

05

**PARKS +
RECREATION +
ARTS + HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**

Petersburg provides equitable access to parks, recreation, the arts, and historic resources to facilitate healthy lifestyles, tourism, and celebration of heritage and culture.

"THE POSSIBILITIES ARE **ENDLESS**
WITH SOME CREATIVE VISION AND A
JOINT CITY AND COMMUNITY INSPIRED
PARTNERSHIP; A REINVESTMENT OF
TIME, IDEAS, AND INNOVATION!"

- Idea Wall Respondent



05

INTRODUCTION

The heart and soul of a community is manifested through its recreational spaces and culture, directly contributing to a high quality of life and an enduring sense of place. Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, access to parks, recreation, and cultural amenities are vital to maintaining the physical and mental well-being of residents and can provide unique opportunities for economic development through tourism.

Petersburg is fortunate to have an abundant inventory of parkland and a rich cultural fabric to support recreation, the arts, and historic preservation. By

resourcefully utilizing existing assets and investing in amenity improvements where there is demonstrated need, the City will cultivate a strong foundation of recreational opportunities, community programming, and cultural experiences that collectively define Petersburg as a destination to live, play, and visit. This chapter highlights the existing conditions of Petersburg's recreational and cultural resources and explores opportunities to enhance assets and preserve them for future generations to enjoy.



What does the community have to say about parks, recreation, the arts, and historic preservation in Petersburg?

- Local history and culture are the most valued assets in Petersburg.
- Lack of youth recreational programming and opportunities is a major concern among survey respondents.
- 71.7% did not feel that there are plenty of outdoor recreation opportunities in the city.
- 55.7% did not feel that there is adequate space and programming at community centers to meet the community's needs.
- 53.4% did not feel that cultural events and social opportunities meet the community's needs.
- The top recreational facility improvements desired are trails, indoor community centers, and outdoor event spaces. Updated and accessible playgrounds were also highly desired, along with a public dog park.

INVENTORY AND ASSETS

Parks and Facilities

Parks and recreational programming are managed by Petersburg's Department of Recreation, Special Events, & Volunteerism, while the Facilities Management and Grounds Maintenance Divisions manage the physical grounds and property maintenance. Overall, the City owns 16 parks within its limits, plus an additional riverfront park in Dinwiddie County, Appomattox Riverside Park. City-owned parks include a large outdoor sports complex, public golf course, community pool, and numerous athletic fields.

Trail systems within Petersburg are available in Legends Park and Petersburg National Battlefield, which have individual systems of internal trails for walking and biking. Additional walking tracks and paths can be found in neighborhood parks throughout the City. Petersburg also boasts newly completed segments of the Appomattox River Trail, which will drive increased opportunities for recreational tourism. Four miles of the Appomattox River Trail have been planned within Petersburg, with key intersections to the Fall Line Trail and East Coast Greenway planned at Patton Park for a coordinated regional trail network that converges in Petersburg.

Community Centers

Community centers provide meaningful services to residents of all ages. There are currently three community center facilities in the City: A.P. Hill Community Center, Harding Street Recreation Center, and the privately-owned Petersburg Family YMCA. Community engagement consistently cited the need for more community centers to adequately provide indoor programming and recreation space, particularly for youth. In lieu of constructing new facilities, the City should utilize its existing vacant properties to provide much-needed indoor meeting and recreation space. Programs desired by the public include after-school youth activities and tutoring opportunities, adult learning and workforce training, computer labs and 3-D printing, and meeting space to learn hobbies and skills.

The City should also collaborate with Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) to facilitate more after-school and community programs within current school buildings and playgrounds after hours. Key benefits to providing more after-school programming for children include safe spaces for youth while their parents work, reduced likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors, and opportunities to learn social and life skills.



Table 5.1 | Parks and Recreation Assets

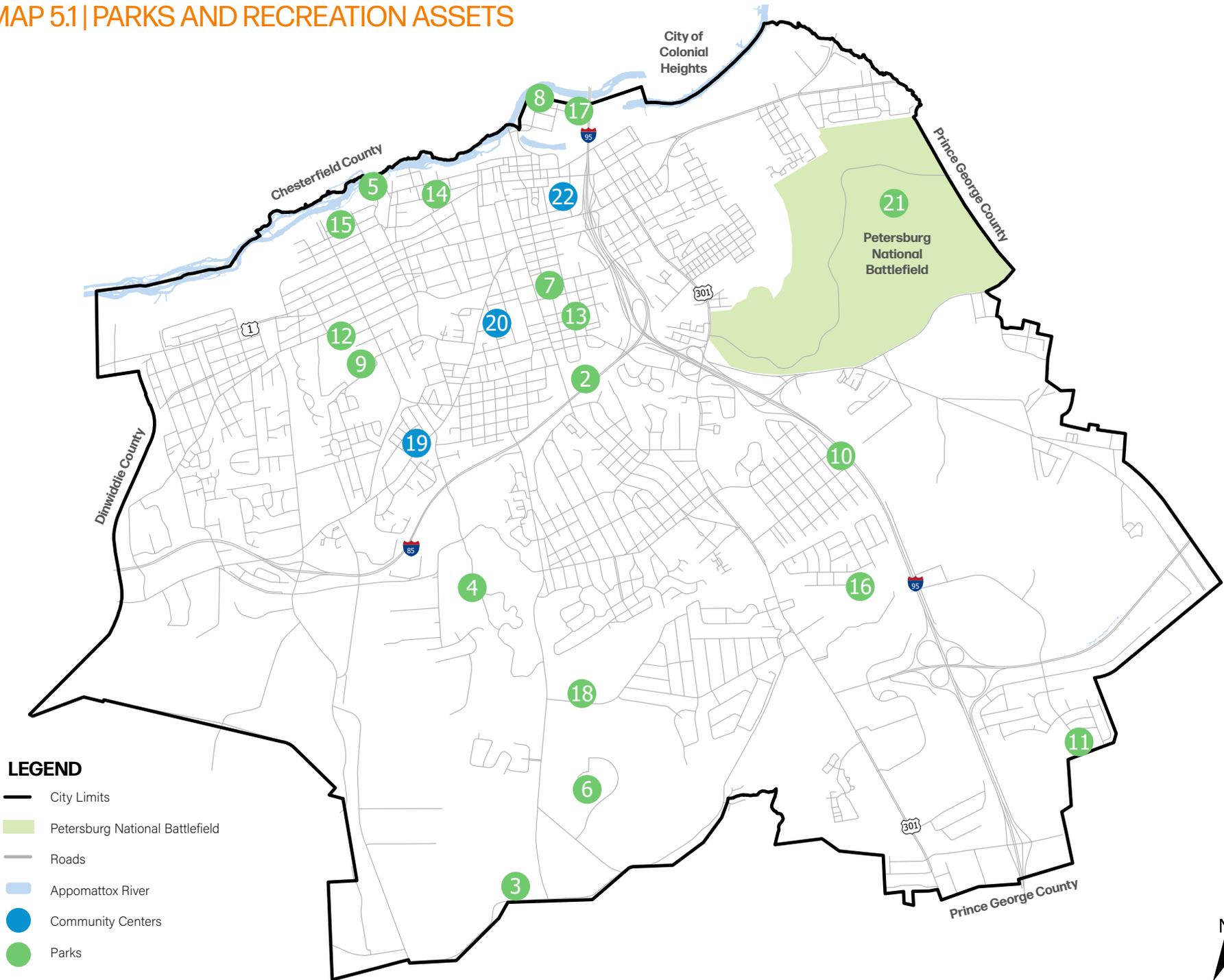
Map ID	Facility Name	Address	Park Type	Amenities
City-Owned				
1	Appomattox Riverside Park (Ferndale Park)	24909 Ferndale Road (Dinwiddie County)	Anchor/Regional	Appomattox River Trail, fishing pier, kayak launch, picnic area, playground
2	Cameron Field	909 S. Sycamore Street	Anchor/Regional	Concession stand, football field, locker room, restrooms, soccer field, stadium, walking track
3	Flink Road Park	1555 Flink Road	Anchor/Regional	Open space
4	Legends Park	1614 Defense Road	Anchor/Regional	Athletic fields and courts (including Cooley Field), bike trails, grill stations, picnic areas, playground, restrooms, trails, wildflower sanctuary, Wilcox Lake
5	Patton Park	527 University Blvd.	Anchor/Regional	Appomattox River Trail, grilling stations, fishing access, picnic areas
6	Petersburg Sports Complex	100 Ball Park Road	Anchor/Regional	Baseball/softball fields, concession stand, locker rooms, meeting rooms, picnic areas, playground, restrooms
7	Poplar Lawn Park	243 S. Sycamore Street	Anchor/Regional	Seating areas, walking paths
8	Rotary Park at Pocahontas Island	149 Rolfe Street	Anchor/Regional	Appomattox River Trail, natural canoe/kayak launch, picnic area
9	West End Park	522 S. West Street	Anchor/Regional	Albert Jones football field, basketball court, walking track
10	Anderson Street Park (East Walnut Hill)	2140 Anderson Street	Neighborhood	Open space
11	Berkeley Manor Park (Berkeley Manor)	616 Bradford Lane	Neighborhood	Baseball field, basketball courts, picnic area, playground
12	Farmer Street Pool & Park (Rome Street)	1216 Farmer Street	Neighborhood	Playground, pool, picnic area, recreation field
13	Jefferson Street Park (Bunker Hill)	523 S. Jefferson Street	Neighborhood	Fitness stations, picnic area, playground
14	Low Street Park (High Street/Grove Avenue)	339 Low Street	Neighborhood	Playground, picnic area
15	McKenzie Street Park (Battersea)	951 McKenzie Street	Neighborhood	ADA accessible, basketball court, picnic area, playground, soccer field, walking track

