



MCPB 4/12/12

Item No. 5

**Memorandum**

**DATE:** April 4, 2012

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *JE Hench for Mary Bradford*  
 Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks for Administration

**FROM:** John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *JE Hench*  
 Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning *Brooke Farquhar*

**SUBJECT:** Transmittal of 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan to Maryland Department of Planning and Department of Natural Resources as a Staff Draft

**Staff Recommendations**

- Approve transmittal of the 2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan to Maryland Department of Planning and Department of Natural Resources as a Staff Draft
- Set public hearing date of May 17, 2012

**OVERVIEW AND SCOPE OF PLAN**

The Work Program for the 2012 PROS Plan was presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board on February 24, 2011 (see Attachment A). The document is an update of the 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan/PROS Plan and is based on new guidelines developed by the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The PROS Plan serves as the County's Local Land Preservation and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

**PLAN PURPOSES**

The purposes of the 2012 PROS Plan are:

- To provide guidance regarding recreation facility needs in the County for the next 10 years
- To recommend priorities for important natural and historic areas in the County that need to be preserved and interpreted

- To provide the basis for park and recreation recommendations in area and park master plans and sector plans
- To guide priorities for park acquisition and development
- To review policy and background information regarding local agricultural land preservation programs

In order to keep pace with changing need patterns, updates to the Plan have been required by the State approximately every six years to maintain eligibility for Program Open Space Funding. The *PROS Plan* supports the park and recreation goals and objectives contained in the County's *1993 General Plan Refinement – Goals and Objectives*.

The 2012 update of the *PROS Plan* serves as the primary planning policy document for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2022. It should be noted that, per State guidance, the 2005 *PROS Plan* served as the primary policy document to the year 2020. The the 2005 Plan was a 15-year plan whereas the current update is a 10-year plan.

The 2012 update compares facility needs and resource conservation priorities for different areas of the County so that decision makers have the information necessary to establish priorities in an era of high competition for limited resources. The greatest challenge for park and recreation planning is to balance facilities needed for the active lifestyles of a growing population with the stewardship of our park system's sensitive environmental and cultural resources, in a county where there is little undeveloped land remaining.

Plan chapters include:

1. Project Overview
2. Background, Existing Policies and New Guidelines for Urban Parks
3. Recreation and Parks
4. Natural Resource Conservation
5. Historic and Cultural Resources Preservation
6. Agricultural Land Preservation
7. Appendices

The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation (Vision 2030)*, completed in June 2011, has guided staff's efforts to draft the current update of the *PROS Plan*. Based on broad consensus among the public, staff, and county leadership, *Vision 2030* includes strategies for maintaining and improving the overall levels of park and recreation service across the County, as well as specific recommendations for effective and efficient delivery of the park and recreation facilities that County residents value the most. Building on the findings of *Vision 2030*, the *2012 PROS Plan* includes, for the first time, service delivery strategies for several priority facilities and resources. The strategies will guide the Department of Parks in locating the right park and recreation facilities in the right places, and to ultimately help to ensure that the parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping the Montgomery County's high quality of life.

## **PLAN OUTREACH**

A great deal of the input for the *2012 PROS Plan* is based on outreach from *Vision 2030*, including the statistically valid mail survey, public meetings, summits, and focus groups. Additional outreach included:

- Providing a Web page and e-mail access with opportunity for input
- Obtaining input from Recreation and Park Advisory Boards
- Holding Public Meetings on Draft Service Delivery Proposals. (See Attachment 2 for summary of meeting comments)

## **PLAN SCHEDULE**

The following schedule was developed to meet the July 2012 State deadline for submission of final plans.

- Draft Plan submittal to MDP/DNR - April 2012
- Public Hearing- May 17, 2012
- Planning Board Worksessions- June 2012
- Plan Adoption- June or July 2012
- Final Plan submittal to MDP/DNR- July 2012

Staff will continue to refine Plan Elements including facility inventories and capacity and will add an Executive Summary and Glossary prior to Final Plan approval.

