

2023-2026



CARROLL COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS
STRATEGIC PLAN

ADOPTED BY THE CARROLL COUNTY RECREATION & PARKS ADVISORY BOARD
OCTOBER 21, 2023



MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION

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

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Department goals are general statements of initiatives for achieving desired outcomes. Department objectives are measurable and attainable milestones to be achieved in accomplishing the goal.

CORE VALUES

Excellence

We are responsive to our community's needs and expectations and strive to exceed them.

Innovation

We develop and deliver creative and quality solutions and outcomes.

Equity

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

Integrity

We earn the community's trust through accountability, ethics, and open communication.

Legacy

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

Collaboration

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

GOAL #1

Provide the public with excellent customer service and the best user experience possible.

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



GOAL #2

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

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

GOAL #3

Promote awareness and good stewardship of the environment through educational programs and “green” initiatives.

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



GOAL #4

Maintain a vibrant park system by protecting and reinvesting in Carroll County assets.

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

GOAL #5

Promote healthy, safe communities that are supported by well-rounded program offerings and policy.

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



GOAL #6

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

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

GOAL #7

Promote Carroll County's natural, cultural and historical legacies

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



GOAL #8

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

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

GOAL #9

Maintain an organizational philosophy of continual improvement.

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



GOAL #10

Develop, support, and recognize volunteer efforts to maximize community engagement

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

GOAL #11

Initiation and foster partnerships that result in increased value to Carroll County

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



GOAL #12

Enhance communication with stakeholders

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