



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item # _____

Date: 6/22/2017

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 15, 2017

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MGR*
Mitra Pedoeem, Deputy Director for Administration *Mitra Pedoeem*

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

Brooke Farquhar, Master Planner Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning (PPSD) *Brooke Farquhar*

Mark Wallis, Planner Coordinator, Park and Trail Planning (PPSD) *MSW*

Brenda Sandberg, Planner Coordinator, PPSD *Brenda Sandberg*

SUBJECT: June 22, 2017 Worksession on 2017 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

Staff Recommendations:

At this worksession, Parks Staff will present and seek approval from the Planning Board on revisions to the *2017 PROS Plan*. To that end, Staff requests:

Approval of the 2017 PROS Plan for transmittal to the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) as the County's Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP), with the following revisions:

- 1) Include an Executive Summary (*Attachment 2*), and revise the Plan document to reflect it.
- 2) Delete the Urban Buffer Park Type from the Park Classification System and rename Community Use Urban Recreational Park as Urban Recreational Parklet.
- 3) Add inventory of lands and facilities on non-M-NCPPC parkland as requested by the State of Maryland.
- 4) Adjust Park Proximity and Equity analyses to reflect the updated inventory as requested by the State of Maryland.

Comments and Staff Responses

Staff and the Planning Board received several comments via letters, emails, and testimony at the Public Hearing on May 25, 2017. Topics that are within the scope of the PROS Plan will be addressed by Staff in the worksession, such as priorities for the next five to ten years, service delivery strategies for facilities, and modifications to the Park Classification System. Other topics beyond the scope of the Plan such as surfacing of

playgrounds, or specific brands of recreational equipment, which are not within the scope of the PROS Plan are addressed in the testimony table (*Attachment 1*). Copies all original letters or emails are available upon request.

COMMENTS FROM PLANNING BOARD

Comments from Planning Board members on the Working Draft included the following, with the Staff response below each item:

Additional Demographic Analysis

The Board asked Staff to perform additional demographic analysis to see if there are any trends or patterns in preferences by subgroups of the population, such as by age, race, ethnicity, sex, income, geography, etc.

As a supplementary section to the statistically valid survey taken by Montgomery County Residents, PROS Consulting Inc. further analyzed the results, according to four geographic areas, households with incomes under \$70,000, households with children, age segments of 20-34, 35-54, and 55+, and by race and ethnicity. The results are presented in a Segment Analysis Report (*Attachment 3*). The Segment Analysis shows that, even taking into account different geographic areas and demographic segments of the statistically valid survey results, the priorities of residents remain largely consistent across groups. While there are a few nuances, the priorities for trails, natural areas and wildlife habitats, and green, gathering spaces in urban areas remain constant across the analysis.

Highlight Clear and Bold Strategies

The Board asked Staff to integrate the findings and recommendations of the *2017 PROS Plan* into some clear and bold strategies for delivery of parks and recreation facilities and services over the next ten years. The Board asked that the Plan address what is different about this PROS Plan that will head us in the right direction and connect where we have been as a parks system with where we are going. In addition, the Board for a clear sense of priorities. Finally, Board members asked that the Plan integrate community-building into the document more prominently, with a basis for providing adequate social gathering spaces and amenities.

Staff has revised the Executive Summary, according to the Board's direction as the Worksession Executive Summary (*Attachment 2*) The Summary provides a sense of where we have come from and where we are going as a Parks agency, gives guidance on equitable delivery of services to lower income areas, and describes how we continue to meet unmet needs countywide. New features since the *2012 PROS Plan* include an emphasis on citizens' top priorities from the Needs Assessment, methodologies to more accurately assess needs in our areas of higher population and lower income, and updated survey data for estimating numbers of facilities needed.

Top priorities of our citizens that influenced the recommendations are to provide activated, central community spaces while meeting recreational needs and protecting and managing our lands for future generations. The recommendations fall under three clear overarching themes:

- 1) Optimize existing parks and facilities
- 2) Create great, activated parks to equitably serve the County
- 3) Steward and interpret our natural and cultural resources

Within each theme we established goals, strategies, and recommended actions for the future of the park and recreation system, all of which are described in the Executive Summary.

