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The Island Drive loops, Surrender Road, and other park roads require more than \$171 million in repairs.

Colonial National Historical Park

Virginia

Overview

Colonial National Historical Park preserves some of the most important sites in early American history. The park includes Jamestown, established in 1607 as the first permanent English settlement in North America. Visitors can experience the convergence of Europeans, Native Americans, and African slaves through historical interpreters at re-created homes and other buildings inside a fort. The park also includes Yorktown Battlefield, where in 1781 American and French troops defeated the British in the last major battle of the Revolutionary War.

These sites are among the most significant in American history, but they are challenged by more than \$200 million in needed repairs.

Maintenance challenges

The park's buildings are central to its historical interpretation but are slowly falling into disrepair, with more than \$9 million in deferred maintenance. After decades of neglect, the reconstructed 18th-century Swan Tavern, the main pub at Yorktown, needs nearly a half-million dollars in repairs. The Yorktown Visitor Center, which provides resources for visiting families and school groups, has a \$6.8 million repair backlog. And more than \$600,000 is required to restore the Nelson House, the home of Thomas Nelson Jr., one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

The park's roads also are degrading and comprise the majority of the park's infrastructure needs. For example, more than \$146 million is needed to repair the Colonial Parkway, a 23-mile scenic roadway connecting Yorktown to Jamestown. Repaving the Island Drive loops, Surrender Road, and other roads will cost more than \$171 million. Parking lots require \$8.1 million to maintain, while road bridges and tunnels would benefit from nearly \$6 million in repairs.

As with many parks, visitors may not find some of the deferred maintenance noticeable. For instance, \$56,000 is needed to fix a sewage pump station, while the Jones Mill Pond Dam, where visitors can fish for largemouth and smallmouth bass, walleye, and rainbow trout, requires \$1.7 million in repairs.

The fortifications that are central to the park's preservation and interpretation mission need \$2 million for repairs. That includes some of the mall forts, called Redoubts #9 and #10, which need shoring up to preserve the spots where Alexander Hamilton led the colonists to victory, resulting in the surrender of Gen. Lord Cornwallis and the eventual end of the Revolutionary War.¹

The York River shoreline also is being refurbished through a combination of stabilization structures and marsh protection measures to safeguard parts of the Colonial Parkway and Yorktown Battlefield. The river has severely eroded the shoreline in the area over the past 50 years, and continuing work on this project requires \$3.2 million.

“ Colonial National Historical Park protects not only historic Yorktown and Jamestown, but a significant amount of our county's green space. However, the park needs repairs to both its historic buildings and its scenic roads and parkway. If addressed, I'm sure the county would benefit economically.”

James W. Noel Jr., director, York County Office of Economic Development

Recommendations

To address the deferred maintenance needs at Colonial and other National Park Service sites in Virginia and across the country, Congress should:

- Ensure that infrastructure initiatives include provisions to address park maintenance.
- Provide dedicated annual federal funding for national park repairs.
- Enact innovative policy reforms to ensure that deferred maintenance does not escalate.
- Provide more highway funding for NPS maintenance needs.
- Create more opportunities for public-private collaboration and donations to help restore park infrastructure.

Table 1
 Colonial National Historical Park Facts
 2016

Visitor spending	\$196 million
Jobs created by visitor spending	3,221
Economic output	\$268.4 million
Labor income	\$92.6 million
Visits	3,352,655
Deferred maintenance (fiscal year 2015)	\$203.1 million

Sources: National Park Service, "National Park Service Visitor Use Statistics," accessed June 8, 2017, [https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20By%20Park%20\(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year\)](https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/National%20Reports/Annual%20Visitation%20By%20Park%20(1979%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)); National Park Service, "Visitor Spending Effects," accessed June 8, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/socialscience/vse.htm>; National Park Service, "NPS Deferred Maintenance Reports," accessed June 8, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/plandesignconstruct/defermain.htm>

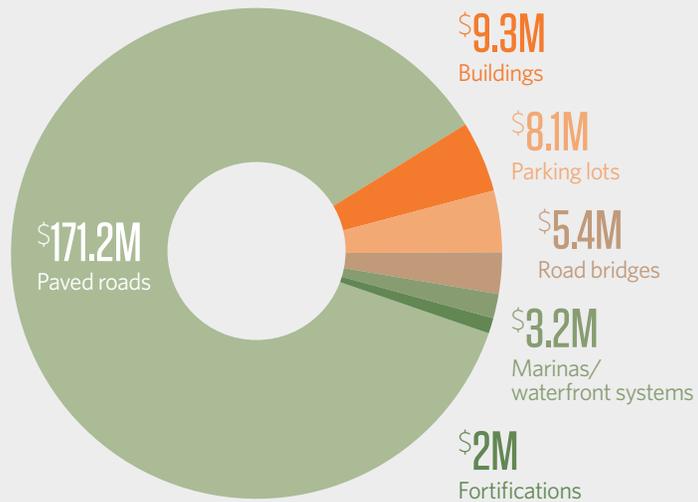
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Figure 1
 Colonial National
 Historical Park
 Needs Millions
 for Infrastructure
 Repairs
 Key deferred
 maintenance

Note: This chart depicts the largest maintenance categories by dollar value.

Source: Pew analysis of National Park Service data

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The Pew Charitable Trusts works alongside the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other national and local groups to ensure that our national park resources are maintained and protected for future generations to enjoy.

Endnote

- 1 AllThingsHamilton.com, "Yorktown, VA," accessed Feb. 27, 2017, <http://allthingshamilton.com/index.php/aph-home/other-locations/redoubt-10-yorktown-va>.

For further information, please visit:
pewtrusts.org/nationalparks

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