## **PLAN HIGHLIGHTS**

This *PROS Plan* endorses and builds on many of the recommendations of *Vision 2030*. The *Vision 2030* Inventory and Level of Service Analysis showed that Montgomery County has an extensive system of high quality parks and associated recreation programs. *Vision 2030* recommends that to maintain this high level of quality into the future, the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation have the following broad challenges:

- Maintain and strengthen the current parks and recreation system
- Prioritize tax resources on core services
- Ensure operational sustainability
- Balance new construction with maintenance and repair of existing facilities
- Respond to emerging trends and changing priorities
- Strengthen stewardship of natural and historical resources
- Continue to “green” the park system – including facilities, equipment, and operational programs
- Continue the current focus on customer service and public safety

- Collaborate to efficiently deliver quality services
- Plan for future growth
- Respond to changing demographics

The main challenge of the *PROS Plan* is to maintain the high level of park and recreation service in the County by putting the “right parks” in the “right places.” Not surprisingly, *Vision 2030* confirmed that the highest needs are and will continue to be in areas of highest population density, mainly along the I-270 corridor and inside the Beltway. The 2011 Annual Growth Policy recommends concentrating new development in these areas for Smart Growth reasons including:

*“...with little room left to grow, development will need to occur in areas where densities can be higher, on sites closer to transit, reusing underdeveloped sites, or redeveloping strip malls and surface parking lots. Development in these areas will reduce vehicle trips and make the best use of our infrastructure investments.”*

As the County becomes more urban, acquiring park sites in growth areas will be increasingly difficult because of competition with other land uses. However, park and recreation goals should support Smart Growth by locating facilities that are accessible by walking and transit, as much as possible. Providing sufficient parks and open space will depend heavily on renovation and repurposing of existing lands and facilities, while strategically acquiring new land. *Vision 2030* recommends balancing renovation of the existing aging facilities with expenditures for new construction, co-location of facilities of two or more public agencies where appropriate, repurposing of existing underutilized facilities, where supported by detailed analysis, and strengthening marketing efforts in order to increase revenue, awareness, and use. The service delivery strategies contained in this *PROS Plan* build upon these recommendations from *Vision 2030*.

## **WHAT'S NEW ABOUT PROS?**

This *PROS Plan* for the first time looks not only at projecting estimated needs and facilities as required by the State, but also attempts to look beyond needs projection to implementation. It also attempts, by building on the *Vision 2030* process, to better align future capital expenditures with the public's priorities for facilities and services. Finally, the *PROS Plan* reaffirms the Department of Parks' critical responsibility for stewarding and interpreting natural and cultural resources throughout M-NCPPC's park system in Montgomery County.

The following new aspects of the *PROS Plan* are intended to help staff and decision makers address park, recreation and stewardship needs in an era of diminishing resources and increasing urbanization in Montgomery County (see Chapter 1 for detailed descriptions):

- Create service delivery strategies (see Chapters 1 and 3)
- Renovate and repurpose existing parkland and facilities
- Implement new guidelines for urban parks (see Chapters 1 and 2)
- Apply new plan to manage natural areas throughout the park system (see Chapters 1 and 4)

- **Manage and interpret historic and archaeological resources per cultural resources asset inventory database (see Chapters 1 and 5)**
- **Create an implementation plan to distribute needed facilities equitably (see Chapter 1)**
- **In coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Public Schools, and Community Use of Public Facilities, complete an Athletic Field Study by mid FY13 to better assess the demand and deliver the service of athletic fields. Please note that until this study is completed, staff will rely on projected athletic field needs as provided in the 2005 PROS Plan (see Chapter 3).**

## **ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment 1- Approved Work Program Summary**

**Attachment 2- Summary of Public Meeting Comments**

**Attachment 3 - Staff Draft 2012 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan**

pcc:

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MaryEllen Venzke – Management Services  
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John Hench – Park Planning & Stewardship  
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Darlen Manley – Park Police  
Christine Brett – Enterprise  
Piera Weiss, Acting Deputy Director, Department of Planning



## Attachment 1

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### 2012 Pros Plan Work Program Summary

#### Overview

The 2012 PROS Plan Update Work Program is based on the Guidelines for State & Local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Planning submitted by the Maryland Department of State Planning in October 2010. In addition to fulfilling the State requirements, the Plan Update will incorporate important recommendations and input from the *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan*.

The Guidelines indicate that the *2012 PROS Plan Update* focus should be on updating the major recreation and parks components of the prior Plan, including inventory, supply, demand, and needs analysis, and the 15-year land acquisition and capital improvement priorities. Chapters on Natural Resource Conservation, Historic and Cultural Preservation, and Agricultural Land Preservation will also be included and will focus on state and local goals, progress since the 2005 Plan, and new proposals.

#### Recreation and Parks Chapter

1. *Vision 2030 Input*

Analyze recommendations from Vision 2030 Strategic Plan including goals, objectives and actions; findings and input from survey and focus groups to determine top 10 recreation facility needs in the County and other important inputs. Determine how they should be included in the 2012 PROS Plan.

