

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARKS

Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan

Approved June 2022



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Montgomery County Department of Parks

ABSTRACT

Title: 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan.

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Abstract: The 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan is a comprehensive amendment to the 1987 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan. It includes recommendations for new facilities and amenities in the park, changes to existing facilities in the park, and other physical improvements in the park that are implemented through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) of the M-NCPPC, Montgomery County Department of Parks. It also includes recommendations for physical and operational improvements outside the park boundary that require coordination with partner agencies such as the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARKS

Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan

Approved June 2022

Montgomery County's Regional Park Next Door



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Montgomery County Department of Parks



Wheaton Regional Park offers a stage for multicultural expression, sharing, and gathering.

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Paved trails are enjoyed by walkers and bikers, as well as four-legged friends.



CHAPTER

01

INTRODUCTION

- HISTORY OF THE PARK
- THE PARK TODAY
- PLAN AREAS
- PURPOSE
- OPERATING WITH CONSTRAINTS

Introduction

This 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan is the first park master plan developed since the Montgomery Park and Planning Board approved drafts of the county's new General Plan Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the 2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. As a large regional park in an urban area, Wheaton Regional Park embodies many of the most important priorities of Thrive and PROS. Thrive calls on the Department of Parks to take on new roles to:

1. Serve residents of downtowns, town centers, and other intensively developed areas;
2. Recognize social engagement and community building as basic purposes; and
3. Encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.

Building on that direction, PROS describes the primary purpose of parks as to encourage physical activity, facilitate social interaction, and steward environmental resources. PROS encourages parks to serve multiple functions, serve the needs of a diverse population, provide activities for senior citizens, teenagers, and working-age adults, stay abreast of trends and develop new ones, use parks to tell our shared story as a community, provide much-needed access to nature, and mitigate the impacts of climate. A summary of all guiding documents can be found in Appendix 1.

As a regional park in an urban area, Wheaton Regional Park is exceptionally well-positioned to support this policy direction. Indeed, it embodies these priorities. Wheaton Regional Park is one of five regional parks that serve the whole of Montgomery County, along with Black



Park entrance sign at the intersection of Kemp Mill Road and Glenallan Ave.

Hill, Cabin John, Little Bennett, and Rock Creek Regional Parks. Wheaton is the most urban of the county's regional parks and serves a highly diverse population.

As a regional park, Wheaton Regional Park provides large-scale facilities with the capacity to serve the entire county, such as the adventure playground, and destination amenities such as the ice rink, carousel, and miniature train. But after a robust public engagement over

a number of years – including thousands of comments from hundreds of commenters, dozens of staff and stakeholder meetings, hours and hours in the park, and extensive existing conditions and data analysis – it was clear that the park serves a critical function for nearby neighbors as well. Wheaton Regional Park not only provides recreational facilities and services for the entire county, but many residents who live near the park consider it their local park as well.

More than 20,000 people live within a ½ mile walk of the park; nearly 60,000 people live within two miles of the park, an easy bicycling distance; and nearly a quarter of a million people live within four miles of the park.



Families enjoy their time together at the park.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Wheaton Regional Park has a long, rich history. The site was occupied by indigenous peoples for thousands of years beginning as early as 4350 B.C. European settlement of the park area began in the 18th century with the establishment of plantations which relied on enslaved labor through the Civil War.

The land was farmed until 1956 when a master plan establishing Wheaton Regional Park was adopted. At that time, the concept of creating regional parks was new and Wheaton was the first in Montgomery County. The master plan called for the conservancy of over 500 acres for the enjoyment of the growing population.

Ground was broken for the park in 1960 with construction taking place over the next 10 years on amenities visitors continue to enjoy today, including the county's first nature center. The 1987 Master Plan for the park acknowledged the changing needs of the county's population, as well as the need to upgrade aging elements within the park. But the 1987 plan also perpetuated the expectation that visitors would continue to arrive by car, need more internal park roads, and require more parking lots.

THE PARK TODAY

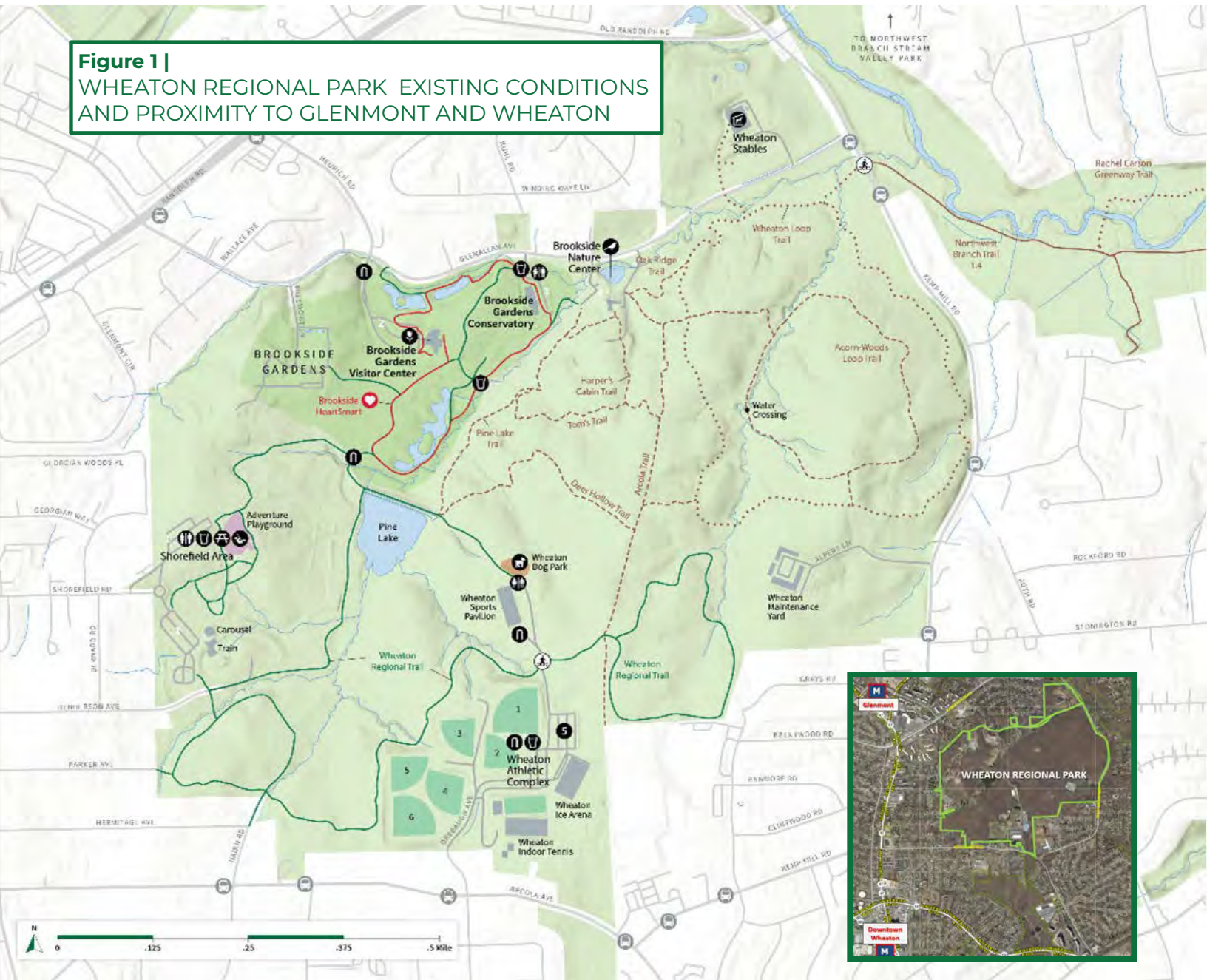
Comprised of 538 acres, Wheaton Regional Park is in the lower, eastern part of the county. It is near the Wheaton, Glenmont, and Kemp Mill communities and adjoins Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park to the east. The park is surrounded by residential development and does not have direct frontage on any major roads. To the west are mostly apartment and townhome communities, and to the north, south and east are primarily single-family homes. Light commercial and retail are nearby in Wheaton, Glenmont, and Kemp Mill. Odessa Shannon Middle School, and Saint Andrew Apostle Church and School, adjoin the park along the eastern edge.

The park is within walking and biking distance of both Wheaton Metro Station and Central Business District, as well as Glenmont Metro Station. It is also well-served by both major and minor roads, including Georgia Avenue (MD 97), Randolph Road, Kemp Mill Road, Arcola Avenue, Shorefield Road, Orebaugh Avenue, Nairn Road, Hermitage Avenue, Henderson Avenue, Parker Avenue, and Old Randolph Road. Bus service in the area is generally good, but there are currently no direct connections to the park.



Groundbreaking of Wheaton Regional Park and aerial view, circa 1960.

Figure 1 |
WHEATON REGIONAL PARK EXISTING CONDITIONS
AND PROXIMITY TO GLENMONT AND WHEATON



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- Hiker/Equestrian
- Hiker Only
- Biker Only

PARK AREAS

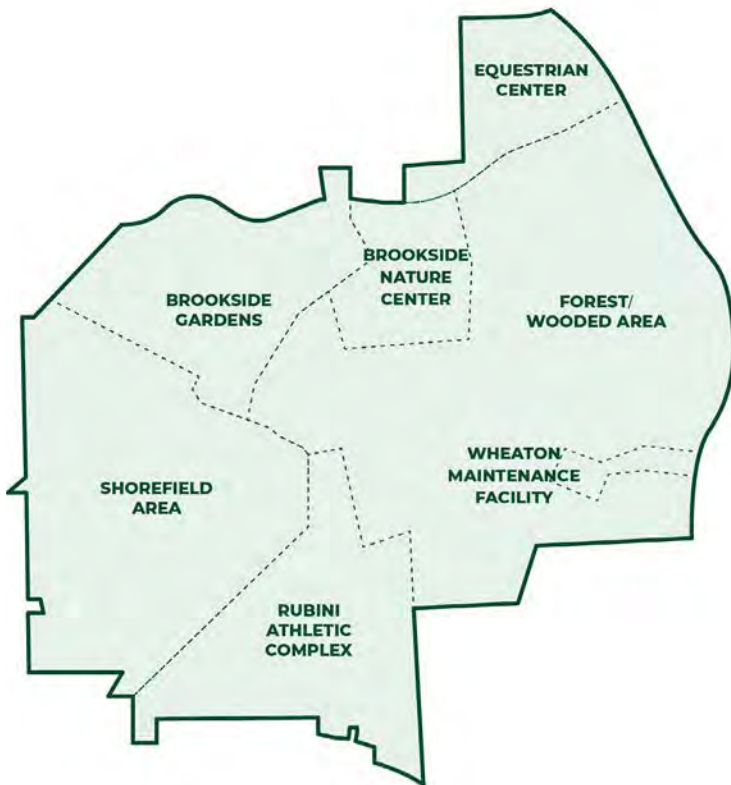
- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PARK AMENITIES

- Playground
- Dog Park
- Brookside Gardens Visitor Center
- Brookside Nature Center
- Wheaton Stables
- Heart Smart Trail
- Restroom
- Restroom
- Water Fountain
- Picnic Area
- Bike Rack
- Pedestrian Crossing
- Bus Stop

PLAN AREAS

For the purposes of this plan, the park is divided into the following six distinct park activity areas and a regional maintenance yard. The plan also makes park-wide recommendations. The activity areas are:



- **Brookside Gardens:** 54 acres, including a visitor center, conservatory, gardens and ponds, pagoda, hard surface trails, maintenance area, and parking lots.
- **Shorefield Area:** 77 acres, including an adventure playground, carousel, miniature train, picnic areas, Pine Lake, Stubbs Barn, hard surface trails, restrooms, and parking lots.
- **Rubini Athletic Complex:** 50 acres, including diamond athletic fields, tennis bubble, ice rink, sports pavilion, dog park, outdoor tennis courts, full-sized basketball court, hard surface trails, rest rooms, and parking lots.
- **Forest/Wooded Area:** 330 acres, including natural surface trails, hard surface trails, equestrian riding center and stables, riding rink, pastures, and parking.
- **Brookside Nature Center:** 23 acres, including a nature center, ancillary buildings, historic cabin, pond, and parking.
- **Maintenance Yard:** 4 acres, including the main building and offices, vehicle maintenance bays, fuel pumps, and employee parking.



Families enjoy biking along the paved trail network.



The nature center regularly offers nature talks at its amphitheater

PURPOSE

The purpose of the 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan is to update the 1987 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan. A park master plan offers guidance to the Department's six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which implements the recommendations of the plan among other projects and public investments. A park master plan establishes priorities for park improvements over the next 15-20 years to better serve existing and future park users, and the surrounding communities.

This plan provides an overall vision for Wheaton Regional Park to modernize the County's premier large park in the eastern down county. It is already a destination for families and sports enthusiasts, but the purpose of this plan is to better serve the broad diversity of people living in this area of the county, as well as their diverse recreational interests.

Much of this plan focuses on modernizing and upgrading existing facilities, but the plan also recommends several new facilities to better meet the needs of an urbanizing, diverse population.

A park master plan establishes priorities for park improvements over the next 15-20 years to better serve existing and future park users, and the surrounding communities.



The park master plan includes recommendations to offer more things to do for teens and young adults, including the Action Sports Park as well as new basketball and soccer courts.

OPERATING WITHIN CONSTRAINTS

Most of the park is forested, as well as topographically and environmentally constrained. Nearly all the land suitable for development in the park has been developed over the years. There is minimal flat, unconstrained land remaining. As a result, this plan is primarily focused on redeveloping, expanding, and repurposing existing facilities and amenities. Where new development is proposed, the land has been evaluated to minimize impacts on high quality natural resources and wildlife habitat.

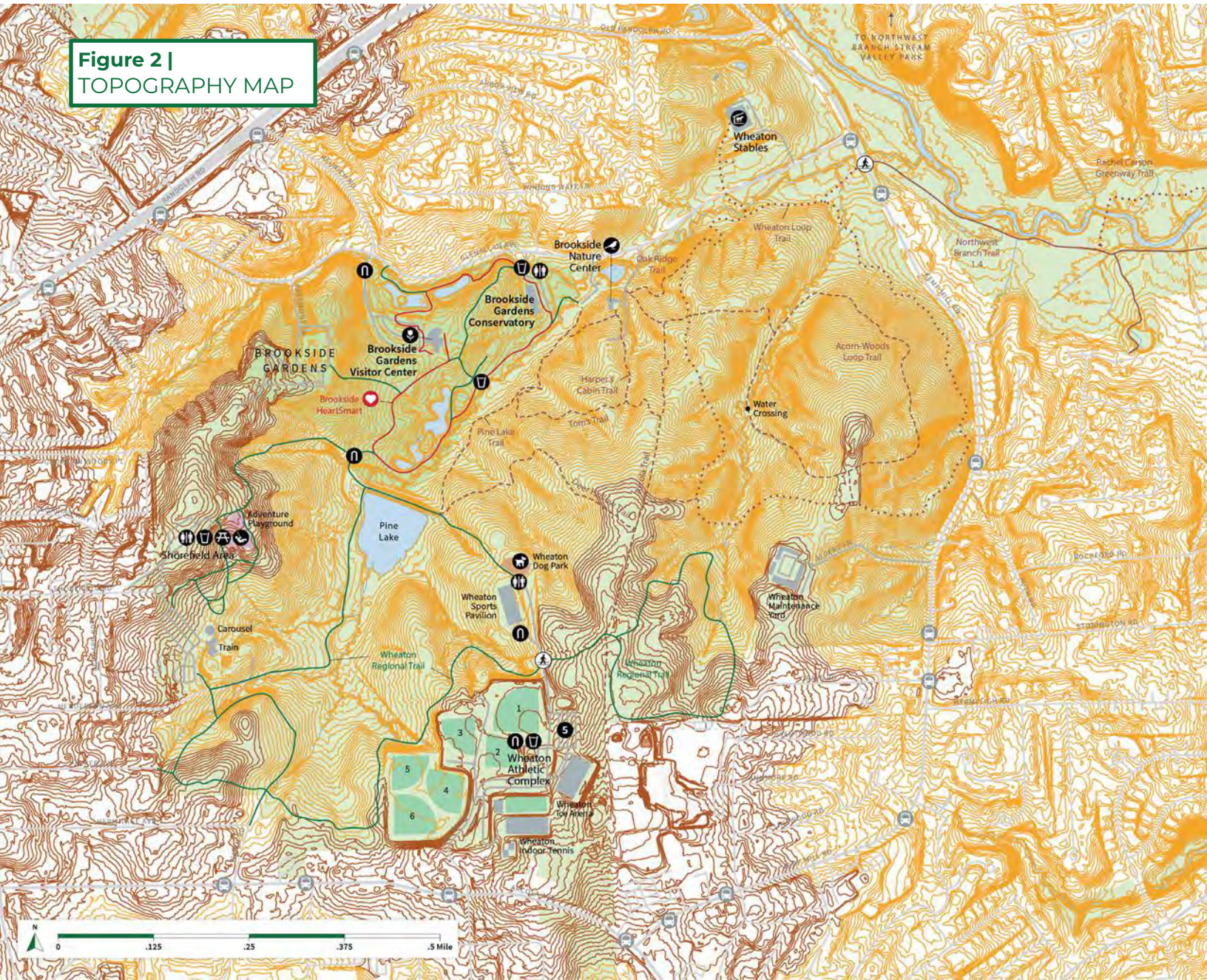
Significant park constraints include:

- Topography – Limited flat and unforested land exist in the park for the development of new amenities. See Figure 2.
- Sensitive environmental resources, including streams, stream buffers, floodplains, wetlands, erodible soils, steep slopes, rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species habitat.
- Limited park expansion potential via land acquisition due to surrounding residential development and institutions.
- Poor public visibility due to lack of direct frontage along major roads.



The Master Plan recommends installing new soccer fields in the Rubini Athletic Complex.

**Figure 2 |
TOPOGRAPHY MAP**



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- Hiker/Equestrian
- - - Hiker Only
- - - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

ELEVATION (2' CONTOURS)

- 201' - 400'
- 401' - 600'



Brookside Gardens offers opportunities for families to enjoy a beautiful landscape together.



CHAPTER

02

PLANNING PROCESS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- PLANNING PROCESS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND PARTNERS
- WHAT WE LEARNED

THE PLANNING PROCESS, STAKEHOLDERS, AND PARTNERS

The communities that surround Wheaton Regional Park are more densely populated and diverse than other regional parks in the county. Therefore, the outreach and community engagement needed to be robust and comprehensive. Park planners worked with staff from the Department's Public Affairs and Community Partnerships (PACP) Division to ensure that all communities were heard during the park master plan process, especially historically under-represented communities. Nearly 50 percent of residents who live within a mile of the park speak a language other than English at home, so outreach and community engagement were conducted in multiple languages whenever feasible, most notably Spanish and Mandarin.

Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) Group

Park planners met with a group of park staff, including park managers, natural and cultural resource staff, trails staff, park development division engineers and landscape architects, park police, and other subject matter experts to assess existing conditions, analyze possible improvements, and vet recommendations. Having a PDCO for a park master plan is critical to ensure that park master plan recommendations are reasonable, desirable, achievable, and cost-effective.

Community Meetings

Parks staff organized and hosted two broad community meetings, in both English and Spanish, and were held in the middle of the planning process to solicit ideas, suggestions, and comments (January 2020), and near the end of the planning process, to share preliminary plan recommendations (September 2021).

The team also met with numerous community and neighborhood groups to discuss the plan and seek comments and ideas in a more relaxed setting. A full list of all community outreach and engagement, including meetings with residents and community organizations, can be found in Appendix 2.

Working Group

Park planners and staff from the Public Affairs and Community Partnerships Division (PACP) created a standing working group, comprised of representatives from the community as well as representatives from nearby schools and civic organizations. This group met frequently during the park master plan process, offering guidance, advice, and comments on not only draft plan recommendations, but also community engagement strategies and community-wide issues related to the park and the surrounding neighborhoods. Members of this working group are listed in Appendix 3.

Outreach Consultant: SKEO

A consultant, SKEO, based in Charlottesville, Virginia and specializing in equitable community engagement, was hired to help the Department reach and obtain comments from residents and stakeholders who are harder to engage. SKEO organized and led meetings with representatives from Kemp Mill's Orthodox Jewish community, as well as Asian-American youth and Latinx residents in nearby communities. A full description of SKEO's work and deliverables can be found in Appendix 4.

Interactive Map

An interactive map was also posted online. More than 100 residents and stakeholders posted comments on the map in the following categories: "I Like This", "This Needs Work" and "Ideas and Suggestions." A summary of the comments can be found in Appendix 6.

