

**RECREATION  
FACILITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN**

**FY 1997-2010**

*2005 UPDATE*



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION**

**2005**

*draft*

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

*The 2005 update is divided into 2 sections; the first dealing with the Community Recreation Centers and the second addressing the Aquatic Facility needs. Each contains its own Executive Summary and conclusions.*

*Table of Contents -----2*

*County and Department Mission Statements -----3*

*Community Recreation Centers -----5*

*Executive Summary -----8*

*Centers Plan -----17*

*Aquatic Facilities -----72*

*Executive Summary -----73*

*Aquatic Plan -----79*

*The Next Two Decades -----112*

*Acknowledgements -----115*

*Attachment # 1*  
*Community Recreation Center, Program Of Requirements, Prototype*

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY VISION STATEMENT

*“Helping to make Montgomery County the best place to be through efficient, effective, and responsive government that delivers quality services”*

---

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*We Will Provide Excellence in Government by:*

**Insisting upon customer satisfaction**  
**Ensuring high value for tax dollars**  
**Adhering to the highest ethical standards**  
**Appreciating diversity**  
**Being open, accessible, and responsive**

**Empowering and supporting employees**  
**Striving for continuous improvement**  
**Working together as a team**  
**Being accountable**

### **Department of Recreation’s Mission**

~~The Mission of the Department of Recreation is to provide and maintain quality programs and facilities that meet the recreational, social, cultural and physical needs of a diverse and changing community. This mission recognizes the importance of vision and flexibility in responding to the complex evolution of the communities that comprise Montgomery County.~~

~~The mission also recognizes that facilities, adequate in both size and number, are essential to the success of recreation and leisure service objectives.~~

## Department of Recreation

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Montgomery County Department of Recreation is to provide high quality, diverse, and accessible programs, services and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities.

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

- Leisure activities that enhance skills, health and self esteem

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

***Operating Objectives:*** “TO GIVE”. The Department will continuously strive for optimal participant experiences.

- **T**eamwork: essential to achieve success for our staff, our programs, our families, and our community.
- **O**bjectivity: We will maintain a positive approach to all challenges we face.
- **G**rowth: Change will be embraced, and used to expand our opportunities.
- **I**magination: We will cultivate new ideas into exciting programs and services.
- **V**alue: We will understand and appreciate the wealth of diversity of our community.
- **E**xcellence: We will meet our participant’s expectation of quality and performance.

***COMMUNITY  
RECREATION  
CENTERS  
2005 UPDATE***

## **PURPOSE OF THE PLAN - 1997**

In 1988, the Department of Recreation completed a Community Recreation Centers Study. This study was endorsed by the County Executive and forwarded to the County Council to be used as a guide for future Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects. The 1988 study called for the development of a prototype community center of 22,500 to 23,500 net square feet to serve a population unit of 40,000 to 50,000 people. That study called for new centers to be developed in the Long Branch, Germantown, I-29 corridor, Kensington/N. Bethesda, Colesville/White Oak, and Silver Spring communities. Long Branch, Germantown, and the I-29 Corridor were the highest priorities of the Department and, in fact, are in the FY 95-2000 approved CIP. Additional centers have not yet been recommended by the Executive or Council.

This Plan serves four primary purposes:

- To update the 1988 study and make necessary revisions to the proposed size and features of a prototype center and the population to be served.
- To provide a thorough presentation of the needs and benefits of community recreation facilities and the importance they serve in Montgomery County as community focal points.
- To acknowledge the use of other spaces, (including public schools and private facilities), which are necessary to address recreational needs. Community recreation centers included in this document will also be referenced in the update of the (M-NCPPC) Park, Recreation Open Space Plan.
- To set parameters of an optimal facility that blends operational histories of existing facilities, with community input of current and future service desires, within a reasonable cost structure.

The Recreation Department recommends the County Executive and the County Council utilize the ***Recreation Facility Development Plan, 2005 Update*** as a guide to future Capital Improvement Programs.

## **PURPOSE OF THE 2005 UPDATES**

*Over the last several years it has become apparent that much of the 1997 plan's recommended actions were being completed. In order for the plan to remain current it needed to have both accomplishments and changing conditions recognized in the text. This update is not intended to be a "new" plan, that will come with future efforts. Rather these revisions are intended only to present current information in order that the plan can effectively complete its required tasks through 2010. Minor incidental corrections for editorial, chronological, and grammatical correctness were made without notation. New or altered narratives were incorporated only where necessary to provide clarification or critical new information and are highlighted in this draft via the use of bold italics in large type.*

*In some cases conditions have changed for better or worse and in some cases accelerated, decelerated or significantly altered the need for the task. In other regards, the effect of accomplishing one of the Plan's tasks has initiated another change or altered the utility of the task. This update attempts to incorporate all of these changes but as with all things it can not be absolute. The evaluation of existing conditions and community circumstances will always be included as a major part of the Departments decision making process.*

*The Recreation Department recommends the County Executive and the County Council utilize the Recreation Facility Development Plan, 2005 Update as a guide to future Capital Improvement Programs.*

**DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION  
COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTERS  
FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Purpose and Value of the Centers to the Community**

The purpose of the long range plan is to update and revise the Department's 1988 facility recommendations and to provide a thorough presentation of the needs and importance of community centers to the County. Its purpose is also to provide a formal plan that can act as a guide to the County Executive and Council regarding future Capital Improvement Program decisions.

The plan recalls the 1988 Commission on the Future report which cites "community identity" as a major problem in Montgomery County and "strongly endorse(s) neighborhood magnet centers, which serve as a hub for neighborhood activities, and serve as a meeting place for conversation, recreation and leisure."

Key demographic and socio-economic need indicators are provided. These include projected 2010 population figures for the high priority senior adult (~~206,140~~) **218,000** and children and youth (~~181,860~~) **265,356** groups. Several key values and benefits of centers for the community as well as for families and individuals are noted. These include: creating critical community focal points, offering activities that strengthen the family unit, promoting health and wellness, reducing isolation and facilitating social and cultural interaction, providing positive alternatives to drug and alcohol use, enhancing public safety, and promoting economic growth and vitality.

Nationally, community recreation facilities have either a social/arts, fitness/sports or multipurpose focus. There is a definite trend in the public sector towards larger, multipurpose centers. One recent study found that new facilities average just over 50,000 square feet, typically include indoor pools and racquetball courts and serve approximately 42,000 residents. In Montgomery County, the public policy of maximizing community use of school facilities coupled with the large number of private sector leisure service providers has allowed for public community centers to be more limited in size.

## History of Centers in the County

The lack of a comprehensive plan has led to a wide assortment of centers currently in the County. Several are very small and were built many years ago with Federal funds. They are both limiting in the quality of programs that can be offered and tend to isolate the communities that they serve.

Since the Department began developing centers in 1977 with the Bauer Drive facility it has continued to promote multipurpose type centers in the 20,000 to 24,000 square foot range. The philosophy of the Department is not to promote specialized facilities to serve specific age groups, but to develop a sufficient number of facilities that are sized and designed with proper versatility to serve all age groups near the communities where they live. The Department does note however, that the sheer magnitude in the numbers of senior adults who will be residing in the County beyond 2010 may warrant the addition of one or more centers devoted to seniors like the existing Schweinhaut and Holiday Park centers. ***2010 will require additional program and activity space. After review, the Montgomery County Commission on Aging undertook a study by a subcommittee to promote the incorporation of Senior “Vital Living” programs and facilities into the Program Of Requirements (POR) for future Community Recreation Centers. Concurrent with the effort to approve amendments to this plan, the Department of Recreation, with input from the Commission on Aging, is completing a new POR for Community Recreation Centers with associated space additions of approximately 9,000 +/- n.s.f.***

## The Future; the Prototype Building and Site

The Department of Recreation proposes that the prototype community center be one that maximizes program flexibility and provides an opportunity to adapt to changing community demographics and leisure interests. The centers will be ~~only slightly larger (24,000 net square feet)~~ ***(33,000 +/- net square feet)*** than the Department has developed during the past decade and will incorporate features that will save capital, operating and maintenance costs.

~~The breakdown of space includes: Administrative and Support (4300 net square feet), Sports and Fitness (9600), Social Activities and Dance (6400), Arts (1600) Community Meeting (1600), and Partnership Space (500).~~ ***A detailed breakdown of space requirements is contained in Attachment # 1, “Community Recreation Center Program of Requirements” (POR) This POR is the narrative description of the specifications and criteria for the design development of County facilities.***

The center should be located in a ***publicly owned***, park-like setting; on a piece of land that is

large enough to support active outdoor play space, including ball fields and courts. ~~In non-urban areas,~~ Typically ten acres or more is desirable ***the required minimum for the prototype. This requirement must have some flexibility in order to accommodate service to populations who are in the most need of recreation opportunities.***

Wherever practical, other public facilities may be co-located ~~on-site with~~ ***adjacent to*** the community center. These could include other recreation/park amenities such as outdoor or indoor pools or skating rinks or facilities serving other public needs such as libraries or child care centers. It is important that the site be accessible. ***Preferably, the site should be adjacent to a four-lane roadway.*** It should have good visibility, be served by public transportation and be near the densest part of the service area. The site should be inviting to all potential users, including very young children and individuals with disability challenges. It is very important that centers be located where they can be most effective in generating and sustaining community identity

### **The Number and Location of Facilities**

***Years ago,*** the National Recreation and Parks Association standard for development of community recreation facilities called for one center of 25,000 net square feet for every population unit of 30,000 people.

***Recently park and recreation professionals have stated that such standards do not take budgeting, land availability, and specific community needs into consideration. In 1996, NRPA's current guidelines were provided in the publication Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (1996). This NRPA publication kept what was working from past versions and developed a planning oriented approach that small and large communities can use to best plan the future of parks and recreation in their unique community - with citizen and stakeholder involvement. A quote that best sums up why the past way of identifying national standards was revised is "Neither NRPA nor the American Academy for Park & Recreation Administration can state categorically what standard is best for all communities".***

Based on the rationale that we will maintain the public policy of maximizing community use of public school buildings and will not compete with private sector leisure providers, the Department recommends a departure from ~~this a~~ national standard. It is recommended that one community recreation center (CRC) of ~~24,000~~ ***33,000*** net square feet be developed for every ***optimum*** 30,000 unit of population. ***This would require approximately thirty-two centers based on total projected population. Because certain municipalities are excluded from the Recreation Tax District the total requirement is more***

*appropriately estimated at twenty-eight facilities. Eleven are currently in operation and nine are in the recommended schedule through FY2010. In addition, six Neighborhood Recreation Centers (NRC) and the Center for Cultural Diversity are also in place. This will require the addition of 18 approximately 4 +/- additional facilities to meet the projected demand of 975,000 people in 2010, with eleven of them recommended for construction by the year 2010. The 30,000 population number is taken from a definition of "community" originally used by the Montgomery County School System to define communities as represented by High Schools. It is clearly understood that based on factors of financial and space capacity, the average center will serve a wider range of populations in most cases. . Currently there are 26 high schools in the County. On average, each high school community represents approximately 36,000 residents today.*

*The travel behavior of center users also provides information about the requirements for centers. A majority of center users, as reflected in CLASS attendance figures, travel around 3 miles. Beyond a three-mile distance from a center, the participation rate of residents drops. Using only this distance criterion, the County would need a minimum of 28 centers to cover the county without regard to population density. When the service area of recreation centers is related to population density, gaps in existing service coverage are apparent. Generally, more densely populated areas require additional facilities.*

*Existing recreation centers are far from uniform in size. They exist in areas of dramatically different population densities. Using the standards herein for facility needs per capita, it is possible to draw the service area of each center, taking into account the size of each center and the surrounding population. Again the gaps in service area are apparent. Generally, smaller facilities can serve fewer residents.*

*It would appear that no one single method of appraisal is sufficient to identify all aspects critical to locating centers. As with most compromises, choices are a product of attempts to achieve the most win-win circumstances from those options available. Recommendations in this plan attempt to utilize a combination of geographic, population and travel data to analyze needs and locate facilities to be most effective and efficient in delivering recreation services.*

## **Development Criteria and Sequencing**

The criteria and sequencing is based upon extensive input from two years of public forums that were conducted by Recreation staff and Recreation Advisory Boards. The public forum information led to the development of the most equitable and logical criteria and sequencing to meet the concerns of the effected communities.

- Population density that is currently un-served by existing facilities;
- Geographically isolated communities;
- Population socio-economic make-up, with communities of more children, higher diversity and/or fewer leisure options, being given priority;
- The availability of time sensitive cost-savings opportunities, such as Federal grants, private sector donations or dedications, or efficiencies in construction costs by joining projects; and
- Expressed interest and support from specific communities.

The Department is recommending that the County strive for the same rate of development of community centers as it has sustained throughout the past few years of its most difficult economic times. After the Germantown, Fairland, East County and Rosemary Hills (*Gwendolyn E. Coffield*) & *Damascus* centers which are completed, the Department recommends the following sequence of development:

- Mid County CRC
- White Oak CRC***
- North Potomac CRC
- North Bethesda CRC
- Kemp Mill CRC***
- Clarksburg CRC***
- West County CRC (& ***Indoor Pool***)
- Kensington CRC

***The 2005 Update further recommends the following for inclusion in the CIP.***

- ***Utilize the “New” POR for CRCs***
- ***Gilchrist CCD***
- ***NRCs Rehabilitation***
  - Ross Boddy***
  - Scotland***
  - Plum Gar***
  - Clara Barton***

### ***Good Hope***

- ***Friendship Heights (Wisc Place)***
- ***Recreation Facility Renovations Master Plan Study FY05-10***  
***This Study would evaluate current facilities, recommend required upgrades/renovations, and assist the County in establishing PORs and priority sequencing of projects.***

### **Renovation/Modernization of Neighborhood Centers**

Six existing neighborhood centers are considerably smaller than the recommended prototype. Some offer little opportunity for future expansion while others have this potential.

The Department recommends that an assessment of each of these centers be completed within the next three years to determine the feasibility and desirability of renovation/ expansion. *This review should include extensive community involvement.* Once completed, the Department of Recreation should recommend the relative priority of these projects in relation to the development of new centers. Separate Project Description Forms should be included in the CIP for each of the renovation projects.

***As noted in the report, in most cases Neighborhood Recreation Centers are as costly to operate and maintain as the full sized Community Recreation Centers but are only capable of serving a small portion of the CRC's population base. It is reasonable that a single CRC could serve an area requiring several NRCs. The continued growth of programs requires larger spaces and more of them in each facility. The availability and cost of multiple sites in a single community also make the NRCs very expensive. There may be however, certain conditions under which the NRC provides the only option to serve a particular population. In the absence of these conditions, the larger full service facility is the more efficient delivery tool.***

### **RECOMMENDATION -**

#### ***Neighborhood Recreation Centers***

***Whenever possible the Department should opt to provide community recreation services from a Community Recreation Center. These are generally large regional facilities servicing communities of more than 30,000 population. Ideally, the CRC Program of Requirements should be followed in order to***

*provide all facilities at single locations. Existing NRCs should continue to be evaluated regularly as their operation continues serving the smaller population base. It is not appropriate, at this time, to discontinue the operation of any of*

*In some circumstances, opportunities will present themselves that involve existing facilities available for conversion such as unused schools. In other situations, land development requirements may provide sites or constructed amenities that could be utilized as community centers to varying degrees. While each of these opportunities should be fully explored on a case by case basis, the basic components of the CRC POR should be considered as the standard.*

*In urban, heavily developed areas it may not be possible to acquire all of the property necessary to meet the complete outdoor POR criteria. The Department needs to be flexible in looking at these opportunities, consider the NRC model, and include in its evaluation other existing and proposed facilities suitable for public recreation. It may be necessary to look to creative space solutions such as the smaller NRC or roof-top play surfaces in order to meet the community's needs.*

### **Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of the recommended long range plan is comprised of two elements: one time capital costs and on-going, annual operating costs. The capital project costs include planning, design, construction and furnishing the seven prototype facilities. This total capital cost is estimated at \$39.8 million. By comparison, the combined cost of all of these facilities is less than the cost of one high school or one jail.

Debt service will comprise about 75% of the total additional annual cost of new community centers. This cost is eliminated when the bond financing is ultimately paid off. Exclusive of debt service, the net annual operating cost of a new center (including all staffing, maintenance and utilities) is approximately \$295,000. This cost also is much less on average than operating other public facilities.

*The fiscal impact of the recommended long range plan is comprised of two elements: one time capital costs and on-going, annual operating costs. The capital project costs include planning, design, construction and furnishing a Community Recreation Center and site. Current annual rates of inflation for development activities are estimated to exceed the 2-3% range.*

*Debt service will comprise about 75% of the total annual operating cost of new community centers. This cost is eliminated when the bond financing is ultimately paid off. Exclusive of debt service, the required net annual operating cost of a center including all staffing, programs, supplies & materials, maintenance, utilities, etc is also affected by annual inflation at a rate of greater than 2-3 %.*

## **CONCLUSIONS**

*Purpose: To update the report, not prepare a new Plan.*

### *Recommendations :*

- *Modify basic centers to approximately 33,000 n.s.f. in order to better serve the user populations including incorporating seniors not previously included. At specific locations, augment the standard POR with additional features such as Spraygrounds, Instructional Kitchens, Region Offices, or other amenities identified in the Schematic Design Phase.*
- *Locate centers on minimum 10 acre, publicly owned, park-like parcels wherever possible.*
- *Explore opportunities for co-locating centers with other compatible public building functions.*
- *Focus on developing/maintaining community identity and ease of public access.*
- *Develop approximately 6 additional centers to meet current projected population requirements.*
- *Consider additional projects in the Plan Update for future Capital Improvement Programs:*
  - *New Program Of Requirements for Future Centers*
  - *Mid County CRC*
  - *White Oak CRC*
  - *North Potomac CRC*
  - *North Bethesda CRC*
  - *Kemp Mill / Wheaton CRC*
  - *Clarksburg CRC*
  - *Western County CRC ( & Indoor Pool)*

- *Kensington CRC*
- *Gilchrist CCD*
- *Neighborhood Recreation Center rehabilitation project*
- *Recreation Facility Renovation Master Plan Study*
- *Friendship Heights NRC*
  
- *Consider full funding for capital development including the new POR, actual operating costs, and Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement / building maintenance costs over the life of the structure, including inflation.*

# **THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITIES TO THE COMMUNITY, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE FAMILY**

## **Commission on the Future**

In June of 1988, an eighteen month fact finding study concerning trends and developments which will have significant impact on life in Montgomery County, concluded with the publication of "Envisioning Our Future: The Report of the Commission on the Future of Montgomery County, Maryland". The report opened with a letter from the Commission to the County Council and the County Executive outlining the key issues facing Montgomery County as we approach the twenty-first century. This letter listed "sense of community first among the key trends... and emerging challenges likely to shape the future of our county". The report states:

*"Montgomery County is a pretty big place. It spans an area the size of the State of Rhode Island and houses a population larger than metropolitan Boston. In an entity that is this large, this diverse, and so geographically widespread, it often is difficult for many residents to develop a strong sense of identification with a particular community.*

*Clearly, the community with which we each identify and to which we devote our active concern and commitment is the neighborhood where we live. A number of the report's recommendations are designed to foster a greater sense of community in our neighborhoods.*

*We strongly endorse neighborhood magnet centers, which can serve as a hub for neighborhood activities, and as a meeting place for conversation, recreation, and leisure. We also call upon the County to encourage neighborhood councils, which we think can give individual neighborhoods a greater share in making decisions about matters that affect the quality of life in the immediate community."*

The Department of Recreation concurs with the findings presented by the Commission on the Future. The current pressures on Montgomery County today caused by increasing urbanization, ethnic diversification, diminishing public resources, and social trends that stress the individual and tear at the fabric of the family structure, all underscore the need to encourage family and community cohesiveness. Community recreation centers provide one of the few options available to the government for having a positive influence and impact on these issues.

## **Community Focal Points**

There are many areas of the country where people reside in small townships or boroughs that

have a clear, defined, and understood identity. There are only a few such communities in Montgomery County. The residents of the incorporated municipalities of Rockville, Takoma Park, Gaithersburg, and Poolesville (and certain other areas of the County) share a sense of connectedness with each other that allows them to have a sense of identity and place. That is not the case with those who share not much more than a zip code.

When dealing with matters affecting many such communities, residents often need to be more cognizant of planning areas, traffic zones, government service centers, or school boundaries than their own community name. These artificial and inconsistent borders do not provide the same sense of identity as a town or other place designation that give people a sense of belonging together. Many residents who have come together to work on sector plans or master plans for their community recognize this need and do whatever is possible to correct it through the planning process.

A draft vision statement of the Glenmont Sector Plan, for example, states: "This plan envisions a center that conveys a strong sense of place and promotes community identity. It will contain distinct physical attributes, such as landmarks and special streetscaping features which provide a sense of place. The center will also include gathering places designed to promote community identity; these include open spaces, pedestrian friendly streets, community facilities, and family-oriented uses now absent from Glenmont."

In much of Montgomery County, this can best be achieved at the ~~neighborhood~~ **community** level and can only be realized if there is a physical focal point to create a sense of identity. A community recreation center can provide such a focal point by offering a place and an opportunity for the community to come together, formally and informally, to communicate. It is a positive place where the activities that reinforce a sense of community ~~and neighborhood~~ take place. Joining with others in an aerobics class or athletic league, car pooling the kids to dance lessons or Club Friday, celebrating a wedding, a birthday or religious occasion, are activities that promote community ~~and neighborhood~~ cohesiveness. Low-income senior adults getting a hot meal at lunch, substance abuse and parent support groups having a place to meet, distribution of surplus food to needy families, accessible locations where residents can learn about jobs, attend health fairs, or register for energy assistance are non-recreation but important community activities that also happen at **community** recreation centers.

The Commission for the Future and other civic and government leaders have accurately concluded that generating a sense of neighborhood and community identity are the most critical needs for the future of Montgomery County and the quality of life of our citizens. Providing opportunities for caring communities to support those in need is also an important piece of our quality of life.

***Due to economic conditions, it has been necessary during the update process to shift the center of focus of the plan from the individual neighborhood to a larger community base. The development and operating cost of Neighborhood Centers***

*is nearly that of Community Centers. The population served by the CRCs can be as much as 2-3 times that of the NRCs. The combination of land availability/cost along with development expense contributes to this change in approach.*

### **Demographic and Socio-Economic Indicators of Need**

Montgomery County is a community growing in both population and diversity. The need for community centers has existed for many years and continues to expand. By the year 2010 the population is projected to be ~~940,000~~ **975,000** people *in 370,000 households*. The largest segments of that growth will occur among age groups who coincidentally are ~~the most~~ frequent users of community recreation facilities, youth and senior adults. **Individuals with disabilities** ~~disabled population~~, who are also significant users of public recreation facilities, are conservatively estimated to be between 7% and 10% of the total population.