Map ID	Facility Name	Address	Park Type	Amenities
16	Oakhurst Park (Oakhurst)	435 Blackwater Drive	Neighborhood	Baseball field, basketball court, playground, restrooms
17	Pocahontas Park (Pocahontas Island)	800 Magazine Road	Neighborhood	Basketball court, picnic tables
18	Dogwood Trace (Golf Course)	3108 Homestead Drive	Anchor/Regional	18-hole, par 72 golf course
19	A.P. Hill Community Center	1237 Halifax Street	Community Center	Baseball field, basketball court, meeting rooms, picnic area, playground
20	Harding Street Recreation Center	453 Harding Street	Community Center	VSU Urban Ag Center, meeting rooms
Federally Owned				
21	Petersburg National Battlefield	5001 Siege Road	National	Historic sites, living history demonstrations, nature trails, tours, Visitors Center
Privately Owned				
22	Petersburg Family YMCA	120 N. Madison Street	Community Center	Before/after school care, camp programs, dance classes, gym and sports amenities, multipurpose space, playground, pool

SOURCE: City of Petersburg

NOTE: Map IDs correspond with numbering on Map 51.

MAP 5.1 | PARKS AND RECREATION ASSETS



LEGEND

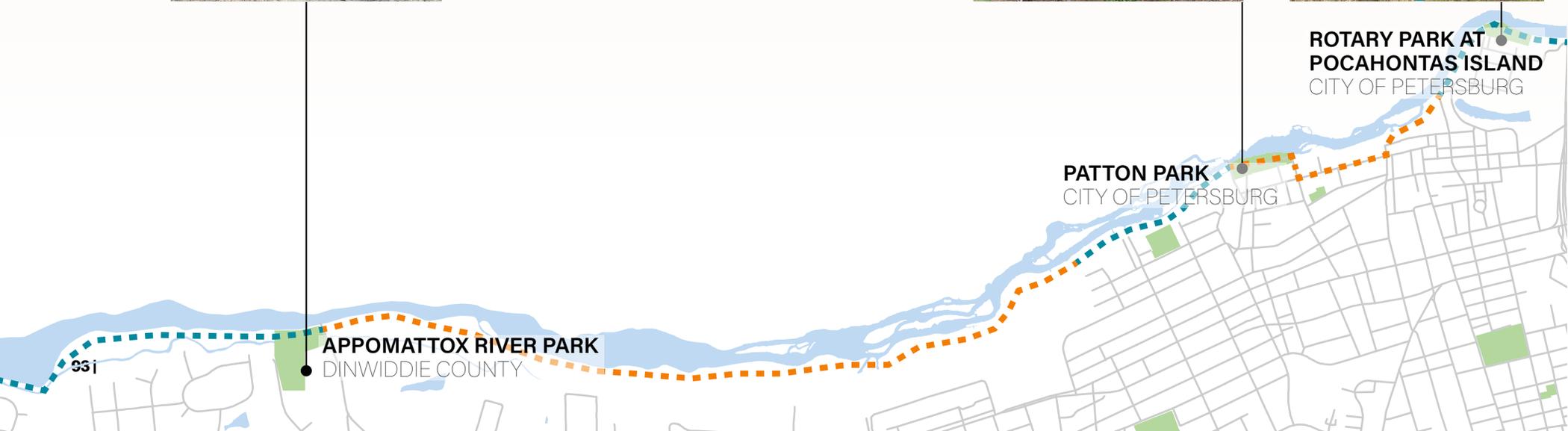
- City Limits
- Petersburg National Battlefield
- Roads
- Appomattox River
- Community Centers
- Parks



Appomattox River Trail

A significant effort spearheaded by the Friends of the Lower Appomattox River (FOLAR), in collaboration with local jurisdictions, organizations, and state and regional partners, resulted in the master planning and implementation of the Appomattox River Trail (ART) and park system. The ART is a planned 25-mile greenway and blueway trail connecting three cities and three counties in and around the Gateway Region.

In the City of Petersburg, four miles of trail are planned, which will also intersect with the East Coast Greenway and Fall Line Trail systems. As of 2023, around 50% of Petersburg's segments were fully funded, with 8% completed. An additional 2.2 miles of trails are accessible from the City-owned Appomattox Riverside Park, just outside the City in Dinwiddie County. The successful development of the Appomattox River Trail and park system brings more opportunities for City residents to participate in outdoor recreation, explore historic Petersburg, and connect with nature.



CAPITALIZING ON PARK ASSETS

Parks and recreational facilities have the unique opportunity to provide services to City residents while also stimulating economic growth. A parks and recreation master plan with a facility space needs assessment and fiscal analysis should be a top priority to fully catalog existing assets and prioritize options for long-term revenue generation.

Petersburg’s impressive inventory of City-owned parks and open space exceeds the national average of parkland available to residents, with 21.7 acres available per 1,000 residents compared to 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents. Despite the abundance of public outdoor space, community engagement consistently cited a lack of outdoor recreational amenities as a top concern. This misperception of available resources may be influenced by maintenance issues, aging facilities, and safety concerns at existing parks, which can deter public usage and prevent those with disabilities or special needs from accessing facilities and trails. Public transit options to parks, particularly those that are not walkable from neighborhoods, can also influence real and perceived issues with access to recreation. The City’s portfolio of outdoor recreational

space is a prime opportunity for renewed investment. As of the FY24 adopted budget, Petersburg spends 73% less on recreation-related operating expenditures per resident than the national average. This stretches thin available funds for programming, maintenance, and equipment upgrades at existing parks; over time, several City parks have deteriorated or had facilities removed altogether, rendering them unusable or inaccessible to the community. The number of dedicated full-time parks and recreation staff also falls 89% below the national average, which can impede program expansions and efficient operations due to lack of staffing.

