Section 1: Framework
Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

With more than 1 million residents and just over 500 square miles of land, Montgomery County is a large and complex place that includes rural, suburban and urban areas. The county's gross economic output exceeds $81 billion a year - more than 13 states – and it is by any measure one of the most affluent jurisdictions in the United States, with a median household income of $111,812, yet 21% of households have incomes below $50,000 and 39.8% percent of students qualify for free or reduced meals in our public schools. Our community is increasingly diverse in every sense of the word, with no one racial or ethnic group forming a majority of the population and almost half of residents speaking a language other than English at home.

Montgomery County's parks and recreational amenities – from its urban parks, athletic facilities, ice rinks, and trails to its museums, historic buildings, and conservation area parks – contribute significantly to the quality of life in our community. Surveys of residents consistently show that parks are among the most valued aspects of life in our community. In a 2021 survey of residents, 93 percent of respondents said that parks, trails, and recreation are an important part of what makes somewhere a great place to live.[1]

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is proud of its record as a leader in the preservation of land for parks, recreation, agriculture, and stewardship of natural resources. We are also proud of the record six Gold Medals the agency has received from the National Recreation and Parks Association for operating the country's best large parks system.

We know, however, that we must continue to evolve and adapt to meet both present and future park needs. As Montgomery County has changed, our parks, recreation facilities, and land management policies have changed in order to meet new economic, social and environmental goals:

- The earliest parks in our system were developed in the 1920s and 1930s as housing developers gave land in stream valley floodplains to M-NCPPC to enhance the attractiveness of new subdivisions and provide a location for water and sewer infrastructure and parkways.
- In the early post-World War II period, Montgomery County accommodated a growing population with facilities for organized recreation, such as park activity buildings, ballfields, and tennis courts. Land use policies and market-led development trends together produced subdivisions of single-family homes, with few apartment buildings or other types of housing. Local parks were provided in most neighborhoods, but the assumption was that residents would be willing and able to drive to regional recreational facilities and other amenities.

---

[1] "Parks/Trails/Recreation" was second only to crime/safety in order of importance in response to the question "When you think about what makes someplace a 'great place to live,' how important are each of the following things?" Source: 2021 Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission Survey Findings Report, September 2021, ETC Institute.

- The park system began to shift its attention to resource stewardship in the 1960s and 1970s in response to the environmental movement, influenced in part by the intellectual leadership of Rachel Carson, a resident of Silver Spring. In 1964, the county adopted "*…on Wedges and Corridors,*" a seminal land use plan that called for focusing development along major highway corridors and in the "urban ring" closest to the District of Columbia. Parks were often planned with the idea that they would serve as "buffers" between residential and commercial areas or between single-family and multi-family homes.
- In 1981 the Agricultural Reserve was established to preserve land for farming, environmental and cultural stewardship, and recreation. The Agricultural Reserve and strategic park acquisitions were among the tools used to implement "smart growth," an approach to land use planning that emphasizes compact development and land preservation to prevent sprawl, improving the efficiency of public infrastructure and protecting the environment.

The early 21st century has seen the emergence of renewed demand for urban living, and Montgomery County has encouraged the development of multifamily housing in established business districts such as Silver Spring, Bethesda and Wheaton as well as emerging and planned centers of activity in places like White Flint, White Oak, and Germantown. The introduction of large numbers of residents into areas previously dominated by offices or retail has generated demand for urban parks with a variety of activities and features in population centers and interest in retrofitting "buffer" parks to help connect communities instead of keeping them apart.

Figure 1.1: Montgomery County Parks Timeline, 1930 to 2010

Each of the roles and functions of parks – from active recreation and social connection to environmental stewardship and access to nature – remains relevant today. While we do some of these things exceptionally well, we have a tremendously challenging task ahead in planning, building, and managing

what the 2017 PROS Plan called the "right park" in the "right place" to serve our community. This means:

- Creating parks that serve multiple functions rather than a single purpose

- Delivering urban parks using an infill and redevelopment approach to add and enhance park sites and facilities in densely populated centers of activity

- Focusing on the specific needs and desires of an increasingly diverse population and of historically marginally and underserved communities and groups

- Serving the distinct needs of senior citizens, teenagers, and young adults of working age

- Making outdoor healthy physical activity irresistible

- Staying abreast of trends in – and leading the way in developing – new park amenities, innovative management tools, and engaging programs

- Creating places that foster community, civic engagement, and social cohesion

- Using parks to tell the story of Montgomery County's history, culture, and natural resources

- Providing sustainable and appropriate access for people to our best natural areas, and

- Maintaining our commitment to environmental stewardship and developing strategies to adapt to and mitigate climate change

The 2022 PROS Plan lays out a vision, strategy, and policies to help Montgomery County achieve these goals.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan is the primary planning policy document for parks and recreation in Montgomery County. Its purpose is to (1) provide the basis for park and recreation recommendations in area and park master plans and the development review process, (2) set priorities for park acquisitions, renovations, and development, (3) provide guidance on recreational facility needs for the next ten years, (4) recommend priorities for preservation and interpretation of natural and historic resources and (5) document agricultural land preservation programs and policies.

The PROS Plan provides input for the State's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) and serves as the County's LPPRP. Updates to the PROS Plan have been required by the State of Maryland approximately every five years.

Section one consists of a single chapter laying out the context and framework for PROS. The second section assesses inventory, identifies needs, and makes recommendations in chapters covering parks and recreation, social engagement, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of agricultural land. The third section includes a concluding chapter describing implementation strategies and the allocation of responsibilities among different parts of state and local government and private parties.

Relationship to Thrive Montgomery

The 2022 PROS may be read in some ways as a companion document to the Parks and Recreation chapter of the County's General Plan *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, although the new PROS plan does not depend on Thrive as a basis for its recommendations. PROS is informed by many of the same ideas about parks and recreation that were laid out in Thrive and outlines the policies and priorities necessary to implement these ideas, but it was developed independently through a separate process.

Thrive and this plan both call on the Department of Parks to take on new roles to:

- Serve residents of downtowns, town centers, and other intensively developed areas,
- Recognize social engagement and community building as a basic purpose of parks and recreation, and
- Encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.

The Parks and Recreation chapter in *Thrive* makes the following recommendations, which are also embraced by this plan:

1. Focus on creating high quality urban parks
2. Use park and recreation facilities/programs to promote active lifestyles
3. Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are readily accessible and equitably distributed
4. Make social connection a central aim for parks and recreation
5. Update park facility standards and acquisition strategies to support infill strategies
6. Maintain high standards of environmental stewardship in park management and operations
7. Integrate parks, recreation, and public spaces into economic development and placemaking strategies

About M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks, and the Recreation Department

Montgomery Parks is a component of the state-chartered Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, while the Montgomery County Recreation Department is a component of Montgomery County Government. While parks and recreation are not combined in a single department under the same parent agency, we provide coordinated, mutually complementary recreational facilities and programs for Montgomery County residents to enjoy.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)

The Montgomery County Department of Parks ("Montgomery Parks") is part of M-NCPPC, a bi-county agency created by the Maryland General Assembly in 1927. The agency, which is charted by the State of Maryland, has authority over land use regulation, transportation planning, and the management and operation of parks in most of Montgomery County and Prince George's County. The agency improves the well-being of over 2 million residents and countless visitors within this region by 1. Planning for the coordinated and harmonious physical growth and development of the region; 2. Protecting and stewarding natural, cultural, and historical resources; 3. Providing an award-winning system of parks; 4. Creating recreational experiences that enhance quality of life of all individuals; and 5. Planning great communities that are vibrant, livable, accessible and sustainable.

In Montgomery County, the Commission functions as one agency, involving a unique relationship between the Planning Department and Montgomery Parks and governed by a bipartisan Board established by state law.

Montgomery Parks

The mission of Montgomery Parks includes both stewardship of natural resources and recreation, broadly defined, even though Montgomery County government operates a separate Department of Recreation. The recreational activities managed by Montgomery Parks range from hiking, bird watching and mountain biking in natural areas to highly organized team sports, community festivals, classes and summer camps, and programs that require purpose-built infrastructure and equipment and the assistance of specialized staffing or other support. Montgomery Parks manages 37,100 acres of parkland and 421 parks. Most of this acreage is in parks that were designed to serve the entire county but the system also includes land and facilities intended to serve more localized needs. Taken as a whole, the park system provides safe and accessible places to protect and experience nature, connect with other people, and participate in a wide variety of healthy recreational activities and educational programs.

Montgomery County Recreation Department

The mission of the Department of Recreation is to provide high quality, diverse, and accessible programs, services, and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities. The Montgomery County Department of Recreation's inventory includes 21 community recreation centers, 2 stand-alone senior centers, 13 adult activity program centers, 4 indoor aquatic centers, and 7 outdoor pools, with 12 facilities located on or immediately adjacent to parks owned and managed by M-NCPPC through Montgomery Parks.

Demographic Snapshot of Montgomery County

With a population of over one million (1,055,110) and 2,543 residents per square mile, Montgomery County is the most populous – and most densely populated -- county in Maryland. It is also one of the most diverse. Non-Hispanic white residents make up 40.6 percent of the population, and demographic forecasts indicate that non-Hispanic whites will represent only 27 percent of the total by 2045. The proportion of Hispanic, black, and Asian/Pacific islander populations have all increased since 2010.

Our park system must continuously evolve in order to meet the needs of our changing community. While a 2021 survey of county residents about parks and recreation showed broad similarities in attitudes and priorities across racial and ethnic lines, some differences were apparent. For example, while strong majorities of residents from every racial and ethnic background report positive attitudes toward – and experience with – our parks, Asian residents were less likely to say they feel safe in our parks, and African Americans reported lower levels of participation in hiking, biking and nature center programs (see chapter 2).
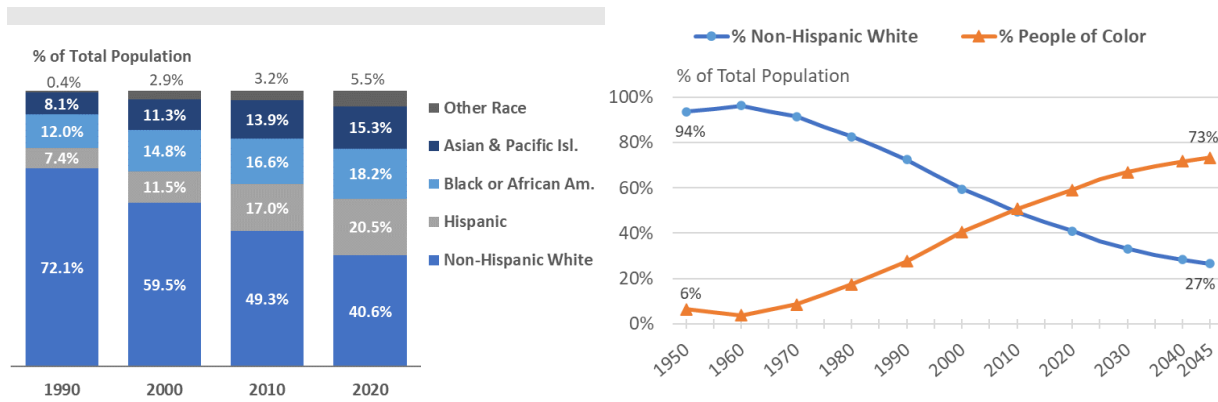
Figure 1.2: Race and Hispanic Origin, 1990-2020 (left) Source: 1990-2020 U.S. Census, U. S. Census Bureau; Research & Strategic Projects

Figure 1.3: Historical and Forecasted Racial Change in Montgomery County, 1950 to 2045 (right) Source: 1950-2020 U.S. Census; 2020-2045 Racial Forecast, Maryland Department of Planning

In addition to increasing racial, ethnic and cultural diversity, Montgomery County is experiencing rapid growth in the size of its senior population. Residents over 65 were the only age group to get larger as a share of the county's total population between 2010 and 2019, and the proportion of elderly residents is projected to continue growing the next 20 years, so our park and recreation facilities and programs will need to adapt to effectively serve older residents.
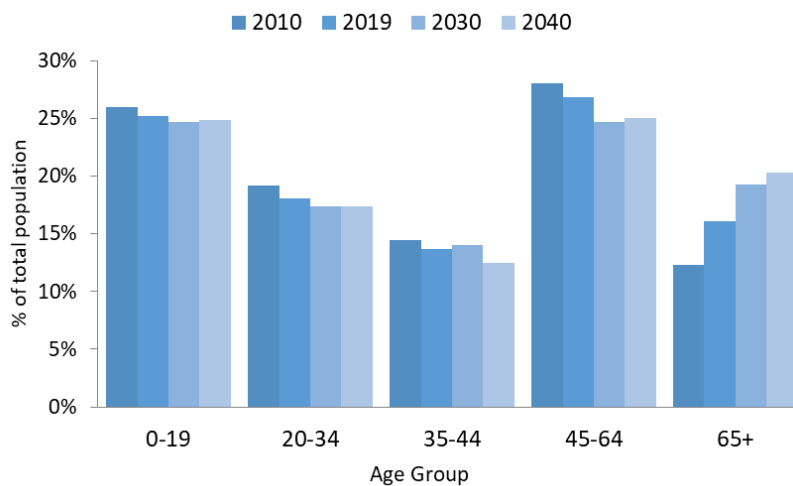

Figure 1.4: Percent of population by age group. Source: 2010 U.S. Census, 2019 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau; 2020-2045 Age Forecast, Maryland Department of Planning.

Social and economic changes also are reshaping the way our residents choose to live. In 1960, just 7 percent of households in the county consisted of one person living alone. By 2018, the proportion of single-member households had more than tripled, to 25 percent of all households. Likewise, the percentage of single-parent households with one or more children under 18 doubled from 4 percent in 1970 to 8 percent today. Meanwhile, the share of households consisting of a married couple with at

least one child under 18 dropped from 60 percent in 1960 to 47 percent in 1970 to 25 percent today. With only 33 percent of households including a child under 18, our park and recreation systems must consider how the needs and desires of our residents have changed. As discussed in Chapter 2, we need to focus on the distinctive interests of teenagers, young adults, people in mid-life, and seniors.
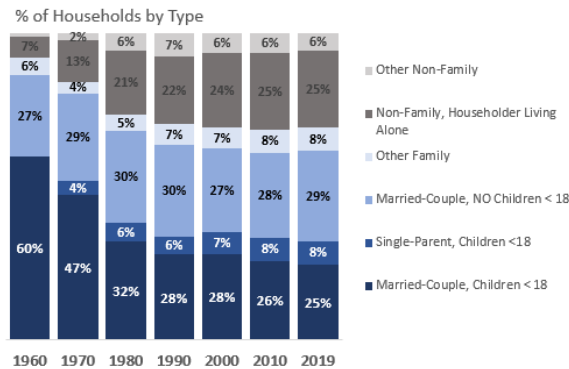
Source: 1960-2010 U.S. Census, 2019 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
Figure 1.5: Households by Type, 1960 to 2019

The Purposes of Parks, Recreation, Land Conservation and Agricultural Land Preservation

There are probably at least as many *reasons that people enjoy parks* as there are people who enjoy parks. Parks support physical fitness, mental health and emotional well-being.[2] They attract employers and skilled workers. They bring people together, but they also give them places to experience solitude. They protect natural resources.[3],[4] A clear answer to what seems like a simple question, "What are parks and open space for?" can help Montgomery County's decision-makers to define goals, make thoughtful choices about budgets and priorities, and measure progress toward our objectives.

This PROS plan articulates the key purposes of parks as encouraging physical activity, facilitating social interaction, and protecting the environment. Parks and recreation facilities should provide irresistible opportunities for healthy physical activities for people of all interests and physical abilities. Parks and public spaces are platforms for social interaction, community-building events, and the development and celebration of distinctive community identity. Parks and land conservation protect the quality of air and water and offer opportunities for people to experience nature. Agricultural land preservation helps to ensure the economic viability of farming and maintain local sources of food, prevents sprawl, protects the environment, and preserves aspects of our cultural heritage for the benefit of all our residents.

---

[2] Barton, Jo and Mike Rogerson *The importance of greenspace for mental health*, BJPsych Int. 2017 Nov; 14(4): 79–81. Published online 2017 Nov 1. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5663018/
[3] http://usahomepagewww.eastshorepark.org/HealthBenefitsReport_FINAL_010307.pdf
[4] Benefits of Parks in Your Community https://www.miracle-recreation.com/blog/benefits-of-parks-in-your-community/

This PROS plan articulates the key purposes of parks as encouraging physical activity, facilitating social interaction, and protecting the environment.

Land Use Contexts

The brief history of Montgomery County parks and land conservation policies outlined in the introduction of this chapter charted the trajectory of the county from a primarily rural, then suburban, and now increasingly urban jurisdiction. Montgomery County today still has distinctly rural, suburban and urban areas, encouraging a variety of economic activities and lifestyles, and we hope to preserve and enhance the best aspects of each of these parts of our community.

The activities and facilities appropriate to each park are determined largely - but not exclusively - by the land use context of the place where it is located. Therefore, the 2022 PROS Plan redefines park "service areas" using the framework described in *Thrive Montgomery 2050* to provide context-appropriate guidance for park acquisition, development and management. Although the land use context expected in each part of the county is clearly delineated in Figure 1.6, the precise mix of resources and amenities found in each park will be influenced by legacy infrastructure, localized needs, and other factors. The typology in this plan is intended to communicate differences in emphasis expected of parks in different parts of the county as opposed to drawing sharp lines between rural, suburban, and urban parks.
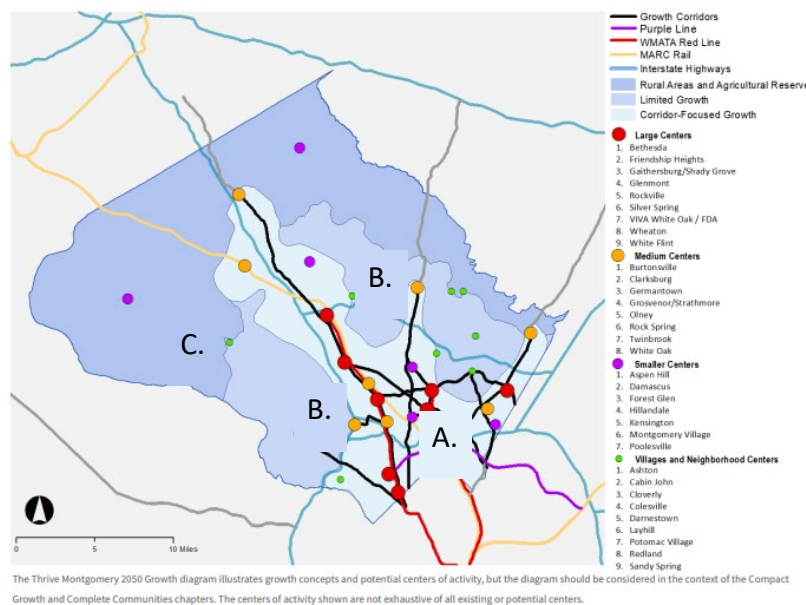
Figure 1.6: Montgomery County Parks Service Areas. Service areas provide context-appropriate guidance for park acquisition, development, and management.

Zone A (Urban): Corridor-Focused Growth area – This zone encompasses the most developed part of the county with the highest-density population and employment centers and the infrastructure to support existing and new development. This zone is forecast to have the largest share of new growth.

Parks and recreation facilities are often smaller but more intensively developed to serve a variety of purposes. Ideally these facilities will be readily accessible by transit, bicycling, and walking. Typical amenities include basketball, pickleball and tennis courts, fitness stations, paved trails, dog parks, and community gardens. Examples of programming may include "Salsa in the Parks," fitness classes, and firepit rentals. By way of illustration, conservation-based programing may include "Weed Warrior" volunteer days to help remove invasive plants, "Flying Squirrels" and "Critters in Crisis."

Zone B (Suburban): Limited Growth area *(East & West)* – This zone contains primarily suburban, residential communities where limited, organic growth is expected to meet local needs for services, provide a diverse range of housing choices, and increase racial and socioeconomic integration to achieve Thrive's conception of "Complete Communities." Park and recreation facilities usually follow the more traditional suburban model, with athletic fields, courts, playgrounds, large gathering spaces or open lawns as central features, and hard or natural surface trails.,". These parks are more likely to prioritize the availability of parking. Examples of programming may include league sporting events, and tours of historic and cultural sites such as Woodlawn Manor or the Josiah Henson museum.

Zone C (Rural): Rural Areas and the Agricultural Reserve – Areas of Zone C are largely dedicated to agriculture, rural open space, and environmental preservation. These parks are generally larger and more frequently classified as Regional Parks or Conservation Parks. Their primary, but not exclusive, purpose is to serve stewardship and resource-based recreation functions. Privately held land in rural parts of the county is generally subject to a variety of regulatory restrictions and incentive programs designed to limit development potential, conserve land, protect water quality, and encourage retention of forested areas. Significant portions of Zone C are in the Agricultural Reserve, and the Parks Department often leases land in this area for farming. Park and recreation facilities can include natural areas, campgrounds, water trails and boat launches, and natural surface trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Agricultural reservation related program may include agritourism such as "Pick Your Own" opportunities for visitors to select fresh fruit and vegetables.
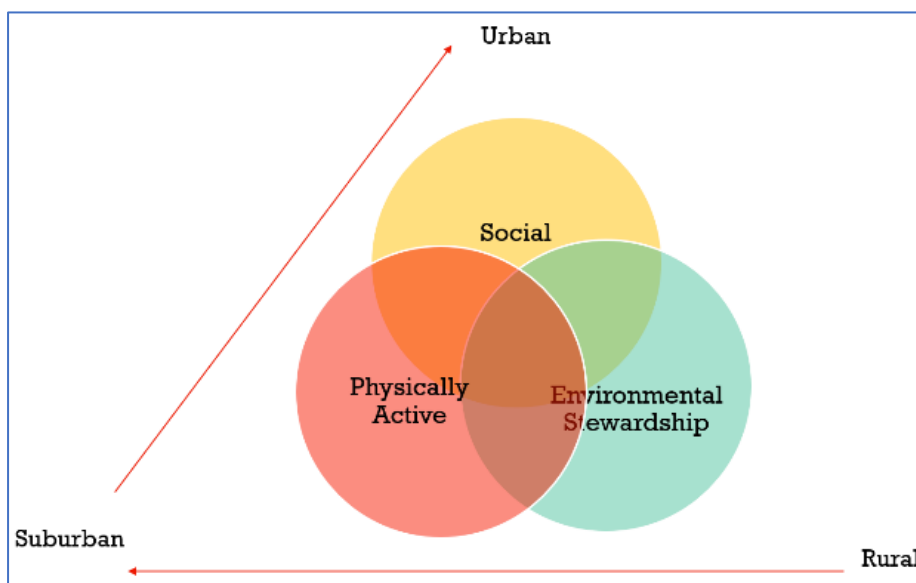
Figure 1.7: While all parks can support physical activity, social connections, and environmental stewardship, there may be more opportunities for certain aspects depending on the land-use context.

Figure 1.8: The scale and design of amenities may vary based on the land use context, even for a single amenity type. This figure shows how soccer fields, dog parks, playgrounds, trails, and stewardship activities may look and feel differently in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

Left: Parks in urban places are more likely to incorporate multiple uses and amenities in a small area than suburban and rural parks. Swampoodle Park in Northeast Washington, DC, goes vertical with a multi-level play structure, which is located next to a dog park and a small seating area. Photo by Darren Flusche.

Right: In service area A, Acorn Urban Park's art installation uses the Newell Street right of way, in coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, to add space for social gathering and physical activity, expanding space for social and recreational uses in one of the county's smallest urban parks.

Buck Branch Local Park in Service Area B contains a playground, lighted tennis and basketball courts, and a youth soccer field.

Black Hill Regional Park in Service Area C contains a variety of amenities, including a nature center, boat rentals, picnic shelters, volleyball courts, playgrounds, and trails. It shows how even in suburban and rural areas a single park can serve multiple purposes, including physical activity, social connection, and environmental stewardship. Photos: Montgomery Parks

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve Photo: Montgomery Planning

Q1. Level of Importance of Each of the Following Aspects of Where to Live

by the sum percentage of respondents who ranked the item as *important* (6 or 7) on a 7-point scale (excluding "not provided")

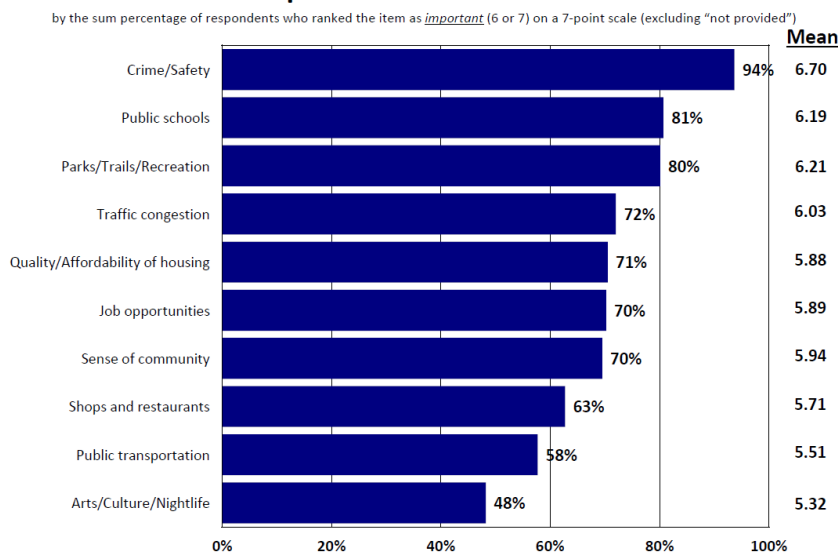|	Percent	Mean
Crime/Safety	94%	6.70
Public schools	81%	6.19
Parks/Trails/Recreation	80%	6.21
Traffic congestion	72%	6.03
Quality/Affordability of housing	71%	5.88
Job opportunities	70%	5.89
Sense of community	70%	5.94
Shops and restaurants	63%	5.71
Public transportation	58%	5.51
Arts/Culture/Nightlife	48%	5.32

Figure 1.9. Parks, trails, and recreation are among the three most important factors determining what makes a community a great place to live, according to Montgomery County residents.

Importance-Satisfaction Rating
2021 M-NCPPC Survey
Aspects of Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Satisfaction %	Satisfaction Rank	Importance-Satisfaction Rating	I-S Rating Rank
Very High Priority (IS >.20)						
Access to restrooms	41%	1	37%	12	0.2570	1
High Priority (IS .10-.20)						
Maintenance and physical condition	39%	3	66%	7	0.1300	2
Feeling of safety	40%	2	69%	4	0.1246	3
Selection of programs and activities	21%	5	44%	11	0.1146	4

Importance-Agreement Rating
2021 M-NCPPC Survey
Statements About Parks & Recreation in Montgomery County

Category of Service	Most Important %	Most Important Rank	Agreement %	Agreement Rank	Importance-Agreement Rating	I-A Rating Rank
High Priority (IS .10-.20)						
We need more park and recreation options that are suitable for seniors	33%	1	56%	8	0.1473	1
The park system should focus more on preserving nature and the environment	31%	3	55%	9	0.1389	2
We need more recreational opportunities that appeal to teens	26%	5	53%	10	0.1230	3

Figure 1.10. The Importance-Agreement Rating and Importance-Satisfaction Rating are tools used to help understand the priorities of members of the community. The Importance-Satisfaction Rating compares the importance survey respondents place on a service to how satisfied they are with the Parks Department's provision of that service. This list shows the services ranked relatively high in importance and relatively low in satisfaction (though in some cases a majority of respondents rated the service in question as satisfactory). The Importance-Agreement Rating is similar but measures agreement with various statements about what the Parks Department should be doing rather than satisfaction with its performance. Priorities rated highest in importance by respondents include access to restrooms, maintenance, safety, options for seniors, preservation of nature, and recreational opportunities for teens.

The Overlapping Joys of Parks

This PROS Plan describes the multiple purposes of parks – physical activity, social connection, and environmental stewardship – and the various activities and facilities used to achieve these ends. This chapter has addressed the need for parks to serve different demographic groups and how park amenities vary in different parts of the county.

It would be a mistake, however, to apply these organizing categories too rigidly. Instead of placing limits on what each park can or should do, this framework is intended as a guide to achieving a broad set of objectives. Parks – both individual parks and the system as a whole – must do many things in service of multiple goals. The objective of this plan is to systematically and thoughtfully analyze and direct our parks, recreation, and land management policies so that they meet the needs and desires of our diverse residents and effectively steward natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations.

Parks – both individual parks and the system as a whole – must do many things and achieve multiple goals.

Parks Classification

This plan revises the Park Classification System to simplify and clarify the typology of parks by communicating the differences in experiences emphasized in each type of park and their relationship with the revised PROS Plan Park "Service Areas." This Plan applies the new PROS service areas to guide the intensity and overlap of different facilities and experiences with the park typology – see Figure 1.10 for the overlaps of the experiences in each service area. This typology is intended to provide context-appropriate guidance for park planning, acquisition, design, development, and management.

All parks should provide social, active, and nature-based experiences to the extent practical. This Plan consolidates the several types of urban parks identified in earlier PROS plans into a single category: Urban Parks. This change will allow more flexibility in defining the character of each urban park, including the range of amenities, predominant function, program, and associated context within a hierarchy of public spaces. The urban design vision developed in future master plans or sector plans will help guide the service area, program, key features, size, and design of these parks. In the absence of a plan specifically applicable to a particular park, the EPS Plan Design Guidelines will be used to evaluate proposed projects in light of the needs of the area and of the urban parks system. The revised PROS Plan Parks Classification system retains "Neighborhood Conservation Areas" but recommends against applying this classification to newly acquired parkland.

For more details on the Park Classification, see the Parks Classification Matrix in Appendix 1.
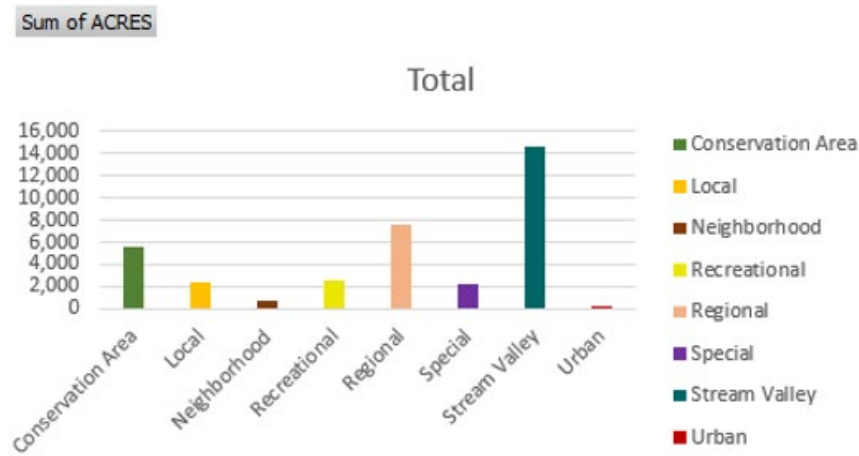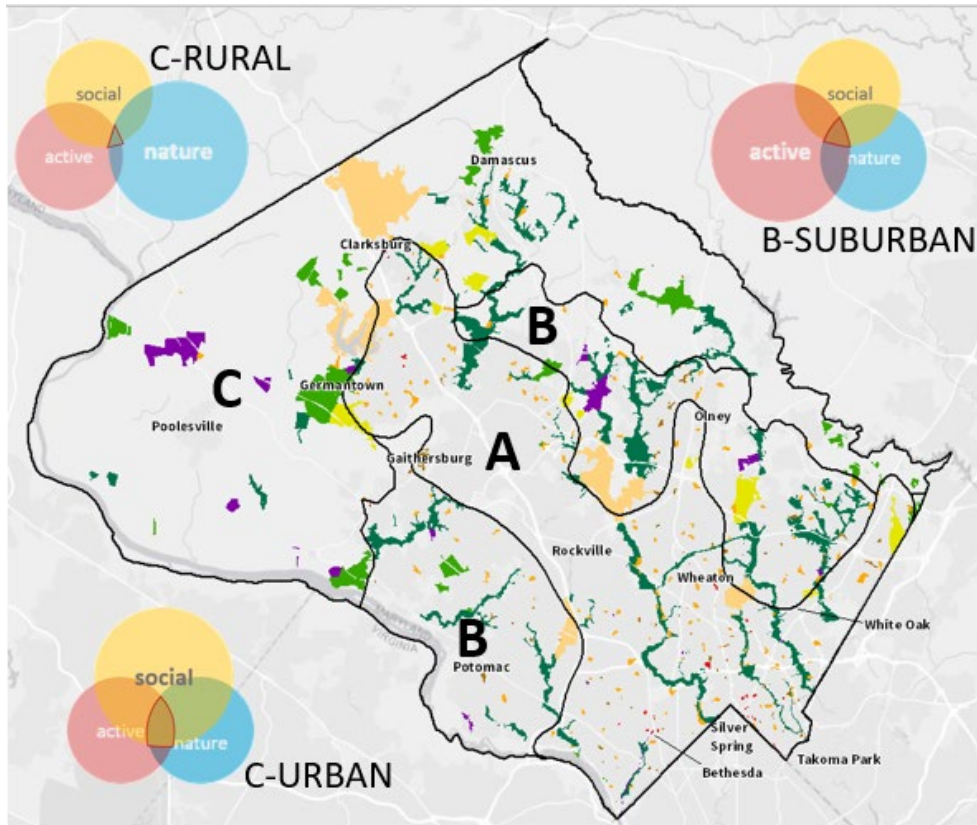
Figure 1.11 - PROS Service Areal, Experiences Overlaps Map and M-NCPPC Parks Distribution Table

2017
PROS PLAN

2022
PROS PLAN

RECREATIONAL ———————— RECREATIONAL
CONSERVATION AREA ————— CONSERVATION AREA
STREAM VALLEY ——————— STREAM VALLEY
SPECIAL ————————————— SPECIAL
REGIONAL ———————————— REGIONAL
LOCAL ——————————————— LOCAL
NEIGHBORHOOD ——————— NEIGHBORHOOD
CIVIC GREEN   URBAN
PLAZA
URBAN GREENWAY
URBAN RECREATIONAL
NEIGHB. GREEN
URBAN REC. PARKLET
POCKET GREEN
NEIGHB. CONSERVATION AREA*

Figure 1.12 – PROS Plan Parks Classification System

Recommendations

The following recommendations address overlapping and cross-cutting needs of parks. They follow from the analysis, categorization, and discussion above.

1. Develop parks that serve multiple functions rather than a single purpose.
    - Design parks, facilities and amenities, and program activities to support physical activity, encourage social connections, and steward environmental resources.
    - Cluster groups of park facilities together in individual parks or parks located in proximity to each other to provide a full range of amenities and services in every part of the county, with appropriate and cost-effective proximity depending on population density, land use context and other factors.
    - Eliminate redundancies and repurpose space and infrastructure to improve service and add variety in experiences, services, and functions.

2. Facilitate creation of public spaces that accommodate multiple needs, including recreation, education, community-building, and resource stewardship. Pursue co-location, adaptive reuse, joint programming, and shared use of land, buildings, and facilities to advance the goals of the Parks Department.

3. Avoid "partnerships," co-location and shared use of facilities and land that are not in the best interests of the parks system and its users. The use or disposal of parks property or resources to serve private interests or public purposes not directly related to Parks Department programs and objectives should be assessed under the "avoid, minimize, mitigate" approach outlined in A Policy for Parks (attached as Appendix 7).

4. Acquire and develop parks in locations that are served by good transportation options.
    - Focus investment in places that are accessible by walking, biking, and transit.
    - Consider accessibility for walkers, cyclists and transit users when making decisions about where to acquire land for parks and where to locate new amenities in existing parks.
    - Assess residual transportation and utility right-of-way with relevant agencies to determine whether such space can be used, permanently or temporarily, for park purposes.

5. Maintain a commitment to excellence in all aspects of park management and operations.
    - Prioritize a state of good repair and the physical condition of existing parks and facilities.
    - Stay abreast of trends in park amenities, management tools, and programs.
    - Encourage experimentation and innovation and remain open to new ideas.

6. Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are widely accessible and equitably distributed while working to understand and respond to specific needs and desires of our changing population.
    - Develop a Racial and Social Equity Plan incorporating and building on data driven tools such as the Equity Focus Areas and Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Plan to ensure that the quantity and quality of park facilities and programing are available to all residents on an equitable basis.
    - Refine the EPS Plan's methodology and expand its geographic scope to broaden and deepen measures of equity in the delivery of park and recreation facilities and programming.

- Apply the EPS Plan's methodology and other tools for assessing equity when developing capital budgets and making decisions about types and locations of new park and recreation facilities.

7. Provide parks and recreational opportunities suited to the diverse interests and needs of our residents.
   - Identify gaps in facilities and services suited to specific age groups, such as senior citizens, teenagers, and younger adults of working age.
   - Ensure that residents in urban, suburban, and rural areas all have access to a wide variety of parks and programs.
   - Assess – and systematically address -- cultural, physical and economic barriers to park visitation and participation in recreational activities.
   - Use technology and data collection to generate more sophisticated insights into the use of park and recreation facilities and to recalibrate service delivery strategies to respond to emerging trends.

8. Acquire and develop more - and better - urban parks.
   - Take advantage of infill and redevelopment opportunities to add and enhance park sites and facilities in densely populated centers of activity.
   - Prioritize acquisition of land for parks in urban centers and other intensively developed places along growth corridors and in Complete Communities using the Legacy Urban Space CIP commitment and the Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Functional Master Plan as a starting point.
   - Implement the EPS Plan to ensure that densely populated parts of the county enjoy walkable access to a full range of park experiences.
   - Integrate privately owned public spaces (POPS) with the park and recreation system to supplement publicly owned and managed gathering spaces and athletic facilities, using a range of ownership and management approaches to public space.
   - Coordinate land use and park planning to ensure communities have access to a range of park types through a combination of public and privately owned facilities.

9. Adapt management, programming, and operations to optimize performance of urban parks.
   - Offer programming designed to increase visitation to urban parks and extend time spent in these parks to make them centers of activity.
   - Refine calculations for Operational Budget Impact (OBI) to ensure accurate operations and maintenance cost estimates for parks in densely populated and high-use areas.
   - Modify operations and maintenance practices for smaller, more intensely used urban parks, including maintenance yard and equipment storage models, equipment types, and staffing approaches.

10. Increase safety and park usage through strategic use of lighting.
    - Develop a comprehensive lighting policy for the park system with criteria including cost effectiveness, energy usage and environmental sustainability, public safety, and effects on wildlife and neighboring homes.
    - Assess needs for lighting to support athletic field needs, trail usage, and evening activities in park buildings or for special evening events.

Section 2: Inventories, Assessments, & Recommendations

Each chapter in Section 2, 1. **describes a key purpose of parks,** 2. **lists inventory and activities relevant to the purpose**, 2. **assesses them**, and 3. **makes recommendations.**

Clockwise from upper left: Friendship Picnic, Wheaton Regional Park; soccer in Aberdeen Park; North Point Nature Conservation Park (Photos by Marilyn Stone); Agricultural Reserve (photo by Montgomery Planning)

Chapter 2: Physical Activity (Parks and Recreation)

Introduction

Parks provide a wide variety of opportunities for exercise and fitness, from fields and courts for team sports like soccer, basketball, and tennis to trails for individual activities such as running and biking. We also offer lower-intensity ways to stay in shape while having fun, including pickleball courts and walking paths. Even programs not designed primarily to encourage physical activity, such as community gardens and "weed warrior" volunteer days, help get people outside working their bodies.

Montgomery County residents see the value in exercise; three out of four say they "definitely will try" to "get more exercise/be more physically active" in the coming year. In addition, 87.7 percent of residents surveyed said they spent time exercising on their most recent day off, and 46 percent ranked exercise as one of their top three choices for what they would like to do on their next day off, making it the most popular option among those offered in the survey.

Support for active lifestyles and physical activity serves important public health objectives in addition to improving the mental and physical well-being of individuals. County government and school system data show that 18.8 percent of all residents -- and 8.6 percent of elementary and secondary school students – are obese based on widely recognized measurements of the relationship between height and weight. Moreover, rates of obesity – and related diseases such as hypertension, high blood pressure, and diabetes -- varies by race and ethnicity. For example, the Maryland Youth Risk Behavior Study found that 15.3 percent of Hispanic students in Montgomery County public high schools are obese, compared to 10.9 percent of African American students and 4 percent of white students.

Parks and recreational facilities can and should play a leading role in meeting the needs and desires of our residents for physical activity, *making our community a healthier place to live.* Perhaps just as importantly, the organized and informal physical activities that parks make possible serve an objective rarely identified as an explicit public interest goal: *making our community more fun.*

Activities, Facilities, Programs, and Infrastructure Supporting Physical Activity

Parks and recreation support physical activity by providing a range of facilities, programs, and infrastructure. Facilities include athletic fields for sports such as softball, cricket and soccer; courts for sports like basketball, tennis, and pickleball; playgrounds, skateboard parks, and swimming pools; trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding; and other infrastructure and amenities designed to accommodate specific sports and games. Some people, of course, are simply looking for space for informal and spontaneous play and movement, and no specialized improvements or equipment are needed to help them enjoy the outdoors and get some exercise. For these park patrons, an open lawn where they can toss a frisbee or a patch of trees for a game of hide-and-seek may meet their needs.

Some people prefer to participate in organized events and activities, so programming is an important part of encouraging people to get off the couch and get outside. Permitted events, such as races or non-

competitive fun runs, walks, and bike rides or organized sports leagues, senior fitness classes, summer camps for young children and teens, and bicycling safety instruction can help entice residents to try out a new active hobby or reconnect with a sport they enjoyed in the past.

Inventory

Park Assets

Montgomery Parks manages ~37,000 acres of land, 421 parks, and hundreds of facilities and amenities.

