



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

MCPB Date: 10/21/2021
Agenda Item #3

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 14, 2021

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MR*
Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director of Administration
John Nissel, Deputy Director of Operations
Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division *SV*

FROM: Nancy Steen, Budget Manager, Management Services Division *NS*

SUBJECT: Department of Parks FY23 Proposed Operating Budget for the Park Fund

Staff Recommendation

Approval to prepare the FY23 Park Fund operating budget at the Base Budget plus Program Enhancements level.

Background

At its September 9 meeting, the Planning Board received a presentation from the Central Administrative Services (CAS) staff on the FY23 budget process including key trends and the budget outlook, strategy, and timeline.

John Kroll, Corporate Budget Manager, reported that the assessable base for Montgomery County continued to grow by 24% from FY15-FY22 gradually continuing to reverse the declining trends that were encountered in FY11-FY13. The Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget (OMB) estimates that the assessable base will grow by 2.3% in FY23. Preliminary projections indicate that this growth will provide an increase in property tax revenue for the Park Fund, but that increase will not meet our projected needs without an increase in the Park tax rate. However, the County Council can approve any expenditure level for the Park Fund that it desires, and then have the Park Fund tax rate set accordingly without requiring a change in the overall property tax rate. The leading drivers for the increase in projections are estimated increases in Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) of 5.8%, health benefits of 7%, and a substantial increase in retirement expenses of 25.6%.

The Planning Board then provided general guidance for developing the FY23 Budget with the recognition that the Department of Parks has mandated requirements and other essential needs to operate our park system. The Board asked that we request what is needed to provide the services that the Planning Board and the County Council have requested of us, being cognizant of the County's fiscal challenges and the

likely impact that these challenges will have on our eventual budget. The Planning Board also emphasized that any requests for program enhancements and/or critical needs be well described and justified.

Known Increases

At the September 9 meeting, CAS provided preliminary estimates for increases associated with the Park Fund for salaries, benefits, retirement, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), and debt service on general obligation bonds. Since that time, we have continued to review and to refine these estimates. The FY23 projected change for compensation (excluding the markers for merit/COLA and reclassification) is an increase of \$4,521,158, a 4.1% change. Nearly half of this increase is attributable to the unbudgeted additional merit increase approved as part of the collective bargaining agreements with unions that took effect at the end of FY22. Included in that compensation total is an increase of \$1,993,381 for pension costs. Note that this pension amount may change when the updated actuarial results are received in November. Our debt service on general obligation bonds for CIP projects is increasing for FY23 by \$871,950.

The Department of Parks also has known inflationary, contractual, and mandated increases as well as increases for operating budget impacts (OBI) for CIP projects and developer-built parks. The OBI increases total \$198,996 (0.2% over the FY22 adopted budget). Additional information on these increases is provided later in this memo. Of that total, \$96,147 is related to the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), and if approved, will be offset by increased revenue from that Fund.

The overall increase in major known commitments totals \$6,759,147 which is a 6.1% increase over the FY22 adopted budget.

Budget Preparation

To prepare for the October 21 Planning Board meeting, Parks staff worked diligently over the past three months identifying deficiencies in our work program as well as looking at emerging trends to determine the needs of the future. Additional requests were received from the divisions, considered by the Director and Deputy Directors, and narrowed down to the most important ones that address the top priorities of the Department. **The funding required for these program enhancement requests totals \$1,209,723 and includes 6 positions.**

Budget Summary

After the review of our Major Known Commitments as well as the Program Enhancements that we are proposing, the total increase for our Department for FY23 is \$7,968,870, a 7.2% increase over the FY22 budget. Excluded from this total is the salary marker of \$2,380,386 for the merit/COLA and the reclassifications.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS				
FY23 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST				
			% Change	# of Positions
	FY22 Adopted Budget	\$ 110,961,117		
FY23 BASE BUDGET INCREASES				
	Salary/Benefit increases (excluding salary markers) *	2,527,777	2.3%	
	Pension Increase	1,993,381	1.8%	
	OBI	102,849	0.1%	1.0
	Contractual Increases	470,788	0.4%	
	Utilities/Telecommunications	(15,723)	0.0%	
	Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay	273,939	0.2%	
	Removal of One-time funding from Prior Fiscal Years	(54,600)	0.0%	
	Debt Service for Internal Service Fund Capital Equipment	685,300	0.6%	
	Risk Management	(510,200)	-0.5%	
	CAS Charges (Chargebacks/CIO/CWIT, etc.)	567,764	0.5%	
	Chargebacks (CIP/Enterprise/Special Revenue Funds/Wheaton HQ)	(386,019)	-0.3%	1.0
	Transfer to Debt Service	871,950	0.8%	
	Water Quality Fund	231,941	0.2%	2.0
	Subtotal Increase - Base Budget Request	\$ 6,759,147	6.1%	4.0
PROPOSED CHANGES - PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS				
	Improving Our Trails and Creating Equitable Experiences	169,000	0.2%	
	Improving Quality and Playability of Ballfields	100,000	0.1%	
	Enhancing Technology	112,500	0.1%	
	Maintaining and Improving What We Have	189,888	0.2%	2.0
	Expanding Innovative Cultural and Historic Programming	110,332	0.1%	1.0
	Improving Public Safety	450,613	0.4%	4.0
	Dept. share of Commission-wide IT Initiatives (CWIT)	77,390	0.1%	
	Subtotal Program Enhancements	\$ 1,209,723	1.1%	7.0
	Total Increase FY23 Proposed Budget Request	\$ 7,968,870	7.2%	11.0
	Non-Departmental - Salary and Reclassification Markers	2,380,386	2.1%	
	Total Increase Excluding OPEB	\$ 10,349,256	9.3%	

