

AGENDA ITEM #7
October 13, 2009

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

MEMORANDUM

October 9, 2009

TO: County Council

FROM: Marlene L. Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst 

SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Report of the Planning Board

The Semi-Annual Report of the Planning Board to the Council typically occurs in the spring and fall each year, and is an opportunity for the Planning Board to present its proposed work program and brief the Council on major planning and parks issues before the Board. The report is attached on © 1 to 20. (Councilmembers have also received a bound color copy of the report.)

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ISSUES

The report highlights the 10 projects/issues the Planning Department has focused on since the last Semi-Annual Report (see © 5 to 7). Of particular note is their continued work on the Zoning Ordinance revision, the significant number of master plans completed by the Department over the past few months, and the development of new regulations to establish a consistent and effective enforcement process for violations. In the coming months they plan to work on a range of issues identified on © 8 – 9, most notably an effort to condense the development review processes (so that each plan would only go the Planning Board once for the relevant findings), the Clarksburg Stage 4 Analysis, and the Purple Line Functional Plan.

Master Plan Schedule

The Master Plan Schedule appears on a chart on © 10-11 in the Report. The table that appears below compares the master plan schedule presented to the Council during the March 2009 Semi-Annual Report meeting and the proposed new schedule for the **Council's receipt of master plans from the County Executive**. (After completing a master plan, the Planning Board sends

it to the County Executive to prepare a fiscal analysis.) The date that the Plan is expected to be transmitted from the Executive to the Council is **shown in red** on the chart on © 10 to 11. Although the Council passed legislation that allows it to set a public hearing master plan without waiting 60 days for the receipt of the Executive’s fiscal impact statement, this schedule assumes the full 60 review period for the Executive.

DATE FOR COUNCIL RECEIPT OF MASTER PLANS*

Master Plan/Study	March 2009 Recommended	October 2009 Recommended
White Flint (Phase I)	September 2009	September 2009
Gaithersburg West	October 2009	August 2009
Kensington/Univ. Blvd.	February 2010	December 2009
Purple Line	September 2009	January 2010
Green Infrastructure	September 2009	February 2010
Water Resources Functional Plan	May 2010	May 2010
Takoma/ Langley Crossroads	February 2010	November 2010
Wheaton CBD/Metro Center	December 2010	December 2010
Master Plan of Highways		April 2011
Battery Lane	November 2011	No date to transmit
Purple Line Station Area # 2 (Long Branch)	May 2011	August 2011
White Flint Phase II	March 2011	August 2012
Clarksburg Stage IV	Not in Report	April 2012
Glenmont Metro Center	Replaced with Purple Line Plan	November 2012
Purple Line Station Areas Master Plan #3	May 2011	April 2013
Gaithersburg East	Not in Report	August 2013
Rt. 29 Corridor Mobility & Land Use Plan	Work to begin in November 2010	November 2013
Purple Line Station Area #4	Not in Report	Work to begin in January 2013
Kensington/Wheaton	Not in Report	Work to begin in May 2013
Westbard Sector Plan	November 2011	Deferred

*Estimated Date County Executive Transmits Plan to County Council
(shown in red on the chart on page 10 – 11 of the Semi-Annual Report)

There are several changes in the schedule that reflect previous requests of the Council to better space master plans (with an average of 3 major land use plans per year) and be sensitive to the Council’s schedule and the optimal times for the Council to review master plans. The Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Chair, when also Council President,

had transmitted a memorandum to the Planning Board indicating ideal months for Council review. The optimum schedule allows the Council to review one master plan each winter, summer, and fall, and avoids having a plan delivered right before the Council begins its budget deliberations or at the end of a Council term when the Council could not complete work on the master plan due to legislative restrictions. While the schedule in this Semi-Annual Report delays the receipt of some plans, it is consistent with the Council's request and presents what Staff believes is a realistic and viable schedule.

There are some issues the Council may wish to note.

- Consistent with previous Council requests, this schedule shows this Council completing the Kensington Sector Plan this term and the Takoma Langley Plan immediately after the swearing in of the next Council.
- While the Report includes the time frame for analysis of Battery Lane, it does not include Executive or Council review period since the Department is not yet sure that their recommendations will require a master plan amendment. Staff notes that the Council was considering changes in density and zoning for Battery Lane at the time it considered the Woodmont Triangle Sector Plan Amendment, but did not want to change the zoning until they could identify a strategy to maintain a significant supply of affordable housing. If any change in zoning or density is to be considered, a master plan amendment would be the appropriate vehicle.
- Councilmember Knapp will be introducing a resolution on October 13 in support of his creation of an Ad Hoc Water Quality Working Group that would issue its report by February 1, 2010. The schedule on © 10 indicates that the Planning Department would not begin work on the Clarksburg Stage IV Plan until July 2010, which would provide the opportunity for the Council to consider the impact of the Working Group report on the master plan at the spring Semi-Annual Report meeting (before the Department begins work on the plan).

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

The Department of Parks Semi-Annual Report appears on © 12 to 18. Circles 12 to 15 highlight the activities of the past few months. Circle 12 notes the change in net income in the Enterprise Fund and creative ways developed to enhance revenue (e.g., the transformation of the Wheaton Outdoor Ice Rink into a popular antiques market and flea market). While the Enterprise Fund still faces significant fiscal challenges (especially the decrease in the reserve and its inability to fund capital improvements), this is very good news, and the Department should be commended. The Department has also launched a very successful Community Gardens Program with 33 plots. Based on the level of interest, they hope to locate additional gardens and provide 250 plots next spring. Other highlights include their completion of the Parks and Recreation Study and continued efforts to reduce energy costs, use volunteers, develop new partnerships, and obtain grants to fund park operations.

Circles 16 to 18 highlight the planned activities for the coming months. In addition to their efforts to expand the Community Gardens Program, they will be focusing on ways to increase

efficiencies with the use of Smart Parks, use sustainable design principles, and protect environmentally sensitive areas. They also plan to create a high school internship program and continue planning for the relocation of the Central Maintenance Facility from Shady Grove.

