Welcome to Tuesdays at APA|DC
Finding Economic Value in Parks
March 15, 2016
The Economic Impact of Local Parks & Americans’ Broad-Based Support for Local Recreation and Park Services

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Vice President of Research
NRPA
NRPA commissioned Dr. Terry Clower and the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University to measure the economic impact of operations and capital spending at local & regional parks in the U.S.

After previewing the results at the NRPA Annual Conference in September, we released the full report in November.
Positive, Robust Findings About the Economic Power of Local and Regional Park Agencies

America’s local and regional public park agencies generated nearly $140 BILLION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY and supported almost 1 MILLION JOBS from their operations and capital spending alone in 2013.
Measures the economic significance of local & regional parks’ operations and capital spending: direct, indirect and induced impacts.

This is a conservative estimate of the full economic benefits of local & regional parks.

It does not include the economic impact of other park benefits:

- Visitor spending/Tourism
- Environment
- Health and wellness
- Property valuation gains
When combined with studies on the National Park Service and on state park systems:

**Public parks are responsible for roughly $200 billion in annual economic activity.**

- National Park System: spending at national parks led to $29.7 billion in economic activity in 2014
- Estimates of state park systems’ economic impact have spanned from $20-40 billion range
## State-level Economic Impact for all 50 States & DC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Economic Activity (Transactions)</th>
<th>Labor Income</th>
<th>Employment (Jobs)</th>
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### Dividing Up the $140 Billion of Local & Regional Parks Economic Impact Nationwide by State

Operations and capital spending at the nation’s local and regional public park agencies generated nearly $140 billion in economic activity that resulted in nearly 1 million jobs in 2013.

[Source](http://www.nrupa.org/park EconReport/)

*Findings from the Economic Impact of Local and Regional Park Agencies’ Spending study, conducted for the National Recreation and Park Association by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University.*

(c) 2015 National Recreation and Park Association
Key Takeaways

Local and regional park agencies are important assets connecting communities throughout the United States.

Not only are public parks leaders in Conservation, Health & Wellness, and Social Equity, they are also engines of significant economic activity and job creation in the United States.
Commissioned by NRPA
Conducted by a team at Penn State University, led by Dr. Andy Mowen

Previewed at the NRPA Conference in September, officially released in January
7 IN 10 AMERICANS GO TO THEIR LOCAL PARK

83% of Americans personally benefit from local parks

92% of Americans say their communities benefit from local parks
4 in 5 agree that local parks are worth the tax dollars spent on them.

Americans see NRPA’s 3 Pillars as the chief priorities for local parks:
- Conservation
- Health & Wellness
- Social Equity
Support for local parks is widespread, spanning:

- AGE GROUPS
- HOUSEHOLD TYPES
- INCOME STRATA
- POLITICAL AFFILIATION

1992 = 2015
Questions?

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Valuing Arlington’s Community Parks and Open Spaces

Arlington Virginia County Park and Recreation Commission
March 15, 2016
Parks and Open Space Play a Central Role in:

• Shaping community
• Bringing people together
• Offering recreational opportunities
• Providing critical environmental services
• Improving our quality of life
• Making Arlington a desirable place to work and live
Research is Voluminous and Clear

Nearby access to parks:

- Encourages physical activity and healthy lifestyles
- Improves mental health
- Leads to a reduction in crime
- Brings communities together
- Provides economic benefits and revitalizes communities
Hypothetical Economic Benefits for Arlington

- Economic analysis using Trust for Public Land methodology on key characteristics

- Data from 10 recent TPL studies in: Seattle, Sacramento, San Diego, Denver, Mecklenburg County--North Carolina, Virginia Beach, Wilmington--Delaware, Philadelphia, Nassau/Suffolk Counties--New York, and Boston
Key Characteristics

- Increased Property Values from Park Proximity
- Increased Property Sales Taxes from Park Proximity
- Increased Value of Annual Property Sales from Park Proximity
- Direct Use Value for Park Users
- Tourism Tax Benefits Attributed to Parks
- Tourism Profits Attributed to Parks
- Health Value of Parks
- Storm Water Management Value of Parks
- Air Pollution Mitigation Value of Parks
- Community Cohesion Value of Parks
Economic Benefits: Arlington’s Community Parks and Open Space

- Increased Property Values
- Direct Use
- Health Benefits
- Increased Property Taxes
- Increased Tourism
- Environmental Services

Millions

$0 $20 $40 $60 $80 $100 $120 $140 $160

Millions
• Estimated annual benefits: $155 million

• Estimated increase in property values: $160 million
Economic Multipliers For Other Communities

• Increased Property Values from Park Proximity:
  – $78,252 * Park Acreage
  – Example: Fairfax County, Virginia
  – $78,252 * 23,310 = $1,824,059,901

• All Other Annual Benefits:
  – $75,879 * Park Acreage
  – $75,879 * 23,310 = $1,768,740,076
Great Parks = Great Cities

• Translating the benefits of parks into dollar values assists in calculating the true costs and expected returns of short and long range planning decisions

• Parks and open space need to play a more prominent role in the second generation of Smart Growth