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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

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October 2006

Dear Montgomery County Council Members:

I am pleased to transmit to you the semi-annual report of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The contents of this report have been discussed in detail by all of the Planning Board members in several public meetings.

As you know, the Planning Board made a strategic decision earlier this year to split the parks function and the planning function into two separate -- yet equally important -- departments, each with its own director. This decision was made to strengthen our overall agency.

As promised during the last time we came before the Council, this report places much greater emphasis on the Department of Parks and includes detailed project element forms for each aspect of our parks.

In the planning section of the report, we have provided an update on the progress we have made in several key areas of our work program.

We look forward to a lively discussion with the Council.

Sincerely,



Royce Hanson  
Chairman



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**THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS**

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## MISSION STATEMENT: THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

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The Montgomery County Department of Parks provides for the acquisition; conservation; development; maintenance; and management of a park system which -- in harmony with the environment and in partnership with the community and other public agencies:

- ✓ Protects, conserves, enhances, and interprets our natural and cultural resources;
- ✓ Identifies and offers a variety of leisure opportunities; and,
- ✓ Is safe, accessible and enjoyable for all.

*Our commitment is to be receptive, progressive, equitable and adaptive in observing and fulfilling this mission for current and future generations.*

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### SPECIAL NOTE

The Planning Board adopted this mission statement in July 1994. In light of the separation of the Department of Parks and the Planning Department, both departments are reviewing and updating their mission statements.



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## INTRODUCTION: THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS

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The Montgomery County Department of Parks is pleased to present a new work program document to the Planning Board/Parks Commission and the County Council. For the first time, the work program matrix included in this report provides a program-oriented overview of the Department of Parks' activities.

The Department of Parks is emphasizing a new program budgeting approach to mirror the work program format begun in June 2006 by the Planning Department. We believe this will be a useful way to display the desired outcomes in future budget processes and highlight our progress over the past six months. **Our purpose in displaying our work program in this way is to:**

- ✓ Begin the development of planning and resource allocation tools that will sharpen the focus on service delivery to the community rather than on internal, divisional efforts;
- ✓ Assist the Planning Board/Parks Commission and the Council in their deliberations on the mission, program mix and priorities of the Department of Parks; and
- ✓ Lay the foundation for the fiscal year 2008 budget preparation tasks in a way that encourages the allocation of resources according to output-oriented program categories rather than internal organizational units alone.

It is important to note that this is a working document that reflects the department's changing approach to how its resources are allocated, managed and tracked. We welcome the views of the County Council and others regarding the usefulness of this display for our operating budget.

### ***Relationship to the upcoming program budget***

From a technical perspective, this matrix has helped department managers shape the framework of programs in relation to the divisional organization of the department. This will in turn form the structure of the department's expenditures and funding sources.

For this initial draft, we have displayed our estimate of how the department's authorized work years are allocated among different program elements. *The representation of work years is only a preliminary estimate developed by park managers. For the fiscal year 2008 budget, we plan to show the allocation of proposed expenditures as well.*

### ***Relationship to the traditional operating budget***

This work year allocation matrix and the program budget will complement and shape the traditional budget. It is important to note that the availability of most information currently in the traditional budget will not be adversely affected: all financial reporting and accountability features of the current budget format will continue to be accommodated, including appropriation by division.

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## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED FROM PROGRAM ANALYSIS

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We are using a different approach, beginning with this document: *what are the programs and services we provide? How much are we allocating to them, and in what proportion? What does this exercise tell us about what we are doing and where we are going?*

Here is what we found out so far, with the very preliminary workforce numbers contained in this report:

- We can separate our core functions into **stewardship** of the land and resources and the **services** we provide on those resources.
- We devote a great many more of our work years to the services side of the organization as a **percentage of our effort**, and have big needs on the stewardship side.
- We are much more heavily in the **recreation** business than even we knew.
- Acquiring, developing, and renovating parks and facilities, a big program, is not necessarily matched by sufficient workforce numbers for long-term **operation and maintenance**.
- We have **very little overhead** -- so low, in fact, that we are not able to provide as much monitoring, auditing, support, training, and continuous improvement as one would expect in a fully functioning and healthy department.
- All elements of the organization have a role in each of our program areas, and are **interdependent** to a greater degree than previously understood.

There are many ways to array our programs and demonstrate where the personnel allocations are being spent right now. We show some examples in our attached matrices. One could easily sort these numbers by program element or geography or by CIP project, etc. As we refine this and move toward program budgeting, eventually we anticipate attaching actual budget numbers to the matrices, rather than simply work years.

Finally, we have concluded from the work done so far that *we should no longer build a budget based upon level of effort in previous years* – such an approach continues neglect in those areas with insufficient resources in the past.

We will return to you in upcoming budget cycles with requests based upon real core needs, supporting what our community expects – the very finest county park system, protecting a beautiful, historic environment while providing for enjoyment and use by all.

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## HOW TO READ THE MATRICES

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On the matrix, the main mission of the Department of Parks is divided into two principal programs and additional sub-programs:

1. Stewardship of natural and cultural park resources  
Land and Resource Management  
Education and Interpretation
2. Park services  
Recreation Opportunities  
Meeting Places

To see the cost in work years by program, read down each column. To see the work year cost for each division, read across each column. Programs essentially focus the reader's attention on what is being done. Organizational units are the components of the organization that show which division is responsible for which work outcomes.

Programs and sub-programs are further divided into primary service delivery categories. These represent the programmatic components the department uses to fulfill its service delivery mission. Each is described in detail in the program element forms that accompany the matrix.

Several other vertical categories (shown in white in the heading) lie outside the two main programs and are represented in Columns C1-C4. See below for more information.

### **Organizational Structure Definitions (down the left side):**

The existing divisions of the Department of Parks are displayed. We also show the Commissioners' Office, the Research and Technology Division of the Planning Department (because both provide support for the Department of Parks), and Central Administrative Services (CAS).

For the moment, the only CAS work years being displayed are a portion of the Legal Department estimated to serve the parks mission. CAS numbers, along with all others, will be refined in preparation for the fiscal year 2008 budget.

### **THE DEFINITION/MEANING OF SELECTED HEADINGS**

#### ***Budgeted work years (Column B1)***

The work years used in this matrix are those in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2007. Special note: Except for the allocation to Capital Investment (CIP), these work years are "gross" before any charge-backs to special funds. For purposes of aligning work years to their mission-focused purpose, however, this is appropriate because "charge-backs" are just a device for segregating work years and expenditures by source of funds, not by purpose. Further, the Budgeted Work Years are before any reduction for "lapse" (budget reductions associated with assumed vacancy rates, etc.). For technical reasons, lapse refinements have been deferred to a later iteration of work program development.

***Capital Investment (Column B2)***

These work years are those in selected divisions largely paid for by the CIP funding sources and that are assigned to CIP projects.

***Continuous Improvement (Column B3)***

This column is being reserved for possible use in the fiscal year 2008 budget to display the share of total departmental work years that will be reinvested in the department's operations to sustain excellence over time.

***Service Delivery (Column B4)***

This column sums up all the work years on the right. It is the total of all budgeted work years not set aside for Capital Investment or Continuous Improvement.

***Management/Administration (Column C1)***

This column includes the senior leadership and their administrative aides in each division. Most of each division's supervisory leadership is excluded from this column (as are technical support staff that may be in the division chief's office) and are allocated to other program elements.

***Partnerships (Column C2)***

Work years in this column are those estimated to be assigned to negotiate and implement various partnership agreements with outside parties. While some of these partnerships can be tied easily to service delivery programs, others lie outside the main mission of the Department.

***Property Management (Column C3)***

This column captures the staff time allocated to managing the various park houses and similar properties. These work years are judged to be working on tasks outside the core mission of the Department.

***Third Party Support (Column C4)***

In certain cases, the Department provides support to outside parties. This includes the policing of Recreation Department pools located on Park property and support of third party events or programs occurring on parkland.

***Program Elements (Columns D1 through E21)***

Descriptions of each of these program elements can be found in the accompanying set of description forms.

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## SUPPLEMENTARY MATRICES

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*There are many ways to slice the program information to show how work years and money are allocated, depending on the interests of the reviewer. We have taken a first cut at these with preliminary supplementary matrices.*

### ***By Geography***

This matrix illustrates how, with additional refined coding, the reader could be provided with a perspective on how some work years and expenditures are allocated by geography: some in distinct regions, others countywide.

### ***By Function***

Questions are often asked such as “how much are we spending on maintenance?” Again, with refined coding in the future, the reader will be able to look to a functional, as well as a programmatic, display for at least starting answers.

### ***By Source of Funds***

Policy makers periodically need to revisit the issue of “who pays” for different programs. The taxpayer and the fee payer are two principal policy categories, for example. This recap, once developed, will help policy officials see the answers to payment burden questions more clearly.

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## LOOKING AHEAD

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The establishment of a separate Department of Parks has sparked a fresh sense of purpose and has already begun to energize staff throughout the department. However, numerous organizational and functional decisions must be made in the coming months and years.

The Department of Parks is currently exploring changes or enhancements in the following areas:

### ***Establish Clear Accountability and Measurement Standards for Managers***

Several performance measures that complement the on-going efforts to migrate to a program budget format are being discussed along with the need for new and/or modified data collection methods. In response to the County Council request for more meaningful performance measures as part of the budget process, we have chosen one program item and expanded the measures to provide a tangible example

An enhanced performance measurement system could: report on the performance of publicly-funded activities; encourage continuous improvement; increase accountability; identify areas of weakness that require corrective action; strengthen oversight and improve decision-making; and provide a context for budget discussion.

### ***Empower Park Managers and Increase Their Training***

In an effort to increase the effectiveness of management of the parks, senior management is looking to increase the authority of park managers and their involvement in the decision-making process. Currently, those who are dealing with the department often have to call around to several offices before finding the one handling a specific park issue. This new system would make it easier, with a geographical basis and person to contact on individual park-related matters, and a manager who knows all the elements of his/her park.

Many park managers were promoted from within, most often from maintenance positions, but many others have widespread training in park matters that could be used more fully. A standardized training program, mentoring, and increased support and guidance from senior leadership will help develop the park manager into a more active, innovative and dynamic position.

### ***Focus on the Park Customer***

The transition to an output-oriented reporting model requires the department to consider all aspects of its work from a programmatic perspective. This will serve as a catalyst to increase customer service initiatives and enhance our outreach and information efforts.

Though 80 percent of the population surveyed in our Fall 2005 Customer Awareness Survey had heard of the name "M-NCPPC," only 52 percent were aware of what facilities, programs or services we provide to the public. In order to be more responsive and accessible to the community we serve, we must ramp up efforts to effectively communicate the services we provide and solicit feedback as to what services are most needed or desired by county residents and visitors.

Current efforts to improve our outreach include: the hiring of a multicultural outreach manager to increase our ability to reach marginalized and non-English speaking populations; expanded

partnerships with select public and private organizations to reach broader audiences; improved use of technology to make access to information easier; and participation in community events.

### ***Improve Technology Systems***

The Research and Technology Center (RTC) serves both the Department of Parks and the Planning Department. The center received funds in the fiscal year 2007 budget to make significant investments in several key technology areas that will benefit the Department of Parks. The budget includes funds to modernize the seven largest phone systems in the Department of Parks, including those that serve the Parkside Headquarters and Brookside Gardens.

RTC staff is currently evaluating options, including options that use VOIP technology. Other investments include replacement of much of both departments' network infrastructure, including routers and switches; improving security from repeated intrusion attempts and other vulnerabilities; migration to the 2003 version of Microsoft Office; and information systems backup, redundancy and recovery to safeguard our most important information assets and assure business continuity for important systems like ParkPass and Smart Parks.

The departments also received funds for a document imaging project that is being matched by a similar contribution from the Prince George's side of the Commission; staff from both the Department of Parks and the Planning Department are now engaged with the other Commission departments in a review of options for selecting and implementing a document imaging system. We are also exploring improvements in our tracking and record-keeping systems as well.

### **KEY POLICY ISSUES/QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

In the process of preparing the program element description forms, the management team of the Department of Parks has identified several key policy issues that will warrant further discussion in the coming months as the fiscal year 2008 budget is prepared and a six year public services document is developed.

Several questions evolve from the program matrix itself. When the work year allocations are complete in the future, this information will enable a policy discussion as to what the priorities are for the Park system and what the Park system should be *primarily*. Over the next six years, there will need to be discussion as to:

- What should be the key priorities of the Department of Parks?
- What will the balance be between Stewardship of Natural Resources and Park Services?
- Should there be a focus on expansion of park visitors and users in total or a more focused effort directed at specific populations such as youth, ethnic groups, seniors and others?
- What is the ultimate goal for the size of the park system? Is there an upper limit on acquisition when the acreage of parks is in balance with the long-term needs of the community and the economic base of the County?
- In addition to the acquisition of land, what are the long-term needs of the system with regard to facilities as Montgomery County reaches build out?
- What could be done to acknowledge, improve or address the intertwined relationship between the Department of Parks and the Department of Recreation?

Other questions relate to key priorities. Most work years allocated to the park system support programs that serve the core mission of the department. However, supporting other public policy goals can pull focus from this core mission from time to time. It is important for the County Council, Planning Board and Department of Parks leaders to examine these broader public policy goals and decide where and how the Department of Parks ought to participate.

Some public policy issues that warrant further discussion include:

- Environmental protection, air quality, litter, Chesapeake Bay protection;
- Forest conservation;
- Social policy: ethnic group inclusion; youth issues including gangs, at-risk youth and obesity; seniors;
- Urbanism and redevelopment;
- Land use – open space and buffering;
- Economic development;
- Historic preservation;
- Housing policies;
- Public health;
- Community educational goals; and,
- Agricultural preservation.

Another major policy issue that we have identified is that of revenues and *who pays*:

- Is the current balance of tax funding and user fees still appropriate and does it meet the challenges of some of the issues posed above? Inherent in fee policies is the underlying issue of balancing demand for revenues with user ability to pay and the goal of expanding participation.
- What should be the policy regarding Enterprise facilities and the capital investment needed to build and maintain them? Capital costs significantly impact the fees charged for participation and can have a negative impact on levels of participation. If park recreation opportunities are seen as a way to attract youth and offer a viable competition to hanging out at the mall, for example, low fees must be a consideration.

We welcome additional questions from the County Council. We look forward to the coming discussions and continued collaboration as the Montgomery County Department of Parks evolves.

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## THE PAST SIX MONTHS

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### ***Organizational changes***

The separation of the Department of Park and Planning into the Department of Parks and the Planning Department has been a substantive organizational change for the Department of Parks that will continue to be refined as the year progresses. This summer, the Planning Board/Parks Commission approved details of the separation that will strengthen and enhance the capacity of the agency to deliver first-rate park and planning services to the community.

Park Planning and Resource Analysis is now a division within the Department of Parks, and the Department is gaining the special program coordinator (policy and partnerships) and grants manager. Both the Department of Parks and the Planning Department each have their own Human Resources and Budget Coordination unit.

Additional functional changes are being implemented to strengthen the Department of Parks' ability to effectively fulfill its mission. These include bigger customer service efforts; defining park manager responsibilities; growing the park information, interpretation, and marketing function; internal communications and systems improvements; and continued organizational change and growth to meet current and future management requirements.

### ***Revenue Growth***

We partially attribute the increased popularity of our parks to new marketing initiatives, especially the combined *Montgomery County Recreation and Parks Programs Guide* and the expansion of ParkPASS, our online registration system for classes, camps and programs.

As a result of this new technology, online reservations increased by more than 100 percent comparing the first three months in 2005 with the same time frame in 2006. The number of clients in our system increased 75 percent over 2005. Total revenue for camps, classes and programs increased to \$1,274,331 in fiscal year 2006.

The ice rinks at Wheaton and Cabin John alone reported an impressive combined revenue increase of \$471,000 for fiscal year 2006 compared to fiscal year 2005. Nature facility program revenues have continued to increase, up 17 percent from fiscal year 2005. The expansion of summer camp offerings and the increased marketing effort resulted in a record 77 percent capacity enrollment.

In its first summer, the new Week in the Park summer camp at Wheaton Regional Park garnered significant media attention, served more than 300 children over the age of 5 years, and generated close to \$70,000 in revenue.

