

Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Adopted by Christiansburg Town Council: August 26, 2014

Prepared by: New River Valley Planning District Commission June 2014

With Contributions from: Town of Christiansburg Staff Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission

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Chapter 1: Executive Summary

The Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the first step in the process of meeting the needs of current and future residents within the town. Christiansburg has a reputation for providing excellence in recreation programming, as well as park and facility offerings. The town has developed assets that are available to town residents, but also have a regional appeal. These assets include the following:

- Huckleberry Trail
- Christiansburg Recreation Center
- Harkrader Sports Complex
- Christiansburg Aquatic Center
- Six town-owned parks and one town-leased park
- Youth and adult sports
- Senior programs
- Special population programs
- Youth and adult programs
- Christiansburg Skate Park

Outside of these current assets, the town is also developing the 20 acre Diamond Hills Park and the Truman Wilson Property, a 62 acre parcel



purchased by the town in 2013 that is in close proximity to the major retail center of Christiansburg. These two new parks will serve as attractions for town residents and regional visitors considering their size and potential for additional facilities for resident users.

As part of the process of developing the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a survey was created and distributed to gather town resident feedback on recreation facilities and programs. The survey was a major factor in developing recommendations for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan which serves as a guide for future development of facilities and programs.

Established relationships with other town departments, community groups, Montgomery County Public Schools, and neighboring localities strengthen the ability of the department to meet the recreation needs of town residents. Parks and recreation amenities are available for a diverse population of users. The Town of Christiansburg strives to be known for its well-rounded programs and facilities to meet the needs of the community while supporting opportunities for regional impact and tourism, true to its slogan, "The only place to play; Christiansburg, Virginia."



Chapter 2: Mission, Goals and Objectives

Department Mission

The Christiansburg Department of Parks and Recreation mission is to promote and implement leisure programs and services that enhance the quality of life for all ages. In partnership with the community, we pledge to deliver quality leisure programs and services in a personal, effective and successful manner.

Goals and Objectives

Goals were developed around four key areas based on direction from the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and town staff. These areas include:

- 1. Parks and Facilities
- 2. Open Space and Interconnectivity
- 3. Marketing and Communication
- 4. Operations and Programs

1. Parks and Facilities

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Goal 1-1: Maintain existing parks and facilities while supporting newer parks and facilities as the town grows.

Objective:	Establish a capital improvement program to prioritize funding for facility needs.
Objective:	Create handicap accessible signature park for the Town of Christiansburg at the Truman Wilson Property.
Objective:	Explore the feasibility of creating new facilities to reduce crowding or overuse.
Objective:	Construct multipurpose fields to maximize space.
Objective:	Develop a softball sport complex to serve residents and bring tournaments to the Town of Christiansburg.
Objective:	Develop and modify playgrounds and parks with respect to special populations (people that are disabled).



2. Open Space and Interconnectivity

Goal 2-1: Provide ease of access for town residents to enjoy the outdoors.

- Objective: Preserve and plan for open spaces within Diamond Hills Park, the Truman Wilson parcel, and any other future parks.
- Objective: Evaluate whether recreation assets, businesses and residential areas are connected via trails and sidewalks.

3. Marketing and Communication

Goal 3-1: Effectively communicate events, facilities, and programs internally and externally.

- Objective: Increase outreach regarding events, facilities, and programs through the continued program guide and social media platforms
- Objective: Advertise tourism opportunities within the town in cooperation with the Montgomery Tourism Development Council.

Goal 3-2: Promote coordination with businesses, schools, New River Valley communities, and support beneficial partnerships elsewhere.

- Objective: Partner with parks and recreation departments throughout the region to host events and tournaments that are beyond the capacity of one department.
- Objective: Develop public private partnerships through sponsorships of events, tournaments, and other community activities.
- Objective: Partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to use facilities for youth and adult sports.

4. Operations and Programs

Goal 4-1: Explore the potential for additional community events throughout the year.



Objective: Market existing events and seek press coverage for stories from town events.

Objective: Identify additional town events for varying interests of town residents.

Goal 4-2: Develop a cost-benefit model for all capital improvements.

- Objective: Evaluate the renovation of parks to be retrofitted so they are handicap accessible and incorporate accessibility features into future parks.
- Objective: Strengthen interdepartmental cooperation by partnering with other town departments on projects to save on costs.

Goal 4-3: Utilize assets within close proximity to town to enhance recreation programs.

- Objective: Develop New River fishing and water sport programs that incorporate education and activities.
- Objective: Work with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries to develop classes on hunter safety and hunting education.
- Objective: Develop classes on hiking and camping safety while utilizing the Appalachian Trail.

Goal 4-4: Ensure compliance with local, state, and national regulations while staying current on national recreation trends.

- Objective: Utilize National Recreation and Park Association data and awards as benchmarks for the town.
- Objective: Observe Virginia stormwater management regulations and incorporate into recreation facility planning.

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Radford Softball Clinic offered as a program through the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department.



CHAPTER 3: Existing Conditions

The Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department serves approximately 22,000 people within town boundaries and also provides services for residents of Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg, as well as surrounding communities. The current assets of the department include the Christiansburg Recreation Center, Harkrader Sports Complex, and seven parks dispersed throughout the community. Parks and Recreation also has two properties for future development, Diamond Hills Park, and the Truman Wilson property. Diamond Hills Park is a 20 acre parcel located off of Independence Boulevard and the Truman Wilson property is 62 acres on the south side of Peppers Ferry Road, N.W.

The Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves a dual role of providing an inventory of existing conditions as well as a guide for future development. Following is a description of the parks and facilities within the Town of Christiansburg as well as those under the management of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Park Definitions

For the purposes of the Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the following park designations were used to determine levels of service within town boundaries. Christiansburg park definitions are based on national standards developed by the National Recreation and Park Association, but have been adapted to match the needs and resources of the town.

Mini Park

Mini parks within the Town of Christiansburg are small parks, less than one acre,

serving small residential developments with limited population. These mini parks feature small, sometimes specialized facilities geared toward easy accessibility and short-term use by residents within a walkable distance. The service area for mini parks is set at ¹/₄ mile. At present, there are five mini parks in town.



Circle Park is a mini park located close to downtown Christiansburg, featuring a playground, swings, and a $\frac{1}{2}$ court basketball court.



Figure 1: Mini Parks and Amenities

	Playground	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Volleyball Court	Rectangular Field	Track	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Open Space	Trails	Restrooms	Bike Rack/Parking	Concession	Amphitheater	Racquetball Court	Skate Park	Batting Cages
Mini Parks																			
Town and Country Park	1									х									
Wall Street Park	1	1								х									
Circle Park	1	1								х									
Wayside Park										х	х								
Downtown Park	3	1								х	х	х							

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks are between one and five acres, allowing for more intense use and include more amenities.

Neighborhood parks serve an area within a ½ mile radius, including a larger population than a mini park. Christiansburg currently has one neighborhood park, Depot Park. It is located adjacent to the Christiansburg Aquatic Center and is relatively close to downtown.

<u>Figure 2: Neighborhood Parks and</u> <u>Amenities</u>



Depot Park recently added a paved trail around the park for recreation users.

	Playground	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Volleyball Court	Rectangular Field	Track	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Open Space	Trails	Restrooms	Bike Rack/Parking	Concession	Amphitheater	Racquetball Court	Skate Park	Batting Cages
Neighborhood Parks					-	-			-	-						-	-		-
Depot Park	1	2								х	х	х							



Community Park

Community parks are between five and 25 acres, generally providing large

recreation uses for all town

residents. Community parks typically provide amenities such as large athletic complexes/fields, open space, parking, picnic shelters, as well as uses found in some smaller parks. There are currently two community parks, Harkrader Sports Complex and Kiwanis Park.

A future community park, Diamond Hills Park, is being



Harkrader Sports Complex is host to baseball tournaments and has adjacent playground areas, complimented by additional Montgomery County Public School amenities including a tennis/basketball courts and soccer fields.