Eliminate the Urban Buffer Park Type

Members of the Planning Board commented during review of recent area master plans that there is no need for a park type called “Urban Buffer Park.” The last *PROS Plan* included this simply because the original intent of some of our older urban parks was to provide a transition between the commercial core of an urban center and surrounding lower density residential development. Now that land use patterns have shifted to provide a mix of residential and commercial uses within our more densely developed areas, parks should serve as the gathering spaces for communities rather than to separate them.

Staff agrees and recommends removal of the Urban Buffer Park type from the Park Classification System.

Encourage hiring more people who “look like” the demographic group in a given geography and who are multilingual.

This comment has been noted for future operational guidance by Staff.

COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Testimony that was submitted to Staff or the Board prior to and during the time the record was open for the Public Hearing fell into the following categories: natural resources stewardship, tennis, artificial turf, inclusion of the differently-abled, and other (park types and sizes, service delivery strategies, rugby, skate parks). The Public Testimony Chart includes excerpts from each individual who commented, along with a staff response (*Attachment 1*). The topics that are within the scope of the PROS Plan are summarized below:

Natural Resources Stewardship

Several organizations and individuals expressed concern that the Plan does not promote enough stewardship and expansion of natural resources. Some proposed changing the 1/3: 2/3 policy for Regional Parks. One comment recommends increasing the ratio in the Policy for Parks to higher than 1:1 for mitigation.

Staff believes the PROS Plan contains sufficient recommendations for expanding our natural resources and the stewardship of them, in Chapter 5, Natural Resources Stewardship. Furthermore, Staff believes the existing policy in Regional Parks works well to ensure an appropriate balance of natural and developed areas of parkland designated to meet a diverse set of functions. Regarding the ratio for mitigation, although the policy says equal to or greater than a 1:1 ratio for natural, cultural or recreational resources, we often negotiate for a much higher return.

Tennis

Organizations and individuals expressed concern that the strategy to repurpose underutilized tennis courts for the relatively newly popular sport of pickleball would take away needed courts. Some recommended Staff undertake a strategic plan for tennis.

The PROS Plan recommends piloting a conversion of an underutilized tennis court to a dedicated pickleball court, with a key criterion of low tennis court usage. Staff will work with the Pickleball and Tennis communities, consulting with recreation, and schools, to exchange ideas and insights to determine utilization versus underutilization of courts.

Rugby

A youth rugby association requested a dedicated rugby field, because there are no regulation-sized fields in the County.

Staff will seek a location for this and add a sentence to the PROS Plan accordingly.

Service Delivery Geographies, Park Types and Sizes, and Park Facility Sizes

A number of recommendations from the Greater Colesville Civic Associations were submitted regarding how the analysis is conducted for the *PROS Plan*. Each recommendation and the Staff's response are detailed in the Public Testimony Table (*Attachment 1*).

COMMENTS FROM STATE OF MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Staff received comments from Maryland DNR on the Working Draft of the PROS Plan on June 6, 2017. The only comments that will affect the analysis and recommendations are as follows:

Revise Inventory to Include all Recreation Lands and Facilities in the County

The State requires us to include all publicly owned (federal, state, county, municipal) and quasi-public/private owned (e.g., land trusts, school properties) parks and recreation facilities. The Park Proximity and Equity Analyses will also need adjusting to this additional data.

Staff will create the inventory and perform the analyses, and revise the Plan accordingly. The State has agreed to grant us an extension to perform this work.

Clarify how the Analyses of Park Proximity and Park Equity will Guide Future Priorities.

State of Maryland reviewers requested explanation of how Montgomery Parks uses the park equity results in recreation planning, and how these priorities can be found in the CIP. Staff will add language to clarify the use of these analyses in guiding the CIP and other implementation priorities.

Add Water Sports to the Parks and Recreation Chapter

State of Maryland reviewers commented that water sports seem important to the county's recreation, especially with its relationship to the Potomac River. Staff will add a section to the Parks and Recreation Chapter 4 on water sports.

Urban Recreational Park Type

Staff requests the Board's approval to revise the name of the Community Use Urban park type that is primarily recreational in purpose. It is currently called a Community Use Urban Recreational Park, which is often confused with the Countywide Urban Recreational Park. Staff suggests renaming it Urban Recreational Parklet.

Remaining Schedule

After approval by the Planning Board, Staff will make approved revisions and submit to the State of Maryland in August. An extension has been approved so that Staff can complete the revised inventories and analysis requested by the State. After submittal, Staff will offer to present the PROS Plan to the County Council PHED Committee in the Fall.

