporting emergency response.

Objective 2: Maintain a five-minute average fire and emergency response time to at least 90% of the County's land area.

1. Locate and design fire stations to provide opportunities for expansion of service, achieve response time goals, address target hazard needs, and/or to meet service demands.

The location and design of fire stations should be carefully investigated and decided to best serve the community needs. Future population growth and development patterns, current response times, identified hazards, and areas with spikes in demand should all be considered in the location and design of new facilities to serve both current and future residents.

Objective 3: Ensure that adequate disaster support facilities are in place to accommodate preparation for, response to, and recovery from major emergencies/disasters.

1. Continue improvement efforts and/or construct facilities needed for adequate major emergency/disaster coordination and support.

An effective response to major emergency/disaster events requires adequate facilities such as an emergency operations center that is set up and permanently available for activation, emergency shelters, public safety facilities, etc. These spaces should also be appropriately equipped with necessary utilities such as sufficient backup emergency power and other utilities and resources that allow them to effectively support operations during emergencies lasting several days to several weeks. Furthermore, it is essential that other critical County facilities that are used to support County operations during major emergencies or disasters and are necessary for the continuity of operations have adequate backup emergency power and associated appurtenances.

Objective 4: Provide law enforcement facilities and employees to accommodate manpower levels sufficient to provide prompt and effective crime protection, prevention, and law enforcement to all areas of the County.

1. Increase the number of Sheriff's deputies.

As the County population is projected to increase over the next 20 years, the number of incidents that must be responded to will most likely increase, as has been evident in recent years. Increasing the number of officers proportional to County growth will allow the York-Poquoson Sheriff's Office to maintain the level of service residents and the business community has come to expect from the Sheriff's Office.

Objective 5: Provide detention/correctional facilities of sufficient capacity to house securely and safely the County's future adult and juvenile inmate population.

1. Work with regional partners to ensure regional facilities have the capacity to house the regional inmate population.

York County's adult prisoners are housed in the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail (VPRJ) with prisoners from James City County, Williamsburg, and Poquoson. Juvenile inmates are housed at the Merrimac Center, a regional juvenile detention center located adjacent to the jail. The VPRJ is designed to accommodate future expansion should the need arise. By continually working with regional partners to monitor the conditions and capacity of these facilities, proactive plans to expand the facility can be made to accommodate increased inmate populations.

Objective 6: Ensure the public receives useful and accurate information in emergency situations.

1. Continue to utilize a variety of means to disseminate disaster and emergency information to the public.

Getting information out to the citizens is one of the biggest challenges in responding to a disaster or major emergency. The County utilizes a variety of means to inform the public in an emergency event including the use of the York Alert notification systems, various disaster publications, multiple social media platforms, variable/digital message signs, routine media communications, and cable channel broadcasts. Continuing to utilize a variety of platforms simultaneously will allow the County to reach the most people in a relatively short amount of time. The County should also continually evaluate additional means and platforms to best reach all residents.

GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Goal: Maintain sufficient and conveniently located space to serve the County's growing population.

Objective 1: Retain historic Yorktown as the seat of the County government.

1. Evaluate the need for and feasibility of constructing a new larger administration building to replace the existing one in Yorktown.

Yorktown has been a center for government in York County for centuries. York Hall specifically has served as a courthouse, and governmental offices, and is now a central location for the meetings of various local boards, committees, and groups. The conversion of the existing Administration Center from a school in 1929 and renovation in 2000 has provided a location for the administrative offices; however, the limitations of the building is showing the growing pains of the needs of citizens. The County should assess the possibility of providing administration services in a building that would represent the seat of government in Yorktown.

Objective 2: Make optimum use of existing office space and use technology to the maximum extent feasible to minimize the need for physical space, accommodate administrative and storage functions, and maximize efficiency.

1. Continue to use technology to improve on space-saving computer-based methods of storing and retrieving County files and records.

The County has already begun using solutions for reducing the number of paper records on file. These efforts should be continued and expanded as technology advances.

2. Evaluate the need for and feasibility of constructing a warehousing center for the storage needs of County departments.

The storage of large equipment and mass amounts of materials, especially in line with the needs for emergency preparedness, as well as storing paper records is a critical need for County departments. A feasibility study should be completed to determine overall needs and possible locations for providing a storage location for these needs.