KNOWN OPERATING COMMITMENTS

The preliminary known changes in the Park Fund for salaries, benefits, retirement, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), and debt service on general obligation bonds were reviewed by CAS at the September 9, and our revised updates to these totals are included in the summary above.

Information regarding the known operating commitments for OBI, mandated, contractual, and inflationary increases for Park operations is provided below.

The chart below outlines the increases for known operating commitments (**excluding compensation and debt service for CIP**) with detailed information about each line item provided in the following narrative.

FY23 Park Fund Base Budget Known Operating Commitments	Personnel	Positions/Workyears	Funding	% Increase from FY22 Adopted Operating Budget
Operating Budget Impact (OBI) (Excluding WQPF)	Career/ Seasonal	1 position/ 1 wkys	102,849	0.1%
Contractual Increases	N/A	N/A	470,788	0.4%
Utilities/Telecommunications	N/A	N/A	(15,723)	0.0%
Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay	N/A	N/A	273,939	0.2%
Removal of One-time funding from Prior Fiscal Years	N/A	N/A	(54,600)	0.0%
Debt Service for Internal Service Fund Capital Equipment	N/A	N/A	685,300	0.6%
Risk Management	N/A	N/A	(510,200)	-0.5%
CAS Charges (Chargebacks, Unemployment, LTD, CIO/CWIT Base)	N/A	N/A	567,764	0.5%
Parks Chargebacks (CIP/Enterprise/Special Revenue Funds and Wheaton HQ)	Career	1 position/ 0 wkys	(386,019)	-0.3%
Water Quality Protection Fund (reimbursed by County)	Career/ Seasonal	2 positions/ 2.6 wkys	231,941	0.2%
	TOTAL		\$1,366,039	1.2%

Operating Budget Impacts (OBI)

Operating Budget Impacts (OBI) are the costs associated with the operating, maintaining, and policing of new and expanded parks. If we do not get additional resources each year to care for new facilities, it equates to an incremental reduction in service level as existing resources must be spread across a larger work program. Much of the land is acquired and developed through the CIP, while some is obtained through partnerships and developer dedicated parks and amenities. New and expanded park facilities require additional operating, maintenance, and safety resources.

The staffing and non-personnel impacts of the projects expected to be completed in or before FY23 total \$198,996. This OBI funding amount is ostensibly approved when the capital budget is approved. This

funding total also includes \$96,147 for OBI that falls under the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), and if approved, will be offset by revenue. Since the WQPF portion of projects will be funded from a different taxing source, associated costs are split out separately.

The chart below details the resources associated with new or expanded park infrastructure.

Project Name	FY23 OBI Expenditures	FY23 Career Workyears	FY23 Seasonal Workyears
CIP PROJECTS			
Avenel Local Park Ballfield Irrigation	74,901	0.8	0.0
Black Hill Regional Park Picnic Area	1,115	0.0	0.0
Glenmont Greenway Urban Park	15,266	0.2	0.0
Long Branch Stream Valley Park	1,015	0.0	0.0
Olney Family Neighborhood Park	3,247	0.0	0.0
Rock Creek Regional Park - Archery Range	7,240	0.0	0.0
Sundown Road Local Park	65	0.0	0.0
SUB-TOTAL	\$102,849	1.0	0.0
CIP - WQPF PROJECTS			
Black Hill Regional Park Picnic Area	3,181	0.0	0.1
Colesville Local Park	19,783	0.2	0.1
Dale Drive Neighborhood Park	8,481	0.1	0.0
Glenmont Greenway Urban Park	3,574	0.1	0.0
Hillwood Manor Neighborhood Park	15,494	0.2	0.0
Maplewood-Alta Vista Local Park	19,783	0.2	0.1
Nolte Local Park	19,783	0.2	0.1
Rock Creek Regional Park - Archery Range	3,131	0.0	0.1
Sundown Road Local Park	2,937	0.0	0.1
SUB-TOTAL	96,147	1.0	0.6
TOTAL	\$198,996	2.0	0.6

A description of each OBI project is included in the Appendix.

Inflationary Increases for Contractual Obligations - \$470,788

The Department has a variety of contracts with known escalation clauses built in. These include maintenance services, tree removal services, custodial services, office services, software maintenance/licensing fees, and insurance premiums.

