



# **Chapter 13**

## **Springfield Planning District**

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**GREAT PARKS, GREAT COMMUNITIES  
2010 – 2020 Park System Plan**

**Fairfax County Park Authority**

**SPRINGFIELD PLANNING DISTRICT**

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## SPRINGFIELD PLANNING DISTRICT

### Location & Character

The Springfield Planning District is located in central-southeast part of the county and is bounded by the Capital Beltway (I-495) and the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks on the north, Rolling Road on the west, and Beulah Street and Telegraph Road on the east. The district is bisected from north to south by I-95.



Springfield has a predominantly suburban residential character, with some mid-rise office and commercial development in the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) and the Franconia/Springfield Transit Station Area. The General Services Administration (GSA) Warehouse and the Fort Belvoir North Area (FBNA) are two large Federal properties in the district.

While the addition of BRAC-related jobs to the Fort Belvoir Main Post and the Fort Belvoir North Area (FBNA, previously EPG) in September 2011 is not anticipated to bring new residents immediately, the County could eventually see increased demand for recreation facilities in this part of the County. Both increased demand and additional constraints on where recreation facilities can be developed may affect this District in the future.

### Park System Summary

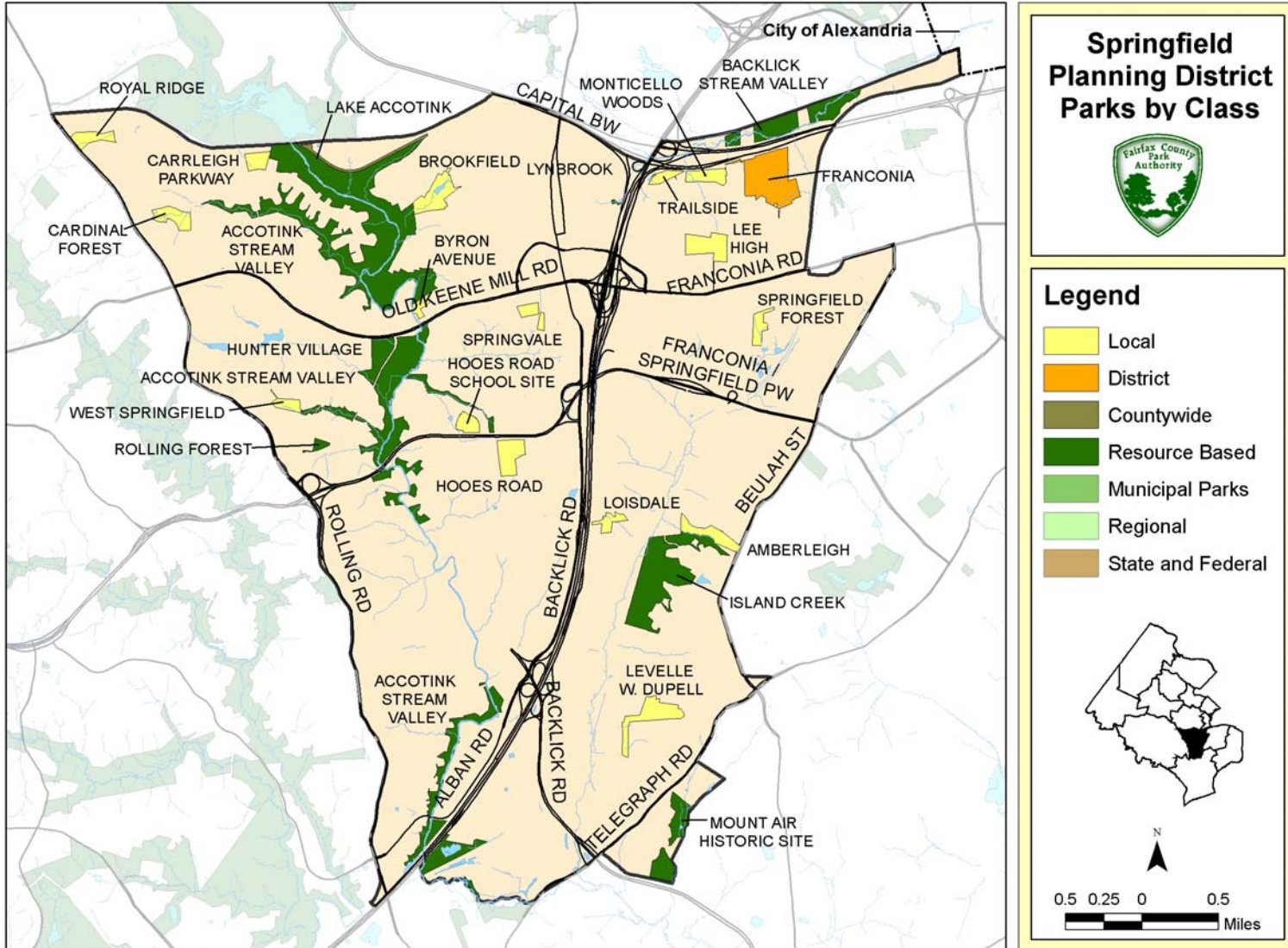
Map 1 depicts the public parkland in the Springfield Planning District. There are 25 public parks with a total of about 1,030 acres in the district. All of the public park acreage in the district is owned by the Park Authority, and is within Park Authority Maintenance Areas 3 and 4.

The parks in the district include a lakefront park, historic sites, local- and district-serving recreational facilities, and stream valleys. Facilities include rectangle and diamond athletic fields, tennis and multi-use courts, playgrounds, garden plots, trails and picnic areas.

