

WORKING DRAFT

# ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

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June 15, 2017



Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission,  
Department of Parks, Montgomery County

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 Abstract

<b>Title</b>	<i>Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan for Mixed Use and High Density Residential Communities (EPS FMP)</i>
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The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors)* for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by the county government. The Boards are responsible for preparing all local plans, zoning amendments, subdivision regulations, and administration of parks.

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## CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP) for Parks in Mixed Use and Higher Density Areas (EPS FMP)* is a plan that applies innovative methodologies to identify areas with the highest need for parks and open spaces and to recommend opportunities to increase the amount of parks and open space in those communities. This Plan promotes public spaces as platforms where people can share experiences and build a sense of community.

This is a living document that establishes a systematic way to assess and deliver outdoor experiences to the public using a variety of implementation strategies and tools. As a Functional Master Plan, it describes a program that the Department of Parks will implement for the foreseeable future. This implementation program will strive to make better use of existing parkland, develop creative partnerships to add new parks and open space resources, and acquire new parkland to provide the park experiences necessary to support our growing communities.

*Cultures and climates differ all over the world, but people are the same. They'll gather in public if you give them a good place for it.*

*- Jan Gehl, Architect and Urban Designer*

### WHY? NEED FOR THIS PLAN

Around 80% of Americans live in cities (2010 Census). Montgomery County is a suburban community located in one of the major metropolitan areas of the United States, the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Our rural and suburban roots are reflected in our current development pattern, but national and international trends,

economic forces, and decades of planning efforts are focusing new population growth in areas that are well served by transportation and other infrastructure. The growth forecast for the County (2010-2045) shows the highest levels of growth concentrated along I-270 in an area representing only 14% of the County's land but 72% of the population and 82% of employment. This concentration of population results in more efficient provision of public infrastructure and other benefits to support residents, among other benefits, but it also creates increasing and unique needs for certain public amenities including parks and open space.

*Public spaces are key elements of individual and social well-being, the places of a community's collective life, expressions of the diversity of their common natural and cultural richness and a foundation of their identity.*

*- 2013 Charter of Public Space, UN Habitat*

With the increase in density in the growing areas of the County, public parks and open space have become essential to creating livable and healthy communities. The recent trend in real estate development in these areas is to replace lower density residential development with higher density residential and mixed use buildings. This significant increase in density makes parks and open space areas the "outdoor living rooms" for many of these communities. Without space for large private backyards, public parks and open spaces play an increasingly important role in improving public health and promoting social interaction and social equity. Access to urban parks is a critical and



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necessary element of achieving one of the primary County's goals, to promote community welfare and quality of life.

*Without public space, we simply don't have cities and towns. We have mere collections of buildings and vehicles.*  
 - Joan Clos, the Secretary-General of Habitat III, as cited by Michael Mehaffy, Author/Consultant in Public Space and Strategic Urban Development

The Catch-22 of these trends is that a growing population creates increased demand for parks and open space, but that population also increases competition for land and thus creates a shortage of space to meet the park needs of that same expanding urban population. The challenge that this Plan and its innovative methodology is designed to solve is how to identify where are the highest needs for more parks and open space and how to use multiple strategies to fill those needs.

## Vision

*An innovative and creative countywide park plan for stronger, healthier and happier communities in the County. In the places where we have the most people, everyone can walk to a public space to enjoy the outdoors.*

## Purpose and Scope

The main purpose of the *EPS FMP* is to create outdoor spaces where people of all ages, ethnicity, incomes and tenures can meet, play, relax, exercise and enjoy nature and more in areas where more people live and work. These outdoor spaces will support and focus on these

experiences which will integrate the public street network and promote a framework around which sustainable future development can occur.

In summary, the overarching goals of the *Energized Public Space FMP* are to:

- Identify where parks and open space are needed most to serve dense populations within walking distance.
- Prioritize parks and open spaces for implementation using social equity and other factors.
- Propose innovative tools and new funding sources to purchase and develop new parks, renovate and repurpose existing facilities, connect and activate parks, and promote the creation of other public open spaces.

To reach these goals, an innovative GIS-based methodology will be used to identify areas with low levels of service for parks and open space and to remedy the shortages in a systematic way. This methodology will be employed to prioritize and distribute parks and open spaces equitably across the EPS Study Area.

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**WHERE? EPS STUDY AREA AND PILOT AREA**

This plan will consider a range of parks and public spaces to serve the portions of Montgomery County with higher intensity mixed uses and with high density residential. The EPS Study Area was determined using data from the Planning Department's Round 9.0 Forecast and other geographically linked data on population and employment levels.

To provide a glimpse into some of the factors that make the EPS Study Area appropriate for examining for park needs, we can look at a few pieces of data. Residents of the EPS Study Area reported the following information as compared to residents in the rest of the County in the *2017 PROS Plan Statistically Valid Survey* (January 2017):

- More EPS Study Area residents live in high-rise multi-family units: 11% of EPS Study Area residents compared to 1.4% of those outside the EPS Study Area.
- EPS residents are more likely to have a low household income: 8% of EPS residents have an annual income under \$30,000 compared to 4.3% outside.
- EPS residents are more reliant upon public transit to access parks and recreation: 18.5% of EPS residents use public transit to travel to parks, trails and recreation facilities, compared to 10.5% outside.

Another differentiation between the EPS Study Area and areas of the County outside of the Study Area is the amount of parkland in proportion to population. The EPS Study Area has 13.4 acres per thousand residents of M-NCPPC parkland, compared to 57.4 acres per thousand residents outside the Study Area. When considering all public parkland (M-NCPPC, municipal and federal), the EPS Study Area has an even greater shortfall: 16.5 acres per thousand residents compared to 96.7 acres per thousand residents.

To test the new methodology proposed in this Plan, the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) was chosen as a Pilot Area within the larger Study Area. The Silver Spring CBD met many of the Pilot Area selection criteria, including high demographic diversity, significant economic activity, good transit connectivity, and the lack of a recent area master plan. In addition, other recent reports (including the *Silver Spring Green Space Plan* (2010) and *2017 PROS*) indicated a high need for parks and open spaces in this CBD. The rest of the EPS Study Area will be analyzed using the EPS methodology during the implementation phase of this Plan.

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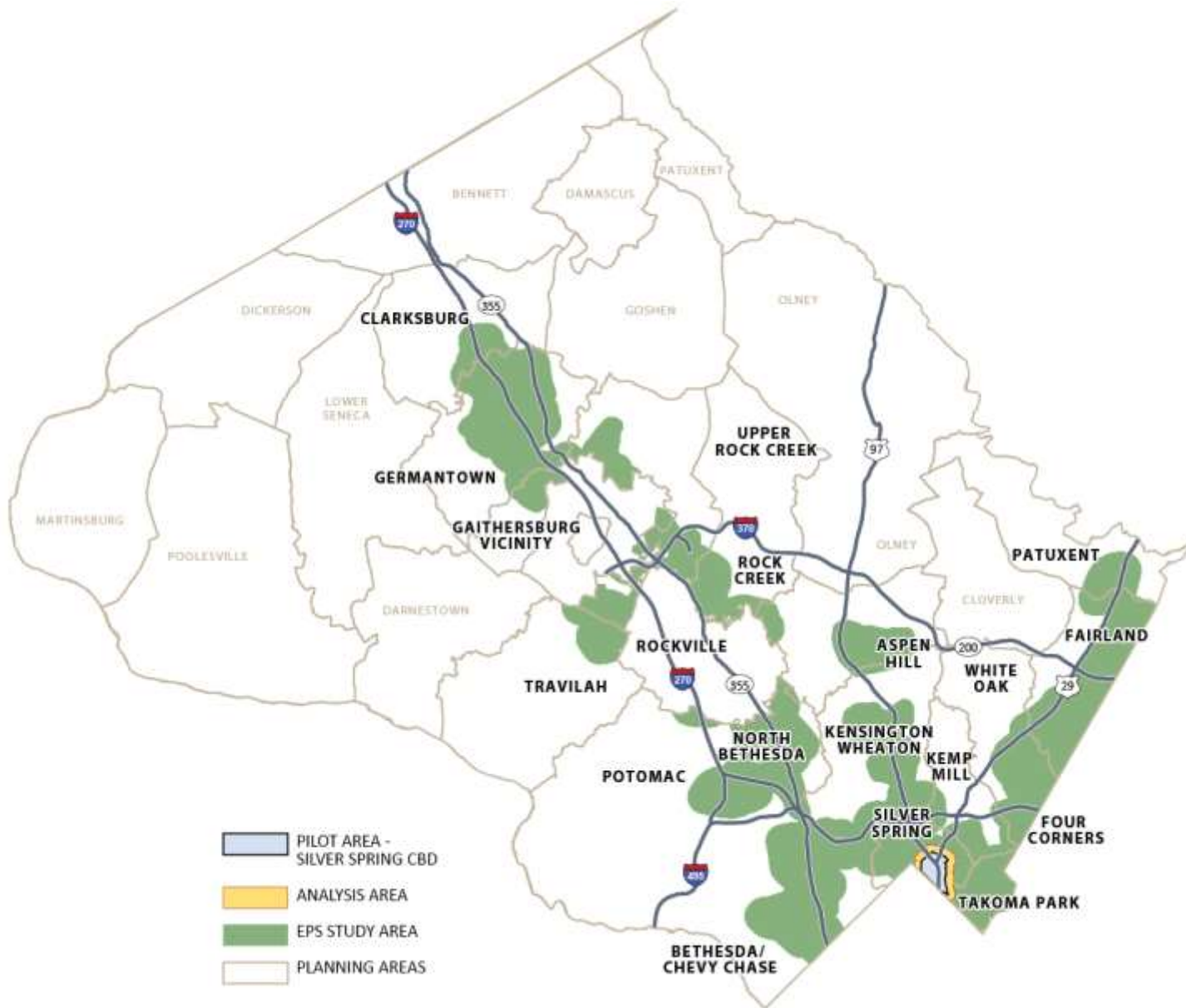


Figure 1. Energized Public Space Study Area and Pilot Area map

## HOW? METHODOLOGY AND NEW TOOLS

### Methodology Summary

The methodology will identify areas within the EPS Study Area that have relatively low levels of parks and open space within walking distance, and then will propose solutions to raise service in these locations. The major steps in applying this methodology are summarized below. For more detail, see Chapters 3 - 5.

#### Analysis

- Collect Data
- Analyze Data: Identify Level of Service
- Analyze Data: Identify Opportunities

#### Results

- Organize by Strategies
- Screen for Feasibility
- Prioritize by Social Equity

#### Implementation

- Apply Methodology to EPS Study Area
- Implement Recommendations
- Provide Funding Sources
- Align Operations, Maintenance, and Policing
- Assess Progress



Figure 2-The EPS FMP Methodology Process

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## New Data Gathering and Analysis Tools

As part of the development of the methodology, a series of new analysis tools and resources were created for this Plan. These tools allowed Parks to collect, analyze and evaluate various data in a more systematic and reproducible manner, resulting in a more robust and valid methodology overall. As the Plan gets implemented, these tools will be updated to keep up with advances in technology and the planning process.

## Broaden Public Outreach Techniques

Montgomery Parks launched a multi-pronged outreach strategy in November 2016 to engage diverse communities for input about the future of parks and recreation. The initiative, titled *Parks and Recreation of the Future*, was aimed at soliciting public input to inform three separate but related park programs: the *2017 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*, the *Capital Improvement Program*, and the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*. The outreach efforts targeted a vast array of audiences including but not limited to ethnically diverse communities, senior populations and people with disabilities. Outreach methods included a statistically valid survey, outreach surveys in three foreign languages, focus groups with traditionally underserved communities, and online comment and survey tools.

The outreach for this Plan also included a Public Meeting with an open house demonstration of an innovative online mapping survey tool using interactive monitors. Finally, the EPS Working Group, consisting of selected representatives of the public and private sectors, provided critical plan support and input through monthly meetings over a one year period (see Acknowledgements page for a list of members).

## Identify Experiences in Parks

This new portion of the EPS methodology evaluates the supply of public spaces based on how each facility within the open space provides for three outdoor experiences:

### ■ Active Experiences

- Play sports or games; run, walk, or bicycle; climb or mountain bike; other outdoor exercise.
- Use trails, athletic fields, open spaces/lawns, sport courts, playgrounds, interactive elements, natural areas.

### ■ Contemplative Experiences

- Enjoy nature, read a book, or learn something; relax/meditate/reflect; escape chaos.
- Use natural areas, historic sites, benches, shade trees, community open spaces, gardens, small green spaces, or trails.

### ■ Social Gathering Experiences

- Attend community festivals, concerts, outdoor movies, parades; visit farmer's markets, historic sites; meet friends, have a picnic, see your neighbors.
- Use plazas with seating, small sport courts, amphitheaters/stages, picnic tables, large community open spaces, dog parks.

Individual facilities within a public or private open space are scored by how much benefit of each experience type that the facility can provide to potential users. Facilities score higher that are open to a larger number of people, and facilities score lower that are not open to all or that require specific skills, equipment, or are limited by age. See *Chapter 3* for more information.

**WORKING DRAFT - ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN****Map Walkable Networks of Parks and Open Space**

Another tool this Plan brings to the site analysis process is the creation of a walkable network Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tool. This GIS tool includes a map layer with digital information on neighborhood roads, trail systems, park, school, and private retail walkways, and any road with a sidewalk within the County. This GIS tool is used to calculate accurate walksheds from a given point; in this case, all parks and open spaces within a 10-minute walk of any given point in the Study Area. The consideration of highways, railroad tracks and other impassable barriers in the walkshed analysis brings a reality check in the accessibility of our public spaces network from the pedestrian experience level compared to prior analysis tools.

**Use GIS to Analyze Park Service Levels**

The methodology for the EPS Plan includes a new and more sophisticated tool to find and prioritize areas with low levels of access to parks within walking distance. The application of this quantitative analysis tool is an important step in the process to optimize the use and distribution of open space resources among different communities. At its root, this tool is a supply versus demand calculator for parks and open space. This data-driven approach will support both government and private decision-making with detailed information on where we need more parks and open spaces to meet what experience needs.

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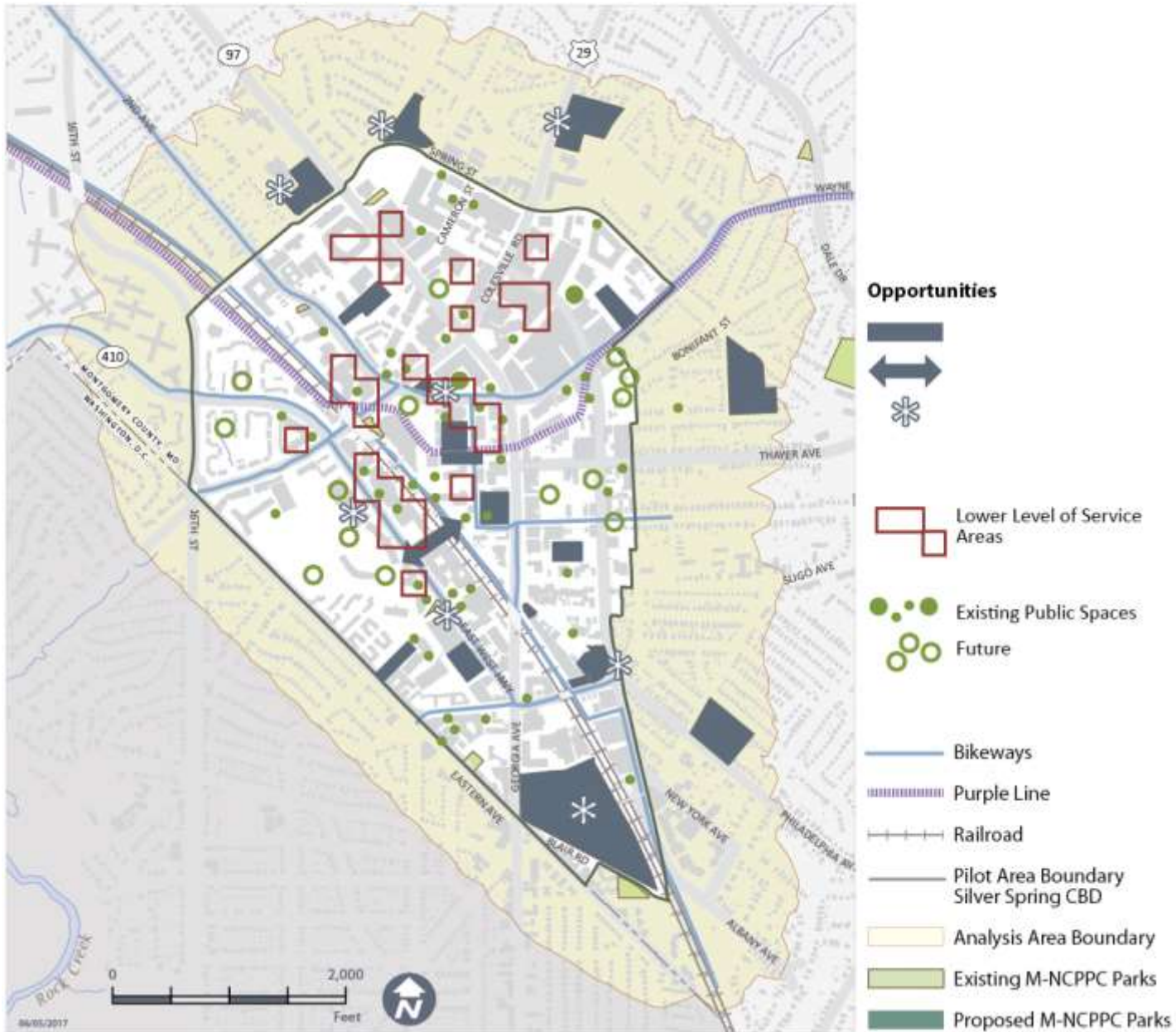


Figure 3 - Low Levels of Park and Open Space Service Overlaid with Opportunities Map, Silver Spring Pilot Area

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**Apply New Planning Framework to Identify Solutions**

This Plan establishes a comprehensive approach to identifying park and open space recommendations, called the EPS Planning Framework, that builds upon traditional urban design analysis to craft recommendations for parks and public spaces. There are two main parts of the EPS Planning Framework:

- A Hierarchy of Park Types
- Urban Parks and Open Space Design Guidelines

The hierarchy of park types has been used since the 2012 PROS Plan to ensure a balance of the right urban park types across the various neighborhoods and blocks of an urban sector plan. The EPS FMP improves upon this urban design tool by introducing a set of Urban Parks and Open Space Design Guidelines. These guidelines provide more detailed information about the parameters that will make each type of park and open space more complete and functional. These Guidelines will help Montgomery Parks and its existing and future partners deliver public spaces that are flexible and accommodate a variety of experiences within the network of public spaces.

**WHAT? PILOT AREA RECOMMENDATIONS**

The EPS methodology was tested in the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) as a Pilot Area. The methodology resulted in a menu of opportunities that provide many potential ways to add more park and open space services to the central areas of the Silver Spring CBD that currently have the lowest levels of service. These recommendations are the basis for proceeding with implementation of the Functional Master Plan over the coming years.

Recommendations are categorized into five implementation strategies that can increase the level of service for parks and open spaces in the Pilot Area: Activate, Connect, Renovate/Repurpose, Develop, and Acquire.

