

2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

A PARKS RECREATION OPEN SPACE PLAN

for Montgomery County, Maryland



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2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

December 2005

This plan was prepared by the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning in coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation

County-wide Planning / Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit
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Table of Contents

Page No.

Executive Summary	1
Chapter I – Introduction to the Local Plan	
Purposes of the Plan.....	I - 1
Local Agency Preparation of the Plan	I - 3
Outreach for the Plan.....	I - 4
The Plan’s Relationship to the Comprehensive Planning Process	I - 5
Definitions Used in the Plan.....	I - 9
Chapter II – Framework for the Plan	
County Physical Characteristics	II - 1
Current and Projected Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics.....	II - 2
Comprehensive Plan Framework	II - 6
Chapter III - Recreation, Parks and Open Space	
Background and Chapter Context	III - 1
Goals for Recreation, Parks, and Open Space	III - 1
State Goals	III - 1
County Goals	III - 2
Current County Implementation Programs	III - 4
Needs Analysis and County Priorities for Land Acquisition, Facility Development and Rehabilitation	III - 9
Supply	III - 10
Demand	III - 19
Needs.....	III - 23
Montgomery County Recreation Department	III - 30
County Priorities for Land Acquisition, Facility Development, Rehabilitation	III - 34
Meeting State Acquisition Goals	III - 40
Public Participation	III - 42
Chapter IV -Agricultural Land Preservation	
Background and Chapter Context	IV - 1
Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation	IV - 4
State Goals	IV - 4
County Goals	IV - 5
Current Implementation Programs for Agricultural Land Preservation.....	IV - 6
Evaluation of the Agricultural Land Preservation and Implementation Program.....	IV -10
Future Program Priorities.....	IV -14
Chapter V - Natural Resource Conservation	
Background and Chapter Context	V - 1
Goals for Natural Resource Land Conservation	V - 1
State Goals	V - 3
County Goals	V - 3
Current County Implementation Programs	V - 8
Evaluation of the Natural Resource Land Conservation Program.....	V - 25
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Implementation Program	V - 25
Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program	V - 28
Future Program Priorities	V - 28

Table of Contents

Page No.

Chapter VI - Cultural Resources Conservation

Historic Resources Section

Background and Chapter Context	VI - 1
Goals for Cultural Resource Preservation	VI - 2
State Goals	VI - 2
County Goals	VI - 3
Current County Implementation Program	VI - 5
Designated Cultural Resources and Data Sharing	VI - 10
Evaluation of the Cultural Resources Historic Preservation Program	VI - 16
Strengths and Weaknesses of the HP Program	VI - 16
Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program	VI - 19
Future Program Priorities	VI - 20

Archaeological Resources Section

Background and Chapter Context	VI -21
Goals for Archaeological Resource Preservation	VI -21
State Goals	VI -21
County Goals	VI -22
Current County Implementation Program	VI -23
Evaluation of the Archaeological Resources Preservation Program	VI -26
Strength and Weaknesses of the Implementation Program	VI -27
Future Program Priorities	VI -28

Table of Contents

Page No.

Appendices

Appendix I	List of Area Master Plans and Approval Date	A I 1-1
Appendix II	1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County.....	A II 1-3
Appendix III	Definitions Used in the Plan	A III 1-16
Appendix IV	Adopted FY05-10 Parks Capital Improvements Program	A IV 1-13
Appendix V	M-NCPPC Park Inventory	A V 1-14
Appendix VI	Programs offered by the Recreation Department.....	A VI 1-1
Appendix VII	Estimated Team Area Additional Needs at Park and School	A VII 1-3
Appendix VIII	Development Priorities	A VIII 1 -6
Appendix IX	Acquisition Priorities.....	A IX 1-1
Appendix X	Public and Agency Participation Table.....	A X 1-3
Appendix XI	Park, Recreation and Open Space Survey Historic Preservation Questions.....	A XI 1-1
Appendix XII	Federal and State Archaeological Guidelines	A XII 1-1
Appendix XIII	Physical Description of Montgomery County.....	A XIII 1-3
Appendix XIV	Recreation and Open Space Trends/Facts	A XIV 1-3
Appendix XV	Methodology for Estimating Future Recreation Facility Needs.....	A XV 1-9
Appendix XVI	Projected Population Changes.....	A XVI 1-4
Appendix XVII	Park Accessibility for Disabled Individuals	A XVII 1-3



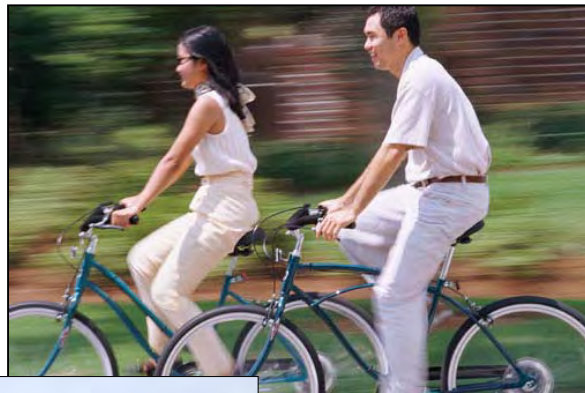
Executive Summary

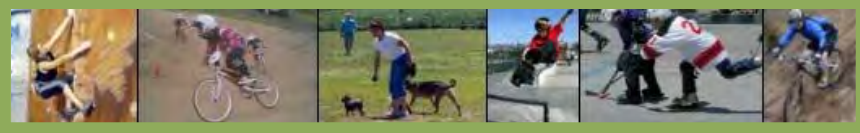
The 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)

The Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan is mandated by the Department of State Planning for eligibility for Program Open Space Grant funding and is intended to help the counties in Maryland carefully think about their needs and potential future requests for Maryland State legislation and grant program funding. The Plan has major chapters that focus on:

- **Recreation, Parks and Open Space.** This chapter discusses planning for parks, open space, recreation facilities and parkland acquisition, and includes quantitative needs analysis for future facilities for the year 2020.
- **Agricultural Land Preservation.** This chapter provides a description of the agricultural preservation programs and summary of needed new initiatives; and
- **Natural Resource Conservation.** This chapter discusses current goals and implementation programs for conservation of natural resource lands and summarizes needed improvements.
- **Cultural Resource Conservation.** This chapter includes information on historic and archaeological resources and needed improvements.







FUTURE RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

In Montgomery County, there are 47,800 acres of parkland that provide recreation including 32,700 acres of M-NCPPC parkland, 12,000 acres of State parkland and 3,100 acres of National parkland. The majority of M-NCPPC parks are devoted to natural resource protection. Stream Valley and Conservation Parks comprise 51% of all parkland. In addition, Regional Parks comprise 20% of total parkland, of which 67 % is maintained as natural areas

Recreation includes both nature-oriented recreation such as nature walks and bird watching as well as recreation needing specific facilities such as athletic fields, playground, etc. The recreation section of the LPPRP focuses on projecting future needs for active recreation facilities to the year 2020.

LPPRP Specific Facility Projections and Service Area Assumptions

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

This Plan examines needs for the following facilities:

- **Local Use Facilities** –These “close to home” facilities are assumed to be needed within each Planning Area and include playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts
- **Community Based Team Area Facilities** –These facilities include all ballfields, and are assumed to be needed within community based team areas, which are groups of adjacent planning areas. Facilities include - youth diamonds for T-ball and peewee baseball; multi-purpose diamonds for youth baseball and adult softball; 90’ baseball; multi-purpose rectangular (soccer/lacrosse) and youth rectangular fields.
- **Countywide Facilities** – These more specialized facilities are assumed to be needed by the County as a whole. They include permitted picnic shelters, nature centers, roller hockey facilities, skate parks, dog exercise areas, natural areas, natural and hard surface trails, community recreation centers and aquatic facilities.

Methodologies for Estimating Future Needs

Three methodologies were used in estimating future recreation facility needs. They include:

M-NCPPC Method (Used in the 1998 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan)

- This method was used for playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts and all types of fields
- It is an age-based participation model, based on actual usage data from 2000 park user observation survey and 2002 spring park permits for both parks and schools, and age based sports participation
- It projects daily spring/summer facility needs for playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, and projects spring peak week needs for soccer, softball and baseball permit data for parks and schools.

State Planning Guidelines Method

- This method was used for facilities serving County-wide needs
- It is a participation based model (not age based) that uses phone survey responses regarding annual facility use from the 2003 State telephone survey with attendance data added where available
- It projects annual needs. It calculates existing participation rates for various recreation activities based on the 2003 state survey. Needs are then computed using season length, yearly facility capacities and population projections to the year 2020.

Fairfax County Method

- This method was used to project only one facility, dog exercise areas, for which survey information was not available
- It is a park standards (level of service) method that provides ratios of various recreation facilities/thousand people in Fairfax County..



Facility Needs Estimates

Needs for Facilities Serving Planning Areas

These “close to home” facilities are assumed to be needed within each Planning Area and include playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts. The following table indicates estimates of additional recreation facility needs for the year 2020.

Future Planning Area Recreation Needs Estimates for the Year 2020

Service area	Facility	Methodology Used	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Additional Needs
Planning Area	Playgrounds (with the exception of regional adventure playgrounds).	M-NCPPC	285	32
Planning Area	Tennis Courts (with the exception of Recreation /regional courts)	M-NCPPC	411	4
Planning Area	Basketball Courts	M-NCPPC	317	12

Needs for Facilities Serving Community Based Team Areas

Most people drive to fields for league play, thus needs for all types of fields are estimated for Community Based Team areas (which are groups of Planning Areas). As shown in the following tables, a maximum total of 123 additional fields are estimated to be needed throughout the County by 2020, the overwhelming majority of which are for multi-use rectangular fields.

Service area	Facility	Methodology Used	Existing Park and School Facilities	Maximum Additional 2020 Estimated Needs
Community Based Team Area	Youth Diamonds (T-ball, youth softball and baseball)	M-NCPPC	91	0
Community Based Team Area	Multi-Purpose Youth Baseball/Adult Softball Diamonds (these sports play on the same type of field)	M-NCPPC	164	15
Community Based Team Area	Baseball (90' base paths- Adults and teens)	M-NCPPC	35	20
Community Based Team Area	Multi-Purpose Rectangular Field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)	M-NCPPC	103	73
Community Based Team Area	Youth Rectangular Field (Soccer / Football / Lacrosse)	M-NCPPC	70	15
TOTALS			463	123

Description of Field Needs within Community Based Team Areas

The following table indicates estimates of future additional field needs for the year 2020 within each area. As the service area goal calls for future needs to be met within the Community Based Team Areas, a surplus in an existing area (indicated by a minus) is not subtracted from the needs in another. Positive needs are shown in bold. However, within the team area, fields needs may potentially be lowered by converting fields to another use (where feasible) to meet the needs, and can potentially lower the total field need to a little over 100. Field conversions should not be made, however, without careful analysis and consultations with user groups.

2020 Additional Field Needs by Community Based Team Area

COMMUNITY BASED TEAM AREA 2020 FIELD NEEDS Planning Team Area	Number of Youth (0-9) Multi-Purpose Diamonds Needed	Number of (Age10-13 Baseball and 10-65+ Softball) Diamonds Needed	Number of 90' infield-Baseball Fields (Ages 14+) Needed	Number of Adult (10-65+) Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields Needed	Number of Youth (0-9) Multi-Purpose Rectangles Fields Needed	Range Minimum/Maximum
Rural/Damascus	-1.8	-3.2	1.7	5.2	-2.6	3.7 / 6.9
I-270	0.1	1.5	3.0	19.4	9.7	33.7
Olney/Georgia Avenue	-5.3	-19.3	1.8	7.7	2.3	1.8 / 11.8
Potomac	-0.3	5.2	4.5	4.6	-4.1	14 / 14.3
Eastern County	-0.5	-20.5	-0.3	4.8	1.1	0.3 / 5.9
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	-1.0	-0.9	4.8	20.4	1.7	24.8 / 26.9
Silver Spring/Takoma Park	-1.7	8.7	4.1	10.8	-3.4	23.6
Maximum Need	0	15	20	73	15	TOTAL 101.7/ 123.1



Needs for Future Countywide Recreation Facilities

The following table lists year 2020 estimates for future additional facilities that are projected on a Countywide Basis. These are often more specialized facilities for which people are willing to drive longer distances.

Facility	Methodology Used	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Additional Needs
Permit Picnic Shelters	State Planning/ plus M-NCPPC Data	78	21
County-Wide Group Picnic Areas	State Planning/ plus M-NCPPC Data	3	1
Nature Centers	State Planning/ plus M-NCPPC Data	4	2.3
Roller Hockey (Game Facilities)	State Planning	2	0
Skate Parks (Including Informal Use Areas)	State Planning	0	16
Dog Exercise Areas	Fairfax County	3	15
Natural Areas in Parks	M-NCPPC- Areas in approved plans	17,682 acres	5495 acres
Natural Surface Regional Trails	Trails in County-wide Trails Plan	115.6 miles	105.4 miles
Hard Surface Regional Trails	Trails in County-wide Trails Plan	73.5 miles	22.5 miles
Community Recreation Centers	Recreation Dept*	17	11.5
Aquatic Facilities	Recreation Dept*	4 indoor 7 outdoor	3-4

*Recreation Facility Development Plan 1997-2010, 2005 Update

Meeting State Land Acquisition Goals

A recreation acreage goal of 30 acres of parkland per 1000 persons has been established by the State in the LPPRP Guidelines. There are two categories of park and open space acreage in Montgomery County, Local Recreational Acreage, and Natural Resource Acreage.

- Local Recreation Acreage** – This consists of 100% of Urban, Neighborhood, Local, Recreational, special and municipal parks plus 1/3 of Regional Parks and 60% of school property. When counting public land towards the overall acreage goal, a minimum of 15 acres per 1,000 people must come from Local recreational lands. Montgomery County currently meets this goal.

- **Natural Resource Acreage** - If the county does not have enough locally owned recreational lands to meet its' overall 30 acres per thousand goal, it may apply a portion of locally owned natural resource lands. This includes 1/3 of Stream Valley, Conservation and undeveloped portions of Regional Parks.

Montgomery County currently has 26,362 acres that count toward fulfilling the State goal of 28,259 acres of recreation land, and could be certified as meeting the State's land acquisition goal with 1,897 additional acres. The following table indicates how land proposed for acquisition could provide 2,650 acres of qualifying parkland, which will enable the County to exceed the State's certification goal.

M-NCPPC - Montgomery County Park System Future Land Acquisition Needs To The Year 2020		M-NCPPC Future Parkland Acquisition Certification Potential To Year 2020	
PARK TYPES	ACRES	STATE PERCENT ALLOWANCE	POTENTIAL CERTIFIED ACRES
County-wide			
Stream Valley	3,204	33%	1057
Regional	368	33% of 1/3 - 2/3 Policy	80
Recreational	283	100%	283
Conservation	1,149	33%	379
Special	708	100%	708
Historical Cultural	16	100%	16
County-wide Subtotal	5,729	County-wide Subtotal	2524
Community-Use			
Urban	2	100%	2
Neighborhood	0	100%	0
Local	123	100%	123
Neighborhood Conservation Area	1	33%	1
Community-Use Subtotal	126	Community-Use Subtotal	126
TOTAL	5,855	TOTAL	2,650

Montgomery County Recreation Department

Recreation programs provide many key values and benefits for individuals, families, and the community, including creating critical community focal points, offering activities that strengthen the family unit, promoting health and wellness, reducing isolation and facilitating social and cultural interaction, providing positive alternatives to drug and alcohol use, enhancing public safety, and promoting economic growth and vitality.

This 2005 LPPRP has been fully coordinated with the Montgomery County Recreation Department and includes a small amount of information regarding Montgomery County Department of Recreation facilities and programs. For additional details please consult the 'Recreation Facility Development Plan, 1997-2010, 2005 Update' prepared by the Recreation Department and incorporated by reference as a part of this report."



AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

Through FY2004, Montgomery County has protected 61,032 acres of farmland through the preservation programs offered to its residents. According to the national publication, Farmland Preservation Report, Montgomery County ranked first in the nation in preserving agricultural land.

The *Preservation of Agriculture & Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan* was adopted by the M-NCPPC in 1980 and proposed the creation and application of two zoning techniques, the Rural Density Transfer (RDT) and the Rural Cluster (RC) Zones, in conjunction with a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system. These techniques have enabled Montgomery County to preserve large amounts of the County for agriculture.

Montgomery County has established a goal of protecting 70,000 acres of farmland. Through FY2004, the County is about 87 percent of the way towards reaching that goal. By examining the trend of development versus the trend of agricultural land preservation, achievement of the goal should be attained by the year 2010, provided no significant economic and political disruptions occur. In order to reach our 70,000 acre goal by the year 2010, we will need to protect an additional 8,968 acres.

It should be recognized that as we approach our goal of protecting 70,000 acres of farmland, it will become more difficult to preserve the unprotected lands that remain. The land that has been protected thus far has become extremely valuable for development, and the remaining unprotected agricultural lands are often directly adjacent to protected properties. Developers and real estate agents use our protected lands as another selling feature amenity that adds value to an unprotected property and encourages rural landowners to pursue development options. Rising real estate values will require diligence by program staff to ensure that valuation of farmland for agricultural preservation easements provides fair and equitable compensation for farmers. In the absence of fair and equitable values, the land will most likely convert to other land uses and be lost to preservation.

Agricultural Land Preservation Initiatives

The best way to safeguard, Montgomery County's agricultural reserve is to safeguard the profitability of farming by creating an environment that is conducive to agricultural sustainability and productivity. We must continue to expand the use of TDRs within the County wherever possible. Therefore, the recommendations in the TDR Task Force Report must become a part of our future planning goals. In another initiative, the County Council recently amended the Ten-Year Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan to prohibit extension of water and sewer service to Private Institutional Facilities in the RDT zone.

Program Development Strategy for Agricultural Land Preservation

The preservation of farmland itself will not ensure that farming will continue as a viable industry. The State and local government must promote a holistic approach to the preservation of agriculture in terms of preserving agriculture an industry. This concept must include many

components in order for a viable future to exist. These components include but are not limited to the following proposals:

Agricultural Zoning - The creation of a true agricultural zone is paramount to the future of agriculture as an industry.

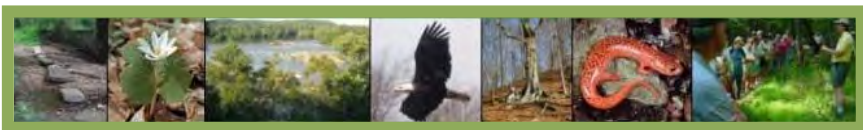
Right-to-Farm Provisions - The Legislative intent and purpose of any agricultural zone is to promote agriculture as the primary land use. Ideally, an agricultural zone should incorporate a right to farm provision stating that all agricultural operations are permitted at anytime, including the operation of farm machinery. No agricultural use should be subject to restriction on the grounds that it interferes with other uses permitted within the agricultural zone.

Master Plan Development - The development and adoption of a Master Plan establishes a public policy guide or “blue print” for local jurisdictions to formulate a holistic approach to agriculture as an industry and a land use.

Support to the Agricultural Industry - The State should work closely with local government to assess the economic contribution agriculture makes to each jurisdiction's local economy. By quantitatively assessing this contribution, local government can define the extent, nature and future direction of the agricultural industry. The agricultural industry within the State is constantly evolving. We must recognize that changing trends in agriculture are not unique to Maryland, nor is it a sign which signifies the ultimate demise of the agricultural industry. Changes are a normal part of an evolving market-driven system. The key for any industry to survive is dependent upon change and the ability for a State, region or county to adapt to these changes. One of the main philosophies the state must employ is to preserve the agricultural land base and let the industry focus on the direction it wants to go. We should not protect farmland for any particular type of agriculture activity or use.

Local and State Legislative Support

We must recommend changes in State Law that limit property tax assessments on protected lands. As the remaining undeveloped farmland increases in value, it is almost certain that the tax assessments will also increase and place increased financial burden on farmers. A change in law will ensure that historic and significant farm related structures are not demolished because they cost too much to retain.



NATURAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION

The natural environment of Montgomery County, its soils, streams, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands, support a variety of plants and animals and forms the backbone of our park system. Parkland provides a touchstone to our natural and cultural heritage, and a looking glass through which to view our past. This environment contributes to the County's high quality of life, visual quality and character and serves as the essential setting for resource-based recreation activities. Visiting natural areas in Parks is the most popular recreation activity of County residents, according to the 2003 Park User Survey (see Appendix). Due to its proximity to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Montgomery County is expected to continue developing at a fairly rapid pace. The critical concern is how to protect the County's air, water, land, wildlife resources and natural beauty while managing growth and making development more environmentally sensitive.

Resource based recreation requires land and resource preservation far beyond the actual space for trails and wildlife observation areas. Water quality capable of sustaining a diversity of fish and amphibian species, forests large enough to have forest interior dwelling birds, geological and soil conditions diverse enough to provide habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species are all dependent on large tracts of land. Even urban wildlife accessible to people near their homes depend on specific amounts and strategic locations of natural habitat.

Protection of the green infrastructure is a major reason for adding proposed parkland to our master plans and capital program. Parkland proposed for environmental protection in master plans is added as conservation or stream valley park. Park development plans consider a variety of environmental factors including soil type, hydrology, drainage, slope, non-tidal wetlands, stream and wetland buffers, rare, threatened and endangered species, forest interior birds, minimal viable population size, exotic plants, edge effect, natural community type, stormwater management, tree preservation, restoration, and mitigation.

A considerable number of plans and programs designed to identify, protect, preserve and manage our County's natural resources have been developed and are currently ongoing or soon to be implemented. These programs assist in the implementation of the seven visions of the Governor's Commission on Growth in the Chesapeake Bay Region that relate to the protection of sensitive areas, stewardship of the Bay and conservation of resources. Currently, about 28,000 acres of locally owned parkland are considered as conservation or stream valley parks (including 2/3 of the acreage of regional parks set aside for natural resource conservation). Approximately 4800 additional acres are proposed as parkland for natural resource protection.

Current Programs for Natural Resources Preservation

Montgomery County Park and Planning's programs to conserve, protect and enhance natural resources are among the strongest in the state, due to the strong tax base and the commitment of the County government and elected officials to the protection of our natural heritage. The continuing citizen advocacy for open space and natural resource protection is the

basis for this level of effort. As the County faces more development pressure, the need for natural resource protection becomes a more critical issue.

The success of our program in protecting many resources also results in some of our greatest weaknesses. The sheer size of the land area protected and the complexity of management issues require continuing efforts to improve our program. Control of deer predation and management of non-native invasive species remain a challenge.

Achieving an appropriate balance of natural resource protection with the needs for recreation, access to public lands and providing connectivity for trails, roads and utilities continues to fragment the county's natural resource base. We address these concerns in the area master plans, park master plans and development review process. Continuing efforts are needed to reduce the impact of these facilities.

Needed Improvements

The County is taking the following steps to overcome weaknesses and achieve goals

- Increasing efforts to manage for over populations of white-tailed deer in order to protect biodiversity within natural areas and protect the viability of farming in the county (recent publications have identified deer as the number one threat to agriculture in the county).
- Increasing efforts to manage infestations of non-native invasive species, which are reducing biodiversity within high quality natural areas.
- Increasing efforts to manage over-all biodiversity on parkland natural areas.
- Increasing efforts to reduce encroachment of adjacent private property owners on parkland resources (i.e., mowing, dumping, tree and understory removal).

Future Program Priorities

The Department of Park and Planning is increasing efforts to address the management issues listed above through increased use of volunteer groups and public/private partnerships. The FY06 work program includes a significant expansion of the non-native species and deer management programs. Stepped-up efforts to address encroachment have paid off and will be continued, especially in areas of critical stream and habitat resources.

Planning efforts to address the need and competition for urban natural resource areas are being undertaken:

- Several new master plan efforts are beginning in the older parts of the county. "Green Urbanism" principles are being applied to restore degraded resources and integrates green building and low-impact development incentives.
- The new "Centers and Boulevards" initiative will look at ways to intensify development around smaller commercial centers and along connecting roads with transit service to create more lively centers with more open space.
- The County Executive is convening a task force to conduct an interagency assessment of current zoning, subdivision, building and road code standards that impede efforts to mitigate the environmental effects of land development.

Green Infrastructure Functional Master Plan

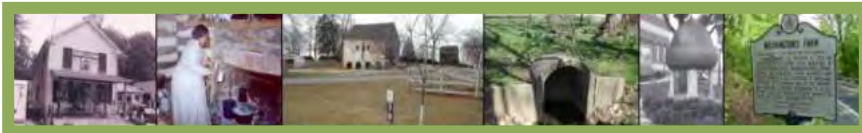
Department of Park and Planning staff are beginning preparation of a *Green Infrastructure (GI) Functional Master Plan* starting in July of 2005. The proposed *GI Functional Master Plan* will be a predominantly GIS-based effort utilizing existing staff resources that will:

- Identify and prioritize the existing and desired countywide contiguous network of all environmentally important areas, and increase potential for funding open space preservation through programs that promote the preservation of Green Infrastructure;
- Identify and adopt effective implementation mechanisms to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore this network such as established mitigation requirements, and guidance for other environmental protection programs;
- Streamline the preparation of environmental information and recommendations for are master plan and public and private development projects;
- Provide a readily updated countywide natural resources inventory, provide a land use planning based tool to meet the TMDL goal of maintaining water quality; and provide a means for tracking and quantifying progress.

This plan is scheduled be completed in draft in 2007, with adoption in 2008.

Recommended Improvements to State Programs

State funding is needed to protect more land, prepare better inventories (before critical resources are lost) and provide better outreach and education for our citizens on the importance of natural resource protection. Eco-tourism is a possible source of economic benefit, however, facilities would have to be improved and significant effort made to attract people beyond the region. The natural features of most widespread interest are within national or state parkland.



CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Cultural resources (both built and archaeological) are scattered throughout the County and on parkland. They demonstrate how each generation leaves its marks on the built environment. For example, Montgomery County's archaeological history contains a record of the cultural adaptations of pre-historic peoples to changing climate and ecology, from the Paleo-Indian Period of 12,000 years ago to European contact in 1608. The County's architectural history as represented by its built landmarks provides a window into early agricultural life, the end of slavery and the emergence of industry, transportation breakthroughs, suburbanization, and government expansion. Montgomery County has established a comprehensive program to identify, protect, and interpret this three-century-old, diverse legacy.

Current Programs for Cultural Resources Preservation

Montgomery County's preservation program is strong, but needs to reach out in key, new areas. The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, the body that heads the County's most visible preservation program, is cited as a model for a well-run local historic preservation commission. The Historic Area Work Permit process also is well defined, and is generally seen as balancing the mandate of historic preservation with property owners' needs for reasonable change.

The Historic Preservation Section has many specific programs to meet State and County goals, including: 1) Researching & evaluating sites for historic designation. 2) Reviewing proposed alterations to designated sites. 3) Reviewing subdivisions & development plans that affect historic sites. 4) Managing MNCPPC-owned historic sites. 5) Directing the countywide archeological program. 6) Undertaking educational and outreach activities. 7) Administering the County Historic Preservation Tax Credit and Historic Preservation Grant Fund. The Historical Atlas, printed in 1976, is now in an electronic format and is updated regularly and available to the public on the M-NCPPC website.

The primary weaknesses of the program are that additional staff is needed in the Historic Preservation office, and that maintenance funds for the upkeep of park-owned properties are severely lacking. Additionally, the historic preservation process is still, unfortunately, seen as a secondary process by some.

Improvements to the Implementation Program

The following are examples of either needed improvements in or future goals for the Historic Preservation program: 1) Increase the maintenance budget for cultural resources in parks. 2) Augment master plan research of cultural resources during intervening years by adding resources so that sites that show the potential for designation are not overlooked during a planning hiatus. Additional resources for research staff would assure that inventory efforts are kept more current, and that previously unidentified, but threatened resources that meet criteria are put on a watch list. 3) Add Cultural Landscape Reports and Historic Structure Reports to the repertoire of regular Commission documents. These explore the history behind parks, landscapes and important buildings through primary document research. 4) Conduct more research on twentieth-century resources ("the Recent Past"), whether commercial or residential, which are not yet appreciated and are quickly being lost to new construction. 5) Increase efforts and funding to put park-owned cultural resources into the GIS and Smart Parks system. The new *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* has started this process. 6) Develop an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* of significant publicly owned and selected privately owned archaeological sites, and identify all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites on County master plans.

Future Program Priorities

In the future it will be important to: preserve and revitalize older, close-in neighborhoods, both commercially and residentially; embrace national preservation initiatives such as the registration of archaeological and African-American historical sites; increase the focus on the "Recent Past"; increase use of heritage tourism; and incorporate in-depth documentation and interpretation of major landmarks and cultural landscapes into the planning and design process.

Finally, it is important to provide opportunities for paid staff to interpret the cultural resources in County parks, something that is standard practice in many other nearby counties.

Another priority is to implement the goals of the *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks*, the purpose of which is to create a blueprint for the future use and priority of County-owned resources. The Strategic Plan:

- Lays out a vision for improving stewardship of park-based cultural resources and establishes priorities critical to implementing that vision.
- Recommends a new way of prioritizing cultural resources in parks based on their potential for long-term use and heritage tourism.
- Presents a “Top 20” Priority Projects List containing sites to be opened to the public by M-NCPPC or via a public/private partnership.
- Defines a systematic approach to stewarding cultural resources in parks based on capital improvements, annual maintenance, and programming (both activity/use/interpretive programming and architectural & engineering programming). This approach crosses over Department divisions.
- Provides a better method for assessing maintenance costs of cultural resources in parks by developing new mathematical formulas.
- Increases agency knowledge about park-owned cultural resources by creating a new GIS park layer with extensive Excel spreadsheet and by sharing that data with Smart Parks.
- Lays the groundwork for ongoing strategic plans because a new cultural resource strategic plan will be developed every ten years and the original plan can serve as a prototype for strategic plans by other divisions.

For more information, see *From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* (January 2006).





CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION TO THE LOCAL PLAN

This Chapter includes the context and purposes of the local Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

PURPOSES OF THE PLAN

The overall purposes and specific objectives of the 2005–2006 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan are to:

- Review goals and objectives of State and local programs for three principal elements: parks and recreation, agriculture, and natural resources;
- Identify where these goals and objectives are essentially the same, where they are complementary or mutually supportive, and where they are simply different;
- Evaluate the ability of implementation programs and funding sources for each element to achieve related goals and objectives;
- Identify desirable improvements to policies, plans, and funding strategies, to better achieve goals and improve return on public investment;
- Recommend to State and local legislatures, governing bodies and agencies changes needed to overcome shortcomings, achieve goals, and ultimately ensure good return on public investment;
- Identify the needs and priorities of current and future State and local population for outdoor recreation;
- Achieve legislative goals of State and local land preservation programs; and
- Ensure that public investment in land preservation and recreation supports and is supported by local comprehensive plans, associated implementation programs, State Planning Policy, and State and local programs that influence land use and development.

This Plan is mandated by Program Open Space Law, that requires all Maryland counties to prepare local Parks, Recreation, and Land Preservation Plans every six years starting in 2005. The State is required to submit a statewide plan that incorporates the county plans one year after the local plans are due.

Numerous and varied land preservation programs have been established by the State and locally since POS law was enacted in 1969. In addition to active recreation, most of these programs are focused on agricultural and rural land preservation, conservation of lands that support natural resources, including the State's biological communities and individual living resource populations, or all of the above. The quality of the State's living environment has benefited tremendously from these diverse and, in most cases, complementary preservation efforts. In Montgomery County alone, we have received grants totaling approximately 100

million dollars from Program Open Space, 16.9 million dollars in Rural Legacy funds, over 7 million dollars in Green Print funds, and over \$150,000 for historic preservation planning.

In light of the large number of desirable preservation programs and supporting revenue sources, a recent slowed economy, and associated reductions in many of those revenue sources, the Land Preservation Park and Recreation Plan is intended to develop a strategy that will best ensure good return on public investment in the objectives of these programs. Input from Counties will also assist in justifying needs for additional funding for these programs.

To accomplish the purposes of the Plan, the planning process will:

- Review goals and objectives of State and local land preservation programs concerned with three types of land resource: parks and recreation, agriculture, and natural resources.
- For each type of land resource, evaluate the ability of implementation programs and funding sources to achieve the goals and objectives. Identify shortcomings in the ability of implementation programs and funding sources to achieve legislative goals.
- Identify and recommend to State and local legislatures and governing bodies changes needed to overcome shortcomings, achieve goals, and ultimately ensure good return on public investment.

The Plan's Relationship with the State of Maryland's Eight Visions

The LPPRP relates to the eight visions of the Governor's Commission on Growth which were originally developed as part of the "Governor's Commission on Growth in the Chesapeake Bay Region". Particularly important, is the protection of sensitive areas and the provision of ample recreation opportunities to adequately serve growth in existing and planned population centers. Recommendations pertaining to natural and cultural areas and recreation facilities included in the Montgomery County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) adhere to these principles.

The Eight Visions are intended to ensure that:

- Development is concentrated in suitable areas.
- Sensitive areas are protected.
- In rural areas, growth is directed to existing population centers and resource areas are protected.
- Stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay and the land is a universal ethic.
- Conservation of resources, including reduction in resource consumption, is practiced.
- Economic growth is encouraged and regulatory mechanisms are streamlined.
- Adequate public facilities and infrastructure under control of the county are available or planned in areas where growth is to occur.
- Funding mechanisms are addressed to achieve these visions.

Consistency with the State of Maryland's eight visions was considered throughout the LPPRP Planning Process. The sections of the Plan dealing with recreation needs are

consistent with the vision that encourages development in suitable areas and the vision that encourages economic growth. The sections of the Plan that address natural and cultural resources programs serve to implement the visions that relate to the protection of the Bay, environmentally sensitive areas, and the conservation of natural resources. The section on Agriculture is consistent with the vision that in rural areas growth is directed to existing population centers and resource and agricultural areas are protected.

Background Information and Plan Context

Overview and Scope of Plan

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

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

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

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

LOCAL AGENCY PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

This Plan was prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning in coordination with the Montgomery County Recreation Department. It was coordinated by the Countywide Planning Division's Park Planning and Resource Analysis Unit (PPRA), with chapters also written by the Countywide Environmental and Historic Preservation Units. Significant contributions were also received from the Community Based Planning Division, Park Region Staff, Park Design and Development, and the Research and Technology Division. The Plan was guided by a team with representation from both Park and Planning and the Recreation Department and additionally, significant input was provided by the Community Use of Schools Department, and the Montgomery County Agricultural Services Division. Specifically, Chapters I, II, and III, were coordinated by PPRA with assistance from the Recreation Department; Chapter IV was coordinated by Community Based Planning and the Montgomery County Agricultural Services Division; Chapter V was coordinated by the Environmental Planning Division and Chapter VI by the Historic Preservation Unit of the Countywide Planning Division. The Program Open Space Grant liaison function is provided by staff in the Park Design and Development Division.

Outreach for the Plan

A large amount of outreach occurred for the LPPRP. In addition to the surveys described below, a number of workshops and meetings have been held with the Recreation Department, Municipalities, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board and Montgomery County Public Schools, to consider recreation trends and future needs. A list of meetings and forums on the Plan is located in the Appendix.

Surveys

Surveys provide a significant amount of input for the Plan including data on which to base future needs. Statistics reflecting user demand and trends and resident preferences are important when projecting future needs for our County. Surveys included:

- 2000 Park User Survey, that provided age/gender user counts on numbers of persons observed utilizing specific park facilities.
- 2003 Montgomery County Park User Satisfaction Survey, that provided telephone responses from Montgomery County residents on park use, facility deficits and park satisfaction; and
- 2003 Maryland State Survey on Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in Maryland, that provided telephone responses from Montgomery and Prince George's County residents on recreation facility use and needs.

The geographic supplement of the National Superstudy of Sports Participation also provided additional data on age-based participation rates in Maryland.

Other Outreach

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

- Coordinating with various Montgomery County Park and Planning Divisions, the Montgomery County Departments of Recreation and Economic Development/Agricultural Preservation Division, Community Use of Schools; County municipalities, and Prince George's County Park Planning.
- Utilizing the six Recreation Advisory Boards to provide countywide and regional input.
- Placing information and opportunities for input on the web.
- Obtaining information from recreation, conservation, ethnic groups and agricultural interest groups.
- Holding staff brainstorming sessions and public forums to provide input on needs for recreation, natural resource and agricultural preservation.
- Coordinating with the outreach for the Green Infrastructure Plan, where appropriate.
- Holding a Public Hearing on the Planning Board Approved Public Hearing Draft for the LPPRP.

THE PLAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive Planning in Montgomery County is undertaken at three levels: The General Plan described in the following section, outlines the overall goals and objectives for land use, transportation and the environment as well as a general pattern of development in wedges and corridors. Functional Plans are prepared for some elements that require countywide planning such as the Master Plan of Highways, Master Plan of Bikeways, the Legacy Open Space Plan, the Patuxent Watershed Plan and others. Area Master plans continually update the General Plan and consider all elements and incorporate the salient parts of functional plans, refining the application of functional plans by designating areas for environmental protection and indicating the appropriate tools (clustering, easements, park acquisition, etc.).

Area Master Plans for specific areas of the county (master plan and sector plan areas) are developed in a 10-15 year cycle, with some plans being started sooner if changing conditions warrant. Minor master plan amendments are undertaken on rare occasions if a narrow issue emerges that must be dealt with quickly and cannot wait for the next master plan cycle to take place. Land uses, trails, road connections, and locations for community facilities are planned in detail based on the General Plan and projected needs for housing, environmental protection and economic development. This is the most intense and comprehensive level of planning in Montgomery County and results in recommendations for land use, zoning, environmental protection, park acquisition, transportation, trails and bikeways. The staff works with landowners, residents and interest groups to arrive at a staff draft plan that is presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and holds several working sessions where the issues still outstanding are discussed and resolved. The plan is then transmitted to the County Executive (and executive departments) for comment and County Council for action. The County Council then repeats the public hearing and work session process, culminating in a resolution to approve the plan with any changes they have made as a result of their process. Subsequently, the County Council then officially approves amendments to the Zoning map of the county, called a sectional map amendment. A list of all recently approved master plans is located in the Appendix.

The LPPRP is a refinement of the overall framework for parks and recreation contained in the County's *1964 General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's County* and in existing park acquisition and development guidelines. It compares the facility needs for each area in the County so that decision makers have the information necessary to establish priorities in an era of high competition for limited resources. Relevant portions of the adopted LPPRP will be included in future Area Master Plans, Park Master Plans, and future Park Functional Plans.

A location map of the County and its 26 Planning Areas is included on the following page

The Role of Parks and Recreation in the Comprehensive General Plan

The 1964 General Plan and the 1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives of Montgomery County help guide programs for recreation, parks and open space. These plans are continually updated by Area Master Plans for the County's 26 Planning areas that are consistent with these goals. They include goals and policies for growth, development, populations, and communities and are consistent with the eight visions established as State Planning policy.

The 1964 *General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties* describes parks, recreation, and open space in broad terms. Portions of the 1993 *General Plan Refinement of the Goals & Objectives for Montgomery County*, an amendment to *The General Plan*, that relate to parkland and protection of environmental and historic resources are included in the Appendix. The thrust of *The General Plan* is still relevant and is complemented and extended, rather than altered, by the LPPRP.

To further describe the role of parks, recreation, and open space as an element of *The General Plan* the following section examines the General Plan's contents in terms of: urban form and design, community development, community identity, conservation, and recreation.

Urban Form and Design

The concept of form and design expressed in the General Plan focuses on the capability of parks and green space to help create and guide a pattern of growth in the County that ultimately provides a pleasing aesthetic appearance for overall County development.

The General Plan calls for the maintenance of large amounts of open space, uninterrupted by scattered urban development, and the acquisition of additional parkland using state and federal matching funds where possible. It mandates park development at a pace that is in step with the County's population growth and coordination of the park acquisition program with the corridor and wedge form of development.