Park Facilities

- Archery: 2
- Athletic fields: 245
- Basketball Courts: 210
- BMX Track: 1
- Boating Facility - Rentals: 2
- Boating Landing Ramps: 3
- Campgrounds – Full Service: 1
- Campgrounds – Primitive: 2
- Campsites: 102
- Carousel: 1
- Community Gardens: 13
- Cricket Field: 8
- Dog Parks: 7
- Driving Range (Stand Alone): 1
- Equestrian centers: 6
- Event Centers: 4
- Exercise Stations: 50
- Formal Botanical Gardens: 2
- Golf Courses: 4
- Gymnasiums: 1
- Historic Sites: 43
- Historic Structures: 114

- Ice Rinks: 2
- Lakes: 4
- Large Group Picnic Areas: 2
- Miniature Golf: 1
- Miniature Trains: 2
- Nature Centers: 4
- Outdoor Ropes Course: 1
- Overlay football/soccer fields: 41
- Park Activity Buildings: 25
- Picnic Shelters (Non-Permitted): 48
- Picnic Shelters (Permitted): 88
- Playgrounds: 307
- Skate Park: 3
- Splash Playground: 1
- Tai Chi Court: 1
- Tennis Centers - Indoor: 3 (20 courts)
- Tennis Courts - Outdoor: 285
- Trails - Natural Surface: 206 miles
- Trails - Paved: 82 miles
- Trails – Water (Canoe): 5.4 miles
- Volleyball Courts: 12

Sources: EAM, EPS GIS database, and the Parks Acquisition ledger (06/2022)

In addition to the Parks Department's inventory of land and facilities, county residents also enjoy federal, state, and municipal parks along with Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPS) and county-owned public spaces such as Veterans Plaza in Silver Spring and Wheaton's Marian Fryer Plaza. Appendix 2 provides a consolidated summary of the main facilities by ownership.

Left: South Germantown Cricket Field Opening 2019. Photo by Marilyn Stone. Pittman.   *Right: MORE Epic Festival Bike Jumping, October 9, 2021. Photo by Art Pittman.*

Assessment

Parks should do more than provide places where people can play if they choose – they should make healthy physical activity irresistible. This requires well-designed, well-built, and well-maintained facilities that serve the needs of residents with different interests, skills, and levels of fitness. Parks must make it easy and appealing to participate in physical activities. Our parks should create welcoming opportunities for people of every cultural background and mental or physical ability. We should provide or facilitate participation in activities ranging from highly organized to totally informal, from intensely competitive to completely non-competitive, and for both groups and individuals.

Parks must focus on the specific needs and desires of an increasingly diverse population and of historically marginally and underserved communities and groups. Parks must serve the distinctive needs of senior citizens, teenagers, and young adults of working age.

Physical Activity in Urban Areas

When Montgomery County residents were asked what could be improved about our parks, the most common phrase in their responses was "need more." The competition for space in parts of the county that are already developed and becoming more urbanized makes it hard to find room for new athletic fields and other facilities designed to encourage vigorous physical activity. The Parks Department needs to be creative not only in how it acquires and develops land but also in how it works with both public and private partners to offer opportunities for active recreation in urban areas. We should be looking for space for physical activity in or on:

- land purchased by or dedicated to the Parks Department;
- land owned or maintained by other government agencies, such as athletic fields or tennis courts on public school sites;

- land developed by private parties who are willing – or required – to provide public access via easements or as a condition of development approvals; and
- unconventional locations such as the roofs of buildings and parking garages.

Active Transportation and Park Access

In addition to providing more opportunities for physical activity *in* parks we can encourage physical activity in the course of getting *to and from* parks by making them accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit. This means locating parks in places that are well-served by appropriate infrastructure such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and bus or rail lines as well as providing bike racks and making safety improvements in or around existing parks and using appropriate design and placemaking approaches in cooperation with the Montgomery Planning Department, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and State Highway Administration.

Serving Our Community

The Parks Department must adapt its programs and facilities to meet the specific needs and desires of an increasingly diverse population that includes historically marginally and underserved neighborhoods and groups. We also need to redouble our efforts to understand and respond to the distinctive needs of senior citizens, teenagers, and young adults of working age.

Responses to the Parks Department's survey of resident attitudes and opinions were broadly similar across demographic groups, although some differences of degree were apparent. For example, Black respondents were less likely to say they participate in an individual sport (running, cycling, horseback riding) or to ride a bike, hike, or walk for fun than respondents of other races. By the same token, though, the park amenities most frequently prioritized by Black respondents were natural surface trails and paved trails, choices that were also at the top of the list for other respondents. In other words, residents of all races and ethnicities are in broad agreement on what kinds of park facilities they most enjoy, but Black residents are slightly less likely to take advantage of them. We interpret the gaps between what Black residents say they like about parks and their use of our parks as an opportunity to be addressed by working to make our facilities more welcoming and accessible to Black patrons.

Seniors

As noted in Chapter 1, Montgomery County's senior population is growing rapidly as a proportion of our population. When residents were asked to select from a list of priorities for parks and recreation over the next five years, the most popular answer was *"We need more park and recreation options that are suitable for seniors" (see Figure 2.1).* In addition, 89 percent of respondents said parks, trails, and recreation play an important role in "giving seniors things to do."

Teens

Perhaps not surprisingly, high school students who participated in the Parks Department's survey said that the Parks Department should focus most on recreational opportunities that appeal to teens (see figure 2.1). When asked what they wanted to do on their next day off, the most popular choice was "getting together with friends." The top five amenities selected as priorities by these students were natural areas/wildlife habitat, natural surface trails, swimming pools, and musuems and historical/cultural sites.

1. We need more recreational opportunities that appeal to teens
2. The park system should focus more on preserving nature and the environment
3. I feel safe in the parks
4. The parks have lots of things to do for almost any type of person
5. The parks are well-maintained
6. We need more park and recreation options that are suitable for seniors
7. The area near my home has convenient access to outdoor recreation opportunities
8. I have a hard time finding information about parks, trails, and recreation facilities
9. I feel welcome in Montgomery County parks
10. Montgomery County parks are missing some of the things that are important to me
11. The parks are run-down and neglected
12. I know where to look for information about parks, trails, and recreation facilities
13. Montgomery County has park and recreational facilities for people like me

Figure 2.1: Summary of priorities selected by Montgomery County public high school students.

Adults

In 1960, 87 percent of households in Montgomery County included at least one child under the age of 18. By 2019, the share of households with children had shrunk to 33 percent. Meanwhile, the proportion of households consisting of one person living alone grew from 7 percent to 25 percent. The social and economic shifts that produced these changes, such as lower rates of marriage and childbirth as well as longer lifespans that have extended the length of time when adults with children can expect to live as "empty nesters, call for the Parks Department to focus more intensively on serving the needs of working-age adults without children as well as our growing senior population.

Q7. Level of Adequacy of Each of the Following Types of Amenities in Montgomery County

by percentage of respondents that think the amenities are either *adequate*, *needs partly met*, and *not enough* (excluding "not provided")

				Mean
Athletic fields (for team sports)	59.8%	36.9%	3.3%	5.59
Basketball courts	58.8%	37.2%	4.0%	5.55
Tennis courts	51.5%	43.6%	4.9%	5.52
Playgrounds	58.1%	37.0%	4.9%	5.30
Picnic areas/shelters	50.1%	43.7%	6.2%	5.26
Nature centers	44.4%	47.9%	7.7%	5.23
Natural trails (dirt/gravel)	50.9%	41.3%	7.7%	5.05
Plazas and space for outdoor events	40.4%	51.4%	8.3%	4.93
Natural areas/wildlife habitat	47.2%	44.5%	8.3%	5.12
Paved trails	44.9%	46.6%	8.5%	5.04
Indoor event space	41.0%	49.9%	9.1%	5.07
Indoor exercise facilities	45.8%	45.1%	9.1%	4.92
Swimming pools	42.5%	46.3%	11.2%	4.89
Skateboard parks	43.5%	44.8%	11.7%	4.91
Museums and historic/cultural sites	36.2%	51.8%	12.0%	4.63
Public gardens	34.7%	53.2%	12.1%	4.69
Ice skating rinks	42.8%	43.6%	13.7%	4.81
Dog parks	44.4%	40.8%	14.8%	4.88

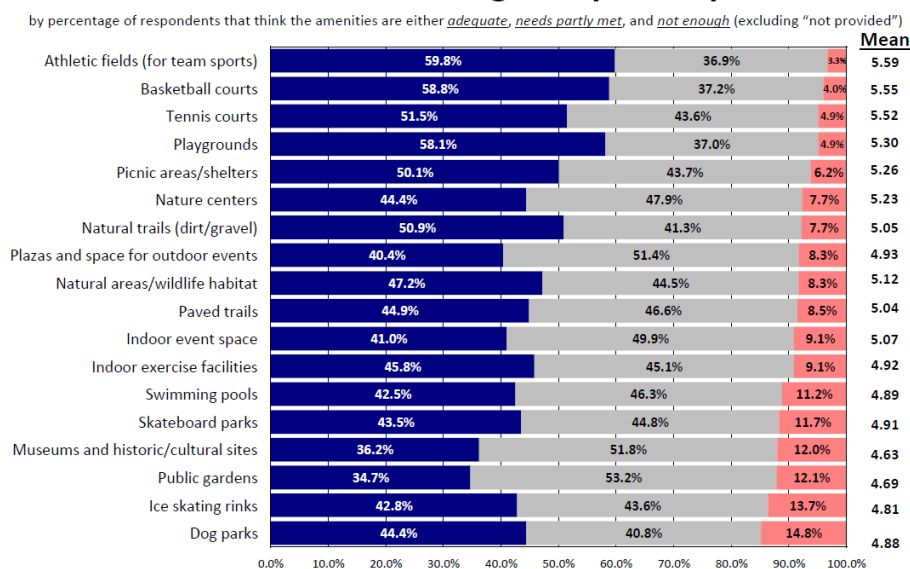*Figure 2.2: Level of adequacy of various amenities in Montgomery County*

Q8. Amenities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as their first, second, and third choice
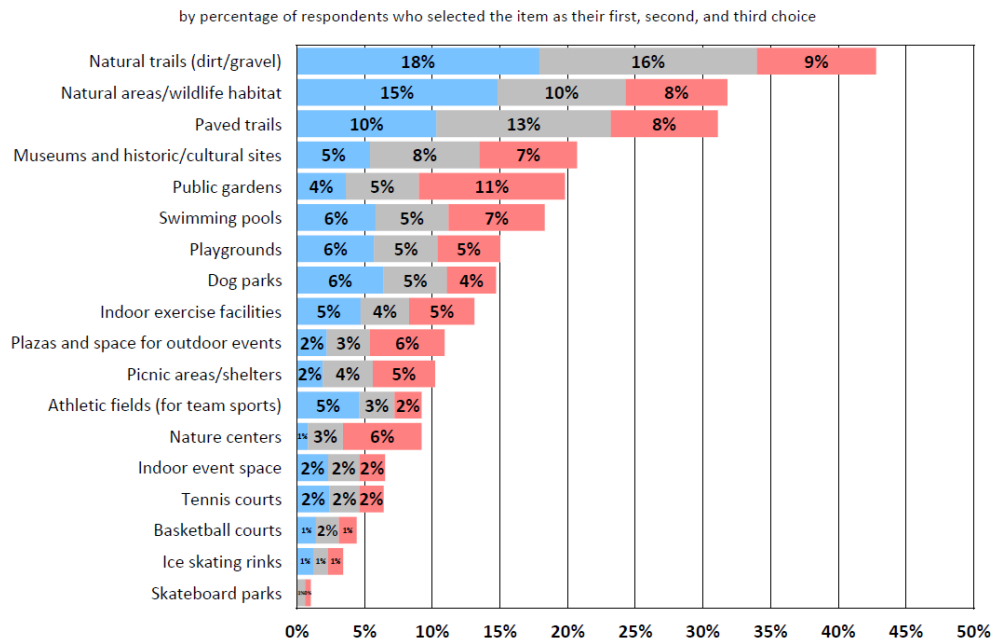

Figure 2.3: The amenities that are most important to residents of Montgomery County. Respondents were asked to rank the top three amenities from the listed items.

Facilities for Physical Activity

According to the level of service analysis conducted in support of this plan (Appendix 5), Montgomery County exceeds national benchmarks for the number of playgrounds, tennis courts, and basketball courts per capita.[5] Only six park amenities were found inadequate by more than ten percent of survey respondents: dog parks (14.8 precent), ice skating rinks (13.7 percent), public gardens (12.1 percent), museums and historic/cultural sites (12 percent), skateboard parks (11.7 percent), and swimming pools (11.2 percent). The level of service analysis also identified a need for two additional sand volleyball courts, two skateboard parks, and a disc golf course.

Athletic Fields

Respondents to the survey were more likely to report being satisfied (60 percent) - and less likely to say they were dissatisfied (3.3 percent) - with athletic fields than any other type of park facility. Teenagers were only slightly more likely than adults to say Montgomery County does not have enough athletic fields. There are, however, gaps in service for athletic field users, including competition for access to convenient practice fields during peak hours. A limited number of high-quality baseball and softball diamonds; rectangular fields for sports like soccer, football, and lacrosse; and cricket pitches are

---

[5] This is generally supported by survey data. Seventy-eight percent of respondents say they are satisfied with the quality and convenience of playgrounds, with no statistical differences across demographic groups. Seventy percent of respondents said they were satisfied with the adequacy of tennis courts, though they may not be distributed such that they are equally accessible to all community members. Seventy-seven percent of respondents said that their basketball court needs were met.

available to serve the large number of privately organized athletic leagues. The quality of fields suffers due to the multiple forms of sports that are played on the fields and lengthened seasons of play. The location and design of our fields should encourage use by non-elite athletes and make both formal and informal sports feel welcoming to all.

Trails

Trails have a low barrier to entry. Though they can involve specific equipment like bicycles or even horses, they also can be used with a simple pair of shoes. Therefore, trails are a great tool for making physical activity accessible and available to everyone. Indeed, natural surface trails and paved trails were both among the top three most important amenities to households based on the PROS survey. The PROS Level of Service analysis and the accompanying benchmarking report recommend that Montgomery County add trail miles to meet performance standards and deliver similar mileage as our neighbors in Virginia.[6] However, quality, and strategic location are at least as important as quantity. Parks should emphasize connectivity, safety, trail access (e.g., trailheads and access points), improving access to parks, and connecting parks with trails to activity centers and destinations in the county.

Other Facilities

Montgomery Parks has been developing new tools and analysis to identify the needs for facilities that encourage many recreation activities in the county. For more information on how the department is integrating the need for facilities based on established level of service, demand location, park accessibility and equity, see Chapter 6 and Appendix 5.

Recommendations

1. Use park and recreation facilities and programs to promote active lifestyles.

   - Include active recreation as an integral element in park planning and design.
   - Encourage active recreation as a key component of privately owned public spaces (POPS) in all parts of the county.
   - Consider the multiple purposes that parks play and integrate opportunities for physical activity into parks where that was not the initial driving force.

2. Deliver park and recreation facilities and programs designed to encourage residents of all ages, cultural backgrounds, and abilities to engage in vigorous physical activity.

   - Conduct a needs assessment to understand how best to serve the distinct physical activity needs of senior citizens, teenagers, and younger adults of working age.
   - Ensure recreational opportunities are equitably distributed in the county.
   - Provide recreational opportunities for non-elite athletes.

---

[6] Montgomery County Parks has 206 miles of natural surface trails and 82 miles of paved trails. Based on per capita trail mileage, the level of service analysis recommends that additional trail mileage is needed to meet the standard: 14 miles of paved and 9 miles of natural surface. The nearby Fairfax County Parks Authority, which like Montgomery County has over a million residents and has roughly 24 thousand acres of parkland (compared to Montgomery County's 37,100 acres), has 200 miles of natural surface trails and 134 miles of paved trail.

- Use strategic marketing plans that promote programs, trails, and parks targeting multiple demographics, increasing community engagement and advocacy for the park system.

3. Use creative strategies to deliver opportunities for recreation and physical activity in urban areas.

- Focus on compact multi-purpose sports facilities to provide more recreational opportunities with faster implementation.

4. Explore opportunities to build recreational amenities, such as athletic fields, above structured parking and on roofs of County buildings and underneath other infrastructure.
Improve active transportation and safe access to parks.

- Work with public agencies, such as MCPS, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Ride On, and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), to create "Safe Routes to Parks" and to other public spaces by filling gaps in sidewalks, trails, and transit service that connect public spaces to neighborhoods, schools, and other County facilities

5. Integrate park trails and paths into transportation planning and better use them to connect residents to jobs, centers of activity, and other parks and trails.
Continue to develop a world class trails network that connects parks and communities.

- Update and implement the Countywide Park Trails Plan with an emphasis on connecting trails to neighborhoods through connector trails, trailheads, and extending existing trails.
- Explore opportunities to support physical activity using pump tracks and mountain biking skills areas.
- Ensure major hard surface trails have adequate width and amenities to accommodate different users by providing additional travel and passing room for safer trail sharing.
- Explore creative and effective ways to educate users about trail etiquette to reduce user conflict.
- Increase awareness of existing trails and develop programs to allow all residents to feel welcome using the trail network.

6. Make strategic investments in athletic fields to maximize existing inventory and address shortages.

- Where practical, add lights to currently unlit fields and study parking capacity to increase playing hours and access to fields without the need to build new facilities.
- Continuously reevaluate the inventory of athletic fields and build new fields and develop partnerships to meet community needs.
- Assess the need for and provide opportunities for sports such as lacrosse, cricket, field hockey, and ultimate frisbee.
- Focus on providing new athletic fields along accessible transportation corridors and in transit-accessible areas.

7. Explore opportunities to add sand volleyball, skate parks, and disc golf facilities.

Precedents

The following precedents illustrate some of the kinds of programs and facilities that could help bring new audiences into the parks, offer a broader array of physical activities to meet the needs of different types of park users, and make it easier for park users to spend more time being active outside with their friends and family.

A: Tails on the Trails (Montgomery County, MD)

- Tails on the Trails invites dog owners to join group fun runs and walks.
- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

B: Park Hubs & Restrooms (FDR Park, Philadelphia, PA)

- Park Hubs create facilities that can support multiple functions – permit offices, community meeting space, event space, cafes, welcome centers, etc.
- These staffed multi-purpose facilities make it feasible to support regularly maintained bathrooms to serve the public.
- Source: Fairmount Park Conservancy: Announcing new FDR Gateway designs and city funding! – Fairmount Park Conservancy (myphillypark.org)

C: Urban Park Programming (Washington, DC)

- Urban parks and plazas can function as outdoor gyms when parks departments host athletic programming.
- Source: Golden Triangle BID: Outdoor Activations - Golden Triangle (goldentriangledc.com)

D: Outdoor Offices (Washington, DC)

- With tables, chairs, shade, and Wifi, urban parks and plazas can also function as outdoor offices.
- Source: Golden Triangle BID: Outdoor Activations - Golden Triangle (goldentriangledc.com)

E: Healthy Aging in Urban Parks (Nationwide)

- The National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Healthy Aging in Parks Initiative seeks to preserve the health, independence, and social connections of older adults through programs that address their health and wellness needs.
- Source: National Recreation and Park Association: Healthy Aging in Parks | Initiatives | National Recreation and Park Association (nrpa.org)

F: Community Health & Literacy Center (Philadelphia, PA)

- The Community Health & Literacy Center in South Philadelphia combines a City Health Center, a pediatric practice, a library branch, and a recreation center and park all on in facility, addressing multiple overlapping needs of the surrounding and diverse population.
- Source: PIDC: COMMUNITY HEALTH & LITERACY CENTER – PIDC (pidcphilablog.com)

G: Co-Creating Space with Teen Girls (N/A)

- Make Space for Girls, a charity based in the U.K., advocates for building public spaces that meet the needs of teenage girls. The organization provides resources and best practices to help communities engage teen girls in conversation about the types of public spaces they would like to see.
- Source: Make Space for Girls: What does better look like? – Make Space for Girls

Chapter 3: Social Connections & Civic Engagement

Introduction

Parks bring people from all walks of life together in public spaces, making them a fundamental part of our democratic infrastructure. Access to resources like nature, gathering places, and recreational opportunities should be available to everyone on an equal basis.

We live in an age of distrust, and civic engagement has been in decline for decades in the United States.[7] Even before the COVID-19 pandemic required us to physically separate ourselves from one another, making the phrase "social distancing" a part of our vocabulary, Americans were feeling increasingly isolated in their day to day lives. Six in ten Americans (61 percent) reported feeling lonely in 2019, compared to more than half (54 percent) in 2018.[8]

Rebuilding a sense of community and shared purpose is essential if democracy is to survive and flourish, and research shows that well-designed parks can be part of the solution. Parks serve a critical and sometimes overlooked role in strengthening social cohesion,[9] facilitating and sometimes even requiring social interaction with both friends and strangers. These interactions can help to strengthen a sense of shared interests and foster active civic engagement. Vibrant and attractive public spaces draw people in and encourage them to interact.[10] As the sociologist William Whyte observed, when it comes to public space, "What attracts people most, it would appear, is other people."

Activities, Facilities, Programs, and Infrastructure Supporting Social Connections

Parks, recreation, and open space support social connectivity by providing a range of facilities, programs, and amenities that bring people together. Facilities that are often successful in achieving this

---

[7] The need for civic education in 21st-century schools, https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/bigideas/the-need-for-civic-education-in-21st-century-schools/

[8] https://www.cigna.com/static/www-cigna-com/docs/about-us/newsroom/studies-and-reports/combatting-loneliness/cigna-2020-loneliness-factsheet.pdf

[9] According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a society is cohesive if "it works towards the well-being of all its members, fights exclusion and marginalization, creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, and offers its members the opportunity of upward social mobility." The three pillars of social cohesion are social inclusion, social capital, and social mobility. OECD 2011, "Perspectives on Global Development 2012—Social Cohesion in a Shifting World"

[10] https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cecil-Konijnendijk-Van-Den-Bosch/publication/267330243_Benefits_of_Urban_Parks_A_systematic_review_-_A_Report_for_IFPRA/links/544b6bae0cf2bcc9b1d51ef5/Benefits-of-Urban-Parks-A-systematic-review-A-Report-for-IFPRA.pdf
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Cecil-Konijnendijk-Van-Den-Bosch/publication/267330243_Benefits_of_Urban_Parks_A_systematic_review_-

effect include picnic areas, dog parks, historic/cultural sites such as museums, nature centers and public gardens, playgrounds, trails, community gardens and even skateboard parks.

Public spaces provide tremendous opportunities for social interaction. People of diverse backgrounds encounter each other in shared spaces to share common interests. These spaces include plazas and outdoor event venues, lawns for informal play, relaxing, and events, like movie nights, and seating areas. Parks can also act as community hubs and focal points for response and recovery during natural disasters and other emergencies.

A variety of park amenities support social interactions and development of civic identity, such as interpretive signs, picnic shelters, benches and other people-watching opportunities; public chess and checker boards; bocce and lawn games; and trailheads with "gateway treatments" where groups can gather. Bike and stroller parking locations can encourage chatting. Food truck hook-ups facilitate food and beverage vendors, encouraging sustained visitation and social events. Water fountains, dog water bowls, and restrooms also allow people (and their four-legged companions) to spend more time in parks.

Programs in parks and open space that support social cohesion include cultural and historic interpretation, happy hours and wine tastings, festivals, events, and other "activation" activities.

Parks provide opportunities to gather in public spaces and make social connections. This is a photo taken during "Evening Embers Campfire Series" Adult Night at Germantown Town Center Urban Park November 2021. Photo by Ed Wondoloski.

Inventory & Programs

Montgomery County has a number of facilities and programs that support civic engagement.

Cultural Resources

Montgomery Parks owns and manages 43 historic sites containing 111 historic structures. The park system also includes 300 known archaeological sites and many more that are likely but have not been formally documented and catalogued. The Parks Department manages these assets in its Asset Priority Index and in its Archaeological GIS Inventory, which is accessible to our staff archaeologists. Most of our historic sites are designated or identified in the county's Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites, the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation, the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, and/or the National Register for Historic Places.

Museums and Historic & Cultural Sites

From African American heritage and the fight for freedom (Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park, Oakley Cabin, and the new Josiah Henson Museum), to cultural history spanning thousands of years (Native American History), to farming practices of 200 years ago (Agricultural History Farm Park), and the experience of education in a one-room schoolhouse in the early-20th century (Kingsley Schoolhouse), the Parks Department's historic resources tell the stories of the county's people. Through regular public openings, reserved group tours, special events, student field trips, and partnership programs, these sites are accessible and interpreted through both free and moderately priced programs.

Josiah Henson Special Park tour groups and poetry reading in February 2018. Photos by Tony Ventouris.

Interpretation

There are 80 interpretive signs in the park system, including 20 recently added signs for historic African-American cemeteries, at cultural sites, at trailheads and along trail corridors, and in parks undergoing renovation.

Nature Centers

Montgomery Parks has five nature centers:

- Brookside Nature Center
  - Programs include Maple Sugaring Days, Flying Squirrel programs, Turtle Talks, Harper Cabin programs, Stroller Strolls, and Friday Forays.
- Maydale Nature Classroom
  - Programs include Frog Watch community science programs, GPS Egg Hunt, Insect Festival (planned).
- Meadowside Nature Center
  - Programs include Raptor programs, Spanish-language programs, Legacy of the Land exhibit, Native Ways cultural programs.
- Locust Grove Nature Center
  - Programs include Cider Days, Nature Explorers pre-school, Dino Dig, Theme Weeks, and Hiking programs for individuals with special needs.
- Black Hill Nature Center
  - Programs include Partnership programs with the Boys & Girls Clubs; Mudfest; Wild Child program; Pontoon boat programs, especially for seniors; Monarch Fiesta; Rainbows, Sprinklers, and Bubbles; and Green School certification consulting.

¡Bienvenidos a la Primavera! Spring Break program March 2018 at Meadowside Nature Center. Photos by Tony Ventouris.

Activation

The activation program is an initiative designed to get people into the parks by hosting unique and engaging activities throughout the system. The program has four full-time employees and relies on the help of part-time staff and volunteers to assist with programming needs. The team operates programs on a year-round basis hosting small, medium, and large activities. The program launched in 2016 and activities have included Touch a Truck events, Sharks in the Parks (Discovery Channel Shark Week films), Butterfly Garden, and Chalk Day. In addition, amenities have been installed in various parks to increase activity, including movable tables and chairs, a loop trail, chess, ping pong, and shuffleboard.

Long Branch Festical at Flower Avenue Local Park on September 11th, 2021. Photos by Ed Wondoloski.

Special Events / Festivals

Montgomery Parks hosts 200-300 events a year that provide community gathering opportunities. Examples include Colors and Kites in Black Hill, the Parks Half Marathon, the MoCo Epic mountain bike ride, the Friendship Picnic in Wheaton Regional Park, Burtonsville Day at Columbia Local Park, the annual July 4th Festival in South Germantown Recreational Park at Newport Mill Local Park, and Opera in the Parks at Warner Circle Park. We also host smaller community events such as 5K races, annual neighborhood get-togethers, and picnics. Each year we host hundreds of sports tournaments of various types.

Plazas / Civic Parks

Social gathering requires inviting physical spaces that can accommodate events of varying types and sizes. Montgomery Parks provides such spaces, including:

- 2 large group picnic areas, consisting of multiple tables and grills,
- 143 picnic shelters, 285 picnic tables, and 54 shelters that do not include a picnic table,
- 70 plaza areas (paved areas with no single defined use),

- 5 amphitheaters, and
- 1 carousel.

In addition, Parks provides accompanying amenities that encourage people to spending time together, including:

- 2,520 benches,
- 20 game tables,
- 16 selfie stands,
- 6 fire pits, and
- 2 pinata hooks.

Volunteer Trail Workday June 2019 at Fairland Recreational Park. Photos by Tony Ventouris.

Volunteers

Montgomery Parks benefits from approximately 80,000 hours of volunteer service each year. Volunteer programs support park priorities and provide opportunities for residents to get to know one another and create social bonds around working towards a common goal. The Parks Department's major volunteer programs and locations are:

- Agricultural History Farm Park,
- Archaeology,
- Brookside Gardens,
- Cabin John and Wheaton Ice Rinks,
- Community gardens,
- Historic interpretation,
- Little Bennett Campground,
- Nature centers,
- Pope Farm Nursery,
- Park Police,

- Park and stream cleanups,
- Trail construction and maintenance,
- Weed Warriors, and
- Wildlife management.

Sligo Creek Parkway. Open Parkways. January 2, 2021. Photos by Marilyn Sklar, Montgomery Parks.

Agritourism

Montgomery County is home to many farms that are open to the public. There are a variety of opportunities to relax and socialize in the agricultural reserve, including:

- Three large "Pick Your Own" Farms (Homestead, Rock Hill Orchard, Butler's Orchard) and many other smaller-scales ones.
- Six farm wineries, including four with tasting rooms.
- Four farm breweries with tasting rooms.
- Two farm cideries – one with outdoor seating and one with a tasting room.[11]

Montgomery Parks Foundation

The Parks Foundation promotes the values and benefits of the park system to Montgomery County residents and policymakers. The Foundation is a fundraising and support organization for Montgomery Parks and provides opportunities for residents and businesses to support the work of the department Among its contributions, the Montgomery Parks Foundation has:

---

[11] https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agservices/agritourism.html

- Assisted the Parks Department in securing millions of dollars in funding through the state capital budgets during the past five years,
- Secured $150,000 for the construction of the Living Classroom in Black Hill Regional Park
- Contributed $500,000 to the Josiah Henson Museum & Park project since 2017, and
- Managed funds raised by the Friends of Potomac Horse Center for much-needed roof repairs at the facility.

Assessment

Through ongoing nature center programs, cultural resource interpretation, and volunteer coordination, as well as the launch of the Parks Activation program in 2016, the relaxation of rules governing alcoholic beverages in parks and the development of the Nature on Wheels Mobile Nature Center in 2020, the opening of the Josiah Henson Museum in 2021, and many other new and growing programs and activities, Parks has made strides in finding ways to welcome people to parks and provide opportunities to strengthen social and civic connections.

However, the work is just beginning towards using parks to intentionally build "social capital," a shared sense of purpose that can help strengthen efforts to promote respect for diversity, demonstrate the value of inclusion, and build a foundation for greater community trust. As parks play a role in building social trust and inclusion, they can and must also support efforts for racial and social justice and invite people of all ages, cultures, incomes, and interests to gather and interact.

The design, location, and accessibility of our parks influence levels of community cohesion and social interaction. Well-designed and sited parks and public spaces can make it easier for people to meet others and participate in activities. Parks must continue to create physical environments where a sense of community can flourish.

Through cultural programming and interpretation, events, and physical design, park space and programs can and should be used to foster a sense of community identity in Montgomery County. Parks must stay abreast of trends in – and lead the way in developing – engaging programs that foster community, civic engagement, and social cohesion. Parks must also use parks to tell the story of Montgomery County's history, culture, and natural resources. Parks' interpretation efforts need to tell historically "untold" stories of marginalized groups in the county.

Space for Impromptu Activity

Through community input, residents have expressed a desire for "casual spaces" that can be used for relaxation, reflection, and informal activities. These spaces create opportunities for spontaneous, positive social experiences. By encouraging those with diverse ages and backgrounds to gather and linger, casual spaces can facilitate "bridging" through interaction and conversation. Casual use spaces should not be those that are "left over" after active uses are accommodated; rather, they should be purposefully designed and designated as part of the public space system.

Support Services and Amenities

Public spaces should include amenities that make them more comfortable, including seating, drinking fountains, eating, shade, and portable or permanent restrooms. Concessions can include permanent or temporary structures that sell food and beverages, including alcohol.

An analysis of our park amenities based on national standards, a review of peer agencies, and survey data determined that the county needs additional picnic shelters, community gardens, and dog parks to meet the demands of the county's population.

As noted in Chapter 2, in terms of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with amenities that support social connections, more than ten percent of survey respondents stated that there are not enough public gardens (12.1 percent) or museums and historic/cultural sites (12 percent) in the county.

Attractive and Culturally Appropriate Public Spaces

Approximately one-third of Montgomery County residents are foreign-born. Culturally appropriate placemaking can be used to provide welcoming spaces that appeal to residents from many different cultural backgrounds and encourage all residents to gather and interact in a way that builds a sense of community.

This is an important goal, because survey results indicate that not everyone currently feels equally welcome in our parks. Asian respondents were less likely to be very satisfied with "interactions with other visitors" and "Interactions with park & recreation employees," and were more likely to say parks should focus on parking and creating a feeling of safety over the next five years.

Overall 84 percent of respondents said they felt welcome in parks. However, only 80 percent of African American respondents agree with the statement "I feel welcome in Montgomery County Parks," compared to 87 percent of White respondents.

Access to and satisfaction with facilities varied somewhat based on demographics. For example, compared to white respondents, African Americans were *less likely* to visit nature centers and *more likely* to say some of their nature center needs are unmet.[12] Presumably, the lower visitation is a result of the lack of convenient and accessible facilities, as expressed by the unmet needs response.

Pop-up and Pilot Projects

Temporary uses and changes add an exciting dynamic to public spaces and could enable parks to do more with the spaces it has and in partnership with private owners.

---

[12] Overall, the survey results were similar across racial and ethnic groups. The examples provided in the text are among those differences among demographic groups that were statistically significant at a 95 or 99 percent confidence level. See appendix A for the full results. Source: 2021 Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission Survey Findings Report, September 2021, ETC Institute.

Feeling of Safety

When survey respondents were asked which aspects Montgomery Parks should focus on over the next five years, the second most popular answer was "feeling of safety." In terms of satisfaction, 69 percent of respondents said they were satisfied with their feeling of safety in parks, but 9 percent said they were unsatisfied. Lower income survey respondents were less likely to report being satisfied with their feeling of safety than higher-income respondents; and lower income respondents were more likely to list safety as the number one aspect of parks they think the Parks Department should focus on over the next five years. Asian and Hispanic/Latino respondents were less likely than white respondents to report being satisfied with the safety of the park system.

In 2021, a multi-division Safety-in-Parks Committee and sub-committees on technology, trails, "hot-spots," and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), analyzed safety issues and made recommendations to improve safety.

Recommendations

1. Ensure access to spaces that are intentionally designed to support casual, impromptu use for exercise, games, socializing, and connection with nature.

   - Explore opportunities to develop standards for casual use spaces. Undertake an inventory of casual use spaces to better understand their distribution and gaps.
   - Locate or connect parks where social gathering is encouraged. Promote walking and biking to gathering places. Ensure that the facilities and site design are civic in nature and promote social gathering.
   - Enhance spaces with temporary uses and "pop-up" programming such as buskers.
   - Create a strategic plan for park activation to promote social interactions.

2. Provide more support services and amenities for public space users.

   - Explore expanding the offerings or permitting of food and beverage concessions in brick-and-mortar facilities and food trucks in public spaces in high density corridors, adjacent to sports fields, and at locations where special events are regularly held and people regularly gather.
   - Explore legislative changes to make it easier for the Parks Department to issue permits for the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in designated parks.
   - Design and build new permanent restrooms and retrofit existing restrooms to accommodate year-round use.
   - Expand Wi-Fi to provide public internet access in urban parks to incentivize park visitation.
   - Reconfigure or add infrastructure to support programming, such as events and classes.

3. Strive for more attractive and culturally appropriate public spaces.

   - Gather data and best practices on ways to provide culturally appropriate recreational programming, activities, and facilities.
   - Use parks and interpretive programming and sign to tell the story of Montgomery County's history, culture, and natural resources, with a focus on historically marginalized groups, including Black, Hispanic, Native-American and LGBTQ communities.

- Preserve and support unique gathering places and sites that enhance neighborhood character and reflect local culture.
- Incorporate public art and public performances to celebrate local history and culture to create meaningful connections between people and places important to civic life.
- Sustain an arts and culture ecosystem in parks that enriches the lives of county residents and the vitality of its communities.

4. Provide park amenities that serve the distinct social connection needs of seniors, teenagers, young adults, and people with disabilities and encourage positive interactions among people of different backgrounds and interests.

5. Enhance spaces with mini-park refreshers, temporary uses, and "pop-up" programming.

- Continue to encourage the activation of public spaces and other publicly and privately owned property through temporary activities like parklets, interim parks, special events, seasonal markets, and pop-up events.
- Partner with transportation agencies to expand the use of temporary road closures to create public spaces that can be used for the community at large or for play and special events.

6. Address park visitors' concerns over feelings of safety in parks.

- Implement the 2021 Safety-In Parks Committee recommendations.
- Use surveys, focus groups, and other research techniques to understand park visitors' safety concerns to identify what makes our parks feel unsafe and specifically where and when.

7. Build more community gardens in or accessible to underserved and high-density areas to increase access to fresh, healthy foods and promote social engagement.

Precedents

This set of precedents shows examples of programs and events that encourage people of different backgrounds to come together around shared interests and experiences, and that elevate the cultural and social traditions of diverse groups to drive these programs.

Programs and Events

A: Yappy Hour
B: Breaking Bread, Breaking Barriers
C: Let's Make Sweet Music Together
D: Craft & Sip
E: Friendship Picnic
F: Programs reflecting diverse cultural identities
G: Pop-Up Explorations with Partners

A: Yappy Hour (Montgomery County, MD)

- Montgomery Parks and Bethesda Urban Partnership partnered to host a "Yappy Hour" and Pop-Up Dog Park in downtown Bethesda with live music, food, beer and wine at Elm Street Urban Park.

- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

B: Breaking Bread, Breaking Barriers (Reading Terminal Market – Philadelphia, PA)

- To build social bonds in diverse communities, Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia curated a series of small group dinners to bring people of different backgrounds together, using food as the common denominator. Each event consisted of a group cooking session followed by a meal and discussion between participants to foster connections that bridged cultural divides.

- Source: Alex Styer for Reimagining the Civic Commons: A Taste for Connection. How Food Bridges Social, Cultural and… | by Chris Maier | Reimagining the Civic Commons | Medium

C: Let's Make Sweet Music Together (Philadelphia, PA)

- To test the power of music to bring people of different backgrounds together, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation created a pop-up mobile music studio to act as a "third place" —inviting people to stop, play, and jam together.

- Source: Interface Studio: Let's Make Sweet Music Together — Medium

D: Craft & Sip (Montgomery County, MD)

- Montgomery Parks Craft & Sip series invites residents to sign-up for a crafting table with a group of friends, which includes assorted crafting materials, food, and drinks.

- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

E: Friendship Picnic (Montgomery County, MD)

- Montgomery Parks and the Montgomery County Office of Human Rights host an annual Friendship Picnic in Wheaton Regional Park. The picnic is free and open to the public and brings people of diverse cultures and faiths together to make new friends and discuss ways to build a stronger community.

- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

F: Programs reflecting diverse cultural identities (Chicago, IL)

- The Rebuild Foundation in Chicago seeks to create "landscapes of belonging" in communities where decades of disinvestment have created neighborhoods that lack access to cultural amenities and spaces for shared experiences. In addition to space, Rebuild offers programming opportunities for local creatives from the community.

- Source: Reimagining the Civic Commons: RCC_PlaceDrivingEquity.pdf (civiccommons.us)

G: Pop-Up Explorations with Partners (New York, NY)

- Pop up learning space can serve as a reading room, art studio, science lab, targeting underserved neighborhoods. In New York, partnerships with NYC Parks, NYC Housing Authority and NYC Department of Transportation provided the locations for the pop ups, while arts and cultural institutions help provide programming content.

- Source: Street Lab: https://www.streetlab.org/programming-nyc-public-space/

Physical Spaces and Amenities

This set of precedents focuses on physical spaces and amenities that make public spaces more welcoming to different types of users and easier to access, and that invite the public to contribute their own ideas of how to make these spaces more inclusive.
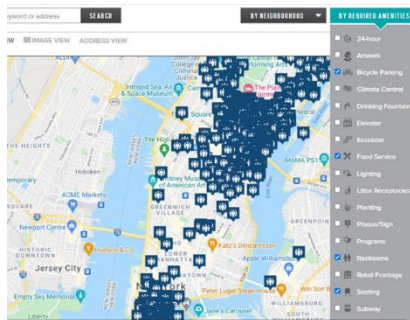
H: Privately Owned Public Spaces "POPS"
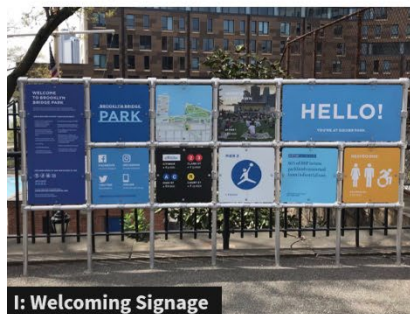
I: Welcoming Signage

J: Creation Spaces

K: Challenge Grants

L: Accessible Signage

H: Privately Owned Public Spaces "POPS" (New York, NY)

- New York City has a long-established POPS program that offers a wide range of spaces from outdoor plazas to indoor arcades. Clear communication helps make the program successful through signage and an interactive map that allows searches by location and amenities.

- Source: Advocates for Privately Owned Public Space, The Municipal Art Society of New York, and Jerold S. Kayden: Find a POPS - Privately Owned Public Space (APOPS) (mas.org)

I: Welcoming Signage (Brooklyn Bridge Park, New York, NY)

- Park systems around the country are beginning to design more welcoming signage standards, designed to highlight what users **can** do in the parks, rather than focusing on what they **can't**.

- Source: Cat Kirk Kucharek: Signage: Brooklyn Bridge Park — Cat Kirk Kucharek | Designer

J: Creation Spaces (Minneapolis, MN & Memphis, TN)

- The Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board is working to transform four of the city's 47 recreation centers into Creation Spaces. The Creation Spaces concept was born out of a desire to create spaces and places for youth in the city to experience different things beyond the typical sports-oriented activities offered at recreation centers. Creation Spaces seeks to reimagine recreation centers into spaces where kids can experience creativity in ways that feel good to them.

