



**A BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE STUDY
OF COMMUNITY CENTERS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You Through the Day, Ray Oldenberg speaks eloquently of an informal public life and places civilized societies must have to nurture it. Oldenberg introduces the concept of a "third place," those places that are not work or home where people go for no particular purpose, except to associate. He contends third places are crucial to the quality of society because the nature of these places is to be inclusive and local, unlike many other places in our lives.

Community centers make an important contribution to the County's collection of third places. This project examines the Recreation Department's budgeting and programming practices for the County's community center program. This study:

- outlines the allocation of the \$3.9 million "Recreation and Community Services" program budget in the Approved FY 98 Operating Budget,
- reviews how funds budgeted to other departmental teams supplement the operation of six case study centers,
- reports on the operations of the centers, and
- reviews the Long Range Facility Development Plan 1997 to 2010 released by the Recreation Department in June 1997.

In FY 98, the County budgeted \$3.4 million to operate neighborhood and community centers. This budget does not include utility, maintenance and debt service expenditures which bring the total cost of the program to \$4.6 million. OLO found the Recreation Department does not distribute the community center budget evenly among all centers. On average, the County spends approximately \$187,000 to operate a neighborhood center, \$348,000 to operate an older regional recreation center and \$440,000 for a newer regional recreation center, excluding debt service.

OLO found some centers are programmed and used more than others. Regional centers have three times as many visits as neighborhood centers. The two busiest regional centers averaged two to three times as many visits as other regional centers. Population and median income data were not good predictors of regional center use. Rather, the variation among regional centers seems to be the result of the Department's programming practices and fee policies. OLO recommends the Department develop performance targets to manage the regional centers. OLO recommends the Department identify capacity measures and use these to determine the construction timing for new regional centers.

OLO's review of the Long Range Plan identified many issues that merit further discussion and analysis if the Council intends to use this plan as a guide for capital programming.

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AUTHORITY

Council Resolution 13-939, FY 1998 Work Program of the Office of Legislative Oversight, adopted June 24, 1997.

INTRODUCTION

Community recreation centers (or "community centers") are multipurpose buildings the Recreation Department builds and uses to provide recreational, social and instructional activities. According to the 1997 Fall Leisure Guide, community centers:

provide activities for children, teens, and adults and may include programs for senior citizens and special populations. Activities normally include classes, workshops, clinics, drop-in programs, supervised play, sports, open gym and crafts. Some centers have weight and exercise rooms and billiards and game areas. Portions of these centers are available for rentals for parties, meetings, weddings, etc.

In addition to providing services, community centers, by virtue of their location and character, also contribute to the identity, cohesiveness and well being of a community. According to the County Executive's FY 95 Recommended Budget:

Community centers act as magnets for citizen activity. They are strategically located throughout the County and are places where people from various backgrounds meet in an informal, friendly positive environment during leisure hours. These facilities house thousands of programs sponsored by the Department as well as other County agencies and community organizations. Community centers are a major public resource for leisure activity, social interaction, family participation, and neighborhood civic involvement. They are critical focal points that assist in adding identity and cohesion to communities.

Community center activities bring together diverse parts of a community. While many programs offered at community centers are also available at other community buildings, such as schools, libraries, regional service centers and park shelters, community centers distinguish themselves because of their recreational focus.

At the beginning of 1997, the County operated 13 community centers. In July 1997, the County acquired the Takoma/Langley Park center in the City of Takoma Park as part of the unification of Takoma Park into Montgomery County. In 1998, the County will open two new centers - in Germantown and East Montgomery County. The addition of these three centers will bring the total number of County centers to 16.

The Approved FY 98-03 Capital Improvement Program includes a replacement center at Rosemary Hills, scheduled to open in 1999, and a new center in Fairland, to open in 2000. In June 1997, the Recreation Department released a long range facility plan recommending the construction of seven additional centers. Implementation of these plans would bring the total number of centers to 24. The approved FY 98 operating budget programs approximately \$3.9 million (of an \$18 million budget for the Recreation Department) to provide recreation services and operate 16 community recreation centers.

SCOPE

This project examines the allocation of resources to the "Recreation and Community Services" program in the Approved FY 98 Operating Budget and Public Services Program. The total budget of approximately \$3.9 million funds two distinct programs: Recreation Services (\$519,000) and Community Centers (\$3.4 million).

This project focuses on 13 of the County's 15 recreation centers. This project does not examine the Takoma Park/Langlely center because the Recreation Department contracts management of this facility to the City of Takoma Park. This project also excludes the Germantown center because it opened in January 1998, after most work on this project had been completed.

The project examines seven neighborhood and six regional centers. Throughout this report the term neighborhood center refers to small, older buildings built for another purpose which have been transferred to the Recreation Department for programming. Neighborhood centers include: Clara Barton, Good Hope, Plum Gar, Rosemary Hills, Ross Boddy, Scotland and Wheaton.

The term regional recreation center refers to buildings the Recreation Department has built or substantially renovated. These centers are newer and larger than neighborhood centers. They have a full complement of programming spaces. The regional recreation centers are: Bauer Drive, Leland, Long Branch, Longwood, Potomac, and the UpCounty center.

This report:

- outlines the allocation of the \$3.4 million in the community center program budget,
- examines the process and criteria the Department uses to allocate budget and program resources,
- examines performance data for the community centers, and
- for six centers, reviews how funds budgeted to other departmental teams supplement the operation of the community centers.

METHODOLOGY

This examination of community center operations relies on three sources of information: projected expenditures in the Approved FY 98 budget, visits to and interviews with community center directors, and visits to the center for the month of October 1997.

The cost estimates in this report are budget numbers based on the Approved FY 98 budget. The costs do not represent actual expenditures. OLO attempted to compile expenditure data for FY 97, however, the internal reorganization of the Department early in October 1996 and the reporting of data before that time made it impossible to re-create accurate expenditure data.

OLO also visited each community center and conducted interviews with center directors and the Community center management team. The Community center management team compiled data on visits to the centers for the month of October 1997. OLO used an internal benchmarking approach to portray the level of activity at individual centers and to understand use patterns at the centers.

When it became apparent this approach yielded some useful insights, OLO examined data for November and December 1997 to determine the amount of variations in the October data. Since the patterns generally stayed the same over the three month period, this report presents the October 1997 data only.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

Chapter I presents the Recreation Department's program budget categories, funding sources and fee policy.

Chapter II describes the County's inventory of recreation centers. The chapter summarizes data for both neighborhood and regional recreation centers.

Chapter III explains how the Recreation Department programs activities at the community centers.

Chapter IV presents data for six case study centers: Rosemary Hills, Clara Barton, Bauer Drive, UpCounty Center, Long Branch and Potomac.

Chapter V reviews the Recreation Facility Development Plan released in June 1997.

Chapter VI presents OLO's findings and recommendations.

Chapter VII presents agency comments on a final draft of the report.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OLO worked closely with staff in the Recreation Department and staff in the Office of Management and Budget to understand and review the operations of the County's community centers. OLO received excellent cooperation from everyone involved in this study. In particular, OLO would like to acknowledge the assistance of Charles Beard, Charles Steinbraker, John Townsley, Michael Harvey, Richard Robinson, Suzan Maher and Gene Neal in the Recreation Department and Bobbi Degnan, Joann Byrum and Sunil Pandya in the Office of Management and Budget.

I. THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET

The Community Center program operates in the context of the Recreation Department's budget and funding practices. This chapter:

- presents the structure of the Recreation Department's budget,
- describes the Department's funding sources and fee policy, and
- shows how funding sources vary by program category.

A. The Recreation Department Reorganization

In October 1996, the Recreation Department reorganized internally. The Department abandoned a hybrid structure of countywide programs and three area offices where each office had separately administered and delivered a set of outreach and community programs. The Department replaced this structure with a Recreation Services team, a Community Centers team and seven program teams. The Recreation Services and Community Center teams are charged with operating the recreation centers and working with community groups to identify community needs.

The seven program teams are: Aquatics, Camps and Playgrounds (CAP), Classes, Senior Adults, Special Events, Sports, and Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR). Each team is responsible for the development and administration of a specific program area countywide. The Department envisioned each team, in cooperation with Recreation Services, would develop and market a program that could be customized to local community needs. The Department hoped shifting the focus from geographic areas to programs and activities would lead to the development of high quality, marketable programs and would eliminate inconsistencies that previously existed between geographic areas.

B. The Budget Structure

The FY 98 approved budget for the Recreation Department totals \$17 million. The budget structure reflects the programs the Recreation Department established in October 1996. Table 1 shows approximately \$13.8 million for direct program delivery and \$3.2 million for administrative costs. The nine program budgets range from \$3.9 million for Recreation Services and Community Centers program to \$85,000 for the Roundhouse theater program.

C. Funding Sources

Chapter 41 of the Montgomery County Code, Recreation and Recreation Facilities, Section 41-1, authorizes the County to establish, develop and operate a coordinated and comprehensive public recreational program to meet the needs of all age groups.

TABLE 1. FY 98 APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE RECREATION DEPT.

ADMINISTRATION			
Fixed Costs	\$	1,170,440	
Budget and Finance	\$	1,021,580	
Administration	\$	917,780	
PLAR	\$	100,000	\$ 3,209,800
PROGRAMS			
Rec. Services and Community Centers	\$	3,998,890	
Aquatics	\$	2,713,240	
Camps and Playgrounds	\$	1,754,800	
Sports	\$	1,496,100	
Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Rec.	\$	1,226,470	
Senior Adults	\$	1,100,700	
Classes	\$	880,730	
Special Events	\$	581,450	
Roundhouse	\$	85,290	\$ 13,837,670
TOTAL			\$ 17,047,470

Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

Section 41-2 authorizes two sources of funding for recreation services: countywide revenues and special taxes levied within the Recreation District. The Code states the intent is to use countywide revenues to defray the cost of providing limited recreational services throughout the County, and to use special taxes to defray the cost of more complete services provided in the Recreation District. In FY 98, \$655,710 was transferred from the General Fund to the Recreation Fund to defray the cost of limited recreation services provided countywide.

The County has established an enterprise fund, the Recreation Fund, to record the fiscal transactions of the Recreation Department. The two main funding sources for the FY 98 Approved Budget are an ad valorem tax assessed on properties in the Recreation District, and fees charged for classes, memberships or rentals.

1. The Recreation Tax

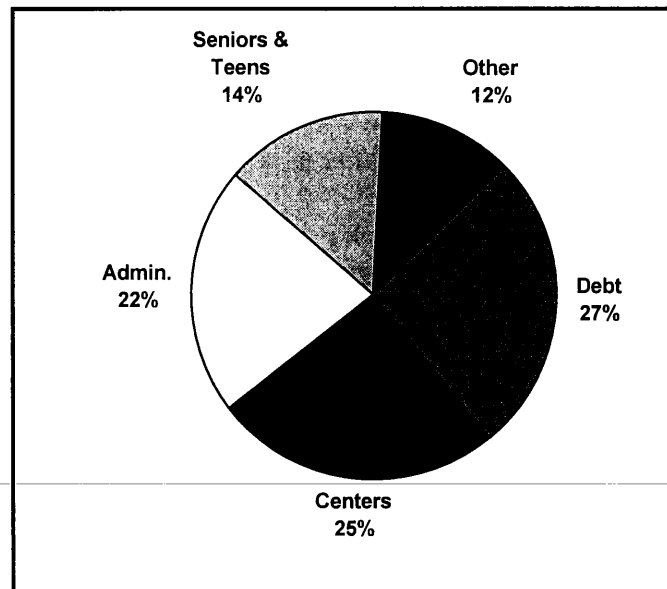
The boundaries for the Recreation District are countywide excluding the cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg and Washington Grove. For FY 98, the assessable base of properties in the Recreation District is \$26 billion, and the Recreation tax rate is 5.4 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The tax yield of

\$14.4 million funds debt service payments, the enterprise fund overhead charge and approximately two-thirds of the departmental budget.

Figure 1 shows how the County allocates the Recreation tax revenues. The County makes debt service payments on recreation facilities from the Recreation District tax revenues. In FY 98, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will transfer \$3.9 million from the Recreation Fund to the Debt Service Fund for debt service payments on all recreation facilities.

As also shown in Figure 1, the County budgets \$10.8 million in Recreation tax revenues to support the departmental budget. One-third of the \$10.8 million funds the Recreation Services and Community Center program. One-third of the \$10.8 million funds the administration, fixed costs and budget and finance programs. Finally, the Department budgets approximately \$1 million each to the Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR) and Senior Adult programs. The remaining programs - Sports, Special Events, Classes, Aquatics, Roundhouse and Camps and Playgrounds - each receive \$600,000 or less in tax revenues.

FIGURE 1. ALLOCATION OF RECREATION TAX REVENUES



Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

OMB also collects an overhead charge for the services other County departments provide to support the administration and operation of the Recreation Fund. In FY 98, OMB transferred \$1.5 million from the Recreation Fund to the General Fund for the overhead charge.

2. Recreation Fees

The adopted fee policy for the Recreation Department states:

The goal of the Department is to offer diversified recreation services, striving for maximum citizen participation in the context of a sound fiscal program. Because consumer demands for recreation and leisure services are greater than the availability of tax funds to support them, it becomes an economic necessity to charge fees to supplement the recreation tax.

The following propositions (from the fee policy) form the base for an appropriate balance of user fees and tax revenues.

1. Fees should be collected only if it is cost effective and administratively feasible to do so.
2. Tax support should be directed towards programs that serve lower income individuals, children and youth, special needs populations, or programs that are universally appealing and can be operated at a relatively low cost.
3. User fees should be the dominant source of revenue for programs that are highly specialized in nature, that serve relatively small numbers of participants or are relatively expensive to provide.
4. It is appropriate for individuals to pay a fee for a service provided to meet a personal interest.
5. The cost of constructing facilities should be covered through the Recreation tax or General Fund tax contributions.

The Department bases its fee policy on a cost allocation plan that identifies the total cost of providing services for each program. The Department allocates the costs of each program to one of three cost categories: direct operating costs, leadership costs and indirect costs. The Department has established four fee levels that progressively increase the amount and types of costs retrieved through user fees.

- Fee level A programs must recover 10% of direct costs only.
- Fee level B programs must recover 50% of direct costs plus leadership costs.
- Fee level C programs must recover 100% of direct costs, leadership costs and benefit costs.
- Fee level D programs must recover 100% of their direct, leadership and benefit costs plus an additional 12.5% of this total or a total of 119% of their program costs.

Table 2 summarizes the types of programs and the cost recovery requirements for each of the four fee levels. The last column lists examples of programs in each fee category.

TABLE 2. PROGRAM AND FEE LEVELS

Fee Level	Types of Programs	Required Fee Level	Examples of Programs
A	Low cost, community based activities for families and large segments of the population	No charge or nominal charge. Fees offset less than 10% of direct costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • senior clubs • center based community use programs • countywide special events • teen clubs, discovery teens • senior adults
B.	Low to moderate cost programs for youth and special need populations led by temporary staff	Fees must cover up to 50% of direct costs plus leadership costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summer activity centers, • family or community nights • therapeutic teen clubs and camps • trips and special events for seniors • adventure activities
C.	Higher cost programs with more highly skilled or specialized leadership	Fees must cover 100% of direct costs plus leadership costs and benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • area tournaments • camps and special events • youth sports, teen clubs, art camps and performances • some senior adult classes • aquatic youth swim lessons • high school basketball leagues
D	Specialized activities that either serve a small population using skilled (contract) instruction or require more costly level of operating expenses	Fees must cover 100% of direct costs plus leadership costs plus an added 12.5% to offset a portion of Department overhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult sports • arts and leisure classes for exercise, crafts, dance and music • special classes • special programs • summer stage

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

How the Department determines what fees to charge for an activity varies with the fee level of the program. For Fee Level D programs (i.e. those activities with the most restrictive revenue requirements) the Department requires the individual class to meet the cost recovery guidelines. For each class, staff negotiates a contract with an instructor. The contract terms address how the Recreation Department and contractor will split the revenues plus other contract conditions.

Next, staff determines how much revenue the class must generate to cover the costs of the contract, staff plus overhead charges. Staff sets the program fees to recover these costs which are equivalent to 119% of the direct

and indirect costs. Staff also determines the minimum number of paying participants needed to make the class financially viable.

The Department provides financial assistance only after the minimum number of paying participants have registered. In effect, this practice provides financial assistance only after the cost recovery requirements for each activity have already been achieved.

The community centers offer programs in all fee levels (A, B, C and D). For A, B and C level activities at community centers, both the cost recovery requirements and the administrative fee setting process are not as restrictive as they are for fee level D contract programs.

At the community centers, the fee setting process takes into account the fee level of the activity, the approved operating budget for the center, the program cost, and the budgeted revenue target for the center. A few years ago, the Department classified all community center programs into fee levels A, B or C, using the fee policy guidelines and criteria. This classification established a fee recovery requirement for each program. The center director uses these fee recovery requirements as a guide.

When a center director develops a program or activity, he or she prepares a budget of what it will cost to offer the program. The first restriction on fees for the community center program is that the cost of all of the programs offered at a center throughout the year must fit into the approved budget for the center. The second restriction is that the center should make every effort to meet its budgeted revenue target. (See Chapter IV for examples of center revenue targets.)

Unlike the team responsible for classes, the center director has more flexibility to control the cost of a program. The center director can adjust the staffing costs, or solicit contributions or volunteer hours from the community. The center director weighs the cost recovery requirements of a particular program, the participants' ability to pay, and the center's budgeted revenue target to determine whether to charge a fee or provide a program free of charge.

Scholarships and Financial Aid

The Department's fee policy recognizes inability to pay may limit participation in its programs for individuals, families, or a group of program participants. To address this issue, the Department offers:

- financial assistance for individuals or families,
- increased subsidies at the activity level for select programs or centers, and
- fee discounts or waivers to attract participants to a particular program or facility.

The Department uses two different methods to account for costs, revenues and financial aid or scholarships granted for each activity. For classes, instructional sports, swim teams and diving teams, the Department records the program cost, the fee collected and the scholarship amount that makes up the difference between the cost and the user fee. This system reports the amount of scholarships or financial aid granted for a particular year. For FY 97, the Department granted \$85,652 in financial aid for classes, instructional sports, swim teams and diving teams.

For Camps and Playgrounds, Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation, and center based activities, the Department offers the program at two different levels: a full cost fee program and a reduced cost fee program. The Department must track the number of participants at each cost to determine the amount of financial assistance provided.

D. Funding Sources by Program Budget

Table 3 shows the budgeted level of user fee support differs by program budget.

TABLE 3. FEE AND TAX SUPPORT BY PROGRAM BUDGET

ADMINISTRATION	BUDGET	APPVD FEE REVENUES	FEE SUPPORT BY PROGRAM	TAX SUPPORT BY PROGRAM
Fixed Costs	\$ 1,170,440	\$ -	0%	100%
Budget and Fin	\$ 1,021,580	\$ -	0%	100%
Administration	\$ 917,780	\$ -	0%	100%
PLAR	\$ 100,000	\$ -	0%	100%
	\$ 3,209,800	\$ -		
PROGRAMS				
Rec Services and Ctrs	\$ 3,998,890	\$ 263,225	7%	93%
TATR	\$ 1,226,470	\$ 82,450	7%	93%
Senior Adults	\$ 1,100,700	\$ 96,500	9%	91%
Sports	\$ 1,496,100	\$ 892,910	60%	40%
Special Events	\$ 581,450	\$ 16,310	3%	97%
Classes	\$ 880,730	\$ 563,745	64%	36%
Aquatics	\$ 2,713,240	\$ 2,597,800	96%	4%
Roundhouse	\$ 85,290	\$ -	0%	100%
CAP	\$ 1,754,800	\$ 1,703,500	97%	3%
TOTALS	\$ 17,047,470	\$ 6,216,440	36%	64%

Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

(Note: The budgeted fee levels do not correspond to specific fee level requirements in the fee policy because each program includes a mix of fee level activities. For example, the sports program includes both adult sports which must recover 119% of their costs and youth sports which recover 100% of their costs.)

- Aquatics and Camps and Playgrounds programs recover 96% to 97% of their budgeted expenditures through user charges.
- Sports and Classes programs recover 60% and 64% of their budgeted expenditures through fees.
- The remaining four programs - Recreation Services and Community Centers, Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation, Senior Adults and Special Events - recover less than 5% of their budgeted expenditures through fees.

E. The Recreation Services and Community Centers Program Budget

Prior to FY 98, budgets for individual centers were under one of the three area offices. The Department established a separate community center program in October 1996 as part of an internal reorganization. The FY 98 budget represents the first time community centers are budgeted in one program. The FY 98 Approved Operating Budget programs \$3,982,240 and 74.4 workyears to administer Recreation Services and to operate Community Centers.

1. The Recreation Services Program

As shown in Table 4, approximately \$520,000 in the approved budget is programmed for "Community Centers" to provide community liaison, volunteer services and customer assessment in the three Recreation Service Centers (RSCs), formerly the Northern, Eastern and Western area offices. According to the FY 98 Recommended Budget, RSC's coordinate the recreation services in their region, assist with the delivery of services, perform customer assessments of programs, provide staff support to Advisory Boards and serve as liaisons with schools and community groups in the region.

TABLE 4. FY 98 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET

Recreation Services and Community Centers Program	
Recreation Services	\$ 519,539
Community Centers	\$ 3,479,351
TOTAL	\$ 3,998,890

OLO, Approved FY 98 Operating Budget.

2. The Community Center Program

In FY 98, the Recreation Department projects the Community center program revenues to be \$261,225 or about 1/2 of one percent of the projected expenditures. Community centers generate revenues for five types of activities: room rentals, weight room membership fees, activity cards, center based clubs and activities, and admission for some events. Roughly half of a center's revenues come from rentals.

