



MONTGOMERY PARKS

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive | Wheaton, MD 20902
MontgomeryParks.org

MCPB Date: 11/10/22
Agenda Item #6

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 3, 2022

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MR*
Miti Figueredo, Deputy Director of Administration *mf*
Gary Burnett, Deputy Director of Operations *GB*
Shuchi Vera, Chief, Management Services Division *S.V.*

FROM: Nancy Steen, Budget Manager, Management Services Division *Nancy C. Steen*

SUBJECT: Department of Parks FY24 Proposed Operating Budget for the Park Fund

Staff Recommendation

Approval to prepare the FY24 Park Fund operating budget at the Base Budget plus Program Enhancements level.

Background

At its September 15 meeting, the Planning Board received a presentation from the Central Administrative Services (CAS) staff on the FY24 budget process including key trends and the budget outlook, strategy, and timeline.

The Planning Board then provided general guidance for developing the FY24 Budget with the recognition that the Department of Parks has mandated requirements and other essential needs to operate our park system. The Board asked that we request what is needed to provide the services that the Planning Board and the County Council have requested of us, being cognizant of the County's fiscal challenges and the likely impact that these challenges will have on our eventual budget. The Planning Board also emphasized that any requests for program enhancements and/or critical needs be well described and justified.

Known Increases

At the September 15 meeting, CAS provided preliminary estimates for increases associated with the Park Fund for salaries, benefits, retirement, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), and debt service on general obligation bonds. Since then, staff have been refining these estimates. The FY24 projected change for compensation (excluding the markers for merit/COLA and reclassification) is an increase of \$266,981, a 0.2% change. The departmental cost for benefits embedded in that total is an increase of

\$1.7M. In addition, the salary lapse percentage for the budgeted lapse is increasing from 7.5% to 9.0% or \$1.5M which more than offsets the requested increases for program enhancements. Pension cost is increasing by \$872,300.

The Department of Parks also has known inflationary, contractual, and mandated increases as well as increases for operating budget impacts (OBI) for CIP projects and developer-built parks. The OBI increases total \$516,518 (0.4% over the FY23 adopted budget). Additional information on these increases is provided later in this memo. Of that total, \$55,111 is related to the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), and if approved, will be offset by increased revenue from that Fund. Our debt service on general obligation bonds for CIP projects is increasing for FY23 by \$593,043.

The overall increase in major known commitments totals \$4,170,024 which is a 3.5% increase over the FY23 adopted budget.

Budget Preparation

To prepare for the November 10 Planning Board meeting, Parks staff worked diligently over the past several months identifying deficiencies in our work program as well as looking at emerging trends to determine the needs of the future. Additional requests were received from the divisions, considered by the Director and Deputy Directors and narrowed down to the most important ones that address the top priorities of the Department. **The funding required for these program enhancement requests totals \$1,184,068 and includes 20 positions. Of those 20 positions, eight are included at a net zero cost impact and do not increase our Park Fund costs.**

Budget Summary

After the review of our Major Known Commitments as well as the Program Enhancements that we are proposing, the total increase for our department (excluding the compensation markers) for FY24 is \$5,354,092, or a 4.5% increase over the FY23 budget. With the addition of the compensation markers, the overall increase (excluding OPEB) comes to \$9,989,827, an 8.5% increase over the FY23 total.

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
FY24 OPERATING BUDGET REQUEST**