- Source: Reimagining the Civic Commons: RCC_PlaceDrivingEquity.pdf (civiccommons.us)

K: Challenge Grants (Macon, GA)

- Macon's Downtown Challenge Fund is an 18-month grant-funded ideas challenge designed to implement the best ideas for transforming Macon into a place that is kid-friendly, inclusive, creative, and greener. The grant is open to everyone – individuals, organizations, businesses, and non-profits, and seeks ideas both small and large related to the primary goals of Macon's Downtown Action Plan.

- Source: Community Foundation of Central Georgia: Downtown Challenge 2.0 - Community Foundation of Central Georgia (cfcga.org)

L: Accessible Signage (Montgomery County, MD)

- Montgomery Parks introduced this communications board at South Germantown Recreational Park to help make parks and playgrounds more inclusive and accessible.

- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

Chapter 4: Natural Resources & Environmental Stewardship

Introduction

Parks and natural areas play a critical role preserving natural resources and wildlife habitats, protecting clean water and clean air, and conserving land. Well-managed and stewarded natural areas support community well-being, encourage and preserve biodiversity, and connect people with nature.

Stewardship activities also enjoy strong public support. When asked how important it is for parks, trails, and recreation facilities to play a role in various aspects of life, 65.6 percent of residents said "protecting natural environment/address climate change" was extremely important, coming in second only to "supporting a high quality of life in every part of Montgomery County" (68.6 percent). When asked what the county should focus most on over the next 5 years, 30.6 percent of respondents ranked "the park system should focus more on preserving nature & the environment" in their top three choices, coming third behind only safety and options for seniors.

North Point Nature Conservation Park 2017. Photo by Marilyn Stone.

Activities and Programs Related to Supporting Environmental Stewardship

Achieving high-quality environmental stewardship, one of the core purposes of parks and strategic land management, requires many different activities including land conservation, sustainable practices, education, and responsible nature-based recreation.

Before and after photographs of a storm drain outfall channel restoration completed 2021 in Watts Branch SVU 3. Photos by Jacqueline Hoban.

- Land conservation and stewardship activities include:

    o public land acquisition,
    o private land conservation easements,
    o local land use management plans and procedures,
    o incentivizing the retention of forests, wetlands, or agricultural lands,
    o avoiding impacts of public infrastructure projects,
    o mitigating impacts of public projects,
    o biological monitoring and watershed restoration,
    o review of development on parkland,
    o vegetation management,
    o non-native invasive (NNI) species management,
    o wildlife management (including white-tailed deer management); and
    o integrated pest management.
- Sustainability practices include writing and implementing a sustainability plan, following LEED standards for buildings, installing solar panels, and reducing waste.

- Continued support for environmental conservation requires public support, which is encouraged by nature-based education in and around nature centers and nature interpretation, as well as responsible nature-recreation including natural surface trails, fishing, and camping.

With significant infrastructure and development pressures affecting parkland, staff coordinates thorough environmental reviews and Mandatory Referrals at the Montgomery County Planning Board when project impacts are determined to be unavoidable and in the public interest. The process imposes requirements for impact avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation commensurate with the value of the affected natural area or resource. An approved Park Construction Permit is required for any external agency to conduct work on parkland, limiting unauthorized encroachments and impacts. An environmental overlay and Special Protection Area zoning provide for caps on impervious development where specific water quality resources and objectives have been established and protective measures are imposed for sensitive area buffers, inclusive of riparian zone, wetlands, steep slopes, and soils.

Appendix 7 contains the entire text of "A Policy for Parks," which was adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board in the 1988 PROS Plan and has been re-affirmed and included in every PROS Plan since and guides acquisition, development, and management of the Montgomery County Park System. For a comprehensive description of Montgomery County's implementing ordinances and programs, see Appendix 9.

Weed Warriors, Sligo Creek Trail, Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, near Forest Glen Road. September 25, 2021. Photos by Marilyn Sklar, Montgomery Parks.

Selected Accomplishments

The 2017 PROS Plan identified three objectives to improve natural resource land conservation. They are listed below along with key actions accomplished since 2017. For a discussion of current resource stewardship goals, see Appendix 8.

Expand Natural Resource Management Efforts

- Implemented 82 stream and outfall restoration projects in 17 watersheds

- Implemented White-tailed Deer population management on an additional 2,543.4 acres of parkland
- Produced a comprehensive Meadow Management Plan and prioritized 2,450 acres of meadow habitat for special protection, 17 of these designated Priority Natural Areas and with assigned asset identification

Create the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

- Completed a nature center needs assessment
- Opened the Maydale Nature Classroom, a net-zero facility constructed out of a repurposed trailer and built with sustainable, locally-sourced materials
- Created a mobile nature center out of a retro-fitted RV
- Expanded programs:
    - Improved stream clean-up and Weed Warrior volunteer Programs and events,
    - Established partner projects with the Latin American Youth Center's Job training Program,
    - Permitted camp and events for The Young Entomologists Group,
    - Coordinated focused natural resources programs on Take your Kids to Work Day(s), and
    - Implemented activation efforts and events, such as "selfie stands" for targeted natural areas

Continue to Acquire Areas of Highest Quality Natural Habitat

- Created a Top 10 proposed natural areas acquisitions list focused on rarity of habitat, riparian habitat and stream protection, and greenway connection
- Acquired 310 acres of new parkland

The Mobile Nature Center "NOW: Nature on Wheels" visiting an urban park, April 30, 2021. Photos by Marilyn Sklar, Montgomery Parks

Inventory

At 28,000 acres, approximately 75 percent of Montgomery Parks land is classified as natural area.

Since its inception in the 1920s, Montgomery Parks has prioritized stream valley acquisition, and the Department leads the county in watershed protection and water quality improvement initiatives along the 430 miles of streams within the park system. Montgomery Parks monitors the biological integrity of those streams to track macroinvertebrates, fish, amphibians and reptiles. The Department of Parks holds a Federal Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) and multiple Industrial National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits which require measures to reduce the amount of non-point source pollution and untreated stormwater from impacting our waterways.

More recently, acquisitions have enlarged forested parkland. Overall, the county contains 93,281 acres of forest cover, including 9,472 acres of forest interior habitat. There are 213 state champion tree registrants and 4,094 separate forest conservation easements covering 22,055 acres.

Nearly 15,000 acres of parkland is designated as either Best Natural Areas or Biodiversity Areas. These are the best examples of natural areas for each "Major Terrestrial Community" or provide habitat for known Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Plants or wildlife Species of Greatest Conservation Need. State and Globally Rare habitats, such as Triassic Shale, Serpentine, and Diabase ecosystems are protected through designation as Conservation Parks or Best Natural Areas.

Montgomery Parks manages 45 Pesticide Free Parks and uses Integrated Pest Management and Best Management Practices for the application of pesticides.

Five brick and mortar nature centers and a mobile unit, trails, interpretive signs, and web-based and social media outreach are available mechanisms for public use and appreciation of natural areas.

Program Category	Acreage Preserved	Percentage of Land Preserved
Forest Cover	93,281	29% of County Land
White-tailed Deer Population Management on public lands Programming implemented for, and focused on reduction of public safety, conservation, and social impacts caused by deer	40,843	68% of Public Land
Conservation Oriented Parkland, M-NCPPC Designation providing distinct provisions for development and use considerate of water quality protection and protection of natural areas habitat	28,264	76% of Parkland
Forest Conservation Easement	22,056	7% of County land
Special Protection Areas Limits impervious development for water quality protection	20,324	6% of County land
Priority Natural Areas on Parkland, M-NCPPC Special protections and habitat conservation efforts for sustaining rare, threatened, or endangered species and habitats	14,954	40% of Parkland
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) conservation easement	2,145	0.7% of County Land

Figure 4.1. Land Preservation Programs and Acreage
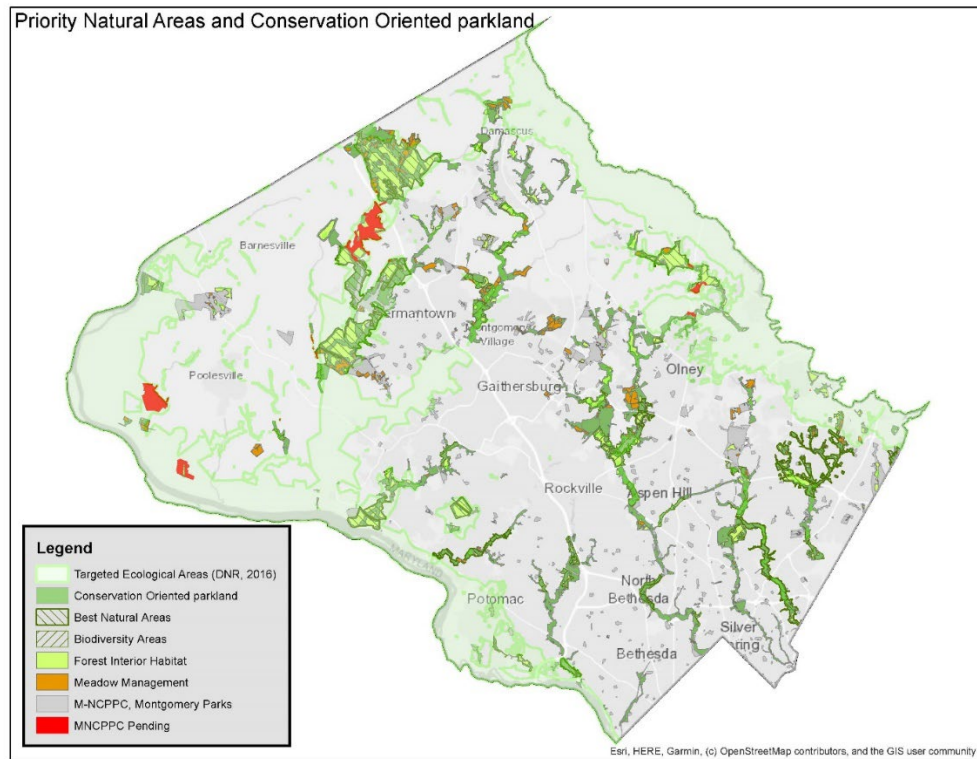
Figure 4.2: Priority Natural Areas and Conservation Oriented Parkland. Montgomery Parks identifies, acquires, and designates parkland considerate of natural areas value for protection and preservation; valuation includes unique and/or rare Major Terrestrial Communities/Habitat Classifications, State Targeted Ecological Areas, buffers of riparian and other sensitive resource zones, and for forest interior habitat and greenway corridor connections.
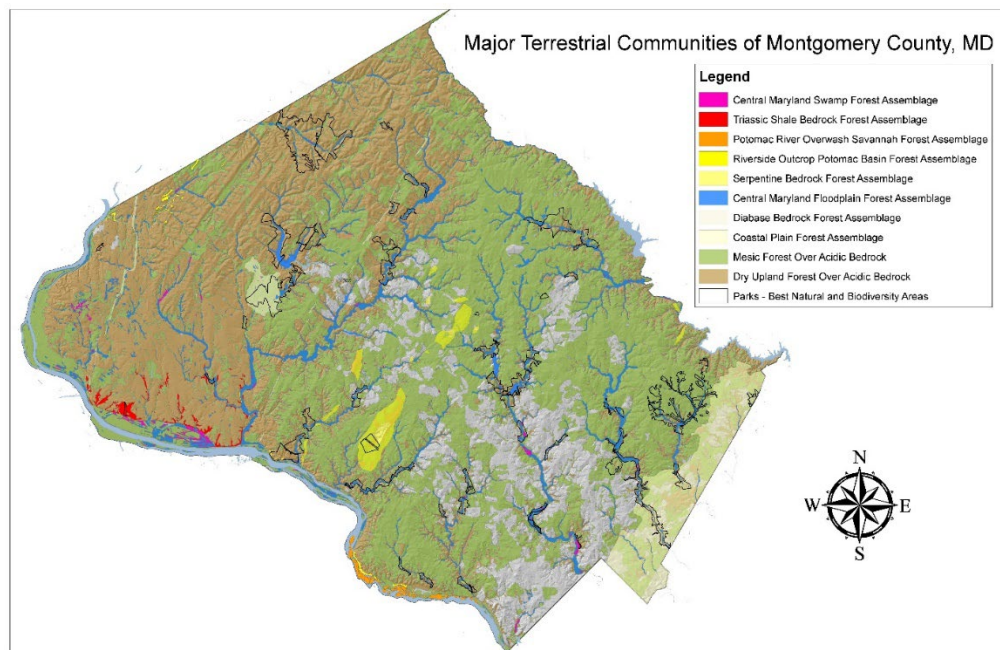
Figure 4.3: The terrestrial resources of Montgomery County. The major terrestrial communities shown identify distinct vegetative communities in the county.
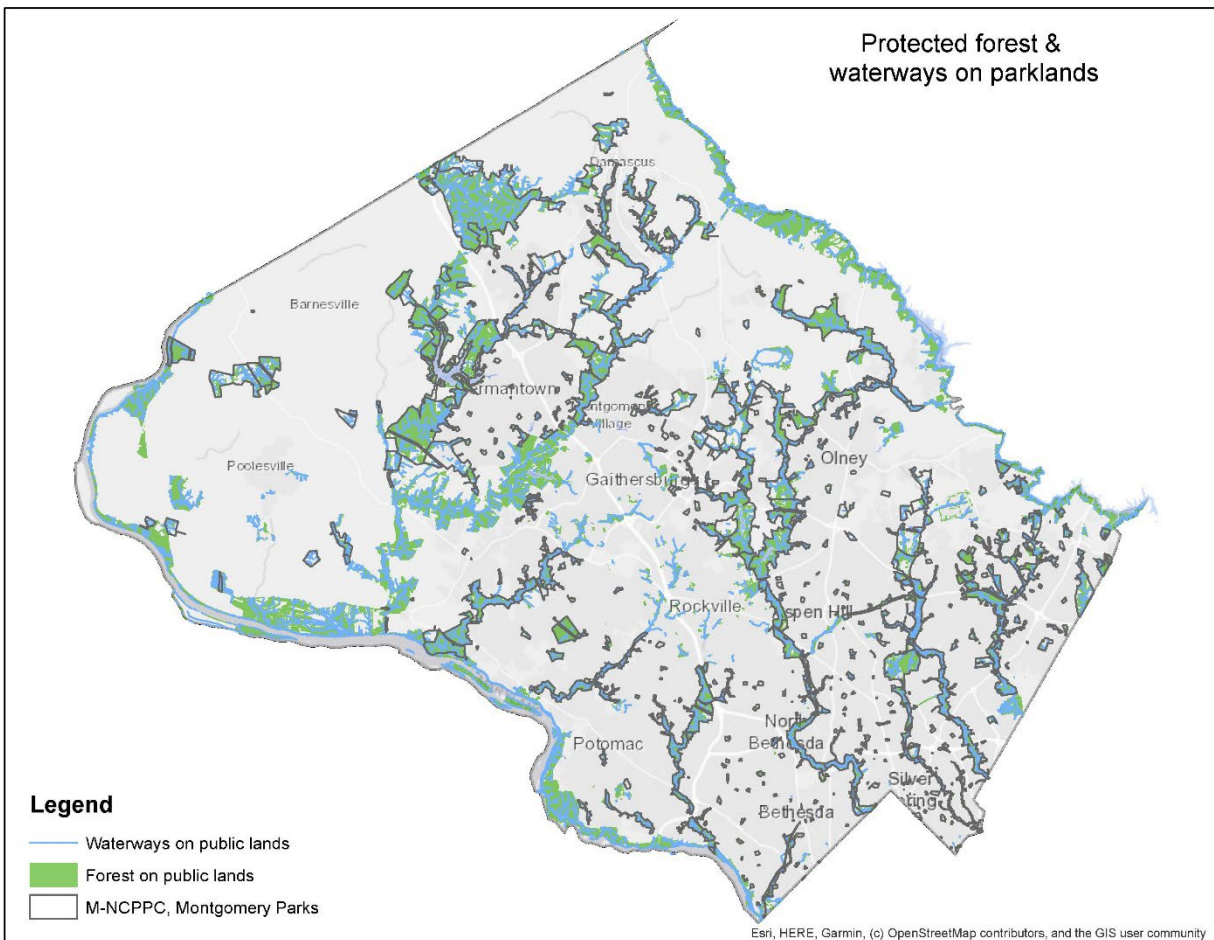
Figure 4.4: Montgomery County contains 93,281 acres of forest cover, including 9,472 acres of forest interior habitat, and Montgomery Parks stewards 430 miles of stream.

Assessment

Montgomery Parks has developed and implemented, arguably, the most progressive environmental stewardship standards and initiatives of all counties in the state and mid-Atlantic region. However, there is room for improvement and for adaptation to changing environments, science, and lessons learned. Climate change and human development's effects on habitat, as well as increasing social disconnection in society and continued physical health challenges, call for a clear strategy for natural areas in the county.

We can make a stronger connection between stewardship activities and the social benefits of parks and better integrate recreation into environmental management. In the past, we have viewed these goals as binary – parks are for recreation OR stewardship – but we now recognize that carefully managed resource-based recreation and environmental stewardship can and should be complementary activities that cultivate public support for additional conservation.

As we carefully integrate human activities into resource areas, we also need to better integrate resource management into developed areas of the county with stormwater management practices, tree planting, NNI management, and urban green spaces.

As described above, Parks has made great progress in acquiring high priority properties for parkland and conducting environmental improvement, such as stream restoration. Yet, in a world of population growth, development, and climate change, we need to continue to innovate and expand our efforts.

Commitment to Natural Resources Stewardship

Thrive 2050 and this plan both reaffirm the county's commitment toward natural resources stewardship. Industry standards and requirements for natural resources stewardship and sustainability practices are growing far more rapidly than the resources required to maintain those standards. Much of the park system's natural areas and infrastructure were acquired and developed at a time when it was believed that these things were self-sustaining. Further, aging utility infrastructure throughout the county is rapidly coming to the end of its service life and damaging natural resources as it degrades in place. Habitat is under considerable stress from sprawl development, invasive plants and animals, habitat loss, and climate change. All these anthropogenic stressors require considerable intervention if desirable conditions or species are to be maintained or achieved.

Acquisitions

Healthy streams and aquatic resources are critical to maintaining unique native biodiversity and high-quality natural resource-based recreational amenities. Watersheds can be protected by selectively expanding and enhancing stream riparian buffers, preserving headwater areas and natural drainage, prioritizing wetland habitat for valuable ecosystem services, and minimizing impervious development in the most sensitive areas. Completing and connecting the existing network of green corridors will facilitate wildlife passage and migration through the region while providing meaningful opportunities to expand access to natural resource-based recreation.

Diversity in plant and animal species is necessary to provide rich habitat for wildlife. Montgomery Parks should refine its habitat assessment techniques to better quantify special characteristics and conditions, and prioritize based on determined value, resources, and management objectives. Currently, Montgomery Parks relies on Major Terrestrial Communities, the Grace Brush Vegetation Map of Maryland, documented rare, threatened, and endangered species, and field truthing to identify habitat worthy of special designation and protection. Staff are currently evaluating the National Habitat Classification System as an additional tool for refining such habitat identification.

Climate Resilience

Adapting to climate change is an increasing priority for the county and Parks should:

- Build resilience to the increase in frequency, intensity and duration of fires, major rain and flooding, drought, high winds, temperature changes, and new wildlife patterns resulting from climate change,
- Use available open space as meadows, reforestation areas, ground mounted solar arrays, or farms to help mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change, and

- Take measures to minimize and offset greenhouse gas and carbon emissions, control energy use, employ LEED design/construction techniques, reduce waste, manage fleet and equipment emissions, and minimize water consumption.

Appropriate Access to Natural Areas

Conservation of natural areas has undisputed ecological benefits, and allowing appropriate access to these areas provides physical and mental health benefits to human beings.. Montgomery County has made significant progress in stewarding natural resources, but well-managed public access is sometimes lacking. Some conservation-oriented parks lack trails and are inaccessible to people walking, bicycling, and using transit, limiting their availability to the public.

A thoughtful strategy for placing trails in both regional and conservation-oriented parks can encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures while still achieving stewardship objectives. In fact, exposing the public to the joys and wonders of the natural environment is critical to fostering public support for ongoing and expanded stewardship activities.

Public Access to Water

Access for water-based recreation activities such as canoeing, kayaking, boating, and fishing is available in several locations on land owned or managed by state and federal agencies, M-NCPPC, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC*)* (see – Appendix 6, Figure 6.2).

The C & O Canal parallels and adjoins the Potomac River, allowing access to water-based recreation from federal parkland. Clopper Lake, located within the Seneca Creek State Park, provides water-based recreation on state property, and M-NCPPC provides similar opportunities at Little Seneca Lake at Black Hill Regional Park and at Lake Needwood at Rock Creek Regional Park. Lake Frank, which is also located at Rock Creek Regional Park has water access limited to shoreline fishing only. WSSC provides water access at the Triadelphia Reservoir located between Montgomery County and Howard County.

Fishing in Montgomery Parks is generally allowed subject to compliance with licensing and other requirements (see Policy for Parks in appendix). Boating requires a permit and compliance with all applicable Park Directives and local, state, and federal law. Montgomery Parks is currently working with DNR to establish sites for the *Maryland Fly Fishing Trail* that will introduce people to nearby public access points, support local and small businesses, and increase visitation to nearby state and county parks and historic sites of interest.

Strategy & Measurement

The benefits of strong environmental stewardship go beyond the obvious and measurable results like clean streams and lakes, healthy and diverse ecosystems that support a variety of plants and animals, and improved air quality. For example, stormwater management projects that reduce the flow of pollutants into our waterways – including stream and outfall restoration – also mitigate flooding caused by runoff from impervious surfaces like parking lots, streets, and roofs. A successful deer population management program protects forest ecosystems and reduces the number of vehicle crashes, saving

lives. These kinds of economic and quality of life benefits support our stewardship mission and should also be measured and understood.

As we measure the impact of our stewardship efforts, we should connect the science and outcome measures to clearly delineated desired results related to natural resources and human quality of life outcomes.

Recommendations

Over the next five years, natural resource stewardship activities should:

1. Reaffirm the Parks Department's commitment to resource conservation, stewardship, and sustainability practices such as innovative stream and habitat restoration projects.
   - Assess the department's analytical tools and standards and practice for resource monitoring and management to ensure that they reflect state-of-the-practice understanding of the most effective and efficient means of achieving stewardship goals.
   - Ensure environmental and sustainability services improve public health, allow for opportunities for nature interpretation and education, and correct environmental injustices within equity and/or densely populated areas.
   - Develop coordinated strategies with other agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and relevant stakeholders to target meaningful stormwater treatment opportunities *before* stormwater reaches parkland. Point sources of stormwater discharge into stream channels on parkland, such as pipes that direct stormwater near or into park streams, should be identified and eliminated through state-of-the-art stormwater management, outfall enhancements, stream restoration and other mitigation techniques.

2. Selectively acquire additional land where needed to protect sensitive natural resources, improve water quality, increase tree cover, enhance wildlife corridors, curb invasive species, and achieve other environmental goals.
   - A priority list of natural resource-based land acquisition targets should be developed, adjusted, and pursued to protect sensitive watersheds, preserve unique and rare habitats, complete critical wildlife corridor connections, and connect communities to natural areas.

3. Create a resiliency plan to improve the ability of park and recreation facilities and natural resources to withstand the effects of climate change. This plan should align with the County Climate Action Plan and Parks Sustainability Plan.

4. Provide appropriate public access to natural areas to support public health and foster public support for resource conservation.
   - Continue to allow and develop natural surface trails in conservation-oriented parks and encourage transit access to all parks where feasible.

5. Develop a Stewardship Strategic Plan for the next five years.
   - Articulate a clear theory about the desired ends for natural stewardship activities.

- Establish program priorities and identify clear steps and program activities, within existing financial resources, to achieve the stated objectives.
- Establish metrics tied to outcomes and measure projects accordingly.

Precedents

The following precedents offer ideas for how we can improve the ecosystems of smaller urban parks, help increase resilience to a changing climate and extreme weather events and raise awareness and engage visitors in new and unexpected ways around environmental issues.

A: Urban Wood Sale
D: Park Camping with Park Rangers
G: iNaturalist – Nature exploration app
B: Inner Belt National Forest
E: Miyawaki Forests
C: Public Cooling Areas
F: Pop-Up Nature Center
H: Community Boat Share: Bartram's Garden

A: Urban Wood Sale (Montgomery County, MD)

- Each year, Montgomery Parks removes hundreds of hazardous dead and dying trees from the park system. Through the department's Green Waste Recycling Program, some of the removed trees are turned into wood products that are reused within the parks department, such as mulch, compost, and lumber. The Wood Sale brings public awareness to urban wood recycling and what Montgomery Parks is doing to produce sustainable wood products that are used in our park operations

- Source: Montgomery Parks: Montgomery Parks (@montgomeryparks) • Instagram photos and videos

B: Inner Belt National Forest (Akron, OH)

- The Innerbelt National Forest is a temporary installation of trees, trails and seating areas on an adjacent section of a decommissioned freeway to test the idea and create stewardship for a permanent green public space in the long-term redevelopment of the freeway. The space provides a place for learning, play, introspection, and connection with an outdoor museum, kids construction area, state, observation deck and outdoor classroom.

- Source: The Devil Strip: The Innerbelt National Forest and how cities plan for the future | THE DEVIL STRIP

C: Public Cooling Areas (Charlotte, NC)

- The City of Charlotte recently released a climate-ready action plan for creating a more climate-resilient and just city. One of the recommended actions of this approach was to create public cooling areas to provide relief during extreme heat events. These cooling areas, which include spraygrounds, pools, and green spaces covered by dense tree canopy, would allow residents to still enjoy the outdoors and stay active in extreme heat events, and are targeted for investment in the most vulnerable neighborhoods in the City.

- Source: Center for American Progress: CharlotteClimate-report1.pdf (americanprogress.org)

D: Park Camping with Park Rangers (New York, NY)

- NYC Parks hosts overnight camping events in their park system, facilitated by their Urban Park Rangers. The program allows participants to pitch a tent under the stars with Urban Park Rangers acting as hosts and guides. Camping events also include guided nighttime hikes, storytelling, camp fires and s'mores!

- Source: NYC Parks: Family Camping with the Urban Park Rangers : NYC Parks (nycgovparks.org)

E: Miyawaki Forests (Worldwide)

- Named for the Japanese botanist who first developed the concept, a Miyawaki forest is a very densely planted, biodiverse pocket forest designed to bring the ecological benefits of a healthy, thriving forest to the small footprints of urban public spaces. The forest pictured in Cambridge's Danehy Park contains approximately 1,400 trees and 32 native species of plants.

- Source: Boston.com: The Northeast's first Miyawaki forest is growing in Cambridge. Here's what that means. (boston.com)

F: Pop-Up Nature Center (Akron, OH)

- The Summit Lake Pop-Up Nature Center by Summit Metro Parks in Akron, OH sought to bring environmental programs and education to the surrounding neighborhood quickly be creating a semi-permanent nature center in an unused conference room in an existing community building. The initiative proved so successful that a permanent home for the nature center opened its doors to the community in 2021.

- Source: Summit Metro Parks: Activities (summitmetroparks.org)

G: iNaturalist – Nature exploration app (N/A)

- Apps like iNaturalist, developed jointly by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society, helps citizen scientists learn more about the natural world around them, while simultaneously providing scientists with valuable crowd-sourced data on the environment.

- Source: iNaturalist.org: A Community for Naturalists · iNaturalist

H: Community Boat Share: Bartram's Garden (Philadelphia, PA)

- Bartram's Garden, a botanical garden and working farm along the Schuylkill River in Southwest Philadelphia, offers a community boatshare program that invites people of all ages to get out on the water with their free boatshare program.

- Source: Reimagining the Civic Commons: Principle 7: Connect people to nature and invite visitorship via walking, biking or transit - Reimagining the Civic Commons - Reimagining the Civic Commons

Chapter 5: Land Conservation and Management (Agriculture)

Introduction

Montgomery County has made a concerted effort to preserve land for agriculture and other uses. The 1964 General Plan "…on Wedges and Corridors" focused growth in defined corridors and maintained low-density residential uses, open space, and protected farmland in "wedges" in between. In 1980, M-NCPPC adopted the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space *in an effort to preserve* farmland and open space in the county. The Plan created a 110,000-acre Agricultural Reserve and a 26,000-acre Rural Open Space area that together cover almost a third of the county.

Since 1980, Montgomery County has protected 72,101 acres of farmland through easement programs and has acquired environmentally sensitive and culturally significant properties in the Agricultural Reserve, placing them into parkland. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council and the American Farmland Trust, these efforts have resulted in the most successful farmland and open space preservation program in the country. The county's diverse agricultural industry has 558 farms and 350 horticultural enterprises. These protected agricultural lands and park areas are key components of local and regional agricultural, economic, cultural, and environmental functions.

Thrive 2050, which was based on two years of outreach to various communities including farmers reaffirms the importance of maintaining agriculture as the primary land use in the Agricultural Reserve through policies, regulations, easements, and incentives, including tools designed to maintain a critical mass of contiguous farmland.

Land Management Activities

The state, county, and M-NCPPC operate a variety of land management and agricultural land preservation programs. They are briefly summarized below, and additional information is provided in Appendix 10.

State Programs
- The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) encourages landowners to donate easements to protect scenic open areas.
- The Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) purchases agricultural land preservation easements directly from landowners for cash.
- The Rural Legacy Program (RLP) in Montgomery County encourages local governments and private land trusts to identify Rural Legacy areas and to competitively apply for funds to complement existing land conservation efforts or create new programs.

County Programs

- The Transferable Development Rights Program (TDR) allows landowners to transfer a development right from one parcel of land to another parcel. For agricultural land preservation, TDRs are used to shift development from agricultural areas to designated growth zones which are closer to public services. When rights are transferred away from a parcel, the land is restricted by a permanent TDR easement.
- The Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP) allows the county to purchase agricultural preservation easements to preserve land for farming.
- The Montgomery County Building Lot Termination (BLT) Program reduces fragmentation of farmland due to residential development. A BLT easement restricts residential, commercial, industrial, and other non-agricultural uses beyond the limits imposed by a TDR easement.

M-NCPPC Programs

- The Legacy Open Space program acquires land for parks.
- The Agricultural Lease Program allows farmers to lease parkland. The Parks Department manages 23 agricultural leases covering 1,047 acres.

Inventory

Montgomery County has access to the programs listed above to preserve agricultural land. The county's Office of Agriculture is the lead agency implementing state and county easement programs to support agriculture in the county, while M-NCPPC implements the Legacy Open Space program and other policies/programs to support preservation and stewardship. The chart below provides a summary of protected acreage for each of the primary easement programs.

Program	Begun	Total through FY2021 (Acres)
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	1967	2291
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)	1977	5,001
Maryland Rural Legacy Program (RLP) in Montgomery County	1997	5,303
Montgomery County Transferable Development Rights Program (TDR)	1980	53,194
Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)	1987	8,940
Montgomery County Building Lot Termination Program (BLT) – Public	2008	1,257
Montgomery County Building Lot Termination Program (BLT) – Private	2008	645

Table 5.1. Source: Montgomery County Office of Agriculture

The Montgomery County Office of Agriculture keeps a comprehensive list of all existing preserved agricultural land in Montgomery County. It is shown in Appendix 11.
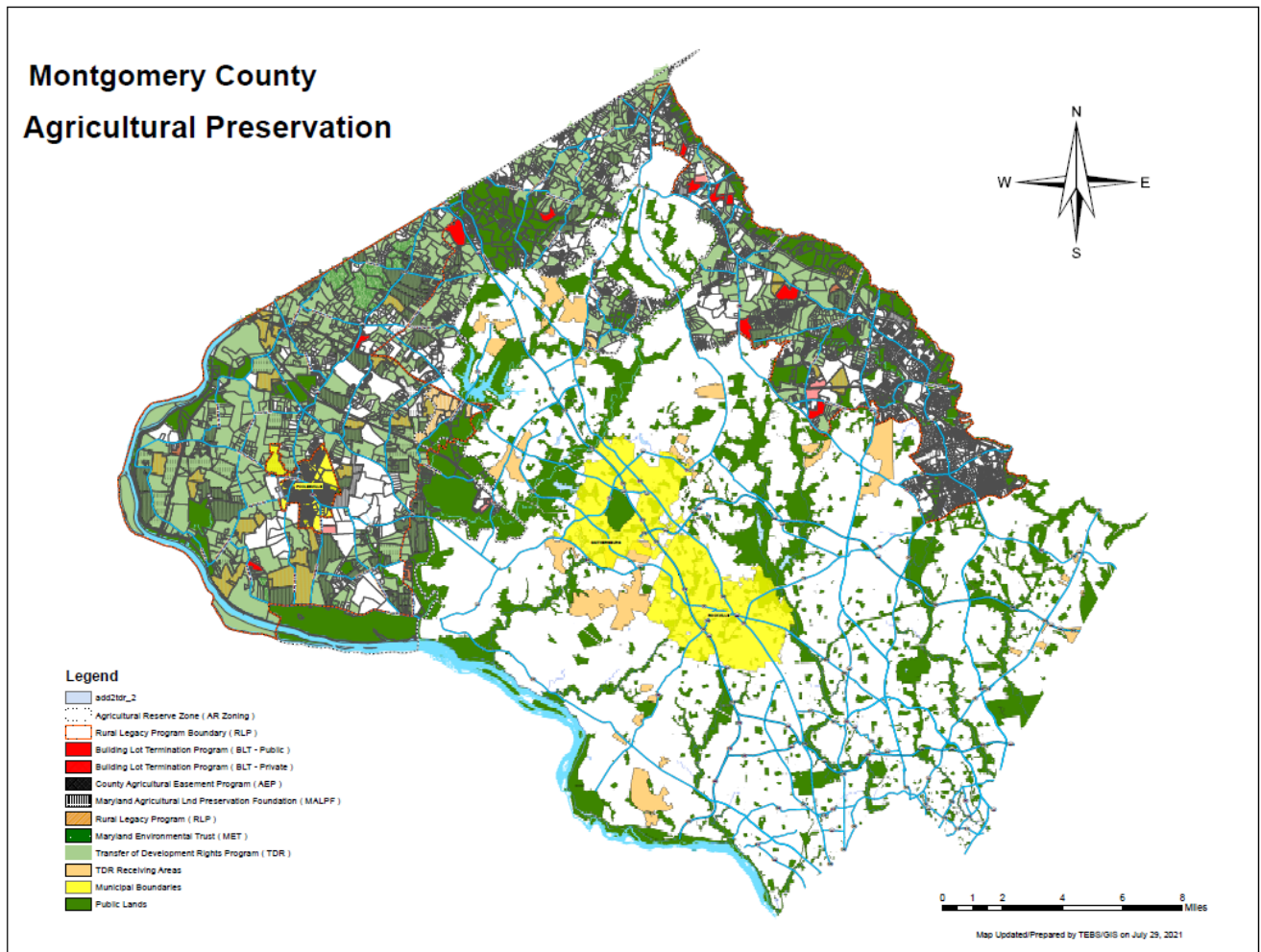
Figure 5.2: Managed and preserved land in Montgomery County includes 28,000 acres preserved in parkland conservation parks, regional parks, and stream valley parks; 76,631 acres of preserved farmland; and 21,297 acres in forest conservation easements. In the county, there are 84,000 acres of sensitive areas buffers (not included on this map) that restrict current and future development on steep slopes, sensitive soils, and wetlands, including 51,000 acres of stream buffer. Some of the acres listed are overlapping.

Assessment

The county has done an outstanding job of preserving agricultural and open space over the past six decades since the 1964 Wedges and Corridors Plan laid the groundwork for the county's land management and preservation.

The 1964 plan noted that land preservation is important to recreation, agriculture and conservation of natural resources, but it did not provide details on how the many people who live in the urban and urbanizing areas of the county would be able to access and enjoy the benefits of preserving land for agriculture and other low- or no-development uses.

Therefore, the county could do a better job of promoting the preservation of land for recreation, agriculture and environmental management in ways that benefit the entire county. This includes ensuring convenient access to the Agricultural Reserve for people to visit, enjoy and develop an appreciation for the value of continued preservation of land for farming, recreation, and stewardship, as well as learn about the county's rural heritage, eat and drink locally produced food and beverages, and participate in outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, camping, and fishing.

Recommendations

1. Update policies and plans to acknowledge the evolution of the business of agriculture and develop recommendations to enhance the economic viability of farming, facilitate locally grown food, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, and advance environmental quality.

2. Develop policies, regulations, easements, and incentives to maintain a critical mass of contiguous farmland to ensure the continued viability of farming and discourage sprawl.

3. Analyze and assess the Transfer of Development Rights and Building Lot Termination programs to evaluate their achievements and limitations in farmland preservation. Develop recommendations for the future of these programs to preserve contiguous farmland and maintain the economic viability of farming.

4. Explore alternative sources to fund agricultural easement programs, including new public funding mechanisms and tools to incentivize private sector purchase of easements. The Office of Agriculture and the Montgomery County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board have continued to seek a sustainable source of funding for its preservation programs, with limited success.5. Implement the New Farmer Project to promote the creation of new sustainable-practice farm businesses using mentoring, business training, and an innovative approach to pairing farmers with landowners to speed the start-up process. The Office of Agriculture-OAG continues to partner with the University of MD-Extension on the Annual New/Beginning Farmer Course and Training. Topics include soils, crop planning, financing, equipment, permits and licenses, and pest management.

Section 3: Implementation
Chapter 6: Implementation

Introduction

The implementation of a comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space plan requires the participation of a variety of partners. This chapter identifies some of the key steps and implementors.

Montgomery Parks

Montgomery Parks has the lead role in implementing this plan since it owns almost all of the land where parks and recreational facilities are located in the county.

Capital Improvement Program

The biennial process of creating the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) aligns Parks Department spending with our goals and priorities. CIP projects for facility rehabilitation and facility development come from a variety of park master plans, functional master plans, area master plans, sector plans, and other plans and studies to address the priorities of Thrive 2050 and this PROS plan. New projects also result from public input during a biennial CIP Forum and online requests, Planning Board and County Council directives, and new parkland added through developer dedication and acquisition.

Proposed projects are evaluated for consistency with state and county goals for recreation, parks, and open space. Additional assessment criteria are used to help sort and prioritize proposed CIP projects. This PROS Plan recommends a continued emphasis on equity to prioritize projects that serve areas with large numbers of low-income residents and/or low levels of access to parks and recreation services relative to population. Project assessment criteria include:

- Promotes equity
- Renovates aging infrastructure
- Fulfills regulatory mandates
- Stewards natural or cultural resources
- Supports recommendations of plans or studies
- Responds to public requests
- Enhances safety
- Generates revenue or promotes economic development
- Minimizes operating costs and maintenance burdens

Projects are prioritized according to the Planning Board's adopted CIP strategy that is revised every two years during the CIP process. The most recently adopted strategy includes:

Immediacy and Efficiency – the project:

- Addresses public health, safety, and welfare
- Prevents degradation of existing facilities and avoids costly future repairs

- Preserves natural, cultural, or historic resources that are under threat
- Achieves compliance with code requirements and/or laws
- Needs to be timed with related projects by other agencies
- Increases revenue, achieves cost savings, and/or improves operational efficiency
- Leverages an opportunity, such as a partnership, donation, or grant
- Promotes multifunctional uses of new or renovated facilities for multi-age users

Equity and Need – the project:

- Promotes racial equity and social justice by improving park access, services, or facilities in Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)
- Provides facilities to an under-served geographic area or population group
- Implements recommendations of adopted plans (e.g. Thrive 2050, PROS, Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan, park master plans, area and sector plans, functional plans)

Project Priorities – the project:

- Renovates or expands both natural and hard surface trail systems
- Improves availability and quality of ballfields
- Activates and improves urban parks, focusing on densely populated areas with older infrastructure, limited open space and shortage of high-quality facilities

Project Delivery – increased focus on:

- Park Refreshers rather than large-scale park redevelopments
- Utilizing level-of-effort projects to maintain what we have and more quickly implement park
- Modifications to meet changing community needs
- Use of in-house staff resources and interdepartmental partnerships
- Simplified Facility Planning that allows flexibility to adapt to changing needs through project development

Upcoming Updates on CIP Strategy – Equity and Need filters

Montgomery Parks is currently working on updates to the strategy described above. The updates will align our CIP requests more closely with the ideas outlined in this PROS plan.

The new layers of analysis consider – areas where supply is insufficient to meet demand/needs by assessing Level of Service of selected facilities within the new proposed PROS Service Areas, parks within the Energized Public Spaces Plan Study Area (EPS Study Area) and Equity Improvement Areas (EIAs) – see Figure 6.1 and Appendix 5 for more information.
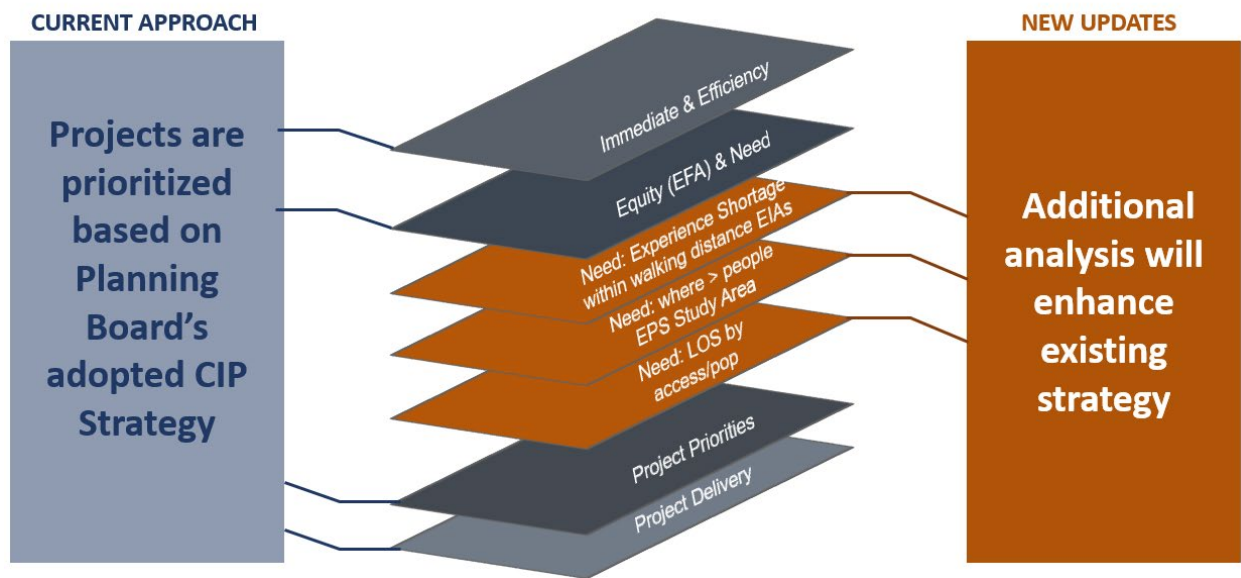
Figure 6.1 - Diagram illustrating filters used for CIP Prioritization and additional layers of analysis to be applied in upcoming CIP cycles.

