



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

MCPB Date: 10/3/2013  
Agenda Item # 3

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 26, 2013

TO: Montgomery County Park Commission

VIA: Mary R. Bradford, Director of Parks  
Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director of Parks  
Kennedi Anderson, Division Chief, Management Services

FROM: Karen Warnick, Budget Manager, Management Services

SUBJECT: Department of Parks FY15 Operating Budget Planning Discussion

**Staff Recommendation**

Approval to prepare the FY15 Park Fund operating budget at the Base Budget Plus Proposed Changes including Restorations and New Initiatives level.

**Background**

At the September 19 meeting, the Planning Board provided the general guidance for developing the FY15 Budget. If the preliminary assessable base information from Montgomery County OMB is accurate, major known commitment costs will grow faster than revenues. At the same time, the Planning Board recognized that we have mandated requirements and other essential needs to operate our park system and asked that we include them in our budget request knowing that the County Council has the authority to increase our tax rate to meet our expenditure level.

The Department has prepared two budget scenarios 1) Base Budget and 2) Proposed Changes including Restorations and New Initiatives.

The chart below shows the increases included in the Base Budget scenario. The categories are:

1. Salaries
2. Employee Benefit Increases
3. Retirement increases
4. Operating Budget Impacts (OBI)
5. Known Operating Commitments

Items 1-3 pertain to Commission-wide personnel costs and were discussed at the September 19 Planning Board meeting. Items 4-5 pertain to Park operations and more information is provided below.

**DEPARTMENT of PARKS  
SUMMARY OF PRELIMINARY FY15 BUDGET REQUEST**

	<b>FY14 Adopted Budget</b>	<b>\$79,705,763</b>
<b>BASE BUDGET</b>		
<b>Major Known Commitment Increases</b>		
Salaries including Adjustment	\$1,818,500	
Benefits	\$819,380	
Retirement	\$770,938	
Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB)- Prefunding	\$616,582	
Operating Budget Impact (OBI)	\$522,500	
FY14 One Time Capital Outlay Expenses	*(-\$267,000)	
Specific other Known Operating Changes(detail provided in narrative)	**\$1,098,400	
Debt Service on General Obligation Bonds	\$1,120,000	
<b>Subtotal Increase Base Budget Request</b>	<b>\$6,499,300</b>	
<b>Preliminary Percent Change in Base from FY14 Adopted</b>		<b>8.15%</b>
<b>PROPOSED CHANGES</b>		
<b>Restorations</b>		
Addressing Service Order Backlog/Infrastructure	\$1,688,400	\$2,297,300
Increase Supplies & Materials and Other Services & Charges Levels by 3%	\$508,900	
Internship Program	\$100,000	
<b>New Initiatives</b>		
Improved Work Programs	\$940,700	\$1,952,000
Emerging Needs	\$963,400	
Park Foundation	\$47,900	
Property Management	***\$0	
<b>Subtotal Increase Proposed Changes Request</b>	<b>\$4,249,300</b>	
<b>Total Increase FY15 Proposed Budget Request</b>	<b>\$10,748,600</b>	
<b>Preliminary Percent Change in Total Request from FY14 Adopted</b>		<b>13.49%</b>

\*The FY14 Budget included capital outlay funds to purchase equipment for OBI projects. This was a one-time expense and was listed as such in the FY14 budget.

\*\*Includes \$468,900 increase in NPDES request which is intended to be funded by the Water Quality Protection Fund and not the Park Fund. The overall increase without the NPDES increase is \$10,279,700 or 12.90%.

\*\*Requesting 1 career position and 1.0wy in the Park Fund to work on facilities in the Property Management Fund. All expenses and the 1.0wy will be charged back to the Property Management Fund resulting in a zero dollar expense for the Park Fund.

**BASE BUDGET**

**Operating Budget Impacts (OBI)**

For FY15, Montgomery Parks is requesting \$522,500 in additional funding for OBI. OBI is the additive cost to operate and maintain new parks and facilities anticipated to come on line during the fiscal year including staff, supplies, services, utilities, and security.

This dollar amount is still preliminary and, if needed, will be updated by the October 3 presentation date.

The funding is for the following parks/projects:

- Germantown Town Center Urban Park
- Layhill Village Connector Trail
- Little Bennett Interim Day Use Area
- Northwest Branch Recreational Park
- North Four Corners Local Park
- Woodlawn Barn Visitor's Center
- Clarksburg-Greenway Hard Surface Trail
- Little Seneca Greenway Natural Surface Trail
- Inter-County Connector Reforestation Projects
- Martin Luther King Recreational Park Field Renovations

**Known Operating Commitments**

Known operating commitments include contractual or mandated increases for Park operations.

This information does not include adjustments in expenses such as risk management, long term disability payments, and unemployment as well as Departmental chargebacks to the Park Fund for CAS services. The Department of Finance expects to provide this information by the end of the October or early November in the Schedule of Fees and Charges. Until then, the Department of Parks has not included any increases for these expenses in the proposed FY15 budget.

The chart below outlines the increases for known operating commitments. Detailed information about each line item is provided below.