Attachments

1. Public Hearing Testimony and Related Staff Comments
2. Executive Summary
3. Segment Analysis Report
4. 2017 PROS Public Hearing Draft

PC:

Gabe Albornoz, Director, Montgomery County Recreation Department
Jeffrey A. Bourne, Chief, Administration & Capital Development Division, Department of Recreation
Robin Riley, Chief, Facility Operations Division, Department of Recreation
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
Caroline McCarthy, Chief of Research and Technology, Planning Department
Pamela, Zorich, Planner Coordinator, Research and Technology, Planning Department

ATTACHMENT 1 - PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY AND RELATED STAFF COMMENTS

Public Testimony – Prior to, during, and the week after the 2017 Pros Plan Public Hearing, M-NCPPC Planning Board - Thursday, May 25, 2017

SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The plan fails to identify the type and quantity of the recreation facilities needed for the health and recreation function in different parts of the county.	Disagree: Service delivery strategies give guidance on geographic distribution.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The PROS plan contends that 97.6% of the population lives in an urban area	Will revise text: This is according to the US Census which defines “urban” to mean 500 people per square mile.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	Suggest applying the Subdivision Staging Policy areas with associated standards for the appropriate park types and appropriate density of each type. Once the standard is established, then it can be compared with the inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities in each planning area or sub-region to determine the need for additional parks.	Disagree: Park types in the classification table allow staff to assign the right kinds of parks in different places. Typically we would not recommend an urban park in the Agricultural Reserve. We base the needs for each facility type on population and the current service delivery for that facility. When we look for new sites for needed facilities, we drill down by planning area or even smaller geographies.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	Support proposed “avoid, minimize, mitigate, compensate” policy. Parks should not be used for other public needs if at all possible.	Agree
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	Encourage that park facilities be collocated with other public uses, especially schools so that facilities can be shared	Agree: Staff looks for such opportunities regularly, in area master plans, site selection studies, etc.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	One of the purposes of the PROS plan is to provide input to master plans. To provide tractability between documents, the PROS plan should use master/sector plan boundaries, which is not done currently (see Figure 12)	Agree: Staff uses PROS as a reference for all area master plans. Future estimated needs are estimated by Planning Area or Countywide, as that is the standard geography to get current and future population projections. When we review data for planning areas, we look at what can be correlated with that plan’s geography.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	In determining the need for additional health and recreational facilities, the targeted age of the users and the travel distance/mode needs to be considered. Appendix 4 attempts to address distance but fails to address targeted age and methods to accessing the park. The distances on page A-4.2 appear to assume that walking is the only mode of access. Depending upon age of the users, and to a certain extent the economic level of the area, people can either drive or take transit. As such, some parks can be further apart than indicated on page A-4.2. The Plan needs to be	Somewhat Agree: The Park Proximity Analysis is a starting point for analyzing where park amenities should be located. Walking was used as the most common non-vehicular mode to identify areas of low Park Proximity to trails, natural areas, and playgrounds. Staff can overlay this with the bicycling and transit routes (future and planned) when we weigh priorities for investment in existing or future parks, along with the demographic segments to be served.