*The following population statistics were provided by the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission based on FY2000 projections.*

### Round 6.3 Household Population Forecast

Age	2000		2010		2020	
	Total	Total	Total	Change	Total	Change
<b>0 to 4</b>	60,113	64,935	64,935	8.0	68,428	5.4
<b>5 to 9</b>	63,230	65,384	65,384	3.4	69,106	5.7
<b>10 to 14</b>	63,037	64,136	64,136	1.7	67,859	5.8
<b>15 to 19</b>	51,040	56,644	56,644	11.0	58,963	4.1
<b>20 to 24</b>	43,076	49,712	49,712	15.4	51,349	3.3
<b>25 to 29</b>	57,238	63,561	63,561	11.0	66,747	5.0
<b>30 to 34</b>	68,689	76,851	76,851	11.9	80,718	5.0
<b>35 to 39</b>	77,880	82,032	82,032	5.3	86,393	5.3
<b>40 to 44</b>	76,997	78,790	78,790	2.3	83,705	6.2
<b>45 to 49</b>	70,816	73,708	73,708	4.1	77,440	5.1
<b>50 to 54</b>	61,498	70,164	70,164	14.1	72,614	3.5
<b>55 to 59</b>	45,480	59,206	59,206	30.2	61,763	4.3
<b>60 to 64</b>	32,313	46,814	46,814	44.9	52,190	11.5
<b>65 to 69</b>	25,874	36,290	36,290	40.3	45,116	24.3
<b>70 to 74</b>	23,605	27,313	27,313	15.7	37,009	35.5
<b>75 to 79</b>	20,157	20,568	20,568	2.0	26,862	30.6
<b>80 to 84</b>	12,881	14,418	14,418	11.9	16,322	13.2
<b>85+</b>	9,986	13,273	13,273	32.9	14,517	9.4
<b>Total</b>	863,910	963,799	963,799	11.6	1,037,101	7.6
<b>Group</b>	9,431	11,200	11,200		12,900	
<b>Quarters</b>						
<b>Total</b>	873,341	974,999	974,999		1,050,001	
<b>Population</b>						
<b>Households</b>	324,656	370,000	370,000		405,000	

*Source: M-NCPPC*

It is often stated that children and youth need some place to go. Vandalism and graffiti, underage drinking and drug use, and even teenage car accidents are blamed at times on Montgomery County for the lack of things to do and places to go for young people. The school age population is growing at a very rapid rate in the County, as is the number of senior adults. The prototype community center recommended in this plan is designed to address the needs of the priority youth and senior adult age groups, as well as those of the entire family.

Community recreation facilities are used by all segments of the population. However, families and individuals with low or moderate incomes are often dependent on public facilities to meet their leisure needs and interests. The most recent census data indicates that 26 percent of Montgomery County's households have incomes under \$35,000 compared to the 1990 Medium Household Income of \$60,586. The Community Action Agency has established an income level of \$ 25,854 as the minimum Standard of Need of survival for a family of four in this County. Growth in the number of lower-income families is clear evidence of the need for public facilities to serve residents with limited recreational options.

The multi-cultural community, which includes African American, Native American, Asian, Hispanic and others, in 1990 approached 30 percent of total Montgomery County residents. The birthrate of subsets of the multi-cultural community exceeds the majority population, forecasting a much more culturally diverse populace in the future. Community recreation facilities are one of few places and opportunities where main streamed acculturation takes place for a variety of age groups in a positive environment.

Population growth and diversity are very important but certainly not the only reason for new facilities. The growth in the number of issues and problems that government is under pressure to address, such as crime and health concerns, are also clear motivating factors. These issues cannot be addressed by enforcement, incarceration and treatment alone. It is a recognized fact that prevention is not just the most effective approach to addressing such problems, but the most efficient as well. Delivering prevention programs and opportunities requires an up-front investment in facility infrastructure.

### **Value to the Individual and the Family**

Many individuals are attracted to community recreation centers for a variety of distinctly different activities. Improving personal health and fitness; socializing with friends and neighbors; becoming involved in community service activities; learning new skills; acquiring needed information, are all typical reasons why an individual might visit a community center. Such visits define one unique contribution of the community center, which is to improve the community by strengthening the individual and the family.

### **Promoting Health and Wellness**

Natural by-products of the positive use of leisure time are improved physical fitness, reduced stress, and invigoration of the mind and spirit. In recent years greater attention to the pursuit of a vigorous, healthy lifestyle has become more and more evident, particularly in the youth, adult and senior adult populations. The message provided by decades of medical and health science research is clear: pursuit of an active exercise regimen will increase longevity and improve the personal quality of life. In addition, learning proper nutrition and food preparation skills serve both health and cultural enrichment.

Each year the wisdom of this advice is heeded by more and more people. Although youth continue to present the most difficult challenge to understanding the importance of the relationship of routine exercise and good nutrition to fitness and health, they too are showing an increased interest in ~~sports and other physical~~ *in a variety of these* activities. These trends are likely to continue and point to a strong future demand for facilities to accommodate active recreational pursuits throughout the demographic spectrum. The community recreation center is an essential facility to accommodate such demand.

### **Strengthening Families**

A typical week at a community center offers a wide variety of family activities such as,

- A Saturday evening wedding reception in the social hall; parents coaching and cheering young athletes in the gym, or couples engaged in co-rec volleyball are all cohesive family activities.
- Multipurpose rooms house a myriad of family support activities including: childbirth classes, parent education programs, single parent support groups, or classes on meeting the financial burdens of a college education.
- In other parts of the building, preschool toddlers improve their sensory and motor skills in parent-child fitness classes.
- After school activities for school-age youth support working parents. Programs such as Kids' Day Out, holiday camps, and other special events provide alternatives to self and sibling care.

These family support activities are the type of positive options that are supported strongly by studies and groups who espouse the benefits of prevention. These activities happen only because the community recreation center provides the place and opportunity.

### **Reducing Isolation**

Everyone is vulnerable to isolation at some time. But to those for whom it is a present reality, having a place to find acceptance, companionship, support and encouragement is a vital requirement. Center visits by groups of senior citizens or recent immigrants, or participation by physically challenged individuals in a mainstream or adapted program, provide new appreciation for the role of recreational activities. This is particularly true for those whose life circumstances may limit their opportunities for meaningful interaction with others. A

community center provides a place, and for many the only place, where such opportunities can

occur.

### **Facilitating Social and Cultural Interaction**

Montgomery County is experiencing dramatic change in cultural diversity. This change is more than a demographic statistic, it is a factor that is redefining the nature of neighborhoods. Our capacity to adapt to the challenges of this change will determine the fabric of our future society.

Leisure programs provide core threads which weave a stronger sense of community. Leisure experiences and the sharing of traditions create bonds of understanding which transcend the more abstract efforts to enhance cultural awareness. ~~The annual Ethnic Heritage Festival brings together 40,000 people from some 60 ethnic backgrounds. These individuals come in celebration of their heritage and to recognize the strength of diversity. They enjoy recreational experiences, games, performances, food, dance and music, visual arts, and educational displays from throughout the world. Those who participate have fun, meet new people, and gain new experiences and insights.~~

The fostering of positive social and cultural interaction is evident ~~not only in activities like the Ethnic Heritage Festival but~~ in many of the major special events sponsored by the Department. Community centers play a significant role in such activities and are frequently the site of similar community celebrations. But even more significant is the interaction and understanding that occurs when individuals from diverse backgrounds are joined together by their mutual interest in a particular leisure pursuit in a community center. A special and more personal understanding is achieved through individuals and experiences shared in settings like community centers and activities like those sponsored by the Department of Recreation.

### **Providing Positive Alternatives to Substance Abuse**

The problem of substance abuse is very complex. While recreation programs and facilities are not a solution in and of themselves to these problems, recreation does play a significant role in both prevention and intervention in the eroding lifestyle caused by substance abuse. The community recreation center offers the capability to reach out with both educational programs and alternative activities.

~~A successful example of such efforts is the Starlite Basketball League. This program offers targeted young adults the opportunity to utilize the facilities of Montgomery County community centers for the purpose of participating in a well-organized, competitive basketball program, with the requirement that they must also participate in a substance abuse educational program. The program routinely attracts over 200 participants and spectators per center on weekend evenings. Where would these young adults be without this opportunity?~~

There is no question as to the preventive value of recreation. Dollars invested in infrastructure to

bring such programs to communities where they are needed pay a healthy savings dividend in reduced criminal justice and treatment requirements. Conjectured for many years, these savings are now documented and evidenced in a new study by the Trust for Public Land. (Healing Americas Cities, Trust for Public Land, National Office, San Francisco, 1994)

### **Enhancing Public Safety**

A community recreation center represents a positive image of government in the community. It also conveys an image of friendly interaction. Both images are accurate and deserved.

However, a community recreation center is also a valuable public safety resource. Consider the experience at the Leland Community Center in Chevy Chase. Within a few hours of the official opening of this center in June of 1989, the neighborhood was ravaged by a violent storm. Trees a half century old or more littered the town streets. Many roads were impassable even by emergency vehicles. Property damage was extensive. Utilities were rendered inoperable. This was a true public safety crisis. What did people do? Where did they go?

The first official function of the Leland Community Center was as a place of refuge for those who needed a place to wait out the recovery from the storm. Although this crisis was brief, it is illustrative of the public safety contribution inherent in a community center facility. It is not an uncommon occurrence for a community recreation center to be used as a shelter for those who are evacuated from their homes or apartments due to fire, gas or other toxic substance leaks, or storm. The public capacity to respond to crisis is enhanced by facilities such as the Leland Community Center.

Such public safety contributions are very apparent in an emergency. Less clear, but of equal or greater public safety value, are the day-to-day opportunities for constructive activities. Community center-based programs such as teen clubs, Under 21 programs, and after school and weekend programs for teenagers offer alternatives to *gang involvement*, drug and alcohol use, vandalism and graffiti. Involvement in these and other productive recreation activities are critically important to crime prevention efforts. Typically, some 12,000 to 15,000 people a month utilize each of the full-size community recreation centers participating in wholesome, constructive activities.

Community recreation centers are also used from time to time as police substations and, much more frequently, for community-based meetings with police about crime prevention, *gang activities*, or community policing issues. Of equal importance are the less formal contacts made between police officers and community members as they drop by the centers or participate in activities. These centers offer an ideal place to enhance the community policing effort. Centers also provide other public safety contributions including CPR and First Aid training programs and fitness training sites for professional fire fighters and emergency response personnel.

### **Enhancing Local Economic Vitality**

Community recreation centers support revenue-producing programs. In fact, these facilities often act as a model for public-private partnerships. Most structured programs scheduled at community centers are fee supported. Many are recreation classes which are typically conducted by contractual service providers. For the most part, these contractors are entrepreneurs who pursue their business interests on a small scale and often part-time basis. Yet, there have been occasions where such small entrepreneurs responding to emerging leisure service demands have led to significant business success stories.

Programs such as Tomkins Karate Association, Little Feet, the Maryland County Baseball Association, and the Washington Area Lacrosse League, began with the initiative of one or two people serving a small group of interested participants. Over time, these activities expanded to their present status of fully privatized organizations, offering significant employment opportunities, and serving not only Montgomery County, but the entire Baltimore-Washington metropolitan region. The success of these and other similar enterprises stems in large part from the community recreation facility which supported their initial operation and continues to support their growth.

There are other less obvious economic impacts created by community center facilities. Businesses often locate in communities where there are recreational amenities for their employees and family members. Each week the typical center schedules social gatherings, wedding receptions, birthday parties, community meetings, and business seminars. Many of these activities are supported by catering services, small Montgomery County businesses which are dependent on such activities for their success and survival.

Sports programs involve uniform, athletic shoe, and equipment purchases by participants. The impact on the local businesses (and even in sales taxes) is much more significant than many realize. If it were estimated that the average participant in a Recreation Department youth or adult sport league (there were **50,500 in 2002**) were to spend a conservative \$100 annually on athletic shoes, bats, gloves, balls, jerseys, racquets, protective gear, etc., then **\$5.05** million would be added to the local economy. These sales generate over **\$250,000** in State sales taxes alone.

Many recreation classes require a wide variety of materials and supplies and stimulate continuing participation in other settings. This is especially true of the visual arts, painting, sculpturing, pottery, crafts, dance, and photography. These also account for significant expenditures and support for Montgomery County small businesses.

In summary, community recreation facilities, and the programs they enable and support, provide a wide variety of critically important benefits to the County as a whole and to its neighborhoods. These centers provide community focal points, promote health and wellness, strengthen families and facilitate intercultural interaction and understanding, enhance public safety and provide positive alternatives to substance abuse and potential delinquency, and

support the local economy.

## **DEFINING A COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER**

As the name implies, a community recreation center is a hub for neighborhood activities. Within the walls of its structure flow a complex variety of activities and interactions that serve to strengthen and revitalize the people who visit and participate. Fortunately, these quality experiences can be provided in a structure that can be simple, efficient, and durable. With proper planning and design, pragmatic structures can be developed with the type of flexibility to serve both the needs of today and those of the future.

The success of a community center is determined by its capacity to support a varied offering of quality programs for people. For this reason, the design of the community center facility must accommodate the following types of activities including:

1. Instructional/*skill development* programs
2. Individual self-directed participation
3. Organized competitions
4. Performances and exhibitions
5. Free play opportunities
6. Recreational clubs and hobby groups
7. Community *use, social functions*, and service activities
8. Family support programs
9. Access initiatives for special populations
- 10. Senior “Vital Living” activities**
11. Summer camps and playgrounds *Summer Fun Centers*
12. Passive and spectator opportunities
13. Human service programs

### **National Perspective:**

#### **Community Center Concepts Throughout the Country**

Community centers should, and typically do, reflect the interests and resources of the neighborhoods they serve. For this reason, there is considerable variation in facilities that are referred to as community centers. Throughout the nation community recreation facilities tend to fall into three general categories:

- Social and Arts Oriented Centers
- Fitness and Sports Oriented Centers
- Multipurpose Centers

It is useful to understand these concepts in planning an appropriate model for Montgomery County.

The Social/Arts focus is representative of designs that provide large meeting rooms furnished and equipped to provide a variety of passive leisure activities, social events, arts, crafts, and meetings. Examples of social arts-type facilities in Montgomery County are the Senior Centers including Schweinhaut, Damascus, Holiday Park, and the privately operated Friendship Heights Community Center. Similar facilities in other parts of the country have expanded upon this basic concept by providing special facilities for musical groups and community theater.

These facilities serve a very useful purpose and are well attended. However, they are designed to exclude more active fitness and sports activities. The Social Arts design creates two major problems. First, it ignores the more active lifestyles of an increasing number of all citizens, including senior citizens. Second, the dimensions of the activity spaces in these facilities are not easily converted to accommodate users of other types of programs.

The Sports/Fitness focus is a prevalent model for recent community center development throughout the country. This is due primarily to the participation and demand trends for facilities to accommodate the fitness lifestyle of the nineties. Recent research by the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) confirmed that the focus on fitness is not merely a fad but an established trend.

The most popular indoor sport, according to the NSGA survey, is bowling with 42.5 million participants, but the remaining top four activities were those typically offered in Montgomery County Community Recreation Centers:

Progressive resistance exercise/weight training	39.4 million
Billiards/pool	29.4 million
Basketball	28.2 million
Aerobic exercise classes	27.8 million

Sports participation is not solely for the young. In 1992, the number of participants over 35 years of age in fitness programs surpassed those under 35 for the first time in history, according to a study by American Sports Data, Inc.,(January 1993). Locally, 1993 marked the 13th year of the Maryland Senior Olympics, an event that offers competition for athletes aged ~~55~~ **50** and up.

Senior Olympic programs must also be factored in the activity capacity of sports fitness facilities including:

Badminton	Table tennis	Volleyball
Tennis	Basketball	Billiards

Sports/fitness facilities typically have large spaces devoted to court games and exercise areas. Activity spaces usually range from 3,000 square foot weight training rooms, to 12,000 square foot gymnasiums. Indoor tracks, racquetball courts, squash courts, tennis courts, and indoor soccer/lacrosse spaces are often found in these facilities. Many sports/fitness centers also include indoor or outdoor pools. These facilities range in overall size from 45,000 to 125,000 net square feet. They can be found in all regions of the country but are particularly significant in areas where seasonal weather conditions diminish opportunities for outside activities.

The advantages of the sports/fitness concept are found in the versatility of the large open spaces inherent in the design and in their revenue-producing capabilities. Because there is the potential for profit, the question is raised regarding the appropriate role of the private and public sectors in providing these types of facilities.

In Montgomery County, the public policy to date has been to support private sector development of sports/fitness centers that generally offer racquetball. This policy appears to be working, with a myriad of private fitness centers now operating in the County. These facilities, however, operate at a profit based on market rate. There is a large percentage of County residents who cannot afford such fees, yet need the health/fitness opportunities that these centers provide. It is for this reason that some fitness features are very important in the design of publicly owned and operated community centers.

The Multipurpose Complex approach seeks to recognize some of the benefits of the sports/fitness model and the social/arts model. This approach establishes a core facility that provides reasonable capacity for sports, fitness, social, arts, instructional, and community service programs. It further recognizes that the community center can complement other structures and should be master planned to include on-site, outdoor athletic fields, playgrounds, and other park features. Swimming pools, indoor and outdoor, may also be a complementing feature on-site.

The multipurpose complex additionally addresses the values of co-location with other complementary public service facilities such as schools, child care centers, or libraries. There are considerable benefits to the co-location of such facilities including savings on initial site and construction costs, savings in on-going security costs, multiple programming opportunities, transportation advantages, enhanced community identity, etc.

There is a nationwide trend toward larger, multipurpose community center facilities. The University of Northern Colorado Recreation Facility Design and Management School recently (1993) surveyed newly developed facilities that contained superior design characteristics. The results of this survey indicated that these new facilities averaged just over 50,000 net square feet with service areas of 42,000 people. ~~This compares to the County's current prototype of 24,000 net square feet, about half the size of the new facility above, serving about the same population.~~

In establishing specific features, amenities, and capacities for a community recreation center one must take into consideration local community needs and resources. In Montgomery County the inventory of community recreation centers varies widely with respect to size and facility features. This is due, at least in part, to the lack of an approved long-term plan prior to 1988. It is important to understand the evolution of community recreation center development in the County in order to evaluate where to go in the future.

## **THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTERS WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

The simplicity of a community center structure is too often complicated by attempts to create spaces to accommodate highly specialized uses or to down scale capacity, without regard for program requirements and the potential impact on use patterns. Both of these extremes are ineffective and wasteful. Unfortunately, the current inventory of public recreation facilities generally considered as community centers, reflect these policy and development errors.

The first effort to apply a planned approach to the development of recreation facilities was in 1974 when the Department of Recreation created a draft Master Plan for Aquatic Facilities and Recreation Complexes. This plan called for the long-term development of thirteen recreation complexes throughout the County that would combine indoor and outdoor pools with community centers in park-like settings of 30 to 50 acres. The plan came at a time when the County was faced with funding other large scale capital improvement needs, including schools and transportation infrastructure, to catch up with rapid development. While the concept itself seemed to win support, it was never formally endorsed because of the competing needs for capital expenditures.

Through 1988, decisions on community recreation centers were made without the benefit of a comprehensive, planned approach. In 1988 the Recreation Department completed a community recreation facilities study that recommended what should be built and where. This study was endorsed by the County Executive and sent to the County Council. The Council accepted this study and has used it as a guide to the projects approved in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). A brief review of the history of existing buildings demonstrates the evolution that has occurred without the benefit of a comprehensive development philosophy and coordinated design concept, and underscores the need for endorsement of a long-term plan.

### **M-NCPPC Parks Department Shelters and Youth Centers**

In the 1950's and 1960's, M-NCPPC developed one-room shelters that ranged in size from 900 to 1,800 net square feet. These structures included one large room, two restrooms, and a small kitchen space with a refrigerator and a range. These facilities served as space for community meetings, limited recreation classes, and supported activities held at adjacent athletic fields or picnic areas.

The 900-1,800 square foot dimension remains an important statistic. Rooms of this size provide a versatile space that can be furnished or reconfigured, sometimes with partitions, to meet a wide variety of recreational uses. While these spaces provide a useful purpose, they lack the capacity to function as a true community center.

In the mid 1960s there was considerable community interest and concern in the growing problem of juvenile delinquency and problem adolescent behaviors, including large gatherings of teens in local shopping centers. As a result, two facilities were constructed as youth centers, one in Wheaton and one in Bethesda. Each contained a large multipurpose room, small meeting and game rooms, and staff office space. The Wheaton center contained a small gymnasium with a stage. These facilities were designed for and (for several years) used exclusively by teens.

Over the years it became apparent that the recreational amenities and spaces that served youth were also needed by and beneficial to adults and senior citizens. Spaces that were typically not utilized during the day could meet other growing public service needs.

By the mid 1970s these Youth Centers had provided significant instructional, recreational, and social programs for all age groups. Senior citizens were particularly well served at these locations. In recognition of the expanded service being provided at these M-NCPPC facilities by the Department of Recreation, the term Youth Center was changed to Community Recreation Center.

### **Recreation Centers**

Concurrent with the development of the M-NCPPC facilities were projects funded by Federal Neighborhood Facilities Grants, planned by the Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) and operated by the Office of Family Resources. These facilities include the existing small neighborhood centers at Scotland (1976), Good Hope (1978) and Plum Gar (1984). They were originally conceived to serve both recreational and social service programming needs.

During the planning process of each, the Department of Recreation advocated adding County funds to the limited Federal grant dollars to expand the size of the centers and allow for more versatile programming to serve a larger community of users. The decision to use only the available Federal funds significantly limited the size of the centers. Underlying this decision was the apparent intent that these facilities should serve only the limited number of residents in the low-income neighborhoods within walking distance of these buildings.

Consequently, these buildings have insufficient capacity to support a comprehensive, quality community recreation program for the neighborhoods they were designed to serve. Perhaps more importantly, this policy has tended to further isolate these low income neighborhoods from the larger community.

In the early 1980s the Scotland and Good Hope centers were transferred from the Department of Family Resources to the Department of Recreation. The Plum Gar Community Center, also funded through DHCD, by a HUD grant, was staffed and operated by the Department of Recreation from the outset. In an effort to enhance their usefulness, the Department of

Recreation has invested in minor modifications to the buildings and has added recreational equipment. While these facilities serve a productive purpose, their limited capacities constrain service potential.

The Department also operates two other community recreation centers which are former school facilities; the Ross Boddy Center serving the Sandy Spring Community and the Clara Barton Center serving the Cabin John region; both serve to provide important recreation, meeting and social space for these communities. However, neither is equipped with a gymnasium or the combination of spaces like the Leland, Bauer Drive or Potomac centers and, therefore, serving a variety of interests and populations is precluded.

The history of the neighborhood centers offers a lesson which points to the need to develop a comprehensive plan which focuses on general program capacity and overall County needs rather than isolated solutions that ignore the demands of the future. This lesson applies not only to new center development but to facility renovations as well.

The Rosemary Hills Community Center (1983) near downtown Silver Spring was an attempt to upgrade a M-NCPPC park shelter to a community center. The result of this effort was to replicate a facility similar to those of Scotland and Good Hope. This design again focused on the needs of the immediate neighborhood, rather than the broader community. The plan also anticipated a high level of program coordination with a nearby elementary school which has a small gymnasium. Like the other neighborhood centers, Rosemary Hills has had a positive impact on the neighborhood it serves. Yet, there remains a larger unmet need, particularly for social and athletic opportunities, that cannot be accommodated without expanding the capacity of this facility. Well-intentioned efforts to respond expediently to the special needs of low-income housing concentrations have short-changed the very people that the undersized facilities were intended to serve. There is no question that the quality of opportunities available to the nearby residents of Scotland, Plum Gar, Good Hope, and Rosemary Hills is not the same as that available to those living near Bauer Drive, Potomac, Long Branch, or any of the larger centers developed later.

In 1977, the Department of Recreation developed the Bauer Drive Community Center. It was the first center built by the Department utilizing traditional bond financing and the CIP process. For the first time, this facility enabled a broader service by providing a gymnasium, arts and crafts room, social hall, meeting room, and game area. It was located adjacent to M-NCPPC and school system athletic fields and tennis courts, fulfilling the goal and the desirability of joining indoor and outdoor recreational amenities. Bauer Drive became an immediate success, serving not just the nearby neighborhoods but drawing participants for a variety of programs from a much broader area of the County as well.

The Longwood Community Recreation Center (1982) located in Olney and the Upper County Community Recreation Center (1985) located along the Rt. 124-corridor Gaithersburg, were

constructed following plans similar to those of the Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center. These three facilities continue to serve as vital community resources and have become the focal points of the neighborhoods and regions they serve.