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fall 2009
semi-annual report



President Andrews and Members of the Council:

Soon, you will review a closely related set of policies and plans that, collectively, are as important in defining how development should occur in the first half of the 21st century as the Wedges and Corridors Plan was to the last half of the 20th. They represent a transition to fostering a more urban form of sustainable development in strategic locations that addresses the needs of a changing population, and include:



- 2009-2011 Growth Policy
- sector plans for White Flint, Gaithersburg West, and Kensington, to be followed by Takoma-Langley Crossroads and Wheaton CBD
- the Housing Element of the General Plan
- the Commercial-Residential Zone
- the Purple Line and the Corridor Cities Transitway
- functional plans for Water Resources and Green Infrastructure
- revisions to the Zoning Code

Those plans and policies retain and reinforce existing stable communities. They provide a framework for building great new places with lower carbon footprints and fewer environmental impacts. They provide greater access to transit and other mobility choices for residents and workers. They foster excellence in design, adding value to the county's economy and increasing amenities for residents and workers.

The plans for Germantown, Gaithersburg West, and White Flint can accommodate almost half of the County's job and housing growth for the next 20 years. This concentration of development makes efficient use of existing and planned transportation and other facilities. It meets needs and preferences of both younger households and seniors. It improves proximity of housing and jobs, and fosters creative enterprises, such as the life sciences and high technology firms. It also strengthens the tax base for financing critical facilities, such as the CCT, improvements to Metro, a bus rapid transit network, and the transformation of Rockville Pike from a congested commercial strip into a grand boulevard. The plans are reinforced by smart, sustainable growth policies that provide incentives for development to occur where we have planned for it.

We look forward to working closely with you over the next several months on these proposals. In the short term, we wish to highlight for discussion the following issues in connection with this report:

Enforcement Package. Since issues of plan compliance arose in Clarksburg, we have made many improvements in inspections and enforcement of site plans, forest conservation plans, and other Board regulatory actions. Under current law, procedures differ for dealing with violations in different areas. We twice sought State legislation to help clarify the Board's enforcement process, only to have a State senator block it from coming to a vote. You recently introduced and set a hearing date for a package of amendments to the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and forest conservation law, with a proposed set of administrative regulations to establish a consistent and effective enforcement process for violations. This package provides a legally sound and regular process for handling all our enforcement cases. The Board urges that it receive your earliest attention, as we have a number of cases pending resolution. The changes we have recommended will save time, better protect the due

process rights of respondents in violation cases, and clarify the authority of the Board and staff in handling cases that, ultimately, do much to define the integrity of the Board's actions.

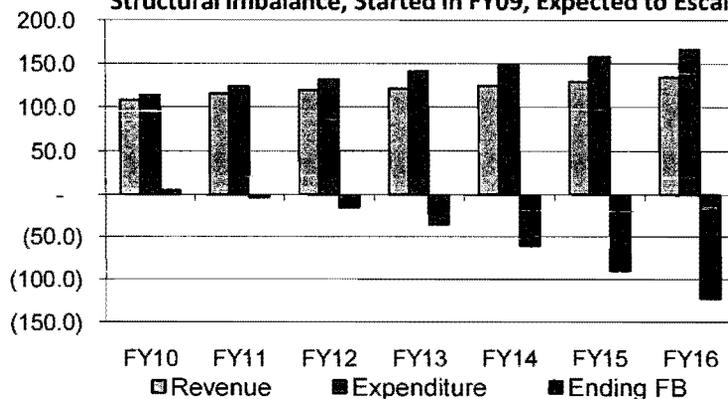
Clarksburg Stage IV. The Council requested that the Board report at the semi-annual meeting on how it proposes to proceed with the master plan amendment for the fourth stage of development in Clarksburg. This amendment involves the scale and character of development allowed in the Ten Mile Creek watershed. A key issue is whether the project can be accomplished in-house by shifting resources from other projects in the work program. We strongly recommend that funds be provided to engage consulting services on low impact development in this Special Protection Area that drains into Little Seneca Lake. If any additional development is permitted in the watershed, there is a strong likelihood that it will have to be concentrated in a small area and be designed, built, and maintained with state-of-the-art techniques. We do not have staff with the expertise to perform this task. We estimate the cost of these specialized consulting services at \$350,000. Using a consultant has the added advantage of training our staff in these techniques.

Improving the Development Review Process. One of our priorities in the next six months is to introduce ways to simplify and streamline development review, particularly reconciling comments from agencies involved in reviewing applications. Some measures may require amendments to various ordinances to establish enforceable deadlines for decisions and ensure that final approvals of development plans are accepted by agencies with permitting authority. A key goal is providing for continued transparency and public engagement in a streamlined process.

Structural Deficit. We want to alert the Council to the existence of a long-term structural deficit in funding for the Commission. It is the consequence of three converging circumstances.

There has been a steady increase of responsibilities for public services without commensurate increases in staffing. The situation is most severe in the Park Fund. During the past decade, 4,000 acres and 64 parks have been added to the system. Yet, only nine work years have been added since 2001 due to mandatory savings requirements. We are well past the point where additional land and facilities can be managed effectively just by increasing productivity.

Six-Year Projection
Over \$100 Million Deficit by FY16
Structural Imbalance, Started in FY09, Expected to Escalate



The commission's tax rates for its two funds have been regularly cut in recent years with no increase in tax rates, resulting in depletion of reserves to balance budgets. We will not experience enough growth in revenue to sustain current operations, much less support expansion of responsibilities.

Unlike all other county agencies, we are almost entirely dependent upon the property tax for operating

revenue. The three-year cycle in assessments means that recovery of our tax base from the recession will lag behind the rest of the government.

If there are no increases in the tax rates for either fund in the next six years, we will need to reduce expenditures by \$18 million per year. We are considering alternative strategies and should be ready to discuss it more fully during the budget season.

Special Revenue Fund. This fund was established during the boom years of development without a reserve, and it has declined sharply during the recession. Except for its first year, it has not generated sufficient revenue to sustain the full costs of the staff required for reviewing development applications. Instead, we have had to supplement from the balance in the administration fund. By maintaining the fiscal fiction that the regulatory program is funded entirely by the Special Revenue Fund, a significant component of the Planning budget is excluded from spending affordability guidelines and then must be subsidized by special or supplemental appropriation of reserves that should be retained for rainy days. We have repeatedly requested that the Special Revenue estimate be included in the budget as income for the administration fund, albeit dedicated for development review support, and that the program's staff and other resources included within the tax-supported administration fund. In good years, application fees may pay the full costs of the review staff; in lean years, the staff can be retained but assigned other duties if development activity is down. That is, in fact, the current situation.

