



MCPB Item # _____


Date: 06/28/2018

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 12, 2018

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks 
 Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director for Administration 
 Jai Cole, Acting Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) 

FROM: Hyojung Garland, Master Planner/Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning Section, PPSD 
 Cristina Sasaki, Lead Park Planner, PPSD 
 Rachel Newhouse, Park Planner, PPSD 
 Patricia McManus, Supervisor, Park Development Division (PDD)
 Paul Mortensen, Planning Department, Director's Office

SUBJECT: Planning Board Briefing on the *Urban Parks and Public Spaces Design Guidelines*

Description

In 2018, in conjunction with the approval and adoption of the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP)*, staff began conducting monthly meetings with an Urban Parks Advisory Group and Parks and Planning Departments staff to discuss a companion document to the EPS Plan - the *Urban Parks and Public Spaces (UPPS) Design Guidelines*.

This briefing will provide an overview of the scope of the project. Staff will also seek feedback and direction from the Planning Board to develop the working draft of the *UPPS Design Guidelines* for public comment prior to Planning Board worksession(s) later this year.

Discussion

Why are we developing design guidelines for Urban Parks?

As Montgomery County and our region continues to grow, the biggest challenge is to provide adequate parks and public spaces where land is already scarce and expensive: our higher density centers. With increase in competition for land, our urban parks and public spaces should accommodate multiple and complementary functions within a network of smaller central spaces. By integrating efforts and preventive measures from different stakeholders, we can effectively utilize scarce and expensive resources and reduce the strain on existing failing infrastructure. This document will be used to give overall guidance to stakeholders including planners, designers, decision-makers, developers, land owners, and the public on

how to design the network of privately and publicly owned, publicly accessible parks and public spaces within the previously adopted EPS Plan Study Area.

Vision: “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”- from the EPS Plan’s Vision.

Purpose: This document provides design guidance for the urban park typology described in the *2017 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan*, and focuses on the design quality of existing and proposed parks and public spaces in the *EPS Plan Study Area*. The *UPPS Design Guidelines* will provide overall direction for the urban park typologies design including the function, type of experiences, key features, size, context, and site access and connectivity. The expected outcome is to create inviting, easily accessible, attractive, comfortable, and safe urban parks and public spaces.

Goals:

- Develop flexible urban parks and public spaces guidelines;
- Create a common language for urban parks to align expectations of a diverse group of stakeholders;
- Integrate lessons learned from case studies.

Schedule

Following this briefing, the schedule for product release, public comment and Planning Board work sessions and approval is as follows:

- **November-December 2017:** Formation of Urban Parks Advisory Group, and Urban Parks Core Team (Parks and Planning staff)
- **January-November 2018:** Project scope and content development, Urban Parks Advisory Group, Core Team Monthly Meetings and Designers Work Sessions
- **June 28, 2018:** Planning Board Briefing
- **Fall 2018:** Working Draft Release and Public Comment Period (3-4 weeks)
- **Fall 2018:** Planning Board Work Session & Public Comments Input
- **Winter 2018:** Planning Board Work Session & Approval

List of Attachments

1. Energized Public Spaces Study Area and Pilot Area in relation to Planning Areas. *EPS FMP* - Figure 2
2. New Park Classification System. *2017 PROS Plan* - Figure 7

PC:

Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD)

