

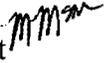
PHED COMMITTEE #1
November 8, 2012

Briefing

MEMORANDUM

November 6, 2012

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

FROM: Marlene L. Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

The Committee will receive a briefing on the 2012 update to the Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan prepared by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Attached on © 1 to 16 are the transmittal letter from the Planning Board Chair and the first chapter of the Plan, which provides the Overview. Complete copies of each Plan have been distributed to Committee members and are available online at http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkPlanning/Projects/pros_2012/documents/2012.PROS.Plan-final.10.19.12.pdf.

The PROS Plan serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2022 and beyond. Based on community-wide outreach efforts, it assesses park and recreation needs and offers innovative, data-based, and logical methodologies for delivering services to meet those needs into the future. In addition, it recommends methodologies for stewardship of natural and cultural resources and preservation of agricultural lands.

The purposes of the 2012 PROS Plan are as follows:

- To provide the basis for park and recreation recommendations in area and park master plans;
- To guide priorities for park acquisition, renovation, and development;
- To provide guidance regarding recreation facility needs in the County for the next 10 years;
- To recommend priorities for important natural historic resources in the County that need to be preserved and interpreted; and
- To review policy and background information regarding local agricultural land preservation programs.

The Plan's contents are in part driven by the State requirements for a Land Planning, Preservation, and Recreation Plan, with updates required approximately every six years. (The last Plan was prepared in 2005.)

Plan Highlights are summarized on © 11. One of the major differences between this PROS Plan and prior versions is that this plan includes a new focus on how to address park, recreation and stewardship needs in an era of diminishing resources and increasing urbanization. Highlights include the need to ensure operational sustainability and prioritize the use of tax resources for core services.

Other changes to the Plan include the following changes in policy and procedure reflected in the recommendations on © 12 to 16:

- Create service delivery strategies;
- Renovate and repurpose existing parkland and facilities;
- Implement new guidelines for urban parks;
- Apply new plan to manage natural areas throughout the park system;
- Manage and interpret historic and archeological resources per cultural resources asset inventory database; and
- Create an implementation plan to distribute needed facilities equitably.

One of the major tasks of the PROS Plan is to inventory existing facilities and estimate the need for additional parkland and new facilities, described in Chapter 3. The estimates are created by considering historical need, Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) permit data, available benchmarking, changes in demographics and recreational preferences, and survey data collected from County residents. Countywide needs for a variety of facilities appear on pages 36 to 39 of the Plan (see © 17 to 20). The analysis indicates significant need for additional dog parks, community gardens, and skateboarding facilities.

The Department of Parks is conducting a more detailed analysis of athletic field use and therefore the 2012 PROS Plan includes data from the 2005 PROS Plan regarding athletic field need. **The Committee may want to ask for an update on field need data once it is available.**

The PROS Plan also includes chapters on Natural Resource Stewardship, Cultural Resources Stewardship and Agricultural Land Preservation. While for the most part these chapters summarize existing programs and policies rather than presenting new recommendations, PROS describes the elements of a new Natural Resource Management Plan for Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parkland, which is currently underway. It will provide guidance on management of natural areas within parks. It also highlights the top 25 cultural resources that should be considered the priority for funding, preservation, and potential programming.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 25, 2012

TO: Marlene Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *M Bradford*
Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director, Administration *MR*

FROM: Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *J Hench*
Brooke Farquhar, Master Planner Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning (PPSD) *Brooke Farquhar*

SUBJECT: November 8, 2012 PHED Committee Briefing on the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the briefing is to provide the PHED Committee with an overview of the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan (**Attachment 1**), approved by the Planning Board on July 19, 2012. Although PROS includes the *Montgomery County Recreational Facility Development Plan 2010-2030* by reference and with excerpts, the Montgomery County Recreation Department will provide a separate memo and briefing on their plan following this presentation.

What is the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan?

The 2012 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2022 and beyond. It gives planners and decision-makers the tools they need for meeting the needs of an urbanizing county. Based on community-wide outreach efforts, it assesses park and recreation needs and offers innovative, data-based, and logical methodologies for delivering services to meet those needs into the future. In addition, it recommends methodologies for stewardship of natural and cultural resources and preservation of agricultural lands.

Required by the State of Maryland for funding by Program Open Space, the 2012 PROS Plan provides input into the State's *Land Planning, Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)* and serves as the County's LPPRP. In order to keep pace with changing patterns of need, updates to the PROS Plan have been required by the State approximately every six years.

The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation, Montgomery County, Maryland (Vision 2030)*, completed in June 2011, guided many of the new recommendations in this plan. *Vision 2030* built a broad consensus among the public, staff, and county leadership and for strategies to maintain and improve the overall levels of service across the County, as well as specific recommendations for effective and efficient delivery of the park and recreation facilities that County residents value the most. As a result, the 2012 PROS Plan evaluates a greater variety of park and recreation facilities than in past PROS plans.

Building on the findings of *Vision 2030*, the 2012 PROS Plan includes service delivery strategies for several priority facilities and resources. The strategies will guide the Department of Parks in locating the

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right park and recreation facilities in the right places, and to ultimately help ensure that the parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping Montgomery County's high quality of life.

The purpose of the 2012 *PROS Plan* is:

- To provide the basis for park and recreation recommendations in area and park master plans
- To guide priorities for park acquisition, renovation and development
- To provide guidance regarding recreation facility needs in the County for the next 10 years
- To recommend priorities for important natural and historic resources in the County that need to be preserved and interpreted
- To review policy and background information regarding local agricultural land preservation programs

The *PROS Plan* supports the park and recreation goals and objectives contained in the County's 1993 *General Plan Refinement – Goals and Objectives*. It compares facility needs and resource stewardship priorities for different areas of the County so that decision makers have the information necessary to establish priorities in an era of high competition for limited resources. It includes chapters on Recreation and Park Needs, Natural Resources Stewardship, Cultural Resources Stewardship and Agricultural Land Preservation.

What outreach was conducted for PROS?

A great deal of the input for the 2012 *PROS Plan* is based on outreach from *Vision 2030*, including the statistically valid mail survey, public meetings, summits, and focus groups. Additional outreach included:

- Providing a Web page and e-mail access with opportunity for input
- Obtaining input from Recreation and Park Advisory Boards
- Holding public meetings on draft service delivery strategies

What is new about this PROS Plan?