Elementary and Middle School School Ball Field Maintenance. This is a parallel issue that we have discussed with Council in previous budget years. We are pleased to use our expertise to maintain these fields, but by including the appropriation in our tax-supported budget, it counts as part of our spending affordability goal. The money supports no park program. Revenue for permitting the fields goes not to parks, but to the Interagency Coordinating Board for Community Use of Public Facilities. The funds were previously part of the Board of Education budget. In our FY 2011 proposed budget, we will urge the Council to make the earmarked appropriation to a special fund of the Department of Parks, rather than the general park fund so that this pass-through account does not count against the core park budget.

The county can expect our full cooperation in meeting both FY 2010 savings and FY2011 budget goals. We appreciate the need for efficient management of our fiscal, staff, and physical resources during these difficult economic times. We have frozen almost all vacancies, filling only essential positions to achieve savings for this year and next. Last year's retirement incentive program has produced budgetary benefits that will continue into the next fiscal year. We have withdrawn our request for funds to make badly needed capital repairs to the Montgomery Regional Office to avoid a large increase in debt service over the next five years. This may result in need for some emergency funding of special appropriations when systems fail, but given the fiscal situation we think it more prudent to act incrementally, as necessary, rather than to pre-fund improvements that will then be demolished when a new building is finally authorized.

We will be prepared to discuss these and other issues raised by the departmental reports, which follow, at the semi-annual meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Royce Hanson
Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board

planning

what we've done

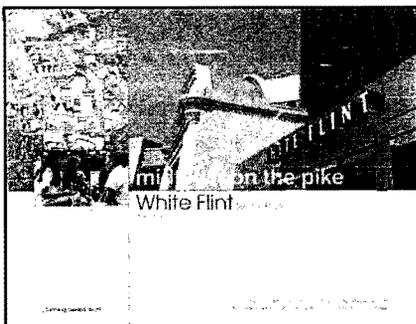
Zoning Code Revision. Planners working on an analysis of the Zoning Code as part of the rewrite project hired a consultant team to help draft the revision. To orient the team, planners held a series of activities, from a tour of the county to a public listening session, in late September. Planners unveiled a new zoning webpage to keep the public better informed. Throughout last spring and summer, the citizen Zoning Advisory Panel continued to meet to provide guidance and oversight to planners working on the project. The rewrite will result in a more functional, better organized Zoning Code.



In July, the Planning Board transmitted a proposed new Commercial-Residential (C-R) Zone to Council. The family of zones would encourage a mix of commercial and residential uses at varying densities. The proposed new zone lists a range of incentives, including proximity to transit and daily-use-oriented commercial shops, green building elements, and day care, to name a few. Services located nearby would save people time, increase a sense of community, and decrease congestion.

www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/zoning

Growth Policy. The draft 2009-2011 Growth Policy recommends how to build smarter by encouraging mixed uses near transit, using less energy, and providing incentives for green building. The Growth Policy aims to reduce vehicle miles traveled, take advantage of existing public transportation systems, revitalize under-used areas, and protect and enhance environmental quality. Some of the Growth Policy's chief strategies include directing new growth to areas where infrastructure already exists, surface parking lots, and infill around suburban office parks. The policy also calls for replacing some commercial and office uses with housing, which brings people closer to jobs, and allowing the transfer of approved building rights into the urban areas of the county. www.growingsmartermontgomery.org



Community Planning. Planners and the Planning Board focused efforts on community master plans in the last six months, advancing a number of plans. In September, the Council approved the Germantown Master Plan and sent it to the full Commission for adoption. In July, the Planning Board transmitted the Gaithersburg West Master Plan, which provides a blueprint for the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center and focuses future development around proposed transit stations. In fact, each stage of growth is tied to the planned Corridor Cities Transitway. The Board

transmitted the White Flint Sector Plan in August. That plan recommends ways to urbanize one of the few remaining locations in the County where excellent public transportation options and the potential

for significant redevelopment coincide. With the area dominated by surface parking lots, much can be done to improve environmental quality. The Board held public hearings on the Kensington and Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plans and held worksessions to review land use, transportation, environmental, and other recommendations.



Housing Functional Master Plan. In July, the Board transmitted an amendment to the Housing Element of the General Plan. Drafted by planners, it outlines strategies to encourage more affordable housing, energy-efficient housing, dwellings connected to community services, and ways to create desirable neighborhoods.

www.montgomeryplanning.org/community/housing

Corridor Cities Transitway. Transportation planners developed a comprehensive report on the Corridor Cities

Transitway and I-270 improvements that served as the guide for the Planning Board and County Council to make recommendations on a Locally Preferred Alternative to the Maryland Department of Transportation. www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/projects/corridor.shtm

Highway Mobility Report. In an annual update, transportation planners produced its report on how long it

Plan Type	Received 4/1/09-9/30/09	Brought to Planning Board 4/1/09-9/30/09
Preliminary	21	39
Project	2	4
Site*	49	45
Forest Conservation**	32	45
Mandatory Referrals	33	27
TOTAL	137	160

takes commuters and others to travel Montgomery County roadways. In addition to ranking the top 10 most congested intersections and roads as the basis for improvements to the local network, planners also analyzed transit use and pedestrian activity to provide a more holistic view of travel in the county.

www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/reports/mobility_report_2009.shtm

Regulatory Caseload. Development review staff analyzed applications and coordinated comments from other divisions and agencies to prepare staff reports for the board on development proposals. In the past six months, planning staff and the legal department have prepared and submitted 103 resolutions for Board adoption, eliminating any previous backlogs. On average, reviews have dipped to four months from receipt of an application to Board review.

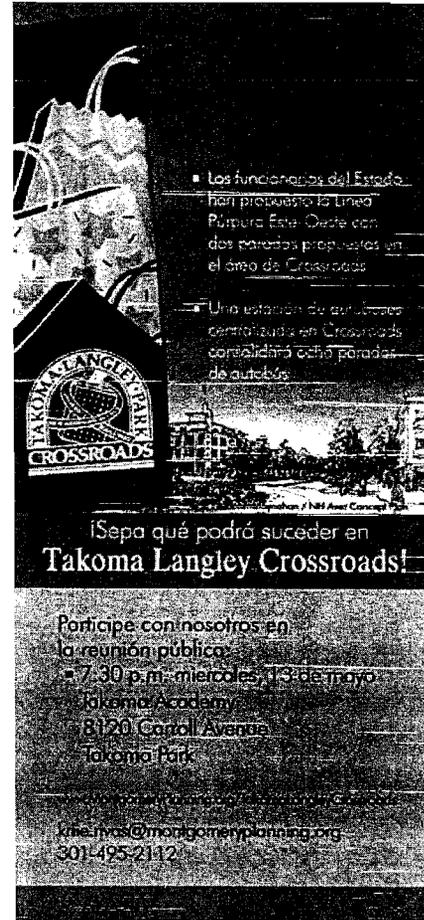
* Site plans received represents 42 amendments of which 28 were administrative.

