

STAFF DRAFT
May 2022

MCPB Item 8. May 5, 2022.

Attachment 1

WHEATON REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN

Montgomery County's Regional Park Next Door



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Parks

Contents

List of Figures	3
Introduction	4
History of the Park	5
The Park Today.....	6
Plan Areas	8
Purpose	9
Operating Within Constraints	9
The Planning Process and Community Engagement	10
Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) Group	11
Community Meetings.....	11
Working Group.....	11
Outreach Consultant: SKEO	11
Surveys	12
Interactive Map.....	12
Advertising	12
What We Learned	13
Plan Recommendations	14
Parkwide	14
Wayfinding	14
Trails.....	15
Park Access.....	26
Park Activity Areas	35
Shorefield Area	35
Rubini Athletic Complex.....	45
Equestrian Center/Wheaton Park Stables	54
Brookside Nature Center	57
Brookside Gardens	60
Maintenance Yard.....	62
Land Acquisition	65
Natural Resources Stewardship	68
Forests and Wildlife	68
Aquatic Resources.....	68

Public Safety.....	71
Implementation	73
Appendices.....	74
Appendix 1. Guiding Documents	74
Appendix 2. Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) Group Members.....	75
Appendix 3. Community Outreach and Engagement	75
Appendix 4. Working Group Members	75
Appendix 5. SKEO’s work and deliverables	75
Appendix 6. Summary of Survey Results	75
Appendix 7. Summary of Interactive Map Comments.....	75

List of Figures

Figure 1. Wheaton Regional Park and Vicinity, Proximity to Glenmont and Wheaton.	6
Figure 2. Wheaton Regional Park.....	7
Figure 3. Park activity areas for master planning purposes.....	8
Figure 4. Park Topography.	10
Figure 5. Conceptual Connections Map.	16
Figure 6. Map of all trail recommendations	17
Figure 7. Map of hard surface trail recommendations.....	21
Figure 8. Map of natural surface trail modal recommendations.....	24
Figure 9. Map of Recommendations for Park Access, Entrances, Plazas and Transitions.....	28
Figure 10. Map of Recommendations for Bike Amenities, Facilities and Parking	31
Figure 11. Map of Recommendations for Park Access (Non-Parkland).....	34
Figure 12. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Upper Parking Lot Area.	40
Figure 13. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Lower Parking Lot, Map 1.....	41
Figure 14. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Lower Parking Lot, Map 2	42
Figure 15. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Stubbs Barn	43
Figure 16. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Pine Lake and Vicinity.....	44
Figure 17. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 1.....	48
Figure 18. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 2.....	52
Figure 19. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 3.....	53
Figure 20. Recommendations for the Equestrian Center.	56
Figure 21. Recommendations for Brookside Nature Center.	59
Figure 22. 2004 Facility Master Plan	61
Figure 23. Brookside Gardens recommendations.....	61
Figure 24. Recommendations for Wheaton Maintenance Yard.	64
Figure 25. Land Acquisition Recommendations - Shorefield Area.....	66
Figure 26. Land Acquisition Recommendations - Rubini Complex	67
Figure 27. Natural & Aquatic Resources	71

Introduction

This 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan is the first park master plan developed since the Montgomery Park and Planning Board approved drafts of the county's new General Plan *Thrive Montgomery 2050* and the *2022 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan*. As a large regional park in an urban area, Wheaton Regional Park embodies many of the most important priorities of *Thrive* and *PROS*. *Thrive* calls on the Department of Parks to take on new roles to: 1. Serve residents of downtowns, town centers, and other intensively developed areas; and 2. Recognize social engagement and community building as basic purposes, and 3. Encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures.

Building on that direction, *PROS* describes the primary purpose of parks as to encourage physical activity, facilitate social interaction, and steward environmental resources. *PROS* encourages parks to serve multiple functions, serve the needs of a diverse population, provide activities for senior citizens, teenagers, and working-age adults, stay abreast of trends and develop new ones, use parks to tell our shared story as a community, provide much-needed access to nature, and mitigate the impacts of climate.

Wheaton Regional Park not only provides recreational facilities and services for the entire county, but many residents who live nearby to the park consider it to their local park as well.

As a regional park in an urban area, Wheaton Regional Park is exceptionally well-positioned to support this policy direction. Indeed, it embodies these priorities. Wheaton Regional Park is one of five regional parks that serve the whole of Montgomery County, along with Black Hill, Cabin John, Little Bennett, and Rock Creek Regional Parks. Wheaton is the most urban of the county's regional parks and serves a highly diverse population. More than 20,000 people live within a ½ mile walk of the park; nearly 60,000 people live within two miles of the park, an easy bicycling distance; and nearly a quarter of a million people live within four miles of the park.



As a regional park, Wheaton Regional Park provides large-scale facilities with the capacity to serve the entire county, such as the adventure playground, and destination amenities such as the ice rink, carousel, and miniature train. But after a robust public engagement over a number of years – including thousands of comments from hundreds of commenters, dozens of staff and stakeholder meetings, hours and hours in the park, and extensive existing conditions and data analysis –

it was clear that the park serves a critical function for nearby neighbors as well. Wheaton Regional Park not only provides recreational facilities and services for the entire county, but many residents who live near the park consider it their *local* park as well.

Wheaton Regional Park is Montgomery County's regional park, next door. The recommendations in the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan emphasize providing regional-quality facilities that meet the local needs the planning team heard about during the planning process, such as skateboarding opportunities, providing access to nature, soccer fields and courts, community gardens, and refreshing and upgrading many existing amenities.

The recommendations in the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan emphasize providing regional-quality facilities that meet the local needs.

History of the Park

Wheaton Regional Park has a long, rich history. The site was occupied by indigenous peoples for thousands of years beginning as early as 4350 B.C. European settlement of the park area began in the 18th century with the establishment of plantations which relied on enslaved labor through the Civil War.

The land was farmed until 1956 when a master plan establishing Wheaton Regional Park was adopted. At that time, the concept of creating regional parks was new and Wheaton was the first in Montgomery County. The master plan called for the conservancy of over 500 acres for the enjoyment of the growing population. Ground was broken for the park in 1960 with construction taking place over the next 10 years on amenities visitors continue to enjoy today, including the county's first nature center.

The 1987 Master Plan for the park acknowledged the changing needs of the county's population, as well as the need to upgrade aging elements within the park. But the 1987 plan also perpetuated the expectation that visitors would continue to arrive by car, need more internal park roads, and require more parking lots.

The Park Today

Comprised of 538 acres, Wheaton Regional Park is in the lower, eastern part of the county. It is near the Wheaton, Glenmont, and Kemp Mill communities and adjoins Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park to the east. The park is surrounded by residential development and does not have direct frontage on any major roads. To the west are mostly apartment and townhome communities, and to the north, south and east are primarily single-family homes. Light commercial and retail are nearby in Wheaton, Glenmont, and Kemp Mill. Odessa Shannon Middle School, and Saint Andrew Apostle Church and School, adjoin the park along the eastern edge.

The park is within walking and biking distance of both Wheaton Metro Station and Central Business District, as well as Glenmont Metro Station. It is also well-served by both major and minor roads, including Georgia Avenue (MD 97), Randolph Road, Kemp Mill Road, Arcola Avenue, Shorefield Road, Orebaugh Avenue, Nairn Road, Hermitage Avenue, Henderson Avenue, Parker Avenue, and Old Randolph Road. Bus service in the area is generally good, but there are currently no direct connections to the park.



Figure 1. Wheaton Regional Park and Vicinity, Proximity to Glenmont and Wheaton.

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

EXISTING CONDITIONS - BASEMAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
— Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
— HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS	Water Area
— Shared by All	Athletic Field
--- Hiker/Equestrian	Dog Park
--- Hiker Only	Playground
--- Biker Only	Buildings
PARK AMENITIES	
⊙ Playground	
⊙ Dog Park	
⊙ Brookside Gardens Visitor Center	
⊙ Brookside Nature Center	
⊙ Wheaton Stables	
⊙ Heart Smart Trail	
⊙ Restroom	
⊙ Water Fountain	
⊙ Picnic Area	
⊙ Bike Rack	
⊙ Pedestrian Crossing	
⊙ Bus Stop	



Figure 2. Wheaton Regional Park



Plan Areas

For the purposes of this plan, the park is divided into the following six distinct park activity areas and a regional maintenance yard. The plan also makes parkwide recommendations. The activity areas are:

Brookside Gardens, 54 acres, including a visitor center, conservatory, gardens and ponds, pagoda, hard surface trails, maintenance area, and parking lots.

Shorefield Area, 77 acres, including an adventure playground, carousel, miniature train, picnic areas, Pine Lake, Stubbs Barn, hard surface trails, restrooms, and parking lots.

Rubini Athletic Complex, 50 acres, including diamond athletic fields, tennis bubble, ice rink, sports pavilion, dog park, outdoor tennis courts, full-sized basketball court, hard surface trails, rest rooms, and parking lots.

Forest/Wooded Area, 303 acres, including natural surface trails, hard surface trails, equestrian riding center and stables, riding rink, pastures, and parking.

Brookside Nature Center, 23 acres, including a nature center, ancillary buildings, historic cabin, pond, and parking.

Maintenance Yard, 4 acres, including the main building and offices, vehicle maintenance bays, fuel pumps, and employee parking.

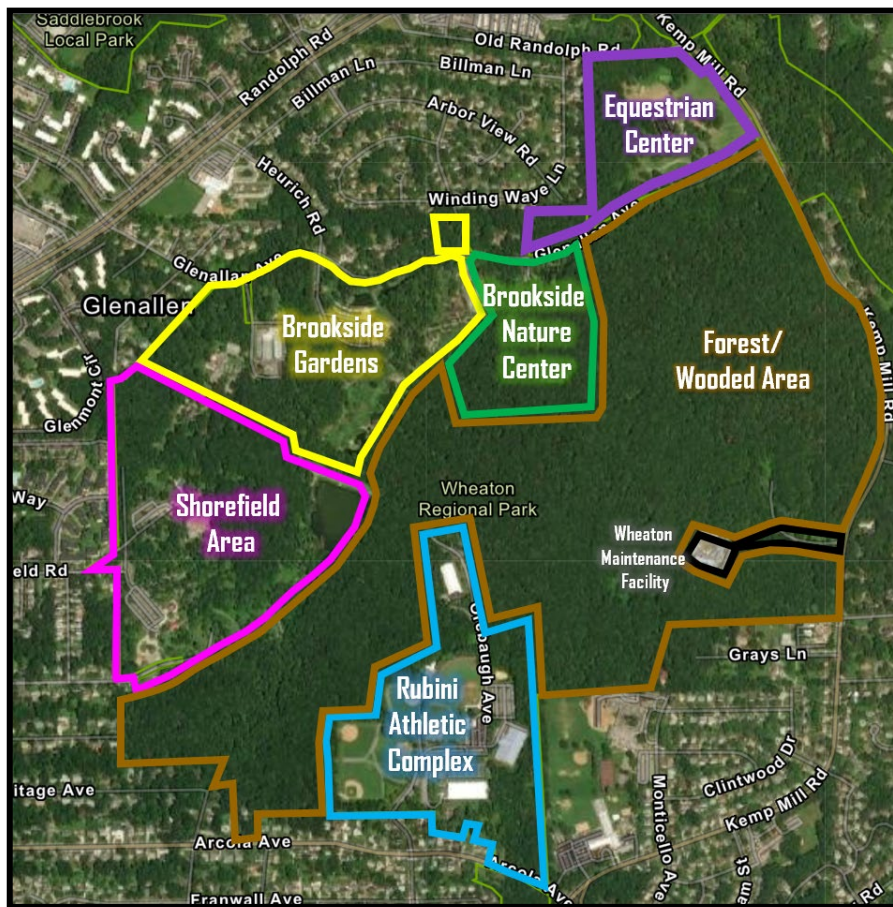


Figure 3. Park activity areas for master planning purposes

Purpose

The purpose of the 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan is to update the 1987 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan. A park master plan offers guidance to the Department's six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which implements the recommendations of the plan among other projects and public investments. A park master plan establishes priorities for park improvements over the next 15-20 years to better serve existing and future park users, and the surrounding communities.

This plan provides an overall vision for Wheaton Regional Park to modernize the County's premier large park in the eastern down county. It is already a destination for families and sports enthusiasts, but the purpose of this plan is to better serve the broad diversity of people living in this area of the county, as well as their diverse recreational interests.

Much of this plan focuses on modernizing and upgrading existing facilities, but the plan also recommends several new facilities to better meet the needs of an urbanizing, diverse population.



Operating Within Constraints

Most of the park is forested, as well as topographically and environmentally constrained. Nearly all the land suitable for development in the park has been developed over the years. There is minimal flat, unconstrained land remaining. As a result, this plan is primarily focused on redeveloping, expanding, and repurposing existing facilities and amenities. Where new development is proposed, the land has been evaluated to minimize impacts on high quality natural resources and wildlife habitat.

Significant park constraints include:

- Topography – Limited flat and unforested land exist in the park for the development of new amenities. See Figure 4.
- Sensitive environmental resources, including streams, stream buffers, floodplains, wetlands, erodible soils, steep slopes, rare, threatened, and endangered (RTE) species habitat.
- Limited park expansion potential via land acquisition due to surrounding residential development and institutions.
- Poor public visibility due to lack of direct frontage along major roads.

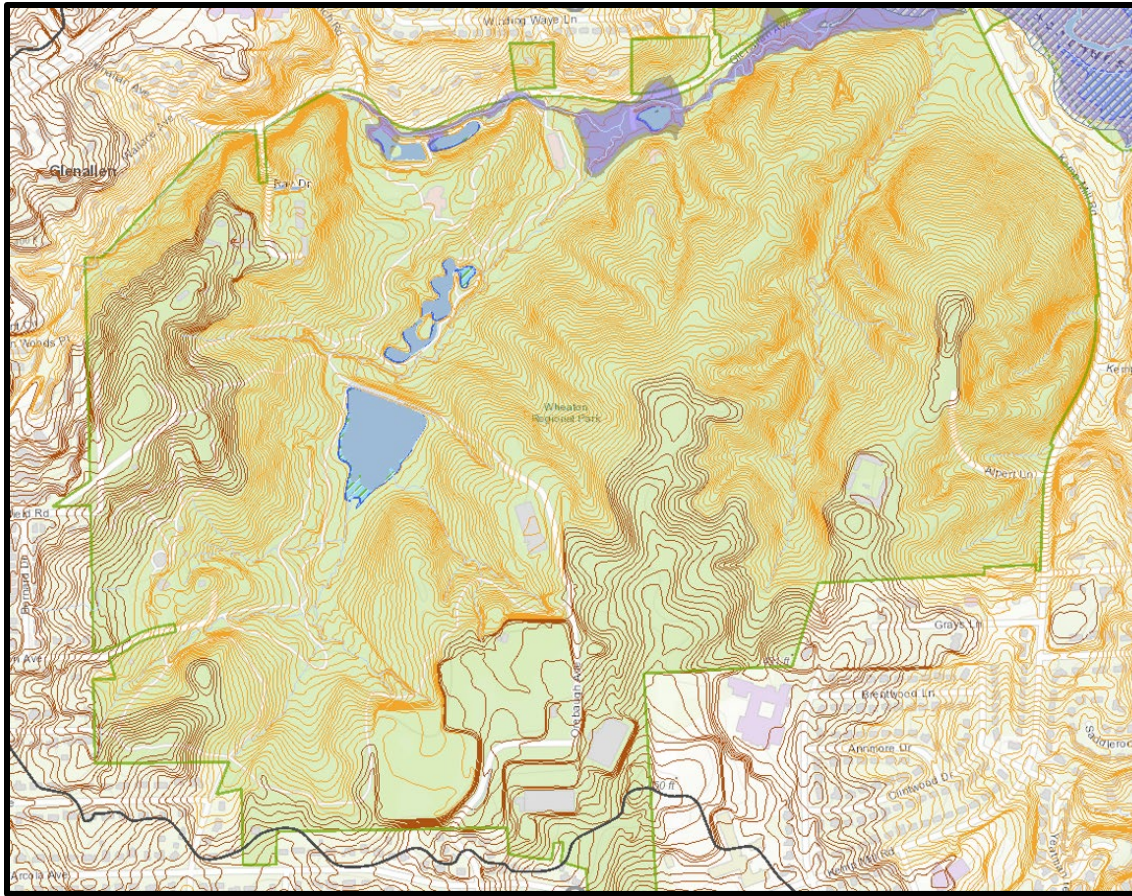


Figure 4. Park Topography.



