



# HOWARD COUNTY

*Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan*  
June 2017



# LETTER *from the* COUNTY EXECUTIVE

May 15, 2017

Dear Fellow Howard County Residents:

I am pleased to present the 2017 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP).

Over the past 15 months the Howard county Recreation and Parks Department has been working with Sasaki Associates to analyze recreational trends, priorities, use patterns, land preservation, challenges and goals, in order to establish a meaningful plan for the future.

Additionally, an analysis of similar service providers was done so that a complete picture of all the options available to our residents could be included. This will insure the most efficient use of our funds so that unnecessary duplication of effort does not happen.

A detailed statistically valid survey was completed asking people what types of services, programs and park opportunities our residents need and want so that we can refine and target our service delivery.

Our County continues to grow and change demographically, plans like this one enable us to keep pace and stay current moving forward. Thank you for your interest and input and I trust that you will continue to provide insight and feedback as we move toward making Howard County an even better place to live, work and play.

Sincerely,



Allan H. Kittleman

Howard County Executive

# LETTER *from the* DIRECTOR

May 15, 2017

Dear Howard County Residents,

I am excited to present the 2017 Howard County Recreation and Parks Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. To be eligible for Program Open space funding from Maryland Department of Natural Resources local jurisdictions prepare these Plans every 5 years. In the Spring of 2016 we partnered with Sasaki Associates to begin the process of creating a relevant plan that will map out the future for parkland acquisition and development and program service delivery to serve future generations of Howard County residents. Using existing information from Plan Howard 2030, The Howard County Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan; Columbia Association studies, Creating an Age-Friendly Community Report, national trend data, as well as using thorough public outreach and a comprehensive statistical survey we believe we have established a plan

that will complement the progression of growth and demographic changes occurring in Howard County. We have an engaged and diverse community who has expressed their priorities through this process, and this Plan will assist in setting budgetary goals and objectives so that we can deliver them. Thank you to everyone who participated in public forums, surveys or on-line testimony to provide us with the necessary input to create a plan that serves you.

Sincerely,



John R. Byrd  
Director

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# Plan

## INTRODUCTION

The 2017 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (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.

# Plan Summary

## What is an LPPRP?

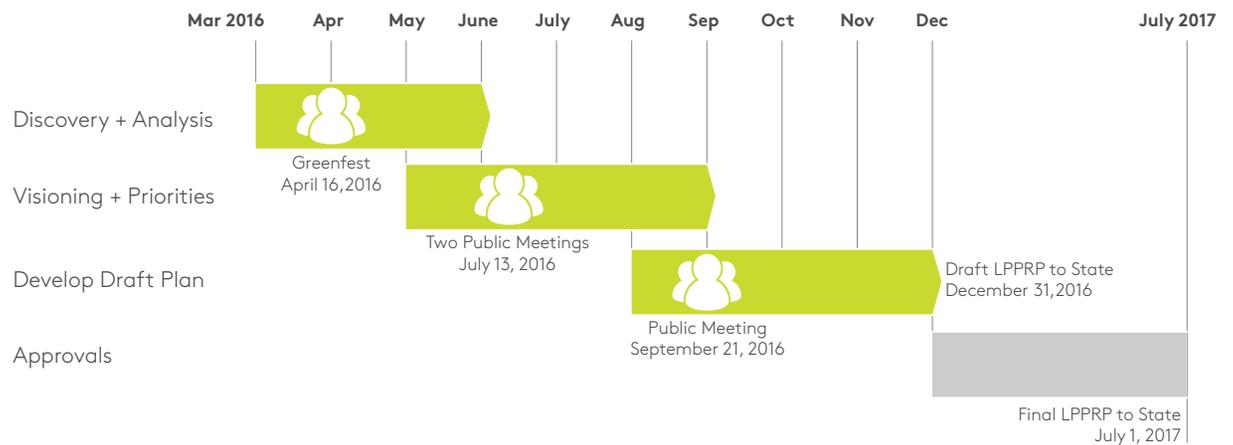
### PROJECT TIMELINE

The 2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) for Howard County serves as a five-year comprehensive plan for the Department of Recreation and Parks (the Department). As Howard County grows and changes, the plan will guide the Department on key issues, trends, and plans for managing and enhancing the system of preserved public lands, parks, and recreation facilities. The planning process began in February 2016 and concluded in December 2016. The plan was approved by the county in XXXX and adopted by the State of Maryland in XXXX.

The Department led the process with guidance from the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, input from local partners, and extensive community feedback. Beginning with a comprehensive inventory of park amenities, the process included an in-depth analysis of the county's recreation and park system. In concert with an analysis of the physical and programmatic amenities, the

existing framework of planning documents and current Department operations and policies provided a strong foundation. The Department conducted a statistically valid survey as part of the process to gauge user

satisfaction and desires for the future. The planning effort concluded with a visioning session with Department staff. The results of the visioning session form the final framework for the plan.



*LPPRP Timeline*



### *Centennial Park*

The LPPRP is a 16-month process evaluated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Funds are allocated for capital improvements and land acquisition for parks and open space.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

To gather support and input for the plan, the Department led a diverse public outreach strategy as part of the LPPRP process. In order to engage the broadest range of constituents, outreach not only included traditional public meetings, but also community events; a statistically valid phone survey; staff, stakeholder, and similar provider interviews and focus groups; and several presentations to the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board.

### **Public Engagement Events**

The LPPRP process included three public engagement events. In April, members of the Department staff and the consulting team attended GreenFest, an annual county festival focusing on sustainability, in order to generate project interest. More than 220 festival attendees completed a survey about their usage of parks and recreation offerings. In July, two public meetings took place at the Roger Carter Community Center and the North Laurel Community Center. Attendees at both locations submitted over 250 comments in the form of group discussions, activities, and one-on-one conversations. The third public engagement event took place in September at the Department headquarters. Approximately 30 community members attended this open-house-style

public meeting, which involved a presentation and small discussion groups around exhibit boards.

### **Statistically Valid Survey**

In June 2016, the Department administered a phone survey to 800 households across the county to better understand user satisfaction and community needs. The statistically valid survey captured responses from 3 percent of the county population with a 95 percent confidence level. This high degree of confidence ensured that the survey captured a snapshot of the county's diverse population across geographic area, income, race, and age, among other factors.

### **Staff Interviews**

The consulting team conducted two group interview sessions with employees who have direct contact with customers and leadership staff involved in managing programs and services. Staff shared insight on the Department's overall strengths and areas for improvement.

### **Focus Groups**

The Department held six focus group sessions throughout the course of the LPPRP process, covering the topics of similar providers, seniors, land conservation, athletics and recreation, and youth concerns. These sessions included more than 20 local stakeholders.

### **Similar Provider Survey**

As part of the LPPRP process, the Department sent an online survey to identify providers of similar services and received a total of 48 survey responses from 42 individual agencies.

### **Online Engagement**

Throughout the duration of the LPPRP effort, the Department offered community members the opportunity to submit comments and suggestions through their website. The Department received a total of 195 online comments.

### **Advisory Board Presentations**

The consulting team presented to the eight-member Recreation and Parks Advisory Board on two separate occasions to get feedback and general guidance on the analysis and visioning phases of the LPPRP.

All of the feedback received throughout the process played a significant role in helping to shape the direction and content of the plan. For further discussion of this process and associated feedback, please refer to *Appendix A, Community Engagement Process*.



*July Public Events*

A total of four public events were held in the county to solicit community input for the plan.



# Historic Legacy

*How did Howard County develop over time?*

Created in 1851, Howard County has a rich history stemming from agricultural prosperity and later from industrial growth. These early periods helped to form the county's identity and physical development, and were followed by a focus on open space preservation and thoughtful and sustainable community development. This legacy has led to a high quality of life in the county today, and parks, open space, and recreation resources are central to this success.

## AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Howard County's agricultural legacy began in the late 1600s with the arrival of some of the first colonial settlers. The rich agricultural lands of the Patapsco Valley began to attract early settlers such as Charles Carroll, one of the original signers of the Declaration of Independence, to purchase large areas of farmland. The growth of farming throughout

the 1700s then led to some of the earliest industrial development in the nation.

In 1772, the Ellicott brothers arrived from Pennsylvania with a vision for the Patapsco Valley. They soon began to convert local farmers to planting wheat as opposed to tobacco, and to use fertilizer to revive the soil. In addition to advancing farming methods, the three brothers invested heavily in transportation infrastructure such as roads and bridges, while also introducing new industrial technology. The newly established road system allowed for better transportation of produce and improved overall agricultural commerce in the mid-Atlantic region, while technology like mechanization allowed for clearing of more farmland. Despite their contributions to agricultural practices and infrastructure, the Ellicott brothers are most often recognized for their development of Ellicott's Mills, which later became one of the most successful manufacturing towns on the east coast.

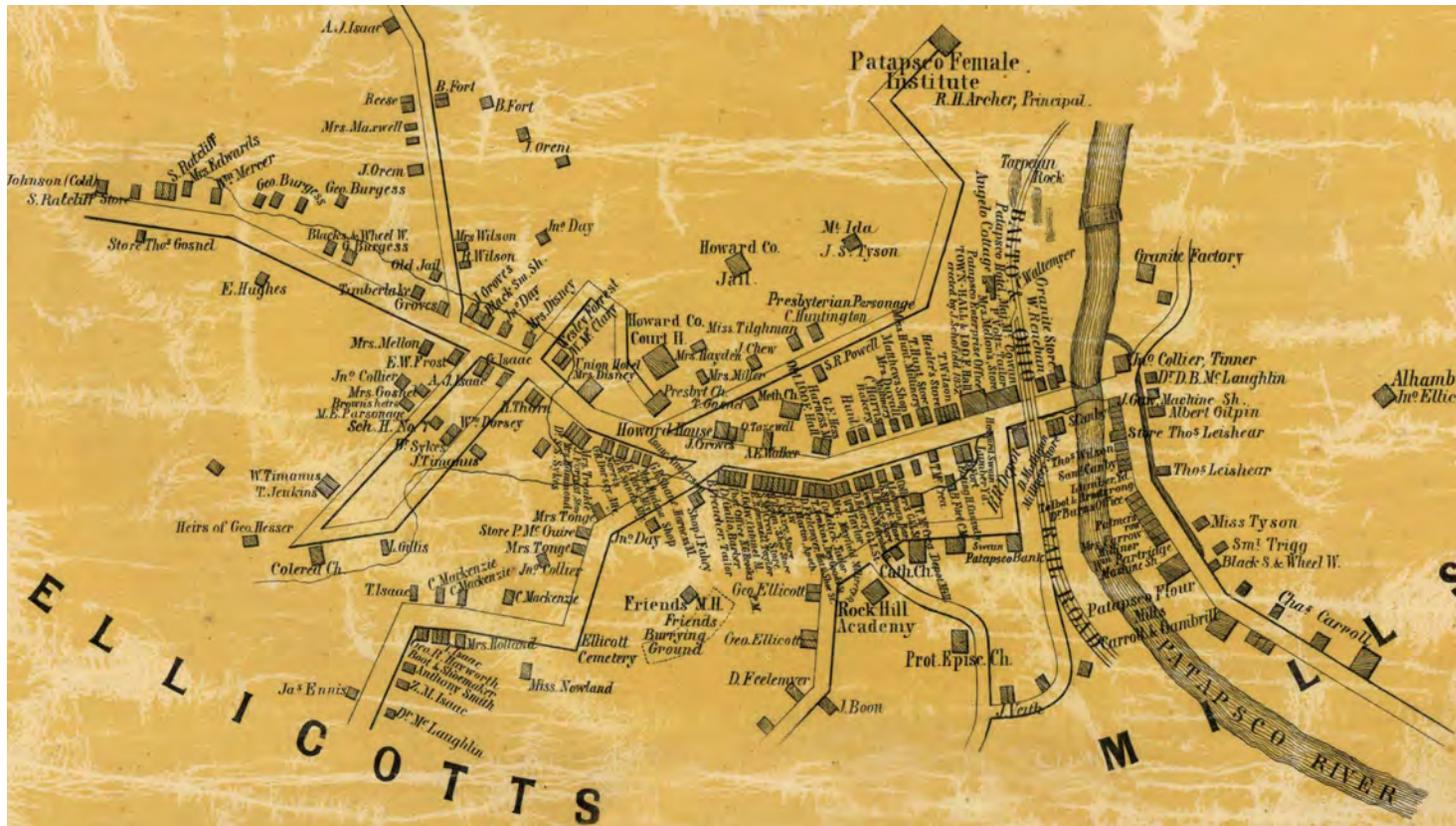
The growth of mills continued to spread to other parts of the county. Savage Mills, one of the most notable mills in the area known for textiles, opened in 1822 along the Little Patuxent River in the southern area of the county. Railroad development followed the surge in manufacturing. In 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) line, the nation's first commercial railroad, connected Baltimore with Ellicott's Mills, where the first railroad terminal was built in 1831. As a result of this rail line, development began to expand further inland in Howard County.

The emerging industries in this area continued to grow through the Civil War, up until the Baltimore Flood of 1868. With the Patapsco River rising up to 21.5 feet, this destructive flood swept away homes, mills, and trees. Despite all of the flood damage, this prosperous period in history clearly defined the future identity, culture, and landscape of the county, while establishing the region as a hub of innovation.



*Thomas Isaac Log Cabin*  
 (far left) The cabin is a key part of Howard County's local historic heritage.

*Patapsco Female Institute*  
 (far right) A former girls' boarding school located on Church Road in Ellicott City.



*Historic Ellicott City*  
 Originally known as Ellicott Mills, the Ellicott brothers founded the city on the banks of the Patapsco to support wheat milling.



### *Plan for the Valleys*

(both images) Ian McHarg pioneered regional land planning with the Baltimore regional plan in 1964. The plan restricted development away from highly desirable open valley floors.

## ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP

Through the Second World War, Howard County would remain primarily rural. After the war, the nation's economic boom and investment in the highway system spurred suburban growth in areas like Howard County. Between 1940 and 1960, the county's population more than doubled, thus increasing development pressures. In response to the area's sprawling development, there was a growing awareness of the need to preserve ecological corridors throughout the region. In 1964, Ian McHarg, a prominent landscape architect, pioneered the concept of regional ecological planning with the

*Plan for the Valleys*. Focusing on several valleys in the Greater Baltimore area, this plan restricted development from the highly desirable open valley floors, which were viewed as regional amenities, and allowed only minimal development on the surrounding slopes. Development was reserved for the surrounding plateaus and intended to accommodate intensive growth.

Following the plan, McHarg continued to promote the importance of ecological planning with his publication of *Design with Nature* in 1969. This work identified the faults

with modern development and argued for the design of human environments in concert with existing environmental conditions. McHarg maintained that it was society's responsibility to preserve the region's natural heritage.

This ecological movement profoundly influenced the development of the Howard County region, as well as several aspects of modern planning such as brownfield restoration, environmental impact assessment, and the development of numerous state smart-growth initiatives.



### *Planned Communities*

James Rouse reviews a diorama of the planned development known as Columbia.



### *Neighborhood Growth*

Smart growth policies ensured appropriate and more dense development to create multi-generational communities with a variety of amenities.

## COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD FOCUS

These ideas of ecological stewardship and environmentally-conscious development soon gave way to new planned communities. In 1963, James Rouse, a commercial developer, purchased 14,000 acres in Howard County for the Columbia development. Planned and designed to be a model of sustainable land use practice, Columbia was developed with the following four goals:

- » To create a fully self-sustaining city, where residents both live and work
- » To respect the land
- » To produce the most accommodating environment for the growth of people
- » To make a profit

Columbia was to be the ideal city, offering places to live and work with a wide range of community amenities. The city was envisioned as a network of towns with nature interspersed throughout, as Rouse's intent was to make natural experiences a part of everyday life for all. He designed the model to foster both personal growth and a sense of community, while also generating a profit for the development company so that the model would be easily replicated. More than 50 years later, Columbia's success is quite apparent. Having reached the planned population of 100,000, the community has received national recognition as a model for sustainable land use planning and continues to grow and evolve into the 21st century.

The impact of Columbia's development model is also evident at the municipal and state policy level. The State of Maryland's Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative is the prime example of legislative action advocating for the same core principles of the well-known planned community. Based on several earlier progressive land use measures at the state level, this 1997 initiative addressed the region's constant need to balance future growth and land conservation. The goals of the initiative were to "enhance the state's existing communities and other locally-designated growth areas, identify and protect the state's most valuable farmland and other natural resources, and save taxpayers from the cost of building new infrastructure to support poorly planned development." By selectively financing infrastructure development within designated priority funding areas, the state has been able to carry out this initiative. Efforts like the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative represent the importance this region has placed on promoting sustainable growth and the protection of natural resources, while still retaining local land use control.

# Howard County Today

*Where are we now and where are we headed?*

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Located in the Mid-Atlantic region strategically between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, Howard County is one of the most well-educated and affluent counties in the nation today. The county is frequently lauded for its high quality of life and has experienced significant and sustained population growth since the 1950s, with a 2013 population estimate of more than 300,000 people. Many are drawn to the county's well-performing school district, accessible open spaces, diverse recreational amenities, employment centers, historical heritage, and mixture of urban and rural communities. The county's dedication to sound planning for the public realm and natural systems to sustain this high quality of life amid the development pressures of a growing community is evident.

With no incorporated municipalities, Howard County is divided into five planning areas: Ellicott City, Columbia, Southeast, Elkridge

and the Rural West. While the majority of the population is concentrated in Ellicott City and Columbia, new development continues to expand elsewhere. Despite efforts to focus on infill development, the threat of sprawl on undeveloped areas remains present.

Currently, 25 percent of the county is farmland, with agriculture serving as one of the top five industries and generating approximately \$31,883,000 in market value of agricultural products sold in 2012 alone, according to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture. Since the 1970s, the amount of farmland throughout the county has decreased by more than 50 percent, while the population has more than tripled in size. This undeveloped land, whether for preservation or agricultural purposes, also contributes to the region's system of natural resources and the corresponding ecosystem services. It is crucial the county preserve these lands to

continue providing the appropriate ecosystem services and to maintain water quality, thus protecting the nearby Chesapeake Bay. The significant growth in population and development, together with active recreation needs, must continue to balance with the needs of preservation to ensure the county's natural resource amenities for future generations.



*Planning Areas*

The county is divided into five planning areas

 Planning Area



## COMMUNITY HEALTH

Despite the wealth of community amenities, Howard County residents face significant health issues as a result of several social factors and elements of the physical environment. Approximately 6.5 percent of residents live near a highway and are negatively affected by the pollution as a result. A large number of residents also suffer from stress-related issues, perhaps stemming from professional demands, leading to a high rate of heart disease. Lack of overall time spent outdoors is another concern, primarily for teenagers. With their mounting academic and extracurricular demands, only 10 percent of US teenagers spend time outside on a daily basis, according to a new nationwide poll from The Nature Conservancy. These health concerns must stay at the forefront of county recreation and park planning, as they can be addressed through the physical, social, and mental benefits of the outdoors and active programming.

## A CHANGING POPULATION

The county's population is growing in size, diversity, and age. With these key shifts today, a unique opportunity exists to improve, preserve, and align the future community with the parks and recreation resources that support it.

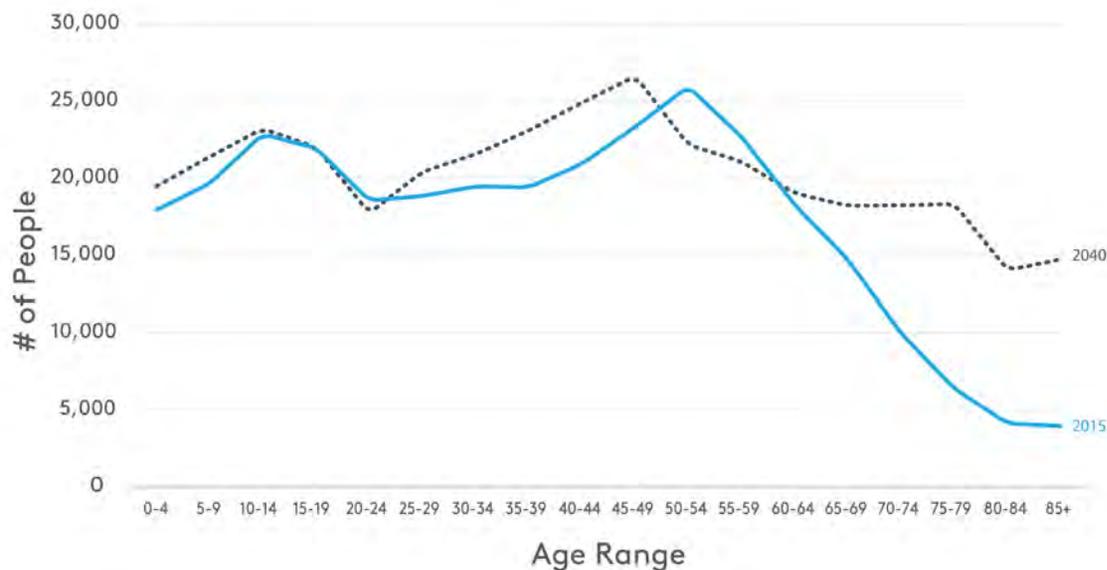
### ***Projected Population Totals***

Howard County is one of Maryland's fastest growing regions in terms of population. Although at a slower rate than previous decades, the county's population grew by 16 percent between 2000 and 2010 (an increase of approximately 39,000 residents). The population is projected to grow by 28 percent between 2010 and 2040, reaching over 366,000, as a result of both migration and a natural increase. This population growth will be coupled with a 38 percent growth in households during this same period. In response to these trends, the Department must closely monitor demand for amenities and programs as well as their accessibility, and preservation of natural resources.

### ***Population Demographics***

The non-white population will experience the most steady growth. In 2000, the non-Hispanic white population represented 73 percent of the county population with the

remaining 27 percent consisting of minority populations. By 2010, this non-Hispanic white population had decreased to 59 percent of the population while the minority population had increased to 41 percent of the total. Specifically, 59 percent of the county population was non-Hispanic white, 17 percent was non-Hispanic African American, 14 percent was non-Hispanic Asian, 6 percent was Hispanic, and approximately 3.5 percent was of another race or more than one race. In terms of minority population count, the non-Hispanic Asian population increased the most between 2000 and 2010 with a total of 22,000 new residents. The non-Hispanic Asian population was followed by an increase in 14,000 new non-Hispanic African American residents and 9,200 new Hispanic residents. However, the Hispanic population represents the largest growth rate since 2000 at 123 percent. At this rate of change, Howard County can anticipate becoming a majority-minority county sometime in the next five to ten years. An increasingly diverse population will require programming for a wide range of user types and a renewed focus on community outreach to ensure Department amenities and services reach all county residents.



### Population Age Shifts

While the total US population grew by approximately 10 percent between 2000 and 2010, the group entering the 45 to 64 year age cohort increased by approximately 32 percent.

### Age Distribution

One of the most distinctive trends in the county, and at the national level, is the rapid aging of the population as result of the Baby Boomer generation. While the total US population grew by approximately 10 percent between 2000 and 2010, the group entering the 45 to 64 year age cohort increased by approximately 32 percent. The 65 and older age cohort has also increased. Between 2000 and 2010, Howard County experienced an

increase in more than 10,000 residents age 65 or older (an approximately 57 percent increase). The growth of this age cohort is anticipated to significantly increase from 29,045 residents in 2010 to 83,565 residents in 2040. This would amount to an increase of 188 percent over the course of a 30-year timeframe. Clearly, the growth of the 65 or older age cohort will represent a greater share of the demand for recreation facilities and programs in the coming decades.

### Past Planning Efforts

In addition to building off the efforts of the 2012 Land Preservation, Recreation, and Parks Plan (LPRP) update, the 2017 LPRP effort closely consulted the following previous county planning efforts:

**PlanHoward 2030:** Adopted in 2012, this comprehensive plan update similarly embraces the principles of smart growth, sustainability, and environmental stewardship.

**Bike Howard 2015:** This master plan emphasizes the importance of a connected bike network to promote sustainable transportation options and overall physical activity for all county residents.

**Creating an Age-Friendly Community:** Developed by the Department of Citizen Services, this report identifies best practices for aging communities and potential implications for future senior programs and services.

# Existing System

*What does the recreation and parks system look like?*

Howard County boasts a comprehensive system of park and recreation facilities, natural resources, and preserved agricultural land.

## RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE

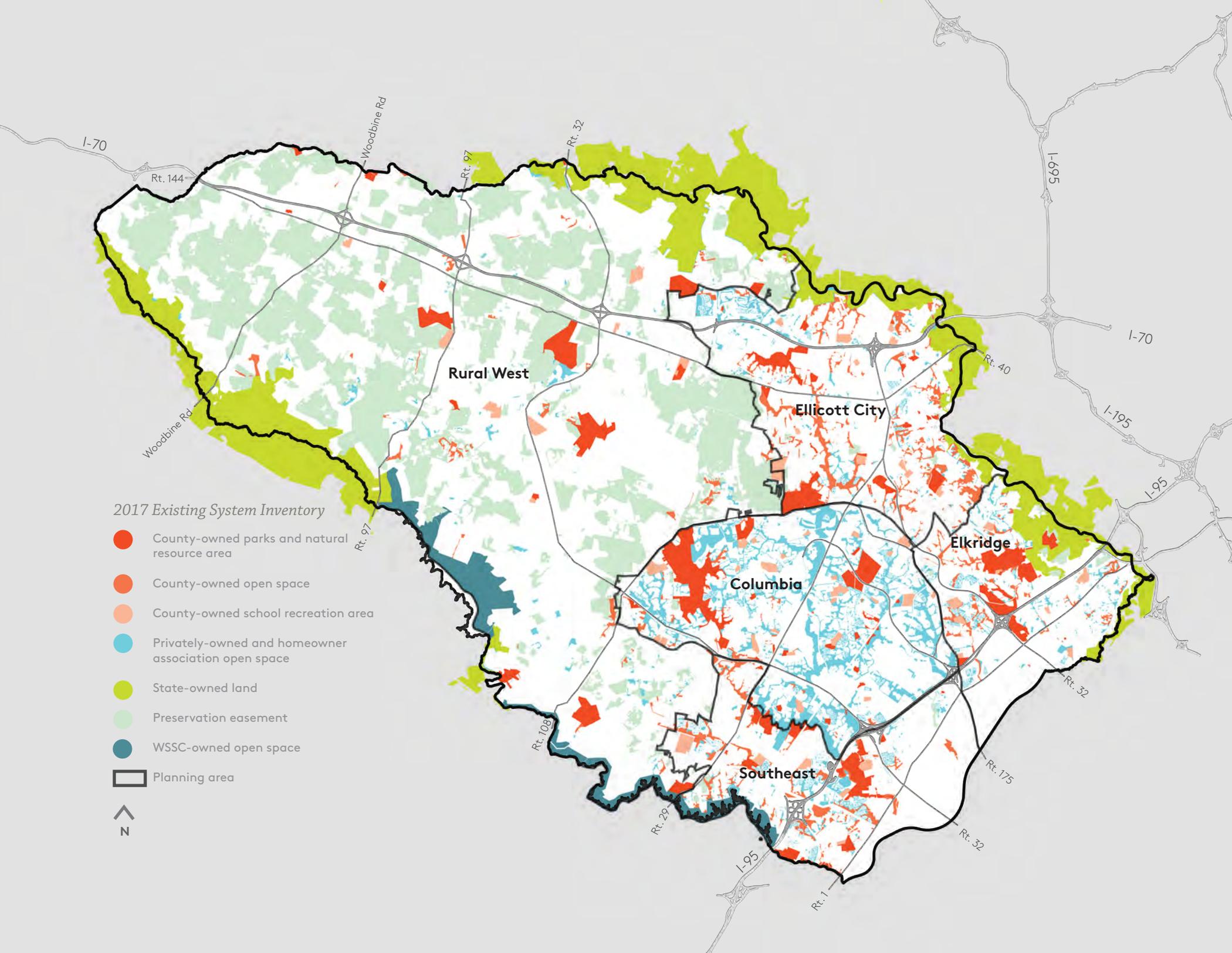
Howard County, the State of Maryland, and homeowner associations make up the majority of the county's open space structure.

- » County parks and facilities (community centers, athletic centers, nature centers, multipurpose rooms, and halls)
- » State lands
- » School-permitted program and activity spaces
- » Historic/cultural areas
- » Homeowner association lands
- » Other permanently preserved private open spaces

While the park and recreation system may consist of all of the elements previously listed, the county owns 9,378 acres of land, 5,750 acres of which is considered programmable park space and 3,628 acres of which is undeveloped open space. In addition to parks, this land also includes 25 historic sites and seven facilities for recreation or educational purposes. For more information about Howard County's recreation, parks, and open space, please refer to chapter three, *Maintaining Excellence and Driving Innovation* and a spatial breakdown by space type in *Appendix I, Community Inventory*.