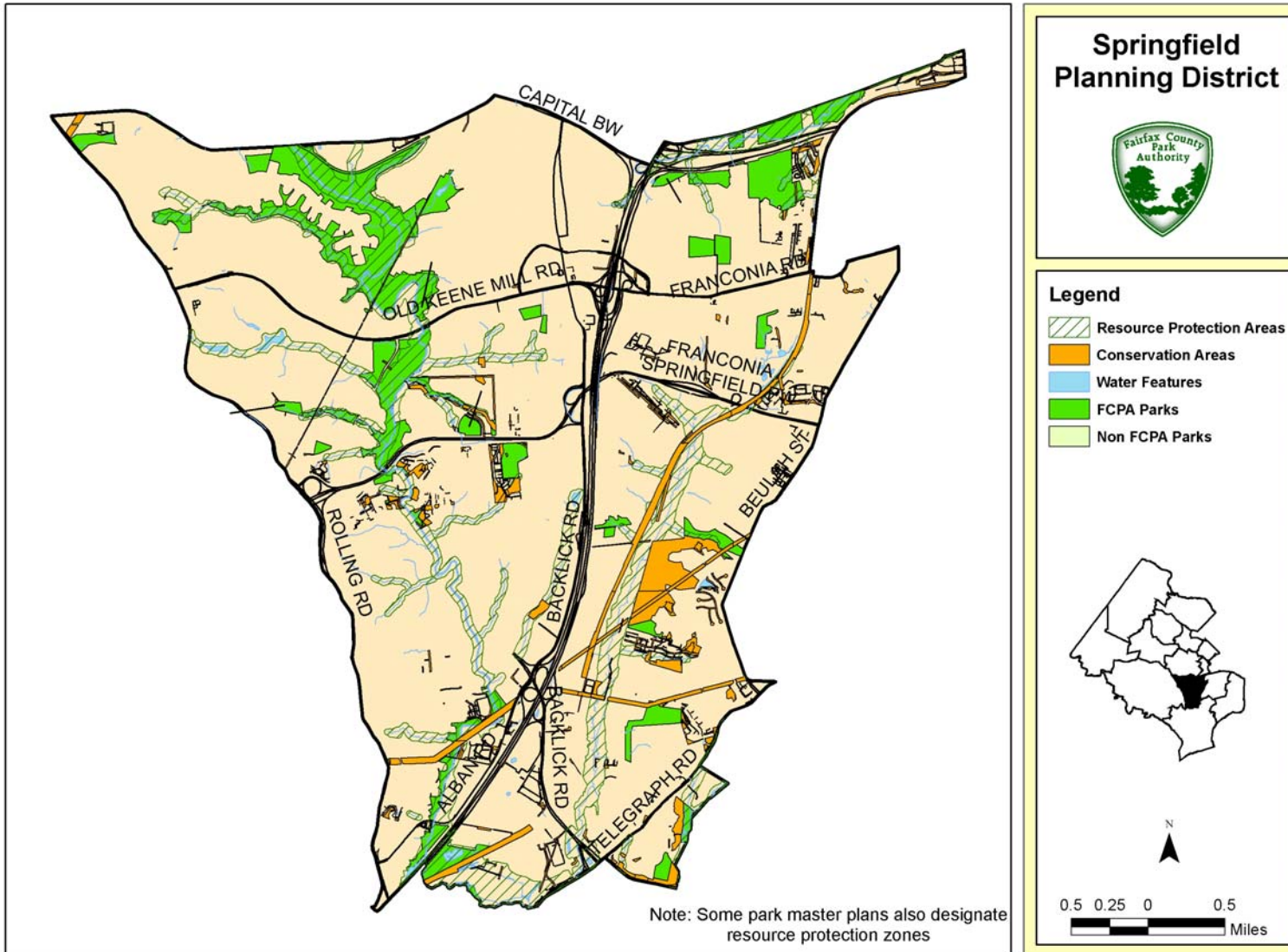
Franconia, Hoes Road, Lake Accotink, and Accotink Stream Valley are the most utilized parks in the district. Accotink Stream Valley Park comprises more than 50 percent of the total parkland in the district and contains portions of the Cross County Trail. Franconia and Hoes Road Parks have multiple athletic fields and are hubs of team sports activities. Franconia Park is the largest park in the district with athletic facilities, containing five athletic fields and two parking lots. In addition, Franconia Park has community garden plots, a native plant nursery, and a significant amount of mature canopy trees. The 448-acre Lake Accotink Park, primarily located in the adjacent Annandale district, has natural areas, trails, boating, mini-golf and picnicking facilities that serve the Springfield district.

Significant cultural sites in the district include the remains of an 18<sup>th</sup> century home and gardens known as Mount Air and a variety of Native American sites within undeveloped portions of parks. Natural resources include Lake Accotink and the stream valley areas associated with Accotink Stream and Backlick Run waterways. Map 2 identifies parkland and areas that contain regulatory or other protections including public park ownership, conservation easements, and Chesapeake Bay Ordinance Resource Protection Areas (RPA).

Map 1: Public Parks by Class in the Springfield District



Map 2: Protected Land in the Springfield District



## **Park Classification**

In June 2005, a new Park Classification System was adopted and incorporated into the Park and Recreation chapter of the Countywide Comprehensive Policy Plan. The Park Classification System is a general framework intended to guide open space and public facilities planning by grouping parks according to certain common typical characteristics. The park classification gives an indication of the intended use, general park size range, typical facility types, and the general experience a user may expect at a park.

