

# CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Source: Culpeper County Public Schools

### INTRODUCTION

As new residents and businesses move into Culpeper County, the demand on existing community resources, such as public schools, fire & emergency services (EMS), parks & recreation, etc., increases. As the provision of these resources is vital to the wellbeing of the community, it is necessary for the County to proactively prepare its community resources for future demand changes. This preparation can range from renovating and expanding existing facilities, to the construction of new ones.

The County's public facilities must be carefully coordinated with land use and transportation plans to integrate the provision of services with anticipated growth, revenues, and available funding. Levels of service within different areas of the County will vary. Wherever possible, current and future needs should be addressed through existing facilities. Where this is not possible, new facilities should be planned. By identifying where public schools, fire and rescue stations, and other improvements should be constructed, the County can encourage development in appropriate areas and discourage development in inappropriate areas. Coordination of County land use, transportation and public facilities development is critical in providing efficient and cost-effective government services for current and future County residents.

Created through coordination with other County departments, the Community Resources Chapter recommends the general timing and location of future County facilities based on desired service levels. This chapter is designed to function as a needs assessment supporting the establishment of specific project priorities through the annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP). A comprehensive approach integrates facility needs, siting criteria, and design issues with adopted land use plans and other planning concerns. This chapter will guide the acquisition of public facility sites through the rezoning process and advance purchase or optioning. Additionally, this does not address funding availability, debt capacity, or other financial concerns; nor does it address facility components, equipment, building design, and numerous other factors best left to the expertise of the operating departments. In addition, the location recommendations are general and should not be interpreted as site-specific.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the County's current community resources, an analysis of current and future concerns and trends relevant to the provision of these resources, and a list of the goals, objectives, and action items that will address these identified concerns. These statements will outline the County's aspirations regarding the provision of these community resources for the next several years, influencing how it will carry out future decisions. Each of these generalized goals will include detailed objectives and accompanying action items that will provide the framework for how the County can work towards achieving them.

## MANAGING GROWTH & DEMAND INCREASES GENERALLY

#### **GROWTH MANAGEMENT**

The adoption of this chapter as a component of the County's Comprehensive Plan will provide an important implementation tool for the County's overall growth management strategy. Articulated throughout this chapter, the Comprehensive Plan encourages sustainable and orderly growth in designated areas of the County while supporting the overall needs and reasonable aspirations of the community.

The County's annual Capital Improvements Program (CIP) addresses short-term facility planning. The CIP proposes a specific schedule for acquisition, development, enhancement or replacement of public facilities over a 5-year period. It shows the arrangement of selected projects in priority order, and establishes cost estimates and anticipated funding sources. This chapter is far more general in nature.

#### **GENERAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

An evaluation of existing public facilities and a determination of needs for future facilities involves several related criteria. These criteria cannot be absolute or static because particular needs and existing conditions vary greatly throughout the County, and may change over time.

#### **LOCATION**

Most of the County depends on groundwater. The vast majority of residents and businesses rely on individual wells for their water supply. There are approximately 50 community (residential) and non-community (business) public water systems of varying sizes within the County. This is covered in more detail in Chapter 7.

#### **ACCESSIBILITY**

Sites should be accessible to major transportation routes providing the best possible access to the greatest number of citizens expected to use the facility.

#### PROXIMITY TO RELATED AND SUPPORTING FACILITIES

There are advantages to the grouping of related facilities within one complex or area. Convenience to the public is thereby enhanced, operational economy is achieved, and less land is required to provide shared facilities such as parking. Some facilities are also more effective when located adjacent to a business district or shopping center, thereby assuring the greatest convenience to the largest number of people. Public facilities should not be located in the very heart of the retail core, but preferably near the periphery of the commercial concentrations.

#### CONDITION AND OBSOLESCENCE ASSESSMENT

The present state of repair for particular facilities needs to be considered. Building space arrangements and special mechanical equipment requirements to meet the functional needs of the facility must be considered. The operational efficiency of the facility and its possible adaptation to change or enlargement are factors that must be reviewed to determine the relative obsolescence of the building plan. Poor condition and high levels of obsolescence may indicate a need for replacement.

#### CAPACITY IN RELATION TO PRESENT AND FUTURE UTILIZATION

The current level of performance of any particular service or function must be related to optimum present and future utilization. Increased demands for services will typically require increased staff and equipment resources with a corresponding need for additional space and expansion potential.

#### SITE ADEQUACY

The site for each building should be adequate for: (a) the space needs of the building and any probable future additions, (b) parking space for vehicles of both visitors and employees, and (c) sufficient landscaped open space for a functional and pleasing appearance, and for appropriate environmental protection.

#### **ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY**

A measure of usefulness is also contained in the building's ability, by its appearance and arrangement, to inspire higher civic achievement in those who see it or in those who work within its confines. An architecturally attractive building is a reflection of cultural pride and a credit to the County's citizens.

