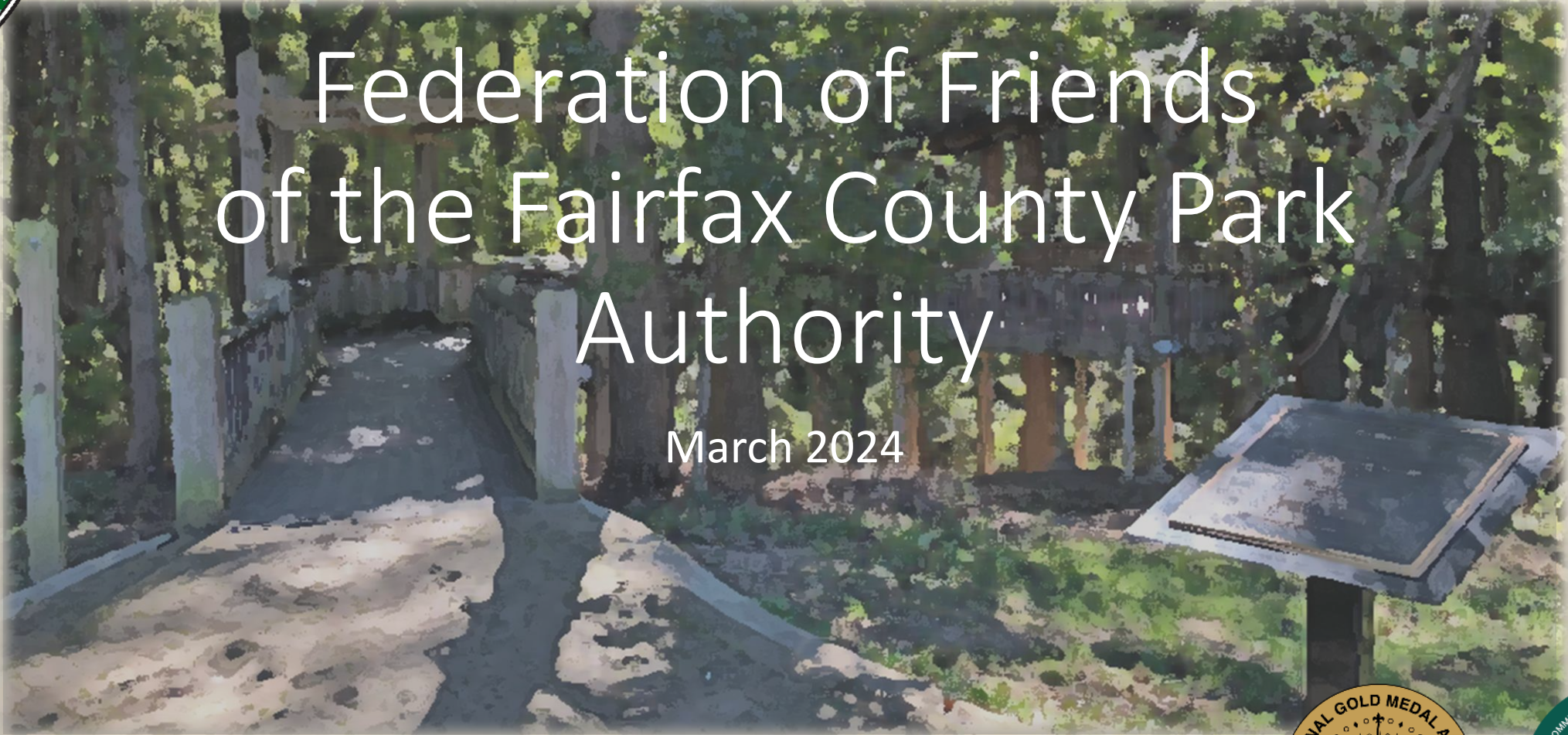


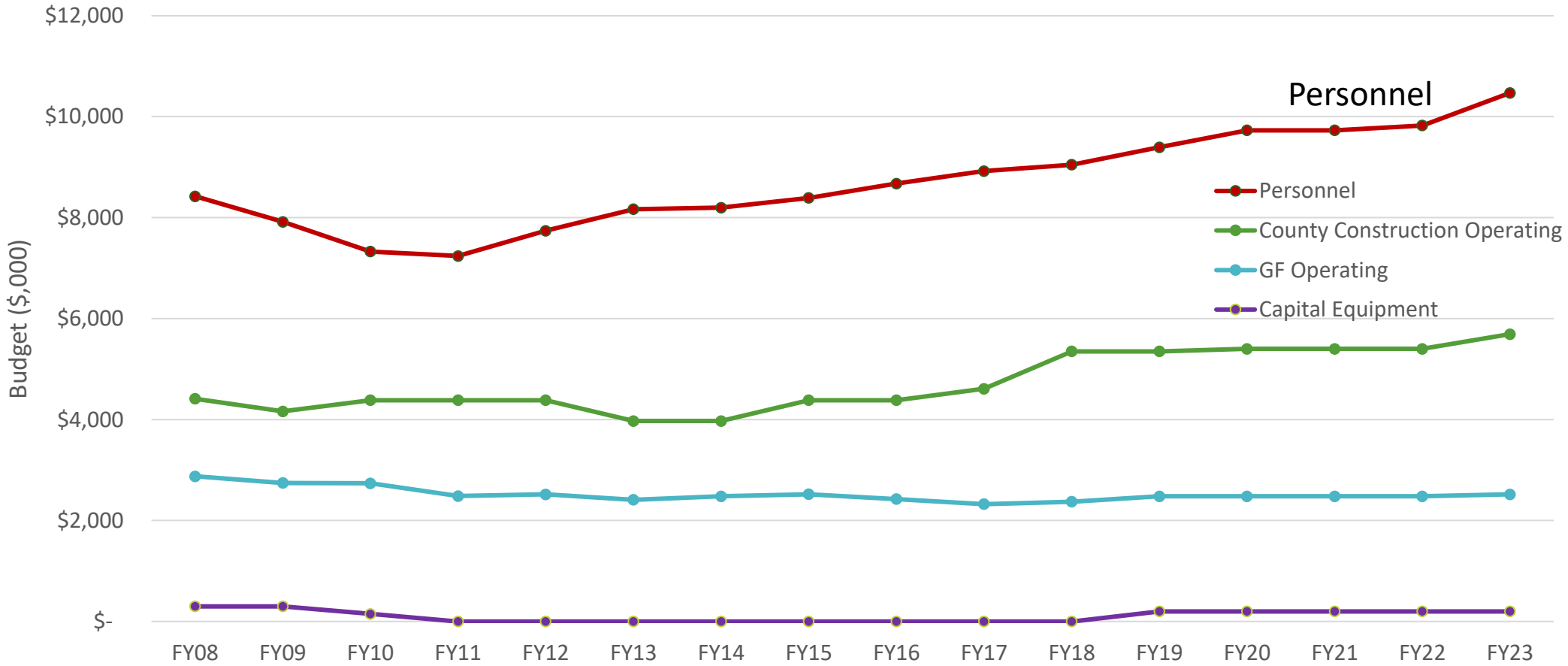


Federation of Friends of the Fairfax County Park Authority

March 2024



Park Operations Historical Budgets



Park Operations Budget

Category	FY23 Original Budget	FY23 Final Budget (Adjusted)*	FY23 Actuals
Salaries	\$10.5 Million	\$8.5 Million	\$8.1 Million
General Fund Operating	\$2.6 Million	\$4.2 Million	\$4.7 Million
County Construction Fund	\$5.7 Million	\$8.2 Million	\$5.3 Million
Capital	\$200k	\$669k	\$668k

*Includes Carryover and One-Time Adjustments

FY23 Actuals for General Fund Operating Budget is \$2.1M over allocated amount



Park Operations Budget

Category	FY23 Original Budget	FY23 Final Budget (Adjusted)*	FY23 Actuals
Salaries	\$10.5 Million	\$8.5 Million	\$8.1 Million
General Fund Operating	\$2.6 Million	\$4.2 Million	\$4.7 Million
County Construction Fund	\$5.7 Million	\$8.2 Million	\$5.3 Million
Capital	\$200k	\$669k	\$668k

*Includes Carryover and One-Time Adjustments

**FY23 Actuals for General Fund Operating Budget is \$2.1M over allocated amount
\$2.1M went to cover operating shortfalls**



Growing Park System & Decreasing Staff

	Total Acres	Trail Miles	Athletic Courts	Picnic Shelters	Playgrounds	# of Park Ops Positions
FY 2009	22,600	312	374	31	201	184
FY 2024	23,636	337	409	65	227	158
#/% Increase	1,036/4.6%	25/8%	35/9.4%	34/110%	26/13%	(26/14%)





1979 Bulldozer



1990 Dump Bed



Original Boiler at GW Rec Center



Benchmarking

Most Comparable County to Fairfax Nationally

	Fairfax County	Mecklenburg County
Number of parks	420	233
Number of acres	23,632	18,570
Population	1,170,033	1,295,000
Maintenance/Operation staff count	158	202
Park operating and personnel expense budget	\$18,878,386	\$24,898,534
Acreage maintained per operating staff	150	92
Park operating expense per acre	\$799	\$1,341
Park operating FTEs per 1,000 population	0.14	0.16

Mecklenburg County has:

- Almost 33% more than our operating expense per acre

Mecklenburg County operating expense and FTEs include Park Operations and Park Repair and Maintenance

Source:

[Mecklenburg County FY2023 Budget Docs](#) (page 267)



Benchmarking Neighboring Jurisdictions of Fairfax

	Fairfax County	Arlington County	Prince William County	Loudoun County
Number of parks	420	148	81	60
Number of acres	23,632	924	4,937	3,710
Population	1,170,033	235,500	486,943	442,695
Maintenance/Operation staff count	158	84	146	66
Park operating and personnel expense budget	\$18,878,386	\$16,481,880	\$17,124,511	\$8,845,455
Acreage maintained per operating staff	150	35	34	56
Park operating expense per acre	\$799	\$3,515	\$3,469	\$2,384
Park operating FTEs per 1,000 population	0.14	0.36	0.30	0.15

Source:

[Arlington County FY2023 Budget Docs](#) (page 318), [Prince William County FY2023 Budget Docs](#) (page 99), [Loudoun County FY2023 Budget Docs](#) (page 4-20)