Local Parks serve surrounding neighborhoods and communities and offer a variety of local-serving recreation opportunities, such as playgrounds, trails, athletic facilities, picnic areas and natural areas. Typically these parks are designed to serve up to a 3 mile radius depending on the facilities and can range from 2 to 50 acres in size.

Local parks may be urban or suburban in character. Urban parks (including pocket parks, civic plazas and common greens) are a type of local-serving park that are generally more compact and located within an urban or transit-oriented setting. These parks generally consist of high quality design and construction, are well integrated into surrounding development, uses and the public realm and primarily serve to define local urban character, support outdoor enjoyment, social gatherings, recreation needs and special events. These parks may be privately or publicly owned and are usually privately maintained.

District Parks are larger parks that serve greater geographic areas of the County (3 to 6 miles) and provide a wide variety of indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and park experiences. Generally, these parks are more than 50 acres in size. These parks typically accommodate visits of up to a half day, longer operational hours and a larger number of users. Many district parks also have extensive natural areas.

Countywide Parks are larger parks that serve the whole County and provide a variety of larger-scale indoor or outdoor recreation facilities, or both, and facilities or resources that are unique within the County. Typically, these parks are greater than 150 acres and provide opportunities for passive and active recreation to a wide range of simultaneous users for experiences of up to a day in length.

Resource-Based Parks have significant cultural and natural resources. These parks support nature, horticulture and history programs, gardening, nature watching and appreciation of local, regional, state and national history. Extensive stream valley parks are part of the resource-based parks network. Typically, trails and interpretative features and facilities are the primary uses. Some resource parks may have separate areas designated for recreation purposes.



Regional Parks are lands and/or facilities administered by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA). These parks have region-wide significance that supplement and enhance the County and municipal park systems.

While some parks are Resource-Based, note that all park types may include areas designated for natural and/or cultural resource protection. In addition, many state and federal parks augment local and regional parks and also serve to protect natural and cultural resources within the County. Table 1 lists and classifies the parks in the Springfield district according to the County parks classification system or by state or federal ownership. Table 1 also includes information about whether and when parks were master planned and if a master planning action (new master plan development or plan update) is needed.

*Table 1: Parks in the Springfield Planning District*

Park Name	Acres	Supervisor District	Park Classification	Approved Master Plan Date	Master Plan Action Needed
Accotink S.V. <sup>1</sup>	841.13 <sup>+</sup>	BR,LEE,MA, MV,PR	Resource-Based		
Amberleigh	17.74	LEE	Local	1988	
Backlick S.V. <sup>1</sup>	90.70 <sup>+</sup>	BR,LEE,MA	Resource-Based		
Brookfield	26.80	LEE	Local	1968	
Byron Avenue	5.67	LEE	Local		✓
Cardinal Forest	15.62	SP	Local	1964	✓
Carrleigh Parkway	10.23	SP	Local	*	
Franconia	62.87	LEE	District	1974	✓
Hooes Road	21.06	LEE	Local	1974	
Hooes Road School Site	10.60	LEE	Local	1994	
Hunter Village	19.80	SP	Resource-Based	*	
Island Creek	95.51	LEE	Resource-Based	*	
Lake Accotink	448.09 <sup>+</sup>	BR	Countywide	1993	
Lee High	23.54	LEE	Local	2004	
Levelle W. Dupell	28.35	MV	Local	1987	
Loisdale	8.64	LEE	Local	1974	✓
Lynbrook	0.54	LEE	Resource-Based	*	
Monticello Woods	13.71	LEE	Local	*	
Mount Air Historic Site	33.15	MV	Resource-Based	*	
Rolling Forest	3.94	SP	Resource-Based	*	
Royal Ridge	12.46	SP	Local	1973	
Springfield Forest	10.50	LEE	Local	*	
Springvale	8.83	LEE	Local	1973	
Trailside	6.65	LEE	Local		
West Springfield	8.06	SP	Local	1970	

<sup>1</sup> Resource-Based Stream Valley parks by practice do not have Master Plans.

\* This park was dedicated by a private developer and may be subject to a Conceptual Development Plan associated with an approved rezoning that takes the place of a park master plan.

+ A portion of this park lies outside of the Springfield district.



## **Park Master Plans**

A park master plan is a general guide for appropriate park uses and their approximate location within a specific park site. The plan serves as a long-range vision (10-20 year timeframe) for future development and programming. Issues typically addressed include planned park elements, natural and cultural resource management, and general design concerns. The plan is conceptual in nature and not intended to address detailed issues related to engineered site design or park operations. The plan is just one of many steps in the process that leads to the development of a public park. An archive of park master plans is available at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/mparchives.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/mparchives.htm).

## **Themes, Issues and Strategies**

In early 2008 the Park Authority interacted with citizens at ten *Great Parks, Great Communities* public workshops in all Supervisory districts and at a variety of community festivals and events in the parks to gather input on **long-term planning for the land, facilities and natural and cultural resources of the park system**. In addition, the Park Authority received public feedback on the park system throughout the year via email and the project web site.

Based on the public feedback and staff expertise, staff identified 26 key issues that fit within eight themes relating to the land, resources and facilities of the Park Authority. **The themes are Connectivity, Community Building, Service Delivery, Facility Reinvestment, Land Acquisition, Resource Interpretation, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Natural Resource Stewardship.**

This section describes how the eight themes relate to the park system in the Springfield District and presents strategies for addressing the issues as they apply to the parks in the district. Some strategies include recommendations for construction of facilities, infrastructure and amenities at parks in the district. As part of the planning process for any proposed construction, the project area should first be assessed for possible impacts to natural and cultural resources.

