



YEAR
IN
REVIEW
FISCAL YEAR
2015

Get out and play!

THE CITY OF
NORFOLK
RECREATION, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“The
quality of life is more
important than
life itself.”

Quality of life. This is what Norfolk's Department of Recreation, Parks and Open Space brings to the residents of Norfolk. As you peruse the following pages you will see the numerous ways in which we are working to make Norfolk a great community in which to live, work and play. Over the years we have worked hard to set a solid foundation, strengthening our infrastructure and assessing the needs of the community. This year we responded to those needs by building upon that foundation. From new murals at the Berkley Pool, to a new entry plaza at Bay Oaks Park, to a new computer lab at Young Terrace Community Center, we are working hard to enhance our services and the lives of the residents we serve.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darrell R. Crittendon'.

Darrell R. Crittendon,
Director,
Department of Recreation,
Parks & Open Space

OUR MISSION:

to enrich the quality of life for Norfolk citizens by providing recreation choices and opportunities for youth, adults and special populations while ensuring the efficient management and maintenance of the city's parks, playgrounds, beaches, urban forest and city-owned cemeteries.

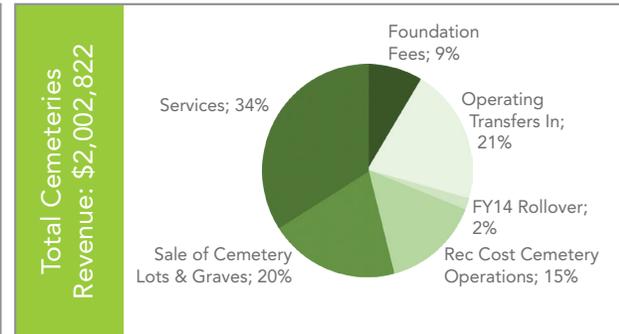
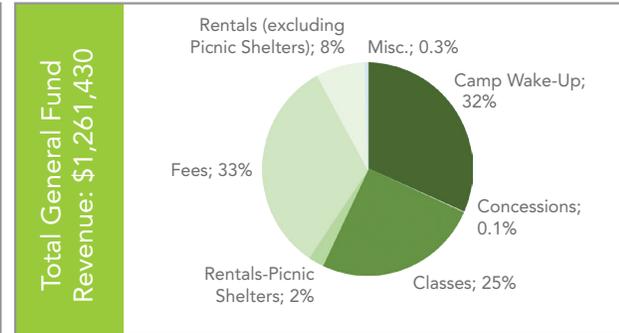
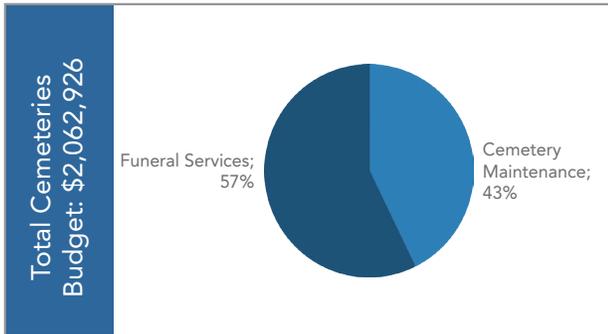
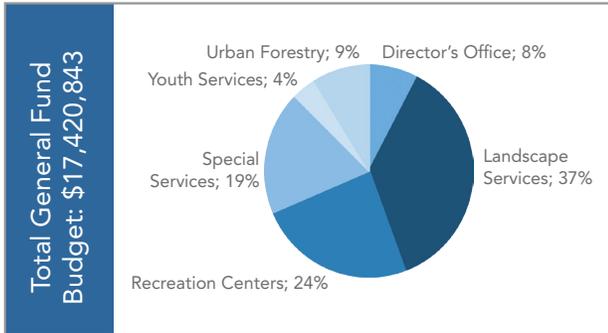


FY 2015 FINANCIALS

The RPOS budget primarily supports the City of Norfolk's priority areas:

- Economic Vitality and Workforce Development
- Well-managed Government
- Safe, Healthy & Inclusive Communities
- Lifelong Learning

The City of Norfolk's General Fund provides funding for daily operations and maintenance of the department's core activities. These include youth programming, athletics, administration, landscape services, urban forestry, and special services.





For the Kid in All of Us
YOUTH RECREATION

Being an active kid means having a healthy lifestyle. RPOS, as part of its Healthy Norfolk Initiative, joined First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign, which works with municipalities to help improve access to healthy, affordable food and access to opportunities for physical activity. As a result of the RPOS commitment to helping kids get healthy, Norfolk was ranked #1 out of 499 municipalities for its ongoing efforts.