2017 Existing System Inventory

- County-owned parks and natural resource area
- County-owned open space
- County-owned school recreation area
- Privately-owned and homeowner association open space
- State-owned land
- Preservation easement
- WSSC-owned open space
- ▭ Planning area



## NATURAL RESOURCES

Defined by the Patapsco River to the north and the Patuxent River to the south, Howard County plays a significant role in the region's natural resource system. These two rivers serve as major tributaries to Maryland's most important and vulnerable resource, the Chesapeake Bay. Approximately three quarters of the county drains to the Patuxent River, while the remaining one quarter drains to the Patapsco River. Therefore, any activity within Howard County can impact the Chesapeake Bay.

The county's rich and diverse natural resource system consists of stream valleys, forested land, wetlands, farmland, wildlife habitats, mineral resources, and several other elements. Many of these open space lands are located adjacent to the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers and are owned by the State of Maryland. The system generates valuable ecosystem services crucial to the sustainability and well-being of the county. The Department acknowledges the significant role of natural resources within the county and leads several programs and initiatives working to preserve the environment and its resources for future generations.

## AGRICULTURAL LAND

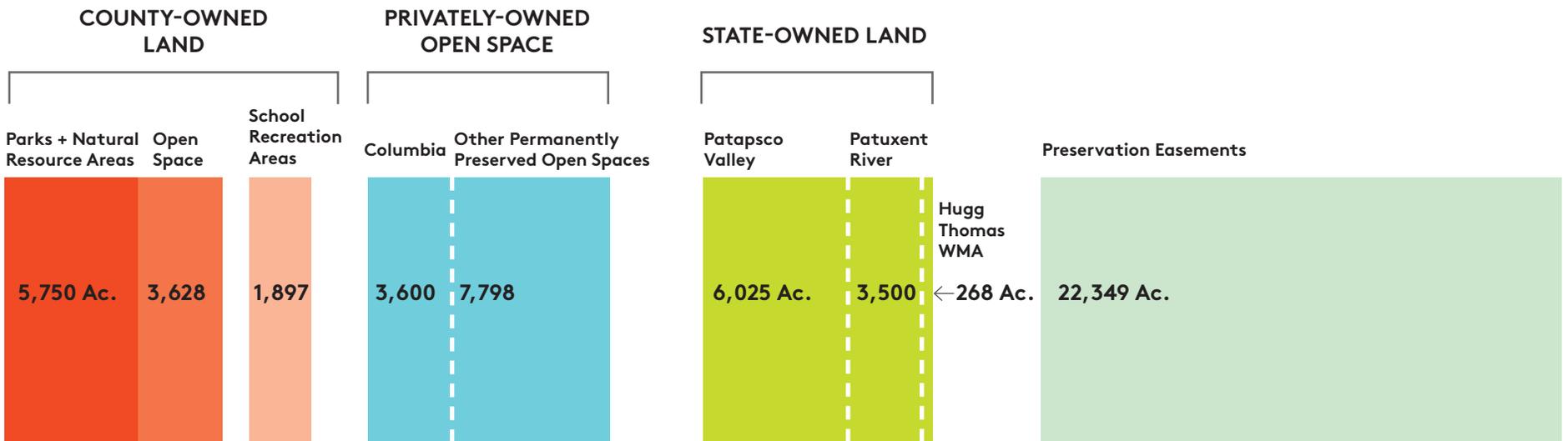
Tied to the county's history, farmland serves as one of the top industries within the county and represents 25 percent of all land. Similarly at the state level, agriculture serves as the single largest land use, representing 32 percent of all land (over 2 million acres). This industry employs approximately 350,000 individuals across the state, making it the largest commercial industry in Maryland.

Despite their contribution to the state's economy, agricultural lands are particularly susceptible to growth pressure since land that is well suited for agricultural use is most often also well-suited for development. Agricultural preservation in Howard County targets prime land that is suitable for agricultural, horticultural, or silvicultural use and is located in the rural western portion of the county. In addition to providing stability to the agricultural economy and land resource base, agricultural land preservation helps to maintain a rural character, scenic vistas, and habitat, all of which are important components of Howard County's natural environment. The Department's role in agricultural land preservation includes land ownership, educational programs, and agricultural easements with landowners. In recent years, the Department has made great strides in acquiring easements in the western portion of the county.

## DEPARTMENT ROLE

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is a highly-regarded department at the local, regional, and national level. The Department currently has approximately 940 employees in payroll. In fiscal year 2016, the Department had an average of approximately 225 full-time, 96 part-time benefited, and about 455 contingent employees, many of whom have advanced professional degrees such as CPRP, CTRS, CPSI, and sports administrator certifications. Between June 2015 and July 2016, 3,845 volunteers logged over 23,760 hours.

The Department has proved its leadership in the field of recreation and parks planning through numerous awards, high customer satisfaction, and other forms of recognition. It is clear to many that the Department's variety of high quality program and amenity offerings and its well-utilized park system contribute significantly to the county's high quality of life. The Department must continue to build on their success and continually evaluate the county's evolving needs for recreation and parks, natural and historic resources, and agriculture preservation.



*2017 Existing System Inventory*

According to the map on page 21 and the above bar graph, Howard County has 32,466 acres of publicly accessible land. This number includes county, state, and privately-owned, publicly accessible open space. Preservation easements contribute to sustained agriculture and forest conservation and account for approximately 22,349 acres. For a property by property breakdown of the space types identified above, refer to Appendix I - Community Inventory.

## County Owned Lands

1	Allenford/North Farm Park	45
2	Alpha Ridge Park	
3	Atholton Park	46
4	<b>B &amp; O Railroad Museum*</b>	47
5	Baldwin Commons Park	48
6	<b>Belmont Manor and Historic Park*</b>	49
7	Benson Branch Park	
8	<b>Blandair Regional Park* (Historic Farm)</b>	50
9	<b>Bollman Truss Bridge*</b>	51
10	Carrs Mill NRA	52
11	Cedar Lane Park	53
12	Cedar Villa Heights Park	54
13	Centennial Park	55
14	Centennial Park Access Pathway	56
15	Chaconas Property	57
16	<b>Col. Anderson Memorial*</b> Lt. Col. Ephraim Anderson Grave Site	58
17	Collins Property	59
18	Cypressmede Park	60
19	David Force Community Park	61
20	David Force Stream Valley NRA	62
21	Dayton Park	63
22	Dickinson Park	64
23	Drell Property	65
24	Dunloggin Park	66
25	East Columbia Library Park	67
26	Elkhorn Garden Plots	68
27	Elkhorn Park	69
28	<b>Ellicott City Colored School House, Restored*</b> Ryan Property Historic Well*	70
29	Font Hill Park	
30	South Fulton Area Park	
31	Ganon-Bahl Property	
32	Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA	71
33	Governors Run Playground	72
34	<b>Granite Mansion (Heine Property)*</b>	73
35	Guilford Park	74
36	Gwynn Acres NRA	
37	Hammond Park	75
38	Harwood Park	76
39	Haviland Mill Park (Masback Property)	
40	Haviland Mill Park (Salas Property)	77
41	Haviland Mill Park (Zirn/Collins Property)	78
42	Hawthorn Park	79
43	Headquarters	80
44	Heritage Heights Park/Clarks Glen Playground	81

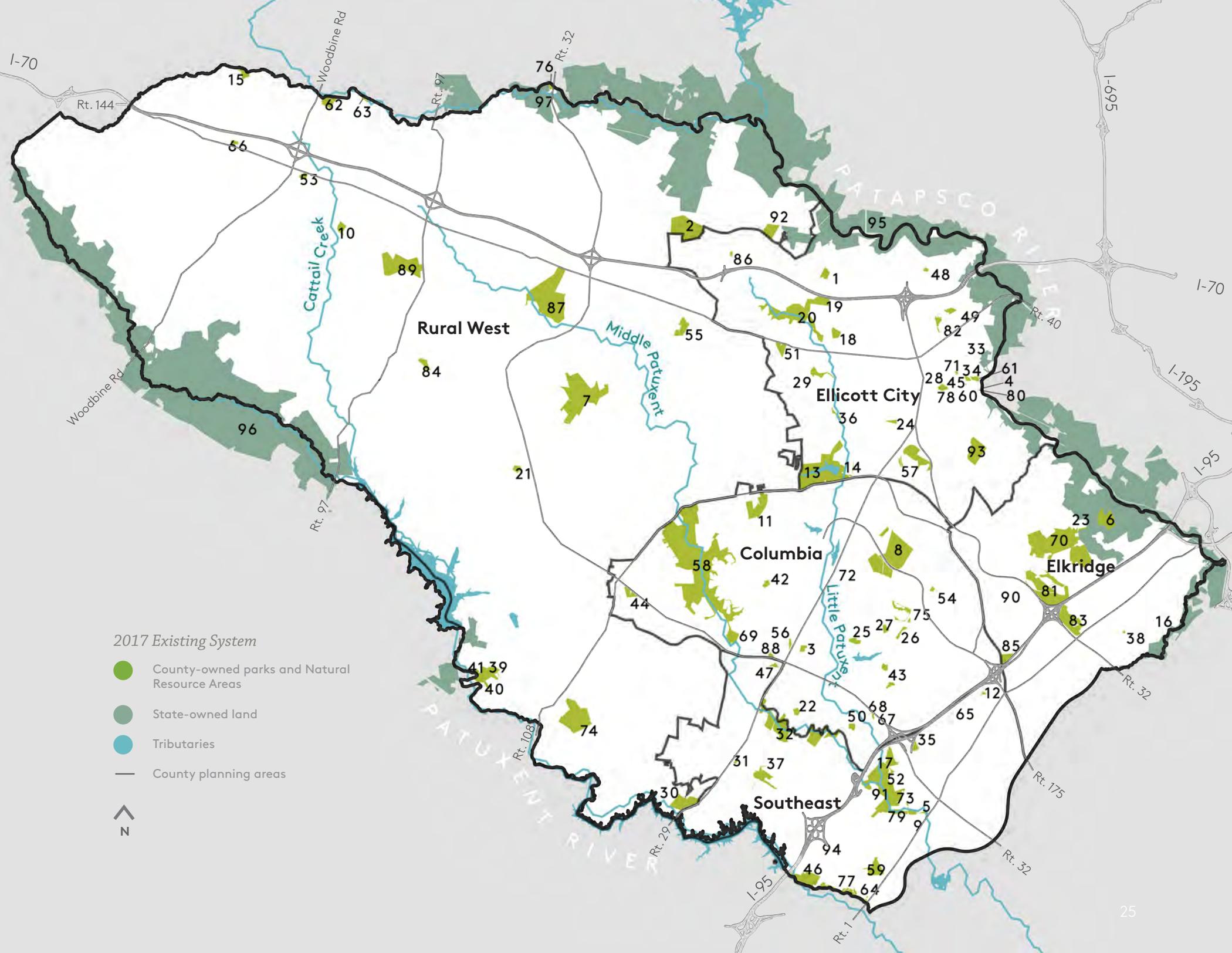
<b>Heritage Orientation Center (Little Court House)*</b>	82
High Ridge Park	83
Holiday Hills Park	
Hollifield Station Park	84
Howard County Center for the Arts/ Rockland Arts Center	85
Huntington Park	86
Kiwanis Wallas Hall and Park	87
Lash Property	
Lisbon Park	88
Long Reach Garden Plots	89
Manor Woods Park	90
Martin Road Park	91
Meadowbrook Park	92
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	93
North Laurel Park and Community Center	94
<b>Old Firehouse Museum*</b>	
<b>Patapsco Female Institute Historic Institute*</b>	
Patapsco Greenway (Houchens)	
Patapsco Greenway (Lewis)	
Patuxent Basin NRA	
Pleasant Chase Playground	
<b>Poplar Springs Park*</b>	
<b>Pratt Truss Bridge Historic Site*</b>	
Pratt Truss Bridge/Murray Hill Stream Valley	
<b>Robinson Nature Center</b> Simpsonville Mill Ruins	
<b>Rockburn Branch Park</b> Clover Hill Farm House* Doyle Spring House* McKenzie Barn* Pfeiffer's Corner Schoolhouse*	
Roger Carter Community Center	
Rt. 29 Pedestrian Bridge	
Savage Park	
<b>Schooley Mill Park*</b> James Marlow House	
Sewells Orchard Park	
South Branch Park James Sykes House*	
Teeter Property	
<b>Thomas Isaac Log Cabin*</b>	
Thompson Property	
Tiber Park	
Timbers At Troy Golf Course	

Town and Country Park	
<b>Troy Park (Troy Park at Elkridge)</b> Troy House*	
Warfields Pond Park	
Waterloo Park	
<b>Waverly Mansion*</b>	
<b>West Friendship Park</b> Hebb House*	
West Side Garden Plots	
Western Regional Park	
Willowood Playground	
Wincopin Trails/Murray Hillstream Valley	
Woodstock Park	
Worthington Dog Park	
Wyndermere Playground	

## State Owned Lands

95	Patapsco Valley State Park
96	Patuxent River State Park
97	Hugg Thomas Wildlife Management Area

\*Heritage Program Historic Site



2017 Existing System

- County-owned parks and Natural Resource Areas
- State-owned land
- Tributaries
- County planning areas



# One HOWARD



# One Howard: Vision

The vision for Howard County's recreation and parks system is predicated on the achievements of the system in providing the best programs and services for the community which allow the county to focus on creating a vibrant future.

Recreation and parks, natural resources, and agriculture are integral to the county's history and legacy, recent successes within the system, and future opportunities for innovation and growth. The vision is a holistic approach to achieving these goals; it maintains the dense, neighborhood features of the eastern communities and seeks to preserve undeveloped lands in the west, but encourages synergies between the urban and rural to create One Howard.

With more than 58 total facilities including offices, maintenance facilities, and historic buildings, and 92 parks in the system, the LPPRP celebrates unique places to interact with the natural environment, recreation programs, the county's rich historic legacy, and farming. Fostering many of the goals and objectives developed by PlanHoward 2030, the most recent county general plan, the LPPRP imagines a sustainable system that celebrates the diverse needs of a growing and evolving community.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The LPPRP identifies three guiding principles which incorporate both County and State goals and underline recommendations for future potential capital improvements that align with those goals. Per state guidelines, the three guiding principles

also respond to the three themes of the LPPRP; parks and recreation, natural resource conservation and agricultural land preservation. These principles are as follows:

- » Maintaining excellence and driving innovation to enhance placemaking and strive for equity in existing and future recreation and parks amenities and programs
- » Enhancing the health, wellness, and resilience of natural and human systems and cultural heritage to promote resilience and environmental health along ecological and riparian corridors
- » Serving as land stewards to facilitate enhanced connections between agricultural and historic heritage, natural systems, and the Howard County community

The three National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) pillars — social equity, health and wellness, and conservation — are woven throughout these themes. The pillars expressly benefit the programs, classes, camps, and services provided by the Department to residents and visitors.

Within the LPPRP, the three principles are presented as individual chapters that identify state and county goals that are both aspirational and forward thinking. Those goals are supported by six recommendations that are grounded in both opportunities for the county system and individual sites; recreation, ecology, placemaking, connectivity, education, and communication are woven throughout the remainder of the LPPRP.



RECREATION



ECOLOGY



PLACEMAKING



CONNECTIVITY



EDUCATION



COMMUNICATION





# **MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE & DRIVING INNOVATION**

# Existing Conditions

*What does the Recreation and Parks system look like?*

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is recognized for their high quality parks and open spaces and diverse recreation amenities that attract both residents and visitors. The Department strives to constantly align programs and services with community need, while also adapting the system to future trends. In addition to this challenging balance, the Department is committed to driving innovation internally and within the greater industry of recreation and parks.

## COUNTY RECREATION AND PARKS SYSTEM

Howard County's robust recreation and park system includes the following elements described in greater detail below:

- » County lands and facilities
- » State lands
- » School-allocated activity and program spaces
- » Homeowner association lands
- » Other permanently preserved private open spaces

### **County-owned Lands and Facilities**

#### **Parks**

Ranging in scale and amenities, the Department maintains a diversity of parks. While the Department owns over 9,378 acres,

only 5,750 acres are programmed open spaces and parks. Park sizes and uses range from large multi-purpose parks intended for use by the entire county population, to smaller neighborhood parks that serve a more localized need. Several parks within the system are very popular among both county residents and visitors, such as Centennial Park, Rockburn Branch Park, and Cedar Lane Park and serve as memorable icons for the system. Although unique in their own ways, these signature parks share similar engaging qualities and amenities that attract a wide range of user groups. Some of these qualities and amenities include the following:

- » A wide variety of amenities that cater to all ages and abilities
- » An approachable way to access nature
- » Presence/amplification of a natural resource
- » Communal gathering space
- » Opportunities for social engagement and exercise

## Natural Resource Areas

Natural resource areas represent a significant portion of the county's park and recreation system. These publicly accessible, protected areas allow for limited development and are managed to enhance the resource and related habitats. Of the Department's programmable park and open space, 1,887 acres (25 percent) are considered natural resource areas.

For more detailed information on the county's natural resource system, please refer to chapter four, *Enhancing Health and Resilience of Human and Natural Systems*.

## County Open Spaces

As Howard County maintains an open space requirement for new residential development, about 1,035 open space parcels throughout the county are under the purview of the Department. While many of these parcels are too small to generate any recreational value, an effort exists to ensure future dedicated parcels strategically link open space corridors and tie into the overall park and open space system.



**Parks**  
(above) Meadowbrook Park hosts many activities throughout the day.



**Natural Resource Areas**  
(left) Hikers walking along the Patapsco River tributary.

## Historic/Cultural Areas

With a rich historical legacy, Howard County has many well-preserved heritage sites, some of which are owned and maintained by the Department. The Department owns and operates a total of 25 historic sites, all of which are either stand-alone sites or structures located within county-owned parks. For a more detailed discussion of the county's historic sites and the heritage program, please refer to Chapter\_\_\_ Enhancing Health and Resilience of Human and Natural Systems.

## Recreation Facilities

The Department also owns and operates the following recreation and education facilities:

- » Gary J. Arthur Community Center
- » Kiwanis Wallas Hall
- » Meadowbrook Athletic Complex
- » North Laurel Community Center
- » Robinson Nature Center
- » Roger Carter Community Center
- » Belmont Manor and Historic Park

Department-owned facilities operated by an outside party include the following:

- » Waverly Mansion
- » Timbers at Troy Golf Course



### *Belmont Manor & Historic Park*

After reopening in 2015, this property has served as a venue for both public and private events.



### *Roger Carter Community Center*

This community center offers a range of amenities including a pool, indoor track, and climbing wall.

The three community centers — Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel, and Roger Carter — are dispersed across the county and offer a wide range of amenities and programs.

The Gary J. Arthur Community Center is located in the Rural West within Western Regional Park and is shared by the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Department of Community Resources and Services, and the Health Department. The facility includes a double gymnasium, fitness room, commercial kitchen, and flexible space for classrooms. The center also hosts several community events for all ages such as the signature Holiday Mart held annually in December, as well as the Fall Flea Market and Spring Egg Hunt.

The North Laurel Community Center is located in the southeastern region of the county and within North Laurel Park. This facility is also shared by several departments including the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Health Department, the Police Department, and the Department of Community Resources and Services, and offers similar amenities to those at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center.

Roger Carter Community Center is the county's third and most recently constructed center. Located in Ellicott City, this facility serves the northern communities with several unique recreation amenities including an indoor/outdoor swimming pool, splash

pad, single gym, and indoor climbing wall. Its location was planned to be adjacent previously developed multi-family housing development, supporting easy access to the recreation resource.

In addition to the community centers, the Department also owns and operates the Meadowbrook Athletic Complex. This large, unobstructed gymnasium space serves as a recreation destination for the entire county with space for indoor basketball, volleyball, field hockey, badminton, and others. The large space can house four basketball courts or up to six volleyball courts.

The Department's Robinson Nature Center, located adjacent to the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, serves as an amenity for both county residents and visitors. Since opening in 2011, the center has offered a unique nature education experience for all ages. The center aims to facilitate the enjoyment and understanding of natural resources through interactive exhibits, outdoor trails, and nature-focused programming. The facility is LEED Platinum certified and incorporates water management best practices including pervious surfaces, native landscaping, rain water collection, and roof gardens.

Lastly, the Department owns and operates Timbers at Troy, the only county-owned public golf course, located in the eastern portion of county. In addition to its beautiful landscape,

Timbers at Troy has made considerable efforts in the form of environmental stewardship by striving toward best management practices in environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical use reduction and safety, water management, and education.

For the comprehensive community inventory of all parks and recreation facilities located within Howard County, please refer to *Appendix I, Community Inventory*.



***North Laurel Park & Community Center***

Located between the community center and the Laurel Woods Elementary School, the new skate park attracts a wide range of users.

## ***State Lands***

Within Howard County, two state parks and one wildlife management area are managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources: the Patapsco Valley State Park, the Patuxent River State Park, and the Hugg Thomas Wildlife Management Area. Together these three state-owned public open spaces represent 9,793 acres within the county. While the two parks offer primarily outdoor recreation activities such as fishing, hiking, and mountain biking, the wildlife management area features hiking trails, hunting grounds, and preserved wildlife habitat.

## ***School Recreation Areas***

Howard County has 73 public school sites reaching a total of 1,874 acres. Almost all school sites are administered by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), with the exception of Howard County Community College which is administered by Howard County and the Maryland School for the Deaf which is administered by the State of Maryland. Rockburn Elementary School and Dayton Oaks Elementary School represent a unique relationship with HCPSS, as outdoor spaces surrounding those schools are owned by the Department. The Department provides programming on many of these sites, from indoor facilities to artificial turf fields, and has jointly developed some of the facilities with

the HCPSS. The Department of Recreation and Parks and the HCPSS both have high demands for program uses of these shared facilities.

## ***Homeowner Association Land***

Homeowner associations have permanently preserved 1,205 acres within Howard County. These lands range in size and configuration depending on their associated residential subdivision.

## ***Other Permanently Preserved Private Open Spaces***

Together, the Columbia Association (CA) and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) own a total of 6,450 acres of preserved private open space within Howard County. Within each of the 10 planned villages of Columbia, a certain amount of land has been reserved for permanent open space, which includes both undeveloped land and recreation facilities. The WSSC owns undeveloped open space along the Patuxent River between I-95 and the Triadelphia Reservoir region.

## RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

Howard County is an active and well-educated community with robust recreation program offerings for all ages and abilities. The Recreation Bureau includes the following three divisions that are involved in recreation programming:

Recreation Services is composed of recreation programs and services that relate to arts, crafts, dance, special events of all sizes, and children and adult leisure classes, camps, and programs. Moreover, recreation services oversee volunteer, preschool, and community center management.

Sports and Adventure Services promote active lifestyles through instructional programs and community partnerships. It offers programs such as sports instruction and leagues, hikes, astronomy, camping and campfires, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, skiing and tubing, boating classes, nature programs, and rock climbing.

Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services Division provides programs for youth from ages two and a half through middle school, offering a wide variety of child care programs, from campus to therapeutic recreation, all licensed through the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care.

Of the 10,340+ programs currently provided annually, several core programs are generally offered every year and form the foundation of program offerings. The following 10 program areas capture all core programs:

For more detailed information about the strengths and weaknesses of the recreation programs and opportunities for future program direction, please refer to *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

1	Volunteerism and Service Opportunities	Serving on boards, participating in service learning, or serving as coaches, docents and program volunteers
2	Special Events and Social Recreation	Including parties, dances, large and small special events
3	Music and Dance	Through performance, instruction, and attendance of all types of music/dance
4	Sports, Fitness and Games, Health and Wellness	Through competitions, in leagues, individually, and in team sports, from martial arts to fitness classes and room use
5	Visual Arts and Arts and Crafts	-
6	Outdoor Recreation, Adventure, Nature, and Environmental Activities	Including camping, nature crafts and activities, environmental education, teambuilding courses, boating, rock climbing and skateboarding
7	Drama	Experienced through film viewings, puppet shows, reenactments, and drama clubs
8	Self-Improvement, Hobbies and Leisure Education	Including stress management, how-to classes, collecting, and gardening tutorials
9	Cognitive, Literary, STEM and Computer gaming	Through game creative writing, book clubs, museum visits, and computerized game programs
10	Trips and Tours, local Tourism and Sport, Eco, Heritage and Tourism	Via day trips, field trips, adventure tourism and sports tourism activities, ghost tours, and heritage programs

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE PREVIOUS PLAN

Since 2012, the Department has received attention for several notable accomplishments ranging from new park designs to popular community events. Several of these accomplishments, which support the goals of Maintaining Excellence and Driving Innovation and Enhancing Health and Resilience of Human and Natural Systems are outlined below, and serve as models for future investments and programming.

### Facilities

**Belmont Manor and Historic Park:** Since purchasing the historic property in 2012, the Department has restored the manor, which opened in April 2015 and now serves as a popular rental space for a variety of events. This year, the Belmont Manor and Historic Park hosted 48 events and 12 programs, from movie events to croquet tournaments and badminton games. The site occupies 68 acres of rolling hills which include a cottage house, carriage house, barn, caretaker house, pond, trails, cemetery, and large gardens. The restoration and current management of the site serve as a model of historic reuse.

**North Laurel Community Center:** Shared by the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Health Department, and the Police Department in addition to the Office on Aging, the North Laurel Community Center serves the southeastern portion of the county. Over the year, the center has also partnered with the HCPSS and Community Action Council to host events such as the back to school clothing drive, as well as hosting its own events and programs throughout the year. The North Laurel Community Center celebrated its 4th year in 2015.

**Robinson Nature Center:** The nature education facility on 18 acres of land is adjacent to the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. As one of three LEED Platinum certified buildings in Maryland, the center has geothermal heating and air-conditioning, porous paving, solar panels, water conservation methods, and other eco-friendly features. This year, the Robinson staff led 426 programs, engaging nearly 17,000 participants. To promote environmental stewardship, the center worked with the National Aquarium, hosted events, collaborated with scientists, engineers, and educators from local astronomy organizations, and facilitated field trips. The center constructed an outdoor nature place for exploration and discovery, opened in September 2015.

**Roger Carter Community Center:** This state-of-the-art community center opened in 2013 in Ellicott City in tandem with the development of the mixed-income community Burgess Mill Station. The center has swimming and diving pools, basketball and volleyball courts, classrooms, fitness and exercise rooms, and a climbing wall. The past year's successful events ranged from dance parties to a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration, from a pool egg hunt to an Earth Day celebration, and even a feature on ABC2's Spotlight on Women program.

**Department of Recreation and Parks Headquarters:** The recently renovated lobby at the Department of Recreation and Parks headquarters has made the space more inviting to community members and better secured for staff members. In addition to the building, the Department's marketing staff has placed greater emphasis on using social media platforms to promote Howard County's programs. Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr were the most frequently visited online platforms, likely contributing to the increased registration numbers seen this year.

**Schooley Mill Park:** The Department recently renovated Schooley Mill Park which included the development of a cricket pitch and field.



*Robinson Nature Center*  
The center provides indoor and outdoor educational experiences for all ages and abilities.

## **Parks**

In total, Howard County has nearly 5,750 acres of programmed park land. Recent accomplishments include infrastructural additions and stormwater management tactics. A few examples are described in detail below:

**Atholton Park:** A new playground and swing area was installed to replace old equipment. The pathway was renovated and new concrete has been laid for the restroom courtyard area. A new playground was erected at Cedar Villa Heights Park , with repaired accompanying pathways.

**South Branch Park:** The first phase of the park has opened, including two age-specific playgrounds, a picnic pavilion, a skate park and an ADA-compliant parking lot with path.

**Troy Park:** The first phase of the park at Elkridge has opened, unveiling the two lighted synthetic multipurpose fields and bleachers, parking areas with bio-retention islands, and a children’s playground. The second phase is currently under construction and will be completed in September, 2017. When all work is completed, Troy Park will include several multipurpose fields for large events, play space, a community center, an indoor athletic complex, and a renovated historic Troy Mansion.

**Blandair Park:** With the first phase completed, Blandair Park is on its way to becoming a world-class regional park with spaces and amenities for all. The six phases of the park plan will cover a total of 300 acres, crossing both sides of the heavily trafficked Route 175, and include a mixture of both active and passive recreation spaces, including multipurpose fields, an athletic complex, environmental education area, and festival lawn. The second phase of Blandair Park is currently underway.

**Haviland Mill Park:** The Department acquired 80 acres at this site for future park development. In addition, a small parking lot was constructed to enable water access for fisherman.

**South Fulton Park:** The Department also acquired approximately 80 acres at this site for the future development of a community park.

**West Friendship Park:** Through a new partnership with the Living Farm Heritage Museum, the Department developed an interpretive center on the county’s agricultural history at West Friendship Park.

**Western Regional Park:** Since 2012, the Department has constructed multiple restrooms, a storage facility, five picnic pavilions and additional parking at this popular destination park.



**Atholton Park**  
A new playground and swing area were recently installed at this popular park.

## **Natural Resource Protection**

The Department hosts a number of programs that help protect the region's natural resources. These include the Stream Releaf Program, the Emerald Ash Borer Project, the Parkland, Open Space and Natural Resources Regulation Enforcement, Agricultural Leased Lands, Frogwatch USA, the Weed Warriors, Howard County GreenFest, and Trout Stocking. Additionally, the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA), Howard County's largest park, was assessed to update the Trail Management Plan with mapping and descriptions of trail improvement and maintenance projects.