### ***THEME: Connectivity***

Better integrating parks with surrounding land uses (neighborhoods and employment centers) and increasing park-to-park connections within the system will allow for greater access and enjoyment. Strategy suggestions include adding trails, trail connections, bridges and other forms of improved access to and between parks.

Map 3 illustrates existing and planned connections and points of interest within the Springfield Planning District. The map depicts high-level, conceptual connections and incorporates elements from the adopted Countywide Trails Plan and Park Authority Trail Strategy Plan. Connections link natural and cultural resources and recreational

destinations, supporting recreational activity and frequently offering alternative transportation options.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should work to improve non-motorized access to parks from commercial and residential areas and to increase connectivity between park sites.***

Springfield District trails and connectivity benefit from two major trails in the district; the Cross County Trail and the major Countywide trail along the Fairfax County/Franconia-Springfield Parkway. The Cross County Trail runs generally north-south while the Fairfax County Parkway trail runs east-west. The Cross County Trail runs through Accotink Stream Valley Park and provides access to Byron Avenue Park.

**Heard from the public: “FCPA parks need to focus more on building recreational trails. Focus should be on connectivity and on multiuse. Natural surface trails bring people into the natural environment without a great amount of impact.”**

Springfield is bisected by I-95, and major roads including Fairfax County Parkway (Route 7100), Franconia-Springfield Parkway (Route 7900), and Old Keene Mill/Franconia Road (Route 644) all serve as barriers to connecting parks and creating safe non-motorized connections between parks. The redevelopment of the Fort Belvoir North Area (formerly EPG) will form a significant barrier to the Accotink Stream Valley trail completion, a key connection for this district.

Strategies:

- S-C-1. Use criteria provided in the Park Authority’s Trail Strategy Plan to evaluate potential new trails, connections and improvements;
- S-C-2. Complete segments of the Accotink Stream Valley Trail south of Hooes Road;
- S-C-3. Continue to work with appropriate agencies to establish Accotink Stream Valley trail through or around the Fort Belvoir North Area (FBNA);
- S-C-4. Connect the Cardinal Forest and West Springfield subdivisions to the Cross County Trail through trail improvements within Accotink Stream Valley, Cardinal Forest and West Springfield Parks;
- S-C-5. Connect Trailside, Monticello Woods and Franconia Parks;
- S-C-6. Create a trail link between the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station and Springfield Forest Park and community;
- S-C-7. Coordinate with Fairfax County and Virginia Departments of Transportation to ensure non-motorized transportation routes are provided with transportation improvements in the Springfield area; and
- S-C-8. Encourage creation of non-motorized transportation links between the Springfield-Franconia Metro Station and surrounding parks and communities.

***Issue: Multiple, separate park sites located across Fairfax County should be linked through thematic interpretive connections.***

Thematic connections, emphasized through elements such as signage, maps, or website information, can foster greater public awareness of important features. Increased knowledge of site features could encourage greater support for stewardship and management activities.

The archaeological work conducted in and around the former Mount Air house site and associated garden could serve as an interpretive theme with other types of archaeological research done elsewhere. Archaeological interpretation would focus on the house site and associated elements. Interpretation would be aided with knowledge and information on the house as it existed prior to the 1992 fire. In addition, the Mount Air house site could be interpreted as an antebellum plantation with earlier colonial associations.

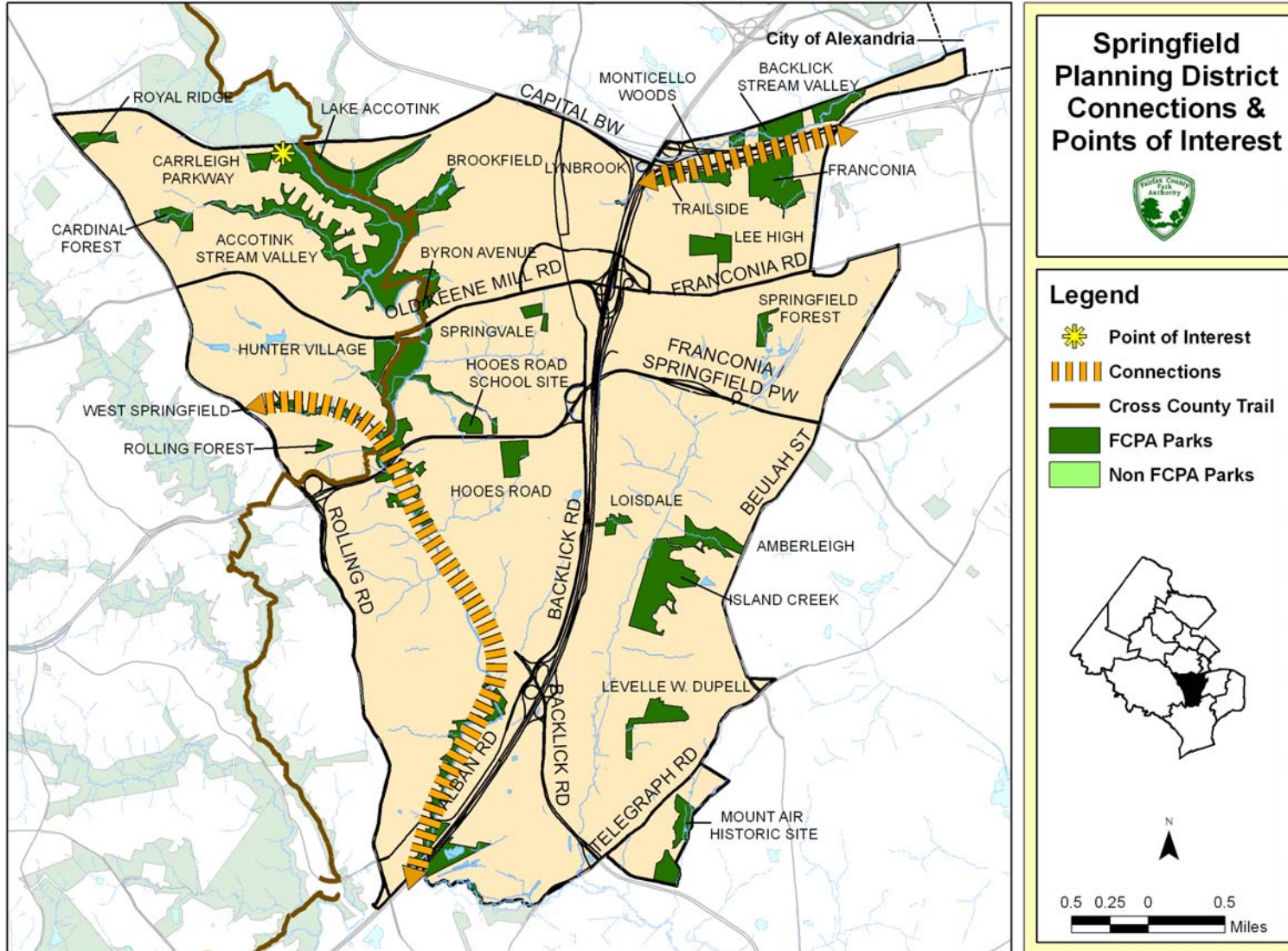
Strategies:

S-C-9. Link the Mount Air cultural landscape to other historic residential properties within the Park Authority system;

S-C-10. Consider linking the native plant nursery run in partnership with Earth Sangha at Franconia Park through a gardening interpretive theme including Green Spring Gardens and other horticultural parks;

S-C-11. Determine suitability of adding Lake Accotink and Island Creek Parks to the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail.

Map 3: Non-motorized Connections and Points of Interest in the Springfield District



**Issue: *Park facilities should be served by the public transportation system to provide access to recreational facilities.***

The portion of Springfield District north of the Fairfax County and Franconia Springfield Parkways are well served by Metrobus routes, with all of the parks in this area within a half mile distance of a Metrobus route. The Kingstowne and Manchester Lakes communities are served by Fairfax Connector bus routes. While it may appear that all of the parks in the district are currently well served by public transportation, they are not, due to stop locations and transit schedules.

Transit stops may be located farther away from parks than a quarter-mile, or across busy streets where safe crossing may be an issue. While there is some limited weekend transit service, the majority of transit service in the area is to support morning and evening commuting, primarily with flows to and from the Franconia-Springfield Metro Station. Transit supporting commuting times and patterns do not necessarily serve park users.

Strategies:

S-C-12. Work with the Fairfax County Department of Transportation to improve bus transit service to parks in the Springfield Planning District, especially Lake Accotink. This should include coordination with bus stop locations and transit schedules.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should work to improve access to waterways and promote the use of “water trails” throughout the County.***

Since there are no navigable waterways in the district, no district- or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Springfield Planning District.

***THEME: Community Building***

Local parks are places where people can interact and build community. Well-designed and located parks, park facilities and programs support greater social interaction. Community-building park facilities and activities include reservable picnic areas, amphitheaters, dog parks, garden plots, farmers markets, performances and special events. Collocation of facilities with other community uses can also assist in strengthening communities. Strategy suggestions include ways to increase the community-building role of local parks in residential neighborhoods and providing parks and recreation facilities near other civic uses.

**Issue: *Local and urban parks should include a combination of facilities, amenities and gathering spaces to attract and promote social interaction among community members.***

A number of parks in the Springfield district provide community building facilities that help to promote social interaction and better integrate local parks with the surrounding

community. Brookfield, Lee High and Levelle W. Dupell Parks all provide reservable picnic areas that are often used by family and community groups for gatherings, with Brookfield Park accommodating groups of up to 120.

Lake Accotink Park, while primarily located within the Annandale District, serves Springfield communities with a variety of community events. The Braddock Nights summer concert series provides music and entertainment. Outdoor movies are often hosted at Lake Accotink. The community's signature event, Springfield Days Festival, is a four day event with parades, food, art shows and performances, with the capstone event, the Cardboard Boat Regatta, hosted at Lake Accotink Park. Lake Accotink also has multiple reservable picnic areas; the largest shelter can accommodate up to 300 people.

Lake Accotink offers many popular dog related programs, however, there are no off-leash dog parks in the district. As additional high-density residential buildings are developed in Springfield, there will be a need to create outdoor community spaces for people and dogs.

Strategies:

S-CB-1. Provide a neighborhood-scale off-leash dog area in the district.

**Heard from the public: "There are not enough dog parks."**

***Issue: Parks should be collocated with other civic uses (libraries, community centers, senior centers, etc.) to promote social interaction among community members.***

There is a strong relationship between Lee High School and Lee High Park, with the park providing a number of athletic facilities for school use. Cardinal Forest, Island Creek, Keene Mill, Garfield, Springfield Estates, and West Springfield Elementary Schools and Irving Middle School are all in close proximity to parks with significant natural areas, such as Accotink Stream Valley Park and Levelle W. Dupell Park.

Strategies:

S-CB-2. Continue to collocate uses as redevelopment occurs in designated growth areas of the planning district.