- **Activate** - Provide programming and community events as an interim solution in parks and open spaces awaiting renovation, and to test community interest in potential future amenities.
- **Connect** - Improve connections between public spaces and an integrated street network, sidewalks and trails.
- **Renovate and Repurpose** - Rebuild existing park facilities to increase service and usage.
- **Develop** - Build new parks and new facilities on existing parkland.
- **Acquire** - Create new parks and open space through dedication, purchase, and creation of privately owned public space (POPS) through the development process.

For all five implementation strategies, Parks will seek opportunities for collaborating with partners and alternate providers to improve service levels for parks and open space. *Figure 4* is an illustration of the recommendations for the Pilot Area from the application of this new methodology. For a brief description of each Pilot Area recommendation, see *Figure 16* in *Chapter 4*.



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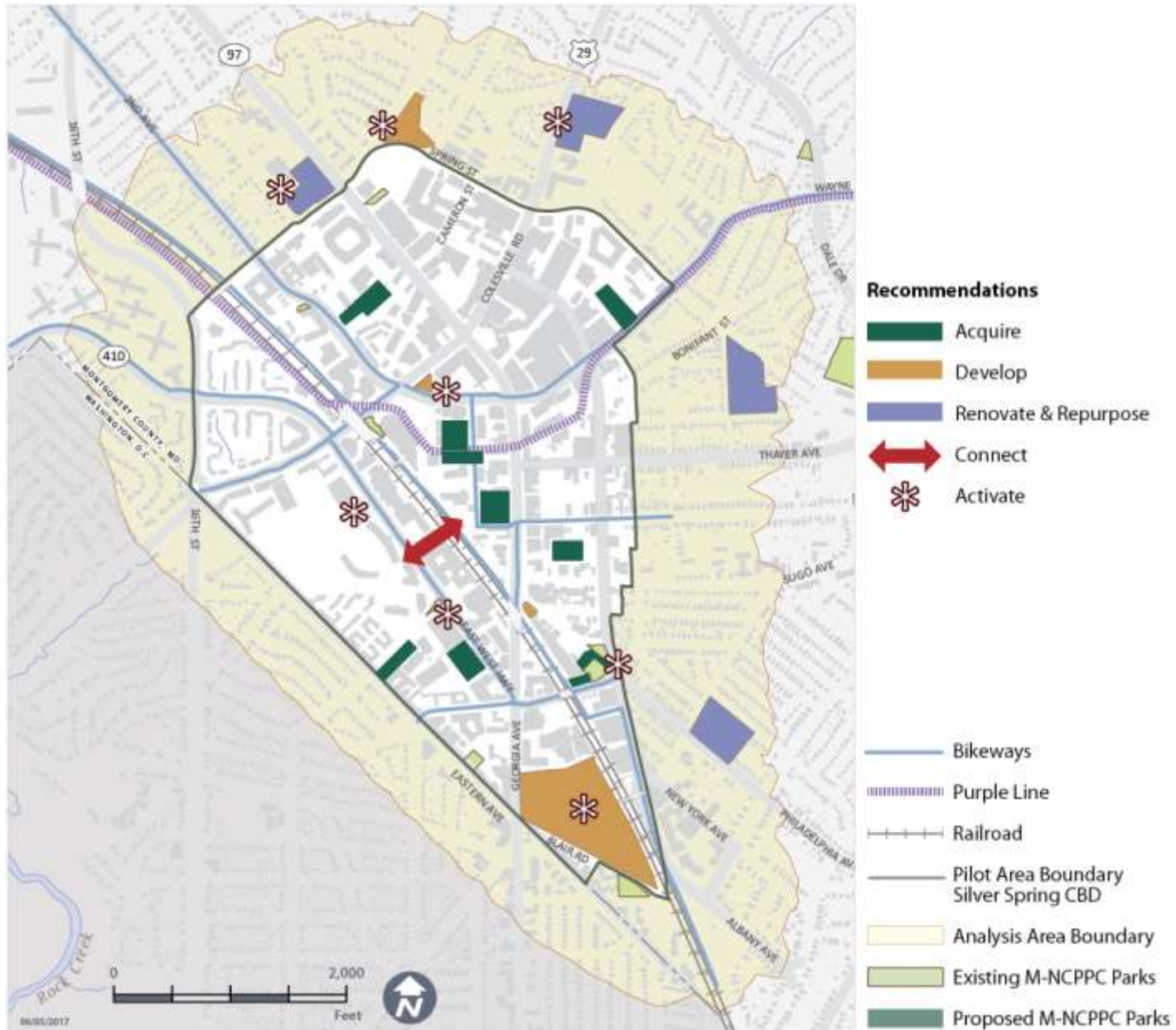


Figure 4 - Pilot Area Recommendations Summary

## WHAT NEXT? IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

As a Functional Master Plan, this Plan defines the parameters of an ongoing program that will strive to meet the park and recreation needs of the County's most dense and mixed use communities. The implementation of this Plan by the Department of Parks will take place over many years, even decades, to reach to overall goal of walkable access to a variety of park experiences for all residents.

The Energized Public Spaces program does not replace existing policies and programs that create new parks and open spaces, but supplements those programs with a new sophisticated analysis tool for guiding park and open space decisions in the high population areas of the County. The recommendations that result from this Plan will integrate with guidance from existing area master plans and the PROS Plan and Vision 2030. Results from this plan will supplement the existing park acquisition programs (State Program Open Space-funded and the Legacy Open Space programs) and help to prioritize the CIP program to target critical locations for park improvements. The Department of Parks will lead a collaborative effort with the Planning Department, other public agencies, property owners and the public to make these critical parks and open spaces a reality.

The most important next steps to implement this Plan are to:

- Apply the Methodology to the entire EPS Study Area
  - Prioritize Locations to Study Next by Social Equity and other factors
  - Find Low Levels of Service and Opportunities to Increase Service

- Prioritize Areas by Social Equity for Implementation Efforts
- Implement Recommendations
  - Use the five implementation strategies to create more parks and open space service in areas of highest need: Activate, Connect, Renovate and Repurpose, Develop, and Acquire
  - Use partnerships, innovative zoning, alternative ownership options, and other tools to expand pool of options for increasing park service
- Provide Funding Resources
  - Propose CIP Funding for acquisition, design, and construction
  - Pursue alternative funding strategies
- Align Operations, Maintenance and Policing
  - Develop New Urban Park Standards for Operations, Maintenance and Policing
  - Create the necessary support infrastructure for Urban Parks, including satellite facilities and the right transportation and equipment
  - Add staff and operating resources to meet the increased need for maintenance, daily operations, and security
- Assess Progress and Report to Planning Board and County Council on a Regular Basis

To make this plan a reality, one key focus of the implementation program will be to expand the pool of open space options by pursuing partnerships with other public agencies, non-profit

organizations, community groups, the private sector, and universities and other institutions.

The *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan* will result in a more systematic, data-driven approach to identifying the locations where walk-to parks and open space are most in need, and will result in prioritized and implemented recommendations through a collaborative process to meet the changing needs of communities across Montgomery County.

## CHAPTER 2: POLICY OVERVIEW

This Chapter includes an overview of the background and policies that guide the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*. The *EPS FMP* aligns with the policies included in the *2017 PROS Plan* and considers the global, national and local perspectives that affect parks and open space planning.

### NATIONAL AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

#### Urban Parks as Economic Incubators

The importance of public spaces in urban areas in our country and abroad is rapidly increasing. Some parks and open spaces are key destinations not only for the local community but also as an attraction for tourists (nationally and internationally), many serving as the “face” of cities. Urban parks also can serve an important role as incubators that can be the spark that ignites other public investment and private redevelopment projects in a community. Recent examples of park development serving as an incubator include the High Line Park in New York City and Yards Park in Washington, D.C.

In the case of the High Line Park, located in a former industrial area of the Chelsea neighborhood, this now-famous park along a former elevated railroad bed offers not only a park experience of walking along green areas with native vegetation and wildlife, but also unique views of the city. The High Line is a prime example of developing a park on an underutilized resource that then spurs economic rejuvenation and community

redevelopment in adjacent areas. The surrounding neighborhood has undergone significant redevelopment and investment in the years since the High Line was constructed.

The Yards Park in Washington, D.C., located on the Anacostia River near the Washington Nationals’ stadium, is known as a place for community festivals and events gathering big crowds of people to the waterfront area. The early implementation of this urban park, prior to most of the commercial and residential development in the area, served to spur redevelopment and investment activity. These two examples of urban parks involved significant planning and partnerships among developers, government, non-profit organizations and the community. The key ingredient from this and other examples is to understand people’s desire for unique and great public spaces in high density areas.

#### Draw of Urban Neighborhoods

Walkable mixed-use centers with public transit and an efficient street network are among the most desirable places to live, especially for the demographic groups of Millennials and Baby-Boomers that are two growing populations in Montgomery County. These demographic groups have shown a strong interest in being near public infrastructure and other resources within walking distance. Having a higher density of people and employees concentrated in one location is a great way to encourage economic development in certain areas. But this desirability also drives real estate prices higher making parkland acquisition a challenge.

Land located within livable and walkable neighborhoods is highly desirable, so competition increases land values to a premium. This scenario raises social equity challenges in our major urban areas as economic development of these areas can exclude affordable housing and parks and open spaces. Commercial or high-end residential developments that offer a short-term return on investment for developers and government can appear more desirable in such areas. As more people move to downtown areas, a long-term investment mindset for public infrastructure needs to be adopted to provide and maintain quality of life.

The more people, more diversity, and more cultures mixed in the same location, the higher the chances of having face-to-face encounters within our community. Public spaces become the most welcoming places to meet people - a key component in this long-term scenario of community building approach. This functional master plan is bringing a new methodology to assess areas with highest needs for walkable access to many park experiences and its relationship to the concentration of people. In this way, new investment can be prioritized within a systematic approach.

The topic of public spaces was a key element of the discussion in the “New Urban Agenda” at the 2016 United Nation’s Habitat III Conference. The quote below summarizes the importance of having these places in the quality of our lives.

*Increasingly, it appears that the healthy growth of economies will depend on well-connected networks of public space, accessible to all. It is critical, in this age of rapid urbanization, that we continue to curate and nurture this vital urban common, and continue to develop and disseminate the tools and strategies to do so.... There is much in the New Urban Agenda that American (and other) new urbanists can applaud, including an emphasis on mixed use, walkable street networks, diversity, transportation choices - and the central importance of public space systems. Joan Clos, the Secretary-General of Habitat III, said that without public space, we simply don't have cities and towns. We have mere collections of buildings and vehicles.”*  
- Michael Mehaffy, Author and Consultant in  
*Strategic Urban Development*

## COUNTY PERSPECTIVE

### The Park System's Response to Societal Changes

Since its inception, Montgomery County's park system has been responding to the needs of its community with a variety of park experiences and services. Each phase of the development of park system over time reflects the needs, lifestyle and predominant development pattern at that time. When the park system was created in the 1920's and 1930's the emphasis was on water supply protection. After World War II and into the 1950's, organized recreation in park activity buildings, ballfields, and tennis courts were the priorities. The 1960's and 1970's brought a suburban growth pattern of larger lots of single-family homes with backyards grouped by residents with similar income and social structure. This development pattern encouraged the use and dependency on car to access any destination.

In the late 60's and 70's, environmental policy started taking shape with a better understanding of the impact of suburban sprawl. Growth management policies started emerging. The *On Wedges and Corridors (1964) Plan* took place, concentrating development along corridors and centers in and around the Beltway (I-495). The introduction of the Agricultural Reserve as a land conservation policy preserved our farmland, and encouraged the shift toward "growing smarter", and preserving access to farmland and open spaces.

Initially, urban parks were created as buffers to protect suburban residential development from commercial areas. Now that people are moving to the commercial centers, parks and open spaces are needed inside the more urban areas so that

people have nearby places to gather, play, or be in touch with the outdoors.

### Today's Challenges

As housing moves inside the commercial centers, the biggest challenge is to provide adequate parks and open spaces where land is already developed and very expensive. The need to focus on urban parks in these growing areas was established in the *Urban Parks Guidelines, Vision 2030* and *2012 PROS*.

With the increase in competition for land, our parks and open spaces should accommodate multiple needs. Integrating parks and recreation areas with other services can reduce costs by providing local amenities within walking distance, reducing impervious surfaces, and recharging groundwater supply, and removing pollutants from water. Sustainability requires integration of efforts and preventive measures to avoid waste of resources. This is especially critical in urban areas where high density puts a strain on failing infrastructure. The comprehensive integration of land uses, including parkland, will require a level of coordination among the different agencies including alignment of objectives, development schedules, and dedicated funds.

In areas with more people and jobs, parks are now much more than a leisure amenity - they provide a platform for a diversity of community experiences. Urban parks provide many direct and indirect benefits to the lifestyle of residents, employees, and visitors.

## PUBLIC PURPOSE

### Montgomery Parks Mission, Vision and Values

Montgomery Parks is one department within the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927.

#### MISSION

Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources; balance demand for recreation with the need for conservation; offer various enjoyable recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles; and provide clean, safe, and accessible places.

#### VISION

An enjoyable, accessible, safe, and green park system that promotes community through shared spaces and treasured experiences.

#### VALUES

- **Stewardship:** Manage the county park system to meet needs of current and future generations.
- **Recreation:** Offer leisure activities that strengthen the body, sharpen the mind, and renew the spirit.
- **Excellence:** Deliver high quality products, services, and experiences.
- **Integrity:** Operate with an honest and balanced perspective.

- **Service:** Be courteous, helpful, and accessible internally and externally.
- **Education:** Promote learning opportunities.
- **Collaboration:** Work with residents, communities, public and private organizations, and policymakers.
- **Diversity:** Support and embrace cultural differences and offer suitable programs, activities, and services.
- **Dedication:** Commit to getting the job done the right way, no matter what it takes.

### Social Equity

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has as its core mission to impact communities through three pillars of Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equity (more information online at: <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/>). These overarching themes are important in guiding the priorities of Montgomery Parks. Social Equity, defined by NRPA as “ensuring all people have access to the benefits of local parks and recreation,” is especially aligned with the public purpose of this functional master plan.

*True to the very philosophy of public parks and recreation is the idea that all people - no matter the color of their skin, age, income level or ability - have access to programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great. Parks and recreation truly build communities - communities for all.*

Montgomery Parks supports Social Equity in several ways. The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* (2010) recommends that the Department of Parks address social equity by “proactively respond[ing] to changing demographics, needs and trends” to create park experiences that are accessible to all neighborhoods and socio-economic groups within the County. The Parks of the Future combined outreach program, which gathered community input to the 2017 PROS Plan, the next CIP program, and this functional master plan, focused on populations in the County who have not traditionally participated in planning processes.

The 2017 PROS plan includes an analysis of Park Proximity and Park Equity as required by the State of Maryland for the first time (see *2017 PROS Plan*, Appendix 4, Park Proximity and Park Equity Analysis). The State defines park equity much as the NRPA defines social equity. The analysis required by the State is intended to “aid in identification of areas where underserved populations do not have easy access to parks close to home.” Montgomery Parks’ analysis of Park Equity in PROS identified lower park equity based on high concentrations of lower income households with low walkable access to park entrances and trailheads. The 2017 PROS Plan also adds Park Equity to the prioritization criteria for the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), thus elevating the issue of social equity to influence some of the most important Parks spending decisions.

Throughout this Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan, measures of Social Equity are used to identify communities needing study to determine park needs, to prioritize Plan recommendations, and to determine where to focus implementation efforts.

## Alignment with Montgomery Parks Values

This Plan aligns with the Values of Montgomery Parks and the Three Pillars of NRPA, in particular the Social Equity pillar, by providing a unique way to identify and prioritize the provision of urban parks. Parks in areas of high density can be incubators for health - physical, mental, and social. All public spaces provide some level of community benefit. Parks and open space are no longer only an amenity, but an essential element of what makes a community desirable, healthy, and wealthy in the broadest sense of the term. They become a platform for a diversity of community experiences. These places bring a list of many direct and indirect benefits to our community:

- Health and Wellness
- Happiness
- Connectivity
- Economic Development
- Increased Neighborhood Value
- Green Infrastructure
- Air Quality
- Nature or Historical Preservation and Access

Urban Parks especially provide opportunities to promote many of the values and strategies of the Department of Parks, including:

**Healthy Living** - Physical activity reduces and can prevent chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and obesity while reducing anxiety and depression. Having a system of parks within mixed use centers encourages people use parks more frequently for exercise. With a well-designed system of trails and sidewalks, people will tend to walk and bike rather than drive.



**Stewardship & Recreation** - with many families choosing to live in urban areas, the first contact with nature and outdoor play for many children is through their neighborhood parks. Urban Parks can help plant the seed for stewardship of nature for those who live in higher density developments with no backyards.

**Natural, Historical and Archaeological Resources** - Although much of the County's inventory of natural, historical, and archaeological resources are outside urban areas, urban parks can provide "pilot" places to experience and appreciate them.

**Economic Competitiveness** - Healthier communities attract businesses and residents, and access to parks is one critical element of a healthy community. Parks increase adjacent property values from 5% to 20%. Parks also lower the cost of infrastructure by managing stormwater and preventing flooding. By promoting walking to parks and maintaining a healthy weight, communities can save \$1,500 per person in healthcare costs a year.

**Social Equity** - Access to parks is critical to healthy living. In areas of higher density with little open space, proximity to parks is especially important. In lower income areas where residents depend on public transit to access park facilities, the public sector should prioritize parks within walking distance. Currently, one third of the County's population is foreign-born. This diversity should guide the services and facilities so that the parks provide public space that is inviting to all.

The balance between the built and unbuilt environments is important to our social and economic good health. The future

wellbeing of Montgomery County citizens depends upon maintaining the quality and availability of parks and open space, especially in our most dense communities. This Functional Master Plan recognizes the important linkage between conservation, quality of life, economic vitality, and social equity. Adequate parks and open space to serve the residents of the County are essential to enrich the lives of current residents and to pass along to future generations.

### Relationship to Master and Sector Plans

The *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP)* amends all area master and sector plans countywide approved as of the date of the final adoption of the plan to the extent that this plan's methodology will designate additional sites that should be considered for park acquisition and facility renovation or redevelopment. This Plan also amends the *Montgomery County Recreation Guidelines (2017)* and other functional master plans. All future sector and master plans will utilize the new methodology established in this plan to determine the priority areas with low levels of park and open space services and to recommend facilities and parkland to improve the level of service.

Sites identified as opportunities for new or renovated parks from application of the EPS methodology across the EPS Study Area are not guaranteed to receive funds or to be fully acquired or implemented through the *EPS FMP*. The methodology established in this Plan will identify preferred opportunity sites to address areas of the County with a relatively low level of park service by adding appropriate park and open space facilities. Implementation of these recommendations over the course of

the Functional Plan will be flexible, allowing for the consideration of opportunity acquisition sites, unforeseen partnerships, and other new implementation tools to fill the identified service needs of each community.

As a functional master plan approved by the Planning Board and County Council, this Plan also will provide the ability to study priority areas of the County and make new park recommendations without being tied to the land use master plan schedule. In addition, this functional plan can be implemented using a wide variety of policy and regulatory tools, including dedication through the development process and the land acquisition process.

## POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Park Planning Policy

Several plans have guided the formation of the *Energized Public Spaces FMP* including the *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation (Vision 2030, June 2011)* and the *2017 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS)*. *Vision 2030* confirmed that the highest needs for parks are now and will continue to be in areas of highest population density.

The *Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan* serves as the primary planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2030 and beyond. It assesses needs and recommends strategies for the delivery of park and recreation facilities, protection of natural resource areas, and preservation of historic/cultural areas and agricultural lands, and is required by the State of Maryland every five years to be eligible for

Program Open Space funding. The *2017 PROS Plan* includes a new chapter on parks to serve mixed use and higher density residential areas, providing policy guidance for the development of this Plan.

