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TO: Montgomery County Planning Board
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Subject: Status of 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), 2006 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan, and Recreation facility methodologies

Purposes of Agenda Item

To discuss:

- 1) The new State Planning Guidelines and the need to prepare two plans;
- 2) The proposed scope, schedule and outreach for both plans; and
- 3) The specific recreation facilities being projected by the 2005 LPPRP, related service area assumptions and methodologies to project future needs.

This agenda item is an opportunity for the Planning Board to confirm or redirect staff's efforts particularly with regard to the specific recreation facilities that will be the subject of the draft Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation document.

Overview

Last spring the Planning Board received a memo entitled "Work Program-New State Guidelines for Preparation of the New 2005 PROS Plan" (Attachment 1) and a copy of the new guidelines prepared by the Department of State Planning. The guidelines state that the new Plans are called "Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans" (LPPRP). The purpose of this item is to update the Planning Board on work accomplished to date, the need to prepare a follow up PROS Strategic Plan; and to review preliminary material on recreation needs for the Plan prior to putting it on the Web and holding a public forum.

Although this Board Item focuses on active recreation needs, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that the most popular County park uses are often associated with natural areas. Use of natural areas and trails continue to be among the most popular ways people use our parks, and the future PROS Strategic Plan will focus heavily on these needs.

New State Planning Guidelines

The 2005 Guidelines for preparation of the LPPRP vary considerably from those that guided the 1998 PROS Plan. The new guidelines and associated work program were the first step in implementing a revision to the Program Open Space Law passed in 2003. In order to retain eligibility for Program Open Space Funding, the law requires that a *Land Preservation, Park and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)* must be prepared by each County every six years beginning with 2005 under a new set of guidelines. These guidelines are intended to help the Counties carefully think about their needs and help the State focus on potential future requests for legislation and grant program funding. In addition to Program Open Space (POS), which funds parkland and recreation facilities, there are many programs (such as Green Print, Rural Legacy, etc.) that are focused on agricultural land preservation, and conservation of natural resource areas, including the State's biological communities. Input by Counties will assist in justifying needs for additional funding for these programs.

After public input, the staff draft plan will be prepared and presented to the Planning Board prior to sending it as required to the State at the end of June 2005. The final plan is due to the Department of State Planning in December 2005.

Major Differences from 1998 PROS Plan

There are significant differences between the new 2005 LPPRP Guidelines and those that were prepared for the 1998 Plan. They include:

- An increased emphasis on natural resource protection and agricultural preservation.
- Greatly increased number of facilities required for specific needs analysis to the year 2020, including breakdown of types of fields needed.
- Implementation proposals for short, mid and long range time frames.
- New detailed questions for each section requiring comparisons between the county and state goals, and guidelines, the eight State visions and needs assessment, etc. requiring a great deal of additional text.

Need for Two Separate Plans

As staff proceeded to work within the constraints of the mandated new State Guidelines, it was determined that in order to effectively look at future needs for the County, two Plans were needed. 1) A *Land Preservation, Park, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)* which will be a technical document specifically following the new State Guidelines; and 2) A *Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS) Strategic Plan*. This second document will be a policy document rather than a technical one. It will focus on information, strategies

and policies important to the public, and staff from the Commission and other agencies.

The following sections briefly describe the scope, schedules and outreach for both plans, and detail draft methodologies, assumptions and projections for recreation facilities that will be a common element in both plans.

Proposed Scope, Schedule and Outreach

2005 LPPRP

Overview and Scope of Plan

The new guidelines developed by the Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources call for the plan to have 3 primary sections:

Recreation, Parks and Open Space which discusses planning for parks, open space, recreation facilities, and parkland acquisition, including quantitative needs analysis for an increased number of facilities, site specific implementation recommendations and estimated costs for land and development.