This *PROS Plan* includes new strategies for our urbanizing county. In an era when it is difficult to build new facilities and acquire new land, we must focus on strategies to deliver services where they are most needed, and in the most efficient manner. Therefore, *PROS* introduces guidelines for urban parks, service delivery strategies, and an emphasis on renovation, repurposing, and co-location.

Urban Parks - New Guidelines, Park Types, and Facility Types

In June of 2010, the Planning Board approved objectives for Urban Park Guidelines. The goal of the Urban Park Guidelines is to re-examine and re-define the role of urban parks in community life. Urban Park Guidelines will provide direction to park and recreation recommendations in area master plans/sector plans, park master plans, park facility plans and CIP projects. *PROS* contains Phase 1 of the Urban Park Guidelines, with a new definition of urban parks through six new urban park types, a new methodology for distribution of urban parks, and new urban park facility types, including civic greens, community open space, urban wooded areas and urban forms of dog parks, skate parks, and community gardens.

Service Delivery Strategies

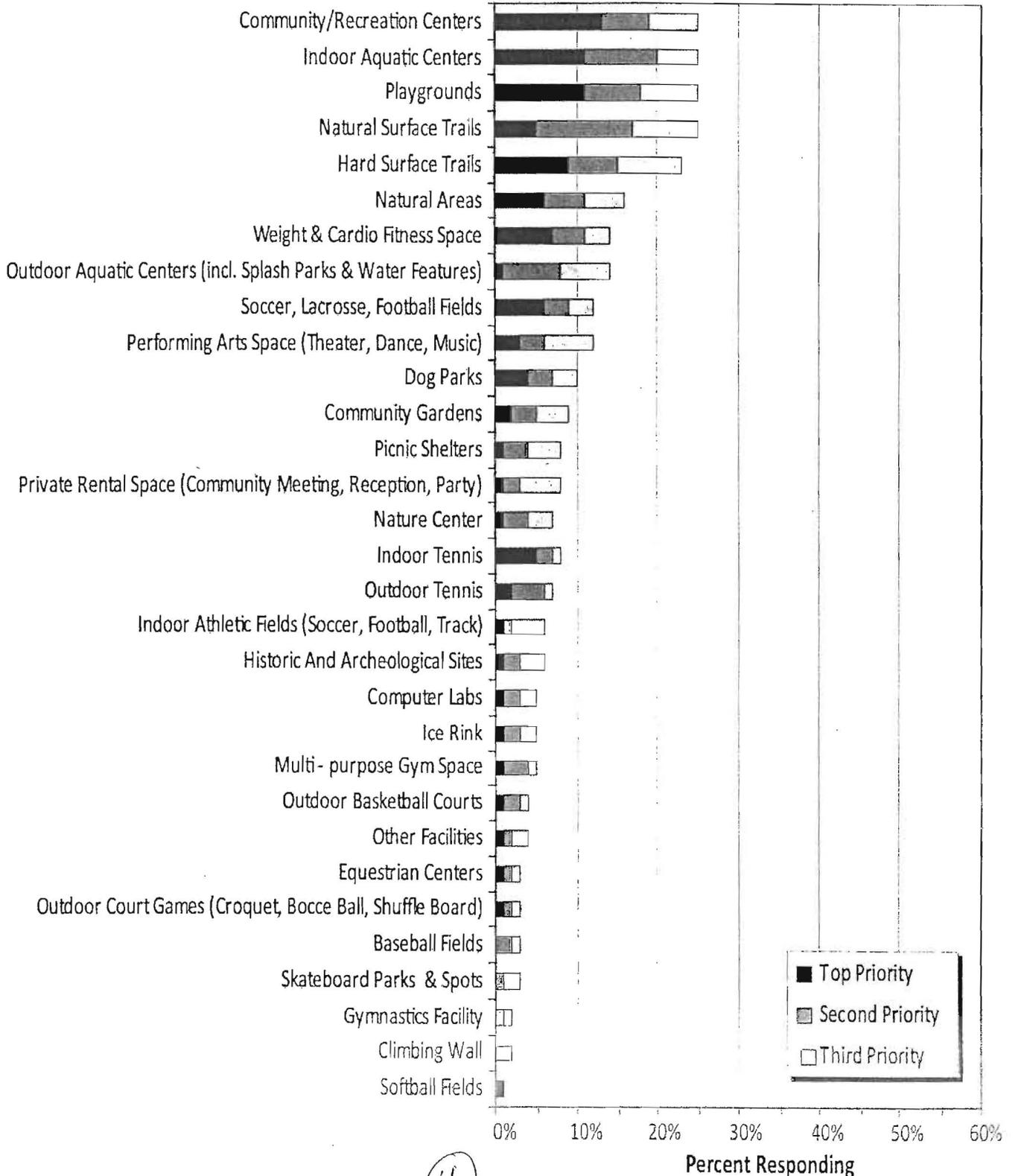
The 2012 *PROS Plan* showcases Service Delivery Strategies, an innovative tool to achieve the “right parks” in the “right places” in our urbanizing County. Service delivery strategies for the most important facilities and resources, identified by *Vision 2030*, allow staff to be more specific about the type, number and location of lands and facilities needed to the Year 2022. The facilities evaluated are listed in order of importance to the public from the *Vision 2030* survey on the following chart.

The *Vision 2030* survey showed certain facilities to be high ranking across several questions - most notably trails, natural areas, playgrounds, and community recreation and aquatic centers. *PROS* estimates needs and recommends service delivery strategies for those facilities as well as for some facilities that ranked lower in importance but higher in unmet need such as skate parks, dog parks, community gardens, and ice rinks, and for traditional facilities such as athletic fields, picnic shelters, tennis courts, and basketball courts. Additional facilities not measured in the survey - cricket fields, outdoor volleyball, civic greens, urban wooded areas, and community open spaces - are included due to other public input and/or staff-observed demand.

In addition to estimating the quantitative need for each facility type, each service delivery strategy recommends the priority park type and geographic distribution to fill gaps in service, as adjusted for projected population density. This methodology helps planners and decision makers in recommendations for area master plans, park master plans, partnership proposals, site selection studies and implementation plans, facility plans and prioritization of future Capital Improvement Programs.

Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Survey Results

IMPORTANCE OF ADDING, EXPANDING, OR IMPROVING FACILITIES (Top 3 Priorities)



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PROS Service Areas Map



The needs estimates and service delivery recommendations in *PROS* are grouped by three geographies, into facilities serving the Countywide Planning Area, Athletic Field Areas, and Planning Areas shown on the above map. Countywide facilities include recreation/aquatic facilities, natural and hard surface trails, natural areas, dog parks, community gardens, picnic shelters, group picnic areas, historic/cultural areas, ice rinks, skate parks, outdoor volleyball, cricket fields, civic greens, community open spaces, and urban wooded areas. These facilities are projected on a total countywide basis.

Athletic fields are included in the Athletic Field Areas. Until the proposed Athletic Field Study is completed in FY 13, the Department of Parks will continue to rely upon the athletic field needs projections to the year 2020 presented in the *2005 PROS Plan/LPPRP*. When completed, the proposed Athletic Field Study will project athletic field needs per the State’s guidelines to the year 2022. Planning Area facilities include facilities needed “close to home” - playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts.

Renovation and Repurposing of Existing and Co-location of New Parkland and Facilities

Renovation, reconstruction, and repurposing of underutilized existing facilities are major recommendations of *Vision 2030*. Service delivery strategies in *PROS* consider the renovation of existing facilities an important aspect of meeting needs and maintaining and improving levels of service. In addition, wherever appropriate and feasible to achieve efficiencies and synergies between uses, co-location of new facilities is also encouraged.

What are the other highlights of PROS?

Balancing recreation and stewardship continues to be a goal of *PROS*. To that end, innovative strategies for stewardship of natural, cultural and agricultural resources are included.

Natural Resources Stewardship

The *2012 PROS Plan* recommends a three-pronged approach to protection and management of natural resources in the park system:

- Management through a new Natural Resource management plan
- Acquisition of important natural resources through Legacy Open Space and Program Open Space
- Stewardship through invasive species control, interpretation, and other programs

The *2012 PROS Plan* describes the elements of a new *Natural Resource Management Plan for Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parkland in Montgomery County, Maryland*, already underway. To provide more protection of specific natural resources within the park system, the new plan will provide guidance to park staff for the management of the approximately 26,000 acres of natural areas in parks. For the first time, park operations staff will have detailed maps and protocols to manage state-mandated environmentally sensitive areas on parkland such as streams, wetlands, and their buffers; 100-year floodplains; habitats of threatened and endangered species; steep slopes; agricultural and forest lands intended for resource protection or conservation; and other areas in need of special protection, as determined in the plan. The plan focuses active resource management on the ten major terrestrial habitat types found in the County, as well as other significant habitat types and microhabitat features that contribute to the biodiversity and biological integrity of the park system.

Protection of important natural resources through acquisition into the park system will continue. Natural resource parkland makes up approximately 5,173 acres (or 82%) of estimated future acquisitions. These natural resources will be added to the park system through the development review process, and the Program Open Space and County Legacy Open Space acquisition programs.

Stewardship of natural areas within parks will continue to be implemented through the variety of programs described in Chapter 4. Current policies and management programs are critical to the conservation of natural resources, especially programs that control invasive and damaging wildlife and plant species. In addition, maintaining interpretive programs for the public creates the next generation of stewards to support the long-term preservation of natural resources in the County.

Cultural Resources Stewardship

The *2012 PROS Plan* includes policies and practices for the management and interpretation of historic and archaeological resources on parkland. The Department of Parks' Cultural Resources Program will continue to make historical, archaeological, and landscape properties useful to residents and visitors now and in the future in the following ways:

- Continue to tell the county's story through its best 8-10 public interpretive sites, including, but not limited to: Woodlawn Manor and the Underground Railroad Experience Trail, Oakley Cabin, Josiah Henson Special Park, the Agricultural History Farm Park, Kingsley School, and Blockhouse Point.
- Continue to use the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory, developed by Parks based on the National Park Service model, as a prioritized historic sites management tool. (Note that some of the buildings in the inventory were acquired in a near-complete state of disrepair.) The top 20-25 properties in the inventory at any given time should be considered the priority sites for funding, preservation, and potentially programming.
- Should a new cultural resource become available that tells a critical part of Montgomery County's history never told before, that resource should be considered for selection in the inventory, regardless of its geographic location.

Agricultural Land Preservation

The 2012 *PROS Plan* reinforces the new and ongoing programs and policies for agricultural land preservation in the County (see Chapter 6). Montgomery County has protected 71,622 acres of farmland through agricultural preservation easements, including eight State and local preservation easement programs and a transfer of development rights program, and acquired environmentally sensitive and culturally significant properties in the Agricultural Reserve, placing them into parkland. New programs and policies, including a Building Lot Termination program and an Agricultural Incubator for new farmers, promise a continuation of the thriving agricultural community in Montgomery County.

Our public agencies continue a balancing act to support the Agricultural reserve: the Planning Department plans and regulates land uses in the Reserve, designates the necessary receiving areas, and helps identify and protect its agricultural heritage; the County administers our Agricultural Preservation programs and supports and promotes the farming economy; and the Department of Parks interprets the Reserve as a resource of lasting value for the public, both culturally and economically, as well as protecting unique resources and providing space for recreational uses.

How will PROS guide future work programs?

The service delivery strategies recommended in *PROS* lay the groundwork to solve the most pressing park and recreation issues of our growing population. Current and future plans that will be guided by the 2012 *PROS Plan* include:

- Urban Park Guidelines - Phase 2
- Countywide Park Trails Plan Amendment
- Athletic Field Study
- Comprehensive Implementation Plan - Site Selection Studies

Urban Park Guidelines – Phase 2

The next phase of the Urban Park Guidelines will address a standard amount of public parks and open space relative to the projected density in urban areas. By establishing such a benchmark, decision makers can apply an appropriate level of service in urban sector plan and master plan areas. In addition, the Guidelines will include performance standards for each park type, and direction for urban park ownership, operations, policing, and programming, and environmental standards.