		% Change	# of Positions
FY23 Adopted Budget	\$ 117,732,074		
 FY24 BASE BUDGET INCREASES			
Salary/Benefit increases (excluding salary markers) *	266,981	0.2%	
Pension Increase	872,300	0.7%	
OBI	461,407	0.4%	3.0
Contractual Increases	716,400	0.6%	
Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay	327,674	0.3%	
Debt Service for Internal Service Fund Capital Equipment	414,283	0.4%	
Risk Management	(51,400)	0.0%	
CAS Charges (Chargebacks/CIO/CWIT, etc.)	308,739	0.3%	
Chargebacks (CIP/Enterprise/Special Revenue Funds/Wheaton HQ)	19,414	0.0%	
Transfer to Debt Service	593,043	0.5%	
Water Quality Fund	241,183	0.2%	
Subtotal Increase - Base Budget Request	\$ 4,170,024	3.5%	3.0
 PROPOSED CHANGES - PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS			
Park Activation	435,796	0.4%	4.0
Improving Customer Service	97,745	0.1%	1.0
Improving Quality and Playability of Ballfields	-	0.0%	4.0
Social Equity	41,200	0.0%	
Maintaining and Improving What We Have	609,327	0.5%	11.0
Subtotal Program Enhancements	\$ 1,184,068	1.0%	20.0
Total Increase FY23 Proposed Budget Request	\$ 5,354,092	4.5%	23.0
Non-Departmental - Salary and Reclassification Markers	4,635,735		
Total Increase Excluding OPEB	\$ 9,989,827	8.5%	
Total FY23 Proposed Budget Request *	\$ 127,721,901		

* Total excludes OPEB

KNOWN OPERATING COMMITMENTS

The preliminary known changes in the Park Fund for salaries, benefits, retirement, Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB), and debt service on general obligation bonds were reviewed by CAS at the September 15 Planning Board meeting, and our revised updates to these totals are included in the summary above.

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

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

FY24 Park Fund Base Budget Known Operating Commitments	Personnel	Positions/Workyears	Funding	% Increase from FY23 Adopted Operating Budget
Operating Budget Impact (OBI) (Excluding WQPF)	Career/ Seasonal	3 positions/ 3 wkys	\$461,407	0.4%
Contractual Increases	N/A	N/A	\$716,400	0.6%
Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay	N/A	N/A	\$327,674	0.3%
Debt Service for Internal Service Fund Capital Equipment	N/A	N/A	\$414,283	0.4%
Risk Management	N/A	N/A	(\$51,400)	0.0%
CAS Charges (Chargebacks, Unemployment, LTD, CIO/CWIT Base)	N/A	N/A	\$308,739	0.3%
Parks Chargebacks (CIP/Enterprise/Special Revenue Funds and Wheaton HQ)	Career	N/A	\$19,414	0.0%
Water Quality Protection Fund (reimbursed by County)	Career/ Seasonal	N/A	\$241,183	0.2%
	TOTAL	3 positions/ 3 wkys	\$2,437,700	2.1%

Operating Budget Impacts (OBI)

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

The staffing and non-personnel impacts of the projects expected to be completed in or before FY24 total \$516,518. This OBI funding amount is ostensibly approved when the capital budget is approved. This funding total also includes \$55,111 for OBI that falls under the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), and if approved, will be offset by revenue. Since the WQPF portion of projects will be funded from a different taxing source, associated costs are split out separately.

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

Project Name	FY24 OBI Expenditures	FY24 Career Workyears	FY24 Seasonal Workyears
CIP PROJECTS			
Black Hill Regional Park Community Garden	\$36,239	0.3	0.1
Black Hill Regional Park - Dice Property Acquisition	\$729	0.0	0.0
Black Hill Regional Park SEED Classroom	\$124,017	0.8	0.0
Broad Run Conservation Park - Acquisition	\$45,645	0.0	0.0
Edgewood Neighborhood Park - Community Garden	\$36,866	0.3	0.1
Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park	\$31,680	0.2	0.2
Germantown Square Urban Park	\$28,751	0.2	0.1
Glen Hills Local Park	\$305	0.0	0.0
Hillandale Local Park	\$135,192	1.0	1.1
Olney Manor Recreational Park - Kimble Property Acquisition	\$5,425	0.0	0.0
Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park	\$406	0.0	0.0
Sligo Dennis Avenue Local Park	\$4,863	0.0	0.0
Sligo Stream Valley Park (Kennebec)	\$4,863	0.0	0.0
South Germantown Recreational Park - Bike Park	\$3,911	0.0	0.0
South Germantown Recreational Park - Tennis Bubble	\$2,515	0.0	0.0
SUB-TOTAL	\$461,407	2.8	1.6
CIP - WQPF PROJECTS			
Germantown Square Urban Park - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$2,132	0.0	0.0
Hillandale Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$29,404	0.0	0.8
Longwood Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$3,602	0.0	0.0
Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$3,428	0.0	0.0
South Germantown Recreational Park Tennis - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$9,592	0.0	0.0
Stewartown Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$6,953	0.0	0.0
SUB-TOTAL	\$55,111	0.0	0.8
TOTAL	\$516,518	2.8	2.4