Surveys

Project staff conducted hundreds of intercept surveys in multiple languages, most notably Mandarin, Spanish, and English, both in the park and at nearby shopping centers, and garnered more than a thousand additional survey responses using an online survey tool as part of the Department's online Town Hall. A summary of survey results can be found in Appendix 5 and are highlighted extensively throughout the Plan Recommendations chapter.

Advertising

During Fall 2020, Montgomery Parks ran bus ads, digital pop-up ads on phones as well as ads on Radio America and El Tiempo Latino, all designed to get residents to complete the online survey. Ads appeared in English, Spanish and Mandarin. These ads generated nearly one million impressions and over 3,400 clicks to access the survey (*see examples below*).

The planning process included equitable outreach and engagement in multiple languages.



WHAT WE LEARNED

Montgomery Parks analyzed and summarized nearly 2,000 comments and survey results. See image above for a graphic summary of what we heard. Here is a brief summary of some highlights:



Illustration of feedback gathered during the Wheaton Regional Park community outreach and engagement process.



38% BROOKSIDE GARDENS

Which area of the park do you visit most often?

- Brookside Gardens – 38%
- Wooded Area/Natural Surface Trails – 27%
- Shorefield Area (playground, carousel, miniature train) – 16%

Choose the TOP 3 facilities or amenities to you or your family:

- Brookside Gardens
- Natural Surface Trails
- Hard Surface Trails

Choose the TOP 3 facilities or amenities that you would like to see added:

- Nature play area
- Community Garden
- Skate Park



27% WOODED AREA + NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

The recommendations that follow incorporate what we learned and heard from not only residents and park visitors, but also an internal working group of park staff who helped shape the recommendations and ensure they were realistic and achievable. The recommendations reflect a balance between improvements desired by the community and staff analysis plus departmental priorities.



16% SHOREFIELD AREA PLAY FACILITIES



Paved trails offer opportunities for both physical fitness and social gatherings.



CHAPTER

03

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

- PARK-WIDE STRATEGIES
- PARK ACTIVITY AREAS
- LAND ACQUISITION
- NATURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- IMPLEMENTATION



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Park-wide Strategies

The trail recommendations in the plan provide connected paved, natural surface, and hybrid-surface connections to all key park destinations and make north-south and east-west connections for travel through the park.

WAYFINDING

Wheaton Regional Park is within easy walking and biking distance of tens of thousands of county residents, as well as downtown Wheaton and two Metrorail Stations. But it's not easy to find. The surrounding road network lacks directional signs to help people travel to a park entrance. Once in the park, a robust and comprehensive trail system is ready to enjoy, but again these trails lack effective signs that orient visitors and help them navigate from one park area to another.

Signs are one of the easiest ways to enhance the park user experience: directional/wayfinding, informational, interpretive, safety and regulatory. If park visitors know where to find specific park features and know how to navigate the park on trails to reach those destinations, they will be able to not only stay longer, but also avoid having to hop in the car to travel between park areas. Likewise, good way-finding signs along the surrounding road network can also help nearby residents and visitors access different areas of the park without the need for a car.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

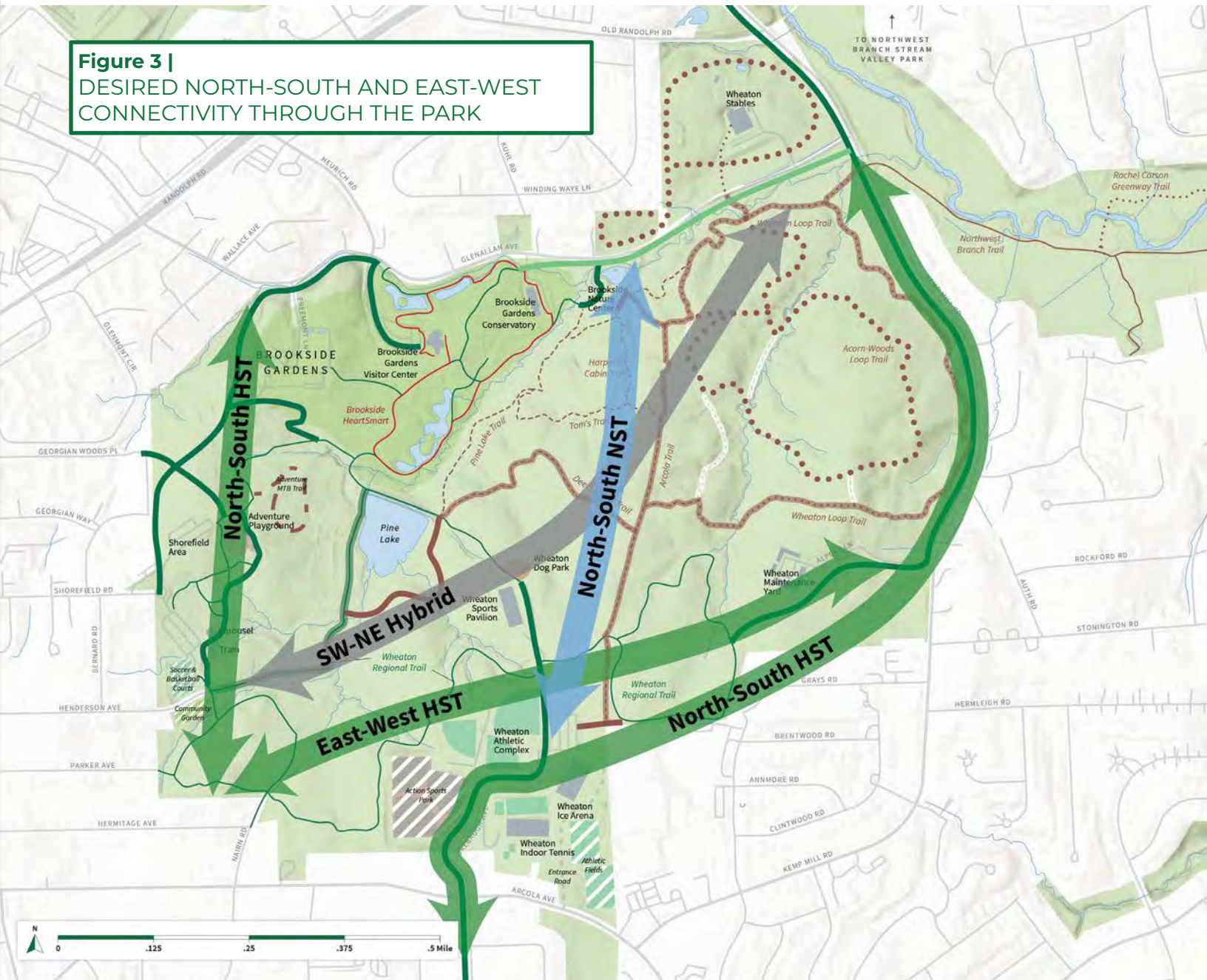
The park does not have direct frontage along surrounding roads, and many residents feel like it's a hidden gem. Visitors arriving at both the Shorefield entrance, and the Rubini Complex entrance feel disoriented, not knowing how to effectively travel to specific facilities or destinations in those park areas or find other park areas when they are lost (arrive at the wrong entrance). Signs along the surrounding and nearby roads help visitors find and access Brookside Gardens, but not the rest of the park. Once in the park, there are no signs that help orient visitors to where they are within the park nor how they can get from one park area to another using the trail system.

Analysis and Recommendations

The park and the roads leading to it do not have effective directional or wayfinding signs. Park entrances are not as clearly marked as they could be. Overall, the park visitor experience would be greatly improved if a comprehensive sign plan were developed.

- Create a comprehensive sign plan for the entire park that includes directional/wayfinding, interpretive, informational, regulatory and safety signs.
- Coordinate with Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County Department of Transportation to improve wayfinding signs along surrounding state and county roads.

Figure 3 |
DESIRED NORTH-SOUTH AND EAST-WEST
CONNECTIVITY THROUGH THE PARK



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- Hiker/Equestrian
- Hiker Only
- Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
- New NS - Shared by All
- New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- New NS - Hiker Only
- New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

CONCEPTUAL CONNECTIONS

- Hard Surface Trail Network
- Natural Surface Trail Network
- Hard Surface / Natural Surface Hybrid T

TRAILS

Montgomery Parks surveys repeatedly indicate that trails are the most popular facilities in the county park system. Wheaton Regional Park is no different. Trails offer opportunities for contemplative experiences, physical activity and fitness, and social gatherings. Trails are open whenever the park is open (generally dawn to dusk, 24/7/365) and can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds. Trails are how people access and experience the park's wooded areas to find a genuine respite from the stresses of daily life.

Wheaton Regional Park contains 5.5 miles of existing natural surface trails and 4.75 miles of existing hard surface trails (including Brookside Garden's Heart Smart trail). These trails are used for walking, hiking, running, biking, horseback riding, nature center programming, and natural resource-based activities such as birdwatching and photography.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

Natural surface and hard surface trails passing through wooded areas in the park are among the most popular and heavily used facilities in the park. Visitors enjoy the quiet and solitude, as well as opportunities to feel immersed in nature. Visitors also appreciate having a pleasant, car-free place to exercise, whether it's running, jogging, bicycling or just walking or hiking. Additionally, equestrians also greatly appreciate the opportunity to ride horses on trails, one of the few places in the county that offers beginner trail rides. A resounding comment is the desire to introduce mountain bikes to some of the natural surface trails.

Additional comments or observations:

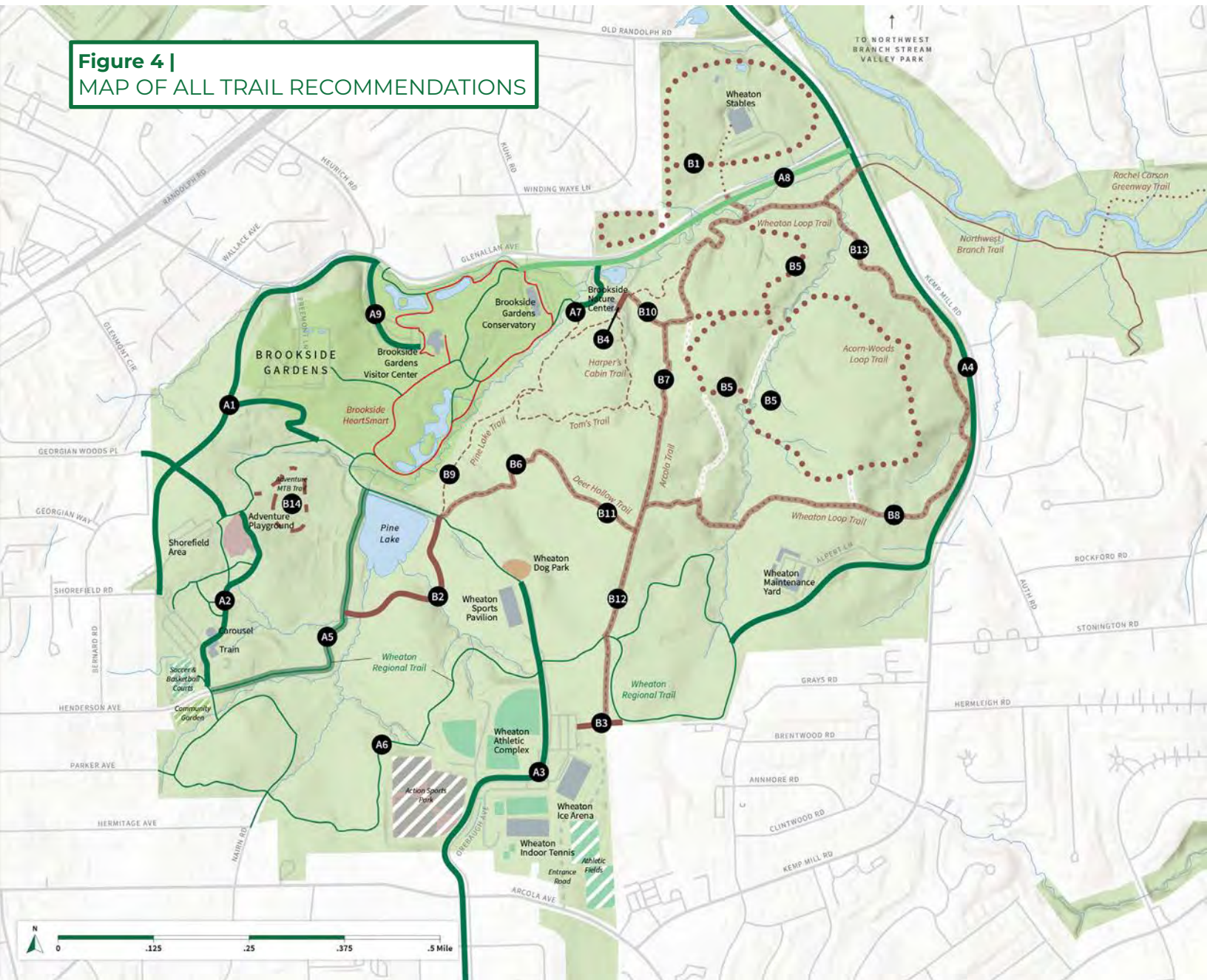
- Wheaton Regional Park currently consists of separate, disconnected nodes. Trails should better connect these isolated park areas.
- Park users often feel disoriented and want improved wayfinding.
- Existing trails are beloved, but surface conditions are frequently poor, both on hard surface and natural surface trails.
- Hiking-only trails are valued by many users.
- Bicycle access to natural surface trails and bicycle-specific experiences are strongly desired by many community members.

- Beginner horseback riders and special program participants need designated equestrian-hiking trails.
- Minimize conflicts between trail user groups (horses and bikes, horses and walkers/hikers, bikers, and walkers/hikers).
- Ensure opportunities for quiet/contemplative experiences; limit some trails to only hiking.
- Improve trail access and connectivity between park activity areas.
- Renovate aging and deteriorating hard surface trails.
- Improve access for people with physical disabilities.
- Enforce dog leash laws.

Analysis and Recommendations

The recommendations in the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan seek to provide multiuse trails, which include bicycles, to all park destinations; offer new shared hiking-equestrian natural surface trails; maintain select hiking-only natural surface trails; improve safety in parking areas; and enhance the user experience through signs, maps, wayfinding, and other amenities.

Figure 4 |
MAP OF ALL TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS



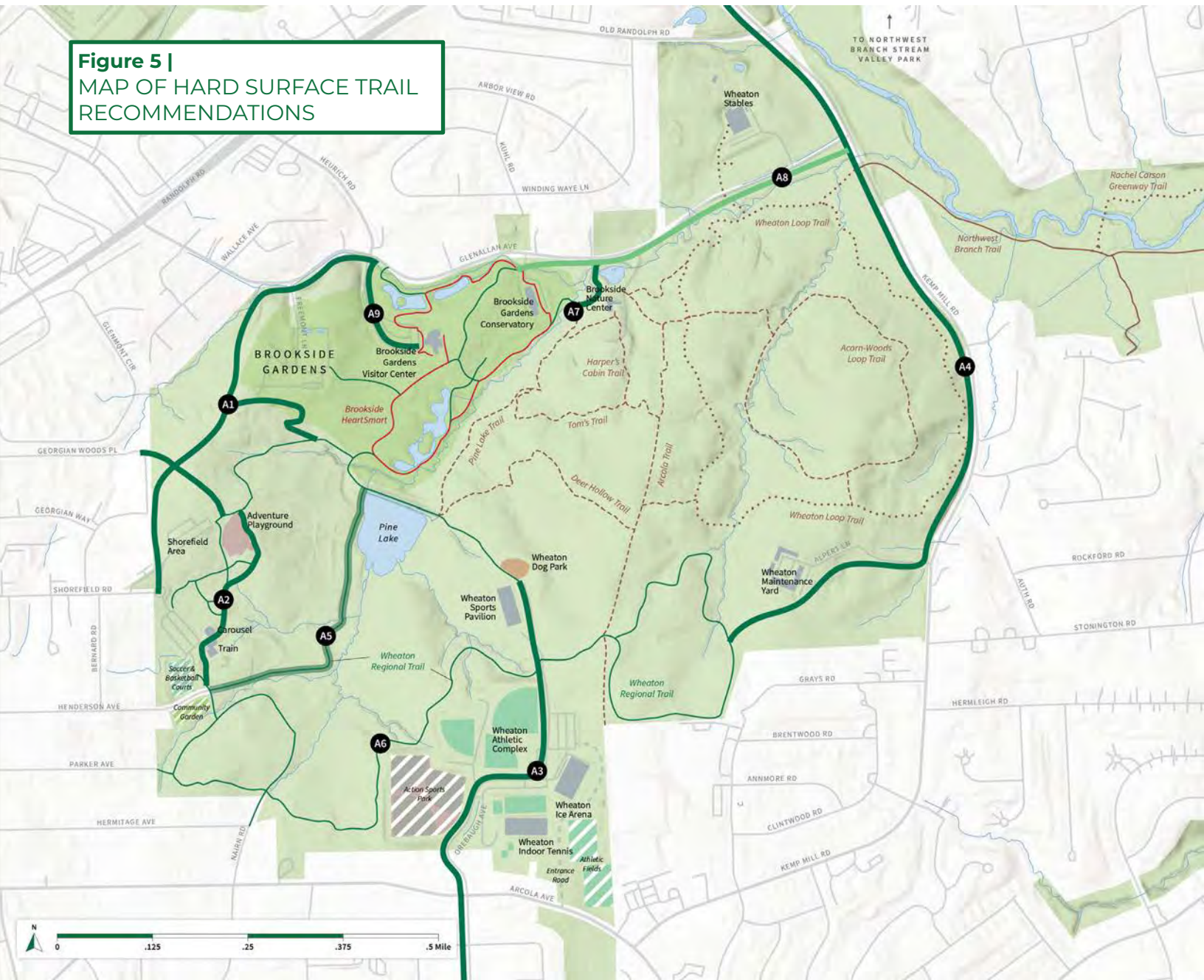
EXISTING CONDITIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| HARD SURFACE TRAILS | PARK AREAS |
| Hiker/Biker | Montgomery Parks |
| HeartSmart Trail | Garden Area |
| NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS | Water Area |
| Shared by All | Athletic Fields |
| Hiker/Equestrian | Dog Park |
| Hiker Only | Playground |
| Biker Only | Buildings |

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION | TRAIL CONVERSION | TRAIL RESURFACING & RENOVATION |
| New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker | Convert to NS - Shared by All | HS Resurfacing* |
| New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker | TRAIL REMOVAL | NS Renovate-in-Place* |
| Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker | Remove HS or NS Trail | PROPOSED PARK AREAS |
| New NS - Shared by All | | Proposed Community Garden |
| New NS - Hiker/Equestrian | | Proposed Action Sports Park |
| New NS - Hiker Only | | Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields |
| New NS - Biker Only | | NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION |
| TRAIL CONVERSION | | New Entrance Road |
| Convert to NS - Shared by All | | |
| TRAIL REMOVAL | | |
| Remove HS or NS Trail | | |

Figure 5 |
MAP OF HARD SURFACE TRAIL
RECOMMENDATIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- - - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - Hiker Only
- - - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

The photos below show existing conditions that will be addressed - Gravel roads and paved trail surfaces will be upgraded; crossing safety on Kemp Mill, as well as bike and pedestrian safety along Glenallan Avenue, will be improved; and potholes along the trails will be repaired.



