



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

THE MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item # _____

December 8, 2016

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 1, 2016

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks
Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director of Parks for Administration

FROM: John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD)
Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning Section, PPSD
Brenda Sandberg, Legacy Open Space Program Manager, PPSD
Cristina Sasaki, Planner Coordinator, Park and Trail Planning Section, PPSD
Susanne Paul, Senior Planner, Park and Trail Planning Section, PPSD

SUBJECT: Scope of Work for the *Energized Public Spaces: Functional Master Plan for Parks in Mixed Use & Higher Density Residential Areas (EPS FMP)*

Requested Action: Approval of Scope of Work

Staff requests the Board's approval of the Scope of Work for the *Energized Public Spaces: Functional Master Plan for Parks in Mixed Use & Higher Density Residential Areas (EPS FMP)*. The Scope includes Background and Purpose, Methodology and Outcomes, Outline, Outreach Strategy and Schedule. As an introduction, Staff will first share with the Board an overview on the importance of providing parks in the areas of highest population in the County.

Background and Purpose

The main purpose of the *EPS FMP* is to create outdoor spaces where people of all ages and incomes can meet, play, relax, exercise and enjoy nature and more, in a range of parks and public spaces within specific geographic areas. The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation* (M-NCPPC 2010) confirmed that the highest needs are and will continue to be in areas of highest population density.

With the scarcity of developable land and the increase in density, park planning in these areas has become more critical to creating livable and healthy communities. Parks and open spaces have become the "outdoor living rooms" and de facto "backyards" for many of these new communities where they play an increasingly important role in improving public health and promoting social interaction and equity. The *EPS FMP* will be an implementation guide to meeting this challenge.

The *EPS FMP* will align with Planning Board approved goals and objectives established in the *Urban Parks Guidelines* (2010) - **see Attachment 1, [Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation](#)** (M-NCPPC 2010), and the **[2012 Park Recreation & Open Space \(PROS\) Plan](#)**. It is being developed in tandem with the *2017 PROS Plan Update*, which will include a chapter on parks to serve mixed use and higher density residential areas with recommended service delivery strategies.

Methodology and Outcomes

The *EPS FMP* will provide a methodology for identifying and prioritizing the parks and open spaces needed in existing and future areas of highest population in the County. The Plan's Study Area is comprised of areas with higher concentrations of population and employment centers – **see Figure 1**. In addition, the Study Area also aligns with on-going regional and local planning efforts areas: activity centers from the Council of Governments, public transit routes and stations, and recent master and sector plans completed by the Planning Department. Within the Study Area, the Plan methodology will identify priorities for renovation of existing parks, opportunities for partnering with other entities to provide service, and recommendations for acquisition and development of new parks. Review and approval of this functional master plan by the County Council will result in a legally robust plan that can support a wide variety of implementation tools, including dedication through the development process and the land acquisition process. As an approved functional master plan, this Plan also will provide the ability to study priority areas of the County and make new park recommendations without being tied to the land use master plan schedule.