** Some forest conservation plans are approved by the Planning Department, not the Board.

Enforcement Regulations. The Board began tackling a backlog of violations by applicants who have not adhered to plan conditions or forest conservation regulations. Planning and legal staff are systematically honing the list of alleged violations to determine the appropriate level and method of enforcement to pursue.

Historic Preservation. The Board evaluated one amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, recommending the designation of the Greenwich Forest Historic District, the Bureau of Animal Industry Building in Bethesda, and the Higgins Family Cemetery in Rockville.

Outreach. In addition to printing informational outreach materials in English and Spanish on several community plans in areas where Spanish is frequently spoken, planners translated the Takoma/Langley Crossroads public hearing draft into Spanish, the first full report translation in Department history. Planners also created a mirror web page for the plan in Spanish. As part of our work to engage residents in the Kensington Sector Plan review, we launched a photo contest in partnership with the Town of Kensington asking residents to show what they like best in their community. We will judge and award prizes at a community event and use many of the images in the



Planning Board draft of the plan. We continued producing Montgomery Plans and Growing Right in collaboration with County Cable Montgomery. A recent Montgomery Plans episode provides a tutorial for residents who might be interested in participating in planning but don't know where to start. (See inside back cover.)

Growing Smarter Speaker Series. The Board continued its monthly speaker series, attracting experts in the field to address the Board, staff, and the general public on cutting-edge issues. The series also serves as way for architects, planners and other professionals to earn continuing education credits. www.montgomeryplanning.org/research/growth_policy/speaker_series/speaker_series_2009.shtml

where we're headed

Condensing Development Review processes.

Planners have proposed a new, streamlined development review process to condense the multiple reviews now required (project, preliminary and site plan review) so each plan would go to the Board only once for all relevant findings. Applicants could then proceed directly to record plat, with site plan details, such as landscaping, lighting and recreational facilities, being approved later by staff. Review times would be reduced significantly, to four to six months for simpler plans and 12-18 months for more complicated plans. The streamlining process will be refined by staff at all the agencies and by the Board in the coming months.

Clarksburg Stage 4 Analysis. To improve water quality in the Ten Mile Creek watershed, the Planning Board recommended a revision to the Clarksburg Master Plan. Planners propose to draft a plan amendment for stage four, which spans about 1,000 acres of the 10,000-acre plan area. The amendment will use environmental site design for new development, prepare design guidelines for new housing types and invite residents and other stakeholders to advise us as the plan takes shape.

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Purple Line Functional Plan. A year ago, staff led the development of the County Council's recommendation for light rail along a route that best serves both previously planned stations and potential redevelopment areas east of Silver Spring. With the Governor's formal selection of this Locally Preferred Alternative, planners are finishing a functional master plan focused on station stops, with a Planning Board Draft to be delivered to the Council in early 2010.



Master Plans. Planners are finalizing the Kensington Sector Plan, with the Board expected to transmit its draft this fall. The Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan transmittal will be delayed until next September at the request of Council. The Wheaton Central Business District Sector Plan is underway, with a first draft expected to be considered by the Board this winter. Planners just began the community

Draft Development Review Process

Natural Resource Inventory



Concept Plan

- Road Standards "CSDS"
- Proposed SWM by general type for development, roads
- Environmental Protection Areas (forest, stream buffers)
- Development pods by unit types



Public Information Meeting



Development Application

- Level 1 Findings – same as pre-app
- Level 2 Findings – same as preliminary, no site
- Level 3 Findings – same as site, no preliminary
- Level 4 Findings – same as project, preliminary and site



Record Plat



Staff-Level Post Approval Site Plan

- Landscape/Lighting
- Recreation Facilities
- Forest Conservation Details (except easements)

outreach process for the Long Branch Sector Plan, which will address land use, zoning, and resident priorities around the two planned Purple Line stations.

Neighborhood Planning. Staff will review many of the county's 48 master/sector plans to consider community issues that may have arisen since the plan was adopted. The small-area plan reviews will focus on specific community concerns, such as the Washington Adventist Hospital site in Takoma Park. Prepared by interdisciplinary planning teams, with collaboration from other agencies, the neighborhood plan reviews should take about six months and may lead to a limited master plan, design study or economic analysis. The process could include considering requests by community groups.