2. *State Requirements*

- *State and County goals* for recreation and parks. List and analyze how do they compare? Include priority recreation and parks issues identified in the 2009 State plan.
- *Principle implementing programs*. Describe how they help to achieve these goals, and how they are consistent with the Strategic Guidelines for Recreation and Parks.
- *State recreation acreage goal* of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Calculate the current ratio according to state requirements, including the three categories of preserved acreage that count towards this goal: local recreational acreage, a portion of local natural resource acreage, and a portion of qualifying State and federal acreage
- *Facility inventory and analysis of facility supply, demand, and needs*- Calculate using county or statewide survey data, updated demographic data, and the method described in Appendix B of the Guidelines (or approved alternative). Analyze rectangular athletic fields, baseball diamonds, playgrounds, basketball courts, and tennis courts plus the top ten facility needs identified by the County. These facilities shall be determined by the results of the Vision 2030 Survey and Strategic Plan. The service areas will be the same as those in the 2005 Plan for comparison purposes. Specifically, the work program will:
  - i. *Calculate Supply*, the total number of occasions/uses provided by the given recreational facilities in a single year for each of the required facilities (playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, diamonds and rectangular fields, and 10 additional most needed facilities. The quantity (inventory) of a given facility (such as baseball diamonds) is multiplied by that facility's "season length" (number of days per year facility is available) and "daily carrying capacity." (number of "uses" that a facility provides per day)

- For the inventory, analyze Vision 2030 completed inventory for use in the Plan Update.
  - ii. Develop *demand estimates*, using a recreation demand survey and population projections for 2012, 2017, and 2022. The Vision 2030 inputs will be used where appropriate to derive participation numbers. The State 2003 Surveys and park permit data may also be used.
    - Determine *Participation Rate*, the percentage of the surveyed sample population that responds that they have participated in a given activity (such as baseball/softball) in the past year.
    - Determine *Frequency Rate*, the average number of times that the individuals who participated in a given activity did so in a twelve month period. Estimate *demand* by multiplying Participation and frequency rates by the current and future County populations for selected Service areas
  - iii. *Determine Current and Future Needs*, by subtracting the occasions/uses demanded from the occasions supplied to determine if there is unmet current demand. Estimate the number of facilities needed and then the amount of land desired per facility to determine the total need for additional land acquisition associated with the activity. The Updated Plan will compare our projected needs for land and facilities with those of similar jurisdictions around the Country and also attempt to determine the right balance between renovation and new construction in meeting those needs.
- *Implementation* - Determine Acquisition, Development, and Rehabilitation Priorities. Include a 15-year implementation program for land acquisition, facility development, and rehabilitation priorities, *identified* for the short term (2012-2016), mid-term (2017-2021), and long range (2022 and beyond). As in the table used for the needs analysis, the matrix should include information on the County's needs for athletic fields, baseball diamonds, basketball courts, and tennis courts, and for the additional top ten needs identified by the County. Prepare a spreadsheet showing what State and local goals are being met by each project.

## Natural Resources Conservation Chapter

1. *Vision 2030 Plan Input*  
Identify relevant recommendations from Vision 2030 Strategic Plan including findings, and input from 2010 survey and focus groups
2. *State and Local Goals for Natural Resource Conservation*  
List and analyze - note differences and conflicts, if any.
3. *County established priority preservation and conservation areas.*  
Identify and provide GIS Maps of:
  - Federal, State, and locally owned parkland, open space, greenway, or natural resource areas.
  - Parkland, natural areas, and open space protected by long-term lease or license agreement.
  - Forest conservation easements and reservations.



- Floodplains, steep slopes, and wetlands preserved by legal and regulatory mechanisms, i.e., protected by easement,
  - Land protected by deed covenants such as homeowner association open space.
  - Land trust easements or ownership
4. *Compare boundaries* of these primary natural resource areas to DNR's GreenPrint lands. Provide map.
  5. *Progress since 2005 Plan*  
Describe which parts of the program development strategy from the natural resources element of the last County Plan have been implemented and those that have not. Summarize any new proposals to conserve natural resources and priority lands.
  6. *Reference and summarize information from the County's comprehensive plan* and implementing ordinances and programs as appropriate to provide plan content for this element of the Plan Update.

### **Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation Chapter (Optional)**

1. *Vision 2030 Plan Input*  
Identify relevant recommendations from Vision 2030 Strategic Plan including findings, and input from 2010 survey and focus groups
2. *State and Local Goals for Historic/Cultural Conservation*  
List and analyze -note differences and conflicts, if any.
3. Identify County established priority preservation sites.
4. *Progress since 2005 Plan*  
Describe which parts of the program development strategy from the natural resources element of the last County Plan have been implemented and those that have not. Summarize any new proposals to conserve historic/cultural sites.
5. *Reference and summarize information from the County's comprehensive plan* and implementing ordinances and programs as appropriate to provide plan content for this element.

