



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

MCPB: 12/13/07  
Item # 10

December 6, 2007

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mike Riley, Acting Deputy Director  
John Hench, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *John Hench*

**FROM:** Lyn Coleman, Park & Trail Planning Supervisor *Lyn Coleman*

**SUBJECT: BRIEFING on the effects of impervious caps on parkland in Upper Rock Creek Special Protection Area (SPA)**

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**Background:**

The Montgomery County Council designated the Upper Rock Creek Special Protection Area (SPA) when they adopted the Upper Rock Creek Planning Area Master Plan. Regulatory control over the implementation of the 8% imperviousness cap for this SPA is found in the subsequently-approved Upper Rock Creek Environmental Overlay Zone (Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance Chapter 59-C-18.24). Both Council approvals address the proper treatment of, and support for implementation of public projects, including parks.

The specific language in the County Council resolution adopting the Upper Rock Creek Planning Area states:

*....SPA requirements (in particular, the application of an imperviousness cap) are not intended to preclude the construction of any public project including those designated in this Master Plan, such as the Inter County Connector, public schools and **park facilities**. However, this Plan supports the avoidance of environmental sensitive areas, minimization, and mitigation and recommends that these be thoroughly examined in the earliest stages of proposed development. (See page 96 of the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan)*

The County Council, in approving the Environmental Overlay Zone (EOZ), recognized the impervious caps associated with the SPA (8%) could affect public projects like parks. In the County Council's opinion in the EOZ, the Council noted its expectations in regards to treatment of public projects. In summary, the Council states that 1) public entities are not required to obtain a Planning Board (i.e., hardship) waiver (per Section 59-C-18.242-c-2) for projects which exceed 8%, and 2) public projects are required to minimize imperviousness and conform to water quality submission and review requirements.

Thus, both the master plan and overlay zone recognize the importance of specific public projects and provide appropriate direction to accommodate these projects. This approach is parallel to similar language from the Upper Paint Branch SPA overlay zone (in place since 1997), where the Council also noted that application of the Special Protection area law does not preclude the construction of any public project.

**Relation of Park Proposals to SPA Requirements**

As shown in Figure 1, there are many parks in the SPA. The planning and facility design of two recreational parks is underway in the area shown in Figure 2: Laytonia Recreational Park and Muncaster Recreational Park. The Pope Farm is located between these two parks. The issuance of the RFP for Laytonia Park has been deferred pending discussion of SPA issues.

Based on staff estimates of impervious levels associated with the program of requirements for these parks, we anticipate impervious levels could reach or even exceed 11%.

For purposes of analysis, we have calculated how the overall impervious levels will change from the existing levels (5.6%) when new development occurs, first at Laytonia Recreational Park, then at Muncaster Recreation Park and finally when improvements consistent with the Pope Farm concept plan are implemented. These changes are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1**

