



**2016 Recreation Guidelines: Presentation of Working Draft for Approval as Public Hearing Draft**

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**I. Description**

Review of 2016 Recreation Guidelines Working Draft for approval as the 2016 Recreation Guidelines Public Hearing Draft.

Staff Recommendation: Approval

**II. Summary**

Staff will provide a presentation of the 2016 Recreation Guidelines Working Draft. This briefing will focus on:

- Issues raised at the Planning Board Briefing held June 23, 2016, with responses;
- Continued development of the interactive web tool;
- Briefing held September 9, 2016 for Developers, Builders and Designers;
- Next Steps.

## **Background**

The Planning Board is required to adopt guidelines that detail the standards and requirements for recreational facilities under §59.6.3.7 of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance. The guidelines are necessary, per §59.7.3.4.E.1.f, to determine the adequacy of recreational amenities as part of the development approval process, as applied through regulatory review of private residential development.

The 2016 Recreation Guidelines update was initiated in the summer of 2015 and the Planning Board approved the Scope of Work on October 1, 2015. The project team comprises a staff committee with representatives from each of the Planning Department's geographic areas, as well as from other divisions such as Research and Special Projects, Information Technology and the Parks Department. The project team analyzed the following: recreational needs classified by location and age groups; recreational infrastructure and access to recreational opportunities, and ways in which to offer flexibility to applicants in the provision of recreational amenities, in particular, the development of a web tool to facilitate developer scenario building for recreational amenities. Staff held two work sessions for the development community professionals, in addition to consultation with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the Parks Department.

On June 23, 2016, the team briefed the Planning Board, focusing on the most pertinent issues identified for discussion by the Recreation Guidelines team. The Board held a discussion of issues and staff has worked toward solutions for those issues in the ensuing weeks. On September 9, 2016, the Department held a briefing for the Developers, Builders and Designers to introduce the Preliminary Working Draft of the 2016 Recreation Guidelines and to present the new interactive web tool for the 2016 Guidelines.

### **III. Issues Discussed at June 23, 2016 Planning Board Briefing**

The Planning Board discussion identified six areas for further analysis:

- a. Exemptions for specified age groups in development projects;
- b. Creating incentives for providing recreational facilities;
- c. Enabling creation of specialized or custom facilities;
- d. Dual use options with stormwater management facilities;
- e. Existing recreational facilities away from project sites; and.
- f. Supply credits in optional method projects.

The section below summarizes the Board discussion, followed by the staff response and recommendation.

#### **A. Age-Group Exemptions**

##### **Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board supported the formalization of age-group category exemptions. The Board made the following comments:

- Age-group exemptions must be available, particularly for tight, urban, infill project sites.
- The needs of the neighborhood must be considered when reviewing an exemption application, beyond the needs of the project itself.
- Neighborhood needs are determined by consulting the applicable master plan, sector plan or PROS plan.

- If an exemption is sought for two age-group categories, the subsequent proposed facilities should be publicly accessible (with a bonus for public accessibility).
- The exempted age group(s) recreation demand could be met with off-site facilities.
- The Planning Board makes the determination to grant or deny the exemption, depending on the project and geographical recreation needs.

**Staff Response and Recommendation:** Chapter 7.3, page 32

- *The total number of recreation demand points for all age groups must be provided, with supply points shifted to the other age groups.*
- *The recreational needs of the neighborhood must be considered, i.e., the exemption should not contribute to increasing a current neighborhood recreation need. The applicable master plan, sector plan or PROS Plan should be consulted to determine neighborhood needs.*
- *The application must demonstrate the necessity of the age group recreation demand shifts.*
- *If an exemption is sought for two age group categories, the recreation facilities proposed must constitute a “very substantial” publicly accessible facility as determined by the Planning Board (example: dog park).*

**B. Bonuses (Incentives)**

**Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board supported the provision of bonuses and incentives:

- Starting point should be 10 percent.
- 20 percent for publicly accessible and master plan, sector plan or PROS recommendation.
- The Planning Board has the authority to increase bonus percentages.

**Staff Response and Recommendation:** Chapter 7.2, page 31

- *Recreation facilities that fulfill a master plan, sector plan or PROS plan recommendation earn a 20% bonus (10% for master plan facility, plus 10% for public accessibility). The Board is authorized to increase the bonus percentage in proportion to the proposed facility’s value to the community.*
- *A recreation facility (located within a project site) that is publicly accessible is eligible for a 10% bonus. This is particularly applicable for trail and pedestrian connections.*

**C. Custom Recreation Facilities**

**Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board supported the ability for applicants to propose new/custom recreation facilities:

- Staff review and the Board must determine if the proposed facility is suitable and safe for its location: finding of “adequate, safe and efficient.”
- Flexibility should be offered where the proposed facility offers something of value to the public.
- Consideration of requiring custom facilities to be publicly accessible.
- Remove any facility or evaluative tier that allows “no supervision of tots.”
- The Planning Board has the authority to deny a custom facility.

