

MEMORANDUM

January 25, 2018

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

FROM: Marlene Michaelson, ^{PH} Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan

The Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Functional Master Plan is a functional master plan that offers a comprehensive approach for creating parks and open spaces in the parts of the County where most people live and work. It proposes a methodology to identify and prioritize open space and park needs in relationship to population and the existing supply of park amenities. This is the only scheduled Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee worksession on the Plan. Attached on © 1-8 is a summary prepared by Department of Parks staff of testimony and correspondence submitted to the Council. Council Staff recommends the Committee endorse the Plan with the minor changes described below.

Councilmembers may wish to bring their copy of the Plan to the meeting.

The overarching goals of the Plan, as listed on page 2 of the Plan, are to:

- Identify where parks and open space are needed most to serve dense populations within walking distance.
- Prioritize parks and open spaces for implementation using social equity and other factors.
- Propose innovative tools and new funding sources to activate and connect parks, renovate and repurpose existing facilities, develop new facilities, and create new parks and open spaces.

EPS Study Area

The EPS Plan focuses on the highest density areas in the County, covering only 17% of the land area (approximately one-third of land not preserved as parkland or agricultural land), but 40% of the County's residents and 60% of its jobs. EPS residents are more likely to live in high-rise buildings, have

a low household income, and be reliant on public transit to access parks and recreation than residents outside EPS areas. A map of the designated areas appears on page 4 of the Plan.

Park Experiences

The EPS Plan identifies 3 different types of park experiences:

- Active Experiences (e.g., playing sports, running, walking, etc.)
- Contemplative Experiences (e.g., enjoying nature, reading a book, etc.)
- Social Gathering Experiences (e.g., attending festivals, farmer’s markets, picnic areas, etc.)

It also proposes a scoring system to determine how well each open space meets each of the three types of experiences based on how many people they serve. For example, while both trails and tennis courts provide active experiences, a trail would score higher because it serves more people.

Plan Tools and Data Analysis

The EPS Plan takes advantage of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to allow a more sophisticated analysis of park needs than previously available. GIS is used to calculate accurate walksheds from given points to allow Department of Parks staff to determine whether there are parks (or other public or private open spaces) within a 10-minute walk of identified locations. GIS is also used to identify the existing supply of parks and likely demand based on population information. This data-driven approach will support both government and private decision-making with detailed analysis on where more parks are needed.

Significant data collection efforts will result in a far more quantitatively-based assessment of need. The demand and supply analysis is used to determine the relative service surplus or shortfall in each area. This assessment can also examine the type of park experience that has a surplus or shortfall (active, contemplative, or social gathering) and the income of residents in areas with the greatest needs. In areas where there is a lower level of service, a more traditional site analysis will identify opportunities to increase service.

Implementation Strategies

Meeting service deficits will occur via one of five strategies described on pages 47-49:

- Activate – provide programming and community events to attract more people to existing parks.
- Connect – improve connections between public spaces and an integrated network of streets, sidewalks and trails.
- Renovate and Repurpose – rebuild or replace existing park facilities to increase service and usage.
- Develop – build new parks and facilities on existing parkland.
- Create – create new parks and open space through dedication, purchase, and creation of privately owned public spaces (POPS) through the development process.

These options allow M-NCPPC to consider options for using existing open space before requiring the acquisition of new parkland.

Implementation Tools

Page 49 describes different tools that can be used to implement the 5 strategies described above. In addition to traditional means of acquiring parkland, the Plan suggests that alternative ownership patterns (public and private) and potential partnerships for the activation, operation, monitoring and maintenance of open spaces should be considered. The Plan indicates that partnerships can make use of private and public organizations that have staff on the ground near parks and open spaces to provide monitoring and certain maintenance tasks more efficiently. It also states that innovative ownership options, including privately owned public spaces, can play a key role in expanding parks and open spaces in the densest communities. It further encourages the use of master plans and the development review process to support the creation of more parks and open space.

Prioritize by Social Equity

The EPS Plan recommends that Social Equity be the primary criteria for determining which areas of the EPS Study Area should be targeted for implementation efforts. The EPS Plan methodology prioritizes the portions of the Study Area with the lowest level of service for walkable park experiences combined with neighborhoods with lower incomes. This prioritization will be used to compare opportunities across large areas of the EPS Study Area (or the entire study area) for relative needs and benefits.