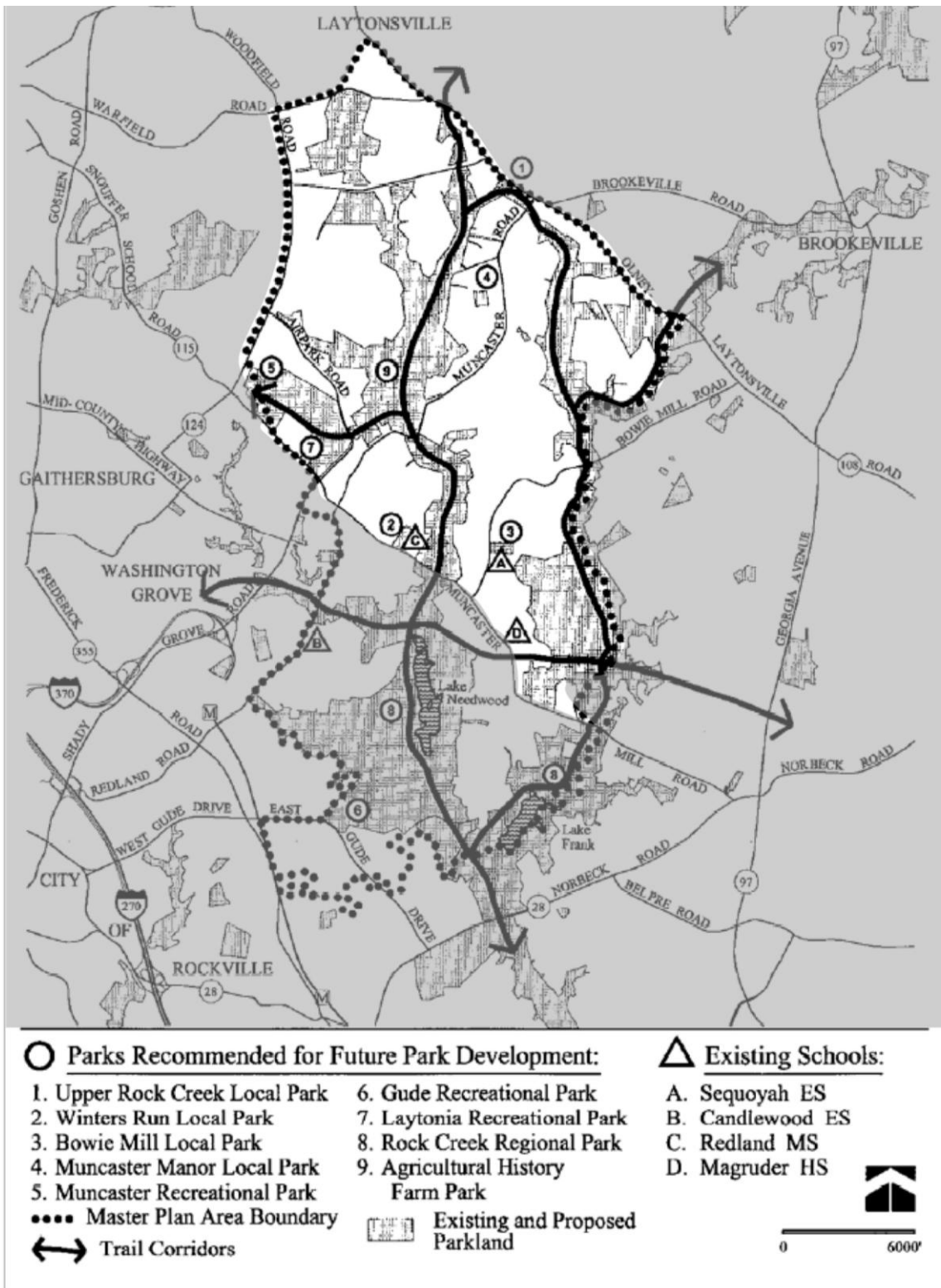
<b>ESTIMATED IMPERVIOUS SURFACE IN POPE FARM SPECIAL PARK AND MUNCASTER AND LAYTONIA REC. PARKS AT BUILD-OUT</b>		
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Acreage of all 3 Parks</b>	<b>262.6</b>	
<b>Combined Acreage inside SPA</b>	227.2	
<b>Existing Impervious Surface</b>	12.7	5.6%
<b>Phase 1 - Animal Shelter</b>	14.6	6.4%
<b>Phase 2 - Laytonia Construction</b>	21.8	9.6%
<b>Phase 3 - Pope Farm Renovation</b>		
<b>and Muncaster Const.</b>	24.9	<b>11.0%</b>

Please note that these calculations are based on anticipated development and are meant for discussion purposes only. The actual impervious levels will need to be calculated as these parks are designed in more detail. For example, the improvements at the Pope Farm are not scheduled in the CIP but are included here for analysis purposes. The design of the Muncaster Recreation Park has not been initiated so a much generalized layout has been assumed for purposes of the report.

**Issue for Planning Board discussion:**

The Upper Rock Creek Master Plan states that the SPA designation and associated imperviousness caps should not preclude park facilities but that strategies for “avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas, minimization and mitigation, be thoroughly examined in the earliest stage of project development“. **Staff is seeking Planning Board guidance on how this requirement should be addressed.**

**Figure 1 - Upper Rock Creek Special Protection Area**



**Figure 2 Locational Map**

