




MCPB Item # \_\_\_\_\_  
March 22, 2007

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mary Bradford, Director, Montgomery County Department of Parks  
John Hench, Acting Chief, Park Planning & Stewardship 

**FROM:** Lyn Coleman, Park & Trail Planning Supervisor,  
Park Planning & Stewardship Division (301) 650-4391

**SUBJECT:** **Public Hearing Draft Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan:  
Review of Public Hearing Testimony and APPROVAL of Plan with  
modifications**

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### **Staff Recommendations:**

**APPROVE** Plan with following modifications:

Add the recommendation that the Hyattstown Mill Road/Western Piedmont Trail become an "interpretive corridor" that highlights cultural, historic natural and prehistoric themes and that this interpretive focus be implemented in conjunction with proposed trail improvements.

Add the recommendation that the Rustic Road Functional Master Plan be amended to reflect this Plan's proposal that two gravel park roads become part of the natural surface trail network.

Clarify the recommendations for park houses and non-park related structures.

Define in greater detail the first phase of development proposed for the park in the Implementation section.

### **Proposed Worksession Agenda:**

- 1. Staff Overview of Key Elements Of Plan**
  - a. Relation of Park Proposal To 1/3:2/3 Ratio Policy**
  - b. Key Features of Trail Network**
  - c. Trail Network: Comparison of Existing Network to Proposed Network**
  - d. Park Acquisition Proposals**
  
- 2. Response To Key Topics Of Public Hearing**
  - a. Policy Relating to Park Houses**
  - b. Recommendation from Rustic Roads Advisory Committee**
  - c. Request for Additional Hard Surface Trails**
  - d. Cultural Aspect of Interpretive Recommendation**

3. **Implementation Recommendations**
4. **Review Summary of Public Hearing Testimony and Staff Responses**  
(Attachment 1)
5. **Approval of Public Hearing Draft Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan**

## **Staff Analysis and Recommendations**

### **1. Staff overview of key elements of plan**

A copy of the Public Hearing Draft Plan map is included as **Figure 1**.

#### **a. Relation of park proposal to 1/3:2/3 ratio policy**

Current park policy for regional parks is not to exceed a “1/3:2/3” ratio of developed areas to natural or conservation areas. The current ratio in Little Bennett Regional Park is 21.4% developed compared to 78.6% natural.

The most significant park proposal in terms of development is the day-use area. This use is proposed in an area currently being farmed so it is already considered “developed” for purposes of the 1/3:2/3 guideline.

The other plan recommendation affecting the ratio is the proposal for a hard surface trail. When this is added to the calculation, the ratio for the park would change by less than 1/10 of 1%.

The ratio may change further depending on recommendations regarding the golf course.

#### **b. Features of Trail network**

At public meetings on the plan, the same recommendation was expressed over and over again: do not reduce the number of trail miles; retain the parity between hiker only trails and shared use trails; eliminate dead-ends and emphasize trail continuity; and realign trails to make them sustainable from an environmental and maintenance point of view.

The Public Hearing Draft Master Plan achieves all these recommendations.

The main focus for realigning trails has been the northern portion of the park. Trails have been realigned to avoid sensitive environmental features, to provide continuity and to provide access from proposed trailhead access points.

#### **c. Comparison of existing network to proposed network**

The issue of how the trail plan relates to the existing trail network was raised at the Public Hearing. The Planning Board asked for information regarding the trail network. As

shown in **Figure 2**, the existing trail network is all natural surface trails. Some of the trails follow old farm roads so the surface is firm and stable enough to accommodate people of limited mobility. Although these trails are former roads, they are NOT considered for trail planning purposes to be hard surface because they have not been planned or aligned in accord with park hard surface trail standards and they are not being maintained as hard surface trails.

**d. Park acquisition proposals**

The map and table showing park acquisition proposals appeared in earlier versions of the draft plan but were inadvertently left out of the Public Hearing Draft. The information, shown in **Figure 3** will be included in the adopted plan.

**2. Response to Key Topics at Public Hearing**

**a. Policy Relating to Park Houses**

There are currently 30 houses in Little Bennett Regional Park. The location of these properties is shown in **Figure 4**. The draft Plan for Little Bennett proposes removal of those houses not related to park functions or that have no historical value or significance. This policy has been in place since acquisition of the park began in 1962 and has been incorporated in all park planning efforts. The Planning Board asked for clarification of this policy.

**Policy Background.** Park practice 6-50, adopted in 1976, governs the management of houses or non-park related structures. In accord with this policy, the houses in Little Bennett Regional Park have been placed in one of two categories (see **Figure 4**).

Category A houses are structures essential to a park program that should be maintained on a permanent basis. Criteria includes agricultural or historical significance. The six park houses in Category A and are described in the table below. Three of the houses are on the Master Plan of Historic Preservation and are integral to the interpretive vision for the park. Three other houses are being evaluated by Historic Preservation staff to see if they meet the criteria for inclusion on the Master Plan of Historic Preservation.

Category B houses are surplus to park use requirements and can be made available for rental on an interim bases. Twenty-four park houses are in Category B. Four of these park houses are considered compromised and uninhabitable. These houses are considered an 'attractive nuisance' and are recommended to be razed immediately.

**Overview of Park Houses with Historic Significance**

| Address  | Rationale for Recommendation                      | Relation to Master Plan                                      |
|--|---|--|
| 1. Hyattstown Mill and Miller's House (14920 Frederick Road) | Included in Master Plan for Historic Preservation | Significant element of interpretive recommendations for park |
| 2. Zeigler Log House (25321 Frederick Road)                  | Included in Master Plan for Historic Preservation | Significant element of interpretive recommendations for park |

| Address   | Rationale for Recommendation   | Relation to Master Plan  |
|---|--|--|
| 3. The Charles Browning Farm (13910 A/B Lewisdale Road) | Included in Master Plan for Historic Preservation  | Near Golf Course; recommended to continue as feature of the park; Golf Course Master Plan, now being prepared by Revenue Authority, should assure setting. |
| 4. Wilkerson Day Farm (25925 Clarksburg Road)           | Included in Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites; under review and evaluation by Historic Preservation staff   | Potential trail head site and trail destination if ever open to the public.  |
| 5. 25115 Frederick Road                                 | Under review and evaluation by Historic Preservation staff   | Study will be complete in 6 months-one year  |
| 6. The Perry Browning House (25801 Prescott Road)       | Potentially the oldest standing structure in the Little Bennett Park, with a log house section estimated to date from the late 1700s. Under review and evaluation by Historic Preservation staff | Study will be complete in 6 months-one year  |

**Planning Background.** All park planning related to Little Bennett Regional Park since its acquisition began in 1962 has assumed the removal of the Category B houses as part of the vision for the park. This is especially true of the 14 houses along MD 355. This area of the park has always been planned for recreation opportunities, a visitor’s center and picnic facilities. The Public Hearing Draft Master Plan adds an additional feature to the frontage area: a hiker-biker hard surface trail that will parallel MD 355 in the same area as the houses. The vision for the park cannot be accomplished with so many non-park related structures in the area of the park intended for public enjoyment.

