



PARKS AND RECREATION

Southern Beaufort County's active and passive parks and recreation facilities are an important component of the region's quality of life and economy. The first chapter established that natural amenities such as coastal waters, salt marshes, beaches, trees and local wildlife are an integral component of the region's attractiveness to both tourists and newcomers. Parks and recreation facilities are an important means of making these natural amenities accessible to both residents and tourists.

Southern Beaufort County's rapid rate of growth is projected to cost the region over \$66 million dollars in the next 15 to 20 years to maintain an acceptable level of service for park land and facilities. Existing dedicated revenue sources projected for this time period only account for approximately \$21 million dollars leaving a \$45 million dollar funding gap.

In addition to the cost of serving the region's parks and recreation needs, the availability of additional land to accommodate future park needs is of immediate concern. Although all three Participating Local Governments have been proactive in acquiring land for parks through fee simple purchases or from dedications negotiated from private developments, an additional 525 acres is needed primarily in the Bluffton area. As the region continues to grow, the availability of land for future parks becomes scarcer and more expensive to acquire giving immediacy to this issue.

Common Goal 2: Regional Park Network Funding.

The Participating Local Governments, where appropriate, will work cooperatively to fund park land and recreation facility needs within the Regional Park Network.

Objective 2.1 Coordinated Funding. The Participating Local Governments, where appropriate, will work together to identify funding arrangements in which the Participating Local Governments coordinate the funding of park land and park facility needs within the Regional Park Network.

Implementation Action: Develop a coordinated strategy to fund the Regional Park Network in Bluffton and the unincorporated county.

Description:

- Revisit park impact fees to determine whether they are adequately covering the cost of providing park land and facilities to accommodate future growth. Increase fees to higher levels if analysis justifies.
- Hold referendum to establish a 1% capital projects sales tax for the maximum 7 year term. Two consecutive 7 year terms would

generate roughly \$24 million at buildout for park projects in southern Beaufort County.

- If other revenue tools are not sufficient, consider use of property tax revenue.
- Consider use of real estate transfer fee as permanent funding source for park land acquisition. This would require lobbying the State Legislature to enable local governments to establish a real estate transfer fee. A .0025 real estate transfer in Beaufort County (with the exception of Hilton Head Island) would generate \$65 million over a 15 year period for southern Beaufort County.

Responsibility: Participating Local Governments; Legislative Delegation

Objective 2.2 Impact Fees. The Participating Local Governments will continue to utilize impact fees to fund recreation facilities.

See implementation action under Objective 2.1

Objective 2.3 Other Revenue Sources. The Participating Local Governments will use other revenue sources for the acquisition of park lands.

See implementation action under Objective 2.1 and Natural Assets Objective 8.3

Objective 2.4 Land Acquisition. The Participating Local Governments, where appropriate, will use land acquisition programs to identify and purchase land suitable for the Regional Park Network. In addition to providing additional parks lands, this program will be coordinated with other goals and objectives to limit development, thereby protecting open space and environmentally sensitive lands, and reducing future transportation pressures.

See implementation action under Objective 2.1 and Natural Assets Objective 8.2

Objective 2.5 Maintenance. The Participating Local Governments will work together to identify funding arrangements to fund adequate maintenance of the Regional Park Network.