### **Agricultural Land Preservation Chapter (Optional)**

1. *State and Local Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation* - List and analyze
2. *Progress since 2005 Plan*  
Document the extent to which progress has been made toward achievement of the agricultural land preservation goals and objectives.
3. *Reference and summarize information from the County's comprehensive plan* and implementing ordinances and programs as appropriate.
4. Include map of priority preservation areas.
5. Provide a data table showing agricultural land preserved by year by easement programs and other means since the last Plan. Provide a table showing how much total land in the County has been preserved by the easement program.

## **Project Schedule**

The Plan will adhere to the following schedule required by the State Guidelines.

- **Work Program submitted to State Planning (2/1/2011)**
- **Draft Plan Submittal to MDP/DNR (1/1/2012)**
- **Final Local Plan Submission (7/01/2012)**
- **Plan Submittal to State Legislators (7/01/2012)**
- ***Final State Plan (7/1/2013)***

## Attachment 2

### Summary of Public Meeting Comments



All public input to the 2012 PROS Plan from email and public meetings is summarized here. This information has been grouped by the five topics used at the public meetings. These comments have been taken into account as we write the Staff Draft of the 2012 PROS Plan recommendations for future park and recreation needs and how they should be implemented in the next ten years.

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\*This document will be updated as additional public input is collected.

#### Topic 1: Montgomery County Department of Recreation

- Keep Sligo Creek Golf Course going. It's a great asset to down-county recreation and green space.
- Any chance of a mini-golf course near Sligo Creek Golf Course for the really early players? It may encourage later use of the real course.
- Meet needs for community recreation facilities and Wheaton. Delayed look at FY14 if available for design.
- Explain renovation assessment process FY13-18
- Re-open the Northwood – Four Corners Community Center (should be on stations)
- Community Recreation Center/Aquatic center 50m pool a must.
- Under Countywide Facilities, Combined Recreation Center and Aquatic Facilities, p. 27: I believe that 350-500 parking spaces are too many. This number should be cut in half and people encouraged to come by other means.
- I am happy to see that the Draft PROS Plan Update includes goals of a new aquatic center in the south-central county area and new skateboard parks. In my view, these are the two areas of greatest recreational need in the Silver Spring area.

## **Topic 2: Trails**

- Thank you for the bike trail from Silver Spring to Union Station. I wish we could make it safer and increase its volume of use (which would also make it safer)
- Fenton Village: The CBD Sector Plan envisions Fenton Street as a green boulevard linking Green Parks. Culminating in Fenton Gateway Park. The pedestrian sidewalks on Fenton Street are badly designed and use bricks that are dangerous in cold weather. Please redesign Fenton Street for walkers and maintain and develop Fenton Gateway a place of repose for walkers/hikers.
- More connection/communication needed between mass transit and trails system – please coordinate with bike share – that is coming- lets be proactive not reactive.
- Why are we not sharing information with other counties (Baltimore, for example) on making lower impact trail surfaces like what Baltimore has for the NCR trails?
- WMATA bike and pedestrian access plan calls for tripling of rate of access to stations by bike in 2020, and quintupling of current rate by 2030. Vast improvement in access-ability of red line to trails in County – Grosvenor, White Flint, Twinbrook difficult to access from park trails.
- Bike-pedestrian connection from Bethesda to Silver Spring critical-quality of Georgetown Branch trail has deteriorated in recent years subsequent to severe weather events and “SWM” construction that has degraded trail quality.
- Understand need to minimize impervious surfaces, but:
  - o Where you have wood boardwalks, you must install grippy surfaces on boardwalks for post rain events. This is a liability risk. I have slipped on these paths
  - o Trade offs between impervious paths and smart growth/TOD/ infill development need to be explicitly confronted. An impervious path that supports infill growth could be better for a watershed all things considered.
- Missing East/West connectivity in Wheaton – Aspen Hill areas. Shown non-park connectors such as Plyers Mill Rd., which connects Kensington/Beach Drive to Wheaton/Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Utilize old stream beds as trails/connectors such as Judson Road South of Randolph and Bucknell in Wheaton.
- Would like to encourage multi-use trails in sensitive areas so people can experience sensitive environments and appreciate/protect them. Need more educational signage on trails letting people know what’s there.
- Need to incorporate bikes into natural surface trail plan for Wheaton/Down County
- Investigate using pocket parks (Forest Glen, etc.) for bike skills areas and pump tracks
- Need to better publicize new additions such as Matthew Henson.
- Re think the term “greenway” which implies a wide flat gravel pathway.
- Find a better way to discourage 4-wheelers from areas near Seneca Greenway Trail
- Ensure sensitive trails, e.g. Blockhouse Point, Little Bennett are kept for hikers only to reduce damage and further severe erosion.
- Before starting new natural surface trails: Finish Muddy Branch - Stream crossings, Guard rails, Signage and Upper Rock Creek - Muncaster Mill to Needwood, Stream crossings, Blazes, signs, guard rails, etc., and Rachel Carson – start at park and work south using existing horse trails.