Right-Size Park Operations: \$2,100,000

	Budgeted Amount	Projected Need	Difference	Result
Forestry Contract Operations	\$383,000	\$1,273,000	\$890,000	This would allow us to fully fund contract operations for HIGH-RISK tree removal
Athletic Field Mowing	\$555,000	\$900,000	\$345,000	This expenditure is directly funded through 9 maintenance positions specifically frozen for this purpose
Park Open Space Mowing	\$442,000	\$562,000	\$120,000	Three maintenance positions are frozen to fund the open space mowing contract
Athletic Court Maintenance	\$290,000	\$490,000	\$200,000	With an inventory of more than 400 athletic courts throughout the County, there is a backlog of 75 athletic courts rated at D or F, along with increases required minimum maintenance.
Trail Maintenance Funding	\$350,000	\$500,000	\$150,000	Annual needs for trail maintenance have been outpacing the baseline allocation, which addresses up to 1 mile of annual trail maintenance
General Park and Facility Maintenance	\$2,358,000	\$2,753,000	\$395,000	Redirected funding has been used to allow for broader opportunities to provide routine maintenance before issues become major concerns
TOTALS	\$4,378,000	\$6,478,000	\$2,100,000	



Summary

- Park Authority resources are woefully insufficient to address the growing needs of the park system.
- Years of stagnant or decreased budgets while the park system continued to grow have had a significant impact on the Park Authority's ability to provide adequate maintenance
- Since FY 2008, FCPA has absorbed and continues to absorb significant unfunded requirements and initiatives without additional staff or operational funding.
- Increased tournament support, forestry operations, recycling pickup, new acquisitions, as well as substantial contract rate increases for mowing, restroom maintenance, and pest management.
- FY25 Proposed Budget Outcome – \$2,100,000
 - Park Maintenance Budget Imbalance: \$1,210,000
 - Forestry Operations Full Funding for High-Risk Trees: \$890,00



FY25 – Additional Budget Requests



Budget Development Guidance

All departments were requested to develop budget reductions totaling 7% of General Fund appropriation. County Executive considered all options during the development of his Proposed Budget.

Guidance from CEX: “Not every reduction submitted will be incorporated in the proposed FY 2025 Budget, but the process we are undertaking will allow us to step back and evaluate the services we offer as well as the most efficient means of offering them.”

FCPA General Fund Target: \$2,370,600

No Reductions Taken



FCPA-Specific Operating Budget Guidance

1. Members of the Park Authority Board are encouraged to coordinate with their District Supervisor in fall 2023 to discuss budget issues in advance of the preparation of the FY 2025 Advertised Budget Plan.
2. Make FCPA operationally whole in future budgets for Forestry and IMA-bamboo mitigation.
3. Work with FCPD to initiate a review of options to expand the presence of law enforcement within our park system, including the proposed park ranger program, and return to the Board with recommendations.



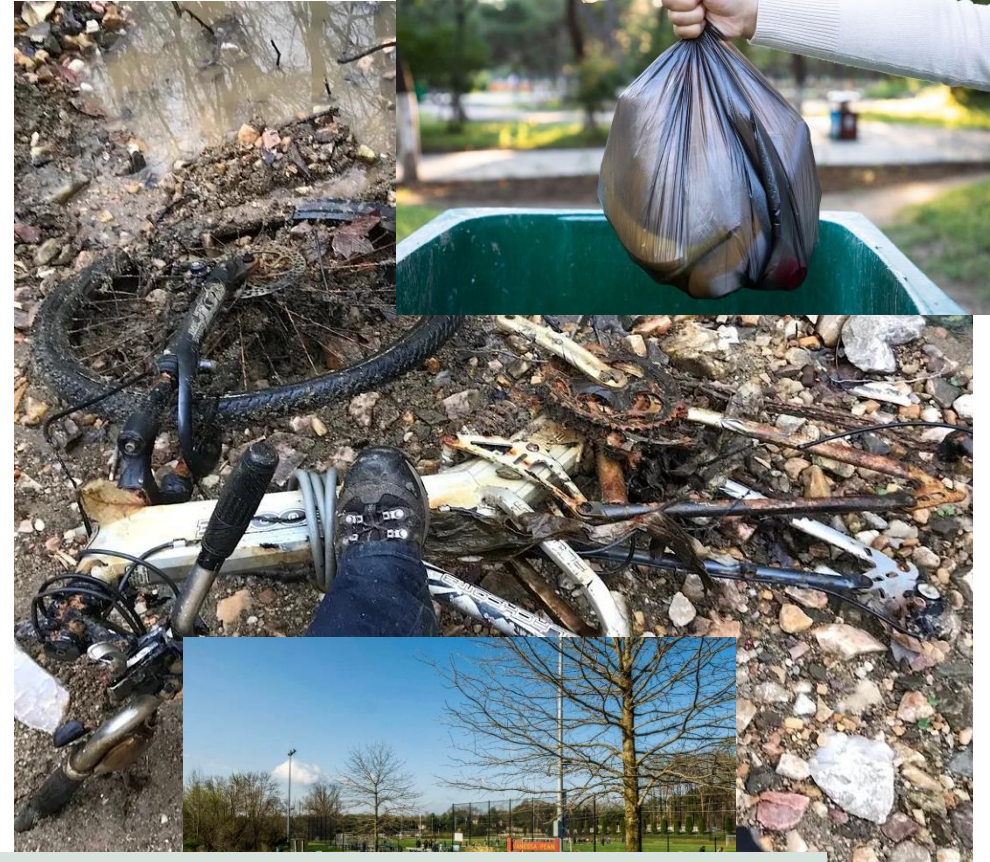
FY 2025 Budget Requests

Items	Final Proposed Submission	CEX Proposed Budget
Continuing Services:		
CPI/Baseline Operating Increases (Admin and Operations)	\$658,539	\$69,580
Full Year of Funding for Mobile Nature Center	\$114,961	\$114,961
Compliance:		
Bamboo Removal on Parkland	\$400,000	\$400,000
Zero Waste Trash Removal and Recycling	\$3,926,062	\$1,064,990* (Pilot)
Operating Budget Impact:		
OBI Funding - Maintenance/ Stabilization/ Staffing	\$1,778,189	\$-
Park Operations Forestry Contract Funding	\$890,000	\$890,000
Park Operations Service Restoration	\$1,210,000	\$1,210,000
Girls Softball Tournament Field Maintenance	\$-	\$300,000
Diamond Field Maintenance (FCPS Fields)	\$-	\$294,000
TOTALS	\$8,977,751	\$4,343,531
Synthetic Turf Replacement (FCPA and FCPS Fields)	\$1,750,000	\$932,836



Zero Waste Trash and Recycling: \$3,391,979

- Fairfax County Code § 109.1-2-3(a)(4) - Recycling at Non-Residential Properties requires that waste cans must be accompanied by recycling cans.
- In the current model, maintenance staff spend 2-3 days per week on trash, impacting their ability to focus on other park maintenance projects.
- Provide additional trash and recycling services in our parks on the weekends.
- Ensure that trash and recycling separation is occurring at our parks and transported according to associated standards.



PHASE 1: \$1,064,990



Forestry Funding: \$890,000

- The current contract budget of \$383,000 only covers about 30% of the annual costs of removing high-risk trees
- Average # of trees removed has increased by 100% (1,005) compared to ten years ago
- Cost overruns are taken from other high priority maintenance projects. With no additional funds, we must scale back to only high-risk trees
- Additional funding will allow FCPA to move from reactive service delivery to proactive and preventative care needs



FULLY FUNDED



Energy Program Projects Funded

Items	CEX Proposed Budget
Conversion to Gas-Powered Equipment (Phase 2)	\$158,412
Continued Support for Invasive Management Area Program	\$466,355
Watch the Green Grow Program	\$43,500
Water Chestnut Mitigation Program	\$130,500
TOTALS	\$798,767



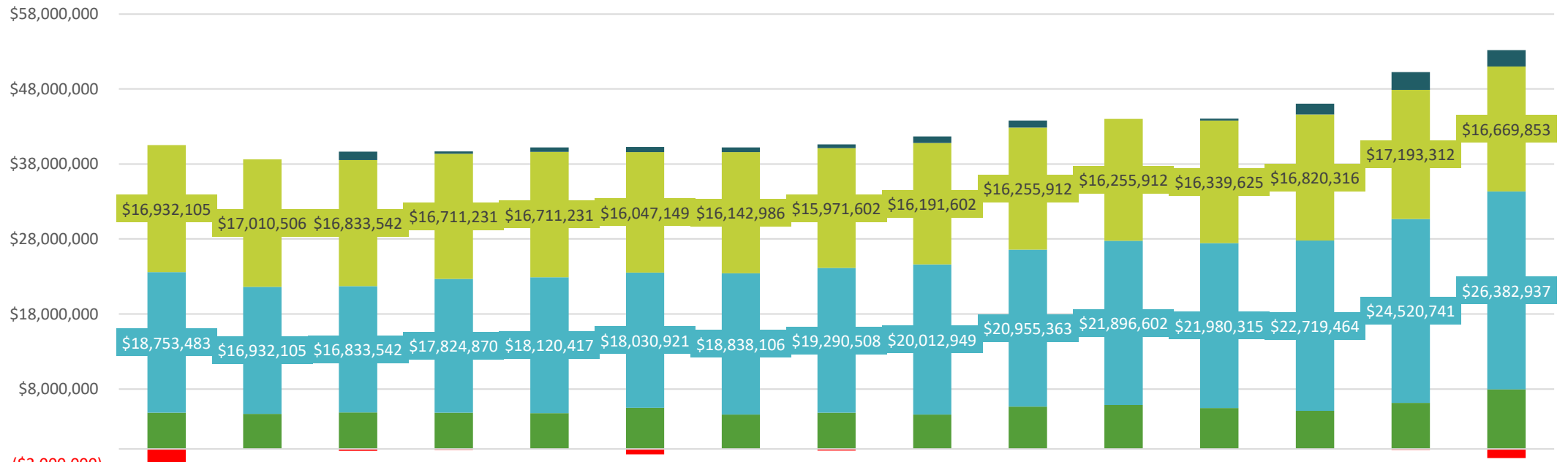
Impact of Advocacy

	FY 2023	FY 2024	<i>FY 2025 Proposed</i>	Total Adjustments
General Fund	\$1,453,365	\$899,443	\$749,531	\$3,102,339
General County Construction Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$201,000 – Park Maintenance \$177,700 – PPN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$57,000 - Forestry \$89,000 - PPN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>\$400,000 – Bamboo</i> <i>\$890,000 – Forestry</i> <i>\$1,804,000 – Park and Field Maintenance</i> <i>\$932,836 – Synthetic Field Replacements</i> 	\$4,551,536
Third Quarter/ Carryover (One-Time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$10,000,000 for capital project support \$500,000 for forestry operations \$400,000 for bamboo mitigation \$350,000 for confederate name changes \$492,527 for recruitment bonuses/pay compression impact \$250,000 for Sully Historic Site Education \$175,000 for Justice Park Shelter/Walkways \$600,000 – Gum Springs Trail 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>\$500,000 for Zero Waste</i> 	\$12,767,527