A1 Gravel Access



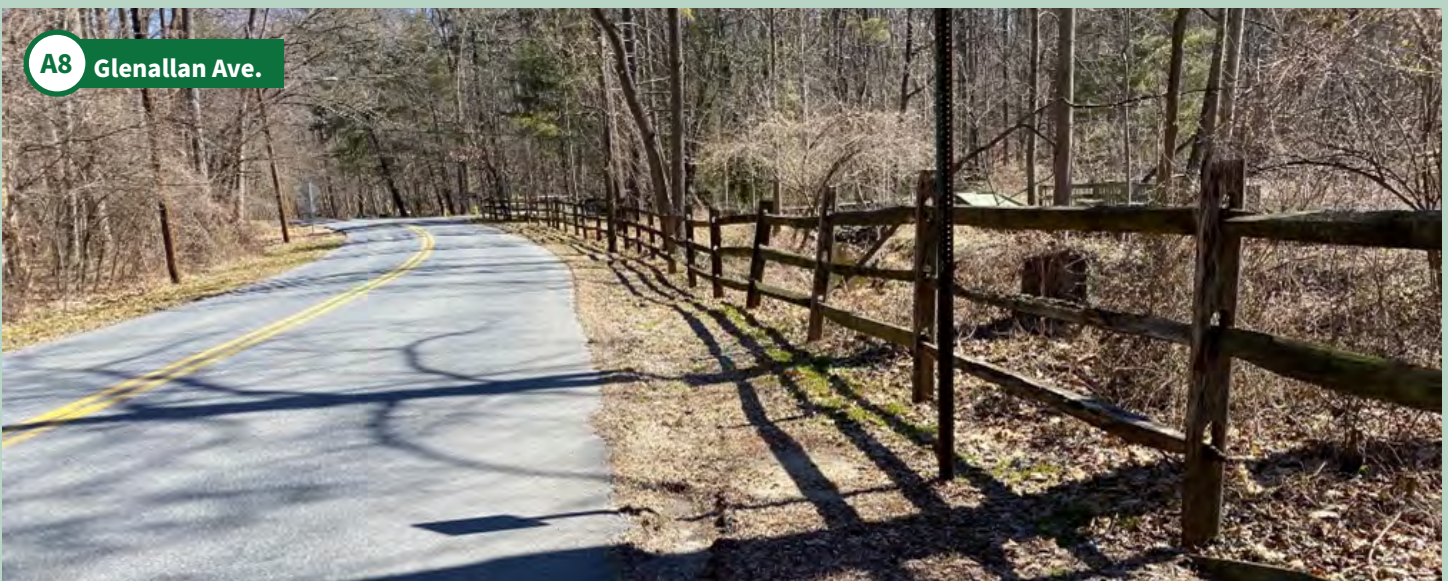
A4 Kemp Mill



A5 Travel Path from Henderson Ave. to Pine Lake.



A6 Poor Trail Condition on Wheaton Regional Trail



A8 Glenallan Ave.

Table 01 | Refer to Fig. 5

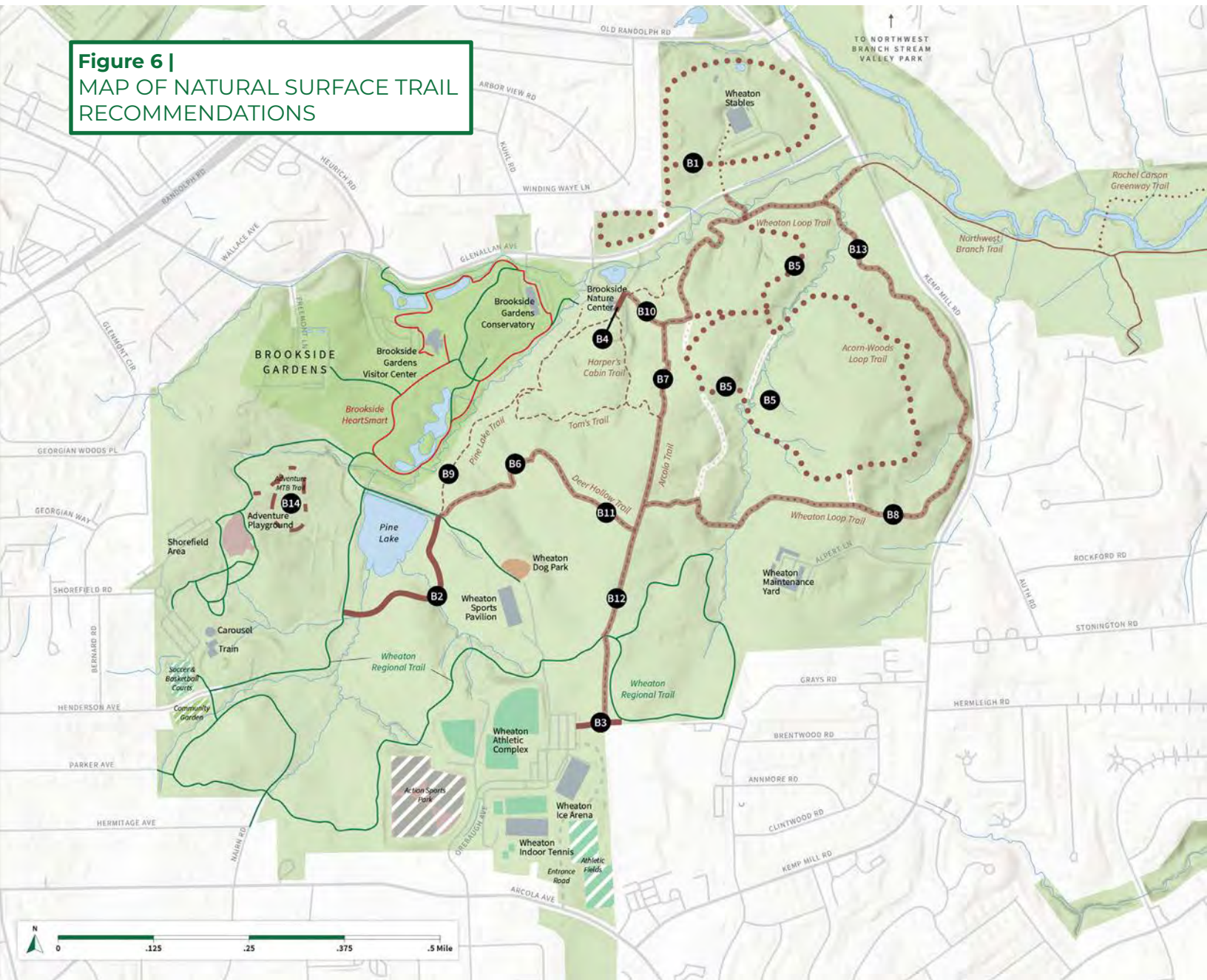
HARD SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Conduct comprehensive inspection of natural surface trail condition. Renovate trails in place, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific condition-improvement recommendations that are known at the time of the plan publication are made separately (B9-B13). "Renovate-in-place" means improvements are done in the original trail corridor. "Re-route" trail improvement require that the trail be moved to a new alignment. Re-route project may require additional consultation with cultural and natural resource staff members. 	Immediate
Global	Continue Trail Ranger inspections to identify trail-condition issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Rangers receive training on identifying and reporting trail issues. WRP Trail Rangers will be asked to monitor compliance with modal designations as modified in this plan and suggest additional educational or signage improvements that may be needed. 	Ongoing
B1	Construct equestrian-hiking trail adjacent to Wheaton Horse Stable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide equestrian trails for beginner riders and programmed therapy rides. Allow access for hikers. Construct new equestrian trails (B1) prior to changing modal designation on horse loop (B8) 	Immediate/ Short
B2	Construct new multi-use natural surface trail along the southeast edge of Pine Lake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the Wheaton Regional Trail at the natural surface trailhead to the existing gravel path on the west side of Pike Lake (A5). Restrict use of existing people's choice trail. Inspect existing pedestrian bridge on people's choice trail. 	Short
B3	Convert people's choice trail to an official, multi-use trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From Arcola Trail (current name) to Wheaton Ice Arena parking area. 	Short
B4	Construct a trail connection through or around the Brookside Nature Center parking lot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From nature center boardwalk loop to Tom's Loop connector trail. 	Short
B5	Close a western section of the Acorn Woods Trail (inner loop trail) and re-route the trail. Construct a new trail connector between outer and inner loops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing trail requires repairs to two bridges/culverts. Re-route trail to an alignment the meets Parks trail guidelines. Designate this trail as equestrian-hiking only 	Short

HARD SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS (cont'd).

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Provide public information on trail designation changes.	<i>Prior to change modal use of trails, provide users with advanced notice with on-trail signs and social media.</i>	Immediate/Short
Global	Label modal designations on trail signs	<i>In coordination with the signage and wayfinding effort, update trail signs to indicate new modal designations.</i>	Short
B6	Convert Deer Hollow Trail to multi-use.	<i>Provides connection from Pine Lake to multi-use natural surface trails.</i>	Short
B7	Convert Arcola Trail to multi-use and change name to the North-South Trail.	<i>Provides north-south connection through the park.</i>	Short
B8	Convert the Wheaton Loop Trail to multi-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Include the spur connection to Kemp Mill Road.</i> <i>Provides recreational loop for all users and connection to Northwest Branch Trail.</i> 	Short
B9	Renovate existing Pine Lake Trail from paved towards Tom's Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Renovate-in-place</i> <i>Existing trail is poorly aligned and is prone to erosion.</i> <i>Re-name trail</i> 	Short
B10	Renovate the hiking-only trail from Arcola/North-South Trail to the Brookside Nature Center.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B11	Renovate eastern portion of Deer Hollow Trail.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B12	Renovate Arcola/North-South Trail.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B13	Renovate northeastern section of the Wheaton Loop Trail (outer loop) and the spur connection to Kemp Mill Rd.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B14	Construct a Mountain Bike Adventure Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Single direction natural surface mountain biking trail.</i> <i>Target age: teenagers.</i> <i>Difficulty: beginner/moderate.</i> <i>Construct observation platform.</i> 	Short

Figure 6 |
MAP OF NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL
RECOMMENDATIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
 - HeartSmart Trail
- NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS**
- Shared by All
 - Hiker/Equestrian
 - Hiker Only
 - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New NS - Shared by All
- New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- New NS - Hiker Only
- New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

The photos below show existing conditions that will be addressed - Some of people's choice trails will be improved, rerouted, or narrowed to minimize impacts on tree roots. Natural surfaces trails and trail treads will be upgraded or rerouted to improve drainage, while former trails will be naturalized with tree plantings.



B2 Bridge on People's Choice Trail at Pine Lake



B2 People's Choice Trail at Pine Lake



B9 Wide Section of Pine Lake Trail



B10 Wide muddy section of Arcola trail



B11 Erosion on a "fall line" trail



B13 Closed former gravel access road

Table 02 | Refer to Fig. 6

NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Conduct comprehensive inspection of natural surface trail condition. Renovate trails in place, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Specific condition-improvement recommendations that are known at the time of the plan publication are made separately (B9-B13).</i> • <i>"Renovate-in-place" means improvements are done in the original trail corridor. "Re-route" trail improvement require that the trail be moved to a new alignment. Re-route project may require additional consultation with cultural and natural resource staff members.</i> 	Immediate
Global	Continue Trail Ranger inspections to identify trail-condition issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trail Rangers receive training on identifying and reporting trail issues.</i> • <i>WRP Trail Rangers will be asked to monitor compliance with modal designations as modified in this plan and suggest additional educational or signage improvements that may be needed.</i> 	Ongoing
B1	Construct equestrian-hiking trail adjacent to Wheaton Horse Stable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide equestrian trails for beginner riders and programmed therapy rides.</i> • <i>Allow access for hikers.</i> • <i>Construct new equestrian trails (B1) prior to changing modal designation on horse loop (B8)</i> 	Immediate/ Short
B2	Construct new multi-use natural surface trail along the southeast edge of Pine Lake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>From the Wheaton Regional Trail at the natural surface trailhead to the existing gravel path on the west side of Pike Lake (A5).</i> • <i>Restrict use of existing people's choice trail.</i> • <i>Inspect existing pedestrian bridge on people's choice trail.</i> 	Short
B3	Convert people's choice trail to an official, multi-use trail.	<i>From Arcola Trail (current name) to Wheaton Ice Arena parking area.</i>	Short
B4	Construct a trail connection through or around the Brookside Nature Center parking lot.	<i>From nature center boardwalk loop to Tom's Loop connector trail.</i>	Short

NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS (contd.).

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
B5	Close a western section of the Acorn Woods Trail (inner loop trail) and re-route the trail. Construct a new trail connector between outer and inner loops.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing trail requires repairs to two bridges/culverts. Re-route trail to an alignment the meets Parks trail guidelines. Designate this trail as equestrian-hiking only 	Short
Global	Provide public information on trail designation changes.	<i>Prior to change modal use of trails, provide users with advanced notice with on-trail signs and social media.</i>	Immediate/Short
Global	Label modal designations on trail signs	<i>In coordination with the signage and wayfinding effort, update trail signs to indicate new modal designations.</i>	Short
B6	Convert Deer Hollow Trail to multi-use.	<i>Provides connection from Pine Lake to multi-use natural surface trails.</i>	Short
B7	Convert Arcola Trail to multi-use and change name to the North-South Trail.	<i>Provides north-south connection through the park.</i>	Short
B8	Convert the Wheaton Loop Trail to multi-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include the spur connection to Kemp Mill Road. Provides recreational loop for all users and connection to Northwest Branch Trail. 	Short
B9	Renovate existing Pine Lake Trail from paved towards Tom's Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renovate-in-place Existing trail is poorly aligned and is prone to erosion. Re-name trail 	Short
B10	Renovate the hiking-only trail from Arcola/North-South Trail to the Brookside Nature Center.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B11	Renovate eastern portion of Deer Hollow Trail.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B12	Renovate Arcola/North-South Trail.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B13	Renovate northeastern section of the Wheaton Loop Trail (outer loop) and the spur connection to Kemp Mill Road.	<i>Renovate-in-place</i>	Short
B14	Construct a Mountain Bike Adventure Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single direction natural surface mountain biking trail. Target age: teenagers. Difficulty: beginner/moderate. Construct observation platform. 	Short

PARK ACCESS

Wheaton Regional Park was primarily built during the county's history when most residents traveled by private automobiles. In fact, the park's current design and configuration reflects this legacy with large parking lots that are difficult to navigate on-foot or by bicycle. Access by walking and biking can be generally characterized as poor. Additionally, the roads leading to and circumventing the park often lack sidewalks or bike paths, and where they do exist, the conditions are often poor or inadequate and do not feel safe. And while transit service in the communities that surround the park is generally good, direct transit access to the park is non-existent. The park is within easy walking or biking distance from both Wheaton and Glenmont Metro Stations.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

There are limited entrances for people walking and biking and welcome signage and maps are missing. It is not easy getting to the park by means other than driving. More park users would travel to the park by walking, biking, and transit if facilities were added or improved. Georgia Avenue, for example, is a barrier for safe walking and biking to the park from communities west of the road. Intersections do not feel safe. It is also not easy traveling from one park activity area to another.

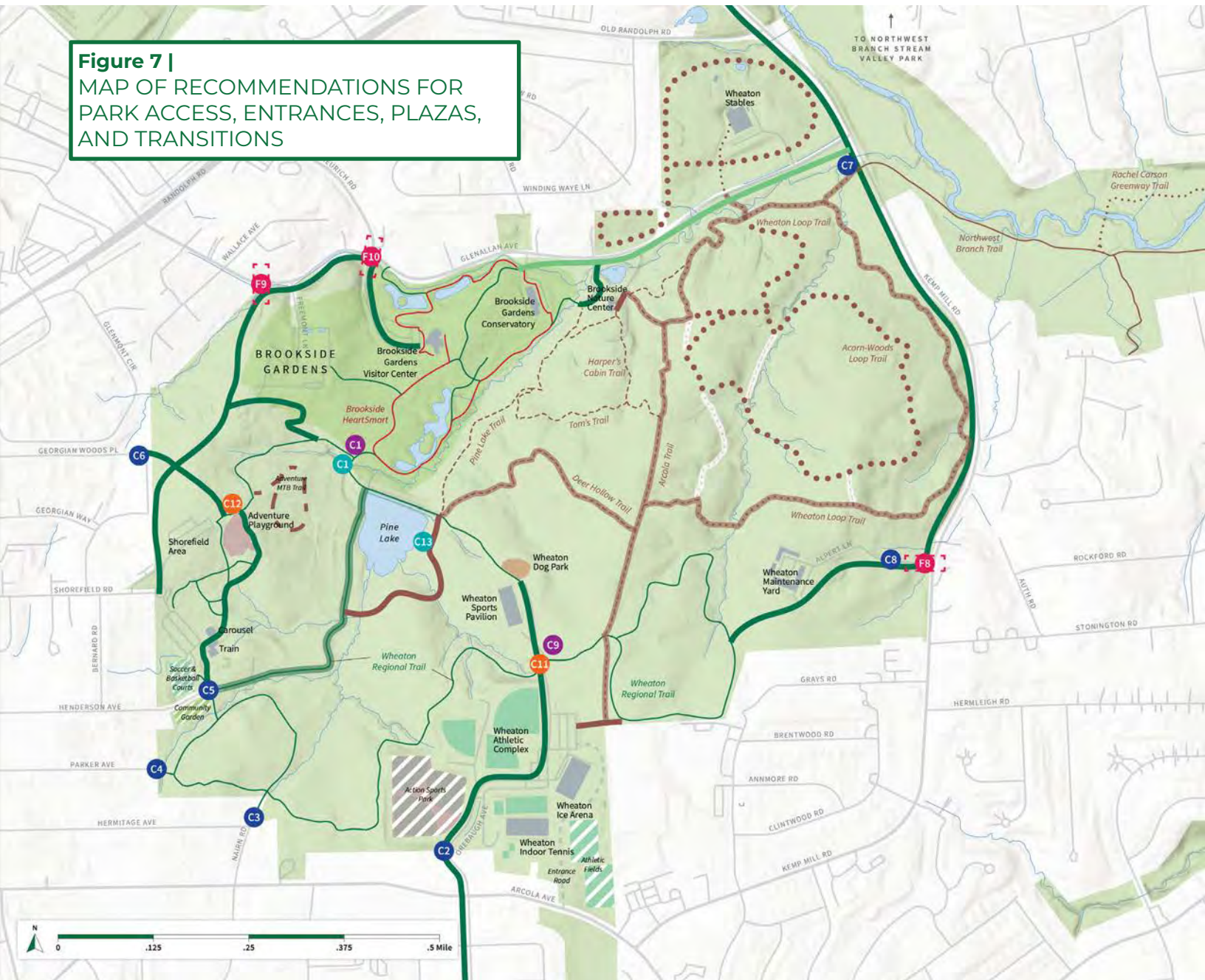
The master plan includes recommendations to make the park more accessible to strollers and people with physical disabilities.

Analysis and Recommendations

Park entrances should be added and formalized to support pedestrian access to the park. Bike parking racks should be added to provide secure bike storage. The transition between Wheaton Regional Park and Brookside Gardens should be enhanced and made more welcoming. This plan only has jurisdiction on M-NCPPC parkland. Some of the issues identified by both the community and internal stakeholders are specific to the park and will be included in the plan. But some issues will require input from and coordination with external agencies. For example, improvements to the Georgia Ave. intersections will require discussions with the Maryland State Highway Administration. And sidewalk, bike path and transit improvements along roads surround the park (excluding Georgia Ave.) will need to be discussed with the County's Department of Transportation.