Batting Cages

x x

built and will be completed in 2014. The park is being reconstructed for the Diamond Hills Stream Restoration Project, part of the Town of Christiansburg's Stream Preservation and Restoration Program established in 2009, will provide an additional community park. The Vision 2020 plan recommends recreational planning with the preservation and protection of natural resources. Therefore, the town has proposed that Diamond Hills Park will offer open space, a permeable loop trail, and picnic areas.

Kiwanis Park is owned by the Christiansburg Kiwanis Club; however, the Town of Christiansburg is the primary user. Since the town is the primary user of the park, Kiwanis Park is included in the following table and considered a community park for the purpose of this analysis.

<u>Figure 5. Community</u>	<u>r ai</u>	KS	<u>an</u>	IA	<u>me</u>	1111	<u>es</u>											
	Playground	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Volleyball Court	Rectangular Field	Track	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Open Space	Trails	Restrooms	Bike Rack/Parking	Concession	Amphitheater	Racquetball Court	Skate Park
Community Parks																		
Harkrader Sports Complex	2			3	1					х		х	х		х			
Kiwanis Park	1			1	1				2	х			х					

Figure 3: Community Parks and Amenities



Regional Park

Regional parks serve town residents, but also serve needs beyond the town boundary in large part due to their facility capacity or unique assets. Regional parks are more than 25 acres and allow for intense recreation uses such as fields, open space, and large venues for events and sports tournaments. Regional parks can be used for bringing people to town for sporting tournaments or for general recreation.

Currently, there are no regional parks within town limits, but a 62 acre site was acquired by the Town of Christiansburg in 2013 to be developed into a park. The land is located south of Route 114, in close proximity to the New River Valley Mall. This park will be adjacent to the Huckleberry Trail extension which is planned to link to the Christiansburg Recreation Center.



Montgomery County's Mid-County Park and the Coal Mining Heritage Park and Loop Trail qualify as a regional parks and are located within close proximity to the Town of Christiansburg. Mid-County Park offers the following: outdoor swimming pool, picnic shelters, 37-hole disc golf course, trails, basketball court and a playground. Coal Mining Heritage Park offers a 1.5 mile multi-use loop trail that meets the standards of the International Mountain Bike Association.

Linear Park

Linear parks are areas that may be developed for alternative transportation and/or recreational travel, including biking, hiking, horseback riding, and other modes. Linear parks can also be natural corridors intended to connect different forms of recreation as well as commercial areas to residential areas.

The Huckleberry Trail is a linear



The Huckleberry Trail offers a multi-use trail option for recreation or commuting.



park and it currently extends six miles, connecting from the New River Valley Mall in Christiansburg, to the Blacksburg Library. Plans to extend the trail in Christiansburg include a bridge over Route 114 that will connect to the Christiansburg Recreation Center. The bridge and extension will be completed in 2014.

There are no applicable service standards for linear parks other than providing connections throughout commercial centers and recreation uses throughout towns and regions.

Private Recreation Options

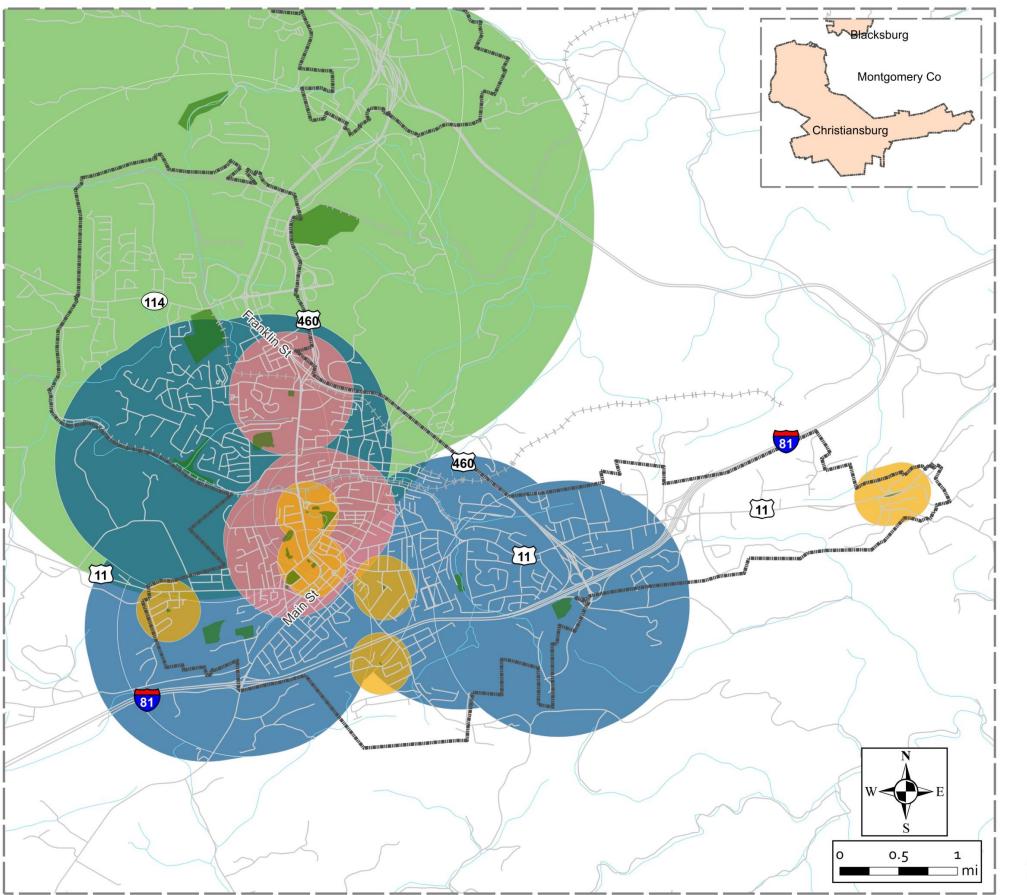
Several businesses within the Town of Christiansburg offer private recreation options for residents. These options include exercise classes, golf, bowling, rock climbing, roller skating, and many more. Combined with existing town and nonprofit offerings, Christiansburg has options for almost any recreation user.

Service Area of Parks

Each park designation has an associated acreage and service area buffer. National standards exist through National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and have been adapted to fit the current size and demographics of the Town of Christiansburg.

Park Designation	Service Area Buffer
Mini	¼ mile
Neighborhood	½ mile
Community	1 mile
Regional	2 miles

Following is a map of the current service area boundaries for town-owned parks within the Town of Christiansburg. The majority of town limits are covered by existing service boundaries, with small exceptions for the less populated eastern and southern portions of the town.



Map prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission, 2014. Sources includeTown of Christiansburg and local input/data.

Map 1: Park Service Area Boundaries







Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Programs

Parks and Recreation programs offered by the Town of Christiansburg serve multiple interests and age ranges. The Christiansburg Recreation Center is the main focus of parks and recreation programs within the town. The Recreation Center hosts youth and adult sports, activities for seniors, and hosts community events in need of a large indoor space. The department also sponsors town events that benefit the whole community. Parks and Recreation programs are described below according to the location of each program.

Downtown Christiansburg: The Town of Christiansburg sponsors downtown events throughout the year. The past two years, there have been food truck events downtown sponsored by Downtown Christiansburg Inc. Other events sponsored by the town or other organizations include the Wilderness Trail Festival, Wine and Artisans, Movies in the Park, Cruise-In, Tech Tailgate events, Depot Days, and 4th of July events.

Christiansburg Recreation Center: The Recreation Center hosts the majority of indoor recreation programs. Youth and adult sports, senior center, and exercise classes occur at this centrally located facility. The Recreation Center also hosts major events within the town such as the New River Valley Home Builders' Association's Home Expo.

Programs hosted at the Christiansburg Recreation Center:

- Youth community recreation
- Adult community recreation
- Special Interest Programs
- Senior Programs
- Special Populations (Disabled) Programs
- Special Events
- Adult Athletic Programs
- Youth Athletic Programs
- Athletic Special Events

Sports tourism has been successful with tournaments hosted within and nearby the Town of Christiansburg. An economic impact study was done to compare the effects of the 2013 USSSA World Series and Dixie World Series. Over a five day period, it was estimated that the total impact of the USSSA World Series included 134 rooms per night, and a total of nearly \$287,000 in local impact. The Dixie World Series, over a seven day period, generated 105 rooms per night, and \$280,000 in total local impact.