Acquisition

The acquisition of additional parkland is often necessary to meet goals identified in PROS. Land acquisition should support the core purposes of parks identified in this plan:

- Encourage physical activity,
- Support social connections and civic engagement, and
- Steward natural and cultural resources.

Parks staff identify acquisition targets as necessary to advance these priorities. To advance the goals of Thrive 2050 and this PROS Plan, acquisitions will:

- Support park development in Equity Focus Areas,
- Target urban park needs and high-density areas,
- Provide opportunities for natural resource-based recreation,
- Improve connections to parks and trail networks, and
- Protect, restore, or enhance natural resources.

Land acquisition needs following these priorities are set forth in area master plans, sector plans, park master plans, the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan, and other park studies and plans. Current plans indicate 6,234 acres of land specifically targeted for park acquisition throughout the county. These sites are identified and tracked as "Proposed Parkland" in the Commission's Geographic Information System (GIS) database. Potential acquisition sites go through a similar selection and prioritization process as park development projects. When community proposals or unexpected opportunities for acquisition arise, they must be assessed against the criteria and priorities in this document.

Energizing Public Spaces (EPS)

The Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS Plan) provides a tool to measure how well Montgomery Parks provides facilities that support formal and informal social gathering (such as events, festivals, picnics, and people-watching), active recreation (trails, multi-use courts, spaces to play) and contemplative relaxation (gardens, urban forests) in the urban areas of the county. It does this by mapping and scoring areas of the County based on availability of facilities and amenities that support these kinds of activities and experiences within a walking distance.

Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) - The EIA map shows areas where low experience scores are spatially clustered. Experience scores were determined by calculating the ratio and scoring of accessible public space experiences to the number of people capable of walking to them from a specific location.
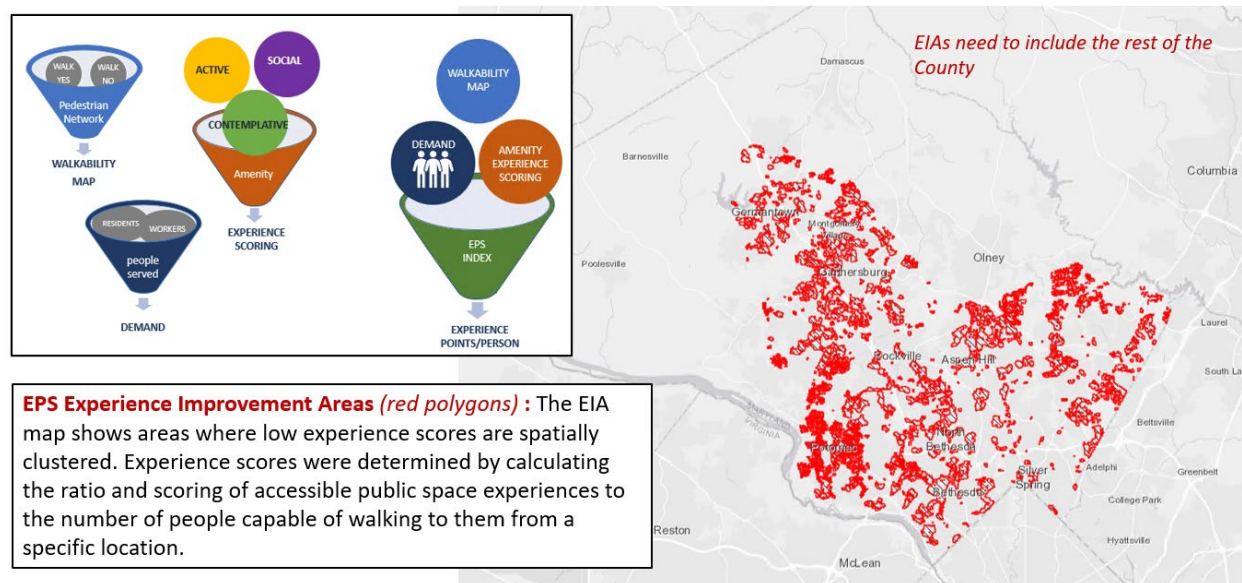
Figure 6.2 - EPS Plan Methodology Diagram and Experience Improvement Areas Map (locations that need prioritization)

In addition to this quantitative analysis of access to the full range of park activities and experiences, the Plan also applies a Hierarchy of Park Types and associated Design Guidelines. The Hierarchy of Park Types ensures a balance of urban park types across the geographic area covered by each urban sector plan. The Guidelines help Montgomery Parks and its existing and future partners deliver public spaces that are flexible and accommodate a variety of experiences within the network of public spaces.

By measuring the supply of amenities within walking distance of all urbanized or urbanizing areas and adding our Equity Focus Area (EFAs) to the analysis, the tool allows park planners to understand which communities are underserved by parks and to give elevated priority to underserved areas with higher concentrations of poverty, people of color, and residents with limited English proficiency.

Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)

Montgomery Parks uses Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) to help guide decisions about the allocation of resources in ways that prioritize the needs of marginalized people and communities. The Equity Focus Areas analysis uses three variables – household income, race and ethnicity, and the ability to speak

English– to identify areas of the county that may experience inequity in access to transportation, job opportunities and other resources supporting a high quality of life.
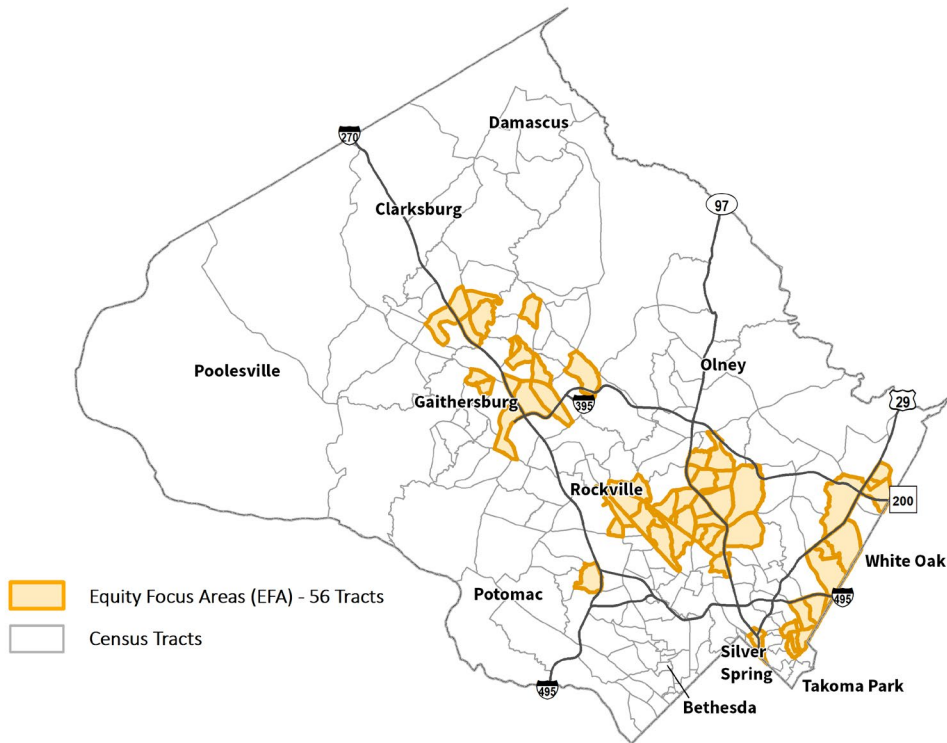
Figure 6.3: The Equity Focus Areas analysis identifies areas in the county with high concentrations of lower-income people of color who may also speak English less than well.

Level of Service (LOS)

Level of Service (LOS) standards are guidelines that define service areas based on populations that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. The PROS Level of Service analysis, which is in Appendix 5, helps Montgomery Parks identify gaps in service by establishing benchmarks and targets for the provisions of key amenities.
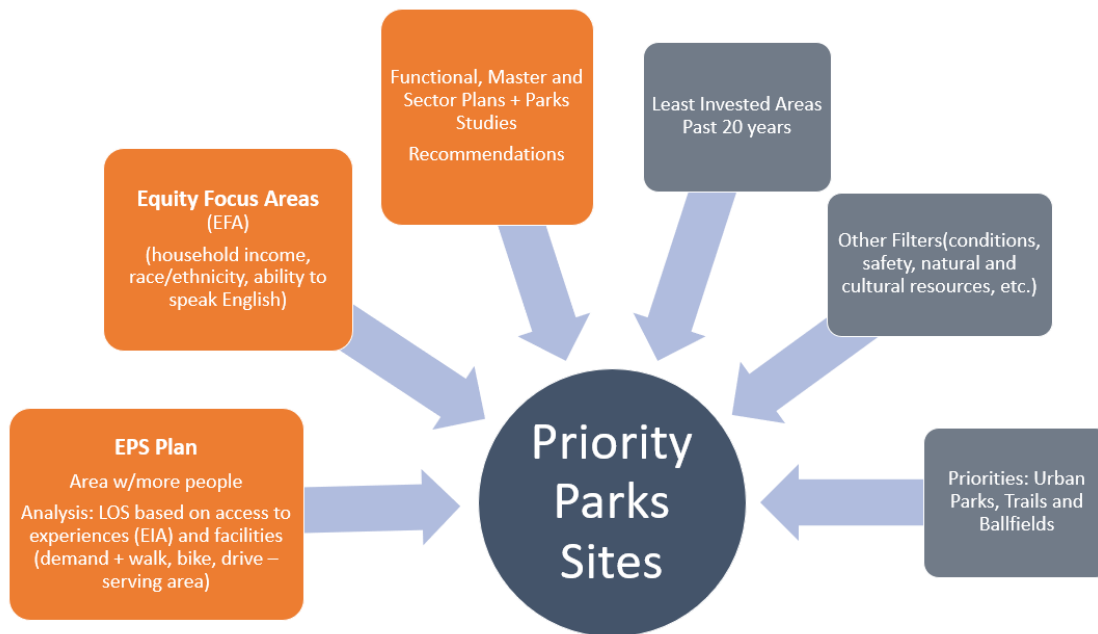
Setting Priorities: Research, Data Collection, and Public Engagement

Our priorities for park acquisition, development, and management are oriented around the objective of delivering the best possible system of park facilities and amenities to serve the needs of the people of Montgomery County. Understanding those needs requires the synthesis of information from a variety of sources, including research on local and national trends, data on park usage and other objective measures of demand, and input from residents and other stakeholders. .

Montgomery Parks uses a variety of tools and sources of information to inform priorities for the allocation of resources, with the specific methods applied in any particular case dependent on the scope and type of project. These methods often include a combination of the following:

- **Public Meetings.** In-person meetings with members of the public remain a useful tool for informing interested residents about upcoming projects and soliciting feedback. In recent years, online meetings have expanded the number and variety of people participating in the public engagement process. A fundamental weakness of both in-person and virtual meetings, however, is the tendency for this type of engagement to amplify the voices of the people with the strongest – but not necessarily the most representative – opinions. Public meetings also risk leaving out people who have an interest in a topic or project but have conflicting work or family commitments, lack access to transportation or a computer, or face other barriers to participation.

- **Staff knowledge and data collection.** The Parks Department gathers a wide variety of information about the use and condition of parks and facilities, and it has devoted resources to adding more sophisticated data collection capabilities such as trail counters, anonymized and aggregated cell phone traffic measurement, and advanced park permit software. The Parks

Department also has a longstanding commitment to rigorous scientific evaluation of natural resource protection and environmental performance, including, for example, the health of aquatic wildlife in streams and other measures of water quality. Together with the professional experience and knowledge of the staff involved in management and operations, this information is a valuable source of insight into the needs of the park system. See Appendix 5 for more detailed information about these tools.

- **Market research.** The sporting goods and outdoor recreation industries; non-profit organizations such as the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA); consulting firms and other companies, groups and government agencies often gather and publish information about national and regional trends in consumer preferences relevant to demand for park and recreation facilities and services. This kind of research may be an imperfect guide to local conditions and preferences, but it can help Montgomery Parks anticipate and assess emerging needs for new types of amenities, facilities, and programs.

- **Surveys.** Surveys can provide information on the attitudes and perceptions of a broad cross-section of residents while also providing insight on the views of specific subsets of the community. Large-scale survey research is not always a cost-effective or appropriate tool for soliciting in-depth input about a project, but even surveys with self-selected samples such as Open Townhall can gather useful information from a larger number of people than would be possible through public meetings. The extensive surveys (see appendix A) conducted for this PROS plan will guide planning and projects for the next several years and should be supplemented by additional surveys on specific projects and subjects.

- **Other forms of in-person and virtual engagement.** Parks staff sometimes set up tables in parks to administer surveys and engage in conversation with visitors participating in special events or during normal park activities. These kinds of information collection activities lower the barriers for community members to express their views to Parks staff and widen the range of people providing feedback. Similarly, some residents prefer to engage indirectly with government through groups organized around specific interests, which can be a trusted bridge to the government. Working with community partners allows Parks to reach a wider spectrum of residents than may attend traditional or online public meetings, complete surveys, or talk one-on-one with Parks staff.

- **Customer Service.** Parks receives valuable input from the community from the customer service phone number and email address. Park staff respond to complaints, requests, and compliments.

To meet the needs of a growing and diverse population, Montgomery Parks must efficiently use its available land and resources to deliver new programs, amenities, and infrastructure that serve residents across the county. While the Parks Department should carefully weigh neighborhood concerns regarding impacts from development of new facilities and programs in existing parks, this input should be considered in context with the priorities of the department and the interests of the county as whole. An engagement process that solicits and favors the views of a narrow segment of residents is inconsistent with Montgomery County's racial equity and social justice policy and with our obligation to give equal consideration to people who lack the time or ability to actively participate in public outreach as to groups or individuals with the skills and resources to organize support for their preferred outcomes. Our

public information and engagement processes must be thoughtfully designed to maximize opportunities for meaningful input while facilitating cost-effective and timely implementation of projects to meet the needs of all county residents.

Routine park repairs, small improvements or the addition of amenities that do not change the basic function of a park, and the like might require only notification on the department's website, while large-scale park renovations, major new facilities, or master plans could involve multiple avenues for public input depending on the scope and type of project. The Department's annual operating budget and the capital improvements program, which is prepared every two years, also offer opportunities for the public to weigh in on the department's spending and construction priorities. In many older neighborhoods, parkland is at a premium and residents should expect that new facilities like dog parks, athletic fields and courts, skate parks, and other parks infrastructure may replace existing amenities or be built in previously unprogrammed space, where feasible.

Programming

Programming occurs through the Parks Department's activation program, cultural and historic resources programs, such as museums and interpretation, and robust nature center programming. Programming should serve the purposes of parks described in this plan – encouraging physical activity, supporting social connections, and stewarding environmental resources. Programs serve these purposes in overlapping ways. Organized sports provide physical activity and bring people together. Nature programming connects people to nature and to one another. Interpretive trails educate people on the environment, culture, and history while exposing them to nature and providing places for groups of people to interact.

Precedents

The Innovation Initiative provides the outline of a process that enables Montgomery Parks to test new ideas, evaluate their effectiveness, and scale up if successful.

Innovation Initiative

1. Ideas competition for achieving defined outcomes
2. Help develop pilot programs or pop-up public spaces
3. Market prototypes so public can 'test-drive' them
4. Evaluate the success or shortcomings of the pilot
5. Refine, re-evaluate, and repeat as necessary
6. Scale up if successful

Iterative Placemaking Process

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan 2022 Appendices

Note: the full PROS 2022 survey results are reported in a separate "Appendix A."

Contents

Note: *The PROS 2022 Appendices are attached as supplementary materials and should be construed consistent with the text of the main document. If there is any conflict between documents in the appendices and the main document, the language in the main document of PROS 2022 prevails.*

Appendix 1. The Parks and Recreation System

Montgomery County is the most populous county in the State of Maryland, located adjacent to Washington, D.C. As of the 2020 census, the county's population was 1,055,110, up about 10 percent from 2010. Most of the county's residents live in unincorporated locales, of which the most urban are Silver Spring and Bethesda. The county has a total area of 507 square miles (1,310 km2), of which 491 square miles (1,270 km2) is land and 16 square miles (41 km2) (3.1%) is water.
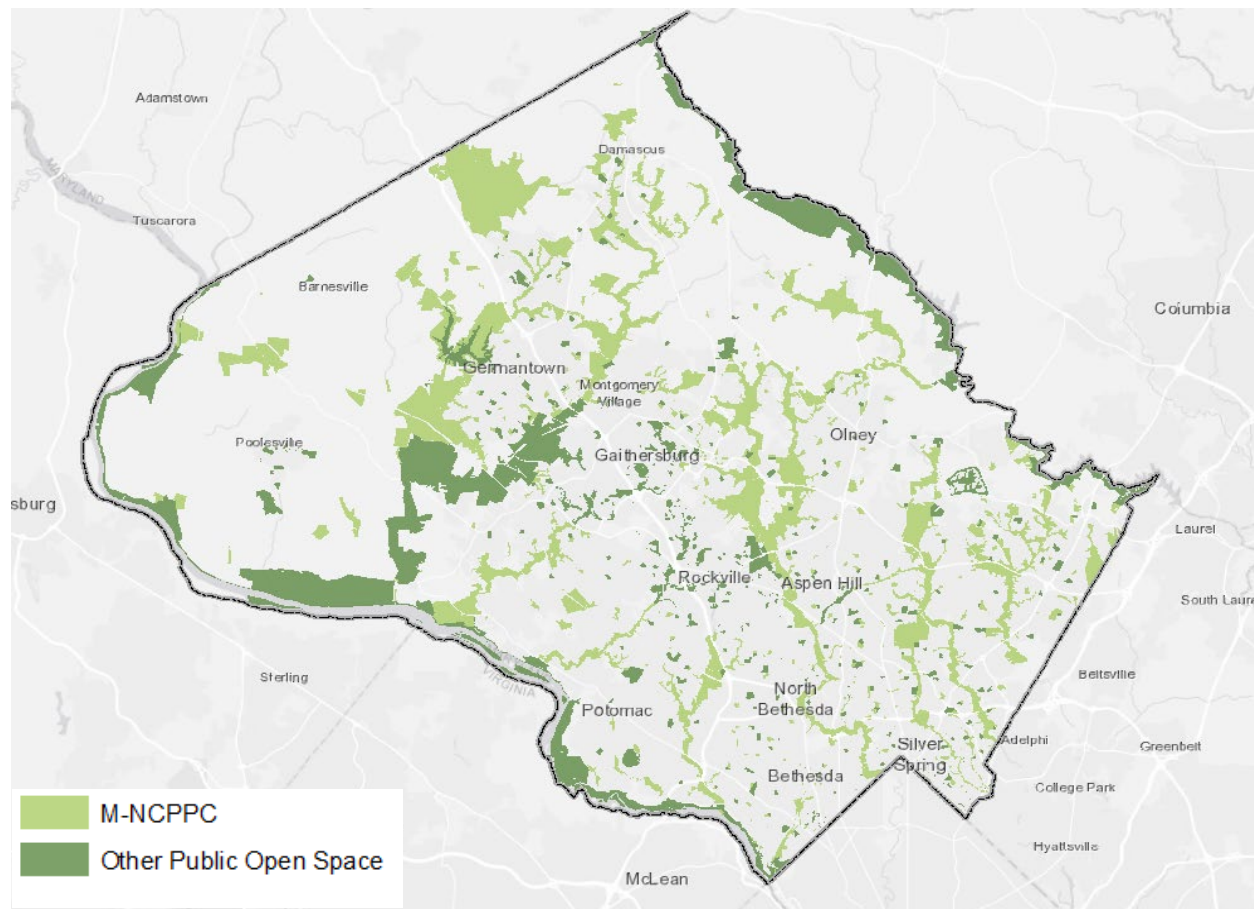
Figure1.1: Existing Public Parks and Recreation Land.

Categories	M-NCPPC	Montgomery County Public Schools	Montgomery County Government	Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)	Municipalities	State & Federal	Total Inventory
Acres	36,949	3241	~4[1]	~30[1]	1,989	20,357	**62,570**

Table1.1: Existing Public Parks and Recreation Land Size

---

[1] Disclaimer: Acreage estimates in these columns are approximations of public space boundaries based on aerial imagery.

Park Classification

PARK TYPE	PARK DESCRIPTION/Major Function	TYPICAL FACILITIES
CONSERVATION AREA PARKS	Large natural areas acquired to preserve specific natural archaeological, and/or historic features. These parks also provide opportunities for compatible recreational activities. Conservation Area Parks are typically located in upland areas and acquired specifically for environmental preservation purposes. Conservation area parks may include outstanding examples of natural communities, populations of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, or unique archaeological and historical resources. Given the sensitive nature of the resources in conservation parks, any proposed addition of infrastructure or amenities is carefully planned and designed to ensure protection of these resources when providing active and social gathering opportunities such as trails, fishing, camping or picnic areas, public access, and the like. Opportunities for interpretation of protected environmental, historic, and archeological elements include self-guided nature trails, interpretive signage, and nature programs.	Trails, fishing and camping areas, nature study areas, and informal picnic areas.
STREAM VALLEY PARKS	Linear parks along major stream valleys providing conservation and recreation areas. Stream Valley Parks form the foundation of the park system, extending as throughout the urban, suburban and rural areas, putting the natural environment within reach of residents. Stream valley parks reduce flooding, sedimentation, and erosion, and provided valuable wildlife habitat. Some stream valleys,	Trails, fishing, picnicking, play areas.

PARK TYPE	PARK DESCRIPTION/Major Function	TYPICAL FACILITIES
	such as the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley, are also designated as special protection areas. In urban areas, clusters of active recreation facilities in parks adjacent to stream valley parks were developed many years ago to serve as local parks. More recent environmental regulations now limit or prevent intensive development along stream banks to reduce sedimentation and erosion and environmental degradation caused by urban runoff. New facilities and upgrades to aging facilities are evaluated to assess the balance of providing recreational opportunities and the protection of natural resources.	
SPECIAL PARKS	Parks acquired for their historic or culturally significant features that activate parks and have distinguishing characteristics that set them apart from other park types. They can be parks of a specialized character such as equestrian parks, formal gardens, and Rails-to-Trails Parks. Examples of Special Parks in the County include McCrillis Gardens, Woodlawn Manor House, Rockwood Manor Park, and the Agricultural History Farm Park. They are often used for small conferences, social events, specialized education, and art exhibits. Important historic sites are preserved in all types of parks. Examples of these are the Silver Spring in Acorn Urban Park, Woodlawn Manor House with its smoke house, and the Needwood Mansion.	Variable, but may include agricultural centers, gardens, small conference centers, historic and cultural sites, museums, and historic park rental properties.
RECREATIONAL PARKS	Large parks that are more intensively developed than Regional Parks but may also contain natural areas. Physical activity is the main emphasis of this park type, but social and contemplative	May include athletic fields, playing courts, picnicking, dog parks, play areas, trails, natural areas, and

PARK TYPE	PARK DESCRIPTION/Major Function	TYPICAL FACILITIES
	opportunities are also considered. This category includes parks with intensive active development such as ballfield, sport courts, and play areas. Design considerations include access to sunlight and connection to the network of public spaces, and protection from the wind, traffic, and noise. In more urbanizing areas, these parks tend to be smaller than other recreational parks and the size of the facilities and multiple functions are studied to optimize use of parkland and serve diverse populations.	sitting areas and flexible grassy open space. In more urbanizing areas include more flexible spaces. Programming may include farmer's markets, outdoor exercise classes, and community yard sales. There is often space for a safe drop-off area and nearby accessible parking.
REGIONAL PARKS	Large parks that provide a wide range of recreational opportunities combining active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences. Regional Parks maintain a large proportion of parkland dedicated to conservation, while providing space for a diversity of recreational activities. *A Policy for Parks* (see Appendix 7) has established a standard of setting aside 2/3 of regional park areas as natural or conservation areas to preserve enough habitat to support healthy ecosystems. The Parks Department has discretion, with Planning Board approval, to adjust this standard on a case-by-case basis after careful review of environmental impacts. Montgomery County has five developed regional parks offering a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable travel time of most County residents totaling around 7,629 acres.	Picnic / playground areas, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf course, campgrounds, natural areas, and lake-based recreation areas.
LOCAL PARKS	Local Parks serve the adjacent neighborhood and also may contain amenities that serve the residents countywide. This type of park is	Permitted and non-permitted ballfields, playing courts, sport-

PARK TYPE	PARK DESCRIPTION/Major Function	TYPICAL FACILITIES
	primarily programmed for physical and activity, with supporting programming and contemplative opportunities. Most existing Local Parks provide regulation size athletic fields that can be reserved for game play. New parks in urbanizing areas may not be able to accommodate regulation size facilities but will provide alternative ways to enjoy physical activity in smaller fields or courts on a first-come, first-serve basis. Many down-county parks include small recreation centers that are used for classes, social events, and other similar activities. Some parks also include other facilities, such as swimming pools. Some of these parks, such as Sligo-Dennis, are located adjacent to Stream Valley Park areas and provide both active and contemplative recreation opportunities. Local parks provide facilities for many programs sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department and are often adjacent to schools, providing additional play space for students.	specific and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic area, shelters, buildings, and other facilities. Programming can include farmer's markets, outdoor exercise classes, and community yard sales. There is space for a safe drop-off area and nearby accessible parking for those who cannot walk to the park.
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	These parks are generally walk-to parks, providing informal leisure opportunities and recreation serving residents and workers. Existing neighborhood parks typically provide about five acres of open space developed with a sitting area, playground, informal play field, and sport courts. These parks provide a flexible space that supports social connections, physical activities and access to nature serving mostly local residents and nearby workers.	Lawn area, play field, shading sitting, shelter, sport courts. (Typically, do not include regulation-size ballfields). May include a play area, a skate park, a community garden, or similar facilities.
URBAN PARKS	Urban parks are strategically located to allow access by walking and biking to and from public transit and other complementary land uses to support the goals of encouraging physical activity, facilitating social connection,	Central lawn or hardscape as focal point, sunny and shaded seating areas, public art (explore interactive

PARK TYPE	PARK DESCRIPTION/Major Function	TYPICAL FACILITIES
	accessing nature, and promoting economic prosperity. Some urban parks are the "heart and civic center" of urbanizing areas emphasizing social gatherings, while others provide complementary uses and functions emphasizing nature-contemplation or physical activity. Some parks located in larger urban areas, including Bethesda, Silver Spring, Friendship Heights, White Flint and Wheaton generally serve as destination parks.	installations with education component), trails or walkways (loops encouraged); a variety of sizes and scales of playing courts and areas for physical activities, multifunctional structures. Features that incorporate nature, history, and/or cultural elements.

Neighborhood Conservation Areas

The 2022 PROS Plan Parks Classification system retains the Neighborhood Conservation Area category for existing parks, but strongly recommends against applying this classification to newly acquired parkland. Many of these parcels were acquired when conservation laws and natural resource preservation tools were not fully developed, so the approach at that time was to acquire these areas to preserve patches of forest and other natural areas. The existing inventory frequently contains streams and drainage areas and adjacent wooded slopes.

Parking in Parks

Where multiple transportation options such as walking, biking and transit are readily available, parks should not contain dedicated parking lots. Provide shared parking on streets and at nearby surface parking lots and garages where possible. In more remote and less dense areas, consider providing adequate parking to ensure access.

Temporary Parks and Interim Parks

A *temporary park* is a type of park created for a certain period of time in a location that is not currently planned as a future public space. An *interim park* is implemented in a short time frame on a site that is actively being designed for a future permanent public space. Staff can use these temporary facilities to collect information on programming and functions to inform the design of the long-term public space.

Both temporary and interim parks can also provide opportunities to partner with local businesses and non-profits to engage with the community in creative ways to deliver places for social gathering, active or contemplative experiences while building a sense of community and belonging at the location.

When feasible, new parks should consider implementation of temporary or interim parks.

State Goals for Parks and Recreation

The following State goals for recreation and parks should be considered appropriate supplementary objectives to be considered in addition to the goals outline in this plan:

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.

- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the state more desirable places to live, work and visit.

- Use State investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans.

- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.

- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.

- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

Local Goals for Parks and Recreation

The drafting of _Thrive Montgomery 2050_ generated a fresh reconceptualization of the County's goals for the planning and development of recreation and parks. These include:

- Focus on creating high quality urban parks.

- Use park and recreation facilities/programs to promote active lifestyles.

- Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are equitably distributed along racial, socioeconomic, and geographic lines.

- Make social connection a central objective for parks and recreation.

- Update park facility standards and acquisition strategies to align with infill development and adaptive reuse strategies.

- Coordinate with county agencies to accommodate multiple needs, including recreation, education, community-building, and resource stewardship - through colocation, adaptive reuse, co-programming and other combined or shared land and facilities.

- Maintain high standards of environmental stewardship in park management and operations.

- Integrate parks/rec/public spaces into economic development strategies and land use planning to attract employers and workers, build social connections, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create vibrant places, especially as part of Complete Communities.

Current Challenges & Benefits of Parks

The Parks Department has built a well-deserved reputation for environmental stewardship, and it has made progress in providing a wider range of recreational opportunities, such as cricket, to meet the needs of a more culturally diverse population. It has room, however, for improvement:

- Our highest density areas are far from most parkland, which is difficult to reach without access to a car.

- Conservation-oriented parks can include carefully designed trails and other low impact recreation areas; however, many of these parks lack appropriate access for hikers and bikers, limiting their availability to the greater public.

- Parks conceived as buffers often act as separators rather than gathering places for people.

- Park facility standards and acquisition strategies conceived during a period of greenfield expansion are incompatible with infill development and adaptive reuse of sites.

Meanwhile, the role of land conservation and stewardship in addressing the county's environmental sustainability goals is as important as ever. Urban redevelopment and infill will reduce the environmental impact of future growth by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and help reverse the damage from earlier development by incorporating modern state-of-the-practice stormwater management features. Nonetheless, the environmental performance of green infrastructure on public land must keep getting better to improve water quality, limit property damage and erosion from flooding, and add tree and forest cover.

In addition to maintaining its leadership role in environmental management, the Parks Department must continue to take on new roles:

• Improve service to residents of downtowns, town centers, and other intensively developed areas

• Focus on social engagement and community building as a central role of parks and recreation

• Encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures Over the coming decades, our challenge is to acquire, develop and program parks, recreation, and privately owned public spaces that provide a range of active recreation and community building opportunities throughout the most intensively developed parts of the county while continuing to apply sound environmental stewardship practices to public lands.

Appendix 2. Public Parks and Recreation Properties

Categories	M-NCPPC	Montgomery County Public Schools	Montgomery County Government	Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS)	Municipalities	State & Federal	Total Inventory
TRAIL MILES:							
Paved Trails	81.57	n/a	6.81	1.08	11.07	46.73	**147.26**
Natural Trails	206.30	n/a	4.90	-	0.53	47.84	**259.57**
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:							
Picnic Shelters	174.00	12.00	3.00	1.00	52.00	6.00	**248.00**
Playgrounds	307.00	367.00	17.00	10.00	93.00	8.00	**802.00**
Baseball Fields	16.20	6.00	4.00	-	21.00		**47.20**
Softball Fields	107.40	167.40	3.00	6.00	30.00	2.00	**315.80**
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Small-Medium)	4.80	14.40	1.00	n/a	10.00	1.00	**31.20**
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Large)	116.40	79.80	8.00	7.00	22.00	1.00	**234.20**
Cricket Fields	8.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**8.00**
Sand Volleyball Courts	12.00	1.00	n/a	1.00	7.00	1.00	**22.00**
Tennis Courts	285.00	361.00	16.00	4.00	91.00	1.00	**758.00**
Pickleball Courts	56.00	47.00	n/a	n/a	26.00	n/a	**129.00**
Basketball Courts (Full & Half)	210.00	432.50	12.00	3.00	64.00	2.50	**724.00**
Community Gardens	13.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	9.00	2.00	**32.00**
Skate Park	3.00	n/a	1.00	n/a	5.00	n/a	**9.00**
Dog Parks	7.00	n/a	n/a	2.00	5.00	n/a	**14.00**
INDOOR AMENITIES:							
Indoor Recreation Space (Square Feet)	602,783.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**602,783.00**
Indoor Aquatic Space (Square Feet)	167,430.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**167,430.00**
Special Use Facilities (Square Feet)	373,929.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	**373,929.00**

Table 1.2: Existing Recreational Facilities within Public Parks and Recreation Properties. Special Use Facilities include activity buildings, event centers, nature centers, and historic buildings that are available to the general public
Note: GIS database of all facilities and parkland was provided to DNR digitally. The database provides detailed info on facilities by type, park name, size, and ownership.

Appendix 3. New and redeveloped urban parks since 2017

Below is a list of the major urban parks projects that have completed milestones since 2017, including several park renovations/upgrades and one newly constructed park.

Renovated and Updated Parks

- Kemp Mill Urban Park: Construction was completed in 2017
- Woodside Urban Park
  - Facility Planning began in 2021 to re-assess the park design based on a reduced budget.
  - If the facility plan is approved, design is estimated for completion in 2023 and construction estimated for completion in 2024
- Caroline Freeland Urban Park
  - Design began in 2021 and is estimated for completion in 2022
  - Construction is estimated for completion in 2023
- Battery Lane Urban Park
  - Park improvements (tennis, basketball, playground, trail, fitness equipment) were completed in 2019

Newly Constructed Parks

- Gene Lynch Urban Park
  - Construction began in 2021 and is estimated for completion in 2022

Park Acquisitions since 2017

Since the 2017 PROS Plan, several acquisitions of new parkland have been completed in areas that serve the County's most populated communities. Here are a few examples.

Josiah Henson Park and Museum Expansion
- Recommended in the Josiah Henson Special Park Master Plan, 2010
- Acquired 0.6 acres of land to expand this significant historic and archaeological park in the I-270 Corridor

Capital Crescent Civic Green (Urban Park)
- Recommended in the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan, 2017
- Acquired 0.4 acres at end of the Purple Line in Bethesda to create Civic Green at a vibrant urban crossroads with transit, Metro, trails in a growing mixed-use community

Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park Expansion
- Recommended based on need for new park amenities near Friendship Heights and the border with Washington, DC.
- Acquired 0.25 acres of urban land to improve park trails, access and visibility, and maintenance access

Westbard Urban Recreational Park
- Recommended in the Westbard Sector Plan, 2014
- Acquired 1.6 acres to provide key urban recreational amenities adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail in a redeveloping community

Ridge Road Recreational Park
- Recommended as the final parcel to complete the envisioned Ridge Road Recreational Park started over 30 years ago

- Acquired one acre to provide access to northeast corner of Park that will allow future priority park amenities, such as an improved dog park and a community garden, to serve the I-270 corridor

Wheaton Urban Recreational Park
- Recommended in the Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan, 2012
- Acquired 3.8 acres to benefit affordable housing development and create new urban recreational park via a future land exchange

South Silver Spring Urban Recreational Park
- Recommended in Energized Public Spaces FMP, 2018
- Acquired one acre to provide critical space for active and social gathering park amenities in a traditionally underserved, diverse, and growing community in South Silver Spring

Appendix 4. Public Engagement and Outreach

Public Meetings

Starting June 2019, Montgomery Planning has engaged the Montgomery County community to imagine what life will be like in 2050 to inform the development of the new General Plan, *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, and what is needed to allow us to thrive in the decades to come.

Thrive Montgomery 2050, which includes a chapter on parks, involved extensive public outreach, including 32 presentations, 18 one-on-one interview/conversations, 6 meetings, 16 community events (Details can be found Thrive Montgomery 2050 Outreach[2]).

On December 9, 2021, the draft PROS plan was presented and briefed for the Planning Board review. Additionally, during the fall, 2022, on-line Town Hall survey was conducted to solicit feedback on PROS recommendations and public's interest for recommendation prioritization.

Surveys

During the development of the 2022 *PROS Plan*, Parks pledged to "engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends". Montgomery County demographic trends that helped shape the outreach methods for the *2022 PROS Plan* include:

Increasing racial and ethnic diversity, with a projected growth in minority groups

A large and widely diverse foreign-born population speaking a multitude of languages and varying English speaking proficiencies

---

For the *2022 PROS Plan*, a great deal of input was collected through a variety of methods. Montgomery Parks launched a multi-pronged outreach strategy in summer 2021 to engage diverse communities for input about the future of parks and recreation. The initiative, titled "*Powered by Parks*", was aimed at soliciting public input to inform three separate venue: Consultant's randomized mail out survey, park staff's intercept survey and on-line survey.

Randomized Mail (831 responses), Intercept (825 responses), On-line (164 responses), MCPS On-line[3] (approx. 200 responses) surveys were analyzed to create the recommendations. Details can be found [Finding Report](#)[4], [Open-Ended Comments](#)[5], [Comparison of On-line, Intercept, Randomized Mail Survey](#)[6].

After the first draft plan, Townhall survey[6] was conducted (131 responses) to indicate top priorities that contribute to high quality of life when dealing with parks and open spaces.

Total number of program participations/registrations annually

Montgomery County Parks has 305,835 total program participants. Following illustrates other participation data and tools. External resources is available for measuring user demand such as 'Visitation to the C& O Canal National Historic Park', 'Maryland Park Service Annual Report'

Trail Trends
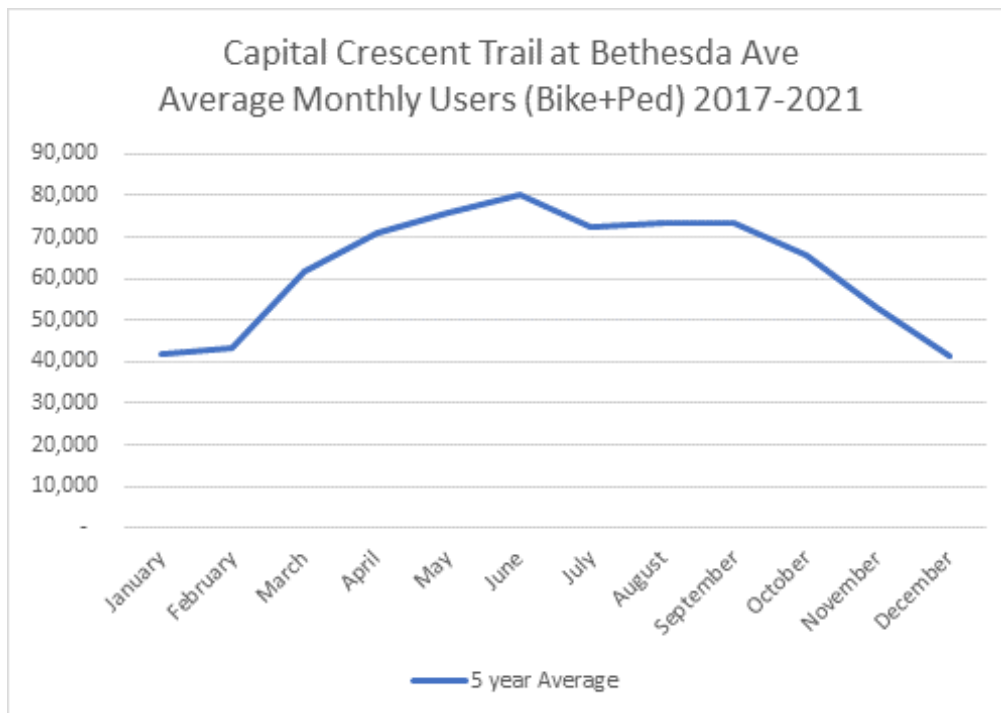
Capital Crescent Trail at Bethesda Ave Average Annual Users: 759,350

	Capital Crescent Trail #1@ Bethesda Ave	Capital Crescent Trail #2 @ Dalecarlia	Rock Creek Trail 1 @ Wildwood	Rock Creek Trail 2 @ Baltimore	Matthew Henson Trail 1 @ Layhill
Monday	1907	1573	507	1149	483
Tuesday	1908	1588	515	1051	188
Wednesday	1944	1588	490	1007	170
Thursday	1859	1524	473	1033	179
Friday	1872	1443	431	947	611
Saturday	2594	1955	856	1261	591
Sunday	2614	2010	777	1309	276

Average trail users, by day of the week at five trail locations, 2017-2021. Source: Eco-Counter

Capital Crescent Trail at Bethesda Ave Average Users (Bike+Ped) 2017-2021

Month	Average Monthly Users
January	42,000
February	43,500
March	61,800
April	70,700
May	76,000
June	78,000
July	72,400
August	73,260
September	73,300
October	65,750
November	53,125
December	41,200

Community Garden Wait List 2022

Park Name	Number of Wait List Requests
Bradley Park	47
Briggs Chaney	38
Brink Road	37
Fenton Street Urban Park	30
Nolte Local Park	10
Gaynor Road	26
King Street	26
Long Branch Local Park	16
Parklawn	10
Rocking Horse Center	37
Sligo Mill Overlook	16
South Germantown Recreational Park	67

Nature Center User Demographics
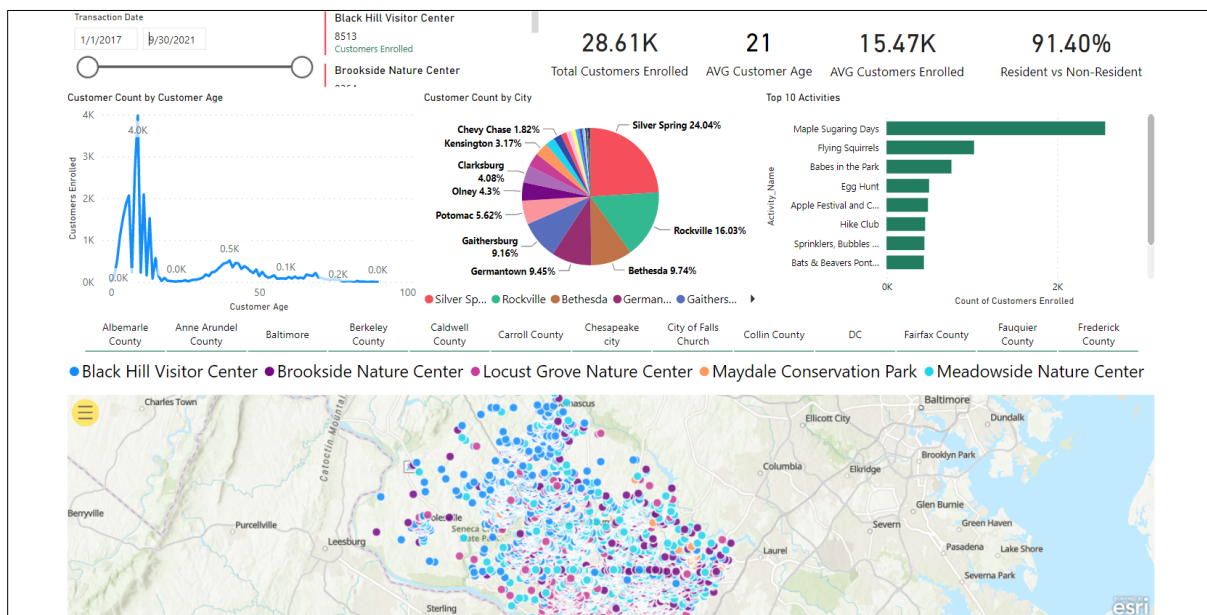
Athletic Fields Permit Data *(All permittable fields under Community Use of Public Facilities)*

Utilization Rates by all planning areas
for Spring and Fall

Legend: ■ Spring   ■ Fall

area	Spring	Fall
Bethesda	119.72	48.84
Rock Creek	102.89	24.41
Kemp Mill / 4 Corners	100.76	58.8
Potomac	94.4	44.5
North Bethesda	88.15	43.22
Travilah	81.85	34.58
Olney	79.19	40.63
City of Rockville	76.41	72.16
Damascus & Vicinity	74.13	33.81
Kensington/Wheaton	73.3	34.07
Silver Spring	70.59	40.55
Darnestown	68.39	34
Clarksburg	66.68	39.53
Cloverly	66.22	22.19
Germantown	63.45	24.6
Fairland	58.43	15.86
White Oak	56.79	29.87
Poolesville & Vicinity	54.86	42.04
Gaitherburg Vicinity	54	20.11
Aspen Hill	52.99	27.44
City of Gaithersburg	46.52	33.2
Takoma Park	36.95	14.1

Appendix 5 - M-NCPPC's Approach Park Access, Experiences and Equity Analysis, Park Visitation, and Level of Service Analysis

Overview

As mentioned in Chapter 6, the Parks Department gathers a wide variety of information about parks and facilities, and it has devoted resources to adding more sophisticated data collection capabilities such as GIS-driven park accessibility from a grid system, trail counters, anonymized and aggregated cell phone traffic measurement, and advanced park permit software.

