

MEMORANDUM

February 8, 2023

TO: Planning, Housing, and Parks (PH) Committee

FROM: Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update

PURPOSE: Receive a briefing on the Plan update

Those expected for this briefing:

Mike Riley, Director, Parks Department

Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director, Parks Department

Darren Flusche, Division Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship, Parks Department

Hyojung Garland, Supervisor, Park Planning and Stewardship, Parks Department

Today the Planning, Housing, and Parks (PH) Committee will be briefed on the 2022 update to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan.

The 2022 PROS Plan serves as the planning policy for parks in Montgomery County to the year 2027 and beyond. It assesses needs and recommends strategies for the delivery of park and recreation facilities, protection of natural resource areas, and preservation of historic/cultural areas and agricultural lands. It is also required by the State of Maryland for funding through Program Open Space.

The greatest challenge for the park and recreation system in Montgomery County is to provide facilities for a growing population where there is competition for land, while continuing to steward sensitive environmental and cultural resources. The 2017 PROS Plan called for the “right park” in the “right place” to serve the residents of Montgomery County. The 2022 update furthers this idea in conjunction with the principles set forth in Thrive Montgomery 2050. This update emphasizes the importance of creating great places with equitable access to opportunities as a means to producing strong communities. Key themes found throughout the Plan include:

- Creating parks that serve multiple functions rather than a single purpose;

- Delivering urban parks using an infill and redevelopment approach to add and enhance park sites and facilities in densely populated centers of activity;
- Focusing on the specific needs and desires of an increasingly diverse population and of historically marginally and underserved communities and groups;
- Serving the distinct needs of senior citizens, teenagers, and young adults of working age;
- Making outdoor healthy physical activity irresistible;
- Staying abreast of trends in – and leading the way in developing – new park amenities, innovative management tools, and engaging programs;
- Creating places that foster community, civic engagement, and social cohesion;
- Using parks to tell the story of Montgomery County’s history, culture, and natural resources;
- Providing sustainable and appropriate access for people to our best natural areas; and,
- Maintaining our commitment to environmental stewardship and developing strategies to adapt to and mitigate climate change.

A copy of the 2022 PROS Plan can be found at: https://montgomeryparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022_Montgomery-County-PROS_PLAN_FINAL-1.pdf