The following chart, from the 2013 Annual Report, displays the participation trends of all recreation programs within the town. Program participation is on the rise for



youth community, adult athletic, special population youth special events, senior special events, and clubs. Programs with the biggest decrease in participation are adult and senior community programs.

Program	Year	Numbers	Sessions	Participants	Teams	Spectators
Youth Community	2013	94	343	824	N/A	N/A
Programs	2012	100	452	705	N/A	N/A
	2011	90	317	672	N/A	N/A
Adult Community	2013	202	1,398	4,167	N/A	N/A
Programs	2012	214	1,457	4,348	N/A	N/A
	2011	194	1,313	3,807	N/A	N/A
Youth Athletic	2013	46	496	919	78	N/A
Programs	2012	46	500	989	79	N/A
	2011	46	2,643	1,269	102	85,891
Adult Athletic	2013	23	815	1,346	106	10,600
Programs	2012	18	697	1,197	98	10,455
	2011	18	689	1,034	96	10,335
Senior Citizen	2013	169	1,269	13,540	N/A	N/A
Programs	2012	162	1,351	15,584	N/A	N/A
	2011	138	1,212	15,170	N/A	N/A
Special Population	2013	8	14	1208	N/A	N/A
Programs	2012	5	13	773	N/A	N/A
	2011	7	21	956	N/A	N/A
Youth Special Events	2013	7	7	613	N/A	2,500
	2012	8	8	559	N/A	2,910
	2011	9	9	559	N/A	3,460
Adult Special Events	2013	8	10	429	N/A	6,600
	2012	8	12	427	N/A	6,400
	2011	11	13	642	N/A	7,430
Senior Citizen	2013	19	24	2,181	N/A	N/A
Special Events	2012	21	29	1,908	N/A	N/A
	2011	23	21	1,024	N/A	N/A
Clubs	2013	3	10	383	N/A	N/A
	2012	2	40	234	N/A	N/A
	2011	4	40	440	N/A	N/A
Athletic Special Events	2013	13	39	128	N/A	75
Outdoor Athletic	2013	1,438	1,180	11,025	735	44,100
Tournaments	2012	1,004	914	8,715	581	34,860

Figure 4: Program Participation Trends



Harkrader Sports Complex: The Harkrader Sports Complex hosts tournaments for baseball and softball as well as league play.

Downtown Park: The Downtown Park is another venue that the town utilizes to host events throughout the year, such as the Great Christiansburg Easter Egg Hunt each spring, and Movies in the Park.

Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Facilities

Christiansburg Recreation Center

The Christiansburg Recreation Center is a 62,000 square foot, multipurpose facility that provides a wide range of recreational and leisure opportunities for the community. There are four full court basketball courts, a 1/8 mile indoor track, cardio room, weight room, senior area, two racquetball courts, and classrooms available for rent. Many of the Parks and Recreation Department's programs are



housed at the Recreation Center and cater to varying ages and intensities for recreation users. The Recreation Center is free to use by town residents and memberships are available for users outside town limits.

Montgomery County Public Schools Amenities

Although not owned by the Town of Christiansburg, school facilities operated by Montgomery County Public Schools provide additional options for town residents to utilize for recreation. There are six schools within the Town of Christiansburg offering additional fields, playgrounds, and other amenities. These assets are utilized by the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department. The town maintains the Falling Branch Elementary fields and uses the property during nonschool hours.



Figure 5: Montgomery County Public Schools Parks and Amenities

		Playground	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Baseball Field	Softball Field	Volleyball Court	Rectangular Field	Track	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Open Space	Trails	Restrooms	Bike Rack/Parking	Concession	Amphitheater	Racquetball Court	Skate Park	Batting Cages
MCPS Schools in Christiansburg	Park Designation by Acreage																			
High School	Community			6	1			3	1			х								2
Middle School	Community			2				2									1			
Elementary School	Neighborhood	1	2								1	х	х							
Primary School	Neighborhood	3						3				х								
Falling Branch Elem.	Community	1				2		2				х	х							
Old Middle School	Community							1				х								



Chapter 4: Demographics, Trends, Usage and Future Development

Christiansburg Demographics

According to 2012 Census estimates, the Town of Christiansburg is home to 21,458 people with 9,609 total housing units. The median family income is \$61,290 and Christiansburg's unemployment rate according to the American Community Survey's estimate is 4.2%, annualized for 2012. The median age of Christiansburg residents is 32.8 years. Following is a breakdown of the number of people in each age group within the Town of Christiansburg.

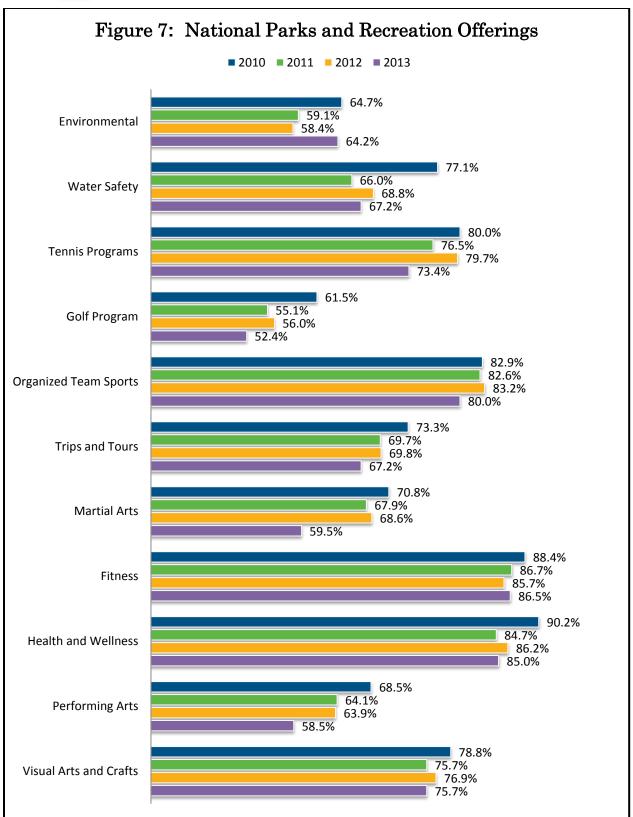
Age Group	Population	Percentage
Under 5 years	1,721	8.2%
5 to 9 years	1,420	6.8%
10 to 14 years	1,237	5.9%
15 to 19 years	991	4.7%
20 to 24 years	1,766	8.4%
25 to 34 years	3,882	18.5%
35 to 44 years	2,885	13.8%
45 to 54 years	2,589	12.3%
55 to 59 years	1,343	6.4%
60 to 64 years	932	4.4%
65 to 74 years	1,074	5.1%
75 to 84 years	910	4.3%
85 years and over	230	1.1%

Figure 6: Age Composition of the Town of Christiansburg

2012 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimate

National Trends

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) develops a Parks and Recreation National Database Report each year. There are several components to the report which include trends in program offerings, budgeting, operations, facility service calculations, and more. Following is a chart that details the percentage of recreation departments that offer specific types of programs. These programs include: environmental, water safety, tennis, golf, organized team sports, trips and tours, martial arts, fitness, health and wellness, performing arts, and visual arts and crafts. Christiansburg offers programs in each of these areas. CHRISTIANSBURG



National Recreation and Park Association, Parks and Recreation National Database Report, 2014



The Town of Christiansburg performs well in the median population per facility according to the NRPA 2014 Report. If Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) facilities are included, Christiansburg meets and exceeds facility offerings based on population. Even if MCPS facilities are excluded from the count, all facilities meet national standards except for rectangular fields. As the population grows, the town will need to consider additional facilities to meet the needs and desires of residents.