**Staff Response and Recommendation:** Chapter 5, page 24-26

- *Tier valuation for custom facilities have been refined (see page 26):*
  - *Public access*
  - *Facility Size*
  - *Materials (indoors, outdoors, landscaped, hardscaped)*
  - *Lighting*
  - *Recreation for tots*
  - *Recreation for teens.*

#### D. Stormwater Management and Recreation Facilities

##### **Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board held a discussion about the use of SWM facilities for recreational use:

- Opinions varied: (a) SWM not for recreation, not a visual amenity; (b) potential for visual attractiveness.
- SWM requirements are hardship on current developers; many proposed project sites carry increased capacity requirements to accommodate requirements for older, existing developments that do not meet the current capacity levels.
- The Planning Department should assert itself more aggressively with DPS in the SWM conversation; consider alternatives to ESD where ESD interferes with recreation.
- Recent approval: Martens Property featured a dog park within the SWM facility. This type of recreation facility could be considered for SWM solutions.

##### **Staff Response and Recommendation Chapter 7, page 31**

- *The Planning Department has scheduled meetings with the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to formalize this process.*
- *Recreation proposed must be a full facility for active recreation: a dog park, a paved walking/running path with fencing and seating and/or fitness stations, a bicycle training track with bicycle support station.*
- *The process requires pre-application meetings with the Planning Department staff, DPS and DNR.*
- *Application for use of a SWM facility parcel for recreation requires a Custom Facility Application: a critical level of regulatory review. A detailed description and state of justification is required.*
- *The Planning Board has the authority to allow or deny the proposal as a Custom Recreation Facility.*

#### E. Off-Site Existing Public Recreation Facilities

##### **Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board suggested the distance measured in walking time (walk shed):

- Use actual accessibility (reference Pooks Hill case).
- Use 10-minute walk shed for down-county project sites
- Use 15-minute walk shed for up-county project sites
- Require applicants to submit a Facility Access Plan as recommended by staff.

##### **Staff Response and Recommendation: Chapter 6, page 27**

- *The Recreation Guidelines IT staff have developed an automated geolocation walk shed generator to yield 10-minute walking distance from a project site. Further development and customization is planned specifically for the Planning Department, the Parks Department as applied to the entire county. This tool will generate the mapped walking distance as part of the Recreation Facilities Report for regulatory applications.*
- *Provision of the 15-minute geolocation walk shed generator will be provided with further development and customization as described above..*
- *The requirements of the Facility Access Plan are largely met through the automated walk shed generator.*

#### F. Recreation Supply Credit in Optional Method Zones (CR, CRN, CRT, LSC Zones)

##### **Planning Board Discussion:**

The Planning Board suggested further discussion of this issue with these comments:

- Allow “double credit” provided under the Optional Method of development construction of MNCPPC recreation facilities where Adequate Public Facilities (APF) fees are paid. Double credit defined as: recreation supply credit for both land dedication and the recreation facility (equipment) itself.
- Do not allow “double credit” for those Optional Method projects where the APF fee is not paid.

**Staff Response and Recommendation:** Chapter 6, page 28

- Allow “double credit” for those Optional Method applications that propose construction of MNCPPC facilities (or other public facility) if APF fees are paid.
- Do not allow “double credit” for those Optional Method projects where the APF fee is not paid.

**IV. The Recreation Guidelines Interactive Web Tool**

Development of the Recreation Guidelines Web Tool has continued to include refinement of these functions:

- Geolocation of existing off-site public recreation facilities with applicable recreation supply credit;
- Geolocation of Montgomery County Public School sites with recreational facilities;
- Mapped walk sheds (10-minute walking distance) as measurable from project sites;
- Linkage of recreation facilities detail sheets;
- Custom facility tool;
- Recreation reporting for incorporation to ePlans.

**V. Recreation Guidelines Builders Briefing: September 9, 2016**

Planning Staff held a briefing for Developers, Builders and Designers on September 9, 2016. The briefing included:

- Features of the 2016 Recreation Guidelines:
  - Interactive Web Tool – Web-based Worksheet
  - New Age Category
  - Updated Demographics
  - Expanded menu of Recreation Facility Types
  - Custom Recreation Facilities
  - Master Plan, Sector Plan, PROS Plan Incentives
  - Recreation and Stormwater Management Facilities
- Demonstration of the interactive web tool.
- Questions and Discussion: Participants were encouraged to submit comments for the Recreation Guidelines Public Hearing on November 17, 2016

**VI. Next Steps**

- Planning Board Public Hearing, November 17, 2016
- Planning Board Work Sessions, as scheduled

Attachment: Working Draft