Objective 3: Maintain and create ease of access to services.

1. Seek to maintain central complexes where departmental offices are concentrated to make locating services easier for citizens.

The County should seek to group similar services together such as development services where citizens can access the offices that handle every step of the development process in one place. Additionally, governmental offices should be maintained, and where possible, established in areas that offer greater accessibility to governmental services. This could mean partnering with other localities to create better ease of access to services for citizens in the upper county, like the library or providing a satellite office, like the voter registrar.

LIBRARY

Goal: Provide equal access to exemplary library information services and foster a community of citizen interaction.

Objective 1: Achieve and maintain the highest levels of excellence in library service according to State standards.

1. Expand the number and range of library books, digital resources, audio-visual materials, and online access to information as necessitated by citizen needs and technological changes.

As the population grows over the next twenty years and technology changes, it is vital that the library is responsive to citizens' needs and constantly looking to evaluate and expand its collection of materials. This will allow the library to maintain EEE rating in collections.

2. Maintain, expand, and enhance information technology in library facilities.

Vital qualities of a modern library include access to books, study rooms, classrooms, open spaces, Wi-Fi, and computers. Technology has become an increasingly important and constantly changing resource that will need to be updated and expanded in the future to keep up with technological advancements. This will allow the library to maintain EEE rating in technology.

3. Increase the number of full-time employees and professional librarians per capita.

The success of a library system is based on the competency and commitment of its staff. York County Library's currently have EE rating in Staffing. Additional full-time employees per capita and professional librarians per capita would allow the library to reach EEE in staffing. Currently the library staffing resources are at capacity to meet the demands for and programs, and will need to be increased further to match the County's growing population over the next twenty years. Each library requires skilled employees in the areas of youth, reference, circulation, technical services, technology, administration, and building maintenance. A consistent onboarding process, staff retention and engagement methods, and policies and programs to support ongoing professional development have been identified to foster a thriving library work environment to best serve the public.

4. Enhance the Cultural Arts Programs utilizing the new space at the Yorktown Library.

The Yorktown Library renovation and addition project includes many spaces, including a large auditorium like space, which can be used for cultural arts programming. The extra space offers the opportunity to enhance and further programming for the public, actions that were not feasible under previous space restrictions.

5. Renovate the interior of the Tabb Library.

The Tabb Library was constructed in 1999 under the recommendation of a prior Comprehensive Plan. Since then, the role of the libraries has expanded to include study rooms, classrooms, open spaces, Wi-Fi, and many technological advancements. Renovation of the Tabb Library would result in a greater and more efficient utilization of the space that is becoming outdated.

6. Explore the possibility of establishing one or more storefront libraries in the upper County.

Upper County residents rely on the Williamsburg Regional Library for convenient library access. With population growth shifting from the lower County to the upper County, a storefront library may also be useful to better serve these residents while repurposing abandoned retail space.

Objective 2: Ensure the equitable provision of library services and facilities throughout the County by breaking down access barriers and engaging with the community

1. Expand library outreach services in the Lackey Community.

Access to library services appears to be a problem for Lackey residents as records indicate that very few of them utilize County library services. Efforts to serve this community have included a “pop-up” library at Charles Brown Park initiated with a mobile van providing books and Wi-Fi access. Additional outreach efforts will likely be needed to ensure access for these residents.

2. Expand library outreach services by extending service hours and locations.

Extending service hours and locations would make visits to the library more convenient for the citizens. Whether it is having time to go to the library after work or spending less time to get there, the strategic expansion of library services will better serve County citizens. This also includes bringing the library to people who otherwise can't get there, including nursing homes, retirement communities, and other underserved areas. “Pop up” libraries and book deliveries have been utilized in the past to connect residents to library services.

3. Develop a plan to continually assess and reconfigure library spaces according to community needs.

The uses and operation of the library have changed over the last twenty years to fulfill its goal and role in the County. Spaces should be designed to be flexible in order to respond to the changing and dynamic needs of patrons and service patterns. The library must continue to be flexible and responsive to community needs to reconfigure spaces to best serve County residents.

Objective 3: Foster local and regional partnerships for resource sharing and economy of service.

1. Continue partnership with Williamsburg Regional Library.

The Williamsburg Regional Library continues to conveniently serve upper County residents through the operation of two locations. Continued support for this partnership will ensure that upper County residents continue to have convenient access to a library.