In general, local parks, park-schools, and urban parks are to be placed in the communities where they are most accessible to resident users. Stream valley parks are, as the name implies, located along the County's major streams, and regional parks are located where they can form a boundary between urban and rural environments or form boundaries to separate urban settlements. Regional Parks often generate large open space areas or provide a boundary or transition between suburban or urbanized development and less densely populated areas. Open spaces also help shape the urban form and define the character of the surrounding area.

The General Plan seeks to prevent urbanization of the open spaces now existing between the radial corridors it describes. Public acquisition of all land outside the corridors is obviously impossible financially. Thus, restricting land uses to rural use through the exercise of zoning powers has been the most feasible method available to protect open space areas, and is considered imperative.

Local parks also play a role in establishing urban form and design. These parks may be used to delineate boundaries between communities or between different types of land uses. They are more frequently used, especially in new developments or master plans, as focal points of activity in the overall design of a community.

Community Development

The concept of community development expressed in the General Plan focuses on the role of park spaces as integral components in the shaping of the various types of land uses within the County, and on the manner in which each use relates with others.

One of the design concepts that lends imagination, integrity and identity to an area--- whether it is a new town, a cluster development, or an existing community--- is the separation of developed areas by open spaces or greenways. These belts of open space may range from rows of trees or conservation areas in a cluster development to developed recreation areas.

In new area master plans and in the administration of planned developments, the location and use of both public and private open space is an integral part of the total development process.

Community Identity

The concept of community identity expressed in the General Plan focuses on the unique and important role that parks play in creating a sense of neighborhood identity. Parks and schools have been important and highly visible public investments at the community level. In many instances, development plans have called for them to be developed jointly in order to emphasize not only economics through joint use, but to reinforce the community focus of these public facilities. Increasingly, parks are used as part of the County's strategy of strengthening a sense of place and identity with a community. Parks may also serve to define communities, by separating neighborhoods or uses, and by providing an edge to a business district or high-density residential area, or by providing a visual or physical barrier between neighborhoods. Parks may also be used to link neighborhoods by bringing them together in a common space or by providing a common pathway system for them to use. Parks serve an important role as prime spaces for community gathering and community activities.

Conservation

The concept of conservation expressed in the General Plan focuses on the acquisition of parkland for conservation and the use of low-density zoning to protect open space in the wedge areas of the County.

Cooperation and coordination with the numerous state, federal, and local programs for rural development, conservation, and open space acquisition are crucial. Area master plans identify important conservation areas. For example, the Upper Rock Creek Watershed Plan is based on the public policy of protecting that watershed from both flooding and excessive urbanization. Similarly, the General Plan identifies important park areas that combine conservation with active recreation. This applies to all stream valley parks, conservation areas and special parks that contain areas of natural resources, local or historical interest, and protect water supply sources.

Recreation

The concept of recreation expressed in the General Plan focuses on the potential recreation capability of all park and open space land. Meeting the phenomenal demand for outdoor recreation spurred by rising living standards and increasing leisure time is seen as requiring the use of private land as well as public parks.

Many active sports can be enjoyed in urban areas on local parks and school facilities including highly land-intensive facility uses such as ballfields, tennis courts, playgrounds, and basketball courts. Camping, fishing, hiking, swimming, horseback riding, boating, water skiing, hunting, and other outdoor sports, however, require more space. The large expanses of water, shoreline, forests, and fields required for these activities obviously cannot be provided adequately within urban areas. Thus, large County regional parks and nearby State and National Parks supplement local opportunities.

DEFINITIONS USED IN THE PLAN

The local and state definitions used in this Plan are found in the Appendix.



CHAPTER II - FRAMEWORK FOR THE PLAN

This Chapter summarizes information about the County's current and projected land use, population, facilities, economy, and resources as relevant to the Plan. Information and maps from the Comprehensive Plan or other sources is provided either by reference or reproduction, to the extent necessary to focus on the purposes of this Plan

COUNTY PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The fifth largest County in the State of Maryland, Montgomery County roughly measures 500 square miles and contains 324,000 acres (including water). The Potomac River forms the County's southwest boundary, separating it from Loudon and Fairfax Counties in Virginia. The Patuxent River flows down the northeastern side of the County, forming a boundary with Howard County. Except for the extreme northern tip of the County, which is in the headwaters of the south branch of the Patapsco River, the northwest boundary is a straight line from the headwaters of the Patuxent to the Potomac at the mouth of the Monocacy River. Sharing that boundary is Frederick County. To the southeast lies Prince George's County. Due to the City of Takoma Park's annexation into Montgomery County in mid-1997 the County line now follows its city limits, and appears as a small triangle into what was a portion of Prince George's County. Adjacent to the southeastern corner of Montgomery County is the District of Columbia.

The County lies almost entirely in the Piedmont Plateau on the east bank of the Potomac River, just 30 miles west of the Chesapeake Bay and approximately 100 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Coastal plain sediments overlap on the eastern edge of the County. Between the coastal plain and the Piedmont is a drop, shown in the many falls and rapids in this area, which is known as the fall line. All of these features and water bodies exert influence in different ways on the recreational habits and patterns of Montgomery County residents.

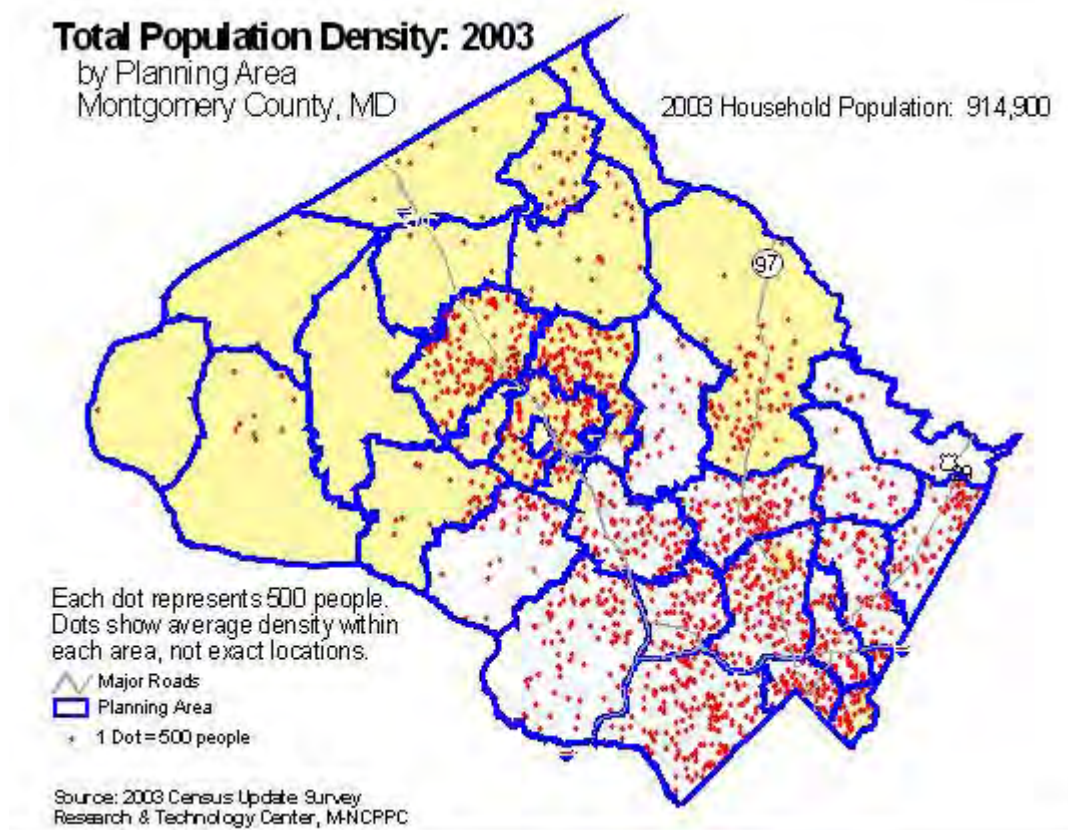
Montgomery County is characterized by gently sloping topography, laced with numerous small streams in relatively narrow valleys. Low ridges of hills stretch green fingers across the central County, separating the branches of Seneca Creek and the watersheds of Rock Creek, Muddy Branch, and Watts Branch, which drain into the Potomac River. Northwest Branch, Long Branch, and Sligo Creek in the eastern portion of the County drain into the Anacostia River, which ultimately flows into the Potomac River in the District of Columbia. The portion of the County draining to the Patuxent is more dramatic, with steep slopes and cliffs. The Potomac watersheds have glens and palisades. It is along these waterways that civilization and industry developed. Early peoples followed the waterways as roads, leaving historic evidence of their presence behind. Eventually people settled in more permanent locations, and later farmers chose the same fertile soils along waterways for cultivation. In later years these same streams and rivers were harnessed for power to operate mills. In the present day and age water resources in the parks system serve as appealing features for residents, visitors and students.

The northwestern area is distinguished from the rest of the County by way of its higher elevation. Slopes are predominantly moderate, with more severe slopes occurring along

streams and rock outcrops. The lowest elevation in the County occurs where the Potomac River enters the District of Columbia (52 feet above sea level), while the highest point is just north of Damascus (850 feet) in the Upcounty area. Slopes run southeastward and southwestward away from this point. Parr's Ridge defines the boundary between the major watersheds of the Patuxent and Potomac Rivers. Additional information on the physical characteristics of the County including soils, vegetation, watersheds, etc. is included in the Appendix.

CURRENT AND PROJECTED DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

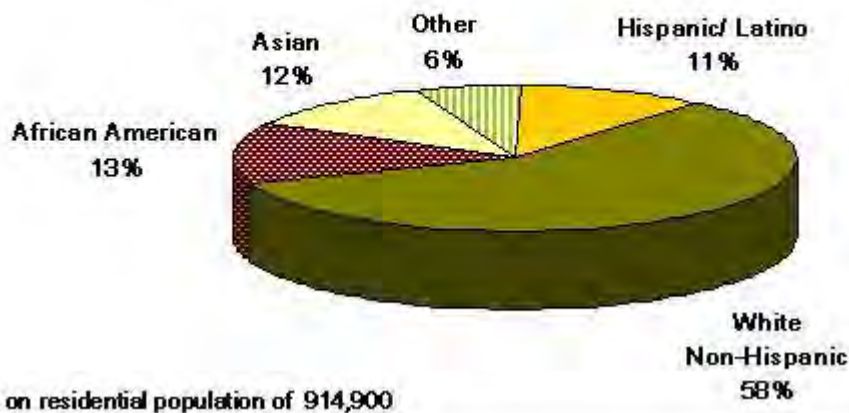
The Residents We Serve



As of July 2005, Montgomery County's estimated total population was 948,000. The majority of the population lives in the southern part of the County, a short commute to the District of Columbia, and along the I-270 corridor. The population becomes sparser as you head toward the more rural northern and western areas of the County, along the Frederick and Howard County borders.

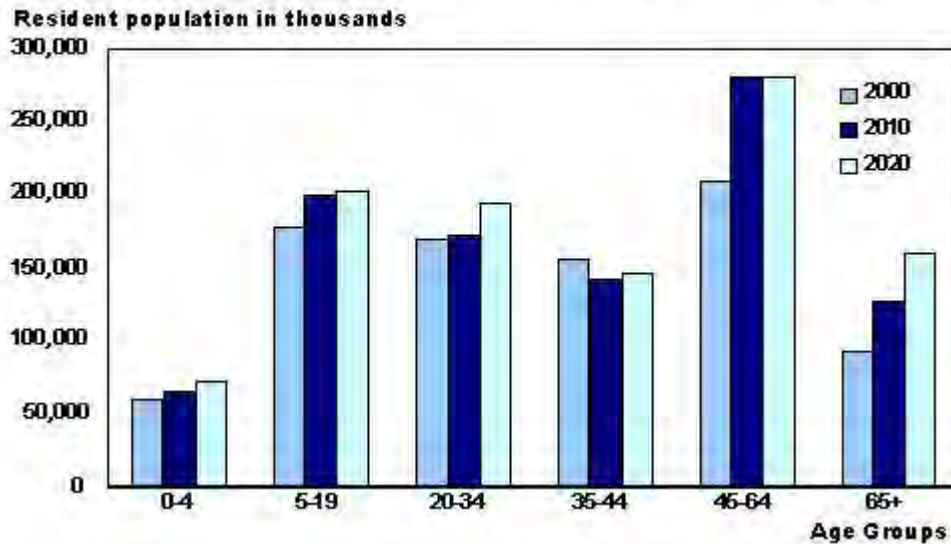
One of Montgomery County's greatest resources and strengths lies in the diversity of its population. Close to one-half of Maryland's foreign-born population resides in Montgomery County, comprising approximately 25% of the County's population. Between 1997 and 2003, foreign-born residents accounted for 56% of Montgomery County's population growth. Of the population above age 5, close to 32% speak a language other than English at home. This includes Spanish (11.6%), other Indo-European languages (9.3%), and Asian or Pacific Island languages (8.0%). The demographics of the County are shown on the following chart:

2003 County Population by Race/Ethnicity



Approximately 53.3% of the County's residents are female; 46.7% are male. The average age of a County resident is 37.3 years. Slightly less than 26% of the population is school age or younger children, and another 12% are 65 and older. In 2004, there was a projected student population of 140,492 in the County's public schools. This represents growth of less than 1% from the prior year's pupil population. By the year 2010, the County is expected to pass the one million-population mark and reach 1,072,000 by 2020. The mature seniors, age 65 and older, are predicted to be the fastest growing age group in the County. Between 2000 and 2010, this age group is expected to grow by 37%, and by an additional 26% between 2010 and 2020.

Montgomery County Population Forecast by Age Groupings



One characteristic that sets Montgomery County apart is the high level of education attained by its adults: 63% of the County's population 25 years or older has a Bachelor's degree or higher. This high percentage of college-educated residents consistently places Montgomery County in the top six counties in the nation for education. Montgomery County's well-educated residents, fueled by high paying jobs, give Montgomery County high household incomes. It is estimated that the 2002 median household income of \$79,115 is 87% higher than the nation's. Approximately 38% of the County's households earn incomes of \$100,000 or more.

3 Out of 8 Households Have Incomes Over \$100,000



The majority of Montgomery County's employed residents live and work within the County (58.8%). One out of four employed County residents commute to the District of Columbia. Commuting to work by car is the preferred method of getting to work: 79.3% of resident workers

drive or carpool. The average commuting time is 31.5 minutes. The County's employed labor forces as of July 2004 was 511,946, with an unemployment rate of 2.37%.

Family households account for close to 75% of total households, and the majority of these (63.4%) are married couple families. Close to 23% of all households are persons living alone. The average household size is 2.70.

The majority of the housing in the County is single family (49.8% detached housing and 19.4% townhouses); the remainder is garden and hi-rise apartments (30.8%). Most are homeowners, 77.3%. Sixty percent of the households were living in the same house five years previously; the median number of years was 7 years. For homeowners, who typically command higher salaries, only 22% of these households spent more than 25% of their income on housing costs. Close to half the renters, on the other hand, spent more than 25% on their housing costs. The median sales price for homes sold in the County in 2003 was approximately \$384,900.

Montgomery County is also a major migration gateway into Maryland for people moving from other states or from abroad. Close to 175,000 people, or 19% of the County's population, became new County residents between 1998 and 2003. Of these new residents, slightly more than half (52.6%) are non-Hispanic whites. Asians and Hispanics make up 15.6% and 13.8% of new residents, respectively. Three of every five new residents moved to Montgomery County from outside the District of Columbia/Maryland/ Northern Virginia area. Forty-five percent are more likely to speak a language other than English. They are highly educated, with 73.2% of new adults holding at least a Bachelor's degree. Almost half of these new residents work in Montgomery County.

In the past decade, rocketing computer ownership occurred in Montgomery County as computer prices plummeted, making ever-advancing technology affordable to most households. In 2003, 87% of the County's households reported at least one personal computer, and of these households, 93% have access to the Internet.

Future population and land use has an important impact on the number, type and location of parks and recreation facilities needed. Present and projected growth patterns of a community have a great influence on both the location and type of recreation and resource needs an area experiences. This is primarily addressed during the Area Master Plan Process where specific future parks are recommended to meet future needs.

Existing and future land use information is an integral part of the methodology that was used to develop the park needs projections in the LPPRP. Population and age distribution as related to recreation participation is specifically addressed. The resulting needs tables, maps, and methodology information is located in Chapter 3 of this Plan. Additional information on land use trends in Montgomery County can be found in the various area Master Plans for sections of the County and also the *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County*.

Socioeconomic and Fiscal Benefits of Recreation and Land Preservation

The advantages of a good recreation system are many and diverse. The value to the individual user is the most obvious benefit, but there are many values to the community, the environment, and the economy that flow from a well-designed park system. At the individual level, recreation opportunities reduce stress, improve self-esteem, provide an outlet for creative energy, and generally improve an individual's quality of life. For the community at large,

recreation facilities provide opportunities to gather for social experiences, to build a sense of community and civic pride, to build ethnic and cultural understanding, opportunities for individuals and groups to interact with nature within an urban setting, and give families a place to grow and connect with each other. What the natural environment gains from the preservation of County parkland is striking: benefits include pollution reduction, protection of the ecosystem, and preservation of habitat. In Montgomery County the preservation of stream valleys, greenways, and other significant natural areas is an especially important aspect of the area's quality of life. These features also provide opportunities for individuals and groups to interact with nature in an urban setting.

Perhaps the most overlooked benefit of a good park system is the economic impact. Increased land values, opportunities for increases in tourism, and improvements in the overall health of the community have many direct impacts and innumerable ancillary benefits to the fiscal well being of an area. Many homes sell for a premium price due to the immediate accessibility of a park.

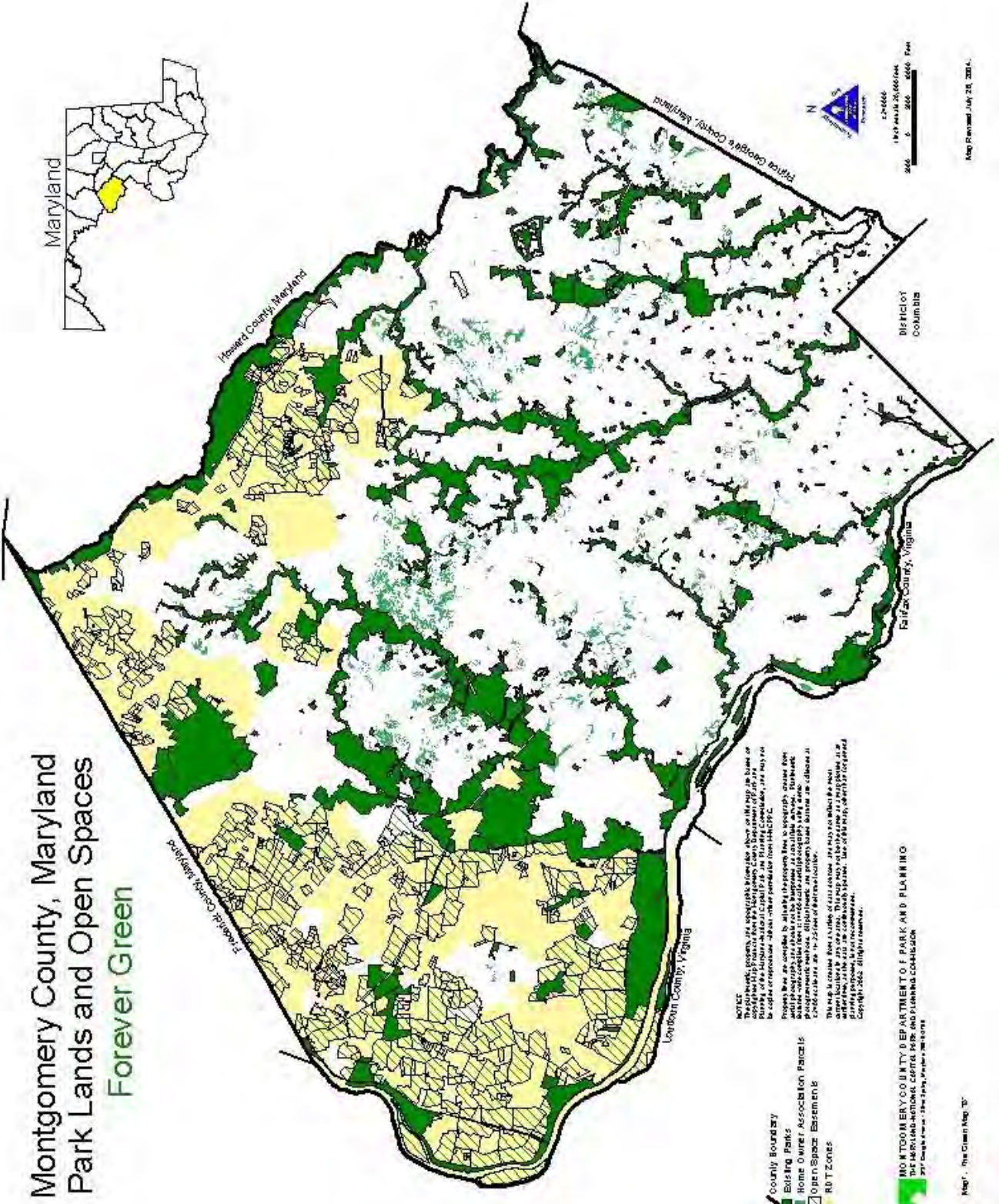
Parks and recreation facilities (and programs) also represent an investment with great potential to save future public expenditures by providing children with safe, accessible recreation areas. Children and youth in any community who require the attention of police are frequently the children without a safe and accessible place to play in their neighborhood. Young adults who are turned away from playing organized sports because there are not enough fields to meet their needs may find destructive ways to spend their time. When this alternative use of time involves alcohol and drugs, it can become a public expense and a serious concern to the community. Early investment in leisure facilities pays healthy dividends and can even save public dollars in the long run. This aspect of recreation and park facilities and its importance to the quality of life in Montgomery County should not be overlooked.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Plan addresses the three elements of land preservation: parks, recreation and open space; agricultural land preservation and natural resource protection. These elements will be integrated into the framework of the county comprehensive plan primarily by being incorporated into Area Master Plans, which continually update the General Comprehensive Plan. The relationship of the General Plan with recreation and open space is discussed in Chapter 3. Agricultural preservation and its relationship to the General Plan is discussed in Chapter 4, and Natural and Cultural Resource Preservation in Chapter 5 and 6.

The following "Forever Green" Map acts as the Plan Map and shows land preserved for recreation, agriculture and natural and cultural resources.

Montgomery County, Maryland Park Lands and Open Spaces Forever Green



The overall framework provided in the comprehensive plan for land preservation, in context of the County's land resources and land use strategies are summarized in Chapter 1. The general strategy of the County's programs that direct growth; development, infrastructure and community enhancements used to protect state and local investments in land preservation for parks and recreation; agriculture and natural resources are discussed within the individual Chapters, as well as in the relevant General Plan Goals shown in the following section.

1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County

The General Plan Proposed concentrating development in corridors allowing much of remaining wedges to be preserved for agriculture and open space. This smart growth policy allows more efficient placement of parks and other public services as shown in the strategies below.

The following Park and Recreation objectives and strategies are included in the Land Use, Environmental, and Identity elements of the *1993 General Plan Refinement-Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County*. Only those sections relating to parks have been excerpted. They are compatible with the policy for parks as well as guidelines and objectives for parkland acquisition and development.

Land Use Objectives Relating to Parkland and Open Space Preservation

Objective: *Provide a coordinated and comprehensive system of parks, recreation, and open space.*

Strategies:

- Give priority to open space, park, and recreation investments in areas with the greatest existing or proposed residential density and in areas with important environmental features.
- Use open space, parks, and recreation facilities to shape and enhance the development and identity of individual neighborhoods, cluster developments, and existing communities.
- Integrate open space, parks, and recreational facilities into urbanized areas to promote public activity and community identity.
- Plan for and encourage the provision of greenways to connect urban and rural open spaces to provide access to parkland, and to connect major stream valley park areas.

Objective: *Preserve farmland and rural open space in the Agricultural Wedge.*

Strategies:

- Strengthen land use policies that encourage farmland preservation and rural open space preservation in the Agricultural Wedge.

- Strengthen incentives and regulations to encourage agricultural uses and discourage development within the Agricultural Wedge.
- Limit non-agricultural uses to those that are low intensity or otherwise identified in master plans.
- Continue the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program as well as the County and State farm easement programs as important elements of preserving farmland.
- Continue the function of existing rural centers as the focus of activity for the surrounding countryside.
- Ensure that rural centers primarily serve rural lifestyles and are compatible in size and scale with the intent of the Agricultural Wedge.
- Continue agriculture as the preferred use in the Agricultural Wedge.

Environmental and Cultural Objectives Relating to Parkland

Goal: Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations. Manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.

Objective: *Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual, environmentally sensitive, or possess outstanding natural beauty.*

Strategies:

- Protect natural resources through identification, public acquisition, conservation easements, public education, citizen involvement, and private conservation efforts.
- Connect parks and conservation areas to form an open space and conservation-oriented greenway system.
- Require open space dedications in new subdivisions that maximize protection of stream valleys and other sensitive environmental features.
- Ensure that development guidelines are reviewed periodically to make certain that they are environmentally sensitive and reflect current technologies and knowledge of the environment.
- Limit construction soils and slopes not suited for development.

Objective: *Conserve county waterways, wetlands, and sensitive parts of stream valleys to minimize flooding, pollution, sedimentation, and damage to the ecology and to preserve natural beauty and open space.*

Strategies:

- Identify and protect wetlands and other sensitive parts of watersheds.
- Continue parkland acquisition in key stream valleys.
- Limit the potential damage to life and property from flooding.
- Prohibit development too close to streams, in the 100-year ultimate floodplain, and in flooding danger reach areas of dams, unless no feasible alternative is available.

- Maintain the natural character of drainage areas in the immediate vicinity of streams, rivers, and lakes.
- Plant and retain trees and other vegetation near streams.
- Minimize impacts from construction and operation of public and private facilities located in stream valleys, buffers, and floodplains; first priority should be given to preserving natural areas (avoidance), second priority to mitigation, and third priority to replacement with functional equivalents.
- Develop programs to rehabilitate damaged streams.
- Mandate "no net loss" of wetlands.

Objective: *Identify and preserve significant historic, scenic, and cultural features and promote art in public areas.*

Strategies:

- Evaluate historic resources for inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.
- Preserve appropriate sites with their environmental settings and districts that are:
 - Representative of a period or style
 - Architecturally important
 - Locations of important events or activities
 - Associated with important persons
 - Archeological sites
 - Cultural landmarks, or
 - Historic or cultural value.
- Protect historic sites permanently.
- Encourage the preservation, restoration, and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity.
- Use financial incentives to minimize the impacts of maintaining and restoring historic properties.
- Promote art and cultural opportunities at appropriate public and private locations.
- Encourage compatible development that highlights and enhances historic resources in development or redevelopment near historic resources and in and around historic districts.



CHAPTER III RECREATION, PARKS & OPEN SPACE

BACKGROUND AND CHAPTER CONTEXT

Recreation in our parks and the preservation of open space for recreation is essential to the quality of life in Montgomery County. Montgomery County places a great deal of emphasis on acquisition, development and maintenance of its park system. It is only 1 of 3 counties in the State of Maryland and 1 of 50 nationwide that is accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Recreation includes both nature-oriented recreation such as nature walks and bird watching, as well as recreation needing specific facilities such as athletic fields, playgrounds, etc. Although this section of the LPPRP focuses primarily on State required projections for future active recreation facilities, it recognizes that visiting natural areas is the most popular recreation activity according to the 2003 Park User Satisfaction Survey. Nature-oriented recreation requires the preservation of important natural resource areas which is discussed in Chapter V. Chapter III focuses on the County recreation goals as they relate to the state goals, summarizes the supply of recreation facilities and programs in the County. In addition, it includes information on the demand for parkland and recreation facilities until the year 2020 and discusses the needs analysis for these facilities. County priorities for land acquisition, facility development and rehabilitation are summarized as is the County's relationship to the State goal of 30 acres of recreation parkland per 1000 persons.

GOALS FOR RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

State Goals

The State's primary goals for recreation, parks, and open space are as follows:

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work and visit.
- Use State investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.

- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

County Goals

County land preservation and recreation goals and procedures support the goals of the comprehensive plan and state goals for recreation, parks, and open space. The sections below discuss goals and objectives in three major comprehensive planning documents.

Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Strategic Plan

The Major Park and Recreation Mission and Goals of M-NCPPC shown below for Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties were recently approved in the 2004 CAPRA Plan. They are compatible with both the State Goals and those of the County’s General Plan. They are as follows:

Mission

PARK AND RECREATION MISSION: The Park and Recreation mission is to improve the quality of life by conserving and enhancing the natural environment for current and future generations.

Goals

- Goal 1* To acquire land, to design and construct parks and recreation facilities and to renovate parks, as needed.
- Goal 2* To support the development, maintenance and management of the park system.
- Goal 3* To conserve and preserve the park system properties, resources, and activities.
- Goal 4* To provide a safe and secure park system.
- Goal 5* To provide recreation and cultural heritage programs, facilities, and services that meet the express needs of the public.

The 1998 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan- Goals and Objectives “A Policy for Parks

This section highlights the goals and objectives used in planning for Montgomery County Parks which were included in the 1998 approved Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. These goals were originally developed in 1998, but are still valid and should be followed whenever possible. Exceptions to these objectives may be made by the Planning Board when it is deemed to be in the best public interest. The (PROS) Plan “Policy of Parks” is:

Goal: To acquire and maintain a system of natural areas, open spaces, and recreation facilities developed in harmony with the County’s natural resources to perpetuate an environment fit for life and fit for living.

Objectives:

Acquisition of Park Land: The objectives of the program for parkland acquisition shall be:

1. Acquisition of land for a balanced park system in the region in order to:

- Provide citizens with a wide choice of both active and passive recreation opportunities as major factors in enhancing the quality of life.
 - Provide adequate parklands to accommodate conservation and preservation needs.
2. Acquisition of parkland based on the following considerations:
- Local and regional demand for public park and recreation facilities based on current need and projected population changes.
 - Protection and preservation of natural areas.
 - Protection and preservation of watersheds.
 - Protection and preservation of cultural and historical site.
3. Encouraging the private dedication of land as a means of parkland acquisition.

Development and Management of the Park System

The objectives of the planning, design, construction, and management of the park system shall be based on:

- Meeting the needs of recreation and preservation in a manner that is harmonious with the natural beauty and parkland physiography, reflecting concern for the environment.
- A planned and scientific approach to resource management, cognizant of the ecological interdependencies of people, the biota, water and soil.

To preserve natural resources, the Department of Park and Planning shall:

- Limit the development of active-use areas in regional parks to no more than 1/3 of their total park acreage, with the remaining acreage designated as natural areas and/or conservation areas. Development in other categories of parks shall be determined on a case-by-case basis with full consideration of the values of the natural features.
- Prepare an environmental evaluation as part of park development or rehabilitation plans where deemed appropriate by the Park Commission.
- Review as necessary the impact of park use, development, and management practices on parkland.

Relationship to Other Public Agencies, Education and the Private Sector.

- The Department of Park and Planning shall encourage other public agencies, as well as the private sector, to assist in providing compatible open spaces, natural areas, and recreation facilities and opportunities in the region.
- The Department of Park and Planning shall encourage and support research in the environmental sciences by other public agencies, institutions of higher learning, and the private sector, and support programs in outdoor education and recreation in the school system.
- Lands and facilities under the control of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission are held as a public trust for the enjoyment and education of present and future generations. The Commission is pledged to protect these holdings from encroachment that would threaten their use as parkland. The Commission recognizes that under rare circumstances non-park uses may be required on park property in order to serve the greater public interest.

The County Comprehensive General Plan- Goals and Objectives

The 1964 General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties describes parks, recreation, and open space in broad terms. Portions of the 1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals & Objectives for Montgomery County, an amendment to The General Plan, that relate to parkland and protection of environmental and historic resources are included in Chapters 5 and 6 of the LPPRP. Chapter 1 examines the General Plan's goals in terms of: urban form and design, community development, community identity, conservation, and recreation. The role of parks, recreation, and open space as an element of The General Plan is discussed in Chapter 2.

The 1964 General Plan and the 1993 General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives of Montgomery County help guide programs for recreation, parks and open space. These plans are continually updated by Area Master Plans for the County's 26 Planning areas that are consistent with these goals. They include goals and policies for growth, development, populations, and communities and are consistent with the eight visions established as State Planning policy.

CURRENT COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

This section describes County programs and procedures for recreation, parks, and related open space. Programs and policies used to implement goals for recreation, parks, and open space include the following: planning, land acquisition, and facility development through the Capital Improvements Program; land dedications and development under zoning and subdivision regulations; taxes and fee structures; and policies and programs related to partnerships with other agencies. Specialized recreational programs provided at facilities are described in the Appendix.

Community Master Plan Park Proposals

Community master plans continually update the County's Comprehensive Plan and provide an important vehicle for implementation of Park Plan proposals. During the community master planning process, needs for future public facilities, including parks, are given careful consideration. The importance of protecting significant natural areas such as stream valleys is also identified and incorporated into proposed land acquisition proposals and included in community master plans. Land use considerations, topography, vegetation, access and projections of future population are given particular weight. A floating park symbol may be placed on a master plan map where future park needs are apparent but it is desirable to defer selection of a specific site. Parks identified in community master plans are implemented through the development of park master plans, through the subdivision process, and through the Capital Improvements Program.

Park Master Plans

Park master plans also serve an important role in implementation of the LPPRP. Countywide recreation facility needs and preservation of natural and historic resources are most often provided by regional and recreational Parks. Park master plans and management plans are prepared for these parks and include proposals that meet recreation needs while providing stewardship of the park's natural resources.

Development Review Process

Acquisition and development of new parks through the subdivision process is an increasingly important method of implementing recreation and open space needs and will become even more critical in the future. Cost-sharing or public/private partnership proposals with developers have become a key way of meeting recreation needs in an efficient manner with minimal impact on County taxpayers. Each subdivision plan for new development is reviewed with respect to park and recreation needs and considers the following:

- The need for a community-use park to serve the development as evidenced by LPPRP Plan or Area master plan proposals. If a local park is needed, an easily accessible, level site of at least 15 acres is sought. If at all possible, the site is located on a main road and not adjacent to homes. In the case of cluster or planned-unit developments, the site is generally be conveyed to M-NCPPC free of charge.
- The need for preservation of natural areas or historic and cultural sites. Stream valley areas are frequently dedicated to park use during the subdivision process when their preservation is important for conservation and watershed protection or to provide connectors to existing or proposed parkland (particularly where trail connectors are needed). Drainage areas or storm water management ponds should only be accepted in dedication when they will provide a significant public benefit.
- The need for trails or access paths to existing or proposed parkland . Need for new trails or access paths to existing or proposed parkland trails is given careful consideration during the subdivision process. It is essential that developers dedicate and construct pathways to allow residents access to adjacent parks, schools, or other public facilities. Pathways should be carefully located so that they are convenient and eliminate the perceived need to cut through neighbors' yards to reach the adjacent parkland. Wide access strips or setting homes farther from the pathways should be encouraged to minimize impact on adjacent residents.
- The need to provide private recreation areas. The *Recreation Guidelines* approved by the Planning Board in 1992 include requirements for developers to provide private recreation areas to fulfill the need for informal neighborhood facilities for new residents. Walk-to facilities such as playgrounds, multi-use courts, and informal playfields are some of the types of private facilities that are needed to serve new residential developments. These areas are maintained by the home owners association.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Park Proposals

The Capital Improvements Program implements the LPPRP Plan by including proposals for land acquisition and construction of recreation facilities identified in the Plan that are not provided through the development review process. Following the identification of park needs and specific site proposals in the LPPRP or community or park master plans, individual park projects may then be considered for inclusion in the six-year Capital Improvements Program: first for facility planning and site design, and second for construction. The CIP is submitted every two years and includes all acquisition and development to be completed within the following six years.

CIP projects in other agencies can often assist in the Implementation of the LPPRP. For instance, schools provide active recreation facilities. Needs for bikeways, and safe road crossings, including bridges and underpasses, should be incorporated into transportation CIP projects at early planning stages so that they can be included in facility designs and cost estimates. Trail construction is also often feasible in conjunction with water or sewer line projects.

Planning Coordination and Partnerships with Other Public Agencies or Private Entities

Planning coordination with other agencies or jurisdictions is important in the implementation of the LPPRP. Implementation of Plan proposals will occur through partnerships with other public agencies or private organizations or groups. Joint recreation facility, natural or historic resource preservation projects that are achieved cooperatively with another public agency or cost shared with private developers will become more important in the future. Friend's groups and volunteers can also greatly expand M-NCPPC resources in providing and maintaining park facilities.

Close coordination occurs with several County Departments and agencies on new park development projects or major renovations. The Recreation Department and the Recreation Advisory Boards under their jurisdiction, provide essential input on proposed park development plans and projects that will meet needs identified in this Plan. Working with the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Permitting Services, and the Department of Public Works and Transportation is essential to facilitate park construction permits as well as for consideration of potential joint projects.

Additional partnerships with Montgomery County Schools could greatly increase the usability of school fields and other facilities. Placing additional facilities at school sites or lighting school facilities at middle and high schools would expand the capacity of ballfields and should be considered where possible. Agreements between M-NCPPC and schools to improve school field maintenance are in existence and are important to maximize the use of existing ballfields. Additionally, a new coordinated County-wide permitting system would facilitate utilization by user groups and eliminate duplicate permit requests.

At the State level, coordination with departments such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Office of Planning is particularly important as it relates to park and trail issues and grant programs such as Program Open Space and Rural Legacy. It is also necessary to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Interior regarding the C&O Canal and the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park and trail system is important to facilitate access to these important trail areas for County residents.

Smart Parks

Smart Parks is a new program designed to enable the department to better track park expenditures and to reallocate park resources more efficiently. SmartParks uses innovative GIS and Database technologies, which has the primary goal of providing management information to park managers and administrators in a manner that will improve management decision-making, provide opportunities for more efficient and economical operation of our park system, and improve the stewardship efforts and ethic of our workforce. We anticipate that the system will provide many quantifiable and non-quantifiable benefits. The system will:

- Reduce labor and labor costs
- Reduce equipment and materials costs
- Provide effective capital investment
- Improve customer satisfaction
- Reduce liability
- Maximize availability and use of Parks facilities
- Minimize replacement costs
- Increase employee morale
- Measure performance

How Parks and Recreation Programs and Procedures are Used to Support Local and State Goals

The County invests Program Open Space funds in parks, recreation and open space to complement and support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive / master plans, including the eight visions of State Planning Policy. This is assured by the fact that all POS funded projects are included in the Capital Improvements Program where they are carefully screened to assure consistency with the local comprehensive/master plans and County and State Goals

The County attempts to ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers; help to protect natural open spaces and resources; and complement community design and infrastructure through the comprehensive/master plan process and the development review process. Area master plans analyze the need for recreation and natural resource land and propose sites for acquisition and development. Additionally, the LPPRP projection of facility needs at the Planning Area level using population projections to the year 2020, and assessment of natural and cultural resource needs helps assure that land is preserved in the most appropriate locations.

The County sets priorities for recreational land acquisition and facility development to make existing communities and planned growth areas more desirable, thereby encouraging private investment in those areas commensurate with the priorities of the comprehensive plan by: renovating parks in older urban areas, acquiring sufficient parkland in developing areas and proposing and developing parks and recreation facilities in "smart growth" areas to meet the needs of future developments. In the County's Recreation Guidelines approved in 1992, developers are asked to dedicated land for recreation and conservation and develop recreation facilities to meet their future residents.

The County seeks to ensure a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities are readily accessible to all of its citizens by examining the available park and recreation opportunities during the LPPRP and Area Master Plan Processes. New Parks are recommended where they are needed to serve deficient areas. Surveys of County residents help determine their recreation needs and perceived deficiencies.