**The major issue regarding the Category B homes in Little Bennett Regional Park is not whether to remove them but when to remove them.**

For the past decades, the continuation of the homes has not interfered with development plans for the park. However, as noted in the Implementation section of the Public Hearing Draft Plan, the top priority for Little Bennett is to provide a public entrance to the park from MD 355 and to make that park entrance a trail head as well as provide some amenities like picnic shelters. This would be an “interim” use until the Master Plan vision of a day-use area is realized.

Staff recommends the Planning Board re-affirm the existing Policy 6-50 regarding razing park houses to assure the orderly removal of park houses during this “interim” period. This action will assure that when the Master Plan vision for the MD 355 frontage is ready to be implemented and the houses are razed that parkland will be restored to its natural state and will not interfere with the overall park development. Little Bennett Regional Park is in its master planning stages--a comprehensive and thorough process--it is correct to suggest the removal of these houses is not imminent. The policy being recommended by staff is to demolish Category B park houses on a case-by-case basis as follows:

- Continue to evaluate the habitable condition of park houses. When a park house requires substantial expense to put the house into habitable condition to meet

housing codes, the house should be razed. This approach would result in four houses being removed immediately.

- As park house tenants vacate, the park house should be razed.

The houses at Little Bennett provide affordable workforce housing as an interim use until the park is developed. This is an important accomplishment in a county where affordable housing is so badly needed. However, one of the key functions of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks is park stewardship and to provide opportunities for residents of Montgomery County to enjoy nature based experiences in an increasingly urban county. To achieve this objective at Little Bennett Regional Park, existing houses in Category B will need to be removed.

**b. Recommendation of the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee to Provide Public Access to Park Roads Designated as Rustic Roads**

Two sections of road in the park were designated “rustic roads” in the 1996 Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan (although abandoned as County roads, the Rustic Roads Plan addressed them as park roads.) The two road segments (see **Figure 5**) create a 1.9-mile loop east of MD 355, just south of Hyattstown. The gravel roads are not signed for public access nor are they maintained to park road standards. They are used by park maintenance vehicles. Park users knowledgeable about the roads use them for access to the stream but there is no official parking lot.

The roads are not needed for local vehicular circulation. The Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan recommends the right of way become part of the overall park trail system for the enjoyment of hikers, bikers, equestrians and people with limited mobility.

The Rustic Roads Advisory Committee has “voted unanimously not to ask the County Council to withdraw the rustic designation and not to close the roads to public vehicular access.” The Advisory Committee supports rustic road use “by visitors with limited mobility” and finds “no conflict with having trail users on these roads.” The committee concludes their letter by offering to work with park staff on “appropriate adaptations of the road surface to accommodate trail users, parking locations, signs on the roads, bridge maintenance and other safety features.”

Staff continues to recommend these road segments be closed to public vehicular traffic and become part of the park trail network for the following reasons:

- The Public Hearing Draft Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan has gone through an extensive community outreach program and the closure of these roads has received widespread support. Converting these roads to trails is an essential element of the Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan. The old roadbeds are firm and stable enough to accommodate people with limited mobility.
- Staff disagrees that using roads as trails is acceptable. Trail use and cars are not compatible. Providing public access to these roads will require the rerouting of the trail into environmentally sensitive areas.

- This portion of the county features numerous rustic roads so there are many opportunities for people to experience the agricultural landscape. It is far more important to provide safe, attractive trail access in the park than to duplicate driving experiences offered elsewhere in the area.
- There is no room for parking in this environmentally constrained locale so people could not get out of their cars to experience the beauty of the stream and natural setting.
- Staff appreciates the offer of the Rustic Roads Committee to work with park staff to assure the roads meet operating and design criteria for rustic roads. However, there is no money in the Parks Department budget for public roads in parks. In fact, the Parks Department has reached an agreement with Montgomery County DPWT to maintain public roads in parks. The 1.9 mile loop in the park has been abandoned by the county so is not subject to this agreement.

**If it is necessary to amend the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan to implement the recommendations of the Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan, Community Based Planning staff should initiate that process immediately to allow implementation of the park trail recommendations.**

### **c. Trail Network: Hard Surface**

Most of the Public Hearing testimony supported keeping the interior of the park for natural surface trails. However, there was testimony suggesting the idea of encircling the park with a hard surface trail. Montgomery County DPWT suggests more hard surface trails were envisioned by the Clarksburg Master Plan.

The Public Hearing Draft Master Plan recommends the extension of a hard surface trail parallel to Md 355. This hard surface trail proposal:

- Extends the proposed Clarksburg greenway hard surface trail from Clarksburg Town Center to Hyattstown.
- Provides access to the proposed Day Use Center
- Provides access to the proposed park entry and internal trail network
- Provides access to the natural surface trails that accommodate bicycles.

The hard surface trail in Little Bennett is part of a regional trail network that will link the community of Clarksburg to Little Bennett Regional Park, Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park and Black Hill Regional Park. The Clarksburg Master Plan and the Clarksburg Greenways Implementation Study illustrate the concept (see **Figure 6**).

Hard surface trails are the most popular type of trail because so many people of differing physical abilities and interest can use them. They are also the most expensive type of trail, costing up to \$1,000,000 per mile depending on topography, environmental features and bridges. This means the designation and the priority for hard surface park trails requires careful consideration. In terms of hard surface trails within parks, the regional trails concept Plan focuses on Black Hill Regional Park and the opportunity to provide a hard surface trail to encircle the lake. Facility plans to implement these two projects have been approved by the Planning Board at an estimated cost of \$4 million.

Completing a hard surface trail around the eastern arm of Lake Seneca in Black Hill Regional Park is the top hard surface trail priority in the upcounty area.

The trail network in Little Bennett Regional Park provides trail opportunities for people on bikes. Even though trails in the northern portion of the park are not hard surface, they are open to cyclists. The trails will accommodate different levels of experience so that the average cyclist on an average mountain bike can enjoy the park.

The idea of a hard surface circumferential trail would require an amendment to the Countywide Bikeways Plan to show a bikepath along Lewisdale Road. This issue was not raised during the development of the Countywide Bikeways Plan and there is no bikeway or bike path proposed along Lewisdale Road.

#### **d. Cultural aspect of interpretive recommendations**

Public testimony supports interpretive programs for the history of African Americans and Native Americans. Staff agrees. The Public Hearing Draft recommends “creating a historic landscape that tells the story of the community life in past centuries.” Potential interpretive themes, including the roles of African Americans and Native Americans, are included as background information. Staff is recommending the background information section be moved into the main body of the Master Plan.

Staff is also recommending that the Hyattstown Mill Road/Western Piedmont Trail serve as the prototype for creating an interpretive trail that intertwines historic, cultural, natural and archeological themes. The Western Piedmont Trail offers the opportunity to offer a “walk through history” as described on page 21 of the Public Hearing Draft Plan, which would include African-American historic sites and the role of Native Americans. Park naturalists have identified natural features along this trail in the categories of geology, wetlands, forests, meadows and old fields and animals.

As discussed in the Plan Implementation portion of the packet, these interpretive themes should be developed in concert with the natural surface trail program. Staff is also requesting additional naturalist support to help implement the program.