In addition to Vision 2030 and 2017 PROS Plan, other existing County policies, guidelines, and plans for open spaces, parks, and urban areas have guided the *EPS FMP*.

- *General Plan Refinement of the Goals and Objectives for Montgomery County (1993)*
- *Countywide Park Trails Plan (2016)*
- *Montgomery County Recreation Guidelines (2017)*
- *Legacy Open Space (LOS) Functional Master Plan (2001)*
- *Silver Spring Central Business District Green Space Guidelines (2010)*

Over the past two decades, the adopted policies in these documents regarding urban parks have evolved to follow the many national and international trends in park planning. In June of 2010, the Planning Board approved objectives for *Urban Park Guidelines*. The goal of the *Urban Park Guidelines* was to re-examine and re-define the role of urban parks in community life. Building on this goal, the *2012* and *2017 PROS Plans* each developed more sophisticated approaches to urban park planning, resulting in the following two primary developments.

### Expanded Classification System for Urban Parks

Prior to the *2012 PROS Plan*, all parks next to urban areas in the County were classified as Urban Buffer Parks, indicating their importance to separating residential and commercial zones. In

the 2012 PROS Plan in response to the 2010 Guidelines, six types of urban parks were added to the Park Classification System. The new categories and subcategories and their descriptions supported the vision and role of urban parks to serve mixed-use, densely developing communities. Several of these park types are found in all sector plans approved since 2012.

In the current PROS Plan, two new classifications of urban parks are proposed to increase the total to eight. The 2017 PROS Plan adds two new types of urban parks to fill distinctly different roles than the prior six types. Urban Plaza is proposed as a new type of Countywide Urban Park and Pocket Green is proposed as a new type of Community Use Urban Park.

The Plaza park type aligns with and complements the Civic Green park type. The first will be allocated to areas with higher pedestrian traffic and flow usually associated to adjacency to transit stops and commercial building frontages and with higher concentration of paved surfaces. In contrast, the Civic Green will provide a larger amount of green space area inclusive of a lawn area for social gatherings.

Pocket Greens will play an important role in the network of public spaces that is encouraged in each sector or district. The presence of these smaller park types will allow for “pauses” in a

landscaped setting along the route between major and larger open spaces within the network. These spaces are particularly important in areas where commercial activities are taking places to allow workers to take a lunch or coffee break while enjoying a contemplative environment. Research has suggested that smaller breaks during the work schedule increases productivity and health, especially mental health.

### Implementing a Hierarchy of Park Types

Since 2010, adopted policy is that the amount of parkland alone will not guarantee “the right parks in the right places” in our urban areas. Urban park recommendations since 2012 have been based primarily on creating the right pattern and type of parks and open spaces for each master or sector plan area, rather than setting a target for the amount of parkland. In order to distribute parkland appropriately within an urban area, the recommendations for parks should meet needs identified in the 2012 PROS Plan, including creating a hierarchy of parks and open spaces to serve everything from an entire sector plan down to a single block. The hierarchy concept includes trying to provide new urban park facilities such as event spaces, skate spots, etc., and create a walkable open space system, using a standard maximum walking distance from residences and transit stops to parks.

Figure 5 -Parks Classification System, 2017 PROS Plan Public Hearing Draft Figure 7

PARK TYPE	PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL FACILITIES*	APPROX. SIZE
<b>COUNTYWIDE PARKS - Parks in this category serve all residents of Montgomery County</b>			
<b>- Recreational Oriented Parks</b>			
REGIONAL PARKS	Large Parks that provide a wide range of recreational opportunities but retain 2/3 of the acreage as conservation areas.	Picnic / playground areas, tennis courts, athletic fields, golf course, campgrounds, and water-oriented recreation areas.	<b>200 ACRES OR MORE</b>
RECREATIONAL PARKS	Parks larger than 50 acres in size that are more intensively developed than Regional Parks, but may also contain natural areas.	Athletic fields, tennis courts, multi-use courts, picnic/playground areas, golf course, trails, and natural areas.	<b>50 ACRES OR MORE</b>
SPECIAL PARKS	These parks include areas that contain features of historic and cultural significance.	Vary, but may include agricultural centers, garden, small conference centers, and historic structures, etc.	<b>VARIES</b>
<b>- Countywide Urban Parks</b>			
CIVIC GREENS	Formally planned, flexible, programmable open spaces that serve as places for informal gathering, quiet contemplation, or large special event gatherings. Depending on size, they may support activities including open air markets, concerts, festivals, and special events but are not often used for programmed recreational purposes.	A central lawn is often the main focus with adjacent spaces providing complementary uses. May include gardens, water features and shade structures.	<b>1/2 ACRE MINIMUM</b> <b>1.5 ACRE IDEAL</b>
PLAZAS	Formally planned, predominantly hardscaped open spaces for pedestrian traffic from nearby transit stops and commercial and higher density residential uses. Depending on size, they may support activities including open air markets, concerts, festivals, and special events, but are not often used for active recreational purposes. Consider access to sunlight and connection to the network of public spaces, and protection from the wind, traffic and noise.	Central hardscaped gathering area with public art/water feature as focal point. May include special lighting, shaded areas, and benches and tables. Consider temporary closure of local streets to enlarge the size of the plaza for special events. Playful and interactive elements are encouraged.	<b>1/2 ACRE MINIMUM</b> <b>1 ACRE IDEAL</b>
URBAN RECREATIONAL PARKS	Oriented to the recreational needs of a densely populated neighborhood and business district. They provide space for many activities.	May include athletic fields, playing courts, picnicking, dog parks, sitting areas and flexible grassy open space. Programming can include farmer’s markets, outdoor exercise classes, and community yard sales. There is space for a safe drop-off area and nearby accessible parking for those who cannot walk to the park.	<b>VARIES</b>
URBAN GREENWAYS	Linear parks that provide trails or wide landscaped walkways and bikeways and may include other recreational and natural amenities. May occur along road rights of way or “paper” streets.	Trails, walkways and bikeways, with extra space for vegetative ground cover and trees. Should link other green spaces, trails and natural systems.	<b>VARIES</b>

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PARK TYPE	PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL FACILITIES*	APPROX. SIZE
<b>- Conservation Oriented Parks</b>			
STREAM VALLEY PARKS	Interconnected linear parks along major stream valleys providing conservation and recreation areas.	Hiker-biker trails, fishing, picnicking, playground areas.	<b>VARIES</b>
CONSERVATION AREA PARKS	Large natural areas acquired to preserve specific natural archaeological or historic features. They also provide opportunities of compatible recreation activities.	Trails, fishing areas, nature study areas, and informal picnic areas.	<b>VARIES</b>
<b>COMMUNITY USE PARKS - Parks in this category serve residents of surrounding communities</b>			
<b>- Community Use Urban Parks</b>			
URBAN BUFFER PARKS	Serve as green buffers at the edges of urban, high density development adjacent to lower density residential areas. They provide a green space within which residents and workers of an urban area may relax and recreate.	Landscaping, sitting/picnic areas, play equipment, courts, and shelters.	<b>1/4 ACRE MINIMUM</b>
NEIGHBORHOOD GREENS	Serve the residents and workers from the surrounding neighborhood or district, but may be designed for more activity than an urban buffer park. These formally planned, flexible open spaces serve as places for informal gathering, lunchtime relaxation, or small special event gatherings.	Lawn area, shaded seating and pathways. May include a play area, a skate spot, a community garden, or similar neighborhood facilities.	<b>1/4 ACRE MINIMUM</b>
<b>POCKET GREENS</b>	<b>Serve residents and workers from nearby area, designed for relaxation, lunch breaks, small games, play area for children, and outdoor eating. Consider access to sunlight, important view corridors, connection to the network of public spaces, and protection from the wind, traffic and noise.</b>	<b>Program and design should reflect the demographics and culture of its surrounding users. Sunlit small gathering areas, shaded seating, small children play areas. May include movable furniture, focal point public art, and small-scale green areas and trees.</b>	<b>1/10-1/4 ACRE</b>
URBAN RECREATIONAL PARKS	These parks serve the residents and workers from the surrounding neighborhood or district, and are designed for more active recreation than an urban buffer park or a neighborhood green.	Sport courts, skate spots, and may include lawn areas, playgrounds or similar neighborhood recreation facilities.	<b>1/10 ACRE MINIMUM</b>
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	Small parks providing informal recreation in residential areas.	Play equipment, play field, sitting area, shelter, tennis and Multi-use courts. (Do not include regulation size ballfields).	<b>2.5 ACRE</b>
LOCAL PARKS	Larger parks that provide ballfields and both programmed and un-programmed recreation facilities.	Ballfields, play equipment, tennis and multi-use courts, sitting/picnic area, shelters, buildings and other facilities.	<b>15 ACRE</b>
NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREAS	Small parcels of conservation oriented parkland in residential areas, generally dedicated at the time of subdivision.	Generally undeveloped, may include a stormwater management pond and related facilities.	<b>VARIES</b>

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Building on these policies, urban park classifications and the hierarchy of parks, the *EPS FMP* creates a methodology to focus the distribution of facilities and resources in the areas of highest population density. This Plan's implementation strategies will guide the Department of Parks, partner agencies, and private entities to locate the right parks and open spaces in the right places, thus creating a network of public spaces to serve

residents and employees. The Department of Parks will continue to play a major role in shaping Montgomery County's high quality of life, but it will not be doing so alone: partnerships with a diverse group of stakeholders will be key to implementing this Plan and promoting community identity and civic engagement

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This Plan presents a data-driven methodology for evaluating park needs that can be employed systematically to prioritize and distribute parks and open spaces across the higher population and mixed-use areas of the County, identified here as the EPS Study Area (*see Figure 8*). The Plan's methodology will identify priorities for renovation and redevelopment of facilities within existing parks, recommendations for acquisition and development of new parks, and opportunities for collaborating with other entities and stakeholders to provide open space and outdoor experiences. Further, this innovative, geographically based method will allow us to evaluate the relative supply and demand for parks and open spaces, test the sensitivity of the open space network to new facilities and new park users, and to prioritize the areas with the most urgent needs for additional open space in a measurable, equitable way.

To test the new methodology proposed in this Plan, a Pilot Area was selected from within the larger EPS Study Area - the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD). The remainder of the EPS Study Area will be analyzed during the implementation phase of this Plan (see Chapter 5). This unique methodology will be illustrated throughout this chapter and the next using the application to and results from the Pilot Area.

The EPS methodology identifies low levels of service for parks and open space and proposes opportunities to raise the service in those areas. The major steps in applying this methodology are described below:

### Analysis

- Collect Data

- Analyze Data: Identify Level of Service
- Analyze Data: Identify Opportunities

### Results

- Organize by Strategies
- Screen for Feasibility
- Prioritize by Social Equity

### Implementation

- Apply Methodology to EPS Study Area
- Implement Recommendations
- Provide Funding Sources
- Align Operations, Maintenance, and Policing
- Assess Progress

The analysis method is described in this chapter, the results are explained in *Chapter 4*, and implementation steps are discussed in *Chapter 5*.

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*Figure 6-The EPS FMP Methodology Process*

## THE EPS STUDY AND PILOT AREAS

### The EPS Study Area

To identify a focused area upon which to apply the new methodology, portions of the County were selected that fall into two categories: higher intensity mixed use and high density residential. Data from the Planning Department's Round 9.0 Forecast was used to create the EPS Study Area and includes current (2010) and future (2045) conditions.

**Higher-Intensity Mixed Use: Commercial and Residential**  
Areas that are "higher-intensity mixed use" are defined as being areas with both moderate residential density and that are also employment centers. These areas have a both a residential population density of 5,000 people per square mile and a ratio of employees to residents that is 1:1 or higher.

### High Density Residential

To also provide greater service to areas in the County with the highest residential density, areas with over 10,000 residents per square mile were added to the Study Area.

In addition, the EPS Study Area also aligns with on-going regional and local planning efforts areas: activity centers as defined by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, public transit routes and stations (existing and proposed), and recent master and sector plans completed by the Planning Department.

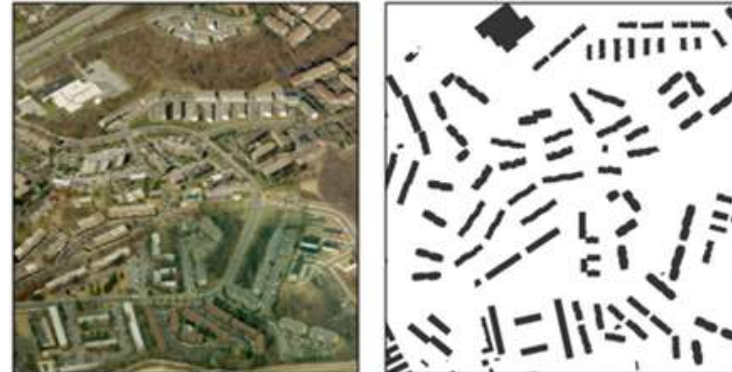


Higher intensity mixed-use\*  
(commercial and residential)



Example: Silver Spring

High Density Residential\*



Example: White Oak

*Figure 7 - Examples of Higher Intensity Mixed-use and High Density Residential Communities in Montgomery County, MD*

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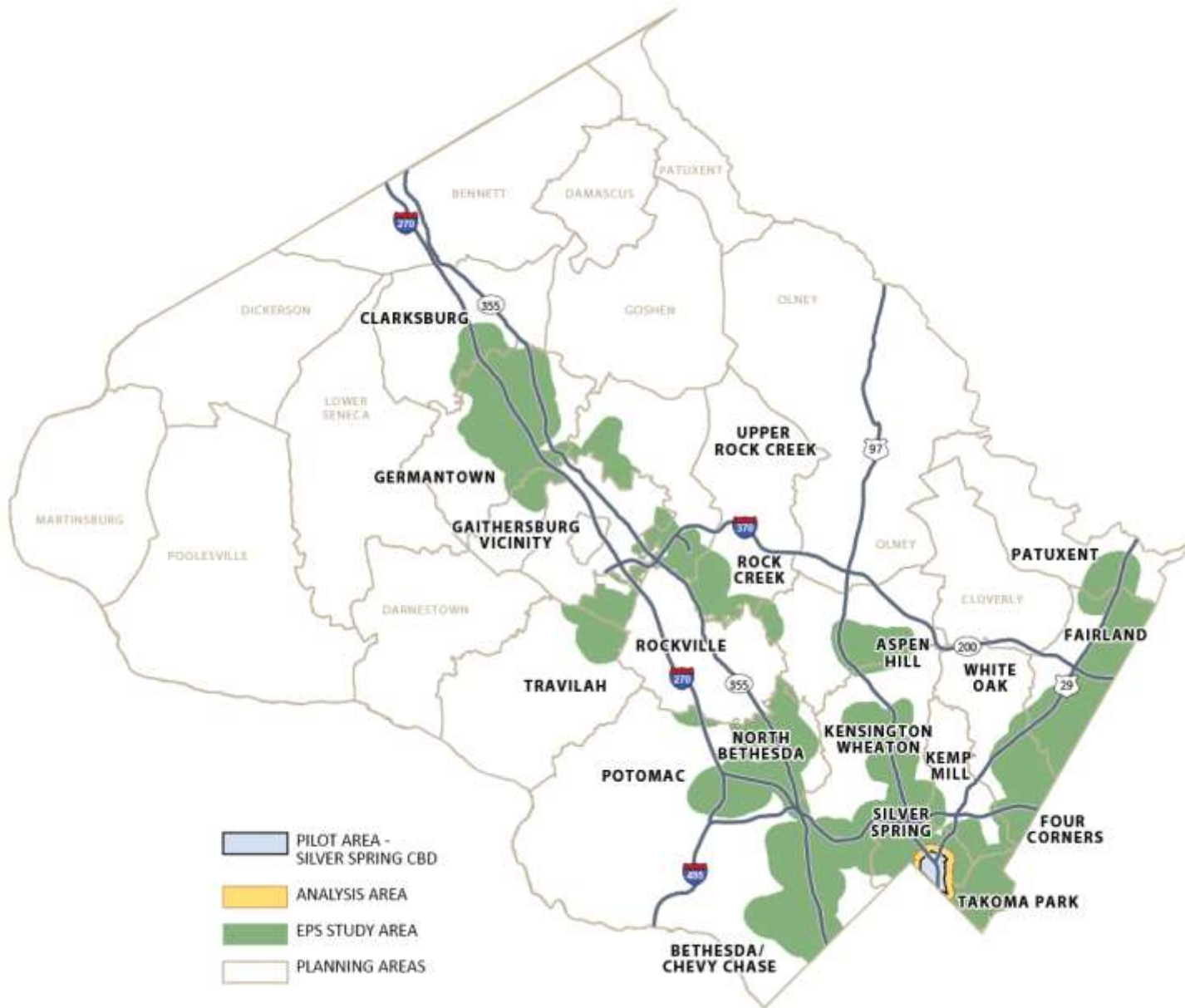


Figure 8. Energized Public Space Study Area and Pilot Area map

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## The Pilot Area

To test and refine the new methodology proposed in this Plan, the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD) was selected for a pilot application of the methodology. The rest of the EPS Study Area will be analyzed during the implementation phase of this Plan (see Chapter 5). The criteria used to select the Pilot Area include the following:

- Demographic Diversity
  - Presence of lower income Census Blocks (<62.2% Average Median Income, or AMI)
- Significant Economic Activity Center
  - Mixed commercial and residential land uses
  - Current zoning leaves room for future economic growth
- Transit Connectivity
  - Important bus and rail station that serves commuters from large portion of County
  - Major stops along future BRT routes and Purple Line light rail
- Lack of Recent Area Master Plan
  - Most recent sector plan completed in 2000
- Existing planning reports indicating need for parks and open spaces
  - *Silver Spring Green Space Guidelines (2009)*
  - *Silver Spring Placemaking (2014)*

Downtown Silver Spring is an area that has a remarkable confluence of factors that meet these criteria, and thus was

selected as the Pilot Area for the Energized Public Space FMP. The Silver Spring CBD is an ideal location to test this new methodology in an area with a diversity of challenges and opportunities. The Pilot Area follows the boundary of the Silver Spring CBD. To analyze the parks and open spaces necessary to serve the residents and employees in the Pilot Area, the analysis area includes the CBD plus areas that are located within a 5-minute walking distance outside the CBD boundary (*see Figure 9*).

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Figure 9 - Pilot Study Area with Existing Parks and Public Spaces

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**ANALYZE SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

To identify and prioritize opportunities to meet the park and recreation needs of County residents in the EPS Study Area, a significant amount of new data must be collected and analyzed using both innovative and traditional tools.

**Collect Data**

In this phase of the methodology, a significant amount of data is collected and sorted. Parameters on how to collect and analyze the data were critical to ensure the systematic approach this methodology will bring to future project areas. Data necessary for the analysis phase focuses on identifying the supply of park facilities and the demand for park and open space use in the area under study.

**Community Input and Demographic Data**

During the development of the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan in 2010, the Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Recreation Department pledged to “engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends”. Montgomery County demographic trends that influenced the outreach methods for the *EPS FMP* include:

- Increasing racial and ethnic diversity, with a projected growth in minority groups from 55 percent of the population in 2015 to 68 percent of the population in 2040
- Projected growth in the population of people over age 65 from 12 percent of the population in 2010 to 20 percent in 2040
- A large and widely diverse foreign-born population speaking a multitude of languages and varying English speaking proficiencies

To gather input from our diverse community, a great deal of input was collected through a variety of methods including the Parks and Recreation of the Future campaign and surveys, interviews and focus groups conducted by a team of consultants. The process and results of these tools were reported in a *Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (Draft, April 2017)*.