### ***Expenditure Reductions in the Enterprise Fund***

To address the losses in the Enterprise Fund and establish one operator for the public golf system in Montgomery County, on April 15 the Commission officially transferred our golf course operations for the 2006 season to the Montgomery County Revenue Authority (RA) because of the RA's reported superior track record of earnings. A short-term operating agreement and letter of intent made the transfer of the operations possible. Staff is finalizing a long-term lease that would commence in Fall 2006, with time for full public comment. Parks placed 32 staff into new work



assignments at other locations within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Parks Department continues to retain ownership of the land.

### ***New Parks and Renovation***

The revised Program Open Space allocations for fiscal year 2007 will enable us to accelerate certain CIP projects, among other possibilities. The funding is split equally between the Commission's acquisition and development programs in the Parks CIP, with a small percentage dedicated to the County's incorporated municipalities. The new Hoyles Mill Village Local Park on Schaeffer Road is under construction and scheduled to open in 2007. Concord Local Park was re-opened to the public at the end of June. The design-build of Wheaton Tennis Facility renovation went out the second half of June. The Park Pedestrian Bridge replacement design program began in June, and will take place in eight parks with the highest priority at Meadowside Nature Center, Sligo Creek Stream Valley Unit #3, Wheaton Regional Park, and Sangamore Local Park.

### ***Stewardship***

Despite the additional work caused by the summer storms, regular work schedules continued. This includes growing plants and trees to keep our park system green.

This year, staff grew 1,950 plants in the field, 1,200 plants for reforestation, 20,000 summer annuals, 700 shrubs, and over 1,200 trees and relocated 105 large trees from Pope Farm to Manor Oak, Nike Missile and Flower Hill Local Parks.

The FY06 budget identified non-native invasive plants as a major threat to park resources and provided new funding for their control. The department met its goal of treating 275 acres of heavily infested lands. This work is continuing. The annual "Deer Management Report and Recommendations for FY07" was published and forwarded to appropriate county agencies in June.

Annual stream surveys were completed to monitor the quality and biological integrity of these important resources. Volunteers and staff planted over 475 containerized trees in reforestation efforts to protect streams and provide wildlife habitat this past spring. Hundreds of other planted trees were "rescued" after being flattened by the June storm floods. A natural resources inventory of Little Bennett Regional Park was completed as part of developing the Park Master Plan.

Efforts continue to review agricultural leases on parkland to ensure the protection of sensitive areas and significant habitats. These lease agreements with farmers not only protect sensitive resources, they keep the buildable land clear of trees to facilitate future development and give farmers an opportunity to cultivate crops or mow hay.

Our stewardship and environmental consciousness even extends to applying compost tea, an organic fertilizer, to four fields at Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreational Park.

### ***Crisis Management***

The June storms of 2006 tested the mettle of Park staff and revealed a high quality organization capable of successfully managing an emergency situation. The teamwork within the agency and with outside agencies, and the procedures followed during the emergency, reflected already established and effective relationships, functions and systems. We are pleased that national organizations are using our combined response as a model for others nationwide.

With a focus on maintaining the health and security of our community, many staff members spent nights and days at Lake Needwood Dam monitoring and constructing temporary measures to control the leaking dam. Staff immediately began to investigate the cause of the leak and develop remedial actions. A plan for remediation has been sent to the Maryland Department of the Environment for approval. We have cooperated with the County, and have met with representatives from FEMA and MEMA regarding a combined application for funding.

The steady presence of our Park Police was especially appreciated during the storms. Park Police conducted 13 water rescues involving more than 60 citizens throughout the County.

Another flood watch was implemented on Thursday, August 31, as Hurricane Ernesto moved up the coast. Park staff increased monitoring of the dams at Lake Needwood and Lake Frank, recording data around the clock at 2-hour intervals. Monitoring continued until the threat of the storm had passed. Conditions at both dams remained stable.

### ***Increased Outreach***

A new “Montgomery County Parks and Heritage Sites Map & Guide” was produced in partnership with the Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County to provide residents and visitors with accurate information about the wide variety of programs, services and facilities provided by both agencies. It is being distributed through parks and historic facilities, LL Bean, Hudson Trail Outfitters, REI, and all Maryland State Welcome Centers. The Parks Show on County Cable continues to educate residents about different aspects of our work and let them know about upcoming events and happenings. A consultant has been hired to help both departments restructure our website to make it easier for visitors to quickly find the information they seek. The Nature Facilities’ Outreach Naturalist brought nature to those who may not have access or time to come to the nature facilities through an innovative “nature tour” program in various Silver Spring area parks. Brookside Nature Center re-established Sunday hours this spring after a number of requests from residents. Four school curriculum nature programs have been developed and will be presented to Montgomery County public schools.

Surveys and community meetings continue throughout the year, assessing the interests and needs of the residents of the County. Park managers have stepped up their public involvement with communities, such as Blair field users and others. The entire organization continues to support many special events such as holiday activities, walks and marches, and a wide variety of sponsored programs utilizing park facilities, roadways, and open space.

Five new seasonal park rangers have come on board and have been outfitted in a uniform that distinguishes them as representatives of the park system. The rangers are assigned to patrol and monitor local ball fields throughout the County and will focus on how our residents use ballfields in the evenings and on weekends. They will also work with formal teams and pick-up game field users. We are assessing this program’s first year and will focus on this new initiative in the FY 08 budget.

### ***Customer service***

As a result of the storms, more than 100 requests for tree service were received, adding to the 941 service requests the tree crew received before the storms from July 2005 to April 2006. Regular schedules had to be pushed back during the storm cleanup, but overtime work helped us catch up with mowing and ballfield repair.

Customer service training was provided to more than 100 Enterprise employees to ensure residents and visitors enjoyed the best experience possible while visiting Park facilities. The vast majority of employees attending the trainings stated that this training would improve their job performance and agreed that they now have a better understanding of why exceptional customer service is important.

A “park manager on duty” program was initiated this year to ensure adequate supervision throughout our parks during regular intense weekend use.

### ***Volunteerism***

In FY 2006 volunteers contributed over 53,000 hours of service throughout the parks system. Brookside Gardens hit an all-time record of 24,334 hours, up 16% from last year. Volunteer program management has been a focus over the past six months and the Volunteer Services Office has focused on staff development to improve and increase our effectiveness with volunteers. Additionally, the Volunteer Services Office has pioneered internet-based training for four distinct volunteer areas: Brookside’s Butterfly Show, Historic Oakley Cabin, Weed Warriors, and Nature Facilities. A Trails Volunteer Coordinator has been hired to engage additional volunteer support in the inspection and routine maintenance of natural surface trails.

The storm related crisis of June 2006 reflected the outstanding relationship that exists between parks and our community. Volunteers responded quickly to our call for assistance, performing trail assessments, locating and photographing damage, and removing fallen branches.

### ***Awards***

The Montgomery County Department of Parks continues to receive awards in recognition of our high level of service. This year, the Secretary of the Interior has designated Sligo Creek Parkway Trail as one of the 36 National Recreation Trails in 24 states that meets the requirement for connecting people to local resources and improving their quality of life.

The historic 1832 Woodlawn Stone Barn, located in Woodlawn Special Park in Sandy Spring, won an award for Restoration of a Historic Accessory Building from Montgomery Preservation’s 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Montgomery County Awards for Historic Preservation. The building will be rehabilitated and used as a visitor and interpretive center to serve as a trailhead for the Rural Legacy Trail, the Underground Railroad, and a gateway to historic Sandy Spring. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Public Safety Awards went to six officers of the Park Police for acts of heroism and community service.

Parks also won two Maryland Recreation and Parks Association awards for “The Parks Show” television programming, and for constructing a rustic campfire ring and associated seating.

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## **PROGRAM ELEMENT FORMS**

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## PARTNERSHIPS

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** W. Mooney  
**Lead Staff:** W. Mooney

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Effective partnerships positively leverage the Department's resources and directly support the dual aspects of the Department's mission, i.e., stewardship and recreation. There are a number of partnerships that support the core mission, such as the Maryland Soccer Foundation and the Smith Foundation's assistance in the development of the Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park. The Department of Parks also participates in a number of significant partnerships that provide service to the community, but are not always directly related to the core mission or function of the park system.

**Program Element Benefits:** Leveraging Park Department resources to meet Commission policy objectives are a cost effective way of achieving goals.

**Relationship of Program Element to Policies of Council or Planning Board:** Seeking productive partnerships that leverages County resources to meet County policy objectives are a cost effective way of addressing core responsibilities.

**Addressing the Core Function:**

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Partnerships based on adopted public policy are effective ways to conserve vital resources and bring private assets to bear on public needs.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** It is critical that a comprehensive analysis be done of all current partnerships to determine which ones meet core mission objectives of the Parks Department, and where additional partnerships can enhance the mission of the Department.

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## PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Author:** J. Bush

**Lead Division:** Enterprise and Property Management

**Lead Staff:** C. Palleschi

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Property Management Program Element provides for the administration and maintenance of Commission properties that are leased or licensed for a variety of uses, including communication towers/facilities, non-profit groups/activities, park housing, offices, agricultural uses, commercial parking, and other commercial uses. This program also administers several leases for operations currently in the Enterprise Fund, and provides for the interim needs (maintenance, security, temporary occupancy) of just-purchased parkland until the park or parcel is developed for park purposes, or until another long-term use is established. The Property Management Fund is a self-supporting fund within the overall tax-supported Park Fund. Property Management Office staff, administrative costs, park housing maintenance, and management costs, and other selected property administration, maintenance, and rehabilitation costs are funded through rental fees and interest income. Additional funding support for major maintenance support of Property Management operations comes from historic preservation funds, and staff resources from Park Fund operations.

**Program Element Benefits:** This program provides for the management and stewardship of Commission parkland and buildings used for traditionally non-park uses, on an interim or even long-term basis, pending development of the properties for more traditional park uses. This program also provides a single clearinghouse in the Department for leasing and licensing matters for park properties and structures, some of which directly support the mission of the Department.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Key aspects of this program include: the management and administration of park residential housing, which provides affordable workforce housing for park employees and other income qualified public sector workers; maintenance and administration support of numerous historic properties; and administration of non-typical parkland uses pending long-term development for park purposes.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Being a single clearinghouse for property management activities, the Property Management Program is constantly striving to standardize leasing terms and conditions, enhance the revenue stream from the program, coordinate maintenance efforts, and seek timely policy decisions on new and unique properties purchased through the Department's acquisition program.

**Community Outreach:** A significant portion of this program involves the rental of affordable park housing. Houses not rented to park employees are offered to the larger community as affordable workforce housing options.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Northern and Southern Regions, Central Maintenance, Research & Technology, Park Development, Natural Resources, General Counsel's Office, Human Resources, Park Police, Countywide Planning, Housing Opportunities Commission, Department of

Housing and Community Affairs, Montgomery County Schools, Montgomery County Government,  
Historic Preservation Commission.

# # #



## THIRD PARTY SUPPORT (RELATED ACTIVITIES; POOLS)

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Lead Division:** Director's Office

**Author:** B. Woodward

**Lead Staff:** B. Woodward

**Program Element Description/Scope:** In order to achieve the goals and objectives related to the Department's core missions, many activities, which support outside agencies and organizations, occur. This Department provides support to the Recreation Department pools, located on Park property, to outside organizations that conduct activities on Park property, as well as expertise to organizations and neighbors concerning land use, wildlife issues, and other matters..

**Program Element Benefits:** Several user groups and agencies with similar missions operate and utilize park resources. Our mission accomplishment is frequently improved or enhanced through supporting and working with these outside organizations. This is often a cost effective way of achieving the goals.

**Relationship of Program Element to Policies of Council or Planning Board:** Productive and cooperative use of park property, resources, and knowledge can be a way to leverage and enhance the delivery of park services to our public.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Support provided to outside agencies and organizations can expand our ability to deliver services, but must be constantly evaluated against the core mission to ensure responsible management decisions.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** It is critical that a comprehensive analysis be done of all current Third Party Support efforts to determine the ones that meet core mission objectives of the Parks Department.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Montgomery County Recreation Department, Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Government, Montgomery College

### **Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Iranian Festival, Going Green, Silver Spring Days, etc.

###

## PLANNING FOR STEWARDSHIP

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources

**Sub Program:** Land and Resource Management

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Author:** R. Gibbs

**Lead Division:** Natural Resources, Park  
Resource Analysis  
Redmond

**Lead Staff:** R. Gibbs, M. Planning and  
Horrigan, S. Chandlee, G. Harman, D.

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Planning for Stewardship program element provides the planning, inventory work, data collection/analysis, and research necessary to ensure protection and enhancement of the natural environment within Parks. The program provides input into the planning process including the County's General Plan; area, park, and facility master plans; the development review process; and park acquisition and development in order to achieve balance between stewardship and recreation in the park system.

Services include: Natural Resource (NR) inventories and mapping, NR consultation and management plans, rare species/habitat identification, coordination of Countywide Deer Management Program, aquatic surveys, and coordination of park-wide National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits for industrial sites, i.e., park maintenance yards.

Other services include review of all park development plans for effects, mitigation plans for non-park development effects on parkland, and assistance with countywide area master plans. Park staff members also provide expert consultation to other county, state, and federal agencies, organizations, and citizens on park and countywide natural resources issues.

**Program Element Benefits:** Careful planning for stewardship protects park and countywide natural resources and maintains an appropriate balance between stewardship and recreation in parks. It maintains high quality and functioning ecosystems that perform critical functions and provide economic benefits that improve the quality of life of all County residents. Natural ecosystems reduce air and water pollutants, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce surface runoff, alleviate flooding, lower stream temperatures, control erosion, recharge groundwater, and provide habitat for wildlife.

In addition, these systems enhance the experience of park users, provide soothing environments to escape the stresses of busy daily schedules, and provide opportunities to appreciate and to reconnect with nature.

### Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:

Objective	FY07 Target
% of park natural areas with natural resources inventories.	50%
# of plans for which written input was provided	30
# of acres of parkland inventoried annually (average)	2,500
# of NPDES plans completed	13

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Stewardship of Park Natural Resources is a core value and responsibility of the Department of Parks.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The Natural Resources Management Unit (NRM) has developed a strategic plan that, among other things, looks to improve communication, coordination and understanding between park staffs to improve resource protection and overall effectiveness.

**Community Outreach:** NRM is increasing efforts to make citizens more aware of the quality and extent of resources housed in our parks, the importance of healthy ecosystems to our quality of life, and the need to properly steward these resources.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Park Development, Park Planning and Resource Analysis, Countywide Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Montgomery County Council, Park Police, County Executive's Office

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Audubon Naturalist Society, Friends of Sligo Creek, Anacostia Watershed Society, Neighbors of Northwest Branch, The Sierra Club, Maryland Native Plant Society, Maryland Ornithological Society, Friends of Rock Creek Ecosystem, Eyes of Paint Branch.

###

## ARBORICULTURE

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources  
**Sub Program:** Land and Resource Management

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Natural Resources

**Author:** S. Bontz  
**Lead Staff:** E. Rose

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Arboriculture is the art, science, technology, and business of tree care to promote healthy trees, discern tree problems, and take measures to correct them. The Arboriculture program element provides a countywide comprehensive tree care program to support the protection of forest resources. Services include: maintaining tree health and care through inspections, preventive maintenance, cabling, lightning protection, aeration, fertilization, pruning and removal of dead, diseased and hazardous trees. Other services include 24-hour emergency response for hazardous tree conditions, dealing with Gypsy Moth, and other tree issues and problems.

**Program Element Benefits:** Maintenance of trees promotes overall aesthetics and a safe environment for park patrons, and reduces the risk of damage to park facilities and neighboring property, thereby reducing the Commission’s exposure to liability. Park and off site building plans are reviewed for Best Tree Management practices and work is monitored and inspected for compliance.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

<b>Measure:</b>	<b>FY Target:</b>
# of parks inspected for tree damage	100
% of parks inspected on schedule	25%
# of tree hazard emergency responses	150
% of emergency responses within 24 hours	100%
# of trees planted	1300
# trees provided aftercare	2,645
% surviving after two years	95%
# of plans/permits reviewed	15
% reviewed within time frame	100%

**Projects**

Best Practices reviews of permits, development plans	Completed within 10 working days of receipt
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**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Priority will be given to obtaining the staff necessary to reduce the backlog of service requests and meet industry standards for annual park inspections for hazard tree identification and to begin a program for Historic, Significant, and Champion trees. These vital services support the caring for forests, trees, and natural resources of the Department.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Expanded cross training of staff in disease symptom recognition will be conducted during the winter months.