Funding Sources

Pages 55-58 discuss the needs to increase both Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and operating budget funding to enable implementation of the EPS Plan. However, the fiscal constraints faced by the County mean that an assumption that implementation can only come with increased funding may be problematic. **Staff recommends this section of the Plan be revised to indicate that, while some Plan recommendations may not be possible without increased funding, the Department of Parks should explore opportunities for alternative funding sources and efficiencies within the Department that will enable the implementation envisioned by the Plan.** Ensuring a safe environment for park users should be the primary concern; the Department may not be able to afford the ideal levels of maintenance. On page 57, the Plan identifies some strategies that can create efficiencies in parks, such as smaller equipment housed in satellite maintenance facilities closer to EPS areas.

The Council received testimony questioning whether the Plan's methodology will result in more potential parks and open spaces than can be funded. Since the potential acquisition and/or use of any specific site is not certain, Staff believes it is important for the methodology to identify far more spaces than needed, but also provide a way to prioritize among options.

Pilot Area

To validate the methodology analysis and results, it was tested in the Silver Spring Central Business District. The results are summarized on pages 9-11 and addressed in more detail in the Appendix (pages 59-79).

Changes to the Plan

Department of Parks staff recommend the following changes to the EPS Plan in response to testimony submitted to the Council. **Staff supports each of these recommendations.**

1. In the Appendix that describes opportunities in Silver Spring, clarify that the Whole Foods parking lot in Silver Spring would only be considered for open space if there is significant redevelopment.

On page 76, amend the description for Whole Foods Parking Lot as follows:

Create open space or park during any future significant redevelopment of site to meet open space requirements of the zoning code. Provide green space and/or recreational amenities to complement Veterans Plaza.

2. Add a new section on climate change to explicitly acknowledge the role of additional green space in addressing climate change.

On page 15, add a fourth paragraph under “Today’s Challenges” as follows:

Providing additional parks and green space also supports the County’s efforts to address global climate change through a variety of means. Many benefits to local environmental quality provide a larger benefit to the global climate. Adding more green spaces and tree canopy provides shade and comfortable places for people to relax and play, while also absorbing more carbon and heat than an impervious surface open space. By increasing the ease with which residents can walk or bicycle to parks, the subsequently fewer auto trips reduce particulate pollution and carbon emissions. By providing green spaces that help to cool the urban heat island effect, parks and open space contribute to a decrease in the energy necessary to make building interiors comfortable, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy producers. The creation of these open spaces as a part of sustainable and resilient communities plays a role in benefiting our country and the globe, not just Montgomery County.

3. Clarify the meaning of the Matrix of Opportunities in the Appendix (pages 75-77) further.

On page 77, amend the footnote as follows:

Sites identified in the Matrix for possibly creating a new open space are preferred locations based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis; alternative locations within the vicinity of these sites may be appropriate to meet the identified needs and may substitute for the identified sites. If future analysis using the EPS methodology indicates changes to the level

of service and preferred sites to meet the needs, a revised Matrix of Opportunities will be presented to the Planning Board for review and approval per the implementation process in Chapter 5.

4. Clarify the issue of property rights for Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS).

On page 59, amend the third paragraph under “Application to Pilot Area: Silver Spring CBD” as follows:

When a property is developed in Montgomery County, the zoning ordinance and applicable master and sector plans may require that a certain portion of the property is used for public open space or recreational [space] amenities without changing the ownership of the property. This functional plan does not increase the amount of open space or recreational space otherwise required for a property’s development, nor is it intended to modify requirements for the operation and maintenance of privately owned public spaces established through existing regulatory approvals. However, if land identified through the EPS method is subsequently developed for private use, this plan and the EPS method may provide recommendations on the type of open space or recreational amenities that would be beneficial to the community through the *2017 Recreation Guidelines for Private Residential Development.*

The following chart documents Department of Parks Staff responses to all public testimony received during the County Council Public Hearing and comment period for the *Planning Board Draft Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*.

SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
Vicki Vergagni President, Board of Directors Glen Waye Gardens Condominium	She encourages policies to make builders responsible for parks and open spaces. Many communities were constructed with their own open spaces and pay to operate and maintain their own open spaces. It's not fair to tax those communities for the lack of parks and open spaces in other communities.	New sector and master plans and the new zoning code (including the Recreational Guidelines for Residential Development) are trying to ensure that all new development provides amenities to meet the residents' needs.
Vicki Vergagni President, Board of Directors Glen Waye Gardens Condominium	Montgomery County has a develop first and build park and open spaces later approach; we should think first, not build first. It is not reasonable to pay twice. Yes to parks, no to taxpayers paying for what should be the developers' burden.	The EPS Plan will provide data to help prioritize the most important places to spend scarce tax dollars to serve the most people the most efficiently.
Dan Wilhem President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	Where is the money going to come from to implement this plan? 26 different recommendations for Silver Spring CBD alone in this plan, but we don't have money to renovate what we have, much less hundreds more sites. Example: Hillandale Local Park rehabilitation appears to be postponed again.	Since the EPS FMP will help us to prioritize the most important new parks, renovations, and activation to increase park access and usage, it will help Parks to get the most benefit from the limited public funds available. The Plan also focuses on using a variety of public and private tools and funding to create a better public space network.
Dan Wilhem President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The methodology overstates the need for parks by including jobs in the Demand part of the calculation. Workers and residents have different needs for parks and workers should be treated as less important in the demand calculation.	Workers affect the demand for parks in two ways. First, workers are themselves potential users of parks and open spaces before or after their work hours or during breaks, and thus should be included in the demand calculation. Second, the number of workers in an area can serve as a proxy for the total urban activity in an area -- including office, retail, and entertainment activities -- that serve to bring visitors and pull residents out of their homes to enjoy the urban environment and, thus, be in need of open spaces.
Dan Wilhem President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The 10-minute walking distance might not be feasible for some people since they rely on driving to get to parks.	The goal of this plan is to increase the walking access to a network of parks and open space for residents and workers in our most dense communities. However, it is understood that many larger parks and facility complexes will continue to be regional in nature serving broader areas of the County, such as large recreational complexes, regional parks with a combination of natural resources and active recreation, and unique parks and amenities such as historic museums and lakes. The goal is to reduce the need to drive to get to everyday use open space and make sure these parks are more walkable.

SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
Dan Wilhem President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	We should make more use of the land that we already have. Only 1/3 of local parks can be used for active recreation – that policy should be changed to allow for more use of existing parkland.	Only Regional Parks are subject to a 1/3 developed recreational land to 2/3 conservation parkland requirement. All other types of parks are allowed to include as much developed land as is necessary to meet the goal of the particular park. In the EPS Plan, four of the strategies to increase the level of service for parks and open space are focused on making more use of the parks and open space we already have, and only one strategy (Create) addresses creating new public and private open spaces.
Mary Flynn EPS FMP Working Group Founder, CBAR Mayor, Town of Chevy Chase	As an active participant in the Working Group for this Plan, she supports the Plan adoption. As new buildings reach for the sky, we must foster a strong sense of place on the ground. The new plan provides guidance to serve the County residents and businesses. The Plans strengths include its ability to be Adaptive, Equitable, and Economically Appealing.	Agree.
Melvin Tull Silver Spring advocate Gaithersburg resident	In Silver Spring, energizing public spaces is a good idea, but he thinks the plan is premature for a functional master plan	The EPS Plan is similar to the current functional master plan for parks, the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001), in that it describes a methodology for evaluating opportunities that can improve the parks and open space system and creates a program to implement those recommendations moving forward.
70 Melvin Tull Silver Spring advocate Gaithersburg resident	The Plan reads as if it were mostly about more public parks and a request for CIP money.	Four of the implementation strategies are focused on making more use of the public parks and private open space we already have, and one strategy (Create) addresses creating new public and private open spaces. Some CIP money will be required to create the necessary public components of this system, but a variety of partnerships and other agencies will work together to implement the Plan's vision.
Melvin Tull Silver Spring advocate Gaithersburg resident	There is some data missing from the Silver Spring analysis: Petals Park, for instance.	Data collection and maintenance is a critical part of the ongoing implementation of this GIS methodology, and considerable effort will be put into creating and updating the data over time to ensure the results of the methodology are valid and can be used to support policy decisions.