Funding Sources

There are many funding sources the County uses to support the park and recreation programs. The Capital Improvements Program, the annual budget, and State Program Open Space Grant funds are the primary sources supporting the County Parks and Recreation.

The Parks Capital Improvements Program

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) implements the PROS Plan by including project proposals for land acquisition and facility construction. It is described in the previous section. For the FY05-10 6 year total, the CIP included a total of \$66,570,000 for land acquisition and \$73,724,000 for development and renovation for a grand total of \$140,294,000. The project listing for the Adopted FY05-10 CIP is included in Appendix 4. The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is a six-year program adopted every two years (biennial). Article 28, Maryland Annotated Code, requires that the Commission submit a six-year CIP to the County Executive and County Council by November 1 every other year, on the odd # year. (In order for staff to meet this deadline, the Board must have made its major decisions to the staff-draft CIP by early October.) By January 15 the County Executive makes a recommendation on our CIP, as well as the CIPs for County Government, Montgomery County Public Schools, WSSC, and Montgomery College. At the same time, the Executive recommends a Capital Budget for all agencies. The County Council holds a public hearing on all these CIPs in early February--the only public hearing on the CIP. The County Council discusses the CIPs through May when the CIP and the Capital Budget for the first year of the CIP is adopted.

Public Participation in the CIP

The County's Recreation Advisory Boards work closely with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and the Department of Park and Planning to provide input to the development of each CIP and commentary on the implementation of the CIP. Staff members attend their monthly meetings. Boards include the County-wide RAB, Northern Area RAB, Eastern Area RAB, and Western Area RAB. Members are appointed by the County Council.

The Commission and Countywide Recreation Advisory Board conduct a public forum to solicit input to the CIP. The County Executive also conducts public forums throughout the County, usually in June prior to preparation of the CIP. Staff and the Commission consider the forum testimony during preparation of the CIP. The County Council conducts the only public hearing on the CIP, usually in February.

Legacy Open Space

The Legacy Open Space program (which is funded by the CIP, state grants and private and municipal contributions), has continued its success into its fifth year of operation. Over \$38 million has been committed to the preservation of twenty-one sites totaling over 3000 acres. Of that \$38 million, approximately one-third (\$13.4 million) came from non-County funding sources, including \$1.36 million in municipal contributions, a \$400,000 private donation, and several large contributions through State of Maryland programs. Several Legacy Open Space sites have been protected by parkland dedication through the development process, as well.

Montgomery County Operating Budget

The annual operating budget provides funding for park maintenance and renovations of park facilities including ballfields, tennis and basketball courts, and play equipment. It also funds staff positions that are essential to keeping our parks in a safe, usable condition for the public. The FY05 Adopted Montgomery County Park and Planning budget included a total of \$101,949,500.

Program Open space

Program Open Space (POS) has been a major source of funding for park acquisition and development since 1970 by funding more than 200 projects.

- More than \$50 million of POS funds has purchased stream valley, conservation, local and recreational parks eg. Rachel Carson Conservation Park, South Germantown Recreation Park and Upper Paint Branch and Cabin John Stream Valley Parks.
- More than \$25 Million from POS has funded development of local, regional and recreational parks, some of which are Black Hill Regional Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Recreational Park, Big Pines Local Park and Brookside Nature Center.
- Over \$1 million for hiking, biking and equestrian trails has been contributed by POS for projects such as the Capital Crescent Trail and the Airpark Road Underpass.
- Future projects are in jeopardy as a result of cuts in POS funding in recent years. POS annual funding has been diverted resulting in Montgomery County currently receiving less than half of the funding received in previous years.
- POS funding must be restored to its former level to enable proposed land acquisition and park development to occur.

This year the State Legislature was successful at restoring much of the POS fund to its original level, for a total of \$120 million Statewide in FY06. The Montgomery County portion of the FY06 funding is 8.1million, with over 4 million proposed for land acquisition, and the remainder for development. This is in extreme contrast to the low of 2.7 million total received by Montgomery County in FY05. The development money is divided using a formula based on population with the municipalities receiving 16% or 1.3 million in FY '06 and Park and Planning receiving 2.7 million.

Funding Through Private Development

Additionally, as described in the previous pages, a large amount of public parkland dedication and construction of public recreation facilities are provided through the development process. Several recreation facilities have also been provided by public /private partnerships. Additionally, volunteers have assisted with many park and recreation programs, construction, renovation and patrolling, saving the County large sums of money. The Clarksburg Greenway Trail Linear Park is an excellent example of public/private partnership through the development process in which the developer donated parkland, assisted with the planning and engineering and is constructing a 3 mile hiker biker trail. This park preserves the environment, and provides a recreational facility for hiking, biking and enjoying nature.

NEEDS ANALYSIS AND COUNTY PRIORITIES FOR LANDS, FACILITIES AND REHABILITATION

This section of the plan includes a description of the 1) Supply of lands and facilities available to support specific recreational activities; 2) Demand assessment and estimate of the public demand for specific recreation activities; 3) Needs determination of additional land and facilities needed through the year 2020; and 4) County Priorities- for land acquisition, facility development, and renovation.

Supply

This section looks at the existing parks and open spaces in Montgomery County.

Montgomery County has a total of 66,067 acres of parkland, recreation space, and open space. The county is lucky to have many partners providing open space protection with each providing a piece of the open space picture. In addition to M-NCPPC and Municipal Parkland, these partners include Federal and State Parks, public school open space, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, private conservation areas, and Potomac Edison Power Company (PEPCO) transmission lines.

The Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS) has been completed and transmitted to the Maryland State Department of Planning. Detailed inventories can be found in the appendix. The inventory for both Park Acres on facilities will be updated annually in connection with the M-NCPPC budget.

M-NCPPC Park System

The following pages include a description of the Montgomery County Park Classification System and a related summary of M-NCPPC Park acreage and selected facilities. This inventory is updated annually in connection with the budget. Additional inventory summary numbers are included in the needs tables in the following section. Inventory information on municipalities and state and federal parks is also included in this section as well as some private open space.

M-NCPPC Park Classification System

The M-NCPPC park system is categorized into different park types for budgeting and planning purposes. The park types are based in part on the service area of each park, its physical size, natural features, and the kind of facilities it contains. This section will describe and help define the distinctions between different types of parks. The table on the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Park Classification System contains a summarized description of each type of park, including approximate park size and typical recreation facilities.

Countywide Parks

Larger parks that serve regional recreation needs or conservation needs are called County-wide Parks. Over 90% of the total County park acreage, nearly 30,000 acres, is in County-wide parks. There are five types of County-wide parks: regional, recreation, special conservation, and stream valley. Of these, the regional, recreational, and special park categories are recreation-oriented parks, while the conservation and stream valley parks belong to a sub-category of County-wide Parks known as conservation oriented parks.

Recreation-Oriented Parks: Regional, recreational and special parks are large parks serving County-wide recreation needs. They provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, but also generally contain areas without facilities that serve conservation purposes.

Regional Parks are large, typically over 200 acres, and contain a wide range of recreation opportunities and facilities, while retaining 2/3 of the park for conservation. Regional parks are the most popular of the County's parks. In 1995, surveys of developed portions of regional parks indicated visits by several million people annually. Many other informal users enjoy the undeveloped portions of the park.

Montgomery County has five developed regional parks offering a variety of recreation opportunities within a reasonable driving time of most County residents. Three of these parks serve the lower and mid-County areas. Wheaton, the System's first regional park, was opened to the public in 1961 and is easily reached by southeastern County residents. Cabin John Regional Park is accessible to southwestern County residents, and Rock Creek Regional Park by people living in the middle and upper-County areas. Many recreational facilities are provided including lighted tournament quality athletic fields, year-round tennis courts, ice rinks, trains, and a carousel. Rock Creek offers golf, boating and other water oriented recreation activities. Additionally, each of these parks furnishes other recreation opportunities, such as nature centers, playgrounds, trails, and picnic areas, and Wheaton has a large botanical garden.

The two regional parks that serve the northern Area of the County have large acreage of open space and conservation area. Little Bennett has a golf course and a large campground, while Black Hill offers opportunities to enjoy picnicking and water-related recreation as well as a many miles of trails.

Recreation Parks is a category that includes parks with intensive development similar to that found in the ball field and tennis court complexes at regional parks; however, they differ from regional parks in that they do not limit 2/3 of their development to conservation uses. Small picnic/playground areas are also included in this category. Presently, Montgomery County has three such developed parks -- Olney Manor, Martin Luther King and Damascus. Fairland Recreational Park is under construction, and there are several other undeveloped recreational parks which are planned for future development including Ovid Hazen Wells, Ridge Road, Muncaster, Gude and Northwest Branch Recreational Parks.

Special Parks preserve historic or culturally significant features and have distinguishing characteristics that set them apart from other park classifications. McCrillis Gardens, Woodlawn Manor House, Rockwood Manor Park, and the Agricultural History Farm Park are good examples of special parks in the County. They are often used for small conferences, social events, specialized education, and art exhibits. Important historic sites are preserved in all types of parks. Examples of these are the Silver Spring in Acorn Urban Park, Woodlawn Manor House with its smoke house, and the Needwood Mansion.

Conservation-Oriented Parks

There are two types of County-wide conservation oriented parks: stream valley parks and conservation area parks. Both protect important environmental areas; however, they differ in that stream valley parks are linear parks acquired to protect stream valleys and conservation parks are large natural areas acquired to preserve specific natural, archaeological or historical features. Both types of parks are managed to provide stewardship of sensitive areas, but may include trails and other low impact recreation areas when carefully designed to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate environmental impacts.

Stream Valley Parks form the foundation of the park system, extending as greenways throughout the urban areas and into the countryside, putting the natural environment within close reach of all Montgomery County citizens. They separate communities with green open space buffers and provide easy access to nature for adjacent residents. Just as they were seventy years ago, stream valley parks today are acquired primarily for conservation purposes. They hold the key to watershed protection throughout the County by reducing flooding, sedimentation and erosion, and they furnish valuable habitat for many species of wildlife. Some stream valleys, such as the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley, are also designated as special

protection areas. These areas are so sensitive that they are subject to a special set of regulations designed to protect them.

Stream valley parks also preserve some of the County's most beautiful and interesting terrain, providing long, interconnected greenways of parkland that provide corridors for trails and wildlife. There are 30 such parks in the County, which include nearly 12,000 acres of parkland. In urban areas, clusters of active recreation facilities in parks adjacent to stream valley parks were developed many years ago to serve as local parks for nearby residents. More recent environmental regulations now limit or prevent intensive development along stream banks to reduce sedimentation and erosion and environmental degradation caused by urban runoff.

Conservation Area Parks are generally large areas that preserve specific natural, archaeological or historical features; are typically located in upland areas; and are acquired specifically for environmental preservation purposes. Conservation area parks may include outstanding examples of natural communities, self-sustaining populations of rare, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, or unique archaeological and historical resources. Given the sensitive nature of the resources in conservation parks, development is very limited and generally restricted to passive recreation areas and opportunities such as trails, fishing and picnic areas, and nature study. Opportunities for interpretation of the protected environmental, historic, and archeological elements should be maximized through self-guided nature trails, interpretive signage, and naturalist programs. There are nine conservation parks in the County, which include over 2,160 acres of parkland.

Community Use Parks

Smaller types of parks that are primarily used by local residents and nearby areas are group in the classification system under the category of community use parks. These parks are sometimes referred to as local parks, and provide everyday recreation needs for residents close to home. Currently there are over 200 developed community use parks. Many are located in the down-county area where they were placed to serve County development in the 1950s and 60s. As new park construction tries to keep pace with an ever-expanding County population, more parks are now being developed in rapidly growing upcounty areas.

The classification system presently includes four types of community use parks: urban, neighborhood, local parks, and neighborhood conservation areas.

Urban Parks serve central business districts or other highly urban areas, providing green space in an often otherwise concrete environment. These parks serve as a buffer between adjacent residential, office and commercial districts, and contain landscaped sitting areas, walkways, and in several cases, play equipment, handball and paddle ball courts. Urban parks serve an important role as gathering places for the community and accommodate activities such as concerts and performances, celebrations, fairs, and outdoor spaces for area employees to have lunch. Nearly all of the County's 19 developed urban parks are located in the down-County with concentrations in the Bethesda and Silver Spring areas.

Neighborhood Parks are small, generally, walk-to parks providing informal leisure opportunities and recreation in heavily populated areas. They often provide about five acres of open space developed with a sitting area, playground, informal play field, and tennis and/or basketball courts. There are 74 developed neighborhood parks in the County, with the largest number found in the Wheaton, Silver Spring, and Bethesda areas where they were developed to serve early concentrations of single-family housing.

Local Parks provide both programmed and informal recreation opportunities within reach of all area residents. Typically about ten to fifteen acres in size, these parks contain athletic fields, tennis and basketball courts, picnic and playground areas, and sometimes recreation buildings and other facilities.

The major difference between neighborhood and local parks is that the local parks provide regulation size athletic fields that can be reserved for game play. Over 40% of the people visiting local parks in 1996 were either league players or league game spectators. Ballplayers attend games on fields near their homes, or travel to other parts of the County to challenge opposing teams. Therefore local parks often have large service areas. Many people drive to local parks, while many neighborhood parks are within walking distance.

Many down-County local parks include small recreation centers that are used for classes, social events, and other similar activities. Some local parks also include other facilities as swimming pools that serve large areas of the County. Some of these parks, such as Sligo-Dennis, are located adjacent to stream valley park areas and provide both active and passive recreation opportunities.

The Commission cooperates with other agencies in order to use tax monies as wisely as possible. Parks provide facilities for many of the programs sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. Many local parks are adjacent to schools and give school children more room to play during the day and families more recreation spaces on the weekend.

Neighborhood Conservation Areas are small pieces of parkland preserved in residential areas. They are generally conveyed to M-NCPPC during the subdivision process and frequently contain streams or drainage areas and adjacent wooded slopes. They remain undeveloped and benefit the neighborhood by providing open space, reducing storm water runoff, and bringing nature into an urban environment.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

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

Figure 4.3 * this list is not all-inclusive, but includes facilities typical of each park type.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PARK SYSTEM TODAY

Park Type	Number of Parks		Total Parks	Total Acres	Ballfields	Tennis Courts	Multi-Use Courts	Play-grounds
	Developed	Undeveloped						
COUNTYWIDE PARKS								
Stream Valley	1	33	34	12,908	5	2	1	12
Regional*	5	0	5	7,834	13	21	2	16
Recreational**	7	4	11	2,957	37	32	10	10
Conservation Areas	0	16	16	3,491	0	0	0	1
Special	16	3	19	1,801	2	0	0	2
Misc.	6	0	6	110	1	0	1	1
SUBTOTAL	35	56	91	29,101	58	55	14	42
COMMUNITY USE PARKS								
Urban	20	3	23	25	0	4	3	14
Neighborhood	81	12	93	632	18	57	59	84
Local	129	13	142	2,124	284	189	132	134
Conservation Areas	0	41	41	283	0	0	0	0
SUBTOTAL	230	69	299	3,064	302	250	194	232
TOTAL PARKS	265	125	390	32,165	360	305	208	274

* By policy, Regional Parks can be only 1/3 developed. The developed acreage number reflects maximum development potential.

**Does not include Soccerplex.

Federal, State, Municipal and Other Parkland and Open Space

Montgomery County also benefits from parkland and recreation areas provided by other jurisdictions. These are the National Park Service, the State of Maryland, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and various municipalities.

National Park Service

Federal park in Montgomery County consists of the C&O Canal Historical Park, which provides 4,102 acres of parkland. The park includes 3.67 miles of the old towpath for hiking and biking, and opportunities for picnicking, fishing, and bird watching. In addition, a limited number of primitive campsites are located along the towpath. The major access point and the area of highest use in the C&O Canal Park is the Great Falls recreation area. In addition to a historic tavern, canal locks and towpath, there are sixteen miles of hiking and natural trails available in the Great Falls area. The Carderock area of the canal below Great Falls provides opportunities for rock climbing enthusiasts. Access to the C&O Canal above Great Falls occurs primarily at the old canal lock sites. There is a boat ramp and parking at the Pennyfield Lock site, which provide boat access to the Potomac. Parking is also available at Violets and Swains Locks.

Other national park sites in Montgomery County include the Clara Barton National Historical Site and the Glen Echo Park, both located in the Glen Echo area of the County.

State of Maryland

State parkland in Montgomery County is 12,292 acres. Approximately 5,866 of these acres are in the Seneca State Park, which extends from the Potomac River to Germantown. A significant portion of this park is developed with picnic, boating, and trail facilities. The area also contains the 90-acre Clopper Lake, an archery range, and provisions for horseback riding.

The second largest State holding is the undeveloped Patuxent State Park, at 3,135 acres, which lies along the Patuxent River on the Montgomery and Howard County boundary. This park, which primarily serves conservation purposes, also includes opportunities for hiking, fishing, and horseback riding. Future development of this park is in the planning stage.

The McKee-Beshers Wildlife Management Area encompasses 2,831 acres and is adjacent to the C&O Canal in the western portion of the County. This area is managed for wildlife and is significant because it is one of the few public sites available for hunting in the County. During the off-season, this area is also used for bird watching.

The Mathew Henson State Park consists of 104 acres from Viers Mill Road to Georgia Avenue. This linear Mid-county wildlife corridor provides passive and hiking recreation.

The Islands of the Potomac Wildlife Management Area (WMA) provides a collective 306 acres of protected wildlife habitat. The Diersen WMA contributes 50 acres.

Municipalities

A number of municipalities in Montgomery County have their own park systems. Municipalities provide a significant amount of stream valley parkland, and local parks with recreational facilities. The cities of Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Takoma Park also provide recreational programs for their citizens. The Appendix includes an inventory of recreation facilities in Municipalities.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)

The WSSC owns 2,074 acres of open space land and 2,192 acres of water supply in Montgomery County. The Triadelphia Watershed comprises 1132 acres with a reservoir containing 576 acres. The T. Howard Duckett Watershed contains 942 acres including a 259-acre reservoir. Black Hill Regional Park has a 1357-acre lake surrounded by Black Hill Regional Park. Although the primary purpose of the WSSC land is for water supply, recreational use of the land is permitted and encouraged. The activities allowed include fishing, boating, picnicking, hiking, and horseback riding on an established trail system.

PEPCO

The Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) owns 2,253 acres of transmissions lines that provide linear open space corridors.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

School properties include ballfields, tennis and basketball courts, playgrounds, and sometimes woodland that contribute to the open space of Montgomery County. The State Guidelines permit counties to count 60% of school acreage towards meeting their open space goal. In Montgomery County, schools provides 2,841 acres of total acreage, of which 60% (1,705) is credited as open space.

Montgomery County Revenue Authority

The Montgomery County Revenue Authority operates 5 golf courses that provide recreation and open space totaling approximately 1,063 acres: Falls Road (148 acres), Hampshire Greens (342 acres), Rattlewood (173 acres), Poolesville (227 acres), and Laytonsville (172 acres).

The Chart “Meeting State POS Acquisition Goals” shows the amount of park acreage provided by each Montgomery County municipality.

Other Large, Private Open Spaces

Private conservation-oriented groups in Montgomery County provide an important role in preserving open space purposes. The Izaak Walton League has 5 Chapters providing a total of 732 acres of protected open space: Rockville 50 acres protected, Bethesda/Chevy Chase Chapter 493 acres, Lois Green Chapter 63.5 acres protected, Wildlife Achievement Chapter 93 acres, and the Izaak Walton League national headquarters with 33 acres.

Existing Parks and Open Space

M-NCPPC PARKS		Acres			Acres
Countywide Parks			Community Use Parks		
Stream Valley Parks		13,016.13	Urban Parks		27.87
Regional Parks		7,830.30	Neighborhood Parks		647.22
Recreational Parks		2,976.38	Local Parks		2,176.68
Conservation Parks		3,541.65	Neighborhood Conservation Areas		<u>283.52</u>
Special Parks		2,002.70			
Misc. Recreational Facilities		4.15			
Misc. Non - Recreational Facilities		<u>106.20</u>			
Subtotal		29,477.51	Subtotal		3,135.29
			M-NCPPC Total Acreage		32,612.80

OTHER OPEN SPACES		Acres			Acres
Local Natural Resources Acreage			Local Recreation Acreage		
HOA Open Space		6,824.93	Other Jurisdictions		
City of Rockville Stream Valley		585.69	City of Rockville		849.84
City of Gaithersburg Stream Valley		100.22	City of Gaithersburg		585.69
WSSC		3,431.70	City of Takoma Park		12.49
Pepco - Transmission Lines Only		2,553.00	Town of Washington Grove		67.40
Izaak Walton League		<u>732.50</u>	Town of Garrett Park		100.22
Subtotal		14,228.04	Town of Poolesville		103.22
			Town of Somerset		18.30
			Town of Kensington		6.02
			Town of Chevy Chase		1.60
			Chevy Chase Village		7.81
			Town of Glen Echo		0.06
			Revenue Authority Golf		<u>1,062.81</u>
			Subtotal		2,815.46
			Other Acreage		
			Montgomery County		
			MC Public Schools		2,841.30
			Federal / State Parks		
			State of Maryland		12,293.40
			Federal		<u>4,102.11</u>
			Subtotal		16,395.51
			Other Open Spaces Total Acreage		36,280.31
			Total Open Space Acres All Sources		68,893.11

Demand

This section focuses on the demand for specific recreation facilities to the year 2020. It discusses facilities being projected, service area assumptions and methodology for estimating demand.

Future Needs to the Year 2020

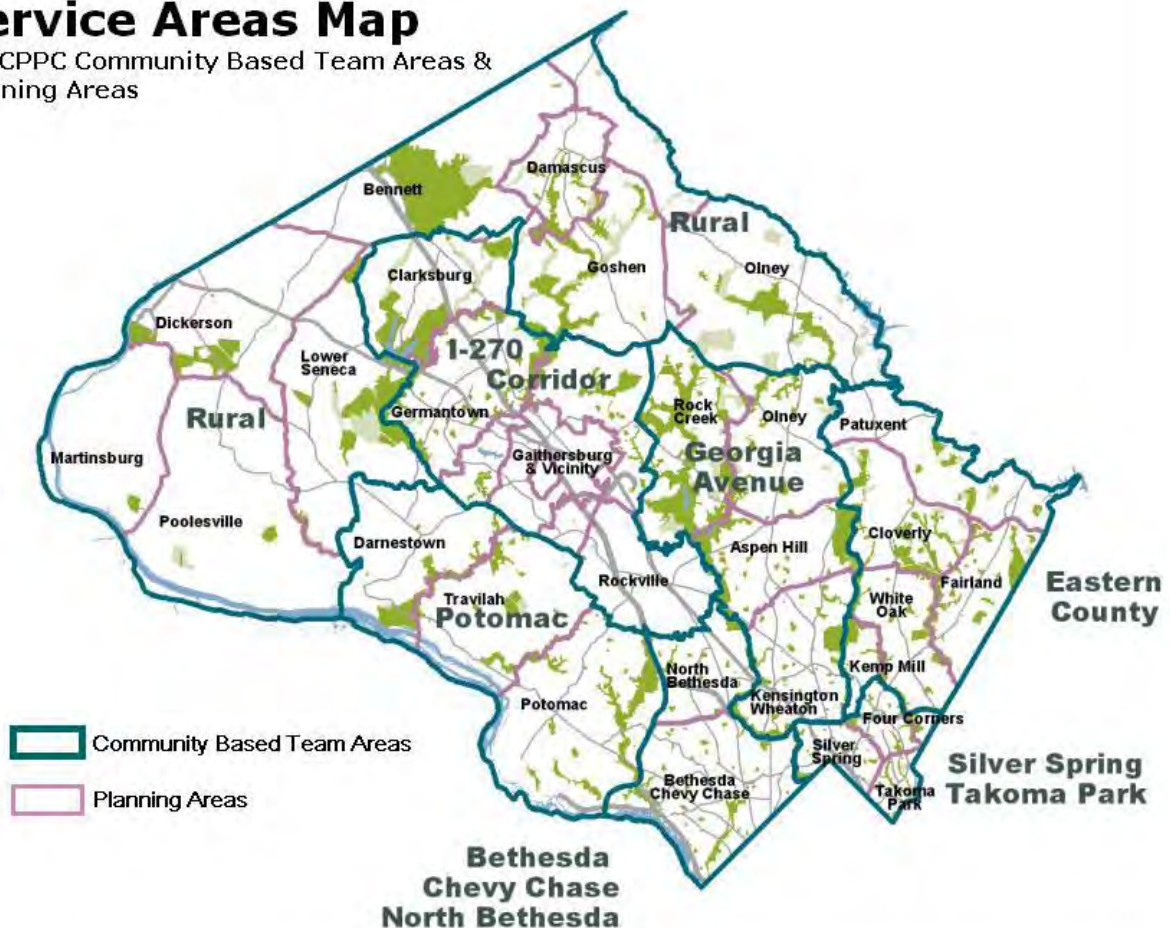
This section focuses on the demand for specific recreation facilities to the year 2020. It discusses facilities being projected, service area assumptions and methodology for estimating demand.

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

Estimating exact numbers of ballfields and other recreation facilities demanded in the County is an extremely difficult task and subject to many future variables. It therefore is often spoken of as “more art than science”. Need estimates should be considered “guidelines” rather than hard and fast rules. They may be revised in the future to accommodate changes in population projections and field participation rates.

Service Areas Map

M-NCPPC Community Based Team Areas & Planning Areas



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

Other sports not included in this document will be discussed in a future Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan. These will include enterprise sports such as golf and ice skating, extreme sports such as hang gliding, paint ball, ATV and motor bike trails, BMX racing, and other activities such as visiting arboretums, model plane flying, sledding, curling, and firearms safety range use, etc. Additionally the Strategic Plan will look at the need for trails and nature-oriented recreation such as bird watching, nature viewing, photography, etc. The Plan will also focus on future trends and needs of youth, elderly and ethnic groups. We plan additional outreach to ethnic groups to discuss their recreation preferences. The state requirement to update the Plan every six years will mean that activity preferences and trends can be re-evaluated.

Maintenance of existing and future facilities is critical to their usability by the public. Renovation and improved maintenance of existing facilities is needed, particularly in older areas of the County, to keep them in safe, usable condition. To assure that we can maintain future facilities, their maintenance impact is calculated and noted in the Capital Improvements Program so that public officials will be aware of their future budget impact.

Service Area Assumption for the Purposes of the LPPRP

Assumptions were made regarding facility service areas. Additional work with GIS maps to determine service area distances for various facilities will be completed for the PROS Strategic Plan.

Facilities that are served within Planning Areas.

Some facilities are considered to serve neighborhood recreation needs that should be provided close to home. For this reason, need estimates have been calculated on an individual planning area basis. Therefore needs are to be met within the planning area do count as serving an adjacent planning area. Facilities assumed to be in this category include:

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

Facilities that are served within Community Based Team Areas

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

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

Facilities that are served by the County as a whole

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

- Permitted picnic shelters
- Group picnic areas,
- Nature centers
- Roller hockey facilities,
- Skate parks,
- Dog exercise areas
- Natural areas
- Natural and hard surface trails and
- Indoor Community Centers and Aquatic Centers (being coordinated with the Recreation Department)

Methodologies for Estimating Future Demand

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

M-NCPPC Method- Used in the 1998 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

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

State Planning Guidelines Method

- Participation based model- not age based
- Based on phone survey responses regarding annual facility use from the 2003 State telephone survey.
- M-NCPPC Attendance data was added, where available.
- Projects annual needs. It calculates existing participation rates for various recreation activities based on the 2003 state survey. Needs are then computed using season length, yearly facility capacities and population projections to the year 2020.

Fairfax County Method

- Park Standards (level of service) method provides ratios of various recreation facilities/thousand population in Fairfax County.
- Based on existing facility/population ratios that were then adjusted to reflect needed changes based on trends from surveys, public forums, input from user groups, etc. Future needs were then calculated based on these adjusted ratios and future population projections. We are including this methodology because, as noted, Fairfax County has some similar characteristics to Montgomery County and may have similar needs.

Year 2020 needs were analyzed using each of these methods and the Montgomery County round 6.4 population forecast. Because of available data sources needed for input into the methodologies, it was determined that some methods are more appropriate for selected specific facilities than others. As a first priority, the M-NCPPC Method for facilities was utilized whenever user counts and age specific data was available to provide estimates based on Montgomery County information. As a second priority, we employed the State methodology for facilities where we do not have user counts, but relevant information was included in the State survey. M-NCPPC attendance data was used to supplement this information, wherever available. Where no State or M-NCPPC participation data was available, we relied on the Fairfax County method. Only one facility, dog exercise areas, used the Fairfax method, because we did not have relevant survey data on for this facility. Information on recreation facility use, trends, and needs indicated by surveys or public input were also taken into consideration and are included in the Appendix.

Needs

This section focuses on preliminary efforts to project future needs for active recreation facilities. These needs will be refined throughout the planning process. The following section summarizes initial efforts at projections for 2020 needs for facilities each of the three service areas: 1) Planning Area; 2) Community Based Team Area; and 3) Countywide.

Facilities Served within Planning Areas

As previously mentioned, it is recommended that playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts facilities should be provided “close to home”. Each Planning area therefore has individual needs.

Needs Estimates

Future Recreation Needs Estimates for the Year 2020

Service area	Facility	Methodology	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Needs
Planning Area	Playgrounds (with the exception of regional adventure playgrounds).	MNCPPC	285	32
Planning Area	Tennis Courts (with the exception of Recreation /regional courts)	MNCPPC	411	4
Planning Area	Basketball courts	MNCPPC	317	12

Un-met Needs by the Year 2020 by Planning Area

Planning Area	PA Num.	Basketball Courts	Playgrounds	Tennis Courts
		2020	2020	2020
Damascus	10,11,14,15	0	.3	0
Poolesville	12,16,17,18	0	0	0
Clarksburg	13	5.2	11.4	2.7
Germantown	19	0	6.1	0
Gaithersburg	20	0	6.0	0
Rock Creek	22	0	2.2	1.2
Olney	23	0	0	0
Darnestown	24	0	0	0
Travilah	25	3.8	1.9	0
Aspen Hill	27	0	2.4	0
Cloverly	28	0	0	0
Potomac	29	0	0	0
North Bethesda	30	0	1.8	0
Kensington/Wheaton	31	0	0	0
Kemp Mill/Four Corners	32	0	0	0
White Oak	33	0	0	0
Fairland	34	0	0	0
Bethesda	35	0	0	0
Silver Spring	36	1.1	0	0
Takoma Park	37	1.5	0	0
TOTALS		11.6	32.1	3.9
Totals Rounded		12	32	4

Description of Needs Served within Planning Areas

The majority of additional needs for public playgrounds, basketball and tennis courts are located in developing portions of the county. These “close to home” public facilities will be supplemented by private homeowners association facilities that often serve as neighborhood parks in the upcounty areas. New schools will provide these facilities as they are needed for educational programs, but can serve the public after school and on weekends. These facilities are projected using user counts from the 2000 user survey. Facilities in schools are discounted to reflect unavailability during the school day.

As shown in the preceding table, heaviest needs for these facilities are in the I-270 Area. The greatest need is for playgrounds, with nearly 30 additional estimated to be needed by 2020. This estimate does not include adventure playgrounds or tennis complexes at regional and recreational parks, which should be accommodated in these parks wherever feasible. Facilities proposed in the CIP at parks and schools combined with developer built public facilities will accommodate the majority of the 2020 estimated needs.

Playgrounds

The county currently has approximately 285 playgrounds at parks and schools available to meet community needs after discounting time for school use. The 2000 user survey showed that playground use had increased substantially. It is estimated that 32 new playgrounds (not counting Regional and Recreational Park adventure playgrounds) will be needed to serve the County by 2020. Most of them are in the I 270 Corridor where the heaviest residential construction is taking place. Although the down county area has a sufficient number of playgrounds, many of them are very deteriorated and need renovation. Increasing the number that can be upgrading annually will be important, as is ongoing playground maintenance. It is felt that playgrounds are so popular, that they should be included in all new local and neighborhood parks.

Basketball (multi-use) Courts

There are over 315 existing basketball courts at parks and schools in the county that are available for community use. Preliminary estimates indicate that 12 additional courts should be constructed by 2020. Heaviest needs are in the Clarksburg and Travilah areas with smaller needs in Silver Spring and Takoma Park. Where possible, it is recommended that a very large multi-use court (85' x185') be constructed in new parks. These have been placed at new Montgomery County Recreation Department Community centers, and can be used for a variety of sports in addition to basketball including roller hockey, soccer and cricket practice, and radio controlled cars.

Tennis Courts

There are approximately 410 tennis courts currently available for community use in public parks and schools in Montgomery County. Local park tennis court usage observed in our 2000 user survey declined by nearly half from that observed in 1995. At these parks where there are usually only 2 courts, they are generally used informally by the adjacent community and use is often low. It is estimated that only 4 new park courts will be needed at local parks by 2020 , primarily to serve new development in the upcounty area.

Montgomery County Tennis Association leagues have grown by as much as 25% since 2002 with a total of 3,326 players in 2004. This extraordinary expansion established Montgomery County as the second largest in the Mid-Atlantic section and may affect future needs. Tennis court complexes of 6 or more can be used more effectively than the local courts.

They can be used for lessons, league play, and tournaments and experience much heavier use than the local park courts. League games often require at least 5 courts. Complexes of 6 or more courts should be placed in new recreational parks, wherever feasible. New courts are constructed at all new middle (4 courts) and high schools (6-8 courts) that serve their educational and competitive program and serve community needs after school and on weekends. These courts are useful for lessons, but indoor courts, which serve countywide needs, are weather independent and more usable for tournament games, particularly in the fall and winter. There has been a strong need voiced for indoor courts, and they were the facility noted as having the greatest deficiencies by the respondents to the 2003 Montgomery County Park User Satisfaction Survey. (see Appendix)

Facilities Served within Community Based Team Areas

Fields needs of all types are recommended to be met within each Community Based Team Area. Most people drive to fields for league play, thus the service area for fields is larger than a Planning Area. We are recommending that needs be developed for community based team areas that are made up of clusters of adjacent Planning Areas.

Field construction and use trends have resulted in a large field shortage for rectangular fields. In the 50's and 60's when most down county parks were built, softball was popular and thus new parks were constructed with this type of field. This sport was played in the spring and summer. In the 80's when the soccer boom began, it was a fall sport and a soccer field was superimposed over existing fields for fall use. Approximately 74 M-NCPPC fields currently have soccer overlays in the fall. Priority is still given by Park Permit office to softball/baseball in the spring and soccer/football in the fall. However, now the spring soccer program is as heavy as the fall, and softball and many baseball leagues have begun playing in the fall. This puts tremendous year round pressure on all our fields.

Team sports provide healthy outlets for youth and have health benefits for both youth and adults. Thus, new ways must be considered to meet field needs. Reconfiguration of existing fields to meet needs will be considered as well as techniques to maximize use, such as artificial turf, lighting, and possible use of private school fields. Many existing fields do not meet current field size standards. Whenever possible, new fields should be constructed to desired specifications.

Field needs for specific sports may change over time, and field needs will also be re-evaluated every 6 years allowing needs to be adjusted to provide for new trends, including effects of increased players from ethnic groups. Construction of new large level field areas will allow for field reconfiguration, if needed in the future.

There are also other fields for which user groups have expressed a need for, that because of the relatively small number of players, are not among the top needs but should be given future consideration. An example of this is a field for the sport "Cricket". A small group has been requesting a field for this sport for many years, and it is felt that in the future we should try to create at least one cricket game field.

The following two tables list field estimates for the year 2020. Total field participation rates are based on 2002 park and school permit data for a peak week in the spring. Further analysis will be conducted to look at differences between sport needs in the spring and the fall, and the number of permits that were turned down for each season. A special look will be given to the need for 90'baseball fields. It will also be determined where needs can be reduced by

converting one type of field to another. On a Countywide basis, field needs are greatest in the I-270 Corridor and Bethesda areas with large needs also in the SilverSpring team areas and Potomac. Needs are greatest for multi-purpose rectangular fields that can be used for soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, etc, which are needed in all areas of the county, with heaviest needs in Bethesda and the I-270 Corridor. Adult soccer and lacrosse teams are rapidly growing in number.

Preliminary Future Ballfield Needs Estimates for the Year 2020

Service area	Facility	Methodology	Existing Park and School Facilities	Maximum 2020 Estimated Additional Needs
Community Based Team Area	Youth diamonds (T-ball, youth softball and baseball)	MNCPPC	91	0
Community Based Team Area	Multi-purpose Youth baseball/Adult Softball diamonds (these sports play on the same type of field)	MNCPPC	164	15
Community Based Team Area	Baseball (90' base paths- Adults and teens)	MNCPPC	35	20
Community Based Team Area	Multi-purpose rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)	MNCPPC	103	73
Community Based Team Area	YOUTH RECTANGULAR FIELD (SOCCER/FOOTBALL/LACROSSE)	MNCPPC	70	15
TOTALS			463	123

Methodology assumes small youth only fields have a lower weekly capacity than larger fields. Includes 10% Adult Softball Practice Factor. Includes 10% Resting/Renovation Factor for Multi-purpose Rectangular Sports.

Description of Field Needs within Community Based Team Areas

The following table indicates preliminary estimates of future additional field needs to the year 2020. As the service area goal calls for future needs to be met within the Community Based Team Areas, a surplus in an existing area (indicated by a minus) is not subtracted from the needs in another. Positive needs are shown in bold.

2020 Additional Field Needs by Community Based Team Area

COMMUNITY BASED TEAM AREA 2020 FIELD NEEDS Planning Team Area	Number of Youth (age 0-9) Multi-Purpose Diamonds Needed	Number of Baseball (age 10-13) and Softball (age 10-65+) Diamonds Needed	Number of 90' Infield-Baseball Fields (ages 14+) Needed	Number of Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields (age 10-65+) Needed	Number of Youth Multi-Purpose Rectangles Fields (age 0-9) Needed	Range Minimum/Maximum
Rural	-1.8	-3.2	1.7	5.2	-2.6	3.7/6.9
I-270	0.1	1.5	3.0	19.4	9.7	33.7
Georgia Avenue	-5.3	-19.3	1.8	7.7	2.3	1.8/11.8
Potomac	-0.3	5.2	4.5	4.6	-4.1	14/14.3
Eastern County	-0.5	-20.5	-0.3	4.8	1.1	0.3/5.9
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	-1.0	-0.9	4.8	20.4	1.7	24.8/26.9
Silver Spring/TP	-1.7	8.7	4.1	10.8	-3.4	23.6
Maximum Need	0	15	20	73	15	TOTAL 101.7/ 123.1

As shown in the tables, a maximum total Countywide additional 123 additional fields are estimated to be needed by 2020, the majority of which are for multi-use rectangular fields. However, within the team area, field needs may potentially be lowered by converting fields to another use (where feasible) to meet the needs, and can potentially lower the total field need to a little over 100. In the following table, the total needs number on the right is shown as a range reflecting that some field needs may be met by converting one field type to another. The minimum number assumes that adult fields, except for 90 ft baseball can be converted to another field type. Field conversions should not be made without careful analysis and consultation with user groups. Future fields proposed in the Park and MCPS Capital Improvements Program appear to only provide about half of the field need estimates for 2020. However, there are many undeveloped park and school sites that have the potential to provide additional fields. An analysis should be conducted in the future to determine individual field conversion potential in problem areas as well as the potential for future site development. Individual Planning Area and team area field inventories, demand and needs tables are located in the Appendix.

Field Needs within Community Based Team Areas

The previous table indicates preliminary estimates of future field needs to the year 2020. As the service area goal calls for future needs to be met within the Community Based Team Areas, a surplus in an existing area is not subtracted from the needs in another.

Needs for Specific types of fields

Youth Diamonds These small (less than 250') fields at parks and elementary schools that are used primarily by children under 10. T-Ball and pee-wee baseball can be played on these fields. Highest needs for these fields are in Bethesda and I-27- corridor areas. A total of 5 additional fields are estimated to be needed by 2020, but needs may be partially met in some areas by using larger fields (Bethesda) or converting rectangular fields (Potomac).