NPDES - increase appropriation request from the Water Quality Protection Fund Includes 5 career positions and 5.0 wys <i>*Funded by Water Quality Protection Fund. Does not affect Park Fund tax rate.</i>	\$468,900*
Americans with Disabilities (ADA) – Includes 4 career positions and 4.0 wys Expense shared with CIP and Enterprise Fund - Park Fund Portion Shown	\$179,600
Consolidated Registration System - Expense shared with CUPF, MC Recreation Department and Enterprise Fund - Park Fund Portion Shown	\$160,800
Utilities/Gasoline/Diesel Fuel	\$156,000
Contractual Increases	\$133,100
Total	\$1,098,400
Total Park Fund (without NPDES)	\$629,500

**NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) - \$468,900**

The Department of Parks received its first National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Small Separate Storm Sewer System (NPDES MS4) permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment in the spring of 2010. The purpose of this permit, which is based in the Federal Clean Water Act, is to reduce stormwater pollution coming from impervious surfaces and thereby improve water quality. The permit requires the Department to develop Best Management Practices for each of the six Minimum Control Measures which include: Personnel Education and Outreach, Public Involvement and Participation, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post Construction Stormwater Management, and Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping. Although the Department was required to obtain this permit and fulfill its requirements, no federal or state funds were available to offset this mandate.

Accordingly, in FY12 the Department was appropriated \$1.5 million from the Montgomery County Water Quality Protection Fund to offset costs associated with ongoing water quality related work across M-NCPPC's 35,000 acre park system and implementation of the Department's new NPDES MS4 permit. Ongoing water quality related work includes maintenance and management of streams, lakes, non-tidal wetlands, and stormwater management facilities as well as the implementation of the Department's NPDES industrial permit for its 12 maintenance yards. In FY14,

the appropriation was increased to \$2 million to address some major deficiencies in meeting the requirements of the permit.

While many improvements have been initiated under the permit, deficiencies still remain in the Post Construction Stormwater Management measure. Further progress is stifled by insufficient dedicated staff that focus on this type of specialized water quality related maintenance work. These constraints continue to pose challenges in meeting the requirements of the new NPDES MS4 permit and are the basis of the Department's new FY15 NPDES MS4 related budget initiatives.

<b>Minimum Control Measure - Post Construction Stormwater Management Best Management Practice</b>	<b>Lead Division(s)</b>	<b>New Positions/ Workyears</b>
Ensure all stormwater management (SWM) facilities on Parkland are monitored and properly maintained to provide maximum stormwater treatment efficiency. (Currently 348 SW facilities; 90 in remote areas and maintained by contract; remaining 258 maintained reactively, not proactively)	Northern Parks / Southern Parks	4.0 WYs 4 Full Time Career Positions
Improved stewardship of natural resources on parkland by recommending strategies to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the negative effects of a wide variety of new and on-going public and private projects on water quality in stream valley parks. In addition, this position will support efforts by park staff working on a wide variety of inter-agency stream restoration and stormwater retrofit projects.	Park Planning and Stewardship	1.0 WYs 1 Full Time Career Position

The increased funding request of \$468,900 for NPDES activities includes the costs for the personnel noted above plus additional funding for equipment and supplies. A breakdown of the funds is shown in the chart below.

<b>New FY15 NPDES Funding Request</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Supplies</b>	<b>Services/ Contracts</b>	<b>Capital Outlay</b>	<b>Total</b>
Northern & Southern	284,600	4,000	2,000	80,000	370,600
Park Planning & Stewardship	96,300	2,000			98,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>380,900</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>2,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>468,900</b>

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - \$179,600 Park Fund, \$120,100 CIP and \$103,400 Enterprise Fund**

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities.

The United States Department of Justice's (DOJ) regulations implementing Title II of the ADA dictate that local governments must evaluate their services, programs, policies, and practices and identify barriers that may limit accessibility for people with disabilities and develop Transition Plans describing how they will address identified barriers. In 2006, the DOJ initiated a compliance review of Montgomery County as a part of Project Civic Access, an initiative to ensure greater access for persons with disabilities to local government programs, services, activities, and facilities. This review included an on-site survey of the County's buildings, programs, and services as well as some facilities owned or controlled by the M-NCPPC in which County programs are offered.

In order to ensure that any County program, service, or activity offered at such facilities is, when viewed in its entirety, readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, the County and M-NCPPC signed a settlement agreement with the DOJ in 2011. The agreement requires Parks to conduct a physical audit of all Park facilities and develop a Transition Plan that shows how the Park system will improve County-wide accessibility. The Agreement requires all of this work to be completed within five years with a detailed annual report during that period to demonstrate adequate progress.

The final Transition Plan must include a plan, strategy and timeframe for improving facility access to our park system as well as program access. The Department of Parks has begun this work, however needs more dedicated staff to focus on meeting the requirements of the agreement. The staff shown below will help meet the construction and retrofit requirements as well as the inclusion policy development.

In FY16, the Department will need additional staff to implement the inclusion policies.

FY15 ADA Funding Request	Description	Total Request	Park Fund	CIP	Enterprise Fund
Facilities Management 1.0 WY 1 Full Time Career Position	Focus on ADA coordination for all project and maintenance activities of the division to comply with the DOJ settlement agreement. Review all service, project and CIP requests to seamlessly integrate ADA requirements for renovations in the beginning of the process rather than taking corrective measures after the fact. Streamline compliance reporting and confirm archival information is properly transmitted and stored according DOJ/ADA requirements. Coordinate employee training on ADA specifications for accessible facilities. 50% Park Fund and 50% CIP	86,400	43,200	43,200	
Park Development 1.0 WY 1 Full Time Career Position	Provide additional Departmental support for the ongoing comprehensive effort to retrofit parks and park facilities to comply with the ADA, including revisions of Title II of the Act that went into effect on March 1, 2011, and ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and standards. Includes policy development and advanced technical training for Department of Parks' architects and engineers to ensure that ADA compliance and accessibility are incorporated throughout the park system's planning, design, and construction processes to ensure that parks and park facilities comply with the new revisions to Title II of the ADA. 30% Park Fund and 70% CIP	109,900	33,000	76,900	
Enterprise Division 2.0 WYs 2 Full Time Career Positions	Settlement Agreement requires an assessment of all "programs" for compliance. Develop and monitor a transition plan for access to recreational facilities and programs in collaboration with Department of Recreation and Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF). Implement the ADA Grievance Policy (required by law) and take the lead in reporting and monitoring Project Civic Access. Develop and implement the Department's Inclusion Services program for program access to classes, camps, and special events. Develop and train staff on a self-evaluation tool, assess results and complete a report on findings and remediation steps to DOJ. 50% Park Fund and 50% Enterprise	206,800	103,400		103,400
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>403,100</b>	<b>179,600</b>	<b>120,100</b>	<b>103,400</b>