2. Continue partnership with the Division of Parks and Recreation.

The library has successfully partnered with the County’s Division of Parks and Recreation on a variety of events and programs. Sharing resources like staff, meeting spaces, equipment, and ideas has led to the development or enhancement of many programs enjoyed by County residents. Events like library programs at the parks, Movies in the Park, Senior Center events, and a variety of monthly library programs have all been successful because of collaboration with Parks and Recreation. The renovation and expansion of the Yorktown Library offers the opportunity to expand partnered events and programs into this new space.

3. Form Economic Development partnerships.

The library can be a useful resource for both professional development and many local businesses. Meeting spaces, conference rooms, Wi-Fi, and library collections can all be utilized to promote professional and economic development in the County. Businesses have used library space to provide free seminars and engage with the public. Additionally, as more people begin to work remotely, the library is utilized by many as a place to work in a quiet space and with a reliable internet connection. Partnerships with the County’s Department of Economic and Tourism Development could expand business development, entrepreneurial, and professional programs to support County residents’ professional needs.

Objective 4: Provide programs, outreach, and resources for the education and entertainment of all ages to foster lifelong learning.

1. Develop makerspace programs.

These spaces can work to expand STREAM-based-initiatives and be an important resource developed with coordination to the needs of the schools. These programs may require the acquisition of necessary additional equipment and other resources. Additional staff should be trained in Makerspace operation with the goal of providing staffed “Maker-hours” where the public can utilize Makerspace equipment.

2. Support a vibrant and educated community.

The libraries should continue to develop classes and events supporting preschool, K-12, and life-long learning. Proposed strategies are to explore collaboration with adult learning institutions and expand workforce development and employment assistance support.

TOURISM

Goal: Maximize the York River waterfront and historic area to enhance York County citizens’ quality of life and make it a premier destination for tourists who contribute to the County’s economic success.

Objective 1: Upgrade waterfront operations and facilities

1. Identify areas that can be managed for increases in use and revenues.

a. Freight Shed: The Freight Shed is a premier waterfront wedding venue in Hampton Roads. This highly sought after waterfront facility stays booked up to eighteen months in advance for the most popular dates. The Tourism Division’s oversight of the Freight Shed has brought steady growth in revenue every year. In addition, the audio-visual equipment in the facility has been upgraded, and Wi-Fi has been added to maximize utilization. The adopted Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for FY2023-FY2028 includes funding programmed for the replacement of the existing Freight Shed tent with a permanent structure that will allow for the expansion of not only paid usage but also year-round events.

- b. Piers: Fishing Pier improvements could include extending it into deeper water and constructing an enlarged “T” section at the end to accommodate more people, handicapped-accessible stations, benches, bait cutting stations, and additional lighting and security.
 - c. Dockmaster’s Building: The adopted CIP includes funding for the Dockmaster’s Building, which will serve as an information center and provide additional public restrooms. This new facility will allow for a more robust information and welcoming service for visitors and provide additional ADA-compliant restrooms. Additionally, the new building will provide offices for the staff that manages Yorktown waterfront operations.
2. Promote and increase year-round visitation to Yorktown and Riverwalk Landing in a manner that does not detract from the village’s historic charm and character and the residents’ quality of life or adversely impact the fragile environment, specifically the ecosystem of the York River and the air quality of the greater area.
- a. Expanded event schedule; state of the art trolleys, and cruise ships
 - Two different concert series, weekly farmers markets, art shows, festivals, and visiting tall ships.
 - Add new events and enhance existing events such as the Maritime Market, Go Green, First Responders, and Market on Main Street by adding more activities, entertainment, and unique vendors and by increasing and spreading the footprint of events.
 - The trolley service carries approximately 90,000 passengers per year. Ridership has grown steadily since 2014 even though older trolleys have experienced maintenance issues that put them out of service.
 - The trolley service has become an attraction in and of itself for locals and all of the trolleys are ADA-compliant.
 - The trolley system is equipped with “ETA SPOT” tracking software which can be accessed using either the web or the mobile app so visitors can track their wait time.
 - Another popular sight at the piers are the cruise ships, which dock primarily in the spring and fall, bringing thousands of visitors to Yorktown who spend money in local restaurants, stores, and attractions.
 - Focus on ways to cross-promote and connect events on Main Street and the waterfront.