The Planning Process and Community Engagement

The communities that surround Wheaton Regional Park are more densely populated and diverse than other regional parks in the county. Therefore, the outreach and community engagement needed to be robust and comprehensive. Park planners worked with staff from the Department's Public Affairs and Community Partnerships (PACP) Division to ensure that all communities were heard during the park master plan process, especially historically under-represented communities. Nearly 50 percent of residents who live within a mile of the park speak a language other than English at home, so outreach and community engagement were conducted in multiple languages whenever feasible, most notably Spanish and Mandarin.

Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) Group

Park planners met with a group of park staff, including park managers, natural and cultural resource staff, trails staff, park development division engineers and landscape architects, park police, and other subject matter experts to assess existing conditions, analyze possible improvements, and vet recommendations. Having a PDCO for a park master plan is critical to ensure that park master plan recommendations are reasonable, desirable, achievable, and cost-effective. Members of this group can be found in Appendix 2. Planning, Design, Construction and Operations (PDCO) Group Members

Community Meetings

Parks staff organized and hosted two broad community meetings, in both English and Spanish, and were held in the middle of the planning process to solicit ideas, suggestions, and comments (January 2020), and near the end of the planning process, to share preliminary plan recommendations (September 2021).

The team also met with numerous community and neighborhood groups to discuss the plan and seek comments and ideas in a more relaxed setting. A full list of all community outreach and engagement, including meetings with residents and community organizations, can be found in Appendix 3.

Working Group

Park planners and staff from the Public Affairs and Community Partnerships Division (PACP) created a standing working group, comprised of representatives from the community as well as representatives from nearby schools and civic organizations. This group met frequently during the park master plan process, offering guidance, advice, and comments on not only draft plan recommendations, but also community engagement strategies and community-wide issues related to the park and the surrounding neighborhoods. Members of this working group are listed in Appendix 4.

Outreach Consultant: SKEO

A consultant, SKEO, based in Charlottesville, Virginia and specializing in equitable community engagement, was hired to help the Department reach and obtain comments from residents and stakeholders who are harder to engage. SKEO organized and led meetings with representatives from Kemp Mill's Orthodox Jewish community, as well as Asian-American youth and Latinx residents in nearby communities. A full description of SKEO's work and deliverables can be found in Appendix 5.

Surveys

Project staff conducted hundreds of intercept surveys in multiple languages, most notably Mandarin, Spanish, and English, both in the park and at nearby shopping centers, and garnered more than a thousand additional survey responses using an online survey tool as part of the Department's online Town Hall. A summary of survey results can be found in Appendix 6 and are highlighted extensively throughout the Plan Recommendations chapter.

Interactive Map

An interactive map was also posted online. More than 100 residents and stakeholders posted comments on the map in the following categories: "I Like This", "This Need Work" and "Ideas and Suggestions." A summary of the comments can be found in Appendix 7.

Advertising

During Fall 2020, Montgomery Parks ran bus ads, digital pop-up ads on phones as well as ads on Radio America and El Tiempo Latino, all designed to get residents to complete the online survey. Ads appeared in English, Spanish and Mandarin. These ads generated nearly one million impressions and over 3,400 clicks (to access the survey). See sample ads below.



What We Learned



Figure 4. Illustration of feedback gathered during the Wheaton Regional Park Community Outreach and Engagement Process

Montgomery Parks analyzed and summarized nearly 2,000 comments and survey results. See image above for a graphic summary of what we heard. Complete results of the surveys and the interactive map can be found in Appendix 6. Here is a brief summary of some highlights:

Area of the park you used or visited most often

1. Brookside Gardens – 38%
2. Wooded Area/Natural Surface Trails – 27%
3. Shorefield Area (playground, carousel, miniature train) – 16%

Top 3 facilities or amenities to you or your family

1. Brookside Gardens
2. Natural Surface Trails
3. Hard Surface Trails

Top 3 facilities you would like to see added

1. Nature play area
2. Community Garden
3. Skate Park

The recommendations that follow incorporate what we learned and heard from not only residents and park visitors, but also an internal working group of park staff who helped shape the recommendations and ensure they were realistic and achievable. The recommendations reflect a balance between improvements desired by the community and staff analysis plus departmental priorities.

Plan Recommendations

The plan recommendations are organized by parkwide recommendations and activity area recommendations. Recommendations for facilities located entirely within one of the park activity areas can be found in the relevant park activity area. For example, recommendations for the adventure playground and carousel can be found in the Shorefield Area section. Recommendations for facilities or park features that cross-park activity areas boundaries are grouped in the parkwide sections. For example, recommendations for natural resources and park trails can be found under Parkwide. Each section describes the relevant area, summarizes what we heard during our existing conditions analysis and community engagement, and provides an analysis and recommendations.

Parkwide

Wayfinding

Wheaton Regional Park is within easy walking and biking distance of tens of thousands of county residents, as well as downtown Wheaton and two Metrorail Stations. But it's not easy to find. The surrounding road network lacks directional signs to help people travel to a park entrance. Once in the park, a robust and comprehensive trail system is ready to enjoy, but again these trails lack effective signs that orient visitors and help them navigate from one park area to another.

Signs are one of the easiest ways to enhance the park user experience: directional/wayfinding, informational, interpretive, safety and regulatory. If park visitors know where to find specific park features and know how to navigate the park on trails to reach those destinations, they will be able to not only stay longer, but also avoid having to hop in the car to travel between park areas. Likewise, good way-finding signs along the surrounding road network can also help nearby residents and visitors access different areas of the park without the need for a car.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

The park does not have direct frontage along surrounding roads, and many residents feel like it's a hidden gem. Visitors arriving at both the Shorefield entrance, and the Rubini Complex entrance feel disoriented, not knowing how to effectively travel to specific facilities or destinations in those park areas or find other park areas when they are lost (arrive at the wrong entrance). Signs along the surrounding and nearby roads help visitors find and access Brookside Gardens, but not the rest of the park. Once in the park, there are no signs that help orient visitors to where they are within the park nor how they can get from one park area to another using the trail system.

Analysis and Recommendations

The park and the roads leading to it do not have effective directional or wayfinding signs. Park entrances are not as clearly marked as they could be. Overall, the park visitor experience would be greatly improved if a comprehensive sign plan were developed.

- Create a comprehensive sign plan for the entire park that includes directional/wayfinding, interpretive, informational, regulatory and safety signs.
- Coordinate with Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County Department of Transportation to improve wayfinding signs along surrounding state and county roads.

Trails

Montgomery Parks surveys repeatedly indicate that trails are the most popular facilities in the county park system. Wheaton Regional Park is no different. Trails offer opportunities for contemplative experiences, physical activity and fitness, and social gatherings. Trails are open whenever the park is open (generally dawn to dusk, 24/7/365) and can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds. Trails are how people access and experience the park's wooded areas to find a genuine respite from the stresses of daily life. Wheaton Regional Park contains 5.5 miles of existing natural surface trails and 4.75 miles of existing hard surface trails (including Brookside Garden's Heart Smart trail). These trails are used for walking, hiking, running, biking, horseback riding, nature center programming, and natural resource-based activities such as birdwatching and photography.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

Natural surface and hard surface trails passing through wooded areas in the park are among the most popular and heavily used facilities in the park. Visitors enjoy the quiet and solitude, as well as opportunities to feel immersed in nature. Visitors also appreciate having a pleasant, car-free place to exercise, whether it's running, jogging, bicycling or just walking or hiking. Additionally, equestrians also greatly appreciate the opportunity to ride horses on trails, one of the few places in the county that offers beginner trail rides. A resounding comment is the desire to introduce mountain bikes to some of the natural surface trails.

Additional comments or observations:

- Wheaton Regional Park regional park currently consists of separate, disconnected nodes. Trails should connect the disparate park areas.
- Park users often feel disoriented and want improved wayfinding.
- Existing trails are beloved, but surface conditions are frequently poor, both on hard surface and natural surface trails.
- Hiking-only trails are valued by many users.
- Bicycle access to natural surface trails and bicycle-specific experiences are strongly desired by many community members.
- Beginner horseback riders and special program participants need designated equestrian-hiking trails.
- Please minimize conflicts between trail user groups (horses and bikes, horses and walkers/hikers, bikes and walkers/hikers).
- Ensure opportunities for quiet/contemplative experiences; limit some trails to only hiking.
- Improve trail access and connectivity between park activity areas.
- Renovate aging and deteriorating hard surface trails.
- Improve access for people with physical disabilities.
- Enforce dog leash laws.

Analysis and Recommendations

The recommendations in the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan seek to provide multiuse trails, which include bicycles, to all park destinations; offer new shared hiking-equestrian natural surface trails; maintain select hiking-only natural surface trails; improve safety in parking areas; and enhance the user experience through signs, maps, wayfinding, and other amenities.

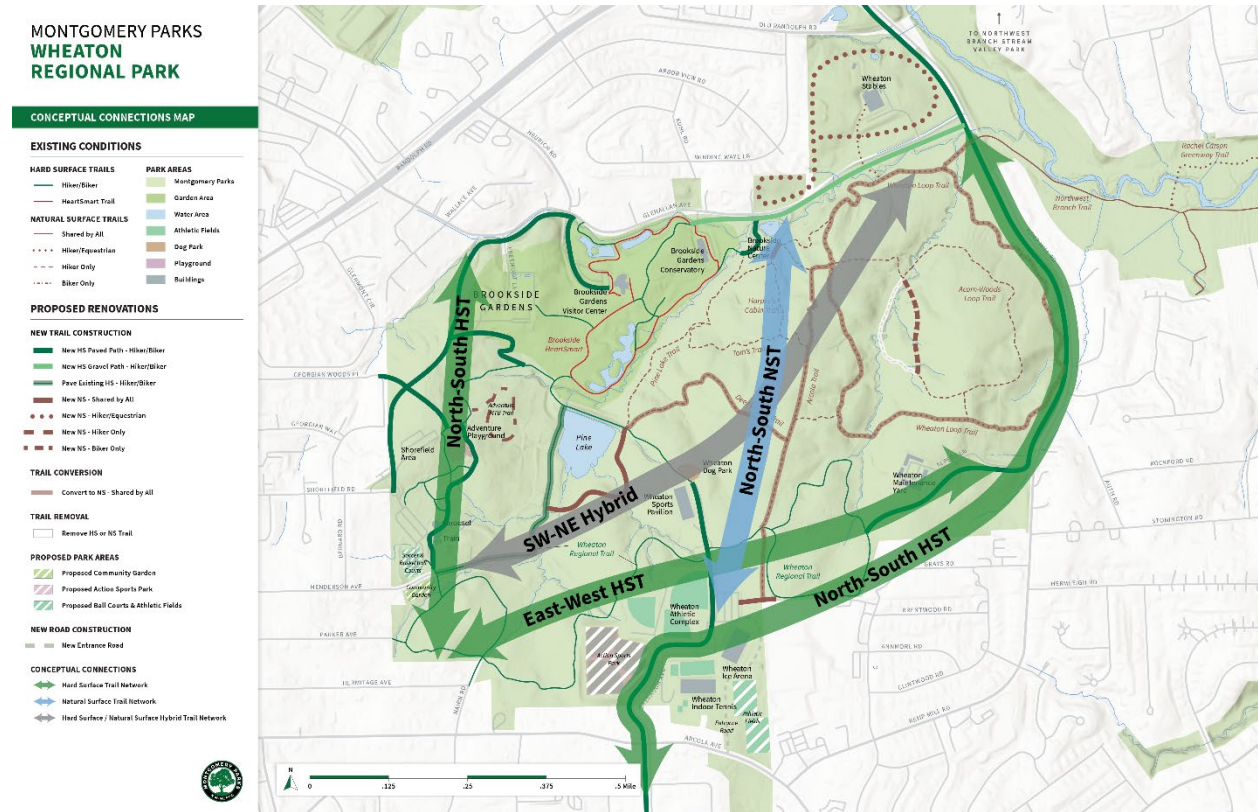


Figure 5. Conceptual Connections Map.

The trail recommendations in the plan provide connected paved, natural surface, and hybrid-surface connections to all key park destinations and make north-south and east-west connections for travel through the park.

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

ALL TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS	Water Area
Shared by All	Athletic Fields
..... Hiker/Equestrian	Dog Park
..... Hiker Only	Playground
..... Biker Only	Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
- New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
- Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
- New NS - Shared by All
- New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- New NS - Hiker Only
- New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

TRAIL RESURFACING & RENOVATION

- HS Resurfacing*
- NS Renovate-in-Place*

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road

*Final extents to be determined during project design and all trails to be considered for renovation and resurfacing

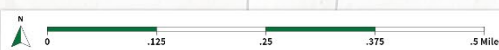


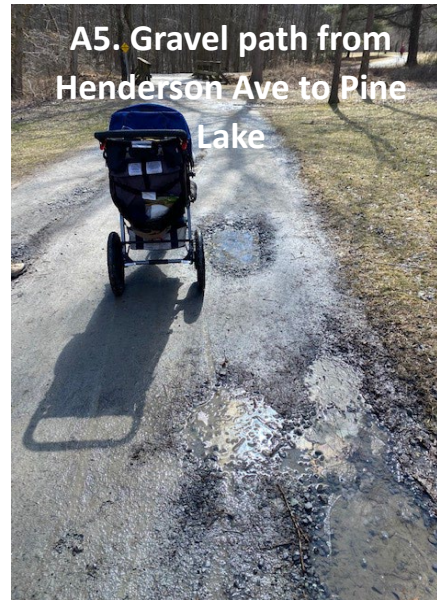
Figure 6. Map of all trail recommendations

Table 1. Hard Surface Trail Recommendations

Map Code	Recommendation	Details / Comments	Time Frame
Global	Perform regular inspections of hard surface trail conditions and conduct spot improvements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate tripping hazards and areas that pool water and maintain an intact edge. 	On-going
A1	Construct hard surface trail from Shorefield Drive to Brookside Garden. Include connector trails from Georgian Woods Place, the existing hard surface Wheaton Regional Trail, and the Shorefield upper parking area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pave the existing access road. The alignment from the access road to Glennallen Ave will be evaluated during the design phase, based on conditions at the time of the project, to determine if it will follow the stream restoration work or use the high land by the fence/barn. Provide ADA paths from the parking area and the proposed Georgian Woods Place entrance to proposed pavilion. Add a trail connection from the existing Wheaton Hard Surface Trail past the adult workout area to new access road to Glennallen Ave trail. Consistent with: Shorefield Area Concept Plan: Wheaton Regional Park Shorefield Area Improvements, June 15, 2017 	Medium
A2	Construct hard surface trail from Wheaton Regional Trail at Henderson Ave trail to the Wheaton Regional Trail at the Adventure Playground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widen existing connector path through picnic area and playground to allow safer multimodal use. Improve trail safety adjacent to the playground to mitigate user conflicts between playground users and trail users. 	Medium
A3	Construct hard surface trail from the current Wheaton Region Trail terminus at the dog park and Sports Pavilion to the Orebaugh Ave park entrance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide safer bicycle and pedestrian connection from the current trail at the dog park through or around the several parking areas to the park entrance at Orebaugh Ave. During detailed design, consider a re-design of the existing connect connector trail adjacent to the ball fields. Reconfigure the parking area for more intuitive motorized vehicle movements. Consistent with: 2016 Countywide Park Trail Master Plan: Sligo Creek Trail to Matthew Henson Trail & In-progress facility plan for Kemp Mill Road. 	Short
A4	Construct hard surface trail from the Wheaton Regional Trail eastern loop to Randolph Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a separated bicycle and pedestrian connection through the park and along Kemp Mill Rd. Consistent with: 2016 Countywide Park Trail Master Plan: Sligo Creek Trail to Matthew Henson Trail & In-progress facility plan for Kemp Mill Road. 	Short
A5	Pave existing gravel road from Henderson Ave to Pine Lake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pave rutted and hazardous gravel path. Study spillway area by Pine Lake. 	Short
A6	Renovate Wheaton Regional Trail from Parker Ave to eastern loop (inclusive of southern section of the loop).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail widths are subject to specific on-site analysis previously conducted by PPSD Trails and Resource Analysis staff. Prioritized in Hard Surface Renovation PDF analysis. Eastern section is included in the in-progress Kemp Mill Road facility plan. 	Short