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

Inflationary Increases for Contractual Obligations - \$716,400

The Department has a variety of contracts with known escalation clauses built in. These include maintenance services, tree removal services, custodial services, office services, software maintenance/licensing fees, and insurance premiums. Many of our contracts have escalation clauses linked to Consumer Price Index (CPI) rates. With the jump in the CPI increase for the first half of 2022 at 6.9%, our department is seeing significant cost increases for both contracts and purchases of goods.

Included in this contractual increase total is the \$59,671 for the cost of the software license and hardware maintenance for the upgraded 911 system for Park Police as the warranty period from the initial system purchase will expire in FY24. The total also includes \$60,000 to upgrade the ESRI GIS Mapping software license for Montgomery Parks and Planning to increase the number of licenses and to

expand access to vendor support, analysis, and data management. The budget request also includes \$75,000 for the Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) license. This critical technology tool was implemented in FY23 and provides ITI Cybersecurity professionals a real-time view of all security activities moving inbound and outbound through our network. It supports and provides a clean dashboard giving staff a live view of possible threat detection, compliance, and security incident management through data collection and analysis using embedded AI (artificial intelligence) of security events, and a wide variety of other event and contextual data sources. In addition, this solution provides Threat Intelligence, extensive Compliance reporting and Forensic capabilities. Costs for the SIEM license are split 50/50 with Montgomery Planning.

Inflationary Increases for Supplies and Materials, Services and Capital Outlay - \$327,674

The Department of Parks is requesting to increase the supplies and materials, non-contractual services, and capital outlay by \$327,674 to keep up with inflation and increased costs for vehicle parts, custodial supplies, security cameras, maintenance equipment and supplies, computer and communications supplies, uniforms, office equipment and supplies, horticultural supplies, and other miscellaneous supply items. This total includes \$100,000 to “right size” funding for our fleet maintenance costs.

Debt Service for Internal Service Fund (ISF) Capital Equipment - \$414,283 (Park Fund)

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

For FY24, the Department of Parks requested funding level is \$2,832,000 for replacement of data servers and to continue replacement of older fleet as well as requests associated with Program Enhancement requests.

This FY24 ISF funding of \$2.832M will provide for the following items:

- Park Fund total:
 - \$177,500 for Information Technology (IT) upgrades of two Nimble data storage arrays for our King Street data center. The total cost will be split 50/50 with Planning.
 - \$39,000 for a vehicle for a new position associated with OBI for the FY24 budget.
 - \$1,683,500 for replacement of older vehicles and equipment that have exceeded their useful life cycle.
- Special Revenue Fund (SRF) for MCPS Ballfields total:
 - \$932,000 for vehicles and equipment associated with the program enhancement for the Athletic Field Team Personnel Expansion and Contract Reduction initiative. The FY24 debt service amount of \$177,080 associated with these purchases will be included in the expenditure budget for the MCPS Ballfields SRF.

The total debt service increase for FY24 for the Park Fund is \$414,283. Of that total, \$53,283 is associated with debt service purchases from prior fiscal years with the balance of the debt service amount linked to new purchases.

The other way that the Department purchases equipment is through capital outlay funds which are used for equipment that costs more than \$10,000 and has a life expectancy of fewer than six years. This equipment is purchased through the Park fund. The capital outlay funding request for FY24 is increasing from \$503,669 to \$563,853. That total increase of \$60,184 includes a transfer of existing funding from Supplies & Materials to Capital Outlay of \$35,000 for a net cost impact of \$25,184.