One correction that is needed in the Public Hearing Draft Master Plan concerns the Jeremiah Norwood Farm (see page 37 of the Public Hearing Draft Plan). Contrary to what the text states, the log tobacco barn of the Jeremiah Norwood Farm is still standing. Although in very rough shape, this structure is a very important architectural and cultural resource. At one time there were hundreds of log tobacco houses in the upcounty area. Today, there are only a handful. This is a highly significant resource which merits immediate attention. There is currently a Tobacco Barn trail that leads directly adjacent to the Jeremiah Norwood tobacco barn. It is an excellent opportunity for future interpretation and will be added to the text and maps in the Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan.

### 3. Implementation Recommendations

The top implementation priorities identified in the Public Hearing Draft Master Plan are:

- Implement natural surface trail system recommendations
- Provide trailhead parking lots, including a parking lot along Md 355/Frederick Road.
- Close off internal park roads to public vehicular traffic as recommended by the Plan.

Staff recommends adding the following to the priority list:

- Provide CIP funds for design/engineering and obtaining necessary permits for an interim parking lot, located in the same general location as the proposed future Day Use Area that will provide:
  - A trail-head gravel parking area, with direct access from MD Rte. 355, that provides in the range of 20 spaces with two as ADA spaces
  - An accessible Picnic shelter located nearby, including ADA path connection to it from the parking lot
  - Natural surface trail connections as shown on the master plan to link to existing trails in the park
  - Meadow interpretive areas near the trailhead.
- Close the current group camping area and relocate it to the regular campground as recommended in the Plan
- Designate the Hyattstown Mill/Western Piedmont trail as an interpretive corridor and develop an interpretive program for trail users.
- Fund a full time career park naturalist at Little Bennett Regional Park in FY 09.
- Initiate an amendment to the Rustic roads Functional Plan to allow 1.9 miles of former roads to be used as trails.
- Provide up to nine cabins at the campground to provide opportunities for people to enjoy the park year-round.
- Include in the Natural Resource Management Plan a strategy for partnering with Montgomery County Public Schools to create the meadows proposed in Phase I Implementation as part of the “green schools” initiative.
- Consider adding the stabilization and/or adding a new roof to the Jeremiah Norwood Farm tobacco house as a major Maintenance or CIP candidate project.



Figure 1 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan Map

Little Bennett Regional Park Proposed Master Plan Map

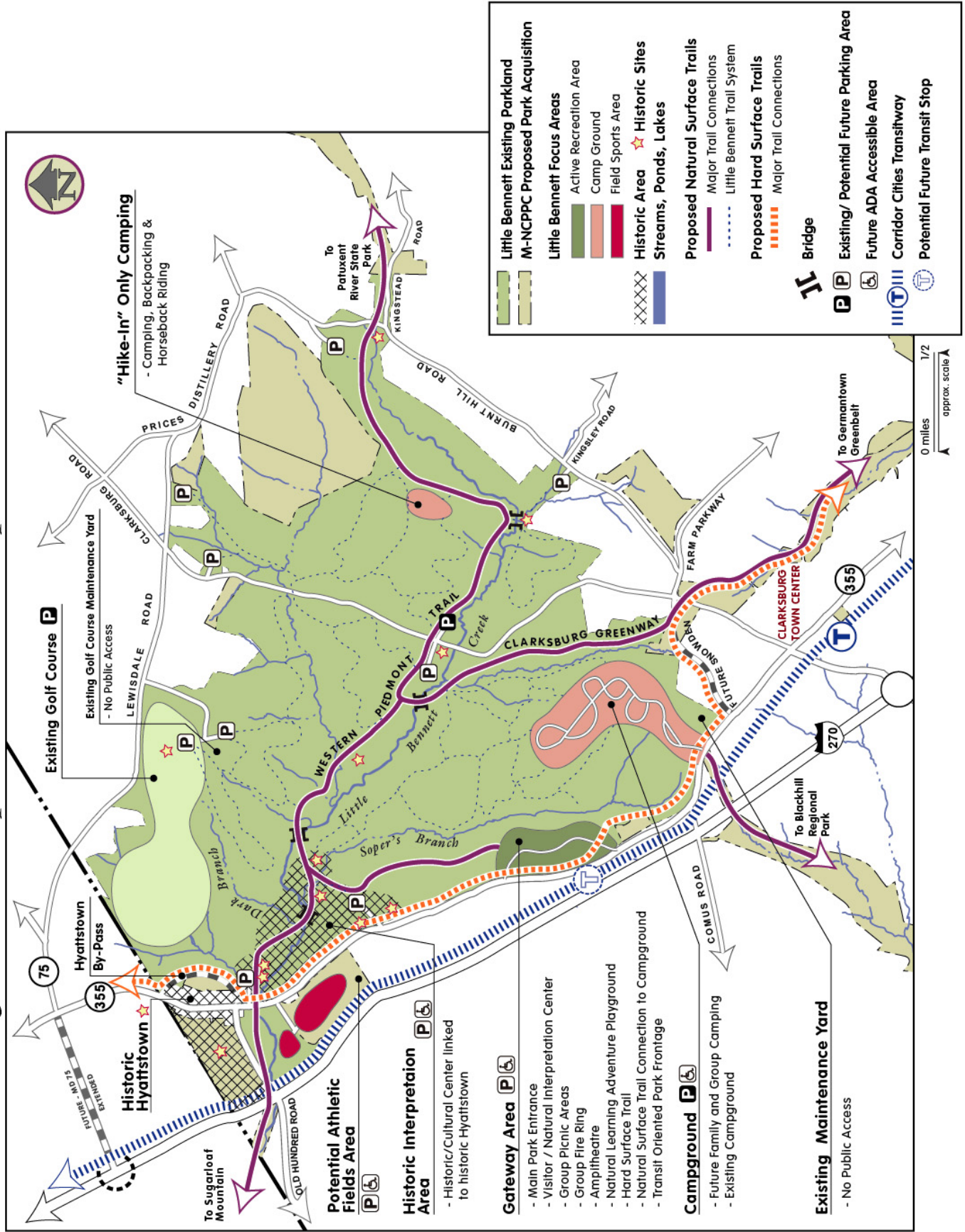
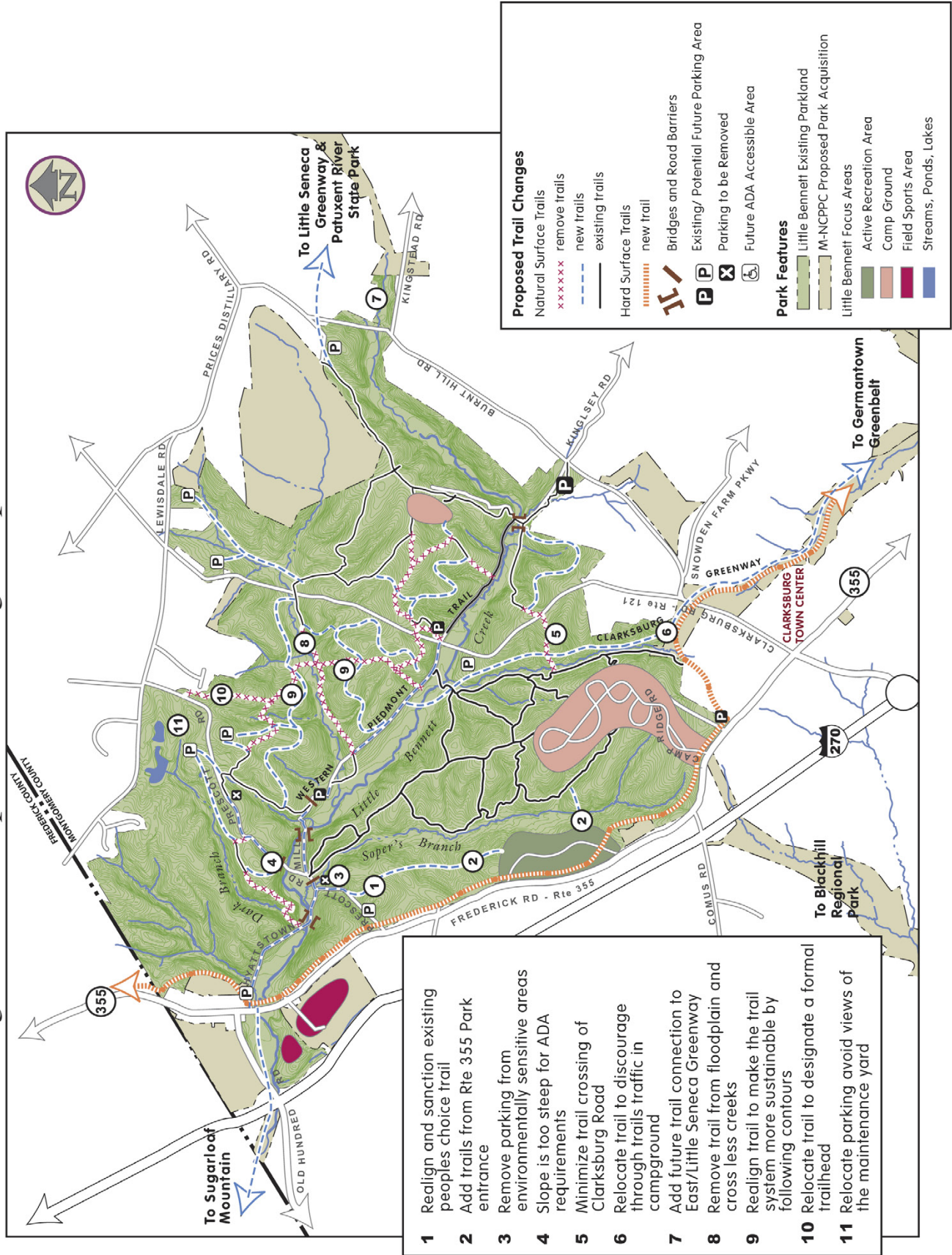