Utilities/Telecommunications – (\$15,723)

The FY23 budget for utilities/telecommunications is decreasing by \$15,723. This decrease is based on savings from communication and telephone upgrades. These savings in circuit costs are offset by increases in the CIO base costs for software licensing as our department continues to transition to Microsoft TEAMS for telephone and teleconferencing support.

Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay - \$273,939

The Department of Parks is requesting to increase the supplies and materials, non-contractual services and capital outlay by \$273,939 to keep up with inflation and increased costs for vehicle parts, custodial supplies, security cameras, maintenance equipment and supplies, computer and communications supplies, uniforms, office equipment and supplies, horticultural supplies, and other miscellaneous supply items.

Debt Service for Internal Service Fund (ISF) Capital Equipment - \$685,300

The Department of Parks finances vehicles and equipment through an Internal Service Fund (ISF). The Department's ISF funding covers vehicles and large pieces of equipment costing more than \$10,000 and a life expectancy of greater than six years, which include work trucks, construction equipment, large mowers, and computer and information technology system upgrades. The Planning Board approves these purchases by approving the debt service payment each fiscal year.

For FY23, the Department of Parks requested funding level is \$2.1M to continue replacement of older fleet as well as items associated with Program Enhancement requests. The total debt service increase for FY22 of \$685,300 includes \$477,300 in debt service for the proposed \$2.1M request for FY23. The balance of that increase is associated with debt service purchases from prior fiscal years.

This FY23 ISF funding of \$2.1M will provide for the following items:

- \$95,000 for Information Technology (IT) upgrades including enhancements to several conference rooms to add TEAMS video conferencing capabilities.
- \$80,000 for an IT upgrade for Nimble data storage for disaster recovery at Wheaton HQ. Nimble storage leverages flash drive storage technology and predictive analytics for managing IT infrastructure.
- \$10,000 for EAM for IT needs for hardware/software upgrades.
- \$219,000 for equipment for new positions requested in the FY23 budget.
- \$1,696,000 for replacement of older vehicles and equipment that have exceeded their useful life cycle.

The other way that the Department purchases equipment is through capital outlay funds which are used for equipment that costs more than \$10,000 and has a life expectancy of fewer than six years. This

equipment is purchased through the Park fund. The capital outlay funding request for FY23 is increasing from \$491,911 to \$503,669.

Risk Management and CAS Charges - \$57,564

Risk management, unemployment insurance, long-term disability benefit costs, CAS chargebacks and adjustments to the projected base cost for the CIO and CWIT are adjusted each year based on actual expenses on behalf of the Parks Department. Changes included in this total include:

- Risk management – decrease of \$510,200.
- LTD Fringe benefit – decrease of \$2,500.
- Unemployment insurance – decrease of \$15,000.
- CAS chargebacks – increase of \$48,797
- CIO/CWIT – increase of \$536,467 comprised of:
 - CIO Allocation – increase of \$297,687 – increase is attributable to departmental share of department-wide IT licenses and subscriptions
 - ERP Upgrade - \$238,780 - This cost is for Park’s portion of the ERP project which is being financed over six years (similar to equipment purchased through the capital equipment internal service fund). This is the second year of the six-year financing cost. The department was able to use FY21 year-end savings to cover the cost of the first year’s payment.

Parks Chargebacks – (\$386,019)

Chargebacks between the Park Fund and the Enterprise Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and the Wheaton HQ Service Fund are reviewed and adjusted each year based on projected expenses. Included in this total is the decrease reflecting the offsetting cost of new positions that were approved by the Planning Board after the initial budget was adopted for FY22. These new positions were for the Park Development Division (PDD) and for the Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD). The other change included in this total is the chargeback offsetting the cost of a new athletic field inspector position providing support to the MCPS Special Revenue Fund (SRF). The cost for this position will be reimbursed by the County through the SRF funding. This total also reflects an increase of \$23,634 for the Enterprise chargeback for the Park Fund’s allocation of the shared costs of the staff in the Enterprise Fund providing department-wide support for the IT management and help desk support for the ActiveMONTGOMERY system.

Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF) - \$231,941

The Department of Parks received its first National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Small Separate Storm Sewer System (NPDES MS4) permit from the Maryland Department of the Environment in the spring of 2010. The purpose of this permit, which is based in the Federal Clean Water Act, is to reduce stormwater pollution coming from impervious surfaces and thereby improve water quality. The permit requires the Department to develop Best Management Practices for each of the six Minimum Control Measures which include: Personnel Education and Outreach, Public Involvement and Participation, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post Construction Stormwater Management, and Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping. Although the Department was required to obtain this permit and fulfill its requirements, no federal or state funds were available to offset this mandate.

Accordingly, in FY12 the Department was appropriated funding from the Montgomery County Water Quality Protection Fund to offset costs associated with ongoing water quality related work across the M-

NCPPC's 37,100-acre park system and implementation of the Department's NPDES permits. Ongoing water quality related work includes maintenance and management of streams, lakes, non-tidal wetlands, and stormwater management facilities as well as the implementation of the Department's NPDES industrial permit for its 12 maintenance yards. As requirements have continued to increase, the amount has increased each year to its current FY22 budgeted amount of \$3,665,414.