#### Environmental Sensitivity

Public facilities should incorporate green building techniques in both site development and building design. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification should be sought for any public project where feasible.

#### Support of Adopted Planning Policies

Proposed projects should support adopted County policies and plans. Without reference to an overall framework for development of the County, projects can be inconsistent and counterproductive. If a project appears justified, even though it is not consistent with adopted policies, then a change in policy may be warranted, and should be proposed and reviewed through the planning process.

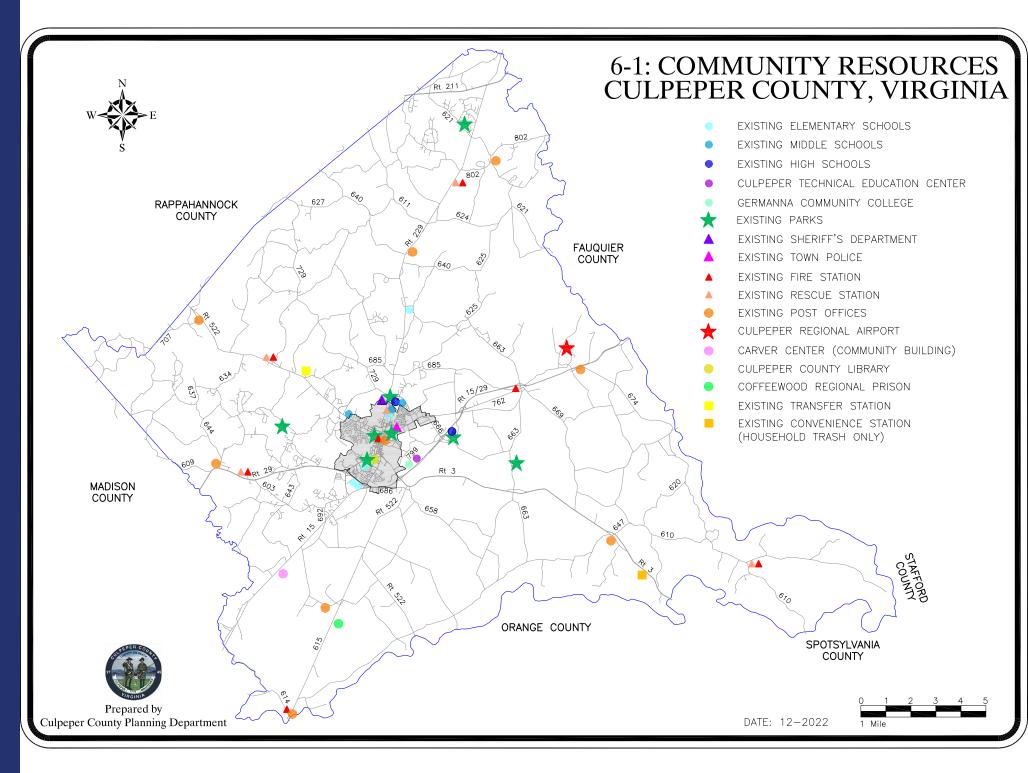
#### **Cost Efficiency**

New projects should be shown to be cost-effective in technical design and/or justified by the public benefits outweighing the public costs. This allows the maximum use of existing capacity or services, with potential expansion when justified by the costs as well as need.

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

#### **EXISTING FACILITIES & LOCATIONS**

As shown in Map 6-1, the Town and the County operate multiple community resources throughout the County. However, a large portion of existing community resources are clustered in and around the Town. This is primarily due to the Town serving as the main population center for the County, with the highest concentration of population and economic activity. There are, however, some community resources located farther away from the Town, including fire/EMS stations, schools, parks, and the waste transfer and convenience stations.