**Community Outreach:** The Natural Resources Division will be modifying the membership of its advisory board to include more minority representation and will be exploring the translation into Spanish of its materials on gypsy moth.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/ Divisions:** The Northern and Southern Regions, and the public identify and report the need for tree work to the Service Center. Work is coordinated with the Park Development Division for the review of plans and tree impacts to avoid, minimize, or mitigate construction impacts.

**Work Program Projects:**

Increase staff to catch up with the backlog of service requests FY 08

Restore money for contract services for trail and parkway maintenance FY08

Begin Historic, Significant and Champion tree care program FY08

Increase park tree inspections to 50% FY09

Increase park tree inspections to 75% FY10

Increase park tree inspections to 100% FY11

**Interest Groups:** Friends of Sligo

###

## HORTICULTURE

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources  
**Sub Program:** Land and Resource Management  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006 **Author:** S. Bontz  
**Lead Division:** Natural Resources **Lead Staff:** S. Bontz, D. Vismara, M. Turay,  
K. May, Haller

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Horticulture is the art, science, technology and business of growing, displaying, maintaining and cultivating flowers, ornamental plants, and turf for parks countywide. The Horticultural program element provides countywide comprehensive services to support the development, beautification, maintenance, conservation, and renovation of parks, public gardens and facilities.

Crop production services include the propagation and growing of woody and herbaceous materials, tree, shrubs, annuals, perennials.. These are accomplished by the operation of nursery and greenhouse production facilities.

Landscaping services include installation, maintenance and renovation of horticultural resources. Additionally, interiorscaping, with seasonal and tropical plants, is provided to public buildings.

Turf and athletic field renovation services, include the overseeding, aerating, grading, soil testing, soil amending and ancillary services on a minor to major scope.

**Program Element Benefits:** Horticultural services provide the living, green infrastructure for park facilities providing trees, shrubs, annuals, perennials, and turf grass including installation and on-going maintenance. A healthy, well-designed and well-maintained landscape provides the following benefits: User enjoyment, aesthetics, site management, wildlife habitat, air and water quality, and energy conservation.

###

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Resources  
**Sub Program:** Land and Resource Management  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006 **Author:** R. Gibbs  
**Lead Division:** Natural Resources **Lead Staff:** R. Gibbs, M. Horrigan, S. Chandlee, G. Harman, D. Redmond

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Natural Resources (NR) Management Program Element preserves and enhances the natural environment within Parks – the Department’s “original infrastructure.”

Services include: Implementation of NR management plans, reforestation, rare species/habitat protection, habitat and stream restoration, non-native invasive plant management, wildlife management, implementation of the Countywide Deer Management Program, and other work related to protecting NR within parks.

In addition, park staff members also provide expert consultation to other county, state, and federal agencies, organizations, and citizens on park and countywide natural resources issues.

**Program Element Benefits:** Protection of park natural resources helps maintain high quality and functioning ecosystems, and protects and enhances biodiversity within the park system. Healthy ecosystems perform critical functions and provide economic benefits that improve the quality of life of all County residents. Natural ecosystems reduce air and water pollutants, reduce greenhouse gases, reduce surface runoff, alleviate flooding, lower stream temperatures, control erosion, recharge groundwater, and provide habitat for wildlife.

In addition, these systems enhance the experience of park users, provide soothing environments to escape the stresses of busy daily schedules, and provide opportunities to appreciate and to reconnect with nature.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Objective	FY07 Target
% of park natural areas in which NRM efforts implemented	69%
# of acres of parkland with deer management programs	14,700
# of acres of parkland treated for non-native invasive plants	350
# of volunteer hours directed towards NRM projects	4800
# of acres planted in reforestation/restoration projects	TBD
# of staff trained in NPDES, NNI, Deer Management issues	TBD
# of NPDES site inspections completed	13

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Stewardship of Park Natural Resources is a core value and responsibility of the Department of Parks.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The Natural Resources Management (NRM) Unit has developed a strategic plan that, among other things, looks to improve communication, coordination, and understanding between park staffs to improve resource protection and overall effectiveness.

**Community Outreach:** NRM is increasing efforts to make citizens more aware of the quality and extent of resources housed in our parks, the importance of healthy ecosystems to our quality of life, and the need to properly steward these resources.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resource, Park Development, Park Planning and Resource Analysis, Countywide - Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Montgomery County Council, Park Police, County Executive's Office

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Audubon Naturalist Society, Friends of Sligo Creek, Anacostia Watershed Society, Neighbors of Northwest Branch, The Sierra Club, Maryland Native Plant Society, Maryland Ornithological Society, Friends of Rock Creek Ecosystem, Eyes of Paint Branch

**Other:**

###



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SITE MANAGEMENT

<b>Program:</b>	Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources	<b>Author:</b>	M. Dwyer
<b>Sub Program:</b>	Land and Resource Management	<b>Lead Staff:</b>	M. Dwyer, J. Sorensen, H. Bouslog
<b>Latest Edits:</b>	9/20/06		
<b>Lead Division:</b>	Countywide Planning		

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Archaeological and Historical Site Management Program Element provides a county wide comprehensive program. Archaeological and Historical Site Management is the strategy and implementation of responsible stewardship of Montgomery County’s non-renewable and fragile archaeological and historical resources. Its goals are to preserve and protect archaeological and historical sites in place, conserve archaeological and historical collections and records, use and share archaeological and historical research results, public education, and participation in archaeology and history. The unit is charged with identifying and preserving historical and archaeological resources located on parkland. Services include managing historical and archaeological resources through Plan Review, restoring historic structures, background research, archaeological site monitoring, surveying, and testing. The excavation, archaeological collection accession, cataloging, analysis, and curation are also provided. The program maintains and updates the Maryland Historical Trust Archaeological Site Forms for Montgomery County, manages and maintains (Geographical Information System) GIS archaeological layer. Other services include program coordination with other Commission units such as Planning, Property Management, and Central Maintenance.

**Program Element Benefits:** This program preserves the County’s historical and archaeological heritage for interpretation, fosters a community sense of place and ownership, and ensures the stewardship of our public historical and archaeological resources.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Measure	FY Target:
• # of archaeological sites protected	3
• # of historic sites protected	4
• # of archaeological sites in need of protection/stabilization	4
• # of interpretive programs presented	10
• # of historic sites restored	6
• # of subdivision plans reviewed for archaeological resources	200
• # cultural resource management contractors’ reports for Transportation Planning and Park Development reviewed	6
• Obtain funding from the state for the Woodlawn Stone Barn	
• Restore the Woodstock Stone Barn	
• Stabilize the Darby Store	
• Open the Dairy Mooseum	
• # of archaeological parks developed	1
• # of historical and archaeological sites researched	2
• % accession records completed for archaeological collections	25%

- % stabilization of archaeological collections 10%
- Update the GIS archaeological layer
- Maintain and update the Maryland Historical Trust Archaeological Site Forms

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Increase oversight of Plan Reviews.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Expand training of staff in artifact identification, historical and archaeological interpretation techniques, and analysis of Early English Settlement systems.

**Community Outreach:** Expand adult archaeological laboratory and field training activities to include Oakley Slave Cabin, Newmantown Reconstruction Era African-American Village, and the Civil War Block House Camp.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Countywide Planning, Property Management, Research and Technology Center, Community Based Planning Division, Development Review, Natural Resource Division, Central Maintenance, Park Development, Montgomery County Historical Society, Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Archaeological Conservation Center (MAC Lab), Heritage Montgomery

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Montgomery College, Richard Montgomery High School, Department of History, Archaeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

###

## NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources  
**Sub Program:** Education and Interpretation  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006 **Author:** B. Turnbull  
**Lead Division:** Park Planning and Resource Analysis **Lead Staff:** B. Turnbull

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Natural Surface Trails program provides design, construction, renovation, maintenance, signage and, above all, standards for the existing and proposed more than 120 miles of trail throughout the Park system. The Countywide Trails Plan, approved by the Planning Board in July 1998, identifies eight trail corridors of countywide significance and proposes trail connector routes within and between the corridors. Planning to refine these corridors will continue and will include proposals to expand parkland dedication to accommodate trails and review of subdivision applications for trail connections between corridors. Master plans for parks will guide renovation of existing trails in order to bring them up to sustainable standards. Construction, renovation and maintenance are lead by staff that supervise crews of volunteers and/or region staff. Inspections of trails are done quarterly by trained volunteers, who report directly to the Trails Volunteer Coordinator. The Northern and Southern Regions provide routine trail maintenance, which includes, but is not limited to, major tree removal and corridor clearing. The Central Maintenance Division provides installation of gravel parking lots and kiosks.

**Program Element Benefits:** Natural Surface Trails are one of the most popular park amenities. Natural Surface Trails provide connectivity throughout the park system, linking major recreation areas, interpreting significant historical and cultural resources, while protecting and stewarding the natural resource environment. Natural Surface Trails provide recreational benefits to hikers, equestrians, cyclists, bird watchers, and nature enthusiasts, including those who are mobility impaired.

### Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:

Measure:	FY Target:
Muddy Branch Trail Assessment Study	Completed
Muddy Branch Trail Phase II Construction	Trail Completed, not bridges
Renovate Black Hill Trails	Completed
Install kiosks for Hoyles Mill and Muddy Branch	Completed
Install Hoyles Mill Trail Bridges	Initiated
Study of Equestrian Impacts in Blockhouse Pt. Park	1 <sup>st</sup> Year Completed/ May Expand
Signage Plan for Clarksburg Greenway	Completed
Project	
Monthly Inspection of Trails by Volunteers	Launch

### Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:

**Core Responsibilities:** Priorities will be given in staff time to implementation of the goals of the 1998 County Wide Trails Plan and the execution of the Board-approved work program for FY07-09. A small portion of time will be given to lend expertise to the Region Staff for minor maintenance issues.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Expanded training of both staff and volunteers will ensure a measurable level of quality control.

**Community Outreach:** The division will be very aggressive in its attempts to:  
Inform citizens of trail implementation in their respective areas;  
Recruit new volunteers in order to achieve our goals;  
Publicize and celebrate new trail openings;  
Organize public trail hike events.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:**

Park Planning and Resource Analysis  
Natural Resources Division, Natural Resources Management Group  
Director's Office, Volunteer Services Office  
Countywide Planning Division, Historic Preservation (Planning)  
Northern Region, Park Managers  
Southern Region, Park Managers  
Central Maintenance  
Park Police

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:**

International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)  
REI Store  
Mid Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE)  
Trail Riders of Tomorrow (TROT)  
Potomac Bridle and Horse Trail Association (PBHTA)  
Montgomery County Road Runners Club (MCRRC)  
Seneca Creek Greenway Trail Coalition (SCGTC)

###

## AGRICULTURAL HISTORY FARM PARK

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources  
**Sub Program:** Education and Interpretation  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06 **Author:** J. Humerick  
**Lead Division:** Northern Region **Lead Staff:** J. Humerick, G. Yick

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Agricultural History Farm Park (AHFP) contains several historic farm buildings and agricultural fields. The historic farm area serves as the staging area for interpretive programming related to agriculture and farm life at the turn of the twentieth century. Park naturalists and volunteer groups also conduct nature and environmental programs. The Ag History Farm Park also provides the setting for many special events throughout the year.

Thousands of visitors come to the park to enjoy events, such as Springtime on the Farm, The Harvest Festival, Arbor Day Celebration, Close Encounters with Agriculture, Little House and the Prairie Camp, and other programs held by M-NCPPC, as well as the Friends of the Agricultural History Farm Park. The historic Bussard House will be opened for public visitation in FY07. The modern agricultural area hosts various agencies that provide the public with learning opportunities on present and future trends in agriculture, and to support and promote the agricultural industry of Montgomery County. There are approximately six miles of natural surface trails throughout the site that accommodate hikers and equestrians.

Daily maintenance of the site includes: turf maintenance, noxious weed control, field maintenance, snow removal, trail maintenance, wildlife management, and building maintenance.

### **Programming and Special Events Description/Scope:**

- Provide recreational and educational opportunities to the public;
- Increase awareness and appreciation for the importance of agriculture’s past, present, and future;
- Increase public awareness of and support for Montgomery County’s Agricultural Reserve;
- Provide safe, well-maintained facilities for park visitors.

**Program Element Benefits:** The enhancement of current programming and the addition of future routinely scheduled programs at AHFP will increase the public awareness of the past, present, and future practices in the agricultural industry throughout Montgomery County. Educational and interpretive opportunities will be increased and offered to the public on a continual basis, rather than only during special events. More children can learn the importance of farming by attending enhanced versions of current programs such as “Close Encounters with Agriculture”, “Springtime on the Farm”, and “Little House on the Prairie”.

### **Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

#### *Overall*

#### *Programming*

# of classes, camps and programs offered	13
# of clients enrolled in classes, camps, and programs	490
% capacity enrollment in classes, camps, and programs	75%

% growth in number of clients	26%
\$ revenue generated by classes, camps, programs	\$5,000
% increase in revenue generated	15%
% participants responded "Highly Satisfied"	100%

*Special Events*

# of people attending events (or # of tickets sold?)	6,000 +
% increase in attendance (or # of tickets sold?)	25%
# of free events	10 +
# of events with fees	5 +
# of sponsored events	5 +
\$ value of sponsorships	\$1,000
\$ revenue generated by events with fees	\$5,500 +
# of events targeting families	10 +
# of events targeting teens	0
# of events targeting seniors	0

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Increase and enhance on site programming to meet public needs. Continue with current agriculture lease to provide production crops for agriculture use as well as for educational purposes. Continue with current maintenance practices.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** AHFP Planning Committee and the AHFP Steering Committee will continue to meet and lay the groundwork for effective future programming and development of the site.

**Community Outreach:** The Northern Region, along with other partners, will work with in-house Marketing and Community Relations staff to promote the current activities, as well as the increased and enhanced future activities. All partners will effectively communicate to and with the public, all undertakings at the AHFP to create a feeling of involvement from the community in the future direction of the facility.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region; Historic Preservation; Park Development; Natural Resources; Volunteer Services; Enterprise; Montgomery County Soil Conservation District MCSCD; U of MD, Cooperative Extension Service, United States Farm Services Agency

**Work Program Projects:**

Establish Orchard Area  
 Expand and Enhance Programming  
 Open Bussard House for Visitation  
 Work on Future Options Analysis Plan  
 Implement Interpretive Sign Program  
 Introduce live animals for interpretation

**FY07 Target:**

Launch November 2006  
 Continue current enhancements  
 Launch November 2006  
 Continue current work  
 Launch March 2007  
 Research and make proposals

**Interest Groups:** Friends of the AHFP; Back In Time 4-H Club

###

## NATURE FACILITIES

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources  
**Sub Program:** Education and Interpretation  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006 **Author:** S. Findley  
**Lead Division:** Northern and Southern Regions **Lead Staff:** S. Findley, G. Yick

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The role of the Nature Facilities is interpreting and developing an awareness and appreciation for the natural, historical, and cultural heritage of Montgomery County and its parks. This program includes Meadowside, Locust Grove, Brookside Nature Centers, and Black Hill Visitors Center. These facilities provide direct interpretive educational opportunities for public participation in Montgomery County and its park. Naturalists conduct interpretive programs for groups (e.g., schools, scouts), provide teacher training to Montgomery County Public Schools, and coordinate a wide variety of nature programs on a year-round basis.

**Programming and Special Events Description/Scope:** Naturalist-led programs fall into one of two categories: Public programs and school/organized group programs. Public programs may be designed for children, adults, or families and cover a wide range of natural and cultural resource topics. Typical programs include nature hikes, campfires, story times, and general nature programs. These programs are advertised in the *Montgomery County Guide: Recreation and Parks Programs* and on [www.parkpass.org](http://www.parkpass.org).

Nature programs are offered to school groups, scout troops, and other organized groups interested in hands-on experiences that reinforce curriculum learning objectives or that fulfill requirements for scout badges.

The nature facilities also offer summer camps for children. Summer camps may be up to a week long, and focus on various natural and historical themes.

In addition to programs and camps, Montgomery County's Nature Facilities also plan and present special events. Such events, like the Monarch Fiesta Days, may run one or more days, and usually feature a variety of scheduled and ongoing activities. Others, such as the Harvest Festival at the Agricultural History Farm Park, involve staff from all four nature facilities. Many special events are planned and held at individual nature facilities.