Risk Management and CAS Charges - \$257,339

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

- Risk management – decrease of \$51,400.
- LTD Fringe benefit – increase of \$69,100.
- CAS chargebacks – increase of \$34,140
- CIO/Commission-Wide IT Initiatives (CWIT) – increase of \$205,499 comprised of:
 - CIO Allocation – increase of \$237,681 – this increase is mainly attributable to the departmental share of Commission-wide IT licenses and subscriptions
 - CWIT - decrease of \$32,182 for departmental share

Parks Chargebacks – \$19,414

Chargebacks between the Park Fund and the Enterprise Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and the Wheaton HQ Service Fund are reviewed and adjusted each year based on projected expenses. This increase is primarily attributable to compensation adjustments for current staff who provide oversight and field inspections for the MCPS ballfield contract.

Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF) - \$241,183

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

Accordingly, in FY12 the Department was appropriated funding from the Montgomery County Water Quality Protection Fund to offset costs associated with ongoing water quality related work across the M-NCPPC's 37,100-acre park system and implementation of the Department's NPDES permits. Ongoing water quality related work includes maintenance and management of streams, lakes, non-tidal wetlands, and stormwater management facilities as well as the implementation of the Department's NPDES industrial permit for its 12 maintenance yards. As requirements have continued to increase, the amount has increased each year to its current FY23 budgeted amount of \$3,897,355.

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

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

- **Additional funding for Seasonal staffing and Other Services and Charges - \$106,910**

The department continues to add new bioretention and stormwater management features which require ongoing labor-intensive inspections and maintenance. Current career staffing is not sufficient to meet the demands of this work program. Therefore, our department is requesting funding of \$26,910 for seasonal funding to help perform these maintenance tasks plus \$80,000 in increased services funding to hire contractors to assist with maintaining these assets.

- **OBI - \$55,111 – project detail was provided earlier in the memo in the section on OBI.**
- **Impact of personnel increases from FY23 (Merit/COLA pay) - \$79,162 – for current staff funded through WQPF**

The increased funding request of \$241,183 for NPDES activities includes the costs requests listed above as well. Note that if this request is approved, it will be offset by increased revenue from the Water Quality Protection Fund. A breakdown of the proposed funding is shown in the chart below.

New FY24 WQPF Funding Request	Personnel	Supplies and Materials	Other Services and Charges	Total
Additional funding - Seasonal staffing and contracted services	\$26,910		\$80,000	\$106,910
OBI for Stormwater Management Amenities	\$29,532	\$3,300	\$22,279	\$55,111
Merit/COLA Impact - Increases from FY23	\$79,162			\$79,162
Total	\$135,604	\$3,300	\$102,279	\$241,183

Position Changes

The department is requesting to convert one part-time (PT) position to full-time (FT) for the Park Development Division. Over the past few years, the budgeted hours for this PT position have gradually increased to the point that the current staff member is working nearly FT hours. The current work program demands require a FT employee. The incremental cost to the Park Fund of converting this position from PT to FT is only \$3,460.

PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE FY24 BUDGET

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

Summary - Program Enhancements					
Item & Description	Career Positions	Career Wkyrs	Term Contract Wkyrs	Seasonal Wkyrs	Funding
Park Activation	4.0	4.0	-	(0.6)	\$435,796
Improving Customer Service	1.0	1.0	-	-	\$97,745
Improving Quality and Playability of Ballfields	4.0	-	-	-	\$0
Social Equity	-	-	-	1.4	\$41,200
Maintaining and Improving What We Have	11.0	10.2	-	(7.4)	\$609,327
Total	20.0	15.2	-	(6.6)	\$1,184,068

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – PARK ACTIVATION</u>	<u>4.0 Career Positions; 4.0 Career Workyears; -0.6 Seasonal Workyears</u>	<u>\$435,796</u>
---	---	-------------------------

Additional Staff for Parks Activation Program – \$219,051

This request is to add one event programmer and two maintenance positions to the Park Activation Team. The Activation Team planned 68 events for the November 2021-October 2022 period at 36 different park locations throughout the County. The current team of program staff divides their time between program development and implementation. Scheduled events require staff time for loading and unloading of equipment, equipment delivery, event setup and take down, and repair and cleaning of equipment. The addition of two park maintenance workers to the Activation Program team will provide dedicated resources to handle these duties and to reduce the need for supplemental assistance from other operational division staff to load equipment and supplies, drive vehicles, help with event setup and break down. Adding these additional positions will also reduce overtime costs for staffing support needed from other divisions for events. Finally, the addition of an event programmer to the team will further enable the staff to continue to expand the number and variety of programs being offered. This total includes a reduction of \$20,000 of seasonal funding for work that would now be handled by this career staff.