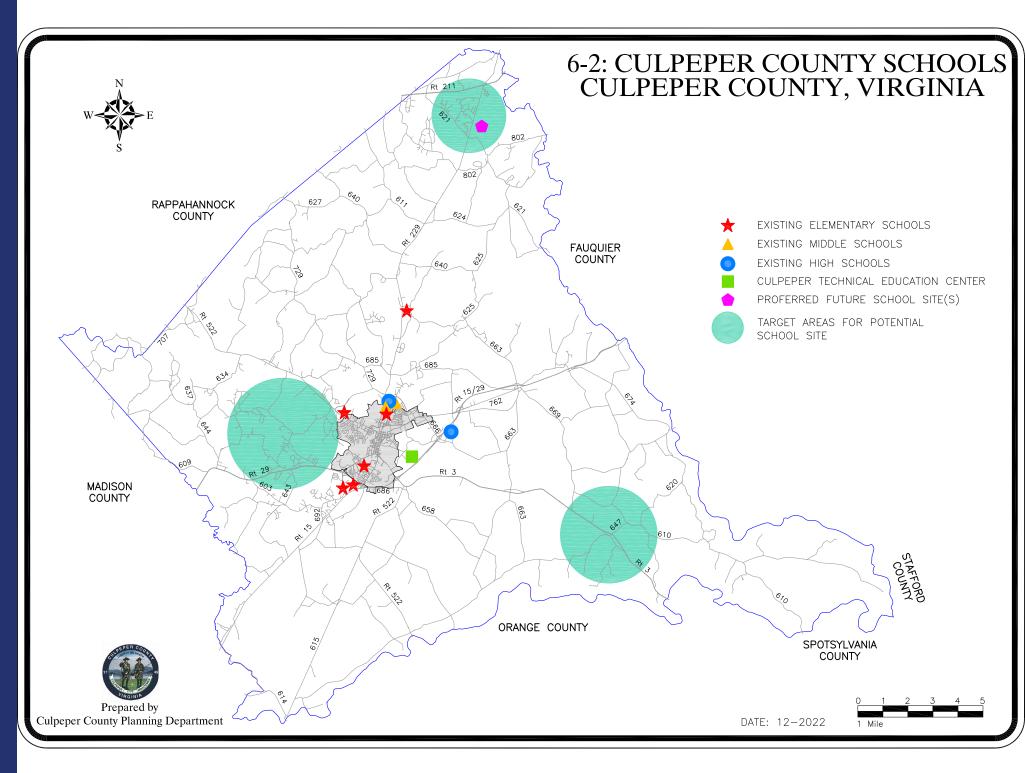


#### **PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

The Culpeper County Public School System offers a comprehensive program for grades pre-K-12. The instructional program offers a range of fine arts, career, and technical programs. English as a Second Language, special education, and alternative education programs also serve the diverse population of students. The school system receives funds through Federal Budget Program Titles I A and D and Workforce (Carl Perkins), II A and D, III, IV A and B, and VI B. These funds are used in accordance with guidelines of each Title Program. Map 6-2 shows the location of the existing schools, as well as target areas for potential school sites.



Source: Culpeper County Public Schools



#### Existing Capacity

The Culpeper County Public School System has six elementary schools, grades pre-K-5; two middle schools, grades 6-8; and two high schools, grades 9-12. For the 2020-2021 school year, there were a total of 8,257 students in Culpeper County Public Schools, with 3,716 students in pre-K through 5th grade, and 4,541 students in the higher grades. Based on the design capacities of the County's schools, there is a total capacity of 9,251 students, with 4,051 students in pre-K through 5th grade, and 5,200 students in the higher grades. It is important to note that the 'design capacity' and the 'program capacity' of our schools are different parameters and yield different numbers. Special programs such as Title I and special education allow for fewer students in a classroom than other programs. Computer labs, art rooms, career and technical education rooms, and fine art rooms are examples of spaces that are designed for the success of specific programs. It is typical for the program capacity of a school to be significantly less than the design capacity, particularly in the higher grades. The data uses Virginia Department of Education Capacity (VDOE), which is essentially design capacity.

#### **Future Expectations**

Long-range planning must not be overlooked in the effort to keep pace with the immediate needs in an expanding system. While an overall population estimate and distribution pattern may prove to be accurate in the long-term, the actual timing of development in a given area may be difficult to predict. Because of this and the limits of funding, school administrators tend to avoid acquiring new school sites until actual residential development is underway. However, using a long-range plan as a guide to site acquisition in advance of development would likely not result in a significant fiscal loss to the public since the property can almost always be sold at a profit or utilized for an alternate use. Acquiring strategically located sites for facilities as far in advance as possible is advisable.

#### Facility Design and Location Standards

The goal of the school system is to provide the highest quality education possible for students in the County, in the most cost-effective manner. The following objectives should be considered when locating future schools:

- Provide new facilities, when deemed necessary, to adequately serve all areas of the County. Schedule school construction to relieve overcrowding and respond to new growth.
- Provide up-to-date learning facilities including advanced computers and related technology improvements commensurate with at least the state-wide averages.
- Coordinate school site planning and development as well as the use of existing facilities with the Parks and Recreation Department in order to provide coordinated community recreational facilities.

- Obtain optimal locations and minimize costs through the advance acquisition of suitable sites as identified by County's Comprehensive Plan.
- Provide locations that minimize travel distance for current and future students.
- Elementary and middle schools should be located within residential neighborhoods; site design should minimize impacts of the recreational areas on adjacent residences. These schools should be located in the community in areas of concentrated growth.
- High Schools should not be located within residential neighborhoods. They should be located along collector roads and streets, avoiding access through residential neighborhoods. Where adjacent to neighborhoods, active recreational areas and parking lots should be oriented away from the neighborhoods. Sports facilities and their parking areas should be buffered from existing nearby homes. High schools should generally be centralized near the Town of Culpeper in close enough proximity to each other to allow for some sharing of faculty and facilities.