2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan

The *2017 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan* introduced a new policy document that focuses on the delivery of parks and open spaces in higher density areas of the County - the *2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*

(EPS Plan) and its associated *2019 Designing Public Spaces Design Guidelines*. The EPS Plan applies an innovative methodology and framework to identify areas with the highest need for parks and open spaces and recommends opportunities to increase the amount and quality of parks and open space in those communities. This Plan promotes public spaces as platforms where people can share experiences and build a sense of community. As participants noted during the listening and visioning sessions, Silver Spring needs more parks for physical activity. The EPS Plan implemented data analysis, a new user-friendly metric, and scenario testing layers to support this need and enhance our park planning analysis during the planning process.

Figure 5.1- EPS Functional Master and associated Design Guidelines

Data-Driven Methodology and Tool

The EPS Plan maps and scores the community's access to parks and open spaces by identifying and quantifying what we have, where we have it, and how to get more of what we need. The tool measures how accessible a variety of public space amenities are from a given spot in the plan via walking. The plan's methodology and approach to mapping outdoor experiences will contribute to this sector plan as well as park-specific plans and park planning studies in the Study Area. By further prioritizing parks implementation selection combining the mapping of our Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) with the overlay of the Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) this Plan will also contribute to the efforts initiated by County Council on Racial Equity and Social Justice.

EPS Experience Improvement Areas *(red polygons)* **:** The EIA map shows areas where low experience scores are spatially clustered. Experience scores were determined by calculating the ratio and scoring of accessible public space experiences to the number of people capable of walking to them from a specific location.

Figure 5.2 - Summary Illustration of Methodology Elements

EPS Plan Methodology Elements

1 - WALKABILITY MAP:

Creating a flexible and adaptable grid system – A regular grid system allows an equal comparison of supply and demand relationships for the many different areas of the county and different districts within the same sector plan. Accessibility is defined as within a 10-minute walkshed from each one-acre cell in the County, and the number of people is determined by how many people live and work in each one-acre cell in the County.

A - Rock Spring – 78 Acres   B - Silver Spring – 268 Acres

Walkability *(by grid)***:** Measured by the number of accessible grids inside each walkshed. Green = high accessibility and Red=low accessibility with numbers within the EPS Study Area and Equity Focus Areas as shown in the map.

COUNT_GRIDS
High
Medium
Low
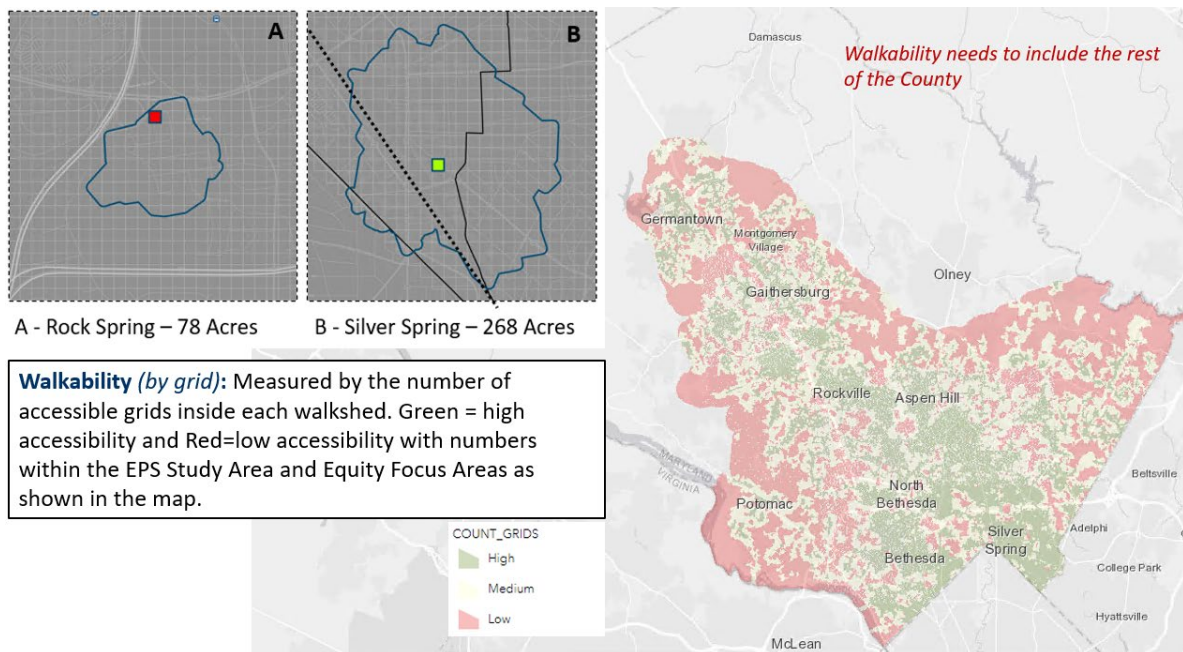
Figure 5.3 - Walkability Map

2 - SUPPLY:

Supply of all publicly accessible parks and public space independently of ownership. The methodology evaluates how each recreational amenity within the open space network provides for three outdoor experiences show in Figure 3.

The tool applies a 3-value system focused on accessibility to outdoor experiences that benefit our overall health. An experience value is applied to all amenities based on 3 major categories of recreation:

Figure 5.4 - EPS Experiences Classification

Active Experiences: physical activities that promote physical health

- Play sports or games; run, walk, or bicycle; climb or mountain bike; other outdoor exercises
- Trails, athletic fields, open spaces/lawns, sport courts, playgrounds, interactive elements, natural areas

Contemplative Experiences: improve exposure to nature, history and culture, and provide opportunities for education and stewardship

- Enjoy nature, read a book, or learn something new; relax/meditate/reflect.
- Include natural areas, historic sites, benches, shade trees, community open spaces, gardens, small green spaces, or trails

Social Gathering Experiences: opportunities for social gathering and interaction

- Community festivals, concerts, outdoor movies, parades, farmer's markets, historic sites
- Use plazas with seating, small sport courts, amphitheaters/stages, picnic tables, large community open spaces, dog parks

3 - DEMAND:

The demand data is a sum of single-family and multi-family residents and daytime population estimates within each square grid.

New Metric: EPS Experience Index Results

An experience value, measured as points-per-person, is assigned based on how each amenity ranks as an active, contemplative, or social gathering experience. Experience scores were determined by calculating the ratio of accessible public space experiences to the number of people capable of accessing them from a specific location. A high ratio, meaning a high rate of walkable experiences per person results in a high score for a cell, while a low ratio results in a low score. Areas with low score are called Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) (see Figure 2) and are the focus of prioritization of park resources as one filter to be used in the CIP Strategy and recommendations for overall park studies, including sector plans.

Equity and Experience Improvement Areas

The map below highlights the overlap between Equity Focus Areas and Experience Improvement Areas. The areas where these two filters overlap are ideal sites to be prioritized along with all other filters listed in the chapter 6 – Implementation.
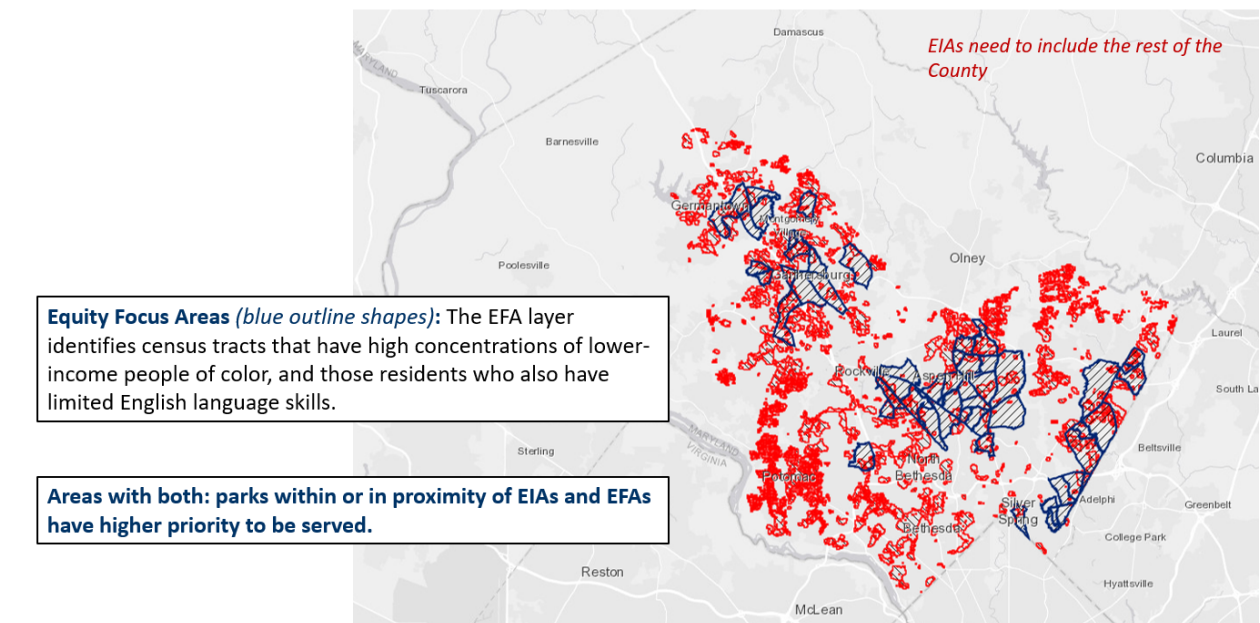
Figure 5.5 - Map illustrating the overlap between Equity Focus Areas and Experience Improvement Areas

Park Visitation

Data Collection in large scale - Montgomery County Parks (M-NCPPC) has measured park visitation using a number of techniques in the past. These include the use of sensor placement on trails or entrances, trash collection metrics, and facility rental data.

In the past couple years, the department has begun evaluating a new technology that has great potential to measure our entire system for the same time periods. This new technology is delivered through several vendors, but all are based on collected GPS location data captured through the various applications present on cell phones.

Various vendors can process this immense amount of cloud data to certain pedestrian, bicycle or driving trips. These trips are a representative sample that is a proxy for an actual number of people traveling into various parks and trails. But the power of this data lies in the fact that the tool can measure the number of trips for each facility for the same periods. Existing physical sensor use can only be employed in one place at a time otherwise.

Montgomery Parks' pilot efforts in this area have been able to show what parks are trending up or down during various time periods. For example, certain parks during Covid closures in 2020 went down dramatically. And others went up. Downtown parks showed a down trend for 2020. The same was observed for parks adjacent to schools that were used largely as a school amenity.

For trails, the use of counters has been somehow successful, but this technology is expensive and requires maintenance of the counters and staff time to retrieve information. Currently Parks has been trying to capture park visitation through big data providers such as Streetlight and Cit yDash and also the creation of an algorithm based on counters and manual data collection mixed with field observation. Each approach has its strengthens and weaknesses. Below is a summary of each study with associated pros and cons. Currently Parks is exploring CityDash since it seems to be a less expensive alternative and offer more flexibility on the targeted outcomes.

George Mason University (GMU) Study

The GMU park visitation study was performed in 2020. The study took place at the following locations: Black Hill Regional Park, Germantown Town Center Urban Park, Long Branch Local Park, and Ten Mile Creek Trail. In the study GMU monitored the activities at the locations, while observing and surveying park patrons. The study focused on key metrics such as time of day, day of the week, race, activity, and weather.

Both CityDash and StreetLight are big data providers that measure visitation based on the segment of population that carries mobile devices and has location tracking permitted.

StreetLight

M-NCPPC entered into a contract with Streetlight in June of 2020. Three years of visitation data was acquired (2018, 2019, and 2020). The data is referenced to M-NCPPC parks and trails as tracked in GIS layers. The data for the Streetlight study can be found in both ArcGIS Online and Power BI dashboards. Users (Montgomery Parks staff) can view visitation trends for parks and trails such as the most and least visited trails.

CityDash

The Data Analytics Team explored a sample visitation dataset provided by CityDash to review the visitation trends of three parks: Black Hill Regional Park, Germantown Town Center Urban Park, and Long Branch Local Park. The sample visitation data spanned 8 weeks in 2021. The emphasis of the exploration was on how visitation trends change, daily/hourly visitation, and visitor origins (Census block groups) that enable Equity Focus Areas and assumed demographics of visitors to be utilized for staff to better understand what parks serve which visitors and what communities are underserved by parks. The demographic findings were compared to that of the overall County and the GMU study. Montgomery Parks is currently in the process of securing a contract with CityDash for visitation data from 2019 to 2024, which will expand the exploration of the data beyond the limits of the sample in the future.
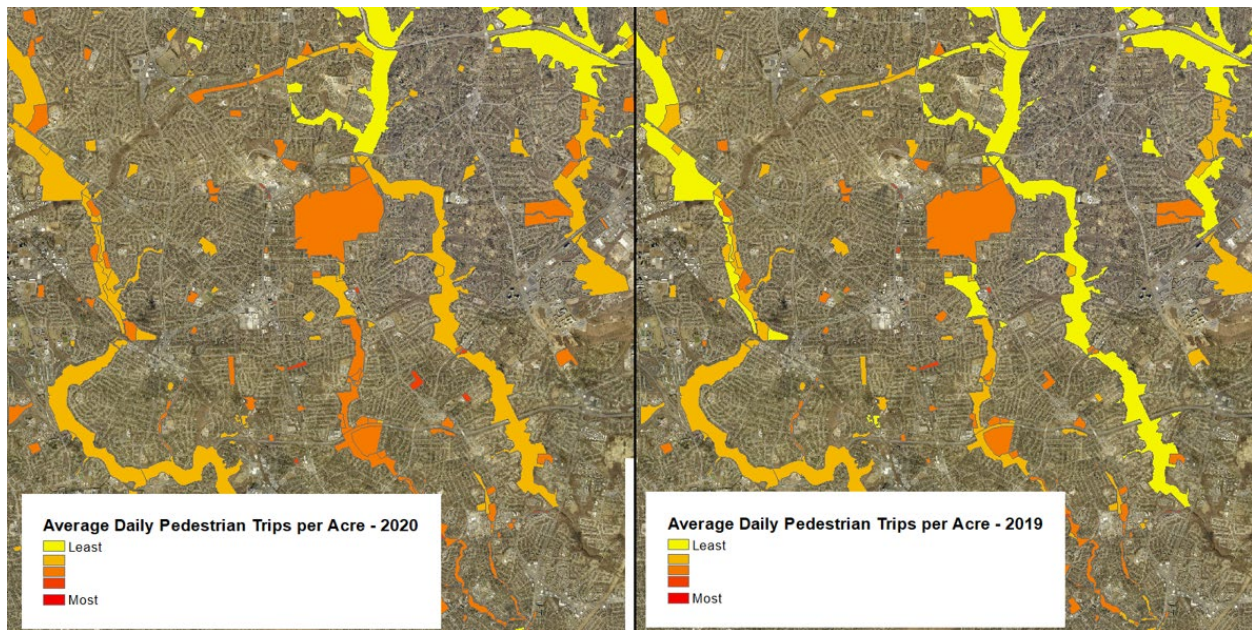
Figure 5.6 - Example of park visitation collected by Streetlight Data analysis.

LOS Methodology

Level of Service (LOS) standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. LOS standards can and will change over time as the program lifecycles change and demographics of a community change.

Every agency has different needs depending on the demographics of the community, the residents' interests, the history and culture of the area, as well as the geography and climate. All of these issues are factors that need to be considered when evaluating what programs, services, and infrastructure should be included in a Parks and Open Space Master Plan Update.

To establish what the wants and needs of the community are for this updated plan, Montgomery County Park staff relied on the following data sources and evaluations:

- National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) recommendations for the number of facilities per population.

- A 2021 statistically valid survey conducted for Montgomery County conducted by ETC Institute that asked a number of questions about park related needs, recreation programming needs and resident overall needs in the County.

- Department staff conducted 825 intercept surveys throughout the county as well as collected approximately 200 high school student surveys

- Interviews with Department staff and key leaders.

It is important to note that these LOS standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the particular situation and needs of the community. By applying these standards to the population of Montgomery County, gaps or surpluses in park and facility types are revealed.

According to the LOS, there are multiple needs to be met in Montgomery County to properly serve the community today and in the future. The existing level of service meets best practices and recommended service levels for many items; however, for example, paved and unpaved trails standards have increased due to the community's wants and needs.

The overall LOS chart was also broken out into three tiers: rural, suburban, and urban. Being able to understand the distribution of amenities and facilities throughout the County will help park planners make educated decisions on where new amenities and facilities should be developed for the future.

The standards that follow are based upon population figures for 2021 and 2026, the latest estimates available at the time of analysis.

Montgomery County Parks overall as a system has done a very good job of meeting and exceeding the needs of residents for parks, trails, and recreation amenities in the county. When evaluating the density areas of the county based on urban, suburban, and rural areas of the county there are disparities in various amenities due to available park plan for park development. Many of the cities within Montgomery County have developed their own parks systems as well and supports and compliments what Montgomery County Parks is providing to the community. Montgomery County is a leader in the Nation in their efforts to support the citizens of the county with exceptional parks, trails, amenities, and programs based on the benchmark report and this level of service report.

Level of Service Chart[7]

The chart below (Figure 5.8) provides a snapshot of the current level of service standards as well as best practice standards from NRPA.

---

[7] Montgomery Parks is currently undergoing a revision of athletic fields inventory including fields owned by MCPS. Data provided at this stage in the PROS Plan LOS chart reflects the current snapshot of the inventory to date.

Per Capita "Gaps"

According to the LOS, the County is performing well in meeting the needs to properly serve the community today and in the future. The existing level of service meets and exceeds best practices and recommended service levels for many items; however, there are several areas that do not meet recommended standards.

Trails

The 2022 PROS Plan LOS chart (Figure 5.8) shows that paved and natural surface trails were among the top three as the most important amenities to households based on the statistically valid survey. Montgomery County has a strong connected trail system and is a leader in trails throughout the region. It is recommended that additional trail mileage (14 miles of paved and 9 miles of natural surface) is needed to meet the standard. The County should continually encourage and seek funding for the development of trails and coordinate with the plans in surrounding jurisdictions to ensure a connected system of shared use paths within region.

Outdoor amenities

Outdoor amenities include ball fields, courts, play equipment, and other park infrastructure that is geared toward a particular sport or activity. The numbers of facilities needed below reflect countywide needs. However, when facilities are distributed in PROS Service Areas, the needs change considerably due to the concentration of the population in urbanizing areas.

Picnic Shelters – There is a need to add an additional 5 picnic shelters based on the recommended level of service standard.

Athletic Fields (Ball Diamonds, Rectangular Fields, Cricket Fields) – Findings from the 2019 Montgomery Athletic Field Business Plan, there are limited number of athletic fields that serve a large number of organizations that offer youth sports. The quality of fields is suffering due to the multiple forms of sports that are played on the fields as well as lengthened seasons. Montgomery County needs to continue to evaluate their inventory for athletic fields and build new ball fields as well as multi-purpose fields to meet community and standard needs for the future.

Sand Volleyball – An additional 20 sand volleyball courts are needed to meet the standard.

Community Garden – There is currently a waiting list of 270 individuals for the existing community gardens found within the County. To meet the level of service standard, there is an additional need for four community gardens.

Skate Park – An additional 2 skate parks are needed to meet the standard.

Dog Park – An additional 4 dog parks are needed to meet the standard.

While LOS indicated per capita gaps, the analysis also revealed surplus facilities for potential conversion and repurposing possibilities to meet new demand.

Playground – There are 270 facilities exceeding the standard.

Tennis Courts – There are 492 facilities exceeding the standard.

Basketball Courts – There are 299 facilities exceeding the standard.

Indoor amenities

There is a need for additional indoor recreation and aquatic space. Although, Montgomery Parks does not oversee indoor recreation facilities beside tennis centers and Nature Centers they own and operate. They should continue to work hand in hand with Montgomery County Recreation to fulfill community needs jointly on what is needed across the county to supplement indoor recreation opportunities such as indoor sports courts, indoor aquatics, program spaces for youth and adult programs and activities in a similar manor that Montgomery County Parks addresses outdoor amenities. This should be a major strategy for the future for both organizations to coordinate efforts together more often.

COUNTYWIDE: 2021 Inventory							
	2021 Inventory			2021 LOS Standards		2026 LOS Standards	
Categories	M-NCPPC (sf)	Current Service Level based upon population (sf/person)	Recommended Service Levels (sf/person)	Meet Standard/ Need Exists (sf)	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed (sf)	Meet Standard/ Need Exists (sf)	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed (sf)
Indoor Recreation Space (Square Feet)	602,783	0.57	1.50	Need Exists	990,309	Need Exists	1,010,415
Indoor Aquatic Space (Square Feet)	167,430	0.16	0.50	Need Exists	363,601	Need Exists	370,303
Special Use Facilities (Square Feet)	373,929	0.35	0.40	Need Exists	50,895	Need Exists	56,257

Figure 5.7 – Summary of Indoor Recreation Space Needs
Note: 2020 Census Population (1,062,061), 2026 Estimated Population (1,075,465: Source ESRI), High school athletic fields are removed from the inventory since these are not open to the general public and controlled by the school athletic director, except for, James Blake HS. Special Use Facilities include activity buildings, event centers, nature centers, and historic buildings that are available to the general public

COUNTYWIDE: 2021 Inventory (Developed Facilities)																2021 LOS Standards			2026 LOS Standards		
Categories	M-NCPPC	Public School	County Gov.	Privately Owned Public Spaces	Municipa lities	State & Federal	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			2021 NRPA Agency Data Upper Quartile Numbers by Jurisdiction Type - County		Recommended Service Levels			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
PUBLIC OPEN SPACES ACREAGES:																					
Total Acres	36,949	3,241	4	30	1,989	20,357	62,570	58.91	acres /	1,000	17 acres /	1,000	22.85	acres/	1,000	Meets Standard	(+38,302)	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	(+37,972)	Acre(s)
TRAIL MILES:																					
Paved Trails	81.6	0	7	1	11	47	147	0.14	miles /	1,000			0.15	miles/	1,000	Need Exists	12.05	Mile(s)	Need Exists	14.06	Mile(s)
Natural Trails	206.3	0	5	0	0.5	48	260	0.24	miles /	1,000	94 miles of trails		0.25	miles/	1,000	Need Exists	5.95	Mile(s)	Need Exists	9.30	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																					
Picnic Shelters	174	12	3	1	52	6	248	1.00	site/	4283	1 site /	-	1.00	site/	4,200	Need Exists	5	Sites(s)	Need Exists	8	Sites(s)
Playgrounds	307	367	17	10	93	8	802	1.00	site/	1324	1 site /	13,951	1.00	site/	2,000	Meets Standard	(+267)	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+260)	Sites(s)
Baseball Fields	16.2	6	4	0	21	0	47.2	1.00	field/	9744	1 field /	42,181 Adult 17,879 Youth	1.00	field/	8,000	Need Exists	23.8	Field(s)	Need Exists	25	Field(s)
Softball Fields	107.4	167.4	3	6	30	2	315.8	1.00	field/	4687	1 field /	37,490 Adult 23,117 Youth	1.00	field/	4,000	Need Exists	38.9	Field(s)	Need Exists	42	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Small-Medium)	4.8	14.4	1	0	10	1	31.2	1.00	field/	35640	1 field /	74,980 Hockey 49,471 Football 49,471 Lacrosse 24,970 Multi-Purpose 64,887 Multi-Purpose Synthetic 49,500 Overlay 32,980 Soccer (Adult) 29,536 Soccer (Youth)	1.00	field/	10,000	Need Exists	76	Field(s)	Need Exists	78	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Large)	116.4	79.8	8	7	22	1	234.2	1.00	field/	4634			1.00	field/	4,000	Need Exists	36	Field(s)	Need Exists	40	Field(s)
Cricket Fields	8	0	0	0	0	0	8	1.00	field/	132758	1 field /	367,849	1.00	field/	100,000	Need Exists	3	Field(s)	Need Exists	3	Field(s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	12	1	0	1	7	1	22	1.00	court/	48276	1 court /		1.00	court/	25,000	Need Exists	20	Court(s)	Need Exists	21	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	285	361	16	4	91	1	758	1.00	court/	1401	1 court /	13,453	1.00	court/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+483)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+480)	Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	56	47	0	0	26	0	129	1.00	court/	8233	1 court /		1.00	court/	25,000	Meets Standard	(+20)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+19)	Court(s)
Basketball Courts (Full & Half)	210	432.5	12	3	64	2.5	724	1.00	court/	1467	1 court /	22,760	1.00	court/	2,500	Meets Standard	(+299.7)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+294)	Court(s)
Community Gardens	13	2	3	3	9	2	32	1.00	site/	33,189	1 site /	106,987	1.00	site/	30,000	Need Exists	3	Site(s)	Need Exists	4	Site(s)
Skate Park	3	0	1	0	5	0	9	1.00	site /	118007	1 site/	235,760	1.00	site /	100,000	Need Exists	2	Site(s)	Need Exists	2	Site(s)
Dog Parks	7	0	0	2	5	0	14	1.00	site /	75862	1 site/	117,176	1.00	site /	60,000	Need Exists	4	Site(s)	Need Exists	4	Site(s)

Figure 5.8 - 2022 PROS Plan LOS Table - Entire County

	Zone A (Urban: Corridor-Focused Growth area) 2021 Inventory (Developed Facilities)															2021 LOS Standards		2026 LOS Standards	
Categories	M-NCPPC	Public School	County Gov.	Privately Owned Public Spaces	Municipalities	State & Federal	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			2021 NRPA Agency Data Upper Quartile Numbers by Jurisdiction Type - County		Recommended Service Levels			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
PUBLIC OPEN SPACES ACREAGES:																				
Total Acres	8,846	2,075	3.86	30	1,793	1,763	14,511	18.19	acres/	1,000	17 acres/	1,000	22.85	acres/	1,000	Meets Standard	(+3,714)	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	(+4,442)	Acre(s)
TRAIL MILES:																				
Paved Trails	60.62	-	6.16	1.08	9.50	7.52	84.88	0.11	miles/	1,000	94 miles of trails		0.15	miles/	1,000	Need Exists	34.8	Mile(s)	Need Exists	39.5	Mile(s)
Natural Trails	38.51	-	0.08		0.34	3.66	42.59	0.05	miles/	1,000			0.25	miles/	1,000	Need Exists	156.8	Mile(s)	Need Exists	164.8	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																				
Picnic Shelters	77.00	5.00	2.00	1.00	44.00	2.00	131.00	1.00	site/	6,089	1 site/	6.00	1.00	site/	4,200	Need Exists	59	Sites(s)	Need Exists	66.5	Sites(s)
Playgrounds	217.00	259.00	11.00	9.00	76.00	4.00	576.00	1.00	site/	1385	1 site/	13,951	1.00	site/	2,000	Meets Standard	(+177)	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+161)	Sites(s)
Baseball Fields	9.00	3.00	2.00	-	16.00	-	30.00	1.00	field/	26,588	1 field/	42,181 Adult 17,879 Youth	1.00	field/	8,000	Need Exists	70	Field(s)	Need Exists	74	Field(s)
Softball Fields	74.40	107.40	-	1.00	26.00	2.00	210.80	1.00	field/	3,784	1 field/	37,490 Adult 23,117 Youth	1.00	field/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+12)	Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+3)	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Small-Medium)	4.20	11.40	1.00	-	6.00		22.60	1	field/	35293	1 field/	74,980 Hockey 49,471 Football 49,471 Lacrosse 24,970 Multi-Purpose 64,887 Multi-Purpose Synthetic 49,500 Overlay 32,980 Soccer (Adult) 29,536 Soccer (Youth)	1.00	field/	10,000	Need Exists	57.16	Field(s)	Need Exists	60	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Large)	74.40	47.40	2.00	1.00	16.00	1.00	141.80	1	field/	5625			1.00	field/	4,000	Need Exists	57.61	Field(s)	Need Exists	66	Field(s)
Cricket Fields	5.00	-	-	-	-		5.00	1	field/	159,526	1 field/	367,849	1.00	field/	100,000	Need Exists	3	Field(s)	Need Exists	3	Field(s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	7.00	0	-	-	7.00		14.00	1	court/	56,974	1 court/		1.00	court/	25,000	Need Exists	18	Court(s)	Need Exists	19	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	186.00	237.00	16.00	4.00	81.00	1.00	525.00	1	court/	1,519	1 court/	13,453	1.00	court/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+326)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+318)	Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	26.00	32.00	-	-	22.00	-	80.00	1	court/	9,970	1 court/		1.00	court/	25,000	Meets Standard	(+48)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+48)	Court(s)
Basketball Courts (Full & Half)	143.00	287.00	6.00	1.00	55.00	2.50	494.50	1	court/	1,613	1 court/	22,760	1.00	court/	2,500	Meets Standard	(+175)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+163)	Court(s)
Community Gardens	9.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	9.00	2.00	27.00	1	Site/	29,542	1 site /	106,987	1.00	site/	30,000	Meets Standard		Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Skate Park	3.00	-	1.00	-	4.00	-	8.00	1	Site/	99,704	1 site /	235,760	1.00	site/	100,000	Meets Standard	(+0)	Site(s)	Meets Standard	(+0)	Site(s)
Dog Parks	6.00	-	-	2.00	4.00	-	12.00	1	Site/	66,469	1 site/	117,176	1.00	site/	60,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	2	Site(s)

Figure 5.9 - 2022 PROS Plan LOS Table - PROS Service Area: Urban Tier

Categories	M-NCPPC	Public School	County Gov.	Privately Owned Public Spaces	Municipalities	State & Federal	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population	2021 NRPA Agency Data Upper Quartile Numbers by Jurisdiction Type - County	Recommended Service Levels	2021 Meet Standard/Need Exists	2021 Additional Facilities/Amenities Needed	2026 Meet Standard/Need Exists	2026 Additional Facilities/Amenities Needed
PUBLIC OPEN SPACES ACREAGES:														
Total Acres	12,882	876	-	-	91	3,798	17,647	92 acres/ 1,000	17 acres/ 1,000	22.85 acres/ 1,000	Meets Standard	(+13,263) Acre(s)	Meets Standard	(+13,192) Acre(s)
TRAIL MILES:														
Paved Trails	12.45	-	0.65	-	1.57	16.84	31.51	0.16 miles / 1,000	94 miles of trails	0.15 miles / 1,000	Meets Standard	(+3) Mile(s)	Meets Standard	(+2) Mile(s)
Natural Trails	78.18	-	1	-	0.19	6.48	85.85	0.45 miles / 1,000	94 miles of trails	0.25 miles / 1,000	Meets Standard	(+38) Mile(s)	Meets Standard	(+37) Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:														
Picnic Shelters	58.00	5.00	-	-	4.00	4.00	71	1 site/ 2,702	1 site/ -	1.00 site/ 4,200	Meets Standard	(+25) Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+25) Sites(s)
Playgrounds	70.00	88.00	5.00	-	7.00	4.00	174	1 site/ 1,103	1 site/ 13,951	1.00 site/ 2,000	Meets Standard	(+78) Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+77) Sites(s)
Baseball Fields	3.00	1.20	-	-	3.00	-	7.20	1 field/ 26,647	1 field/ 42,181 Adult 17,879 Youth	1.00 field/ 8,000	Meets Standard	(+17) Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+17) Field(s)
Softball Fields	25.80	47.40	3.00	5.00	1.00	-	82.20	1 field/ 2,334	1 field/ 37,490 Adult 23,117 Youth	1.00 field/ 4,000	Meets Standard	(+34) Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+33) Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Small-Medium)	0.60	3.00	-	-	-	1.00	4.60	1 field/ 41,709	1 field/ 74,980 Hockey 49,471 Football 49,471 Lacrosse 24,970 Multi-Purpose 64,887 Multi-Purpose Synthetic 49,500 Overlay 32,980 Soccer (Adult) 29,536 Soccer (Youth)	1.00 field/ 10,000	Need Exists	15 Field(s)	Need Exists	15 Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Large)	24.60	27.00	4.00-	4.00	1.00	-	60.60	1 field/ 3,166		1.00 field/ 4,000	Meets Standard	(+13) Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+12) Field(s)
Cricket Fields	2.00	-	-	-	-	-	2.00	1 Court/ 95,931	1 field/ 367,849	1.00 field/ 100,000	Meets Standard	0 Field(s)	Meets Standard	0 Field(s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	3.00	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	5.00	1 Site/ 38,372	1 court/	1.00 court/ 25,000	Need Exists	3 Court(s)	Need Exists	3 Court(s)
Tennis Courts	78.00	92.00	-	-	6.00	-	176.00	1 Site/ 1,090	1 court/ 13,453	1.00 court/ 4,000	Meets Standard	(+128) Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+127) Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	18.00	13.00	-	-	-	-	31.00	1 Site/ 6,189	1 court/	1.00 court/ 25,000	Meets Standard	(+24) Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+23) Court(s)
Basketball Courts (Full & Half)	49.00	117.00	5.00	-	5.00	-	176.00	1 field/ 1,090	1 court/ 22,760	1.00 court/ 2,500	Meets Standard	(+99) Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+98) Court(s)
Community Gardens	3.00	-	-	-	-	-	3.00	1 field/ 63,954	1 site/ 106,987	1.00 site/ 30,000	Need Exists	4 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)
Skate Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 field/ 0	1 site/ 235,760	1.00 site / 100,000	Need Exists	2 Site(s)	Need Exists	2 Site(s)
Dog Parks	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	1 court/ 191,861	1 site/ 117,176	1.00 site / 60,000	Need Exists	2 Site(s)	Need Exists	2 Site(s)

Figure 5.10 - 2022 PROS Plan LOS Table - PROS Service Area: Suburban Tier

Categories	M-NCPPC	Public School	County Gov.	Privately Owned Public Spaces	Municipalities	State & Federal	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			2021 NRPA Agency Data Upper Quartile Numbers by Jurisdiction Type - County		Recommended Service Levels			Meet Standard/Need Exists (2021)	Additional Facilities/Amenities Needed (2021)		Meet Standard/Need Exists (2026)	Additional Facilities/Amenities Needed (2026)	
Zone C (Rural: Rural Areas and the Agricultural Reserve) 2021 Inventory (Developed Facilities)																**2021 LOS Standards**			**2026 LOS Standards**		
PUBLIC OPEN SPACES ACREAGES:																					
Total Acres	15,218	320	-	-	104	14,796	30,437	610	acres/	1,000	17 acres /	1,000	23	acres/	1,000	Meets Standard	(+29,295)	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	(+29,254)	Acre(s)
TRAIL MILES:																					
Paved Trails	8.50	-	-	-	-	22.37	30.87	0.62	miles/	1,000			0.15	miles/	1,000	Meets Standard	(+23)	Mile(s)	Meets Standard	(+23)	Mile(s)
Natural Trails	89.61	-	3.82	-	-	37.70	131.13	2.62	miles/	1,000	94 miles of trails		0.25	miles/	1,000	Meets Standard	(+119)	Mile(s)	Meets Standard	(+118)	Mile(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:																					
Picnic Shelters	39.00	2.00	1.00	-	4.00	-	46.00	1.00	site/	1,086	1 site /	-	1.00	site/	4,200	Meets Standard	(+34)	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+34)	Sites(s)
Playgrounds	20.00	20.00	1.00	1.00	10.00	-	52.00	1.00	site/	961	1 site /	13,951	1.00	site/	2,000	Meets Standard	(+27)	Sites(s)	Meets Standard	(+26)	Sites(s)
Baseball Fields	4.20	1.80	2.00	-	2.00	-	10.00	1.00	field/	4,997	1 field /	42,181 Adult 17,879 Youth	1.00	field/	8,000	Meets Standard	(+3.75)	Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+4)	Field(s)
Softball Fields	7.20	12.60	-	-	3.00	-	22.80	1.00	field/	2,192	1 field /	37,490 Adult 23,117 Youth	1.00	field/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+10)	Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+10)	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Small-Medium)	-	-	-	-	4.00	-	4.00	1.00	field/	12,492	1 field /	74,980 Hockey 49,471 Football 49,471 Lacrosse 24,970 Multi-Purpose 64,887 Multi-Purpose Synthetic 49,500 Overlay 32,980 Soccer (Adult) 29,536 Soccer (Youth)	1.00	field/	10,000	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Field(s)
Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (Large)	17.40	5.40	2.00	2.00	5.00	-	31.80	1.00	field/	1,571			1.00	field/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+19)	Field(s)	Meets Standard	(+19)	Field(s)
Cricket Fields	1.00	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	field/	49,967	1 field /	367,849	1.00	field/	100,000	Meets Standard	0	Field(s)	Meets Standard	0	Field(s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	2.00	-	-	1.00	-	-	3.00	1.00	court/	16,656	1 court /		1.00	court/	25,000	Meets Standard	(+1)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+1)	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	21.00	32.00	-	-	4.00	-	57.00	1.00	court/	877	1 court /	13,453	1.00	court/	4,000	Meets Standard	(+44)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+44)	Court(s)
Pickleball Courts	12.00	2.00	-	-	4.00	-	18.00	1.00	court/	2,776	1 court /		1.00	court/	25,000	Meets Standard	(+16)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+16)	Court(s)
Basketball Courts (Full & Half)	18.00	28.50	1.00	2.00	4.00	-	53.50	1.00	court/	934	1 court /	22,760	1.00	court/	2,500	Meets Standard	(+33.5)	Court(s)	Meets Standard	(+33)	Court(s)
Community Gardens	1.00	-	1.00	-	-	-	2.00	1.00	site/	24,984	1 site /	106,987	1.00	site/	30,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Skate Park	-	-	-	-	1.00	-	1.00	1.00	site /	49,967	1 site /	235,760	1.00	site /	100,000	Meets Standard	(+0.5)	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	1.00	-	1.00	1.00	site /	49,967	1 site/	117,176	1.00	site /	60,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)

Figure 5.11 - 12022 PROS Plan LOS Table - PROS Service Area: Rural Tier

New Upcoming Enhanced LOS Analysis by Facility Type

The LOS tables provide the number of park facilities within each PROS Service Areas. However, it does not identify the location of needed facilities beyond the geographic boundaries of the service areas. Montgomery Parks is currently developing a more detailed analysis to determine the best location of a facility type based on that facility location and its associated walkshed, bikeshed and driveshed – all based on a 10-min shed timeframe and the served demand within these sheds. This analysis together with the Parks Classification, Equity and Experience Analysis and other CIP strategies will further enhance Montgomery Parks' goal of providing access to park resources in a more equitable manner, especially to those who cannot voice their opinion in the traditional process through participation on community meetings and official surveys. The current PROS Plan LOS tables focus on major facilities. This new upcoming analysis can be applied to any facility within the county due to its association to a grid system and its associated demand and supply of amenities (existing and proposed). The expected outcome is to optimize our limited resources where there are more people in need, especially those in equity areas.
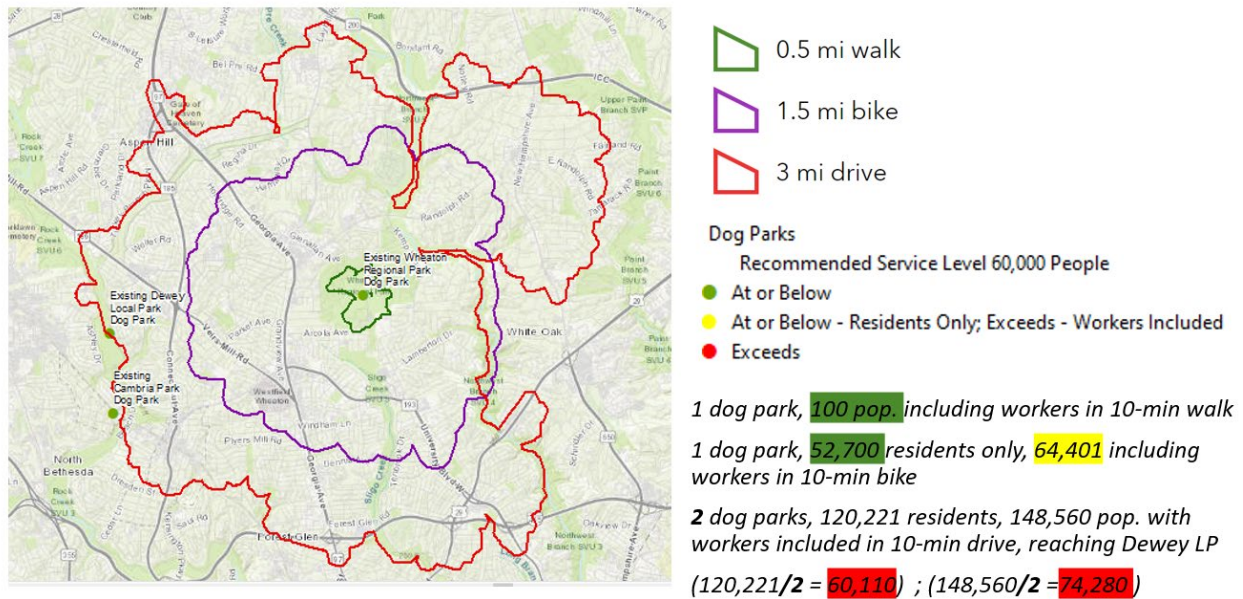
Figure 5.12- Example of upcoming analysis using walkshed, bikeshed and driveshed to determine service area of a dog park in the Wheaton Regional Park

Non-Participant Interest by Age Segment

Montgomery Parks is also interested in residents who are non-participants and to better understand how to entice them to be active in their parks.

