

PHED COMMITTEE #1
February 14, 2011

Briefing

MEMORANDUM

February 10, 2011

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: Marlene L. Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst *MM*
Vivian Yao, Legislative Analyst *VY*

SUBJECT: Briefing on Vision 2030 Strategic Plan

The Committee will receive a briefing on the Draft Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for County Parks and Recreation. The Executive Summary appears on © 1 to 24 and the complete draft plan on © 25 to 109. The attached document is the second volume of a 3 volume effort:

Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment
Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan
Volume 3: Implementation Plan

Volume 1 has been completed and Departments of Parks and Recreation Staff are currently working on the Implementation Plan, which should be completed by May. Since the Implementation Plan will include the timing, budget impacts, and responsibilities for specific action steps, it is a critical follow-up to the Strategic Plan.

The Department of Parks is continuing to obtain public input on the Draft Strategic Plan. (One of the public meetings originally scheduled for January was postponed due to weather.) The Planning Board met on February 10 to discuss the Plan. Since they met after this memorandum was completed, Department of Parks will update the Committee on their discussion at the meeting. The Committee is being briefed before the Plan is finalized to provide an opportunity for Councilmembers to comment on the Draft Plan.

The Draft Plan is a cross agency Strategic Plan which focuses on the provision of park and recreation services, not on which agency provides them or on organization issues. Staff believes this is the right approach. It will facilitate having the Departments work together if their current structure is not changed, and its recommendations will still be valid if there is any change in organization or new allocation of responsibilities. This is one of the highlights of the document.

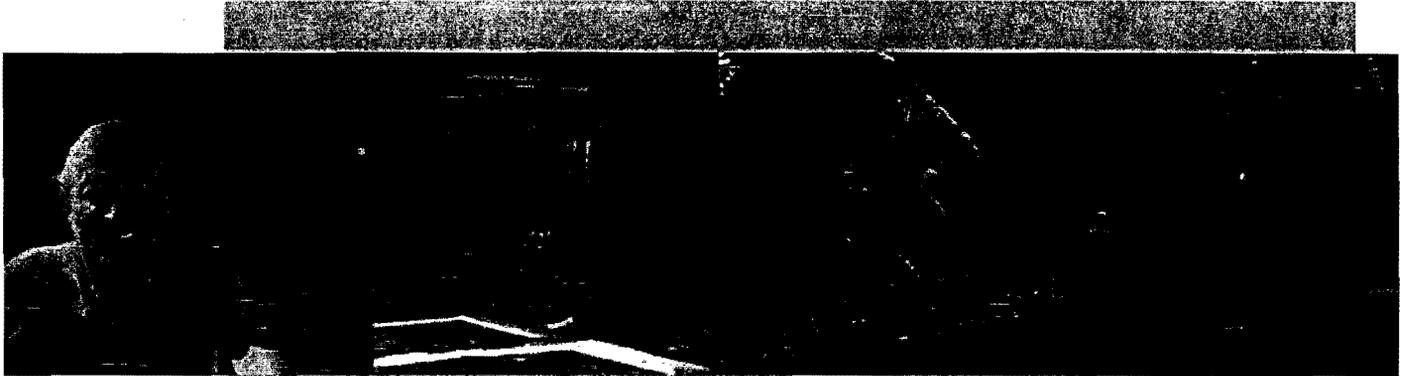
The Plan focuses on 5 main themes:

1. Programs and Experiences – Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure.
2. Planning and Development of Facilities – Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing County.
3. Operations, Maintenance and Safety – Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system.
4. Management – Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability.
5. Marketing and Outreach – Informing and engaging a diverse community.

The Plan outlines criteria and methodologies for assessing the need for park and recreation facilities and programs and can lead to a more comprehensive consideration of options. Included in the Plan is an analysis of the level of service (LOS) provided in different areas of the County. The analysis is based on an inventory of all park and recreation **facilities** in the County. It concludes that the LOS is lower in the South Central and North Central sub-areas (see maps on © 93 to 95). Since this includes areas along the I-270 Corridor planned for significant growth, the gap could grow worse in the future without some effort to equalize services.

Some of the issues the Committee may want to discuss with the Departments of Parks and Recreation include the following:

- Many of the recommendations relate to the expansion and enhancement of park and recreational programming at a time when fiscal realities are forcing the County to contract and diminish programming. For example, the Plan discusses the need to provide equitable services throughout the County - which is an important goal - but it suggests ways to determine when to increase services in areas receiving a lower level of service (LOS), rather than options to reduce services in those areas with greater levels of service. Staff also notes that 2 of the 5 key programs identified as priorities for expansion are ones recently cut by the Council in the latest budget savings plan (out-of-school programming for summers and after school and senior programming) – see © 44.
- Implementing many of the Plan’s recommendations will require significant staff resources, something that may be difficult given the recent cutbacks in staffing in the Departments. This includes both staff to undertake additional studies and planning and recommendations to increase staffing for various parks and recreation programs. The Committee may want to discuss whether the Departments have or will determine which ones are feasible in the short term given budget constraints and how they will prioritize the list of recommendations to best use limited resources.
- One of the most critical recommendations is to focus on the provision of core services, but the report does not identify which specific services should be considered core services. It is unclear whether the top priorities, listed on © 46 are the programs the Departments would consider their core services (since high demand for a service should not be the sole determinate of whether it is a core service).
- The Plan provides a cost recovery pyramid that identifies which services should have the greatest cost recovery and which the least (see © 70 and © 110). While this provides general guidance on when to change fees, it does not address specific fees for specific services and whether there are opportunities to significantly increase revenue via fees.



Vision 2030 Strategic Plan

for Montgomery County Parks and Recreation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | JANUARY 2011

*A 10-year Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation Services
in Montgomery County, Maryland*

- DRAFT -

Montgomery County Department of Parks, M-NCPPC
MontgomeryParks.org

Montgomery County Department of Recreation
MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec



Vision 2030

Montgomery County
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT

Vision 2030 Strategic Plan

Vision and Values

VISION

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan will guide the M-NCPPC's Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation in the provision of:

- Stewardship of natural and historic resources.
- Opportunities for active life-long learning, leisure, and recreation.

VALUES

The M-NCPPC's Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation are committed to:

- Promote healthy living through diverse recreation and leisure activities
- Protect natural, historical, and archaeological resources
- Promote the economic competitiveness of Montgomery County as a place for businesses to locate through a robust parks and recreation system that attracts knowledge workers and families
- Promote sense of community and civic pride
- Nurture an appreciation for our natural, cultural legacy
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities
- Shape healthy, safe, green communities
- Collaborate with partners to provide sustainable, accessible, and diverse leisure opportunities
- Engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends
- Acquire, maintain, and manage the parks and recreation built environment



Table of Contents

Introduction - 3

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Purpose _____ | 3 |
| Why is this Plan important? _____ | 3 |

Challenges and Opportunities - 5

Recommendations - 6

| | |
|---|----|
| Theme 1: Programs & Experiences _____ | 7 |
| Theme 2: Planning & Development of Facilities _____ | 8 |
| Theme 3: Operations, Maintenance & Safety _____ | 11 |
| Theme 4: Management _____ | 14 |
| Theme 5: Marketing & Outreach _____ | 16 |

Background and Methodology - 18

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Population Trends _____ | 18 |
| The Outreach Process _____ | 19 |

Next Steps - 19

Deliverables - 20

| | |
|---|----|
| Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Products _____ | 20 |
|---|----|



ABSTRACT

Title - DRAFT - Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Author Prepared by Montgomery County Department of Parks, Park Planning and Stewardship Division and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Subject A summary of the *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* for Montgomery County Parks and Recreation

Date January 27, 2011

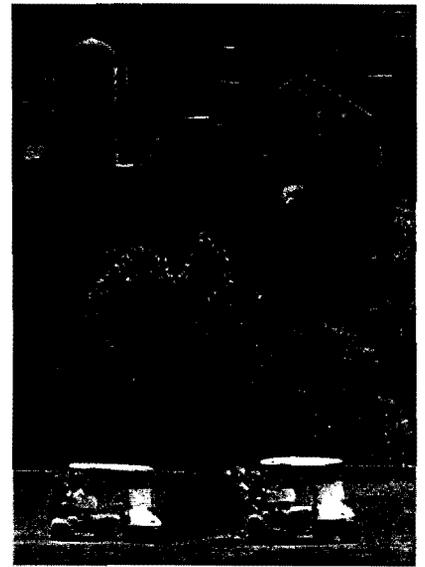
Agencies Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Source of Copies Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Website(s) *ParkPlanning.org, MontgomeryParks.org*
MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec

Number of Pages 24

Abstract This document summarizes the recommendations of the Vision 2030 project based on research and outreach which identify park and recreation needs for the next 20 years in Montgomery County, Maryland



Introduction

Montgomery County, Maryland is nationally recognized for an extensive parks, recreation, and open space system that greatly contributes to the high quality of life in the County.

In order to maintain the high quality of this valuable parks and recreation system into the future, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC's) Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation have collaborated on the development of a long-term strategic plan to guide parks and recreation services for the next 20 years. This plan is called the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan.



Purpose

The purpose of the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan is to:

- Develop a shared vision for the parks and recreation system in Montgomery County.
- Articulate clear strategies to address current and future needs.
- Collaboratively provide parks and recreation facilities and services.

Through this plan, we seek to address the following questions:

- How do we maintain the appropriate level of service for people who live, work, and engage in recreation in Montgomery County now and in the future?
- How do we most effectively and efficiently deliver the parks and recreation services that are most important to the residents of Montgomery County?

Why is this Plan important?

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan will help M-NCPPC's Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation respond to:

- The need for greater dependence on revenue generation and alternative funding
- Growing population and service demands
- Aging infrastructure
- Growing environmental awareness
- Emerging trends in parks and recreation
- Shrinking tax support

- Organizational sustainability
- By focusing on key strategic areas including policy, programming, facilities, operations, maintenance, management, and marketing, this plan will also provide the guidance necessary to:
 - Make strategic, defensible decisions about programming, services offered, fees, and cost recovery.
 - Be more transparent in our operations and more accountable for the results of our work.



Challenges and Opportunities

Throughout the Vision 2030 planning process, members of the community repeatedly voiced their support for the value and benefits of Montgomery County's parks and recreation system.

As our county becomes more urbanized it is even more important realize the benefits of parks, recreation and open space. The Trust for Public Land's report titled, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," states:

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community through economic development and tourism.
- Trees improve air quality, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.
-

Growing demand and shrinking resources will continue to be a challenge for parks and recreation services in this county. With strong leadership and a guiding vision, both departments have a unique opportunity to maximize operational sustainability by:

- Prioritizing tax resources to focus on core services.
- Balancing new construction with the maintenance and repair of existing facilities.
- Proactively responding to changing demographics, emerging trends, and changing priorities.
- Strengthening the stewardship of natural and historical resources.
- Continuing to "green" the park system – including facilities, equipment, and operational programs.
- Maintaining the emphasis on customer service and public safety.
- Collaborating to more efficiently deliver quality services.
- Planning for future growth.



Recommendations

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan recommendations are organized by five broad vision themes:

- **Theme 1: Programs & Experiences**
Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure.
- **Theme 2: Planning & Development of Facilities**
Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing County.
- **Theme 3: Operations, Maintenance & Safety**
Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system.
- **Theme 4: Management**
Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability.
- **Theme 5: Marketing & Outreach**
Informing and engaging a diverse community.

The specific goals and objectives for each theme are detailed on the following pages.



Theme 1: Programs & Experiences

Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure.

GOAL 1

Provide a variety of high-quality programs that meet community needs and interests.

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Enhance, expand, or add programs and services identified as high priorities by research and customer feedback.
- 1.2 Enhance parks and recreation program planning methods.
- 1.3 Optimize program and facility utilization through balanced service provision.
- 1.4 Expand or develop tracking system capabilities to consistently monitor non-registered and drop-in visitation.

GOAL 2

Promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Montgomery County's natural and historical resources.

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Implement the cultural/historic interpretation plan based on "From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks" and the prioritization system in the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory.
- 2.2 Develop and implement interpretive master plans for natural resources, public gardens, community gardens, and the nature centers.
- 2.3 Develop an environmental literacy program for County residents of all ages.

GOAL 3

Enhance health, wellness, and active living in Montgomery County.

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Incorporate concepts of healthy and vital living into all facilities, programs, and services throughout the parks and recreation system.



Theme 2: Planning & Development of Facilities

Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing County.

GOAL 4

Provide adequate and appropriate public lands and facilities that are equitably distributed across the County to meet the needs of residents.

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Set standards for Level of Service (LOS) that take population density into account and are based on composite-values methodology which includes both the quantity and quality of facilities and services provided, and allows LOS to be derived from a mix of various facilities.
- 4.2 Prioritize projects to increase the Level of Service in the areas where data shows the highest needs.
- 4.3 Establish clear priorities for planning, acquiring, developing, and stewarding parklands.
- 4.4 Provide an appropriate balance between stewardship and recreation.

GOAL 5

Create a high-functioning system of parks, recreation, trails, and open space that is responsive to changing community needs and interests.

OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Prioritize planning and development projects and streamline associated processes.
- 5.2 Provide for flexible spaces and “green” facility designs.
- 5.3 Provide a variety of park and recreation facilities that address current needs and emerging trends (e.g., dog parks, community gardens, cricket, ice facilities, tennis facilities, etc.).
- 5.4 Ensure that the quantity and type of parks, programs, facilities, trails, and open space are adequate for the users being served.
- 5.5 Improve the comfort and convenience of park and recreation users by providing adequate facilities such as accessible restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, parking, and other convenience features.
- 5.6 Use the Outdoor Components Analysis Chart to guide future planning for park facilities.



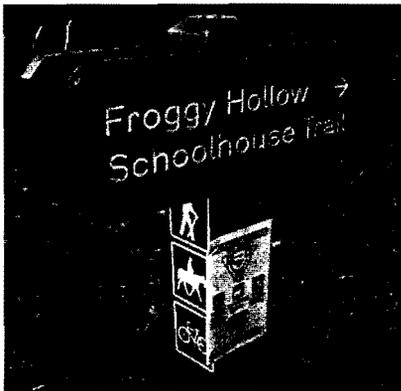
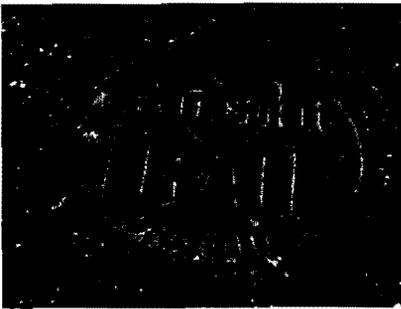
- 5.7 Re-balance the existing mix of athletic fields to better fit current needs for rectangle and diamond fields.
- 5.8 Provide adequate playgrounds throughout the County to meet the need for convenient access to healthy play opportunities.

GOAL 6

Expand and enhance opportunities for recreational trail experiences to promote health and wellness.

OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Expand the distribution of multi-use trails.
- 6.2 Increase trail connectivity.
- 6.3 Address the needs of specialty trail users, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians.
- 6.4 Enhance the trail user experience through safety and comfort features, including informational kiosks at trail heads, uniform directional signage, interpretive signage, and appropriately placed restrooms.



GOAL 7

Expand parks and recreation facility accessibility.

OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 Enhance access to parks, recreation facilities and programs, trails, and open space by setting measurable standards for different areas of the County.
- 7.2 Collaboratively work to provide safe and accessible park and recreation facilities.
- 7.3 Incorporate the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design into planning and development of park and recreational facilities for both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

GOAL 8

Provide an equitable distribution of public indoor recreation spaces in Montgomery County that is sustainable.

OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Refine the level of service model for indoor recreation and aquatic centers.
- 8.2 Conduct feasibility studies and operating/business plans prior to the design and development of new community recreation facilities.
- 8.3 Use the Service Assessment to assist the evaluation of renovations and modernization of recreation centers and potential consolidation/repurposing the older smaller community and neighborhood facilities as may be warranted.
- 8.4 Consider an assessment of needs and opportunities for specialized countywide facilities (e.g., arena, event center, indoor sports complex) including public/private partnership opportunities.



Theme 3: Operations, Maintenance & Safety

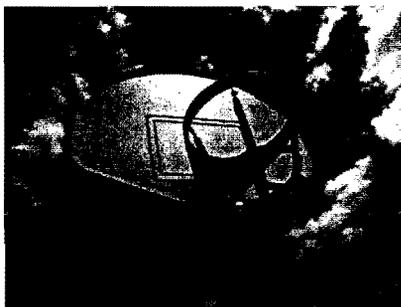
Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system

GOAL 9

Maintain quality park and recreation lands and facilities for efficiency, safety, attractiveness, and long-term sustainability.

OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 Develop a comprehensive “green” operations and maintenance initiative.
- 9.2 Expand the Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement Program (PLAR).
- 9.3 Implement the existing prioritized deferred maintenance plan.
- 9.4 Re-evaluate the current maintenance levels of service and standards based on industry best practices and update standards.
- 9.5 Identify operating budget impact (OBI) needed for new capital improvement projects and acquisitions and allocate adequate resources.
- 9.6 Formalize the maintenance and management of athletic fields.
- 9.7 Expand SMARTPARKS applications throughout the M-NCPPC Department of Parks (e.g., park planning, natural resources management, and historic resources management).
- 9.8 Create equipment standards for select park and recreation facilities (e.g., basketball hoops, restroom fixtures, etc.) to aid in parts inventories and enhance maintenance efficiency.
- 9.9 Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and guidelines into parks and recreation site design and ongoing maintenance practices.
- 9.10 Evaluate and plan for maintenance functions by identifying operational and locational enhancements (e.g., maintenance yards) to efficiently meet future needs.



GOAL 10

Provide for the protection, security, and safety of natural areas, historic resources, archeological sites, and park and recreation facilities, including playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, community centers, and trails.

OBJECTIVES

- 10.1 Ensure continued dedicated personnel and resources for the specialized requirements of both agencies.
- 10.2 Expand enforcement of unauthorized encroachments to preserve parkland for public use.
- 10.3 Expand participation by Park Police in existing Department of Recreation homework clubs and other after-school youth programs.
- 10.4 Expand the use of Park Rangers as appropriate for natural resource and interpretive duties.



GOAL 11

Inventory, conserve, restore, and enhance ecologically healthy and biologically diverse natural areas with a focus on Park Best Natural Areas, Biodiversity Areas, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas as defined in the "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan" (M-NCPPC, 2005).

OBJECTIVES

- 11.1 Develop a protocol and schedule for the routine inventory and analysis of natural resources patterned after the Montgomery County Stream Protection Strategy.
- 11.2 Develop a countywide natural resources management plan.
- 11.3 Prioritize Best Natural Areas and Biodiversity Areas based on their ecological value and biological diversity.
- 11.4 Propose a schedule for developing natural resources management plans for each Best Natural Area and Biodiversity Area.
- 11.5 Develop comprehensive restoration plans for down-County stream valley parks including Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, and Little Falls.
- 11.6 Consider expanding the current white-tailed deer management program into down-County areas consistent with public demand, natural resource management needs, and public safety concerns.



- 11.7 Develop natural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.
- 11.8 Develop new volunteer-based programs to assist with the inventory and management of natural resources in County parks (e.g., Forest Stewards).
- 11.9 Ensure adequate staffing to achieve natural resource management goals and associated Objectives.

GOAL 12

Identify, stabilize, preserve, maintain, and interpret historic and archaeological resources on parkland.

OBJECTIVE:

- 12.1 Implement M-NCPPC Department of Parks' existing plan "From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks" and use the Cultural Resources Section's Asset Inventory to prioritize the restoration and interpretation of the highest value historic and archaeological resources in County parks. (Also see Objective 2.1 regarding cultural resources interpretation.)
- 12.2 Propose a schedule for developing plans to restore the highest value historic resources and stabilize the highest value archaeological resources in County parks.
- 12.3 Develop cultural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.
- 12.4 Ensure adequate staffing to achieve goals and Objectives associated with the restoration and interpretation of historic resources in County parks.



Theme 4: Management

Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability.

GOAL 13

Ensure long-term sustainability by focusing taxpayer funding on those services that produce the widest community benefit, using a cost recovery pyramid.

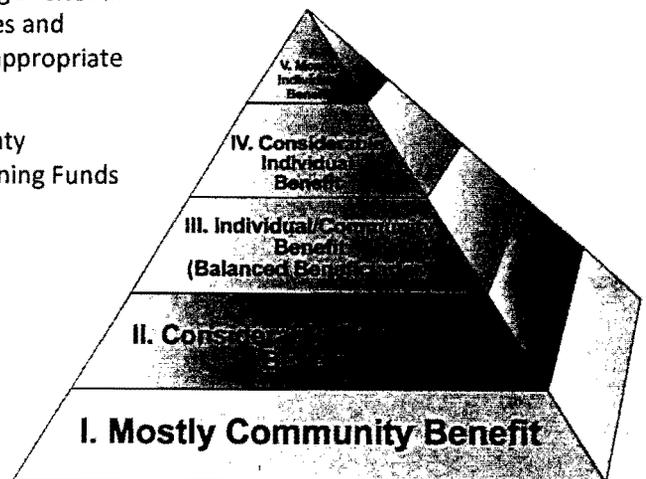
OBJECTIVES

- 13.1 Ensure that all staff members are using cost-based or activity-based budgeting principles to determine the cost to provide a service.
- 13.2 Increase cost recovery to meet cost recovery target goals through recommended pricing strategies and/or use of alternative funding sources as appropriate to specific service.
- 13.3 Review all rentals, Memorandums of Understanding, and long term lease agreements to assure compliance with cost recovery goals in relation to the cost to provide the service and the category of service level on the cost recovery pyramid.
- 13.4 Review all instructor agreements in relation to the agency costs and adjust to match the category of service level on the pyramid.
- 13.5 Identify funding sources or partnership/collaborations to continue the provision of social service type programming by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation as current funding is reduced and eliminated.
- 13.6 Pursue alternative funding for efficiency measures to reduce the costs to the taxpayer of operations, maintenance, and safety.
- 13.7 Identify the cost of emergency services (e.g., providing shelter in an emergency, water main breaks, flooding, hurricanes and major storms, etc.) and pursue remuneration where appropriate or possible.
- 13.8 Identify selective opportunities for Montgomery County Department of Recreation to use or create Self-sustaining Funds or Enterprise Funds as appropriate.
- 13.9 Implement service provision strategies identified through the Service Assessment.

Cost Recovery Pyramid:

The pyramid below illustrates the method used in this plan to guide cost recovery philosophy and policies.

The base level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation system—those services that benefit the largest portion of the community. Services appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid are those that provide mostly individual benefits.



© 2001, 2008, 2009 GreenPlay, LLC

GOAL 14

Ensure services are accessible for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

OBJECTIVES

- 14.1 Review and refine scholarship and fee reduction/waiver policies and consider aligning them across both departments, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- 14.2 Seek funding sources for each agency, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, to fund the scholarship or fee reduction/waiver program.
- 14.3 Expand targeted efforts to reach socio-economically disadvantaged populations.

GOAL 15

Increase alternative funding sources.

OBJECTIVES

- 15.1 Utilize non-profit 501(c)(3) funding organizations to help generate alternative funding.
- 15.2 Expand sponsorship and naming rights opportunities.
- 15.3 Expand alternative funding through grants.
- 15.4 Seek alternative funding sources for programs and operations.

GOAL 16

Be leaders in sustainable "green" practices.

OBJECTIVES:

- 16.1 Develop an agency-wide coordinated program to incorporate sustainable "green" design, development, and operational practices at all levels of the organization.
- 16.2 Strive to achieve compatibility with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for all new major facilities.



Theme 5: Marketing & Outreach

Informing and engaging a diverse community.

GOAL 17

Proactively market parks and recreation services and facilities and communicate the benefits to the community.

OBJECTIVES

- 17.1 Develop and implement a county-wide strategic marketing and outreach plan to expand awareness and usage of programs and services offered by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- 17.2 Transition communications from printed to electronic media where feasible.
- 17.3 Promote the value and positive impacts of parks and recreation services using multiple forms of media (print, radio, TV, web-based).



GOAL 18

Effectively communicate with and engage diverse groups.

OBJECTIVES

- 18.1 Augment staff training in multi-cultural competency and outreach.
- 18.2 Increase opportunities for engagement with diverse groups and those that serve these populations regarding parks and recreation.
- 18.3 Strive to make parks and recreation advisory groups representative of the demographic diversity of Montgomery County. (e.g., ethnic, age, physical disabilities, income, etc.).
- 18.4 Increase collaboration on community-wide events and festivals.
- 18.5 Identify non-English speaking language translations needed for effective marketing and outreach.



GOAL 19

Provide meaningful opportunities for public support, input, and engagement.