Community input indicates a strong desire for providing parks and open spaces in high density and mixed-use areas of the County. One theme that arose from stakeholder focus groups is the desire for community gathering spaces. The Needs Assessment Report indicates that people want to “utilize parks as meeting points and vehicles for community building and gatherings. The parks should function as a place for building community through social gatherings so that people can meet each other. Work in partnership with the community, through nonprofits to accomplish more cultural programming. Parks should be utilized as centers to promote cultural understanding and learning particularly through more ethnic programming and events.” These findings helped inform the development of the EPS Plan methodology that places increased importance on parks and open spaces as places to gather and interact with members of one’s community.

A second major finding of community outreach was that people highly value areas of natural character and beauty and want Parks to increase amounts of these spaces and the care of these areas. This is particularly important where the most people live and where there is the least amount of green space today, that is the EPS Study Area. This finding indicates community support for the research recommendations to increase access of all residents to green, natural spaces. As the implementation of the Energized Public Space program proceeds, amenities that

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provide green spaces and small natural areas within our most highly developed communities will be promoted.

**Supply of Publicly Accessible Facilities**

Determining the supply of park and open spaces that a given person can access within a reasonable walking distance is the critical first step in this Plan's methodology. The supply of facilities will be quantified by taking inventory of all open spaces, then evaluating the park experiences that can occur on those open spaces, and finally measuring how many of those experiences are accessible by walking to the area under study.

*Inventory All Open Spaces and Parks*

Understanding that real estate within the EPS Study Area comes at a premium, this Plan expands its scope and inventory of resources to look beyond Montgomery Parks properties. It will

consider integrating the network of all publicly accessible open spaces and parks, independent of ownership. This collaboration and partnership with a diverse group of stakeholders will ultimately provide outdoor experiences delivered to the community in a more efficient and expedited way.

To include all publicly accessible open spaces within this methodology, such spaces need to be documented in GIS layers. In addition to existing Montgomery Parks sites, public spaces to be catalogued include other types of government land: County, public schools, municipal and federal. All Privately-Owned Public Spaces are also included in this inventory. Privately-Owned Public Spaces, or POPS, are created via the development review process for private residential or commercial buildings according to the *Recreation Guidelines for Private Residential Development* (2017).

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**PRIVATE**



**M-NCPPC**



**MCPS**



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

*Figure 10 - Examples of public spaces in different ownership*

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## Evaluate Park Experiences

Why do people go to parks and open spaces? The short answer is to experience the outdoors. This Plan recognizes the importance of a balance in these experiences so facilities can be responsive to a wider demographic range of residents and employees.

Public spaces are about people gathering and sharing a common place. As such, each space needs to provide experiences that will attract people to it. This Plan classifies outdoor experiences into three types that are not necessarily exclusive of each other:

- **Active Experiences**
  - Play sports or games; run, walk, or bicycle; climb or mountain bike; other outdoor exercise.
  - Use trails, athletic fields, open spaces/lawns, sport courts, playgrounds, interactive elements, natural areas.
- **Contemplative Experiences**
  - Enjoy nature, read a book, or learn something; relax/meditate/reflect; escape chaos.
  - Use natural areas, historic sites, benches, shade trees, community open spaces, gardens, small green spaces, or trails.
- **Social Gathering Experiences**
  - Attend community festivals, concerts, outdoor movies, parades; visit farmer's markets, historic sites; meet friends, have a picnic, see your neighbors.
  - Use plazas with seating, small sport courts, amphitheaters/stages, picnic tables, large community open spaces, dog parks.



ACTIVE



CONTEMPLATIVE



SOCIAL GATHERING

Figure 11 - EPS FMP Outdoor Experiences Classification: Active, Contemplative and Social Gathering



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Each facility within the inventoried park and open space system is scored based on how well it provides active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences.

The first step in evaluating the supply of park experiences is to determine whether a given facility provides each experience type. This step is a binary (yes/no) determination. For example, a playground provides for both active recreation and social gathering, but not contemplative experiences.

The second step in evaluating park experiences is to determine how much benefit each facility provides for each experience type. Each facility gets a score depending on how well it provides each of the experiences to potential users of that park facility. The scoring criteria give a higher score to a facility that is open and welcoming to the most people (*see Figure 13*).



**Figure 12 - Evaluate which type of experience each facility provides**

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Figure 13 - Facility Supply Scoring Criteria for Each Experience Type Table

EXPERIENCE BENEFIT LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	SUPPLY SCORE
Most Community Benefit	Facilities that serve the community as a whole	3
Individual and Community Benefit	Facilities that provide a balanced benefit to individuals and larger groups	2
Mostly Individual Benefit	Facilities that provide benefit mostly to individuals and small groups	1
Minimal Benefit		0

For example, a playground has a higher score than a tennis court for the active recreation experience because it serves a larger number of people at one time and there are no specialized skills required to use a playground (see Figure 14). Trails get an even higher score than playgrounds for active recreation since they serve a larger demographic audience than playgrounds. However, for the social gathering experience, playgrounds score

higher than trails since trails are narrow, linear facilities that mostly serve to move users from one location to another, not providing for significant levels of social gathering. Plazas and Civic Greens, on the other hand, accommodate large events and community festivals that are open to all and thus have high social gathering scores.



Figure 14 - Examples of Supply Scoring by Experience Type - Active and Social Gathering Examples

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Each facility type also receives a total supply score by adding the three experience scores together. In the case of a playground, supply scores are assigned for Active and Social Gathering experiences with no score for Contemplative.

#### Apply Walkable Network Model

A GIS-based model was created to calculate “walksheds” for the parks and open space within a 10-minute walk of all residents and employees. This Walkable Network Model considers neighborhood roads, trail systems and parks, walkways on schools and commercial land, and any road with a sidewalk within the County to calculate parks within walking distance. The ability to consider barriers such as highways and elevated rail

tracks in the walkshed analysis brings a reality check in the accessibility to our public spaces network from the pedestrian experience.

In the final step of the supply analysis, this walkable network model is applied to calculate the supply of park experiences for each location within an analysis area. The area under study is divided into a grid of one-acre squares. Each square in the grid is assigned supply scores based on the park experiences within the walkshed of that square, including the total score and the component active, contemplative, and social gathering scores (see illustration in *Figure 15*)

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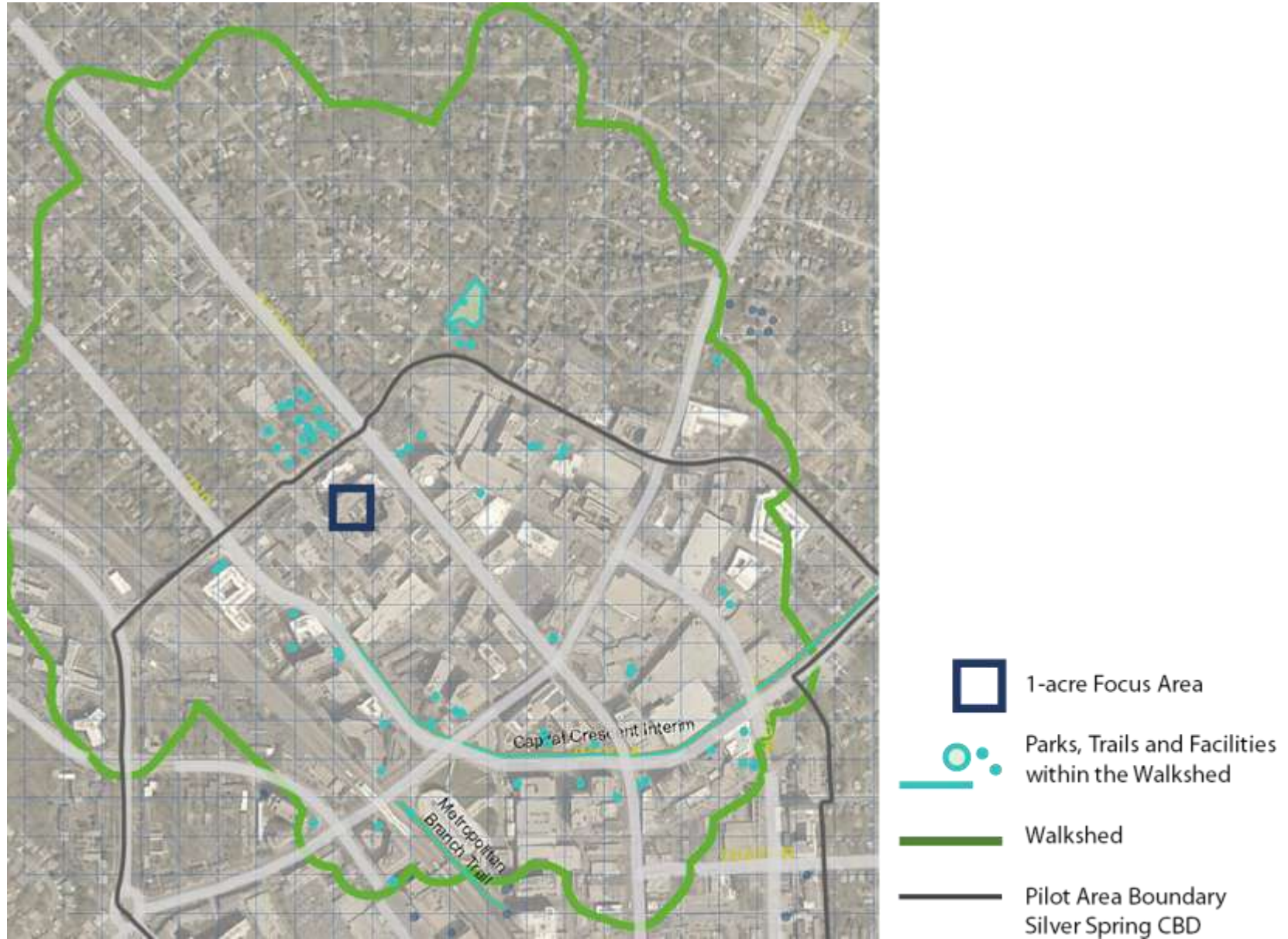


Figure 15 - Illustration of a sample 10-minute walkshed and its supply of facilities, Silver Spring CBD

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The GIS model then aggregates the scoring results for all the individual grid squares to create a map of the supply of park experiences available to residents, employees and visitors to an area. See *Figures 16-18* for the locations of the parks and open spaces that supply each experience type to the Pilot Area. See *Figure 19* or the output map from the Walkable Network Model calculated from the experiences mapped in *Figures 16-18*

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Figure 16: Active Park and Open Space Experience Supply Map

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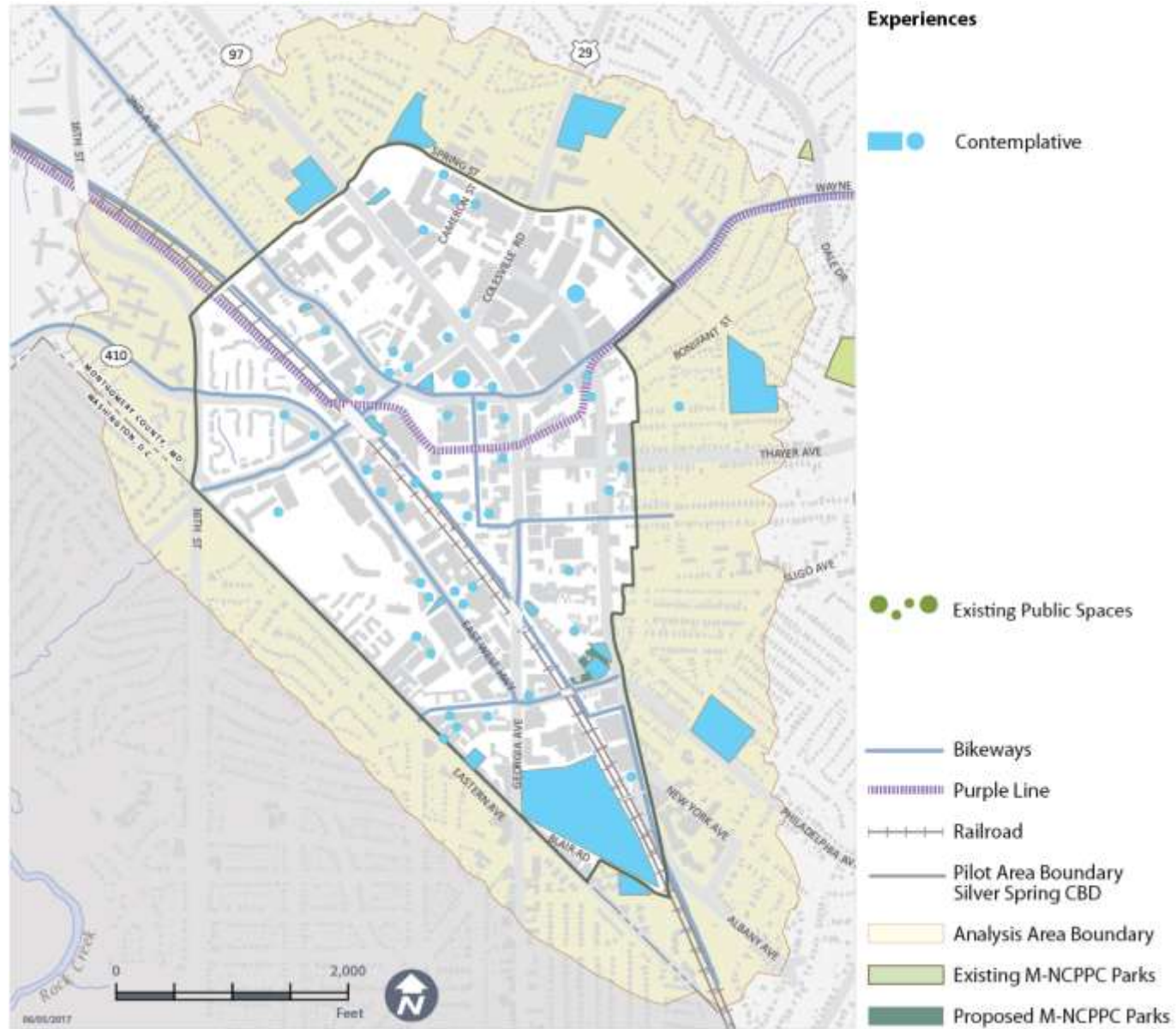


Figure 17: Contemplative Park and Open Space Experience Supply Map

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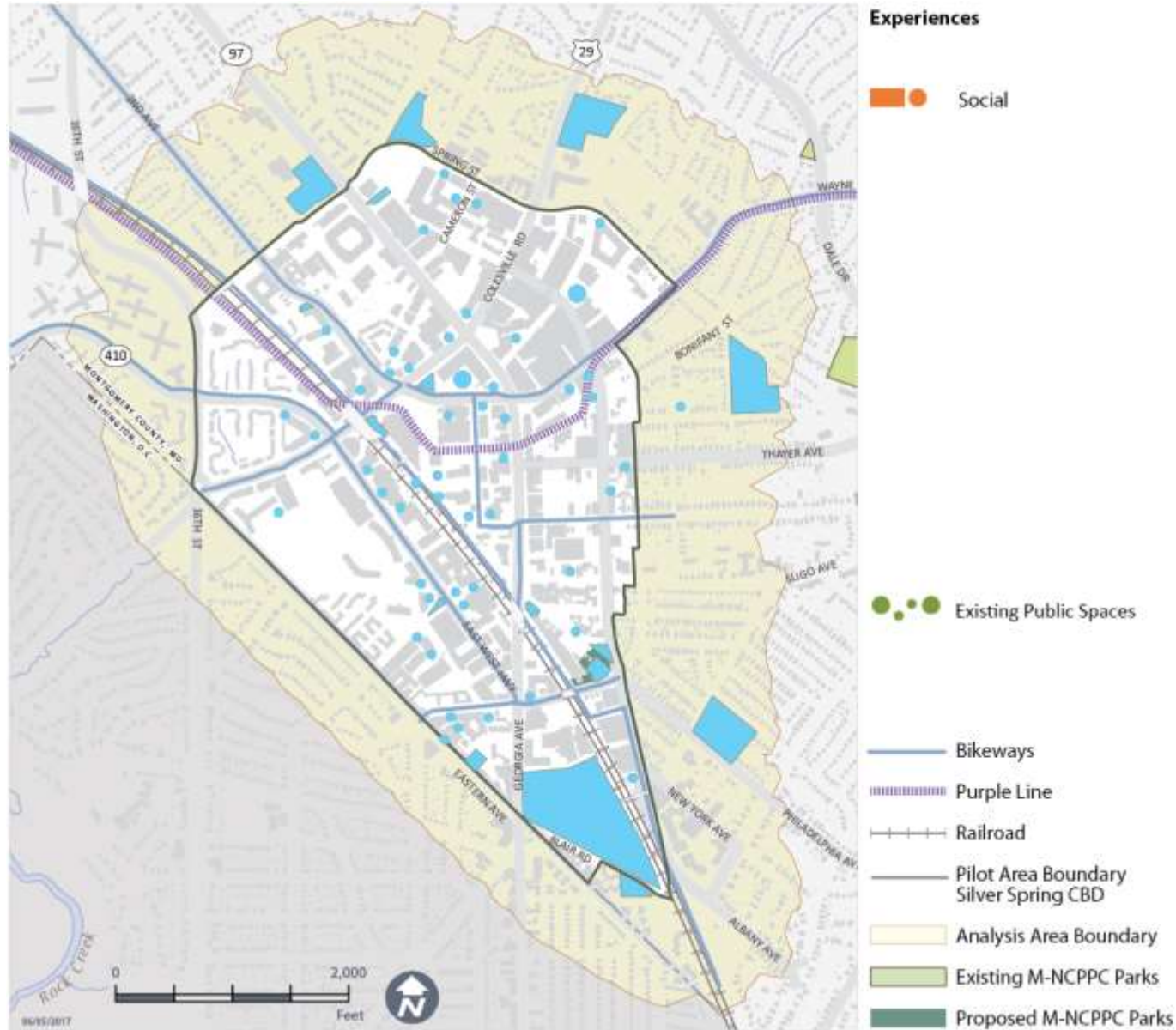


Figure 18: Social Gathering Park and Open Space Experience Supply Map





Figure 19 - Total Supply Score Map, Silver Spring Pilot Area

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The Total Supply Score map shows the amount of park and open space experiences that are within a 10-minute walk of each location within the CBD. These four maps together lead to several conclusions about the supply of parks and open spaces across the Pilot Area.

- All areas of the CBD have some access to parks and open space within a reasonable walking distance, but the level varies significantly.
- The CBD contains a large number of small social gathering spaces, but has no large site for events within the center of the CBD.
- The center and western portions of the Pilot Area have a low supply of active recreation amenities, the most significant shortfall among the three experience types.

### Demand for Parks and Open Spaces

The demand for park and open space facilities is calculated based on the number of residents and daytime users (employees, visitors, shoppers, etc.) in an analysis area. Demand data for this Plan's methodology was gathered from a variety of sources, including U.S. Census data and future population projections, and Planning Department, State and County data on property parcels and the size of commercial and residential buildings. The demand data is a sum of single-family residents, multi-family residents and daytime population estimates within each grid square.