Expenditures

The budget for the Community Center program totals approximately \$3.4 million. Approximately 75% of the budgeted expenses are for staffing, 21% are for maintenance and the remaining 5% are for other operating expenses. Table 5 portrays the allocation of the budget. The table shows that payments for debt service and utilities are programmed outside the community center budget. If these payments are added to the budget, the total budgeted expenses for community centers operations is \$4.6 million. An explanation of the expenses in each category follows.

Personnel Expenses

The approved FY 98 personnel complement for the Community Centers program has 10 full-time recreation specialists, one part-time recreation specialist, one full-time community activity coordinator, 12 part-time community activity coordinators, and 18.3 workyears for seasonal temporary staff. The Community Center program is managed by a team leader, two program supervisors and one property manager. The personnel complement also includes four full-time building service workers, three full-time craftworkers and 1.3 workyears for temporary maintenance personnel.

The recreation specialists and community activity coordinators are responsible for operating the centers. The Department's preferred staffing plan calls for a recreation specialist and a community activity coordinator (CAC) at each regional recreation center, and a recreation specialist or CAC at each neighborhood center. As the center director, the recreation specialist is responsible for the overall management of the facility. The community activity coordinator serves as an assistant to the director and is primarily responsible for community interest programs.

In practice, Bauer Drive, Leland, Rosemary Hills and Long Branch community centers are staffed with a recreation specialist and a CAC while other centers have different staffing combinations. The permanent staff are supplemented by temporary recreation assistants who are responsible for answering phone calls, registering participants, supervising the gym and other supporting services.

The property manager supervises a staff of four building service workers and three public service craftworkers. He is responsible for facility maintenance and upkeep of the community centers and the senior centers. The four building service workers (BSW's) are assigned to specific centers: two are assigned to community centers - Long Branch and Germantown - because these

TABLE 5. FY 98 APPROVED COMMUNITY CENTER PROGRAM BUDGET

Categories	Item	Total	
Personnel		\$ 2,369,055	68%
Full-time	\$ 1,076,170		
Part-time	\$ 328,217		
Seasonal	\$ 415,083		
Benefits etc	\$ 549,585		
Services		\$ 165,800	5%
Instructor Services	\$ 7,680		
Other Professional Services	\$ 158,000		
Non-Professional Services	\$ 120		
Maintenance		\$ 819,067	24%
Bldg Structure Maintenance	\$ 287,000		
Flooring	\$ -		
Grounds Maintenance	\$ 112,000		
Janitorial Maintenance	\$ 342,620		
Alarms	\$ -		
Snow	\$ -		
Moving	\$ -		
Cleaning Supplies & Uniforms	\$ 39,420		
Charges: Facilities and Services	\$ 38,027		
Communications		\$ 36,880	1%
Pagers	\$ 3,120		
Faxes	\$ 26,000		
Printing, Copying, Postage	\$ 7,760		
Transportation		\$ 27,830	1%
Motor Pool Vehicles	\$ 24,330		
Travel	\$ 3,500		
Gas	\$ -		
Supplies		\$ 17,720	1%
Office and Genl Supplies	\$ 2,420		
Rec program supplies	\$ 15,300		
Misc		\$ 62,550	2%
Other Rec Expenses	\$ 4,850		
Rentals and Leases	\$ 1,000		
Equip Repair and Maint	\$ 8,200		
Food and Meals	\$ -		
Other Misc Operating Exp	\$ 48,500		
NET TOTAL (W/o Utils and Debt)		\$ 3,479,351	
Utilities		\$ 347,046	
Debt Service		\$ 775,736	
GROSS TOTAL	\$ 3,498,902	\$ 4,602,133	

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

centers have four day a week senior programs. The other two BSWs are assigned to two senior centers - Schweinhaut and Holiday Park. The Public Service Craftworkers respond to service needs at the remaining centers and at other Recreation Department buildings.

Services

This category includes a budget of \$158,000 for professional services to operate the Takoma Park center plus an additional budget of \$7,680 for instructor services at Scotland.

Maintenance

The maintenance budget of \$819,000 includes contracts for janitorial services, structural building maintenance and grounds maintenance. The contracts provide services to both the community centers and the senior centers. There is an additional \$39,000 budgeted for cleaning supplies and uniforms.

The Department has a \$287,000 budget for building structure maintenance. The Department allocates the maintenance budget to individual centers using three criteria:

- Safety issues or maintenance problems that pose a hazard have first priority.
- Structural problems or items that will result in the deterioration of the building have second priority.
- Cosmetic and functional problems have third priority.

The Department has a \$342,600 contract for nightly cleaning of the centers that do not have an assigned building service worker. The Department also has a \$112,000 contract with Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for grounds maintenance at the community centers, some athletic fields and some elementary school sites.

Communications, Transportation and Supplies

This budget of \$36,880 includes an allocation of \$2,000 to each center for the purchase of a fax machine plus \$10,000 for all centers combined for pagers, postage and duplication. The \$28,000 transportation budget includes \$24,000 for motor pool vehicles and \$4,000 for travel expenses. The \$18,000 supply budget includes funds for recreation and office supplies.

Miscellaneous

This budget includes \$48,500 in miscellaneous operating expenses, \$8,200 for equipment repair and maintenance and \$5,800 for rentals, leases and other miscellaneous operating expenses.

3. Expenses not included in the Community Center Program Budget

Utilities and debt service are additional costs not in the Community Center Program budget. Utilities for the community centers are budgeted under fixed costs in the Recreation Department budget. The budget for FY 98 is \$347,000.

The utility budget does not include payments for the Clara Barton and Wheaton centers. Historically, when the Recreation Department took over programming of a building the Department did not pick up the facility maintenance costs. Staff in the Division of Facilities and Services (DFS) in the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) reopened this issue a few years ago and, beginning in 2000, DFS will roll over utility costs for buildings programmed by the Recreation Department to the Recreation Department budget.

The County budgets debt service payments for the centers outside of the Recreation Department in the Debt Service Fund. The FY 98 debt service budget for the Recreation Department is \$3.9 million. Of this total, \$776,000 is for debt service payments for seven community centers.

In Sum

This overview of the Recreation Department budget illustrates how the Recreation Services and Community Centers Program budget fits into the larger departmental budget. The approved FY 98 budget for the Recreation Department totals \$17 million. The Department budget funds management, administrative and fixed costs plus seven program areas established by the Recreation Department following an internal reorganization in 1996.

Section 41-2 of the Montgomery County Code authorizes two sources of funding for recreation services: countywide revenues and special taxes levied within the Recreation District. To supplement these funding sources the Recreation Department charges fees for certain activities. The Department's fee policy sets cost recovery ratios of 10%, 50%, 100% and 119%. At the most restrictive fee level a cost recovery ratio of 119% must be met for each individual program or class.

The Recreation Department offers financial assistance, increased subsidies, fee discounts and waivers for those who are unable to pay. However, for activities with the most restrictive fee recovery requirements, assistance is provided only after the fee recovery ratios have been met.

To provide an appropriate balance between user fees and tax revenues, the Recreation Department stipulates tax support should be directed towards programs that serve lower income individuals; fees should be collected only when it is cost effective, and fees are appropriate for services provided to meet a personal interest.

At the program budget level, the Department directs tax support to the Recreation Services and Community Centers, Seniors, and Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR), in addition to administration, budget and fixed costs. Over 90% of these program expenditures are funded with taxes. In contrast, user fees fund almost all of the Aquatics program, almost all the Camps and Playground program, and almost two-thirds of the budgets for Sports and Classes.

The Community Center program budget is approximately \$3.4 million. Approximately 75% of this budget funds personnel and 25% funds maintenance and other operating expenses. Many of the maintenance contracts provide services to senior centers and other facilities, in addition to the community centers. The County budgets an additional \$1.2 million in debt service payments and utility expenditures for community center operations outside of the community center program.

II. THE INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY CENTER BUILDINGS

This chapter presents the physical characteristics of the 14 existing community centers to understand how the centers differ in location, size, configuration and age. (NOTE: The Takoma Park/Langley center is not included because the Recreation Department contracts management to the City of Takoma Park.)

A. How do the existing community centers compare in terms of size, age and type of facility?

The Recreation Department operates the community center program from buildings it has inherited or built over the years. The Recreation Facility Development Plan, FY 1997 - 2010, released by the Department of Recreation in June 1997, describes the evolution of community centers in detail.

Table 6 presents the age, original owner and gross square footage of the community centers. The seven neighborhood centers were initially built for another purpose and later transferred to the Recreation Department for programming. In contrast, the Recreation Department built or renovated the seven regional centers to function from the outset as recreation centers.

TABLE 6. AGE, ORIGINAL USE, SIZE AND OWNERSHIP OF COMMUNITY CENTERS

	AGE	ORIGINAL USE	ORIG. DEPT	GROSS SF	BLDG OWNER	SITE OWNER
NEIGHBORHOOD						
Clara Barton	N.A.	Elem. school	MCPS	8,100	County	County
Good Hope	19	Community Mtgs	DHCA/HHS	5,534	County	MNCPPC
Plum Gar	13	Community Mtgs	DHCA/HHS	6,008	County	MNCPPC
Rosemary Hills	14	Park shelter	M-NCPPC	9,377	County	MNCPPC
Ross Boddy		Elem. school	MCPS	12,844	County	County
Scotland	21	Community Mtgs	DHCA/HHS	6,254	HOC/Private	HOC/Private
Wheaton	34	Youth shelter	M-NCPPC	12,633	MNCPPC	MNCPPC
REGIONAL						
Bauer Dr	20	Community Center	Rec. dept	19,704	County	MNCPPC
Longwood	15	Private School	Rec. dept	18,433	County	MNCPPC
UpCounty	12	Community Center	Rec. dept	18,337	County	MNCPPC
Leland	8	Youth Center	Rec. dept	23,147	County	MNCPPC
Potomac	9	Elem. school	Rec. dept	25,560	County	County
Long Branch	3	Community Center	Rec. dept	24,600	County	MNCPPC
Germantown	0	Community Center	Rec. dept	23500*	County	County

Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

B. What is the history of the neighborhood centers?

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) built two centers - Clara Barton, and Ross Boddy - as elementary schools. The Department of Family Resources managed Clara Barton and subsequently transferred programming to the Recreation Department. In 1997, Clara Barton and Ross Boddy continue to operate out of their original buildings.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) built 2 centers - Wheaton and Rosemary Hills. M-NCPPC built Rosemary Hills in the 1940's as a park shelter. In 1983, the Department of Recreation enclosed and upgraded the Rosemary Hills Center. M-NCPPC built Wheaton as a youth shelter in the 1960s. Minor repairs and improvements have been made at the Wheaton center but it has not undergone a major renovation or upgrade since it was built.

The County Department of Community Development (CDC) developed three centers - Good Hope, Scotland and Plum Gar - in the 1960's using Federal Neighborhood Facility Grants. CDC built the centers to provide community meeting space for disadvantaged communities. (The Recreation Department took issue with the ability to program recreation features in these facilities when they were built.) The Recreation Department has programmed the Plum Gar center since it opened. The Department of Family Resources operated the Good Hope and Scotland centers, and transferred management to the Department of Recreation in the early eighties.

C. How do the neighborhood centers compare in terms of programming space?

Table 7 presents program spaces at each neighborhood center. The gross square footage ranges from 5,500 to almost 13,000 square feet. None of the centers have the full complement of rooms found at the larger community centers.

TABLE 7. PROGRAMMING SPACE AT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

Center	Total S.f.	Gym	Wt. Room	Game Room	Art& Kiln Rooms	Conf Room	Commty Room	Social Hall	Kitchen	Meeting Rooms
Good Hope	5,534	X	X	-	X	-	X	-	X	-
Plum Gar	8,213	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X
Scotland	5,132	X	X	X	-	X	-	X	X	-
Rosemary	7,814	-	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-
Clara Barton	6,750	-	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	X
Wheaton	12,633	X	-	X	X	-	-	X	X	X
Ross Boddy	12,844	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Average	8,417	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

D. What is the history of the regional recreation centers?

The Recreation Department has built or renovated seven regional recreation centers over the last 20 years. The Department constructed:

- Bauer Drive, Longwood and the UpCounty centers in the late 1970s and early 1980s,
- Leland center (in Bethesda) and Potomac in the mid to late 1980s, and
- Long Branch and Germantown in 1994 and 1998 respectively.

E. How do the regional recreation centers compare in types of programming space?

Table 8 summarizes the number, type and size of rooms available in each center. The table shows each of the seven community centers has:

- a full size gym and a weight room,
- a game room or game tables in the lobby,
- space for arts and crafts,
- a social hall and kitchen, and
- classrooms or meeting space.

On average, a regional recreation center has 14,258 square feet of program space. The amount of space for use varies by center. In some cases, a room at one center is more than twice as large as a similar room at another center. For example, Potomac has a 1,900 square foot weight room and the UpCounty has a 609 square foot weight room. Similarly, the craft room at the UpCounty center is 209 square feet compared to craft rooms of over 800 square feet at every other center. Some of these sizes reflect the fact that community center uses have changed and/or been converted over the years.

TABLE 8. PROGRAMMING SPACE AT REGIONAL RECREATION CENTERS

Center	Net S.F. (w/ lobby)	Program S.F.	Gym	Wt. Room	Game Room	Art& Kiln Rooms	Conf Room	Commty Room	Social Hall	Kitchen	Notes
UpCounty	15,281	10,953	6,570	609	936*	476	209	-	2,448	165	*In lobby
Longwood	15,361	12,740	6,405	587	720*	868	384	-	3,388	240	*In lobby
Leland	19,289	12,841	6,775	864	950*	957	308	-	2,700	280	*In lobby
Bauer	16,420	15,006	6,784	836	360*	964	204	1,770	3,180	304	*In lobby
Long Branch	20,500	16,679	7,200	1,193	1,193	970	620	645	3,600	288	
Potomac	21,300	17,328	6,640	1,900	1800*	940	1,680	1,590	3,348	290	*In lobby
Germantown	22,500	17,155	7,600	1,685	1,593	895	419	948	3,775	240	
Average	18,664	14,672	6,853	1,096	1,393	867	546	708	3,206	258	

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

F. How much does it cost to build a regional recreation center?

According to the Recreation Facility Development Plan, the County spends \$5.5 million to construct a community center. The Recreation Department has built three new recreation centers in the last four years. The Long Branch center opened in 1994 and centers in Germantown and Eastern Montgomery County will open in 1998. Table 9 shows the construction costs for each of these centers.

The Long Branch center cost approximately \$4.1 million and did not include land costs. The East County center cost \$6.7 million, including \$1.6 million for land. The Germantown center cost \$9.2 million; however, that project included the cost of an outdoor pool.

TABLE 9. COSTS TO CONSTRUCT REGIONAL RECREATION CENTERS (\$000s)

Center	Built	PDS	Land	Site Imps	Constr	Other	Total
Long Branch	1994	\$ 583	\$ -	\$ 511	\$ 2,854	\$ 142	\$ 4,090
Germantown	1998	960	1,803	1,382	4,912	183	9,240
East County	1998	593	1,660	895	3,362	189	6,699
Average Cost		\$ 712	\$1,154	\$ 929	\$ 3,709	\$ 171	\$ 6,676

Source: OLO, Approved FY 97 - 02 Capital Improvements Program, 1996.

G. How does the County fund the construction of regional recreation centers?

Table 10 shows the source of funds for centers built in the last ten years. The source of funding for the Long Branch and Germantown centers was General Obligation bonds. The sources of funding for the East County center were General Obligation bonds and Community Development Block Grant money.

TABLE 10. REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER FUNDING (000s)

Center	G.O. Bonds	Mun. Fin.	State/Other	Total
Long Branch	4,090	-	-	4,090
Germantown	9,240	-	-	9,240
East County	1,660		5,039	6,699

Source: OLO, Approved FY 97 - 02 Capital Improvements Program, 1996.

The County uses Recreation tax revenues to pay debt service on the General Obligation bonds. In FY 98, the Department paid approximately \$776,000 in debt service for community centers. Through FY 97, this payment was included in the departmental budget. Beginning in FY 98, the County budgets this payment in the non-departmental Debt Service Fund account but continues to make payments with Recreation tax revenues.

H. Where are the existing regional recreation centers located?

In 1995, the County released a plan for regional service centers. This plan described population and household characteristics of the County's five regional service areas. (See Appendix A for a map of the regional service area boundaries.) Table 11 shows the location of the seven regional recreation centers by regional service area. There are two centers in the Western County and Mid-County areas, one center each in the UpCounty and Silver Spring areas. There are no centers in the Eastern County area.

TABLE 11. COMMUNITY CENTER SPACE BY REGIONAL SERVICE AREA

Regional Service Areas	Centers	S.F.	#	Population	Pop/Center
Western County	Leland	19,289	2	161,000	
	Potomac	21,300			80,500
Eastern County	None	0	0	81,040	0 centers
Mid County	Longwood	15,361	2	182,445	91,223
	Bauer Dr	16,420			
Silver Spring	Long Branch	20,500	1	73,155	73,155
Up County	UCCC	15,281	2	206,140	103,070
	Germantown	23,500			
COUNTYWIDE		131,651	7	703,780	100,540

Source: OLO, 1998.

The combined size of the seven regional recreation centers is 131,165 square feet. The seven centers serve a population of 704,000 or the equivalent of one center for every 100,000 people. The availability of regional recreation centers varies by region. The Eastern region has the lowest level of service while the Silver Spring center with one center for 73,000 people has the highest level of service.

- The Western service area has two centers - Potomac and Leland - over 40,000 square feet of regional recreation center space, and a service level of one center for every 80,500 people.
- In the Eastern service area, there are no regional recreation centers, however, two centers (East County and Fairland) are currently under construction.
- The Mid-County region has two centers - Longwood and Bauer Drive - a total of almost 32,000 square feet of regional recreation center space, and a service level of one center for every 91,000 people.

- In the UpCounty area, there are two centers - UpCounty and Germantown - a total of 38,000 square feet of regional recreation center space, and a service level of one center for every 103,000 people.
- The Silver Spring region is served by one center - Long Branch with 23,500 square feet which provides a service level of one center for 73,155 people.

I. In the Approved FY 97- 02 Capital Program, the County has three centers that are programmed or under construction. How will the opening of these centers affect the existing service levels?

Table 12 shows the distribution of the three centers programmed in the Approved FY 98-03 Capital Improvements Program by regional service area. The table also shows the population forecasts for the year 2000 and the anticipated change in service levels.

The construction of three more regional recreation centers will improve service countywide from one center for every 100,000 people to one center for every 75,000 people. After the three centers are opened, Silver Spring and Eastern County will have the greatest availability of centers. Silver Spring will have one center for every 35,000 people and the Eastern County will have one center for every 41,000 people.

The Western County and Mid-County service areas will have moderate declines in service with one center for every 88,000 people in the Western County and one center for every 95,000 people in the Mid-County. The UpCounty, which will see the greatest increase in population, will see a decline in service from one center for every 107,000 people to one center for every 113,000 people.

TABLE 12. DISTRIBUTION OF CENTERS PROGRAMMED IN FY 98-03 CIP

Regional Service Area	Existing Centers	Center 1995 Are Per Ar	2000 Are	#people per center	Programmed centers	Centers 2000 Per Area	2000 Area Population	#people per center
Western County	Leland Potomac	2	161,000	80,500	NONE	2	176,900	88,450
Eastern County	None	0	81,038	0 centers	East County Fairland	2	82,700	41,350
Mid-County	Longwood Bauer Dr	2	182,445	91,223	NONE	2	189,900	94,950
Silver Spring	Long Branch	1	69,490	69,490	Rosemary Hills	2	70,300	35,150
Up County	UCCC Germantown	2	206,140	103,070	NONE	2	226,500	113,250
COUNTYWIDE		7	703,780	100,540	COUNTYWIDE	10	746,300	74,630

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

In Sum

The County's inventory of community centers includes two types of buildings: neighborhood centers and regional recreation centers. Neighborhood centers were built by other departments or agencies in the late sixties and early seventies. The Recreation Department programmed some centers from the outset whereas others were transferred to the Department over time. Neighborhood centers range in size from 5,000 to 12,000 square feet. The most limited facility is Plum Gar with only a gym and one room.

The Recreation Department has built seven regional recreation centers over the last 20 years. The three centers built in the late seventies are about 15,000 net square feet each. The centers built in the last ten years range in size from 19,000 to 22,500 net square feet. All of these buildings have a gym, a weight room, game tables, a social hall, classrooms and meeting spaces. The Recreation Department estimates the average cost to build a new center is \$5.5 million, plus another \$1 million if land is included.

The seven regional recreation centers serve a population of 704,000 people or provide a service level of one center for every 100,000 people. The availability of centers varies by region. As of mid FY 98, there are:

- no existing centers in the East County,
- one center in Silver Spring, and
- two centers each in the Western, Mid-County and UpCounty regions.

After the County completes the centers in the Approved FY 98-03 Capital Program, there will be two centers in each region and a countywide average of one center for every 75,000 people.

III. PROGRAMMING COMMUNITY CENTERS

Community center staff and other Recreation teams jointly program community center buildings. According to the Center Operations Manual, the center director has final authority over what activities take place at a center. In practice, the center director makes decisions within a policy context established by the community center team and the center advisory committee.

A. The Role of Community Center Staff

Each center director programs six categories of community center activities. Each category includes several different programs. The Recreation Department does not formally guide the number or types of programs a center director should offer. Instead, the center director decides what programs to offer based on input from community members, visitors, or a center advisory committee. The six categories of programs a community center offers are:

- after school activities,
- clubs,
- community uses,
- intramural sports,
- instructional activities, and
- partnerships.

1. After School Activities

After school activities are programs for young people after the school day has ended. Examples of these programs include the after school program, homework help and kids zone. The after school program and kid zone programs operate four or five days a week for four hours. Part-time temporary staff and volunteers offer homework help and supervise games, crafts and play. The center director may also recruit local business sponsorship for program supplies and refreshments. The homework help program lasts for only one or two hours and may be grant funded.