OBJECTIVES

- 19.1 Provide a variety of input opportunities on parks and recreation service issues and concerns in Montgomery County.
- 19.2 Expand volunteer opportunities.
- 19.3 Conduct a statistically-valid countywide survey every five years to determine community interests and needs.
- 19.4 Leverage relationships with existing "Friends Groups," staff, and volunteers to promote parks and recreation in Montgomery County.



Background and Methodology

Population Trends

The population of Montgomery County is forecast to grow by 17 percent over the next twenty years. By the year 2030, Montgomery County is projected to have approximately 1,134,400 residents.

Most of this growth is projected to occur in the central part of the County, including the I-270 corridor. Proactive planning to address parks and recreation needs in these urbanizing areas is a focus of the Vision 2030 Plan.

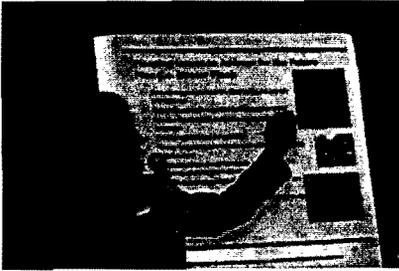


Level of Service per Population by Sub-area

Due to the size and diversity of the County, the Vision 2030 process projected park and recreation needs in four geographic sub-areas of the County: Potomac/Rural, East Transit Corridor, South Central, and North Central

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis of the parks and recreation inventory shows that when population density is considered, the current overall LOS per capita is lower in the I-270 corridor (indicated by the lighter shades in the South Central and North Central sub-areas on this map.

The increased growth projected in the next twenty years along the I-270 corridor will create increased demand for parks and recreation facilities and services.



The Outreach Process

The Vision 2030 Plan resulted from an extensive, collaborative planning process that engaged over 1,000 people, including residents, community leaders, stakeholders, staff, and County leadership over a period of 14 months.

Both agencies did extensive outreach by email, posters, e-newsletter, the project website and press releases

The process included:

- Eight public meetings
- Three summits
- Twenty-five community focus groups
- Statistically-valid, countywide mail survey of parks and recreation needs and interests



Because the Vision 2030 Plan reflects a broad consensus among the public, staff, and County leadership, it will help to ensure that Montgomery County's parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping the high quality of life enjoyed by County residents.

Next Steps

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan provides goals and objectives that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This plan positions both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation to collaboratively meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing and diverse community.

Based on the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan, an implementation plan will be developed. This implementation plan will consist of detailed implementation matrices for each of the Strategic Plan Objectives with specific action steps that include timeline, budget impacts, and responsibility. These guiding documents should be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs and interests, and resources.



Deliverables

Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Products

In addition to this Executive Summary document, Vision 2030 includes the following documents:

- **Volume 1:** Needs & Resource Assessment
- **Volume 2:** Vision 2030 Strategic Plan
- **Volume 3:** Implementation Plan

Following is a brief description of each the Vision 2030 documents and how they relate to each other.

VOLUME 1: NEEDS & RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The document identifies key parks and recreation issues and needs in Montgomery County based on analysis in the following areas:

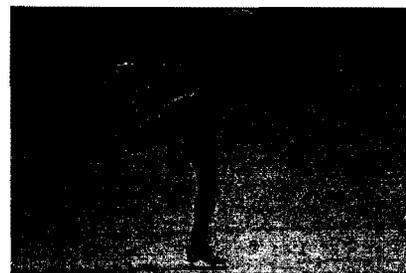
- Trends and demographics.
- Community and stakeholder input including a statistically-valid survey, public meetings and summits, and external and internal focus groups.
- Programs and services.
- Inventory analysis of parks and recreation facilities including major alternative providers such as municipalities and schools.
- Administration and management.

VOLUME 2: VISION 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

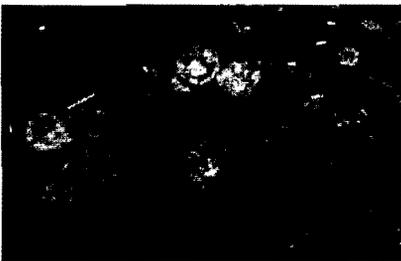
The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan provides a vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system for 20 years to 2030. It also includes a 10-year Strategic Plan that lays out recommended goals and Objectives to achieve the 2030 vision and address the key issues identified in the Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment.

VOLUME 3: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan is a staff-level work plan that identifies action steps to achieve the strategic goals and Objectives along with the sequence/timeframe and financial and staff resources needed to implement the plan recommendations.



Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks & Recreation





Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation
Executive Summary | January 2011

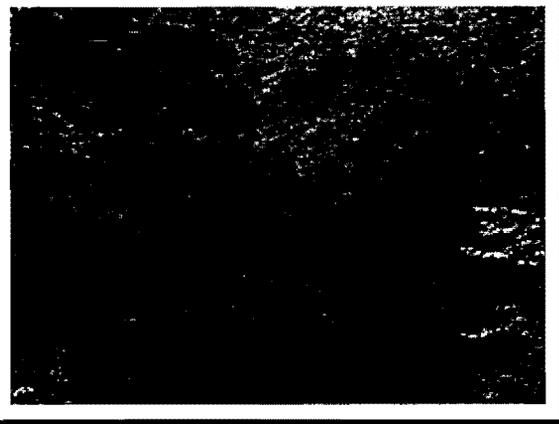
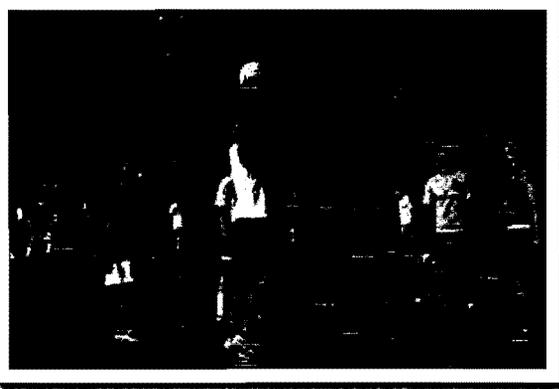


Vision 2030

Montgomery County
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the
MontgomeryParks.org
MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec
Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Parks and Recreation Vision 2030



Vision 2030

Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan DRAFT January 2011



Montgomery County
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Montgomery County Planning Board

Françoise Carrier, Chair
Marye Wells-Harley, Vice Chair
Joe Alfandre
Norman Dreyfuss
Amy Presley
Royce Hanson, term expired June 2010

Montgomery County, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board

George Tarrico, Chair
John Williams, Vice-Chair
Donna Bartko
Peter Freeman
Daniel Johnston
David Magill
Mark Pharoah
Jerilyn Ray Shelley
Arquilla Ridgell
Chris Robinson
George Schlapo
Lou Sousa
Sean Thomas Smith
James Zepp

Area Recreation Advisory Boards

Down County Area – Jerilyn Ray-Shelley, Chair
East County Area – Mark Pharoah, Chair
Mid County Area – Arquilla Ridgell, Chair
Up County Area – Ed Socha, Chair

Vision 2030 Steering Committee & Senior Managers

M-NCPPC Department of Parks

Mary Bradford, Director of Parks
Mike Riley, Deputy Director, Park Administration Division
Gene Giddens, Deputy Director, Park Operations Division
Christine Brett, Chief, Park Enterprise Division
Brooke Farquhar, Vision 2030 Project Manager
Jayne Hench, Park Volunteer Services Coordinator
Dr. John Hench, Chief, Park Planning & Stewardship Division
Michael Horrigan, Chief, Northern Parks Division
Darien Manley, Chief, Montgomery County Park Police Division
John Nissel, Chief, Park Facilities Management Division
Mitra Pedoeem, Chief, Park Development Division
John Schlee, Supervisor, SMARTPARKS Unit
Kate Stookey, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division

Mary Ellen Venzke, Chief, Park Management Services Division
David Vismara, Chief, Horticulture, Forestry, & Environmental Education Division
Brian Woodward, Chief, Southern Parks Division
Pamela Zorich, Research Coordinator, Planning Department

Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Gabriel Albornoz, Director
Terry Blount-Williams, Southern Region Manager
Jeffrey Bourne, Division Chief
Pattie Cox, Office of the Director
Reed Dewey, Northern Region Manager
Doug Fox, Manager, Aquatics
Ginny Horvath, Automation/IT Supervisor
Karen Jordan, Area I Supervisor
William Kaarid, Administrative Specialist-Facilities
Sandra Kaiser, Manager, Countywide Programs
Vicki Kane, Management Services Specialist
Sharon Norcio, Program Supervisor
Robin Riley, Division Chief
Joanne Roberts, Area II Supervisor
Melanie Sasse, Aquatics Supervisor
Phil Smakula, Area IV Supervisor
Edward Trever, Management Services Manager
Lori Tyler-Ellis, Area III Supervisor
Stephanie White, Program Supervisor

Vision 2030 Project Management Team

M-NCPPC Department of Parks

Brooke Farquhar, Project Manager
Tanya Schmieler, Assistant Project Manager
Dr. John Hench, Chief, Park Planning & Stewardship Division

Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Jeffrey Bourne, Division Chief
William Kaarid, Administrative Specialist-Facilities
Suzan Maher, retired, 2010
Mark Winans, retired, 2010

Vision 2030 Project Consulting Team

GreenPlay, LLC
Design Concepts
Justice and Sustainability Associates, LLC
Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects
RRC Associates



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Introduction & Planning Context | 1 |
| Purpose | 1 |
| Vision 2030 Documents | 2 |
| Key Challenges & Opportunities | 3 |
| Decision Making Tools | 3 |
| Vision, Mission & Values | 4 |
| Parks & Recreation Benefits | 8 |
| Related Planning Efforts | 8 |
| Regional Context | 9 |
| Demographics & Trends | 10 |
| Planning Process & Timeline | 12 |
| Findings & Recommendations | 15 |
| Programs & Experiences | 16 |
| Planning & Development of Facilities | 23 |
| Operations, Maintenance & Safety | 35 |
| Management | 41 |
| Marketing & Outreach | 46 |
| Implementation | 51 |
| | |
| Appendix A: Vision 2030 – Glossary of Terms | 53 |
| Appendix B: Level of Service Analysis Summary | 59 |
| Appendix C: Level of Service Maps | 57 |
| Appendix D: Prioritizing Parkland Acquisitions | 65 |
| Appendix E: Outdoor Component Analysis Chart | 67 |
| Appendix F: Recreation & Aquatic Center Analysis | 71 |
| Appendix G: Planning Area Map & Population Projections | 77 |
| Appendix H: Multi-Use Trail Table | 81 |
| Appendix I: Cost Recovery Pyramid | 85 |

TABLE OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Population Projections and Percent Change – County and Sub-Areas | 11 |
| Table 2: Sub-Area Demographic Overview | 11 |
| Table 3: Recreation Centers Analysis by Sub-Area | 71 |
| Table 4: Indoor Recreation and Senior Center Capacity Analysis | 72 |
| Table 5: Potential Areas for New or Expanded Recreation Centers by 2030..... | 74 |
| Table 6: Recreation Center and Aquatic Facility Benchmarking | 76 |

TABLE OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1: Montgomery County Sub-Areas | 10 |
| Figure 2: Program Life Cycle | 20 |

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT

In January, 2010, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation embarked on a process to develop a vision and strategic plan for park and recreation services in Montgomery County. While the two departments manage different aspects of parks, stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and recreation and leisure, the needs and values of customers transcend agency boundaries. The **Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Vision 2030 Strategic Plan** project provides an opportunity to develop a shared vision and a set of recommendations that will best serve the County for the next twenty years.

This project was guided by a staff Steering Committee and sub-committees, a series of Summits of community leaders and stakeholders, along with input from an extensive public process including focus groups and public meetings.

Purpose

The purpose of the **Vision 2030** plan is to:

- Develop a **shared vision** for the parks and recreation system in Montgomery County.
- Articulate **clear strategies** to address current and future needs.
- **Collaboratively provide** parks and recreation facilities and services.

This **Vision 2030** Plan focuses on future parks and recreation services and facilities and sets forth a long-term vision and strategic goals and objectives. The **Plan is not** intended to deal comprehensively with every aspect of the two agencies, but instead focuses on gaps in service and key strategic areas including policy, programming, facilities, operations and maintenance, management, and marketing.

Vision 2030 Documents

Vision 2030 includes the following documents:

- *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Executive Summary*
- *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment*
- **Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan**
- *Volume 3: Implementation Plan*

This document, **Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan**, contains recommendations based on key issues identified through the needs assessment. Following is a brief description of each the **Vision 2030** documents and how they relate to each other.

Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment

The *Needs & Resource Assessment* is a separate support document to *Volume 2*. The needs assessment identifies key parks and recreation issues and needs in Montgomery County based on analysis in the following areas:

- Trends and demographics.
- Community and stakeholder input including a statistically-valid survey, public meetings and Summits, and external and internal focus groups.
- Programs and services.
- Inventory analysis of parks and recreation facilities including key alternative providers such as municipalities and schools.
- Administration and management.

Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan

The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* provides a vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system for 20 years to 2030. The Plan lays out recommended goals and objectives to achieve the 2030 vision and address the key issues identified in the *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment*.

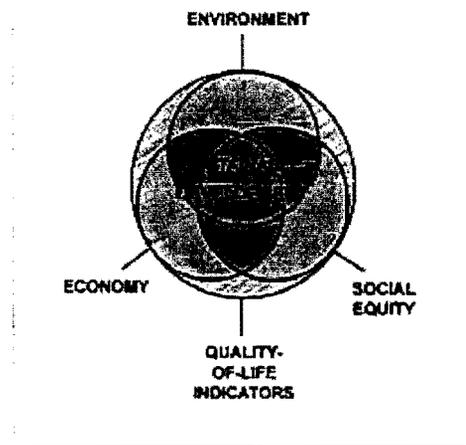
Volume 3: Implementation Plan

The *Implementation Plan* is a staff-level document or work plan that identifies action steps to achieve the strategic goals and objectives along with the timeframe and financial and staff resources needed to implement the plan recommendations.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

The Vision 2030 Inventory and Level of Service Analysis shows that Montgomery County has an extensive system of high quality parks and associated recreation programs. To maintain this high level of quality into the future, the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation will need to:

- Maintain and strengthen the current parks and recreation system.
- Prioritize tax resources on core services.
- Ensure operational sustainability.
- Balance new construction with maintenance and repair of existing facilities.
- Respond to emerging trends and changing priorities.
- Strengthen stewardship of natural and historical resources.
- Continue to “green” the park system – including facilities, equipment, and operational programs.
- Continue the current focus on customer service and public safety.
- Collaborate to efficiently deliver quality services.
- Plan for future growth.
- Respond to changing demographics.



Source: M-NCPPC Planning Department, 2010

Growing demands and shrinking resources will continue to be a challenge. With strong leadership and a guiding vision, both departments have a unique opportunity to maximize operational sustainability by promoting environmental quality, enhancing social benefits, and reducing operating costs.

Decision Making Tools

The **Vision 2030** project has generated strong quantitative and qualitative analysis and decision making tools to guide future planning efforts that include the following.

- Updated demographic information overall and by sub-area.
- Understanding of recreation trends.
- Identification of community values, interests, and needs.
- Results from the statistically-valid survey by sub-area.
- Service Assessment with identified provision strategies.
- Cost recovery philosophy and service pricing strategies.
- Detailed inventory of all Department components by sub-area along with data on alternative providers.
- Level of Service Analysis capacity for all components owned and managed by the Department.

- Identification of Key Issues.
- Analytical Maps and Level of Service Perspectives.
- Decision making matrices.

Vision, Mission & Values

The following vision and mission statements provide the foundation for this the **Vision 2030** project. First, the **Vision 2030** project value and vision statement are highlighted; followed by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks vision, mission, and values statements; and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation mission and operating principles and objectives. These statements affirm the central role that the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system play in contributing to the quality of life in Montgomery County.

Organizational values, vision, and mission provide fundamental principles and create a logical philosophical framework that guide and direct decision-making efforts. They are the foundation for all organizational decisions and processes.

An organization's values are comprised of leadership values, staff values, and community values. They direct an organization's vision and help determine those community conditions the agency wishes to impact through the organizational mission. The agency mission helps guide management decisions, often substantiating difficult decisions making them justifiable and defensible.



1. Vision 2030: Values and Vision Statements

The following values and vision statements for the **Vision 2030** project were developed based on input from community leaders and stakeholders that participated in a **Vision 2030** Summit in February 24, 2010.

Vision 2030

VALUES

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation serve the County to:

- *Promote healthy living through diverse recreation and leisure activities.*
- *Protect natural, historical, and archaeological resources.*
- *Promote economic competitiveness of Montgomery County as a place for businesses to locate through a robust parks and recreation system that attracts knowledge workers and families.*
- *Promote sense of community and civic pride.*
- *Nurture an appreciation for our natural, cultural legacy.*
- *Provide lifelong learning opportunities.*
- *Shape healthy, safe, green communities.*
- *Collaborate with partners to provide sustainable, accessible, and diverse leisure opportunities.*
- *Engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends.*
- *Acquire, maintain, and manage the parks and recreation built environment.*

VISION 2030

Vision 2030 will guide the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation to provide:

- *Stewardship of natural and historic resources.*
- *Opportunities for active life-long learning, leisure, and recreation.*

2. M-NCPPC Department of Parks

Following are the vision, mission, and values statements for M-NCPPC Department of Parks.

VISION

"An enjoyable, accessible, safe and green park system that promotes a strong sense of community through shared spaces and experiences and is treasured by the people it serves."

MISSION

"Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources; balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation; offer a variety of enjoyable recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles; and provide clean, safe, and accessible places for leisure-time activities."

VALUES

- *Stewardship – Manage the county park system so it best meets the needs of current and future generations.*
- *Recreation – Offer a range of leisure activities that strengthen the body, sharpen the mind, and renew the spirit.*
- *Excellence – Deliver the highest quality product, service, and experience possible.*
- *Integrity – Operate with an objective, honest, and balanced perspective.*
- *Service – Be courteous, helpful, and accessible to each other and the public we serve.*
- *Education – Promote opportunities for continuous learning among staff and the public we serve.*
- *Collaborations – Work in cooperation with all stakeholders including residents, communities, public and private organizations, and policymakers, as well as interdepartmentally.*
- *Diversity – Support and embrace the differences among our employees and the public we serve, and offer suitable programs, activities, and services.*
- *Dedication – Commit to getting the job done the right way, no matter what it takes.*

3. Montgomery County Department of Recreation

Following are the mission and operating principles and objectives for the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

MISSION

The mission of the Montgomery County 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.

Operating Principals: *In support of the mission, the Department will readily serve the community by providing:*

- *Leisure activities that enhance skills, health, and self esteem.*
- *Activities that incorporate current leisure trends and population demographics.*
- *Ways to stimulate growth in knowledge through leisure experiences.*
- *Opportunities to build sense of community.*
- *A network of services linking the community through collaboration and partnerships.*
- *Safe havens where participants feel welcome.*
- *Fun for all.*

Operating Objectives: *The Department will continuously strive for optimal participant experiences.*

- *Teamwork: Essential to achieve success for our staff, our programs, our families, and our community.*
- *Objectivity: We will maintain a positive approach to all challenges we face.*
- *Growth: Change will be embraced, and used to expand our opportunities.*
- *Imagination: We will cultivate new ideas into exciting programs and services.*
- *Value: We will understand and appreciate the wealth of diversity of our community.*
- *Excellence: We will meet our participants' expectations of quality and performance.*

4. Montgomery County Values

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation complement five of the Montgomery County Executive's eight "Essential Values." Parks and recreation venues play a critical role in furthering the health and wellness of County citizens and contribute to a vibrant economy that benefits all residents.

County Executive's Essential Values Related to Parks and Recreation:

- Children Prepared to Live and Learn
- Healthy and Sustainable Communities
- Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods
- A Strong and Vibrant Economy
- Vital Living for All of Our Residents

Parks & Recreation Benefits

Through the planning process for the **Vision 2030** project, community members repeatedly voiced their support for the incredible value and benefits of the parks and recreation system in Montgomery County. The Trust for Public Land published a report titled, "*The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*,"¹ that makes the following observations about the **health, economic, environmental, and social benefits** of parks and open space:

Expenditures for parks and land conservation are best understood not as a cost but as an investment that will pay dividends – including economic ones – long into the future.
Trust for Public Land, *Conservation: An Investment That Pays*, 2009.

- **Physical activity** makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves **physical and physiological health**.
- Residential and commercial **property values** increase.
- Value is added to community through **economic development and tourism**.
- Trees improve **air quality**, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- **Crime** and juvenile delinquency are **reduced**.
- Stable neighborhoods and **strong communities** are created.

Related Planning Efforts

The **Vision 2030** project responds to and builds on the following Montgomery County parks and recreation-related planning documents including:

- *Countywide Park Trails Plan* (M-NCPPC, as amended, September 2008)
- *Joint Workgroup Report and Recommendations* (M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department, October 1, 2009)
- *From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* (M-NCPPC Department of Parks, January 2006)
- *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (M-NCPPC Department of Parks, 2005)
- *Recreation Facility Development Plan, 2005 Update* (Montgomery County Department of Recreation)
- *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan* (M-NCPPC Department of Parks, July 2001)

In addition to the documents listed above, many documents and studies were reviewed, including annual and program reports, past community surveys, and capital improvement plans.

¹ Gies, Erica, "*The Health Benefits of Parks*," *The Trust for Public Land*, 2006.

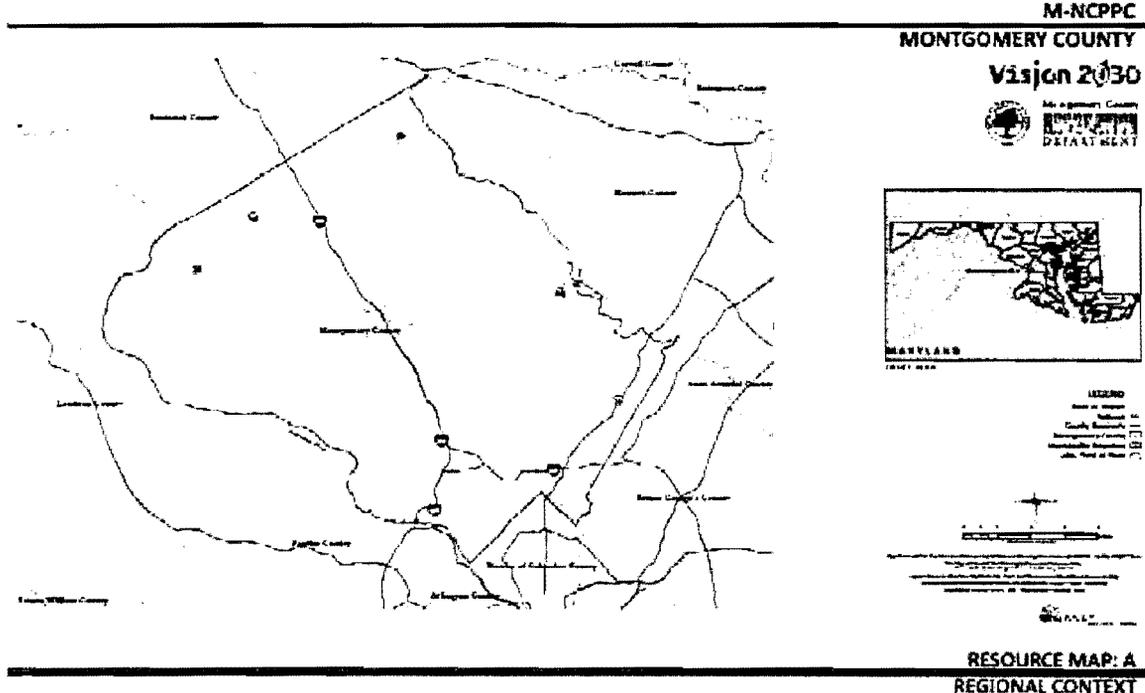
Regional Context

The fifth largest County in Maryland, Montgomery County measures approximately 500 square miles and contains 324,000 acres (including water). The Potomac River forms the County's southwest boundary, separating it from Loudon and Fairfax Counties in Virginia. The Patuxent River flows down the northeastern side of the County, forming a boundary with Howard County. Frederick County borders the northwest – which, except for the extreme northern tip of the County, is a straight line from the headwaters of the Patuxent to the Potomac at the mouth of the Monocacy River. Prince George's County lies to the southeast. Adjacent to the southeastern corner of Montgomery County is the District of Columbia.

Montgomery County lies almost entirely in the Piedmont Plateau on the east bank of the Potomac River, just 30 miles west of the Chesapeake Bay and approximately 100 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The County is characterized by gently sloping topography, interspersed with small streams in relatively narrow valleys.

The majority of the population lives in the southern part of the County, a short commute to the District of Columbia and along the I-270 transportation corridor. The population drops in the more rural northern and western areas of the County along the Frederick and Howard County borders.

(Note: Information in this section is taken from the *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*.)