Facility Type	Departments Offering	Median Jurisdiction Population per Facility	Total Town/MCPS Facilities	Christiansburg Population per Facility (Includes MCPS)	Town- owned or Maintained
Playground	96.1%	3,840	14	1,533	11
Diamond Fields	92.0%	3,403	8	2,682	7
Rectangular Fields	89.1%	4,242	12	1,788	3
Tennis Court (outdoor)	85.3%	4,283	8	2,682	0
Basketball Court (outdoor)	84.6%	6,644	7	3,065	5
Recreation/Community Center	74.3%	24,645	1	21,458	1
Swimming Pool (outdoor)	59.7%	30,376	0	N/A	0
Community Gardens	47.1%	32,529	0	10,729	0
Dog Park	47.1%	50,852	0	N/A	0
Golf Course (9 holes)	34.7%	29,631	0	N/A	0
Swimming Pool (indoor)	32.8%	61,322	1	21,458	1
Tennis Court (indoor)	9.8%	22,852	0	N/A	0

Figure 8: Christiansburg Versus Median U.S. Facility Offer	
- FIGURE & CONSUMERSOURS VERSUS MEDIAN U.S. FACILLY OTIEN	nøs

Additional takeaways from the NRPA report include the individualization of recreation. Of the top ten activities performed by active Americans, all are individual sports such as walking, biking, running, and swimming. The report also calls attention to safety issues, such as concussions, that are affecting team sports like football and soccer. This could result in more flag football leagues throughout the country, but football numbers in the Town of Christiansburg continue to increase. In July 2012, the Town of Christiansburg developed a Youth Sports Concussion Policy and has taken a proactive approach by educating coaches, officials, and parents about the signs and dangers of concussions. A key policy within the document is, "when in doubt, sit them out."

Each year, the National Recreation and Park Association presents communities with awards for excellence in long-range planning, resource management, and agency recognition. There are five classes of awards based on population. The



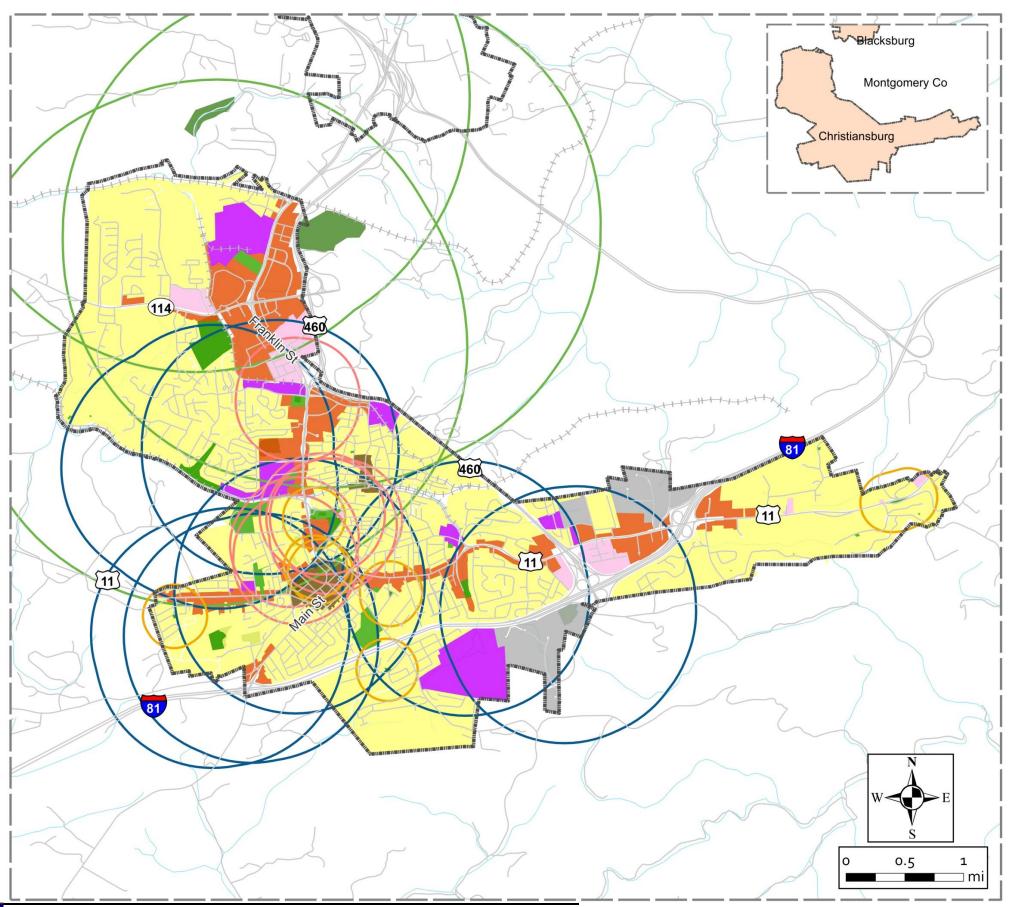
Town of Christiansburg falls within the 20,000-50,000 population category. Communities recognized in this category in the past five years include: Westerville, Ohio; Castle Rock, Colorado; Parker, Colorado; Gurnee, Illinois; and Lombard, Illinois. These communities developed and enhanced different areas of recreation planning. Following is a sample of their projects and activities.

- Westerville, Ohio:
 - \circ Parks and recreation calendar of events.
 - Online registration for classes and athletics.
 - Host videos of events and key recreation assets within the town.
- Castle Rock, Colorado:
 - Special Needs Club meets twice a month for sports, food, and fun for ages 10 and up.
- Parker, Colorado:
 - Personal trainers are on staff with fees for each session.
 - Climbing wall with classes and open climb times throughout the week.
- Gurnee, Illinois:
 - Art, dance, craft, and theater classes for several age groups.
 - Martial arts classes.
- Lombard, Illinois:
 - Picnic shelter rentals.
 - Offers advertising spaces for purchase in quarterly activities guide.

Future Development

The Town of Christiansburg recently completed the 2013 Comprehensive Plan which includes future population projections developed by Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. The plan indicates that by 2020, the town's population will grow to nearly 25,000. In 2030, the population is estimated to be over 28,000. With this increase from 21,041 in 2010, parks and recreation facilities will need to keep pace to meet the 34% increase in population over a 20 year period. This will put additional strain on the Christiansburg Recreation Center and existing facilities.

Following is a future land use map with park service area buffers. Population growth is expected to occur in the eastern, western, and northern areas of town. These areas do not have a community park or smaller facility within their service area buffer, so it is recommended to evaluate the need for future parks based on park proximity.





Map prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission, 2014. Sources includeTown of Christiansburg and local input/data.

Map 2: Future Land Use and Current Park Service Area Boundaries



Legend

Town Boundary

Future Land Use

- Residential
- Business/Commercial
- Parks/Open Space
- Downtown/Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Mixed Use w/ Buffer (Industrial)
- Mixed Use w/ Buffer (Res/Bus)
- 2 Mile Buffer 25 Acres or More)
- 1 Mile Buffer (5-25 Acres)
- 1/2 Mile Buffer (1-5 Acres)
- 1/4 Mile Buffer (Under 1 Acre)
- **Road Center Line**
- ++++ Railroad
- Hydrology
- Parks



Chapter 5: Public Input

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission developed a survey, included in the appendix, as an initial form of outreach. This survey was hosted online and advertised on the Town website, the Parks and Recreation Department website, through "Notify Me" which has nearly 700 subscribers, and a link to the survey was printed on Town water bills. Paper surveys were located at Town Hall, the Recreation Center, the Christiansburg Library, and the Aquatic Center. Overall, 619 surveys were completed and comments were utilized to inform the recommendations found in this plan.

The Town of Christiansburg also hosted a community input meeting on June 2, 2014 to allow for comments on the draft of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Twelve citizens were present at the meeting. Comments from that meeting have been utilized in editing the Master Plan.