2. Clubs

A center director sets up clubs to serve an identified need or to meet a social interest. Clubs vary in the age groups they serve as well as their purposes. Sometimes a director establishes a club to recruit enough participants to justify a future class programmed by the Classes team.

Examples of center based clubs include the Baby-sitters club, the Chess Club, the Gardening club, or the Hobby club. The center director organizes youth and instructors to learn a particular skill or hobby. The centers charge an

annual fee for use of the weight and exercise room and consider these payments to be a Weight and Exercise room club membership.

3. Community uses

The community uses category includes special events that take place at the center plus rentals of the community center for meetings and other uses.

Center based special events

Community centers sponsor special events to offer community residents an opportunity to meet and get to know each other in an informal setting. Center staff program special events around seasonal holidays or a community theme. Special events may be targeted to kids, families, or the community at large. Some centers offer monthly special events.

Examples of center based special events include antique shows, craft fairs, community days or community festivals, family fun carnivals, crab feasts, egg hunts, family dinners, family nights, flea markets or Halloween parties.

Rentals

Community centers rent rooms and facilities at the center to groups or individuals for meetings, seminars, special events or social functions. The available rooms include gymnasiums, social halls, meeting rooms, kitchens and outdoor facilities. The center director strives to achieve a diversified and balanced use of the facility. Rental requests are handled on a first come-first served basis although Recreation Department programs have priority for reservations within the context of established guidelines. The center director, in consultation with others, recommends approval or disapproval of facility use. Some events may require a permit from the liquor licensing board and other events may be subject to police approvals.

The time limit for rentals varies with the type of event or use. Gym rentals are limited to three hours and children's birthday parties are for two hours. The center director is authorized to provide additional time for set up and clean up at no charge.

Rental fees are charged on a per hour rate. There is a sliding fee scale based on the type of function and the nature of the group requesting the reservation. The fee schedule is adopted annually as part of the budget process. Table 13 displays the FY 98 fee schedule.

TABLE 13. FY 98 FEE SCHEDULE FOR COMMUNITY CENTER RENTALS

TYPE OF EVENT	TYPE OF GROUP	
	Non-profits and County govt. groups	Primarily social. May be for profit or non-profit
A. Meetings	No charge	\$16/hr
B. Meetings with limited food and non-alcoholic beverage	\$16/hr	\$32/hr
C. Children's parties	\$32/hr	\$32/hr
D. Gym rentals	\$16/hr	\$32/hr
E. Socials, receptions, dances, fund- raisers and any event with alcoholic beverages	\$65/hr	\$90/hr

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

4. Intramural Sports

Community center staff offer intramural sports programs in basketball, billiards, table tennis, badminton and volleyball. A center recruits volunteers and part-time staff to provide instruction and also organizes tournaments. A basketball tournament is usually programmed to reach at-risk youth. A center director may work with the Teen team and police to coordinate these tournaments which may be one part of a larger Teen club program.

5. Instructional activities

Instructional activities are one time classes or mini-seminars. Center directors use activities in this category to allow community members to share a particular skill, talent or interest or to address a one time special need of a group in the community. Examples of activities in this category include preschool programs, wellness clinics, a bicycle repair workshop or a one time women's self defense class.

6. Partnership programs and activities

The Department expects center directors to establish and maintain connections with multiple community groups and businesses. Partnership programs offer a way for businesses, athletic clubs, community service organizations, government organizations and others to contribute to or serve a community.

The community center team identifies two types of partnership programs: coordination partnerships and collaborative partnerships. For coordination partnerships, the centers provide facility space for public or private service providers. Providers who use meeting space at the community centers include the Department of Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Police,

Montgomery County Public Schools, civic associations, Toastmaster groups, Alcoholics Anonymous and the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

In comparison, collaborative partnerships are characterized by strong and consistent interactions between the center and a provider. The center not only provides space for meetings and activities, but also provides money for staff salaries. Centers have formed collaborative partnerships with Special Olympics, Florence Crittenden Services, Suburban Hospital, Montgomery County Public Schools, the Board of Elections, Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Police and the Park Police.

B. The Role of Other Recreation Department Teams

As a result of the reorganization in 1996, the Recreation Department has been working actively and making a concerted effort to program community centers. The Department has assembled ad hoc teams and has strengthened the communication between the Community Center program and other teams. The Department expects Recreation teams to take the lead in program development and getting programs underway. After programs are up and running, the Department expects center staff to keep the program going.

Five teams in the Recreation Department program activities at community centers. The teams are: Seniors, Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR), Classes, Sports, and Camps and Playgrounds (CAP). Each of these teams uses community centers differently depending on the needs and characteristics of their particular programs.

The Special Events team does not program activities with the community centers but does have limited interactions with the centers. Special Events may borrow equipment from a conveniently located center to assist in the staging of a special event. Special Events may also advise center staff in the development and promotion of a center based special event.

1. Senior Programs

The Senior Program team offers regional senior centers and neighborhood senior programs, clubs, classes, wellness and fitness, trips and special educational, health and social services programs for adults age 55 and over. The Department offers these activities at senior centers, community centers, M-NCPPC community buildings and select senior housing sites.

Two of the recreation centers - Long Branch and Ross Boddy - offer a four day a week senior program. These centers are focal points for delivering a variety of recreation, community and health related services. The Senior

Program offered a four day a week program at the UpCounty center through the end of FY 97. In FY 98, the County opted to consolidate this program with the program in the City of Gaithersburg.

The Senior program team supports neighborhood senior programs at five centers - Bauer Drive, Clara Barton, Longwood, Potomac and Wheaton. Unlike senior centers, senior neighborhood programs offer activities generally one day a week for four or five hours.

The Senior team program recovers 9% of its program budget through fees, however the cost recovery for individual activities may vary widely. A portion of the revenue is derived from the Senior Activity Card which has a \$12 annual fee. (The Department collected approximately \$33,000 in activity card fees in FY 97.) This minimal payment entitles the cardholder to an array of special events and access to special use areas at the centers. In addition to these activities, the centers offer lunch programs and social and health services which do not require the activity card for participation.

Recreation staff state transportation is an important consideration in locating senior programs. Centers with convenient access near population centers minimize the time and inconvenience of getting participants to the programs. A few years ago, the Department consolidated programs at Ross Boddy and Good Hope only to find that seniors were spending 1.5 hours on the bus just to get to the program. Subsequently since the program was returned to Good Hope one day per week the number of participants and number of volunteers from within the Good Hope community has increased.

The Recreation Department notes the existence of senior clubs at numerous sites in addition to community centers complicates transportation issues, particularly when new senior programs open. Providing transportation for senior programs at Germantown may require adjusting transportation routes for other club sites.

2. Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR)

The Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation team (TATR) serves middle and high school students and individuals with disabilities. The TATR team uses community centers to offer both programs and camps.

The teen activities include teen clubs, an after hours program, teen centers, a life skills summer camp and a summer teen drop in program. The teen clubs sponsor trips, dances and activity nights on weekends and holidays. The teen centers are operated in partnership with a civic or community organization and provide after school and weekend activities.

The therapeutic programs at community centers include therapeutic classes, an after school program, a teen adult class and a craft class. The TATR team also offers a therapeutic camp and pool parties.

The TATR team works with schools, communities, other private organizations and community center staff to determine program locations. For teen programs, staff works most closely with the schools and community groups. For the therapeutic programs, staff relies on information from schools, and community organizations and also relies on indicators of need such as group home locations, and information from provider institutions. Since teens and individuals with disabilities live throughout the County, the Teen team also targets programs to areas of the County where a program vacuum exists. Staff indicate identifying the best program locations is an ongoing struggle.

The TATR team programs space at many community centers. The TATR team offers teen programs or camps at Clara Barton, Scotland, Wheaton, Bauer Drive, Longwood, UpCounty, Long Branch and Potomac. Therapeutic programs are offered at Good Hope, Wheaton, Rosemary Hills, Bauer Drive, UpCounty, and Potomac. A therapeutic camp is offered at the Potomac Community center. This camp would be offered at other centers, however the CAP team already has the space booked. In addition to community centers, the TATR team offers programs at schools.

The TATR program budget recovers 7% of their program budget through fees, however, the cost recovery ratio for each program varies widely. Some programs are entirely self-sufficient whereas others are not. For example, the high staff to participant ratio for therapeutic programs creates high costs and a low fee recovery ratio. Even with a relatively low fee recovery requirement for the program budget, staff indicate programs are canceled because a minimum number of participants fail to register.

The Recreation Department recruits parents or community volunteers to assist with Teen clubs and other teen programs. Staff notes community involvement is another factor that may explain why teen programs are successful in some communities but not in others.

3. Classes

The Classes team in the Recreation Department offers one of the most visible services. Four sessions of classes are offered each year. Classes are advertised through the Leisure Guide and the team also works with staff at the community centers to offer classes of specific interest to that community.

In order to offer a class, the Recreation Department must:

- execute a contract with a certified instructor who has obtained insurance coverage,
- recruit a minimum number of paying class participants to recover 119% of the program costs, and
- obtain a site location that provides adequate space as well as any specialized equipment that may be needed.

Instructors

The Recreation Department contracts with instructors to provide classes. The Department advertises for instructors through the Leisure Guide, community centers, universities and class participants. Typically, instructors teach because they have a particular hobby or interest they want to share and to supplement their income. As contract employees, instructors have the flexibility to specify where they want to teach or whether they are willing to travel long distances. People interested in teaching a class must be qualified by the Recreation Department staff. The certification criteria depend on the nature of the class being taught.

Fee Policy and Minimum Participation Levels

The Recreation Department fee policy requires that each class recover 119% of its costs in fees. To achieve this objective, the Department identifies the minimum number of full paying participants needed to make the class financially feasible. Generally, if the minimum number of participants do not register, the Department must cancel the class.

The Recreation Department does not offer a class until the instructor and the Department have executed a contract. The conditions of the contract may require the instructor to obtain insurance as required by Risk Management. Insurance companies may require a one year policy. If the class is canceled for lack of participation, an instructor may have purchased insurance that will not be used.

Class Locations

The Classes team offers classes at community centers, schools, park shelters, senior centers and libraries. The Department prefers to use community centers for classes because the space is provided rent free. Other providers charge rent that ranges from \$3 to \$19.50 per hour. The effect of the rent is to raise the overall cost of the course and subsequently the class fees.

OLO summarized data from the 1997 Fall Leisure Guide to examine the location of class offerings among community centers and other public buildings. The data is summarized in Table 14.

TABLE 14. CLASS OFFERINGS

Location	Number	Percent
Community Centers	336	38%
Schools	267	30%
Park Shelters	130	15%
Other	88	10%
Senior Centers	29	3%
Libraries	27	3%
Camps	5	1%
TOTAL	882	100%

Source: OLO, Fall 1997 Leisure Guide.

Community centers were used for 336 classes or 38% of all classes offered. Schools provided space for 30% of all classes. The remaining classes were held at a variety of places including park shelters, senior centers, libraries and camps.

The Department strives to provide a collection of diverse programs at locations throughout the County. This is sometimes made more difficult:

- if instructors are unwilling to travel or unwilling teach at certain sites,
- if the center does not have the appropriate programming space or equipment the class requires, or
- if the class does not recruit the minimum number of participants needed to make the class financially feasible.

Although the Department offers financial assistance to qualified applicants, the 119% cost recovery ratio must be achieved before this assistance becomes available.

The Classes team has used several strategies to increase class availability at certain centers. The team may:

- begin a class at a site near a center with the idea of eventually moving to a center,
- contract with an instructor to teach two classes if one is provided at a less marketable center,
- work with center directors to pre-form a class with an instructor or,
- work with center directors to qualify instructors in the community.

4. Sports

The Sports team programs adult and youth sports throughout the County. The Department provides instruction for youth in soccer, basketball, tennis, softball and T-ball. The Department offers competitive youth leagues in basketball, tackle football, baseball, softball, flag football and in-line hockey. The Sports team provides competitive leagues for adults in tennis, soccer, football, volleyball, basketball and softball.

The Sports team states the availability of facilities is the main factor that determines where the Department offers sports programs. The Sports team uses over 100 gyms for youth basketball, only six of which are at community centers. It uses 30 to 40 gyms for adults, again six of which are at community centers.

Indoor adult sports leagues are programmed at Bauer Drive, Potomac, Leland, Germantown, UpCounty and Long Branch community centers. Indoor youth activities are programmed at all of the adult centers plus Wheaton and Good Hope. The Sports team also offers programs at outdoor facilities at community centers, including youth baseball, softball, in-line hockey, youth and adult flag football, youth tackle football leagues and instructional soccer, tennis and softball.

Adult sports programs, like classes, must recover 119% of their program costs through fees. The Recreation Department requires officials to travel to community centers. The Sports team notes adults often prefer to play near where they work instead of where they live. Thus, centers near business locations may be preferable to those near residential areas. Unlike classes, adult sports programs are not advertised or offered at a specific location. Instead, the Sports team forms leagues and assigns sites based on level of play after it has reviewed all the applications.

Youth sports must recover 100% of their program, leadership and benefit costs through fees. Parents want the site of youth programs to be held at their neighborhood school. The Sports team forms teams geographically by neighborhood schools but does not offer a team at every school site because numerous elementary schools and small neighborhood centers do not have gyms. Instead, the Department permits fields geographically to provide service countywide. The Recreation Department has first right to schedule new parks and new schools but competes with other organizations for the use of existing public facilities.

In addition to forming teams and finding gyms and fields, the youth programs require volunteer coaches to work with the youth. The Sports team typically recruits coaches through the registration process, phone calls or letters to registrants and may look for other non-parent volunteer coaches.

Before the 1996 internal reorganization, area offices had different policies about the use of non-parent coaches. Since the reorganization, the Sports team keeps a list of people interested in volunteering. In some cases, high school students may coach to fulfill their community service hours requirement for graduation. If a coach is not found, the Recreation Department cancels the team. In some cases, the Department will call a first practice or delay a program in the hopes of finding a coach at the last minute.

5. Camps and Playgrounds (CAP)

The Recreation Department programs camps and playgrounds to meet the needs of youths (ages 5-12) during the summer. Winter camps and the Kids Day Out program are provided at community centers during the holiday break or on isolated school holidays to assist parents when kids are off but parents must work.

The Recreation Department offers camps at seven community centers: Bauer Drive, Germantown, Leland, Longwood, Potomac, UpCounty and Wheaton. Over the past few years, the Department has implemented transportation hubs to help contain transportation costs. This approach has had the added benefit of increasing the variety of activities kids have access to. The Department uses two centers, Potomac and Longwood, plus Waters Landing for transportation hub sites. The FY 98 transportation costs were \$321,000.

The playground program is a neighborhood walk-in program offered countywide. The playground program has two fee structures. A full cost program is offered countywide at dispersed sites. A reduced fee program is targeted to low income neighborhoods. The Recreation Department looks at MCPS data, including summer food sites and the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) program for elementary schools, to determine the locations of the reduced fee playground programs.

Staff state the difference in community and school boundaries skews whether a community automatically qualifies for a free lunch program. Staff indicate some neighborhoods such as Long Branch qualify automatically whereas Rosemary Hills may not qualify automatically because the children from the community who qualify are bussed to four different elementary schools.

Currently, the Department programs playgrounds at four neighborhood centers - Rosemary, Good Hope, Plum Gar and Scotland - and two regional centers - Long Branch and UpCounty.

C. A Snapshot of Neighborhood and Regional Recreation Center Visits

At OLO's request, the Recreation Department compiled data on the number of visits to neighborhood and regional recreation centers in October 1997 by program. These data illustrate how the center staff and other Recreation Department teams share responsibility for programming community centers.

The data provides some interesting insights, however, its usefulness is limited in at least two ways. First, since the data is for only one month, it does not provide a pattern of visits to a center but instead reflects the uniqueness of the events that took place in one particular month. (Note: OLO examined data for November and December for select centers and found similar patterns but chose, for the sake of simplicity, to use only the October data for reporting purposes.) The data is also limited because it does not capture events that take place in other seasons of the year. Specifically, the Recreation Department notes that October data will miss the dramatic increase in visits that takes place in the winter months when basketball is in session.

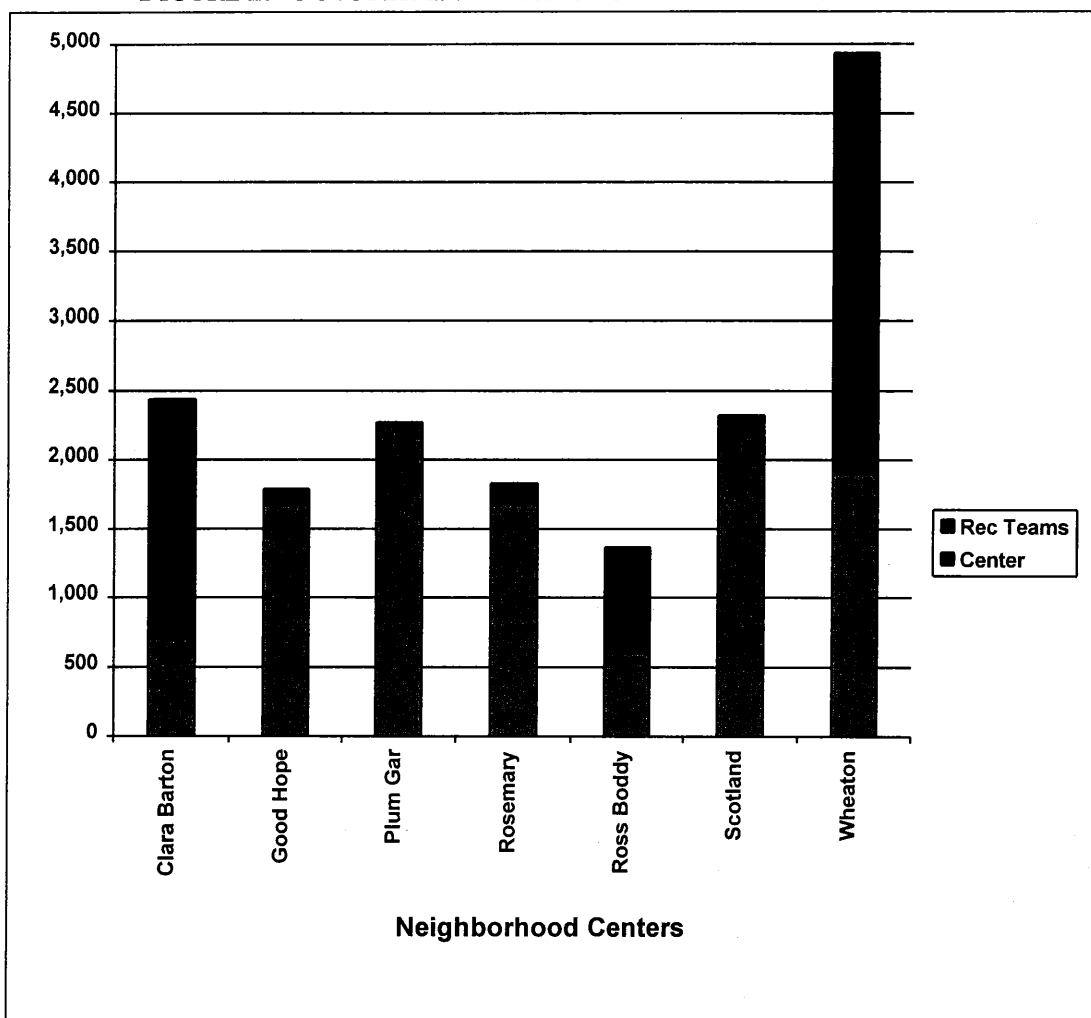
1. Neighborhood Centers

Figure 2 and Table 15 (at the end of the chapter) display visits to the seven neighborhood centers. Countywide, approximately 17,050 people visited one of the seven neighborhood centers in October, 1997. The center based programs generated about 70% of the visits and recreation team programs generated 30% of the visits.

The average number of visits per center was about 2,400 however the visits were not distributed evenly. Wheaton had 4,900 visits or 30% of the total. Without Wheaton, the other six centers averaged 2,000 visits each. Good Hope, Rosemary Hill and Ross Boddy had under 2,000 visitors whereas Clara Barton, Plum Gar and Scotland had over 2,000 visits each.

Of the 11,000 visits for center based programs, 40% were for community uses, 27% were for self directed activities, and 23% were for partnership programs. Of the 6,000 Recreation program visits, 47% were for classes and 43% were for seniors programs. (Note: The visits for Sports are limited because most centers do not have gyms.)

FIGURE 2. OCTOBER 1997 VISITS TO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS



Source: OLO, 1998.

- Wheaton had the highest number of visits for Recreation programs (2,943) including almost 2,200 class participants.
- Clara Barton and Ross Boddy both had a significant number of participants from the Senior program. About 1,230 seniors attended programs at Clara Barton and 765 attended activities at Ross Boddy.
- Good Hope, Rosemary Hills and Scotland had fewer than 200 people each participate in programs offered by other Recreation teams.
- Plum Gar had no activities programmed by the other Recreation teams. On the other hand, Plum Gar had the highest number of visitors for center programs (2,273).