Multi-Purpose Youth Baseball/ Adult Softball Diamonds have estimated 2020 additional needs in Silver Spring, Potomac, and the I-270 corridor. These fields are generally over 250' and used by youth baseball and adult and coed softball and kickball teams. Adult softball has greatly declined over the past 20 years. Some areas of the county, particularly the Eastern County and Georgia Avenue are estimated to have a surplus of this type of field. Where these surplus fields are large enough, some fields should be considered for conversion to adult rectangular field. However, youth baseball continues to be extremely popular and adult kickball, which also uses this type field, is an up and coming sport.

Baseball Fields with 90' base paths for teens and adults are also estimated to be needed in the County, primarily in the Potomac and Bethesda areas. These needs will be further evaluated in the future as none of the 90' baseball fields at high school were counted in this analysis, because most of them are not available for community use. However some leagues have adopt-a-field agreements whereby they make improvements to high school fields in return for a significant amount of use of the field for community teams. Additionally, a joint effort between M-NCPPC and schools to light some of these fields in return for a significant amount of community use might help in providing additional availability. Additional analysis of the needs for 90' baseball fields will occur, and we will continue to work with user groups on this issue.

Multi-purpose Rectangular Fields There are approximately 100 large rectangular fields at parks and schools that can be used for multiple sports, including soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby. These fields are used by youth over 10 and adults, and vary greatly in size. Future fields should be constructed to meet specifications shown in the appendix whenever feasible. It is estimated that 77 fields of this type will be needed by 2020, but some of these may be achieved by converting large softball fields.

Youth Multi-Purpose Rectangular Fields are available at 87 parks and elementary schools. These fields are generally less than 250' long and are primarily used by youth under 10 for games and practices PROS. Greatest future needs will be in the developing I-270 area, but most of these can be provided by new schools.

Facilities Serving County-Wide Needs

The remaining facilities are projected on a total countywide basis in the 2005 LPPRP because most facilities are located in regional or recreational parks and serve large portions of the County. Several of these facility needs are based on Master Plans or special studies (such as the Countywide Park Trail Plan). The following table indicates preliminary estimates for 2020. The needs for picnic shelters, nature centers roller hockey, and skate parks are based on the State Planning Department methodology, and utilize participation rates derived from the 2003 State telephone survey, supplemented where possible by M-NCPPC park permit data. Dog Exercise area needs were projected using the Fairfax County facilities/population methodology because of insufficient survey data. Needs for Natural Areas were based on proposed sites determined by environmental analysis in approved Area Master Plans, and the Countywide Park Trail Plan is the basis for needs for trails to serve walkers, bikers and equestrians. For community recreation centers (which do not include small M-NCPPC) centers, and aquatic facilities, the 2003 proposed update to the Recreation Department's Long Range Facility Plan provided the basis for the needs projections. We are currently working with the Department and analyzing service area and user data. Preliminary estimates below may be revised in the Public Hearing Draft as a result of this analysis.

The following table lists preliminary estimates for future additional needs for facilities that are served on a Countywide Basis.

Facility	Methodology	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Needs
Permit Picnic Shelters	State Planning/ plus MNCPPC Data	78	21
County-Wide Group Picnic Areas	State Planning/ plus MNCPPC Data	3	1
Nature Centers	State Planning/ plus MNCPPC Data	4	2.3
Roller Hockey (Game Facilities)	State Planning	2	0
Skate Parks (Including Informal Use Areas)	State Planning	0	16
Dog Exercise Areas	Fairfax County	3	15
Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parks	MNCPPC- Areas in approved plans	17,682 acres	5495 acres
Natural Surface Regional Trails	Trails in County-wide Trails Plan	115.6 miles	105.4 miles
Hard Surface Regional Trails	Trails in County-wide Trails Plan	73.5 miles	22.5 miles
Community Recreation Centers	Being Coordinated with the Recreation Dept	18	11.5
Aquatic Facilities	Recreation Dept	4 indoor 7 outdoor	3-4

Discussion of Individual County-wide Facility Needs

Picnic Shelters There are currently 78 picnic shelters that are rented out at Regional Parks. These shelters can accommodate 30-50 people and are heavily booked during the summer months. Needs were developed using State 2003 survey responses supplemented by M-NCPPC Park Permit data. It is estimated that 21 additional shelters that can be permitted will be needed by 2020.

Group Picnic Areas There are only 3 group picnic areas that can accommodate large groups over 150 people and allow alcohol. These facilities are in great demand for company picnic, large family reunions, etc., and it is estimated that at least 1 more will be needed by 2020.

Nature Centers The County's 4 nature centers are located in regional parks and are especially popular for school groups and families with children. It is estimated that 2.3 more centers will be needed in the County by 2020.

Roller Hockey Game Facilities Official roller hockey game facilities need a court 85' x 185'. At Wheaton Regional Park, the old ice rink was used for roller hockey. It is not available most of the time however, as the court is rented out for ice hockey from October/April which conflicts with the roller hockey season. Use of this facility has also been limited by problems including a leaking roof and wet skating surface. A youth court is located Potomac and is very successful, but restricted to youth 12 and under. An uncovered court was recently completed at Ridge Road Recreational Park. For maximum usability, future courts should be covered so games do not have to be cancelled in inclement weather. It is estimated that at least 1 additional game court will be needed by 2020.

Skateboard Parks M-NCPPC is currently constructing its 1st public skateboard park at Olney Manor. Two facilities exist in municipalities. These facilities charge admissions and are fenced and supervised.

There is a great demand for skateboarding facilities that are close to home, unfenced, and can be used informally. These can be built as small areas in parts of urban or local parks or be multi-purpose park elements designated to allow youth to use for skateboarding such as stepped small setting areas or amphitheaters, ramps, rails, edging, etc. The proposed estimate of 15 additional courts needed by 2020 assumes that many of these will be informal use areas.

Dog Exercise Areas (DEA's) The County currently has 3 dog exercise areas, with two more currently are proposed. A recent survey showed that these were well used facilities. The Fairfax County methodology of dog exercise areas/1000 people was utilized, as the State Survey data did not relate to use of dog exercise areas. Their standard is 1 neighborhood DEA per 86,000 residents and 1 regional DEA per 400,000 residents. It is estimated that by 2020, an additional public 15 dog exercise areas will be needed in the County. We are currently recommending one acre sites for this facility, as users have indicated our current areas are too small and have requested separate areas for small and large dogs. User groups have suggested that in addition to the need for public DEA's, developers of new residential areas should be required to place DEA's in their Areas.

Natural Areas There are 17,682 acres of natural areas preserved as parkland in the County, and an additional 5,796 acres proposed for preservation in approved park and area master plans. These areas include high quality forests, stream buffers, steep slopes, biodiversity areas, etc, and were recommended after a full natural resource analysis of important natural areas conducted in connection with each area master plan. Enjoying natural

areas is the most popular recreation activity of County residents according to the 2003 Montgomery County Park User Satisfaction Survey, and the need for additional natural areas was highly ranked among survey respondents. (See Appendix for additional information)

Natural Surface Trails There are 118 miles of sanctioned M-NCPPC natural surface park trails in the County. These trails are important for recreation and also are needed to provide access to natural areas. Based on the approved County-wide Park Plan, an additional 108 miles will be needed to complete the natural surface corridor trails recommended by the Plan. In addition to this, natural surface trails should be provided in local and regional parks for interpretation and enjoyment of natural areas.

Hard Surface Trails There are 43 miles of existing hard surface M-NCPPC park trails in the County. (These do not count small trails found in local parks.) An additional 61 miles of major trail corridor trails are recommended for construction by the County-wide Park Trails Plan. These trails provide corridors for recreation and environmentally friendly bicycle transportation. Trails are one of the top 5 recreation activities noted by respondents to the 2003 Park User Satisfaction Survey and provide recreation for people of all ages and abilities.

Community Recreation Centers The Recreation Department's Draft Long Range Facility Plan recommends the construction of 9 new Centers. Most of the Center proposals use the larger 33,000 square foot prototype building and associated recreation facilities, however two of them are built in connection with a private development project, and will be smaller. Like Aquatic Facilities, current service area analysis may result in a change in the projected needs.

Aquatic Facilities The Long Range Study recommends that 1 new indoor and 2 outdoor aquatic centers be constructed in the County.

As mentioned previously, there are many other sports not included in this document that will be discussed in a future 2006 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan. These will include enterprise sports such as golf and ice skating, extreme sports such as hang gliding, paint ball, ATV and motor bike trails BMX racing, and other activities such as visiting arboretums, model plane flying, sledding, curling, and firearms safety range use, etc.

Montgomery County Recreation Department

Recreation programs provide several key values and benefits for individuals, families, and the community, including creating critical community focal points, offering activities that strengthen the family unit, promoting health and wellness, reducing isolation and facilitating social and cultural interaction, providing positive alternatives to drug and alcohol use, enhancing public safety, and promoting economic growth and vitality.

The recreation programs also provide accessible leisure, education, and personal skill development activities for individuals with disabilities through mainstreaming and adaptive programs, and provide programs for the families of participants.

The Recreation Department is responsible for operating Community and Neighborhood Recreation Centers, Indoor and Outdoor Pools, and the Gilcrest Center for Cultural Diversity as well as recreation and leisure activities throughout the County. Some of the wide variety of programs offered and facilities operated by the Montgomery County Recreation Department are located in M-NCPPC parks while others are located on County owned property.

Some Recreation Department programs are currently provided in small, Commission-owned centers located primarily in local parks. In the 1950s and 1960s, M-NCPPC built many one-room recreation buildings that ranged in size from 900 to 1,800 square feet and included one large room, two restrooms, and a small kitchen space with a refrigerator and a range. The "Park Center" facilities now serve as space for daycare programs, community meetings, limited recreation classes, and support activities held at park ballfields or picnic areas. These facilities continue to provide a vital service to small neighborhoods for community recreation, social, and civic activities. The M-NCPPC "Park Center" will be the subject of a future functional plan developed jointly with the Department of Recreation.

Recreation Center Facilities

The Recreation Department began constructing larger recreation centers in the 1980s. The current prototype for these facilities meets resident's needs much more effectively. The Department currently has 17 Community and Neighborhood Recreation Centers located throughout the County which host programs for the Department as well as other County agencies and community organizations. These centers provide leisure activity, social interaction, family participation, neighborhood civic involvement, and promote community cohesion and identity. Programs for all ages are available in centers. These facilities are designed to support sports, fitness, dance, social activities, and arts programs. Activities include instructional programs, organized competitions, performances and exhibitions, recreational clubs and hobby groups, access initiatives for special populations, and summer camps/playgrounds. In addition, they offer important community meeting space. Center spaces are available for rentals, receptions, special events, and meetings. User fees are charged for rentals and other programs and services offered at each facility.

Future Needs for Recreation Center Facilities

In the proposed FY07-12 Capital Improvements Program, there are 9 new centers proposed, including one in Friendship Heights that will be built by a developer. Additionally, renovations are proposed for the older centers.

In 2003, the Recreation Department proposed a larger prototype building to maximize efficiency in programming and operation. The new prototype will be 33,000 net square feet and will include more integrated space for senior citizen services. The LPPRP concentrates primarily on these larger centers operated by the Recreation Department. Additionally, it was suggested that the 33,000 square foot model serves an optimum population of approximately 30,000 or about 1,100 sf. of recreation space for every 1,000 individuals.

A coordinated effort has been conducted with the Recreation Department participation data to determine appropriate geographic service areas and capacities. Research has determined that most people attending recreation classes do not travel more than three to five miles to their activity. Beyond the three to five mile distance from a center, the participation rate of residents drops dramatically. When the service area of recreation is related to population density, gaps in existing service coverage are apparent.

Aquatic Facilities

Public outdoor pools provide opportunities during the summer months for thousands of citizens to recreate, compete, and exercise. The pools serve swimming needs for area daycare groups, summer playground programs, summer camps and therapeutic/special needs groups.

They are particularly important to serve those who have no access to private pools. The aquatics programs provide recreational, fitness, instructional, competitive, therapeutic and rehabilitative water activities that serve all citizens.

The first public pool opened in Montgomery County in 1968. The Recreation Department now operates seven outdoor and three (soon to be four) indoor pools. The outdoor pools operate seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The indoor pools operate seventeen hours a day, approximately 340 days a year. In addition, there are two municipalities with indoor and outdoor pools, and three YMCA pools in the County. There are also a number of private swim clubs and apartment pools. In the 1980's and 1990's, the Recreation Department developed modern designs for multi functional swimming facilities that serve significant regions of the County with features and programs that attract regular and occasional users.

Public indoor pools provide the opportunity for lap swimming, water exercise classes, physical rehabilitation and recreational opportunities that are in great demand year-round. Swim team members (youth and adults) who wish to continue training during the winter months, and families looking for indoor healthy recreation opportunities use public or private indoor pools.

The public school system also uses Recreation Department pools to conduct their high school varsity swim and dive programs.

Future Needs for Aquatic Facilities

New pools and pool renovations have responded to innovative changes requested by the public. These include water slides, spray features, Jacuzzi's and even a "lazy river". These features are very popular and fulfill recreation needs of residents. All pools include instruction including many programs for the disabled. In addition to the new facilities described below, renovation for older aquatic facilities is essential and included in the CIP.

The Germantown Aquatic Center will be opening in FY06 and will serve the large population area in the up-county region. The project consists of an indoor aquatic facility that serves swimmers of all ages and abilities. The natatorium includes a main pool with one and three-meter diving boards, and dive platforms. The second pool will include a 25 yard X 25 yard lap and teaching pool. In addition, there will be a free-form leisure pool.

For FY05 – 10, the Clarksburg/ Damascus Indoor and Outdoor Pool is currently in the CIP Facility and Planning and Site Selection. The site for this center will most likely be located in the Ovid-Hazen Wells Recreation Park, and the Western County Indoor Pool and Olney/Sandy Spring/Norwood Outdoor Pool are included in the CIP Facility Planning.

The general information regarding Montgomery County Department of Recreation facilities and programs listed in this section is intended to give a brief overview of the department's operations and facilities. They are covered in more detail in the 'Recreation Facility Development Plan, 1997-2010, 2005 Update' incorporated by reference as a part of this report. See Appendix for a summary description of Recreation Department Programs.

Department of Recreation, Recommended FY07- Future CIP Initiatives

PROJECT	ACTIVITY	SEQUENCE*
Mid County, No. 720103	Completion of construction phase	FY 08
North Bethesda, No. 720100	MNCPPC and Developer agreement-Pending Design and construction	FY09-10
North Potomac, No. 720102	Design	FY 07
	Construction	FY 08-10
Upper County Outdoor Pool, No. 720500	Design	FY 06
	Construction,	FY 07-08
White Oak, No. 720101	Design Development & Const Docs	FY 06-08
	Construction	FY 08-09
Neighborhood Recreation Center Rehabilitation	Design, Plumgar and Scotland	FY 09
	Construction, Plumgar and Scotland	FY 10-11
	Design Clara Barton and Good Hope	FY 09-10
	Construction, Clara Barton and Good Hope	FY 11-12
Ross Boddy Neighborhood RC	Design	FY 07
	Construction	FY 08-09
Clarksburg/Damascus In/outdoor Pool	Design	FY 09-10
	Construction	FY 11-12
MAC Dive Tower	Construction	FY 08-09
West County CRC & West Co Indoor Pool	Design	FY 14-15
	Construction	FY 16-17
Kemp Mill CRC	Design	FY 10-11
	Construction	FY 12-13
Kensington CRC	Design	FY 15-16
	Construction	FY17-18
Olney/Sandy Spring/Norwood Outdoor Pool	Design	FY 16-17
	Construction	FY 17-18
Facility Renovation Study	Master Plan Study	FY 09
	Facility Renovations scheduled into CIP	FY 11-17
Clarksburg CRC	Design	FY 13-14
	Construction	FY 15-16
Gilchrist Center Cultural Diversity	Site Selection & Facility Planning Projects	07-12
Friendship Heights/Wisconsin Place	MNCPPC and Developer agreement- Pending Construction	FY 07-08
Gaithersburg Aquatic Center	Proposal to Share Funding-	Future PDF

* Fiscal Years (FY) are used to indicate the relative sequence of projects, not an absolute specific year of activity.

COUNTY PRIORITIES FOR LAND ACQUISITION, FACILITY DEVELOPMENT, REHABILITATION

This section discusses County Priorities for Land Acquisition, Facility Development, and Rehabilitation priorities and recommendations to meet recreational needs for the periods required by the guidelines which are: short (2006-2010), mid (2011-2015), and long-range (2015-2020)

County priorities for land acquisition, facility development, and rehabilitation are based on the results of the LPPRP needs analysis, the Comprehensive Area Master Plans and are consistent with State and County goals for recreation, parks and open space.

CIP projects in other agencies can often assist in the Implementation of the PROS Plan. For instance, needs for bikeways, and safe road crossings, including bridges and underpasses, should be incorporated into transportation CIP projects at early planning stages so that they can be included in facility designs and cost estimates. Trail construction is also often feasible in conjunction with water or sewer line projects. Joint recreation facility, natural or historic resource preservation projects that are achieved cooperatively with another public agency or cost shared with private developers will become more important in the future. Friends' groups and volunteers can also expand M-NCPPC resources in providing needs.

Close coordination must also occur with several County Departments and agencies on new park development projects or major renovations. The Recreation Department and the Recreation Advisory Boards under their jurisdiction, provide essential input on proposed park development plans and projects that will meet needs identified in this Plan. Working with the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Permitting Services, and the Department of Public Works and Transportation is essential to facilitate park construction permits as well as for consideration of potential joint projects.

Partnerships with Montgomery County Schools could greatly increase the usability of school fields and other facilities. Placing additional facilities at school sites or lighting school facilities at middle and high schools would expand the capacity of ballfields and should be considered where possible. Agreements between M-NCPPC and schools to improve school field maintenance are important to maximize the use of existing ballfields. Additionally, the new coordinated County-wide permitting system will facilitate utilization by user groups and eliminate duplicate permit requests.

At the State level, coordination with departments such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of Planning is particularly important as it relates to park and trail issues and grant programs such as Program Open Space and Rural Legacy. It is also necessary to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Interior regarding the C&O Canal and the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park and trail system is important to facilitate access to these important trail areas for County residents.

Establishing Priorities

- The County's priorities for acquisition, facility development, and rehabilitation were established to complement and support the County's comprehensive planning goals for recreation, parks, and open space and State goals established through these guidelines. In order to make the most effective use of County land and facilities staff determines how many of the needed facilities could be met by new parks or schools on currently owned sites, and consider where future facility needs would be met by currently proposed park sites that are on master plans.
- County priorities address the need to make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens.
- Priority projects and their locations were chosen to be conveniently located to population centers. As the needs methodology is based on demographics, areas with the most dense population receive the greatest needs.
- The area master Plan Process selects park sites that are accessible to public transportation where possible; and complement community design and infrastructure.
- These Parks will help to make existing communities and planned growth areas more desirable, thereby encouraging private investment in those areas commensurate with the priorities of the comprehensive plan.
- Priorities help to protect natural open spaces and resources by acquiring the most threatened resources as early as possible.

Future Proposals

Future proposals have been preliminarily identified in the LPPRP and will continue to be refined through the upcoming Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Strategic Plan as well as in future Capital Improvements Programs and through the development review process.

As previously indicated, the LPPRP Guidelines have requested information on short, mid and long term priorities and proposals. The majority of short term and mid term proposals are included in the County's adopted FY2005-10 Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The Capital Improvements Program implements the LPPRP by including proposals for land acquisition facility planning and construction of recreation facilities identified in the Plan. Following the identification of park and facility needs in the LPPRP, individual park projects may then be considered for inclusion in the six-year Capital Improvements Program: first for facility planning and site design, and second for construction. The adopted Capital Improvements Program for FY2005-2010 CIP included a total of \$66,570,000 for land acquisition and \$73,724,000 for facility planning development and renovation for a grand total of \$140,294,000. The project listing for the Adopted FY05-10 CIP is included in the Appendix.

Future Land Acquisition Priorities

There is \$ \$3,569,000 in the FY 05-10 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for short term acquisition of community use parks (urban, neighborhood, and local parks) and \$8,458,000 for acquisition of non-local parks (regional, recreational, stream valley and conservation parks). In addition the CIP has \$46,277,000 in Legacy Open Space (LOS) funding for the short term, but this funding may be utilized for conservation and agricultural easements as well as fee-simple land acquisition. In addition to County Bonds, approximately 10 million dollars of LOS funding is anticipated to come from contributions.

Legacy Open Space Short term Priority Sites

Several specific properties and areas have been targeted for Legacy Open Space active pursuit using the allocated funds for FY07-08. These include the following:

Natural Resource Protection priorities include: The River Road Shale Barrens, a highly unique forest ecosystem of statewide significance; the Hyattstown Forest is a high quality forested highland providing a buffer to the historic town of Hyattstown; and the Hoyles Mill Forest Area consists of over 400 acres of unique forest adjacent to the new Hoyles Mill Conservation Park.

Water Supply Protection priorities include: Protecting key parcels throughout the Patuxent Watershed; and monitoring parcels identified in the Olney Master Plan for opportunities for easement and acquisition.

Heritage Resources priorities include: Carroll Place, also known as Circle Manor, the open space in the heart of historic Kensington; Harewood, a historic property in the Quaker Cluster adjacent to lands protecting the Sandy Spring; and the Warren M.E. Church site which is a unique collection of historic African American buildings.

Greenway Connection priorities include the Seneca Greenway Connection as one of the only remaining gaps in the 100-mile Ribbon of Green trail outlined in the Legacy Open Space master plan.

Farmland and Rural Open Space priorities include: Partial acquisition of the Spurrier Farm, the only farm in Montgomery County remaining in the same family's ownership for over 200 years; and miscellaneous easement and other protection opportunities identified in partnership with the County's Agricultural Services Division.

Urban Open Space priorities include: the Clarksburg Triangle, an important open space in the center of the developing town of Clarksburg, and a potential Regional Park site.

Other Short Term Land Acquisition Priorities

Short term acquisition priorities (2005-2010) encompass properties in 22 different parks including Upper Paint Branch, River Road Shale Barrens and Serpentine Barrens, Little Seneca Greenway Stream Valley Park, Hoyles Mill Conservation Park, Clarksburg Road Special Park, Calithea Farm Special Park, Ridge Road Recreational Park, and five local parks.

Mid-Term acquisition priorities (2011-2015), include Great Seneca, Hawlings River, North Branch, Ovid Hazen Wells Greenway, Reddy Branch, Rock Creek, Ten Mile Creek Greenway, and Little Bennett Stream Valley Parks, additions to South Germantown, Olney Manor, Ovid Hazen Wells and Northwest Branch Recreational Parks, Rachel Carson Conservation Park, Red Door Store Historic/Cultural Park, and Takoma Academy Local Park.

Long Term acquisitions (after 2015) include acquisitions in Bucklodge Branch, Dry Seneca Creek, Great Seneca, Little Bennet and Wildcat Branch Stream Valley Parks, Gude Drive Recreational Park, Oaks Landfill Special Park, and Fairland and Little Bennett Regional Parks.

Future land acquisition proposals are listed in the appendix for short, mid and long range priorities, and a summary of future land acquisition needs is shown in the following table.

M-NCPPC's - Montgomery County Park System Future Land Acquisition Priority Needs to the Year 2020

PARK TYPES		ACRES	
County-wide		Community-Use	
Stream Valley	3204	Urban	2
Regional	368	Neighborhood	0
Recreational	283	Local	122
Conservation	1149	Neighborhood Conservation Area	1
Special	708		
Historical Cultural	16		
County-wide Subtotal	5728	Community-Use Subtotal	125
		TOTAL	5853



Future Facility Development Priorities

The following tables show the relationship between the existing number of facilities, estimated 2020 additional facility needs, and facilities that are currently proposed in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), area and park master plans and other documents. As requested by the state guidelines, these proposals have been classified as short, mid and long range proposals that could help meet future needs. Short-range proposals include facilities completed since needs were estimated and facilities funded for construction in the adopted FY05-FY10 Park or School CIP's. There is \$73,724,000 proposed for short term planning and development in the FY 05-10 CIP. (Tables in the appendix detail specific CIP Proposals) Mid-range facilities are those funded for facility planning in the CIP or scheduled for constructed by a developer. Long-range proposals are park sites subject to future review that are not yet in the CIP for planning or construction, or dedication and/or construction by a developer, but have the potential of providing future facilities. The following tables show the relationship between existing park and school facilities that serve community needs, 2020 estimated needs, and short, mid and long range proposals for facilities. The tables indicate that many facilities fall considerably short of the 2020 estimated needs, particularly rectangular sports fields, picnic shelters, skate parks and dog exercise areas. The Park, Recreation, and Open Space Strategic Plan as well as future area and park master plans will look at ways to close these gaps.

Facilities Serving Planning Area Needs

Facility	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Needs	Current Proposals		
			Short Range 2005- 2010	Mid Range 2011-2015	Long Range After 2015
Playgrounds (with the exception of regional adventure playgrounds).	285	32	19	9	8
Tennis courts (with the exception of Recreation /regional courts)	411	4	1	0	8
Basketball courts	317	12	14	4	5

Facilities Serving Community Based Planning Area Needs

Facility	Existing Park and School Facilities	Maximum 2020 Estimated Needs	Current Proposals		
			Short Range 2005- 2010	Mid Range 2011-2015	Long Range After 2015
Youth diamonds (T-ball, youth softball and baseball)	91*	0	0	1	1
Multi-purpose Youth baseball/Adult Softball diamonds (these sports play on the same type of field)	164	15	10	3	1
Baseball (90' base paths- Adults and teens)	35	20	2	2	1
Multi-purpose rectangular field (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)	103	73	10	7	17
YOUTH RECTANGULAR FIELD (SOCCER/FOOTBALL/LACROSS E)	70*	15	4	3	0
Total	463	123			

Facilities Serving County-wide Needs

Facility	Existing Park and School Facilities	2020 Estimated Needs	Current Proposals		
			Short Range 2005- 2010	Mid Range 2011-2015	Long Range After 2015
Permit Picnic Shelters	78	21	3	2	0
County-Wide Group Picnic Areas	3	1	0	0	0
Nature Centers	4	2.3	0	2.5	0
Roller Hockey (Game Facilities)	1	1	1	0	0
Skate Parks (Including Informal Use Areas)	0	15	1	2	1
Dog Exercise Areas	3	15	2	0	0
Natural Areas in M-NCPPC Parks (acres)	17,682	4595	1304	1821	1471
Natural Surface Regional Trails (miles)	115.6	105.4	25	20	60.4
Hard Surface Regional Trails (miles)	73.5	22.5	8.3	6	8.2
Community Recreation Centers	18	11.5	5	2	2
Aquatic Facilities	4 indoor 7 outdoor	3-4	1 outdoor	1 outdoor	1 indoor 1 outdoor

MEETING STATE ACQUISITION GOALS

A recreation acreage goal for each county of 30 acres of parkland per 1000 persons has been established by the State in the LPPRP Guidelines. This section summarizes how the State asks us to calculate the generic state goal, and how to count local, state and federal lands towards this goal. This is one of the methods a county can use to set its recreational acreage goal.

$$(Number\ of\ residents/1,000) * 30\ acres = goal\ in\ acres$$

Setting the Goal

There are three categories of preserved acreage that the State Guidelines count towards this goal: 1) Local Recreational Acreage, 2) a portion of Local Natural Resource Acreage, and 3) a portion of qualifying State And Federal Acreage for Maryland Counties having more than 60 acres of State and Federal parkland per 1000 residents. What types of land qualify under each category and how each category counts towards the goal are explained below in the appropriate section.

1) Local Recreation Acreage

When counting public land towards the default acreage goal, a minimum of 15 acres per 1,000 people must come from locally owned recreational lands. The box on the right indicates what types of land may be counted as recreational lands.

Local Recreational Acreage Consists of 100% of:	
- Neighborhood Parks	- Metro/Regional Parks
- Community Parks	- Educational Recreation Areas*
- City/Countywide Parks	
<i>*60% of school sites or actual community recreational use areas can be counted. A joint use agreement between the county and school must exist.</i>	

2) Local Natural Resource Acreage

If the county does not have enough locally owned recreational lands to meet it's overall 30 acres per thousand population goal, it may apply a portion of locally owned natural resource lands and qualifying state and federal lands towards the goal. The sections on the right explain how to compute the portions that can count towards the goal.

Local Natural Resource Acreage Consists of 1/3 of:	
- Natural Resource Areas	
- Historic Cultural Areas	
- Private Open Space*	
<i>*Private Open Space may be counted if the land is permanently preserved as Open Space, is accessible to members of the community in which it is situated, and can be reasonably construed as helping to meet public demand for open space.</i>	

3) State and Federal Acreage

Montgomery County does not qualify for this category, as we do not meet the minimum requirements of 60 acres of State and Federal parkland, per 1000 county residents.

Meeting the Goal

In addition to local recreational acreage, one third of the acreage of certain types of natural resource land can be counted towards the default recommended acreage goal. Montgomery County lands that can be counted are indicated below.

Local Recreation Acreage Parkland Qualified to Meet Goal

The table below indicates that Montgomery County meets the local minimum requirement of 15 acres of locally owned recreation lands/1000 population which equals 13,155 acres.

Park Category	Local Recreation Acreage	
	Consists of 100% of:	Certified Acreage
Urban Parks	27.88	27.88
Neighborhood Parks	647.22	647.22
Local Parks	2176.68	2176.68
Misc. Recreational Facilities	4.16	4.16
Recreational Parks	2976.38	2976.38
Regional Parks (1/3 active)	2607.49	2607.49
Special Parks	2002.71	2002.71
Municipal Parks	1,752.65	1,752.65
Sub Total	13257.97	13257.97

Other	Local Recreation Acreage	
	Consists of 60% of Schools:	Certified Acreage
MC Public Schools	2841.30	1704.78

Local Natural Resources Acreage Qualified to Meet Goal

Park Category	Local Natural Resources	
	Acreage Consists of 1/3 of :	Certified Acreage
MNCPPC - Stream Valley Parks	13016.14	4295.33
Regional Parks (2/3 natural acreage)	5219.68	1147.18
Conservation Parks	3541.65	1168.74
Neighborhood Conservation Areas	283.53	93.56
HOA Open Space	6824.93	2252.23
City of Rockville Stream Valley	585.69	193.28
City of Gaithersburg Stream Valley	100.22	33.07
WSSC	3431.70	1132.46
Pepco - Transmission Lines Only	2553.00	842.49
Izaak Walton League	732.50	241.73
Subtotal	29571.83	11400.07

The summary table below indicates that Montgomery County could meet the State's 2005 land acquisition goal of 28,260 acres with 1,897 additional acres.

Acreage Goal Based on 30 Acres Per Thousand People	
<i>Total Acres All Sources</i>	62,066.62
County Population 2005 (Estimated)	942,000.00
Acreage Goal to be Certified	28,260.00
Certified Acres	26,362.82
Acres to Achieve Goal	1,897.18

Meeting the Goal with Future Proposed Land Acquisition

The following table indicates how land proposed for acquisition will provide 2,650 acres of qualifying parkland, which will enable the County to meet the State's 2005 goal of 30 recreational acres of parkland for each 1000 persons. A summary listing of priority sites proposed for acquisition and the approximate cost is located in the Appendix.

M-NCPPC - Montgomery County Park System Future Land Acquisition Needs To The Year 2020		M-NCPPC Future Parkland Acquisition Certification Potential To Year 2020	
PARK TYPES	ACRES	STATE PERCENT ALLOWANCE	POTENTIAL CERTIFIED ACRES
County-wide			
Stream Valley	3,204	33%	1057
Regional	368	33% of 1/3 - 2/3 Policy	80
Recreational	283	100%	283
Conservation	1,149	33%	379
Special	708	100%	708
Historical Cultural	16	100%	16
County-wide Subtotal	5,729	County-wide Subtotal	2524
Community-Use			
Urban	2	100%	2
Neighborhood	0	100%	0
Local	123	100%	123
Neighborhood Conservation Area	1	33%	1
Community-Use Subtotal	126	Community-Use Subtotal	126
TOTAL	5,855	TOTAL	2,650

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation is described in Chapter 1 of this report. A great deal of outreach occurred for the LPPRP. In addition to surveys a number of workshops and meetings have been held with the Recreation Department, Municipalities, Countywide Recreation Advisory Board and Montgomery County Public Schools, to consider recreation trends and future needs. Other types of outreach that include information on resident preferences and recreation trends include the following:

- Coordinating with various Montgomery County Park and Planning Divisions, the Montgomery County Departments of Recreation and Economic Development/Agricultural Preservation Division, Community Use of Schools; County municipalities, and Prince George's County Park Planning.
- Utilizing the six Recreation Advisory Boards to provide countywide and regional input.
- Placing information and opportunities for input on the web.
- Obtaining information from recreation, conservation, ethnic groups and agricultural interest groups.
- Holding staff brainstorming sessions and public forums to provide input on needs for recreation, natural resource and agricultural preservation.
- Coordinating with the outreach for the Green Infrastructure Plan, where appropriate.
- Public Hearings on the Planning Board Approved Public Hearing Drafts for both the LPPRP and PROS.

A listing of meetings is included in the Appendix.



CHAPTER IV AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

BACKGROUND AND CHAPTER CONTEXT

Public Commitment to Investment in Land Preservation

For over two hundred years, Montgomery County has been the home to a strong agriculture industry. There is a long and rich farming heritage in the County; a heritage and tradition that has contributed greatly to the incredibly high quality of life the residents of Montgomery County enjoy today. Preserving that heritage and encouraging its growth, through land preservation efforts and public policy, continues to be a top priority in Montgomery County.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council and the American Farmland Trust, Montgomery County has the most successful farmland and open space preservation program in the country. Ninety-three thousand acres in Montgomery County have been set aside, through zoning for agricultural and open space uses. The County's diverse agricultural industry has 577 farms and 350 horticultural enterprises, which contributes \$250 million to the local economy. The Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan outlines the County's goals on land preservation, and an important component is ensuring the continued viability of agriculture.

In the late 1950's, agricultural and open space preservation arose nationally as a social and economic issue. Later this became a planning issue as the loss of agricultural and open space land was expressed in terms of the needs and problems associated with development in close proximity to metropolitan areas. In essence, the need to preserve open space and the diseconomy in building costly infrastructure to serve scattered suburban development. This was at the heart of the issue in 1960 when Maryland enacted the first state law to provide preferential assessments on farmland in the hope of encouraging farmers not to sell their property to developers. Despite preferential assessment programs, however; development pressure continued to erode farmland acreage.

Supportive Local Plans, Zoning, and Regulations and Procedures

Montgomery County's leadership contributed to the vision of recognizing growth trends within its borders and taking action to conserve land for agricultural and open space. County efforts to preserve farmland began in 1964 when the County adopted the *General Plan* (On Wedges and Corridors). This plan envisions a land use pattern where intensive development is confined to a series of Corridor Cities located along major transportation arteries and separated by wedges of rural open space, low-density residential uses and farmland. When the agricultural wedge concept was introduced, its function was to provide and protect large open spaces for recreational opportunities; provide a rural environment in which farming, mineral

extraction, and other natural resource activities could be carried out; and conserve and protect the public water supply and recreation. In 1969, when the General Plan was updated, it affirmed the 1964 *General Plan* recommendations.

In 1974, after extensive study by the Montgomery County Planning Board, the County Council approved a new Rural Zone to protect the wedge areas from increasing development pressure. This new zone imposed a five-acre minimum lot size on approximately one-third of the County. The Rural Zone was designed specifically to preserve farmland and further implement the recommendations of the General Plan.

In the following years, it became evident that the Rural Zone (in combination with the State Agricultural Assessment Program) was not sufficient to protect farmland. From 1975-1979, almost 11,000 acres of farmland were subdivided, primarily for homes. As a result, from 1976-1980, County Planning staff, the Montgomery County Planning Board, County Council, a Council-appointed Agricultural Task Force, and a cross section of County residents wrestled with the problem of farmland and rural open space preservation.

The *Preservation of Agriculture & Rural Open Space Functional Master Plan* was adopted by the M-NCPPC and approved by the County Council in 1980 to address the issue of the loss of farmland on the urban fringe. The Functional Plan proposed the creation and application of two zoning techniques, the Rural Density Transfer (RDT) and the Rural Cluster (RC) Zones, in conjunction with a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system.

The RDT Zone gives strong preference to agriculture, forestry, and open space uses, as well as allowing a wide variety of agriculturally related commercial and industrial uses. It discourages residential uses by restricting residential development to one dwelling unit per 25 acres. Use of the RDT Zone significantly reduces fragmentation of farmland, stabilizes farmland value, minimizes development pressure, protects agricultural practices, and maintains critical mass of farmland.

In return for this loss of development potential, the TDR system provides the opportunity for an economic return of farmland placed in the RDT Zone by allowing the owner of the farmland to sell development rights at a rate of one TDR per five acres. This is equivalent to the development density permitted under the 1974 Rural Zone before the 25-acre minimum downsizing. The development rights may be utilized in specifically designated TDR receiving areas in various parts of the County determined suitable for growth. When TDRs are sold for transfer to a receiving area, a legal easement is placed on the sending area restricting the use of the sending area to agricultural or open space purposes.

Development rights are therefore determined to be commodities that can be sold to developers and transferred to designated areas of the County where growth and development are desired. The private marketplace establishes the value of development rights, and the County is responsible for tracking the sale and transfer of rights through its records. The TDR system has the advantage of using the private sector to fund the protection of farmland.

In 1993, the County approved the *A General Plan Refinement of the Goals & Objectives for Montgomery County*. This document updated the General Plan goals and objectives, outlining challenges, and providing a vision for the approaching 21st century. The vision for the agricultural wedge is to preserve farmland and rural open space by employing the strategies listed in the County Goals Section of this Chapter.

Farmers and landowners are a crucial part of the effort to preserve agricultural land. They are both participants in, and beneficiaries of, efforts to preserve agricultural land. Landowners can choose from many State and local agricultural land preservation programs. Each of the programs is designed to place an easement on the property which prevents future commercial, residential or industrial development of the land.

The State of Maryland is recognized as a national leader in the field of farmland preservation. This recognition is demonstrated by over 360,000 acres of farmland and *open space* being protected through voluntary easement programs including Transferable Development Rights (TDRs). As the State is recognized as a National Leader, so too is Montgomery County. According to the Natural Resources Defense Council and the American Farmland Trust, Montgomery County has the most successful farmland and open space preservation program in the country. Ninety-three thousand acres in Montgomery County have been set aside, through zoning for agricultural and open space uses. The State of Maryland has been successful in accommodating development in designated areas and reducing *sprawl* by protecting farmland in rural areas.

Through programs all designed to protect agricultural land and open space areas, State and Local government work in a mutually supportive partnerships to achieve both State and local preservation goals. While State and local government are working towards the same goals, the approaches and programs used achieve these successes are quite different in nature. While the State employs the use of donated and purchase of development rights programs (PDR) or public investment as the primary vehicle to protect farmland, Montgomery County employs the use of both PDR programs and Transferable Development Rights Programs (TDR) to provide County landowners with multiple preservation options. What is important about the County's approach is that it relies on both the public and private investment of funds to secure the preservation of these valuable agricultural lands. This approach does not place the financial burden to protect agricultural lands entirely upon the public sector.

In addition, our TDR program is not designed to eliminate development within the County, but simply to transfer the density from highly valued agricultural lands to areas within the County that possesses the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the increased density.

Chapter Context

The purpose of this Chapter is to:

- Review goals and objectives of State and local land preservation programs for agricultural land preservation. Identify where they are essentially the same, where they are complementary or mutually supportive, and where they are simply different.
- Evaluate the ability of implementation programs and funding sources to achieve the goals and objectives. Identify shortcomings in the ability of implementation programs and funding sources to achieve legislative goals.
- Identify and recommend to State and local legislatures and governing bodies changes needed to overcome shortcomings, achieve goals, and ultimately ensure good return on public investment.