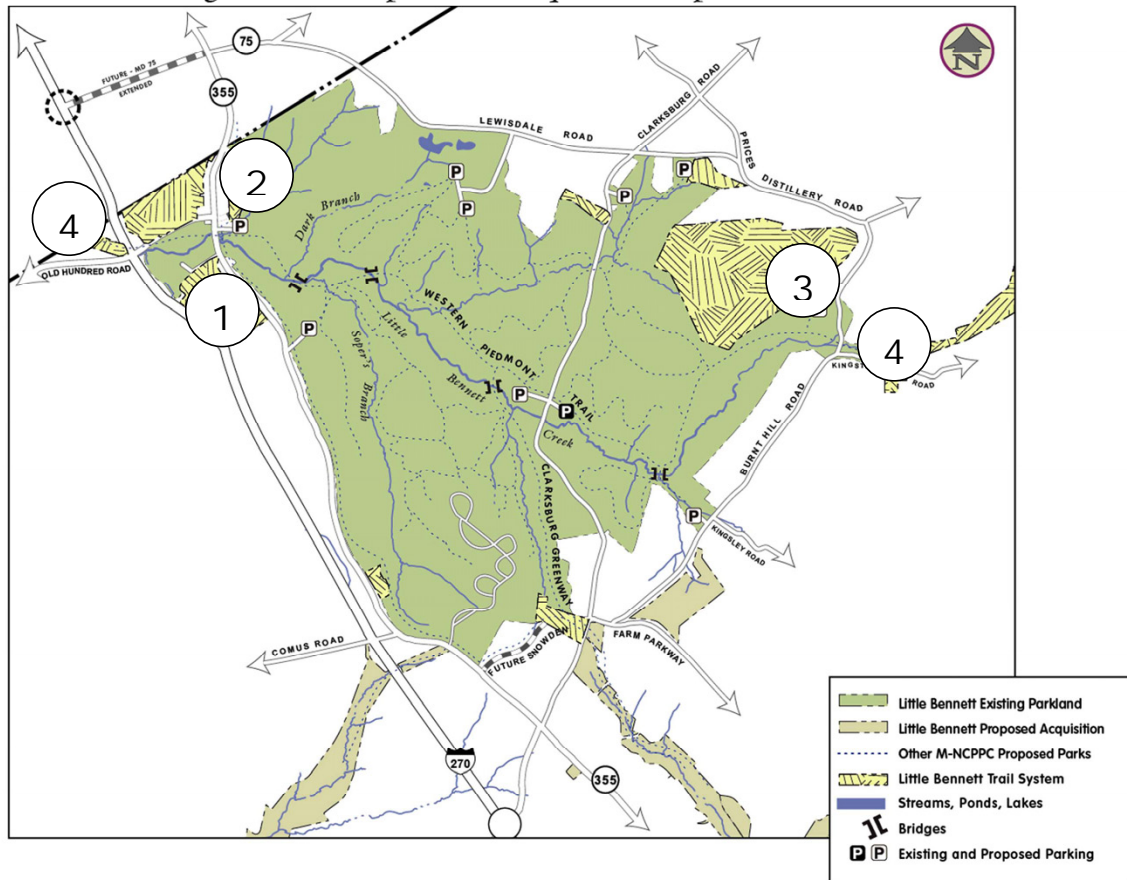
Figure 2 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan Trail Changes Map