Agricultural Land Preservation, which includes information on the public commitment to Land Preservation and supportive local goals, plans, and implementation programs. It also provides a description of the Agricultural Preservation Programs and summary of needed new initiatives; and

Natural Resource Conservation. Which discusses current goals and implementation programs for conservation of natural resource lands and summary of needed improvements. Staff has added an additional chapter on cultural resource preservation, which includes similar information for historic and archaeological resources.

Attachment 2 includes the state's outline for the Plan. An updated "Forever Green" map that includes sites to be preserved for all of the Plan purposes, will serve as the official Plan Map. This map includes proposed parkland for recreation and natural and cultural resource protection and agriculturally zoned land.

The 2006 Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan

The required guidelines and timeframe for the LPPR do not produce a policy document that is easily readable by the public and looks at strategies for providing needed recreation and preservation in the future. It is recommended that a 2006 PROS Strategic Plan be developed subsequently to provide a user-friendly policy document rather than a technical one. It will ultimately be the document primarily distributed to the public and other agencies as the "PROS Plan". This Plan will build on previous studies such as "Parks For Tomorrow," "Looking Ahead" and "The CAPRA Strategic Plan." Additional coordination is planned with the Community Based Teams, Strategic Planning, and expanded Parks Staff. It would put an emphasis on trends for the future and the most popular recreation pursuits. Greater emphasis can be placed on natural and historic interpretation as it is important to educate the public as to

the value of these important resources. Other new initiatives, such as Smart Parks, and new policies or procedures can also be addressed. The Green Infrastructure Functional Plan will be well underway at the time of the Strategic Plan, and the strategic plan can incorporate important findings of the work completed.

The Plan will address issues such as:

- Past and Future Trends and how they will affect park needs of the future
- Future needs for protection of natural and cultural resources
- Future recreation needs and strategies to accommodate these needs including strategies for providing:
 - Nature oriented and interpretive recreation
 - Natural and hard surface paths to serve existing and future communities
 - Heritage tourism
 - Enterprise facilities
 - Park re-development in urban areas
 - A new regional park
 - New and emerging types of recreation facilities
 - Revised park classification system and objectives
 - Reconfiguration of ballfields to meet changing needs
 - Public/private partnerships.

Differences Between LRPR Plan and PROS Strategic Plan

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)	Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan
1. Purposes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a technical document following State Guidelines • Maintain eligibility for State POS funding • Provide Information on 2020 needs for parkland and recreation facilities, agricultural preservation and conservation of natural resources. • Show how state and local goals are coordinated, how we use State Programs, any changes we would recommend to these programs, and what future State funding is needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User-friendly Policy document that develops strategies for meeting future needs for new emerging sports and future trends, as well as standard facilities • Provide additional focus on most popular activities • Provide updated classification system, policies and guidelines • Proposes Revisions to Classification system • Updates the Policy for Parks (goals & objectives) • Updates guidelines for different types of park

Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)

Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan

2. Recreation Facility Analysis

Recreation Facility Projections for:

- Playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts (projected by Planning Area)
- Youth and adult softball, adult baseball, youth and adult soccer/rectangular fields (projected by Community Based Team Areas)
- Other facilities including picnic shelters/group picnic areas, nature centers, roller hockey facilities, skate parks, dog parks, natural & hard surface trails, natural areas, indoor community centers and aquatic centers projected for the County as a whole.
- Proposes park acquisition and development for short, mid and long term needs
- Uses Existing Park Classification System
- Uses CAPRA & General Plan goals and objectives

Recreation Facility Projections

- Incorporates Recreation Facility Projections from LPPRP.
- Analyzes new trends for emerging recreation and looks at additional facilities
- Analyzes geographic service areas in terms of distance to facilities
- Proposes re-configuration for parks to meet changing needs
- Proposes field conversions to different types where needed/ Studies ways to meet down country needs
- Includes Regional Park Needs Analysis
- Provides special Focus on Trails – highlights need for exercise (Heart Smart), nature interpretation, etc.–
- Need for Enterprise Facilities – provides input from Enterprise Strategic Plan on specific facility needs.
- Heart Smart programs