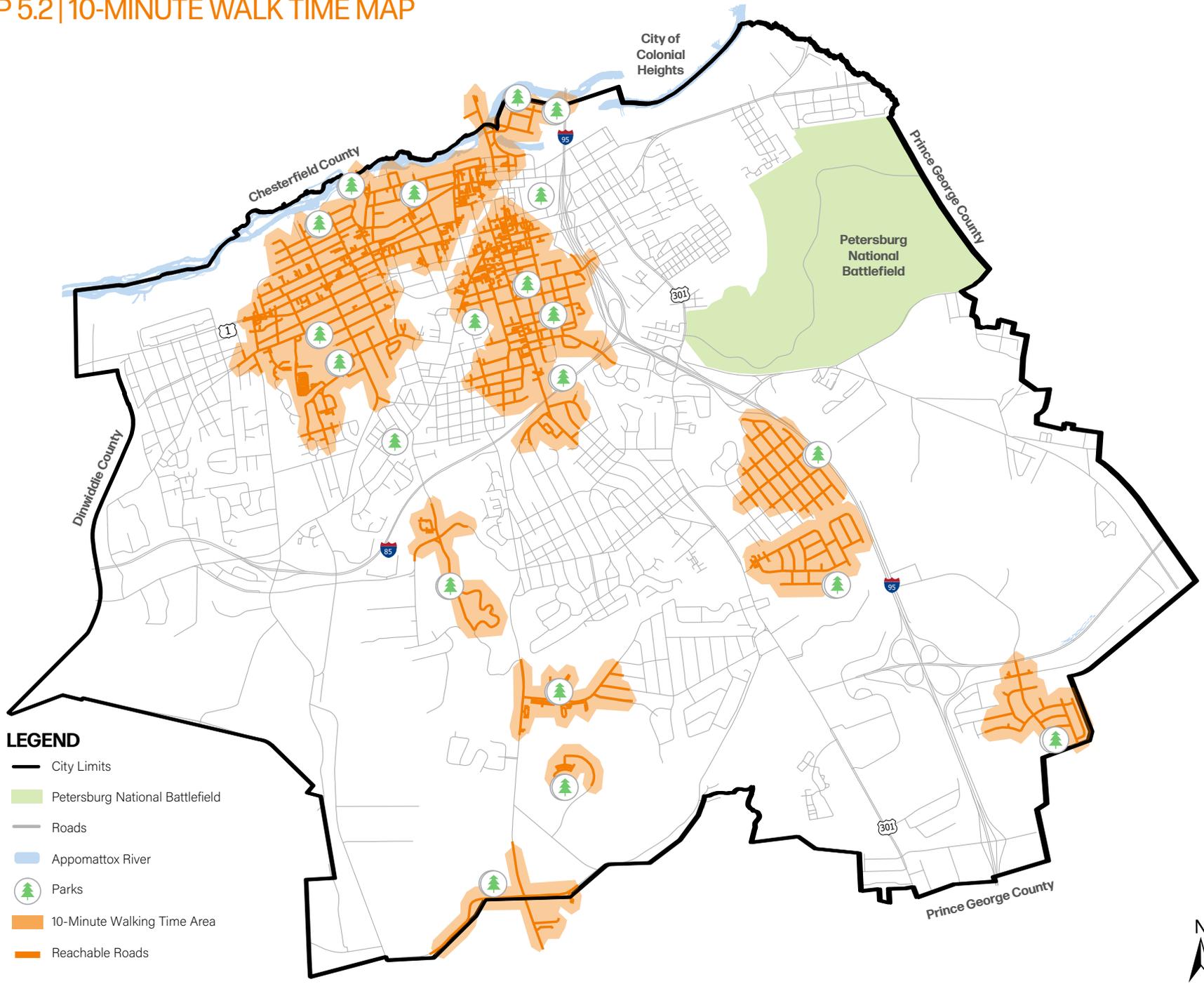


Table 5.2 | Parks and Recreation Metrics Comparison

	Petersburg	National Average	City Comparison to National Average
Park to resident ratio	1 park per 2,091 residents	1 park per 2,287 residents	9% higher
Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents	21.7	10.8	101% higher
Full time parks & rec employees per 10,000 residents	1.2	8.9	87% lower
Operating expenditures per resident, FY23 Adopted Budget	\$20.24	\$94.77	79% lower
Operating expenditures per resident, FY24 Adopted Budget	\$25.53		73% lower
Operating expenditures per acre, FY23 Adopted Budget	\$931.28	\$7,388	87% lower
Operating expenditures per acre, FY24 Adopted Budget	\$1,174.68		84% lower
Revenue per resident, FY23 Adopted Budget	\$0.84	\$21.71	96% lower

SOURCE: Petersburg FY23 and FY24 Adopted Operating Budgets, National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA)

MAP 5.2 | 10-MINUTE WALK TIME MAP



The national standard for park access is a **10-minute walk time from a residence to a park facility**.

While Petersburg has abundant parkland, **most is concentrated in the north central area of the city**, leaving the majority of Petersburg's residences outside of a 10-minute park walk time. This has **major implications for equity**: as many City residents are low-income and do not have a personal automobile, locating parks within a 10-minute walk becomes even more important to providing all residents the opportunity to recreate and socialize.

As Petersburg continues to build its bright future, there are several ways to expand park access for all residents, including **locating public transit stops at park entrances, ensuring that sidewalks provide direct routes between neighborhoods and parks**, and **prioritizing the location of new parks in areas where access is currently limited**. A target of 80% of all residents within a 10-minute walk of a park by 2044 is an achievable goal with strategic investment and planning.

Click here to learn more about the 10-minute walk time movement!

Maintenance of major parks that serve as recreational anchors, namely Patton Park, Legends Park, and the Petersburg Sports Complex, should be an ongoing priority, including trail maintenance, equipment upgrades, safety features such as fencing and adequate lighting, and grass cutting. Where equipment and facilities are lacking, particularly in neighborhood parks, grants such as those offered through KABOOM! and the NRPA can provide funding and resources to install new equipment.

Increased investment in park amenities can lead to increased non-tax revenue to supplement the City's recreational budget. Generating revenue will increase cost recovery to offset operational and overhead costs, reducing taxpayer burden while still providing quality recreational services to residents. Enhanced programming helps pay for itself as participation grows through user fees and other revenue streams; this in turn frees up resources to continually expand and improve programs and services.

The City's recreation-related revenue currently accounts for only 4% of overall operating costs and is primarily derived from user fees. Since Petersburg has several unused sites at its disposal, there are opportunities to refurbish existing facilities for additional rental space and new economic development opportunities.

Other streams of potential revenue include:

- **Facility-Related Revenue.** Ways to increase facility rental revenue include renting buildings, rooms, sports fields, parking lots, and picnic areas, as well as strategizing scheduling for a steady rotation of use.
- **Recreation Program Revenue.** This type of revenue is typically generated through registration fees for programs and classes.
- **Advertising and Sponsorship Revenue.** As parks and recreation offerings increase, opportunities for increased advertising and sponsorships also increase. Well-placed advertisements and banners in athletic fields and print media will be more lucrative to prospective advertisers.
- **Concession and Leasing Revenue.** Running concessions at parks and recreation facilities can be labor-intensive and cost prohibitive. Allowing third-party food operators, such as food truck vendors and restaurant popups, to operate at park concession facilities can help fill a niche while generating rental fees.

To fully capitalize on potential revenue, the City should invest in more full-time recreation staff and consider merging them into a cohesive Parks and Recreation department, including planning, programming, and grounds/maintenance. A strong roster of full-time staff and administrative coordinators to manage daily logistics, along with a robust team of part-time staff, will help streamline internal communications and more efficiently distribute services and maintenance where they are most needed – particularly as participation and facility use grows.

Volunteers can also supplement staff needs. Petersburg currently offers a variety of volunteer opportunities for students, residents, and community partners through the Petersburg Ambassador Program. Current volunteer needs should be assessed annually, along with opportunities for internships. Tapping into Petersburg High School (PHS), Virginia State University (VSU), and Brightpoint Community College (BCC) can lead to creative opportunities for internships that will benefit the City in exchange for class credit. Volunteer efforts should also highlight opportunities to maintain neighborhood parks and organize community clean ups.



Sports Tourism

Interest in developing a large indoor sports complex to attract regional sports tourism opportunities was **cited as a potential opportunity during community engagement**. The existing Petersburg Sports Complex on Ballpark Road is capable of hosting large baseball and softball tournaments, but the City **lacks additional facility space for indoor sports competitions**. **Sports tourism**, defined by the NRPA as travel for sporting events to either participate in or observe, is **one of the fastest growing tourism sectors**, generating over \$90 billion in economic impact across the U.S. in 2021. **Successful sports complexes** that host large events and tournaments will **attract competitors and their families by being supported by safe and easily accessible communities with adequate places to stay, eat, and shop**.

Factors to consider include market saturation in the greater Richmond region and the need to provide related retail and hospitality-oriented uses to support a sports tourism base.

Due to the number of other sports complexes in the region, **a market study would be beneficial** to assess the strengths and challenges of further pursuing an indoor sports facility and enhancing sports tourism.

PARKS, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

Parks and Public Safety

According to the NRPA, well-designed and well-used parks and recreation areas are great community assets. But those assets can become a liability when facilities are inconsistently maintained and become unsafe, losing their value and benefit to the community. Keeping parks and recreation areas well-maintained and safe has a direct impact on usage and is a key to community wellness. Research has found that there is a direct relationship between the level of park use and the perception of security: the more visitors involved in positive activities, the more likely that inappropriate behavior is deterred.



Working Together for Park Safety

Considerations for designing safe parks include:

- Does it meet the needs of all users, including those with disabilities?
- Does it connect people with place?
- Does it provide people with a positive image and experience?

Recommendations for implementing safe parks include:

- Locate programmed activities near the park perimeter, beside an entrance, or along a pedestrian path.
- Cater programming and the physical design of the park to encourage use during evenings.
- Develop activities and events beyond those for organized sports facilities and playgrounds.