Little Bennett Regional Park Proposed Trail Changes Map



**Figure 3 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan Park Acquisition Map and Chart**

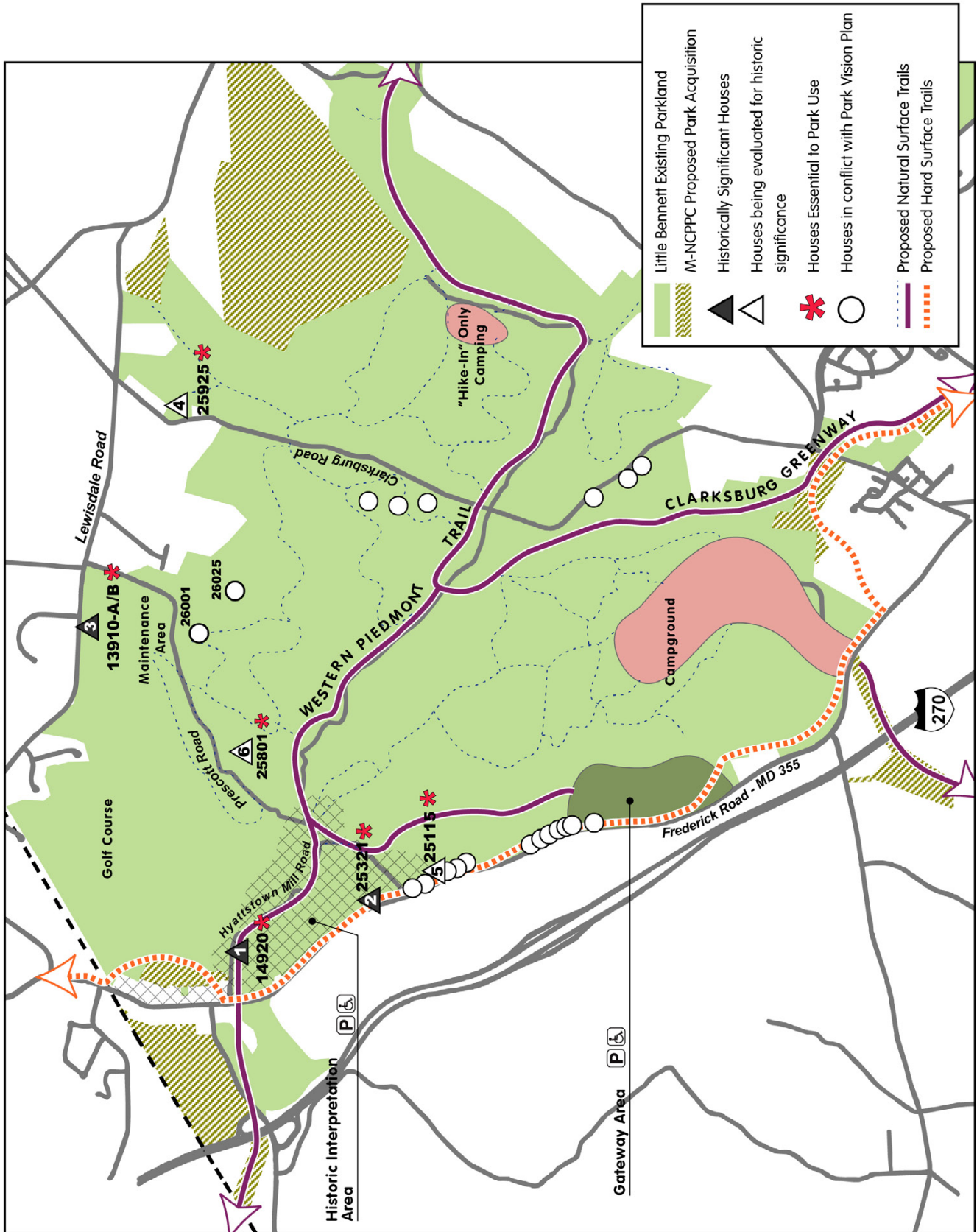
*Little Bennett Regional Park Proposed Park Acquisition Map*



| MAP KEY # | ACREAGE                        | RATIONALE FOR FUTURE ACQUISITION   |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1         | 50+                            | Would accommodate potential future need for athletic fields; strengthens historic focus for northwestern portion of Little Bennett park; Enhances setting for Hyattstown Historic District |
| 2         | .6 acre                        | Would provide parking area for Hyattstown Mill   |
| 3         | To be determined by field work | Entrance to proposed trailhead parking   |
| 4         | To be determined by field work | Acquire additional land as needed to locate natural surface trails outside environmental buffer areas.   |

Figure 4 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan - Park Houses Map