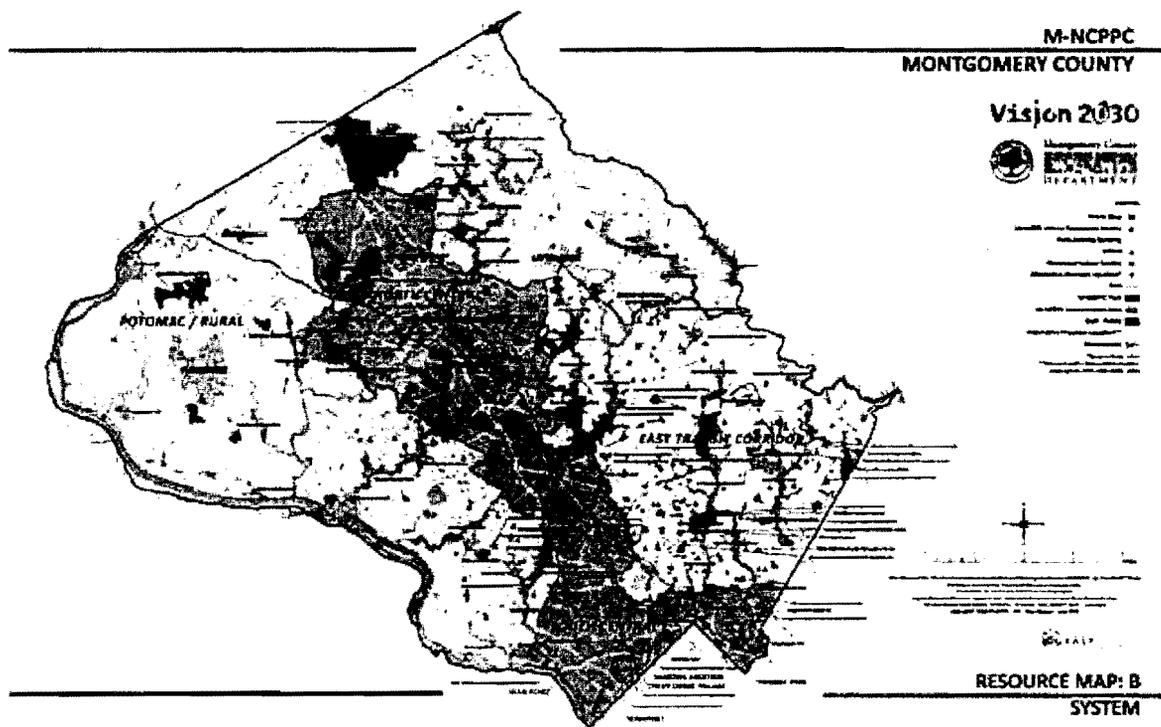
38

Demographics & Trends

The population of Montgomery County is forecast to grow by 17 percent to a total of 1,134,400 over the next twenty years to 2030. Most of this growth will occur in the central part of the County in urbanized areas. Proactive planning to address the parks and recreation demands of these urban areas is a key focus area over the next two decades.

Due to the size and diversity of the County, the **Vision 2030** project provides analysis in four sub-areas. The map in **Figure 1** identifies each sub-area: Potomac/Rural, East Transit Corridor, South Central, and North Central.

Figure 1: Montgomery County Sub-Areas



The largest percentage of growth in the next twenty years is projected to be concentrated in the North Central sub-area (30.6%), followed by the South Central sub-area (22.5%) as shown in **Table 1**. (Note: the M-NCPPC also uses 28 smaller Planning Areas. For reference, a map and population projections by each of these Planning Areas are found in **Appendix G**.)

Table 1: Population Projections and Percent Change – County and Sub-Areas

| | COUNTY | % Change | East Transit | % Change | North Central | % Change | Potomac Rural | % Change | South Central | % Change |
|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------|
| 2010 | 967,900 | | 301,649 | | 297,050 | | 126,847 | | 242,354 | |
| 2020 | 1,050,700 | 8.6% | 310,747 | 3.0% | 331,526 | 11.6% | 127,896 | 0.8% | 280,531 | 15.8% |
| 2030 | 1,134,400 | 8.0% | 318,354 | 2.5% | 387,890 | 17.0% | 131,361 | 2.7% | 296,795 | 5.8% |

Source: Population Forecast Round 8.0, Research and Technology Center, M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Department, June 2010

The demographic make-up of each of the County sub-areas varies as shown in **Table 2**. The North Central and East Transit Corridor sub-areas have the highest populations. The North Central has the highest percentage of foreign born residents (33.5%) and has the lowest average household income of the sub-areas.

Table 2: Sub-Area Demographic Overview

| | Average Age | Average Household Size | Median Income | Foreign Born | *% of County Population |
|----------------------|-------------|------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Potomac/Rural | 38.0 | 3.0 | \$144,705 | 23.9% | 13% |
| North Central | 35.2 | 2.7 | \$87,785 | 33.5% | 31% |
| South Central | 40.0 | 2.3 | \$101,820 | 26.5% | 25% |
| East Transit | 39.5 | 2.7 | \$89,150 | 27.5% | 31% |

2008 US Census Update, Research and Technology Center, M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Department
 *Percentage of Population Source: Population Forecast Round 8.0, Research and Technology Center, M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Department, June 2010

Montgomery County is among the wealthiest in the Nation. According to the 2008 U.S. Census Update, the estimated median household income for Montgomery County residents was \$96,475. The County has a higher percentage of foreign born residents, when compared to the U.S. Increasing racial and ethnic diversity marks an area of growth and change for County. The aging population is a national trend that will also impact the County.

Planning Process & Timeline

The **Vision 2030** project was guided by a Steering Committee and sub-committees made up of staff from M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. Extensive community input provided valuable direction to the project through a series of three Summits of community leaders and stakeholders numerous focus groups and public meetings. The project team met with consultants from the GreenPlay team and provided input throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates local knowledge and institutional history. The planning process and timeline follows.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| PHASE I: INFORMATION GATHERING | DECEMBER 2009-MAY 2010 |
| Strategic Kick-Off | December 2009-January 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Began project• Refined project goals and work plan | |
| Community & Stakeholder Input Process | February-May 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted public meetings and focus groups• Held staff focus groups and interviews | |
| Inventory and Analysis of Existing Facilities | January-May 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct inventory and analysis of County parks, open space, trails, and facilities | |
| Service Assessment and Resource Allocation Analysis | February-May 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted staff assessment of all services• *Began development of resource allocation assessment and philosophy | |
| Survey | March-May 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducted statistically-valid survey of random sample of County residents | |
| Demographic and Trends Analysis | February-May 2010 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analyzed County demographics and population projections• Compiled parks and recreation-related trends | |

(*Note: The resource allocation work continued through Phases II and III.)

PHASE II: FINDINGS AND VISIONING

JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2010

Findings and Visioning Staff and Public Meetings

July 2010

- Presented and validated key findings of needs assessment
- Held public meetings

Resource Allocation/Cost Recovery Philosophy Workshops

September 2010

- Held the following meetings the week of September 13th:
 - Summit #2
 - Two public meetings
 - Series of staff workshops

(The **Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment** document is a compilation of the findings and analysis from Phases I and II.)

PHASE III: PLAN DEVELOPMENT

OCTOBER 2010-FEBRUARY 2011

Plan Review

- Draft **Vision 2030 Strategic Plan** October-November 2010
- Summit #3 November 2010
- Staff review of Plan November 2010-January 2011
- Public meetings on Draft Plan January 2011
- Public review of Plan January-February 2011

PLAN COMPLETION

MARCH 2011

(**Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan** and **Volume 3: Implementation Plan** are documents from Phase III based on key findings from **Volume 1**.)



FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* recommendations are organized by five broad vision themes.

Vision 2030 Themes

Programs & Experiences

Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure

Planning & Development of Facilities

Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing County

Operations, Maintenance & Safety

Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system

Management

Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability

Marketing & Outreach

Informing and engaging a diverse community

The following five sections address each of these vision themes. Recommended goals and objectives follow highlights of key findings for each of the themes. The findings are summarized from the *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment* document.

The recommendations focus on the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and also on the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. *Volume 3: Implementation Plan* is a companion document that identifies which agencies have lead responsibility for the implementation of various recommendations.

Programs & Experiences

Key Findings

The following findings helped shape the **Vision 2030 Programs & Experiences** goals and objectives.

OVERVIEW

The parks and recreation programs and services provided in Montgomery County are vast and varied. The main providers of these services are the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, but a multitude of alternative providers contribute to the mix of leisure services. (Key alternative providers were included in the **Vision 2030** analysis including the inventory and Service Assessment. The *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment* provides additional information and analysis.)

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks offers a multitude of programming opportunities focusing around the tennis, ice, nature, horticulture, and cultural/historic facilities and resources they manage. All ages can participate in programming that meets their abilities and interest.

The mission of the Montgomery County 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 department offers hundreds of programming opportunities – in aquatics, camps, arts and crafts, martial arts, fitness and wellness – for preschoolers, youth, adults, seniors, and special populations.

There is a need for ongoing strategic programming efforts to maximize available resources to expand popular programs (as identified through registration information and tools such as the **Vision 2030** survey) and re-evaluate lower performing programs (e.g. program with lower participation rates, lower community interest, etc.).

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND INPUT

The **Vision 2030** survey results identified top priorities for improving and expanding the following program areas:

- Exercise and fitness
- Community events and festivals
- Aquatics instruction (non-competitive)
- Out-of-school programming (summer and after school)
- Senior programming

*Programs and facilities in
Montgomery County are great
– that's why we live here.*

Comment from survey respondent

Other program areas that rated as high priorities to improve or expand include: health and wellness, outdoor nature programs, children and youth activities, community gardens, and youth league sports. (It is important to note, in another survey question cultural/art programs also rated high, but when respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities it did not remain in the top ten.)

Community input from the public meetings and focus groups demonstrated a high value for the variety of types of parks and recreation programs, facilities, and services offered and a desire to maintain this mix of opportunities throughout the County. Community members expressed the importance of these services in addressing community issues such as nature deficit disorder, physical inactivity, and social and physical isolation. Key areas of focus that emerged include: addressing accessibility, both physical access and affordability of services; serving populations that may be underserved or have greater needs (e.g., youth, seniors, people with disabilities, and immigrant communities).

DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

Staying on top of evolving community needs and interests is important for parks and recreation service providers. Montgomery County is facing similar demographic and lifestyle shifts as are other communities across the country – an aging population, an increase in non-traditional families, growing ethnic and racial diversity, and a decline in participation for structured leisure activities due to busy lifestyles and schedules. Parks and recreation professionals need to tailor services to respond to these shifts to most effectively and efficiently meet community needs.



SERVICE ASSESSMENT

A **Service Assessment** is a tool used in the **Vision 2030** project to help staff understand the market segment of services they provide and the strength or weakness of their position within that market. It also helps identify core services, alternative providers, and optional provision strategies. The Service Assessment process that was undertaken critically examined each service area of both departments based on:

- Fit with agency's values and vision
- Financial capacity
- Alternative coverage
- Market position

The Service Assessment process, in which staff from both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation participated, identifies potential service provision strategies that include:

- Grow services identified as "advance" or "affirm market position."
- Work with alternative providers for complementary development of market.
- Identify services for collaboration and divestment strategies and re-allocate or re-purpose available resources.

(Note: A Glossary of Terms used in this document is found in **Appendix A**.)

Recommendations

Programs & Experiences

Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure

GOAL 1 – Provide a variety of high-quality programs that meet community needs and interests.

Objective 1.1

Enhance, expand, or add programs and services identified as high priorities by research and customer feedback.

The Vision 2030 survey identified ten top priorities for program improvement, expansion, or addition:

- Exercise and fitness
- Community events and festivals
- Aquatics instruction (non-competitive)
- Out-of-school programming (summer and after school)
- Senior programming
- Health and wellness
- Outdoor nature programs
- Children and youth activities (non-sport)
- Community gardens
- Youth league sports

This list should not be the sole focus of expanded or new programming. To determine additional potential programming opportunities, further review of the survey data should be conducted and used in conjunction with additional customer feedback on an ongoing basis.

Actions:

- Continue to utilize the Joint Parks and Recreation Alliance staff work group to plan and develop programming.
- Develop strategic program initiatives to address the top ten programs areas identified in the Vision 2030 survey. For example, expand recreational aquatic services by:
 - Increasing early childhood swim lessons, especially during prime time weekdays (5-7 pm) where current demand is high.
 - Refining adult water fitness program offerings, schedule, and marketing efforts to increase program utilization.
 - Identifying opportunities to expand leisure aquatic facilities accessible to high density growth areas in the County. (Also see **Goal 8.**)

- Develop new programs after examining the following criteria:
 - **Need:** Outgrowth of a current popular program, educational priority, or enough demonstrated demand to successfully support a minimal start (one class, for instance).
 - **Planning and human resources:** Determine the staff (including administrative) and volunteer resources needed and overall program feasibility.
 - **Budget:** Account for all costs and anticipated (conservative) revenues to meet the cost recovery target established by agency.
 - **Location:** Available and within budget.
 - **Instructor:** Available and within budget.
 - **Materials and supplies:** Available and within budget.
 - **Marketing effort:** Adequate and timely opportunity to reach intended market, within budget (either existing marketing budget or as part of a new programs budget).

Customer feedback practices should be standard and consistent across all program areas. Information sought from participants should include:

- Satisfaction levels and supportive reasoning.
- Actual skill development or learning performance benchmarking against promised outcomes.
- Suggestions for program improvements.
- Suggestions for new programs.
- Suggestions for alternative days and times for desired programming.

- Optimize operation hours of recreation and park facilities with available resources (e.g., convenient hours for working families – before work hours, after school and evenings, strategic hours on weekends).
- Provide a variety of drop-in, short-term or episodic programs and events that require less time (e.g., open gym, fitness clinic, gardening workshop, etc.).
- Offer more coordinated services where family members can recreate independent of each other at same location (e.g. drop-in fitness and youth classes).
- Expand services to address the evolving growing needs of residents with disabilities (e.g., fitness classes for people with physical disabilities, inclusion services, etc.).
- Deliver more recreational services that appeal to diverse racial and ethnic residents (e.g., family-oriented programs and events, etc.).

Objective 1.2

Enhance parks and recreation program planning methods.

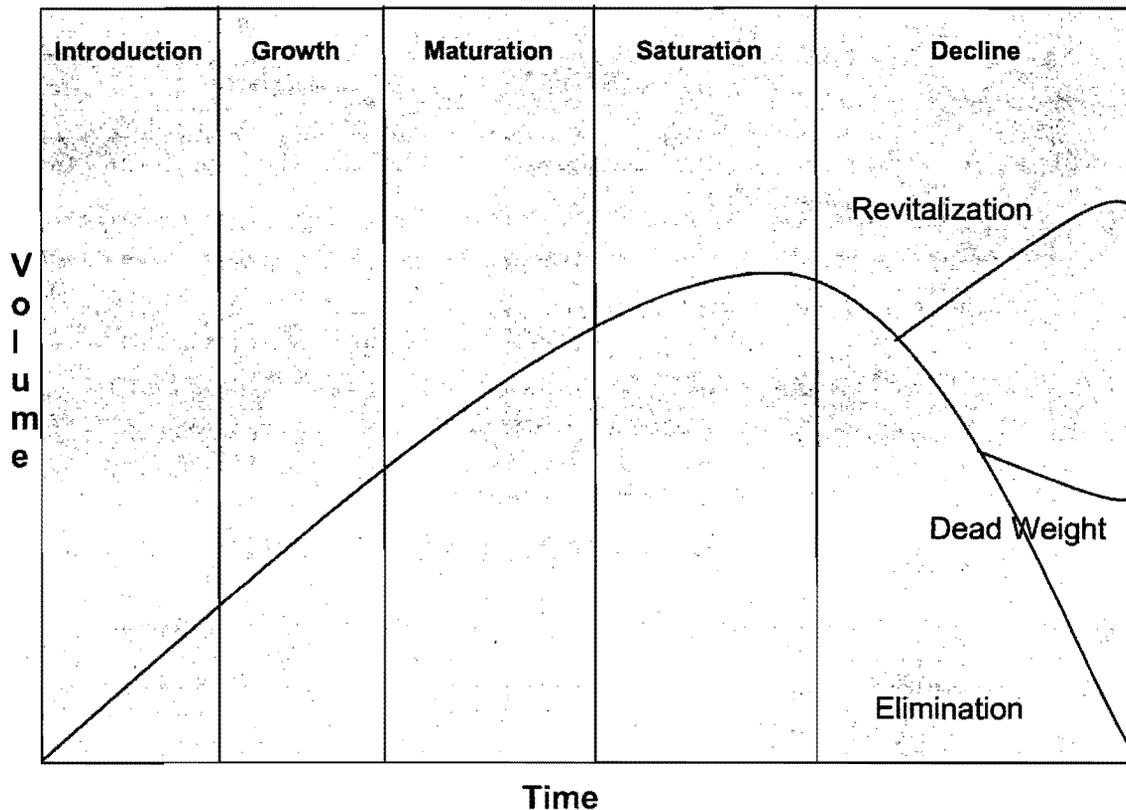
Actions:

- Establish service objectives, including utilization goals, to ensure that a program, activity, or event is needed or desired and that it is measured to determine success and effectiveness. Establish objectives at the onset of event/program/activity planning to accurately determine event intent and success indicators.
 - Objectives should be written in terms of what the program or service is supposed to do for the participants, that is “outcomes” (e.g., “introductory skills development” or “advanced skills development” and other proficiency measurements).
 - Objectives should be measurable.
 - Objectives need not always be tied to participant numbers. Other outcomes can be higher priority (e.g., cultural education).

- Conduct participant evaluations for each program, activity, and event that addresses participant satisfaction, facility appropriateness, and future interest. (Post program evaluations as well as mid-program evaluations are recommended.)
- Conduct an analysis of the Program Life Cycle at the conclusion of each program, activity, or event.

Once program evaluations are completed, a program, activity or event's stage of existence should be considered as decisions are made relative to the future of any service. For example, if registrations continue to decline, staff may wish to evaluate the merits of attempting to revitalize a program with a new name, adjusting scheduling to another date or time, modifying a program's format, or simply discontinuing the program reallocating resources elsewhere. A graphic representation of this Program Life Cycle and the stages in a program, activity, or event's life can be found on the following page. (Note: Continue to comply with Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies or CAPRA program standards.)

Figure 2: Program Life Cycle



Objective 1.3

Optimize program and facility utilization through balanced service provision.

Actions:

- Create program utilization goals.

Program utilization goals should:

- Determine if certain programs (type, age group, time/days offered, instructor, title/description, market position) cannot meet utilization goals and should be restructured (change name, time offered or focus), downsized, and/or eliminated.
 - Determine which programs (type, age group, time/day offered) should be expanded upon to meet demand.
 - Determine acceptable cancellation rates (no more than 30% is typical).
 - Determine acceptable minimum registration levels for group lessons (typically three for learn to swim programs and five individuals or three to five couples or more for other types of classes).
 - Combine classes which are under minimum and move the registrations in the software system for tracking purposes.
 - Determine program areas that need additional marketing in order to meet utilization goals.
- Implement target marketing strategies to boost programs registration in strategic program areas. (Coordinate with overall marketing plan in the Marketing and Outreach recommendations.)

(See Vision 2030 Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment for additional program analysis, Chapter 4.B and 4.C.)

Objective 1.4

Expand or develop tracking system capabilities to consistently monitor non-registered and drop-in visitation to account for the total impact and use of all M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation programs, services, and facilities where possible.

GOAL 2 – Promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Montgomery County’s natural and historical resources.

Objective 2.1

Implement the cultural/historic interpretation plan based on *From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* and the prioritization system in the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory.

Actions:

- Provide staff persons to be facility managers at cultural resource sites such as Josiah Henson Special Park and Woodlawn Manor.
- Continue to use volunteers as a way to offer interpretive and archaeological programs.
- Continue to make archaeological artifacts a vital component of exhibits.
- Continue to identify key locations for exhibits and/or signage based on potential for interpretive programming, visibility, access to parking and/or trails, etc.
- Continue to seek grant funding for signage and interpretive programs.

- Continue to work with in-house exhibit shop to create interpretive panels when appropriate.
- Develop partnership between Montgomery County Public Schools and M-NCPPC Department of Parks for curriculum-based historical education at historic sites only if there are facility managers to handle such programming.
- Develop a strategic marketing plan in coordination with the agency marketing plan.
- Coordinate with the other interpretation plans, such as a natural resources interpretive plan, as necessary. (See **Objective 2.2.**)

Objective 2.2

Develop and implement interpretive master plans for natural resources, public gardens, community gardens, and the nature centers.

The plan should:

- Identify message elements that are in alignment with core values.
- Prioritize interpretation of the highest value resources areas.
- Develop a strategic marketing plan in coordination with the agency marketing plan.
- Coordinate with the other interpretation plans, as necessary.

Objective 2.3

Develop an environmental literacy program for County residents of all ages.

Actions:

- Identify key partners in Montgomery County with environmental stewardship values that are in alignment with M-NCPPC Department of Parks (i.e., Sierra Club, Audubon Naturalist Society, Croydon Creek Nature Center, and Lathrop E. Smith Environmental Education Center).
- M-NCPPC Department of Parks in coordination with key partners develop environmental education programs that meet Montgomery County Public Schools and State environmental literacy curriculum standards.
- M-NCPPC Department of Parks implement a train-the-trainer program for teachers in the Montgomery County Public Schools and other K-12 schools.
- M-NCPPC Department of Parks staff and partners identify other County sites to deliver environmental education programs to residents of all ages, including recreation centers operated by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation. (Note: Program offerings should be coordinated with the Joint Parks and Recreation Alliance staff work group.)

GOAL 3 – Enhance health, wellness, and active living in Montgomery County.

Objective 3.1

Incorporate concepts of healthy and vital living into all facilities, programs, and services throughout the parks and recreation system.

Action:

- Develop a coordinated health, wellness, and active living countywide initiative between the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County Department of Recreation, and key alternative providers to promote facilities and programs available in Montgomery County.

Planning & Development of Facilities

Montgomery County represents rural, suburban, and growing dense urban areas made up of a diverse mix of residents in ethnicity, age, and income. Recognizing this diversity, it is important that parks and recreation facilities and services be tailored to meet the varied needs of the County. Agreed upon standards by which to fairly distribute parkland and facilities to meet these varied community needs and interests are critical to successfully reach the **Vision 2030** goals.

Key Findings

The following findings helped shape the *Planning & Development of Facilities* goals and objectives.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The Vision 2030 survey demonstrated an overall high degree of satisfaction with the current parks and recreation system of parklands and facilities. The facilities that rated the highest in importance include:

- Trails
- Natural areas
- Playgrounds
- Recreation centers

While some other facilities (which fill a need for a more targeted or narrower population) rated as less important to the community as a whole, they are, nevertheless, very important to those certain segments of the population that have such a need, such as dog parks, indoor tennis, baseball and softball fields, and skateboard parks and spots.

The facilities that rated as top priorities to add, expand, or improve include the following.

- Community recreation centers
- Indoor aquatic centers
- Playgrounds
- Trails (natural and hard surface)
- Natural areas

LEVEL OF SERVICE

A parks and recreation inventory was conducted between January and June 2010 of parklands and facilities provided by three major provider groups: M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County Department of Recreation, and major alternative providers such as municipalities, schools, and key non-profit agencies such as the YMCA. Based on the composite-value of the components of the overall parks and recreation system a series of Level of Service (LOS) analyses and mapping was conducted. The overall LOS findings include the following.

Level of Service (LOS) is the amount and type of parks and recreation service that is appropriate to the needs and desires of residents and is sustainable to operate. The Composite-Values Level of Service Methodology used in the **Vision 2030** project, analyzes quantity, quality, and location information of physical components that make up the park and recreation system (e.g., playgrounds, trails, recreation centers, etc.). By analyzing the composite values of each component, it is possible to measure the service provided by the park and recreation system from a variety of perspectives for any given location.