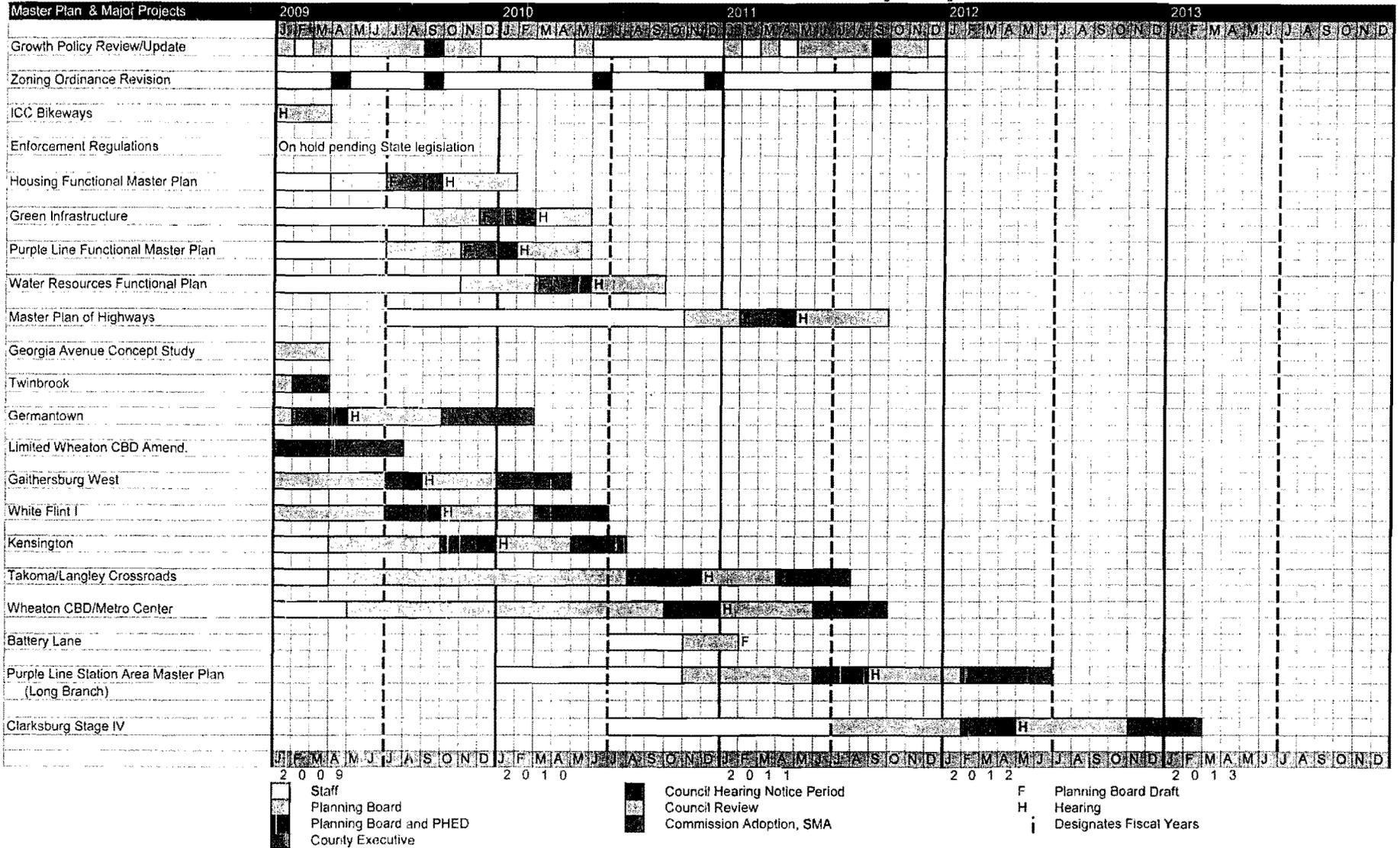
Water Resources. To meet state water quality regulatory requirements, this functional plan reviews the County's water quality needs in relation to land use and growth. The plan, required by state law every six years, sets stormwater management policies to ensure adequate drinking water and wastewater treatment capacity to meet water quality in light of planned growth. The plan will be one part of an overall multi-level, interagency approach to dealing with water resources and water quality issues and needs.



Public Education. Planners and communications staff have begun developing informational videos for public presentations and the website on specific topics such as road capacity and smart growth.

Budget Preview. The Department is facing increases for fixed costs, primarily in personnel-related costs. Since the Planning Department's budget is approximately 85 percent personnel, those costs are substantial. We are looking for ways to accommodate those costs within our current base; however, we foresee costs for consulting services associated with specific master plans that will cause an overall increase. This challenge is compounded by the performance of the Development Review Special Revenue Fund, which, like development activity, is trending downward. The Department has successfully realized efficiencies in its reorganization, using cross-functional teams to accomplish the work program, and alternative hiring methods. We are continuing to look for innovative ways to reduce expenditures. After receiving the directive for the FY10 savings plan, we are working on ways to address the Department's portion.

Schedule: Master Plans and Major Projects



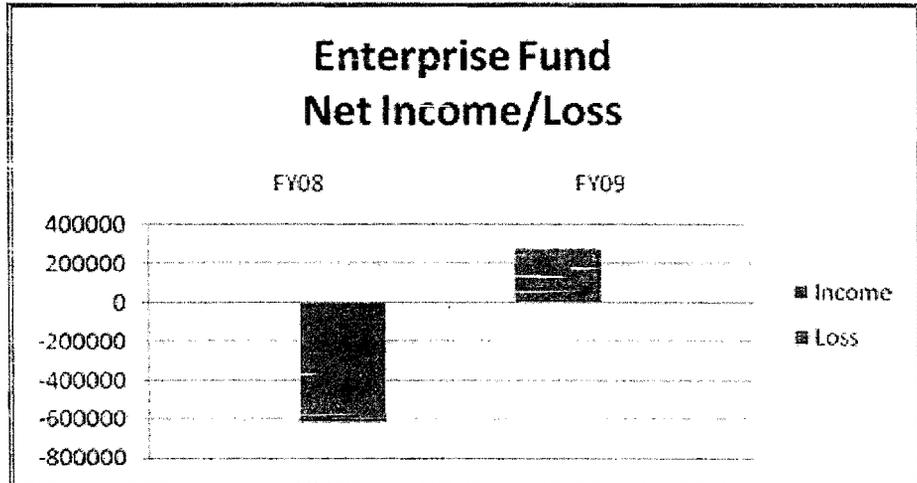
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parks

what we've done

Improved the Fiscal Management of the Enterprise Division. A more controlled approach to fiscal management, as well as strategic planning and more activity programming, is resulting in a FY09 net income of \$282K for the

Enterprise Division's facilities and programs. Strategic and Business Plans, completed for each facility and the Division as a whole, and greater efficiencies through a reduction in hours of operation during the off-season, are only a part of what is appearing to be a turnaround success story for Enterprise.



Continued Measures to Reduce Energy Consumption. The projected reduction in energy consumption for FY09 is 9% or about \$148,900. The Recycling and Solid Waste Management Program has increased recycling rates from 32% in 2003 to 68% in 2009. The projected overall reduction in costs of water consumption in FY09 is estimated to be \$28,900, partly due to water conservation programs that include the installation of waterless urinals in selected park facilities. Park staff continues to decrease paper use as much as possible: of particular note is the Park Permit Office, which began issuing field permits electronically for the first time in September 2009 and has reduced its paper budget by 20% for FY11. Other county officials have praised our cutting edge approach to energy conservation and our resulting savings.

Reduced Departmental Expenditures. In FY09, significant savings were achieved by reducing positions through the retirement incentive plan, freezing non-critical positions, and narrowing our focus to the most mission-critical tasks. We cut out or reduced certain training and travel expenses. Several maintenance efficiency measures were implemented, including: designated no-mow areas; removal of trash cans at local park ball fields during non-peak months; changes to landscaping and horticultural programs with fewer annual flowers planted in parks; and fleet reductions and energy efficient replacements of vehicles and equipment, including bio-diesel vehicles. We began testing a tracking system on some of our vehicles to optimize routes.