Figure 7 |
MAP OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
PARK ACCESS, ENTRANCES, PLAZAS,
AND TRANSITIONS



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- - - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - Hiker Only
- - - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
- New NS - Shared by All
- - - New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - New NS - Hiker Only
- - - New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

PROPOSED PARK FEATURES

- Plaza
- Park Map
- Park Entrance Information
- Call Box
- Park Access (Non-Parkland)

Table 03 | Refer to Fig. 7**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARK ACCESS, ENTRANCES, PLAZAS, AND TRANSITIONS.**

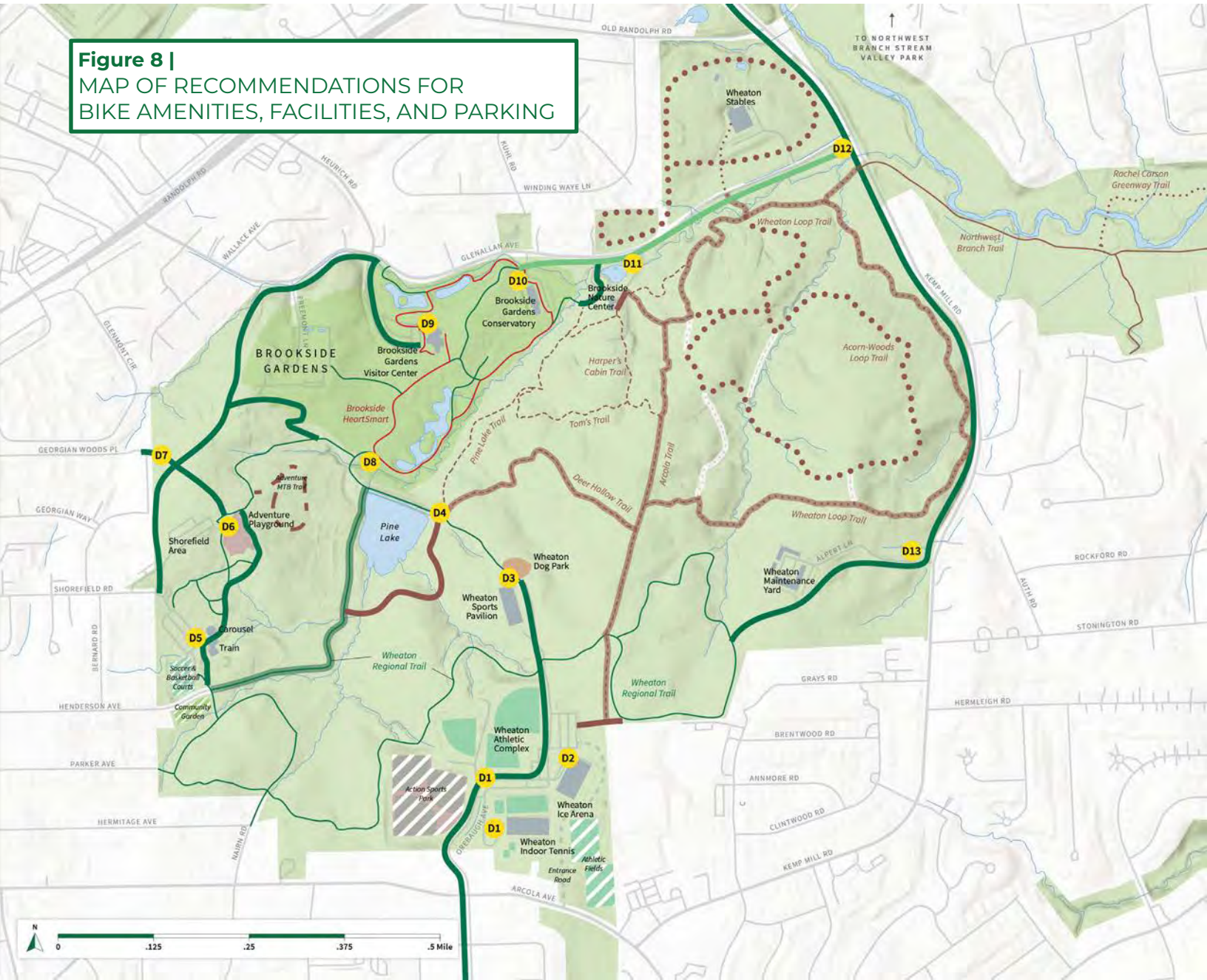
MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Create welcoming entryways to Wheaton Regional Park at bicycle and pedestrian entrances.	<i>All pedestrian and bicycle entrances of the park.</i>	Ongoing
Global	Improve transit service to the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) to evaluate ways to adjust current bus routes/schedules or add new routes to better serve the park, with bus stops at/service to Brookside Gardens, Brookside Nature Center, the Equestrian Center, the Rubini Athletic Complex, and the Shorefield Area. • Participate in MCDOT's RideOn Reimagined Study to suggest ideas for MCDOT's consideration. 	Ongoing
C1	Develop an inviting transition plaza between Wheaton Regional Park trails and Brookside Gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic tables and benches. • Expanded bike parking (D10) • Kiosk with park & trail map and park information • Bike Fix-It Station and pump 	Medium
C2	Improve park entrance at Orebaugh Avenue	<i>Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike</i>	Short
C3	Formalize entrance /park map at Nairn Road	<i>Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike</i>	Short
C4	Formalize entrance /park map at Parker Avenue	<i>Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike</i>	Short
C5	Refresh existing kiosk and Sligo Trail Map at Henderson Avenue	<i>Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike</i>	Short
C6	New public park entrance at Georgian Woods Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike. • Timing determined by the paving of the gravel access road (A1). 	Medium
C7	Add park welcome sign and park map kiosk at Kemp Mill Road	<i>Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike</i>	Short
C8	New public park entrance at Alpert Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and bicycle scale signs. • Timing determined by Kemp Mill Trail Project (A4). 	Medium

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARK ACCESS, ENTRANCES, PLAZAS, AND TRANSITIONS (contd.).

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
C9	Park & Trail network map at hard surface Wheaton Regional Trail	<i>At road crossing between Athletic Complex and dog park</i>	Short
C11	Call box	<i>At road crossing between Athletic Complex and dog park</i>	Medium
C12	Call box	<i>At Shorefield Road upper parking area / Adventure playground</i>	Medium
C13	Enhance access to the lake to improve the fishing experience	<i>Consider a floating dock and/or boardwalks closer to the lake</i>	Medium



Figure 8 |
MAP OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BIKE AMENITIES, FACILITIES, AND PARKING



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- - - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - Hiker Only
- - - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
- New NS - Shared by All
- - - New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - New NS - Hiker Only
- - - New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

BIKE AMENITIES

- Bike Racks

Table 04 | Refer to Fig. 8**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BIKE AMENITIES, FACILITIES, AND PARKING.**

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Use racks that meet Montgomery County Bike Parking standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally inverted U's unless otherwise specified or desired. • Monitor use and add capacity as needed. 	Ongoing
D1	Install 8 bike racks	<i>Orebaugh Ave Tennis Courts (4) and Ballfields (4).</i>	Short
D2	Install 2 bike racks	<i>Wheaton Ice Arena.</i>	Short
D3	Install 4 bike racks	<i>Wheaton Sports Pavilion & Dog Park.</i>	Short
D4	Install 2 bike racks	<i>At transition between multiuse trails and hiking-only Pine Lake Trail (current name, subject to change).</i>	Short
D5	Install 10 bike racks	<i>At carousel and train. Bike fix-it station and pump.</i>	Short
D6	Install 3 bike racks	<i>Adventure Playground.</i>	Short
D7	Install 2 bike racks	<i>At new public park entrance at Georgian Woods Pl.</i>	Short
D8	Expand existing bike racks to 6-8	<i>At plaza (C1).</i>	Short
D9	Install 6 bike racks	<i>Brookside Gardens Visitor Center.</i>	Short
D10	Install 4 bike racks	<i>Replace existing bike rack.</i>	Immediate
D11	Install 4 bike racks	<i>Brookside Nature Center.</i>	Short
D12	Install 4 bike racks	<i>Glenallan at Kemp Mill Road.</i>	Short
D13	Install 2 bike racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pedestrian and bicycle entrance at Kemp Mill and Alpert Lane. • Timing dependent on new trail connection (A4). 	Medium

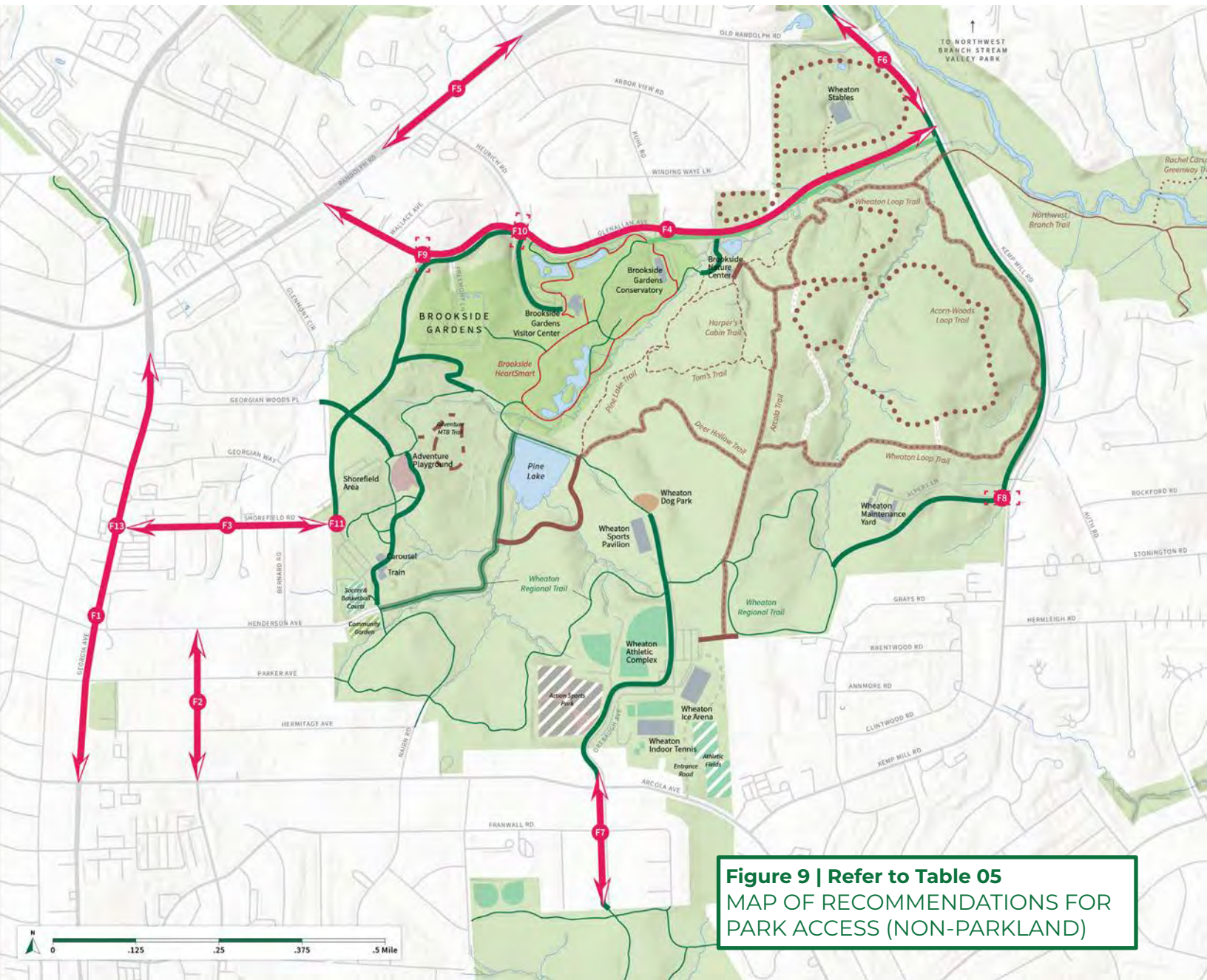


Figure 9 | Refer to Table O5
MAP OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARK ACCESS (NON-PARKLAND)

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- Hiker/Equestrian
- Hiker Only
- Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
- New NS - Shared by All
- New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- New NS - Hiker Only
- New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

PARK ACCESS

- Non-Parkland
- Crossing

Table 05 | Refer to Fig. 9**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARK ACCESS (NON-PARK LAND).**

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION
Global	Incorporate Wheaton Regional Park access into transportation, sector, and functional plans
Global	Study bus access to Wheaton Regional Park
F1	Improve the safety of pedestrian crossings of Georgia Avenue. Long-term recommendation.
F1	Mid-block crossing at Library and Hermitage Ave
F2	Build trail in MCDOT ROW from Amherst to Henderson
F3	On-street bicycle facilities on Shorefield Road. [Shared Use Path is in Bicycle Master Plan. Refer to Complete Street Guidelines.]
F4	Improve bicycle and pedestrian access along and across Glenallan Ave
F5	Study lowering the speed limit on Randolph Road
F6	Improve bicycle or trail connection to Matthew Henson Trail
F7	Improve bicycle or trail connections and wayfinding to Sligo Creek Trail. Consider HAWK at Orebaugh Ave.
F8	Improve crossing safety at Alpert Lane to proposed park entrance
F9	Improve crossing safety of Glenallan Ave
F10	Improve crossing safety of Glenallan Ave at Heurich Rd.
F11	Explore CaBi station at Shorefield entrance
F13	Prominent Gateway Signs (Georgia Ave and Shorefield Rd)



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Park Activity Areas

Recommendations for facilities located entirely within one of the park activity areas can be found in the relevant park activity area.



SHOREFIELD AREA



BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER



RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX



EQUESTRIAN CENTER



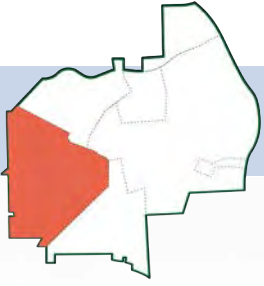
BROOKSIDE GARDENS



FOREST/WOODED AREA

Figure 10 |
AERIAL VIEW OF THE PARK ACTIVITY AREAS





SHOREFIELD AREA



Children of all ages enjoy the adventure playground.

Perhaps the most well-used and well-known area of the park outside of Brookside Gardens, the Shorefield Area is located on the western side of the park with access primarily off Georgia Avenue. It is proximate to two Metrorail stations, both Glenmont and Wheaton, as well as to hundreds of families who live in adjacent multi-family communities. It features picnic shelters with grills, an adventure playground, the Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel, the miniature train, hard surface park trails, Stubbs Barn, Pine Lake and most recently an area with adult fitness equipment.

The Shorefield Area is popular with families with young children and is where families from around the county and DC region gather for birthdays and other life celebrations. It is also where large community festivals and events take place, including the annual Friendship Picnic each September. Brookside Gardens, Brookside Nature Center, and the Rubini Athletic Complex are a short walk or bike ride from Shorefield Area along the numerous park trails, both hard surface and natural surface.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

We heard a lot of comments about the facilities in this part of the park. Overall, park users feel like this area offers a lot of things to do for families with young children, but could do more for older children, teens, and young adults.

Additionally, we learned that although thousands of residents live within easy walking or biking distance to the Shorefield Area, many choose not to walk or bike there because the entrance does not feel welcoming and there are no clear signs telling visitors what this area offers, nor what other areas of the park offer. And finally, although numerous multi-family communities are adjacent or very nearby to the park, there is no direct access to the park from these communities (*see Park Access recommendations in the previous pages*).

Other things we heard:

- Desire for food concessions or food trucks.
- Picnic shelters should accommodate larger groups.
- The playground is not designed well for children with disabilities.
- Desire to designate a trail leading to the historic Stubbs Barn. The Stubbs Barn should be open to the public.
- Walking and ADA access between the lower and upper parking lot areas could be improved.
- Replace the carousel when the current one is relocated to Clarksburg.
- Improve the fishing experience at Pine Lake. Upgrade signs around the lake.
- The Brookside Gardens gated entrance does not feel welcoming.
- This area of the park is popular for birding, particularly near the lower parking lot, and along the gravel road leading to Pine Lake.



Visitors to the Shorefield Area are greeted with this well-designed park entrance sign.

Analysis and Recommendations

This area of the park can offer more for park visitors of all ages. The Shorefield Area has the potential to be one of the premier destinations in the county for family fun and visitors of all ages and abilities. It should be more easily accessible by walking, biking, people with disabilities, and transit. It should offer an area for food trucks and an adjacent outdoor food court, as well as a picnic shelter for larger groups. There should be signs to help visitors learn about and more easily navigate to other areas of the park. The playground should be designed to be more accessible and fully inclusive.

Residents of adjacent multi-family communities should be able to safely, and more efficiently, walk or bike to the park. The fishing experience at Pine Lake should be improved, it should be easier for fishing enthusiasts to access the lake, and the signs around the lake should better interpret the natural resource benefits of the lake. The entrance to Brookside Gardens should feel more welcoming and offer picnic tables and seating. The wooded area could include a mountain bike skills area for older children and teens.



The Shorefield Area is a great place to enjoy a family picnic.



The Shorefield Area hosts many great community events, including the annual Friendship Picnic that offers live music.



The plan recommends a designated area for food trucks in the Shorefield Area



The Shorefield Area is a popular area for birding.

Table 06 | Refer to Fig. 11

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD AREA AND UPPER PARKING LOT AREA.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
SU-1, B14	Construct a beginner mountain bike skills loop trail	<i>In the woods adjacent to the adventure playground.</i>	Short
SU-3	Renovate playground to better serve children with emotional, mental, and physical disabilities and make it easier for parents and caregivers to supervise children (remove retaining walls that create sharp contrasts between upper and lower areas, for example).	<p><i>Renovation should address the following issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accessible</i> • <i>Inclusive</i> • <i>Sense of enclosure</i> • <i>Better grading to allow for safer supervision</i> • <i>Features for older children and teens</i> • <i>More seating</i> • <i>Nature play space</i> 	Long
SU-4	Construct a large picnic shelter for groups over 50.	<i>Include amenities nearby, such as large grassy open space for casual volleyball and soccer</i>	Short
SU-5, A1	Construct a new connector between the gravel road (to be paved, see SU-6) and Georgian Woods Place	<i>Both an ADA ramp and stairs</i>	Short
SU-6, A1	Pave the gravel road from the upper parking lot to the deer fence line around Stubbs Barn		Medium
SU-7	Construct a new path or sidewalk from the park entrance, along the southern edge of the parking lot, to the paths at the bathrooms	<i>Improve crosswalks and add seating/benches.</i>	Short
SU-8, SL-5	Construct sustainable stormwater management facilities to treat parking lot runoff	<i>Include signs to educate park users about sustainable stormwater management.</i>	Short

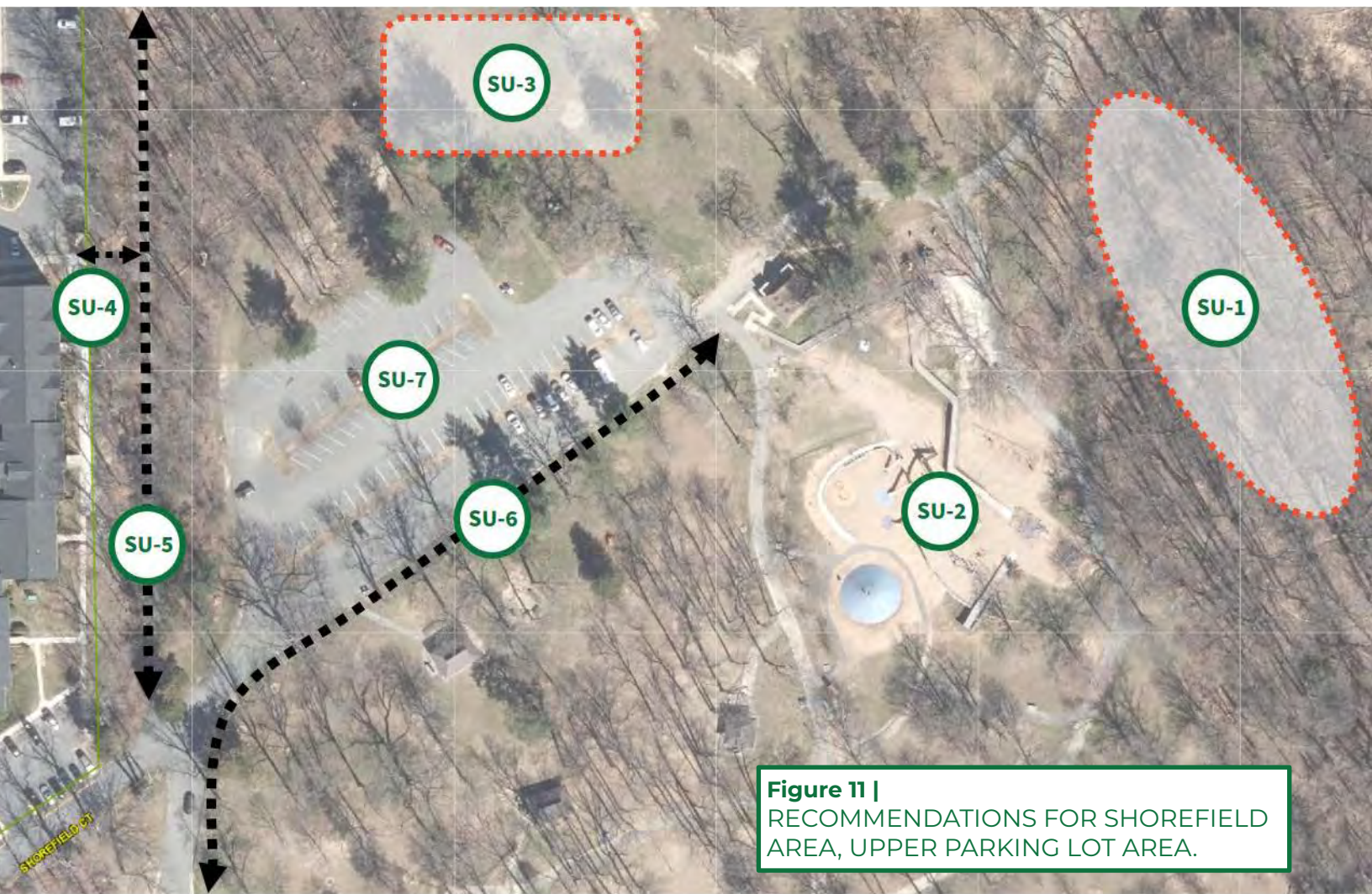


Figure 11 |
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD
AREA, UPPER PARKING LOT AREA.