## **Horticulture and Land Management**

In conjunction with the natural resource protection projects, horticultural and land management has occurred throughout Howard County. Staff and volunteers scheduled turf areas for soil percolation, five sites have had debris removed, nine sites have had turf repaired via seeding, stumps have been removed, sink holes were repaired, invasive species were removed, water pipe leaks were fixed, streams were cleaned up and rain gardens were planted.



### ***Blandair Park***

The second phase of this planned 300-acre park is currently underway.

## **Heritage Sites**

This year, the 25 heritage sites managed by the Department successfully hosted a variety of educational programs, special events, and museum and park tours for all ages. The Santa at the Thomas Isaac Log Cabin and the Historic Ships in Baltimore traveling exhibit were particularly popular, and the Heritage Orientation Center was recognized by the National Park Service's

Network to Freedom trail for the period 1840-1842. The Shakespeare in the Ruins ran a successful 10 weeks for 3500 patrons, while summer internship projects produced exhibition materials for the Firehouse Museum and Patapsco Female Institute. The Department also made the following physical improvements and developed design plans for several heritage sites:

**Patapsco Female Institute:** The Department began initial design development for site enhancements, which will include added amenities such as restrooms, lighting, and interpretive signage, among others.

**McKenzie Barn:** Since 2012, the Department finalized design and completed restoration of the historic farm house located in Rockburn Branch Park.

**Belmont Manor:** In 2015, the Department successfully restored Belmont Manor and reopened it for both public and private events.

### **Recreation Programs**

The 2014/2015 recreational season was extremely successful, with increases in programs, enrollment, participation, and revenue. Starting in summer 2015, kids programs ranged from a robotic programming camp to stand-up-comedy to bike maintenance. The fall and winter seasons saw continued success, particularly since the latter added longer and expanded programs, contributing to an 11 percent increase in adult participants.

**Sports and Adventure Services:** The division offered instructional programs and community partnerships, organizing hikes, astronomy programs, camping, boating, rock climbing, and other extensive outdoor activity opportunities.

**Cricket:** In response to the county's increasingly diverse population, the Department added cricket to their list of program offerings. The program has been very successful and as a result, and is offered through camps and leagues for both youth and adults between the spring and fall.

**Wrestling:** Howard County's first tournament and final travel tournament was hosted at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center.

**Therapeutic Recreation and Recreation Inclusion:** This program area offers a sustaining and wide range of recreational and leisure opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Some of these opportunities include fitness, creative arts, community outings, and summer camp programs. The Department has been recognized for its diverse offerings in this field and in December 2015 received the Learning Resources Network Best Programming Award for its Sensory-Friendly Nature Explorers Mini-camp, which was created to help youth with sensory issues.

In addition to providing specific opportunities for those with disabilities, the Department strives to make all programs available to individuals with disabilities by providing several forms of support. Inclusion services encompasses financial assistance, accessibility, companions, additional training, medical services, and interpretive services for the deaf or hearing impaired.

**Home School Programs:** The Department began offering home school programs for early childhood aged residents this past fall, to a variety of student ages, in response to the successful home-school programs offered at the Robinson Nature Center.

**Special Programs:** The Department provides licensed child care for over 3000 children a year, from preschool through to middle school. The Judy Center at Cradlerock Elementary School named the Department an Outstanding Partner in May 2015. Additionally, the Department hosts Prism programs for adults with Alzheimer's as well as a service program through Coach's Registry of Sports Volunteers.

### **Special Events**

**Kids' Fest:** Hosted at the Meadowbrook Athletic Complex, Kids' Fest is geared towards children ages 2 through 12 and their families. The second annual festival saw a 100 percent increase in total attendance from the previous year, and has been a successful addition to the county's special events since it was added in 2012. The Department hosted its third annual Kids' Fest in March 2016.

The Department has also expanded special events programming focused around heritage programs and historic sites, including Crafts with a Past at the Thomas Isaac Log Cabin and the Rockburn Open Car Show complete with flea market and car sale. Special events



### *Cricket*

In response to diversifying recreation needs, the Department has actively introduced new programs and fields including cricket.



### *Ellicott City Colored School, Restored*

(left) The Department is a steward of Heritage sites like this one in Ellicott City and the unique history of the county.



### *Butterfly Gala*

(right) This annual event draws residents with disabilities and their families from all over the county to participate.

such as the Butterfly Gala, for children and adults with special needs, and Camp Day, which serves hundreds of kids, were extremely popular. Some of the Department's most recent major gathering events represent the diversity of the events roster. These include the 4th of July annual Festival and Fireworks at Lake Kittamaquidi, the National Night Out neighborhood party organized by the Department of Recreation and Parks together with the Police and Fire Departments, the Holiday Mart with over 100 artisans, and Wine in the Woods, a two-day event that most recently greeted over 20,000 attendees.

## RECREATION AND PARK BENEFITS

The numerous benefits of recreation and parks have been well-documented by research institutions, municipalities, industry leaders, and the like. Today, more data is available on how park systems perform and impact their surrounding communities, therefore strengthening the case for greater investment from nontraditional sources and encouraging innovative partnerships. While the impact of recreation and park systems spans many fields, research has primarily focused on the associated environmental, economic, and public health benefits.

### **Environmental Benefits**

As part of the greater ecological system, parks can play a significant role in promoting biodiversity and mitigating the negative impacts of climate, air, and water pollution. Parks serve as areas that can encourage biodiversity — a crucial element to the overall health, sustainability, and resilience of our ecosystems. With their vegetation and tree canopy, parks also help lower average temperatures that are rising due to heat island effect. Trees remove pollutants from the air, serving as a form of filter, while open spaces absorb and clean stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces before reaching nearby water bodies.

### **Economic Benefits**

A strong recreation and park system is an investment that generates numerous economic benefits. Studies have shown that parks have the ability to increase property value, catalyze development, and promote tourism, while also serving as direct revenue generators themselves. The power of Howard County's parks is cited in many rankings about the county's high quality of life.

**Property Value:** Great parks can raise neighboring property values by an estimated 15 percent, increasing city property tax revenue.

**New Development:** Parks can increase new private development. Specifically, trail connections can encourage new development by providing a strong framework for private investment across a trail region.

**Tourism:** Both parks and recreation facilities can serve as destinations for visitors. Tourism can increase revenue through specific facility or park fees and services, and through indirect retail spending.

**Direct Use:** Parks can generate revenue directly through several methods, including lease payments from concessions and amusements, venue rentals, and parking and permit fees.

### **Health Benefits**

The numerous health benefits of recreation and park systems are apparent, as they provide opportunities for physical activity, contact with nature, and social interaction.

**Physical Well-being:** Recreation and park systems provide environments that encourage fitness and work to reduce the rate of obesity, a national epidemic with several related health conditions. Certain park conditions can lead to increased physical activity, such as good maintenance, accessibility, design and lighting, and proximity to other amenities and the community. Physical well-being is also directly tied to human contact with nature, which is proven to lower stress, blood pressure, and cholesterol, while strengthening the overall immune system.

### *Western Regional Park*

Parks and open spaces provide numerous mental and physical health benefits to people of all ages and abilities.

**Mental Well-being:** The psychological benefits of parks stem from both physical and mental exercise and the opportunities created for social interaction. Physical exercise has been proven to reduce anxiety and depression, while other open space activities, such as gardening, yoga, and tai chi, positively engage both the mind and body. Parks, similar to other institutions such as schools and churches, also encourage social interaction and thus serve as places that foster human relationships. These relationships result in stronger, more cohesive communities.

## **EXAMPLES OF SYSTEM CHALLENGES**

### ***Space Needs***

The Department faces a significant need for indoor recreation space, primarily due to the county's growing population and overcrowded schools. With the lack of available school and community center space, the Department is focusing on the feasibility of new community centers and other programmed facilities.

### ***Staffing Needs***

As the Department plans to provide more services in response to growing program demand and increasing population, staffing considerations will need to be made for facilities and services to the community.



## **Connected Trail System**

While Howard County boasts an extensive amount of parkland and open space, the overall system would benefit from a more comprehensive, well-connected trail system. The Columbia Association also provides a network of trails within their boundaries. Developers are required to incorporate open space into new residential development, however, there is no existing regulation that specifies location or requires the open space to tie into the existing trail network. As a result, the county is left with a series of discontinuous and poorly accessible trails to maintain. 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.

## **Financial Sustainability**

The Department is unique to other county groups; it balances program and operational costs with generated revenue from fees, programs, camps, and services. In order to maintain a financially sustainable system, the Department must regularly evaluate the current budget to track expenses and revenue generation. The Department operating budget is broken down into five funding mechanisms, identified below:

- » General Fund (46.3 percent) — this fund is tax-supported and changes based on budget allocations from the county on an annual basis
- » Recreation and Parks Fund (43.9 percent) — this fund is revenue-generated through user fees and charges and is also variable; however, any revenue not spent annually carries over
- » Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) Fund (.3 percent) — this fund is foundation-supported
- » Forest Conservation Fund (4.1 percent) — this fund is supported through developer impact fees
- » Timbers at Troy Golf Course (5.4 percent) — this fund is revenue-generated through course user fees

While not all costs generate direct revenue, like the program guide, they are crucial for the Department to provide their services and fulfill their mission. However, other non-revenue generating services, such as tax-supported recreation inclusion accommodation, fall within the Department's responsibilities and budget yet serve all county residents and represent a basic fundamental service. Services such as these require further discussion and evaluation to determine the most appropriate funding source.

As the Department grows and develops, consideration should be made to prioritize revenue and fee allocation and budget revenue generation to offset costs.

## **IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS**

In April 2016, Governor Larry Hogan signed HB 462 into law, which restores state funding for transfer-tax-funded land conservation, preservation, and recreation programs including Program Open Space. In the early 2000s, Program Open Space funds were diverted to the state general fund. HB 462 effectively reestablishes approximately \$60 million in new funding for Program Open Space, the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Fund, and the Rural Legacy program. The law also funds state and county land acquisition, and facility and park development and maintenance. The law requires the transfer of approximately \$90 million previously allocated away from the fund be repaid through state general funds.

Prior to this landmark law, funding mechanisms like Program Open Space, agricultural preservation purchasing, preservation and other dedicating programs, and the Rural Legacy program allocated limited resources to counties for land acquisition, capital improvements, and recreation in support of the goals and strategies laid out in the previous LPPRPs.

## ***Program Open Space***

Established in 1968, Program Open Space (POS) is a funding mechanism committed to preserving natural resources and supporting high-quality recreation opportunities statewide. Program Open Space — Local is specific to counties and the City of Baltimore for planning, acquisition, and development of recreation land or open space areas. In August 2016, Howard County submitted its most recent annual program for POS funding in accordance with the 2012 LPRP. Like the previous plan, the 2017 LPPRP addresses PlanHoward 2030, the Eight Visions from the 1992 Planning Act and Maryland Smart Growth initiatives. Program Open Space also administers the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program which financially supports local rehabilitation, expansion, or improvements to existing parks and playgrounds. Since 2012, Howard County has received \$8.9 million in state and local funds from Program Open Space which has contributed to the success of a variety of projects.

## ***Other Funding Mechanisms***

Howard County has used or considered using the following pay-as-you-go financing options to help fund capital costs not provided by state grants:

- » County taxes (property, income, sales, and excise taxes)
- » Special assessments (for projects that

benefit a specific target area rather than the community at large)

- » User fees (such as facility rentals or recreation program fees)
- » Fees collected from developers in lieu of mandatory land dedication
- » State bonds

Debt financing techniques are also available for the county to consider using, including direct borrowing from a bank and bonds. Bank loans are typically short term and often must be repaid with interest in five years or less. Longer-term borrowing is usually arranged by selling bonds to raise revenue. These bonds are then retired (paid back) with interest over a long-term period, such as 25 years. The county continues to take advantage of state bonds to cover costs not included as part of the POS grant for a particular project.

# Goals & Objectives

*What are the county's goals and objectives for recreation, parks and open space?*

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 plan is based on the following Department recreation and park goals that strive to maintain excellence and drive innovation within the county:

1. Promote programs and spaces 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 providing 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
9. Maintain CAPRA accreditation with the NRPA

## Systemwide Goals

Several state and county goals are identified as part of the holistic approach to the future of county recreation, parks and open spaces.

### ECOLOGY

Provide sustainable parks, open spaces and recreation facilities that are safe and secure for users of all ages and backgrounds.



### VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION

Build partnerships within County government and across the county to efficiently share resources.



### CONNECTIVITY

Improve connectivity to recreation and park resources through all modes of travel.



### PLACEMAKING

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



### EDUCATION

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



### RECREATION

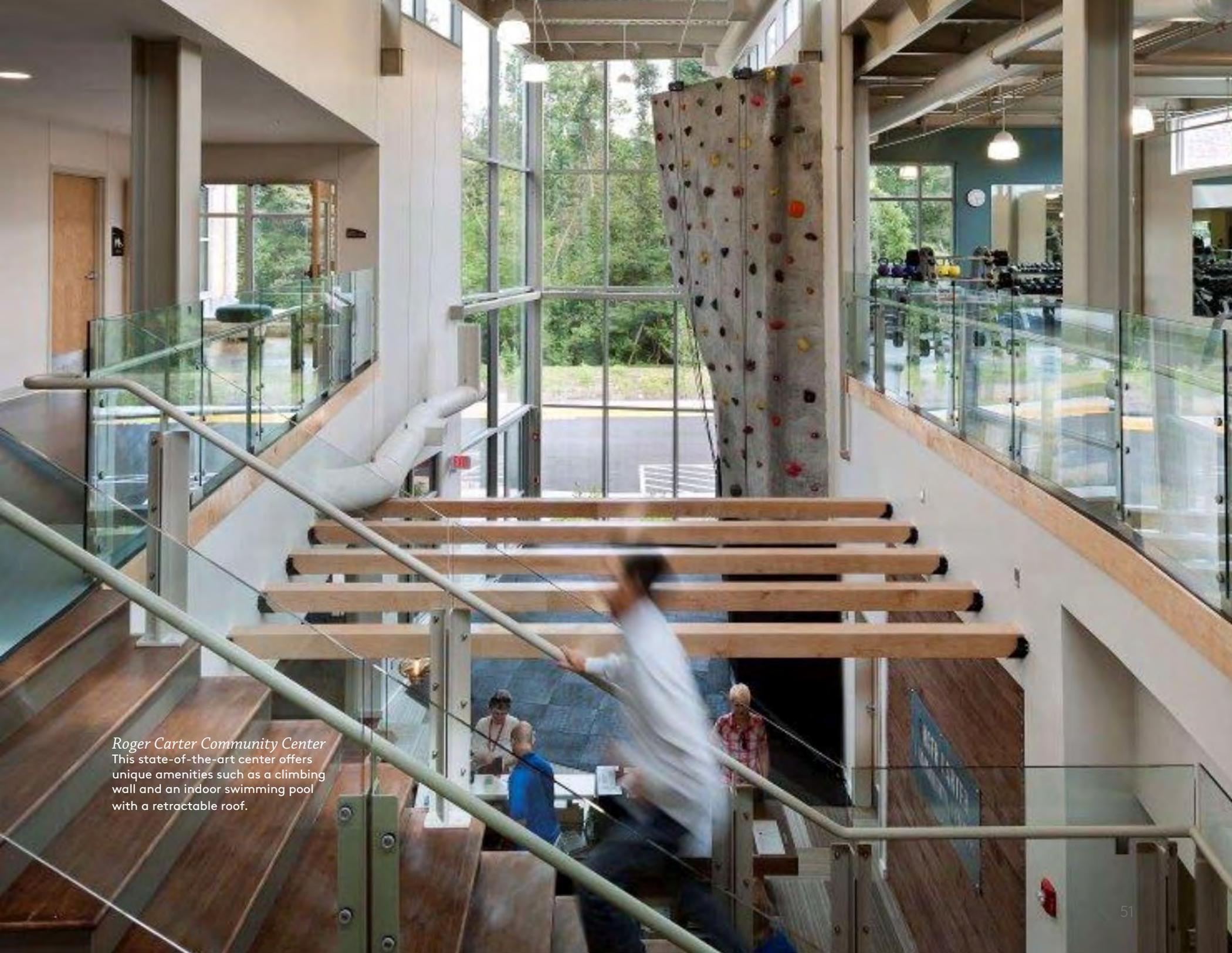
Factor in diversity by providing a range of recreation programs, inclusive park and facility design and cultural awareness.



These goals are closely aligned with the State of Maryland’s overall goals for recreation, parks, and open space preservation outlined below:

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

Both the Department and the State of Maryland’s goals for recreation and parks are rooted in similar system principles including accessibility, equity, strong planning, collaboration, and recreational open space protection. Therefore, implementation of the Department goals supports implementation of the statewide goals at the local level.



*Roger Carter Community Center*  
This state-of-the-art center offers unique amenities such as a climbing wall and an indoor swimming pool with a retractable roof.

# Needs Assessment

*Where does the county have gaps in service?*

The Needs Assessment is an evaluation of Department assets and needs to identify existing and projected gaps in service and determine land, facility, and service priorities. This section consists of four components: the level of service analysis, user demand analysis, recreation program assessment, and trends and innovation assessment. Each of these four evaluation components and their respective findings are outlined below. For a comprehensive summary of all community needs, please refer to *Appendix D, Needs Assessment* and for a comprehensive summary of the proximity analysis, please refer to *Appendix J, Social Accessibility and Gap Analysis*.

## 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, and aided in 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 standards. For the complete level of service analysis, please refer to *Appendix D, Needs Assessment*.

## Community Inventory Assessment

The purpose of the community inventory assessment is to provide a detailed understanding of all park and recreation amenities located within Howard County. The assessment was composed of four sections: parks and facilities, programs and services, Department partners, and similar providers.

### Parks and Facilities

The first component of the assessment included a qualitative inventory of county-owned parks, open spaces, and facilities. The consulting team visited each park and open space as part of a comprehensive system tour to assess their condition, usability, connectivity, and safety. In order to get a sense of the large system and what is accessible to county residents, this inventory was combined with a list of all parks and facilities within the county outside of Department jurisdiction.

## Programs and Services

All Department programs are described in a matrix format organized by age group. Each program is described by the following characteristics:

- » Level of supervision
- » Level of structured leadership
- » Cost
- » Skill level (basic, interim, expert)
- » Type of participation (physical, intellectual, social, creative)
- » Participation size (individual, small group, groups)

For the complete program services matrix, please refer to *Appendix B, Program Services Matrix*.

## Department Partners

The Department partners with several agencies and organizations at both the local and state levels. While these partnerships span multiple areas of the Department, the majority focus on recreation programming and natural resource and heritage preservation. As part of the community inventory process, a list of all Department partners was compiled based on feedback from staff meetings and interviews. For this complete list of Department partners, please refer to *Appendix I, Community Inventory*.

## Similar Providers

The LPPRP process included a review of similar providers in the Howard County Recreation and Parks system. An inventory of all known similar providers includes over 200 public and private organizations. Focus groups and online surveys were also sent to similar provider email groups to gauge program diversity, relationship to the Department, and future partnership opportunities. The survey captured 48 responses and represented 42 individual agencies/organizations.

Significant similar providers include the Columbia Association, YMCA, youth and adult sports and recreation organizations, and Howard County Public School System.

The interest and desire by the similar providers to engage in future partnership opportunities appears strong. Based on the expressed vision to continue to grow and specific requests for return calls to discuss partnership opportunities further, the Department should continue to identify opportunities to strengthen partnerships with organizations to provide an enhanced level of service to the community. Specific attention should be paid to developing child care, therapeutic recreation and senior programming. Consideration should also be given to the specific ideas shared in the open-ended provider responses. The Department is in an excellent place — the providers perceive

an overall positive public image, are satisfied with the Department, and have a general desire for growth; these factors favorably position the organization for future strategic partnership opportunities. For the complete list of similar providers, please refer to *Appendix I, Community Inventory*.

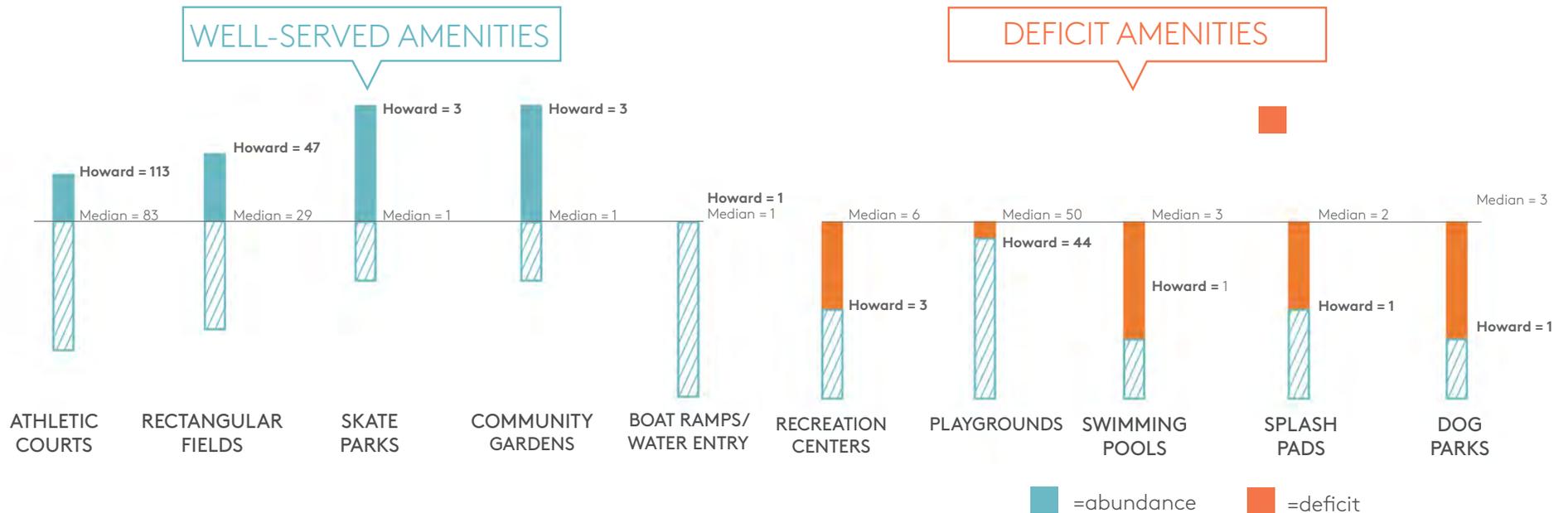
## Peer Benchmarking

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 standards were synthesized from 39 peer recreation and park systems of 250,000 residents or more, all of which had submitted their data to the NRPA PRORAGIS database. Overall, Howard County ranked very well among other recreation and park systems, only falling below the median with a few amenities. The following chart identifies where the county offers more or less than the national median:

With regard to parks, Howard County maintains more than double the national median acreage of parkland. However, the total number of parks maintained is less than the national median. The county ranks above the national median in athletic courts, rectangular fields, community gardens, and skate parks, and ranks at the national median for water access points. These numbers also indicate the county does not rank at or above the national median for playgrounds, dog parks, community centers, splash pads, and swimming pools.

While NRPA PRORAGIS 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 from the various community engagement efforts, similar provider meetings, and staff interviews in order to determine the community need.

For the full NRPA PRORAGIS report, please refer to *Appendix E, NRPA PRORAGIS Report*. For the overall evaluation of community need, please refer to *Appendix D, Needs Assessment*.



## Geographic and Social Accessibility and Gap Analysis

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. The consulting team defined high need areas primarily based on race and age characteristics, as household income is relatively high across all areas of the county. Approximately less than 1 percent of households within all county census tracts are living below the poverty level.

The mapping process was used in conjunction with the other elements of the needs assessment, such as the national standards analysis described previously, and will form the basis for identifying gaps in service and potential opportunities for future facility development and capital planning. This geographic and social accessibility analysis and gap analysis are visual tools that are similar to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources *Proximity Analysis and Park Equity Analysis*, but are catered to the unique nature of Howard County. More information about the Needs Assessment and subsequent system findings, deficiencies and priorities can be found in *Appendix D, Needs Assessment*.

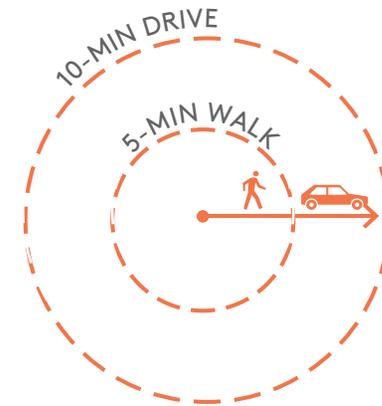
All county, state, and other publicly accessible parks, facilities, and amenities were included in this analysis. Columbia Association amenities were included in the analysis if they

are free to the public or if they operate on a fee-by-use basis.

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 consulting team determined catchment areas within a 5-minute walk and 10-minute drive 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 on accessibility of parks, community centers, athletic fields, playgrounds, water access, pavilions, and trails. Overall, the results indicated that walking access is very poor across the county and that driving access is very high with the well-developed road network transecting the county's most populous areas. For example, 96 percent of the county population lives within a 10-minute drive of a park, while only 6 percent 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, minority populations, and those over age 55, implying that no single user group is more or less disadvantaged than another.

The accessibility analysis of amenities focused primarily on driving access, as very few residents live within a 5-minute walk of the selected amenities. Athletic fields proved to be the most accessible with 97 percent of residents living within a 10-minute drive of one field (and 78 percent of residents living within driving distance of three or more fields). Playgrounds and pavilions are slightly less accessible by car with 86 percent of all residents living within driving distance of a single playground and just 60 percent of all residents living within driving distance of a pavilion. Community centers and water access are the least accessible amenities with only 15 percent of residents living within driving access of one of the county's three community centers, and only 10 percent of residents living within driving distance of one of the county's four water access points.



Accessibility Distance

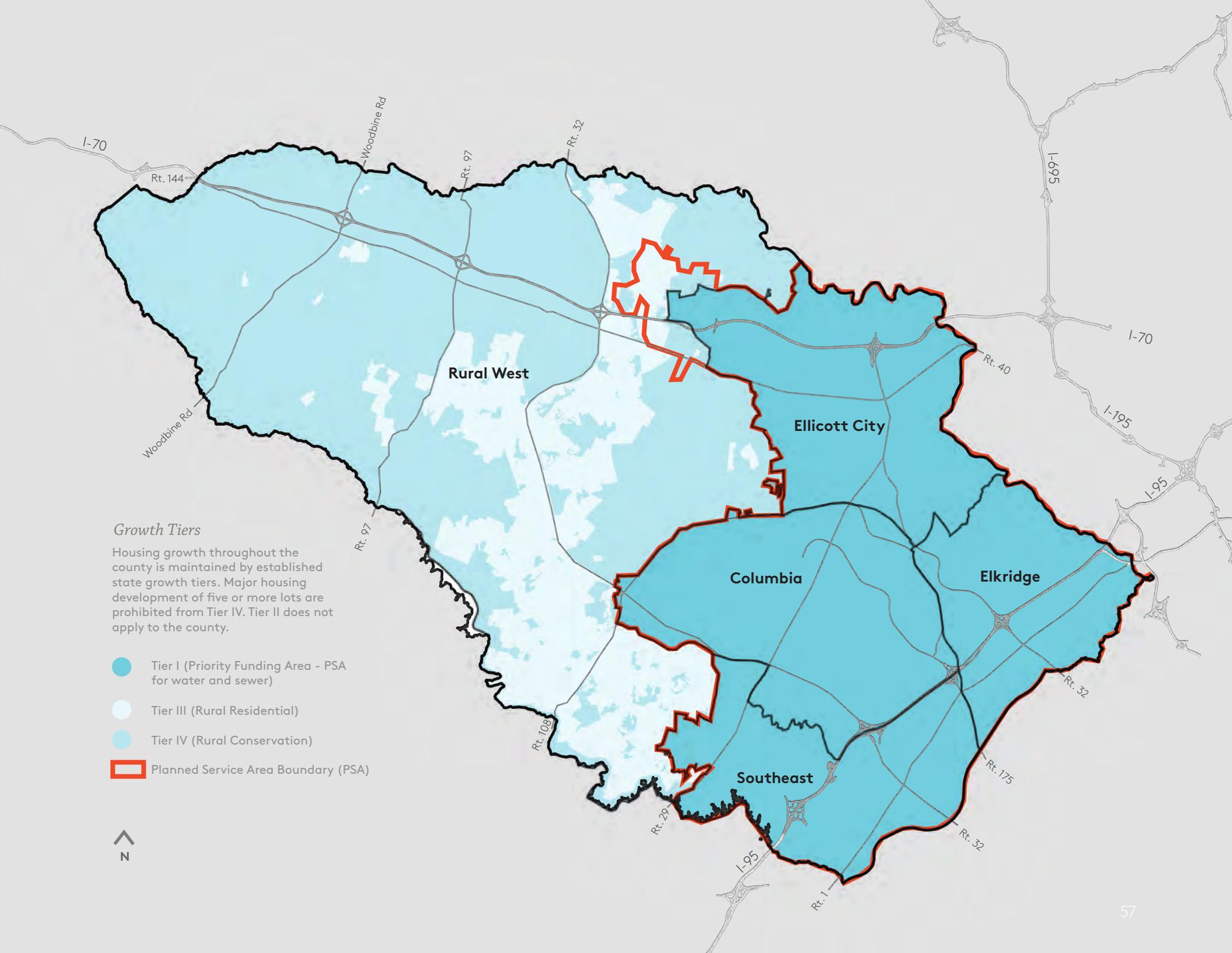
## ALIGNING WITH PREVIOUS PLANNING

Evaluating social and geographic accessibility in the following section is not limited to demographic and distance considerations. The opportunity sites and zones for future park, open space, trail and facility consideration include policies shaped by PlanHoward 2030, the Howard County Bike Plan and other local policies and plans that preceded this planning process.

