



MCPB Item # _____

June 15, 2017

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 08, 2017

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks

Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director of Administration

John Nissel, Deputy Director of Operations

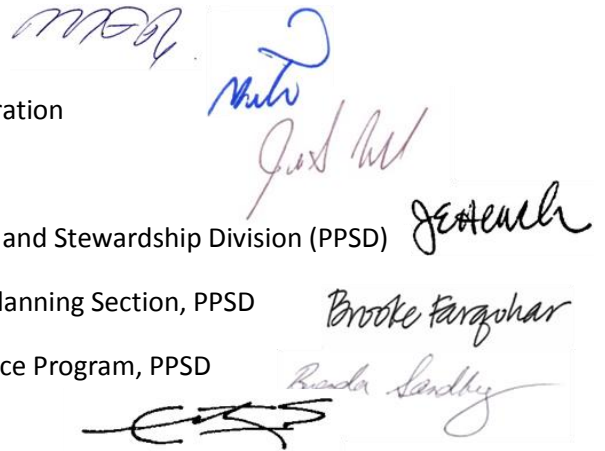
FROM: Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD)

Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning Section, PPSD

Brenda Sandberg, Manager, Legacy Open Space Program, PPSD

Cristina Sasaki, Planner Coordinator, PPSD

Christopher McGovern, Supervisor, ITI Division



SUBJECT: *Energized Public Spaces: Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP) for Parks in Mixed Use & Higher Density Residential Areas Working Draft*

Requested Action

Staff requests the Board’s approval of the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP) Working Draft* as the Public Hearing Draft and the setting of the Public Hearing date for July 27, 2017.

Background

On December 8, 2016, the Planning Board approved the plan’s Scope of Work. On April 20, 2017, the Planning Board approved the plan’s Methodology.

Why? Need for this Plan

With the scarcity of developable land and the increase in density, park planning in these areas has become more critical to creating livable and healthy communities. Parks and open spaces have become the “outdoor living rooms” and de facto “backyards” for many of these new communities where they play an increasingly important role in improving public health and promoting social interaction and equity. The *EPS FMP* will be an implementation guide to meeting this challenge.

The Vision of the *EPS FMP* is to create a parks and public space system for stronger, healthier, and happier communities in our most populated areas. These spaces will encourage people of all ages and incomes to meet, play, relax, exercise, enjoy nature, interact socially and more. The major emphasis will

be on outdoor spaces. The *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation* (M-NCPPC 2010) confirmed that the highest needs are and will continue to be in areas of highest population density.

This Plan's overarching Goals are:

- 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.

Where? EPS FMP 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 FMP 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 (see Executive Summary).

The *2017 PROS Plan* Statistically Valid Survey (January 2017) found some interesting differences between residents of the EPS FMP Study Area and residents of other areas of the County that support the selection of this area for the *EPS FMP*. Study Area residents reported being more likely to live in high-rise multi-family units, more likely to have a low household income, and more reliant upon public transit to access parks and recreation when compared to residents outside the Study Area. When comparing the amount of parkland, residents of the Study Area have access to less M-NCPPC parkland in proportion to population (13 acres/1,000 residents inside the Study Area vs. 57 acres/1,000 residents outside) and less total parkland (17 acres/1,000 residents inside vs. 97 acres/1,000 residents outside).

Using selection criteria such as demographic diversity, economic activity, transit connectivity, and the status of master plans and reports, the Silver Spring Central Business District was selected to conduct a Pilot Area test of the innovative EPS FMP methodology.

How? Methodology and New Tools

The methodology will identify areas within the 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 FMP Study Area
- Implement Recommendations
- Provide Funding Sources
- Align Operations, Maintenance, and Policing
- Assess Progress

What? Pilot Area Recommendations

The EPS FMP 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 with measured low levels of service. These recommendations are the basis for proceeding with implementation of the Functional Master Plan over the coming years – see Figure 1 and Chapter 4 of the *EPS FMP Working Draft*.

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, the Plan will seek opportunities for collaborating with partners and alternate providers to improve service levels for parks and open space.