Countywide Park Trails Plan Amendment

PROS directs the Countywide Park Trails Plan Amendment to recommend realistic alignments for trail corridors, taking into account more detailed environmental and natural resource analysis than previous trail plans, and to coordinate with the *2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan* as much as possible to produce interconnected systems of trails and bikeways. This plan, currently underway, builds on *Vision 2030's* guidance to remedy geographic disparities in level of service for trails by prioritizing trails according to:

- proximity to population density
- connections to destinations
- location of alignments on suitable terrain
- closing gaps in the trail system

From a countywide perspective, residents are well-served by park trails. Compared to other Maryland jurisdictions, Montgomery County features an extensive recreational park trail system, both hard surface and natural surface. However, these trails could be more evenly distributed geographically. Some areas of the county are better served (defined as convenient access) than others. For example, our hard surface trail system is primarily located in downcounty stream valley parks in older, more densely developed urbanized areas. It is important to have trails where population densities are highest.

However, some current or proposed high density areas are not very well-served, such as the I-270 Corridor and the eastern area of the county. Residents living in these areas either have poor access to park trails or not enough trails. Additionally, because our hard surface park trail network is primarily located downcounty, residents could benefit from more miles of hard surface park trails upcounty in areas of new growth. New hard surface park trails are scheduled to be built by developers in some locations. Conversely, because many of the county's natural surface trails are currently located in less populated areas primarily upcounty, residents could benefit from more miles of natural surface trails downcounty in the older, more urbanized areas.

Athletic Field Study

Vision 2030 recommends a more detailed analysis of field use in order to better assess the demand and deliver the service of athletic fields. Specifically it recommends re-balancing the existing mix of athletic fields to better fit current needs for rectangle and diamond fields by strategically repurposing some existing diamond fields and increasing the number of rectangular fields to meet growing demand for a variety of sports played on rectangular fields. It acknowledges that locating enough of the right type of fields close to field users is a big challenge. Accordingly, *Vision 2030* recommends that the M-NCPPC Department of Parks undertake a more detailed analysis of athletic fields than is typically required by the State of Maryland in a *PROS Plan*.

The Athletic Field Study, currently underway, will:

- Conduct extensive outreach efforts to athletic field user groups and various governmental partners, e.g., CUPF, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery Department of Recreation
- Identify athletic field issues and associated solutions unique to each of the seven athletic field areas
- Compare use to capacity (both measured in hours per week) for all public athletic fields
- Identify opportunities on restricted use fields to increase their capacity by adding irrigation, lighting, and/or converting some to synthetic turf

- Identify opportunities to increase the number of rectangular athletic fields through:
 - making more high schools fields available for public use through CUPF
 - conversion of diamonds to rectangles where feasible
 - building new fields
- Consider the contributions of alternative providers(e.g., Olney Boys and Girls Club) to meeting countywide athletic field needs
- Compare and contrast M-NCPPC Department of Parks current method of predicting future athletic field needs by sport, youth versus adult (as first proposed in the *2005 PROS Plan*), with methods used by other jurisdictions throughout Maryland and elsewhere. If Department of Parks Staff and its various governmental partners agree on a more accurate method for predicting future athletic field needs, the Department will use it.

The 2012 PROS Plan builds on the guidance from Vision 2030, by recommending Service Delivery Strategies, based on input from user focus groups, operations staff and permitting staff, first for rectangular fields, followed by diamonds.

Comprehensive Implementation Plan

The *2012 PROS Plan* recommends a future Implementation Plan focusing on increasing service where it is most needed. This new park planning paradigm will rely on comprehensive and integrated analyses of facilities and lands that are in greatest demand to provide decision-makers with understanding of the trade-offs in an era of increasing competition for limited land and resources for a growing population. In some areas it will not be possible to build facilities on additional land and the only solution to meeting needs will be to repurpose underutilized facilities to more needed ones, while strategically seeking opportunities in other areas for new parkland. In addition, co-location with other public facilities to achieve efficiencies will be examined. The new paradigm links:

- The estimated number of needed facilities (e.g., PROS needs for dog parks, skate parks, community gardens, community open space)
- The service delivery strategy
- The results of facility-specific site selection studies

Once the potential sites for the various needed facilities are identified, staff will develop priorities and produce recommendations for area master plans, park master plans and facility plans, and park renovations. In this way, the M-NCPPC Department of Parks will align proposed implementation with the overarching guidance of *Vision 2030*, the service delivery strategies of *PROS*, and the reality testing of detailed analysis. The results will help us ensure that the parks and recreation system meets the needs of our growing population and continues to play a major role in shaping Montgomery County's high quality of life.

Pcc:

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Kate Stookey – Public Affairs and Community Partnerships
Mitra Pedoeem – Park Development
John Nissel – Facilities Management
David Vismara – Horticulture, Forestry, Environmental Education
Stephen Chandlee – Acting Chief, Southern Parks
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Mike Horrigan – Northern Parks
Antonio DeVaul – Acting Chief, Park Police
Christine Brett – Enterprise
Rose Krasnow - Interim Director, Planning Department
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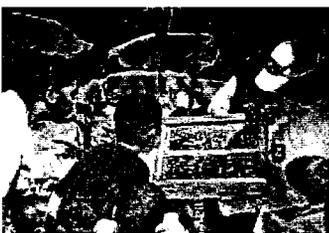
CHAPTER 1 - Project Overview

INTRODUCTION

Parks and open spaces are essential to the high quality of life for Montgomery County residents. The greatest challenge for park and recreation planning is to balance facilities needed for the active lifestyles of a growing population with the stewardship of our park system's sensitive environmental and cultural resources, in a county where there is little undeveloped land remaining. The *2012 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan* serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2022 and beyond. It assesses needs and recommends strategies for the delivery of recreation facilities, protection of natural resource areas, and preservation of historic/cultural areas and agricultural lands, and is required by the State of Maryland for funding by Program Open Space.

GUIDANCE FROM VISION 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation (Vision 2030)*, completed in June 2011, has guided the *2012 PROS Plan*. Based on broad consensus among the public, staff, and county leadership, *Vision 2030* includes strategies for maintaining and improving the overall levels of service across the County, as well as specific recommendations for effective and efficient delivery of the park and recreation facilities that County residents value the most. Building on the findings of *Vision 2030*, the *2012 PROS Plan* includes service delivery strategies for several priority facilities and resources. The strategies will guide the Department of Parks in locating the right park and recreation facilities in the right places, and to ultimately help ensure that the parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping Montgomery County's high quality of life.



PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the *2012 PROS Plan* is:

- To provide the basis for park and recreation recommendations in area and park master plans
- To guide priorities for park acquisition, renovation and development
- To provide guidance regarding recreation facility needs in the County for the next 10 years
- To recommend priorities for important natural and historic resources in the County that need to be preserved and interpreted
- To review policy and background information regarding local agricultural land preservation programs

The *PROS Plan* provides input into the State's *Land Planning, Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)*; it serves as the County's *LPPRP*. In order to keep pace with changing patterns of need, updates to the *PROS Plan* have been required by the State approximately every six years. The *PROS Plan* supports the park and

approved July 19, 2012

recreation goals and objectives contained in the County's 1993 *General Plan Refinement - Goals and Objectives (Appendix 1)*. It compares facility needs and resource conservation priorities for different areas of the County so that decision makers have the information necessary to establish priorities in an era of high competition for limited resources. It includes chapters on Recreation and Park Needs, Natural Resources Stewardship, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Agricultural Land Preservation.

PLAN OUTREACH

A great deal of the input for the 2012 *PROS Plan* is based on outreach from *Vision 2030*, including the statistically valid mail survey, public meetings, summits, and focus groups. Additional outreach included:

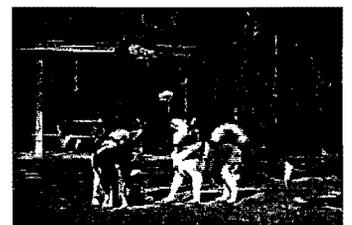
- Providing a Web page and e-mail access with opportunity for input
- Obtaining input from Recreation and Park Advisory Boards
- Holding Public Meetings on Draft Service Delivery Proposals

PLAN RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS

The 2012 *PROS Plan* endorses and builds on many of the recommendations of *Vision 2030*. The *Vision 2030* Inventory and Level of Service Analysis showed that Montgomery County has an extensive system of high quality parks and associated recreation programs. *Vision 2030* recommends that to maintain this high level of quality into the future, the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department have the following broad challenges:

- 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

The main challenge of the *PROS Plan* is to maintain the high level of park and recreation service in the County by putting the "right parks" in the "right places."



Not surprisingly, *Vision 2030* confirmed that the highest needs are and will continue to be in areas of highest population density, mainly along the I-270 corridor and inside the Beltway. The 2011 Annual Growth Policy recommends concentrating new development in these areas for Smart Growth reasons including:

"...with little room left to grow, development will need to occur in areas where densities can be higher, on sites closer to transit, reusing underdeveloped sites, or redeveloping strip malls and surface parking lots. Development in these areas will reduce vehicle trips and make the best use of our infrastructure investments (M-NCPPC, 2011, Annual Growth Policy)."

As the County becomes more urban, acquiring park sites in growth areas will be increasingly difficult because of competition with other land uses. However, park and recreation goals should support Smart Growth by locating facilities that are accessible by walking and transit, as much as possible. Providing sufficient parks and open space will depend heavily on renovation and repurposing of existing lands and facilities, while strategically acquiring new land. *Vision 2030* recommends balancing renovation of the existing aging facilities with expenditures for new construction, co-location of facilities of two or more public agencies where appropriate, repurposing of existing underutilized facilities, where supported by detailed analysis, and strengthening marketing efforts in order to increase revenue, awareness, and use. The service delivery strategies contained in the *2012 PROS Plan* build upon these recommendations from *Vision 2030*.

The *2012 PROS Plan* for the first time looks not only at projecting estimated needs and facilities as required by the State, but also looks beyond needs projection to implementation. Building on the *Vision 2030* process, the strategies in the *PROS Plan* will help to better align future capital expenditures with the public's priorities for facilities and services. Finally, the *PROS Plan* reaffirms the Department of Parks' critical responsibility for stewarding and interpreting natural and cultural resources throughout M-NCPPC's park system in Montgomery County.



WHAT'S NEW ABOUT PROS?

The following recommendations of the *2012 PROS Plan*, new since the *2005 PROS Plan* are intended to help staff and decision makers address park, recreation and stewardship needs in an era of diminishing resources and increasing urbanization in Montgomery County:

- Create service delivery strategies
- Renovate and repurpose existing parkland and facilities
- Implement new guidelines for urban parks
- Apply new plan to manage natural areas throughout the park system
- Manage and interpret historic and archaeological resources per cultural resources asset inventory database
- Create an implementation plan to distribute needed facilities equitably

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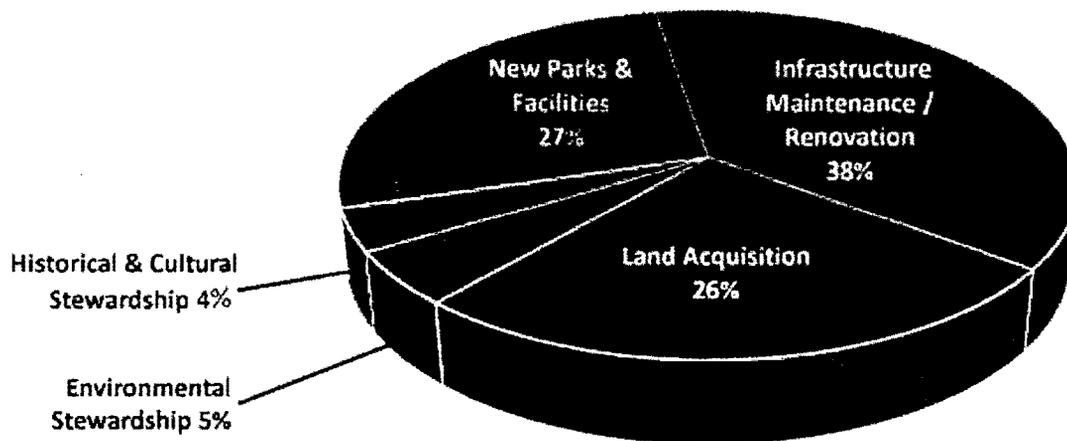
Create Service Delivery Strategies

The 2012 PROS Plan recommends strategies to deliver park and recreation facilities for the most important facilities and resources identified by Vision 2030. These strategies will help Parks staff locate amenities where they are most needed. Some popular facilities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, and tennis courts are currently meeting needs in most areas and are relatively easy to include in new or renovated parks. Others are more difficult to provide due to the lack of available or affordable land to meet the needs of a growing population; they include recent trends such as community gardens, civic greens, community open space, dog parks, urban wooded areas, cricket, and skateboarding facilities, as well as more traditional facilities, including community recreation/aquatic centers, trails, and athletic fields. The service delivery strategy for each of these is provided in detail in Chapter 3, Recreation.