A7	Establish a trail connection between Brookside Nature Center to Brookside Gardens Conservatory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection would provide an alternative to Glenallen Ave. • Trail surface type and alignment to be determine with consultation with Brookside Gardens and Nature Center staff. 	Medium
A8	Path from Brookside Gardens Conservatory to Kemp Mill Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve pedestrian access and safety on Glennallen Ave. • Vertical element to restrict parking. • Provide direct trail access to Brookside Gardens Conservatory and Brookside Nature Center from Northwest Branch Trail. • Pending additional study by PPSD Resource Analysis and Trails staff. 	Short

Hard Surface Trail Existing Condition Photos



MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

HARD SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
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NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

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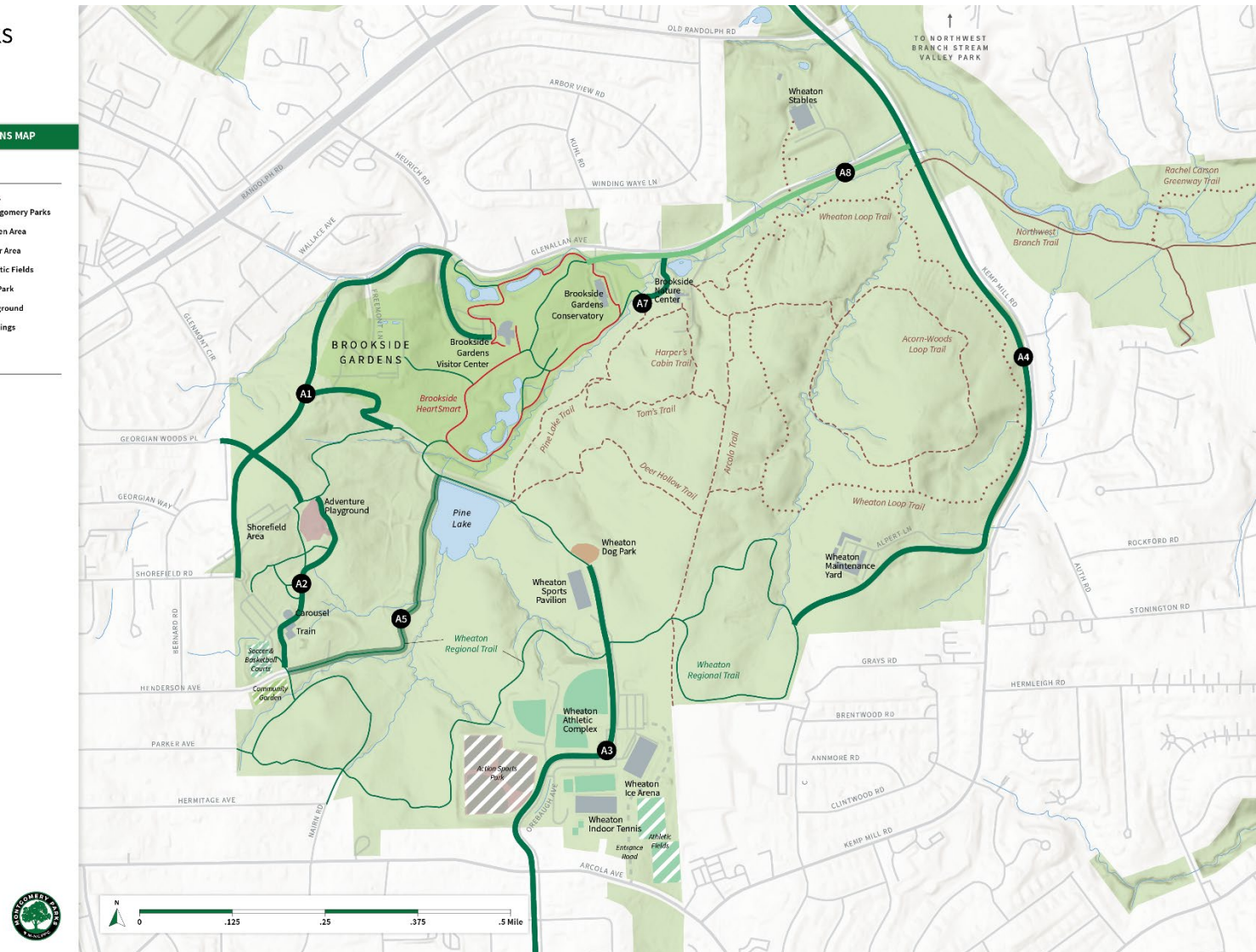


Figure 7. Map of hard surface trail recommendations.

Table 2. Natural surface trail recommendations

Map Code	Recommendation	Details / Comments	Time Frame
Global	Conduct comprehensive inspection of natural surface trail condition. Renovate trails in place, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific condition-improvement recommendations that are known at the time of the plan publication are made separately (B9-B13). • "Renovate-in-place" means improvements are done in the original trail corridor. "Re-route" trail improvement require that the trail be moved to a new alignment. Re-route project may require additional consultation with cultural and natural resource staff members. 	Immediate
Global	Continue Trail Ranger inspections to identify trail-condition issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail Rangers receive training on identifying and reporting trail issues. • WRP Trail Rangers will be asked to monitor compliance with modal designations as modified in this plan and suggest additional educational or signage improvements that may be needed. 	On-going
B1	Construct equestrian-hiking trail adjacent to Wheaton Horse Stable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide equestrian trails for beginner riders and programmed therapy rides. • Allow access for hikers. • Construct new equestrian trails (B1) prior to changing modal designation on horse loop (B8) 	Immediate/ Short
B2	Construct new multi-use natural surface trail along the southeast edge of Pine Lake.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the Wheaton Regional Trail at the natural surface trailhead to the existing gravel path on the west side of Pike Lake (A5). • Restrict use of existing people's choice trail. • Inspect existing pedestrian bridge on people's choice trail. 	Short
B3	Convert people's choice trail to an official, multi-use trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Arcola Trail (current name) to Wheaton Ice Arena parking area. 	Short
B4	Construct a trail connection through or around the Brookside Nature Center parking lot.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From nature center boardwalk loop to Tom's Loop connector trail. 	Short
B5	Close a western section of the Acorn Woods Trail (inner loop trail) and re-route the trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing trail requires repairs to two bridges/culverts. • Re-route trail to an alignment the meets Parks trail guidelines. 	Short
Global	Provide public information on trail designation changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to change modal use of trails, provide users with advanced notice with on-trail signs and social media. 	Immediate/ Short
Global	Label modal designations on trail signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In coordination with the signage and wayfinding effort, update trail signs to indicate new modal designations. 	Short
B6	Convert Deer Hollow Trail to multi-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides connection from Pine Lake to multi-use natural surface trails. 	Short
B7	Convert Arcola Trail to multi-use and change name to the North-South Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides north-south connection through the park. 	Short

B8	Convert the Wheaton Loop Trail to multi-use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include the spur connection to Kemp Mill Road. • Provides recreational loop for all users and connection to Northwest Branch Trail. 	Short
B9	Renovate existing Pine Lake Trail from paved towards Tom's Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate-in-place • Existing trail is poorly aligned and is prone to erosion. • Re-name trail 	Short
B10	Renovate the hiking-only trail from Arcola/North-South Trail to the Brookside Nature Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate-in-place 	Short
B11	Renovate eastern portion of Deer Hollow Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate-in-place 	Short
B12	Renovate Arcola/North-South Trail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate-in-place 	Short
B13	Renovate northeastern section of the Wheaton Loop Trail (outer loop) and the spur connection to Kemp Mill Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovate-in-place 	Short
B14	Construct a Mountain Bike Adventure Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single direction natural surface mountain biking trail. • Target age: teenagers. • Difficulty: beginner/moderate. • Construct observation platform. 	Short

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

NATURAL SURFACE TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
	Water Area
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS	Athletic Fields
Shared by All	Dog Park
..... Hiker/Equestrian	Playground
--- Hiker Only	Buildings
..... Biker Only	

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

- New NS - Shared by All
- New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
- New NS - Hiker Only
- New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

- Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

- Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

- Proposed Community Garden
- Proposed Action Sports Park
- Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

- New Entrance Road



Figure 8. Map of natural surface trail modal recommendations.

Natural Surface Trail Existing Condition Photos



**B2. People's
choice trail at
Pine Lake**



**B2. Bridge on people's
choice trail at Pine Lake**



**B13. Closed former
gravel access road**



**B10. Wide, muddy
section of Arcola
Trail (current name)**



**B9. Wide section
of Pine Lake Trail
(current name)**



**B11. Erosion on a
"fall-line" trail**



**Modal
Designation
Sign**

Park Access

Wheaton Regional Park was primarily built during the county's history when most residents traveled by private automobiles. In fact, the park's current design and configuration reflects this legacy with large parking lots that are difficult to navigate on-foot or by bicycle. Access by walking and biking can be generally characterized as poor. Additionally, the roads leading to and circumventing the park often lack sidewalks or bike paths, and where they do exist, the conditions are often poor or inadequate and do not feel safe. And while transit service in the communities that surround the park is generally good, direct transit access to the park is non-existent. The park is within easy walking or biking distance from both Wheaton and Glenmont Metro Stations.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

There are limited entrances for people walking and biking and welcome signage and maps are missing. It is not easy getting to the park by means other than driving. More park users would travel to the park by walking, biking, and transit if facilities were added or improved. Georgia Avenue, for example, is a barrier for safe walking and biking to the park from communities west of the road. Intersections do not feel safe. It is also not easy traveling from one park activity area to another.

Analysis and Recommendations

Park entrances should be added and formalized to support pedestrian access to the park. Bike parking racks should be added to provide secure bike storage. The transition between Wheaton Regional Park and Brookside Gardens should be enhanced and made more welcoming.

This plan only has jurisdiction on M-NCPPC parkland. Some of the issues identified by both the community and internal stakeholders are specific to the park and will be included in the plan. But some issues will require input from and coordination with external agencies. For example, improvements to the Georgia Avenue intersections will require discussions with the Maryland State Highway Administration. And sidewalk, bike path and transit improvements along roads surround the park (excluding Georgia Avenue) will need to be discussed with the County's Department of Transportation.

Table 3. Recommendations for Park Access, Entrances, Plazas and Transitions

Map Code	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
C1	Develop an inviting transition plaza between Wheaton Regional Park trails and Brookside Gardens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic tables and benches • Expanded bike parking (D10) • Kiosk with park & trail map and park information • Bike Fix-It Station and pump 	Medium
Global	Create welcoming entryways to Wheaton Regional Park at bicycle and pedestrian entrances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pedestrian and bicycle entrances of the park. 	On-going
C2	Improve park entrance at Orebaugh Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike 	Short
C3	Formalize entrance /park map at Nairn Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike 	Short
C4	Formalize entrance /park map at Parker Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike 	Short
C5	Refresh existing kiosk and Sligo Trail Map at Henderson Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike 	Short
C6	New public park entrance at Georgian Woods Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike • Timing determined by the paving of the gravel access road (A1) 	Medium
C7	Add park welcome sign and park map kiosk at Kemp Mill Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome information for park users entering by foot and bike 	Short
C8	New public park entrance at Alpert Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian and bicycle scale signs • Timing determined by Kemp Mill Trail Project (A4) 	Medium
C9	Park & Trail network map at hard surface Wheaton Regional Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At road crossing between Athletic Complex and dog park 	Short
C11	Call box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At road crossing between Athletic Complex and dog park 	Medium
C12	Call box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Shorefield Road upper parking area / Adventure playground 	Medium
C13	Enhance access to the lake to improve the fishing experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a floating dock and/or boardwalks closer to the lake 	Medium

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

PARK ACCESS, ENTRANCE, & PLAZA MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS	Water Area
Shared by All	Athletic Fields
Hiker/Equestrian	Dog Park
Hiker Only	Playground
Biker Only	Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
New NS - Shared by All
New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
New NS - Hiker Only
New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

Proposed Community Garden
Proposed Action Sports Park
Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

New Entrance Road

PROPOSED PARK FEATURES

Plaza
Park Map
Park Entrance Information
Call Box
Park Access (Non-Parkland)



Figure 9. Map of Recommendations for Park Access, Entrances, Plazas and Transitions

Entrance and Plaza Existing Condition Photographs



Table 4. Recommendations for Bike Amenities, Facilities and Parking

Map Code	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
Global	Use racks that meet Montgomery County Bike Parking standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally inverted U's unless otherwise specified or desired. • Monitor use and add capacity as needed. 	On-going
D1	Install 8 bike racks	• Orebaugh Ave Tennis Courts (4) and Ballfields (4).	Short
D2	Install 2 bike racks	• Wheaton Ice Arena.	Short
D3	Install 4 bike racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheaton Sports Pavilion & Dog Park. • Determine via site visit at time of installation whether to concentrate the racks at the Pavilion entrance or split between the Pavilion entrance and the dog park. 	Short
D4	Install 2 bike racks	• At transition between multiuse trails and hiking-only Pine Lake Trail (current name, subject to change).	Short
D5	Install 10 bike racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At carousel and train. • Bike fix-it station and pump. 	Short
D6	Install 3 bike racks	• Adventure Playground.	Short
D7	Install 2 bike racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At new public park entrance at Georgian Woods Pl. • Placement should consider site-lines for visibility in this fairly wooded area. 	Short
D8	Expand existing bike racks to 6-8	• At plaza (C1).	Short
D9	Install 6 bike racks	• Brookside Gardens Visitor Center.	Short
D10	Install 4 bike racks	• Replace existing bike rack.	Immediate
D11	Install 4 bike racks	• Brookside Nature Center	Short
D12	Install 4 bike racks	• Glenallen at Kemp Mill Road	Short
D13	Install 2 bike racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pedestrian and bicycle entrance at Kemp Mill and Alpert Lane • Timing dependent on new trail connection (A4) 	Medium

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

BIKE AMENITIES MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
	Water Area
NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS	Athletic Fields
Shared by All	Dog Park
Hiker/Equestrian	Playground
Hiker Only	Buildings
Biker Only	

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
New NS - Shared by All
New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
New NS - Hiker Only
New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

Proposed Community Garden
Proposed Action Sports Park
Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