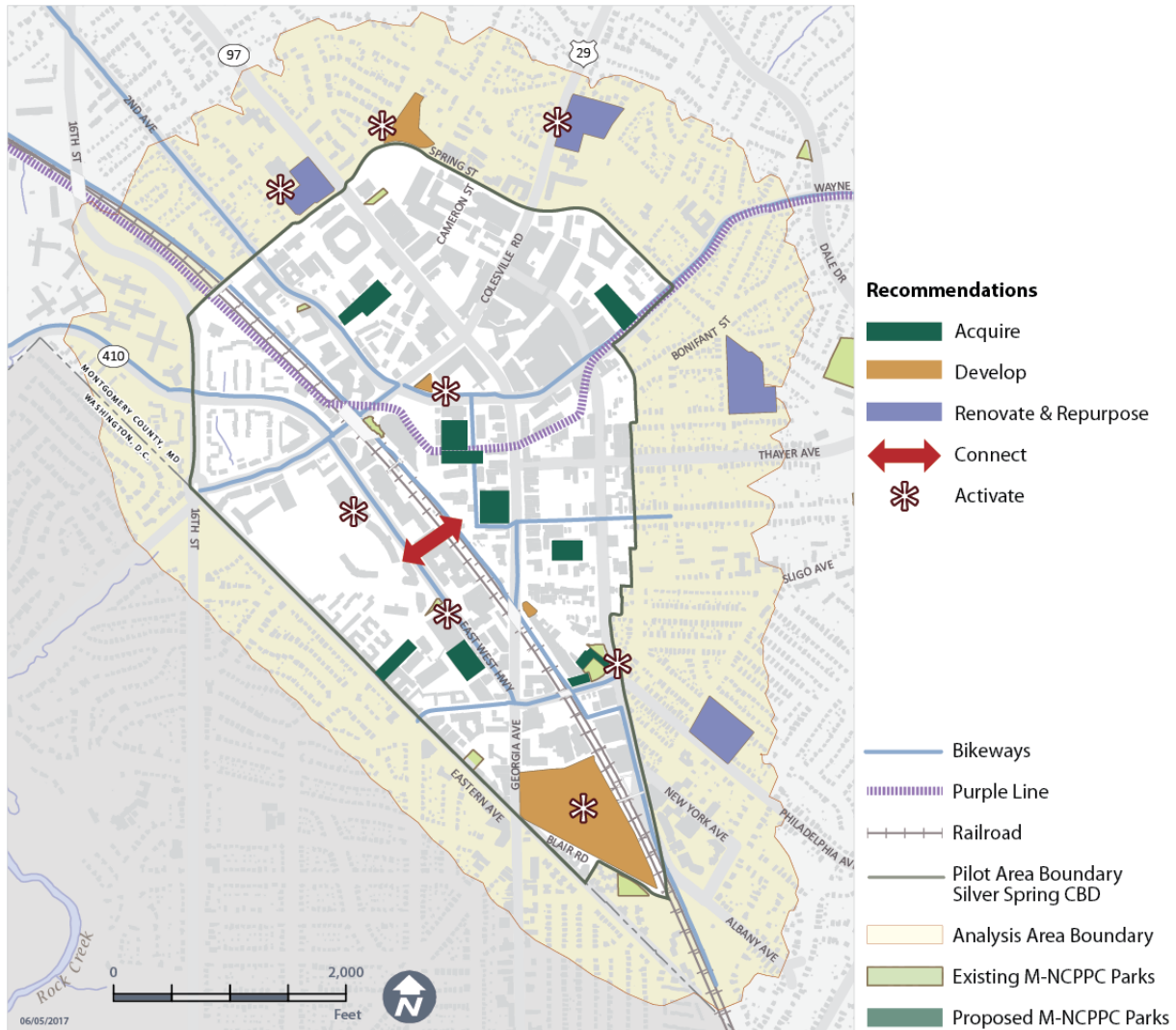


Figure 1 – Pilot Area Recommendations Summary

What’s Next? Implementation Recommendations

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 (the State Program Open Space-funded program and the Legacy Open Space program) and help to prioritize the CIP program to target critical locations for park improvements. The next steps to implement this Plan are as follows:

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 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 result in prioritized and implemented recommendation in a collaborative manner to meet the changing needs of communities across Montgomery County.

Plan Outline

The Plan describes the policy framework, defines a study area, propose a methodology for identifying opportunities, with a pilot area of the County as the first application. The Plan Outline below was revised since the Scope of Work presentation to the Planning Board.

Chapter 1 - Executive Summary

- Why? Need for this Plan
- Where? EPS Study Area and Pilot Area
- How? Methodology and New Tools
- What? Pilot Area Recommendations
- What Next? Implementation Recommendations

Chapter 2 - Policy Overview

- National and Global Perspective
- County Perspective
- Public Purpose

- Policy Framework

Chapter 3 - Methodology

- EPS Study & Pilot Areas
- Analyze Supply and Demand

Chapter 4 - Results

- Organize by Strategies
- Screen for Feasibility
- Prioritize by Social Equity
- Pilot Area Results

Chapter 5 - Implementation

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

Appendix

- Appendix 1 – Design Guidelines for Urban Parks and Open Spaces

Public Outreach

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 3 foreign languages, focus groups with traditionally underserved communities, and online comment and survey tools. The results of this outreach efforts were used to refine the methodology and make recommendations in this plan.

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.

Schedule Update

2017		PLAN SCHEDULE
SUMMER		
June 15		Planning Board - Approval of Working Draft as Public Hearing Draft
June 23		Public Hearing Process starts (30-calendar days)
July 27		Public Hearing
FALL		
September 7		Planning Board Worksession and Approval of Planning Board Draft Report
October		Submit Planning Board Draft to the County Council and County Executive
TBD		Presentation to the Montgomery County Council PHED Committee

Attachments

Attachment 1 – *Energized Public Spaces: Functional Master Plan (EPS FMP) for Parks in Mixed Use & Higher Density Residential Areas Working Draft*

pc:

Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD)
 Jeffrey A. Bourne, Chief, Facilities & Capital Programs Division, MCRD
 John Nissel, Deputy Director of Parks 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
 Tony Devaul, Chief, Park Police Division, Department of Parks
 Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division, Department of Parks
 Michael Ma, Chief, Park Development Division
 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