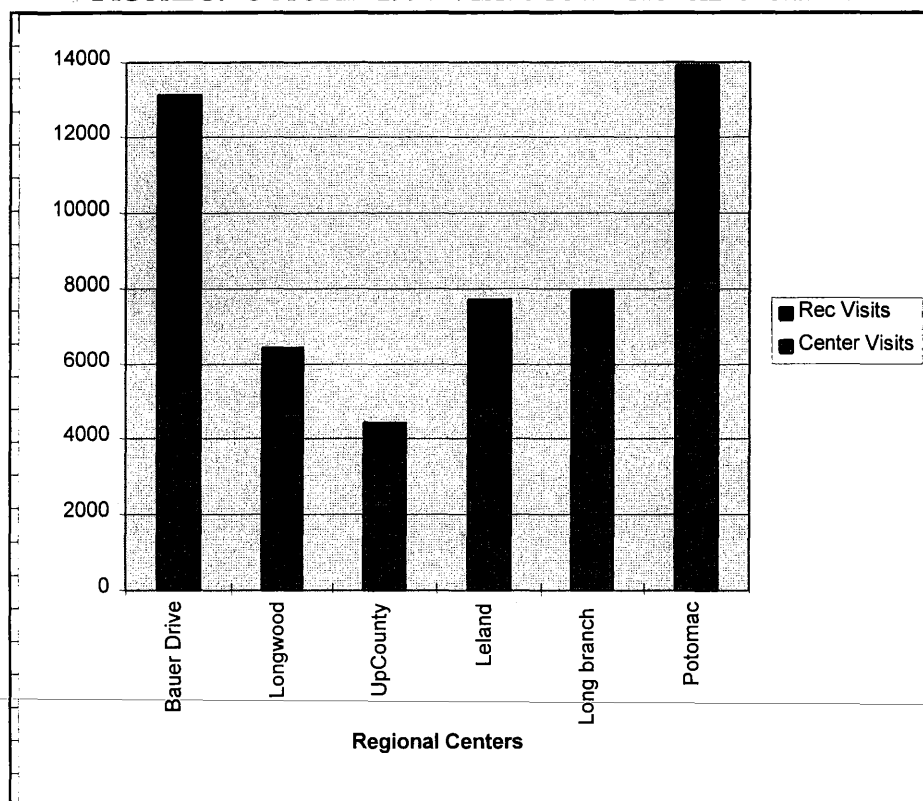
2. Regional Recreation Centers

Figure 3 and Table 16 (at the end of this chapter) show visits to the six regional recreation centers. (Germantown is not included because it was not open in October 1997.). A total of 53,500 people attended a community center in October 1997. Of this total:

- 62% (33,000 visits) were for center based programs and
- 38% (20,600 visits) were for Recreation Department activities.

On average, each center had 7,680 visits. Longwood and UpCounty were below the average number of visits. Leland and Long Branch were at the average and Bauer Drive and Potomac far exceeded the average.

FIGURE 3. OCTOBER 1997 VISITS TO REGIONAL CENTERS



Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

- Bauer Drive had the highest number of visits generated by Recreation team activities (7,800) followed by Potomac (5,678).
- Bauer Drive was the only center that had more than half of its visits for other Recreation team activities.
- For the other centers, the contribution of other Recreation teams varied from 21% to 41%, of all visits.
- Potomac had the highest number of center based visits (8,230) followed by Long Branch (6,430).

In Sum

Center directors and other Recreation teams jointly program community centers. Center directors program six types of activities: After school activities, Clubs, Community use and events (Rentals), Intramural sports, Instructional activities and Partnerships. Other Recreation teams program Senior activities, Teen, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation programs, Sports, Classes and Camps and Playgrounds.

The number of monthly visits to a community center varies according to center size, center features, center based activities, and recreation programming. A total of 53,600 people visited regional recreation centers in October 1997. Approximately 33,000 were for programs offered by center staff compared to 20,600 visits for other Recreation team programs.

At both neighborhood centers and regional recreation centers, center based programs generate the majority of visits. At the neighborhood centers, about 70% of the visitors participate in programs developed by the center staff. At the regional recreation centers, about 62% of the visits are for center based programs.

The most popular center based programs at the neighborhood centers are community uses, self-directed activities and partnership programs. The most popular center activities at the regional recreation centers are self-directed activities, community uses and Club Friday.

Recreation teams, on average, attract 30% of the visits to neighborhood centers and 40% of the visits to regional recreation centers. Participation in recreation team programs at the neighborhood centers is concentrated at Wheaton and Clara Barton. For the regional recreation centers, the most popular sites are Bauer Drive and Potomac.

Recreation teams state they prefer to program community centers because they do not pay rent for the space. The Recreation Department indicates several interrelated factors determine program locations. The pre-requisites most commonly cited to support programming by other Recreation teams include:

- an easily accessible location near the service population of the program,
- available and adequate space with the necessary equipment,
- registration by the minimum number of paying participants needed to achieve the required cost recovery ratio, and
- in some cases, support from the community in terms of volunteer assistance or volunteer coaching location.

TABLE 15. OCTOBER 1997 VISITS TO NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

	Clara Barton	Good Hope	Plum Gar	Rosemary Hill	Ross Boddy	Scotland	Wheaton	TOTALS
Center Programs								
After School			100					100
Club Friday	139	134	10	466			228	977
Community Use	419	399	1,363	690	232	200	991	4,294
Self Directed	71	164	700	241	241	1,007	576	3,000
Classes								-
Subtotal	629	697	2,173	1,397	473	1,207	1,795	8,371
Partnerships								
Day Care	70							70
Government			100		125			225
Hospital						320		320
Police		845		274				1,119
Community Serv		123				632	100	855
Subtotal	70	968	100	274	125	952	100	2,589
CENTER TOTAL	699	1,665	2,273	1,671	598	2,159	1,895	10,960
Recreation Teams								
Classes	355	64		160			2,169	2,748
Seniors	1,229				765		502	2,496
Sports						115	190	305
Teens	154	60				48	96	358
Therapeutics							82	82
RECREATION	1738	124	0	160	765	163	3039	5,989
GRAND TOTAL	2,437	1,789	2,273	1,831	1,363	2,322	4,934	16,949
Share Center Visits	29%	93%	100%	91%	44%	93%	38%	70%
Share Rec Visits	71%	7%	0%	9%	56%	7%	62%	30%

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

TABLE 16. OCTOBER 1997 VISITS TO REGIONAL CENTERS

Center Programs	Bauer Dr	Longwood	UpCounty	Leland	Long Branch	Potomac	TOTALS
After School	338	2	450		765		1,555
Club Friday	678	611	380	335	396	2,268	4,668
Community Use	2,126	3,123	960	270	1,290	2,177	9,946
Self Directed	2,160	728	1,488	4,025	2,312	3,226	13,939
Classes			200				200
Subtotal	5,302	4,464	3,478	4,630	4,763	7,671	30,308
Partnerships							
Day Care							-
Government						201	201
Hospital							-
Police					700		700
Community Service		190		200	1,000	358	1,748
Subtotal	-	190	-	200	1,700	559	2,649
CENTER TOTAL	5,302	4,654	3,478	4,830	6,463	8,230	32,957
Rec Teams							
Classes	5,143	1,295	740	2,410	735	5,043	15,366
Seniors	220	486		295	524	245	1,770
Sports	2,300		192	180	240	360	3,272
Teens	-	-	-	-	-	16	16
Therapeutics	150	-	16	-	-	14	180
REC TOTAL	7,813	1,781	948	2,885	1,499	5,678	20,604
GRAND TOTAL	13,115	6,435	4,426	7,715	7,962	13,908	53,561
Center %	40%	72%	79%	63%	81%	59%	62%
Rec %	60%	28%	21%	37%	19%	41%	38%

Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

IV. CASE STUDIES

The description of the budget, the buildings and programming practices in the first three chapters presents an overview of the community center program. It demonstrates that the Recreation Department:

- funds community center operations almost exclusively with Recreation District tax revenues,
- operates the community center program from buildings that vary widely in size, age and availability of programming space, and
- programs centers with local community activities as well as activities that draw participants from broader regions of the County.

This chapter looks at six centers - their physical settings, neighborhood characteristics, program offerings, operating budgets and activity levels - to develop a clearer picture of the community center program and to understand how and why center operations vary from one center to the next. The first part of this chapter describes the physical characteristics, neighborhood setting, and programming of each center. The second part looks at operating budget characteristics and the last section of the chapter presents performance data for the centers.

OLO selected the case study candidates in consultation with Recreation Department staff. OLO selected these centers to represent a mix of neighborhood and regional recreation centers, different geographic areas of the County, and, for the regional recreation centers, a mix of older and newer centers. OLO pairs the centers into three groups to summarize the case study characteristics.

Type of Center	Centers
Neighborhood Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rosemary Hills• Clara Barton
Older Regional Recreation Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upper County• Bauer Drive
Newer Regional Recreation Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long Branch• Potomac

A. Descriptions of the Case Study Centers

This section describes the neighborhood setting and program offerings at each of the six case study centers.

1. The Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville Neighborhood Center

The Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville Neighborhood Center is located in Rosemary Hills on Lyttonsville Road outside of the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD). The County Executive's Recommended FY 97 Capital Budget and Capital Improvements Program describes Rosemary Hills as a culturally diverse and densely populated community.

Approximately 17,400 people live within one mile of the center and 126,165 people live within three miles of the center. The median income within one mile is \$59,204. Within three miles, the median income is \$53,600. Approximately 25% of the students in the schools closest to the center participate in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS).

The Maryland National-Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) constructed the original building as a park shelter in the 1940's. The Recreation Department enclosed and expanded the structure to create a neighborhood community center in 1982. The 7,800 square foot center offers a social hall, a community room, a game room, a weight room and a kitchen. Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville is one of three neighborhood centers without a gymnasium.

The Approved FY 97 to 02 Capital Improvements Program includes a project to demolish the existing building and replace it with a new 23,500 square foot regional recreation center. The estimated cost of this project is \$4.6 million. Funding would be provided using County General Obligation bonds. The service area for the new center will be the Rosemary Hills community and the Greater Silver Spring Planning Area.

The budget for Rosemary Hills funds one part-time community activity coordinator and 2,470 part-time temporary hours. The center is budgeted for approximately 2,500 hours annually or, on average, 48 hours a week. In addition to paid staff, the center relies on volunteers to support its programs. In the first half of FY 98, the center logged over 500 volunteer hours or the equivalent of 1,000 hours annually. Volunteers assist primarily with administrative and program duties but also help out with special events, management activities and sports.

The center staff offers several programs at Rosemary Hills. Last fall, the center programmed a bead stringing class, a karate class and a gymnastics class. A special "After School Adventures" club offers cheerleading, ballet, African dance and homework help. This program not only helps parents alleviate the need for day care responsibilities but also provides children with structured programs that may not be provided by a baby-sitter or a day care facility. The

center has also offered Special Events such as "Community Service Days," "National Night Out," a community festival and a trip to Atlantic City, for all ages.

The Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville Center has collaborative partnerships with the Park Police, Montgomery County Public Libraries, and the Girl Scouts. The center also has partnerships with private providers such as Pilgrim Baptist Church, Rock Creek Foundation, Mom's Club of Silver Spring and Helping Hands, a food distributor. The center also coordinates and facilitates services for the Bethesda Youth Services and the Trout Club of America.

The Classes, CAP, and TATR teams also program activities, at the Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville center. In the first half of FY 98, the Classes team offered eleven sessions with nine different classes. Most classes were educational and geared for young children. The CAP team offered a playground program over the summer and the TATR team offered an after school program that had to be canceled because it did not meet the minimum registration requirements.

2. The Clara Barton Neighborhood Center

The Clara Barton Neighborhood Center is housed on the first floor of a former elementary school building. The neighborhood center shares the building with two other non-profit groups - Bethesda Youth Services and a day care organization. The center has 6,530 square feet of program space. It is one of three neighborhood centers that does not have a gym. It offers a large social hall, a meeting room, a conference room, plus a small weight room and small game room.

The center is adjacent to a local park. The nearest commercial area is Glen Echo, a few miles away. There are five schools within two miles of the center. The center is surrounded by residential neighborhoods comprised primarily of single family detached housing. Approximately 5,400 people live within one mile of the center and 52,500 people live within three miles. The median income is \$81,800 within one mile of the center and \$80,000 within a three mile area. Approximately 2% of students attending schools within a mile of the center participate in Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS).

The Clara Barton center budget funds one permanent part-time recreation specialist and 2,310 part-time temporary hours. The center is programmed for approximately 3,400 hours annually or 65 hours a week. In addition to paid staff, Clara Barton benefited from approximately 290 hours of volunteer time in the first half of FY 98 or the equivalent of 580 hours annually. The majority of volunteer time helps with hosting special events.

The Clara Barton Center offers a mix of Recreation Department and center based programs. The center based programs include a weight and exercise room and sponsorship of special events and community activities. For example, in October the center sponsored a middle school Halloween dance for the teen club. The center has also established a partnership with the day care center to allow use of the social hall in inclement weather.

The Clara Barton Neighborhood Center has collaborative partnerships with Bethesda Youth Services, the Board of Elections, and the Montgomery County Public Schools. The center provides meeting space for many non-profits such as the Cabin John Citizens Association, Seven Locks Homeowner Association meetings, Montgomery County Democrats, the National Tai Chi organization, the Canoe Cruisers and the Potomac Peddlers.

Other Recreation Department teams that program Clara Barton include the Senior Adult team, the Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR) team, and the Classes and Camps and Playgrounds (CAP) teams. The Senior Adults team sponsors a one day a week senior club program on Wednesday. The TATR team sponsors an after school teen drop-in center. For the Fall 1997 session, the Classes team offered seven sessions of five different classes. The classes included karate for adults and children, gymnastics for grade school children, and flower painting for adults. There was also a class called Definitions and a Nightclub Latin Dance class. The CAP team offered a playground program last summer.

3. The UpCounty Center Community Center

The UpCounty Community Center is located in the Emory Grove community on Emory Grove Road between the City of Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village. The three mile service area overlaps some parts of the Montgomery Village community, the Flower Hill community, the City of Gaithersburg, and the town of Washington Grove. These communities provide a number of separate community centers for their residents. There are eleven schools within two miles of the center.

There are 15,600 people living within one mile of the center and 77,300 people living within three miles of the center. The median income for those within one and three miles is \$53,081. Approximately 33% of the students attending public schools nearest the center participate in Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS).

The UpCounty regional recreation center building was originally constructed in the late 1970's by the Recreation Department. The building provides a full size gym, a weight room, a game room, an arts and kiln room, a

conference room and a social hall. The center is co-located with an outdoor pool, managed by the Recreation Department.

The UpCounty center budget funds two full-time recreation specialists and 2,565 part-time temporary hours. The center is funded for approximately 3,400 operating hours annually or 66 hours a week. In addition to the paid staff, the center uses volunteers to assist with center operations. Volunteers contributed approximately 135 hours to center operations in the first half of FY 98 or the equivalent of 270 hours annually.

The center based programs and collaborative partnerships at the UpCounty center focus on youth and families. "P.E.A.R.L.S." - a program for pregnant and parenting young women offers skills, education and parenting issues for young adults ages 14. to 24. "S.N.E.A.K.E.R.S." a program for girls ages 14 to 16 discusses self-esteem, responsibility, nurturance, and assertiveness. Last fall, Planned Parenthood presented a workshop for parents with teenagers at the center. The center also programs special annual events such as the Halloween Extravaganza.

The center provides meeting space for many groups and government agencies including the Housing Opportunities Commission, the Department of Health and Human Services, the PTA Council, the National Association of Letter Carriers, the Women's Ministries Department, the National Institutes of Standards and Technology, and the Islamic Center of Maryland.

The Classes, Sports, TATR and CAP teams in the Recreation Department program the UpCounty center. (Note: The Senior Adults previously offered a four day senior program at the UpCounty center that was serving approximately 600 seniors a month. At the beginning of FY 98, the County consolidated this program with a senior program in the City of Gaithersburg and relocated these activities to a center in the city.)

In the first half of FY 98, this regional recreation center offered ten sessions of seven different classes. The classes were mainly dance and aerobic activity classes. The center also has a volleyball league for adults and karate classes for adults and youths. In the first half of FY 98, the TATR team programmed two therapeutic recreation classes, a teen life skills camp and two pool parties. The CAP team offered a playground program.

4. Bauer Drive Community Center

The Bauer Drive Community center was built by the Recreation Department in the late 1970's. The center is located on Bauer Drive, next to the Earle B. Wood Middle School and across the street from the Norbeck Village Shopping Center. There are nine schools within two miles of the center. The

boundaries of the service area extend into the city of Rockville, which offers a separate program of recreation services and community centers.

Approximately 10,000 people live within one mile of the center and almost 100,000 people live within a three mile radius. The median income is \$61,539 within a one mile radius and \$51,254 within a three mile radius. Approximately 20% of the students attending public schools near the center participate in Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS).

As described in the Long Range Plan, the Bauer Drive center was the first center to be built by the Recreation Department using traditional bond financing and the capital program process. For the first time, the facility design enabled a broader service by providing a gymnasium, arts and crafts room, social hall, meeting room and game area. Facility siting adjacent to park and school system athletic fields and tennis courts, achieved the goal of co-locating indoor and outdoor recreational amenities.

Construction of this center represented the beginning of the modern community center program by the Recreation Department. The building has 15,000 net square feet of program space including a full size gym, a small weight room, a social hall, classrooms, a community hall and a kitchen.

Bauer Drive is staffed with one full-time recreation specialist, one part-time community activity coordinator and 3,430 part-time temporary hours. The center is budgeted for 4,500 hours annually or approximately 87 hours a week. Bauer Drive received over 400 hours in volunteer time or the equivalent of more than 800 hours annually. Volunteers assisted with community service, special events, and center operations.

Bauer Drive has numerous collaborative partnerships with both public and private providers. Some examples include the Montgomery Public Schools, the Supervisor of Elections, the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless, Narcotics Anonymous, Table Tennis Club, Wheaton Majorettes, and Girl Scouts.

The center provides meeting space for various groups including the Department of Health and Human Services, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the U.S. Coast Guard and the American Antique Association.

Bauer Drive is one of two regional recreation centers heavily programmed by other Recreation teams. The Classes, Sports, TATR, Senior Adults and CAP teams all program activities at Bauer Drive. The Fall 1997 Leisure guide advertised 70 different classes and a total of 99 class sessions. The programs included arts and crafts, leisure classes, sports, children's programs, exercise programs, educational programs, dancing, and one senior dance class. This

center offered special classes such as the Holiday Centerpiece or Door Ornament classes, the No-Sew Halloween Costumes for Children class, and how to make decorative Christmas cards.

The TATR team programmed four therapeutic recreation classes, a craft special event and a countywide middle school event. "The Bauer Drive Seniors" offers a social gathering every Monday during the months of September and October. Bingo, bridge, and local musicians are just a few events that take place. The CAP team programmed a gymnastics camp this fall.

5. The Long Branch Community Center

The Long Branch Community center is located on Piney Branch Road, south of the Flower-Piney Branch commercial area. There are 13 schools within two miles of the center.

The service area for the center is Silver Spring and Takoma Park, a culturally diverse and densely populated community with a significant percentage of youth, elderly, and low income residents. Approximately 27,000 people live within one mile of the center and almost 100,000 people live within a three mile radius. The median income for those within a mile of the center is \$37,970. Within a three mile radius of the center the median income is \$47,857. Approximately 66% of the students attending public schools near the center participate in Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS).

The Long Branch center building was opened in 1994. The building has 20,500 net square feet. It includes a full size gym and social hall, a large arts and crafts room, a weight room, conference room and a separate game room. The center is co-located with an outdoor pool.

The Long Branch budget funds one recreation specialist, one community activities coordinator and 4,850 part-time temporary hours. The budget funds 3,300 annual operating hours or an average of 64 hours a week. The Long Branch center receives a substantial amount of volunteer support. In the first half of FY 98, volunteers contributed 1,080 hours or the equivalent of 2,160 hours annually. Volunteers assisted primarily with community service events.

The center based activities at Long Branch have created an active, busy center. The after-school program known as "Kidzone" is offered Monday through Thursday and provides homework assistance, arts and crafts, sports and other recreational activities. Friday nights are reserved for Long Branch's "Club Friday" which offers both parents and children the chance to participate in special events, listen to music, play games and enjoy arts and crafts.

The Long Branch Regional Recreation Center has collaborative partnerships with many programs including the Department of Health and Human Services, Long Branch Neighborhood Initiatives, Special Olympic Partners, the Washington Chess Foundation, Helping Hands, (a food distributor), and a Community based Hip-Hop Club. The center provides meeting space for Montgomery County Public Schools, the Montgomery County Police, the Department of Health and Human Services, Alcoholic Anonymous, the Panamanian Dance Group, and the Cajun Gumbo Groupies.

Other Recreation teams that program Long Branch include the Senior Adults, TATR, CAP, Sports and Classes teams. The Senior Adults offer a four day a week senior program. In the first half of FY 98, the TATR team programmed pool parties, an outreach teen prevention program and one therapeutic recreation class that did not meet minimum registration requirements. The Classes team offered 18 sessions for 11 different classes. Most classes were sport or aerobic activity programs including dancing classes for adults, youths, and preschoolers, and a volleyball league for adults. There were also three leisure classes.

6. The Potomac Community Center

The Potomac Community Center is located on Falls Road about one mile from the village center. The capital program estimated the center would serve approximately 65,000 residents and the anticipated service area for the center would include Potomac, Travilah, Cabin John and portions of south Rockville. There are 8,400 residents within a mile of the center and 50,000 residents living within a three mile radius. The median income is \$103,523 within a one mile area and approximately \$97,400 within a three mile service area. Approximately 10% of students attending schools within one mile of the center participate in Free and Reduced-price-Meals System (FARMS).

The center is co-located with a day care center, the Recreation Department's western regional service center and the Camps and Playgrounds (CAP) office. The center building was formerly the Lake Normandy Elementary school. The school closed and an interim center opened in the summer of 1983 to serve pre-schoolers, teens, adults, senior citizens and a large school population.

The converted center opened in 1988. It is a 30,000 square foot building with 17,328 square feet of program space. The center has a full size gym, a weight room, a game room in the lobby, a social hall, a community room and a kitchen.

