RECREATION & PARKS

DESCRIPTION

The Division of Recreation and Parks offer a variety of programs, services, facilities, and parks to enhance the standard of living and provide leisure opportunities for residents and guests of Henrico County. To accomplish its mission, the Division is composed of three operational units: Park Services, Recreation Services, and Administrative Services.

Mission Statement: Enriching Lives, Connecting Communities

Vision Statement: Innovating Tomorrow's Parks, Today

Park Services

Park Services is responsible for the care and maintenance of the entire Henrico County Park system with over 4,500 acres of both developed and undeveloped property. The park system also includes 104 recreation buildings, which range in size and purpose from small restrooms to full-service recreation centers. There are three service sectors within Park Services: Support Services, Turf and Grounds, and Property Services.

Support Services is responsible for landscaping, tree and trail maintenance in parks, as well as special event preparation and clean-up. The Turf and Grounds section is responsible for general grounds maintenance and athletic field maintenance, which includes many Henrico County Public School (HCPS) fields. Property Services is responsible for general construction improvement projects, maintenance of recreation buildings, and maintenance and repair of small equipment.

ANNUAL FISCAL PLAN SUMMARY

Description	FY25 Actual	FY26 Original	FY27 Approved	% Change
Personnel	$20,189,304	$22,517,640	$24,264,616	7.8%
Operation	6,547,856	7,266,285	8,456,497	16.4%
Capital	1,684,430	1,912,489	2,026,489	6.0%
Subtotal	$28,421,590	$31,696,414	$34,747,602	9.6%
Recommended Adjustment	0	0	-950,892	100.0%
Total	$28,421,590	$31,696,414	$33,796,710	6.6%
Personnel Complement	200	208 *	213 **	5

** Eight positions added to support Glover Park and the Summer Camp expansion.*

*** Three positions moved to the SEA and eight positions added to support HCPS MS field maintenance.*

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

	FY25	FY26	FY27	26-27 Change
Workload Measures				
Park Visitation	6,737,626	6,850,000	7,000,000	150,000
Special Event Attendance	87,200	117,200	132,200	15,000
Facility Contacts	258,900	258,900	264,000	5,100
Number of Youth Sports Participants	48,000	48,500	49,000	500
Turf Acres Mowed	7,445	7,700	7,700	0
Number of General Acres Mowed	13,001	13,000	13,000	0
Number of Work Orders Processed	2,362	2,400	2,500	100
Number of Irrigation Sites Maintained	143	143	145	2
Number of Habitable Structures	104	108	108	0
Number of Historic Sites	35	35	37	2
Number of Shelter Reservations	2,487	2,756	2,847	91
Efficiency Measures				
Number of Programs Offered	1,700	1,500	1,200	-300
Program Attendance	60,969	60,000	60,000	0
Open Gym Attendance	26,746	25,136	23,525	-1,611
Fitness Center	29,486	30,960	30,960	0
Social Media Followers	32,763	34,300	36,000	1,700
Number of App Users	5,705	6,300	7,000	700

DESCRIPTION (CONTINUED)

Recreation Services

Recreation Services creates safe, fun, and affordable recreational opportunities to improve the quality of life for Henrico County residents. This service area oversees the daily management and operation of all recreation facilities.

Employees work together to create program offerings that appeal to a diverse range of interests. These programs serve customers of all ages and abilities, including age-appropriate offerings for children, teens, and adults. For example, there are summer camps for youth, nature programs at Three Lakes Nature Center and Aquarium, performing arts programs at the Henrico Theatre, and living history programs at Meadow Farm.

The preservation and interpretation of the history of Henrico County also falls under Recreation Services. Staff in this section develop and implement preservation and interpretive solutions at 10 historic sites owned and operated by Henrico County.

Recreation Services also offers a variety of free public events in the parks for residents to enjoy. These include large annual events such as Juneteenth and the July 4th Celebration, as well as several smaller-scale community events spread throughout the year.

Administrative Services

Administrative Services provides all necessary support for the department to fulfill its primary customer service mission and objectives. This area oversees the department's personnel, financial, and customer service needs.

It also includes the Capital Planning and Development work team which provides professional expertise to lead the continued development and redevelopment of the Henrico County Park system. This work team is responsible for master planning, design development, construction documentation, project bidding, and construction administration as well as maintaining the department's annual five-year Capital Improvement Program.