Additional Performers and Event Funding for Park Activation - \$119,000

The Parks Activation Team is requesting additional funding of \$64,000 for instructors and performers plus \$55,000 to add a signature event or festival (over 5,000 attendees) to the department’s program offerings. This additional funding will enable the team to expand the number and variety of events throughout various parks in different areas of the County including continuing to enhance program equity and diversity. Adding staff and increasing event funding will enable the Activation Team to increase the number of programs and events by approximately 10-20% depending on the complexity of the event.

Permit Specialist - \$97,745

This enhancement will add a full-time Permit Specialist needed to handle the increased volume of Special Events and other permit requests. This position will partner with event sponsors and manage stakeholders to build and maintain positive working relationships thereby promoting greater event quality and customer satisfaction. This position will also perform permit tasks and staff analysis to assist customers in selecting appropriate park sites and to identify staffing needs for events. This position will coordinate with marketing to help promote events through approved channels and to monitor compliance needs for permits or other items required for events. Having this additional staff person will add capacity to facilitate improvement of business processes and reporting on event outcomes helping leadership determine areas of success and opportunities for growth.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE</u>	<u>1.0 Career Position; 1.0 Career Workyear</u>	<u>\$97,745</u>
--	--	------------------------

Parks Information and Customer Service (PICS) Assistant Manager - \$97,745

The department typically handles 300-500 calls per week during the warmer months, with at least 200 additional written cases per week originating via email. The current staffing level is sufficient to handle calls under typical circumstances answering all incoming calls during businesses hours while replying to nearly all written cases within 24 hours (or on Monday for those received over the weekend). However, this current staffing level is not sufficient if a staff member is out sick or on leave, which causes delays in customer response. Adding an assistant manager position will provide operational flexibility to provide coverage in case of employee absence, expand capacity to provide analysis and improve both internal and external communication. This will also allow the department to expand hours of coverage to evening or limited weekend hours enabling the department to be more responsive during peak times of patronage usage.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – IMPROVING QUALITY AND PLAYABILITY OF BALLFIELDS</u>	<u>4.0 Career Position; 4.0 Career Workyears</u>	<u>\$0</u>
---	---	-------------------

Athletic Fields Team Personnel Expansion and Contract Reduction - \$0

Montgomery Parks currently maintains 208 athletic fields on Montgomery County Public School property through outsourced contracted services. Our department is reimbursed by the County for these maintenance and renovation costs. Although the contractor performance typically meets standards for routine maintenance duties (e.g., mowing), the quality, consistency, and timeliness of performing more complex services does not always meet our standards. Therefore, this program enhancement request is to transition a portion of the contracted services funded in the Special Revenue Fund and in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to be handled internally by adding four new positions to the Athletic Field Team. Services being transitioned include aeration, seeding, nutrient management, infield annual services, and field renovations. By using highly skilled staff and specialized equipment, transitioning this work to be handled by parks staff will ensure a consistent standard of work in the appropriate time frame, ultimately saving time and money and improving field playability. This will also provide an improved level of service for our community and the ability to increase services in social equity focus areas throughout the County without additional cost. The cost for the additional staff will be offset by a reduction in the contracted cost.

<u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – SOCIAL EQUITY</u>	<u>(1.4 Seasonal Workyear)</u>	<u>\$41,200</u>
---	---------------------------------------	------------------------

Summer and Trades Internships – \$41,200

This request is for personnel funding for Summer and Trades Internships to grow the diverse talent pipeline for various positions across the park system including "hard to fill" trades positions. This funding will enable the department to increase the number of internships from the current level of six to fifteen. The program plan will include 10 summer collegiate interns for 10 weeks in the summer plus five trades interns that can be scheduled throughout the year to work simultaneously while attending Trades school.

