

AGENDA ITEM #5
April 2, 2019

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

MEMORANDUM

March 29, 2019

TO: County Council

FROM: Marlene Michaelson, Executive Director *MM*
Pamela Dunn, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Semi-Annual Report of the Planning Board

PURPOSE: Review Planning Department and Department of Parks accomplishments and work program and provide input on work program.

The Semi-Annual Report of the Planning Board to the Council typically occurs in the spring and fall each year and is an opportunity for the Planning Board to present its proposed work program and brief the Council on major planning and parks issues before the Board. The Report is attached, and a color copy is available online at:

https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/2019_Spring_semiannual_print.pdf

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Semi-Annual Report lists the master plans in progress and proposed on page 34. The following chart compares the schedule approved by the Council in the fall with the new one proposed in this Semi-Annual Report. The proposed schedule shows delays in the next group of Plans the Council will receive, including the Germantown Plan for the Town Sector zone, the Montgomery Hills/Forest Glen Sector Plan, the Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment, and the Ashton Minor Master Plan Amendment. While delays in master plan deliveries are not unusual, these delays end up compressing the initiation of review for these 4 plans to a 5-month period, with 2 overlapping budget review. If the Planning Department cannot accelerate the delivery of one or more plans, they should delay delivery for one or two to late spring, so the Council can work on it after budget, over the summer.

DATE FOR COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING OR REVIEW

| Master Plan/Study | October 2018 Approved | April 2019 |
|--|---|--|
| MARC Rail Stations | January 2019 | February 2019 |
| Veirs Mill Rd Corridor Plan | February 2019 | February 2019 |
| Germantown Plan for Town Sector Zone | June 2019 | October 2019 |
| Montgomery Hills/Forest Glen Sector Plan | June 2019 | January 2020 |
| Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment | October 2019 | February 2020 |
| Ashton Minor Master Plan Amendment | January 2020 | February 2020 |
| Roadway Functional Classification System | February 2020 | June 2020 |
| Pedestrian Master Plan | | May 2021 |
| Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update | | May 2021 |
| General Plan Update | Council review shown as beginning July 2020 | Council review not shown in the period of the Report (Planning Board work shown through June 2021) |

Typically, the Semi-Annual Report at the beginning of a new Council term proposes new master plans to be completed over the 4-year term, but this Report does not propose any significant additions to the workprogram other than the Pedestrian Master Plan and Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan Update. Instead, it appears that the Department will focus on the General Plan Update, with no new land use master plans after the Council’s adoption of the Shady Grove and Ashton Minor Master Plan Amendments (tentatively in the summer of 2020). Two transportation-related plans are recommended to be transmitted to the Council almost a year later in the spring of 2021 (the Pedestrian Master Plan and an update of the Rustic Roads Master Plan).

The General Plan Update is discussed on pages 7-8, but it is unclear when the draft plan would be submitted to the Council since the schedule on page 34 shows the Planning Board working on it through the end of FY21. **Unless it can be transmitted to the Council to be considered no later than the fall of 2021, it should be deferred until 2023, rather than be reviewed shortly before or after the Council primary elections.**

In addition to master plans, the Planning Department lists eight evaluations/studies underway, a number almost equal to the number of plans. With the exception of the Purple Line Implementation Plan, the Semi-Annual Report does not provide any information regarding these efforts. Staff recommends these items be discussed further by the PHED Committee during M-NCPPC’s budget review.

Other topics covered in the Semi-Annual Report related to the Planning Department include Vision Zero (page 11-12), historical markers to commemorate African American communities (page 13), Purple Line Corridor Mobility, Economic Development and Transit-Oriented Finance and Implementation Plan (page 13), Community Engagement (page 15), Housing (page 15), Economic Health (page 18), Community Planning and Revitalization (page 22), Design Guidelines (page 23), and Development Projects (page 27). Joint efforts of the Planning Department and Department of Parks include Community Equity as discussed on page 11, Placemaking on page 24, Environmental Resilience on page 28, and the state-initiated Managed Lanes Study on page 31.


PARKS DEPARTMENT

Topics related to the Department of Parks are interspersed throughout the report and focus on activating parks, delivering new and improved hard and natural surface trails in close proximity to areas of highest population, planning for trails where there are service gaps, and expanding potential commuting opportunities with e-bikes and e-scooters (page 17). Other topics include the park volunteer program and studies of future parks (page 21), continued improvement and expansion of the sustainable athletic fields program (page 30), and Stream Restoration (page 31).

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PARKS + PLANNING
SPRING 2019 SEMIANNUAL REPORT

 M-NCPPC





About Us

The Montgomery County Planning Department and Department of Parks are dedicated to improving the quality of life by conserving and enhancing the natural and built environments for current and future generations while creating great communities. This goal is achieved through the master planning and development review process as well as protecting and interpreting Montgomery County's valuable natural and cultural resources, balancing demand for recreation with the need for conservation and providing clean, safe and accessible places.

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Letter From Our Chair

President Navarro and Members of the County Council:

I am pleased to present our Spring 2019 Semiannual Report, which highlights the accomplishments of the Planning Board, Planning Department and Department of Parks in strengthening the county's economic competitiveness, advancing social equity and improving residents' quality of life.

This year, we begin updating our 1964 General Plan. This enduring framework has successfully established an efficient and sustainable development pattern in Montgomery County. It has helped us preserve open spaces and environmental resources, concentrate development in urban areas and corridors, and create a connected transportation system. As we revise the plan more than 50 years later, we are focusing our work through the lens of community equity, economic health and environmental resilience.

We have already been making progress on these fronts. Our work on recent projects and plans, including the Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study, Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan and Energized Public Spaces Master Plan, explicitly include equity components and our outreach teams have been using innovative tools to successfully engage a diverse array of residents.

Our research team recently completed the Montgomery County Trends Report, which identifies changes in housing, population and employment over 25 years.

This data will help guide economic development strategies as well as equity goals in the updated General Plan.

Successful placemaking efforts, like the partnership between the Parks and Planning Departments, Randolph Hills Civic Association and Better Block Foundation to create a pop-up park in a Rockville shopping center, help bring new life to aging commercial areas and encourage community participation in the development process.

The Parks Department has always been a leader in environmental stewardship. Over the past year, Parks worked with the county's Department of Environmental Protection on a plan to make stormwater management projects more cost-effective while realizing the best possible environmental benefits.

On the planning side, our continued focus on redevelopment of aging strip centers and parking lots into compact, walkable, mixed-use communities also contributes to reduced vehicle miles traveled, less stormwater runoff and decreased energy consumption. We are encouraged by progress on development plans in areas such as White Oak, Montgomery Village and Clarksburg, as well as Bethesda and other parts of the county that have long been centers of economic activity.

Our Planning Department recently received several notable awards, including the American Planning Association National Capital Area Chapter's Outstanding Plan Award for the Downtown Bethesda Sector Plan and the Harold Foster Award for Community Outreach and Engagement, as well as the Washington Area Bicyclist Association's Bicyclists' Choice Award for the county's new Bicycle Master Plan. I am proud of our staff's achievements and grateful for the opportunity to share the results of our work with you.

Respectfully Submitted,



Casey Anderson
Planning Board Chair



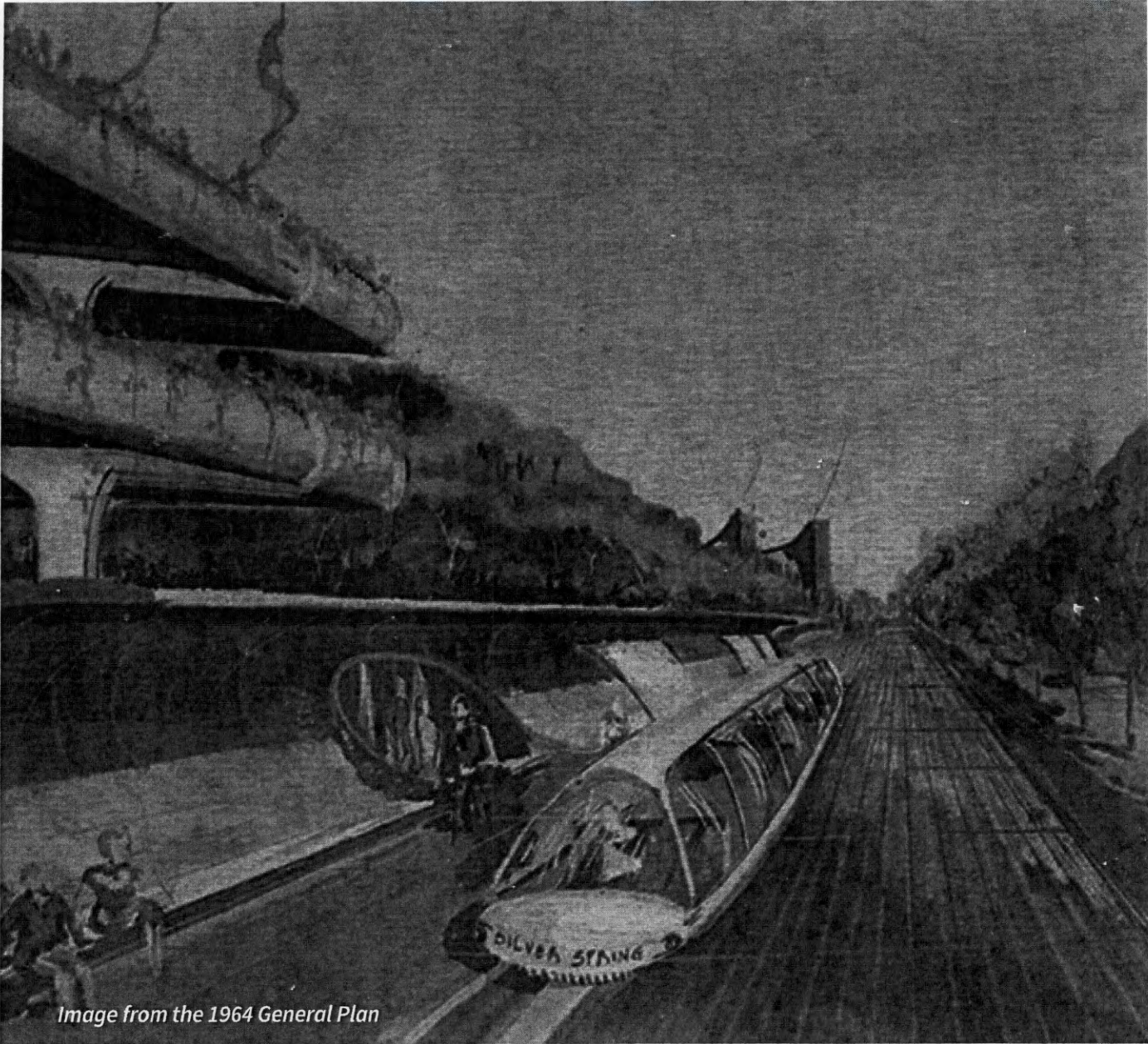


Image from the 1964 General Plan

Introduction

Montgomery County's great urban, suburban, and rural communities, verdant parks and transportation corridors were shaped by planners and community members who developed the award-winning General Plan: On Wedges and Corridors in 1964. This long-term land use policy document has guided the county's physical development through an overall vision, values and policies set more than half a century ago.

The General Plan has great relevance as it informs the shape and character of every neighborhood in Montgomery County, the types of community facilities and amenities that serve residents and businesses, and the ways we travel throughout the county. It is continually updated and revised through local master plans, sector plans and countywide functional plans.

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It's time for us to ask, 'what's next?' So much has changed since 1964: we are traveling in different ways, working in different ways and living in different ways. We need to address the challenges and new technologies to figure out how not just to exist, but to **thrive**.

Gwen Wright
Planning Director



But 50 years have passed since the General Plan was reviewed comprehensively and there are many new forces that must be recognized and accounted for: demographic shifts, technological changes and economic realities that are already changing the face of Montgomery County. These factors necessitate stepping back from our geographically specific master plan updates to look at the big picture and update the General Plan to respond to changes that were not even contemplated 50 years ago.

Over the next year, Montgomery Planning, in close collaboration with the Montgomery County Council, will engage the community to imagine what life in the county could be in 2050. This effort will reveal the tools and policies we need to put in place to allow us to thrive in the decades to come. The update will envision a county that is equitable, economically healthy and environmentally resilient for all residents.

“We are preparing for one of our most important plans in decades – the General Plan Update. It will determine how the county will respond to change for the next 30 years,” says Planning Director Gwen Wright. “It’s time for us to ask, ‘what’s next?’ So much has changed since 1964: we are traveling in different ways, working in

different ways and living in different ways. We need to address the challenges and new technologies to figure out how not just to exist, but to thrive. I’m energized by the opportunity to collaborate with community members to craft a new vision for the future of Montgomery County.”

In preparing for the General Plan Update, the Planning Department focused its 2019 Winter Speaker Series on issues related to this project, including sessions on comprehensive plans undertaken by other jurisdictions in the region, resilience in all its forms and regional mobility. We heard innovative ideas that will influence the direction of the General Plan.

In January 2019, the Planning Department issued the Montgomery County Trends Report, identifying changes in population, housing and employment in the county since 1990. Planners will use this data to inform and support the update of the General Plan.

The strategic framework for the General Plan Update rests on three pillars of planning – community equity, economic health, environmental resilience -- that have informed our work over the past six months and will be carried forward as we work on the General Plan and other projects.

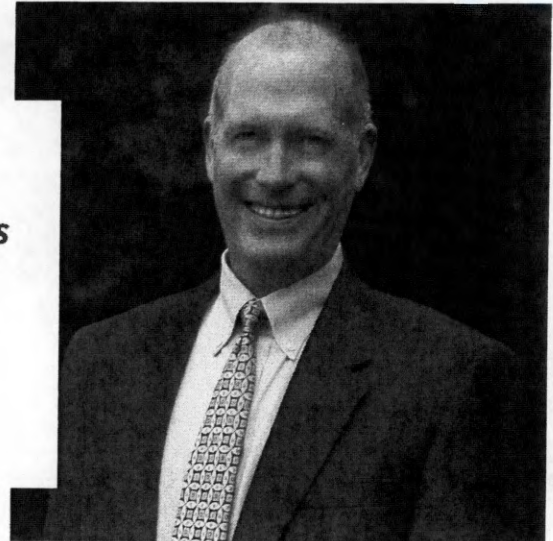
Strategic Framework of the General Plan Update



“

Our parks play a vital role in achieving Montgomery County’s racial equity and social justice goals by ensuring **all residents** have access to spaces and opportunities to be physically and mentally healthy, experience nature and bond with their neighbors to build strong communities.

Mike Riley
Director of Parks





Community Equity

The Montgomery County Parks and Planning Departments are striving to advance equity through all of our plans and programs. The goal is to ensure that all county residents have equitable access to housing, transportation, jobs, community facilities and open spaces, a high quality of life and safety.

Vision Zero

Implementation of Montgomery County's Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030 is supported by recent plans, projects and studies:

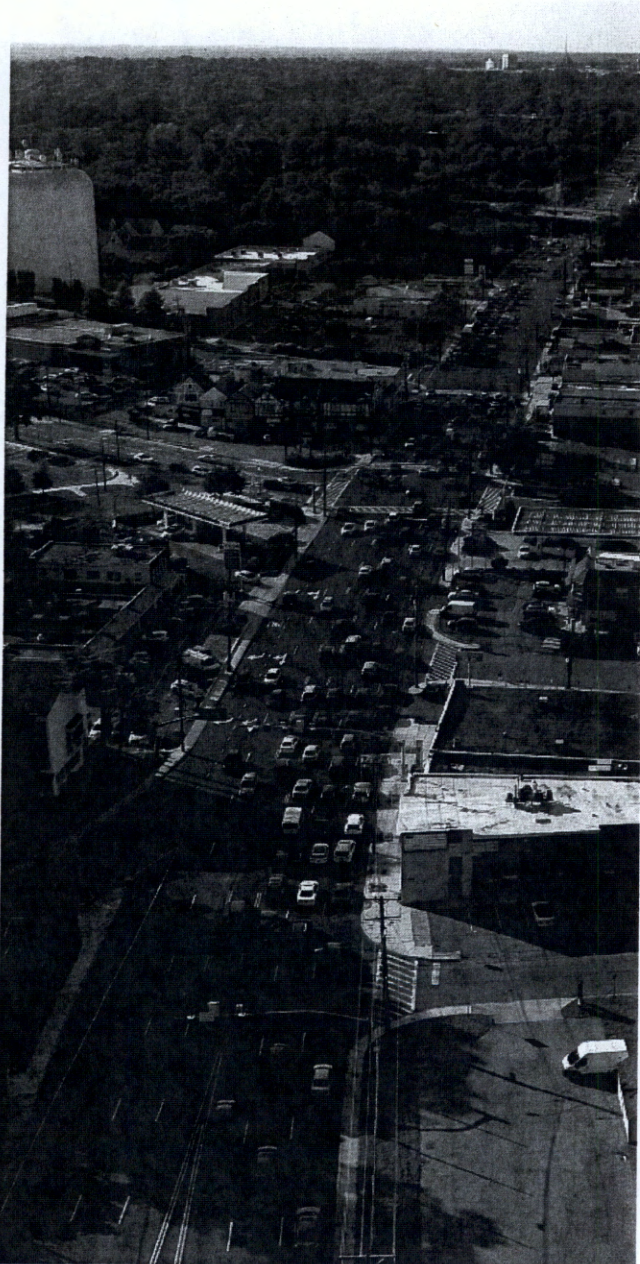
The **Bicycle Master Plan** recommends ways of creating a highly-connected, convenient and low-stress bicycling network to increase bicycling comfort and improve cycling safety in Montgomery County. The County Council approved the plan in November 2018.

The **Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan** aims to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users and motorists along four miles

of Veirs Mill Road, from Rockville to Wheaton, and surrounding neighborhoods. The Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee recently concluded work sessions for the plan.

The **Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study** is identifying existing barriers to safety and exploring ways to improve conditions in the area between Georgia and Connecticut Avenues that extends north to Bel Pre Road and south of the intersection to Matthew Henson Park. Planners are collaborating with the community on potential strategies to make major intersections safer for all road users. The study will result in recommendations to improve safety for people who walk, bike, drive and take transit in Aspen Hill.

Focused on the station areas in Boyds and Germantown, the **MARC Rail Communities Plan** recommends ways of reducing dependency on cars and vehicles for daily commuter trips by improving pedestrian and bicycle environments. Expanding public transportation options and managing roadways to minimize traffic backups and congestion are part of the plan.



About Vision Zero

Vision Zero is the international initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries. The Montgomery County Government adopted this initiative in 2017 and is aiming to reach its goals by 2030.

The **Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan** area stretches along the Georgia Avenue corridor to encompass the Montgomery Hills commercial area and Forest Glen neighborhood. The plan considers proposed Maryland State Highway Administration improvements along Georgia Avenue between 16th Street and the Capital Beltway, and their impact on properties lining the sides of the road. The planning team is exploring ways of improving pedestrian and bicycle access, connectivity and safety within the plan area.

Based on a recommendation from the county's Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan, the upcoming **Pedestrian Master Plan** will evaluate the countywide walking network through a policy document and an online map. The plan will build on collected data to develop a pedestrian network and a methodology for assessing walkability in the county.

Among Montgomery Parks' efforts to achieve Vision Zero is identifying **121 priority trail and roadway crossings** and working to complete safety improvements at 10 of those intersections per year by 2030. In the first quarter of 2019, four projects have been completed and eight additional projects are under construction. Additionally, 15 crossings are scheduled for the design phase this spring.

Park Activation

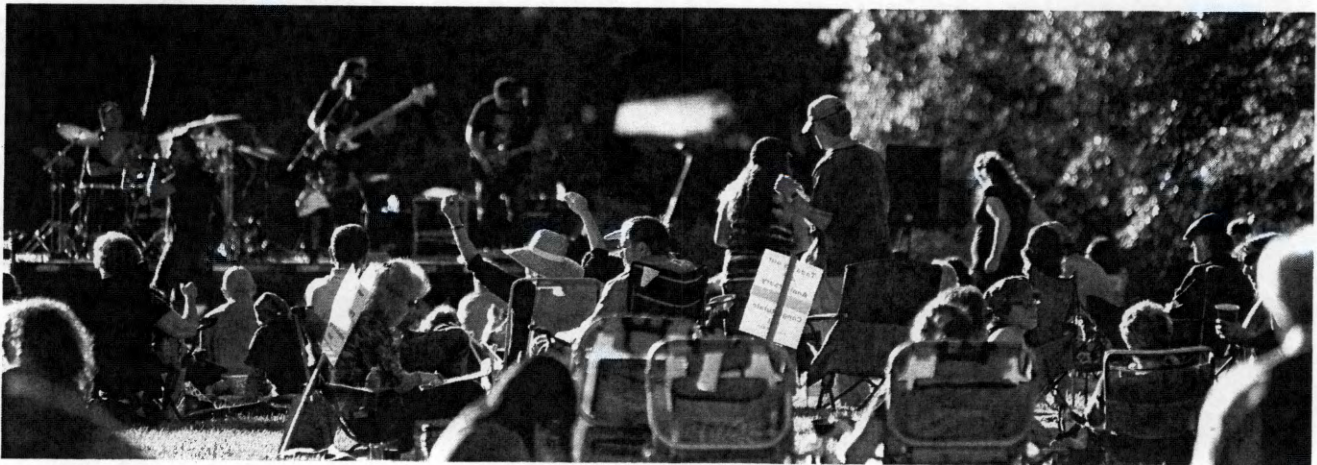
Since 2016, Montgomery Parks has continued an initiative designed to bring more people into parks to recreate and connect with their communities. Events such as Yappy Hour, Opera in the Park and Cinco de Mayo Picnic help connect people to nature and to each other. Park activation is facilitated through events, such as festivals, movie screenings and races, and by working closely with park planners to include interactive features, such as murals, installations and sculptures. The role of activation bridges park priorities, such as conservation of our natural resources, engaging county residents in health and wellness, and fostering social equity, by providing culturally specific programming for our county's diverse populations.

Historic Preservation

The Planning Department's Historic Preservation Office is collaborating with community members and the County Council to create five historical marker signs to commemorate and celebrate African American communities and resources in Montgomery County. This ongoing initiative aims to raise awareness of our African American heritage and encourage dialogue with our communities.

Transportation

Montgomery Planning is partnering with the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, College Park. Collaborative projects include the Purple Line Corridor Mobility, Economic Development and Transit-Oriented Finance and Implementation Plan, funded through a Federal Transit Administration grant, to ensure neighborhood, housing and economic development goals of the light rail project are met.





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Community Engagement

Public outreach is broadening to allow people to participate in the planning process in the places where they live.

The Planning Department's ReactMap allowed stakeholders to provide feedback through their smart phones and computers about their impressions of the neighborhoods addressed in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan. The digital map provided the opportunity to weigh in about the plan area without having to attend a meeting. This tool recorded answers to questions posted on the map as well as on bus shelters along Georgia Avenue and around the Forest Glen Metro Station. Planners used the information to inform preliminary recommendations for the sector plan.

Spanish language translations and interpretations are a regular part of public planning meetings held in the Veirs Mill Road and Aspen Hill communities to ensure all community members can participate in a meaningful way.

The County Council's February 2019 public hearing for the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan was held in the community, at the Holiday Park Senior Center in Silver Spring, rather than at the County Council Building in Rockville, so more community members could attend and testify.

Housing

Montgomery Planning is promoting the expansion of housing options through initiatives such as the Missing Middle Housing Study to encourage more clustered and moderate density units, and provide more choices for residents of all ages and incomes. In addition, Montgomery Planning is supporting the County Council's effort to increase the number of accessory dwelling units by removing restrictions on where they can be built.

Did you know?



*Housing units in Montgomery County have increased from **295,723** to **390,563** since 1990.*

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department Trends Report



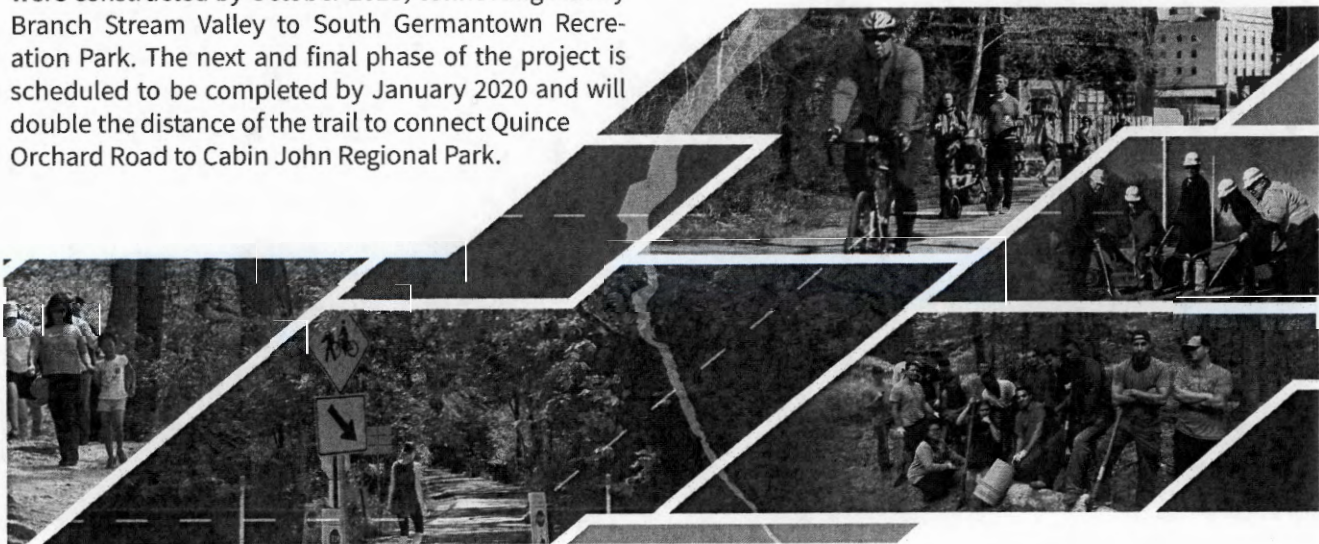
New Trails

Montgomery Parks' Countywide Park Trails Plan aims to deliver new and improved hard and natural surface trails in close proximity to areas of highest population. The plan was approved in 2016 and recommends expanding the network with trails that are multi-use, achievable and sustainable. The plan also identified a trail service gap in the eastern part of the county and as a result, in fall 2018, the Planning Board approved a Limited Area Trail Plan for the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park system. The new plan recommends a connected network of new trails that will be open to hikers, equestrians and bikers. Construction of the project started in February 2019.

In January 2018, Montgomery Parks broke ground for the new natural surface Powerline Trail, as part of a partnership with the Potomac Electric Power Company and Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts. In the first phase of the project, six and a half miles of new trail were constructed by October 2018, connecting Muddy Branch Stream Valley to South Germantown Recreation Park. The next and final phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by January 2020 and will double the distance of the trail to connect Quince Orchard Road to Cabin John Regional Park.

Montgomery Parks has 183 miles of natural surface trails used by hikers, bikers, runners and equestrian riders. To enhance the safety of trail users, increase sustainability and reduce damage of our trail system, Montgomery Parks began closing natural surface trails during wet weather conditions in fall 2018. Trail users can now access the Rain-out Line, a 24-hour phone number, website and mobile app that allows users to know the status of trails during inclement weather conditions or those affected by construction renovation projects.

To expand potential commuting opportunities for residents, Montgomery Parks will launch a year-long pilot program in spring 2019 to allow e-bikes and e-scooters on all hard surface park trails within the county. Throughout the pilot, Montgomery Parks will solicit public input to consider the possibility of making it a permanent program, which will also accommodate the growth in commercial dockless e-bikes and e-scooters in the county and DC region.



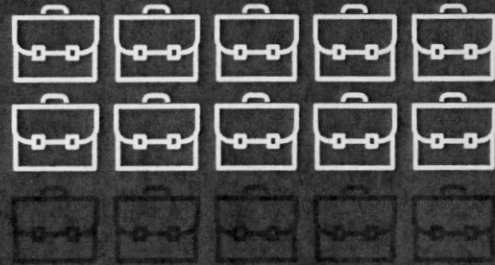
Economic Health

Maintaining the county's strong and competitive economy is the goal of several recent plans and projects.

Applied Research

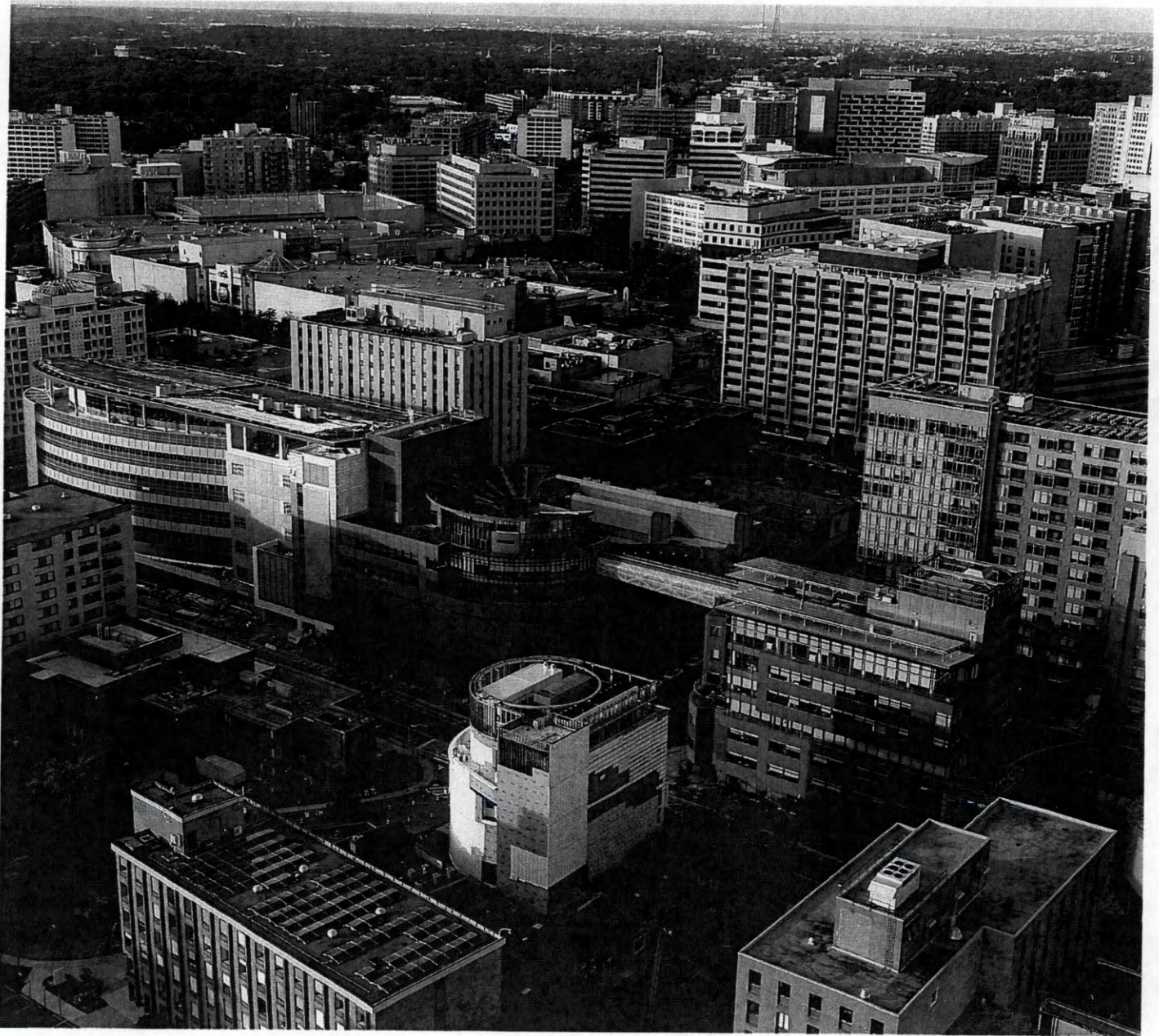
The report issued by Montgomery Planning's Research and Special Projects Division in January 2019, **Montgomery County Trends: A Look at People, Housing and Jobs**, is informing the update of the General Plan. The data collected over a 25-year period reveal notable changes in the county's demographics, economics and housing. Among the trends is an employment base growing more concentrated in the health-care industry and professional services. Seniors aged 65 and older are expected to increase to more than 20 percent of the county's residents by 2040. Homeownership among households under age 35 declined from 45 percent in 1990 to 28 percent in 2016.

Did you know?



*Montgomery County had nearly **600,000** residents in the labor force in 2016 (31 percent more than 1990).*

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department Trends Report





Parks Volunteer Program

Volunteers spend their time, talents and energy to making a real difference in our communities. They come from all walks of life and include students, corporate groups, environmental partners and many service-based organizations. These dedicated individuals and teams provide ongoing support with park cleanups, natural surface trail maintenance, non-native plant removal and much more. During fiscal year 2018, Montgomery Parks' volunteers contributed more than 82,000 hours, equaling approximately \$2 million dollars of value-added service or the equivalent of 40 full-time park staff.

Studies of Future Parks

Montgomery Parks is conducting suitability studies to determine a list of appropriate sites for future dog and skate parks, and community gardens. In 2018, Parks completed a comprehensive analysis of future sites for dog parks and skate parks at various locations in the county. Public comments are being collected on the proposed dog park locations, which will be considered for final recommendations submitted in spring 2019. The next phase of the skate park study will be to solicit public comments. In 2019, Parks will complete its analysis for new community gardens. Suitable candidate sites will be prioritized based on parts of the county where there are waitlists in the existing Community Gardens Program as well as parts of the county that are identified as food insecurity areas by the Montgomery County Food Council's FoodStat analysis.

Parks Volunteers Contributions



82,000 + hours



\$2 million dollars of value-added service



Equivalent value of 40 full-time parks staff

Community Planning and Revitalization

The **Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan** is evaluating how properties in the Montgomery Hills commercial area and Forest Glen neighborhood will be affected by road improvements proposed for Georgia Avenue between 16th Street and the Capital Beltway. Its recommendations present opportunities for redevelopment at strategic locations, and improvements to Metro access, parks, sidewalks, street trees and lighting to retain and attract businesses.

The **Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment** revisits the transportation implementation recommendations in a plan for transforming an industrial area around the Shady Grove Metro station into a new community. The 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan is a three-staged vision for this mixed-use neighborhood that requires mobility and public infrastructure requirements for each stage of development. Since its approval, the plan has not proceeded beyond stage one. To proceed to stage two, several infrastructure projects must be publicly funded. They include a new grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Frederick Road (MD 355) and Gude Drive – which, at this time, looks unlikely to proceed in the foreseeable future. The Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment will consider modifying the staging triggers in the 2006 plan in response to updated transportation information and new infrastructure, such as the bus rapid transit network, which was not considered in 2006.

Now underway, the **Germantown Plan for the Town Sector Zone** addresses the 1,254 acres comprising Churchill Village's T-S zone, which includes Churchill Lake, parks, walking trails and recreational amenities. In 2014, Montgomery County updated its zoning ordinance and, as a result, the T-S zone is being phased out.

Additionally, as approved by the original 1968 zoning case that authorized the development of Churchill Village, no new zoning classifications could be considered for 50 years. This zoning control feature expired in 2018 and is the primary reason for the new plan. Planners have analyzed existing land uses, densities and open spaces in order to prepare new zoning recommendations that best reflect current conditions, uses and densities.

The new **Minor Master Plan Amendment to the Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan** evaluates the appropriateness of current zoning in Ashton's business district, around the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and MD 108. This area is subject to the Sandy Spring/Ashton Rural Village Overlay Zone, which was designed to foster preservation of rural village character under the county's previous zoning ordinance, before it was updated in 2014. However, this overlay zone generally did not provide for mixing of land uses and allowed activities and densities that were not in keeping with village character. This minor master plan amendment is looking in detail at the potential land uses in Ashton that would conform to the county's current zoning ordinance and promote the local economy.

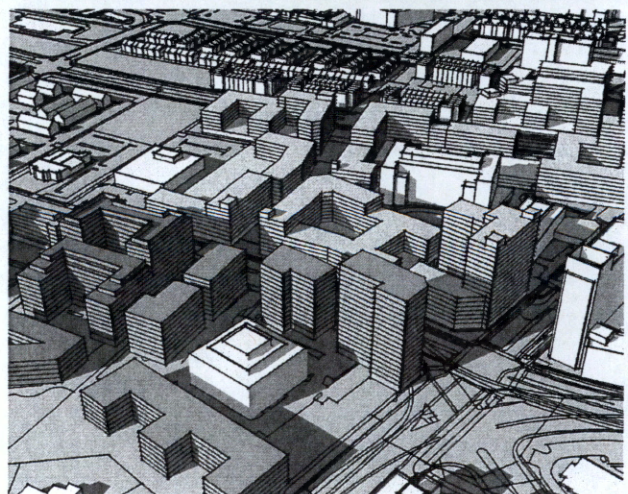
The **Wheaton Headquarters of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission** at 2425 Reedie Drive is moving ahead with construction of the 14-story building nearly halfway completed. The LEED Platinum-rated project will feature green roofs, solar panels, geothermal heating and cooling wells and a high-performance building skin. Slated for occupancy in summer 2020, the building is part of the revitalization of downtown Wheaton that includes the new Wheaton Library-Recreation Center complex slated for completion in 2019.

Design Guidelines

The Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan Design Guidelines provide a framework for evaluating new and upgraded buildings, streetscapes and open spaces proposed for the plan area. The guidelines build on the recommendations in the 2017 Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan, ensuring design excellence for both private developments and public improvements.

Similarly, the Rock Spring and White Flint 2 Design Guidelines ensure that new building projects fit into the character of these areas and provide consistent standards for reviewing proposed developments. One set of guidelines was developed for Rock Spring and White Flint 2 since these areas are about 1.5 miles apart and share similar challenges and opportunities.

Montgomery Parks' Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Functional Master Plan provides a comprehensive approach to how and where we create parks and public spaces in the parts of the county where more people live and work. This plan was adopted in 2018, and as a result, Montgomery Parks developed the EPS Design Guidelines, which were approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board in March 2019. These guidelines provide overall direction for major features of parks and public spaces design, including the recommended size, type of experiences and amenities that each park type should provide. The purpose of the document is to create energized, inviting, easily accessible, attractive, comfortable and safe public spaces. The EPS Design Guidelines serve as a companion document to the EPS Functional Master Plan.



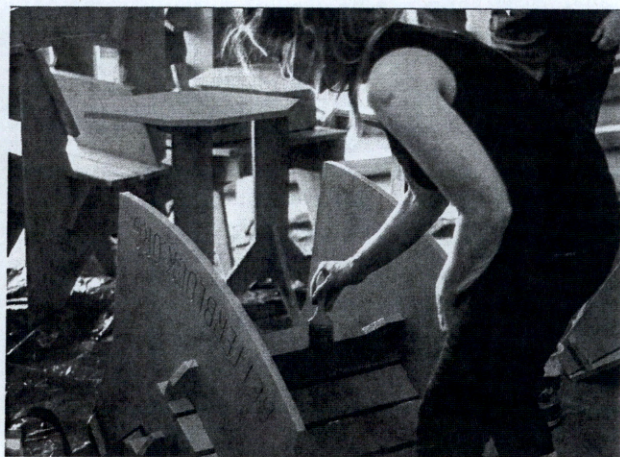
Placemaking

Montgomery Parks and Planning are partnering with the community to turn parking lots into places. These placemaking initiatives create new public spaces to attract people, involve local businesses and support neighborhoods.

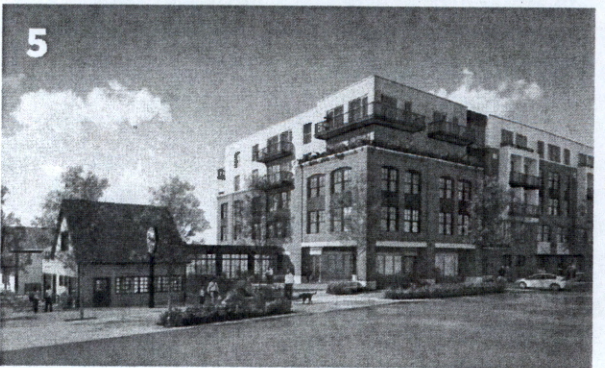
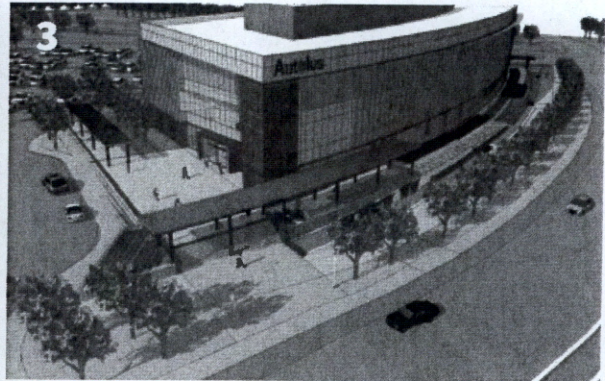
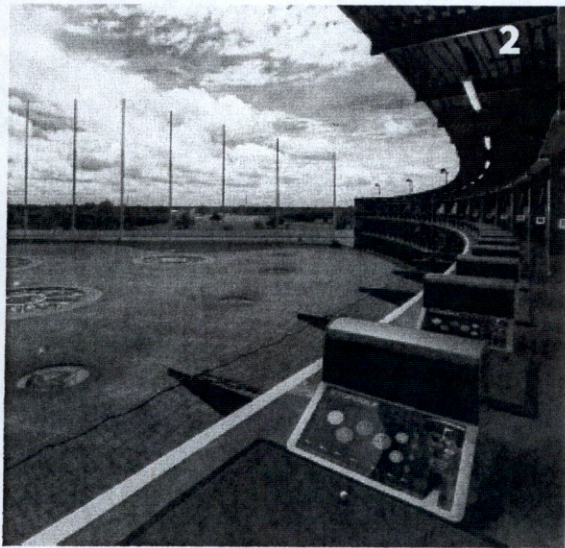
In October 2018, the White Flint Placemaking Festival was held in Rockville's Randolph Hills Shopping Center. The event involved six months of planning with residents, civic groups and the nonprofit Better Block Foundation, which specializes in neighborhood placemaking

efforts. Volunteers transformed an unused, grassy field and part of the parking lot into a pop-up park with play and picnic areas, a performance stage and fitness areas. Over a weekend, the festival drew about 1,000 people and residents and local community members and businesses continue to use the new public space for events. The project demonstrates how planning recommendations can be quickly realized with positive, community-led changes. Additional placemaking events are being planned for Long Branch, Silver Spring and Upcounty.









Development Projects

1. **Metro Tower** | Downtown Bethesda
2. **Topgolf** | Germantown
3. **Autolus BioTech Company** | Great Seneca Science Corridor
4. **The Lindley** | Chevy Chase
5. **Solera Reserve** | Kensington



Environmental Resilience

Protecting built and natural resources through historic preservation, forest conservation and tree planting programs is part of Montgomery Planning's ongoing mission.

Historic Preservation

As required by county ordinance, the Montgomery County Planning Board must maintain a county survey of cemeteries and sites so these areas can be protected. The Planning Department's Historic Preservation Office is responsible for maintaining and updating the Burial Sites Inventory and Guidelines, now identifying 322 cemeteries and sites in the county. Public outreach events will be held in spring 2019 to solicit feedback from the public on the guidelines for this effort and engage the community in the process of identifying and preserving additional sites.

In November 2018, the Planning Department's Historic Preservation Office held a 6-mile public bike tour of the Kensington, Forest Glen, Capitol View Park and National Park Seminary Historic Districts to call attention to the protected architectural gems in these neighborhoods.

Forest Conservation

Montgomery Planning's tree planting and forest conservation programs are being consolidated within the Development Applications and Regulatory Coordination Division. There will be a coordinated effort to initiate forest conservation and stream buffer planting on private lands and properties maintained by Montgomery Parks, and expand tree-planting programs in neighborhoods, including Leaves for Neighborhoods and Shades of Green. Partnerships with local private non-profits and community groups will be pursued to implement as much tree planting as possible.





Semiannual Report **Spring 2019**

Sustainable Athletic Fields

Montgomery Parks is using optimal standards of design, construction and maintenance to deliver sustainable athletic fields that are playable, accessible and safe for recreational activities. As a result, we have expanded our partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to increase our athletic field inventory, improve the overall quality of athletic fields in terms of playability, safety and maintenance.

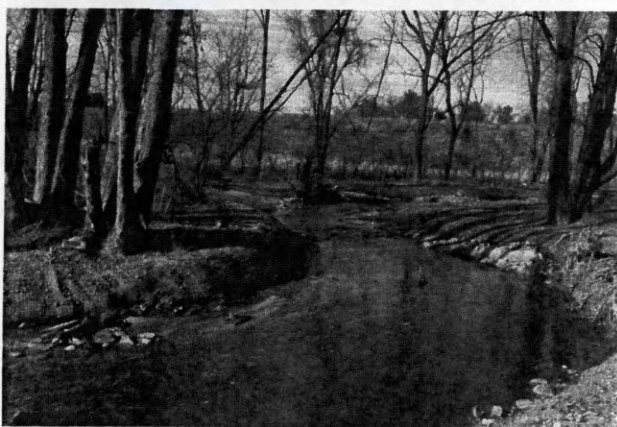
We have centralized operations and streamlined resources to allow additional investments for equipment, renovations and maintenance. This process ensures our fields are maintained, designed and constructed to increase usage, extend their life and reduce renovations. In fiscal year 2018, we completed nine MCPS athletic field renovation projects. Currently, five projects are in progress and scheduled to be completed in fiscal year 2019.

Stormwater Treatment

Our National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requires urban jurisdictions and state and federal landowners to treat and control polluted stormwater running off impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, roads, driveways and trails. On October 31, 2018, new permit requirements went into effect that include a significantly higher standard of compliance and reporting. The new standard requires Montgomery Parks to use stormwater management techniques to treat 20 percent of our existing untreated hard surfaces within the first permit term.

Stream Restoration

Montgomery Parks has an ongoing commitment to the environmental protection and stewardship of natural resources. Water quality protection remains a top priority and Parks is currently working with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection on stream restoration projects at Grosvenor, Stoneybrook, Glenallan and Clearspring. Work on these four projects is scheduled to begin in spring 2019.



Cabin Branch Before and After Restoration

Transportation

The state-initiated Interstate-495 and Interstate-270 Managed Lanes Study aims to evaluate a range of travel alternatives on those highways to reduce traffic congestion. The project, proposed as a public private partnership (P3), must meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires an environmental impact statement (EIS) approved by the federal government.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is a cooperating agency in the NEPA process. Our concurrence with comment is needed for certain stages of the project to advance. The preferred alternative stage will be scheduled as a mandatory referral review before the Commission in spring 2019.

Both the Planning and Parks Departments for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties are reviewing all aspects of this study and have dedicated a website to the project. Planning staff considers best practices in transportation and land use planning, while Parks staff evaluates the environmental, cultural and historic resource impacts of any of the proposed alternatives and is preparing for any required mitigation. Staff regularly attends community meetings and responds to direct inquiries from the public, media and elected officials.

More than 10 state bills related directly to the project or to the state's P3 Act have been introduced this legislative session. M-NCPPC is closely following those initiatives and providing technical assistance as requested by both legislators and the public.



Awards

Planning Awards

National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association:

- Outstanding Plan Award for the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan
- Harold Foster Award for Community Outreach and Engagement for the Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan.

Washington Area Bicyclists Association:

- Bicyclists' Choice Award for Best Improvement in Maryland for the Bicycle Master Plan.

Parks Awards

Montgomery Preservation, Inc.

For 31 years, outstanding achievements in the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of the architectural and landscape heritage of Montgomery County have been recognized at the annual Historic Preservation Awards.

Most nominations are submitted to Montgomery Preservation, Inc. by members of the public. During the administration of Isiah Leggett, the Montgomery County Executive's Award was initiated by MPI; in practice, the Historic Preservation Commission and its staff recommend one or more deserving individuals, groups, and projects, from which the County Executive makes a selection. This year, County Executive Marc Elrich selected author Jamie Kuhn's biography of Josiah Henson.

Mott Foundation Grant

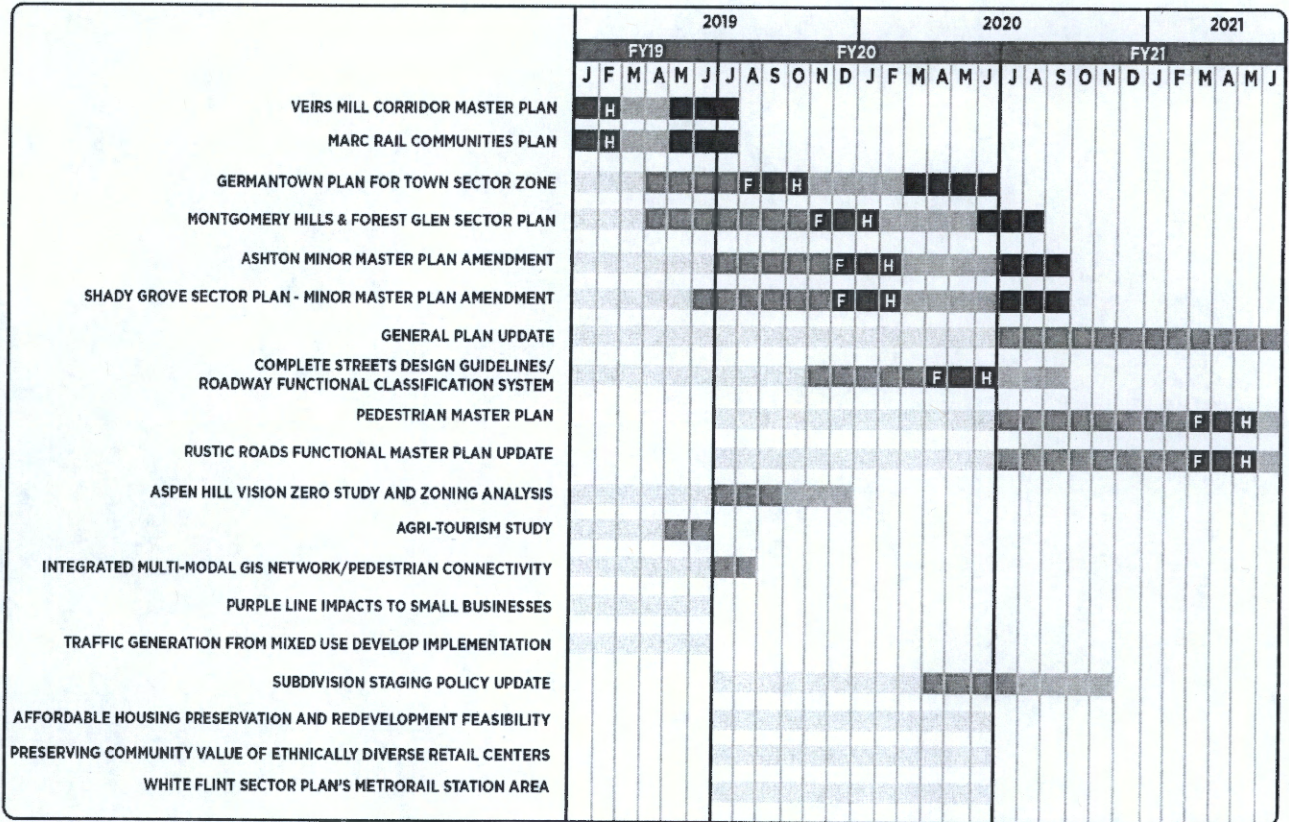
Brookside Nature Center was granted \$10,000 from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, a gift designated to Brookside Nature Center for helping bring multi-cultural nature programs to our Title I neighborhood schools and families.

2018 Maryland Green Centers

The Black Hill Visitor Center and Nature Programs, Meadowside Nature Center and Brookside Gardens were re-certified as 2018 Maryland Green Centers.

The Maryland Green Center Award, presented by the Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education (MAEOE), recognizes facilities that model environmental sustainable practices, support community environmental education and guide schools through the Maryland Green School certification program.

FY20 Proposed Master Plans and Major Projects Schedule



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- HEARING
- COUNCIL REVIEW
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