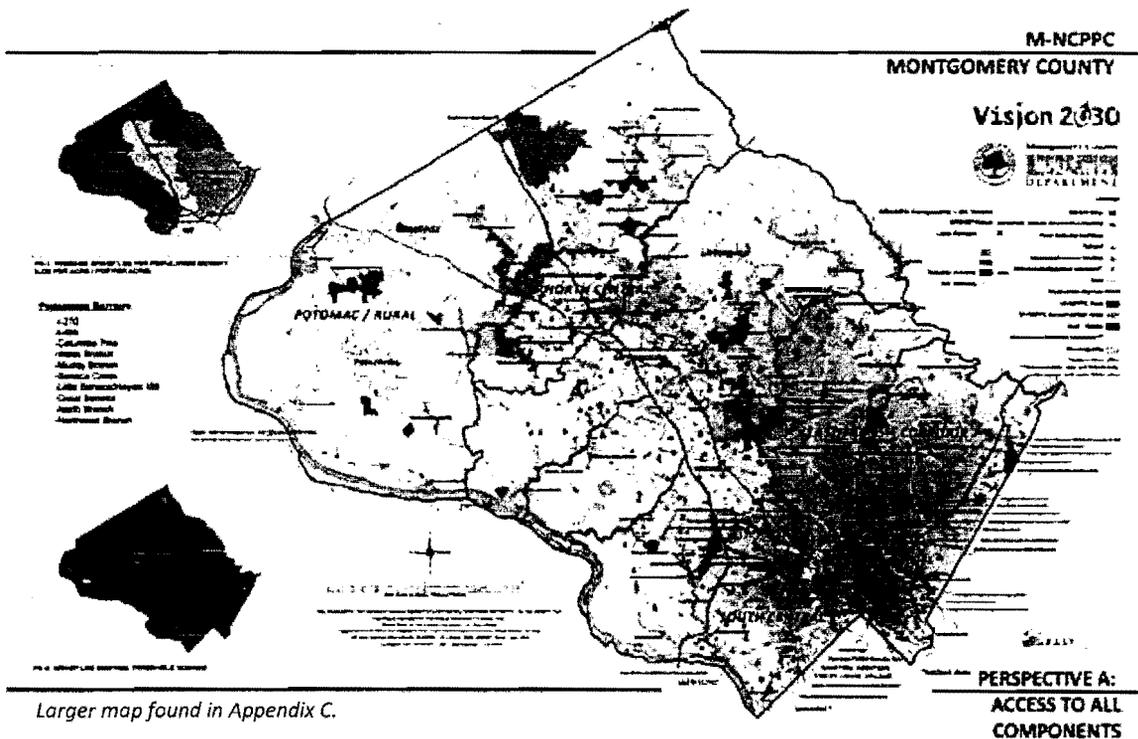
- **Montgomery County is well-served for parks and recreation overall.** No matter where a resident lives in the County, he/she has adequate access to a basic set of facilities and components within a reasonable distance. (However, while residents overall enjoy proximity to *some* parks and recreation components, access to specialized facilities may be more limited.)
- Another finding is the **difference between the rural and urban parts of the County.** The overall or composite service coverage is 100 percent for the entire County. But when looking at specific types of service, such as indoor recreation, the coverage in the rural areas drops significantly below that of the urban areas. And where service is provided in the rural areas, the LOS is lower than in the urban areas. However, whenever service is measured in proportion to the population served, the rural areas emerge consistently higher than the urban areas.
- **When population density is considered, the overall LOS per capita is lower in the South Central and North Central sub-areas** (as shown by lighter shades in the upper left inset map in *Perspective A: Access to All Components* referenced below with an enlarged map found in **Appendix C** and described in **Appendix B**).
- An interesting finding is the difference between LOS for people who drive and who walk. While access to parks and recreation components is available across 100 percent of the County for someone who drives, only **58 percent of the County offers walkable access.**
- Eighty percent of parks and recreation locations can be reached by some type of public transportation.
- Montgomery County is well-served for natural and cultural resources across the sub-areas.
- **Gaps in service coverage for indoor recreation facilities exist in the North Central sub-area.** This sub-area also has the lowest LOS based on population density. In addition, this part of the County is projected to see the largest percentage of growth out of the four sub-areas in the next twenty years to 2030. The high population growth projected for the South Central sub-area in the next twenty years will also create a demand for recreation facilities. (See *Perspective B: Access to Indoor Facilities* in **Appendix C** as well as additional indoor recreation and aquatic center analysis in **Appendix F**.)

Access to Park and Recreation Facilities Make a Difference

Childhood obesity in the U.S. has tripled in the last thirty years according to the Centers for Disease Control. Recent studies have shown that proximity to parks and recreation facilities has been associated with less weight gain for children over time. Access to parks and recreation directly contributes to healthy communities.

(“Childhood Obesity and Proximity to Urban Parks and Recreational Resources: A Longitudinal Cohort Study,” Active Living Research, San Diego, CA, 2009.)

Perspective A: Access to All Components shows an LOS analysis for the County when all components in the inventory are considered, including indoor and outdoor components, trails, and open space. Where darker shades occur, the LOS is higher. Purple areas on the lower inset map indicate areas that are at or above a threshold LOS and shows that **Montgomery County is well-served by the components that make up the parks and recreation system.** However, when population density is factored in the LOS per capita is lower in the South Central and North Central sub-areas. (See **Appendix B** for summary of LOS service findings.)



POPULATION DENSITY & FUTURE GROWTH

The County consists of highly populated urban areas to sparsely populated rural areas. It is important that density be considered when planning for the equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities. Meeting the increasing demands of a growing population that will be concentrated in the urban areas of the central part of the County is a key planning focus area. Proactive planning to ensure adequate green space and parks and recreation amenities as the County becomes more urbanized is essential to maintaining the high quality of life that is enjoyed by residents in Montgomery County.

Planning for Dense Urban Areas

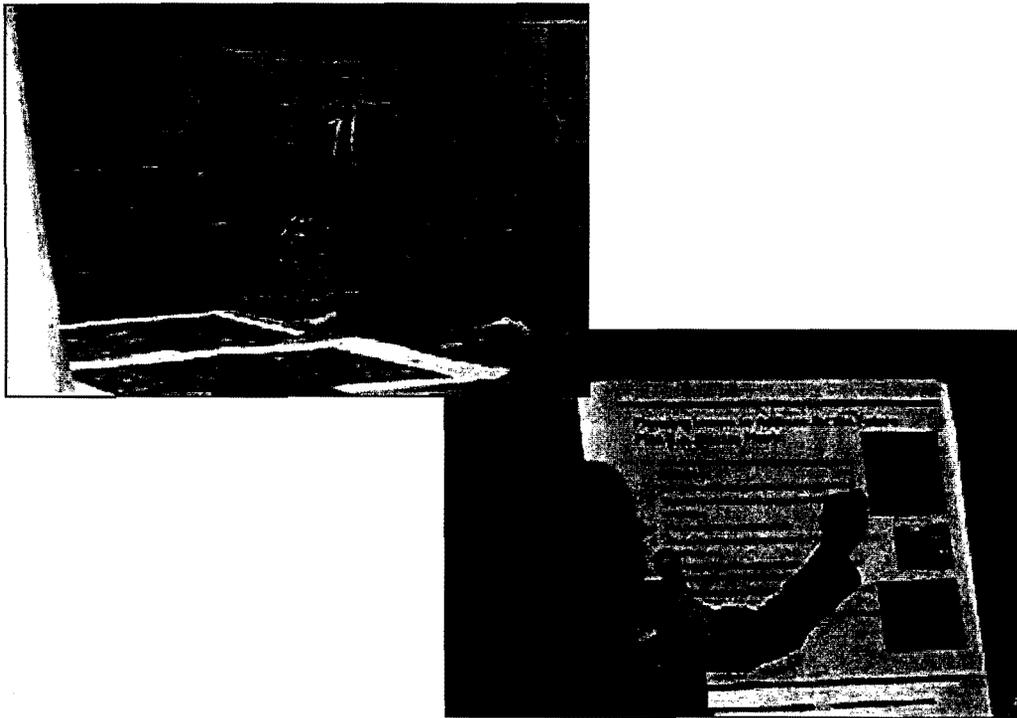
Proactive planning to ensure adequate green space and parks and recreation amenities as the County becomes more urbanized is essential to maintaining the high quality of life the is enjoyed by residents in Montgomery County.

PLANNING & COORDINATION

Strategic Focus – Prioritized and focused planning efforts are needed to maximize the available resources and respond to changing needs and demographics. Future parks and recreation planning focus areas planning for dense urban areas and specialty facilities (e.g., dog parks, skate parks, etc.). Montgomery County is known for its proactive approach to preserving, protecting, and enhancing natural areas and should continue this commitment into the future.

Sustainability – There are opportunities for both departments to expand current efforts in sustainable design, development, management practices, and operations. Creating a comprehensive approach toward sustainability, training staff, and identifying needed resources to implement state-of-the-art “green” practices will help Montgomery County maintain its position as a national leader in public parks and recreation.

Coordination – Streamlining and enhancing planning coordination efforts among different and between the same public agencies is needed. For example, coordination between park planning and development divisions of the M-NCPPC Department of Parks is needed. Additionally, coordination between multiple agencies is important to effectively plan for future community recreation centers.



Recommendations

Planning & Development of Facilities

Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing County

GOAL 4 – Provide adequate and appropriate public lands and facilities that are equitably distributed across the County to meet the needs of residents.

Objective 4.1

Set standards for Level of Service (LOS) that take population density into account and are based on composite-values methodology which includes both the quantity and quality of parks and recreation facilities and services provided, and allows LOS to be derived from a mix of various facilities.

Actions:

- Base LOS calculations and projections on population as a means of determining equity across the County.
- Establish the target LOS (normalized for population density) that is to be achieved for each sub-area. (See further analysis of the parks and recreation LOS analysis in **Appendix B**.)
- Develop guidelines for projecting future needs and meeting LOS goals in sector plan urban areas.

Objective 4.2

Prioritize projects to increase the Level of Service in the areas where data shows the highest needs. (The Level of Service analysis shows that when population density is considered, the overall LOS per capita is lower along the I-270 corridor in the South Central and North Central sub-areas. See **Appendix B** for additional information.)

Actions:

- Develop a plan to increase the LOS in the North Central and South Central sub-areas.
- Measure progress every five years.
- Consider using a weighting system to give higher value to the most desirable or relevant components within a particular planning area according to the survey results and program trends.
- Review the current inventory, making sure that components are the ones needed at a given location and that any under-performing ones are addressed.
- Improve comfort and convenience features as one way to enhance the user's experience and to contribute to improving the LOS, especially in the North Central and South Central sub-areas.
- Include alternative providers (like urban plazas) in the LOS computation as a means of providing a more accurate picture of what is available for residents, particularly in the more urban areas.

Objective 4.3

Establish clear priorities for planning, acquiring, developing, and stewarding parklands.

Actions:

- Refine the criteria for prioritizing parkland acquisitions. (See **Appendix D.**)
- Identify and secure funding to purchase appropriate lands as they become available.
- Strengthen requirements for developers to provide public spaces with a focus on sector plan areas (dense urban areas).

Objective 4.4

Provide an appropriate balance between stewardship and recreation.

Actions:

- Utilize the LOS Perspectives for stewardship (natural and cultural resources) to set targets and goals for future stewardship LOS.
- Evaluate the current policy for a 1/3 – 2/3 mix of conservation/stewardship to recreation in regional parks to assure that it is achieving the intended results. (For example, is it assuring that all of the lands most appropriate for stewardship are being protected, and is it allowing for the highest and best use of lands most appropriate for active or developed recreation to use for such purposes?)
- Ensure that all park master plans and park facility plans appropriately balance stewardship and recreation.

GOAL 5 –Create a high-functioning system of parks, recreation, trails, and open space that is responsive to changing community needs and interests.

Objective 5.1

Prioritize planning and development projects and streamline associated processes.

Actions:

- Apply criteria and tools for prioritizing planning and Capital Improvement Projects. (Build upon existing tools used by the Park Development Division in coordination with the Park Planning and Stewardship Division.)
- Prioritize sites for which to complete park master plans with a focus on the North Central and South Central sub-areas.
- Include priority park master plan projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). (Focus on renovation of existing parks. Place a priority on projects in parts of the County where need is greatest, and on components that are currently below expectations.)
- Create an interim process for “pre-facility planning” that develops a Program of Requirements (POR) for items in the CIP that do not have a full master plan.
- Create standard design and construction details for typical park improvements.
- Develop and enhance the database to include the most recent inventory information. Link SmartParks with the GIS.
- Consider the development a generic POR for each type of park in the park classification system, incorporating typical elements, but which is flexible to accommodate emerging trends that are appropriate to each type.

- Recognize stewardship of environmentally sensitive areas, biodiversity areas, best natural areas, and priority cultural resources in planning for park development projects.
- Adhere to the M-NCPPC's Guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County.

Objective 5.2

Provide for flexible spaces and "green" facility designs.

Actions:

- Develop a process for evaluating whether existing components or features are contributing adequately to needs and goals.
- Create more un-programmed, flexible parks and recreation spaces, and features that are multi-functional or adaptable for multiple purposes.

Objective 5.3

Provide a variety of parks and recreation facilities that address current needs and emerging trends (e.g., dog parks, community gardens, cricket, ice facilities, tennis facilities, etc.).

Actions:

- Identify decision-making criteria and a process for specialty facility requests (e.g. dog parks, skate parks, cricket fields, etc.). (See box below.)
- Consider the development of a discretionary development fund to respond more quickly to emerging facility trends. (Could consider designating a percentage of resources to meet this objective, similar to "Percent for Art" type programs found elsewhere).

RESPONDING TO TRENDS & VARIED INTERESTS

Components that are missing from current inventory that could be considered to add include: frisbee golf, indoor or outdoor climbing wall, and a BMX facility. Splash pads (non-staffed) and skateboard parks could also be expanded. Due to the high percentage of foreign born residents currently in Montgomery County and the projected growth of this segment of the population, internationally popular sports such as futsal (a version of soccer played on indoor and outdoor courts) and cricket should be considered when planning for new parks and recreation uses.

PROCESS FOR SPECIALTY FACILITY/SERVICE REQUESTS

- Conduct a Service Assessment to determine the service's fit with the department's values, vision, and mission, level of responsibility and position in the market, financial capacity, and who else is providing a like or similar service in that same target and service market.
- Determine the need for the specialty facility/service (e.g., using public input including existing surveys).
- Determine Cost Recovery goals using the Pyramid Methodology.
- Identify facility cost and potential funding sources.
- If service is determined as essential and requires financial subsidy (taxpayer investment) to exist, consider submitting a special budget request or include in the next fiscal year's budget process.
- Communicate the process and status with the general public and those requesting the service.

- Provide tennis facilities that fit current demand and future trends.
 - Identify strategic opportunities for larger groupings of tennis courts (indoor and/or outdoor), versus stand-alone courts.
 - Identify stand-alone tennis courts that are no longer functioning well and consider repurposing them to a different use based on community needs.
- Provide regional ice facilities to address current and future demand.
 - Maximize the use of Wheaton Ice Center through scheduling, promotional pricing strategies, and expanded marketing.
 - Conduct a feasibility study to determine if, when, and where a new ice arena is needed in the future. (Study should also assess whether Wheaton is the best location for the ice arena in the future.)
- Provide a permanent cricket field with supporting infrastructure.
- Address the growing demand for dog parks, especially in urban areas.
 - Update the policies and procedures for dog parks.
 - Consider the feasibility of designated hours for off-leash dogs in appropriate large regional parks.
 - Maximize partnerships with dog owner groups.
 - Identify opportunities to add dog parks with a focus in the South Central and North Central sub-areas.
- Identify additional sites, especially in urban and residential areas, for community gardens.
 - Expand existing community gardens in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and other interested groups.
 - Identify strategic opportunities to add community garden to urban areas.

Objective 5.4

Ensure that the quantity and type of parks, programs, facilities, trails, and open space are adequate for the users being served.

Action:

- Adopt a composite-values approach to Level of Service.

Objective 5.5

Improve the comfort and convenience of park and recreation users by providing adequate facilities such as accessible restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, parking, and other convenience features.

Actions:

- Identify strategic locations to add comfort and convenience features (such as restrooms, drinking fountains, seating, shade, and safety features such as lighting, etc.) to existing facilities

to increase the LOS of the components located there. (Focus initially on areas that scored low in comfort and convenience in the inventory.)

- Develop a policy for restrooms to manage expectations and to get the most benefit from the resources required to build and operate them.

Objective 5.6

Use the *Outdoor Components Analysis Chart* to guide future planning for park facilities.

(See *Appendix E.*)

Objective 5.7

Re-balance the existing mix of athletic field to better fit current needs for rectangle and diamond fields.

Actions:

- Formalize an internal standing committee to continually formulate, implement, and evaluate options to deliver better-quality playing experiences for users of park athletic fields.
- The work group shall study and include staff representation in the following athletic field areas:
 - Planning and needs assessment
 - Design and construction including natural sports turf, synthetic turf, irrigation, and lighting
 - Public/Private partnerships for development, operation and/or maintenance
 - Maintenance standards and practices
 - Permitting
 - Usage policies
 - Enforcement of policies
 - User outreach and education
 - User fees
 - Joint usage with schools and other agencies

The Parks Athletic Field Committee shall periodically interface with and support the work of user groups and interagency bodies associated with athletic fields.

- Conduct a field use/capacity analysis of all public athletic fields and set maximum capacities for field types.
- Identify opportunities to increase the capacity of existing fields by adding irrigation and converting some to synthetic turf.
- Identify opportunities to increase the number of rectangle athletic fields. (Opportunities include more effective partnering with schools, conversion of diamonds to rectangles where feasible, and adding new fields.)

Objective 5.8

Provide adequate playgrounds throughout the County to meet the need for convenient access to healthy play opportunities.

Actions:

- Incorporate nature into the playground environment.
- Prioritize playgrounds in highest need of replacement or renovation.

GOAL 6 – Expand and enhance opportunities for recreational trail experiences to promote health and wellness.

Objective 6.1

Expand the distribution of multi-use trails.

Actions:

- Convert limited-use trails to multi-use trails, especially in more densely-populated areas.
- Create new multi-use trails, with a priority on locating these in areas where population density is currently or projected to be high but existing trails are located more than ½ mile apart or when trail access is limited. (See **Appendix H, Multi-Use Trail Table.**)

Objective 6.2

Increase trail connectivity.

Actions:

- Identify gaps in the regional trail system (such as places where multi-user trails are non-continuous but could be connected with a new segment to create a continuous route, or places where the designated user type changes along a continuous route and creates a gap for some users).
- Prioritize trail connections to create a linked series of loops of varying lengths in the trail system. (Such connections may be made by purchasing land, routing trails along sidewalks, etc., or other means and should be clearly marked and signed as part of the trail system.)
- Identify existing parks without loop trails (meaning a trail that forms a loop back on itself and is contained within a single park or site – i.e. a local trail) and prioritize parks to add loop trails. Connect these park loop trails to the overall trail system where possible.
- Re-examine the feasibility of trail alignments proposed in the Countywide Park Trails Plan.
- Improve access to the recreational trail system by assuring that routes from homes, businesses, and other places are safe, convenient, and useable for getting to the trail system.

Objective 6.3

Address need for specialty trail users, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

Action:

- Identify trails that should remain as limited-user trails, based on the characteristics of the terrain and environment rather than on the location and distribution. However, try to distribute these appropriately when possible.

As of 2010, 23 percent of residents countywide lived within ¼ mile of a multi-user trail, either hard or soft surface. For the sub-areas, the percentages are 32 percent in the Potomac/Rural area, 37 percent in the South Central area, 9 percent in the North Central area, and 23 percent in the East Transit Corridor. (See **Appendix H.**)

Objective 6.4

Enhance the trail user experience through safety and comfort features, including informational kiosks at trail heads, uniform directional signage, interpretive signage, and appropriately placed restrooms.

Actions:

- Add distance markers, directional and wayfinding signage, and interpretive signage.
- Create downloadable on-line maps with distances marked.
- Add waysides, rest areas, and improve connections to parks with restroom facilities when feasible. Identify these features clearly on signs and maps.
- Establish and adapt standards for trails.
- Build and renovate trails according to department standards.

GOAL 7 – Expand park and recreation facility accessibility.

Objective 7.1

Enhance access to parks, recreation facilities and programs, trails, and open space by setting measurable standards for different areas of the County.

Action:

- Set target values for walkable access to parks and recreation lands and facilities in each sub-area. (Facilities accessible by public transportation – buses and metro stations – should be factored into walkable access.)

Objective 7.2

Collaboratively work to provide safe and accessible facilities.

Actions:

- Work with State Highway Administration and Department of Transportation and/or Department of General Services to ensure safe ADA pedestrian access to park and recreation facilities via sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe crossings. (Coordinate with County Complete Streets efforts.)
- Strategically provide conveniently located bike racks at park and recreation facilities.
- Incorporate multi-use trail linkages to park and recreation facilities when feasible as well as sidewalk and bike paths in public rights-of-way.

Objective 7.3

Incorporate the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design into planning and development of park and recreational facilities for both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Actions:

- Incorporate 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for recreational facilities.
- Incorporate new ADA guidelines for hard and natural surface trails.

Montgomery County Department of Recreation – Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Facilities
(Continuation of Planning & Development of Facilities Recommendations)

GOAL 8– Provide an equitable distribution of public indoor recreation spaces in Montgomery County that is sustainable.

REFINE RECREATION & AQUATIC SERVICE MODEL

- **Incorporate flexibility** into the level of service model to allow for larger centers to serve more residents when appropriate. Providing leisure services at larger regional centers is an *industry best management practice* and provides one-stop service, increased operational efficiencies, sustainability, and cost recovery, while promoting improved customer service.
- **Incorporate indoor aquatics in new recreation centers** to create operational efficiencies, broader appeal, and respond to high public interest in leisure and instructional (non-competitive) aquatics.
- **Identify highly accessible locations** for new recreation centers along multi-modal transportation corridors (e.g., public transportation routes, trails, major roadways, etc.).
- **Identify opportunities to partner and/or co-locate** indoor recreation centers with other institutional facilities (e.g., schools, libraries, park facilities, or other leisure service providers etc.), when appropriate.

Objective 8.1

Refine the level of service model for indoor recreation and aquatic centers.

Actions:

- Prioritize adding public indoor recreation centers in the North Central and South Central sub-areas where lower per capita LOS currently exists, and highest rates of growth are projected in the next 10 to 20 year (2010-2030). (See **Appendix F** for additional analysis and recommended approaches for future recreation centers.)
- Incorporate flexible spaces and industry trends (e.g., Wi-Fi access, climbing walls, running/walking tracks, etc.) into recreation center designs.

Objective 8.2

Conduct feasibility studies and operating/business plans prior to the design and development of new community recreation facilities. Develop corresponding Program of Requirement (POR) descriptions.

Objective 8.3

Use the Service Assessment to assist the evaluation of renovations and modernization of recreation centers and potential consolidation/repurposing the older smaller community and neighborhood facilities as may be warranted.

Objective 8.4

Consider an assessment of needs and opportunities for specialized countywide facilities (e.g., arena, event center, indoor sports complex) including public/private partnership opportunities.

Operations, Maintenance & Safety

Key Findings

The following findings helped shape the *Operations, Maintenance & Safety* goals and objectives.

BALANCE BETWEEN NEW AND OLD

Improving existing facilities ranked as the highest priority for future parks and recreation spending in the Vision 2030 survey. While new facilities will inevitably be needed to address the demands of a growing population in the next ten to twenty years, there is a need to balance the allocation of resources to maintain and improve existing facilities with adding new facilities.



APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE LEVELS

There is a need for the public and decision-makers to understand the resources and subsidy needed for acceptable maintenance service levels (e.g., developed parks, natural and cultural resources, and community recreation centers). While the vast majority of parkland managed by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks is made up of undeveloped natural areas, the maintenance resources may not align to adequately preserve *quality* natural areas into the future. Reevaluating maintenance standards and realigning resources may be needed. Additionally, as recreation centers and park infrastructure age, ongoing investments will need to be made in lifecycle replacements, renovations, and improvements.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

In a time of resource scarcity, identifying opportunities to improve operational efficiencies whenever possible is necessary. Strategies such as expanding “managed mowing” areas and partnerships with athletic field user groups could be explored. The Montgomery County Department of Recreation should explore the option of creating larger, multi-purpose regional centers which can help increase staffing operational efficiencies and cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use.



Recommendations

Operations, Maintenance & Safety

Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system

GOAL 9 – Maintain quality park and recreation lands and facilities for efficiency, safety, attractiveness, and long-term sustainability.

Objective 9.1

Develop a comprehensive “green” operations and maintenance initiative. (This initiative would build on existing efforts and be part of an agency-wide comprehensive sustainability plan. Also see **Goal 16.**)

Actions:

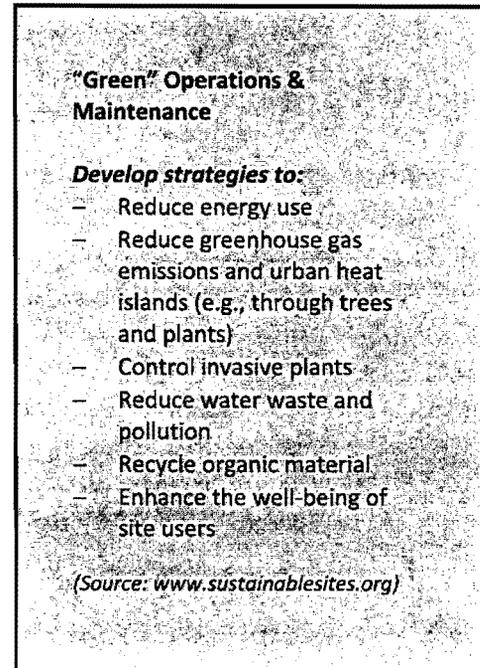
- Implement an employee training program for “green” operations and maintenance.
- Continue to institute the commissioning process related to maintenance requirements for new facility development.
- Develop a pilot Sustainable Sites project.
- Determine when it is appropriate or applicable to waive historic sites renovations from LEED requirements due to prohibitive costs, impact to historic site, return on investment, etc.