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) conducts an annual report (Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report) tracking participation rates as well as tracking non-participant interest. The following are activities that the U.S. population currently does <u>not</u> participate in due to

physical or monetary barriers, but is interested in participating in. Below are the top five activities that each age segment would be most likely to partake in if they were readily available.

Overall, the activities most age segments are interested in include Camping, Bicycling, Fishing, and Swimming for Fitness. All of which are deemed as low-impact activities, making them obtainable for any age segment to enjoy.

These top activities align with the LOS with additional need of trails to not only serve active residents but potentially new users.

6-12 Year-Olds
Fishing
Camping
Soccer
Martial Arts
Basketball

13-17 Year-Olds
Fishing
Camping
Working out w/ Weights
Volleyball
Running/Jogging

18-24 Year-Olds
Camping
Fishing
Martial Arts
Volleyball
Kayaking

25-34 Year-Olds
Camping
Fitness Swimming
Bicycling
Fishing
Kayaking

35-44 Year-Olds
Fitness Swimming
Camping
Bicycling
Fishing
Hiking

45-54 Year-Olds
Bicycling
Fishing
Camping
Fitness Swimming
Hiking

55-64 Year-Olds
Bicycling
Fishing
Fitness Swimming
Camping
Hiking

65+ Year-Olds
Fishing
Fitness Swimming
Bicycling
Birdwatching/Wildlife viewing
Working out using machines

34

Appendix 6. DNR-Required Park Proximity & Equity Analysis

The State requires analyses and maps of park equity and park proximity. The utility of these analyses is to help jurisdictions provide services and facilities more equitably. The investment for improving park proximity or park equity in a location should depend on more detailed analysis to determine whether improvements in access or improvements in facilities would fill the gap identified on the maps. Resulting recommendations could consist of:

- Prioritizing the replacement of individual park components that have reached the end of their life cycle after a facility condition assessment

- Identifying and eliminating barriers to walking from neighborhoods to existing parks

- Providing new facilities as identified in the PROS Plan

- Re-thinking an entire park if the current layout no longer meets the needs of the residents

Montgomery Parks has developed a more detailed proximity analysis described in Appendix 5. The maps shown in this appendix were created with the sole purpose to respond to the LPPRP required analysis.

Park Proximity

Proximity analyses and maps were created to show gaps in proximity to various popular park features – trailheads, playgrounds, and forested areas and state required facilities. As mentioned above, Montgomery Parks uses a different methodology to show gaps to park facilities. Following the LPPRP guidelines' requirements, the maps provide:

- 5-mile buffer from parks and facilities within the Rural and Suburban Tiers;
- 0.5-mile buffer from parks and facilities within the Suburban and Urban Tiers

As the majority of the maps illustrate, most of the County is very well-served.

Entire parks and recreation system
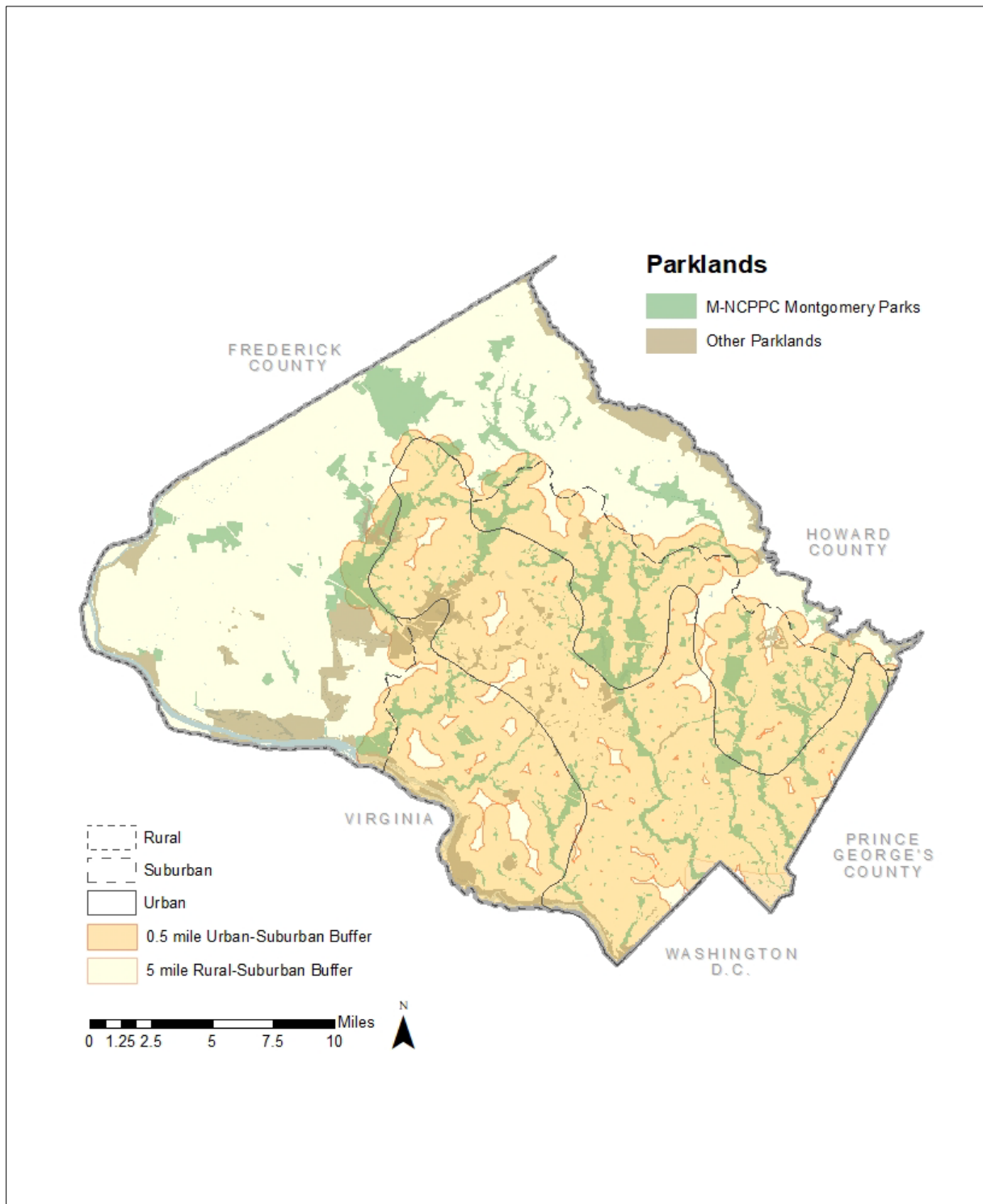
Figure 6.1: Proximity Analysis on Entire Parks and Recreation System. Approximately 96% residents are covered within the half-mile distance from Parkland.

Water Access
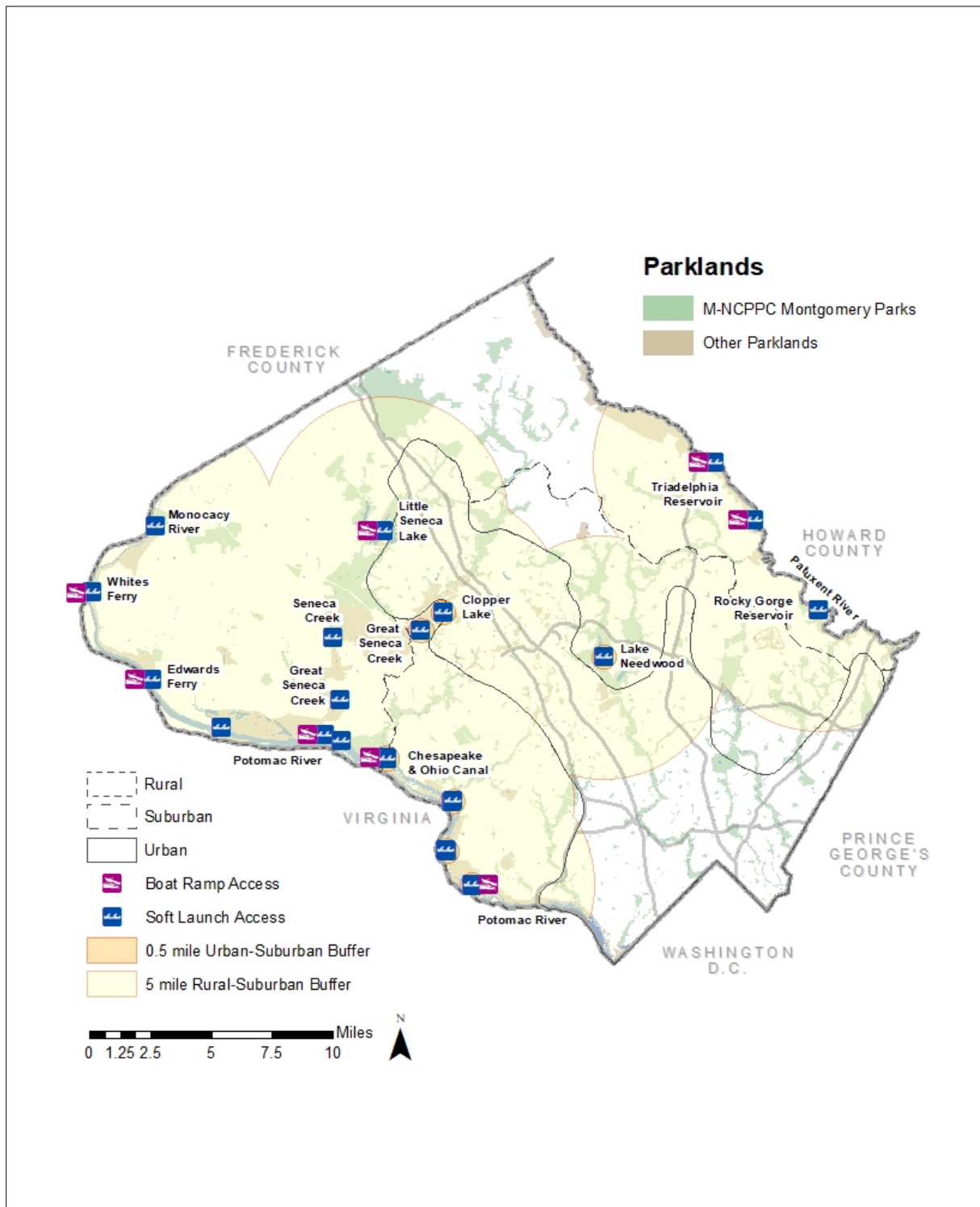
Figure 6.2: Proximity Analysis on water Access which include soft launch access and boat ramp. There are 25 "water access" points on public land in the county.

Trails
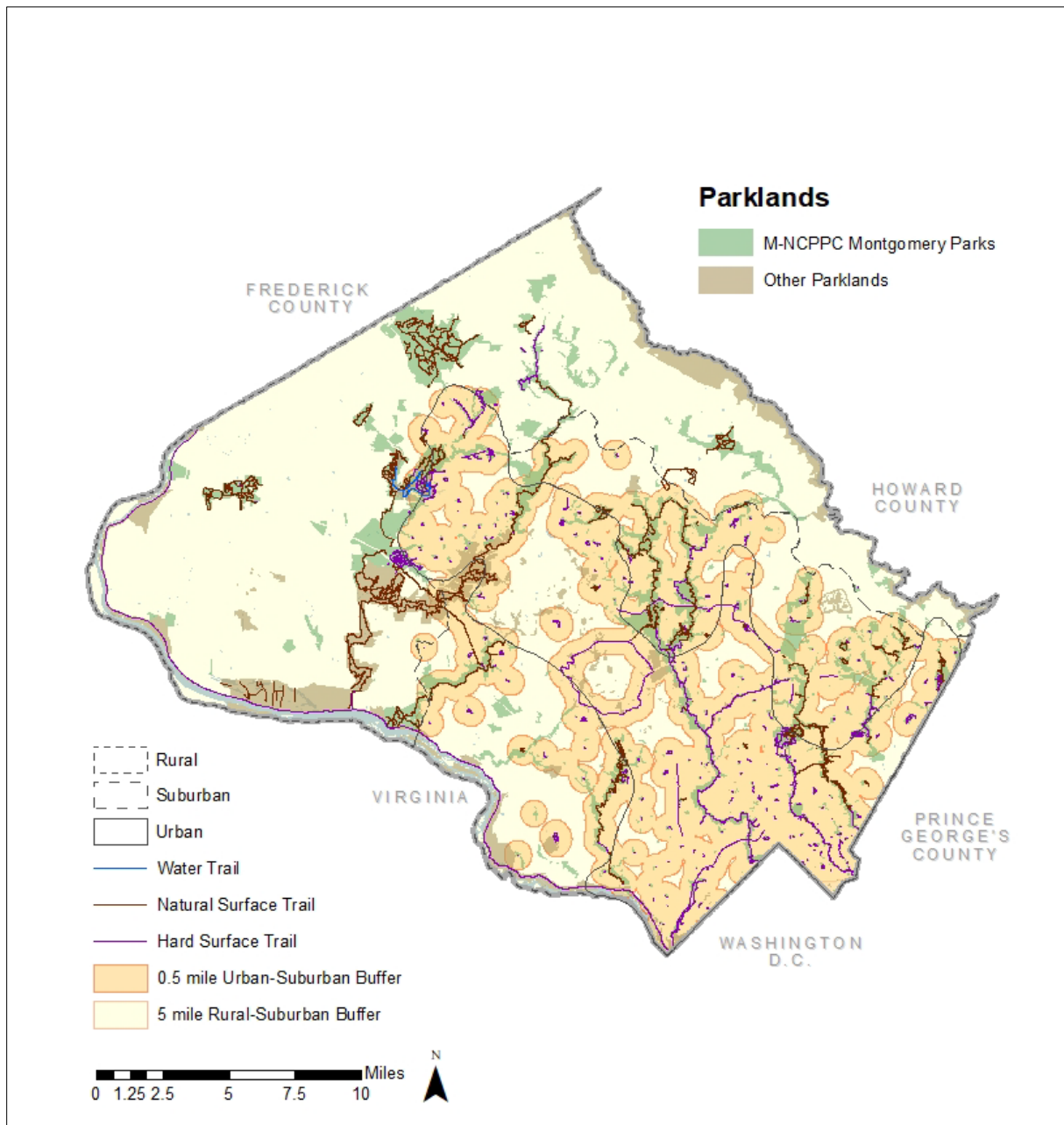
Figure 6.3: Proximity Analysis on Trails. Montgomery Parks has 206 miles of natural surface trails and 82 miles of hard surface trails. (Additional trails exist on state parkland and in urban jurisdictions.) On average, trail access points are located a little less than a mile apart in our trail network. "Access points" include trailheads with parking, signed access points without designated parking, and locations where trails intersect roadways. Access points are more frequent on hard surface trails, with one located every 0.6 miles on average, compared to 1.1 miles for natural surface trails. A total of 289,000 of residents are covered within the half-mile distance from trailheads or access points.

Picnic Facilities
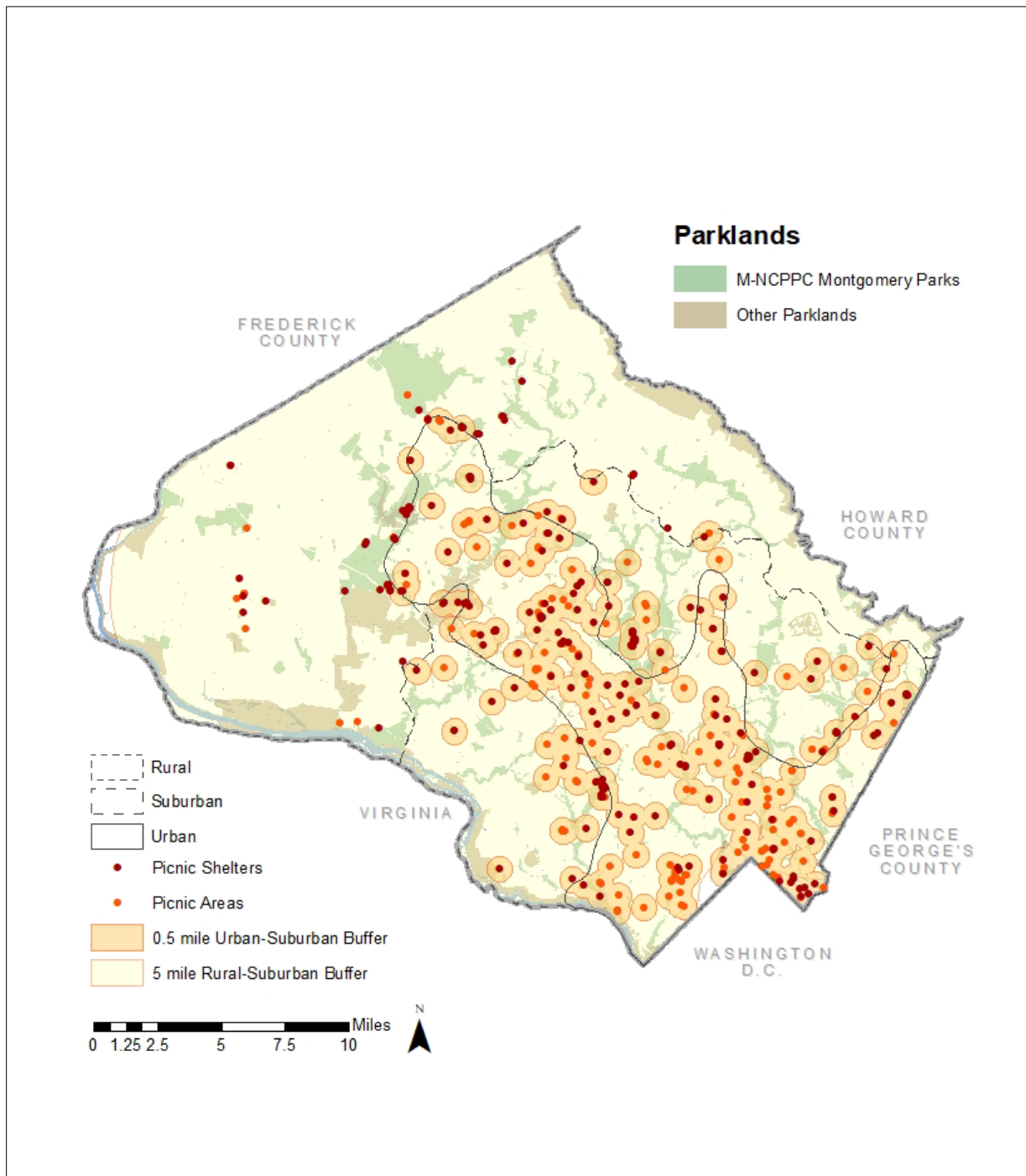
Figure 6.4: Proximity Analysis on Picnic Facilities. Approximately 56 percent residents are covered within the half-mile distance from picnic area and shelters (424 shelters).

Forested Public Land
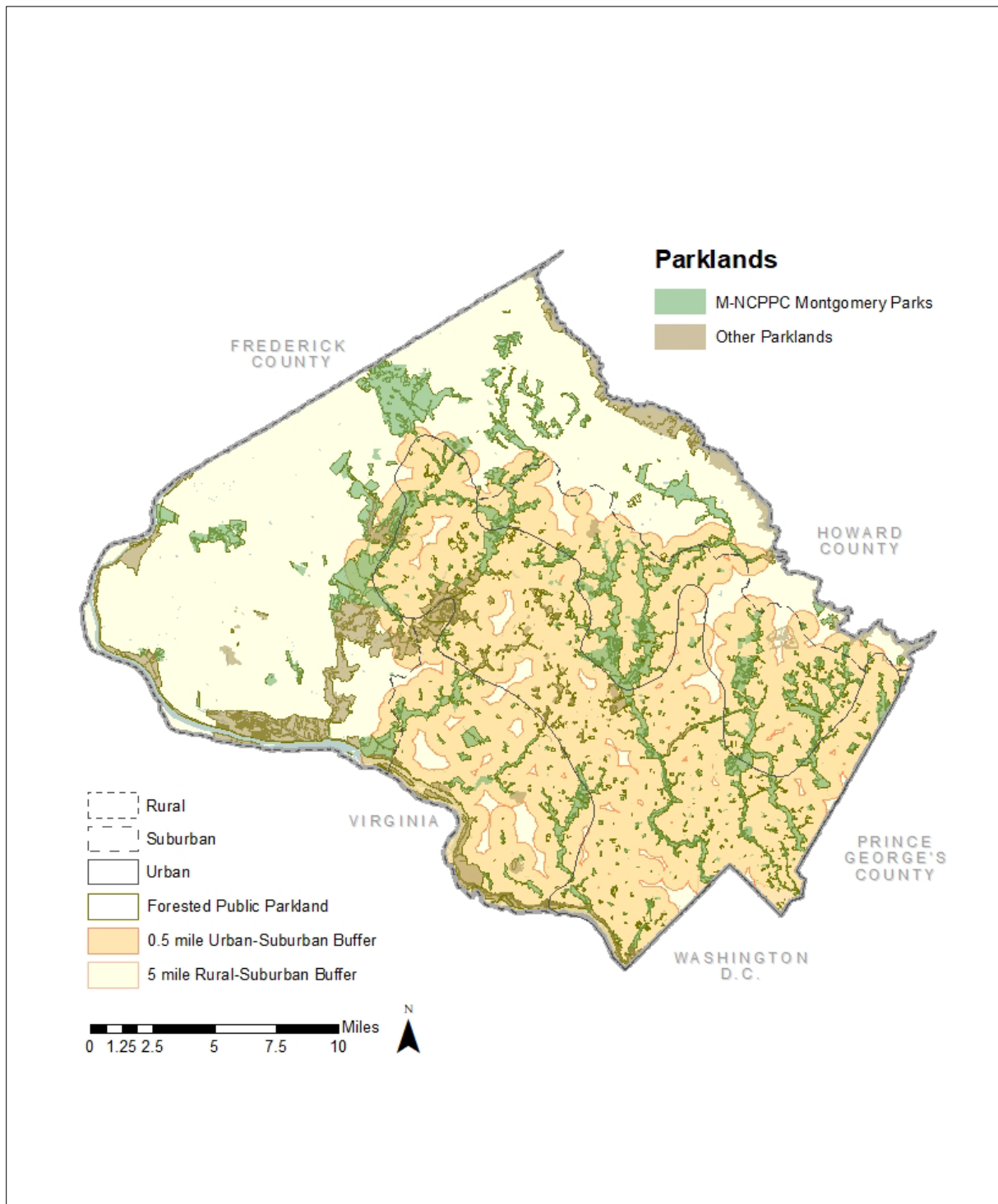
Figure 6.5: Forested Area are defined as woodland (50-feet wide with at least 10,000 sf) and meadow areas. Proximity Analysis on Forested Public Land. Approximately 94% residents are covered within the half-mile distance from forested Area.

Public Playgrounds
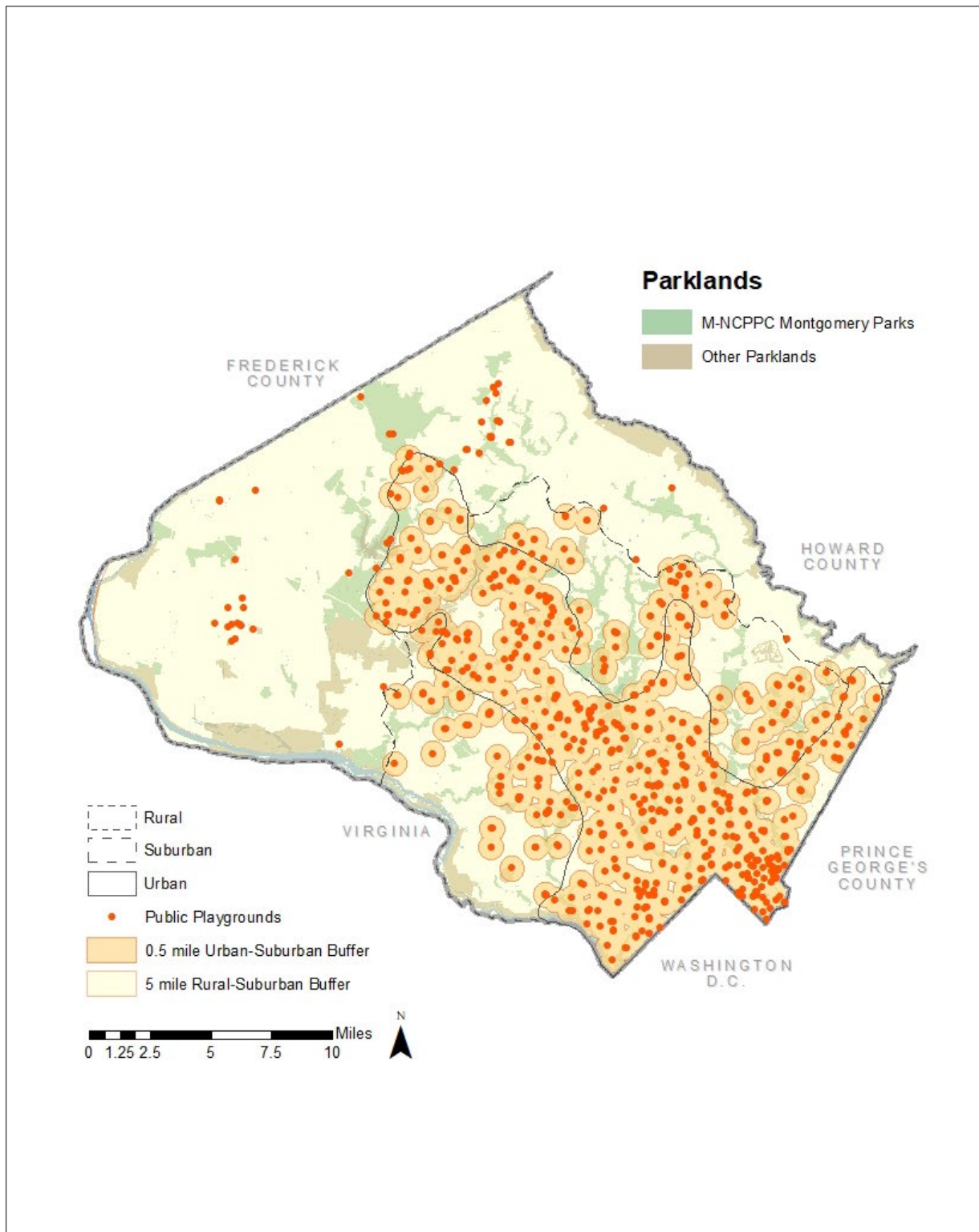
Figure 6.6: Proximity Analysis on Public Playgrounds. Approximately 85% residents are covered within the half-mile distance from public playgrounds.

Appendix 7. "A Policy for Parks"

The following *Policy for Parks* was adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board in the *1988 PROS Plan* and has been re-affirmed and included in every PROS Plan since that date. Its goals and objectives are still valid and should be followed whenever possible. Exceptions may be made by the Planning Board when it is deemed to be in the best public interest. The *Policy for Parks* guides acquisition, development, and management of the Montgomery County Park System.

Goal

To acquire and maintain a system of natural areas, open spaces, and recreation facilities developed in harmony with the County's natural resources to perpetuate an environment fit for life and fit for living.

Objectives

Acquisition of Parkland

The objectives of the program for parkland acquisition shall be:
- Acquisition of land for a balanced park system in the region in order to:

- Provide citizens with a wide choice of both active and passive recreation opportunities as major factors in enhancing the quality of Life

- Provide adequate parklands to accommodate conservation and preservation needs

- Acquisition of parkland based on the following considerations:

- Local and regional demand for public park and recreation facilities based on current need and projected population changes

- Protection and preservation of natural areas

- Protection and preservation of watersheds

- Protection and preservation of cultural and historical sites

- Encouraging the private dedication of land as a means of parkland acquisition.

Development and Management of the Park System

The objectives of the planning, design, construction, and management of the park system shall be based on:
- Meeting the needs of recreation and preservation in a manner that is harmonious with the natural beauty and parkland physiography, reflecting concern for the environment

- A planned and scientific approach to resource management, cognizant of the ecological interdependencies of people, the biota, water and soil

To preserve natural resources, the Department of Parks shall:
- Limit the development of active-use areas in regional parks to no more than 1/3 of their total park acreage, with the remaining acreage designated as natural areas and/or conservation areas. Development in other categories of parks shall be determined on a case-by-case basis with full consideration of the values of the natural features

- Prepare an environmental evaluation as part of park development or rehabilitation plans where deemed appropriate by the Park Commission

- Review as necessary the impact of park use, development, and management practices on parkland

Relationship to Other Public Agencies, Education, and the Private Sector

- The Department of Parks shall encourage other public agencies, as well as the private sector, to assist in providing compatible open spaces, natural areas, and recreation facilities and opportunities in the region

- The Department of Parks shall encourage and support research in the environmental sciences by other public agencies, institutions of higher learning, and the private sector, and support programs in outdoor education and recreation in the school system

- Lands and facilities under the control of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are held as a public trust for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. The Commission is pledged to protect these holdings from encroachment that would threaten their use as parkland. The Commission recognizes that under rare circumstances non-park uses may be required on park property in order to serve the greater public interest

- For projects that will impact parkland, the policy is that non-parkland alternatives be pursued first for all publicly funded projects – unless environmental, economic, social and engineering impacts to move the project off parkland are proven to be prohibitive. In cases where the Planning Board has deemed that non-park use of parkland is unavoidable and/or serves the greater public interest, The Department of Parks shall:

  - Require the agency to acquire a Park Construction Permit. Through the review process, Parks will require that the agency minimize the impacts to parkland as much as possible.

  - Determine how to make the park system whole through mitigation. Some examples of mitigation may include but are not limited to: reforestation, vegetation enhancements or replacements, tree replacement, impervious surface removal, stormwater management facility retrofit or creation, terrestrial or aquatic habitat restoration, or other measures deemed appropriate for the impact.

  - In instances where the agency must permanently take ownership of parkland, parkland replacement may be required. Parkland impacted by a project must be replaced at equal or greater natural, cultural, and/or recreational value; therefore the parkland replacement mitigation may exceed the acreage impacted by the project. In certain instances, the impacts to parkland caused by public projects may be of such magnitude that the park function affected can never be restored and/or The Department of Parks believes there is no comparable replacement land in the County. When such cases arise, a compensation plan will be developed and agreed upon.

  - Neither Mitigation nor Compensation will be considered in place of avoidance, minimization or mitigation and will need to be approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board.

Appendix 8. Natural Resources Stewardship Goals

Montgomery Parks' natural area conservation objectives have long been aligned with the State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation, listed below, and other existing policy initiatives of the State. The agency utilizes the State Targeted Ecological Areas network and Rare, Threatened, and Endangered or Greatest Conservation Need Species to identify and target parkland acquisition for conservation of species and habitats/micro-habitats, water quality, and greenway connectivity.

M-NCPPC's Planning Department directs zoning and development standards inclusive of progressive forest conservation, easement, parkland creation, and mitigation requirements.

Policy documents that guide natural areas conservation include but are not limited to:

- Environmental Guidelines for Development,
- Natural Resources Management Plan,
- Comprehensive Management Plan for Vegetation,
- Countywide Stream Protection Strategy,
- Comprehensive Management Plan for White-tailed Deer,
- Sustainability Plan,
- Non-Native Invasive Plant Management Plan,
- Best Management Practices for Non-Native Invasive Plants,
- Planting Requirements for Land Disturbing Activities on Parkland,
- the draft Greenways Functional Plan, and
- numerous Master Plans.

Additionally, while Montgomery County encourages forest retention, provision for allowable commodities development of forest products within the Agricultural Reserve zone is permitted.

Montgomery Parks is recycling hazard trees removed, for use/re-use for building products and landscaping materials.

State Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation

- Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
    - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
    - Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
    - Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;
    - Incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;
    - Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and
    - Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.

- Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).

- Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.)

- Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.

- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.

- Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:
  o Expand and connect forests, farmland and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure;
  o Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities and populations;
  o Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions;
  o Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
  o Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland

Appendix 9. Implementing Ordinances and Programs

Many laws, regulations, and programs work to conserve natural resources in the County, both within and outside of parkland. Measures including Erosion and Sediment Control permits, Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineations (NRI/FSD), Forest Conservation Plans, and Water Quality Plans (for projects planned in one of the County's five Special Protection Areas) are just some of the key requirements that protect natural resources. Department of Parks and Department of Planning staff, as well as many other County agencies, use these regulations and guidelines not only to review the impacts of planned development on parkland or elsewhere in the County, but also to protect natural resources through recommendations written in park, local, and area master plans. This section is a brief summary of the most important of these efforts that are implemented via the development review process, focused on public health, water quality and biodiversity conservation, or related to development taking place on parkland. Nothing in this appendix – or in other parts of this plan – vitiates or expands the applicability of these laws and regulations, although every effort should be made to interpret both the PROS plan and any applicable statutes, ordinances, rules and guidelines in a manner that harmonizes their intent and effect.

Environmental Guidelines

Environmental Guidelines: Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County[8] defines the objectives, principles, and policies to protect sensitive areas through which development projects are to be reviewed and approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board. These provide specific guidance for protecting environmentally sensitive areas on public and private land proposed for development and establish procedure for identification and protection of natural resources potentially affected by construction. The Guidelines ensure that development plans give adequate consideration to protection of stream water quality, water supply reservoirs, steep slopes, forest conservation, wildlife habitat and exemplary natural communities including rare, threatened, and endangered species; maintenance of biologically viable and diverse streams and wetlands; reduction of flood problems; protection against development hazards on areas prone to flooding, soil instability, etc., amongst other provisions for public amenities. In areas where the land use planned is considered a potential risk in high quality watersheds, the area may be designated a Special Protection Area (SPA). Proposed development in a SPA requires a water quality plan be prepared that incorporates redundant stormwater management facilities and other features that address the goals for the receiving waterway. Among other requirements, wider wetland buffers and accelerated reforestation are required in these areas. In some SPAs, overlay zones are adopted to limit imperviousness to specific levels on each site and limit or prohibit certain land uses that pose a risk to water quality.

Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law (amended 2018 and 2021)

Adopted pursuant to the State legislation, regulates efforts to preserve forest and tree canopy through the development process. Forest Conservation requirements on private and non-park public development projects contribute to the large number of sensitive areas and forest that are conveyed to the park system through the development review process. On land that is not appropriate for transfer to

---

[8] https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/environment/environmental-guidelines-reports/environmental-guidelines/

Parks, a Forest Conservation easement is placed on land to protect existing forest or newly planted forest on properties under development. These are legally recorded in the land records and M-NCPPC, Montgomery Planning Department provides enforcement.

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System and MS4 Permits

Montgomery Parks complies with requirements of a Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for all parkland (requiring Montgomery Parks to develop and implement best management practices under six minimum control measures which include: Personnel Education and Outreach, Public Involvement and Participation, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post Construction Stormwater Management, and Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping) and an Industrial Permit for its twelve maintenance yards (requiring Montgomery Parks to train staff, adopt best management practices, develop pollution prevention plans, and improve facilities to reduce stormwater pollution from these sites).

Montgomery County has a Phase I MS4 NPDES permit which includes a requirement to treat an additional 20% of untreated stormwater. Because Montgomery Parks is largely a stream valley park system, many of the County's stormwater management facilities and stream restoration projects are either currently or proposed to be on parkland. Parks works with the County and other NPDES permittees on reviewing and permitting these projects on parkland.

Cosmetic Pesticides Use Restrictions

Montgomery County regulates pesticide use on private and public lands for safe and responsible use and for transparent public notification, with oversight provided by the Department of Environmental Protection. This regulation addresses parkland, non-native invasive plants, and pesticide use near a waterbody separately.

Best Natural Areas and Biodiversity Areas

These areas, collectively, are considered the best-of-the-best; demonstrative of unique, high quality natural areas demonstrating specific qualities (e.g., RTE/GCN species, large contiguous forest interior, meadow, or wetland habitat) necessary of sound conservation and biodiversity sustainability. Development affecting these is discouraged, except for well-planned and low impact trails and associated infrastructure.

Programs to Conserve Natural Resources

M-NCPPC is responsible for the protection and management of all-natural resources within county parkland. As the primary public landowner in the county, this responsibility often serves a larger countywide function. Natural Resources Stewardship staff develop and implement resource management plans, programs, guidelines, and Best Management Practices to protect and enhance park resources, and assist with implementation of Federal, State and local plans for conservation of Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species and critical habitats and is guided by a countywide Natural Resources Management Plan[9]. A selection of the most critical programs is described here.

Watershed Restoration

Today, watershed restoration efforts are primarily driven by federal/state mandates: the NPDES requirements and the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load, a measure of pollution entering waterways) requirements. The NPDES permits of the Parks Department and the County prioritize restoration efforts on the most impacted waterways in the most developed portions of the County. For the Parks Department, our compliance with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL requirements is through our Phase II NPDES permit compliance.

Montgomery Parks evaluates watersheds to determine existing problems and the feasibility of stormwater retrofit projects and stream restoration. During the past PROS 5-year cycle, 82 streams were surveyed, in 17 watersheds. Eligible projects are selected based on feasibility, potential for stream improvements, cost and funding availability. Watershed plans have been completed for the Paint Branch, Hawlings River, Rock Creek, Cabin John, Watts Branch, and Northwest Branch. Each year, selected priority restoration projects from these watershed plans are implemented by the County DEP. Due to the significant percent of streams in the County occurring in stream valley parks, many of the County watershed restoration projects are implemented on parkland.

Montgomery Parks implements a variety of watershed restoration projects via Parks' capital budget to support development of park facilities and address specific erosion and watershed damage in new and existing parkland, and to improve water quality and overall natural resources condition. The level-of-effort project in the CIP is typically funded at a level of $500 thousand per year, enough to annually fund one to two stream restoration projects and approximately 5 to 10 smaller improvement projects: with the objective of reforming and stabilizing of the channel and banks, providing fish passage, and replanting riparian vegetation. Smaller watershed restoration projects may include riparian restoration after bridge or culvert construction, repair of erosion associated with storm drain outfalls, small wetland or floodplain improvements, or forest planting along stream edges.

The volunteer park cleanup program provides a significant level of support to help keep parks and streams clear of trash and debris. In a typical recent year, volunteers from more than 100 groups and organizations take part in around 250 cleanup projects coordinated by Parks staff and remove about 72 tons of trash from parkland.

---

[9]https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.montgomeryparks.org/uploads/2016/07/2013.02_naturall_resources_management_plan.pdf

Vegetation Management

The benefits of a healthy and diverse plant community are multiple and significant: vegetation assemblages are often determinant of critical wildlife habitats essential within the coastal plain and piedmont physiographic regions. Preserving habitats in the various stages of vegetative succession (meadows/grasslands, scrub-shrub, conifer-dominated forest, then deciduous-dominated forest) is key to providing the necessary habitat for diverse wildlife communities. Each stage in this succession process is important to providing habitat to different associated species, thus the importance to overall biodiversity of maintaining heterogeneous areas across the natural areas of Parks.
Vegetation management programs are devised and implemented to maximize ecological function and heterogeneity, to provide clean air and water, and to provide connectivity for species distribution of both flora and fauna. Management recommendations are guided by all the research and analysis acquired through inventory, monitoring and prediction efforts as described above. Overall guidance for vegetation management comes from the Comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan for M-NCPPC Parkland.