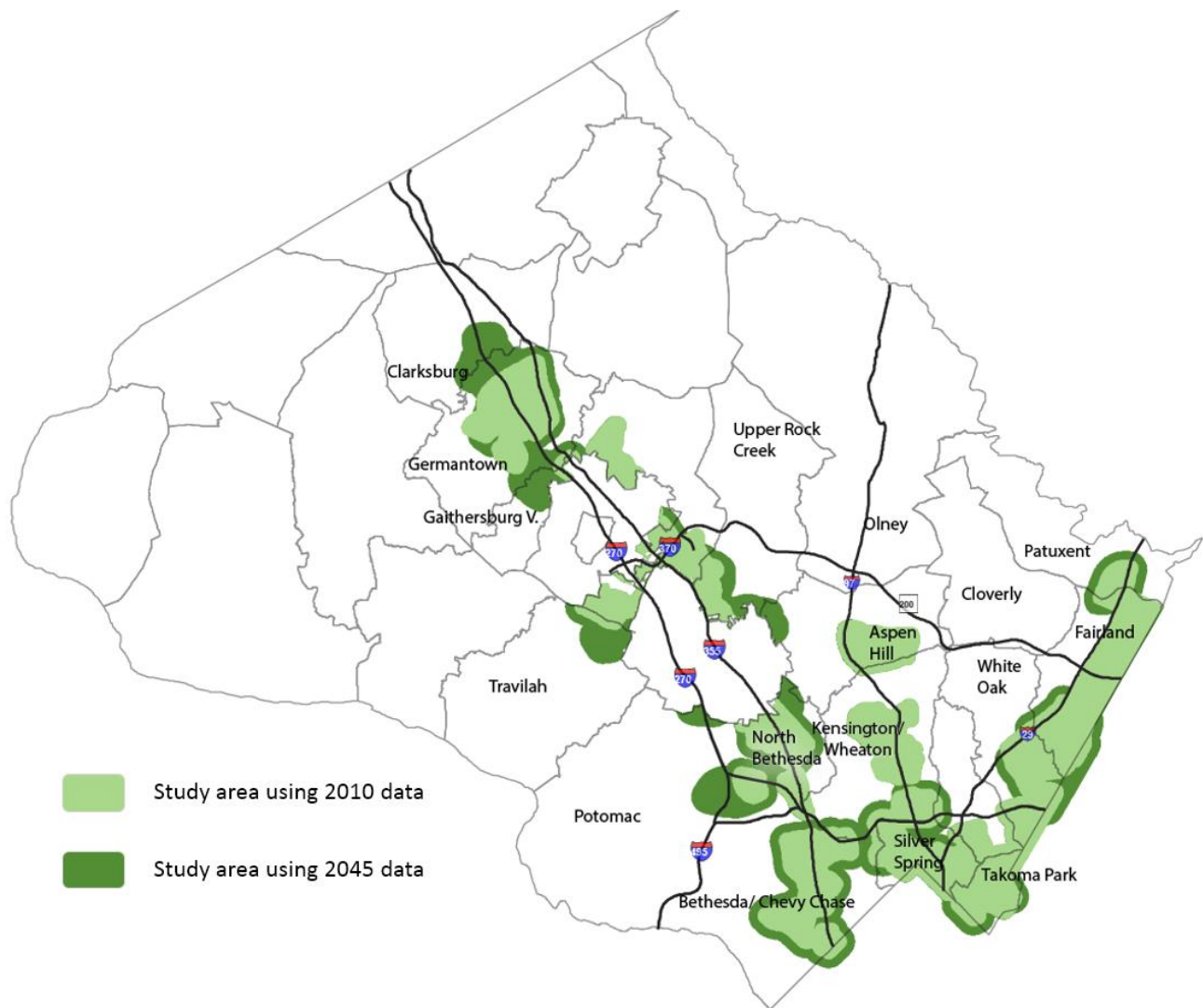


Figure 1 - EPS FMP Study Area

To successfully implement the recommendations of this Plan, staff will submit two new funding projects (PDFs) within the *Capital Improvement Program* (CIP) review process for the FY19-24 CIP: 1) Acquisition: Mixed Use/Higher Density Area Parks, and 2) Facility Planning: Mixed Use/Higher Density Area Parks. Final design and construction funds for major park renovations and new construction of these important parks will be funded through the CIP as Facility Planning is completed, as is done for other major park projects.

In summary, the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan for Parks in Mixed Use & Higher Density Residential Areas* will:

- Identify where parks are needed most to serve dense populations
- Propose funding sources to purchase new parkland
- Prioritize which parks to fund
- Provide a method to evaluate the success of parks that serve the needs of these unique areas

Outline

The Plan will describe the policy framework, define a study area, identify gaps in service and propose a methodology for solutions, with a pilot area of the County as the first application.

Described below is the proposed outline for this plan.

I. Executive Summary

- A. Goals
- B. Needs
- C. Solutions
- D. Implementation

II. Policy and Planning Overview

- A. National Perspective
- B. County Perspective
- C. Public Purpose
- D. Policy and Planning Framework
- E. Relationship to Master Plans and Sector Plans

III. Defining Study Area and Park Typology

- A. Definition of Study Area
- B. Mapping of Study Area
- C. Prioritization of Study Area (including Social Equity)
- D. Park Classification System (Urban and Other Park Types)