Enhanced Revenues. In addition to offering new and popular programs at our Enterprise facilities, we found creative new uses for existing infrastructure, such as the Wheaton Outdoor Rink's transformation into a very popular antiques market and flea market or seeking new customers for our event centers.

We are in the process of establishing procedures for recovering costs associated with dedicating facilities to individuals or supporters, and have had some success in this area already. Donations and grants revenues are up (see below). Parks also introduced a new special event permit process to recapture the costs of third-party special events that demand park resources above and beyond what is normally provided.

Completed the Parks & Recreation Study. In April 2009, members of the County Council's PHED Committee requested the Directors of the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation to return to County Council by October 1, 2009, with recommendations to improve the delivery of recreation programming to the citizens of Montgomery County. Both agencies have worked diligently over the past five months to examine the possible implications of facility and program transfers and identify opportunities to streamline and enhance customer service through improved technology and marketing. Recommendations were developed in four key areas: 1) Facility Review, 2) Programming and Pricing, 3) Technology, Registration and Payments, and 4) Marketing and PR. Three public meetings were hosted by the two agencies; the first to gain feedback on the proposed approach to the project assigned, the second to gain feedback on the proposed recommendations, and the third to present the final report to the public for one last review. The resultant report provides tangible results and implementable recommendations that can be institutionalized within both organizations and will improve the services for our constituents.

Enhanced Opportunities for Youth. All camp programs, such as archeology, outdoor adventure camps (fishing, kayaking), nature and science camps, skating, tennis and baseball camps and scouting camps, were expanded to include full and half day sessions to better serve residents with children. Montgomery



Parks continues to support Maryland's No Child Left Inside initiative by offering a variety of outdoor experiences that connect children and teens to nature and expanding outreach efforts to local schools. Participants in these programs spend at least 75% of the session time outdoors, which helps develop a lifelong stewardship ethic. Natural exploration areas, constructed with natural elements to encourage natural play and imagination, are now open at Brookside Nature Center and Locust Grove Nature Center. We are cooperating with MCPS on school

curricula, and that has already resulted in an uptick in student interest in parks in order for them to complete their assignments.

Played an Active Role in our Communities. Our tree crews promptly responded to more than 400 requests for service and removed 747 hazard or fallen trees from our parks including 55 emergency tree removal calls after normal business hours. Sixty annual park inspections of trees around playgrounds were also conducted to ensure the safety of our patrons. Park Police officers conduct numerous Park Watch Programs for community groups highlighting crime prevention and safety outreach through a variety of interactive programs, and Park Police Officers and Park Rangers regularly interact with young

park patrons to develop strong positive relationships through activities such as the Longbranch Homework Club, Ride-A-Longs, bike rodeos, and the upcoming Park Ranger High School Geo-Caching Challenge. Gathering regular customer feedback remains a priority for the Department as well. Collection for the “How Are We Doing?” surveys has grown steadily since the feedback program was introduced in 2007, with a FY09 over FY08 collection increase of 73%.

Successfully Launched the Community Gardening Program. In FY09, the Department initiated a Parks Community Garden Program. The first community garden, located at Sligo Overlook Park and consisting of 33 plots, opened on May 16, 2009, and was quickly sold out. A grant of \$10,500 was received from Takoma Park to install a deer fence, arbors, and gates around the garden perimeter. A storage shed for the garden was built by scouts and parents using donated materials from local hardware stores. Demand for additional garden lots throughout the county is high, and new garden sites are expected to open in the spring.



Maximized the Impact of Volunteerism. Volunteerism continues to provide significant value to Parks. In FY09, close to 9,000 Parks volunteers donated over 70,000 hours of their time to support Park programs and activities, the equivalent of \$1,375,000 of value-added service. In this six month period, community volunteers were instrumental in a number of highly successful service days including the Potomac River Clean Up Day, Earth Day, Trails Day, and National Public Lands Day, and also provided staff support for major park events like the Harvest Festival, Apple Festival, Children’s Day, Monarch Butterfly Day, and others. Volunteers continue to provide the primary staffing resource for many important park programs, such as archaeology, trails, non-native invasive control, public gardens, nature centers, and historic interpretation, and provide significant support to our park police officers as well.

Developed More Partnerships; Sought and Received More Grants and Donations. The Department added 11 approved partnership projects over the past six months that provide recreational and environmental stewardship facilities, programs, and services in support of the park system. The Department also has 15 new public/private partnership proposals under review including the development of a new indoor tennis facility at Cabin John Regional Park and a new baseball facility for special needs children at South Germantown Recreational Park. The Grants and Donations programs received a total of \$458,152 in the second half of FY09. Recent grants include a Maryland Energy Administration, Empower Clean Energy grant for Ice Rink Lighting Retrofits(\$73K); Maryland Heritage Areas Administration grant for Interpreting the Quaker Underground Railroad and Civil War Heritage in Montgomery County (\$100K); and EPA, Smart Growth Implementation Program (technical assistance on growth and development-related issues).



Increased the Viability of Our Cultural Resources. The historic Seneca Stone Barn in Woodstock Equestrian Park has been stabilized, and opened to the public for the first time in its history. We achieved approval for the Darby Store stabilization. Structural enhancement was completed and an electrical upgrade begun at Meadowbrook Stables. The requirements of a \$100,000 federal appropriation (via Save America's Treasures grant) for the Josiah Henson Site/formerly "Uncle Tom's Cabin" has begun. We are acquiring land adjacent to the Josiah Henson Site, and opened it to the public in June and September. We received a \$50,000 operating grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority for the professionalization of the volunteer docent corps at Woodlawn Manor and Oakley Cabin. We conducted archaeology at the Josiah Henson Site, the Zeigler Log House and Darby Store to develop portable, traveling

exhibits that can be displayed. Staff and dozens of trained docents and archaeology volunteers provided scholarly educational experiences at eight historical interpretive sites on Heritage Days in June. Finally, 140 youths participated in archaeology high school clubs and popular summer camps, sponsored by the Department in the past year. Our Emancipation Day event on November 7, 2009, is expected to draw sizeable audiences at Oakley Cabin, the Josiah Henson Site, and the Underground Railroad Experience Trail.

where we're headed

Employ Directed Management to Increase Efficiencies. Our Smart Parks technology will soon include web-based applications that allow for the incorporation of energy management, fleet operations, security and alarm system data. The new system upgrade will allow managers to plan more effectively, forecast budget expenditures, integrate data from other systems, such as KRONOS (timesheets) and GIS (mapping), and use handheld PDAs to update information from the field. It will also allow inventory control of equipment through bar code technology. The Condition Assessment Module will be expanded to provide life-cycles and a detailed condition index of building systems and structures including roofing and HVAC. With this information in hand, management will be able to make data-driven decisions and more strategically plan the Department's work program to meet existing needs.