Little Bennett Regional Park - Existing Park Houses Map



**Figure 5 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan - Rustic Roads Functional Plan**

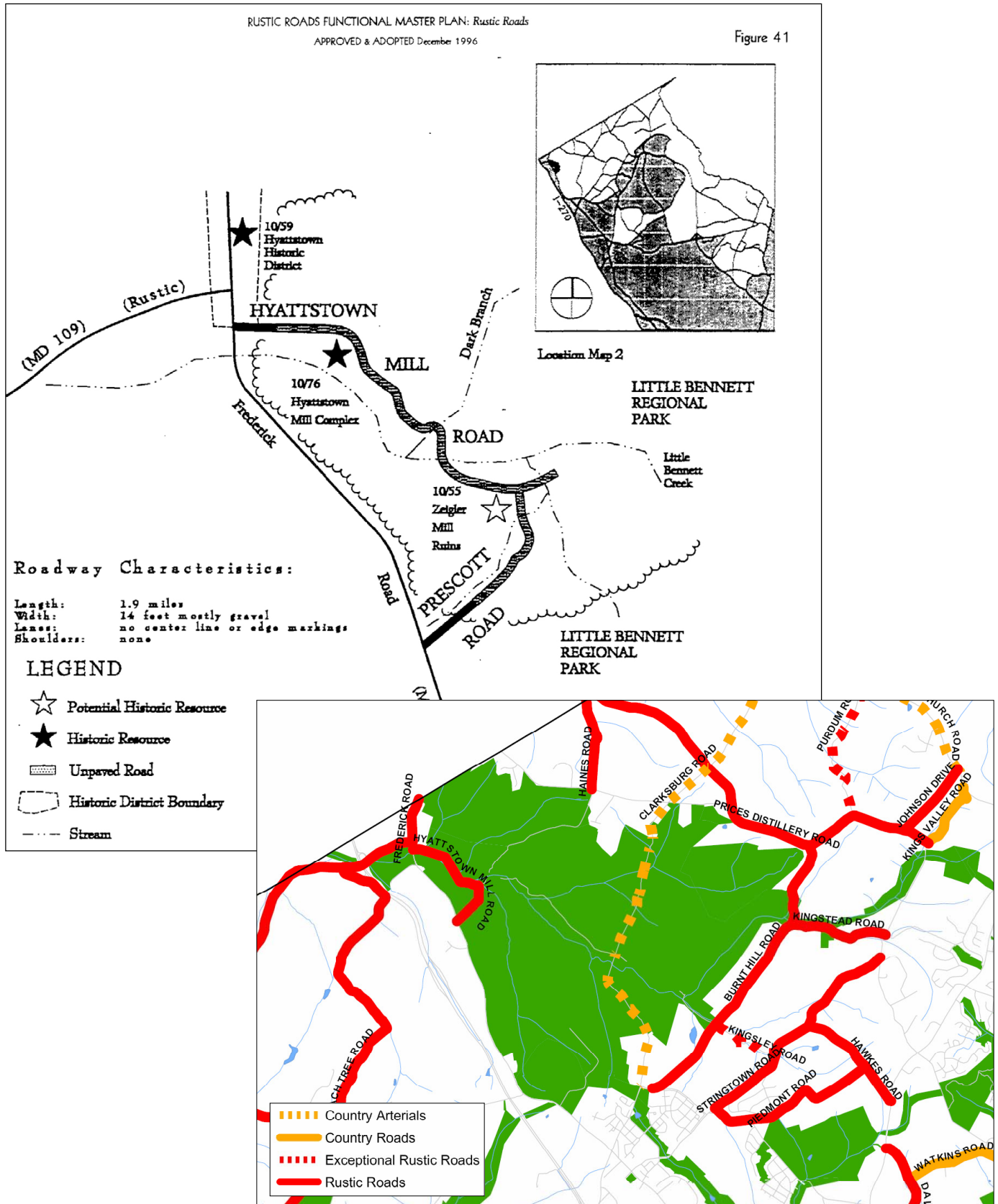
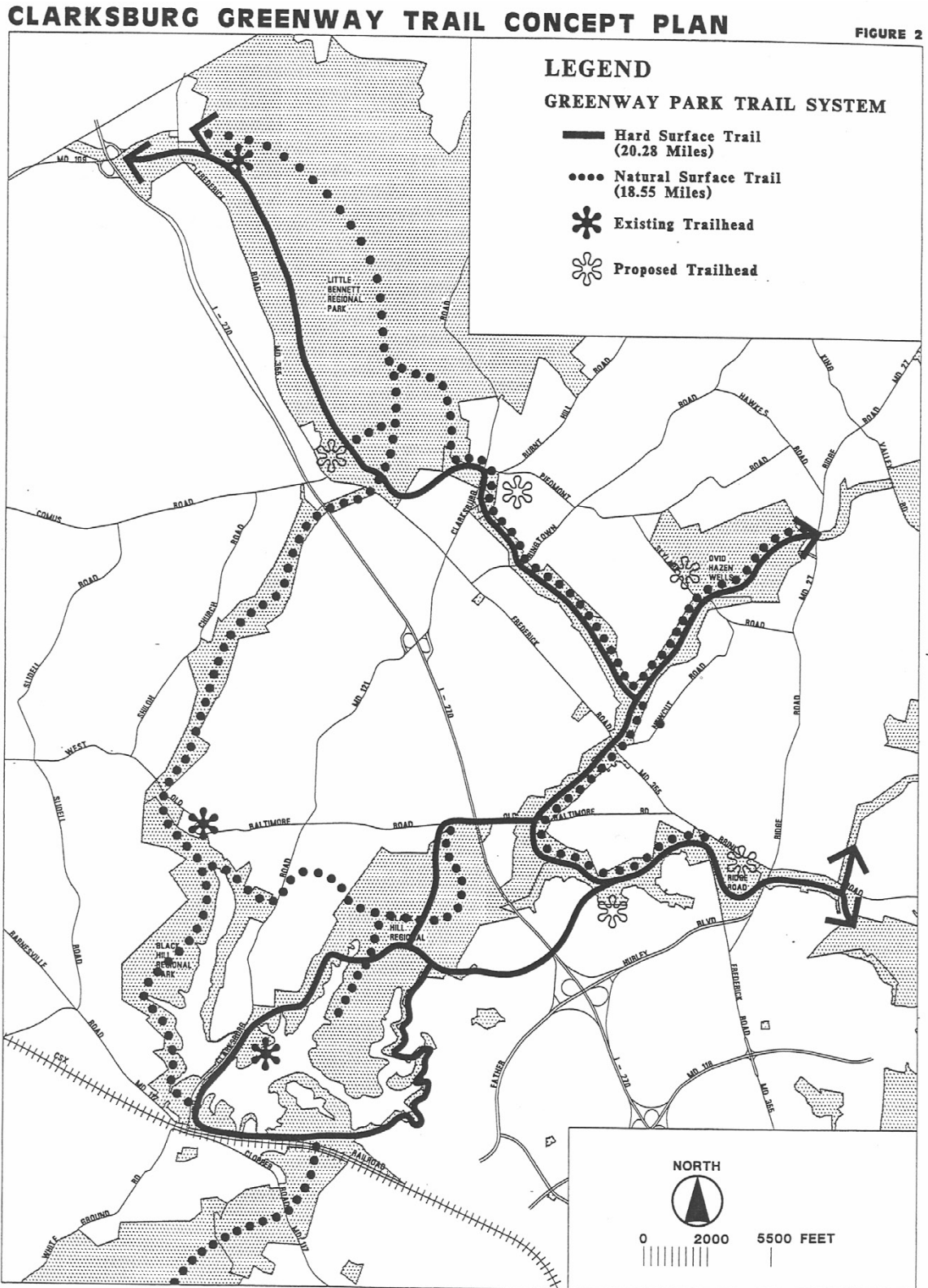


Figure 6 - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan - Clarksburg Master Plan Hard Surface Trail Network



## Attachment 1

### 4. Responses to Public Hearing Testimony - Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan

| TOPIC                        | TESTIMONY   | STAFF RESPONSE  |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| <p><b>Plan Concepts:</b></p> | <p><i>Robert Beall</i><br/>Agree with closing or interior roads except for maintenance/emergency. Restore Clarksburg Rd. as it goes thru park to gravel.</p>  | <p>As noted in the Plan, Clarksburg Road must continue as a through road and continue to meet country arterial standards.</p>   |
|                              | <p><i>Friends of Little Bennett</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends of Little Bennett support and endorse the Plan</li> <li>• Strongly support concept of park being “nature-based retreat”.</li> <li>• Absence of any type of public entrance to the park limits public access to and benefit of the park; support plan concept of main gateway entrance.</li> <li>• Visitor’s center would enhance education about natural, historic and cultural features.</li> </ul> | <p>No response needed.</p>  |
|                              | <p><i>Maryland Native Plan Society (John Parrish)</i><br/>Overall, I like this plan in the general sense. Support locating more intensive uses along MD 355</p>   | <p>No response needed.</p>  |
|                              | <p><i>Hyattstown Mill Project</i><br/>Ball fields will introduce a lot of vehicular traffic because not within walking distance of populations</p>  | <p>Current projections indicate that ball fields being provided on public parkland elsewhere in the service area of LBRP will meet future recreation demand. Retaining a potential future location for additional ballfields west of MD 355 is in case demand exceeds the supply of ball fields at some future point in time.</p> |
|                              | <p><i>Quantico Orienteering Club (Greg Lennon)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally support plan</li> <li>• Support preservation of park interior and elimination of vehicular road travel.</li> </ul>  | <p>No response needed.</p>  |
|                              | <p><i>Charles Deering</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As user of the park for 20 years and a participant in all the community meetings, I can say the draft truly represents our shared vision.</li> </ul>   | <p>No response needed.</p>  |

| TOPIC                          | TESTIMONY   | STAFF RESPONSE   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
|                                | <p><i>Paul Majewski</i></p> <p>The park should remain a quiet place for the enjoyment of nature. Additional multiple ballfields or off road motorized vehicles would violate that quest for quiet.</p>  | <p>The potential future location identified for ball fields in west of MD 355, so that active recreation activities will not conflict with the more passive orientation of the park east of MD 355. Off road motorized vehicles are not permitted in any parks.</p>  |
| <p><b>Executive Branch</b></p> | <p><i>Rustic Roads Advisory Committee</i> has voted unanimously to retain the rustic designation of 1.9 miles of Hyattstown Mill and Prescott Roads and not to close these roads to public vehicular access.</p>  | <p>The Public Hearing Draft Master Plan recommends keeping these roads open as trails but recommends closing them to public vehicular access. Further discussion may be found in the packet.</p> <p>Community Based Planning staff offer this response:</p> <p>Community Based-Planning staff does not object to closing these roads to vehicular traffic, if necessary, as long as the existing roads are used for access (vehicular or pedestrian) to historic and cultural sites in the park. CBP staff also does not see any conflict in keeping the roads open to vehicular traffic as well as trail users since there is hardly any vehicular traffic on the road. If the Parks staff feels that the existing road bed can not be used by both users then we suggest that the Planning Board be made aware of the rustic roads advisory committee's position along with the Park staff recommendation. If the Planning Board decides to close the roads to vehicular traffic, the question of whether a Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan amendment is needed will be addressed by the CBP Division after the Board's decision</p> |
|                                | <p><i>Department of Environmental Protection</i> staff concerned about use of water feature as focal point in day use areas because of impacts of a wet pond on Soper's Branch. Suggest an alternate focal point be proposed.</p>   | <p>Agree. The graphic will be changed from a water feature to another natural focal point.</p>   |
|                                | <p><i>Department of Public Works and Transportation</i> generally does a good job of identifying master planned transportation facilities in vicinity of park. The following should be corrected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Include description of park acquisition properties and relevant master planned roads.</li> <li>b. DPWT opposes closing of Clarksburg Road as a pilot project</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Agree, inadvertently omitted after Staff Draft</li> <li>b. This is a suggestion to accommodate special events related to cycling and park activities; any temporary closing of Clarksburg Road would only be done in cooperation with DPWT.</li> <li>c. The Clarksburg Master Plan did not include Little Bennett</li> </ul>   |