These facilities, however, have one fundamental inadequacy. There is a lack of versatility among the activity spaces. Designed to provide very specific functions and downsized to meet resource constraints, these facilities are structurally limited in their ability to meet increased and changing program demands. This is a most important lesson to acknowledge in future planning and design. Future centers should be built to maximize efficiency, versatility, and variety among potential uses.

The designs of the Potomac (1988) and Leland (1989) Community Recreation Centers were intended to address the space inadequacies existing in other facilities. However, the eventual designs of these facilities were modified to accommodate community services beyond the recreation program needs. The Potomac Community Center, which is a renovation of a former elementary school, had the additional requirements to house both administrative offices and a child care facility within the same building. Similarly, the Leland Community Center was constructed to meet requirements to co-locate the Town of Chevy Chase offices, as well as a child care center, on the same site. Given the limited acreage available at the Leland site, the community center capacity is less than desirable (though comparable to Bauer Drive, Longwood, and Upper County facilities.)

In addition to these community recreation centers, there are three other major recreation facilities devoted specifically to the leisure needs of the senior adult population. The Margaret Schweinhaut (1972), Holiday Park Multipurpose Service Center (1981) and Damascus (1990) Senior Centers remove some programming pressure from the other community recreation centers by serving hundreds of senior adults daily. These facilities offer a variety of leisure, educational and human service programs.

It is the general philosophy of the Department of Recreation that specialized facilities to serve specific age or interest groups not be promoted. Instead, a sufficient number of facilities should be developed that are sized and designed with proper versatility to serve all age groups near the communities where they live.

~~The single exception to this is that, as the senior population expands over the next 20 years, a fourth regional center may become necessary to respond to programming needs that cannot be addressed in the more conventional community recreation center model. If this need becomes evident, an independent study should be undertaken in the future to determine exactly what type and size of structure should be developed to serve specific senior adult needs, and the features and programs that it should incorporate. The study should also determine where such a facility should be located.~~

*After review, the Montgomery County Commission on Aging undertook a study by a subcommittee to promote the incorporation of Senior “Vital Living” programs and facilities into the Program Of Requirements (POR) for future Community Recreation Centers. Concurrent with the effort to approve amendments to this plan, the Department of Recreation, with input from the Commission on Aging, is completing a new POR for Community Recreation Centers with associated space additions of approximately 9,000 +/- n.s.f.*

# **THE PROTOTYPE BUILDING, THE BUILDING SITE, SERVICE AREAS, THE NUMBER OF FACILITIES NEEDED, PRIORITIES AND TIMELINES.**

## **The Prototype Building**

After more than 20 years of development and management experience with diverse community recreation facilities, it has become increasingly clear that a new building design needs to incorporate features that will encourage versatility, minimize operating and maintenance costs, and forestall obsolescence.

The primary lesson of past experience is that facilities should be constructed to serve a variety of potential uses. It is possible and even practical, to subdivide large spaces to accommodate special needs. But, it can be very costly and sometimes impossible, to expand small spaces without significant redesign and reconstruction. History has demonstrated the long-term inadequacy and inefficiency of scaled down facilities in the County. Conversely, a review of private sector ingenuity evident in health and fitness club operations across the country, has demonstrated how larger open spaces can be converted to accommodate changes in market demand.

In the late 1960's, racquetball developed as a major sports trend. The advent of a lighter strung racquet similar to a scaled down tennis racquet, replaced the larger heavy wooden paddles formerly used in this sport. This apparently simple change captured a whole new market of enthusiasts. By changing the racquet characteristics the sport became easier to play recreationally, and more challenging to those who sought competitive expert status. It was an easy to learn, fun alternative to handball, squash, tennis and paddle ball. Soon racquetball courts were being established as a standard component of college physical education complexes, and private club facilities mushroomed across the Country.

However, in the mid-80s the popularity of the sport began to wane. Many private clubs faced a tough business decision regarding future operations. One successful initiative taken by some clubs was to convert court spaces to other uses. Some successfully promoted new court sports like volleyball, or re-equipped facilities to change the courts to weight training and circuit fitness centers. The lesson is clear that space can be reprogrammed and re-equipped to accommodate new uses with minimal expense, provided it was large enough and designed with proper versatility to begin with.

**Recommendation –  
Community Recreation Centers**

The Department of Recreation proposes that the prototype community recreation center be one that both maximizes program flexibility and provides an opportunity to adapt to changing community demographics and/or leisure interests as they occur. This facility will be ~~only~~ **slightly** larger in overall size (24,000 net sq. ft. compared to **33,000** sq. ft.) than the centers developed by the Department during the past decade. It will incorporate features that will save capital, operating and maintenance costs in the future.

*Attached to this document and incorporated into it, is a copy of the most current “Montgomery County – Department of Recreation – Community Recreation Center - Program Of Requirements” (POR). This is a narrative description of all of the space needs for a prototypical center including items such as site selection, access, equipment, furniture and fixtures, etc.*

*As needed, up to date copies of the most recent POR will be attached and incorporated into this document. From time to time, unique amenities will be incorporated into the POR as determined necessary by the Department or through the community involvement in the Schematic Design Phase of each individual center. This updating process does not constitute a revision to the POR or this plan.*

~~Activity spaces should be designed as flexible modules of at least 1,600 net square feet. This will preserve the capacity for varied uses without the need for major reconstruction. Each 1,600 square foot module may be either clustered to create larger open spaces, or subdivided to partition off smaller areas. But the key concept is to establish a design that permits the creation of at least a 1,600 square foot open space without requiring major structural renovations.~~

~~A major consideration of this plan is to provide an optimal prototype that offers both effectiveness and efficiency. The prototype community center concept describes a minimal threshold of 23,500 net square feet to meet the desired recreation program capacity. However, the concept of providing a meaningful community focal point should recognize the value in partnership initiatives with community organizations, public agencies, and through joint ventures with the private sector. Accommodating partnerships such as, corporate mentoring program for~~

youth, senior citizen wellness partnerships with area hospitals, PALS (Police Athletic League) programs with County and M-NCPPC police, and the Teen Center Community Partnership Program, requires either additional space capacity or a decision to diminish recreation program space.

Given the existing surplus demand for space, determining the relative value of such competing demands can be difficult. Requests to rent space at existing community centers are regularly made from a year to eighteen months in advance of the event. The current number of unaccommodated request is typically 200-300 annually at facilities such as Potomac, Longwood and Bauer Drive community centers.

Although there is a direct relationship between quality of program services and quantity of space, this plan has refrained from advocating a position that merely states bigger is better. We have learned from previous experience, that larger open space design maximizes participation and revenue potential, provides the flexibility to adapt to changing needs. For this reason this plan advocates inclusion of an additional 500 sq. ft. for the purpose of accommodating partnership initiatives bringing the size of the prototype to 24,000 net square feet.

Key building spaces and features include the following:

Administrative and Support Space	4,300 net square feet
Sports and Fitness	9,600 net square feet
Social Activities and Dance	6,400 net square feet
Arts	1,600 net square feet
Community Meeting Space	1,600 net square feet
<b>TOTAL NET PROGRAM SPACE</b>	<b>23,500 net square feet</b>
Partnership Programs	500 net square feet
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>24,000 net square feet</b>

**Administrative/Support Space** 4,300 net square feet

The space required for administrative functions and essential support spaces such as lobby space, locker areas in rest rooms, staff offices, and equipment storage have historically required approximately 4,800. The exact configuration of these areas is a function of design and code requirements. The goal of the prototype facility is to maximize the essential program activity spaces and establish the most efficient use of space for administrative and support functions.

This plan recommends a change in the allocation of administrative and support space, in order to

improve the capacity of program spaces. Such capacity is vital to the quality of customer service as well as the quantity of people served. To accomplish this goal, 4,300 net sq. ft. is designated for administration and support space.

The lobby area is the main arrival point and focus of the community center and should be designed to provide a bright, open and inviting environment. The lobby should provide the primary control point for the entire center and radiate to all activity spaces. This control design feature minimizes the need for increased operational staff. The lobby should also serve the purpose of providing information to customers entering the building. It should provide comfortable waiting space for parents or others waiting to pick up a participant. The lobby will contain staff offices, a reception counter, restrooms, storage, and custodial closets.

In some urban areas sufficient land may not be available to construct single story centers. When facilities are two or more stories (such as the new Long Branch Center) elevators will be required for accessibility purposes. Since these will not be required in most centers, the space and cost are not included in the prototype model.

**Sports and Fitness Space ————— 9,600 net square feet**

This area is designed to support athletic programs and fitness activities. It includes:

Gymnasium	8,000 net square feet
Weight/Exercise	1,600 net square feet

*Gymnasium*

The gymnasium should be the size typically constructed for high schools and appropriate for competitive league and pick-up play. This will be the primary space devoted to athletic activities which will include: aerobic exercise, badminton, basketball, floor hockey, gymnastics, indoor soccer, indoor lacrosse, martial arts, roller skating, volleyball, and wrestling. Some gym features will include retractable baskets, hardwood maple floors, bleacher seating for 250 spectators, volleyball sleeves and wall anchors for practice nets.

The gym floor will accommodate two side court basketball and two volleyball games simultaneously.

*Weight/Exercise*

This 1,600 net square foot module is for the purpose of providing self-directed fitness and weight training for those high school age and above. The room will be equipped with a variety of exercise apparatus that are appealing and appropriate to both men and women. This module

should be adjacent to the gymnasium and visually accessible for safety and control purposes, to the lobby control center. The room should accommodate up to 35 users at one time, who will be required to purchase a pass for this purpose.

**Social Events and Dance** \_\_\_\_\_ **6,400 net square feet** \_\_\_\_\_

This 6,400 net square foot space is intended to support large social functions, dance programs, teen activities, and self-directed games. It is also a primary activity space to support camps or playground activities. This space will be sub-divided as follows:

Social Hall	4,000 net square feet
Kitchen	300 net square feet
Vending Area	500 net square feet
Game Room	1,600 net square feet

*Social Hall/Kitchen*

The 4,000 net square foot social hall is a multipurpose area that provides for both recreation programs and rental opportunities for individuals and community groups. This space will accommodate groups of up to 500 people. Typical functions include parties, wedding receptions, dances, and other alcohol-free activities for teens, fund raisers, cultural and religious celebrations, and other similar social functions. This space is adjacent to and served by the kitchen (300 net square feet), which is equipped with warming ovens, refrigeration, and ice-making capabilities. This will not be a full service kitchen, capable of food preparation, but will serve the warming and refrigeration needs of caterers or others who bring in food for large functions.

The social hall is also used for meetings, recreation classes, senior luncheons, and programs. An acoustical folding partition divides the social hall, allowing two smaller groups to be served at the same time. This space has a separate set of bathroom facilities. The entire area can be secured from the remainder of the facility, allowing use at times when other parts of the building are not open. Experience indicates that this feature of the facility will be constantly booked and generate significant revenue from rentals and from those taking recreation classes.

*Game Room/Vending Area*

The game room will be a 1,600 foot module that will accommodate self-directed games such as pool, billiards and table tennis. Video and electronic games are also an option. This is one of the center features that appeals to the drop-in user. However, this area is also used for instructional or structured, competitive programs. It complements and adds program quality and versatility to a number of user groups, including the pre-teens and teens who come to Club Friday or After Hours Programs or the seniors who attend club activities.

A 500 net square foot vending area serves the entire facility. It provides participants with an opportunity for a snack or drink. This is important particularly for those engaged in fitness and aerobic activities. Tables and chairs in this area will also provide space for rest or for parents or others waiting for program participants.

**Arts Studio** ————— **1,600 net square feet**

This 1,600 net square foot module is intended to be used for both instruction and self-directed participation in music and visual arts activities. The area will be sub-divided as follows:

Hobby Craft & Kiln Room	800 net square feet
Music/Class Room	800 net square feet

*Hobby Craft and Kiln Rooms*

This 875 net square foot area will contain both crafts and kiln rooms and is intended to be used for instruction and self-directed use for drawing, painting, sculpture, silkscreening, ceramics, pottery, lapidary, photography, woodcarving, and wood working. The area will contain suitable support features including deep sinks and multiple heavy duty electrical outlets.

*Music/Class Room*

This 725 net square foot area will provide space suitable for vocal or instrumental instructions and rehearsals. It will be acoustically treated and appropriately furnished.

**Community Meeting Space** ————— **1,600 net square feet**

This 1,600 net square foot module is intended to support a variety of purposes including community meetings, senior citizen clubs, discussion groups, tutorial and other small group educational programs, card and hobby club meetings, and as a reading/work area for parents waiting for children who are participating in other center activities.

This space will be subdivided into a conference room (400 net square feet), and a senior/community lounge (1,200 net square feet). The conference room will serve as a quiet meeting space for up to 25 people. Experience indicates that this room will be in use virtually every night the center is open. It is a particular benefit to community groups who need space for civic or tenant association meetings and to non-profit support groups whose success is dependent on meeting in locations close to those they serve. The Department of Recreation provides this space at no charge to such groups because of the overall contributions they are making to the quality of life in the County.

The Senior/Community Lounge will be a comfortably furnished, passive area that will offer an environment conducive to senior and other adult activities, including discussion groups, card clubs, reading, and small table games. This room should be located in a part of the building that is not highly active. This space will often be provided as dedicated space for senior adults who will have it for exclusive use during certain periods of the day. These are the essential spaces of the prototype community center. Where it is located is equally important to its potential success. Specialized storage areas will be developed in this part of the facility specifically for senior programs.

### **Parking Requirements**

Parking for the facility needs to be adequate to serve peak capacity needs without significant impact on the surrounding neighborhood. However, parking requirements may vary considerably from center to center. Facilities located in more urban areas that are served by mass transit and where there is a higher incidence of "walk in" participation will require less parking than centers located in more rural or suburban areas. Exact parking requirements must be worked out during the planning process for each facility. The minimum average parking requirement is believed to be approximately 150 spaces.

Co-location of community recreation centers with other facilities also will impact on parking requirements. Co-location with schools, for example, can save parking costs because peak use of centers do not coincide with peak use of school buildings. Other types of joint uses may require additional parking.

### **The Building Site**

There are certain features to the building site that the Department of Recreation deems to be critically important to the overall operation and success of the facility. These can be summarized in three basic categories: the size and topography of the site, the potential for co-location with other public facilities, and the access features.

The center should be located on a piece of land that is a park-like setting with sufficient capacity to develop the community center and its supporting outdoor amenities. Ideally the parcel should be relatively flat and relatively square. In non-urban areas of the County, typically ten acres or more is desirable.

*There are certain features of the building site that the Department of Recreation*

*deems to be critically important to the overall operation and success of the facility. These can be summarized in three basic categories: the size and topography of the site, the potential for co-location with other public facilities, and the access features.*

*In addition to these physical criteria, a significant aspect of site selection is to locate facilities on publicly owned property where and whenever possible. This is both a financial and a land use concern as available property in much of the County is either unavailable, priced beyond the reasonable limits of public funding, or has a highest and best use for other development.*

***Recommendation –  
Site Criteria***

*The center should be located on a piece of publicly owned land that is a park-like setting with sufficient capacity to develop the community center and its supporting outdoor amenities. Ideally the parcel should be relatively flat and square. Typically under these circumstances, ten acres or more is required.*

*Aesthetics and function need to come together to allow the development of an attractive building adjacent to a series of outdoor recreation amenities. These should include a wide array of outdoor recreation facilities including ballfields, tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, and a playground. Passive features such as picnic areas and landscaped/garden areas are also desirable but not as essential as the active recreation spaces. Additional space for specialized features such as roller/skateboard facilities, spraygrounds, or other as yet undefined activities should also be included.*

*Because these features are typically found in parks and because Community Center operations constitute an appropriate “active recreational use”, it makes sense, wherever possible, to locate community recreation centers on an active part of a local, regional, or special park. Many of the existing community*

*recreation centers in the County are now located on land that is either in or adjacent to property operated by M-NCPPC. This arrangement has proven to work very well as it enhances the “active recreation” component of the Park system.*

*In heavily developed areas a more urban concept may need to be applied. Land costs and space constraints will be more pronounced and will require great flexibility to meet the demands of the program of requirements.*

Aesthetics and function need to come together to allow the development of an attractive, preferably one-story building, adjacent to a series of outdoor recreation amenities. These should include ballfields, tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, and a playground. Passive features such as picnic and garden areas are also desirable but not as essential as the active recreation spaces.

Because these features are typically found in parks, it makes sense, wherever possible, to locate community recreation centers on an active part of local, regional, or special parks. Many of the existing community recreation centers in the County are now located on land that is either in or adjacent to property owned by the M-NCPPC Parks Department. This arrangement has proven to work very well.

**Recommendation –  
Co-location With Other Public Facilities**

It is desirable, wherever feasible, to co-locate public facilities. The highest priority is to co-locate active recreation facilities, particularly *such as* indoor or outdoor pools, together with centers. Other facilities however, also complement one another and work well on the same site. Child care centers, libraries, ice skating, or in-line skating rinks all could work well together if properly located on a large enough site. *Co-location with active recreation portions of existing and future parks is also highly recommended.*

Community recreation centers also can be located on *or adjacent to* school sites. While such sites typically do not contain all of the features considered desirable for a community recreation center location, there are often advantages. The Bauer Drive Community Center shares a site with a middle school and the new Germantown Community Recreation Center is under the same roof with a new middle school. This site also includes an outdoor swimming pool.

Supplemental space might also be considered as an addition to the prototype center for specific human service or other needs of the community. Space for a small police drop-in or substation

operation is one type of use that may be considered when the planning process for each center begins top focus on specific design features.

There are a number of reasons why co-location of facilities is good public policy. Chief among them is that considerable cost can be saved in land acquisition and site development. Whenever co-location of facilities is contemplated, however, it is critical that there be a comprehensive planning process that addresses the needs of all users from the outset. Indoor and outdoor space requirements should not be compromised for the sake of co-location.

**Recommendation –  
Access Features**

It is very important that the site be accessible to those it is intended to serve. This means that, wherever possible, it should be near the densest part of the service area. The site should have good visibility and should be served by public transportation.

It should be inviting to all potential users, including very young children and individuals with disabilities.

An important consideration for siting community recreation centers is the natural traffic and travel patterns of a particular region and the barriers that are sometimes caused by major roadways. A community recreation center on one side of the 495 Beltway, for example, is typically not accessible to those people residing close but on the opposite side. This is particularly true for children and others who may not use a car to get to the center. Centers should be sited to encourage access by means other than the automobile. Linkages to hiker-biker trails and sidewalks to nearby neighborhoods and other access points are important.

While these site features are all very important, it also must be recognized that Montgomery County is very diverse and the site must reflect the needs of the particular community to be served. It is not realistic to think that a center in downtown Bethesda or Silver Spring can be sited on a proto-typical park-like setting of 10 acres. Both the center and site features may vary somewhat in these locations since the land is not available. All centers, wherever possible, need to be designed to reach both daytime working and evening/weekend residential populations.

**Recommendation –  
Community Identity**

One of the most important considerations in siting community centers in Montgomery County is to put them in places where they can be most effective in generating and sustaining community identity.

With these five factors in mind:

Community Recreation ~~Building~~ Size/Use  
***Publicly Owned Parcel*** Site Size and Topography  
Co-Location with Other Public Facilities  
Access Features, and  
Community Identity

it is important to consider how many centers are needed to serve this diverse County and generally where should they be located.

## **THE NUMBER AND LOCATION OF FACILITIES NEEDED TO SERVE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION TAX DISTRICT**

When the original plans for the development of community recreation centers were first advanced in 1973 and 1988 in the County, there was very little to draw on in the way of national standards as guidelines. For many years the only standard cited by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) regarding centers was that there should be one community center to serve each population unit of 25,000 people. However, NRPA did not define the size or features of such centers. It was also difficult to develop national standards since leisure needs are met in such diverse ways by the public and private sectors throughout the country.

During the past several years, however, the results of national surveys and local planning efforts have gone further in defining community recreation center standards. Today's **1997's** standard called for one community recreation center of 25,000 net square feet in size to serve every 30,000 people. (American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation). Currently less than one-third of this number of centers is in place and (because of the very limited size of many) only 167,070 net square feet of space is available. Based on the rationale that we will maintain the public policy of maximizing community use of public school buildings and will not compete with private sector leisure providers, the Department recommends a departure from ~~this~~ **a** national standard. It is recommended that one center of ~~24,000~~ **33,000** net square feet be developed for every *optimum* 30,000 unit of population. ***This would require approximately thirty-two centers based on total projected population. Because certain municipalities are excluded from the Recreation Tax District and provide recreation facilities of their own, the total requirement is more appropriately estimated at twenty-eight facilities. Eleven are currently in operation and nine are in the recommended schedule through FY2010. In addition, six Neighborhood Recreation Centers and the Center for Cultural Diversity are also in place. This will require the addition of ~~18~~ approximately 4 +/- additional facilities to meet projected demand of 975,000 people in 2010. ,with eleven of them recommended for construction by the year 2010. The 30,000 population number is taken from a definition of "community" originally used by the Montgomery County School System to define communities as represented by High Schools. It is clearly understood that based on factors of financial and space capacity, the average center will serve a wider range of populations in most cases. . Currently there are 26 high schools in the County. On average, each high school community***

*represents approximately 36,000 residents today.*

*The travel behavior of center users also provides information about the requirements for centers. A majority of center users, as reflected in CLASS attendance figures, travel around 3 miles. Beyond a three-mile distance from a center, the participation rate of residents drops. Using only this distance criterion, the County would need a minimum of 28 centers to cover the county without regard to population density. When the service area of recreation centers is related to population density, gaps in existing service coverage are apparent. Generally, more densely populated areas require additional facilities.*

*Existing recreation centers are far from uniform in size. They exist in areas of dramatically different population densities. Using the standards herein for facility needs per capita, it is possible to draw the service area of each center, taking into account the size of each center and the surrounding population. Again the gaps in service area are apparent. Generally, smaller facilities can serve fewer residents.*

*It would appear that no one single method of appraisal is sufficient to identify all aspects critical to locating centers. As with most compromises, choices are a product of attempts to achieve the most win-win circumstances from those options available. Recommendations in this plan attempt to utilize a combination of geographic, population and travel data to analyze needs and locate facilities to be most effective and efficient in delivering recreation services.*

Before applying nationally-accepted standards to the County, an examination must be made of public policy decisions that impact the way leisure services are delivered here. Two policies are critically important.

First, the County government typically does not enter into competition with private sector leisure service providers. Where the private sector can deliver a service, it has generally been the Department's policy (as it is of many other counties) to let them do it. There are no publicly owned racquetball courts, movie theaters, miniature golf courses, batting cages, or amusement facilities in the Recreation Tax District. ***The tax district is defined as :***

***Sec. 41-5 of the County Code reads in part:***

***“There is hereby established a special taxing area, to be know as the ‘recreation district’, the boundaries of which shall include all of the county with the exception only of that area now or hereafter included within the incorporated boundaries of the City of Rockville, the City of Gaithersburg and the Town of Washington Grove. (Mont. Co. Code 1965, § 2-77.)***

Of the many pools in Montgomery County, only *eleven* are owned and operated by the Recreation Department. Of the many golf courses in the County, only 8 are publicly owned and operated by the Department of Parks, the City of Rockville or the Revenue Authority.

For many years this policy has helped meet the leisure needs of the County. As the socio-economic makeup of the County changes, however, the numbers of citizens limited in their ability to access private, profit-making leisure service facilities will continue to grow and test the full-scale viability of this policy and practice. The primary question will be whether or not a change in public policy is warranted as larger and larger groups of residents are excluded from healthy lifestyle options and opportunities that can only be accessed in the private sector. This type of exclusion can lead to other types of less obvious, yet very real public costs in the future. The Trust for Public Land study on "Healing America's Cities" (1994) cites very clear examples of where investments in park and recreation facilities have more than paid for themselves in reduced crime. The National Public Health Service warns of the severe consequences in future public health care costs if we do not encourage active, healthier lifestyles, particularly of our youth.