IV. Methodology

- A. Identifying Service Gaps
 - 1. A New Methodology for Parks Serving Mixed Use & Higher Density
 - 2. Evaluation of Public Parks
 - 3. Locational Service Gap Findings for Study Area
- B. Finding Solutions
 - 1. Level of Service Indicators
 - 2. Opportunities to Fill Gaps
 - 3. Evaluate & Prioritize Opportunities
 - 4. Pilot Program
 - Find Solutions for Pilot Area
 - Evaluate & Prioritize Opportunities in Pilot Area
- C. Implementing the Solutions
 - 1. Implement Solutions with Innovative Tools
 - Partnerships for Operations & Activation
 - Public, Private and Partnership Ownership Options
 - 2. Pilot Program: Identify Potential Implementation Tools for Pilot Area

V. Future Work Program: Creating Great Parks for a Changing County

- A. Prioritization of Study Areas for Implementation
- B. Find and Implement Solutions for Additional Service Gaps
 - 1. Priority Study Areas
 - 2. Sector and Master Plans Under Revision
- C. Create Dedicated Public Funding for Implementation
 - 1. Capital Budget Funding for Acquisitions
 - 2. Capital Budget Funding for Facility Planning
- D. Measure Progress

VI. Appendices

Outreach

Due to its aggressive schedule and parallel timeframe with the ongoing *2017 PROS Update* and CIP plans, the outreach plan for the *EPS FMP* will be part of a consolidated outreach initiative. These three plans will share a series of resources, including an intercept survey targeted to reach underrepresented residents by going to the places they go on a daily/weekly basis: recreational facilities, grocery stores, and places of worship. The locations will be selected based on County data on race and ethnicity of residents. In addition to the survey, residents will have numerous opportunities to provide input about the future of parks, in person at meetings and events, online through an interactive website and surveys, and via email and snail mail. Outreach presentations and materials including surveys, flyers, websites and other content will be offered in a variety of languages to engage people of varying ethnicities and backgrounds.

Outreach for the *EPS FMP* will also include a working group with representatives of the community, government and developers and land owners. This group will meet on a monthly basis.

Schedule

2016	Plan Schedule
FALL-WINTER	
December 8	Planning Board Presentation – Scope of Work
	Outreach Plan Tasks and Tactics
	Continue Research and Analysis: Study Areas, Identify Service Gaps Countywide, Form Working Group, Focus Groups, Intercept Surveys / Community Events and Conversations
2017	
WINTER	Continue Research and Analysis
	Public Meeting on Working Draft Plan Recommendations
SPRING	Planning Board Working Draft Review
SUMMER	Public Hearing
	Planning Board Work sessions
FALL	Planning Board Approval of Plan
TBD	Submit Planning Board Draft to the County Council and County Executive
	Presentation to the Montgomery County Council PHED Committee

Attachments

Attachment 1 - *Urban Parks Guidelines (2010)*

pc:

Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD)
Jeffrey A. Bourne, Chief, Facilities & Capital Programs Division, MCRD
John Nissel, Deputy Director of Parks Operations, Department of Parks
Jim Poore, Chief, Facilities Management Division, Department of Parks
Doug Ludwig, Chief, Northern Parks, Department of Parks
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Christy Turnbull, Chief, Enterprise Division, Department of Parks
Tony Devaul, Chief, Park Police Division, Department of Parks
Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division, Department of Parks
Michael Ma, Acting Chief, Park Development Division
Kristi Williams, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division, Department of Parks
Gwen Wright, Director, Planning Department
Pamela Zorich, Planner Coordinator, Research and Special Projects, Planning Department



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND - NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item #__ 10 __

Date: June 3, 2010

MEMORANDUM

May 28, 2010

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks for Administration
Gene Giddens, Acting Deputy Director of Parks for Operations
Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division

FROM: Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning Section Park Planning
Stewardship Division
Rachel Davis Newhouse, Planner Coordinator, Park and Trail Planning

RE: Urban Park Guidelines: Objectives, Outreach Strategy Recommendations, and Plan Schedule

RECOMMENDED PLANNING BOARD ACTION: Approval of Objectives, Outreach Strategy, and Schedule

Background

The Department of Parks, with input from the Chairman, recognizing that parks are critical to the formation of sustainable and healthy urban communities, included urban park planning in the Park Planning Work Program FY 08-10. The proposed Objectives of the *Urban Park Guidelines* are based on Staff's preliminary review and analysis of urban parks.

Discussions with staff from our agency and from two of the Urban Districts (Bethesda and Wheaton) have helped us begin to formulate a rationale for the pattern, roles, amount, location, design, ownership, funding, and operations of urban parks. During the past two years, Staff has applied this rationale when developing urban park recommendations in several community sector plans.