The following map identifies the priority funding area (PFA) and planned service boundary (PSA) for new development in the county. As per State law, the PSA growth boundary for water and sewer is also designated as the county's priority funding area. The map also identifies growth tiers for planned development and rural agricultural land conservation. The PSA and PFA align with the Tier 1 allocated growth tier and is defined by sustainable compact development opportunities.

PlanHoward 2030 acknowledges the rate of growth in the county and future potential growth that may continue and identifies goals for limiting development outside of the PSA. Under this plan, the county establishes goals for sustainable communities with integrated pathway connections, compact development and vibrant open spaces within walking distance of these communities.

Many of the opportunity zones and opportunity projects identified in this chapter and in the capital improvement plan in the Summary and Synthesis chapter fall within the identified PSA boundary.



*Growth Tiers*

Housing growth throughout the county is maintained by established state growth tiers. Major housing development of five or more lots are prohibited from Tier IV. Tier II does not apply to the county.

- Tier I (Priority Funding Area - PSA for water and sewer)
- Tier III (Rural Residential)
- Tier IV (Rural Conservation)
- Planned Service Area Boundary (PSA)



## ACCESS TO PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

In order to evaluate park and natural area accessibility, this analysis included county parks and natural areas, Maryland state parks, Columbia Association parks, and county school recreation areas. This analysis evaluated all parks equally and did not evaluate access by park type or size.

Results revealed that white and non-white populations living in Howard County have similar access to county-owned parks. Of the total white population, 97 percent live within a 10-minute drive of a park and only 14 percent live within a 5-minute walk of a park. Similarly, 99% of the non-white population live within a 10-minute drive of a park and 18 percent live within a 5-minute walk of a park.

The population of adults over 55 and children under 18 produced the same results, which suggests that while there may be gaps in programming and services across the county and especially in the Rural West planning region, access to parks and programming is equitably distributed across ages, races, and income levels.

NRPA Proragis peer benchmarking comparisons suggest that while Howard is well-served by parks when calculating system coverage by acreage, the County is underserved in the number of parks.

Opportunity zones, highlighted in peach, follow the Howard 2030 General Plan Primary Service Area Boundary, which was identified

by the County as a priority area for new park acquisition and investment.

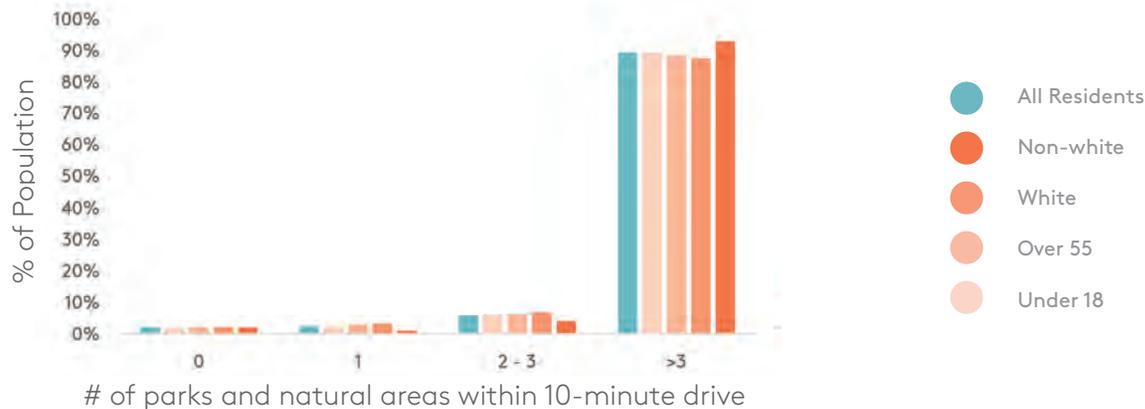
In order to address park and natural area accessibility, the county has identified the following sites as potential locations for new parks or park expansion:

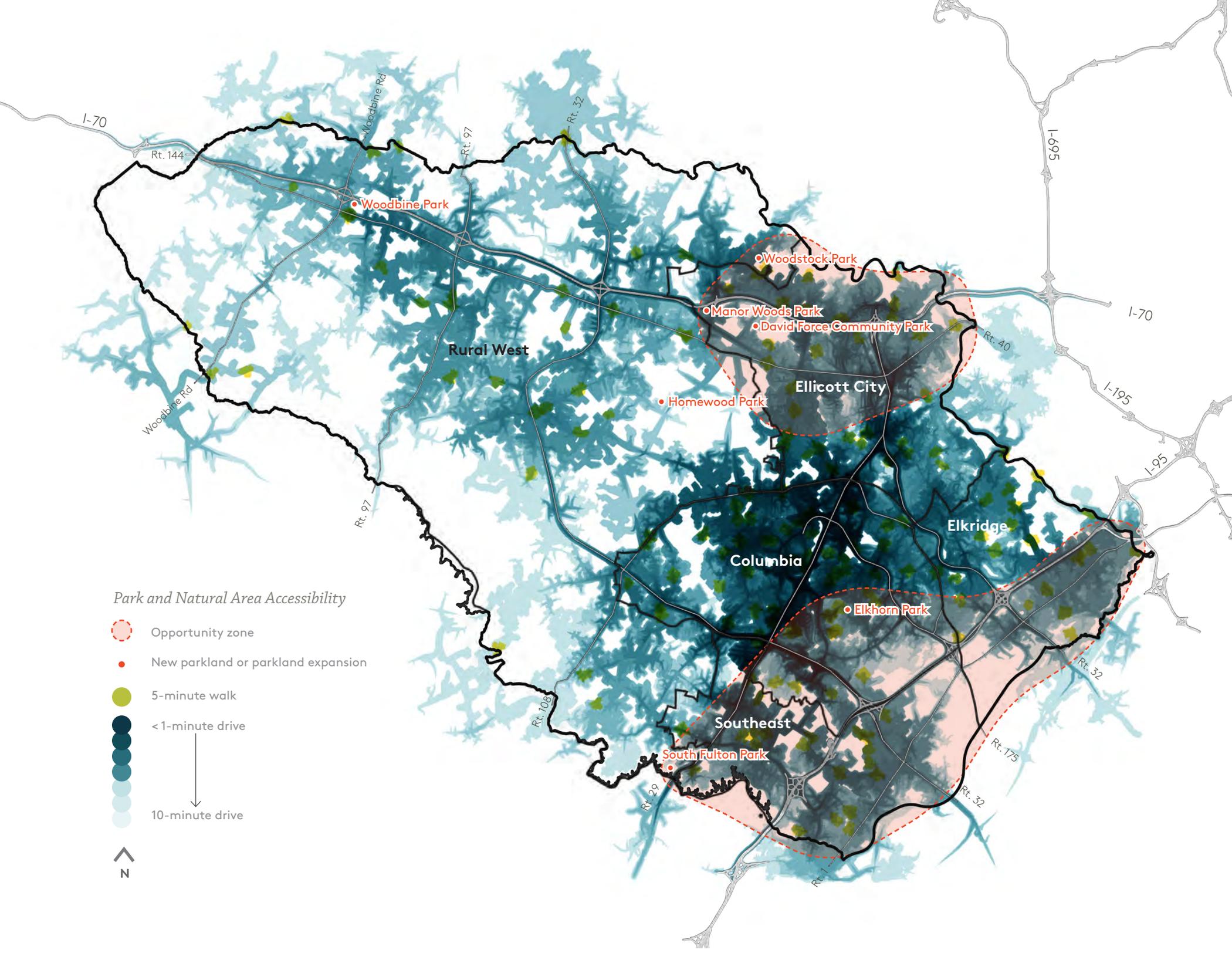
- » David Force Community Park
- » Elkhorn Park\*
- » Clarksville Park
- » Woodbine Park
- » Woodstock Park
- » South Fulton Park
- » Manor Woods Park
- » Homewood Park

These projects are outlined in the Capital Improvement Plan within the Summary and Synthesis chapter.

\* *Future school site.*

### Accessibility Analysis





*Park and Natural Area Accessibility*

-  Opportunity zone
-  New parkland or parkland expansion
-  5-minute walk
-  <1-minute drive
-  10-minute drive



## ACCESS TO COMMUNITY CENTERS

In order to evaluate community center accessibility, this analysis included the three county-owned community centers. Columbia Association community centers were not included because they are fee-based.

This accessibility analysis revealed that an overwhelming 85 percent of the county population does not live within a 10-minute drive of a community center. The *Needs Assessment* and feedback from both the community, focus groups and peer benchmarking analysis also suggest a deficiency in the number of community centers. In specific, the NRPA PRORAGIS peer benchmarking comparison suggests a need for at least three additional community centers.

In response to this identified need, the Department should conduct feasibility studies for the development of a community center at the following potential locations:

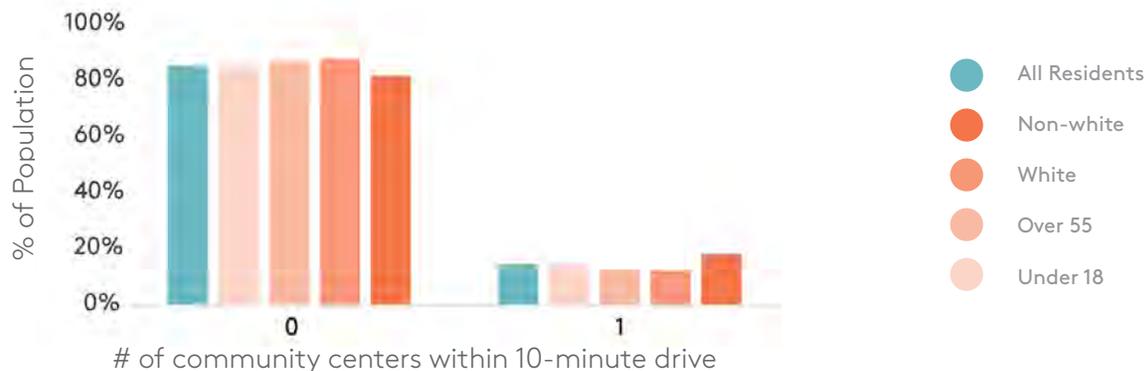
- » David Force Community Park
- » Troy Park at Elkridge
- » Manor Woods Park
- » Woodstock Park

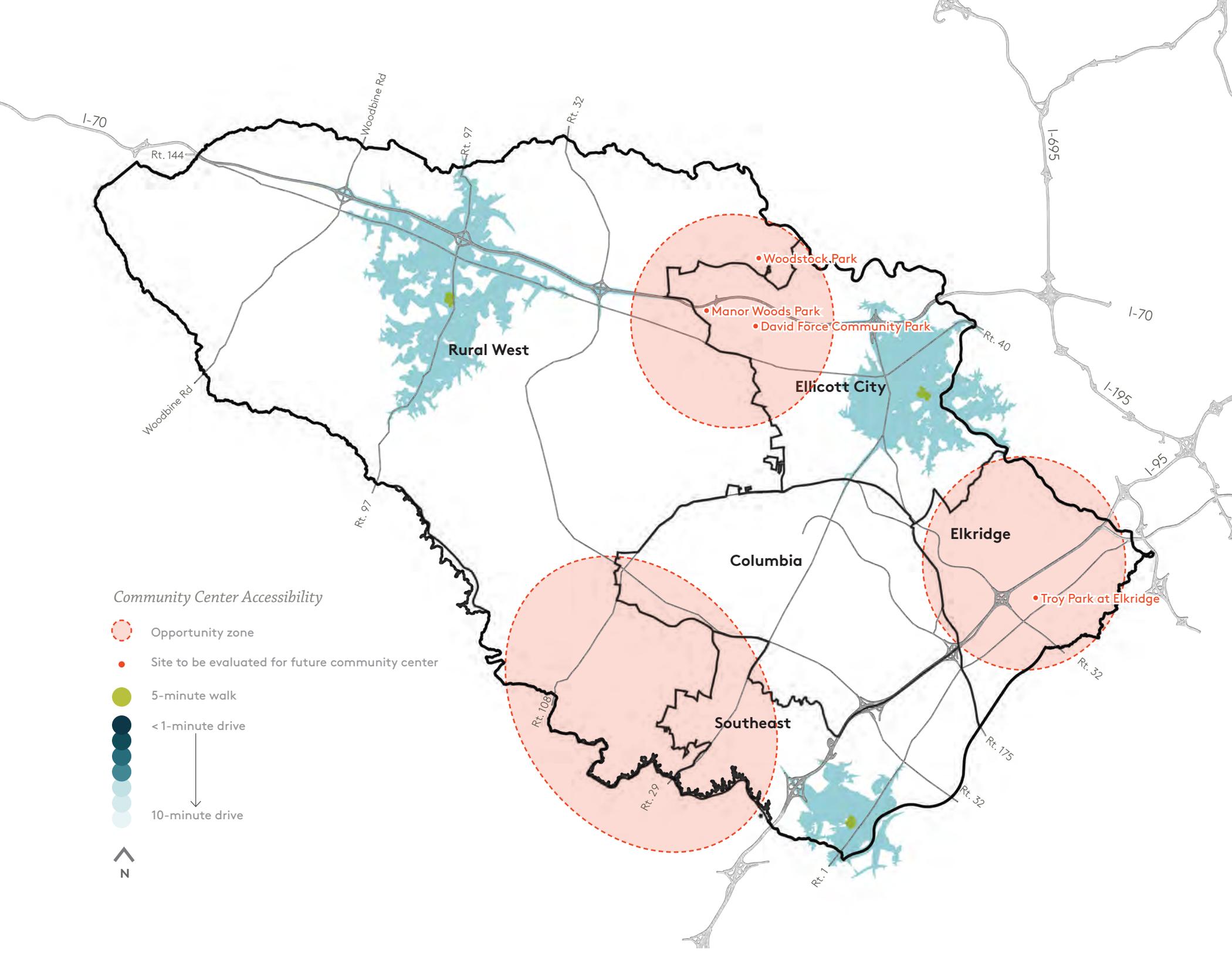
The Department has also identified a need for an additional community center in the Southeast/Rural West planning areas, as the existing North Laurel Community Center, located in the Southeast planning area, is currently operating at capacity and

development continues to grow populations in these planning regions. At this time, the Department has not yet identified a potential site for a community center in this area, but recognizes the future needs of the community and will continue to study opportunities to best serve these growing communities.

The four potential sites for community center feasibility studies are identified in the Capital Improvement Plan within the Summary and Synthesis chapter.

### Accessibility Analysis





*Community Center Accessibility*

- ⦿ Opportunity zone
- Site to be evaluated for future community center
- 5-minute walk
- <1-minute drive
- 
- 10-minute drive



Rural West

Ellicott City

Columbia

Elkrige

Southeast

• Woodstock Park

• Manor Woods Park

• David Force Community Park

• Troy Park at Elkrige

Rt. 144

Woodbine Rd

Rt. 97

Rt. 32

I-695

I-70

Rt. 40

I-195

I-95

Rt. 97

Rt. 32

Rt. 108

Rt. 29

Rt. 175

Rt. 32

Rt. 1

## ACCESS TO ATHLETIC FIELDS

In order to evaluate athletic field accessibility, this analysis included all county-owned athletic fields. According to NRPA Proragis, the county is well-served by athletic fields. Howard County maintains the most fields when compared against its peer communities both in overall fields and fields per 1,000 residents.

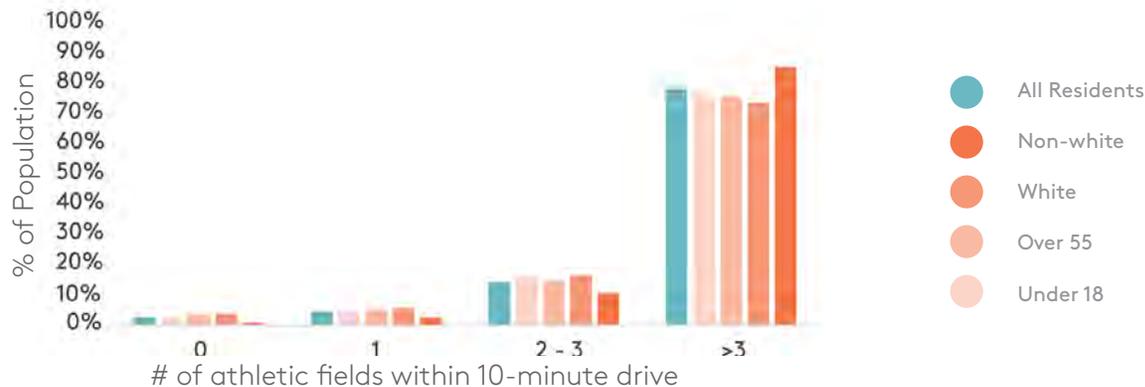
Overall, residents have very good driving access to the 47 county athletic fields. Over 75 percent of all residents live within a 10-minute drive of more than three athletic fields. Although driving accessibility ranks well, the Department has proposed new fields in the Capital Improvement Plan to meet future demand, including both lighted and

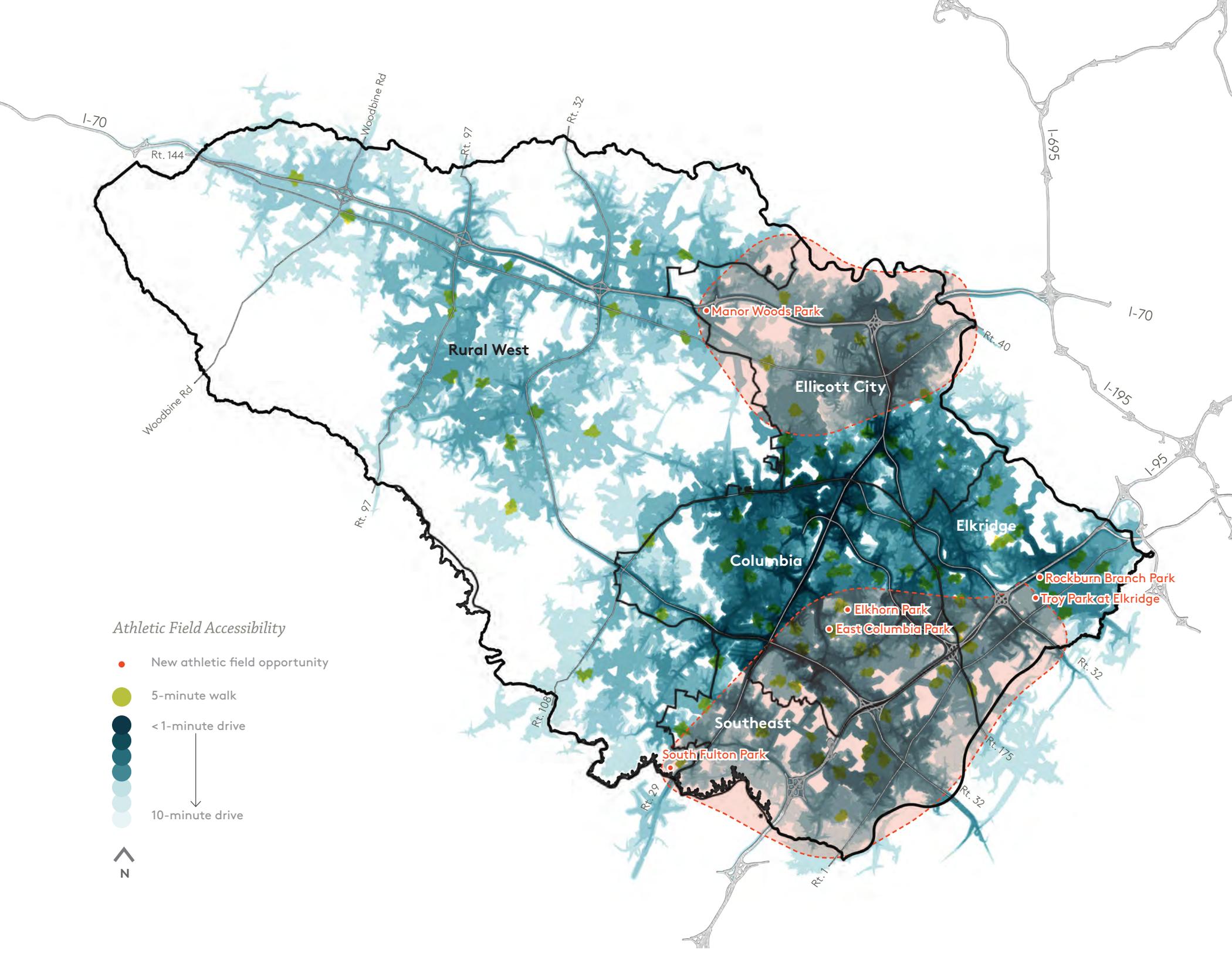
informal fields. As the Department acquires land, opportunities for athletic fields will be evaluated against the existing levels of access within the county with a focus on areas that fall within the *Howard County 2030 General Plan* Planned Service Areas. Opportunities for new fields will be evaluated for the following parks:

- » South Fulton Park
- » Manor Woods Park
- » Troy Park
- » Rockburn Branch Park
- » Elkhorn Park\*
- » East Columbia Park

\* Future school site.

### Accessibility Analysis





*Athletic Field Accessibility*

- New athletic field opportunity
- 5-minute walk
- <1-minute drive
- 10-minute drive

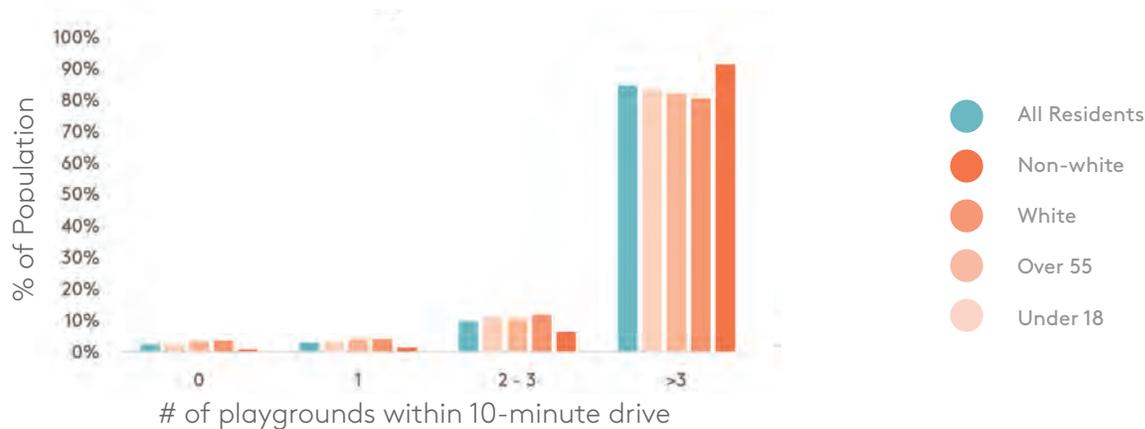


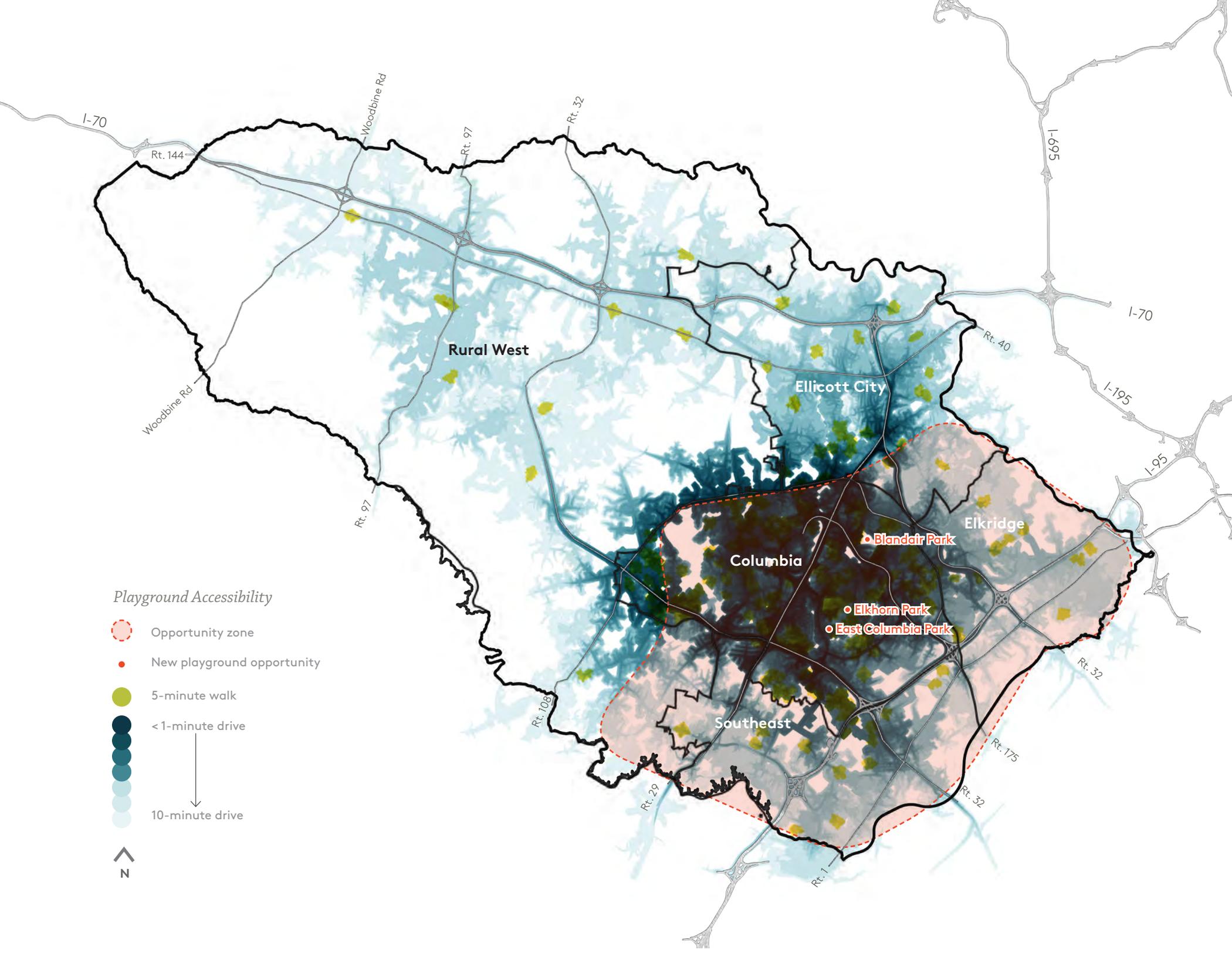
## ACCESS TO PLAYGROUNDS

In order to evaluate playground accessibility, this analysis included county playgrounds, Columbia tot lots, and public elementary school playgrounds. Results indicated that 85 percent of the county population lives within a 10-minute drive of three or more playgrounds. While only 25 percent of the county population is located within walking distance of a playground, Howard County is uniquely suburban, especially in the Rural West. Though the Rural West is not well-served by playgrounds, this planning region is characterized by large lot zoning, higher incomes and larger backyards than other planning regions in the county.

As part of the Capital Improvement Plan, the county is evaluating opportunities for new playgrounds at Elkhorn Park and East Columbia Park. Longer term projects will be reviewed for opportunities to incorporate various methods of play for multiple age groups. As opportunities for walkable playgrounds accessible to new developments and growing communities arise, the Department will re-evaluate plans for those spaces.

### Accessibility Analysis





*Playground Accessibility*

-  Opportunity zone
-  New playground opportunity
-  5-minute walk
-  <1-minute drive
-  10-minute drive



## WATER ACCESS

In order to evaluate water access, this analysis included state-owned, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, county and Columbia Association-owned parks and natural area water access opportunities. Water access as part of this evaluation is defined as a formal vista, boat ramps and launches, fishing access, and publicly accessible swimming opportunities. The analysis revealed that while over half of the county's population lives within a 10-minute drive of two water access points, more than 25 percent of the population does not live within a 10-minute drive of any water feature.