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Melvin Tull Silver Spring advocate Gaithersburg resident	The Whole Foods parking lot is identified for acquisition, but it already serves as the necessary parking lot for a development that created significant public space (Veterans Plaza).	The Whole Foods parking lot is identified in the Matrix of Opportunities in the Appendix. It is identified as a site where, if future redevelopment of the site adds significant additional density and underground parking, a Privately Owned Public Space (POPS) would be appropriate. A green space that supports active recreation would complement the existing Veteran's Plaza, not duplicate its functions. Park staff recommend the following edits to the description of the recommendation in the Matrix of Opportunities to further clarify the intent of the recommendation (p.76): Create open space or park during <u>any future significant redevelopment of site to meet open space requirements of the zoning code</u> . Provide green space and/or recreational amenities to complement Veterans Plaza.
Herb Simmens Montgomery Chapter, The Climate Mobilization Silver Spring resident	Montgomery County is a model for the country when it comes to mobilizing for the future climate crisis. However, he didn't see any mention of climate change in the EPS Plan. Climate change should be addressed in all future policies including this one.	Agree. Park staff recommend adding the following paragraph to Chapter 2, Today's Challenges (p. 15): <u>Providing additional parks and green space also supports the County's efforts to address global climate change through a variety of means. Many benefits to local environmental quality provide a larger benefit to the global climate. Adding more green spaces and tree canopy provides shade and comfortable places for people to relax and play while also absorbing more carbon and heat than an impervious surface open space. By increasing the ease with which residents can walk or bicycle to parks, the subsequently fewer auto trips reduce particulate pollution and carbon emissions. By providing green spaces that help to cool the urban heat island effect, parks and open space contribute to a decrease in the energy necessary to make building interiors comfortable, thus reducing greenhouse gas emissions from energy producers. The creation of these open spaces as a part of sustainable and resilient communities plays a role in benefiting our country and the globe, not just Montgomery County.</u>

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Leah Haygood Chair Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	M-NCPPC headquarters development is creating a new town plaza, but much smaller than the prior open space. The WUDAC strongly recommends closing Reedie Drive to traffic to increase the size of the Town Plaza and remove traffic from dividing the most important open space at the heart of downtown Wheaton.	The park and plaza at this location will be larger than the previous green space and will be framed by active commercial uses. Reedie Street will be designed with a focus on pedestrians and cyclists including traffic calming measures to minimize speeds. It is important to retain vehicle connectivity through this large block to provide vehicle access to the commercial uses along Triangle Lane. Reedie Street can be closed on weekends and for special events to accommodate larger crowds.
Leah Haygood Chair Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	Wheaton Veteran's Park needs to be upgraded. Steep inclines in the park are not conducive to public use. Despite activation efforts by WUDAC, the park could serve more residents with renovation.	Wheaton's Veteran's Park is being transferred from M-NCPPC control to Montgomery County control as part of the M-NCPPC regional headquarters development project. As such, any upgrades and improvements to this park will need to be coordinated with the County.
Leah Haygood Chair Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	Wheaton CBD is lacking in play space. Support addition of play spaces including play equipment, art and other amenities to activate the urban spaces.	When the EPS quantitative analysis is complete for the Wheaton CBD, Park and Planning staff will have data to support requests for active recreation and additional open spaces and parks.
Leah Haygood Chair Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	Connectivity necessary to Brookside Gardens from the CBD, via paths and bus links. Important to allow pedestrians and local residents to access the park by foot and public transit. For example, for the Garden of Lights should be accessible by foot, not just by car.	Improving connectivity between the CBD and Wheaton Regional Park is clearly an important strategy for improving the parks and open space access for residents in the CBD. When the EPS methodology is applied to the CBD, improved walkable access to these important existing park resources will be part of the resulting recommendations.
Leah Haygood Chair Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee	WUDAC supports the plan to create new spaces through variety of tools. Available real estate needs to be invested in now to preserve for future use. They support more private open space in the CBD, as well. Also, inadequately developed areas on school properties need to be upgraded to provide more public service to the broader community.	Under the EPS Plan, a variety of tools will be used to create more, better connected, developed and activated parks and open space in the Wheaton CBD and vicinity.
Michael Sherman Director Policy and Research Division National Capital Planning Commission	Commend EPS goals to identify more parks and open space to serve population within walking distance. Consistent with the planning principles and policies of the Comprehensive Plan of the National Capital: Federal Elements (Comprehensive Plan), specifically the parks and open space element of the plan. Consider the impacts and benefits of this plan on federal installations within the EPS Study Area as Plan implementation moves forward.	Agree. Staff will coordinate with federal installations as the full EPS methodology is applied in those areas regarding parks and open space recommendations and potential options for intergovernmental partnerships.