While many improvements have been initiated under the permit, deficiencies remain in the Post-Construction Stormwater Management measure as the department continues to add stormwater amenities each year throughout the park system. These constraints continue to pose challenges in meeting the requirements of the NPDES MS4 permit. In addition, the Department was issued a new MS4 permit which went into effect in FY19 that requires our Department to delineate impervious surfaces, drainage areas, and best management practices such as stormwater management retrofits and stream restoration projects.

These on-going requirements are the basis for the budget items listed below.

- **Native Plant Program (NPP) Position and Supplies - \$99,888**

This request is for an additional staff position to monitor and coordinate the NPP. The number of plants grown by the NPP have increased every fiscal year from 14,708 plants grown in FY17 to 45,697 in FY21. During that same time frame, the percent of native plants grown for water quality related projects increased from 38% to 66% of the overall plant production including over 31,000 maintenance plants provided for bioretention areas. The number of bioretention facilities maintained by the department increased from 49 to 132 between 2015 and 2020, and this growth is consistent with forecasted on-going future increases in demand for plant material from Regional Stormwater Maintenance Teams and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). Additionally, in 2017, the Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) initiated the Environmental Restoration and Stormwater Outfall Infrastructure Rehabilitation program which requires the increased need for plant material from the NPP above and beyond the current and regular requests.

In addition to providing plants for stormwater and CIP projects, the program also provides plants for Brookside Gardens, weed warrior plantings to enhance habitat biodiversity, nature center revenue producing plant sales, and for other local government jurisdictions (if requested plants are available).

The NPP program is unique because it produces 95% of our plants by starting them from seed collected on host plants at Pope Farm or from other plants growing in natural habitats in areas on Montgomery Parks owned properties. The plant material grown and produced by the NPP is of "local ecotype", meaning that these plants carry the genetic adaptations of the plants that were originally growing in that specific area. This approach to plant production is truly innovative and is the only way possible to obtain true indigenous material for our Park system. Adding another full-time staff member will enable the NPP to have more time to collect seeds for increased plant production, thereby virtually eliminating the potential need for supplementing projects by purchasing finished plant material from outside vendors, ultimately saving departmental costs. All material is custom grown and is cared for and held in reservation by NPP staff, so there is no risk of non-availability when projects are ready for installation which would normally be a significant obstacle when dealing with outside vendors. This also allows greater flexibility for the Parks staff to schedule work and to take plants for the projects needed.

Pope Farm has shifted seasonal staff from other priority programs and used volunteers to attempt to meet the growing needs of the NPP, but the rapid growth requires the expertise and continuity of a career position to meet this sustained demand. With additional year-round expertise, the program is more efficient by being able to collect seed from our on-site stock plants and grow them in our facility during times of year when it is otherwise difficult to obtain material and for the plants to be in a ready state for early spring projects. Critical program duties that would be handled by this position include propagation, plant health/integrated pest management (IPM) tasks, data management of plant inventory, and coordination of duties handled by seasonal staff and the 16-20 volunteers that help support this program. This request also includes \$10,000 for supplies.

- **OBI - \$96,147 – project detail was provided earlier in the memo in the section on OBI.**
- **Impact of personnel increases from FY22 (Merit pay) - \$35,906 – for current staff funded through WQPF**

The increased funding request of \$231,941 for NPDES activities includes the costs for the positions listed above as well as other Known Commitments. Note that if this request is approved, it will be offset by increased revenue from the Water Quality Protection Fund. A breakdown of the proposed funding is shown in the chart below.

New FY23 WQPF Funding Request	Personnel	Supplies and Materials	Other Services and Charges	Total
Native Plant Program	\$89,888	\$10,000	\$0	\$99,888
OBI for Stormwater Management Amenities	\$88,072	\$8,075	\$0	\$96,147
Merit Impact - Increases from FY22	\$35,906	\$0	\$0	\$35,906
Total	\$213,866	\$18,075	\$0	\$231,941

Position Changes

The department is transferring the Activating Urban Parks unit and associated cost (including four FT positions plus seasonal workyears) from the Public Affairs and Community Partnership Division to the Horticulture, Forestry and Environmental Education Division. This transition was initiated in FY22, but the associated budget transfer was deferred until FY23.

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE FY23 BUDGET

In addition to Known Commitments, the Department of Parks is proposing an increase for Program Enhancements that will expand our current work program to help meet emerging needs. The chart below gives a snapshot of the proposed Program Enhancements followed by specific descriptions.