**Program Element Benefits:** The Nature Center Facility programs educate people about the importance of their natural and cultural resources, creating stewards for Parks, Park policies, and Park work programs that manage these resources. Park Naturalists assist the public with questions and concerns about natural resource issues, such as how to deal with wildlife issues and how to control alien invasive plant species. Naturalists also educate people about Parks Department programs to protect and manage natural and cultural resources. This program is the "face" of the Parks Department. It is likely that more people interact one-on-one with a park naturalist than with employees in any other park unit. Programs in natural, historical, and cultural resources interpretation provide direct educational and recreational benefits to park users.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Measure	FY07 Target
# of programs offered	1625
# of customers	40,000
\$ revenues	\$163,000
# of special events	xxxxx
# of attendees to special events	xxxxx

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Nature facilities are responsible for the majority of education and interpretation programs offered by the Department of Parks. This programming is an integral part of the Commission’s stewardship efforts and provision of passive recreational opportunities. Our education and interpretation programs help inform the public about resource management concerns, develop advocates for our stewardship programs, and recruit volunteers to assist in management efforts. These programs also provide enjoyment outdoors in our parks for tens of thousands of people every year. In FY07, we will continue to offer programs focusing attention on the problems of invasive species, the need to protect water quality, and protection of special areas through our Legacy Open Space program.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Nature facilities will continue implementing the Strategic Plan for Interpretation, which was initiated two years ago. This plan has improved communication, cooperation, and coordination between the four nature facilities and other work units within the Park and Planning Commission. Implementation of Strategic Plan goals include improving school programming which was completed in FY07, and developing a larger volunteer program in support of nature facility programming and operations.

**Community Outreach:** Outreach is another goal of the Strategic Plan for Interpretation. Ongoing efforts include more programming conducted at locations away from the nature facilities, such as at schools and in park areas without nature facilities. Language training has been provided in conversational Spanish, and many staff members continue to take Spanish language courses. A new interpretive trail being developed in Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park will feature interpretive signs in both English and Spanish.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Southern Region, Northern Region, Natural Resources Division, Central Maintenance, Park Planning and Resource Analysis

**Work Program Projects:**

Design and implement school programs available at all four nature facilities (Completed in FY07)

Design and implement new training program for volunteers (In process)

**Interest Groups:**

**Other:** Montgomery County Public Schools and scout groups



## PUBLIC GARDENS

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources

**Sub Program:** Education and Interpretation

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06

**Author:** D. Vismara

**Lead Division:** Natural Resources

**Lead Staff:** D. Vismara

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Public Gardens Section is responsible for the maintenance, programming and development of both Brookside Gardens and McCrillis Gardens. Brookside Gardens is Maryland's premier horticultural display garden and is nationally recognized. It provides permanent landscape and seasonal floral displays within 35 acres and two conservatories. Brookside Gardens manages 15 acres of natural areas. A 12,000 sq. ft. visitor center provides space for horticulture and enterprise programming. McCrillis Gardens is a five-acre shade garden, which includes a former residence currently being used as headquarters for the Montgomery Parks Foundation and Brookside's School of Botanical Art and Illustration.

The Public Gardens program propagates and grows over 50,000 plants each year for seasonal and permanent displays. Horticulture information is disseminated through children and adult education programs, interpretation, a plant labeling system and a 4,698-volume library. Special events are held throughout the year. Public Gardens encourages community support through partnerships developed with organizations and communities and its large and expanding volunteer program. Public Gardens aggressively seeks private support through its sponsorship and donor programs.

**Programming and Special Events Description/Scope:** The Public Gardens program provides a wide variety of horticultural learning experiences and events for visitors of all ages. In-classroom experiences for adults include topics on landscaping, plant culture, plant propagation, floral arrangements, green roofs, vegetable gardening, containers, indoor plants, native plants, cooking, holiday decorations, garden crafts, plant maintenance, tree care and garden structures. Brookside Gardens School of Botanical Art and Illustration, located at McCrillis Gardens, offers throughout the year, designed curriculum for all skill levels of botanical drawing. Out-of-classroom experiences for adults include garden demonstrations, guided tours, plant identification walks and horticultural garden tours. Public Gardens childrens experiences include gardens and butterfly exhibit tours; classes on plant structure, garden activities and garden crafts; morning story times and Childrens discovery benches. Public Gardens provides classes which meet MCPS curriculum standards to public, private and home schools. A number of annual special events are offered throughout the year which include the Wings of Fancy Live Butterfly Exhibit, Green Matters Symposium, Holiday Light Show, Childrens Day, Fall and Spring Lecture Series, Sculpture Show, Art Shows and Conservatory Shows. In addition, Public Gardens has partnered with numerous plant societies and green industry organizations to offer plant shows and sales (Day Lily Show, Dahlia Show, Chrysanthemum Show, Mushroom Show, Cactus Show) and events (Horticulture Magazine Symposium, Green Roof Symposium) for homeowners and professionals

**Program Element Benefits:** Brookside is the most visited facility in the Montgomery County Parks System attracting an estimated 393,000 visitors annually. Brookside and McCrillis Gardens offer beautiful landscape settings and displays for public use for leisure recreation and educational growth. Public Gardens programs and special events provide unique learning and personal growth

opportunities, and leisure activities at reasonable, affordable rates for all Montgomery County residents.

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** The mission of Brookside Gardens as a public garden is to foster an appreciation for the art of gardening and science of horticulture through plant collections, displays, learning opportunities and events. Brookside Gardens programs and special events are designed to appeal to a broad audience of all ages, compliment the Gardens plant displays and exhibits and encourage visitation throughout the year.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** ParkPASS tracks participation levels in all classes and tours. Surveys are completed by participants for all classes and tours. Information obtained from the surveys and ParkPASS help determine repetitiveness of a class or tour, customer satisfaction, and suggest new class offerings. Themes, program content and displays are changed each year for annual special events to attract new and returning visitors. Volunteers are used extensively to support all operations at Brookside and McCrillis Gardens.

**Community Outreach:** Classes and special events are listed in the Montgomery County Recreation and Parks Program Guide, which is mailed quarterly to more than 86,000 homes and available at public libraries, Park facilities and other public buildings. Brookside's *Xperience* guide to programs and events is sent to over 6,000 households and is available at the Brookside Gardens Visitor Center, libraries, community centers and Park facilities. Monthly press releases are sent to all local newspapers, magazines and television media. Rack cards are sent to all Welcome Centers in the State. Flyers and posters are displayed in local stores. Flyers are distributed with Montgomery County School Backpack Program. Upcoming events and classes are displayed on a plasma screen in the Brookside Gardens Visitor Center lobby. Programs are promoted to local communities by participating in local county and community events (Silver Spring Parade, Taste of Wheaton, Red Wiggler Farm Tour).

**See Program Element Forms for Arboriculture, Horticulture, Natural Resources Management, Trails (Natural Surfaces), Event Centers, Trails(paved), Public Private Partnerships.**

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** M-NCPPC: Natural Resources, Central Maintenance, Enterprise, Community Outreach and Media Relations, Nature Centers; MCPS

###

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SITE INTERPRETATION

**Program:** Stewardship of Natural and Cultural Park Resources

**Sub Program:** Education and Interpretation

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06

**Lead Division:** Countywide Planning

**Author:** H. Bouslog

**Lead Staff:** M. Dwyer,  
J. Sorensen, H. Bouslog

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Archaeological and Historical Sites Interpretation educational Program Element provides interpretation of the historical and archaeological sites located on parkland. The services include management of an active Volunteer Program (for high school students and adults), summer archaeology workshops for primary grades through high school students, Archaeology Field Schools for adults, and public interpretive and educational programs. The Archaeology Program also includes an outreach component serving Montgomery County Public Schools and private schools (including internship opportunities), community fairs, local historical and archaeological societies, boy and girl scouts, and senior citizen groups, among others. The Program delivers hands-on workshops and activities, lectures, career fair displays, and educational seminars and displays for the public.

**Program Element Benefits:** The educational and interpretive element of the Archaeological and Historical Sites Program benefits the community by providing:

- Increased multi-cultural awareness, enhanced quality of life through community participation and group interaction;
- Deeper appreciation and awareness of the benefits of archaeological study;
- Increased knowledge, skills, and abilities in cultural resource stewardship;
- Improved consideration of the effects of land use decisions on cultural resources;
- Improved understanding that archaeology goes beyond just material things: cultural ideas shape objects, and objects shape culture;
- Enriched quality of life for present and future generations through the preservation of archaeological sites and data;
- Improved awareness of Montgomery County's unique prehistory and history;
- Greater appreciation of one's own "place" in time as understood through a historical/archaeological context;
- Enhance personal development and satisfaction through skill development.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Measure	FY07
# of educational or interpretive programs presented	20
# of attendees at programs	670
# of archaeological volunteer hours	5500
# of archaeological public displays	4

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** The interpretive programs engender in the participants a connection to Montgomery County's heritage, which fosters an appreciation and desire to protect the archaeological and historical resources found in Montgomery County Parks.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Increase staff education through participation in Volunteer Program Management workshops.

**Community Outreach:** Invite attendance in the Master Volunteer Conference.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Park Department Nature Centers, Countywide Planning Division, Richard Montgomery High School, Department of History, Montgomery College

**Work Program Projects:**

- Hold Public “Dig Day”
- Develop and expand schedule of Volunteer excavation and laboratory opportunities
- Conduct interpretive programs at archaeological sites for “special interest” groups, such as MCPS or boy scouts or girl scouts troops
- Continue responding to public inquiries
- Continue partnership with Montgomery College, Richard Montgomery High School and Archaeology Society of Maryland, Inc.
- Conduct Archaeology Summer Camps and Archaeology Field Schools
- Prepare and deliver public presentations and displays
- Co-Sponsor Archaeology Month Activities with Maryland Historical Trust, State Highway Administration, Archaeology Society of Maryland, Inc.
- Cooperate with other park and community programs, i.e., Emancipation Day, Harvest and Spring Festivals, Calithea Farm Opening, Clarksburg Days, Damascus Fair, Rockwood Manor Women’s Conference

**Interest Groups:** Archaeology Society of Maryland, Inc., Montgomery County Historical Society, Menare Foundation

**Other:**

###

## PARK PLANNING FOR PARK SERVICES

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Park Planning and Resource Analysis  
**Author:** L. Coleman  
**Lead Staff:** L. Coleman, T. Schmieler

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Park plans define the future development of the park system. Park plans recommend additions and renovations to the park system to provide recreation opportunities, protect significant environmental resources, preserve key historic and cultural features, and promote an interconnected countywide trail system. The most significant park planning efforts include: Park functional plans such as the Land Preservation, Park, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), master plans for countywide parks, facility plans for community use parks, trail corridor plan, and park and trail elements of community master plans. More detailed park concept plans are prepared at time of subdivision to assure developers dedicate and construct parks that meet the Department's design and maintenance standards.

**Program Element Benefits:** Effective planning is an important element and first step in delivering a high quality park system that meets the mission and goals of the park system. The LPPRP determines land and facility needs, and guides the Department's park acquisition and development program. Park plans define the components of parks and recommend implementation strategies. Developers provide parkland in accord with the parkland recommendations of individual community master plans. The park planning program provides a park system that ensures long-term stewardship of high quality natural and cultural resources while making enjoyment of the out-of-doors convenient to all county residents.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

- Completion of PROS Strategic Implementation Plan
- Completion of Little Bennett Regional Park Master Plan
- Completion of Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan
- Preparation of park and trail recommendations in community master plans
- Planning/opening of Centerway Heart Smart Trail
- Preparation of concept plans for parks at time of regulatory review

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** This program supports the acquisition and development of parks.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Plan preparation involves all agency staff related to parks to assure plan recommendations can be implemented and are sensitive to park management and maintenance concerns.

**Community Outreach:** All master plan efforts are widely publicized and staff works closely with Recreation Advisory Boards and Community Outreach staff to involve the widest possible audience. All sanctioned park trail maps area available on the web. Trail events (such as 100 miles in 100 days challenge) encourage public use of the park trails.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Users, Regions, Police, Central Maintenance, Park Managers, Park Development staff, County Executive staff, municipalities, elected officials, Montgomery County Department of Recreation, Montgomery County Public Schools, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

**Work Program Projects:** Natural Surface Trail Implementation; Recreation Centers (Functional Plan), Trails-Hiker-Biker

**Interest Groups:** Recreation Boards, the Commission on People with Disabilities, homeowner's association, park and trail advocates, municipalities, civic groups

**Other:**

###

## BASEBALL/SOFTBALL

**Program:** Park Services

**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Lead Division:** Northern and Southern Regions

**Author:** A. Nelligan

**Lead Staff:** A. Nelligan, G. Harman, B. Conner

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Baseball / Softball Program Element provides a comprehensive Countywide program of maintenance and operation to provide safe, functional play fields for organized youth and adult play, as well as unstructured free play.

**Program Element Benefits:** Provide safe, functional baseball and softball fields for organized youth and adult sports programming. Additionally, Local Park ballfields provide opportunities for unorganized “ walk on “ free play.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:** Meet established standards for maintenance of baseball and softball fields in Regional, Recreational and Local Parks throughout the county.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Regional and Recreational Park Ballfields: Seasonally provide scheduled maintenance and operation, as identified in established departmental maintenance standards.

**Local Park Ballfields:** Seasonally, provide weekly maintenance, as identified in established departmental maintenance standards.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** During winter months provide training to staff in best management practices for infield maintenance and turf management to insure consistency in the quality of maintenance applications throughout the County’s park ballfields.

**Community Outreach:** Communicate with all organized baseball/softball leagues in Montgomery County regarding field maintenance issues.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies:** Southern Region, Northern Region, Park Police, Directors Office, Natural Resources

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Montgomery County Recreation Department, all organized baseball/softball leagues in the County

**Other:**

# # #

## BOATING

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The boating program accounts for the maintenance, operations, programming, and administration of boating-related activities in the Department of Parks. Services include the operation and maintenance of boat rental facilities in Rock Creek and Black Hill Regional Parks (Lakes Needwood and Little Seneca), the provision of mooring sites and launching permits for private boats at both sites, tour boat rides at Lake Needwood, interpretive tour boat rides at Little Seneca, water-based interpretive programs, and launching ramps at Little Seneca Lake and Seneca Landing Park (next to the C&O Canal).

The Boating program element captures special programs and events that involve boating programs, such as Boat Demo Day held at Lake Needwood. The work program for boating-related interpretive tours and programs is in the Nature Facilities program element.

**Program Element Benefits:** The boating program offers residents of all ages an opportunity to participate in a range of water-based activities and sports in convenient close-to-home locations.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Boating access on lakes provides the public an opportunity to fish, sail, paddle, observe wildlife, exercise, and otherwise enjoy the outdoors. Water-based interpretive programs enhance the visitor's appreciation of water resources and facilitates stewardship of the park environment.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The Department's growing marketing program continues to identify means of expanding the public's awareness and wise use of water resources.

**Community Outreach:** With the Department's expanding summer camp programs, opportunities exist to expose new users to water sports and activities, and to the Department's boating facilities and programs.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region, Central Maintenance, Research & Technology, Enterprise Marketing, Natural Resources, Park Police, Human Resources, Park Planning and Resource Analysis, ParkPASS, and Montgomery County Recreation Department

**Work Program Projects:** Boating Summer Camp

**Interest Groups:** Bass Anglers Sportsmen's Society, Audubon Naturalist Society, Maryland Ornithological Society

**Other:** Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of the Environment, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Corps of Engineers

###



## CAMPING

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** R. Nichols  
**Lead Staff:** R. Nichols

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The camping program element provides safe and well-maintained, family-friendly campgrounds/campsites at three locations. There are a variety of amenities for local residents, long distance travelers, and vacationers. These campgrounds also provide the appropriate facility for use by organized groups.

Little Bennett Campground, located in Little Bennett Regional Park, consists of 66 non-electric campsites with tent pads, picnic tables and fire rings/grills, 25 campsites with 30-amp electric service, picnic tables and fire rings/grills (typically used by RV's), three bathhouses, two large playfields, opportunities for volleyball, horseshoes, and basketball, two playgrounds, two large group campfire rings, an indoor activity center, and an outdoor amphitheater with a campfire area.

Little Bennett Regional Park also offers a primitive group camping area with no running water, and pit toilet facilities that can accommodate up to 100 people.

Located in Cabin John Regional Park, The Robert C. McDonell Campground, offers seven walk-in primitive sites with two tent pads, grills, tables, a campfire circle per site, and pit toilets. This campground is managed by the Park Permit Office and maintained by the Cabin John maintenance staff.

Parklawn Group Camping Area, located in Wheaton, offers four primitive campsites, where each campsite features grills, a campfire circle, and pit toilets.