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Kent Morgan Chevy Chase resident	EPS Plan should include the replacement of open space and natural resources "lost" to other government uses as a criterium for prioritizing recommendations for new parks and open space.	The EPS methodology takes into account the relative need for more open space, including green space, based on the current inventory of public parks and private open space. If known government or private projects will remove existing public space, the EPS methodology allows for recalculating the level of service to see how the needs for open space have increased due to planned reductions. The EPS Plan allows us to analyze the constantly changing network of public and private open space, and adaptively respond to those changes with the most appropriate recommendations.
William Moore President Wheaton-Kensington Chamber of Commerce	Support the Plan goals and vision, including the 10-minute walksheds and prioritizing service for traditionally underserved communities. The Plan will help the community and whole County to be more healthy, active, and economically viable by providing parks and open space in an equitable balanced way. The Plan will allow prioritization and use of partnerships to make the most use of limited public funds	Agree.
Max Bronstein	Encourage involvement of development industry in funding of parks and open space in areas of need. Consider offering naming rights for parks that they finance.	Parks Department has a Naming Rights Policy that was adopted by the Planning Board in 2011. This policy creates a variety of options for recognition for donations in support of entire parks and individual facilities within parks. This policy is administered by the Montgomery Parks Foundation. Our public-private partnerships also leverage private resources for public benefit.
Max Bronstein	Encourage finding a way for people from varying income levels to be recognized for their contributions to the community and parks.	The Montgomery Parks Foundation provides different forms of recognition for donors of all giving levels. In addition to donations of funds, people who volunteer their time in significant ways to various Parks programs are eligible for recognition through formal volunteer recognition events.
Jane Redicker President & CEO Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce	1. Focus on renovating and upgrading existing public parks, and not rely on the "creation" strategy through acquisition of private property or dedication through development review.	The EPS Plan's five strategies already focus on using its existing public and private resources first. Due to the shortage of parks and open spaces in the County's more urbanized areas, creation of new spaces is already a key recommendation in many sector/master plans, the PROS Plan and other park studies, and through the zoning code requirements for development. For example, the <i>Silver Spring Central Business District Green Spaces Guidelines</i> (adopted by Planning Board, May 2010) recommends many actions to improve and add new parks and open space in the Silver Spring CBD. The EPS Plan offers a data-driven methodology to support and prioritize the creation of new open spaces where the other strategies will not be adequate to meet public needs.

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Jane Redicker
President & CEO
Greater Silver Spring Chamber
of Commerce

2. Remove names of specific privately-owned properties from the Matrix of Opportunities and modify language to refer to preferred "areas" instead of sites. Concern that identification of sites will change future public expectations regarding the use and development of these sites.

Suggested changes to the Plan text (p.77):

[Sites] Areas identified in the Matrix for possibly creating a new open space are [preferred locations] based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis; alternative locations within the vicinity of these [sites] areas may be appropriate to meet the identified needs in the vicinity and may be substituted for the identified [sites] areas.

Similar to other Functional Master Plans, the EPS Plan addresses a "system" of services - parks and open spaces - and creates a program to improve this system. Specific properties are identified in other functional master plans if their locations are within or nearby major service locations or routes (such as for highways) or meet a set of criteria (as in the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan, 2001). Similarly, this Plan also identifies preferred sites to meet the identified needs. Identification of these preferred sites in the functional master plan is necessary to allow use of funding sources (such as ALARF) that are only available to projects identified in an adopted master or functional master plan.

The results of the EPS methodology are expressed in a Matrix of Opportunities with significant language that indicates that the results are a "menu of options" that may be implemented over time to create a better system of parks and open space. During Planning Board worksessions on this Plan, additional clarifying language was added (in the body text and in a footnote to the Matrix) to indicate that alternative sites may be considered as substitutes for the preferred sites if new opportunities become available in the future.

This Plan's adaptive approach will allow re-analysis of the opportunity sites as new development comes into place and additional open spaces opportunities are added to the system. If the supply of parks and open spaces become balanced over time, a revised Matrix of Opportunities could remove some initial properties from the list.