Forest is the primary vegetation type in Natural Areas in Montgomery Parks. In addition to the many policies and regulations that support preservation and expansion of forest, Parks takes direct action to preserve, manage and expand forest on parkland. Through the guidance in Planting Requirements for Land Disturbing Activities, development projects by private and public agencies result in afforestation (new forest) and reforestation (replacement forest) being planted in appropriate areas within Parks. Park planning recommendations contained within Park Master Plans, Operation & Use Plans, and even within land use master plans also result in areas of parks where forest is planted. Newly acquired parkland is often reviewed during initial planning to identify appropriate locations for supplemental planting to improve existing forest and for planting additional forest to protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas such as streams and wetlands.

Since natural disturbances that create meadows and grasslands (such as fire or beaver activity) are mostly absent in a suburban landscape, there is a significant shortage of these vegetation types in Montgomery County. The Parks Department manages some of our natural areas to remain permanently in various stages of secondary plant succession to address this lack of diversity. By preserving some natural areas in grassland and scrub-shrub stages using appropriate protocols, the maximum diversity of plant habitats can be provided across the County to support wildlife diversity. Grasslands management dedicates natural areas in suspended succession to support specific plant and wildlife species.

Non-Native Invasive Species

Non-native species management is designated to sustain populations of native flora and fauna, through address of species identified as non-indigenous of the physiographic region. These invaders include terrestrial and aquatic species of flora and fauna. Non-Native Invasive (NNI) Plant management is guided by the Non-native Invasive Plant Management Plan and Best Management Practices for Control of Non-Native Invasive Plants and intended to protect native species within areas identified as key environmental resources for the purpose of enhancing public health and safety, ecosystem function, and biodiversity. Management efforts include mechanical and chemical treatment by staff and contractors, and mechanical removal by volunteers. Programs to address invasive insects and other

animals (e.g. Gypsy Moth and Emerald Ash Borer Beetle) are conducted on an as-needed basis and focus on preventing the spread and/or mitigating the impacts of the invasive species.

Montgomery Park's Weed Warrior Program trains and activates citizens to identify and remove non-native invasive plants. Supervisors and park staff also lead more than 100 group workdays per year to tackle larger infestations and provide opportunities for untrained volunteers and outside groups.

Wildlife Management

Wildlife is managed for public safety, regulatory compliance, biodiversity, and sustainability, and in accordance with human land uses and priorities. Management programs are focused on providing habitat necessary to maximize species diversity in sustainable abundance, as discussed in the vegetation management section above. Hands-on wildlife management programs also create artificial habitat otherwise unavailable in the County for certain species. Most of the additional effort in wildlife management focuses on the addressing the nuisance impacts of certain wildlife on citizens and parkland and for maintaining regulatory compliance(s) associated with such impacts.

White-Tailed Deer

Montgomery Parks is charged to lead the Montgomery County Deer Management Work Group, a multi-agency entity that produces annual reports to guide county-wide implementation of the Comprehensive Management Plan for White-tailed Deer in Montgomery County, Maryland. Subject to the guidance in the management plan and the annual reports, Montgomery Parks implements a comprehensive management program for White-Tailed Deer.

The White-tailed Deer Management Program addresses county-wide impacts of deer including deer-vehicle collisions, over-browsing of natural vegetation, damage to agriculture and ornamental landscapes, and communicable disease. Montgomery Parks has active deer population control occurring on approximately 21,000 of its 37,000 acres. Multiple control efforts are utilized to manage the population, including Archery, Cooperative, Lottery and Tenant-based Managed Deer Hunting and Park Police-based Sharpshooting Programs.

Additionally, since M-NCPPC is charged to investigate and address county-wide White-tailed Deer impacts, some program efforts occur on additional public and private lands not within stewardship authority of M-NCPPC to fully understand the population dynamics in the entire county.

Sustainability

Montgomery Parks is committed to sustainable practices that preserve natural and economic resources, reduce consumption and waste, reduce our environmental footprint, promote green practices in our facilities and programs, and that support the wellness of our employees and wider community that we serve. The Department has developed a sustainability plan and contributes to the M-NCPPC sustainability plan and the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan.

All new and retrofit park buildings/facilities of qualifying size are constructed to LEED Silver or equivalent standard. In older facilities, upgrades are made to conserve and improve the efficiency of both energy and water resources – cutting back on consumption, utility bills, and pollution. These upgrades include installing high-efficiency heating and air conditioning units, improved insulation, motion sensor lighting and use of LED technology, installation of 'smart' thermostats for improved management and control of energy resources and replacing faucets and toilets with low-flow fixtures.

Solar panel installation and power purchase agreements allows Montgomery Parks to benefit from clean renewable solar energy with no upfront costs. These projects will lower utility bills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while also contributing to smart, clean, and resilient energy region-wide.

Montgomery Parks cares very much about reducing waste and ensuring that we divert materials for reuse or recycling, as appropriate. A few strategies we use to reduce our waste include: All facilities recycle mixed paper/cardboard as well as commingled jars and containers of glass/plastic/aluminum/steel/tin. Additionally, we recycle scrap metal, motor fuel, tires, electronic waste, light bulbs, batteries, construction debris, concrete and asphalt. Green waste removed from parkland is composted for conversion these waste materials into useful products, including compost, wood chips, and mulch, that can be used for future park projects. Over four million pounds of waste is diverted from landfills or incineration each year.

Integrated Pest Management

The Department follows Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles to steward resources and protect them from pests (weeds, insects, animals, and diseases) that may harm people or plants, impair function, and deteriorate infrastructure. IPM means managing pests by combining multiple strategies and techniques such as mechanical removal of pests, cultural methods to improve soil and plant health, conserving and introducing beneficial biological controls, and using pesticides.

The Parks Department does not use pesticides for cosmetic purposes. Pesticides are used as a last resort to control noxious and invasive pests, maintain safe and playable athletic fields and courts, and prevent significant economic damage, including degradation of park infrastructure. Staff who apply pesticides and fertilizers are certified and registered with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and all applications are posted on-site and on the web for public notification and tracking purposes.

Montgomery Parks manages 45 pesticide-free parks. Pests in parks designated pesticide-free are managed using alternative methods, such as hot foam, string trimming, mechanical weed removal and products approved for use by Montgomery County Code 33B. And as previously mentioned the Department has developed Best Management Practices for Control of Non-Native Invasive Plants that emphasize the safe use of chemicals in addressing invasive species.

Nature Centers and interpretive services

Montgomery Parks provides interpretive programs, curriculum-based school programs, and community engagement efforts that connect knowledgeable Parks staff with current environmental stewards and help to develop future leaders, including formal (five nature centers and one mobile unit) and informal programs in the fields of horticulture, environmental education, and natural history interpretation. To

support Montgomery County Schools in meeting the Maryland Environmental Literacy Graduation Requirement, Montgomery Parks offers free curriculum-based school programs for all K-12 Montgomery County public schools, independent schools, and home school groups, thereby overcoming the financial barrier that keeps some student populations from regular access to environmental education.

Protected Lands by Category	MC Acres
MET	2274
MALPF	5312
Local PDR/TDR	73165
Private Conservation Orgs.	71
MARBIDCO	0
Rural Legacy	5299
ISTEA/Forest Legacy/CREP/FRPP-ACEP	161
Cluster Subdivision Remainder	0
POS Stateside Conservation Easement	1633
County Rec & Parks	42989
DNR State Land Inventory	14432
Federal Park & Conservation	4221

Montgomery County Protected Land Acres by Category

Montgomery County Protected Land Acres by Category

Category	Acres
Federal Park & Conservation	4221
DNR State Land Inventory	14432
County Rec & Parks	42989
POS Stateside Conservation Easement	1633
Cluster Subdivision Remainder	0
ISTEA/Forest Legacy/CREP/FRPP-ACEP	161
Rural Legacy	5299
MARBIDCO	0
Private Conservation Orgs.	71
Local PDR/TDR	73165
MALPF	5312
MET	2274
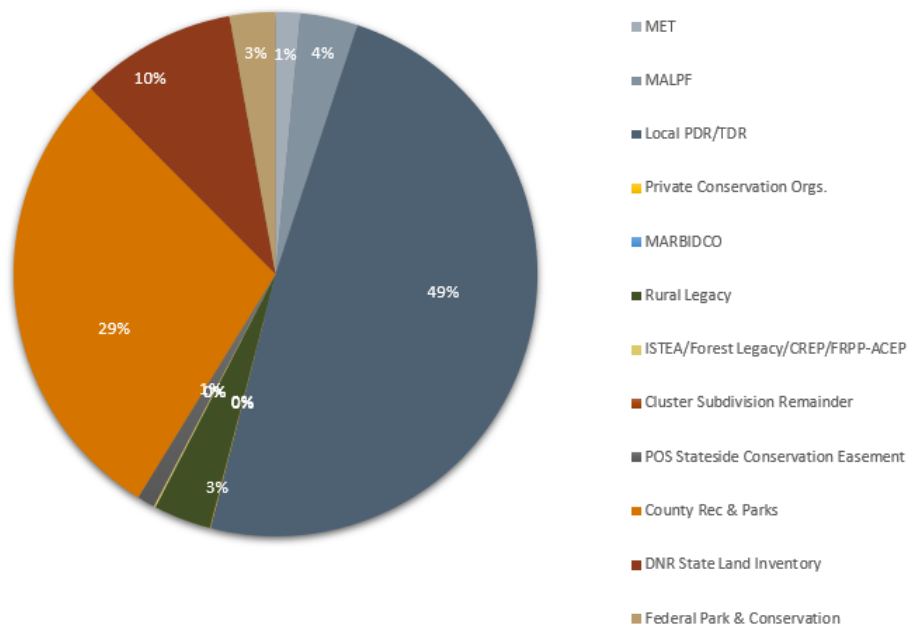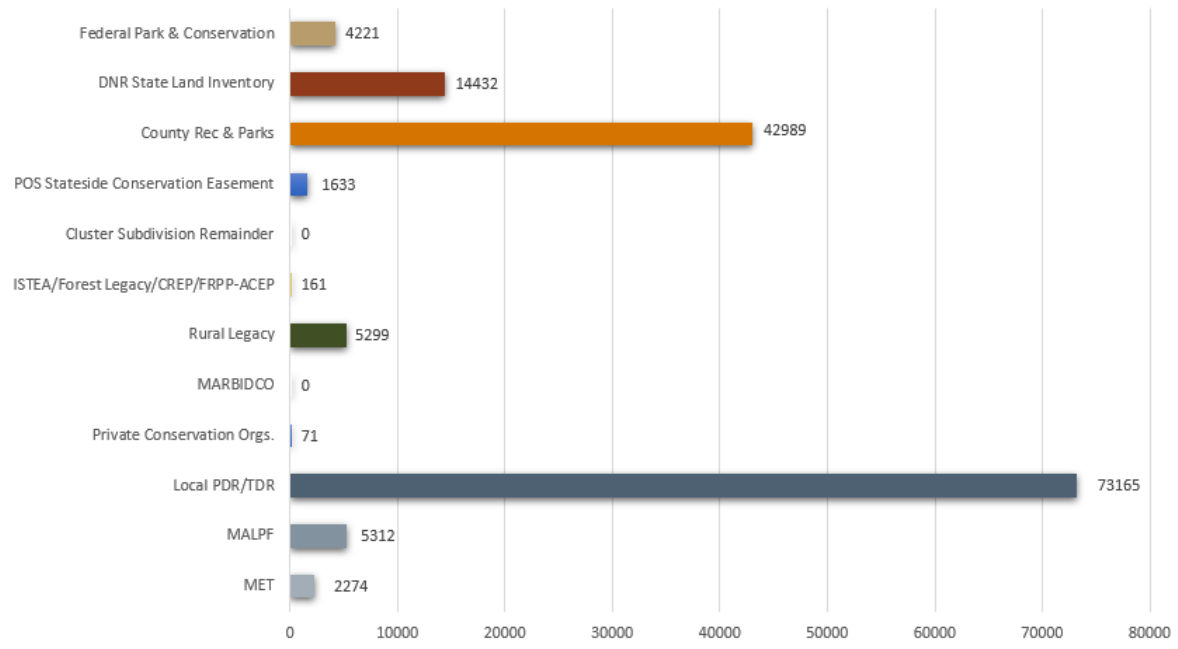
Dashboard Disclaimer: Preserved lands data are a public resource for general information purposes. Accuracy is not guaranteed. Data users are responsible for determining suitability. Acreages are rounded to the nearest whole number.
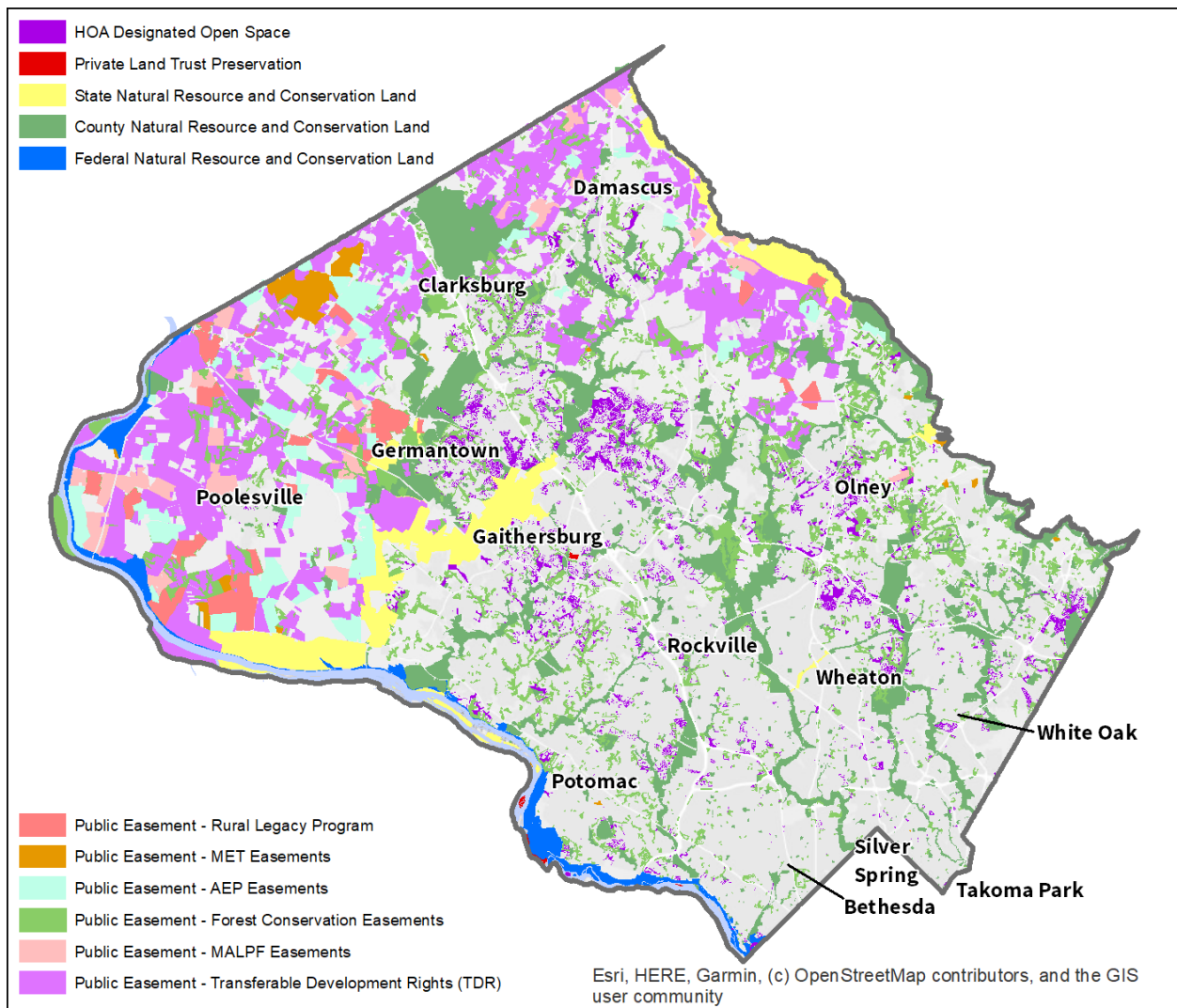
Table9.1: Public Protected Land Combined

Legend:
- Public Easement - Rural Legacy Program
- Public Easement - MET Easements
- Public Easement - AEP Easements
- Public Easement - Forest Conservation Easements
- Public Easement - MALPF Easements
- Public Easement - Transferable Development Rights (TDR)
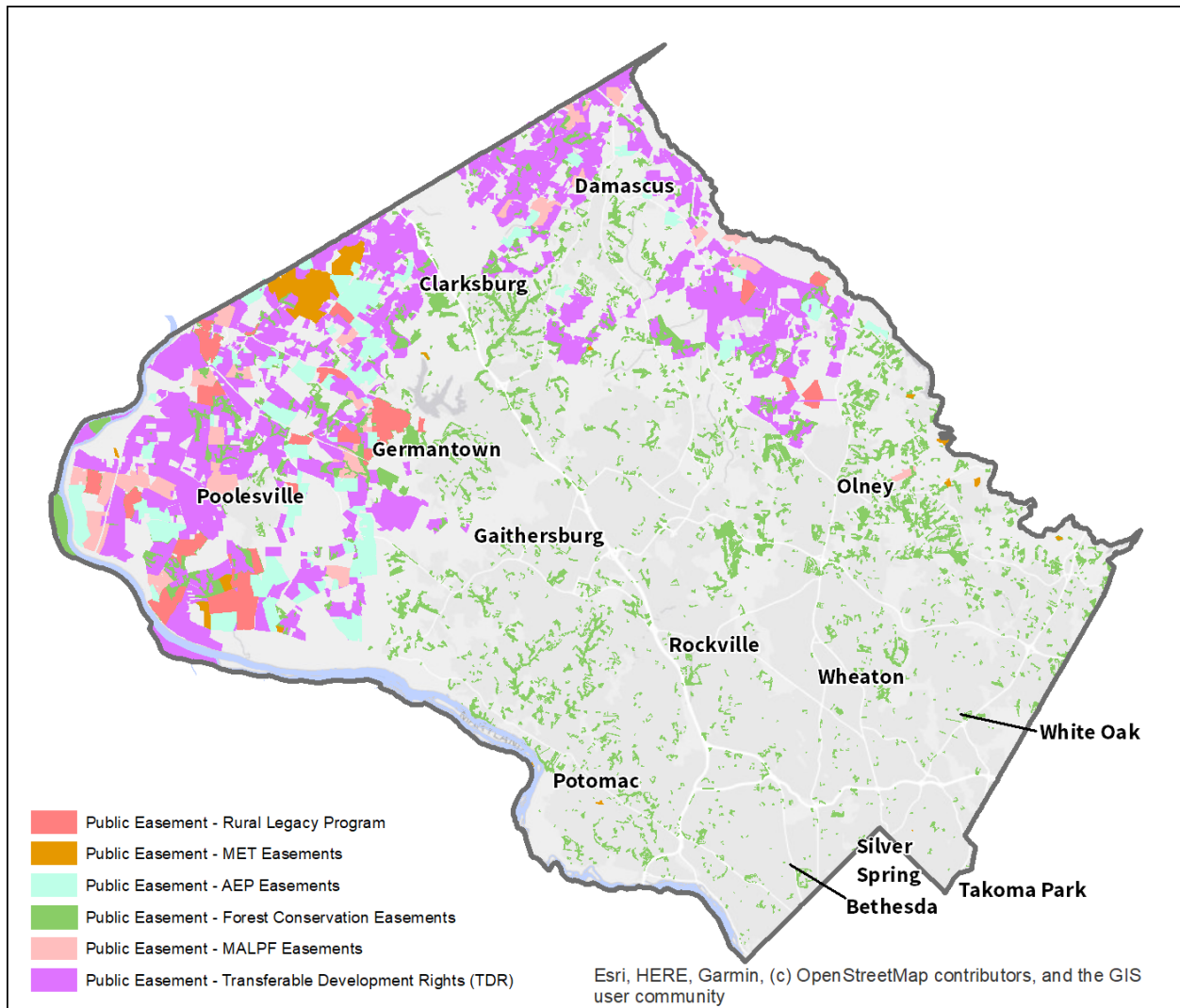
Table9.2: Public Protected Land – Per MD Dashboard Categories

State Natural Resource and Conservation Land

County Natural Resource and Conservation Land

Federal Natural Resource and Conservation Land

Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community
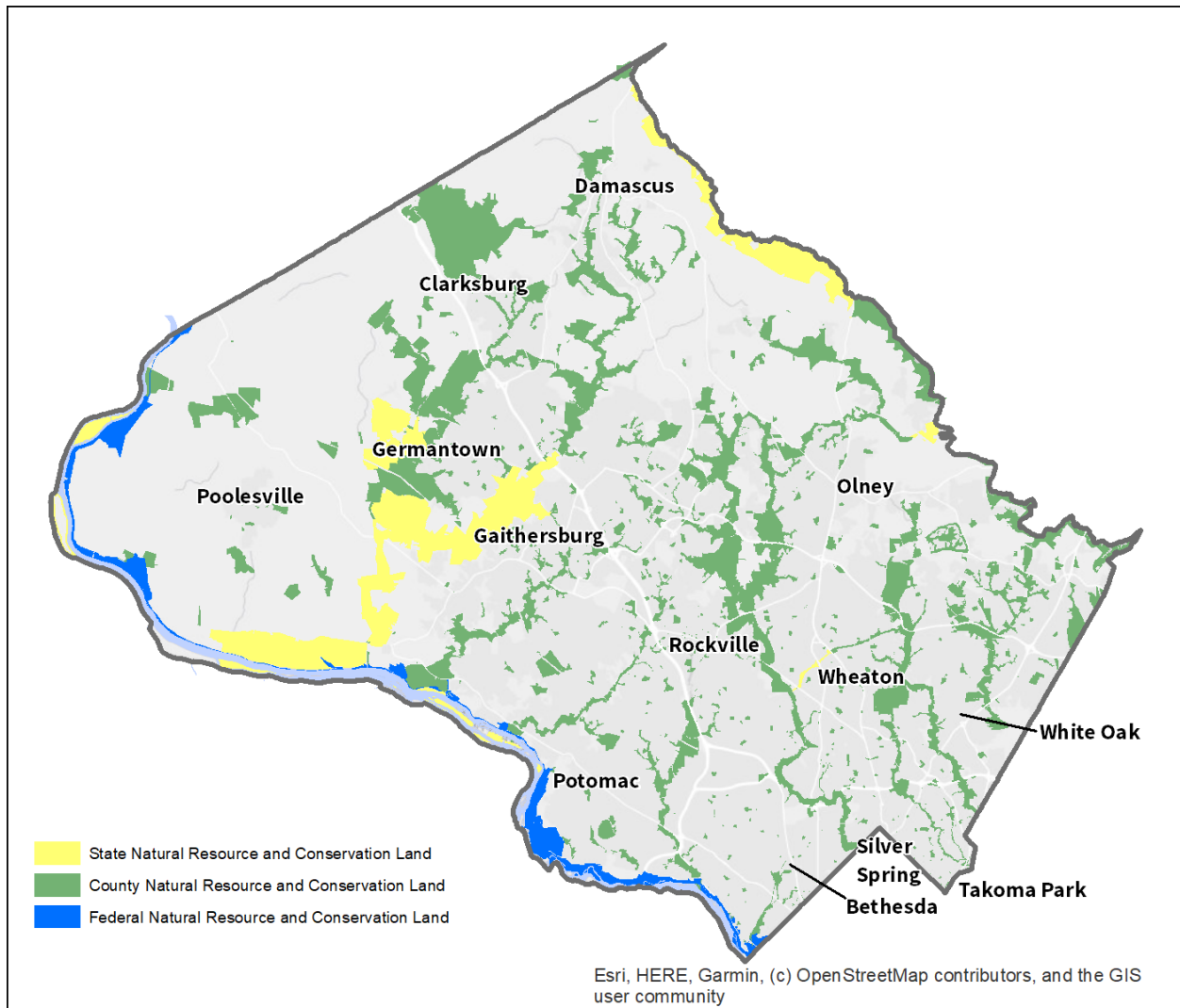
Table9.3: Public Protected Land – Per ownership
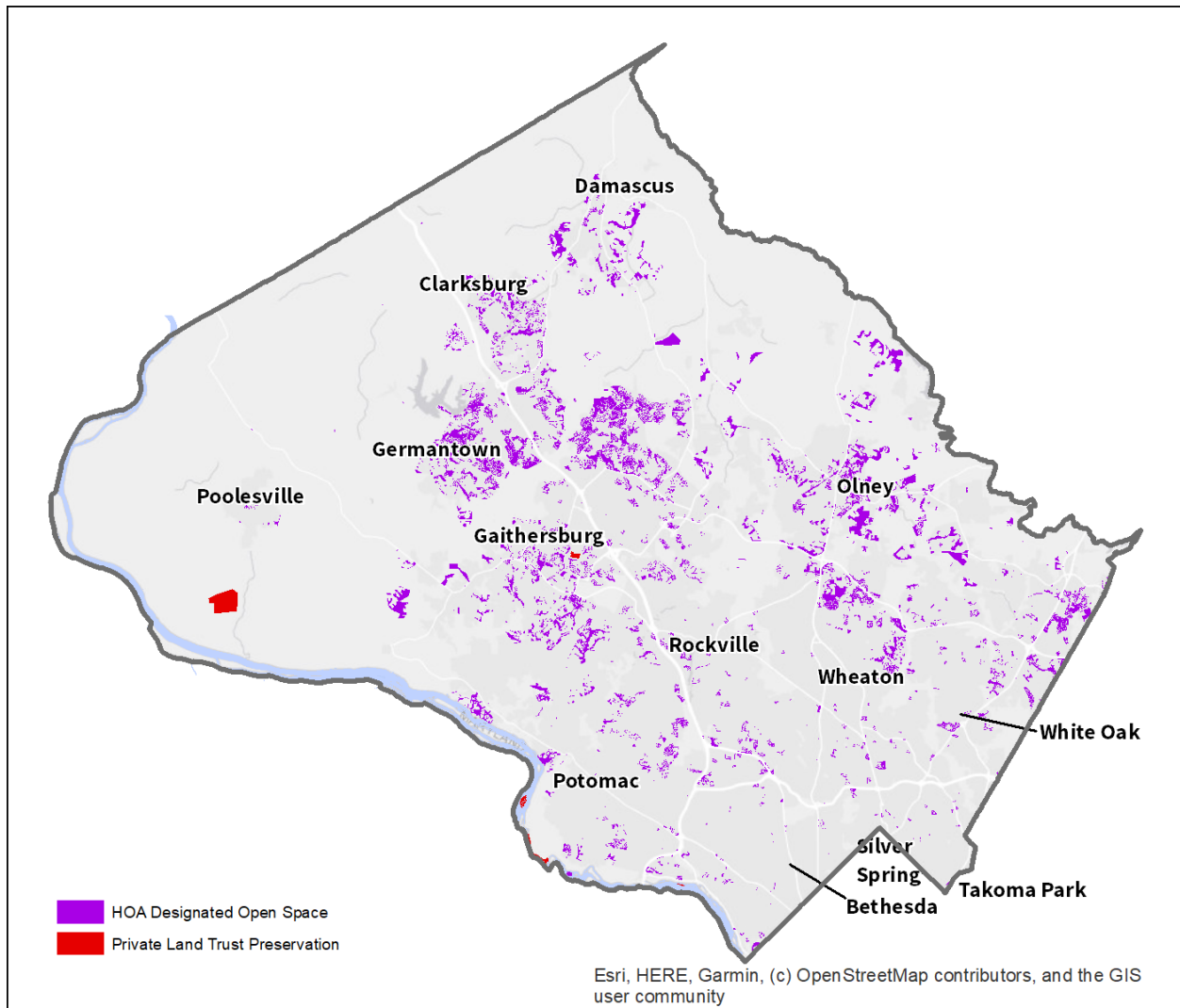
Table9.4: Private Protected Land – Per Designation

Legend:
- Public Easement - Rural Legacy Program
- Public Easement - MET Easements
- Public Easement - AEP Easements
- Public Easement - Forest Conservation Easements
- Public Easement - MALPF Easements
- Public Easement - Transferable Development Rights (TDR)

Esri, HERE, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community
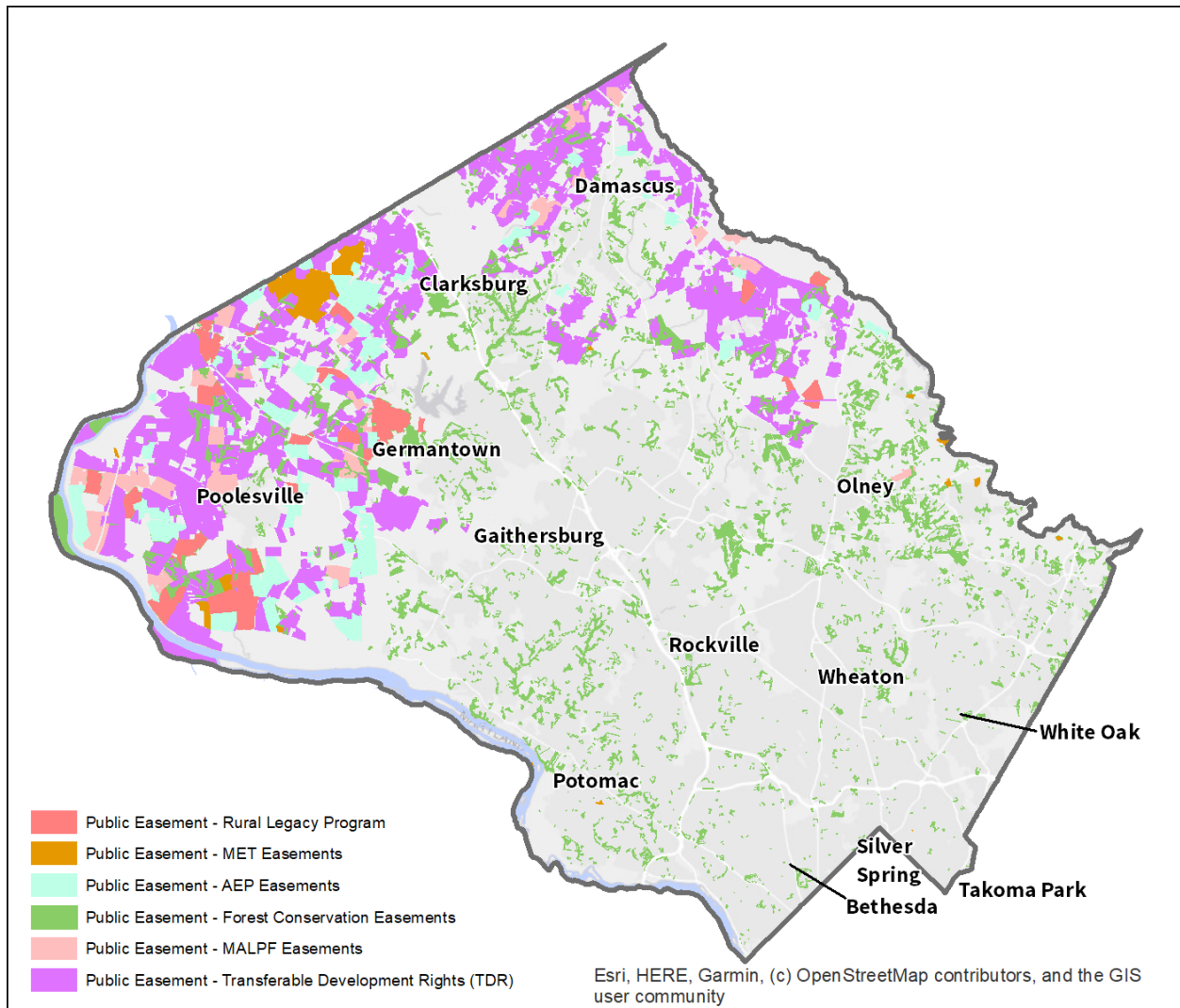
Table9.5: Private Protected Land – all combined

Appendix 10. Agricultural Land Preservation Programs

State Programs

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)

This program was established by the Maryland State Legislature in 1967 to encourage landowners to donate easements to protect scenic open areas, including farm and forest land, wildlife habitat, waterfront, unique or rare areas and historic sites. MET accepts both donated and purchased easements. In the donated easement program, the landowners are eligible for certain income, estate, gift, and property tax benefits in return for limiting the right to develop and subdivide their land, now and in the future. Using this program, 2,291 acres were preserved through FY2021

Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)

This program was established in 1977 by the State Legislature as a result of concern over decreasing farmland acreage caused by development. The program is implemented through the Maryland Department of Agriculture, in partnership with local government. The MALPF purchases agricultural land preservation easements directly from landowners for cash. Following the sale of the easement, agricultural uses of the property are encouraged to continue. Through FY2021, 5,001 acres were preserved under this program.

Rural Legacy Program (RLP) in Montgomery County

Passed by the Maryland General Assembly in May of 1997 as part of the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act, the Rural Legacy Program encourages local governments and private land trusts to identify Rural Legacy areas and to competitively apply for funds to complement existing land conservation efforts or create new programs. This State program provides grants to Counties or other sponsors for preserving areas rich in agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources. The intent is to promote a resource-based economy, protect greenbelts and greenways and maintain the fabric of rural life. Grants can be directed to either purchase sensitive lands in fee or to acquire protection through conservation easements.

In the spirit of maximizing both State and local funds, Montgomery County has been successful in its Rural Legacy applications by leveraging State/local funds to target significant agricultural resources through the conservation easement acquisition process. Since the first grants were awarded during the FY1998-1999 grant cycle, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of $19.3 million in State Grant Funds; through FY2016, 4,875 acres have been protected by this program. As with the County's AEP program, TDRs created through the easement acquisition process are held jointly by the State/County and represent an asset and potential source of future revenue for the program. Through FY2021, 5,302 acres were preserved under this program and the RLP the State/County has acquired 360 TDRs through this program.

Transferable Development Rights Program (TDR)

The Montgomery County TDR Program was established in 1980 as part of the *Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan.* The TDR program allows landowners to transfer a development right from one parcel of land to another parcel. For agricultural land preservation, TDRs are used to shift development from agricultural areas ("TDR sending areas") to designated growth zones

or ("TDR receiving areas") which are closer to public services and far removed from the "sending area". When rights are transferred from a parcel within the designated "TDR sending area," the land is restricted by a permanent TDR easement. The TDR program represents the private sector's investment in land preservation, as the price paid for TDRs is negotiated between a landowner and a developer. A developer who purchases TDRs is permitted to build at a higher density than permitted by the "base zoning." The funds paid for a TDR by the developer to a landowner creates a wealth transfer from the developed areas back into the rural economy.

Montgomery County has been recognized as having one of the most successful TDR programs in the nation, with 53,194 acres of agricultural land preserved by TDRs through FY2021.

Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)

Established in 1987, this program gives the County the ability to purchase agricultural land preservation easements to preserve land for agricultural production. Lands eligible for participation in this program must be zoned Rural, Rural Cluster, or Rural Density Transfer, or subject to land being designated as an approved State or County Agricultural Preservation District. The program was created to increase both the level of voluntary participation in farmland preservation programs and to expand the eligibility of farmland parcels. Through FY2021, 8,940 acres were preserved under this program. 16, 8,575 acres were preserved under this program.

Montgomery County Building Lot Termination (BLT) Program

The Montgomery County BLT program was established in 2008 with the first BLT easements purchased in 2011. The primary purpose of a BLT easement is to preserve agricultural land by reducing fragmentation of farmland due to residential development. A BLT easement restricts residential, commercial, industrial, and other non-agricultural uses beyond the level of protection that a TDR easement provides. A key feature of the BLT easement is an enhanced level of compensation to landowners who demonstrate that property has the capacity for residential development and who agree to permanently retire an approved on-site waste disposal system associated with the lot to be terminated.

This program has two phases. The public Building Lot Termination (BLT) program allows the County to pay farmers for a BLT Easement for each whole building lot that is terminated from their farm. To date, there have been 11 public BLT transactions totaling 1,257 acres. Through FY2021, 19 partial BLT transactions have paid for 9.2 BLTs. Another component of the BLT program allows a developer to purchase partial BLTs when their project does not warrant a whole BLT. The proceeds from partial BLTs are deposited in the agricultural preservation fund and used to purchase additional BLTs from interested landowners.

The second phase involves a privately funded initiative whereby the development community purchases whole BLT's directly from AR zoned landowners. This privately funded initiative functions in a similar fashion as the County's Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR). The BLTs are one method that a developer may use for acquiring additional density for projects in the CR zones, to meet the public benefit formula.

The privately funded BLT program has preserved over 645 acres of land and removed 17 potential development lots.

M-NCPPC Programs

The M-NCPPC has worked for many decades to support the preservation and stewardship of agricultural and rural lands in Montgomery County. Since spearheading the creation of *the Agricultural and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan* in 1980, the Planning and Parks Departments in Montgomery County have worked to preserve farmland through a variety of policies and programs and expended significant effort and funds to implement those programs. The Commission's programs complement the extensive efforts to protect the Agricultural Reserve that have been completed since 1980 through the easement programs as implemented by the County's Office of Agriculture.

Within the Commission, each Department has a role in preserving agricultural land. The Planning Department plays a critical role in maintaining large areas for agriculture and preservation of natural resources via their review of subdivision requests in the Agricultural Reserve. The Parks Department further works to preserve agricultural and rural lands by preserving targeted lands of significance within the Agricultural Reserve as parkland, providing public access for recreation as well as agricultural and natural resource education on some of the most exceptional lands in the County, as described elsewhere in this Plan. Two key Parks programs are described here.

Legacy Open Space Program (LOS)

The *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (LOS FMP)* was approved by the Montgomery County Council in 2001. The LOS FMP includes one category of open space that is focused on preservation of Farmland and Rural Open Space. The functional plan recommended that the Legacy Open Space program and funding should support the agricultural preservation programs in several ways, primarily through supporting the AEP program and purchasing easements on exceptional programs directly. The LOS FMP also states a goal of reducing development potential on priority rural land to no more than 1 unit per 50 acres. During 20 years of implementation efforts, the LOS program has supported the goals of farmland preservation through the tools that are most appropriate for the Parks Department, primarily the use of in-fee land acquisition instead of easement acquisition.

The Legacy Open Space program protects and stewards the Agricultural Reserve through two main avenues. First, when a high priority natural resource site is acquired as conservation parkland, further residential development is excluded from that property, thus reducing the number of potential rooftops in the Agricultural Reserve as a whole. This result is comparable to the preservation achieved by placing BLTs or other development restrictive easements on privately owned land. By reducing new development in the Reserve, the potential of the Reserve to remain a functioning economic agricultural area is supported. In addition to supporting farmland and rural open space through these acquisitions, other goals achieved include protection of sensitive natural resources, water supply areas, heritage resources, and the provision of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding and other forms of natural – resource-oriented recreation such as fishing, camping and birdwatching. To date, the Legacy Open Space program has resulted in the addition of approximately 1975 acres of rural and agricultural lands to the park system in the Reserve.

Second, above the preservation and stewardship of rural land purchased for parkland, those acquisitions can result in the complete protection of many additional acres of farmland that remain in active agriculture in private ownership. To achieve multiple goals for the Legacy Open Space program,

agricultural preservation, and Parks overall, partial acquisitions are often pursued that remove development rights from the land remaining in private ownership below the level of 1 unit per 25 acres. For instance, the portion of a farm that consists of high-quality forest and natural resources that adjoins existing conservation parkland and that provides opportunities to make trail connections between public lands may be acquired in-fee as parkland. To meet farmland preservation goals, additional development rights can be purchased during that transaction that limit the development potential on the farmland remaining in private ownership. To date, LOS purchases of 1975 acres of parkland have resulted in over 300 acres of farmland and rural land remaining in private ownership but protected from further development that could damage future agricultural use.

Agricultural Lease Program
The Parks Department's Agricultural Lease Program supports farming operations on many park properties via leases with local farmers. The Parks Department currently manages 23 agricultural leases totaling 1,047 acres of active fields.