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	modified to account for public transit (including BRT) and bicycle (using recent planning staff work) accessibility.	
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The size for neighborhood and local parks is excessive. When considering park sizes for health and recreation purposes, they need to exclude space needed for stream valley and conservation purposes. Also, the size of the neighborhood park is excessive since it doesn't have ball fields. A typical local park size of five acres and one acre for a neighborhood park is plenty, excluding any needed parking or stream buffers.	Disagree: We have a menu of park types and it is working well. Sizes are approximate and are recommended according to typical programs. The urban park types allow for smaller versions of the more suburban neighborhood and local park.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	<p>The plan identifies four types of countywide urban parks and seven types of community use parks types. The county wide parks are not really for countywide use but provide space for local or community use (both residential and day-time office). Therefore these two categories of parks should be combined. The following types of parks should be combined since they are essentially the same.</p> <p>The "neighborhood green" type and the proposed "pocket green" serve the same function and thus the creation of "pocket green" should be rejected.</p> <p>"Civic greens" and "neighborhood green" serve the same purpose and should be combined, and the size should normally be under ¼ acre.</p> <p>"Urban Recreational park" and "local park" serve the same purpose (eg ball fields) and should be combined.</p> <p>"Urban greenway" and "neighborhood conservation" area have similar purposes and should be combined. Trails can be provided around stormwater management ponds.</p>	<p>Disagree:</p> <p>Countywide parks are those that serve both the local neighborhood and a larger area. This category allows us to use GO bonds, while Community Use parks cannot.</p> <p>A pocket green is a much smaller space than a neighborhood green and was added so we can secure more of these spaces in our urbanizing areas.</p> <p>Civic greens are commonly supported by the public at 1-2 acres as the main, central, event space, and serve a different purpose than a neighborhood green.</p> <p>Urban recreational parks are different from local parks in that they do not have parking, because they are located in densely populated areas.</p> <p>Urban greenway is envisioned in the more densely populated areas for the purpose of linking to other trail, whereas Neighborhood Conservation Areas are typically environmentally constrained and are therefore places where trail and park construction is difficult.</p>
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	<p>The County is largely built-out and therefore space is limited for all uses, not only health and recreation purposes but also economic redevelopment, housing, etc. The thrust of the PROS plan is that health and recreation uses have a priority over all other uses. That thrust needs to change. All uses need to be considered and integrated as a whole. If a balanced approach is not taken, the result could be uneconomical with the result that redevelopment will not occur. The number and size of parks is part of the problem.</p> <p>Plazas. A one acre size may make sense some places, but more often than not this is excessive. Having a transit stop (like bus stop) should not be a reason to justify a plaza, or any other type of park.</p>	<p>Disagree:</p> <p>Parks works with land use, transportation, and other planners to devise a balanced community in each and every area master plan.</p> <p>Agree that a one acre plaza is not necessary at every bus stop. However, it makes sense at central stops such as in our centers of higher density, to have a place that is comfortable, pleasant, and activated, to wait for or meet people.</p> <p>Agree with final statement, where possible.</p>

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	<p>Transit stops are intended to permit people to use public transportation and those stops need to be near residential, retail and office facilities, not parks.</p> <p>Larger parks need to be close to and easily accessible from a large number of housing units.</p>	
<p>Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association</p>	<p>Page 89 starts the discussion on dog parks. Two acres for a dog park is excessively large. We don't think the average stay of a dog at a park will be 2 hours, but rather something in the range of 30-60 minutes. Also an acre should be able to accommodate more than 15 dogs at a time.</p> <p>Page 92. An eight-hour stay for cricket practice or Twenty-20 appears excessive –two hours should be sufficient (this is what is played at international events). We assume a formal Test Cricket or any tournament would be played at a county-wide recreational park, not at a community park.</p> <p>Page 98. The capacity of a playground is surely higher than eight children.</p>	<p>Parks is willing to look any hard evidence about how long the average length of say is at a dog park. The “standard” size dog park is an attempt to limit the number of dogs, to spread the dogs around the dog park to keep some natural grass. More dogs in a smaller area eventually becomes dirt.</p> <p>Parks is staying with the current need assumptions. Parks periodically re-evaluates assumptions and is getting more experience with Cricket, as more facilities are made available and permitting history deepens.</p> <p>To be identified as a “playground” in the parks inventory, the structure must be large enough to handle eight children simultaneously. The daily carrying capacity of a typical park playground is estimated at 50 children per day.</p>
<p>Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association</p>	<p>On page 35-37 there is a discussion of what is called Implementation Strategies. The three listed strategies are conservation, health and wellness and social equity. These are not implementation strategies. Conservation has to do with one type of stewardship which translates to a set of park types (Stream Valley etc.) Health and Wellness is another stewardship category. Social equality is the primary criteria that should be used to identify the need for new parks.</p>	<p>The document calls these overarching themes, not strategies per se. That said, the chapter goes on to describe our strategies to achieve social equity.</p>
<p>Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association</p>	<p>The public input indicates that the greatest demand is for trails. People prefer to walk along streams and therefore the primary place for providing the trails should be in stream valley parks.</p>	<p>Agree with the recognition that stream valleys are also our most environmentally constrained and environmentally sensitive areas where the economic costs of overcoming environmental limitations will always be highest.</p>
<p>Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association</p>	<p>Page 61 indicates that in the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, five new or expanded parks are identified. The existing Paint Branch Stream Park is partly in this plan. There is enough space away from the stream for at least a trail and, if slopes allow, a ball field. These needs should be served via existing parkland rather than taking land away from the primary purpose of the plan, which is economic development.</p>	<p>Disagree: These recommendations are in a Council approved plan, which included land use and zoning recommendations as well as park recommendations. Staff will look at this in greater detail during regulatory review.</p>