**Consolidated Registration System with Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) and Montgomery County Department of Recreation (MCRD) - \$160,800 Park Fund and \$77,500 Enterprise Fund**

In May 2010, the Montgomery County Council passed Budget Resolution 16-1373, which stipulated that the Department of Parks, the County's Community Use of Public Facilities Office (CUPF), and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation (MCRD) work together to consolidate facility and athletic field permitting, and class and program registration, and the operation of classes, camps and trips except for ice skating/hockey, tennis, nature, interpretive, horticultural, and gardening programs and classes. The intent of Council, as stated in the Budget Resolution, is to "...create a more streamlined and user-friendly system for County residents..." and, over time, achieve "...budget savings and operational efficiencies."

CUPF, MCRD and Parks are each committed to working together to share resources, gain efficiencies, and streamline services in order to improve customer service. Over the course of the past several months, workgroups comprised of staff from each of the three agencies have met with consultants from Active Network to adopt Active Net over the current automated registration software called "Class". Class, as we know it today, will be phased out by Active Network in the next few years.

Active Net can support a single database for the 3 departments per the requirement of the County Council. One of the benefits of Active Net is that it is web-based software that will provide better service to the customers. Active Net is fully hosted and is accessible from any compatible computer with internet connectivity. In addition, Active Net will have a consolidated customer database with social media integration built in its marketing and communication tools.

Active Net will meet the financial needs of the three departments. Active Network will manage the credit card data security concerns that Parks' IT and ParkPASS manage now. Active Network will take the risk of properly managing and storing the user and credit data which complies with the highest industry data security systems.

At this time the three departments are in contract negotiations with Active Network. The implementation process is projected to take about 18 months with a proposed Go Live date of January, 2016. The initial costs shown in the chart below are for the FY15 contractual resources for the implementation of Active Net. A financial reconciliation function will begin after the system goes live and will likely require additional staff resources.

Automated Registration System	Park Fund Personnel	Other Services & Charges	Capital Outlay	Total Park Fund	Enterprise Fund
Consultant fees \$100K split by 3 Departments		33,300		33,300	
Project Management fees \$150K split by 3 Departments		50,000		50,000	
Contract data entry staff \$60K split by Park Fund and Enterprise Fund		30,000		30,000	30,000
Seasonal employees \$20K split by Park Fund and Enterprise Fund	10,000			10,000	10,000
System Fees \$55K split by Park Fund and Enterprise Fund		27,500		27,500	27,500
Equipment Costs \$20K split by Park Fund and Enterprise Fund			10,000	10,000	10,000
TOTAL				160,800	77,500

**Utilities/Gasoline/Diesel Fuel - \$156,000**

The FY15 budget for utilities is increasing a modest \$6,000. Economists forecast fuel prices to increase 10% in the upcoming year and so the FY15 budget for gasoline/diesel fuel is proposed to increase by \$150,000, or 10% from the FY14 adopted budget. Also, the current trend in the Department is to use the higher priced but "greener" biodiesel fuel.

**Contractual Increases - \$133,100**

The Department has contractual obligations for known increases based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as well as contractual requirements to replace outdated technology and to provide improve customer service. The details on these requirements are provided below.

**Contractual Obligations for CPI Increases - \$52,300**

The Department has a variety of contracts with known escalation clauses built in such as portable toilets , storm water management contract, software maintenance/licensing fees, and energy consultant. These increases total \$52,300.

**Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) - \$52,000**

In conjunction with the Prince George's Department of Parks and Recreation, we are currently working with the Commission's Enterprise Resources Planning (ERP) vendor to include the replacement of our current SmartParks work order, asset, inventory and project management systems. The current Facility Focus software is outdated and no longer supported. The proposed new system will be web-based with many added features including integration with the ERP, GIS (Geographical Information Systems) and Kronos timekeeping systems. This new system will allow us to continue tracking maintenance costs by parks and specific amenities. The Department's portion of the maintenance of the new system will be \$152,000. The Department has \$100,000 in the FY14 budget for start-up maintenance fees and web-hosting services and will need an additional \$52,000 in FY15 for the full year.

**Active Citizen Request (ACR) - \$28,800**

ACR is a customer relations management system that tracks and directs the interactions between our Department and the public. ACR will serve as the public interface for our new EAM software and is designed to streamline the process of responding to citizens and tracking the types of inquiries we receive. The system was purchased at the end of FY13 and the annual maintenance cost for the new system must be included in the FY15 budget.

## **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FY15 BUDGET**

In addition to the list above, the Department of Parks is proposing an increase for the restoration of funds cut in recent budgets and for new initiatives that will enhance our current work program, meet emerging needs, and provide additional needed assistance to the successful Parks Foundation. Specific descriptions are provided below.