New Entrance Road

BIKE AMENITIES

Bike Racks

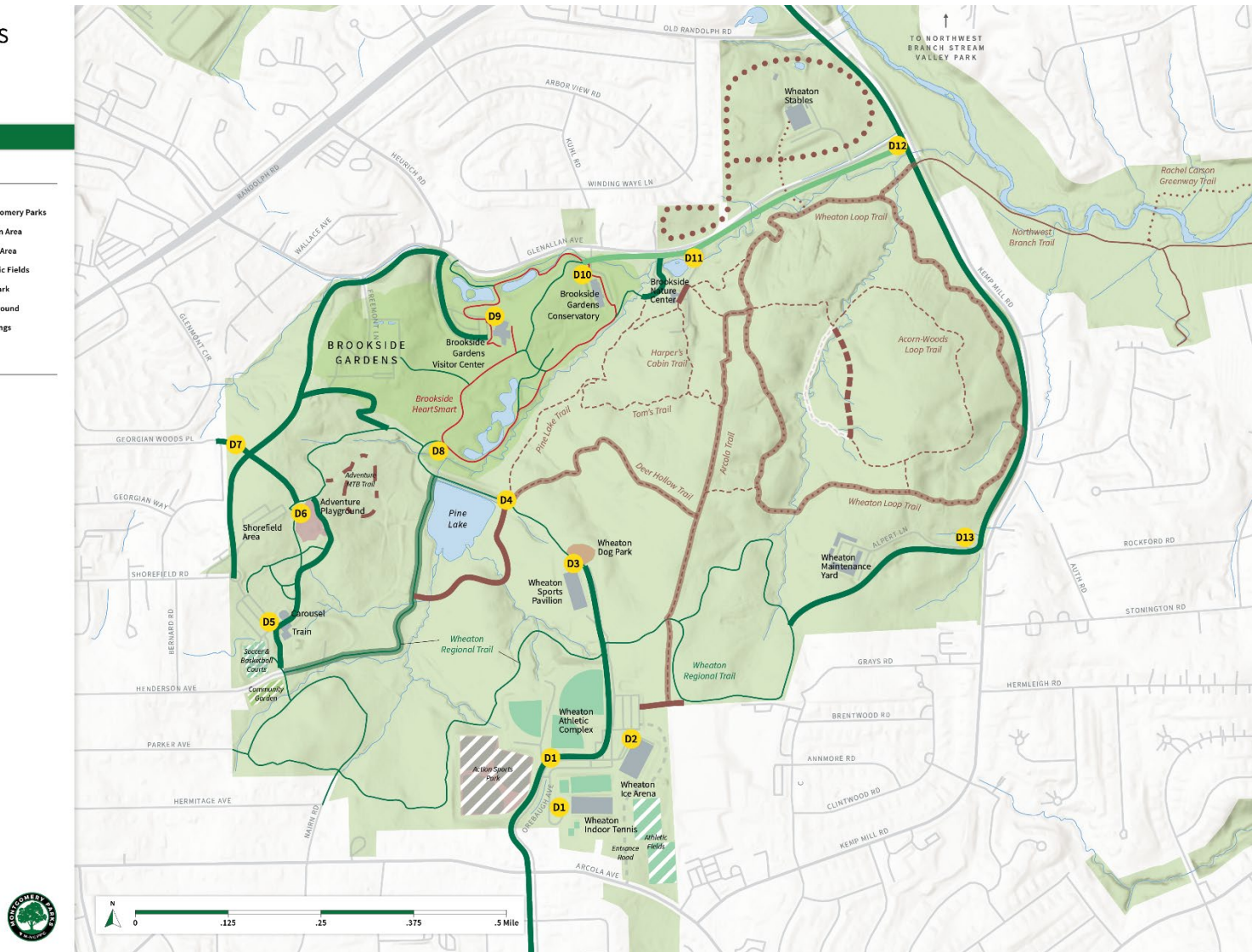


Figure 10. Map of Recommendations for Bike Amenities, Facilities and Parking

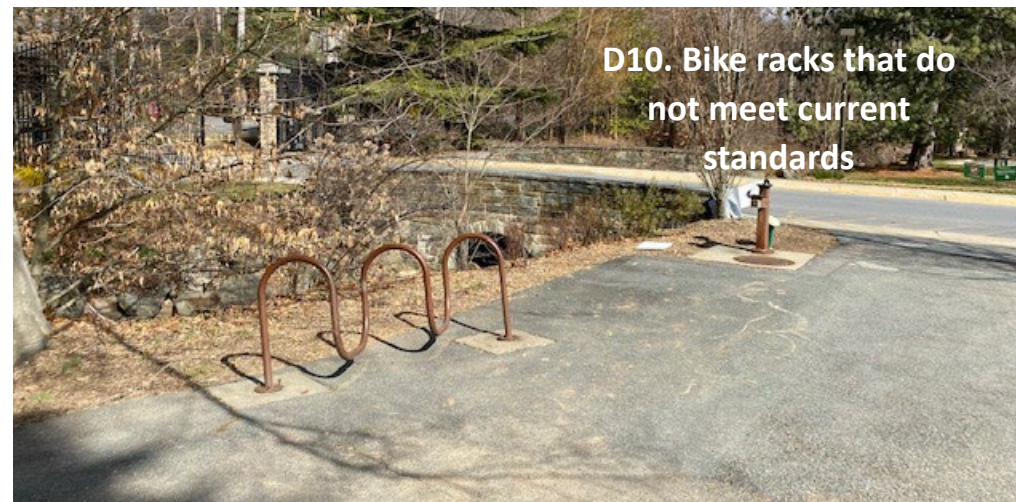


Table 5. Recommendations for Park Access (Non-Parkland)

Map Code	Recommendation
Global	Incorporate Wheaton Regional Park access into transportation, sector, and functional plans
Global	Study bus access to Wheaton Regional Park
F1	Improve the safety of pedestrian crossings of Georgia Avenue. Long-term recommendation.
F1	Mid-block crossing at Library and Hermitage
F2	Build trail in MCDOT ROW from Amherst to Henderson
F3	On-street bicycle facilities on Shorefield Road. [Shared Use Path is in Bicycle Master Plan. Refer to Complete Street Guidelines.]
F4	Improve bicycle and pedestrian access along and across Glenallan
F5	Study lowering the speed limit on Randolph Road
F6	Improve bicycle or trail connection to Matthew Henson Trail
F7	Improve bicycle or trail connections and wayfinding to Sligo Creek Trail. Consider HAWK at Orebaugh.
F8	Improve crossing safety at Alpert Lane to proposed park entrance
F9	Improve crossing safety of Glenallan Ave
F10	Improve crossing safety of Glenallan Ave at Heurich Rd.
F11	Explore CaBi station at Shorefield entrance
F13	Gateway (Georgia Ave)

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

PARK ACCESS (NON-PARKLAND) MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
HeartSmart Trail	Garden Area
Shared by All	Water Area
Hiker/Equestrian	Athletic Fields
Hiker Only	Dog Park
Biker Only	Playground
	Buildings

PROPOSED RENOVATIONS

NEW TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

New HS Paved Path - Hiker/Biker
New HS Gravel Path - Hiker/Biker
Pave Existing HS - Hiker/Biker
New NS - Shared by All
New NS - Hiker/Equestrian
New NS - Hiker Only
New NS - Biker Only

TRAIL CONVERSION

Convert to NS - Shared by All

TRAIL REMOVAL

Remove HS or NS Trail

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

Proposed Community Garden
Proposed Action Sports Park
Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

PARK ACCESS

Non-Parkland
Crossing

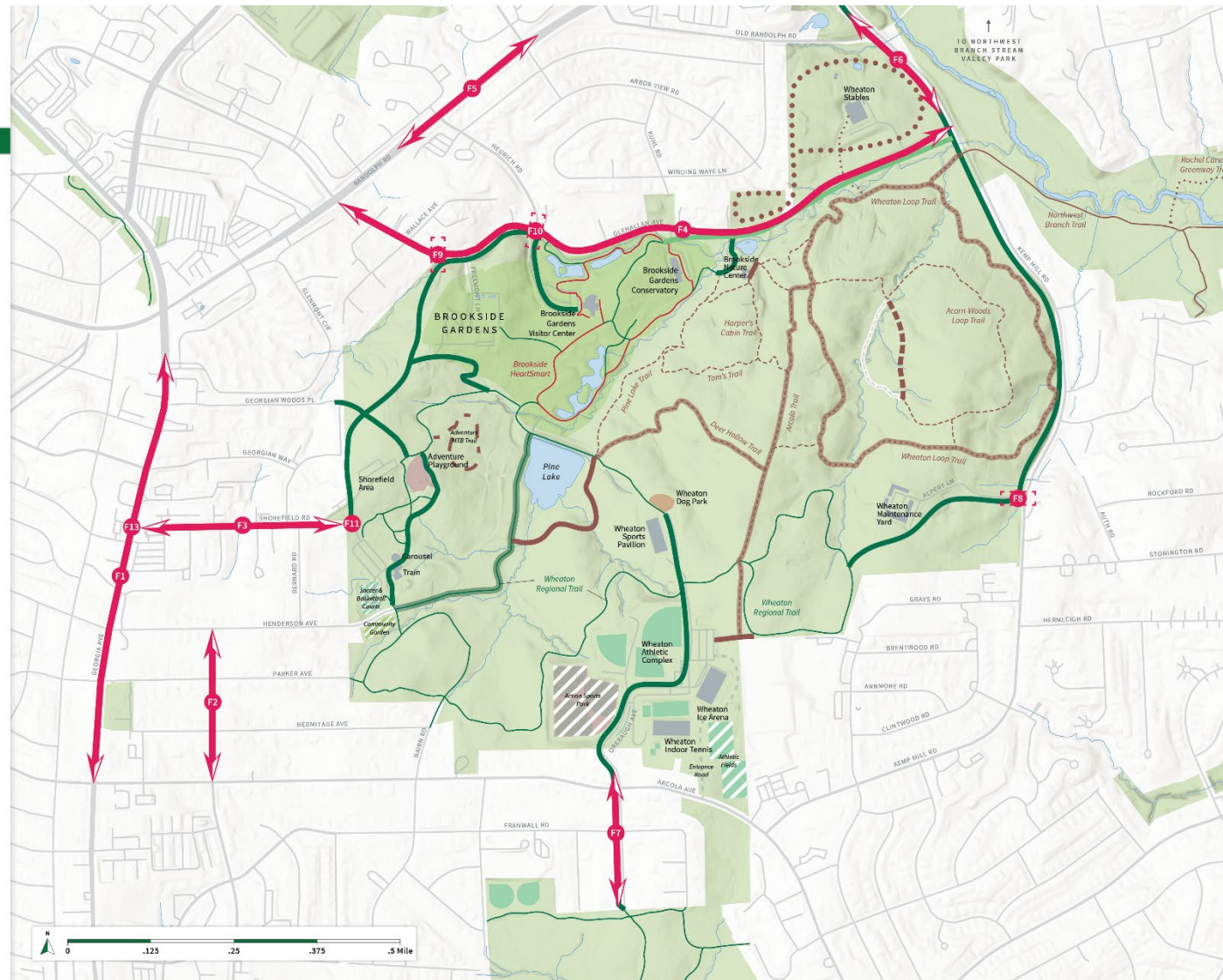
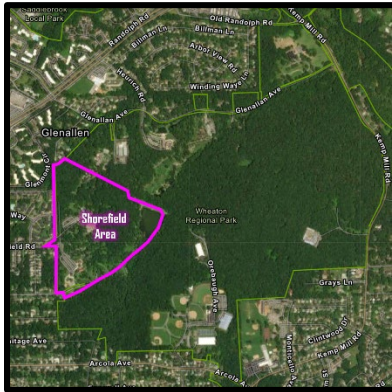


Figure 11. Map of Recommendations for Park Access (Non-Parkland)

Park Activity Areas

Shorefield Area



Perhaps the most well-used and well-known area of the park outside of Brookside Gardens, the Shorefield Area is located on the western side of the park with access primarily off Georgia Avenue. It is proximate to two Metrorail stations, both Glenmont and Wheaton, as well as to hundreds of families who live in adjacent multi-family communities. It features picnic shelters with grills, an adventure playground, the Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel, the miniature train, hard surface park trails, Stubbs Barn, Pine Lake and most recently an area with adult fitness equipment.

The Shorefield Area is popular with families with young children and is where families from around the county and DC region gather for birthdays and other life celebrations. It is also where large community festivals and events take place, including the annual Friendship Picnic each September. Brookside Gardens, Brookside Nature Center, and the Rubini Athletic Complex are a short walk or bike ride from Shorefield Area along the numerous park trails, both hard surface and natural surface.



What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

We heard a lot of comments about the facilities in this part of the park. Overall, park users feel like this area offers a lot of things to do for families with young children, but could do more for older children, teens, and young adults. Additionally, we learned that although thousands of residents live within easy walking or biking distance to the Shorefield Area, many choose not to walk or bike there because the entrance does not feel welcoming and there are no clear signs telling visitors what this area offers, nor what other areas of the park offer. And finally, although numerous multi-family communities are adjacent or very nearby to the park, there is no direct access to the park from these communities (see park access recommendations above).

Other things we heard:

- Desire for food concessions or food trucks.
- Picnic shelters should accommodate larger groups.
- The playground is not designed well for children with disabilities.

- Desire to designate a trail leading to the historic Stubbs Barn. The Stubbs Barn should be open to the public.
- Walking and ADA access between the lower and upper parking lot areas could be improved.
- Replace the carousel when the current one is relocated to Clarksburg.
- Improve the fishing experience at Pine Lake. Upgrade signs around the lake.
- The Brookside Gardens gated entrance does not feel welcoming.
- This area of the park is popular for birding, particularly near the lower parking lot, and along the gravel road leading to Pine Lake.

Analysis and Recommendations

This area of the park can offer more for park visitors of all ages. The Shorefield Area has the potential to be one of the premier destinations in the county for family fun and visitors of all ages and abilities. It should be more easily accessible by walking, biking, people with disabilities, and transit. It should offer an area for food trucks and an adjacent outdoor food court, as well as a picnic shelter for larger groups. There should be signs to help visitors learn about and more easily navigate to other areas of the park. The playground should be designed to be more accessible and fully inclusive. Residents of adjacent multi-family communities should be able to safely, and more efficiently, walk or bike to the park. The fishing experience at Pine Lake should be improved, it should be easier for fishing enthusiasts to access the lake, and the signs around the lake should better interpret the natural resource benefits of the lake. The entrance to Brookside Gardens should feel more welcoming and offer picnic tables and seating. The wooded area could include a mountain bike skills area for older children and teens.

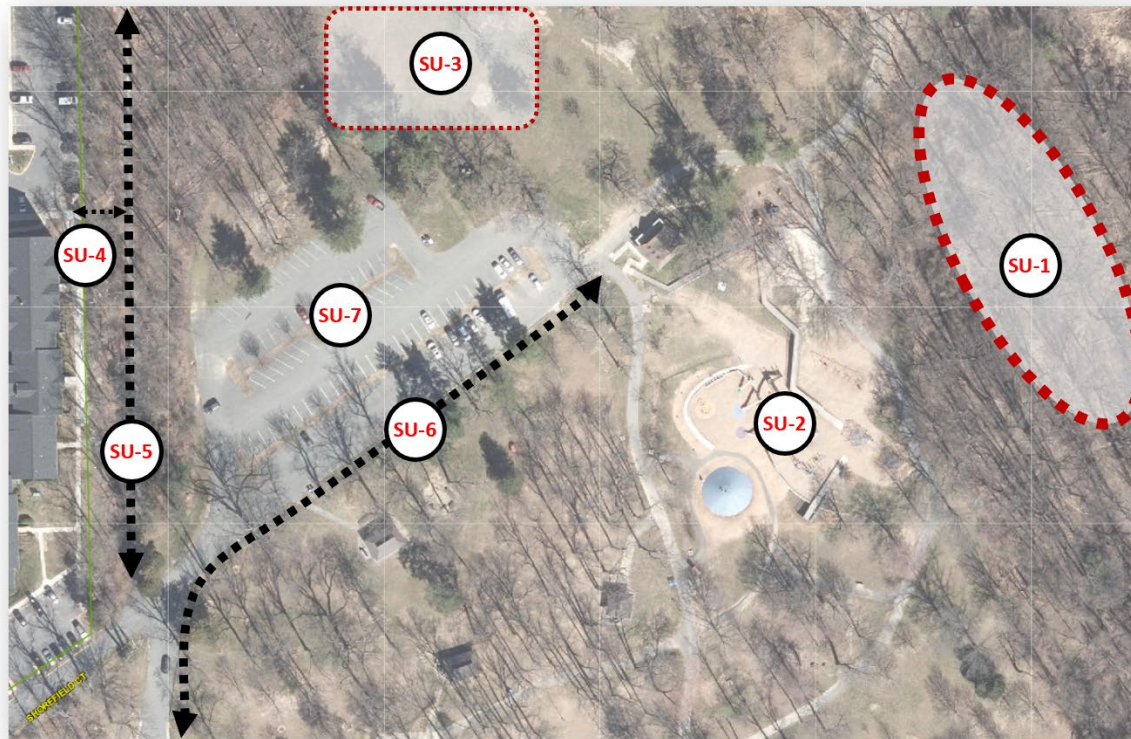


Table 6. Recommendations for Shorefield Area

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
SU-1, B14	Mountain Bike Loop Trail	Construct a beginner mountain bike skills loop trail	In the woods adjacent to the adventure playground.	Short
SU-3	Adventure Playground Renovation	Renovate playground to better serve children with emotional, mental, and physical disabilities and make it easier for parents and caregivers to supervise children (remove retaining walls that create sharp contrasts between upper and lower areas, for example).	Renovation should address the following issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible • Inclusive • Sense of enclosure • Better grading to allow for safer supervision • Features for older children and teens • More seating • Nature play space 	Long
SU-4	Large Picnic Shelter	Construct a large picnic shelter for groups over 50?	Include amenities nearby, such as large grassy open space for casual volleyball and soccer	Short
SU-5, A1	New Community Connector	Construct a new connector between the gravel road (to be paved, see SU-6) and Georgian Woods Place	Both an ADA ramp and stairs	Short
SU-6, A1	Upgrade Gravel Road to a Hard Surface Trail	Pave the gravel road from the upper parking lot to the deer fence line around Stubbs Barn		Medium
SU-7	Sidewalk Connector to Upper Parking Lot Bathrooms	Construct a new path or sidewalk from the park entrance, along the southern edge of the parking lot, to the paths at the bathrooms	Improve crosswalks and add seating/benches.	Short
SU-8, SL-5	Stormwater Management Upgrade	Construct sustainable stormwater management facilities to treat parking lot runoff	Include signs to educate park users about sustainable stormwater management.	Short
SL-1, SL-3	Sidewalk Connector Between Upper and Lower Parking Lots	Construct a new path or sidewalk connecting the upper and lower parking lot areas		Short
SL-2	LED Entrance Sign	Install a large electronic LED sign to inform arriving park users about facilities in this area of the park, as well as available programs parkwide.	Ensure sign allows for remote access to keep information timely and fresh.	Medium
SL-4	Driveway Improvements	Realign the driveway to lead drivers to the middle drive aisle, and realign crosswalk		Short
SL-6, SL-7	Bathroom and Picnic Shelter Swap	Swap a picnic shelter with the bathroom; Make the bathroom accessible.	Off the lower parking lot	Short