GOALS FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Preservation of rural land for agricultural use is becoming increasingly important in many areas of the State of Maryland and Montgomery County. The primary goals of agricultural preservation programs include the following:

- To conserve farmland for future food and fiber production.
- To ensure continued high quality food supply for our citizens.
- To preserve the agricultural industry and rural communities as an *enhanced quality and way of life*.

Specific State and County Goals are listed in the following sections

State Goals

A variety of easement acquisition programs invest in agricultural land preservation in Maryland, for example: the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF); Rural Legacy; Green Print; the federal Farmland Protection Program; local agricultural land preservation programs, which may include programs to purchase and/or transfer development rights; local land trusts; the Maryland Environmental Trust; and the Maryland Historical Trust. Each program and associated funding source has its own specific goals, either articulated in enabling legislation or in supporting program statements.

In addition, the Maryland General Assembly passed a resolution in 2002 establishing a Statewide goal to preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020. The resolution recognized the productive agricultural land preserved through the combined efforts of MALPF, Rural Legacy, GreenPrint, and local easement acquisition programs.

The expectation behind the 1.03 million acre goal is that it will provide a long-term frame of reference for funding and improving land preservation efforts by State and local governments. Counties are expected to formulate their own acreage goals based on considerations that include those behind the State goal: how many acres of productive rural land, if preserved, will support long-term continued agricultural production in individual counties and regions of the State.

Overall, the state's goals for agricultural land preservation are the following:

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
- Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.
- To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.
- Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.
- Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020.

- Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating State agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
- Work with local governments to:
- Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals;
- In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and State and local government officials;
- Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;
- Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.
- Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public-at-large.

County Goals

County Goals for agriculture are consistent with the previously stated State goals and are built on those expressed in the County's Comprehensive General Plan discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, and are listed below:

Objective:

Preserve farmland and rural open space in the Agricultural Wedge.

- Strategies:
- Strengthen land use policies that encourage farmland preservation and rural open space preservation in the Agricultural Wedge.
- Strengthen incentives and regulations to encourage agricultural uses and discourage development within the Agricultural Wedge.
- Limit non-agricultural uses to those that are low intensity or otherwise identified in master plans.
- Continue the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program as well as the County and State farm easement programs as important elements of preserving farmland.
- Continue the function of existing rural centers as the focus of activity for the surrounding countryside.
- Ensure that rural centers primarily serve rural lifestyles and are compatible in size and scale with the intent of the Agricultural Wedge.
- Continue agriculture as the preferred use in the Agricultural Wedge.

CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

Types of Conservation Easement Programs:

The primary land preservation programs available to assist landowners in Montgomery County are:

- State Purchase of Development Rights Programs
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF)
- Rural Legacy Program (RLP) – State/County Cooperative PDR
- County Purchase of Development Rights Programs
- Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP)
- County Transferable Development Rights Program (TDRs) Montgomery County Transferable Development Rights Program (TDRs)
- Donation Based Conservation Easements Programs
- Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), and other private trust organizations.

County, State and Federal Programs

Current Programs and Land Use Management Tools

Montgomery County currently has six programs available for land preservation, in Montgomery County's "toolbox" of land Preservation Program Options for landowners: Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) easement program, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF), Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR), Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program (AEP), the Maryland Rural Legacy Program (RLP), and the M-NCPPC Legacy Open Space Program (LOS) (further discussed in the Natural Resources Chapter).

The Maryland Environmental Trust

The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) was established by the Maryland state legislature in 1967 to encourage landowners to donate an easement on their property to protect scenic open areas, including farm and forest land, wildlife habitat, waterfront, unique or rare areas and historic sites. MET accepts both donated and purchased easements. In the donated easement program, the landowners are eligible for certain income, estate, gift and property tax benefits in return for limiting the right to develop and subdivide their land, now and in the future. Through this program, 2,086 acres have been preserved as of June 30, 2004.

Maryland Agriculture Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Act -- State Agricultural Preservation Program

This program was established in 1977 by the State Legislature as a result of concern over decreasing farmland acreage caused by development. The program is implemented through the Maryland Department of Agriculture, in partnership with local government. The MALPF purchases agricultural land preservation easements directly from landowners for cash. Following the sale of the easement, agricultural uses of the property are encouraged to continue.

The MALPF program works in two steps. The first step is the voluntary creation of an agricultural district by the landowner which must comprise 50 acres or more. Agricultural districts are recorded among the land records and remain in force for a minimum of 5 years. By entering into the Agricultural District agreement, a landowner can continue to conduct normal agriculture activities (i.e., noise, odor, night operations, machinery operations, etc.) as protected activities under the district agreement. Once the Agricultural District is established, the landowner is eligible, but not obligated, to sell an agricultural easement to the State. Landowners retain title to the land and can sell the property in the future, however; future development of the property is limited to agriculture. As of June 30, 2004, 3,322 acres have been preserved under this program.

The Montgomery County Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR)

The Montgomery County TDR Program was established in 1980 as part of the Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agricultural and Rural Open Space. The history, purpose and functional details of this program were discussed earlier in the Planning and Policy Development Section. In short, The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program allows landowners to transfer a development right from one parcel of land to another parcel. For agricultural land preservation, TDRs are used to shift development from agricultural areas ("TDR sending areas") to designated growth zones or ("TDR receiving areas") which are closer to public services and far removed from the "sending area". When rights are transferred from a parcel within the designated "TDR sending area," the land is restricted by a permanent TDR easement. The land to which the rights are transferred are called the "receiving area." A TDR program represents the private sector's investment in land preservation, as the price paid for TDRs are negotiated between a landowner and a developer. A developer who purchases TDRs is permitted to build at a higher density than permitted by the "base zoning." The funds paid for a TDR by the developer to a landowner creates a wealth transfer from the developed areas back into the rural economy.

Montgomery County has been recognized as having one of the most successful TDR programs in the nation, with over 45,000 acres of important agricultural land preserved as of June 30, 2004.

The Montgomery County Agricultural Easement Program

Established in 1987, this program gives the County the ability to Purchase agricultural land preservation easements to preserve land for agricultural production. Lands eligible for participation in this program must be zoned Rural, Rural Cluster, or Rural Density Transfer, or subject to land being designated as an approved State or County Agricultural Preservation District. The program was created to increase both the level of voluntary participation in

farmland preservation programs and expand the eligibility of farmland parcels. As of June 30, 2004, 6,678 acres have been preserved under this program.

Rural Legacy Program in Montgomery County

Another tool for rural preservation recently developed by the State of Maryland is the Rural Legacy Program. Passed in May of 1997 as part of the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Act, the Rural Legacy Program encourages local governments and private land trusts to identify Rural Legacy areas and to competitively apply for funds to complement existing land conservation efforts or create new programs.

Through this program, the county has developed another tool in our agricultural land preservation toolbox to target the protection of large contiguous tracts of farmland as well as enhancing the protection of greenbelts and greenways and other open space uses that are conserved through the voluntary purchase of conservation easements. The program provides the focus and funding necessary to protect contiguous tracts of land and other strategic areas from sprawl development, and to enhance natural resource, agriculture, forestry, and environmental protection through cooperative efforts among state and local governments and private land trusts. Two aspects of this program are its selective approach, intended to save the best or most strategic farmland from development; and the evaluation process, which gives high priority to farmland that provides important natural resource benefits, such as wildlife habitat and watersheds.

This State program provides competitive grants to Counties or other sponsors for preserving areas that are rich in agricultural, forestry, natural and cultural resources that, if protected, will promote a resource-based economy, protect greenbelts and greenways and maintain the fabric of rural life. Awarded Grants could be directed to either purchase sensitive lands in fee or acquire protection through conservation easements. In the spirit of maximizing both State and Local funds, Montgomery County has been very successful in its Rural Legacy applications by leveraging State/Local funds to target significant agricultural resources through the conservation easement acquisition process. Since the first grants were awarded during the FY1998-1999 grant cycle, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of \$16.9 million in State Grant Funds; and through FY2004 over 3,900 acres have been protected by this program.

Federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program

The National Association of Counties (NACO) established the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Steering Committee in the 1980's. Through this effort, Maryland Counties participated in an extensive lobbying effort to lay the foundation for the Federal Government to become a new partner in Farmland Preservation.

The Federal Farmland Protection Program (FPP) was first created for the State of Vermont, and then in 1996 was finally expanded to include all States and Counties in the U.S. This program provides reimbursement for up to 50% of the easement costs for properties protected by agricultural land preservation easements. Montgomery County Government has been an active participant in the FPP since its first year in 1996. Since this time, Montgomery County has made successful bids for FPP funding during each authorized funding cycle. As of FY2003, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of \$792,363 in Federal Funds that provided reimbursement of County funds in acquiring both State (MALPF) and County (AEP) easements.

This fund leveraging mechanism provides the County greater use and application of important preservation funds.

Funding Sources

Agricultural Transfer Tax

Agricultural Transfer Taxes are collected when farmland is sold and converted to uses other than agriculture. The agricultural transfer tax that is assessed on real property is 5 percent of the consideration paid. Montgomery County's agricultural preservation program is certified by the State, and is therefore able to retain 75% of the agricultural transfer taxes collected in order to fund the agricultural preservation program.

Investment Income

Agricultural Transfer Taxes retained by Montgomery County are placed in an interest bearing account. Beginning in *FY1994*, the income generated by the interest was invested back into the agricultural land preservation program.

In *FY1997*, a policy was implemented which directed agricultural transfer tax expenditures to be offset by Investment Income. This policy authorized 10 percent of the total agricultural transfer tax expenditures be adjusted as the Investment Income's contribution to the project. This policy remained in effect until *FY2003*, when the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Economic Development recommended that investment income be used to fund 100 percent of the administrative expenses associated with the project. (These expenses include in the Division of Agricultural Services 1.0 work year for the Senior Business Specialist, and 0.6 work year for the Manager II). This change simplified the current practice of cost allocation for administrative expenses and eliminated the need for time-consuming State reporting requirements. This policy was applied retroactively to encompass Investment Income expenditures for *FY2001*, *FY2002* and *FY2003* and the investment income expenditures were adjusted accordingly.

General Obligation Bonds

One alternative for funding farmland preservation in Montgomery County is through the use of General Obligation Bonds. By definition, a General Obligation Bond or G.O. Bond is a bond backed by the ability of a sovereign or municipal issuer (County) to levy taxes on real property and on business activities in its jurisdiction. General obligation bonds are backed by the full faith, credit and taxing power of the issuer. Because these types of bonds require debt servicing for repayment, the County adopted a policy to limit the use of G.O. Bonds for farmland preservation. This policy dictates that G.O. Bonds can only be used when the reserves of cash have been significantly depleted. For several fiscal years, G.O Bonds were authorized and appropriated for use, but were never used because of the G.O. Bond usage policy. In *FY 2001*, \$700 thousand dollars of appropriated G.O Bonds were returned for use elsewhere in the County since the program had sufficient cash revenue. While no G.O Bonds are currently being authorized and appropriated for this project, they may be sought in the future as cash revenues become insufficient to fund the preservation program.

State Grants

Beginning in 1997, the State's Rural Legacy Program was enacted as part of the Governor's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative to protect our natural resources. Through this program, a competitive grants program was established by which local governments and local land trusts could compete for State funds. These funds could be directed to either purchase sensitive lands in fee or acquire protection through conservation easements. Since the first grants were awarded during the FY1998-1999 grant cycle, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of \$16.9 million in State Grant Funds.

Federal Grants

The National Association of Counties (NACO) established the Agricultural and Rural Affairs Steering Committee in the 1980's. Through this effort, Maryland Counties participated in an extensive lobbying effort to lay the foundation for the Federal Government to become a new partner in Farmland Preservation. The Federal Farmland Protection Program (FPP) was first created for the State of Vermont, and then in 1996 was finally expanded to include all States and Counties in the U.S.

This program provides reimbursement for up to 50% of the easement costs for properties protected by agricultural land preservation easements. Montgomery County Government has been an active participant in the FPP since its first year in 1996. Since this time, Montgomery County has made successful bids for FPP funding during each authorized funding cycle. As of FY2004, Montgomery County has been awarded a total of \$792,363 in Federal Funds.

State and Local Real Estate Transfer Taxes:

Real Estate Transfer Taxes are collected when real property is sold. The Real Estate Transfer Taxes are assessed on a percentage basis based upon the consideration that is paid for the real property. These funds are used for fund a multitude of State and Local projects, some of which includes farmland preservation and open space park acquisitions.

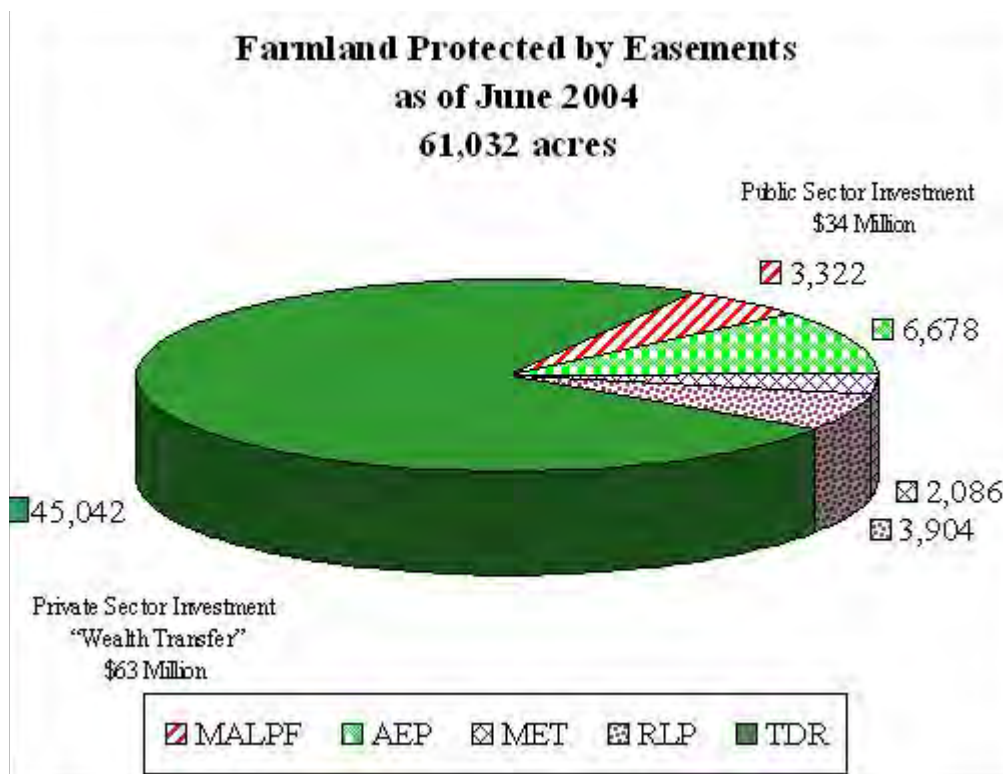
Montgomery County's Farmland Preservation programs are funded by a combination of funding sources. These funding sources include retention of county share of State Agricultural Transfer Taxes, Investment Income, General Obligation Bonds, State and Federal Grants.

EVALUATION OF THE AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Summary of Accomplishments and Farmland Preservation Goal

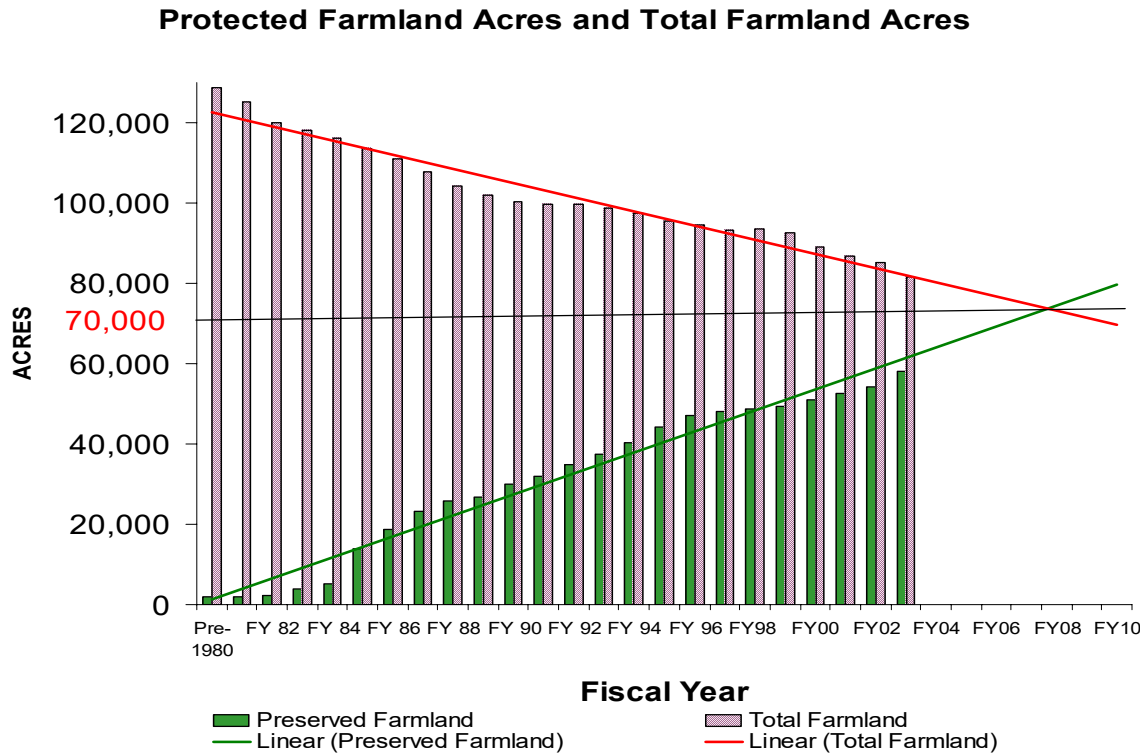
Through FY2004, Montgomery County has protected 61,032 acres of farmland through the preservation programs offered to its residents. The pie chart on the following page, graphically illustrates the progress made by the County's preservation programs through FY2004.

Our accomplishments in farmland preservation have not gone without notice. As a County, we are asked on a continuing basis to help provide technical assistance to other jurisdictions across the nation that are in the process of developing farmland preservation programs of their own. We have conducted these outreach efforts for the sole purpose of expanding the farmland preservation knowledge base to ensure a future for agriculture across this nation.



Montgomery County has established a goal of protecting 70,000 acres of farmland. Through FY2004, the County is about 87 percent of the way towards reaching that goal. By examining the trend of development versus the trend of agricultural land preservation, achievement of the goal should be attained by the year 2010, provided no significant economic and political disruptions occur.

Trend of Farmland Preservation vs the Development Trend



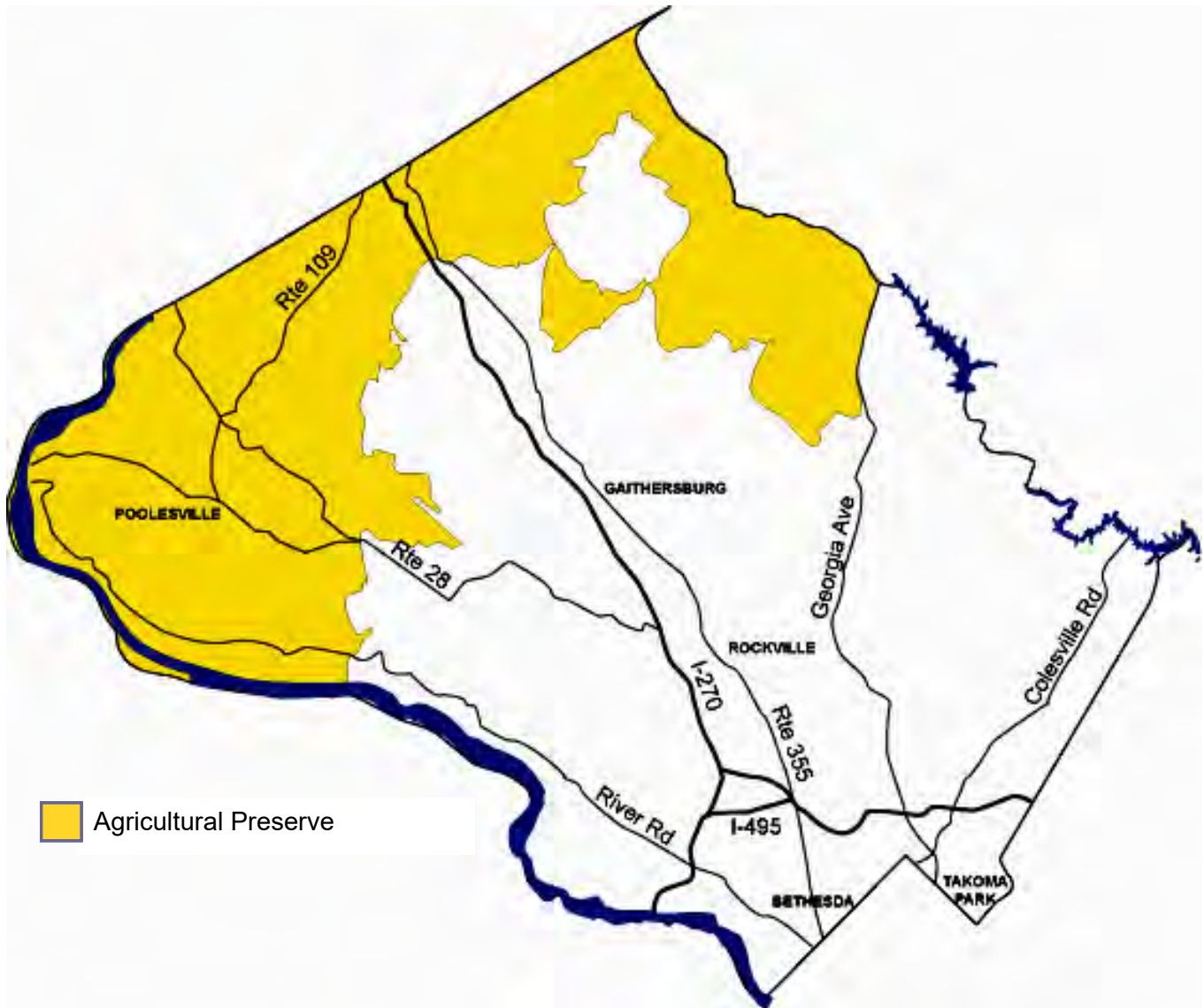
In order to reach our 70,000-acre goal by the year 2010, we will need to protect an additional 8,968 acres.

It should be recognized that as we approach our goal of protecting 70,000 acres of farmland, it will become more difficult to preserve the unprotected lands that remain. The land we have protected thus far has become extremely valuable for development. The remaining unprotected agricultural lands are often directly adjacent to protected properties. Developers and real estate agents use our protected lands as another selling feature amenity that adds value to an unprotected property and encourages rural landowners to pursue development options. Rising real estate values will require diligence by program staff to ensure that valuation of farmland for agricultural preservation easements provides fair and equitable compensation for farmers. In the absence of fair and equitable values, the land will most likely convert to other land uses and be lost to preservation.

The importance of agriculture to the County has been well documented, agricultural activities occupy about one-third of Montgomery County's Land Area, as well as representing a diverse agricultural industry. With about 577 farms and 350 horticultural enterprises remaining, agriculture produces more than \$250 million in economic contribution and employs more than 10,000 residents. In order to ensure the protection of the 70,000 acres of production farmland which represents our critical mass, we will expand program policies and regulations to keep the preservation initiatives on track.

The map on the following page indicates portions of the County that have been preserved for agriculture.

Preserved Agricultural Land in Montgomery County



Impediments to Program Implementation and other Program Limitations

Competition for State and local resources continues to provide challenges in funding these critically important farmland preservation initiatives. In these times of rising real estate values, the appropriation and targeting of financial resources must be of paramount importance. As the acreage of agricultural lands continue to dwindle, the value placed upon the unprotected lands that remain steadily increases. The longer it takes to protect these valuable agricultural lands, the more cost prohibitive their preservation will become. While increasing funds for farmland preservation will help, this action alone will not stem the tide of agricultural land conversion. The State must provide incentives and rewards for County's that have implemented true agricultural zoning. This zoning set agricultural as the primary land use and encourages low density residential uses.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION

The preservation of farmland itself will not ensure that farming will continue as a viable industry. The State and local government must promote a holistic approach to the preservation of agriculture in terms of preserving agriculture an industry. This concept must include many components in order for a viable future to exist. These components include but are not limited to the following:

Proposals

Agricultural Zoning

The creation of a true agricultural zone is paramount to the future of agriculture as an industry. It is in the public interest to preserve farmland and in order to develop a preservation strategy that regulates land use, it is important to first clearly define the need for such a strategy in terms of the public purpose. The definition of the public purpose provides the basis for future government action and makes those actions more defensible and understandable. The creation of an agricultural zone reduces further fragmentation of farming by employing the use of low density residential use which reduces the erosion or loss of farms as an economic unit for agricultural production. Agricultural zoning represents a strong local commitment to agriculture that treats all farms on a level playing field, thereby minimizing the potential and negative impacts of residential development.

Right-to-Farm Provisions

The Legislative intent and purpose of any agricultural zone is to promote agriculture as the primary land use. Ideally, an agricultural zone should incorporate a right to farm provision stating that all agricultural operations are permitted at anytime, including the operation of farm machinery. No agricultural use should be subject to restriction on the grounds that it interferes with other uses permitted within the agricultural zone. Fairness in public policy deals not only

with equity among similar individuals, but between the interests of private property owners and those of the public. A successful preservation strategy must strike a balance that will limit the economic return available from subdivision and development while retaining the value essential to the survival of successful farming operations.

Master Plan Development

Farmland preservation not only involves the preservation of individual farms, productive soils, and a way of life, but it meets a variety of national, regional, state and local objectives. The need to preserve farmland can be justified in broad public purpose areas that include:

- Control of Public Costs and Prevention of Urban Sprawl
- Adherence to Growth Management Systems
- Preservation of Regional Food Supplies
- Energy Conservation
- Protection of the Environment
- Maintenance of Open Space
- Preservation of Rural Life-Styles

The development and adoption of a Master Plan establishes a public policy guide or “blue print” for local jurisdictions to formulate a holistic approach to agriculture as an industry and a land use.

Support to the Agricultural Industry

The State should work closely with local government to assess the economic contribution agriculture makes to each jurisdiction's local economy. By quantitatively assessing this contribution, local government can define the extent, nature and future direction of the agricultural industry. The agricultural industry within the State is constantly evolving. We must recognize that changing trends in agriculture are not unique to Maryland, nor is it a sign that signifies the ultimate demise of the agricultural industry. Changes are a normal part of an evolving market-driven system. The key for any industry to survive is dependent upon change and the ability for a State, region or county to adapt to these changes. One of the main philosophies the state must employ is to preserve the agricultural land base and let the industry focus on the direction it wants to go. We should not protect farmland for any particular type of agriculture activity or use.

In addition we must recommend changes in State Law that limit property tax assessments on protected lands. As the remaining undeveloped farmland increases in value, it is almost certain that the tax assessments will also increase and place increased financial burden on farmers. It is our view that since these protected farms will remain farms and not place demands on the County or State for public services, any increases in assessments should be prevented and thereby frozen at the time of the easement settlement date regardless of any infrastructure improvements that are made. This change in law will ensure that historic and significant farm related structures are not demolished because they cost too much to retain

Furthermore, if the increases in assessment value are inherently driven by the sales of farmland being developed in the marketplace, how can these comparable sales be used to determine the new assessment values for farms that cannot be developed? Until this question is answered, real property tax assessments will continue to be in direct conflict with the preservation goals of farmland and the agricultural industry.

New Initiatives

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve was created 25 years ago. To celebrate that event and to reinforce the commitment of Montgomery County and the M-NCPPC to that vision; a new initiative called "*Forever Farmland*" will be unveiled which will chart a path for agricultural preservation into the 21st Century and beyond. The elements of this initiative were announced in early March, which included: land use reform, marketing strategies for farmers, education and publicity efforts for schools and the general public, and legislative reforms to assist farmers.

To survive and prosper, agriculture must evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of marketing on the urban fringe. "Traditional" commodity-based agriculture will continue to face challenges associated with the lack of adequate grain shipping facilities, increasing production costs, environmental regulation compliance as well as free trade and global competition issues. In recognition of these challenges, we are fortunate that there are many other forms of agriculture that can be profitable which will help keep the land in productive use. The key to any agricultural preservation program is to keep the land in profitable production, so it will not be a tempting source for housing development.

County initiatives

Montgomery County leads the nation in land conservation; however, to achieve a true measure of success, we must be proactive to save family farms. The continued success of the County's farmland preservation initiatives may be dependent upon our ability to make program adjustments in order to provide viable alternatives to landowners above and beyond development options. Exploration of innovative program changes, alternative funding sources, policy changes, regulatory relief, and the expansion of both private/public sector investments all may be required in order to reach our preservation goal.

Agricultural Industry Support

We must ensure that the next generation is afforded the same benefits from farmland and open space that we have today. According to County farmers, the greatest challenge to their economic survival is crop damage from the overpopulation of deer. In response to this impending crisis, County Executive Duncan has proposed within his FY2006 budget (subject to County Council approval), a nearly 20% increase in funding for agricultural support. This includes an additional \$112,000 for deer management initiatives, \$50,000 for several agricultural marketing and other agricultural industry support initiatives, and \$10,000 to provide technical assistance to farmers.

Increased agricultural marketing opportunities and educational outreach efforts targeting our "down" County residents must be maintained as a high priority. These educational outreach

opportunities must be further expanded to provide an even greater exposure to children through activities sponsored in partnership with the Montgomery County Public Schools and other venues. By building awareness within this targeted group we will endow the children of today, with the tools to become the leaders of tomorrow. Equally as important and critical to our success, lies within increasing the public awareness and appreciation for the agricultural reserve as stakeholders and benefactors of the preservation public policy. Outreach efforts must be undertaken to reinforce the benefits of agricultural within our community, because whether our residents enjoy purchasing fresh locally grown products or appreciate a beautiful vista as an open space amenity, every citizen benefits from agricultural preservation.

We must also strive to build stronger partnerships with our State Land Grant University. This may entail more cooperative financial assistance to ensure our farmers have access to the Land Grant University and Cooperative Extension as these entities provide the linkage with local farmers to cutting-edge technology and agricultural research initiatives.

Agricultural Land Preservation Initiatives:

The M-NCPPC is also committed to continuing the preservation of Montgomery County's agricultural heritage. M-NCPPC will spearhead initiatives to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the visionary Master Plan for Preservation of Agriculture and Open Space by working with governmental and private sector partners to ensure that the County's Agricultural Preservation programs reflect 21st century land use issues and agricultural economics. The best way to safeguard Montgomery County's agricultural reserve is to safeguard the profitability of farming by creating an environment that is conducive to agricultural sustainability and productivity.

M-NCPPC is proposing to convene a land preservation summit for public and private groups to review a variety of issues important to the future of the agricultural reserve. In addition, M-NCPPC commits to expanding Montgomery County's Deer Management Program including: public education and awareness of deer/vehicle collisions; landscaping advice for homeowners; managed hunts by qualified hunters under strict regulations; donation of venison to homeless shelters and food kitchens; and working with The County's Department of Economic Development and Maryland Department of Natural Resources to expand its deer management program in State Parks within the County and encourage more intense management of privately owned lands.

The County needs to formally adopt and implement the TDR Task Force Report and Promote Urban Growth Areas. Montgomery County's TDR program has long been admired nationally as the model for Transferable Development Rights programs. Many jurisdictions across this country have studied our example and worked towards implementing programs of their own. While we have benefited from this exposure, we have not been working aggressively enough to ensure its continued viability. Any program that has existed for over 20 years must be modified on occasion to enhance its effectiveness in meeting the needs of the citizens. TDRs are responsible for protecting over 45,000 acres of farmland, which represents about 74% of the farmland preservation that has occurred thus far. This private sector investment has played a pivotal role in the success of our public policy initiative. We must continue to expand the use of TDRs within the County wherever possible therefore, the recommendations in the TDR Task Force Report must become a part of our future planning goals.

The County must continue to invest in our older developed communities. Recent studies have shown people are willing to pay more to live closer to where they work instead of the

alternative of spending hours each day in traffic trying to reach their homes in the rural areas. Livable and safe communities influence homeownership decisions, as well as, amenities like public parks, libraries, banks and shopping centers that are within walking distance to these communities. By providing these services in a safe community setting, the pressure to develop our rural and agricultural areas will be reduced and give the agricultural industry a fighting chance to survive.

Our efforts to protect Montgomery County's valuable agricultural, natural and open space resources is helping to achieve the County's vision of balancing economic growth and vitality with the protection of extremely valuable agricultural and open space resources. This achievement has been accomplished through a multitude of initiatives that target farmland and open space resources. We are very fortunate to have farmers who are equally interested in protecting their lands and who have entered into voluntary farmland preservation easement programs. There are several challenges to protecting the Agricultural Reserve. The County is committed to developing mechanisms to meet these challenges. The following land use issues impacting the Agricultural Reserve, particularly the RDT Zone, are the most important and must be addressed. They include:

- **Rate of Residential Development Activity** - Methods are needed to resist demand for housing on agricultural land including incentives to transfer "developable" TDRs from the RDT Zone, thus reducing residential potential. Also, a lack of regulatory guidance for design of permitted residential development in the RDT Zone leads to elimination of the large contiguous farm fields necessary for most agriculture. Design guidelines reflecting the intent of the Master Plan can better protect rural character and agricultural potential.

New technologies authorized by the county for sewage treatment opens more land for housing than was envisioned in the Master Plan for the Preservation of Agricultural and Rural Open Space. The use of new technologies (other than to protect public health) should be tied to reduced density and design standards.

- **Proliferation of Non-Agricultural Uses** - Requests for sewer extensions for large institutional uses in the RDT Zone are increasing. Cumulatively, these uses nibble away at the intent of the Master Plan and impede impervious goals for Chesapeake Bay protection. They bring high levels of activity and traffic and remove large tracts of land from the potential for agricultural production. The County Council recently amended the Ten-Year Comprehensive Water Supply and Sewerage Systems Plan to prohibit extension of water and sewer service to Private Institutional Facilities in the RDT zone. Overuse of "sand mound" septic treatment systems are also a problem.
- **Stresses on the TDR Program** – There is a need for additional TDR receiving sites as few viable TDR receiving areas remain after Clarksburg, and concepts to reduce development potential in the RDT Zone will create new sending TDRs. Additionally there has been significant abuse of the "Child Lot" provision in the RDT zone.
- **Agricultural Economic Development** - Declining traditional agricultural production leaves farmlands vulnerable to development pressure and the intent of the Master Plan open to question. Support is vital for the evolution of farming to models that will be profitable as the Agricultural Reserve becomes an island of agricultural land surrounded by developing areas in surrounding counties. Because of this fiscal stress, support is needed to enable this sustained evolution of agricultural production and agricultural uses. Land use regulations must more easily accommodate evolving agriculture and agriculturally related uses.

- **Agricultural Awareness and Education** – Protection and preservation of the Agricultural Reserve depends on strong support for its value from all county residents and property owners. Too many down-county residents are not aware of the importance of the Agricultural Reserve. Immediate and long-term action is needed to spread this awareness and allow all county residents to share in the benefits of this important resource.

Local and State Legislative Support

Legislative efforts are necessary to implement budget initiatives and deer management measures in the County Council, as well as increasing the profile and public awareness of agriculture throughout the county. “Twenty-five years ago, public officials recognized that the best way to preserve farmland and open space was to preserve the business of farming,” “As the population in our region continues to grow, this principle will become even more important in the future that this tradition is not only sustained, but flourishes.

In addition we must recommend changes in State Law that limit property tax assessments on protected lands. As the remaining undeveloped farmland increases in value, it is almost certain that the tax assessments will also increase and place increased financial burden on farmers.

This future concern is reflected in how these increased assessments will negatively impact the farmer's ability to make a living in farming. This fundamental characteristic of Montgomery County contributed to the County's public policy for agricultural preservation which started in 1980 with the creation of the 93,000 acre Agricultural Reserve. Within the County's Agricultural Reserve to date, we have approximately 16,000 acres (excluding Transferable Development Rights) protected through agricultural and conservation easement programs that limit residential development. It is our view that since these farms will remain farms and not place demands on the County or State for public services, any increases in assessments should be prevented and thereby frozen at the time of the easement settlement date regardless of any infrastructure improvements that are made. This change in law will ensure that historic and significant farm related structures are not demolished because they cost too much to retain.

Furthermore, if the increases in assessment value are inherently driven by the sales of farmland being developed in the marketplace, how can these comparable sales be used to determine the new assessment values for farms that cannot be developed? Until this question is answered, real property tax assessments will continue to be in direct conflict with the preservation goals of farmland and the agricultural industry.

Agricultural Outlook

The agricultural industry within the County is constantly evolving. We must recognize that changing trends in agriculture are not unique to Montgomery County, nor is it an anomaly signifying the ultimate demise of the agricultural industry. Changes are a normal part of an evolving market-driven system. The key for any industry to survive is dependent upon change and the ability for a County, State or region to adapt to these changes. One of the main

philosophies the County employs for farmland preservation is to protect the agricultural land base and let the industry focus on the direction it wants to go. We do not protect farmland for any particular type of agriculture activity or use.

If the County recognizes the importance of agriculture within its borders then County government must assume the responsibility of recommending and implementing measures to ensure its survival. A key recommendation within the 1980 Functional Master Plan for the Preservation of Agriculture and Rural Open Space recognizes that there must be *"application of incentives and regulations to preserve farmland and rural open space and to encourage agricultural use of the land."*

These future initiatives and the decisions that are made will have a profound impact on the future of Montgomery County agriculture. We must ensure the next generation will be the beneficiaries of productive farmland and open space amenities. To this end we will have protected an important part of our heritage as well as enhancing the quality of life for all citizens of Montgomery County.



CHAPTER V NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION

BACKGROUND AND CHAPTER CONTEXT

The natural environment of Montgomery County, its soils, streams, rivers, wetlands, and woodlands, support a variety of plants and animals and forms the backbone of our park system. Parkland provides a touchstone to our natural and cultural heritage, and a looking glass through which to view our past. This environment contributes to the County's high quality of life, visual quality and character and serves as the essential setting for resource-based recreation activities. Visiting natural areas in Parks is the most popular recreation activity of County residents, according to the 2003 Park User Survey (see Appendix). Due to its proximity to the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, Montgomery County is expected to continue developing at a fairly rapid pace. The critical concern is how to protect the County's air, water, land, PROS wildlife resources and natural beauty while managing growth and making development more environmentally sensitive.

Resource based recreation requires land and resource preservation far beyond the actual space for trails and wildlife observation areas. Water quality capable of sustaining a diversity of fish and amphibian species, forests large enough to have forest interior dwelling birds, geological and soil conditions diverse enough to provide habitat for rare, threatened and endangered species are all dependent on large tracts of land. Even urban wildlife accessible to people near their homes depend on specific amounts and strategic locations of natural habitat.

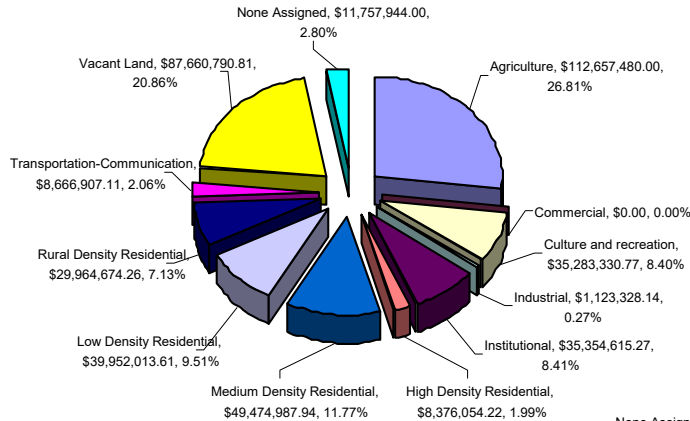
Protection of the green infrastructure is a major reason for adding proposed parkland to our master plans and capital program. Parkland proposed for environmental protection in master plans is added as conservation or stream valley park. Park development plans consider a variety of environmental factors including soil type, hydrology, drainage, slope, non-tidal wetlands, stream and wetland buffers, rare, threatened and endangered species, forest interior birds, minimal viable population size, exotic plants, edge effect, natural community type, stormwater management, tree preservation, restoration, and mitigation.