Having an intern program promotes awareness of the County's Park system and aids in recruitment of talented individuals to fill vacancies within the Department. In addition, these interns complete meaningful projects and provide needed work for the Department of Parks while they are learning. Providing a great learning experience for our Interns will help with succession planning in the future as we keep in contact with them when they are ready to start their careers. While the Department generally has a diverse workforce, there are certain positions that have traditionally lacked diversity, so this concerted effort will aim to continue to attract diverse candidates through targeted partnerships with schools, non-profit institutions, and other affinity groups. The intern program that was reinstated in FY22 with minimal funding has been very successful, and there is now more demand from Divisions than there is funding. Our internship program is not just "re-started" - we have enhanced the communication, evaluation, and feedback strategies to truly leverage the great experiences that our

Interns experience into creating a pipeline of future talent that we will draw from. Systems have been established that formalize Intern and community outreach efforts to effectively market our internship opportunities in the County, to raise awareness of the depth and breadth of fields of study available and to benefit to the Intern, the Department of Parks, and the communities we serve.

<p><u>PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT – MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE</u></p>	<p><u>11.0 Career Positions; 10.2 Career Workyears; -7.4 Seasonal Workyears</u></p>	<p><u>\$609,327</u></p>
---	--	--------------------------------

Natural Resources Care and Management Crew- \$216,247

This enhancement is the first step towards a seven- year plan to greatly enhance the level of service for natural areas care and management. This will enable the team to better serve our customers, both internal and external, enabling expansion of the care of priority natural areas and community focused conservation projects. It creates a two-person work crew dedicated to the care and maintenance of natural areas, non-native invasive plant management and habitat restoration, and supplementing Weed Warrior Volunteer efforts. It also adds a Natural Resources Specialist to accommodate continued growth and to support inventory, planning, and community conservation efforts. Habitat care and maintenance is essential to sustaining the quality of natural areas for current and future generations. This initiative benefits many work programs directly through improved care, maintenance, and guidance for natural areas management, to include supporting elements for park planning and development projects, operations and use planning, and marketing and outreach. This total cost includes a reduction in services of \$40,000 for contracted services that would now be handled by this additional staff. Services being transitioned to staff can be completed at approximately half of the cost of using a contractor, allowing for service expansion and improved care. Having additional staff will also improve responsiveness to customer requests and/or complaints.

Playground Surface Crew- \$0

This request is to add three park maintenance staff positions for the Northern Parks Playground Surface Crew. The Northern Parks Division is responsible for 125 playgrounds, most of which have a wood carpet play surface. This surface material requires ongoing regular maintenance to meet safety standards, remain weed free without the use of pesticides, and to remain at the required depth. Much of the existing playground infrastructure is aging, and many upgraded playgrounds are in the CIP pipeline to address amenity shortcomings. Current staffing on our playground team is insufficient to complete the existing work related to playground inspections, repairs, and pesticide free wood carpet maintenance. Finding and retaining qualified seasonal staff, particularly for the playgrounds program which involves additional training, has become very challenging. These additional positions would provide full time help, allowing for greater efficiency in the efforts to control weeds in the playlot areas during the season, as well as in the use of the large Foamstream unit when needed, allowing other staff to continue with normal operations. The playground maintenance program is year-round and requires higher skill levels and knowledge that require career staff with higher experience, expertise, and accountability. During the months when weeds are not actively growing, the new career staff would replace playground borders and add additional wood carpet to playgrounds, both of which help to deter weed growth. These activities are currently performed when time allows by management area maintenance crews

which defers other critical maintenance practices that need to take place to prepare for the spring season. The cost for these new positions will be offset by reductions in divisional seasonal funding making the cost a net-zero impact.

Construction Inspector- \$20,790

This request is for a construction inspector position to help manage the increased number of CIP construction projects. Adding another position to the team will allow better distribution of construction projects among inspectors, allowing them to apply more resources to each construction project, which will result in better quality for users. In addition, increasing the staffing complement will save money by reducing the costs of having outside consultants perform this work at higher rates. The improved quality control from having an additional inspector will also help reduce the volume of change orders needed for CIP project completions and improve timeliness of completing projects. This inspector position will also assist with EAM data collection and asset condition assessments. Since this position will primarily be working on CIP projects, the cost in the Park Fund will be reduced by a chargeback to CIP for 80% of the total cost.