<b>Restorations</b>			<b>\$2,297,300</b>
	Addressing Service Order Backlog/Infrastructure	\$1,688,400	
	<i>Maintenance Staff Restoration</i>	\$500,200	
	<i>Natural Surface Trails</i>	\$179,700	
	<i>Tree Contract</i>	\$100,000	
	<i>Seasonal Staff Restoration</i>	\$140,400	
	<i>Landscape Restoration</i>	\$310,100	
	<i>Safe and Functional Equipment</i>	\$226,000	
	<i>Extending the Life of Outdoor Courts</i>	\$232,000	
	Increase Supplies & Materials and Other Services & Charges Levels by 3%	\$508,900	
	Internship Program	\$100,000	
<b>New Initiatives</b>			<b>\$1,952,000</b>
	Improved Work Programs	\$940,700	
	<i>Tree Health and Safety</i>	\$180,000	
	<i>Historic Preservation</i>	\$88,500	
	<i>Interpretation of Historic and Agricultural Sites</i>	\$373,500	
	<i>Community Outreach</i>	\$38,800	
	<i>Leisure Programs in Parks for a Vibrant Community</i>	\$150,000	
	<i>Youth Conservation Program (Junior Ranger)</i>	\$109,900	
	Emerging Needs	\$963,400	
	<i>Improve Efficiency through Information Technology (IT) Initiatives</i>	\$484,000	
	<i>Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) Support</i>	\$77,700	
	<i>Responsive to Public Requests</i>	\$195,700	
	<i>Addressing New Areas of Employee and Public Safety</i>	\$206,000	
	Foundation	\$47,900	
	Property Management	\$0	
	<b>Proposed Changes Request</b>		<b>\$4,249,300</b>

### **Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog - \$1,688,400**

From FY10-FY12, the Department of Parks budget was severely reduced and, today, the level of care for our valuable and popular amenities remains well below optimum and our own standards. The Department has continued to address critical maintenance deficiencies and prioritized work programs to keep the parks safe, accessible and protected. However, the deferred maintenance backlog is growing for building, facilities (including trails, roads, and bridges), and grounds. In FY12, there was a backlog of over 2,000 outstanding work orders for repairs and preventive maintenance. By the beginning of FY13, this number had grown to 2,500. Now at the beginning of FY14, there are 2,700 outstanding work orders. In addition, there is a current backlog of 1,272 tree service requests. By the end of FY14, this backlog is expected to be over 2,000 service requests.

During the FY14 budget hearings with the PHED Committee, the Department was asked by Council Members what could be done to reduce the outstanding work orders. For FY15, the Department proposes to address several areas of need to help reduce the backlog and to continue to maintain safe, accessible, and protected parks.



**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog - Maintenance Staff Restoration \$500,200- including 5 Full Time Careers Positions**

The Northern Parks Division requests the restoration of four positions in four different maintenance areas. Due to budget cuts in FY11, the division abolished nine positions. After analysis and review, the positions recommended for restoration will allow current staff to meet performance measures and maintenance standards more effectively, and reduce the maintenance service backlog.

With the addition of these positions, current staff can spend more time on tasks and responsibilities that have had a reduced focus due to new programs such as Smart Parks/EAM management; ERP management; new ADA compliance requirements; increased recycling efforts expanding to local parks; environmental mitigation projects; NPDES mandates; new storm water management regulations; new nutrient management regulations, and much more. While staff has high completion rates for urgent tasks that require quick response, routine tasks have suffered without the appropriate amount of oversight and coordination efforts.

In addition, the Southern Parks Division is requesting the restoration of a Regional Operations Manager. This position was abolished in FY09 during the fiscal downturn. The Southern Parks is the largest operations division in the Department responsible for about two-thirds of the 418 parks in the system in the most densely populated areas. This down-county division has the oldest infrastructure and the most staff with 147 positions.

By re-establishing this key position, the Southern Parks will be more successful with managing staff, reducing maintenance backlog, providing better service to the community at large, and providing for more effective oversight of a very large management area with many diverse facilities. Consistent maintenance requires constant attention and planning for the maintenance and upkeep of the assets in the park system.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog – Natural Surface Trails - \$179,700 – including 2 Full Time Career Staff Plus Seasonal Staff**

These positions will supplement the two staff that are primarily responsible for planning, designing, constructing, monitoring, repairing, and maintaining the 141 mile network of sanctioned natural surface trails in Montgomery Parks. The Vision 2030 process reveals that trails are one of the top three facilities valued by Montgomery County residents. Trails provide critical access to a variety of park facilities and natural areas. On-going renovation and regular and routine inspection and maintenance are critical. Trails provide critical access to a variety of park facilities and natural areas.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog – Tree Contract - \$100,000**

As stated above, there is a current backlog of 1,272 tree service requests and by the end of FY14 this backlog is expected to be over 2,000 service requests. The Department requests the funding to hire a contractor to significantly reduce the tree service backlog.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog – Seasonal Staff Restoration - \$140,400**

During the budget reductions of FY11, all seasonal staff was eliminated. Some seasonal staff funding was restored in the Northern and Southern Park Divisions but was not in the Horticultural, Forestry and Environmental Education (HFEE) Division. Seasonal staff in HFEE can help experienced operators by supplementing crews for tree digging, tree planting, community garden maintenance, ball field renovations, and tree after care. The seasonal staff expands the ability to send more crews to different locations and reduces costs per project by pairing a seasonal with an operator versus sending two operators to one location.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog – Landscape Restoration - \$310,100 – including 3 Full Time Career Staff**

During the severe budget cuts of FY10-12, the landscape program was drastically reduced. The current crews are unable to meet the demands of the program and the service request backlog. The Department is requesting three full time career maintenance positions to ensure the timely and consistent management and maintenance of our landscape areas for our highly visible parks. This team would have the ability to identify landscaping needs and

increase our ability to keep "high profile" parks and office buildings and public spaces in an aesthetic manner. In addition, this landscape crew can support our water quality protection efforts by maintaining some of the cleaned out facilities, assist with the planting efforts on large projects, which in turn will allow more of the backlog to decrease.