Work Greener by Using Sustainable Design Principles. Parks staff is applying the principles of the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SSI), an interdisciplinary effort led by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center and the United States Botanic Garden, to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction, and maintenance practices in upcoming projects. Projects using these principles include facility plans for Woodside Urban Park, Little Bennett Regional Park, and the Josiah Henson Site, and design projects for Laytonia Recreational Park and Greenbriar Local Park. There are also opportunities this fiscal year to apply for and participate in pilot projects. We have already begun widespread training for our horticultural and maintenance staff.

Promote and Protect Environmentally Sensitive Areas. The *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* (M-NCPPC, 2005: V-8 to V-16) includes criteria for the recognition of Sensitive Areas, Biodiversity Areas, Best Natural Areas, High Quality Forest, and Forest Interior Habitat. Using these criteria and data compiled during approximately twenty years of field surveys, park staff have described and mapped *Sensitive Areas*, *Biodiversity Areas*, and *Best Natural Areas* throughout the 34,000 acre county park system. The GIS-based maps (and related data) have been recently compiled into a digital *Resource Atlas* for park staff and is a powerful, web-based tool that will facilitate efforts to better steward county parkland. We have also developed an educational program for both park staff and the public that describes how we strive to achieve the right balance between recreation and conservation (as stated in the Department's mission) across the county park system and illustrates the best examples of environmentally sensitive areas in county parks.

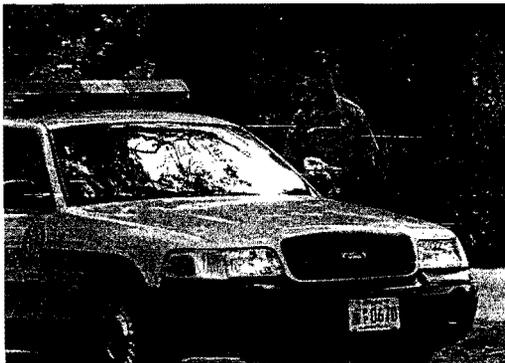
Expand the Community Gardens Program. Additional sites are being considered for the spring of 2010. These include a large area off of Briggs Chaney Road in Spencerville, Bradley Local Park in Bethesda, and Norwood Park in Chevy Chase. Because of limited open space on park property in the down county area, opportunities for community gardens on non-park property are being considered as well. These include the Silver Spring YMCA and a privately owned lot in downtown Silver Spring. Park



staff is actively searching for appropriate community garden sites in the northern part of the county as well. Public meetings for all future sites will be held to gather input from the neighborhood and interested parties. The program's goal is to have 250 plots available for gardening in the spring of 2010. In February 2010, the Parks and the University of Maryland are cosponsoring a Community Garden Round Table at Brookside Gardens for all regional community garden coordinators.

Reach Out to Youth through High School and Collegiate Internship Programs. In an effort to increase opportunities and learning experiences for teens, Montgomery Parks is meeting with Public Schools to establish a Parks high school intern program. In this way, we are grooming future naturalists, park managers, police officers, engineers, architects, and horticulturists from our own community and giving the students exposure to the advantages of parks careers. In addition, the Department will continue to sponsor the Summer Collegiate Internship Program, which gives selected interns "real-life" assignments, such as building marketing website tools, assessing staff training needs, and conducting tree care efforts in our parks. This helps to establish the Department as a workplace of choice at area universities.

Improve Coordination with other Government Agencies. Collaboration continues between the Park Police and various public safety entities including the Montgomery County Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, the County Executive's Positive Youth Development Initiative, the Montgomery County Emergency Management Group and the Montgomery County Chief's meetings. Police management is now linked to the MCP Emergency Notification Network, and our MCP Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Terminals have been updated. The Park Police participates in the MC Gang Task Force, Maryland Chief's Challenge, Underage Drinking Initiatives, Transportation Safety Details, Montgomery County Fair Security Detail and DUI Enforcement Task Forces. Parks has entered into an agreement with the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to offer Park ALERTs through the existing Alert Montgomery system. The Park ALERTs will notify residents of park and facility



closures, large event cancellations, and athletic field closures. Regular athletic field coordination meetings with Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) and MCPS continue as well, and increased efforts to outreach to and educate field users will be coordinated with all appropriate agencies and through the upcoming preseason Field User Forums scheduled for March and July 2009. Conversation with MC311 staff has begun to determine the best strategy for the integration of Montgomery Parks. The new Joint Parks and Recreation

Alliance, formed in partnership with the Department of Recreation, will provide better program services to county residents.

Ensure Emergency Preparedness. The Department is working with the University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security to develop a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for each Division and the Department as a whole. The plan details how the essential functions of the Department will continue during an emergency. Other objectives include: protecting vital equipment, records, and other assets; reducing or mitigating disruptions to operations; reducing loss of life, minimizing damage and

losses; and achieving a timely and orderly resumption of ordinary operations. A table top exercise has been scheduled for November, 2009. The Park Police also participate in weekly H1N1 conference calls/updates with the Montgomery County Department of Homeland Security and other County and State stakeholders to prepare and plan for this flu season. Emergency Park Alerts messages will now be issued by Park Police dispatch using the Alert Montgomery system.

Continue Planning for the Relocation of the Central Maintenance Facility from Shady Grove. The Department of Parks has been working closely with the County Executive over the past six months to plan the move of its Central Maintenance facility to the Webb Tract, as a component of implementing the Shady Grove Master Plan. Parks staff has attended weekly meetings with neighbors of the Webb Tract to discuss its maintenance operation and hear residents' concerns regarding uses on the site. Based on a program of requirements provided by Parks, the Department of General Services will prepare a master plan for the site, including the location and layout of the Parks and MCPS facilities. Funding for design and construction of the new parks facility is not yet in the six-year CIP.