Park staff recommends that the sites identified in the Matrix of Opportunities remain as in the Planning Board draft to facilitate implementation of the EPS Plan over time. To clarify the meaning of the Matrix further, Park staff recommends the following edits and additional sentence for the footnote to the Matrix of Opportunities (p.77):

Sites identified in the Matrix for possibly creating a new open space are preferred locations based on the quantitative and qualitative analysis; alternative locations within the vicinity of these sites may be appropriate to meet the identified needs and may substitute for the identified sites. If future analysis using the EPS methodology indicates changes to the level of service and preferred sites to meet the needs, a revised Matrix of Opportunities will be presented to the Planning Board for review and approval per the implementation process in Chapter 5.

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SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
Jane Redicker President & CEO Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce	<p>3. Request to add language stating that new “operation, maintenance, and policing” standards for urban parks will not change property rights of the private properties owners.</p> <p>Suggested additional text: <u>This Plan by itself does not propose any changes to any property rights of the owners of private properties. Privately-owned public use spaces and open spaces remain private property. Private property owners retain all the rights to operate, maintain, and police their properties, including the public use spaces located thereon, subject to any previously obtained development approvals for the property.</u></p>	<p>As previously addressed during the Planning Board worksessions, Plan language was clarified to note that this Plan will not affect laws, regulations, or negotiated agreements that impact the legal rights of owners of Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) created as a result of development approvals of the Planning Board.</p> <p>Park staff do not believe the issue of property rights for POPS is appropriate to address in a functional master plan. However, to clarify this issue further, the following language is proposed to add to the introduction of the Appendix (p. 59):</p> <p>When a property is developed in Montgomery County, the zoning ordinance and applicable master and sector plans may require that a certain portion of the property is used for public open space or recreational amenities. This functional plan does not increase the amount of open space or recreational space otherwise required for a property's development, <u>nor is it intended to modify requirements for the operation and maintenance of privately owned public spaces established through existing regulatory approvals.</u> However, if land identified through the EPS method is <u>subsequently</u> developed for private use, this plan and the EPS method may provide recommendations on the type of open space or recreational amenities that would be beneficial to the community through the 2017 Recreation Guidelines for Private Residential Development.</p>
Naomi Friedman Silver Spring resident	<p>The South Silver Spring CBD area is well served for transit, retail, and other amenities, but has unmet needs for more parks and green and open spaces since the community has large numbers of multifamily buildings with no backyards.</p>	<p>Agree. The EPS analysis clearly indicates a lack of green open space and a lack of active recreational opportunities in a community with a high residential density.</p>
Naomi Friedman Silver Spring resident	<p>Regarding environmental issues, there is a lack of pervious surfaces for rainwater infiltration and green areas to support urban wildlife.</p>	<p>The provision of green, pervious surfaces in future development is evaluated and implemented during the development review process. For future public parks, green space and other techniques that address stormwater management and other environmental benefits are a priority for park development.</p>

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Naomi Friedman Silver Spring resident	By providing new and renovated open spaces and parks, we will ensure that this neighborhood remains a high-quality place for families to live for years to come. She supports the recommendations for new parks in this community.	Agree. The overarching vision for the EPS Plan is to ensure quality of life and economic viability of our most dense communities through the provision of an integrated public and private open space system.
Devora Kimelman-Block Silver Spring resident	Suggests that the Days Inn/Travelodge motels on 13th Street be acquired for a park. This would not only create needed park space but also address an ongoing crime-infested location.	The Days Inn/Travelodge site was not identified in the Matrix of Opportunities as a preferred site for a future public park in this part of Silver Spring. However, the flexibility of the Plan and its recommendations allows for staff to evaluate the site as a potential park to meet the community's needs and determine if it is an appropriate site for a new park.
Devora Kimelman-Block Silver Spring resident	Suggests that the wooded area in Jesup Blair Park be better utilized for the community as a recreational resource.	<p>The Matrix of Opportunities for the Silver Spring CBD includes three recommendations to increase the usage of Jesup Blair Local Park. First, the plan recommends that activation be pursued to increase the number of people using the park. Activation efforts for this unique park with recreational amenities and an historic house and wooded front lawn could include pop-up activation events, historic tours and programs, and special events, among others.</p> <p>Second, better pedestrian connectivity to Jesup Blair would support increased usage in the park. Better connections across Georgia Avenue and increasing pathways into the park by removing portions of the fencing are examples of ways to increase connectivity to the park.</p> <p>Third, the Plan recommends that the park be evaluated to determine if there are ways to develop new amenities that would make more use of this expansive park within the CBD while still respecting the existing recreational and cultural amenities.</p>