A considerable number of plans and programs designed to identify, protect, preserve and manage our County's natural resources have been developed and are currently ongoing or soon to be implemented. These programs assist in the implementation of the seven visions of the Governor's Commission on Growth in the Chesapeake Bay Region that relate to the protection of sensitive areas, stewardship of the Bay and conservation of resources.

Ecosystem functions provide specific benefits to our quality of life. This has been documented by many studies, but was recently brought home in work done by American Forests regarding the benefits of tree cover (see next page). These charts indicate that tree cover in Montgomery County provide over \$450 million in benefits by reducing air and water pollution and sequestering carbon that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Although comparable figures are not available for wetlands and other resources, additional benefits can be assumed.

Some Economic and Environmental Values of Tree Canopy

The CITYGREEN model, also developed by American Forests, was applied to calculate the value of stormwater runoff mitigation, pollution removal, and carbon sequestering that is attributed to existing tree canopy in Montgomery County. These values are shown below in Figures 1, 2, and 3.

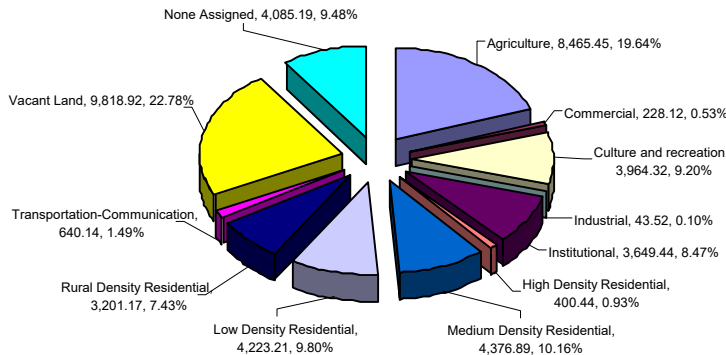
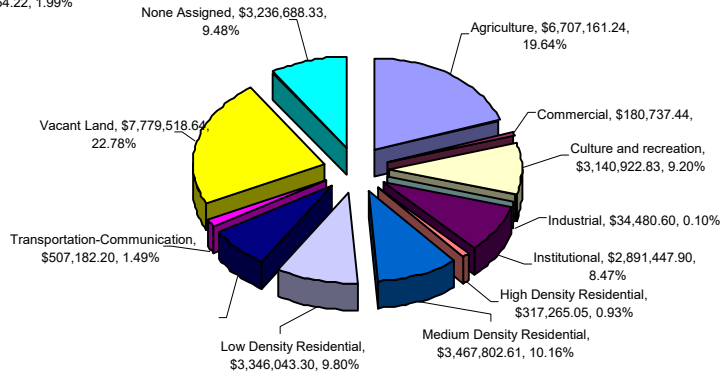


Tree Canopy Stormwater Runoff Mitigation (dollars/year)

Figure 1
The value in dollars per year of stormwater runoff mitigation by tree canopy for a typical 24-hour single storm event observed within a two-year cycle. This value totals \$428,648,000 per year.

Tree Canopy Air Pollution Removal

Figure 2
The value in dollars per year of air pollution removed by tree canopy across Montgomery County. This value totals \$34,146,000.



Tree Canopy Carbon Sequestering Rates by Landuse Type (tons/year)

Figure 3
Tons per year of carbon sequestered by tree canopies across Montgomery County. This value totals 5,536,000 tons per year.

Source: Montgomery County Forest Preservation Strategy, October 2000

This Chapter includes information on State and County Natural Resource goals, strategies, and implementation programs for conservation of natural resource lands, evaluation of programs and summary of needed improvements.

GOALS FOR NATURAL RESOURCE LAND CONSERVATION

State Goals

The State's goal for conservation of natural resource lands are to accomplish the following:

- Identify, protect, and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
 - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
 - Preservation and stewardship on private lands through easements and assistance; and
 - Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs.
- Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas within the statewide green infrastructure.
- Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist State and local implementation programs. Accomplish this by synthesizing local inventories with DNR's inventory of green infrastructure in each county.
- Assess the combined ability of State and local programs to:
 - Expand and connect forests, farmlands, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
 - Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
 - Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions.
 - Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing economic viability of privately owned forestland.
- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated State / local strategy to achieve them through State and local implementation programs.
- Preserve the cultural and economic value of natural resource lands.
- Encourage private and public economic activities, such as eco-tourism and natural resource-based outdoor recreation, to support long-term conservation objectives.

County Goals

County goals reflect and compliment those of the state. Park and Planning has been a leader in implementing the goals of many state environmental and resource management programs, and has even provided a model for state programs in certain instances. The General Plan Refinement adopted in 1993 reflects the eight visions of State Planning Policy and the environmental goals and objectives in that document directly reflect the state goals stated above. The one shortcoming is the lack of specifically stated goals relating to the eco-tourism and the economic value of natural resource lands. The Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan recommendations and strategies that follow also reflect state goals.

General Plan

The Approved and Adopted General Plan Refinement of 1993 includes the following Goal, Objectives and accompanying Strategies:

Goal

Conserve and protect natural resources to provide a healthy and beautiful environment for present and future generations. Manage the impacts of human activity on our natural resources in a balanced manner to sustain human, plant, and animal life.

Objective: Preserve natural areas and features that are ecologically unusual, environmentally sensitive, or possess outstanding natural beauty.

Strategies

- Protect natural resources through identification, public acquisition, conservation easements, public education, citizen involvement, and private conservation efforts.
- Connect parks and conservation areas to form an open space and conservation-oriented greenway system.
- Require open space dedications in new subdivisions that maximize protection of stream valleys and other sensitive environmental features.
- Ensure that development guidelines are reviewed periodically to make certain that they are environmentally sensitive and reflect current technologies and knowledge of the environment.

Objective: Protect and improve water quality.

Strategies

- Limit impacts on water quality by designating compatible land uses near water resources.
- Identify and protect recharge areas for aquifers, individual wells, headwater springs, and seeps through land use and innovative control techniques.
- Manage activities in the Potomac and Patuxent river basins above water supply intakes to prevent pollution that might endanger the region's water supply.
- Prevent or mitigate thermal pollution that may be harmful to aquatic life and the general ecology of the County's waters through land use policies.
- Control runoff and flooding by minimizing impervious surfaces.

Objective: Conserve County waterways, wetlands, and sensitive parts of stream valleys to minimize flooding, pollution, sedimentation, and damage to the ecology and to preserve natural beauty and open space.

Strategies

- Identify and protect wetlands and other sensitive parts of watersheds.
- Continue parkland acquisition in key stream valleys.
- Limit the potential damage to life and property from flooding.

- Prohibit development too close to streams, in the 100-year ultimate floodplain, and in flooding danger reach areas of dams, unless no feasible alternative is available.
- Maintain the natural character of drainage areas in the immediate vicinity of streams, rivers, and lakes.
- Plant and retain trees and other vegetation near streams.
- Develop programs to rehabilitate damaged streams and then to maintain them.
- Mandate "no net loss" of wetlands.

Objective: Preserve and enhance a diversity of plant and animal species in self-sustaining concentrations.

Strategies:

- Determine and protect the land and water masses and linkages necessary to support a diversity of species in self-sustaining concentrations.
- Plan a system of parks, conservation areas, subdivision open space, and easements to support a diversity of species in self-sustaining concentrations.
- Minimize forest fragmentation to protect habitat continuity.

Objective: Increase and conserve the County's forests and trees.

Strategies:

- Identify and designate forest preservation and tree planting areas.

Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan

The *1998 Park Recreation and Open Space Plan*, approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board, includes an series of recommendations for natural resource protection and an ambitious acquisition program. The following are the specific recommendations and strategies stated in that plan.

Recommendation:

Develop the park system based on sound conservation principles and practices.

- Meet the needs of recreation and preservation in a manner that is harmonious with the natural beauty and parkland physiography, reflecting full concern for the environment.
- Consistently use a planned approach to resource management, cognizant of the ecological interdependencies of people, the biota, water, and soil.

Park Planning Strategies

- Prepare an environmental evaluation as part of park development or rehabilitation plans, including: review of the environmental guidelines, identification of stream buffers and floodplains, biodiversity areas, soils with severe limitations for development, contiguous forest habitat, and special fisheries management areas.

- Follow a hierarchy within parks of impact avoidance, minimization, and mitigation when considering each element of any land use or development proposal affecting existing or master-planned parkland.
- Limit development of active-use areas in regional parks to no more than 1/3 of their total park acreage, with the remaining areas designated as natural areas and/or conservation areas. Development in other categories of parks should be determined on a case-by-case basis with full consideration of the of the recreation opportunity to be provided as well as the value of the natural and historical features.
- Limit construction on soils and slopes not suited for development.
- Provide opportunities to meet demands for passive recreational activities on parkland (e.g., hiking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, picnicking, etc.).
- Ensure that development guidelines are reviewed periodically to make certain that they are environmentally sensitive and reflect current technologies and knowledge of the environment.
- Provide public information regarding the importance of natural areas and environmental studies that are prepared, and techniques proposed to minimize environmental impacts during construction.

Park Acquisition Strategies

- Prior to parkland acquisition, consider the environmental and engineering feasibility of potential park development proposals or potential conservation areas.
- Encourage other public agencies and the private sector to assist in providing compatible open spaces, natural areas, recreation facilities and opportunities, greenways and greenway connections, stormwater management facilities, and other mitigation facilities.
- Encourage private dedication of land as a means of parkland acquisition.
- Examine the impact of increased maintenance and policing of facilities and resources dedicated to the Commission from the private sector during the subdivision process.

Park Management Strategies

- Review as necessary the impacts of park use, development, and management practices on parkland.
- Protect lands and facilities under the control of the M-NCPPC from encroachment that would threaten their use as parkland.
- Maintain awareness of state-of-the-art environmental research and management techniques.
- Encourage and support research in the environmental sciences through other public agencies, institutions of higher learning and the private sector.
- Support programs in outdoor education and recreation in the school system.

- Continue and expand public education about natural, historical, and archaeological resources issues affecting park operations, including development of educational programs regarding the importance of preserving natural areas, trail etiquette, etc.
- Preserve conservation areas and rare, threatened, and endangered species within the park system, including biodiversity areas.

Recommendation:

Connect parks and environmentally sensitive areas to form an open space and greenway system.

- Plan for and encourage the provision of greenways to connect urban and rural open spaces, to provide access to parkland, and to connect major stream valley park areas.

Park Planning Strategies

- Work cooperatively to protect park connections and greenways throughout the planning and regulatory process.
- Identify locations to implement a countywide trail system within parks in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Park Acquisition Strategies

- Expand major stream valley park areas along smaller tributaries and over ridges between watersheds to provide greenway linkages and protect stream water quality.
- Provide connections between stream valley parks to create a network of greenways.

Recommendation:

Conserve county waterways, wetlands, and sensitive parts of stream valleys to minimize flooding, pollution, sedimentation, and damage to the ecology, as well as preserve natural beauty and open space.

- Minimize impacts from construction and operation of public and private facilities located in stream valleys, buffers, and floodplains; first priority should be given to preserving environmentally sensitive areas (avoidance), second priority to minimizing impact, and third priority mitigation.

Park Planning Strategies

- Identify and protect wetlands and other sensitive parts of watersheds.
- Give consideration to stream and wetland buffers, stormwater management, and tree conservation early in the planning process.

Park Acquisition Strategies

- Continue parkland acquisition in key stream valleys.
- Require open space dedications in new subdivisions that maximize protection of stream valleys and other sensitive environmental features.

Recommendation: Preserve high quality forests

Park Planning Strategies

- Consider tree conservation early in the park planning process.
- Identify and designate forest preservation and tree-planting areas.
- Ensure forestland conservation, tree planting and related maintenance in new development.
- Minimize forest fragmentation to protect habitat continuity where the provision of recreation facilities can be accommodated near park perimeters.
- Encourage a pro-active urban forestry program.

CURRENT COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Comprehensive Planning Process

Protection of Natural Resources is undertaken largely through the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan and through area master plans that implement the General Plan (see description in Chapter I). In addition, a major effort is planned in the next three years to prepare and adopt a Green Infrastructure Functional Plan to comprehensively identify natural resources and determine a local protection program. This planning effort is described in the last section of this chapter on steps to achieve state goals.

Natural resources are identified and mapped at different scales and with different degrees of accuracy depending on the amount of area being studied and the need for detailed information. Countywide and large area inventories are less detailed by necessity and cover broader issues. Inventories undertaken for parkland are more detailed and dynamic because the Park and Planning Commission is responsible for constructing and maintaining public facilities and access as well as wise short and long-range management of those resources.

Data Sharing

There is considerable information available for environmental resources countywide, almost all in digital form on our Geographic Information System. Many are derived from the aerial photography that is interpreted to provide information at 1"=200' for tree cover, fields, pasture, streams, topography, and man-made features. Our planimetric tree cover information has been merged with the state forest inventory to provide a rough classification of tree cover by forest type. Several layers of information are derived from the digital soils coverage provided by NCRS

including hydric soils, soils with septic limitations, and erodible soils. Geologic information on bedrock types informs our understanding of the potential for unusual plant communities and the presence of rare, threatened and endangered species. Wetlands information is derived from the Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quad (DOQQ) coverage developed through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Designated Conservation Areas, Inventories and Maps of Resources

Inventories for Area Master Plans

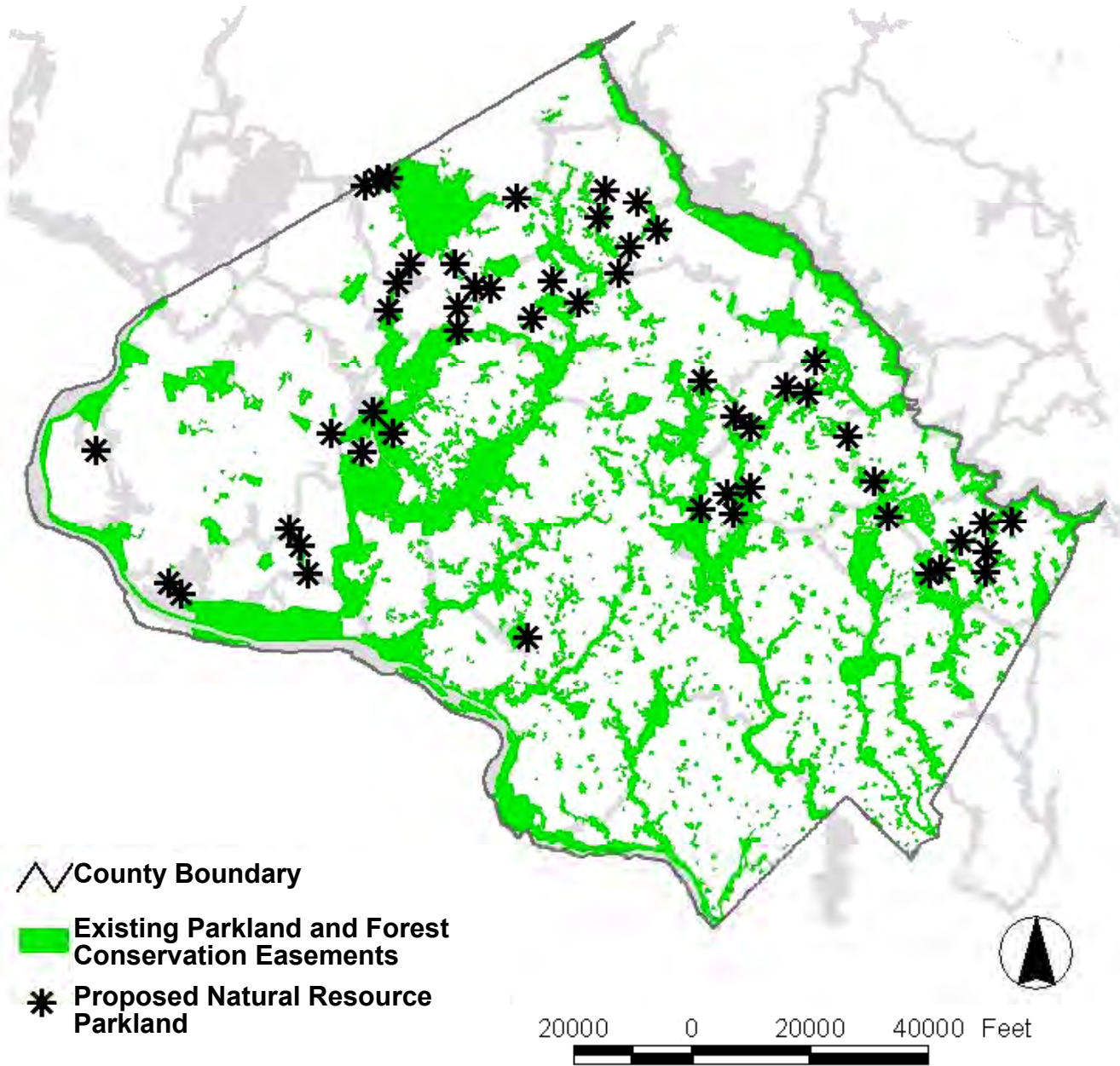
Before beginning an area master plan, Environmental staff (including staff devoted to park resources) prepares an inventory of environmental resources in the watersheds that encompass the planning area. If only a small portion of a master plan area extends into a large watershed, the inventory may be limited to one or more subwatersheds that adequately represent the resource with respect to the planning area. The inventory includes summaries of all the relevant federal, state and regional laws, policies, and programs that are relevant to protecting and enhancing the environment within the watersheds affected.

The inventories include the most detailed information available in tabular and map form regarding forests, wetlands, wildlife, protected or unique species and communities, water quality, geology, topography and soils information. These resources are described and unique or important information about their relevance countywide is included. Information about sensitive areas, biodiversity areas and parks best natural areas is incorporated in the inventory (see Figure 1 for criteria used). The state Green Infrastructure information is always used as a starting point for examining potential hubs and connections. The countywide data is then used to refine this information, eliminating connections that are precluded by development and looking for alternative connections that were not identified by the state information.

Most of the information is available countywide in a digital format, however, more detailed information is collected for each planning area depending on the issues that are likely to be at stake in the area. Typically, the forest information is significantly enhanced by detailed examination of the aerial photos and spot field checks to develop a breakdown of the forest by type with refined boundaries between types. Forest interior habitat is prepared using the criteria established by DNR (see Figure 1). This information, combined with water quality indicators and analysis of various characteristics of individual forest stands is then used to rank stands for preservation or restoration of forest gaps. In addition, a wetland functional assessment is conducted for the watersheds in the area. This inventory ranks wetland groups by their potential to serve each of five functions. These functions include: floodflow retention, groundwater discharge, nutrient removal/sediment retention, wildlife habitat and aquatic habitat. Priority wetlands are identified as part of this DNR-approved methodology.

In the larger planning areas with lots of undeveloped property, these inventories are published as separate documents early in the planning process. In more developed areas or small sector plans, this material is prepared in summary form or as a series of graphics early in the process and eventually published as part of a technical appendix to the master plan.

Existing Parkland and Easements with Proposed Natural Resource Parkland



Countywide Parkland Inventories

Floral inventories and Forest Stand Delineations are developed and updated by park ecologists for most park natural areas and are important components of park master plans and management plans. Volunteers have done additional inventory work with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for biodiversity areas and for other park natural areas.

Inventories are maintained on a variety of wildlife species. There is a particular focus on birds and amphibians as important indicator species for terrestrial and wetland ecosystems. Data on breeding and wintering birds are collected from a number of sources including park specific inventories, the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's Nesting Bird Monitoring Program conducted in collaboration with the Montgomery County Parks, the Maryland Breeding Bird Atlas, and the Annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count. Amphibian data are collected from park specific inventories and the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's Vernal Pool Monitoring Program conducted in collaboration with the Montgomery County Parks. This information is utilized in area master plans as well as park specific master plans and management plans.

Inventories of aquatic species (benthic macroinvertebrates and freshwater fish) are conducted in cooperation with the Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS, a program of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources) and the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Planning MCDEP). Benthic macroinvertebrates and freshwater fish are inventoried in each of the County watersheds every five years, with some sites being monitored more frequently for special projects. The data collected by M-NCPPC and MCDEP are stored in a database maintained by MCDEP, but accessible by M-NCPPC.

Biological inventory data are used to calculate indices of biological integrity (IBIs), which compare the health of each stream to reference conditions (i.e. the best stream conditions in the County).

Inventories for Park Master Plans and Management Plans

During the Master Plan process for parks, staff collects detailed information regarding existing features, their extent and health in order to protect the sensitive areas from development and to build on the areas most suitable for construction of park facilities. First all relevant data about the land is compiled including pictorial documents to determine existing conditions. Geographic Information System (GIS) data is used to identify all known previously mapped natural features including: existing soil types, underlying geology and bedrock, topography, slopes, buildings, streams, wetlands, seeps and springs. The locations and classifications of streams, wetlands, seeps and spring are also displayed according to the GIS layers available. The most current aerial photographs are used to identify existing roads, buildings, forest edges and densities, as well as other features discernable from the photographs. Digital aerial photographs and topology are updated on a 5-year schedule.

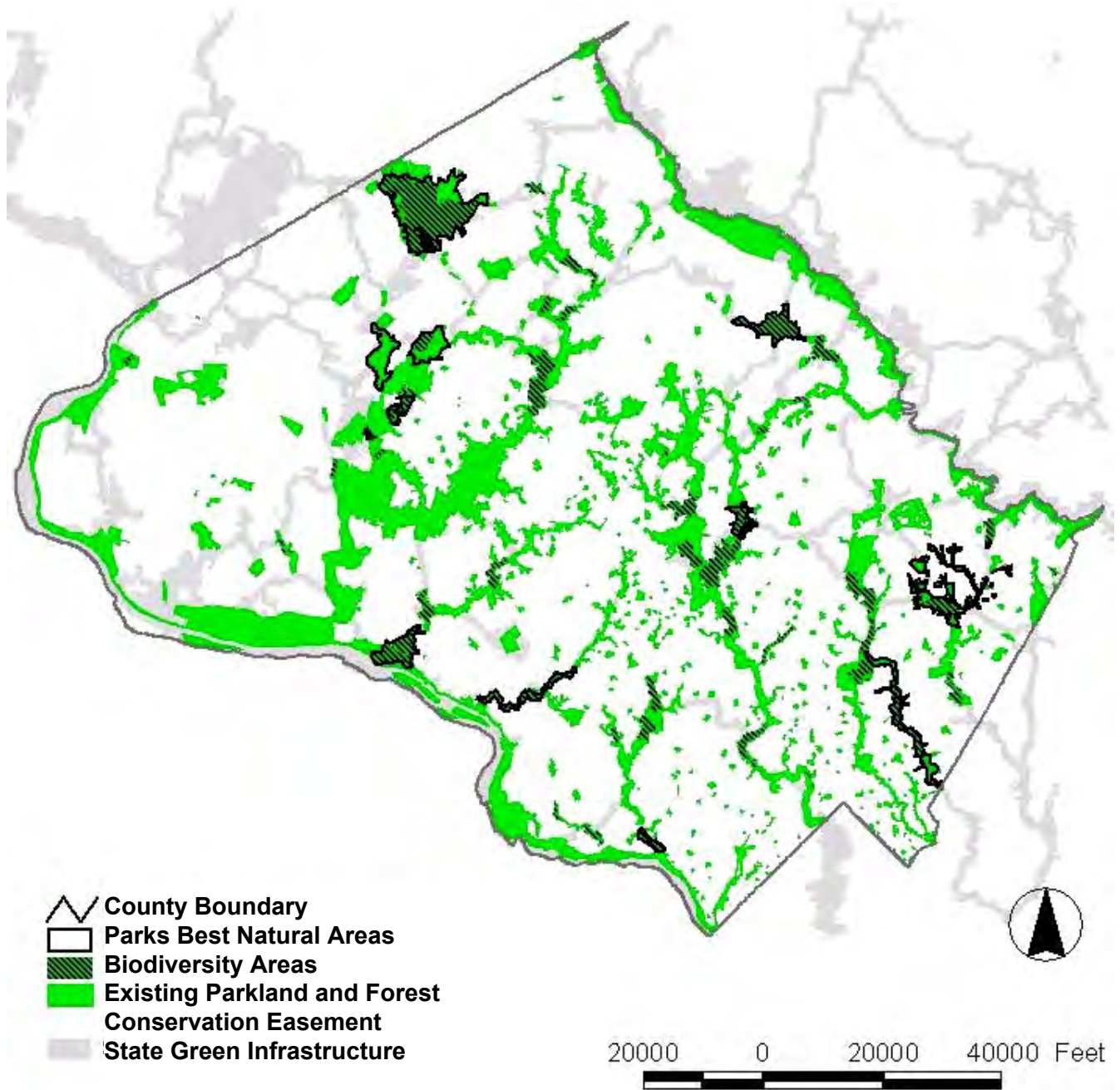
Once the maps are compiled, staff fieldwork is used to fine tune and update the GIS information. Global Positioning (GPS) instruments are used to take note of physical changes in mapped features. The health, age, and composition of the resources are also noted. A forest stand delineation is conducted at this time as well which documents species, size, health and composition of the forest (trees, shrubs, herbaceous plants). Criteria for identifying high quality and interior forest are shown on page V-14 Rare, threatened, endangered species and well as

species unique or significant in the county are identified and catalogued. Specimen trees are also located via GPS and added to the maps.

Soil borings may be taken to verify the extent of any wetlands. Structures and other manmade features, which may have changed since the photos were taken, are noted. Known and newly discovered cultural features such as historic and archaeological sites are also located with the GPS as are features that may have been damaged and will need repair. Adjustments are made to the maps. Once all the digital features are reviewed and displayed on a map the Commissions' Environmental Guidelines are applied. The areas too sensitive environmentally to build on according to Federal, State, and County regulations and policies are outlined. Those areas outside the sensitive areas, which may be suitable for development, are displayed as well. This information is then used as the basis for the park master plans and park management plans.

In addition to the existing natural features, some parkland has been identified as Biodiversity Areas and Best Natural Areas (see Map). Biodiversity areas are surveyed and verified by the DNR Natural Heritage Program as having rare, threatened, or watchlist species or unusual plant communities. The Best Natural Areas are large areas within parkland having some of the same features as Biodiversity Areas, but also including areas of exceptional scenic beauty and important aquatic communities. Some parkland carries both designations. Every effort is undertaken to protect these areas intact and accommodate public access appropriate to the resource.

Biodiversity and Best Natural Areas



Criteria for Identifying Key Environmental Resources

Sensitive Areas

1. Streams and stream buffers.
2. 100-year floodplains.
3. Wetlands and wetland buffers.
4. Steep slopes.
5. Highly erodible soils.
6. Habitats of rare, threatened, endangered, and watch-list species (see official listing of plant and animal species at www.dnr.state.md.us).

Biodiversity Areas

1. Areas of contiguous, high quality forest, marsh, or swamp.
 - a. Relatively little evidence of past land-use disturbance.
 - b. Few or no exotic, invasive, plant species.
2. The known presence of rare, threatened, endangered, or watch-list species.
3. Generally represent the best examples of unique plant community types found in Montgomery County, *i.e.*, river-rock outcrops of the Potomac River Basin; serpentine influenced plant communities; diabase influenced plant communities; plant communities on soils derived from Triassic shales, siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate; central Maryland floodplain forest; central Maryland swamp forest; mesic forest on acidic bedrock; dry forest on acidic bedrock; and limestone influenced plant communities.
4. Areas of exceptional scenic beauty.

Best Natural Areas

1. Large areas of contiguous, high quality forest, marsh, or swamp.
 - a. Generally more than 100 acres.
 - b. Relatively little evidence of past land-use disturbance.
 - c. Few or no exotic, invasive plant species.
2. The known presence of rare, threatened, endangered, or watch-list species
3. The best example of a unique plant community type found in Montgomery County, *i.e.*, river-rock outcrops of the Potomac River Basin; serpentine influenced plant communities; diabase influenced plant communities; plant communities on soils derived from Triassic shales, siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate; central Maryland floodplain forest; central Maryland swamp forest; mesic forest on acidic bedrock; dry forest on acidic bedrock; and limestone influenced plant communities.
4. High quality wetlands, including those of Special State Concern as noted in COMAR Title 26.
5. Aquatic communities rated as good or excellent in the Countywide Stream Protection Strategy.
6. Special Trout Management Areas as noted in COMAR Title 08.
7. Areas of exceptional scenic beauty.

HIGH QUALITY FOREST

1. Relatively little evidence of past land-use disturbance.
2. Few or no exotic invasive plant species.
3. Areas dominated by mature trees (generally larger than 11 inches diameter at breast height, *i.e.*, dbh) or old-growth trees (generally larger than 14 inches dbh) as apposed to regenerating trees (seedling or sapling size up to 5 inches dbh) or young trees (generally 5 to 11 inches dbh).
4. Snags for cavity nesting wildlife are abundant.
5. Natural mortality and windfall create small clearings that soon become pockets of regenerating growth.

Forest Interior Habitat

1. Existing forest with trees generally larger than 5 inches dbh.
2. At least 100 acres in size.
3. High area to edge ratio.
4. Forested buffer of at least 300 feet in width around the interior forest.

Findings of the Inventory Relevant to State Efforts

There is a continuing **loss of certain types of habitat** that result from a combination of high real estate prices, need for housing, smart growth efforts to concentrate new development in areas of existing infrastructure, and environmental regulations that are limited to forests, wetlands and stream buffers:

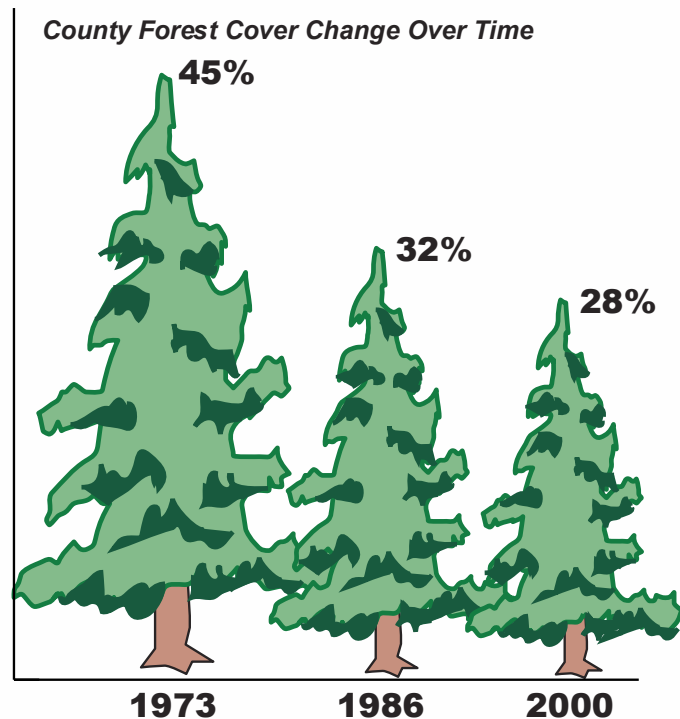
- **Loss of meadow habitat** -The state needs to more publicly recognize this issue (especially as it relates to state reforestation requirements that often focus attention on open field habitats as potential reforestation sites), promote meadow management and provide better guidance. Recognize the degradation to meadow/grasslands from the planting of tall fescue and actively promote the removal of this noxious species.

- **Loss of remaining urban wildlife habitat outside of parkland, parkland development losses** - Smart Growth initiatives and the increasing desire to provide for recreation in congested urban areas put irresistible pressure on the remaining “undeveloped” private and public land. Road widening, new intersections, transit ways, and enlarged sewer and water lines to

serve these area are another source of erosion of our urban wildlands. Additional state funding to protect these areas is essential due to the very high cost of this land.

- **Loss of vernal pool habitat** -The state needs to more publicly recognize this issue, develop regulations to better protect vernal pools and develop public programs to promote their identification, inventory, and protection similar to programs implemented by New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey and others.
- **Loss of upland forest**- Numerous regulations protect forested lands in stream buffers, 100-year floodplains, and wetlands. Fewer regulations protect upland forests. The Maryland Forest Conservation Act needs to be strengthened to better protect this important forest component.

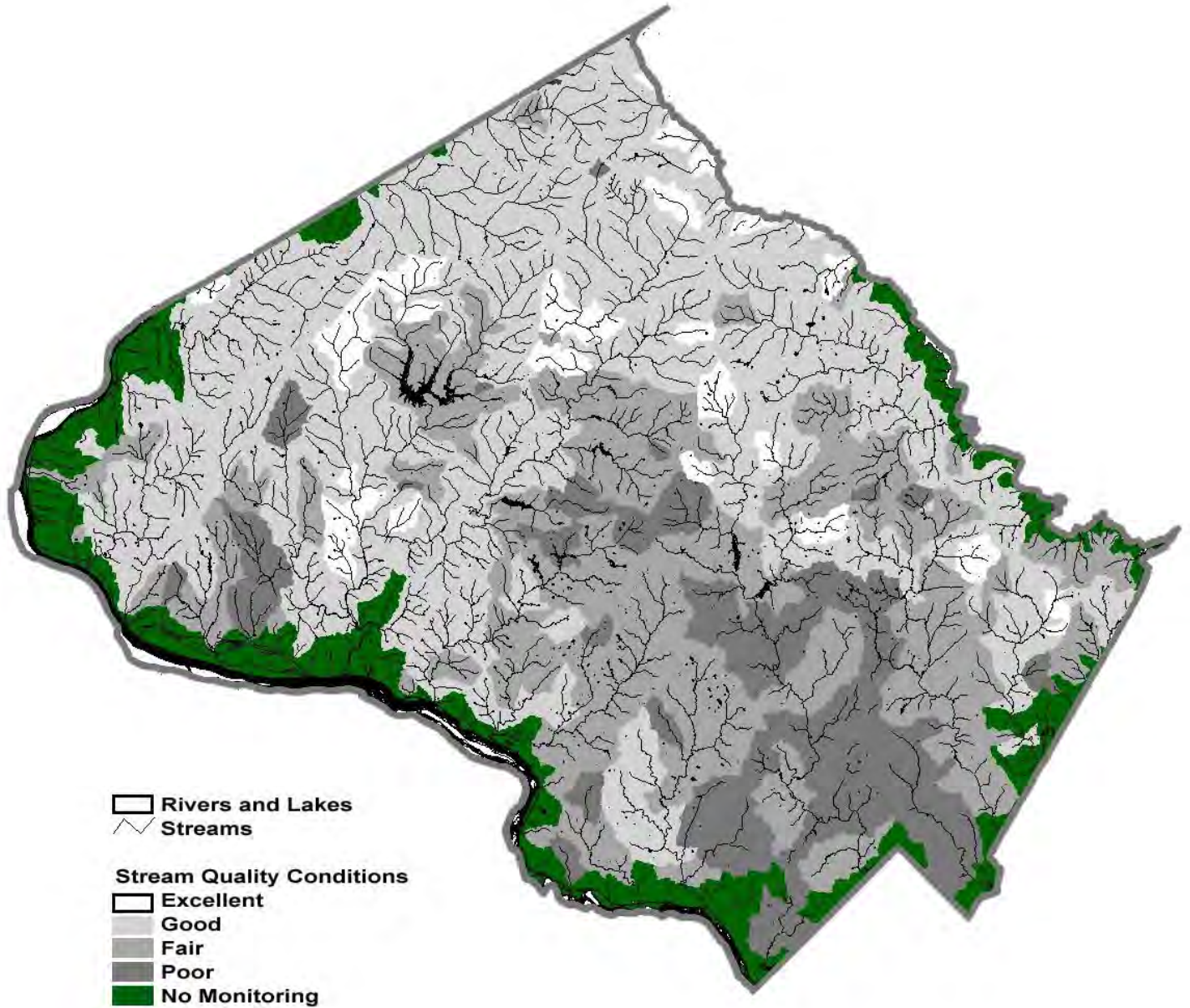
Non-native invasive plants (NNIs) and deer are having a tremendous impact on natural communities on public and private lands throughout the county. Both are significantly affecting biodiversity and require more direct management. The state needs to more publicly recognize this issue, address issues related to the sale of these plants within the state, promote NNI management and provide better guidance. High deer populations and NNIs are impeding reforestation work and much more intense efforts are needed to assure that forest plantings are successful. Planting of larger trees and adequate deer protection will require additional funding.



Wetlands rated highly by functional analysis for aquatic and terrestrial habitat contain large upland areas that cannot be protected with standard stream and wetland buffers. Park acquisition or low-density zoning with dense cluster options is the only way to protect the upland areas that complete these vital habitats. Low-density cluster zoning can only be used near the edges of the Priority Funding areas where sewer can be easily extended. Protecting such habitat inside the PFA requires park acquisition or purchase of easements. Outside the PFA if clustering is not possible due to conditions for individual septic systems; the continuing protection of these areas is dependent on property owners because forest conservation requirements are often met by preserving a much smaller area.

The 2003 CSPA update of stream conditions and water quality indicates that, of the 85% of the stream miles that had been inventoried at that time, 7% were rated as excellent, 55% as good, 28% as fair, and 10% as poor. In 1998, 9% were excellent, 51% good, 29% fair, and 11% poor. Overall, there has been little change in the proportions of excellent, good, fair, and poor watersheds, and the general pattern of water quality has stayed the same – i.e. the better quality watersheds occur in the less-developed areas in the northern and western parts of the county, and the poorer quality watersheds occur in the highly developed down-county areas and in the I-270 corridor. It may be noteworthy, that several streams (e.g. Watts Branch and Muddy Branch) that have their headwaters in the I-270 corridor, improve in quality as they flow through areas of parkland, going from poor to fair conditions in the headwaters to fair to good conditions in their downstream portions.

Stream Quality Conditions 1994 - 2000



Source: Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) - 2003 CSPA update of stream conditions and water quality

1994-200 County Stream Conditions

Stream Condition	Stream Miles	Percent of Streams Monitored
Excellent	84	7
Good	694	55
Fair	362	28
Poor	131	10
Total Monitored	1272	100
Waters Not Monitored	226	
TOTAL	1498	

Source: Montgomery county Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) - 2003 CSPP update of stream conditions and water quality

State information sources are important and more research needs to be done. State identification of green infrastructure, unique communities, biodiversity areas, and wetlands of state concern have been especially helpful. Additional help in understanding groundwater resources, urban forests and wildlife, as well as assistance on coping with deer predation and non-native species in restoration projects are needed to continue our efforts to maintain our green infrastructure.

Easement Acquisition, Funding, Planning and Land Use Management Authority

Existing Easement and Acquisition Programs

Program Open Space

Local Program Open Space funds are used to purchase property based on the approved Capital Improvement Program for Parks. Properties to be acquired using CIP funds are primarily purchased from funds made available each fiscal year from M-NCPPC revenues for capital improvement projects, and from the State of Maryland's Program Open Space funds from which

Montgomery County receives a share each year to purchase open space in the County. Some acquisitions are also accomplished through dedications from landowners or developers. The acquisition schedule for FY05-10 includes, but is not limited to, purchases for natural resources protection in the Clarksburg Greenway, Little Seneca Stream Valley Park and Great Seneca Stream Valley Park.

In the program to date, three of the top four natural resource sites have been completely protected (Serpentine Barrens, Bucklodge Forest, Hoyles Mill Diabase Area-South) and seven other natural resource sites have been at least partially protected through a variety of tools, including easements and dedication through the development review process. In the past two

years alone, two natural resource sites have been protected through dedication (South Serpentine and the Freeman Property) and two have been acquired (Ricci Property in Paint Branch and Cahoon Property in Watts Branch).

In other Legacy categories, two sites have been purchased to protect the water supply, including one during the last two-year period (Carman Property, part of Rachel Carson Conservation Park Extended). Six historic sites have been protected through acquisition and easement since the program began. Three of those historic sites have been protected during the recent two-year period: Capitol View Park Open Space (Cohen Property), the Darby House and Store, and two back lots in Hyattstown.