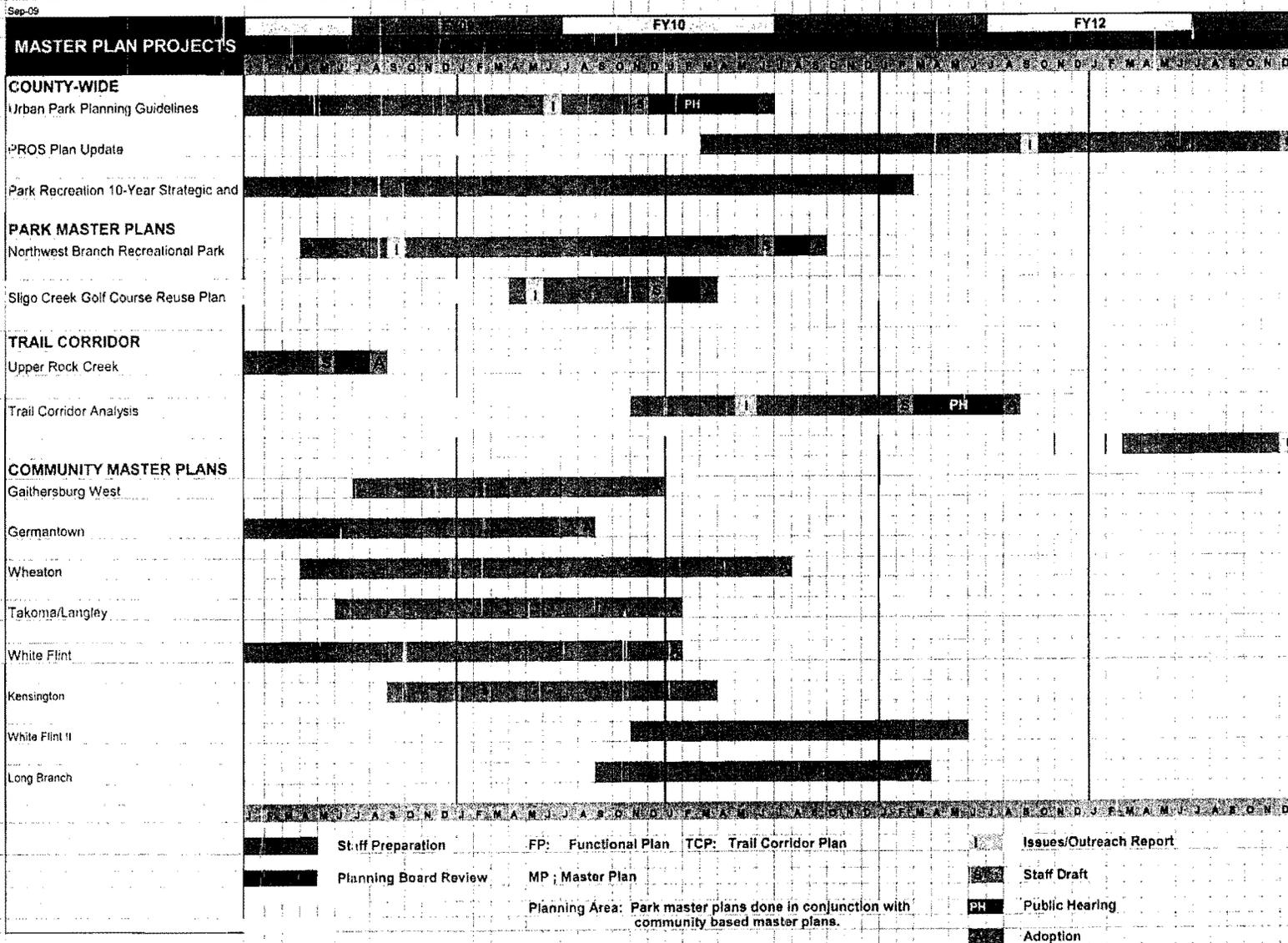
Improve Customer Data Collection. Montgomery Parks will be pursuing partnerships with local universities to collect more accurate visitor counts and gain additional information on park users. The existing customer feedback program will expand to cover more parks facilities and achieve a more in-depth look at customer needs through tabling, focus groups, and a mystery shopper program. Marketing staff will be coordinating efforts with the Recreation Department to maximize the value of the data collected and share costs and resources where possible.

Status of CIP projects. The status of development projects is listed in the chart following this section. Find more information on this program and related projects at www.ParkProjects.org. The items below are additions to the park system through land acquisitions.

- 0.14 acres added to North Branch Stream Valley Park, Unit 2
- 17.65 acres added to Rock Creek Regional Park
- 4.44 acres added to Nike Missile Local Park
- 149.92 acres added to Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park
- 0.40 acres added to Fenton Street Urban Park
- 0.48 acres added to Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Unit 2
- 4.5 acres added to South Germantown Recreational Park
- 76.8 acres added to Black Hill Regional Park
- 96.99 acres added to Ten Mile Creek Conservation Park
- 13.05 acres for the new Clarksburg Village North Local Park
- 0.93 acres added to Clarksburg Triangle Urban Park

Total: 365 acres +

PARK PLANNING and STEWARDSHIP DIVISION'S MASTER PLAN SCHEDULE



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Fall 2009 Semi-Annual Report - Major CIP Project Implementation

PDF	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	BSY
Rock Creek Trail Pedestrian Bridge	█							
East Norbeck Local Park	█	█						
Black Hill Trail Extension	█							
Black Hill Trail Renovation	█	█						
Takoma Piney Branch Local Park	█							
Fairland Artificial Turf	█							
Elmhirst Parkway Neighborhood Park	█							
S. Germantown Rec. Park	█							
Blair Artificial Turf	█							
Lake Needwood Modifications	█	█						
Germantown Town Center Urban Park	█							
Falls Road Local Park - Playground	█							
Woodstock Equestrian Center	█							
Warner Circle Special Park	█							
Darnestown Square Heritage Park	█							
Shady Grove Maintenance Facility	█							
Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park	█							
Rock Creek Sewer System Improvements	█							
Woodlawn Barn Visitors Center	█							
Laytonia Recreational Park	█							
Greenbriar Local Park	█							
Montrose Trail	█							
Wheaton Tennis Ancillary Building	█							
Falls Road Local Park - Parking Lot	█							
Brookside Master Plan Implementation	█							
Rock Creek Maintenance Facility	█							
North Four Corners Local Park	█							
Magruder Branch Trail Extension	█							
Battery Lane Urban Park	█							

█ Design █ Construction