It is important to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for our users. The constant upkeep of landscaped areas should be performed by professionally qualified staff. This is particularly important in the down-county area in our most heavily used parks. Natural landscaping is an opportunity to reestablish diverse native plants, thereby inviting the birds and butterflies back home. Natural landscaping is good the health and well-being of our patrons. It is one of the most cost effective tools for improving and sustaining the quality of life, whether in the urban or rural areas, however it is usually a fairly large task that consumes time and energy.

Natural landscaping includes altering the contours of the ground, and building structures and amenities such as pedestrian ways, paths and picnic areas. This activity is one of the few improvements that adds more value to real estate than it costs to install.

In addition, landscaping can reduce direct sun from striking and heating up building surfaces on office building and other structures. It is a natural and beautiful way to a building cool in summer and reduce energy bills.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog –Safe and Functional Equipment - \$226,000 - 3 Full Time Career Staff**

In FY09, Parks spent \$1 million on capital equipment. Funding for capital outlay was eliminated in FY10-FY13. The Department was able to purchase large equipment during those years through the internal service fund (ISF) which finances equipment costing more than \$5,000 that has a life expectancy of greater than 6 years (the length of the financing term).

Since FY09, the Department has used the equipment available to them or done without. Some of the equipment is old, outdated, not the correct type or size for the task, and not efficient. These aging assets result in escalating repair costs, longer downtime leading to lost productivity, decreased equipment reliability and, in some cases, may compromise operator and public safety. The rising repair workload has led to an increase in the backlog in service and preventative maintenance by 30%. It is common for equipment to be past due for preventive maintenance and to be taken out of service for extended periods.

During this time, four mechanic positions were abolished in FY11. One of the mechanics was located at the Meadowbrook Maintenance Yard. Now repairs typically completed on-site are reassigned to Shady Grove causing increased transportation costs and downtime, and adversely affecting the backlog at the Shady Grove facility. The Department is requesting the restoration of this position to decrease the backlog of service and repairs and to increase efficiency of the Meadowbrook shop. Reinstitution of this mechanic position would create a positive ripple effect of labor savings throughout the Department.

Additionally, the Department is requesting the restoration of a mechanic position at Shady Grove, the Department's main garage and repair shop. The primary responsibility of this position would be tow operator/road service and quick service technician. Currently, tow service is contracted and often vehicle operators are forced to wait roadside with their vehicles for a long time, then they are transported to Shady Grove, and must make arrangements to be picked up from this location. This restored position would allow for field repairs for problems such as a flat tire, and the flexibility to take the drivers to their work location. The position would also be responsible for providing quick preventative maintenance service. This would be particularly beneficial to decreasing the Park Police preventative maintenance wait times and resulting in higher in-service rates.

Another position abolished in FY11 was the administrative assistant supporting the fleet operations. Since then, supervisors have been tasked with administrative duties such as purchase record keeping, data entry into Faster (the Department's Fleet management software system for asset inventory and work orders), preventative maintenance notifications, speed camera citation distributions, Departmental fuel logs, etc. This position would centralize these

administrative tasks and free supervisors to concentrate on vehicle triage, staff support/ supervision, and customer service resulting in an increased performance rates and decreased backlog. The addition of this position should improve Faster data reliability.

**Restoration - Addressing Service Order Backlog – Extending the Life of Outdoor Courts - \$232,000 – including 2 Full Time Career Staff plus Seasonal Staff and Contract Services**

The Department has over 500 outdoor courts including 305 tennis courts and 207 basketball courts. There are numerous work requests generated each year for these courts that our current staff cannot complete. The Department renovates only 4-6 courts year utilizing CIP funding, leaving most in service long beyond the optimal life cycle of 25 to 30 years. The requested career and seasonal staff would establish a coating material application crew that works on the outdoor tennis and basketball courts as well as bridges, boardwalks, and play equipment. In addition, the Department requests funding to hire contractors as a supplement to the application crew program, to apply intermediate court sealing in spring and fall seasons. These programs would significantly increase service life of assets and reduce liability.

**Restoration – Increase Supplies & Materials and Other Services & Charges Funding Levels by 3% - \$508,900**

During the FY10 and FY11 budget process, the funding for supplies and materials (S&M) as well as other services and charges (OS&C) was dramatically reduced. Since that time, the budget for these categories has only increased due to known commitments such as contractual obligations, OBI, or mandated services. Since 2011, the consumer price index (CPI) has increased a total 6.2%, or an average of 2.1% each year.

By not keeping up with inflation, the Department's S&M and OS&C budgets have effectively shrunk. The Department has had to do more with less, cut services, and reduce its ability meet maintenance standards. The level of care provided to maintain the park system can be described as "Fair or Managed Care" at best.