***THEME: Service Delivery***

The Park Authority provides quality facilities that are well used, but may not be equitably distributed across all parts of the County or accessible to all groups. Countywide and specialty facilities, in particular, may not serve a true county-wide service area. Residents desire recreational facilities and opportunities at parks near where they live and for all age groups and socio-economic populations. Strategy suggestions include creating more facilities, better distributing facilities across the County, and reducing barriers to use.

Service level standards for over twenty park facility types were established through the 2004 Needs Assessment (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/needsassessment.htm>) process and incorporated into the Countywide Policy Plan (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/comprehensiveplan/policyplan/parksrec.pdf>) in 2005. Facility standards are countywide goals for providing park and recreation facilities that reasonably satisfy community needs. Standards are expressed in units per population, and are based on extensive analysis of citizen demand and preferences compared with the existing public facility inventories. Based on the Countywide adopted facility service level standards and projected population growth, Table 2 shows the projected surplus or deficit of several key local serving facilities in the Springfield Planning District for the year 2020. While overall facility needs are quantified in Table 2, the location of needed facilities is determined through the site specific master planning process that considers site conditions, context, resources, and community input. For more detailed information on existing facilities in each park and service levels, please see the Existing Conditions Report.

*Table 2: Springfield Planning District 2020 Local Serving Facility Needs Analysis*

		59,133	2010 population			
		65,381	2020 population			
Facility	Service Level Standard	2010 Existing Facilities	2020 Needed Facilities	2020 Projected (Deficit)/ Surplus	2020 Projected Service Level	
Rectangle Fields	1 field / 2,700 people	21.7	24.2	(2.5)	90%	
Adult Baseball Fields	1 field / 24,000 people	3.0	2.7	0.3	110%	
Adult Softball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 22,000 people	1.5	3.0	(1.5)	50%	
Youth Baseball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 7,200 people	19.0	9.1	9.9	209%	
Youth Softball Fields <sup>+</sup>	1 field / 8,800 people	1.5	7.4	(5.9)	20%	
Basketball Courts	1 court / 2,100 people	8.0	31.1	(23.1)	26%	
Playgrounds	1 playground / 2,800 people	16.0	23.4	(7.4)	69%	
Neighborhood Dog Parks	1 dog park / 86,000 people	0.0	0.8	(0.8)	0%	
Neighborhood Skate Parks	1 skate park / 106,000 people	0.0	0.6	(0.6)	0%	

<sup>+</sup> 60 ft and 65 ft diamond fields are assigned to the sport where primarily allocated.

**Issue: The Park Authority should provide and equitably distribute facilities to meet established facility service level standards.**

Springfield is projected to only have a surplus in adult and youth baseball fields, and is projected to have deficiencies in all other facility types. This is similar to Fairfax County



as a whole, where deficiencies are projected for all facility types other than adult baseball and youth softball diamonds. The district lies within the service area of Lake Accotink Park and Lee District Park. These are large District and/or Countywide parks which provide a number of fields and recreational amenities, but are located outside the Springfield district.

Strategies:

- S-SD-1. Consider providing a local skate park facility at a park in the district; and
- S-SD-2. Support construction of a lighted, synthetic turf rectangular field in land to be added to Loisdale Park, as proffered by adjacent commercial development.

***Issue: The Park Authority should provide new kinds of parks and facilities and in new ways to meet the needs of the County's changing population.***

Strategies:

- S-SD-3. Consider developing a mountain bike skills park and/or BMX track at a park within the district, if a suitable location can be found.

***Issue: The Park Authority should re-examine park master plans to determine if parks are planned to best serve the needs of Fairfax County residents.***

Many of the parks in Springfield have existing master plans or other approved development plans. While most of these master plans are 20 years old, the majority are planned with facilities that continue to support adjacent residential uses and offer the opportunity to expand local park usage within parks with changes to adopted master plans.

Strategies:

- S-SD-4. Master plan Cardinal Forest and Byron Avenue parks;
- S-SD-5. Amend the master plan for Franconia Park to evaluate the suitability of existing temporary or planned, but unbuilt, facilities; and
- S-SD-6. Develop master plans for suitable Local parks to provide opportunities to add needed facilities.

***THEME: Facility Reinvestment***

The Park Authority has a great diversity of facilities and resources in various lifecycle stages. Funding and schedules for replacement or reinvestment are inconsistent and adding new facilities has sometimes taken precedence over renewal of existing facilities. Strategy suggestions include repairing, replacing, upgrading, and improving utilization of existing facilities and equipment.

**Issue: *Repair, replacement, and upgrading of existing park facilities should be addressed through a system-wide lifecycle replacement program that takes into account changing facility needs.***

Strategies:

S-FR-1. Renovate or replace playground structures at Brookfield Park. Playground replacements should co-locate apparatus for ages 2-5 and ages 5-12.

**Issue: *Parking standards and levels of service should reflect user patterns to minimize impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.***

Due to the built-out and relatively compact residential nature of the district, there can be parking conflicts between local residents and park users arriving by automobile.

Strategies:

S-FR-2. Develop all local parks in a way that encourages non-motorized access to the surrounding residential areas;

S-FR-3. Avoid building parking lots at local parks that do not have recreation facilities;

S-FR-4. Renovate and expand the parking lot and park access road at Hooes Road Park; and

S-FR-5. Renovate the existing parking lot and access road at Franconia Park.

***THEME: Land Acquisition***

Additional parkland is needed to protect and buffer natural areas and historic sites and to provide room to develop new recreational facilities. Strategy suggestions include ways to continue to add appropriate land to the Park Authority's land holdings to expand the park system.