Other key factors to consider include:

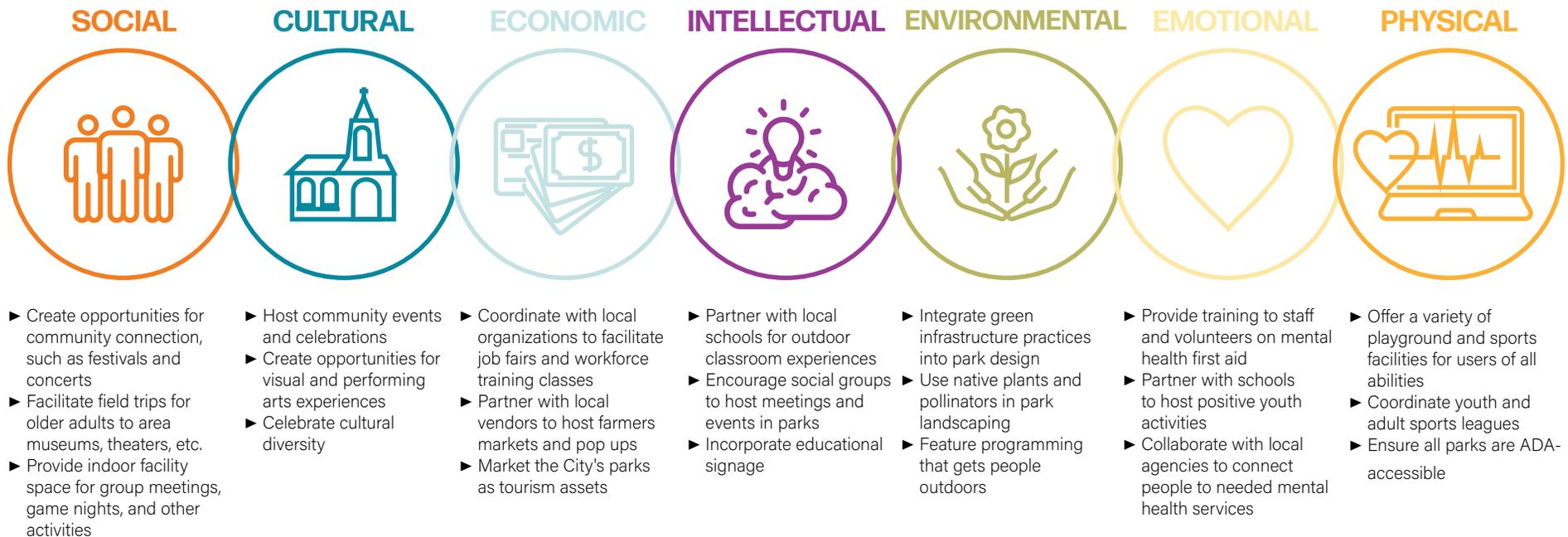
- Perceptions that a park is unsafe are as important as actual safety – both must be addressed to attract more people to parks.
- Involve the community in the design/redesign of park spaces, especially neighborhood pocket parks.
- Clear and understandable signage helps enhance the feeling of safety because it allows people to orient themselves.

Parks and Community Wellness

Access to outdoor recreation helps increase residents' physical activity, supports mental health, and fosters a sense of community. Parks and trails also contribute to environmental wellness by preserving natural and cultural resources from development. The preservation of vegetated natural areas helps reduce pollution, provides relief from heat islands, and naturally captures carbon. Sensitive areas such as floodplains, endangered species habitats, and waterways can be preserved within parkland while still allowing public access to their recreational and educational benefits.

As Petersburg works to improve its local health rankings, investment in parks and recreation should be seen as a direct investment in community health and wellness. The NRPA offers strategies for creating community hubs (further discussed in Chapter 6). Hubs are trusted gathering places that connect every member of the community to essential programs, services, and spaces that advance health equity, improve health outcomes, and enhance quality of life. Community hubs can be integrated with community centers and should be designed to advance wellness across the seven interconnected dimensions of well-being:

Despite historical perceptions of health, health and wellness encompass more than simply being free of disease. Wellness is grounded in equitable access to resources and social supports, and involves the dynamic pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of true health.





Playspace Inequity

Playing is the essence of childhood and is a critical developmental need that provides countless physical, social, and mental health benefits.

Many children, particularly those in underserved and minority neighborhoods, do not have access to safe and accessible neighborhood playgrounds and parks. This is known as **playspace inequity**.

Organizations such as KABOOM! work with communities to build playspaces to spark joy and foster a sense of belonging for children who are often denied opportunities to thrive. **Providing playspaces for children to play, explore, exercise, and build friendships** can have **lasting positive impacts that are foundational to healthy growth and development**. In Petersburg, a new playground funded through a grant from KABOOM! opened at the Petersburg Family YMCA on North Madison Street in May 2023. The City can **explore additional funding opportunities to develop similar playgrounds in parks currently lacking facilities, as well as upgrades to existing playgrounds to be more inclusive**, such as ADA accessibility, sensory activities, and shade structures. These amenities often get overlooked in underserved communities, but can **provide wellness benefits that will reap generational rewards**.

Parks in need of playground amenities include:

Anderson Street Park – 2140 Anderson St.

Flank Road Park – 1555 Flank Rd.

Pocahontas Park – 800 Magazine Rd.

PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Local organizations and nonprofits work in the community to provide vital resources such as youth outreach, life skills development, parental classes, health education, and more. Below are a few of the local groups and resources available to the community:

- Petersburg Boys & Girls Club
- Petersburg Healthy Options Partnerships (PHOPS)
- Petersburg Family YMCA
- Petersburg Wellness Consortium
- Progressive Community Outreach





ARTS AND CULTURE

Petersburg residents are passionate about local arts and culture, ranking it as the City's most valued asset along with local history. In 2008, the City established the Arts and Culture District in and around Old Towne to increase awareness and support for arts and cultural pursuits, along with an associated incentive program that allows for an exemption of the admissions tax to qualified arts organizations within the District for up to 10 years. The program is targeted to ventures such as theaters, art galleries, museums, and studios. Additional incentives can be considered, such as encouraging new ventures to locate in underutilized and vacant spaces through tax incentives, microgrants, or expedited permit review.

Community engagement conveyed a strong desire for more robust arts and cultural resources and programming. While partnerships have been formed in the past between the City and area organizations to support the arts, residents would benefit from reinvigorated initiatives to bolster the creative economy. Strategic planning related to recreation and tourism should also include provisions for arts and culture, such as public art procurement and themes, community events planning, and an inventory of available public and private

venues and studios. Completion of a public art plan should be considered within the Arts and Culture District to help facilitate new public art installations. Public art can be utilized to beautify dilapidated parks, repurpose vacant walls, add definition to existing significant neighborhoods. By supporting public art planning and programming, Petersburg will reinforce arts and culture as intrinsically valuable community assets.

Arts & Community Wellness

Along with recreation, access to cultural amenities provides interesting and educational activities for community members of all ages, and enhances community pride and promotes inclusion. Creative arts therapies and health programs provide important care options for both mental and physical health. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, the positive impacts of the arts on health begin in early childhood by contributing to healthy emotional and social development. For older adults, participation in the arts is linked to higher cognitive functioning and lower rates of hypertension. Supporting and expanding a strong presence of the arts and culture in Petersburg will contribute to improving local health rates and increasing positive health outcomes.



Below is **just a small sampling of Petersburg's many events and festivals!**

Festival of Grapes and Hops

Hosted in Old Towne Petersburg Harbor, the Festival of Grapes and Hops features over 20 wineries and craft breweries, local food trucks, and musicians.

Friday for the Arts!

Friday for the Arts! is organized by the Petersburg Area Art League and is held the second Friday of every month. The event showcases local artists, galleries, museums, restaurants, and shops across more than 20 venues in the Old Towne area.

Friday Flow at Ironworks

Hosted in the historic Appomattox Ironworks complex, Friday Flow at Ironworks is a weekly summer concert series featuring a variety of Americana, Folk, and Southern Rock musicians.

Friday Flow is a newer addition to Petersburg that kicked off in 2023.

Halifax Music Festival On the Avenue

This outdoor community music festival occurs every June at Halifax Triangle or "The Avenue". The block party-style event features Jazz and Blues musicians, food, and drinks.