For FY15, the Department proposes increasing the S&M and OS&C budget by \$508,900, which is 3% of the nearly \$17M budgeted in FY11 for these expenses. This increase is only one-half of the 6.2% CPI increase over these last 3 years which accounts for some efficiencies that have been achieved since FY11. The Department chose FY11 as the baseline year since S&M and OS&C have not increased since then except for known commitments.

**Restoration – Internship Program - \$100,000**

An internship program provides realistic work experience to college students who anticipate careers in park management and administration. In 2009, 17 requests for interns from 8 divisions were submitted. 91 students applied for these positions and 14 were employed to work on project assignments in the various divisions throughout the parks system. This program was abolished through the budget reductions in FY10 and beyond. However, the demand for interns has remained over the years. Multiple divisions submit requests each year and the Department receives many e-mail inquiries from interested applicants.

An internship program provides many benefits for the Department and the community at large. Internships give back to the community by supporting colleges and universities, and hiring local students who are given the opportunity to apply concepts learned at school and to gain practical work experience. The Department gains the opportunity to evaluate highly motivated prospective employees virtually risk free at a relatively low cost, to get short term projects completed, and to free professional staff to focus on larger initiatives. Also, employees hired after internships tend to be more invested in the department resulting in higher retention rates.

**New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Tree Health and Safety - \$180,000**

A healthy tree canopy provides environmental, economic and health benefits to the community. The Department is requesting \$180,000 to conduct a tree inventory to learn the location, size, species and health of a tree. This information will be invaluable to staff by creating a baseline for effective community forest management. We currently use aerial photos/GIS data for assessing trees in developed parkland to show where and what species of trees are located in individual parks. We also use the Planning Department's digital database of natural resources inventories (NRI's) that are plans that consultants put together during the park development and renovation process to assess

and inventory trees 24" and larger on a parcel along with other special features such as erodible soils, wetlands, etc. However, a lot of this data is old and the trees are now larger or not in the same condition when the data was collected.

The tree inventory collection process includes ground "truthing" or going out to each park needs to be done to make sure individual trees are in locations that they are shown on the aerial photos along with identifying what type of tree they are and quickly assessing their health condition. Once the data is collected in individual parks, we will be able to go back into GIS and assess the canopy in each park in terms of health, species diversity, replanting needs, etc.

Some benefits of having an inventory specific to Montgomery Parks are 1) prioritized tree maintenance based on the condition of the tree resource in developed parkland to maintain healthy trees and reduce the number of hazardous tree removal; 2) increased opportunities for forestry grants for tree planting and public education; 3) improved short-term and long-term planning and budgeting by identifying exactly what work needs to be completed by the tree crew; 4) ability to provide better information to the public, county executive, council, planning board and directorate on the health of the Tree Resource in developed areas of parks; 5) enhanced ability to determine which park management areas are most urgently in need of replanting and canopy restoration and to target planting in specific locations to achieve canopy goals; 6) to understand species distribution throughout the park system and be able to diversify in a much more logical way to avoid devastations by diseases and pests such as the Emerald Ash Borer; and 7) to enable us to measure economic and health benefits of the green infrastructure.

**New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Historic Preservation - \$88,500 including 1 Part Time Career Position and Contractual Services**

Preservation of M-NCPPC's historic and archaeological resources is a critical part of the Department of Parks' mission and outreach services help to increase public support for historic sites. Currently, staff is unable to meet demand for tours, site openings, and events. Additional staff can develop marketing strategies, including marketing campaigns and material (e.g. brochures, websites, advertisements.) The work of this staff position will also support cost-recovery and revenue goals for the cultural resources program.

Additionally, this position will support the planned Josiah Henson Museum and the Visitor Center at Woodlawn Manor Cultural Park, and assist with interpretive and educational signs and materials for the Cultural Resources Section.

We are also requesting \$40,000 for the contractual management/removal/mitigation of nuisance groundhog populations around historic buildings in Montgomery Parks. Currently, there are approximately 115 standing historic structures, many with stone foundations, throughout the park system. At many of these buildings, groundhogs have constructed extensive burrow systems in and around the foundations. These burrows can threaten the structural integrity of the buildings and create unsafe conditions for park patrons. Accordingly, the nuisance groundhog populations need to be removed, barriers (in the form of below ground fencing) installed, and the damage repaired. The requested funds will allow staff to contract with qualified vendors to perform the necessary work.

**New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Interpretation of Historic and Agricultural Sites - \$373,500 including 3 Full Time Career Positions**

**Historic Site Interpretation - \$109,900**

The Code of Federal Regulations (36 CFR Part 800-Historic Properties) governs cultural resources and the Section 106 Process of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Section 106 requires that Federal agencies (or state agencies that obtain federal permits, licenses or funding) take into account the effect of undertakings on historic and archaeological properties and the need to mitigate adverse effects. The Code also regulates Professional Standards necessary to protect resources by referencing the need for all parties to conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guideline for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. The Professional Qualifications for Archaeology stated therein are: "a graduate degree in archeology, anthropology, or closely related field plus" work experience. At present, the Department's Archaeology Program is not up to this legal requirement due to the loss of a former Archaeologist position, and thus the critical need exists to restore this position in FY 15. The current archaeological

projects already regulated by law by Section 106 include: Josiah Henson Park, Woodlawn Barn Visitors Center, Mid-County Highway (M-83), Poole's (Seneca) Store Restoration, Brainard Warner Park (Circle Manor), the WSSC Consent Decree projects, and the Purple Line.