The recommendations in this plan are based on maintaining the current public policies. But it is recommended that within the next few years, the County wide Recreation Advisory Board join with the Community Action Agency and the Commission for Children and Youth to study in depth the current and potential future impact of this public policy on the growing numbers of low income residents in a changing Montgomery County.

The second major existing public policy that impacts on the number of centers needed to serve the County is the decision to maximize public school facilities during evening and weekend non-school hours for recreation and other community purposes. This public policy also has been very successful. ~~In FY 94 \_\_\_\_\_, there were 320,371 \_\_\_\_\_ paid hours and 119, 571 \_\_\_\_\_ free hours booked for indoor community use of school buildings. Many of these hours were for recreation and leisure programs.~~

***In FY 03 there were over 65,000 hours of recreation programming and activities offered in the public schools (CUPF, '03). Assuming a minimum of 8 participants for each activity, more than half million recreation experiences were provided using school facilities. In addition, Parks and Recreation facilities provided approximately 570,000 programmed experiences as well (MC-DOR & MNCPPC, '03).***

*Neither figure accounts for casual un-organized leisure use of facilities.*

Use of school buildings during the school day by any community group is simply not possible. The senior population, (nearly twice the size of the student population), have program space available in only 14 community and 3 senior centers during school days. Often the facility space is far from their respective neighborhoods. The student use of school buildings beyond the school day further limits use after school, evenings and even weekends. This is particularly true of the type of spaces, such as gymnasiums and all-purpose rooms that are desirable for recreation and leisure activities.

The school gyms (not existent in many elementary schools), are utilized all day for physical education classes and many after school and evening hours by school junior varsity and varsity sports programs. When the gyms are available for public use, competition is keen, particularly for certain hours. Demand, (among other reasons), has led the ~~Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB)~~ **Community use of Public Facilities (CUPF)** to establish written policies such as eliminating the use of gyms for any activities that are traditionally considered outdoor sports, including soccer, lacrosse, hockey and baseball. **CUPF** booked 96,196 hours of community use in gyms during FY 04.

While it is evident there is extensive use, there are gym hours still available. However, the available times tend to be clustered and with reason. These include Sunday mornings and the good weather months when many sport and physical fitness enthusiasts are engaged in outdoor activities. The Department of Recreation experiences similar demand and use patterns for its gyms. During the fall and winter seasons, the Department must limit practice time available to organized teams to allow at least some time for less organized "drop-in" play. Demand far exceeds space availability in gyms throughout the County during peak periods and will continue to do so after additional schools are built and the community recreation centers recommended in this plan are developed.

While classrooms and cafeterias may be more available than gyms during non-school hours, furniture and fixtures often make their use incompatible with many types of leisure program needs. Though quality may be compromised, these spaces are still heavily utilized because of the lack of alternatives. This is particularly true in the many neighborhoods in the County that do not have a community recreation center anywhere in the region.

Public policies such as those in Montgomery County which emphasize the use of school buildings and the private sector to deliver recreation services were probably considered when establishing the national standard of one center for every 20,000 residents. However, the extent to which Montgomery County applies these policies is probably greater than the typical community throughout the country. The **CUPF** is a rather unique structure and the private club membership in the County is not matched by many regions.

**Recommendation –  
Facility Size and Service Area**

The Department of Recreation recommends that the Recreation Tax District be served by a prototype community recreation center of ~~24,000~~ **33,000** +/- net square feet *for an optimum population* of 30,000 residents.

~~This ratio is 36 percent lower than the recommended national norm. This is based primarily on private sector opportunities in the County and the use of school facilities to deliver many services. To meet this objective, this plan recommends a total of 17 new facilities, with 7 of them to be developed over the next two decades.~~

~~This recommendation lowers the population range to 30,000 per center from the 40,000 to 50,000 per center discussed in the 1988 study. The primary reason for this change is experience with existing community recreation centers which has clearly demonstrated that they do not have the capacity to meet demand, which is true of virtually all center spaces. It is typical for center visits to exceed 150,000 per year.~~

~~Since one of the primary objectives and benefits of community recreation centers is to establish a stronger sense of community identity, it is important that both the geographical area and the population to be served not be too large. 30,000 would be the maximum population size recommended to achieve this objective. More centers of reasonable size make more sense for Montgomery County than a few large centers serving major regions.~~

~~Many jurisdictions have opted for much larger facilities. Typically these facilities incorporate features that produce revenue in competition with private sector providers. Fairfax County has several centers that range up to 70,000 net square feet. The City of Gaithersburg is in the planning stages of a facility that will be 65,000 net square feet. These facilities contain indoor swimming pools, racquetball, and larger banquet type rental spaces. This is not the existing or~~

***This recommendation is a general guideline, not based on a specific recommended national norm. This is based primarily on private sector opportunities in the County and the use of school facilities to deliver many services. To meet this objective, this plan recommends new facilities to be developed over the period of the plan.***

***This recommendation maintains the population range, identified in the 1997 plan, at 30,000 per center, a reduction from the 40,000 to 50,000 per center***

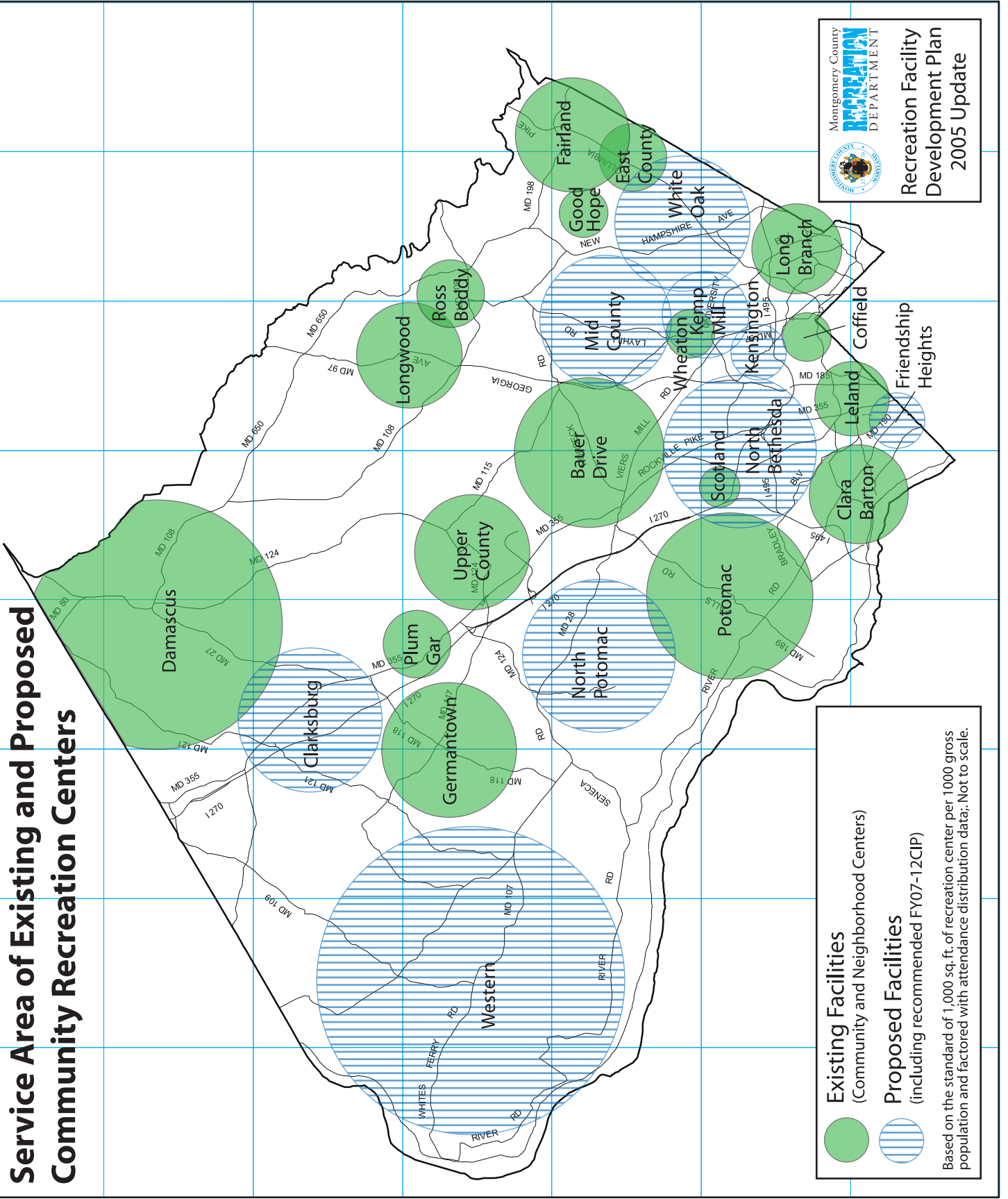
*discussed in the 1988 study. The primary reason for this change is actual operating experience with existing Community Recreation Centers, which has demonstrated that they do not have the capacity to meet demand, which is true of virtually all center spaces. It is typical for center visits to exceed 150,000 per year. The size changes do not serve a greater overall population area but rather serve additional previously unserved members of the same geographic community – Seniors.*

*The two options to meet the space and program demands are to build either larger centers or to build more of the current model. The selection is not difficult in light of all of the goals established for the centers.*

*Since one of the primary objectives and benefits of Community Recreation Centers is to establish a stronger sense of community identity, it is important that both the geographical area and the population to be served not be too large. 30,000 would be the optimum population size recommended to achieve this objective. It is clearly understood however, that faced with the practical limitations of land and budget the centers will continue to serve a wider variety of population sizes.*

*Many jurisdictions have opted for much larger facilities. Typically these facilities incorporate unique features that produce revenue in order to offset operating costs. Fairfax County has several centers that range up to 70,000 net square feet. The City of Gaithersburg has a facility that is 65,000 net square feet. Often these facilities contain indoor swimming pools, racquetball, and larger banquet type rental spaces. This is not the existing or the proposed public policy for Montgomery County.*

# Service Area of Existing and Proposed Community Recreation Centers



**Existing Facilities**  
 (Community and Neighborhood Centers)

**Proposed Facilities**  
 (including recommended FY07-12CIP)

Based on the standard of 1,000 sq. ft. of recreation center per 1000 gross population and factored with attendance distribution data.; Not to scale.

## THE LOCATIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITIES

The chart on the following page breaks out the number of existing community recreation facilities along with the associated square footage by planning area population. It also displays the deficiencies of centers and square footage according to the recommended standard of one center of ~~24,000~~ **33,000** net square feet for every *optimum* population unit of 30,000.

In addition, the chart clarifies where centers and additional space are needed. The decision on the priorities and the sequence in which centers and space should be developed is more complex. Most of the existing community centers were constructed after intense pressure by community groups. It is anticipated that such pressure will be sustained and even increased by communities which are currently un-served or under served and who understand the values and benefits that accrue from such facilities. In fact, many citizen groups working on master plan or sector plan

### **Recommendation – Location Criteria**

The Department of Recreation recommends that there be a systematic, planned approach to bringing new community centers on line, and renovating or adding space, where appropriate, to existing centers to bring them up to the prototype standard. The decision on the sequence of development should be based principally on four criteria:

#### ***Publicly owned property; Park-like setting***

Population density that is currently by existing facilities;

Geographically Isolated Communities

Population socio-economic make-up, with communities of more children, higher diversity and/or fewer leisure options, being given priority;

The availability of time sensitive cost-saving opportunities, such as Federal grants, private sector donations or dedications, or efficiencies in construction costs by joining projects; and expressed interest and support from specific communities.

development or reviews are including the need for new community recreation centers in their issues reports and planning documents.

## Community/ Neighborhood Recreation Center Combined Needs Analysis, 2005

LOCATION (Planning Areas)	POPULATION 2010	CENTERS REQ. (30,000 ea.)	EXISTING COMM. & NEIGH. REC. CNTRS	EXISTING CENTERS	NEW CENTERS NEEDED	NEW CENTERS PROPOSED
<b>UP-COUNTY</b>	63,621	<b>2</b>	<b>DAMASCUS</b>	<b>1</b> (24,400sf)	<b>1</b>	CLARKSBURG Recommended
<b>MID- COUNTY</b>	140,128	5	WHEATON	<b>1</b> (12633sf)	<b>3-Prop FY05-10</b>  <b>1</b>	<b>MID COUNTY KENSINGTON KEMP MILL</b>
<b>BETHESDA</b>	152,405	<b>5</b>	<b>LELAND CLARA BARTON</b>	<b>1</b> (17613sf) <b>1</b> (7816sf)	<b>1-Prop FY05-10</b> <b>1-Prop FY05-10*</b> <b>1</b>	<b>N. BETHESDA</b> Friendship Hts*
<b>EAST-COUNTY</b>	124,012	4	<b>GOOD HOPE EAST COUNTY FAIRLAND</b>	<b>1</b> (5265sf) <b>1</b> (24,500sf) <b>1</b> (23,500sf)	<b>1-Prop FY05-10</b>	<b>WHITE OAK</b>
<b>N. POTOMAC</b>	42,209	<b>1.5</b>		0	<b>1-Prop FY05-10</b> <b>.5</b>	<b>N. POTOMAC</b>
<b>G'TOWN/ WEST</b>	93,964	<b>3</b>	<b>GERMANTOWN PLUMGAR</b>	<b>1</b> (21,350sf) <b>1</b> (8,213sf)	<b>1-Prop</b> <b>Fac.Plng.</b>	<b>W. COUNTY</b>
<b>**GAITH/ ROCKVILLE</b>	<b>**189,720</b>	<b>2</b> (**4.5)	<b>UPPER COUNTY BAUER</b>	<b>1</b> (14,395sf) <b>1</b> (17,816sf)	<b>0</b>	
<b>OLNEY</b>	52,196	<b>2</b>	<b>LONGWOOD ROSS BODDY</b>	<b>1</b> (16,882sf) <b>1</b> (13,221sf)	<b>0</b>	
<b>POTOMAC</b>	48,753	<b>2</b>	<b>POTOMAC SCOTLAND</b>	<b>1</b> (21,650sf) <b>1</b> (6,157sf)	<b>0</b>	
<b>SILVER SPRING</b>	67,953	<b>2</b>	<b>LONGBRANCH COFFIELD</b>	<b>1</b> (24,980sf) <b>1</b> (23,500sf)	<b>0</b>	
	<b>974,961</b> **(32+/- Cntrs)	<b>28.5+/-</b> **	<b>17</b> <b>Existing</b>	<b>17</b> (283,891sf)	<b>11.5+/-</b>	<b>9</b>

(\*) - Non- CIP development project

(\*\*) - Includes population figures attributable to Gaithersburg/ Rockville Planning Area vicinity.  
Both municipalities provide recreation centers.

Based on these criteria, the Department of Recreation is able to make recommendations regarding the sequence of development/redevelopment of centers for the next two decades. The recommendations include the projects in the current FY 97-2002 CIP. Twenty years is the maximum time frame that criteria can be reasonably applied to establish priorities and make decisions regarding the sequence of development.

**Recommendation –  
Development Rate**

The Department of Recreation recommends that the pace of center development be at least sustained at the same rate that currently exists. ***Optimally, approximately four CRCs should be included in each CIP 5-Year program in order to meet public demand.***

The FY 97-2002 CIP included the development of Fairland, Germantown, East County and Rosemary Hills (Coffield) Centers. Both the County Executive and the County Council have sustained this level of support during the recent difficult financial period. The Department recommends that facility development be sustained for the next 20 years as the County seeks to meet the recreation infrastructure deficiencies in underserved communities, and develop recreation facilities in un-served communities.

**Recommendation:**

Based on the criteria established in this plan, the Department recommends the following sequence of development of community recreation centers for the next 20 years:\*

<u>Current approved</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	<u>Completion</u>
Germantown		FY1998
East County		FY1999
Fairland		FY2000
Rosemary Hills		FY2000

Proposed

Damascus

Mid County

North Bethesda

White Oak/Kemp Mill

North Potomac

West County

Kensington

***Recommendation – 2005 Update  
Development Schedule***

***Based on the criteria established in this plan, the Department recommends the following sequence of development of Community Recreation Centers :\****

<b><i><u>Current approved</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>Proposed Completion</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>Current Status</u></i></b>
<b><i>Germantown</i></b>	<b><i>FY1998</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>
<b><i>East County</i></b>	<b><i>FY1999</i></b>	<b><i>“</i></b>
<b><i>Fairland</i></b>	<b><i>FY2000</i></b>	<b><i>“</i></b>
<b><i>Rosemary Hills</i></b>	<b><i>FY2000 (Coffield)</i></b>	<b><i>“</i></b>
<b><i>Damascus</i></b>	<b><i>FY2005</i></b>	<b><i>“</i></b>
<b><i><u>Proposed (by 1997 Plan)</u></i></b>		
<b><i>Mid County</i></b>	<b><i>FY2008</i></b>	<b><i>Design FY05</i></b>
<b><i>North Bethesda</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>	<b><i>Design FY10*</i></b>
<b><i>White Oak*</i></b>	<b><i>FY2009</i></b>	<b><i>Design FY06*</i></b>
<b><i>Kemp Mill*</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>	<b><i>SS &amp; FP FY05*</i></b>
<b><i>North Potomac*</i></b>	<b><i>FY2008</i></b>	<b><i>Design FY06*</i></b>
<b><i>West County*</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>	<b><i>SS &amp; FP FY05*</i></b>
<b><i>Kensington*</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>	<b><i>SS &amp; FP FY05*</i></b>

***Proposed, 2005 Update***

<b><i>“New” POR for CRCs</i></b>	<b><i>FY05-future</i></b>	
<b><i>Clarksburg*</i></b>	<b><i>FY07-12, SS&amp; FP</i></b>	
<b><i>Friendship Heights</i></b>	<b><i>FY09 (Operations)</i></b>	
<b><i>Gilchrist CCD</i></b>	<b><i>FY05-10, SS &amp; FP</i></b>	
<b><i>NRCs Rehabilitation</i></b>	<b><i>FY05-10</i></b>	
<b><i>Recreation Facilities Renovation Master Plan Study</i></b>	<b><i>FY07-12</i></b>	

***(\* Based on “new” POR @ 33,000s.f.)***

## **REVITALIZING EXISTING COMMUNITY CENTERS**

The prototype development plan describes a process of constructing facilities that are simple in design, easily adapted to a variety of purposes, and finished with materials that minimize maintenance requirements while retaining a standard of attractiveness and functionality. This plan recognizes the need to address design and space deficiencies in existing buildings as well as planning for life cycle replacement of structures, systems and furnishings.

### **Recommendation – SAFE Concept**

The SAFE concept is to establish a pattern of maintenance, repair and replacement that targets four goals:

Safety and Security  
Attractiveness and Accessibility  
Functional space and Furniture  
Efficiency

### **Safety and Security:**

There is a fundamental responsibility to insure a safe and secure environment in all recreational facilities. In recent years, improved security technology has been incorporated in both designs for future buildings and in modifications to existing community centers. In addition compliance with regulatory requirements such as OSHA, MOSHA, Consumer Product Safety Standards, the American College of Sports Medicine Guidelines for Health and Fitness Facilities have defined the requirements for changes to building structures and systems.

### **Attractiveness and Accessibility:**

Community centers are subject to intense and often inconsiderate use. The consequence of responding to up to 15,000 participants per month reduces the life cycle of carpet, paint, tiles, and furniture. The existing County intervals for cyclical replacement of carpeting (10 years) and painting (6 years) do not reasonably apply to community centers. In order to maintain an attractive appearance, the things people see, like carpet and paint need to be replaced on a 3 to 5

year cycle.

The concern with appearance is truly a concern with creating an inviting environment that encourages participation. Closely associated with this goal is the need to insure accessibility and limit barriers to participation. Modifications to existing designs to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act are essential. A special county wide project to bring all county facilities into compliance with ADA is in progress, and all future designs meet established accessibility guidelines.

**Functional Space and Furniture, *Fixtures*, & Equipment:**

There are two critical components that define the functionality of a recreation facility. The first is to create sufficient space to accommodate a variety of activities. This is accomplished in the prototype design. The second is to provide furniture, *fixtures*, and equipment that support program activities. The essential distinction between an art room, an exercise room, or a game room, is the furniture and equipment that is present in the space. As facilities age it is imperative to provide for the replacement of the initial furnishings in a building. This is the most pressing current need in facilities ~~such~~ as that are over 15 years old.

***Incorporated in the Program of Requirements for CRCs and attached as a part of Attachment # 1 of this document, is a comprehensive listing of the typical minimum furniture, fixtures, and equipment necessary to the basic operation of these centers.***

**Efficiency:**

Efficiency in space utilization, building systems and finishes requires investment in new technologies and materials that will contribute to reduced operating expenses for utility costs, preventive and routine maintenance.

**Planned Life-Cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR)**

This concept is based on forecasting the need and costs of replacement of building components, systems and furnishings. FY 06 funding is \$200,000, a fraction of a percent of the current replacement value of Department of Recreation facilities. This level of funding severely limits the amount of work that can be accomplished in a given year. For example, replacement of one pool filtration system, or replacing one gym floor and white coating one pool shell will ***more than*** expend all PLAR funds for one year. This results in partial fixes to aging facilities, that creates repair and replacement projects that span several years for one facility. The result defeats the concept of cycling repairs and creates a pattern of continual replacement.

***A recent review (FY03) of existing CRCs and Senior Centers uncovered an average value of un-completed repairs/replacements in excess of \$100,000.00 per***

*facility. Given an average life cycle for most finishes, furniture, and equipment of between 3-10 years and a current inventory of 15 major community/senior facilities, the minimum annual allocation should be in the range of \$415,000.00 in FY04 and escalating by 2-3% per year. At the conclusion of this plan the amount should be a minimum of \$520,000.00/yr to support the current inventory of facilities.*

*These funds should be incorporated into the Department's annual operating budget or contained in a special category of capital outlay expense within the CIP but funded as pay-as-you-go expenditures.*

***Recommendation –  
PLAR Funding***

*It is recommended that a biennial review of facilities be conducted and a budget allocation be established to fully fund the major repair and rehabilitation of Department of Recreation facilities. As a minimum, an amount equal to the current estimated cost of these items, as listed in this plan, should be used as a starting point.*

**Future Renovations and Implications for New Development**

*As an example, Bauer Drive Community Center, constructed in 1977, was the first Department of Recreation designed community center. Between 1994 and 1996 a series of building system and structural modifications were completed including, replacement of HVAC equipment, installation of a new roof, installation of a new energy efficient interior lighting system, replacement of ceiling tiles, interior painting, carpet replacement, and ADA modifications. Work that remains to complete revitalization of the facility is the replacement of major furnishings and program equipment that have been in use for 20 years. Once this is completed, the facility should be structurally sound for another twenty years until 2016 provided an acceptable level of routine maintenance continues and replacement of furniture, carpet and painting is done on a ~~3-5~~ **3 – 10** year cycle. It is reasonable to forecast a similar need for renovation at other existing Department of Recreation Community Centers. ~~The following list compares the anticipated need for major structural and system renovations with the proposed development of new centers.~~*

## Montgomery County Facility Life Cycle Standards

DPWT had established the following replacement schedules for major building components:

Painting	3 - 5 years
Carpet	7 - 10 years
Heat Pumps	10 - 12 years
Air Compressors	15 - 20 years
Windows/Caulking	16 - 20 years
Boilers	20 - 25 years
Electrical systems	20 - 30 years

Actual experience supports most of these life cycles except carpeting replacement *and painting* which is usually needed within *less than a* 3 to 5-year cycle.

In addition to the need to replace basic building components, it is also necessary to periodically replace the initial furniture and equipment inventory of these facilities. Kitchen appliances, exercise machines, sound systems, security cameras and alarms, and gymnasium apparatus are projected for replacement on a *maximum* 15 year-cycle.

