

**NOVA Parks**  
5400 Ox Road  
Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

**Board Meeting, February 24, 2022**  
**7:30 p.m.**

**The meeting took place virtually via Zoom and was livestreamed on YouTube.**  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcKufx1dafi-b2lsgGeMyDA>

## **MINUTES**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

#### **Members Present:**

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chairman  
Sean Kumar, Vice Chairman  
James Bonfils  
Jeffrey Tarbert  
Mark Chandler  
Michael A. Nardolilli  
Patricia Harrison  
Paul Baldino  
Paul Ferguson

#### **Members Absent:**

Brian Knapp  
Scott Price  
Stella Koch

#### **Staff Present:**

Paul Gilbert, Executive Director  
Danielle Endler, HR Administrator  
Brian Nolan, Director of Planning & Development  
Chris Pauley, Director of Operations  
Lauren Weaver, Director of Finance  
Tracy Hanford, Director of Marketing and Communications  
Kiley Christian, Planning & Development Assistant

#### **Guests Present:**

Thomas O'Rourke, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc.  
Patrick Hoagland, Brandstetter Carroll, Inc.

**OPEN SESSION:**

Executive Director, Paul Gilbert paraphrased the following statement:

Statement for electronic meetings conducted during the state of emergency:

Fairfax County, where the main office of NOVA Parks is located has declared a state of emergency. It is impracticable and unsafe for the Authority Board to assemble in person because of the COVID pandemic. The February 24, 2022 meeting of the NOVA Parks Board will be held electronically. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business of the Authority and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

Notice of this meeting has been posted. Video of this Meeting is being both recorded and livestreamed on YouTube, for public access.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The virtual meeting began at 7:35 p.m.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING FEEDBACK SESSION:**

The NOVA Parks Board of Directors participated in a series of Menti Polls and dialogue developed around the Framework for the Strategic Initiative Plan facilitated by, Patrick Hoagland ASLA, Brandstetter Carroll Inc.

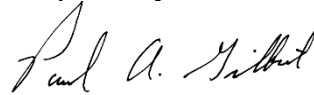
Strategic Plan Framework Attached

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion was made by Mr. Tarbert to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Bonfils.

**VOTE: UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

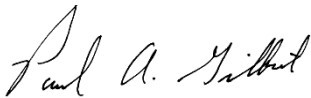
Respectfully submitted,



---

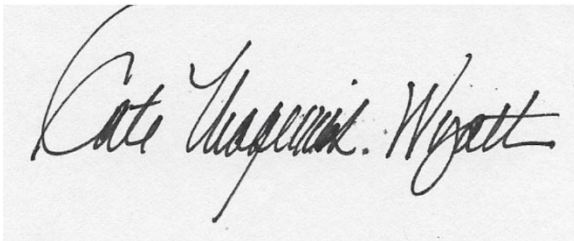
Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary

Approved by the Park Authority Board  
on March 17, 2022:



---

Paul A. Gilbert, Secretary



---

Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chairman

# NOVA Parks Strategic Plan Framework

*Draft 2/15/22*

## **Vision 2027:**

It is June 30, 2027, on a warm sunny day. NOVA Parks is the pride of Northern Virginia. The last five years have seen remarkable achievements that are recognized widely throughout the region and nationally. The W&OD trail now has many sections of Dual Trails helping people move around the region in a carbon-free way, and millions frequent a new visitor center. The agency has grown with hundreds of new acres and thousands of new trees that are absorbing carbon and led by example in lowering its carbon footprint.

NOVA Parks is a leader in inclusive programming. The 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Independence has created countless programs and efforts that highlight the long struggle for freedom and justice in our nation and region. The ethnically diverse community of Northern Virginia feels at home and welcome in our parks.

The growing lands and facilities have also come with a growth in revenues generated to support the park system. These growing fortunes have meant that NOVA Parks is also considered one of the best employers in the Park & Recreation field. The innovative and positive culture has supported a staff who knows that their efforts make a better community and a better world.

## **Environment**

NOVA Parks is about a growing system. Founded as a conservation organization and with more lands along our region's rivers than any other park agency, the environment has always been core to who we are for over 60 years. In the coming years, our natural systems will be enhanced to sequester more carbon and help address the cause of climate change will be a great need.