### **Programming and Special Events Description/Scope:**

Little Bennett Campground offers weekend activities and special events to campers to enhance their camping experience, and to attract more campers. Throughout the entire season, weekend activities include Craft-time for Campers, a Guided Trail Hike, and Ice Cream Socials. Additional weekend activities from mid-June through August include Outdoor Movie Nights, and Group Campfires. Special events take place on a limited basis during the full season and include: birding programs for children and adults, hayrides, campfire cookouts, and demonstrations by the Mid-Atlantic Search and Rescue Dogs.

The Department of Parks does not coordinate any special programs for The Robert C. McDonell Campground. However, it is home to "Camp Tuckerman," which is a Girl Scout Camp that takes place over a six-week period.

The Department of Parks does not coordinate any special programs for the Parklawn Group Camping Area.

**Program Element Benefits:** Camping in Montgomery County Parks provides both individuals and organized groups the opportunity to engage in an outdoor recreational experience in a secure, maintained facility. These campgrounds allow the participants to enjoy nature and provide space for

learning outdoor skills such as camping, campfire cooking, backpacking, orienteering, hiking, nature exploration, survival skills, and plant and animal identification. These facilities also provide a place to stay for travelers and vacationers.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

**Little Bennett Campground:**

*Overall*

*Programming*

# of programs and camps offered	118
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**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** The Montgomery County Parks' campgrounds promote a direct relationship between the environment and the community via hands-on experiences in the outdoors. Camping can engender a sense of ownership and stewardship, thereby fostering the conservation and protection of the parks that are in our care.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** By providing these outdoor spaces, people can engage in outdoor experiences, and thereby connect with the environment in a way that facilitates park stewardship.

**Community Outreach:** County residents are encouraged to enjoy these local facilities for short-term or beginner camping experiences. Additionally, long-distance travelers are welcome to stay at Little Bennett Campground for extended stays.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern and Southern Regions, Enterprise, Park Police, Central Maintenance, Research & Technology, Director's Office – Park Permits

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Groups from various Houses of Worship, Clarksburg Civic Association, Hyattstown Mill Arts Project, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Montgomery County Schools, orienteering groups, Mid-Atlantic Search and Rescue Dogs, bird watchers

###

## DOG EXERCISE AREAS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Divisions:** Northern and Southern Regions  
**Author:** G. Moxley  
**Lead Staff:** J. McMahon, G. Moxley

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Dog Exercise Areas provide a secure, fenced area where dogs are allowed to be off their leash, enabling them to run freely with other dogs. Parks provides a shaded area and seating for patrons utilizing the dog parks, a source of water for the dogs, and daily maintenance to ensure the cleanliness of the area.

**Program Element Benefits:** Providing an area for dogs to run freely affords the public a secure and clean environment that allows patrons and dogs to socialize. Providing these areas reduces the number of “dogs off leash” complaints in the parks. The program has afforded dog walking patrons an area to host special events promoting walks and dog care.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:** Provide a clean and secure area for dogs to run off their leash. Establish a committee to determine future specifications for Dog Exercise Area facilities that include: construction specifications, proper locations, amenities required, and identifying support groups.

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Maintains and promotes a healthy environment for dogs/owners.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Promotes a positive image with the public.

**Community Outreach:** Provides an area where dogs can run and play off leash.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Southern and Northern Regions, Central Maintenance

**Work Program Projects:** Future planning for additional dog parks based on current experiences

**Interest Groups:** MC Dogs

###

## EQUESTRIAN CENTERS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Equestrian Centers program provides for the development, operation, maintenance and/or lease administration of several equestrian facilities throughout Montgomery County. Equestrian Centers offer: boarding, pasturing, lessons, trail rides, competitions/special events, therapeutic riding programs, horse care and grooming, and tack sales and services. Equestrian Centers include: Rickman Horse Farm Park, Meadowbrook Stables, Potomac Horse Center, Wheaton Park Stables, Calithea Farm, and Woodstock Equestrian Park.

**Program Element Benefits:** This program provides the citizens of Montgomery County a diverse array of equestrian facilities and programs that span the County from Chevy Chase in the south, through Wheaton and Potomac, up to Beallsville in the north. Boarding, lessons, and access to equestrian trails are available at most sites. Therapeutic riding programs are currently available at two facilities: Rickman Horse Farm Park and Potomac Horse Center.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Recreational equestrian activities in an increasingly urbanized county require specialized facilities that are found on parklands. These facilities also help support the equine agricultural community, which is the second largest component of Montgomery County agriculture, and boasts over 12,000 horses. The equestrian centers have been developed and operated over the years through leases with private sector individuals or entities. For consistency in operations, fees, and public service emphasis, the Department, as one of its core responsibilities, manages/administers the leases for these operations.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The Department should develop a Functional Master Plan for equestrian facilities. To manage the growing inventory of equestrian centers, the Department has recently hired an Equestrian Manager to oversee the equestrian operations.

**Community Outreach:** Programs at Meadowbrook Stables, Potomac Horse Center, and Rickman Horse Farm Park work with disabled, financially-disadvantaged, and other members of the community that would not normally be drawn to equestrian activities. Through affordable or free equestrian programs and activities, these programs are designed to foster physical and mental rehabilitation, build confidence, and open doors of opportunity.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Northern and Southern Regions, Central Maintenance, Enterprise Marketing, Natural Resources, Park Police, General Counsel's Office, Park Permits, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Park Development, Public-Private Partnerships

**Interest Groups:** Friends of Woodstock, Trail Riders of Today, pony clubs, Maryland Draft Horse and Mule Association.

###

## FIELD SPORTS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Northern and Southern Regions

**Author:** A. Nelligan  
**Lead Staff:** A. Nelligan, G. Harman, B. Conner

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Sports Fields Program Element provides a comprehensive Countywide program of maintenance and operation, to provide safe, functional sports fields for organized youth and adult play, as well as unstructured free play. More than 200 Montgomery County Public School ballfields are also maintained by the Department of Parks, as well as the MNCPPC-owned fields.

**Program Element Benefits:** Provide safe, functional rectangular and circular sports fields for organized youth and adult sports programming. Additionally, sports fields in local parks provide opportunities for unorganized “walk on “ free play.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:** Meet established standards for maintenance of turf and lining of sports fields in regional, recreational and local parks throughout the county.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Seasonally, provide weekly turf maintenance and lining, as identified in established departmental maintenance standards.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** During winter months, provide training in best management practices for turf management, for staff, to insure consistency in the quality of maintenance applications throughout the county.

**Community Outreach:** Continue efforts to inform and educate user groups regarding policy and field permitting issues. Continue efforts to find solutions to field users / neighborhood citizens’ conflicts.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Southern Region, Northern Region, Park Police, Directors Office, Natural Resources

#### **Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Mont. Co. Recreation Department, all organized football/soccer/lacrosse/rugby leagues in the County

###

## GOLF

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The golf program provides for the administration and management oversight of leased golf operations in Montgomery County Parks. Golf operations include Sligo Creek, Northwest Branch, Needwood, and Little Bennett Golf Courses, as well as the driving range and learning center at South Germantown Recreational Park.

**Program Element Benefits:** This program provides the residents of Montgomery County a high quality, affordable golfing experience. Public golf courses are located throughout the County and are available on a daily fee, first-come, first-served basis.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Providing space for the recreational activity of public golf, while concurrently assuring stewardship of our natural resources.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The transfer of the operation of the golf courses is one element of an ongoing initiative to improve the financial viability of the Enterprise Fund, while adhering to the practice of “no net loss of parkland.”

**Community Outreach:** The Revenue Authority is expected to expand support for The First Tee program, to develop reduced fee or no-fee programs for qualified individuals and families, and to continue to offer consideration to high school golf teams.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Northern and Southern Regions, Central Maintenance, Enterprise Marketing, Natural Resources, Park Police, General Counsel’s Office, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Park Development, Public-Private Partnerships, Montgomery County Revenue Authority, Montgomery County Public Schools

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** First Tee Montgomery

**Other:**

###

## ICE SKATING

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise  
**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This program provides for the operation, maintenance, and programming of the Department's ice skating facilities in Wheaton and Cabin John Regional Parks. The facilities include: the Cabin John Ice Rink with one National Hockey League (NHL)-sized rink, one Olympic rink, and one studio rink; the Wheaton Ice Rink with one NHL rink; and the outdoor Wheaton Ice and In-Line Roller Skate facility incorporating one NHL rink. Program elements for the indoor facilities include: public skating sessions; group and private figure skating lessons; hockey instruction and leased ice for games and practices; freestyle and ice dancing sessions; skating competitions and events; party rentals; group skating activities; summer camps; clinics and demonstrations; charity events; and club rentals/activities. The outdoor-covered facility is used for dry floor activities in the off-season and ice rentals (primarily hockey) during the traditional winter season.

In this program element, a significant portion of the facility schedule and the programming is devoted to classes, camps, and other structured programs. In addition to the many benefits these programs offer the public, they help to maximize usage of the facility and to develop future generations of skaters.

Special events, such as skating demonstrations and shows, are also an expanding element of the overall programming.

**Program Element Benefits:** The ice skating program provides venues, programs, and unstructured opportunities for individuals, groups, families, and organizations to take advantage of a full range of on-ice and off-ice activities, the benefits of which include: year round, recreational skating; skills development for a full range of on-ice activities; participation in competitive ice sports; charitable donations by way of attendance at special sessions/events; attendance at special shows, competitions, and events; social activities/opportunities; structured and safe teen activities; and the promotion of a healthy and active lifestyle for all ages.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Providing affordable, high quality active recreation for residents of all ages. To ensure that this program meets the needs of the users and the community, more attention will be given to collecting and evaluating customer satisfaction data and program success.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Very few public venues for ice skating exist in Montgomery County. Facilities in Montgomery County Parks offer high quality skating opportunities to the public.

**Community Outreach:** The implementation of joint marketing with the Montgomery County Recreation Department and ParkPASS on-line registration has provided for the wider awareness of ice rink programs and activities, and has made it easier for customers to access program information and register for programs from the comfort of their homes or offices. Additional features of the

ParkPASS system, currently under consideration, will further enhance customer access to and use of the facilities.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Park Police, Research & Technology, Enterprise Marketing, ParkPASS, Volunteer Services, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Montgomery County Public Schools, General Counsel's Office, Human Resources

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:**

**Other:** United States Figure Skating Association, Ice Skating Institute of America

###



## MINI-GOLF AND SPLASH PLAYGROUND

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise  
**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This program provides for the operation and maintenance of the mini-golf and splash playground at South Germantown Recreational Park. The mini-golf and splash playground are operated by the Department of Parks under the Montgomery County Enterprise Fund. Direct and indirect costs for this program are funded primarily through user fees.

**Program Element Benefits:** The special features of the splash playground and the challenging layout of the two miniature golf courses offer residents of Montgomery County two uniquely-designed, family-oriented recreational activities in one convenient, up-County location. Prices are in the affordable range enabling visitors to get value for their money whether they spend an hour or a day.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Operation of the mini-golf and splash playground serves to fulfill the Department's mission statement to "Improve the quality of life by...enhancing...the developed environment for current and future generations."

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Northern Region and Enterprise staff continues to explore ways to expand awareness and usage of the mini-golf and splash playground through increased marketing, new/expanded programs, and enhanced facility amenities/features.

**Community Outreach:** With the Department's expanding summer camp program, opportunities exist to expose certain segments of the community that would not normally seek out or have access to these facilities (mini-golf and splash playground) and programs.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Northern Region, Central Maintenance, Enterprise Marketing, Park Police, Department of Recreation, ParkPASS, Research & Technology, Human Resources

###

## MULTI-USE COURTS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Northern and Southern Regions  
**Author:** G. Harman, M. Little  
**Lead Staff:** G. Harman, M. Little

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Multi-Use Court Program Element provides a comprehensive countywide inspection and maintenance program to provide safe, functional play courts that are used mainly for basketball and free play. The program includes ensuring that all surfaces are smooth and clear of debris, free of graffiti, and all fixtures and nets are in place and functional.

**Program Element Benefits:** Provide a safe, functional play surface for all ages to use in organized and free play situations. These courts allow for both “team” socialization as well as imaginative development.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:** Develop a comprehensive, consistent, routine inspection system to ensure the delivery of safe, functional multi-use courts throughout the County.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Increase the overall awareness of all levels of staff to inspect these court areas and report needed repairs and improvements.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Expand inspection training for staff to ensure the timely reporting of problems and resolution of those problems.

**Community Outreach:** Initiate efforts to reach organized basketball groups and/or the Montgomery County Recreation Department to coordinate small tournaments (maybe 3 on 3) on our outdoor courts.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region, Southern Region, Park Design and Development

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Montgomery County Recreation Department, organized basketball leagues in the county

###

## OPEN SPACE (UNPROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES)

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06  
**Lead Div:** Northern and Southern Regions

**Author:** S. Chandlee  
**Lead Staff:** Chandlee/Jones

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Open Space (unprogrammed areas) are areas where informal play occurs, appreciation of the outdoors develops, and the constructive use of leisure time is promoted, all of which support both individual and community wellness that enhances the overall quality of life. Open Space (unprogrammed areas) includes open areas that are mowed, trim mowed, and include trash removal, litter pick-up, no mow areas or wildflower areas mowed once a year.

Currently, the Commission has about 22,260 acres of locally-owned parkland that are considered conservation or stream valley parks. Conservation and neighborhood conservation parks have ion of regional park are subject to more activity, but still unprogrammed. These areas include the least amount of disturbance, while stream valley parks and the conservation parks include the natural green space adjacent to active areas of recreation. According to the 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan surveys, natural areas are one of the top ten most popular facilities.

**Program Element Benefits:** The acquisition, development, and maintenance of open space are an essential part of recreation and leisure for the citizens and visitors of Montgomery County. Open space provides safe, accessible, and attractive areas to be used for recreation and leisure. These areas help meet the needs of diverse communities for physical, emotional, cultural, and social activities. Open space can also attract businesses, provide wildlife habitat, add to home values, and make communities more livable.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY 07:** Actively seek acquisition and development opportunities. Maintain park open spaces according to the goals and objectives as outlined in Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) park maintenance standards manual.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Provide adequate levels of staff and materials in order to achieve maintenance standards and goals for the 33,000 acres of parks and open space available to the citizens of Montgomery County.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Hire, train, and promote staff for positions within the departments that have direct influence on the acquisition, care, and upkeep of parks and open space.

**Community Outreach:** Utilize various types of public media, fairs, community functions, and homeowners associations to inform and educate citizens about parks and open spaces.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Northern and Southern Regions, Natural Resources, Park Police Nature Centers, and Park Planning and Development

###

## PICNIC SHELTERS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Park Permits

**Author:** B. Woodward  
**Lead Staff:** B. Woodward

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Picnic Shelters are a popular amenity in many countywide and community-use parks. These facilities provide a covered location for families and groups to serve food and conduct group activities. These shelters can be reserved for a fee; otherwise they are available on a first-come-first-served basis. These shelters typically consist of a timber or metal roof structure supported by posts on a slab of concrete. Maintenance usually consists of removing trash and debris daily, and a weekly washing with a power washer. The popularity of these facilities sometimes results in user conflicts that may need Park Police intervention. The Park Permit Offices manage the permit process. Revenues from local park shelters go into the Park General Fund, and the revenues from the Regional Park shelters go into the Enterprise Fund.

**Program Element Benefits:** Picnic Shelters are a quintessential park amenity that provide cover and defined space within a park to serve food, and which allow for defined private space in a public location.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Provides a defined outdoor meeting place for social, recreational, and dining activities where residents can enjoy the park environment and participate in park-based activities.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Picnic shelters are provided in most regional and many community parks. They are a popular amenity and are frequently completely booked on weekends and holidays. The Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD) also uses some picnic shelters for camps and classes.

**Community Outreach:** The agency's website and its park brochures advertise the availability of these shelters.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Montgomery County Recreation Department, park patrons, Regions, Park Police, Central Maintenance

**Work Program Projects:** None

**Interest Groups:** Park patrons and communities

###

## PLAYGROUNDS

**Program:** Park Services

**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Author:** W. Gillette, M. Arrington

**Lead Division:** Southern and Northern Regions

**Lead Staff:** W. Gillette, M. Arrington

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Playgrounds program element provides a countywide comprehensive inspection, repair, replacement, and maintenance program to protect and preserve its unsupervised public playground facilities and its users. Services include maintaining the play equipment and the safety of our users through inspection by certified inspectors. Defects are recorded and corrected or fenced off until repaired. Preventive maintenance is performed during the inspection, which includes adding and leveling surfacing material, removing litter and following manufacture maintenance specifications. Crews follow the Consumer Product Safety Commission Guidelines, and work with manufacturers and installation contractors.