| TOPIC | TESTIMONY  | STAFF RESPONSE  |
|-------|--|---|
|       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. Correct inconsistencies with Council approved plans: Clarksburg Master Plan bikeway plan and Countywide Bikeways Functional Plan</li> <li>d. Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan</li> <li>e. Relationship between the Little Bennett Golf Course Master Plan and this Plan needs to more fully clarified and explained.</li> </ul> | <p>Regional Park. The arrows shown as bikeways through Little Bennett Regional Park were intended to emphasize the importance of connectivity of bike paths from Clarksburg to and through Little Bennett Regional Park. As noted in the Clarksburg Master Plan, “individual master planning efforts by the Department of Parks will guide future development of Little Bennett Regional Park.” The Clarksburg Plan Implementation Study further reinforces this approach for Greenways: “Add greenway trail planning as a critical element in the Little Bennett Regional park master Plan.” The Public Hearing Draft provides the greenway trail connectivity by locating the hard surface trail parallel to MD 355 and providing natural surface trail access to the park’s interior.</p> <p>The Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan (March 2005) also shows a bikeway (SP-72) along MD 355 to “provide excellent connection to... Clarksburg Town Center.” Figure 2-25 of the Plan shows another hard surface trail going through the center of the park, which is identified as a “park trail corridor with a hard surface trail.” The Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan proposes to shift this park trail corridor to MD 355 so that SP-72 essentially functions as both the transportation bikeway for this area of the county – connecting the regional park with Clarksburg Town Center – as well as the planned recreational park trail/corridor</p> <p>County master plans, therefore, do not support the statement by DPWT staff that this park trail “should be retained since it is envisioned as part of the Countywide Transportation element”. The bikeway plan does not identify a specific alignment for the park trail/corridor. Rather, the park trail corridor as shown on Figure 2-5 of the CBFMP simply depicts a desirable connection.</p> <p>The Plan proposes that the visitor’s center and recreational facilities be located along MD 355. Specific concerns about water supply should be addressed in coordination with the park manager and region maintenance staff and during the Facility Plan for the Visitors Center and day use area. The interior of the park is limited to natural surface trails.</p> |

| TOPIC                | TESTIMONY  | STAFF RESPONSE  |
|----------------------|--|---|
|                      |  | <p>Widening all these trails to accommodate emergency vehicles would alter the natural experience of the trail user. The pattern of trails and the width of trails are not different from other parks in the system</p> <p>d. See packet for discussion of rustic road designation.</p> <p>e. The Planning board is reviewing the master plan for the golf course separately.</p> |
|                      | <p><i>Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service</i> concerned that access issues, insufficient water supply and lack of appropriate apparatus/equipment for this unique and rugged setting hinder fast and effective service. Makes specific recommendations to address concerns.</p>  | <p>The main areas of development proposed in the park occur along MD 355. The interior of the park will only include natural surface trails. Many of the comments made are very specific and management oriented. These be addressed in separate discussions with the park manager who has already met with Fire and Rescue Service representatives.</p>                          |
| <p><b>Trails</b></p> | <p><i>Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts (MORE) Austin Steo</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully support the trail elements of the Plan, realizing some minor connectivity issues need to be resolved.</li> <li>• The stacked loop proposal provides trail-less areas within the loop.</li> <li>• Most of trail concept is to relocating existing trails with a more sustainable, environmental friendly trail network.</li> </ul>  | <p>No response needed.</p>  |
|                      | <p><i>William Michie:</i></p> <p>a. As a road bicyclist, I agree with keeping interior of park for natural surface trails.</p> <p>b. Support continuous hard surface trail from Clarksburg along MD 355 set off by 100-200 feet all the way to Hyattstown and Frederick County.</p> <p>c. Provide for midterm” cyclists, the person with an average hybrid bike with medium size tires who is neither an outstanding athlete nor totally unfit to enjoy the interior of the park.</p> <p>d. Allow for hikers to enjoy one contiguous area, which is the park, undisturbed by asphalt pavement; the road cyclist has the entire Ag. Reserve to experience an agricultural experience.</p> | <p>a. No response needed.</p> <p>b. Agree; this is an element of the Plan.</p> <p>c. Agree.</p> <p>d. The southern trail system is open to hikers only.</p>   |

| TOPIC | TESTIMONY  | STAFF RESPONSE   |
|-------|--|--|
|       | <p><i>J. Fauerby, Lynne Rosenbusch</i></p> <p><b>a.</b> Plan should provide more hard surface bike trails, as these are most popular and most accessible types of trails. Reduce construction cost/maintenance costs and environmental impacts by following existing gravel roads. Natural surface trails open to bikes means biking would be enjoyed only by a small number of people who are experienced riders of all terrain bicycles.</p> <p><b>b.</b> Park Plan violates the Clarksburg Master Plan that recommends three hard surface trails in park.<br/>-Add hard surface trail along Lewisdale Road.<br/>-Add parallel trails for horses along hard surface trails.</p> <p><b>c.</b> Clarify which trails will be discontinued by new trail plan. Against closing the following: Northern portion of the Tobacco Barn Trail; against closing portion of Froggy Hollow Schoolhouse Trail that crossed Clarksburg Road.</p> <p><b>d.</b> Concerned about locating new parking lot south of the existing golf course parking lot.</p> | <p><b>a.</b> See packet for discussion. Hard surface trails are popular and accessible but are also the most expensive. Park standards for hard surface trails cannot be met by simply relying on existing gravel roads. However, these roads can be continued as part of the natural surface trail network and provide a firm and stable surface for hikers and cyclists.</p> <p><b>b.</b> See earlier response. The proposal for a circumferential hard surface trail could only be accomplished by having a bike path along Lewisdale Road, not currently recommended in the Countywide Bikeways Plan. The idea including a natural surface trail next to the Master Plan proposed hard surface trail can be considered at time of Facility Planning of the hard surface trail proposed parallel to MD 355.</p> <p><b>c.</b> This Plan realigns trails to address environmental and connectivity concerns. There is no net loss of trails and the resulting network will offer a far more sustainable trail network than now exists.</p> <p><b>d.</b> The issue of sharing parking with the golf course has raised concerns from the Revenue Authority due to conflicts with golf course users on weekends. The exact location of trail head parking will be determined during the implementation phase after adoption of the Plan.</p> |
|       | <p><i>Maryland Native Plant Society (John Parrish)</i></p> <p>Natural resources management plan should have been done prior to laying out trail network.</p> <p>Trail plan does good job in avoiding wetland and steep slopes.</p> <p>Trails seem to go everywhere; DNR report from 1997 says additional trails and facilities would fragment rare species habitat. Make certain portions of the park trail-less like a wilderness park, especially near Dark Branch Tributary.</p> <p>Should not introduce trails into areas that are relatively pristine.</p>  | <p>The Natural Resources Management Plan follows the master plan so that management recommendations are supportive of the long-range vision for the park. An analysis of environmental features was the first stop in the plan process and led to the conclusion that all recreational facilities and structures should be located at the outskirts of the park and that the interior of the park should be preserved. Actual alignments of trails will be done in the field with trail building and natural resource staff.</p> <p>“No trails” does not mean “no people”. Parks attract people because of their beauty and natural features. The absence of trails has not prevented “people’s choice” trails to emerge in all our parks. These trails are often problematic as they are formed by people who are not knowledgeable about the environmental consequences of a poorly routed trail. The Department of Parks</p>  |

