PLANNING & ZONING
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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Members of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Jim Frydl, Planning Director
Stephanie Golon, Deputy Planning Director

SUBJECT: Authorization to Fund a Countywide Recreation Planning Initiative

DATE: November 10, 2026

PURPOSE

Request Board authorization to fund a coordinated recreation planning initiative consisting of: (1) a feasibility study for a multi-purpose indoor recreation and community events center; (2) a County Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and (3) a Community Recreation and Open Space Plan identifying opportunities for neighborhood recreation, passive-use areas, trails, and pocket parks throughout Greene County.

BACKGROUND

Greene County continues to experience residential growth and increasing demand for recreation opportunities, while available indoor and outdoor facilities remain limited. Existing facilities are heavily used for organized athletics and scheduled programming, leaving little capacity for new programs, passive recreation, informal play, or convenient neighborhood-based opportunities.

Greene County does not currently have a dedicated public indoor recreation facility. School gymnasiums are the only indoor facilities available for County recreation programming. As school enrollment, academic activities, and school-sponsored athletics grow, the availability of shared gym space is becoming increasingly constrained. Recreation practices and games are often scheduled late in the evening or on Sundays because more desirable times are unavailable. Some programs have been reduced or cannot be offered because suitable indoor space is not available.

Outdoor recreation resources face similar pressure. Organized programming occupies much of the available park space, limiting passive uses such as walking, picnicking, open play, playground use, and informal community gathering. Recreation amenities are also concentrated in a limited number of locations, creating a need for additional convenient opportunities near existing neighborhoods and areas planned for future residential growth.

EXISTING COMMUNITY PARK MASTER PLAN

Greene County has a basic conceptual master plan for the Greene County Community Park. Prepared in 2008, the plan evaluated the park's physical conditions, considered several recreation concepts, and illustrated a phased layout for fields, courts, trails, passive recreation, parking, and a future community center. While the plan provides a useful starting point, it is broad and conceptual rather than a realistic, implementation-ready plan tailored to the County's current needs, resources, and operating capacity. It also predates much of the County's recent growth and should be replaced with a more specific and practical plan that identifies what improvements are needed, which improvements are physically and financially feasible, where they should be located, and how they can be phased and operated over time.

The proposed planning initiative would use the earlier work as background rather than treat it as a final development program. The new planning process would verify existing conditions, identify current recreation needs, test the feasibility of specific improvements, develop realistic costs and priorities, account for improvements already made, and determine how the Community Park should function together with a potential indoor facility and smaller recreation opportunities distributed throughout the County.

PROPOSED PLANNING INITIATIVE

Planning Component	Purpose
Indoor Recreation Facility Feasibility Study	Evaluate demand, site suitability, conceptual design, capital and operating costs, partnerships, funding opportunities, and implementation options for a multi-purpose indoor recreation and community events center.
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Establish a long-term countywide vision for parks, athletic facilities, indoor recreation, trails, programming, maintenance, capital investment, and levels of service.
Community Recreation and Open Space Plan	Identify geographically distributed opportunities for neighborhood parks, pocket parks, passive recreation, trail connections, open space, and small-scale amenities near existing and future residential areas.

NEED-BASED CHALLENGES

- Indoor recreation programs have been reduced or cannot be expanded because suitable space is unavailable.
- School gymnasiums are the County's only available indoor recreation facilities, and those spaces must first serve growing school enrollment, academic activities, and school-sponsored athletics.
- Practices and games are frequently scheduled late in the evening or on Sundays because preferred time slots are unavailable.
- Existing parks are heavily committed to organized programming, reducing opportunities for passive recreation and informal public use.

- Recreation opportunities are concentrated in a limited number of locations and are not equally convenient to all residents.
- Existing recreation opportunities are concentrated toward the western portion of the County, while the Ruckersville area and surrounding growth areas contain a majority share of the County's population. This geographic imbalance limits convenient access to recreation for many residents and reinforces the need to evaluate additional opportunities closer to where current and future population growth is occurring.
- Continued residential growth will increase demand for both organized and passive recreation unless future sites and investments are planned in advance.
- Individual projects developed without an overall plan may duplicate functions, compete for resources, or fail to serve the areas of greatest need.