Objective 2: Invest in placemaking and connectivity within Yorktown

1. Increase the provision of accessible sidewalks within the Yorktown village.

Creating a walkable community and connectivity throughout the historic district would be a meaningful upgrade to the citizen and visitor experience. The ability to walk between historic Main Street and the Yorktown waterfront could result in a better experience, longer visits to Yorktown, and ultimately more revenue. As more ADA-accessible amenities are added to the waterfront, there is a need to add a brick-paved sidewalk to match the existing sidewalk at the waterfront along the riverside of the National Park Service beach picnic area. It would also enhance the overall experience of citizens and visitors.

2. Increase Wi-Fi internet access and public address system throughout the waterfront.

Visitors to the waterfront expect to be able to use their technology. Wi-Fi would not only enhance the visitor experience, but it would also provide a strong internet connection for visitors to reach County websites, social media, and the newly established Trolley tracking app, which gives real-time updates on its location. This could also increase visitation to the adjacent attractions and help bring awareness to special promotions by the local businesses using GPS and location markers.

With growing visitation to the waterfront and an increasing number of events, a public address system and open wireless broadband internet service would be an important public safety tool. This would allow officials to promptly reach those in the area and inform them of public safety-related warnings such as impending inclement weather, lost children or family members, and other emergency scenarios.

3. Review signage and wayfinding within the historic village.

The Wayfinding Master Plan with signage will make it easier for visitors to navigate the historic village, waterfront, and other attractions. An integrated wayfinding system will enhance the visitor experience by providing pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular signage, information kiosks, directional signage, mapping, and technology-assisted parking.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Goal: Build community amongst and enhance the quality of life for York County residents through the operation and maintenance of park and recreation facilities and programs.

Objective 1: Continually assess and evaluate the future need for outdoor and indoor recreational facilities and activities to serve County residents.

1. Continue implementation of the “school/park” concept to enhance the recreational use of school sites.

York County’s development of recreational facilities at school sites for community use, known as the “school/park” concept, has proven to be an effective means of providing athletic fields, gymnasiums, playground areas, basketball and tennis courts that serve both school and community needs. Sharing these sites is also extremely cost-effective compared to building and maintaining separate sites for school and recreational uses. Developments utilizing this concept are often both a mutually beneficial and cost-effective strategy to expand recreational facilities.

2. Develop a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

A comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan would address specific existing and future demands for both public and private recreation programs and any needs for additional recreation facilities and grounds accounting for future residents’ desires.

3. Consider the need for and feasibility of developing a public space for community events requiring meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and multi-purpose rooms.

Demand for facilities with meeting rooms, kitchen facilities, and multi-purpose rooms may increase as the County population grows over the next twenty years. These facilities provide services that are currently utilized at the York County Boys & Girls Club and Charles E. Brown Park and at other recreation facilities located in James City County and Williamsburg for upper County residents. School sites have also been used to fulfill the need for these spaces but school programs, school maintenance, and construction priorities cause scheduling difficulties for community recreational use. This has resulted in many short-notice cancelations and program alterations because of the limitations of school facilities.

4. Provide for the particular needs of the young, the elderly, and the disabled.

Both the number of young and elderly residents are expected to increase in the County over the next twenty years. Special attention should be given to the unique needs of these subgroups of residents

in future planning and development of both facilities and programs. In addition, special attention should also be given to the needs of the disabled to provide equitable access to County recreational programs, facilities, and Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) programming.

5. Increase public awareness about private and other non-County facilities and programs that help meet the recreational demands of County residents.

Informing County residents of these resources can serve to meet their demand for these programs and facilities without costly substantial investment in new facilities and programs. Some of these resources include privately run athletic programs, the Victory Family (lower County) and R.F. Wilkinson Family (upper County) YMCAs, and recreation facilities located in James City County and Williamsburg.

6. Continue to place lighting at County athletic fields to increase usage beyond daylight hours.

Installing lighting at County athletic fields is an efficient way to increase their hours of use. As demand for athletic fields increases, this strategy can effectively be used to meet demand without having to develop and maintain new fields. In addition, recently the time demand for school usage has increased dramatically as a result of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) approval of year-round practices for interscholastic teams. This has left less time for the recreational use of many of the County's athletic fields. Lighting has been found to double or even triple a field's hours of use, provided the turf system is strong enough to endure the increased use.