Service level standards for both local and district/countywide parkland were established through the 2004 Needs Assessment and incorporated into the Countywide Policy Plan in 2005. Parkland standards represent countywide goals for providing land for the two types of parks (Local and District/Countywide) that support service delivery and facility development and are expressed in units per population. Local parks include both suburban and urban park types. Resource-based parks occur where resources are located and therefore do not require quantitative service level standards. Please refer to the Park Classification discussion earlier in this chapter for additional information on park classification descriptions.

Based on adopted service level standards and projected population growth, Table 3 shows the projected surplus or deficit of parkland in the Springfield Planning District for the year 2020.

*Table 3: Springfield Planning District 2020 Parkland Needs Analysis*

<b>59,133</b>	2010 population					
<b>65,381</b>	2020 projected population					
<b>8,836</b>	District Size (acres)					
	<b>Parkland/Open Space Type</b>	<b>Service Level Standard</b>	<b>2010 Existing Acres</b>	<b>2020 Needed Acres</b>	<b>2020 Projected (Deficit)/ Surplus</b>	<b>2020 Projected Service Level</b>
<b>Public Parkland</b>	Local Suburban	5 acres / 1,000 people	315	327	<b>(12)</b>	115%
	Urban	1.5 acres / 1,000 people plus 1 acre / 10,000 employees				
	District/Countywide <sup>+</sup>	13 acres / 1,000 people	44	850	<b>(806)</b>	5%
	Resource-Based	*	675			
	<b>Parkland Total</b>		<b>1,034</b>			
<b>Private Open Space</b>	Private Recreation		0			
	HOA Property		707			
	<b>Private OS Total</b>		<b>707</b>			
<b>Public &amp; Private Total</b>			<b>1,714</b>			

<sup>+</sup> The District and Countywide Parks that serve this Planning District may be located outside the Planning District and this outlying acreage is not reflected in this table.

\* There is no service level standard for Resource-Based parkland. The amount of resource based parkland owned and/or protected is based on the existence and sensitivity of the resources.

**Issue: Parkland for recreation should be provided according to adopted service level standards and distributed equitably throughout the County.**

Due to the nature of existing development within Springfield, there are few opportunities to purchase additional land suitable for park facilities. Most of the natural and cultural areas have been developed or are impinged by existing development. Therefore the most likely source of new parkland to address the service level deficiencies will come from infill development and redevelopment within commercial areas.

Strategies:

S-LA-1. Evaluate Federal land holdings within the district for suitability for active and passive recreation uses if these properties should be declared surplus; and

S-LA-2. Develop an additional district park in the southeast portion of the district, in accordance with the Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

**Issue: Urban parks should be provided in higher density/mixed use areas of the County (i.e. Tysons Corner, Transit Station Areas, Commercial Revitalization Districts).**

Strategies:

S-LA-3. Encourage the creation of urban parks in the Springfield Community Business Center (CBC) and Franconia-Springfield Transit Station Area (TSA) that will help create a sense of place, spur redevelopment and serve residents, workers and visitors; and

S-LA-4. Evaluate parks within walking distance of the Springfield CBC and TSA for redevelopment opportunities to better match park uses with changing community needs.

**Issue: *Property acquisition is important for protecting historic resources in Fairfax County and ensuring their preservation for future generations.***

No district or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Springfield Planning District. Please refer to the countywide section of the Great Parks, Great Communities Plan for a discussion of strategies to address this issue on a countywide basis.

**Issue: *Property acquisition is an important strategy for protecting natural resources in Fairfax County and ensuring open and natural areas for future generations.***

Strategies:

S-LA-5. Seek to acquire and/or protect through purchase, donation, development dedications, or conservation easements remaining natural areas in the district, especially large tracts connecting to other natural areas and those containing unique or significant natural resources;

S-LA-6. Continue to acquire property within the Accotink Creek and Backlick Run stream valleys, in accordance with the stream valley policy; and

S-LA-7. Seek to acquire additional property around Lake Accotink in order to protect the park from encroachment threats.

**Heard from the public: “We have a great park system and serve a diverse constituency, but most of our natural resources are destroyed or impaired. FCPA should take the lead in creating, restoring and acquiring more natural areas.”**

***THEME: Resource Interpretation***

Residents may not be aware of or understand the importance of the vast number of natural and cultural resources the Park Authority holds in public trust. Strategy suggestions include adding to the existing interpretive facilities, signs, and programs. Roadway and trail waysides permit park visitors opportunities to stop and view interpretive signage.

**Issue: *The full range of natural and cultural resources within Fairfax County should be interpreted through facilities as needed.***

Historic sites in county parks in the district reflect different phases of the architectural and agrarian history of Fairfax County during the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They provide opportunities to interpret the evolution of Fairfax County from colony through the Revolution, Civil War and into the period of the New Nation.

Strategies:

S-RI-1. Develop an interpretation plan and construct appropriate cultural resource signage and facilities at Mount Air Historic Site.

***THEME: Cultural Resource Stewardship***

Many factors threaten the health, protection and viability of natural and cultural resources on county parkland. Strategy suggestions include focusing on managing threats and actively managing existing natural and cultural resources consistent with guidance provided in the countywide [Cultural Resource Management Plan](#) and [Natural Resource Management Plan](#).

The district's most significant historic site is at Mount Air Park, which is the core area of the historic plantation called Mount Air, consisting of the ruins of the main house (circa 1750), the remnants of formal gardens, assorted out-buildings and archaeological features. The Mount Air Historic Site promises to yield material remains related to a variety of historical periods of interest to residents of Fairfax County.