Trends in Public feedback:

- 77% of survey responses came from town residents
- Priorities based on additional or updated facilities and places

Figure 9: Desired Facility and Program Rankings

Rank	Responses	Percentage	Desired Facility/Program
1	198	32.0%	Trails - Paved/Concrete
2	188	30.4%	Music Venue
3	179	28.9%	Trail Running/Walking
4	170	27.5%	Town Events
5	140	22.6%	Dog Park
6	138	22.3%	Aerobics/Exercise Classes
7	124	20.0%	Picnic Shelters
8	123	19.9%	Trails - Gravel
9	118	19.1%	Playground
10	114	18.4%	Track Running/Walking
11	111	17.9%	Bicycling
12	109	17.6%	Camping/Hiking
13	106	17.1%	Soccer
14	93	15.0%	Recreation Center
15	92	14.9%	Kayaking/Canoeing/Rafting
16	80	12.9%	Fishing/Hunting
17	78	12.6%	Swimming
18	64	10.3%	Basketball
19	63	10.2%	Tennis
20	48	7.8%	Lacrosse
21	43	6.9%	Horseshoes



22	42	6.8%	Senior Activities
23	41	6.6%	Volleyball
24	34	5.5%	Racquetball
24	34	5.5%	Softball
26	29	4.7%	Special Population Activities
27	25	4.0%	Baseball
28	9	1.5%	Pickleball
29	3	0.5%	Frisbee Golf

- "Other": Each received one vote:
 - Dog park
 - o Tennis
 - Mountain biking trail
 - Weekend special interest classes adult
 - Inline hockey rink
 - Inline hockey rink Field trips for non-seniors
- \circ Large open spaces

Sidewalks

Rook tournament

Music/food events

• Spin classes

0

0

0

- Weightlifting
- Children's Classes
- People responded that they would participate more often in these activities if the town had adequate or additional facilities, by area of town (Top five):

Downtown:

- 1. Paved Trails
- 2. Music Venues
- 3. Town Events
- 4. Trail Running/Walking

0

5. Dog Park

Recreation Center:

- 1. Paved Trails
- 2. Trail Running/Walking
- 3. Town Events
- 4. Music Venue
- 5. Aerobics/Exercise Classes

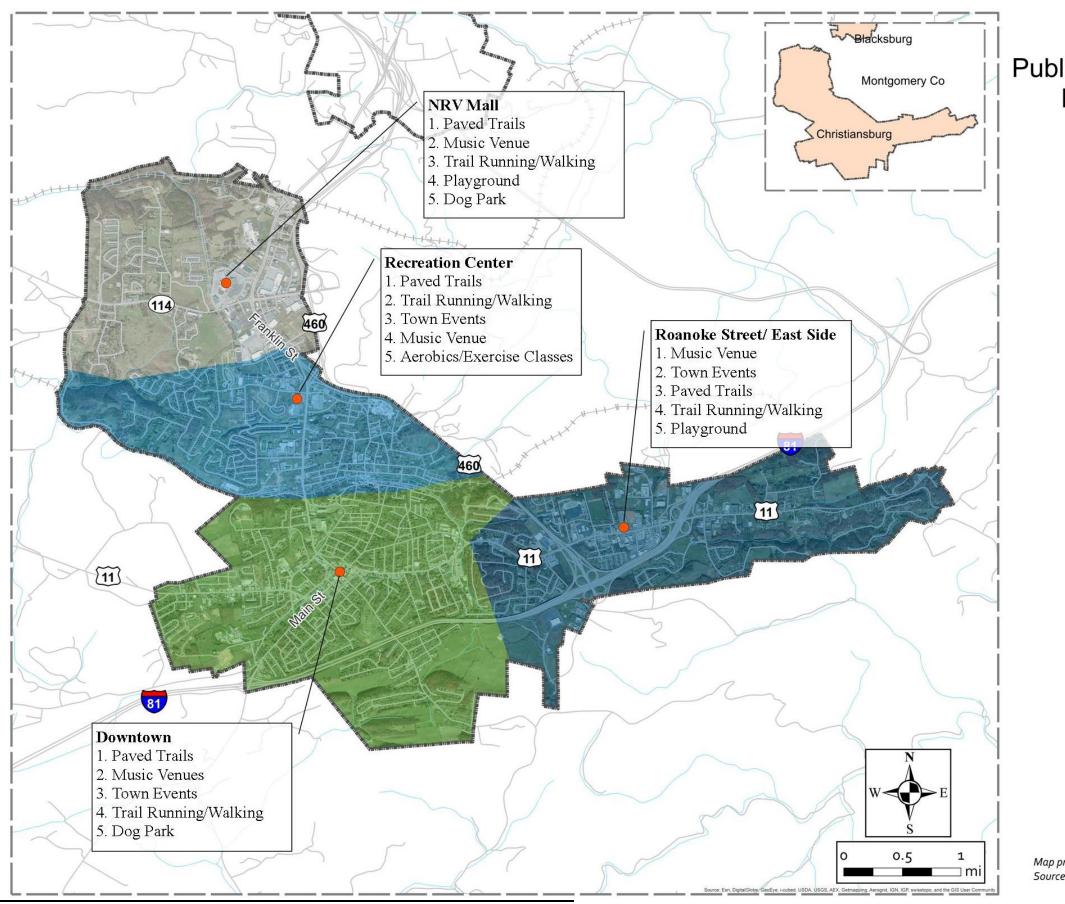
Following is a map of these results.

Roanoke Street/East Side:

- 1. Music Venue
- 2. Town Events
- 3. Paved Trails
- 4. Trail Running/Walking
- 5. Playgrounds

NRV Mall Area:

- 1. Paved Trails
- 2. Music Venue
- 3. Trail Running/Walking
- 4. Playground
- 5. Dog Park



Map 3: Public Desires for New Programs/ Facilities by Area of Town



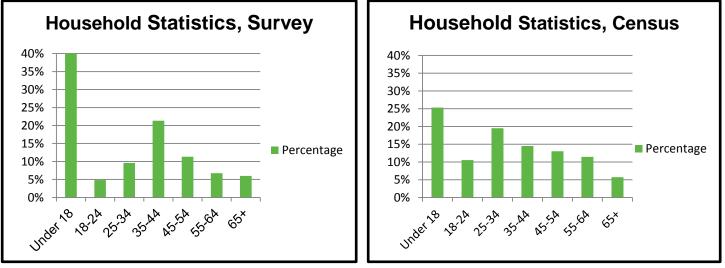


Map prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission, 2014. Sources includeTown of Christiansburg and local input/data.



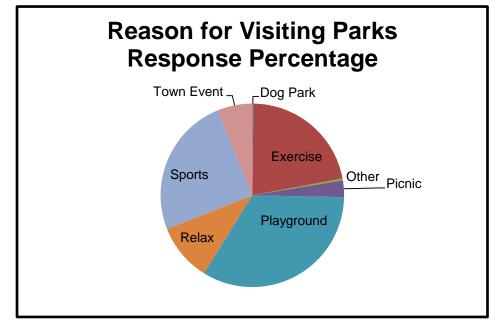
• Survey results compared to Census data:

Figure 10: Household Age Characteristics, Survey and Census

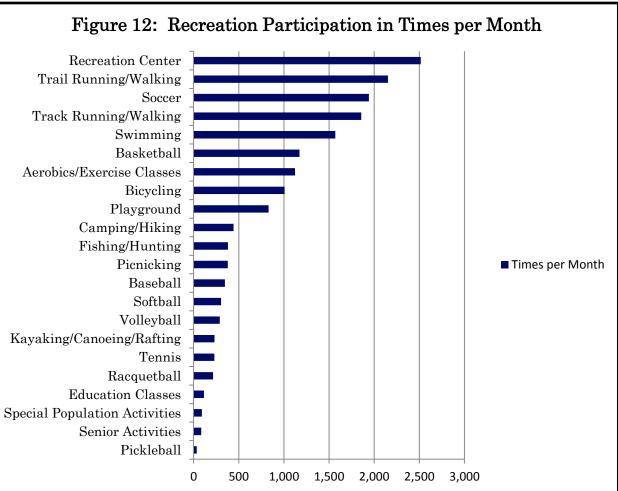


- Survey respondents generally resembled Census data with the exception of the large 'Under 18' and smaller '25-34' age categories.
- The top five reasons that Christiansburg residents visit parks are:
 - 1. Playgrounds
 - 2. Sports
 - 3. Exercise
 - 4. Relax
 - 5. Town Event