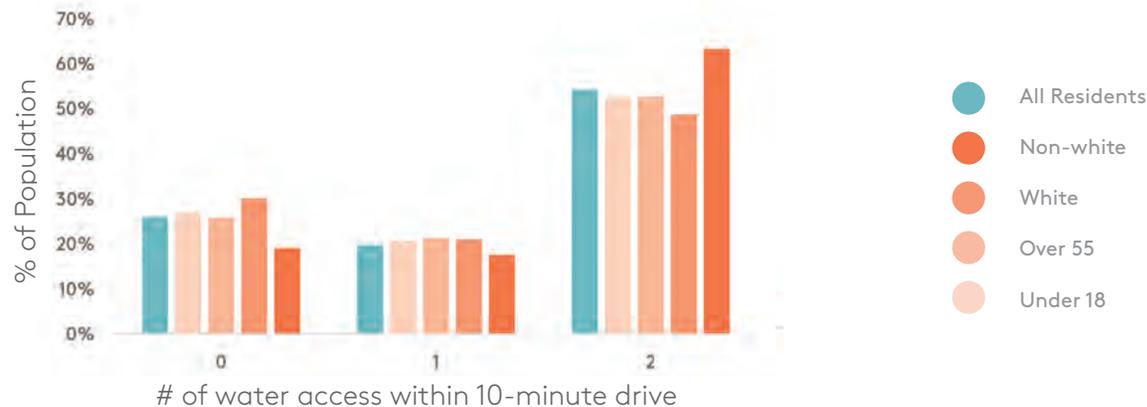
With continued land acquisition around the edges of the county along the two

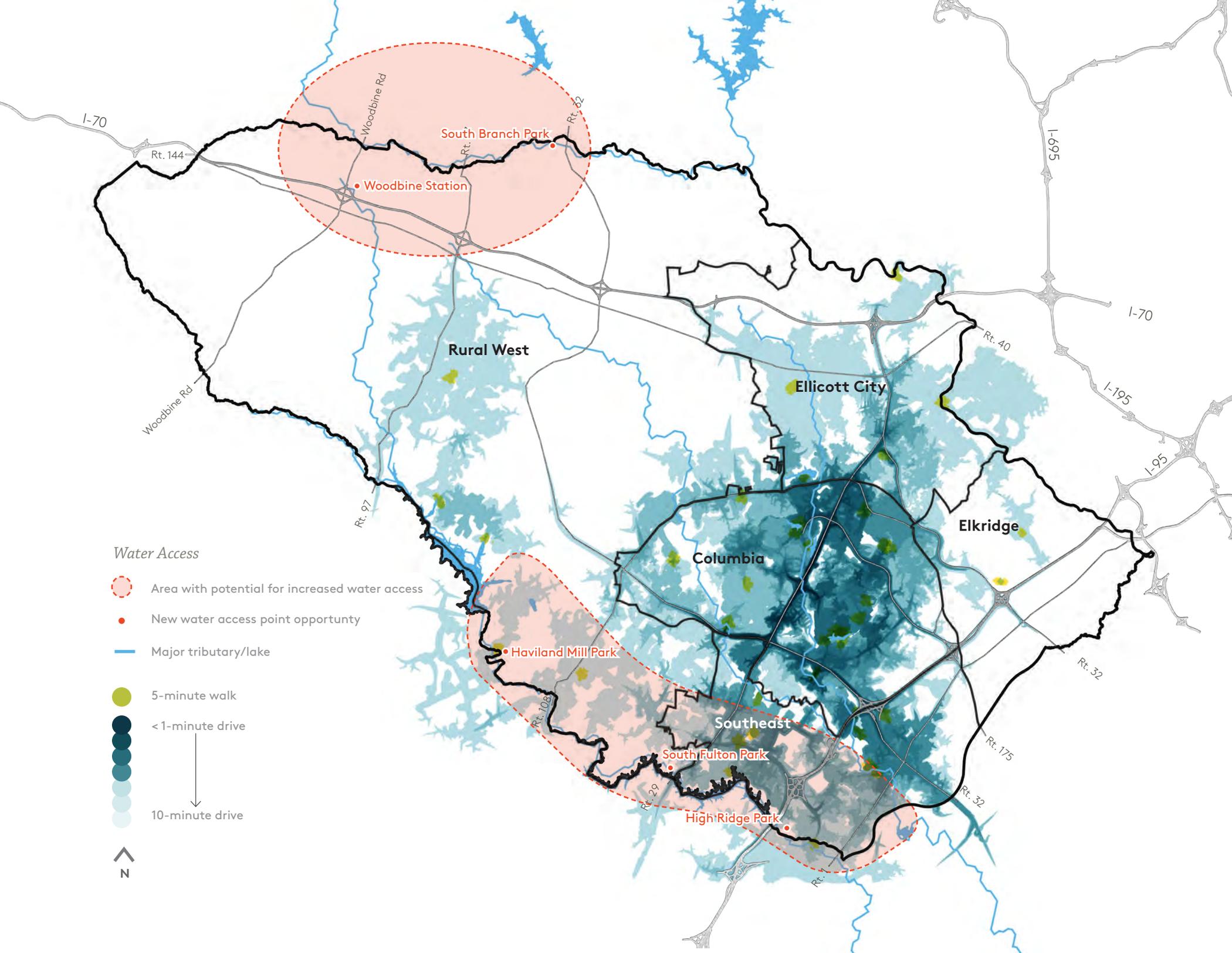
major tributaries, the County will review opportunities to increase the number of access points or expand existing water access.

In the short term, the county proposes opportunities for new water access points in the Capital Improvement Plan in the following existing county-owned parks and open spaces:

- » South Fulton Park
- » Woodbine/Morgan Station Road
- » Haviland Mill Park
- » South Branch Park
- » High Ridge Park

## Accessibility Analysis





*Water Access*

 Area with potential for increased water access

 New water access point opportunity

 Major tributary/lake

 5-minute walk

 <1-minute drive

 10-minute drive

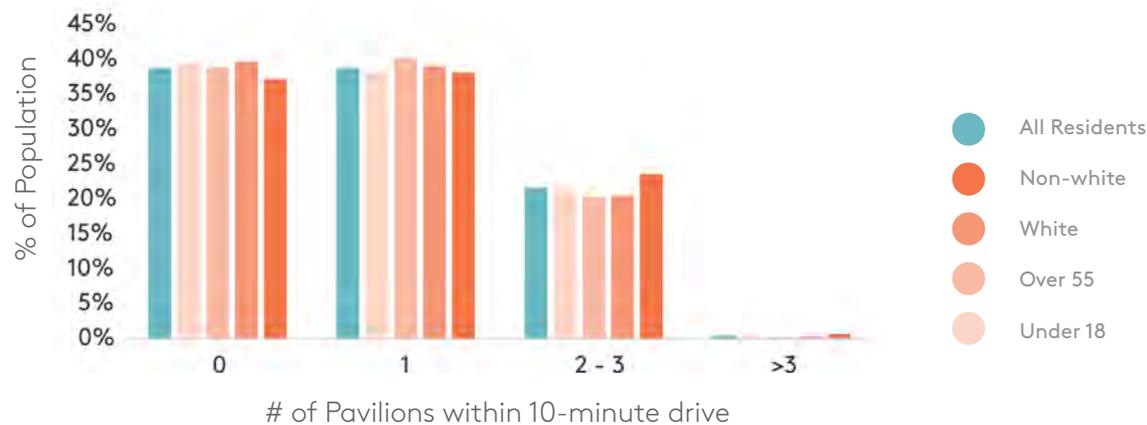


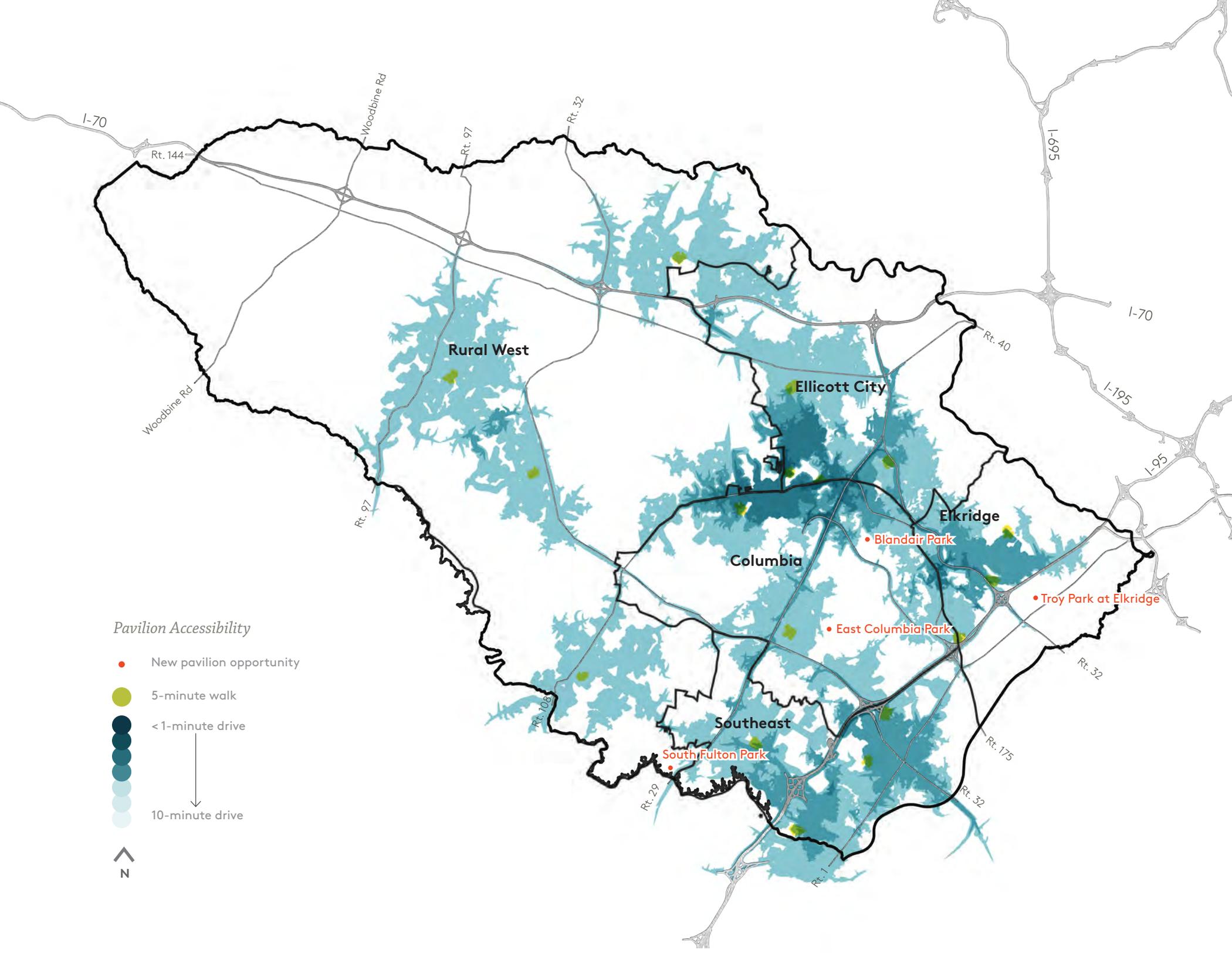
## ACCESS TO PAVILIONS

Pavilions are well used throughout the county. As the county considers new locations for any additional pavilions, considerations will also need to be made based on the popularity of pavilions for events and adequate parking to support those events.

Currently, more than one-third of the county population does not have access to a pavilion within a 10-minute drive of their home. In order to increase accessibility for all residents, the county proposes several new pavilions for South Fulton Park, Blaindair Park, Troy Park and East Columbia Park.

### Accessibility Analysis





*Pavilion Accessibility*

- New pavilion opportunity
- 5-minute walk
- <1-minute drive
- 10-minute drive



## ACCESS TO TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

In order to evaluate trail and pathway accessibility, this analysis included trails and pathways within county parks, other county-maintained trails and pathways, major Columbia Association trails, and trails within state parks. Trail access was measured by distance to trailheads, which were identified by formal parking areas adjacent to trails. Information for parking areas adjacent to trails within state parks was not available, and therefore, trailheads were approximated based on where the trail met the state park boundary.

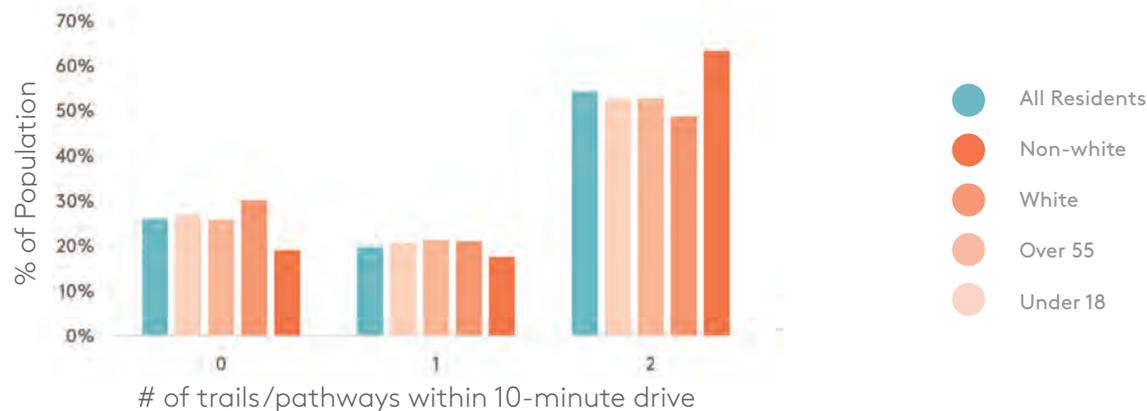
Driving access to trails within county parks is very high for the county population overall. Currently, 83 percent of the county's population has driving access to more than two trail access points. This percentage does not vary significantly across the evaluated population groups (non-white, white, over 55, and under 18).

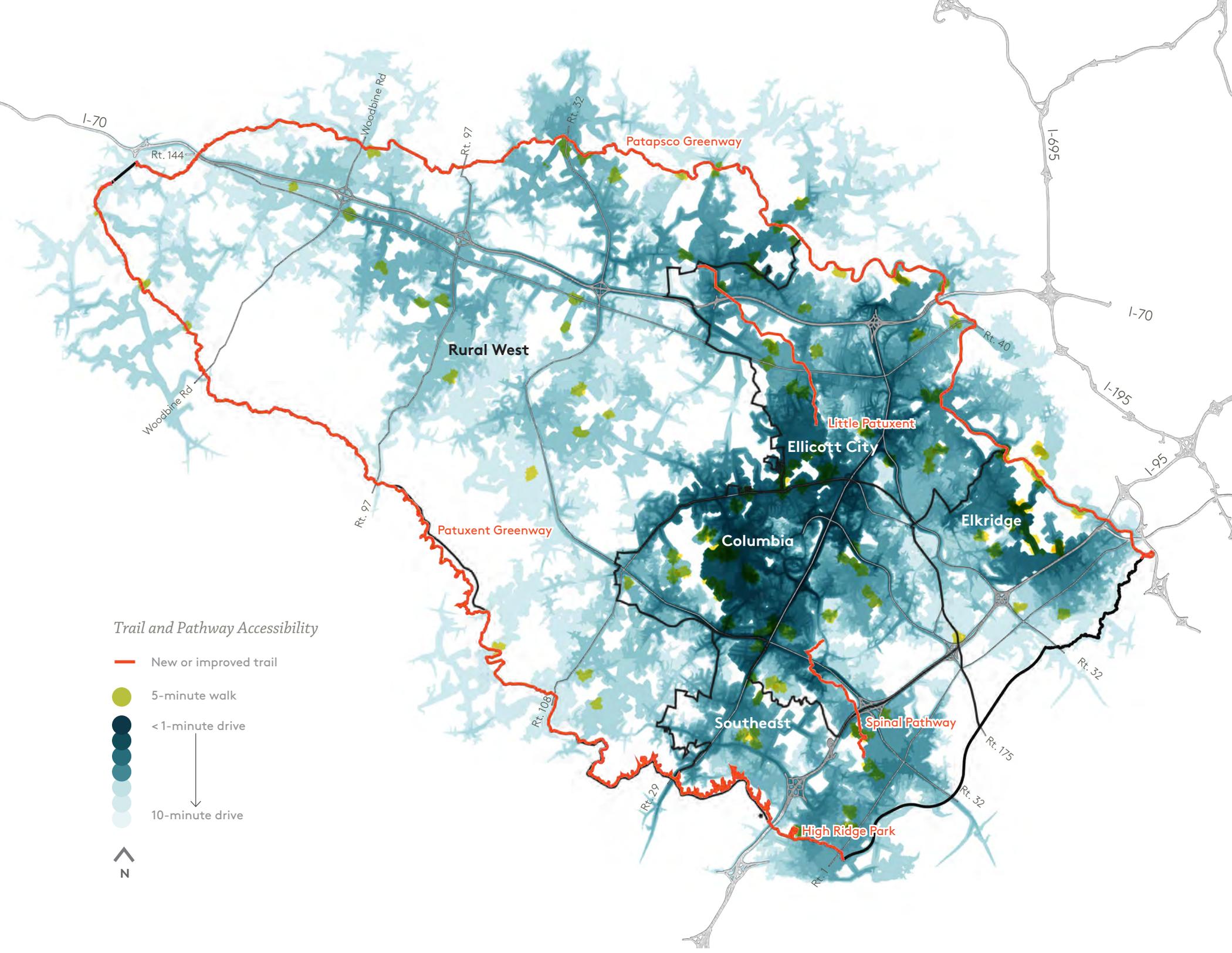
Trails were identified as the most popular outdoor activity by Howard County residents. As the county continues to age, senior residents will continue to have ample access to internal paved park trails and loop paths through parks that are close to where senior residents live.

Although this analysis revealed high driving accessibility to trails and pathways, the overall trail system lacks strong connectivity. Furthermore, feedback from both the community and focus groups discussions indicate a need for more trails and better connections between individual trails. In response, the Department has identified rehabilitation and expansion plans for the following trails in the Capital Improvement Plan to improve connectivity across the county:

- » Patapsco Greenway
- » Patuxent Greenway
- » High Ridge Park, connecting into Laurel and Prince George's County
- » Connections into existing and proposed bike paths and bike lanes in accordance with the Howard County Bike Plan
- » Little Patuxent, from Gwynn Acres Natural Resource Area to Alpha Ridge Park
- » Spinal Pathway, extending from Savage Park through Columbia to Dorsey's Search

### Accessibility Analysis





*Trail and Pathway Accessibility*

-  New or improved trail
-  5-minute walk
-  <1-minute drive
-  ↓
-  10-minute drive



## MEASURING USER DEMAND

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 LPPRP includes 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. This section also outlines the Department's alignment with Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) standards relating to customer satisfaction and includes recommendations for strengthening the service system based on best practices. For more detailed information, please refer to *Appendix C, Measuring User Demand*.

### **Staff Focus Groups**

The consulting team held two focus group sessions to determine staff recommendations for the Department. One focus group was composed of employees who have direct contact with customers and the other included leadership staff who are involved in managing programs and services. As a result of the internal focus groups, staff members identified growing trends and opportunities for improvement.

### **Statistically Valid Survey**

As part of the LPPRP's community engagement process, the Department conducted a statistically valid phone survey through the marketing consultant OpinionWorks. Several of the questions from the survey were directly related to assessing the quality of the user experience. According to the results, 80 percent of survey respondents are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with parks, facilities, and programs. An overwhelming majority was also satisfied with cleanliness and park maintenance, as 92 percent of household respondents agreed the Department's assets are either always or sometimes clean and well maintained.

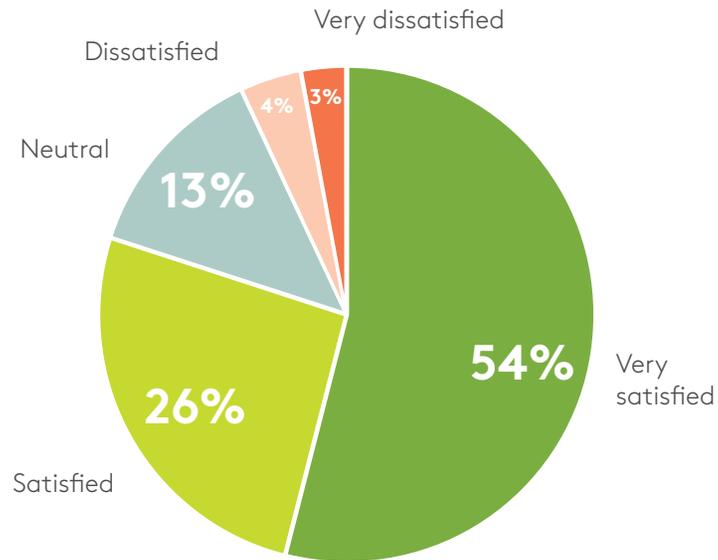
With regard to overall satisfaction, there were slight disparities in race and age. White residents reported higher levels of satisfaction than Hispanic residents, and the 25 to 34 age group reported lower levels of satisfaction than other age groups. Satisfaction is also directly related to income; while lower-income residents are not dissatisfied, satisfaction rates are 25 points lower than the highest-income residents.

### **CAPRA Standards**

Six CAPRA standards have a direct relationship to improving the user experience. These standards are outlined with their definition and the Department's performance relative to the standard in *Appendix C, Measuring User Demand*.

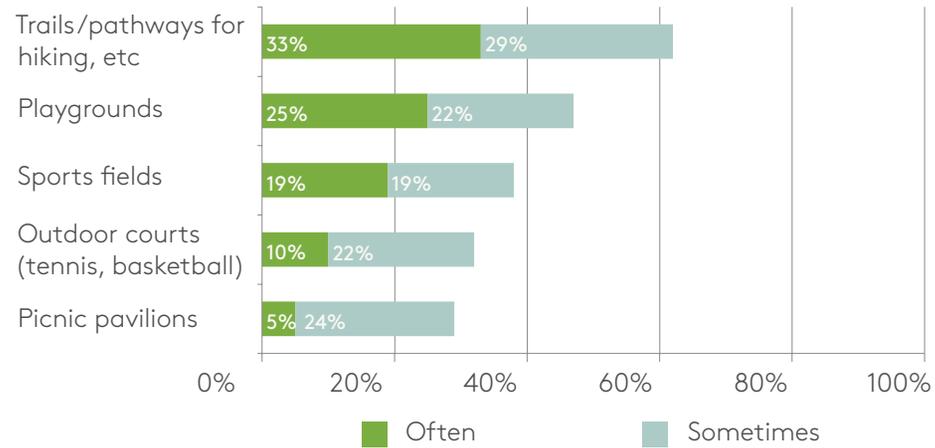
### **Best Practice Approaches**

Despite the Department's overall high user satisfaction ratings, there is room for improvement as the county looks ahead to the future and strives for innovation. The Department could further enhance customer satisfaction based on the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria for Organizational Excellence. These six criteria for organizational excellence apply to agencies of all sizes and capabilities. One of the criteria includes the development of a customer focus. 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 identify opportunities for innovation. The customer focus criteria and how it applies to the Department is outlined in detail in *Appendix C, Measuring User Demand*.



*Statistically Valid Survey*

How satisfied are you with the amenities provided by Howard County Recreation and Parks?



*Statistically Valid Survey*

In the past year, have you used these County Recreation and Parks offerings often, sometimes, seldom, or never?

## 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.

### **CAPRA Requirements**

The Department complies with the recreation program and services standards established by CAPRA. Three fundamental CAPRA standards include the Recreation Program Plan, Program Objectives, and Outreach to Diverse Underserved Populations. The Department's Program Plan, from 2015, also fulfills a number of non-fundamental CAPRA standards, outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. The Department's commitment to providing more outreach to a diverse population is reflected in its scholarship program to provide financial assistance, an established Therapeutic Recreation division to offer programs and inclusion services that meet and exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

standards, and development of facilities to ensure equity and access for all county residents.

### **Demographic Summary**

The Howard County population is projected to increase by 28 percent between 2010 and 2040, according to the State of Maryland population projections. By 2040, the 55+ group is projected to represent 34 percent of the total population, while the white population will decline to 37 percent of the total population. Both statistics suggest that recreation programming will need to accommodate an aging population and increase outreach strategies to minority populations. Further demographic data is available in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

### **Community Survey Results**

The community survey results demonstrate an 80 percent overall satisfaction rate, with 54 percent very satisfied. The survey results also expose the importance of cleanliness and maintenance to program and services participants, while non-participants cite a lack of awareness, lack of features, cost, and bad timing as reasons for not using recreation facilities. In general, the Department's high satisfaction ratings attest to the variety of programs offered and their alignment with community needs. However, higher satisfaction is recorded from white residents,

and significantly so from higher-income residents in comparison to lower-income residents. Additionally, those who use the recreation and parks system at least weekly respond with highest levels of satisfaction. Future surveys may focus more on resident need for specific program types, and to identify how the Department serves different areas, ethnic, and income groups of the county. For the full survey results, please refer to *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

### **Community Input**

Community input sessions were held in April, July, and September, with online commentary recorded as well. Many comments were related to recreation services, which can be used to develop program recommendations for the future. Some of the most frequently mentioned recreation activities and facilities included pickle ball courts, indoor swimming pools, outdoor fitness programming, and community gardens. It should be noted that the county, in partnership with Columbia Association, recently conducted a feasibility study of an indoor sports complex at the Oakland Mills Village Center, which included the potential expansion of the ice rink. The study concluded that the development of a sports complex of this scale was highly unlikely due to required land assembly, potential traffic and design impacts to adjacent neighborhoods, and the lack of foreseeable future funding sources. For a

detailed outline of all comments, please refer to *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

### **Program Inventory**

To determine if Howard County provides all major recreation programs typically offered by recreation agencies, the Department’s services were compared to a master program inventory, outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. While the analysis concluded that Howard County does provide all programs, a pressing challenge is to accommodate demand with sufficient program space. Today, available space remains a challenge for provision of additional services, or even meeting the existing need for some services.

### **Age Segment Analysis**

To review the distribution of recreation program offerings, the Department tabulated how many programs were available to four different age groups: two youth (12 and under; 13-17) and two adult (18-54; 55 and over). The data collected demonstrated that 64 percent of total programming is geared towards individuals in the 12-and-under age bracket, and that the Department should develop more programs for older residents as the 55-and-over population increases. More age segment distribution numbers are outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.



**Community input**  
Some of the most frequently mentioned recreation activities were pickle ball and outdoor fitness.

## **Major Program Areas**

The Department aims to provide programming that meets community need and is of a consistent level of quality. To form and categorize these programs, many criteria are considered. These criteria are listed in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. Staff members reviewed existing program categories to develop a MacMillan Matrix, a metric designed to help nonprofit organizations assess their programs for sustainability in light of scarce resources. Howard County programs were analyzed in regard to four standards: organizational fit, financial capability, alternative coverage, and competitive position. Each standard is further defined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. Howard County's major program categories were scored 1 through 5 in regards to each MacMillan standard: the higher the score the better the Department's ability to sustain that program.

Out of the 10 analyzed program categories, Sports, Fitness, Games and Health and Wellness scored 19 of a possible 20, confirming its importance and demand within the Department's program availability. More programming statistics are available in the *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

The Department's biggest challenge continues to be space, particularly as demand for therapeutic and active adult programs continues to grow. Moreover, the

Department's current financial assistance program will need to grow as the population increases, through registrant donations and/or by adjusting programs to augment the budget allocated to financial services.

## **Program Lifecycles**

Programs can be analyzed by development stage to determine whether or not the Department should add, reposition, or maintain the current program lifecycle mix. Staff members categorized core programs based on four stages of the life cycle: introduction stage, growth stage, mature stage, and decline stage. The distribution statistics of programs are available in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. Many programs are considered mature programs because of a lack of space, while others are a result of high participation. While overall program lifecycle distribution appears close to the recommended distribution of programs, only one program is in the introduction stage and one is in the decline stage, suggesting further monitoring and growth of new introductory programs may be needed.

## **Facility Space**

Today, there is a lack of adequate indoor recreation space available for Howard County residents. While there is no national standard for square footage recommendations, a

standard of 2 to 2.5 square feet per person for indoor space is used, based on extensive national community research. Plans are in place to provide additional indoor space for the future athletic complex at Blandair Park and community/athletic center at Troy Park at Elkridge — a total of 410,230 square feet for the county. Still, more will be required to accommodate the 2020 projected population growth. Data of existing indoor space is outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

## **Seasonal Reporting**

The Bureau of Recreation compiles a report at the end of each programming season that analyzes how each programming division has performed. The report identifies successful programs, areas for improvement, significant changes, outcome of planned changes, and evaluation ratings. These numbers are analyzed in conjunction with the revenue and expenses of each program division and facility. The report is used to determine if program divisions met targets, and exposes which factors may have impacted program performance.

All data is outlined by recreation facility and programming division in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

## **Marketing Review**

The community input sessions provided insight into the success of marketing efforts, including Howard County residents' awareness of programs and information sources. This information, in addition to the CAPRA requirements for marketing-related standards, informs the annual marketing plan that supports the Department's mission and vision. The 2015 annual marketing plan includes eight strategic initiatives, as well as more than 30 strategies, many of which are tactical. These eight initiatives are outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*. Despite this, opportunities exist to improve the LPPRP by developing short-term and long-term goals and objectives, as well as to use a balanced scorecard to capture the four aspects of customers, finance, internal business support, and learning and growth within the LPPRP.