3. Agricultural Land Preservation

- Includes information on current goals and preservation efforts
- Recommends changes to State Programs
- Increased efforts on innovative strategies to preserve agriculture

4. Natural Resource Conservation

- Includes information on current goals and preservation efforts
- Recommends changes to State Programs
- Evaluates current efforts and identifies possible improvements
- Strategies to create more nature oriented recreation and trails, and nature interpretation
- Guidance for Green Infrastructure Plan

5. Cultural Resource Conservation

- Includes information on current goals and preservation efforts
- Recommends changes to State Programs
- Evaluates current efforts and identifies possible improvements
- Strategies for Heritage Tourism and Interpretation

Proposed schedule for Both Plans

The following table indicates the proposed schedules for both plans. The State Planning Guidelines require the LPPRP Staff Draft to be transmitted by June 2005 and the final draft by December, and the PROS Strategic Plan will be prepared in the following year

Proposed Schedule for the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan and the Park, Recreation and Open Space Strategic Plan

Date	Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan	Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan
Thursday April 28, 2005	MCPB Briefing	
Tuesday May 24, 2005	Public Forum- input on proposed needs	Public Forum- will provide some input on long range needs and strategies
June 23, 2005	MCPB-Staff Draft Presentation	
June 30, 2005	Transmit Draft To State Planning	
September 2005	MCPB Public Hearing	
October/November 2005	MCPB Work session	
December 2005	MCPB Final Approval	
December 30, 2005	Transmit to State	

Date	Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan	Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan
Winter 2006		Preliminary Strategic Plan -Concept Development
Spring 2006		Public Forum
Summer 2006		Staff Draft
Fall 2006		Public Hearing
November 2006		Plan Approval

Outreach for Both Plans

A great deal of outreach has already occurred for the LPPRP and PROS Strategic Plans. In addition to the surveys described below, a number of workshops and meetings have been held with the Recreation Department, Municipalities, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board and Montgomery County Public Schools, to consider recreation trends and future needs. Future outreach is discussed in the section below.

Surveys

Surveys provide a significant amount of input for both Plans including data on which to base future needs. Statistics reflecting user demand and trends and resident preferences are important when projecting future needs for our County. In addition to the 2000 Park User Survey, which provided detailed information on current facility use, the 2003 Montgomery County Park User Satisfaction Survey and the 2003 Maryland State Survey on Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland provided important background information on recreation use and perceived needs. An update of the Park User Satisfaction Survey is anticipated in 2005/2006 and will provide input for the PROS Strategic Plans. The geographic supplement of the National Superstudy of Sports Participation also provided additional data on age-based participation rates in Maryland.

Other Proposed Outreach

Other types of proposed outreach that include information on resident preferences and recreation trends include the following:

- Coordinating with various Montgomery County Park and Planning Divisions, the Montgomery County Departments of Recreation and Economic Development/Agricultural Preservation Division, Community Use of Schools; County municipalities, and Prince George's County Park Planning.

- Utilizing the six Recreation Advisory Boards to provide countywide and regional input.
- Placing information and opportunities for input on the web.
- Obtaining information from recreation, conservation, ethnic groups and agricultural interest groups.
- Holding staff brainstorming sessions and public forums to provide input on needs for recreation, natural resource and agricultural preservation.
- Coordinating with the outreach for the Green Infrastructure Plan, where appropriate.
- Hold Public Hearings on the Planning Board Approved Public Hearing Drafts for both the LPPRP and PROS.

Details on Preliminary Recreation Facilities Needs Analysis for the 2005 LPPRP

The remainder of this item focuses on preliminary efforts to project active recreation facilities needs. These needs will be refined throughout the planning process, however, we felt it was important to update the Board at this time, prior to public outreach. We will be discussing assumptions and preliminary facility needs during upcoming meetings and obtaining input through the web. The following section summarizes initial efforts at projections utilizing new methodologies for projecting the facilities required for the 2005 LPPRP Plan

Specific Facilities Being Projected in the 2005 LPPRP Plan and Service Area Assumptions

Estimating exact numbers of ballfields and other recreation facilities needed in the County is an extremely difficult task and subject to many future variables. It therefore is often spoken of as “more art than science”. Need estimates provide guidelines, however and may be revised in the future to accommodate changes in population projections and field participation rates.