BENEFITS OF COORDINATED PLANNING

- Creates a long-term strategy for recreation investments instead of evaluating projects independently.

Builds on the County's existing Community Park master plan while updating it for current needs, completed improvements, population growth, and new recreation opportunities.

- Coordinates indoor recreation, athletic fields, trails, passive recreation, pocket parks, and neighborhood amenities as one connected system.
- Identifies the most appropriate locations for facilities based on population, growth, accessibility, available land, and existing public assets.
- Balances organized sports with passive recreation, open play, walking, and community gathering opportunities.
- Provides convenient recreation opportunities closer to existing homes and planned growth areas.
- Allows the County to phase projects over time and direct limited capital resources toward the highest priorities.
- Strengthens applications for state, federal, and foundation grants by documenting community need and establishing adopted priorities.
- Identifies opportunities for partnerships with schools, community organizations, developers, and private-sector sponsors.
- Improves public health, youth development, quality of life, and community connectivity.

COMMUNITY WELLNESS BENEFITS

Recreation is also an investment in community wellness. Providing more places to walk, play, exercise, and gather gives residents practical opportunities to be active, spend time outdoors, and connect with neighbors. These benefits can serve children, working adults, families, and older residents—not only participants in organized sports.

This emphasis is consistent with the Greene County Comprehensive Plan. In its Parks and Recreation section, the Plan states that a sufficient supply of parkland can enhance quality of life, public health, and property values. This directly supports treating recreation planning as a

community wellness and quality-of-life investment. (Greene County Comprehensive Plan, Parks and Recreation, p. 88.)

- Supports healthier daily routines by making physical activity easier and more convenient.
- Provides positive, accessible places for youth and families to spend time together.
- Creates opportunities for older adults and residents of different abilities to remain active and socially connected.
- Strengthens community connections through shared spaces for recreation, events, walking, and informal gathering.
- Improves quality of life and helps Greene County remain an attractive place to live as the community grows.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE PROPOSED INDOOR FACILITY

The indoor recreation facility feasibility study remains an important component of the request. However, the proposed building should be evaluated within the context of the County's overall recreation system. The study would determine whether the facility is feasible, what functions it should provide, where it should be located, how it should operate, and how it would complement schools, parks, athletic fields, trails, and smaller neighborhood recreation investments.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration	Questions to Address
Demand and Level of Service	What recreation opportunities are currently missing, where are service gaps located, and how will projected growth change demand?
Geographic Access	Which existing neighborhoods and future growth areas lack convenient access to parks, trails, passive recreation, or indoor facilities?
Facility Coordination	How can school facilities, County parks, proposed indoor space, and future neighborhood amenities function together?
Land and Site Opportunities	Which County-owned or partner-owned properties are suitable for recreation, and where could pocket parks or trail connections be incorporated?
Capital and Operating Costs	What are the anticipated costs, staffing requirements, maintenance responsibilities, and long-term operating impacts?
Funding and Partnerships	Which grants, partnerships, sponsorships, proffers, donations, or phased capital strategies may be available?

RECOMMENDED SCOPE OF WORK

1. Inventory existing public, school, nonprofit, and private recreation facilities and programs.

Prepare a realistic and site-specific update to the 2008 Greene County Community Park master plan that identifies which fields, courts, trails, passive recreation areas, parking improvements,

support facilities, and potential indoor uses are needed and feasible, with planning-level costs, operational considerations, priorities, and practical implementation phases.

2. Assess current usage, scheduling constraints, unmet demand, and projected future needs.
3. Conduct public and stakeholder engagement, including youth sports organizations, schools, older adults, families, and residents in different parts of the County.
4. Establish recreation service areas and identify geographic gaps in access.
5. Evaluate opportunities for an indoor recreation and community events center, including site alternatives and operating models.
6. Identify potential locations for neighborhood parks, pocket parks, trails, passive recreation areas, playgrounds, and open-space connections.
7. Develop planning-level cost estimates and a prioritized, phased capital improvement strategy.
8. Identify grant opportunities, partnership models, and potential funding sources.
9. Provide implementation recommendations, including short-, mid-, and long-term actions.