Moreover, the Marketing Department aspires to increase efforts in using data analysis for decision making, and to determine if efforts are not only yielding the best return on investment of marketing dollars but also if the Department is successfully communicating to different marketing segments. A list of how the Department currently tracks data is available in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

From green marketing techniques to using

social media to internal communication standards, the marketing staff utilizes quality control and quality assurance techniques. Marketing needs to be tightly connected to customer satisfaction results in programs and services, potentially through developing a trends team. Moreover, the Department should build relationships in order to secure corporate sponsorships, which will help sustain recreation programming for Howard County.

## **Pricing and Revenue Policy**

The Department's fees and revenue policy, updated in May 2015, fulfills the CAPRA-required standard 5.1.1 Comprehensive Revenue Policy that relates to fees and charges. The policy includes philosophies, guidelines, and cost determination structures to manage fees and charges, and includes three levels of financial sustainability: direct costs, program administration, and institutional costs. Moving forward, the policy must include cost recovery goals for the 10 major program categories, and for the various facilities used. Having these goals will create accountability for program staff.

Budget worksheets and pricing information for programs at the county level are outlined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

## **Additional Program and Service Observations**

Additional program and service observation notes, from volunteer activity to drop-in programs to registration form credit card information collection, are available in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

## **Recreation Program Best Practices**

The Department intends to strengthen its programs and services by focusing on three best practice areas: quality standards, customer requirements, and key performance indicators.

Developing quality standards is necessary for achieving high levels of customer satisfaction. The Department could focus on the Gaps Model of Service Quality, developed by Parasuraman and Zeithaml, to measure the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of the service used. The five components of the Gaps Model are defined in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

To better meet customer requirements, the Department could identify the five most important attributes to customers and reinforce them through documentation, training, surveys, and performance metrics.

Working with customers directly to identify these attributes will help the Department understand what is most important to county residents, and determine how closely existing programs and facilities meet those needs.

Key performance indicators allow agencies to track the success and identify issues with programs and services. Examples of these performance indicators are listed in *Appendix H, Recreation Program Assessment*.

## TRENDS AND INNOVATION ASSESSMENT

### Recreation Trends

The Physical Activity Council (PAC) produces a report summarizing data about US leisure activity, compiled from national, state, and local trends. The report identifies activity levels in various age groups and provides insight into key sport, fitness, and recreation participation trends. The Department's own Trends Analysis Plan, from 2011, outlines an eight-step process in using trend research as part of program and service development. The Plan complies with the CAPRA standard 10.5.1, which calls for the periodic assessment of the impact of societal and local recreation and leisure trends on existing and projected user populations.

### Participation and Activities in the United States

Leisure activity participation has fluctuated over the last six years, although more than half of each categorized generation participates in fitness sports. Out of the 10 core participation activities identified in the PAC Overview Report, eight are fitness-related activities. Details regarding participant numbers and generational activity preferences are available in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

The report also reveals the fastest growing sports and activities by resources and participants, the latter of which provides insight into what Americans are becoming more interested in for their health, wellness, and fitness needs. The Top 10 Actual Growth Activities are listed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*. The growth activities suggest that participants are interested in fun physical, emotional, and mental experiences, and non-conventional activities that require less equipment such as P90X and CrossFit. More activity trends are outlined in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

An inactive person is defined by the PAC report as one who does not participate in any of the 120 sports or activities listed. In the past six years, 2014 experienced the highest percentage of inactivity at 28.3 percent of Americans. PAC's framework of engaging

inactive people includes expanding the adult programming base to accommodate an aging population, and categorizing programs as aspirational, which has been shown to be an effective method of engaging unlikely participants. Moreover, the active adult community is interested in social program areas, such as walking and biking clubs. Further examples of active adult recreation programs are listed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*, alongside the results of a recent survey to recreation professionals.

The Wall Street Journal published a list of statistics reflecting particular participation declines in the four most popular US team sports of basketball, soccer, baseball, and football, assembled from a variety of sports groups and industry associations from 2008 to 2012. All are reflected in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

### Market Potential Index for Howard County

The Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the relative likelihood of adults in a specific area to exhibit certain consumer behavior, compared to the rest of the US. The MPI in Howard County for aerobics is 142, higher than the national average of 100, suggesting that aerobics programs would do well in Howard County, for instance. Determining

residents' likelihood to participate in a variety of activities can serve program development in the future.

All consumer behavior trends are derived from an ESRI report entitled Sports and Leisure Market Potential and apply to the demographic composition of Howard County. Those statistics are available in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

### **Major Program Areas Trends**

Howard County's major program area trends supplements the sports and fitness activity trends by including information about aging adults, inclusion services, and licensed childcare. Surveys and reports indicate the aging population requires designated senior sections, facilities, and programs, in addition to easier access. Recent reports' lists of active adult trends and needs are outlined in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

Mirroring the growth of diversifying populations, special events have provided more and more programs geared toward ethnically diverse audiences. Moreover, nostalgia-themed events, to target broader audiences, in addition to food-related, pet-oriented, and family-oriented events, have grown in popularity.



### **National trends**

Fitness activities that require less equipment, such as Crossfit and walking clubs, are growing nationwide. Image source: [www.newalbanycompany.com](http://www.newalbanycompany.com), [beachfitness.com](http://beachfitness.com)

Volunteering consistently supports recreational programs, with higher rates from older generations. Specific volunteering trends, as released in 2012 and 2014, are listed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

Outdoor recreation appears to have grown in popularity in the past 20 years, and has reached its peak. More agencies, however, are creating outdoor facilities to accommodate activities like biking and zip lining. Participation rates for specific activities, in reports released from 2009 to 2014, can be reviewed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

Cost of childcare is one of the top two obstacles to afterschool care enrollment nationally and in Maryland. The Department's costs are approximately 35 percent lower than the national average, but rates are predicted to grow within the state. Parents make use of childcare programs to provide opportunities for their children's physical activity, access to healthy food, and access to STEM programs. A 2016 report on childcare predicts that despite an increased need for childcare by the year 2020, Maryland childcare providers will decline. This suggests an opportunity to develop additional childcare programs in the Department. Additionally, to meet the rising demands for extensive inclusion services, including programs for children of all abilities, parks and recreation agencies throughout the US will partner to set visions

and recommendations. A 10-point standards checklist for what childcare facilities should provide and recommendations for inclusion services are listed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

With regards to arts programming, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) released a list of participation trends by activity. These national and Maryland-based statistics, from performing arts programs like dance, music, and theater, to personal art creation like painting or writing, are available in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.

General program trends, beyond fitness activities or the arts, include cognitive, literary, STEM, and computer gaming activities. Agencies beyond the Department provide examples of these activities in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*. Also listed are locations specifically geared towards sports tourism, which must also ensure ways to maintain local residents' needs.

Further national trends, collected from recreation and parks agencies around the US, are outlined in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*, including suggestions for departments that have not yet incorporated these increasingly popular programs. All research conducted in the Trends and Innovation report help the Department build services aligned with industry trends as well as resident needs. A review of the

current program inventory indicates staff members have relied on trends to develop programs according to changing consumer interests. Moving forward, the Department is prepared to focus on the need for active adult programming, activities that reflect the county's ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, and increasing childcare programs. Developing a trends team for the Department may be a productive method to oversee and implement these activities.

All statistics sources listed in *Appendix G, Trends and Innovation*.



*County program area trends*

The county is experiencing greater demand for culture-specific events and outdoor fitness opportunities.



# County Recommendations

***How can the county better meet the needs of the community and serve as innovators in the field of recreation and parks?***

In order to maintain excellence and drive further innovation within the Department, the Plan puts forth several recommendations for recreation and park services. These recommended improvements are based on the Plan analysis and community input and are represented through the following seven categories, all of which correspond to specific department goals:

- » Recreation
- » Education
- » Ecology
- » Connectivity
- » Placemaking
- » Visibility and Communication

At the countywide level, the Plan recommends the following:

**Recreation:** Celebrate the uniqueness of Howard County's diverse community through recreational opportunities that support multi-generational play, evolving trends, and diverse programming that are accessible to everyone. These opportunities should maintain a healthy balance of facility and park supply to support growing demand.

**Education:** Support lifelong learning through programming and partnerships that build community knowledge around the importance of healthy living and wellness.

**Ecology:** Celebrate the significance of Howard County's watershed system and diverse open space types. Invest in sustainable spaces and practices throughout all parks, recreation and natural spaces.

**Connectivity:** Create strong physical connections within and between parks, facilities and open spaces. Imagine Howard County as a connected green infrastructure

system that supports people and the greater natural system and provides linkages between the community and neighboring counties.

**Placemaking:** Create inspiring public spaces that focus on local community assets to enhance human relationships, reinforce park identity and promote overall wellbeing.

**Visibility and Communications:** Improve the identity of the system through enhanced wayfinding and impactful communication that is clear and visible. Continue to build meaningful partnerships outside of the Department to enhance visitor experience and community outreach.

**Department Operations:** Cultivate a strong workforce under the tenets and mission and vision of the Department. Enhance operational sustainability, efficiency, and the user experience.



*Gary J. Arthur Community Center*

Although already providing numerous successful programs and camps, the community center at Western Regional Park would benefit from stronger physical connections to the park itself and to the adjacent civic institutions.





**ENHANCING HEALTH  
AND RESILIENCE OF  
NATURAL SYSTEMS  
AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

# Existing Conditions

***What natural and historic resources does the county maintain?***

Contributing to Howard County's high quality of life, protected lands and historic resources managed by the Howard County Natural and Historic Resources Division support essential ecosystem services while offering residents and visitors the opportunity to connect with nature and the county's cultural heritage. These ongoing efforts reflect the State of Maryland's commitment and vision for environmental protection and conservation of natural and heritage resources while addressing challenges and conditions that are unique to Howard County.

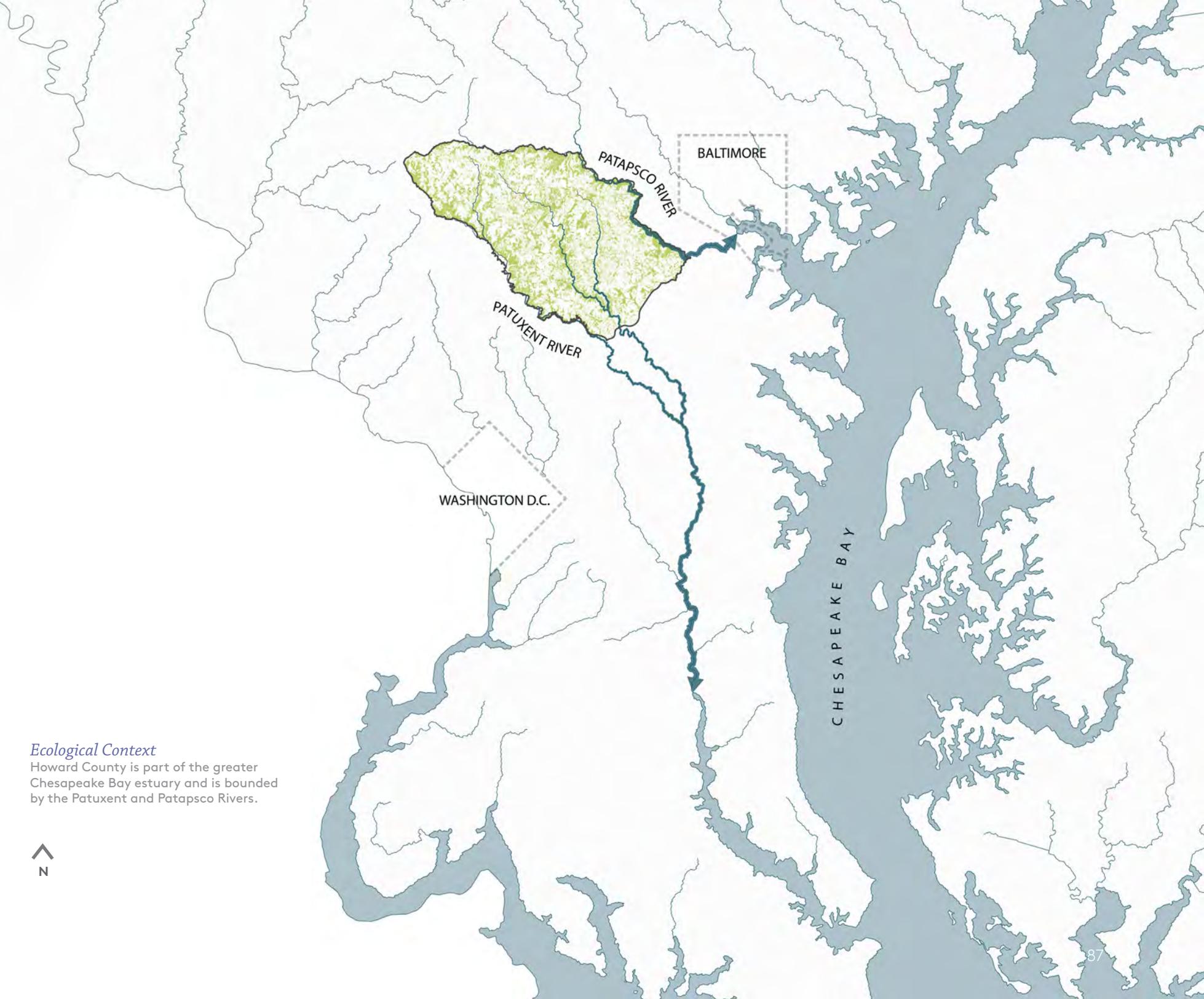
## ECOLOGICAL SETTING

While the region was strongly influenced by Ian McHarg's progressive and ecologically driven approach to planning in the 1960s (noted in the LPPRP introduction), centuries of settlement and broader land use changes have significantly decreased and fragmented the county's historic forest canopy cover. These changes have impacted not only the diversity and composition of the county's ecological communities, but have also contributed to water-related issues in local streams and rivers, which all drain to the Chesapeake Bay.

As part of a multi-state effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, watershed planning efforts began. In recent decades, major contributing watersheds and sub-watersheds have undergone studies to identify restoration potential, as part of compliance with an effort led by the Storm

Water Management Division in the Bureau of Environmental Services — National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System stormwater discharge permit. Efforts from several of the Department's program aid in the reporting requirements for this permit.

Reforestation is one strategy used to reconnect and buffer natural systems; however, habitat loss and fragmentation have had significant impacts on wildlife populations and biodiversity. While smaller habitat fragments and increasing edge conditions have favored edge-dwelling species such as deer, species requiring specialized habitats — such as forest interior dwelling bird species — have mostly declined.



*Ecological Context*

Howard County is part of the greater Chesapeake Bay estuary and is bounded by the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers.



## NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES DIVISION

The mission of the Natural and Historic Resources Division of the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is to manage, protect, and enhance the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the county. Cultivating environmental and cultural awareness, the division promotes responsible stewardship of the land and historic resources, and strives to connect people of all ages with their surroundings. The Natural and Historic Resources Division is composed of the following management sections:

- » Natural Resource Operations
  - Natural Resource Management
  - Forestry
  - Enforcement
  - Deer Management
- » Park Rangers
- » Heritage Programming
- » Middle Patuxent Environmental Area
- » Robinson Nature Center

The Natural and Historic Resources Division also works closely with other divisions outside the Department to achieve environmental protection and enhancement goals including the following:

- » Department of Public Works Storm Water Management Division
- » Department of Public Works Construction Inspection Division
- » Howard County Soil Conservation District
- » Office of Community Sustainability
- » Department of Planning and Zoning
- » Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- » Maryland Department of Agriculture
- » Alliance for Chesapeake Bay
- » Columbia Association
- » Howard County Chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society
- » Howard County Forestry Board
- » University of Maryland

Through these partnerships, the Natural and Historic Resources Division works to advance the state's GreenPrint goals to protect Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) that represent lands and watersheds of high ecological value that have been identified as conservation priorities.

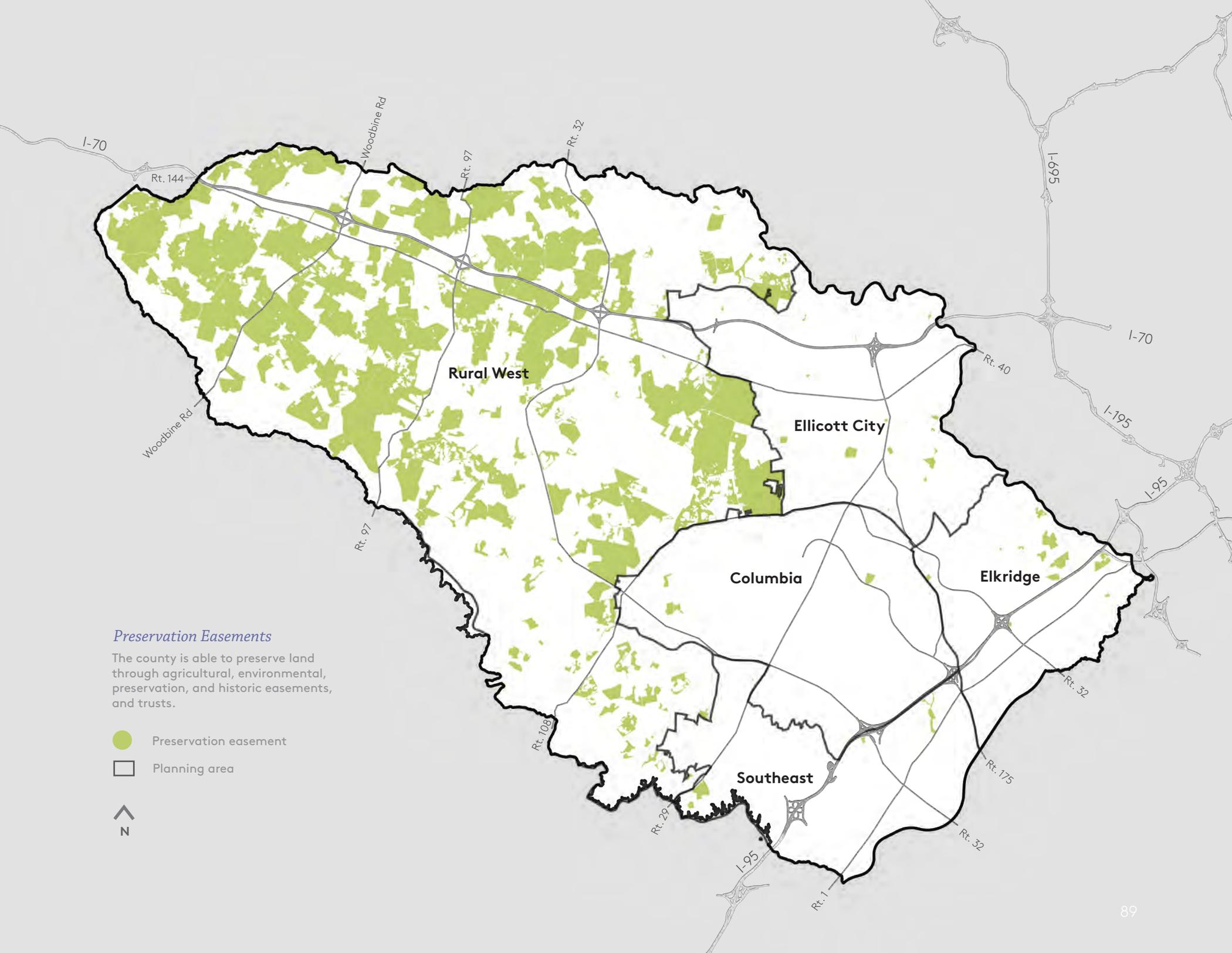
## EXISTING NATURAL AREAS

### ***Natural Resource Areas***

Natural Resource Areas (NRA) represent a significant portion of the county's park and recreation system. These publicly accessible, protected areas allow for limited development and are managed to enhance the resource and related habitats. These areas also play a significant role in the protection and enhancement of the county's waterways that span across several watersheds, shown on page 91. Of the Department's 9,378 acres of total land holdings, 1,887 acres (20 percent) are considered natural resource areas. These areas include the following:

***Carrs Mill NRA:*** Once a controversial landfill, Carrs Mill Park is a 21-acre natural resource area in the Rural West that was remediated and deeded to the county in 1996.

***Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA:*** Also called Gorman Park, the NRA is 215 acres of county land and several hundred acres of Columbia Association open space. The NRA is home to a mix of deciduous upland and floodplain forests along both sides of the Middle Patuxent River. Migrant warblers and thrushes are known to pass through this area during migration periods.



*Preservation Easements*

The county is able to preserve land through agricultural, environmental, preservation, and historic easements, and trusts.

- Preservation easement
- Planning area



**Gwynn Acres NRA:** Gwynn Acres NRA is a seven-acre open space, located on the eastern side of the Little Patuxent River off Columbia Road. The NRA includes paved and unpaved trails and is home to young and mature deciduous floodplain trees.

**Middle Patuxent Environmental Area:** Home to nearly 150 species of birds, more than 40 species of mammals, and numerous amphibians, reptiles, fishes, butterflies, plants, and other wildlife, the 1,021-acre Middle Patuxent Environmental Area (MPEA) is the largest natural resource conservation area in the Howard County park system. The MPEA offers opportunities for environmental education and research, in addition to passive recreation with over 5.5 miles of hiking trails and numerous volunteer opportunities.

**Patapsco Greenway (Houchens):** The 34-acre property is in the Rural West planning region of the county along the Patapsco River on the border of Howard County and Carroll County.

**Patapsco Greenway (Lewis):** The Lewis property is a 6-acre parcel along the Patapsco River, just south of the Houchens property.

**Patuxent Basin NRA:** The Patuxent River Basin is a 43-acre winding site along the Patuxent River, just before the river leaves the county. The basin is south of the Rocky Gorge Dam and supports a wide range of plant and animal species.

**David Force NRA:** Preserved as an important forested area to protect water quality, provide habitat for wildlife, and support recreational hiking and nature observation, this 221-acre natural resource area is situated between Interstate 70 in the north and US Route 40 to the south along David Force Creek, a tributary to the Patuxent River.

**Font Hill Wetlands Park:** Located in Ellicott City this park was the first State/County/Private sector cooperative wetland project in the State of Maryland, presenting numerous opportunities to observe and study wetlands and their wildlife in this 26-acre park.

**Chaconas Property:** A 19-acre parcel located along the Patapsco River in the northwest section of the county.

## EXISTING HISTORIC RESOURCES

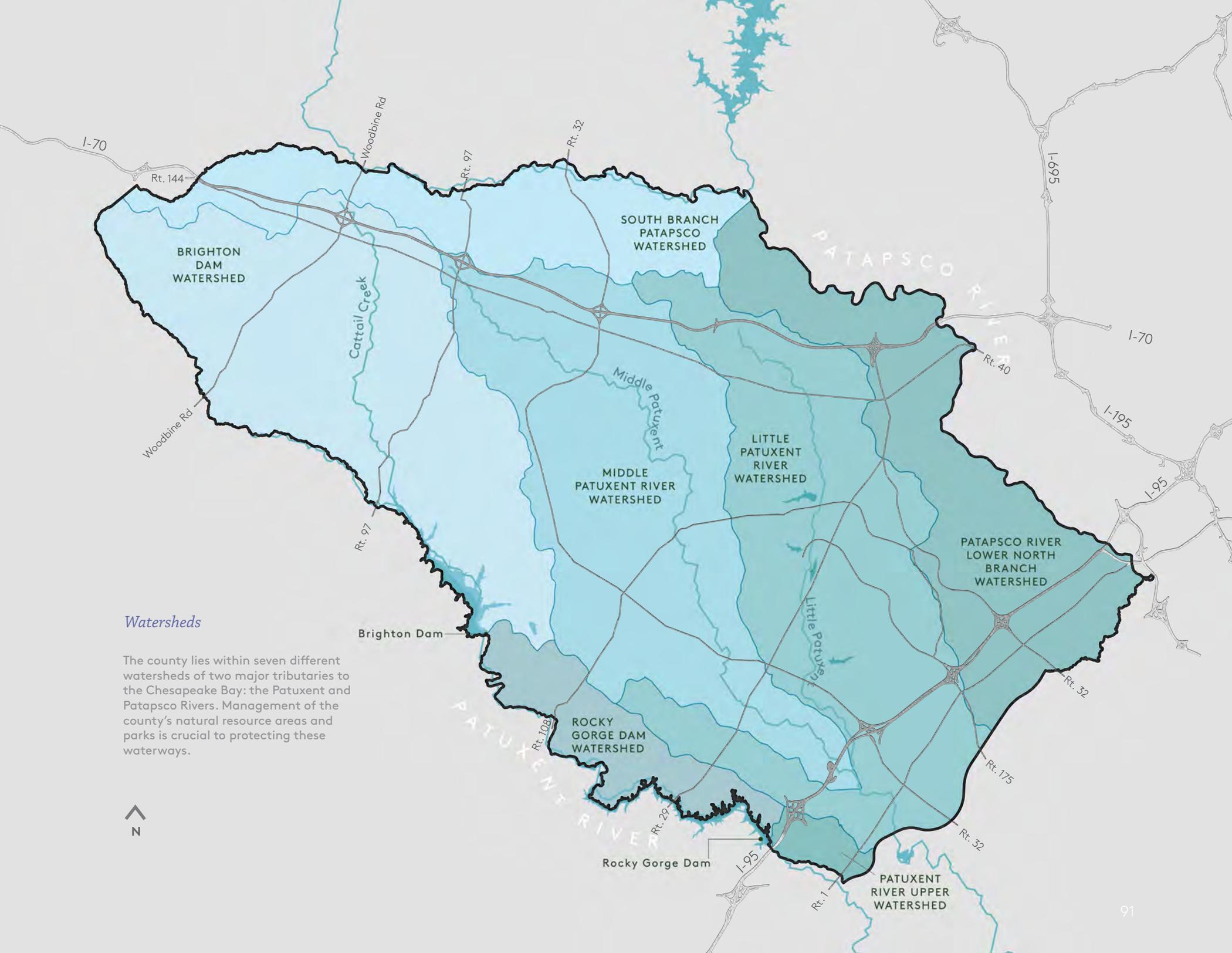
Heritage resources within Howard County illustrate many facets of the area's past including Native American settlement, early European settlement and agriculture, slavery and abolition, industry and transportation, and mid-twentieth-century community planning. Many of these resources are located within Ellicott City, where a concentration of historic buildings and structures tell the story

of a bustling town shaped by its proximity to both river and railroad. Other heritage assets, particularly those that illustrate the county's rich agricultural heritage, are spread throughout the county. Many resources have been lost due to twentieth-century development, but the county's efforts to conserve open land and the protection provided by historic designations have preserved many sites that are invaluable to the interpretation of Howard County's past.

### **Heritage Programming**

Heritage Programming is a section within the Natural and Historic Resources Division of the Department. The mission of the program is to "benefit a diverse audience through utilizing our historic resources in various ways by staying current with technology and heritage tourism trends, by providing historically accurate information to our visitors, and maintaining a sense of place through the built environment and the intangible heritage associated with the region." Heritage Programming oversees an inventory of 25 historic and cultural sites with varying management structures and programming arrangements.

As of 2016, Heritage Programming directly manages programs for six of these sites (The Firehouse Museum, Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park, Pfeiffer's Corner Schoolhouse, Ellicott City Colored School, Restored, the



*Watersheds*

The county lies within seven different watersheds of two major tributaries to the Chesapeake Bay: the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers. Management of the county's natural resource areas and parks is crucial to protecting these waterways.



Thomas Isaac Log Cabin, and the Heritage Orientation Center,). One of the sites, Belmont Manor and Historic Park, is managed by a separate group within Park Operations, and private entities manage three additional sites (Waverly Mansion, Hebb House, and the B&O Railroad Museum). Several of the sites are structures that can be experienced by passers-by but are not ideal for active heritage programming, such as the Bollman Truss Bridge, the Gilford Quarry Pratt Through

Truss Bridge, the Lt. Ephraim Anderson Grave Site, and the Ryan Property Historic Well. Other sites remain vacant or unused. Most of the programs managed by Heritage Programming are focused on Ellicott City, but the Department’s historic sites are spread across the county. The Heritage Programs office is currently located in a house adjacent to Centennial Park but not in the vicinity of foot traffic or any historic sites.

All revenue generated by heritage programming stays within the Department and directly benefits further programming and the treatment of historic sites, making revenue a high priority for Heritage Programming. The staff must balance the need to generate additional revenue with maintaining the integrity of both the historic sites and their programs.

Heritage Programming greatly benefits from partnerships with other organizations, many of which are led by Howard County residents who have a long history of involvement with the interpretation and preservation of heritage resources. Beyond school field trips, Heritage Programming notes less involvement and interest from younger generations of county residents.

Although the current programming is of high quality, Heritage Programming lacks a system for staff and resources to grow substantially and to program many of the unused historic sites currently within the Department’s inventory. Currently, all staff manage the programs, when they should focus on contractor management. Volunteers and contingent staff could run the programs so that full-time staff can supervise and expand the program model. This way, programming could occur at more historic sites, many of which are currently not used, and increase preservation opportunities. Appropriate programming for vacant historic sites is a high priority for Heritage Programming.