OBJECTIVES

- To provide the residents of Henrico County parks and facilities where they can gather that are safe, clean, and well-maintained.
- To provide the residents of Henrico County with access to facilities, programs, and services and strive to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.
- To provide open spaces and historic resources for future generations to enjoy.
- To prioritize the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of the community through recreational programs, fitness opportunities, and outdoor activities.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

The Division's FY27 approved budget totals $33,796,710. This represents a $2,100,296 or 6.6% increase when compared to the FY26 approved budget. The personnel component of this budget increased $1,746,976 or 7.8%. This net increase is due to adjusted salaries, benefits, and the addition of eight positions related to HCPS middle school field maintenance, offset by the transfer of three positions to the Sports & Entertainment Authority. The operating budget increased by $1,190,212 or 16.4%. This includes funding for HCPS middle school field maintenance, Runnymeade Community Farm, Capital Trail, and operating costs for the phase II development of Glover Park. The capital outlay budget increased $114,000 or 6% when compared to FY26. The increase is for facility rehab and maintenance equipment at the HCPS middle school fields and Glover Park. As part of an exercise in fiscal prudence, this budget includes an operating decrease equivalent to 3% of the department's FY26 approved budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

The FY27 approved budget for Administration totals $3,206,338 and includes the Director's office, the Business Office, and Capital Planning and Development. The proposed budget for FY27 reflects a net increase of $206,607, due to salary changes and the accompanying benefit costs, as well as operational funding growth for items such as the Capital Trail, Runnymeade Community Farm, training, association memberships, lease of equipment, and other operational needs.

RECREATION SERVICES

The FY27 approved budget for Recreation Services totals $11,303,470, which reflects an increase of $1,101,144, or 10.8%, when compared to FY26. The majority of the increase is reflected in personnel, as funding was added for salary adjustments and a significant increase in temporary salaries. Operating and capital funding increased in this budget for maintenance service contracts, janitorial services, medical supplies, educational and recreational supplies, technology infrastructure, and other expenses.

Operating and capital components also include funds used to pay for equipment replacement expenses, the preservation of historic artifacts, and to purchase new furniture and fixtures for the various recreation centers. Set-up fee revenue supports furniture replacement, as a note this fee was approved in FY02, and the replacement furniture expenditures program was approved in the FY03 budget.

In a similar fashion, the FY18 budget initiated the inclusion of $20,000 annually for fitness equipment replacement at the Eastern Henrico Recreation Center. This is funded through revenues collected from members using the facility.

CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

The approved FY27 County contribution to the Cultural Arts Center is $600,000. This funding level reflects no change from the prior fiscal year. This funding is provided in support of the wide array of programs and services that the Center provides in the community.

PARK SERVICES

The approved budget for Park Services totals $19,637,794 for FY27, an increase of $1,743,437, or 9.7%, when compared to the FY26 approved budget. This increase is driven primarily by the additional personnel and salary adjustments. Operational budget increases include landscaping, agricultural supplies, chemicals, motor pool, and lease of equipment.

Capital outlay will focus mainly on replacing existing equipment and facility rehab. New capital infrastructure improvements include an equipment lift at the Dorey Shop, small engine equipment, water fountains, score board controllers, tools to outfit mechanics at Dorey Maintenance, one RTV, a mini skid steer, and attachments for trail work.

Recreation & Parks

The Capital Outlay equipment replacement program was initiated in the FY09 budget to provide a regular replacement schedule for equipment. In FY27, $480,200 will go towards small equipment for ballfields/turfing/grounds, wet liners, replacement pop-up tents, goals (soccer, lacrosse, field hockey, etc.), and the replacement of current traffic counters.

The Capital Outlay facility rehabilitation portion of the budget totals $703,000 in the FY27 budget. This plan was initiated in the FY01 budget to maintain the Division's facilities on a yearly basis. For FY27, planned Facility Rehabilitation projects include turf projects at Klehr Field, Dorey Baseball field, Highland Spring Rec Football as well as container bins for infill material. Planned HVAC projects include Dabbs House and Armour House. Miscellaneous projects include replacing wood decking at Deep Run, Tuckahoe Boardwalk and Osborne, re-curing or replacing ballfield light poles, re-curing floor epoxy at several restroom/concession buildings, Echo Lake spillway repairs, and playground rubber surfacing.