Objective 9.2

Expand the Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) program.

Actions:

- M-NCPPC Department of Parks evaluate PLAR program and make adjustments as feasible. (Consider adding park infrastructure elements such as trails, bridges, park roads, water lines, tree/plant replacements, etc.).
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation evaluate PLAR program and make adjustments as feasible. Areas of focus include:
 - Develop cycles for standard replacement items – flooring, paint, banquet tables/chairs, exercise equipment, etc. based on manufacturers recommended life expectancy in multi-year increments.
 - Develop annual refurbishment task lists for each facility – carpet cleaning, floor stripping, curtain dry cleaning, upholstery washing, etc.
 - Establish a percentage of each year’s PLAR allocation to be contributed to a permanent facility capital replacement fund for major one time emergencies covering all of the “Program Elements” not carried by the Montgomery County Department of General Services budget policies.



Objective 9.3

Implement the existing prioritized deferred maintenance plan.

Actions:

- Develop a decision-making process to determine whether to repair, renovate, replace, repurpose or remove a facility or piece of equipment.
- Identify a list of smaller day-to-day deferred maintenance items (using tools including SmartParks and the Facility Engineering Assessment).

Objective 9.4

Re-evaluate the current maintenance levels of service and standards based on industry best practices (e.g., maintenance, health, and safety standards) and update standards (e.g., mowing frequency for different park types, natural resources management, routines to maintain clean parks and recreation facilities, etc.).

Actions:

- Review and revise current parks maintenance standards.
- Review and revise current facility maintenance standards.
- Review and revise current building custodial standards.
- Develop or finalize other critical standards such as tree maintenance and natural resources management.
- Assure relevant contracts are adhering to maintenance standards.
- Where possible, try to have the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation agree on maintenance standards.
- When necessary, make choices to modify maintenance standards due to resource limitations and annual appropriations.
- Use maintenance standards to communicate with policy-makers and the public regarding meeting community values and expectations if changes to maintenance routines are required due to resource limitations.

Objective 9.5

Identify operating budget impact (OBI) needed for new capital improvement projects and acquisitions and allocate adequate resources (e.g., program staff, maintenance, supplies and materials, other services and charges, etc.).

Objective 9.6

Formalize the maintenance and management of athletic fields. (Also see **Objective 5.7.**)

Action:

- Update athletic field use and maintenance standards and procedures (e.g., field capacity and usage, field rest criteria, cancellation criteria, priority use policies, monitoring of field permits, user group partnerships, etc.).

Objective 9.7

Expand SMARTPARKS applications throughout the M-NCPPC Department of Parks (e.g., park planning, natural resources management, and historic resources management).

Objective 9.8

Create equipment standards for select park and recreation facilities (e.g., basketball hoops, restroom fixtures, etc.) to aid in parts inventories and enhance maintenance efficiency.

Action:

- Institute cross departmental purchasing to maximize efficiencies.

Objective 9.9

Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and guidelines into parks and recreation site design and ongoing maintenance practices.

Actions:

- Institute a training process relating to ongoing maintenance requirements for CPTED principles.
- Implement CPTED principles in the maintenance of park and recreation sites.

Objective 9.10

Evaluate and plan for maintenance functions by identifying operational and locational enhancements (e.g., maintenance yards) to efficiently meet future needs.

Actions:

- Conduct a study to determine the distribution of maintenance yards or sites to most effectively and efficiently meet the maintenance needs of a growing park and recreation system.
- Consider a satellite facility for Facility Management to reduce drive times.

GOAL 10 – Provide for the protection, security, and safety of natural areas, historic resources, archeological sites, and park and recreation facilities, including playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, community centers, and trails.

Objectives 10.1

Ensure continued dedicated personnel and resources for the specialized requirements of both agencies.

Objectives 10.2

Expand enforcement of unauthorized encroachments to preserve parkland for public use.

Objectives 10.3

Expand participation by Park Police in existing Department of Recreation homework clubs and other after-school youth programs.

Objectives 10.4

Expand the use of Park Rangers as appropriate for natural resource and interpretive duties.

GOAL 11 – Inventory, conserve, restore, and enhance ecologically healthy and biologically diverse natural areas with a focus on Park Best Natural Areas, Biodiversity Areas, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas as defined in the *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (M-NCPPC, 2005).

Objective 11.1

Develop a protocol and schedule for the routine inventory and analysis of natural resources patterned after the *Montgomery County Stream Protection Strategy*.

Actions:

- Standardize protocols to inventory parkland natural resources (e.g., terrestrial plant communities, birds, mammals, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians, non-native invasive infestations, rare and threatened or endangered species).
- Develop and implement a program that utilizes staff and volunteers to inventory park natural areas.
- Update and maintain a GIS inventory database and make it available via the M-NCPPC Department of Parks Resource Atlas and website.

Objective 11.2

Develop a countywide natural resources management plan.

Objective 11.3

Prioritize Best Natural Areas and Biodiversity Areas based on their ecological value and biological diversity.

Objective 11.4

Propose a schedule for developing natural resources management plans for each Best Natural Area and Biodiversity Area.

Objective 11.5

Develop comprehensive restoration plans for down-County stream valley parks including Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, and Little Falls.

Objective 11.6

Consider expanding the current white-tailed deer management program into down-County areas consistent with public demand, natural resource management needs, and public safety concerns.

Objective 11.7

Develop natural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.

Objective 11.8

Develop new volunteer-based programs to assist with the inventory and management of natural resources in County parks (e.g., Forest Stewards).

Objective 11.9

Ensure adequate staffing to achieve natural resource management goals and associated objectives.

GOAL 12 – Identify, stabilize, preserve, maintain, and interpret historic and archaeological resources on parkland.

Objective 12.1

Implement M-NCPPC Department of Parks' existing plan *From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* and use Cultural Resources Section's *Asset Inventory* to prioritize the restoration and interpretation of the highest value historic and archaeological resources in County parks. (Also see **Objective 2.1** regarding cultural resources interpretation.)

Actions:

- Remove obstacles to partnerships that stabilize buildings and provide compatible uses, including but not limited to obstacles in funding sources, lease agreements, and partnership processes.
- Promote historic resource capital improvements as a priority for the Department of Parks Foundation, developer amenity funds, and bonus density incentives.
- Divest resources that do not qualify as significant on the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory and resist acquisitions of parkland that come with historic buildings without a maintenance endowment.
- Make archaeological investigation an integral component of park development and interpretation, including planning for costs and timing of archaeology in Park Development Division projects.
- Seek to identify adequate capital and maintenance funding to ensure the preservation of historic structures.
- Provide training to the M-NCPPC Department of Parks staff on historic preservation and archaeology best practices and historic preservation regulatory compliance at the local, state, and federal levels.

Objective 12.2

Propose a schedule for developing plans to restore the highest value historic resources and stabilize the highest value archaeological resources in County parks.

Objective 12.3

Develop cultural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.

Objective 12.4

Ensure adequate staffing to achieve goals and objectives associated with the restoration and interpretation of historic resources in County parks.

Action:

- Explore funding options for a preservation architect and general contractor specializing in historic structures to enable the rehabilitation of numerous failing historic structures in the park system.

Management

Key Findings

The following findings helped shape the *Management* goals and objectives.

COMMUNITY INPUT

There is currently a high degree of satisfaction in the parks and recreation services in Montgomery County, as articulated through public input throughout the Vision 2030 planning process. A challenge into the future will be maintaining the current high level of service. This is demonstrated by the **Vision 2030** survey results that show the highest financial priority of respondents is to make improvements to existing facilities. As shown through the level of service analysis, the County is well-served by parks and recreation facilities – so the management challenge is to balance the need to maintain and improve the existing expansive inventory of facilities, while responding to demands for expansion of the parks and recreation system in response to population growth.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Parks and Recreation agencies across the country are confronted with similar challenges.

- Deteriorating parks and recreation infrastructure.
- Declining parks and recreation budgets relative to costs.
- Increasing competition for shrinking federal, state, and local tax resources.
- Increased public demand for participation, accountability, and productivity in government.
- Insufficient open spaces in urban areas.

While Montgomery County has a long history of superior parks and recreation services, it is not immune from these same challenges. The **Vision 2030** project positions the County to proactively confront these challenges with creative solutions.

Shrinking Tax Support – Due to financial constraints, increasing efficiencies and pursuing revenue generation and alternative funding opportunities are needed. As part of the **Vision 2030** project a *Cost Recovery Model and Resource Allocation Philosophy* was developed using the Pyramid Model process (see **Appendix I**). In addition, at the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, efforts are currently underway to develop a non-profit Foundation to expand alternative funding support. Efforts to expand in-kind contributions from volunteer efforts are also strategies to continue to pursue in the future.

Transparency in Government – Transparency is needed to let the public see how their tax investment is utilized, along with what decisions are made and how they are made. It is vital to demonstrate trust and accountability, and gain credibility. Opportunities exist to more effectively “tell our story” and be accountable for and responsible with resources.

SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

There are opportunities for both departments to expand current efforts in sustainable design, development, management practices, and operations. Creating a comprehensive approach toward sustainability, training staff, and identifying needed resources to implement state-of-the-art “green” practices will help Montgomery County maintain its position as a national leader in public parks and recreation. More importantly a comprehensive sustainability program will maximize environmental, social, and economic benefits and operational efficiencies.

Recommendations

Management

Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability

GOAL 13 – Ensure long-term sustainability by focusing taxpayer funding on those services that produce the widest community benefit, using a cost recovery pyramid.

(See *Appendix I* for Cost Recovery Pyramid.)

Objective 13.1

Ensure that all staff members are using cost-based or activity-based budgeting principles to determine the cost to provide a service.

Objective 13.2

Increase cost recovery to meet cost recovery target goals through recommended pricing strategies and/or use of alternative funding sources as appropriate to specific service.

Objective 13.3

Review all rentals, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and long-term lease agreements to assure compliance with cost recovery goals in relation to the cost to provide the service and the category of service level on the cost recovery pyramid.

Objective 13.4

Review all instructor agreements in relation to the agency costs and adjust to match the category of service level on the pyramid.

Objective 13.5

Identify funding sources or partnership/collaborations to continue the provision of social service type programming by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation as current funding is reduced and eliminated.

Objective: 13.6

Pursue alternative funding for efficiency measures to reduce the costs to the tax payer of operations, maintenance, and safety.

Objective: 13.7

Identify the cost of emergency services (e.g., providing shelter in an emergency, water main breaks, flooding, hurricanes and major storms, etc.) and pursue remuneration where appropriate or possible.

Objective: 13.8

Identify selective opportunities for Montgomery County Department of Recreation to use or create Self-sustaining Funds or Enterprise Funds as appropriate.

Objective 13.9

Implement service provision strategies identified through the Service Assessment.

(Note: The following actions were identified through a comprehensive staff Service Assessment in spring 2010. The Service Assessment tool should be used regularly to align services with evolving community needs, financial and market conditions, etc.)

Actions:

- Complete the transfer of the permitting and maintenance of Woodside Gym in the Southern Parks Region from M-NCPPC Department of Parks (or Community Use of Public Facilities, CUPF) to Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- Further refine the definition of “Partner” and re-categorize rentals or leases that do not fit this definition.
- Divest park houses which are not of cultural, historic, or operational benefit or which cost more to operate than the benefit received. (Cultural or historic value should be identified based on research and the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory prioritization system.)
- Divest responsibility for maintenance of old buildings which may loosely qualify as historic or cultural because of age, but are of no real historic or cultural value, or where the cost to restore, operate, and maintain exceeds the community’s return on investment. (Also see **Objective 12.1**.)
- Transfer the operations and maintenance of the Splash Park from M-NCPPC Department of Parks to Montgomery County Department of Recreation to align with other aquatics services.
- Transfer the operations and maintenance of the Skatepark from the Montgomery County Department of Recreation to the M-NCPPC Department of Parks to align with other Skatepark services.
- Evaluate opportunities for third party service providers.

GOAL 14 – Ensure services are accessible for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Objective 14.1

Review and refine scholarship and fee reduction/waiver policies and consider aligning them across both departments, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Focus on providing financial support for participation in those categories of service on the *Mostly or Considerable Community Benefit* levels of the Pyramid – thus assuring access for all to those services providing the greatest community benefit. (See **Appendix I**.)

- Monitored Facility/Area Usage
- Classes, Workshops, and Clinics – Introductory/Beginning/Multi-level
- Recreational Camps/After School Care/Day Care
- Open Facility/Area Usage
- Community-wide Events
- Volunteer Program
- Inclusion services

Actions:

- Consider alignment of the scholarship or fee reduction/waiver policies between the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- Consider what other parks and recreation jurisdictions scholarship or fee reduction/waiver policies are within the region.

Objective 14.2

Seek funding sources for each agency, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, to fund the scholarship or fee reduction/waiver program.

Actions:

- Consider creation of a donation and/or an endowment program.
- Consider if an endowment grows, or funding becomes available include services on level three of the Pyramid that provide balanced community and individual benefit.
- Consider a round-up program as one option (e.g., giving program registrants the opportunity to voluntarily round-up their program or service fee to support the scholarship program or a designated program or service).
- Consider creating a “workreation” program (for individuals to use volunteer hours toward payment/credit for future programs for which they would like to participate).

Objective 14.3

Expand targeted efforts to reach socio-economically disadvantaged populations. (For example, outreach efforts could be targeted to socio-economically disadvantaged neighborhoods, lesser achieving school service areas, subsidized housing developments, high-density urban areas, senior housing developments and assisted living facilities, and areas not served by public transportation, etc.)

GOAL 15 – Increase alternative funding sources.

Objective 15.1

Utilize non-profit 501(c)(3) funding organizations to help generate alternative funding.

Action:

- Determine when the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation should work together or independently.

Objective 15.2

Expand sponsorships and naming rights opportunities.

Actions:

- Determine when the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation should work together or independently.
- Develop sponsorship packages to bundle opportunities and market to major businesses like hospitals, insurance companies, sports organizations and related for-profit businesses.
- Identify opportunities for naming rights at historic sites.

Objective 15.3

Expand alternative funding through grants.

Actions:

- Explore funding options for a grant writer position, perhaps a collaborative position between the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- Explore funding options for a regulatory compliance position to deal with requirements of grants and bond bills such as design review easements, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance regulations, etc.
- Pursue grants for healthy and active living initiatives.
- Pursue grants for trail development like Safe Routes to Schools.
- Continue to pursue grants and bond bills for cultural resource projects.

Objective 15.4

Seek alternative funding sources for programs and operations.

GOAL 16 – Be leaders in sustainable “green” practices.

Objective 16.1

Develop an agency-wide coordinated program to incorporate sustainable “green” design, development, and operational practices at all levels of the organization.

Actions:

- Consider the development of a “green team” of staff across the organization to coordinate existing efforts (e.g., recycling, composting, piloting the Sustainable Sites Initiative project, etc.) and expand efforts.
- Develop a sustainability program plan and implementation schedule.
- Examine cost and Return-on-Investment (ROI) to implement various “green” practices.

Objective 16.2

Strive to achieve compatibility with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for all new major facilities.

Note: Both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation are currently implementing “green” design and operations initiatives. In 2007 the Montgomery County passed the Buildings – Energy Efficiency and Environmental Design regulation. The regulation “applies to any newly constructed or extensively modified non-residential or multi-family residential building that has or will have at least 10,000 square feet of gross floor area.” The regulation applies to County buildings for which the County government finances at least 30% of cost of construction or modification. The LEED rating system developed by the US Green Building Council or an equivalent standard is required.

Marketing & Outreach

Key Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and objectives for *Marketing & Outreach*.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The **Vision 2030** survey results identified the following findings relative to marketing and communication:

- **Importance of Marketing** – Overall, 42 percent of survey respondents indicated that the reason they do not use parks and recreation services is that they are not aware of programs or facilities offered. Effectively communicating and engaging a diverse audience is both a challenge and an opportunity as the County continues to grow and become even more diverse. Marketing is a good investment to ensure that the public is aware of the vast amount of facilities and services available.
- **Web-based Communication** – Approximately one-third of respondents said that e-mail is the best way to reach them with information on programs and facilities in Montgomery County; however, only 13 percent of respondents are currently getting their information through e-mail, representing an opportunity for further outreach to the community. Other methods of communication listed by respondents as the best way to reach them include the Internet/website (19 percent), program guides (17 percent), and flyers or brochures (14 percent). A large majority of respondents prefer to register for classes using the Internet (77 percent). However, varied methods of communication and outreach are critical to communicate effectively with different audiences.

Marketing and outreach issues that were raised at **Vision 2030** public meetings and focus groups include:

- **Outreach to Diverse Groups** – Outreach and communication to various ethnic communities is needed. Community liaisons, trained staff, and partnerships with ethnic groups would help bridge the gap. Representatives of the disability community indicated a desire for alternative forms of communication including audio descriptions and Braille.
- **Electronic Communication** – Youth expressed that more visual communications such as videos and Facebook as well as text messaging are often more effective than flyers. There was also a desire to make the agency websites more user-friendly (e.g., online registration, etc.).

COLLABORATION & CREATIVITY

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks is working to enhance marketing and communication efforts through a variety of media tools, with a growing emphasis on web-based electronic communication. The challenge will be to find the right mix of marketing strategies as no one method is effective for all. Creative approaches with limited budgets will also continue to be a challenge.

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation’s marketing efforts are not coordinated under one main team. Instead, program staff and facility managers produce and distribute flyers and other promotional materials for their own programs. The Montgomery County Office of Public Information provides assistance public service announcements, press releases, the Destination Recreation cable television show, and event publicity.

A strong, coordinated marketing program has a direct, positive impact on participation and revenue. Both departments should continue to collaborate on and expand strategic marketing efforts.



Recommendations

Marketing & Outreach

Informing and engaging a diverse community

GOAL 17 – Proactively market parks and recreation services and facilities and communicate the benefits to the community.

Objective 17.1

Develop and implement a countywide strategic marketing and outreach plan to expand awareness and usage of programs and services offered by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

Objective 17.2

Transition communications from printed to electronic media where feasible.

Actions:

- Identify dedicated staff resources to focus on electronic web-based communications.
- Enhance department websites to make more user-friendly.
- Expand use of e-newsletters, text messaging, social media, and i-phone applications for general as well as target markets.
- Enhance department websites to make more user-friendly.
- Expand use of e-newsletters, text messaging, social media, and smart phone applications.

Objective 17.3

Promote the value and positive impacts of parks and recreation services using multiple forms of media (print, radio, TV, web-based).

Actions:

- Promote special interest stories.
- Communicate the interrelated benefits of health and fitness and environmental education.

COMMUNICATE THE BENEFITS OF PARKS & RECREATION

Build support and participation in parks and recreation programs by strategically communicating positive individual and community benefits.

- Fitness, health and wellness activities to promote active lifestyles for all ages and abilities through.
- Outdoor and environmental education to foster stewardship of natural resources.
- Out-of-school youth programs to foster youth development and healthy lifestyles.

GOAL 18 – Effectively communicate with and engage diverse groups.

Objective 18.1

Provide staff training in multi-cultural competency and outreach. (Utilize expertise and resources of the Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity and M-NCPPC Diversity Council.)

Objective 18.2

Increase opportunities for engagement with diverse groups and those that serve these populations regarding parks and recreation.

Actions:

- Expand partnerships with Montgomery County Department of Recreation.
- Expand volunteer opportunities.

Objective 18.3

Strive to make parks and recreation advisory groups representative of the demographic diversity of Montgomery County (e.g., ethnic, age, physical disabilities, income, etc.).

Objective 18.4

Increase collaboration on communitywide events and festivals.

Objective 18.5

Identify non-English speaking language translations needed for effective marketing and outreach.

GOAL 19 – Provide meaningful opportunities for public support, input, and engagement.

Objective 19.1

Provide a variety of input opportunities on parks and recreation service issues and concerns in Montgomery County.

Actions:

- Pilot an online forum or blog for a parks and recreation project.
- Look at ways to automate on-line surveying tied to database systems.
- M-NCPPC Department of Parks to develop a Standard Operating Procedure for public notifications related to master planning or project development.
- Create an on-line suggestion box to collect parks and recreation ideas and innovations.
- Continue to provide input opportunities for different specialized user groups at various facilities to provide suggestions for addressing improvements.

Objective 19.2

Expand volunteer opportunities.

Objective 19.3

Conduct a statistically-valid countywide survey every five years to determine community interests and needs.

Action:

- Consider investing in a statistically-valid community use and satisfaction survey for specific target markets.

Objective 19.4

Leverage relationships with existing "Friends Groups," staff, and volunteers to promote parks and recreation in Montgomery County.

Actions:

- Expand on existing communication opportunities.
- Develop training program to support outreach efforts.



IMPLEMENTATION

The **Volume 2: Vision 2030 Strategic Plan** provides goals and objectives that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This plan positions the both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Departments of Recreation to collaboratively meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing and diverse community.

Volume 3: Implementation Plan consists of detailed implementation matrices for each of the *Strategic Plan* objectives with specific action steps that include: timeline, budget impacts, and responsibility. This staff-level document should be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs, and interests, and resources.



APPENDIX A: VISION 2030 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Activity-Based Costing – Identifies costs associated with providing a service or product. It is a tool to determine what a specific service or product costs, and also what the costs are to service a given customer, including those services that are non-revenue generating. Activity-based budgeting is also referred to as “Program Budgeting,” “Program-Based Budget,” or “Cost-Based Budgeting.”

Best Natural Areas – Large areas (generally more than 100 acres) of contiguous high quality forest, marsh or swamp with relatively little evidence of past land-use disturbance and few or no exotic invasive plants and the known presence of rare, threatened, endangered, or watch-list species. Best Natural Areas include the best examples of unique plant community types found in the Montgomery County park system (i.e., river-rock outcrops of the Potomac River Basin, plant communities influenced by serpentine, diabase, or limestone, plant communities on soils derived from Triassic shale, siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate, central Maryland floodplain forest, central Maryland swamp forest, mesic forest on acidic bedrock, and dry forest on acidic bedrock). Best Natural Areas may include high quality wetlands, including those of Special State Concern as noted in COMAR Title 26, aquatic communities rated as good or excellent in Montgomery County’s *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy*, Special Trout Management Areas as noted in COMAR Title 08, and parkland of exceptional scenic beauty.

Biodiversity Areas – Areas of contiguous high quality forest, marsh, or swamp with few or no exotic invasive plants and the known presence of rare, threatened, endangered, or watch-list species. Biodiversity Areas generally represent the best examples of unique plant community types found in the Montgomery County park system (i.e., river-rock outcrops of the Potomac River Basin, plant communities influenced by serpentine, diabase, or limestone, plant communities on soils derived from Triassic shale, siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate, central Maryland floodplain forest, central Maryland swamp forest, mesic forest on acidic bedrock, and dry forest on acidic bedrock). Biodiversity Areas may also include parkland of exceptional scenic beauty.

Cost Recovery – The degree to which the cost (direct and/or indirect) of facilities, services and programs is supported by user fees and/or other designated alternative funding mechanism such as grants, sponsorships, partnerships, use of volunteers, etc. versus tax subsidies.

Community Garden – Community gardens provide a location to a community to grow fresh produce and plants as well as satisfying labor, neighborhood improvement, sense of community, and connection to the environment. Community gardens are places tended to and planted by individuals as such each garden can be as diverse as its gardeners. Some grow only flowers, others only food plants, some are nurtured communally and others have raised beds for ease of access.

Community gardens encourage an urban community’s food security, allowing citizens to grow their own food. They also support an improvement in the gardeners’ health through increased fresh vegetable consumption and providing a venue for exercise. The gardens also provide opportunities for social gatherings and social cohesiveness.

Core Services – The mission-led and vision-inspired primary service or businesses areas in which the Department focuses its efforts and energy. Core Services are meant to align with community values to achieve desired outcomes. Examples might include: recreation centers, youth and adult recreation programs, athletic fields, neighborhood parks, community and regional parks, aquatic centers and services, natural areas, and trails.

Cultural Resources – Physical evidence or place of past human activity: site, object, landscape, structure; or a site, structure, landscape, object or natural feature of significance to a group of people traditionally associated with it. The types of cultural resources often found in parks include:

- Archeological resources – The remains of past human activity and records documenting the scientific analysis of these remains.
- Historic structures – Material assemblies that extend the limits of human capability.
- Cultural landscapes – Settings we have created in the natural world.
- Ethnographic resources – Sites, structures, landscapes, objects or natural features of significance to a traditionally associated group of people.
- Museum objects – Manifestations of human behavior and ideas.