- SU-1** Build a beginner-level mountain biking skills area/loop trail
- SU-2** Renovate playground to offer more opportunities for inclusive and accessible play
- SU-3** Construct a large picnic shelter with associated open lawn area for casual soccer or volleyball plus bocce court
- SU-4** Build a path connector from gravel road (future paved trail) to Georgian Woods Place

- SU-5** Pave the gravel road between the parking lot and Armstrong House/Stubbs Barn
- SU-6** Construct a sidewalk between park entrance and path near bathrooms
- SU-7** Renovate parking lot and add stormwater management facilities

Table 07 | Refer to Fig. 12 and 13

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD AREA AND LOWER PARKING LOT AREA.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
SL-1, SL-3	Construct a new path or sidewalk connecting the upper and lower parking lot areas	<i>Include amenities nearby, such as large grassy open space for casual volleyball and soccer</i>	Short
SL-2	Install a large electronic LED sign to inform arriving park users about facilities in this area of the park, as well as available programs park-wide. Ensure sign allows for remote access to keep information timely and fresh.		Medium
SL-4	Realign the driveway to lead drivers to the middle drive aisle, and realign crosswalk	<i>Include signs to educate park users about sustainable stormwater management.</i>	Short
SU-8, SL-5	Construct sustainable stormwater management facilities to treat parking lot runoff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Include signs to educate park users about sustainable stormwater management.</i> • <i>Renovation should address the following issues:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accessible</i> • <i>Inclusive</i> • <i>Sense of enclosure</i> • <i>Better grading to allow for safer supervision</i> • <i>Features for older children and teens</i> • <i>More seating</i> • <i>Nature play space</i> 	Short
SL-6, SL-7	Swap a picnic shelter with the bathroom; Make the bathroom accessible.	<i>Off the lower parking lot</i>	Short
SL-8	Replace Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel when it gets relocated to Clarksburg	<i>Enterprise Division anticipates this expense and has funding available when needed.</i>	Medium

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD AREA AND LOWER PARKING LOT AREA (contd.).

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
SL-9, SL-10	Design an area to accommodate up to 8 food trucks plus a large shaded, weather-protected picnic area that can comfortably accommodate at least 100 people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On west side of lower parking lot; ensure adequate electricity so that food trucks don't have to idle; ensure safe pedestrian access from larger activity area across/around parking lot. Minimize impacts to existing trees, which offer important bird habitat in this area of the park. 	Short
SL-11	Construct 2 new basketball and 2 new soccer courts In area currently occupied by the overflow gravel parking lot. Minimize impacts to existing trees, which are important bird habitat in this area of the park.	<i>In area currently occupied by the overflow gravel parking lot. Minimize impacts to existing trees, which are important bird habitat in this area of the park.</i>	Short
SL-12	Construct a community garden approximately 1/3 acre in size near the Henderson Avenue entrance on site formerly occupied by a park house.	<i>Adjacent to Henderson Avenue</i>	Short
SL-13	Seek abandonment of Henderson Avenue that juts into the park	<i>Consider using this abandoned ROW for any future improvements in this area of the park</i>	Medium
SL-14	Acquire 2016 Henderson Avenue		Medium-Long
SL-15, PL-3, A5	Pave the gravel road between Henderson Avenue and Pine Lake to become a hard surface park trail		Medium
SL-16	Add artwork and other playful design elements to enhance the experience of train riders		Medium

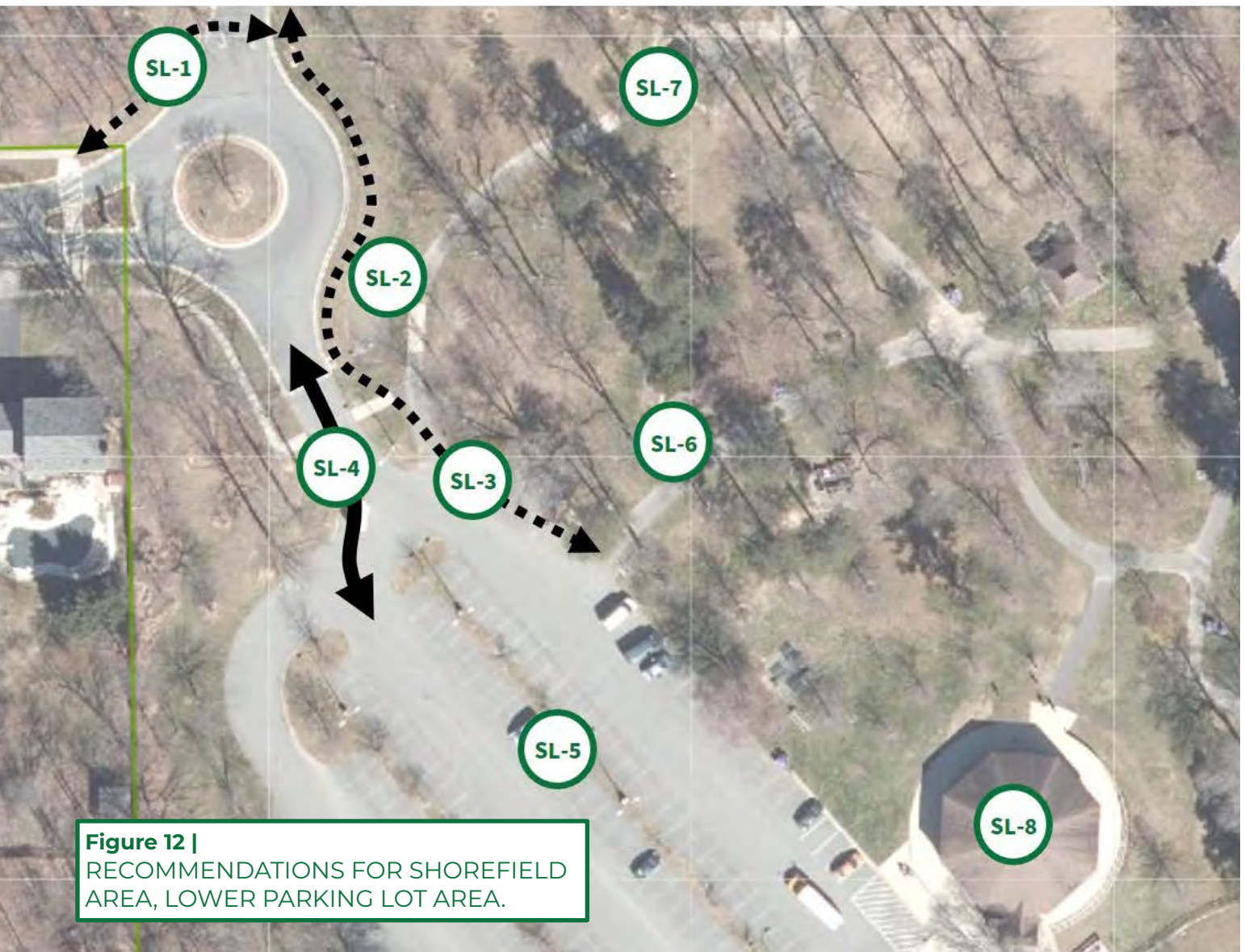


Figure 12 |
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD
AREA, LOWER PARKING LOT AREA.

- SL-1** Build a sidewalk and crosswalk to the upper parking lot area, connect to future sidewalk
- SL-2** Install a large LCD sign to communicate park information
- SL-3** Build a sidewalk between lower and upper parking lot areas
- SL-4** Realign driveway and crosswalk
- SL-5** Renovate parking lot and add stormwater management facilities

- SL-6** Construct Accessible bathroom, replacing current picnic shelter
- SL-7** Remove current bathroom, replace with new picnic shelter
- SL-8** Replace Carousel when current one is moved to Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park

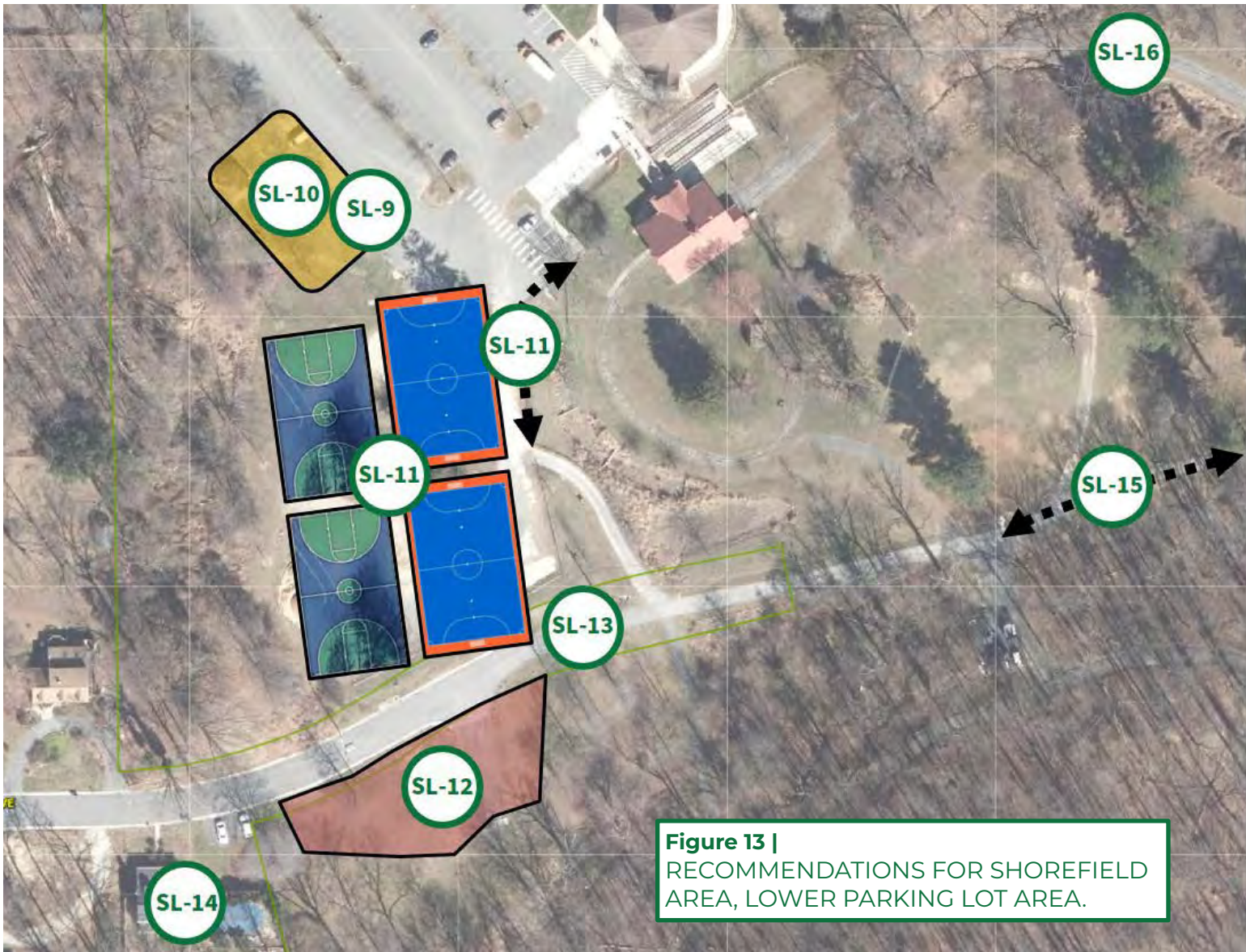


Figure 13 |
 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD
 AREA, LOWER PARKING LOT AREA.

- SL-9** Dedicate parking spaces as a food truck parking area
- SL-10** Remove current picnic shelter, replace with larger picnic pavilion to complement new food truck area
- SL-11** Construct 2 new basketball courts and 2 new Soccer courts, replacing the gravel parking lot area. Construct new access pathway.
- SL-12** Build a community garden, add parallel parking along Henderson Avenue

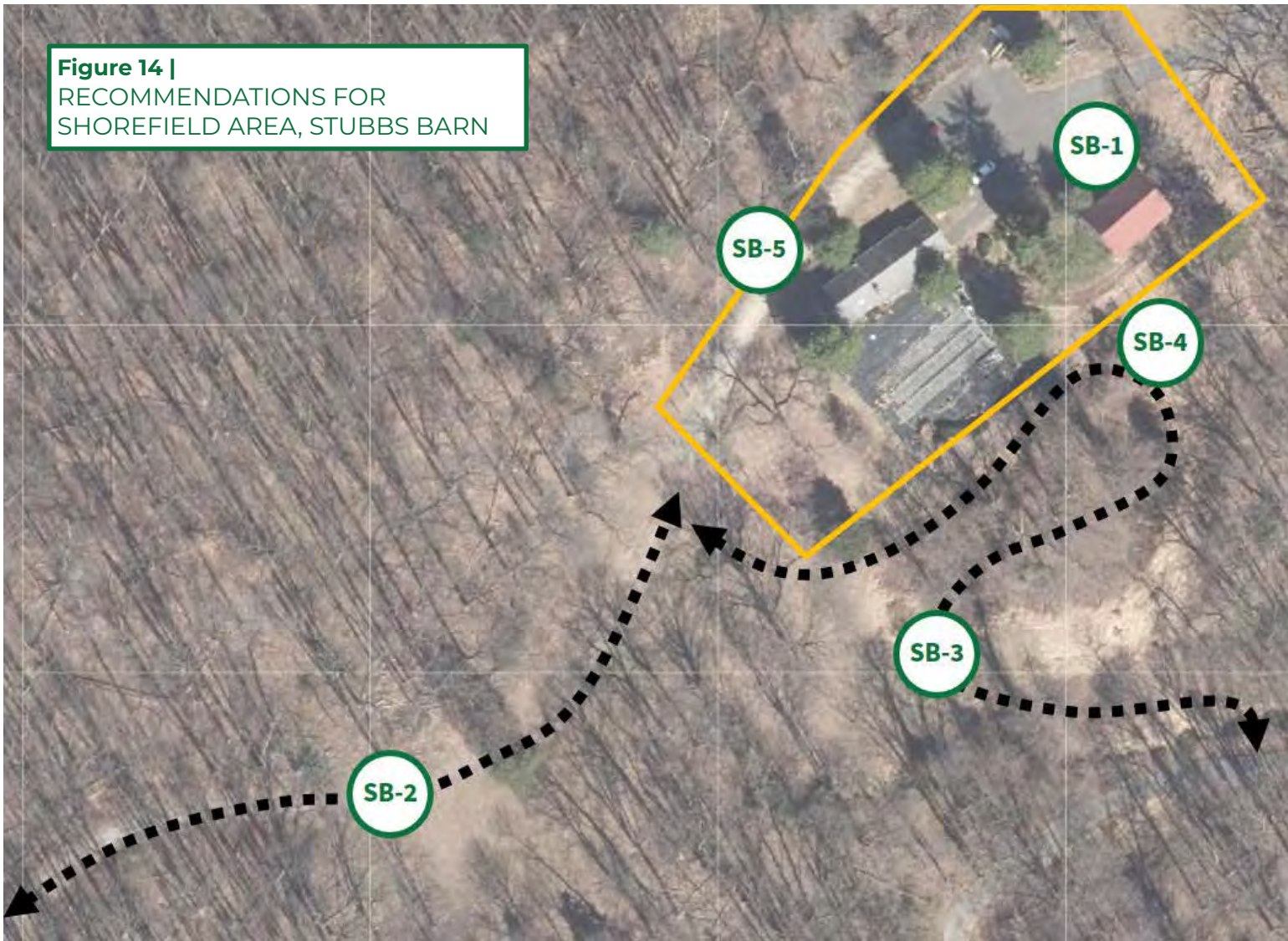
- SL-13** Seek abandonment of Henderson Avenue to officially make it parkland
- SL-14** Acquire property to add to park
- SL-15** Pave existing gravel road
- SL-16** Enhance miniature train experience with artwork and/or information billboards/signs

Table 07 | Refer to Fig. 14

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD AREA - STUBBS BARN.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
SB-1	Conduct a facility condition assessment.	<p><i>To determine the amount of investment needed to both:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Invite park users to visit the barn's interior.</i> <i>Activate the barn with special events.</i> 	Medium
SB-2, SU-6	Pave the gravel road to deer fence line.		Medium
SB-3	Construct a paved trail connector between the new paved roadway (SB-2, SU-6) with the existing paved path.		Medium
SB-4	Install an interpretive sign for the barn adjacent to the new paved trail connector.		Short
SB-5	In order to deter vandalism of the barn, retain existing deer fencing surrounding the barn and Armstrong House.		N/A

Figure 14 |
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SHOREFIELD AREA, STUBBS BARN



SB-1 Conduct a facility condition assessment to determine investment needed for potential public use

SB-2 Pave the gravel road (see also recommendation SU-6) to deer fence line

SB-3 Construct a paved trail connector between the new paved roadway (SU-6 and SB-2) with the existing paved path

SB-4 Install an interpretive sign for the barn adjacent to the new paved trail connector

SB-5 In order to deter vandalism of the barn, retain existing deer fencing surrounding the barn and Armstrong House

Table 08 | Refer to Fig. 15

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SHOREFIELD AREA - PINE LAKE AND VICINITY.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
PL-1	Construct a boardwalk and/or floating dock to provide more accessible and safe areas for groups and families to enjoy fishing	<i>Add/upgrade environmental educational interpretive signs and add more picnic tables and trash/recycling receptacles.</i>	Medium
PL-2, C1	Design and construct a new plaza outside the Brookside Gardens gate for people to congregate and picnic	<i>Features should include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches • Picnic Table • Attractive bicycle parking • Concealed trash and recycling receptacles 	Short
SL-15, PL-3, A5	Pave the gravel road between Henderson Avenue and Pine Lake to become a hard surface park trail.		Medium
PL-4	Realign the natural surface trail to be more sustainable.		Short
PL-5	Upgrade environmental and natural resources interpretive signs.		Short
PL-6	When dredging occurs to maintain stormwater function, incorporate features to improve fish habitat	<i>The lake was last drained and dredged in 2006</i>	Long
PL-7	Rehabilitate streams that drain into the lake to reduce sediment and improve water quality.		Long



- PL-1** Enhance access to the lake to improve the fishing experience
- PL-2** Construct a plaza at the entrance gate to Brookside Gardens
- PL-3** Pave the gravel road
- PL-4** Realign the natural surface trail to be more sustainable

- PL-5** Upgrade environmental and natural resource interpretive signs
- PL-6** When dredging occurs to maintain stormwater function, incorporate features to improve fish habitat.
- PL-7** Rehabilitate streams that drain into the lake to reduce sediment and improve water quality



RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX



The plan recommends at least 8 new dedicated pickleball courts in this park area.

This park area, named for former Director of Parks Frank Rubini, currently features six diamond athletic fields, six outdoor tennis courts, a basketball court, and a dog park, as well as several enterprise (pay-to-play) facilities, including the indoor tennis bubble, the indoor ice rink, and the Wheaton Sports Pavilion.

Access by automobile is via Orebaugh Avenue, passing through a residential area. Visitors can also access this area of the park using hard surface park trails connecting from both Brookside Gardens and the Shorefield Area. There is no sidewalk along Orebaugh Avenue connecting Arcola Avenue to the facilities in this area of the park; park visitors arriving on foot, by wheelchair or by bicycle must currently share the road with motorized traffic.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

The Rubini Athletic Complex is one of the busiest areas of the park on weekends and during weekday evenings. During these days and times, the athletic fields are generally permitted, the tennis courts are occupied, and the ice rink and indoor tennis bubble are bustling. The dog park is popular, and many park users are enjoying the numerous park trails that can be accessed from this area. On working hours on weekdays, however, the Rubini Athletic Complex is nearly deserted; residents and park users say this area of the park feels empty. And because of that, people generally avoid this area of the park during working hours on weekdays, except for occasional tennis players, visitors to the dog park and a few trail users. Park users feel this area of the park is not easily accessible by means other than driving; there is no sidewalk or hard surface trail offering safe passage from Arcola Avenue to the park's amenities.



The Indoor Tennis Facility offers tennis lessons for all ages and opportunities for year-round, climate-controlled play.

Additional comments:

- The area of the park is hidden, access is poor, and the entrance is awkward, passing through a residential area; turning movements to/from Arcola Avenue are difficult, this intersection does not have traffic control (signal or stop signs).
- The parking lots are poorly designed; traffic lanes could be more clearly marked.
- Consider adding facilities and amenities that can be used during more hours of the day/week.
- It is not easily accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit.
- This area of the park does not offer many outdoor recreational amenities for young children.
- There are no food concessions to encourage social gatherings.
- The dog park should have separate areas for large dogs and small dogs, and the dog park could be improved with lighting, more shaded seating, a dog-friendly surface and upgraded entrance and water source.
- Some of the tennis courts should be converted to pickleball courts, and the lighting should be upgraded.
- The underutilized handball courts should be repurposed.
- The basketball court should be improved with fencing, new rims, better lighting, and renovated surface.
- Wayfinding is poor; add a more visible and prominent entrance sign along Arcola Avenue (and at Georgia Avenue and Arcola Avenue).