With over 100 playgrounds and full-service recreation centers, there are ample opportunities for kids in Norfolk to get out and play! In the last year we've seen significant growth in RPOS organized sports programs like soccer, baseball, track, and more:

- Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI), sponsored by Major League Baseball, strengthens baseball programs in urban areas across the country. This year Norfolk's baseball teams finished the season with multiple victories in a multi-state tournament!
- The Team Norfolk Boxing Club, which has a wait list of over 200, brought victories from multiple championship matches. In response to the demand of such a high-quality program, a new, 12,000 square foot facility, the Boxing & Fitness Center at Harbor Park, is scheduled to open in fall 2016.
- Norfolk teens had the chance to explore our coastal history with the Youth Boatbuilding Program sponsored by the Tidewater Wooden Boat Workshop. Throughout the summer 20 teens participated in the inaugural class to build five 12-foot rowboats, Bevinn's Skiffs, then rowed them onto the Elizabeth River!



For the Kid in All of Us **ADULT RECREATION**

In Norfolk, adults get the chance to let loose their inner child! More and more adults in Norfolk are finding ways to play. Throughout the year, adult swim classes and basketball and softball teams are among the most popular sports. City community centers see people day and night working off steam and building up muscle.

Seniors get an extra-special chance to show off their sports skills at the annual Senior Olympics. For four days in May, hundreds gather on the campus of Old Dominion University (ODU) to compete in bowling, billiards, swimming, tennis, softball and more, all to win a coveted medal! The event has proven so popular, the contract with (ODU) has been extended to ensure an ongoing quality experience for the athletes.

Norfolk adults are also taking advantage of the enrichment opportunities available through RPOS. Artists hone their craft and display their work in exhibits at the Paul Street Gallery at Titustown Visual Arts Center. Others express their creativity by performing in recitals that showcase the fancy footwork of tappers, ballerinas and square dancers.

For the Kid in All of Us **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

Participants of the Therapeutic Recreation programs get to take advantage of a variety of enriching and exciting recreational opportunities, such as aquatics and exercise, field trips, and holiday celebrations. Transportation can be barrier to participation, and this year a new van that accommodates the special needs of participants, has helped overcome that barrier. To support program needs such as transportation, the Inaugural Halloween 5K brought awareness, funds, and pride as participants ran, walked, and rolled over the finish line.

Interaction with a pet has known scientific benefits. It can lower blood pressure and anxiety, and increases self-confidence and socialization. Kaitlyn Muira, Norfolk Therapeutic Recreation Specialist and originator of the program sees how participants' attitudes improve after interacting with the shelter animals, evident in the smile you see here.

It takes a lot to care for a shelter animal. They need special treatment, health care, the right enclosure, and lots of attention. Ultimately, they give back so much more.

This is the case for Norfolk's Therapeutic Recreational Group. As part of the weekly "Whiskers & Tails Program," they visited a local animal shelter to sort newspaper for animal bedding. Afterward, these volunteers got some special time with the shelter animals waiting for their forever home.





Recreation is all around us
PARKS & TRAILS

Norfolk has a lot of natural beauty packed into its urban environment. RPOS recognizes its importance and leads the way with citywide beautification efforts. Just last year the Bureau of Parks and Urban Forestry planted more than 1,200 trees throughout Norfolk and coordinated the most popular Arbor Day celebration to date.

The city's natural beauty is what pedestrians and cyclists will find as they traverse the Elizabeth River Trail, a 10.5 mile trail that runs from near the U.S. Naval Base to Norfolk State University. A long-awaited section, which crosses Lambert's Creek, runs behind the Mallory Country Club and Weyanoke Sanctuary in West Ghent was completed over the summer. Pedestrians and cyclists have a safer space in our urban setting in which to explore the beauty of nature that is all around us.

And the more than 400 acres of community green space maintained by RPOS is growing. Thanks to the efforts of the Design and Planning team, the entry plaza to Bay Oaks Park was completed. The section of 4th Bay Street running through the park became a gravel walkway. Pergolas, benches, monument signs and an archway defined the entryway. Bay Oaks Park is well on its way to becoming a destination for visitors to run, walk and relax under the sun.



Recreation is all around us
AQUATICS

With three public beaches, seven and a half miles of shoreline, four indoor pools, three outdoor pools, and two splash pads, Norfolk residents have plenty of ways to dive into fun all year round. Over time, some of those pools have shown the results of their own popularity and need a little TLC.

This year RPOS took on a multi-faceted project at the Huntersville Community Center that renovated and converted approximately 2,500 square feet of area for provide modern uses and upgraded facilities to our patrons. The swimming pool received a re-plastered interior and new mechanical system designed to

prolong the useable life of the facility, improve appearance and ease maintenance operations of the pool. Locker rooms were renovated and upgraded to make improvements that accommodated those with special needs. Tile floors and walls were improved, plus new lockers and a Family Changing Room added. A new 1,300 square foot fitness room with rubber flooring, gym quality weight lifting machines, free weights, treadmills, mirrors, wall mounted flat screen TV's and new windows for daylighting was converted from underused space. The Huntersville Pool and Community Center are well positioned to meet the health and wellness needs of its patrons.



