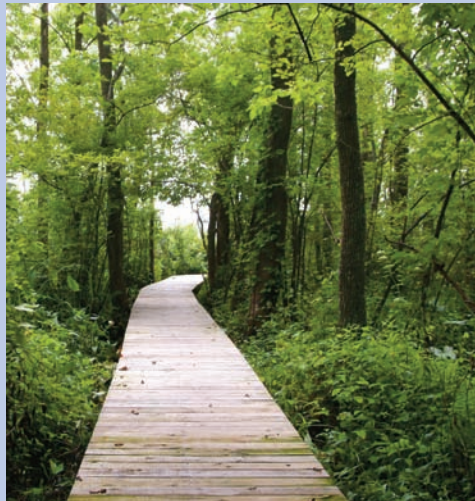


PARKS & RECREATION: 2010 AND BEYOND
A Plan for the Future of Parks and Recreation by the People of Prince George's County

Parks & Recreation
2010 AND BEYOND

VOLUME 2

**2040 Vision
& Framework**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
B. INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT	9
1. Introduction.....	9
2. Purpose	9
3. 2010 & Beyond Elements	9
4. Agency Vision & Mission Statements.....	9
5. Related Planning Efforts.....	10
6. Regional Context	11
7. Planning Process & Timeline	12
C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VALUES	15
1. Guiding Principles.....	15
2. Values	16
D. KEY FINDINGS	17
1. Demographics.....	17
2. Trends.....	21
4. Inventory & Level of Service Analysis Summary	24
5. Program Analysis.....	31
6. Administration & Management	33
E. VISION TO 2040	35
1. 2040 Vision Statement	35
2. Vision Themes	36
F. RECOMMENDATIONS	39
THEME 1 – <i>Appropriate level of service for parks and facilities to meet diverse community needs</i> ..	39
THEME 3 – <i>Recreation and culture that inspires healthy lifestyles and a sense of community</i>	56
THEME 4 – <i>Safe and accessible places and programs for play, relaxation, and enjoyment</i>	65
THEME 5 – <i>Community engagement and collaborations that maximize resources</i>	72
THEME 6 – <i>A sustainable organization to provide quality services and facilities</i>	76
G. ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITMENTS	87
APPENDIX A – INVENTORY DESCRIPTION & CLASSIFICATIONS	89
APPENDIX B – STANDARDS AND LOCATION CRITERIA	97
APPENDIX C – MAPS	103
APPENDIX D - GLOSSARY	107
APPENDIX E – DATA SOURCES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX	113

TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Population Trend in Prince George’s County..... 18
Figure 2: Prince George’s County Sub-Areas 19
Figure 3: Population Change by Sub-Area 20
Figure 4: Areas Meeting Level of Service Target 29
Figure 5: Average LOS Per Population Density by Sub-Area..... 30

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has a long tradition of leadership in the preservation of stream valley parks and natural areas. The tradition continues with the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** planning effort. In September 2008, the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County embarked on this community needs assessment, visioning, and strategic planning project. The purpose of the project is to proactively plan for Prince George's County's present and future recreation programs, parks, trails, and open space needs. This plan provides decision-makers with tools to accomplish the following:

- Serve the parks and recreation needs and interests of current and future Prince Georgians.
- Maintain the quality of the system over time.
- Ensure organizational sustainability.

Purpose

Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond provides a vision for the future of the parks and recreation system in Prince George's County as well as a strategic focus for how to make that vision a reality. This **2040 Vision and Framework** will guide the development of the parks and recreation system for the next 30 years when the county is anticipated to be largely built-out. This framework builds on the firm foundation of an exemplary parks and recreation system, renowned across the country, with a focus on maintaining the existing high level of service into the future. The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** plan elements provide a proactive guide for staff and policy-makers to equitably plan for and provide parks and recreation facilities and services to meet the needs of a diverse and growing county.

Tools for Decision-Making

The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project has generated strong analysis tools for future decision-making. This analysis and resultant tools include:

- Updated demographic information overall and by sub-area.
- Understanding of local and regional recreation trends.
- Strong community involvement and input – over 4,500 participated in various ways.
- Results from the statistically valid survey by sub-area.
- Detailed inventory of all Department components by sub-area along with strong awareness of alternative providers.
- Level of Service Analysis capacity for all components owned and managed by the Department.
- Identification of Key Issues.
- Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis.
- Analytical Maps and Perspectives.
- Decision-Making Matrices.

Plan Elements

The elements of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** Plan include the following three reports:

Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment

Volume 2: 2040 Vision & Framework

Volume 3: FY2010 to FY2013 Implementation Plan

Needs & Resource Assessment

The *Needs and Resource Assessment* is a separate support document to the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** Plan. The needs assessment identifies key parks and recreation issues and needs. This document includes analysis and key findings in the following areas:

- Trends and demographics.
- Community and stakeholder input including statistically valid and open surveys, public meetings, and external and internal focus groups.
- Programs and services.
- Inventory analysis of parks and recreation facilities including key alternative providers such as municipalities and schools.
- Administration and management.

2040 Vision & Framework

This component of the plan provides a vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system for 30 years to when the county is anticipated to be largely built-out.

It includes a 10-year *Strategic Plan* that lays out recommended strategies and objectives to achieve the 2040 vision and address the key issues identified in the *Needs and Resource Assessment*.

FY2010 to FY2013 Implementation Plan

The *FY 2010 to FY 2013 Implementation Plan* identifies action steps to achieve the strategic objectives in the next three years along with the necessary financial and staff resources.

Process

This plan is a result of the collective efforts of engaged residents, stakeholders, staff, and leadership. Over 4,500 members of the public along with elected officials, staff, and other stakeholders contributed to the vision and strategies laid out in this plan. This community involvement affirmed that the parks and recreation system is highly valued by residents and contributes to their quality of life. The vast system of natural areas and parks shapes the community character and fabric of the many communities that make up Prince George's County.

Challenges & Opportunities

This **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** Plan positions the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County to meet the changing and growing needs of an increasing diverse community. The identification of needs and issues through the planning process provides solid ground on which the Department can strategically provide quality parks and recreation facilities and services into the future.

Guiding challenges and opportunities include:

- Quality versus Quantity in Services and Facilities
- Holistic versus Fragmented Decision-Making and Management
- Proactive versus Reactive Planning
- Focused versus Dispersed Provision of Services

2040 Vision Statement

The following **Vision Statement** for **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** describes what the organization hopes to become by 2040:

In 2040, the parks and recreation system in Prince George's County is enjoyed by a diverse mix of residents and visitors. Parks and open spaces are integral to the fabric and character of the community and provide places of respite and beauty. Natural, recreational, cultural, artistic, and historical resources provide enriching experiences, enjoyment, fun, and health for all people. The parks and recreation system is sustainable, well-maintained, and safe. The preservation of parkland and natural areas continues with a focus on connecting people to the land and each other. Residents are both aware of and active participants in an array of recreation and leisure opportunities. Residents are strong advocates for and stewards of the parks and recreation system.

Themes & 2040 Vision Elements

Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond looks ahead 30 years until 2040 when it is anticipated that Prince George's County will be extensively built-out with few remaining opportunities for large parcel land acquisition. The following **six themes** reflect issues, dreams, and concerns expressed by Prince Georgians. Supporting goals and strategies will guide the future development, operations, and maintenance of the Prince George's County parks and recreation system to 2040.

THEME 1

Appropriate level of service for parks and facilities to meet diverse community needs

GOAL 1: Provide an equivalent mix of facilities and public lands across the county to meet the needs and desires of residents.

Strategies:

- Regularly monitor levels of service of lands, facilities, programs, and amenities in all parts of the county to determine balance on both a distribution and per-population basis.
- Implement a Level of Service Model that produces an equivalent mix of indoor facilities throughout the county and ensures sustainable operations and maintenance.
- Create plans for new and improved parks and recreation facilities to address need.
- Ensure that new developments incorporate parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residents.
- Implement strategic analysis for existing and to plan for additional aquatics facilities.

THEME 2

Natural areas, trees, and waters that endure and captivate

GOAL 2: Preserve, protect, and enhance or restore woodlands, natural areas, open spaces, and waters managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County.

Strategies:

- Acquire and protect environmentally sensitive properties and natural areas.
- Implement sound management practices to provide healthy and sustainable natural resources.

GOAL 3: Engage the community in outdoor and environmental activities.

Strategies:

- Promote environmental stewardship and education.
- Promote eco-tourism and resource-based recreation.

THEME 3

Recreation and culture that inspires healthy lifestyles and a sense of community

GOAL 4: Implement a Service Delivery Model that is responsive and relevant to county residents' leisure behaviors, interests, and needs as they cope with dynamic social and economic conditions.

Strategies:

- Prioritize core service areas with the greatest potential to impact countywide conditions.
- Focus on services to address emerging recreation and leisure trends and changing population characteristics.
- Evaluate and measure participant outcomes and countywide impacts of all programs and services.

GOAL 5: Position the Department as a collaborative provider of leisure service delivery.

Strategy:

- Develop collaborations with other public, non-profit, and private leisure service providers in the county whose values, vision, and missions align with those of the Department to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services (including programs and facilities) infuse programming with creativity, and responsibly utilize financial resources to reach the greatest number of county residents.

THEME 4

Safe and accessible places and programs for play, relaxation, and enjoyment

GOAL 6: Collaborate to maintain safe and accessible park and recreation facilities.

Strategies:

- Emphasize safety and accessibility in the design, redevelopment, and construction of parks and recreation facilities.
- Proactively engage the community in crime prevention through programs and activities.
- Collaborate with law enforcement agencies on countywide crime and safety issues.

GOAL 7: Enhance access to facilities and programs.

Strategies:

- Develop a connected recreational trail system with access to community destinations.
- Work to ensure multiple transportation access opportunities to facilities and programs.

THEME 5

Community engagement and collaborations that maximize resources

GOAL 8: Provide opportunities for meaningful community engagement and partnering.

Strategies:

- Strengthen relationships with local civic/community organizations, recreation councils, and HOAs.
- Create and implement a partnership policy that creates mutual obligations and expectations for all collaborations.

GOAL 9: Enhance communications and outreach efforts to increase community awareness of and involvement in Department programs, services, and facilities.

Strategies:

- Strengthen marketing, customer service, and community relations practices and methods.
- Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities.

THEME 6

A sustainable organization to provide quality services and facilities

GOAL 10: Adopt management practices that will produce long-term organizational sustainability while maintaining service quality.

Strategies:

- Refine and broadly communicate organizational values, vision, and mission.
- Ensure staff understands their roles and responsibilities for maintaining a respectful, inclusive, and productive work environment.
- Allocate appropriate staff resources to enable each Division to function effectively.
- Create integrated financial systems, processes, and tools.
- Continually update and integrate technologies to create efficiencies and ongoing improvements to service.
- Develop a comprehensive staff training and development program to maintain staff expertise to deliver quality program and services.
- Set, follow, and meet maintenance standards for each facility type.
- Set, follow, and meet standards for the design, construction, and renovation of facilities and amenities.
- Evaluate the quality of parks and recreation facilities on an ongoing basis.
- Achieve taxpayer equity.

Organizational Implementation Commitments

The **2040 Vision and Framework** provides long-term goals and strategies that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This framework positions the Department of Parks and Recreation to maintain its place as a national leader and high quality provider of parks and recreation facilities and services.

The **2040 Vision and Framework** incorporates a **10-year Strategic Plan** that builds on the vision with specific objectives and actions to achieve the 2040 goals. A **FY2010 to FY2013 Implementation Plan** provides short-term action steps and identifies needed financial and staff resources. These guiding documents should be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs, and interests.



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B. INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT

1. Introduction

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has a long tradition of leadership in the preservation of stream valley parks and natural areas. The tradition continues with the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** planning effort. In September 2008, the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County embarked on this community needs assessment, visioning, and strategic planning project. The purpose of the project is to proactively plan for Prince George's County's present and future recreation programs, parks, trails, and open space needs.

2. Purpose

The **2040 Vision and Framework** provides a vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system into the future, looking to when the county is anticipated to be largely built-out in 30 years. This **Strategic Plan** component of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project provides the broad framework to guide the work of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County over the next ten years, and is therefore more detailed for implementation.

3. 2010 & Beyond Elements

Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond consists of several resource and guiding documents. The **Needs and Resource Assessment** report is a separate document that identifies key findings that inform the plan elements of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project. In addition to this **Strategic Plan**, a detailed **FY2010 to FY2013 Implementation Plan** is being developed that builds upon the vision elements and strategies identified in the **2040 Vision and Framework**. The vision, strategies, and objectives laid out in these strategic planning documents will provide a proactive guide for staff and policy-makers to equitably plan for and provide parks and recreation facilities and services throughout the county now and in the future.

4. Agency Vision & Mission Statements

The following vision and mission statements for The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County provide the foundation for this **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project. These vision and mission statements affirm the central role that the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system play in contributing to the quality of life of the community.

M-NCPPC Vision

The M-NCPPC vision is to be “a leader in managing public resources and delivering quality customer-focused programs.”

M-NCPPC Mission

The M-NCPPC mission is to “provide a framework for future development that will enhance livability for citizens and residents of the Montgomery and Prince George’s bi-county area by:

- Managing physical growth.
- Providing stewardship of natural areas.
- Providing open space.
- Planning a variety of living environments.
- Offering leisure and recreational “experiences.”

Department Mission

The mission of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County is to “provide, in partnership with our citizens, comprehensive park and recreation programs, facilities, and services which respond to changing needs within our communities. We strive to preserve, enhance, and protect our open spaces to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment.”

Department Vision

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County pledges to:

- Provide stewardship of our county's natural, cultural, and historical resources.
- Foster the needs of our citizens for recreational pursuits in a leisure environment.
- Provide the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community.

5. Related Planning Efforts

The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project responds to, and builds on, the following M-NCPPC planning documents related to Prince George’s County.

- *Prince George’s County General Plan* (October 2002)
- *Parks and Recreation Marketing Manual* (2004)
- *Countywide Green Infrastructure Plan* (June 14, 2005)
- *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for Prince George’s County* (2005)
- *Strategic Plan, Fiscal Years 2008-2010, Montgomery and Prince George’s County* (December 2006)
- *Youth Action Plan* (March 2007)
- *2008 Senior, Age 55 and Better, Recreation and Interest Assessment Survey*
- *Countywide Master Plan of Transportation* (Preliminary, December 2008)
- *Comprehensive Recreation Programming Plan: Montgomery Parks and Prince George’s Parks and Recreation* (May 2009)

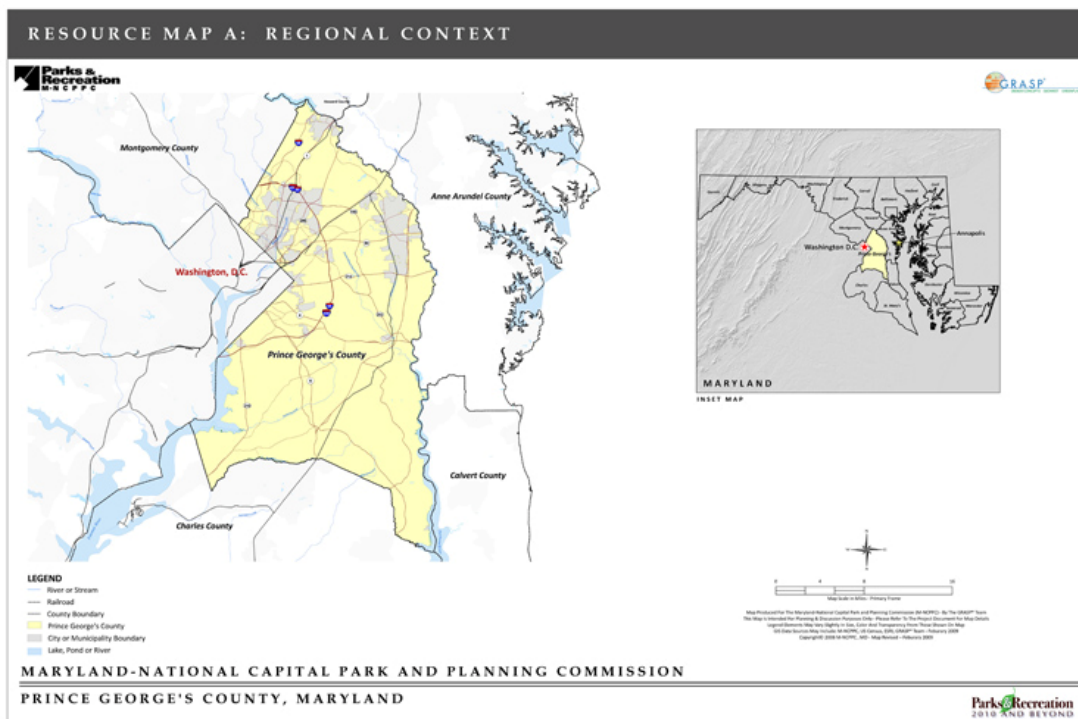
In addition, many Department documents and studies were reviewed including the Capital Improvement Plan, program reports, and past community surveys. References to these plans and documents are made in relevant sections of this plan.

6. Regional Context

Prince George’s County, Maryland is located in the Baltimore/Washington corridor, bordering Washington D.C. and just 37 miles south of Baltimore. The county’s boundary is mostly defined by water – the Potomac River to the southeast, the Patuxent River along the entire eastern boundary, and Mattawoman Creek to the south. Stretching some 35 miles from northern tip to southern tip, the county area includes 487 square miles of land and 12 miles of water.

The growing population of close to 850,000 resides in 27 municipalities and unincorporated areas. The land inside the Capital Beltway is largely developed, while the area immediately outside the Beltway is experiencing steady growth. The eastern part of the county is largely rural.

Situated on the divide between the Potomac and the Patuxent Rivers, the landscape is one of deciduous forests, urbanized areas, and agricultural lands. The headwaters of the Anacostia River can be found in the northern half of the county. A number of smaller stream valleys flow southward from the central axis of the county to the rivers along its edge. These valleys are the original impetus for the system of parks, open spaces, and trails managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation.



7. Planning Process & Timeline

This project has been guided by a project team made up of key staff and a Steering Committee of community leaders and stakeholders, along with input from an extensive public process. The project team and senior managers met with consultants from the GreenPlay team and provided input throughout the planning process. This collaborative effort fully utilizes the consultant's expertise and incorporates local knowledge and institutional history. The planning process and timeline follows.

Note: The M-NCPPC has jurisdiction in both Prince George's County and Montgomery County, MD. This plan is focused on Prince George's County parks and recreation, but it is important to note that while the term "the county" is used throughout this document to generally refer to the Department's service area, there are parts of Prince George's County which are not part of the Commission district boundaries, especially in the southern sections and around some of the municipalities.

PHASE I: INFORMATION GATHERING	Sept. 2008-February 2009
Start-up	September 2008
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Began project.2. Refined project goals and work plan.	
Community & Stakeholder Input Process	October 2008-February 2009
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conducted public meetings and focus groups.2. Held staff focus groups and interviews.3. Received guidance from Steering Committee and staff project team.	
Inventory and Assessment of Existing Facilities	November 2008-February 2009
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conducted inventory and analysis of county parks, open space, trails, and facilities.	
Program Analysis	November 2008-February 2009
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conducted staff focus groups.2. Reviewed program issues identified through public process.	
Statistically-Valid Survey	December 2008-February 2009
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mailed survey to random sample of county residents.2. Provided additional open web-based survey.	
Demographic and Trends Analysis	December 2008-February 2009
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Reviewed county demographics and population projections.2. Identified parks and recreation-related trends.	

PHASE II: FINDINGS & VISIONING

March-April 2009

Findings and Visioning – Community and Staff Meetings

1. Presented key findings to staff, Steering Committee, and elected officials.
2. Held six public meetings.
3. Validated findings.
4. Identified community goals and priorities.

PHASE III: PLAN DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW

May-October 2009

Draft Plan Review

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 1. Worked with staff to refine plan elements. | June |
| 2. Draft 2040 Vision and 10-Year Strategic Plan. | June-July |
| 3. Review by staff and Steering Committee. | June-August |
| 4. Held four public open houses on Draft Plans. | July |
| 5. Public Review of Plans. | July-August |
| 6. Staff development of 3-Year Implementation Plans. | August-October |

Plan Adoption

October

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C. GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VALUES

The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** vision elements and strategies are guided by the following principles and values.

1. Guiding Principles

General Plan

The following guiding principles from the Prince George's County *General Plan* provide the context for the plan elements of **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond**.

- Public health, safety, and welfare
- Sustainability
- Quality
- Meaningful public participation



The *General Plan* also includes **county priorities** based on the *Biennial Growth Policy*. Parks and recreation facilities and services contribute to many of the following priorities identified in the *General Plan*.



- Quality economic development
- Infill and revitalization
- Existing neighborhood integrity
- Adequate public facilities
- Environmental protection
- Transit support
- Socio-economic diversity
- Farmland preservation



2. Values

The following values frame and guide the elements of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** and in turn how the plan will be implemented. These values were synthesized based on feedback from community members, stakeholders, and staff as part of the planning process.

Leadership & Innovation

Visionary leadership and innovation to achieve excellence.

Sustainability

Responsibly balancing resources to meet the environmental, social, and economic needs today and in the future.

Preservation of Open Space

Open lands for enjoyment & preservation.

Quality

Maintenance of quality services and facilities.

Fairness

Distribution of resources to meet a variety of community needs and interests.

Diversity

Celebration of and responsiveness to a diverse community.

Healthy Communities

Contributions to the health of the community – for people, the environment, and the economy.

Community Engagement

Awareness and active participation.

Accessibility & Safety

Accessible and safe places that encourage participation.

These values complement the agency values of The Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission:

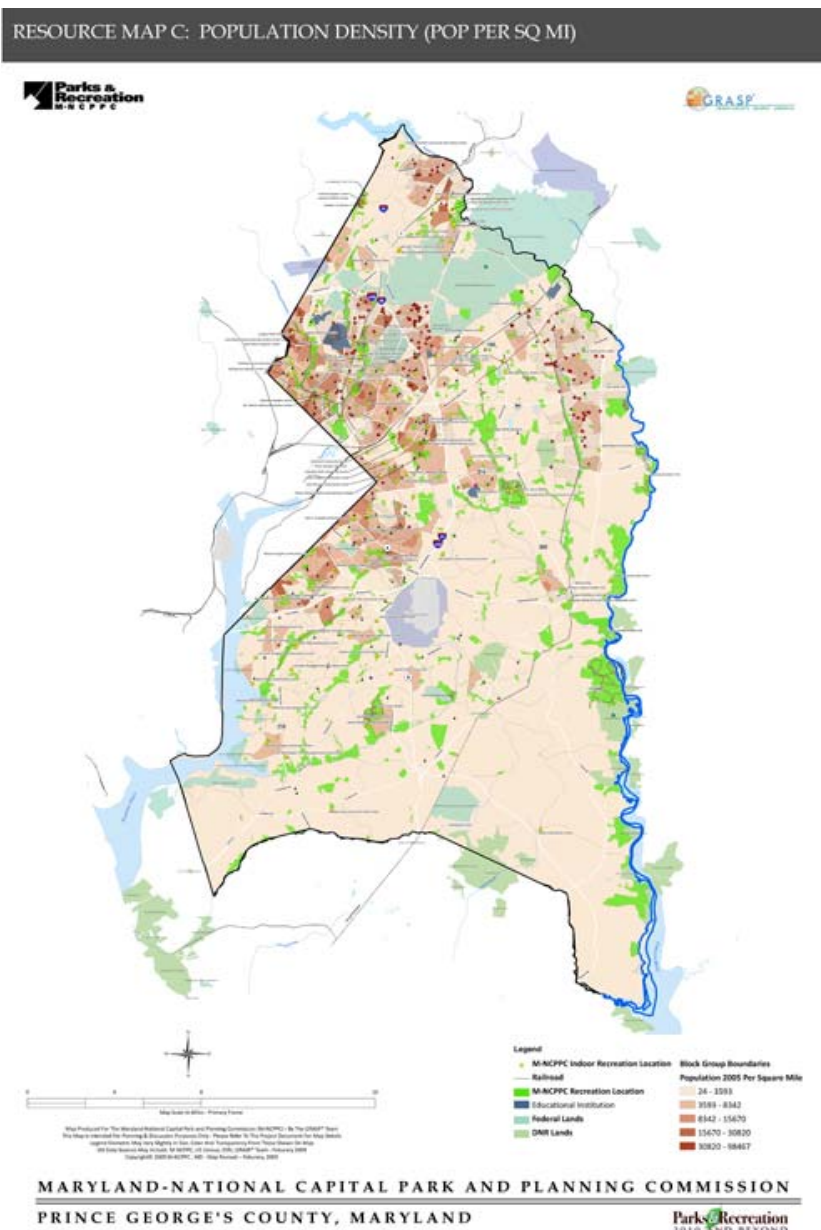
Excellence:	<i>Striving for the highest quality work of which we can be proud.</i>
Stewardship:	<i>Managing the resources under our care as if they are our own.</i>
Integrity:	<i>Committing to balanced, honest, and objective thought and actions.</i>
Ingenuity:	<i>Seizing opportunities to find creative solutions.</i>
Collaboration:	<i>Committing to work cooperatively with internal and external partners.</i>
Dedication:	<i>Providing exceptional customer service.</i>

D. KEY FINDINGS

Following are highlights of the key findings included in the *Needs and Resource Assessment*, a separate **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** document with detailed information and analysis.

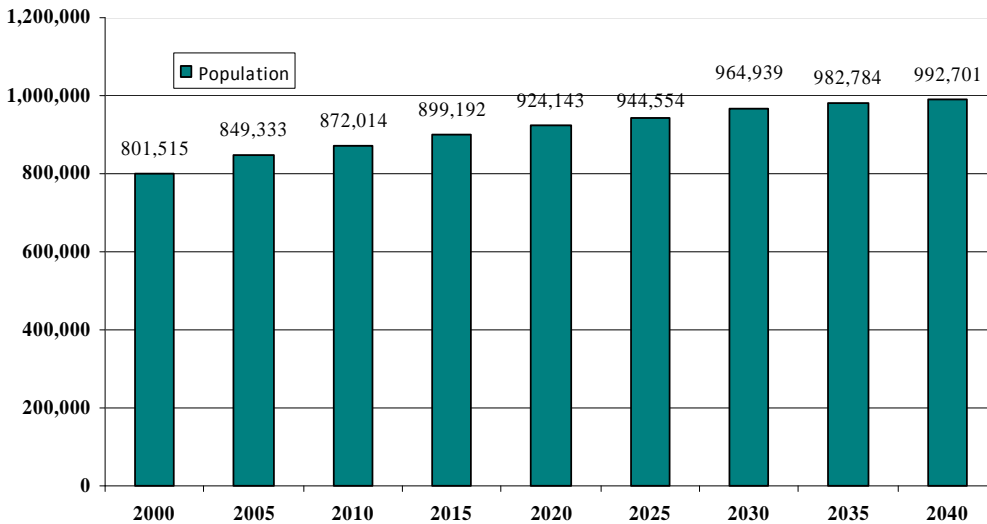
1. Demographics

The demographic diversity of residents in Prince George's County presents planning opportunities and challenges. The county represents urban, suburban, and rural communities made up of a mix of residents diverse in age, income, and race. The darker shades in *Resource Map C* below show higher densities of current population in the county.



Steady population growth is projected for Prince George’s County. According to M-NCPPC, the estimated 2005 county population was 849,333. The 2010 projected population is 872,014. As shown in **Figure 1**, this is an eight percent increase since 2000. It is projected that the county will reach 992,701 by 2040. **The county population is forecast to grow by 14 percent from 2010 to 2040, adding over 120,000 new residents.**

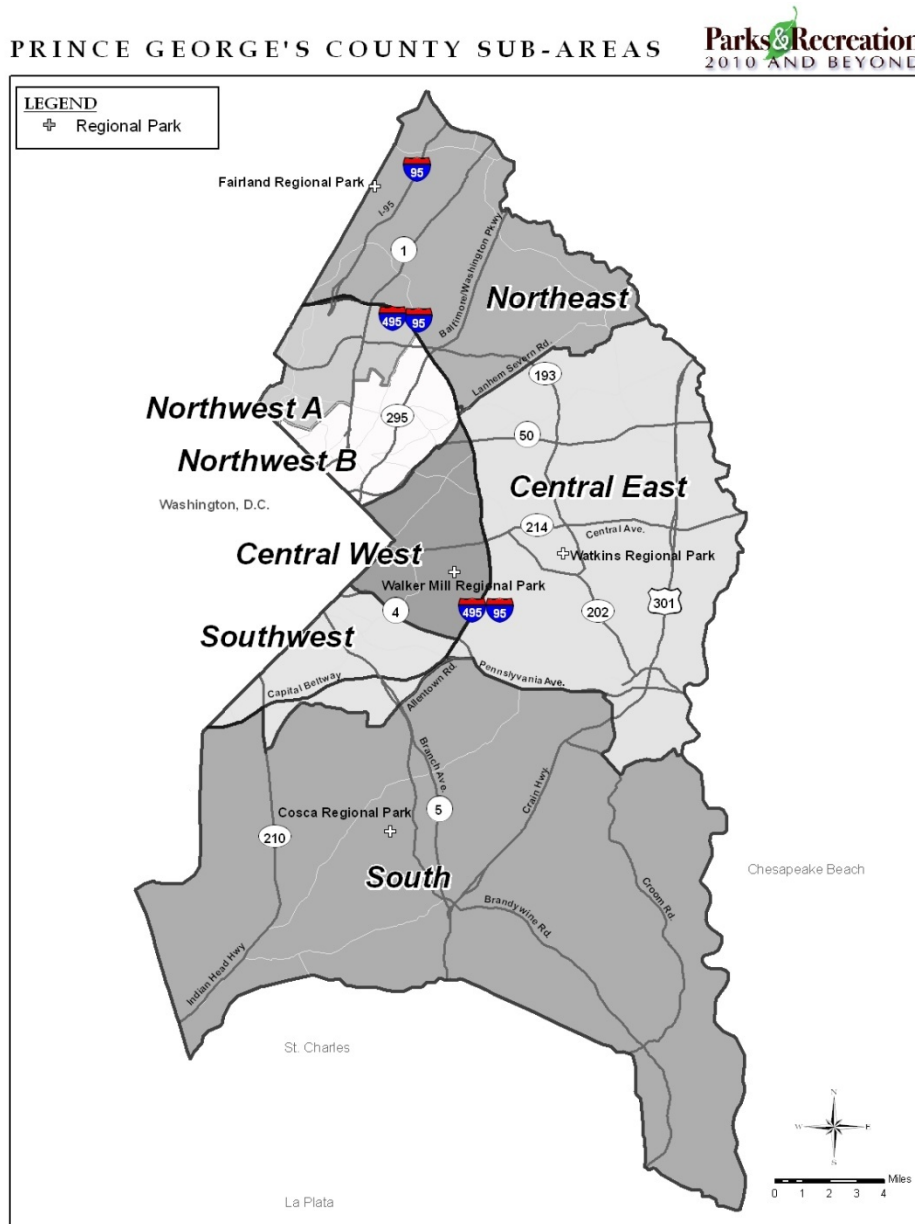
Figure 1: Population Trend in Prince George’s County



Source: US Census 2007 American Community Survey for 2000 population, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for all other population estimates

Due to the large size and high level of diversity for Prince George’s County, this plan includes important demographic features for **seven sub-areas**. US Census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) were used to create seven sub-areas that are identified as: Central East, Central West, Northeast, Northwest A, Northwest B, Southwest, and South.

Figure 2: Prince George’s County Sub-Areas



Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission



Population projections for Prince George’s County sub-areas are outlined in the following table. The highest percent change from 2010 to 2040 is forecast for the South sub-area (29%), followed by the Central East sub-area (23%), and Northwest A (14%). Population increases in these three sub-areas make up over 50 percent of the countywide growth through 2040. The lowest growth is forecast for the Central West sub-area (3%).

Figure 3: Population Change by Sub-Area

Sub- Area	2010	2040	Percent Change 2010 to 2040
Northwest A	109,214	124,612	14%
Northeast	125,803	135,836	8%
Northwest B	101,279	105,029	4%
Central West	105,374	108,572	3%
Central East	171,670	210,366	23%
South	151,761	195,370	29%
Southwest	106,742	112,726	6%

Source: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Summary of County Demographics

The following demographic highlights for Prince George’s County are taken from the US Census 2007 American Community Survey.

- The median household income in Prince George’s County (\$68,370) is higher than the national median income (\$50,740).
- Median income in West sub-areas averages \$54,000 per household, while East and South sub-areas average \$74-\$95,000 per household.
- African Americans make up the majority of county residents (63.6%), followed by Whites (18%), Hispanics/Latinos (12%), and six percent others.
- A larger percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents reside in the Northwest B (47%) and Northwest A sub-area (31%). Over 20 percent of households in these two sub-areas speak Spanish at home.
- Eighteen-point-eight (18.8) percent of county residents are foreign born, with the highest percentages in the Northwest sub-areas. Forty percent of the Northwest A sub-area is foreign born, which is the highest in the county, followed by Northwest B with 31.3 percent foreign born residents.

2. Trends

Key trends that are both important to evaluate and relevant for Prince George’s County’s future planning efforts include the following:

- On a national level, parks and recreation agencies are becoming the key providers of entry-level fitness and wellness activities, contributing to public health. The United Health Foundation has ranked Maryland 26th in its *2008 State Health Rankings* (based on 22 measures such as infant mortality rate and prevalence of obesity, smoking, violent crime, and children in poverty).
- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home, according to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers conducted by the National Association of Home Builders and the National Association of Realtors.
- According to the *Outdoor Industry Foundation*, 50 percent of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.
- Parks and recreation agencies are becoming more commonly identified as the primary after-school providers for youth. Participation in out-of-school activities and programs offer support for youth and working families, and benefit the youth socially, emotionally, and academically. Afterschool programs and camps also provide a safe haven for youth and help decrease crime and delinquency.
- According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association, the top three sports activities for persons 65 years and older in 2007 were exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming.
- There is an increasing trend towards providing larger regional multi-purpose facilities rather than smaller neighborhood facilities for both economic and retention purposes.
- Indoor leisure and therapeutic pools are becoming more popular as aquatic features. Additional amenities like “spray pads” are becoming increasingly popular as well.
- Environmental education programs were listed at the top of the 10 programs parks and recreation departments are planning to add within the next three years (according to the “State of the Industry Report,” *Recreation Magazine*, June 2008). Participation in environmental programs offered by M-NCPPC in Prince George’s County is growing.
- National trends in the delivery of parks and recreation systems reflect an increase in partnerships for service delivery.



3. Community and Key Stakeholder Input

This plan is a result of the collective efforts of engaged residents, stakeholders, staff, and leadership. Over 4,500 members of the public along with elected officials, staff, and other stakeholders contributed to the vision and strategies laid out in this plan. At each stage of the planning process, community members and staff contributed their thoughts and ideas, helping to identify key issues and



recommendations. In addition, a Steering Committee made up of a cross-section of county stakeholders guided the project along with a staff project team. Specific opportunities for input included the following. (Note: The summary of key findings from the public input is included throughout the **Strategic Plan**. Additional information from these public input opportunities is available in the **Needs and Resource Assessment** report as well as separate summaries for each focus group and public meeting.)

Survey

A statistically-valid survey of residents in Prince George’s County was conducted as part of needs assessment for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project. Highlights of this survey are interwoven throughout this **Vision and Framework**. For a full survey report see **Appendix A** in the separate **Needs and Resource Assessment** report.

The statistically-valid survey was mailed to 14,000 randomly selected county households. The survey provided input from a representative sample of residents and was a reliable method to get input from non-users of the M-NCPPC parks and recreation system in Prince George’s County. Surveys were also available in Spanish.

An open web-based survey was available to any interested county resident or stakeholder. The open survey provided a broad-based opportunity for anyone to give input. As responses to the open-link version of the questionnaire are “self-selected” and not a part of the randomly selected sample of residents, results from these questionnaires were analyzed separately. An additional 801 open-link surveys were completed resulting in a grand total of 1,429 completed surveys, with solid representation from each sub-area of the county.



Focus Groups

Forty external focus groups were held gaining input from 400 stakeholders during the information gathering phase of the project. Input was gained from a variety of groups throughout the county with different interest areas:

- Environmental
- Historical Resources
- Arts and Culture
- Education
- Sports Associations
- Faith-based Groups
- Alternative Providers
- Homeowners Associations
- Youth Organizations and Teens
- Seniors
- Disabled Community
- Immigrant Communities (e.g. Filipino, Latino, African, Caribbean etc.)
- Governmental (municipalities, state, and federal)

In addition, input was also gained from a cross-section of staff representatives in focus groups and individual interviews.

Public Meetings

Broad outreach was made at each stage of the project to engage residents in sharing ideas and shaping the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** vision and plans. A total of fourteen public meetings were held throughout the county.

Summary from Community and Stakeholder Input

Similar to the findings from the statistically-valid survey, the key themes for further improvement identified from the public meetings and focus groups include:

- Improving perception of safety and security.
- Increasing marketing and communications efforts.
- Improving equity and distribution of programs and facilities, along with transportation and access capabilities.
- Offering a variety of programs for all ages, ethnicities, and abilities.
- Partnering with schools, faith-based organizations, and other non-profit, for-profit and governmental agencies.

A series of **six public visioning meetings** were held in the spring of 2009. Highlights of these community visioning sessions are summarized below.

Key priority areas of focus for the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County include the following:

- Maintenance of parks and facilities
- Access to indoor facilities – recreation centers, pools, cultural centers, etc.
- Protection of natural resources
- Engaging youth and teens
- Affordable programs

Residents were asked a broad question about their image of or vision for Prince George's County. Many of the responses related to the role parks and recreation plays in contributing to the quality of life in the county.

- Beauty of open space
- Vibrancy of community
- Quality, safe, family environment
- A great place to live
- Many cultures and history

4. Inventory & Level of Service Analysis Summary

The range of densities within Prince George's County has been increasing as infill and population density occurs in some areas while others are being preserved in an undeveloped state. This is echoed in the increasing ethnic and demographic diversity found across the county. Serving such a diverse and dynamic geographic area is alone a challenge, and the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County has raised the bar by setting a high standard for service and consistently meeting it over the years. In order to continue this achievement for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project, it is important to gain a clear understanding of the nature of the service that is currently being provided to the residents of Prince George's County so that plans can be made to maintain the standards set by the Department in the years to come.

Inventory Methodology

The parks and recreation system can be thought of as an infrastructure that serves the health and well-being of people. This infrastructure is made up of parts that are combined in various ways to provide service. At the larger scale, parks, greenways, and indoor facilities form the basic building blocks of the system. But each of these can be broken down as well into individual components such as playing fields, interpretive features, or meeting rooms. For this project, a very complete and thorough database of amenities related to the provision of parks and recreation facilities in Prince George's County was conducted. All of the individual components within the system were evaluated and recorded into the inventory dataset.

The inventory was conducted from November 2008 to January 2009. The inventory included Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County managed and owned properties and alternative providers. Alternative providers include elementary and middle schools, homeowner association (HOA) parks, municipal indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, state and federal indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, Boys and Girls Clubs, and the indoor pool at Prince George's Community College.

A methodology known as Composite-Values Level of Service Analysis was used to inventory and assess the service provided by the current park system. Each relevant component (e.g. playground, ballfield, indoor facility, trail, etc.) was located, counted, and assessed for the functionality of its primary intended use. A Level of Service (LOS) score was assigned to the component as a measure of its functionality.

Inventory Overview

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County has:

- Over 25,000 acres of parkland including over 8,000 acres of developed parkland.
- Almost 8,000 acres of stream valley parkland.
- Over 7,000 acres of undeveloped parkland.

According to the inventory conducted in 2008, this system includes 526 park locations (including stream valley and undeveloped parks) as well as 119 indoor facilities. Overall, the system has over 2,300 outdoor components and over 400 indoor components. The system is divided into three major recreational planning areas: Northern, Central, and Southern. For the purpose of this study, seven sub-areas are used in the LOS analysis study were defined. These sub-areas are South, Southwest, Central West, Central East, Northwest A, Northwest B, and Northeast.

The Department of Park and Recreation in Prince George’s County’s system is well maintained and features a wide variety of indoor and outdoor facilities. Based on the 2008 inventory, listed below is a summary of Department’s indoor and outdoor facilities that are included in the LOS analysis. See **Appendix A** for an overview of the parks and recreation inventory.



Table 1: Department Inventory Summary

Facility	Quantity
Aquatic Facilities (including Sports & Learning Complex)	11
Athletic Complex (including Sports & Learning Complex)	3
Boxing Center	1
Community Centers	43
Community Parks	82
Community Center Parks	25
Community Park/Schools	11
Community Park School Center	4
Community Recreation Centers	8
Conservation/Natural Areas	16
Cultural Arts Centers	4
Equestrian Center	1
Golf Courses	4
Hiking/Biking Trails	90 miles
Blueway	99 miles
Historic Sites/Landmarks	23
Ice Rinks	3
Nature Centers	3
Neighborhood Mini Parks	21
Neighborhood Playgrounds	61
Neighborhood Parks	126
Neighborhood Park/Schools	31
Neighborhood Park School Center	1
Neighborhood Recreation Centers	14
Regional Parks	4
River Parks	4
Senior Centers	2
Sports & Learning Complex	1
Stadium	1
Stream Valley Parks	28
Tennis Bubble	3

The following maps were prepared for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project and can be found in the *Needs and Resource Assessment* report, a support document to this plan.

Map A: Regional Context

Map B: System Map

Map B1: Northern System Map Enlargement

Map B2: Central System Map Enlargement

Map B3: Southern System Map Enlargement

Map C: Population Density

Map D: Maintenance Map

Map E: Natural Resource Map

Level of Service Analysis

For this planning study, one tool that was utilized was the examination of Level of Service (LOS). This tool allows for analysis of the inventory, quantity, location, distribution, and access to recreation components. Level of Service is typically defined in parks and recreation plans as the capacity of the system's components to meet the needs of the public. Two methods were used in this analysis. One method uses a traditional capacities approach that compares quantity to population. The other analysis uses a Composite-Values approach methodology. The approach is a unique way of looking at LOS because it considers not only the quantity and distribution of parks and facilities but also quality, comfort and convenience, and overall design and ambiance.

A series of Perspectives (maps analyzing the LOS based on the inventory scores) were prepared for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project. Further description of the inventory and Level of Service analysis, including these Perspectives or analytical maps can be found in the *Needs and Resource Assessment* report, a support document to this plan.

Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

Perspective B: Neighborhood Access to Indoor Facilities

Perspective C: Neighborhood Access to Arts, Heritage, and Historic Components

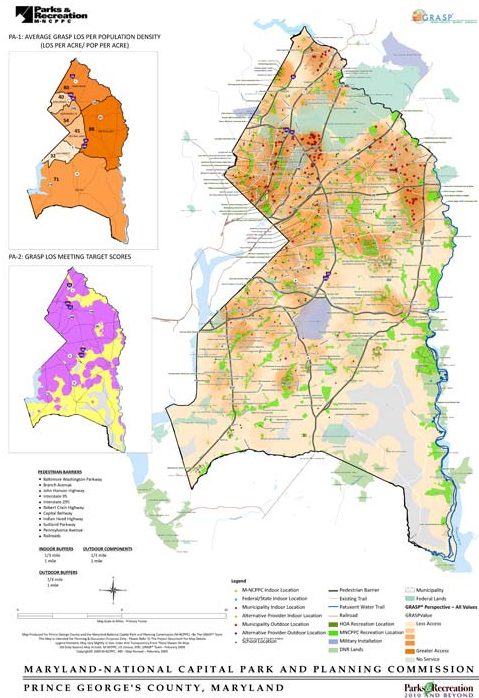
Perspective D: Neighborhood Access to Multi-Purpose Fields

Perspective E: Neighborhood Access to Trails and Blueway

Perspective E2: Trailshed Analysis

An overview of the Level of Service provided by the whole parks and recreation inventory, ***Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to all Components***, is described below. (A larger version of this map can be found in ***Appendix C***.)

PERSPECTIVE A: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS



Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

This map shows the Level of Service (LOS) available at a neighborhood level for all the parks and recreation components in the inventory. This includes all outdoor, indoor, active, passive, and other components. Service is measured based on a one-mile radius, with a higher value placed on the components that are available within walking distance, or 1/3 mile.

Perspective A shows a LOS analysis for the county when all components in the database are considered, including indoor and outdoor components, trails, and open space. **Where there are darker shades, the Level of Service is higher.**

The Perspective shows higher levels of service in the northern parts of the county, and lower levels in the southern part. Gaps where no service is provided occur in some of the southern parts of the county as well. (It is important to note service is lower in the south due to the lower population density as well as the fact that a portion of this sub-area is not included in the M-NCPPC park taxing district.)

Another way to look at LOS from this Perspective is shown on the lower inset map on **Perspective A, PA-2: LOS Meeting Target Scores**. It shows where the cumulative LOS on Perspective A falls above or below the Target Minimum LOS. The **target minimum is equivalent to access to at least four components and one greenway**.

Purple areas on the inset map are those where scores are at or above the target. These areas are considered to have adequate Levels of Service, although this does not necessarily imply that the mix of components being offered is the one that residents currently desire. It may be that changes and/or improvements are needed within the purple-shaded areas to fit the specific mix of services to the needs and expectations of residents. This is determined through the public process.

The **areas in yellow on the inset map indicate where service exists, but it falls below the target minimum.** These are areas of opportunity, because land and facilities are currently available to provide service, and relatively simple improvements to those lands and facilities may be enough to bring service up to the targets.

Another way to look at the service within each sub-area is to consider the total value of all of the components within it, regardless of where they are located. When this LOS value is divided by the population of the sub-area, in thousands, the result is called a LOS Index. **When the Level of Service is adjusted for population density by sub-areas, the Central East and Northeast emerge with the highest values, and Southwest and Northwest A have the lowest.** (See *Perspective A inset map PA-1 in Appendix C.*)

Measuring Fair Level of Service

A Fruitful Proposition

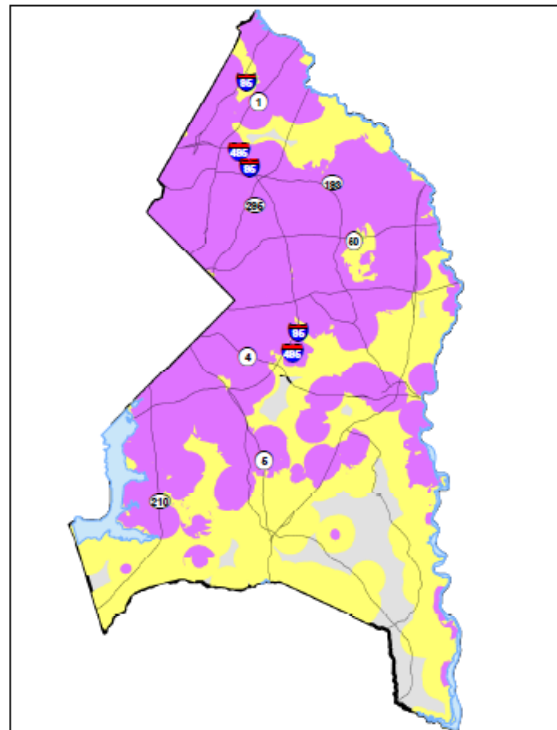
This **Strategic Plan** utilizes a composite-values approach to measuring and setting fair or equitable goals for service across the county.¹ The concept of “**equity**” allows for service to be provided at similar levels to residents throughout the county, without having to be the same everywhere.

An analogy can be helpful to illustrate the concept of equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities. It is like providing one pound from a mixture of different kinds of fruit. As long as everybody has the same amount – one pound – the process is equitable. But instead of giving everybody an equal number of oranges or cherries, the goal is to make sure everyone has a full pound of some kind of fruit. People will be even better served if they have the kind of fruit they like, of a good quality.

There are two main goals to assure that everyone is fairly or equitably served by the parks and recreation system. The first is to make sure everyone has an adequate **quantity** of service (i.e. a pound of fruit) and the second is to provide everyone the right **quality** of service (a selection of good fruit of the kind they like). Composite-values Level of Service is analogous to the pounds of fruit described above. The components in the inventory (playgrounds, athletic fields, gyms, multipurpose rooms, etc.) are the qualitative parts (i.e. different kinds of fruit, but all of consistent quality).

Figure 4: Areas Meeting Level of Service Target

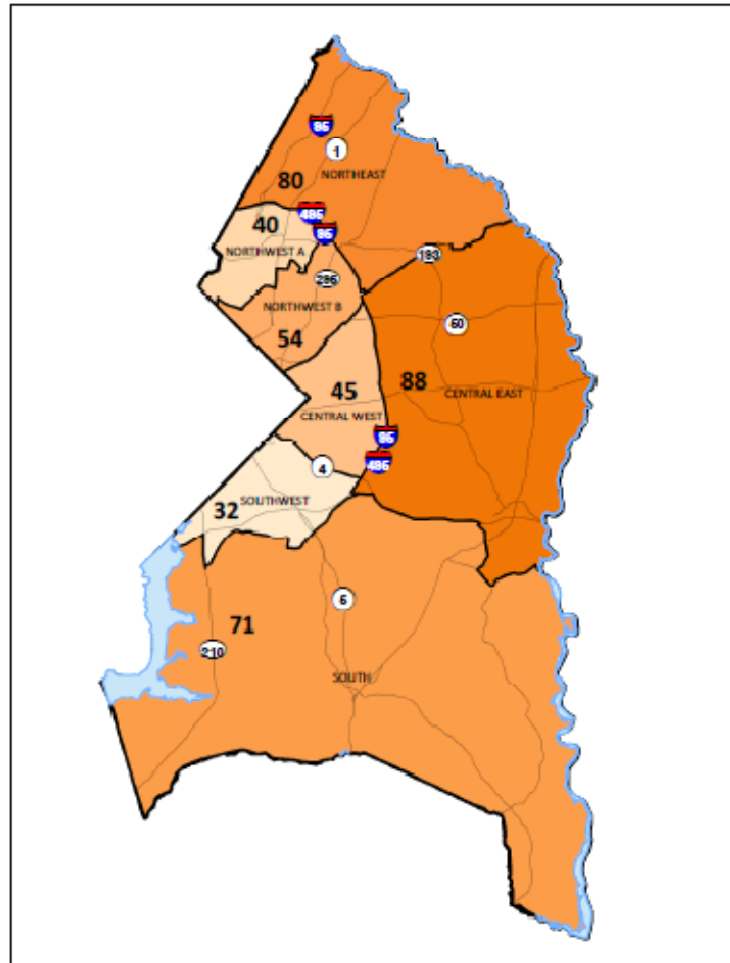
The first goal is to provide an adequate *quantity* of service to everyone in the county. **Figure 4: Areas Meeting Level of Service Target** shows where this is being accomplished. As described earlier, **areas shaded with purple are places where the quantity of service is at or above an assumed minimum Level of Service** considered to be adequate which is equivalent to having four components and one greenway within one-mile.



¹ The name for the process is called Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process – or **GRASP**®.

For the most part, **Prince George’s County has achieved a minimum Level of Service where developed residential areas exist.** In fact, when the Level of Service for *Neighborhood Access to All Components* is averaged on a per-acre basis, it is evident that all of the sub-areas are meeting this minimum. The South sub-area is right at the threshold, and the others are well above it. But they are not equal to each other. To keep with the earlier analogy, in effect, everyone has at least a pound of fruit, but some people seem to have a lot more fruit than others. When the *Average LOS Per Acre per Population* is calculated, as shown in **Figure 5**, the inequity is not as great. Still, a first step for the county should be to achieve a closer spread between sub-areas for both of these indicators. This can be done by adding new components, or improving the quality of existing ones in the lower scoring sub-areas.

Figure 5: Average LOS Per Population Density by Sub-Area



The easiest way to begin to address the equity among sub-areas is to use the LOS Index.² (See the *Needs and Resource Assessment* report for further description.) The LOS Index is

simply a calculation of the total value of all components located in a sub-area divided by the population of the sub-area in thousands. In effect, it tells how many components people have in each sub-area. People in the **Southwest** sub-area have the least amount, so providing more there is a good place to start. **Northwest A** is next in line, followed by **Central West**. **Increasing the value of components in these sub-areas by adding new ones and improving existing ones should be a priority.** Any components in these areas that were rated below expectations in the inventory should be repaired, renovated, or replaced. New components should be added, particularly ones that were rated as most important in the survey for those sub-areas.

Please note: As they were identified as key issue areas, additional detailed analysis was conducted on indoor facilities and pools. This information has been provided separately as a “Staff Resource Document: Detailed Analysis of Indoor Recreational Spaces and Pools”, with a summary of applicable recommendations included in the strategic recommendations sections.

² See the separate *Needs and Resource Assessment* report for further description of the LOS or GRASP® Index.

The LOS Index should be updated continually as changes to the inventory are made in order to monitor progress. This is easy to do as long as the inventory database is kept current and population estimates for each sub-area are updated. The entire database and population data should be reviewed annually to make sure all information is current and accurate.

For the other sub-areas and components— Central East, Northeast, Northwest B, and South, additional components are only needed if the population grows. These areas have an adequate amount of service right now, so the focus should be on assuring that it is made up of the kinds of things that people want or need. Rather than adding more components, consideration should be given to adjusting the mix of components. This might include repurposing existing components that are obsolete or no longer needed with new or different ones better suited to current needs. For example, the community survey shows that in the Central East sub-area softball fields rank relatively low in importance compared to multi-purpose fields, so it may make sense to repurpose some softball fields for use as multi-purpose fields.

The LOS maps can be run on a less frequent basis than the LOS Index, but should be updated at least every five years to make sure that the distribution of service, i.e. where things are located, is matching up with where people live. This is especially important for undeveloped parts of the county that become developed.

The ultimate long-range goal should be to make sure that all parts of the county where people live have appropriate LOS scores for the various indicators (LOS Index, Average LOS Per Acre Served, etc.) and that these scores are derived from a blend of components that fit with the needs and desires of the people living there. The overall goal is for all residents is to have a strong selection of high-quality parks and recreation facilities (“fruit”) to enhance their quality of life.

5. Program Analysis

The **Needs and Resource Assessment** document (provided separately), includes an overview and analysis of the Department’s programs and services, gap analysis, participation trends, current and potential partnership opportunities, and the influence of alternative providers in the county. The Department offers a recreation services menu that provides a variety of opportunities for community members, regardless of age, ability, skill, or access limitations.

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County has established itself as one of the leading agencies in recreation service provision in the United States. The Department is nationally recognized for outstanding efforts in program design and development by organizations such as the National Recreation and Park Association Council on Accreditation for Parks and Recreation Agencies (or CAPRA) and the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association.

That being said, there are still areas for improvement and focus over the next ten years. The Department will need to respond to changes to the county that most impact the future of parks and recreation delivery including:

- **Demographic Shifts** – The average age of county residents is projected to steadily increase, as is racial and ethnic diversity. Immigration of Hispanics and Asians, for many of whom English is a second language, is expected to result in a population with a much greater multi-cultural mix.

- **Recreation and Health Trends** – Adults are expected to stay active longer. Interest in non-traditional and self-directed recreation is rising. Health and obesity concerns are rising and driving up health costs. Parks and recreation play a critical role in promoting active lifestyles and community health.

The strategic recommendations addressing some of the key challenges and opportunities are highlighted under the **Vision Themes** later in this plan, and they include primary focus on the following areas.

- **Program Design and Development** – The Department has attempted to provide “something for everyone,” and in the process, is faced with the threat of stretching resources beyond capacity. A strategic approach in the future needs to look at designing programs that meet the needs and desires, but are more focused with attention to evaluation, measurement, and outcomes. Moving forward, the agency will need to create a strong system of evaluation and implementation for all areas of the organization.
- **Financial Management** – As the department continues to grow, the agency and the community taxpayers will be better served if there is attention to measuring costs, consensus on cost recovery, and clear expectations related to pricing of services.
- **Community Center Operations and Management** – The Department’s community centers tend to be smaller, older facilities. It will not be financially or operationally possible to continue the model of smaller centers located in neighborhoods. Most agencies are moving towards operating larger, multi-functional regional centers to supplement neighborhood and community spaces, and a focus on longer operating hours to accommodate the public’s changing use patterns.
- **Ongoing Community Needs Assessment and Outreach Efforts** – There should be more streamlined and integrated systems in place for ongoing assessment, measurement, and evaluation of community needs, desires, and satisfaction with programs and services, along with mechanisms for objective adjustments to the service delivery model over time.
- **Staff Training and Development** – It is becoming increasingly difficult to hire staff resources with professional parks and recreation training backgrounds, and it is also difficult to train so many new staff for such a large agency. The Department should develop training programs to systematically and effectively engage and successfully train new staff.
- **Safety and Support Services** – There are some identified needs for improvements in actual and perceived resources for safety, technology, customer service, and organizational design.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations** – While the Department of Parks and Recreation is engaged in many collaborations there is a need to re-evaluate and strengthen existing partnerships (e.g. Prince George’s County Public Schools and the Boys and Girls Club) and identify opportunities for new relationships with community organizations and faith-based organizations, for example. The benefits of collaborating with alternative providers include the reduction or elimination of duplication of services and the enhancement of resource efficiency.

County residents have access to many recreation service providers. When asked what other organizations survey respondents and their household members use for recreation facilities and programs, 38 percent indicated that they use churches/houses of worship, followed by parks outside of the county (33 percent) and private or public schools (29 percent). Other facilities used include municipal, state, and national parks in the county (24 percent), private health and fitness clubs (24 percent), and trails outside of the county (21 percent). The **Needs and Resource Assessment** report includes more information and analysis about the role of alternative providers. Additionally, the parks and recreation inventory conducted as part of this project includes major alternative providers.

6. Administration & Management

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is a large and sophisticated agency with 1,066 full-time career positions in FY2010 and thousands of part-time, seasonal, and contract positions.

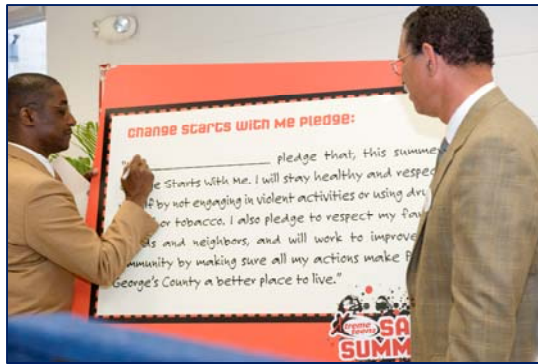
Since the agency is so large, it can be perceived as slow-moving, bureaucratic, and inflexible, with more emphasis at times on process, politics, and procedure than provision of services. The Department upper management is sometimes seen as being non-responsive by the public and decision makers (the Board), while at the same time, non-communicative to lower level staff. Most of this appears to be a function of time and communication constraints. As a very large organization with elected decision makers, the key management issues over the next ten years will continue to be focused on refining practices related to:

- Control of process.
- Standardization and dissemination of information.
- Equitable funding and resource allocation.
- Maintaining quality and training.
- Obtaining qualified personnel and staffing.
- Responding to the Board and political influences.

Key focus areas for improvements related to Administration include:

- **Strong Financial Management** – As the funding climate and real resources are strong factors in sustainability, the agency needs to improve training and practices related to financial management and consensus related to cost recovery expectations at all levels of the organization.
- **Communications and Marketing** – This is a strong area of expertise in the organization, but due to the large number of staff, stakeholders, and the interested public, along with a vast number of programs, facilities, and services, strong focus is needed on organized, timely, and well-articulated communication and marketing strategies.
- **Planning and Development** – The Department plays a key role in contributing to countywide environmental sustainability, economic growth, quality of life, and community development. Focus areas for the growth of the parks and recreation system must be integrated into the countywide *General Plan*, growth policies, parkland dedication, and environmental preservation.

- **Technology** – The Department utilizes a vast array of technology and must manage the new innovations and rapidly evolving technological tools. Focus must be on effectiveness of the management and utilization of information, along with integration of registration, maintenance, financial, community engagement, and administrative technologies and software.
- **Education and Training** – A key need is for the Department to offer a strong program of education and training for staff at all levels. Some training needs to be specific and in-house, and others facilitated through outside providers. Managing staff need to work with training staff to identify the most relevant topics and curriculum for each division and staffing level, identify which trainings should be mandatory and which should be optional, and incorporate professional development trainings as part of the factors which are evaluated as part of job performance. This area is also crucial to help develop competent workload capacity and succession planning.



E. VISION TO 2040

Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond looks ahead 30 years to 2040 when it is anticipated that Prince George’s County will be extensively built-out with few remaining opportunities for large parcel land acquisition. The following **vision statement** and the **six vision themes** will guide the future development, operations, and maintenance of the Prince George’s County parks and recreation system to 2040.

1. 2040 Vision Statement

The following **Vision Statement** for **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** describes what the organization hopes to become by 2040:

In 2040, the parks and recreation system in Prince George’s County is enjoyed by a diverse mix of residents and visitors. Parks and open spaces are integral to the fabric and character of the community and provide places of respite and beauty. Natural, recreational, cultural, artistic, and historical resources provide enriching experiences, enjoyment, fun, and health for all people. The parks and recreation system is sustainable, well-maintained, and safe. The preservation of parkland and natural areas continues with a focus on connecting people to the land and each other. Residents are both aware of and active participants in an array of recreation and leisure opportunities. Residents are strong advocates for and stewards of the parks and recreation system.

2. Vision Themes

As a quality parks and recreation system that is nationally recognized, The M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County in 2040 will continue to focus on providing facilities, services, and programs for the community that meet the needs of residents and overall Commission goals. The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project identified six themes that provide the vision and framework for future planning.

Vision Themes for the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County

THEME 1

Appropriate level of service for parks and facilities to meet diverse community needs

THEME 2

Natural areas, trees and waters that endure and captivate

THEME 3

Recreation and culture that inspires healthy lifestyles and a sense of community

THEME 4

Safe and accessible places and programs for play, relaxation, and enjoyment

THEME 5

Community engagement and collaborations that maximize resources

THEME 6

A sustainable organization to provide quality services and facilities

3. Key Challenges & Opportunities

The **2040 Vision and Framework** and the **10-Year Strategic Plan** position the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County to proactively meet the changing and growing needs of an increasing diverse community. The identification of needs and issues through the planning process provides a solid grounding on which the Department can strategically provide quality parks and recreation facilities and services now and in the future. Following is an overview of key challenges and opportunities that this plan addresses.

Quality versus Quantity

Maintaining the current high level of parks and recreation service will be a challenge for the Department as the county grows, facilities age, and more demands are placed on the system. There will be a need to balance quantity of facilities with quality of facilities to ensure a sustainable and well-maintained system. A comment from a focus group participant voices this sentiment well: *“Take care of and improve what we have. We’d rather see fewer sites cared for at a higher level rather than many sites cared for at a low level.”*

Proactive versus Reactive Planning

Planning based on ad hoc political and administrative decisions will result in an unsustainable parks and recreation system. The vision for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project is to proactively plan based on clear standards and priorities that will guide the growth of the parks and recreation system in a way that is equitable and operationally sustainable over time.

Holistic versus Fragmented Decision-Making and Management

Achieving broad consensus among the leadership on mission, core services, and cost recovery expectations will help to maintain and enhance the level and quality of service as the system expands to meet the needs of a changing population. Engaging all decision-makers in key strategic discussions related to broad benefits for all residents will be important to ensure holistic and consensual decision-making.

Focused versus Dispersed Services

The wide variety of parks and recreation facilities and services offered by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County is something to celebrate. However, with this comes the danger of “spreading yourself too thin” and diluting the effectiveness and quality of these services. Targeted measurement and ongoing evaluation are keys to implementing focused service options.

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F. RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Strategic Plan* recommendations are organized by six themes identified by the *2040 Vision and Framework*. The results of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** needs assessment and community planning processes have identified a variety of key focus areas for continual improvement. This plan now addresses these focus areas under a series of six broad **themes**. The *10-Year Strategic Plan* and *FY2010 to FY2013 Implementation Plan* delve further into **Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART)** strategies (with actions for the shorter timeframe strategies). Key findings are summarized, followed by *Strategic Plan* recommendations for each theme. (*Appendix E: Data Sources for Recommendations* provides a summary of additional qualitative and quantitative data sources for recommendations.)

THEME 1 – *Appropriate level of service for parks and facilities to meet diverse community needs*

Many voices of residents echoed the strong value of fairly distributing parks and recreation facilities and services across the county. Recognizing the diversity of the county, it is important that parks and recreation facilities and services be tailored to meet the varied needs of different parts of the county. Agreed upon standards by which to fairly distribute resources to meet these diverse community needs and interests are critical to successfully reach the 2040 vision elements.



Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 1*.

Community Outreach and Input

Regular community outreach and input opportunities are essential for today and for effective planning for the future. The community survey conducted as part of this plan provides valuable information on community priorities for the next three to five years. However, the Department will need to gauge community issues and needs on a regular basis through surveys and other input opportunities in order to stay responsive.



Community input can help guide Capital Improvement Program planning efforts. For example, the survey for this project identified the following outdoor components as most important to add, expand, or improve: multi-use fields, picnic shelters, playgrounds, natural areas, and trails. Multi-purpose fields ranked as the top priority for improvements and came up as a theme in many of the public meetings and focus groups. Preserving natural areas and trail connectivity and amenities also emerged as common themes from the community input. Strong interest in indoor recreation

was also expressed. Indoor recreational amenities identified as important by survey respondents include: designated space for youth and teen activities, indoor walking tracks, designated space for seniors, weight room, and cardio fitness space.

Level of Service Standards

Community input and staff input identified the desire to fairly deliver parks and recreation services and facilities throughout the county. Clarifying standards while allowing for responsiveness to the varying needs in different areas of the county will help direct planning efforts to equitably meet the needs of residents today and in the future. With unclear standards, the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is put in a reactive position. Developing Level of Service standards for indoor recreation facilities is one area of focus to position the Department for a sustainable future.

Growth of the System

Future growth of the park and recreation system will primarily occur in two areas – serving areas of new growth and filling existing service gaps. Ensuring adequate park and recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residential developments will be important. At the same time, filling gaps in service in already developed areas of the county is equally important. However, opportunities for parkland acquisition are limited in more densely built-out areas of the county. Creative approaches toward providing equitable or fair Levels of Service are needed to overcome these constraints. Furthermore, the land dedication requirements for new residential developments need to be reevaluated to ensure that they are adequately meeting the park and recreation needs as the county grows.

A Detailed Look at Indoor Facilities and Pools

As indoor facilities and pools were identified through the process as key issues for special evaluation, a more detailed analysis was conducted and provided separately as a **Staff Resource Document: Detailed Analysis of Indoor Recreational Spaces and Pools**. This analysis identified strong recommendations for changing the current provision model for indoor facilities.

Summary of Analysis and Key Indicators for Change in Indoor Facilities Provision:

- There is an expressed desire from the community for increased facility provision for the future. This includes a desire for equitable distribution of indoor facilities across the county.
- There is an industry trend to provide larger multi-purpose regional centers. The identified most important key components of indoor centers include:
 - Multi-purpose classrooms for programming for all ages
 - Gyms
 - Fitness classes, cardio and weight rooms
 - Indoor pools
 - Indoor walking tracks
- The majority of program registrants and a significant number of drop-in participants are not using the centers closest to their homes, but are driving or taking other forms of transportation to other centers.
- Based on basic financial calculations, a continuation of the current and historic model is not a feasible way to provide a similar level of service throughout the county as the population grows over the next 30 years.
 - Based on the current center average of approximately 25,000 SF per center, provision of similar centers within one mile of all residents for each neighborhood that does not have service now would cost approximately **\$405 million** in 2009 dollars.

Industry Justification for a Primarily Regional Indoor Recreation Center Model

The Department currently has a wide mix of facilities to serve the residents. Research shows that larger multi-purpose recreation centers have higher participation rates, greater cross-use by all ages, higher retention and frequency of use, along with higher rates of cost recovery, especially in larger urban communities. Current practices in building public recreation centers include attention to potential revenue, control points, safety, and maximum efficient use of public subsidy dollars.

- Using Square Footage analysis, this study indicates that to maintain LOS at current levels, the county will need to add **218,559 SF** of space by 2040. If a modest increase in service standard is desired (to 1.4 SF/Pop), **397,080 SF** should be added. At an approximate cost of **\$275 per SF**, this amounts to an approximate cost of **\$109 million** in 2009 dollars (about 25% of the cost of continuing the current model).
- The current parks/schools partnership model has been successful, and there is support to expand this model.

Summary of Pools Analysis

Currently the department offers 11 aquatics locations and is at a provision level of one aquatics location per **79,274** residents. Note that an aquatics location may include an indoor pool, an outdoor pool, warm water pool, competitive pool, and/or a therapy pool. Similar to the analysis on indoor centers, there is a strong industry and financial rationale for looking at fewer but larger regional aquatics locations that may include a variety of pool basin types at any given location. Given the input from the community needs assessment and current and future provisions, a broad target standard for both indoor and outdoor regional locations of **one per 50,000** residents is now recommended for Prince George's County.

This ratio indicates that there is a current need for **six** additional regional aquatics locations at this time, and as the community grows through 2040, an additional **three** more aquatics facilities will be needed for a total of **nine** more to reach **20** regional locations throughout the county. A detailed **Aquatics Facilities Plan** is necessary to help evaluate the specific inclusions at each new location, and should include an analysis of:

- Review of functionality, capacity, condition, size, participation, and use for each existing location.
- Best specific location for new facilities.
- Nearby and regional participation projections, transportation, and access options.
- Specific pool basin preferences for each location to determine what should be included.
- A business and marketing plan for each location.
- An operational and maintenance pro-forma for each location.
- Anticipated capital costs for each location.

VISION THEME 1: Recommendations

Appropriate level of service for parks and facilities to meet diverse community needs

GOAL 1: Provide an equivalent mix of facilities and public lands across the county to meet the needs and desires of residents.

Strategy 1.1.

Regularly monitor levels of service of land, facilities, programs, and amenities in all parts of the county to determine balance on both a distribution and per-population basis.

Objectives:

- 1.1.1 Set targets, goals, and other benchmarks for Levels of Service (LOS).

Actions:

- Refine and adopt service area standards and location criteria for key parks and recreation facilities. (See **Appendix B** for proposed standards.)
- Adopt a minimum LOS standard for neighborhood access for areas in which the density is four units per acre or higher that provides the equivalent of four components and one greenway within one mile.
- Adopt LOS targets for office and commercial areas to provide recreation opportunities to workers.
- Acquire land to maintain the parkland ratio of 35 acres per 1,000 residents (15 acres serving local areas and 20 serving county or region) based on the projected population in 2040.
- Proactively identify lands that meet acquisition criteria on an ongoing basis.
- Identify and secure funds to purchase appropriate lands as they become available.
- Acquire appropriate land through fee purchase, easements, partnerships, mandatory land dedication, and other means with an average annual target of 292 acres per year.
- Monitor LOS standards and add parks and recreation components if needed to maintain the LOS as population increases.

Defining Equitable Level of Service for Parks and Recreation

“Equitable” does not mean “equal.” It is impossible, and not necessarily desirable, to have an equal amount of the same types of facilities in all locations, but it is important that all sub-areas have an equitable level of service, from a sum of different types of facilities. Some areas may have more natural areas (due to topography and/or natural resources), while others have higher levels of active or cultural facilities. The goal is that a mix of all types should be available across the county, with a sum total of equitable service for all.

Land Acquisition and Level of Service

Reaching the Goal of 35 acres of parkland per 1,000

To reach this goal parkland will need to be added to keep pace with population growth as well as make up the current gap in acres per 1,000 persons. The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County **currently owns 25,989 acres**. At the projected population of 992,701 in 2040, a total of 34,745 acres will be required to achieve the standard of 35 acres per 1,000. This means that **a total of 8,756 new acres must be acquired by the year 2040** to achieve the standard at the projected population. This acreage will need to serve a variety of purposes, including developed parks, natural and conservation areas, trails, etc. Some of this land will come from mandatory land dedication requirements of new developments. To reach the goal of 35 acres of parkland per 1000 by 2040, approximately **292 acres of parkland per year in the next 30 years will need to be acquired**. (Note: The county population is forecast to increase by 12 percent from 2010 to 2040, with 120,668 new residents. Therefore, 4,223.45 acres or almost half of new parkland that will be needed countywide by 2040 is due to increased population.)

It should be noted that the 35 acres per 1000 persons is a countywide standard, therefore some parts of the county may have more parkland than others. Of the 35 acres per 1,000, 15 acres is for local parkland (or the equivalent in parks and recreation service) and 20 acres is for regional parkland.

Other tools, such as the composite-values level of service analyses, are useful in determining equitable distribution of Level of Service. In some parts of the county it is not feasible to achieve 15 acres per 1000 persons on a localized basis, but it may be possible to offer equitable levels of service on variable acreages. Because part of the purpose in acquiring 35 acres per 1000 persons is to ensure protection and public access to valuable natural areas, some of the lands acquired must be located where those natural values occur, regardless of its distribution. In protecting natural areas, larger tracts are sometimes needed as well, further reducing the opportunities to distribute such lands throughout the county. For all of these reasons, it is important to make sure that new land acquisitions satisfy the need to balance protection of natural resources with the desire to provide equitable distribution of lands throughout the county.

- Conduct ongoing community input and periodic (at least once every five years) statistically valid surveys to monitor evolving needs due to changing demographics and recreation and leisure trends.
- Annually update LOS indices by sub-area to measure against targets.
- Determine ability to acquire land in those areas of the county that are not part of the Metropolitan (park tax) District to ensure that critical lands are not lost to development and that adequate lands are available for developed parks when they are needed.

- 1.1.2 Utilize composite-values LOS methodology to ensure a balanced provision of parks and recreation components across the county and monitor levels of service.

Actions:

- Construct new facilities and amenities when and where necessary to satisfy demand, meet needs, and take advantage of unique opportunities in different parts of the county. (See sidebar for more description.)
- Identify opportunities to re-purpose underutilized or less-desired facilities to meet current needs. (Evaluate underutilized ballfields, tennis courts, etc.)
- Add facilities to underserved areas to achieve the desired LOS in all areas of the county.

The most immediate priority is to increase the LOS in the Southwest. Identification of which amenities to add should be determined from survey results and public input as well as data on participation rates, trends, and opportunity. For example, it may be difficult to add amenities that require large tracts of land in the highly developed parts of the county, unless existing lands can be repurposed. An example of this would be converting an undersized or otherwise substandard athletic field into a new playground and picnic area with a basketball court, dog park, or other such amenities. Another example would be repurposing an underutilized softball field in the Central West, where softball fields were ranked lowest in the priority of needs, into a playground, picnic shelter, basketball courts, or other components. This would have the effect of converting one component (a softball field) into multiple components, thereby increasing the LOS for that area.

Responding to Diverse Needs and Interests for Amenities: Sub-Area Analysis

The community survey conducted as part of the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** provides a snapshot of needs and priorities for different sub-areas of the county. For example, according to the survey, the **top three needs in the Northeast and Northwest sub-areas, in order of priority, are natural areas, trails, and multipurpose fields**. Playgrounds were the next priority in both sub-areas. **Picnic shelters were the first priority in the Central West, Central East, and Southwest subareas, and the second priority in the South sub-area**. Unlike amenities such as sports fields, these do not require large areas of land and should be relatively easy to add to existing sites, thereby increasing the level of service for those sub-areas and meeting the stated demands of residents. **Multipurpose fields were rated the number one priority in the South, and second priority in the Central West and Central East**. Providing these will take a bit more land and investment than picnic shelters, but opportunities should be sought to do so. Softball fields rated the lowest of all specified amenities in the Central West and second lowest in Central East, so it may be practical to convert some dedicated softball fields to multipurpose fields in those sub-areas. **Playgrounds also rated as a high priority in Central West, Central East, Southwest, and South**, so an emphasis should be placed on providing more of them in those sub-areas.

- Utilize the inventory to determine which components need to be removed, replaced, or updated in each sub-area.

Playgrounds, for example, are one of the most important park components according to the survey. There are 51 playgrounds in the inventory that received a score of one for low functionality. A closer look at the data reveals that many of these need to be replaced, and some just need additional equipment. A priority should be to bring all of these up to full functional value (LOS quality score of 2 or 3). An even higher priority should be placed on those that are located in the Southwest sub-area because playgrounds were ranked as the number two priority need there.

- Annually update the inventory database that was created for this plan to keep it current by adding new components and deleting any that are decommissioned or removed.
- Add facilities and amenities that respond to national trends and local needs and interests in parks and recreation.

Specific outdoor amenities to consider adding or improving include public or community gardens, dog parks, spray pads and/or outdoor pools, skate parks, varied playground types, disk golf, and public gardens. Outdoor pools rated as the sixth priority for outdoor facilities to expand or improve in the community survey. An evaluation of whether the current outdoor pools are sufficient should be made. An alternative to outdoor pools for an aquatic play experience are spray play areas. These are very popular nationally and relatively cost effective to provide (especially in comparison to pools). Another trend is to provide a wider variety of playground types beyond the standard “post and platform” structure. Themed play is popular, along with challenge play such as imitation boulders for rock climbing, etc. Natural play, adventure play, interactive play, and intergenerational play are other trends in play.

- Update the Trailshed Analysis as new trails and facilities are added.

Strategy 1.2.

Implement a Level of Service Model that produces an equivalent mix of indoor facilities throughout the county and ensures sustainable operations and maintenance.

Objectives:

- 1.2.1. Primarily establish a regional indoor recreation centers model that includes multi-purpose, multi-generational functions, and a regional Level of Service.

Actions:

- For new facilities, focus on providing “regional recreation/community centers” with the key identified components (e.g. multi-purpose classroom and programming spaces, gyms, fitness facilities, indoor aquatics, and other collateral spaces). The following chart gives an example of a potential regional center at \$275 per SF cost.

Sample Medium-sized Regional Multi-Purpose Recreation Center	
Components	SF
2 classrooms	2,000
wet class/party room	1,000
aquatics	15,000
2 gyms	14,000
cardio fitness	3,500
weights	3,000
fitness/dance	3,000
child care	1,500
support space/storage	15,000
offices	10,000
Total SF	68,000
cost @ \$275 SF	\$ 18,700,000

Note that other components may be added to each center, such as walking tracks, catering kitchens, performing or visual arts space, climbing walls, or other specialty facilities, as deemed appropriate at each location. Co-location of components is desired whenever possible to create a regional draw.

- Conduct detailed feasibility, siting, and schematic design studies for each regional center.

The following sub-areas have the highest identified priority for additional regional centers – Northwest B, Central East, and South. Placing new regional centers within these sub-areas will also increase LOS in adjacent sub-areas. Planning for all of these centers should include a detailed site analysis, feasibility studies, business and management planning, along with an operational pro-forma prior to completion of schematic and construction documents to achieve desired cost recovery. Sizes for the centers can be adjusted for the specific site and revenue goals, but should be at minimum between 60,000 to 80,000 SF each.

1.2.2. Using this additional detailed information, develop and adopt a master plan for the identification and acquisition of sites for the new key regional recreation facility and maintenance components.

Actions:

- Set an acceptable goal for SF/Population for the County. A range of 1.3 to 1.4 SF per population is recommended.
- Focus on locating **three to five** regional multi-purpose recreation/community centers in the priority and potentially secondary focus sub-areas. At an average of 70,000 SF per center, total capital outlay will be approximately **\$60 to \$109** million to meet these regional county-wide goals. Level of service will increase substantially and equitably, but at a much lower cost (approximately 25% of the cost) than if the current smaller community center model is continued. Operational and maintenance costs also will be much lower.

2040 Population	Total SF with 3 new ctrs.	SF/pop	Total SF with 5 new ctrs.	SF/Pop
992,701	1,300,000	1.3	1,425,000	1.4
Cost at \$275 SF		\$57,750,000		\$109,190,000

- Focus on co-location of components and potential partnerships, including those with schools or other organizations, to enhance the reach, operations, and minimize financial impacts whenever possible.
- Conduct detailed feasibility and schematic design studies for any designated new or renovated facilities.
- Identify site options with a regional and transportation access focus.

1.2.3. In sub-areas where levels of service enhancements are not accomplished through the addition of regional centers, enhance current community center provision and establish additional community centers, if needed.

Actions:

- Enhance existing community centers first to focus on enlargement to include co-location of more of the key components, e.g., those spaces that provide multi-purpose programming spaces (especially a gym and space for youth and/or senior activities). Conduct a detailed study of the users and functionality of the existing centers to determine priorities for remodel and renovations.

The Prince George’s County *General Plan* includes the following location criteria for countywide, regional, and community facilities:

- Locate in population centers.
- Locate in transportation corridors.
- Use parks and recreation facilities as a means to revitalize existing communities.

- Determine other providers of “community center” type spaces. This can include rooms and spaces open for public programming in libraries, municipal buildings, schools, and other private and non-profit providers.
- Seek to have “community center” type programming spaces located within a one-mile distance of all county residents in areas designated for higher density development, especially in the vicinity of Metro stations. This does not mean that the Department must provide this space, but the Department can facilitate access to spaces owned by other providers specifically for programming and public gathering purposes.

1.2.4. Address other specialty indoor centers separately on a regional basis including nature centers, historic centers, stand alone specialty functions (tennis center, performing arts center, etc.).

Actions:

- Evaluate any natural or historic resource acquisition for the potential location of a nature or historic center.
- Co-locate specialty centers with regional centers whenever possible.

Managing Regional Specialty Centers

Cultural and Performing Arts Centers – There are currently three centers classified as Cultural Arts Centers. There is strong demand for additional cultural and performing arts venues. This type of component should always be evaluated as part of the site specific feasibility work for each new indoor recreation center, and if inclusion is not possible, spaces should be accommodated in other facilities throughout the county. Exhibition space should be included in new or improved regional centers and in community centers, especially when they are distant from existing cultural arts centers.

Nature Centers – Currently there are three nature centers and Old Maryland Farm. These types of facilities are determined in relationship to natural resources and interpretation of the surrounding natural areas. Any new acquisition of substantial natural areas should include analysis to see if an interpretive nature center should be added.

Historical Facilities – Like nature centers, these are site determined and resource specific, and should be evaluated as sites are acquired or determined to have ‘historic’ characteristics.

Rental and Events Centers – Currently there are rental facilities available as stand-alone buildings, as part of programmed centers, and in many historic venues. Rentals should be part of all regional recreation center spaces, and any space that is appropriate from a market standpoint should be considered for rental if it is not full with managed programming uses.

Additional Specialty Centers – The Department operates a variety of “other facilities” such as the Showplace Arena and Equestrian Center. This study does not indicate an additional need for these types of specialty facilities, but as trends and opportunities change over time, the Department should continually evaluate whether additional activities should be part of the “regional indoor centers” model or stand-alone regional facilities.

- Consider the location of one regional “teen/youth” center to act as a primary hub for youth and teen activities in the county. This could be co-located or stand alone, perhaps in a remodeled existing community center, as part of a school partnership, or as a re-purposed other type of building.

Strategy 1.3.

Create plans for new and improved parks and recreation facilities to address needs.

Objectives:

- 1.3.1. Develop a Recreational Trail Master Plan. *(See Strategy 7.1 in Theme 4: Safe and Accessible Places.)*

Actions:

- Link trails to form loops, networks, and provide connections to destinations.
- Identify strategies to secure rights-of-way when necessary to develop a connected trail system.
- Identify locations for trailheads and waysides with amenities including benches, mileage markers, drinking fountains, restrooms, and wayfinding and informational signage.
- Identify opportunities to create loop walks within parks.

- 1.3.2. Facilitate partnerships with other organizations and agencies to provide access to spaces for programming.

Actions:

- Pursue opportunities for Park/School Initiatives and continue to work with schools to open up school facilities for gyms and community programming spaces throughout the county, with continued emphasis on formal agreements and enforcement of those agreements.
- Develop a strategic plan for additional gyms in partnership with the schools, including additions to community centers, schools, or new facilities.
- Conduct an assessment of all public gyms in the county, including capacity and scheduling issues.

- 1.3.3. Develop strategic approaches toward the acquisition and preservation of historic sites managed by the Department.

Actions:

- Ensure facilities can meet expectations for functionality and quality.
- Clarify the respective roles of M-NCPPC in historic site acquisition and management vis-à-vis other potential actors and partners.
- Develop criteria for historic property acquisition, restoration, interpretation and rental to ensure that public resources are invested wisely in high value properties.

- 1.3.4. Identify opportunities to re-purpose underutilized or less-desired facilities to meet current and projected need.

Actions:

- Consider long-term leases to community partners, e.g. underutilized recreation center buildings.
- If there are underutilized facilities, such as baseball/softball fields or tennis courts, consider adapting them to more popular and flexible uses, such as multi-purpose fields.

- 1.3.5. Add facilities and amenities in response to survey findings and the level of service analysis.

Actions:

- Add or enhance playgrounds, picnic shelters, and multi-purpose fields where needed based on survey findings and Level of Service analysis by sub-area.
- Add loop walks to parks that currently do not have them and expand loop walks where feasible at more popular locations. (*See trail recommendations in Theme 5.*)

- 1.3.6. Align the Capital Improvement Program with updated level of service standards and goals.

- 1.3.7. Develop a public art plan.

Actions:

- Develop public art guidelines.
- Identify funding sources for public art including a possible “percent for arts” from construction budgets.

Strategy 1.4.

Ensure that new developments incorporate parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of new residents.

Objectives:

- 1.4.1. Strengthen the County Subdivision Code requirements for parkland dedication, fee in lieu, and recreation facilities to best meet the public park and recreation demands of residents of new developments.

Actions:

- Conduct a complete review and study of Code provisions.
- Review the fee-in-lieu of parkland dedication requirement to ensure that fee is equivalent to the market value of land that would have been dedicated.
- Evaluate the recreation facilities provision to determine if minimum LOS goals are being met.
- Examine national best-practices.

- Work with the Planning Department to conduct a survey of existing HOA facilities to determine the success in providing private recreation facilities.
- 1.4.2. Determine the feasibility of a park impact fee to fund the development of dedicated parkland.
- 1.4.3. Include language in the Subdivision Code that requires developments to provide trail connections to regional trail network.
- 1.4.4. Monitor the location and type of HOA recreation facilities for the community inventory.

Actions:

- Inventory and map HOA facilities provided per recreation facility agreements (RFAs).
- Annually update HOA recreation facility inventory database.
- Periodically inspect to determine condition.

Strategy 1.5.

Implement strategic analysis to plan for and include additional equivalent aquatics facilities as the county grows, provide quality for existing facilities, and ensure sustainable operations and maintenance.

Objectives:

- 1.5.1. Adopt a standard of one regional aquatics location per 50,000 residents, with a regional level of service philosophy that incorporates an approximate five-mile service radius for aquatics locations.

Actions:

- For new facilities and renovations, focus on providing regional aquatics facilities (primarily located within regional multi-purpose recreation/community centers), with a consideration of co-located outdoor facilities, partnerships, warm water therapy, water park amenities, and spraygrounds to enhance revenue potential.
 - Renovate existing facilities and site additional facilities to meet the needs based on detailed analysis of current locations along with feasibility, business planning, and schematic design studies for each new aquatics location.
- 1.5.2. Create an **Aquatics Facilities Plan** that evaluates existing and new facilities, with plans for periodic evaluation.

Actions:

- Adopt a renovation plan for each of the current aquatics facilities to ensure timely facilities, quality, and potential for enhanced revenue generation. This plan should evaluate functional, mechanical, safety, programming, staffing, participation, marketing, renovation, and major maintenance of all aquatics facilities.
- Create a detailed plan for existing and future facilities to meet the standard outlined in **Objective 1.5.1.**

THEME 2 – *Natural areas, trees, and waters that endure and captivate*

The preservation of the environment and open space along with conservation of natural resources has been central to the mission of M-NCPPC since its inception in 1927. As development and growth occur in Prince George’s County, preservation of the open spaces will continue to be of central importance in maintaining the character of the county. The quality of the environment and the quality of life of residents are interlinked. In an era of “nature deficit” it is even more important to preserve open spaces and natural areas for people to enjoy, appreciate, and care for. Urban forests, natural areas, and waters provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hiking, biking, and boating and contribute to a healthy community.



Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 2*.

Community Outreach and Input

Residents value natural areas and undeveloped open space in the county, ranking protecting river corridors and wetland as the most important value of open space, followed by minimizing the impact of housing density and traffic. Natural areas ranked in the top five outdoor facilities to add, expand, or improve. While residents expressed high importance of natural areas, less than half (43%) of survey respondents had visited a natural area in the county in the last year, and even less (33%) had visited a nature center. This points to an opportunity to identify ways to draw people to natural areas and nature centers to enjoy and appreciate.

Making Connections

There is a growing concern over the disconnection of people to nature. This will continue to be an issue in the future as the county becomes more densely populated and televisions and computers continue to compete for the leisure time of residents, especially children. Continuation and expansion of the already strong environmental education and stewardship programs will be important. Widely promoting the many opportunities for residents to enjoy natural areas by hiking, fishing, picnicking, and birding will help attract people to these natural sanctuaries. When people have a connection to and an appreciation of natural areas, they are more likely to support the protection of these resources.

Preservation and Management of Natural Resources

A large percentage of the park system managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County is located in natural areas including flood plains, sensitive wetland habitats, and other uniquely preserved natural resources. An aggressive and strategic acquisition and preservation plan is essential to maintaining important natural lands to connect the stream valley system and maintain the character of the county as growth occurs. Employing best management practices in the care of these resources is important.

Many federal, state, and regional plans and regulations provide the framework for the management of natural resources in the county (e.g. Patuxent River Watershed Act, the Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Act, and the Woodland Conservation and Tree Preservation Ordinance). Therefore, close coordination with county, state, and federal regulatory agencies is imperative to the successful management of these important lands and resources.

VISION THEME 2: Recommendations

Natural areas, trees, and waters that endure and captivate

GOAL 2: Preserve, protect, and enhance or restore woodlands, natural areas, open spaces, and waters managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County.

(This goal supports Policy 1 of the *Green Infrastructure Plan*).

Strategy 2.1.

Acquire and protect environmentally sensitive properties and natural areas.

Objective:

- 2.1.1. Develop an action plan to implement relevant elements of the *Green Infrastructure Plan* including a strategic plan for acquisition of land and easements in stream valleys designated in the *Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan for Prince George’s County*.

Actions:

- Create adequate buffers when purchasing stream valley property.
- Look for opportunities to provide undeveloped natural areas in all areas of the county, including the developed tier.
- Connect wildlife corridors whenever possible.

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Strategy 2.2.

Implement sound management practices to provide healthy and sustainable natural resources.

Objectives:

- 2.2.1. Develop and implement a Natural Areas Management Plan that ensures that natural areas are ecologically diverse and sustainable.

Actions:

- Protect areas of bio-diversity, including wildlife corridors and habitat.
- Aerate compacted soils to alleviate runoff and erosion.
- Use only unpaved trails in conservation and environmentally-sensitive areas.
- Implement management plans for all lakes and bodies of water on properties maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County.
- Manage the Patuxent River Park in accordance with the *Patuxent River Policy Plan* to reduce nonpoint-source pollution and protect sensitive natural areas and resources.

2.2.2. Preserve existing woodland resources and replace woodland, where possible.

Actions:

- Contribute to the *General Plan* objective to meet or exceed forest and tree cover goals within each Tier (26% in developed tier, 38% in developing tier, and 60% in rural tier).
- Develop a tree replacement plan for developed parks.

2.2.3. Collaborate and partner with local, state, and federal organizations to plan for and fund the preservation and management of the natural areas and undeveloped open spaces.

Actions:

- Work with the other organizations (government, watershed organizations, etc.) to determine priority corridors for protection.
- Develop an interdisciplinary team of staff (including the Planning Department) to share information and coordinate planning, funding, and management efforts with other agencies.
- Work collaboratively with other agencies to develop and implement a plan to preserve agricultural lands determined to have high value.
- Identify clear criteria for acquisition or preservation of agricultural land by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County.
- Expand partnerships to provide interpretative opportunities (programs such as community gardens, signage, etc.) to educate the public on the agricultural heritage of the county.

GOAL 3: Engage the community in outdoor and environmental activities.

Strategy 3.1.

Promote environmental stewardship and education.

Objectives:

- 3.1.1. Develop and incorporate environmental stewardship and education curricula into programs at all community centers.
- 3.1.2. Develop a marketing plan to broadly promote environmental stewardship volunteer opportunities offered through the Natural and Historic Resources Division.

Strategy 3.2.

Promote eco-tourism and resource-based recreation.

Objectives:

- 3.2.1. Develop a countywide eco-tourism and resource-based recreation initiative. Work in partnership with other organizations to develop and implement initiatives.

Action:

- Expand water recreation programs including packaged river trips.
- 3.2.2. Develop marketing campaign to publicize the variety of natural resource-based programs and facilities (e.g. three nature centers, Bladensburg Marina, Lake Artemesia, Suitland Bog Conservation Area, etc.).

THEME 3 – Recreation and culture that inspires healthy lifestyles and a sense of community



Diverse recreation and leisure opportunities are unique and defining elements to be celebrated in the Prince George’s County parks and recreation system today. Opportunities abound at community centers and specialized facilities including arts and cultural heritage, natural and historical resources, as well as health, wellness, and sports. Community members expressed a strong interest in these varied recreation offerings and a desire to continue to provide these equitably across the county into the future.

Responsiveness to evolving needs and interests of county residents will continue to be essential to delivering strategic services efficiently and effectively. Ethnic diversity will continue with an increase in foreign-born residents projected. Proactive outreach and collaborations to engage diverse communities and maximize public resources will be critical.

Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 3*.

Community Outreach and Input

Community centers had the second highest frequency of use of M-NCPPC facilities with 67 percent of survey respondents visiting centers an average of eight times a year. In terms of other providers of recreation facilities and programs, houses of worship were used by 38 percent of respondents. In general, the quality of community centers and recreation programs were rated positive.

The highest need for programs that was identified in the community survey includes the following:

- Walking, biking, and hiking
- Fitness and wellness
- General/skills education
- Nature and environmental programs
- Cultural/arts programs
- Swimming programs/lessons



These results support the need to continue to provide a variety of programs and facilities. Of these programs, general skills education was rated high in unmet needs, suggesting an opportunity for the Department to expand offerings in this area. Comments from participants through the focus groups also expressed interest in general education classes, especially related to youth development and teens.

The community input confirmed a **strong appreciation for the wide variety of program offerings** of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County and a **desire to offer them equitably across the county**. Furthermore, public input identified the importance of offering programs sensitive to the needs and interests of the ethnically diverse communities in the county.

In addition, there was strong public input emphasizing the need for programs for youth. **Strong support was voiced for partnerships with schools.**

In the community visioning workshops, participants voiced a desire to have **access** to a variety of programs and facilities. In addition to physical access by trails or public transportation, other topics related to access that were identified included affordability of programs and services, hours of operation of facilities, and locations of facilities. Furthermore, the opportunity to create better access also included crossing cultural or language barriers.

Responding to Evolving Community Needs and Interests

Community members mentioned lack of time as a reason for their lack of participation in Department services. A current behavioral trend relative to leisure behaviors is the declining interest in participating in longer-term program commitments. As people face more demands on their time, **short-term or drop-in programs have become more appealing and popular**. The Department will need to respond to these trends by offering programs, activities, and events that are short-term or episodic in nature (e.g., one day clinics or workshops; one week camps versus two week camps; shorter sport league seasons)

In an increasingly diverse society, it is essential for staff to understand, value, and respond to the varied interests and needs of residents throughout the county as they design and develop recreation services. With **growing numbers of diverse racial and ethnic populations**, determining programming interests is more critical today and into the future if the Department is to meet the recreational needs of its constituency.

Demand for services for people with disabilities is expected to increase in the immediate future. This is largely due to the number of community members who have not previously sought such services based upon limited availability and by the vast numbers of service men and women who have sustained injuries, leaving them with disabilities and other emotional and physical challenges as a result of our Nation's recent wars.

According to demographic trends there will be **an increase in the older adult population** in the county. These increases will create more demand for passive as well as active services for this population. These older adults will range in age from 55 to 85 or older and will have varying interests and varying ability and skill levels. To respond to this trend, there will be a need to re-visit categorizing all "seniors" or older adults together by age when service planning. Many older adults do not consider themselves "seniors" and want more active options.

VISION THEME 3: Recommendations

Recreation and culture that inspires healthy lifestyles and a sense of community

GOAL 4: Implement a Service Delivery Model that is responsive and relevant to county residents' leisure behaviors, interests and needs, as they cope with dynamic social and economic conditions.

Strategy 4.1.

Prioritize core service areas with the greatest potential to impact countywide conditions.

Objectives:

- 4.1.1. Conduct a Service Assessment that leads to the identification of Department “core services,” duplication of efforts with alternative providers, financial capacity, market position, and alternative service delivery strategies. (*See text box on page 60.*)

Actions:

- Identify the geographical service area for each Department service (program, activity or event).
- Identify all alternative providers of similar or like services that “compete” with the Department for market share.
- Determine the Department’s responsibility and role as “producer” of services rather than as a co-provider.
- Identify those services that are provided most effectively and efficiently by alternative providers (i.e., alternative providers own majority market share and have capacity; not cost effective for Department to manage).
- Identify those services that are “core” to the Department’s values and vision.
- Identify those services that may provide opportunity for collaboration or complementary development.
- Identify those services that may provide opportunity for divestment and re-allocation of resources.

SERVICE ASSESSMENT

A Service Assessment is an intensive review of organizational services including programs, activities, events, facilities, and parklands. The analysis utilizes a series of filters to assist in the determination of the organization’s level of responsibility in the provision of each service. Results of the Assessment indicate whether the service is “core to the organization’s mission,” or if there is significant duplication of community efforts to provide a service, therefore, direction to reallocate resources elsewhere. Current resources, their allocation, and cost recovery/subsidy levels for all organizational services are also analyzed.

Services Assessment Matrix © 2009 GreenPlay LLC and GP RED		Financial Capacity Economically Viable		Financial Capacity Not Economically Viable	
		Alternative Coverage High	Alternative Coverage Low	Alternative Coverage High	Alternative Coverage Low
Good Fit	Strong Market Position	Affirm Market Position 1	Advance Market Position 2	Complementary Development 5	“Core Service” 6
	Weak Market Position	Divest 3	Invest, Collaborate or Divest 4	Collaborate or Divest 7	Collaborate or Divest 8
Poor Fit	Divest				9

4.1.2. Align the components of the Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan to focus on core service areas.

Action:

- Design a Health and Wellness Initiative that focuses on activities, programs, and events that address identified county-wide health-related issues.

4.1.3. Prioritize interpretation of historic sites managed by the Department.

Actions:

- Promote heritage tourism through cross marketing and partnerships with public and private organizations.
- Identify funding, collaboration, and volunteerism strategies to support efforts.

Strategy 4.2.

Focus on services to address emerging recreation and leisure trends and changing population characteristics.

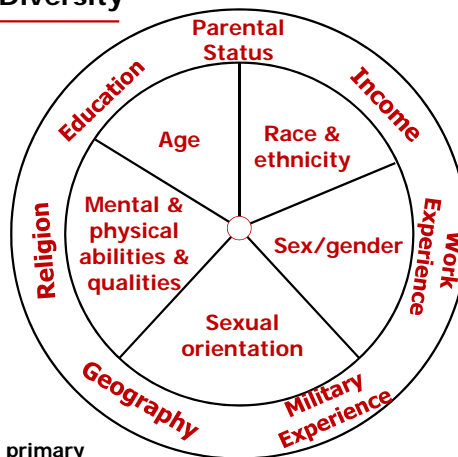
Objectives:

- 4.2.1. Deliver more recreational services opportunities that appeal to a diverse racial and ethnic citizenry.
- 4.2.2. Deliver more programs, activities, and events that require less time.
- 4.2.3. Deliver more programs that activate underutilized space during weekdays, e.g. programs targeted to tele-workers and home-schooled children and their families.
- 4.2.4. Deliver more programs to address the evolving service needs of residents with disabilities through implementation of the Comprehensive Recreation Programming Plan.

DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY

It is important in the design and development of all services including activities, events, and facilities that staff make efforts to understand, value, and incorporate the “dimensions of diversity” into their planning efforts. In essence, this means considering the different types of people that live in our communities, the special traits and qualities they each have, and how these traits and behaviors influence their “leisure behaviors” (why they choose to do what they do; why they play the way they do).

Dimensions of Diversity



Inner circle – core or primary
Outer circle - secondary

4.2.5. Increase participation in arts, cultural, historical, and environmental education programs.

Action:

- Design a mobile arts appreciation/education outreach program to youth and families in sub-areas with limited access.

4.2.6. Deliver more programs for older adults through implementation of the Comprehensive Recreation Programming Plan.

4.2.7. Deliver more opportunities for family members to recreate independent of each other at the same location.

4.2.8. Deliver additional non-competitive sports opportunities.

4.2.9. Develop regional Youth/Teen Advisory Groups/Boards representing youth/teens throughout the county to lead and foster implementation of the *Youth Action Plan* and provide direction and guidance for youth and teen program design and development.

4.2.10. Deliver before and after school-programs for youth and teens that focus on visual and performing arts, sport, health and wellness, and outdoor education.

Action:

- Design internal practices that encourage Youth/Teen Advisory Groups/Boards to lead and foster the implementation of the Youth Action Plan.

Strategy 4.3.

Evaluate and measure participant outcomes and countywide impacts of all programs and services.

Objectives:

4.3.1. Develop a formalized service evaluation process that includes both participant and staff evaluations.

Actions:

- Conduct pre-tests of participants in identified programs that assess current condition (e.g., current academic performance, current health conditions).
- Conduct formative (mid-term) evaluations to determine intermittent impacts.
- Conduct summative (end of session) evaluations to determine overall impacts.
- Measure results comparing and contrasting between pre-test data, and formative and summative data.
- Assess the methodology used to conduct these measurements.
- Apply the assessed methodology to other services as appropriate.

- 4.3.2. Evaluate the place of each service in the Program Life Cycle at the conclusion of each program, activity, or event session. (*See following text box for more description of the Program Life Cycle.*)

Action:

- Identify five to eight services (current and potential) that can have positive impacts and influences on primary community issues and problems (academic performance, recidivism rates, physical health and wellness, and crime and delinquency).
- 4.3.3. Collaborate with institutions that have research capacity such as colleges, universities, and hospitals to assist with the development of assessment strategies and tools.
- 4.3.4. Establish service goals and performance objectives for each identified service that can influence/affect intended outcomes (academic performance, recidivism rates, physical health and wellness, and crime and delinquency).

PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE

The Department offers a vast array of diverse services, many of which have long histories and track records of success. These mainstay services continue to draw consistent attendance and remain popular with the community. However, the Department offers services that have may have outlived their effectiveness and do not provide maximum community benefit or resource efficiency. These services do not meet their “minimums” and have steadily declining registrations.

The Program Life Cycle must be considered at the conclusion of each program, activity, or event. Once program evaluations are completed, a program, activity, or event’s stage of existence should be considered as decisions are made relative to the future of any service.

During the introduction, growth, and maturation phases of a Program’s Life Cycle, it is suggested that they are healthy or thriving; however, once a service has entered the saturation or decline phases of the Program Life Cycle, it is necessary to assess the program’s condition. Indicators that a program has entered either the saturation or decline of its existence are as follows:

Saturation Indicators:

Revenues decline
Attendance levels off
Average cost per participant increases
Staff/participant ratio increases

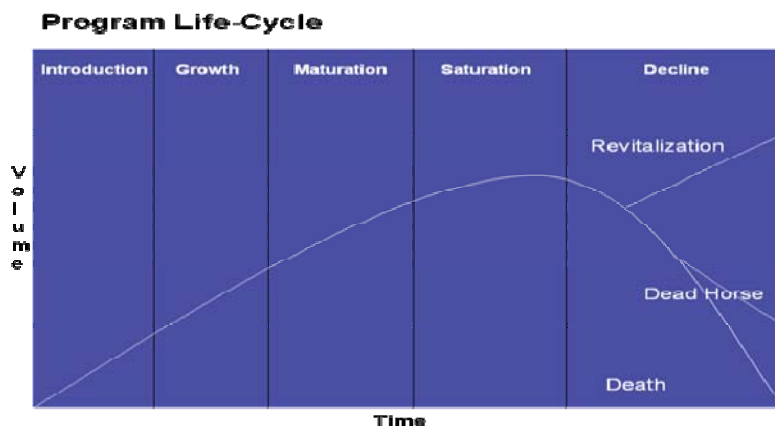
Decline Indicators:

Revenues decline significantly
Attendance drops below 25% capacity
Average cost per participant increases
Staff/participant ratio increases

Once staff have identified that a program has entered the saturation or decline phases of the Program Life Cycle they may wish to:

- Evaluate the merits of attempting to re-vitalize the program with a new name.
- Adjust scheduling to another date or time.
- Modify the program’s format.
- Discontinue the program and reallocate resources elsewhere.

A graphic representation of this Life Cycle and the stages in a program, activity, or event’s life is illustrated below:



GOAL 5: Position the Department as a collaborative provider of leisure service delivery.

Strategy 5.1.

Develop collaborations with other public, non-profit, and private leisure service providers in the county whose values, vision, and missions align with those of the Department (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, School District, and ARC) to eliminate unnecessary duplication of services (including programs and facilities) and responsibly utilize financial resources to reach the greatest number of county residents.

Objectives:

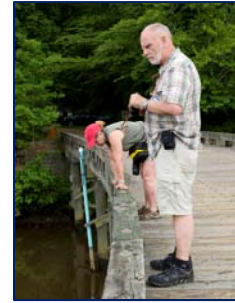
- 5.1.1. Develop a formalized agreement with the Boys and Girls Club that details roles, responsibilities and reciprocal benefit.
- 5.1.2. Develop a formalized Joint Use Agreement with Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) focusing on operational protocols detailing roles, responsibilities, and reciprocal benefit.
- 5.1.3. Develop a collaborative pilot effort between the Department and PGCPS to assess the ability provide a comprehensive afterschool program for students in elementary and middle schools (K-8 grades).
- 5.1.4. Develop a collaborative effort between the Department and PGCPS to provide an intramural program (physical health and wellness and arts) for high school students (9-12 grades).
- 5.1.5. Assess the value of collaborations with other alternative providers (e.g., faith-based organizations, arts agencies, University of Maryland) as a result of the Service Assessment.

Action:

- Develop an accountability process (including accommodations clause – i.e., “in the event you cancel use of a space, another space will be identified”) to be incorporated into all joint use agreements that exist or are developed between the Department and other providers.
- 5.1.6. Provide outreach to area youth who are currently under-served through collaborations with the Office of Youth Strategies and Programs, the Police Athletic League, Prince George’s County Public Schools, and others.

THEME 4 – *Safe and accessible places and programs for play, relaxation, and enjoyment*

Community members expressed various barriers to participation and access to Department parks and recreation facilities and services – transportation access and perceived safety issues. In terms of transportation, a majority of survey respondents currently use their car to get to facilities; however, many expressed an interest in using alternative means of transportation – walking, biking, and using public transportation. In addition, trail connectivity and amenities were identified as key issues through the survey and public process. Special concern for access to facilities by youth and older adults was expressed.



Community concerns were also articulated about public safety, particularly related to crime and gang activity in areas of the county. These safety concerns, whether real or perceived, do appear to affect the image of the Department and its services, and therefore, community interest in participation. If people do not feel safe, they will not use parks and participate in programs. Continued efforts to address community safety issues through programs and internal and external collaborations will be important.

Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 4*.

Community Outreach and Input

Overall, safety and security at facilities, parks, and on trails emerged as a significant consideration in the community survey. Safety and security was identified as the top reason (37% of respondents) for not using parks, facilities, and programs in Prince George’s County. This concern was highest in the Central West. Some respondents indicated a desire for better lighting and layout of trails and parks, as well as increased monitoring of facilities. However, in a separate Department of Parks and Recreation customer survey, 91 percent of respondents indicated that they felt safe both inside and outside the facility. This indicates that concern over safety issues by non-users of the system may be based more on perception than reality, pointing to the need to improve public communication and awareness.



Concerns over safety that surfaced from the community survey were also echoed in the community visioning process. Input from teens identified gang violence as a top concern. Solutions suggested by these teens were to increase activities to encourage young people to meet others from different areas and to expand activities to include young adults over 18.

Access to facilities and programs was also voiced as a key concern by participants in the public process for the **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** project. Feedback on ways to improve access included safe crossings to facilities, ADA accessibility, walkable access to facilities, security staff, and lighting. Issues that arose in these discussions included transportation, with suggestions of enhanced public transportation identified as one solution and trail connectivity identified as another. Improved signage identifying locations of facilities was also suggested.

The community survey results ranked trails in the top five outdoor facilities to expand or improve. Results from the Northwest sub-areas ranked trails higher in importance than other parts of the county.

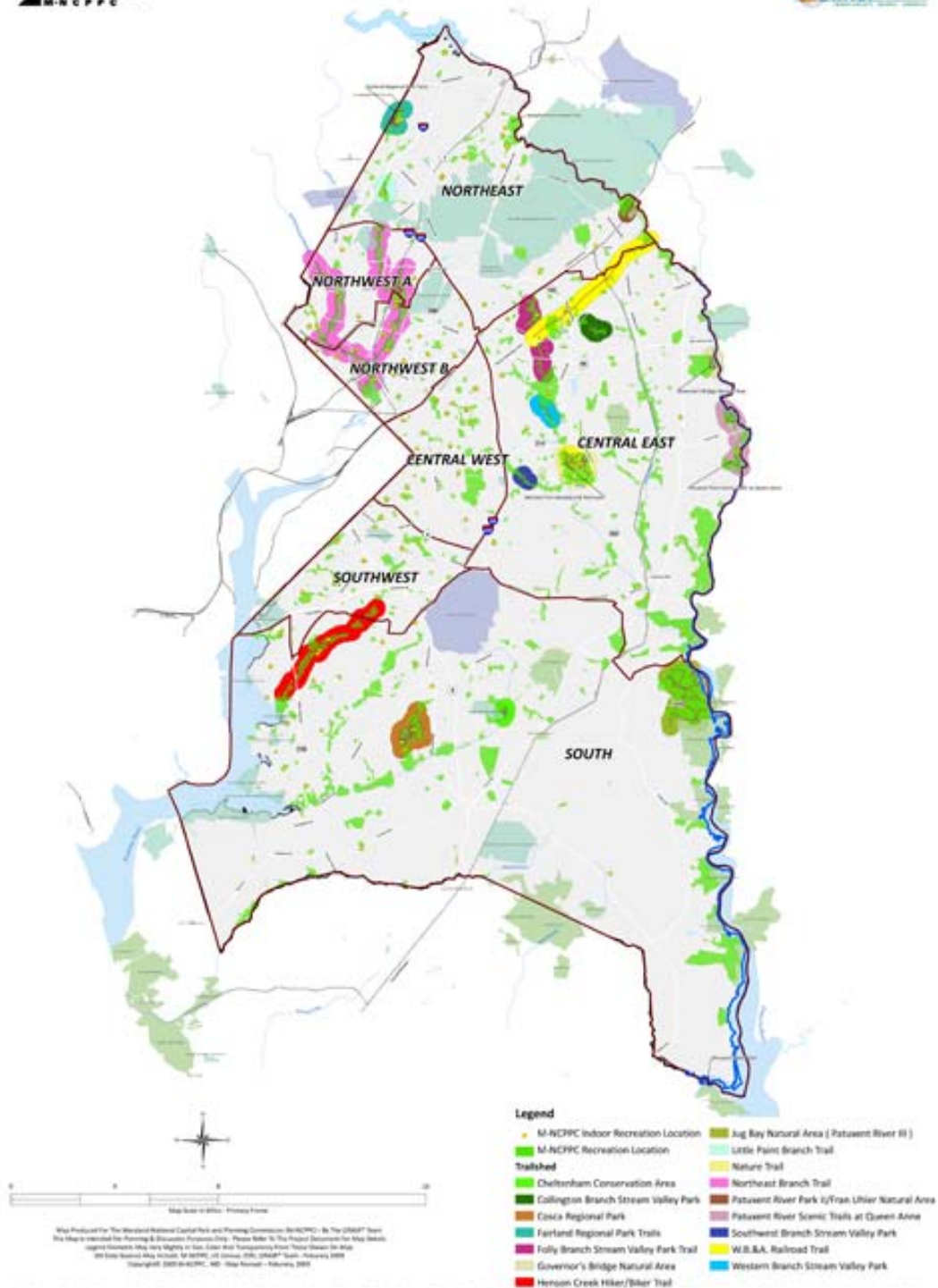
Trail Analysis

Recreational trails in the system are located in greenways, and are recreational destinations within themselves, and others are loop walks within individual parks. **Most of the trails** in the inventory for Prince George’s County **tend to be fragments, rather than connected segments of a larger network.** **Thirty (30) percent of the county has access to trail within one mile.** The access to trails is **highest in Northwest A sub-area**, with 82 percent coverage.

Sixteen (16) distinctive “**trailsheds**” or individual trail networks are included in the parks and recreation system inventory in Prince George’s County. (See *Perspective E – 2: Trailshed Analysis. A larger version of this map can be located in Appendix C.*) Each individual network is a set of continuously connected trails. This means that within an individual network, all segments of trail are connected and any segment can be reached from another without leaving the network.

The **Northeast Branch trail is shown to provide a high degree of connectivity and access, far beyond that of the other networks.** At the same time, the trailsheds within the Central East sub-area offer the potential for a high Level of Service if they were connected to each other. When two networks are connected, they become one network with a larger total service value.

PERSPECTIVE E2: TRAILSHED ANALYSIS



MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND



VISION THEME 4: Recommendations

Safe and accessible places and programs for play, relaxation, and enjoyment

GOAL 6: Collaborate to maintain safe and accessible park and recreation facilities.

Strategy 6.1.

Emphasize safety and accessibility in the design, redevelopment, and construction of the parks and recreation facilities.

Objectives:

- 6.1.1. Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) goals, principles and guidelines into parks and recreation design. (This strategy supports the recommendations of the *Public Safety Facilities Master Plan, 2008.*)

Actions:

- Train park design staff in CPTED guidelines.
- Involve Park Police in land use planning activities, including review of relevant site plans.
- Continue to install and maintain security cameras in and outside parks and recreation public buildings.

- 6.1.2. Develop park lighting plans that encourage public use and promote safety.

Actions:

- Conduct a lighting inventory and study of facilities.
- Develop criteria and design standards for lighting of spaces such as center parking lots and other high traffic areas.
- Reevaluate the current policy of not lighting trails and include criteria for lighting of some trails (e.g. trail links to Metro stations used by commuters).

Strategy 6.2.

Proactively engage the community in crime prevention activities through programs and activities.

Objectives:

- 6.2.1. Expand youth and community outreach programs through the Park Police Community Services Unit. (Programs include Operation C.A.R.E., Cops Camp for Kids, DARE, Doing Something Right, and the Park Police Community Volunteer Academy.)
- 6.2.2. Park Police and program staff work with community groups to increase recreation program activity in high crime areas. Continue to build on recommendations of the *Youth Action Plan* and initiatives such as the Safe Summer Program.

Actions:

- Identify facilities to target in high crime areas.
 - Hold regular meetings with stakeholders and partners to develop and implement program plan.
 - Evaluate and refine plan.
- 6.2.3. Widely publicize positive activities and programs to help change people's perceptions of safety concerns related to parks and recreation facilities.

Action:

- Develop and implement publicity campaign to communicate positive activities focus on human interest stories of participants of parks and recreations programs and services.

Strategy 6.3.

Collaborate with law enforcement agencies on countywide crime and safety issues (e.g. Safe Summer Program, etc.).

Objectives:

- 6.3.1. Develop coordinated campaigns to address high crime neighborhoods.

Action:

- Collect and monitor relevant crime data on a quarterly basis.
- 6.3.2. Align staffing resources for Park Police and Park Ranger staff as responsibilities expand with a growing parks and recreation system.

GOAL 7: Enhance access to facilities and programs.

Strategy 7.1.

Develop a connected recreational trail system with access to community destinations. (Also see Theme 1, Objective 1.3.1.)

Objectives:

- 7.1.1. Prioritize trails that provide access to the greatest number of features.

Actions:

- Whenever possible, locate new amenities within existing or proposed trailsheds.
- Use the trailshed analysis as a tool to measure progress.

- 7.1.2. Construct new trail segments that link existing trail networks together.

- 7.1.3. Make trails a viable transportation alternative by locating them in proximity to recreation and community facilities.

Actions:

- Create ADA accessible trails that connect to neighborhoods, schools, employers, and shopping that are separate or away from busy traffic.
- Develop a strategic plan to address major barriers (e.g. roads, railroads) that are creating gaps in the trail system.

- 7.1.4. Coordinate trails with other transportation modes.

Actions:

- When trails connect to Metro stations or bus routes, provide amenities such as benches, shade, bike racks, etc. at the point of connection.

Trail Connectivity

Identify opportunities to create larger loops within trail networks. These trail loops allow people to travel for a variety of times and distances and return to their starting point without back-tracking. Provide connections that create loops of varying lengths on trails.

Look for opportunities to connect the existing branches of the Northeast Branch Trailshed in the Northwest A and Northwest B sub-areas. The result would be a loop or loops that would allow for recreational rides of as much as ten to twenty miles without back-tracking. Such opportunities are desirable to recreational bicyclists.

Identify opportunities to connect Folly Branch and the W.B. & A. Railroad Trails to each other, with an additional connection to the Collington Branch Stream Valley Park Trails. These all could then be connected to the Western Branch Stream Valley Park, with a connection continuing on down the drainageway to the Nature Trail in Watkins Regional Park. Another link along the Southwest Branch would complete the network on its southern end. On the northern end, a connection along the river from the end of the W. B. & A. Railroad Trail to the Patuxent River Park II/Fran Uhler Natural area would extend the northern reach of the combined Trailshed.

- Create a separate designation for trails that connect to Metro stations or other destinations and provide lighting and other features, allowing them to be safely and legally-used for year-round commuting, including at times outside the designated hours for parks.

Strategy 7.2.

Work to ensure multiple transportation access opportunities to facilities and programs.

Objectives:

- 7.2.1. Adopt recreation facility location criteria that favor sites with multi-modal transportation access (e.g. public transportation, pedestrian, and automobiles).

Actions:

- Locate facilities along safe routes for pedestrians (including strollers and wheel chair users), cyclists, and others.
 - Locate facilities close to public transit and trails whenever feasible.
 - When feasible, co-locate facilities in activity centers next to schools, libraries, commercial areas, or other community destinations.
- 7.2.2. Collaborate with State Highway Department and Department of Public Works to ensure safe ADA accessible pedestrian access to parks and recreation facilities via sidewalks and crossings.
 - 7.2.3. Provide bike racks, signage, and other trail amenities at parks and recreation facilities.

The community survey indicated that 15 percent of respondents ride their bikes to get to parks and recreation facilities and programs in Prince George’s County, and an additional 34 percent said they would like to do so. The Department should set a goal to align the numbers, so that in future surveys the number of people who ride is closer to the number of those who say they want to ride. Similar goals should be set for walking. Thirty-three percent say they now walk, and 48 percent would like to walk.

THEME 5 – *Community engagement and collaborations that maximize resources*



Community engagement and collaborations are central elements of the vision of the organization. Meaningful public participation is a principle identified in the Prince George’s County *General Plan*, a commitment shared by the leadership of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County. Additionally, an element of the Department’s vision statement is to “provide the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community.” Furthermore, an important element of the **Parks**

& Recreation: 2010 and Beyond project was to acknowledge the role of different providers of parks and recreation services throughout the county and identify ways to collaborate to maximize resources and effectiveness.

Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 5*.

Community Outreach and Input

Residents must be informed and aware of the many parks and recreation opportunities before they can be fully engaged. Therefore, creative public relations and communications are vital. A repeated theme from community input was the need to continue to get the word out about Department services and facilities. Survey participants indicated that electronic communication (email and websites) was the best way to reach them (14% currently get information by email, but 37% indicate that email is the best way to communicate). Creative communications and outreach to engage diverse ethnic groups, young people, and underserved groups was also identified as a need by staff and community members.

The value of outreach to the M-NCPPC is significant in broadening the reach of recreation and leisure to those who have limited access (i.e., physical, financial, language barriers). Outreach efforts that are based upon communicating with various cultures and ethnicities within the county can translate into responsive program development that counters traditional programming.

Community Engagement

While the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County offers many ways for residents to get involved through volunteer activities, advisory boards, and recreation councils, staff and community input identified the need to continue and strengthen these efforts. In particular, the need to re-evaluate the recreation councils in order to enliven participation was expressed.

Creative Collaborations

Efforts to expand services and improve the effectiveness of existing partnerships with schools and Boys and Girls Club were identified by the community and staff as important. Additionally, opportunities to expand collaborations with municipalities, faith-based groups, business, and civic associations were also identified.



VISION THEME 5: Recommendations

Community engagement and collaborations that maximize resources

GOAL 8: Provide opportunities for meaningful community engagement and partnering.

Strategy 8.1.

Strengthen relationships with local civic/community organizations, recreation councils, and HOAs.

Objectives:

- 8.1.1. Develop an outreach plan to engage ethnic communities and faith-based organizations.

Action:

- Train staff in cultural norms of different ethnic communities in the county.

- 8.1.2. Develop an action plan to strengthen and foster place-based and interest-based community engagement.

Actions:

- Help sustain existing Recreation Councils through recruitment of new members, including youth.
- When a recreation council does not exist, approach town councils and existing community/civic organizations regarding the creation of a recreation committee or sponsorship of a council.
- Provide technical assistance to friends groups that want to support particular parks and recreation facilities.
- Help create and provide ongoing support to communities of interest about parks and recreation issues and the work of existing interest-based non-profit organizations and clubs (e.g. 4-H Clubs and PTAs).

Strategy 8.2.

Create and implement a partnership policy that creates mutual obligations and expectations for all collaborations.

Objectives:

- 8.2.1. Formalize existing and future partnerships into written formal agreements (*Also see Theme 3: Recreation and Culture.*)

- 8.2.2. Identify and promote Departmental partnership priorities and encourage and empower staff to build relationships.

Actions:

- Train staff on how to work with other governmental, faith-based, and other alternative providers to develop partnerships with alignment of mission and mutual benefits.

- Develop collaborations with local ethnic and grass-roots organizations and small businesses.
- Expand HUB center pilot projects in cooperation with local service providers to disseminate information on available social and economic development programs.

GOAL 9: Enhance communications and outreach efforts to increase community awareness of and involvement in Department programs, services, and facilities.

Strategy 9.1.

Strengthen marketing, customer service, and community relations practices and methods.

Objectives:

- 9.1.1. Develop and implement enhanced marketing, communications, and outreach plans.

Actions:

- Develop enhanced marketing and communication strategies to effectively communicate to diverse members of the community and underrepresented groups.
- Explore the development of social networking and other online tools to communicate with and engage residents, especially youth.
- Expand the outreach of the electronic newsletter.
- Redefine the Department’s tagline of “Something for Everyone” to emphasize our obligation to make sure every resident of Prince George’s County is aware of the benefits of and has access to opportunities to participate in recreation and leisure activities, regardless of who provides them.
- Integrate marketing and outreach with enhanced management of the Community Outreach Toolbox, SMARTlink, Automated Customer Response, and the Samaritan Volunteer Management systems.
- Continually communicate a consistent message through a variety of methods about who we are, why we exist, and how to access our programs and services.
- Target information to schools to stimulate youth awareness and interest.
- Target market programs with additional capacity.
- Develop a proactive succession program to help communities maintain their network of relationships with the Department as staff changes.
- Regularly update community contact database. Include all contact information – email, phone, and address – to broaden outreach capabilities.

- 9.1.2. Develop a comprehensive signage plan to enhance the visual appeal and effectiveness of signage and to facilitate greater awareness of key facilities.

Action:

- Include highway signage plan for key regional facilities, natural resource areas, historic sites, specialty facilities, etc.
- 9.1.3. Improve the internal and external effectiveness and efficiency of the SMARTlink computer system.
 - 9.1.4. Integrate all current databases with the Automated Customer Response System.
 - 9.1.5. Evaluate alignment of Help Desk hours with facility operating hours and consider adding evening hours.

Strategy 9.2.

Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities.

Objectives:

- 9.2.1. Expand volunteer opportunities to include activities that extend the “eyes and ears” of staff (e.g. monitor field-use, report condition problems with facilities, count facilities usage such as trails).
- 9.2.2. Increase volunteer training to support volunteer plan.

THEME 6 – A sustainable organization to provide quality services and facilities



A sustainable organization meets the current parks and recreation needs without sacrificing the ability to meet the needs of future generations by balancing environmental, social, and economic concerns. Limited resources must be responsibly managed to best meet a wide array of community parks and recreation needs and interests. Maintaining the quality of a large parks and recreation system and responding to changing interests and needs will be essential to the ongoing success of the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince

George’s County. Best management practices to ensure quality services and fair distribution of resources are critical. The following are key findings and goals and strategies addressing financial and operational sustainability to continue to offer high quality services and facilities into the future.

Findings

The following findings helped shape the goals and strategies for *Vision Theme 6*.

Community Outreach and Input

Community input from focus groups and public meetings indicated a strong appreciation for the variety of parks and recreation facilities and programs offered throughout the county. The community survey also showed that satisfaction with the current quality of facilities, customer service, and maintenance of facilities is relatively high, with over 60 percent of survey respondents rating these areas as good or excellent. A key to a sustainable, quality system will be dedicating adequate resources to maintaining current facilities at a high level. In fact, survey respondents ranked “improvements to existing parks, trails, and open space” as the highest priority for department fund allocations, followed by community centers. In terms of user fees, 49 percent of survey respondents indicated they were “about right” and 17 percent felt they were “too much” (32% were uncertain and 2% felt they were too little). Developing a sound approach toward pricing various services will position the Department to more effectively manage resources and communicate fair rationale to the public.

Financial Management

A subsidy allocation and cost recovery philosophy that reflects the values of the organization including community, staff and leadership does not appear to exist. A philosophy that guides decisions relative to resource allocation is invaluable for making financial management decisions such as allocating subsidy and determining fair pricing of services. Developing and adopting a subsidy and cost recovery philosophy will be important as the Department works to sustain services in both the short and long term.



Improving financial management through the tracking of program expenses and revenues will be important. Currently, the staff does not consistently determine the direct (and indirect) costs of each recreational service. By determining the direct and indirect costs for each service including programs, activities and events, fees and charges can be established and assessed in an informed way and financial resources can be managed effectively. This will allow the Department the ability to articulate the true costs of providing services to the community.

Pricing services can be done in a variety of ways – the most common being based upon market tolerance, competitive pricing, and by arbitrary pricing. Many Department services have been priced based upon the latter and are determined by adding a flat rate or percentage on to the previous year’s fee or charge. Due to the Department’s strong past financial condition staff has become accustomed to this method.

As the Department expands, adequate funding to support the long-term operational costs to maintain the system is essential for the financial health of the organization.

Integrated Technology

The Department is very large, and technology is a tool that should be used to communicate effectively, to automate many of the processes and systems, and to provide relevant information for decision making. At this point in time, the Information Technology and Communications Division has diligently worked to update the hardware and software infrastructure for the entire agency. In the future, focus will need to be on maintaining the most current necessary technology infrastructure, while purposefully and comprehensively integrating how all of the tools create **relevant** information, along with strong integration with training and staff development related to how to use the tools and technology that are already in place.

Staff Development

Quality staff is at the core of a successful organization. It is recommended that the Department enhance staff training and education so staff members are equipped to respond to changing demographic changes and trends. Staff must be proficient in basic management practices of service provision, but also are expected to be experts in areas such as financial management, customer service, and diversity (racial, ethnic, ability, interest). Additionally, the face of recreation and social services has changed dramatically in recent years, and the complexity of service design and development is more sophisticated. Ultimately, the community becomes the beneficiary of this training and development program through more advanced and contemporary service delivery and management practices.

Maintaining Quality Facilities

A focus of the Department now and into the future is on maintaining quality facilities. Quality and functionality are key parts of the equation when determining LOS and equity across the county, and maintenance is critical to quality and functionality. Improperly maintained components will score lower and result in lower LOS. A comprehensive maintenance plan is needed to clarify maintenance standards and needed resources – staffing, equipment, maintenance yards – to maintain the system over time. In an aging system, it is also important to develop life cycle replacement schedules for facilities and equipment.

VISION THEME 6: Recommendations

A sustainable organization to provide quality services and facilities

GOAL 10: Adopt management practices that will produce long-term organizational sustainability while maintaining service quality.

Strategy 10.1.

Refine and broadly communicate organizational values, vision, and mission.

Objective:

- 10.1.1. Conduct a Service Assessment to determine core services. *(See Theme 3: Recreation and Culture for specific objectives.)*

Strategy 10.2.

Ensure that staff understands their roles and responsibilities for maintaining a respective, inclusive, and productive work environment.

Objective:

- 10.2.1. Support implementation of the Culture Change Initiative.

Strategy 10.3.

Allocate appropriate staff resources to enable each Division to function effectively.

Objectives:

- 10.3.1. Streamline the procurement process to facilitate use of contracted staff and consultants to supplement workload needs.
- 10.3.2. Periodically review work functions to enable position efficiencies, re-engineer work processes, and realign job descriptions as capacity changes.

Action:

- Conduct a department-wide staff workload assessment, especially for “go to” individuals assigned frequently to committees and special projects.
- 10.3.3. Make planning, analysis, and evaluation of resource usage part of measured expectations and include appropriately in all job descriptions.

Strategy 10.4.

Create integrated financial systems, processes, and tools.

Objectives:

10.4.1. Adopt a subsidy allocation and cost recovery philosophy and policy.

Actions:

- Identify and communicate consensus on cost recovery expectation for the agency overall and by division.
- Determine department specific direct and indirect costs of service provision.
- Determine and communicate program and service delivery parameters for areas outside the Metropolitan District.

10.4.2. Integrate the Commission budget and financial software systems (CAS) with the SMARTlink system, the maintenance management software, and the Kronos time management software.

10.4.3. Train operating staff on basic financial and budgeting software and processes.

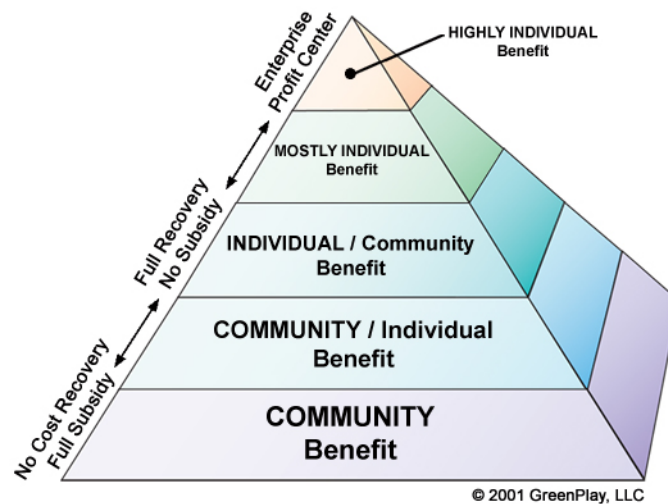
10.4.4. Identify and fund resources (staff, equipment, etc.) needed to support the operations of all new facilities.

Direct and Indirect Costs

By determining the direct and indirect costs for each service including programs and facilities, fees and charges can be established and assessed in an informed way and financial resources can be managed effectively. This does not suggest that fees and charges are assessed to cover all costs of service delivery, rather, it allows for more informed management decisions about how subsidy is to be used and an ability to articulate the “real or true” costs of doing business. This analysis does include identification of department specific indirect cost allocation to each service such as facility operations and maintenance costs and administrative functions such as staffing, marketing, and others.

SUBSIDY ALLOCATION & COST RECOVERY PHILOSOPHY

A philosophy that guides decisions relative to resource allocation is invaluable for making financial management decisions such as allocating subsidy and determining fair and equitable pricing of services. Developing and adopting a subsidy and cost recovery philosophy will be important as the Department works to sustain services in both the short and long term. The Pyramid Methodology is an effective management tool currently being utilized by agencies across the country as a way to develop and articulate a subsidy and cost recovery philosophy. The methodology helps articulate the level of benefit that services such as activities, facilities, and lands provide as they relate to the mission of an agency. Its design leads to the logical determination of core services, resource allocation and subsidy/cost recovery goals, and future fees and charges. Establishing guidelines and a methodology for the determination of these critical operational issues is imperative to sound fiscal responsibility, governmental accountability and decision making.



Strategy 10.5.

Continually update and integrate technologies to create efficiencies and ongoing improvements to service.

Objective:

10.5.1. Maintain, implement, and continually update the comprehensive *Technology Plan* for the Agency.

Actions:

- Continually evaluate and integrate the available technologies across the agency to create a summary of needed hardware, software, and pertinent trainings for each division.
- Continue to update annual specific technology plans for each unit and facility.
- Work with managers to determine and continually implement relevant reporting and tracking requirements.
- Train staff on how to properly use all facets of the software. This includes working with managing and training staff to discern which trainings need to be mandatory vs. optional for various positions.
- Provide additional adequate staff resources to meet the growing demands for technology implementation.
- Continue to improve timely response and support for any technology related issue.
- Ensure that relevant management software programs used are compatible and use front-end programming to integrate across platforms. For example, currently there are many different software packages that are being used for various purposes that have integration capabilities, but may not be fully and effectively interfacing with each other:
 - Samaritan software for Volunteer Management
 - Financial Software for budgeting and finance
 - SMARTlink for registration and facilities management
 - Human Resources software
 - Maintenance management software
 - Kronos time management (hourly tracking) software
 - Trackit - All in one purchasing, customer support center, inventory tracking, and network management system
 - GasBoy – fuel management system
 - Social networking – digital mechanisms to integrate social outreach and communication
 - Internally created digital access and web-based programs, like the Community Outreach Toolbox
 - e-Builder Project Management System for CIP projects
 - Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Strategy 10.6.

Develop a comprehensive staff training and development program to maintain staff expertise to deliver quality program and services.

Objectives:

10.6.1. Create different sets of curricula and educational opportunities that will be required for all new hires and existing staff. Topic areas can include but are not limited to:

- Conversational Spanish
- Contemporary Program Design and Delivery
- Responding to a Diverse Community
- Service Evaluations and Assessment
- Financial Management and Budgeting 101
- Pricing 101
- Today's Behavioral Trends and Issues
- Program Development and Evaluation
- Marketing and Communications
- Customer Service

Actions:

- Commit a full-time dedicated staff training coordinator position to oversee a comprehensive training program.
- Work with a community college and/or hired parks and recreation educators to help provide trainings in national best practices.
- Create a training program for local high school students, young adult entry staff, and volunteers to become entry level parks and recreation professionals.
- Utilize web-based trainings that can be accessed by staff at any time.
- Ensure that any training is consistent with agency practices, current technology, vision, mission, and values.

10.6.2. Tie annual staff performance evaluations to completion of trainings for most positions.

Strategy 10.7.

Set, follow, and meet maintenance standards for the condition and quality of each land and facility type.

Objectives:

10.7.1. Develop a short-range action plan to address any components that currently score below expectations in the inventory.

Actions:

- Develop a work plan and budget to address the needed inventory improvements.
- Whenever major repairs are needed for existing facilities and amenities, consider whether it should be repaired, replaced, or removed completely.

10.7.2. Prepare and adopt a maintenance plan with standards for the condition and quality of each facility type.

Actions:

- Develop facilities maintenance standards using data on facility utilization, age, and condition from the upcoming Indoor Facilities Study.
- Apply industry maintenance best practices and policies, as appropriate.
- Identify causes for facilities to not meet maintenance standards:
 - Improper maintenance procedures (i.e. inadequate frequency of maintenance activities, lack of staff training, etc.).
 - Obsolescence (the facility is too old and dilapidated to maintain to the standard).
 - Poor design or construction.
- Set performance benchmarks for Levels of Service. Standards may be different for various types of facilities, such as developed parks versus undeveloped parks. These standards should directly relate to *Vision Theme 1 –Appropriate Levels of Service*.
- Adopt the plan and communicate it throughout the organization.
- Train staff on updated maintenance standards.

10.7.3. Identify resources (personnel and equipment) needed to maintain facilities at the established level.

Actions:

- Track actual maintenance costs and collect data in a consistent manner to allow staff to know the true costs of maintaining facilities.
- Identify operational costs of capital improvements so that resources are allocated to maintenance when new facilities are built.

10.7.4. Determine organizational structure and facilities required for managing the system at build-out, including the number, type and location of maintenance yards and staffing levels.

10.7.5. Develop a preventative maintenance schedule.

Actions:

- Determine expected life cycles for various facilities and amenities and equipment used to maintain facilities.

- Prepare schedules and budgets for repairs and replacements.

Strategy 10.8.

Set, follow, and meet standards for the design, construction, and renovation of facilities and amenities.

Objectives:

10.8.1. Ensure that standards adopted for Department facilities also apply to developer-built facilities for which the Department may be responsible.

10.8.2. Include Department planning, programming, operations, and maintenance staff in the design and review of any proposed facilities that the Department will have a responsibility to program, operate, or maintain.

10.8.3. Develop a master plan for the identification and acquisition of sites for key regional recreation facility and maintenance components.

Actions:

- Begin the acquisition process for properties that will be needed for future maintenance and athletic facilities.

- Identify maintenance facility size and location needs to most effectively and efficiently maintain the parks and recreation system anticipated by 2040.

- Develop schematic plans and budgets to support the maintenance facility plan (for improvements to existing or new maintenance facilities).

10.8.4. Prepare and adopt standards for sustainability in the design and operations of facilities.

Actions:

- Incorporate green building design into all new facilities.

- Identify measurable targets for reduction in consumption of energy, chemicals, and other consumables used in the design, operation, and management of facilities.

- Create a monitoring process to determine if these targets are being met.

- Expand the recycling program to include all Department facilities. Incorporate recycling education in the program to promote broad participation.

- Train staff on the updated standards.

- Coordinate the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) with goals for each facility type.
- Standardize equipment to make it easier to care for equipment and stock spare parts.

10.8.5. Replace facilities and amenities that are removed when a replacement is required to maintain the desired composite LOS. Replacements will match current and projected need.

Strategy 10.9.

Evaluate the quality of parks and recreation facilities and programs on an ongoing basis.

Objectives:

10.9.1. Conduct regular facility and program audits to determine whether they meet expectations for quality and develop a list of necessary improvements.

10.9.2. Ensure that all programs, services, and facilities are regularly evaluated.

10.9.3. Develop SMARTLink management reports that track key information.

Strategy 10.10.

Achieve taxpayer equity.

Objective:

10.10.1. Include all areas of the county in the Metropolitan (park tax) District.

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G. Organizational Implementation Commitments

The **Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond** elements provide long-term goals and strategies that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This framework positions the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County to maintain its place as a national leader and high quality provider of parks and recreation facilities and services. The commitment of leadership and staff is to use the guiding documents of the *2040 Framework Plan*, *10-Year Strategic Plan*, and *FY 2010 to FY 2013 Implementation Plan* to maintain and grow the system.

The *2040 Vision and Framework* provides the long-term direction, based on community vision elements and a *10-Year Strategic Plan* with specific objectives to achieve the 2040 vision elements and strategies. The *FY 2010 to FY 2013 Implementation Plan* provides short-term action steps and identifies needed financial and staff resources. Annual Work Plans and budgets will be developed to support the visions, goals, and strategies of these the plans.

The *Strategic Plan* recommendations are interrelated and cross organizational boundaries. Collaborative efforts between staff in different parts of the organization – program, maintenance, park police, administration, etc. as well as the continued engagement of community stakeholders will be important to the successful implementation of the vision and plan elements.

The *Strategic Plan* is a living, breathing document that should be responsive to changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs, interests, and trends. This document should be reviewed and updated annually to reflect these changes.



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APPENDIX A – INVENTORY DESCRIPTION & CLASSIFICATIONS

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Inventory Description & Classifications

The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County has over 25,000 acres of parkland, including over 8,000 acres of developed parkland, almost 8,000 acres of stream valley parkland, and over 7,000 acres of undeveloped parkland. According to the inventory conducted in 2008, this system includes 526 park locations (including stream valley parks and undeveloped parkland) as well as 119 indoor facilities. Overall, the system has over 2,300 outdoor components and over 400 indoor components. The system is divided into three major recreational planning areas: Northern, Central, and Southern. For the purpose of this study, seven sub-areas are used in the Level of Service (LOS) analysis. These sub-areas are South, Southwest, Central West, Central East, Northwest A, Northwest B and Northeast.

The Department of Park and Recreation in Prince George’s County’s system is well maintained and features a wide variety of indoor and outdoor facilities. A summary of Department’s indoor and outdoor facilities is described below (based on the 2008 inventory).

1. M-NCPPC Outdoor Facility Descriptions

As noted above in the facility summary, there are several major types of outdoor facilities ranging from neighborhood parks to regional facilities, all of which offer a wide variety of outdoor components and amenities. Currently, M-NCPPC’s park system in Prince George’s County is made up of seven major types of parks including:

1. Neighborhood
2. Community
3. Regional
4. Countywide
5. Special Facilities
6. Natural Areas/Conservation Areas
7. Undeveloped Parks

Neighborhood

Within these major park types, there are several sub-types of parks. These sub-types are based on the naming convention used by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County. The neighborhood level sub-types include:

1. Neighborhood Mini-Parks
2. Neighborhood Playgrounds
3. Neighborhood Parks
4. Neighborhood Park/Schools
5. Neighborhood Recreation Centers

Typically, a Neighborhood Mini-Park focuses on providing a Level of Service to the immediate neighborhood or neighborhoods. Neighborhood Mini Parks, on average, include about 2-3 components, with one component usually being a playground or a ballfield, basketball court, or picnic grounds. On average, these parks are a half-acre in size. Neighborhood Playgrounds typically include an average of four (4) components including ballfields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and playgrounds. Neighborhood Playgrounds tend to be bigger than Neighborhood Mini-Parks and are on average three (3) acres in size. The next sub-type, Neighborhood Park, includes an average of six (6) components and a combination of many of the following: multi-use fields, shelter, tennis courts, ballfield, basketball court, and playground, as well as an occasional loop walk, picnic grounds, or a volleyball court. These parks are an average size of about 10 acres.

A Neighborhood Park/School is a neighborhood park adjacent to or connected to a school. Neighborhood Park/Schools tend to include more components than a Neighborhood Park, ranging from 6-11 components with the same types of components, however, these parks tend to be a little smaller with an average size of nine (9) acres. Lastly, Neighborhood Recreation Centers are parks that are adjacent to or contain a neighborhood recreation center. These parks tend to have the same number of components as a Neighborhood Park/School and are comparable in size.

Community

This major type of park focuses on providing service at a wider range at a community level. Community types include the following sub-types:

1. Community Park
2. Community Park/School
3. Community Center Park
4. Community Recreation Center

The first sub-type, Community Park, on average includes 10 components from ballfields to volleyball courts. A Community Park is on average 38 acres. Community Park/Schools are community parks that are adjacent to or connected to a school and on average are about 33 acres in size. There are fewer Community Park/Schools than Neighborhood Park/Schools. The next sub-type, Community Center Park, is a park that is adjacent to or includes a Community Center and on average includes 10 components and is an average of 20 acres. Lastly, a Community Recreation Center is a park that is adjacent to or includes a community recreation center and has an average size of 36 acres with 11 components.

Regional

Regional Parks

Regional level parks include stream valley parks, regional parks, and cultural art centers. M-NCPPC's system includes four regional parks – Cosca Regional Park, Fairland Regional Park, Watkins Regional Park, and Walker Mill Regional Park. These parks focus on providing service to the surrounding community and regions of the county. These parks also include the most components of all the major types of parks.

Stream Valley Parks

Stream Valley Parks are long and expansive parcels of land varying from one acre to over 90 acres in size and can span several of the sub-areas used for this plan. The purpose of a stream valley park, such as the Anacostia River Stream Valley Park and Back Branch Stream Valley Park, is to preserve land, especially within Prince George's County floodplains. Stream valley parks are characteristically undeveloped; however these parks typically contain smaller developed parks within them, such as neighborhood parks and community parks.

Countywide

At the county and regional level there are fewer parks, however, these parks offer many unique recreational opportunities. The countywide level includes river parks, historic sites and landmarks, trails, and other facilities.

River Parks

There are two river parks, the Potomac River Park and the Patuxent River Park. The Patuxent River Park encompasses many amenities and includes other parks that are open to the public, such as Aquasco Farm and Cedar Haven Fishing Area.

Historic Sites, Museums, Landmarks, and Rental Sites

Many historic sites include indoor facilities, however, many have outdoor components such as gardens and interpretive walks. Refer to the indoor facility description for more detail.

Trail and Blueway Description

There are over 90 miles of hiking and biking trails within the Department's park system. Several types of trails exist, including natural trails and paved trails. Some trails are included within the extent of the park, and some meander through the stream valley parks or other greenways. Many of the trails can be found within regional parks as well. Major trails include the Anacostia River Trail, Hensen Creek Hiker/Biker Trail, W. B. & A. Railroad Trail, Paint Branch Trail, and the Northeast Branch Trail. The Patuxent Water Trail is a stretch of developed blueway that offers opportunities for users to paddle the river, access developed parks, and camp up and down the Patuxent River.

Special Facilities

Special facilities include aquatic facilities, ice rinks, golf courses, shooting centers, athletic complexes, equestrian centers, airports, marinas, and reclamation areas.

There are many unique opportunities within special facilities to be experienced in indoor or outdoor facilities, which are listed below.

- College Park Airport
- Prince George's Equestrian Center/The Show Place Arena
- Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex
- Chesapeake Carousel at Watkins Regional Park
- Miniature Train at Watkins Regional Park

Additionally, there are many sports facilities within M-NCPPC’s park system in Prince George’s County including:

- Fairland Sports and Aquatics Complex in Laurel
- Prince George’s Stadium in Bowie
- Prince George’s Equestrian Center/The Show Place in Upper Marlboro
- Prince George’s Sports & Learning Complex in Landover

Natural Areas/Conservation Areas

There are several conservation areas and natural areas throughout the County, which M-NCPPC owns and/or manages. These sites focus on preserving natural resources and include:

- Bladensburg Waterfront Park
- Cheltenham Conservation Area
- Dueling Creek Natural Area in Colmar Manor Park
- Lake Artemesia Conservation Area
- Patuxent River Park
- School House Pond in Upper Marlboro Park
- Suitland Bog Conservation Area

Undeveloped Parks

There are two types of undeveloped parks. The first type consists of undeveloped parks that will be developed in the future. The other type of undeveloped park is one designated as a conservation/natural area that is identified as not being suitable for active recreation. A majority of the undeveloped parks that have been identified for future park development (and require master plans) are found in the South sub-area. The following table summarizes the quantity of both types of undeveloped parks within each sub-area.

Sub-Area	Undeveloped – Future Park Development	Undeveloped – Conservation/Natural Area
South	35	8
Southwest	6	7
Central West	10	4
Central East	15	11
Northwest A	3	0
Northwest B	5	4
Northeast	10	6
Total	84	40

2. M-NCPPC Indoor Facility Description

Indoor facilities range from neighborhood recreation centers to regional facilities and offer a wide variety of indoor components and amenities. Currently, M-NCPPC's system in Prince George's County is made up of five major types of indoor facilities including:

1. Neighborhood
2. Community
3. Regional
4. Countywide
5. Special Facilities

Neighborhood

Neighborhood level facilities include Neighborhood Park/Schools and Neighborhood Recreation Centers. A Neighborhood Park/School commonly includes a gymnasium and a Neighborhood Recreation Center commonly includes kitchen and multi-purpose room.

Community

Community indoor facilities include Community Centers, Community Park/Schools, and Community Recreation Centers. Community Centers and Community Recreation Centers are freestanding buildings and Community Park/Schools are attached to schools. Community facilities at this level often include gymnasiums, meeting rooms, kitchens, multipurpose rooms, weight/fitness rooms, and pre-school rooms.

Regional

Regional facilities include cultural arts centers and provide service to an entire region within the county. Cultural arts facilities are those that provide programs, classes, performances, and exhibits such as the Harmony Hall Regional Center, Prince George's Publick Playhouse, and the Montpelier Arts Center.

Countywide

Countywide facilities include historic sites and landmarks and other unique facilities. There are many historic sites, museums, and rental sites that offer unique opportunities for interpretive and educational experiences, as well as events. Historic rental sites include:

- Adelphi Mill
- Snow Hill Manor
- Dorsey Chapel
- Newton White Mansion
- Oxen Hill Manor
- Prince George's Ballroom

Historic sites and museums include:

- Abraham Hall
- College Park Airport
- College Park Aviation Museum
- Darnall's Chance House Museum
- Montpelier Mansion
- Mt. Calvert Historic and Archeological Park
- Northhampton Plantation Slave Quarters
- Patuxent Rural Museums
- Seabrook Schoolhouse
- Surratt House Museum

Special Facilities

Special facilities include aquatic facilities, ice rinks, golf courses, shooting centers, athletic complexes, equestrian centers, airports, marinas, and reclamation areas. Additionally, there are three (3) nature centers including Clearwater Nature Center, Mount Rainier Nature/Recreation Center, and Watkins Nature Center. These centers focus on exhibits, live animals, gardens, and other educational experiences to provide support for environmental education. Refer to the outdoor facility description for a list of sport and special facilities.

Other indoor facilities include senior centers, tennis bubbles, and other indoor facilities used for meeting spaces and other indoor recreational opportunities.

APPENDIX B – STANDARDS AND LOCATION CRITERIA

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Recommended Facility Level of Service Standards & Location Criteria for Select Components

Service Areas – Countywide (1); Regional (3-6, depending on the facility and community interests and needs); Community (defined as 15-min. drive or 3-mile); Neighborhood (defined as 15-min. walk or less than 1-mile)

Facility Type	Service Area	Standards & Location Criteria	NOTES
INDOOR FACILITIES			
Multi-purpose Spaces (classrooms and other programming spaces)	Neighborhood, community, and regional	Part of the 1.4 SF per population for indoor facilities standard	In regional centers, and then co-locate and partner whenever possible. Youth and senior spaces are included here.
Pools	Regional and community	1 aquatics location per 50,000 population – mix of outdoor and indoor	Primarily part of regional Multi-purpose centers, supplemented by additional outdoor, waterpark, therapy and sprayground amenities
Gyms	Community	Within regional centers and partnered with middle schools. Part of 1.4 SF per population standard.	New gyms should be part of school partnerships and new regional centers.
Fitness Centers	Regional	Located within regional centers; Minimum of 9-10,000 SF. Part of 1.4 SF per population standard for indoor space.	Continue existing fitness areas in community centers; locate new fitness centers in regional centers.
Cultural Arts Centers	Regional	Six centers or co-located with regional centers; Geographically disbursed throughout county.	Co-locate cultural arts centers, whenever possible, with other public agency facilities. Co-locate with arts and entertainment districts, when possible.
Nature Centers and Historic Sites	Countywide	Resource dependant – locate adjacent to primary interpretive resources.	

Facility Type	Service Area	Standards & Location Criteria	NOTES
OUTDOOR FACILITIES			
Natural Lands	Regional	Resource dependant	
Developed Park Land	Community	Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Multi-Purpose Turf Fields	Community and Regional	Access to a field should be on a community level, tournament facilities on a regional; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	Single fields are community level, while multiple fields provide regional or county-wide tournament capacity.
Synthetic Turf Fields	Regional	Synthetic turf fields should be considered as appropriate.	
Ballfield Diamonds	Community and Regional	Access to a ballfield should be on a community level, tournament facilities on a regional; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	Single fields are community level, while multiple field provide regional or county-wide tournament capacity.
Disk Golf	Regional	Six, geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Dog Park	Regional	Six, geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Community Garden	Regional	Six, geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Golf	Regional	Four, Keep current distribution.	
Tennis	Community	Access to a court should be on a community level, tournament facilities on a regional level; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Playground, Local	Neighborhood	Ideally within walking distance; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	Can be a variety of types, including nature play, interactive play, etc. but should offer a range of physical and social development activities for kids up to 10+.
Skatepark	Regional	Six, geographically disbursed by sub-area.	
Group Picnic Shelter	Community	One per Community Park; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	Single picnic shelters can be provided in neighborhood parks as needed.

Trails	Community and Regional	Access to a trail should be on a community level, with major connections on a regional basis; Geographically disbursed by sub-area.	Connect with regional trails system as well as community facilities, community and regional park facilities, and major shopping and employment centers, whenever possible.
Playground, Destination	Community and Regional	Minimum of three; Located within Community or Regional Parks.	Large unique/custom playground with adjacent amenities suitable for longer visits, including restrooms, drinking fountains, shade, picnic shelter, seating, parking.
Spray Pad	Neighborhood, Community and Regional	Smaller simple ones in neighborhoods, minimum of three larger ones in Community and Regional Parks. Smaller ones geographically disbursed by sub-area, larger ones placed in destination locations.	May be co-located with other aquatics locations or stand-alone to help activate parks w/o aquatics.

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APPENDIX C – MAPS

Perspective A: Neighborhood Access to All Components

Perspective E2: Trailshed Analysis

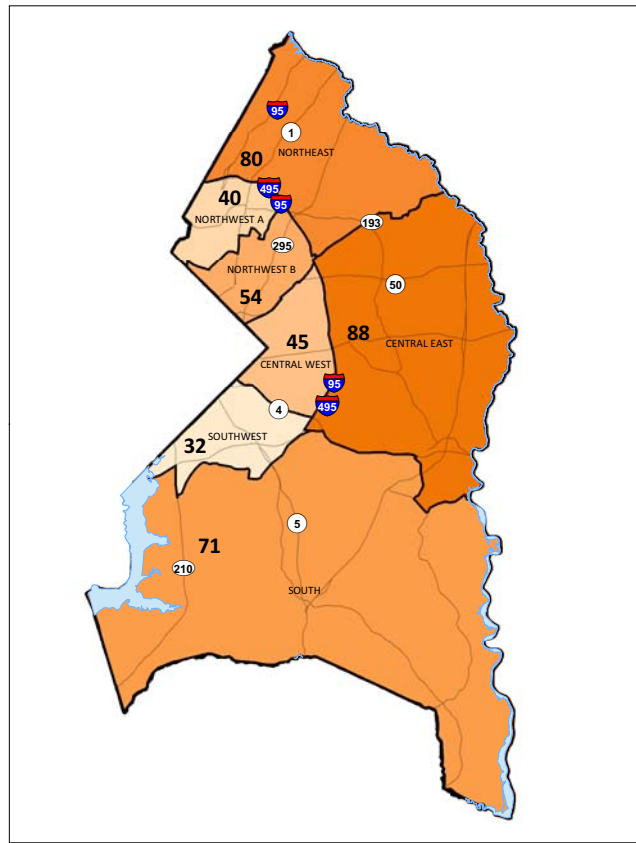
(Note: See *Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment* for additional maps and Perspectives)

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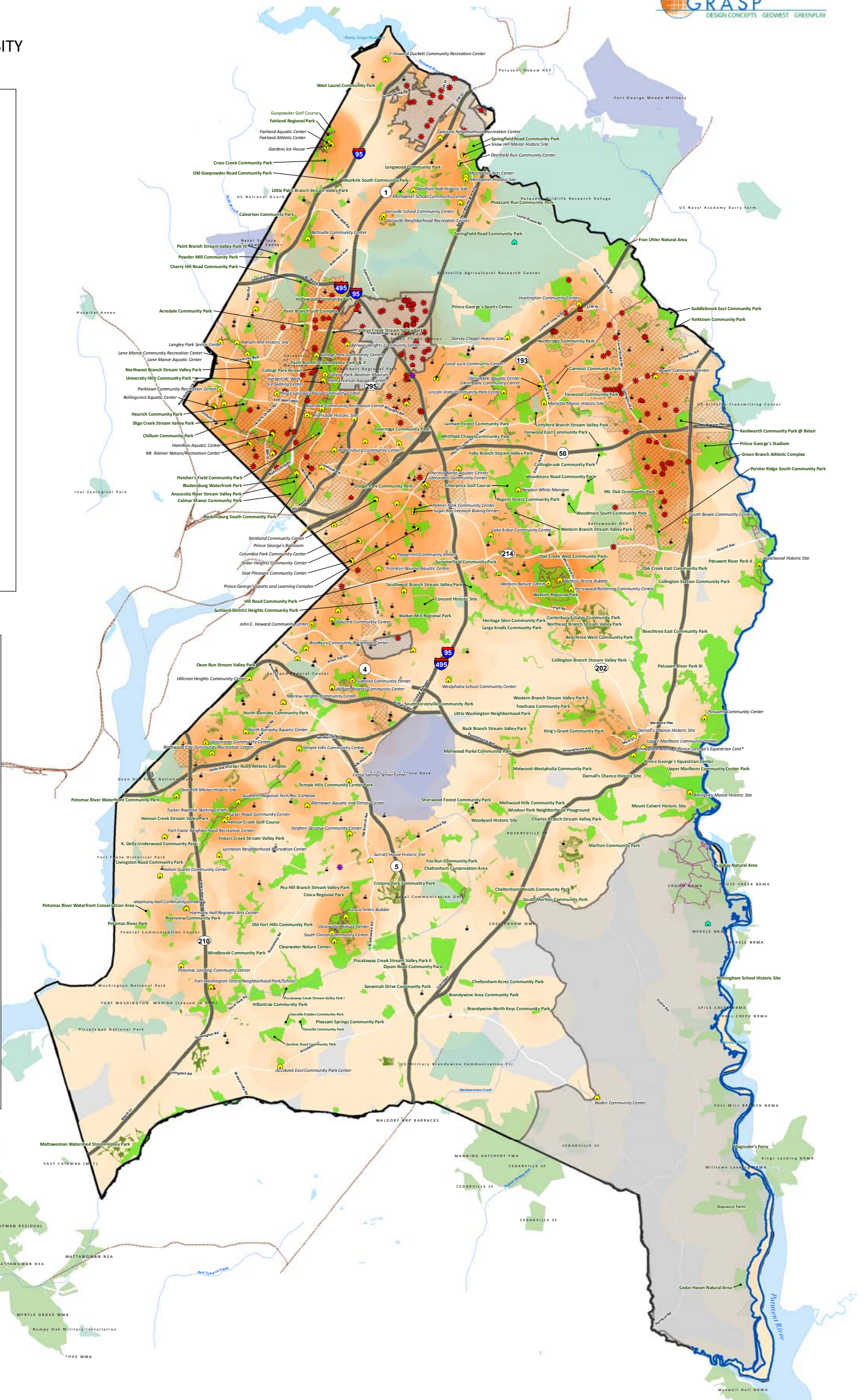
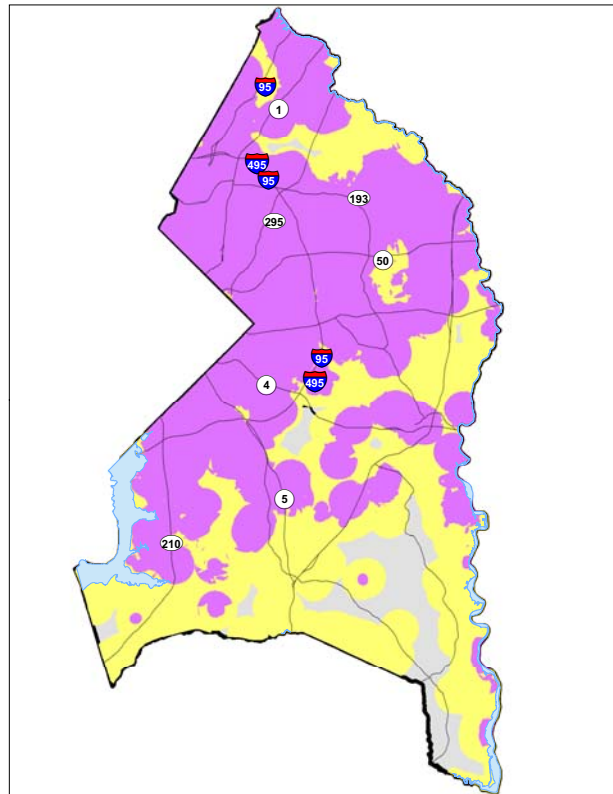
PERSPECTIVE A: NEIGHBORHOOD ACCESS TO ALL COMPONENTS



PA-1: AVERAGE GRASP LOS PER POPULATION DENSITY
(LOS PER ACRE/ POP PER ACRE)



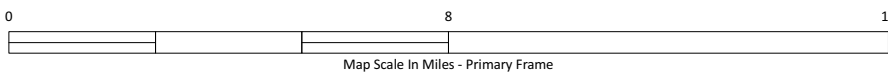
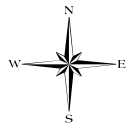
PA-2: GRASP LOS MEETING TARGET SCORES



- PEDESTRIAN BARRIERS**
- Baltimore Washington Parkway
 - Branch Avenue
 - John Hanson Highway
 - Interstate 95
 - Interstate 295
 - Robert Crain Highway
 - Capital Beltway
 - Indian Head Highway
 - Suitland Parkway
 - Pennsylvania Avenue
 - Railroads

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| INDOOR BUFFERS | OUTDOOR COMPONENTS |
| 1/3 mile | 1/3 mile |
| 1 mile | 1 mile |

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| OUTDOOR BUFFERS | TRAILS AND BLUEWAY |
| 1/3 mile | 1/3 mile |
| 1 mile | 1 mile |



Legend

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| M-NCPPC Indoor Location | Pedestrian Barrier | Municipality |
| Federal/State Indoor Location | Existing Trail | Federal Lands |
| Municipality Indoor Location | Patuxent Water Trail | Metropolitan District (No Park Tax) |
| Alternative Provider Indoor Location | Railroad | GRASP® Perspective – All Values |
| Municipality Outdoor Location | HOA Recreation Location | GRASPValue |
| Alternative Provider Outdoor Location | MNCPPC Recreation Location | Less Access |
| School Location | Military Installation | Greater Access |
| <small>*included in Level of Service Analysis</small> | DNR Lands | No Service |

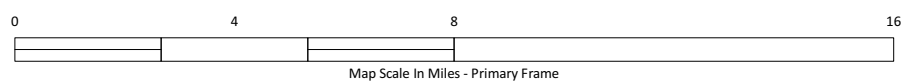
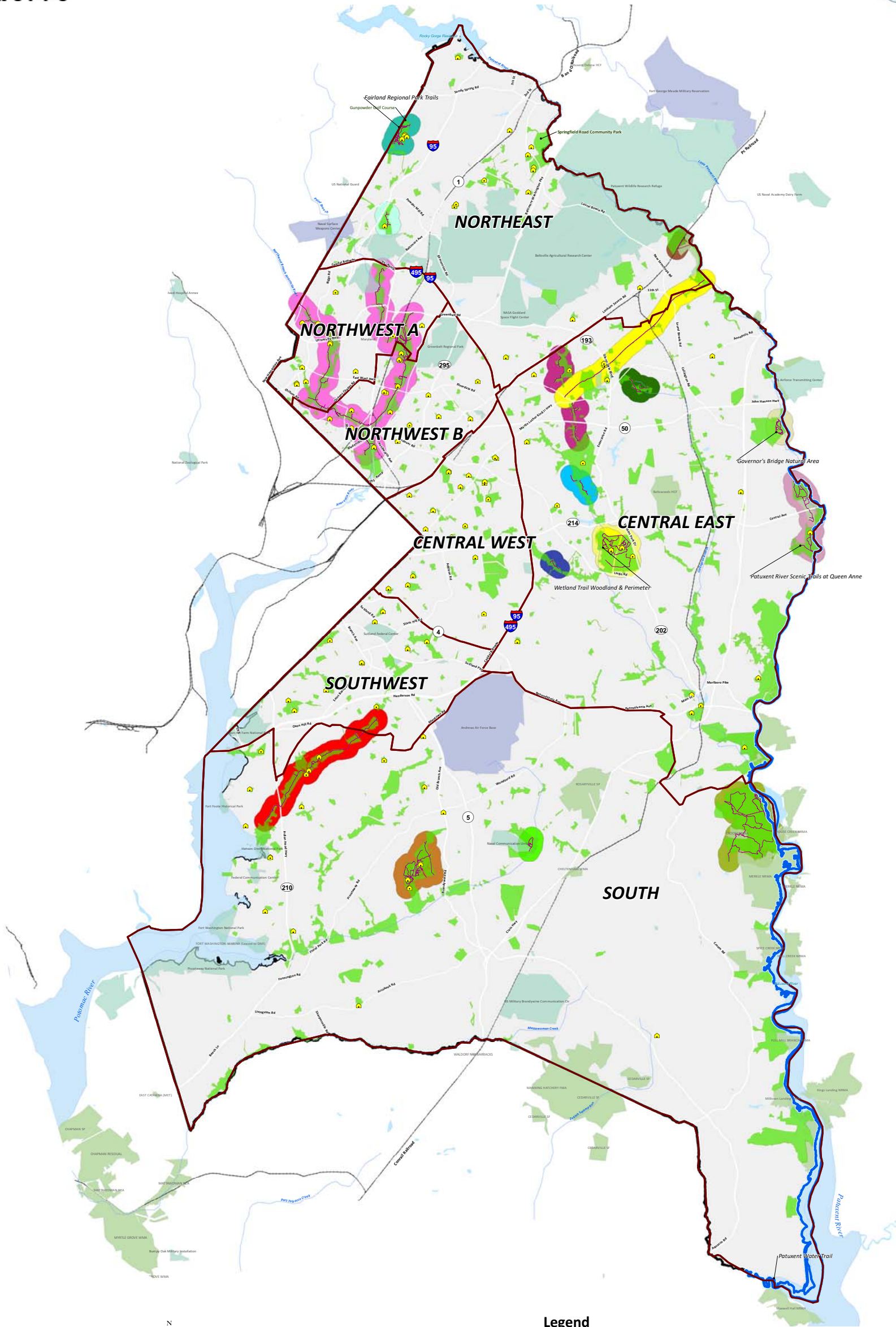
Map Produced For Prince George County and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) - By The GRASP® Team
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MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND



PERSPECTIVE E2: TRAILSHED ANALYSIS



Legend

- M-NCPPC Indoor Recreation Location
- M-NCPPC Recreation Location
- Trailshed**
- Cheltenham Conservation Area
- Collington Branch Stream Valley Park
- Cosca Regional Park
- Fairland Regional Park Trails
- Folly Branch Stream Valley Park Trail
- Governor's Bridge Natural Area
- Henson Creek Hiker/Biker Trail
- Jug Bay Natural Area (Patuxent River III)
- Little Paint Branch Trail
- Nature Trail
- Northeast Branch Trail
- Patuxent River Park II/Fran Uhler Natural Area
- Patuxent River Scenic Trails at Queen Anne
- Southwest Branch Stream Valley Park
- W.B.&A. Railroad Trail
- Western Branch Stream Valley Park

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APPENDIX D - GLOSSARY

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Glossary of Terms

Blueway – A river, stream or canal that is used for aquatic recreation such as boating.

Core Services – The mission-led and vision-inspired primary service or businesses areas in which the Department focuses its efforts and energy. Core Services are meant to align with community values to achieve desired outcomes. Examples might include:

- Recreation centers
- Youth recreation programs
- Adult recreation programs
- Athletics and fields
- Neighborhood parks
- Community and regional parks
- Aquatic centers and services
- Open space
- Trails

Diversity – The quality of being different or varied. Diversity characteristics often include race, ethnicity, gender, disability and sexual orientation.

Dog Park – An area designed specifically as an off-leash area for dogs and their guardians (also known as a “canine off-leash area”).

Goal – An ideal that we strive to attain or maintain.

Level of Service (LOS) – The amount and kind of parks and recreation service that is appropriate to the needs and desires of residents and is sustainable to operate. The Composite-Values Level of Service Methodology used in the Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond project, analyzes quantity, quality, and location information of physical components that make up the parks and recreation system (e.g. playgrounds, trails, recreation centers, etc.). By analyzing the composite values of each component, it is possible to measure the service provided by the parks and recreation system from a variety of perspectives for any given location.

Loop Walk – Any sidewalk or path that is configured to make a complete loop around a park or feature and that is sizeable enough to use as an exercise route (min. ¼ mile).

Mandatory Dedication – A Subdivision Regulation requiring developers to transfer ownership of land to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for park, recreation, and open space purposes. The land is intended to satisfy recreation and open space need created by new development. In some cases, a developer may build a park, add a facility to an existing park or make a monetary payment (fee-in-lieu) instead of land dedication.

Maryland-Washington Metropolitan District – Geographic taxing district designated by the State of Maryland where M-NCPPC is authorized to acquire land and make improvements, including the construction of buildings and facilities, for recreation purposes.

Mission – A concise statement of organizational purpose. The mission of M-NCPPC is contained in Article 28, Annotated Code of Maryland.

Natural Area – An area that contains plants and landforms that are remnants of or undisturbed native areas of the local ecology. Natural areas are usually dedicated to the protection and maintenance of native habitat and biological diversity and specifically managed to preserve plants and animals.

Objective – A measurable or observable achievement.

Partnership – A cooperative venture between two or more parties with a common goal and compatible missions that combine complementary resources to establish a mutual direction or complete a mutually beneficial objective.

Playground, Destination – A playground that serves as a destination for families from a large geographic area. Typically, a destination playground has restrooms and parking on-site, and may include special features such as a climbing wall, spray feature, or adventure play.

Service Areas

Countywide Service Area – A facility or program that is unique and intended to serve the whole county (e.g. historic sites and museums and specialty facilities such as the Showcase Arena and Sports and Learning Center).

Regional Service Area – A given facility or program that serves multiple communities within the county (e.g. cultural arts centers, golf courses, etc.).

Community Service Area – A facility or program that serves an area within a 15-minute drive or three miles.

Neighborhood Service Area – A facility or program that serves an area within a 15-minute walk or less than one mile.

Service Assessment – An intensive review of organizational services including activities, facilities, and parklands that leads to the development of an agency **Service Portfolio**. The assessment indicates whether the service is “**core to the organization’s values and vision**”, and provides recommended strategies that can include, but are not limited to, enhancement of service, reduction of service, collaboration, and advancement or affirmation of market position. The process includes an analysis of the relevance of each service to organizational values and vision and market position, including an examination of economic viability and other competitive service availability.

SMARTLink – The on-line program registration and facility reservation system for the Prince George’s County Department of Parks and Recreation. SMARTLink has a multi-year database of information on program and service utilization.

Strategy – A set of actions designed to attain an objective.

Sub-Area – Seven US Census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA’s) in Prince George’s County, Maryland used for demographic and level of service analysis for the Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond project.

The seven sub-areas are identified as: Northwest A, Northwest B, Northeast, Central West, Central East, Southwest, and South.

Skate Park – An area designed specifically for skateboarding, in-line skating, or free-style biking. A skate park may be specific to one user group or allow for several user types and can typically accommodate multiple users of varying abilities.

Sustainability – Meeting the needs of the present without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Trails, Multi-use – Trails, paved or unpaved, that are separated from the road and provide recreational or transportation opportunities (e.g. biking, walking/jogging, rollerblading, etc.).

Values – A set of timeless, guiding principles that influence:

- What we strongly believe about who we are and what we do
- A set of core beliefs
- Who the organization is
- What’s important to the organization

Organizational values are a composite of the societal/community, member/staff, and leader/policy maker values. They are what we aspire to impart as park and recreation professionals within our community. Examples include environmental stewardship, financial sustainability, and active lifestyles.



Vision – A 10-30 year over-arching goal describing what the organization seeks to become or how they plan to impact the community in the future.

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APPENDIX E – DATA SOURCES FOR RECOMMENDATIONS MATRIX

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Data Sources for Recommendations- Prince George's County, Department of Parks and Recreation

2008-09	Data Source	Qualitative Data			Quantitative Data		Best Practice
		Public Meetings	Focus Groups	Staff Interviews	Statistically Valid Survey	Inventory & LOS (GRASP®) Analysis	
	Rating Scale 0 - not applicable 1 - minor concern 2 - opportunity to improve 3 - key issue/priority						
Theme 1	Appropriate Level of Service						
	Fair and sustainable LOS standards for indoor centers	2	3	3		3	3
	Strengthen parkland dedication requirements			3			3
	Increase LOS in south as population grows		3			3	2
	Increase LOS in southwest (based on current population density)					3	3
	Outdoor - facilities to expand/improve						
	Multi-use athletic fields (soccer, football) - including lighting, scheduling, synthetic turf, etc.	2	3	2	3		3
	Playgrounds		2		3		2
	Picnic shelters				3		2
	Natural areas	2	2		3		2
	Trails and connections	3	3		3	2	3
	Outdoor pools			2	2	2	2
	Other facilities (public gardens, basketball, etc.)				2		2
	Improve existing parks, trails, and open space (maintain existing system)	2	2		3		2
	Indoor - facilities to expand/improve						
	Fitness spaces	2	2	2	3		2
	Renovate aging facilities	2			2		2
	Multi-purpose spaces for teens, seniors	2	2		3		2
	Indoor tracks				3		2
	Indoor pools	2		3	3	2	2
Theme 2	Natural Areas, Trees & Water						
	Acquire and preserve natural areas	2	2		2		2
	Expand environmental education		2		2		2
	Improve management of natural areas, trees, and watersheds	2	2		2		2
Theme 3	Recreation and Culture						
	Expand general education and youth development programs	3	3		3		2
	Offer diverse programs distributed appropriately	2	3		3		2
	Expand afterschool programs youth	3	3	2	3		3
	Redefine and expand older adult activities	2	2		2		2
	Maintain and expand fitness/wellness programs			2	3		3
	Promote arts and culture programs/facilities	2	2				2
	Provide convenient hours of operation, length of sessions, drop-in opportunities	2	2		2		2
	Identify core services and align services (e.g. conduct Service Assessment)			3			3
	Improve collaborations with schools, Boys & Girls Club	2	2	2			3
Theme 4	Safe and Accessible Places & Programs						
	Increase access and transportation opportunities (focus on kids and seniors)	3	3		2		2
	Increase trail connectivity to facilities	3	3		3	3	3
	Address safety in parks (real or perceived)	3	3	2	3		2
	Provide youth programs with focus on teens	3	3	2	3		3
	Increase police visibility and problem-oriented policing	2		2			2
	Enhance lighting in parks, as needed	2	2				2
Theme 5	Community Engagement & Collaborations						
	Provide opportunities for involvement	2	2	3			2
	Re-evaluate recreation councils	2		3			3
	Promote volunteer opportunities		2		2		2
	Increase public awareness of services	2	2		2		2
	Increase web-based communication		2		3		2
	Expand school partnerships	3	3				3
	Outreach to underserved groups		2	3			3
Theme 6	Sustainable Organization						
	Enhance financial management and long-term operational sustainability			3			3
	Maintain updated technologies			2			2
	Regularly evaluate program and facility quality			2			2
	Enhance staff training (e.g. community outreach, financial management, etc.)	2	2	2	2		2
	Maintain current parks and recreation facilities	2	2		2		3
	Institute preventative maintenance practices (indoor centers, fitness equipment, etc.)			2	2		2
	Plan for future maintenance shops and organizational needs			3		2	3

Note: The Key Issues Matrix from Volume 1: Needs and Resource Assessment was updated based on additional analysis and community visioning and re-organized by the six themes of the 2040 Vision and Framework.