#### TARGET AREAS FOR POTENTIAL FUTURE SCHOOL SITES

The earlier Map 6-2 illustrated future school sites. These are general in nature. They are based on the location of proffered sites, road access, proximity to projected growth areas, and the location of existing schools. The site location of future schools should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis using the target areas and the recommendations of this Plan as a guideline. Location of a new school outside of the target areas shall not be precluded by this Plan.

It is to be understood that these target areas are for future elementary and middle schools. Additionally, it is possible that if a school is to be developed, it could be a combined school for both elementary and middle school grades.

As of the Spring of 2022, the development of Stonehaven was beginning construction, and is expected to contribute a number of new students to the school system. The development did proffer a site for a new elementary school.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE**

Fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) are indispensable to County residents. This section of the Comprehensive Plan integrates planning for fire and rescue services with public facilities throughout the County in order to provide effective and efficient fire protection and emergency medical response. This plan, in part, will provide the basis for the Capital Improvements Plan adopted each year by the County Board of Supervisors.

Fire and Rescue Services are provided to the residents of Culpeper County through a system comprised of both volunteer and career personnel. There are 10 volunteer organizations providing services to the County: the Culpeper County Volunteer Fire Department, the Brandy Station Volunteer Fire Department, the Richardsville Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, the Salem Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, the Culpeper Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company, the Rapidan Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company in Rappahannock County and the Remington Company in Fauquier County also provide coverage in Culpeper. Each of these agencies has its own officers to oversee the operations of their respective organization. The volunteers are the primary providers of fire and rescue coverage. The majority of the members work regular full-time jobs, resulting in limited availability of volunteers for weekday coverage.

#### **EXISTING FACILITIES**

Currently, there are 9 fire and/or rescue companies operating throughout the County. The response area for each station varies in size due to population density and location within the County. The specific stations, as well as potential future stations, are shown in Map 6-3.

Culpeper County maintains mutual aid agreements with Fauquier, Madison, Orange, and Rappahannock Counties. The Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services also seeks to reduce demand for fire and rescue services through a proactive fire prevention and safety program. The program includes numerous public education activities as well as a fire safety inspection program. Inspections are provided for the public school system as well as for commercial and industrial businesses.

The total number of emergency response calls is expected to continue to increase based primarily on population growth. This increase may require additional stations and manpower to maintain or improve the current level of service. The anticipated increase in senior population will place a greater demand on our public safety providers. Any development proposals focused on senior housing should be expected to mitigate these impacts. Figure 6-1 shows the number of dispatched calls for service by company from 2018-2021.

#### **LOCATION CRITERIA**

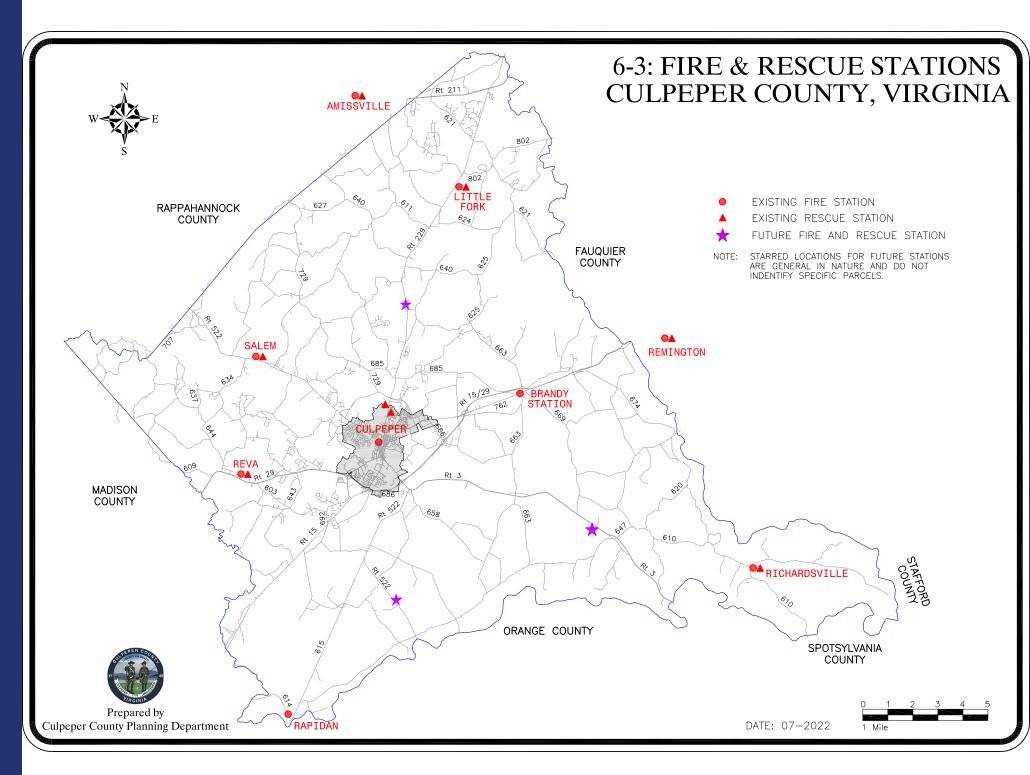
The following criteria should be used in determining appropriate sites for additional stations to provide a consistent level of service across the County:

- Locate stations at points with fast, easy access to a major arterial. Possible sites should be located near two major arterials that offer both east-west and north-south travel.
- Locate new fire/rescue stations near village centers where possible based upon key site planning considerations such as access, safety and response time.
- Reduce response areas to a 3-mile radius for facilities within the areas of highest population density.

Response areas in less populated areas should be a 5-mile radius.

Facility	2018	2019	2020	2021
Culpeper County Volunteer Fire Department Co. 1	791	758	739	790
Brandy Station Volunteer Fire Department Co.2	639	571	539	700
Richardsville Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad Co.6	251	237	207	307
Salem Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad Co. 8	628	571	539	744
Little Fork Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad Co.9	513	532	508	594
Rapidan Volunteer Fire Department  Co. 10	151	101	99	120
Culpeper Volunteer Rescue Squad Co.11	3,710	3,901	3,972	4,379
Culpeper County Office of Emergency Services Co.12	4,087	4,195	4,309	5,100
Reva Volunteer Fire and Rescue Co. 16	544	613	504	610
Total	11,314	11,479	11,416	13,344

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#### PARKS AND RECREATION

As Culpeper County continues to grow, the significance of parks and recreation planning, acquisition, and development increases. The County's Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for operating and maintaining all County parks and recreation programs. The Department also supports a number of organized activities including baseball, softball, soccer, lacrosse and football, cheerleading, rugby, and a variety of classes and programs. Map 6-4 shows all of the existing parks in the County.

#### **NON-COUNTY OWNED FACILITIES**

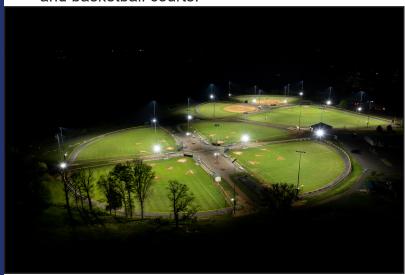
The Town of Culpeper owns and operates multiple park facilities which feature a variety of amenities including trails, skate park, splash pad, playgrounds, disc golf course, pavilions, shelters, and picnic areas designed to increase the quality of life for residents.

#### Rockwater Park

Rockwater Park features 32 acres of rolling farmland and abundant wildlife. Rockwater Park has visitor amenities including a disc golf course, close to a mile of paved walking trails, a pavilion for picnics and gatherings, a splash pad for children, and an obstacle course for teens and adults.

#### Yowell Meadow Park & Culpeper Skate Park

Easily accessible from downtown Culpeper, Yowell Meadow Park offers a level, paved 2-mile walking trail and a more challenging nature trail. The walking trail is lined with markers containing information about Culpeper's history, while the nature trail passes a monument dedicated to the Culpeper Minutemen Revolutionary War militia. The park also features child-friendly play areas and basketball courts.



Source: Culpeper County Parks and Recreation



#### Wine Street Memorial Park

Designed to honor local veterans of World War II and the Korean War, Wine Street Memorial Park is a neighborhood park dedicated in April 2008.

The park features a central memorial pad containing inscribed brick pavers surrounded by memorial benches, and includes a playground and a separate area with two picnic tables.

The town's Veterans Recognition Committee was created to oversee the design, fundraising, and placement of a monument in the central memorial pad. In June 2011, a bronze statue titled "Homage" by Kansas sculptor Jim Brothers was dedicated. A nationally-renowned sculptor, Mr. Brothers created nearly all the bronze figures at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

#### CULPEPER COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

#### Laurel Valley Park

Home of the Culpeper Soap Box Derby and undeveloped space, this future park would be located on the closed cells of a former County landfill operation. Future plans include a multi-use trail system, skateboard park, dog park, and the conversion of the former animal shelter building into a picnic shelter and maintenance shed.

#### **Culpeper County Fieldhouse**

Opened in 2022, the Culpeper County Fieldhouse is located within the Culpeper Sports Complex and showcases over 16,898 square feet of recreation and leisure space. Some of the facility's signature amenities include a full-size high school gymnasium lined for basketball, pickleball, and volleyball, 6 retractable basketball hoops, portable bleachers, drop-down court divider, patron lockers, 3 multi-use classrooms, aerobics studio, and the Culpeper County Parks & Recreation offices.