(Source: National Park Service)

Divest – To reduce or eliminate resources allocated to service provision, to transfer operations of a physical asset to a third party, or to remove the asset because it is of limited value to the organization. The service is either a poor fit with the agency’s values and vision, or the agency deems the service to be contrary to the agency’s interest in the responsible use of resources because they are in a weak market position. The alternative coverage of the service by other providers may be high or low, and the service may or may not be economically viable or financially feasible to sustain.

Environmentally Sensitive Areas – Include streams and stream buffers, 100-year floodplains, wetlands and wetland buffers, steep slopes, highly erodible soils, and habitats of rare, threatened, endangered, and watch-list species (see official listing of species at www.dnr.state.md.us).

Equitable – Dealing fairly and justly with all concerned. Equitable does not have to mean everyone has the exact same thing, but rather that they have things that are equivalent or similar in value. Equitable levels of service can be derived from a mix of various facilities and services, and the mix can be different but still equitable for different locations or groups of constituents. Equity can also be based on calculations that account for differences in population numbers or density, rather than on geographic distribution of amenities alone.

Facility – Something that is built, installed, or established to serve a particular purpose (e.g., park playground, neighborhood park, recreation center, etc.).

Goal – Broad based statements of intent. Goals are clear general statements about what the agency intends to accomplish. Goals must be connected to the mission, vision and values of the agency.

Level of Service – A measurement of the value or rate at which a geographic location, constituent group, or other identified entity is receiving benefit from a system or its component parts. For parks and recreation this is derived from the amount, types, condition, and location of the facilities, programs, and other elements being provided. Levels of service can be determined for a particular element or combinations and groupings of components. The Composite-Values Level of Service Methodology used in the **Vision 2030** project analyzes quantity, quality, and location information of physical components that make up the park and recreation system (e.g., playgrounds, trails, recreation centers, etc.). By combining the values of individual components, it is possible to measure the service provided by the park and recreation system from a variety of perspectives for any given location or grouping of people. The Geo-referenced Amenities Standards Process (GRASP®) is the Composite-Values Level of Service Methodology that was used for the level of service analysis of parks and recreation components in Montgomery County. In some circumstances, it is necessary to look additionally at unique types of facilities or services individually to get a complete picture of the level of service being provided. This might include community recreation centers, aquatic facilities, special park facilities, etc.

Loop Walk – Any trail that is configured to make a complete loop around a park or feature and that is sizeable enough to use as an exercise route (minimum ¼ mile).

Mission – A concise statement of organizational purpose. Mission defines who you serve, what you do, how you do it, and why an organization exists.

Natural Area – The sum total of acres of land not developed for public use and encompassing those natural resources being preserved to maintain a diversity of native natural communities as a legacy for future generations. Within these communities, natural processes and desirable ecological changes should be allowed to take place. Management activities should be limited to those necessary to mitigate the influence of humans as well as non-native and undesirable species (e.g., gypsy moth, *Lymantria dipar*). (Source: *2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, M-NCPPC Department of Parks)

Objective – A measurable or observable achievement and a subset of a goal. Objectives are specific operational statements that detail desired accomplishments and leads to the satisfaction of goals. Objectives should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and trackable (SMART). (Note: *The Vision 2030 Volume 3: Implementation Plan provides more detail through action steps, etc. to make the objectives in Volume 2 meet the SMART guidelines.*)

Open Space – Areas usually intended for recreational, agricultural, preservation or scenic purposes. (Source: *2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, M-NCPPC Department of Parks)

Partnership – A cooperative venture between two or more parties with a common goal and compatible missions that combine complementary resources to establish a mutual direction or complete a mutually beneficial objective.

Park or Parkland – A publically owned piece of land used of active or passive recreational use that may or may not be kept in its natural state. (Source: *2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan*, M-NCPPC Department of Parks)

Public Garden –A place where a wide variety of plants are cultivated for scientific, educational, and ornamental purposes and may include exterior landscapes, conservatories, and greenhouses. Public gardens enhance environmental aesthetics; improve the quality of life through education, interpretation, display, and outreach; and promote environmental awareness through sustainable practices and conservation. Public garden professionals are skilled in the art and science of cultivating plants in spaces for public use and benefit.

Program – The activities and events offered by the agency at various locations with specific participant purposes such as education, play, fun, leisure, skill development, socialization, or health.

Services – Programs and experiences afforded the public through the use of park and recreation physical assets and lands. In some cases, specific programs are offered off-site (for example, staff may provide an environmental education program at a school). A service may also define a single or collection of tasks performed by the entity on behalf of the public to protect or enhance the resource, make the facility safe, useable, and accurate or allow other services or programs to continue (e.g., natural resource management, building maintenance, life guarding, etc.).

Service Assessment – An intensive review of organizational services including activities, facilities, and parklands that leads to the development of an agency **Service Portfolio**. The assessment indicates whether the service is “**core to the organization’s values and vision,**” and provides recommended strategies that can include, but are not limited to, enhancement of service, reduction of service, collaboration, and advancement or affirmation of market position. The process includes an analysis of the relevance of each service to organizational values and vision and market position, including an examination of economic viability and other competitive service availability.

SmartParks – A computerized maintenance management system (CMMS). Its primary function is to generate, track and report work orders, maintained assets, and inventory management. It serves as a decision support system for reporting and analysis of park operations conducted by the trades, arborists, and park maintenance staff. Organizationally, the SmartParks staff team provides systems support for the department and is part for the Management Services Division of the M-NCPPC Montgomery Department of Parks.

Stewardship – An ethic that embodies cooperative planning and management of the County park and recreation system – including its natural areas, historical resources, and built infrastructure – so that it best meets the needs of current and future generations.

Sub-Area – Four sub-areas of Montgomery County were used for demographic and level of service analysis for the Vision 2030 project. The sub-areas are identified as: North Central, South Central, Potomac/Rural, and the Eastern Transit Corridor. (These sub-areas were formerly the M-NCPPC Planning Department’s Vision Division Team areas.)

Sustainability – Meeting the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Operational sustainability promotes environmental quality, enhances social benefits, and incorporates economic efficiencies.

Target Market – The specific market of a service (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity, education level, ability level, residence, etc.).

Trails, Multi-use – Trails, paved or unpaved, that are separated from the road and provide recreational or transportation opportunities (e.g. biking, walking/jogging, rollerblading, etc.).

Values – A set of timeless, guiding principles that influence:

- What we strongly believe about who we are and what we do
- A set of core beliefs
- What's important to the organization

Organizational values are a composite of the societal/community, member/staff, and leader/policy maker values. They are what we aspire to impart as park and recreation professionals within our community. Examples include environmental stewardship, financial sustainability, and active lifestyles.

Vision – A long-range over-arching goal describing what the organization seeks to become or how they plan to impact the community in the future.

APPENDIX B: LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

INVENTORY OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The parks and recreation system can be thought of as an infrastructure that serves the health and well-being of people. This infrastructure is made up of parts that are combined in various ways to provide service. At the larger scale, a parks and facilities form the basic building blocks of the system. But each of these can be broken down into individual components, such as playing fields, interpretive features, or gyms. For this project, a very complete and thorough database of parks and recreation amenities in Montgomery County was developed. All of the individual components within the system were evaluated and recorded into the inventory dataset.

The Composite Values Level of Service (LOS) process used in the **Vision 2030** records quantity, quality, and location information regarding the components that make up the parks and recreation system. The proprietary version of this type of LOS analysis used for this project is called **GRASP®** (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process).

The inventory was conducted from January 2010 to June 2010 and included three major provider groups:

- M-NCPPC Department of Parks managed and owned properties
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation managed and owned properties
- Alternative providers

Alternative providers include schools (elementary, middle, and high schools); Montgomery Village Foundation recreation facilities; municipal indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, including but not limited to City of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Tacoma Park; state and federal outdoor recreational facilities; Boys and Girls Club properties; YMCAs; and other alternative providers.

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

Overview

The findings from the analysis show what the current levels of service are for a variety of parks and recreation needs. These include overall LOS provided by the system to all parts of the County, and specific LOS for particular needs such as indoor facilities, multi-purpose fields, etc. The analysis also allows for comparisons to be made in evaluating how equitably services are provided across different parts of the County. Details on the GRASP® Methodology are included in **Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment**.

While the methodology allows quantitative measurements to be made for levels of service, there are no established nationwide standards for what the resultant numbers should be. This is because every community is different. However, the community-specific **GRASP® values can be used in conjunction with other findings**, such as community surveys and public input, **to determine whether current LOS is meeting needs and expectations, then used as a benchmark for creating targets and measuring results in the future. The numerical analyses provide a measurement for what the level of service is for a given location, but not necessarily what it should be.** These findings should be utilized in context with the other tools and methodologies used in the planning process as a basis for recommendations.

The following LOS analytical maps or Perspectives were prepared for the Vision 2030 project and can be found in *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment*.

- Perspective A: Access to All Components**
- Perspective B: Access to Indoor Facilities**
- Perspective C: Access to Outdoor Components**
- Perspective D: Access to Fields**
- Perspective E: Walkable Access to All Components**
- Perspective F: Access to Cultural Resources**
- Perspective G: Trailshed Analysis**
- Perspective H: Transportation**
- Perspective I: Sector Plans**

(Note: Appendix C of this document includes larger versions of Perspectives A, B, and E.)

Summary of LOS Findings

A key finding from the analysis is that **Montgomery County is well-served for parks and recreation in the traditional sense**. No matter where a resident lives in the County, he/she has adequate access to a basic set of facilities and components within a reasonable distance from home that in sum add up to a level of service that is on par with traditional models for service.

A second finding is the difference between the rural and urban parts of the County. The overall or composite service coverage is 100 percent for the entire County. But when looking at specific types of service, such as indoor recreation, the coverage in the rural areas drops significantly below that of the urban areas. And where service is provided in the rural areas, the GRASP® value of that service is also significantly lower than in the urban areas. **However, whenever service is measured in proportion to the population served, the rural areas emerge consistently higher than the urban areas.** This is because the population in the rural areas is so low compared to the urban areas that it takes relatively little amounts of “things” in the rural area to generate a much higher per-capita ratio than found in the urban areas. This pattern is to be expected in a County system versus a municipal one, and is not normally an area of concern.

If the Potomac/Rural sub-area is taken out of the equation, it appears in a very general sense that the East Transit Corridor shows well in most categories of analysis, while **North Central comes in as the lowest of the three urbanized sub-areas in many categories**. The degree of difference between these three sub-areas in terms of overall (composite) service as measured in *Perspective A* ranges from a factor of 1.2 for Average LOS Per Acre Served to 2.3 for Average LOS Per Acre Per Population Per Acre. In simpler terms, this means that **the average value of the composite service for East Transit Corridor is 1.2 times what it is for North Central**. When adjusted for population density the value of service in East Transit Corridor is 2.3 times that of South Central. In terms of raw per-capita value of the components in each sub-area as determined by the GRASP® Index, East Transit Corridor is 1.3 times that of North Central.

Whether or not the numeric spreads listed above translate into inequities in service may depend upon other factors, such as potential presence of additional alternative providers that were not included in the inventory, and the needs, desires, and expectations of the people that live within each sub-area. Underlying land uses may play a role as well, as different land uses generate different types of needs for parks and recreation. An area with a higher proportion of commercial, multi-family residential or other

land uses may have different needs than an area that is strictly suburban homes. **The numerical analyses provide a measurement for what the level of service is for a given location**, but not what it should be. Threshold scores have been used to get a sense of where the service value falls above or below an assumed value, but in reality people in one part of the County might have a different threshold value than others. Other tools are used to determine what the value should be in specific cases such as surveys, focus groups, demographic composition, and others.

While the analyses used to determine LOS are very effective at putting numerical values on the physical assets that are offered, it does not measure how effectively the assets offered fit the desires of the public they are intended to serve. Again, this must be determined by other means as listed above. However, once certain types of assets are determined to be desired, the analyses can be used to determine what the value of those assets is (but not what they should be).

For example, Perspective D analyzes the provision of **athletic fields**. The results show that fields are well-distributed across the County, although a bit less so in the Potomac/Rural sub-area. It also shows what the current values of those fields are overall and by sub-area. It is possible to see that the values for the various indicators measured for fields in **Perspective D** (Average LOS Per Acre Served, etc.) are fairly consistent among the urban sub-areas. The spread from high to low scores among these is no more than a factor of 1.6 in the most extreme case. This suggests that, if a need for more fields countywide has been identified through participation numbers, surveys or other tools, and that the need is consistent across the County, then new fields should be added in a distributed manner across the County. If a greater inequity had shown up between the sub-areas, then it might have made more sense to add the new fields where the current LOS is low.

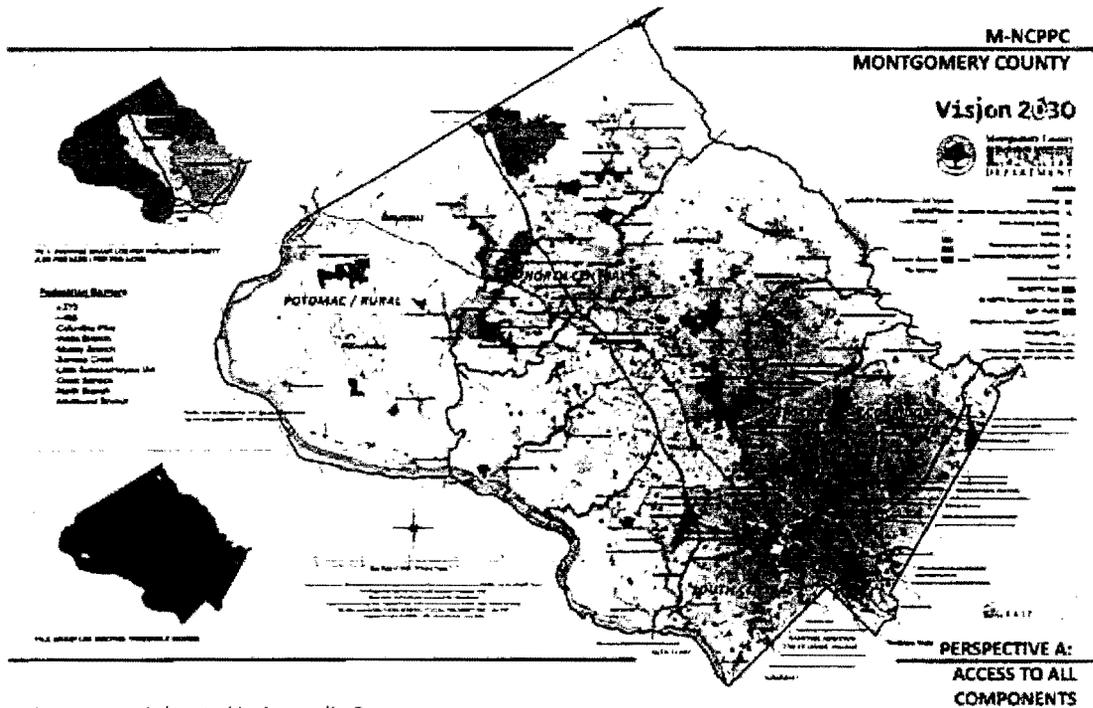
The value of **trail connectivity** is also indicated in the analysis. Based on the assumption that more connectivity creates better access to park and recreation components, connecting existing trails to each other could greatly increase the value of those trails. This finding assumes that the connected trails share user types. For example, the connection between two multi-user trails will increase the value of both trails, however a connection between a single-use and a multi-use trail, may not increase the value of both trails, since certain users may not benefit from the connection, such a biker or a hiker. When developing recommendations, this finding should be weighed against other factors such as how far the average user is willing to go, environmental constraints in the areas where connectivity is desired, and limitations on user types.

Finally, one of the most useful findings might be the relationship between **Perspective A: Access to All Components**, and **Perspective E: Walkable Access to All Components**. Comparing the two shows how different the LOS picture looks from the standpoint of someone who drives and someone who does not. While access to parks and recreation components is available across 100 percent of the County for someone who drives, only **58 percent of the County offers walkable access**, and only 6 percent of the County offers walkable access to a combination of components whose value meets the assumed threshold for adequate service. While providing walkable service for 100 percent of the County might not make sense as a goal, achieving a high coverage for walkability in the urbanized parts of the County could. Currently, those sub-areas have walkability coverage that ranges from 46 percent to 81 percent. The percentages of each sub-area that meet the threshold scores are much lower, ranging from 4 percent to 15 percent. **Using these figures as baselines, it will be possible to set measurable targets for increasing the percentages of certain areas covered by walkable service**, along with desired targets for LOS scores within those walkable areas.

Cultural resources are relatively uniformly well-distributed across the County. No matter where a resident lives within the County, he/she is either within three or five miles of a cultural resource.

Another factor to consider from the findings is that some of the components considered in the LOS analysis do not belong to the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation. The quality or even continued existence of these components is beyond the control of the departments. The components provided by Rockville, Gaithersburg, Montgomery Village Foundation, and Takoma Park can be considered reasonably permanent; however should changes occur in these areas or any other areas beyond the knowledge or control of the departments, levels of service will change accordingly.

**A Closer Look –
Perspective A: Access to All Components**



Larger map is located in Appendix C.

Perspective A: Access to All Components is analyzed below to provide an example of the level of service analysis and tools used for the Vision 2030 project. (Note: This level of analysis was also conducted for each of the other Perspectives listed above and can be found in *Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment*.)

Perspective A represents the service available from all components combined and shows higher levels of service in the Southern parts of the County, and lower levels in the Northern part. No gaps in service are apparent in this analysis. The entire County has at least some service.

GRASP® Table A—Access to All Components shows the statistics derived from **Perspective A – Access to All Components** for the County as a whole and by sub-area. For each column, the **highest value is shaded in dark green** and the **lowest is shaded in light green**.

GRASP® Table A

| Perspective A: Access to All Components | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| SUB-AREA | Percent of Area With LOS | Average LOS Per Acre Served | Percent Total Area Above Threshold Score (67.2) | Avg LOS Per Acre Per Pop Per Acre | GRASP® Index |
| Montgomery County | 100% | 710 | 100% | 238 | 23 |
| Potomac / Rural | 100% | 415 | 100% | 592 | 34 |
| East Transit Corridor | 100% | 1136 | 100% | 270 | 24 |
| South Central | 100% | 1101 | 100% | 117 | 22 |
| North Central | 100% | 940 | 100% | 157 | 18 |

The table shows that 100% of the County is covered with at least some service, meaning that the GRASP® score for every location within the County according to this Perspective is greater than zero. Even the Potomac/Rural sub-area has 100% coverage. The average GRASP® LOS score per acre for all acres with service across the County is 710 points. This number represents the average GRASP® score for all of the area within the County. The scores by sub-area range from a high of 1136 points in the East Transit Corridor to a low of 415 points in Potomac/Rural. This is a factor of 2.7 to one. It indicates that there is a **greater concentration of components serving the East Transit Corridor than there is for the others**. The East Transit Corridor has the highest population of all the sub-areas, so providing more components there makes sense.

USING COMPOSITE-VALUES LEVEL OF SERVICE METHODOLOGY

The Vision 2030 *Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment* Chapter 5 analyzed the current inventory of park and recreation facilities in Montgomery County. One measurement of Level of Service is the Average LOS Per Acre Per Population Per Acre that can be found in GRASP® Table A above. The values for this indicator are 238 for the entire County, 592 for Potomac/Rural, 270 for East Transit Corridor, 117 for South Central, and 157 for North Central. A goal could be established for making this value equal for East Transit Corridor, South Central, and North Central by the year 2020. Potomac/Rural will continue to be an anomaly, which is acceptable due to the comparatively low population found there. To accomplish this, add or upgrade components within the South Central and North Central sub-areas. This could include adding components or upgrading modifiers such as comfort and convenience features (e.g. restrooms, shade, etc.). Components could be added within the East Transit Corridor when needed to keep pace with population growth, or components may be re-purposed there to keep them in sync with changing needs.

The GRASP® Indices can be used on an ongoing basis to measure relative LOS among the sub-areas. A goal could be set to maintain the GRASP® Index at the current level for the East Transit Corridor, and increase it for the South Central and North Central sub-areas. The GRASP® Index for the Potomac/Rural sub-area may be allowed to decrease since it is always likely to be higher than the others because of the low population found there. The GRASP® Index should be recalculated annually as an indicator of progress in equalizing service among the sub-areas. The GRASP® Perspectives, analytical LOS maps, can be run at less frequent intervals, such as every five years, if desired. It will be important to update the inventory regularly, on the same frequency that the GRASP® Indices are recalculated.

The upper inset map for **Perspective PA-1: Average GRASP® LOS Per Population Density** shows the average GRASP® score per acre within each of the sub-areas divided by the sub-area's average population density per acre. **This was done to normalize the LOS for population.** In some ways, the GRASP® analysis is a density analysis which measures the density of components and the service they provide. So comparing density of service to density of population can be a useful exercise. When analyzed this way, the **highest LOS per population occurs in the Potomac/Rural sub-area and the lowest in the South Central sub-area.** The Potomac/Rural sub-area has the lowest population density of all the sub-areas by a large margin, and the East Transit Corridor sub-area has the highest. In general, LOS as a function of population density is higher in those parts of the County that are more rural and less populated. It is inappropriate to say here what the "correct" value should be, or whether the values for all sub-areas should be the same. This information is simply provided to be used in conjunction with other findings to make recommendations for future actions.

Another way to look at LOS from this Perspective is shown on the lower inset map on **Perspective A, PA-2: GRASP® LOS Meeting Threshold Scores.** It shows where the cumulative LOS on Perspective A falls above or below the threshold score, as described earlier. The **threshold score** for this Perspective is 67.2. This is **equivalent to access to at least four components and a trail** with appropriate modifiers in place, although this score might be achieved in other ways that do not guarantee a certain mix of components. Whether or not the mix is appropriate for all areas is determined through other tools, including the public input process.

Areas where service exists, but it falls below the threshold score would be shown in yellow on this map if there were any. **For Montgomery County there are no areas falling below the threshold.**

Purple areas on the inset map are those where scores are at or above the threshold. These areas are considered to have adequate levels of service, although this does not necessarily imply that the mix of features being offered is the one that residents currently desire. It may be that changes and/or improvements are needed within the purple-shaded areas to fit the specific mix of services to the needs and expectations of residents. Again, this is determined through the public process. The Vision 2030 survey findings show overall high levels of satisfaction with the parks and recreation facilities and services in Montgomery County.

Another way to look at the service within each sub-area is to consider the total GRASP® value of all of the components within it, regardless of where they are located. **When this GRASP® number is divided by the population of the sub-area, in thousands, the result is called a GRASP® Index.** (The GRASP® Index for Access to All Components is shown in the **GRASP® Table A.**) In this analysis, **Potomac/Rural and the East Transit Corridor emerge with the highest values, and South Central and North Central have the lowest.**

APPENDIX C: LEVEL OF SERVICE MAPS

Perspective A: Access to All Components

Perspective B: Access to Indoor Facilities

Perspective E: Walkable Access to All Components

APPENDIX D: PRIORITIZING PARKLAND ACQUISITIONS

The *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, 2005* (LPPRP) identifies Montgomery County priorities for land acquisition and facility development and rehabilitation. Criteria for establishing these priorities as identified in LPPRP include:

- Consistency with the County's comprehensive planning goals for recreation, parks, and open space and State goals established through these criteria.
- Access to a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities.
- Convenience in location to population centers (e.g. areas with the most dense population receive the greatest needs).
- Access to public transportation, when possible.
- Protection of most threatened natural resources.

Questions the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Land Acquisition Section staff ask when considering parkland acquisitions include:

1. *Is the proposed acquisition specifically shown on an adopted master plan?*
2. *Does the proposed acquisition, if not specifically shown on an adopted master plan, fall within the general guidelines for parkland acquisition?*
3. *Does the proposed acquisition represent a logical addition to or expansion of an existing park?*
4. *Is the proposed acquisition threatened by loss to development?*
5. *Is the proposed acquisition essential to accommodate the construction of a Capital Improvement (CIP) project?*
6. *Does the proposed acquisition lend itself to development with active recreation facilities that will eliminate or help to eliminate unmet needs in a given area?*
7. *Is there community support for the proposed acquisition?*
8. *Does the proposed acquisition represent an "opportunity" to acquire real estate that is clearly in the public's interest?*

(Source: M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Land Acquisition Section)

There are four separate land acquisition programs used by the M-NCPPC in Montgomery County: the Non-Local Park Acquisition Program, the Local Park Acquisition Program, the Advance Land Acquisition Revolving Fund, and the Legacy Open Space Program.

The Legacy Open Space Program is a land acquisition program that began in 2001 with the adoption of the *Legacy Open Space Master Plan*. The plan identifies open space lands for acquisition due to their exceptional recreational, historic, natural or cultural value.