REVENUES

The Division anticipates collecting revenue totaling $316,000 in FY27, a decrease of $29,000 from the approved FY26 budget. Recreation & Parks generate revenue through program fees and facility rentals.

DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Henrico Recreation and Parks programming initiatives have shifted towards more non-registration-based programs, allowing for broader community engagement. Examples include Holiday Sprays, Canoeing with the Community, Movies in the Park, Paint and Sip, Story Tots and Tunes, Bingo, Awesome Autumn Afternoon, Make it Mondays, and National Bounce House Day. Recreation Coordinators tailor programs to community interests, spanning categories such as creative arts, nature and outdoors, home and garden, music and dance, STEM, sports, history, performing arts, and community events.

Highlighting the department's camp offerings, Spring Break Camp Days extended its reach across three locations, providing enriching experiences for 120 campers. The eagerly anticipated Here We Grow Summer Day Camp, running from late June to early August, has expanded to eight sites, accommodating a substantial surge in participation with approximately 900+ attendees – a notable increase compared to past years.

The Division is committed to outreach programs, collaborating with organizations such as Henrico United, Henrico Juvenile Detention Home Creative Arts, Jacobs Chance, Autism Society of Central Virginia, Henrico Connect, Virginia Department of Health, Department of Forestry, and Department of Wildlife Resources.

FACILITIES: HOURLY RESERVATION FEE SCHEDULE

In FY25, the Division achieved a major operational success by implementing a flexible hourly fee structure tailored to the size and nature of each event. This customer-focused model empowers patrons to allocate their reserved hours across setup, event time, and cleanup as needed, without rigid oversight or unnecessary restrictions. By eliminating the previous standard, the Division significantly increased scheduling efficiency, enabling multiple events to be hosted in a single day. As a result, facility reservations have seen a significant increase, with the 14 facilities collectively hosting 6,836 rentals in FY25, reflecting a positive response to a more adaptable, more efficient system.

Further amplifying this success, the Division conducted a strategic review of auxiliary fees, such as setup and kitchen usage. This led to the consolidation of inconsistent charges into simplified room-size categories and the elimination of outdated or unnecessary fees that had previously exasperated customers. These changes not only enhanced pricing transparency but also improved the overall customer experience, removing barriers and allowing the Division to serve more patrons more effectively. Together, these innovations reflect a bold, data-informed approach to service delivery, resulting in increased utilization, improved customer satisfaction, and greater operational efficiency.

FITNESS ACCESS PASS

In FY25, the Fitness Department implemented a strategic shift in its class registration model, transitioning from a registration-based system, common among other municipalities and other traditional programs, to a more flexible and inclusive access pass format. Previously, monthly class registrations would fill within minutes, leaving many patrons on lengthy, manually managed waitlists. This system often led to customer frustration, as many who secured spots failed to attend or cancel in advance, limiting access and opportunity for others.

Recognizing the need for a more customer-centric and industry-aligned approach, the department introduced the Fitness Access Pass system. This model allows patrons to obtain a yearly free pass, attending on a first-come, first-served basis for each class, eliminating the need for pre-registration and reducing administrative burden.

The impact was significant: participation surged from 14,042 in FY24 to 22,574 in FY25, marking a 61% increase in attendance. This growth reflects the department’s commitment to strategic problem-solving and expanding access, ultimately enhancing customer satisfaction and aligning services with evolving fitness consumption trends.

HENRICO LIVE RECORD SALES AND STRATEGIC GROWTH

Henrico Live, Henrico Theatre’s concert series, saw record sales for its 25-26 season comprised of 13 concerts programmed September 2025 through May 2026. Sales for the series are structured by allowing season ticket buyers to purchase their packages one week prior to single tickets. Season ticket sales began on August 18th at noon, selling 3,330 out of 5,278 seats or 62.5% of all available tickets by the end of August 24th. This was an increase of 49.1% over the previous year's first week of sales. Notably, 5 of the 13 concerts sold over 80% percent of all available seats during the initial first week of sales. The following week, when single tickets became available, 550 seats were sold for a total of 3,880 seats or 73.5% of all available tickets, an increase of 40.2% over the previous year. By the end of the second week of sales, four shows had less than 25 out of 406 seats still available. To date, 7 out of the 13 shows have completely sold out.

The growth seen this year highlights the value residents place on the programming at Henrico Theatre. All musical genres have seen growth over previous years proving the need for diverse programming that appeals to all of Henrico County's residents.