#### **Culpeper Sports Complex**

Opened in 2005, the Culpeper Sports Complex receives over 350,000 visitors per year. Athletic fields available include 3 football/lacrosse/rugby fields, 4 little league baseball fields, 2 softball fields, 1 youth baseball field, and 6 soccer fields. Practice areas are also available within the Culpeper Sports Complex. In 2022, state-of-the-art Musco LED Athletic Field Lighting was installed on 14 athletic fields.

In addition to the premier athletic fields, the Culpeper Sports Complex also features Bright Spot Inclusive Playground which is a Five Senses Garden, a 2.24-mile multi-use trail, 2 concession stands, permanent restrooms, meditation labyrinth, and ample parking. Future plans include paving the existing trail system, picnic shelters, extended baseball/softball backstops, new LED scoreboards, and a new community pool.

#### Lenn Park

Donated to the County by the Lenn family for recreational purposes, the park includes 2 adult softball fields, an amphitheater, a pavilion with indoor activity room and kitchen, 2 playgrounds, multi-use trails, 2 multi-use athletic fields, dog park, Boy Scout camp area, catch and release fishing, and a radio-controlled air plane field. Future plans include paving the existing multi-use trail system, playground improvements/additions, and paved parking lots.

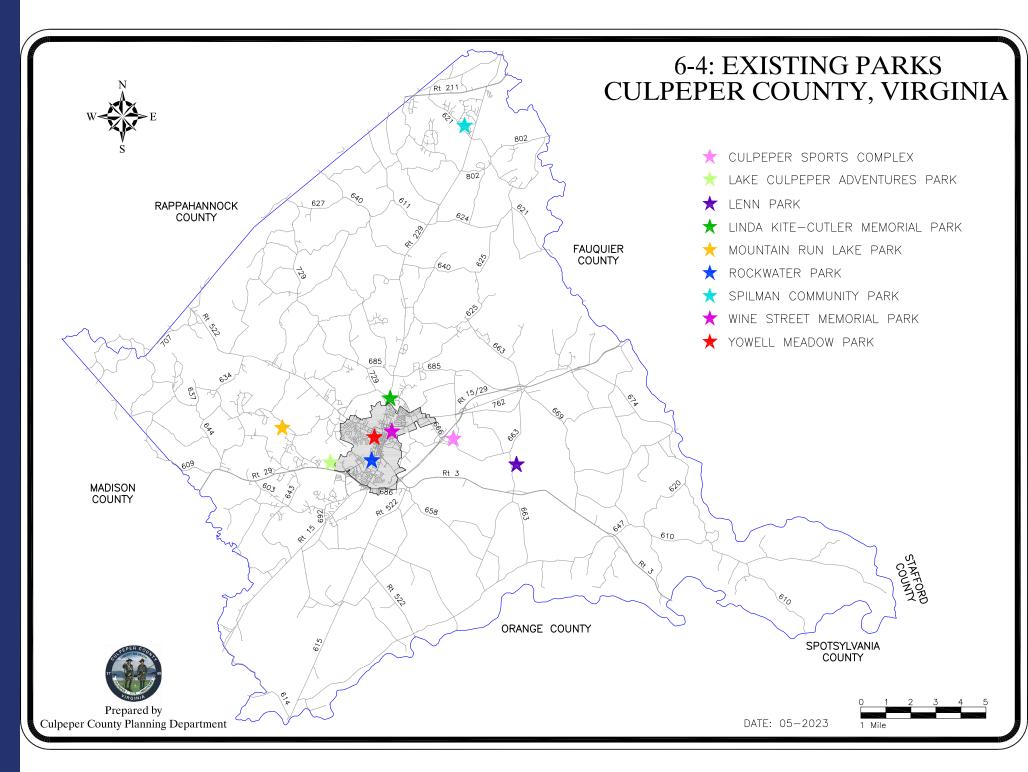
#### Mountain Run Lake Park

Adjacent to Mountain Run Lake, this park, set in the rolling countryside of western Culpeper County, offers stunning views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Birds, waterfowl, and wildlife are abundant and can readily be viewed throughout the year. Only 15 minutes from Downtown Culpeper, this is one of the nicest places to go for a picnic, either under one of the 4 covered shelters. Playgrounds are available for children. Future plans include the addition of a multi-use trail system, multi-use athletic field, tennis courts, splash pad, tennis courts, paved parking, amphitheater, and renovated dog park.

Mountain Run Lake and Lake Culpeper serve as valuable recreational resources. Boating and fishing are popular in these lakes, as well as, in the Rappahannock and Rapidan Rivers. These two rivers combine to make up over 80 miles of Culpeper County's borders.