Summary - Program Enhancements					
Item & Description	Career Positions	Career Wkyrs	Term Contract Wkyrs	Seasonal Wkyrs	Funding
Improving Our Trails and Creating Equitable Experiences	-	-	-	2.0	\$169,000
Improving Quality and Playability of Ballfields	-	-	-	-	\$100,000
Enhancing Technology	-	-	-	-	\$112,500
Maintaining and Improving What We Have	2.0	1.5	-	0.5	\$189,888
Expanding Innovative Cultural and Historic Programming	1.0	1.0	-	-	\$110,332
Improving Public Safety	4.0	4.0	-	-	\$450,613
Commission-wide IT (CWIT) Program Enhancements - Department Share	-	-	-	-	\$77,390
Total	7.0	6.5	-	1.5	\$1,209,723

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – IMPROVING OUR TRAILS AND CREATING EQUITABLE EXPERIENCES</u>	<u>2.0 Seasonal Workyears</u>	<u>\$169,000</u>
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Increasing Funding for Maintenance of Hard Surface Trails – \$50,000

Montgomery Parks currently has over 68 miles of hard surface trails. Park users consistently name trails as one of the most popular and important park amenities, but frequently mention the need to improve trail surface condition and amenities. This additional supply funding will be used to purchase signs, mile markers, and non-slip paint for coating and coloring of bridge surfaces. Adding mile markers and other trail orientation (e.g. signage, color coating) information improves coordination with emergency responders if needed. The non-slip coating for bridges improves safety by improving surface condition to reduce tripping. Adding the non-slip coating in different colors to improve safety on bridges will be the initial priority for this funding. With a current inventory of 411 non-vehicular bridges, this funding will be targeted initially to complete the coating of about 123 bridges per year, with all bridges being completed in slightly over three years.

Trails Equity Engagement Program - \$119,000

The Trail Equity Engagement Program will knock down barriers to trail use for underserved communities in the County. At the request of the County Council, the Trails Team acquired a bike fleet to provide opportunities for diverse residents to experience park trails. This program will expand event offerings that spark park activation and integrate use of our extensive trails network. Events will include group rides at Fairland Recreation Park, borrow-a-bike events at South Germantown Bike Park, and beginner rides on Long Branch Trail.

Incorporating the new fleet of 16 mountain bikes acquired in FY21 into our programs will provide bike access for residents who are unable to provide a bike for participation in the events. Research shows that communities of color face barriers to outdoor use, including not feeling welcome, not knowing where trails are, may not know how to ride a bike, or may not own a bike. This enhancement will reduce barriers to trail use for many members of our community and improve our ability to deliver high quality trail experiences for our users. The program staff will build relationships with community organizations, serve diverse communities, and broaden the reach of our programs.

The program staff will also develop relationships with high schools. In addition to hosting more than half a dozen bike and trail activation events next year, a High School Volunteering and Leadership Development Program will be established designed to foster a generation of trail ambassadors and advocates. We plan to launch the inaugural two-week long high school volunteer and leadership program in the summer of 2022 with 10-15 students. Overall, the program will increase awareness of our park trails and help make them welcoming places for underserved communities.

This request includes \$64,000 of seasonal funding and \$55,000 of supplies funding.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – IMPROVING QUALITY AND PLAYABILITY OF BALLFIELDS</u>		<u>\$100,000</u>
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Athletic Field Nutrient Management and Turf Improvement Program – \$100,000

The Department is also requesting supplies funding of \$100,000 to continue to improve the quality of athletic fields through increased aerification, seeding, and fertilization. The vision for nutrient management is to create a standard for each field to receive four applications of nutrients annually (to meet a national accepted minimal standard) for athletic field safety. Using soil sample technology, staff will use targeted applications of nutrients to improve soil health as a method to improve the athletic field levels of sustainability, accessibility, and safety resulting in a decrease in the number of field closures and improved pest management. This funding will be directed to the lowest ranking fields using the collector score with a goal to do a minimum of two applications (two applications out of the needed four applications) per year on approximately half (about 150 out of the 314) of the athletic fields throughout the County.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – ENHANCING TECHNOLOGY</u>		<u>\$112,500</u>
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Enhancing IT Disaster Recovery by Purchasing Immutable Cloud Storage - \$75,000

There have been several high-profile Ransomware attacks recently including Colonial Pipeline, Baltimore City, JBS Foods, and Kaseya (1500 companies affected). The best practice for protecting backups is to follow the 3-2-1 rule. Keep 3 copies of your data (production and at least two backups), have 2 storage mediums, and keep 1 copy off-site (cloud or tape).

This funding is for Phase 1 of 3 to store the off-site copy in cloud storage and take advantage of immutability. Immutability protects against Ransomware by marking backup files as read only until a time stamp expires (example 90 days). This ensures that, in the event of a successful Ransomware attack, the Parks and Planning Departments will be able to restore their data. The total cost is \$150,000 and will be split 50/50 between Parks and Planning.

Network Analytics and Orchestration - \$37,500

Like the previous initiative, moving into network analytics and orchestration will improve our ability to configure, deploy, and maintain our IT assets. This funding will procure a Cisco Digital Network Architecture (DNA) Center to provide centralized command-and-control in automating the configuration, deployment, and asset management for our Cisco network devices. The total cost is \$75,000 and will be split 50/50 between Parks and Planning.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE</u>	<u>2.0 Career Positions; 1.5 Career Workyear; (0.5 Seasonal Workyear)</u>	<u>\$189,888</u>
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Infrastructure Funding for Existing Park Amenities – \$100,000

This request is for additional funding for increased maintenance of existing parkland amenities and infrastructure. Increased funding will expand efforts for proactive maintenance and reduce reactive and costly emergency repairs (break & fix). Expansion of efforts will allow for completion of more projects improving service to the user through increased efficiency, safety, attractiveness and long-term sustainability of park amenities and facilities. Although a small amount of funding was added in FY22, additional funding is still required to continue to address our large backlog of needed repairs.