#### Agricultural History Farm Park - \$238,600

This request supports the Commission's longstanding commitment to provide educational programming at the Agricultural History Farm Park (AHFP). Since acquisition began in 1964, the park has grown in to encompass over 454 acres. The Planning Board adopted a master plan for the park in 1990 and a subsequent analysis of programming options in 2005. Both documents envisioned regular programming and events focused on agriculture past, present and future for a variety of audience types.

The two requested positions would help the Department to realize the goal of the 2005 Planning Board decision to:

1. Increase public awareness of the value and economic benefits of Agriculture in Montgomery County,
2. Increase awareness and support for Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve, and
3. Increase the number of students participating in educational programs related to agriculture.

Barriers to regular programming were identified in 2005 and over the past 8 year have been addressed. Currently, the barn is being renovated for ADA accessibility and assembly use, leaving the site ready for regular programmatic use in 2015.

Agricultural and farm related programming has seen an upsurge in recent years with the advent of the "locavore" movement emphasizing fresh food and healthy lifestyles. Parks success with community gardens is indicative of the public demand for hands on experiential and educational opportunities. Other government, private and non-profit organizations have increased the amount of farm related programs they offer such as petting farms, school tours, birthday parties, week-long farm camps and grow your own workshops, etc.

The Commission has invested in the purchase of the site, preserved the buildings and developed long standing partnerships within the agricultural community, but currently programming at the Farm Park is provided primarily through volunteers and community partners. These efforts will continue but are not adequate to build the high quality, sustained programming envisioned by the Commission and supporters. This budget request provides for the opportunity to address the programmatic capacity envisioned by the Planning Board.

The Department of Parks requests two full time career positions plus supplies for one Park Manager II position in the Northern Parks Division and one History/Museum Specialist position in the Park Planning and Stewardship Division to work collaboratively to provide interpretive programming, public outreach, community cultural events, and coordinate with Montgomery County Public Schools on curriculum development.

The program developed in the first year between the Park Manager II and the Museum Manager would result in an operating budget impact for subsequent years that would include staffing for maintenance and events operations, supplies and materials, and some small equipment.

#### **New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Community Outreach - \$38,800 Park Fund; \$58,100 CIP; including 1 Full Time Career Position**

Public outreach efforts for the Department of Parks are critical to ensuring transparency in Parks' operations. Effective outreach ensures that County residents, park neighbors, park patrons and other stakeholders are aware of, educated about, and engaged in important plans and projects that impact the development, design, construction, and renovation of new parks, facilities, programs and more.

Community outreach is divided across multiple divisions in the Department, and this position would coordinate the logistics and public noticing for all departmental public meetings, input opportunities and construction/renovation work, which will increase efficiency, effectiveness and consistency, while also helping to establish solid relationships

between internal and external constituents. This position will also maintain updated community contact lists, improve relationships and communications with civic and community groups, and responsiveness to the public.

The majority of outreach coordinated by this position will be in support of CIP-related projects and 60% of the expense for this position will be charged back to the CIP.

**New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Leisure Programs in Parks for a Vibrant Community- \$150,000 including 1 Full Time Career position**

Part of a vibrant community is gatherings for festivals and concerts in public areas. The Department currently offers a few of these programs if staff is able to fit them into their schedule, but outside third parties are the primary driver of such activities. Many parks are underutilized for this typical park function, and we would like to activate these parks with programs such as concerts, youth events, and health opportunities. This request would fund one position to develop and program gathering opportunities within our parks to bring folks together and coordinate with other County agencies. Contractual funds are also included to hire vendors or performers, as necessary.

**New Initiative - Improved Work Program – Youth Conservation Program (Junior Ranger) - \$109,900 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

This funding would provide staffing to develop and manage a year-round, youth-oriented volunteer program designed to promote and encourage stewardship and support of our natural spaces, resources and parkland among the County's youth. This program would leverage the student service learning (SSL) requirement for high school students, develop a new generation of park advocates, and support the Department's participation in the Children In Nature initiative.

**New Initiative - Emerging Needs – Improve Efficiency through Information Technology (IT) Initiatives - \$484,000 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

Technology is advancing rapidly. Increasing numbers of staff are moving away from desktop computer to using smart phones, laptops and tablets to work more efficiently. Advances in software and communications systems allow staff to perform more intricate analysis and provide better customer support both internally and externally.

The IT upgrades request includes funding for desktop virtualization software move towards new technology and eliminating the need for desktop PCs; software to remotely manage mobile devices; a monitoring system for all telephone communications servers, gateways, and networks in real time; upgrading the Tandberg video conferencing units; upgrading the VOIP for E911; and Quick Tap Survey application for use on mobile devices in Parks.

The last time Departments of Park and the Planning Department developed an IT Strategic Plan was in 2005. In order to keep current, the request also includes funding from each department to hire a consultant to upgrade the IT Strategic Plan.

Most of these requests are split between the Department of Parks and the Planning Department.

In addition, one full-time career position is requested for the Park Development Division (PDD) which has several distinct technological initiatives underway that need constant support. PDD uses the ProjectDox (electronic plan review software for park design and construction) and Hyperion (Montgomery County's new CIP system) as well as their internal inspection permit and project tracking databases that require continual support. The departmental IT staff do not have the skills or the time to provide the level of service that the PDD systems need.

**New Initiative - Emerging Needs - Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) Support - \$77,700 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

As described earlier in this memo, the benefits of the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) system include tracking maintenance costs by parks and specific amenities. Currently, the Horticulture, Forestry and Environmental Education (HFEE) division does not collect data in SmartParks. When the new system goes live in the summer of 2014, HFEE will begin to collect data on their work program including tree work requests and tree inventory data.