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Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	The planned development of Viva White Oak near the intersection of Industrial Parkway and FDA Blvd will include approximately 5,000 residential units. Much of the planned residential development is on the opposite side of the Paint Branch Stream from the White Oak Recreation Center. A path and pedestrian bridge should be installed between these two areas. That way, the new residents would be able to walk to the recreation center and people could walk in the other direction to future jobs (see diagram). On May 17, the Urban Land Institute review of the area concluded that a trail is needed across the Paint Branch Stream for the above reasons	Disagree: This area of Paint Branch Stream Valley Park features extensive sensitive environmental resources. It is not only important as a county-designated best natural area (plant and wildlife habitat), but also has steep slopes and the terrain is very rocky. The White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan specifically looked at various trail connections, including crossing the stream valley, and the master plan ultimately recommended that the existing Old Columbia Pike bridge would be the means by which Viva White Oak and the White Oak Shopping Center (and rec center) would connect for bicycles and pedestrians. No county master plans (area, functional or park) recommend any type of trail in this park, not even parallel to the stream. The terrain is just too difficult and the resources too important to disrupt.
Dan Wilhelm, President Greater Colesville Citizens Association	Extend the trail in the Valley Mill Park north in the stream valley to the Maydale Nature Center.	During June 2017, Park planners are initiating a limited area trail plan for the Upper Paint Branch. This natural surface trail plan will evaluate various trail alignments, including this one.
Kenneth Bawer, Vice President Watts Branch Watershed Alliance	Strongly disagree with the following new recommendation included in the Policy Framework and Plan Foundation: "Continue to Balance Renovation, Development and Acquisition..." This "balance" as defined is diametrically opposed by the will of our citizens, which is to grow the amount of natural park acreage.	Disagree: Approximately 2/3 of our parkland is undeveloped natural areas. Balancing stewardship and recreation is a top priority in all of our plans. This includes increasing acreage of high quality natural areas while meeting recreation demands of a growing population.
Kenneth Bawer, Vice President Watts Branch Watershed Alliance	Strongly disagree with the following stated method of preserving natural resources: "Limit the development of active-use areas in regional parks to no more than 1/3 of their total park acreage, with the remaining acreage designated as natural areas and/or conservation areas....limit the development of active-use areas in future regional parks to no more than 5% of their total park acreage	Disagree: This bi-county policy adopted in 1968 works well to ensure an appropriate balance of natural and developed areas of parkland designated to meet a diverse set of functions.
Kenneth Bawer, Vice President Watts Branch Watershed Alliance	Strongly support the Priority Ranking that puts "Nature parks over traditional sports parks". Unfortunately, there is a vocal, well-funded minority constantly advocating for more sports fields. But historically, the majority of citizens support natural resource-based recreation - past surveys in both Montgomery County and Fairfax County (VA) confirm this, as does the recent Parks online survey.	PROS recommendations include increasing our resources to steward and grow our natural areas.