- Convert single-use trails to multi-use where possible, e.g. Little Bennett, Rachel Carson, Wheaton Regional Park and encourage all trail users (hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers) to help build and maintain sustainably designed and built natural surface trails. They can be sustainable and minimize environmental impact, even in sensitive areas.
- Please complete the Clarksburg Greenway Trail from the Little Bennett Maintenance Area to Snowden Farm Parkway.
- Consider a hard surface trail along the former Hyattstown Mill Rd from MD 355 to east of Clarksburg Rd. Bridges are needed to cross Little Bennett Stream. May want to consider crushed limestone as the trail surface.
- Rebuild to standardize the hard surfaced trail from Skylark Rd going south.
- Need to further the planning for the Clarksburg Greenway Trail from Skylark Road to Damascus Regional Park to connect with the Magruder Trail. Planning is also needed for the Magruder Trail to Damascus Town Center. Make sure the planning is completed for Clarksburg Greenway Trail towards I-270 and West Old Baltimore Rd.
- The design of the Clarksburg Greenway Trail needs to be finalized along Overlook Drive and from there to Snowden Farms Parkway in Clarksburg.
- More connections between existing trail systems. For example, connect Black Hill to Little Bennett, Little Bennett to Seneca Greenway, etc...
- Open trails on the west side of Black Hill in order to connect to Hoyles Mill trail.
- Design trails more for the end user experience instead of as a connection between 2 points. Look for unique scenery and vistas to showcase.
- Limit linear trails. Use contour trails.
- Build paved commuter trails to areas like Germantown to Bethesda. Similar to W & OD in VA.
- Improve crossings of I-270, especially at Route 124
- Build trail in Goshen Branch Stream Valley Park to connect Huntmaster (near Brink) with Seneca Creek Trail. Construct parking area where construction trailer is currently located. Provide wetlands interpretation signage describing plants and aquatic features. Let's leverage the \$2.6 million state investment to improve Goshen Branch Stream Valley Park.
- The trail experience is part of the goal. The reason to be outdoors. Therefore viewing "trails as the destination" covers all intended or planned use for the trail (connector, stack loops, nature trails, etc.) even a connector trail should have a high quality user experience. Be in beautiful forest, have scenic vistas, by, thru and over natural features and terrain (large rocks, etc.)
- Connector trails; don't think of them as linear, but also a destination.
- Avoid old roadbeds, farm roads, etc. as trail corridors or as trail, and if there now, consider either rerouting them or modifying them. Of course there are instances where it "fits" to keep them, but avoid them in any future trail. These often offer low quality user experience, they are straight, wide, flat, rutted, linear roads that default as trail as a result of negative legacy.
- East County is sorely underserved in all kinds of trails.
- All large parks and connector park trails should be shared use in the public interest. If not, a clear and well defended argument needs to be made to defend single or partial shared use.

- Trails and connector trail planning have been a victim over time of not being included in sales and deed dedication of land beyond the minimum for stream buffers. Priority needs to be given all land use and saves to provide more forest allowing for a trail corridor.
- When difficult areas are hard to build, but an important connection is made, don't rule out all kinds of materials or methods (boardwalk, metal, new materials) even if cost prohibitive, so at least a possible solution has been considered).
- How many miles of Hard Surface and Natural Surface Trails have been provided and will be built by 2022?
- Establish certain trails as limited-user trails to address the needs of hikers, bikers and equestrians: Bikers and equestrians should be kept away from streams, wetlands or other fragile areas.
- Montgomery County has done an amazing job preserving open space. Pretty much every resident has the opportunity to leave their home and quickly find themselves on a trail, either paved or natural surface. Unfortunately, when I am on my bicycle, I am not welcome on many of these trails. Especially in the down county, closest to my home in Silver Spring. For natural surface trails, I strongly encourage the county to move toward a default shared-use policy. Even with so much protect space, there is not enough to create private playgrounds for every special interest or modality. But the default should be trails open to all muscle-powered use. Opening a long-distance trail like Northwest Branch would literally allow tens of thousands additional residents the opportunity to ride their bicycle without need to use their car. Poorly aligned trails manufacture erosion and user conflict. The trails community is ready to help park staff fix these problems.
- Suggest re-route of the Cabin John trail to put a trail underpass in a metal cage under River Road below existing vehicle bridge. Danger of current grade crossing is increasing.