#### Spilman Park

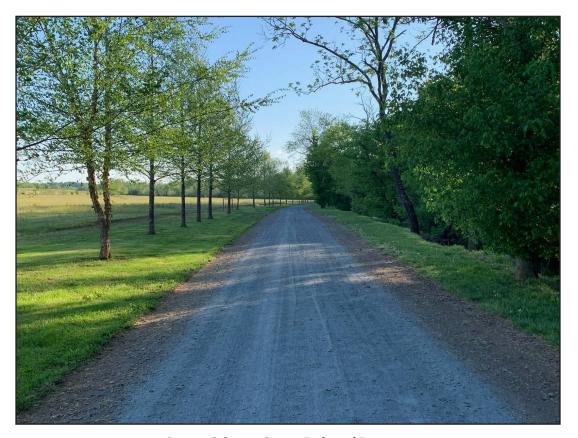
This park offers the community both active and passive recreational opportunities. The park includes an 18-hole disc golf course, large picnic shelter, multi-use athletic field, walking trails, preschool playground, and historic interpretive panel. Future plans include expansion and paving of the multi-use trail system, permanent restroom facilities, additional playground, alternate disc golf tee-boxes, and paved parking.



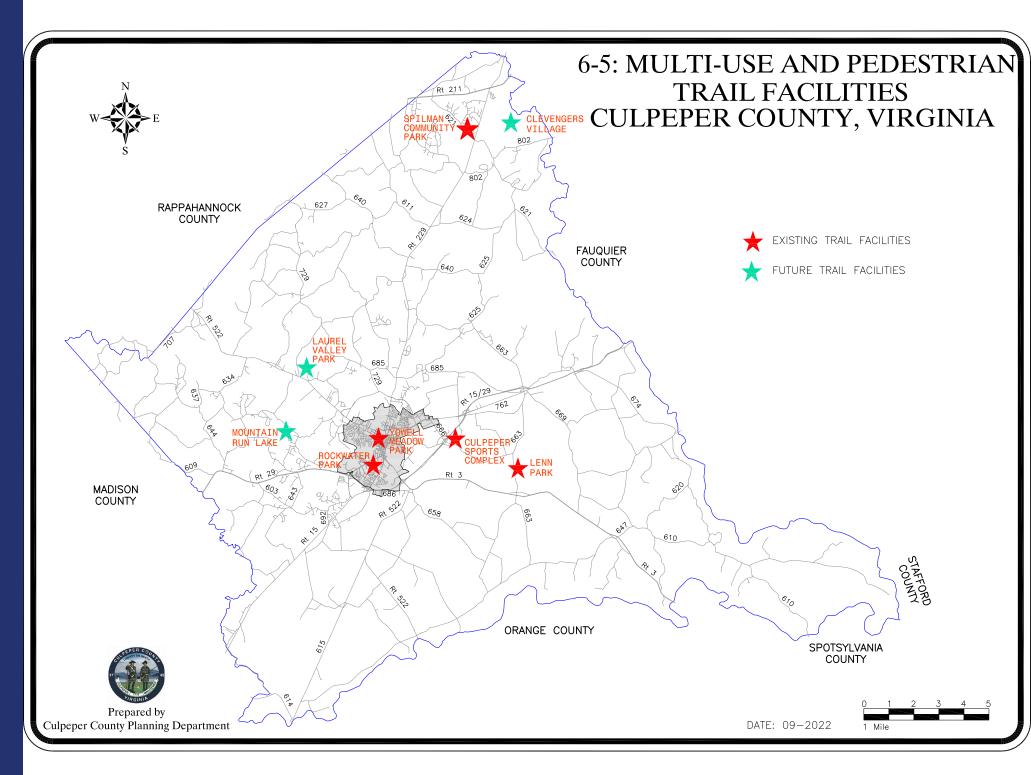
#### MULTI-USE TRAILS & RIVER ACCESS

There are numerous recreational sites, development projects, and privately held properties in Culpeper County which could lend themselves to multi-use and bike trail development as components. The successful implementation of these facilities will depend on a number of factors. In County parks, funding may be a significant constraint, and grant funds should be pursued diligently. Private dedications of easements and donations could also be a key in developing facilities. In large land developments, trail facilities should be sought for implementation through proffers or other voluntary agreements between the County and the developers. Map 6-5 shows existing and future trail facilities.

Additionally, sites, projects, and private properties that are along the Rappahannock River, Rapidan River, or other rivers and streams of suitable qualities provide the opportunity to create access points for water-based activities. This type of planning is called blueway planning, and a regional effort is discussed in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission Active Transportation Plan.



Source: Culpeper County Parks and Recreation



#### OTHER PUBLIC FACILITY NEEDS

#### JAIL FACILITY

A major capital cost facing the County will be the need for a new jail facility. With rising population, problems such as increased crime and the attendant need for more jail space are inevitable. The County has previously indicated interest in using excess space at the Coffeewood Correctional Center to address current concerns related to jail capacity.