## The Future of Existing Neighborhood Centers

### **Recommendation – Renovation and Modernization**

The Department of Recreation recommends an independent assessment be completed within three years on six of the seven neighborhood-sized centers to determine facility improvements that would enhance program and service delivery (the Rosemary Hills assessment is done). When completed, the Department should recommend the relative priority of these renovation/expansions in relation to the proposed construction schedule for new facilities. A specific Project Description Form should be included in the CIP to capture cost recommended modifications from the reviews.

Seven existing neighborhood recreation centers are considerably smaller than the recommended prototype and lack one or more major features. These centers include: Rosemary Hills, Plum Gar, Scotland, Good Hope, Wheaton, Ross Boddy, and Clara Barton. Each of these centers needs to be evaluated individually regarding the feasibility and desirability of adding features to bring them closer to the prototype model. The M-NCPPC neighborhood center in Wheaton, is a 34 year old facility, has inadequate parking, existing structural problems, and limited program capacity make it a candidate for replacement rather than renovation as has been recommended in the Sector Plan for the Glenmont Transit Impact Area.

Structural and system renovations were completed at Scotland, Good Hope, and Ross Boddy Neighborhood Centers between 1990 and 1994. These facilities are small and provide limited program capacity. Their value is limited to the service they provide to the immediate neighborhoods in which they are located. These facilities also should be expected to be renovated. The scope of this work should be evaluated in light of the service priorities that exist at that future time.

***The following section provides an overview of the Neighborhood Recreation Center Assessment recommendations referenced above:***

## Neighborhood Recreation Centers – 2003 Recommendations Report- Summary

*Recently, the Department of Recreation conducted an evaluation of the Scotland, Clara Barton, Good Hope, Plum Gar and Wheaton neighborhood centers as recommended by the original Facility Development Plan, as noted above. This process included technical assistance from the Capitol Projects Division of the Department of Public Works and Transportation, Division of Facility Services, community meetings, and input from Department of Recreation staff responsible for the operations of these facilities. This study was initiated to fulfill the objective of the Department of Recreation Facility Development Plan to determine if program and facility modifications should be made to improve the Department's service objectives. Potential facility modifications were considered ranging from interior modifications, facility additions, and total facility reconstruction. The results of this study confirmed unique variables associated with each of these facilities which preclude a uniform solution for all facilities. The following is a summary of key issues and recommendations regarding each neighborhood center.*

**Scotland:** *The existing facility includes two small classrooms (400 sq. ft. each), small kitchen, large multi purpose space (1920 sq. ft.) and a prefabricated butler building “gymnasium” of approximately 1560 sq. ft. The size and adjacency of spaces within the building limit the capacity to schedule more than one activity in a given time period. Although in compliance with ADA, the main entrance is uninviting, lacks visibility and provides an awkward access for all patrons. The building is aging and is anticipated to have increasing and significant maintenance requirements. The community views this facility as a safe haven for children, youth and seniors in the neighborhood. Proposals that reconstructing a larger facility outside the immediate neighborhood are not supported by the community, and there are no available sites in close proximity to consider relocating the facility. The Scotland community opposed relocating the center in Cabin John Regional Park, and creating connecting pathways for pedestrian access through the park. These issues were considered by the Potomac Master Plan Advisory Group, which recommended renovation of the existing facility.*

*Renovation of the facility at its current location including a redesign of interior spaces to improve, customer service, ADA access, program capacity and security, best reflects the expressed will of the immediate user community. In addition, replacing the existing prefabricated structure with a masonry structure equivalent to the dimension of an elementary school gym would address the long-term costs for maintenance and repair of the existing structure. This project should seek alternative funding sources to the County general fund, such as Community Block Grant Funding, since this facility's location and capacity is limited to the immediate Scotland neighborhood with limited potential to meet the needs of a broader community.*

*Based on location and capacity issues mentioned, coupled with the fact that no parking spaces are available to support use of the building, it is recommended that no significant remodeling or additions be undertaken to the center. Major repair and rehabilitative construction should be funded in the FY 05-11 CIP in order to make the building reasonably efficient to operate and maintain in its current configuration.*

*Plum Gar: This facility represents nearly an opposite problem to Scotland. The existing facility is essentially an elementary sized gymnasium (4250 sq. ft.) with minimal support space. One small room (300 sq. ft.) Adjacent to the entrance has been modified to serve as small computer lab and a space for small group meetings. This facility needs space for non-sports programs and services. A long term interim solution has been funded through a Community Development Block Grant, which provided for the acquisition and installation of a modular classroom building adjacent to the existing gymnasium. This space provides for multiple program activities.*

*The Plum Gar site, unlike the Scotland location, has parking capacity sufficient to support its current functions and program spaces. The existing “portable classrooms” are providing space for after-school programs, computer lab operations, medium-sized social and community meeting functions in addition to the original building’s gym and multipurpose space.*

*Based on a life expectancy of 10-15 or more years for the recent addition, assuming that the building is not disturbed or relocated, no additional development activity is recommended in the upcoming FY 05-11 CIP. However, as in previous situations, major repairs and rehabilitation should be undertaken to avert escalating maintenance and operational problems but without significant change to the physical plant.*

*Clara Barton: This facility is a former elementary school, that is utilized for Department of Recreation programs, a private daycare provider and the Bethesda Youth Services. A design concept was developed that demonstrated that providing a 24,000 net sq. ft. community center on this site is possible using a two story scenario. However, the expanded capacity would require significant additional parking and programming would likely exacerbate existing traffic congestion along MacArthur Blvd. The Cabin John Civic Association and local community opposed expansion plans. In light of these concerns and recognizing the interest of some nearby communities (Brookmont) in supporting new center development, no renovation or expansion of this facility is recommended in the FY05-11 CIP. Only major repairs and rehabilitative construction should be undertaken as a part of the upcoming capital budget.*

*Good Hope: The potential to make significant changes at Good Hope are constrained by the requirements of the Paint Branch Special Protection Area. Expansion of this facility was considered in the original site selection process for the nearby Fairland Community Center. To accommodate any significant increase in facility capacity would create an associated need*

*to expand parking. This could not be done without diminishing existing athletic fields. Even more significant is the fact that the site already exceeds the threshold for impervious surface established for the Special Protection Area. Any additional surface created by parking areas or buildings is precluded. The combination of environmental and space constraints limit any improvements to this facility to rehabilitative and major repair work as a part of the FY05-11 CIP.*

***Wheaton:** The Wheaton center is a MNCPPC facility programmed by the Department of Recreation. Originally constructed in the mid 60's this building has served as a teen center, a senior center and is now scheduled for a variety of recreation programs. The program activity spaces include a lobby, gymnasium and 4 small rooms used for arts, fitness, and community meetings. Major constraints for this facility include limited parking, and a deteriorating roof and building structure. The Department of Recreation Facility Development Plan criteria clearly indicate a need to replace this facility with a full-size, full-service center. The recommendation is to acknowledge this need and respond with a coordinated transition plan with MNCPPC, and Mid County Services Center. It is recommended that options be explored that could review the Kemp Mill and Wheaton areas to determine opportunities for joint planning of a facility to meet needs in this urban area. It may even be possible to provide collocation of facilities to deliver a more comprehensive recreation service. Both a Facility Planning Project and eventually an individual PDF should be initiated to create a project in the FY 05-10 CIP for this effort. This project would be intended to support and augment any resources provided by the private developer.*

## **IN CONCLUSION**

*As an additional recommendation, the Department in the future should endeavor to avoid attempting to operate neighborhood based facilities and instead place priority on those facilities that can serve the larger community population. The small NRCs are nearly as costly to operate as the full-service CRCs but are much less efficient in terms of a reasonable benefit/cost comparison. Whenever opportunities to accept, transfer, or develop NRC type facilities present; they should be very carefully evaluated based on this recommendation. Only in highly unusual and unique situations should this type of facility be considered as a part of the Departments service delivery arsenal. These kinds of facilities are more appropriate to and recommended to be continued as a feature of park sites.*

## **Takoma Park Neighborhood Recreation Center**

The unification plan for the City of Takoma Park includes a transfer of the Takoma Park Recreation Center from the Prince George's M-NCPPC Department of Parks to the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Parks. The long range plan for this facility includes eventual operations and maintenance of this facility by the City of Takoma Park. However, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation will assist in the transition of the program services.

***Currently, the Department provides an annual grant to the City in the amount of \$100,000.00 to assist in supporting the operation of the Center and the provision of public recreation services for residents. It is recommended that this support continue and that this methodology be reviewed as a potential prototype for other similar situations.***

## **Senior Centers**

The Department of Recreation provides specialized programs to senior citizens at Damascus Senior Center, Holiday Park Center in Wheaton, and Schweinhaut Center in Silver Spring. The Department of Recreation programs these facilities and maintenance is managed by the Division of Facilities and Services. Major maintenance and renovation of these facilities is ***in critical need of being budgeted and*** scheduled as part of the Facilities and Services PLAR program. ***Without this type of investment in maintaining the services, programs, and facilities, these programs will cease to exist.***

## **Commercial Business Districts and Urban Centers**

Regions with high density commercial development along commuter corridors present unique opportunities and challenges. It is important to recognize that the "community" in these regions includes not only the residents, but also the thousands of citizens who spend a significant portion of their time as "commuter residents". The reality of this lifestyle is a need and desire to maximize opportunities for effective use of time. For many, this means integrating health, fitness and recreational activities into their daily work and commute schedules. The consequence is a higher leisure service demand factor than reflected in residential population statistics.

The Bethesda region offers some meaningful lessons regarding the need to be proactive in meeting these challenges. The Leland Community Center, located 4 blocks east of Wisconsin Ave., has proven to be a valued community resource. Yet this facility does not meet the total needs of this region. In response to the evident need, the Bethesda region has seen the development of private sector commercial recreation facilities which compliment public

programs and facilities. It is apparent that to meet the needs of these urban areas requires a proactive plan for both private sector and public facility development. An important part of this approach is to establish a clear and complete definition of the type of recreation facilities required as part of a partnership development. This approach has been initiated in the preliminary planning for proposed development along Rock Spring Drive in North Bethesda

The revitalization of downtown Silver Spring is critically important to the economic health and future of Montgomery County. In March of 1997, the County Executive appointed a citizens steering committee to develop recommendations for the total downtown area, including Fenton Street Village and the potential expansion of Montgomery College. A development team was subsequently appointed to create a plan specifically for the 14 acre central business district. Public facilities and investment will play a key role in the revitalization plan. There has been considerable and consistent citizen interest expressed in active park and recreation spaces and facilities as key components of any mixed use redevelopment.

~~The Silver Spring revitalization effort offers a unique opportunity for joint public/private ventures. It is conceivable that the County could join with a private developer to jointly create a complex that would provide traditional community center and complimentary commercial recreation amenities typically developed and operated by private sector organizations. It is also possible that the recreation facility needs would be met entirely by private sector development. If private sector incentives and appropriate joint venture opportunities emerge, a recommendation to initiate development of an urban complex in Silver Spring before the year 2010, would be consistent with the criteria and recommendations of this plan.~~

**FISCAL IMPACT OF THE  
COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTERS  
LONG-RANGE PLAN FYS 1997 - 2010**

The fiscal impact of the recommended long range plan is comprised of two elements: one-time capital costs and annual on-going operating costs. The capital project costs include planning, design, construction and furnishing the seven prototype facilities recommended for completion within the next two decades. The total capital cost of the recommended long range plan ~~updates~~ through ~~2010~~ is estimated at \$38.9 \_\_\_\_\_ million.

The projected costs of both the one-time capital projects and the on-going annual operating expenses are estimated in 1994 dollars. The estimates do not include annual inflation adjustments on personnel, operating, or construction costs. The operating budget impact is spread over the fiscal years according to the recommended time table for completion of the community recreation facilities. The fiscal impact does not include those projects already approved in the FY 95 - 2000 CIP.

**Estimated Capital Costs for a  
Community Recreation Center  
Based on the Recommended Prototype Facility:**

Construction costs are based on the average of a range of recently approved community center projects and are comprised of the following: \_\_\_\_\_

Planning/design/supervision _____	\$ 625,000
Site improvements _____	1,000,000
<b>Indoor space:</b>	
Building construction _____	3,200,000
Furniture/Equipment _____	200,000
<b>Outdoor space:</b>	
Baseball and Soccer fields _____	180,000
Playground _____	60,000
Multipurpose courts _____	45,000
Volleyball/Basketball/Hockey _____	
Tennis court _____	60,000
Parking 150 spaces _____	180,000
<b>Total _____</b>	<b>\$ 5,550,000</b>

## **THE NEXT TWO DECADES**

### **Maintain Current Resources Develop Facilities in Unserved Regions Plan for Land Acquisition and Development**

This plan provides three primary goals for the future. First to maintain current service capacity and facilities. Second, to develop facilities in unserved regions of the County. Third to identify areas of future development to provide for timely and cost effective land acquisition.

Maintaining service capacity and facilities is accomplished by the creation of a prototype design and a master development schedule which can be synchronized with new development. The design standards for new facilities emphasizes the use of materials and systems that have longer life cycles and greater operating efficiencies than existing facilities. Applying these standards to existing facilities as part of the periodic renovation program will be useful in controlling future operating expenses and capital investment. During the next two decades, three existing community centers, Upper County, Potomac, and Leland, will require major structural and system renovation. Having completed systems modernizations at neighborhood centers (Ross Boddy, Scotland, and Good Hope) in 1990-1993 these facilities should life cycle beyond 2010.

East County, Germantown, Fairland and Rosemary Hills Centers are approved in the FY 97-02 CIP. Site selection is complete and design is in progress. Each of these centers were high in priority based on the criteria for facility development. The East County Center offered a unique opportunity to respond to a significant community need supported by Federal block grant funds. The Germantown Center is the first construction partnership with Montgomery County Schools that will result in a middle school, recreation center, and outdoor pool complex. Fairland Community Center will be a keystone facility in a suburban "town center" being co-located with the Fairland Library, M-NCPPC park facilities, and a possible future location for the East County Government Services Center.

The proposed centers are planned to meet the needs of growing unserved regions of the County. The proposed development schedule for community recreation centers has been refined in response to community input during the fall of 1996. In addition consideration was given to the findings presented in master plans, sector plans and recent strategic planning for future government services centers. The results of this effort establish a clear priority of regional needs. The recommendation is to first implement projects that will serve those regions that currently do not have any

community center facilities, and then begin to address areas that are underserved.

The northern region of the county including Damascus and Clarksburg, is a top priority due to the combination of projected population growth and the fact that the communities in this region are geographically isolated from existing recreational facilities.

The mid-county region including Aspen Hill, Glenmont, Wheaton and Kensington includes a densely populated area, with highly diverse communities that are faced with increasing urbanization. This region is served by one undersized M-NCPPC neighborhood facility that is 34 years old. While this structure was factored into the evaluation as a viable center, it suffers from existing structural defects and will certainly need to be replaced by the year 2010. Even if this structure remained a useable facility, the mid-county region is the number two priority for facility development.

The value of this plan has already been used to guide potential land use and acquisition. The construction plans of community centers in North Bethesda, and White Oak/Kemp Mill have been closely linked to other public and private sector projects. The plans for a proposed development north of Rock Spring Drive in Bethesda, included a delineation of land for location of a community center. The requirements for such a center have been based on the footprint of the prototype center described in this plan. This prototype facility was also included on the initial master plan of the Blair High School site, in order to retain appropriate space for a community center at this location. While no commitment has been made to develop centers at either of these locations, the existence of a comprehensive definition of a community center complex serves a useful planning function.

The goal of the Department of Recreation has been to develop community centers on government owned property, typically adjacent to park land or school property. This plan affords a guide to future land needs which will enhance the quality of planning for the North Potomac, West County, and Kensington Centers. This should result in the establishment of a leisure service facility network that will be reasonably available to citizens in all regions of the County.

The recommendations provided in this document return to the values which formed the foundation of this plan. The report by the Commission on the Future of Montgomery County, Maryland, entitled *Envisioning Our Future* stated, "We strongly endorse neighborhood magnet centers, which can serve as a hub for neighborhood activities and as a meeting place for conversation, recreation and leisure." This view has been reinforced in recent meetings with members of our communities. The development of these facilities will establish the keystones to community identity and

~~cohesiveness that is valued by the citizens of Montgomery County.~~

***AQUATIC  
FACILITIES  
2005 UPDATE***

**Department Of Recreation  
Aquatic Facilities  
Development Plan**

**Executive Summary**

**Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of this Aquatic Facility Plan is to take a current look at the availability and distribution of existing public indoor and outdoor pools in Montgomery County, to identify the residual needs in regions of the county, and suggest the prototype facilities for the future. The purpose is also to provide a guide to the County Executive and Council regarding CIP decisions.

**Purpose of the 2005 Update**

*Over the last several years it has become apparent that much of the 1997 plan's recommended actions were being completed. In order for the plan to remain current, it needed to have both accomplishments and changing conditions recognized in the text. This update is not intended to be a "new" plan that will come with future efforts in FY 09. Rather these revisions are intended only to present current information in order that the plan can effectively complete its required tasks through 2010. Minor incidental corrections for editorial, chronological, and grammatical correctness were made without notation. New or altered narratives were incorporated only where necessary to provide clarification or critical new information and are highlighted in this draft via the use of bold italics in large type.*

*In some cases conditions have changed for better or worse and in some cases accelerated, decelerated or significantly altered the need for the task. In other regards, the effect of accomplishing one of the Plan's tasks has initiated another change or altered the utility of the task. This update attempts to incorporate all of these changes but as with all things it can not be absolute. The evaluation of existing conditions and community circumstances will always be included as a major part of the Departments decision making process.*

**Value & Contributions of Public Pools**

Public pools provide for the most basic traditional form of public recreation. Public outdoor pools provide swim opportunities during the hot Washington area summers for thousands of citizens to cool off, recreate, compete and learn lifetime swim skills. They serve the many citizens who have no access to private pools, as well as the swimming needs for area day care groups, playgrounds, summer camps, and the disabled. With more multifunctional facilities and better trained staff, public outdoor pools also serve people who do not have access to other pools. The combination of private community pools and well-placed regional public outdoor pools will ensure regular access to the entire county.

Public indoor pools provide virtually the only opportunity for people to continue swimming as their preferred form of recreation, competition, and exercise after the outdoor pools close on Labor Day. Lap swimming, water aerobics classes, and physical rehabilitation opportunities are in great demand year-round. Swim team members (youth and adults) wish to continue training during winter months. Families looking for indoor, healthful recreation opportunities will use public pools. Parents seek swim lessons for their children (and themselves), particularly during winter months to prepare for safe summer activities. In Montgomery County, the public school system utilizes Recreation Department pools to conduct high school varsity swim and dive programs. In the absence of private or school indoor pools to meet these needs, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation is left to provide the facilities and programs. In so doing, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation provides many jobs for youth, safe environments for youth and adults to become proficient in and about the water, and generally an improved quality of life.

### **History of Public Aquatic Facilities in Montgomery County**

Montgomery County got a late start in providing public pools – with the first not opening until 1968. As of this writing, the Department of Recreation, the agency designated by the County Charter to provide public swim facilities, operates ~~only five~~ **seven** outdoor pools and four indoor pools. In addition, there are only two municipalities with indoor and outdoor pools, and three YMCA pools in the county for a ~~county~~ **population** of more than ~~800,000~~ **900,000** citizens.

~~In the~~ Since the 1980s, ~~and 1990's~~ the Recreation Department has developed modern designs for multifunctional facilities with features and programs that attract regular users as well as the occasional recreator. They are large, attractive facilities that serve significant regions of the county.

### **Previous Aquatic Facility Studies**

There have been two Aquatic Facility Studies prepared by the Montgomery County Recreation Department; one in 1974, and a second in 1985. Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission also addresses the need for public outdoor pools in their PROS Study. These studies developed the concept of regional swim centers to serve populations of 50,000 people – the

standard used by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). Well placed and well designed public pool facilities, located preferably on publicly owned land, could serve the school system and complement any existing community, quasi-public or municipal pool rather than compete with them. These studies have formed the basis for the CIP submittal up to this time. Thus, Montgomery County has followed an organized systematic approach to economically provide summer and year-round swim opportunities. This ~~1997 Plan~~ **2005 update** will continue this approach.

### **Existing Public & Quasi-Public Pools in Montgomery County**

This plan identifies the existing public indoor and outdoor pools, as well as the YMCA and Municipal pools, and the geographic areas they serve. Using population data by planning areas, the current and future level of service is given for each region served. It also identifies the regions still by any public indoor or outdoor pool.

### **Implementation**

***Integrated into the long-range plan for future Capital Improvement Programs is the scheduling of new facilities, together with major renovation and modernization of existing facilities, that will meet the needs of each region in a timely manner but also be economically sound.***

***The sequence of aquatic facility development should be based primarily on four criteria:***

- ***Population density that is currently un-served by existing facilities;***
- ***Population & socioeconomic makeup, with communities of more children and higher diversity;***
- ***The availability of time-sensitive, cost-saving opportunities, such as Federal grants, private sector donations or dedications, or efficiencies in construction costs by joining projects;***
- ***Expressed interest and support from specific communities; and***
- ***Fewer leisure options (due to geographic isolation) being given priority.***

### **Prototype Indoor and Outdoor Pools**

The Aquatic Facility Plan describes the prototype indoor pool that Montgomery County has successfully built in recent years. The newest, the Olney Indoor Swim Center, contains the basic elements necessary to serve an entire region, as well as the enjoyable play features that have proved successful in other pools. The outdoor pool prototypes are the ~~Germantown Outdoor Pool~~ ~~recently designed and about to be constructed.~~ ***Glenmont and Martin Luther King, Jr. outdoor pools.*** It also has the many features popular in the waterpark industry, but found suitable for the public pools. These prototype facilities provide planners with models for selecting appropriate sites, as well as developing construction and operating costs for future facilities.

### **Renovation to Existing Pools**

Future CIP submittals must address not only unserved regions of the county, but also integrate the costs for major renovation and modernization of existing pools. While some will be in need of refurbishment beyond routine and planned maintenance, others may need total replacement on the same or adjacent site. Renovations to pools which are 20 – 25 years old will need to be addressed in the near future. The more recent facilities should not need more than regular maintenance until the next planning process.