Impact of Advocacy

FCPA General Operating/County Construction Adopted Budgets



	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25*
■ MRA/Comp Adjustments	\$0	\$0	\$1,113,639	\$295,547	\$574,586	\$711,348	\$623,786	\$502,441	\$878,104	\$941,239	\$0	\$258,458	\$1,428,281	\$2,385,655	\$2,166,518
■ Personnel No MRA	\$16,932,10	\$17,010,50	\$16,833,54	\$16,711,23	\$16,711,23	\$16,047,14	\$16,142,98	\$15,971,60	\$16,191,60	\$16,255,91	\$16,255,91	\$16,339,62	\$16,820,31	\$17,193,31	\$16,669,85
■ Personnel	\$18,753,483	\$16,932,105	\$16,833,542	\$17,824,870	\$18,120,417	\$18,030,921	\$18,838,106	\$19,290,508	\$20,012,949	\$20,955,363	\$21,896,602	\$21,980,315	\$22,719,464	\$24,520,741	\$26,382,937
■ Budget Reductions	(\$1,821,378)	\$0	(\$246,964)	(\$122,311)	\$0	(\$720,356)	\$0	(\$211,384)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$115,799)	(\$1,200,786)
■ Non-Personnel	\$4,839,283	\$4,689,283	\$4,866,247	\$4,841,594	\$4,789,283	\$5,493,365	\$4,602,172	\$4,852,393	\$4,591,732	\$5,635,222	\$5,856,728	\$5,472,215	\$5,076,737	\$6,157,106	\$7,953,004

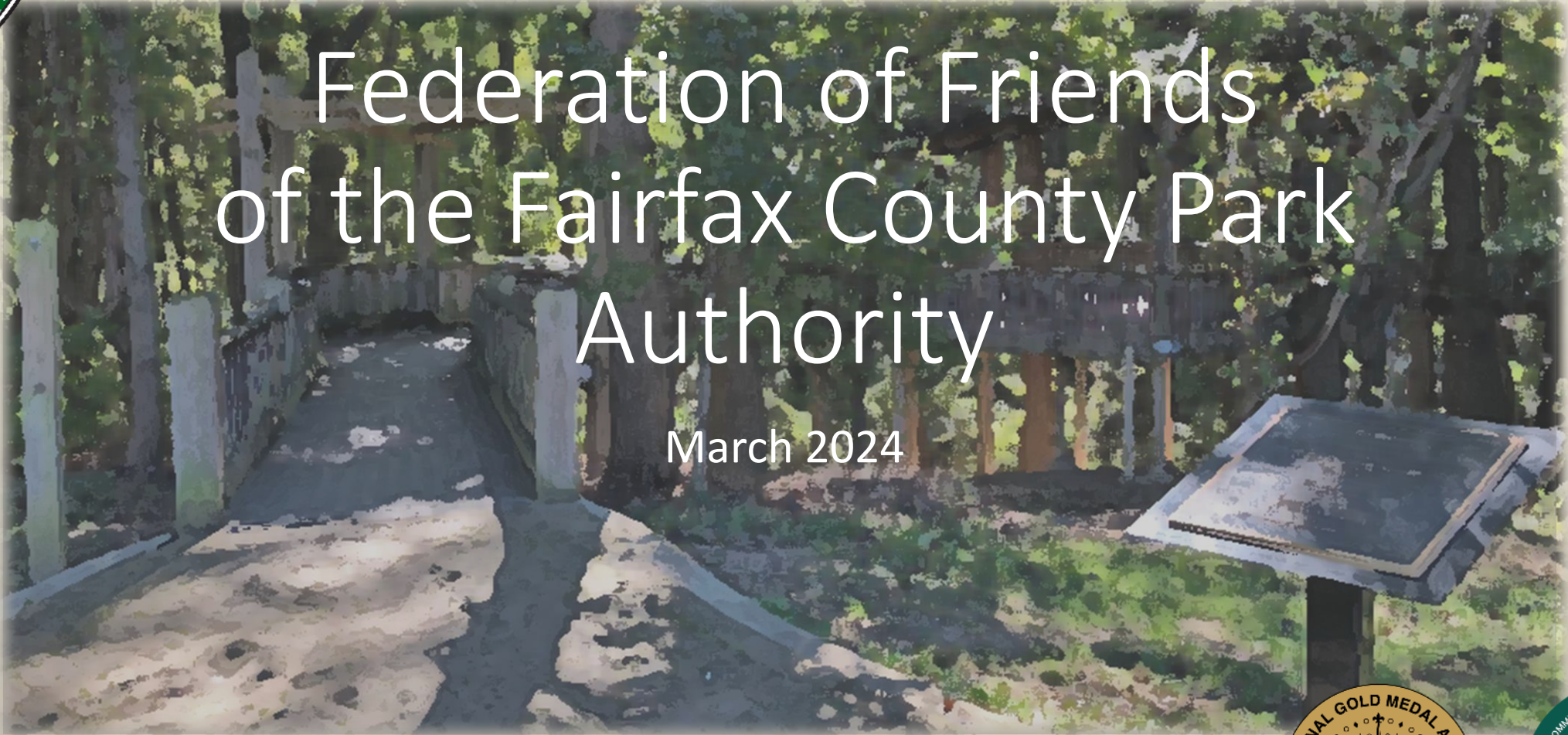
*= FY25 Proposed Budget





Federation of Friends of the Fairfax County Park Authority

March 2024



HR&A



Recreation | Funding for Equity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

January 2024

THE PROJECT

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) engaged HR&A, a national real estate, public policy, and economic development consulting firm, to support its equity efforts.



EQUITY IN PARKS & RECREATION

The known benefits of parks and recreation are abundant; the challenge is making sure that these benefits are felt equitably across communities.

- Real Estate Value
- Job Creation
- Local Spending
- Tourism Value
- County Branding
- Resident Attraction
- Environmental Benefits
- Public Health
- Childcare
- Safety
- Physical Activity
- Social Cohesion
- Personal Development
- Stress Alleviation
- **Fun!**



Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole, Fairfax County Park Authority

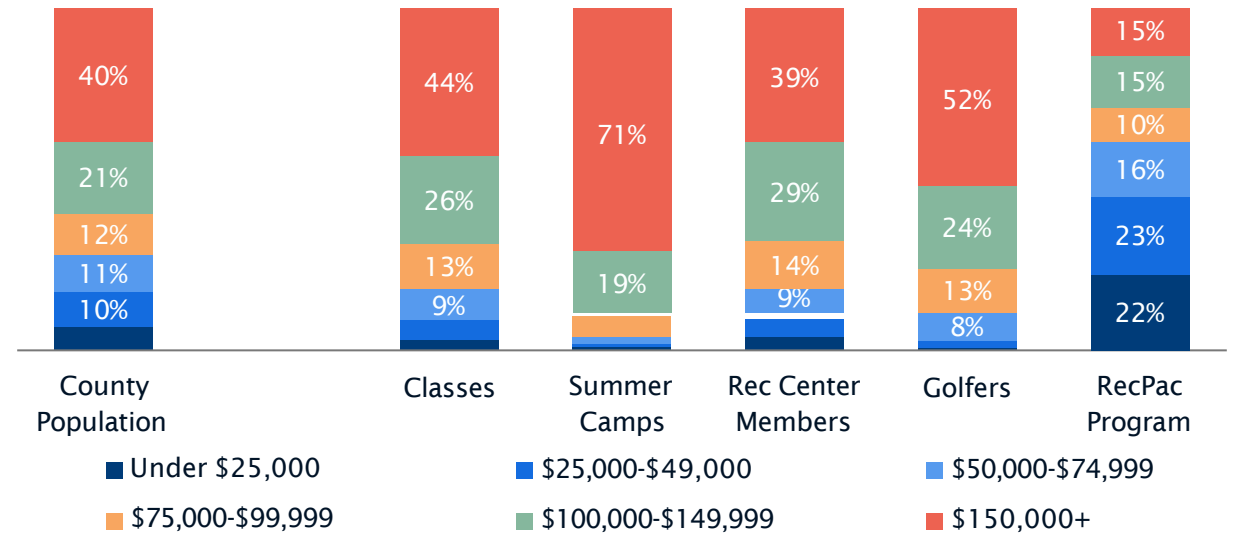
THE PROBLEM

This reliance on fees means that some of FCPA’s public recreation programs charge more than other local jurisdictions, and more than many county residents can afford.

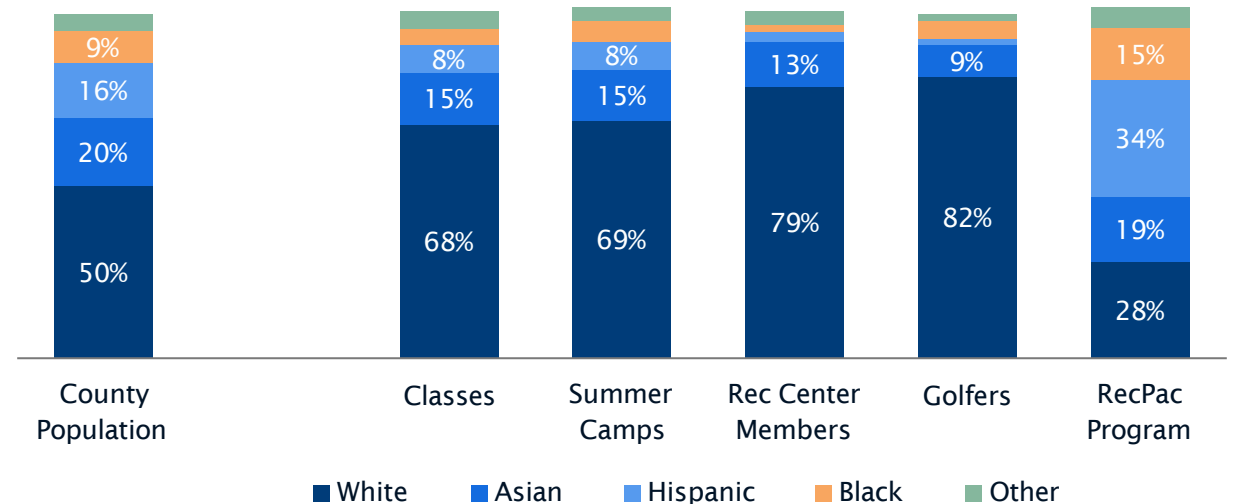
As a result, FCPA’s recreation participation skews wealthier and whiter than both the population of Fairfax County and participation in General Fund programs like RecPac.