Arts and Economic Development

Arts and cultural industries should be utilized as economic assets that appeal to visitors and residents alike. The arts and cultural sector stimulates local economies through tourism, consumer purchases, and tax revenue. According to the National Governors' Association for Best Practices, the range of economic benefits include:

- **Helping weak economic areas:** The decentralized nature of creative industries can boost economic stability. At the heart of the creative economy are individual artists who are typically well-connected to their home communities. Linking these artists with entrepreneurial opportunities both inside and beyond their immediate neighborhoods offers many economic development possibilities.
- **Attracting tourism dollars:** Audiences drawn to cultural venues and events also bring economic benefits for other related businesses. A thriving cultural scene helps attract visitors who not only spend money on the events themselves, but also contribute to local economies by dining in restaurants, lodging in hotels, and purchasing gifts and services in the community.

- **Recruiting and developing a skilled workforce:** The arts are an important complement to economic development, providing an enhanced quality of life that plays an influential role in attracting and retaining young professionals. Jobs generated in supporting industries such as hospitality and customer service also benefit the local workforce.

The arts, in combination with parks and recreation amenities, provide a well-balanced quality of life that sustains the heart and soul of Petersburg. Working with local and regional organizations and partners to enhance and promote cultural offerings is an investment with lasting returns.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

With distinct roles during the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Civil Rights movement, Petersburg is well known for its rich inventory of historic structures, sites, and resources. Petersburg's historic resources contribute to, and in many respects, define the City's character. Preservation of local historic assets builds community identity, and through that identity, acts as a driver of economic growth and cultural pride in Petersburg. However, many of Petersburg's historic resources have been threatened over the years through population loss, abandonment and demolition of buildings, and renovations that remove historically substantial elements. Balancing forward-thinking growth with the preservation of Petersburg's historic fabric should be an ongoing, foundational element of the City's future planning.

To tell its ever-evolving story, Petersburg manages its historic resources in several ways. The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance regulates renovations to existing buildings and new construction within the City's seven locally designated historic districts; these changes are subject to review by the Preservation Planner and/or the Architectural Review Board (ARB). In

addition to administering design review in locally designated historic districts, the City owns and maintains several historic sites, including Centre Hill Museum, Petersburg Courthouse, People's Cemetery, and Blandford Church Museum and Cemetery. The City also maintains Certified Local Government status through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) and enforces design guidelines to ensure that new improvements in historic districts are compatible with existing architectural character and contribute to the economic vitality of the City.



The City's long-standing attention to historic preservation is apparent in the quality of Petersburg's historic resources and neighborhoods. To continue this legacy of quality historic preservation, the City should:

- Prepare a preservation plan for Petersburg.
- Improve community engagement in historic preservation efforts.
- Continue researching and promoting an inclusive history of Petersburg, including the preservation of historically Black and disinvested neighborhoods.
- Improve code enforcement to reduce blight and neglect of historic structures City-wide.
- Continue to focus on context-sensitive development and preservation of historic structures.
- Utilize key design elements from the City's historic districts to inform new development.
- Improve use of historic resources to promote tourism and expand the local economy.

Historic Preservation and Community Wellness

Historic development patterns in Petersburg are reflected through a compact, human-scale development pattern. Preservation of human-scale patterns of development, with walkabout street grids and functional forms, contributes to an equitable, multimodal transportation network. Historic street grids tend to be more walkable and bikeable, and also have access to public transit, giving residents multiple options for navigating Petersburg in addition to personal vehicles. This promotes more daily activity and provides reliable options for travel to healthcare appointments and employment opportunities.

In addition to physical benefits, historic preservation also fosters a sense of place, enhancing the intrinsic benefits of community identity, continuity, and pride. Research has shown that an entire group's health can suffer after losing a special place – blight and demolition can erode, and even destroy, the heart and soul of neighborhoods by removing the community spaces that define the area. Continued efforts to maintain physical connections to the past through the preservation of Petersburg's sacred buildings and sites will positively contribute to community wellness and ensure that Petersburg's story will endure for generations to come.

Historic Preservation and Economic Development

Historic preservation has many benefits for Petersburg, including promoting green development, bolstering the tourism economy, preserving existing affordable housing stock, celebrating shared culture and social connection, and ultimately enhancing quality of life.

- **Attracting talent and investment:** Historic neighborhoods contribute to urban livability and an environment for job creation. Businesses located in cities that are perceived as good places to live, with a sense of historic authenticity, have an advantage in attracting talent and investment. Retaining historic patterns of mixed use design can also provide attractive spaces for both employers and professionals looking to settle in Petersburg.
- **Property values:** Historic preservation helps maintain strong property values, with historic district values consistently rising more than in non-historic areas. Additionally, studies show that historic districts better maintain their value during recessions and recover more quickly.

- **Heritage tourism:** Heritage tourists tend to stay longer and spend more per day, therefore generally having a greater economic impact per trip.
- **Business incubation:** Older, smaller buildings are critical to the incubation of small businesses that are the primary job creators in the U.S. economy. Neighborhoods containing a diverse mix of older, smaller buildings support greater levels of positive economic and social activity than areas dominated by newer, larger buildings.



PRESERVATION PROGRAMS, TOOLS, AND INCENTIVES

Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places

Petersburg boasts 12 historic districts and 34 individual sites that are recognized on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or National Register of Historic Places. An additional 44 properties are considered eligible but are not formally listed. Inclusion on state and national historic registers is honorary and generally does not carry preservation protections, but inclusion does open opportunities for preservation tax credits, grants, and easements. As a cohesive collection of resources, properties listed on historic registers can be a key economic driver for neighborhood revitalization, business development, affordable housing, and heritage tourism.

Tax Credits

Rehabilitation tax credit programs provide tax credits to property owners who undertake the rehabilitation of historic buildings in compliance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Through the federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs, property owners are given substantial incentives for private investment in preservation, resulting in enormous advantages to the public. The

preservation of these structures encourages a connection to the past, enhances the identity of a community, and stimulates private investment.

Locally Designated Historic Districts

In addition to the 12 state and federally recognized historic districts, Petersburg has seven locally designated historic districts. Local districts may follow the same boundaries as their state/federal counterparts, but local districts are not strictly honorary and are subject to additional standards and protections through the Zoning Ordinance.

Architectural Review Board

The Architectural Review Board (ARB) is an appointed body responsible for reviewing all proposals for development and exterior modifications to buildings and signs within the City's seven local historic districts. The City should continue to develop educational materials on appropriate maintenance procedures and requirements for owners of historic properties within local historic districts and promote Petersburg's historic district guidelines as an aid to property owners planning renovation, rehabilitation, or new construction to historic properties.



Photo Credit: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Certified Local Government

Petersburg is recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLGs are municipalities that have demonstrated a commitment to local preservation through a formal certification process with DHR. Becoming a CLG promotes community-wide preservation, supports local preservation programs, and establishes the credentials to qualify for them. Requirements to become certified include:

- Establishing a qualified historic preservation commission and/or Architectural Review Board.
- Creating a historic district ordinance to enforce appropriate regulations for the protection of historic and heritage resources.
- Maintaining a system to regularly survey and inventory local historic resources.
- Facilitating public participation in local preservation and stewardship programs.

Once certified, CLG communities are eligible for additional benefits such as competitive grant funding and technical assistance.

Easements

Easements allow property owners to voluntarily protect the historical, architectural, and archaeological integrity of their property by placing a permanent preservation easement on the property. The easement restricts future development of the property, prohibits certain activities, and requires prior approval of others. Except for rights specifically relinquished, the landowner continues to own, use, and control the land.