### **Public Indoor and Outdoor Pools – Now and Future**

This Aquatic Facility Plan recommends the regions now that justify the need for indoor pools by the year 2010 and beyond. Together with the existing indoor pools, a network of facilities will appropriately serve each region and its schools, with at least a minimal level of service. Similarly, the recommended outdoor pools will provide reasonable access to all populations, and groups seeking summertime swim opportunities. The accompanying list and chart summarize the recommendations:

## **CONCLUSIONS**

***Purpose: To update the report, not prepare a new Aquatic Plan***

### ***Recommendations:***

- ***Scheduling of new facilities, together with major swimming pool renovations and modernization of existing facilities***
- ***Renovations to pools which are 20-25 years old***

- *Aquatic Facilities Plan outline prototype indoor and outdoor pool*
- *Consider four additional projects in the Plan Update for the FY 05-10 Capital Improvement Program*
  - *Renovation of Upper County Outdoor Pool*
  - *Clarksburg/Damascus Indoor/Outdoor Swim Center*
  - *Olney/Sandy Spring/Norwood Outdoor Pool*
  - *Western County Indoor Swim Center*
  - *Recreation Facilities Renovation Master Plan Study*

***Recommendation – Development Sequence***

***Based on the criteria established in this plan, the Department recommends the following sequence of development of Community Recreation Centers:***

<b><i><u>Proposed 1997 Plan</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>Proposed Completion</u></i></b>	<b><i><u>Current Status</u></i></b>	
<b><i>Germantown Outdoor Pool</i></b>	<b><i>FY 98</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>	
<b><i>Wheaton/Glenmont Modernization</i></b>	<b><i>FY 00</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>	
<b><i>Montgomery Aquatic HVAC Renovation</i></b>	<b><i>FY 03</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>	
<b><i>Germantown Indoor Swim Center</i></b>	<b><i>FY 05</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>	
<b><i>Bethesda Outdoor Pool Renovation</i></b>	<b><i>FY 03</i></b>	<b><i>Completed</i></b>	
<b><i><u>Proposed 2005 Update</u></i></b>			
<b><i>Renovation of Upper County</i></b>			
<b><i>Outdoor Pool</i></b>	<b><i>FY 05</i></b>	<b><i>Design FY06</i></b>	
<b><i>Clarksburg/Damascus</i></b>			
<b><i>Indoor/Outdoor Pool</i></b>	<b><i>FY 07-12</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>	
<b><i>Olney/Sandy Spring/Norwood</i></b>			
<b><i>Outdoor Pool</i></b>	<b><i>FY 05-10</i></b>	<b><i>Fac Plng</i></b>	
<b><i>N/A</i></b>			
<b><i>Western County Indoor Swim Center</i></b>	<b><i>FY 05-10</i></b>	<b><i>Fac Plng</i></b>	<b><i>N/A</i></b>
<b><i>(Combined w/ Western CRC)</i></b>			

## AQUATIC FACILITY PLAN

### Value of Public Aquatic Facilities

A recent national survey revealed that swimming attracts more than 125,000,000 participants annually and is only surpassed in popularity in the U. S. by walking as a participant support. The national Spa and Pool Institute estimates that there are 10,000,000 pools in this country. The number of public and semi-public pools is approaching 1,000,000. Recreation literature reveals many testimonies to the values and popularity of swimming. It often heads the list of preferred activities for children, young people and adults according to many studies made in schools, colleges, clubs and communities. Swimming is not only popular with people of all ages, but also is an ideal form of recreation for families and mixed groups, and is an excellent means of social activity.

Public swimming pools provide an opportunity for water safety education, water therapy, rehabilitation, stress reduction, wholesome recreation, socialization, and an opportunity to enhance fitness and health. It provides many job opportunities for young adults to become lifeguards, pool aides, cashiers, swim instructors, and coaches. Through swimming lessons and competitive teams, lifetime skills are taught. As young and old alike become water safe and poised in and about the water, they are better prepared to partake in other water-related activities such as canoeing, kayaking, water skiing, boating, scuba diving, and the like. They become more aware of their abilities, and the dangers inherent with water-related activities.

Public aquatic centers and community recreation centers provide some of the few options available to the government to have a positive influence and impact upon family and community cohesiveness. Such facilities provide a physical focal point to create a sense of identity in a community, and bring a community together for common recreation enjoyment. While swimming pools often are considered places specifically for children and youth to recreate and to learn to swim, today's indoor and outdoor pools are programmed for, and used by ~~all segments of the population,~~ ***adults and seniors during the day.***

Outdoor pools are scheduled for general recreation throughout the day and are attended primarily by youth. The evening hours begin to offer to the adult population an opportunity to recreate after work with their families or swim laps as part of their physical fitness commitment. Weekend usage reflects the greatest participation by the entire family unit.

Indoor pools are particularly tailored to meet the needs of the adult and senior population. Throughout the school year, the school-age youth are not able to attend an indoor pool until after school or early evening. Before work, lap swimming draws a large number of adults at each indoor pool. The mid- and late-morning hours serve well the homebound mothers with preschool children, home school families looking for a daytime recreation opportunities and water exercise classes. The noon hours are particularly heavily attended by the senior citizen population. With children in school, many seniors come regularly to the pool to swim or to use the exercise facilities as their means for physical fitness. After school, the varsity youth programs, as well as

the Recreation Department youth competitive activities, are available to the school-age youngsters. The weekday after dinner recreational swim period attracts families as well as lap swimmers. The later evening hours are most suitable for adults in specific aquatic programs such as SCUBA, kayaking, Lifeguard classes, and Masters training. On weekends, the late mornings are reserved for youth swim lessons followed by the sessions of family recreational swim. Indoor pools are also great places for birthday parties and rentals by teen groups, scouts, and church groups.

Aquatic facilities are good for the business community as well. Access to a public indoor or outdoor pool in various parts of the County is a strong selling point for the real estate industry as they market homes in the County. Businesses looking to locate in Montgomery County will evaluate the amenities available to their employees. Many businesses located in other parts of the country have employees accustomed to using public facilities available to them. When locating to the Washington, D.C. area, they will often contact real estate agents, and the Recreation Department, to determine where aquatic facilities are available to them when they move here.

Finally, as recreation community centers do, aquatic facilities operated by the Recreation Department promote health and wellness, strengthen family, facilitate intercultural interaction and understanding, enhance public safety, provide positive alternatives to substance abuse and potential delinquency, and support the local economy.

### **History of County Public Aquatic Facilities**

Many jurisdictions throughout the United States, as well as in Europe, consider public swimming pool access a fundamental recreation component to be provided by the public sector. Historically, this had not been the case in Montgomery County. Many jurisdictions throughout the East Coast, Midwest, and West Coast, regularly included indoor pools in schools as they were built, and outdoor pools in major parks. Montgomery County was void of public swimming opportunities until the late sixties. This lack of development can be traced to the rapid growth in Montgomery County after WW II. The county's population base was expanding rapidly, and the citizenry was hard pressed through government and state agencies to provide public facilities fast enough. School construction, road construction, and other essential public facilities took precedent over recreation facilities and other amenities. One can look back to the rapid construction of schools as Montgomery County grew. The Board of Education in more recent years has returned to existing schools to provide auditoriums and second gyms. These facilities had been eliminated from the original plans due to limited funds and need for school buildings elsewhere in the county. The provision of swimming pools in the school system, considered to be a fundamental school component in many other areas of the country, was not accommodated in Montgomery County.

### **Indoor Pools**

The Montgomery County Public School system has long since abandoned the idea of building indoor pools at their schools. There are no plans for the school system to provide, even in a catch-up mode, swimming facilities at County elementary or secondary schools. The difficulty of funding new schools in rapidly developing areas of the County dictates that the school system

must utilize County Recreation Department facilities, limited as they are, for their aquatic programs.

The high cost for construction and operation of indoor pools, as well as little to no profit margins, virtually eliminates the private sector from providing adequate size indoor pools for public use. Some small indoor lap pools have been built by the private sector as part of a sport complex, such as racquetball and fitness centers. The limited use of these pools and high membership fees make them inaccessible to most citizens. Moreover, most private indoor pools are only available to the adult population, and not very suitable for youth, seniors, or the handicapped.

### **Outdoor Pools**

The availability of outdoor swimming opportunities for Montgomery County citizens has taken on a quite different evolution. As many communities developed throughout Montgomery County in the fifties and sixties, developers of housing tracts of 100 homes or more, provided community pools primarily to help sell houses. These pools were turned over to the community to manage once all the houses were sold. Scattered throughout Montgomery County, inside and outside the Beltway, are more than eighty private community pools run by volunteer homeowners' boards of directors. As the neighborhoods have aged, many of these pools have dropped their boundaries and thus permit anyone within a reasonable geographic distance to join their membership.

These private community pools are not inexpensive for the average family, costing as much as \$500 or more to join the facility and as much as \$250+ in annual dues. This financial arrangement is necessary for these private ventures to be sustainable; however, such fees make many of these pools financially inaccessible to large numbers of Montgomery County families.

Furthermore, as the long established community pools age, the costs for major repairs and renovation become a heavy burden to its members. If these community pools are forced to close, their residents will rely upon the nearest public pool to provide aquatic recreation.

In more recent years, the availability of community pools has not kept pace with the expansion of Montgomery County households. Many new developments do not provide swimming facilities for the homeowners and those that do, often provide such a minimal facility that the homeowners are not adequately served. As demands were made for limited recreation dollars, the predominant theory of County officials was that due to the availability of private community pools, there was not a pressing need for the government to provide outdoor swimming pools in this county. Surveys showed however that a large number of the population was still not being served by community pools. Access to membership was denied or limited to many homeowners who live outside the community that built the facility. The financial structure also eliminated families from possibly joining. Thus the residual demand for swimming lay dormant for many years in many communities. Meanwhile, public recreation dollars in government's expenditures were channeled in other areas, like schools and park facilities.

## **Role of the Department of Recreation**

As the public clamored for the government to provide recreational facilities, Montgomery County was nonetheless slow to provide outdoor pools for its citizens. It was not until 1968 that the first outdoor county pool was built to serve the Wheaton/Glenmont area. To this day, the County Recreation Department operates only ~~five~~**-seven** outdoor swimming pools to serve the entire county. These ~~five~~**-seven** regional outdoor pools are extremely popular and well attended. The public pools serve families who are not members of community pools. They also serve the members of private pools who wish to interact with a broader community base at a public pool, and avail themselves of aquatic programs that are not offered at the smaller private pools. Private community pools have continued to be successful in serving their particular neighborhoods.

The Montgomery County Charter specifically designates the Montgomery County Department of Recreation of the County government to be the agency to provide public swimming facilities for the citizens of Montgomery County. This is in contrast to the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission which provides most other public recreation facilities. It is apparent therefore, that if Montgomery County citizens are to have access to year-round aquatic opportunities for all ages, they will need to look to the Department of Recreation to provide that opportunity.

## **Revenues through Aquatic User Fees**

A goal of the Montgomery County Recreation Department Aquatics Section is to establish fees that are at, or somewhat below, the market rate and strive to cover all direct operating costs. These fees must also be financially accessible to most households in Montgomery County, and thereby enable families to access aquatic programs on a regular basis. This goal is tempered with the mandate to offset the direct operating costs through user fees, notwithstanding a user-friendly financial assistance program to assist citizens who cannot afford these fees. The combined goal therefore is to establish fees that can offset direct operating costs of full-time and part-time staff salaries, most operating costs, if possible, but at the same time, ensure that county citizens are being well-served by this form of public recreation.

A major revenue source from aquatic programming is from daily admission fees for recreational swim periods. Other revenue sources are pass sales to families, individuals, and senior citizens; income from the sale of swimming lessons; rentals to community groups; birthday parties; rentals to MCPS for their varsity programs and other school functions; revenues from swim team, dive team, and water polo programs; and revenue from water fitness exercise programs for adults. Together, these fees help to offset the operating costs of all the swimming pools, some of which are more successful than others.

If fees become too expensive, the patronage of the facilities will drop. Families will only come to outdoor pools on the very hottest days. When the highly successful 4th Grade Learn-to-Swim

Program was cut from the school budget several years ago, County families were left to take the initiative to register their children for swim lessons in fee-supported recreation programs. Many have not made this a family priority. Many children may never receive lessons, and will forever be at risk as they partake in water-related activities. Furthermore, if fees continue to rise, the swim and dive teams that keep youth involved on a regular basis in a wholesome activity throughout the summer and winter, will become available only to those who can afford the high fees.

As a result, the more affluent families will be able to frequently use public facilities, while those families that must scrutinize their use of a recreation dollar may seek other opportunities in which to spend their leisure time that are more affordable. The majority of costs to operate pools are fixed costs that must be met for the most part whether the pool is crowded or not. Operating expenses, chemicals, and lifeguard salaries are present for any pool that is well, or marginally, attended. Therefore, it is in the Recreation Department's best interest to monitor program and usage, and adjust fees where possible, to ensure that these facilities are being maximized in terms of usage. Consistent high attendance ensures the best use of the recreation dollar expenditure and will satisfy the largest number of people seeking aquatic recreation.

### **County Takeover of Private Pools**

From time to time, the Montgomery County Government has been contacted by representatives of private community pools to offer their facility for sale to the County. As a private community pool becomes unable to financially support itself, it is faced with either closing or finding another owner; i.e., the government, to purchase its assets. This would allow the facility to continue to serve the community, but under the operation of the government rather than the struggling members. The pitch usually focuses on the County's opportunity to take over an existing facility in a viable community and preclude the County from a capital expenditure to replace it. The facts behind such an overture however, reveal that the property in question is more than twenty years old, in deteriorated condition, and unsustainable by its declining, aging membership.

If government takeover is not possible, it has been shown in at least three cases in Montgomery County, that the facility would be closed, the property sold off, and that recreation feature withdrawn from its availability to the community. The community then is forced to seek access to other community pools that are perhaps some distance from these neighborhoods, or seek access to the nearest public pool.

Virtually every community pool will go through such a cycle. Many have survived by eventual turnover of houses to new, younger families seeking memberships. At least three community pools have closed, and many others are on the brink. In older neighborhoods, new occupants may not bring sufficient buying power to generate new membership revenues.

To assume ownership, and then to renovate and operate a community pool, has many drawbacks for a public agency. To purchase a deteriorating plant that perhaps was designed to minimal standards to serve a small community would require major renovation necessary to bring a

facility up to county standards. The limitations of small sites with access often deep within neighborhoods, would create many problems for a public facility.

Before it is summarily dismissed as not viable, the takeover of an existing community pools does merit some consideration by the Recreation Department. Due to the limitations of available sites, particularly in the down-county area, it may be prudent for the government to study each individual case as it may arise. County takeover of an existing private pool may be the only way that a significant portion of a community could maintain access to an outdoor pool without traveling long distances.

This precedent was actually established in the Poolesville community. The only outdoor pool to serve that entire region of the county was originally the River Road Country Club, later purchased and operated by F. O. Day as the Potomac Valley Country Club, then ultimately sold to the County Revenue Authority. Because this property also had the only outdoor pool available to that community, the County Government agreed to operate it for a number of years until it could be replaced by the now Western County Outdoor Pool. Had the County not provided this service, the Poolesville community would have been devoid of any aquatic recreation opportunity for many years.

The demise of older private community pools would place a greater burden on County government ***to provide additional public pools***. It is important that government recognize the contribution of these facilities to satisfying recreational demands. To support these private efforts the County could provide ***recently explored possible means of providing assistance with economic incentives where possible,*** ~~One possible way to assist would be to reduce or eliminate~~ reduction in real estate taxes for these pools, ***low interest loans for capital improvement,*** ~~This could be accomplished through zoning to make allowance for open space contributions. Operating fees,~~ ***and reduction in*** license and inspection fees. ~~also could be waived~~

***After much consideration, the County Council determined that it could not provide this assistance.***

### **Previous Aquatic Facility Studies**

In 1974, the Department of Recreation recognized the need to develop a systematic and economic plan to construct future aquatic and recreation facilities. Prior to that time, no study had been completed. No master plan existed to consider the needs and locations for the next public pools. At that time there were preliminary plans to provide an outdoor pool for Bethesda in response to citizen demands. Also the citizens from the northeastern portion of the county had expressed a need for a public pool. It raised a question whether these would be justified as part of a county-wide study. In 1974, the Department of Recreation, in cooperation with the Office of Planning and Capital Programming, developed a *Master Plan of Aquatic Facilities in Recreation*

*Complexes.* The general guidelines for the establishment of this first plan included the following objectives.

1. Facilities should serve all age groups and both sexes.
2. Facilities should encourage citizens to participate in recreational swimming.
3. Facilities should provide for competitive swimmers and divers of all levels of ability and age groups.
4. Facilities should provide instruction for (a) beginners, intermediate and advanced swimmers; (b) senior citizens and the handicapped; (c) divers; (d) water safety and ~~lifesavers~~ *lifeguards*.

This plan further states that “Swimming facilities should be attractive, spaciouly designed, and well managed. When possible, pools should be placed in a park setting with other recreation features located within and outside of pool boundaries. An adequate buffer between the facility and nearby residences should be provided to prevent a nuisance from noise, traffic, and lighting.” The “Master Plan” adopted the National Park & Recreation Association’s standard that recommends that a regulation indoor pool (i.e., 25 yards/meters) would be sufficiently supported by a population of 50,000. The “Master Plan” also adopted NRPA's standard that a population of 20,000 is sufficient to support a public 50-meter outdoor pool. However, due to the frequency of community and private pools in Montgomery County, the standard for the 50-meter outdoor pool complex was amended to a more conservative 50,000 unit of population rather than an NRPA 20,000 unit of population. Therefore, a standard for providing a public swimming pool in Montgomery County, as adjusted, would suggest that a 50-meter outdoor pool complex and/or a 25-meter indoor pool complex would serve a 50,000 unit of population.

The “Master Plan” established that residents who use a swim center on a regular basis for recreation purposes generally live within a 3-mile radius of the site. However, participants in the competitive swimming, swimming lessons, or other much sought after programs, will travel a greater distance. The immediate service area of an indoor or outdoor public swimming pool was determined to be between a 1.5 and 3 mile radius, while the general service area could be extended up to 5 miles.

This “Master Plan” further recommended that where possible “a regulation indoor swimming pool should be located adjacent to a 50-meter outdoor pool complex on the same site and in a park setting.” Such an arrangement would allow for economies in operation and construction. If located in a park setting with other indoor and outdoor features, these pools would offer families one location to satisfy all their aquatic needs, and at the same time, provide some non-aquatic recreation opportunities. An example of this standard applied in Montgomery County was successfully validated in 1968 by the City of Rockville Recreation Department. After many studies, Rockville constructed a 25-yard indoor pool adjacent to a 50-meter outdoor pool complex to serve its citizens, which at the time numbered 50,000 people. This particular facility proved to be so successful that the City of Rockville has in recent years doubled the size of the

indoor pool and doubled the size of the outdoor pool to better serve its citizens and nearby nonresidents.

Note: While it has been the intent of the Montgomery County Recreation Department to follow this approach in its future pool designs, it has not yet been possible. This has been due to the needs for indoor pools where public outdoor pools were already nearby, or vice versa. It is also due to limited land availability; i.e., construction sites for one of these facilities would not be large enough to accommodate both. It should be noted however that in future planning, the Recreation Department would still seek to provide an indoor and outdoor pool complex located together in a park setting wherever possible.

***The completion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Phase II outdoor pool in the summer of 2004 achieved the County's first indoor and outdoor pool complex on the same site. Such an arrangement allows for economics in operations and offers families one location to satisfy their aquatic needs. Also provides broader service, shared resources and more direct supervision.***

Using the NRPA standard as applied to Montgomery County, the 1974 aquatic "Master Plan" determined that major geographic regions of the County should be served by a public indoor and outdoor pool readily accessible and financially affordable to the majority of citizens. It identified nine geographic regions of the County that either already had, or could, support these facilities should they be built in the future. The implementation of this plan was begun in subsequent capital programs, to be amended by later studies.

In 1978, Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission surveyed the needs for public outdoor facilities, and other outdoor recreation facilities. *The Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* (PROS) analyzed existing outdoor pools and recommended future space to serve the "unmet swimmer days" in each Forecast area. The PROS Master Plan agreed with the Recreation Department plan even though each agency used different methods to assess the need for pools. It validated the justification for the existing public pools; i.e., the Wheaton/Glenmont and Long Branch Pools, as well as those contained in the then-approved CIP. Residual need would require construction of three additional public pools by 1985 or beyond. These areas were the Urban Ring Forecast Area, to serve Bethesda or N. Bethesda; the I-270 Forecast Area, to serve the vicinity of Germantown; and the Olney Forecast Area, to serve the southern part of Olney or northern part of Aspen Hill. In January 1982, an update of the PROS Plan added to this recommendation by indicating that there was a significant need to construct a new pool to serve the northern and western sections of the county.

The last county plan to address the systematic and economic provision of public pools was the *Aquatics Study* in 1985. This report also identified regions of the County that were not served by public pools. The priority location for future pool needs was identified as the Western County region, (Poolesville Forecast Area), and was the top priority in the CIP. The study recommended that the old pool at the Poolesville Golf Course be replaced with a facility to serve the town of Poolesville and the surrounding western county communities. It was the first priority in the CIP.

The second recommendation was to provide a public pool to serve the Olney forecast area, (the Olney Swim Center). The third recommendation of the “Study” was a 50-meter outdoor pool complex to serve the I-270 Forecast Area in Germantown. This need will be met upon the completion of the Northwest Middle School project in Germantown, currently in the CIP.

The *Aquatic Study* further recommended future aquatic facilities that should be considered beyond the six-year Capital Improvements Program. A substantial population expansion in the Damascus/Clarksburg area in future years would require an ~~50-meter~~ **indoor/outdoor** complex of its own. The Upper County Outdoor Pool to the east of Gaithersburg, as well as the planned Germantown facilities would not meet the needs of Damascus/Clarksburg, particularly in view of the lengthy commuting distance. At that time, only one private outdoor community pool existed to serve the Damascus area and it had a substantial waiting list. The Study further recommended that the Phase II portion of the Colesville/White Oak project (~~Martin Luther King, Jr. Indoor Pool~~), be completed. ~~This project originally called for a 50-meter outdoor pool complex to be located adjacent to the existing indoor pool. Later CIP’s reflected the more pressing need to provide a public pool facility in unserved forecast areas before a second facility would be built in an area already served. Phase II of the MLK project continued to be delayed.~~

Finally, the *Aquatic Study* confirmed the position that public pools should be located in park-like settings, preferably on park land, or adjacent to a community center. This was done with the Upper County Community Center and Outdoor Pool Complex. This type of development is more cost-effective and promotes joint use of land, lighting, parking, security, utility services, etc. There are also savings in construction and some operating costs.

Although school sites should be considered as potential sites for future pools, they are less desirable than ones in a park or park-like setting due to the higher rate of vandalism. Also, experience indicates that citizens prefer recreation park settings to swim in rather than institutionalized settings of a school site. Frequent family use exhibited at the Rockville Swim Center and most County indoor and outdoor pools support the position that park-like settings are more conducive to successful pool operations. In any case, sites with good arterial access, adequate buffer and compatible neighboring facilities must be considered. Publicly-owned land is certainly preferred to avoid land costs for new pool facilities. As future community centers, libraries, county service centers, new school sites, and parks are planned, pool facilities should be given early consideration as a potential partner to these projects.

### ***Spraygrounds:***

***A recent innovation to providing a water attraction to neighborhoods is the advent of “spraygrounds.” These are multiple water spray features on concrete slabs where the water drains away and is reused. Thus there is no pool to swim in or to guard. This is a modern version of opening a fire hydrant or running***

*under a garden hose. As such, this Department will consider a sprayground as a potential outdoor feature to be added to other public space in communities with limited access to regional public pools*

## **Existing Indoor Public Pools in Montgomery County**

The following indoor public pools are available to Montgomery County citizens either through the Department of Recreation, or through other nonprofit agencies.

1. Montgomery County Government, through its Recreation Department to date has built and operates *four* regional indoor swim centers.
  - A. The first indoor facility, opened in 1981, was the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center**, 1201 Jackson Road in Silver Spring, just off of New Hampshire Ave. This facility is located in the 90-acre Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreational Park between the communities of Colesville and White Oak. The total water surface is 8,246 n.s.f. with a building of approximately 30,000 n.s.f.
  - B. The second indoor facility, opened in 1989, was the **Montgomery Aquatic Center**, 5900 Executive Blvd. in North Bethesda. This facility is located in the 12-acre Wall Local Park near Rockville Pike and Old Georgetown Rd. “MAC” is the County’s flagship aquatic center which serves the down-county area. The total water surface area is 13,920 n.s.f. in a building of approximately 44,000 n.s.f.
  - C. The third ~~and most recent~~ facility is the **Olney Indoor Swim Center**; 16601 Georgia Ave. Opened in 1994, this facility is located in the Olney Manor Park between Aspen Hill and Olney and serves the Georgia Ave. (Rte. 97) corridor. Total water surface is 9,386 n.s.f. in a building of approximately 33,000 n.s.f.
  - D. The fourth and largest of our facilities is the **Germantown Indoor Aquatic Center** located at 18000 Central Park Circle, Germantown. This state of the art facility is located within South Germantown Regional Park. The total water surface is 16,234 n.s.f. with a building of approximately 60,000n.sf.
2. *For many years* Montgomery County Recreation Department in cooperation with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) operated and programmed the **Piney Branch Elementary School Pool**. This pool, opened in 1974, serves the year-round needs of Takoma Park and East Silver Spring with after-school, weekend, and summer aquatic programs. Limited activities by the school are conducted during school hours. The single pool ranging in depth of 3.5' to 10' totals only 4,500 n.s.f. of water surface area, with no shallow water for young children.