POTENTIAL USES AND OUTCOMES

Planning Outcome	Potential Community Benefit
Indoor Recreation Strategy	Expanded year-round youth and adult programming, reduced reliance on limited school space, and improved scheduling.
Athletic Facility Strategy	Better coordination of fields, courts, leagues, tournaments, and future improvements.
Passive Recreation Network	More opportunities for walking, picnicking, playground use, open play, and informal community gathering.
Neighborhood and Pocket Parks	Convenient small-scale recreation opportunities located near existing homes and new growth.
Trail and Greenway Connections	Safer and more connected walking and recreation routes between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and community destinations.
Capital Investment Roadmap	A prioritized and financially responsible sequence of projects for the County Capital Improvement Program.

FUNDING APPROACH

Staff recommends that the Board authorize funding for the planning work before committing to construction of any major facility. Based on the limited number of County-owned sites, the availability of existing GIS and demographic information, and the opportunity to coordinate public engagement with the ongoing Comprehensive Plan update, staff estimates that the combined initiative can likely be completed for approximately $75,000 to $150,000. The final cost will depend on the level of concept design, financial and operating analysis, public engagement, and any statistically valid community survey included in the scope. Combining the

work into one coordinated procurement should reduce duplication in data collection, mapping, public engagement, and project management compared with procuring separate studies.

For initial budgeting, staff recommends authorizing an amount not to exceed $125,000 from the Future Recreation Facility Fund, Capital Improvement Program or another Board-designated funding source, with the final contract amount established through procurement. This amount should support a focused and practical scope that updates the Community Park master plan, evaluates the feasibility of an indoor recreation facility, identifies countywide recreation needs and geographic opportunities, and provides realistic costs and implementation priorities. If proposals exceed the available funding, staff may refine or phase the scope and return to the Board for further direction. Potential sources for the planning work and future implementation may include the Future Recreation Facility Fund, County Capital Improvement Program, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation planning or recreation grants when available, USDA Community Facilities funding for eligible facility work, federal recreation grants, public-private partnerships, corporate sponsorships, development-related contributions where legally appropriate, and community fundraising.

PLANNING-LEVEL COST ESTIMATE

The estimated cost is a planning-level budgeting range rather than a consultant quote. A focused scope is expected to cost approximately $75,000 to $150,000, with staff recommending an initial authorization not to exceed $125,000. Actual cost will depend on the number of sites evaluated, the level of concept design and engineering, whether a statistically valid community survey is included, the number of public meetings, the depth of operating and financial analysis, and the extent of GIS mapping and implementation planning. Competitive proposals will establish the final cost.

Planning Component	Planning-Level Allowance
Countywide Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Planning	$40,000-$75,000
Indoor Recreation Facility Feasibility and Concept Analysis	$25,000-$50,000
Survey, Engagement, GIS, and Specialized Analysis	$10,000-$25,000
Estimated Coordinated Contract Range	$75,000-$150,000
Recommended Initial Authorization	Not to exceed $150,000

NEXT STEPS

10. Authorize staff to prepare a scope of work for the combined recreation planning initiative.
11. Develop a planning-level budget and procurement strategy for Board consideration.
12. Solicit proposals from qualified recreation planning, park planning, and facility feasibility consultants.
13. Complete community engagement, needs analysis, facility evaluation, and geographic opportunity mapping.
14. Return to the Board with draft plans, priorities, implementation options, and funding recommendations.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors authorize funding for a coordinated Countywide Recreation Planning Initiative consisting of an indoor recreation facility feasibility study, a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and a Community Recreation and Open Space Plan. The work should use the existing Greene County Community Park master plan as a conceptual starting point, but develop a more realistic, specific, and implementation-focused plan based on the County's current recreation needs, available resources, site constraints, operating capacity, and financial feasibility. The updated plan should identify what improvements are needed, which projects are feasible, where they should be located, how they should be prioritized and phased, and how the Community Park should coordinate with indoor recreation, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, trails, passive recreation, and future growth areas. This approach will provide the County with a long-term framework to coordinate resources, meet current service gaps, and prioritize recreation investments in a financially responsible manner.