FACILITIES

Who knew that a small community center kitchen could have such a big neighborhood impact? From the annual neighborhood Thanksgiving feast to family reunions, the Berkley Community Center, one of dozens of recreation facilities throughout Norfolk, is a bustling place.

“The center offers much to the community,” said Michael Ivy, Recreation Specialist at Berkley Community Center, “and the kitchen is a big part of that.”

As these events have grown, both in size and frequency, it became apparent that a larger, working kitchen was needed. Upgrades included a larger stove, commercial refrigerator, ice machine, stainless steel sinks, new countertops, cabinets, ADA compliant serving window, HVAC system improvements, tile floor and more. Renovations were celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony during a popular seniors’ night event, and plans to maximize the new amenities were already being made.

CEMETERIES

The Norfolk Bureau of Cemeteries is dedicated to preserving the memories of the people of our community and the rich history of our city. Ever mindful of the eternal bond between the city and the families whose loved ones are memorialized within the cemeteries, we have responded to community demand for a new space. To complement the Community Mausoleum originally designed by Sidney Lovell in 1919, the Norfolk Bureau of Cemeteries is honored to include the addition of another architecturally modern mausoleum. This new addition, located in Forest Lawn Cemetery, will provide families with additional options to honor and remember their loved ones.

Our historic city cemeteries like Forest Lawn require ongoing maintenance that is vital to their longevity. Throughout the year, volunteer groups work hard to remove debris, repair monuments and headstones, and honor the lives of those resting in the cemeteries by holding memorials, special events and celebrations. Events such as the From Here to Eternity 5K and the Easter Egg Hunt showcase the history and beauty in each location, increasing awareness and support of those maintenance efforts.



Community mausoleum at Forest Lawn Cemetery



From Here to Eternity 5K participants

Recreation by the Numbers

Fee-based classes

- Registrations – 9,000

Therapeutic Recreation Center

- Course Participants – 12,516

Summer Food Service Program

- Sites Participating – 17
- Meals Served – 88,176
- Meals Per day – 2,004

Recreation Center Visits

- Summer Camp – 60,280
- Before/After School – 60,716
- Open Recreation – 39,450

Norfolk Fitness & Wellness Center

- Total Visits – 66,236
- Total Memberships – 3,670

Norfolk Pools & Beaches

- Total Pool Visits – 155,802
- Total Beach Visits – 152,073
- Water Rescues – 4

Rentals and Reservations

- Picnic Shelters – 195
- Athletic Fields – 79

Senior Centers

- Total Visits – 28,992
- Field Trips – 36

Sports Leagues

- Adult Sports Team - 143
- Adult Athletes - 2,684
- Youth Sports Teams - 274
- Youth Athletes - 3,077



LOOKING AHEAD

RPOS will continue to build upon the successes of this past year with initiatives designed to promote the City Council goal of providing safe, healthy and inclusive communities.

- Construction of the new 3,000 square foot Boxing & Fitness Center at Harbor Park.
- Renovations at Northside Indoor Swimming Pool.
- Identification of new opportunities for Senior programming.
- Phase II of Bay Oaks Park construction.
- Expand volunteer initiatives throughout the department.
- Identify efficiency opportunities in Parks and Urban Forestry.
- Promote safe, healthy and active living with Healthy Norfolk.
- Develop funding models promoting program and services sustainability by securing grant funding.
- Apply for bikeable city status by the League of American Bicyclists.
- Support the RPOS Master Plan by identifying options to provide recreation opportunities to underserved communities.
- Evaluate equipment to right-size operations, increasing efficiencies.
- Expand tree canopy through enhanced and expanded programs that encourage tree planting on private property.
- Refresh park amenities through playground and small scale park renovations to include Maple Ave. Park, James Monroe Elementary School, and Suburban Park Elementary School.
- Refresh athletic fields at Lakewood Park through replacement of perimeter fencing, renovating in-field areas, and new bleachers and player benches.

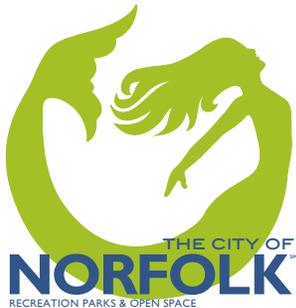
*Cultivating Leadership
Today for Tomorrow*

**NORFOLK EMERGING LEADERS
EXECUTIVE INTERNS
NORFOLK YOUTH COUNCIL**



You are never too young to serve your community. Each summer 200 high school students and 13 college students participate in the City of Norfolk's Emerging Leaders and Executive Intern programs. Throughout the school year middle and high school students participate in the Norfolk Youth Council and engage in community decision making.

Participants perform tasks in a variety of fields, learning valuable work skills, the ins and outs of government processes and the importance of community service. In return, Norfolk benefits from their contributions of creativity, innovation, and enthusiasm. By providing the youth of today these experiences, we are helping to develop the leaders of tomorrow.



City of Norfolk
Department of Recreation, Parks and Open Space
501 Boush Street • Norfolk, VA 23510
757-441-2400 • Norfolk.gov/Play