As mentioned previously, the State has significantly increased the number of facilities being projected from what was required for 1998 Plan, and requires need projections to the year 2020. In addition to **Playgrounds, Tennis and Basketball courts, and fields** which were projected in the 1998 Plan, the State has asked for Counties to project their additional ten most popular facilities. Based on recent surveys, we have selected **picnic shelters, nature centers, roller hockey facilities, skate parks, natural Surface trails, hard surface trails, dog parks, natural areas, indoor community centers and aquatic centers**. These estimates will provide useful input as guidelines for area and park master plans and the Capital Improvements Program.

Preliminary need estimates will be evaluated by staff and user groups as we go through the planning process. Assumptions that affect the different projections may be revised as more is learned about current use and potential demand. The Staff Draft will include information received at the public forum and user group meetings. Additional input will be received at the Public Hearing and additional meetings that may result in the adjustment of future need estimates in the final plan.

Service Area Assumptions

For the purposes of the LPPRP, assumptions were made regarding facility service areas. Additional work with GIS maps to determine service area distances for various facilities will be completed for the PROS Strategic Plan.

Planning Area Oriented Needs

Some facilities are considered to serve neighborhood recreation needs and should be provided close to home. For this reason, need estimates have been calculated on an individual planning area basis, and needs are to be met within the planning area. Facilities can not count as serving an adjacent planning area. Facilities assumed to be in this category include:

- **Playgrounds (with the exception of regional adventure playgrounds)-**
- **Tennis courts (with the exception of regional and recreational courts), and**
- **Basketball courts**

Community Planning Team Area Oriented Needs

Most field sports teams play other teams from within the County and drive to parks or schools to play their games, so the service area for fields is larger than the Planning Area. It is desirable, however, to minimize driving time by striving to meet field needs in the general area of the players. Therefore we have suggested using the Community-based Team Area as the service area within which to project fields. Field use needs include estimates for:

- **Youth diamonds (T-ball, youth softball and baseball)**
- **Multi-purpose diamonds – Youth baseball/Adult Softball (these sports play on the same type of field)**
- **Baseball- 90' base paths- Adults and teens**
- **Adult rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)**
- **Youth rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)**

Countywide Oriented Needs

The facilities listed below are projected on a total countywide basis in the 2005 LPPRP because most facilities are located in regional or recreational parks and serve large portions of the County. Some of these facility needs are based on special studies or study methods (such as the Countywide Park Trail Plan). In the 2006 PROS Strategic Plan, estimated service areas will be developed. Facilities estimated to be served by the County as a whole include:

- Permitted picnic shelters
- Group picnic areas,
- Nature centers
- Roller hockey facilities
- Skate parks,
- Dog parks
- Natural areas (based on approved area and park master plans)
- Natural and hard surface trails (based on the approved County-wide Trails Plan and
- Indoor Community Centers and Aquatic Centers (being coordinated with the Recreation Department)

Methodologies for estimating future needs

The increased number of facilities required for analysis by the state presented new challenges to the staff. Each of the previous PROS Plans has relied on a participation rate based mathematical model developed in 1978. The current model presented difficulties for many facilities because it relies on the 2000 park user survey and park permit data that is not available for some facilities. The State Planning Guidelines included a suggested methodology that is also a participation-based model. It is based on the 2003 State telephone survey and is useful for facilities for which we do not have specific user data. We also reviewed methodologies of other similar jurisdictions to see what approaches were used. A usable methodology must be able to use available information, and be dependable, defensible, and updateable. In addition to the methodology suggested by the State, we felt that the Fairfax County method was worth of consideration as they have a similar population and are within the Washington Metro Area. The three methods we explored and used are described below.