The first greenway protection acquisition occurred during the past CIP cycle. Four approved development lots were acquired in Great Seneca Stream Valley Park that, if built, would have fragmented the wildlife corridor and interfered with trail connectivity in the Seneca Creek Greenway. And to date, the Legacy program has acquired two important urban open spaces with the financial participation of local jurisdictions, the City of Takoma Park and Chevy Chase Village. Chevy Chase Section 5 has recently contributed to the acquisition of the site next to Chevy Chase Village.

Legacy Open Space

Legacy Open Space is a program to conserve Montgomery County's most significant open space. The program identifies the most important unprotected natural resources, open space (urban areas and water supply watersheds), farmland, and historic lands for conservation and creates a protection strategy for the most important pieces of the County's "green infrastructure." This focused endeavor heightens the County's commitment to open space conservation in rural, suburban, and urban areas. A functional master plan establishes the program as a part of the General Plan for Montgomery County. The master plan includes criteria for identifying potential Legacy Open Space sites, an initial inventory of the sites known to meet the criteria, and a process for setting priorities for protection through acquisition of land or easements. The state Green Infrastructure information was used to locate potential sites for the natural resources and drinking water supply protection categories in the plan.

The Program provides additional local government funding and an effort to secure private contributions to supplement Program Open Space and other funds to purchase property in fee or secure easements to protect the natural resources on the property. To date, over \$16 million have been spent to protect sites with important natural resource conservation features.

Forest Conservation Easements

Forest Conservation easements are used to protect areas of existing forest or newly planted forest on properties being developed. A Category I Conservation easement does not allow disturbance of the canopy or understory except to control non-native invasive species. This type of easement is used most frequently to protect natural areas that remain on private land. They are legally recorded in the land records and M-NCPPC provides enforcement.

Other Easements

Occasionally, other conservation easements not related to the specific requirements of the forest conservation law are negotiated through the development review process to protect land set aside in cluster developments, open space vistas or agricultural area protection. These can contain requirements to protect specific natural resources.

County Objectives With Respect to the Forest Resource Industry

Privately owned forest of any significance is limited in Montgomery County. According to the Montgomery County Forest Conservancy District Board, Montgomery County private forest owners produce over 1,000,000 board feet of lumber from more than 30 acres in an average year. The County contains 25 certified tree farms covering 1,500 acres plus ten Christmas tree growers. The primary (lumber, mulch, firewood) and secondary (cabinets, pallets) wood products industries have annual earnings in excess of \$10,000,000; secondary industries employ more than 656 workers. Average annual reforestation exceeds 220 acres.

A Maryland Department of Natural Resources report, Maryland's Strategic Forest Assessment (October 2003), identifies limited patches of forest within Montgomery County of high economic value. The forests identified will likely be harvested upon development. Those identified for high probability of commercial timber management are primarily on publicly held land within conservation areas, such as along rivers and streams.

There are many small woodlots on farms that provide local residents with firewood, but these mostly supplement traditional farming income. The largest economic benefit associated with trees comes from landscaping and tree service firms that process trees removed from developed areas (mostly downed or diseased trees) as well as trees removed for new development. There is a substantial group of companies that provide mulch, firewood and other forest products from these sources.

Watershed Management Strategy and Relationship to Land Use Planning

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection and M-NCPPC jointly prepare the *Countywide Stream Protection Strategy*, with updates every five years. This publication documents the results of a stream condition survey that samples biological communities and physical stream conditions for all streams in the county. In addition, it indicates existing and projected imperviousness and a management strategy for each subwatershed in the county. This information is used as part of the inventory described above and in the master plan preparation. The preparation of the land use alternatives considered is influenced by this information and more refined estimates of projected imperviousness are made with detailed information about each alternative land use scenario. Our overlapping goals of protecting, conserving and restoring stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands and floodplains are combined in the master planning process to arrive at the best combination of density, clustering options, open space preservation and parkland acquisition to protect water quality.

Once the zoning, land use and park acquisition boundaries are set in the master plan and accompanying zoning map amendments, individual developments are subject to development

review for compliance with the Planning Board's Environmental Guidelines and the Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law. These programs comprehensively protect most environmentally sensitive features on site when development projects (both public and private) are submitted to the Planning Board. The only allowed encroachments to these areas are roadway or utility access to the site that cannot be avoided. Sites that are heavily forested will often incur forest loss up to the threshold specified for each zone, except in very low-density zones when more open space is required.

In areas where the land use planned is considered a potential risk in high quality watersheds, the area may be designated a Special Protection Area. This requires that a water quality plan be prepared that incorporates redundant stormwater management facilities and other features that address the particular goals for the receiving water. In addition, wider wetland buffers and accelerated reforestation is required in these areas. In some Special Protection Areas, overlay zones are adopted to limit imperviousness to specific levels on each site and limit or prohibit certain land uses that pose a risk to water quality.

Planning and Land Use Management Authority

As described in the section in Chapter I on comprehensive planning, master planning is conducted for specific areas of the county on a 10-15 year cycle to develop specific recommendations that implement current federal, state and local policies. At any one time, 6-10 plans are in various stages of preparation or review. Land use planning authority comes directly from Article 28 of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

A significant effort during the master plan process is considering the zoning and density options for under- or undeveloped land in the area. Environmental concerns play a significant part in determining the range of density options that can maintain the use designation of the stream and protection of important habitats. The master plans recommend appropriate zoning, clustering, density transfer zones and park acquisition to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas as part of the planning process. While the master plans set policy and give specific direction regarding open space and natural resource protection, the zoning provides most of the regulatory basis for the amount of open space and options for clustering and density transfer that can occur.

When properties are proposed for subdivision they must be consistent with the recommendations of the master plan. Areas indicated for resource protection must be put in easement, purchased or dedicated for parkland. Dedication is required in areas where cluster zones can be used to preserve open space and still achieve the number of lots allowed by zoning. Purchase of parkland is recommended only when entire properties are needed for resource protection or a cluster zone is not feasible (usually in areas without sewer). In addition, the Environmental Guidelines and Forest Conservation Law require that all areas approved for the protection or planting of forest be placed in easement at time of subdivision.

Park Master Plans are prepared for larger park properties either soon after acquisition or when funds are anticipated for significant park improvements. These plans are prepared through a process similar to area master plans, except that the Montgomery County Planning Board approves them without the need for County Council review. The master plans specify areas for protection, restoration and development, giving the general layout of facilities and trail alignment.

Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plans are developed for natural park areas to provide practical and detailed guidance for the protection, management and enhancement of the park's natural resources. They are supplemental to the Park Master Plans. The NRM plan provides day-to-day operational guidance to Park staff on natural and cultural resource management issues. The plan identifies and describes the natural and cultural resources of the park in more detail than the MP, identifies and addresses key issues that impact these resources and provides detailed stewardship and management recommendations. For example, recommendations would prescribe how often and when should a particular meadow be mowed; how and when should park managers control the growth of non-native invasive species; or how best to protect specific cultural resource such as a stone foundation. NRM plans should be revised and updated on a regular basis (at least every 5 years) and reviewed in its entirety at least every 10 years.

Measurable Objectives for Natural Resource Conservation

Montgomery County has not yet established measurable objectives with respect to natural resources that are outside the realm of regulatory requirements. The Environmental Guidelines require that all stream buffers be protected (except for unavoidable road and utility connections), the Forest Conservation Law establishes minimum retention and reforestation requirements and annual programs for environmental restoration are set through the Capital Improvement Program and operating budgets. An annual report is sent to DNR indicating the amount of forest protected, cleared and easements recorded.

The Green Infrastructure Functional Master Plan (see Program Development Strategy for Natural Resource Conservation section) will evaluate our current goals and consider establishing more comprehensive, measurable objectives for natural resource conservation.

Other Regulatory or Management Programs

Countywide Programs

Montgomery County has continually updated their requirements for **Sediment and Erosion Control and Stormwater Management** based on state of the art techniques and state policy direction. This program resides in the Department of Permitting Services and includes an aggressive inspection program. Recently, the County enacted legislation enabling the county to impose a tax to support maintenance of stormwater management facilities. Privately owned facilities that meet certain standards may be maintained by the Department of Environmental Protection via this funding source.

The County also has a significant **Watershed Restoration Program** to address the impacts of development approved prior to environmental regulations. The Department of Environmental Protection evaluates watersheds to determine existing problems and the feasibility of stormwater retrofit projects and stream restoration. Eligible projects are selected based on feasibility, potential for stream improvements, cost and funding availability. Plans have been completed for the Paint Branch, Hawlings River, Rock Creek, Cabin John and Northwest Branch. Plans are currently being prepared for Watts Branch and Cabin John.

M-NCPPC's Environmental Guidelines provide specific guidance for protecting environmentally sensitive areas on public and private land proposed for development. The Montgomery County Planning Board approved these guidelines in 1983, and revised them in 1997. The guidelines establish a procedure for identification and protection of natural resources potentially affected by construction. These guidelines protect the environmentally sensitive areas specified by the Maryland Smart Growth Initiatives. The guidelines ensure that development plans give adequate consideration to the following environmental management objectives: protection of stream water quality, water supply reservoirs, steep slopes, forest conservation, wildlife habitat and exemplary natural communities including rare, threatened, and endangered species; maintenance of biologically, viable and diverse streams and wetlands; reduction of flood problems; protection against development hazards on areas prone to flooding, soil instability, etc.; and provisions of visual amenities and areas for recreation and outdoor education activities.

Regulations involving **forest conservation and tree preservation** have also been established. Maryland's Forest Conservation Act, passed in 1991, requires forest and tree retention and replanting as part of the approval of development. The County's Forest Conservation Law requires a natural resources inventory, forest stand delineation, and forest conservation plan for all new development or redevelopment projects that result in the removal of 5,000 square feet or more of tree cover (with some exemptions). These regulations also require tree save plans showing how critical root zones of trees greater than 24 inches dbh (diameter at breast height) will be protected, even on adjacent properties.

The **Forest Preservation Strategy** was prepared in 2000 and update in 2004 by a Task Force appointed by the County Executive to increase the quantity and improve the quality of forest and trees, restore and protect natural forest ecosystems, and enhance the poor condition of street trees in the county's most developed areas. The report's recommendations and action plans are being used to guide actions by all agencies involved in forest and tree protection. The County Forest Coordinator has been hired, funding has been increased for street tree maintenance and planting and several programs and funding sources have been coordinated to achieve more protection for upland and riparian forests.

M-NCPPC is responsible for the **protection and management of natural resources within county parkland**. Staff ecologists also participate in evaluating ecological value of properties being considered for park acquisition. As the primary public landowner in the county this responsibility often serves a larger countywide function. Natural Resource Staff develop and implement resource management plans, programs, guidelines and Best Management Practices in order to protect and enhance park resources. They include the following:

- The Comprehensive Stewardship Plan for Forested Parkland in Montgomery County;
- The Non-Native Invasive Plant Management Plan for M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks;
- Re-vegetation Guidelines for Disturbances on M-NCPPC Park Property;
- Park Reforestation Program;
- The Weed Warrior Volunteer Program;
- The Comprehensive Management Plan for White-tailed Deer in Montgomery County which is countywide in scope;
- Management guidelines for nuisance species including beaver and Canada geese;

- A Goose Management Plan;
- An extensive Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring Program;
- Meadow Management Guidelines focused on maintaining grassland bird habitat; and other park specific and species specific management plans.
- Management and reduction of encroachment of adjacent private property owners on parkland.

Interpretive Programs in Montgomery County Parks address aspects of Montgomery County's natural and cultural history are offered at the park system's three nature centers and one visitor center. All four interpretive centers offer public programs designed to inspire and entertain people of all ages while developing an appreciation for the county's natural and cultural resources and encouraging careful stewardship. All four centers also present programs to school children, scout groups, home schoolers, and others interested in hands-on and close-up encounters with the world around them. In addition, visitors can learn more about natural and cultural history from interpretive exhibits and nature trails. The nature centers house interactive exhibits that spotlight unique regional features, and naturalists stand ready to answer questions and direct visitors to local hot spots for birds, wildflowers, and other resources of interest.

State and Federal Regulatory Programs

Significant state programs that help to shape our protected lands and management programs include: the Non-Tidal Wetlands Law, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and the Non-Game and Endangered Species Conservation Act.

The combination of state and federal permitting requirements for protection of non-tidal wetlands and waters of the US strengthen our Environmental Guidelines by clearly delineating the areas where encroachment is only allowed if unavoidable. These laws do not extend to buffer areas that are equally important in the health and functioning of those wetlands and streams, and do not include protection of vernal pools that are essential for the survival of amphibian and other aquatic species.

Economic Development In Eco-Tourism and Resource-Based Recreation

Montgomery County has no specific strategy or adopted policy for ecotourism, but does have programs that work toward similar goals. Existing programs from Montgomery County's Department of Economic Development Agriculture Services Division include: the Annual Farm Tour & Harvest Sale, four farmers markets and a report to support the growing equine industry. Destinations in the County include those of national, regional, and local note, including the C&O Canal, Great Falls, the Underground Railroad (Rachel Carson Greenway), and unique natural areas such as bogs and serpentine areas. Additional potential resources and destinations include fruit, vegetable, dairy, specialty poultry, and sustainable agriculture farms, trail rides, and Bed & Breakfasts.

EVALUATION OF THE NATURAL RESOURCE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Implementation Program

Montgomery County Park and Planning's program to conserve, protect and enhance natural resources are among the strongest in the state, due to the strong tax base and the commitment of the County government and elected officials to the protection of our natural heritage. The continuing citizen advocacy for open space and natural resource protection is the basis for this level of effort. As the County faces more development pressure, the need for natural resource protection becomes a more critical issue.

The strengths of our program include the amount of information available as a result of our survey and monitoring programs, the resources available for planning and management and the abilities of the staff to use almost all the state and federal protection regulations and programs. Additional strength is provided by the extraordinary efforts of volunteers, many of which are involved in specific efforts to keep park natural areas clean and reduce the impact of invasive species. In FY04 alone, over 50,000 hours of volunteer work was contributed to the park system.

In terms of the specific elements of the implementation program requested by the Guidelines, the following summarizes our findings:

The Comprehensive Planning process is sufficient in giving overall direction to our programs and conservation efforts. The General Plan gives broad, if sometimes competing, goals and objectives countywide. The master planning process for specific areas of the county and functional plans that larger issues have ample opportunity for environmental concerns and parkland acquisition to protect specific resources. While these concerns are not always pre-eminent, the decision makers and stakeholders take them seriously. Where appropriate, state agencies participate in review and advice on such issues as wetland, RTE, wildlife and aquatic resource protection as part of the planning process.

The inventories and maps available from the state have been valuable in heightening the awareness of key issues. They are not adequate to identify resources for planning and protection purposes, because we have, or are developing, much more detailed information for these purposes. It is useful to site the state maps and inventories as collaborating and reinforcing reasons to protect areas that are indicated by both state and local data. The most useful information is the identification of resources of state concern. This gives an indication of resources that should be protected above others.

Easement and acquisition programs are hampered by the needs for funding. The increasing price of land and development rights, especially in the PFA, limit the amount of land that can be protected. Planning and Land use authority provides adequate zoning and legal tools, and Montgomery County has used them generously to create a substantial system of protected lands. However, critical properties in sensitive watersheds or unique habitat areas must often be purchased in order to protect sufficient area or reduce potential imperviousness.

Much needs to be done to provide specific and measurable goals as an effective basis for implementation. Some measurable goals are used including buffer widths, forest conservation thresholds and stream quality ratings. These have been effective in preserving many more resources than in the past. Most goals established are the minimum that can be justified by existing research. Compliance with forest conservation goals are tracked through an annual

report to DNR and the County publishes an update the Countywide Stream Protection Strategy every five years. The acreage or percent of unavoidable encroachments on wetlands, floodplains and stream buffers is not tracked. Anecdotal evidence indicates this is a relatively small amount.

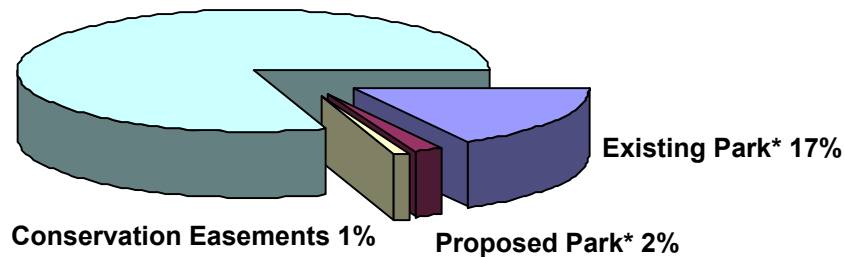
Because of the need to achieve other county goals of providing affordable housing and transportation improvements, most new development only protects the minimum area required by law. Additional research is needed to determine if these minimums are sufficient to protect the resources.

Combined state and local programs do much to protect the green infrastructure, critical habitats and population and protect watersheds. The success of our program in protecting a large amount of area at the outset of development in an area also results in some of our greatest weaknesses. The sheer size of the land area protected and the complexity of management issues require continuing efforts to improve our program.

As the graph below shows, existing public parkland (including federal, state and county lands) and reservoir protection lands include about 17% of the land in the county, with another approximately 2% to be added in the future. Conservation easements are a very small component of land protection.

Land in Montgomery County

Private Land w/o Easements 80%

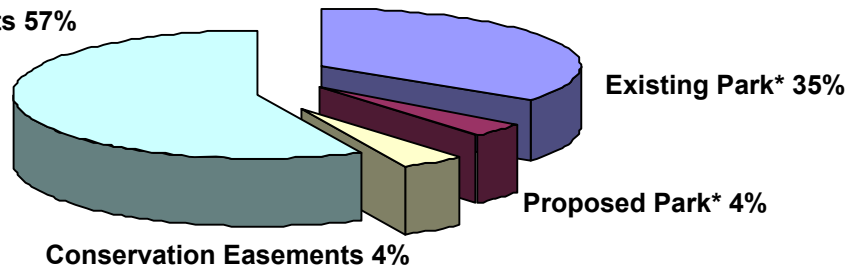


Note: Existing and Proposed Park acreage includes Federal, State, County, M-NCPPC parkland and WSSC Reservoir protection property.

Of the total forest area in the county, only about 35% is currently on public parkland and reservoir protection lands. While the County's Forest Conservation Laws will protect some additional forest land in stream buffers, much of the county's forest land protection relies on the clustering of low density development. Even within parkland, the need for active recreation facilities can displace existing forest.

Montgomery County Forest Protection

Private Land w/o Easements 57%

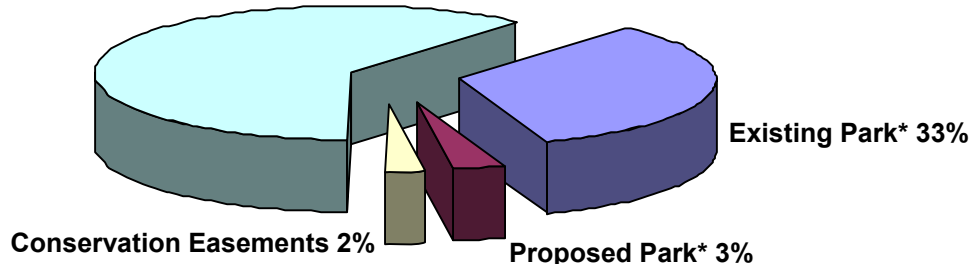


Note: Existing and Proposed Park acreage includes Federal, State, County, M-NCPPC parkland and WSSC Reservoir protection property.

Countywide, 33% of environmentally sensitive areas (including stream buffers, floodplains and steep slopes) are within parkland. Another 3% are in proposed parkland and 2% in Conservation Easements. Although the Forest Conservation Law and the Planning Board's Environmental Guidelines protect sensitive areas on property proposed for development, many areas developed before these programs were in place, and sensitive area protection is at the discretion of the property owner.

Protection of Sensitive Areas

Private Land w/o Easements 62%



Note: Existing and Proposed Park acreage includes Federal, State, County, M-NCPPC parkland and WSSC Reservoir protection property.

Achieving an appropriate balance of natural resource protection with the needs for recreation, access to public lands and providing connectivity for trails, roads and utilities continues to fragment the county's natural resource base. We address these concerns in the area master plans, park master plans and development review process. Continuing efforts are needed to reduce the impact of these facilities.

It is difficult to respond to the increasing calls for protection of urban wild spaces. The cost of acquiring these properties, the difficulty of maintaining their habitat qualities despite the ravages of non-native species, while accommodating the need for more intense development

near transit weigh against the preservation of these areas. Replacement landscaping or off-site reforestation, given the other priorities for these areas, often fulfills Forest conservation requirements. Existing “undeveloped” public lands are in high demand for expanding recreation opportunities and connectivity of roads and pedestrian facilities.

Although Montgomery County has a limited forest resource industry, there is an active “green industries” group composed of landscape contractors and producers of mulch and firewood that works with the County to refine zoning and other regulations relating to the economic viability of their industry.

Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program

Many improvements to the Implementation Program can be addressed through increases in funding and technical assistance. Over \$26 million will be necessary to acquire all the parkland proposed for natural resource protection. More staff positions are needed to plan and manage these areas. Unfortunately, while natural resource lands do not require the intensive maintenance of more structured facilities, the developed context demands constant management for non-native invasives, trail hazards and wildlife issues. Many of the steps the state can take are highlighted in the section regarding “Findings of the Inventory Relevant to State Efforts.” Increasing county efforts are needed to:

- Identify the green infrastructure in Montgomery County at a level of detail that will enable appropriate planning, acquisition and protection of these areas.
- Manage for over populations of white-tailed deer in order to protect biodiversity within natural areas and protect the viability of farming in the county (recent publications have identified deer as the number one threat to agriculture in the county).
- Manage infestations of non-native invasive species, which are reducing biodiversity within high quality natural areas.
- Manage over-all biodiversity on parkland natural areas.
- Reduce encroachment of adjacent private property owners on parkland resources (i.e., mowing, dumping, tree and understory removal).

FUTURE PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Department of Park and Planning is increasing efforts to address the management issues listed above through increased use of volunteer groups and public/private partnerships. The FY06 work program includes a significant expansion of the non-native species and deer management programs. Stepped-up efforts to address encroachment have paid off and will be continued, especially in areas of critical stream and habitat resources.

A considerable amount of land is still needed to complete the park acquisition program outlined for natural resource protection in area master plans. While some of the proposed parkland will be added without cost when property is dedicated as part of development plans, purchasing whole properties is the only way to protect many outstanding resources. The

following list describes the key properties that must be purchased (additional detail is provided in the Appendix):

Properties Identified for Legacy Open Space

Property	Significance
1. River Road Shale Barrens (120 acres)	Triassic red shale bedrock resulting in soils that support unique vegetation. Large block of contiguous forest cut with many steep sided stream valleys. At least nineteen (19) species of rare, threatened, and endangered or watchlist plants make preservation of Statewide importance.
2. Hoyles Mill Diabase Forest Area (Casey Property) (458 acres)	Much of property is underlain with diabase bedrock that results in unique vegetation. At least eight (8) species of rare, threatened, and endangered and watchlist plants have been identified. Large, good quality forest areas with cold headwater streams that feed into Use III Little Seneca Creek.
3. Limestone Ecological Corridor (100 acres)	Limestone bedrock and resulting soils support a considerable diversity of vegetation. Numerous wetlands throughout. Adjacent to Federal owned limestone bedrock parkland that connects to C&O Canal Park.
4. Furnace Branch Headwaters Area (440 acres) Easement	Use III headwaters area that connects with Monocacy Natural Area in Frederick County.
5. Barnesville Forest (585 acres) Easement	Large, contiguous forest area. Little Monocacy Tributary headwaters.
6. Broad Run Stream System (1,000 + acres)	Headwaters of stream lying entirely on Triassic sedimentary bedrock derived soils, with good water quality and diversity of aquatic life.
7. North Branch Buffer Area (122 acres)	Good quality forest and field habitat that buffers and enhances the high quality sensitive natural area along North Branch.
8. Hyattstown Forest Buffer Area (85 acres)	Good quality upland forest to the east and west of Hyattstown that buffers forest and aquatic resources which lie to the south and to the east in Little Bennett Regional Park.

Significant Properties to be Acquired Using CIP Funds

Property	Significance
1. Paint Branch Watershed (Upper) (170 acres)	Use III headwaters of Paint Branch. High quality aquatic resources including naturally reproducing brown trout.
2. Little Bennett Area (Little Bennett Stream Valley Park) (320 acres)	Use III headwaters of Little Bennett Creek. High quality aquatic resources including naturally reproducing brown trout. Completes wildlife/human use corridor connection to Oak Ridge Conservation Park.
3. Little Bennett Area (Ballfield Tributary Subwatershed) (338.5 acres)	Use III headwaters of Ballfield Tributary which feeds into Little Bennett Creek. High quality aquatic resources including naturally reproducing brown trout.
4. Dry Seneca Stream Valley (238 acres)	Protection of aquatic resources and large wetlands along a wildlife/trail corridor that connects to Seneca State Park.
5. Great Seneca Creek and Tributaries (Upper) (1,186 acres)	Upper reaches of Great Seneca Creek and tributaries along a wildlife/human use corridor that will connect Great Seneca Extension Park with Patuxent River State Park.
6. Reddy Branch Stream Valley (36 acres)	Buffers sensitive aquatic resources and widens the wildlife/human use corridor which connects North Branch of Rock Creek Park with Hawlings River Stream Valley Park.
7. Northwest Branch (Upper) (51 acres)	Buffers sensitive aquatic resources and completes connection between headwaters of Northwest Branch and existing Stream Valley Park.

Planning efforts to address the need and competition for urban natural resource areas are being undertaken:

- Several new master plan efforts are beginning in the older parts of the county. “Green Urbanism” principles are being applied to restore degraded resources and integrate green building and low-impact development incentives.
- The new “Centers and Boulevards” initiative will look at ways to intensify development around smaller commercial centers and along connecting roads with transit service to create more lively centers with more open space.

The County Executive is convening a task force to conduct an interagency assessment of current zoning, subdivision, building and road code standards that impede efforts to mitigate the environmental effects of land development.

New management tools are available as well to address concerns that natural resources are considered early in decision-making processes for the use of parkland. The “Smart Parks” database puts resource information in the hands of park managers and the Planning, Design Construction and Operations (PDCO) process establishes a process for the inclusion of natural resource concerns in site selection, design and construction of park facilities.

Green Infrastructure Functional Master Plan

Park and Planning staff are beginning preparation of a green infrastructure plan starting in July of 2005. The proposed GI Functional Master Plan will be a predominantly GIS-based effort utilizing existing staff resources that will:

- Identify and prioritize the existing and desired countywide contiguous network of all environmentally important areas, in addition to parks and LOS, and the current gaps in that network;
- Increase potential for funding open space preservation through programs that promote the preservation of Green Infrastructure;
- Identify and adopt effective implementation mechanisms to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore this network such as established mitigation requirements, and guidance for other environmental protection programs;
- Streamline the preparation of environmental information and recommendations for are master plans;
- Complement and enhance existing plans, programs, and Environmental Guidelines;
- Provide a more streamlined and environmentally effective mitigation process for all public and private development projects;
- Provide a readily updated countywide natural resources inventory and GI recommendations;
- Support the desired development pattern of the county and facilitate Smart Growth;
- Meet new State requirements for the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan;
- Provide a land use planning based tool to meet the TMDL goal of maintaining water quality; and
- Provide a means for tracking and quantifying progress.

This plan is scheduled be completed in draft in 2007, with adoption in 2008.

Recommended Improvements to State Programs

The most important improvement is to fully fund Program Open Space and other programs that supply funding to local governments to purchase land or easements for natural resource protection. Beyond POS, the extensive list of individual programs that offer technical assistance and funding to address individual resources or specific policies make funding natural resource protection a complex process that deters local government participation. More money would be available for the local jurisdictions to use to achieve multiple objectives if programs were consolidated and “block grants” made available to local jurisdictions. Points could be assigned based on the degree to which local program address the specific goals of the state programs, and funds allocated accordingly.

State funding is needed to protect more land, prepare better inventories (before critical resources are lost) and provide better outreach and education for our citizens on the importance

of natural resource protection. Eco-tourism is a possible source of economic benefit, however, facilities would have to be improved and significant effort made to attract people beyond the region. The natural features of most widespread interest are within national or state parkland.

Any efforts that identify resources that have statewide importance are especially helpful to local government. Even knowing the resource type or characteristics would enable us to use those criteria to identify local examples of those resources for protection. Additional recommendations are described in the "Findings of the Inventory Relevant to State Efforts."



CHAPTER VI CULTURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

This Chapter includes two major sections. While the first section deals broadly with *cultural* resources (both historical and archaeological), the emphasis is primarily on the preservation of *historic* resources, thus the sub-heading name. The second section deals strictly with the conservation of archaeological resources.

Historic Resources Section

BACKGROUND AND CHAPTER CONTEXT

Visible reminders of Montgomery County's rich history are everywhere. Look beyond recent development and you will discover buildings from the Colonial and Federal periods, and from the agrarian, industrial and Recent Past. Individual landmarks, historic districts, and cultural resources scattered throughout county parkland demonstrate how each generation leaves its mark on the built environment. Together, these cultural landmarks weave a rich, historic tapestry that includes: archaeological sites and mill ruins along the stream valleys; farms, banks and meeting houses associated with the Quaker heritage; lock houses, aqueducts, mines, and quarries bordering the Potomac River and C&O Canal; farmhouses, spring houses, corn cribs, and slave quarters from the rural past; river fords and encampment sites of the Civil War; African-American communities with longstanding roots; early suburbs developed along the route of the B&O railroad; small-scale commercial blocks and gas stations from the early automobile era; major government complexes such as the Bethesda Naval Hospital and the National Institutes of Health; and postwar housing that shaped the Washington region as a center of suburban development.

Montgomery County has established a comprehensive program to identify, protect, and interpret this three-century-old, diverse legacy. The County's Historic Preservation Commission and its staff, the Historic Preservation Section, work hard to preserve these vibrant aspects of Montgomery County's heritage. We do so in order to enrich the lives of current citizens and to educate future generations. The historic preservation program is guided by state and county goals, but in addition, it stays abreast of new developments affecting historic buildings and archaeological sites. Staff members work on specific study projects that reach out to communities in need. They also work to protect those resources where we, the County, are the primary stewards.

One of the program's current top priorities is to produce a *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* to guide the maintenance and preservation of the many county-owned

buildings located throughout our extensive park system. Changing these structures from artifacts to attractions will help boost Montgomery County's emerging status as a heritage tourism destination for the Washington region. The breadth of the County's historic preservation programs are detailed below in this chapter.

GOALS FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE PRESERVATION

State Goals

State cultural resource goals come from the document, *Preservation Vision 2000: The Maryland Plan* (1995).

The major priorities identified during Preservation Vision 2000's development were related to the prominent issues of growth management, neighborhood revitalization, economic development, heritage tourism, heritage resource education and heritage resource protection. These issues were cause for concern due to the state's projected increase in population and the anticipated rise in demand for services that may negatively impact Maryland's significant historic, archeological and cultural resources. Four goals were developed to address these priorities. Although interrelated, they were important enough to stand alone. The four goals and their associated objectives were broadly defined so that they could be implemented at all levels of government and in all communities around the state.

Goal 1

Effectively manage growth by encouraging neighborhood revitalization

Objective 1: Implement programs designed to revitalize older neighborhoods and commercial centers.

Objective 2: Develop local, regional, and state comprehensive plans in which growth policies are compatible with heritage resource protection

Goal 2

Stimulate economic development through heritage tourism

Objective 1: *Implement the Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program to identify, interpret and promote areas that exhibit a cohesive group of significant historic, cultural, archeological, and natural resources.*

Objective 2: *Strengthen the interpretive and tourism potential of Maryland's communities.*

Objective 3: *Develop inter-jurisdictional, inter-governmental and interdisciplinary partnerships.*

Goal 3

Increase public awareness and appreciation of Maryland's heritage resources

Objective 1: *Offer educational programs for all ages that focus on Maryland's history and its significant heritage resources.*

Objective 2: *Utilize a variety of communication options to provide efficient educational and liaison services.*

Objective 3: *Strengthen working partnerships and linkages with government agencies, preservation organizations, and individuals who support heritage conservation.*

Goal 4

Encourage heritage resource protection in communities throughout the state

Objective 1: *Promote the identification, evaluation, and protection of Maryland's significant heritage resources.*

Objective 2: *Utilize land use strategies and protection programs that assist in the preservation of important architectural and archeological Resources.*

County Goals

County goals can be found primarily in three documents, listed below.

General Plan Goals

The *Approved and Adopted General Plan Refinement of 1993* includes the following Goals, Objectives and accompanying Strategies under the Community Identity & Design chapter:

Goal

Identify and preserve significant historic, scenic and cultural features and promote art in public areas.

Strategies

- Evaluate historic resources for inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.
- Preserve appropriate sites with their environmental settings and districts that are:
 - representative of a period or style,
 - architecturally important,
 - locations of important events or activities,
 - associated with important persons,
 - archaeological sites,
 - cultural landmarks, or of
 - historic or cultural value.
- Protect historic sites permanently.
- Encourage the preservation, restoration and use of historic sites and community landmarks to foster community identity.
- Use financial incentives to minimize the impacts of maintaining and restoring historic properties.
- Promote art and cultural opportunities at appropriate public and private locations.

- Encourage compatible development that highlights and enhances historic resources in development or redevelopment near historic resources and in and around historic districts.

1998 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan

Thirdly, the PROS Plan of July 1998 laid out County goals for historic and cultural resources:

Identify historic and archaeological resources

- Produce and maintain a geographic database inventory of historic and archaeological resources.
- Research and analyze the significance of historic and archaeological resources in connection with area master plan updates.

Preserve and protect historic and archaeological resources

- Facilitate viable uses for historic properties, which will aid in stabilization and continuing maintenance.
- Protect the historic context of historic properties, including walkways, vistas, historic landscaping, agricultural open space, and other features of environmental setting.
- Expand public/private partnership program to decrease the fiscal burden of maintenance.

Renovate buildings through park property management program.

- Train Central Maintenance crews in restoration construction.
- Preserve appropriate sites, with their environmental settings and districts that are representative of a period or style, architecturally important, or associated with important persons, events, or activities.
- Preserve, with their environmental settings and districts, appropriate archaeological sites and landmarks of historical or cultural value.

Interpret historic and archaeological resources

- Provide regular interpretive and educational programs.
- Work with community residents to make historic sites important park focal points and viable elements of the community.
- Increase public access to historic sites in connection with railways, bikeways, and easements.
- Integrate interpretive programs into park master plans.

Montgomery County Code

Secondly, Chapter 24-A of the Montgomery County Code: Historic Preservation Section 24A-1 guides the activities of cultural resource conservation in the County. The purpose of the ordinance is as follows:

It is the purpose of this chapter to provide for the identification, designation and regulation, for purposes of protection, preservation and continued use and enhancement, of those sites,

structures with their appurtenances and environmental settings, and districts of historical, archaeological, architectural or cultural value in that portion of the country which is within the Maryland-Washington Regional District. Its further purpose is to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the County, safeguard the historical and cultural heritage of the County, strengthen the local economy, stabilize and improve property values in and around such historical areas, foster civic beauty and to preserve continued utilization and pleasure of the citizens of the County, the state, and the United States of America.

CURRENT COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Comprehensive Planning Process

Cultural resource initiatives receive or will receive policy and programmatic guidance from several key documents and/or programs. In addition to the 1964 General Plan and 1993 General Plan Refinement, the key documents that guide the cultural resources planning process include: The Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites; The Master Plan for Historic Preservation; Chapter 24-A of the Montgomery County Code; The Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan of 1998; The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitation, and the Certified Heritage Area Management Plan, among others. The Countywide Planning Division in the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning is currently preparing a Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks that also will guide planning for the many cultural resources in MNCPPC ownership.

Montgomery County is recognized as having one of, if not the, best preservation county-based programs in the state. It is a Certified Local Government (CLG), has an active Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), runs its own grant program, accepts easements from interested property owners, has a staff of professional architectural historians and planners, and maintains a comprehensive planning program wherein the County's potential cultural resources already are or will eventually be documented according to state standards.

At the broadest level, the General Plan and its Refinement outline overall goals and objectives for land use and preservation in the County. Below are the remaining documents, ordinances and/or programs that shape the County's comprehensive planning process.

Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites

In 1976, MNCPPC prepared the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, an inventory of over 1,000 potential cultural resources (both built and archaeological) located throughout the County. On an ongoing basis, Atlas resources are further researched and evaluated for eligibility in order to be designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. Hundreds of properties are evaluated annually by this means. As these investigations occur by planning area, certain properties are elevated to Master Plan status and other properties are dropped from the Locational Atlas, primarily due to loss of integrity. Those properties that are designated on the Master Plan are thereby protected under the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the County Code. The Historical Atlas is now in an electronic format and is updated regularly and available to the public on the M-NCPCC website.

Participation in the Historical Trust Statewide Survey Program

The documentation of cultural sites in Montgomery County, primarily but not exclusively from the *Locational Atlas*, is done via the state's Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form. All research forms on Montgomery County properties are given a state inventory number. The inventory is divided into two parts: standing structures (i.e., buildings, structures, objects, and districts) and archeological sites. A property should demonstrate the potential for historical and/or architectural significance in one or more of four aspects of Maryland history. Copies of the inventory forms are kept both at the local Historic Preservation Section office and at the archives of the Maryland Historical Trust.

Historic Preservation Designation Process

In order for any property in Montgomery County, either public or private, to be designated as a historic site on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the resource must follow a historic preservation designation process. As already noted, resources are evaluated to determine if they meet one or more of the criteria for historic, cultural, or architectural significance that would warrant their protection. The evaluation schedule includes public comment opportunities and review by the Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Board, and County Council. The County Council has the final decision-making capability. County Regulation 27-97 establishes the rules, guidelines, and procedures necessary for the proper transaction of the business of the Historic Preservation Commission. If the ultimate decision is positive, the action takes the form of an approved and adopted amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, which is put in place by the full Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The primary tool, therefore, for protecting cultural resources in a comprehensive manner is the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. This document is designed to list those properties that have cultural value at the local, state, and/or national level. The *Master Plan* includes cultural sites on both public parkland and private land. The *Master Plan* has two parts: the official, current list of the County's historic sites, and the adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance. When a historic resource is placed on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, the adoption action officially designates the property as a historic site or historic district, and subjects it to the further procedural requirements of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

As of the writing of this Plan (June 2005), there have been approximately 400 individual historic sites and 20 historic districts designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Public citizens or the Historic Preservation Section can suggest additions to the *Master Plan*. Those that meet one or more of the criteria set out in Chapter 24-A are recommended for consideration by the Historic Preservation Commission for inclusion in the *Master Plan*.

Chapter 24-A, Montgomery County Code, Historic Preservation Ordinance

As just described, the Historic Preservation Ordinance was adopted in 1976 and is part of the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Once historic resources are designated on the *Master Plan*, they are subject to the protection of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, also known as Chapter 24A of the County Code. Any substantial changes to the exterior of a resource or its "environmental setting" must be reviewed by the Historic Preservation

Commission before work commences and a historic area work permit must be issued under the provisions of the County's Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-6.

Section 24A-6 of the Ordinance states that a Historic Area Work Permit must be obtained for work on protected public resources (including Commission-owned historic properties) or private property prior to altering an historic resource or its environmental setting. Private property owners provide drawings of proposed changes as part of the Historic Area Work Permit application. Historic Preservation Section staff reviews the applications in order to form recommendations to the Historic Preservation Commission.

The designs of public facilities near historic resources are also reviewed so they maintain the character of the area. In the majority of cases, decisions regarding preservation alternatives are made at the time of public facility implementation within the process established in Section 24A of the Ordinance. This method provides for adequate review by the public and governing agencies. In order to provide guidance in the event of future public facility implementation, the amendment addresses potential conflicts existing at each site and suggests alternatives and recommendations to balance preservation and community needs.