SL-8	Carousel Replacement	Replace Ovid Hazen Wells Carousel when it gets relocated to Clarksburg	Enterprise Division anticipates this expense and has funding available when needed.	Medium
SL-9, SL-10	New Food Truck Area plus Associated Picnic Area	Design an area to accommodate up to 8 food trucks plus a large shaded, weather-protected picnic area that can comfortably accommodate at least 100 people.	On west side of lower parking lot; ensure adequate electricity so that food trucks don't have to idle; ensure safe pedestrian access from larger activity area across/around parking lot.	Short
SL-11	New Basketball and Soccer Courts	Construct 2 new basketball and 2 new soccer courts	In area currently occupied by the overflow gravel parking lot	Short
SL-12	New Community Garden	Construct a community garden approximately 1/3 acre in size near the Henderson Avenue entrance on site formerly occupied by a park house.	Adjacent to Henderson Avenue	Short
SL-13	Henderson Avenue Abandonment	Seek abandonment of Henderson Avenue that juts into the park	Consider using this abandoned ROW for any future improvements in this area of the park	Medium
SL-14	Land Acquisition	Acquire 2016 Henderson Avenue		Medium-Long
SL-15, PL-3, A5	Gravel Road Upgrade	Pave the gravel road between Henderson Avenue and Pine Lake to become a hard surface park trail		Medium
SL-16	Miniature Train Artwork	Add artwork and other playful design elements to enhance the experience of train riders		Medium
SB-1	Stubbs Barn	Conduct a facility condition assessment.	To determine the amount of investment needed to both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite park users to visit the barn's interior • Activate the barn with special events 	Medium
PL-1	Enhance access to the lake to improve the fishing experience	Construct a boardwalk and/or floating dock to provide more accessible and safe areas for groups and families to enjoy fishing	Add/upgrade environmental educational interpretive signs and add more picnic tables and trash/recycling receptacles.	Medium
PL-2, C1	Plaza Outside Brookside Gardens	Design and construct a new plaza outside the Brookside Gardens gate for people to congregate and picnic	Features should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benches • Picnic tables • Attractive bicycle parking • Concealed trash and recycling receptacles. 	Short
PL-6	Lake Dredge	When dredging occurs to maintain stormwater function, incorporate features to improve fish habitat	The lake was last drained and dredged in 2006	Long
PL-7	Stream Restoration	Renovate streams that drain into the lake to reduce sediment and improve water quality		Short

Shorefield Area – Upper Parking Lot (SU)



- SU-1** Build a beginner-level mountain biking skills area/loop trail
- SU-2** Renovate playground to offer more opportunities for inclusive and accessible play
- SU-3** Construct a large picnic shelter with associated open lawn area for casual soccer or volleyball plus bocce court
- SU-4** Build a path connector from gravel road (future paved trail) to Georgian Woods Place
- SU-5** Pave the gravel road between parking lot and Armstrong House/Stubbs Barn
- SU-6** Construct a sidewalk between park entrance and path near bathrooms
- SU-7** Renovate parking lot and add storm water management facilities

Figure 12. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Upper Parking Lot Area.

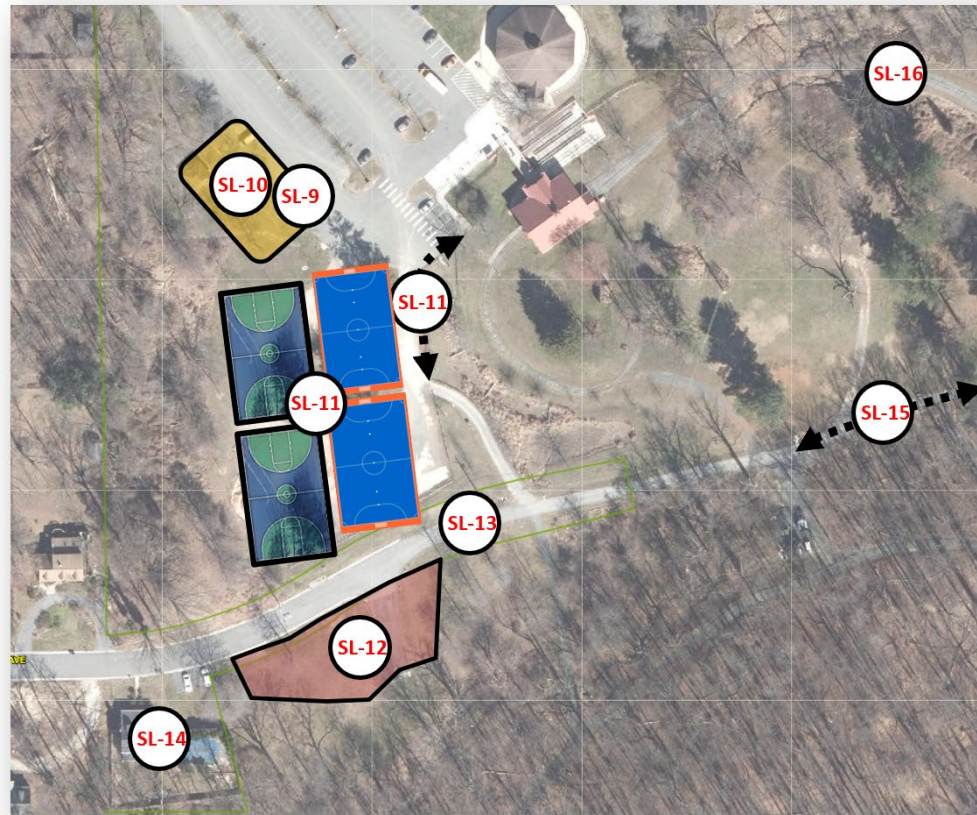
Shorefield Area – Lower Parking Lot (SL) – Map 1



- SL-1** Build a sidewalk and crosswalk to the upper parking lot area, connect to future sidewalk
- SL-2** Install a large LCD sign to communicate park information
- SL-3** Build a sidewalk between lower and upper parking lot areas
- SL-4** Realign driveway and crosswalk
- SL-5** Renovate parking lot and add stormwater management facilities
- SL-6** Construct Accessible bathroom, replacing current picnic shelter
- SL-7** Remove current bathroom, replace with new picnic shelter
- SL-8** Replace Carousel when current one is moved to Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park

Figure 13. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Lower Parking Lot, Map 1

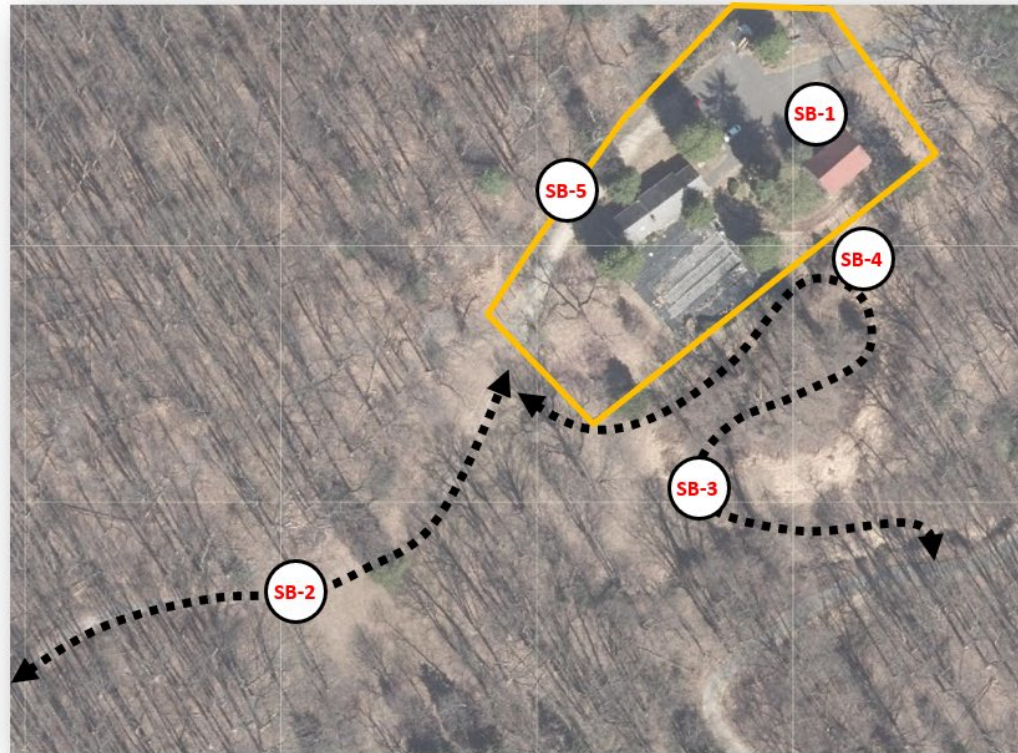
Shorefield Area – Lower Parking Lot (SL) – Map 2



- SL-9** Dedicate parking spaces as a food truck parking area
- SL-10** Remove current picnic shelter, replace with larger picnic pavilion to complement new food truck area
- SL-11** Construct 2 new basketball courts and 2 new soccer courts, replacing the gravel parking lot area. Construct new access pathway.
- SL-12** Build a community garden, add parallel parking along Henderson Avenue
- SL-13** Seek abandonment of Henderson Avenue, to officially make it parkland
- SL-14** Acquire property to add to park
- SL-15** Pave existing gravel road
- SL-16** Enhance miniature train experience with artwork and/or information billboards/signs

Figure 14. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Lower Parking Lot, Map 2

Shorefield Area – Stubbs Barn (SB)



- SB-1** Conduct a facility condition assessment to determine investment needed for potential public use
- SB-2** Pave the gravel road (see also recommendation SU-6) to deer fence line
- SB-3** Construct a paved trail connector between the new paved roadway (SU-6 and SB-2) with the existing paved path
- SB-4** Install an interpretive sign for the barn adjacent to the new paved trail connector
- SB-5** In order to deter vandalism of the barn, retain existing deer fencing surrounding the barn and Armstrong House

Figure 15. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Stubbs Barn

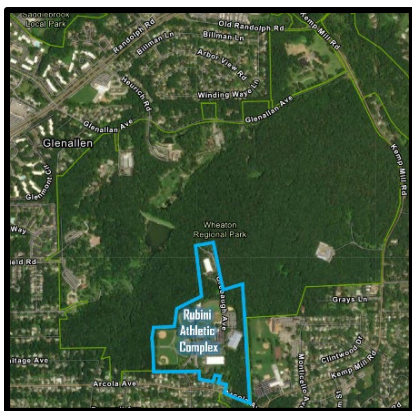
Shorefield Area – Pine Lake and Vicinity (PL)



- PL-1** Enhance access to the lake to improve the fishing experience
- PL-2** Construct a plaza at the entrance gate to Brookside Gardens
- PL-3** Pave the gravel road
- PL-4** Realign the natural surface trail to be more sustainable
- PL-5** Upgrade environmental and natural resource interpretive signs
- PL-6** When dredging occurs to maintain stormwater function, incorporate features to improve fish habitat.
- PL-7** Rehabilitate streams that drain into the lake to reduce sediment and improve water quality

Figure 16. Recommendations for Shorefield Area, Pine Lake and Vicinity

Rubini Athletic Complex



This park area, named for former Director of Parks Frank Rubini, currently features six diamond athletic fields, six outdoor tennis courts, a basketball court, and a dog park, as well as several enterprise (pay-to-play) facilities, including the indoor tennis bubble, the indoor ice rink, and the Wheaton Sports Pavilion. Access by automobile is via Orebaugh Avenue, passing through a residential area. Visitors can also access this area of the park using hard surface park trails connecting from both Brookside Gardens and the Shorefield Area. There is no sidewalk along Orebaugh Avenue connecting Arcola Avenue to the facilities in this area of the park; park visitors arriving on foot, by wheelchair or by bicycle must currently share the road with motorized traffic.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

The Rubini Athletic Complex is one of the busiest areas of the park on weekends and during weekday evenings. During these days and times, the athletic fields are generally permitted, the tennis courts are occupied, and the ice rink and indoor tennis bubble are bustling. The dog park is popular, and many park users are enjoying the numerous park trails that can be accessed from this area. On working hours on weekdays, however, the Rubini Athletic Complex is nearly deserted; residents and park users say this area of the park feels empty. And because of that, people generally avoid this area of the park during working hours on weekdays, except for occasional tennis players, visitors to the dog park and a few trail users. Park users feel this area of the park is not easily accessible by means other than driving; there is no sidewalk or hard surface trail offering safe passage from Arcola Avenue to the park's amenities.

Additional comments:

- The park is hidden, access is poor, and the entrance is awkward, passing through a residential area; turning movements to/from Arcola Avenue are difficult, this intersection does not have traffic control (signal or stop signs).
- The parking lots are poorly designed; traffic lanes could be more clearly marked.
- Consider adding facilities and amenities that can be used during more hours of the day/week.
- It is not easily accessible by walking, bicycling, and transit.
- This area of the park does not offer many outdoor recreational amenities for young children.
- There are no food concessions to encourage social gatherings.
- The dog park should have separate areas for large dogs and small dogs, and the dog park could be improved with lighting, more shaded seating, a dog-friendly surface and upgraded entrance and water source.
- Some of the tennis courts should be converted to pickleball courts, and the lighting should be upgraded.
- The underutilized handball courts should be repurposed.
- The basketball court should be improved with fencing, new rims, better lighting, and renovated surface.
- Wayfinding is poor; add a more visible and prominent entrance sign along Arcola Avenue (and at Georgia Avenue and Arcola Avenue).

Analysis and Recommendations

This area of the park should offer more facilities for park visitors of all ages, that can be used during more hours of the day/week. This area of the park has most of the flat, relatively unconstrained land in the park. We should take advantage of this land, converting three diamond athletic fields to a regional action sports park with facilities that can be enjoyed by more people. The wooded area behind the tennis bubble can accommodate two rectangular athletic fields, as well as a new park entrance, and more parking. Rubini Athletic Complex should be more easily accessible by walking, biking, people with disabilities, and transit. It should offer an area for food trucks and an adjacent outdoor food court, as well as social gathering spaces and picnic areas. There should be signs to help visitors learn about and more easily navigate to other areas of the park. The dog park should be upgraded and include lighting. Some of the tennis courts should be designed to accommodate pickleball in the short term and converted to dedicated pickleball courts in the future. The handball courts should be repurposed as soccer courts.