Table 5.3 | Properties Listed on Historic Registers

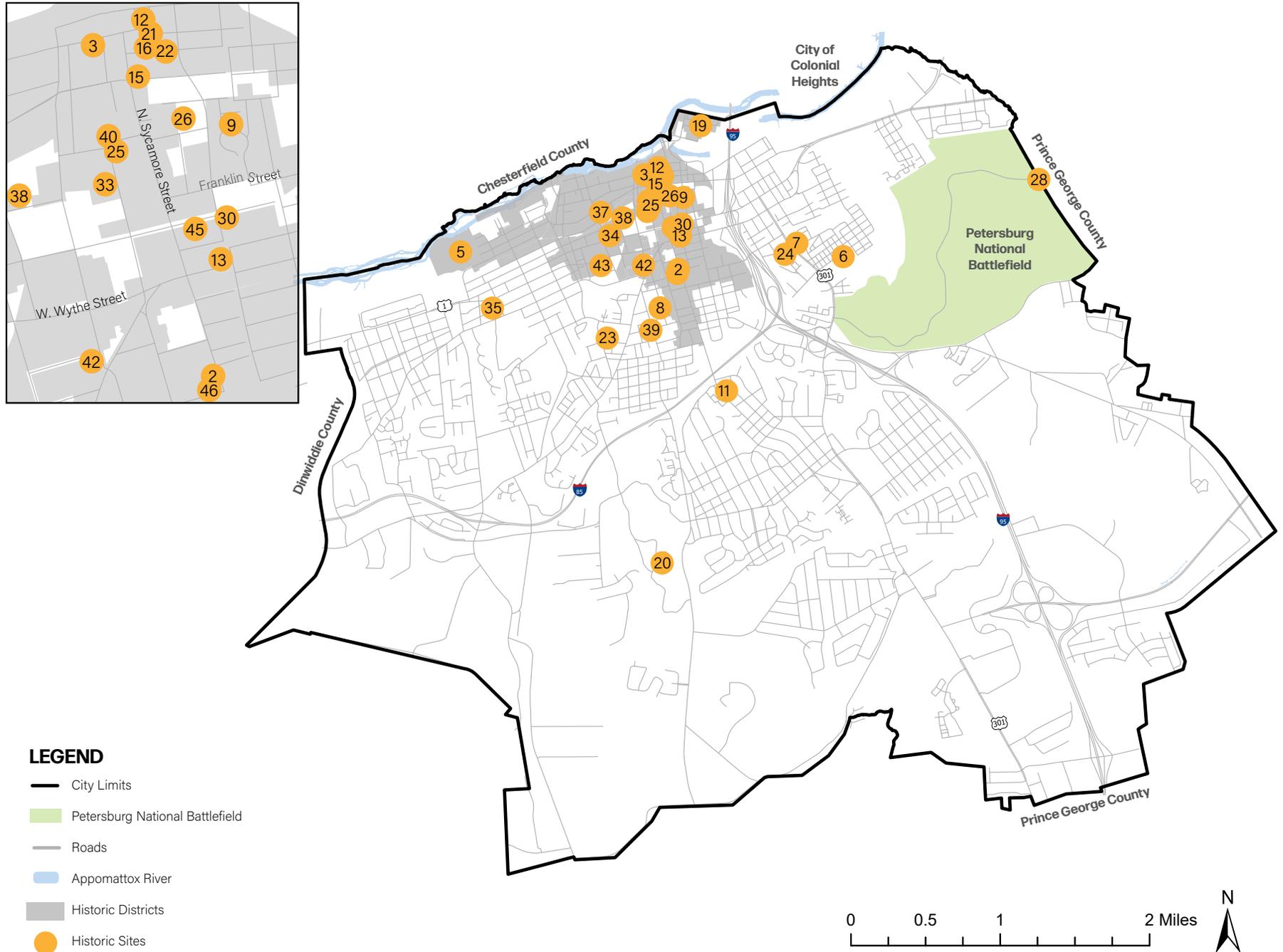
Map ID	Site Name	Year Built/Period of Significance	Dated listed on Virginia Landmarks Register	Dated listed on National Register of Historic Places
1	African-American Cemeteries in Petersburg, Virginia, 1818-1942 MPD (Multiple Property Designation)	1818-1942	12/5/2007	3/28/2008
2	Anna P. Bolling Junior High School	1926	9/14/1998	10/30/1998
3	Appomattox Iron Works	1812-1897	4/20/1976	8/11/1976
4	Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Commercial and Industrial Historic District	1879-1960s	6/18/2009	8/27/2009
5	Battersea	1768	5/13/1969	11/12/1969
6	Blandford Cemetery	1702-1924	4/22/1992	10/15/1992
7	Blandford Church	1734-37, 1901	4/18/1972	5/31/1972
8	Byrne Street USO Club	1942	3/17/2022	5/27/2022
9	Centre Hill	1823	11/21/1972	12/27/1972
10	Centre Hill Historic District	1914-1923	10/15/1985	6/13/1986
11	Chris and Grace Episcopal Church	1925, 1955-57	12/12/2019	2/27/2020
12	City Market	1878-79	11/5/1968	6/11/1969
13	Cohen House	1851	9/5/2007	11/1/2007
14	Commerce Street Industrial Historic District	Early 20th century	6/19/2008	9/12/2008
15	Exchange Building	1841	11/5/1968	6/11/1969
16	Farmers' Bank	1815	1/18/1972	4/13/1972
17	Folly Castle Historic District	Late 18th & 19th century	2/26/1979	7/16/1980
18	Halifax Triangle and Downtown Commercial Area Historic District	1842-1964	3/16/2017	2/12/2019
19	Jarratt House	1820	9/15/2022	N/A
20	Legends Park	1921	6/14/2000	8/14/2000
21	McIlwaine House	1815	6/19/1973	7/16/1973
22	Nathaniel Friend House	1815-16	4/20/1976	8/11/1976

Map ID	Site Name	Year Built/Period of Significance	Dated listed on Virginia Landmarks Register	Dated listed on National Register of Historic Places
23	Peabody Building of the Peabody-Williams School	1920	6/14/2000	8/2/2000
24	People's Memorial Cemetery	1840-1942	12/15/2007	3/28/2008
25	Petersburg City Hall	1856-59	4/18/1978	11/16/1978
26	Petersburg Courthouse	1840	4/17/1973	5/14/1973
27	Petersburg Courthouse Historic District	1815-1940	8/21/1990	12/21/1990
28	Petersburg National Battlefield	1864-1865	10/18/1983	10/15/1966
29	Petersburg Old Town Historic District	1851	11/20/1979	7/4/1980
30	Petersburg Trailways Bus Station	1946	6/18/2015	9/29/2015
31	Pocahontas Island Historic District	1749-1956	9/6/2006	11/3/2006
32	Poplar Lawn Historic District	1767-1945	2/26/1979	5/23/1980
33	Saint Paul's Episcopal Church	1857	4/15/1986	5/30/1986
34	Second Presbyterian Church	1861	12/12/1989	1/14/1991
35	South Chappell Street Car Barn	1899-1903	12/18/2008	2/25/2009
36	South Market Street Historic District	1840-1905	6/19/1991	4/22/1992
37	Stewart-Hinton House	1798	6/18/2003	1/14/2004
38	Strawberry Hill	1792	11/19/1974	12/23/1974
39	Sutherland House	1860	9/22/2011	11/22/2011
40	Tabb Street Presbyterian Church	1843	2/21/1978	5/31/1979
41	The North Battersea/Pride's Field Historic District	1810-1940	3/16/2005	5/26/2005
42	Thomas Wallace House	1855	4/15/1975	5/2/1974
43	Virginia Trunk and Bag Company	1903-1931	9/17/2009	12/23/2009
44	Walnut Hill Historic District	1913-1972	12/8/2022	N/A
45	Washington Street (United) Methodist Church	1842	6/17/1980	11/24/1980
46	William McKenney House	1890	12/12/1989	12/6/1990

SOURCE: Virginia Landmarks Register; National Register of Historic Places

NOTE: Map IDs correspond with numbering on Map 5.3 and Map 5.4.