### Calculate Demand

Residential demand data is calculated based on population estimates per square foot of residential space (for multi-family units) or by population per single family unit (either attached or detached). The numbers of residents are assigned to either a point on a single-family unit, or to the parcel that contains a multi-family unit.

For daytime users, estimates of employees, visitors and shoppers are calculated using square feet to jobs conversion factors. This methodology uses the accepted conversion factors that are used in transportation planning. Same as for residential demand, the daytime users are assigned to the property parcels that contain a given office or commercial building.

### Assign Demand to Model Grid

Just as for supply, demand numbers are assigned to each acre square within an analysis area. The model apportions number of jobs and housing population based on the percentage of the grid square that overlaps parcels. This illustration (*Figure 20*) from the Silver Spring Pilot Area shows how the demand was calculated for one square that covers a portion of a multi-family apartment building and a smaller portion of an office building. The demand for this square consists of 18.6 jobs and 435.9 residents, for a total demand score of 454.6. *Figure 21* maps the Total Demand Score calculated from the combined demand sources over the Pilot Area.

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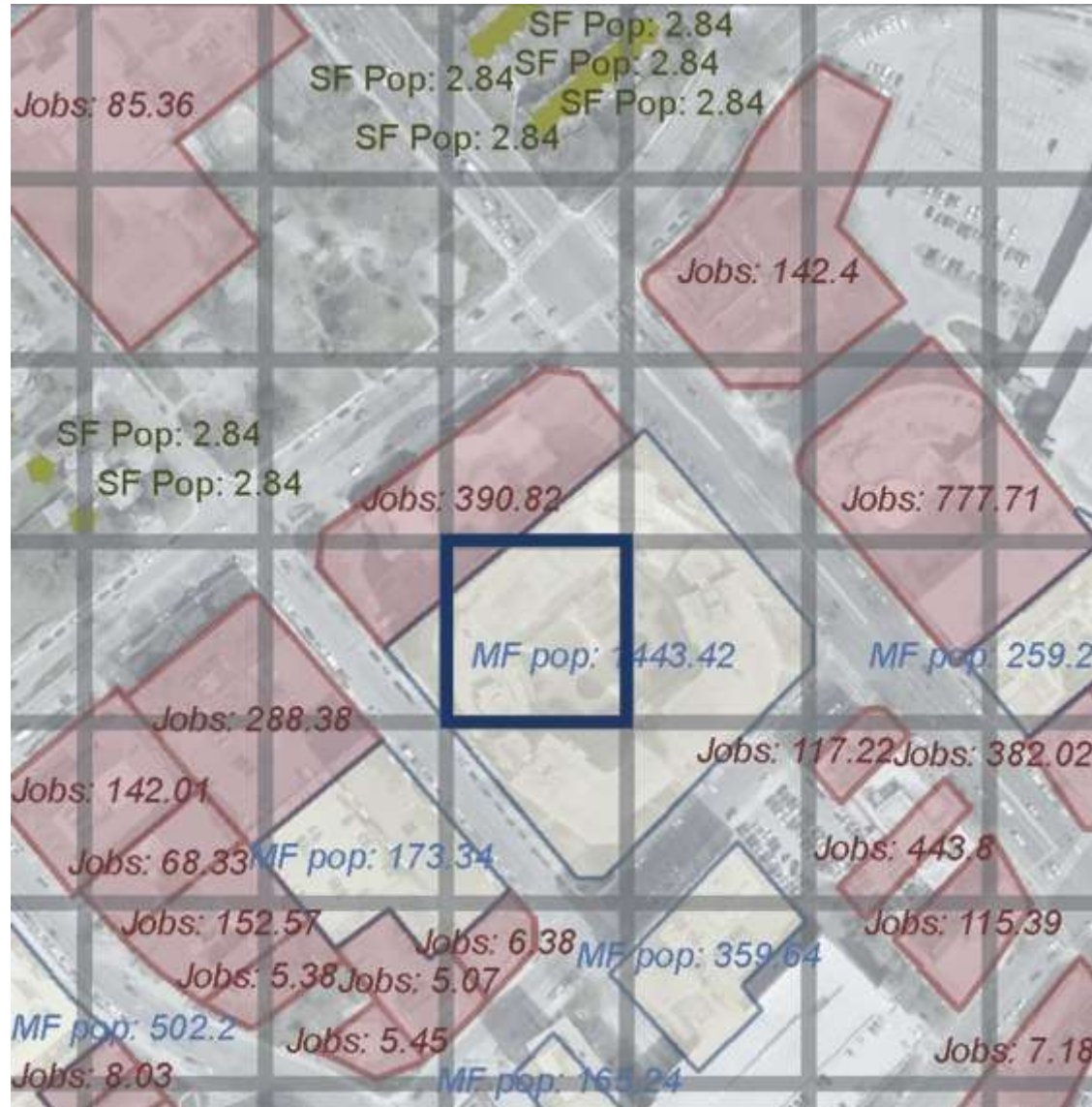


Figure 20: Calculating Demand

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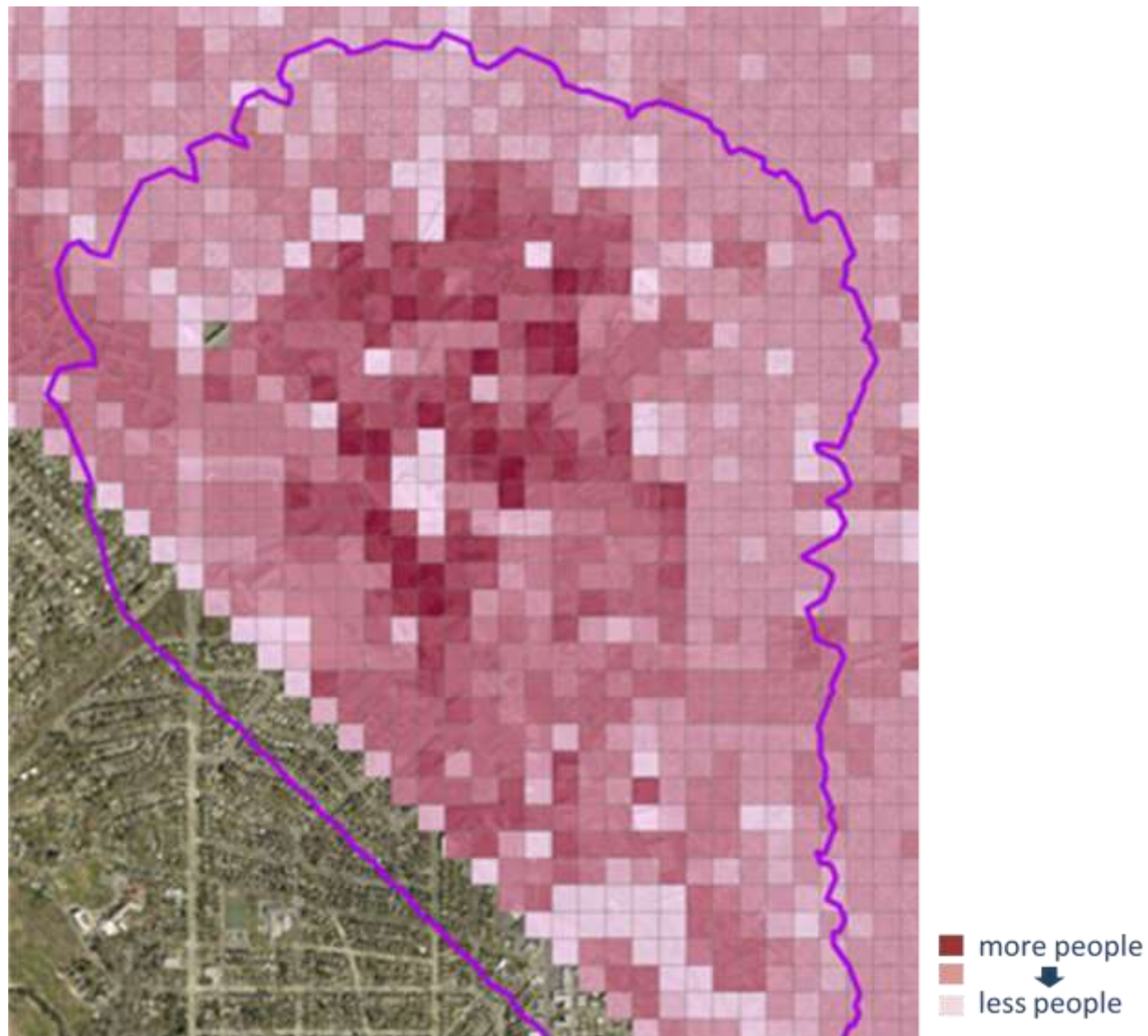


Figure 21: Demand Maps for Silver Spring Pilot Area

### Analyze Data: Identify Level of Service

Once the supply and demand data necessary has been collected and entered in the GIS model, we can conduct a supply and demand analysis to identify the relative level of service for each type of open space experience. This first major element of the data analysis is a primarily quantitative analysis to determine the location of areas with the lowest level of service parks and open space. Graphic: Demand Maps for the Silver Spring Pilot Area.

### Combine Supply and Demand Data

The first step is to combine the data sets so that each grid square has assigned supply and demand scores. The illustration here (*Figure 22*) for several grids in downtown Silver Spring shows the combination of supply and demand scores assigned to each grid square. For example, the highlighted grid in *Figure 22* has a Total Supply Score of 188 and a Total Demand Score of 455.

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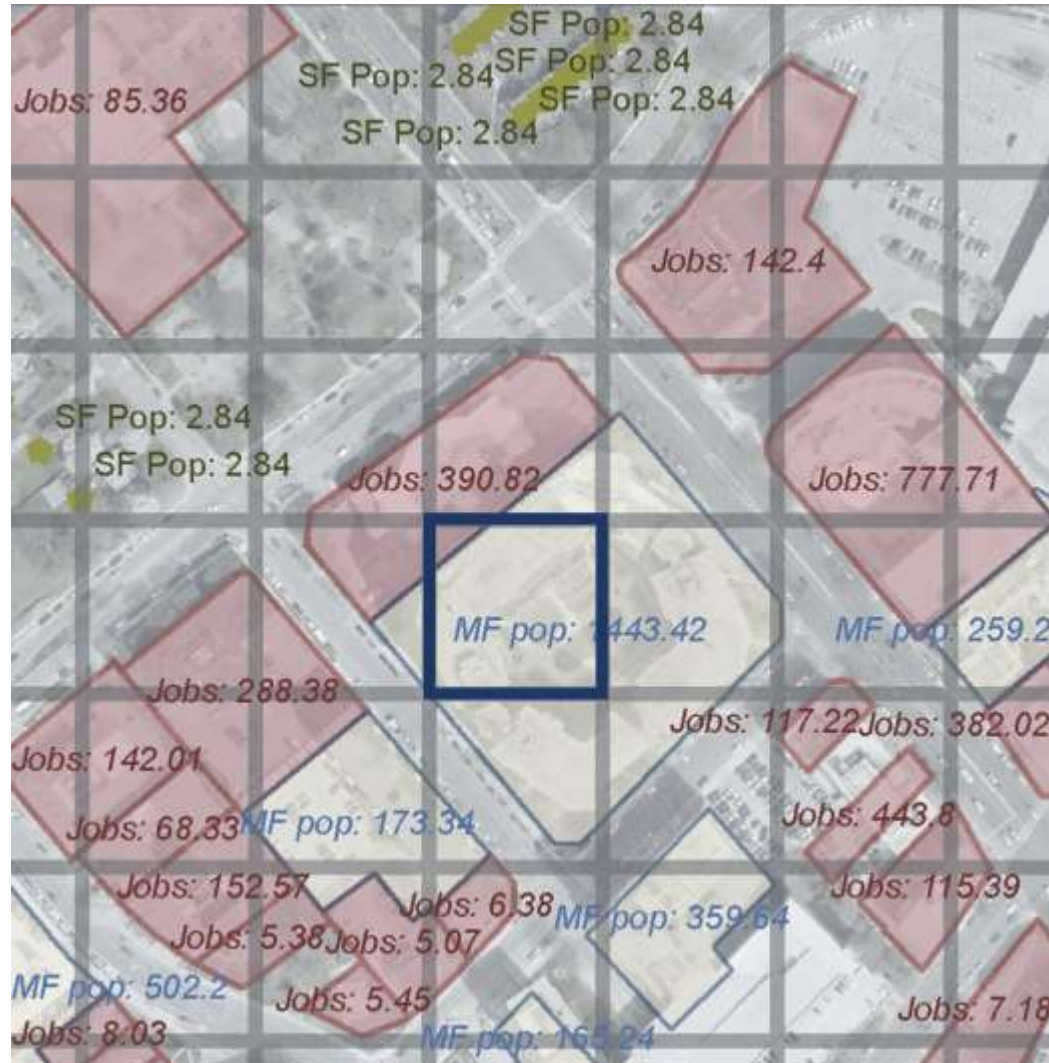


Figure 22 - Relationship between Supply and Demand

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**Determine Supply/Demand Comparison Factor**

After each square is assigned a total supply score and a total demand, the final step is to compare the supply and demand across an area and determine the relative service surplus or shortfall. The critical element of this step in the methodology is that the Supply and Demand values are compared using a ratio called the Supply/Demand Comparison Factor. Since the Supply and Demand scores were calculated from different inputs - a point scale of relative access to park experiences versus estimated numbers of residents plus employees - they are not directly comparable at a 1:1 ratio. The Supply/Demand Comparison Factor will allow the model to set a threshold that will result in identifying areas with low levels of service within a given analysis area, and to compare the relative lack of service across large areas of the County.

Based on the analysis of the inventory of public spaces and the demand numbers in Silver Spring, the Supply/Demand Comparison Factor was established for the Pilot Area as a ratio of 2:1 Supply to Demand. The factor sets a threshold for where the supply is adequate to meet the demand. For this analysis, wherever the demand score exceeds twice the supply score, it is considered an inadequate level of service.

In the implementation phase of this Plan, the first step will be to apply this methodology to the rest of the EPS Study Area. At that

time, adjustments to this factor can be made to prioritize low service areas among different communities within the EPS Study Area. The Supply/Demand Comparison Factor allows for sensitivity analysis to be conducted on either the entire EPS Study Area or selected areas to identify the highest priority low-service areas in various formulations, thus providing data to support the decision-making process during the implementation phase of the *EPS FMP*.

**Outcome: Level of Service Maps**

The results of the supply versus demand level of service analysis for the Pilot Area are shown below in *Figure 23*. The grid squares where Total Demand outstrips Total Supply are highlighted, indicating the location of the lowest level of service for parks and open space within the Silver Spring CBD. This analysis indicates pockets of low service in many areas of the CBD, but all are concentrated near the core, not near the edges. This result is not unexpected due to the presence of so much supply of parks and open space at the edges of the CBD from the traditionally-located buffer parks.

By systematically locating places within an analysis area that have low levels of service for parks and open space, Level of Service Maps such as this will provide critical information to the decision-making process for determining where and what type of parks and open space should be provided.

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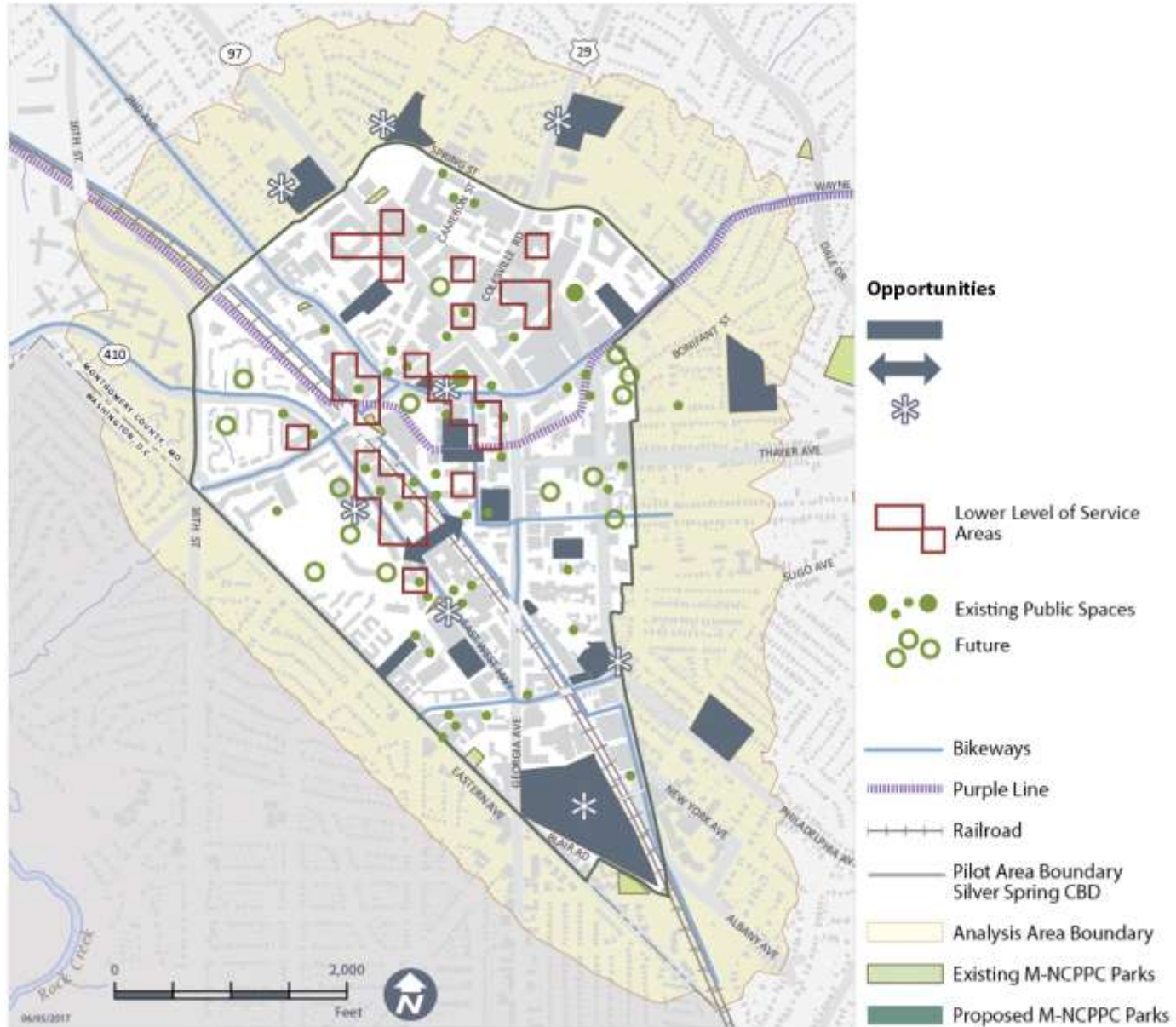


Figure 23 - Silver Spring Pilot Area Level of Service Map



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### Analyze Data: Identify Opportunities

Parallel to the level of service mapping using the quantitative method described above, a more traditional site analysis will take place to determine the best opportunity sites for renovated or new parks and other ways to increase level of service. This qualitative analysis will apply the principles of urban design and site assessment in a tool named the **EPS Planning Framework**. The EPS Planning Framework includes two steps - first applying a Hierarchy of Park Types, then implementing the Urban Parks and Open Space Design Guidelines - to create the desired system of parks to reduce service shortfalls in the EPS Study Area.