Adventure Sports Park

In response to community comments about this area of the park feeling empty much of the week, to maximize the use of flat, environmentally unconstrained land in the Rubini Athletic Complex area, and in response to the growing demand for adventure sports in the county, the hallmark recommendation of this master plan to create a multi-purpose adventure sports park in the location currently occupied by the three lower, unlit diamond athletic fields.

The adventure sports park will be a world class, multi-generational attraction that can accommodate both casual use and also be designed for competitions. It will offer something for all ages and skill levels. It will be a family destination, as well as a destination for teens and adults. It will encourage physical fitness and accommodate social gatherings. It will include observation decks for spectators. It will have lighting to encourage use during evenings. It will become a premier adventure sports facility that not only serves county residents, but also visitors from throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

Proposed facilities include:

- Skate Park
- Bicycle Pump Track
- Climbing Wall
- Parkour/Obstacle Course
- Bicycle Skills Area
- Traffic Safety Garden
- Splash Pad
- Social Gathering Areas
- Children's play area
- Food Truck Area

Table 7. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
RC-1	Adventure Sports Park	Build an adventure sports facility that may include a premier, regional skate park, climbing walls, parkour/obstacle course facility, bicycle skills area, splash pad, small playground, social gathering space and food truck vending area, replacing diamond fields 4, 5 and 6	All recommendations in the Rubini Athletic Complex are interrelated and should be evaluated, reviewed, and designed as a whole, including this project, athletic field improvements and parking/traffic circulation, as well as bicycle and pedestrian access and safety.	Short (Facility Plan) Medium (Design and Construction)
RC-2, RC-12, A3	Safe Bicycle and Pedestrian Access	Provide safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities through the parking lots, from the park entrance to the dog park	Sidewalks/side paths, crosswalks	Short
RC-3	Parking lot renovations	Renovate the parking lots to improve overall public safety and traffic circulation, plus add more parking spaces	Upgrade stormwater management at the same time.	Short
RC-4	New soccer fields	Build two new soccer fields and associated parking on wooded land behind the indoor tennis facility and	The Park currently does not offer any rectangular fields. These fields will greatly improve service in this area of the county.	Medium
RC-5, RC-6	New park entrance off Arcola Avenue	Add a new one-way-in entrance off Arcola Avenue leading to the upper parking lot of the indoor ice rink.	Add new parking lots to serve the new soccer fields	Medium
RC-8	Sport Courts	Upgrade the basketball court with fencing, a new surface, new backboards and rims, and improved lighting.	These improvements will make the court more functional, attractive/modern and usable during more hours of the day	Short
RC-7	Sport Courts	Convert 3 tennis courts to 8 pickleball courts.	This location is far from existing homes and avoids potential noise complaints from neighbors	Short
RC-9	Sport Courts	Convert underutilized handball courts to a soccer court.	This site is suitable for conversion to soccer court.	Short
RC-10	Land Acquisition	Acquire all properties along Arcola Avenue between Orebaugh Avenue and the new driveway entrance	Purchasing these properties will make the park more visible from Arcola Avenue	Long
RC-11	Dog Park Upgrades	Upgrade the dog park with separate areas for small and large dogs, lighting, improved paw-friendly surface, weather-protected seating, and more efficient/effective water fountains.	These improvements will make this facility more attractive and usable throughout the year, and during more hours of the day.	Short/Medium

Rubini Athletic Complex (RC) – Map 1

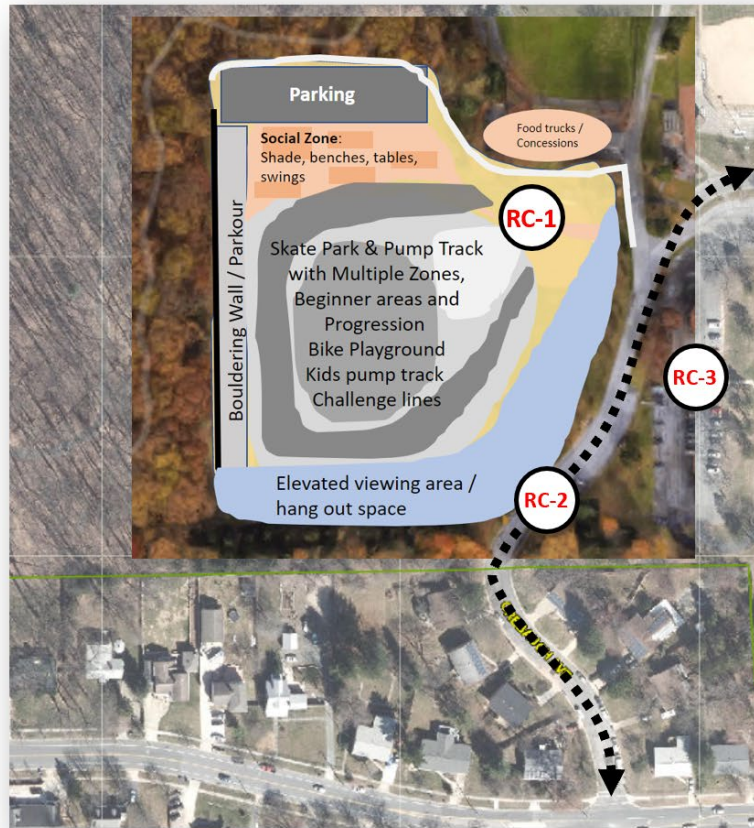


Figure 17. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 1

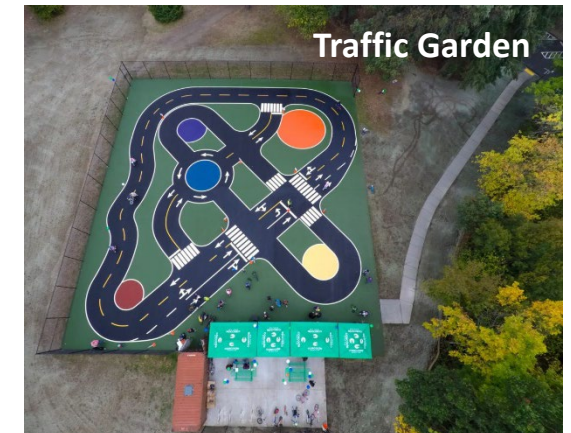
RC-1 Construct an action sports park, replacing athletic fields 4-6 that may include:

- Signature regional skate park
- Bouldering wall/parkour area
- Pump Track
- Bicycle Playground
- Challenge lines
- Ample social gathering/hang out space
- Elevated viewing areas
- Shaded area with tables, WiFi, charging stations
- Food truck/concessions area

RC-2 Provide bicycle and pedestrian access to and through the parking lots

RC-3 Renovate the parking lots and add stormwater management

Adventure Sports Park Example Photos



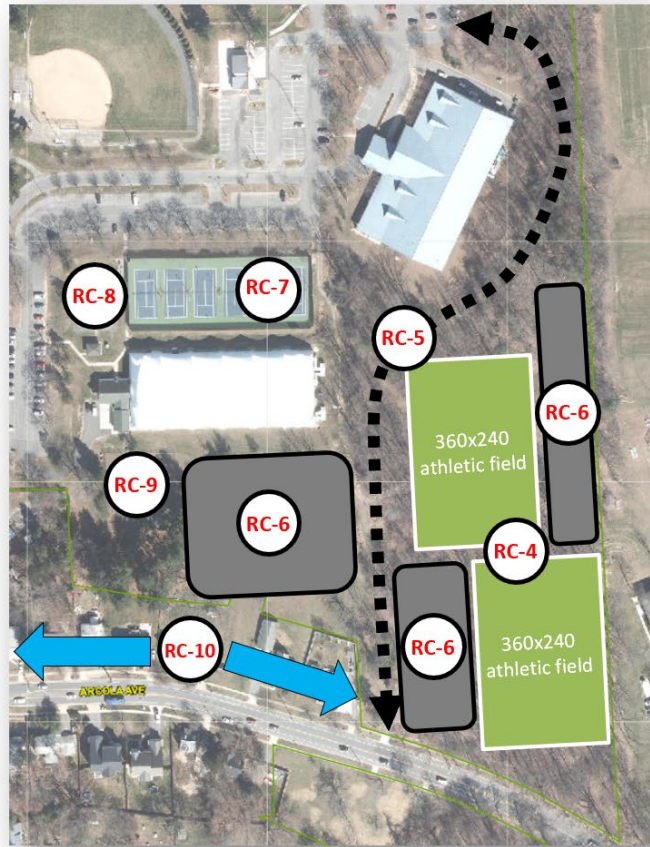
Adventure Sports Park Example Photos



Social Gathering Example Photos



Rubini Athletic Complex (RC) – Map 2



- RC-4** Construct two adult-size rectangular athletic fields
- RC-5** Construct a new one-way-in entrance and driveway
- RC-6** Construct new parking lots
- RC-7** Convert 3 tennis courts to 8 pickleball courts
- RC-8** Upgrade basketball court
- RC-9** Convert handball courts to soccer court
- RC-10** Acquire all properties between Orebaugh Avenue and new park driveway

Figure 18. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 2

Rubini Athletic Complex (RC) – Map 3



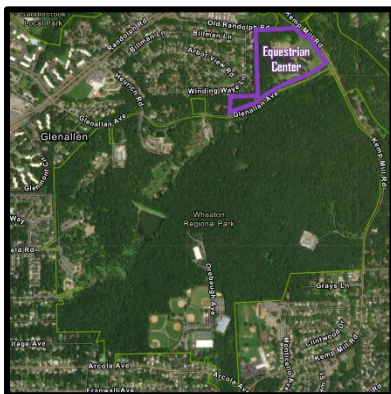
RC-11 Upgrade dog park

- Create different areas for large and small dogs
- Upgrade entrance
- Add lighting
- Change surface
- Add shelter and seating
- Upgrade dog play features
- Improve water fountain/source

RC-12 Improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety

Figure 19. Recommendations for Rubini Athletic Complex, Map 3

Equestrian Center/Wheaton Park Stables



One of the original facilities built in Wheaton Regional Park in the early 1960s, the equestrian center sits on 27 acres at the intersection of Kemp Mill Road and Glenallan Avenue. The relatively environmentally unconstrained site includes an indoor riding rink, boarding stables, an outdoor riding rink, grazing meadows, and other improvements. The land, buildings and infrastructure are owned by M-NCPPC. The current lessee/tenant, Wheaton Park Stables (WPS), offers beginner and riding programs for people with special needs both on-site and along natural surface trails that pass through the Wheaton Regional Park forest on the opposite side of Glenallan Avenue, as well as along the Northwest Branch Trail on the opposite side of Kemp Mill Road. WPS draws customers from both Montgomery County and nearby jurisdictions.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The main building is aging and likely needs a major renovation. The full cost of the renovation is unknown.
- Montgomery Parks recently completed structural repairs to the stables and replaced the curtain wall siding.
- WPS serves families with children who have physical, emotional, and mental disabilities.
- WPS is the only equestrian facility in the County that offers beginner and riding programs for people with special needs on wooded trails.
- The equestrian center site draws visitors who simply enjoy walking the grounds, soaking in the bucolic scenery.
- The 27-acre site is the largest environmentally unconstrained area of not only Wheaton Regional Park, but the larger down-county region as well. This site could potentially accommodate additional, compatible facilities, or accommodate a different use altogether.



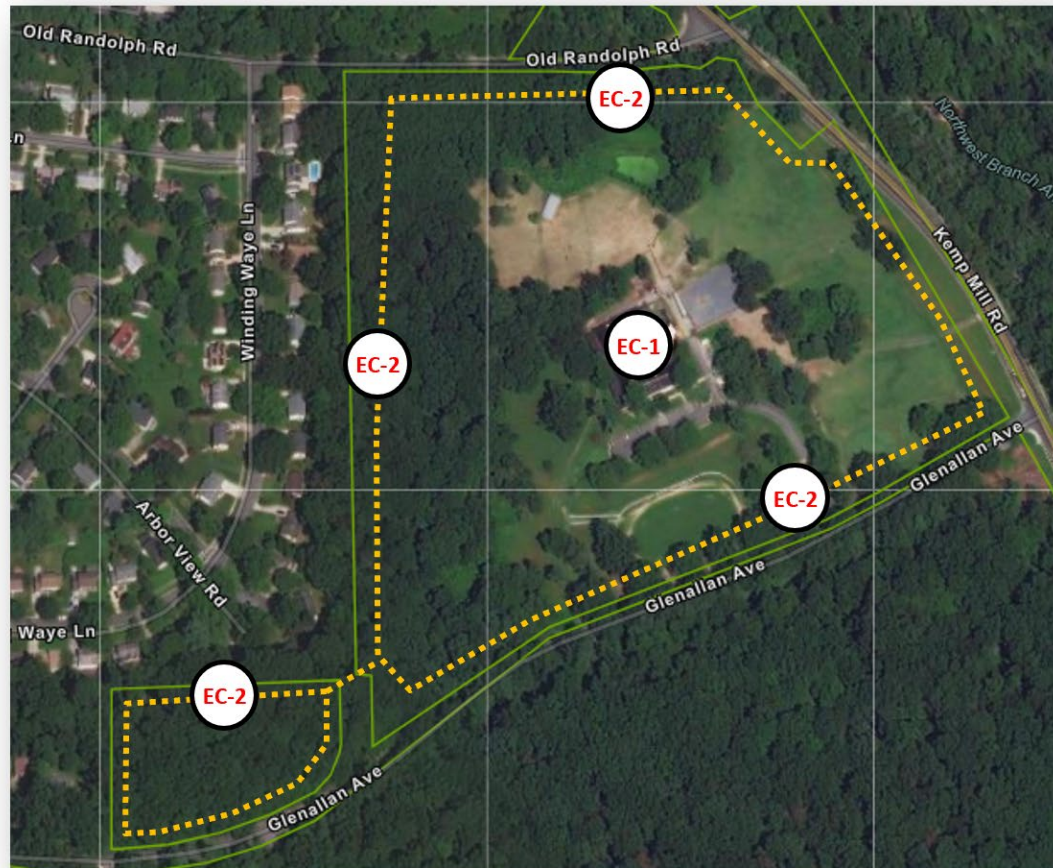
Analysis and Recommendations

The short-term focus of the plan should be to simply fund improvements to the building and site to ensure visitor and employee safety and comfort. New natural surface trails will also be added on-site for beginner and therapeutic programs. Longer-term, however, Montgomery Parks should assess opportunities to add other facilities to the site or repurpose the land with a different use to focus on physical activity, social capital, and environmental stewardship.

Table 8. Recommendations for Equestrian Center & Wheaton Park Stables

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
EC-1	Continue as Equestrian Center	In the short term, retain current use as an equestrian center	Under terms of current lease, continue operations. Invest in improvements that enhance public and employee safety and comfort.	Short
EC-2, B1	New hiker-equestrian trails	Add new natural surface trails on-site for both horseback riding and walking/hiking.	Work to be completed by Natural Surface Trails Program	Short
EC-1	Future potential uses	Evaluate opportunities to add other needed facilities to this site, and/or repurpose the land completely as something else consistent with <i>PROS 2022</i> focus on physical activity, social capital, and environmental stewardship	<i>PROS 2022</i> identified numerous needs for the communities in the downcounty. This land is relatively unconstrained and could be repurposed to meet other public recreational needs.	Long

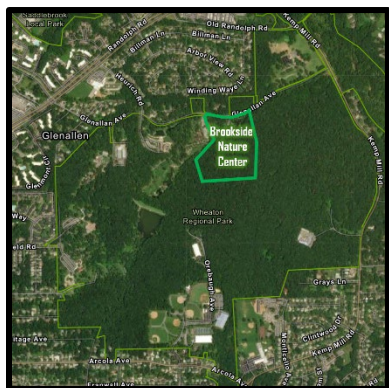
Equestrian Center (EC)



- EC-1** Retain Equestrian Center
(Short Term)
Explore Future Uses
(Long Term)
- EC-2** Provide New Natural
Surface Trails

Figure 20. Recommendations for the Equestrian Center.