**Program Element Benefits:** To provide safe and up-to-date playground equipment, sites, and amenities for the enjoyment of the children and toddlers of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:** Provide the proper level of wood carpet fiber in all Southern Region Playgrounds.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Safety Inspections and repairs

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Inspect all lots every month – 75% completion rate

**Community Outreach:** The Community is involved in meetings with staff and in selecting equipment and colors. If the Community wants additional items, they are encouraged to raise the funds for expansion of equipment. Examples are: Woodacres, Westmoreland Hills, Dorset and Kennedy Drive, and Norwood

**Coordination and Linkages: Park Development Division (PDD):** Involved with design, coordinates construction, recommends new playgrounds and renovations, meets with citizens and organizations regarding playground problems and suggestions, and explains replacement program.

**Central Maintenance:** Constructs playgrounds, installs equipment, repairs problems dealing with drainage, wash outs, etc. **Southern Region:** Installs equipment, inspects for safety, and attends meetings with Park Development Division to explain program, monitor fiber surface in playgrounds and track by SmartParks. **Park Police:** Monitors gang activities and graffiti/tagging. **Montgomery Parks Foundation:** donated equipment

**Agencies/Divisions: Natural Resources:** Removes/trims trees for limbs and hangers that pose a danger to patrons and equipment.

**Work Program Projects:** Need to consider Handicap Accessibility

**Interest Groups:** Adults and children, citizen organizations, civic and fraternal orders/clubs, land developers

**Other:** All other playground users to include above.

###

## SCENIC PARKWAYS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Southern Region
 
**Author:** R. Gathers, J. Boyd  
**Contact Name:** R. Gathers, J. Boyd

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Sligo Creek Parkway and Beach Drive provide a drivable park experience in an urban environment, as well as access to several active and passive use recreation facilities, such as trails, playgrounds, and tennis courts.

**Program Element Benefits:** The parkways provide stream valley preservation and a scenic commuter or leisure experience in a heavily urbanized area. Parkways provide quality of life benefits by preserving the environment and in providing recreational opportunities. These roadways provide an escape from the development that often occurs in large cities. Users can drive the entire length of the parkways or stop at various points to enjoy recreational experiences. Communities and users can engage in either passive or active recreation that is in close proximity to where they live without having to drive long distances or use public transportation.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

**FY07 target**

*Southern Region*

Inspect roadway and trail	Monthly
Respond to emergencies (snow, storms, flooding)	As needed
Collect trash along trail/s	Daily
Mow along roadway	2-3 inch height
Inspect Bridges	Monthly or as needed
<b>Central Maintenance</b>	
Respond to Work Request for asphalt and bridge repairs as well as site work by Heavy equipment crews, welding carpentry, masonry and painting. Will also provide Fleet Management services	As required
<b>Natural Resources</b>	
Inspections and tree maintenance	Monthly
Respond to emergencies (snow, storms, flooding)	As needed
<b>Park Police</b>	
Monitor traffic patterns to determine accident prevention and enforcement actions.	Daily
Close roadway for pedestrian and cycle use.	Weekly

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Priority will be given to emergencies, maintaining the roadway and signs along with the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), trash removal, and general maintenance of facilities and trails.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Use of automated maintenance management software to manage non-routine maintenance. Distribute resources to provide a safe, educational, and well-maintained parkway experience. The Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Park Police, and Park Development Divisions provide coordinated services for patrolling, emergencies, routine maintenance, and capital improvements, such as maintaining signs, trees, trails, flood barriers, mowing, backfilling, snow removal, stream bank protection and improvements, trash collection and roadway repairs or renovation. DPWT has assumed Capital Improvements Program (CIP) responsibility for the roadway and bridges in FY07.

**Community Outreach:** Work with volunteers to keep the parkways and facilities well maintained. Increase community involvement through interpretive programs along the parkways.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Park Police, Park Development, Montgomery County DPWT

###

## TENNIS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006 **Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise **Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This program includes the operation, maintenance and programming of the Department's indoor and outdoor tennis courts. The Department's indoor tennis facilities are located in Cabin John and Wheaton Regional Parks. The outdoor tennis courts are located throughout the County in various local, regional, recreational, and neighborhood parks. Wheaton and Cabin John indoor facilities offer seasonal court reservations, spot-time reservations, group and private lessons, group rentals for parties or league play, and summer camps. Programming on the outdoor courts, includes league play and events on selected courts at Olney Manor, and group instruction and activities in the new Week in the Parks and Tennis in the Parks programs. These programs are managed through the Enterprise Division, in cooperation with the Montgomery County Tennis Association, Montgomery County Recreation Department, and Montgomery County Schools.

A growing portion of this program are the classes and camps in the new Week in the Parks and Tennis in the Parks programs. These new programs build on the success of the private and group lesson programs and camps offered at the indoor facilities for many years. The outdoor programs reach out to locations and clientele previously not possible with the indoor programs.

Maintenance program costs for this program are paid for through user fees.

**Program Element Benefits:** This program provides recreational tennis opportunities; promotes a healthy and active lifestyle for users; provides for tennis skills development in group or private settings; provides healthy, educational summer activities for children; offers venues for competitive tennis activities; provides healthy and safe activities for children; and offers opportunities to adults and children alike for social interaction.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** In keeping with the Department's current mission statement, this program "...improve[s] the quality of life..." by providing active recreational activities and programs for residents of all ages. As with ice rinks and other Enterprise programs, to ensure that this program meets the needs of the users and the community, more attention will be given to collecting and evaluating customer satisfaction data and program success.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Similar to the ice rink program, the implementation of ParkPASS has made County residents more aware of tennis programs and activities, and has made it easier for customers to access program information, and register for programs from the comfort of their homes or offices. The marketing aspects of ParkPASS and the increased convenience for customers, in combination with the program tracking features of the ParkPASS system, will provide for enhanced programming and program attendance. Additional features of the ParkPASS system, currently under consideration, will further enhance customer access to, and use of, the facilities.



**Community Outreach:** The outdoor tennis program, in general, and the new Week in the Parks and Tennis in the Parks initiatives, in particular, has the goal of reaching a wider and more diverse spectrum of the community, including populations that traditionally are not drawn to the sport of tennis.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Natural Resources, Park Police, Research & Technology, Enterprise Marketing, ParkPASS, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Montgomery County Schools, General Counsel's Office, Human Resources

**Work Program Projects:**

**Interest Groups:** Montgomery County Tennis Association, United States Tennis Association

**Other:**

###

## HIKER/BIKER TRAILS (PAVED SURFACES)

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Northern and Southern Regions

**Author:** W. Hanley  
**Lead Staff:** T. Johnson,  
W. Hanley

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Trails - Hiker/Biker (Paved Surfaces) provide a place for trail-based recreation, nature enjoyment, and exercise. Park patrons can walk, jog, run, bike, skate, roller blade, bird watch, view wildflowers, and push strollers along a maintained hard surface. Hiker/Biker Trails can be used for the “activity” or to reach a destination. Our Hiker/Biker Trails lead through and to parks with play areas, dog exercise areas, picnic areas, athletic fields, natural areas, and lakes. The Hiker/Biker Trails can also provide a transportation corridor to places such as work and school. This Program Element provides a place for multi-use recreation and/or exercise. Park Maintenance Staff maintains trails: patch asphalt, mow, trim, remove downed trees, remove trash, repair and replace railings and bridges. Park Police patrol trails, and volunteers provide patrols and park clean-ups.

**Programming and Special Events Description/Scope:** The Trails - Hiker/Biker (Paved Surfaces) provide places for walking and running, and for biking groups to conduct special events, i.e., nature enjoyment, Volkssport Walks, Montgomery County Road Runners, etc.

**Program Element Benefits:** The Trails - Hiker/Biker (Paved Surfaces) provide patrons safe access into an aesthetically-pleasing environment, where they can enjoy a variety of activities. They provide active recreation for walking, running, cycling, and also passive recreation in the form of quiet walks to enjoy the flora and fauna of the area. Hiker/Biker Trails also benefit citizens by providing corridors to recreation and work facilities.

### **Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Meet established standards for Paved Trails.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Through this arterial system of trails, we are able to address core responsibilities, such as public access, connecting to our communities, diverse recreational opportunities, health and wellness efforts, and overall quality of life in Montgomery County.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Continue to improve inspection and maintenance of trails, as well as improve wayfinding signage along trails. Educate staff on procedures for proper inspection and maintenance of hard surface trails.

**Community Outreach:** Continue to develop the HeartSmart Trails and other community benefit efforts to increase awareness and appropriate use of the trail system. Work with special user groups and volunteers for special events, trail clean ups, and promote safe trail use.

Coordination and Linkages:

**Agencies/Divisions:** Highway and Safety Services, Park Development, Park Police

**Work Program Projects:** Implementation of Functional Master Plan for Trails

**Interest Groups:** Friends of Rock Creek, Friends of Sligo Creek, Montgomery County Road Runners, and Volkssport Groups, Audubon Naturalists Society, Maryland Ornithological Society, Maryland Native Plant Society

**Other:** Coordinate with M-NCPPC Transportation Planning for commuting linkages

###

## TRAINS AND CAROUSELS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Recreational Opportunities  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06  
**Lead Division:** Southern Region

**Author:** M. Tchou  
**Lead Staff:** M. Tchou  
J. Devlin

**Program Element Description/Scope:** A favorite attraction of Wheaton Regional Park is the restored 1915 carousel originally built by the Herschell Spillman Co. of North Tonawanda, New York. From the 1960s until the early 1980s, the carousel operated on the Mall in Washington, DC, after which it was moved to Wheaton Regional Park.

A replica of an 1863 C.P. Huntington engine pulls miniature trains, a family favorite in Cabin John and Wheaton Regional Parks. The five-car passenger trains depart from the station for a 12-14 minute tour of the park through forest and meadows totting their whistles and ringing their bells.

Other services include: party rooms for children's birthday parties, visitor information and assistance, and bus permit information/issuance. New Special Programs such as the Haunted Train Ride and Western Week were added for the year in the Wheaton location.

**Program Element Benefits:** The Trains and Carousel program provides a popular, economical, and nostalgic amenity to the Regional Parks. It is popular with kids of all ages as well as grandparents.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Increase ridership by up to 20 percent.

Continue and diversify special programs during off peak season e.g. Haunted Train and Creepy Carousel and Western Week.

Develop an interpretive signage program for the Wheaton Train.

###

## RECREATION CENTERS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Meeting Places  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Park Permits

**Author:** B. Woodward  
**Lead Staff:** B. Woodward

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Recreation Centers are small buildings located within local parks that provide indoor space for meetings, parties, recreation programming, childcare, worship activities, summer camps, and other appropriate gatherings. A user fee is charged to recover the cost of providing the buildings. These buildings were predominantly built in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. The cost of maintaining them and keeping them in safe and usable conditions increases with the age of the buildings. The users are unsupervised, which sometimes results in inappropriate activities occurring, requiring Park Police and park management intervention. The permits for these building uses are managed through the Park Permit Offices. The revenues go into the Parks General Fund.

**Program Element Benefits:** Community groups, such as scouts, homeowners associations, garden clubs, and civic groups use these buildings when they are in proximity to their community. The Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD) uses the space for classes and camps, often to include the surrounding park setting. The buildings also provide space for family and religious gatherings in a pleasing natural location. Bringing these groups into a park setting helps to increase residents' awareness and use of our park facilities.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** A Facility Master Plan, in progress in the Park Planning and Resource Analysis unit, relates to our core responsibilities, and the future use of these structures.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** A condition assessment study is currently underway to determine the physical condition, total cost of ownership, and the life-cycle evaluation of these structures.

**Community Outreach:** These facilities are listed on the Park Permits web site, and can be reserved on-line.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Central Maintenance, Northern Region, Southern Region, Park Police, Montgomery County Recreation Department

**Work Program Projects:** Facility Master Plan, Condition Assessment Study

**Interest Groups:** Neighborhood associations, users, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Summer Camps, churches, business groups

**Other:**

###

## EVENT CENTERS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Meeting Places  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Enterprise

**Author:** J. Bush  
**Lead Staff:** J. Bush

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The event centers program offers the citizens of Montgomery County and surrounding jurisdictions a variety of venues for meetings, social events, educational offerings, and other group, family, or community activities. Annually, the centers are used by a diverse collection of individuals and family groups, non-profit organizations, and other public and private sector groups, businesses, and agencies. Included among the types of activities held at the event centers are: business meetings and retreats, community meetings, government functions, weddings and/or receptions, birthday and retirement parties, family reunions, holiday parties, interpretive programs, educational classes, outdoor retreats, and social/fraternal club functions.

Commission offered/sponsored classes, camps and other structured programs represent a significant portion of this program element at the public gardens, and future opportunity at the other event centers. The public gardens also sponsor a number of special programs/events throughout the yearly calendar.

**Program Element Benefits:** Parks Department event sites provide users an opportunity to hold their selected event(s) in one of several unique, scenic, and often out-of-the way settings. Settings range in character from the historic Woodlawn Manor in the pastoral area of Sandy Spring, through Rockwood Manor near the scenic C&O Canal, to the quiet elegance of Brookside Gardens in Wheaton Regional Park. Overnight accommodations at Rockwood Manor provide customers the option of staying over for weekend, and other multi-day retreats or functions. By bringing people into these park settings, we hope to increase awareness and use of our parks.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** The creative re-use and wise use of historic and unique structures is sound stewardship. By bringing private and corporate groups into the park settings, we intend to foster appreciation of natural spaces and subsequent visitation to our parks.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Needed is a policy decision on how the event centers will accommodate ongoing internal and external requests for free or reduced fee usage of the facilities, while striving to cover operating costs. To reduce this program's dependence on Park Fund subsidies, and net operating proceeds from other Enterprise facilities to fund operating deficits, priority is being placed on enhancing marketing efforts to advertise facilities and programs, and to develop new programs to increase usage.

Event evaluations have been developed to determine the level of customer satisfaction, solicit recommendations, and determine future resource allocations.

**Community Outreach:** The "We Have The Where" campaign has been implemented, which includes print and website advertising, trade show exhibitions, brochures, and other printed materials. These campaign materials are distributed through channels identified to reach target

audiences. More emphasis will be placed on staff participation in community organizations and functions to promote the benefits of the event centers through personal recognition, contact, and outreach.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Enterprise, Northern and Southern Regions, Central Maintenance, Research & Technology, Enterprise Marketing, Natural Resources, General Counsel's Office, Human Resources, and Park Police

**Work Program Projects:** Development of new special programs, such as the Women's Weekend Retreat at Rockwood Manor Park

**Interest Groups:** National Girl Scout Council, Montgomery County Conference and Visitor's Bureau, various Chambers of Commerce, wedding and event planners

###

## LARGE GROUP PICNIC AREAS

**Program:** Park Services  
**Sub Program:** Meeting Places  
**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006  
**Lead Division:** Park Permits

**Author:** B. Woodward  
**Lead Staff:** B. Woodward

**Program Element Description/Scope:** Three Large Group Picnic Areas are specialized and distinctive areas, which provide for picnic, sport, and open areas separate from the general park user, where groups up to 175 people to gather, serve food, and enjoy sports as a group. These areas must be permitted for a fee, and require an advanced reservation. Keg Beer and large bottle wine may be served. A sports equipment pack is issued to the group. Restrooms are also provided.

**Program Element Benefits:** These facilities are provided to allow for a large group to reserve a distinct area for picnic and sports, and not be concerned with other park users interfering. Because they are separated from the general park users, beer and wine may be served. These amenities are primarily used by corporate groups for a “company picnic.”

### **Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

Number of Group Picnic Areas:  
Number of Permits Issued:  
Revenues from fees:  
User satisfaction from survey:

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:**  
**Organizational Effectiveness:**  
**Community Outreach:**

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Users, Regions, Police, Central Maintenance  
**Work Program Projects:**  
**Interest Groups:**  
**Other:**

###



## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - LAND ACQUISITION

**Program:** Capital Investment

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/06

**Author:** M.E. Venzke

**Lead Division:** Park Development

**Lead Staff:** M.E. Venzke

**Program Element Description/Scope:** The Land Acquisition program allows for the purchase of land in Montgomery County for the preservation of open space, future parks, public development projects, and the preservation of properties with exceptional natural or cultural value. The Land Acquisition Program demonstrates the Commission's commitment to secure park lands and the preservation of future parks and natural areas. The Capital Improvement Program accomplishes this with the following projects: Legacy Open Space, Advanced Land Acquisition Revolving Fund (ALARF), Acquisition Local Parks, and Acquisition Non-local Parks.