Ongoing refinements of the set of criteria for lands for parks, recreation, open space, and trails to assure that the balance of needs can be met are desired. The **Vision 2030** project provides additional analysis to identify target areas of current and future demand, including parklands that serve the increasingly urbanized North Central and South Central sub-areas.

M-NCPPC MONTGOMERY COUNTY Vision 2030



LEGEND

- GRASP® Perspective – All Values
- GRASP Value
- Less Access 26
- Greater Access 100
- No Service
- Metro Stop M
- Indoor Recreation Facility
- M-NCPPC Park Activity Building
- School
- Municipal Indoor Facility
- Alternative Provider Location*
- Trail
- Pedestrian Barrier
- M-NCPPC Park
- M-NCPPC Conservation Area
- Golf - Public
- Alternative Provider Location**
- Municipality

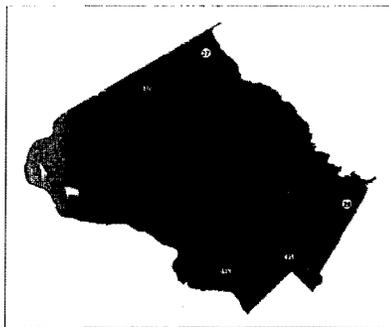


PA-3: AVERAGE GRASP LOS PER POPULATION DENSITY (LOS PER ACRE / POP PER ACRE)

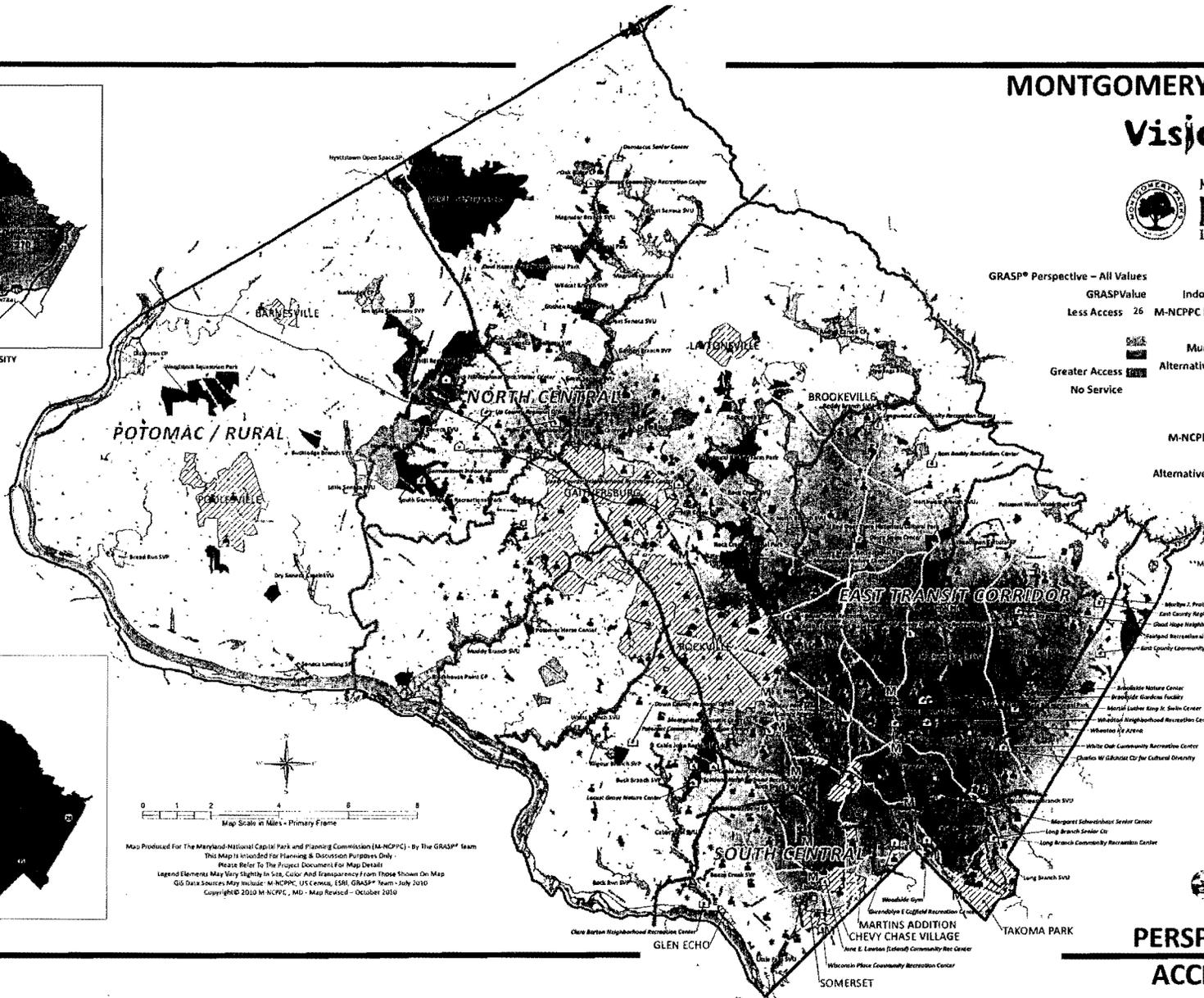
Pedestrian Barriers

- I-270
- I-495
- Columbia Pike
- Watts Branch
- Muddy Branch
- Seneca Creek
- Little Seneca/Hoyles Mill
- Great Seneca
- North Branch
- Northwest Branch

* Roads, such as Georgia Ave. and 355 are road to cross, but are not actual barriers, and not included.



PA-2: GRASP LOS MEETING THRESHOLD SCORES



Map Produced For The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) - By The GRASP® team
 This Map is intended For Planning & Discussion Purposes Only -
 Please Refer To The Project Documents For Map Details
 Legend Elements May Vary Slightly In Size, Color And Transparency From Those Shown On Map
 GIS Data Sources May Include: M-NCPPC, US Census, ESRI, GRASP® Team - July 2010
 Copyright © 2010 M-NCPPC, MD - Map Revised - October 2010



PERSPECTIVE A: ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS

93

M-NCPPC MONTGOMERY COUNTY Vision 2030

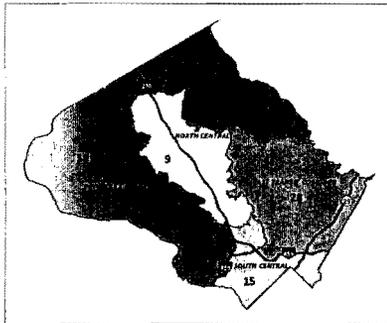


Montgomery County
RECREATION
DEPARTMENT

LEGEND

- GRASP® Perspective – All Values
- GRASPValue
- Less Access 3
- Greater Access
- No Service
- Metro Stop M
- Indoor Recreation Facility
- M-NCPPC Park Activity Building
- School
- Municipal Indoor Facility
- Alternative Provider Location*
- Trail
- Pedestrian Barrier
- M-NCPPC Park
- M-NCPPC Conservation Area
- Golf - Public
- Alternative Provider Location**
- Municipality

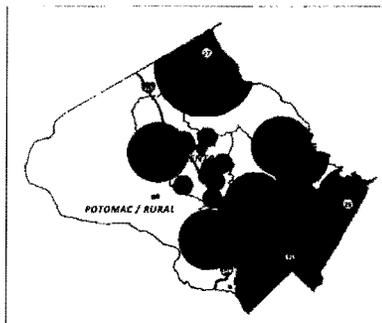
*Outdoor Pools, other
**Municipal parks, state and federal lands, urban spaces, Montgomery Village Foundation parks (HOA), other



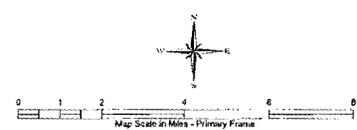
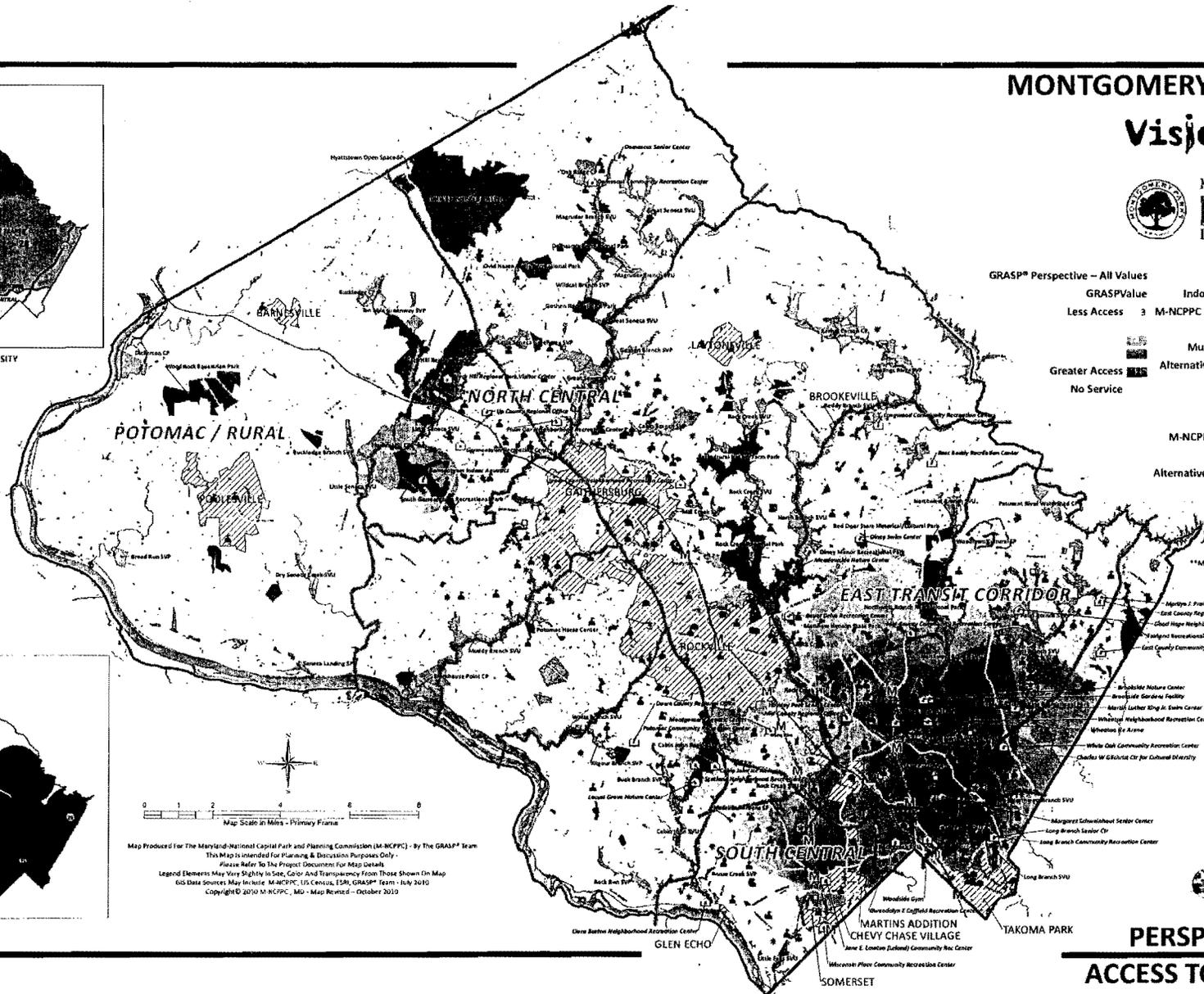
PB-1: AVERAGE GRASP LOS PER POPULATION DENSITY (LOS PER ACRE / POP PER ACRE)

Pedestrian Barriers

- I-270
- I-495
- Columbia Pike
- Watts Branch
- Muddy Branch
- Seneca Creek
- Little Seneca/Hoyles Mill
- Great Seneca
- North Branch
- Northwest Branch
- * Routes, such as Georgia Ave. and 355 are I and U cross, but are not actual barriers, and not included.



PB-2: GRASP LOS MEETING THRESHOLD SCORES



Map Produced For The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) - By The GRASP® Team
This Map is intended for Planning & Discussion Purposes Only -
Please Refer To The Project Document For Map Details
Legend Elements May Vary Slightly In Size, Color and Transparency From Those Shown On Map
GIS Data Sources: May Include: M-NCPPC, US Census, ESRI, GRASP® Team - July 2010
Copyright © 2010 M-NCPPC, MD - Map Revised - October 2010

PERSPECTIVE B: ACCESS TO INDOOR FACILITIES

94

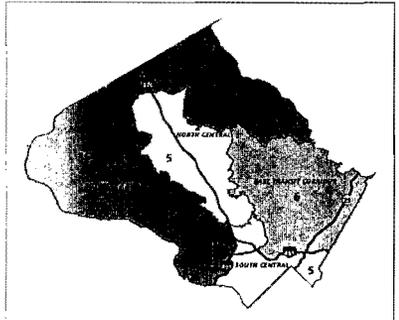
M-NCPPC MONTGOMERY COUNTY Vision 2030



LEGEND

- GRASP® Perspective – All Values
- GRASPValue
- Less Access 1
- Greater Access 2
- No Service
- Metro Stop M
- Indoor Recreation Facility
- M-NCPPC Park Activity Building
- School
- Municipal Indoor Facility
- Alternative Provider Location*
- Trail
- Pedestrian Barrier
- M-NCPPC Park
- M-NCPPC Conservation Area
- Golf - Public
- Alternative Provider Location**
- Municipality

*Outdoor Pools, other
**Municipal parks, state and federal lands, urban spaces, Montgomery Village Foundation parks (MVOA), other

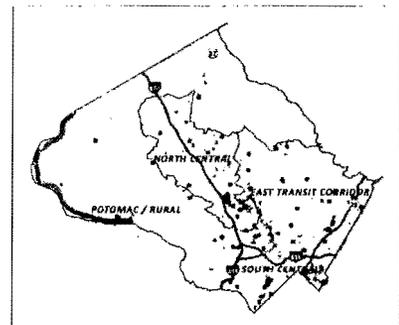


PE-1: AVERAGE GRASP LOS PER POPULATION DENSITY (LOS PER ACRE / POP PER ACRE)

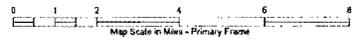
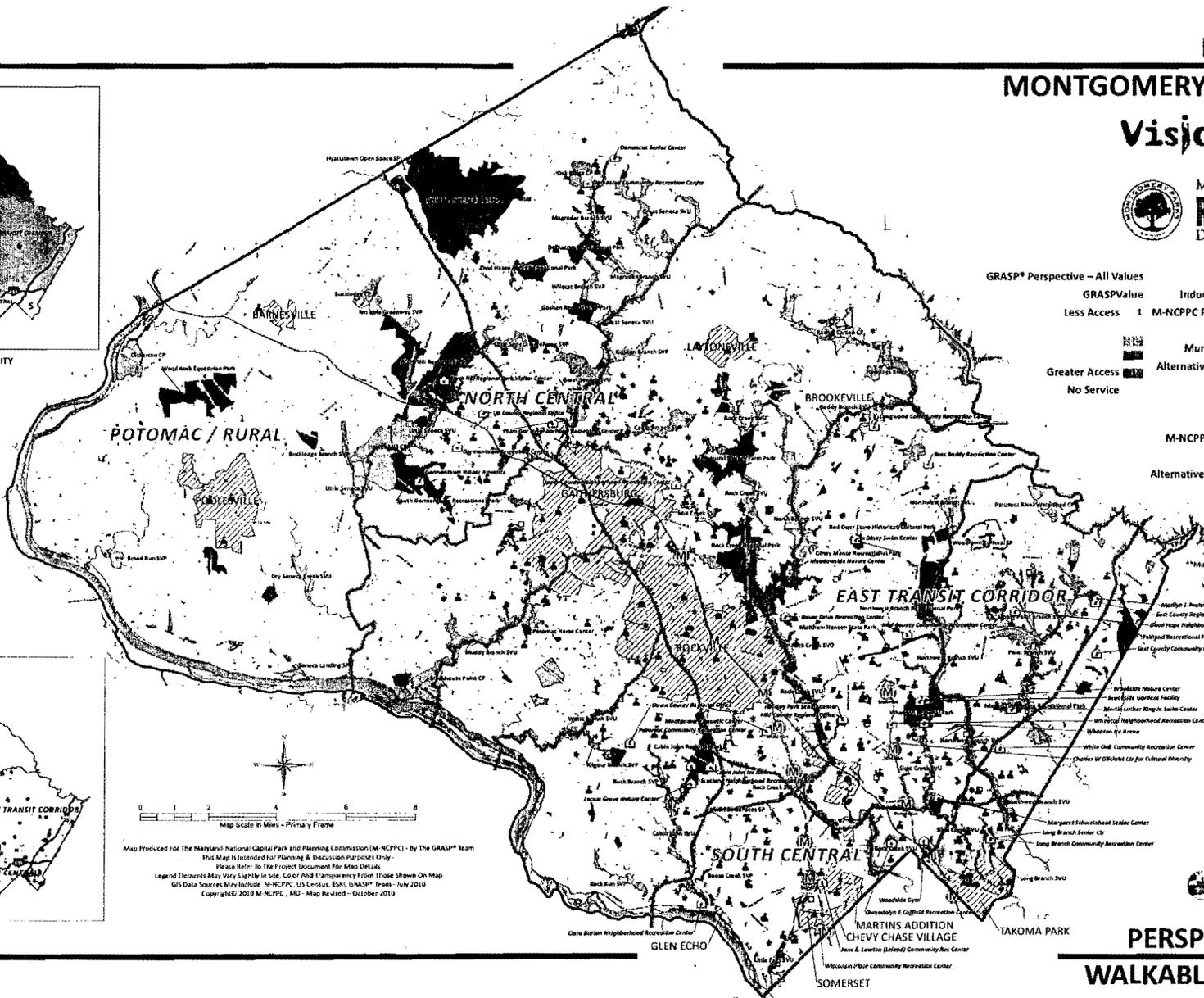
Pedestrian Barriers

- I-270
- I-495
- Columbia Pike
- Watts Branch
- Muddy Branch
- Seneca Creek
- Little Seneca/Hoyles Mill
- Great Seneca
- North Branch
- Northwest Branch

* Roads, such as Georgia Ave. and 355 are hard to cross, but are not actual barriers, and not included
Note: 1/4 Catchment Area



PE-2: GRASP LOS MEETING THRESHOLD SCORES



Map Produced For The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) - By The GRASP® Team
This Map Is Intended For Planning & Discussion Purposes Only -
Please Refer To The Project Document For Map Details.
Legend Elements May Vary Slightly In Size, Color And Transparency From Those Shown On Map
GIS Data Sources May Include: M-NCPPC, US Census, ESRI, GRASP® Team - July 2010
Copyright© 2010 M-NCPPC, MD - Map Revised - October 2010



PERSPECTIVE E: WALKABLE ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS

95

APPENDIX E: OUTDOOR COMPONENT ANALYSIS CHART

Table: Outdoor Park Component Analysis Chart (2010) – DRAFT, December 2010

| Facility or Component | *NRPA (per pop.) | | Montgomery County (2010) (per pop.) | **Survey Results (2010) | | | Service Assessment | | ***Trends (Nat'l) | Recommendation |
|----------------------------|------------------|---------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|---|---|--------------|--|--|
| | All | County | | Importance | Needs Being Met | Sub-area | North | South | | |
| Basketball court (outdoor) | 7,333 | 16,333 | 4,951 (high LOS relative to NRPA study) | Lower (37%) | Mid (56%) | Ranked as low priority countywide | Complementary Development | Core Service | Declining participation (organized vs. pick-up) | Consider multiple uses of some courts (e.g., futsal, inline skating, etc.) |
| Diamond field | 3,913 | 9,467 | 5,232 (mid LOS) | Lower (27%) | Mid (49-50%) | Ranked as low priority countywide | Advance Market Position (Regional/Recreational Parks) Core Service (Community Use Parks) | | Baseball, softball - declining participation | Strategic potential to repurpose some existing diamond fields; a capacity/use study may be warranted |
| Community Gardens | NA | NA | 4 sites (over 200 plots total) = 241,975 | Mid (46%) | High (57%) | Higher demand in South and North Central | Advance Market Position | | Increasing demand (in MC) | Strategic potential to add (3 planned for spring 2011) |
| Dog Park | 59,256 | 242,500 | 193,580 (mid LOS) | Lower (33%) | Lower (43%) | Higher demand in South and North Central | Core Service | | Growing trend, especially in urban areas | Increase, focus on urban areas |
| MP Field, all sizes | 4,946 | 10,500 | 6,049 (mid LOS) | Mid (45%) | High (62%) | Higher demand in East Transit Corridor and South Central | Advance Market Position (Regional/Recreational Parks) Core Service (Community Use Parks) | | Soccer and lacrosse growing, football steady participation | Strategic potential to add (or increase functionality of existing) |
| Playground, all sizes | 4,000 | 16,400 | 3,752 (high LOS) | Higher (68%) | Highest (73%) | Higher demand in East Transit Corridor, South and North Central | Core Service | | Growing importance as healthy living amenity | Maintain high current LOS |
| Skate Park | NA | NA | 483,950 | Lowest (16%) | Lowest (39%) | Ranked as low priority countywide | NA Don't have any in this region | Core Service | Fewer participants, but high % increase in youth participation | Strategic potential to add |
| Tennis (outdoor) | 4,690 | 15,779 | 3,184 (high LOS) | Mid (48%) | High (63%) | Higher demand in Potomac/Rural | Complementary Development | | Steady participation since 2000 | Potential to decrease number of stand-alone courts and increase groupings of tennis courts |

Note: This is a draft chart and is subject to revisions upon further staff review.

*National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Operating Ratio Study, 2009: "All" includes all jurisdiction respondent types – County/Borough, Municipal, and Special Districts.

**Survey: Vision 2030 Survey results are statistically-valid on a countywide basis; sub-area information is informational and not statistically-valid due to the smaller sample size.

See Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment for the survey report. "Needs" analysis is based on Figures 9 and 10 in the survey report. Sub-area analysis is based on Figure 22.

***Trend Sources: Sport trends - National Sporting Goods Association, Ten-Year History of Sport Participation, 1990-2000; Regional and local trends per staff data and observations

APPENDIX F: RECREATION & AQUATIC CENTER ANALYSIS

RECREATION CENTERS

The table below provides an analysis of Montgomery County Department of Recreation indoor recreation centers by sub-area. The blue shaded areas in the table indicate lower levels of service (LOS) and show that by far, the North Central sub-area has the lowest level of service for indoor recreation centers based on population density or per capita service. However, the Potomac/Rural sub-area, which has the lowest population but the largest geographic area, shows the lowest percentage LOS geographic coverage.

Table 3: Recreation Centers Analysis by Sub-Area (Dept. of Recreation)

| Sub-Area | 2010 Pop.* | SF & Number of DOR Centers | Pop. per Center | *** SF per Pop | **** Survey Ranking (Top 3) | ***** % of Area with LOS | ***** LOS Pop. Density | *Pop. Growth 2010-2030 | Priority for New or Expanded Facilities |
|-----------------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| North Central (Total) | 297,050 | 49,747 SF In 3 ctrs | 99,016 | .17 | 25% | 85% | 9 (lowest) | 30.6% 90,840 | Highest |
| **North Central | 175,867 | " | 58,622 | .28 | " | " | NA | 57,329 | |
| East Transit Corridor | 301,649 | 231,237 SF in 11 ctrs | 27,422 | .77 | 28% | 96% | 28 | 5.5% 29,846 | Lower |
| South Central | 242,354 | 89,610 SF in 5 ctrs | 48,471 | .37 | 22% | 99% | 15 | 22.5% 54,441 | 2 nd Highest |
| Potomac/Rural | 126,847 | 100,550 in 5 ctrs | 25,369 | .79 | 18% | 42% | 58 (highest) | 3.6% 4514 | Lowest |

*Source: Population Forecast Round 8.0, Research & Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, M-NCPPC June 2010. See Table 6 below for more detailed population projections of high growth parts of the sub-areas.

**North Central sub-area 2010 and 2030 population projections and analysis does not include the municipalities of Gaithersburg and Rockville because they provide their own recreation facilities and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation does not assume responsibility for recreation facility planning for these cities.

***Square Foot/2010 Population – include net square footage of recreation centers, neighborhood centers, and senior center (including new centers: Mid County, White Oak and North Potomac) per person based on 2010 County population.

****Percentage of survey respondents that ranked adding, improving, or expanding recreation centers as one of their top three priorities

*****Percentage of sub-area that has some service provided by indoor recreation centers – that shows coverage is fairly even with the exception of Potomac/Rural sub-area. The LOS analysis includes Recreation Centers, Senior Centers, open Park Activity Buildings as well as key alternative providers. See Vision 2030 Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment for further analysis in Chapter 5.