### **Topic 3: Natural Resources**

- Fenton Gateway Park – please maintain this as a Green Buffer as envisioned in the CBD Sector Plan. As a natural and landscaped (not hardscaped) refuge from the built up CBD. Some of the area could be dedicated to native plants and also plants that support and attract pollinators and other beneficial insects. Having landscaping is also better for water drainage.
- Protect and preserve peoples' "Green spaces" and recreation fields of Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park by refusing to let it be "taken" by the MCPS/BOE for a new B-CC Cluster Middle School. This natural and built-on-top resource next to Coffield Community Center is an invaluable and essential center of our community and ecology-heavily used by all generations and in a neighborhood of majority apartment (not yards), minority single family modest homes and ethnically-income diverse growing population that will not give up! Help save our park!
- In light of continued urbanization of the County, make sure that many natural areas are kept natural or restored to natural condition. This is important for education of kids, preservation of water and clean air, preservation of native plants and animals, and recreation/appreciation of nature. The value of natural areas is paramount since once lost it can't be recovered without great effort.
- Make sure tree-planting continues since it is valuable for clean air and water and wildlife habitat.
- Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park needs tree replanting in copses on park margins where Department of Parks arborist crews recently cut and removed dying and diseased over-mature trees over past 2 years. Weedy second-growth trees – e.g. Black Locust have sprung up under the larger tree canopy and well-sunned areas causing problems fall on with adjacent power lines and homes surrounding this small, heavily used green space. Replacement trees need to "fit" the local ecology and

recreational context. Also, landscape maintenance requires regular attention and grass-care, as well as improvements in deteriorating asphalt pathways.

- I am alarmed and dismayed that MC Public Schools (MCPS) is in "land grab" mode and pillaging parkland! Especially when several perfectly serviceable school buildings are being used for non-school purposes.
- Yes, agreed! Is this why we have parks, to make the land schools?
- Please do not pollute our groundwater with pulverized tire crumb on playgrounds and fields – no artificial turf at Laytonia! No artificial turf anywhere! A.T. is not green, open or environmentally friendly!
- Need a historic and cultural resource map showing connectivity to trails and parks.
- Put informative signs near natural resources (e.g. trees, bushes, wildlife in that area) so that resource (e.g. storm water management facility) can also be used as an information source for kids/naturalists.
- Black Hill Regional Park – end of extens. trail (new), near curve before bridge is constantly wet. (wetlands?) How do you remediate where asphalt has been poured to lessen wetlands impact?
- Black Hill Regional Park – why was cement poured over the historic Millrace where rest was asphalt.
- Black Hill Regional Park – Is the ramp from boardwalk to ground level consistent in 100yr flood plan (new path).
- In favor of more deer management to protect Natural Areas!
- Goshen Branch SVP – ICC wetland mitigation – why not putting trail to finish trail. Access points could be left as parking areas for trail and park access; should have interpretive signage wetland creation.

#### **Topic 4: Traditional Facilities - Athletic Fields, Tennis, Basketball, Picnicking, Ice Skating**

- Youth rugby is growing in MoCo. In the Eastern area there are youth and adult programs.
- Keep Sligo Creek Golf Course going. Important green space and recreation for down county residents.
- Field at Silver Spring International Middle School (Wayne Ave and Sligo Creek Pkwy) - regrade existing field to improve runoff and put in framework for portable toilets (to deter vandals) and install water fountain.
- Why the disconnect between public transit and recreation facilities? They are very hard to get to/use without a car.
- We need more rectangular sports fields for the downcounty region. These fields can be used for football, rugby, lacrosse, soccer, and even pitch baseball. Planning needs to determine whether the current fields are being used well with scheduling and also whether other fields (baseball) are being used. Determine the demand and the best use of the available fields.
- Desperate for more soccer fields downcounty.
- Approve partnerships for developing soccer fields, e.g. Laytonia.
- Need permanent soccer goals on fields.
- Field maintenance has declined. Soccer fields are unsafe, especially school fields.
- Other jurisdiction.
- Co-location of facilities with public and private agencies as a cost-saving .