In addition to protecting designated resources from architecturally incompatible alterations and insensitive redevelopment, the County's Preservation Ordinance also empowers the County's Department of Permitting Services and the Historic Preservation Commission to prevent the demolition of historic buildings through neglect.

Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan

In 1997, Montgomery County enacted a Rustic Roads program to provide a rational system for evaluating, protecting and enhancing scenic roadways that reflect the agricultural character and rural origins of the County. The Rustic Roads program reinforces land use policies that preserve the less-developed areas of the County, while guiding growth. Many of the Rustic Roads protected by this program are located in or adjacent to County parks. This program has the benefit of being one of several opportunities to expand the preservation program beyond structures to include significant cultural landscapes.

Designation as a Certified Heritage Area

In 2003, the State of Maryland's Heritage Area Authority approved Montgomery County as a Certified Heritage Area. This designation allows the County to become eligible for funding for heritage-related purposes. It provides a means to: 1) showcase the County's significant cultural and natural resources in a way that avails itself of the close proximity to Washington, D.C.'s significant tourism trade; and 2) preserve and protect vital historic and natural resources that might otherwise deteriorate and be lost. The County has developed three themes that support the heritage tourism initiative: 1) The Underground Railroad and Quaker Cluster, 2) the Farming History Cluster, and 3) The Technological Innovation Path. By grouping cultural resource sites into these categories, Montgomery County's unique themes become more apparent. In addition, the resources in the County can be differentiated from those in other certified heritage areas across the state. The three County themes offer a way for an array of attractions to be marketed and promoted.

The Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County (Heritage Montgomery) is the organization that obtains funding from the state's Certified Heritage Areas grant program.

Heritage Montgomery is at work on several exciting initiatives, including adding more scenic highways and developing routes that follow the County's equestrian sites, most interesting barns, and the War of 1812. The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Section works closely with Heritage Montgomery.



LEFT: Basil Waters House (c. 1790s, 1890), Germantown. Owned by Park and Planning. Leased to the Montgomery County Historical Society. Headquarters of the Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County. (Historic Preservation Section Brochure, 2003)



RIGHT: Woodlawn Barn, 1832, Sandy Spring. Owned by Park and Planning. Scheduled to become a Visitors Center for the Quaker/Underground Railroad Heritage Cluster. (Historic Preservation Section Brochure, 2003)

Role as Certified Local Government: Easements, National Register, Grants, and Section 106

The County acts as one of the state's Certified Local Governments, taking the first step in fulfilling state regulatory processes in a number of situations. At times, the County has performed the task of reviewing the condition of those properties for which the state holds an easement. This condition assessment process enabled the County to become better acquainted with some of its most outstanding resources and to do the legwork, on behalf of the state, that is required of the easement holder. Having the Historic Preservation Section conduct easement inspections was especially rewarding to new homeowners of historic buildings. They reported that the County and state's interest in the property through inspection was a galvanizing force, familiarizing them with a vast body of knowledge on how to restore historic properties.

The County also acts as the first reviewer of any proposed National Register of Historic Places applications. Specifically, the Historic Preservation Commission reviews proposed National Register designations and sends its recommendations to the County Executive for action. The County's decision is then forwarded to the state National Register administrator for action. As a Certified Local Government (CLG), the County also is eligible to receive grant monies from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) - the Maryland Historical Trust. Some past projects that have been undertaken via so-called CLG grants are: the Montgomery County Camp Meeting Project (consisting of oral histories, a Historic Context Report, and an MHT Inventory Form on the Damascus Camp Meeting) and the preparation of a book about a designated historic district and its environs called *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital*.

Finally, as the CLG, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Section reviews all actions that fall under Section 106 of the State Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Many of these actions involve federal and/or state-funded or licensed road widenings or new construction. Staff at the Historic Preservation Section analyzes the impact of these projects upon local resources and forwards a recommendation of how the action will affect those resources to the Maryland Historical Trust.

Local Application of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

Montgomery County uses not only its own standards for evaluating historic properties (outlined in Chapter 24A), but also applies the federal government's standards to projects in its jurisdiction. Specifically, the Historic Preservation Section uses the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* (which include Standards for Preservation, Restoration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, etc.) in reviewing projects affected by new construction and/or alteration. The most commonly used set of standards is called the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. These have been adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission to provide guidance for property owners on the following subjects: providing a compatible new use for an historic property; retaining the "historic character" of a property; recognizing a building as a physical record of its time, place, and use; acknowledging that changes to properties over time acquire historic significance in their own right; protecting distinctive examples of construction techniques or craftsmanship; repairing deteriorated historic features rather than replacing them; avoiding chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials; protecting significant archaeological resources; and encouraging compatible yet differentiated additions/new construction to preserve the form and integrity of a historic property.

DESIGNATED CULTURAL RESOURCES AND DATA SHARING

Description of Inventories of Cultural Resources

Locational Atlas and Master Plan for Historic Preservation

As already noted, the Historic Preservation Section staff conducts inventories of the County's cultural resources by geographically reviewing those properties identified in the 1976 *Locational Atlas*. The staff maintains lists of resources identified on the *Locational Atlas* and the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Manager of Historic Properties' Office takes the lead in maintaining the inventory of cultural resources located within parkland. These existing

inventories have recently been supplemented by information gathered during the Strategic Planning process and by photographic documentation undertaken by the park architect's office.

Contracted Inventory Projects

When appropriate, the Historic Preservation Section contracts out large-scale surveys to private consulting firms that specialize in architectural history. One such project was the recent survey of the Silver Spring Central Business District, which resulted in an inventory of sites that might qualify for designation under local ordinance and/or other preservation laws.

Grant and Other Inventory Projects

In addition, the staff conducts independent, grant-funded research projects that bring to light possible cultural resources for protection, public education, or both. These grants primarily come from the Maryland Historical Trust (from the former Preservation Incentives for Local Governments grant fund), the Certified Local Government grant fund (already described), and/or the Non-Capital grant fund. These funds have required Montgomery County to match the Trust's investments with either or both cash and in-kind services. These inventory projects have resulted in Historic Context Reports, a neighborhood-specific publication titled *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital*, and documentation on National Register-eligible historic districts representing subdivisions designed by the architect Charles M. Goodman. Another source of funding was responsible for the County's most prominent inventory, a book that includes descriptions of all *Master Plan* resources and a thorough county history. This illustrated publication/inventory is titled *Places from the Past: the Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland*.

GIS Inventories

There also is countywide information available on cultural resources in digital form on the Historic Preservation Section's Geographic Information System (GIS). All *Locational Atlas* and *Master Plan* cultural resources are stored in the GIS system within a historic preservation layer. As noted, staff is in the process of adding all of the data relating to park-owned cultural resources to the GIS system, including both built and archaeological resources.

The GIS program is used daily by Historic Preservation Section staff. When any action is anticipated to affect cultural resources, staff first identifies the site on its GIS system, reviews the data, and compares it with each site's paper file. Questions from the public regarding whether or not a property holds historic designation are first checked against the County's GIS system.

Alterations and Subdivisions Files/Data

Staff also maintains all of the paper data on individual Historic Area Work Permits (HAWP) and files on alterations/subdivision cases affecting cultural resources. The Historic Preservation Commission's decisions, the nature of any conditions, the terms of permits, staff reports, etc., are all documented in these files. As files get older, they are transferred to the Commission's Archives and the inventory of Archives boxes allows staff to call up these files when necessary. Staff also is testing a database of HAWP decisions in order to track decision-making over the years.

Slide and Photographic Inventories

Staff routinely photographs resources being inventoried or reviewed because of pending alterations. Initially, this was done using slides, so there are many notebooks of slides of historic structures on file at the Historic Preservation Section. At present, cultural resources are inventoried using a digital camera. This information can then be used in Power Point presentations given to the Historic Preservation Commission or the Planning Board. Ultimately, these images will be linked to the GIS system.

Findings of the Inventory Relevant to State Efforts

The following list is a compilation of what has been learned through years of inventorying the County's cultural resources:

- The cultural and economic value of the County's historic resources starts to become known through the inventory.
- Patterns of architectural development become apparent through the inventory of structures first identified on the Locational Atlas. Staff can identify the typical late 19th century frame farmhouse, for example, or the typical bank barn.
- Resources can be identified and grouped for heritage tourism purposes.
- Patterns of Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) actions become apparent through the inventory of HPC cases and an emerging database of recent decisions.
- Lack of adequate funding for additional research staff makes the survey and inventory process lengthy, since only one part-time staff person is responsible for inventorying the entire county. As a result, there is a loss of integrity of structures due to the delay between their first identification in the Locational Atlas and the time that they are next reviewed for possible designation on the Master Plan.
- Loss of historic context, countywide, is due to multiple forces: federal and state-funded road projects; surging population and the consequent need for housing; and land values that rise above housing, resulting in teardowns and subsequent "mansionization."
- Case study analysis, especially with regard to inventorying 20th-century resources, is necessary to stem the tide of teardowns.
- Inability to gather enough support for local designation of buildings from the "Recent Past" hampers potential survey efforts.
- Minimal state funds for critical research projects to identify and expand cultural resource programs (oral history projects, publications, landscape studies, etc.) potentially limit what could be a more inclusive inventory process.

Easement Acquisition and Assistance Programs (including Funding)

Existing Easement and Acquisition Programs

Easements

The County has its own easement program, which only applies to privately owned properties. The state also accepts easements on historic properties. In 2003, since grant monies allowed it, the County monitored the condition of some 16 private properties for which the Maryland Historical Trust holds an easement. In this way, the County acted as stewards for the state.

Designation of Parkland

The County owns a significant number of properties. The County has used outright, fee-simple ownership more than easements as a tool to protect cultural resources located within open space and/or parkland. Acquisitions through purchase of parkland have accounted for over 150 cultural resources, both historic and archaeological, in the agency's real estate portfolio. Via Master Plans and the upcoming *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks*, planners can recognize, monitor, and manage historic and archaeological resources located on parkland.

Legacy Open Space

Legacy Open Space is a program to conserve Montgomery County's most significant open space. The program identifies natural resources, open space, farmland, and historic lands for conservation and creates a comprehensive strategy to protect the County's "green infrastructure." A functional master plan establishes the program as a part of the General Plan for Montgomery County. The master plan includes criteria for identifying potential Legacy Open Space sites, an initial inventory of the sites known to meet the criteria, and a process for setting priorities for protection through acquisition of land or easements. Legacy Open Space is one of the most flexible programs currently implemented for acquisition of historic properties. Recently, the Commission accepted ownership of the Darby House and Store in Beallsville and the Red Door Store in Sandy Spring under this program. In addition, the Commission acquired a property in the Capitol View Park Historic District under this program.

Private Donations

The County also receives historic properties through private donations. The Woodstock Equestrian property and the Rickman Horse Farm are examples of properties that include historic sites that have been donated to MNCPPC for protection and with parameters established for usage.

Public/Private Partnerships

The County works in partnership with friends groups, heritage tourism groups, arts organizations, and private homeowners to provide restoration, rehabilitation, maintenance, and, in certain key cases, interpretation of cultural resources. One of the most successful partnerships is the one that exists between MNCPPC and the Friends of Oakley Cabin in

Brookeville. Through the efforts of the staff Outreach Coordinator and Manager of Historic Properties in the Historic Preservation Section, Oakley Cabin has been restored and is being interpreted. It opens on a regular basis to the public as a living history museum staffed by volunteers. The experience teaches about the life of slaves and newly freed peoples as well as the role of the Underground Railroad in the County. Other successful partnerships between MNCPPC and private groups include the Waters House, which is operated by the Montgomery County Historical Society, and the Hyattstown Mill, which is operated by the Hyattstown Mill Art Project. The Commission is working on developing a new partnership with the Town of Kensington for rehabilitation and operation of the Kensington Cabin.

Other Regulatory or Management Programs

Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks

The Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks is one of the most important activities being undertaken by the Historic Preservation Section to address the improvement of funding, rehabilitation, maintenance, and programming of publicly owned cultural resources spread throughout the County. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to provide the County Executive, County Council, Planning Board, Historic Preservation Commission, and internal agency directors with a blueprint for protecting and enhancing the County's most important cultural resources. It includes a method for evaluating maintenance costs associated with historic buildings. The Strategic Plan will be presented to the Planning Board in the fall of 2005. Money from an Impact Grant allowed the office to hire an intern to assist on the project who is a graduate student in the state's university system.

The Strategic Plan highlights the Top 20 priority projects that should be programmed for highest visibility, heritage tourism, and potential revenue. Defined within the Plan will be the stakeholders who make the saving of cultural resources possible: the Historic Preservation Section and Historic Preservation Commission, the Parks Department, Central Maintenance, the Manager of Historic Properties, the Enterprise Office, private investors/partners, and the Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County, to name a few. The plan seeks to build on recent successes and use creative marketing to bring more properties into operation. The document's theme, "From Artifact to Attraction" emphasizes the need to open more sites to the public. Commission-owned cultural resources are invaluable tools in defining the County's history in evocative ways.

A major objective of the Strategic Plan is to put the County-owned cultural resources 'on the map,' both literally and figuratively, and to provide a formulaic means of allocating dollars for their maintenance. The Plan will bring cultural resources more into conformance with data standards and terminology being used for other property types, especially by being compatible with the SmartParks program. The Plan includes a database of information on each publicly owned historic resource in the parks, matched with a new GIS layer to be managed by the Historic Preservation Section. It also includes mathematical formulas for determining the cost of maintenance of historic resources based on a presumed value. With such quantifiable data, MNCPPC and County leaders will be able to see cultural resources as critical components of an integrated park system, not something apart from other types of structures that routinely obtain funding and maintenance.

RIGHT: Cooke's Range (Late 18th Century) at Pope Farm, Redland. Owned by Park and Planning. Not yet restored. (Photo: Michael Dwyer, 1976)



BELOW: Oliver Watkins House, turn-of-the-century Victorian dwelling, Cedar Grove. Owned by Park and Planning and restored. Public/private partnership opportunity. (Historic Preservation Section brochure, 2003)



BELOW: Stubbs House (second half, 19th century), Wheaton. Although changed today, this photograph from an earlier time shows a representative Montgomery County farmhouse. Owned by Park and Planning. (Copy of photograph by Bradford Armstrong, 1936)



LEFT: Main house at Bussard Farm (early 20th century). Owned by Park and Planning. Improvements underway to restore the house and its outbuildings as an agricultural history interpretive center at the Agricultural Farm Park in Redland. (Historic Preservation Section brochure, 2003)

Planning and Land Use Management Authority

As described above, the identification of cultural resources worthy of protection is an ongoing task. The *Locational Atlas* properties are continuously being reviewed by geographic planning area for possible designation on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Cultural resources already designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* are continually being preserved through the Historic Area Work Permit program established in Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. Finally, a draft *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* has been completed. The most select properties in the park system have been or are slated to be restored/rehabilitated. These are earmarked to be opened to the public, used for park offices or housing, or leased to private caretakers/partners.

In addition to the tools described above, the Historic Preservation Section participates in the Subdivision Review process by having a liaison attend all of the Development Review Committee meetings. Staff and, in many cases, the Historic Preservation Commission itself, provides guidance on subdivision and development plans that will affect historic properties.

Heritage Tourism

Economic Development in Heritage Tourism

As stated above, Montgomery County has already become a Certified Heritage Area. Heritage resources in Montgomery County's parks are playing a vital role in developing economic benefits. This is a new concept for a county that has thought of itself as primarily suburban; however, it is an idea whose time has come. It is also supported by the 1997 survey of park users, done for MNCPPC by the University of Maryland. In this survey, 79% of the respondents said they would make use of guided tours at historic sites in Montgomery County, 86% would attend live demonstrations about local history, and 74% would attend lectures. When asked which should have the higher funding priority - restoring historic sites or building recreation facilities -- 56% of the respondents favored historic sites with 31% opting for recreation facilities. (See Appendix.)

Throughout the State of Maryland, the importance of heritage tourism is being recognized and developed. In a recent study of six historic districts in Maryland, it was estimated that these districts drew over 3.4 million visitors per year solely for reasons relating to heritage tourism. According to a Travel Industry Association study (1997), 53.6 million Americans, or 1/4 of U.S. adults, visited an historical place or museum in the past year.

With these types of benefits in mind, the Maryland Legislature passed House Bill 1 in 1996 and created the Maryland Heritage Preservation and Tourism Areas Program. This program was designed to assist communities in using cultural tourism as a way of building their economies while protecting, developing, and promoting their cultural, historical, and natural resources. The program provides a number of different kinds of grants to communities that apply for and get approval as Certified Heritage Areas. Also previously noted, Montgomery County's three, predominant heritage themes include: 1) Quakers and the Underground Railroad; 2) Farming History; and 3) Technological Innovation.

In tandem with the heritage tourism effort, primarily spearheaded by a new 501C-3 organization (the Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County), the Historic Preservation Section will be implementing the goals of heritage tourism into its *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks*. Some of the ideas for greater visibility for the MNCPPC-owned cultural

resources include: general heritage tourism (house/farm museums, B&Bs, etc.) agri-tourism (pick-your-own orchards), Equestrian Reserves (linked equestrian facilities), Arts Programs (Hyattstown Mill and others), and more paid staff undertaking living history programs and other forms of public outreach.

EVALUATION OF THE CULTURAL RESOURCES HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Program

Strengths and Weaknesses of the HP Program:

Comprehensive Planning Process

The strength of the comprehensive planning process is that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and its staff are well regarded statewide due to the longevity of the program and its tested successes. The Montgomery County HPC is cited as a model for a well-run local historic preservation commission. The Historic Area Work Permit process is generally seen as balancing the interests and mandate of historic preservation with the needs of property owners interested in reasonable change. The strength of the program is the breadth of what it accomplishes. Just to name some of its major programs, Historic Preservation Section staff:

- Supports HPC, Planning Board & County Council in researching & evaluating
- Sites for historic designation
- Supports HPC in review of proposed alterations to designated sites
- Reviews subdivisions & development plans that affect historic sites
- Manages MNCPPC-owned historic sites
- Manages the countywide archeological program
- Undertakes educational and outreach activities
- Administers the county Historic Preservation Tax Credit and Historic Preservation Grant Fund

The major weaknesses of the program are threefold:

1) Maintenance funds for the upkeep of park-owned properties are severely lacking. A significant number of sites that the County owns in its park system are in grave disrepair due to a lack of maintenance funds.

2) The Historic Preservation office is understaffed. Only one part-time staff person is assigned to research and evaluate all of the properties designated on the *Locational Atlas* and make recommendations for *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* status. This is often coordinated with master planning tasks, but also includes responsibility for designating any and all buildings nominated by the public and/or threatened by demolition. This is an unreasonable task for one staff person, given the over 1,000 resources originally identified on the 1976 *Atlas* and the properties of the Recent Past that are continually being brought to the staff's attention

for preservation consideration. In addition, there is an ever-increasing workload of projects that require design review, which also is putting additional pressure on limited staff. With new *Locational Atlas* and *Master Plan* sites being added to the County's inventory on an ongoing basis and a strong home building and renovation economy, staff's Historic Area Work Permit caseload is increasingly heavy.

3) The historic preservation planning process is still, unfortunately, seen almost as a secondary process by some of the other divisions of the Commission and/or by appointed and elected officials.

The following are examples where there could be improvement and state funds could help make the following changes possible:

Master planning takes into account cultural resources (both historical and archaeological), but there is more to be done, especially in adding sites that have potential for designation in the intervals between master plan publication. More state funding for inventory work would assure that inventory efforts were up to date, therefore making it easier to get the best information into master planning documents and to apprise the various boards of resources that are threatened.

Trails and greenway plans are done without enough consideration of the history of the landscapes they touch, not the structures or events to be interpreted along trails, but the actual physical landscape. More state funding for Cultural Landscape Reports would correct this problem. In addition, public opinion consistently supports more funding for signage and kiosks that are used to interpret historical/cultural sites along natural surface trails.

Twentieth-century resources are not yet appreciated and are therefore quickly being lost to new construction. More state funding for studies involving the Recent Past would help stem the tide. Continued money for inventorying affected 20th-century buildings and helping interested communities to develop alternative protection measures such as Neighborhood Conservation Districts and Easements would be helpful.

Funding for intensive research on publicly owned historic resources is currently unavailable. Money for the production of Historic Structures Reports, such as those used by the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to restore their buildings, is crucial to placing precious dollars where they need to go.

Funding for the maintenance of publicly owned cultural resources is woefully inadequate. More bricks-and-mortar money from the state to the local level would help protect buildings that are owned by the County, but stand in a state of disrepair or neglect.

Easement inspections help historic property owners know about resources available to them for restoring buildings. Currently, the state has no funding for the County to conduct easement inspections on state-or county-held easement properties.

Inventories/Maps of Resources

The GIS system of designated (*Master Plan*) and potentially historic (*Locational Atlas*) properties functions well for the purposes of research, Historic Area Work Permits, and public

inquiry. Staff members use the system on a daily basis to identify properties and their environmental settings, review subdivision requests, and respond to public inquiries about whether or not a property has been designated under the Ordinance.

The effort to put park-owned cultural resources into the GIS system has recently been completed in its first iteration. The shape files and accompanying Excel spreadsheet includes both built and archaeological resources. The latter are mapped broadly, not specifically, so as to prevent looting.

Again, the weakness of the mapping program has to do with funding/staffing. Currently, the primary staff person responsible for GIS is a full-time preservation planner with responsibilities for Historic Area Work Permits and subdivision review. The goal of digitizing all of the information about historic properties (former Historic Area Work Permits, photographs, plans, etc.) and linking all of this information to the GIS map is done extremely slowly, therefore. Often, it becomes the task of interns. More state funds for ramping up the technological capabilities of the Historic Preservation Section would be critical to bringing our GIS system in line with the County's SmartParks system and to getting the data on all of our inventoried buildings into the system.

Cultural Resource Easement Acquisition and Assistance Programs

The Legacy Open Space has recently served the purpose of increasing cultural resource acquisition well. The County has purchased several properties (houses and stores) that may provide opportunities for greater visibility and possible revenue. This program has been successful in acquiring historic properties that can be restored and made useful to the public.

A relative weakness is the County easement program, which is not adequately advertised and the records of which only become apparent when the property changes hands. This program has potential for greater use, and should be given more prominence, so that property owners can take advantage of historic preservation easement tax savings.

Planning and Land Use Management Authority

M-NCPPC recognizes that historic preservation is a legitimate aspect of planning, but more could be done to integrate cultural resource protection with other planning processes. The Historic Preservation Section plans to reach out more to divisions within the agency with increased preservation training, memoranda, and wider distribution of *The Preservationist*, the section's newsletter. In turn, other departments within MNCPPC could strengthen their efforts to communicate with Historic Preservation whenever cultural resources are affected by planning actions. M-NCPPC

A weakness has been a lack of funds to secure the upkeep of the properties the County owns. The *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* will guide improvements in that area. The *Plan* will bring together different divisions within MNCPPC to maintain and program (in both the architectural and interpretive senses) cultural resources that the County owns.

A strength has been the County's ability to address community concerns vis-à-vis the historic designation process. A weakness has been the County's inability to protect communities in areas that are not designated "historic" and therefore not protected under the preservation ordinance. To this end, the state has funded a preliminary handbook on

preservation alternatives to historic district designation to protect early 20th-century neighborhoods threatened with teardowns and “mansionization.” This handbook is being produced as an informational tool in light of the recent trend toward destruction of smaller houses located in close-in, desirable suburbs. Montgomery Preservation, Inc., a non-profit preservation organization, has already sponsored two very-well attended “mansionization” conferences; the County Council is studying legislation aimed at eliminating loopholes in the definition of “height” in the zoning code; and at least one town has issued a short-term moratorium on building permits until the matter can be studied further.

Heritage Tourism

The Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County, the 501C-3 organization charged with spearheading the County’s heritage tourism effort has obtained state grants for its website, a brochure, and a host of creative programming to capture the essence of Montgomery County’s cultural resources. This new program, which works closely with the Historic Preservation Section, is a strong element in the County’s plan to increase heritage tourism. The County’s strength is that it is working so closely with this organization.

Weakness in the heritage tourism effort results from a lack of funds for adequate staffing. (The Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County has only one paid staff person and no one person in the Historic Preservation Section is charged with spearheading heritage tourism.) More state aid is necessary to bring Montgomery County’s heritage programming funds in line with other popular counties and/or with Baltimore City.

Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program

More funding is needed for historic preservation projects in the County, particularly for future capital grant program requests that may target county-owned properties being lost due to demolition by neglect for lack of funds. More capital grant funding would allow for the protection of outstanding buildings, many of which are located in our parkland and are vacant. Additional funding from non-capital grant funds also would allow the County office to accomplish much more of what is necessary to run one of the state’s largest preservation offices. It also would be beneficial if the Maryland Historical Trust staff tour Montgomery County once a year as a regular visit to see the County’s best heritage sites, National Register districts, and local historic districts while learning firsthand about the County’s many programs. Such an effort on the part of the state would strengthen what is already an excellent relationship between the state and county and give Trust staff insight into the type and extent of cultural resources the County has to offer.

Future Program Priorities

- Implement all cultural resource initiatives that meet the County mandates of identifying, documenting, and interpreting historic and archaeological sites. Consistently strive to stay abreast of initiatives in the historic preservation field, such as African-American history, cultural landscape history, the Recent Past, oral history and folklore, and national heritage corridors.

- Increase staffing of the historic preservation office to undertake the wide range of programs required by state and county goals.
- Add paid staff to interpret cultural resource sites, as is the practice in other counties, instead of relying solely on volunteers.
- Better maintain the existing building stock that the County owns.
- Approve all of the goals stated in the *Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks* (due to the Montgomery County Planning Board Oct./Nov. 2005).
- More clearly embrace heritage tourism and public/private partnerships as the best means to get the County's historical story out to the public.
- Turn the County's artifacts into attractions. Move beyond stabilization of publicly owned properties, the County's direction for the last fifteen years.
-

Archaeological Resources Section

BACKGROUND AND CHAPTER CONTEXT

Montgomery County's unwritten history contains a record of the cultural adaptations of many pre-historic peoples to the changing climate and ecology of this area, from the Paleo-Indian Period of 12,000 years ago to European contact in 1608. In large part, this record has been preserved because of the stream valley nature of Montgomery County's park system and the direct correlation between prehistoric site locations and their short distances (500 feet) to watercourses. For thousands of years, differing bands and tribes camped by our creeks to hunt game and forage seasonal resources. In historical times, settlers made use of streams to power numerous mills. Farmsteads were laid out next to springheads, and African American communities made use of bottomlands.

Such remains from Montgomery County's past are an irreplaceable social resource, providing lessons for our future successes in managing the places we inhabit. Surviving the centuries, archaeological sites often constitute our sole source of knowledge and awareness of all those peoples whose tales of struggle and survival, of adaptation and invention, of failure and success, of forging and changing interrelationships helped shape Montgomery County as we know it today. Archaeological sites reveal how yesterday's world became today's world.

In order to comply with federal and state regulations in our parks and County, an archaeological program was initiated in the late 1980s to help consider the effects of land-use decisions on belowground cultural resources. Archaeological investigations contribute to restorations, development plans and mitigation of construction projects. They also provide an opportunity for public participation in discovering the thousands of years of human activity in our County.

The best archaeological policy is not anti-development. It should seek to partner with contractors to recover and manage the cultural assets of the past.

Goals for Archaeological Resource Preservation

State Goals

State Goals come from the Maryland Historical Trust Technical Report, Number 2: "Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigation In Maryland" (Shaffer and Cole, 1994).

Goal

Identification, evaluation and treatment of historic properties through archaeology in fulfillment of federal and state historic guidelines.

Objective 1: *Oversee review process in compliance archaeology with environmental consultants and developers requiring federal or state permits or licenses.*

Objective 2: Provide standards and guidelines for individuals and organizations that are not tied directly to compliance with federal or state law.

Objective 3: Provide local governments with a model from which to develop historic preservation procedures in archaeology for their own jurisdictions.

County Goals

Goal

Provide stewardship for the archaeological resources of Montgomery County. Identify, manage, protect and interpret these non-renewable archaeological resources to gain a better understanding of our region's historically diverse cultures. Preserve our region's unique archaeological heritage for current and future generations.

Objective: Identify the archaeological resources within Montgomery County

Strategies

- Locate sites through research of documents, photographs and maps; perform field surveys
- Invite community involvement and collect oral histories
- Conduct field investigations and sub-surface systematic excavations to determine site significance

Objective: Manage archaeological sites

Strategies

- Mapping County archaeological sites through GIS
- Consider effects of land-use decisions on below-ground cultural resources
- Encourage civic engagement
- Promote community ownership
- Implement and incorporate CIP Projects, historic restorations, Park development, non-Park construction projects, subdivision and transportation planning processes
- Participate in the decision-making process

Objective: Preserve and protect the archaeological resources

Strategies

- Provide archaeological collection management
- Construct barriers and reroute trails around sensitive sites
- Provide for places for and train people in the art of artifact conservation

Objective: Interpret the archaeological resources

Strategies

- Create interpretive markers
- Provide learning experiences for county residents through educational programs in archaeology that support tourists, involves communities and takes into account the demographic and ethnic diversities of the County

- Provide opportunities for understanding the value and importance of our local archaeological heritage

CURRENT COUNTY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Comprehensive Planning Process

As part of the Bi-County Park & Planning Commission, Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties share a comprehensive plan for protecting archaeological resources with only one other in the State, Anne Arundel. Although archaeological stewardship has a countywide focus, almost half of our non-renewable archaeological resources are preserved throughout our own Parks' systems because they contain a large number of river valleys and stream drainages that show great potential for both prehistoric and historical creek oriented sites.

Archaeological resources are best stewarded by working WITH developers. Archaeology is not anti-development. Preventing development is not the only, or the most common, way to protect archaeological resources. Often, development offers opportunities that would not be otherwise available. Archaeological stewardship must include, and be sensitive to, development objectives.

Below are elements of the County's comprehensive planning process:

Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County, Maryland

The *Locational Atlas*' resources include archeological sites. These are then researched and evaluated for designated eligibility for the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*

Master Plan for Historic Preservation

The Commission may designate sites for their significance and contribution to Federal, State or local history. These are, then, sent on to the County Council for final inclusion in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.

Park and Area Master Plans

Because the Commission is more specifically involved in the parks' management, their planning process involves a detailed inventory and analysis of the location, nature and management potential of archaeological resources within their boundaries. This includes conducting a pedestrian survey of the park, recording archaeological sites using Global Positioning Systems, placing them on the Geophysical Information System (GIS) mapping system, recording information for the State Inventory, obtaining a Maryland Historical Trust site number and suggesting any management needs or interpretive potential. At the area master plan level, a more broad-scoped approach includes similar processes.

Subdivision Review

As part of the subdivision review process, an assessment is made of the land's prehistoric and/or historic archaeological potential (based on geology, soils, hydrology, topography, and archival research), suggesting either mitigation or avoidance where appropriate.

The Countywide planning process includes potential mitigation of archaeological site through subdivision review of:

- Large lot zoning
- Cluster zoning
- Agricultural set asides
- Site dedication
- Development or site plan review and approval with conditions
- Transfer of development rights

Archaeological resources are also addressed in the following manuals and plans (for Federal and State Guidelines, see Appendix -

Trees: Approved Technical Manual of 1992

The forest conservation program's "Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation" requires a summary map to include "cultural and historic features."

General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County: On Wedges and Corridors (1993)

This Plan requires specific strategies for protecting historic and archaeological resources as presented in the Community Identity and Design Section, Objective 3.

Montgomery County "Parks for Tomorrow" Preparing for the 21st Century (1998)

Section 2, "Goals, Objectives and Strategies" identifies archaeological sites in its strategies to depict resources on land-use maps, research their significance for master plans, and stress the importance of landscape preservation.

The Countywide Park Trails Plan of 1998

This establishes that a framework should be developed, "...for identifying and prioritizing opportunities for historic resource access via bikeways, trails and open space".

Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan of 2000

This provides an overarching strategy to protect the exceptional open spaces that are key to the “green infrastructure, listing “Heritage Resources” which could include archaeological sites.

Designed Cultural Resources Inventories and Data Sharing

Description of Inventories of Cultural resources:

The archaeological staff maintains and updates the Global Information System mapping program for all archaeological sites within both our parks and County. They also keep the State’s official archaeological sites’ inventory updated. Currently they have identified some 350 sites on parkland and over 400 Countywide.

Programs for Cultural Resources Acquisition and Assistance

Cultural resource acquisition and assistance programs have included archaeological resources. They now comprise public/private partnerships such as Dowden’s Ordinary Special Park, a French and Indian War (1755-1763) and Revolutionary War tavern, which is being acquired and constructed through an agreement with Clarksburg developer, US Homes.

MNCPPC also holds archaeological easements on private land, such as the Early Woodland/Agricultural (1000 B.C. to A.D. 300), prehistoric site, known as the Noursi Site, in Germantown, near Doctor Sally K. Ride Elementary School.

Economic Development in Eco/Heritage Tourism

Since most of human history is preserved only as archaeological sites, any county that wishes to reflect the whole complement of its past must consider its below-ground cultural resources. Interpretation of Montgomery County’s archaeological sites will add greatly to our understanding of all those diverse peoples that used the land before us, including: thousands of years of occupation by prehistoric bands and tribes, historic milling industries, farmsteads, slave cabins, Civil War camps, tenant farms, Reconstruction era villages, dairy farms, quarries and even mica and gold mines.

Archaeology programs contribute to public education and civic engagement. They encourage participants to develop appreciation of the procedures and methods of just how archaeology uncovers former lifeways. Through public outreach programs, participants can discover not only the County’s already culturally diverse past, both historically and prehistorically, but other unique traditional viewpoints.

Staff has implemented the following initiatives to introduce the public to Montgomery County’s archaeological heritage:

- Encourage Cultural Stewardship
 - Family “dig days”
 - Community symposiums

- Provide educational and training opportunities, including:
 - Lectures on the prehistory and history of the County
 - Summer archaeology classes
 - Regular classroom enhancement for 4th grade
 - Adult classes and volunteer training
 - County-wide “Volunteers in Archaeology” program
 - Field excavations and laboratory work on a weekly and monthly basis throughout the school year in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools.
 - Internships at the high school and college levels
- Cooperate with the Mid-Potomac Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Maryland and their “Certified Archaeological Technician” program. Volunteers meet, at least, once a week to either do laboratory duration and analyses and/or field work.
- Conduct interpretive walks to increase the participants’ understanding of the prehistory and history of the County.
- Demarcate trails with interpretive signage and themes that stress archaeological and historical patterns (e.g., prehistoric camps/quarries, mills, Civil War sites, etc.).

EVALUATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The previous discussion included a list of the major steps that are being implemented to ensure that County lifeways are preserved.

Program Development Strategy for Archaeological Resource Conservation

The following strategies should be implemented to improve archaeological conservation:

- Placement of significant archaeological sites on the National Register of Historic Places
 - Nominate important archaeology sites (such as the Paleo-Indian Pierpoint site, Woodland village sites, Meadowside Rockshelter, etc) to the state and national register in order to secure their preservation.
- Develop amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* of significant publicly owned and selected privately owned archaeological sites to be presented before Historic Preservation Commission and/or Planning Board and County Council.
- Place all prehistoric and historic archaeological sites on County Master Plans.
- Use a specific archaeological site-survey implementation system for dealing with private development. Currently there is no consistent legal mechanism for identifying, evaluating or managing non-park properties for archaeological potential. Prince Georges and Anne Arundel Counties in Maryland and Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria in Virginia, all have specific archaeological guidelines in place. We recommend making Montgomery County’s archaeological guidelines consistent with these other local jurisdictions.

- Increase interpretive possibilities within County Parks and our Parks trail systems. This would include the stabilization of mill ruins as money permits.
- Work with Montgomery County Agencies, developers, and the public to increase their awareness of both the importance of the County's prehistoric and historical sites and also the archaeological laws that pertain to development and construction projects. Many developers are unaware of the existence of such guidelines or when such guidelines apply to their projects.
- Work with MNCPPC staff, the public, and developers in designing a Cultural Resource Guidelines for archaeological sites, similar to MNCPPC's Environmental Guidelines - 2000.
- Look for opportunities for more and improved facilities for proper storage of artifact collections. Archaeological sites are particularly vulnerable to looting. Because stealing from our Parkland is stealing from our public trust, we recommend that county laws on "pot hunting" be reviewed and that penalties for stealing archaeological artifacts from public County lands be made consistent with state and federal standards, which can include such penalties as confiscation of equipment, etc.

Strength and Weaknesses of the Implementation Program

Strengths of the Implementation Program

The archaeology program has demonstrated that more prehistoric and historical sites have survived than had been thought possible in so urban a setting as most of Montgomery County. We have been able to greatly expand our knowledge of the County's culturally diverse past, and have started to develop a Countywide plan for responsible stewardship through beginning to create guidelines for further identification, management and interpretive potential. Current strengths of the Archaeology Program include:

- Participation in CIP, subdivision review and transportation planning processes.
- Encouragement of civic engagement through year-round educational and hands-on instructional programs and workshops
- Sponsorship of community symposiums to increase awareness of the archaeological richness of the County, linking diverse past lifeways to modern local communities.
- Provision for summer archaeological field sessions for school are children and adults.
- Management, curation, and storage of Montgomery County artifact collections.
- Development and expansion of adult and high school volunteer programs
- Partnerships with Montgomery College and the Archaeological Society of Maryland, Inc, The Mid-Potomac Chapter.
- Identification and mapping of archaeological sites through the Geographical Information Systems Program

Weaknesses of the Implementation Program

The archaeological remains of Montgomery County are a precious and irreplaceable resource within the context of a fragile environment too often overlooked by short-term gain. “With the current and past levels of development in the County, a large portion of its archaeological resources are in danger of being lost, and this danger increases yearly” (Maryland Historical Trust, White Paper No. 1). Current archaeological guidelines concentrate on our parks system and only generally on the County at large. There is a need to better implement the current development review process to include consideration of archaeological resources on non-park public and private lands.

Summary of Needed Improvements in the Implementation Program

The Park and Planning Department now includes archaeological consideration in both the development review and transportation planning processes. We are encouraging developers to consider archaeological resources when submitting plans by identifying them and by helping to mitigate the impact of development upon such archaeological sites.

Recommended Improvements to the State Programs

The archaeology program could benefit by fully funding Program Open Space, which could supply funding to local governments not only for natural resources, but also for archaeological resources. Archaeology should be considered in connection with eco-tourism as well as heritage tourism because it adds a rich understanding to site visitations.

In conclusion, despite a variety of Federal, State and local laws and guidelines passed over the last century, the amount of loss, looting and vandalism of our irreplaceable heritage on both public and private lands continues. Montgomery County has been especially vulnerable to archaeological degradation. When the Maryland Historical Trust last reviewed the County in 1987, its *Preservation Policy, White Paper #1* stated: “With the current and past intensive level of development in Montgomery County, a large portion of its archaeological record has been lost, and this loss increases daily.” In fact its Chief Archaeologist concluded: “More archaeological sites have been lost in Montgomery County than any other county in the State.”

FUTURE PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Over the last decade, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning’s archaeology program has begun to reverse the trend of archaeological loss through its emphasis on public and private cultural stewardship. Currently, only three counties in Maryland recognize the importance of any countywide stewardship of archaeological resources: Montgomery, Prince Georges, and Anne Arundel. The priorities for the archaeology program are to:

- Steward Montgomery County’s rich cultural resources carefully and foster a countywide sense of stewardship. In archaeology, stewardship is an ethical attitude of caring for prehistoric and historical sites that “belong” to everyone, present and future (Henry

1993). Taking care of archaeological resources is a task of the whole community, public and private alike.

- Nominate archaeological sites to more local, state, and national registers for documentation and protection.
- Develop an amendment to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* that specifically takes into account multiple archaeological resources.
- Improve mechanisms to identify archaeological resources on private land or subject to private development in coordination with landowners. One such mechanism to be studied is a new set of archaeological guidelines that should be consistent with those used in other local jurisdictions.
- Increase interpretive possibilities within County parks and trail systems.