The type and pattern of parks and open spaces best suited to urban populations is different from the suburban model of large tracts of land filled with fixed, single-use facilities. PROS Plans in the past projected recreational needs by broad planning areas, rather than by small sub-areas such as the new transit oriented neighborhoods being created in Montgomery County. The *2017 PROS Plan* recognizes that we need to provide, build, and manage park and recreation resources differently in urban areas. There are distinct challenges as well as unique opportunities in creating a system of parks for mixed use and higher density residential areas.

This qualitative analysis of all the land, infrastructure, and properties within an area under analysis will provide the on-the-ground reality check of the level of service results from the quantitative analysis. Further, this analysis will identify candidate opportunities to provide additional park and open space amenities to meet the needs of residents and daytime users of a study area.

### A Hierarchy of Park Types

The *2012 PROS Plan* recommended that for each urban area, a unique open space system should be planned to serve the projected demographics of residents, workers, and visitors through a combination of public and private efforts. The urban design vision developed during the master plan or sector plan process for the area helped guide the amount, pattern, location, siting, and design of open spaces. This way of approaching park recommendations will be applied throughout the EPS Study Area.

The new open space system should support a vibrant and sustainable community by including open spaces that will be comfortable, attractive, easily accessible, safe, and provide a range of experiences, up to and including festival and outdoor event spaces. Those open spaces that rise to the level of serving as a focal point of community life for the planning area are typically recommended to be publicly owned and managed parks, while those open spaces serving a smaller district, neighborhood, or block are often recommended as public use spaces owned or managed by the private sector. The character, amount and size of open spaces within the EPS Study Area will vary from one community to the next based on density and existing community factors.

The following hierarchy and associated park types should be applied to each analysis area in the EPS Study Area. See Chapter 2 for the Parks Classification System tables that define the parameters of each park type.

For each Urban Sector/Master Plan Area (Countywide Parks)

- **Civic Green**
- **Plaza**

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- **Urban Recreational Park**
- **Urban Greenways**

For each Urban Neighborhood (Community-Use Parks)

- **Neighborhood Green**
- **Urban Buffer Park**
- **Urban Recreational Parklet**

For each Urban Block (Community-Use parks):

- **Pocket Green** - “pause” spaces to appreciate public art and some green while people watching during lunch or coffee break

For each Building

- Outdoor recreation space

For each Residence

- Private outdoor space

An example of an applied hierarchy for parks and open spaces from the approved and adopted *White Flint Sector Plan (2010)* is shown below.

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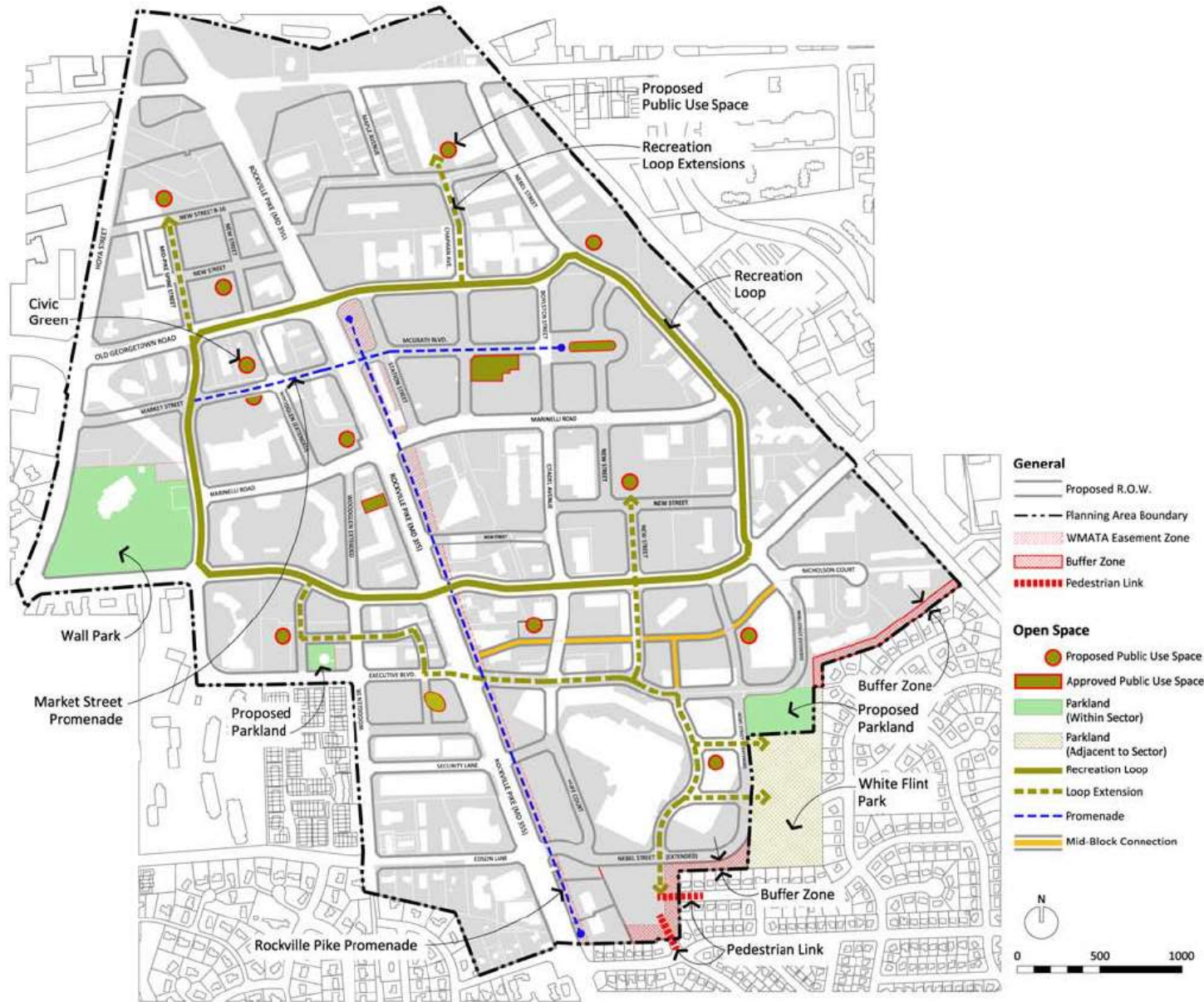


Figure 24 - Parks and Open Space Network Plan - White Flint Sector Plan (April 2010)

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**Urban Parks and Open Space Design Guidelines**

In addition to the hierarchy of park types, the *EPS FMP* introduces a set of urban parks design guidelines to help Montgomery Parks and its partners deliver public spaces that are flexible and accommodate a variety of experiences within its network of outdoor spaces.

These guidelines are intended to provide developers and the public with a sense of the types of open spaces that the Planning Board might look for when reviewing projects in the EPS Countywide Study Area. The Plan considered three approved documents as references for the development of these guidelines: *Silver Spring CBD Green Space Guidelines (2010)*; *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space (2013, Prince George's County)*; and the *Urban Design Guidelines for the Bethesda Downtown Plan (2017, Staff Draft)*.

The Urban Parks and Open Space Design Guidelines give more detailed guidance than the Park Classification System in PROS, including recommendations on the following elements of a park:

- Intent
- Key Features
- Size
- Experiences
- Relationship to Adjacent Uses
- Special Features
- Frequency of Uses
- Community Benefits
- Site Access and Connectivity

See *Appendix 1* for the detailed description of the guidelines for each urban park type.

**Outcome: Park System Findings and Opportunity Sites**

Applying the EPS Planning Framework to the Silver Spring Pilot Area resulted in the following findings that will help with identifying and prioritizing opportunities to raise the level of service in the Silver Spring CBD.

- Missing a central Civic Green space - The Silver Spring CBD has a large amount of paved open spaces, both public and private. It has a civic plaza in the northeast quadrant in the Veteran's Plaza. However, it does not have a central Civic Green to serve the unique functions that such a space provides.
- Missing active recreation - The central and western portions of the CBD are significantly lacking in active recreation opportunities. This lack of service needs to be addressed through implementation efforts.
- Fragmented public spaces network - The Pilot Area includes many small POPS (privately-owned public spaces), but very few larger parks or POPS exist other than on the perimeter of the CBD to provide for events and active recreation.
- Lack of green space throughout Pilot Area - The analysis indicates many small, largely paved contemplative spaces that appear to provide adequate supply of contemplative experiences throughout the CBD. However, the value of these spaces is lower than it could be due to the lack of natural landscape features such as trees, plants, flowers, lawn, that are integral to a high quality contemplative experience. There is a lack of green and nature-oriented spaces except on boundary of CBD. The provision of additional green space within small POPS, larger parks, and new green parks and open spaces in the center of the CBD is key to adding to the health benefits of the open space network in the CBD.

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- Major connectivity hub in center of CBD - The new Silver Spring transit center and the future Purple Line Station adjacent creates a significant hub of bus, auto, and transit connectivity. This core area is served by one large POPS (Discovery Green), two small public parks (one existing and one in design), and a future POPS in front of the Purple Line station, but there may be additional ways to increase service to the many commuters, residents, employees, and visitors to commercial establishments in this central location.
- Barrier to connectivity across CBD - The elevated railroad and Metro tracks create a significant barrier between the southwest area and the rest of the CBD. This barrier slices across the pedestrian connectivity of the CBD with only two crossing points in the middle of the CBD (Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road).

To identify potential opportunities to increase service to the Pilot Area and to address these findings, a planning level analysis was conducted by building upon the assessment done for the 2009 *Silver Spring Green Space Guidelines*. Sites identified in the 2009 plan along with additional sites based on current conditions were combined to create the initial list of opportunities for the Pilot Area. The outcome of this two-stage analysis is a graphic illustration of the results of the quantitative level of service analysis combined with the results of the qualitative opportunity site analysis. *Figure 25* shows the combined outcome of the analysis portion of the EPS methodology (low levels of service) on the same graphic with these potential sites to increase the level of service (opportunities) for the Pilot Area. This information is now ready to be evaluated and implemented in the next steps of the methodology.

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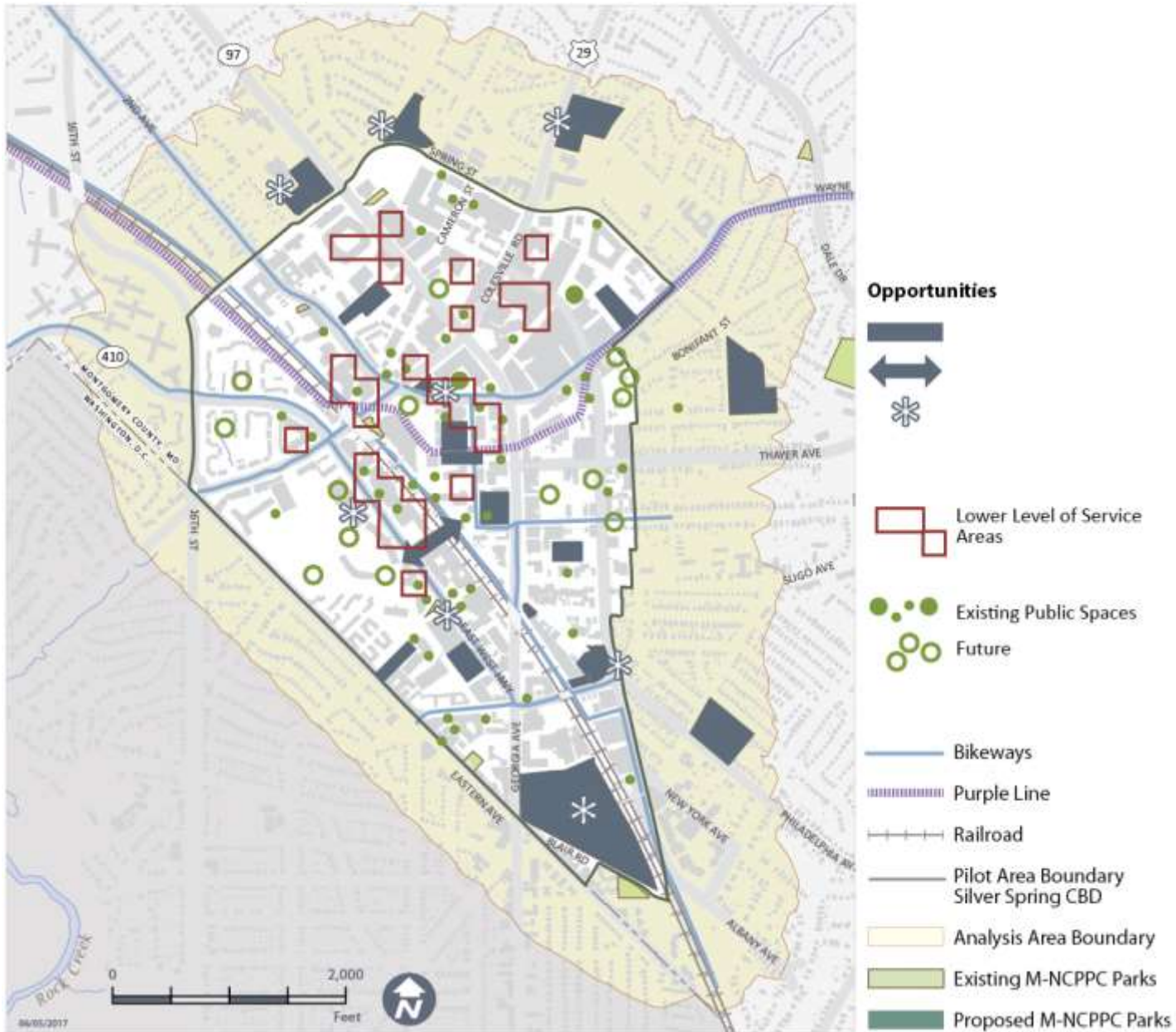


Figure 15 - Low Levels of Park and Open Space Service Map Overlaid with Opportunities, Silver Spring Pilot Area



## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Once the quantitative and qualitative analyses have been completed for an area, locations with low levels of parks and open space service and the potential opportunities to add service have been gathered and mapped. Next, that information is used to select specific opportunities for additional parks and open space and to develop recommendations and implementation strategies for each opportunity site. These results of the EPS Plan will guide future actions to create a world-class park and open space system to serve the County's growing population in its core.

The first step in creating actionable results from the analysis is to organize, evaluate & prioritize the identified opportunities for additional park and open space resources.

### ORGANIZE BY STRATEGIES

There are five implementation strategies (Activate, Connect, Renovate/Repurpose, Develop, and Acquire) that can be used to increase the service provided by parks and open spaces. These strategies build on the theme of balancing renovation, development and acquisition described in the 2017 PROS Plan that is key to providing park services in an efficient manner. Candidate opportunities identified in the previous step will be organized according to these five strategies. *See Figure 27* for how the opportunity sites in the Silver Spring Pilot Area have been organized into the five strategies.

#### Activate

Through activation and programming of existing parks and public spaces, residents can have access to more park experiences in a short time frame after needs are identified. Montgomery Parks has an Activating Parks Program to promote the parks as a place to relax, recreate and foster a sense of community. This program serves to re-invigorate existing urban parks, among others, many of which are heavily used and in need of renovation and development. The current Activating Parks Program is changing the way residents are using parks and challenging antiquated park rules. Activation programs can expand residents' perceptions regarding what is possible to do in parks and open spaces.

Public spaces activation can include "pop up" events that bring temporary facilities to a site, such as a climbing wall or bicycle/skateboard pump track, or games such as corn hole and large-scale versions of scrabble, Jenga, or chess. Other activation events could include programming yoga or exercise classes, special events such as music, food or art festivals, and providing unique experiences such as outdoor movie nights. Activation events even can be scheduled year-round by including cold weather events such as evening fire circles with s'mores and hot chocolate.

Activation can serve as an interim solution for park spaces that are planned for new construction or redevelopment in the future. It plays a major role in engaging the community in a park that is awaiting improvements and helps to keep them involved as the planning and construction phases are underway.



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Activities and pop up features can be scheduled that will promote a new use for a park, serving as a trial run for new facilities with input from actual park users. For parks where renovations and upgrades may be further off into the future, activation events encourage the community to continue using parks and allows them to discover new ways to use parks. These programs also raise awareness of the importance of public spaces through publicity for events, even with people who cannot take part in activation events.

### Connect

A critical tool to increase the service provided by a given park or open space is to improve the community's access to that site. Connectivity can be increased with upgrades to pedestrian and bicycle circulation in parks and road rights-of-way, including sidewalks, bikeways, and safe road crossings, and improvements to circulation on public spaces on private property. By improving walkable connections to the entire public space network, service levels can be increased at lower cost and in shorter time frames than necessary to renovate existing or build new parks.

### Renovate and Repurpose

Existing parks can be updated and refocused to provide the needed amenities missing from a community. Some parks may not be providing the service a community wants either through out-of-date or poor condition facilities or through the wrong types of facilities. Renovation of facilities that have reached the end of their useful lifecycle is a major ongoing effort of the Department of Parks through targeting capital funding for renovation and replacement.

One way to improve services often implemented as part of renovation projects is to repurpose a facility to another use. If Countywide trends and detailed usage data for a specific park indicate that a facility is underutilized, then the platform that facility occupies may be considered for additional or alternate uses. In some instances, minor changes can allow more use of an existing facility; for example, adding pickle ball striping to existing tennis courts allows for participants in two racquet sports to make use of the same facility. In other cases, a facility may be removed or rebuilt to suit a different use entirely; for example, an underutilized diamond field could be rebuilt into a more in-demand dog park or rectangular field. Repurposing opportunities also may be identified on privately held open spaces where analysis indicates an open space with potential to provide greater service.

### Develop

Developing new facilities in existing public parkland and public open space is one key way to add significantly to the supply of park experiences. In the EPS Study Area, making efficient use of existing parkland is especially important due to the high competition for land. Some opportunities for increasing park service rely upon developing new facilities on existing parkland. These sites may include existing developed parks with available space for new facilities and park sites that have yet to be developed to meet their service intent. Opportunities to develop new open space amenities also will be identified on private open space and on non-park public lands.

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## Acquire

If the previous four tools are not adequate to expand the supply of park and open space to meet a community's needs, then acquisition of land must be considered to provide a platform for park experiences. Properties in a preferred location for a future park are identified for future addition to the public park system. Identified sites become either public parkland or privately-held but publicly available open space through multiple avenues. Traditionally, new land is added to the public park system through two primary avenues: dedication through the land development process and direct purchase using public funds. When dedication or POPS do not create the needed park facilities, purchase of parkland becomes necessary.

In the highly-developed portions of the County that make up the EPS Study Area, a third avenue to create public parkland is to consider land already owned by the public sector but used for something other than parks and open space. Some of these parcels may be the most likely candidates for creating additional parkland, especially for larger urban parks over one acre, and include surface parking lots, the roofs of parking garages and other public buildings, and unused areas of road rights-of-way, among others.

## Implementation Tools

Multiple tools can be used to implement the five strategies to create new parks and open spaces. Here are just a few of the most important.

### Partnerships for Operations and Activation

Partnerships between private and public entities can create significant opportunities to increase the level of service for parks

and open space through joint activation and operations efforts. Partnerships can make use of private and public organizations that have staff on the ground near parks and open spaces to provide monitoring and certain maintenance tasks more efficiently. Parks staff could partner with other organizations to do joint activation efforts in both public parks and private open space.

### Alternative Ownership Options: Public, Private and Partnership

This Plan analyzes the complete network of public open spaces to determine service levels, including alternate providers such as the public schools, private open spaces on development sites, and others. When seeking to implement opportunities to increase the level of service of parks and open space, alternate ownership options will continue to be considered. Alternate providers will continue to fill in experiences that cannot be met with additional parkland. Similarly, new and upgraded public parks will fill needs that cannot be met by POPS.