Figure 11: Resident Reasons for Visiting Parks





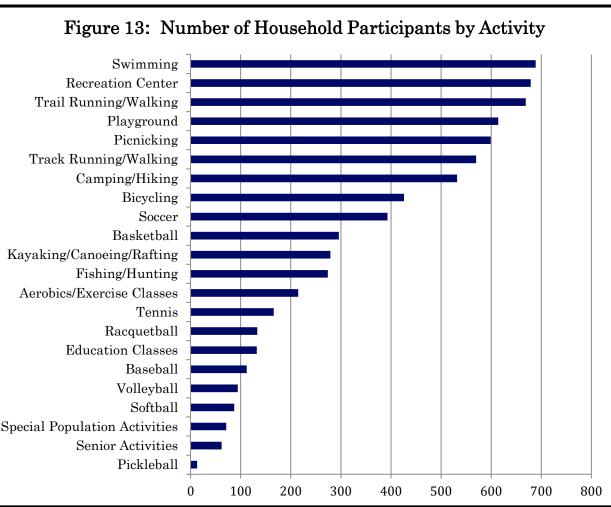


- Top ten activities and places by total participation, meaning the most utilized activities/places (i.e. Christiansburg Recreation Center has many visitors that come 3-5 times/week):
 - 1. Recreation Center
 - 2. Trail Running/Walking
 - 3. Soccer
 - 4. Track Running/Walking
 - 5. Swimming
 - 6. Basketball
 - 7. Aerobics/Exercise Classes
 - 8. Bicycling
 - 9. Playground
 - 10. Camping/Hiking



Cheerleading Camp hosted at the Recreation Center.





- Top ten activities and places visited indicates the most common form of recreation within the town with respect to total participants:
 - 1. Swimming
 - 2. Recreation Center
 - 3. Trail Running/Walking
 - 4. Playground
 - 5. Picnicking
 - 6. Track Running/Walking
 - 7. Camping/Hiking
 - 8. Bicycling
 - 9. Soccer
 - 10. Basketball



Weight Room inside the Recreation Center



Chapter 6: Parks and Facilities Needs and Recommendations

These recommendations for parks and facilities are based on feedback from four sources: 1) public input, 2) Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, 3) town staff, and 4) recreation industry research. Each park and facility was evaluated and recommendations are included for each park or facility. Rough cost estimates accompany each recommendation. Costs will vary as projects are designed and built.

Mini Parks

Town and Country Park:

Town and Country Park is a quiet park serving the neighborhood located on Summit Ridge Road. This tranquil park provides Miracle Recreation playground equipment, swings, and a picnic area that welcomes outings for family and friends.



Recommendations:

- Update playground equipment and swing sets to match other parks' playground equipment updates.
- Increase parking options with designated parking lot or through expanding the pull off for vehicles.

Wall Street Park:

Wall Street Park is located east of the Wall Street and Harkrader Street intersection. This quiet park, tucked away in an established residential neighborhood, offers Miracle Playsystem playground equipment, one half-size basketball court, and a shaded picnic area.

A peaceful spot located off the beaten path, Wall Street Park is tucked behind a brick maintenance building that provides a sense of



privacy from the road and welcomes family outings and picnics.



Recommendations:

- Create wayfinding signage from Route 11 to direct residents to the park.
- Increase parking options with on-street parking or small parking lot.

Circle Park:

Circle Park is located on Ellett Drive and Circle Drive. This playground, nestled in the middle of an established residential area, boasts Miracle Recreation playground equipment, swings, a picnic area and a halfcourt basketball court. This neighborhood park is also attractive for family outings and picnics.



Recommendations:

- Expand parking options through on-street improvements.
- Install basic fencing to provide a barrier for safety.
- Explore potential for rentable picnic shelter

Wayside Park:

Wayside Park is located at the top of Christiansburg Mountain, off Route 460. Stop at this quaint park for a quick break during your travels. Wayside Park offers picnic tables and plenty of shade for your convenience and relaxation. This park is still being considered for further future development.

- Provide a scenic open space through landscaping and design to enhance the park, and explore the potential to fill and grade the park.
- Explore options to acquire or utilize land for a neighborhood or community park on the east side of town.





Downtown Park:

Downtown Park is located on College Street beside the armory. Conveniently located in Town, the park offers a paved walking trail leading to the library that passes the fire department and rescue and lifesaving building. Downtown Park offers Miracle Recreation playground equipment, swings, horseshoe pits, a full basketball court, and a shaded picnic area.



Recommendations:

- Addition of a rentable picnic shelter for town-residents
- Replace older equipment adjacent to College Street to match newer equipment in the park.

Neighborhood Parks

Depot Park:

Depot Park, located on Depot Street, offers Miracle Recreation playground equipment, two basketball courts, a tee-ball field, soccer field, and jogging / walking path. This popular park is an enjoyable place for family outings and picnics and is within walking distance of the aquatic center and skate park.



- Install handicap accessible swing on existing swing set.
- Post distance markings on or beside the trail.



Community Parks

Diamond Hills Park (Future):

Diamond Hills Park was acquired by the town and has been undergoing a stream restoration project. This park will also have a passive recreation component for people to enjoy the open space and natural surroundings of the park.



Recommendations:

- Incorporate and maintain open space within the park.
- Develop nature information stations.
- Complete a small, permeable loop trail for park visitors.

Harkrader Sports Complex:

Harkrader Sports Complex opened in 2006 and is located behind the Christiansburg Middle School. The complex has three lighted, multipurpose fields, two of which have 300 foot dimensions and are used for tournament play.



A central tower houses a concession stand and restrooms on the main level. The upper part of the tower has an umpire room, office, and room

for scorekeepers, scoreboard operators, media, and staff. There is also a walking path, tennis and basketball courts, picnic tables, and two playground areas.

Harkrader Sports Complex is heavily used from spring to fall and is often the host site for local baseball tournaments. Harkrader Sports Complex has hosted the Dixie Boys World Series in 2010 and 2012. Harkrader was also the host of the 2013 USSSA Baseball World Series. The Harkrader Sports Complex and the Town of Christiansburg will host the 2014 Nations Baseball World Series and the 2014 USSSA Baseball World Series.

- Explore options to add outdoor exercise equipment to develop exercise stations around the trail.
- Incorporate pavement distance markings for walkers and runners.



Kiwanis Park:

Kiwanis Park is located off Roanoke Street, behind Southern States. This popular park has two lighted multipurpose baseball / softball fields, a picnic shelter, and new Miracle Playsystem playground equipment. Kiwanis Park and the Kiwanis Community Picnic Shelter are sponsored by the Christiansburg Kiwanis Club.



Recommendations:

- Develop restroom and concession facility between the baseball/softball fields.
- Build permanent scorer's area for both baseball/softball fields.
- Continue to cultivate relationships with the Christiansburg Kiwanis Club.
- Replacement of lights to the baseball/softball fields.
- Construct loop trails around both fields that interconnect into a figure eight.

Falling Branch Elementary School:

Falling Branch Elementary softball and rectangular fields are maintained by the Town of Christiansburg and are available for town use during non-school hours. This partnership has benefitted recreation program offerings and minor improvements will greatly enhance the property.



- Build new dugouts for softball/baseball fields.
- Designate and build a scorers area.
- Replace fencing on and around fields.



Regional Parks

Truman Wilson Property (Future):

The Truman Wilson Property presents a significant opportunity to meet the parks and recreation needs of town residents. The Town of Christiansburg has benefitted recently from hosting United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) and Nations baseball tournaments. These tournaments bring teams from across Virginia, as well as the east coast, that spend money on hotels, restaurants, and other attractions throughout the area. The



Truman Wilson property can aid the effort to bring in additional tournaments in sports, depending how the park site is programmed.

- Incorporate cultural attractions to meet desires for town events and a music venue (i.e. amphitheater).
- Dedicate a portion of the property to passive recreation uses that do not include active ballfields.
- Develop rectangular fields (i.e. soccer, football, lacrosse etc.) to meet increasing demand for facilities.
- Develop a signature playground for children of all abilities.
- Develop softball/baseball enclosed park with ticket booth and concessions, similar to the Harkrader Complex.
- Incorporate a fenced dog park into the design of the site.
- Safely connect the park to the Huckleberry Trail to connect prime town assets.
- Develop a paved loop trail to connect recreation assets.
- Incorporate croquet and shuffleboard areas into the park design.
- Add a beach volleyball court.