Brookside Nature Center



The oldest nature center in the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks system, Brookside Nature Center is located adjacent to Brookside Gardens with access from Glenallen Avenue. It consists of two retrofitted former residential houses as well as the historic Harper Cabin, a small picnic pavilion, an outdoor amphitheater, an interpretive pond, a small nature play space, a parking lot for cars and two buses, and numerous natural surface trails. Brookside Nature Center offers both permanent and rotating exhibits and classroom-based activities, as well as many very popular special events throughout the year, including Maple Sugaring and Flying Squirrels.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The nature center is small for the geographic area it is intended to serve.
- The parking lot is too small to handle the volume of traffic.
- There is not available environmentally unconstrained land to expand on-site.
- Bicycle, pedestrian, ADA, and transit access is poor.

Analysis and Recommendations

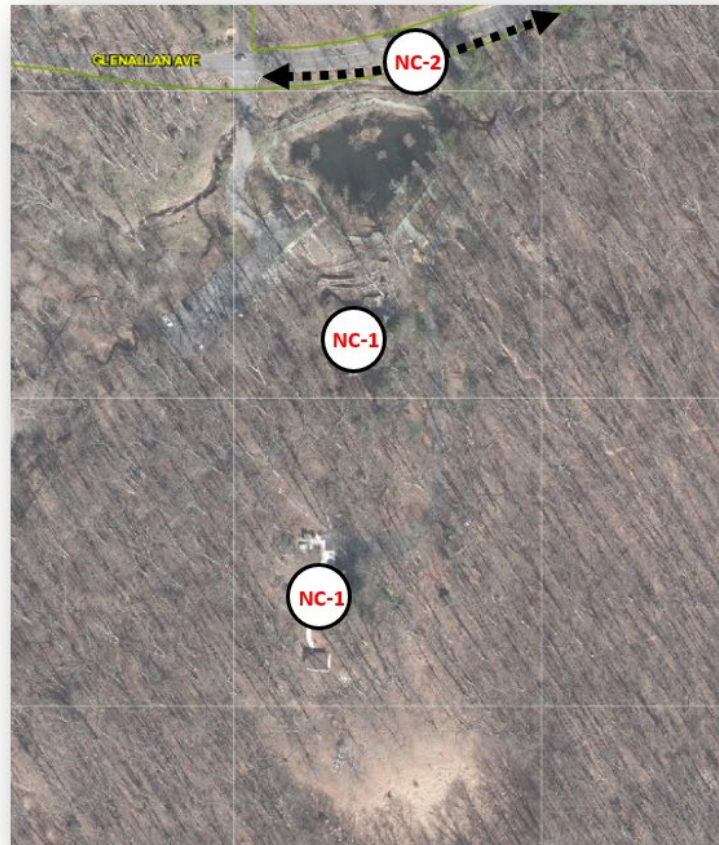
Due to its constrained site and surroundings, it is infeasible to expand the nature center on site. The current buildings should be modernized and upgraded to make them more functional, safe, accessible and comfortable. The nature center staff should operate strategic off-site interpretive mobile programs, some of which may provide opportunities for new partnerships with Montgomery Parks staff from other divisions. For example, offer mobile programming throughout the park at different locations, either using an RV or trailer, or offer programming in repurposed buildings. Additionally, if bicycle, pedestrian, ADA, and transit access were improved, demand for parking would be reduced and the need to expand parking would be eliminated.



Table 9. Recommendations for Brookside Nature Center

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
N/A	Mobile nature programming	Examine ways to deliver mobile nature programming in other areas of the park throughout the year	Either an RV that travels around the park, or schedule programming in other areas of the park, including using existing buildings and/or picnic shelters	Short Term
NC-1	Ongoing maintenance	Continue to invest in the current buildings and related infrastructure	Building interior improvements for nature programming building completed in 2021	Ongoing
NC-2, A8	Bicycle, pedestrian and transit access	Identify ways to get visitors to the nature center by means other than driving and parking on-site.	Gravel pathway along Glenallan Avenue between Kemp Mill Road and entrance; transit service to the nature center, particularly on weekend and during special events.	Short Term

Nature Center (NC)



NC-1 Continue to invest in current buildings and related infrastructure

NC-2 Provide a gravel pathway along south side of Glenallen Avenue

Figure 21. Recommendations for Brookside Nature Center.

Brookside Gardens



Perhaps the most visited and well-known area of the park, Brookside Gardens is a highly regarded botanical garden established in 1968 that boasts unique plants from around the world, as well as a Conservatory, a Visitor Center, its own maintenance facility, walking trails, a pond, and a pagoda. Hundreds of thousands of people from around the world visit the gardens annually, and the gardens host very popular events each year, including Garden of Lights, Butterfly Exhibit, and the Environmental Forum.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- It is not easy walking, bicycling, or taking transit to the gardens
- The gated entrance from the Shorefield Area feels unwelcoming.
- Although it is generally well-understood why food is not allowed in the gardens, visitors would like opportunities for picnicking as well as snacks and/or meals at an on-site restaurant.

Analysis and Recommendations

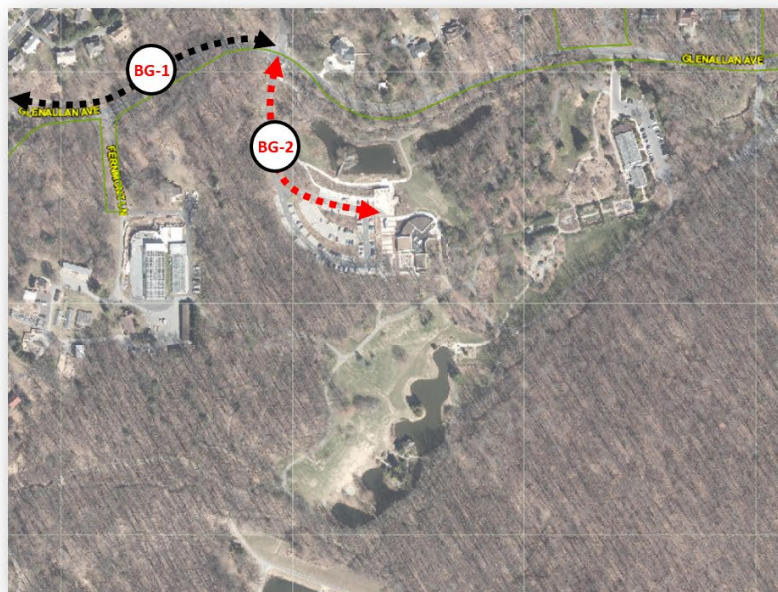
Development and improvements at Brookside Gardens are guided by a facility master plan approved the Planning Board in 2004. See Figure 22. This park master plan, therefore, will not include any recommendations to update the 2004 facility master plan, but rather will focus on issues and recommendations intended to enhance the relationship of the gardens to the rest of the park, as well as improve bicycle, pedestrian, and transit access to the gardens.

- Construct a shared use path from Glenallan Avenue to the Visitor Center through parking lot too improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety through the parking lot area.
- Add bicycle parking racks at the Visitor Center (see Figure 10)
- Support and promote a new picnic area and plaza outside the gated entrance from the Shorefield Area to make this entrance feel more welcoming and give visitors a pleasant location to picnic and gather. (See Figure 9)



Figure 22. 2004 Facility Master Plan

Brookside Gardens (BG)



BG-1 Coordinate with MCDOT to improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Glenallen Avenue between Randolph Road and BG entrance

BG-2 Construct a paved path from Glenallen Avenue to BG Visitor Center

Figure 23. Brookside Gardens recommendations

Maintenance Yard



The Wheaton Maintenance Yard is the oldest in the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks system. This yard not only provides nearly all the maintenance services for Wheaton Regional Park (excluding Brookside Gardens), but it also serves the larger Wheaton Park Management Area that includes 51 parks. Additionally, it provides trash service for the Martin Luther King Jr. Park Management Area (32 parks) and is one of the snow-command centers for the entire southern region, which includes all the parks south of Rockville.

What We Learned During Engagement with Parks Staff

- The maintenance yard is aging and deteriorating.
- It is undersized for the services it provides and needs to be larger.
- Much of the equipment is outdated and needs to be modernized.
- Any expansion must account for the planned hard surface trail that passes adjacent to the yard and runs down Alpert Lane.
- The maintenance yard features a telecommunications tower, and associated equipment and infrastructure both on-site and running down Alpert Lane.
- The forest to the southeast and east is lesser quality than the forest to the north and west.
- The land immediately adjacent to Alpert Lane is already disturbed from previous land use and offers additional opportunities for park improvements (e.g., employee parking).
- Existing unforested land should be examined for improvements before proposing impacts to forest.

Analysis and Recommendations

Every other maintenance yard in the M-NCPPC Montgomery County park system has been modernized over the years. This is the last remaining yard that still has some of the original buildings and infrastructure. As the maintenance yard serving one of two down county regional parks with highest population density in the surrounding area, it is long overdue for a major renovation. While the entire maintenance yard is surrounded by forest and the biodiversity area, the forest to the south and east is less important to protect than the forest to the north and west. Therefore, any expansion of the yard should be to the south and east and be designed to avoid steep slopes and large specimen trees as much as possible and accommodate the planned hard surface park trail that will pass adjacent to the yard and travel parallel to Alpert Lane to connect to a planned bikeway along Kemp Mill Road.

Table 10. Recommendations for the Maintenance Yard

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments	Time Frame
MY-1	Facility Expansion and Modernization	Expand/enlarge the MY and modernize the building, equipment, and infrastructure	Expand to the south and east, strive to minimize impacts to existing forest and maximize use of already disturbed areas	Medium Term
MY-2, A4	New hard surface trail	Accommodate the alignment for the new hard surface park trail that passes through/adjacent to the MY and along Alpert Lane	MY expansion and new trail alignment should be coordinated	Short Term

Maintenance Yard (MY)

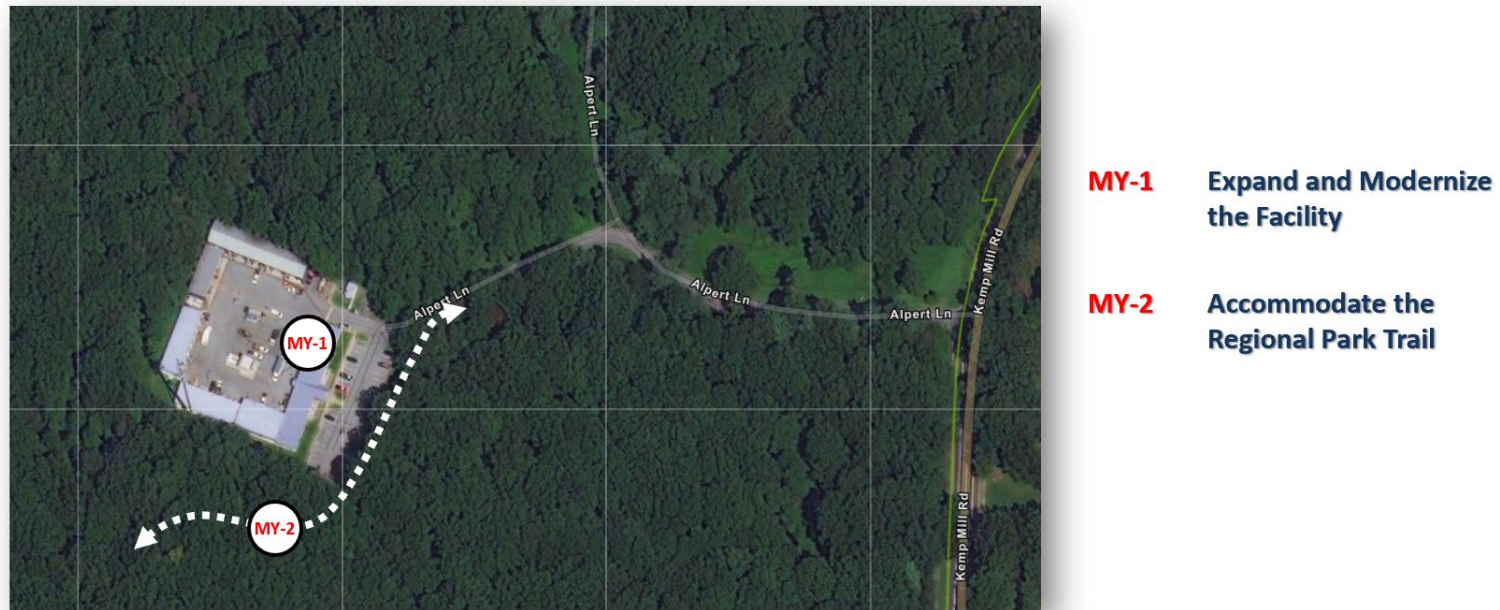


Figure 24. Recommendations for Wheaton Maintenance Yard.

Land Acquisition

Wheaton Regional Park is a large park and is generally surrounded by stable residential communities. But there are opportunities to improve the park visitor experience, as well as enhance the park's visibility, by acquiring several parcels.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The park is not very visible, the entrances are constrained, and access is poor.
- M-NCPPC should consider purchasing homes from willing sellers as they come on the market, and/or approach homeowners to gauge interest in selling land/homes to M-NCPPC.
- Park management would benefit from seeking abandonment of Henderson Avenue as well as purchasing adjacent home.

Analysis and Recommendations

Acquiring several parcels along Arcola Avenue would improve access to the Rubini Athletic Complex. Additionally, acquiring some land from the St. Andrew Apostle Church could give M-NCPPC direct access to the Arcola Avenue/Kemp Mill Road intersection. Acquiring one parcel along Henderson Avenue would help give M-NCPPC better control of road access to the park and provide a buffer between future park development and the adjacent home. M-NCPPC typically only acquires land/homes from willing sellers.

(Refer to Figure 25 and Figure 26)

- To improve park visibility and access, acquire the following properties along Arcola Avenue
 - High Priority: 1703, 1705
 - Medium Priority: 1707, 1709, 1711
 - Lower Priority: 1713, 1717
- To improve park access and traffic circulation, acquire the following properties along Orebaugh Avenue:
 - Lower Priority: 11703, 11705, 11707
- To provide long-term potential access to the Arcola Avenue/Kemp Mill Road intersection, engage in discussions with the church to acquire some of its land between the park and the intersection. (Lower Priority)
- To improve park management objectives:
 - Acquire 2016 Henderson Avenue (Medium Priority)
 - Seek abandonment of the portion of Henderson Avenue within the park that no longer provides access to existing homes. (High Priority)



Figure 25. Land Acquisition Recommendations - Shorefield Area



Figure 26. Land Acquisition Recommendations - Rubini Complex

Natural Resources Stewardship

Wheaton Regional Park consists of relatively large, contiguous natural areas surrounded by a highly urbanized landscape, providing an urban oasis with benefits to people, plants, and wildlife alike. The park includes a designated Biodiversity Area (see Figure 27), characterized by contiguous forest in relatively undisturbed condition, capable of providing habitat for rare, threatened and endangered (RTE) and/or species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Aquatic resources, including streams, tributaries, wetlands, and ponds/lakes provide habitat for numerous species of fish, amphibians and aquatic invertebrates, reptiles, birds, and mammals. These valuable natural resources not only provide direct benefits to wildlife in an otherwise developed environment, but also produce mental and physical benefits for park users and innumerable ecosystem services for the larger community.

Forests and Wildlife

The park features four distinct forest communities, inclusive of areas containing large, mature deciduous forest and forest interior evidencing some of the oldest remaining forests in the county. The park primarily consists of a tulip poplar dominant forest with many tulip poplars exceeding 36-inches in diameter. Other areas of forest include mixed Oak/Hickory in the uplands and Sycamore/Green Ash in the stream valleys.

Common trees species in the park include American Beech and American Holly that occur sporadically, most likely resulting from adjacency to the transition between piedmont and coastal plain physiographic regions. There are also areas of hedge habitat that are demonstrable within maturing forest and evidencing past land uses of agriculture, nursery, and homesteads.

The park includes approximately 170 documented wildlife species. Notable species include northern and southern flying squirrels, river otter, box turtles, and wild turkey. The presence of these species is indicative of quality resource availability (clean water, abundant food sources, etc.) and greenway connectivity for dispersal to and from new areas.