How the Urban Park Guidelines will be Used

The *Urban Park Guidelines* will be used by Staff to prepare recommendations to the Board for parks in community based master plans, park master plans, and park facility plans in urban areas. These guidelines should provide some predictability, consistency, and practicality to urban park recommendations, while allowing Staff and the Board flexibility to respond to changing interests, context of a particular community, demographic projections, and best practices.

Department of Parks Staff collaborates with Staff of the Planning Department to recommend a system of parks and open spaces as part of a holistic approach to planning communities, along with land use, transportation, environment, and design, for every community master plan. Staff would like to thank Glenn Kreger, John Carter, Dan Hardy, Mark Pfefferle, and Rose Krasnow and their staff in particular, for their collaboration as we worked through parks and open space recommendations for Germantown,

White Flint, Great Seneca Science Corridor, Takoma Langley, Kensington, Silver Spring Green Space, and currently Long Branch, Wheaton, and Chevy Chase Lakes. Staff will continue to work closely with the Planning Department staff as well as the business community, staff from the various urban districts (e.g. Silver Spring, Wheaton, and Bethesda), and members of the public to develop the *Urban Park Guidelines*.

Overall Goal and Key Question

The goal of the *Urban Park Guidelines* is to re-examine and re-define the role of urban parks in community life. While the County has been served well for years by its extensive park and trail system, its urban centers are largely lacking in accessible, conveniently located, public parkland. The pattern of urban parks must keep pace with the County's vision, plans, and policies for compactly developed, sustainable urban areas.

A key question to be addressed is how to determine which spaces should be acquired and operated by the Department of Parks and which spaces are more appropriately provided and operated by the private sector. Parks are an integral part of the public open space system in each community. The *Urban Park Guidelines* will clarify what is the public sector's responsibility in meeting urban open space needs, regardless of the private sector's potential contribution, because it is impossible to predict the amount, location, and function of future privately-provided public spaces.

Figure 1: A comparison of public and private ownership of the public open space system in some of the Sector Plans recently reviewed and/or approved by the Planning Board.

Sector Plan	Publicly Owned Public Use Space		Public Connectivity	Privately Owned Public Use Space	
	Proposed	Existing	The System	Proposed	Existing
White Flint	Civic Green Expansion of White Flint Neighborhood Park	Wall Local Park White Flint Neighborhood Park	New Recreation Loop Green Streets Green Boulevards	New public open spaces associated with new transit, commercial and housing.	Public open spaces associated with existing mixed use development
Great Seneca Science Corridor	Civic Green Urban Recreational Park	Traville Local Park Great Seneca Extension Stream Valley Park Orchard Neighborhood Park Quince Orchard Valley Neighborhood Park	New Recreation Loop Green Streets Green Boulevards	New public open spaces associated with new transit stations, commercial and housing.	
Takoma Langley	Civic Green	Long Branch & Sligo Stream Valley Park Takoma Park Recreation Center	Bike Lane on University Green Streets	New public open spaces associated with new transit stations, commercial and housing.	

Attachment 1 - Urban Parks Guidelines (2010)

Montgomery County Parks - Park Planning and Stewardship Division

Building on the recommendations in recent sector plans and on “lessons learned” from recent research, design, and implementation of urban parks around the region and country, staff will develop guidelines for the pattern, amount, and implementation (ownership, management, programming, maintenance, policing, and funding) of urban parks in Montgomery County.

Proposed Objectives

Staff proposes the following objectives for the *Urban Park Guidelines*:

Objective 1: Define a new (third) park category in the classification system called Urban Parks.

Staff recommends that the definition, role, and functions of urban parks be revised to better reflect the important and evolving role urban parks play in community life. This would be best accomplished by creating a new category that will highlight the vision and role of urban parks to serve mixed-use, densely developing communities.

The existing Park Classification System includes urban parks under the Community Use category, and defines them as those that “serve ...highly urban areas, providing green space in an often otherwise concrete environment. These parks serve as a buffer between adjacent residential, office and commercial districts... (2005 Park Recreation & Open Space Plan / Land Preservation, Parks & Recreation Plan (PROS / LPPRP) p. III-12) ”.