Prioritization of projects will include review of both amenity condition in conjunction with analysis using the equity focus area tools. Currently, the major maintenance backlog of unfunded projects includes six water line replacements and four sewer line replacements.

This funding will also be used to improve court maintenance by extending the overall life of tennis and basketball courts by repairing cracks, replacing color coating, and performing other necessary repairs for our inventory of 299 tennis courts and 227 basketball courts. The department has a large backlog of

needed court renovations that exceeds existing CIP funding and staff capacity to complete. These maintenance repairs will help to extend the surface life of the courts by helping to defer the need for major renovations and to decrease safety issues. Repairing cracks will reduce the opportunity for weed growth which can cause significant damage and will reduce the need for pesticide applications. Increased funding is needed to adequately maintain the athletic surfacing systems resulting in increased efficiency, safety, attractiveness, and long-term sustainability. Our project management staff will utilize this funding to hire contractors to assist in completing this backlog of court repairs needed for our aging parks. In FY19 and FY20, major maintenance funding was used to complete repairs to six tennis courts and six basketball courts (total cost of \$35k for these repairs). Currently, there is a backlog of 47 courts in immediate need of renovations to extend court life.

Horticulturist Position for the Community Garden Program - \$89,888

This request is to add another position supporting the Community Garden Program. Duties for this new position will include program expansion/maintenance, coordination with volunteer and seasonal support staff, food recovery/food waste, education, equity in services, addressing food insecurity in the county, internal and external partnerships, and ADA/accessibility.

Adding another position will enable the program manager to have additional time to focus on: program expansion to add more gardens and plots throughout the parks in coordination with planning and development support from the PPSD and PDD Division, including site visits, plan reviews, attending community meetings, monitoring Open Town Hall postings, reaching out to strong community advocates and community members in equity focus areas to address food insecurity by placing gardens in the most impactful areas.

The department's Community Garden Program is one of a kind. There are very few programs in the nation that provide comparable amenities including the support of full-time career staff. Currently we have 12 gardens located throughout Montgomery County Parks serving over 500 families, plus a waitlist of 350 families. With an 85% retention rate for the program, very few plots are available to reduce that waitlist backlog. Therefore, there is a substantial need to expand this program. While the program continues to focus on its priorities, the program has also taken on opportunities to support other initiatives in the county that create a lasting impact in the county for health, recreation, social engagement, and ecology. According to Feeding America, the 2019 overall food insecurity rate for Montgomery County is 8.6%, with a projected increase of 5% (post pandemic). Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Garden Program has donated over 2,200 pounds of food through partnerships and donations. This success is the beginning of major potential within the department to establish Parks as a supporter of food and healthy equity in the county.

The expansion of the program is key to providing garden sites for food insecure residents including providing donations of food to local food banks. Adding another position will ensure the sustainability of the current 12 gardens and sustain support to volunteers, the public, and internal and external partnerships (i.e. working with other divisions for repairs, responding to public inquiries, food donation efforts, etc.). New gardens are currently being planned with non-traditional typologies so that food can be grown in smaller areas such as the new garden plots at Nolte Local Park, an underutilized park activity building that was turned into a garden with accessible tables to grow food.

The Community Garden Program has a long history of serving many populations of the county, but there is more work to be done in the Equity Focus Areas (EFA). According to the Equity Focus Area Study,

Montgomery County is 56% People of Color, and our program is representative of this data in some areas (Briggs Chaney, Gaynor Road, Rocking Horse) but needs more support to ensure representation throughout our program. We can engage EFA communities through increased availability of garden plots, partnerships, and/or gardening education. An additional position will allow staff to collect more detailed demographic data about our program users and potential gardeners, highlighting our strengths and our opportunities for growth. Gardening is one way that many refugee populations feel connected to a new place and adjust. When we create more spaces that create a sense of belonging, we engage more residents and more users. In addition to creating more space, the program does offer reduced or waived plot fees for low income families or organizations, by request. The program has also offered waived plot fees in exchange for translation services or other opportunities to bridge the gaps of cultural engagement.