Jeffrey A. Bourne, Chief, Facilities & Capital Programs Division, MCRD

John Nissel, Deputy Director of Park Operations, Department of Parks

Jim Poore, Chief, Facilities Management Division, Department of Parks

Doug Ludwig, Chief, Northern Parks, Department of Parks

Bill Tyler, Chief, Southern Parks, Department of Parks

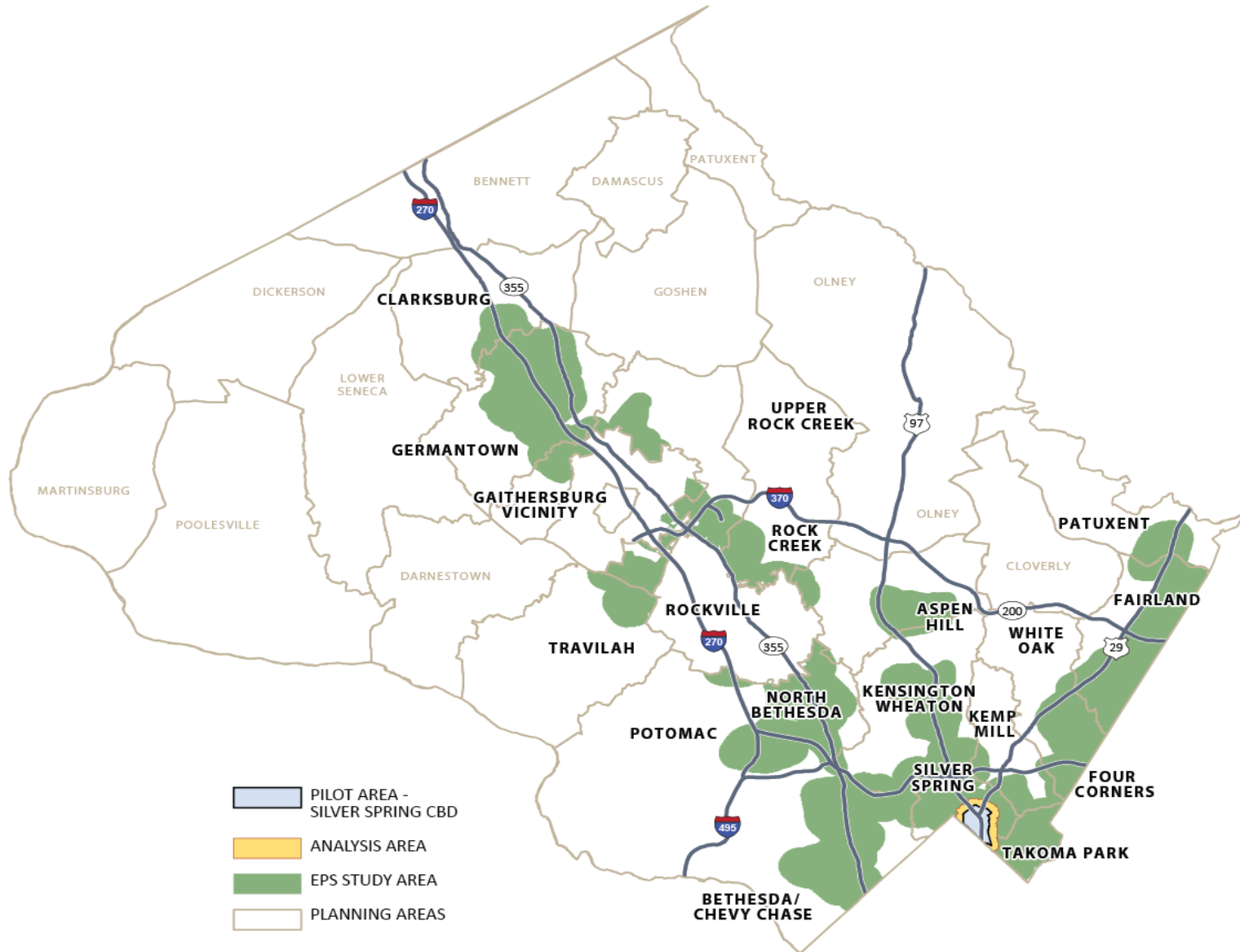
David Vismara, Chief, Horticulture Forestry and Environmental Education Division, Department of Parks

Christy Turnbull, Chief, Enterprise Division, Department of Parks

Darryl McSwain, Chief, Park Police Division, Department of Parks
Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division, Department of Parks
Michael Ma, Chief, Park Development Division, Department of Parks
Kristi Williams, Chief, Public Affairs & Community Partnerships Division, Department of Parks
Gwen Wright, Director, Planning Department
Pamela Zorich, Planner Coordinator, Research and Special Projects, Planning Department

Attachment 1

Energized Public Space Functional Master Plan - Figure 2, Energized Public Spaces Study Area and Pilot Area in relation to the Planning Areas



Attachment 2

2017 PROS Plan - Figure 7, New Park Classification System

| COUNTYWIDE PARKS - Parks in this category serve all residents of Montgomery County | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| - Recreational Oriented Parks | | | |
| PARK TYPE | PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION | TYPICAL FACILITIES* | APPROX. SIZE |
| 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. | 200 ACRES OR MORE |
| 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. | 50 ACRES OR MORE |
| 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. | VARIES |
| - Countywide Urban Parks | | | |
| PARK TYPE | PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION | TYPICAL FACILITIES* | APPROX. SIZE |
| 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. | 1/2 ACRE MINIMUM 1.5 ACRE IDEAL |
| 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. | 1/2 ACRE MINIMUM 1 ACRE IDEAL |
| 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. | VARIES |
| 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. | VARIES |

- Conservation Oriented Parks

| PARK TYPE | PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION | TYPICAL FACILITIES* | APPROX. SIZE |
|-------------------------|---|---|---------------|
| STREAM VALLEY PARKS | Interconnected linear parks along major stream valleys providing conservation and recreation areas. | Hiker-biker trails, fishing, picnicking, playground areas. | VARIES |
| 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. | VARIES |

COMMUNITY USE PARKS - Parks in this category serve residents of surrounding communities

- Community Use Urban Parks

| PARK TYPE | PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION | TYPICAL FACILITIES* | APPROX. SIZE |
|-----------------------------|---|---|--------------------------|
| 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. | 1/4 ACRE MINIMUM |
| POCKET GREENS | 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. | 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. | 1/10-1/4 ACRE |
| URBAN RECREATIONAL PARKLETS | 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. | 1/10 ACRE MINIMUM |

- Community Use Parks

| PARK TYPE | PARK TYPE DESCRIPTION | TYPICAL FACILITIES* | APPROX. SIZE |
|---------------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| 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). | 2.5 ACRE |
| 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. | 15 ACRE |
| 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. | VARIES |

**This list is not all inclusive, but includes facilities typical of each park type.*