MAP 5.3 | PROPERTIES LISTED ON HISTORIC REGISTERS

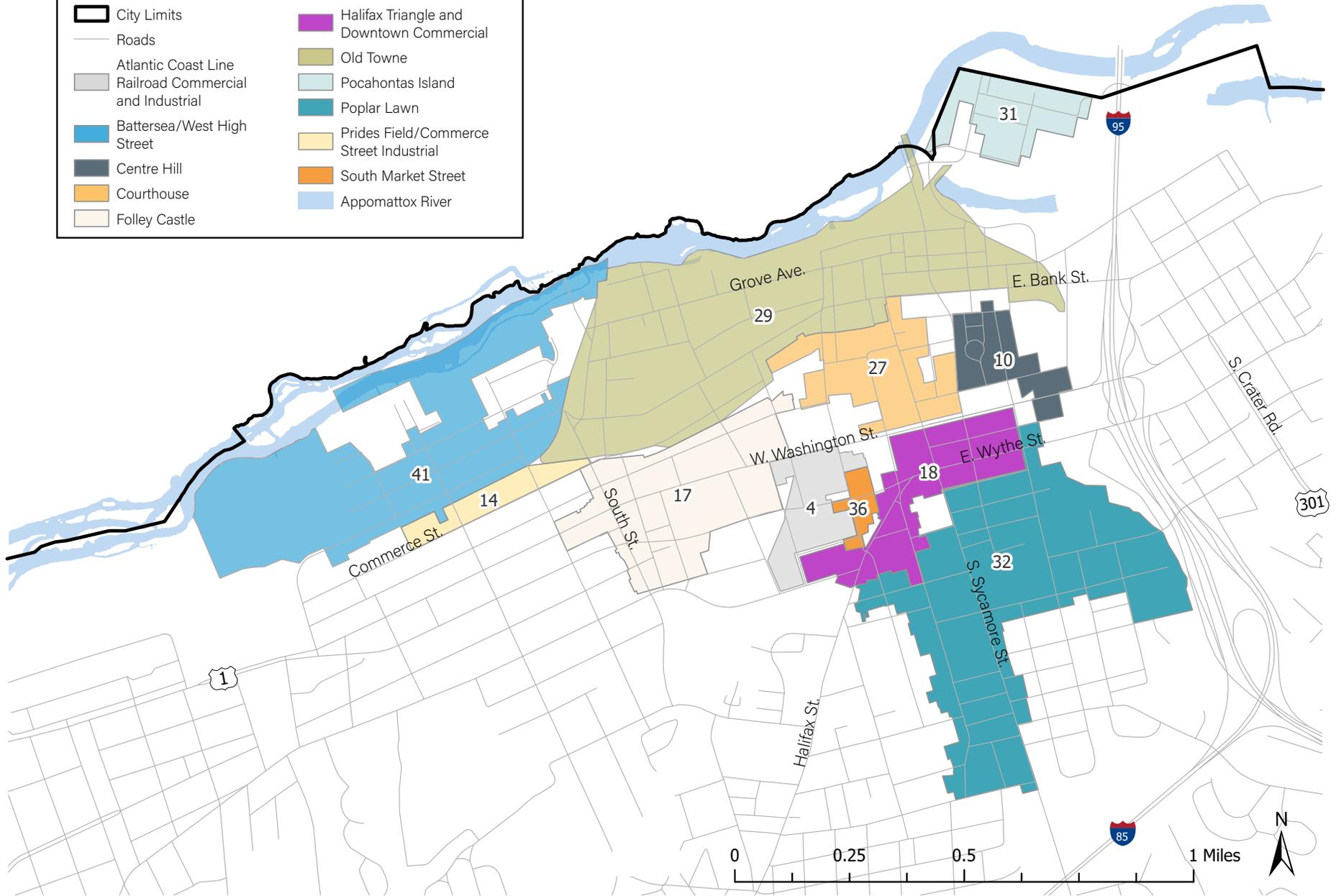


SOURCE: Virginia Landmarks Register; National Register of Historic Places
 NOTE: Map numbering corresponds with Map IDs in Table 5.3.

MAP 5.4 | STATE OR FEDERALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS

LEGEND

City Limits	Halifax Triangle and Downtown Commercial
Roads	Old Towne
Atlantic Coast Line	Pocahontas Island
Railroad Commercial and Industrial	Poplar Lawn
Battersea/West High Street	Prides Field/Commerce Street Industrial
Centre Hill	South Market Street
Courthouse	Appomattox River
Folley Castle	



LOCALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS



Old Towne

The Petersburg Old Towne Historic District was established in 1973 and contains the highest concentration of 18th century buildings in the City. The City's commercial and formerly industrial core comprises the eastern area of the district. The western area of the historic district is largely residential and is predominantly composed of 18th and 19th century homes of former prominent and working-class residents alike.



Poplar Lawn

Poplar Lawn began as a genteel residential area for many of the area's prominent merchants. The neighborhood is centered around the 19th century Central Park and features a variety of Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival homes.



Folly Castle

The Folly Castle district is centered around Folly Castle, an 18th century residence, and was developed between the mid-18th and early 20th-centuries. The neighborhood largely consists of high-style Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, and Queen Anne homes, along with middle class and factory workers' housing to support the numerous tobacco factories that once surrounded the residential portion of the neighborhood.



Centre Hill

The Centre Hill Historic Area takes its name from Robert Bolling's 18th-century Centre Hill mansion, home to prominent Petersburg residents and distinguished guests from across the country. In 1910, owner Charles Hall Davis sold much of the grounds for speculative housing, giving rise to a neighborhood of bungalows, Colonial Revival, and American Foursquare residential structures dating to this period.



South Market Street

The South Market Street Historic Area is comprised of portions of South Market, Wythe, Brown, and Halifax Streets and largely consists of grand Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate residences constructed by prominent residents in the mid- to late 19th century. Many of the historic residences retain their original outbuildings. The Wallace-Seward House, located within the district, is the site of the last meeting between President Abraham Lincoln and Union General Ulysses S. Grant after Petersburg's fall and just days before the Confederacy's surrender.



Courthouse

The Courthouse Historic Area includes the 1838 Petersburg courthouse, the 1843 Tabb Presbyterian Church, the 1856 Customs House, and the 1855 St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Additionally, the district features a unique mix of Federal, Greek Revival, Italianate, Renaissance Revival, Neoclassical, Classical Revival, and Chicago School structures. The district is centered on North Sycamore Street and is located directly south of the Petersburg Old Towne Historic Area.



Battersea/West High Street

The Battersea/West High Street Historic Area consists of the Prides Field and Battersea neighborhoods, located along the Appomattox River to the west of the Petersburg Historic Area. The neighborhood's growth began with the completion of the Upper Appomattox River Canal in the 1820s, and the neighborhood is dominated by late nineteenth century Italianate vernacular frame residences, set close together on shallow lots and occupied by the middle class in their time.