Analysis and Recommendations

This area of the park should offer more facilities for park visitors of all ages, that can be used during more hours of the day/week. This area of the park has most of the flat, relatively unconstrained land in the park. We should take advantage of this land, converting three diamond athletic fields to a regional action sports park with facilities that can be enjoyed by more people. The wooded area behind the tennis bubble can accommodate two rectangular athletic fields, as well as a new park entrance, and more parking. Rubini Athletic Complex should be more easily accessible by walking, biking, people with disabilities, and transit. It should offer an area for food trucks and an adjacent outdoor food court, as well as social gathering spaces and picnic areas.

There should be signs to help visitors learn about and more easily navigate to other areas of the park. The dog park should be upgraded and include lighting. Some of the tennis courts should be designed to accommodate pickleball in the short term and converted to dedicated pickleball courts in the future. The handball courts should be repurposed as soccer courts.

Adventure Sports Park

In response to community comments about this area of the park feeling empty much of the week, to maximize the use of flat, environmentally unconstrained land in the Rubini Athletic Complex area, and in response to the growing demand for adventure sports in the county, the hallmark recommendation of this master plan to create a multi-purpose adventure sports park in the location currently occupied by the three lower, unlit diamond athletic fields.

The adventure sports park will be a world class, multi-generational attraction that can accommodate both casual use and also be designed for competitions. It will offer something for all ages and skill levels. It will be a family destination, as well as a destination for teens and adults. It will encourage physical fitness and accommodate social gatherings. It will include observation decks for spectators. It will have lighting to encourage use during evenings. It will become a premier adventure sports facility that not only serves county residents, but also visitors from throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

Proposed facilities include:

- Skate Park
- Bicycle Pump Track
- Climbing Wall
- Parkour/Obstacle Course
- Bicycle Skills Area
- Traffic Safety Garden
- Splash Pad
- Social Gathering Areas
- Children's play area
- Food Truck Area



The action sports park will include an area for food trucks and picnicking.



PARKOUR COURSE | Penzer Action Park (Langley, BC)



BICYCLE SKILLS COURSE / TRAFFIC SAFETY GARDEN



ROCK CLIMBING



OUTDOOR PLACEMAKING | The Lawn on D (Boston, MA)



SKATEBOARDING PARK | Arvada Skatepark (Arvada, CO)



TEEN ACTIVITIES

Table 09 | Refer to Fig. 16-17
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
Global	Minimize and mitigate as needed noise impacts to neighbors caused by new facilities.	<i>There are many homes near this area of the park. Neighbors along Arcola Avenue and Orebaugh Avenue are concerned that new/added facilities may cause more ambient noise, particularly at night if facilities are lighted. They asked that noise be minimized or mitigated to the extent practicable.</i>	Ongoing
RC-1	Build an adventure sports facility that may include a premier, regional skate park, climbing walls, parkour/obstacle course facility, bicycle skills area, splash pad, small playground, social gathering space and food truck vending area, replacing diamond fields 4, 5 and 6	<i>All recommendations in the Rubini Athletic Complex are interrelated and should be evaluated, reviewed, and designed as a whole, including this project, athletic field improvements and parking/traffic circulation, as well as bicycle and pedestrian access and safety.</i>	Short (Facility Plan), Medium (Design and Construction)
RC-2, RC-12, A3	Provide safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the parking lots, from the park entrance to the dog park	<i>Sidewalks/side paths, crosswalks</i>	Short
RC-3	Renovate the parking lots to improve overall public safety and traffic circulation, plus add more parking spaces	<i>Upgrade stormwater management at the same time.</i>	Short

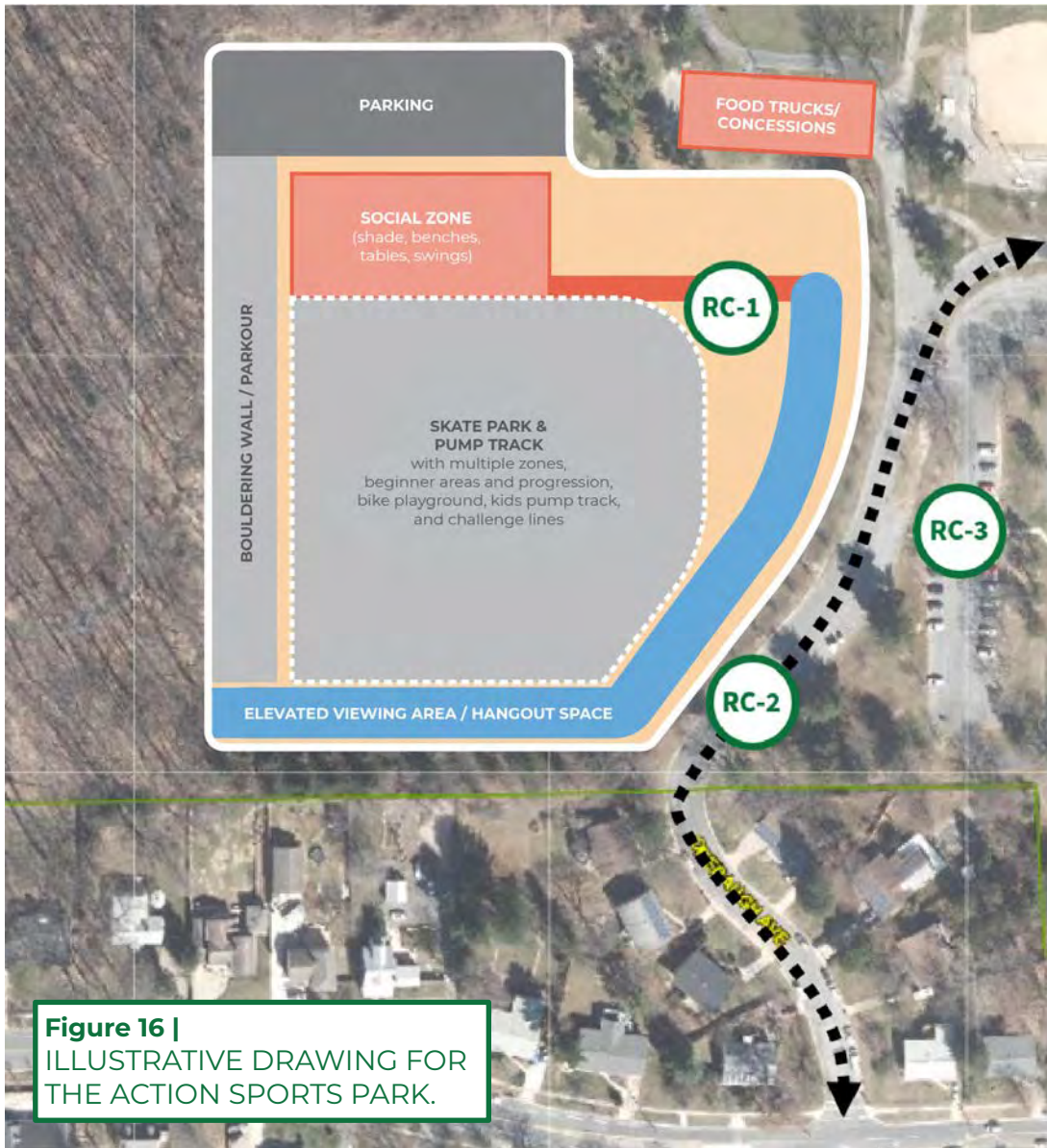


Figure 16 |
ILLUSTRATIVE DRAWING FOR
THE ACTION SPORTS PARK.

- RC-1** Construct an action sports park, replacing athletic fields 4-6 that may include:
- Signature regional skate park
 - Bouldering wall/parkour area
 - Pump Track
 - Bicycle Playground
 - Challenge lines
 - Ample social gathering/hang out space
 - Elevated viewing areas
 - Shaded area with tables, WiFi, charging stations
 - Food truck/concessions area

RC-2 Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to and through the parking lots

RC-3 Renovate the parking lots and add stormwater management

Table 10 | Refer to Fig. 16-17
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
RC-4	Build two new soccer fields and associated parking on wooded land behind the indoor tennis facility.	<i>The Park currently does not offer any rectangular fields. These fields will greatly improve service in this area of the county.</i>	Medium
RC-5, RC-6	Add a new one-way-in entrance off Arcola Avenue leading to the upper parking lot of the indoor ice rink.	<i>Add new parking lots to serve the new soccer fields</i>	Medium
RC-7	Convert 3 tennis courts to 8 pickleball courts.	<i>This location is far from existing homes and avoids potential noise complaints from neighbors</i>	Short
RC-8	Upgrade the basketball court with fencing, a new surface, new backboards and rims, and improved lighting.	<i>These improvements will make the court more functional, attractive/modern and usable during more hours of the day</i>	Short
RC-9	Convert underutilized handball courts to a soccer court.	<i>This site is suitable for conversion to soccer court.</i>	Short
RC-10	Acquire all properties along Arcola Avenue between Orebaugh Avenue and the new driveway entrance	<i>Purchasing these properties will make the park more visible from Arcola Avenue</i>	Long
RC-11	Upgrade the dog park with separate areas for small and large dogs, lighting, improved paw-friendly surface, weather-protected seating, and more efficient/effective water fountains.	<i>These improvements will make this facility more attractive and usable throughout the year, and during more hours of the day.</i>	Short/ Medium

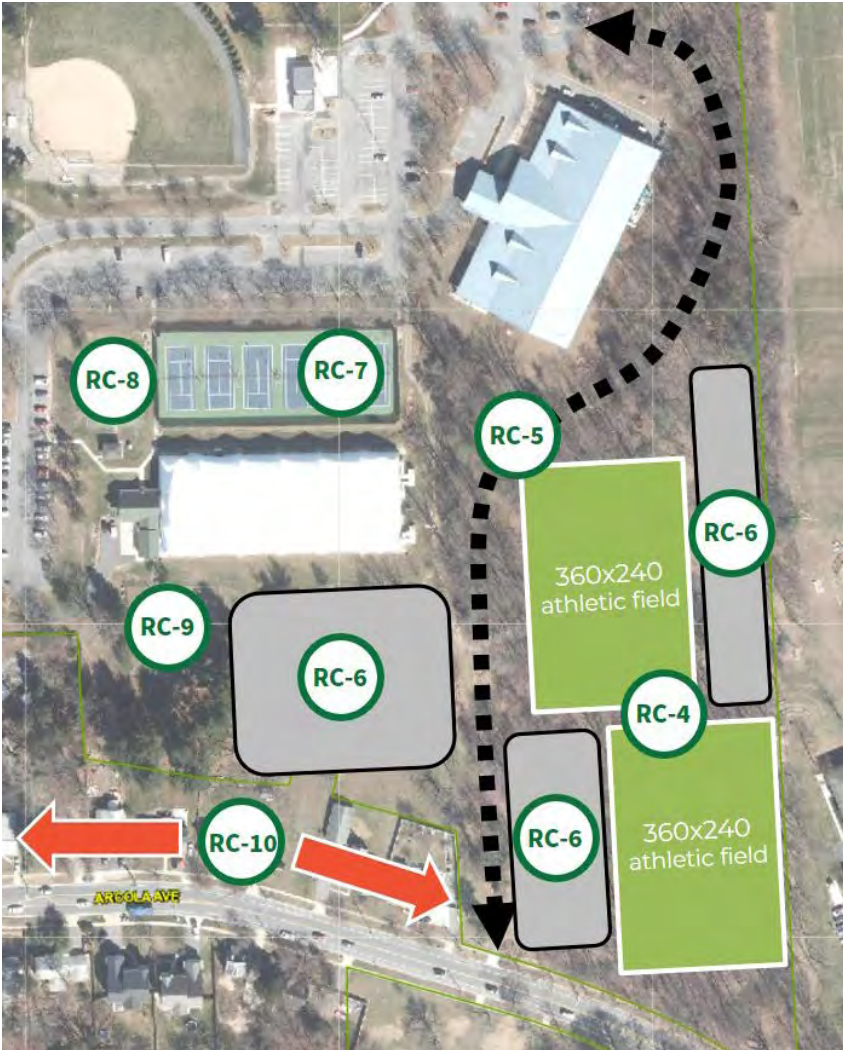


Figure 17 | Map 01
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX

- RC-4** Build two new soccer fields and associated parking on wooded land behind the indoor tennis facility.
- RC-5, RC-6** Add a new one-way-in entrance off Arcola Avenue leading to the upper parking lot of the indoor ice rink.
- RC-7** Convert 3 tennis courts to 8 pickleball courts.
- RC-8** Upgrade the basketball court with fencing, a new surface, new backboards and rims, and improved lighting.

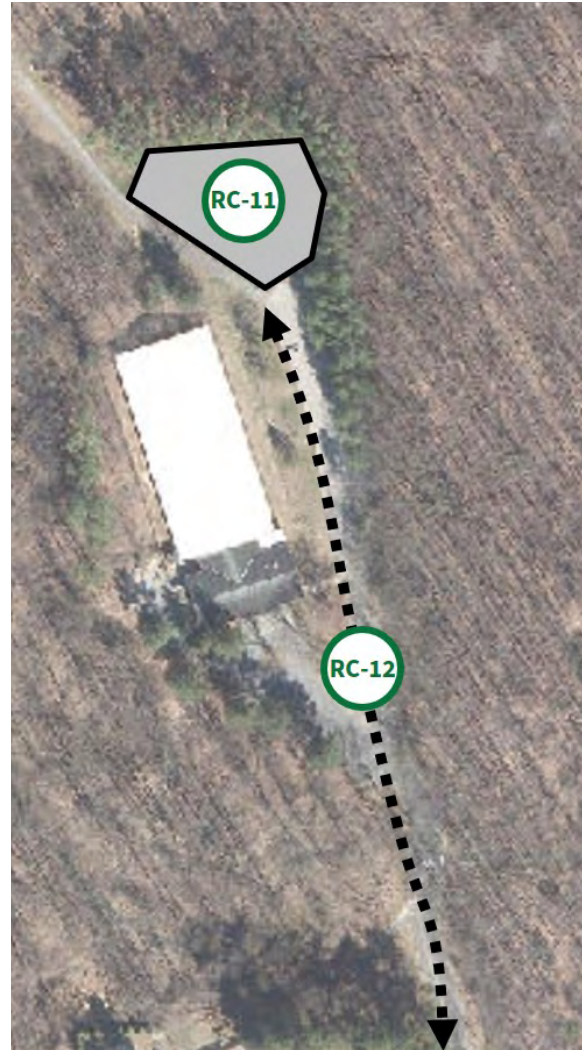


Figure 17 | Map 02
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
THE RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX

- RC-9** Convert underutilized handball courts to a soccer court.
- RC-10** Acquire all properties along Arcola Avenue between Orebaugh Avenue and the new driveway entrance.
- RC-11** Upgrade the dog park with separate areas for small and large dogs, lighting, improved paw-friendly surface, weather-protected seating, and more efficient/effective water fountains.



EQUESTRIAN CENTER/WHEATON PARK STABLES



Wheaton Regional Park Stables offers guided trail rides.

One of the first facilities built in Wheaton Regional Park in the early 1960s, the equestrian center sits on 27 acres at the intersection of Kemp Mill Road and Glenallan Avenue. The site includes an indoor riding rink, boarding stables, an outdoor riding rink, grazing meadows, and other improvements. The land, buildings and infrastructure are owned by M-NCPPC. A public-private partner currently offers riding programs for the public on-site and along natural surface trails that pass-through Wheaton Regional Park's forest on the opposite side of Glenallan Avenue, as well as along the Northwest Branch Trail on the opposite side of Kemp Mill Road.

The stables draw riders from both Montgomery County and nearby jurisdictions. Our public-private partner also manages a program in cooperation with a nonprofit that strives to provide a range of pre-vocational and vocational experiences to individuals with developmental disabilities. Many of these individuals take part in trail rides at the stables during the week and on weekends as part of the special needs recreational riding program.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The stables building is aged and despite the recent structural repairs completed, future capital investment is needed to upgrade major systems and amenities such as new bathrooms that are ADA accessible.
- The stables serve families with children who have physical, emotional, and intellectual disabilities.
- The stables at Wheaton Regional Park is the only down-county equestrian facility that is accessible by public transportation that offers beginner and riding programs on wooded trails for people with special needs as well as the general public.
- The equestrian center site draws visitors who enjoy walking the grounds, soaking in the bucolic scenery.

Analysis and Recommendations

Montgomery Parks recognizes that the Wheaton stables provide services that are valued by many members of the community, including individuals with developmental disabilities who benefit from its pre-vocational and vocational opportunities as well as recreational rides tailored to people with special needs.

To provide a foundation for the financial sustainability of the stables, outside sources of funding will be needed to support the medium and long-term capital needs of the facility. The Parks Department will collaborate with its public-private partner to explore opportunities to generate additional revenue from operations and solicit private donations.

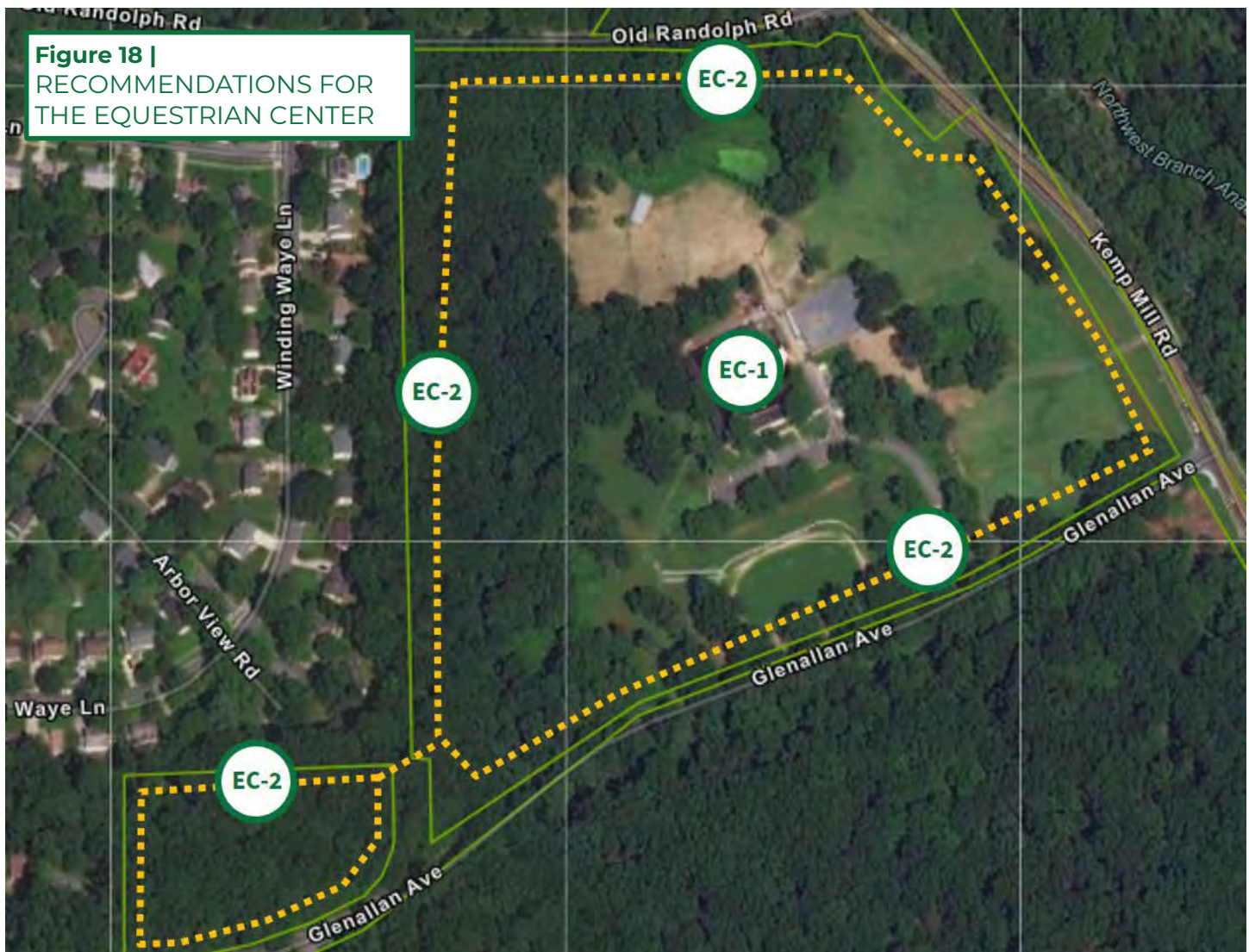


Wheaton Regional Park Stables offers large pastures for boarded horses to graze.

