Inspecting Forest Conservation Easements: The Department of Recreation & Parks (DRP), as per an agreement with the Department of Planning & Zoning (DPZ), is responsible for the inspection of any forest conservation easement (FCE) established under a Forest Conservation Agreement between a land developer and the county during land development. A land developer is required to submit to the county a Deed of Forest Conservation Easement, a land records plat depicting the easement, and a Forest Conservation Plan for all FCE areas created during land development. The County will perform a minimum of two inspections of FCE areas to verify that the land developer has met its obligations. Past inspections, at a minimum of two years apart, land developer is required to complete a two year survival and maintenance period for all FCE areas created.

Invasive Plant Policy: The Department plays an active role in controlling invasive plants to improve overall habitat management. Between the Conservation Stewardship and the Weed Warriors department programs, a total of 809 volunteer hours were contributed to the removal of non-native, invasive plant species and replanting of native trees and shrubs within the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) in FY2016. A 2015 grant from CBT awarded to the MPE Foundation in the amount of $13,898 helped to fund the MPEA Weed Warriors program,

and also funded bringing goats to the MPEA as a new management tool for invasive species control. In FY2016, maintenance continued on over 10 acres of habitat restoration areas created through the grant, including monitoring, invasive species control, and survival counts on planted trees and shrubs.

Neonicotinoid Use on Parkland: Neonicotinoid is a class of insecticides related to nicotine with a common mode that affects the central nervous system of insects. The use of neonicotinoids are prohibited on all county parkland including sports fields, garden plots, golf course and open space, with few exceptions.

Nuisance Wildlife Management: Over population of certain species can create nuisance for humans and environment. The white-tailed deer population is one such example where their presence has causes environmental damage, human illness, and traffic accidents. Howard County's comprehensive deer management plan addresses actions that can help reduce deer-human conflicts but cannot eliminate them.

Open Space Acceptance Policy: The county receives fee simple ownership of lands that have been approved through the county's subdivision review process. This policy provides direction for inspecting and accepting these lands into the Department's system.

Open Space Land Acquisition: There are three different methods under this policy to acquire land. The methods include the dedication process under the Department of Planning and Zoning's subdivision regulations, fee simple purchase, and the State of Maryland's Program Open Space. Open Space is parkland set aside to remain in a natural state and conserved for environmental protection and for limited, passive recreational use. Together, the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Space Plan and the Plan Howard 2030 recognize the environmental importance of undisturbed natural vegetation and DRP places a high priority on protecting such areas. These natural vegetation areas provide wildlife corridors, aquifer recharge, habitat and passive recreational/educational opportunities and are protected by law under Title 19, Subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code.

Parkland Development: The Department of Recreation & Parks (DRP) is charged with the development of the Howard County Parks system. The main function of the body is to assist in the development of parkland, related amenities and resource protection. The Plan helps the Department carry out its mission and vision by guiding the Department's policy decisions and day-to-day operations. One major goal of this Plan is to comply with the State of Maryland mandate that all local jurisdictions update their land

preservation, parks and recreation plans to continue qualifying for Maryland Program Open Space funds. A second major goal is to guide the development of Recreation and Parks services, and help direct the county's efforts to conserve and protect its natural environment and farmland.

Parkland Rules and Regulation Enforcement: The DRP is responsible for the management of Parkland within Howard County as set forth in Title 19, subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code. Adaptive management Approach to conservation practices is used for management purposes. In this approach, implemented procedures are regularly monitored and changes in procedure are adapted according to the result. From 1992 onwards, stronger focus was towards natural resources protection. Thus, "post-development" environmental protection regulation was put in place. Emphasis is on compliance through education rather than enforcement. Whenever needed, enforcement measures are taken when educational efforts prove ineffective.

Private Forest Conservation Easements: This program is designed to create forest conservation easements on private properties with environmentally sensitive features. The Department is responsible for site selection, planning and preparation, plantings, and management for 2- years. To be qualified for this program, properties must be 10 acres or larger and easements at least 1 acre. Under this program, to date, 58 acres have been

planted, 17,657 trees have been planted and 23,657 feet of stream have been buffered.

Program Open Space Grants/Private Forest Conservation Establishment Program: The Department through the Private Forest Conservation (PFCE) program is charged with the design and implementation of forest conservation easements on private property. Funding is determined on an annual basis by the Department of Planning and Zoning. Site selection completed through set criteria by the Department and PFCE. Reforestation is given priority over retention.

Reforestation Tree Planting on Public and Private Lands: This policy establishes guidelines for the afforestation or reforestation program within Howard County. The Department is the lead agency within the county for afforestation and reforestation financed by the forest conservation fund. The Natural and Historic Resources Division of the Department plans, designs, plants, maintains, and monitors the planting of the trees. The county benefits from this program through increased forested buffers that act as filters, stabilizing stream channels, shade over stream, increased biological diversity, etc.

Resident Canada Goose Management: This program manages and develops mitigation solutions to address the county's large canada goose population, which has resulted in the degradation of lake and pond waters, and shorelines at several park properties. The

Department focuses on reducing damage at park properties, such as Centennial Park, as well as reducing the number of illegally released domestic waterfowls.

Stream Re-Leaf Program: This program is designed to enhance riparian stream buffers by providing native trees and shrubs to property owners. The county provides trees and shrubs for the property owner to plant within 75 feet of a stream. Large orders of at least 75 plants may qualify for planting services as well. From 2003 to 2015, 14,481 trees have been planted.

Trail Management Policy: This policy provides direction for the design, construction and maintenance of county trails. Best management practices for the Department, as well as for other county departments, are outlined in a trail planning and management guideline document that ensures sustainable standards.

Utility Crossing on County Parkland: This policy set forth the requirements for allowing developers and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to cross parkland for the purpose of public improvements such as sewer, water, and other utility easements. A restitution fee is mandatory to be paid to the county for tree and habitat loss.

Volunteer Tree Planting
The Department organizes several volunteer tree planting events each year, including this one at Cedar Lane Park.

Goals & Objectives

What are the county's goals and objectives for natural and historic resources?

The LPPRP is intended to guide decisions about investments in park improvements and development and recreation programs over the next 10 years, and beyond.

This portion of the LPPRP is based upon the following natural and historic resources goals that reflect the continued success of natural and historic resource preservation programs and focus on preserving the comprehensive green infrastructure network, building in sustainable practices across Department functions, and encouraging environmental stewardship. The LPPRP County goals are as follows:

1. Protect and restore natural resources through habitat improvements and restoration efforts.

2. Continue to improve water quality through countywide stream restoration and reforestation efforts, benefiting local waters and the greater Chesapeake Bay Estuary.

3. Connect protected natural areas in a comprehensive green infrastructure network.

4. Encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries.

5. Share and promote the Department's numerous accomplishments.

6. Build sustainability goals into operational and departmental culture and functions.

7. Reflect Howard County's natural heritage while making open space a priority equal to its impact on the quality of life for future generations.

8. Integrate historic and cultural resources into park programming and facilities in a way that encourages and promotes the stewardship of these resources.

Systemwide Goals

LPPRP state and county goals are intended to guide investments in historic and natural resources across the entire county.

PLACEMAKING

Reflect Howard County's natural heritage while making open space a priority equal to its impact on the quality of life for future generations.

RECREATION

Integrate historic and cultural resources into park programming and facilities in a way that encourages and promotes the stewardship of these resources.

EDUCATION

Encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries.

ECOLOGY

Protect and restore biodiversity through habitat improvements and restoration efforts.

VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Share and promote the departments numerous accomplishments.

Build sustainability goals into operational and departmental culture and functions.

CONNECTIVITY

Connect protected natural areas and park spaces in a comprehensive network.

The County goals are closely aligned with the State of Maryland's overall goals for natural and historic resources outlined below:

1. Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

   a. Public land acquisition and stewardship;

   b. Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;

   c. Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;

   d. Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;

   e. Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and

   f. Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected.

2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).

3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.).

4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.

5. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.

6. Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:

   a. Expand and connect forests, farmland and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure;

   b. Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities and populations;

   c. Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrological and water quality functions;

   d. Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and

   e. Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

Watershed Conservation
The rain garden at the Gary J.
Arthur Community Center, located
within the Middle Patuxent River
Watershed, helps to channel roof
water runoff away from the street
and into the ground.

County Recommendations

In order to enhance the health and resilience of human and natural systems and cultural heritage within the county, the LPPRP puts forth several recommendations for natural resource and historic conservation. These recommended improvements are based on the LPPRP analysis and community input and are represented through the following seven categories, all of which correspond to specific departmental goals:

» Recreation
» Education
» Ecology
» Connectivity
» Placemaking
» Visibility and communication
» Cultural heritage

At the countywide level, the LPPRP recommends the following:

Recreation: provide connected open spaces and facilities and enhance scenic value and outdoor recreational opportunities for people.

Education: encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries through collaborative environmental education partnerships.

Ecology: protect against runoff, erosion, flooding, and filter pollutants away from the watershed and protect and restore biodiversity through habitat improvements, such as invasive species management, corridor connections and restoration efforts.

Connectivity: imagine Howard County as a connected ecological system with a mix of wildlife and shaded recreation trail corridors.

Placemaking: reflect Howard County's natural heritage while making open space a priority equal to its impact on the quality of life for decades to come.

Visibility and Communication: foster communication and visibility of physical spaces, programming, and County conservation efforts to the public and continue to build meaningful partnerships within and outside of the Department to enhance visitor experience and community outreach.

Cultural Heritage: encourage the stewardship of the county's cultural heritage by strengthening Heritage Programming through enhanced programming, preservation, and interpretation of historic resources through the following:

» Expand programming outside of Ellicott City to encompass the whole county

» Find ways to integrate historic resources and programs into other successful programs within the Department

» Develop a plan for curating the thousands of archaeological artifacts currently held by Heritage Programs

» Ensure that any curation plan is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation and Archaeology and the Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations in Maryland

» Provide a central home base for Heritage Programs office that gives visibility to the group and its work

» Develop a formal strategy and plan for programming historic sites within the Recreation and Parks system, with the objective to provide a consistent process for making decisions regarding the most viable and appropriate uses and programs for individual historic sites, and with a strategy of incorporating an assessment of historic significance and integrity of individual assets based on the standards and guidelines set by the National Park Service and the Maryland Historic Trust — categories of uses can include adaptive use for events (such as Belmont Manor and Historic Park), active interpretation (such as the Firehouse Museum), adaptive use for stable tenancy (such as retail, restaurant, or office space), and passive interpretation (such as the Pratt Truss Bridge)

» Incorporate heritage tourism and preservation trends in programming and focus on appealing to a wide range of audiences, including younger generations who may currently have less attention on the heritage of Howard County.

» Identify revenue-generating programs that can fund the expansion of HP and the office's stewardship goals including the maintenance/mothballing of unused historic sites awaiting programs.

» Build awareness of Howard County's rich history with its residents while creating destinations for non-residents.

SERVING AS
LAND STEWARDS

Overview | *How does the county preserve agricultural land?*

Maryland is one of the most densely populated states in the country. However, the state also has one of the strongest agricultural land preservation programs in the country. With the support of both state and local initiatives, Maryland has protected just over 60 percent of its goal to protect 1.03 million acres of privately-owned farmland.

Howard County has grown significantly over the past several decades. New development has centered both on infill growth in urbanized areas like Columbia and Elkridge and on suburban or rural development along Interstate 95, Route 32, and other major vehicular arteries. In 1973, Howard County was home to just under 85,000 people and 116 square miles of agricultural land. Today, the community has grown to just over 300,000 people and agricultural land has decreased by half to 58.5 square miles (37,475 acres) in 2012 (2012 USDA Census, https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/).

By 2040, the county's population is anticipated to grow to 366,000 people (MD DPZ). Development pressures continue to mount on the decreasing, yet significant agricultural land uses in the county. Although it is one of the smallest and densest in the state, Howard County has actively supported and stewarded strong agricultural land preservation within the county limits to protect the vital farming economy. The Department of Planning and Zoning actively manages all agricultural easements and was the primary contributor to this chapter of the plan.

Currently, preservation is focused in the Rural West, where the majority of active farmland is located, and where three neighboring counties connect into a broader network of agriculture, forests, and open spaces. This physical network is quickly shrinking or becoming disjointed, as pressures for suburban development increase as a result of the proximity to two major cities and the desirability of the county's high quality of life, strong civic infrastructure, and cost of living.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE PREVIOUS PLAN

The 2012 LPRP identified three techniques to continue protecting agricultural land with a goal of preserving 21,000 to 22,000 acres primarily in the Rural West. The County exceeded expectations for fee-simple purchases, participation in agricultural preservation programs and conservation easemetns. Many aspects of the 2005/2012 plan techniques listed below were carried over into the 2017 LPPRP for their incentive nature and success rate.

» Agricultural Preservation Easements
» County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations
» EDA Agricultural Marketing Program

A comparison of the achievements in the 2012 plan and the 2017 plan are detailed in the section entitled, *Inventory of Preserved Agricultural Land & Existing Programs*.

Land preservation
Together with the state, the county works to balance development pressures with agricultural land and forest preservation.

Goals & Objectives

What are the county's goals and objectives for agricultural land preservation?

This LPPRP identifies opportunities through both state and county goals to enhance connections between agricultural and historic heritage, natural systems, and the Howard County community. The preservation of agricultural lands is of vital importance to Howard County's historic significance, legacy, and economic value. Agricultural preservation has been a key priority for the county and has the potential to be further integrated into the parks system through educational and recreational programming, institutional and state partnerships, local food markets, and sustainable management.

COUNTY GOALS

The following county goals are meant to supplement the already robust and exhaustive state goals.

The 2017 county goals are as follows:

1. Integrate the preservation of the county's agricultural land and activities with natural resource protection

2. Connect the county's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs

3. Incorporate farming across all scales — from large-land preservation to support more efficient use of small farms to community gardens

The 2017 goals expand on the previous 2012 county goal, which was to integrate the preservation of the county's agricultural land and agricultural activities with resource protection and recreational goals. Programs like the deer management program and installation of pollinator meadows, both spearheaded by the Natural and Historic Resources Division, are two examples of programs that directly support resource protection and agricultural activities. Farm-to-table events and the installation of community gardens on county property also provide educational opportunities in support of both the 2012 and 2017 department goals.

Systemwide Goals

This aerial highlights several key goals for agricultural land preservation in Howard County.

Integrating agricultural heritage into the park system

Educating about agricultural heritage

RECREATION

Connect agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, by incorporating community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.
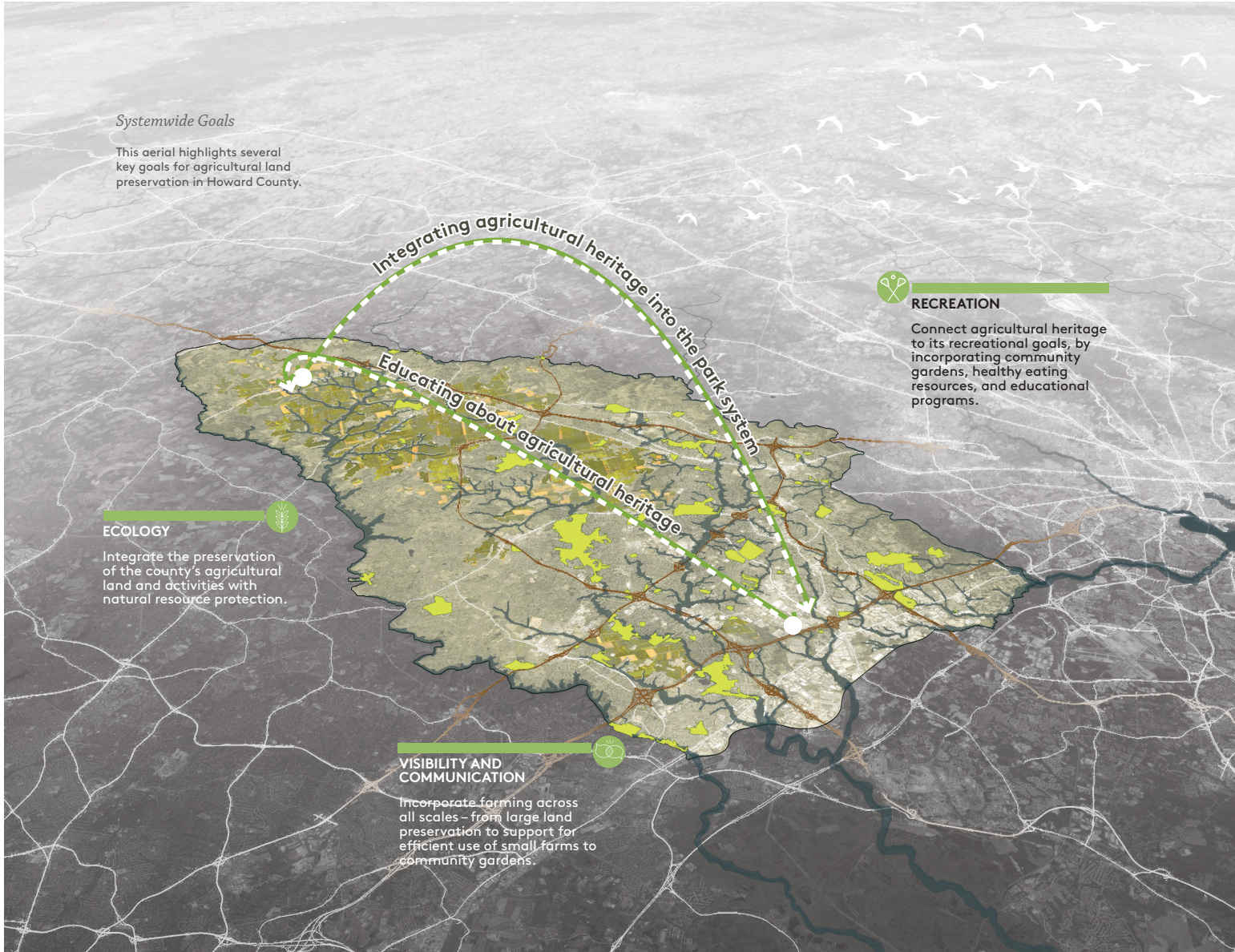
ECOLOGY

Integrate the preservation of the county's agricultural land and activities with natural resource protection.

VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Incorporate farming across all scales – from large land preservation to support for efficient use of small farms to community gardens.

STATE GOALS

The following state goals complement the county goals and provide a framework for protecting farmland within the context of substantial population growth and development pressures.

1. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries

2. To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries

3. Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating state agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land-use management programs

4. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production

5. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland

6. Work with local governments to achieve the following:

   » Use local land-use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas

   » Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement state goals

   » In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and state and local government officials

   » Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs

   » Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and public at large

Through state and county preservation programs, partnerships, and funding mechanisms discussed later in this chapter, Howard County continues to follow state goals and invest in agricultural land preservation. The county goals are complementary of the statewide goals and expand partnership opportunities identified in state goal six to include non-profits, institutions like the University of Maryland extension office, and the county community. The expansion of state goal six is reflected in the county goals above. The county goals also focus on expanding community understanding of the value of active agricultural land and the protection of agricultural interests through perpetual land easements.
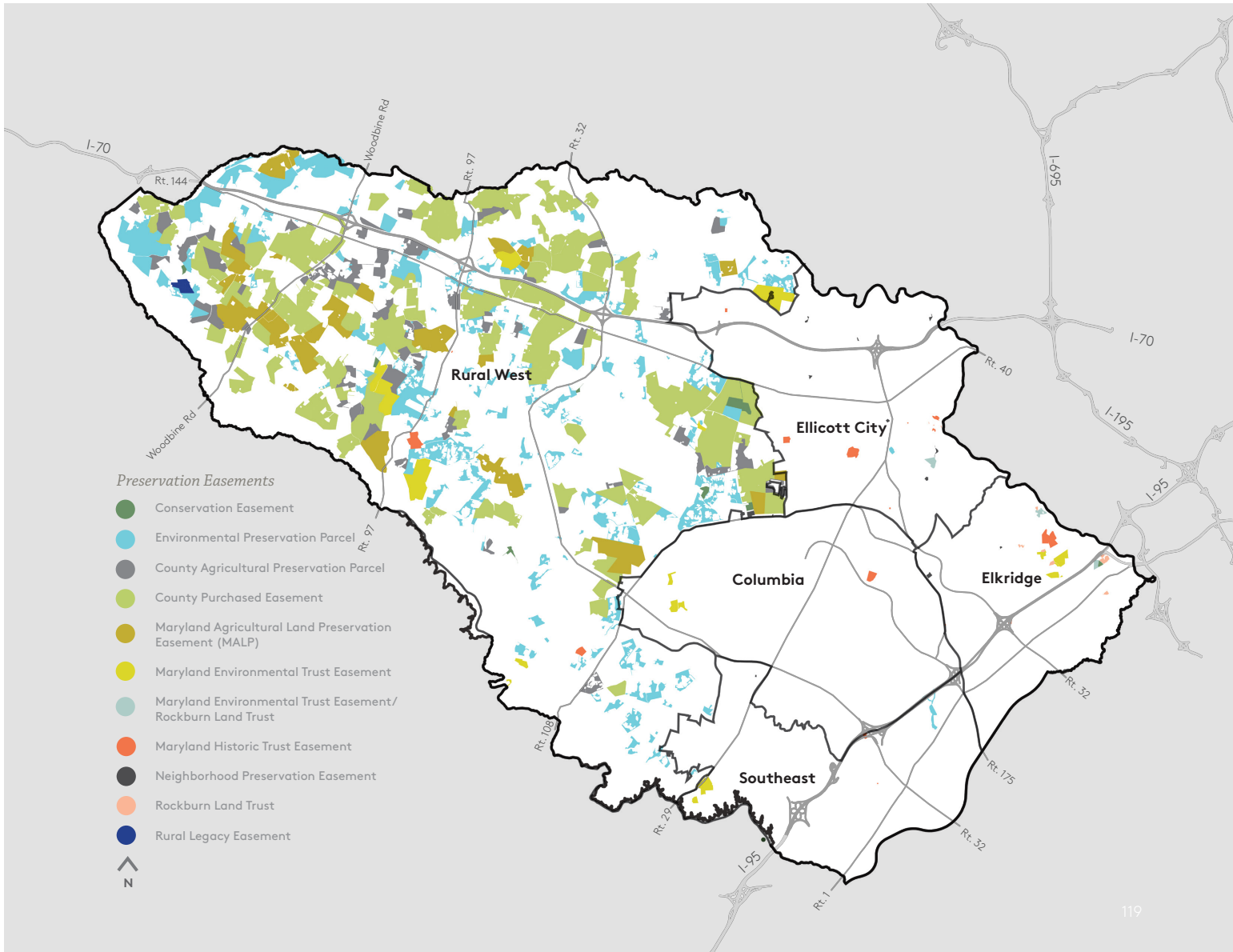
Film "Feastival"
Image from the Film Feastival at Clarks Elioak Farm. State and county goals aspire to increase partnerships within the county.

Inventory of Preserved Agricultural Land & Existing Programs

How does the county preserve agricultural land?

The county utilizes a variety of programs to purchase and preserve working agricultural land. The following table lists the 2012 LPPRP properties and accompanying program for acquisition or preservation and compares that against 2017 LPPRP preserved acres. Programs are explained in detail below.

Program	Number of Properties (2012)	Acres Protected (2012)	Number of Properties (2016)	Acres Protected (2016)	Percent Growth in Acreage (2012 to 2016)	Growth in Acreage (2012 to 2016)
PURCHASED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Purchased Easements	147	14,621	158	15,277	9.1%	656
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements	35	3,949	36	4,019	17.3%	70
Rural Legacy Easement	4	81	4	81	0.0%	-
Subtotal Purchased Agricultural Easements	**186**	**18,651**	**198**	**19,377**	**3.9%**	**726**
DEDICATED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels	74	2,972	74	2,972	0.0%	0
Subtotal Dedicated Agricultural Easements	74	2,972	74	2,972	0.0%	0
TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS	**260**	**21,623**	**272**	**22,349**	**3.4%**	**726**

Preservation Easements

- ● Conservation Easement
- ● Environmental Preservation Parcel
- ● County Agricultural Preservation Parcel
- ● County Purchased Easement
- ● Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easement (MALP)
- ● Maryland Environmental Trust Easement
- ● Maryland Environmental Trust Easement/ Rockburn Land Trust
- ● Maryland Historic Trust Easement
- ● Neighborhood Preservation Easement
- ● Rockburn Land Trust
- ● Rural Legacy Easement

N

Rural West

Ellicott City

Columbia

Elkridge

Southeast

I-70
Rt. 144
Woodbine Rd
Rt. 97
Rt. 32
I-695
I-70
Rt. 40
I-195
I-95
Rt. 32
Rt. 175
Rt. 108
Rt. 29
I-95
Rt. 1
Rt. 32
Woodbine Rd
Rt. 97

PRIVATE SECTOR PRESERVATION TOOLS

Transferable Development Rights (TDR)

Transferable Development Rights (TDR) is a voluntary, incentive-based program landowners can use to sell their development rights to land to a developer or other entity to increase the density of development in another location. This program supports development growth in appropriate areas and in effect allocating land for open space preservation.

STATE PRESERVATION TOOLS

There are three types of farmland preservation programs in Maryland — easement donation, easement sale, and transferable development rights sale. Easements as they relate to land preservation in Maryland include not only the right of access to a property, but also stipulations to the development or use of the property, including allowable land uses, maximum number of subdivisions for residential uses, minimum stream buffers, and wetland protections.

Easement Donation

In 1967, the state created the Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) "to conserve, improve, stimulate, and perpetuate the aesthetic, natural, health and welfare, scenic, and cultural qualities of the environment, including, but not limited to land, water, air, wildlife, scenic qualities, [and] open spaces." The MET currently holds over 1,080 conservation easements preserving over 130,000 acres statewide.

Easement Sale

Both the state and Howard County have easement purchase programs. The Maryland General Assembly established the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) in 1977. The MALPF is one of the first state easement purchase land preservation programs in the country. At the end of fiscal year 2016, the MALPF had preserved 299,234 acres of agricultural land, or 2,207 properties (http://mda.maryland.gov). The MALPF has acquired about 4,000 easement acres in Howard County.

The Maryland Rural Legacy Program is another state easement program used to preserve farmland; however, the program uniquely prioritizes environmental protection as well. Established in 1997, the program purchases large, continuous tracts of farm and forests that "enhance natural resource, agricultural, forestry, and environmental protection through cooperative efforts among state and local governments and land trusts." The total acreage withn the state that is designated a Rural Legacy Area totals 920,694 acres. According to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, 86,103 acres have been preserved under the program (http://dnr2.maryland.gov). Howard County has one Rural Legacy Area, the Upper Patuxent Watershed, which covers 11,200 acres. Only 81 acres of the Upper Patuxent Watershed are protected by Rural Legacy Program easements, though there is a lot of other protected land within the Rural Legacy Area boundary.

The Green Print Program was the only state program not initiated by the property owner. Introduced in 2001, the Green Print Program provided a funding source for protecting the most ecologically significant land in the state through an assessment program known as the Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) and subsequent strategic acquisitions and easements. The agricultural Green Print program ended in 2006.

COUNTY PRESERVATION TOOLS

Howard County has been a leader in protecting farmland since the establishment of the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) in 1978. The program takes advantage of three important methods for agricultural land preservation:

» The purchase of agricultural preservation easements by the county (ALPP Purchased)

» The dedication of agricultural preservation parcels as provided for in the county's zoning regulations (ALPP Dedicated)

» The purchase of agricultural preservation easements by the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF Purchased)

As of August 2016, 22,349 acres of farmland have been preserved in Howard County. Since the most recent acquisition cycle in 2013, the county has permanently protected 11 properties and over 656 acres by purchasing development rights. The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation also purchased one 71-acre easement.

County-purchased Easements (ALPP Purchased)

The ALPP Purchased program is voluntary for farmers or landowners — if their land meets certain acreage and soil criteria they can sell an easement in perpetuity to the county. The program allows landowners to hold a fee simple title to the land and continue to farm the land. The land can be sold, but the easement remains with the land and binds each new owner to the development restrictions.

County-dedicated Easements (ALPP Dedicated)

The ALPP Dedicated program accepts agricultural easements dedicated to the county through the subdivision process, as density-sending parcels or as cluster-residue parcels.
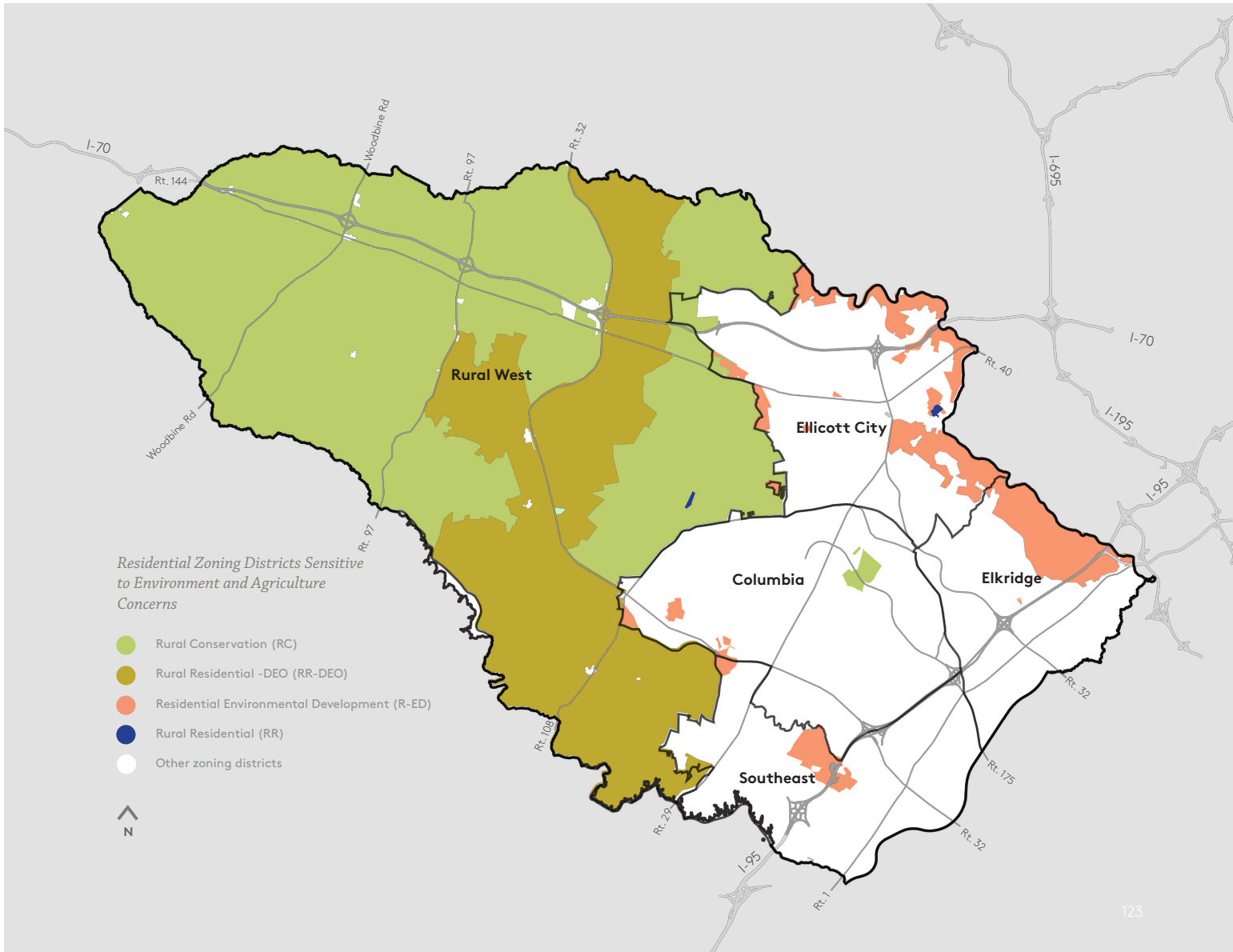
Conservation Easements

The county also facilitates a program to promote easements of less than 50 acres. These types of easements generally involve a process between the landowner and a local land trust, like the Howard County Conservancy.

ZONING AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS TO PROTECT FARMLAND

According to PlanHoward 2030, three residential zoning categories presently address environmental and green space concerns. The Residential-Environmental Development (R-ED) zoning district in the east allows smaller lots, clustered together to keep development impacts away from sensitive steep slopes and stream valleys. The Rural Conservation (RC) and Rural Residential (RR) zoning districts in the Rural West allow low-density, clustered residential development to protect natural resources and agricultural lands. This type of clustering may also be appropriate to enhance environmental protection in other residential zoning districts.

Zoning District	Total Acreage	Percentage of total county area
Residential-Environmental Development (R-ED)	7,432 ac	4.5%
Rural Conservation (RC)	62,410 ac	38.5%
Rural Residential (RR) and Rural Residential -DEO (RR-DEO)	31,835 ac	19.7%
TOTAL	**101,677 ac**	**62.7%**

Residential Zoning Districts Sensitive
to Environment and Agriculture
Concerns

- Rural Conservation (RC)
- Rural Residential -DEO (RR-DEO)
- Residential Environmental Development (R-ED)
- Rural Residential (RR)
- Other zoning districts

Rural West

Ellicott City

Columbia

Elkridge

Southeast

N

Additional Guidelines

How will the county manage land preservation in the future?

STRATEGIES

As stated in the 2012 LPRP, the county will continue to invest in the three preservation tools mentioned previously to preserve agricultural land. Under the 2012 LPRP, the county did not anticipate budgeting county funds to acquire new agricultural easements. However, since the 2012 LPRP, the county has purchased 11 easements, a growth from 2012 to 2017 of about 4.5 percent or 656 acres. The total purchased and dedicated parcels under the three preservation mechanisms increased from 2012 by 3.4 percent to 272 properties and over 726 acres.

Since 2012, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program has acquired one easement on 70 acres, which represents an unexpected additional preservation of more large farms in the county. Under community conservation and enhancement policies, the historic state sites inventory has expanded to more than 1,000 sites with grant-funding assistance from the Maryland Historical Trust.

In accordance with PlanHoward 2030, sustainable farming practices continue to protect soil and water quality. Per year, more than 12,813 acres of land in the county follow soil conservation and water implementation plans to improve water quality of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Howard County Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program also continues to promote diversified forms of agriculture. Agritourism is growing in the county; more than seven farms cater to interactive programming and pick-your-own business models. Farms across the county are selling local produce locally, promoting and practicing organic and sustainable farming practices, and participating in farmers markets.

In accordance with PlanHoward 2030, the 2017 LPPRP recommends that the focus in agricultural preservation be on stewardship of lands under easement to support any challenges or opportunities the farming community could face over the life of this plan.

PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS AND ZONING

PlanHoward 2030 encourages preservation of farmland throughout the county, but focuses on the Rural West planning region as a priority preservation area where the Rural Conservation (RC) and Rural Residential (RR) zoning districts limit development opportunities and encourage large parcel preservation.

PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION FINDINGS

The 2012 LPRP indicated that easement acquisition would be put on hold due to a lack of funding following two successful application cycles. This changed in 2013 with the enactment of the state "Tiers" legislation and the subsequent reduction of development potential for most properties in the RC zoning district. The ALPP was reopened to a surge of renewed interest in preservation. Since the completion of the 2012 LPRP, the County has acquired easements on 11 properties, totaling 656 acres. In addition, one 71-acre MALPF easement has been acquired. Although continued acquisition wasn't contemplated in the 2012 LPRP, it certainly has been a significant effort and accomplishment in the intervening years.

Increased emphasis on monitoring and stewardship – the initial effort to conduct site visits on all ALPP properties has been successful. A systematized program to periodically visit and assess easement properties is now in place for the future.

Transitioning easement farms through multiple generations is an ongoing effort that will continue to be essential as the original easement grantors pass away or transfer their land. In particular, ALPP staff assists new landowners in understanding the retained rights and use constraints due to the easement encumbrance. In addition, the Ag Marketing Specialist (AMP) within the County's Economic Development Authority works with young and beginning farmers to develop business plans and to consider all options regarding both traditional and innovative practices.

Providing technical assistance and training to help farmers diversify into more profitable ventures – agriculture in the County continues to evolve and the partnership between the ALPP and the AMP is actively working to anticipate, encourage and facilitate these trends through a variety of activities, including the very successful Ag Innovation Grant program.

Keep the farmers farming – this includes projects mentioned above in addition to recent revisions to the County's Right to Farm law.

Provide additional flexibility in the Zoning Regulations to accommodate emerging agricultural industries, such as agritourism and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). During the recent Comprehensive Zoning update, a number of new uses were added to reflect current practices and anticipate future trends.

Continue and expand educational opportunities for residential neighbors about the business of farming, in an effort to reduce conflict – ALPP staff participates in the County Executive's Farm Academy educational program, and has also worked with farmers to get an ag disclosure statement included in real estate transfer documents.

Zoning and Land Use Tools

In addition to Rural Conservation Zoning, the County's preservation goals are further implemented though compliance with SB 236. In order to comply with this legislation, the County adopted growth Tiers that limit development in the Rural Conservation Zoning District.

Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

The County monitors uses in the RC Zoning District on a regular basis as requests for Conditional Uses and Zoning Regulation Amendments (ZRAs) are submitted. DPZ evaluates these requests to ensure compatibility with surrounding preserved lands.

Conclusions of the Most Recent Evaluation

DPZ will be evaluating the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations in 2017.

County Recommendations

How can the county better balance agricultural preservation and recreation needs?

The popularity of the county as an ideal place to live has gradually reduced the amount of active farms in the county and focused those activities to the Rural West planning region. The theme of serving as land stewards focuses recommendations around preserving as much agricultural land in the county as possible in support of state and county goals and balancing recreation needs and preservation through thoughtful education opportunities and outreach. These recommendations are represented through five of the seven overall LPPRP recommendations:

» Recreation

» Education

» Ecology

» Connectivity

» Visibility and communication

At the county level, the plan recommends the following:

Recreation: enhance the relationship between farming and neighborhoods through the promotion, where appropriate, of recreational programming that supports health and local food education, including expanded opportunities for community gardens throughout the county

Education: support learning through programming and partnerships that build community knowledge around the importance of healthy living and wellness

Ecology: think beyond open space and park boundaries, and reinforce secondary roles of agricultural open spaces as significant native plant and animal corridors

Connectivity: imagine Howard County as a connected green infrastructure system that supports people and the greater natural system and protects the integrity and legacy of the county's farming economy

Visibility and Communication: improve the identity of the system through enhanced wayfinding and impactful communication that is clear and visible, and continue to build meaningful partnerships outside of the Department to enhance visitor experience and community outreach

Living Farm Heritage Museum
The Department should continue to promote education around the county's agricultural past and present.

SUMMARY AND
SYNTHESIS

Implementation

How does the county begin setting this plan into action?

The 2017 LPPRP is the result of a 16-month research, engagement and planning effort that aims to provide Howard County residents and visitors greater access to programs and amenities, expand and preserve protected agricultural land, and enhance the long-term benefits of natural resources and open space – ensuring that the system will prosper for future generations.

The Plan is timely; its implementation is on the heels of significant enabling legislation and unprecedented growth in parks, facilities and programs since the previous 2012 LPPRP. The Governor recently signed into law legislation that will support the replenishment of Program Open Space (POS) funding for local systems, funding that is used to acquire vital open spaces, build new amenities to increase access to the public, and improve an already vibrant system.

The Plan requires committed community engagement and the investment of citizens, state and local governments, and private partners to successfully implement the ambitious goals and strategies set out by the vision. A critical first step in implementation will be to leverage existing partnerships and cultivate new collaborative relationships with groups invested in the future of the system, so as to ensure that funding aligns with community needs and the plan's guiding principles.

Department Priorities

The following priorities for the county recreation and park system have been identified by the Department in response to the four components of the Needs Assessment.

Parks and Trails

» Develop new open space requirements for private development to facilitate connected open space and trail networks

» Promote western land acquisition if it enhances connectivity across county-owned parcels

» Improve bike access and trail connectivity countywide

» Create a Park System Transportation Plan that identifies future trail and pathway alignments and promote the creation of a requirement for developers to connect identified trails and pathways as identified in the Park System Transportation Plan.

» Expand trail maintenance support

» Address the lack of parks in the growing areas of the county through school partnerships and acquisition and align with the Planned Service Area within the *Howard 2030 General Plan*

South Branch Skate Park
Ribbon cutting for the new skate park.

» Acquire land adjacent to parks and open spaces where appropriate to expand the function of a park

» Prioritize land acquisition along the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers, greenway corridors, and within the Planned Service Area

Amenities

» Prioritize land acquisitions, amenities and facilities in areas with dense or growing populations, especially along I-95, Route 1 and Route 32 corridors

» Expand and better integrate community gardens into the neighborhoods

» Determine actual demand for indoor pickleball space based on the number of players

» Develop walking tracks and ADA accessible walking paths within parks to support diverse user needs and age groups

Facilities

» Develop stronger partnership with school system to better share spaces

» Research the cost/benefit of adding indoor pools to every community center

» Enhance overall walkability and explore sites for new community centers in appropriate areas within the county

Programs

» Consider outside partnerships to encourage access for county residents to programming not offered by the Department

» Establish more effective programming in concert with growing communities within the county

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The implementation process will also involve prioritizing improvements based on the Plan's evaluation of the system's existing assets, needs, accessibility, and community demands, as well as future trends within the industry. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), included in the following pages, will serve as the tool to strategize, prioritize and appropriately time these community improvements. The CIP identifies priority projects within a short, medium and long term timeframe and aligns project development with the 2017 state and 2018 county goals.

Ellicott City Region

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Centennial Park (9A)		Dredge sediment from lake	6M										6M
David Force Park (9A)		Future 36-acre park will include pathway connections to other trail systems including existing natural areas that border the park, the inclusion of active uses, including tennis and basketball courts, paved trails, bocce ball courts and other appropriate alternative sports opportunities. Investigate the feasibility of a community center within the park.	6M									6M	
Patapsco Female Institute (9A)	Design development drawings are underway for site enhancements and buiding upgrades in keeping with 2012 LPRP recommendations. Building renovations will include a multipurpose room and restrooms. Landscaping improvements including fencing have been installed.	Recommendations under the 2017 LPPRP include 2012 recommendations to construct restroom, lighting, shelter, roads, parking, and landscaping at this 7-acre historic site and to incorporate interpretive signage, historic preservation, and enhance accessiblity throughout the park.	1M			1M							

Elkridge Region

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Rockburn Branch Park (12A)	Updated athletic fields with artificial turf fields and realigned existing trails to be more sustainable. Installed a mountain bike skills park and reconfigured the disc golf course. Started the design for the historic farmhouse.	Reinforce pathway connections to other trail systems and adjacent communities including natural areas that border the park. Launch a feasibility study for an indoor recreation facility. Incorporate path and trail connections into existing bike trails through the park and connect walking and bike trails with existing phases of park development under the 2012 LPRP. Complete restoration of farmhouse in 2018.	12M								2M	10M	
Troy Park at Elkridge (13)	Phase one is complete and consists of playground and two lighted turf multi-purpose fields and paved pathway system; phase two is under construction and will completed in September, consists of one turf field, three pavilions with restrooms, one stand alone restroom and one stand alone pavilion and parking facilities.	Under the 2017 LPPRP, phase 2B includes the construction of the stadium field phase three includes the construction of a parks maintenance shop and phase four will include the construction of a community center or indoor recreation facility opportunity for indoor track. Long-term recommendations include a new parking facility and two to three multi-purpose fields.	54M	5	1M	10M	2M		5M			36M	

Southeast Region

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
North Laurel Park (13)	Completed the design and construction process for new community center and park which includes a skate park, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, trails, pavilion, baseball fields and a new multipurpose field.	Design and construction of an indoor swimming pool.	16M			16M							

Columbia Region

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Blandair Park (13)	Phase 1 is complete and includes three lighted turf fields, a pavilion, restrooms, parking and a playground.	Phase 2 includes construction of two turf fields, five lighted tennis courts, a pavilion, baseball field with lights, additional restrooms, pathways that connect into Phase 1 and a challenge course playground. Phase 3 will include bocce ball, background games, a maintenance facility, pavilions, restrooms, and a large play for all destination playground.	36.5M			8.5M			28M				
Elkhorn Park (13)		This site is currently owned by the Board of Education. The site was identified as an opportunity for future fields and playgrounds.	1.8M									1.8M	
East Columbia Park (13)	Design for the park is complete.	Begin construction of two youth baseball fields, six quick start tennis courts, playground, pavilion and site amenities including a paved pathway network.	4M			4M							

Rural West Region

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Alpha Ridge Park (9A)	Further study of skating conveyed a decrease in demand for inline hockey rink, the additional facility amenities were not constructed. Tennis courts were converted to archery ranges and an observatory with restrooms was constructed.	Future trail system to be studied.											
Clarksville Park (9A)		Future 20-acre park. Long range opportunity for a park with passive and active uses.	3M									3M	

Rural West Region, continued

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 – 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 – 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 – 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Haviland Mill Park (9A)	80 acres were acquired for future park development. Constructed a parking lot for access to trail network and fishing opportunities.	Install an ADA natural surface trail to a stream overlook (nature play) as part of a partnership with Healing Waters. Recommendations also include passive recreation sites for traditional and alternative forms of recreation.	5M									5M	
Benson Branch Park (9A)	The county completed a full study of the natural trail system and identified improvements to make the trails more accessible and sustainable.	Future park currently used for equestrian uses. Evaluate opportunities for future active recreation, equestrian uses and connection to existing trails. Trail rehabilitation is slated for short term implementation, which include the installation of an equestrian use parking lot. Refer to Appendix XX for an illustrative diagram conveying a potential future and design recommendations for the park.	10M				2M					8M	
Woodbine Park (9A)		Future 20-acre community park near the intersection of route 94 and I-70. A typical community park contains active and passive recreation activities with potential river access.	4M									4M	
Woodstock Park (9A)		Opportunity site for a 45 acre park at the intersection of Woodstock Road and Old Frederick Road (RT. 99). A typical community Park contains both active and passive recreation activities. This site could also have a community center.	8M									8M	

Rural West Region, continued

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
South Fulton Park (13)	Acquired 80 acres for the construction of typical community park.	Develop park site with varied active and passive uses including pavilions and supporting equestrian uses. Park will also include informal field areas for play. The development will include meadow areas with native species, interpretive trails and signage for engaging nature education and recreation. Opportunities for water access to Patuxent River will also be explored.	8M									8M	
Manor Woods Park (9A)		Opportunity site for a 40-acre community park at Route 144 and Triadelphia Road. The park will include informal play fields, a pathway network that connects to adjacent civic institutions. Investigate the feasibility of a community center within the park.	5M									5M	
South Branch Park (9A)	Constructed a playground, pavilion, parking and skate park.	Restore historic buildings on site and study opportunities for future water access.	1M							1M			
West Friendship Park (9A)	Facilitate a partnership with the Living Farm Heritage Museum for a interpretive center on agricultural history of Howard County.	Work with the Living Farm Heritage Museum to identify potential expansion of multi-use trails and passive uses. Opportunity for a natural resources facility. Please refer to Appendix XX for an illustrative diagram conveying a potential future and design recommendations for the park.	15M									15M	
Western Regional Park (9A)	Constructed a playground, five pavilions and two restroom facilities.	Construct restroom/storage facility, picnic pavilions and additional parking. Incorporate trail loops for fitness and interpretive opportunities through meadows and along stream. Refer to Appendix XX for an illustrative diagram conveying potential design recommendations.	5.6M						2.6M			3M	

Systemwide Improvements

Planning Area (State District)	Description of accomplishments from 2012 to 2017	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority: 2017 - 2021			Mid Term Priority: 2022 - 2027			Long Term Priority: 2028 - 2032		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Equestrian Trails and Parking	Assessed existing trails and evaluated shared use opportunities within parks.	Plan for trails on existing county parkland and open space along river corridors. Acquire additional right-of-way as needed using the Acquisition Parkland Fund. Construct a trail to include water access.	1.5M			500,000			500,000			500,000	
Historic Structure Rehabilitation	Restored Belmont Manor. Exterior and interior updates to all facilities around Belmont Manor including the carriage house, caretakers cottage, and gardens. Landscaped around Waverly Mansion and painted the Bollman Truss Bridge.	Rehabilitation of County-owned historic structures including the restoration of Granite Manor, Clover Hill House, and historic buildings identified within each park.	5M				2M			1.5M			1.5M
Howard County Trail and Pathway System	Parcels have been purchased since 2012 in support of a continuous trail network through Program Open Space grant funding.	Improve and enhance the spinal pathway 7 miles along the Little Patuxent River from Gwynn Acres to Alpha Ridge Park. Rehabilitate and expand the existing Spinal Pathway which currently extends from Savage Park through Columbia to Dorsey's Search. Includes rehabilitation of existing pathway system.	2.5M			500,000			1M			1M	
Park Resurfacing Program	Various sites included turf improvement and path and parking lot reconstruction.	Resurface roads, parking lots, courts and playgrounds.	7.5M			500,000	1.5M		500,000	2M		1M	2M
Parkland Acquisition Program	Purchased 173 acres of open space for parkland between 2012 and 2017.	Continue to budget funds annually for new parks and parcels adjacent to existing parks to provide residential buffers and address additional space needs; funds should also be used to acquire critical NRAs and address state and local greenway efforts.	8.5M	200	2.5M			3M			3M		
Park Systemic Improvements	Various sites including Centennial Park, Rockburn Park, and Clubhouse at Timbers	Rehabilitation of existing parks based on facilities assessments.	33.5M			2M	8M		2M	9.5M		2M	10M
Total			**262.4M**	**205 Ac**	**4.5M**	**40M**	**15.5M**	**3M**	**39.6M**	**14M**	**5M**	**121.3M**	**19.5M**

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

FY2016 Program Open Space Annual Program

Park	State District	Planning Area	Description of Land Preservation & Recreation Recommendations	Park Class	Estimated Total Cost ($)	Acres to be acquired	2012 Notes
Patapsco Greenway	ALL	ALL	Acquisition of land to expand the Patapsco Greenway by connecting parcels to thousands of acres owned by MD. Will allow for forest protection	Regional Park	tbd	tbd	Addresses following of 'eight visions': Protect Sensitive Areas, Control Sprawl, Bay Protection, Conserve Resources, Economic Growth
Patuxent Greenway		Rural West	Acquisition of land to protect the Patuxent River and provide for community parks. Will provide protection and establish a community park with facilities on upland portion of property.	Regional Park/ Community Park	tbd	tbd	Addresses following of 'eight visions': Direct growth to appropriate areas, Protect Sensitive Areas, Control Sprawl, Conserve Resources, Economic Growth
Howard County Interior Greenway	ALL	ALL	Acquisition of land along exiting Greenways to protect rivers, environmental areas and provide for community parks. This will provide river and stream protection, and establish a park with facilities on upload portion of property. Project is along the Patuxent River	Regional Park	tbd	tbd	Addresses following of 'eight visions': Direct growth to appropriate areas, Protect Sensitive Areas, Protect the Chesapeake, Control Sprawl, Conserve Resources, Economic Growth
				TOTALS	**$2.7M**	**116.285**	

Summary of Goals

What are the 2017 goals and objectives of the Department of Recreation and Parks and the State of Maryland?

MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE AND DRIVING INNOVATION

County Goals

1. Promote programs and spaces that are accessible to all people.

2. Improve connectivity of people to recreation and park resources through all modes of travel, including walking, biking and transit.

3. Stay at the forefront of trends in recreation and park facilities, recreation programs and park design.

4. Instill flexibility to adapt to shifts in community needs and meet future growth.

5. Provide a range of recreation programs and inclusive park and facility designs to facilitate a diversity and cultural awareness.

6. Build partnerships within County government and across the county to efficiently share resources and provide the best customer service.

7. Use best practices to continue to provide sustainable parks, open spaces and recreation facilities that are safe and secure for users of all ages and backgrounds.

8. Integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness, supporting the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of the diverse Howard County community.

State Goals

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.

2. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live work and visit.

3. Use state investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.

4. To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the

automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.

5. Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.

6. Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

ENHANCING HEALTH AND RESILIENCE OF NATURAL SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

County Goals

1. Protect and restore natural resources through habitat improvements and restoration efforts.

2. Continue to improve water quality through countywide stream restoration and reforestation efforts, benefiting local waters and the greater Chesapeake Bay Estuary.

3. Connect protected natural areas in a comprehensive green infrastructure network.

4. Encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries.

5. Share and promote the Department's numerous accomplishments.

6. Build sustainability goals into operational and Departmental culture and functions.

7. Reflect Howard County's natural heritage while making open space a priority equal to its impact on the quality of life for future generations.

8. Integrate historic and cultural resources into park programming and facilities in a way that encourages and promotes the stewardship of these resources.

State Goals

1. Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

   a. Public land acquisition and stewardship;

   b. Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;

   c. Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;

   d. Support incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;

   e. Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and

   f. Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected.

2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).

3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.)

4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.

5. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.

6. Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:

   a. Expand and connect forests, farmland and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure;

b. Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities and populations;

c. Manage watersheds in ways that protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions;

d. Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and

e. Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

SERVING AS LAND STEWARDS

County Goals

1. Integrate the preservation of the county's agricultural land and activities with natural resource protection.

2. Connect the county's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.

3. Incorporate farming across all scales – from large land preservation to support for efficient use of small farms to community gardens.

State Goals

1. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries;

2. To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries;

3. Ensure good return on public investment by concentrating state agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs;

4. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production;

5. Protect natural, forestry and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland;

6. Work with local governments to achieve the following:

   » Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas;

   » Establish preservation areas, goals and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement state goals;

   » In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large and state and local government officials;

   » Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;

   » Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and public-at-large.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Aligning state and county goals with proposed capital improvements

Park/Project	2017 STATE GOALS			2017 COUNTY GOALS		
	Parks and Recreation	Natural Resource Land Conservation	Agricultural Land Preservation	Maintaining excellence and driving innovation	Enhancing health and resilience of human and natural systems	Serving as land stewards
Centennial Park	5	1,6		7	1	
David Force Park	1-6	1, 3, 5, 6	3	1-5, 7, 8	1, 7	1, 2
Patapsco Female Institute	1-3	1		1, 4, 5, 6	7, 8	
Rockburn Branch Park	1-6	1, 5		1-8	3, 5, 6, 8	
Troy Park at Elkridge	1-6	1		1-8	5, 6	
North Laurel Park	1-6	1		1-8	5, 6	
Blandair Park	1-6	1, 3, 6		1-8	8	
Elkhorn Park	1-6	1		1-8	1, 5, 6	
Alpha Ridge Park	1-6	1, 2, 4, 6		1-8	1-7	
East Columbia Park	1-6	1		1-8	1, 5, 6	
Clarksville Park	1-6	1		1-8	1, 5, 6	
Haviland Mill Park	1-6	1-6		1-8	1-7	
Benson Branch Park	1-6	1	1,2	1-8	7	1-3
Woodbine Park	1-6	1-6		1-8	1-7	
South Fulton Park	1-6	1-6		1-8	1-7	
Manor Woods Park	1-6	1		1-8	1, 5, 6	
South Branch Park	1-6	1-6		1-8	1-7	
West Friendship Park	1-3, 5, 6	1-6	1-3	1-8	3, 7, 8	1-3
Western Regional Park	1-6	1, 5, 6		1-8	1, 5, 6	
Equestrian Trails & Parking	1-6	1-6	1-2	1-8	7, 8	2

Park/Project	2017 STATE GOALS			2017 COUNTY GOALS		
	Parks and Recreation	Natural Resource Land Conservation	Agricultural Land Preservation	Maintaining excellence and driving innovation	Enhancing health and resilience of human and natural systems	Serving as land stewards
Historic Structure Rehabilitation	1-6	1		1, 5, 6	7, 8	2
Howard County Pathway System	1-6	1-6	1,2	1-8	2, 3, 7	
Park Resurfacing Program	1, 2,3, 5	1, 3, 5, 6		1-5, 7, 8	1, 2, 5, 6, 8	
Parkland Acquisition Program	1-6	1-6	1, 5, 6	1-8	1, 7, 8	2, 3
Park Systemic Improvements	1-6	1-6	1	1-8	1, 2, 3, 7, 8	2, 3

APPENDIX

Appendix A.
Community Engagement Process

The following chapter summarizes the three public participation events over the course of the LPPRP process. The events are as follows:

» April 16th - Greenfest

» July 13th - Public Forum #1

» September 21st - Public Forum #2

HOWARD COUNTY
Play Grow Preserve

GREENFEST 2016
SURVEY RESULTS
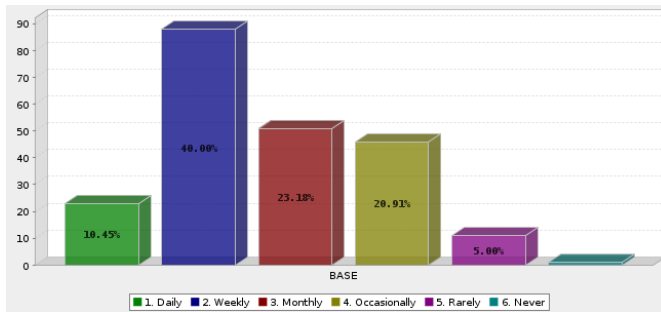Summary

April 16, 2016

SURVEY OVERVIEW

Location: Howard County Community College
Date: April 16, 2016
Time: 10am - 4pm

Surveys completed: 221

Page 1

## Q1. HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION FACILITIES OR PARKS?

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Daily	23	10.45%
2.	**Weekly**	**88**	**40.00%**
3.	Monthly	51	23.18%
4.	Occasionally	46	20.91%
5.	Rarely	11	5.00%
6.	Never	1	0.45%
	TOTAL	*220*	

## Q2. WHICH FACILITY AND OR PARK DO YOU USE THE MOST?

- After Care
- All parks
- Alpha Ridge
- Atholton Park
- Belmont Manor & Historic Park
- Bike Trails
- Blandair Regional Park **(9)**
- Cedar Lane Park **(2)**
- Centennial Park **(90)**
- Children's activities e.g. basketball
- Chooley Mill Park
- Classes
- Columbia Ice Rink
- Daniels Dam **(3)**
- Dickinson Park **(3)**
- East Columbia Senior Center
- Elkridge Senior Center **(3)**
- Ellicott City recreation center
- Fairland regional Park
- Font Hill
- Glenwood Park **(4)**
- Guilford Park **(3)**
- Gym
- Harwood Park
- Hawthorn Park
- Howard County Conservancy **(3)**
- Jackson Pine
- Lakes
- Lake Elkhorn **(23)**
- Lake Kittamaqundi
- Libraries **(3)**
- Lisbon Park
- Path system
- Patuxent Trail

- Pigtail
- Playground
- Pool
- Rec Center
- Reston Regional
- Robinson Nature Center **(4)**
- Rockburn Branch Park **(12)**
- Roger Carter Community Center **(10)**
- Savage Mill **(4)**
- Savage Park
- Scotts Landing
- Sewells Orchard Park
- Soccer fields and parks
- Softball
- Spelman
- State Parks
- Supreme Sports **(3)**
- Tamar area
- Tapstur
- Trails **(5)**
- Trails around Oldmill area
- Trails Blake Lane
- Trolley trail
- Troy Hill Park **(4)**
- Varies
- Varies/parks
- Veta Vintage Earth
- Walking path **(4)**
- Western Regional Park **(4)**
- Wilde Lake Park **(6)**
- Wincopin Trail **(7)**
- Worthington Park

Q3. WHAT RECREATION ACTIVITIES/RESOURCES DO YOU USUALLY USE? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Q4. DO YOU USUALLY VISIT THE PARKS OR RECREATION CENTERS...
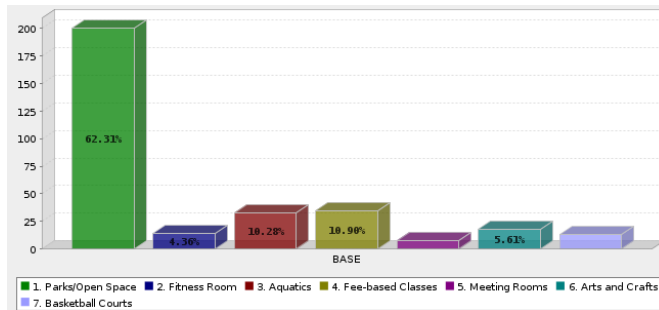
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	**Parks/Open Space**	**200**	**62.31%**
2.	Fitness Room	14	4.36%
3.	Aquatics	33	10.28%
4.	Fee-based Classes	35	10.90%
5.	Meeting Rooms	8	2.49%
6.	Arts and Crafts	18	5.61%
7.	Basketball Courts	13	4.05%
	TOTAL	*321*	
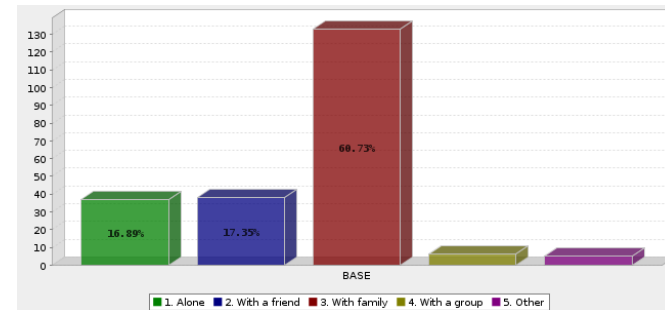
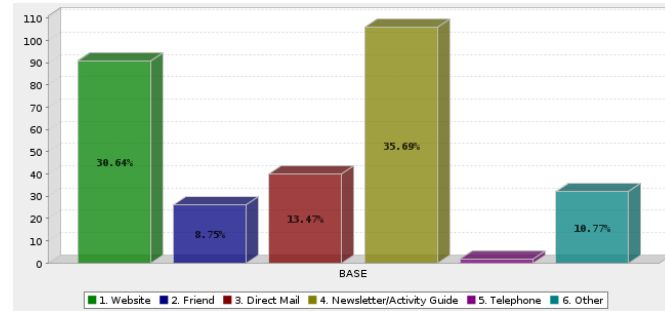|	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Alone	37	16.89%
2.	With a friend	38	17.35%
3.	**With family**	**133**	**60.73%**
4.	With a group	6	2.74%
5.	Other	5	2.28%
	TOTAL	*219*	

Other:
- Family and Alone
- My dog (2)
- Coworkers
- All

Q5. ARE THE FACILITIES CLEAN AND WELL MAINTAINED?
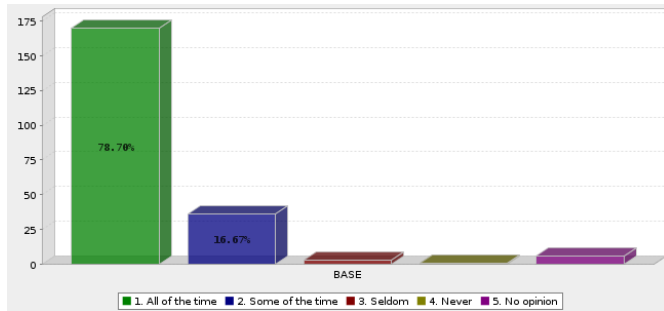
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	**All of the time**	**170**	**78.70%**
2.	Some of the time	36	16.67%
3.	Seldom	3	1.39%
4.	Never	1	0.46%
5.	No opinion	6	2.78%
	TOTAL	*216*	

Q6. HOW DO YOU FIND OUT ABOUT RECREATION PROGRAMS OFFERED AT THE PARK?(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

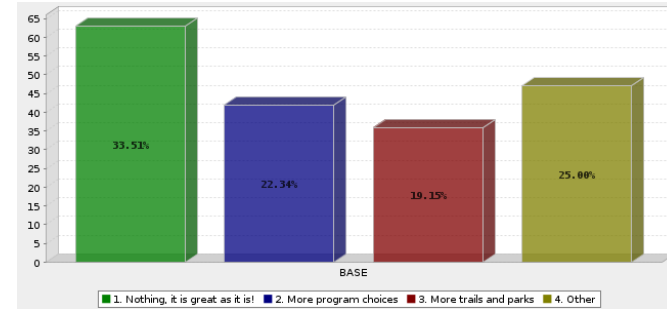|	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Website	91	30.64%
2.	Friend	26	8.75%
3.	Direct Mail	40	13.47%
4.	**Newsletter/Activity Guide**	**106**	**35.69%**
5.	Telephone	2	0.67%
6.	Other	32	10.77%
	TOTAL	*297*	

Other:

- Email (4)
- Email blasts
- Employee
- Events
- Greenfest
- HCC
- Info sessions
- Just go
- Library
- Lived here for years
- MD Envrionmental Department
- Nearby
- Newspaper (3)
- No getting info about county because live in rural
- School (2)
- Signage
- Significant other
- St park
- Wander around
- Web (online)
- Work for county
- Works there

Q8. WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION OF HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION CENTERS AND PARKS?
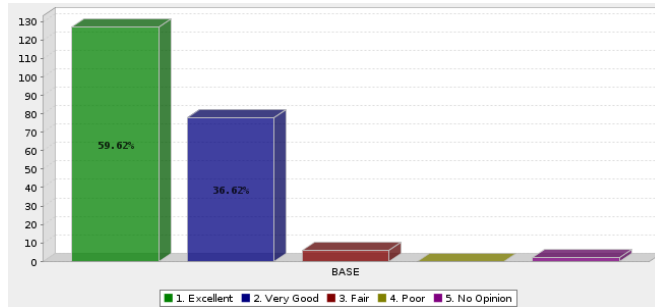
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Excellent	127	59.62%
2.	Very Good	78	36.62%
3.	Fair	6	2.82%
4.	Poor	0	0.00%
5.	No Opinion	2	0.94%
	TOTAL	213	

Q7. WHAT WOULD MAKE THE SYSTEM WORK BETTER?(SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Nothing, it is great as it is!	63	33.51%
2.	More program choices	42	22.34%
3.	More trails and parks	36	19.15%
4.	Other	47	25.00%
	TOTAL	188	

Other:

- Advertise more
- Baseball fields and pools
- Bathroom access longer in the year
- Bathrooms
- Better communication, more for older people
- Better info about programs
- Better map access
- Better trails and signs to help them connect
- Better upkeep of facilities, particularly Centennial park needs work done on restrooms/railroad ties on embankments, etc..
- Bike trail connections
- Bike trails not walking and bike
- Dog park
- Dog parks
- Expand bike trails
- Facilities open in winter
- Fewer people

- Food preservation classes
- For western Howard county
- Invasive species control
- Keep bathrooms clean and available. Bathrooms closed for winter.
- Lights off earlier, it's distracting and a waste of energy
- Look at Cleveland's western suburb rec center!
- Lower fees
- Made of low CO2 park + facilities. Declare CO2 use mule not $50k pick ups
- Maintenance
- Maintenance
- More cycling specific near parks and in parks
- More daytime classes
- More fish in the water
- More natural areas

- More nature
- More offerings to low income families and transportation options
- More parking
- More parking Patapsco
- More recycling trash along Patapsco
- More senior programming, intergenerational spaces
- More tennis courts
- More weekend programs
- Security/patrolling
- Spend more on upgrading existing facilities
- Strategic program choices
- Swimming locations
- Trash cans
- Variety of playgrounds and splash pads
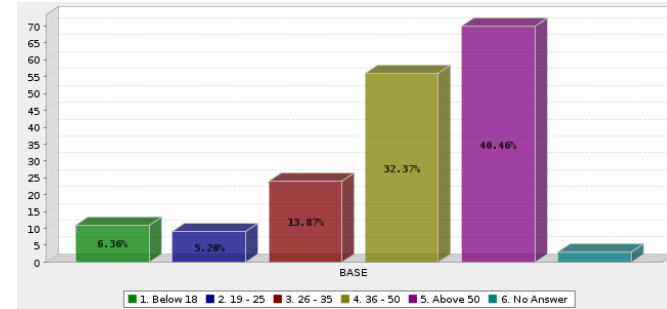- Very crowded
- Western

Q8. WHAT IS ONE WORD YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION AND PARKS

Outstanding
abundant
The slides
Excellent
Communal   Good for basketball
Available   Fun   Very nice
                        Responsive
Fabulous Convenient
Awesome
Precious   Colorful   Beutiful
Useful   Great   Plentiful
Life giving
Good
Opportunity

Q10. WHAT IS YOUR AGE?

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Below 18	11	6.36%
2.	19 - 25	9	5.20%
3.	26 - 35	24	13.87%
4.	36 - 50	56	32.37%
5.	**Above 50**	**70**	**40.46%**
6.	No Answer	3	1.73%
	TOTAL	*173*	

Q9. PLEASE PROVIDE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS ABOUT HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION AND PARKS

- ADA accessibility
- Add a place for drone recreation or remote controlled planes
- Add harrows
- Advertisement
- Beautiful, well maintained
- Best use of our taxes
- Better bathrooms and comments
- Better maps and wayfinding
- Better than Baltimore county
- Cambodian program
- Camp programs were great
- Confusing between CA spaces
- Continued enhancement Huntington park burned down need new one!
- Enjoy the system
- Events for kids
- Glad that it is important to government
- Great programs want more for kids in west Howard county
- Greater focus on parks nit rec considering aging pop
- I am often in CA park areas, and they seem to stay on top of upkeep/trash/etc. Better than Parks & Recs
- I do wish there were more benches on the walking trails
- I like the app
- I want more bike trails connect HoCo
- Impressive system _ especially concerts
- Keep undeveloped areas preserved
- Like more natural parks,
- Like the movie program on summer, like more often
- Like them
- Love the park system
- Love the parked
- Maintenance some trails have puddles swings could have more
- More classes on sustainability
- More classes, sport classes
- More concerts, dummaer is great, rest there is not much
- More creative activities, moveable chairs
- More dog parks
- More fish in the water
- More free classes
- More help for growing business, business classes
- More info on bike trails, map
- More like picnic tables, water park
- More parks
- More programs for younger professionals, map for trail system
- More racquetball courts
- More trails for bikes
- More trails hiking
- Nature center is very nice and Middle Patuxent is nice want more wild places
- Need a printable map of all parks
- Need attention in down county parks
- Need more swings and see saws
- Nice to have guided tours
- None
- One of the best place to live in US
- Online registration for swimming difficult
- Patapsco Valley State Park, nice to have public restroom at wild lake.
- People not cleaning after dog, not enough parking
- Picnic areas
- Places to grow plants, tomato plants, garden spaces
- Prices are high for fixed income
- Quiet spaces outside
- Spinning boat, disk, playground equipment
- Swimming classes more daytime options
- Thank you
- There are no parks by your house
- There are so many options of thing to do in Howard County we love it
- They have something for everybody
- Trails online with distance
- Trips out of town for young people
- Water fountains
- Water fountains
- Well supervised, bathroom well maintained, vender is clean
- West more parks, too rural.
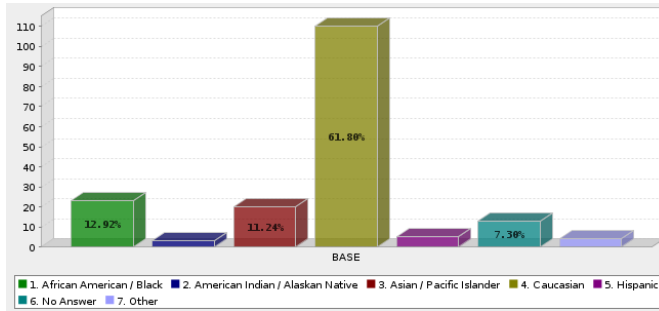- You have a nice staff and a funny director

Q10. WHAT ZIP CODE DO YOU LIVE?

20144	20794	21041	21076 (2)	21228 (3)	21765
20244	20850	21043 (14)	21078	21229	21784
20423 (2)	20866	21044 (27)	21104	21230	21794
20707	21015	21045 (29)	21133	21236	
20723 (9)	21029 (5)	21046 (13)	21209 (2)	21702	
20763	21036	21061	21211	21737	
20777 (3)	21042 (17)	21075 (13)	21225	21738	

Q11. WHAT IS YOUR RACE OR ETHNICITY?

	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	African American / Black	23	12.92%
2.	American Indian / Alaskan Native	3	1.69%
3.	Asian / Pacific Islander	20	11.24%
4.	**Caucasian**	**110**	**61.80%**
5.	Hispanic	5	2.81%
6.	No Answer	13	7.30%
7.	Other	4	2.25%
	TOTAL	*178*	

Other:
- Anglo-Indian
- Korean
- Indian

Q12. WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME?
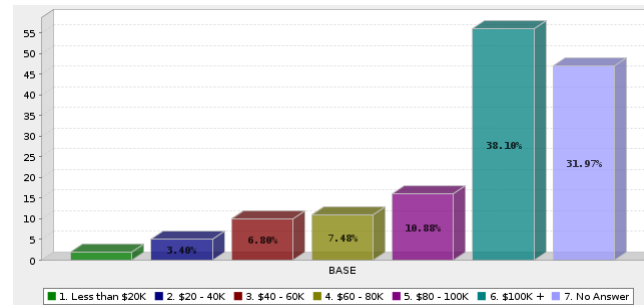
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	Less than $20K	2	1.36%
2.	$20 - 40K	5	3.40%
3.	$40 - 60K	10	6.80%
4.	$60 - 80K	11	7.48%
5.	$80 - 100K	16	10.88%
6.	**$100K +**	**56**	**38.10%**
7.	No Answer	47	31.97%
	TOTAL	*147*	

Q13. ARE THERE CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?
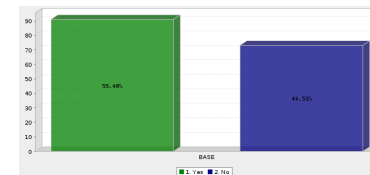
	Answer	Count	Percent
1.	**Yes**	**91**	**55.49%**
2.	No	73	44.51%
	TOTAL	*164*	

GENERAL COMMENTS HIGHLIGHTS

- Need more trails for biking, walking, and running.
- Sometimes paving is needed at parks.
- Would use the parks more if the trails had ramps for people with disabilities.
- More parking is need at Patuxent by the bridge.
- Better signage is needed.
- Would also like to see more information about other parks to encourage people to visit other parks they may not know about.
- Don't seeing the lights from the 175
- There are no more smells or sounds when I come home to "Thunder Hill/Oakland Mill Home"
- Please continue to consider the neighbors and our property values.
- All transcripts from hearings must be kept and made available to the public.
- Promises made at meetings must be recorded and available to the public.
- Meadowbrook Road needs maintenance in general adjacent to park in wetlands, which are not maintained.
- DPT too focused on attracting outsiders and charging fees, but not enough emphasis on local parks.
- Need water fountains in Centennial Park.
- Poor communication with Laurel
- Walkability in Columbia has been lost. Children cannot walk to community parks.
- I often walk the trails through Howard County. Would like to see more trails that are pedestrians and bicycle friendly.
- More calisthenics/parks are needed to exercise.
- Would like to see more rock climbing and hiking facilities.
- Good precedent is Montgomery County and Brookside Gardens.
- Centennial is great for dog parks. Not enough signage on paths. Would like more native plantings, and less formal parks.
- Walkability lost. Original concept plan lost.
- I frequent Elkhorn Ridge, Centennial, Cypressmeade Park.
- Dunloging - good for walking, wild flowers, nature walks.
- Infill forces water into open land. Better stormwater management. More plant rescue operations.
- Frequents Patapsco Park. Needs more programs for teenagers i.e. obstacles courses
- Frequents Columbia Association. Would frequent Howard County Parks if they offered comparable services i.e. gyms and basketball with extended hours of availability. I would like adult programs (parents) during the same time kids have programs.

HOWARD COUNTY
Play   Grow   Preserve

PUBLIC MEETING
SUMMARY

MEETING
QUICK FACTS

Meeting Date & Time:
July 13, 2016
7-9pm

Locations:
North Laurel Community Center
(NLCC)
Roger Carter Community Center
(RCCC)

Attendees:
NLCC: 42
RCCC: 18

➤ MEETING STRUCTURE

On July 13, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks held a public meeting in two different locations to introduce the initial analysis performed for the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). During this meeting, the project team collected feedback from the participants to include in the plan development.

The meeting was organized based on the three themes that make up the project slogan: Play, Grow, and Preserve. A presentation was conducted explaining each theme in detail and the analysis conducted prior to the plan development. The results of the analysis, discussed during the presentation, were displayed on a series of boards around the room. Additionally, participants were able to provide feedback through a series of activities by theme, general comment cards, and person-to-person conversations with the project team.

ACTIVITIES
QUICK FACTS

Total Number of Comments:
NLCC: 167
RCCC: 78

ACTIVITIES

Play

The purpose of the Play activity was to understand what typology, facilities, programs, and features would make up the community's ideal park. The Play activity was organized in two stations:

Play and Recreation Typology

At this station, participants were able to identify the type of sites, facilities and programs they would like to see in their neighborhoods and community parks, recreation facilities, regional parks, and natural resource areas.

Dream Ideas

The Dream Ideas station provided participants with an opportunity to write down new ideas for activities, programs, sites, and facilities that have not been part of the current recreation and parks programs and facilities.

Preserve

The purpose of the Preserve activity was to identify the kind of land uses and programs for preserving open space. It also identified the agricultural land the community wanted to expand or add to the Howard County current land uses and programs.

Grow

The purpose of the Grow activity was to determine what sustainable growth means to the Howard County community.

The material provided for these activities were:

- » Boards
- » Sticky notes
- » Color-coded bingo daubers
- » Markers and pens

WHAT WE HEARD
Summary of comments provided during activities

PLAY

Play and Recreation Typology

Neighborhood and Community Parks

- » Forest and/or tree cover
- » Access to water for fishing, boat access from Elkridge to Patapsco River
- » Walking and biking trails
- » Restrooms in trails
- » Pavilions/gathering spaces
- » Playground along Route 1
- » More picnic tables, benches, and water fountains

Recreation Facilities

- » Indoor and outdoor pickle ball courts (at zip codes 21043, 21044, and 21045)
- » Indoor basketball court
- » Indoor swimming pool
    - 50meter pool
    - At Elkridge/Jessup (Route 1), and NLCC
- » Indoor ice and track
- » Climbing walls or rock climbing areas
- » More space for senior activities at NLCC, especially during summer
- » Programs for low income families
- » Intergenerational programs
- » Kayaking programs in rivers
- » Multiuse trails
- » Meetup/common interest groups at Savage
- » Educational events (workshops/seminars) at Savage

Regional Parks

» Access to water for horses and equine use
» Forest and/or tree cover
    - Blandair Park
    - Trails between Savage and Lake Elkhorn
» Restrooms around trails
» Orienteering
» Multipurpose fields at East Columbia Library Park
» Pickle ball court at Oakland Mills, Ellicott City, Glenwood, Glenelg, Laurel, Clarksville, Maple Lawn, and Columbia
» Bocce court
» Exercise classes and groups
» Educational events (workshops/seminars)
» More community gardens
» Multiuse, not paved trails
» Outdoor yoga, Tai Chi or other fitness classes
    - For seniors
    - At Centennial
» Meet up for seniors

Dream Ideas

» Hiking and biking trails:
    - Rustic
    - Along rivers, particularly Little and Middle Patuxent River
    - For connectivity between parks and other recreation facilities (and avoid/reduce driving)
» Play, recreation and social opportunities for aging populations
» Horse facilities:
    - More horseback ride opportunities
    - Not paved horse trails, and hitches for horses
    - Horse trailer parking at Benson Branch Park
» More serene spots
» Indoor and outdoor pickle ball courts
    - Pickle ball tournaments (suggestion: 2-3 nights a week)
    - Available evenings and all year
    - Instructional classes for all levels and ages

    - Locations: Ellicott City, Laurel, Maple Lawn, Glenwood, Dayton, Clarksville, Columbia, and Savage
» Restrooms
    - Around trails
» Multipurpose sport fields
» Public Exercise Equipment (PAR) on trails
    - At Centennial Park
» Indoor swimming pool at NLCC (suggestion: separate from building)
» Structure community center fees differently (suggestion: pay annual fee rather than pay for lessons for each activity)
    - Lower fees on classes for seniors
» Nature-theme and natural element play spaces
» More small-scale playgrounds
» More connectivity between parks and other recreation facilities
» Ponds for fishing in every neighborhood park
» Trampoline gym
» More basketball courts
» Skate board park in Savage and NLCC
» Sports for low income families

Protected land

Add More (x15)
Additional Comments:
» More protected land around rivers, particularly Middle and Little Patapsco. New development diminishes water quality
» More protected land around Patuxent River and Savage Park
» Add more without taking park land in Savage for private development of the settlement Atlas Mill
» Network of greenway trails to connect parks and resource area

Maintain (x2)
Additional Comments:
» Develop a meadow for birds

Historic sites

Add More (x11)
Additional Comments:
» At Savage and Patuxent River
» Commodore Joshua Barney House at Savage
» Why let historic savage be destroyed by development along river?

Maintain (x6)
Additional Comments:
» Add additional funds to maintain historical sites
» Savage and Patuxent River historic disk in Savage
» Repaint Bollman Truss Bridge
» Restore the feel of Historic Savage

Equine resource

Add More (x3)
Additional Comments:
» Riding trails and easements through developments to connect green spaces

Maintain (x2)

PRESERVE

Tree planting

Add More (x8)
Additional Comments:
» Pollinator gardens
» Restore buffers destroyed by park overlook at North Laurel Community Center
» I'm looking forward to the new streetscape in Savage in the next couple of years. I'd like to see more trees and traffic calming on main roads through town such as Savage - Guilford.

Education
Add More (x1)

Native plant
Add More (x2)

Healthy waterways

Add More (x8)
Additional Comments:
» More park land along rivers. Monitor run off from newer developments

Maintain (x2)

Urban farms or community gardens

Add More (x5)
Additional Comments:
» Route 1 corridor. Can put in CAC zoning or other high density area as one of their "community amenities." Need to hire a part time coordinator for developing more community gardens
» Pollinator gardens and planting
» Urban gardens in Savage or North Laurel
» Needed, but not at expense of environmental areas. Use transitional space

Maintain (x1)
Additional Comments:
» I think Savage needs a community garden to strengthen our sense of neighborhood and get us interact

Main Themes

New Developments

» Make sure new developments includes sidewalks along all road access and connectivity

» No shady land swaps with developers.

» Allow school population to catch up to development. Too many students in classrooms

» Study well before you add more development (housing). Too many houses being built, roads and parks are not keeping up. Increase in traffic, crowded city situation being created around Gorman Rd. and vicinity.

» Stop development and land swap (i.e. Savage Mill)

Safety

» Mobile phone application, so we can press a button to make a call to police silently. It could give our location by GPS. I would want it for walking trails when I am alone or with a group. It would make people feel more secure for a robbery or medical emergency.

Recreation Facilities and Programs

» Connect low income families with recreation

» Please build another facility like Meadowbrook but dedicated to adults and seniors

» Harness volunteers to promote HCPR facilities

» Implement parks and recreation tests in Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO)

» More trails for all age groups

» Bike lanes on road

» Preserve farms and open spaces

Preservation

» Plant an urban garden (veggies and fruit trees). Donate crop/harvest to those in need (i.e. seniors' centers).

» No respect for mature trees! Plant things that get more than 30 feet tall.

» Retain small horse farms

» Look at the long term effect of cutting down trees and replacing them with office buildings'

GROW
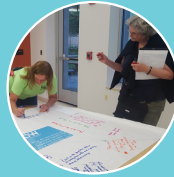
MEETINGS SUMMARY

In both the North Laurel and Roger Carter Community Centers, participants were receptive to the information provided and provided useful feedback through discussions and the activities.

Major Themes

The major themes that came up at the North Laurel Community Center meeting were the desire to add more recreation programs and facilities for adults and seniors, walking and hiking trails, preservation of historic sites, and protect water and land from new developments.

The major theme at Roger Carter Community Center was the desire of adding more specialized recreation facilities, such as pickle ball courts, swimming pools, ice rinks, bocce courts, and basketball courts.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Raw comments from North Laurel Community Center

Play: Park and Recreation Typology
Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of times the same comment was repeated.

	NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY PARK	RECREATION FACILITIES	REGIONAL PARK	NATURAL RESOURCE AREA
Site	» Forest/tree cover (x3) » Access to water for fishing » Varied terrain: walking + bike trails	» Varied terrain: walking + bike trails » Access to water for fishing	» Forest/tree cover » Restrooms » Orienteering	» Restrooms » Orienteering
Facility	» Pavilions/gathering space » Indoor + outdoor pickle ball courts » Walking trails	» Pavilions/gathering space » Indoor + outdoor pickle ball courts » Walking trails » Climbing walls or rock climbing area More space for seniors activities @ NLCC, especially in the summer	» Fields/courts » Fields/courts	» Restrooms » Trail between Savage Lake Elkhorn no bathrooms
Programs	» Educational events (workshops/seminars): Intergenerational programs	» Educational events (workshops/seminars): Intergenerational programs » Kayaking program (rivers)	» Exercise classes and groups » Exercise classes and groups » Educational events (workshops/seminars) » More community gardens	» More community gardens

	NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY PARK	RECREATION FACILITIES	REGIONAL PARK	NATURAL RESOURCE AREA
Where would you like to add these kind of parks?	» Meetup/common interest groups at Savage » Educational events (workshops/seminars) at Savage	» Meetup/common interest groups at Savage » Educational events (workshops/seminars) at Savage	» Pickle ball courts: Ellicott City, Glenwood, Glenelg, Laurel, Clarksville, Maple Lawn, Columbia » Blandair, more tree cover » Outdoor yoga, tai chi or other fitness classes @ Centennial » Yoga + tai chi exercise classes for senior » Meet up for seniors	

Play: Dream Ideas

Site
» Rustic hiking trails
» Play + Rec opportunities for aging population combine with social activities
» More horseback riding opportunities
» More serene spots
» About safety? Health issues, direction, and crime.
» Ex. Dirt Bike Courses! Re: I'd be concern about noise and air pollution, as well as the torn up tracks leading to erosion of the courses.

Facility
» I suggest to have pickle ball twin 2 nights a week
» Pickle ball courts indoor: Evening + days year round
» Horse trailer parking at Benson Branch Park
» I want an indoor swimming pool at the North Laurel Community Center. Our 50+ center members will especially benefit for health reasons. Must be indoor. Recommend separate from building
» Additional off road walking and biking trial along the rivers - little + Middle Patuxent.
» More dedicated pickle ball courts for our aging population

» In other counties the community centers require you to pay annual fee rather than pay for lessons for each activity. Is it possible for Howard County to structure fees differently?
» Future indoor pickle ball for summer play
» Indoor pickle ball during the day - 3xweek on a drop-in basis (pay as you go)
» Nature-theme and natural element play spaces
» More small-scale playgrounds. Not all neighborhoods are in HOA's with these amenities
» More restrooms or at least porta pots at trails areas
» More connectivity between parks and other recreation facilities via trails (rather than driving). Good for both youth - senior populations
» Every neighborhood park should have a pond for fishing
» Trampoline gym
» More and safe basketball courts
» A skate board park in savage would help get teens out-of-house. One at NLCC is adequate)

Programs
» Pickle ball instructor for all levels - seniors play P-B so it would be good to have daytime classes
» Skill lessons for all levels skill practice at various locations
» Pickle ball classes and tournaments
» Pickle ball: Outdoor courts in each region of the country, Instructional classes for all ages, Marketing efforts to generate interest and enthusiasm for the sport. Tournaments

Where would you like to add these kind of parks?
» Pickle ball at: Ellicott Coty, Laurel, Maple Lawn, Glenwood, Dayton, Clarksville, Columbia, and Savage
» Pickle ball at Columbia E.C.
» Pickle ball anywhere there is available space

Preserve

Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of times the same color-coded dot or comment was repeated.

Protected Land
» Add more (x9)
» Add more: More protected land around rivers, particularly middle and little Patapsco - New development diminish water quality
» Add more: Patuxent River + Savage Park
» Add more: Patuxent River + Savage Park
» Add more: without taking park land in Savage for private development of the settlement Atla Mill

Historic Sites

» Add more (x7)
» Add more: Savage + Patuxent River
» Add more: Joshua Barney Savage reminder industrial site Savage Mill
» Add more: Joshua Barney House
» Add more: Why let historic savage be destroyed by development along river?
» Maintain (x4)
» Maintain: Add additional funds to maintain historical sites
» Maintain: Savage + Patuxent river historic disk in Savage

Equine Resource

» Add more (x2)
» Maintain (x2)

Tree Planting

» Add more (x5)
» Add more: Restore buffers destroyed by Park overlook at North Laurel Community Center
» Add more: I'm looking forward to the new streetscape in Savage in the next couple of years. I'd like to see more trees + traffic calming devices on main roads through town such as Savage - Guilford.

Education

» Add more

Native Plant

» Add more (x2)

Healthy Waterways

» Maintain (x2)
» Add more (x7)
» Add more: More parkland along rivers. Monitor run off from newer developments

Urban Farms or Community Gardens

» Add more
» Add more: There are no urban gardens in Savage or North Laurel but we very much want one!
» Add more: Needed, but not at expense of environmental areas - use transitional space
» Maintain: I think Savage needs a community garden to strengthen our sense of neighborhood and get us interact. There are many immigrants + poorer

Grow

» Implement parks and rec tests in APFO! (it's what it's all about!)
» Implement parks and rec tests in APFO! (it's what it's all about!) - Yes
» Please build another facility like Meadowbrook but dedicated to adults + seniors - not kids
» Make sure any/all new development includes sidewalks along all road access + connectivity
» Harness volunteers to promote HCPR facilities
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Ditto
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Ditto
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Exactly!!
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Exactly!! - Ditto
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Exactly!! - Ditto - Agree
» No shady land swaps with developers! - Me too
» Plant an urban garden (veggies + fruit trees). Donate crop/harvest to those in need.
» Plant an urban garden (veggies + fruit trees). Donate crop/harvest to those in need. - Support
» No respect for mature trees! Plant things that get more than 30 feet tall.
» Retain small horse farms
» More trails for all age groups
» Bike lanes on road
» Allow school population to catch up to development. Too many students in classrooms + trailers
» Allow school population to catch up to development. Too many students in classrooms + trailers - Ditto
» If we wanted to live in an urban area, we would have bought there
» Look at the long term effect of cutting down trees and replacing them with office buildings'
» Study well before you add more development (housing). Too many house being built, roads and parks are not keeping up. Increase in traffic, crowded city situation being created around Gorman Rd. and vicinity.
» Stop development!
» Stop development! - Yes!
» Stop development! - Ditto!
» There is nothing smart about 'smart growth'!

General Comments (Comment cards)

» 1) More picnic tables in parks. 2) More benches. 3) More water fountains
» 1) Bridge needs painting bad. 2) Stop light on Gorman Rd. and Foundry St. please. 3) Don't charge for sports in the schools. 4) Make the roads you can drive without having to stop for another car coming the other way. 5) Building to many apartments in Howard Co.

- Stop the growth in Southern Howard County! Farms and open spaces are being consumed by developers putting houses
- Stop the growth in Southern Howard County! Farms and open spaces are being consumed by developers putting houses on top of houses L All schools are overpopulated by hundreds of students. Columbia Mall area is a disgrace. How could you let Merriweather Post area go to APARTMENTS? I've lived here 38 years and this is not what I expected to see when I moved to Howard County. I've been very vocal about an indoor pool at North Laurel Community Center. As a member of the 50+ center, it will benefit our older population with opportunity for water classes to improve our aging bodies. Additional staffing will be needed at our center when our pool opens.
- Red pickle balls so you can see them easier. Thank you all for listening to us! Very much appreciated.
- Urban garden – donate veggies to Senior Centers. Pickle ball – Indoors year round evenings in particular a lot of us still work. Dedicated pickle ball facility with nets already set up; open to all ages. Drop in locations for evening play. HoCo pickle ball classes – do not put a limit on enrollees; there is a no-show rate.
- I respectfully request that the Howard County Department of Recreation and Park does not support or go forward with the proposed land swap for the proposed settlement at Savage Mill. The land is question is park land and should be protected from development. We do not need 35 more units of high density housing in Historic Savage. Instead, I highly encourage DRP to move forward with projects that will restore the feel of Historic Savage. For example, Bollman Bridge is in desperate need of repair and repainting. I am saddened every time I drive by the bridge as it is today, faded and horribly sun-bleached. Take steps to repair and repaint Bollman Bridge, restoring it to its former glory and helping to attract additional visitors and recreationists to Savage. This project will provide much more benefit to our community than will 35 units of high density housing built on parkland. Thank you. Jimmy Williams. 9384 Spring Water Path.
- I have lived near the Bollman Truss Bridge almost my entire life; I love that bridge. My request is to make enough money I been fund to maintain the bridge! It's only red on the inside where the sun-bleaching is avoided. My family, friends, and I have taken walks and plenty of pictures at the "red bridge" and should hate to see it lose its charm as someone getting married soon, I would close to have photos taken with the bridge and in prime-looking conditions. On a side note, please go not build the new homes apartments on Washington St. over the historic area.
- Pickle Ball. Currently 150+ HoCo residence on mailing list need some dedicated courts and some courts that we share with tennis players. Classes for pickle ball, beginner to expert. Indoor courts for evening play, many of us are still working. Bike trails, Skills park improvements and more space lanes on roadways.
- I would like to say I'm strongly in disagree with the proposed baseball park planned for the East Columbia Library fields. Those fields should remain as multipurpose fields like they were originally planned. In the area it is already being saturated with baseball facilities at the Blandair Fields. Lake Elkhorn has two baseball diamonds now that are not being used. I believe that multi-purpose fields will serve the Owen Brown Community better to serve their rugby, soccer, lacrosse, and football communities that utilize the fields today. Thank you. S. Smith.

APPENDIX B
Raw comments from Roger Carter Community Center

Play: Park and Recreation Typology
Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of times the same comment was repeated.

	NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY PARK	RECREATION FACILITIES	REGIONAL PARK
Site			» Access to water for horses and equine use
Facility	» Courts for pickle ball (x7) » Restrooms in trails » Multipurpose sports fields » Access to water: boat access to Patapsco R in Elkridge	» Courts for pickle ball (x7) » Aquatics: 50m pools » Fields/Courts: Indoor ice, swim, and track » Restrooms in trails » Aquatics: Splash park along Rt.1 » Indoor basketball court	» Courts for pickle ball (x7) » Restrooms around trails » Restrooms around trails » Multipurpose fields » Bocce Court
Programs		» Programs to include low income families	
Where would you like to add these kind of parks?	» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City) » Aquatics: Pool at Elkridge/Jessup - Rt.1 » Playgrounds along Rt. 1	» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City) » Multiuse trails » Columbia - 21045 » Oakland Mills - 21045	» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City) » Multi use trails - not paved » Multipurpose fields @ East Columbia Library Park

Play: Dream Ideas

Facility
- Courts for pickle ball (for young and old) - indoor and outdoor (x5)
- Not paved horse trails
- Water access for horses
- Restrooms
- Hitches for horses
- Multipurpose sports fields
- PAR (public exercise equipment) on trails

Programs

» Pickle ball league + games (x5)
» Sports for low income families

Where would you like to add these kind of parks?

» Pickle ball @ Ellicott City
» Pickle ball @ Columbia
» Sports for low income families @ Columbia
» PAR @ Centennial Park
» Trails in County Parks

Preserve

Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of times the same color-coded dot or comment was repeated.

Protected Land

» Add more
» Add more: Develop a meadow for birds - Belmont?
» Add more: Network of greenway trails to connect parks and resource area
» Maintain

Equine Resource

» Add more: Riding trails and easements through developments to connect green spaces

Tree Planting

» Add more: Pollinate or gardens

Urban Farms or Community Gardens

» Add more: Rt. 1 corridor. Can put in CAC zoning or other high density area as one of their "community amenities." Need to hire a part time coordinator for developing more community gardens. There are waiting lists!
» Add more: Pollinator gardens and planting

Grow

» Connect low income families with recreation
» Mobile phone application, so we can press a button to make a call to police silently. It could give our location by GPS. I would want it for walking trails when I am alone or with a group. It would make people feel more secure for a robbery or medical emergency. Thanks, Kevin Abel (646-498-3081)

HOWARD COUNTY
Play   Grow   Preserve

LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN (LPPRP)

PUBLIC MEETING #3
SUMMARY

September 2016

MEETING
QUICK FACTS

Meeting Date & Time:
September 21, 2016
7-9pm

Location:
Howard County Recreation and
Parks Headquarters
(7120 Oakland Mills Road
Columbia, MD 21046-1677)

Attendees: 17

MEETING STRUCTURE

On September 21, Howard County Recreation and Parks held a public meeting at the department's headquarters to present an initial draft of the 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

The team provided a presentation and collected feedback from the participants to include in the final plan. The team prepared a series of boards to present background information, trends, and the recommendations for the 2017 LPPRP. During the meeting, participants were able to provide feedback through comment cards and person-to-person conversations with the project team.

COMMENTS
QUICK FACTS

Total Number of Comments: 18

⟩ MAJOR THEMES

Participants were receptive and expressed their approval on the draft recommendations presented by the team. They also provided useful feedback through discussions and the comment cards. The major themes were:

- » The major themes that came up at the meeting were:
- » Trails: maintaining and adding more natural multi-use trails
- » Adding more parks and recreation facilities (including pools and Pickle Ball courts)

⟩ RAW COMMENTS

At the end of the public meeting we received 18 written comments. Here is a list of the participants' comments:

- » Maximizing conservation of green infrastructure is first priority
- » Troy should be a tennis center
- » Great ideas utilizing Hammond Community and High Ridge Trail
- » The largest opportunity available at present is the re-integration of the Commodore Joshua Barney House, Savage Park, Savage Remainder industrial/archeological site and Savage Mill for a regional National Historic destination available for camping, ecotourism, tourism, archeology and industrial revolution re-enactment, co-sponsored with the United States Navy and POW/MIA organizations.
- » Creating nature play. Whole parks vs. scattered elements throughout parks? Look at Constitution Gardens, Gaithersburg, MD.
- » Connecting parks through water access? (kayak/canoe)
- » Take advantage/promote smaller parks more
- » How to develop trails that connect County? Not just Columbia
- » Cost of activities
- » Howard County App?
- » Savage Park trail is in need of maintenance. Access from trail to the river needs to be replaced, as do overlooks and the amphitheaters
- » Graffiti is a growing issue on the Bollman Bridge. This is a key photo site.
- » A community garden is greatly desired
- » West friendship Park already has equestrian trail(s?). Will you put in one for them when you enlarge the trail area? Also will you do an equestrian trail for the western HoCo? Horses do not need paved as it is slippery, natural needed (tie ups - porta potties too!)
- » Great graphics and presentation materials. Only comment would be to post these presentation materials on the project website so folks who could not attend may review. Thanks for the good work.
- » I would like to have more picnic tables at the Savage Ball Parks. Longer hours at the Savage Park office.
- » Inasmuch as Savage Park never got their pool, I would like to see an "indoor" one at North Laurel, so that those of us (including seniors) would have somewhere to go and do exercises that benefit to our health year round.
- » What is Pickle Ball? Any recommendation or plan to interconnect entire the county with the trail system.

Appendix B.
Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative ©	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Adult:	6.1.3	6.1.4	6.1.6	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
Fitness/Health Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S	I,S,G
Therapeutic Fitness Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S	I,S,G
Visual Arts/Crafts Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	C,I	I.S
Music Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	C,I	I,S,G
Personal Development Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I	I
Day Trips	X		$	E,B,A,G	B	S,I	I,S,G
Recreational Sports	X		B	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S	I,S,G
Competitve Sports	X		$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Instructional Sports		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Special Events for ages 18-Up	X		B	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Social Events (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Outdoor Recreation	X		B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S
Parks-Pathways, Green Spaces, Natural Areas	X		F	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,P	I,S

Howard County Recreation & Parks Nature of Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative ©	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Elementary Age:	6.2.1	6.2.2	6.2.4	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
Licensed Child Care 38 Progr		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	S,G
Special Events	X		B	E,B,A,G	B	S	G
After School Education/Recreation	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Fitness/Health Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S	S,G
Dance Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P	S,G
Visual Arts/Crafts Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,C,S	I,S,G
Instructional Sports		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,S,I	S,G
Competitive Sports		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S	I,S,G
Swim Lessons/Aquatics		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,S	I,S,G
Summer Camps		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	S,G
High Adventure Skills Class		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
High Adventure Trips	X		$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Playgrounds (equipment)		X	F	E,B,A,G	B	P,S	I,S
Parks-Pathways, green spaces, natural areas	X	X	F	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,P	I,S,G
Lakes streams-Fishing, boating	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,P	I,S
Life Skills		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Enrichment Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,S,C	I,S,G
Cooking Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,C	I,S,G
Heritage Events and Programs		X	F	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,S	G
Community Center Events		X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Nature Education/Interpretation		X	B	E,B,A,G	B, I	P, I, S, C	I, S,G

Howard County Recreation & Parks Nature of Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative (C)	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Over 55:	6.2.1	6.2.2	6.2.4	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
Day Trips	X		$	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Overnight Trips	X		$	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Themed Social		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	S	G
Special Events	X		B	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Card Clubs	X		F	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	S,I	I,S,G
Fitness/Health Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S	I,S,G
Music Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	C,I	I,S
Visual Arts/Crafts Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	C,I	I,S
Enrichment Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,P,S,C	I,S,G
Dance Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,S	I,S,G
Recreational Sports	X		B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,S	I,S,G
Competitive Sports	X	X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S	I,S,G
Outdoor Recreation	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Cooking Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,C	I,S,G
Heritage Events and Programs		X	F	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I,S	I,S,G
Community Center Events		X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Computer Classes		x	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	I	I,S,G
Nature Education/Interpretation		X	B	E,B,A,G	B, I, E	P, I, S, C	I, S,G

Howard County Recreation & Parks Nature of Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative (C)	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Pre-School:	6.2.1	6.2.2	6.2.4	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
Early Learning Center		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	P,I,S,C	S,G
Dance Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,C	S,G
Drama		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	C	S,G
Parent & Child Classes and Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Music Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	C	S,G
Visual Arts/Craft Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	C,I	S,G
Themed Special Events		X	B	E,B,A,G	B	S	G
Swim Lessons/ Aquatics		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P	S,G
Fitness/Health Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	P,S,I	ALL
Instructional Sports		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S	ALL
Summer Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	S,G
Playgrounds (equipment)	X		F	E,B,A,G	B	P,I,S	I,S
Parks-pathways, green space, natural	X		B	E,B,A,G	B	P,I,S	S
Lake-Fishing, boating	X		B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S	S
Community Center Events		X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Enrichment Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,S,C	S,G
Cooking Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	I	S,G
Heritage Events and Programs		X	F	E,B,A,G	B	I,S	G
Outdoor Recreation Programs		X	B	E,B,A,G	B	P,I	S,G
Nature Education/Interpretation		X	B	E,B,A,G	B	I, S, C	I, S,G

Howard County Recreation & Parks Nature of Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative (C)	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Teenage:	6.2.1	6.2.2	6.2.4	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
After School Education/Recreation	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
After School Care (Can Teen Club)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Instructional Sports		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S	I,S,G
Competitive Sports	X		$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,S	I,S,G
Recreational Sports	X		$	E,B,A,G	B	P,S	I,S,G
Swim Lessons/Aquatics		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P	I,S
Therapeutic Recreation		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
TRIO		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Dance Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,S,C	I,S,G
Fitness/Health Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S	I,S,G
Visual Arts/Crafts Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	C,I	I
Art Classes (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	C,I	I
Social Events (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B	S	S,G
Music Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	C,I	I,S
Summer Camps		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
High Adventure Skills Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S
High Adventure Trips		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Parks-pathways, green spaces, natural areas	X	X	F	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I	I,S,G
Lakes & Streams - Boating, Fishing, Kayaking	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I	I,S,G
Adventure and Nature Programs	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I	I,S,G

Howard County Recreation & Parks Nature of Program Services Matrix

Programs/Activities by Age	Programs with general or little supervision	Programs with Structured Leadership	Fee ($) Free (F) or Both (B)	Economic Levls (E) Racial & Ethnic Backgrounds (B) Age (A) Gender (G)	Scope/Level: Basic (B) Interm (I) Expert (E)	Types of Participation: Physical (P) Intellectual (I) Social (S) Creative (C)	Types of Participation: Individual (I) Small Group (S) Groups (G)
Teenage:	6.2.1	6.2.2	6.2.4	6.3	6.5	6.6	6.7
Enrichment Programs		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,S,C	I,S,G
Cooking Classes		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	I,C	I,S,G
Community Center Events		X	B	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P,I,S,C	I,S,G
Community Center Drop-in	X		$	E,B,A,G	B	P,S	I,S,G
Special Events	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B	S	I,S,G
Swim Lessons/Aquatics (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I,E	P	I, S
Performing Arts (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S,C	S,G
Recreational Sports (TR)		X	$	E,B,A,G	B,I	P,I,S	I,S
Nature Education/Interpretation	X	X	B	E,B,A,G	B, I, E	P, I, S	I, S,G

Appendix C.
Measuring User Demand

INTRODUCTION

One of the elements of the LPPRP guidelines relates to User Demand. The focus of this area is to determine user satisfaction and efforts to improve the guest experience. The process included a high level overview of the service system, primarily drawn from two staff focus groups, staff interviews, review of policies and procedures, and a review of survey results and public input sessions. The outcomes of the User Demand Narrative include:

» Identification of existing efforts in determining customer satisfaction

» Identification of efforts in continuously improving customer experiences

» Alignment with CAPRA standards relating to customer satisfaction

» Recommendations for strengthening the service system based on best practices as part of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Organizational Excellence

The Department's list of values includes Exceptional Customer Experience. This is continuously reinforced by leadership and is top of mind with employees. During a focus group of service employees, the importance of service was repeatedly mentioned. Compared to other park and recreation agencies nationwide, the Department's service philosophy and commitment is excellent. The purpose of this Narrative is to provide recommendations for further strengthening customer satisfaction and experiences.

SUMMARY OF STAFF FOCUS GROUPS

The following section provides a summary of staff comments from two focus groups with employees who have direct contact with customers and leadership staff involved in managing programs and services.

How would you describe the quality of customer experiences?

Staff members mentioned that the customers they interact with typically provide very positive comments about their experiences with Howard County Recreation and Parks. Customers who have lived elsewhere are amazed at the array of offerings provided by the county. The use of standards provides staff with the framework to provide excellent service.

Staff members mentioned the need to improve language translation services, mostly for the Hispanic population, but other languages were mentioned, including Korean and Chinese. Telephone service is offered through Language Select. Staff members are currently researching the Department's ability to offer the Program Guide in Spanish.

TYPES OF COMMENTS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED BY CUSTOMERS.

Staff members mentioned receiving frequent comments about suggestions for additional programs. The staff try to accommodate the demands for programs. In addition, the price of programs generally is viewed positively by customers. Suggestions for improvement included the need to provide better information about online registration as customers have difficulty finding the program they desire. Other frequent comments included improving the website. In addition, an aquatic facility is the most frequently mentioned facility need, particularly at The Gary J. Arthur Community Center.

WHAT PROGRAMS DO YOU HAVE THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY ACCOMMODATING THE DEMAND?

The staff members mentioned a significant demand for swimming lessons and not being able to provide the necessary number of classes. Therapeutic Recreation is an additional program area that has difficulty meeting the demand. Furthermore, it is becoming more difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. The childcare program typically has waiting lists. This problem is exacerbated by the loss of school space because some schools are over-populated. This is an acute problem as the before and after school programs have vital importance to Howard County families.

Park design and amenities impact the ability to provide services. Examples include the need for better ADA accessibility in parks and a lack of parking spaces. The demand for more park space from the private sector and non-profits continues to grow, particularly for walking and running events. Heritage programs are impacted by the need for renovation of properties.

Gymnastics programs are contracted, but there was some thought that offering tumbling classes would be beneficial. Home schooling programs was an additional program area that could be tapped into. Robinson Nature Center offers programs for home schooled children, and they fill up quickly. The Tourism Office has a need for space as well. Other comments related to difficulty in accommodating demand included:

» All the athletics are short of officials coaches

» Any program based in the schools

» There is a lot of pressure to do events but we are short of parking

» Demands from Tourism; we don't have parking to accommodate them; everyone is doing sports tourism

» Staff members are looking into using non-traditional space

WHAT SHOULD THE DEPARTMENT DO TO BETTER ACCOMMODATE DEMAND?

Staff comments included the need to build another community center, as well as researching opportunities for alternative spaces such as a church or retail space. Building additional large picnic shelters was also mentioned. Pavilion H holds 300 people; a couple additional pavilions this size are needed. The sports division does pop up programs such as cricket and pickle ball, mountain biking, and archery.

Also mentioned was a need to develop online registration for picnic pavilions. The Department is currently looking into accepting online registrations. Currently a significant customer issue relates to pavilion reservations as potential customers get a voice mail when trying to rent. According to staff, this is a result of a lack of staffing, and results in lost business.

HOW IS THE QUALITY OF THE USER EXPERIENCE MEASURED?

According to the Department's 2015 Program Plan, there is an informed approach to measuring customer satisfaction that states: "Upon completion of each program season, program coordinators distribute Program Evaluations/Customer Service Surveys to participants of their programs.

Results of these evaluations are tabulated and reports are compiled. These evaluations stimulate adjustments to program offerings as well as input for new program offerings. The Department now has available online evaluation software on a limited basis."

Therefore, there is a system wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction, and summative evaluations are prepared. The Department also uses some anecdotal approaches such as instructor interaction with customers. Some areas of the operation use comment cards. Google analytics and zip code analysis are done in some areas to identify locations of customers.

Staff members mentioned that approximately 80% of calls they receive relate to open gym times. A suggestion was made to have the ability to tweet a daily open gym schedule. Staff focus group participants mentioned the desire to have a menu for customers to access information quickly, but the Department prefers to have a live person handling inquiries.

The Department has measures relating to programming, such as a 25% cancellation rate goal and a 20% new program goal per quarter. Additionally, the Department deploys customer service standards that provide guidelines for written communication, oral communication, and staff communication. A standard exists for customer response of 24 hours from the time a customer contacts staff. The standards could be expanded to include standards for instructional staff and contractors that include quality assurance/quality control standards such as class content, and teaching techniques.

IN A RECREATION AND PARKS SETTING, THE GREATEST CHALLENGE FOR DEPARTMENTS IS TO CREATE A CONSISTENT GUEST EXPERIENCE ACROSS DIVISIONS AND BUSINESS UNITS OF THE DEPARTMENT. HOW DOES THE DEPARTMENT WORK TOWARD ENSURING A CONSISTENT USER EXPERIENCE?

The Department works at reducing variation among the different aspects of the service delivery system. Staff members receive a framework for guidance in this area in its branding, communication, rules and regulations, and wayfinding approaches. However, the scheduling of athletic fields is an area that needs improvement. Childcare programs have an extensive level of consistency in its training and manuals. Natural Resource operations have weekly meetings to discuss problems and issues. The communication standards mentioned previously also assists in creating consistent experiences for customers. Playground safety standards are used to assure safe experiences for children.

HOW IS TECHNOLOGY USED TO IMPROVE THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE? HOW DO YOU RECEIVE TRAINING TO LEARN ACTIVE?

The following is a list of responses from the groups:

» Offering online registration
» We scan membership cards
» We want to integrate applepay, but Activenet cannot read it
» Activenet doesn't track scholarships; it's all done manually
» Part of the seasonal report is done manually
» We don't use the full set of capabilities of ActiveNet; if we had time to play around, that would be great
» We have a park app
» Standings and schedules are available
» 24 hour registration wait is not user friendly
» Constant comment email is used
» We can communicate 24/7
» IT Department trains staff; they have a lab for small group training
» GIS database; inquiries about who owns what
» All of the park rangers have a computer in their car; they also have mapping capability

- » Concussion education training
- » Online training for concussion; for other training as well
- » Training for volunteers
- » YouTube sites for coaches
- » Global transparency to the public

TELL ME ABOUT THE INTERNAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND COUNTY GOVERNMENT. DO YOU GET THE SUPPORT NEEDED TO DO A GOOD JOB?

These relationships are generally very good within the Department as well as with other County departments. Any relationship difficulty that does exist with other County Departments usually is a result of departments having staffing difficulties, such as within facilities and fleet. Relationships within the Department work very well, according to the group. However, the relationship with schools is viewed as an area of needed improvement. Another improvement suggestion relates to the warehouse hours, which was mentioned as needing to be open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The payroll process is a manual process, but is currently being automated. There are limitations in staffing as part-time staff can only be assigned two hourly rates. IT

support can be difficult at times within the Department, according to the service employees.

HOW ARE EMPLOYEES TRAINED IN CUSTOMER SERVICE?

To some extent, training varies from one area of the Department to the other. For example, one Center uses a checklist for orientation, yet this is not system wide. YouTube video training is also offered. The existing customer service standards also serve as a training method.

One of the problems relating to service quality is the number of contingent employees providing service. The turnover rate of the employees causes difficulty in the provision of service. Another issue of concern relates to the hours worked by full-time staff working a traditional Monday through Friday schedule from 8:00 to 5:00 pm. Weekend and evening coverage is then staffed by contingent employees. Contingent employees do not have the authority to complete ActiveNet transactions.

Currently, there is no standardized process for ActiveNet training. Staff members mentioned they learn by doing. However, there are regular registration meetings for staff. A training manual for Active is being developed.

IF YOU WERE IN CHARGE OF IMPROVING ONE ELEMENT OF SERVICE, WHAT WOULD THAT BE?

The responses came from the service employee group. They are as follows:

- » Technology aspect of our work; there was a lot of consens us among the group about this.
- » We don't know what we are selling as we haven't been to various parks and facilities.
- » We didn't know we had a new app.
- » Communication within the organization could be improved.
- » Our rental income is our best revenue generator for Gary Arthur. People are renting without being able to see what they are renting; however, the Department is working on a virtual tour, which will be helpful.
- » We are not as tech savvy as we should be.
- » I wish I had the authority to do some things. I need an account approval and can't find a supervisor...and the customer is standing in front of me.
- » We need a field house.
- » Customers should have the ability to register at Wegman's or Dick's Sports.

STATISTICALLY VALID HOUSEHOLD SURVEY RESULTS RELATING TO USER DEMAND

Several questions on the Household Survey related to assessing the quality of the user experience. According to the results, 80% of survey respondents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with parks, facilities and programs. Furthermore, there is very high satisfaction toward cleanliness and maintenance of parks and facilities as 92% of household respondents feel that the Department's assets are either always or sometimes clean and well maintained.

A few significant items to note are the higher satisfaction levels among white residents, with Hispanics notably lower. The 25 to 34 age group is also slightly less satisfied.

Satisfaction is also directly related to income; while lower-income residents are not dissatisfied, satisfaction rates are 25 points lower than the highest-income residents. Satisfaction tops 90% among those who use the rec and parks system at least weekly.

CAPRA STANDARDS AS THEY RELATE TO USER DEMAND

The following section lists CAPRA standards that have a relationship to improving customer satisfaction. Six CAPRA standards have a direct relationship to user experiences. The following information lists the standard, the definition of the standard, and Howard Recreation and Parks performance relative to the standard.

10.1.1 Responsibility for Evaluation:

The agency shall assign specific responsibility for managing elements of the evaluation program including planning, training, evaluation and analysis.

Results: The Department does have an ongoing process for evaluations and analysis. This process should be documented as part of the Program Plan as well as responsibilities being clearly defined.

10.2 - Outcomes Assessment:

The agency shall use evaluation results to assess the outcomes of park and recreation programs, services, and facilities and assess the operational effectiveness of the organization. Outcomes show the relationship between resource inputs and the resulting impacts and benefits of the outputs. Outcomes are measurable changes in behaviors, attitudes, knowledge, conditions or skills.

Results: The Department does use outcome based measures.

10.3 - Performance Measurement:

The agency shall have a procedure for tracking and monitoring data trends and measuring performance against targets linked to achievement of goals and objectives.

Results: The Department does track data such as numbers on wait lists, percent of new programs, cancellation rates, program minimums and maximums, financial and registration results. A suggestion would be to add a measure for customer retention for those programs that have subsequent increasing level of skill.

10.5 - Program and Service Statistics:

The agency shall collect and analyze statistics on its programs and services for evaluation and future program and service development.

Results: The Department does collect and analyze information that provides information about future program and service development. This includes the monthly and seasonal report as well as the Annual Report and Program Plan. A suggestion would be to have a summary report for the four seasonal reports to provide an annual snapshot of performance.

10.4 - Needs Assessment:

The agency shall periodically conduct an assessment of assets and needs to identify existing and projected gaps in service and determine land, facility and service priorities. Need assessments are used to help determine priorities for developing services with the agency. Needs assessments can use a variety of methods to obtain input from the community, including focus groups, advisory boards, forums, and surveys.

Results: As part of the LPPRP process, the Department completed a statistically valid needs assessment survey to identify gaps in service. Also, needs were also identified as part of the Level of Service methodology.

10.6.1 - Quality Assurance:

The agency shall monitor and evaluate the quality of its programs, services and facilities from the user perspective. Examples include but are not limited to customer comment cards, secret/mystery shopper surveys, user satisfaction surveys, program evaluations and focus groups.

Results: The Department uses a variety of methods to assure quality, including the methods mentioned above. One suggestion for improvement would be to develop an overall matrix of all core programs and services and map all of the methods used to assure quality. The process should be mapped or flow charted to ensure common understanding among staff.

BEST PRACTICE APPROACHES

As a result of the Department's efforts aligned with CAPRA standards, an aspirational goal for the Department is to further enhance customer satisfaction based on the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria for Organizational Excellence. There are six criteria for organizational excellence, one of which includes the development of a customer focus. The criteria are outlined below.

Customer Focus assesses how the organization engages its customers for long-term marketplace success, including how the organization listens to the voice of the customer, builds customer relationships, and uses customer information to improve and to identify opportunities for innovation. The Customer Focus area includes two elements: Voice of the Customer and Customer Engagement.

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

a. Customer Listening Criteria: How do you listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain action¬able information? How do your listening methods vary for different customers, customer groups, or market segments? How do you use social media and web-based technologies to listen

to customers, as appropriate? How do you seek immediate and actionable feedback from customers on the quality of products, customer support, and transactions?

Results: The Department uses a variety of mechanisms to listen to the customer. Surveys and program evaluations are most frequently used, supplemented by a statistically valid household survey. Online program evaluations are used as well. It would be helpful to document results in a centralized file location and to have documented verification of follow up on customer feedback. It is also recommended to prepare a yearly calendar or matrix of various listening methods prescribed throughout the entire Department to ensure some level of consistency in how listening methods are used.

b. Determination of Customer Satisfaction and Engagement Criteria: How do you determine customer satisfaction and engagement? How do your determination methods differ among your customer groups and market segments, as appropriate? How do your measurements capture actionable information to use in exceeding your customers' expectations and securing your customers' engagement for the long term? How do you obtain information on your customers' satisfaction relative to their satisfaction with your competitors?

Results: The Department does use a variety of methods to measure customer satisfaction. This could be done more comprehensively. The American Customer Satisfaction Index, an organization involved in measuring customer satisfaction in multiple industries, uses the following benchmark information:

» Customer Satisfaction

» Customer Expectations

» Perceived Quality

» Perceived Value

» Customer Complaints

» Customer Loyalty

The Department could develop specific surveys for core programs and facilities, but use these standardized questions that could be trend charted year to year. The customer satisfaction rating could be done on an organizational basis and trend charted year to year.

Customer expectations (commonly referred to as customer requirements) should be identified to better ensure the Department delivers expectations according to customer specifications. Recreation and park agencies have complex service systems, given the number and types of programs and facilities. Furthermore, most of the service delivery is performed by young and/or contingent employees who generally need a more

detailed framework for assuring quality service. A suggestion is to identify five key customer requirements for each core program or facility operation. (This creates a sense of focus rather than having 25 or so customer requirements). For example, a fitness center user's five most important customer requirements could include items such as:

» Facility cleanliness

» Equipment access

» Type and variety of equipment

» Staff knowledge

» Membership fee

By identifying the most critical elements of importance to the customer, staff members can focus on delivering what's most important. Survey questions/program evaluations should relate to the customer requirements. Training of staff should focus on these elements. Each of the requirements can be detailed for better and more specific understanding. Customer requirements are best determined by the customer, through a survey and/or focus group process. An additional source of customer requirement information includes discussions with staff that have primary responsibility for serving customers.

Perceived value is represented by costs divided by benefits. Therefore, it is important to provide information to the customer

that outlines the benefits of the purchased program or service.

Additionally, if the cost of the service increases, there should be a corresponding improvement to the benefits. When fees increase, it is important to provide information to the customer about the benefits.

The Malcolm Baldrige criteria include the importance of knowing how the Department's services compare to like services. A recommendation includes developing a similar provider evaluation on a two-three year period. This involves an analysis of comparison of program and service attributes. In addition, an ongoing survey question should include, "if you took this program or experienced this service elsewhere, is there anything we can learn to improve our service."

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

a. Product Offerings and Customer Support Criteria: How do you determine customer and market requirements for product offerings and services? How do you identify and adapt product offerings to meet the requirements and exceed the expectations of your customer groups and market segments? How do you enable customers to seek information and support and enable them to conduct business with you and give feedback?

Results: As mentioned previously, the Department should work toward identifying customer requirements for core program and facility operations. The Department's ongoing customer satisfaction measurement systems assist in determining customer and market requirements. It would be helpful to formalize this process in which data is captured about service improvements implemented and sharing the results with staff.

A few best practice recreation and park agencies have developed a system-wide, cross functional team to oversee the service system. Creating an overall system can minimize service quality variation. The team would be accountable for the Department's overall service system and create process improvements to ensure continued high customer satisfaction. The team could also expand the use of standards to include quality control standards for programs and services as well as develop an agency-wide customer service training program. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to offer sales training to front line staff in order to optimize the Agency's ability to attract and retain customers.

b. Building Customer Relationships Management (CRM) Criteria: How do you market, build, and manage relationships with customers to acquire customers and build market share; retain customers, meet their

requirements, and exceed their expectations in each stage of the customer life cycle; and increase their engagement with you?

Results: Marketing efforts include branding the agency's programs and services. Marketing staff members are currently working on identifying ways to connect better with minority populations. The Department should identify CRM techniques to build upon existing customer relationships, such as measuring customer retention and developing a reward system for loyal customers. Marketing is also working on developing more customized marketing according to customer markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USER DEMAND IMPROVEMENT

» Continue and expand efforts to market to various ethnic populations.

» Develop customer requirements for core program and facility areas.

» Expand the use of standards to include quality control for programs and services.

» Develop a system wide customer service team to oversee the service system. The team's purpose is to be responsible for creating a service framework and exerting accountability for service improvements.

» Develop customer service benchmarks and trend chart from year to year. Include an overall customer satisfaction measurement percentage for the agency.

» Strengthen the customer satisfaction measurement system by documenting the process and identify a yearly calendar of measurement methods.

» Develop an agency wide customer service training program.

» Consider developing "flexible solution space" or developing more autonomy and accountability for front line service employees. The term flexible solution space (FSS) is a term used by the Technical Assistance Research Programs, an organization that does research on service quality. FSS provides written guidelines that outline specific areas in which staff members have autonomy to handle customer concerns.

» Address the concern related to staffing centers with contingency employees during peak times.

Appendix D.
Needs Assessment

This document complies with the CAPRA standard 10.4 Needs Assessment, which calls for the periodic assessment of assets and needs to identify existing and projected gaps in service and determine land, facility and service priorities. The following document includes the current needs assessment, a description of the methodology used to conduct the assessment, and a description of how the Department uses the assessment in planning. This assessment is updated every five to seven years in conjunction with the LPPRP process.

METHODOLOGY

The Needs Assessment consists of four components: the level of service analysis, user demand analysis, recreation program assessment, and trends and innovation assessment. The procedural steps for each of these components is outlined below.

Level of Service Analysis

The Level of Service Analysis is intended to identify the provision of overall park space and amenities located within Howard County, determine the gaps in the system today, as well as inform the development of goals for future level of service standards. Level of service has evolved from the use of unilateral standards applied to all agencies and has moved to creating customized information. The analysis for this plan includes a variety of methods to determine these standards including a thorough inventory, analysis of forecasted needs and existing gaps in the system, and comparison to national metrics. Two of the Level of Service Analysis components are outlined and discussed below as part of the Needs Assessment.

Peer Benchmarking

As part of the level of service analysis, the county's park and recreation amenities were compared with similarly sized counties throughout the United States. These national metrics were synthesized from 39 peer recreation and park systems of 250,000 residents or more, all of which had submitted their data to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database. This comparison of 39 similar recreation and park systems is included at the end of this document in table format.

While NRPA Park Metrics benchmarking is very useful for gauging an overall sense of park and amenity provision within the county, it does not tell the complete story. These numbers must be reviewed together with feedback and results from all components of the Needs Assessment in order to determine the community need.

Social Accessibility and Gap Analysis

In addition to comparing the county's system to national benchmarks, the Needs

Assessment also examined issues surrounding social and geographic accessibility. In order to identify areas with high and low park and amenity accessibility, the Consulting Team utilized GIS to map each location and define their surrounding service areas to see how well the park or amenity served the county, based on population characteristics and access.

In considering how well the county's parks and amenities serve the community, it is useful to measure access in terms of both walking and driving distances. The Consulting Team generated "isochrones", a representation of the catchment areas served by an amenity within a given travel time and mode. In this case, The Team determined catchment areas within a 5-minute walk (1/4 mile) and 10-minute drive (2 miles) of park system amenities. The populations residing within the determined catchment areas were then calculated and combined to define the overall percentage of county residents with access. In response to the results from the national standards analysis, the Consulting Team decided to focus specifically on accessibility of parks, community centers, athletic fields, playgrounds, water access points, and pavilions.

This mapping process, together with the other components of the needs assessment, will form the basis for identifying gaps in service and potential opportunities for future facility development and capital planning.

User Demand Analysis

In order to better understand the system, it is crucial to determine user satisfaction and efforts to improve the guest experience. This section of the needs assessment includes a high level overview of the service system, primarily drawn from staff focus groups and interviews, a review of policies and procedures, and a review of survey results and public input sessions.

Stakeholder Focus Groups

The Consultant Team held six focus group sessions over the course of two days with the following local stakeholders:

County similar providers

The Department sent an online survey to gather information about other County providers of similar services and received a total of 48 survey responses from 42 individual agencies. The survey covered topics such as customer demand, duplication of service, and existing partnerships with the Department.

County agencies

A group interview with other County agencies included both departments that work/partner with the Department of Recreation and Parks and departments that have a limited relationship or no relationship

with the Department. Representatives from the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), Office on Aging, and the Departments of Community Resources and Services, Planning and Zoning, Tourism, Environmental Planning, Public Works and Finance.

Columbia Association

Columbia Association is both a partner and similar provider in Howard County. Representatives from the Association's parks and trails group provided feedback on their relationship with the Department and any overlapping or unmet needs between the two organizations.

Voices for Change

Middle and high school-aged children with the group Voices for Change participated in an hour long discussion about their impressions of the county offerings and provided valuable feedback on subjects including but not limited to family and individual access to amenities, connectivity, overlap/partnerships with HCPSS, and programming.

Athletics and Recreation

A group interview was scheduled with various athletics groups that operate within the Department or partner with the Department for access to facilities and fields. The

County recreation and sports director and a representative from the Elkridge Youth Organization attended the discussion.

Recreational Licensed Childcare Pickup and Preschool Camp

Informal, individual interviews were held with parents dropping off young children for preschool camp and parents picking up later elementary age children from day camp. Many elementary aged children joined conversations with parents or voluntarily provided feedback related to the future of system offerings.

Representatives of the senior population

Seniors visiting the Florence Bain Senior Center provided informal feedback related to their experience with the Department offerings.

Representatives from land conservation and agricultural conservation groups

A mix of individuals and groups were represented in this meeting. Farmers, the Department of Planning and Zoning, Trail Riders of Today (TROT), the Howard County Conservancy, and the Office of Sustainability all provided valuable feedback related to specific and universal stakeholder needs.

Statistically Valid Survey

As part of the 2017 LPPRP, the Department sponsored a countywide survey of Howard County residents to assess the needs and preferences of the public for recreation and parks facilities and programs. OpinionWorks LLC, an independent research organization based in Annapolis, Maryland, conducted a representative countywide random sample telephone survey of 800 Howard County adults between June 29 and July 2, 2016. Both landline and wireless telephones were included in the survey, which was conducted by live operators. The results of this survey have a potential sampling error no greater than ±3.5% at the 95% confidence level.

Recreation Program Assessment

In addition to gauging existing need from user demand analysis, the Needs Assessment also incorporates elements of the Recreation Program Assessment. This assessment is geared towards identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for Howard County's Recreation and Parks future program direction. Through an analysis of Howard County's program and service offerings, including reviews of monthly reports, fees policies and marketing plans, in addition to interviews and staff member-completed surveys, the recreation assessment intends to build upon the Department's high performance to ensure alignment with community needs. While the Recreation Program Assessment encompasses many aspects of the Department's recreation program area, the Needs Assessment only incorporates the sections focusing on existing needs within the county.

Trends and Innovation Assessment

The Trends and Innovation Assessment outlines leisure activity trends at the nation, state and local levels based on the most recent Physical Activity Council report. The report identifies activity levels in various age groups and provides insight into key sport, fitness and recreation participation trends. The Needs Assessment focuses on portions of this assessment that highlight trend areas anticipated to grow and become future community needs.

SUMMARY OF NEEDS

The following section summarizes the findings from each of the four components, highlighting the existing and projected system gaps and prioritizing improvements moving forward. While all components contributed to this summary of County needs, the statistically valid survey results from the level of service analysis were used to guide the overall framework.

The survey indicated that the Department is serving an already very physically active, engaged, and supportive community. Approximately 42% of residents frequently use recreation facilities or parks and 80% of residents are very or somewhat satisfied with the amenities and programs provided by the Department. Although this is a relatively high rate of usage for a county recreation and park system, the geographic areas and demographic groups that reported the lowest usage should still be targeted when considering the prioritization of needs. The Southeast (referred to as "Laurel" in the survey) and Elkridge planning areas reported the lowest recreation facility or park usage and female residents reported lower usage than male residents. In terms of age groups, both young adults (ages 25-34) and senior residents (age 65 or older) reported the lowest usage.

Howard County residents are also very committed to the Department's improvement, as 85% reported that they strongly or somewhat support dedicating more County resources to improving park, recreation and open space system. This support from County residents is crucial for the Department to evolve as an agency and better meet community needs.

Several of the following needs are identified in specific planning areas to guide future Department decisions; however, it should be noted that these gaps only reflect county amenities and not those that may be accessible outside of the county.

Existing and Projected Gaps

Parks

Howard County ranks very well among other recreation and park systems in terms of programmed parkland, with their total of 5,750 acres amounting to more than double the national median acreage. However, the total number of parks maintained (95) is slightly less than the national median (100).

Overall, walking access is very poor across the county and driving access is very high with the well-developed road network transecting the county's most populous areas. For example, 96% of the county population lives within a 10-minute drive of a park, while only 6% lives within a 5-minute walk of a

park. However, both walking and driving accessibility results for parks and amenities were similar across multiple population groups including youth under age 18, the minority population, and those over age 65, implying that no single user group is more or less disadvantaged than another.

Apart from acreage and geographic accessibility, the county park system also needs to improve its legibility. Several of the senior citizens that attended one of the focus group discussions indicated a need for better wayfinding throughout the park system in order to avoid getting lost.

Trails

Community feedback from engagement events indicated the need for a larger, better connected trail system and more hiking opportunities. In response to one of the statistically valid survey questions about frequency of park amenity usage, trails and pathways were reported as the most used with 33% of respondents using them often and 29% using them sometimes. Respondents to the similar provider survey also noted their inability to meet customer demand for hiking opportunities. During the focus group discussion for local land and agricultural conservation stakeholders, several attendees voiced the need for more continuous trails for all uses, including commuting and equestrian purposes. A

coordinated effort to link open space corridors, existing trails, and parkland throughout the county would meet both recreation and transportation needs. This effort can also include additional clarity and documentation of maintenance arrangements with similar providers of trails, like the Columbia Association.

Amenities

In comparison to national standards for amenities, Howard County performs well overall. However, while the number of these amenities may appear to meet or surpass national standards, accessibility of these amenities must also be considered. As previously mentioned, walking access to amenities is relatively poor across the county, while driving access is quite high. The 2017 LPPRP identifies the following amenity needs:

Athletic courts

Although the county has more athletic courts than the national median according to NRPA Park Metrics, public feedback through community meetings and the statistically valid survey has suggested that there is a need for several specific types of courts, such as pickeball. Discussions with various athletic groups that operate within the Department or partner with the Department for access to facilities and fields also revealed a great demand for more 90' baseball diamonds,

developing a field scheduling process to prioritize membership organizations, and encouraging the development of more turf fields in order to avoid flooding and the rescheduling of events. Those included in the Voices for Change focus group discussion also echoed the need for more baseball fields.

Community gardens

The County also ranks above the national median with three community gardens; however, public feedback and national health and wellness trends have suggested that there is a need for additional community garden opportunities, specifically in the developed eastern area of the county where not all residents have garden space. Respondents to the similar provider survey also noted their inability to meet customer demand for community gardens.

Water access

While the county meets the national median for water access points, there is still room to grow. Public feedback via community events and the survey has shown that parks with water access are high in demand, and studies have proven that access to nature can have significant health benefits. Currently, only 10% of all residents live within a 10-minute drive of one of the county's four water access points.

Swimming pools

Swimming pools in the county are primarily offered by other similar providers, including Columbia Association. Columbia Association pools are fee-based, but open to all residents of Howard County. Therefore, although the county falls short of the national median of three swimming pools, there is no significant shortage. However, both public feedback online and at community events has indicated that there is a demand for a 50 meter length pool. The County received a total of 126 individual online comments requesting a pool of this size. Similarly, attendees at the focus group discussion for preschool and day camp parents highlighted the need for more swimming pools and swim lessons throughout the year.

Playgrounds

With a total of 44 playgrounds, the county falls below the national median of 50 playgrounds. However, it should be noted that there are an additional 170 tot lots operated by Columbia Association that were not factored into this total. While the county would exceed the national median of playgrounds by including the Columbia Association tot lots in their total, it would still create a need for additional playgrounds in the other four planning areas. Furthermore, discussions at the focus group with Columbia Association indicated that the association

plans to reduce the number of existing tot lots. To date, they have only removed five playgrounds; however, approximately 50 playgrounds are planned for removal.

Dog parks

With only one dog park owned by the Department, the county falls short of the national median of three dog parks for similar sized counties. The only other dog park within Howard County, apart from the Department's Worthington Dog Park, located in Ellicott City, is the Columbia Dog Park, owned and maintained by Columbia Association. As a result, there remains a need for dog parks in the county's other three planning areas (Elkridge, Southeast, and Rural West). The need for more dog parks was also reinforced by those that attended the Voices for Change focus group discussion.

Splash pads

The County owns and operates only one splash pad, just one below the national median. The sole splash pad is located at the Roger Carter Community Center in Ellicott City, therefore creating a need for more splash pads in the other four planning areas – Elkridge, Columbia, Southeast and Rural West. Those that attended the Voices for Change focus group also expressed a need for more water play opportunities.

Pavilions

Although the county maintains 30 pavilions, 40% of all residents do not live within driving distance of a pavilion. The pavilions are dispersed across the five planning areas; however, they are only located within 16 of the total 95 County parks.

Community centers

With only three community centers, the county has three fewer than the national median for a county of their size. The three existing centers, located within the Ellicott City, Southeast and Rural West planning areas, are also not very accessible for many residents, with only 15% of the total population living within driving distance (10-minute drive). While the Department already has plans to locate a fourth community center in Troy Park at Elkridge, there remains a gap of two additional community centers. Department staff have identified Rockburn Branch Park as a potential site for one of these future community centers.

Programming Space

Findings from the recreation program assessment, focus group discussions and the similar provider survey all indicate a great need for additional indoor space. In response to one of the similar provider survey questions, 40% of respondents claimed facility-related constraints such as needing more field space, court time, and ice time, as well as activity room capacity. Local stakeholders that attended the land and agricultural conservation and Voices for Change focus groups discussions identified the need for an indoor tennis center and a weight room. Currently the only indoor tennis center within the county is operated by Columbia Association and requires membership. Those that attended the athletics and recreation focus group discussion highlighted the growing popularity of pickleball and the associated future space needs.

Maintenance

Stakeholders that attended the athletic and recreation focus group discussion indicated that there is a general need to upgrade lighting at several of the older County facilities and fields.

Programs

The Department boasts more than 1,700 program offerings per season and an overall high recreation participation rate. Only 5% of the statistically valid survey respondents mentioned a need for more programs. Despite these results, the Department still faces existing and future anticipated gaps in recreation programming. Primarily, this

area of the Department will need to adapt to the changing demographics of the county. By 2040, the county's 55+ population is anticipated to increase to represent 34% of the total population, and the non-white population is anticipated to increase to represent 63% of the total population. Both statistics suggest that recreation programming will need to accommodate an aging population and an increase in outreach strategies to minority populations.

The following program areas have been identified as community needs:

Access to nature

Similar provider survey responders expressed inability to meet customer demand for access to nature programs such as horticultural and birding programs.

Active adult services

In response to the changing county demographics, the Department will need to develop more accessible programming and amenities specifically targeted towards the aging population, as well as the active adult population.

Art Programs

Attendees of the similar providers' focus group discussion indicated the need for more partnerships to develop art programs.

Boxing and self-defense

Several attendees of the Voices for Change focus group discussion expressed a need for more boxing and self-defense courses.

Childcare and camps

Parents that attended the focus group discussion surrounding County day cares and camps highlighted the need for more preschool opportunities (five days a week) and better clustering of programs and camps to improve scheduling for families with multiple children. This group also focused on the need for more fitness programs, such as dance or yoga, in convenient locations offering childcare opportunities.

Inline skating

Several of the stakeholders that attended the focus group for land and agricultural conservation expressed the need for more inline skating opportunities.

Off-season sports

Howard County youth that attended the Voices of Change focus group discussion emphasized the need for off-season sports programs.

Outdoor fitness

Numerous comments from community engagement events indicated the need for additional outdoor fitness opportunities such as yoga or tai chi in parks.

Pick-up leagues

The Voices of Change focus group discussion also highlighted the need for more pick-up leagues. Those that attended this focus group also voiced their concern about the need to register for all programs and how this can promote a sense of over-scheduling.

System Priorities

The following priorities for the county recreation and park system have been identified by the Department in response to the four components of the Needs Assessment.

Parks and Trails

» Develop new open space requirements

» Promote western land acquisition if it enhances connectivity across county-owned parcels

» Improve bike access and trail connectivity countywide

» Expand trail maintenance support

» Address the lack of parks in the growing northwest area of the County through school partnerships and acquisition

» Acquire land adjacent to parks and open spaces where appropriate to expand functions parks

» Prioritize land acquisition along the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers

Amenities

» Prioritize land acquisitions, amenities and facilities in areas with dense or growing populations, especially along I-95 and Route 32 corridors

» Expand and better integrate community gardens into the neighborhoods

» Determine actual demand for indoor pickleball space based on the number of players

» Develop two-mile walking track and standalone pavilions at Blandair Park

Facilities

» Develop stronger partnership with school system to better share spaces

» Research the cost/benefit of adding indoor pools to every community center

» Enhance overall walkability and explore sites for new community centers in appropriate areas within the count

Programs

» Consider outside partnerships to encourage access for county residents to programming not offered by the Department

» Establish more effective programming in concert with growing communities within the county

Appendix E.
NRPA PRORAGIS Report

	MEDIAN	Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks	Arlington County Department of Park and Recreation	Arlington Parks and Recreation TX	Atlanta (City of) Dept of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	Brown County Parks Department
Jurisdiction Population		309,284	226,908	383,204	456,002	256,000
Parks Maintained	100	95	142			
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389	5,676	918			
Water Access	1	1	0			
Splash Pads	2	1	4			
Swimming Pools	3	1	0	6	11	0
Athletic Courts	83	113	142	66	270	1
Baseball Fields	41	56	0	86	375	6
Rectangular Fields	29	47	41	97	227	2
Community Gardens	1	3	7	1	22	0
Skate Park	1	3	1			
Playgrounds	50	44	73	49	111	5
Dog Parks	3	1	8	1	5	1
Recreation Centers	6	3	15	5	33	0

	MEDIAN	Chandler Community Services Department	Denver Parks and Recreation (City and County of)	East Baton Rouge Parish (BREC) Recreation and Park Commission	El Paso (City of), Parks and Recreation	Forsyth County Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		249,146	663,862	443,598	679,036	204,000
Parks Maintained	100	70	283			
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389	1,528.89	5,957			
Water Access	1		1			
Splash Pads	2	3				
Swimming Pools	3	20	16	3	4	0
Athletic Courts	83	140	336	150	126	35
Baseball Fields	41	35	132	79	0	104
Rectangular Fields	29	31	176	101	57	23
Community Gardens	1		8	1	2	0
Skate Park	1	1	5			
Playgrounds	50	65	153	125	175	20
Dog Parks	3	4	9	5	3	
Recreation Centers	6	1	25	62	17	3

	MEDIAN	Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation	Frederick Co Parks & Rec	Garland Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts	Gilbert Parks and Recreation	Glendale Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		258,522	243,675	235,501	239,572	226,721
Parks Maintained	100	86	20			
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389	2,446	2,096			
Water Access	1	4	0			
Splash Pads	2	7	0			
Swimming Pools	3	3	0	3	4	2
Athletic Courts	83	111	44	17	18	94
Baseball Fields	41	38	40	8	18	38
Rectangular Fields	29	28	54	3	24	82
Community Gardens	1	1	1		0	1
Skate Park	1	1	0			
Playgrounds	50	56	24		7	97
Dog Parks	3	2	1		2	3
Recreation Centers	6	1	7	6	1	3

	MEDIAN	Jefferson County Open Space	Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation	McHenry County Conservation District	Mesa Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department	Miami (City of) Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		525,000	467,007	307,409	462,376	430,332
Parks Maintained	100			33	199	131
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389			25,100	2,389	1,016
Water Access	1			1		5
Splash Pads	2			0	2	0
Swimming Pools	3	0	22	0	9	12
Athletic Courts	83	0	180	4	95	152
Baseball Fields	41	0	665	0	49	57
Rectangular Fields	29	0	56	0	20	42
Community Gardens	1	0	4	0	1	0
Skate Park	1			0	2	0
Playgrounds	50	0	98	0	66	33
Dog Parks	3	1	3	0	2	4
Recreation Centers	6	0	10	0	5	43

	MEDIAN	Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board	New Hanover County Parks & Gardens	Norfolk Department of Recreation, Parks & Open Space	Norfolk's (City of) Recreation, Parks & Open Space Department	Northwest Special Recreation Assn
Jurisdiction Population		400,079	202,667	246,392	242,803	587,307
Parks Maintained	100		15			
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389		1,500			
Water Access	1					
Splash Pads	2					
Swimming Pools	3	66		3	7	0
Athletic Courts	83	0	38	135	5	0
Baseball Fields	41	0	21	71	0	0
Rectangular Fields	29	0	30	55	0	0
Community Gardens	1	3		4		0
Skate Park	1					
Playgrounds	50	112	11	17		0
Dog Parks	3	7		11		0
Recreation Centers	6	50		9		1

	MEDIAN	Saginaw County Parks and Recreation Commission	San Luis Obispo (County of), Parks and Recreation	Santa Cruz Co Parks & Rec Dept	St. Charles County Parks & Recreation	Tacoma (Metro) Parks
Jurisdiction Population		200,000	279,083	271,804	373,495	203,000
Parks Maintained	100					62
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389					1,020.10
Water Access	1				2	0
Splash Pads	2					10
Swimming Pools	3	0	7	3		3
Athletic Courts	83	7	34	21	7	47
Baseball Fields	41	0	8	9	0	48
Rectangular Fields	29	0	6	18	0	4
Community Gardens	1	0	1	3		10
Skate Park	1				1	7
Playgrounds	50	5	20	28		43
Dog Parks	3	1	5	1	2	4
Recreation Centers	6	0		1		1

	MEDIAN	Tampa Parks & Recreation	Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District	Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation	Wichita (City of) Park and Recreation Department	Wichita Park and Recreaton
Jurisdiction Population		358,699	230,000	450,980	385,518	382,368
Parks Maintained	100	178	100	272		130
Total Acres of Parks Maintained	2,389	1,820	618	7,381		5,000
Water Access	1	6	0			
Splash Pads	2	7	1	1		
Swimming Pools	3	12	2	0	9	8
Athletic Courts	83	176	222	236	151	192
Baseball Fields	41	87	105	143	53	55
Rectangular Fields	29	26	164	97	56	70
Community Gardens	1	1	12		1	
Skate Park	1	3	3	3		
Playgrounds	50	80	87	215	82	89
Dog Parks	3	12	3	3	3	3
Recreation Centers	6	38	6	6	9	9