Appendix 11. Preserved Agricultural Land

Montgomery County has access to a large "toolbox" of programs to preserve agricultural land, each described in this section. The County's Office of Agriculture is the lead agency in implementing the State and County easement programs to support the agricultural economy in the County, while the M-NCPPC implements the Legacy Open Space program and other policies/programs to support preservation and stewardship. The Montgomery County Office of Agriculture keeps a comprehensive list of all existing preserved agricultural land in Montgomery County. The list is included below:

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)	11	918254	11/1989	Simms	BUSH, WILLIAM and CHRISTINA BARR	49.71
	11	920177	12/1989	Ellsworth	LANGSTAFF DAVID H	25
	11	917911	12/1989	Martin	CLIFTON FARM LLC	322.32
	11	1679436	12/1989	Thoms	THOMS, RICHARD W ET AL TR	57
	11	917146	1/1990	Johnson	JOHNSON, EDWIN R JR ET AL	174
	3	2396887	6/1990	Raynsford	RAYNSFORD, ROBERT W & E R	20
	3	2396865	8/1990	Davis	DAVIS, BETTY J	15.1326
	3	1658888	8/1990	Kaylor	Mobaraki, Gholam Reza	60
	3	37851	37851	Ladd	ALLNUTT HOMESTEAD LLC	36.949
	3	1936533	8/1990	Warner	WARNER, JONATHAN M	32.956
	11	914440	8/1990	Davies	DAVIES, NELIA A	90
	11	914666	8/1990	Johnson	JOHNSON, EDWIN R ET AL	163.185
	3	1898468	9/1990	Jamison	JAMISON, FRANKLIN A & O P	32.1186
	3	2242422	2/1991	Kepart	KAPSCH, ELIZABETH & ROBERT	28.71

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	919010	4/1991	Poole	WILLARD, WILIAM FRANCIS ET AL TR	208.67
	11	1879261	4/1991	Melnick	MELNICK, JULIANNE L	16
	1	10236	6/1991	Rogers	SUNDOWN FARM, LLC	156.4752
	1	03357381	6/1991	Rogers	ARNOLD, SANDRA E	48.84
	11	917272	6/1991	Hough	HOUGH, HAMMET W & J L	28.5
	3	2840692	8/1991	Levi	KIPLINGER, AUSTIN H & M L	26
	11	2718911	8/1991	Pachner	LANGSTAFF, DAVID H & C S	30.047
	11	1684706	8/1991	McCrea	WALKER, ANTHONY M	20
	3	40222	12/1991	Priest	GRIGORIAN, GREGORY	57.59
	3	38491	12/1991	Priest	GRIGORIAN, GREGORY	22.91
	11	913695	12/1991	Checkley	WMR III LLC C/O WM Rickman Co	157.06
	11	2622185	4/1992	Cissel	REMONDI, BENJAMIN W	11.63
	11	1804120	33695	Sutherland	HAGEN, RICHARD & JULIE	77.8
	12	939121	33695	Power	POWER, JOHN C	98.3675
	3	41693	33756	Weitzer	WEITZER, DAVID	246.0487
	3	33831	39114	Weitzer	Kim Worth	7.19
	3	35008	7/1992	Cleveland	CLEVELAND, ERNEST B & A F	106.3364
	3	37714	7/1992	Kiplinger	KIPLINGER, AUSTIN H ET AL	326.38
	2	28548	11/1992	Hay	HAY, THOMAS O & MELISSA MCCANNA	26.77
	2	3002472	11/1992	Hay	COLBURN, MARK A & SHARON L DONOVAN	46.68

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	2168372	33970	Ware	BRUNNER, CHRISTOPHER & ELENA VICTORIA	25
	2	28537	3/1993	Hoffmann	HOFFMANN, R THOMAS & M K	45.44
	11	1743247	3/1993	Sugarloaf Equestrian	SUGARLOAF EQUESTRIAN	40.55
	11	920667	34060	Shumaker	SHUMAKER, KENNETH E ET AL	188.2163
	11	1992870	34060	Coleman	CHEN, SUN AND LYDIA NATAL	30
	11	914644	34090	Knop	KNOP, PETER J	154.72
	3	2665071	34394	Fistere	FISTERE, STEVEN CHARLES REV TR	60
	11	3056190	34394	Hilltop Farms LTD	HILLTOP FARMS LIMITED PTNSHP c/o FALLER MGMT CO INC	245.27456
	3	406031	34547	Windolph/Williams	BALLA MACHREE LLC	395.3095
	11	1708780	34639	Minners	PYLES, TRACEY	81.04
	6	1636437	34639	Minners	BALLA MACHREE LLC	25.58
	3	41875	34881	Willard	WILLARD, WILLIAM F ET AL	293.07
	3	39451	34973	Patton	LEWIS LEGACY LLC	271.3
	11	3129401	11/1995	Seligson	SWEETWATER FARM LLC	95.72
	11	3129241	11/1995	Seligson	SWEETWATER FARM LLC	99.3
	11	921150	35004	Kirsh	DIANE KIRSCH FAMILY TRUST	57.91
	3	39462	35065	Patton	J T PATTON & SONS	243.42
	11	918538	35370	Eeg	EEG, PETER H & C A	16
	2	23262	12/1998	Woodfield	HANEY, MARY E ET AL	65.97

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	12	941738	36951	Steele	ALEXANDER, DUANE L & DEBBIE L	89.41
	3	38401	37012	Beverly	BEVERLY, CHARLES M ET AL	535.36
	11	917660	37135	Lewis	LEWIS, ROBERT A & LINDA A	187.925
	8	3317306	37561	Pretty Penny LLC	C/O N G SHERWOOD	107.4822
	3	41465	37591	Crawford/Kean	CRAWFORD, IRVIN L 2ND ET AL	116.1926
	1	10783	38534	Hyatt	GINGRICH, CHARLES & SHERRI	121.7318
	3	34653	38869	BUTZ	BUTZ	111.368
	12	929793	39052	Connelly/Hawse	Connelly/Hawse	85.88
	3	34700	39295	Byrd	Byrd Charitable Foundation, Inc	117.67
	3	34686	39295	Byrd	Byrd Charitable Foundation, Inc	153.49
	11	3528965	39630	Worthington	Michael & Hayley Mott	126.178
	11	3528965	39630	Worthington	George Worthington	part of above
	1	4122	39783	Stabler	Stacy Stabler & Tricia Holland	75.7845
	11	917124	39934	Belt	Allen Belt	257.14
	1	1345	39990	Waredaca Farms LLC	Waredaca Farms LLC	166.24
	11	921503	39995	Friends Aplenty LLC	Friends Aplenty LLC	170.9225
	3	2689316	40026	Delia Croghan et al	Delia Croghan et al	116.05
	11	918642	41275	Windmill Farm LLC	Sunlight Farm LLC	88.08
	2	28322	41275	George Cumberledge	Burnt Hill Farm LLC	117.58

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	3	34915	42109	Greenfield View Farm LLC	Greenfield View Farm LLC	192.79
	3	33682	42783	Greenfield View Farm LLC	Greenfield View Farm LLC	93.9645
	12	927420	42872	Charles Gingrich et al	Charles Gingrich et al	84.18
AEP/ FRPP	3	34436	36708	Willard	WILLARD, WILLIAM F SR & A M	514.25
	3	1874111	35370	Gordon	GORDON, ALEXANDER R & B D	50
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)	3	34618	FY80	Schaeffer	M P M INC	214.3924
	3	40973	FY80	Spates	DES SPATES, ERIC C	295.3896
	3	37667	FY81	KEPHART	KEPHART, GEORGE O ET AL	134.15
	3	39347	FY82	O'Hanlon	NAUGHTY PINE PLANTATION PTNSHP	316.6
	3	37018	FY82	Hopkins	HOPKINS, MASON R SR	158
	3	33636	FY82	ALLNUTT	ALLNUTT, BENONI D JR & M	229.1454
	3	36105	FY83	Patton	LEWIS LEGACY LLC	128
	3	3158128	FY84	Keshisian	WALSH, JAMES V	42.13
	3	33955	FY84	Keshishian	KESHISHIAN, HAROLD M	119.84
	3	2093766	FY84	Yolken	YOLKEN, HOWARD T ET AL TR	50
	3	44047	FY97	WILLARD	WILLARD, WILLIAM F ET AL	268.5227
	3	37441	FY02	Evans	EVANS, JAMES B & M B	234
	8	717538	FY84	Stephens	18201 BROOKE ROAD LLC c/o Gil Hasty	115

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	916302	FY03	Cerino, Conners Laney	LANEY, ANNE H & JAMES A	109.21
	11	2790062	FY03	LANEY, JAMES A & A H	LANEY, JAMES A & A H	12.18
	11	3266478	FY03	Cross Farm LLC	CROSS FARM LLC	100.7
	11	3302384	FY03	Carlin Farm LLC	CARLIN FARM LLC	130.3375
	1	1152	FY03	Stabler	STABLER, W DREW ET AL	170
	3	36594	FY05	Mihm	MIHM, BERNARD A & K A	272.84
	11	917693	FY06	Shiloh LLC	Shuangxi	140
	12	923967	FY08	Richard and Nancy Biggs	John and Mary Fendrick	137.85
	12	927817	FY08	Doody	Joanne Leatherman et al TR	163.13
	12	933716	FY09	Luther	Lonne Luther et al	145.1
	12	930746	FY09	Haines	Lewis Haines	102.75
	12	927863	FY10	Luther	Lonne Luther et al	98.4842
	1	00005310	FY10	W. Drew Stabler	Tricia Stabler Holland	55.28
	3	00037532	FY11	WILLARD	ISDA LLC	168.7
	2	00023865	FY12	Roy and Kathy Stanley	Roy and Kathy Stanley	75.74
	12	937292	FY13	Moxley Farm LLC	Moxley Farm LLC	70.6
	11	03363894	FY19	Nancy and Paul Baker	Nancy and Paul Baker	101.0027
	1	00010511	FY20	Roy and Kathy Stanley	Roy and Kathy Stanley	114.24
	11	03363872	FY21	Ida Dayhoff	Ida Dayhoff	106.07
MALPF/FRPP	11	3350892	FY04	MDR Friends Advice	Michael Rubin	150.9797
	11	921480	FY04	MDR Friendly Acres	Michael Rubin	109.539

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	918312	FY04	MDR Friends Ahoy	Michael Rubin	231.0764
Maryland Rural Legacy Program (RLP)	1	01685483	3/2002	George Simms	SIMMS, GEORGE E JR	127.78
	1	7238	1/2004	Robert Stabler	STABLER, ROBERT N ET AL	85.7951
	1	02798570	1/2004	Robert Stabler	STABLER, ROBERT N ET AL	67.3674
	3	00038081	4/2001	Batchelor's Purchase	Hughes Road Trust	352.58
	3	0037144	5/2001	Izaak Walton League	IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE BCC	369.19
	3	41911	7/2001	Mary Williams	WILLIAMS, MARY S ET AL TR	238.132
	3	41523	9/2001	Patricia Vajda	J A K E ENTERPRISES LC	212.008
	3	40643	5/2002	David Scott	SCOTT, DAVID O & J N	270.509
		40687	5/2002	David Scott	KIMBERLY BETZ	(part of above)
	3	3349346	8/2002	Charles H Jamison, Inc	CHARLES H JAMISON INC	210.51
	3	33762	9/2002	William Anderson et al	ANDERSON, WP FAMILY TRUST, HITCHCOCK, SARAH ANDERSON ET AL	431.8364
	3	33671	1/2004	Sarah Hunter	Sarah Dorsett	82.126
	11	00913844	4/2001	James O'Connell	O'CONNELL, JAMES R	154.7176
	11	916687	11/2001	Peggy Kingsbury	KINGSBURY, PEGGY H	133.1371
	6	00402261	2/2003	MDR RCS LLC	C/O CAPITOL INVESTMENTS	886.7073
	11	03369947	2/2003	MDR RCS LLC	C/O CAPITOL INVESTMENTS	
	11	919715	2/2003	MDR RCS LLC	C/O CAPITOL INVESTMENTS	
	11	919726	2/2003	MDR RCS LLC	C/O CAPITOL INVESTMENTS	

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	00919885	3/2004	Full Circle LLC	MDR FULL CIRCLE LLC	181.69
	11	01969431	6/2004	Rubin and Crawford	RUBIN, MICHAEL D ET AL	100.3503
	11	1969442	6/2004	Potomac Hunt	Potomac Hunt	59.97
	3	1892894	3/2006	MDR Polo	MDR Polo	451.0478
	11	914837	6/2005	Poss	Poss	30.83
	3	35167	2/2008	Cochran	Poplar Spring Animal Sanctuary Inc	427.91
	8	00713074	44248	MCB Farm, LLC	MCB Farm LLC	229.7371
	8	00704800	44248	MCB Farm, LLC	MCB Farm LLC	67.873
	8	00704822	44248	MCB Farm, LLC	MCB Farm LLC	
	3	00034323	44276	Greenfield View Farm, LLC	Greenfield View Farm, LLC	130.8548
Building Lot Termination (BLT)	1	9090	FY12	W Drew Stabler	W Drew Stabler	200.97
	12	926983	FY12	Damascus Limited Partnership	Damascus Limited Partnership	54.17
	1	3507930	FY12	William Hilton	JEFFREY L HARRISON	53.38
	12	3327737	FY13	Taylor Paskowitz LLC	Morning Run Horse Park Corp	100.71
	2	16541	FY14	Thomas Hartsock	Thomas Hartsock	103.83
	8	3497407	FY14	Our House INC	Our House INC	98.9491
	1	9168	FY14	Charles and Bertha Stanley	Charles and Bertha Stanley	105.72
	1	3003	FY15	Robert and Besty Stabler	Robert and Besty Stabler	160.77
	2	3584436	FY15	Lynwood Farm LLC	Brinklow-Blocktown LLC	226.51
	3	36754	FY15	Twin Ponds Farm LLC	Twin Ponds Farm LLC	77.16
	11	916437	FY16	Walter Prichard	Timothy & Vickie Shaw	75.1554
					Total	**1257.3245**

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
Private -BLT	12	924585		Montgomery Horse, LLC		82.5
	12	1728630		Montgomery Horse, LLC		
	1	3399410		Jones Farm, LC		25.1
	3	3683851		Potomac Estates Corporation		48.951
	3	37270		Potomac Estates Corporation		25.6361
	2	1573625		A.S. McGaughan, Jr		5
	2	1607958		A.S. McGaughan, Jr		5
	2	1607947		A.S. McGaughan, Jr		5
	3	34961		David Bolten		65.7471
	8	706898		Farmers Collective Preservation LLC		176.34
	3	34004		MDR Budd One, LLC		87.6
	1	3292205		Tusculum Farm Trust		47.62
				ASM Realty, Inc.		71.19
	6	2998234	(Lot 1)	ASM Realty, Inc.		
	6	2998245	(Lot 2)	ASM Realty, Inc.		
	6	2998256	(Lot 4)	ASM Realty, Inc.		
	6	3634281	(Lot 5)	ASM Realty, Inc.		
					Total	*645.6842*
Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	3	35214			Richard Hill & Ronnie Hay	17
	3	33897	35795	Izaak Walton League	Izaak Walton	127.31
	11	917215	29313	Johnston	Ross	171.58
	11	3247704	29313	Johnston	JianJun Feng & Chunmei Zhang	47.28
	11	3279460	29313	Johnson	Choukas-Bradley	2.35
	11	3272105	29497	Johnson	Choukas-Bradley	68.436
	11	3248275	29497	Johnston	Langstaff Farm LP	92.92

Program	Election Districts	Primary Tax Account #	Date Acquired	Grantor	Owner	Size (Acres)
	11	3272093	29497	Johnston	Sheaffer	55.08
	11	915444			Pleasants	1124
	11	921398	33337	Watkins	Law B. Watkins	286
	2	20942			Montgomery County	16
	2	23397	40533	Knapp	Barbara Knapp	10.07
	8	1709044			Hussman	17
	8	708614			Hartge	59
	8	1726482			Thomas	3
	8	1726493			Coutts	22
	8	714490			Williams	28
	5	270452			Polisar	16
	3	2930213	42726	Izaak Walton League	Izaak Walton League	100.4188
	2	36993		Milmoe	Milmoe	27.46
					Total	*2290.9048*

Appendix 12. Implementing Programs

Montgomery County relies upon the State of Maryland Program Open Space (POS) grant program as a critical component of the funding structure for acquisitions. A significant portion of the M-NCPPC Montgomery County park system has been acquired using state POS funds since the program's inception in 1970. Of the total of $186.3 million in POS grant payments received, half has been allocated to purchase parkland while half was used for facility development. In addition to State POS funding, Montgomery County General Obligation (G.O.) Bonds and M-NCPPC G.O. Bonds (aka Commission or Park and Planning Bonds) are issued by the controlling agency and provided to acquisition CIP projects. For certain types of acquisition expenses and in strong economic times, County Current Receipts are also provided to the acquisition CIP.

To address the lower levels of traditional acquisition funding sources (State POS, County and Commission Bonds, tax receipts) over the past decade, innovative funding strategies have been established to keep the land acquisition program moving forward.   New funding sources have been created over the past decade to implement proposed new urban parks through master plan and zoning recommendations (Bethesda Park Impact Payment and Mid-County Park Benefit Payment). A new capital project was created in FY 2021 funded primarily with State POS to implement the goals of the Energized Public Spaces Plan to create parks within walking distance in our most populated communities (Legacy Urban Space).   Other tools help to make expensive acquisitions more feasible, such as negotiating installment contracts to stretch current funding, seeking additional funding sources, and requesting supplemental appropriations when necessary for significant urban acquisitions.

Acquisition Program Structure

Maintaining a variety of acquisition funding sources – from the locally funded Legacy Open Space to the development funded Bethesda PIP and MidCounty PBP to the State POS-funded Legacy Urban Space and Park Acquisition programs -- is a key element to ensure we can purchase and preserve open spaces to provide active, social, and contemplative public amenities in our growing County.

Acquisition via Development Review Process
The development of land within the County often results in recreational and stewardship land being transferred to park ownership. The amount of land conveyed to Parks through the development review process varies with the zoning requirements, area master/sector plan recommendations, the size and quality of natural resources on the land being developed, and recreation and open space needs related to the new development. Designation of a site in a functional master plan such as Legacy Open Space or Energized Public Spaces may also result in dedication of appropriate parkland.

Legacy Urban Space Capital Project
The *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan* (EPS Plan; see Chapter 3 for more detail) is a countywide plan to provide public spaces within walking distance in the county's most densely populated areas. With rising populations in mixed use and higher density residential neighborhoods, parks and open space serve as "outdoor living rooms" that play a critical role in promoting livable and healthy communities, social interaction, and equity for residents of all ages and incomes.

Legacy Open Space Capital Project

The Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (M-NCPPC 2001), adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board and Montgomery County Council, established a program to preserve the best remaining open spaces across the County in six different categories:

- Natural Resources
- Water Supply Protection
- Heritage Resources
- Greenway Connections
- Farmland and Rural Open Space
- Urban Open Spaces

Bethesda Park Impact Payment (PIP) Capital Project

The *Bethesda Downtown Plan* (BDP, 2017) created a new approach to providing funds for parks that are critical to livable and healthy communities for the residents of Bethesda and the County. With an increasing population of residents and workers in the Bethesda Downtown Plan area, parks and open spaces have become "outdoor living rooms" and de facto backyards that play an increasingly important role in promoting healthy living, social interaction, and equity. A new zoning tool -- the Bethesda Overlay Zone or BOZ -- requires a Park Impact Payment (PIP) for portions of certain development approvals within the BDP boundary.

Mid-County Park Benefit Payment (PBP) Capital Project
The central portion of Montgomery County continues to experience population and economic growth. The 2010 White Flint Sector Plan, the 2017 Rock Spring Sector Plan, the 2018 White Flint 2 Sector Plan, and the 2018 Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan support this growth by creating livable communities that offer a range of benefits such as walkable neighborhoods and access to community facilities including parks. Specifically, these sector plans focus on creating new parks with central gathering spaces and active recreational amenities to support the quality of life.

Park Acquisition Capital Project
In the upcoming FY23-28 CIP, a new Park Acquisition capital project will be created that merges the current Non-Local and Local Park Acquisition CIP projects. This new project will be funded primarily with State Program Open Space (POS) grants to acquire all types of parkland to serve residents on a countywide (Non-Local) and community use (Local) basis. This project is intended to fund park acquisitions that are not funded by the more targeted land acquisition funds. The new Park Acquisition project will also include small amounts of County and Commission funds for program expenses and site cleanup.

Waterway Improvement Program
The Department of Natural Resources administers several state and federal grant programs that support the general boating public in Maryland. Maryland's Waterway Improvement Fund (WIF) provides financial support to local governments, to the department, and to federal agencies in the form of grants and/or loans for a wide variety of capital projects and services for the boating public. Montgomery Parks received $99,500 for Seneca Landing Special Park for boat ramp project and construction is expected in FY **23.**

Appendix 13. Capital Improvement Plan

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) FY22-26

County and Commission Bonds fund 47% of the CIP, and County Current Revenue provides another 14% of the six-year budget. State Program Open Space dollars are estimated to fund 20% of the total CIP over the next 6 years. Program Open Space is a critical contribution to the CIP that supports the necessary development and acquisition efforts of the Commission to provide parks, recreation and open space resources to the residents of the County.

The most recent CIP was approved by the Montgomery County Council on May 27, 2021. The table below summarizes the expenditures for the years included in PROS 2022 (FY22-26) and also provides some estimated projections for the mid-term planning horizon (FY27-31) and long-term planning horizon (FY32-36) based on growth trends over time. As the coordinating agency for Program Open Space in Montgomery County, Montgomery Parks apportion a share of the development half of the county's allocation to incorporated municipalities. The percentage of the allocation to each municipality is based on population. Projects sponsored by municipalities may include development of new parks, enhancements to existing parks, or acquisition of parkland.

(Dollar amounts in $1,000)

Capital Project	Description	Current funding, FY22-26			Mid-Term, FY27-31			Long-Term, FY32-36		
		Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation
ACQUISITION										
Acquisition: Local Parks	Acquisitions that serve county residents on a neighborhood or community basis, including related costs for land surveys, appraisals, settlement expenses and other related acquisition costs.	4250			4467			5338		
Acquisition: Non-Local Parks	For non-local parkland acquisitions, including related costs for land surveys, appraisals, settlement expenses and other related acquisition costs.	3700			3889			4647		
ALARF: M-NCPPC	A revolving fund to enable the Commission to acquire rights-of-way and other property needed for future public projects.	5000			5256			6280		
Bethesda Park Impact Payment	Acquisitions and development in the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan area.	250			263			314		
Legacy Open Space	To acquire or obtain easements or make fee-simple purchases on open-space lands of countywide significance	11,443			12028			14372		
Legacy Urban Space	To acquire parkland to fill needs identified in the Energized Public Spaces Study Area using State of Maryland Program Open Space grants	16,875			17738			21194		
Mid-County Park Benefit Payments	Acquisition of new parkland and the development of park facilities on newly acquired land to serve the White Flint, Grosvenor-Strathmore, and Rock Spring areas	2,500			2628			3140		
DEVELOPMENT										
ADA Compliance: Local Parks	Removes existing barriers and ensures that park facilities are built and maintained in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.		818	3,272		860	3439		1027	4110
ADA Compliance: Non-Local Parks	Removes existing barriers and ensures that park facilities are built and maintained in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.		990	3,960		1041	4163		1243	4974
Ballfield Initiatives	Improves existing athletic fields, creates new fields, and converts field types to meet needs		2,345	9,380		2465	9860		2945	11781
Black Hill Regional Park: SEED Classroom	Converting maintenance yard to an environmental-friendly educational site using the principles of Sustainable Education Every Day (SEED) Classroom design and construction.		250							
Blair HS Field Renovations and	Renovation of two fields for multiple sports for both school use and			2,900						

Capital Project	Description	Current funding, FY22-26			Mid-Term, FY27-31			Long-Term, FY32-36		
		Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation
Lights	community use.									
Brookside Gardens Master Plan Implementation	This project implements multiple phases of the 2004 Brookside Gardens Master Plan. Next phases of infrastructure work – Visitors Center & Conservatory (POR), renovations to the Formal Gardens, and facility planning for Propagation Area B of the maintenance area.			1,700		0	1787		0	2135
Cost Sharing: Local Parks	This PDF funds development of local park projects in conjunction with public agencies or the private sector.		75	300		79	315		94	377
Cost Sharing: Non-Local Parks	This PDF funds development of local park projects in conjunction with public agencies or the private sector.		50	200		53	210		63	251
Energy Conservation - Local Parks	This project funds modifications of existing park buildings and facilities to modernize equipment, produce energy, control and utility costs.		479			504			602	
Energy Conservation - Non-Local Parks	This project funds modifications of existing park buildings and facilities to modernize equipment, produce energy, control and utility costs.		700			736			879	
Enterprise Facilities' Improvements	This project funds renovations or new construction at M-NCPPC-owned Enterprise facilities.		720	180		757	189		904	226
Facility Planning: Local Parks	Concept design and facility planning of Local Parks.		400	1,600		420	1682		502	2010
Facility Planning: Non-Local Parks	Concept design and facility planning of Local Parks.		290	1,160		305	1219		364	1457
Hillandale Local Park	This project renovates the existing 25.35-acre Hillandale Local Park..			5,700						
Minor New Construction - Local Parks	Provides new amenities within existing parks		381	1,524		400	1602		479	1914
Minor New Construction - Non-Local Parks	Provides new amenities within existing parks		770	3,080		809	3238		967	3868
North Branch Trail	Hiker-biker trail, 2.2 mi, through Lake Frank and the North Branch of Rock Creek		4,672							
Northwest Branch Recreational Park-Athletic Area	Phase II to include Lighting and irrigation for adult fields, playground, maintenance building, restroom building and two picnic shelters, sensory loop trail, landscaping and miscellaneous amenities.		4,600							
Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park	This project expands the active recreation area in Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park and relocates the Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel from Wheaton Regional Park and provides supporting recreational amenities and parking to create a destination recreational area.		8,200							
Park Refreshers	This project funds design and construction of renovations, modifications, and modernizations of local parks, with projects generally between $1 to $3.5 M.		3,408	13,632		3582	14329		4280	17121
Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement: Local Parks	This project schedules renovation, protection, modernization, conversion, and/or replacement of aging, unsafe, or obsolete local park facilities and features. Subprojects: Boundary Markings, Minor Renovations, Park Building Renovations, Play Equipment, Resurfacing Parking Lots and Paths, and Court Renovations.			16,905			17770			21232

Capital Project	Description	Current funding, FY22-26			Mid-Term, FY27-31			Long-Term, FY32-36		
		Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation
Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement: NL Parks	This project schedules renovation, protection, modernization, conversion, and/or replacement of aging, unsafe, or obsolete local park facilities and features. Subprojects: Boundary Markings, Minor Renovations, Park Building Renovations, Play Equipment, Resurfacing Parking Lots and Paths, and Court Renovations.			24,105			25338			30275
Pollution Prevention and Repairs to Ponds & Lakes	Provides water quality enhancements and environmental restoration			5,750			6044			7222
Power Line Trail	This project will design, construct, and equip portions of the ultimate 13-mile paved and natural surface trail within the Pepco powerline corridor that connects South Germantown Recreational Park to Cabin John Regional Park as well as community and park connectors along the corridor.		10,000							
Restoration Of Historic Structures	Restores historic sites and structures and provides for community access and interpretation.		544	2,176		572	2287		683	2733
Seneca Landing Boat Ramp	Boat ramp project which will use Waterway Improvements Funding to partially fund the project. Construction is expected in FY23		99.5							
S. Germantown Recreational Park: Cricket Field	Provides the second cricket pitch envisioned as part of phase II of this overall project.		3,118							
Small Grant/Donor-Assisted Capital Improvements	Appropriation to receive non-agency contributions.		1,090	4,360		1146	4583		1369	5476
Stream Protection: SVP	Provides water quality enhancements and environmental restoration.			5,150			5413			6468
Trails: Hard Surface Design & Construction	Creates community connections to existing trails, trail signage, and trail amenities.		1,500			1577			1884	
Trails: Hard Surface Renovation	Renovates hard surface trails.			4,050			4257			5087
Trails: Natural Surface & Resource-based Recreation	Creates access to natural, undeveloped parkland and natural resource-based recreation.		2,500			2628	0		3140	
Urban Park Elements	Provides new amenities within urban park settings.		1,156	495		1215	521		1452	622
Vision Zero	Creates improvements to trails, roads, access routes to enhance safety and calm traffic.		540	2,160		568	2271		678	2713
Wheaton Regional Park Improvements	Based on the Wheaton Master Plan update and ongoing needs assessments, this project provides planning, design and construction for the renovation, conversion, and modernization of a wide range of park amenities and infrastructure throughout Wheaton Regional Park.		600	2,400		2202	8808			
Municipality Projects										
Blohm Park Trail Enhancement Project	Two sections of trails within the City of Gathersburg's 25 acre Blohm Park. There will also be two boardwalk sections and an educational overlook that will allow the trail to provide not only recreation uses but expand to provide educational uses as well.		194							
Bohrer Park Pump Room Renovation	City of Gathersburg Water Park: Due to the age of the facility, it has become imperative to replace the existing filters, motors, controllers, valves and other water treatment equipment to meet current standards and requirements.			680						

Capital Project	Description	Current funding, FY22-26			Mid-Term, FY27-31			Long-Term, FY32-36		
		Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation	Acquisition	Development	Maintenance & Renovation
Zimmerman Park Multi-Use Public Recreation Area	Town of Chevy Chase: Proposed park amenities include a natural play area for children, a picnic/seating area, a broad lawn area with improved drainage for sports and recreation activities, better landscaping to shield the park from East West Highway, and a perimeter fence that can be fully enclosed to permit occasional off-leash dog events. The existing park is a passive space, and these improvements will fulfill the needs of area residents for an active recreation area.		450							
E.E. Halmos Park	Town of Poolesville: The restrooms and concession facility needs to be demolished and replace with restrooms only at the same location.		110							

Acquisition Details Table

Historically in Maryland, Level of Service Analysis was completed using only a single metric of the number of acres per 1,000 population, with the state's default goal being 30 acres of parks and recreational land per 1,000 population. In that single metric, Montgomery County meets the state goal on a countywide scale. Montgomery Parks believes that a more granular and detailed approach to Level of Service Analysis yields more accurate and useful information on which to base acquisition needs. Therefore, Montgomery Parks uses various methods (i.e., Energized Public Spaces Analysis, Equity Focus Area designation, specific park needs, easy access for the public, etc.) to assess the comprehensive acquisition needs and guide prioritization.

This table includes information on the specific sites identified for parkland acquisition. Priority 1 acquisitions are the highest priority acquisitions that are also most likely to occur in the short term (2021-2025). Priority 2 acquisitions are likely to occur in the mid-term (2026-2030) and Priority 3 acquisitions are likely to occur over the long term (2031+).

Estimated costs were developed for Priority 1 acquisitions using data on comparable sales and recent market assessments. For Priority 2 and 3 acquisitions, the cost estimates are a more general level-of-effort value based on average costs per acre for the location and zone of the proposed acquisition. When estimated cost shows '0', it means exaction (i.e., conveyance or dedication) through development proposal.

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Arliss Civic Green	Civic Green	Long Branch Sector Plan	0.578	0	1		
Battery Lane Urban Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.682	2,700	1		
Broad Run Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	519.293	3,000	1		
Clarkmont Local Park	Local	Clarksburg Master Plan	10.518	0	1		
Clarkmont Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Clarksburg Master Plan	74.257	0	1		
Clarksburg Village Local Park	Local	Clarksburg Master Plan	8.146	0	1		

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Eastern Capital Crescent Urban Greenway Park	Urban Greenway	Bethesda Downtown Plan	1.37	16,000	1		
Fenton Village Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Silver Spring Master Plan	0.9	3,000	1		
Flower Avenue Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Long Branch Sector Plan	0.3	0	1		
Hoyles Mill Conservation Park	Conservation	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	14.764	300	1		
Hyattstown Forest Special Park	Special	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	85.025	2,600	1		
Little Bennett Regional Park	Regional	Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan	7.846	500	1		
Muddy Branch Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Potomac Master Plan	71.749	0	1		
Northwest Branch Stream Valley Unit 4	Stream Valley	SHA Agreement	15.083	0	1		
Olney Manor Recreational Park	Recreational	Olney Master Plan	16.411	900	1		
Peach Orchard Neighborhood Conservation Area	Neighborhood Conservation	Cloverly Master Plan	1.381	100	1		
Reddy Branch Stream Valley Unit 1	Stream Valley	Olney Master Plan	2.75	1,000	1		
Reddy Branch Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Olney Master Plan	18.531	0	1		

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
River Road Shale Barrens Conservation Park	Conservation	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	80	1,500	1		
Stewart Avenue Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	4.019	0	1		
Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Cloverly Master Plan	59.039	0	1		
Veteran's Park Civic Green	Civic Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.3	7,500	1		
Westbard Central Civic Green	Civic Green	Westbard Sector Plan	0.5	0	1		
Westbard Urban Recreational Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Westbard Sector Plan	0.8	3,000	1		
White Flint Civic Green	Civic Green	White Flint Sector Plan	1.668	7,500	1		
White Flint Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	White Flint Sector Plan	2.602	0	1		
Willett Branch Urban Greenway	Urban Greenway	Westbard Sector Plan	9.8	1,500	1		
WSSC Civic Green	Civic Green	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	0.542	0	1		
16th Street Urban Plaza	Plaza	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	0.279	0		2	
B-CC East Neighborhood Green Park	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.326	0		2	
Eastern Greenway Neighborhood Green South	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	4.306	20,700		2	
Ednor Soapstone	Conservation	Cloverly Master Plan	0.811	1,000		2	

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Quarry Conservation Park							
Glenfield Local Park	Local	Glenmont Sector Plan	25.143	2,500		2	
Glenmont Civic Green	Civic Green	Glenmont Sector Plan	0.624	0		2	
Hawkins Creamery Road Local Park	Local	Damascus Master Plan	13.175	400		2	
Limestone Conservation Park	Conservation	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	107.547	2,000		2	
Little Bennett Creek Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	291.679	8,800		2	
Long Branch-Garland Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	Long Branch Sector Plan	0.24	0		2	
Magruder Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	0.844	100		2	
New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	Long Branch Sector Plan	1.569	0		2	
Northwest Branch Recreational Park	Recreational	Cloverly Master Plan	10.926	400		2	
Northwest Branch Stream Valley Unit 7	Stream Valley	Cloverly Master Plan	31.38	1,000		2	
Piedmont Woods Special Park	Special	Development Compliance	65.779	0		2	
Reddy Branch Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Olney Master Plan	196.664	2,500		2	

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 12	Stream Valley	Upper Rock Creek Master Plan	21.168	700		2	
Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 16	Stream Valley	Upper Rock Creek Master Plan	23.84	800		2	
Seek Lane Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	Long Branch Sector Plan	0.387	500		2	
Springfield Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Westbard Sector Plan	0.323	0		2	
Summit Hills Civic Green	Civic Green	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	0.526	0		2	
Summit Hills Urban Recreational Parklet	Urban Recreational Parklet	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	0.966	0		2	
Ten Mile Creek Conservation Park	Stream Valley	Clarksburg Ten Mile Creek Limited Amendment	798.5	2,000		2	
Viva White Oak Civic Green	Civic Green	White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan	0.939	0		2	
Viva White Oak Local Park	Local	White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan	3.92	0		2	
White Oak Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan	1.973	0		2	
Arlington South Gateway Plaza Urban Greenway	Urban Greenway	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.238	0			3
Black Hill Regional Park	Regional	Boyds Master Plan	7.252	500			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Black Hill Regional Park	Regional	Clarksburg Ten Mile Creek Limited Amendment	228.6	9,000			3
Blockhouse Point Conservation Park	Conservation	Potomac Master Plan	10.441	400			3
Brickyard Road Local Park	Local	Potomac Master Plan	20.281	700			3
Bucklodge Branch Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Agricultural and Rural Open Space	117.404	3,600			3
Dry Seneca Creek Stream Valley Unit 1	Stream Valley	Agricultural and Rural Open Space	160.448	4,900			3
Dry Seneca Creek Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Agricultural and Rural Open Space	71.854	2,200			3
Eastern Greenway North Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	2.34	14,000			3
Gaithersburg West Local Park	Local	Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan	13.961	500			3
Norwood Local Park	Local	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.07	0			3
Glen Hills Local Park	Local	Potomac Master Plan	9.74	300			3
Glenmont Greenway Urban Park	Urban Greenway	Glenmont Sector Plan	2.126	0			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Agricultural and Rural Open Space	5.945	200			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 4	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	47.467	1,500			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 5	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	158.502	4,800			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 6	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	100.169	3,000			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 7	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	1.039	100			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 8	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	16.351	500			3
Great Seneca Stream Valley Unit 9	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	18.722	600			3
Gude Drive Recreational Park	Recreational	Upper Rock Creek Master Plan	164.346	0			3
Hawlings River Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Olney Master Plan	211.165	0			3
Hillandale Local Park	Local	White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan	0.8	1,500			3
King's Bridge Local Park	Local	Damascus Master Plan	30.342	1,000			3
Linthicum West Recreational Park	Recreational	Clarksburg Master Plan	81.806	2,500			3
Little Bennett Regional Park	Regional	Planning Board	306.745	3,000			3
Little Bennett Regional Park	Regional	Planning Board	10.536	100			3
Little Bennett Regional Park	Regional	Planning Board	30.239	300			3
Long Branch Stream Valley Unit 1A	Stream Valley	Takoma Park Master Plan	1.199	100			3
LSC West Civic Green	Civic Green	Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan	0.505	100			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
LSC West Local Park	Local	Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan	15.534	500			3
Muddy Branch Stream Valley Unit 1	Stream Valley	Potomac Master Plan	12.71	0			3
North Bethesda Trail Urban Greenway	Urban Greenway	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.916	0			3
North Branch Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Remainderment Interest	5.889	100			3
North Branch Stream Valley Unit 3	Stream Valley	Olney Master Plan	86.329	0			3
North Branch Stream Valley Unit 4	Stream Valley	Upper Rock Creek Master Plan	23.3	0			3
Oak Drive Local Park	Local	Damascus Master Plan	13.002	400			3
Oaks Landfill Recreational Park	Recreational	Olney Master Plan	501.31	0			3
Old Georgetown Road Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.301	6,000			3
Ovid Hazen Wells Greenway Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Clarksburg Master Plan	31.612	1,000			3
Patuxent River Watershed Conservation Park	Conservation	Cloverly Master Plan	34.597	350			3
Patuxent River Watershed Conservation Park	Conservation	Fairland Master Plan	39.057	400			3
Patuxent River Watershed	Conservation	Olney Master Plan	162.476	1,600			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Conservation Park							
Rachel Carson Conservation Park	Conservation	Olney Master Plan	14.84	200			3
Rachel Carson Conservation Park	Conservation	Olney Master Plan	8.969	150			3
Red Door Store Special Park	Special	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	16.346	500			3
Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	14.289	0			3
Rock Run Stream Valley Park	Stream Valley	Potomac Master Plan	8.015	300			3
Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park	Local	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	1.016	0			3
Sandy Spring Village Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Sandy Spring Rural Village Plan	0.5	0			3
Selden Island Conservation Park	Conservation	Legacy Open Space Master Plan	0	0			3
Seneca Landing Special Park	Special	Agricultural and Rural Open Space	8.582	300			3
Seneca Meadow Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan	0.433	500			3
South Bethesda Public Plaza Recreational Park	Community Recreational	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.152	0			3
Summit Hills Urban Greenway	Urban Greenway	Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan	4.91	0			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Takoma Academy Local Park	Local	East Silver Spring Master Plan	25.829	2,600			3
Unity Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	Opportunity Acq	2.143	200			3
Upcounty Regional Services Center Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Germantown Employment Area Sector Plan	0.904	1,000			3
Water Tower Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	White Flint Sector Plan	0.731	1,000			3
Wellington Drive Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.499	0			3
Western Edge Neighborhood Green (Beth Elem - Bd Ed)	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.504	1,000			3
Western Edge Neighborhood Green (Caroline Freeland)	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.153	1,000			3
Western Edge Neighborhood Green (Private home)	Neighborhood Green	Bethesda Downtown Plan	0.515	1,000			3
Wildcat Branch Stream Valley Unit 1	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	45.093	1,400			3
Wildcat Branch Stream Valley Unit 2	Stream Valley	Damascus Master Plan	100.817	3,100			3
Fenton Village Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	0.3465	2,000			3

PARK NAME	PARK TYPE	AUTHORITY	ACRES	ESTIMATED COSTS ($1,000)	Short Range Priority (2021-2025)	Mid Range Priority (2026-2030)	Long Range Priority (2031+)
Mayor Lane Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	2.19795	0		2	
East-West Highway Recreational Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	1.6237	12,000	1		
Cameron Street Recreational Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	1.78265	0		2	
Wayne-Fenton Neighborhood Green	Neighborhood Green	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	4.82961	0			3
Silver Spring Central Recreational Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	2.60372	0		2	
Ripley District Civic Green	Civic Green	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	1.69799	15,000			3
Newell Street Recreational Park	Countywide Urban Recreational	Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan	1.00017	9,500			3
TOTAL ACRES TO BE ACQUIRED			**5,641.67**		1,010	1,610	3,021
TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS				**$213 Million**	**$63 Million**	**$43 Million**	**$107 Million**

Appendix 14. Funding Sources

Agricultural Transfer Tax

State Agricultural Transfer Taxes are collected when farmland is sold and converted to uses other than agriculture. The agricultural transfer tax assessed on real property is five percent of the consideration paid. Montgomery County's agricultural preservation program is certified by the State and is therefore able to retain 75 percent of the agricultural transfer taxes collected to fund the agricultural preservation program. A total of $30,983,365 from FY1990 through FY2014 was retained by the County for agricultural land preservation.

The County Office of Agriculture estimates that only about 4,000 acres of farmland exist in the County that could be developed and trigger the collection of agricultural transfer taxes (i.e., land outside of the Agricultural Reserve in agricultural use with a preferential agricultural tax rate). Montgomery County is running out of farmland to develop, thus creating a funding dilemma for the preservation program: Montgomery County will have fewer farm conversions that generate agricultural transfer taxes to fund future easement acquisitions.

As the primary funding source for farmland preservation easements in Montgomery County, the significant decline in Ag Transfer Tax revenue over the past decade has resulted in a severe shortage of funds for farmland preservation easement programs.

Investment Income

Agricultural Transfer Taxes retained by Montgomery County are placed in an interest-bearing account. Beginning in FY1994, the income generated by the interest was invested back into the agricultural land preservation program. As of FY2020, a total of $4,677,904 of interest had accrued. Investment income was used to fund preservation initiatives, agricultural economic development initiatives and staffing costs.

General Obligation Bonds

One alternative for funding farmland preservation in Montgomery County is through the use of General Obligation (or G.O.) Bonds. G.O. bonds are backed by the full faith, credit, and taxing power of the issuing jurisdiction. Because these types of bonds require debt servicing for repayment, the County has adopted a policy to limit their use for farmland preservation. This policy dictates that G.O. Bonds can only be used when the reserves of cash are significantly depleted Declining collections of Agricultural Transfer Taxes in recent years necessitated an infusion of $2 Million in G.O. Bonds in one year, but no additional G.O. Bonds are currently appropriated for farmland preservation.

State Grants

Beginning in 1997, the State's Rural Legacy Program was enacted as part of the Governor's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative to protect natural resources. Through this program, a grants program was established by which local governments and local land trusts could compete for State funds. These funds could be directed to either purchase sensitive lands in fee or acquire protection through conservation easements. Since the first grants were awarded during the FY1998-1999 grant cycle, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of $21.6million in State Grant Funds.

Contributions to the BLT Program

As described above, a developer seeking to build an optional method development in the Commercial-Residential (CR) family of zones is incentivized to purchase BLTs to meet their project's density requirements. Purchase of partial BLTs from the public part of the BLT program helps return money to the easement acquisition fund that can then be used to purchase additional BLTs from interested landowners. Again, as more developments proceed in the coming decade in areas of the County under the CR family of zones, the BLT program is expected to accelerate and provide more funding to the public BLT program.