- Shuttle buses to get kids to different facilities. Recreation can reduce juvenile crime.
- North Four Corners Park- keep the meadows instead of soccer.
- Re-open the North Four Corners Community Center.
- Renovate fields instead of building new.
- Use decompaction with compost to make fields last longer.
- Use turf management regime used by golf courses and City of College Park.
- Light athletic facilities in Urban and Recreational Parks to allow for more use and give youth somewhere to go in the evening; e.g. North Four Corners, Long Branch, Takoma Piney Branch, Wheaton Regional.
- Have at least one facility for every sport, e.g. cricket, velodrome.
- Would like to see running tracks (made of pervious pavement) around non-synthetic playing fields to encourage walking/running between games.
- No synthetic turf. Teach people to not use the fields when they are wet (Environmental Education). Parks has experimented with Bermuda grass fields that are doing GREAT and are more durable. Talk to Dave McGrady and Brian Woodward. The Revenue Authority/Enterprise Fund—Keith Miller (Jon Lubenstine, Agronomist) are putting Bermuda grass fields in at schools. First one at Clarksburg High School. Work with them.
- No Artificial Turf.
- Don't spend \$5 million on a SINGLE soccer field complex. Use the money to fund 10-11 top of the line natural field renovations and the Wheaton Recreation Center/Library!!!!
- Community Gardens: our temporary garden in Fenton Park has been a great success. It is fitting with the Green Theme of the CBD Sector Plan. It is also appropriate to the park and a Green Gateway buffer between commercial and residential areas. Scullery on the part of the county planners resulted in falsifying a county report and county planners have repeatedly misrepresented Fenton Gateway Park as a site for a skateboard facility. We in the neighborhood support Fenton Gateway Park and community gardens as beneficial to the community and CBD. Thank you.
- Proposal for Fenton Gateway Park: to include an aromatic herb/plant garden for the sign impaired to enjoy our gardens. In the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens there is an area with raised beds at waist level and with Braille labels. The plants attract butterflies and pollinators. And everyone loves it.
- Add sites where some conventional gardening practices are permitted or allow conventional gardening practices at currently established sites. Conventional gardening practice in the context means some non-organic practices. This suggestion is intended to apply to the entire community garden program.
- The Parks Department should do more in terms of community gardens and/or community fruit trees - particularly in areas where apartment residents may lack the ability to grow any of their own food. Would like a community garden near Rosemary Hills as it has many nearby apartment complexes and single family homes with small yards/deep shade. Consider smaller gardens in urban areas.
- There is still a good deal of land in parks and rural lands reserves which would be used to grow deer-resistant crops to feed the homeless.
- Indoor skate/bike park at the old Woodlawn hanger.
- More skate/bike spots i.2.: Woodside



- Please favor green/soft use of land over hardscape. Balance trees/grass/open streams over pavement and buildings.
- Bicycling destinations: mountain biking trails, pump tracks, skills parks (see: Valmont Bike Park in Boulder, Co), velodromes, traffic gardens (see: Baltimore), etc.
- Seconding the comments above re: bicycling opportunities
- Community gardens will become more and more important and can serve community needs for interpersonal connections and access to green/earth/nature (of a cultivated) sort. The graying of MoCo population will create more garden demand, and many neighborhoods (ironically as we lose tree canopy) are still too sunny to garden much on individual properties.
- Montgomery County Parks needs a clearer focus on underlying long-range trends in popular recreation with a thoughtful, phlegmatic mindset.
- Vocational training programming as part of recreational programming for youths & teens
- Daycare at the programming places so that teens responsible for babysitting can participate.
- Urban issues/spaces not emphasized enough – special needs!
- Need more dog parks in Germantown Area
- Connect local farms with community garden sites for mentorship and collaboration (business/community partnership)
- Allow garden plots adjacent to woodland – premature – instead of separating veggies and wild habitat.
- Look at the other counties – Baltimore – for ideas of how to analyze statistics on youth and activity to determine indicators of need.
- Need parks and outdoor exhibit space for local artists. Historic buildings could be used for indoor space, Civic Greens and Historic sites could be used for outside exhibit space.
- It would be better to not split the day (ex. Saturday) between 2 organizations. Instead give each organization one whole day to allow for better scheduling and to accommodate flexible schedules.
- The determination for having a brand new league should consider the field space needed for the new league – takes space and ability to grow from existing leagues.
- Sometimes the decision to close the field is made too early with too little information.
- It causes a lot of problems to have the field closure message at 7am and then to ask people to call back at 11am. It would be better to close all day so people know for sure what is happening.
- Loves the electronic permits!
- Add a disc golf course.
- Can (diamond) field – use be consolidated to a few fields with lights and all day and evening in a closer area rather running parts of days over a larger area?
- At all of our dog parks, have separate area for small dogs. Problems have occasionally occurred at our DP's with just 1 area. Black Hill RP doesn't have one – add one with 2 sections.
- Have more developer funds dedicated to Clarksburg Urban Park.
- Permanent course. Would be only one in entire DC/MD/VA area.
- Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Park / Coffield Center : We use it frequently -- to kick around a soccer ball, fly kites, play hide and seek amid the trees, sled down the hill when there's a big snow, and to ride

bicycles and scooters along the path. The bigger playground area is also heavily used by our children, but they are quickly outgrowing it. Our community would benefit from a park with an enhanced play space for older children with more rigorous climbing structures. If the park is to remain the way it is, I am saddened to say that we will soon outgrow the cohesive springboard of inclusion, joy, and exercise that it is.