The Revenue Fund model also limits FCPA’s ability to implement other equity initiatives.

Program Participation by Household Income



Program Participation by Race



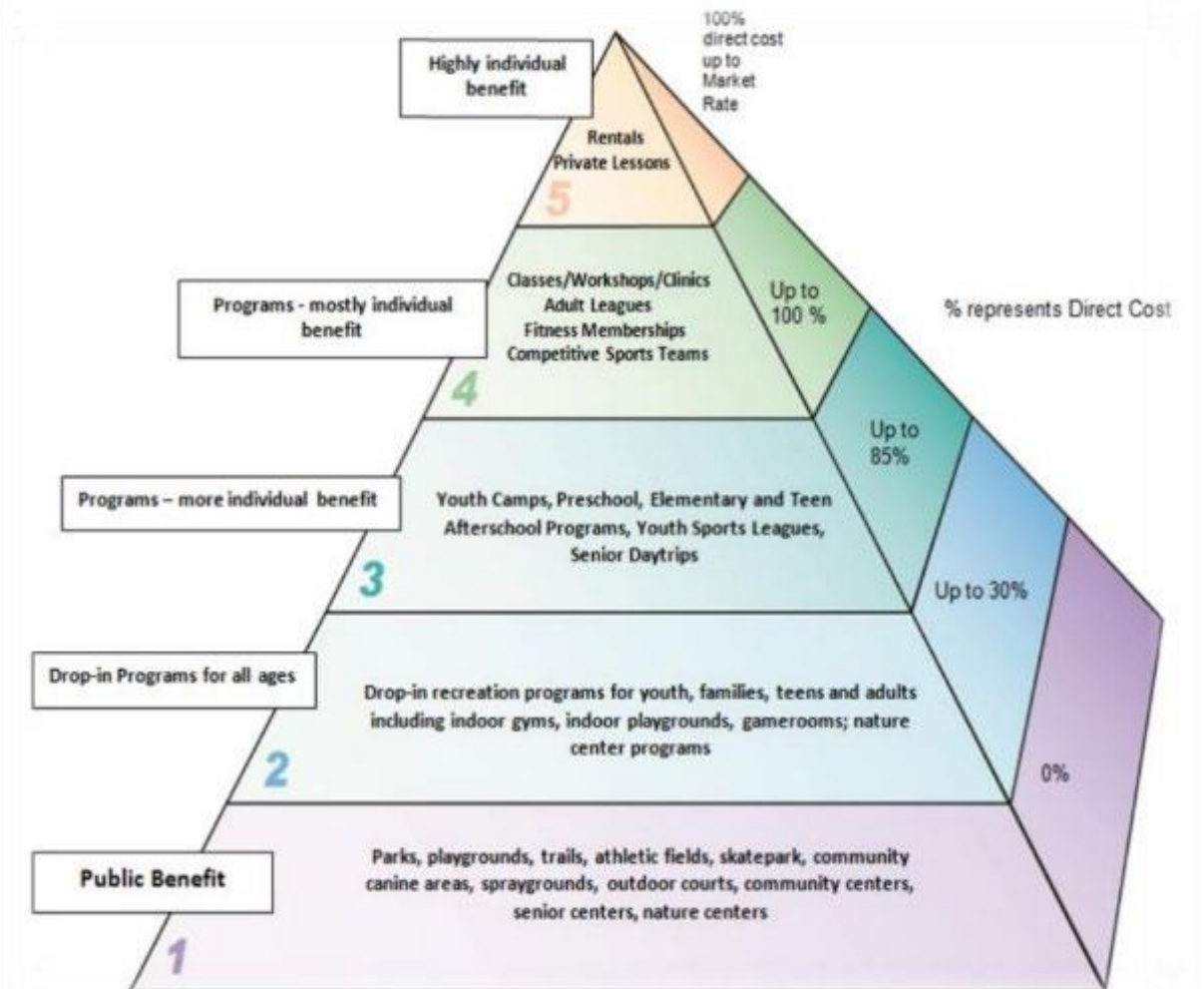
PARKS & RECREATION BEST PRACTICES

FCPA's Revenue Fund model diverges from national best practice, which considers community benefits when setting cost recovery targets.

Many agencies set cost recovery targets at the program level, based on the community benefit they provide.

For example, children's swim lessons, which offer significant public health and safety benefits, might target 50% cost recovery; one-on-one personal training sessions, which provide primarily individual benefit, might aim to recover 100% of direct costs.

By contrast, all FCPA Revenue Fund programs must charge participants enough to recover 100% of costs, regardless of community benefit.



Source: [Arlington County Parks and Recreation Cost Recovery Pyramid Methodology](#), GreenPlay LLC

PARKS & RECREATION BEST PRACTICES

In addition, other parks and recreation agencies are rarely required to recoup costs not directly associated with programming, such as administrative and maintenance costs.

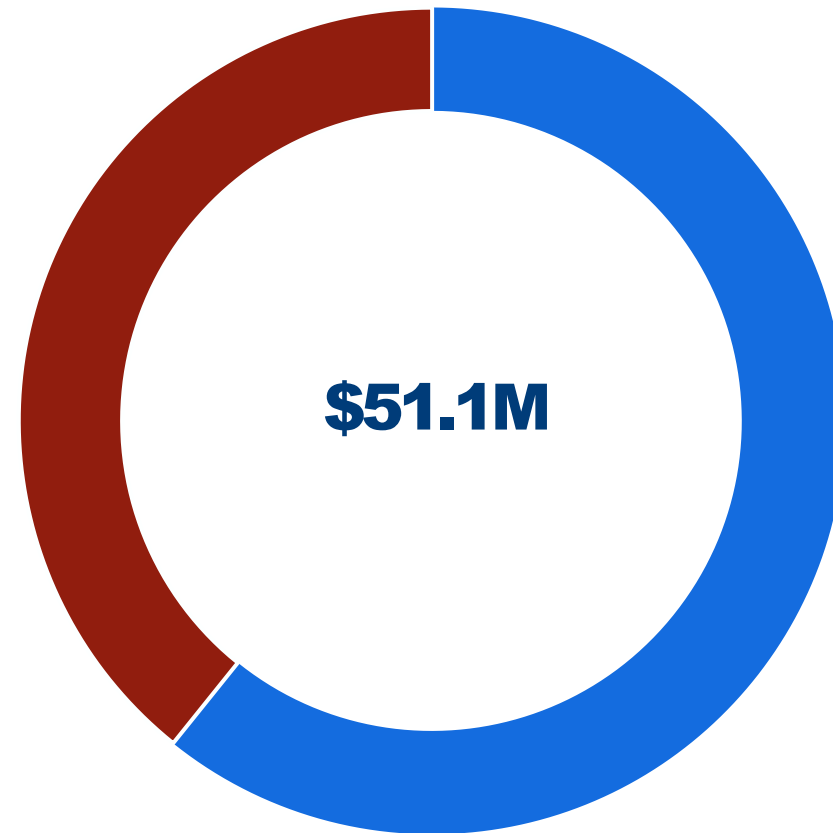
Revenue Fund Expenses, FY23

FCPA's
100%
cost
recover
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require
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Many of these indirect overhead expenses are necessary to maintain the public recreation system's basic offerings, such as opening recreation buildings, regardless of the programming offered there.

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Indirect Costs
(\$20.1M)