#### HUMAN SERVICES

The Culpeper County Human Services Department provides a wide range of social assistance such as protective services, foster care/adoption, support through public assistance programs like Medicaid, career services, childcare at Kid Central, Full Circle Thrift, assistance to new families, and Head Start.

#### THE CARVER CENTER

The Carver Center hosts a multitude of educational and business opportunities within its former classrooms. As of the beginning of 2022, work was beginning on replacing the roof.

#### **COUNTY GOVERNMENT OFFICES**

Culpeper County is currently facing a shortage of space for many of the necessary governmental functions. Space requirements for future administrative offices and courts will have to be addressed. Additionally, as discussed in Utilities Chapter 7, many County facilities may have the potential to host distributive renewable energy systems, which have the potential reduce operating costs.

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM**

Some aspects of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically projects regarding facilities, transportation systems, and other significant infrastructure, are addressed in the County's Capital Improvements Program. The Capital Improvements Program is "a five year plan that identifies needed capital projects, estimates all costs, lists the year when each project should begin, and determines the best method of finance." The most recent version as of Spring 2022 can be viewed on the Planning & Zoning Department's web page on the official Culpeper County government website.

## **CONCERNS & CONSTRAINTS**

#### **GROWTH & GEOGRAPHIC SPREAD**

As mentioned earlier, increases in the County's population directly correlate to increases in the demand for community resources. Depending on the type and timing of this growth, the County might need to expand existing facilities or build new ones. Expansions and new constructions would be costly capital projects.

The location of this growth could cause additional stress to the provision of community resources. Specifically, growth in areas with limited community resources, such as areas far from the Town of Culpeper, could worsen the speed and quality of these resources. Some examples include longer school commutes and increased response time for emergency services. Although the Land Use & Development Chapter 2 addresses concentrating growth towards areas with ample community resources, the expansion and creation of facilities needs to consider the geographic spread of existing and future residents.

This increase in growth would put additional strain on fire/EMS operations since they are significantly reliant on volunteer forces. It is quite possible that further growth will necessitate the County to utilize additional full-time fire/EMS staff to ensure that there is still adequate coverage.

## GOALS, PATHWAYS, & ACTION ITEMS

#### **COMMUNITY RESOURCES VISION**

Continue to provide prompt and effective community resources while logically expanding and enhancing the related facilities.

**GOAL 1**: Continue to operate and enhance existing community resource facilities.

**PATHWAY 1**: Continue providing suitable maintenance.

ACTION ITEM: Ensure facilities are in top condition and that any deferred maintenance is addressed.

ACTION ITEM: Upgrade outdated infrastructure to improve the functionality and quality of existing facilities.

**PATHWAY 2**: Determine the feasibility of expanding existing facilities.

ACTION ITEM: Explore the feasibility of expanding existing facilities before opting to construct new facilities.

**PATHWAY 3**: Consider enhanced utilization/co-location at existing facilities.

ACTION ITEM: Explore the feasibility of co-locating different community resources and/or programming at the same facility, such as educational and park resources, to fully utilize existing capacities.

ACTION ITEM: Study the potential co-location of distributive renewable energy generation systems at existing facilities to address energy costs and demand.

GOAL 2: Proactively prepare for the possible need for future facilities.

**PATHWAY 1**: Conduct research and acquire data on future population and capacity trends.

ACTION ITEM: Conduct studies on the current serving capacities of existing facilities to determine the amount of growth can be currently accommodated.

ACTION ITEM: Initiate population growth studies, especially for school population, to better understand the future demand for community resources.

ACTION ITEM: Ensure studies include projected/hypothetical growth from the identified Future Growth Areas discussed in Chapter 2.

**PATHWAY 2**: Conduct initial site identification and acquisition for future facilities.

ACTION ITEM: Begin initial site research for future facilities, keeping in mind predicted growth and development patterns, the transportation network, and existing service ranges.

ACTION ITEM: If forecasted demand indicates the need for additional facilities, begin the acquisition of identified sites as long as expansion is determined to be financially feasible.

## **Chapter Source Appendix & Resources**

- Culpeper County E911 https://web.culpepercounty.gov/E911
- Culpeper County Emergency Management Services https://web.culpepercounty.gov/emergencyservices
- Culpeper County Human Services https://web.culpepercounty.gov/humanservices
- Culpeper County Parks and Recreation https://web.culpepercounty.gov/parksrec
- Culpeper County Public Schools https://www.culpeperschools.org/
- Rappahannok-Rapidan Regional Commission Active Transportation Plan https://cms9files.revize.com/rappahannock//Document\_ Center/Publications/Rural%20Transportation/RRRC.Active.Transportation.Plan.Adopted.201912.pdf
- Virginia Department of Education School Quality Profiles Culpeper County https://schoolquality.virginia.gov/divisions/culpeper-county-public-schools