Linear Parks:

Huckleberry Trail:

The Huckleberry Trail is an asphalt-paved bike/pedestrian path that connects the towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg. Distance markers are placed every half-mile and benches are placed along the trail so that users may rest and enjoy the scenery.

The Huckleberry trail crosses the road to Warm Hearth Village retirement community, as well as Hightop and Merrimac Roads.



Parking is available at both ends of the trail, with additional parking available at the crossings of Warm Hearth, Hightop, and Merrimac. The total distance of the trail, from the Blacksburg Public Library to the intersection of Rte. 114/Peppers Ferry Road, is just over 6 miles.

In the fall of 2013, the trail was extended from Rte. 114 to the Christiansburg Recreation Center. The completion of the Renva W. Knowles Bridge will connect the trail over Rte. 114. Once the bridge is completed, the trail will extend from the Blacksburg Public Library to the Christiansburg Recreation Center.

- Explore extending the trail to downtown Christiansburg and to other major population centers within town.
- Incorporate outdoor exercise stations along the trail.
- Develop an annual run/walk event that features the Huckleberry Trail.



Facilities

Christiansburg Recreation Center:

The Christiansburg Recreation Center, located on 1600 North Franklin Street, is a 62,000 square foot, multipurpose facility that provides a wide range of recreational and leisure opportunities for the community.

It has a weight room, cardio room, two racquetball courts, senior area, and walk / run track surrounding four full-court basketball courts. Community rooms are also available for rent.



Recommendations:

- Maintain existing equipment for weight room, cardio room, and sporting equipment.
- Perform an energy efficiency audit to determine energy saving strategies that lead to cost savings.
- Paint, replace floors, and renovate the Recreation Center on an as needed basis.

Additional Recommendations

Website Recommendations:

- Create a calendar of events with detailed information.
- Allow online registration for facility rentals.

New Park Recommendations:

- Utilize town property or acquire additional property for development of a neighborhood park east of Interstate 81.
- Evaluate potential for acquisition of the old Christiansburg Middle School.
- Utilize town property or acquire additional property for development of a mini or neighborhood park near Peppers Ferry Road on the northwest side of the town.

Signage and Branding Recommendations:

- Develop signage to bring a brand to Christiansburg parks.
- Create wayfinding signage for all parks.



Chapter 7: Program and Event Recommendations

Programming in parks and recreation poses a unique challenge. Youth and adult programs, especially exercise, follow national trends that change each year. The Parks and Recreation Department must continually monitor these national trends in order to meet future demand for classes and programs.

Program desires, according to the survey, include town events, exercise classes, camping/hiking classes, water sport classes, fishing/hunting classes, and classes for seniors and special populations.



Tap Class at the Recreation Center.

Programs focused on outdoor recreation scored highly in the survey and should be a key priority. The addition of fishing, hunting, and water sport classes will diversify the department offerings, reaching different residents within the town.

Trails were the clear preference for future desires within the town, followed closely by town events and music venues. Events and music allow a community to show its culture, and offer opportunities for residents to participate in that culture. The Town of Christiansburg currently hosts events throughout the year. These events serve youth, adults, and seniors and include:

- 4th of July Celebration
- Christiansburg Alumni Return
- Heritage Day
- Wilderness Trail Festival
- Ghouls Gathering

- Lion's Club Craft Fair
- Christmas Parade
- Breakfast with Santa
- Home Expo
- Great Easter Egg Hunt

These events have been successful, but more events are desired based on survey responses.

- Develop phased, 1-2 programs per year, pilot programs for camping, hiking, water sport education, hunting, and fishing.
- Plan and construct amphitheater at Truman Wilson Property to host cultural and music events.
- As trails develop, organize 5K and other events with themes developed by town stakeholders.
- Host an annual downtown music and arts festival, showcasing local talent.



Chapter 8: Accessibility and Connectivity

The Huckleberry Trail is a significant benefit to recreation users within the Town of Christiansburg, and is one of only a few walking and biking options within town. Limited sidewalk networks serve the downtown area, and the Huckleberry Trail serves the north side of town while providing an option for commuters to Blacksburg. A need exists to connect residential areas such as the cambria area to points of interest within town; such as, businesses, parks, other trails, and other attractions.

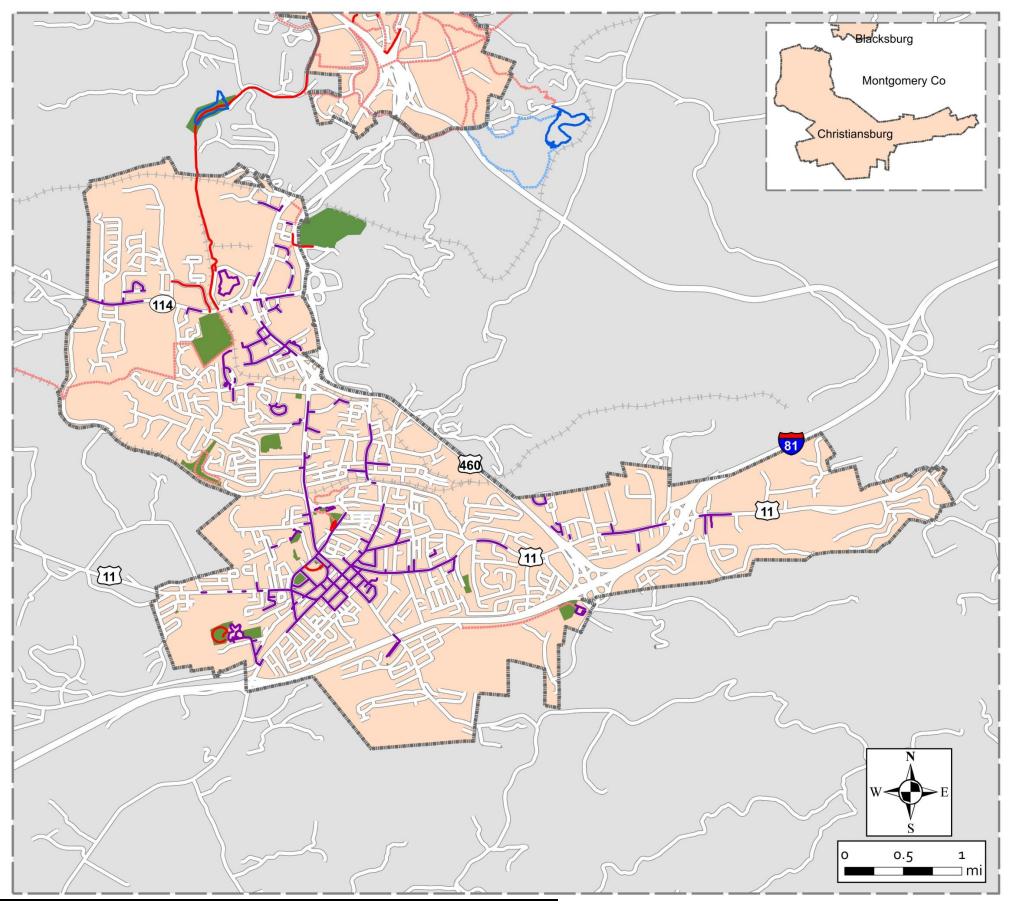
Trails and Sidewalks:

Trail running and walking was a key priority according to the survey responses. The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRVMPO) is currently working on a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Included in this analysis is a network of multiuse pathways throughout the town. These trails can connect parks to neighborhoods, and neighborhoods to employment and activity centers.

Cost for trails and sidewalks is often the prohibitive factor when evaluating cost versus benefit. Multi-use, 12 foot wide asphalt, typically cost \$80 per linear foot or \$422,400 per mile while sidewalks cost \$40 per linear foot or \$211,200 per mile. These costs include materials, engineering, right-of-way acquisition, drainage, etc. It is important to recognize trails have a direct link to economic development. According to a 2004 study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Virginia Creeper Trail connecting Damascus to Abingdon, VA accounts for an economic impact of \$1.59 million and supports approximately 27 jobs. Exploring additional opportunities for trail expansion can add quality of life and economic value to the Town of Christiansburg.

Following is a map of existing and proposed trails and sidewalks throughout the town.