- Manage the natural resources in a way that enhances carbon sequestration and improve natural habitat
- Measure NOVA Park's carbon footprint and take measures to lower it
- Expand leadership role in natural resources banking
- Expand the park system with new lands
- Protect areas with rare or endangered species
- Target invasive species efforts in high impact areas with partnerships and resources
- Creating innovative green buildings

- Create Reservoir Park in partnership with Loudoun Water that will focus on water resource education

## **Belonging**

The end result of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are parks and programs that engage the citizens of Northern Virginia and create a sense of belonging. NOVA Parks has already distinguished itself in this effort and can do much more in the coming years. Examples of successes in this area include the Suffragist Memorial, Tinner Hill, Korean Bell Garden, Juneteenth celebration at the Carlyle House, interpretive efforts at Piscataway Crossing, enslaved graveyard at Bull Run Marina, the Daniel Dangerfield Story, Black history signs along the W&OD, programs like the Black & Hispanic Birding program at Upton Hill and more.

- Korean Bell Garden – celebrate annually with a focus on the 2022 tenth anniversary, and the 2026 fifteenth anniversary
- Rededicate Piscataway Crossing Regional Park, 2022
- Expand Black & Hispanic Birding program to the Winkler Preserve
- Provide regional leadership for the America 250<sup>th</sup> commemoration in Northern Virginia with programs focused on freedom, and justice
- Build and support partnerships with community groups, including the NAACP, Korean American Cultural Committee, history, and tourism organizations focused on telling a more diverse history and creating programs with cultural resonance.
- Engage official and unofficial friend’s groups to help NOVA Parks build public support and achieve goals

## **Building the Future**

In 2021 the NOVA Parks Board’s Strategic Initiatives Committee worked on developing a group of Capital projects that would help NOVA Parks build a stronger park system. These projects, along with those in the five-year Capital Budget, envision a bold future. NOVA Parks will create innovative facilities that serve the public in new ways.

- Implementation of Strategic Initiatives projects. These signature projects will be among the most noteworthy in the region. They include:
  - Gateway Wetlands Park
  - Hemlock Facility Update
  - Occoquan indoor/outdoor Adventure Center
  - Pohick Bay expanded camping and associated amenities
  - W&OD Trail Visitor Center

- Expansion of Dual Trails on the W&OD Trail. In partnership with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, this initiative is designed to expand the capacity of the trail in most congested urban areas, building on the success of the Falls Church section.
  - Arlington Section
  - Vienna Section
  - Reston/Herndon Section
  - Leesburg Section?
- Execute the rolling five-year Capital Plan. This budget, funded with contributions from member jurisdictions, grants, and enterprise funds, addresses a wide range of capital needs throughout the park system.
- Create cutting edge, innovative park facilities

## Staffing

The center of any organization is its people. The culture of NOVA Parks is innovative, and the employees pride themselves on honesty and customer service. With a changing job market, the challenge for NOVA Parks will be how to build on the best elements of our culture, attracting and retaining the talent we need to serve the community.

- Maintain seasonal compensation that is competitive in Northern Virginia
- Communicate tangible and intangible benefits of working at NOVA Parks
- Adopt a more proactive approach to staffing with the creation of a recruiter
- Recruit future full-time staff from the ranks of seasonal employees
- Develop a workforce that mirrors the ethnic and gender makeup of the region
- Conduct full-time compensation study in 2022
- Create new ways to build team connections across facilities
- Recognize employees that exemplify core values
- Incentives for staffing referrals

## Revenue & Efficiency

NOVA Parks is unlike other governments and park agencies, with nearly 90% of the funds that support operations coming from the various park enterprises. The success in all categories of this plan is completely dependent on our entrepreneurial revenue generation. With rapidly changing technology, NOVA Parks needs to continue to implement new ways of serving the public and achieving our mission.

- Grow net enterprise revenues at a rate greater than inflation
- Implement new marketing tools to grow waterpark, light shows, and event/reception businesses, and enhance the user experience

- Create programs for corporate team building
- Create facilities/programs to take advantage of AlpineX next to Occoquan Park
- Exemplify maintenance standards that make NOVA Parks destination sites
- Further, automate business processes to improve efficiency
- Expand digital marketing and the use of data to reach customers
- Create an endowment to support capital projects from telecom and natural resource banking