Innovative ownership options can play a key role in expanding parks and open spaces in our high-density communities. Examples such as the pending park in the Chevy Chase Lake community, where a public park is being constructed on top of a privately owned, underground parking garage, provide a model for moving forward with innovative options.

### Zoning, Area Master Plans, and Development Review

A variety of tools related to master plan recommendations and the development review process can be used to support the creation of more parks and open space, and they are key element of implementation efforts. Among the many ways that these regulatory and policy tools can support a better open space system, a few examples include: specific recommendations in land use master plans for parks and open

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space; zoning recommendations that encourage assembly of large blocks of redevelopment to create larger POPS or public parks; and zoning tools that can support additional funding for parks acquisition and development such as park impacts payments.

## SCREEN FOR FEASIBILITY

Once the opportunities are categorized by strategy, they are evaluated to make a first pass at determining the feasibility of implementation. This initial evaluation looks at a variety of factors related to the feasibility of an opportunity coming into reality. This step may also look at potential benefits to the parks and open space system versus the potential costs.

For acquisition opportunities, planning level information about a site is considered, including the current land use, zoning, and potential for future redevelopment or likelihood of availability for acquisition. Opportunities in the other implementation strategies are evaluated by other factors to estimate feasibility, including condition of existing parks and open space, current use patterns, and options for pursuing the proposed strategy.

All candidate opportunities will be given an estimated feasibility ranking of low, medium or high. Opportunities that are not deemed to have a reasonable chance of becoming reality, even during the long-term, may be screened out of the opportunity list during this step in the methodology.

## PRIORITIZE BY SOCIAL EQUITY

After the results of the quantitative and qualitative analysis have been organized into strategies and screened for feasibility, they can be prioritized for implementation. This Plan proposes to use Social Equity as the primary criteria to determine which areas of

the EPS Study Area should be targeted for implementation efforts. The EPS Plan methodology prioritizes the portions of the Study Area with the lowest level of service for walkable park experiences combined with neighborhoods with lower incomes. This prioritization will be used to compare opportunities across large areas of the EPS Study Area (or the entire study area) for relative needs and benefits.

As discussed in the policy overview ([Chapter 2](#)), national, state, and local policies support the use of equity as a key way to measure the success of park and recreation systems. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), the American Planning Association (APA), Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR) and many of other agencies and non-profits have identified social equity as a major element in developing successful communities, and equitable distribution of parks is a critical element of the overall equity issue.

The Pilot Area covers a fairly small portion of the entire EPS Study Area. The Pilot Area results have not been prioritized yet since the methodology has not been applied to other areas to which they can be compared. As additional portions of the Study Area are evaluated with the methodology, the results from the Silver Spring pilot analysis can be compared and prioritized by Social Equity.

## PILOT AREA RESULTS

The recommendations for the Silver Spring Pilot Area are in *Figure 26* after applying the organizing and screening steps from this Chapter. Many of these recommendations build upon recommendations for parks and open spaces from prior planning efforts, including the *Green Space Guidelines for the Silver Spring CBD* (2010) and the *Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan* (2000). Other recommendations are new opportunities to increase park service

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that have been identified by looking closely at the on-the-ground conditions within the low service areas, and by considering the broad range of implementation strategies being used in this Plan.

The recommendations are illustrated in *Figure 27*, showing the range of strategies spread across the Pilot Area, including key recommendations to add service to the core of the Silver Spring CBD.

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Figure 26 - Opportunities to Increase Park and Open Space Level of Service, Silver Spring Pilot Area

MAP KEY	SITE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	PRIMARY EXPERIENCE BENEFITS	PROPOSED PARK NAME AND/OR TYPE (IF APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FEASIBILITY ESTIMATE
	Woodside Urban Park	Activate	Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program	Active, Social Gathering	Urban Recreational		High
	Fairview Local Park	Activate	Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program	Active, Social Gathering	Neighborhood Park	Developer of MRO Headquarters site	High
	Ellsworth Urban Park	Activate	Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program	Active, Social Gathering	Urban Recreational		High
	Gene Lynch Urban Park, Discovery Green, and future Purple Line Station POPS	Activate	Activate public park in partnership with two adjacent POPS	Active Social Gathering	Urban Plaza	Discovery Channel, Purple Line operator	Medium
	Acorn Urban Park and Canada Dry POPS	Activate	Activate in partnership with adjacent POPS	Active, Social Gathering	Pocket Green	Canada Dry property owner	Medium
	Fenton Street Urban Park	Activate	Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program	Active Social Gathering	Fenton Village Neighborhood Green		High
	Jesup Blair Local Park	Activate	Activate existing public park as part of comprehensive, year-round park activation program	Active Social Gathering		Montgomery College	High
	Railroad ROW Crossing between Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue	Connect	Create new connection across major pedestrian/bicycle barrier to increase access to all open spaces on both sides of tracks.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering		Planning Dept., County DOT, MD SHA, WMATA, CSX, adjacent property owners	Low - Medium
	Other connectivity improvements	Connect	Improve connections to access public space network.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering		Planning Dept., County DOT, MD SHA, Property Owners	Medium
	Woodside Urban Park	Renovate/ Repurpose	Major renovation underway. Construction to begin Summer 2017, estimated completion in 2019.	Active, Social Gathering			High
	Ellsworth Urban Park	Renovate/ Repurpose	Renovate reclaimed space from brick house. Urban dog park recently added, successfully increasing park usage.	Active, Social Gathering			High

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MAP KEY	SITE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	PRIMARY EXPERIENCE BENEFITS	PROPOSED PARK NAME AND/OR TYPE (IF APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FEASIBILITY ESTIMATE
	Silver Spring Intermediate Neighborhood Park	Renovate/ Repurpose	Improve service through renovation of current facilities.	Active, Contemplative			High
	Bullis Local Park	Renovate/ Repurpose	Improve service through renovation of current facilities.	Active, Contemplative			High
	Fairview Local Park	Develop	Add new facilities to underutilized space to provide more service. Preserve or expand Urban Wooded Area to reinforce natural, contemplative setting.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering		Developer of MRO site.	High
	Gene Lynch Urban Park	Develop	Develop new park on former road ROW at heart of Silver Spring CBD. Currently in Facility Design phase.	Social Gathering			High
	Philadelphia Avenue Urban Park	Develop	Owned by Parks, but currently used for 14 public parking spaces (PLD Lot #18).  Develop into an Urban Pocket Green.	Contemplative, Social Gathering	Pocket Green	Coordinate with Silver Spring PLD	High
	Jesup Blair Local Park	Develop	Add new facilities to underutilized space to provide more service. Respect historic setting and existing active uses.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering			High
1	Cameron-Second Garage #7, Silver Spring Parking Lot District (PLD)	Acquire	Partner to create park space on roof in current state, or create park during redevelopment of site.	Active, Social Gathering	Countywide Urban Recreational	SS Parking Lot District, future site developer	Medium
2	Whole Foods Parking Lot	Acquire	Partner to create significant park during redevelopment of site. Provide Green space to complement Veterans Plaza.	Active, Social Gathering	Neighborhood Green, or Urban Recreational Parklet	Property owners (Peterson, Foulger-Pratt)	Low
3	Bonifant-Dixon Garage #5, Silver Spring PLD	Acquire	Partner to create park space on roof in current state, or create park during redevelopment of site. Site proposed for future arena to serve County needs.	Active, Social Gathering	Countywide Urban Recreational	SS Parking Lot District, future site developer	Low
4	Ripley District Civic Green	Acquire	Purchase to create core Civic Green to serve south Silver Spring CBD.  Priority Site in SS Green Space Guidelines.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering	Civic Green		Medium
5	Fenton Street Village Garage #4, Silver Spring PLD	Acquire	Create open space during redevelopment of site.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering	POPS or Neighborhood Green	SS Parking Lot District, future site developer	Medium

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MAP KEY	SITE	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	PRIMARY EXPERIENCE BENEFITS	PROPOSED PARK NAME AND/OR TYPE (IF APPLICABLE)	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	FEASIBILITY ESTIMATE
6	Newell Street Self-Storage	Acquire	Purchase to create a linear park connecting to existing POPS at Newell and Kennett Streets and Acorn Urban Park. Priority site in SS Green Space Guidelines.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering	Neighborhood Green		Medium
7	Lots between Kennett Street and East-West Highway	Acquire	Purchase to create park to serve multiple needs. Priority site in SS Green Space Guidelines.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering	Countywide Urban Recreational		Medium
8	Fenton Street Urban Park expansion	Acquire	Purchase additional properties to complete the envisioned Park as identified in prior sector plan.	Active, Contemplative, Social Gathering	Fenton Village Neighborhood Green	NA	Medium

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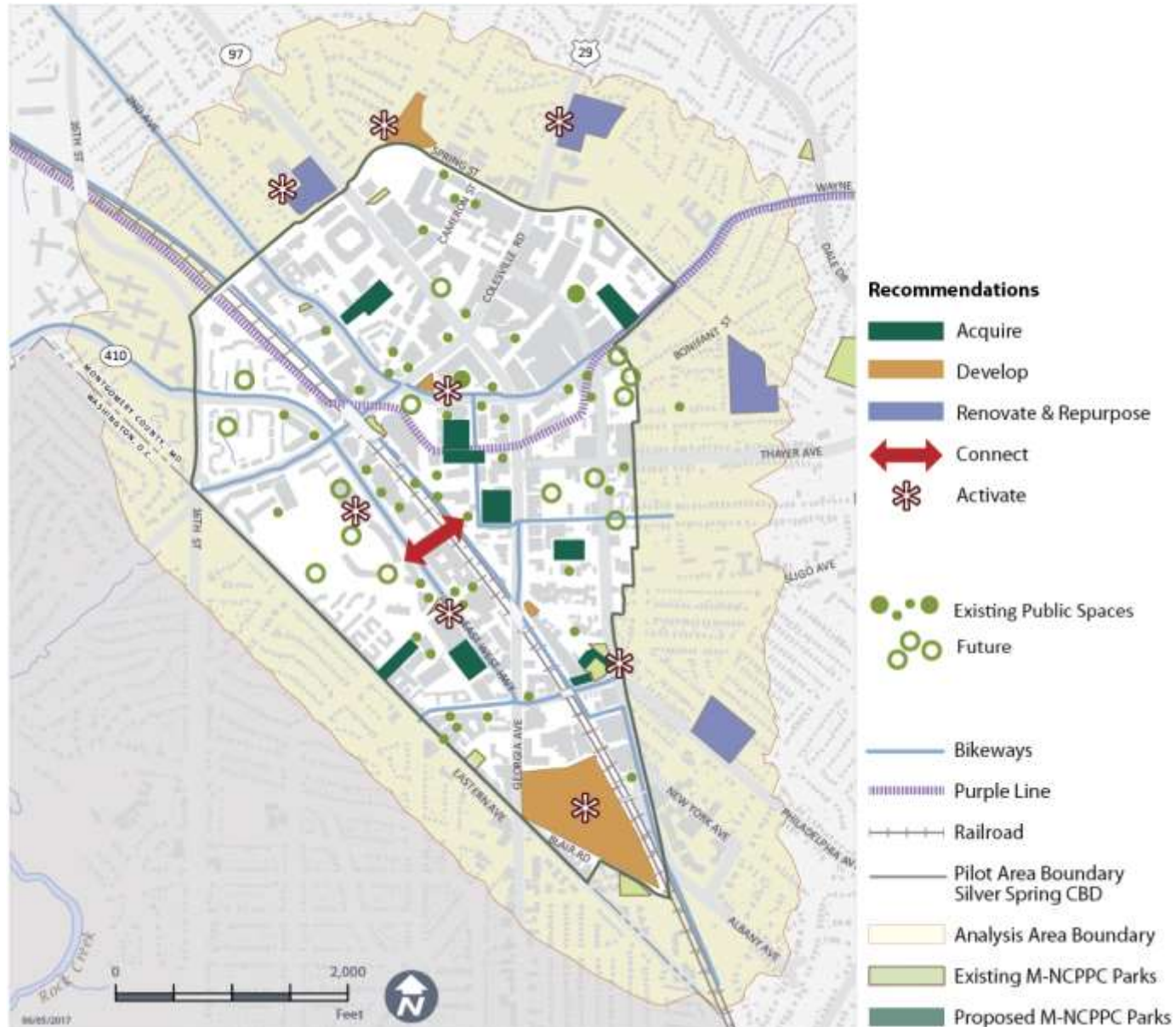


Figure 16-Recommendations Summary, Silver Spring Pilot Area



## CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

As a Functional Master Plan, this Plan defines the parameters of an ongoing program that will strive to meet the park and recreation needs of the County's most dense and mixed use communities. The implementation of this Plan will take place over many years, even decades, to reach to overall goal of walkable access to a variety of park experiences for all residents. As discussed above, the EPS FMP does not replace existing Parks policies and programs that create new parks and open spaces (including the State Program Open Space and the Legacy Open Space acquisition programs), but supplements those programs with a new sophisticated analysis tool for guiding park and open space decisions in the high population areas of the County. The Department of Parks will lead a collaborative effort with the Planning Department, other public agencies, property owners and the public to make these critical parks and open spaces a reality. The most important next steps to implement this Plan are described in this chapter.

### APPLY METHODOLOGY TO EPS STUDY AREA

#### Prioritize Locations to Study Next

After adoption of the *Energized Public Spaces FMP*, the rest of the EPS Study Area will need to be evaluated by the complete methodology that was applied to the Pilot Area. Staff will determine the best method for doing this complete study and may analyze portions of the Study Area one at a time instead of the entire Study Area all at once.

Social Equity will be the primary criteria to prioritize which areas to analyze first. Additional criteria that will help to select the next study areas include:

- High level of identified park and open space needs in the *2017 PROS Plan*.
- Geographic parity between communities within the Study Area.
- Communities that have not recently gone through the land use master plan process.
- Areas with a low level of development activity that are not receiving privately generated open space and park amenities.
- Areas with Master Plans currently under revision, so EPS recommendations can be added directly into land use master plans.

After the first step of the methodology (supply and demand analysis) is completed across the Study Area, communities with the lowest level of service can be prioritized for full analysis and identification of opportunities to increase park service.

Staff will present to the Planning Board the work program for study priorities in coordination with the Planning Department's master plan schedule. Opportunities to create parks via development activity, public input, or new partnership options may also affect the selection of which parts of the Study Area should be analyzed first.

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### Find Low Levels of Service and Potential Solutions

Park staff will apply the EPS methodology over time according to the established priorities for analysis. Once the quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been completed for one or more portions of the EPS Study Area, the recommended strategies will be vetted through Montgomery Parks, the Planning Department, other public agencies and relevant community groups for review and comment, prior to seeking Planning Board approval.

### Planning Board Approval of Recommendations

The *Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan (2001)*, the one functional master plan that directs Parks programs currently, uses a set of criteria to evaluate sites within six categories of open space. The criteria are used to determine if new sites are significant enough to add to the LOS Functional Master Plan as designated LOS resources. Similarly, the EPS FMP uses quantitative and qualitative analysis tools to determine recommended sites to improve parks and open space level of service through five implementation strategies.

This Plan recommends that the Planning Board review and approve the set of recommended opportunities for each portion of the Study Area to go through the complete methodology. Based on the approved method for amending the *Legacy Open Space FMP*, EPS opportunity recommendations that are approved by the Planning Board will be added to the Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan for implementation through the regular land acquisition, park development, land development review, and master plan processes. The County Council will have general review over these changes to the implementation phase of the *EPS FMP* through the CIP review process.

### Prioritize Areas for Implementation Efforts

Once service levels are quantified across the EPS Study Area, Social Equity factors will be used to prioritize locations for focused implementation efforts. To paraphrase the Social Equity Pillar of NRPA, the main philosophical principle behind parks and recreation is to provide adequate open space, parks and recreation opportunities to all communities and citizens regardless of race, income, age or ability. This Plan will use two primary factors to prioritize implementation efforts by Social Equity: communities the lowest level of service for parks and open space; and communities with lower levels of household income.

First, the supply and demand analysis will provide a map of locations within the EPS Study Area with a low level of service for parks and open space. That map will be used to identify the largest and deepest areas of low supply. The second prioritization factor is to identify communities with lower income levels. The EPS methodology will use the same data source used to calculate Park Equity in the 2017 PROS Plan: Median Household Income as a percent of Area Median Income (AMI) based on U.S. Census Data.

These two factors will provide information to the Parks Department that will allow implementation funds and staff resources to be targeted to the communities most in need of additional parks and open space opportunities within a 10-minute walk of their residences and commercial establishments.

## IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This is a living document that establishes a systematic way to assess and deliver outdoor experiences to the public using a variety of implementation strategies and tools. As a Functional

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Master Plan, it describes a program that the Department of Parks will implement for the foreseeable future. This will be an ongoing implementation program to make better use of existing parkland, make creative partnerships to meet the needs, and purchase new parkland. Implementation to fill identified low service areas with solutions to increase park and open space service will take time and effort.

As is clear from the opportunities to increase service identified in the Pilot Area, a variety of actions will be taken over many years to implement this functional plan.

### Activate

Increasing parks service level will occur through augmenting the existing Activating Parks Program for Montgomery Parks sites. Programs and activities will be developed for four seasons to promote park use year-round. The new Activating Parks Program Coordinator has initiated the development of these activities and implementation, and the results have been significant in terms of increasing use of targeted parks during the activation events. The ongoing Activating Parks Program will continue to develop new programs and assess their effectiveness at increasing users in the parks, both during and long after events have concluded.

A key element of activating parks and open spaces is to partner with providers of other public open space to do joint activation events on both public and private open spaces. Joint activation efforts will require appropriate staff and funding to implement with the private sector and non-profit entities.

### Connect

Since most connections between communities and parks are not on parkland, most proposed connections need to be implemented through interagency and public-private collaboration. Montgomery County Department of Transportation and Maryland State Highway Administration are critical partners to achieve improvements to pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in road rights-of-way, including sidewalks, bikeways, and safe road crossings. Private property owners can partner with Parks and other agencies to provide connections from commercial and residential communities to private and public open spaces. And, the Parks Department will evaluate park trails, paths and community connectors to determine if changes to internal pedestrian circulation can expand the service walkshed of existing park facilities.

### Renovate and Repurpose

Park sites identified for renovation and repurposing efforts will be evaluated and prioritized for implementation through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) process every two years. A large number of park assets, including those in the EPS Study Area, have a planned lifecycle where renovation becomes necessary at regular intervals. Limits on available capital funding creates the need to prioritize which parks and assets should be renovated first among a list of many that are end of their lifecycle. The use of the EPS methodology will be a useful tool to identify the most needed parks and facilities in prioritizing renovation projects.

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## Develop

### Parks

Just as for renovation and repurposing, parks identified for development of new facilities will be evaluated and prioritized for implementation through the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) process every two years. Park design is funded through two Facility Planning PDFs, and park construction is funded through either a stand-alone PDF for a large park project or through several level-of-effort PDFs for smaller new projects. The use of the EPS methodology will be a key tool to identify the most needed new parks and new facilities within parks during the CIP prioritization process.

### Non-Parks

The EPS recommendations for facility development can also be implemented on non-Park property. Additional amenities could be provided on POPS (privately-owned public spaces) required as a condition of land development and could be pursued either during the development review process or negotiated during a later phase in the life of a development project. New amenities to provide active, contemplative, or social gathering spaces can also be developed on existing public lands where appropriate, such as road rights-of-way, schools, or other public agency spaces.