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Charles Carter, tennis patron	<p>Consideration should be given to completion of a Hard Courts Strategic Plan similar to the proposed Athletic Fields Strategic Plan. This plan would address all needs for hard courts and ensure that hard courts are adequately monitored and maintained to industry standards.</p> <p>Dealing with overutilization of regional park courts and conflicts between the general public and tournament players, there are not sufficient large court batteries to accommodate the demand for tennis facilities.</p> <p>Add USTA and MCTA information on the growth and development of the game to the PROS Plan. Add: Create an exceptional system of sports courts to serve all areas of Montgomery County</p> <p>Create a working group composed of the Parks and Recreation Departments and major stakeholders to develop the strategic plan and criteria for potential conversion or co-location of sports courts.</p> <p>Determine, in consultation with major stakeholders, where there are underutilized sports courts for potential conversion, or co-location as it relates to pickleball.</p>	<p>Staff will consider this in future analyses. Staff will consult with the Pickleball and Tennis communities, recreation, and schools, to exchange ideas about future serve delivery issues such as role of local park tennis, first come, first served, tournament play at regional and recreation parks with large batteries of courts, high schools with large batteries of courts, and middle schools tennis availability.</p>
Charles Carter, tennis patron	<p>Caution against over-reading the statement that “residents also prioritized nature parks over traditional sports parks...”as this suggests a false construct where decision-makers see their choices as a zero-sum game, pitting “nature parks” advocates against “traditional sports parks” advocates. The two interests are not necessarily conflicting nor mutually exclusive. Residents need assurance that both types of open space facilities are valued and their respective needs will be prioritized and addressed through normal budgetary processes, including CIP investment.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>
Alan Klein, Montgomery County Tennis Association	<p>“Conversion” of tennis courts to pickleball courts is one way to proceed. A better alternative may be maintaining a tennis court but adding blended lines that make it more readily usable for pickleball as well. The latter seems more attuned to the notion of “optimizing what we have” than the former.</p>	<p>We have been piloting this approach and will assess its success before converting any underutilized tennis courts.</p>
Lindsey Keeler, Director of Adult Tennis for the USTA Mid-Atlantic	<p>USTA Mid-Atlantic does not support the conversion of tennis courts to pickleball courts. Ultimately, we don’t believe that appeasing one group of users at the expense of another group of users would be the most successful course of action, especially given the priority level shown in your list of top priorities for investment for park facilities accordingly to Montgomery County Residents</p>	<p>The plan does not propose to convert all tennis courts; only strategically according to patterns of use.</p>

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Lindsey Keeler, Director of Adult Tennis for the USTA Mid-Atlantic	We believe there is great opportunity to do more in terms of local tennis programming. Pickleball programming is regularly referenced within the 2017 PROS Plan while there is no reference to tennis programming	Pickleball as a relatively new sport is discussed because we need to supply some facilities to meet some of the demand.
Lindsey Keeler, Director of Adult Tennis for the USTA Mid-Atlantic	We recommend that tennis be included in the executive summary based on the priority levels when surveying Montgomery residents and that representatives from the local, grassroots tennis community be included to provide additional insight into utilized and underutilized tennis facilities.	Staff will work with the Pickleball and Tennis communities, consulting with recreation, and schools, to exchange ideas and insights to determine utilization vs underutilization of courts.
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	We support the work of Parks staff in stewarding natural resources within the forests, marshes, stream lands, hills, and even playing fields that make up this asset, and request that such stewardship work continue to be even further prioritized and emphasized in the next draft of the PROS plan.	Agree: It is a top priority in this PROS Plan
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	The PROS Plan must continue to highlight stewardship, and most importantly, the budget must fund it at a high level (well above the 4% in the current CIP budget) to actually achieve PROS goals.	Agree: Staff has requested a higher level in the FY 19-24 CIP cycle for both Stream Protection and Pollution Protection Level of Effort PDF – which are the ones that compile the 4%
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	We recommend that the final PROS Plan incorporate the techniques of spongy turf management and repurposing existing paved surfaces throughout the Plan.	Operations staff are constantly improving the turf management, but this is not a recommendation typical in a PROS Plan. When redeveloping parks, it is our standard practice to utilize – to the greatest extent possible – the areas already disturbed by legacy infrastructure.
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	Legacy Open Space funds should be largely directed towards acquiring connected natural areas such as forested lots, stream valley parks, trail access connections, etc., rather than additional paved surfaces. Achieving connectivity of natural areas is a primary goal of Legacy Open Space and should be prioritized in the budget.	The Legacy Open Space Program focuses on preserving lands under six resource categories: natural resource areas, water supply lands, heritage areas, greenway connections, rural landscapes and urban open spaces. All are important. To solely focus on one resource category would be counter to the master plan objectives of the LOS Program and of detriment to the other resource categories.
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	We urge the acceleration of pesticide use reduction and elimination in every Park, and we as civic, environmental, and watershed groups stand ready to support this multi-faceted effort.	In 2017, Montgomery Parks significantly reduced pesticide applications and increased the use of alternative management strategies such as propane flame weeding and mechanized weed removal. Parks’ design and maintenance divisions are implementing modified design elements, using durable materials and combining alternative practices to suppress weeds and reduce the need for pesticides. Parks uses integrated pest management methods that are continually updated due to current scientific findings as we protect and