**Program Element Benefits:** The above land acquisition programs are essential for the preservation of properties for leisure activities, natural and historical enjoyment, essential public projects, and the protection of the environment.

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Securing land for environmental, historical, and recreational purposes, according to established master plans and public policy, is essential in a County that is rapidly building out. Continue to acquire land that will enhance the quality of life in Montgomery County by providing various types of conservation, recreational and/or historical opportunities.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Is measured by the success of implementing the land acquisition recommendations of the adopted master plans within the limits of the capital budget.

**Community Outreach:** As a component of the master plan and budget process, public meetings and hearings on potential land acquisitions are held. .

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Montgomery County Government, M-NCPPC's Finance and Legal Departments, Park Planning and Research Analysis Section, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, municipalities within Montgomery County, Historic Preservation Commission

**Work Program Projects:** Spurrier Farm, Callithea Farm, Rickman Farm, and Northwest Branch Stream Valley

**Interest Groups:** Landowners, citizens, "Friends" groups

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## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM – ENVIRONMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

**Program:** Capital Investments

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Lead Division:** Park Development

**Author:** M.E. Venzke

**Lead Staff:** M. E. Venzke

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This program provides funding for capital improvements, which contribute to the protection and stewardship of natural, historical, and cultural resources on parkland. Projects included in this program are Trails: Natural Surface Design, Construction and Renovation, Restoration of Historical Structures, Stream Protection, Energy Conservation, and Pollution Prevention of Ponds and Lakes , ,

**Program Element Benefits:** Repairs, stabilizes, and renovates important historical structures and sites to preserve historical resources and provide infrastructure for interpretive programs for public education and enjoyment. This program also facilitates access to natural areas, archeological, and historic sites. It enhances the environmental conditions throughout the park system. It provides funding for corrective improvements to preserve the natural environment including damages to stream channels and tributaries in stream valley parks, reduces energy consumption at park facilities, and provides storm water pollution plans to improve the conditions of ponds and lakes within the park system.

### Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:

% of CIP used for these stewardship programs	4%
% program accomplished in FY07	90%

### Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:

**Core Responsibilities:** Maintaining and improving the quality of our natural resources: energy, historic structures, and water/stream quality supports the stewardship aspect of the Department's mission, and facilitates the public's use and enjoyment of parkland. These actions ensure that the value of parkland is not diminished.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** Keep current with the latest governmental regulations regarding improved environmental efficiencies and incorporate them into our projects whenever feasible.

**Community Outreach:** Involve the surrounding residents and concerned Interest Groups throughout the process as necessary.

### Coordination and Linkages:

**Agencies/Divisions:** Department of Public Works and Transportation, Countywide-Historic Preservation, Park Planning and Research Analysis and Environmental Sections, Historic Preservation Commission, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Northern Region, Southern Region, Central Maintenance

**Work Program Projects:** Trails included in the Countywide Park Trails Plan, Woodlawn Stone Barn, Sligo Creek, Northwest Branch Creek, Hoyles Mill, Cabin John and Meadowbrook Maintenance Yards

**Interest Groups:** Friends of Sligo Creek, Friends of Northwest Branch, Anacostia Watershed Society, Friends of Rock Creek's Environment

## INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

**Program:** Capital Investment

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Author:** M.E. Venzke

**Lead Division:** Park Development

**Lead Staff:** M.E. Venzke

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This is a capital project that renovates, upgrades, or enhances an existing park facility or supporting infrastructure. These projects repair, restore, replace aging, unsafe, or obsolete park facilities or components of park facilities. Projects may consist of complete park renovations, repairs to facilities, ballfield renovations, or planned lifecycle asset replacements in local and non-local parks.

**Program Element Benefits:** Preserves the beauty, quality, and safety of our parks by adequately maintaining its infrastructure thereby ensuring that the facilities remain as accessible as possible to all residents so that they can enjoy the natural and cultural resources and participate in the variety of recreational opportunities.

**Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

% of Capital Budget for infrastructure maintenance projects	32%
% of funding expected to be spent	90%

**Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** To provide a safe and structurally sound park infrastructure system for the citizens and park users. Infrastructure Maintenance is the number one priority of the Planning Board in FY07.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** To continue to utilize the best and most cost effective/innovative methods for updating the infrastructure throughout the system while developing a mechanism for establishing lifecycle replacement of capital assets. In compliance with the County Council's Interagency Infrastructure Maintenance Task Force recommendation, the Department is working to reverse a long trend of deferred repair and lifecycle replacements. The infrastructure assessment project will be used to implement an on-going process of identification and prioritization for replacement, renovation, and maintenance of all infrastructure assets.

**Community Outreach:** Reach out to affected users and citizens as needed.

**Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Central Maintenance, Northern Region, Southern Region, Natural Resources, Director's Office, Maryland State Highway Association, Montgomery County Recreation Department

**Work Program Projects:** Infield renovations at 20 local parks; turf renovation at 10 local parks, renovation of tennis/multi-use courts; design and replacement of bridges at various locations; renovation of Winding Creek Local Park; renovation of Wheaton RP Adventure playground; replacement of playground equipment at various park sites; renovation of Broad Acres Local Park; renovation of Wheaton indoor tennis facility

**Interest Groups:** Ballfield users, sport organizations, civic associations

## NEW PARKS AND FACILITIES

**Program:** Capital Investment

**Latest Edits:** 9/20/2006

**Author:** M.E. Venzke

**Lead Division:** Park Development

**Lead Staff:** M.E. Venzke

**Program Element Description/Scope:** This program delivers capital projects that expand or create new park facilities. These projects respond to the unmet park and recreation needs in the County by creating new or expanded opportunities in the park system. Projects include new parks and park expansions, hard surface trails, pedestrian bridges, athletic fields and field enhancements, dog exercise areas, and skate parks.

**Program Element Benefits:** New park projects offer new park facilities to under-served areas and provide additional recreational opportunities throughout the County. Recreational opportunities may consist of both nature-oriented activities and active recreation such as athletic fields and playgrounds. These projects enhance the quality of life for the residents of the County.

### **Specific Service Delivery Objectives for FY07:**

% of Capital Budget for New Parks and Facilities 13%

% of budgeted funds expected to be spent 90%

### **Specific Actions Relating to Planning Board Priorities in FY07:**

**Core Responsibilities:** Provide new and updated park facilities throughout the County thereby meeting the residents' recreational needs.

**Organizational Effectiveness:** The department coordinates closely with other County agencies and local jurisdictions to provide successful and timely implementation of projects through shared resources and joint procurement opportunities.

**Community Outreach:** Continue to expand our outreach efforts with residents by conducting more and varied community outreach at the beginning of the planning process. Surveys, CIP forums, and information from 2005 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) support the outreach efforts.

### **Coordination and Linkages:**

**Agencies/Divisions:** Northern Region, Southern Region, Central Maintenance, Enterprise, Park Police, Natural Resources, Park Planning and Research Analysis Section, Community Outreach Section, Department of Public Works and Transportation, Montgomery County Recreation Department, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services

**Work Program Projects:** Construction of Phase 1B of Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, Olney Manor Skateboard Park, construction of National Capital Trolley Museum, construction of Matthew Henson Trail Phases 1, 2, 3

**Interest Groups:** Civic Associations, Citizens, "Friends" groups

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## **THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

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## WORK PROGRAM UPDATE: MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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The Management Improvement Plan (MIP) work program over the past six months focused on recruiting personnel, incorporating findings from the Management Partners Report into the MIP work program, and improving the functioning of the Development Review Division. Staff workgroups completed revising the format and timing of the Planning Board Agenda and implemented changes in developer application requirements (such as public notification and signage).

Ongoing initiatives include:

A staff ***Team Building and Decision-making Workgroup*** has developed a draft project review protocol defining roles and responsibilities of the lead reviewer and review team members, procedures for resolving differences among staff, and procedures for developing staff reports when consensus of all review team members could not be reached. Following review of draft by all staff, the team will create a training program to implement the new processes throughout the Department.

A ***Condition-Writing Workgroup*** has been created to improve the way conditions are written. The team is creating a manual on how to write good conditions with a menu and standardized language for commonly used conditions. The group will then develop a method for training the rest of the staff in condition writing and develop performance measures.

Improvements in the ***organization and functioning of the Development Review Division*** include the hiring of a senior site plan reviewer and a subdivision reviewer and creating a technical team to aid in application intake and support the plan reviewers.

The MIP identified the need for adequate space for Development Review. Rental space has been acquired and renovations should be completed by the end of the month for 40 staff members including most of the Research and Technology team as well as two Park Department staff members currently located at MRO and other staff as needed. This will free up space in the MRO building for Development Review. A study is underway to determine how minimal renovations can be undertaken to accommodate current functions while awaiting further development of SilverPlace.

Draft ***Planning Board Rules of Procedure*** have been prepared by the Commission's legal staff. For review purposes, the proposed Rules of Procedures have been divided into three segments:

- Part One: how the Planning Board conducts hearings, including rules for a consent agenda, reconsiderations, etc.
- Part Two: how the Board reviews development applications, including issues such as noticing requirements, exhibits, etc.
- Part Three: enforcement procedures, including rules for threshold hearings, violations, fines, etc.

The Planning Board will review Part One in September and has released the draft for public comment. Another hearing will be scheduled later in September, to provide an opportunity for oral testimony in addition to written testimony.



The availability of *Development Review Activity Information* on the web has been greatly enhanced. Anyone with web access can now view “core documents” from development applications, including submitted applications, plan drawings, staff reports, and approved plans. Our first focus is making available these core documents for submissions for the past two years, with the ultimate goal of making all relevant documents available for active plans.

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## STAFF RECRUITMENT

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To speed the hiring of staff in the planner series, the Department began a six-month *Pilot Recruitment Program* in June. A key advantage of the pilot is that that we can post our own position advertisements immediately when a vacancy is created, instead of going through our central human resources office. Additionally, all resumes come directly to us instead of through CAS to be reviewed for qualifications, which commonly took several months.

Other steps include the following:

- Created a strike force to focus on recruiting

### Administrative

- Delineated recruiting process issues with list of actions needed
- Created new Procedures Manual for hiring managers
- Created tracking form

### Advertising

- Posted 23 ads on 13 internet sites
- All resumes posted in an electronic folder with access for all hiring managers
- Provide notification to chiefs when new resumes are posted
- Respond personally to each applicant, asking where they saw the ad
- Faxed job announcements to 100 planning agencies along the east coast

### Incentives

- Recognition award of \$500 offered as a bounty to current employees for each successful hire they bring to the department
- Up to \$3,000 in relocation reimbursement offered for new employees who are outside a 100-mile radius

### Training in recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce

All hiring managers are required to attend training by Trinity Transitions Consultants and CAS staff. The four three-hour sessions will include outreach, capacity building, recruiting for right fit, interviewing, hiring, orientation, coaching/mentoring, performance review, staff development, promotions, discipline and termination.

### Current Status

As of June 22, we had 27 vacancies in the Department. As of September 6, 2006, we had 24 vacancies. Of the current vacancies, 15 are in the pilot program. We have made or are about to make five offers. Since we have been posting our own ads, we have received 112 resumes for the planner series. In Development Review we have conducted 33 interviews, we have made five offers (not including the designation of an acting tech team supervisor), and we have had three acceptances.

We have just filled a vacancy in Management Services who will be involved with recruiting and retention. The tasks for this position include support for and liaison with CAS on organizational

development, application of the merit system, performance evaluations, and the myriad of other personnel issues that arise on a daily basis. We have learned from our recent concentration on personnel issues that we require additional human resources staff to be fully effective in recruiting and retaining the workforce needed to complete our mission.

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## MANAGEMENT PARTNERS REPORT

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The Department received the final Report from Management Partners. The report focused on six core dimensions. Their recommendations and our response include:

- ***Refining the development review process.*** The Department has created an intake technician unit to assist in revising existing procedures to improve efficiency and assist reviewers in preparing graphics and data tables. The use of the Hansen system has been expanded to take full advantage of its capabilities. A document imaging/management system has been established. Yet to be done is a file protocol for all paper files and consideration of transferring environmental and transportation submissions to the intake process.
- ***Coordination of review by other agencies.*** The Planning Department has worked closely with the County's Department of Permitting Services to develop an MOU outlining responsibilities for inspections for compliance with site plan conditions. Bi-weekly meetings between Development Review staff and DPS allow issues to be addressed. A closer more cooperative relationship has been developed with DHCA so that concerns regarding the provision of MPDU's can be addressed earlier. Discussions concerning better coordination with all agencies involved in the Development Review Committee are underway.
- ***The community involvement dimension of development review.*** The Department has greatly increased the information available online including posting Planning Board agendas sooner. New requirements call for applicants to hold pre-submittal meetings with the public and to post sites that are subject to development proposals. A complaint hotline was established.
- ***Personnel resources.*** Management partners recommends organizational changes and additional staff. In response to staff shortages and vacancies, a six-month pilot recruitment program was established. Additionally, the tech team has been established and duties of the inspectors will be evaluated with changes of responsibilities with DPS. The Director is seeking to involve more staff in the transformation of the Department with regular meetings with chiefs and managers.
- ***The use of technology in the development review process.*** Although the Department has already taken several important steps to use the Hansen system more extensively, staff is also developing a comprehensive action plan for full use of all relevant features. The document imaging project is well underway, feeding the "dynamic web portal" that allows the public to view detailed development application documents. Space has been created near the front counter for the public to view the information on our web page.
- ***A comprehensive space needs analysis.*** Office space has been rented to allow more than forty staff members to move from the MRO headquarters creating much needed additional space for Development Review staff. The planning for the new headquarters building will involve additional space planning.

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## **MASTER PLAN SCHEDULE**

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## **WORK PROGRAM UPDATE: MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

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Master plans shape communities by advancing the goals of the General Plan. The master plan process is designed to broaden public involvement, expedite the planning process, and facilitate plan recommendations. The following outline identifies both new and ongoing initiatives that are designed to continue the excellence in planning that is a hallmark of the Planning Department.

### **Rural Initiative**

This initiative is designed to protect agricultural and rural open space in Montgomery County. Three staff reports, including an assessment of the status of the TDR sending and receiving areas, recommendations for improvements to the TDR program, and proposed Text Amendments were completed during the last year. The Community-Based Planning Division and the Research and Technology Center are participating in the discussions with the Agricultural Task Force, and they will begin implementation of the recommendations in the next year.

### **Master Plans for the Corridor Cities**

- **Germantown Master Plan** – The Germantown Master Plan is underway. The Urban Land Institute completed a charrette concerning the future of the employment center in Germantown. The Department held a public session in Germantown to begin the master plan process.
- **Gaithersburg Master Plan** – The preparation of the staff draft of the Gaithersburg Master Plan continues. The staff completed the review of the annexation for the Crown Farm. The staff also completed a review of the potential opportunities for the Webb Tract for the County Council.

## **Sector Plans for the Metro Station Areas**

### **Shady Grove Sector Plan**

The staff completed the Implementation Plan for the Shady Grove Sector Plan requested by the County Council. This Plan identifies the impact on the Shady Grove Sector Plan if the County Service Park is not relocated.

### **Twinbrook Sector Plan**

The staff is finalizing the staff draft to be presented to the Planning Board in the fall of 2006. The Twinbrook Sector Plan will foster the creation of a mixed-use neighborhood at the Metro station, establish opportunities for advanced technology and biotechnology employment, and preserve existing industrial land.

### **White Flint Sector Plan**

The preparation of the White Flint Sector Plan began in July 2006, in response to the request from the County Council. The staff will produce the Purpose and Outreach Report in the fall of 2006.

### **Woodmont Triangle**

The staff has been meeting with representatives of the community to discuss methods to improve the optional method process. The discussions include identifying opportunities for locating public use space off-site and allowing applicants to contribute funds to provide the required amenity features.

### **Battery Lane Housing Initiatives**

The preparation of the Battery Lane Amendment to the Bethesda Sector Plan will begin in the late fall of 2006. The staff has already begun to review the options for providing affordable housing in this area of older, multi-family dwelling units.