The Biodiversity Area and mature Forest Interior habitat provide for a rich forest floor including ferns and fern allies, with orchids that still occupy isolated pockets. Forest Interior provides habitat for numerous birds requiring large blocks of forest, known as forest interior dwelling/dependent species (FIDS), including scarlet tanager, Acadian flycatcher, ovenbird, and pileated woodpecker. Wheaton Regional Park's many streams, wetlands and ponds provide a variety of fish and aquatic organisms, amphibians, reptiles, and waterfowl species.

Aquatic Resources

Wheaton Regional Park is within the Northwest Branch Watershed which flows into the Anacostia River. All the streams within Wheaton Regional Park are designated as use class IV, recreational trout waters. Biological monitoring is conducted at various locations in Wheaton Regional Park and within the receiving watershed downstream. Fish diversity within the streams running through Wheaton Regional Park includes 21 species. The state rare (S2 rank) acuminate crayfish (*Cambarus acuminatus*) has been documented in the Glenallan Tributary (2009, 2020) as well in abundance at Pine Lake Tributary (2009). Biological monitoring results at locations in and receiving drainage from Wheaton Regional Park are variable and range from **poor** to **good** (Maryland Biological Stream Survey Index of Biotic Integrity classification range of **poor-fair-good-excellent**), depending on location and year.

Notable streams include Glenallan Tributary, Wheaton Tributary and Pine Lake Tributary. Glenallan Tributary drains a large portion of the park and ranges from **poor** to **fair** stream biological condition overall. There is extensive coverage of non-native and invasive riparian plants along both banks. A stream restoration project is in design by Montgomery Parks for the upstream portion of the Glenallan Tributary at its headwaters along Glenallan Avenue, at the northwestern boundary of Wheaton Regional Park. Estimated completion is FY23. Wheaton Tributary is completely within the biodiversity area and flows from near the Shannon Odessa Middle School to its confluence with Glenallan Tributary near the intersection of Kemp Mill Road and Glenallan Road. Wheaton Tributary is rated **poor** for stream biological condition and has evidence of past disturbance within the stream channel and in its watershed that have likely contributed to incision and straightening at some points. There are numerous existing trail crossings that utilize culverts and bridges; these have generally resulted in destabilized channels downstream of the crossings. Pine Lake Tributary is a uniquely healthy channel from a biological standpoint and was rated **good** for stream biological condition.

In addition to the overall biological community present in Wheaton Regional Park's streams, Pine Lake is a significant feature of the Shorefield area which provides stormwater management for all of the upstream inputs in the park and also serves as an important recreational angling location that is routinely stocked with Rainbow Trout by Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MD DNR), Inland Fisheries. Other lentic/impounded aquatic systems within the park include the ponds at Brookside Nature Center and Gude Gardens Pond at Brookside Gardens. Although Gude Garden Ponds are ornamental and not managed for fish, there are species utilizing those locations, including two species of gamefish, among others that are of recreational importance. Both Pine Lake and Gude Garden Ponds provide habitat for other aquatic organisms, including a handful of amphibian and reptile species.

Small pockets of wetlands occur throughout the park within the floodplains of stream channels, adjacent to the ponds and throughout low-lying, forested areas. Wetlands provide water quality benefits, flood mitigation and habitat to unique wildlife species.

What We Learned from Park Staff and During Community Outreach and Engagement

- The park's cherished and scenic natural resources are what attracts many visitors to the park.
- The park is considered one of the best places for birding in the County.
- Much of the forest is a designated Biodiversity Area, managed for its high-quality wildlife habitat and unique animal and plant species.
- Many streams are degraded and should be restored/repared.
- Pine Lake is both a regional stormwater management pond as well as a popular fishing destination.
- Brookside Gardens is fenced to protect the unique plants from abundant deer in the area.

Analysis and Recommendations

The conservation and management of the natural resources in Wheaton Regional Park must be prioritized to maintain the human and environmental benefits that they are currently providing. Environmental restoration should be implemented to strengthen climate resilience within the community and improve the ecological function of the park into the future.

- Continue to protect interior and contiguous forest stands and/or resolve fragmentation as much as possible, providing activation along the edges without significant interruption
- Continue to effectively manage Whitetail Deer
- Remain vigilant against the spread of non-native plants from adjacent botanical gardens and/or remnant of nursery stock plantings
- Continue effective maintenance of non-native invasive plants and pests within core priority natural areas and along edges of developed trails and other infrastructure affecting these
- Improve interpretative outreach, reaching park users more broadly (e.g. languages, digital, interactive)
- Consider meadow habitat development and enhancement in unprogrammed space
- Conserve wetlands and create and augment wetland habitat where feasible as part of future restoration and development projects
- Implement outfall restorations at degraded and unstable outfalls within Wheaton Regional Park, particularly as other park improvements occur in the vicinity and/or as upstream stormwater controls are installed
- Target stream restoration opportunities at degraded stream segments. (see Figure #27 and Table #11)
- Implement long term biological monitoring efforts to track the ecological health of these resources and evaluate the success of restoration projects

Table 11. Recommendations for Water Resources

Map Code	Recommendation Name	Recommendation	Notes / Comments
Global	Outfall Stabilization	Implement outfall restorations at degraded and unstable outfalls within Wheaton Regional Park.	Outfall stabilizations should be implemented as other park improvements occur in the vicinity and/or as upstream stormwater controls are installed.
WR-1	Wheaton Tributary Restoration	Stream condition monitoring and localized spot treatments of this reach are recommended to address points of instability, particularly at trail crossings.	Stream function to be monitored and improvements implemented that maintain and improve ecological function and protect the existing resources. As the trail system is improved and/or rerouted, all trail crossings should be evaluated for improvement and infrastructure removal.
WR-2	Glenallan Tributary Restoration	Stream condition monitoring is recommended to track areas of degradation, instability and ecological function. Conduct restoration work as required to protect infrastructure, maintain ecological function, and to improve habitat based on stream condition monitoring.	Environmental restoration work adjacent to Brookside Nature Center should include interpretive signage and close coordination with Brookside Nature Center staff. The two driveway culverts at Brookside Nature Center should be replaced with natural channel bottom culverts or bridges.
WR-3	Pine Lake Tributary Restoration	Stream condition monitoring is recommended to track areas of degradation, instability and ecological function. Conduct restoration work as required to protect infrastructure, maintain ecological function, and improve habitat based on stream condition monitoring.	There are good opportunities for wetland enhancement within the floodplain of the reach upstream of Pine Lake. Any work in the nature center parking lot should include improving the riparian buffer and stream corridor.

MONTGOMERY PARKS WHEATON REGIONAL PARK

NATURAL RESOURCES AREA MAP

EXISTING CONDITIONS

HARD SURFACE TRAILS	PARK AREAS
— Hiker/Biker	Montgomery Parks
— Hiker/Smart Trail	Garden Area
— Shared by All	Water Area
— Hiker/Equestrian	Athletic Fields
— Hiker Only	Dog Park
— Biker Only	Playground
	Buildings
	Biodiversity Area

NATURAL RESOURCES PROJECTS

— Sustainable Outfall Treatment
— Continued Stream Condition Monitoring
— Limited Restoration and Continued Monitoring
— Environmental Restoration Implementation

PROPOSED PARK AREAS

— Proposed Community Garden
— Proposed Action Sports Park
— Proposed Ball Courts & Athletic Fields

NEW ROAD CONSTRUCTION

— New Entrance Road



Figure 27. Natural & Aquatic Resources

Public Safety

Visitor enjoyment in-part depends on both perceived and actual public safety. This includes not only facilities that are clean and in good condition, but also that a park is designed in a way that visitors feel welcome, can be seen and heard, and that park rules, regulations and laws are regularly and consistently monitored and enforced. Where facilities are open at night, there must be adequate lighting. Signs with park rules and regulations should be posted in highly visible areas. Laws must be enforced. Potential park user conflicts are minimized. Crime is deterred. Public health, safety and welfare all have to be high priorities in all aspects of park design, operations and maintenance.

What We Learned During Community Outreach and Engagement, and Staff Analysis

Park visitors generally feel safe in the park. Crime within the park boundary is relatively low compared to other county parks. Park Police report that the biggest public safety concerns in the park are related to motor vehicle circulation and parking, as well as incidents involving children who are reported as being lost.

Additional Comments and Observations:

- Ensure good cell phone coverage in the park, in case of emergencies.
- Consider adding emergency phones along paved trails, could be solar powered where appropriate.
- Proposed locations for phones: near Pine Lake & Brookside Gardens, Picnic Areas, Athletic field area, Dog park, as well as other areas where the park feels empty during certain times of the week/year.
- Shorefield Road can be an intimidating entrance, going through the residential area, and then once you get to the park, it feels like there's not enough "there", all attractions/amenities are away from the traffic circle, the traffic circle is not an activity area, at times feels unsafe with no eyes on it
- Adventure playground is not well designed for CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). Consider opening up the wooded area behind it, clear shrubs and ground cover, trim branches from the ground to 3'. Those woods are a good candidate location for park activation, including a bicycle skills area, sensory trail or nature play area.
- Parking is the biggest public safety issue in the park, most calls for service. Consider adding more parking and/or making sure regulatory signs are posted to allow for enforcement by Park Police.
- Consider widening driveways to allow for parallel parking.
- Think about emergency vehicle access, as part of any changes to roadways and parking lots.
- Keep in mind that only MCFRS (Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service) can approve curbs for yellow markings. There are certain criteria that must be met.
- Think about CPTED in comfort station/restroom designs (sight lines, lighting, no solid walls all the way to the ground so that people's feet/legs can be seen, etc.)

Analysis and Recommendations

- Activate the wooded area adjacent to the adventure playground
- Use CPTED principles when redesigning the adventure playground, as well as the design of other improvements throughout the park
- Add more emergency phones throughout the park
- Continue to employ security cameras to monitor areas prone to mischief and crime
- Activate park entrances to improve perception of public safety, most notably the Shorefield Entrance.
- Design bathrooms to allow for more effective monitoring by Park Police to prevent mischief and crime
- Ensure parking lots are clearly marked and signs to allow for effective monitoring and enforcement by Park Police.
- Where appropriate, add clearly marked parallel parking along driveways

Implementation

This plan will be primarily implemented via the Wheaton Regional Park Improvements (P871904) PDF of the Capital Improvement Program. Funding requests for this PDF are expected to continue indefinitely and include Bonds, State Grants, POS, and other sources. The master plan process included extensive public outreach; therefore, majority of projects will be streamlined directly into implementation. These projects include, but are not limited to:

- Henderson Avenue Community Gardens and Sports Courts
- Trail Renovations and Extensions throughout Wheaton Regional Park
- Parking Lot, ADA Improvements, and Access Road Upgrades throughout Wheaton Regional Park
- Repurposing of tennis courts and handball courts in the Rubini Athletic Complex
- Relocation/replacement of Picnic Area Restroom Building and Shelters
- Wheaton Regional Park Trail Extension to Kemp Mill Road
- Henderson Avenue Abandonment and Active Use Redevelopment
- Dog Park Upgrades with Lighting
- Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Upgrade
- Parkwide Signage Enhancements
- Shorefield Bicycle Skills Park
- Shorefield Picnic Area Upgrades
- Shorefield Group Picnic Area
- Shorefield Adventure Playground Renovation/Nature Play Area
- Pine Lake Trail Plaza at Brookside Gardens Entrance with Lighting
- Environmental Restorations throughout Wheaton Regional Park
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Improvements throughout Wheaton Regional Park
- Stubbs Barn Renovation and Interpretation
- Pine Lake Enhancements and Access Improvements
- Minor Site Improvements and Amenity Modifications

More complicated projects requiring Program of Requirements Development and Facility Planning, requiring additional public engagement and Planning Board approval include:

- Maintenance Facility Upgrade and Expansion
- Adventure Sports Center Redevelopment
- Arcola Entrances and Circulation Modifications
- Rectangular Field Development
-
- Potential Wheaton Stables Redevelopment (Long-Term)

Appendices

Appendix 1. Guiding Documents

The update to the master plan has been guided by several documents.

1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton

Wheaton Regional Park is located within this master plan area; however, this plan does not include any recommendations specific to the park. Instead the plan generically recommends that parks be evaluated regularly for needed upgrades and improvements, and that deteriorated facilities be replaced. The plan recommends that existing ballfields at both schools and parks be preserved. The plan also recommends a Class I bikeway (shared use path) along Glenallan Avenue and also through the park connecting Glenallan Avenue with the hard surface trail loops within the park.

2012 Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan

This plan recommends improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between the CBD and Wheaton Regional Park, including improved signage along streets connecting them. The plan also recommends providing kiosks with park information at central locations within the CBD such as the Metro Station and public parking facilities.

2013 Glenmont Sector Plan

This plan includes Glenmont Forest Apartments, which touches the park. The plan recommends improving bicycle and pedestrian connections to the park, including signs along streets and trails leading to it. Specifically, the plan recommends a local bikeway (LB-4) between Randolph Road and the park and through the Glenmont Forest Apartments. The plan also recommends exploring extending the Glenmont Greenway along Georgia Avenue between Randolph Road and Shorefield Road, in-part to improve access to the park.

2016 Countywide Park Trails Plan

This plan identifies Wheaton Regional Park as a major recreational destination and includes the park within the Eastern County trail planning area. The plan identifies Sligo Creek Trail as part of a hybrid loop that passes through the park linking to the Matthew Henson Trail. The plan also recommends a multi-use natural surface trail along the Northwest Branch, with a link directly to the park. The hard surface trail connecting Sligo Creek Trail to Matthew Henson Trail, through and adjoining Wheaton Regional Park, is the plan's highest implementation priority for hard surface trails (E-03.03). It is currently a Parks project in facility planning.

2022 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS)

The *2022 Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan* serves as the planning policy for parks and recreation in Montgomery County to the year 2030 and beyond. It assesses needs and recommends strategies for the delivery of park and recreation facilities, protection of natural resource areas, and preservation of historic/cultural areas and agricultural lands.

2018 Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan

This plan includes recommendations to improve bicycle connections to the park and bicycle mobility along roads that adjoin the park. The plan recommends the following:

- Arcola Avenue, Amherst Avenue to University Boulevard, Sidepath, Side TBD
- Georgia Avenue. Randolph Road to Arcola Avenue. Sidepath, East Side.
- Glenallan Avenue, Randolph Road to Wallace Avenue. Sidepath, North Side.
- Henderson Avenue, Georgia Avenue to Trail (N-S Paper Street), Sidepath, Side TBD
- Kemp Mill Road. Randolph Road to Arcola Avenue. Sidepath, West Side.
- Orebaugh Avenue. Sligo Creek Trail to the Park, Shared Street/Neighborhood Greenway.
- Shorefield Road. Sidepath, Side TBD.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (Planning Board Draft)

This comprehensive update to the 1964 General Plan, and subsequent amendments in 1969 and 1992, includes a chapter titled *“Parks and Recreation for an Increasingly Urban and Diverse Community: Active and Social.”* The plan includes the following relevant objectives or actions related to future improvements in Wheaton Regional Park.

- Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are accessible and equitably distributed.
- Improve accessibility of park and recreation facilities via walking, biking and transit.
- Make social connections a central objective for parks and recreation
- Design park, recreation, and related infrastructure and services around building community, creating opportunities for interaction, and making parks and recreational amenities a central element of Complete Communities.
- Connect neighborhoods and people to parks with a world-class trail network.
- Include food/beverage in planning and programming parks and recreational facilities.
- Provide park amenities that appeal to visitors with different interests/ physical abilities.

Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan (Underway)

This plan is underway but not yet complete. The project includes a pedestrian level of comfort map that identifies hard surface trails within the park as “very comfortable” and most streets around and connecting to the park as “somewhat comfortable” but a few as “uncomfortable”. A notable exception is Glenallan Avenue between Wallace Avenue and Kemp Mill Road that’s identified as “Undesirable.”

Source: <https://mcatlas.org/pedplan/>

[Appendix 2. Planning, Design, Construction and Operations \(PDCO\) Group Members](#)

[Appendix 3. Community Outreach and Engagement](#)

[Appendix 4. Working Group Members](#)

[Appendix 5. SKEO’s work and deliverables](#)

[Appendix 6. Summary of Survey Results](#)

[Appendix 7. Summary of Interactive Map Comments](#)

(Appendices 2-7 will be provided at the final Planning Board work session)

STAFF DRAFT



Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan / MAY 2022