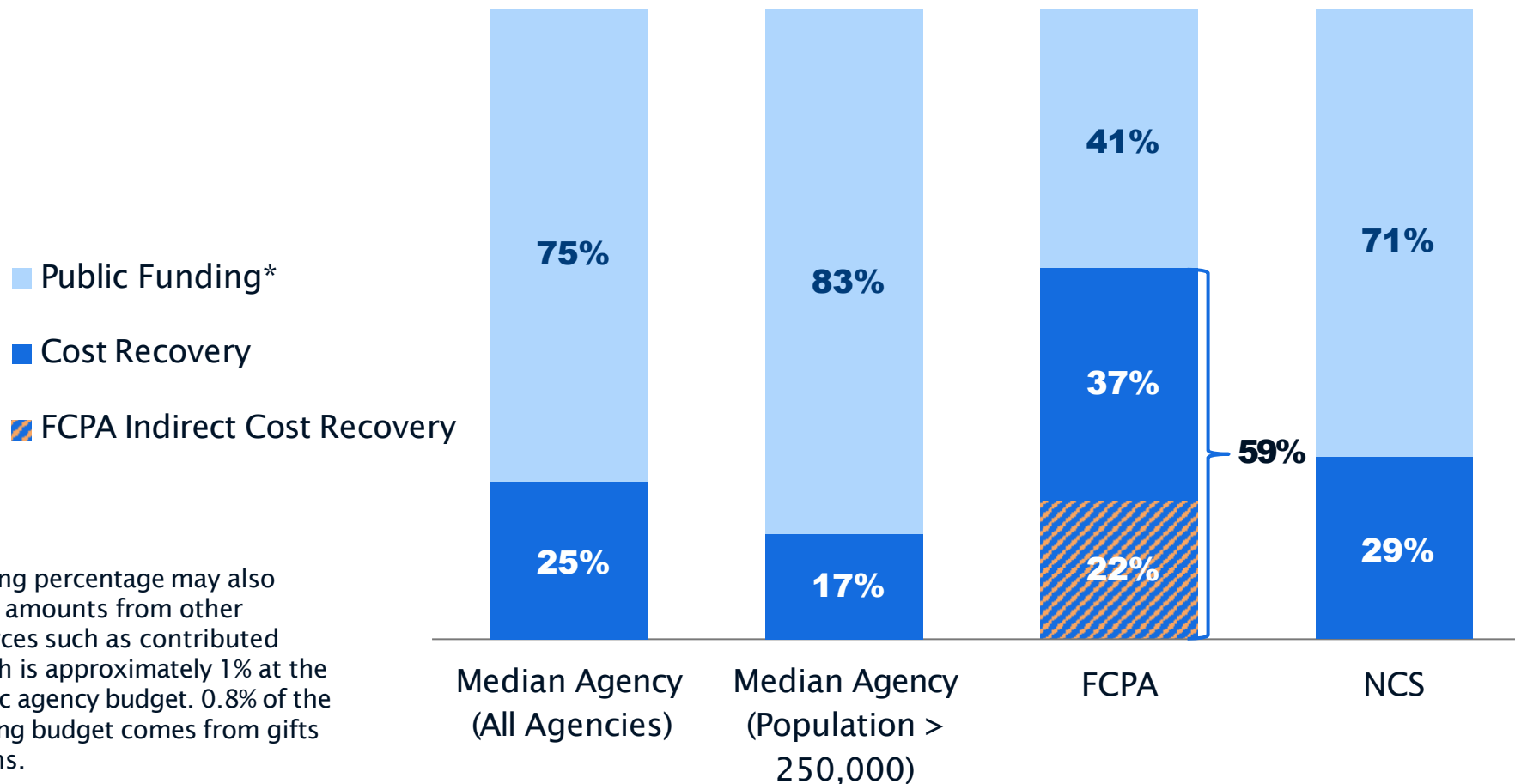


Program-
Related
Expenses
(\$31.1M)

PARKS & RECREATION BEST PRACTICES

In combination, these departures from cost recovery best practice drive the share of fees and charges to support FCPA's operating budget well above that of the median agency.

National Cost Recovery Trends in Parks and Rec, 2023



*Public funding percentage may also include small amounts from other revenue sources such as contributed income, which is approximately 1% at the median public agency budget. 0.8% of the FCPA operating budget comes from gifts and donations.

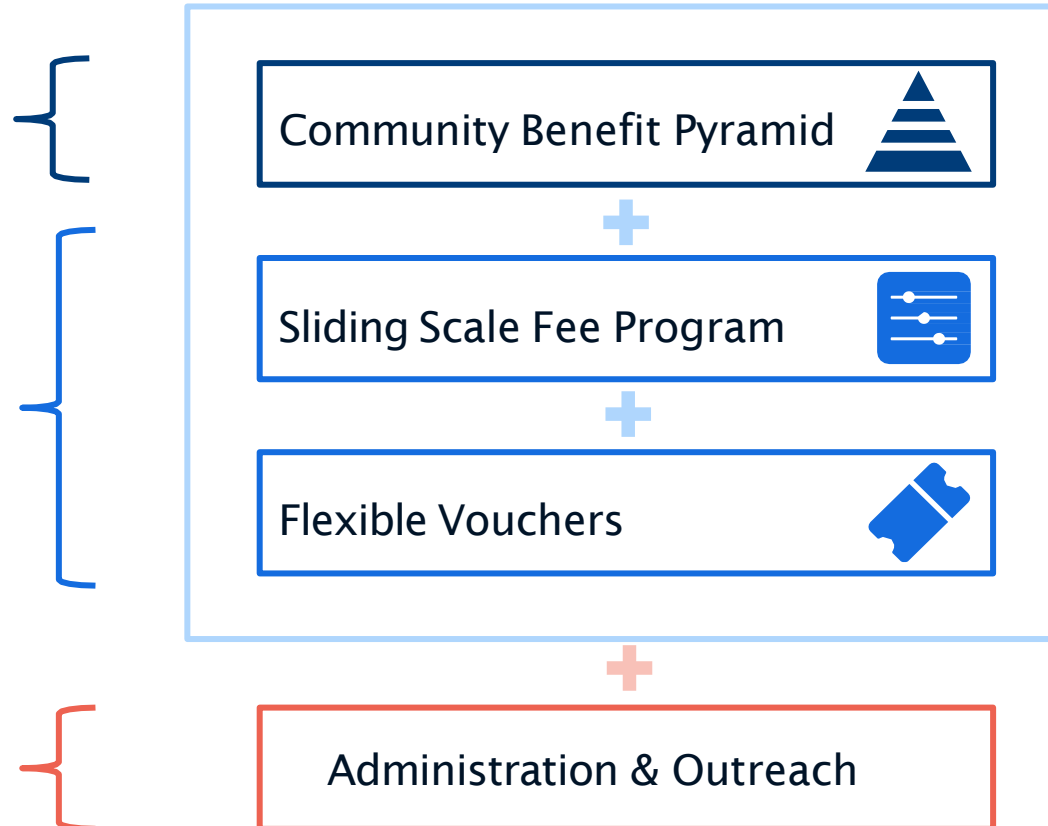
IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE TO ENSURE EQUITY

Using community benefits to guide program cost recovery goals would better align FCPA with its peers and with best practices for distributing public goods, lowering the cost of most programs for all. In addition, **supplementary sliding scale and voucher programs** are needed to ensure that price does not remain a barrier to participation for the lowest income households.

Reduce some fees for everyone by revising cost recovery targets to align with community benefits.

Introduce supplementary subsidies to make all programs more accessible to those who can least afford them.

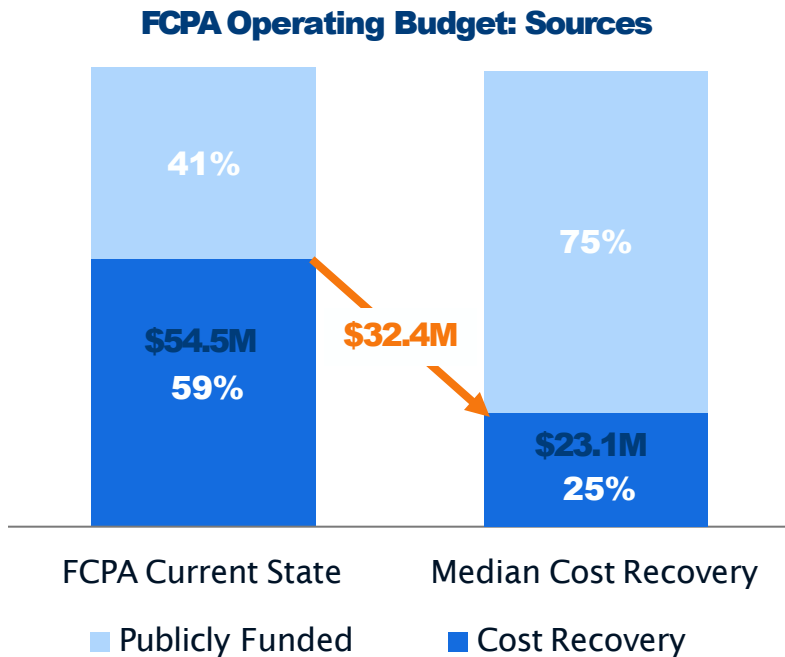
Allow for technical implementation of the programs and develop outreach resources to engage with the community.



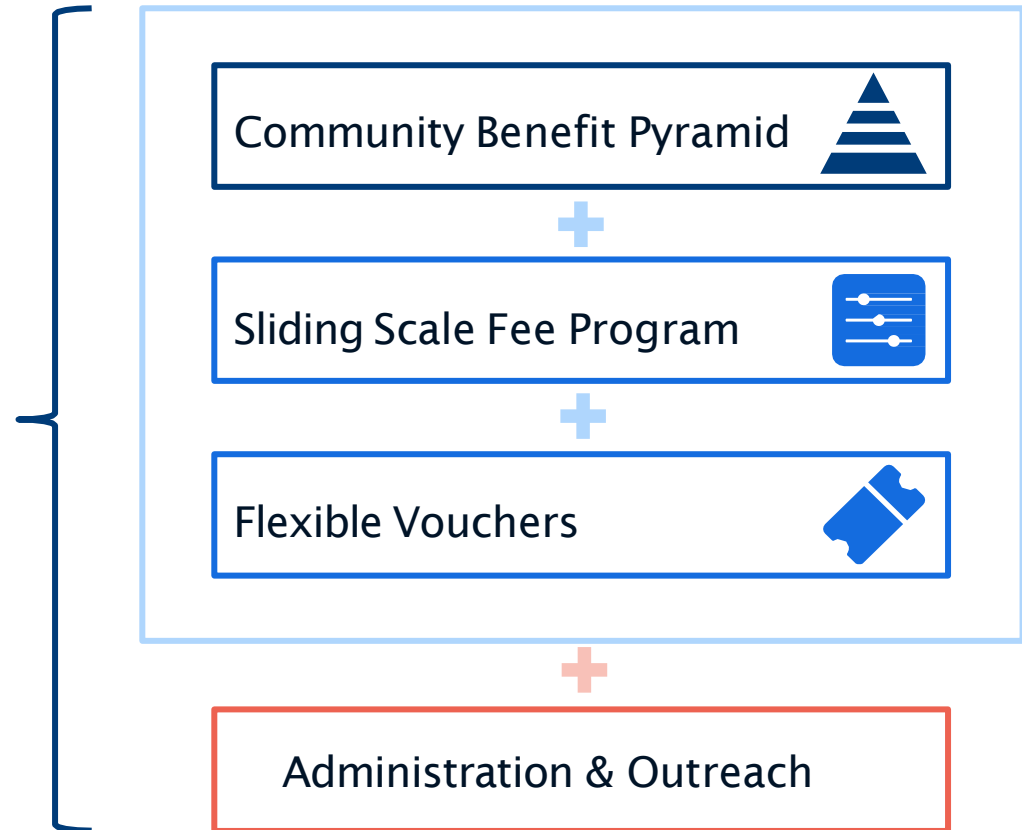
IMPLEMENTING BEST PRACTICE TO ENSURE EQUITY

Many parks and recreation agencies that implement these programs reach the **national median cost recovery of 25%**.

If FCPA were to target 25% cost recovery, revenue from fees and charges (based on FY23) would drop from \$54.5M to \$23.1M, requiring \$32.4M in additional funding.



\$32.4M
at 25% cost recovery



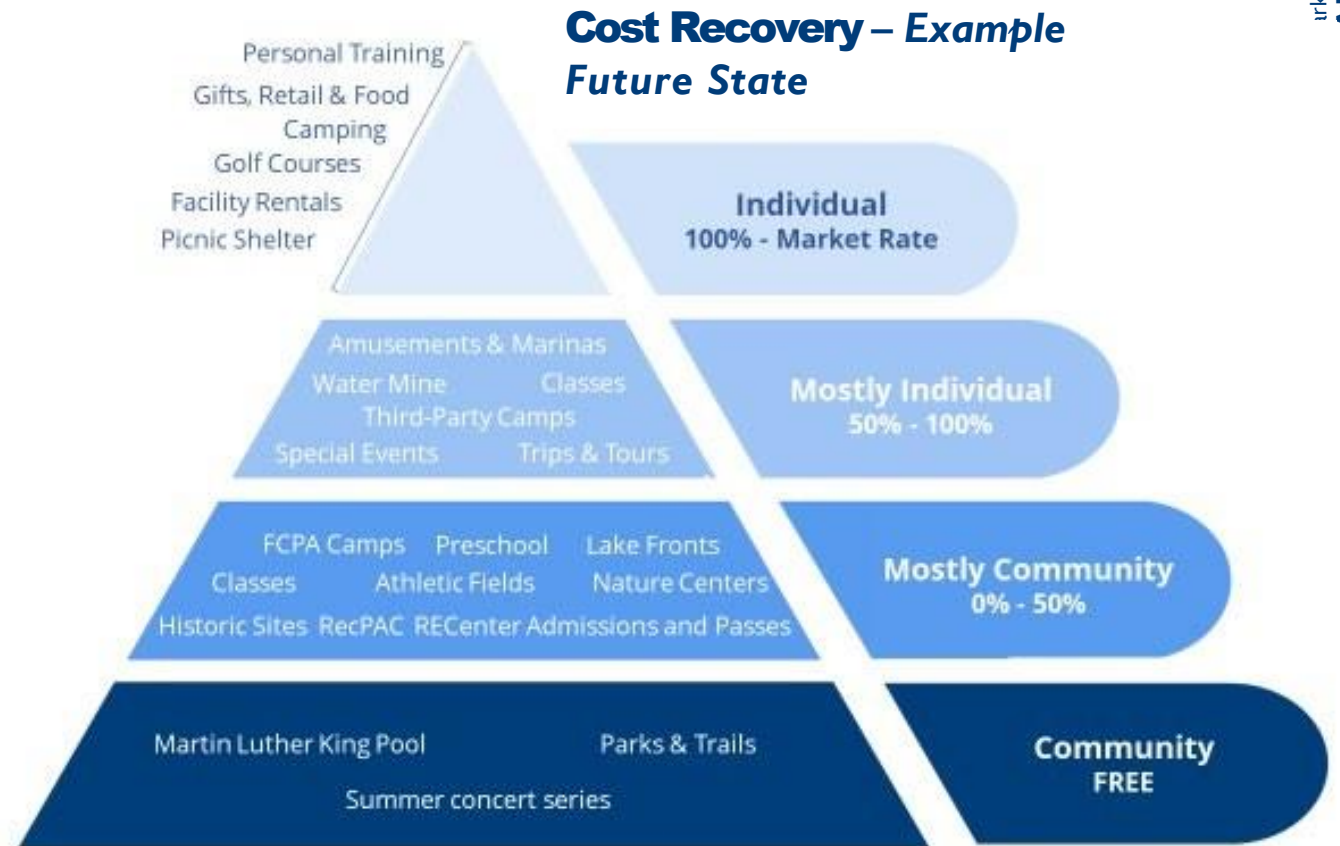
REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

HR&A recommends that FCPA move to a multi-tiered system of program **cost recovery based on community benefit**, lowering the cost of some programs for everyone.

The pyramid to the right represents an example of a future multi-tiered system that aligns with national best practice.

Personal training would likely remain in the top tier, as a highly individual service. Many of FCPA's classes within Rec Centers could target 50-100% cost recovery, while general admission to Rec Centers could target 20-30%.

Some preschool and FCPA camps could target 20-30% cost recovery, reaching a similar level of accessibility as RecPAC.



[Cost Recovery Pyramid Methodology](#), GreenPlay LLC

REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

As an initial step, FCPA proposes a **modified implementation** of the cost recovery pyramid for an estimated cost of **\$9.4M***.

FCPA's scaled-down recommendation focuses on reducing cost recovery in areas with significant community and public health benefits, such as swim lessons and summer camps.

***Decisions on program-specific cost recovery targets will be finalized through a public decision-making process.**



\$9.4M* *FCPA estimated cost for modified community benefit pyramid*



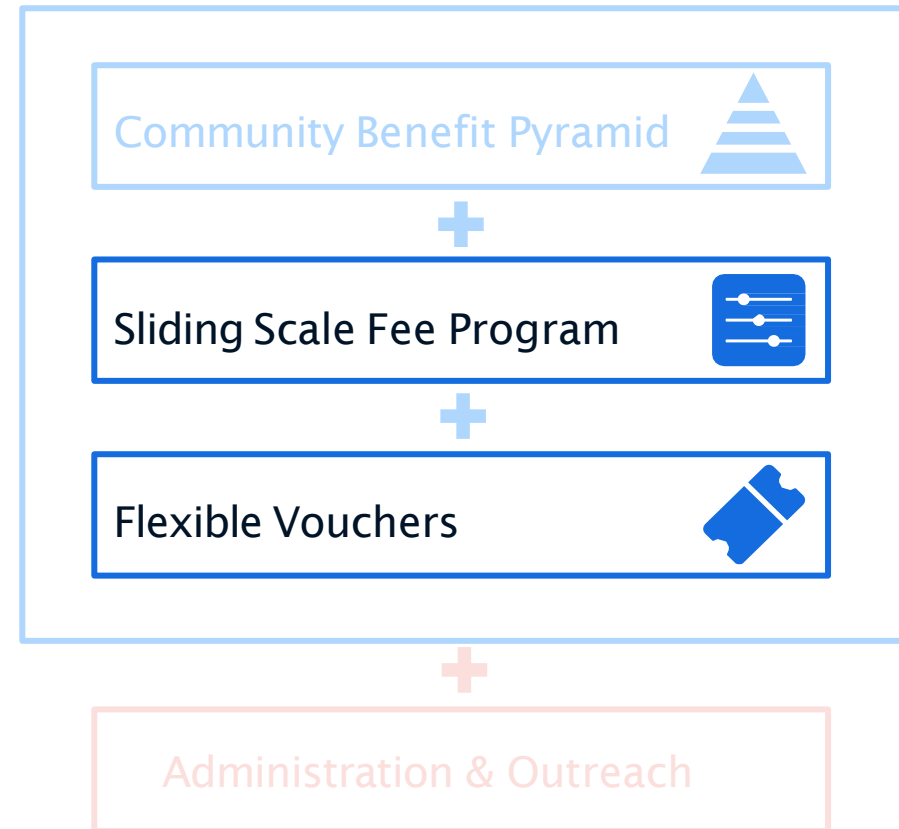
REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

HR&A recommends that FCPA also implement **supplementary subsidy programs** to ensure that price does not remain a barrier to participation for lower income households.

A **sliding fee scale** can ensure that programs like summer camps and swim classes are accessible to households of all incomes.

In addition, many parks and recreation agencies offer **flexible annual vouchers** to qualifying households that can be applied to any recreation offering, including individual-benefit services like picnic shelters or campground rentals. These vouchers help to ensure that low-income families are not excluded from certain FCPA offerings.

Implementation should involve coordination with other County agencies that currently operate similar subsidy programs, such as the RecPac and SACC Programs.



REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

HR&A recommends that FCPA implement a **sliding fee scale** to ensure that price does not remain a barrier to participation for lower income households.

A **sliding fee scale** can ensure that programs like summer camps and swim classes are accessible to households of all incomes.

In Fairfax, both FCPA's RecPac and the School Age Child Care (SACC) program currently offer sliding scale fees. SACC subsidies are offered for families with annual household incomes of \$132,500 or less.

FCPA estimates a cost of \$7.0M* to make a sliding fee scale program available for services like summer camps, swim classes, and Rec Center access.

Adjusted Household Income	March 25 - 29 (5 Days) 1 Child
\$132,500 and above	\$301
\$119,250 - \$132,499	\$251
\$106,000 - \$119,249	\$202
\$92,750 - \$105,999	\$153
\$79,500 - \$92,749	\$104
\$66,250 - \$79,499	\$55
\$53,000 - \$66,249	\$33
\$52,999 and below	\$11

Example of SACC Spring Break Program Sliding Fee Scale, reducing the full pay fee from \$301 to lower price points based on household income.



\$7.0M* FCPA estimated cost for sliding fee scale program


*To be finalized through a public decision-making process.

REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

In addition, many parks and recreation agencies offer **flexible annual vouchers** to qualifying households that can be put towards any recreation offering, including individual-benefit services like picnic shelters or campground rentals.

Typically, jurisdictions that offer this program provide a defined annual voucher for eligible low-income families (typically \$200 - \$1000), with eligibility tied to participation in other income-verified programs (such as free school lunch or disability payments), alleviating some administrative burden for households and the agency.

FCPA estimates \$3.0M* for a flexible annual voucher program, ensuring services not included in the community benefit pyramid or sliding fee scale programs remain accessible to all residents.

 **\$3.0M*** *FCPA estimated cost for flexible annual voucher program*



Reston Community Center (RCC)

*To be finalized through a public decision-making process.

REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

FCPA estimates that the administrative, outreach, and software costs to implement a sliding fee scale and flexible voucher program total **approximately \$7.2M**.