The budget for the Potomac center funds one full-time recreation specialist, two community activity coordinators and 3,790 part-time temporary

hours. The center is budgeted for 5,000 hours annually or approximately 96 hours a week. The Potomac center received approximately 740 hours in volunteer time in the first half of FY 98 or the equivalent of 1,500 hours annually.

This past fall the center offered the Annual Oktoberfest which included activities such as the "Hans" look-alike contest, a hot air balloon race and a 5K race. German food, crafts and entertainment were also provided. The Potomac Center also held an Arts and Crafts Bazaar which featured jewelry, floral arrangements and hand-made arts and crafts.

The Potomac Community Center has a collaborative partnership with Karma academy, a drug rehabilitation program. The center provides meeting space for the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Advocates for Long Term Care, the Lymphoma Foundation, Alcoholic Anonymous, Potomac Rotary, and Tally Ho Toastmasters.

The Potomac Regional Recreation Center is programmed by the Classes, TATR, Sports, CAP and Senior Adults team. Last fall, the Classes team offered 88 class sessions with 53 different classes to choose from. The class offerings included a large variety of classes for each age group, numerous aerobic, exercise classes and leisure classes for adults. The CAP team offered a sports program. The TATR team programmed a middle school after hours program, two therapeutic recreation classes, a therapeutic recreation camp and an outreach teen prevention program. The Senior Adults team offers a two day a week senior neighborhood program.

B. Operating Costs for the Case Study Centers

A key issue of this study is how much the County spends to operate a recreation center and whether the County budgets resources evenly across all centers. This section examines the budgeted operating costs for the six case study centers. The cost information is from the Approved FY 98 budget for the Recreation Department. It reflects budget data only, not actual expenditures. (Note: OLO could not retrieve actual expenditure data for FY 97 because expenditures were not tracked by individual center prior to the reorganization.)

The sources of budgeted cost data include:

- personnel and operating expenses for each individual center,
- management costs for the Community Center program,
- estimated operating and personnel expenses of other Recreation teams which program activities at the centers, and
- management, utility, maintenance and debt service costs from the Recreation Department budget.

1. Personnel and Operating Expenses

The detailed review of case study centers shows that resources budgeted for individual centers vary. Table 17 shows the variation in budgeted hours and workyears by center. Potomac and Bauer Drive are budgeted for 96 and 87 hours a week respectively compared to 65 hours for Clara Barton, UpCounty and Long Branch and 48 hours for Rosemary Hills.

The staffing levels vary by the size and age of the centers. The neighborhood centers are budgeted for 2 workyears, the older regional recreation centers are budgeted for 3.2 to 3.5 workyears and the newer regional recreation centers are budgeted for 4.2 to 4.7 workyears.

TABLE 17. CASE STUDY CENTERS: BUDGETED HOURS AND PERSONNEL

Center	Budgeted Annual Hours	Average Weekly Hrs	Fulltime Permanent	Parttime Permanent	Parttime Temporary	Total Staff Workyears
Rosemary Hills	2,496	48	0.0	0.9	1.2	2.1
Clara Barton	3,380	65	0.0	0.9	1.1	1.9
UpCounty	3,432	66	2.0	0.0	1.2	3.2
Bauer Drive	4,524	87	1.0	0.9	1.6	3.5
Long Branch	3,328	64	1.0	0.9	2.3	4.2
Potomac	5,018	96.5	2.0	0.9	1.8	4.7
Average	3,696	71	1.0	0.7	1.6	3.3

Source: OLO, Recreation Department, 1998.

Table 18 shows the budgeted personnel costs and operating expenses for each center plus a pro-rated share of the budgeted administrative costs for the Community Center program.

TABLE 18. CASE STUDY CENTERS: CENTER PROGRAM COSTS

Center	Personnel Costs	Operating Costs	Center Budget	Program Adm. Costs	Total Program \$
Rosemary Hills	\$ 52,916	\$ 5,860	\$ 58,776	\$ 30,490	\$ 89,266
Clara Barton	91,508	4,430	95,938	30,490	126,428
UpCounty	173,760	6,110	179,870	30,490	210,360
Bauer Drive	148,951	6,160	155,111	30,490	185,601
Long Branch	165,241	6,570	171,811	30,490	202,301
Potomac	210,256	7,820	218,076	30,490	248,566
Average	\$140,439	\$ 6,158	\$146,597	\$ 30,490	\$177,087

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

- The average personnel costs are \$140,440 per center. The variation in personnel costs for the centers reflects not only different staffing patterns among the centers shown in Table 17 but also a variation in the seniority of the center staff.

- The budgeted operating expenses average \$6,160 for each center. Operating expenses vary from \$4,430 for Clara Barton to \$7,820 for Potomac.
- The pro-rated share of Community center program administrative costs is \$30,490 for each center. (Note: OLO divided the total management and administrative cost for the Community center program by the number of centers to establish this pro-rata cost estimate.)

2 Cost of Programming by Other Recreation Teams

OLO asked the six Recreation teams that program community centers (Senior Adults, TATR, CAPs, Sports, Classes and Special Events) to compile costs estimates for their programming at the six case study centers from July to December 1997. OLO annualized these estimates to provide an order of magnitude estimate of the cost of programming by other Recreation Department teams. Table 19 summarizes these costs.

TABLE 19. CASE STUDY CENTERS: OTHER RECREATION TEAM COSTS

PROGRAM	Rosemary	Clara B.	Bauer	UCC	Long Branch	Potomac	TOTAL
Senior Adults	\$ -	\$ 3,820	\$ 3,820	\$ -	\$ 12,260	\$ 3,820	\$ 23,720
TATR	6,574	23,292	10,374	21,926	10,588	31,087	\$ 103,841
Sports	-	-	10,690	10,690	10,690	10,690	\$ 42,760
Classes	4,720	4,720	47,200	4,720	-	47,200	\$ 108,560
CAP	10,621	10,621	9,937	10,621	10,621	25,709	\$ 78,130
Special Events	-	-	1,200	-	400	700	\$ 2,300
TOTAL	\$ 15,341	\$ 42,453	\$ 82,021	\$ 47,957	\$ 44,159	\$ 118,506	\$ 350,437

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

3. Total Budgeted Costs

Table 20 summarizes the total budgeted cost data for the six case study centers. The personnel and operating costs include the personnel and operating costs for the community center program and the costs incurred by other Recreation Department teams.

The table also displays the maintenance, utility and debt service costs for the six case study centers. The utility costs are budgeted estimates from the Recreation Department and the debt service payments for Potomac and Long Branch are from the Department of Finance payment records.

The maintenance costs are based on actual expenditures for the first half of FY 98 plus OLO's review of the maintenance contracts. The maintenance budget for Long Branch includes the salary of a building service worker assigned to the center plus the contract expenses. The other centers display contract expenses plus a pro-rated share of the craftworker salaries charged to the Community center program.

TABLE 20. BUDGETED OPERATING COSTS FOR THE CASE STUDY CENTERS

Center	Personnel & Oper. Exp.	Maint.	Utilities	Operating Budget	Debt Service	Average by Type
Rosemary Hills	\$ 104,604	\$ 27,073	\$ 16,177	\$ 147,854	0	\$ 186,567
Clara Barton	168,840	31,568	24,871	\$ 225,279	0	
UpCounty	292,378	44,738	32,843	\$ 369,959	0	\$ 347,600
Bauer	233,555	57,269	34,417	\$ 325,241	0	
Long Branch	246,457	111,614	38,872	\$ 396,943	\$ 194,000	\$ 440,202
Potomac	367,043	60,927	55,490	\$ 483,460	\$ 192,000	
AVERAGE	\$ 284,858	\$ 68,637	\$ 40,406	\$ 393,901	\$ 96,500	

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

The table shows the average operating budgets for each center category vary by the size and age of the center. Based on data from the six case study centers, on average the County budgets:

- \$187,000 for a neighborhood center,
- \$348,000 for an older regional recreation center, and
- \$440,000 for a newer regional recreation center (excluding debt service).

The Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville neighborhood center has the lowest operating budget at \$147,850 annually. In contrast, Long Branch and Potomac, the newer regional recreation centers, have annual budgets of almost \$400,000 and \$483,000. This is two to three times the budget for Rosemary Hills. When debt service payments are added to the operating costs, the gross annual costs increase to \$591,000 for Long Branch and \$675,000 for Potomac.

4. Revenues

A small portion of the operating costs for the Community Center program are offset by revenues. In addition to its budgeted expenditures, each center has an budgeted revenue target. The sources of revenues for community centers include rentals, activity fees, club fees, weight room membership fees, activity cards and admission charges for center events. Table 21 displays the FY 98 revenue targets for each case study center.

The gross operating costs for the case study centers would also be reduced by any fees or revenues charged for the activities programmed by other Recreation teams. Those activities in the most restrictive fee level charge fees to recover their costs plus an additional profit that offsets other non-revenue

TABLE 21. CASE STUDY CENTERS: BUDGETED REVENUE TARGETS

Centers	Revenue Targets
Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville	\$3,500
Clara Barton	9,000
UpCounty	31,325
Bauer Drive	34,625
Long Branch	14,000
Potomac	70,250

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

programs. Because each program has its own fee level classification, it is difficult to determine the actual fees generated from the programs offered at the six case study centers. To develop an order of magnitude estimate, OLO used the program budget levels to estimate the level of tax support. This analysis showed the County recovers approximately half of the costs for the other Recreation activities through fees.

5. Operating Costs per Square Foot

Table 22 shows the operating costs for the six case study centers on a per square foot basis. The average square foot operating cost is \$21.78. The data show Rosemary Hills has the lowest operating cost per square foot (\$15.84) and its paired center Clara Barton has the highest operating cost per square foot (\$27.81). Both the UpCounty and Bauer Drive have below average costs while Potomac and Long Branch have above average costs, due largely to annual debt service payments.

TABLE 22. CASE STUDY CENTERS: COST PER SQUARE FOOT

Center	Gross Budget	Gross Square Ft.	Cost / Square Ft.	Average Index
Rosemary Hills	\$ 147,854	9,337	\$ 15.84	0.73
Clara Barton	225,279	8,100	27.81	1.28
UpCounty	369,959	18,337	20.18	0.93
Bauer	325,341	19,704	16.51	0.76
Long Branch	590,943	24,600	24.02	1.10
Potomac	675,460	25,560	26.43	1.21
AVERAGE	\$ 490,426	22,050	\$ 21.78	1.00

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

6. Operating Costs per Visit

Table 23 shows the gross operating costs on a per visit basis. The average cost per visit among the six case study centers is \$4.86. The neighborhood centers, Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton, which generate a lower number of visits, have costs per visit that are 40% to 60% higher than average. Long Branch and UpCounty have costs per visit that are 30% to 40% higher than the average. Potomac has a below average cost per visit and Bauer Drive, with a moderate budget and a high volume of visits has the lowest cost per visit. At \$2.07 per visit, this cost is less than half the average cost.

TABLE 23. CASE STUDY CENTERS: COST PER VISIT

Center	Gross Budget	Cost per month	October Visits	Cost / Visit	Average Index
Rosemary Hills	\$ 147,854	\$ 12,321	1,831	6.73	1.39
Clara Barton	225,279	\$ 18,773	2,367	7.93	1.63
UpCounty	369,959	\$ 30,830	4,426	6.97	1.43
Bauer	325,241	\$ 27,103	13,115	2.07	0.43
Long Branch	590,943	\$ 49,245	7,962	6.19	1.27
Potomac	675,460	\$ 56,288	13,349	4.22	0.87
AVERAGE	\$ 490,401	\$ 40,867	9,713	4.86	1.00

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

C. Program Measures

OLO calculated the number of visits per hour for each case study center by dividing the total number of visits by the hours of operation. The data of visits per hour by center are shown in Table 24.

TABLE 24. CASE STUDY CENTERS - VISITS PER HOUR

Centers	October Hours	October Visits	Visits Per Hour
Rosemary Hills	211	1830	9
Clara Barton	286	2440	9
UpCounty	290	4425	15
Bauer Drive	348	13115	38
Long Branch	282	4960	28
Potomac	425	13910	33
Average	307	7280	22

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

The data show that the small centers - Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton - each had 9 visits per hour. This is less than half the average number of 22 visits per hour for all the centers. The data show Bauer Drive, with 38 visits per hour, was the most productive of the four regional recreation centers followed by

Potomac at 33 visits per hour. Long Branch had 28 visits per hour and the UpCounty center received 15 visits per hour.

To gain a better understanding of community center operations, OLO examined three factors - the size, age and condition of the center; population and medium income data; and the contribution to programming by other Recreation Department teams.

1. Size, Age and Condition of the Center Buildings

The case study centers are paired according to the size and age of the center buildings. The variation in productivity between the neighborhood centers and regional recreation centers supports the Recreation Department's understanding that activity level at the neighborhood centers does not match the level of activity at regional recreation centers.

However, the variation in productivity among the older regional recreation centers - Bauer Drive had two and one-half times more visits per hour than the UpCounty - suggests that other factors, such as neighborhood demographics or programming by other Recreation Department teams, also contribute to the performance of a center.

2. Service Area Population and Income Data

Table 25 summarizes population and median income data for the six case study centers. With 126,000 people within three miles of the center, Rosemary Hills has the highest population base, followed by Long Branch and Bauer Drive. Potomac and Clara Barton, with populations of approximately 50,000 each have the lowest population base.

Potomac has the highest median income followed by Clara Barton. The UpCounty center, Rosemary Hill and Bauer Drive, all have comparable median incomes ranging from \$51,000 to \$53,000. Long Branch has the lowest median income among the six case study centers.

TABLE 25. CASE STUDY CENTERS : POPULATION AND INCOME DATA

Center	Total Visits	Visits per hour	3 mile Population	3 mile Income
Rosemary	1,830	9	126,170	\$53,560
Clara Barton	2,440	9	52,530	79,000
UpCounty	4,430	15	77,280	53,080
Bauer Drive	13,120	38	97,100	51,250
Long Branch	7,960	28	99,450	47,860
Potomac	13,910	33	50,230	97,360

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

Population and income only partially explain the level of productivity at a center. The effect of the large population base near Rosemary Hills is likely mitigated by the size and age of the center, but should be favorable when the regional center opens in 2000. Potomac, with the lowest population and the highest median income, has the second highest productivity.

The large population base for Long Branch may explain why this center is more productive despite having the lowest median income among the case study centers. Bauer Drive, the most productive center, has comparable socio-economic data to Long Branch with a slightly lower population but a slightly higher median income. The performance of Long Branch and Bauer Drive, and their socio-economic data, suggest that population and income data alone do not explain the relatively low productivity at the UpCounty center. The UpCounty has 20,000 fewer people but it has a slightly higher median income than Long Branch and Bauer Drive.

3. The Effect of Departmental Programming Practices

To understand the effect of the department's programming practices on center productivity, OLO compared the number of visits generated by center sponsored programs to the number of visits generated by Recreation Department teams for each case study center. The data are presented in Table 26 and graphed in Figure 4.

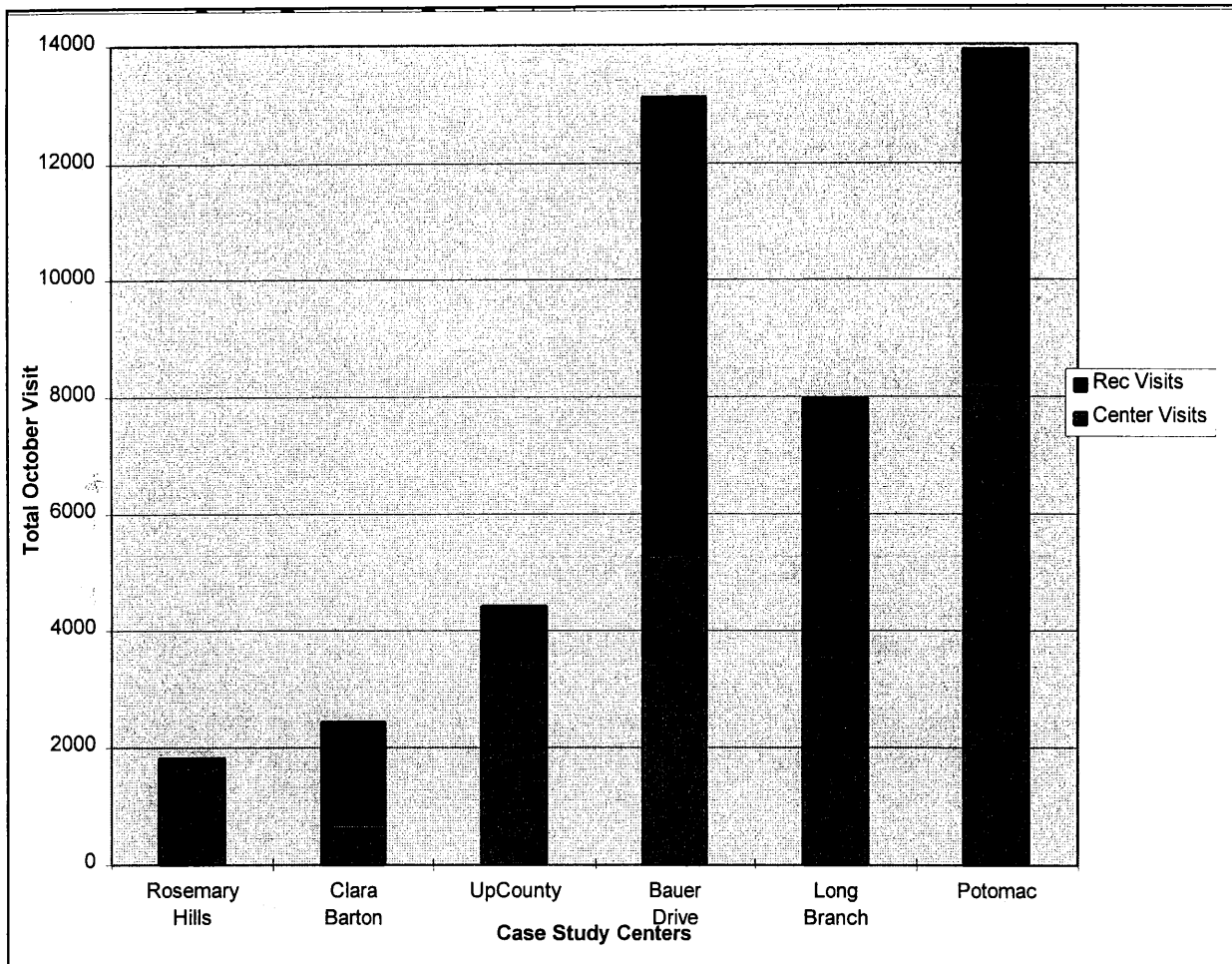
TABLE 26. CASE STUDY CENTERS: VISITS FOR OCTOBER 1997

Category	Center	Center Visits	Rec Visits	Total Visits
Neighborhood centers	Rosemary Hills	1,671	160	5,493
	Clara Barton	699	1,738	7,311
Older Reg'l centers	UpCounty	3,478	948	13,278
	Bauer Drive	5,302	7,813	39,345
Newer Reg'l centers	Long Branch	6,463	1,499	23,886
	Potomac	8,230	5,678	41,724
Average	All Case Studies	4,307	2,973	21,840

Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

The data (and the graph in particular) show visits generated by Recreation Department programs contribute significantly to overall activity levels at the busiest centers, namely Bauer Drive and Potomac. Without Recreation Department programming, the variation among the UpCounty and Bauer Drive or Long Branch and Potomac drops to less than 2,000 visits. Absent the contribution of the Recreation Department programs at Clara Barton, the activity level drops well below that of Rosemary Hills.

FIGURE 4. VISITS TO CASE STUDY CENTERS - OCTOBER 1997



Source: OLO, Department of Recreation, 1998.

In Sum

OLO, in consultation with Recreation Department staff, developed case studies for six centers to develop a clearer picture of the community center program and to understand how and why center operations vary from one center to the next. The six case study centers were Rosemary Hills, Clara Barton, the UpCounty, Bauer Drive, Long Branch and Potomac.

OLO selected these centers to represent a mix of neighborhood and regional recreation centers, different geographic areas of the County, and a mix of older and newer regional recreation centers. OLO paired the centers as follows to report the characteristics of three types of centers:

- neighborhood centers (Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton),
- older regional recreation centers (UpCounty and Bauer Drive), and
- newer regional recreation centers (Long Branch and Potomac).

OLO determined the budgeted operating costs for each center. The budgeted cost components included: personnel and operating expenses for the center, a pro-rated share of the Community Center program management costs, maintenance costs and utility costs. The average budget by type of center was:

- \$187,00 for a neighborhood center,
- \$348,00 for an older regional recreation center, and
- \$440,000 for a newer regional recreation center.

For the newer regional recreation centers, debt service payments are approximately \$190,000 annually. The gross operating budgets vary from \$147,900 annually for Rosemary Hills to \$675,500 annually for Potomac.

OLO calculated the cost per square foot and cost per visit for the case study centers. OLO found Rosemary Hills had the lowest cost per square foot and Clara Barton had the highest cost per square foot. Bauer Drive had the lowest cost per visit and Clara Barton had the highest cost per visit.

OLO also calculated the visits per hour for each center as one measure of productivity. OLO found consistent productivity (measured in visits per hour) among two of the three case study pairs. The neighborhood centers (Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton) each averaged 9 visits per hour. The new community centers (Long Branch and Potomac) averaged 28 and 33 visits per hour respectively. In contrast to these two pairs, there was a variation in the productivity of the older regional centers (Bauer Drive and the UpCounty.) Bauer Drive with 38 visits per hour had two and one-half times as many visits per hour as the UpCounty center with 15 visits per hour.