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|                              |  | <p>has created a "sanctioned trail" program that involves the systematic reevaluation of park trails to locate trails in areas where people want to go but to create trail alignments that are sustainable from an environmental and maintenance perspective.</p> <p>The impetus for revisiting the Little Bennett Regional Park trail systems was growing concern at the degradation of trails because of their poor locations and design. Providing a safe, enjoyable, interconnected trail system is the best strategy to divert people from environmentally sensitive portions of the park. By not providing sanctioned trails, we will be encouraging unsanctioned, people's choice trails.</p> <p>As a final note, the park regulations allow hikers in all our parks and allows access by equestrians to areas where there has been equestrian use in the past.</p> |
|                              | <p><i>Quantico Orienteering Club (QOC) Greg Lennon</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. QOC has sponsored orienteering event opt on the public in Little Bennett since 1984. Would like master plan to recognize that off-trail travel on foot will continue to be permissible in general in all areas of Little Bennett.</li> <li>b. Support conversion of existing trails in line with guidelines for long-term sustainable trails.</li> <li>c. Clarify which trails are multiuse.</li> <li>d. Provide areas of at least 200 acres where there are no trails or paths.</li> <li>e. Support access by the disabled to the park, including hard surface trails.</li> </ol> <p><i>Paul Majewski</i><br/>Any changes to the existing trails needs to be explained</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. This is a park management issue that will be handled by the park manager.</li> <li>b. Agree.</li> <li>c. All natural surface trails in the northern portion of the park are shared use as well as a proposed shared use trail that will connect these trails to the proposed visitors center along MD 355.</li> <li>d. The proposed park trail system includes trail loops which encircle "trail-less" areas that range in size from 40 to over 200 acres.</li> <li>e. Agree</li> </ol> <p>Agree, This topic will be addressed at the worksession.</p>   |
| <p><b>Implementation</b></p> | <p><i>Friends of Little Bennett, (Charles Deering)</i><br/>Endorse making renovated trail network and trail parking lots as a top implementation priority</p> <p><i>Maryland Native Plant Society</i><br/>Support acquisition of more land for conservation and active recreation.</p>   | <p>Agree</p> <p>See Plan packet for description of proposals for park acquisition.</p>   |

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|                              | <p><i>Quantico Orienteering</i><br/>Request public input to review drafts of Natural Resources Management Plan</p>  | <p>The Natural Resources Management Plan is a staff level technical document that will help implement the recommendations of the Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan. Because it addresses how resources should best be managed from a technical and professional viewpoint, the Plan does not include a public outreach element. However, staff is more than happy to answer any questions about the management plan.</p> |
| <b>Park Houses</b>           | <p><i>Don Henning</i><br/>Should not demolish park houses because they provide affordable workforce housing. If houses are in poor condition, it's because they have not been maintained property. All parks have homes bordering park property; signs could identify Little Bennett Regional Park without taking down homes.</p> <p><i>John Fauerby and Lynne Rosenbusch:</i><br/>Concerned about policy to tear down park houses. Either maintain these homes or contract with an organization that provides this service</p> <p><i>Hyattstown Mill Arts Project</i><br/>Very serious to displace somebody from their residence; must have been some wisdom when park created to leave houses intact.</p> | <p>The issue of park housing is addressed separately in the packet.</p> <p>See packet for discussion.</p> <p>See packet for discussion</p>  |
| <b>Interpretive Elements</b> | <p><i>Hyattstown Mill Arts Project</i><br/>-Very thoughtful plan<br/>-No mention of the Hyattstown Mill Arts project and its importance in terms of cultural programming</p> <p><i>Maryland Native Plan Society</i><br/>Support interpretive exhibits and signs to educate the public about natural and cultural history in the park.</p> <p><i>American Indian Heritage and Education Association (Gregory Hamilton)</i><br/>-Believe the interpretive emphasis is a major component for the success of the park's development<br/>-Support Native American theme for this park. including an</p>  | <p>Interpretation at the mill is a critical element of the Plan. The Hyattstown Mill Arts Project is meeting this objective.</p> <p>Agree</p> <p>Agree</p>  |

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|                     | Indian village and providing Native American programs year-round.  |   |
|                     | <p><b>Warren Fleming, member, Historic Preservation Commission</b><br/>African American portion of interpretive section has been left out from earlier plan drafts.</p>  | <p>Although the role of Native Americans in the park is one interpretive theme endorsed by the Plan, the theme is not being recommended as the overarching theme for the entire park. Archeological studies are needed to better understand the patterns of Native American habitation and hunting in the area of the park. Until such studies are done, staff is recommending the Planning Board endorse the Hyattstown Mill Road/Western Piedmont Trail as an interpretive corridor that highlights the role of Native Americans in the region. More specific interpretive sites can be developed once an archeological study is completed.</p> |
|                     | <p><b>Margo Williams, member, Montgomery County Historical Society</b><br/>-Support the master plan<br/>-We need to take advantage to tell the story of life in the Piedmont region of Montgomery County<br/>-Support including Native American culture, history and traditions into the Park's education missions.<br/>-Support the creation of an Algonquian Living history Village in the park.</p>   | <p>See previous response.</p>   |
| <b>Other topics</b> | <p><b>Miller and Smith</b><br/>Correct map to show approved location of hiker-biker trail along Snowden Farm Parkway; the approved site plan places 8' wide trail on south side and 5' sidewalk on north.</p> <p><b>Quantico Orienteering Club (QOC) Greg Lennon</b><br/>Provide a small number (1-2) pavilions that can be reserved for use by groups through the year</p> <p><b>Paul Majewski</b><br/>Staff greatly encouraged public input and facilitated comments from attendees. If there are any major changes to this draft, please considered additional meetings in Clarksburg</p> | <p>Will correct</p> <p>Agree to the need for picnic shelters in first phase of park development.</p> <p>Staff is not proposing any significant changes from the Public Hearing draft.</p>   |
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