Historic Sites
B & O Railroad Museum
Belmont Manor and Historic Park
Bollman Truss Bridge
Ellicott City Colored School House, Restored
Firehouse Museum
Bernard Fort House (Heine property)
Howard District Court House (formerly the Heritage Orientation Center)
Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park
Gilford Quarry Pratt Through Truss Bridge
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin
Waverly Mansion

Historic Sites Within Parks	Park
Blandair Historic Farm	Blandair Park
Clover Hill Farm House	Rockburn Branch Park
Doyle Spring House	Rockburn Branch Park
Hebb House	West Friendship Park
James Marlow House	Schooley Mill Park
James Sykes House	West Friendship Park
Lt. Col. Ephraim Anderson Grave Site	Colonel Anderson Memorial Park
McKenzie Barn	Rockburn Branch Park
Pfeiffer’s Corner Schoolhouse	Rockburn Branch Park
Ryan Property Historic Well	Ellicott City Colored School House, Restored
Simpsonville Mill Ruins	Robinson Nature Center
Troy House	Troy Park
Poplar Springs Spring House	Poplar Spring Park



*B & O Railroad Museum*

The county has maintained several historic sites, such as the B & O Railroad Museum, that serve as regional tourist attractions.

Heritage Programming manages a range of historic property types and program types. Belmont Manor is a successful example of a historic property that is being adaptively reused for event programming, such as weddings and training events. Resources such as the Ellicott City Colored School and the Firehouse Museum are used for active cultural interpretation and house permanent exhibits. Others are used for active interpretation through living exhibits, such as the Hebb House at West Friendship Park. Some historic sites, such as the Gilford Quarry Pratt Through Truss Bridge and the Thomas Isaac Log Cabin, are used for passive interpretation through interpretive signage. Many sites, such as the Clover Hill Farm House and the Ryan Property Historic Well, remain unused either because their condition cannot accommodate programming, there are not sufficient resources for programming, or appropriate programs have not yet been identified. Currently, Heritage Programming does not have a comprehensive plan for the prioritization of appropriate programming for its historic sites.

## Heritage Programs Recommendations

- » Expand programming outside of Ellicott City to encompass the whole county.
- » Develop a plan for curating the hundreds of archaeological artifacts currently held by Heritage Programs. Ensure 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 the Heritage Program that gives visibility to the group and their work.
- » Develop a formal strategy and plan for programming historic sites within the recreation and parks system. The objective of the plan should be to provide a consistent process for making decisions regarding the most viable and appropriate use and programs for individual historic sites. The strategy should incorporate an assessment of historic significance and integrity of individual assets based on the standards and guidelines set by the National Register of Historic Places 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 Gilford Quarry Pratt Through Truss Bridge).
- » Incorporate trends in heritage tourism and preservation 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 Heritage Programs and 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.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE PREVIOUS PLAN

Since 2012 the Natural and Historic Resources Division has made considerable progress on working toward the state and county goals outlined in the LPPRP. The following provides a brief summary of notable achievements and accomplishments, many of which align with the state's GreenPrint goals to coordinate the efforts of multiple conservation programs to preserve the identified Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs). Please note: some figures in the following summary represent achievements for the duration of the program which may have commenced prior to 2012.

### ***Forest Conservation/ Reforestation Programs***

Working toward restoring Howard County's forest canopy, 80,101 trees have been planted through several different programs.

#### **Private Land Forest Conservation**

- » Private Forest Conservation Establishment — conservation easements located on private properties with environmentally sensitive features (58 acres planted, 17,657 trees planted and 23,657 feet of stream buffered to date)
- » Developer default plantings — privately held lands (13,731 trees have been planted on 68 acres since 2012)

- » Tree Canopy program — free native trees and planting services provided to homeowners (2,596 trees planted from 2011 to 2015)
- » Stream ReLeaf – riparian stream buffer enhancement program for private property owners (15,876 trees planted from 2003 to 2017)
- » Turf to Trees program - provides trees and planting services to Howard County property owners with lots of 1.5 to 10 acres in size, free of cost (1,187 trees planted on six acres)

#### **Recreation and Parks Planting**

- » Public Land Forest Conservation - 12,511 trees have been planted since 2012
- » Emerald Ash Borer program — surveying and under-planting for long-term forest management in David Force Natural Resource Area (12.1 acres replanted) and other affected sites countywide. The Department closely coordinates this program with the efforts of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Forest Service. In May, 2015, the Department co-hosted a regional EAB workshop with the DNR Forest Service at the Robinson Nature Center. Several representatives from the DNR Forest Service and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission have also toured the various county management sites.

#### **Community Efforts**

- » Volunteer Tree Plantings - conducts two plantings per year (600 trees planted to date)
- » Students Branching Out - student and volunteer environmental education program that has planted 15,943 trees to date, totaling more than 95 acres of reforestation.

### ***Environmental Education***

***Robinson Nature Center:*** In 2011, the Department opened their first nature education facility along the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area. With the intention of bringing nature and people together, the center offers outdoor trails, educational exhibits, and programs. Over the past few years, the center has experienced tremendous success serving as a popular destination for school classes, families, and adults across several neighboring counties. The building itself has also been praised for its environmentally-friendly features resulting in LEED Platinum certification and is located within a designated TEA.

### ***Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature:***

The county has collaborated extensively with the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature, a public and private partnership that works to provide opportunities for children to play and learn outdoors and promote environmental literacy.

The county collaborates with the partnership on several programs at the Robinson Nature Center, as well as through several Howard County Conservancy programs at their Mount Pleasant site in Woodstock. The county leases the Carriage House at Belmont Manor and Historic Park for various environmental education programs.

### **Public Outreach and Community Engagement**

To date, close to 9,000 volunteer hours have contributed to improving the environmental quality of Howard County. From tree plantings to cleanup programs throughout the county, the following programs offer opportunities for Howard county residents to make a difference in their community.

**Students Branching Out:** combines environmental education with water quality planting efforts (students and volunteers have been engaged in a total of over 2,500 service hours).

**Restoring the Environment and Developing Youth (READY) Projects:** assists the Department with forest conservation planting maintenance such as tree shelter removal, invasive species control, monitoring, developing rain gardens and other stormwater facilities.

**Volunteer tree plantings:** conducts two planting events per year.

**Stream and pond clean-up program:** since 1996, 2,536 volunteers have invested 5,558 hours cleaning county waterways; since 2000, 40.41 miles of streams and rivers and 102.7 acres of pond and lake areas have been cleaned.

**Educational materials:** a variety of brochures and website links have been developed placing an emphasis on public education to protect the environment.

**Weed Warriors:** a volunteer group removes invasive plants from county lands (to date, 178 volunteers have worked 758 hours removing invasive plants).

**Howard County GreenFest:** more than 2,000 in attendance at the ninth annual event in 2017.

**Park Rangers:** provide quality customer service and information related to park safety, amenities, resources, and regulations while protecting the environment; offerings include the Bark Ranger program, the Ticked Off program, interpretive walks, and displays at expos and the county fair.

**Trout in the Classroom:** run by Trout Unlimited, this program raises Rainbow Trout eggs in the classroom for release into local streams; park rangers partner with Trout Unlimited to release the trout and help teach students about the value of water quality.

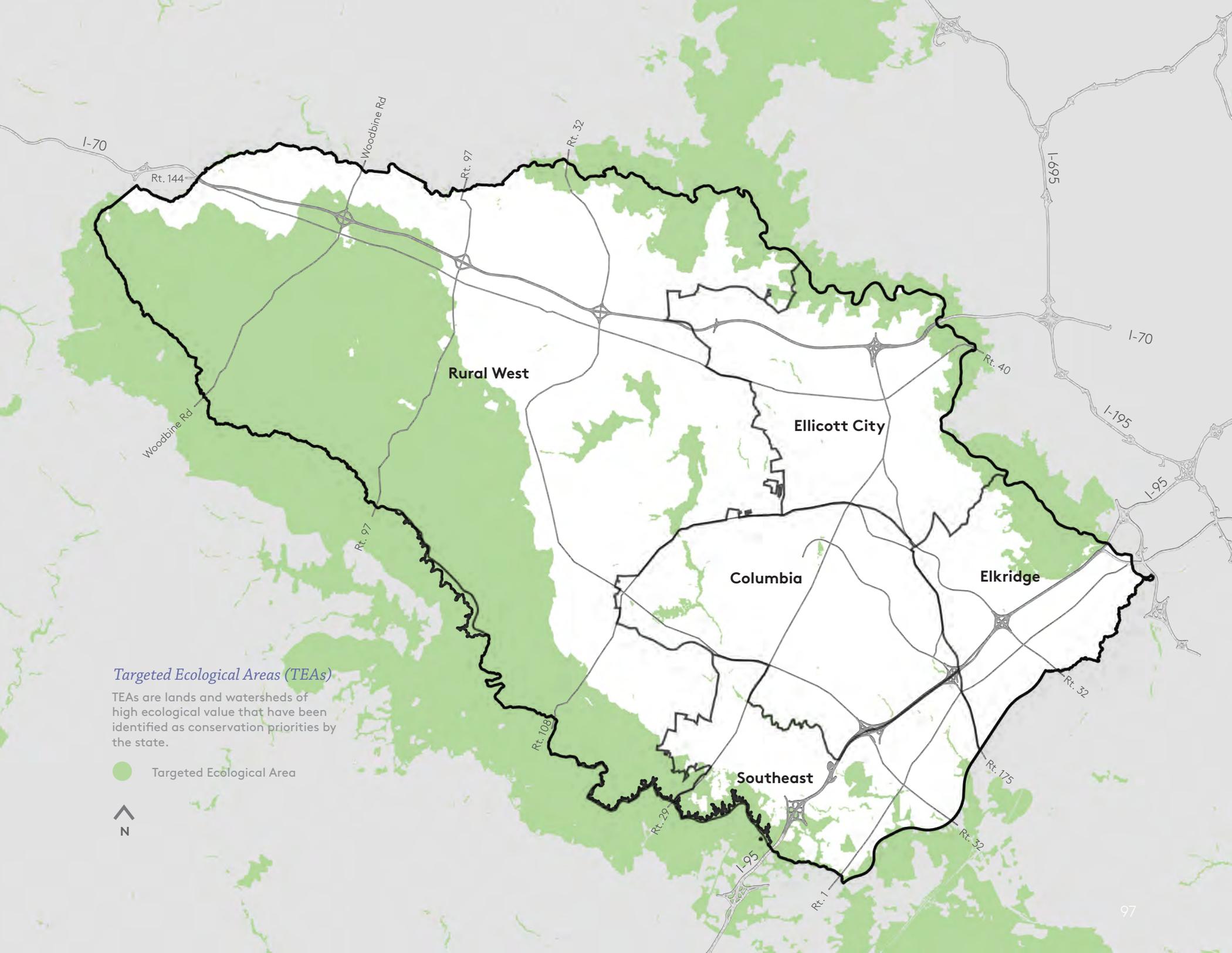
### **Trail Management**

**Trail Planning and Management Guidebook:** Since 2012, the Department has completed a Trail Planning and Management Guidebook that describes Best Management Practices to follow when designing and constructing natural surface trails. This guidebook is to serve as a resource for trail planning decisions for the Department, as well as for the Department of Planning and Zoning, and to be shared with developers to ensure existing and newly constructed trails comply with sustainable standards.

**Natural Surface Trail - Action Strategy:** Started in 2013, the Department annually updates the Action Strategy—a document that plans objectives needed to be achieved to meet identified trail management goals. It documents the locations, construction and maintenance events on existing trails or newly planned routes. The next update will closely coordinate with recommendations from *Bike Howard 2015* and most likely will expand to include paved trail corridors.

### **Biological Surveys**

Citizen scientists have logged more than 7,400 hours surveying amphibians, butterflies, and dragonflies; contributing to the inventory of Howard County biota. A number of programs are listed here:



*Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs)*

TEAs are lands and watersheds of high ecological value that have been identified as conservation priorities by the state.

 Targeted Ecological Area



**Frogwatch USA:** an effort to gather data on declining amphibian populations (since 2000, 1,127 volunteers gathered information at 18 sites by conducting frog calling surveys with a total of 5,876 hours of volunteer service). managed by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

**Annual Butterfly Count:** As part of a partnership with the Howard County Bird Club, the Department participates in an annual census of North American butterflies found in the county (since 2007, 130 volunteers have worked 349 hours).

**Annual Dragonfly Count:** since 2006, the Department has partnered with the Howard County Bird Club to conduct the annual census of dragonflies and damselflies (odonates) in the county (since 2009, 155 volunteers have worked 1,216 hours on this survey).

**Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas:** the Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas began 1/1/2010 and ended 12/31/14; this project was lead by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the goal was to collect data to map, by blocks every 10 square miles, of the distributions of these animals all across the state; data will be published in 2017 and repeated in 2034.

## **Species Management**

**Deer management:** monitors and manages deer populations in the county while

educating hunters and homeowners about deer-related issues.

**Resident Canada Goose Management Program:** population control measure to reduce degradation of lake, pond waters, and shorelines at several park properties.

**Trout Stocking:** state officials have determined that the water quality in these rivers is sufficient to support a recreational, three season fishery and during the fall of

2015, 6,000 brown and rainbow trout were stocked in the Little and Middle Patuxent Rivers, in addition to 2,500 trout stocked in Centennial Park Lake.

**Meadow management:** where appropriate, lands are actively managed in early

### *Deer population*

The county continues to look for innovative solutions to address the overpopulation of deer.



successional habitats and planted to grass and wildflowers species beneficial to a variety of pollinators, small mammals, and birds.

**Aquatic weed management:** in fishable ponds and lakes, invasive aquatic vegetation is managed to support active recreation and water quality.

## EXAMPLES OF SYSTEM CHALLENGES

### ***Historic Site Maintenance and Programming***

The Heritage Programming section within the Natural and Historic Resources Division struggles to maintain and program its 25 heritage sites due to limited resources. A lack of funding and staff creates a tension between the need to develop revenue-generating programs and the division's stewardship goals and responsibilities.

### ***Invasive Species***

Invasive species pose a considerable threat to the biodiversity and resilience of natural systems throughout Howard County and the surrounding region. Ongoing efforts continue to monitor and manage the many invasive species of concern; however, education, outreach, and continuing support from local volunteers is essential for the continuing success of the management program. Some

of the species which are currently monitored and managed by Howard County and supporting volunteer organizations includes but is not limited to; the Emerald Ash Borer beetle (*Agrilus planipennis*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Multi-flora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), and Japanese Stiltgrass (*Microstefium vimineum*).

### ***Deer Management***

Howard County faces an overpopulation of white-tailed deer, which results in overgrazing of the natural environment and an abundance of ticks leading to Lyme disease. The Department uses various methods to control the deer and tick populations.



### ***Historic site maintenance***

The county has difficulty maintaining and developing active programming for all of their heritage sites such as the Clover Hill Farm House.

## IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCES AND PROGRAMS

Natural and Historic Resources Division has been instrumental in helping to create numerous policy and management guidelines. Those policies and guidelines are identified in detail below:

**Title 19:** Within the Howard County Code of Ordinances, the Parkland Watershed Facilities Fund authorizes the County Executive to purchase and develop land within the limits of the county for public park use and possible future expansion of county water facilities.

**Department Policy and Procedures:** The role of the Department is to ensure the Department's philosophy, goals and policies are appropriate; they will be reviewed by the director and designated staff at least yearly in accordance with HCDC Policy A-003, Policy and Procedure and Post Order review. Staff are encouraged to participate, to the maximum degree possible, in recommending changes as needed.

**Beaver Management:** In its role as a steward of Howard County's natural resources (Howard County Code Title 19, subtitle 2, Section 19.200-211), it shall be a goal of the Department of Recreation and Parks to practice an attitude of acceptance of, and tolerance for, beaver activity as part of the county's natural environment

and it will foster this attitude among the public through education. The Department recognizes beavers as a natural and desirable component of the environment because of their contribution to the quality and diversity of natural habitat.

### **Digitizing Forest Conservation Easements:**

This easement program was established pursuant of the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County. Natural and Historic Resources Division is responsible for the inspection of any forest conservation easement established under a forest conservation agreement between the "developer" and the "county". According to this easement program, the developer is required to retain existing trees, plant trees to replace trees cleared during the course of development, or plant trees to create new forests. The area dedicated for the required retention, reforestation or afforestation is shown on the plan's plat of the Forest Conservation Easement and is described in the Deed of Forest Conservation Easement.

### **Farm Lease Best Management Practices**

**Inspections:** The Department manages approximately 9,378 acres of county parkland out of which several park properties are leased to local farmers for agricultural production. Department benefits from proper management of these properties until the parks designed and developed. Farmers are required to follow the Resource Management

Plans (RMPs) written by US Department of Agriculture. Department will annually visit the property to insure the agreed upon RMP is being followed and implemented. If the farmers fail to follow the approved RMP, department may terminate the lease.

### **Forest Conservation Easement**

**Regulations:** This regulation was established pursuant to the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County. Easements recorded in plats, plans and deeds are digitalized into GIS system. Accurate posting of protective signs along easement perimeters is carried out. Assessment of forest cover, plant survival and invasive species is performed. Threats like encroachments and deficiencies are reported.

**Insect Collection Policy:** The Department's role as a steward of Howard County's natural resources brings in the responsibility to protect and manage endangered species/ insects and their environments. The Natural and Historic Resources Division, will provide for the coordination, oversight, guidance, and where applicable, public notice and enforcement of all activities related to allowing amateur, professional and university-lead research projects involving the collection of organisms/insects within County-owned properties. Formal written request for permission should be approved to carry out the collection. The Department will not permit the collection of rare, threatened, or endangered insect species.

### **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

*How can the county better preserve their natural and historic resources?*

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 easements. 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 "Festival"*  
Image from the Film  
Festival at Clarks Elioak  
Farm. State and county  
goals aspire to increase  
partnerships within the  
county.

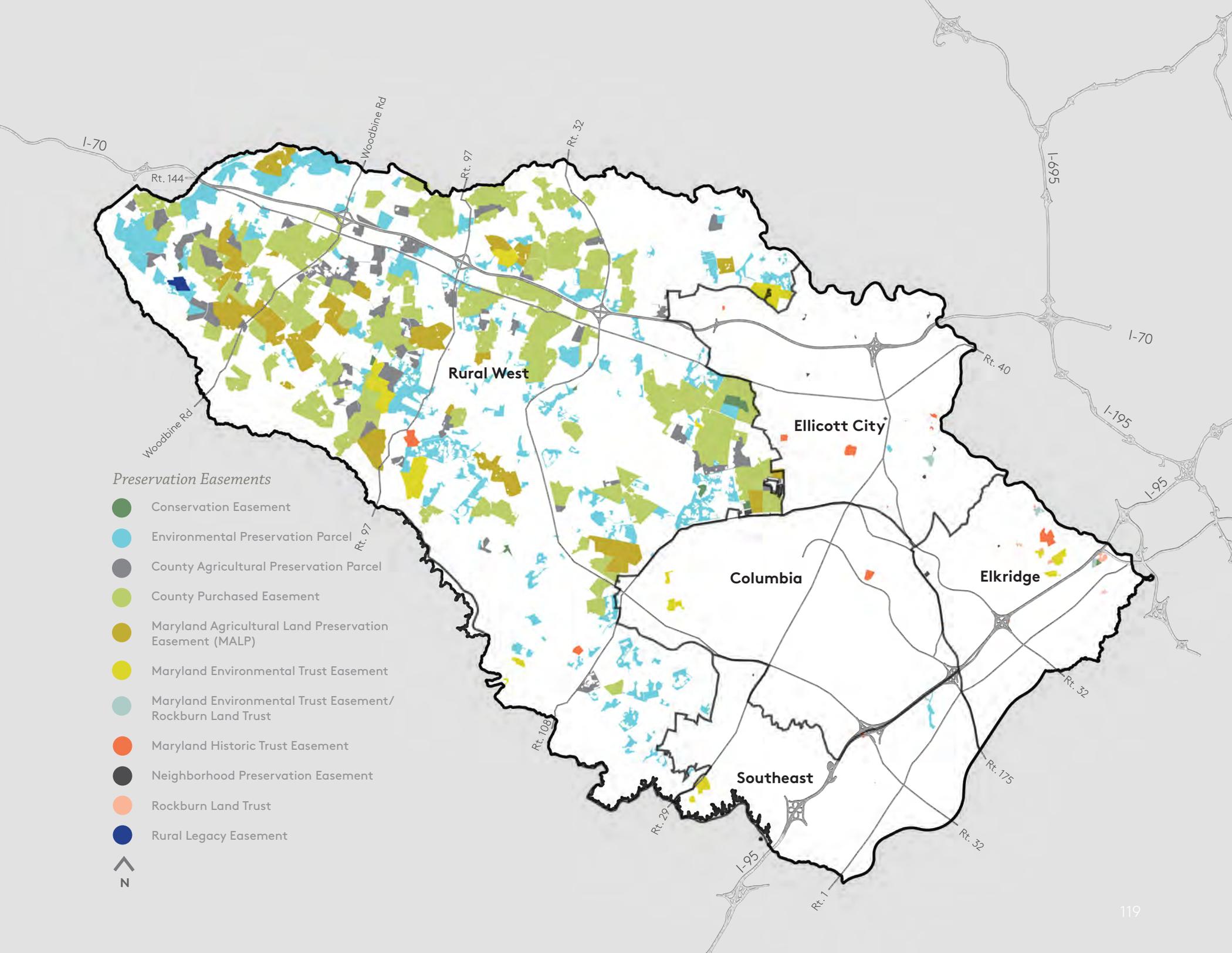
WARNING: TO AVOID SUFFOCATION, KEEP THIS BAG FAR AWAY FROM BABIES AND CHILDREN. DO NOT USE IN CRISPS, BEDS, CHANGERS OR PLAYSETS.

# 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%	-
<b>Subtotal Purchased Agricultural Easements</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>18,651</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>19,377</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>726</b>
DEDICATED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels	74	2,972	74	2,972	0.0%	0
<b>Subtotal Dedicated Agricultural Easements</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>2,972</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>2,972</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>21,623</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>22,349</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>726</b>



*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



## 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 within 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.

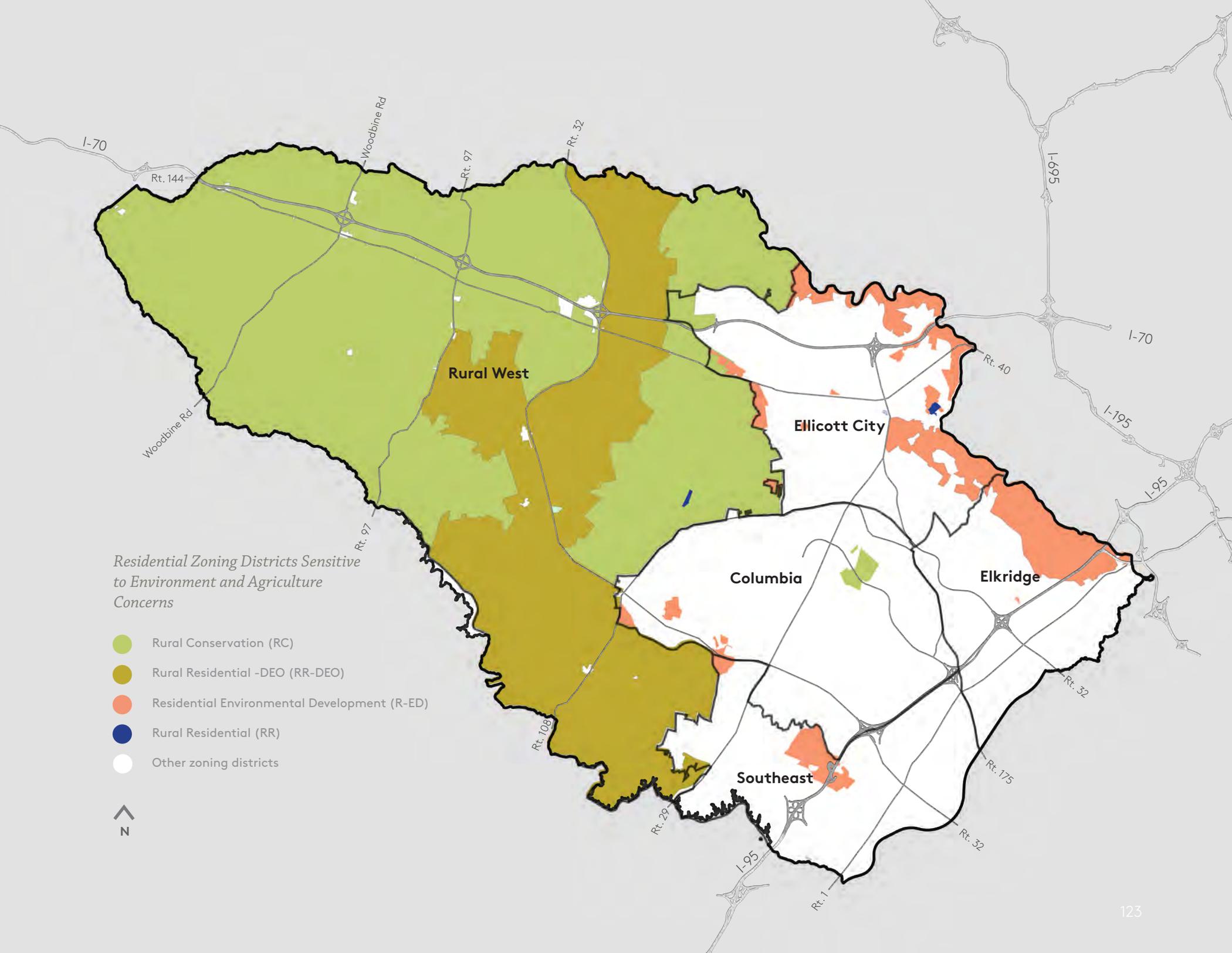
### ***Conservation Easements***

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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>101,677 ac</b>	<b>62.7%</b>



*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



# 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 through 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 accessibility 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 be 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 LPRP, 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
<b>Total</b>			<b>262.4M</b>	<b>205 Ac</b>	<b>4.5M</b>	<b>40M</b>	<b>15.5M</b>	<b>3M</b>	<b>39.6M</b>	<b>14M</b>	<b>5M</b>	<b>121.3M</b>	<b>19.5M</b>

# 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 upland 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
<b>TOTALS</b>					<b>\$2.7M</b>	<b>116.285</b>	



# 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

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<b><i>B - Program Services Matrix</i></b>	<b>172</b>
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# 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



## GREENFEST 2016 SURVEY RESULTS

Summary

April 16, 2016



## SURVEY OVERVIEW

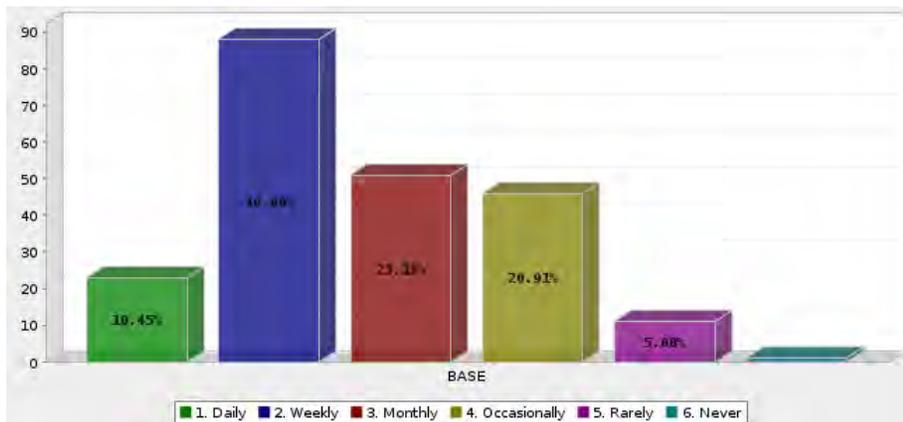
Location: Howard County Community College

Date: April 16, 2016

Time: 10am - 4pm

**Surveys completed: 221**

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

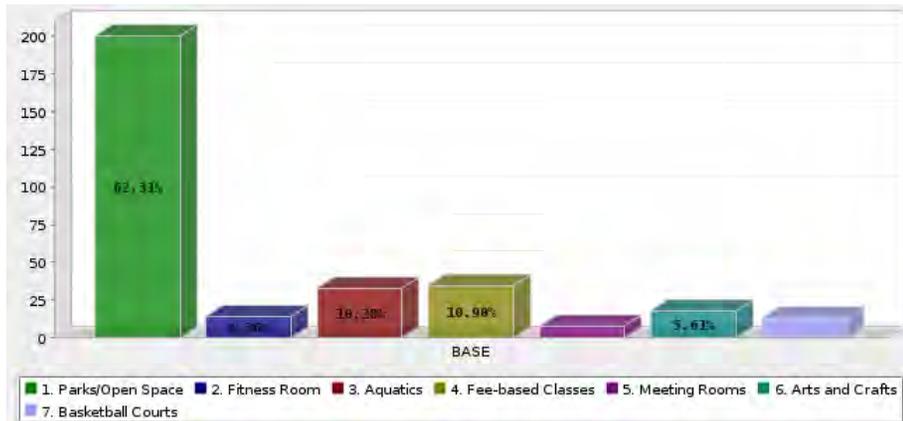


Answer	Count	Percent
1. Daily	23	10.45%
2. Weekly	88	40.00%
3. Monthly	51	23.18%
4. Occasionally	46	20.91%
5. Rarely	11	5.00%
6. Never	1	0.45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>220</b>	