- Forget artificial turf. It is not the answer to your wish for maximizing field use and minimizing wear. A natural surface field will do better if properly installed and maintained. Just because most of those now in existence have not been handled that way is no reason to suppose that they can not be done right. And artificial turf will wear out in a relatively short time. Who pays for the replacement? In the meantime, players suffer from the health consequences of using the turf.
- The park at Dale and Hartford avenue could use an updated playground. It gets a lot of use.

### **Topic 5: Trends**

- Food vendor carts should be allowed in parks.
- More recycled rubber tires in playgrounds for surfacing.
- No food vendor carts because of trash concerns
- More smaller in space/size dog parks scattered around the community.
- Like flexible spaces for lots of different uses.
- Do not need a defined field to play a pick-up game.
- Like the ½ courts.
- Like the variety of uses in the small neighborhood park.
- Small parks are valuable green in the neighbors – need more.
- Like large too, but may not get as much.
- More outdoor star gazing opportunities.
- On or near natural surface trails specialized use areas like bike parks that help cyclist develop stronger bike handling skills that they will find either in county parks or in parks elsewhere with more rugged terrain and feature. That is fun too!
- These bike facilities areas or mountain bike skills areas could include any combination of the following or just a few:
  - o Progressive drops
  - o Natural rock, wood or logs (“rock gardens”, “log rides”)
  - o Steeper but reinforced inclines
  - o Beam turns
  - o Public tracks
  - o Jump lines
  - o Short steep downhill sections
  - o Flow lines
  - o Modified narrow boardwalks
  - o All designed to develop skills, but with fun in mind
- Similar skills park features, natural surface trail systems need more “stacked loops” or “advanced” challenging segments if they can only be linear, that provide the same advanced skills and maybe in some cases long alternate lines. Adjacent to the main trail.
- Areas for cyclocross racing

- Bike polo
- Indoor mountain bike park. Similar to "Ray's indoor mountain bike park" in Ohio. This is especially important for winter months and wet seasons that provide a dry place for cyclists so they don't damage outdoor natural surface trails. "Ray's" is a private enterprise that is profitable.
- Community gardens and/or community fruit trees at Rosemary Hills area of Silver Spring; particularly in areas where apartment residents may lack the ability to grow any of their own food. The community center would be well suited to house a community garden. The garden might be located on the park - or it could be located on school grounds.
- Set aside special areas for preferred or single use, such as training areas near stables or interpretive/solitude trails in high-value spots like those by Brookside Gardens.
- I encourage the county to further embrace public/private partnerships making it easier for residents to help maintain their local parks.
- Bike Parks and Pump Tracks are compact facilities that provide opportunities for skill building or riding styles that might not be compatible in a shared-use setting.
- I would like to challenge the plans to use artificial turf. Why would you use a product that wears out and needs proper disposal in order not to harm the environment in the future. Plus I understand there is evidence for toxic substances leaching from artificial turf.
- Also have you calculated how often the artificial turf needs replacing and included the re-purchase as well as disposal costs in your planning.
- Re-purpose unused tennis courts for kids skateboarding, inline skating, dog exercise, etc.

### **Miscellaneous**

- The Agricultural Reserve was not mentioned [at the public meeting]--but very much should be.
- Under Cultural Resources, I applaud your concern for maintenance. Governments love to build things (including highways) but they don't want to maintain them. Unfortunately, gifts must be included. It is very disappointing to see historical structures fall into decay and ultimately destruction. Note the Trump takeover of the Old Post Office downtown
- I would respectfully request that a strategic goal focus on intensified maintenance of existing equipment/grounds in the parks. At Rosemary Hills- Lyttonsville Park, we're seeing quite a bit of paint chipping from the playground equipment as well as paint chipping from the benches on the park grounds. We also, despite our best efforts to walk around with bags picking up trash, observe that the grounds of the playground, more often than not, has significant amounts of trash. We also would encourage more proactive review of the condition of trees in the park as, at times, dead trees/limbs have not been cut down in a timely manner (and when tree limbs have been cut down, they have not been removed in a timely manner).



**Attachment 3**

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**Staff Draft 2012 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan**

- See Attached Document -