## **Sector Plans for Neighborhoods and Centers**

### **MD 355/I-270 Technology Corridor**

The staff held initial outreach meetings to begin the effort to improve the coordination between ongoing master plans and sector plans along MD 355. Coordination meetings with the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg were held.

### **Centers along the Bi-County Transitway including Takoma/Langley**

Staff has begun meeting with representatives of the Planning Department in Prince George's County to identify opportunities to prepare a unified plan. The staff continues to meet with representatives of the State of Maryland concerning the options for the Bi-County Transitway.

### **Kensington Sector Plan**

The Kensington Sector Plan will begin in 2006. The staff has already begun to contact the community and prepare a Purpose and Outreach Report.

### **Westbard Sector Plan**

The Westbard Sector Plan will begin in 2007. Staff has already met with interested property owners and representatives of the community. Redevelopment of existing shopping centers, improvement of the character of River Road, and redevelopment of existing industrial areas represent some of the issues identified to date.

### **Sectional Map Amendments**

The following Sectional Map Amendments (SMA) were reviewed by the Planning Board, and transmitted to the County Council during the last year:

- Olney SMA
- Shady Grove SMA
- Woodmont Triangle SMA
- Damascus SMA

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## **WORK PROGRAM UPDATE: MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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### **Zoning Text Amendments**

The following text amendments are intended to establish a hierarchy of mixed-use centers. These text amendments are intended to provide a comprehensive approach to improving centers in Montgomery County.

**Four, Mixed-Use Euclidean Zones** – A new set of zones could be used in the new sector plans for Metro station areas and some large commercial areas. Two of these zones were recently approved by the County Council. Ideally, these zones should be created before the next set of master plans and sector plans are completed.

- 0.5 Zone: Small commercial centers and transition areas adjacent to higher density development
- 1.0 Zone: Medium to large commercial centers (already approved in the Olney and Damascus master plans)
- 2.0 Zone: Transit station areas not including CBDs (already approved in the Shady Grove area with potential use in the Twinbrook and White Flint areas)
- 3.0 Zone: Transition areas adjacent to CBDs to replace the TS-M and TS-R Zones

**Mixed-Use Floating Zone with a Range of Densities from 0.5 to 3.0** – A mixed-use floating zone would be useful to allow residential uses in some commercial centers. This zone could be used in some commercial areas with existing C-2 zoning.

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## **Public and Private Coordination**

Each master plan establishes the projects and priorities to implement the recommendations. The Department provides ongoing coordination to assist in the implementation of the recommendations in master plans. The following items highlight the coordination efforts during the last several months:

### **Ashton Center**

Staff participated with the applicant and community in the review of future plans for the Ashton Center.

### **Burtonsville**

Staff participated in the ongoing review of the Burtonsville Center including the review of proposed road improvements in coordination with private development.

### **Bethesda CBD**

Several project plans, site plans and local map amendments were also completed that will add housing in the Bethesda CBD.

### **Clarksburg**

The staff continues to participate in the review of all projects in Clarksburg to provide the necessary coordination between private and public projects including roads, schools, and parks.

### **Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)**

Staff participated in the site location studies for the new high school in the Gaithersburg area. Staff continues to work with MCPS to forecast the needs for schools in the I-270 Corridor.

### **Sandy Spring Village**

Staff began examining the need for Text Amendments, and guidelines for the Sandy Spring Village Center to implement the Master Plan.

### **Silver Spring CBD**

The Community-Based Planning Division is involved in the planning for the Silver Spring Transit Center. Staff continues to be involved in several new project plans and site plans in the CBD to improve streetscape and provide needed public facilities and amenities.

### **Shady Grove Life Sciences Center**

The staff continues to participate with the Department of Economic Development in planning for the Shady Grove Life Sciences Center and the expansion of the Johns Hopkins University as part of the Gaithersburg Master Plan.

### **White Flint**

The staff continues to be involved in the planning for the White Flint Metro Station. Several local map amendments (White Flint Crossing), Site Plans (LCOR), and text amendments have been proposed for this area.

**Wheaton Revitalization** - Staff continues to be involved with the revitalization\_efforts in the Wheaton CBD. Staff participated in the review of a recent text amendment to the Wheaton Overlay Zone.

## **Mandatory Referrals**

In addition to completing nearly 20 other mandatory referrals, the following notable mandatory referrals were reviewed or completed during the last year:

### **ICC Coordination**

The staff continue to review the final plans for the ICC including the landscaping, location of bikeways, and impact on adjacent communities.

### **Bi-County Transitway**

The efforts for this project include the review of a new entrance for the Bethesda Metro Station and the future Bi-County Transitway as part of development in the Bethesda CBD. Staff also participated in the ongoing discussions concerning Transitway alignments in the East Silver Spring area.

## **Specific Community Outreach Efforts**

The staff continues to provide improvements to the community outreach system. The staff will establish Master Plan Advisory Committees for each master plan presently underway, and they will work on other improvements to community outreach during the master plan process. Other outreach projects during the last six months include the following:

### **Community Round Tables**

Staff completed three round tables with the Planning Board, Strategic Planning Division, and the Research and Technology Center. These round table discussions include extensive community outreach and participation. These round tables concentrated on improving commercial centers, boulevards and public spaces.

### **Long Branch Task Force**

Staff continue to serve on this task force to assist in the implementation of the East Silver Spring Master Plan. Coordination continues with the M-NCPPC in Prince George's County to improve the Takoma/Langley area.

### **Olney Town Center**

The advisory committee was appointed by the Planning Board for the Olney Town Center to begin the review of future development in the area.

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## DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

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### *Development Review*

Since the June 27, 2006 Semi-Annual Report, the Development Review Division has been focused on self-improvement in response to both the OLO report and the process review done by Management Partners.

To begin with, we have devoted considerable time to the hiring of new staff. Without enough people, we will never be able to process applications in a timely manner. We are putting together a new technical team that will improve the intake process and will assist reviewers in assembling basic information for each case, as well as in preparing graphics for staff reports, and power point presentations for the Board.

We have instituted a peer review process to insure that all aspects of a case are discussed, issues identified, and consensus reached. We are helping with a number of management improvement initiatives, including the condition-writing team and the team building effort.

We are in the process of developing performance measures that will capture our ability or inability to perform each portion of the development review process in a timely manner. Examples of this would include: Time required to schedule an intake appointment, time required from the date of DRC to a hearing before the Board, time required to have a resolution approved, and time required to complete certified site plan review. We also want to work with the development community to identify ways in which they, too, can help us improve the process.

### *Status of Violation Allegations and Hearings*

Since April of 2005, when the first hearing was held with respect to alleged violations at Clarksburg Town Center, the Board has held numerous violation hearings and has resolved the majority of the cases that were uncovered either as a result of citizen complaints or through the Site Plan Audit that required DPS and MNCPPC to go back and check all projects that had received approval since January of 2003. All of these cases were difficult, involving many meetings with the public, applicants, attorneys, staff and so forth. At the beginning, because there was little precedent to follow with respect to these matters, each case was handled somewhat differently. Over time, however, staff and the Board started to develop a more consistent approach.

The most notable cases that have been heard by the Board are described below:

**Clarksburg Town Center:** The Board held a series of hearings, finding violations with respect to height, setbacks, and the phasing of recreational amenities, before agreeing in December of '05 that the entire matter should be referred to mediation. The mediating parties met throughout the first five months of 2006, and on June 15, 2006, the Board approved the Plan of Compliance that was presented to them.

**Bethesda Crest** – The Board heard this case in November of 2005. The Board found that grading had begun before the signature set was signed and a fine of \$6000 was assessed. With respect to the setback issue, the Board accepted a Plan of Compliance in lieu of a finding of violation. Setbacks



had to be increased for two unbuilt units and additional amenities had to be provided including enhanced fences along the property lines to the North and South.

**Maple Ridge** – This case was heard by the Board in February of 2006, after being brought to light by the site plan audit. At issue were townhouses that were built to a height that exceeded what was allowed by the site plan and in the zone. The Board accepted a proffer from the developer in the amount of \$276,750, with no finding of violation.

**Germantown Professional Building** – This one story medical building measured 18 feet in height, although the site plan specified a height of 15 feet. At a hearing held in May of '06, the applicants conceded that they failed to catch the height discrepancy and agreed to pay a fine of \$37,500.

**Greenway Village (Arora Hills)** – The Board heard this case over a several month period beginning in April of 2006. At issue was a failure to provide a bike path in a timely manner, relocating and narrowing a path without first amending the plan, and a lack of complete development standards. The Board assessed a fine of \$36,000 and approved a Compliance Program.

**Clarksburg Village** – At a series of hearings held since May, the Board found five , including single family homes that had setbacks that failed to meet the requirements of the zone, lot sizes that were too small, multi-family buildings in a zone that did not allow multi-family, narrowing a road by 10 feet from what was required in the preliminary plan, discrepancies in the unit counts for the various types of dwellings. Moreover, the plan lacked complete development standards. The Board issued a corrective order that would allow 148 units to move forward while the various issues were being resolved. The Board has not yet approved a final Compliance Program, but staff has recommended a package that includes a fine of \$100,000, a payment to the HOA of \$50,000 additional landscaping and amenities, and the redesign of certain portions of the community, including a net loss of 31 units.

Of the cases uncovered by the audit, only one, **Scandinavian Auto Import**, remains to be heard. This automobile service/sales building is located in Derwood, and its height exceeds the height allowed in the site plan by 2 feet. Since the building was already occupied, it was not possible to impose a stop work order. The owner is aware of the outstanding violation, but a hearing date has not yet been set.

As a result of the publicity surrounding all of the above violation cases, citizens continue to contact staff about apparent problems with numerous other developments. Developers are also looking much more closely at their plans, and have brought possible problems to the attention of staff. Each of these matters are being thoroughly investigated and will either be resolved through the citation process or will be brought before the Board or a hearing examiner for resolution. Examples of such projects are listed below:

**Regency at Leisure World** – Numerous issues have been raised with respect to this project, including the provision of MPDUs, setback issues, height issues, and grading problems. The MPDU issue has been resolved. DPS is working to resolve the grading issues. Although it originally appeared that several homes were built too tall, the standard set forth in the site plan is ambiguous at best. Therefore, at this time no hearing date has been set.

**Montgomery Village** – In the East Village Section of Montgomery Village, a large fence was constructed that was not allowed in the approved site plan. The Association has received a citation and has been given a certain time period in which to remove the fence or request a violation hearing before the Board.

**Park Potomac** (also known as Fortune Parc) - The builder of the townhouse portion of this project notified planning staff that one building was incorrectly sited such that it didn't meet the dimensions shown in the plan. This was not caught at the time of wall check. The site plan showed that the building was to be set back 18 feet from the street, but, because it was actually centered on the piece of property, it sits only 15 feet back but has a great setback in the rear. All purchasers received notice of this discrepancy from the developer. An amendment has been submitted to address this and other, minor variations, on the site plan. The matter will be brought to the Board as a combined violation/amendment hearing.

**Westfall-Blalock** – A citizen notified Park & Planning that construction on this project appeared to have ceased even though the tot lot and open play areas had not yet been installed, a storm water pond had not been completed, and a construction trailer and large mound of dirt were still on site. Staff has issued a citation and given the developer 30 days to complete all the facilities or request a violation hearing before the Board.

Staff is also learning that as construction has proceeded on a variety of projects, several minor changes have been made by developers without the knowledge of planning staff. These developers are now bringing in site plan amendments that, if approved, will reflect the actual as-built conditions. Staff is trying to determine how to handle such situations. While these changes are not significant in and of themselves, the idea that changes are being made without approval is troubling. On the other hand, the fact that even the most minor change must now be taken to the Board for approval creates a climate where it is advantageous to make the changes and seek forgiveness later. Clearly, new procedures need to be put in place so that some latitude for field changes can be granted.

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## OTHER IMPORTANT UPDATES

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### ***Bi-County Transitway Study***

Staff continues to provide MTA coordination regarding public outreach, development review activities, and technical assistance in preparation for the MTA Draft Environmental Impact Statement scheduled for mid-2007.

### ***Bikeways***

Staff provided technical assistance and recommendations regarding bikeway facilities for development review cases and planning efforts both within the Department and for other agencies. Specific initiatives during fall 2006 include recommendations for implementing connections and extensions to the state's programmed ICC bikeway and considering bikeway recommendations for the Twinbrook, White Flint, and Gaithersburg master planning efforts.

### ***Forest Conservation***

The Forest Conservation Program and the law that has created it are undergoing evaluation, both internally and by several citizen task forces. The result of these efforts may be to amend the forest conservation law for clarity and effectiveness, and to streamline the implementation process. An initial legislative change was to update the violation penalties and in-lieu fees, and this took effect in December 2005. Additional legislative changes are possible.

### ***Green Infrastructure Plan***

Three meetings have been held that included governmental agencies, adjacent jurisdictions, building industries, chambers of commerce and agriculture interests. Additional focus groups for environmental advocacy, large civic organizations, municipalities and natural areas recreation interests will be held in September and October. Initial data collection has been completed and work will continue through the fall on mapping of existing green infrastructure.

### ***Historic Area Work Permits***

There continue to be a large number of Historic Area Work Permit applications. The current number of applications reviewed is 200 per year. Staff is reviewing and processing these applications in a timely manner (meeting the 45 day time limit prescribed by law) and there have been a very limited number of appeals of Historic Preservation Commission decisions to the Board of Appeals.

### ***Master Plan for Historic Preservation***

Staff is providing input on preservation issues for ongoing master plan efforts such as Gaithersburg, Twinbrook, Germantown and others. In addition, the amendment for Damascus and Goshen is nearly ready for transmittal and work is beginning on another major amendment for Planning Areas 10 and 15.

### ***Growth Policy/Growth Audit***

Planning staff has begun the process assembling and analyzing the amount, type, location and pace of past and future development; staff will be working with other planning divisions to compare growth activity to expectations in adopted plans and County policies. Staff has already collected

much of the historical data needed to analyze density and other attributes of development projects in the past 15 years in the County; this work will improve understanding of what to expect as master plans are built out. Staff plans to begin the process of identifying samples of completed projects that will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and review process.

### ***Housing Policy***

This fall, staff will be supporting review of the Executive regulations for the Workforce Housing program. Staff has also begun the research needed to support a policy discussion about the potential redevelopment of existing, market-rate affordable multi-family housing. In some cases, these are older buildings located near major travel corridors and on parcels with substantial additional density permitted by right, which may encourage their owners to pursue renovation, redevelopment, or other action that would take these units out of the affordable category. This research is specifically useful for the Battery Lane Housing project, but has application wherever these units exist in the County.

### ***Centers and Boulevards, Phase II, Toolbox for Infill and Redevelopment***

This project will identify and propose options for amending or augmenting the County's land-use planning and regulatory tools so that they can be more useful in achieving the goals of the General Plan in a maturing suburb where an increasing share of planned growth is infill and redevelopment, and responding to key development trends, changing population needs, and emerging land-use and market changes.

During the past six months, the Department completed its outreach efforts designed to expand Department and community leadership understanding about the myriad of challenges and opportunities associated with the expected changes in our maturing county. In spring 2006, the Department convened two community sessions with local and national experts and community leaders to explore how we can best plan and manage growth in the future and how we can attain the communities we envision.

The guidance gained from these sessions is helping the Department to develop a planning program responsive to community and business needs now and in the future. The Department is planning one last community session in September to focus on the development of alternative implementation strategies and identification of areas throughout the County in need of priority planning attention.

The results of this effort will not only help to frame the Department's Work Program but will provide valuable information for decision-makers in the future.

### ***Inventory of Religious Institutions***

This project is underway. It will take 18-24 months to conclude. Staff will report findings regularly to the Planning Board and the County Council throughout the study process.

The project will update the 1997 Inventory of Places of Worship; survey representatives of religious institutions about land-use and related issues, with particular attention to the challenges facing churches with expansion plans; review local land use regulations affecting religious institutions; identify options and successful models for meeting the needs of expanding or relocating churches in urbanizing communities throughout the United States. A subsequent phase of this project will identify alternative implementation approaches.

This project will also update existing databases to support geographic display and analysis of religious institutions throughout the County. This new database will allow for future spatial and statistical analysis.

***Other Special Projects***

Since the June Semi-Annual Report, the Strategic Planning Division embarked on the following Special Projects:

- Expansion of the Department's 3D Modeling and Digital Visualization Capability
- Reestablishment of the Department's Library Resource Center.
- Staff support for the upcoming SilverPlace Developer Selection Process.

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