***Issue: Historic structures should be stabilized, repaired, renovated and/or restored to ensure their preservation and availability for public viewing and interpretation.***

Strategies:

S-CR-1. Continue efforts to preserve the Mount Air Historic Site.

***Issue: Cultural Resources should be identified and evaluated prior to any proposed construction activity.***

Strategies:

S-CR-2. For any site subject to proposed construction activity, a preliminary assessment of the property will be carried out using GIS and pedestrian reconnaissance. Should potential resources be present, a cultural resource survey will be conducted and mitigation measures will be developed, as necessary.

***Issue: Impacts to National Register eligible cultural resources should be avoided where at all feasible. If impacts cannot be avoided mitigation level documentation or data recovery should occur.***

Strategies:

S-CR-3. Document and record buildings and structures using Historic American Buildings/Historic American Engineering methods (research, measured drawings and archival photographs) and conduct data recovery excavations for archaeological sites, as appropriate.

**Issue: *New, expanded and upgraded facilities are needed to house artifact collections to ensure their preservation for future generations.***

No district- or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Springfield Planning District. This is an issue of countywide concern that should be addressed with centralized facilities.

***THEME: Natural Resource Stewardship***

Parkland in this district is concentrated mostly within the Accotink Stream Valley Park – a loosely connected group of parcels stretching along Accotink Creek – and in several larger parks such as Island Creek. Most of the remaining parks in the district have only isolated fragments of natural areas.

**Issue: *Natural habitats and the wildlife they support are disappearing and are fragmented.***

Strategies:

- S-NR-1. Protect and improve existing corridors, linkages and watersheds;
- S-NR-2. Provide new linkages between remaining public and private natural areas;
- S-NR-3. Manage utility corridors and other easements consistent with natural resource goals, not just utility service goals;
- S-NR-4. Designate permanent resource protection zones on parkland that define appropriate uses and development; and
- S-NR-5. Mitigate impacts from development, road and utility projects on parkland through leveraging easements and agreements needed from the Park Authority.

**Heard from the public: “It is critical that we seek to improve and maintain the natural resource areas in our county. Given the high degree of development in the county these areas become more precious and endangered...Please save these areas for our current and future residents both human and animal!”**

**Issue: *Water resources and stream valleys are degraded due to development and associated stormwater runoff.***

The Springfield Planning District contains a significant portion of the Accotink Creek watershed and some of the headwaters for other creek systems in Fairfax County. All are highly impacted from upstream activities. Several of these watersheds, such as

Accotink Creek, have few to no stormwater controls and severe degradation from excessive runoff.

Strategies:

S-NR-6. Work with the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) and private land owners including the Department of Defense, to capture and treat stormwater. This could take the form of incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) methods and provision of new or enhanced stormwater facilities with larger redevelopment projects;

S-NR-7. Encourage private property owners to adopt wildlife and water friendly landscaping practices to improve water quality and habitat with continuing education opportunities; and

S-NR-8. Continue to partner with Friends of Accotink Creek organizing stream cleanups, storm drain marking and other water quality improvement activities.

**Issue: *The Park Authority does not have an adequate inventory of natural resources on parkland.***

Strategies:

S-NR-9. Direct development of park infrastructure to areas that, when inventoried, reflect few or poor quality natural resources, unless otherwise incompatible;

S-NR-10. Ensure that natural resources are assessed prior to any park development. Use design principles that minimize natural resource impacts and include monitoring and restoration of impacted natural areas as part of development plans;

S-NR-11. Identify, preserve, protect and enhance wetlands within Accotink Creek and Backlick stream valley corridors; and

S-NR-12. Conduct natural resource inventories and develop and implement natural resource management plans for natural areas.

**Issue: *Non-native invasive plants are threatening natural resources by reducing the diversity of native species and impacting wildlife habitat.***

The extremely fragmented nature of the natural areas in the district coupled with small park size and high levels of human disturbance have generally resulted in degraded natural areas within parks including high occurrences of invasive plant species. Due to the development pattern in the Springfield area, invasive plant species are well established and often cover large percentages of vegetated areas.

Strategies:

S-NR-13. Educate citizens on the problems associated with invasive plant species through community education;

S-NR-14. Continue invasive plant control and removal efforts in portions of Accotink Stream Valley;



S-NR-15. Partner with Earth Sangha at Franconia Park to manage nearby meadow and woods to prevent invasive species seed production; and

S-NR-16. Expand non-native invasive plant management and habitat restoration on parkland by implementing the Non-Native Invasive Plant [Prioritization Plan](#) and [Assessment](#).

**Issue: *The County has a goal to expand tree canopy. The Park Authority should contribute to this goal wherever possible by ensuring existing forested areas are sustainable and expanding canopy where possible.***

Strategies:

S-NR-17. Ensure sustainability of tree canopy on parkland by developing and implementing management plans and controlling threats such as non-native invasive plants and deer herbivory;

S-NR-18. Encourage tree planting and natural landscaping techniques on public and private land;

S-NR-19. Incorporate natural landscaping techniques on parkland, avoid tree loss from development and where possible increase tree canopy;

S-NR-20. Designate permanent resource protection zones on parkland that define appropriate uses and development; and

S-NR-21. Consider expanding and enhancing tree cover by planting trees at appropriate locations within Franconia, Backlick Stream Valley, and Hoes Road Parks.

**Issue: *The Park Authority should utilize innovative practices in construction of recreational facilities and buildings to minimize impacts to the environment and demonstrate stewardship.***

No district- or park-specific strategies exist for this issue in the Springfield Planning District.