Table 10 | Refer to Fig. 18

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EQUESTRIAN CENTER AND WHEATON STABLES.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
EC-1	Continue as Equestrian Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montgomery Parks will continue to make necessary investments to ensure visitor and employee safety and comfort. Parks will collaborate with the partner to explore developing a financially sustainable operations and capital improvements plan and associated agreements (i.e., lease). 	Short/ Medium
EC-2	Add new natural surface trails on-site for both horseback riding and walking/hiking.	Work to be completed by Natural Surface Trails Program	Short





Wheaton Stables provide services that are valued by many members of the community, including pre-vocational and vocational opportunities, as well as recreational rides, tailored to people with developmental disabilities.



BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER



Brookside Nature Center offers programs for nature enthusiasts of all ages.

The oldest nature center in the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks system, Brookside Nature Center is located adjacent to Brookside Gardens with access from Glenallan Avenue.

It consists of two retrofitted former residential houses as well as the historic Harper Cabin, a small picnic pavilion, an outdoor amphitheater, an interpretive pond, a small nature play space, a parking lot for cars and two buses, and numerous natural surface trails. Brookside Nature Center offers both permanent and rotating exhibits and classroom-based activities, as well as many very popular special events throughout the year, including Maple Sugaring and Flying Squirrels.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The Nature Center is small for the geographic area it is intended to serve.
- The parking lot is too small to handle the volume of traffic.
- There is not available environmentally unconstrained land to expand on-site.
- Bicycle, pedestrian, ADA, and transit access is poor.

Analysis and Recommendations

Due to its constrained site and surroundings, it is infeasible to expand the Nature Center on site. The current buildings should be modernized and upgraded to make them more functional, safe, accessible and comfortable.

The Nature Center staff should operate strategic off-site interpretive mobile programs, some of which may provide opportunities for new partnerships with Montgomery Parks staff from other divisions. For example, offer mobile programming throughout the park at different locations, either using an RV or trailer, or offer programming in repurposed buildings. Additionally, if bicycle, pedestrian, ADA, and transit access were improved, demand for parking would be reduced and the need to expand parking would be eliminated.



Brookside Nature Center is fully accessible to people with physical disabilities.

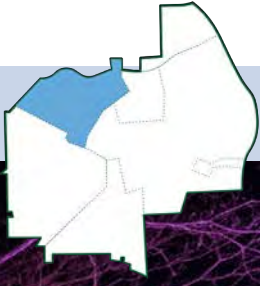
Table 11 | Refer to Fig. 19

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
N/A	Examine ways to deliver mobile nature programming in other areas of the park throughout the year	<i>Either an RV that travels around the park, or schedule programming in other areas of the park, including using existing buildings and/or picnic shelters</i>	Short term
NC-1	Continue to invest in the current buildings and related infrastructure	<i>Building interior improvements for nature programming building completed in 2021</i>	Ongoing
NC-2, A8	Identify ways to get visitors to the nature center by means other than driving and parking on-site.	<i>Gravel pathway along Glenallan Avenue between Kemp Mill Road and entrance; transit service to the nature center, particularly on weekend and during special events.</i>	Short Term



Figure 19 | RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BROOKSIDE NATURE CENTER



BROOKSIDE GARDENS



The Garden of Lights is one of the most popular events at Brookside Gardens.

Perhaps the most visited and well-known area of the park, Brookside Gardens is a highly regarded botanical garden established in 1968 that boasts unique plants from around the world, as well as a Conservatory, a Visitor Center, its own maintenance facility, walking trails, a pond, and a pagoda. Hundreds of thousands of people from around the world visit the gardens annually, and the gardens host very popular events each year, including Garden of Lights, Butterfly Exhibit, and the Environmental Forum.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- It is not easy walking, bicycling, or taking transit to the gardens
- The gated entrance from the Shorefield Area feels unwelcoming.
- Although it is generally well-understood why food is not allowed in the gardens, visitors would like opportunities for picnicking as well as snacks and/or meals at an on-site restaurant.

Analysis and Recommendations

Development and improvements at Brookside Gardens are guided by a facility master plan approved the Planning Board in 2004 (see *Figure 20*). This park master plan, therefore, will not include any recommendations to update the 2004 facility master plan, but rather will focus on issues and recommendations intended to enhance the relationship of the gardens to the rest of the park, as well as improve bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access to the gardens.

- Construct a shared use path from Glenallan Avenue to the Visitor Center through parking lot too improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety through the parking lot area.
- Add bicycle parking racks at the Visitor Center (see *Figure 8*).
- Support and promote a new picnic area and plaza outside the gated entrance from the Shorefield Area to make this entrance feel more welcoming and give visitors a pleasant location to picnic and gather (see *Figure 15*).



Brookside Gardens offers many activities throughout the year for visitors to learn about plants and horticulture.



Brookside Gardens hosts weddings throughout the year.

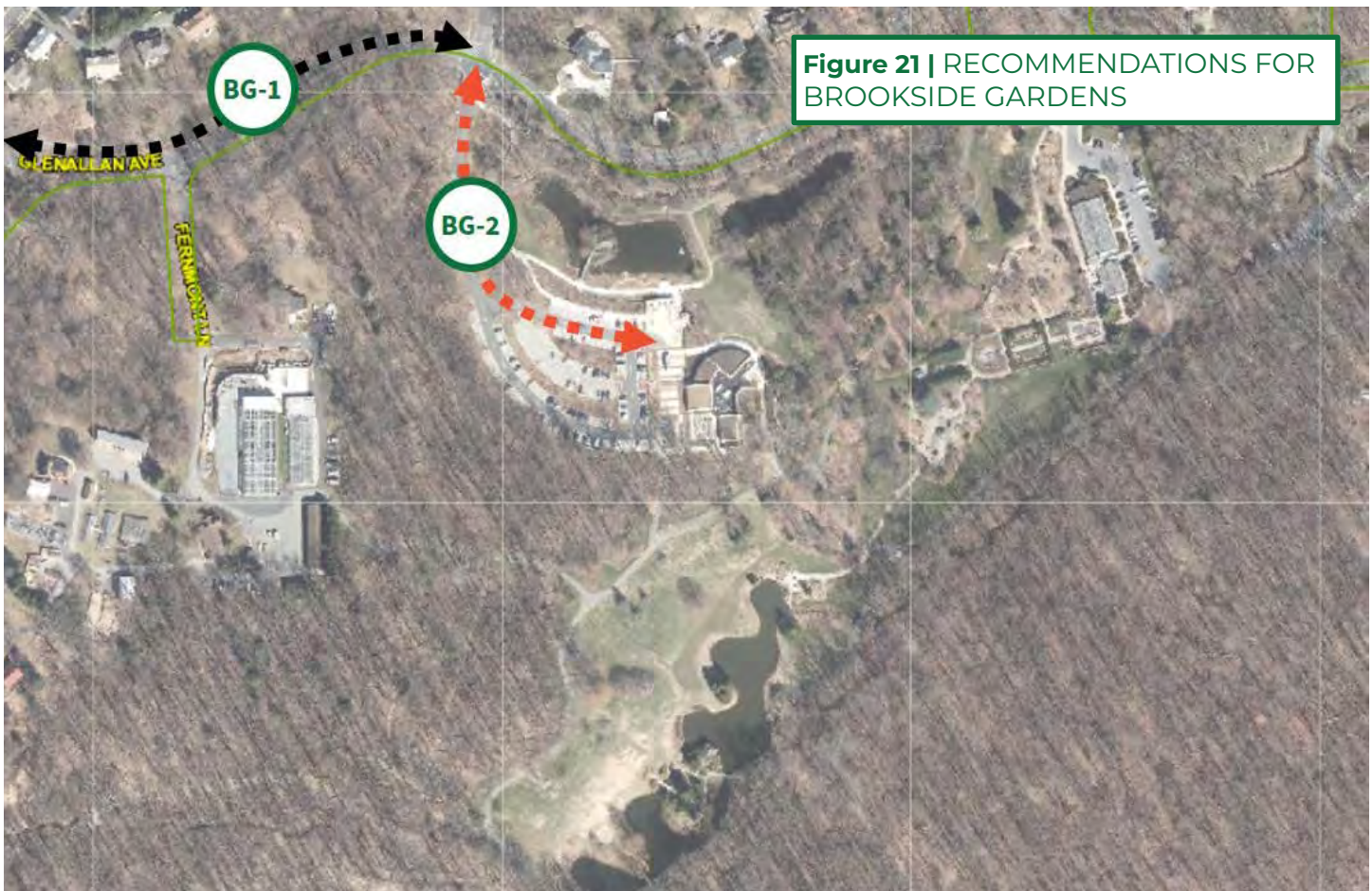
Figure 20 |
BROOKSIDE GARDENS 2004 FACILITY MASTER PLAN

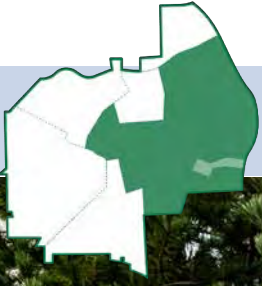


This park master plan, therefore, will not include any recommendations to update the 2004 facility master plan, but rather will focus on issues and recommendations intended to enhance the relationship of the gardens to the rest of the park.

Table 12 | Refer to Fig. 21
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BROOKSIDE GARDENS.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
BG-1	Coordinate with MCDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Glenallan Avenue between Randolph Road and the Brookside Gardens entrance.		Ongoing
BG-2	Construct a paved path from Glenallan Avenue to the Brookside Garden Visitor Center.		Short Term





WHEATON MAINTENANCE FACILITY



Maintenance and operations staff include skilled trades and heavy equipment operators.

The Wheaton Maintenance Yard is the oldest in the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks system. This yard not only provides nearly all the maintenance services for Wheaton Regional Park (excluding Brookside Gardens), but it also serves the larger Wheaton Regional Park Management Area that includes 51 parks. Additionally, it provides trash service for the Martin Luther King Jr. Park Management Area (32 parks) and is one of the snow-command centers for the entire southern region, which includes all the parks south of Rockville.

What We Learned During Engagement with Parks Staff

- The maintenance yard is aging and deteriorating.
- It is undersized for the services it provides and needs to be larger.
- Much of the equipment is outdated and needs to be modernized.
- Any expansion must account for the planned hard surface trail that passes adjacent to the yard and runs down Alpert Lane.
- The maintenance yard features a telecommunications tower, and associated equipment and infrastructure both on-site and running down Alpert Lane.
- The forest to the southeast and east is lesser quality than the forest to the north and west.
- The land immediately adjacent to Alpert Lane is already disturbed from previous land use and offers additional opportunities for park improvements (e.g., employee parking).
- Existing unforested land should be examined for improvements before proposing impacts to forest.

Analysis and Recommendations

Every other maintenance yard in the M-NCPPC Montgomery County park system has been modernized over the years. This is the last remaining yard that still has some of the original buildings and infrastructure. As the maintenance yard serving one of two down county regional parks with highest population density in the surrounding area, it is long overdue for a major renovation.

While the entire maintenance yard is surrounded by forest and the biodiversity area, the forest to the south and east is less important to protect than the forest to the north and west. Therefore, any expansion of the yard should be to the south and east and be designed to avoid steep slopes and large specimen trees as much as possible and accommodate the planned hard surface park trail that will pass adjacent to the yard and travel parallel to Alpert Lane to connect to a planned bikeway along Kemp Mill Road.

The maintenance yard provides nearly all the maintenance services for Wheaton Regional Park, and the greater Wheaton Park Management Area that includes 51 parks. Services include trash service and acting as the snow-command center for the entire southern region.

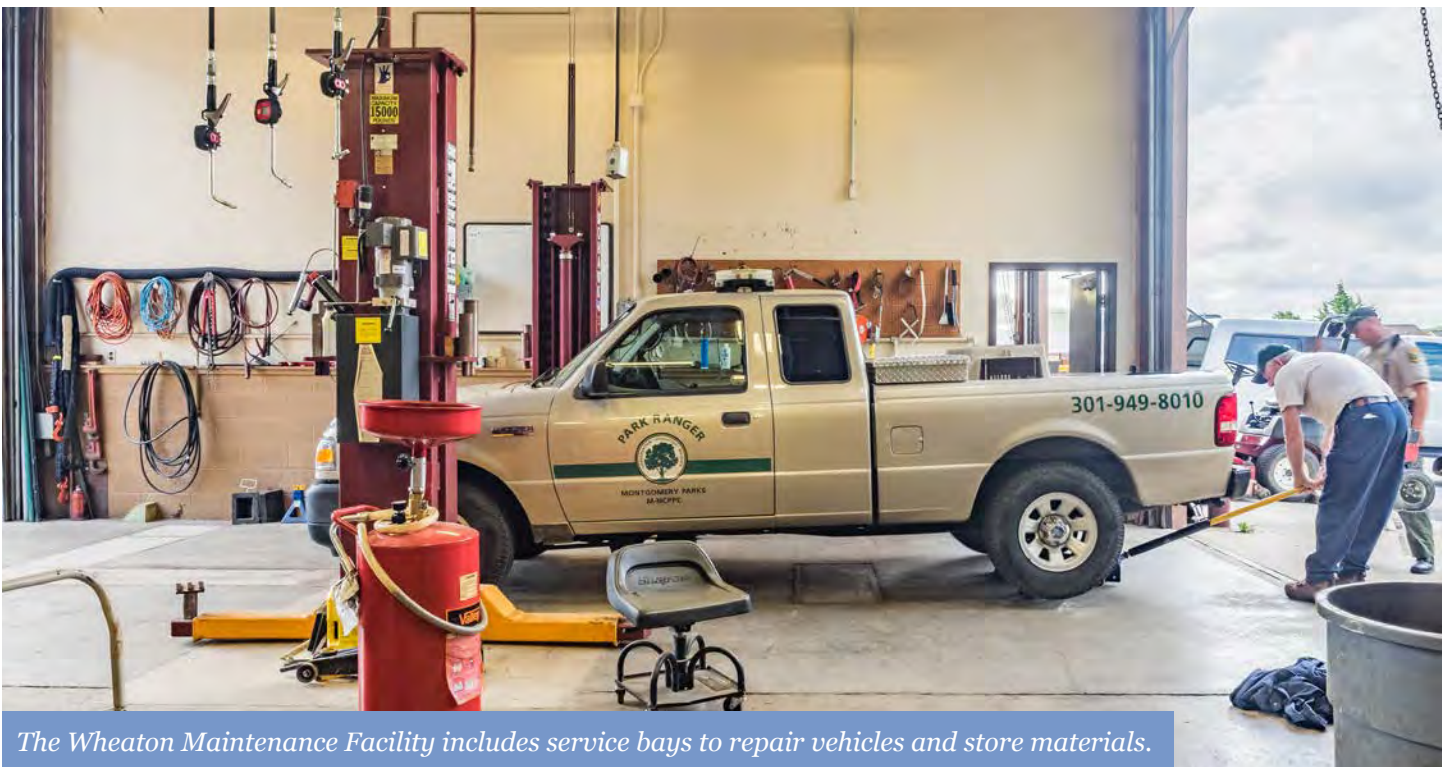
Table 13 | Refer to Fig. 22
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MAINTENANCE YARD.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS	TIME FRAME
MY-1	Expand/enlarge the Maintenance Yard and modernize the building, equipment, and infrastructure	<i>Expand to the south and east, strive to minimize impacts to existing forest and maximize use of already disturbed areas</i>	Medium Term
MY-2, A4	Accommodate the alignment for the new hard surface park trail that passes through/adjacent to the Maintenance Yard and along Alpert Lane	<i>MY expansion and new trail alignment should be coordinated</i>	Short Term





Maintenance and operations staff keep park facilities in good working order.



The Wheaton Maintenance Facility includes service bays to repair vehicles and store materials.



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Land Acquisition

Wheaton Regional Park is a large park and is generally surrounded by stable residential communities, but there are opportunities to improve the park visitor experience, as well as enhance the park's visibility, by acquiring several parcels.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The park is not very visible, the entrances are constrained, and access is poor.
- M-NCPPC should consider purchasing homes from willing sellers as they come on the market, and/or approach homeowners to gauge interest in selling land/homes to M-NCPPC.
- Park management would benefit from seeking abandonment of Henderson Avenue as well as purchasing adjacent home.

Analysis and Recommendations

Acquiring several parcels along Arcola Avenue would improve access to the Rubini Athletic Complex. Additionally, acquiring some land from the St. Andrew Apostle Church could give M-NCPPC direct access to the Arcola Avenue/Kemp Mill Road intersection.

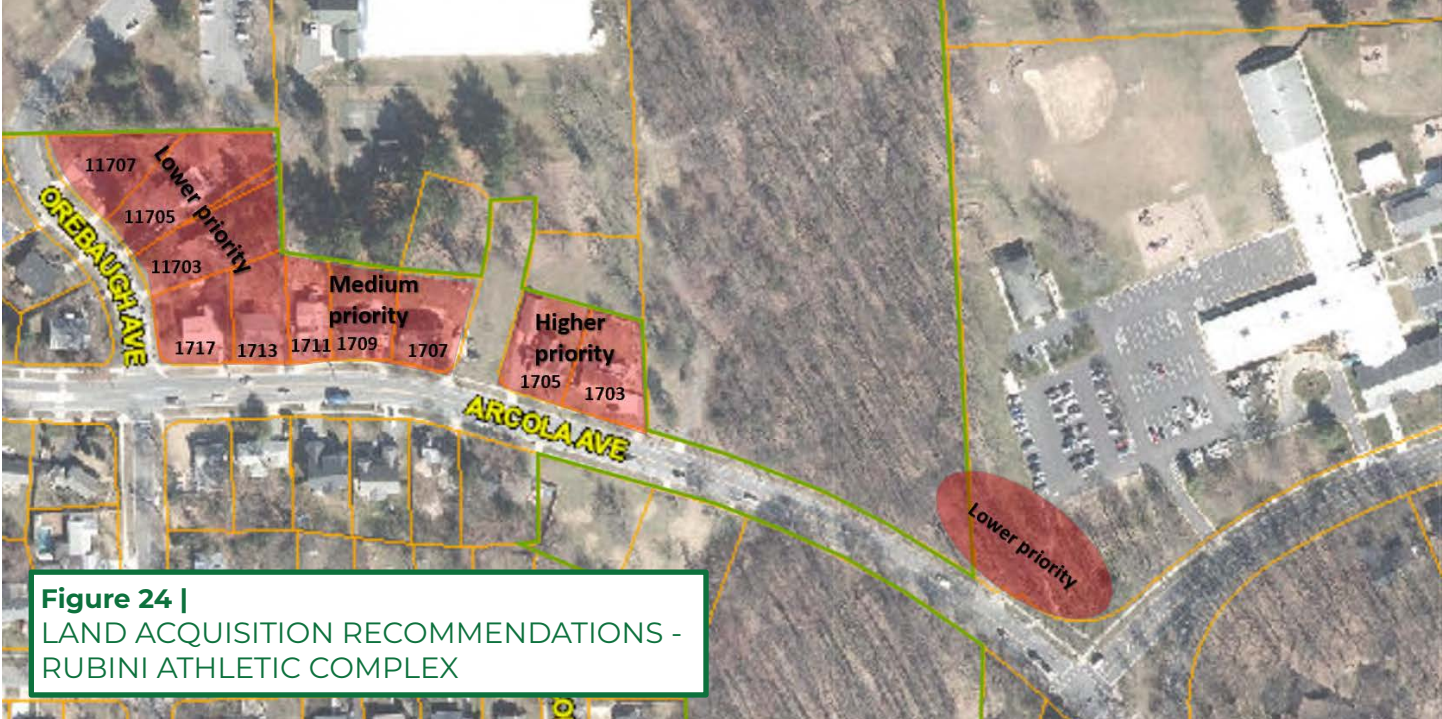
Acquiring one parcel along Henderson Avenue would help give M-NCPPC better control of road access to the park and provide a buffer between future park development and the adjacent home. M-NCPPC typically only acquires land/homes from willing sellers. (Refer to Figure 23 and Figure 24)

- To improve park visibility and access, acquire the following properties along Arcola Avenue
 - High Priority: 1703, 1705
 - Medium Priority: 1707, 1709, 1711
 - Lower Priority: 1713, 1717
- To improve park access and traffic circulation, acquire the following properties along Orebaugh Avenue:
 - Lower Priority: 11703, 11705, 11707
- To provide long-term potential access to the Arcola Avenue/Kemp Mill Road intersection, engage in discussions with the church to acquire some of its land between the park and the intersection. (Lower Priority)
- To improve park management objectives:
 - Acquire 2016 Henderson Avenue (Medium Priority).
 - Seek abandonment of the portion of Henderson Avenue within the park that no longer provides access to existing homes (High Priority).