***** LOS score that shows when population density is factored in Potomac/Rural has the highest indoor center LOS per capita while the North Central has the lowest. (This measurement and the one above are two different ways of looking at LOS using composite-values methodology.)

The Montgomery County Department of Recreation level of service model of one center (approximately 33,000 net square feet) per 30,000 residents is detailed in the *Recreation Facility Development Plan, 2005 Update*. The East Transit Corridor and the Potomac/Rural sub-area exceed this target based on 2010 population figures. These two sub-areas also have the highest combined center square footage per population. In contrast, the North Central has the lowest current LOS and is projected to have the highest rate of growth in the next twenty years to 2030.

Table 4: Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Center Projections (Square Feet)

| Total Current SF of Indoor Recreation & Aquatic Centers (2010/CIP Gross SF*) | 2010 Population (Adjusted***) | 2010 SF/Person | 2030 Population (Adjusted ***) | New SF of Indoor and Aquatic Space Needed to Reach Standard of 1.1 SF/person, 2030 |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 882,200+/- SF** (24 indoor recreation centers and 4 aquatic centers) | 846,717 | 1.05 | 979,706 | 195,500 +/- SF**** |

*Estimated Gross Square Feet (SF) = 40% above Net Square Feet (NSF).

** Includes 3 Senior Centers serving unique + 55 populations only.

***Adjusted Montgomery County, MD population minus the populations of the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville.

****See Vision 2030 Goal 8 and Objectives.

A flexible approach to meeting the recreational needs of Montgomery County is desired – one that factors in equitable distribution of centers based on population density as well as operational efficiencies to best meet these needs. Due to the high interest in recreational aquatics, especially indoor facilities, and the operational efficiencies involved **it is the recommendation of the 2030 Vision project to incorporate indoor aquatics with recreation centers.** This is common industry practice throughout the nation. However, Montgomery County has a history of larger, stand alone state-of-the art aquatic centers. Incorporating aquatics in recreation centers **would require that the current Community Recreation Center Program of Requirements (POR) be modified and merged with an Aquatic Center POR for these new combined facilities.**

The standard of 1.1 square feet for community recreation center space per one County resident (based on a 33,000 square foot recreation center per population of 30,000) is appropriate and no changes are being recommended in the **Vision 2030** project. This standard is comparable to other similar agencies. For example, the Park Authority in Fairfax County, Virginia also has a recreation center standard of 1.1 SF/resident. (Source: *Needs Assessment Final Report*, Fairfax County Park Authority, February 2004)

A need for the equivalent of 195,500 +/- SF of additional indoor recreation space is projected based on the 2030 population forecast in order to achieve the 1.1 SF/resident standard. According to the Vision 2030 study, new or expanded recreation centers are the highest priority to serve the North Central sub-area due to current gaps in indoor recreation service and anticipated demands from projected population increases. The South Central sub-area is a second priority due to projected population demands. (See *Perspective B: Access to Indoor Facilities* in **Appendix C.**) Opportunities

and current efforts to renovate and modernize existing community recreation centers should also be explored, when feasible, as an additional strategy for addressing increased demand as the County grows.

Guidelines for Prioritizing Capital Improvement Projects

The following development criteria and sequencing for DOR recreation centers is outlined in the *Recreation Facility Development Plan, 2005 Update*.

- Population density that is currently underserved by existing facilities.
- Population socio-economic make-up, with communities of more children, higher diversity and/or fewer leisure options, being given a priority. *(North Central would qualify)*
- Availability of time sensitive cost-saving opportunities, such as Federal grants, private sector donations or dedications, or efficiencies in construction costs *(and/or operating costs)* by joining projects.
- Expressed interest and support from specific communities.
- Geographically isolated communities with fewer leisure options.

The analysis from the **Vision 2030** project clearly points to a gap in service in the North Central sub-area based on current and projected population densities. In addition to efficiencies in construction costs, it is important to also consider efficiencies in operating costs. The last item in the list should be further defined as it may not be operationally sustainable to add recreation centers to geographically isolated communities with very low populations.

Role of Alternative Providers

How do **alternative providers** currently contribute to the level of service for indoor recreation centers in Montgomery County? The inventory conducted as part of the **Vision 2030** project shows that the denser, more developed sub-areas have the most number of a wide variety of alternative providers (recreation centers as well as indoor aquatic facilities, cultural centers) as show in table below. The East Transit Corridor sub-area has by far the highest number (12) of the smaller Park Activity Buildings (owned by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks) that generally consist of a large multi-purpose room, restrooms, and a small kitchen. The composite-values level of service analysis used in the **Vision 2030** project factored in these other providers. Even with alternative providers factored in, the LOS is still lowest in the North Central followed by the South Central.

Table 5: Park Activity Buildings and Alternative Providers (by sub-area)

| Sub-Area | M-NCPPC Department of Parks – Park Activity Buildings (in operation as of 2010) | | *Alternative Providers of Indoor Recreation Spaces |
|-----------------------|---|----------|---|
| | Number | Total SF | |
| North Central | 1 | 2,175 | 22 |
| South Central | 6 | 12,799 | 9 |
| East Transit Corridor | 12 | 29,418 | 2 |
| Potomac/Rural | 0 | 0 | 2 |

**Alternative providers included recreation centers in Gaithersburg and Rockville, including aquatic facilities and cultural center, as well as providers such as the YMCA. While school spaces such as gyms were factored into the LOS analysis, they are not included in these numbers.*

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks also has an inventory of Park Activity Buildings that are not currently open. Further research into potential opportunities for adaptive re-use or replacing Park Activity Buildings to serve the North Central area in particular is recommended.

Potential Areas for New or Expanded Recreation Centers

The table below identifies target areas where concentrated growth is projected to 2030. New or expanded recreation centers are the highest priority to serve the North Central sub-area, followed by the South Central sub-area. (Note: More detailed population projections by the 28 Planning Areas used by the M-NCPPC are found in **Appendix G.**)

Table 6: Potential Areas for New or Expanded Recreation Centers by 2030

(Potential areas have lower current per capita service for indoor centers and high projected population growth.)

| Sub-Area | By 2020 (10 years) | By 2030 (20 years) |
|---|---|---|
| North Central (Highest Priority) | Clarksburg area <i>(projected pop. increase of 23,614 by 2030 with 14,480 of this growth by 2020)</i> | Germantown/ Gaithersburg Vicinity <i>(projected pop. increase of 35,235)</i> |
| South Central (Secondary Priority) | Silver Spring area <i>(projected pop. increase of 12,278 by 2020)</i> or *North Bethesda area <i>(projected pop. increase of 26,241 by 2030 with 5,246 projected by 2020)</i> | Bethesda area <i>(projected pop. increase of 16,365 by 2030)</i> |
| East Transit Corridor | NA | Kensington/Wheaton <i>(projected pop. increase of 14,793)</i> (Look at opportunities to expand existing centers) |

Source: Population Forecast Round 8.0 by Planning Area, Research & Technology Center, Montgomery County Planning Department, M-NCPPC, June 2010.

**Planning efforts currently underway.*

Note: Long-term planning efforts should address the Poolesville/ Western County area because it has few facilities even though population numbers may not indicate it is warranted.

AQUATIC CENTERS

Survey and Inventory Analysis

Indoor aquatics rated in the top five as most in need of addition, expansion, or improvement (out of a list of 30 parks and recreation facility choices) across all four sub-areas, as shown by the following Vision 2030 survey rankings. Outdoor pools rated lower in comparison.

Table 7: Aquatics Survey Input by Sub-area

| Sub-area | Outdoor Aquatics | | | Indoor Aquatics | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----|--|-----------------|-----|--|
| | Rank | % | Current # (Dept. of Recreation) | Rank | % | Current # (Dept. of Recreation) |
| North Central | 4 th | 19% | 2 (Upper County, Germantown) | 1 st | 29% | 0 |
| South Central | 7 th | 16% | 2 (Long Branch, Bethesda) | 5 th | 21% | 1 (Mont. Aquatic Ctr.) |
| East Transit Corridor | 10 th | 8% | 2 (Wheaton/Glenmont, Martin Luther King, Jr) | 4 th | 23% | 2 (Martin Luther King, Olney Swim Ctrs.) |
| Potomac/Rural | 11 th | 7% | 1 (Western County) | 3 rd | 23% | 1 (Germantown Indoor Swim Ctr) |

Note: The following alternative providers have outdoor pools: municipalities – Rockville Municipal Swim Center, Gaithersburg Summit Hall Pool (both in North Central) and Silver Spring and Bethesda YMCA (in South Central). These are not counted in the total numbers above.

Aquatics – Recommendations

No new stand-alone indoor aquatic centers are recommended in this Vision 2030 study. Instead, it is recommended that these types of aquatic facilities be included as a component of new larger regional-serving recreation centers (see Vision 2030 Goal 8).

Montgomery County also appears to be well-served by outdoor aquatic facilities, both public and private. Therefore, future aquatic facility development should focus on indoor aquatic centers integrated with larger regional-serving community recreation centers.

Maintaining the quality of the current indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities with investments in ongoing maintenance and enhancements will continue to be equally important.

RECREATION AND AQUATIC FACILITIES BENCHMARKING – A NATIONAL LOOK

The table below looks at benchmarking ratios of the recreation centers and aquatic facilities operated by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation in comparison to averages from a self-reported nationwide study, *2009 Operating Ratio Report*, a report of the National Recreation and Park Association. For example, if an agency reported a jurisdiction population of 100,000 and the agency had two recreation centers the population per center would be 50,000. *(Note: it is difficult to accurately compare recreation and indoor facilities because the size and quality are not factored in this type of analysis. In addition, many county agencies across the nation do not operate either aquatic facilities and/or recreation/community centers; the municipal jurisdiction or special district handles local level of service. This is not true of Montgomery County, so the better comparison is to the "All" column versus the "Borough/County" column. This information should be considered only in context with other more detailed analysis.)*

Table 8: Recreation Center and Aquatic Facility Benchmarking

| Facility Type | Population Per Facility | | | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---|---|
| | *NRPA | | **Montgomery County – Dept. of Recreation (2010) | |
| | All | Borough/County | | |
| Recreation/Community Center | 25,000 | 36,554 | 35,280 (24 centers) | These figures only include DOR centers; if the 18 small M-NCPPC Parks Activity Buildings are factored in, the ratio would be much larger |
| Indoor Aquatics/Swimming Pool | 42,000 | 172,000 | 211,679 (4 large stand-alone aquatic facilities) | DOR indoor aquatic facilities are large regional facilities with many features (average 41,860 SF); the facilities are larger than most other jurisdictions and are an not "apples to apples" comparison |
| Outdoor Aquatics/Swimming Pool | 34,187 | 105,556 | 120,959 (7 outdoor pools) | Alternative providers of outdoor pools, such as swimming clubs, are numerous and contribute greatly to the LOS countywide and are not factored into the numbers in this chart. The County appears to be well-served with outdoor pools when private and public providers are considered together. |

*National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Operating Ratio Study, 2009: "All" includes all jurisdiction respondent types – County/Borough, Municipal, and Special Districts.

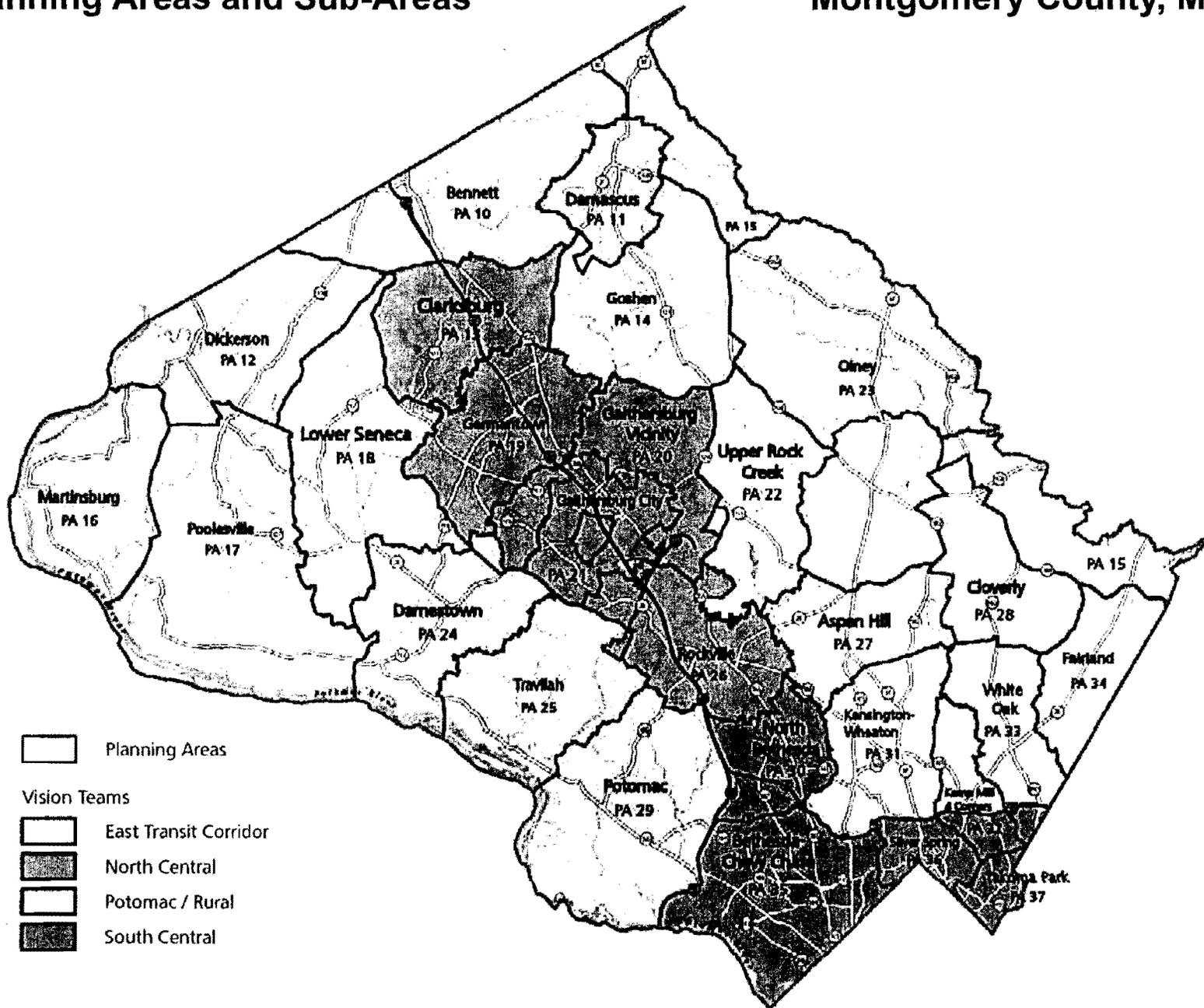
**Based on the adjusted 2010 County population that excludes the populations of the Cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville of 846,717.

APPENDIX G: PLANNING AREA MAP & POPULATION PROJECTIONS

104

Planning Areas and Sub-Areas

Montgomery County, MD



Total Montgomery County Population by Planning Area
Round 8.0 Cooperative Forecast

| Planning Area | 2010 | 2015 | 2020 | 2025 | 2030 |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Aspen Hill | 62,633 | 63,355 | 63,551 | 63,596 | 62,962 |
| Bennett | 3,851 | 3,828 | 3,893 | 3,968 | 4,040 |
| Bethesda | 102,807 | 110,568 | 115,475 | 118,028 | 119,172 |
| Clarksburg | 14,745 | 21,349 | 29,225 | 36,921 | 38,359 |
| Cloverly | 17,452 | 17,368 | 17,500 | 17,738 | 17,937 |
| Damascus | 10,978 | 10,919 | 11,458 | 12,642 | 13,507 |
| Darnestown | 12,982 | 12,798 | 12,693 | 12,565 | 12,664 |
| Dickerson | 1,363 | 1,372 | 1,405 | 1,443 | 1,483 |
| Fairland | 42,774 | 42,041 | 41,857 | 42,148 | 41,958 |
| Gaithersburg City | 58,707 | 62,416 | 67,560 | 72,473 | 77,050 |
| Gaithersburg Vicinity | 75,542 | 75,141 | 78,143 | 85,748 | 96,174 |
| Germantown | 87,573 | 86,074 | 87,422 | 94,754 | 102,176 |
| Goshen | 11,731 | 11,628 | 11,702 | 11,870 | 11,963 |
| Kemp Mill | 36,546 | 36,848 | 36,878 | 37,113 | 37,585 |
| Kensington/Wheaton | 78,259 | 82,054 | 87,537 | 90,544 | 93,052 |
| Lower Seneca | 1,226 | 1,243 | 1,297 | 1,339 | 1,377 |
| Martinsburg | 280 | 279 | 280 | 295 | 297 |
| North Bethesda | 51,683 | 56,929 | 67,078 | 69,496 | 77,924 |
| Olney | 37,758 | 37,064 | 38,267 | 39,521 | 40,851 |
| Patuxent | 5,561 | 5,551 | 5,672 | 5,798 | 5,914 |
| Poolesville | 5,990 | 6,435 | 6,798 | 6,946 | 7,087 |
| Potomac | 47,678 | 48,336 | 48,705 | 49,058 | 49,155 |
| Rockville | 62,476 | 67,341 | 71,847 | 74,503 | 77,644 |
| Silver Spring | 44,602 | 52,633 | 56,122 | 56,420 | 56,880 |
| Takoma Park | 30,597 | 30,264 | 29,931 | 30,858 | 31,346 |
| Travilah | 27,212 | 26,342 | 26,076 | 25,985 | 26,061 |
| Upper Rock Creek | 12,092 | 12,095 | 12,141 | 12,494 | 12,575 |
| White Oak | 34,902 | 34,729 | 34,487 | 34,736 | 34,807 |
| County Total | 980,000 | 1,017,000 | 1,065,000 | 1,109,000 | 1,152,000 |

*Source: Population Forecast Round 8.0, Research & Technology Center,
M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Department, June 2010*

APPENDIX H: MULTI-USE TRAIL TABLE

Multi-Use Trails Chart

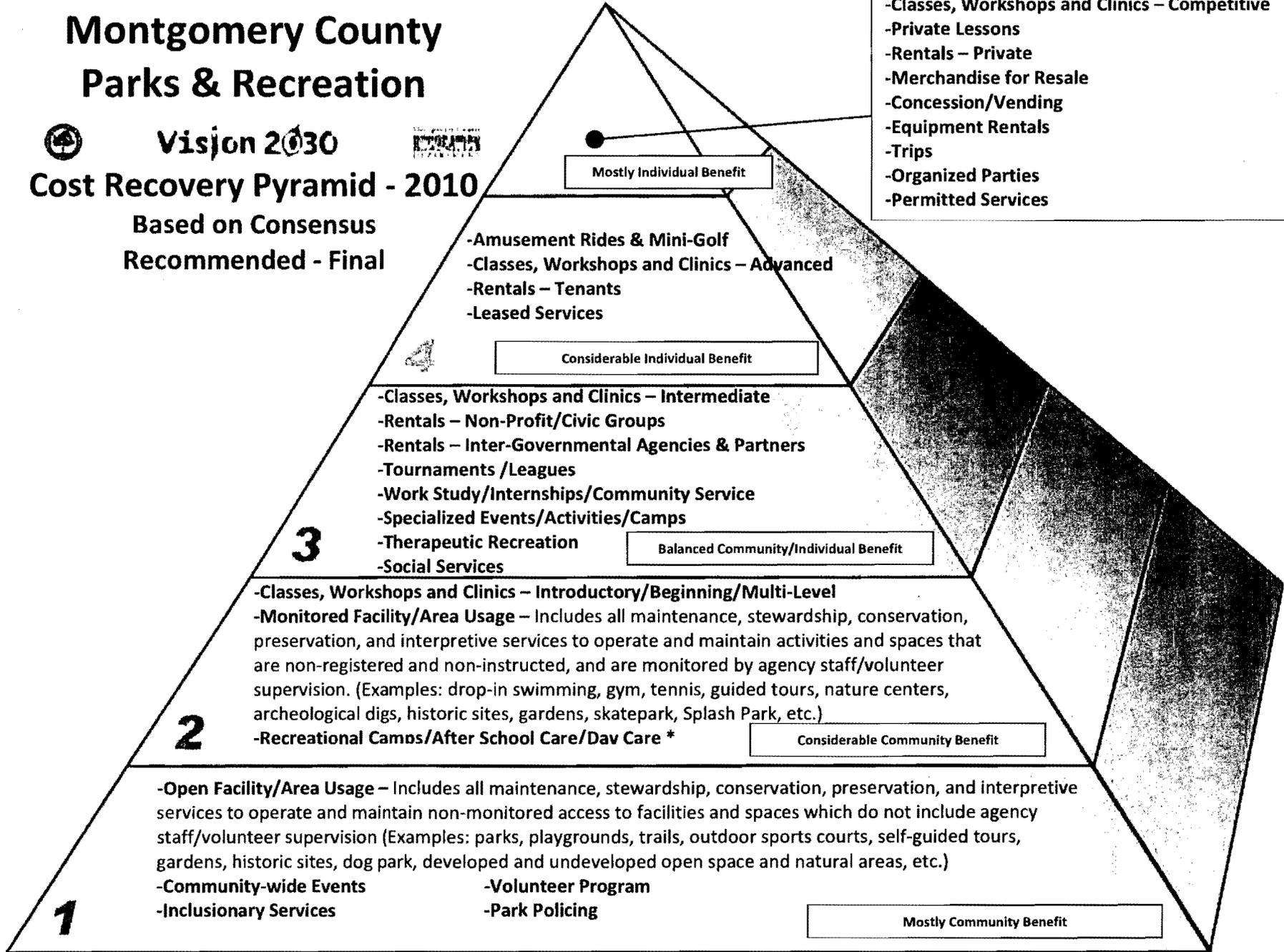
| Sub-Area | Trail Surface Type | User | Miles M-NCPPC | Miles Other | Total | Pop 2010 w/in 1/4 Mile Trail Catchment Area | Sub-Area Pop 2010 | % Pop w/Access to Trail 1/4 Mile | 1/4 Trail Catchment Area (acres) | Sub-Area Acreage | % Sub-Area Acreage w/in 1/4 Mile Trail Catchment | Sub-Area Pop 2030 |
|---|--------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|---|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|--|-------------------|
| Potomac/Rural | Hard/Paved | Hiking/Biking | 12.7 | 34.2 | 46.9 | | | | | | | |
| Potomac/Rural | Natural | Shared by All | 39.8 | 5.2 | 45.0 | | | | | | | |
| Potomac/Rural Subtotal | | | 52.5 | 39.5 | 92.0 | 39566 | 124,973 | 32% | 23008 | 176825 | 13% | 131,361 |
| South Central | Hard/Paved | Hiking/Biking | 20 | 9.3 | 29.3 | | | | | | | |
| South Central | Natural | Shared by All | 0.25 | 0 | 0.3 | | | | | | | |
| South Central Subtotal | | | 20.3 | 9.3 | 29.6 | 89700 | 242,354 | 37% | 8026 | 234623 | 3% | 296,795 |
| North Central | Hard/Paved | Hiking/Biking | 7.3 | 2.1 | 9.4 | | | | | | | |
| North Central | Natural | Shared by All | 17 | 0 | 17.0 | | | | | | | |
| North Central Subtotal | | | 24.3 | 2.1 | 26.4 | 25832 | 297,050 | 9% | 5684 | 333913 | 2% | 387,890 |
| East Transit Corridor | Hard/Paved | Hiking/Biking | 37 | 0.26 | 37.3 | | | | | | | |
| East Transit Corridor | Natural | Shared by All | 8 | 0 | 8.0 | | | | | | | |
| East Transit Subtotal | | | 45.0 | 0.3 | 45.3 | 70722 | 301,649 | 23% | 9319 | 340616 | 3% | 318,354 |
| COUNTY | | | 142.1 | 51.1 | 193.2 | 225,820 | 966,026 | 23% | 46,037 | 1,085,977 | 4% | 1,134,400 |
| Total 2010 Pop | 966,026 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pop 2010 w/in 1/4 Mile Trail Catchment Area | 225,820 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| % Pop w/Access to Trail 1/4 Mile | 23% | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1/4 Trail Catchment Area (acres) | 46,037 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Miles Hard Surface | 122.9 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Miles Natural Surface | 70.3 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * Montgomery County, Dufief HOA, National Park Service (including C&O Towpath), State of MD | | | | | | | | | | | | |

109

Montgomery County Parks & Recreation

 **Vision 2030**
Cost Recovery Pyramid - 2010
Based on Consensus
Recommended - Final

- Classes, Workshops and Clinics – Competitive
- Private Lessons
- Rentals – Private
- Merchandise for Resale
- Concession/Vending
- Equipment Rentals
- Trips
- Organized Parties
- Permitted Services



* Notes: Consultant recommendation:Recreational Camps/After School Care/Day Care – moved from level 3 to 2 due to slight weighting toward Public and Summit sorting results.