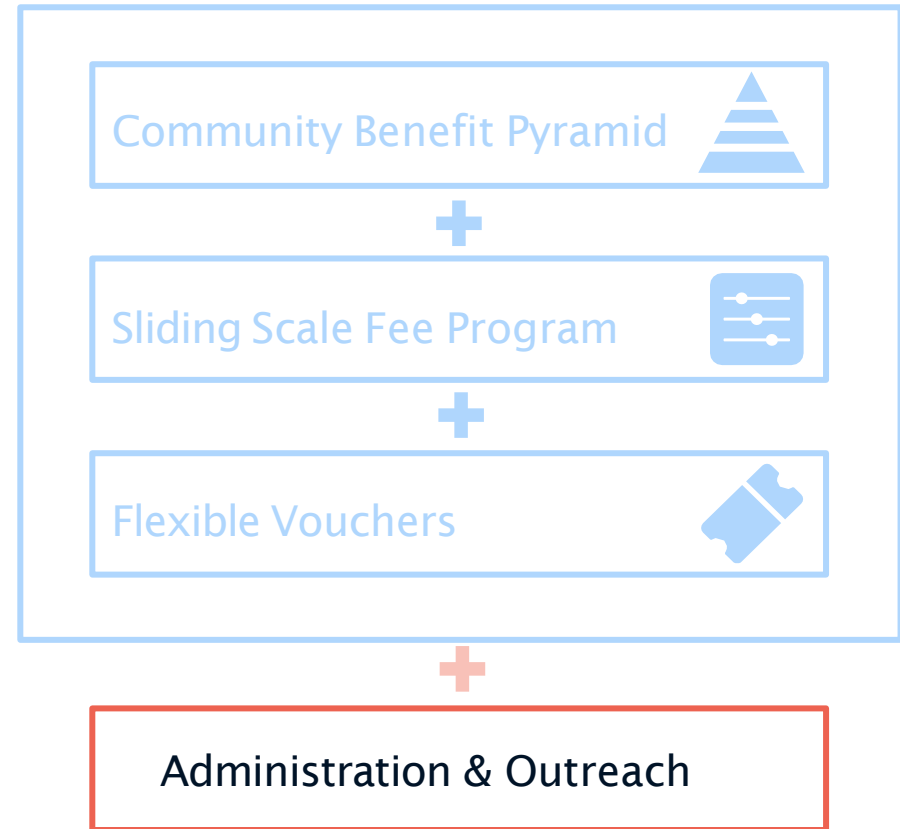
Vouchers and sliding scale fees provide targeted assistance to those who need it most but can come with administrative costs and social stigma that might discourage participation.

When establishing a household-based voucher program or sliding scale fee, FCPA will need to determine:

- How households apply for support (e.g., online, by mail, or in person);
- How FCPA verifies eligibility;
- How households indicate their level of need.

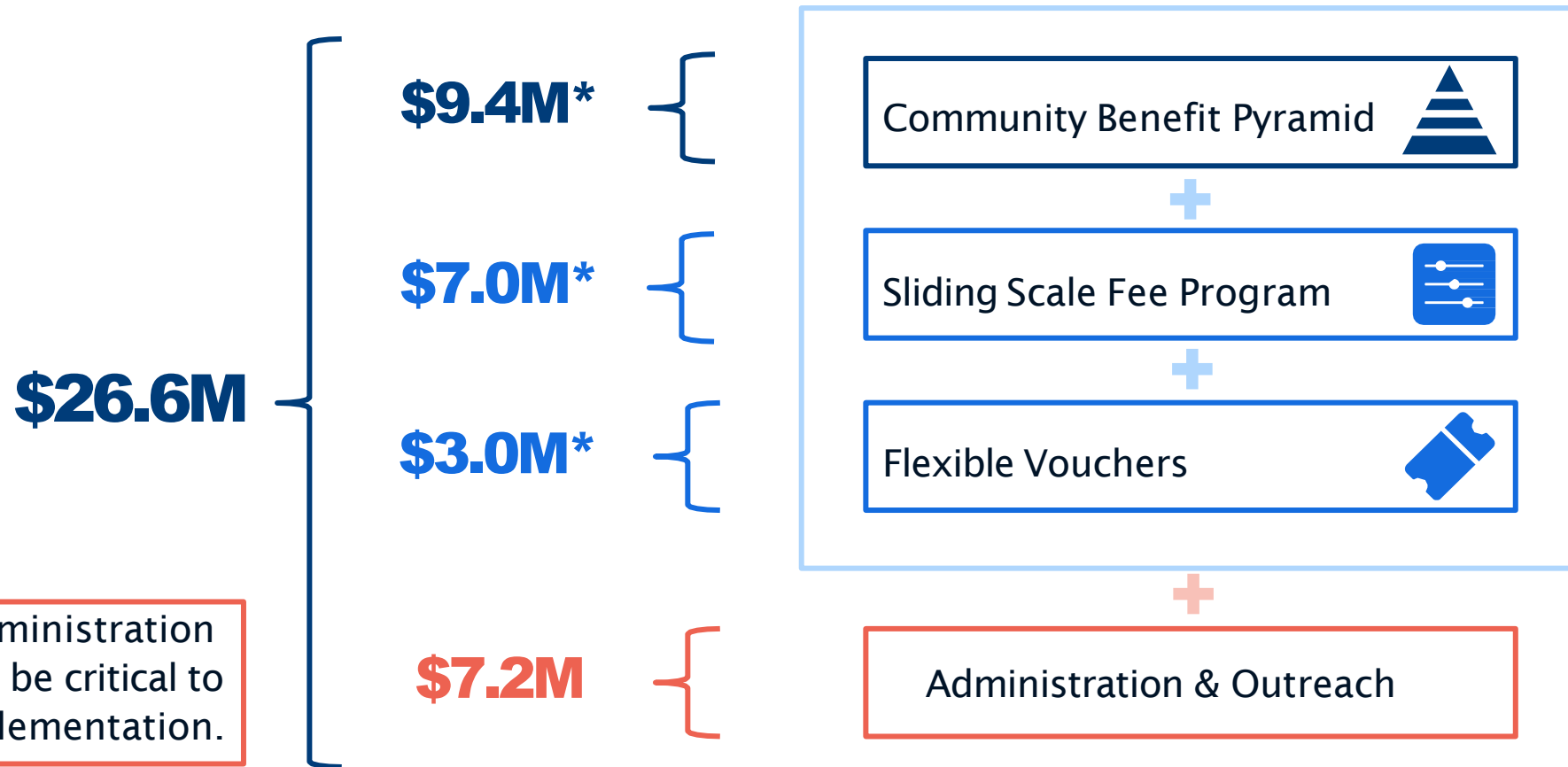
FCPA will need significant outreach and engagement with communities and individuals not currently being served.

\$7.2M FCPA estimated administration
& outreach costs



REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

In total, FCPA is recommending a scaled-down implementation of these programs that would cost approximately **\$26.6M in additional funding as of today.**

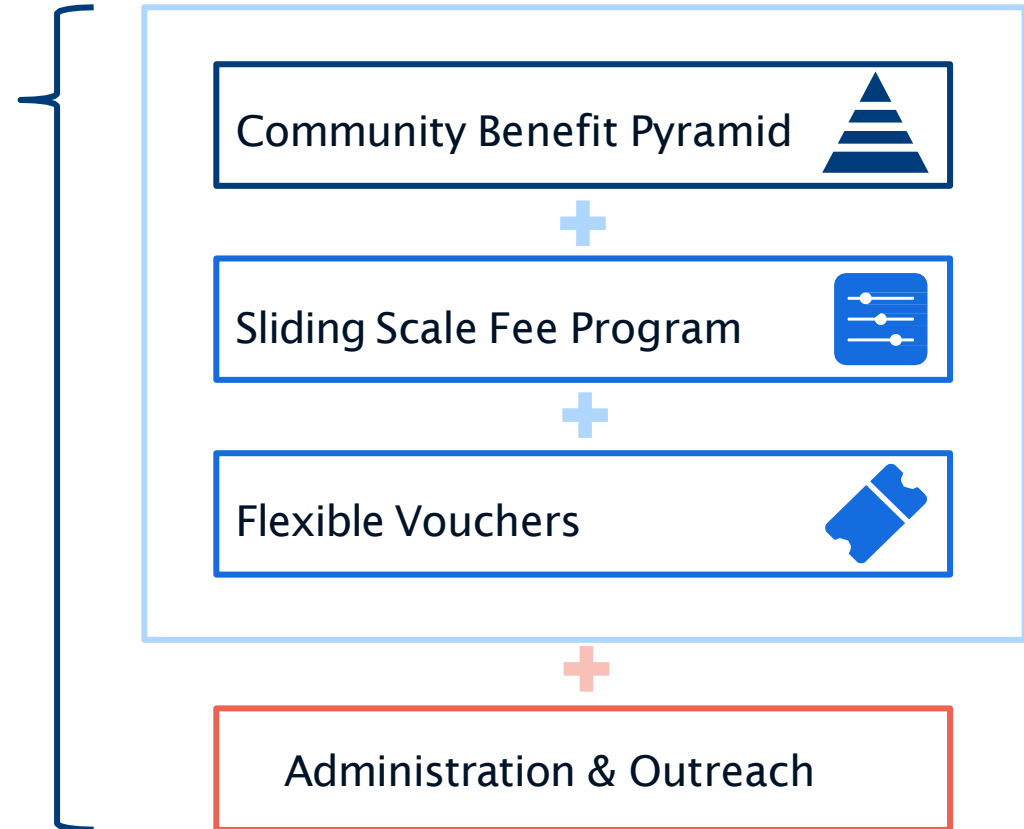
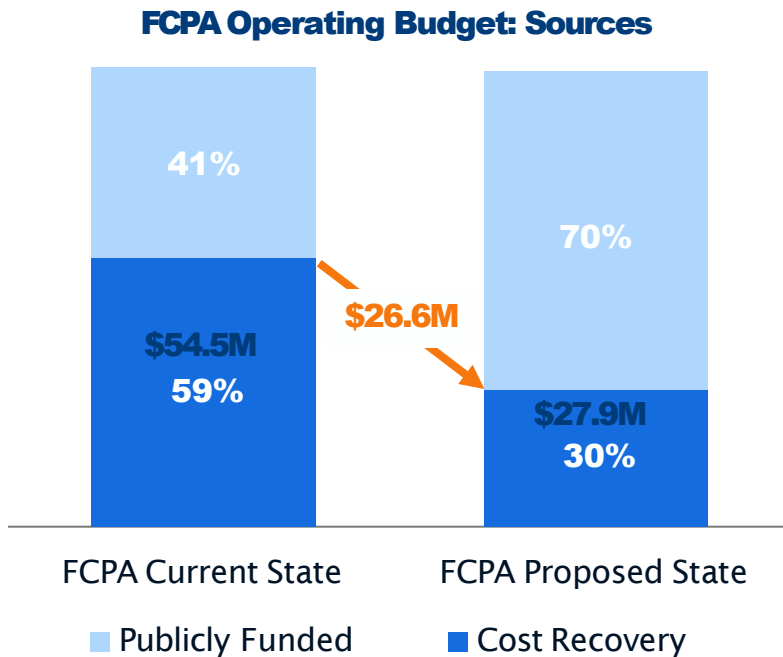


Funding for administration & outreach will be critical to successful implementation.