OLO examined three factors - facility size, socio-economic data and departmental programming practices - to better understand the variation in productivity among all case study centers:. The smaller size, age and condition of the neighborhood centers appears to explain the lower productivity of neighborhood centers compared to the regional recreation centers. Population and income data do not appear to explain the low productivity of the UpCounty center because both Bauer Drive and Long Branch have similar socio-economic data but higher productivity levels. Programming by other Recreation teams makes a significant contribution to the activity levels at the busiest centers and, in part, explains the higher productivity at Bauer Drive and Potomac.

The case study data suggests there are two models for community center program operations. Under one model, the center generates most of its visits from center based programs with only a few Recreation team programming contributions. Rosemary Hills, the UpCounty and Long Branch represent this model. Generally, these centers have higher than average costs per square foot and higher than average costs per visit.

Under the second model, a core of center based programming is matched by a substantial amount of programming by other Recreation Department teams. Bauer Drive and Potomac represent this approach. Bauer Drive has lower than average costs per square foot and the lowest cost per visit among the case study centers. Potomac has a higher than average cost per square foot but a lower than average cost per visit.

V. THE RECREATION FACILITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN, FY 1997 to 2010

In June 1997, the Department of Recreation released The Recreation Facility Development Plan FY 97 to 2010 (referred to as the Plan). The Department of Recreation prepared the Plan with assistance from the countywide Recreation Advisory Board and other departments and agencies. No formal requirement for a plan exists in the County Code, however, the Recreation Department hopes the County Executive and County Council will refer to the Plan when they make future capital program decisions.

The Recreation Department briefed the Council's Planning Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee on the Plan on July 21, 1997. The PHED Committee raised several questions and asked the Recreation Department to return for another meeting before the Committee considers the Executive's Recommended FY 99-03 capital program. The PHED Committee held a second worksession in January 1998.

A. The 1988 Study

The 1997 Plan updates and revises a community recreation study the Recreation Department prepared in 1988. The 1988 study recommended a 23,500 square foot center to serve 40,000 or 50,000 people. The study assumed a three to five mile service area for community centers and a three mile service area for neighborhood centers. The study estimated a total of 10 or 12 facilities would be needed to serve the Recreation District population.

The study called for the development of six community centers in Long Branch, Germantown, the I-29 Corridor, Kensington/North Bethesda, Colesville White Oak and Silver Spring. Since 1988, the County has opened four new regional centers: Potomac (1988), Leland (1989), Long Branch (1994) and Germantown (1998). The County is constructing two new regional centers in the I-29 Corridor - East County (1998) and Fairland (2000), and the County has programmed a regional center to replace the Rosemary Hills neighborhood center (2000).

B. The 1997 Plan

The 1997 Plan discusses the value and benefits of community recreation centers, presents proposed siting, size and design considerations for a prototype center, assesses the number and timing of future centers, and estimates the anticipated fiscal impact of seven new centers.

1. The Benefits of Community Recreation Centers

One of the most important benefits of a community recreation center is to provide a focal point by offering a place and an opportunity for the community to come together formally and informally to communicate. Centers are positive places where the activities that reinforce a sense of community and neighborhood take place.

Besides serving as a community focal point, a community recreation center and its programs provide both countywide and neighborhood benefits. As described in the Plan, community centers:

- promote health and wellness,
- strengthen families,
- reduce isolation,
- increase social and intercultural interaction,
- enhance public safety,
- provide positive alternatives to substance abuse and potential delinquency, and
- enhance local economic vitality.

The Plan states the County needs community recreation centers so children and youth have a place to go, so there are facilities for residents who have limited recreational opportunities, so educational programs are brought to a community level, and so community and neighborhood organizations have a place to meet.

2. Proposed Site Considerations

The Plan states a center should be located on a relatively flat, square site of approximately ten acres in a park like setting. It is desirable to co-locate a center with other public facilities, the highest priority being indoor and outdoor pools. A site should have good visibility and be served by public transportation. It should be located in a place where it can be most effective in generating and sustaining community identity.

3. Policies that Affect the Number and Location of Needed Centers

The Plan modifies the 1988 study which recommended one center (24,000 s.f.) for every 40,000 or 50,000 people. The 1997 Plan recommends that there be one center for every 30,000 people in the Recreation District. The Recreation Department modified this standard because the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends one center for every 22,000 people. The Department recognizes two county policies that justify a standard with a greater population base for Montgomery County. One policy requires the County to maximize the use of schools and other public facilities for community use.

The second policy encourages the County not to compete with private sector providers of recreation services.

The Plan notes the changing socio-economic makeup of the County may increase the number of citizens with limited access to private, profit making leisure service facilities. The Department cautions this change may test the full scale viability of this policy and practice and require more centers.

The Department believes the County must balance the policies supporting a larger service area against the role of community recreation centers to establish a stronger sense of community identity, which suggests a smaller service area. To achieve this benefit, the Plan states it is important that both the geographical area and population served by a community center not be too large. The Recreation Department recommends that 30,000 be the maximum population served.

C. Calculating how many centers the County needs

The County currently has 14 community centers (seven regional centers and seven neighborhood centers) which total 253,000 square feet. The Recreation Department calculates 17 new centers are needed using a matrix of service areas, population projections and existing centers. (See Appendix B for the matrix from the Plan.)

The Recreation Department assumes there will be 975,000 people in the Recreation District in 2015. The Department multiplies this population estimate by 0.8 (24,000 SF/30000 people) and calculates this population will need 780,000 square feet of community center space. The Department subtracts the existing and programmed space available in all centers and estimates the space deficiency will be 406,640 square feet. The Department divides this total by 24,000 SF to arrive at the recommendation for 17 new community centers.

D. The Development Schedule and Operating Budget Impact

The Plan proposes the County complete four centers (programmed in the Approved FY 97-02 Capital Improvements Program) and construct seven new centers over a 15 year period. Table 27 shows the proposed phasing and the 15 year estimated operating budget impact of opening seven new centers.

The Plan estimates the first of the seven planned centers would open in the fifth year of a fifteen year plan. The Department projects the net operating cost of each center at \$295,000 and forecasts the cumulative net operating costs will increase to \$2 million at the end of fifteen years. This forecast does not include debt service or inflation. The Recreation Department notes debt service would comprise 75% of future costs but does provide specific estimates for these costs.

TABLE 27. LONG RANGE PLAN OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (\$000)

Centers	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Year 14	Year 15
Damascus	Open										
Mid County				Open							
N. Bethesda					Open						
White Oak							Open				
N. Potomac							Open				
West County									Open		
Kensington											Open
Operating Budget Impact											
Utilities	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 27	\$ 54	\$ 81	\$ 81	\$ 135	\$ 135	\$ 162	\$ 162	\$ 189
Staff	171	171	171	342	513	513	855	855	1026	1026	1197
Other Oper.	38	38	38	76	114	114	190	190	228	228	266
Maint.	98	98	98	196	294	294	490	490	588	588	686
Offsetting Revs	-39	-39	-39	-78	-117	-117	-195	-195	-234	-234	-273
TOTAL	\$ 295	\$ 295	\$ 295	\$ 590	\$ 885	\$ 885	\$ 1,475	\$ 1,475	\$ 1,770	\$ 1,770	\$ 2,065

Source: OLO, Recreation Facility Development Plan, 1997.

Observations

The Recreation Facility Development Plan FY 97 to 2010 is a timely document because the County has opened or programmed most of the buildings called for in the 1988 study. The document makes a contribution to the strategic thinking about community centers because it provides information on the inventory of existing centers, a prototype building and long term recommendations.

Several assumptions and conclusions in the Plan merit further review. For example, the 1997 Plan recommendation that the County provide one center for every 30,000 people represents a departure from the 1988 study recommendation of one center for every 40,000 to 50,000 people. This recommendation deserves careful study not only because it doubles the total number of centers needed but also because OLO's analysis suggests the County operates very successful centers with service areas of 50,000 people or more. OLO is concerned the County not overbuild community center buildings, particularly when larger service areas produce busier centers with more efficient operations.

The Recreation Department recommendation that the County develop new centers based on the development rate of past centers also merits further study. The County typically stages development of new public facilities based on an assessment of need and capacity available in existing facilities. If the County Executive and County Council were to stage new centers based only on a past rate of development, the County might fail to maximize the use of its existing and programmed centers.

The projected operating budget impact in the Plan also needs further review. OLO questions projecting operating budget impacts while excluding debt service because debt service payments are paid from Recreation District Tax Revenues. A long range fiscal impact projection would help explain the cumulative effect of the four programmed and seven planned centers on the tax rate. It would be useful to estimate how much the Council would have to increase the Recreation tax rate to fund the programmed and planned centers.

Finally, OLO believes it is important to discuss the legal status of this plan and to understand how it will be used to guide capital programming decisions. The plan is similar to plans the Council has seen for regional service centers and libraries. All of these plans provide a useful look into the future, however, since the Council does not adopt these plans they have no legal standing as formal documents.

VI. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community centers are multipurpose buildings constructed and programmed by the Recreation Department. At a typical center, the Recreation Department offers classes, workshops, drop-in programs, supervised play, sports, open gym and crafts. Some centers have weight and exercise rooms and game areas. Many centers rent rooms for parties, meetings and weddings. The Recreation Department hopes community centers, by virtue of their location and character, contribute to the identity, cohesiveness and well being of the community.

This project examined the budget for the "Recreation and Community Services" program in the Approved FY 98 Operating Budget and reports on the operations of 13 of the County's 15 centers. This report:

- outlined the allocation of the \$3.9 million program budget,
- described the criteria the Department uses to allocate budget and program resources,
- presented performance data for community centers, and
- for six centers, reviewed how funds budgeted to other departmental teams supplement the operation of the community centers.

This chapter summarizes the findings and recommendations in the report. Part A summarizes OLO's findings and Part B presents recommendations.

A. FINDINGS

1. The County's community centers deliver a range of programs and activities that benefit children, youth, adults and seniors and strengthen the County's families and communities. As part of this study, OLO visited each community center. In practically every case, OLO observed friendly staff tirelessly and enthusiastically working to stage events, explain rules, assist with equipment and answer questions. OLO saw people exercising, competing, having fun, learning new skills, or simply "hanging out." In the midst of these activities, OLO witnessed countless examples of encouraging, teaching, admonishing, volunteering, giving, receiving and sharing. As one center director put it, community centers are about giving folks an opportunity to "rec-reate" and to "re-create" themselves.

In The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts and How They Get You Through the Day, Ray Oldenberg speaks eloquently of an informal public life and places civilized societies must have to nurture it. Oldenberg introduces the concept of a "third place," those places that are not work and not home where

people go for no particular purpose, save to associate. He contends third places are crucial to the quality of society because the nature of these places is to be inclusive and local, unlike many other places in our lives.

Oldenberg believes American communities have lost many of the benefits of third places as our zoning and land use patterns have created increasingly more private places, often at the expense of informal, public places. He contends we fail to appreciate the importance of third places, in part because their benefits are not a part of our everyday vocabulary and because the benefits run counter to the valued American traits of self reliance and privacy. Based on his study of third places in American history and other cultures, Oldenberg argues third places make many important contributions. Specifically, the informal interactions that occur in these community spaces serve:

- to unite the neighborhood because a universal service is provided,
- to allow everyone to know everyone or to know "how they add to and subtract from the general welfare,"
- to assimilate newcomers and introduce them to their predecessors,
- to sort people according to their affinities, or their potential usefulness in long term undertakings,
- to stage operations in a time of crisis,
- to create public characters who care about the community and know everything that is going on,
- to bring adults and young people together in a non-threatening environment,
- to provide fun and entertainment, and
- to grow political life and intellectual discussions to support a diverse community.

OLO observed the County's regional recreation centers and neighborhood centers make an important contribution to the County's collection of third places.

2. The Recreation Services and Community Centers Program is the largest of nine program budgets in the Recreation Department. Of a \$3.9 million budget, the County budgets approximately \$3.4 million to operate community centers. The Recreation Department's budget structure reflects the programs the Department established as part of an October 1996 internal reorganization. This reorganization envisioned each team, in cooperation with Recreation Services, would develop and market programs that could be customized to local community needs. The Department hoped the shift from a geographic to a programmatic focus would not only lead to high quality, marketable programs but would also eliminate inconsistencies that previously existed between geographic areas.

3. The two major funding sources for the Recreation Department are an ad valorem property tax assessed in the Recreation district and user fees charged for individual programs and activities. At the program budget level, the Department directs tax support to Recreation Services and Community Centers, Senior Adults, and the Teens, Adventure and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR) teams, in addition to administration, budget and fixed costs. Over 90% of these program budgets are funded with taxes. In contrast, tax support funds 30% to 40% of the Sports and Classes programs and less than 10% of the Aquatics and Camps and Playground (CAP) program budgets.

4. The administration of the Recreation Department's fee policy varies depending on the cost recovery requirements of a program. The department's fee policy allocates costs to one of three categories: direct operating costs, leadership costs and indirect costs. The policy also establishes four fee levels that progressively increase the amount and types of program costs retrieved through user fees.

Activities classified in the most restrictive fee level group (e.g. Classes and Adult Sports) must recover 119% of their costs through fee charges. The "total program cost" for programs with the highest cost recovery requirements includes direct operating costs, leadership costs and indirect costs. In effect, these activities must recover their own costs plus additional revenues to support other programs. Each class or program must meet the cost recovery ratio of 119%. The department offers financial assistance but only after a minimum number of fee paying participants have registered.

Community centers develop programs across all fee levels (A, B, C and D). When a center director sets fees for a community center program, he or she takes into account: the fee level of the activity, the approved operating budget for the center, the program cost, and the budgeted revenue target for the center. Unlike classes, where staff must satisfy cost recovery requirements for each activity, the center director must make sure all programs for the year do not exceed the annual approved budget and must also try to meet the budgeted revenue target for the center.

The center staff designs the program, determines the staffing level, and has access to community volunteers, businesses and in-kind contributions. Compared to classes, center staff have less restrictive cost recovery requirements and more flexibility in how they are met.

5. Community centers are jointly programmed by center staff and Recreation Department staff from the Classes, Senior Adults, Sports, Camps and Playgrounds and Teens and Therapeutic Recreation (TATR) teams. As part of its October 1996 reorganization, the Department has made a concerted effort to increase the programming of community centers. Center

directors program six types of activities: After school activities, Clubs, Community use and events (Rentals), Intramural sports, Instructional activities and Partnerships. Other Recreation Department staff program schools, park centers, and libraries in addition to community centers.

6. Recreation teams prefer to use community centers for their activities because the centers do not charge rent. However, staff must satisfy several pre-requisites before a center is actually programmed. Specifically, the center must:

- have adequate space with the necessary equipment,
- be easily accessible for the service population of the program,
- register the minimum number of paying participants necessary to achieve the required cost recovery ratio for the class or activity,
- be conveniently located for instructors and officials, and
- recruit volunteers (parents, high school students or others) from the community to sponsor, coach or assist with a program.

7. The County's inventory of community centers includes eight neighborhood centers and seven regional recreation centers.

Neighborhood centers are small, older buildings originally built for another purpose and later transferred to the Recreation Department for programming. Neighborhood centers have (on average) 8,400 net square feet and limited types of programming space. Only four of the eight centers have gyms and many of these are undersized. Plum Gar, the most limited neighborhood center, has a gym and one small meeting room.

The Recreation Department has built (or substantially renovated) seven regional recreation centers over the last 20 years. The three centers built in the late seventies (Bauer Drive, UpCounty and Longwood) are about 15,000 net square feet each. The centers built in the last ten years (Potomac, Leland, Long Branch and Germantown) range in size from 20,000 to 22,500 net square feet. All of these buildings have a gym, a weight room, game tables, and a social hall plus classrooms or meeting spaces. It costs \$5 million (on average) to build a new center, or \$6 million if land costs are included.

8. Neighborhood centers average 2,400 visits per month; however these visits are not distributed evenly across all centers. The Wheaton center generates 30% of all visits to neighborhood centers. Without Wheaton, the other neighborhood centers average 2,000 visits per month. The majority of visits to a neighborhood center are for community uses and self directed activities programmed by center staff. The most common programs offered by other Recreation teams are Classes (primarily at Wheaton) and Senior activities (primarily at Clara Barton and Ross Boddy.)

9. Regional recreation centers average 7,700 visits per month. Again, these visits are not distributed evenly across all centers. Longwood and UpCounty have a below average number of visits. Leland and Long Branch have an average number of visits and Potomac and Bauer Drive far exceed the average. Approximately 60% of the visits are for activities programmed by center staff and 40% are for programs developed by the other Recreation teams. The most popular center activities at the regional recreation centers are self-directed activities, community uses and Club Friday.

OLO collected detailed budget, socio-economic and program data for six case study centers. The case studies included:

- two neighborhood centers - Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton
- two older regional recreation centers - Bauer Drive and UpCounty
- two newer regional recreation centers - Potomac and Long Branch.

The budget data shows the County spends:

- \$187,000 to operate a neighborhood center,
- \$348,000 to operate an older regional recreation center, and
- \$440,000 to operate a newer regional recreation center.

The table summarizes OLO's operating budget and cost data for the six case study centers. The operating budget data combines approved budget data, annualized actual cost expenditures and annual debt service payments.

Centers	Operating Budget	Cost per Sq. Ft.	Cost per Visit
Rosemary Hills	\$147,850	\$15.80	\$6.70
Clara Barton	225,280	27.80	7.90
UpCounty	369,960	20.80	7.00
Bauer Drive	325,240	16.50	2.10
Long Branch	590,940	24.00	6.20
Potomac	675,460	26.40	4.20
Average		\$21.90	\$5.70

10. The data for the case study centers suggest there are two models for community center program operations. Under one model, the center generates most of its visits from center based programs with only a few Recreation team programming contributions. Rosemary Hills, the UpCounty and Long Branch represent this model. Generally, these centers have higher than average costs per square foot and higher than average costs per visit.

Under the second model, a similar core of center based programming is matched by a substantial amount of programming by other Recreation Department teams. Bauer Drive and Potomac represent this approach. Bauer Drive has lower than average costs per square foot and the lowest cost per visit among the case study centers. Potomac has a higher than average cost per square foot but a lower than average cost per visit.

OLO believes this data makes two important points. First, it demonstrates the contribution of programming by other Recreation teams to overall center activity levels for both neighborhood and community centers. Second, it raises the issue of whether the Recreation Department intends for its programming practices to produce significantly different programming offerings in centers that are generally similar in terms of age, condition and building features.

OLO also examined productivity and budget data for the case study centers. OLO found consistent productivity (measured in visits per hour) among two of the three case study pairs. The neighborhood centers (Rosemary Hills and Clara Barton) each averaged 9 visits per hour. The new community centers (Long Branch and Potomac) averaged 28 and 33 visits per hour respectively. In contrast to these two pairs, there was a variation in the productivity of the older regional centers (Bauer Drive and the UpCounty.) Bauer Drive with 38 visits per hour had two and one-half times as many visits per hour as the UpCounty center with 15 visits per hour.

OLO examined the relationship between productivity and three factors - facility size, socio-economic data and departmental programming practices - to gain more insight into center operations. OLO concluded:

- The smaller size, age and condition of the neighborhood centers explains the lower productivity of neighborhood centers compared to the regional recreation centers.
- Population and income data do not explain the low productivity of the UpCounty center because both Bauer Drive and Long Branch have similar socio-economic data but higher productivity levels.
- Programming by other Recreation Department makes a significant contribution to the activity levels at the busiest centers. In part, departmental programming practices explain the higher productivity at Bauer Drive and Potomac compared to the relative lower productivity at UpCounty and Long Branch.

The three regional centers currently programmed in the Approved FY 98 to 03 Capital Program, (East County, Fairland, Rosemary Hills) will significantly improve the County's inventory of regional recreation centers. When the County opens these three centers:

- **There will be a network of regional recreation centers that provides countywide coverage.**

When the County opens the Eastern Montgomery County center this summer, a countywide system of regional recreation buildings will be in place. The majority of county residents will live within four miles of a regional recreation center capable of supporting the full range community center and Recreation Department programs.

- **Service will improve from one center for every 100,000 people to one center for every 75,000 people.**

The seven regional recreation centers currently serve a population of 704,000 people or provide one center for every 100,000 people and are unevenly distributed throughout the County.

As of mid FY 98, there are no regional community recreation centers in the East County, one regional recreation center in Silver Spring, and two regional recreation centers each in the Western, Mid-County and UpCounty regions. After the County completes the centers in the Approved FY 98-03 Capital Program, there will be two centers in each region and a countywide average of one center for every 75,000 people.

- **Regional recreation centers could accommodate over 100,000 visits a month or twice as many visits as there are in 1997.**

The capacity that will come on line when the County opens three centers over the next two years could double the number of visitors to regional recreation centers. The Germantown center opened in January 1998. The East County center will open in July 1998. The Fairland center and renovated Rosemary Hills center are both scheduled to open in FY 2000. If these four centers are as productive as Bauer Drive and Potomac are today (13,500 visits monthly), they will accommodate 54,000 visits each month. This equals the number of people who presently visit the six existing centers and thus would double number of visits to regional recreation centers.

In failing to acknowledge the capacity of the existing and programmed centers, the Department's long range Facility Development Plan departs from the County's standard practice for staging other public

facilities. The Recreation Department's Long Range Plan recommends the County open four centers every six years based on the rationale the County should maintain the development rate of the past few years.

Typically, when the County Council programs new capital facilities, it bases this decision on not only a determination of need but also an assessment of the capacity available in existing and programmed facilities. For schools and roads in particular, the Council programs new facilities when it determines existing facilities are at or near capacity.

The Recreation Department's proposed development schedule is at odds with the County practice. If the County follows the development schedule proposed in the Long Range Plan, it risks building centers before they are actually needed or overbuilding the total number of centers.