Renovate and Repurpose Existing Parkland and Facilities

The Department of Parks recognizes that existing parks and facilities need renovation and reconstruction to continue to provide County residents with a high level of service. The proposed Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for FY 13-18, approved by the Planning Board, reflects this priority. Thirty-eight percent of the Parks Department CIP is allotted to Infrastructure Maintenance and Renovation, while 27% is allotted to New Parks and Park Facilities. Service delivery strategies in the 2012 PROS Plan consider the renovation of existing facilities an important aspect of meeting needs and maintaining and improving levels of service.

Proposed FY 13-18 CIP



Vision 2030 recommended strategically repurposing some underutilized park and recreation facilities with those in higher demand. Repurposing analyses will be included in future site selection and implementation studies.

Implement New Guidelines for Urban Parks

PROS Plans in the past have projected park and recreational needs by broad planning areas. The smaller urban sector plan areas present distinct challenges and opportunities for park and recreation resources as areas redevelop. Urban Park Guidelines will provide direction to park and recreation recommendations in area master plans/sector plans, park master plans, park facility plans and CIP projects. The 2012 *PROS Plan* recommends that a system of parks and open spaces be provided for every urban master plan or sector plan area through a combination of public and private efforts. Urban open space systems should support a vibrant and sustainable urban center by creating open spaces that will be comfortable, attractive, easily accessible, and provide a range of experiences. Those open spaces that rise to the level of serving as a focal point of community life for the sector plan area are typically recommended to be publicly owned and operated parks, while those open spaces serving each district, neighborhood, or block are often recommended as public use spaces to be owned by the private sector. The following hierarchy should be applied to all urban master plans and sector plans:

For the Sector Plan Area:

- active recreation destinations within or near the plan area
- a central civic urban park, ranging in size from 1/2 to 2 acres
- an interconnected system of sidewalks and trails to connect parks and open spaces
- wooded areas that will provide a sense of contact with nature

For each Urban Neighborhood: a neighborhood green, urban buffer park, or community use recreational park

For each Block: an urban square, plaza or green space

For each Building: outdoor recreation space

For each Residence: private outdoor space

This *PROS Plan* redefines urban parks by revising the Park Classification System to better reflect the open space needs of urban communities. The revised Park Classification System includes three urban park types under Countywide Parks - Civic Green, Countywide Urban Recreational Park, and Urban Greenway and three under Community Use Parks - Community Use Urban Recreational Park, Urban Buffer Park, and Neighborhood Green (*Chapter 2*).

Apply New Plan to Manage Park Natural Areas

As in the past, important natural resources will be protected by acquisition into the park system through the development review process or the Program Open Space and County Legacy Open Space land acquisition programs. Operation and Use Plans for Natural Areas will be developed for existing and future parks. These park-specific operational plans will be created within the framework of the new *Natural Resources Management Plan for Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parkland in Montgomery County, Maryland* (June 2012).



approved July 19, 2012

Stewardship of natural areas within parks will continue to be implemented through a variety of programs. Current policies and management programs are critical to the conservation of natural resources, especially programs that control invasive and/or damaging plant and animal species (e.g., a variety of non-native invasive plants and white-tailed deer).

Manage and Interpret Historic and Archaeological Resources

The Cultural Resources Asset Inventory Database is a prioritized historic sites inventory based on preservation factors. Some of the buildings were acquired in a near-complete state of disrepair. The top 20 - 25 historic sites at any given time should be considered the priority sites for funding, preservation, and potentially programming.

The Department of Parks' Cultural Resources Program will continue to make historical, archaeological, and landscape properties useful to residents and visitors now and in the future in the following ways:

- Continue to tell the county's story through its best 8-10 public interpretive sites, including, but not limited to: Woodlawn Manor and the Underground Railroad Experience Trail, Oakley Cabin, Josiah Henson Special Park, the Agricultural History Farm Park, Kingsley School, and Blockhouse Point
- Should a new cultural resource become available that tells a critical part of Montgomery County's history never told before, that resource should be considered for selection in the inventory, regardless of its geographic location

Create an Implementation Plan to Distribute Needed Facilities Equitably

PROS Plans inform the park, open space, and recreation recommendations in area master plans, sector plans, park master plans, park facility plans, and the CIP. The *2012 PROS Plan* recommends an Implementation Plan that is system-wide, while focusing on increasing service where it is most needed. This new park planning paradigm will rely on comprehensive and integrated analyses of facilities and lands that are in greatest demand to provide decision-makers with understanding of the trade-offs in an era of increasing competition for limited land and resources for a growing population. In some areas it will not be possible to build facilities on additional land and the only solution to meeting needs will be to repurpose underutilized facilities to more needed ones, while strategically seeking opportunities in other areas for new parkland. In addition, co-location with other public facilities to achieve efficiencies will be examined. The new paradigm links:

- The estimated number of needed facilities (e.g., PROS needs for dog parks)
- The service delivery strategy
- The results of facility-specific site selection studies

Park Planning staff believes these outcomes, coupled with the more general guidance in *Vision 2030*, will provide excellent guidance for preparation of the Department's future CIP. It will also help guide our work with the development community, by giving direction to our efforts to negotiate opportunities for new parks (and their associated facilities) through the development review process.