REQUESTED BOARD ACTION

Authorize staff to prepare and issue a coordinated request for proposals for the Countywide Recreation Planning Initiative; authorize a planning amount not to exceed $125,000, subject to final appropriation and contract approval; and return to the Board with the proposed scope, consultant selection, final cost, and contract recommendation.

ATTACHMENT A

Planning Initiative Summary

Component	Primary Focus	Key Deliverable
Feasibility Study	Indoor recreation and community events center	Site, concept, cost, operations, funding, and implementation analysis
Parks and Recreation Master Plan	Countywide recreation system	Needs assessment, service standards, priorities, and capital roadmap
Community Recreation and Open Space Plan	Distributed neighborhood and passive recreation	Opportunity map for parks, pocket parks, trails, and open space

ATTACHMENT B

Preliminary Planning Schedule

Phase	Estimated Time
Board Authorization	Month 1
Scope and Procurement	Months 1-3
Inventory and Needs Assessment	Months 3-6
Public and Stakeholder Engagement	Months 4-8
Facility and Geographic Opportunity Analysis	Months 6-9

Phase	Estimated Time
Draft Plans and Priorities	Months 9-11
Board Review and Adoption	Months 12-13

ATTACHMENT C

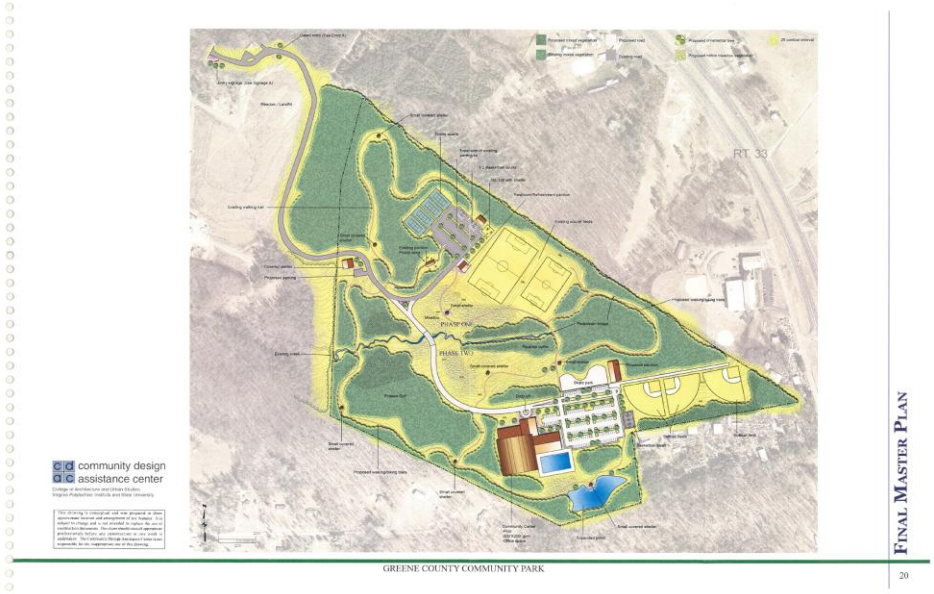
Planning-Level Benefits Summary

- Expanded and more reliable indoor recreation capacity.
- Reduced scheduling pressure on school facilities.
- More reasonable practice and game times for families.
- Greater balance between organized athletics and passive recreation.
- Convenient recreation opportunities near existing and future neighborhoods.
- Improved eligibility and competitiveness for grants.
- Better coordination of land, facilities, programs, and capital resources.
- A phased implementation strategy tied to community priorities and financial capacity.

ATTACHMENT D

Existing Greene County Community Park Master Plan

The 2008 master plan provides a useful but basic conceptual foundation for the Community Park. It does not provide the level of detail needed to determine which improvements are practical, affordable, operationally sustainable, or responsive to the County's current recreation needs. The proposed Countywide Recreation Planning Initiative would prepare a realistic and site-specific update, identify feasible improvements and costs, establish priorities and implementation phases, and coordinate the Community Park with indoor recreation, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, trails, and passive recreation opportunities across the County.



Existing Greene County Community Park master plan concept (2008).