This information will be a vital part of the overall management of the work program and of maintaining the tree inventory data. An administrative assistant position is requested for this new initiative in HFEE to collect, enter and analyze this data so professional staff will not have to add data entry to their work program.

**New Initiative - Emerging Needs - Responsive to Public Requests - \$195,700 including 2 Full Time Career Positions**

**Implementation of New Urban Parks - \$111,900 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

The critical challenge for Park Planning is to maintain the high level of park and recreation service in the County by putting the "right parks" in the "right places." Not surprisingly, *Vision 2030* confirmed that the highest needs are and will continue to be in areas of highest population density. Park and recreation goals should support Smart Growth by locating facilities that are accessible by walking and transit. As the County becomes more urban, acquiring park sites in growth areas is increasingly difficult because of competition for land. The *Urban Park Guidelines*, approved by the Planning Board as part of the *2012 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan* recommends that a system of parks and open spaces be provided for every urban master plan or sector plan area through a combination of public and private efforts. Identifying and negotiating the opportunities to achieve the right parks in the right places in our urban areas requires a Planner Coordinator whose time is largely devoted to proactively pursuing solutions to these critical needs.

**Expansion of Community Gardens - \$83,800 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

In its three years of operation, the highly popular community garden work program has grown significantly and includes oversight of 11 gardens year-round with 485 individual garden plots, monitoring 11 list serves, coordinating garden plot registration each spring, recruiting and training volunteer garden coordinators, coordinating new garden installations and updating the website. Currently, this operation is managed by a part time seasonal staff. However, this staffing level is not sufficient to handle the annual work load and or meet the public demands for future garden additions or expansions.

A full time career position will be able to fully handle the current work program, increase the number of community gardens in the parks, expand existing community gardens to increase the number of plots offered, and coordinate an annual plant sale benefiting community gardens. In addition, this position will coordinate all ADA compliance mandates for the community gardens. A recent review of ADA standards and guidelines indicated that 4 of the 11 existing community gardens must be renovated to be accessible and that all new community gardens, or additions to existing gardens, are considered new construction and must include at least 5% accessible plots.

The current revenue (\$28,900) and most of the expenditures, including the seasonal salary, for the community gardens are included in a special revenue fund. To remain in the special revenue fund, the program must be self-sufficient. Since this program has proven to be more costly than can be covered by revenues, it is not self-sufficient and must be moved from the special revenue fund to the Park Fund. The seasonal salary will go away and will be replaced by the career salary. These Park Fund expenses will be offset by the revenue deposited in the Park Fund.

**New Initiative - Emerging Needs - Addressing New Areas of Employee and Public Safety- \$206,000 including 2 Full Time Career Positions**

**Employee and Public Safety - \$75,500 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

Surveillance cameras are becoming ubiquitous in society today. The presence of active surveillance systems serves as a deterrent to criminal activity and is a valuable tool for monitoring unattended facilities. As technology has grown, demand for these systems has increased and has outpaced the Department's current technical staffing to install and maintain camera surveillance systems as needed. This critical service is unfunded and the technology is underutilized in our current circumstances. A dedicated position would properly address standardization of implementation, equipment distribution, liability and privacy concerns.

**Public Safety - \$130,500 including 1 Full Time Career Position**

With the increase in afterhours use of our urban parks and opening urban parks 24 hours, the Department needs an additional sworn officer on the midnight shift. The additional officer would provide supervision and oversight of staff, and would help address the increased workload caused by additional calls for service from providing proactive patrols of the 24 hour urban parks. The increased staffing will help ensure sufficient proactive foot and bike patrols and police presence in our urban parks during the overnight hours. This presence would help reduce the opportunity for crimes to be committed when there would be less of a citizen presence to provide extra eyes and ears for criminal behavior. This would greatly increase the safety and security of our afterhours park users.

**New Initiative - Foundation - \$47,900 including 1 Term Contract Position**

The Montgomery Parks Foundation continues to expand opportunities for Montgomery County residents, businesses and organizations to support their parks through donations, grants, sponsorships and memberships. Many of these programs, such as the tribute programs in parks (benches, trees, bricks boulders) are very labor intensive and require significant administrative efforts to track donations, place order, coordinate personalized plaques, and work with the park managers on the installation. This term contract administrative position for the Foundation will support the tribute programs, the Friends of Montgomery Parks, the Corporate Sponsorship Program and other administrative needs of the growing Foundation.

**New Initiative - Property Management - \$0 Park Fund; \$77,300 Property Management Fund**

The Department is requesting 1 career trades position and 1.0wy in the Park Fund to work on facilities in the Property Management Fund. Currently, Facilities Management trades staff perform most of the maintenance work on Property Management properties. However, additional work is needed to reduce the backlog of service and preventive maintenance requests. All expenses and the 1.0wy will be charged back to the Property Management Fund resulting in a zero dollar expense for the Park Fund.

**Summary**

The Department of Parks is preparing the FY15 Proposed Budget. During this process we have been mindful of the financial situation in the County, yet we are committed to continue to provide the best services possible to our customers.

Staff is requesting approval from the Park Commission to proceed to prepare the FY15 Park Fund budget at the Base Budget Plus Proposed Changes including Restorations and New Initiatives level.

The Department will be prepared to speak to the relative priority of the restorations and new initiatives at the work session.

Staff is currently scheduled to return on November 21 to seek approval of specific funding levels for the Department of Parks FY14 Proposed Budgets for the Park Fund, Enterprise Fund, Property Management Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Internal Services Equipment Fund.