Figure 2: Existing Park Classification System. Urban Parks are included in the Community Use category.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM			
PARK TYPE	PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL FACILITIES*	APPROXIMATE SIZE
COUNTY-WIDE PARKS – Parks in this category serve all residents of Montgomery County			
- Recreational Oriented Parks			
Regional Parks	Large Parks that provide a wide range of recreational opportunities but retain 2/3 or the acreage as conservation areas.	Picnic / playground areas, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf course, campgrounds, water-oriented recreation areas.	200 acres or more
Recreational Parks	Parks larger than 50 acres in size that are more intensively developed than Regional Parks, but may also may also contain natural areas.	Athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, picnic/playground areas, golf course, trails, natural areas.	50 acres or more
Special Parks	These parks include areas that contain features of historic and cultural significance.	Vary, but may include agricultural centers, garden, small conference centers, historic structures, etc.	Varies
- Conservation Oriented Parks			
Stream Valley Parks	Interconnected linear parks along major stream valleys providing conservation and recreation areas.	Hiker-biker trails, fishing, picnicking, playground areas.	Varies
Conservation Area Parks	Large natural areas acquired to preserve specific natural archaeological or historic features. They also provide opportunities of compatible recreation activities.	Trails, fishing areas, nature study areas, informal picnic areas.	Varies
COMMUNITY USE PARKS – Parks in this category serve residents of surrounding communities			
Urban Parks	Very small parks, serving highly urban areas.	Landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, courts, and shelters.	1 Acre
Neighborhood Parks	Small parks providing informal recreation in residential areas.	Play equipment, play field, sitting area, shelter, tennis and Multi-use courts. (Don not include regulation size ballfields).	2.5 Acre
Local Parks	Larger parks that provide ballfields and both programmed and unprogrammed recreation facilities.	Ballfields, play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic area, shelters, buildings and other facilities.	15 Acre
Neighborhood Conservation Areas	Small parcels of conservation oriented parkland in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.	Generally undeveloped, may include a storm water management pond and related facilities.	Varies

Many open space advocates of urbanizing communities are asking for parks to function differently from typical suburban parks. Densely developed communities with little open space need central gathering spaces, systems of open spaces connected with walking and cycling routes, and enough green to contribute to health of people and of the environment.

The definition of an urban park should be updated to reflect the open space needs of urban communities, including places for gathering, environmental health, human health, and economic vitality.

Objective 2: Propose a standard amount of public parkland for community master plan areas, based on projected future population in the plan area.

Across the nation, several urban parks departments have open space or parkland goals, measured in acres per thousand residents, and in some cases, employees. Staff will review the standards and their basis in order to propose a standard for the urban areas of Montgomery County.

The County currently meets its countywide goal of 15 acres per thousand residents of recreation lands, but the *Urban Park Guidelines* will propose a standard for smaller, urban areas. It is important to note, however, that the amount of parkland alone will not guarantee “the right parks in the right places” in our urban areas. Other objectives should be used in combination with a standard for the amount of parkland.

Objective 3: Propose a methodology for distributing parkland across a community master plan area.

Staff proposes using at least the following criteria to distribute parkland appropriately within an urban area:

- **Help meet identified needs.** This will be assessed by applying PROS/LPPRP needs estimates for facilities in a given area. PROS/LPPRP will be updated at the same time as our work on the *Urban Park Guidelines*, and should include new, urban park facilities such as event spaces, skate spots, etc.
- **Help create a walkable open space system.** The *Urban Park Guidelines* will propose a standard maximum walking distance from residences and transit stops to parks.
- **Fill gaps in service.** The *Urban Park Guidelines* will propose service areas for each type of urban park that corresponds to its role, and will recommend a gap analysis methodology to identify desired locations for new parks.

Objective 4: Develop a vision and performance standards for each type of urban park.

For each type of urban park, the *Urban Park Guidelines* will define a vision or purpose. For example, the approved and adopted White Flint Sector Plan (page 22) describes a Civic Green as “a central space for gatherings, ceremonies and celebrations”, and a Neighborhood Green as “a meeting space and a landmark.” The *Urban Park Guidelines* will also suggest performance standards for each park type.

Objective 5: Clarify urban park acquisition strategies and the various conditions associated with each.

The *Urban Park Guidelines* will include a summary of current practices for acquisition in and beyond our region, including partnerships, urban districts, and urban park divisions within public park agencies.

Owning, operating, and policing urban parks is expensive because of competing interests for the land and because maintenance and operations require more staff, time, and equipment. In difficult fiscal times the challenge of financing the acquisition, development, operation, policing, and maintenance of urban parks becomes even greater.