Urban Park Maintenance Team- \$372,290

This request is to create a dedicated Urban Park Maintenance Team. The request includes new positions for a team leader, a maintenance worker, a Horticulturist, and a Gardener. These new positions will be supplemented by repurposing three additional existing maintenance worker positions to the team. This request is the continuation of a department-wide effort to provide a higher standard of maintenance at urban parks that receive the most constituent traffic and are utilized more frequently for park activation events. Currently, urban park maintenance standards only dictate a basic standard to keep the location from being overgrown and litter free. Recent studies and analysis conducted by our planning staff revealed the need from our citizens for a higher standard of care and the desire for more aesthetically pleasing parks. Improving our maintenance level to achieve this higher level for both existing and future urban parks will require a dedicated team. This cost includes \$333,090 of personnel cost and \$39,200 for small equipment purchases, vehicle/equipment parts and fuel for vehicles. Any needed capital outlay will be purchased using FY23 year-end funding.

Summary

The Department of Parks is continuing to refine the FY24 Proposed Budget. Being mindful of the cost pressures facing the Park Fund from salaries, benefits, retirement, and mandated obligations, the **FY24 budget request shows our commitment to continue to provide the best services possible to our customers with an 8.5% operating increase (excluding compensation markers) over the FY23 budget.**

Staff is requesting approval from the Planning Board to proceed to prepare the FY24 Park Fund operating budget at the Base Budget plus Program Enhancements level.

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

The Department is scheduled for a final work session on the operating budget on November 17th to seek approval of specific funding levels for the FY24 Proposed Budgets for the Park Fund, Enterprise Fund, Property Management Fund, Special Revenue Fund, and Internal Services Equipment Fund.

APPENDIX

FY24 Operating Budget Impact (OBI) Project Descriptions

CIP PROJECTS			
PROJECT NAME	AMOUNT	CAREER WYS	SEASONAL WYS
Black Hill Regional Park Community Garden	\$36,239.00	0.3	0.1
This project will pave the existing gravel access road, convert the existing parking lot of a meadow, and install raised beds for community use. It will also add a chain link fence and gravel surface between the garden beds.			
Black Hill Regional Park - Dice Property Acquisition	\$729.00	0.0	0.0
The Dice Property is adjacent to Black Hill Regional Park and the Cool Springs Run Trailhead on Clarksburg Road. Acquisition of this property provides the space and safe access to Clarksburg Road (MD 121) needed for a planned trailhead parking area to improve public access and safety. The addition of the Property to Black Hill RP also expands the buffer provided by the park for the Little Seneca Reservoir.			
Black Hill Regional Park SEED Classroom	\$124,017.00	0.8	0.0
This project converts an unused maintenance yard to an environmental-friendly educational site using the principles of Sustainable Education Every Day (SEED) Classroom design and construction. The building will be designed for net-zero energy and water usage, utilizing a solar array and rainwater reclamation, and provides an expansion of the program space for the Black Hill Regional Park Nature Center Program.			
Broad Run Conservation Park - Acquisition	\$45,645.00	0.0	0.0
This acquisition of 472.78 acres of the entire 535.36-acre Broad Run Creek Farm provides for conservation, research, and interpretation of significant natural and cultural resources, and serves as a focal point for the Broad Run Park by providing public access for recreation and education at this unique place in Montgomery County. A natural surface trail will eventually connect through this property to the C&O Canal Historic Park to the north and south creating a major loop trail system.			
Edgewood Neighborhood Park - Community Garden	\$36,866.00	0.3	0.1
Establishes a new community garden with raised beds, gravel and natural surface walkways, benches, and interpretive kiosks.			
Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park	\$31,680.00	0.2	0.2
This project adds landscaping funding to the OBI adopted previously for Edith Throckmorton. It includes forest conservation costs and costs to maintain landscape improvements.			