ADDITIONAL HISTORIC HIGHLIGHTS

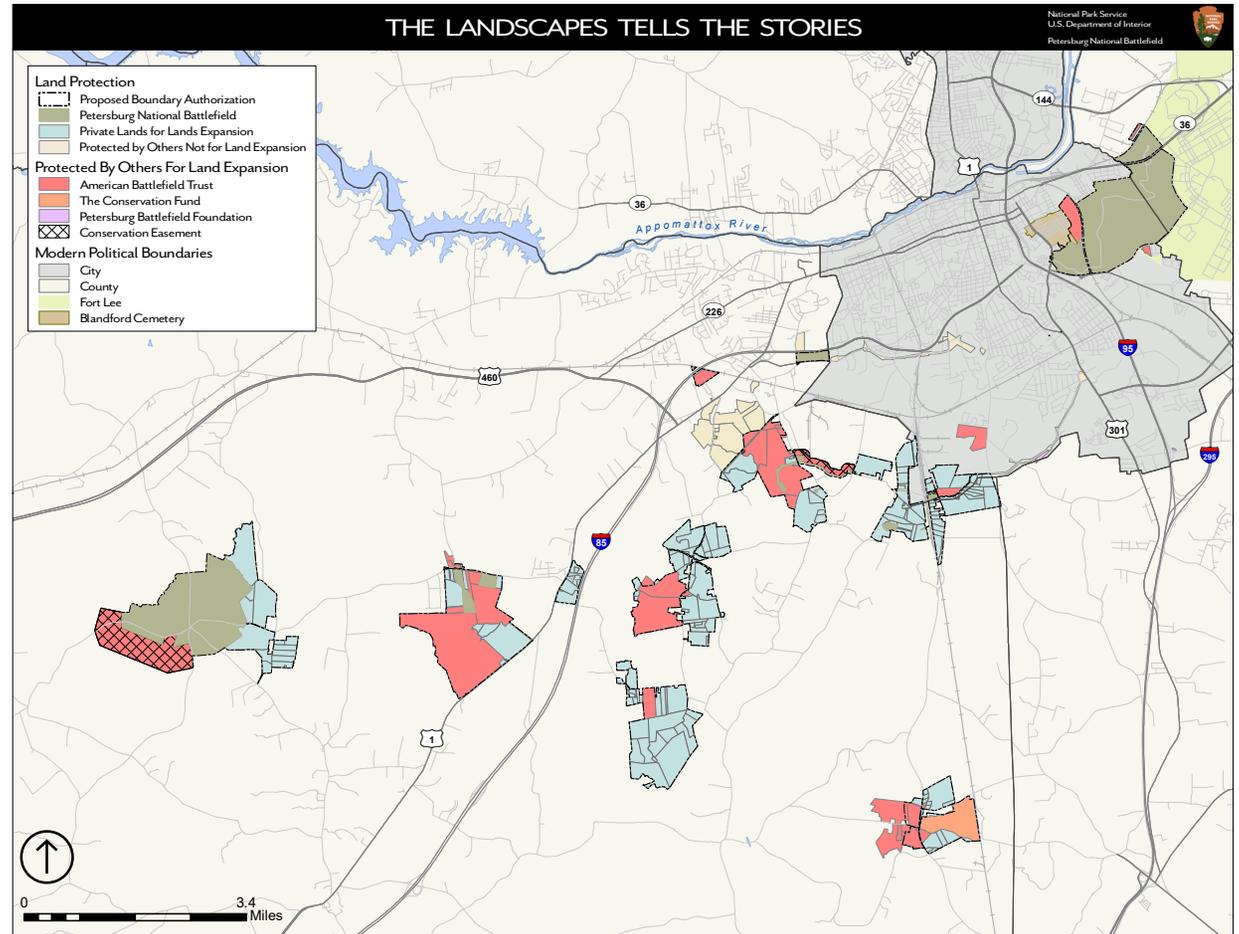
Petersburg National Battlefield

Petersburg National Battlefield Park is one of the City's most well-known assets, drawing 201,606 visitors in 2021. The Park commemorates the ten-month siege of Petersburg from 1864 to 1865, covering a total of 9,300 acres across Petersburg, Hopewell, Prince George County, and Dinwiddie County. Roughly 2,700 acres of the Park are located in and around Petersburg, along with over 10 miles of trails for hiking and biking. Visitors can experience historic battle reenactments, ranger-led tours, and self-guided tours, as well as curated exhibits at the Eastern Front Visitors' Center located on Siege Road.

Community engagement indicated that residents desire more direct connections to the Park itself, noting that the existing entrance forces visitors to bypass the heart of the City. To the extent possible, the City should engage with the National Park Service (NPS) on any future Park plans to incorporate additional routes, trails, and wayfinding directing visitors to Petersburg. This effort should be combined with City efforts to revitalize and beautify shared

gateway corridors. Petersburg can also advocate for a joint visitors' center in the former Southside Depot on River Street to further expand the relationship between the Petersburg National Battlefield and the City.

MAP 5.4 | PETERSBURG NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD LAND PROTECTION PLAN



Pocahontas Island

Pocahontas Island, located along the Appomattox River on the northern edge of Petersburg, is one of America's oldest free Black settlements and has evidence of prehistoric Native American settlement dating to 6500 B.C. Named for the renowned Powhatan princess, the island was initially situated further north along the river's upper banks until the early 20th century when a new channel pattern formed the current configuration. Slaves were first brought to this area in 1732 to work in tobacco warehouses. The island was formally platted in 1749 and named Wittontown; the original street grid pattern is still reflected today. The name was changed to Pocahontas Island in 1752. By 1800, over 300 of Petersburg's freed slaves had settled here and formed a prosperous residential and commercial community, making it home to the largest free Black population in Virginia.

Today, Pocahontas is a quiet residential neighborhood consisting of mostly frame, one-story dwellings that date from the turn of the 20th century, with two buildings that are known to have survived from before the Civil War. A tornado in 1993 destroyed many of the homes on the island, creating more open space than historically existed in this once dense urban neighborhood.

Local efforts spearheaded by lifelong resident Richard Stewart prioritized the preservation of Pocahontas Island's history and remaining structures. Through his dedication and perseverance, the Pocahontas Island Black History Museum was opened in 2003 to showcase over 300 years of Black history, with hundreds of artifacts and detailed historical records. Its location on Witten Street was part of the Underground Railroad during the Civil War. To commemorate and substantiate Pocahontas Island's rich legacy in Petersburg, the Pocahontas Island Historic District was added to the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places in 2006.

While numerous studies have been conducted in recent years to determine plans for the future of Pocahontas Island, residents have conveyed concern that little action has been taken after studies are completed, and certain actions have conflicted with resident desires. The existing residential areas are flanked by the former Roper Lumber site to the east and south, with opportunities for redevelopment currently being explored by the City. Environmentally, the Roper Lumber site is located within floodplains and Resource Protection Areas. Redevelopment and economic opportunities for this former industrial site must be balanced with environmental and

cultural resource protections and should be sensitive to the neighborhood's history and current residential fabric.

Part of the Roper Lumber property encompasses the existing Pocahontas Island neighborhood park. Any future redevelopment of this area should consider opportunities to permanently retain this recreational space. Community engagement favored converting the Roper site into an outdoor park and event space, which would be well-suited to connect to Rotary Park via the neighborhood park to create a cohesive recreational open space network that defines the perimeter of Pocahontas Island.



Growing and Promoting Our Quality of Life

Goal Statement: Petersburg provides equitable access to parks, recreation, the arts, and historic resources to facilitate healthy lifestyles, tourism, and celebration of heritage and culture.

Objectives	Strategies
5.1 Provide parks and recreational spaces that are safe and accessible to all.	5.1.1: Inventory and assess the current conditions of park facilities to identify and prioritize safety improvements, ADA accessibility, and repair/replacement of broken or aging equipment.
	5.1.2: Ensure that the City's major anchor parks, such as Patton Park, Legends Park, and the Petersburg Sports Complex, have routine grounds and trail maintenance to provide a safe and inviting recreational atmosphere. Install or repair safety fencing and lighting in parking areas and along trails where needed for increased nighttime safety.
	5.1.3: Coordinate with local non-profit organizations and volunteer groups to assist with grounds maintenance and cleanup programs, particularly in neighborhood parks.
	5.1.4: Apply for grants and other creative funding sources to install new playground equipment in parks that currently lack facilities.
	5.1.5: Assess existing facilities for opportunities for additional community centers, including currently vacant buildings and Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS) buildings during evenings and weekends.
	5.1.6: Utilize available resources from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) to evaluate and enhance existing park assets, safety considerations, and public wellness opportunities.
	5.1.7: Integrate community hubs with community centers and design them to advance wellness across the seven interconnected dimensions of well-being.
	5.1.8: Consider opportunities to convert existing park space into a public dog park.

Objectives	Strategies
5.2 Capitalize on existing assets to increase revenue streams and invest in staffing resources.	5.2.1: Identify underutilized City-owned properties for reinvestment as multifunctional facility spaces for rentals and events.
	5.2.2: Invest in dedicated staff resources to provide quality recreational programming more efficiently.
	5.2.3: Explore opportunities for increased sponsorship opportunities at major events and parks.
	5.2.4: Use creative marketing and branding to generate interest in recreational programming, assets, and events and drive participation rates.
5.3 Create a parks and recreation master plan to best utilize existing parks and recreational assets for the community and generate revenue for facility and program improvements.	5.3.1: Incorporate facility space needs assessments and fiscal analyses to balance improvement costs with new revenue streams.
	5.3.2: Coordinate new investment with regional plans for the Appomattox River Trail, Petersburg National Battlefield, and other regional amenities to ensure cohesive visioning and efficient use of resources.
5.4 Continue to develop and enhance recreational opportunities along the Appomattox River.	5.4.1: In collaboration with regional stakeholders, continue investing in park upgrades and facilities at Patton Park, Rotary Park at Pocahontas Island, and Appomattox Riverside Park.
	5.4.2: Identify opportunities to create additional riverfront park space with piers and docks for water access.
	5.4.3: As river access increases, install additional wayfinding and safety signage along the riverbank.
5.5 Support a strong local arts and culture economy.	5.5.1: Develop a public art master plan and/or incorporate public art considerations into related City strategic and master plans.
	5.5.2: Use public art to revitalize, define, and enhance the character of Petersburg and its neighborhoods.
	5.5.3: Actively market Arts and Culture District incentives to entrepreneurs and arts organizations; consider adding new incentives to locate in vacant, underutilized spaces.
	5.5.4: Continue working with local partners to organize festivals and events to increase tourism and establish Petersburg as a regional event center.

Objectives	Strategies
<p>5.6 Promote historic preservation as a means of enhancing quality of life for Petersburg's residents.</p>	5.6.1: Work with and support local organizations to promote the fullest understanding of Petersburg's diverse history.
	5.6.2: Broaden the constituency for preservation by identifying and preserving sites/districts related to historically underrepresented groups in the community.
	5.6.3: Support and advocate for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic Old Towne properties as a means of increasing downtown population and economic vibrancy.
	5.6.4: Utilize key design elements from the City's historic districts to inform new development, especially along major commercial corridors and within transition areas between historic districts and non-historic peripheral areas.
	5.6.5: Encourage newly eligible properties to be assessed and considered for inclusion on the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places.
	5.6.6: Continue to promote historic preservation and heritage tourism as key elements for a strong and resilient local economy.
	5.6.7: Continue to meet Certified Local Government status and enforce local historic preservation ordinances.