***In 2002 the Montgomery County Department of Recreation worked with MCPS at Piney Branch School, and the City of Takoma Park to transfer its operational responsibility of the Piney Branch Pool to the Silver Spring YMCA. The YMCA was looking to expand its program opportunities in the***

***Takoma Park region, while the County Department of Recreation needed to focus its shrinking resources toward the operation of its regional swim center. The result has been a win-win-win for all parties. Takoma Park is cooperating with the YMCA for their program needs and the YMCA expects to expand programs at the pool to better serve its community.***

3. Two Montgomery County municipalities have indoor pools to serve their residents and nearby nonresidents. The City of Rockville has expanded its facilities to provide two 25-yard indoor pools (totaling 7,570 n.s.f. of water surface area at one site). The City of Gaithersburg and Montgomery County Public Schools jointly operate an indoor pool (4,050 n.s.f.) at the Gaithersburg Middle School site.
4. Montgomery County is fortunate to have three YMCA indoor swim facilities. The Silver Spring YMCA is located off Colesville Road near the Beltway. The Bethesda YMCA is located near the Beltway off Old Georgetown Road. The Upper County YMCA is situated in the heart of Montgomery Village in Gaithersburg. While these three facilities are not-for-profit private pools, their substantial fee structure greatly limits availability to the general public. However, many of their programs are available to nonmembers, such as swimming lessons and exercise classes.
5. The Fairland Aquatic Center, operated by the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission, is a public facility located in Prince George's County on the Montgomery County line. It helps to serve residents of Eastern Montgomery County.
6. ***Small specialty pools designed specifically to provide physical therapy and related services are operated in three schools by MCPS. Because of their limited use, these pools are not available for public use.***

All three Montgomery College campuses have indoor pools to serve primarily the needs of their students, faculty, and staff. When classes are not scheduled, there is lap swimming for adults. The Department of Recreation offers a very limited after-school competitive swimming program, and youth swim lessons at the Germantown Campus. No such programs are available at either Takoma Park or the Rockville Campus of Montgomery College.

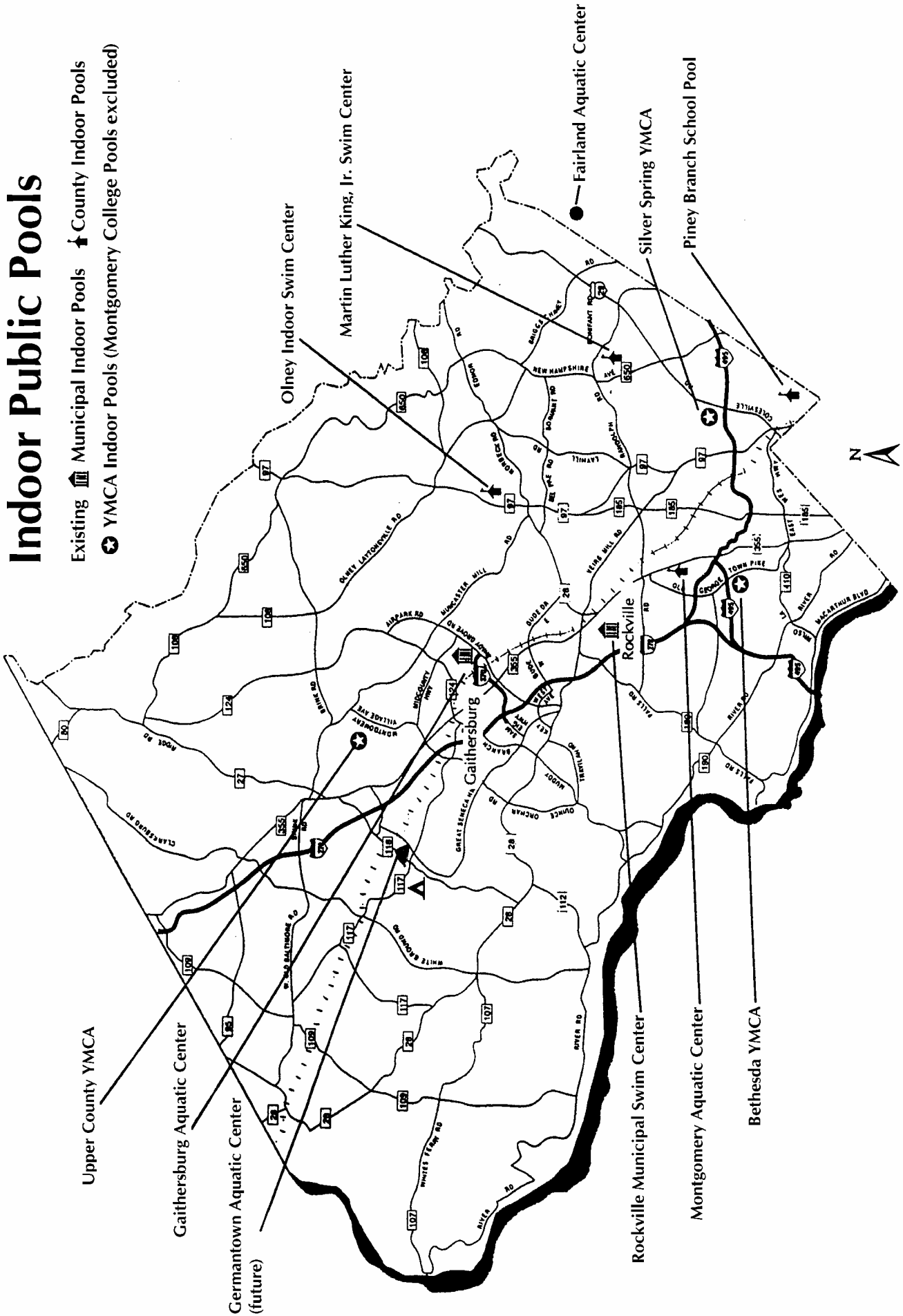
It must be noted that there are some other fine indoor swim facilities in the County, but they are private. The Jewish Community Center in Rockville has a limited indoor pool for exclusive use of their members. The Quince Orchard Bath and Racquet Club bubbles its outdoor pool and charges substantial fees for membership. In addition, there are several private racquetball clubs such as Athletic Express, the Bethesda Racket Club, and the Aspen Hill Racket Club that have small indoor pools as part of the overall facility offering to its members. Again, while some programs may be available to the general public for a fee, full access to these facilities require a substantial membership to the entire club.

For purposes of this study, these private sector indoor pools and the Montgomery College indoor pools are not considered serving the general public, and are not therefore included as facilities that are considered public pools.

The accompanying map shows the approximate location of the public indoor pool facilities in Montgomery County.

# Indoor Public Pools

- Existing  Municipal Indoor Pools
-  County Indoor Pools
-  YMCA Indoor Pools (Montgomery College Pools excluded)



## Existing Outdoor Public Pools in Montgomery County

Public outdoor pools in Montgomery County are provided by County and Municipal Recreation Departments. *As of the year 2003:*

1. The Montgomery County Recreation Department operates ~~five~~**seven** outdoor pool facilities with variations of main and leisure pool size, shapes and features. All have bath houses, filter/mechanical rooms, tot pools, snack bar facilities, and lawn areas for sun bathing.

A. The **Wheaton-Glenmont Pool**, located off Randolph Road next to Wheaton High School. ~~Is a large 50-meter pool complex with a total water surface area of 13,780 sq. ft.~~ ***Originally opened in 1968 as the County's first public outdoor pool, this facility was entirely rebuilt in 2000, to include multiple pools totaling 17000 n.s.f. of water surface area.*** The facility serves Wheaton, Aspen Hill, Kensington, and neighborhoods north of the Beltway in Silver Spring and south of Rockville. ~~Built in 1968, Glenmont is the oldest public pool in the County.~~

*Note:* ~~The current FY 97 CIP includes the renovation/modernization of the existing Wheaton/Glenmont Pool.~~

B. **Long Branch Pool**, located near the intersection of University Blvd. and Piney Branch Rd., serves the Takoma Park and east Silver Spring area. This is a 25-meter pool complex, similar in size and design to a typical community pool. With total water surface area of 6,790 n.s.f., Long Branch was built in 1970, and was refurbished during construction of the Long Branch Community Center on the same site in 1994.

***As a result of the "Long Branch Initiative" to enhance facilities that serve this community, funds (including State Local Bond Bill Funds) were provided to complete renovations and purchase several water-play features for the existing facility. These enhancements were added for the 2004 summer.***

C. **Bethesda Pool**, located on Little Falls Pkwy., several blocks north of River Road, serves lower Bethesda communities, from the Beltway to the District line. This is a 50-meter pool complex, with a total water surface of 12,018 sq. ft. Opened in 1980, ~~the Bethesda Pool will be the next outdoor facility to be scheduled for renovation and modernization~~ ***was refurbished and modernized in 2002.***

D. **Upper County Pool**, located next to the Upper County Community Center near Mid-County Hwy., serves the eastern portion of Gaithersburg/Derwood, and the Rte. 124 Corridor neighborhoods south of Montgomery Village. Opened in 1985, this facility totals 11,815 n.s.f. of water surface.

E. **Western County Pool**, located in the town of Poolesville, serves the entire western portion of Montgomery County, from Darnestown to the Potomac River, as well as communities to the north including Boyds and Barnesville. Opened in 1990, this facility totals 10,173 n.s.f. of water surface.

F. ~~The only new outdoor facility currently planned and funded in the current CIP is the~~ ***The Germantown Outdoor Pool*** ~~complex. This facility will be located with~~ ***adjacent to*** the Germantown Community Center and Northwest ***Kingsview*** Middle School on Route 118 and Clopper Road in Germantown. With 12,857 n.s.f. of water surface, this pool ~~will~~ serves communities north of Rockville, west of I-270, and east of Western County.

G. ***Martin Luther King, Jr. Outdoor Pool, located adjacent to the indoor Swim Center serves the eastern part of the County along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.***

2. The City of Rockville operates two ***large swim center complexes that feature*** Olympic-size outdoor pools ***adjacent to leisure pool of equal size as well as*** located in Welsh Park, not far from Montgomery College. ~~This large complex also contains two adjacent indoor pools.~~ ***This facility*** serves the entire City of Rockville's population as well as many nonresidents. Nonresidents are charged higher fees.

3. The City of Gaithersburg operates a large outdoor swim facility at the Summit Hall Park off of Rte. 355 in Gaithersburg. This facility serves the citizens of the City of Gaithersburg as well as nonresidents who also would pay a greater fee.

4. Montgomery Village has seven outdoor pools open only to Montgomery Village residents. These pools are run by Montgomery Village Foundation, Department of Recreation and Parks.

5. Of the three YMCA facilities in the County, the Silver Spring and Bethesda YMCA's both have an outdoor pool component.

In conclusion, the citizens of Montgomery County who wish to avail themselves of outdoor swimming pool opportunities are limited to seeking membership in a nearby private community pool (if memberships are available and affordable), join a YMCA, or seek a public pool operated by one of the three Recreation Departments.



## Evolution of Indoor Pool Design Spaces

~~The~~ ***One of the*** oldest county-operated indoor pools ~~is the~~ ***was a*** the joint venture ***previously run by the Recreation Department and the*** public school system at Piney Branch ***(currently it is run by the Silver Spring YMCA)***. Built in 1974, this simple 75' x 45' tank has no play features, little or no deck space or seating capacity, no shallow water for small children, etc. This small pool is not suitable for instruction to young children, hosting a high school dual meet, or having more than one meaningful activity going on at one time. Consequently, this facility is underutilized and not cost-effective to operate.

By contrast the newest indoor pool, constructed by the Department of Recreation in Germantown, built in 2005 provides three separate pool amenities. The competition pool features dive towers, 5- meter, 7.5 meter and 10 meter platforms. The dive area will also be used for water polo, deep water running, SCUBA and water safety instruction. The recreation pool will be used for instruction, water exercise and lap swimming. The leisure pool will feature interactive children slides, tumble buckets and a ramp entrance. The pool also features two water slides over 200 feet in length.

The chart on the following page indicates the major features found within the existing Recreation Department indoor pools. The evolution in design is evident by the features provided in the newer facilities.

## Summary of Indoor Swimming Facility Activity Spaces

Existing Indoor Pool Facilities	Swimming Pools Surface Area	50 Meter Pool	25 Meter Pool	Separate Diving Well	Leisure Pool	Teach Pool	Hydro Pool	1 Meter Diving	3 Meter Diving	Diving Tower	Water Slide	Lap Lanes	Deep Water Walk&Run	Special Changing Room	Locker Shower Rooms	Sauna Men/Women Rooms	Spectator Seating	Meeting Room	Weight Room	Snack Bar/Vending
<b>Montgomery Aq Ctr</b>	<b>13,920sf</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr</b>	<b>8,246sf</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Olney Swim Center</b>	<b>9,386sf</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Germantown Aq Ctr</b>	<b>(future)</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

### DEFINITIONS OF SPACES:

- 50-meter Pool: A true Olympic size (165' long) for competition. During regular operation, it is divided into two eight-lane 25-meter swim courses separated by a movable bulkhead
- 25yd/m Pool: Pools usually set up for a 25 yards (standard length for high school and USS competition) with a diving well separated by a movable bulkhead.
- Leisure Pool: Warm water shallow free form pool with sprays, fountains, kiddie slides, "Rain Drop" umbrella, or other features.
- Hydrotherapy Pool: Large tiled "hot tub" holding up to 10 adults with water temp. of 103 degrees.
- 1-3 meter diving (springboard): 1-meter level is for high school and NCAA diving; 3-meter for US and Olympic training.
- Diving Tower: Contains concrete dive platforms at 5, 7, 10 meter heights for Olympic level training.
- Water Slide: Over two hundred feet in length over descending from 10 meter launch point to splash pool.
- Lap Lanes: Designated area of pool for patrons to swim continuously for fitness.
- Deep Water Running Areas: Pool areas over 6' deep designated for individuals or classes to exercise with flotation devices.
- Meeting Room: Located off the lobby, used for lifeguard training, CPR and Instructor training, team meetings, in-service staff training, etc.
- Weight Room: A small room with 10 or more exercise stations of stacked weight machines, exercise bikes, etc.
- Snack Bar/Vending: Area designated to dispense light snacks and drinks with limited seating.

## **Evaluation of Outdoor Pool Designs Spaces**

The earliest outdoor pools, Wheaton/Glenmont (1968) and Long Branch (1970), provided the basics to those communities. Glenmont is the largest County outdoor pool with much to offer good swimmers. Multiple lap lanes in the main pool offer too much deep water for young children. The “junior” and tot pools are too small. The dive well is great for those who can dive and swim, but is inefficient by design. No play feature, no shade, poor lawn area locations, etc. limit this facility to the status of being merely adequate.

***The Glenmont Pool was completely replaced, and re opened in 2000 on an adjacent site at the original location. The new design includes a large lap/training pool with diving boards and ample shallow water, a freeform Leisure Pool with kiddie slides, and other water play features, a tot pool, snack bar, and modern bathhouse.***

Long Branch is one-third the size of Glenmont and has the same limitations. The Long Branch experience proved to the county that this community pool size is woefully inadequate to serve as a public regional pool. In comparison to the operations of all the other county outdoor pools, which have a “50-meter capacity” design and thus can serve double the patrons, Long Branch is a very inefficient design and should not be duplicated.

By contrast, the ~~newest~~ ***more recent*** outdoor pools designed by the Recreation Department ~~soon to be constructed in Germantown will~~ combine successful features. A free-form Leisure Pool, ample shallow water, fun play features and well-designed ancillary areas ~~will better serves~~ all age and ability levels, operates more efficiently, and stimulates repeat business from the community in a broad region of the county.

The chart on the following page indicates the major features found within the existing Recreation Department outdoor pools. The evolution in design is evident by the features provided in the newer facilities.

## Summary of Outdoor Swimming Facility Activity Spaces

Existing Outdoor Pool Facilities	Swimming Pools Surface Area	50 Meter Pool	25 Meter Pool	Leisure Pool	Teach Pool	Tot Pool	Diving Well	1 Meter Diving	1/2 Meter Diving	Water Slide	Kiddie Slide	Lap Lanes	Special Changing Room	Bath House	Spectator Seating	Snack Bar
Bethesda Pool (revised)	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
“New” Glenmont Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Long Branch Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Upper County Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Western County Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Martin Luther King, Jr. Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Germantown Pool	12,018sf	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

### DEFINITIONS OF SPACES:

- 50-Meter Pool: true Olympic length 165 feet (Long Course). Glenmont, Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) and Bethesda are 6 lanes, 45' wide; Glenmont and MLK have 5 lane 25-meter courses into the Dive Well of the 50-meter pool.
- 25-Meter pool: Standard for Montgomery Swim League competition length. Upper Co. and Western Co. are 60' wide; Long Branch is 42' wide. Bethesda has six such lanes, as well as a separate six lane 25-meter lap pool.
- Leisure Pool: Shallow water, free form with beach entry, warm water, sprays foundations, kiddie slides "Rain Drop" umbrella and built-in bench 0-4 feet
- Teach Pool: Small rectangle shape 3 feet to 4 feet in depth, usually 20' x 40'.
- Diving Well/Pool: Separate from swim area to provide for 1 or 3 meter diving boards.
- Tot Pool: Shallow water 6" in depth for tots and infants, separated by barriers from other pools.
- Water Slide: 200' in length, over 10' in height, fiberglass flume exiting to a separate receiving pool area.
- Kiddie Slide: Under 10' in height, short length, exiting into shallow water.
- Lap Lanes: Designated area of pool for patrons to swim continuously for fitness.
- Special Changing Room: For Handicapped or other persons who desire privacy, as well as a parent with a child of opposite sex too young us use locker room alone
- Snack Bar: Small snack concessionaire operation: package goods, no cooking for food preparation provided.

## **Prototype Indoor and Outdoor Pools**

The professional staff of the Montgomery County Department of Recreation Aquatics Section has spent many years researching successful, as well as unsuccessful, designs and operations of indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities, locally, throughout the United States, and abroad. County aquatic facilities that have been designed, constructed, and operated by the Department have demonstrated the evolution of knowledge from this research. Montgomery County has developed a national reputation in the aquatic community as one of the foremost designers and operators of public facilities. Through this process, the Recreation staff has developed a prototype for both an indoor and outdoor aquatic facility that works best for Montgomery County. While each new facility would be unique in design, it would incorporate the most successful elements found in the existing county facilities as well as new knowledge from other pool operations.

### **Indoor Pool Prototype Facility**

The prototype indoor pool for Montgomery County consists minimally of an 8-lane wide by a 25-yard/meter Main Pool, and a separate shallow-water Leisure Pool. This pool would range in depth from 4 feet to 14 feet, with as much standing depth available as possible. The Main Pool provides the ideal program space for lap swimming and team training, as well as sufficient shallow and deep water for water exercise classes, deep water running, diving, scuba, swimming lessons, water polo, and the like. The indoor pools would be used by the high school varsity teams to hold practices and competitions, as they do now, since there are no pools in any of the county high schools.

The adjacent warm water Leisure Pool would contain fountains, kiddie slides, sprays and water play features, water umbrellas, tumble buckets, and other fun features. The Leisure Pool combines the requirements for a Tot Pool as well as a shallow water Leisure Pool by a design water depth ranging from 0 inch depth to 4 feet. This shallow water space is ideal for elementary and preschool age youth to recreate as well as learn to swim. The warmer water makes it particularly suitable for the young and old alike. Also, underwater benches with hydrojets provide space for attending adults to relax while being with their children in this pool. Any indoor prototype pool should contain at least two hydrotherapy pools that would accommodate 10-12 adults each.

Ancillary features for the indoor swim center include mechanical and storage spaces, temporary and permanent seating for at least 300 persons, locker and shower space as required by code, saunas, an exercise/weight room, meeting room, lobby, circulation space, and office administration area. The prototype indoor pool building would be minimally designed for approximately 35,000 s.n.f., with a total water surface area of approximately 10,000 s.n.f.

Montgomery County is fortunate to have as one of its indoor swim centers, the Montgomery Aquatic Center. Because of its prime location in the down county area convenient to Rte. 495 and I-270, this facility exceeds the prototype design requirements. It is the flagship indoor

aquatic facility for the Recreation Department, and has proved tremendously successful. This building is 44,000 s.n.f. and contains the only true indoor Olympic pool and diving facility in Montgomery County. MAC also features a 220-foot water slide connecting the dive tower platform to the Leisure Pool Splash Pool. While it certainly would be desirable to duplicate this effort in another part of Montgomery County, it seems prudent that the prototype building as described above, (exhibited by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center and the more recent Olney Indoor Swim Center), is the facility that would best serve other regions of Montgomery County in the future.

***The Germantown Aquatic Center is modeled after the larger Montgomery Aquatic Center. Due to the large population area to be served in the up-county region west of I-270, a larger facility is appropriate to meet the demand. This will become the County's largest facility to date. This Center provides not only greater water space but also more amenities to complement the programs to be offered.***

### **Outdoor Pool Prototype Facility**

Experience has proven that the minimum **outdoor** aquatic facility built by Montgomery County Recreation Department anywhere in the County would be a facility described as a "50-meter pool complex." This title does not suggest necessarily that a 50-meter Olympic size pool must be included in the design. It rather suggests that a pool complex would have the water surface comparable to a 50-meter Olympic size pool, together with the ancillary features and complimentary pool spaces that would accompany it.

It could be appropriate in some regions of the county that a 50-meter pool of Olympic training size might be most desirable and in demand. This "50-meter pool complex" would contain a lap/competition pool that is minimally 8 lanes wide (approx. 60 feet) by 165 feet long (50 meters). The predominant water depth would slope from 4 to 5 feet for the majority of this body of water and, dependent upon the design, may slope deeper into a diving well area that could be as deep as 14 to 18 feet. This pool complex would have a separate Leisure Pool component that would attract young children who would be most comfortable in depths of water from 0 inches to 4 feet. Separate from the competition and Leisure pools would be a Tot Pool to allow infants and toddlers with a parent to enjoy a shallow water experience of 4 to 18 inches without being surrounded by older users.

However, in some parts of the county, an Olympic size pool may already exist nearby. Therefore, the complex may be designed with a smaller lap/competition pool (no less than 25 meters long) and a larger Leisure Pool. The 25-meter minimum length is necessary in any outdoor pool so that a community-based youth swim team could be formed and become a viable member in the Montgomery County Swim League.

The total water surface area of a regional “50-meter capacity” pool complex would range from 11,000 n.s.f. to as much as 20,000 n.s.f., depending on the final design and configuration. Surrounding these pools would be sufficient lawn and landscaped areas inside the perimeter fencing to allow ample opportunity for sunbathing, play apparatus, and perhaps some lawn sports such as volleyball and tetherball, etc. The pool most likely would include a snack bar building and eating plaza to compliment the pool facilities. The bath house would be sized to adequately serve an instant capacity of as many as 1,000 patrons. It would contain an admission counter area, pool office, first aid room, guard room, mechanical space, shower and changing areas, and some limited locker space. All the pools would be surrounded by a minimum of 6 foot wide concrete deck as required by the design codes.

The facility would necessitate security elements for the buildings as well as sufficient lighting for the pools, decks, and lawn areas to allow safe operation past dusk. This prototype outdoor pool would require minimally 175 parking spaces conveniently located near the entrance. Such a complex would be situated on a footprint of no less than 4 acres, but would require additional acreage around the pool facility. The entire complex would best be buffered from any neighboring residence by land used for other park features, ball fields, compatible recreation buildings and/or natural buffers. A 10-12 acre site central to the target region is preferred, with good visibility, pedestrian and bike access, as well as good arterial access.