Germantown Square Urban Park	\$28,751.00	0.2	0.1
Minor renovation project to improve safety, accessibility, and sustainability as well as to enhance and activate the park to better serve the nearby community. The project will remove the existing aging gazebo, relocate gathering and seating areas, and provide accessible walkways and stormwater management. Funding includes providing on-going landscaping for this urban park.			
Glen Hills Local Park	\$305.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates the existing access road, parking lot, playground, benches, bike racks, and a group picnic area.			
Hillandale Local Park	\$135,192.00	1.0	1.1
The major park renovation includes the realignment/reconstruction of the main Chalmers Road entrance, modification to the existing Rodney Road entrance, construction of a restroom/picnic shelter facility, multi-age playground, lighted basketball courts, a high-performance rectangular field with a softball diamond overlay, parking, an asphalt loop trail, accessible walkways, seating areas, installation of site furnishings, tree preservation, landscape planting and storm water management facilities. A recently constructed picnic shelter and associated accessible parking area and the existing tennis courts will be retained and incorporated into the design of the renovated park.			
Olney Manor Recreational Park - Kimble Property Acquisition	\$5,425.00	0.0	0.0
The Kimble Property separates the two existing parts of Olney Manor Recreational Park (OMRP). Acquisition of this 17.08-acre property will enable the department to eventually complete the park as long planned and proposed in the 2005 Olney Master Plan. This OBI is for turf management costs to preserve buffers around established trees and for meadow management of the site until further property develop is executed.			
Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park	\$406.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates the existing playground and adds benches and an underground stormwater management.			
Sligo Dennis Avenue Local Park	\$4,863.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates the existing playground and adds benches and underground stormwater management.			
Sligo Stream Valley Park (Kennebec)	\$4,863.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates the existing playground and adds benches and underground stormwater management.			
South Germantown Recreational Park - Bike Park	\$3,911.00	0.0	0.0
This project represents the first phase of improvements to the SGRP Bike Skills Area. Additions include a paved access road and expanded parking, bike racks, a picnic shelter, and additional sidewalks.			

South Germantown Recreational Park - Tennis Bubble	\$2,515.00	0.0	0.0
This OBI is for ground maintenance and trash removal for the area adjacent to the additional tennis bubble being added to this park.			
TOTAL OBI FOR CIP PROJECTS	\$461,407	2.8	1.6
CIP PROJECTS - WQPF			
Germantown Square Urban Park - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$2,132.00	0.0	0.0
Minor renovation project which intends to improve safety, accessibility, and sustainability as well as to enhance and activate the park to better serve the nearby community. The project will remove the existing aging gazebo, relocate gathering and seating areas, and provide accessible walkways and stormwater management.			
Hillandale Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$29,404.00	0.0	0.8
The park renovation includes the realignment/reconstruction of the main Chalmers Road entrance, modification to the existing Rodney Road entrance, construction of a restroom/picnic shelter facility, multi-age playground, lighted basketball courts, a high-performance rectangular field with a softball diamond overlay, parking, an asphalt loop trail, accessible walkways, seating areas, installation of site furnishings, tree preservation, landscape planting and storm water management facilities. A recently constructed picnic shelter and associated accessible parking area and the existing tennis courts will be retained and incorporated into the design of the renovated park.			
Longwood Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$3,602.00	0.0	0.0
Installation of 490 sq. ft. of new bioretention facilities.			
Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$3,428.00	0.0	0.0
This project renovates the existing playground and adds benches and underground stormwater management.			
South Germantown Recreational Park Tennis - Stormwater Mgmt.	\$9,592.00	0.0	0.0
This project installs a new Bioretention area along with landscaping improvements surrounding the Tennis Bubble.			
Stewartown Local Park Stormwater Mgmt.	\$6,953.00	0.0	0.0
This project will renovate one basketball court and convert another to a combination basketball/futsal court. It will also add two new picnic tables to an existing shelter, renovate an existing shelter, add two bioretention facilities, and expand parking.			
TOTAL OBI FOR CIP PROJECTS - WQPF	\$55,111	0.0	0.8
GRAND TOTAL	\$516,518	2.8	2.4