## Acquire

To increase the likelihood of receiving parks in dedication, innovative zoning tools are being developed in area master plans currently underway. These zoning tools provide incentives for property assembly, density transfer, and other means of creating

park dedication. The development review process in higher density zones also results in many privately owned public spaces (POPS) with a variety of active, contemplative, and social gathering benefits.

Innovative methods of creating parks can also be implemented during the development process on a case-by-case basis. Public parks can be created through easements and other legal agreements in unique locations, such as on top of underground or above ground parking garages. The first example of this innovative way to meet public and private needs is a new park to be constructed on top of an underground garage in Chevy Chase Lakes.

Opportunities to increase park level of service that are identified as potential acquisition sites will be added to the GIS database for parks as a proposed park location, just as for recommended parks in other master plans. Following this standard master plan implementation procedure will ensure that future planners and development reviewers, property owners, and community members will have access to the recommendations when researching land use.

For the highest priority sites that need to be purchased for public parkland, every effort will be made to acquire the sites using available tools and innovative options. The 2017 PROS Plan describes the funding and tools available to the Department of Parks to implement the direct acquisition of necessary parkland. For the most challenging proposed parks where alternative locations are not available, acquisition tools such as mediation and condemnation may be used to ensure the provision of the parks necessary for our growing communities.

## Implementation Tools

Each of the five strategies to increase the level of service for parks can be approached with innovative ideas and tools. Some of the most important are identified here.

### Partnerships for Operations and Activation

Partnerships can be pursued by the Department of Parks with private and non-profit entities to provide activation programs throughout the EPS Study Area. Partnerships may be appropriate with local non-profits, urban districts, and property owners. Additional partnerships may be appropriate to address some operations, maintenance and security services on parks and open spaces. Both of these types of partnerships will be developed to target increase service to the community in the most efficient manner possible.

### Alternative Ownership Options

As described in Chapter 4, different ownership patterns for parks and open space can provide a path to creating additional open space in land-constrained communities. New ownership tools include leasing underutilized space, adding parks above underground parking, and other alternatives.

### Zoning, Area Master Plans, and Development Review

Recommendations to increase the level of service in the EPS Study Area can be supported in many ways through zoning, master plan recommendations, and the development review process, as summarized in Chapter 4. The Department of Parks will play an active role in recommending innovative new zoning and master plan tools to increase the amount of park and open space provided through development review. Parks will partner with the Planning Department and other agencies to move these new tools forward wherever feasible.

## PROVIDE FUNDING RESOURCES

### Proposed CIP Funding

New funding will be necessary to successfully implement the recommendations of this Plan via the five strategies. The Department of Parks will submit requests for additional funding in the *Capital Improvement Program (CIP)* review process for the FY19-24 CIP. Funds will be requested to support new parkland acquisition and design, engineering, and construction costs. This Plan recommends that additional funds be requested in several of the following five existing CIP projects (Project Description Forms, or PDFs) to provide the mix of funds necessary for the EPS program.

- **Acquisition:** Local - purchase of community use parkland
- **Acquisition:** Non-Local - purchase of countywide use parkland
- **Facility Planning:** Local - design and engineering for renovation, repurposing and new development on community use parks
- **Facility Planning:** Non-Local - design and engineering for renovation, repurposing and new development on countywide use parks
- **Urban Park Elements** - design and construction of quick-to-implement new facilities in urban areas

Acquisition funds are the most critical and largest amount necessary to implement the EPS FMP. To acquire necessary parkland in many of the most expensive areas of the County, additional acquisition funding dedicated to this purpose will be necessary to implement the goals of this new FMP. Since the

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EPS FMP is not replacing existing park acquisition programs but supplementing them, it is critical to fund this program while also maintaining existing acquisition CIP funds to meet the goals of the other park acquisition programs (Program Open Space and Legacy Open Space).

Staff will use a variety of means to make expensive acquisitions more feasible, such as negotiating installment contracts to stretch current funding, seeking additional funding sources (see below), and requesting supplemental appropriations when necessary for significant acquisitions in the EPS Study Area.

Final design and construction funds for major park renovations and new construction of these important parks will be requested through the CIP as the design and initial engineering phases are completed, as is done for other major park projects.

### Alternate Funding Strategies

Innovative and alternative funding strategies will be pursued throughout the implementation phase of the Functional Master Plan. New strategies may be developed via the zoning code during new master and sector plan development. For example, an overlay zone is proposed for the Bethesda Downtown Plan that uses an innovative approach to funding parks through the process for allocating bonus density to development projects. Special taxing districts, fee-in-lieu payments from development projects, and increasing the required percentage of open space on development in certain zones may also be appropriate in certain areas of the EPS Study Area. The Department of Parks will collaborate with the Planning Department and other government agencies to develop any of these or other options that may work to support developing communities with the parks they need.

## ALIGN OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND POLICING

To successfully implement the vision of this Plan, Parks operations, maintenance, and policing need to be aligned with the new types and locations of parks being added to the Park system. Many of the recommendations from this plan will result in additional private open space that will be taken care of by private or non-profit entities. However, some of the most important public spaces will be the signature public parks in the County's most dense mixed use neighborhoods, and they will require a higher level of operations, maintenance, and policing effort than the more suburban model parks in the rest of the County. The following three recommendations should be pursued in a timely manner to create the parks and open space network of the future in Montgomery County.

### Develop Urban Park Standards for Operations, Maintenance and Policing

Usage levels will be high for many parks within the EPS Study Area, thus these parks need to be provided with consistent, high quality maintenance standards and service delivery. Ensuring these standards and delivery is one of the primary goals of park management, as they are essential for protecting the long-term capital investment in these highly used spaces.

This Plan recommends that standards be developed for park operations, equipment and facility maintenance, and policing and security needs for the seven types of urban parks classified in the *2017 PROS Plan*. As the inventory of urban parks within the County grows, the increased usage, expanded hours, and new facility types in these parks results in a very different kind of

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park from the point of view of operations and safety. The current standards for operations, maintenance and policing are based largely on a suburban park model and need to be updated for the new paradigm of parks being provided to the County.

A key element to consider in developing these park standards is to address how the standards of care directly affect the operating and capital budgets and influence citizen perceptions of safety and use patterns. For example, a maintenance plan in which all tasks are carried out at or above recommended best maintenance practices may create a pristine landscape but may ultimately prove to be unsustainable due to cost. Alternatively, a maintenance plan in which tasks and repairs are carried out at minimal levels may reduce annual budgets, but will likely result in high capital costs required for replacement or repairs that could have been prevented with regular care. Low standards of care can also create an unsafe environment for users, thus reducing usage rates and causing increased monitoring and policing needs.

These new park standards should include a method for park management to regularly evaluate and track trends in the condition of these parks. Report cards could be created for each urban park type and for specific amenities that can be used during routine inspections. The standards should also address the issues of seasons of use to assist with creating the right structure for park maintenance work programs. Hours of usage in the most urban, mixed use areas also need to be address in the new standards, since that will have a significant impact on park operations and policing requirements.

### Create Necessary Support Infrastructure

Two elements are necessary to support existing and new urban parks: the right facilities and the right equipment to efficiently work in the most dense communities in the County.

#### **Plan and Develop Satellite Facilities for Staging, Maintenance and Police Operations**

This Plan recommends creating a Program of Requirements (POR) for satellite maintenance facilities and then identifying potential locations based on recommendations for new and renovated urban parks through implementation of this Plan. Significant efficiencies can be had by eliminating the need for large trucks and equipment to drive long distances from regional maintenance yards through the most congested areas of the County. Recommendations for the design specifications and potential locations small, efficient satellite maintenance yards could include storage areas at individual park locations or to serve small clusters of parks.

#### **New equipment for smaller urban parks**

The second element of the necessary support infrastructure is to have the correct equipment for transportation and park maintenance. Different types of transportation should be considered to reach hard to access spaces due to lack of parking or other site limitations. Options can include smaller trucks, trailers, and various forms of utility carts, as are used in many urban park settings such as the National Mall in Washington, D.C. In addition to new transportation options, appropriately-sized equipment should be provided in close proximity to the parks they service, including smaller mowers, trash-hauling vehicles, and other equipment.

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### Add Staff and Operating Resources

Every one of the five implementation strategies to increase parks level of service will increase demands on the operating budget to keep parks clean, safe, and available to the community.

Operating Budget Impact (OBI) will increase not just for new parks and facilities, but for activation, renovation, repurposing and developing new amenities.

There are four main reasons OBI will increase as these efforts are implemented. First, as facilities are updated or changed, new maintenance standards apply that occasionally reduce maintenance needs but more often increase the maintenance needs of the particular facility. Second, new and improved facilities attract more users, thus creating significantly more demand for regular maintenance. For example, when a new dog park is built, then overall park usage increases measurably and thus the maintenance need increases from twice per week to daily or even twice daily visits. Third, urban parks often have extended service hours, perhaps even 24-hours, compared to the traditional suburban model parks that operate from sunrise to sunset. These extended hours where park activity continues into the evenings on a daily basis have a much larger need for policing for safety and maintenance support. And finally, park activation programs require dedicated staff to implement.

Intensity of use and programming are key factors that impact the maintenance budget. In general, the greater number of visitors a park receives, the greater the maintenance load. Directly related is the fact that the level of maintenance impacts park use. Simply stated, a well-maintained park attracts visitors whereas a poorly maintained site discourages positive park visitation and often invites misuse and vandalism. Given this relationship between

maintenance and use, it is important to ensure that the level of maintenance is adequate for the level of use and programming that is envisioned. Operations, maintenance and policing needs will adjust over time as the *EPS FMP* is implemented, and corresponding funds to pay for increased OBI will be requested through the annual operating budget process.

### ASSESS PROGRESS

The Department of Parks will assess progress toward the implementation steps in this Chapter and report to the Planning Board on a biennial basis. In addition to these comprehensive progress reports every two years, progress updates may be prepared for the Planning Board's semi-annual report to the County Council on work of the Planning and Parks Departments.

Over time as more of the EPS Study Area is evaluated using the methodology in this Plan, the cumulative body of information will be more complete and valuable. For instance, the supply and demand analysis can be used to evaluate improvements or reductions in the level of park and open space service to a community over time. The methodology will also allow for the prediction of future service levels after development and park and open space projects in the pipeline are completed.

One key element of assessing progress will be to continually update the GIS data necessary to track level of service. The changing status of public parks, facilities, and POPS as strategies are implemented need to be tracked, along with changes in demographics, housing and commercial uses, to ensure that the model will continue to provide valid and useful data to decision-makers regarding providing the right parks and open spaces in the right places.



## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1 - DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR URBAN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

#### Design Guideline Elements

For each proposed new or renovated public open space, the following design elements should be considered to maximize the potential benefits of the site:

- Intent, Key Features, and Size
- Experiences and Mix of Uses
- Relationship to Adjacent Uses
- Site Access and Connectivity
- Special Features
- Frequency of Use

#### Intent, Key Features and Size

These basic elements of a proposed park are described in the Park Type Summary Chart from the *2017 PROS Plan*.

#### Experiences and Mix of Uses

Public Spaces are about people gathering and sharing a common place. As such, each space needs associated experiences that will attract people to it. This Plan classifies the outdoor experiences into three types that are not necessarily exclusive of each other:

- **Active:** exercise, play sports/games, run or walk]

- Examples of facilities: Field: open space/grass, trails, hard courts and Surfaces, Nature-inspired interactive elements (climbing), playgrounds, etc.
- **Contemplative:** enjoy nature, relax, meditate, reflect, escape chaos
- Examples of facilities: natural areas, historic sites, benches, trees for shade, community open space, gardens, small green spaces, trails, etc.
- **Social Gathering:** go to community festivals, farmer’s market, lunch places, concerts, outdoors movies, parades, historic sites
- Examples of facilities: plazas with seating, stage area/small courts, amphitheater, cluster of picnic tables, large community open spaces, dog parks, etc.

#### Relationship to Adjacent Uses

The land-use surrounding each urban park is a critical element to its character and function. The scale of the ground floor and its open space needs to provide a welcoming pedestrian -scale relationship. Location of entrances can influence in the sense of personal safety while walking in the public space: “eyes on the place”.

- Building frontages and entrances facing the park
- Street Frontage
- Compatibility

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- Public Spaces as Central Community Focal Point
- Openness/Welcoming Spaces
- Interesting Viewsheds
- Solid & Void Relationships
- Clearly Delineate between the public space & adjacent private realm

### Site Access and Connectivity

Successful public spaces are connected and easily accessible in an integrated network of streets and sidewalks, mid-block connections, and proximity to transportation.

- Clear Entries/Gateways
- Safe Pedestrian Access/Crossings
- Trail System Connections
- Street Grid Continuity
- Public Transit & Bike System Connections
- Servicing, Access, and Shared Parking
- Directly connected to a Street Network
- Grade Transitions
- Access to Sunlight

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### Special Features

In addition to the location and hierarchy of open spaces within the public spaces system, there are special features that provide

a unique setting and identity for each public space helping the community to engage and learn in inviting, safe and beautiful open spaces.

- Night Lighting
- Signature Main Open Space
- Signature Element: Interactive Water, Nature or Art Feature as Focal Point
- Defined Major Pedestrian Path
- Signage/Wayfinding
- Large species shade trees
- Park Furniture: fixed elements & degree of flexibility

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### Frequency of Uses

Each park type has a couple of major experiences associated to its frequency of use. Neighborhood Greens will more likely be used daily or weekly opposed to Civic Greens that need a large central green space to accommodate special events that might happen a couple of times during the year but none of these functions are less important than the other. The system is designed to accommodate different needs of the communities served in each area.

- Special Events
- Seasonal Events
- Monthly Functions
- Weekly Functions
- Daily Functions

## Design Guidelines for Urban Park Types

The design elements are described generally for each type of urban park as defined in the 2017 PROS Plan and located in *Chapter 3 - Analyze Data: Identify Opportunities*.

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### Civic Green

#### Intent

Formally planned, flexible, programmable for:

- informal gathering
- large gatherings, markets, concerts, festivals

#### Key Features

- Large central lawn
- Surrounded by activating uses
- Optional: gardens, water features and shade structures.

**Size - ½ acre minimum, 1 ½ acre ideal**

**Experiences - ensure a mix of uses with a focus on Social Gathering**

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Located at the center of activating uses
- Building entrances should front on civic green

**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure a connection to transit systems
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Capitalize on unique views
- Incorporate identity creating features or artwork



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- Incorporate streetscape enhancements along open space edge

### Frequency of Use

- Special Events
- Seasonal Events
- Monthly Functions
- Weekly Functions
- Daily Functions

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### Plazas

#### Intent

Formally planned, predominantly hardscaped spaces for:

- areas of high pedestrian traffic
- open air markets, concerts, festivals, and special events

#### Key Features

- Central hardscaped gathering area
- public art/water feature as focal point
- Inclusion of the temporary closure of local streets to enlarge the size of the plaza for special events should be an important element in the design of its boundaries and edges
- Optional: special lighting, shaded areas, and benches and tables

#### Size - ½ acre minimum, 1.0 acre ideal

- Experiences - ensure a mix of uses
- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

#### Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)

- Located at the center of activating uses
- Building entrances should front on plaza
- Located in high pedestrian traffic areas



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**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure a connection to transit systems
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features****Frequency of Use****Neighborhood Greens****Intent**

Formally planned, flexible open spaces for:

- informal gathering
- lunchtime relaxation
- small special event gatherings
- walk-to recreation

**Key Features**

- Lawn area
- shaded seating
- play area
- Optional: a skate spot, a community garden, or similar neighborhood serving amenities

**Size - ¼ acre minimum, ½ acre ideal**

**Experiences - ensure a mix of uses**

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Located in the center of residential developments
- Within walking distance of residents



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**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Picnic areas
- Play features and small game spaces
- Open lawns
- Neighborhood serving amenities, neighborhood identity features

**Frequency of Use**

- Seasonal Events
- Monthly Functions
- Daily Functions

**Urban Greenway****Intent**

Linear parks that provide:

- trails
- wide landscaped walkways and bikeways
- other recreational and natural amenities
- A more intimate, slower experience for recreating than a bikeway
- small areas for gathering

**Key Features**

- Trails, walkways and bikeways
- vegetative ground cover and trees
- links other green spaces and trails
- Gathering pods
- Artwork and interpretive displays
- natural systems



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**Size** - the width should accommodate a ten-foot trail plus the buffer vegetation

**Experiences** - ensure a mix of uses with a focus on active and contemplative

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Location is defined by filling the gaps of access to the open space system
- May occur along road right of ways or paper streets
- Site Accessibility/Connectivity
- Ensure physical and visual connections to the bike and trail network
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Enhanced natural systems such as streams
- Unique lighting
- Artful wayfinding elements

**Frequency of Use**

- Special Events
- Daily Functions

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### Countywide Urban Recreational Park

**Intent**

Oriented to the recreational needs of a densely populated neighborhood and business district, They provide space for:

- active recreation
- recreational programming
- community gatherings

**Key features**

- athletic fields, playing courts, picnicking, dog parks, sitting areas and flexible grassy open space
- Programming can include farmer's markets, outdoor exercise classes, and community yard sales.



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**Size - minimum 2.5 acres****Experiences - ensure a mix of uses with a focus on active uses**

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/Community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Located within walking distance of high density residential and commercial developments
- Compatible with other community serving uses such as recreation centers, libraries, etc.
- Located near transit system

**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure a connection to transit systems
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Unique recreational amenity
- Artwork as recreational feature
- Unique lighting

**Frequency of Use**

- Special Events
- Weekly Functions
- Daily Functions

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**Urban Buffer Parks****Intent**

Green transitions at the edges of urban, high density development for:

- Contemplation
- Relaxation
- Picnicking
- Quiet play





## WORKING DRAFT - ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

**Key Features**

- sitting/picnic areas
- play areas
- courts
- shelters

**Size - ¼ acre minimum****Experiences - ensure a mix of uses with a focus on contemplative**

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Located at the edges of low density residential to higher density developments

**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Protected forest areas
- Unique natural features
- Protected habitat

**Frequency of Use**

- Daily Functions

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**Pocket Greens****Intent**

Nearby spaces to residents and workers for:

- contemplative recreation
- places of relaxation
- outdoor eating



## WORKING DRAFT - ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

- Small games and play

**Key Features**

- Sunlit small gathering areas
- Small scale green areas
- shaded seating
- play areas.
- Optional: movable furniture, focal point public art

**Size - 1/10 - ¼ acre average size****Experiences - ensure a mix of uses**

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

**Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)**

- Located in spaces between buildings
- Located on at least one street

**Site Accessibility/Connectivity**

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

**Special Features**

- Picnic areas
- Play features
- Open lawns
- Small games spaces
- Neighborhood serving amenities
- Neighborhood identity features

**Frequency of Use**

- Daily Functions

## Urban Recreational Parklet

### Intent

Nearby small spaces to residents and workers for

- more active recreation than an urban buffer park or a neighborhood green
- Park-Schools facilities

### Key Features

- sport courts
- skate spots
- playgrounds
- similar neighborhood recreation facilities.

### Size - 1/10 acre minimum

### Experiences - ensure a mix of uses with a focus on active recreation

- Active
- Contemplative
- Social gathering/community building

### Relationship to Adjacent Uses (context)

- Located near residential developments with scarce recreational resources
- Located in small underutilized open spaces

### Site Accessibility/Connectivity

- Ensure physical and visual connections from street
- Ensure safe pedestrian crossings

### Special Features

- Active recreation desired by the community

### Frequency of Use

- Daily Functions





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## WORKING DRAFT - ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

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