Objective 2: Protect the natural environment and preserve open space.

1. Continually assess and evaluate the future need for public areas for passive recreation for citizens to enjoy the outdoors.

Citizens have repeatedly expressed the desire for more passive recreation areas in the County. Currently, there are very few places in public parks that are not developed into athletic facilities or adjacent to program areas. The development of passive recreational areas would allow citizens to enjoy the outdoors by providing areas to read a book, enjoy nature, have a picnic, fly a kite, take a walk, throw a Frisbee, etc.

2. Continually assess and evaluate the future need for greenways/trails to include a network of open space areas, water trails, natural corridors, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and historical and recreational sites.

There are many economic, health, environmental, historical, and cultural benefits to having greenways in a community. The Greenways Plan shows the approximate routing that the trails might take, using a combination of natural area and roadside segments, and how the trails could link key public properties such as schools, parks, and government buildings to neighborhoods, shopping areas, and historical and recreational areas. The Greenways Plan depends on continued funding through the CIP, the availability of grant funds, detailed planning and design, property and/or easement acquisition, and adequate construction. Implementation of Greenways would provide substantial recreational and aesthetic enhancements for County citizens.

3. Promote the provision of open space and recreational facilities in new residential development.

As continued residential development increases the County's population, it will be essential to expand recreational facilities and open space to meet new demand. Greenways and open spaces close to residential areas can encourage citizens to participate in new activities and provide alternative modes of travel to work or other destinations.

Objective 3: Increase public access to waterways to include recreational, fishing, and boating uses.

1. Explore opportunities to work with the National Park Service and the U.S. Military installations to increase public access to the waterways.

Based on the 2018 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* water-related activities are extremely important to Virginians. Less than 1% of Virginia's tidal shoreline is publicly owned and accessible. This is especially a challenge in York County, as in addition to private ownership, much of the County's shoreline is in federal ownership (National Park Service, Camp Peary, Cheatham Annex, Naval Weapons Station, and the Coast Guard Training Center). This contributes to a shortage of water access in the County. Partnerships forming public access sites would be extremely beneficial to County residents and visitors.

2. Continually explore and assess the need and ability to maintain, expand, and/or establish new public water access points on nonfederal land.

With water access limited by private and federal land ownership, opportunities for the County to expand water access outside federal areas should constantly be explored and assessed. Some identified actions include water access on Queen Creek, a public boat launching facility on Chisman Creek, expansion of the parking lot at Back Creek Park and increased accessibility of large tidal marshes along the County's creeks.

Objective 4: Ensure that athletic fields and other recreational facilities are well maintained.

1. Develop and implement a schedule for the phased conversion athletic fields from natural turf to synthetic turf.

The conversion to synthetic turf would allow the fields use for year-round activities and programs. There is often increased usage on County fields during times when natural turf fields would otherwise have to be annually rested or renovated to maintain turf quality. Recently, the time demand for school usage has increased dramatically as a result of the Virginia High School League (VHSL) approval of year-round practices for interscholastic teams. This has left less time for the recreational use of many of the County's athletic fields.

SCHOOLS

Goal: Create a school system where together, all students and staff are inspired to explore paths leading to personal and collective success.

Objective 1: Provide a quality learning environment that is conducive to the education of all present and future school-age children in the County.

1. Consider the general boundaries of residential neighborhoods and their proximity to schools in establishing school attendance zones.

As the number one tool in addressing school overcrowding, changes in zones should evaluate multiple options for maintaining neighborhood unity while keeping schools as close as possible to the students they serve.

2. Review school enrollment projections every year.

School enrollment can fluctuate greatly from year to year and sometimes even from month to month, making it extremely difficult to forecast. Short-term enrollment projections should be analyzed

regularly. Additionally, before approving rezonings and planned developments, the School Division and County should consider their potential impact on the school system so as to minimize school crowding.

Objective 2: Optimize use of school facilities and grounds.

1. Utilize school facilities as multi-use structures.

The School Board and Board of Supervisors should continue to work in partnership to utilize school facilities for parks and recreation programming as well for community support. Where possible, each school should provide athletic fields, gymnasiums, playground areas, and basketball and tennis courts that serve both school and community needs. Furthermore, there should be continued support for use of school facilities for after-hours classroom use.