The service delivery strategies in the *2012 PROS Plan* (Chapters 3, 4, and 5) will serve as a starting point for the more detailed site selection recommendations. The Implementation Plan will use an objective and data-based analysis to recommend:

- Sites for natural and hard surface trails, natural areas, dog parks, community gardens, picnic shelters, group picnic areas, historic/cultural areas, ice rinks, skateboarding facilities, outdoor volleyball, cricket fields, civic greens, community open spaces, urban wooded areas, and athletic fields. Athletic field recommendations will be based on analysis of existing fields -- use, capacity, and demand to re-balance the existing mix -- and on analysis of sites for new or re-configured fields. This study will be especially challenging and will attempt to consider the impact of new policies instituting hourly permit fees, permit turndowns or inability for filling first or second requests, and amount of unpermitted use
- Whether and where any new nature centers or renovations should be constructed in the park system. This would include a service delivery strategy and an analysis of the existing facilities
- Realistic hard surface and natural surface trail alignments and priorities, per the Countywide Park Trails Plan Amendment currently underway
- Expanded and additional park maintenance facilities
- Future Park Police headquarters

Figure 8 - Countywide Inventory, Future Needs and Service Delivery Strategies

V2030 SURVEY RANK	FACILITY TYPE	CALCULATION OF NEED			COUNTYWIDE SERVICE DELIVERY
		METHOD /DATA SOURCE	2011 INVENTORY	ADD'L NEED BY 2022	
PROS COUNTYWIDE - Indoor Facilities					
1	Combined Community Recreation and Aquatic Multipurpose Centers	Per Montgomery County Recreation Facility Development Plan 2010-2030, (MCRD, 2011)	0	4	Add fewer, larger centers, and combine typical elements of Community Recreation Centers and Aquatic Centers into combined structures, (<i>Vision 2030</i> , M-NCPPC, 2011). Redefine two existing and add two additional strategically located combined Community Recreation and Aquatic Multipurpose Center projects to serve the North & South Central Sub-Areas
2	Indoor Aquatic Centers		4	0	See above
PROS COUNTYWIDE - Outdoor Facilities					
4	Natural Surface Trails	Per Countywide Park Trails Plan (M-NCPPC, 2008)	128 mi. (+21 mi. alternate providers)	To Be Determined (TBD) by CWPTP Amendment	Per <i>Vision 2030</i> (M-NCPPC, 2011): Expand distribution of multi-use trails: high density areas with limited trail access; and where existing trails are over ½ mile apart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-examine planned regional trails as part of the <i>Countywide Park Trails Plan (CWPTP) Amendment</i> (expected completion by Fall of 2013) ▪ Convert limited use trails to multi-use where appropriate
5	Hard Surface Trails	Per Countywide Park Trails Plan (M-NCPPC, 2008)	62.6 mi. (+112.6 mi. alternate providers)	TBD by CWPTP Amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and fill gaps in regional trail system ▪ Enhance trail connectivity to the county's recreational facilities and activity centers ▪ Improve links to the county's bikeway system and recognize the trail system's value for non-motorized mobility ▪ Examine additional way to enhance level of service
6	Natural Areas	Per Planning Board approved area master plans, park master plans, and countywide functional plans	26,000 ac	5,173 ac	Key natural areas in the County will be conserved, managed and appropriate public access provided through three primary delivery strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Important natural resources will be protected through acquisition into the park system through the development review process and acquisition programs ▪ Park-specific operational plans will be developed to provide management guidance for newly acquired and existing natural areas within the overall framework of the new <i>Natural Resource Management Plan for Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parkland in Montgomery County, Maryland</i> ▪ A variety of conservation and education programs will continue to be implemented by the Parks Department to conserve natural resources and create the next generation of

V2030 SURVEY RANK	FACILITY TYPE	CALCULATION OF NEED			COUNTYWIDE SERVICE DELIVERY
		METHOD /DATA SOURCE	2011 INVENTORY	ADD'L NEED BY 2022	
					stewards for long-term conservation
11	Dog Parks	Participation rates per <i>Vision 2030</i> Survey (M-NCPPC, 2011)	5	12 dog parks or 24 acres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Give priority to areas where level of service per population is lowest ▪ Provide three types of facilities defined by size, platform, and service area ▪ Priority platforms are Countywide (Regional, Recreational, or Urban parks) or Community Use (Local, Neighborhood, or Urban) parks based on operational and user capacity considerations, where compatibility with surrounding land uses and increased operations are feasible ▪ Size: ¼ acre (dog spot) in urban parks to 3 acres (dog parks)
12	Community Gardens	Participation rates from Benchmarking (National Research-National Gardening Association, 2009)	10	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct survey to guide site selection study ▪ Priority platform: local and neighborhood parks and public schools, followed by recreational parks ▪ Geographic Distribution: Current inventory and future need to be delivered in proportion to percent of County population in each area of the County ▪ Size: Optimal number of plots is 50
13	Permitted Picnic Shelters	Participation rates from M-NCPPC permit data, 2011	87	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at geographic parity and locate in regional and recreational parks near higher density in areas with lower levels of service for this facility, e.g., Northwest Branch Recreational Park, Wheaton Regional Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, and Cabin John Regional Park
NA	Group Picnic Areas	Participation rates from M-NCPPC permit data, 2011	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locate in regional and recreational parks near higher density in areas with lower levels of service for this facility, e.g., South Germantown Recreational Park. Site selection should focus on the upcounty area where there are currently no public facilities.

V2030 SURVEY RANK	FACILITY TYPE	CALCULATION OF NEED			COUNTYWIDE SERVICE DELIVERY
		METHOD /DATA SOURCE	2011 INVENTORY	ADD'L NEED BY 2022	
19	Cultural Resources: Historic & Archaeological Sites	Cultural Resources Asset Inventory Database, Maryland Historic Trust, and Archaeological Database	117 structures, approx.. 383 archaeology sites	NA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within a policy and regulatory framework provided by the <i>Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites</i> (M-NCPPC, 1976), the <i>Master Plan of Historic Preservation</i> (M-NCPPC, 1979), and Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code, identify, preserve, protect, and interpret historic and archaeological resources on M-NCPPC parkland; rehabilitate standing historic structures through either the CIP, major maintenance, or property management programs; and prioritize these efforts according to the ranked priority of cultural resources as determined in the Park Planning and Stewardship Division's Cultural Resources Asset Inventory Database New historic and archaeological resources will be considered for addition to the current inventory on a case-by-case basis according to historic significance, availability, condition, and public funds
21	Ice Rinks	User data (M-NCPPC, 2011)	2	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate in a regional or recreational park in the I-270 Corridor, based on location of users from current turn-away data. Ridge Road Recreational Park most appropriate because of available infrastructure, grading, parking, etc.
28	Skateboarding Facilities	Participation rates from State Planning Survey, 2003	6.5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give priority to areas where level of service per population is lowest, such as South Central Area (<i>Vision 2030</i>, M-NCPPC, 2011) Locate within safe walking distance of middle or high schools, in areas of higher population density Provide three types of facilities defined by size, platform, and service area, with priority to be given to mid-size (10,000--15,000 thousand square feet) skate parks in local parks, and larger skate parks (15,000 - -20,000 square feet) in regional and recreational parks. Provide smaller skate spots (5,000-10,000 square feet) in urban and neighborhood parks
NA	Outdoor Volleyball Courts	Participation rates estimated from local user groups	18	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add sand volleyball, with an emphasis on co-locating two or more courts for tournament play, with lighting (<i>Vision 2030</i>, M-NCPPC, 2011) Service delivery depends on where the most players are and where there is room in regional or recreational parks Multiple courts grouped, lighted, in a regional or recreational park, with adequate restrooms, picnic tables, and parking
NA	Cricket Fields	Participation rates estimate from national research	1*	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide 2 fields in the I-270 Corridor, and 2 in East County, accessed by major road such as MD Route 29, MD Route 200 /ICC