Visitor Services Specialist for the Nature Centers - \$0

This request is to add a Visitor Services Specialist for the nature centers. This part-time position will primarily provide support for the Locust Grove Nature Center, Maydale Nature Classroom, and the Nature on Wheels (NOW) program. This additional resource will enable the staff at Locust Grove Nature Center and at Maydale Nature Center to focus on facility operations and visitor experiences, and to expand capacity for programs, outreach, community engagement, and volunteer coordination. This position will also assist with scheduling and deploying the recently added NOW mobile nature center and science field station increasing our ability to bring a variety of programming to the community and audiences where they live and play and to provide special programs in parks that do not have nature facilities. Expanding the NOW program enables park naturalists to lead various nature and science programs and activities utilizing displays located around the vehicle and with a mobile stage to expand programming while ensuring safe distancing. This new position will facilitate the growth in offerings for nature exploration, green careers discovery, getting people active with wellness programs, and building social engagement in our communities. This request has a net zero cost impact as the cost for this position will be offset by reductions in seasonal and non-personnel costs.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – EXPANDING INNOVATIVE CULTURAL AND HISTORIC PROGRAMMING</u>	<u>1.0 Career Positions; 1.0 Career Workyear</u>	<u>\$110,332</u>
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Cultural Resources Stewardship Equity Program - \$110,332

The Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) is requesting one full-time position to fill an immediate need for development of cultural context and interpretation of underrepresented groups in the county’s history. The mission of the Cultural Resources Stewardship Section (CRSS) is to conduct high-quality research into the human experience in Montgomery County and to bring those stories to life through a range of programming and interpretive platforms. Adding the Cultural Resources Stewardship Equity Program will augment the existing interpretive program to provide greater access to the community of underserved park users. There are numerous parks, trails, and cemeteries within Parks that have no historical facility to rehabilitate or interpret, yet there are rich and powerful stories of African American, Asian, Hispanic and Latino communities, and Native Americans and new immigrant communities that have yet to be told and properly interpreted. Interpretive programs have long since

expanded beyond guided tours of historic facilities and living history programs held on cultural and historical spaces.

The current cultural landscape highlights the need for this continued focus on equity and the importance of getting these stories out to the public in a timely way. Using data from historical and archaeological research, the proposed staff will implement projects that convert that technical information into accessible and engaging products that show the diversity of experience for county residents. In order to ensure high-quality products, this new position will be responsible for working with existing staff to identify the most effective platform for interpretation at each location or subject, be it traditional interpretive signage or printed products, a digital presence such as a story map or audio tour of a site, or 3D printing of artifacts or reconstructions of archaeological sites. This proposed position will also work closely with archaeology staff to expand their interpretive outreach program and to utilize the vast CRSS archaeological artifact collection on a variety of digital and online platforms.

This proposed program is an excellent parallel program to the PPSD Trail amenities program. As additional benches and commemorative elements are added along a trail, the CRS Interpretive Equity program can develop corresponding interpretive panels which enhance the learning experience of trail and park users and expand their knowledge of the cultural history of the trail or park.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY</u>	<u>4.0 Career Positions; 4.0 Career Workyears</u>	<u>\$450,613</u>
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Park Police – Northern Region Community Service Team – \$450,613

As a full-service agency charged with protecting the national award-winning Montgomery Parks system, the Park Police is at a pivotal point of efficiency and effectiveness due to current staffing levels. Over the past 10 years, Montgomery County has become one of the most diverse communities in the nation. It remains the most populous county within the State of Maryland with over 1.1 million residents with population growth of more than 9% from 2010 to 2020. Yet, the current staffing level for the Park Police Division is at the same level as the FY10 complement of 122 positions.

In northern Montgomery County, population increases have been very pronounced (e.g. Clarksburg and Gaithersburg have grown by 79% and 13% respectively within the past 10 years) and are expected to remain consistent for the foreseeable future when assessing current public-school capacity levels. The size of the department’s park system has increased by nearly 2,100 acres from FY12 to FY21 with continued plans over the next few years to add additional parks and increased amenities such as dog parks and pickleball courts. At the same time, police service calls in the Northern Region have spiked over the past few years with the call levels reaching new highs in 2019 and 2020 and at a level that is more than three times higher than the number of service calls received in 2011.

This population increase has greatly outpaced current staffing levels. In addition, increased park visitation during the pandemic plus the continued growth of park activation and other programming in the parks has increased the division’s dependence on overtime to meet this increased demand. Therefore, the Park Police is requesting to add one sergeant and three officers who will be assigned as the Northern Region Community Service Team. This request also includes \$84,000 of supplies funding for the cost of outfitting the officers and vehicles. Adding this team to the Northern Region will also

allow the current complement of police officers to be realigned to provide better coverage throughout other areas of the county experiencing similar population growth. This team will enhance safety and the patron visitation experience in this region improving the quality of life of residents. Staff hired for this team will have advanced training in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), project management and conflict resolution, cultural competency and media relations and will be bilingual with language proficiency in conversational Spanish or another non-English language.

Adjusting public safety staffing levels to population and demand levels helps to maintain high levels of service delivery, timely responses, and the prevention of crime before it occurs. The proactive presence of uniformed officers adds to the perception of safety which positively impacts park usage, property values, and community satisfaction.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – COMMISSION-WIDE IT</u>		<u>\$77,390</u>
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The Office of the Chief Information Officer has proposed a new request for FY23 for the Commission-wide IT Initiative Internal Service Fund. The department’s share of the proposed new IT projects totals \$77,390. This request is comprised of:

- \$49,890 for a Learning Management System (LMS)
- \$27,500 for a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

These initiatives will be discussed with the Planning Board at the October 14th meeting during the CIO’s budget presentation.