Figure 23 |
LAND ACQUISITION RECOMMENDATIONS -
SHOREFIELD AREA



Figure 24 |
LAND ACQUISITION RECOMMENDATIONS -
RUBINI ATHLETIC COMPLEX





PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Resources Stewardship

Wheaton Regional Park consists of relatively large, contiguous natural areas surrounded by a highly urbanized landscape, providing an urban oasis with benefits to people, plants, and wildlife alike.

The park includes a designated Biodiversity Area (see Figure 25), characterized by contiguous forest in relatively undisturbed condition, capable of providing habitat for rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) and/or species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Aquatic resources, including streams, tributaries, wetlands, and ponds/lakes provide habitat for numerous species of fish, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates, reptiles, birds, and mammals. These valuable natural resources not only provide direct benefits to wildlife in an otherwise developed environment, but also produce mental and physical benefits for park users and innumerable ecosystem services for the larger community.

Forests and Wildlife

The park features four distinct forest communities, inclusive of areas containing large, mature deciduous forest and forest interior evidencing some of the oldest remaining forests in the county. The park primarily consists of a tulip poplar dominant forest with many tulip poplars exceeding 36-inches in diameter. Other areas of forest include mixed Oak/Hickory in the uplands and Sycamore/Green Ash in the stream valleys.

Common trees species in the park include American Beech and American Holly that occur sporadically, most likely resulting from adjacency to the transition between piedmont and coastal plain physiographic regions.

There are also areas of hedge habitat that are demonstrable within maturing forest and evidencing past land uses of agriculture, nursery, and homesteads.

The park includes approximately 170 documented wildlife species. Notable species include northern and southern flying squirrels, river otter, box turtles, and wild turkey. The presence of these species is indicative of quality resource availability (clean water, abundant food sources, etc.) as well as greenway connectivity for dispersal to, and from, new areas.

The Biodiversity Area and mature Forest Interior habitat provide for a rich forest floor including ferns and fern allies, with orchids that still occupy isolated pockets. Forest Interior provides habitat for numerous birds requiring large blocks of forest, known as forest interior dwelling/dependent species (FIDS), including scarlet tanager, Acadian flycatcher, ovenbird, and pileated woodpecker. Wheaton Regional Park's many streams, wetlands and ponds provide a variety of fish and aquatic organisms, amphibians, reptiles, and waterfowl species.



Resource Analysis staff regularly monitor stream conditions and water quality throughout the park system, including streams in Wheaton Regional Park.

Aquatic Resources

Wheaton Regional Park is within the Northwest Branch Watershed which flows into the Anacostia River. All the streams within Wheaton Regional Park are designated as use class IV, recreational trout waters. Biological monitoring is conducted at various locations in Wheaton Regional Park and within the receiving watershed downstream. Fish diversity within the streams running through Wheaton Regional Park includes 21 species.

The state rare (S2 rank) acuminate crayfish (*Cambarus acuminatus*) has been documented in the Glenallan Tributary (2009, 2020) as well in abundance at Pine Lake Tributary (2009). Biological monitoring results at locations in and receiving drainage from Wheaton Regional Park are variable and range from poor to good (Maryland Biological Stream Survey Index of Biotic Integrity classification range of poor-fair-good-excellent, depending on location and year).

Notable streams include Glenallan Tributary, Wheaton Tributary and Pine Lake Tributary. Glenallan Tributary drains a large portion of the park and ranges from poor to fair stream biological condition overall. There is extensive coverage of non-native and invasive riparian plants along both banks. A stream restoration project is in design by Montgomery Parks for the upstream portion of the Glenallan Tributary at its headwaters along Glenallan Avenue, at the northwestern boundary of Wheaton Regional Park. Estimated completion is FY23.

Wheaton Tributary is completely within the biodiversity area and flows from near the Shannon Odessa Middle School to its confluence with Glenallan Tributary near the intersection of Kemp Mill Road and Glenallan Road.

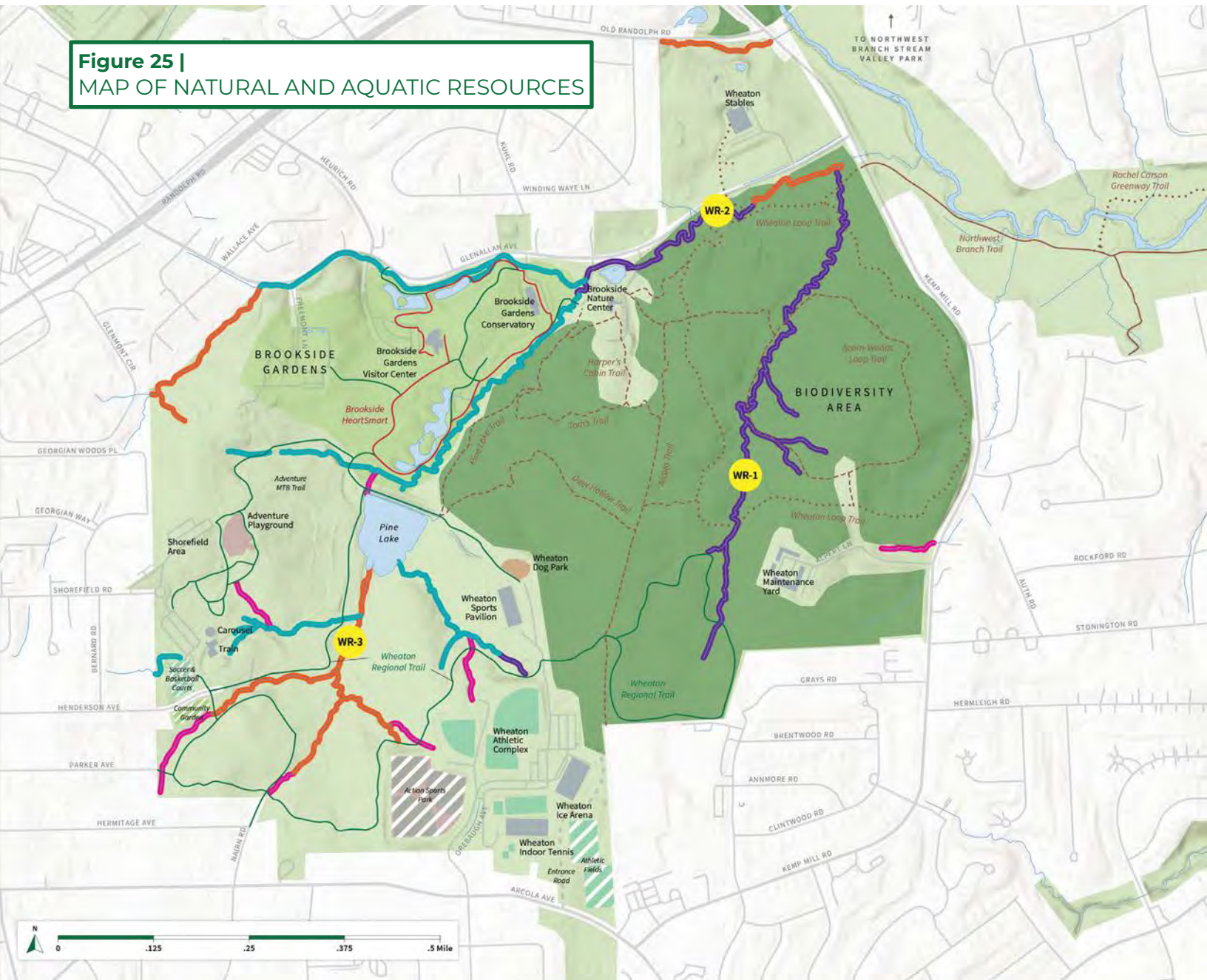
Wheaton Tributary is rated poor for stream biological condition and has evidence of past disturbance within the stream channel and in its watershed that have likely contributed to incision and straightening at some points. There are numerous existing trail crossings that utilize culverts and bridges; these have generally resulted in destabilized channels downstream of the crossings. Pine Lake Tributary is a uniquely healthy channel from a biological standpoint and was rated good for stream biological condition.

In addition to the overall biological community present in Wheaton Regional Park's streams, Pine Lake is a significant feature of the Shorefield area which provides stormwater management for all of the upstream inputs in the park and also serves as an important recreational angling location that is routinely stocked with Rainbow Trout by Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), Inland Fisheries. Other lentic/impounded aquatic systems within the park include the ponds at Brookside Nature Center and Gude Gardens Pond at Brookside Gardens.

Although Gude Garden Ponds are ornamental and not managed for fish, there are species utilizing those locations, including two species of gamefish, among others that are of recreational importance. Both Pine Lake and Gude Garden Ponds provide habitat for other aquatic organisms, including a handful of amphibian and reptile species.

Small pockets of wetlands occur throughout the park within the floodplains of stream channels, adjacent to the ponds and throughout low-lying, forested areas. Wetlands provide water quality benefits, flood mitigation and habitat to unique wildlife species.

Figure 25 |
MAP OF NATURAL AND AQUATIC RESOURCES



EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS

- Hiker/Biker
- HeartSmart Trail

NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

- Shared by All
- - - Hiker/Equestrian
- - - Hiker Only
- - - Biker Only

PARK AREAS

- Montgomery Parks
- Garden Area
- Water Area
- Athletic Fields
- Dog Park
- Playground
- Buildings
- Biodiversity Area

NATURAL RESOURCES PROJECTS

- Sustainable Outfall Treatment
- Continued Stream Condition Monitoring
- Limited Restoration and Continued Monitoring
- Environmental Restoration Implementation

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

What We Learned from Park Staff and During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The park's cherished and scenic natural resources are what attracts many visitors to the park.
- The park is considered one of the best places for birding in the County.
- Much of the forest is a designated Biodiversity Area, managed for its high-quality wildlife habitat and unique animal and plant species.
- Many streams are degraded and should be restored/repaired.
- Pine Lake is both a regional stormwater management pond as well as a popular fishing destination.
- Brookside Gardens is fenced to protect the unique plants from abundant deer in the area.

Analysis and Recommendations

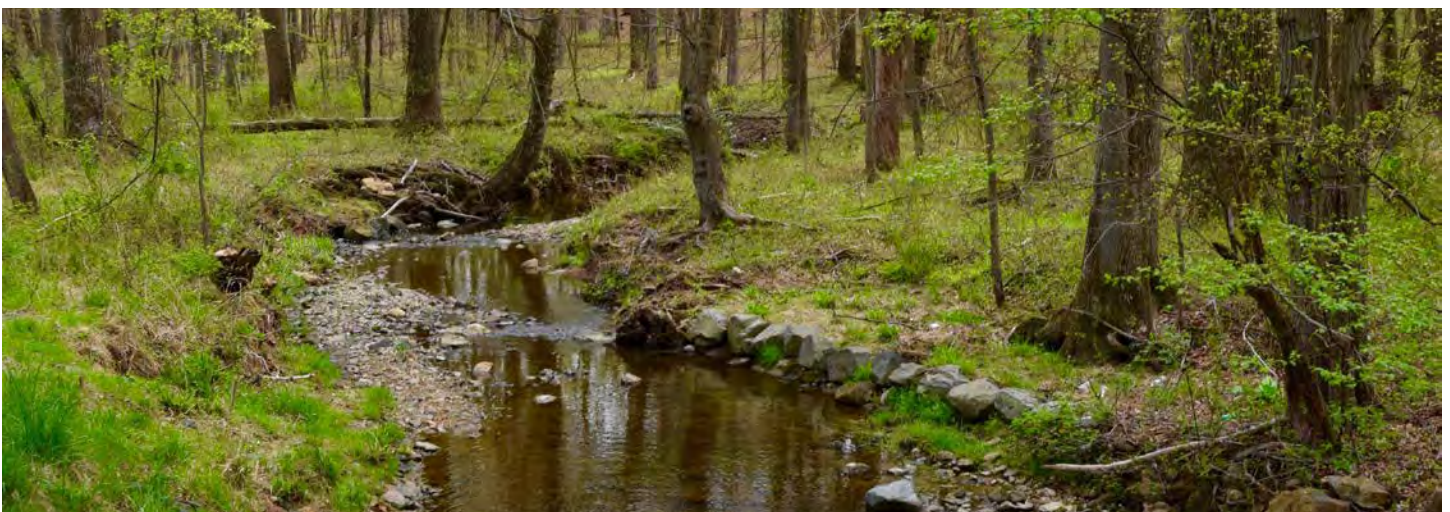
The conservation and management of the natural resources in Wheaton Regional Park must be prioritized to maintain the human and environmental benefits that they are currently providing. Environmental restoration should be implemented to strengthen climate resilience within the community and improve the ecological function of the park into the future.

- Continue to protect interior and contiguous forest stands and/or resolve fragmentation as much as possible, providing activation along the edges without significant interruption
- Continue to effectively manage Whitetail Deer
- Augment existing programs to better and more consistently manage and control non-native plants throughout the park, including from the adjacent botanical gardens and/or remnant nursery stock plantings. Include non-native plant management as part of any future park improvements that disturb previously undisturbed areas.
- Continue effective maintenance of non-native invasive plants and pests within core priority natural areas and along edges of developed trails and other infrastructure affecting these
- Improve interpretive outreach, reaching park users more broadly (e.g. languages, digital, interactive)
- Consider meadow habitat development and enhancement in unprogrammed space, including along the future paved gravel road between Henderson Avenue and Pine Lake.
- Ensure all new lighting in the park, as well as modifications to existing lighting, meet standards and guidelines of the International Dark Sky Association to minimize unnecessary light intrusion into wooded areas.
- Conserve wetlands and create and augment wetland habitat where feasible as part of future restoration and development projects
- Implement outfall restorations at degraded and unstable outfalls within Wheaton Regional Park, particularly as other park improvements occur in the vicinity and/or as upstream stormwater controls are installed
- Target stream restoration opportunities at degraded stream segments (see *Figure 25 and Table 14*).
- Implement long term biological monitoring efforts to track the ecological health of these resources and evaluate the success of restoration projects.

Table 14 | Refer to Fig. 25

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WATER RESOURCES.

MAP CODE	RECOMMENDATION	DETAILS OR COMMENTS
Global	Implement outfall restorations at degraded and unstable outfalls within Wheaton Regional Park.	<i>Outfall stabilizations should be implemented as other park improvements occur in the vicinity and/or as upstream stormwater controls are installed.</i>
WR-1	Stream condition monitoring and localized spot treatments of this reach are recommended to address points of instability, particularly at trail crossings.	<i>Stream function to be monitored and improvements implemented that maintain and improve ecological function and protect the existing resources. As the trail system is improved and/or rerouted, all trail crossings should be evaluated for improvement and infrastructure removal.</i>
WR-2	Stream condition monitoring is recommended to track areas of degradation, instability and ecological function. Conduct restoration work as required to protect infrastructure, maintain ecological function, and to improve habitat based on stream condition monitoring.	<i>Environmental restoration work adjacent to Brookside Nature Center should include interpretive signage and close coordination with Brookside Nature Center staff. The two driveway culverts at Brookside Nature Center should be replaced with natural channel bottom culverts or bridges.</i>
WR-3	Stream condition monitoring is recommended to track areas of degradation, instability and ecological function. Conduct restoration work as required to protect infrastructure, maintain ecological function, and improve habitat based on stream condition monitoring.	<i>There are good opportunities for wetland enhancement within the floodplain of the reach upstream of Pine Lake. Any work in the nature center parking lot should include improving the riparian buffer and stream corridor.</i>



The park's cherished and scenic natural resources are what attracts many visitors to the park.



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Safety

Visitor enjoyment depends on both perceived and actual public safety. Public health, safety and welfare have to be high priorities in all aspects of park design, operations and maintenance.

This includes not only facilities that are clean and in good condition, but also that a park is designed in a way that visitors feel welcome, can be seen and heard, and that park rules, regulations and laws are regularly and consistently monitored and enforced. Where facilities are open at night, there must be adequate lighting. Signs with park rules and regulations should be posted in highly visible areas. Laws must be enforced. Potential park user conflicts are minimized. Crime is deterred.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement, and Staff Analysis

Park visitors generally feel safe in the park. Crime within the park boundary is relatively low compared to other county parks. Park Police report that the biggest public safety concerns in the park are related to motor vehicle circulation and parking, as well as incidents involving children who are reported as being lost.

Additional Comments and Observations:

- Ensure good cell phone coverage in the park, in case of emergencies.
 - Consider adding emergency phones along paved trails, could be solar powered where appropriate.
 - Proposed locations for phones: near Pine Lake & Brookside Gardens, Picnic Areas, Athletic field area, Dog park, as well as other areas where the park feels empty during certain times of the week/year.
 - Shorefield Road can be an intimidating entrance, going through the residential area, and then once you get to the park, it feels like there's not enough "there", all attractions/amenities are away from the traffic circle, the traffic circle is not an activity area, at times feels unsafe with no eyes on it
- Adventure playground is not well designed for CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). Consider opening up the wooded area behind it, clear shrubs and ground cover, trim branches from the ground to 3'. Those woods are a good candidate location for park activation, including a bicycle skills area, sensory trail or nature play area.
 - Parking is the biggest public safety issue in the park, most calls for service. Consider adding more parking and/or making sure regulatory signs are posted to allow for enforcement by Park Police.
 - Consider widening driveways to allow for parallel parking.
 - Think about emergency vehicle access, as part of any changes to roadways and parking lots.
 - Keep in mind that only MCFRS (Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service) can approve curbs for yellow markings. There are certain criteria that must be met.
 - Think about CPTED in comfort station/restroom designs (sight lines, lighting, no solid walls all the way to the ground so that people's feet/legs can be seen, etc.)

Analysis and Recommendations

- Activate the wooded area adjacent to the adventure playground.
- Use CPTED principles when redesigning the adventure playground, as well as the design of other improvements throughout the park.
- Add more emergency phones throughout the park.
- Continue to employ security cameras to monitor areas prone to mischief and crime.
- Activate park entrances to improve perception of public safety, most notably the Shorefield Entrance.
- Design bathrooms to allow for more effective monitoring by Park Police to prevent mischief and crime
- Ensure parking lots are clearly marked and signs to allow for effective monitoring and enforcement by Park Police.
- Where appropriate, add clearly marked parallel parking along driveways.



Police regularly patrol the park to monitor activity and help keep visitors safe.

Implementation

This plan will be primarily implemented via the Wheaton Regional Park Improvements (P871904) PDF of the Capital Improvement Program. Funding requests for this PDF are expected to continue indefinitely and include Bonds, State Grants, POS, and other sources.

The master plan process included extensive public outreach; therefore, majority of projects are streamlined directly into implementation. These projects include, but are not limited to:

- *Henderson Avenue Community Gardens and Sports Courts.*
- *Trail Renovations and Extensions throughout WRP.*
- *Parking Lot, ADA Improvements, and Access Road Upgrades throughout WRP.*
- *Repurposing of tennis courts and handball courts in the Rubini Athletic Complex.*
- *Relocation/replacement of Picnic Area Restroom Building and Shelters.*
- *WRP Trail Extension to Kemp Mill Road*
- *Henderson Avenue Abandonment and Active Use Redevelopment.*
- *Dog Park Upgrades with Lighting*
- *Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Upgrade*
- *Park-wide Signage Enhancements*
- *Shorefield Bicycle Skills Park*
- *Shorefield Picnic Area Upgrades*
- *Shorefield Group Picnic Area*
- *Shorefield Adventure Playground Renovation/Nature Play Area*
- *Pine Lake Trail Plaza at Brookside Gardens Entrance with Lighting*
- *Environmental Restorations throughout WRP*
- *Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements throughout WRP*
- *Stubbs Barn Renovation and Interpretation*
- *Pine Lake Enhancements and Access Improvements*
- *Minor Site Improvements and Amenity Modifications*
- *More complicated projects requiring Program of Requirements Development and Facility Planning, requiring additional public engagement and Planning Board approval include:*
- *Maintenance Facility Upgrade and Expansion*
- *Adventure Sports Center Redevelopment*
- *Arcola Entrances and Circulation Modifications*
- *Rectangular Field Development*
- *Potential Wheaton Stables Redevelopment (Long-Term)*



Children and adults alike are participants in making Wheaton Regional Park a great place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Gerald R. Cichy
Tina Patterson
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Children enjoy some play time at the indoor tennis courts.



To all the stakeholders, park staff members, neighbors, and visitors who shared their time, experience, and ideas in the making of this plan,
WE THANK YOU!



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Parks