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		interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources to balance the demands for recreation with the need for conservation.
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	We recommend that the policy explicitly incorporate a commitment to replacement or compensation at a ratio greater than 1:1 for impacted resources, to account for the diminishing availability of natural resources overall throughout the county and the importance of protecting what is left.	Although the policy says equal to or greater than a 1:1 ratio for natural, cultural or recreational resources, we often negotiate for a much higher return. The 1:1 ratio is often applied toward replacement recreational facilities. With natural areas the ratio is often much higher due to the diminishing availability of high quality natural resources not already in the stewardship of the Department of Parks. The replacement for natural resources is done on a value basis, not on the exact acreage.
Eliza Cava, Vice-Chair, Stormwater Partners Network	We recommend that language on p 28 describing Plazas specifically describe their use as limited and small in size and only to be used when a Civic Green or Pocket Park has been affirmatively found to be unsuitable to the site.	Disagree: Staff will recommend where plazas are most appropriate due to high pedestrian traffic. Plantings for shade and interest, as well as pervious surfaces, will be encouraged.
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Any experience we have in a park land is really dependent on the health of the resource... make sure that we have natural resource areas that we protect highly and we have other areas that we open to different -- other different kinds of activities, not an all -- it's not a one-size- fits-all.	Agree
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Our natural areas in our urban parks should be really as natural as we can make them, with lots of trees.	Agree
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Correct the gross mismatch between the stewardship work that you do in the parks and the four percent budget	Agree: Staff has requested a higher level in the FY 19-24 CIP cycle for both Stream Protection and Pollution Protection Level of Effort PDF – which are the ones that compile the 4%
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Prioritize those best areas as needing to be inventoried so that we know what we have	Agree: Staff prioritizes inventory and management of Best Natural Areas consistent with assessed value and uniqueness.
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Executive Summary, under Optimization, Every one of those pictures gives the impression that the main thing we want to optimize is people uses. ...but there are optimization efforts that should be made in natural areas as well....include in one of the pictures.	Agree: Executive Summary revised accordingly
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Nature centers should be used to interpret the surrounding park and to engage the public in that they teach things like non-native invasives, they take people out in the park so that they can understand what the flora and fauna are in the surrounding area. They even may get people to be more ecologically caring about their own properties.	Agree: to be addressed in Nature Centers Functional Plan

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Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Multiuse trails where appropriate. They aren't appropriate everywhere.	<p>The 2016 Countywide Park Trails Plan (p.48) states”</p> <p>“...there may be rare situations during which use would be limited to one or more specific user groups. These situations would be based upon one or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve environmental sustainability Minimize/mitigate impacts to cultural resources Avoid user conflicts Public safety Provide a specific type of user experience <p>Exceptions to the general policy favoring multi-use access should be based on specific and objective evidence wherever possible. In cases where limitations are needed in order to avoid overuse of trails or user conflicts, strong consideration should be given to providing multiuse access to other trails in the vicinity.”</p>
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	Looking forward to working with you on protecting and enhancing and making more available information about our wild places in this county, because they are very special. And as we get older, people are not going to be using as many recreational facilities as they are going for walks, on wild flower, tree walks.	Agree: The Plan emphasizes access to natural areas
Ginny Barnes, Stormwater Partners Network	For optimizing what we have, what about unused buildings? The Montgomery Countryside Alliance has been looking for a long time for places to gather, for the community up there to gather. Why not one of Parks’ shuttered buildings such as Owens Park or Poole’s Store?	<p>Parks is currently in the process of exploring the best use of the Park Activity Building in Owens Local Park. Since there has recently been some renewed interest in the building from multiple parties for alternative uses, issuance of another RFP for long-term occupancy is a consideration.</p> <p>The Seneca Store/Poole’s Store will be rehabilitated in the coming year. When the construction and infrastructure are complete, a Request for Proposals will be generated seeking a tenant that is compatible with Parks’ criteria and mission.</p>
Reeve Brenner, et al, National Association for Recreational Equality	...diversity and inclusion of the disabled, differently-able, mobility impaired, the autistic community, wheelchair users and others – too many to list - who are atypical, deserve the same kind of comprehensive “list” and attention to better address their needs. inclusion of atypical and differently able members of the community is no less important than the various ethnic communities’ inclusion. Universal design is our advocacy – in tangible terms not as a theory generally mouthed and ignored....	Montgomery Parks enthusiastically supports and encourages the participation of all persons regardless of abilities in our programs and activities including the use of unprogrammed spaces and facilities. Parks has developed and will continue to expand our efforts to provide improved access and greater inclusion within our park system. We appreciate your interest and will consider your input in the future as we move forward towards a more inclusive park system.

SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
	<p>Only a swimming pool and the Bankshot Playcourts designed for drop-in walk on inclusion provide Total-Mix mainstreaming integration...</p> <p>Universal Design, which achieves inclusion and diversity, we submit, should provide the principal focus as our priority in the lineup of projects receiving funding. Total mix diversity and inclusion based on universal design should provide the guidelines and scaffolding for future project of the Park and planning board so that the underserved members of the community are not continually and invariably marginalized and excluded.</p>	
Sheldon Fishman	For park and school athletic fields, use safe, modern materials like engineered wood fiber that is ADA compliant and attenuates impact. ...pilot modern grass fields that support high use and require few pesticides and even reduced maintenance costs.	The PROS Plan is a master plan that identifies future needs for recreational facilities. It does not address design standards or materials. These issues are considered during the planning and design phases of park projects.
Sheldon Fishman	A high functioning system of Recreation outdoor play space requires banning materials not proven to be safe and healthy for children. The Council banned tire waste in all athletic fieldsban tire waste (eg all “poured in place”) in play space too.	The PROS Plan is a master plan that identifies future needs for recreational facilities. It does not address design standards or materials. These issues are considered during the planning and design phases of park projects.
Sheldon Fishman	A high functioning system of Recreation outdoor play space requires good fiduciary responsibility... Synthetic turf fields are a Ponzi scheme that replaces live grass fields that regenerate themselves forever with dead synthetic materials that steadily deteriorate the first day they are installed until they become so dangerous they must be removed, disposed, and replaced. Parks recent experience doing an emergency replacement for \$750,000 even before the warranty was up should be a wakeup call. Many Parks projects that had to be delayed to fund this replacement.	The PROS Plan is a master plan that identifies future needs for recreational facilities. It does not address design standards or materials. These issues are considered during the planning and design phases of park projects.
Diana Zuckerman, President, National Center for Health Research	Strong concerns about the continued use of tire mulch and other toxic materials on playgrounds and athletic fields... . tires are also made from petroleum products that can disrupt children’s hormones and increase the risk of cancer and other serious problems	The PROS Plan is a master plan that identifies future needs for recreational facilities. It does not address design standards or materials. These issues are considered during the planning and design phases of park projects.
Kathleen Michels, Friends of Sligo Creek	Promote the use of natural safe materials for playgrounds for the health of both children, our soils and waters... what we don't want, and children should not be exposed to is artificial plastic Turf (aka synthetic or synturf) and in particular the short-lived waste tire-poured in place (PIP) surfacing such as installed At Watkins Mill, Fairland, Wheaton Regional park in the Kemp Mill Urban Park on Arcola Ave, Wheaton, Kemp Mill Rec Center , and many other	The PROS Plan is a master plan that identifies future needs for recreational facilities. It does not address design standards or materials. These issues are considered during the planning and design phases of park projects.

SPEAKER/ORGANIZATION	TESTIMONY	STAFF RESPONSE
	<p>places. Natural materials such as engineered wood fiber and grass provide something of a pollutant filter. -Synthetic rubber/waste tire surfacing wears out, contributes toxic particulates to our children's playspace, and the air, soil and water around the play area, heats up to hazardous levels WHICH SHOULD PRECLUDE ITS USE ENTIRELY and will CONTRIBUTE pollutants to the park and creek....</p>	
<p>Cameron Newton, Skate Park user</p>	<p>Please expand Woodside Park skate park</p>	<p>There is limited space available within the park to expand the skate park while retaining the basketball court. The renovation of the park includes relocation of the basketball court to provide a modest expansion of the skate park to improve its function.</p>
<p>Dan Soso, President Maryland Exiles Youth Rugby</p>	<p>Our youth rugby program serves many people, including low income and minority populations. We have no regulation rugby pitch and we request a true rugby facility in Montgomery County.</p>	<p>There is no regulation rugby field in the county. Rugby is using football field(s) as a substitute. Parks can begin looking for a site to vary the facility mix of fields being offered.</p>