NEXT STEPS

Crucially, Fairfax will need to chart a way forward to increase public funding for public recreation.

\$26.6M in additional public funding to support modified implementation of HR&A's recommendations.



FUNDING

Many park systems leverage a dedicated tax stream for parks and recreation, decreasing reliance on both fees and general funds and enabling equity initiatives. Parks referenda consistently garner very high levels of voter support.

Windsor, CO	Tacoma, WA	Virginia Beach, VA	Portland, OR
 <p data-bbox="257 883 764 928">Windsor Parks and Recreation</p>	 <p data-bbox="766 883 1274 928">MetroParks Tacoma</p>	 <p data-bbox="1276 883 1783 928">Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation</p>	 <p data-bbox="1786 883 2293 928">Portland Parks and Recreation</p>
<p data-bbox="257 929 764 1158">Sales and use tax funding for land acquisition, stewardship, operations, and maintenance.</p>	<p data-bbox="766 929 1274 1158">Property tax levy for operations and maintenance, land preservation, youth programming, and safety.</p>	<p data-bbox="1276 929 1783 1158">Dedicated parks and recreation tax to cover recreation center expenses.</p>	<p data-bbox="1786 929 2293 1158">Property tax levy for operations including the expansion and maintenance of equitable recreation services.</p>

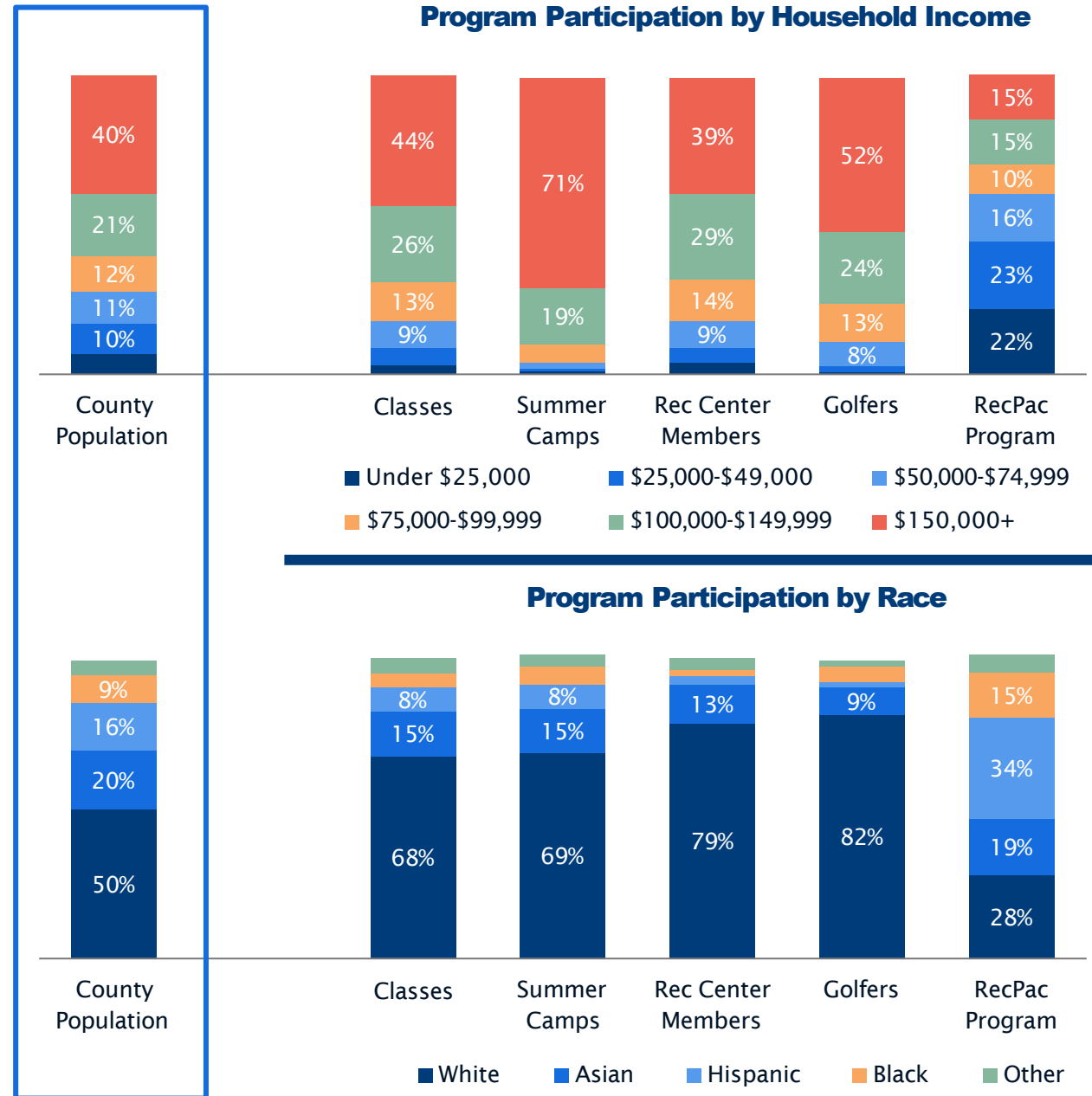
Source: Trust for Public Land, City of Portland, Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation

REDUCING FEES TO ENSURE EQUITY

Together, the recommended community benefit pyramid, sliding scale fee program, and flexible vouchers will:

- 1. Expand access to the benefits of public recreation** to all Fairfax households.
- 2. Ensure that fees are no longer a barrier to participation** for Fairfax's lowest income households.
- 3. Align FCPA with national parks and recreation best practices.**

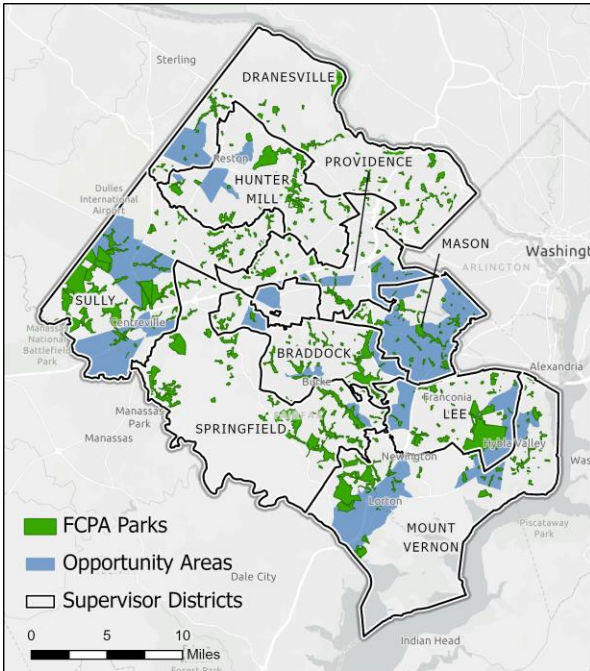
In doing so, FCPA will make progress towards future participation that better aligns with Fairfax County's population.



Fairfax County Park Authority - Equity Action Plan



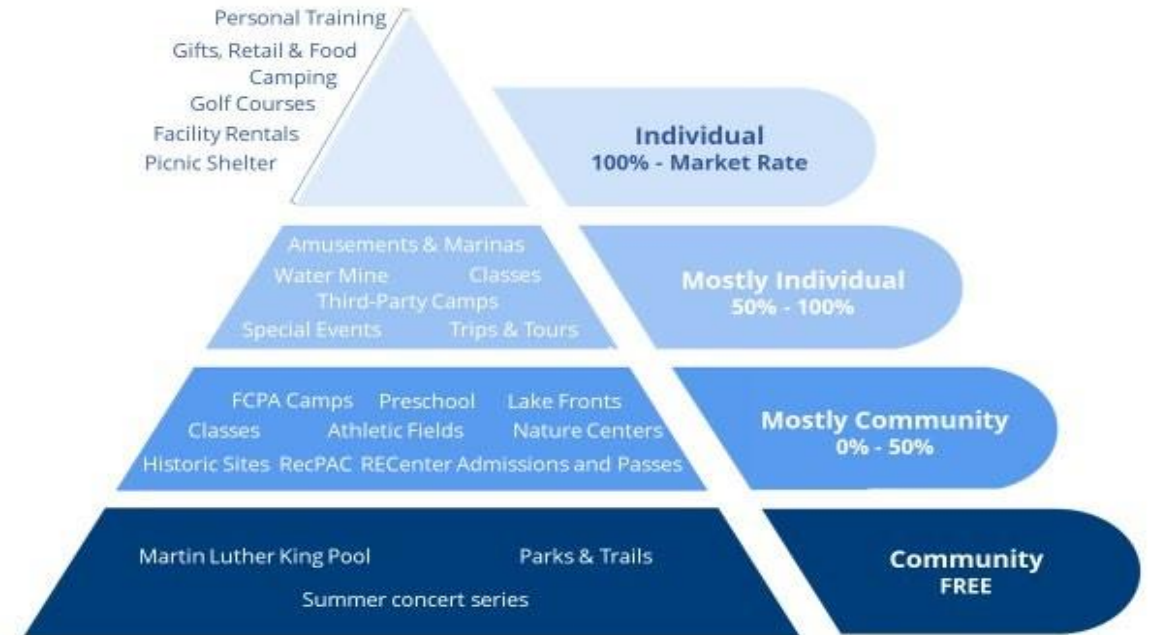
1. The FCPA workforce reflects the community we serve.



2. The quantity and quality of parks & amenities are equitable across the County



3. The programming tells the complete story of Fairfax County and is inclusive.



4. FCPA facilities and programs are accessible to all residents

Next Steps

- This is Not a Budget Ask
- Next step – Intensive, Inclusive Public Outreach has begun
 - Multi-pronged approach to outreach that will go thru the summer
 - Collect Comments from the public across the county, BOS, PAB
- Not the standard outreach – Working with NCS and their Inclusive Community Engagement team
- Work with DMB, BOS and PAB and return in the Fall 2024





Friends of –

Colvin Run Mill

Frying Pan Farm Park

Green Spring Gardens
(FROGS)

Historic Huntley

Holmes Run

Huntley Meadows Park

To join, e-mail:

TodiCarnes@verizon.net