- Develop an interlinked trail and sidewalk network to connect major population, recreation, and retail areas.
- Create signaled crossings of major roadways/intersections for bicycle and pedestrian traffic, such as the North Franklin/Wades Lane intersection.
- Extend the Huckleberry Trail to the downtown area.



Map prepared by the New River Valley Planning District Commission, 2014. Sources include New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and local input/data.

Map 4: Existing and Potential Trail and Sidewalk Network







Chapter 9: Implementation of the Master Plan

Recommendations contained in the Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan were identified by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, town staff, through the public outreach survey, or by recreation industry research. The steady growth of the Town of Christiansburg will present new challenges and opportunities for facilities, parks, and may dictate the need to broaden offerings within town.

The development of the Truman Wilson property is the top priority of this Plan. The public survey clearly indicated trails and cultural events are the highest priority. The 62 acre Truman Wilson site will allow for many of these desires to be addressed. Developing the park with cultural amenities first, such as an

amphitheater, and linking the Huckleberry Trail to the park will begin to meet the expressed desires.

Sport tourism, such as hosting athletic tournaments, benefits the town through meals and lodging purchased by outside teams and spectators. As stated previously, the two USSSA and Dixie World Series tournaments resulted in a combined impact of nearly \$570,000. Maintaining current tournament relationships, developing



relationships with additional sports tournament organizations, and marketing any new facilities developed on the Truman Wilson site will allow these numbers to grow and bring greater benefits to the town from teams and spectators.

Over the next ten years, the Parks and Recreation Department will need additional financial resources to develop new, and maintain existing, properties and facilities. These efforts will bring additional revenue through sports tourism, increasing property values through quality of life improvements, and will allow the town to serve a more diverse population through the department. The town can develop events that will become part of the culture of being a resident of the Town of Christiansburg, helping connect the town to individuals. This plan, as implemented, will strengthen the town's parks and recreation brand as, "The Only Place to Play; Christiansburg, Virginia."







<u>Summary of Open-Ended Comments – Survey</u>

- Comments centered on the following items, in rank order:
 - Fields and Facilities
 - \circ $\,$ Trails and Connectivity $\,$
 - $\circ \ \ \, Operations \ and \ Staff$
 - \circ Programs
 - o Parks
 - o Girls Sports
 - o Marketing and Communications
 - Events, Arts, and Culture
 - Fees for the Recreation Center and Aquatic Center
 - o Safety
- Lacrosse and soccer were the most requested facilities in the open-ended comments
 - \circ Lacrosse 14 comments
 - \circ Soccer 12 comments

<u>Summary of Comments – June 2, 2014 Public Meeting at the</u> <u>Christiansburg Recreation Center</u>

- Explore the potential for expanding the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission to include more representatives, specifically youth, civic organizations (i.e. Rotary Club)
- Mr. Epperley was asked about why the Aquatic Center and Skate Park were not included in the Master Plan. Mr. Epperley explained that the Aquatic Center was its own department whose scope covered the Skate Park as well.
- Music events would be welcomed.
- The Christiansburg Soccer Club donated \$5,000 to help with the addition of the soccer field. They were appreciative of the new look of Depot Park and commented on the now more frequent use.
- Purchasing combo soccer/football goal posts can aid in multi-use rectangular fields.
- Field space for youth is important to keep them involved in the community. References were made to studies linking youth sport participation to better performance in school.





Cost Estimates for Parks and Facilities

These estimates are based solely on equipment and materials and meant only to provide a basic idea of costs associated with park and facility development. Grading, stormwater management, and other costs will be added to these totals. As the town seeks proposals for park and facility development, more detailed figures will be submitted.

Item	Cost Estimate
Playground Equipment	\$35,000-40,000
Parking Spaces	\$1,000 per space
Wayfinding Signage	\$500 per sign
Picnic Shelter	\$50 per square foot
	20 x 30 ft = \$30,000
900 Square foot Concession Facility with Restrooms	\$90,000
Baseball/Softball Dugouts	\$4,000 each
Amphitheater	
Basic – Wood benches and stage area	\$50,000
Intermediate – Terraced seating and stage area	\$250,000
Top Tier – Terraced seating, precast stage and sound wall	\$350,000-400,000
Rectangular Field Complex (Soccer, Lacrosse, Football, etc.)	\$300,000-500,000 per
4-6 Fields	grass field
	\$500,000-750,000 per
	turf field
Four Field Softball Complex	\$900,000-1,000,000
Chain Link Fence – dog park, ball park, etc.	\$18 per linear foot
Shuffleboard Court	\$7,500
Beach Volleyball Court	\$10,000
Field Lighting	\$100,000 per field,
	reduced for adjacent
	fields to \$80,000 per
	field
Press Box/Scorer's Box	\$10,000

Town of Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Survey

1. Is your residence located within the town limits of Christiansburg? (circle one) Yes No 2. Please write the number of people in your household within each age category:	The results of the following survey will inform the Christiansburg Recreation Master Plan process. Please fill out this survey so that the Town can better meet your parks and recreation needs. Please complete every question and return by mail or drop off at Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department (Recreation Center), 1600 N. Franklin St., Christiansburg, VA 24073. Thank you! An online version of the survey can be taken at www.surveymonkey.com/s/Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Survey			
Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 56-64 65+ 3. Which of the following do you live closest to? (check one) NRV Mall Ohristiansburg Recreation Center Downtown Shelor Motor Mile 4. How would you rate how often you participate in Christiansburg parks and recreation programs/activities? (circle one) Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very Often 5. How many times PER MONTH do you visit a town park? (circle one) None 1-2 3-4 5+	1. Is your residence located within the town limits of Christiansburg? (circle one)			
NRV Mail Christiansburg Recreation Center Downtown _Shelor Motor Mile 4. How would you rate how often you participate in Christiansburg parks and recreation programs/activities? (circle one) Nore 0 1 2 3 4 5 Very Often 5. How many times PER MONTH do you visit a town park? (circle one) None 1.2 3.4 5 Very Often 5. How many times PER MONTH do you visit a town park? (circle one) None 1.2 3.4 5+ 6.1-What is the main reason you would visit a town park? (check only one) Playground Picnic Town Event Exercise Relax Sport _Other (list):				
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(circle one)	None 1 2 3+			
	(circle one)			

13. What do you feel are critical needs for SPORTS FACILITIES within the Town of Christiansburg?

14. What do you feel are critical needs for PROGRAMS/CLASSES within the Town of Christiansburg?

15. How many people in your household participate in, or visit, the following activities/places? (write number next to each activity, leave blank if "0")

Aerobics/Exercise Classes	Baseball	Basketball
Bicycling	Fishing/Hunting	Kayaking/Canoeing/Rafting
Pickleball	Picnicking	Playground
Racquetball	Special Population Activities	Soccer
Softball	Swimming	Tennis
Track Running/Walking	Trail Running/Walking	Volleyball
Recreation Center	Education Classes	Senior Activities
Camping/Hiking		

16. How many times PER MONTH TOTAL do people in your household participate in, or visit, the following activities/places? (Please enter the total for all that apply to your household. Example: If you play tennis 2X per month and your spouse plays 6X per month, enter 8)

Aerobics/Exercise Classes	Baseball	Basketball
Bicycling	Fishing/Hunting	Kayaking/Canoeing/Rafting
Pickleball	Picnicking	Playground
Racquetball	Special Population Activities	Soccer
Softball	Swimming	Tennis
Track Running/Walking	Trail Running/Walking	Volleyball
Recreation Center	Education Classes	Senior Activities
Camping/Hiking		

17. Check any that your household would participate in, or visit, MORE OFTEN if Christiansburg had adequate or additional facilities:

Aerobics/Exercise Classes	Baseball	Basketball
Bicycling	Fishing/Hunting	Kayaking/Canoeing/Rafting
Pickleball	Picnic Shelters	Playground
Racquetball	Special Population Activities	Soccer
Softball	Swimming	Tennis
Track Running/Walking	Trail Running/Walking	Volleyball
Recreation Center	Dog Park	Trails – Gravel
Trails – Paved/Concrete	Music venue	Town events
Senior Activities	Horseshoes	Camping/Hiking
Other: (please specify)		
Additional Commenter		

Additional Comments: