



KATHERINE A. KLAUSMEIER
County Executive

BOB F. SMITH, *Director*
Department of Recreation and Parks

June 18, 2025

By email to the MD Dept. of Natural Resources and the MD Dept. of Planning
c/o Tiffany DePaoli and Deborah Herr Cornwell

Dear Tiffany and Deborah:

Attached please find Baltimore County's proposed Fiscal Year 2026 Program Open Space (POS) Annual Program. This document provides information on the use of FY25 (and prior) POS funding, and outlines the projects that Baltimore County intends to pursue with the use of POS funding. Please note that the funding amounts in the table of projects are approximate and subject to change. Additionally, those amounts include both presently unexpended POS funds from FY25 and prior, as well as the new POS funding allocated to the County for FY26.

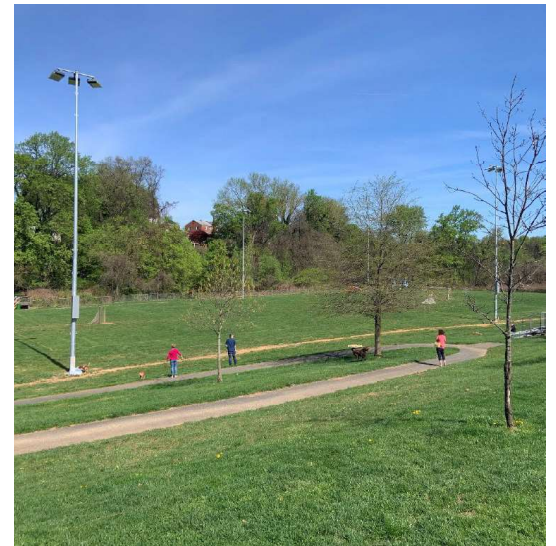
Thank you for your consideration, and please feel free to contact Patrick McDougall, Baltimore County's POS grants program manager, should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bob F. Smith

Bob Smith
Director, Dept. of Recreation and Parks

Baltimore County Fiscal Year 2026 Program Open Space (POS) Annual Program



Images on cover page - recently completed POS-funded projects (clockwise from top left):

1. Canoe/kayak soft launch at Fort Howard Veterans Park
2. Sparrows Point Park
3. LED field lighting at Linover Park
4. Carroll Island Park Site (Bowley's Quarters Investments property acquisition)
5. Hazelwood Park skate park
6. Middle River (Glenmar) Recreation Activity Center

INTRODUCTION

This Baltimore County Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Program lists park acquisition and development projects currently being explored by Baltimore County, for which fiscal year 2026 Maryland Program Open Space (POS) funding may be pursued. Projects listed here will help to achieve the goals and objectives of Baltimore County's Master Plan 2030 and the County's 2022 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plans (LPPRP). Specifically, the projects will support the following LPPRP 2022 and Master Plan 2030 goals:

- Acquire a variety of parklands and recreation sites in order to meet the needs of County residents and provide a park system that contributes to the County's quality of life and overall land preservation efforts.
- Develop, enhance, and rehabilitate parks to meet the recreational needs and demands of residents of all ages and abilities, to attract visitors, and to support the organized recreation programs of the partner recreation and parks councils.



Rough concept for renovations and enhancements to Sparks Park in northern Baltimore County, for which a POS application was submitted in FY2025. These much needed enhancements will greatly expand the recreational functionality and overall condition of the park, part of which once served as an elementary school recreation center.

- Enhance public access to the natural environment, including the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and seek to increase public knowledge of and appreciation for nature.
- Work with Baltimore County's Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability (EPS) to improve environmental conditions at the County's parks and recreation sites, and to help protect and preserve the natural environment.
- Pursue alternative means for providing recreational opportunities through partnerships with other agencies and organizations.
- Expand opportunities for residents to participate in and experience arts and cultural programs and events, and work to preserve historically and culturally significant sites for the appreciation and enjoyment of the County's residents and visitors.
- Continue to partner with affiliated resident organizations, and participate in various partnerships in an effort to enhance public recreation access for Baltimore County residents and visitors.

The projects proposed in this Annual Program also support other planning documents and initiatives, and help to achieve the 5-year priorities and goals identified in the State of Maryland’s “Land Preservation and Recreation Plan: 2019-2023” (below graphic from the plan):



Goal 1: Coordination and Collaboration

Strengthen coordination and collaboration between federal, state, and local government agencies and other key stakeholders in planning for the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and land conservation initiatives.



Goal 2: Promote the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation and Conservation of Natural Lands

Promote the economic, cultural, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation of natural lands. Seek to increase the public's understanding of these benefits to enhance interest and participation in recreating outdoors in Maryland.



Goal 3: Increase Access to Open Spaces and Waterfronts

Increase and improve opportunities for all segments of the population to access land and water-based outdoor recreation opportunities.



Goal 4: Improve What's Already Available

Improve the overall quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure at public parks and outdoor areas across the state.



Goal 5: Develop an Informed Stewardship Culture

Promote environmental education and use of parks and outdoor areas as teaching tools to foster a positive stewardship ethos among children, youth, and their families.

CAPITAL PROJECT SELECTION PROCESSES

While the goals and objectives identified in the County’s LPPRP provide the general impetus for conducting various capital projects, the means for selecting such projects varies based on the type of capital projects. The methods for choosing acquisition projects differ significantly from those used to establish development, enhancement, and rehabilitation projects. Following is a summary of the processes Baltimore County utilizes to identify, prioritize and select capital projects.

A. Acquisition Projects

In any given year, Baltimore County, through its Department of Recreation and Parks and its real estate office, pursues numerous properties to serve as park sites. While many candidate properties may be evaluated and considered, the acquisition process is typically initiated only in circumstance where the land in question will help to achieve the County’s present park acquisition goals and objectives. An assortment of factors are considered when deciding whether or not to pursue acquisition opportunities, including the supply of parkland in a given area, the need to acquire land suitable for accommodating

facilities required to meet recreational demands, the availability of undeveloped land within a geographic area, local population growth trends, and relative public and environmental benefits. Baltimore County is firmly committed to providing equitable recreational opportunities countywide, with the park acquisition program playing a key role in this mission. In some circumstances the County will identify certain areas of need, and make it a priority to seek out potential site for park acquisition. However, the diminished availability of high-quality properties in many areas of the County can make the acquisition of adequate parklands a challenging proposition.

Two POS-funded acquisitions were completed in fiscal year 2025, including the purchase of the future Carroll Island Park site, a nearly 85-acre waterfront site in the Bowley's Quarters community of eastern Baltimore County. The acquisition application is the largest single application in Baltimore County's history, in terms of dollar amount. One underway acquisition, for a 1-acre property in the Woodmoor-Lochearn neighborhood of western Baltimore County, is expected to be submitted in late FY2025 or early FY2026, and is specifically identified in this Annual Program.

B. Park Development, Enhancement and Rehabilitation Projects

The “development side” of POS helps to fund a wide range of park development, enhancement, and rehabilitation projects. Up to 75% of eligible capital project costs may be funded through POS, though the amount of POS funding utilized varies by project. POS is also sometimes combined with other outside funding sources, such as State bond bills and capital grants. The means by which development, enhancement, and rehabilitation projects are chosen varies by the type of project. The following describes the types of projects that may be funded with POS assistance, as well as the general process by which these projects are typically selected.

- **New Park Development:** New park development projects are often initiated shortly after the acquisition of a site that was procured to meet existing recreational needs. Funding is usually set aside for site engineering between one and five years after site acquisition. In some cases, a site may remain unimproved longer than five years, until there is available funding and sufficient demand for park development. Such recreational demands and needs are usually the key consideration in deciding when a new park development project is to be funded. The design and development of the Woodley Avenue Park Site in Reisterstown, included in this Annual Program for FY2026, is an example of such a project.
- **Phased Park Construction:** Another form of park development is phased construction. This most typically occurs at larger parks, most often when it is not financially or physically feasible to fully develop the entire park immediately. In such situations, a concept plan or park “master plan” may be formulated for the entirety of the park site prior to the initial phase of development, with subsequent engineering of the first phase being based upon the concept plan. The second phase may occur soon afterwards – usually in another fiscal year – or multiple years later.
- **Park Renovations and Enhancements:** These type of projects, which have become more commonplace in recent years, help to improve recreational opportunities at existing parks and recreation sites, and range from entirely new facilities and amenities, to improvements to existing facilities to make them more functional and/or implement new technology. Five such project applications were submitted in FY2025, for projects at Catonsville Community Park, the Fields at Renaissance Park, Miami Beach Park, Northwest Regional Park, and Sparks Park. One of the projects proposed for FY2026 involves renovations and enhancements at West Towson Park, for which a POS-funded park addition was acquired in FY2025.

The acquisition of the 0.5-acre former Hanley Property in FY2025 (outlined in red on the map image) will enable a proposed FY2026 park renovation and enhancement project at West Towson Park, whose compact size and extent of facilities have limited the potential for expanded recreational facilities. .



- **Rehabilitation:** Park facilities and amenities have a finite life cycle, and eventually need to be replaced or comprehensively rehabilitated to keep them safe for public use. Most of the County's facility rehabilitation projects are funded without POS assistance, as POS regulations allow only a small proportion of a county's POS allocation to be utilized for facility renovations/rehabilitation.

POTENTIAL FISCAL YEAR 2026 PROJECTS

Parts two and three of this annual program list prospective fiscal year 2026 acquisition and development projects. These sections provide detailed information regarding recreation and parks projects for which POS funding may be requested. Information about other State funding sources such as bond bills and capital grants is likewise provided. All projects listed are sponsored by Baltimore County, which has no incorporated towns within its boundaries. Additional projects not listed in this program may be added throughout the fiscal year as needed, at which time this program shall be amended through written notification to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Department of Planning. It is important to note that the inclusion of projects within the annual program or the LPPRP does not guarantee that capital funding will be available for implementation, and project priorities may be revised.

POS regulations allow for 100% funding reimbursement for park acquisition projects, with the maximum eligible reimbursement amount typically being based upon the average of two property appraisals, or the purchase price (whichever is lower). POS will fund up to 75% of park development, enhancement or rehabilitation projects costs.

The tables that follow identify the presently envisioned projects for which POS funding may be utilized. The columns that comprise the tables are:

- **Project Name and Description:** The name and brief description of each project or job.
- **Project's Relationship to County LPPRP and State goals:** This column lists the most relevant goals and objectives of the County's Master Plan and the County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, and indicates how the project supports the State of Maryland's goals outlined in the Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan.
- **Acreage Data:** This column presents various park and recreation site acreage data, including the size in acres of parks with development projects. Acreage is not listed for sites in which the specific project sites have not yet been identified.
- **Source of Funds:** These columns provide details about the various funding sources that are projected to be utilized for each specific project/job. Since capital funding (including POS) carries over from fiscal year to fiscal year, these figures will often include funding that carried over from the prior fiscal year.

Notes pertaining to the lists of potential projects: The funding amounts identified, for the most part, are approximate and do reflect actual contract costs. Additionally, in order to prevent potential land speculation and avoid creating competition or undue value expectations for prospective property purchases, specific acquisition sites are not generally identified within this Annual Program. Instead, more general priority acquisition areas are identified.

A series of maps are provided for the purpose of identifying project locations throughout the County. Maps are not provided for projects that are not site specific, such as potential acquisitions not yet identified and trail improvements to be located in a variety of parks.

This Annual Program is not as extensive as many from past years, reflecting the relatively small POS allocation (just under \$3.5M) Baltimore County will receive for FY2026.

ACQUISITION PROJECTS

PROSPECTIVE BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2026 ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Project Name and Description	Project's Relationship to LPPRP and State Goals	Acre Data	Total Funding	Local Funding	POS Funding	Other Funding	Federal Funding	Funding Notes
Priority Area Park Acquisition(s): Acquisition of various properties within areas with defined or anticipated parkland, open space and recreational facility needs. Acquisitions may be pursued to provide sites for recreational development, expand upon existing parks and recreation sites, acquire key parcels along planned trails or green space corridors, preserve green/open space, or to produce a more equitable distribution of parkland across our county. Potential areas of emphasis for FY26 are sites within communities with a strong need for parks and/or high social vulnerability, as well as opportunities to provide more public waterfront parklands. One site presently under consideration is situated on Windands Road, east of McDonogh Road,	LPPRP/COUNTY MASTER PLAN: Helps to meet the general goal of acquiring a variety of parklands and recreation sites for multiple purposes. Certain acquisitions could help achieve goal of enhancing public access to the Bay and its tributaries. STATE GOALS: Supports the Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan Goal to "Increase and improve opportunities for all segments of the population to access land and water-based outdoor recreation opportunities."	TBD	\$9,275,000	\$4,775,000	\$4,500,000	\$0	\$0	

PROSPECTIVE BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2026 ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Project Name and Description	Project's Relationship to LPPRP and State Goals	Acre Data	Total Funding	Local Funding	POS Funding	Other Funding	Federal Funding	Funding Notes
Woodmoor Properties, LLC Property Acquisition: Purchase of approximately 1-acre site at the SW corner of Sedgemoor and Marston Roads, in the Woodmoor-Lochearn area of western Baltimore County. Anticipated future use would be a neighborhood park.	LPPRP/COUNTY MASTER PLAN: Helps to meet the general goal of acquiring a variety of parklands and recreation sites for multiple purposes. STATE GOALS: Supports the Maryland Land Preservation and Recreation Plan Goal to "Increase and improve opportunities for all segments of the population to access land and water-based outdoor recreation opportunities."	1	\$409,500	\$10,000	\$399,500	\$0	\$0	
TOTALS:		TBD	\$9,684,500	\$4,785,000	\$4,899,500	\$0	\$0	
Note that the above funding figures include unexpended funds that carried over from FY2025. Only \$1,739,695 of the POS funds are new FY2026 funding								

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

PROSPECTIVE BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2026 PARK DEVELOPMENT, ENHANCEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROJECTS

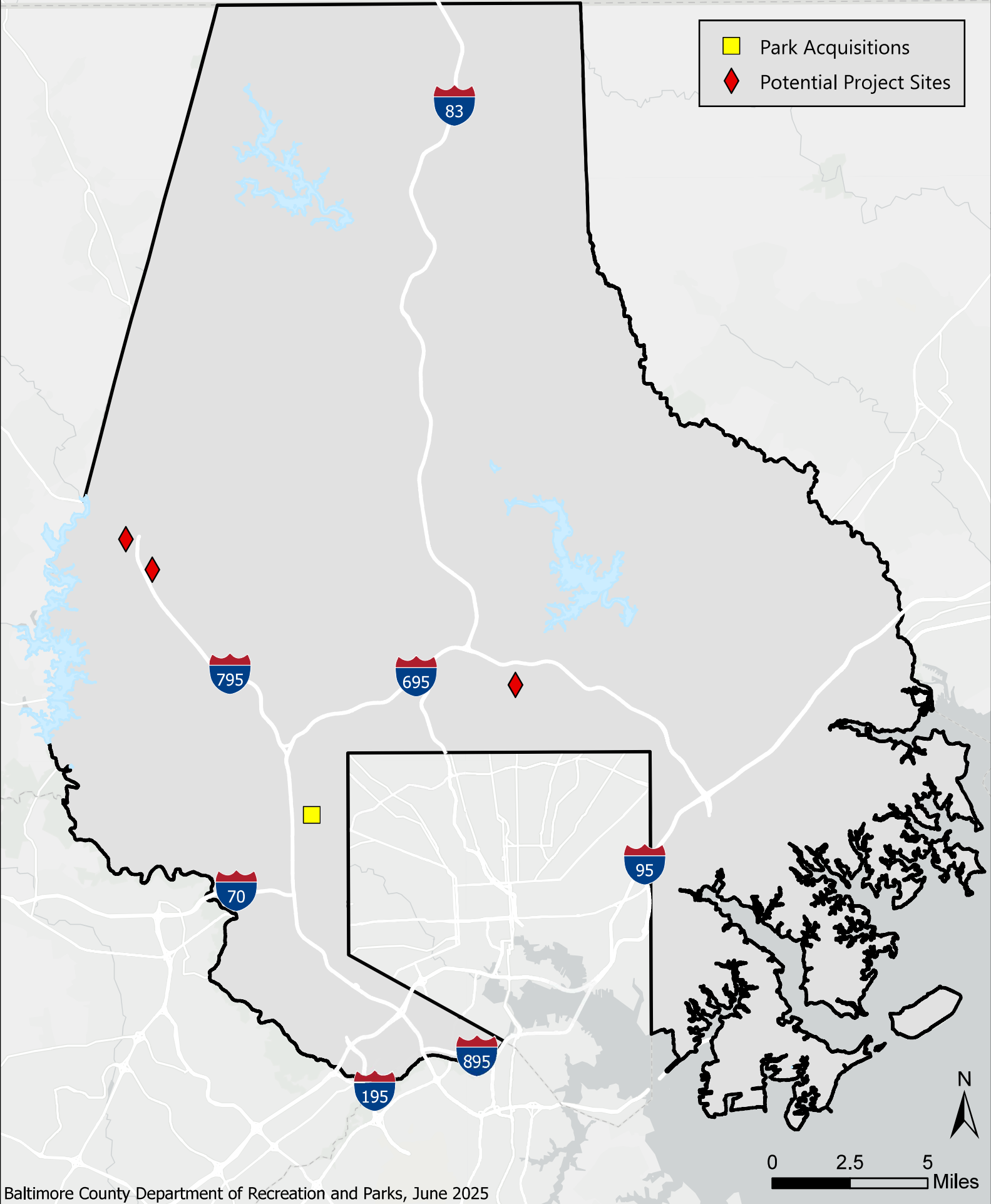
Project Name and Description	Project's Relationship to LPPRP and State Goals	Park/ Site Acres	Total Funding*	Local Funding*	POS Funding*	Other Funding*	Federal Funding*	Funding Notes
Reisterstown Regional Park LED Lighting Conversion: This project consists of the upgrade of the existing field lighting system at Reisterstown Regional Park. The existing aged metal halide lighting system, which serves the park's ball diamonds and athletic fields, will be replaced with a more effective and energy efficient light-emitting diode (LED) system. This project will continue the County's efforts to enhance athletic facility lighting systems.	LPPRP/COUNTY MASTER PLAN: Develop, enhance, and rehabilitate parks to meet the recreational needs and demands of residents of all ages and abilities, to attract visitors, and to support the organized recreation programs of the partner recreation and parks councils; Provide a sufficient quantity of traditional outdoor recreation facilities such as ball diamonds, athletic fields, sports courts, playgrounds and picnic areas. STATE GOALS: Improve the overall quality of outdoor recreation infrastructure at public parks and outdoor areas across the state.	130.0	\$750,000	\$332,500	\$417,500	\$0	\$0	
West Towson Park Renovations and Enhancements: This project consists of various renovations and enhancements at West Towson Park, in the Towson community of central Baltimore County. This project will be pursued through Recreation and Park's local parks comprehensive enhancement programs, which seeks to revitalize the County's older neighborhood and community parks. Expanded park facilities will be provided, made possible by the FY2025 acquisition of a park addition on Central Avenue.	LPPRP/COUNTY MASTER PLAN: Develop, enhance, and rehabilitate parks to meet the recreational needs and demands of residents of all ages and abilities, to attract visitors, and to support the organized recreation programs of the partner recreation and parks councils; STATE GOALS: Promote the economic, cultural, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation of natural lands. Seek to increase the public's understanding of these benefits to enhance interest and participation in recreating outdoors in Maryland.	4.2	\$1,200,000	\$300,000	\$900,000	\$0	\$0	

PROSPECTIVE BALTIMORE COUNTY FISCAL YEAR 2026 PARK DEVELOPMENT, ENHANCEMENT AND REHABILITATION PROJECTS

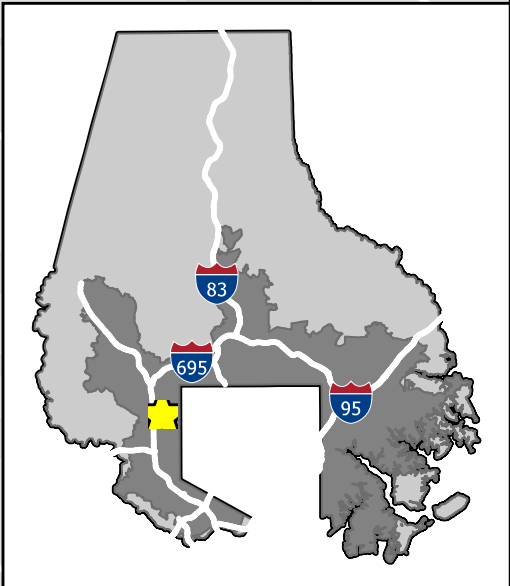
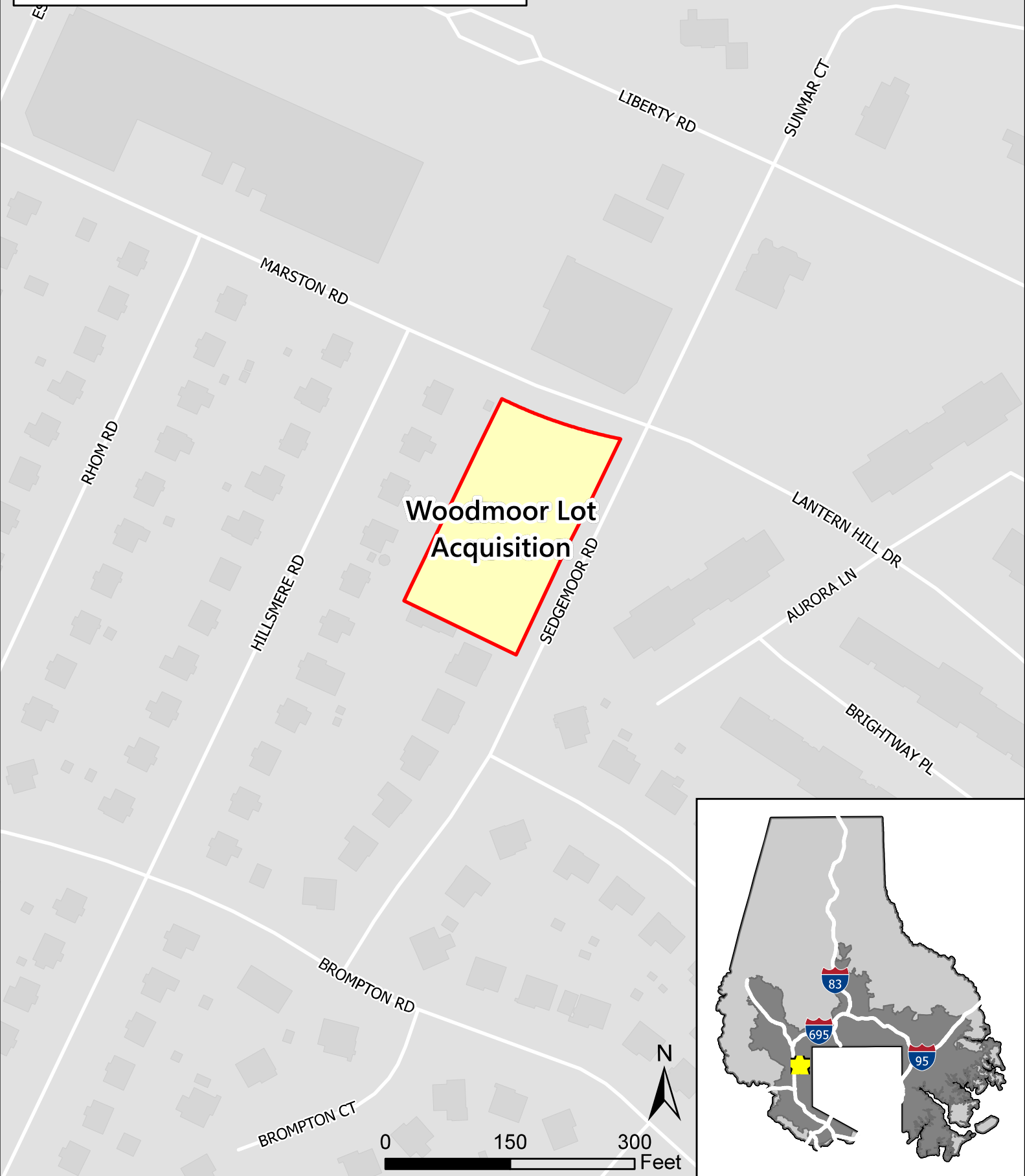
Project Name and Description	Project's Relationship to LPPRP and State Goals	Park/ Site Acres	Total Funding*	Local Funding*	POS Funding*	Other Funding*	Federal Funding*	Funding Notes
Woodley Avenue Park Site Design and Development: This project consists of the design and development of the approximately 3.8-acre Woodley Avenue Park Site in the Reisterstown community of northwest Baltimore County. It is anticipated that a facet of this project will be a bicycle and pedestrian connection to the proposed expanded Franklin Woodlands Trail, a local trail that is planned to be extended to connect "main street Reisterstown" with public parks, school recreation centers, greenways, and other public lands. This park site was acquired with the use of POS funding in 2022.	LPPRP/COUNTY MASTER PLAN: Develop, enhance, and rehabilitate parks to meet the recreational needs and demands of residents of all ages and abilities, to attract visitors, and to support the organized recreation programs of the partner recreation and parks councilss; Enhance public access to the natural environment, including the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries STATE GOALS: Promote the economic, cultural, health, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation and conservation of natural lands. Seek to increase the public's understanding of these benefits to enhance interest and participation in recreating outdoors in Maryland.	60.9	\$1,250,000	\$322,500	\$927,500	\$0	\$0	
TOTALS:			\$3,200,000	\$955,000	\$2,245,000	\$0	\$0	

MAPS

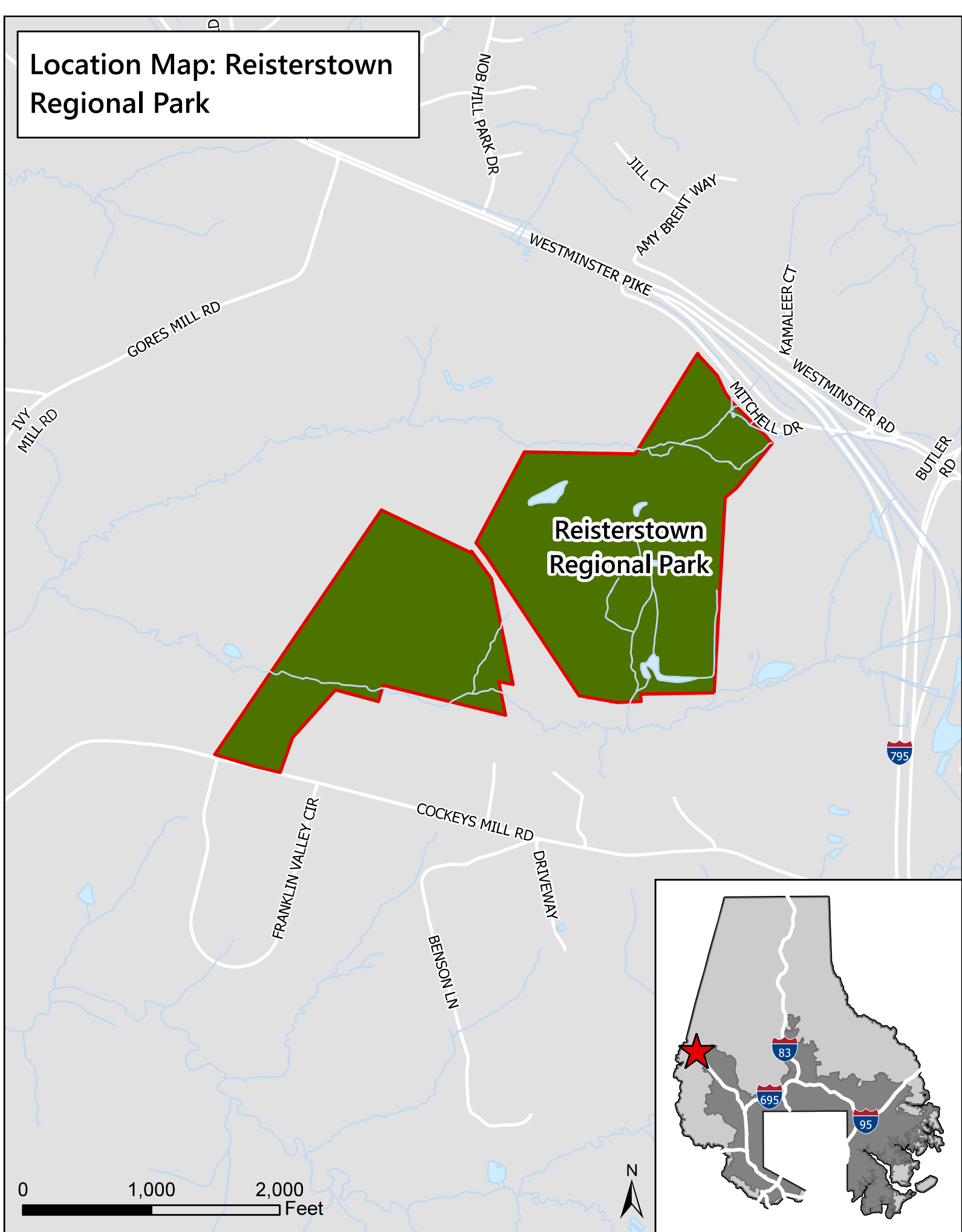
FY26 Potential Program Open Space Project Sites



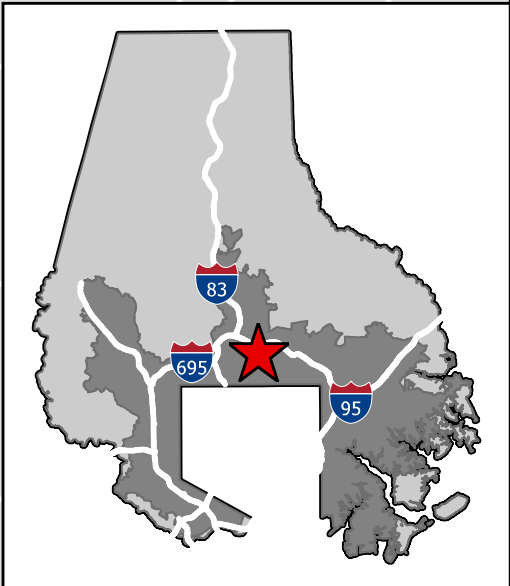
Location Map: Woodmoor Lot Acquisition



**Location Map: Reisterstown
Regional Park**



Location Map: West Towson Park



Location Map: Woodley Avenue Park Site

Chatsworth Elementary
School Recreation Center

Franklin
Elementary School
Recreation Center

Woodley
Avenue
Park Site

- Woodley Avenue Park Site
- COUNTY OPEN SPACE
- SCHOOL RECREATION CENTER



0 250 500 Feet