1) *MNCPPC PROS Method*

- **Age Based Participation** model developed for M-NCPPC for the first PROS Plan in 1978 and used in all subsequent plans.
- **Based on actual usage data from 2000 park user observation survey and 2002 spring park permits for both parks and schools, and age based sports participation**
- **Projects daily spring/summer facility needs** for playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts
- **Projects spring peak week needs** for soccer, softball and baseball permit data for parks and schools.

2) *State Planning Guidelines Method –*

- **Participation based** model- not age based
- **Based on phone survey responses regarding annual facility use** from the 2003 State telephone survey.
- **Staff has added M-NCPPC Attendance data** where available

- **Projects annual needs.** It calculates existing participation rates for various recreation activities based on the 2003 state survey. Needs are then computed using season length, yearly facility capacities and population projections to the year 2020.

3) Fairfax County Method

- **Park Standards method** provides ratios of various recreation facilities need for every thousand persons being served.
- **Based on existing facility per population ratios** that were then adjusted to reflect needed changes based on trends from surveys, public forums, input from user groups, etc. Future needs were then calculated based on these adjusted ratios and future population projections. We are including this methodology because Fairfax County has similar characteristics to Montgomery County.

Year 2020 needs will be analyzed using each of these methods using the Montgomery County round 6.4 population forecast. Because of available data sources needed for input into the methodologies, we determined that some methods are more appropriate for selected specific facilities than others. As a first preference, we will use the M-NCPPC Method for facilities, whenever we have user counts and age specific data, to give us estimates based on Montgomery County specific user data. As a second preference, we employed the State methodology for facilities where we do not have user counts but relevant information was included in the State survey. M-NCPPC attendance data will be used to supplement this data, wherever available. Where no State or M-NCPPC participation data is available, we will rely on the Fairfax County method. Only one facility, dog parks, used the Fairfax method, because we did not have relevant survey data on how many people wanted to use dog parks.

Summary of Recreation Facility Assumptions

The following table lists the specific recreation facilities for which we will develop needs for the year 2020, and indicates the related service area assumption and which of the three alternative methodologies mentioned above was used. Preliminary number estimates will be developed for the public forum. These estimates will be further refined during the next several months based on additional data and public input, prior to the final plan.

Facility	Service Area	Methodology
Playgrounds (with the exception of regional adventure playgrounds)-	Planning Area	M-NCPPC
Tennis courts (with the exception of Recreation/regional courts)		MNCPPC
Basketball courts		MNCPPC

Facility	Service Area	Methodology
Youth diamonds (T-ball, youth softball and baseball)	Community Based Team Area	MNCPPC
Multi-purpose Youth baseball/Adult Softball diamonds (these sports play on the same type of field		MNCPPC
Baseball- 90' base paths- Adults and teens		MNCPPC
Adult rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse		MNCPPC
Youth rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)		MNCPPC
Facility	Service Area	Methodology
Permit Picnic shelters	Countywide	State Planning Method with M-NCPPC Data
County-wide Group picnic areas		State Planning Method with M-NCPPC Data
Nature centers		State Planning Method with M-NCPPC Data
Roller hockey (game) facilities		State Planning
Skate parks-(including informal use areas)		State Planning
Dog parks		Fairfax County
Natural areas		MNCPPC-(based on approved area and park master plans)
Natural Surface Trails		(Based on the approved County-wide Trails Plan
Hard Surface Trails		(Based on the approved County-wide Trails Plan
Indoor Community Centers		Being Coordinated with the Recreation Dept
Aquatic Centers		Recreation Dept

Attachments

Attachment 1 – March 2, 2004 Memorandum to the Montgomery County Planning Board titled “Work Program- New State Guidelines for Preparation of the New PROS Plan.

Attachment 2 - Outline for the 2005 Local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) Developed by the Maryland State Department of Planning.