The Recreation Department prepared the Plan to guide capital decisions the County Executive and County Council will make in the future, however, the Plan has no legal standing as a formal, adopted plan. The Recreation Department's plan is similar to strategic plans the Council has seen for regional service centers and libraries. All of these plans provide a useful look into the future, however, since the Council does not adopt these plans they have no legal standing as formal documents.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1

The Recreation Department should collect, compile and report performance data for the seven regional community centers for FY 98 and the first half of FY 99.

OLO's analysis of the October 1997 monthly visits provided some useful insights into the operations of community center operations. However, one month does not provide an adequate or reliable reporting period. OLO believes it is important to examine the pattern of visits to the regional recreation centers for a 12 to 18 month period or longer. This will provide a mechanism to measure changes in the use of existing center space as new centers come on line. It will provide a way to monitor the effect of the changes the Department has put in place to improve use of the centers and it will provide a longer time frame to portray the patterns of the individual centers.

OLO recommends the Department compile data for an 18 month period (July 1997 to December 1998) and brief Council on the results when the Council considers the Recommended FY 00 Operating Budget. OLO recommends the

Department report the total visits per month and the number and share of center versus Recreation Department visits.

Recommendation #2

The Recreation Department should propose a set of performance targets to manage its regional centers.

OLO recommends the Recreation Department define desirable performance characteristics to manage its regional recreation centers. OLO recommends the Department begin by setting targets for :

- the total number of monthly visits to a center,
- the desired mix of center and recreation program visits, and
- an appropriate cost per square foot or cost per visit.

Defining the optimal performance characteristics will help the Department monitor systematically the operations of existing and future centers. It will also help the Department identify below average performance patterns, determine the causes of these patterns and implement specific strategies to improve performance.

In OLO's opinion, the comparable performance levels of Bauer Drive Center and Potomac Center, two centers dissimilar in terms of building condition and socio-economic data, suggests one set of performance targets for all centers would be appropriate. If this is the case, OLO believes a review of the Department's programming practices and fee policies may identify changes that would increase the programming of underused centers.

To the extent the Department believes different targets are justified for centers of similar size, condition and features, the Department should explain why different standards are warranted. If the Department adopts two sets of operating characteristics, it would also want to address which set of performance targets the programmed and planned centers are expected to meet.

Recommendation #3

The Recreation Department should identify indicators for the County to monitor to determine when to program new regional recreation centers.

After the County opens three new regional centers in the next three years, the number of visitors to regional recreation centers could double. This increase in total visitors plus the capacity at the existing underused centers represents an important County recreation resource.

OLO believes the need and timing of future centers should depend, in part, on how quickly existing and programmed capacity is used. OLO recommends the Recreation Department propose service level indicators the County could monitor to determine the timing and location of new centers.

Recommendation #4

The criteria to locate future centers should address the constraints Recreation teams face when they program existing centers plus the characteristics of existing alternative providers in the service area.

OLO's analysis shows other Recreation teams make an important contribution to the programming of community centers. When the Recreation Department and the County plan new centers, the process should include community surveys and market studies to evaluate how the design and location will provide:

- adequate space and equipment,
- convenient access for participants - many of whom may not drive,
- convenient access for instructors, officials and volunteers,
- the minimum number of paying participants to make programs financially viable, and
- the community volunteers required to support program delivery.

Given the County's community use of public facility policy, OLO recommends the planning also examine the number, type and location of alternative providers in the service area (e.g. schools, libraries, regional service centers, and private community spaces). OLO believes this assessment will not only avoid overbuilding community centers but may also help customize the definition of the prototype center to a particular community.

Recommendation #5

The Office of Management and Budget and the Recreation Department should address how debt service for centers in the long range plan (excluding Damascus) impacts the tax rate. As part of this assessment, OMB and the Department should also review and update the operating budget impact (OBI) cost assumptions.

In the Long Range Plan, the Recreation Department states the cumulative operating budget impact of seven new centers would be \$2 million at the end of 15 years. However, this estimate does not include the proposed debt service payments for the planned centers. It also does not estimate how the increase will affect the Recreation district tax rate.

An analysis is needed so decisionmakers can evaluate the projected costs of the proposed plan. OLO recommends the Recreation Department and OMB brief the Council on this analysis during the Council's review of the Executive's Recommended FY 99 Operating Budget.

Recommendation #6

The Council should decide how it intends to use the Department's Long Range plan when it makes future capital programming decisions.

OLO believes the 1997 Long Range Plan is a timely document since the County has implemented most of the recommendations in the 1988 study. The 1997 Plan is similar to strategic plans the Council has seen for regional service centers and libraries. However, it departs from these plans in its ambitious capital program.

OLO is concerned that the 1997 Plan changes some of the key underlying assumptions in the 1988 study and that these changes have important capital and fiscal implications. The Council should decide if it intends to use the plan as a capital programming guide. If the Council decides to use the plan as a capital programming guide, the Council and Recreation Department should address:

- the basis for the Recreation District population estimate,
- the allocation of existing community center space,
- what to count as community center square footage of senior centers, and
- the appropriate service standard for regional recreation centers.

VII. AGENCY COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT REPORT

OLO circulated a draft of this report in February 1998 to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). The written comments received on the draft report are included in their entirety, beginning on the following page.

OLO appreciates the time taken by Executive staff to review and comment on the draft report. OLO looks forward to a continuing discussion of the issues raised as the Council reviews the report in the coming months.

OLO would like to clarify that the report does not recommend and did not mean to imply every regional center in the County should provide "a virtual duplication of services and programs." A significant part of the OLO report describes the variety of programs offered in community centers and OLO believes this variety is a strength of the community center program.

OLO does recommend that the Recreation Department hold all regional centers to a consistent set of performance standards. In contrast, the CAO's response suggests the Department intends to set center-by-center performance goals. OLO agrees with the CAO's statements that the number and variety of programs and customer satisfaction are important measures to track in addition to total visits. OLO also agrees that cost per visit may not be a reliable measure.

Finally, the CAO takes issue with OLO's recommendation that the Recreation Department identify indicators the County can use to determine when to program future regional recreation centers. OLO recommends the Recreation Department define ways to measure when the County's collection of regional centers will be operating over capacity. The CAO states that the underuse of existing centers should not preclude construction of new centers for underserved communities.

The underlying disagreement between the CAO and OLO on this issue is the target level of service the County should adopt for community centers. OLO supports the 1988 standard of one center for every 40,000 to 50,000 people. The CAO endorses the standard in the 1997 Long Range Plan of one center for every 30,000 people. At OLO's request, the Recreation Department has provided an excerpt from the 1995 National Recreation and Park Association Study cited in the CAO's comments. This excerpt follows the agency comments.



OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Douglas M. Duncan
County Executive

Bruce Romer
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

March 5, 1998

TO: Sue Richards, Program Evaluator
Office of Legislative Oversight

FROM: Bruce Romer, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: Response to Draft OLO Report 98-1 - A Budget and Performance Study of
Community Centers

OVERVIEW

We have had the opportunity to review the Budget and Performance Study of Community Centers. OLO once again has done a very good job of producing a thoughtful and thorough study. From an overall point of view, the study has reconfirmed, from an independent perspective, many of the operational issues that the Department of Recreation has identified and has been actively working on for some time within the community centers.

We are in agreement with most of the findings and recommendations. There are only two areas where we differ. We do not agree with the implication that there should be a virtual duplication of services and programs in all regional centers throughout the County. We believe that communities differ and what they expect and need from a community center may differ as well. Our experience has taught us that we need to recognize and address the unique diversity of our communities. Programs should be tailored to meet individual community needs wherever possible.

We also do not agree that maximizing utilization of all centers should be a prerequisite to the development of new centers in under served areas of the County. We concur that some centers fall short of maximum utilization and are working hard to address this issue. However, unserved communities should not be denied a center based on capacity needs elsewhere. These points are addressed more specifically under the recommendations.

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RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION # 1 The Recreation Department should collect, compile and report performance data for the seven regional community centers for FY 98 and the first half of FY 99.

We concur with this recommendation and will work on new processes to compile more useful user data. The Recreation Department has been working on the development of a "smart card" that will initially be piloted at four facilities within the next six months. This card will allow the Department to capture significant data about use when a magnetic strip on the card is "swiped" when entering the facility. It will also assist with improving customer service as well as address certain safety concerns.

We believe that the OLO "snap shot" taken of regional centers does not present a complete picture of the extensive use and value of these centers to their communities. Two examples may emphasize this point. The most recent use statistics gathered have been for the new Germantown Community Center. Recent figures for this center are substantially higher than the average reported for regional centers in the OLO Study. They also indicate that citizens are coming to the center for a wide variety of interests and programs. (See attached)

Another example is the extensive regular use of centers by community organizations and the many collaborative partnerships, which have been forged. A list is attached depicting these for each of the centers. It is particularly gratifying to see the number of Police, HHS and non-profit human service programs that are utilizing the centers to broaden the scope of community/neighborhood services throughout the County. This is an example of the "value" that the centers bring to their communities, which is important to recognize as we rely more and more on innovative collaborative partnerships to address community needs. It is important to note that these outside partners have also recognized the uniqueness of individual communities and have developed site specific programs.

RECOMMENDATION # 2 The Recreation Department should propose a set of performance targets to manage the regional centers.

The OLO Study recommends that the Department set performance targets for :
"the total number of monthly visits to a center, the desired mix of center and recreation program visits and the appropriate cost per square foot or cost per visit." It also recommends that *"one set of performance targets for all (regional) centers would be appropriate."*

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We agree that it is important to have clear goals and targets for what community centers should be achieving. There will be universal goals common to all centers. But there will also be goals tailored and targeted to the particular needs of the individual communities. The goals and performance targets for each center should be set with considerable community input and guidance and should be based on needs, interests and the physical capability and characteristics of each particular center. These goals and performance targets will be set within a resource context that addresses and insures service equity among centers.

The intent of the OLO recommendation may have been to assist the Department in finding methods to achieve maximum performance at centers and to maintain a balance of programming. Both are important goals for the Recreation Department. However, total visits and cost per visit may not be the best measures to determine if we are meeting these goals.

Data important to the Recreation staff include the *number* and *variety* of programs in centers, and how well these programs meet local community needs. The Department is very concerned that any policy or other barriers (even physical barriers where feasible) that restrict a full array of recreation services be removed. The current fee policy, for example, (as pointed out in the OLO Study) requires a level of cost retrieval for contract classes to operate. This has created problems in some centers where advertised classes do not fill to the capacity required by the policy and, therefore, are not conducted. The Department already has underway a review of the entire independent contractor process with the goal of creating more flexibility, allowing for a better balance of class offerings throughout the County.

While quantity (total visits) is an important factor, the quality of customer visits is equally or more important. Both must be taken into consideration in setting performance targets for centers. The Recreation Department believes strongly in the efficiency of center operations and is interested in working with OMB to establish meaningful measures in this regard. We believe, however, that cost per square foot may not be a reliable measure to compare either resource allocation or performance among centers. Cost factors can vary considerably with little or no relationship to center performance. For example, salaries and fringe benefits of a long tenured employee would increase the cost basis of one center substantially over a center staffed by a relatively new employee. The presence and contributions of volunteers, which varies from time to time and center to center, also significantly enhances the value but not the cost of centers.

We also believe that effectiveness is an important measure. The Recreation Department is revising and augmenting its customer feedback system by developing a direct interview process with center users and "neighborhood non-users" to obtain more meaningful data. These efforts will be utilized to assist in setting center by center performance goals and determining how effective the centers are in meeting customer expectations.

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RECOMMENDATION # 3 The Recreation department should identify indicators for the County to monitor to determine when to program regional recreation centers.

We disagree with the finding (p.72) which states *"If the County follows the development schedule proposed for the Long Range Plan, it risks building centers before they are actually needed or overbuilding the total number of centers."* This is based on the presumption that there is capacity in existing centers that could be utilized to reduce the need for additional centers.

The County Executive has indicated his support for both the standard established in the Long Range Plan for one prototype community recreation center (24,000 square feet) for every 30,000 population unit, and he has endorsed the criteria for sequencing the development of these centers. While he has established this as a goal, he purposefully did not establish a schedule with specific years for development. This will depend on the County's fiscal capability during each CIP cycle.

When the centers in the current CIP are completed, the County will still only have one center for every 75,000 population unit (as noted in the OLO Study). This is far below what is happening in most other areas of the Country, as reported by the National Recreation and Parks Association. According to the most recent (1995) NRPA National Study of Local Park and Recreation Facilities and Sites, *"For Parks and recreation department's serving populations under 2,500, only 33% maintain at least one recreation center. When the population size served increases to 25,000 to 49,999, 70% of the jurisdictions maintain between one and five recreation centers."* The study goes on to note that *"the median size of facilities planned to be constructed in the Northeast, West and South range from approximately 23,000 square feet to 32,000 square feet"*. The standard established for Montgomery County in the Long Range Plan is conservative in both size of facility and population served by this national comparison.

While there may be room for additional program capacity in some of the regional centers (for a wide variety of reasons), we believe this should have little or no bearing on the development of centers in unserved or under served communities. Residents from Damascus and Germantown have not been utilizing the Upper County Community Center in Emory Grove and capacity in this facility should not be used to deny them opportunities more proximate to their own community. It is important to examine why and when residents utilize community centers. Many visits are "walk to", particularly at the smaller, neighborhood centers and even larger facilities including Upper County and Ross Boddy. We believe the new East County Center may have more "walk to" visits than any of the other centers once completed. The standard of one facility for every 30,000 residents takes into account factors of both capacity and proximity. It is not dissimilar to the Library Department goal that no resident should have to drive more than two

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miles to reach a library, yet is probably much more conservative from a national comparison point of view.

The Recreation Department will continue to work to better identify and address capacity issues. However the limited capacity that exists at some times in some centers should not be used as a reason to limit the development of new centers in communities where there is need.

RECOMMENDATION # 4 The criteria to locate future centers should address the constraints Recreation teams face when they program existing centers plus the characteristics of the existing alternative providers in the service areas.

We concur with the OLO recommendation that the design and location of the center should take into account the programming and marketing requirements of recreation teams. These are factors that need to be (and for the most part are now) considered during the site selection process.

The reason OLO makes this recommendation relates to the problems that were noted with centers where location or center features have presented difficulties for recreation programming. Several of the existing community and neighborhood centers are older buildings not originally designed for recreation use but converted for this purpose. Where major reconstruction was completed and features developed similar to what is proposed in the Long Range Plan, the centers are doing well. (Potomac and Leland). Those where the conversion was less substantial are not able to produce the same results. (Ross Boddy, Clara Barton)

This is also true of the smaller neighborhood centers originally constructed by the old Community Development Department under a Federal grant. These small centers were designed for multipurpose use and converted to recreation space. Programming space is limited and the Recreation Department acknowledges in its plan that further study of these centers is required to determine how they may best meet the communities long range needs.

While we concur with the second part of this OLO recommendation, that alternative service providers be considered before siting and developing new recreation centers, there is a caution that must be considered. The simple presence of a service or facility in a region does not make it automatically available for public use. High schools and the Montgomery College campuses, for example, have a number of spaces that would appear to be a community use asset and prevent the need for duplication of facilities. However, the demands of the schools themselves allow for very little time for community use. Other services, such as the YMCA, require membership and have other use policies which limits their ability to respond completely to all public interests.

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RECOMMENDATION # 5 The Office of Management and Budget and the Recreation Department should address how debt service for the community centers in the Long Range Plan (excluding Damascus) will impact the Recreation tax rate. As part of this, OMB and the department should also review and update the operating budget impact (OBI) assumptions in the Long Range Plan.

We concur with this recommendation. OMB and the Department of Recreation will prepare the additional fiscal analysis requested.

RECOMMENDATION # 6 The Council should decide how it intends to use the (Recreation) Department's Long Range Plan when it makes future capital programming decisions.

The County Executive has indicated his interest in using the plan as a guide to developing future CIP's. It is one area of public facility and infrastructure needs which must compete against others for limited resources. The Recreation plan, like the Libraries plan, provides criteria and a reasoned approach to the sequencing of new centers and the refurbishing of older facilities. Every two years, the County Executive will examine conditions or events which may have an impact on the plan's recommendations and make his final judgement about what should be included in the six year CIP.

The Recreation staff has been working closely with the new community planning process established by the Planning Board. It is important that there be an integration of plans such as the Recreation Facilities Long Range Plan with the master plans as they are reviewed by the Planning Board. Staff are also looking at the current site selection process to see if changes may be needed to insure that appropriate sites for community centers will be available in the future.

ADDITIONAL POINTS ABOUT COMMUNITY CENTERS

OLO did a very good job of capturing the issues related to community center operations and development. However, they were not charged in their study, and did not report on, the current efforts that the Department is making in addressing many of these concerns. I thought it would be helpful to the Council to briefly list some of these. I will ask the Recreation Department to be prepared to discuss them more in depth with the Council when the OLO report is presented.

- **Reorganization.** For many years, the centers were managed by three separate Recreation Area offices. At times, this led to significant differences in programming and inconsistencies in levels of service. The Department reorganized to place all center operations under one team and has been able to make significant strides in addressing these inconsistencies. The Centers Team works with other Recreation teams (Seniors, Classes, Sports, etc.) to provide programs to meet identified community needs. We believe that communities should play a large role in defining what they want in the way of leisure services, within a policy context that allows for a reasonable equity of resources among the centers.

The Rosemary Hills Center is a good case in point. Neither the Recreation Department nor the community were happy with the level of programming at this center. The Community Centers Team made personnel changes and intensive efforts were initiated to address this concern. The results have been very promising, in spite of the limited space and features available at this facility.

The Centers Team is also working on developing a set of "core competencies", which are not just desirable but essential for successful staff leadership of any center. One of the Department's concerns has been the differential in center performance based on "who" the center director has been. The OLO report points out how critical this job is. The Recreation Department is looking for a more consistent, high level of achievement among all centers by identifying and training staff in the core competencies required to achieve success.

- **Advisory Committees.** Each center has a citizen advisory committee which is intended to provide input into community needs and desires. Some committees have been very active (perhaps even overactive) while others have been nearly dormant. The Recreation Department has planned and is beginning an initiative to better define the roles, structures, and authorities of these committees and will be setting a goal to have more consistent participation from center committees throughout the county.
- **Center Maintenance.** Another of the most critical issues facing the centers, which was not addressed in detail in the study, is maintenance. Fiscal limitations over the past decade have resulted in extended deferred maintenance and a very limited ability to replace fixtures, furniture, and flooring. The County Executive toured many of the centers during the summer and fall and became quite concerned with the physical condition of some of these facilities. He believes these centers are critical assets to our community and will focus on this maintenance concern in his FY 99 operating budget proposal. He will ask the Council's support in addressing this need.

Sue Richards
March 5, 1998
Page 8

- **Neighborhood Facilities.** The OLO Study points out the limited programming capacity of the smaller neighborhood centers. This is frustrating to the Recreation Department as well as its customers. The reason that some centers lack classes or sports leagues offered in other locations is often simply the lack of a gym or social hall space to conduct the program.

The Long Range Plan recommends that a feasibility study be completed for each of the small centers to determine how each might best suit the long term needs of the community. The options examined could include:

- potential for conversion to a full service regional center (or as close to one as possible) by adding a gymnasium, social hall and/or other features currently lacking;
 - potential for conversion to a senior center;
 - potential for conversion to a more focused recreation use, such as an arts center;
 - potential for conversion to a child care center or other HHS or government service use;
 - potential for conversion to use by a community based, non profit; and
 - leave as is.
- **Senior Centers.** The Long Range Plan indicates that programming for seniors is an integral and important part of community centers. Yet it also recognized that the centers may not be adequate to handle all of the needs of this growing population throughout the County. The plan stated that further study will be required to determine whether or not additional centers such as Holiday Park, devoted to almost exclusive use by seniors, will be needed in other parts of the County. The Recreation Department will add this study to their work program.

We appreciate the diligent work done by the Office of Legislative Oversight and the opportunity to comment on the draft. We look forward to working closely with the County Council to make our community recreation centers a model for the nation.