The features in any modern outdoor pool must include activity spaces and play features that attract patrons of all ages. The lap pool meets the competitive requirements and provides lap swimming opportunities for patrons who prefer this type of physical exercise. It must appeal to many teenage and older swimmers who find 4 - 5 feet of water comfortable to recreate in, away from small children. Diving boards of at least one meter, and perhaps a drop slide would be desirable to attract that age user. A separate Tot Pool will provide a safer environment for infants and toddlers. The shallow water Leisure Pool, designed specifically for smaller children, should have many attractions and features that would stimulate interest. Slides, swings, sprays, waterfalls, and crosswalks are some of the innovative apparatus that is available from the water park industry, but is rapidly being adopted in the public sector in new pool design. Large water slides and more challenging water play features that stimulate young adult and adult use must also be provided.

The public sector has learned much from the private sector water park industry in what it must provide to accommodate the many interests that the public bring to recreation facilities in the modern day. If recreation departments are to compete with the private sector successfully, and hope to generate enough revenue to offset its costs, it must include the successful elements from the water park industry in its future pool designs to attract regular customers.

## **Meeting Future Needs**

### **Aquatic Facility Service Area**

The accepted National Recreation & Park Association standard, modified to account for existing community pools in Montgomery County, justifies the need for a public indoor or outdoor pool

for each 50,000 unit of population. The regions served by existing Montgomery County aquatic facilities exceed this standard, in many cases by double the amount. On the positive side, this conservative application of the NRPA standard results in a more economically realistic level of residual need for facilities in the county. The negative of such a conservative application of the national standard is a diminished level of service to all citizens.

Planning and programming public pools for such highly populous service areas has established a precedent for crowded classes and often insufficient space to have an enjoyable experience either in a structured program or during family recreation. Nevertheless as long as Montgomery County is in a catch-up mode for providing a minimal level of aquatic service for all of its citizens, this conservative population standard (and level of service) should be followed. An improved level of service in areas minimally served will be the charge of some future Aquatics Facilities Plan.

Population, however, cannot be the only criteria. Geographic isolation in rural regions supports the need for pools where great distances separate residents from access to public recreation.

The stated goal of the Department of Recreation is to develop an Aquatics Facility Plan that will provide reasonable and affordable access to public indoor and outdoor aquatic opportunities suitable for all family members. This is done by determining realistic regions (service areas) throughout the county that make sense geographically, allowing for ease of access and natural borders; i.e., land barriers or arterials which are not easily crossed, etc.

The planning process must first identify the existing public facilities available to the public and then determine the service areas left ". The intent is to avoid duplication or competition with any facility that properly serves its surrounding communities. The primary mission of this aquatic plan is to identify the regions of Montgomery County with sufficient population or geographic isolation to justify such a public facility. The national standard as applied to the county population suggests that there is sufficient need to support not only pools in regions that are not now served, but in some high density areas that are served by existing pools, a second public pool may be justified.

The most prudent approach to providing indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities for Montgomery County is to continue the regional swim center philosophy. Based upon the NRPA standard, the development and success of the existing pools in the County to this date indicates this approach makes good sense. In fact, while the NRPA national standards calls for a 50,000 unit of population to justify an indoor or outdoor public pool; the service areas of the existing public/quasi-public pools are much greater in Montgomery County. In many regions already served, service area populations number more than 100,000 people.

### **Public Indoor Pools – Regions Served**

The public indoor pools that now exist in Montgomery County serve geographic regions as follows:

- The **Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center** serves the north-east portion of the county, along the New Hampshire Ave./Route 29 corridor north of the Beltway. This region is also somewhat served by the Fairland Aquatic Center, just across the Prince Georges County border.
- The **Montgomery Aquatic Center** serves the down-county Bethesda vicinity. This includes Kensington, Garrett Park, South Rockville, Chevy Chase and parts of Potomac. Also in this region is the Bethesda YMCA with two small indoor pools.
- The **Rockville Municipal Swim Center**, with two standard indoor pools, serves the Greater Rockville region, including Potomac, Darnestown, areas south of Gaithersburg, and Norbeck.
- The **Germantown Indoor Aquatic Center** will serve the Germantown, Up County Region area which will include Poolesville, Barnesville and Boyds.
- The **Gaithersburg Aquatic Center** serves the citizens of Gaithersburg and surrounding areas such as Laytonsville and Derwood.
- The **Olney Indoor Swim Center** serves the Rte. 97 Corridor and the populations that fall between the Rockville and the Montgomery Aquatic Center and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Centers. The Olney Indoor Swim Center serves the Brookeville/Sandy Spring area to the north, as well as Aspen Hill to the south.
- The **Silver Spring YMCA** and the **Piney Branch Elementary School Pool** serve the southeastern portion of the county, particularly south of the Beltway in the Greater Silver Spring/Takoma Park area.

***Note: The D.C. Department of Recreation is currently designing an Olympic size indoor pool to replace the old Takoma Park Outdoor Pool located close to the Silver Spring/Takoma Park region of Montgomery County. This facility will also serve Montgomery County citizens in the same way Fairlands Aquatic Center does in the northeast region.***

- **The Upper County YMCA**, located in Montgomery Village, serves the areas to the north of the Olney Swim Center and the north of Gaithersburg and Rockville Swim Centers.

### **Regions Unserved by Public Indoor Pools**

The areas of the county that are not now "served" by a public indoor swimming facility and which have the population to support a public facility are the Germantown region and the Damascus/Clarksburg region.

- **The Greater Germantown Region** is projected to have a population of over 92,000 people by the year 2006. Access to the Montgomery College pool on the Germantown campus by the non-college community, as limited as it is, will continue to shrink as the demand for college programs in the pool expands. This area west of Rte. 270 will not be adequately served

by a Damascus/Clarksburg pool, if it is built, or the existing pool in Rockville. Site constraints will not permit the indoor pool to be co-located with the Germantown Outdoor Pool at the Northwest-Kingsview Middle School.

Note: Preliminary plans for the South Germantown Park call for an indoor public pool to compliment the other planning recreation features.

The recommendation is to provide an indoor swim center to serve the Germantown region. Consideration was given to duplicating the size and many of the features of the Montgomery Aquatic Center.

***The Montgomery County Department of Recreation developed the Germantown Aquatic Center in 2005. This multi pool indoor facility is located in the South Germantown Regional Park. With more than 60,000 SF of space, this pool is the largest in the County and will serve much of the region.***

- **The Clarksburg/Damascus Region** is projected to have a population of more than 64,000 people by the year 2010. The paucity of private facilities as well as the consideration of geographic isolation, justifies an indoor pool.

Note: Preliminary plans by Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission for the Ovid Hazen Wells Park located between Damascus and Clarksburg include a public pool facility. Considering the availability of the MC-Germantown indoor pool (limited as it is) and the planned opening of the Germantown Outdoor Pool, the next area to be provided an indoor pool would be the Damascus/Clarksburg region.

The recommendation is to provide an indoor/outdoor pool similar to the Olney Swim Center and Glenmont outdoor pool to serve the Clarksburg/Damascus region.

***The Program of Requirements for the facility has been approved. The site selection process is scheduled to begin in FY04 with the goal to determine and acquire the best site. The project will be included in the FY05-10 CIP cycle for final approval and funding.***

- THE WESTERN COUNTY REGION must be included in future considerations for year-round (indoor) swimming opportunities due to geographic isolation. While the population projections do not support the construction of a prototype indoor public pool facility, an interim consideration to provide year-round swimming, until the population's growth supports an independent indoor facility, may be to cover the main pool at the outdoor facility. The Western County (Poolesville) Pool was designed so that a temporary cover, or more permanent cover, could be economically added over the main pool. It would connect to the bath house and be winterized in such a way so that it could be used as a year-round pool, leaving the adjacent

leisure pool, tot pool, deck, and lawn areas as an adjoining outdoor facility. A temporary bubble could deliver year-round aquatic opportunities to that community years in advance of the population support for its own separate indoor aquatic facility.

The recommendation is to address the indoor pool needs for the Western County region.

*Note: Preliminary studies have been concluded about the feasibility of providing some year round use of one of the outdoor pools in Poolesville. The Department's recommendation is that while it can be accomplished, only the lap pool could be "bubbled" reasonably. Considering the costs of the structure, heating, staff salaries, chemicals and maintenance costs, as well as the winterization of the bath house, the conclusion is that a separate permanent indoor swim center should be built.*

## Meeting Future Needs

### Public Outdoor Pools – Regions Served

The existing public outdoor pools serve the following regions:

- The **Bethesda Pool** serves the lower Bethesda area from the Washington, D.C. border in areas south of the Beltway.
- The **Wheaton-Glenmont Pool** serves the Greater Wheaton area from Silver Spring to the south through to Glenmont, Kensington, and Aspen Hill to the north.
- The **Long Branch Pool** serves the Takoma Park, East Silver Spring area.

*The Martin Luther King Jr. Outdoor Pool serves the north Silver Spring, White Oak, Colesville regions along the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.*

- The **Upper County Pool** serves the communities east of Gaithersburg and northwest of Olney.
- The **Western County Pool** serves the greater Poolesville/Martinsburg/Boyds area of the county.
- **City of Rockville** pools serve not only its citizens, but the communities north of Glenmont and south of Gaithersburg and communities to the west.
- The **Summit Hall Pool** serves the citizens of Gaithersburg as well as the many areas of Darnestown and Rte. 28 corridor, not served by the Germantown Outdoor Pool.
- The ~~new~~ **Germantown Outdoor Pool**, at the ~~Northwest~~ Kingsview Middle School site, ~~will~~ serves the outdoor public pool needs of Germantown, west of I-270. Together with the

Rockville and Gaithersburg facilities, it will serve the communities east of the Western County Pool. ~~Currently in the approved CIP, this facility is scheduled to open for the 1997 summer.~~

### **Regions Unserved by Public Outdoor Pools**

The two regions void of an outdoor public pool opportunity are the northeast region of Montgomery County and the Damascus/Clarksburg region.

- The Northeast Region was originally scheduled for an outdoor pool complex as part of the Martin Luther King Swim Jr. Swim Center project. The indoor pool (Phase I) proceeded to completion – the outdoor pool (Phase II) was postponed indefinitely. This region of the county has no public outdoor pool opportunity, with the closest facilities being the Wheaton-Glenmont and Long Branch Pools.

The recommendation is to complete Phase II of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center project and construct an outdoor pool complex on the site adjacent to the indoor pool at Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center. This facility should include a Leisure Pool with water play features and slides incorporated into a 50-meter lap training area.

***Note: The facility is currently in operation and opened in the summer of 2004.***

- **The Clarksburg/Damascus Region** is not served by any public pool. Citizens from this region must drive a considerable distance to utilize the new Germantown Outdoor Pool, or the Upper County swim facilities. ~~Perhaps~~The preliminary plans by M-NCPPC for the Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park can ~~consider~~ **recommend** both the indoor and outdoor pool facilities as complimentary features at the same location.

***The recommendation is to provide an indoor/outdoor pool complex in the Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park to serve the growing Damascus/Clarksburg community. This outdoor pool will serve the needs north of Gaithersburg to the west of Germantown.***

***Note: Space has been reserved at the Ovid Hazen Wells Site, as the remainder of the park is being developed. This project has been approved for site selection to serve the rapid growing Clarksburg region as well as Damascus and communities east of I-270.***

- **The Olney Region**, north of Aspen Hill to Brookeville, and east along Rte. 108, including Sandy Spring and Norwood, is the final region left totally un-served by a public outdoor pool.

This region which will not be adequately served by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Outdoor Pool, (~~if it is built~~) nor the Glenmont facility, nor the Upper County Pool in east Gaithersburg. Since there is not sufficient room in the Olney Manor Park to locate this outdoor pool with the Olney Indoor Swim Center, a new site search must be undertaken.

The recommendation is to provide a 50-meter outdoor pool complex to serve the Olney/Sandy Spring/Norwood region.
--

### **Renovation to Existing Public Pools**

Meeting the future needs for facilities is a twofold planning process. Determining the regions of the county which have need and can support a facility is one task. The other includes integrating into that plan a renovation and modernization plan for the existing facilities that will ensure a continuous, meaningful service to their region. Should any of the existing facilities go out of service due to failure of aging equipment or infrastructure, or if the design and function do not meet the expectations of the public, this served region becomes in effect an unserved region. It is paramount that the future of existing facilities be factored into any planning for new facilities.

Major renovations and modernization to existing public pools must be factored into any Capital Improvement Plan. With the completion of the newest outdoor pool in Germantown, Montgomery County will have over \$30,000,000 invested in pool facilities. Unlike many other public facilities, recreation centers and indoor aquatic facilities are open to the public seven days a week, 50 weeks a year. Indoor pools operate from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., and experience wear and tear that is well beyond the use rate at most public buildings. The use of caustic disinfectant and cleaning materials in pools takes a heavy toll on finishes and mechanical equipment.

Outdoor pools, while open to the public only 3 months a year, are subjected to the freeze/thaw weather cycle each year. Careful winterizing cannot often avoid severe damage to buried pipes, concrete decks, underwater lights, pool shells, fiberglass features and dormant motors, etc. Such forces affect the lifecycle of outdoor pools as much as overuse affects the indoor pools.

Minor repairs and replacement of equipment are made to each facility as needed, hopefully without closing the pool to the public. If possible, repairs are scheduled in the off season, or during maintenance close-down weeks. Roof or HVAC replacements, as well as “filter systems” and major plumbing replacements are extensive and often require interruption of operations to the public at critical program times.

As lifecycles are exceeded, and repairs become too costly to continue, plans for major renovation must be made and scheduled to minimize time out of service. At the time of major renovation, modernization must be included. Adding new pool features not found in older facilities will enhance its appeal to patrons.

Major replacements are also desirable as technological advances are developed within the swimming pool industry. For example, water chemistry and filtration system design and

manufacture have advanced significantly in the past twenty years. Automated chemical feed and filtration systems provide cleaner, safer, water quality. These systems are also more economical to operate in terms of electricity, water, and chemical consumption.

### **Planned Life-Cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR)**

This concept is based on forecasting the need and costs of replacement of building components, systems and furnishings. The current level of funding is \$100,000 annually for all departmental facilities including pools, a fraction of a percent of the current replacement value of Department of Recreation facilities. ***The same dollar amount continues to be used as recently as the FY04 operating budget.*** This level of funding severely limits the amount of work that can be accomplished in a given year. For example, replacement of one pool filtration system, replacing a water play feature, or white coating one pool shell will ***more than*** expend all PLAR funds for one year. This results in partial fixes to aging facilities and creates repair and replacement projects that span several years for one facility. The result defeats the concept of cycling repairs and creates a pattern of continual replacement.

***A conservative estimate by the Aquatics staff places the value of un-completed repairs/replacements in excess of \$10,000.00 per facility. Given an average life cycle for most finishes, furniture, and equipment of between 3-10 years and 10 aquatic facilities, the minimum annual allocation should be in the range of \$100,000.00 in FY06 and escalating by 2-3% per year. These funds should be incorporated into the Department's annual operating budget or contained in a special category of capital outlay expense within the CIP but funded as pay-as-you-go expenditures.***

***Recommendation –  
PLAR Funding***

***It is recommended that a biennial review of facilities be conducted and a budget allocation be established to fully fund the major repair and rehabilitation of Aquatic facilities. As a minimum, an amount equal to the current estimated cost of these items, as listed in this plan, should be used as a starting point.***

## **Plans for Renovation & Modernization**

### **Indoor Pools**

- The **Piney Branch School Pool** (circa 1974), located in a MCPS elementary school building, is in need of a new roof and ceiling treatment, HVAC equipment, and pool circulation piping. Due to the site constraints, modernization would only include improvements to the entrance area and locker room, and recreation features to replace the diving boards.

***Note: Piney Branch pool and natatorium was renovated just prior to the transfer or operations to the Silver Spring YMCA.***

- The **Martin Luther King, Jr. Swim Center** (circa 1981) should be renovated. The roof has been replaced, but the natatorium ceiling needs painting. Pool equipment and the filter systems are in need of lifecycle replacement. Converting the large meeting room to an exercise and fitness area will enhance its appeal and use.

***Note: Some renovations to the indoor swim center took place as part of the Phase II outdoor pool construction in FY2004.***

- The **Montgomery Aquatic Center** (circa 1989) had the roof repaired and a vapor barrier added to the interior walls in 1997 as part of a settlement with the original contractor. In the near future, the HVAC system, dive tower, pool surfaces, and lockers must be scheduled for replacement, and major painting must take place.

***Note: MAC closed in the summer of 2003 in order to replace the entire HVAC system and make other improvements.***

- The **Olney Indoor Swim Center** (circa 1994) should not require renovation for some years to come.

### **Outdoor Pools**

- The **Wheaton-Glenmont Pool** (circa 1968) is scheduled for major replacement in 1998-99. As the oldest facility, well past its lifecycle, Glenmont will have all pools totally replaced. The bath house and pools will be modernized as well as to provide the best water play features found in new pools.

***Note: In 2000, the entire original pool complex was raised and replaced by a modern multi-pool facility.***

- The **Long Branch Pool** (circa 1970) was refurbished as part of construction of the Community Center in 1994. A new modern bath house, pool, filter and improvements to the

pool shell, underwater lights, exterior lights, etc. were provided. Due to site limitations, no expansion is possible to this pool. No major changes are planned.

***Note: The Department used a local grant and County matching funds to add water slides and play features to the existing facility.***

- The **Bethesda Pool** (circa 1980) is the next facility in need of renovation. Once again, a tight site precludes any significant change to the existing pool shells. Underwater lights, tiles, and filters should be scheduled for replacement. A new lap pool and snack bar should be added.

***Note: The Bethesda Pool was renovated, modernized and reopened in 2003. It has a new filter system, all new surfaces, decks, skimmer and tile, as well as a new lap pool, snack bar, shade shelters and other improvements.***

- The **Upper County Pool** (circa 1985) is projected for a lifecycle renovation by the year 2010.
- The **Western County Pool** (circa 1990), and ***Germantown Outdoor Pool (circa 1998)*** are recent modern facilities and should not need renovation in the near future.

**THE NEXT TWO DECADES**  
**FY 05 to FY 25**  
**Building Upon the Foundation of Success,**  
**Not Relying on a Crystal Ball**

*The probability of this Plan's success is more than reasonably high, as its initial track record has already proven itself during both good and poor economic times for the County. The Department of Recreation has developed the critical skill of adapting to change which this plan continues to accomplish. The proper attitude for addressing change, along with a well thought out road map, will provide continued success for recreation facility development to the benefit of the ever growing, Montgomery County.*

*When this document was originally written in 1996 it was considered simply a road map for the future. Recognized by the County Executive, the County Council, and the Park and Planning Commission, the Plan has been the guiding document referenced by all agencies for the Department's very successful CIP. It continues to provide solid direction in our current planning, and with this update it should provide future administrators with facility development principles readily acceptable by everyone who enjoys Recreation.*

*The overarching evidence that this Plan is a "living document" is that it has admirably handled change, and seized opportunity. This Plan stands ready to continue its ability to metamorphoses conditions it encounters as it moves forward with more success.*

*The Plan has steadfastly maintained its three primary goals of:*

- *Maintain current service capacity and facilities*
- *Develop new facilities in underserved regions*
- *Identify areas of future development to provide for timely and cost effective land acquisition.*

**Our Track Record to date**

*Overwhelming community support, the tenacity of the County Executive, and the dedication of the County Council has witnessed the opening of:*

- *Germantown Community Center*
- *East County Community Center*

- *Coffield Community Center*
- *Fairland Community Center*
- *Germantown Outdoor Aquatic Center*
- *Wheaton/Glenmont Outdoor Aquatic Center*
- *Bethesda Outdoor Aquatic Center*
- *Martin Luther King Outdoor Aquatic Center*
- *Charles Gilchrest Center for Cultural Diversity*
- *Damascus Community Recreation Center*
- *Germantown Indoor Aquatic Center*

### *Our future path*

*Just as important as accomplishments of brick and mortar, is the fact that this Plan continues to forge the future with inclusion within the current 6 year CIP the following facilities:*

- *North Potomac Community Recreation Center*
- *Mid County Community Recreation Center*
- *White Oak Community Recreation Center*
- *Clarksburg/Damascus Indoor/Outdoor Aquatic Center*

*Additionally, adaptation to change and opportunity has given life to:*

- *A major expansion of the Seniors services component in centers*
- *A proposal that the Gilchirst Center for Cultural Diversity convert to the Wheaton Community Center pending the site selection of the Wheaton/Kemp Mill Community Center becoming a reality.*
- *A proposal for sponsorship of a Gaithersburg Community/Aquatic Center that would support underserved County users, without non-resident fee surcharges.*

*The Plan is designed to anticipate society trends and associated demand for services:*

- *Change in Demographics: Montgomery County is witnessing ever increasing strength in community with its rapidly expanding diversity.*
- *Shifts in Programs/Services: staying in tune with new activities such as spray parks, skate-parks and computer labs; along with changing demands by seniors, teens, and ethnic groups.*

- *Change in Political Direction: Change has occurred on the County Council and MNCPPC, yet the direction of the Plan has stayed the course. The community's will with Elected Officials leadership has kept this Plan on track, and undeniably will continue to do so.*

*It is a true honor to be able to place my thoughts about the future into this long range facility plan. This Plan continues a bright future for all Recreation participants in Montgomery County.*

*Greg Bayor, Director, 2005*

## **Acknowledgements - 1997**

This Plan was prepared by staff of the Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Government with the assistance of its Recreation Advisory Boards. The Department of Recreation appreciates the outstanding cooperation of the following agencies and individuals who made contributions during its formulation and review:

Office of Management and Budget  
Department of Facilities and Services  
Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
Recreation Advisory Boards 1994  
Marvin Weinman, Chair, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board  
Bill Shoemaker, Chair, Eastern Recreation Advisory Board  
Peggy Stone, Chair, Northern Recreation Advisory Board  
Larry Chloupek, Chair, Western Recreation Advisory Board  
Recreation Advisory Boards 1996  
Marvin Weinman, Chair, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board  
Jacob Frenkel, Chair, Eastern Recreation Advisory Board  
Michael Mullins, Chair, Northern Recreation Advisory Board  
Larry Chloupek, Chair, Western Recreation Advisory Board  
Department of Recreation Staff  
Greg Bayor, Director, Department of Recreation  
Charles Steinbraker, Recreation Administrator  
Richard Robinson, Facilities Program Manager

*Special thanks to Babette Degnan, Martha Lamborn, and Ketta Abeshouse from the Office of Management and Budget, as well as Steve Nash, and Larry White, Capital Projects Management Section of the Department of Public Works and Transportation.*

## **Update 2005 – Acknowledgements**

***Many of the organizations and individuals listed above were again instrumental in the completion of the Update-2005. In addition, the following played key roles in the updating process:***

***George Schlapo, Past Chair, County-wide Recreation Advisory Committee***

***James Erickson, Chair, County-wide Recreation Advisory Committee***

***Greg Bayor, William Bullough, Martha Coester, James Erickson, William Kyle, Richard Robinson, Tanya Schmieler, William Tyler, Jeffrey Wright- Members of the Plan Update Committee***

***Anise Brown, Natalie Cantor, Catherine Matthews, Deborah Snead, Gary Stith- Regional Service Center Directors***

***Douglas Fox, Suzan Maher, Elizabeth McLeod, Billie Wilson, Edward Wroth, Robin Riley, Jack Schwartz – Department of Recreation Staff***

***Larry White, Jan Wilson, Anjali Gulati, Hamid Omidvar- Division of Capital Development, DPW&T***