Summary

The Department of Parks is continuing to refine the FY23 Proposed Budget. Being mindful of the cost pressures facing the Park Fund from salaries, benefits, retirement, and mandated obligations, the FY23 budget request shows our commitment to continue to provide the best services possible to our customers with a 7.2% operating increase (excluding compensation markers) over the FY22 budget.

Staff is requesting approval from the Planning Board to proceed to prepare the FY23 Park Fund operating budget at the Base Budget plus Program Enhancements level.

Staff will be available at the work session to provide any additional information on the budget request.

The Department of Parks is tentatively scheduled to return to the Planning Board on October 28th should a follow-up work session be required. The Department is scheduled for a final work session on the operating budget on November 18th to seek approval of specific funding levels for the FY23 Proposed Budgets for the Park Fund, Enterprise Fund, Property Management Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Internal Services Equipment Fund.

APPENDIX

FY23 Operating Budget Impact (OBI) Project Descriptions

CIP PROJECTS			
PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	CAREER WYS	SEASONAL WYS
Avenel Local Park Ballfield Irrigation	\$74,901.00	0.8	0.0
Adding irrigation to 3 soccer fields.			
Black Hill Regional Park Picnic Area	\$1,115.00	0.0	0.0
ADA Improvements to Picnic Area. Scope includes new walkways connecting parking lots, shelters, restroom, and other site amenities, repaving parking lot 8 & 9, replacing volleyball court, installing a new cornhole court, and adding a new 750 sq ft SWM facility.			
Glenmont Greenway Urban Park	\$15,266.00	0.2	0.0
Glenmont Greenway, running from the WMATA Glenmont Metro garage to Randolph Road along southbound MD 97, was previously maintained by Montgomery County DEP and will be maintained by MNCPPC going forward. Includes maintenance of 1 Storm Water Management sand filter on the site.			
Long Branch Stream Valley Park	\$1,015.00	0.0	0.0
Project will build a new hard surface trail extension from the end of the existing Long Branch Trail to Carroll Avenue.			
Olney Family Neighborhood Park	\$3,247.00	0.0	0.0
This project will replace a playground that was removed in 2018 and will be relocated in a more accessible location within the park. The final playground will be approximately 6,047 SF.			
Rock Creek Regional Park - Archery Range	\$7,240.00	0.0	0.0
ADA renovation for the archery range, including a new parking lot with 6 spaces, new paved concrete walkway, resting area, and stone dust walkway, as well as new accessories (markers, posts, arrow quivers, etc.) for archery shooting activities. Includes a 220 sq ft Bio-Retention Area.			
Sundown Road Local Park	\$65.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates and replaces the existing playground, renovates the existing parking lot, makes ADA improvements, and enhances the storm water management of the park with a 500 sq ft Bioretention SWM Facility.			
TOTAL OBI FOR CIP PROJECTS	\$102,849	1.0	0.0
CIP PROJECTS - WQPF			
Black Hill Regional Park Picnic Area	\$3,181.00	0.0	0.1
ADA Improvements to Picnic Area. Scope includes new walkways connecting parking lots, shelters, restroom, and other site amenities, repaving parking lot 8 & 9, replacing volleyball court, installing a new cornhole court, and a new 750 sq ft SWM facility.			
Colesville Local Park	\$19,783.00	0.2	0.1

Bioretention and/or Bioswale SWM Facility			
Dale Drive Neighborhood Park	\$8,481.00	0.1	0.0
Bioretention SWM Facility			
Glenmont Greenway Urban Park	\$3,574.00	0.1	0.0
Glenmont Greenway, running from the WMATA Glenmont Metro garage to Randolph Road along southbound MD 97, was previously maintained by Montgomery County DEP and will be maintained by MNCPPC going forward. Includes maintenance of 1 Storm Water Management sand filter on the site.			
Hillwood Manor Neighborhood Park	\$15,494.00	0.2	0.0
2 Bioretention SWM Facilities			
Maplewood-Alta Vista Local Park	\$19,783.00	0.2	0.1
Installation of 2 Bioretention SWM Facilities and 1 Bioswale SWM Facility			
Nolte Local Park	\$19,783.00	0.2	0.1
Installation of 2 Bioretention SWM Facilities and 1 Bioswale SWM Facility			
Rock Creek Regional Park - Archery Range	\$3,131.00	0.0	0.1
ADA renovation for the archery range, including a new parking lot with 6 spaces, new paved concrete walkway, resting area, and stone dust walkway, as well as new accessories (markers, posts, arrow quivers, etc.) for archery shooting activities. Includes a 220 sq ft Bio-Retention Area.			
Sundown Road Local Park	\$2,937.00	0.0	0.1
This project renovates and replaces the existing playground, renovates the existing parking lot, makes ADA improvements, and enhances the storm water management of the park with a 500 sq ft Bioretention SWM Facility.			
TOTAL OBI FOR CIP PROJECTS - WQPF	\$96,147	1.0	0.6
GRAND TOTAL	\$198,996	2.0	0.6