BR:lw
Attachments

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES - COMMUNITY CENTERS

Bauer Drive Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships:

A. Inter Agency/Departmental:

1. Park Police - Byrne Grant Program - Program being developed
2. Montgomery County Public Schools and Teen Team - activities and meetings, such as after prom night -as requested
3. Montgomery County Public Schools - Wood Middle School classes - daily use
4. Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless - use of weight/exercise facility -on going
5. Board of Elections - election year polling site- as requested during election year

B. Private Providers:

1. Girl Scouts - meetings and activities -1 to 2 x monthly
2. Narcotics Anonymous - meetings- 2 x monthly
3. Wheaton Majorettes - practice - Daily use
4. Table Tennis Club - 2-x monthly
5. Badminton Club -2-x monthly
6. Community based - craft club - 1 x weekly
7. Single Parents Raising Children - 1 - every 3 months
8. Fifth Chapter - 1 x monthly

II. Coordination and Facilitation:

A. Inter- Agency/Departmental:

1. Health and Human Services - Widowed Persons- 1 x monthly
2. Health and Human Services - meetings -as requested
3. Office of Human Resources - meetings -as requested
4. Montgomery County Police - meetings -2 x yearly
5. Park Police - meetings - 2 x yearly
6. Fire Chiefs - meetings - 1 x monthly
7. National Council of Negro Women - meetings - 1 x monthly

B. Private Providers:

1. Montgomery County Retired Teachers Association - choral rehearsal -1 x monthly
2. National Association of Retired Federal Employees - meetings - 1 x monthly
3. American Antique Association - meetings- 1 x monthly
4. Rock Creek Civic Association - meetings -1 x monthly
5. Community Based - bible study -2 x monthly
6. Manor Towne HOA - meetings - 1 x monthly
7. SPARKS - meeting - 1 x monthly
8. Democratic League - meeting - 1 x monthly

Clara Barton Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Bethesda Youth Services - classes - meet as necessary
2. Board of elections - election year polling site
3. Montgomery County Public Schools - Walt Whitman Wrestling - 1 x yearly

Clara Barton Center Continued

B. Private Providers:

1. Scouts - meetings and activities - weekly
2. Clara Barton Center for Children - meetings and recreation- daily and as requested

II. Coordination and Facilitation:

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Cabin John Citizens Association - meetings -monthly
2. Seven Locks HOA - meetings - monthly
3. Clean up the Potomac- meetings - monthly
4. Montgomery County Democrats - meetings - 2 x yearly
5. Lacrosse Officials - meetings -seasonal
6. National Tai Chi Organization - meeting - 2 x yearly
7. Orphan Foundation - meeting - 2 x yearly
8. The Barker Foundation (adoption agency) - meeting - 2 x yearly
9. Canoe Cruisers - meeting - 1 x monthly
10. National Capital Velo Club - meeting - 1 x monthly
11. Potomac Peddlers - meeting - 1 x monthly
12. Older Women's League - meetings - as requested
13. Ismaili Cultural Center - meetings - quarterly
14. New Beginnings - meetings - 2 x yearly
15. St Andrews - meetings - 2 x yearly
16. St. Bartholomew's - meetings - 2 x yearly
17. Adat Shalom Congregation - meetings - 1 x monthly
18. National Sikh Center - meetings - 2 x yearly
19. Folklore society of Greater Washington - meetings - 4 x yearly
20. MacArthur Park HOA - meetings - every other month
21. Maryland State Highway Administration - meetings - as requested
22. National Park Service - meetings - as requested
23. Bethesda Food Coop - meetings - monthly

Good Hope Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Montgomery County Police - Pals program - 6 x weekly

B. Private Providers:

None

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Oak Springs HOA - meetings - 1 x monthly
2. Good Hope Church - recreation - 2 x weekly

Leland Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

None

III. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Social Services - meetings - as requested

B. Private Providers:

1. Town of Chevy Chase - meetings - 4 to 5 x monthly

Long Branch Community Center

I Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Crittendon Services - sneakers program for girls - 1 x weekly and seasonal
2. Special Olympic Partners - meetings and activities - 1 x weekly
3. Park Police - Byrne grant program - 1 x weekly
4. Long Branch Neighborhood Initiatives - 1 x monthly
5. Health and Human Services - classes - 3 x weekly

B. Private Providers:

1. Community based Hip-Hop Club - teen recreation - 1 x weekly
2. Washington Chess Federation - games - 1 x weekly
3. Helping Hands - food distribution - 1 x yearly

IV. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter Agency/Departmental:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools - meetings - 1 x monthly
2. Montgomery County Police - meetings - 1 x quarterly
3. Health and Human Services - WIC voucher distribution - 1 x monthly
4. Montgomery County Public Schools - home study - 2 z weekly
5. Montgomery County Public schools - ESOL instruction - 4 x weekly

C. Private Providers:

1. Alcoholic Anonymous - Hispanic chapter - 1 x monthly
2. Panamanian Dance Group - recreation - 1 x weekly
3. Cajun Gumbo Groupies - recreation - 1 x weekly
4. Between the Creeks HOA - meeting - 1 x monthly

Longwood Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Montgomery County Public Schools – Sherwood H.S. - meetings and after prom activities – as requested

B. Private Providers:

1. Sandy Spring Museum – activities - 2 x annually
2. St. Peter's School – practice - seasonal
3. Olney Boys and girls club – practices and meetings - as requested
4. Olney Mom's Club – playgroup - 1 x weekly
5. Conway – play group - 1 x weekly.
6. Daycare providers – play group - 1 x weekly
7. Scouts – meetings and activities - as requested
8. Explorers Group – community service group - as requested
9. Mellwood Youth Program – rehab group – recreation - as requested
10. Sandy Spring Friends School – recreation - as requested
11. Olney Kiwanis – toys for tots - seasonal
12. Chamber of Commerce – community night- 1 x yearly

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Health and Human Services – meetings - as requested
13. Montgomery County Public Schools – Belmont El. – rehearsals - as requested

B. Private Providers:

1. Greater Olney Civic Association – meetings - 1 x monthly
2. Toastmaster – meetings - 2 x monthly
3. Toastmaster – meetings - 2 x monthly
4. Knights of Columbus – meeting - 1 x yearly

Potomac Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Karma Academy – drug rehabilitation - drop -in

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Juvenile Diabetes Foundation – support group - 1 x monthly
2. Lymphoma Foundation – support group - 1 x every other month
3. Alcoholic Anonymous – meetings - 1 x weekly
4. Scouts – meetings and activities - every other week
5. Falls Reach HOA – meeting - every other month
6. Tally Ho Toastmasters – public speaking - 1 x monthly
7. Fallsmeade HOA – meeting - every other month
8. Potomac Rotary - 1 x monthly
9. Cultural Study Group – educational - 1 x monthly
10. Advocates for Long Term Care – support group - 1 x monthly

Potomac Community Center Continued

11. Tara HOA - meetings - 4 x yearly
12. Eldwick HOA - meetings - 4 x yearly
13. Normandy Falls HOA - meetings - 4 x yearly

Rosemary Hills Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Park Police, Prudential Health Care and WPGC Radio - health fair and social - 1 x activity
2. Montgomery County Police, Park Police and Silver Spring Regional Services Center - National Night Out - 1 x yearly
3. Girl Scouts and MNCPPC - grounds beautification - 1 x activity
4. Montgomery County Public Libraries - bookmobile - 1 x weekly
5. Bethesda Youth Services - counseling meeting rooms - as requested
6. Bethesda Youth Services Horizons - leadership training - 2 x monthly
7. Florence Crittendon - Sneakers - activities - 1 x weekly
8. State grant and RSC Team - activities - 5 classes total
9. Kennedy Institute, Montgomery County Arts Council and MCRD Therapeutic Team - 1 x weekly
10. Montgomery County Community Partnership - classes - 1 x weekly

B. Private Providers:

1. Mom's Club of Silver Spring - playgroup - 1 x monthly
2. Square Dance club - for seniors - 1 x monthly
3. Pilgrim Baptist Church - exercise and fellowship - 1 x weekly
4. Rock Creek Foundation - activities for disabled - 1 x weekly
5. Helping Hands - food distribution - 1 x yearly

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Bethesda Youth Services - counseling meeting rooms - as requested

B. Private Providers:

1. Trout Club of America

Ross Boddy Community Center

I. Collaborative Programs

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Housing Opportunities Commission - programs - 2 x weekly
2. HOC - G.U.I.D.E. - programs - as requested

B. Private Providers:

1. Montgomery General Hospital - health screenings - 1 x monthly
2. Montgomery general Hospital - aerobics classes - 1 x weekly
3. Howard County Mentoring Group - mentoring - 1 x weekly
4. Scouts - meetings and activities - weekly

· Ross Boddy Community Center Continued

5. Community based tutoring - 1 x weekly

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Sandy Spring Task Force - meetings - 2 x monthly
2. Volunteer Fire Fighters - meetings - 1 x monthly

B. Private Providers:

1. Wesleyan church - meetings - 1 x weekly
2. Church of Philadelphia - meetings - 1 x weekly

Scotland Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Montgomery County Police - karate classes, tickets to sporting events - weekly
2. Montgomery County Public Schools - Bells, Mill, Cabin John Middle and Churchill High School - parenting classes and tutoring, computer equipment donations - as needed.
3. Florence Crittendon Services - Sneakers - 1 x weekly
4. Bethesda youth Services - classes, field trips and workshops - as programmed
5. Health and Human Services - summer scholarships for children - seasonal

B. Private Providers:

1. Suburban Hospital - maintenance services, equipment and financial support - daily
2. Whetstone Management Co, - scholarships for youth, recreation programs and other support to the community - as needed.
3. Scotland AME Zion church - programs and financial support - as needed
4. Scotland civic Association - plan and conduct special events - monthly
5. St. Marks Church - provide youth scholarships - as needed

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Scotland Development Board - meetings - monthly

Wheaton Community Center

I. Collaborative Partnerships

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental:

1. Health and Human Services - WIC voucher distribution - 1 x monthly

B. Private Providers:

1. Helping Hands Food distribution - 1 x yearly

II. Coordination and Facilitation

A. Inter-Agency/Departmental

None

B. Private Providers:

1. Neighborhood Watch - meetings - BI - monthly
2. Christian L.I.F.E. -home school - 1 x monthly

Germantown Community Center

Monthly Status Report - January 1998

Total Number of Participant Visits

Rentals, Meetings and Events:

Grand Opening	1,275
(3-Day Weekend)	
1/15 - Jaycees	16
1/20 - Home-school Group	20
1/20 - Camp Retreat	12
1/23 - Rec. Retreat	10
1/28 - Nationsbank	180
<u>1/30 - Christian Life Ctr.</u>	<u>75</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,588</u>

Sport and Drop-in Programs:

Kingsview MS (Classes)	540
Germantown ES (Spec. Ed)	30
MCRD Basketball (Game)	5,212
MCRD Basketball (Practice)	288
Drop-in Adult Basketball (Evening)	306
Daily Drop-in	925
(Basketball & Game Room)	
Exercise Room	810
<u>Billiards</u>	<u>355</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>8,466</u>

Classes:

Ballroom Dance	24
Batik	27
Bridge	33
Clock Repair	42
Watercolor	18
Dog Help	18
Travel	08
Gymnastics	52
Aerobics	35
Step Aerobics	44
Karate (Adult)	48
Karate (Youth)	40
Kid's Music	44
Nursery Rhymes	48
Oil Painting	16
Pastels	27
Family Albums	04
Kaleidoscope (TR)	21
Aerobics (TR)	21
<u>Wee Wanna Be</u>	<u>156</u>
<u>Total Participants</u>	<u>726</u>

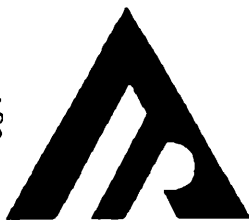
Senior Programs:

Walk-ins	173
Tai Chi	25
Exercise	38
Chair Exercise	62
Billiards	16
Art Appreciation	03
Genealogy	9
<u>Lunch</u>	<u>108</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>434</u>

Total Number of Participant Visits: 11,214

Total Number of Registrants:

Classes	217
Exercise Room	213
Gymnasium	705
<u>Senior Programs</u>	<u>71</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>1,206</u>



A Project of the
National Recreation and Park Association
and the American Academy for
Park and Recreation Administration

Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines

James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP and James R. Hall, CLP



SIZE AND COST OF RECREATION CENTERS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The size and cost of recreation centers and other recreational facilities was analyzed in relation to the population sizes served. Population sizes affect both demand for facilities and funding resources available for facilities. Note that the information is representative of population segments throughout the country and not by region.

Number of Recreation Centers Operated by Public Park and Recreation Departments

The total number of recreation centers increases directly with the size of the population served. For P&RDs serving populations under 2,500, only 33 percent maintain at least one recreation center. When the population size served increases to 25,000 to 49,999 people, 70 percent of jurisdictions maintain between one and five recreation centers. A more detailed listing of the number of recreation centers per population segments served is provided in the chart below.

Table 160					
NUMBER OF RECREATION CENTERS					
TOTAL NUMBER OF RECREATION CENTERS	UNDER 25,000	2,500-4,999	POPULATION 5,000-9,999	10,000-24,999	25,000-49,999
0	66.70%	34.60%	38.80%	46.10%	25.80%
1-2	33.3	61.5	61.2	46.1	50
3-5	0	3.9	0	7.8	20.8
6-10	0	0	0	0	2.5
11-15	0	0	0	0	0.9
16-20	0	0	0	0	0
21 or more	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
TOTAL NUMBER OF RECREATION CENTERS	50,000 - 99,999	100,000 - 249,999	POPULATION 250,000 - 250,000	500,000 - 999,999	Over 1,000,000
0	28.80%	23.90%	23.50%	33.30%	20.00%
1-2	33.3	28.3	23.5	6.7	0
3-5	25.8	23.90	5.9	0	0
6-10	7.5	10.9	17.6	0	40
11-15	4.6	6.5	11.8	0	0
16-20	0	6.5	11.8	20	20
21 or more	0	0	5.9	40	20
TOTAL	100	100	100	100	100
Source: PKF Consulting					

Plans For New Recreation Center Facility

The greatest number of new recreation facilities planned for construction within the next five years will be in the South, with approximately 27 percent of respondents stating they obtained approval for construction. The Northeast will experience the least number of new recreation centers to be constructed over the next five years, with only seven percent of respondents approved for recreation center construction. The North Central and West will experience modest growths in the number of new facilities to be erected, with approval rates of 12 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Similar to the most recent recreation centers constructed, the median square footage for facilities in the North Central will be the largest among the four regions, with a median square footage of approximately 42,000 square feet. The median area of facilities planned to be constructed in the Northeast, West, and South range from approximately 23,000 square feet to 32,000 square feet.

The most common facilities to be included in the new recreation centers, include multi-purpose courts, meeting rooms, game rooms, weight rooms, fitness rooms, and food and beverage facilities. The South and West produce the greatest percentage of responses to these facilities, while the percentage of responses by the Northeast and North Central, to the same facilities, is markedly lower. A large percentage in the four regions, over 73 percent, did not provide an answer, indicating that the type of facilities to be installed is yet to be determined or since new construction has yet to occur, answers could not be provided.

Table 166

FACILITIES TO BE INCLUDED IN NEW RECREATION CENTER PLANS

FACILITIES	NORTHEAST	NORTH CENTRAL	SOUTH	WEST
Auditorium	3.90%	1.90%	8.90%	3.80%
Mult-Purpose Courts	1.00	7.80	18.40	11.30
Swimming Pool	1.00	5.80	7.60	4.70
Meeting Rooms	6.90	8.40	22.20	15.10
Game Room	3.90	6.50	19.60	8.50
Weight Room	1.00	7.10	13.90	5.70
Fitness Room	2.00	9.70	17.70	10.40
Food & Beverage Facility	5.90	7.80	19.00	8.50
Racquetball Courts	0.00	3.20	8.20	3.80
Other 1.00	1.00	4.50	3.20	7.50
No Answer	93.10	87.70	73.40	82.10

Source: PKF Consulting

Montgomery County
REGIONAL SERVICES CENTERS FACILITIES STRATEGIC PLAN

SECTION III
STRATEGIC PLAN

3.0 STRATEGIC PLAN

This section will address in detail, the proposed 20-year strategic plan presented in the Executive Summary of this report. In this section, we will:

- 1) evaluate the existing regions based on the planning criteria and goals developed in Section II,
- 2) as a result of this analysis, propose to divide the current five RSC service regions into a total of nine over the long-term, and
- 3) document a facilities development and implementation plan necessary to provide appropriate service delivery levels under the proposed nine-region scenario.

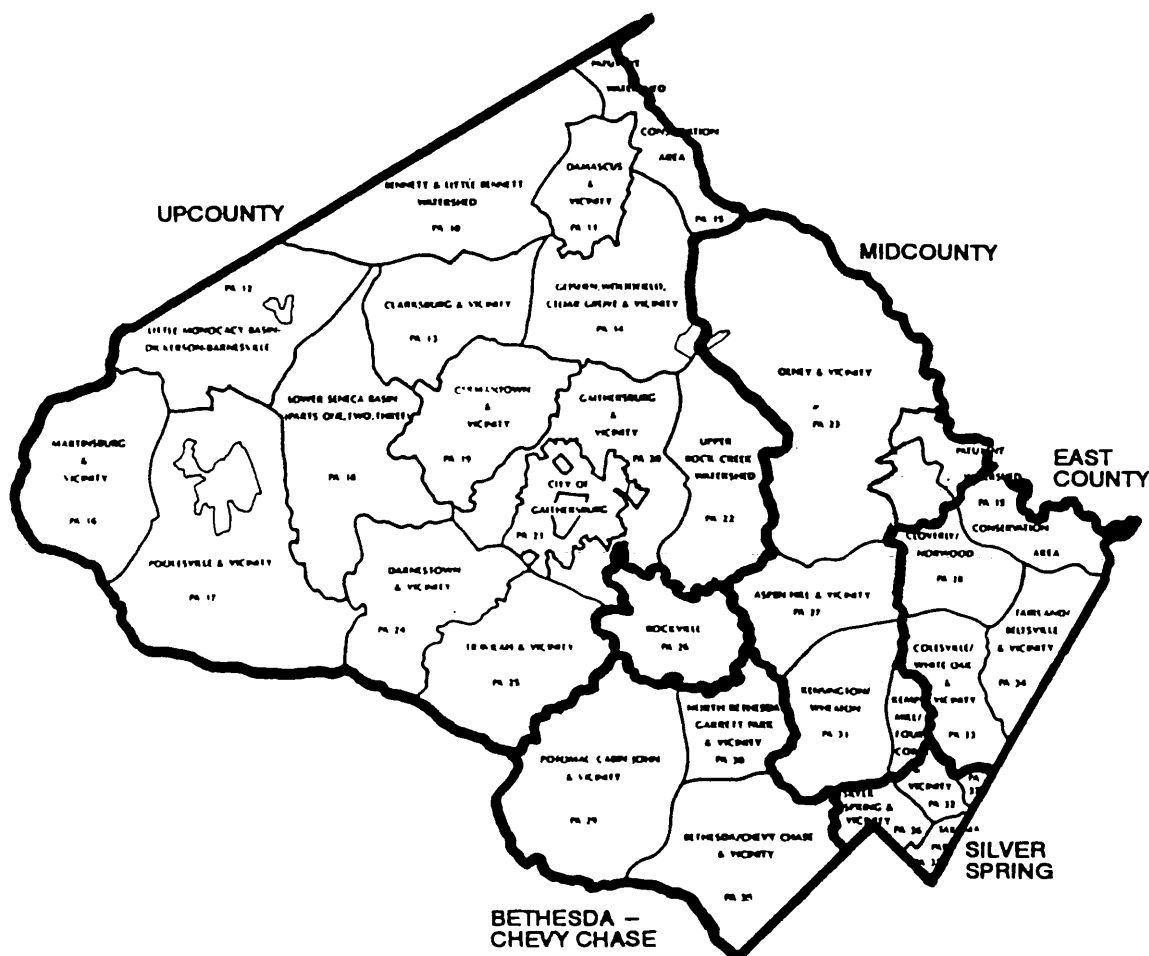
Exhibit 3.1
Existing RSC Service Regions

3.1 DETERMINATION OF SERVICE REGIONS

3.1.1 Background

Are the existing RSC service regions appropriate given recent and forecasted development within the County?

Displayed in Exhibit 3.1 are the existing five RSC service regions within Montgomery County: East County, Midcounty, Silver Spring, Bethesda-Chevy Chase, and Upcounty. Rockville, the county seat, and an established municipality will remain outside of the RSCs' service boundaries. As documented in Section I, these regions are quite diverse in terms of population, geographic size, and demographics.



RECREATION DEPARTMENT
COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITIES LONG RANGE PLAN

REGION	SERVICE AREA	PLANNING AREA	POP 2000	POP 2010	POP 2015	SPACE NEEDS IN 2015 (Sq. Ft.)	EXISTING APPROVED COMMUNITY & Neighborhood Centers	EXISTING COUNTY SPACE (Sq. Ft.)	SPACE DEFICIENCY (Sq. Ft.) IN 2015	NEW CENTERS NEEDED	NEW CENTERS PROPOSED
Upcounty	Damascus/Clarksburg	10,11,13,14	35,095	47,514	63,621	50,897		-	50,897	2.1	Damascus
Mid County	Aspen Hill Wheaton/Kensington	27 31	62,077 73,110	63,577 72,463	61,494 78,634	49,195 62,907	Wheaton	12,633	49,195 50,274	2.0 2.1	Mid County Kensington
Bethesda	N. Beth/Garrett Park Bethesda	30 35	41,881 89,778	46,459 89,217	56,675 95,730	45,340 76,584	LELAND Clara Barton	- 19,289 6,750	45,340 50,545	1.9 2.1	N. Bethesda
East	White Oak Kemp Mill/Four Corners Fairland Cloverly	33 32 28,34	31,849 33,155 54,898	32,387 32,560 55,572	31,932 34,009 58,071	25,546 27,207 46,457	Good Hope EAST COUNTY FAIRLAND	- - 5,534 23,500 23,500	25,546 27,207 (6,077)	1.1 1.1 -0.3	White Oak/ Kemp Mill
N. Potomac	N. Potomac/Travilah Darnestown	25 24	21,576 12,776	22,990 12,452	28,687 13,522	22,950 10,818		- -	22,950 10,818	1.0 0.5	N. Potomac
G'town/West	Poolesville Germantown	12,16,17,18 19	7,592 73,653	7,434 80,533	7,877 86,087	6,302 68,870	GERMANTOWN Plum Gar	- 23,500 8,213	6,302 37,157	0.3 1.5	W. County
Gaith/Rville*	Gaithersburg Rockville	20,21 26	122,342 48,036	134,211 49,098	140,849 48,871	112,679 39,097	UPCOUNTY BAUER	15,281 16,420	NA NA	NA NA	
Olney	Rock Creek/Muncaster	22,23	47,261	49,640	52,196	41,757	LONGWOOD Ross Boddy	15,361 12,844	13,552	0.6	
Potomac	Potomac	29	45,514	44,894	48,753	39,002	POTOMAC Scotland	21,300 5,132	12,570	0.5	
Silver Spring	Takoma Park Sil Spr, Rosemary Hills	37 36	24,211 36,156	23,871 43,742	23,979 43,974	19,183 35,179	LONG BRANCH ROSEMARY HILLS	20,500 23,500	(1,317) 11,679	-0.1 0.5	
	TOTALS		860,960	908,614	974,961	779,969		253,257	406,637	17	

Population statistics are based on a Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission study dated April 27, 1994.

*Gaithersburg and Rockville are municipalities that provide additional recreational facilities for residents. Therefore, determining the space deficiency is not applicable.