V2030 SURVEY RANK	FACILITY TYPE	CALCULATION OF NEED			COUNTYWIDE SERVICE DELIVERY
		METHOD /DATA SOURCE	2011 INVENTORY	ADD'L NEED BY 2022	
		and local user groups			
NA	Civic Greens	Public input	0	1 per urban area	Include in urban parks in the center of highest density in urban areas, near activating uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide one in every transit-served urban sector plan area
NA	Community Open Space	Public input	To Be Quantified	To Be Determined (TBD)	Open, level, grassy area for a variety of informal recreational activities. 10,000 square feet minimum, with 60' width, minimum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate Community Open Space in existing parks, and acquire additional lands that could include Community Open Space especially in areas with high population density and lower levels of service
NA	Urban Wooded Areas	Public input	To Be Quantified	TBD	An area of preserved trees or new plantings that will provide a sense of being in a natural area within an urban environment. Trails and seating areas will create inviting, relaxing places within the area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing and proposed parks in urban areas - As a part of regular planning processes, designate Urban Wooded Areas in existing and proposed parks. Prioritize efforts in areas lacking nearby woodland. ▪ Geographic Distribution: Look for opportunities to acquire additional lands that could include Urban Wooded Areas in existing and future urban areas ▪ Size: 5,000 ▪ square feet minimum, with 50' width, minimum ▪ Setbacks: 30' from buildings and curbs, and other park facilities Priority Platform for Service Delivery: Parks in urban areas.

* Two temporary substandard fields considered equivalent to one standard cricket field for the purposes of inventory.

November 8, 2012



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

Memorandum

To: Nancy Floreen, Councilmember – At-Large
Chair, Planning, Housing & Economic Development Committee

From:  Valerie Ervin, Councilmember – District 5

Date: August 17, 2012

Re: **PHED Worksession on Dog Parks**

I am writing today to request a Planning, Housing & Economic Development (PHED) Committee meeting to discuss the expansion of off-leash exercise areas for dogs, or dog parks, in Montgomery County.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, 39% of households owned at least one dog in 2011. As you know, dog owners are one of the most frequent users of the Parks System. While the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's Department of Parks currently operates and maintains five dog parks, there remains high demand for these facilities in other areas of the County. The public testimony on the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan articulated the need for more dog parks in urban areas with high residential density, such as Silver Spring. Like community gardens, these dog parks could potentially be placed in currently underutilized locations in the Parks System, or incentivized in the development process.

I recently met with Councilmember Muriel Bowser, Ward 4 Councilmember from the District of Columbia, and among other things, discussed the need for dog parks as a growing issue along the County's border with the District. I later met with The Planning Board Chair and Director of Parks to discuss how we could increase the number of dog parks in the county.

I would like to request a future PHED worksession to discuss the steps that would need to be taken to increase the number of dog parks in the County. I would also like to discuss the inclusion of dog parks in future master/sector plans that are anticipated to have a high level of density.

Please feel free to contact my office with any questions regarding this request at 240-777-7960. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Attachment

c: Councilmembers
Françoise Carrier, Chairman, M-NCPPC Planning Board
Mary Bradford, Director, M-NCPPC Department of Parks
Marlene Michaelson, Council Staff



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

VALERIE ERVIN
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 5

Memorandum

To: Françoise Carrier, Chairman, M-NCPPC Planning Board
Mary Bradford, Director, M-NCPPC Department of Parks

From: Councilmember Valerie Ervin

Date: June 29, 2012

Subject: Dog Parks

I am writing today to request a meeting to discuss the expansion of off-leash exercise areas for dogs, or dog parks, in the Montgomery County Parks System.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, 39% of households owned at least one dog in 2011. As you know, dog owners are one of the most frequent users of the Parks System. While the Commission currently operates and maintains five dog parks, there remains high demand for these facilities in other areas of the County. Like community gardens, these dog parks could potentially be placed in currently underutilized locations in the Parks System.

I recently met with Councilmember Muriel Bowser, Ward 4 Councilmember from the District of Columbia, and among other things, discussed a growing problem along the County's border with the District. With the Council's focus on transit-oriented development, there has been an increase in the number of units around the Silver Spring Metro Station. Councilmember Bowser's constituents have noticed that this population growth has also brought an increase in pet owners. However, with the lack green space in the Silver Spring Central Business District to walk their dogs, these residents have been forced to go into the residential neighborhood of the District.

During your June 28 worksession on the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, you also heard testimony from Silver Spring residents regarding dog parks. These residents articulated that there is a need for more dog parks in urban areas, such as Silver Spring, and less in regional parks.

I would like to meet with you to discuss the steps that would need to be taken to increase the number of dog parks in the County, including in the immediate Silver Spring area. I would also like to discuss the inclusion of dog parks in future master/sector plans that are anticipated to have a high level of density. My staff will contact your office to schedule this meeting, and I look forward to our discussion.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie Ervin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "V" and a long, sweeping underline.

Valerie Ervin
Councilmember – District 5

c: Marlene Michaelson, Council Staff