In recent sector plans, Staff has recommended, and the Board has approved that those open spaces that serve the entire planning area and beyond, should be owned and operated as public parks (*see figure 1*).

Objective 6: Explain how the Environmental Guidelines, Forest Conservation, ESD, and Stormwater Management regulations will be applied to urban parks.

The *Urban Park Guidelines* will facilitate coordination with environmental requirements and develop a response to what is feasible in the urban areas for stormwater management, forest conservation and water quality protection.

Objective 7: Recommend implementation strategies for design, development and construction of urban parks.

The *Urban Park Guidelines* will:

- Summarize the process needed to implement the construction of urban parks.
- Recommend that every time a master plan is adopted by Council the related park acquisition and development projects are added to the proposed CIP work program.
- Suggest standard text for recommendations in master plans to elevate urban parks as priority amenities for developer contributions for acquisition, design, development and construction.
- Summarize other tools for implementation, such as partnerships and donations.

Objective 8: Describe strategies for operations, including maintenance, programming, and policing:

The *Urban Park Guidelines* will describe the different kinds of maintenance and policing standards needed for the higher level use in urban parks. The *Urban Park Guidelines* will:

1. Outline typical costs associated with implementing the standards.
2. Propose performance criteria to evaluate whether or not the standards are being met.
3. Present pros and cons associated with at least the following three strategies for maintenance and policing:
 - a. Parks Department
 - b. Urban Districts
 - c. Contractors
4. Present an analysis of successful case studies of urban park programming.

Outreach Strategy Recommendations

Staff proposes to reach out to the many groups that should have or already have a voice in planning decisions in urban areas of the County. A combination of outreach methods will be used to engage community members who would be most affected by the *Urban Park Guidelines* or who have experience in the needs of urban areas for parks and open space. Member of communities that have existing and planned urban parks will be targeted as well as countywide interest groups such as Recreation Advisory Boards. Outreach methods will include community meetings, public hearings, booths at community events, online surveys, and an interagency work group.

Staff proposes to form an advisory group team for each of the Plan Objectives. Staff will invite people from the following interests to help to develop a vision and implementable strategies for urban parks:

- **Business Community** - Office of Economic Development, CEO's of corporations, Chambers of Commerce
- **Health Community** – Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, health advocacy groups, Regional Services Centers
- **Safety Community** – Park police and County police
- **Recreation Community** – Montgomery County Department of Recreation, Bike and Trail advocacy groups, Recreation Advisory Boards
- **Environmental Community** – Audubon Naturalist Society, the Sierra Club, and others
- **Development Community** – Chambers of Commerce, Advisory Group members from sector plans
- **Non-profit Land Interest Groups** – Urban Land Institute, Trust for Public Land's Center for City Park Excellence, Philadelphia Horticultural Society
- **Sustainable Design Groups** – ASLA, AIA
- **Partnerships and Urban Districts** - such as Bethesda Urban Partnership, Silver Spring, Wheaton

Plan Schedule

Work has already commenced on the collection and consolidation of urban park planning practices through work on community master plans and other studies. Once the Board approves the Plan Objectives, Outreach Strategy Recommendations, and Plan Schedule, the work program can proceed in a focused manner. The intent to produce a Board-approved document by the end of Fiscal Year 2011 can be accomplished per the following timeline:

- ☐ **ONGOING – May 2010**
Department of Parks Inter-Divisional Meetings on draft Objectives and Issues
- ☐ **June 3, 2010**
Plan Objectives, Outreach Strategy Recommendations, and Plan Schedule to Planning Board
- ☐ **ONGOING –WINTER 2010**
Community Outreach and Interagency Collaboration
- ☐ **WINTER 2010**
Publish Draft *Urban Park Guidelines* for Public Review
- ☐ **SPRING 2011**
Public Hearing and Planning Board Approval
- ☐ **TBD**
Publish Approved *Urban Park Guidelines*

CC: John Nissel, Facilities Management
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 Rose Krasnow, Development Review
 Joshua Sloan, Development Review
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 Evette Freeman, Manager of the Silver Spring Urban District
 W. David Dabney, Executive Director of the Bethesda Urban Partnership
 Rob Klein, Wheaton Urban District, Director of Redevelopment
 Joe Callaway, Wheaton Urban District Operations Manager