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

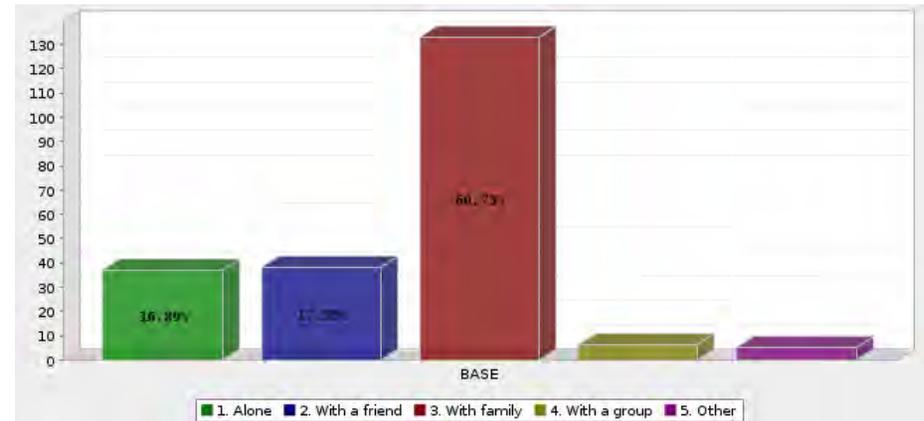
- After Care
- All parks
- Alpha Ridge
- Atholton Park
- Belmont Manor & Historic Park
- Bike Trails
- Blandair Regional Park (9)
- Cedar Lane Park (2)
- Centennial Park (90)
- Children's activities e.g. basketball
- Chooley Mill Park
- Classes
- Columbia Ice Rink
- Daniels Dam (3)
- Dickinson Park (3)
- 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)**



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%
<i>TOTAL</i>	321	

**Q4. DO YOU USUALLY VISIT THE PARKS OR RECREATION CENTERS...**

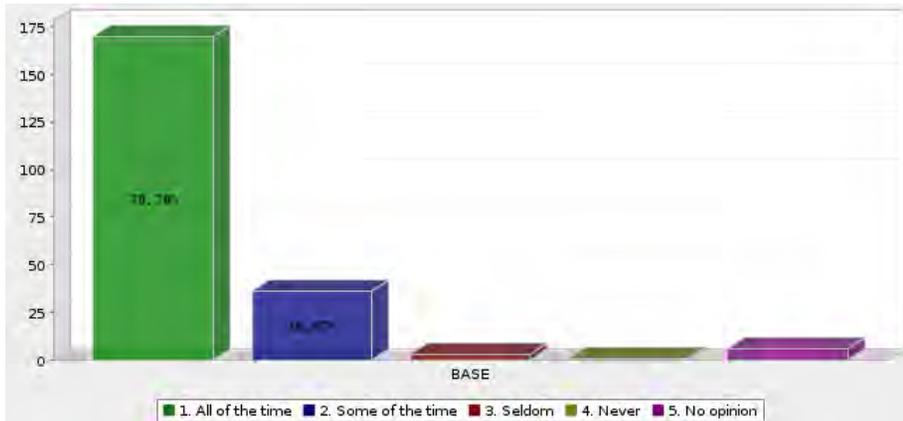


Answer	Count	Percent
1. Alone	37	16.89%
2. With a friend	38	17.35%
3. With family	133	60.73%
4. With a group	6	2.74%
5. Other	5	2.28%
<i>TOTAL</i>	219	

**Other:**

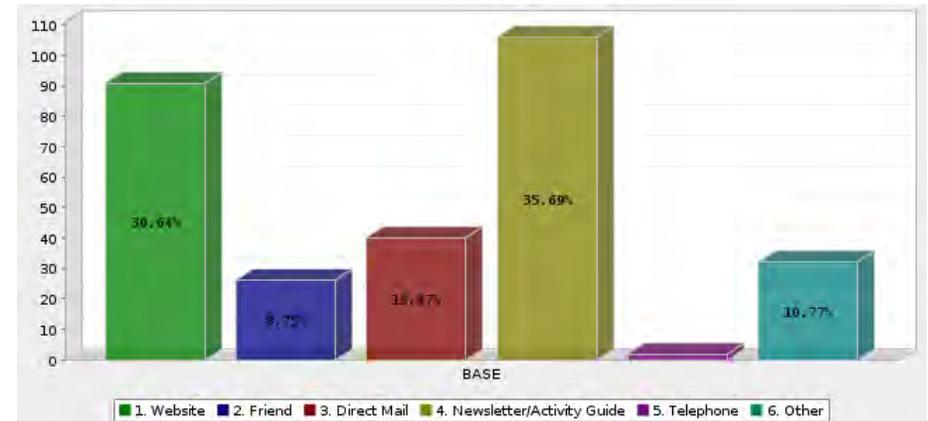
- Family and Alone
- My dog (2)
- Coworkers
- All

**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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>216</b>	

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

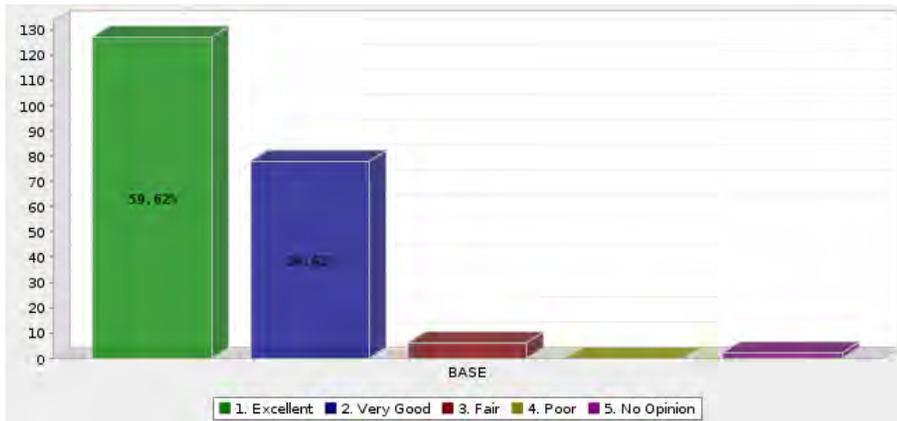


Answer	Count	Percent
1. Website	91	30.64%
2. Friend	26	8.75%
3. Direct Mail	40	13.47%
4. Newsletter/Activity Guide	106	35.69%
5. Telephone	2	0.67%
6. Other	32	10.77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>297</b>	

**Other:**

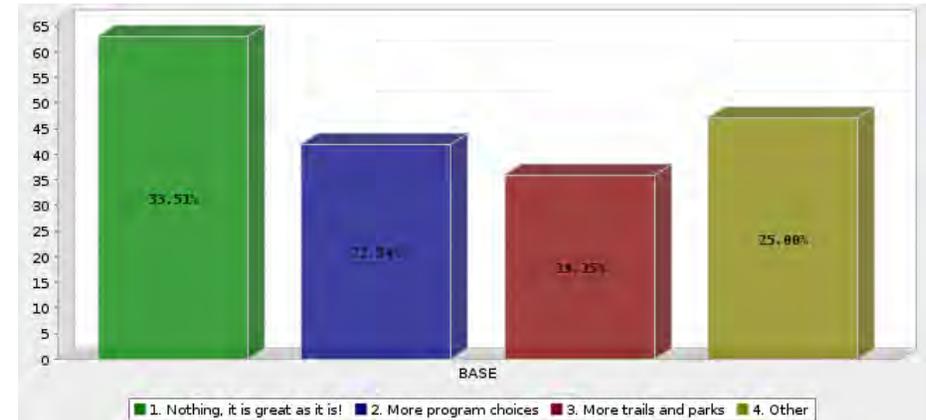
- Email (4)
- Email blasts
- Employee
- Events
- Greenfest
- HCC
- Info sessions
- Just go
- Library
- Lived here for years
- MD Environmental Department
- Nearby
- Newspaper (3)
- No getting info about county because live in rural
- School (2)
- Signage
- Significant other
- St park
- Wander around
- 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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>213</b>	

### 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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>188</b>	

#### 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

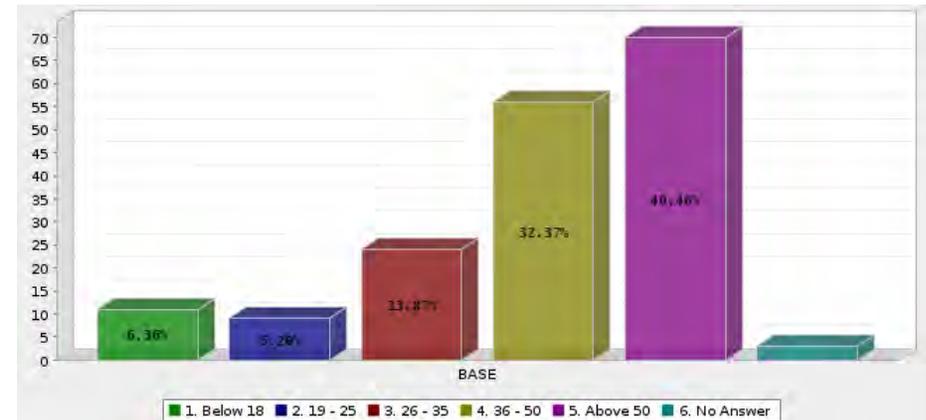
**Q8. WHAT IS ONE WORD YOU WOULD USE TO DESCRIBE HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION AND PARKS**



**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 IS YOUR AGE?**

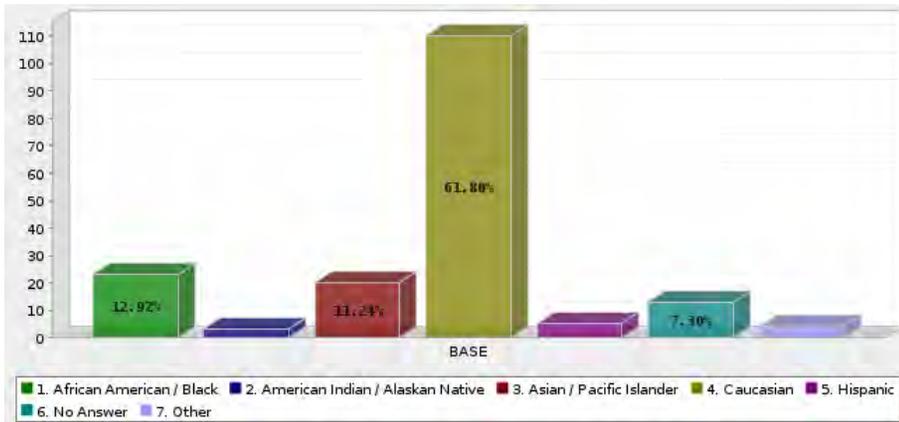


Answer	Count	Percent
1. Below 18	11	6.36%
2. 19 - 25	9	5.20%
3. 26 - 35	24	13.87%
4. 36 - 50	56	32.37%
5. Above 50	70	40.46%
6. No Answer	3	1.73%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173</b>	

### 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?

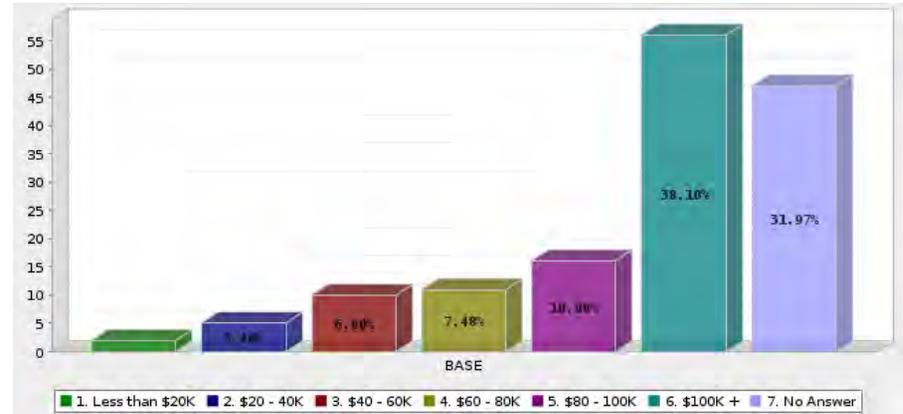


Answer	Count	Percent
1. African American / Black	23	12.92%
2. American Indian / Alaskan Native	3	1.69%
3. Asian / Pacific Islander	20	11.24%
4. Caucasian	110	61.80%
5. Hispanic	5	2.81%
6. No Answer	13	7.30%
7. Other	4	2.25%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>178</b>	

Other:

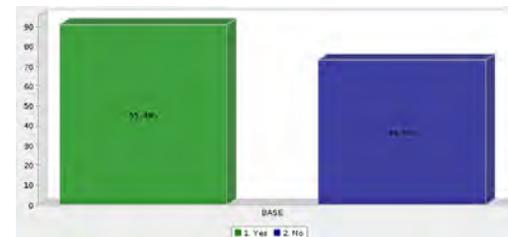
- Anglo-Indian
- Korean
- Indian

### 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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>147</b>	

### Q13. ARE THERE CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD?



Answer	Count	Percent
1. Yes	91	55.49%
2. No	73	44.51%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>164</b>	

## 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.
- Dunlogging - good for walking, wild flowers, nature walks.
- Infill forces water into open land. Better stormwater management. More plant rescue operations.
- Frequent Patapsco Park. Needs more programs for teenagers i.e. obstacles courses
- Frequent 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.



LAND PRESERVATION, PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN (LPPRP)

# 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
- » Color-coded bingo daubers
- » Sticky notes
- » 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

Note: The number in parentheses represents the number of times a dot or comment was repeated.

## 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.



# 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
<b>Site</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Forest/tree cover (x3)</li> <li>» Access to water for fishing</li> <li>» Varied terrain: walking + bike trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Varied terrain: walking + bike trails</li> <li>» Access to water for fishing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Forest/tree cover</li> <li>» Restrooms</li> <li>» Orienteering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Restrooms</li> <li>» Orienteering</li> </ul>
<b>Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pavilions/gathering space</li> <li>» Indoor + outdoor pickle ball courts</li> <li>» Walking trails</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pavilions/gathering space</li> <li>» Indoor + outdoor pickle ball courts</li> <li>» Walking trails</li> <li>» Climbing walls or rock climbing area</li> <li>» More space for seniors activities @ NLCC, especially in the summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Fields/courts</li> <li>» Fields/courts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Restrooms</li> <li>» Trail between Savage Lake Elkhorn no bathrooms</li> </ul>
<b>Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Educational events (workshops/seminars): Intergenerational programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Educational events (workshops/seminars): Intergenerational programs</li> <li>» Kayaking program (rivers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Exercise classes and groups</li> <li>» Exercise classes and groups</li> <li>» Educational events (workshops/seminars)</li> <li>» More community gardens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» More community gardens</li> </ul>

# APPENDICES

	NEIGHBORHOOD & COMMUNITY PARK	RECREATION FACILITIES	REGIONAL PARK	NATURAL RESOURCE AREA
Where would you like to add these kind of parks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Meetup/common interest groups at Savage</li> <li>» Educational events (workshops/seminars) at Savage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Meetup/common interest groups at Savage</li> <li>» Educational events (workshops/seminars) at Savage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pickle ball courts: Ellicott City, Glenwood, Glenelg, Laurel, Clarksville, Maple Lawn, Columbia</li> <li>» Blandair, more tree cover</li> <li>» Outdoor yoga, tai chi or other fitness classes @ Centennial</li> <li>» Yoga + tai chi exercise classes for senior</li> <li>» Meet up for seniors</li> </ul>	

## 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 trail 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 too 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
<b>Site</b>			» Access to water for horses and equine use
<b>Facility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Courts for pickle ball (x7)</li> <li>» Restrooms in trails</li> <li>» Multipurpose sports fields</li> <li>» Access to water: boat access to Patapsco R in Elkridge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Courts for pickle ball (x7)</li> <li>» Aquatics: 50m pools</li> <li>» Fields/Courts: Indoor ice, swim, and track</li> <li>» Restrooms in trails</li> <li>» Aquatics: Splash park along Rt.1</li> <li>» Indoor basketball court</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Courts for pickle ball (x7)</li> <li>» Restrooms around trails</li> <li>» Restrooms around trails</li> <li>» Multipurpose fields</li> <li>» Bocce Court</li> </ul>
<b>Programs</b>		» Programs to include low income families	
<b>Where would you like to add these kind of parks?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City)</li> <li>» Aquatics: Pool at Elkridge/Jessup - Rt.1</li> <li>» Playgrounds along Rt.1</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City)</li> <li>» Multiuse trails</li> <li>» Columbia - 21045</li> <li>» Oakland Mills - 21045</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Pickle ball: 21044 (Columbia), 21045, 21043 (Ellicott City)</li> <li>» Multi use trails - not paved</li> <li>» Multipurpose fields @ East Columbia Library Park</li> </ul>

### 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)



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 amphitheatres
- » 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 Levels (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)
<b>Adult:</b>	<b>6.1.3</b>	<b>6.1.4</b>	<b>6.1.6</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>
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
Competitive 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 Levels (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 Levels (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)
<b>Over 55:</b>	<b>6.2.1</b>	<b>6.2.2</b>	<b>6.2.4</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>6.7</b>
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 Levels (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 Levels (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 Levels (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 consensus 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  $\pm 3.5\%$  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 Elkrige 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 pickleball. 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

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



# Appendix F.

## Statistically Valid Survey Summary

The following is a summary of the Statistically Valid Survey presentation on September 22<sup>nd</sup> to the bureau chiefs.

### **PROJECT OVERVIEW**

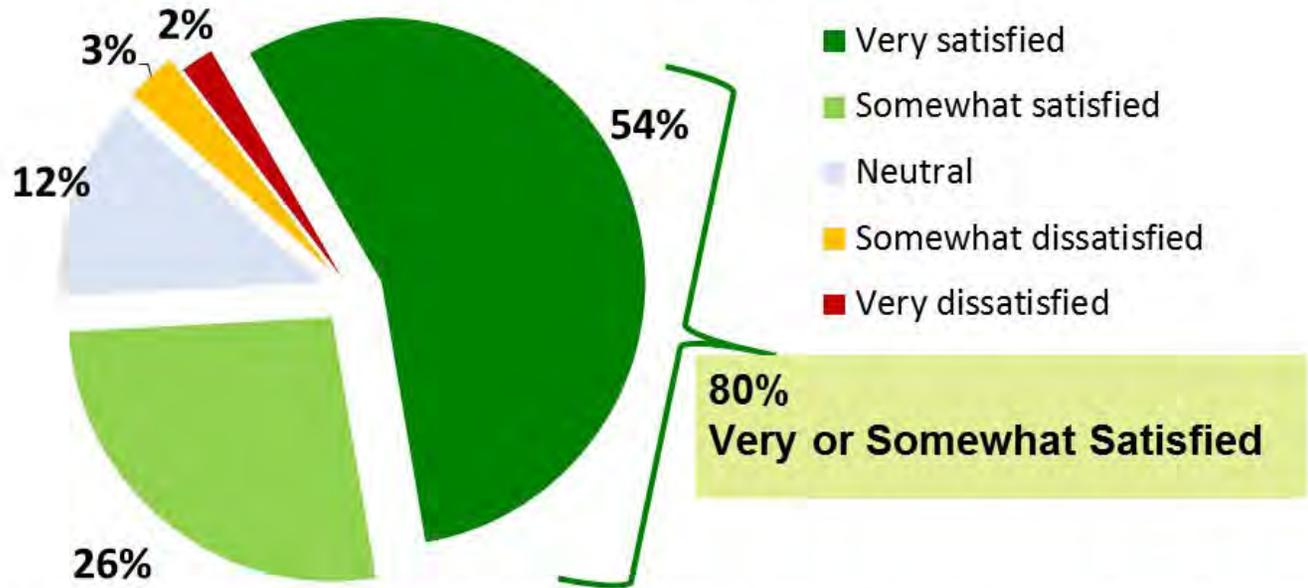
The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks sponsored this countywide survey of Howard County residents to assess the needs and preferences of the public for Recreation and Parks facilities and programs. A representative countywide random sample telephone survey of 800 Howard County adults were interviewed by telephone 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  $\pm 3.5\%$  at the 95% confidence level. This research was conducted by OpinionWorks LLC, an independent research organization based in Annapolis, Maryland.

### **Survey Findings**

Overall, Howard County residents are highly satisfied with the parks, facilities, and programs provided by Recreation and Parks, with 80% of residents either very or somewhat satisfied. Only 5% of residents expressed any level of dissatisfaction.

# Overall Impressions

Countywide Survey Response

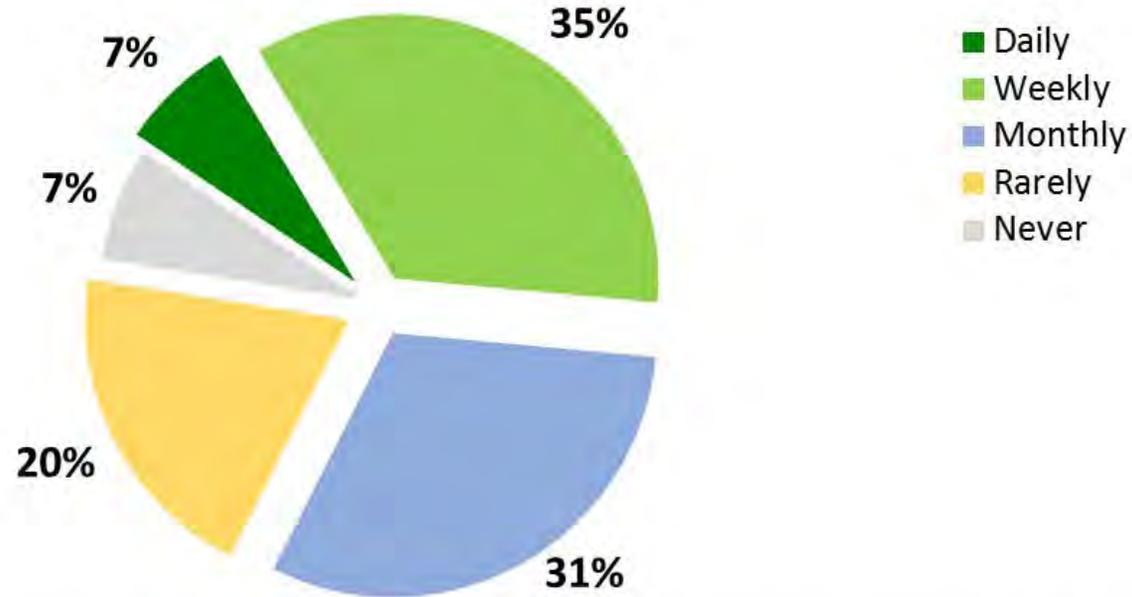


1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the parks, recreation facilities, and programs provided by Howard County Recreation and Parks?

The survey reflects very good usage, with more than four residents out of ten saying they use a recreation facility or park at least weekly, with 35% saying they use a recreation facility or park weekly, and another 7% saying they do so *daily*.

## Usage Frequency

Countywide Survey Response

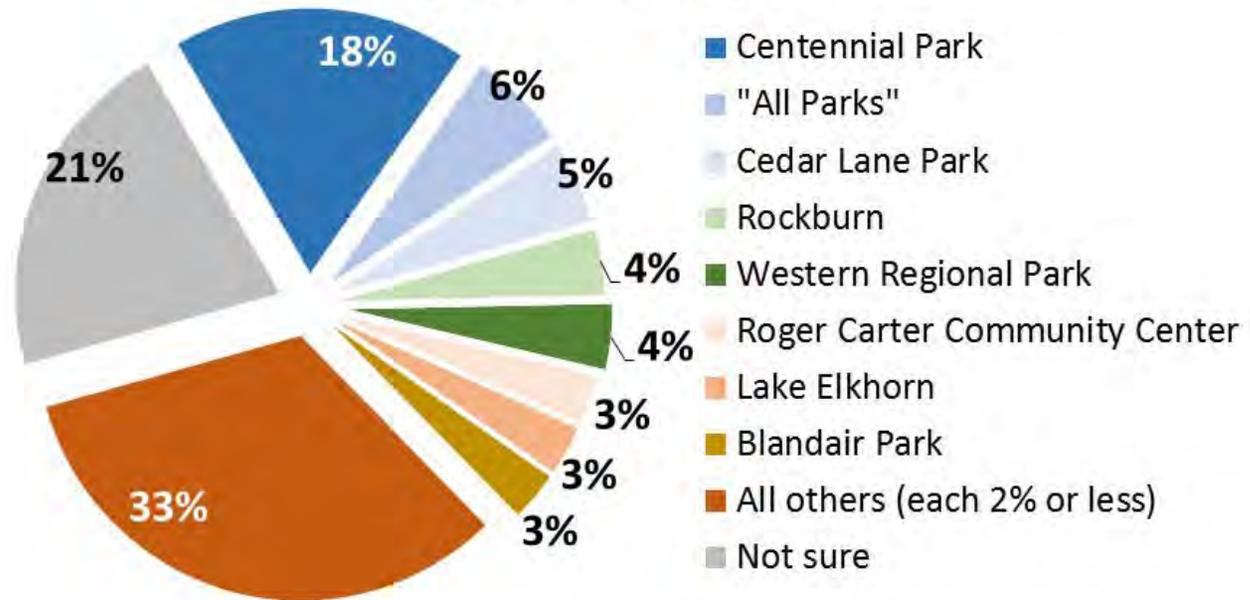


2. How often do you or others in your household use a Howard County recreation facility or park?

The most widely used facility or park is Centennial Park, with 18% of residents saying that is the park they use most often. This is followed by Cedar Lane Park (5%), Rockburn (4%), Western Regional Park (4%), and other named facilities or parks in decreasing order.

## Facility or Park Used Most

Countywide Survey Response



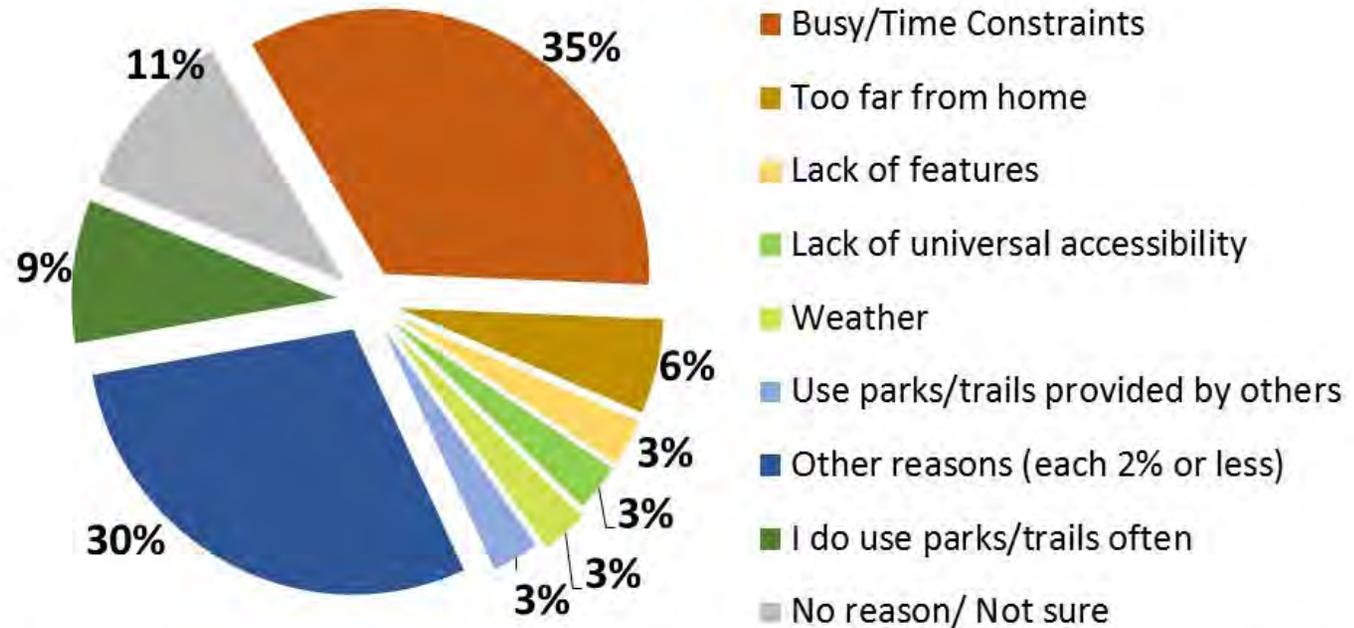
3. What is the name of the recreation facility or park that you use the most?

Respondents were asked why they did not make more use of parks and trails and of recreation programming during the prior 12 months, and in both cases, lack of time was the key limiting factor. Thirty-five percent of residents cited lack of time as a main reason they did not make more use of Howard County parks and trails, and 28% cited lack of time as a main reason they did not make more use of recreation programming.

Other reasons were well back, with distance from home a barrier to park and trail usage for 6%, and no other single reason topping 3%.

## Reasons for Non-Usage – Parks & Trails

*Countywide Survey Response*

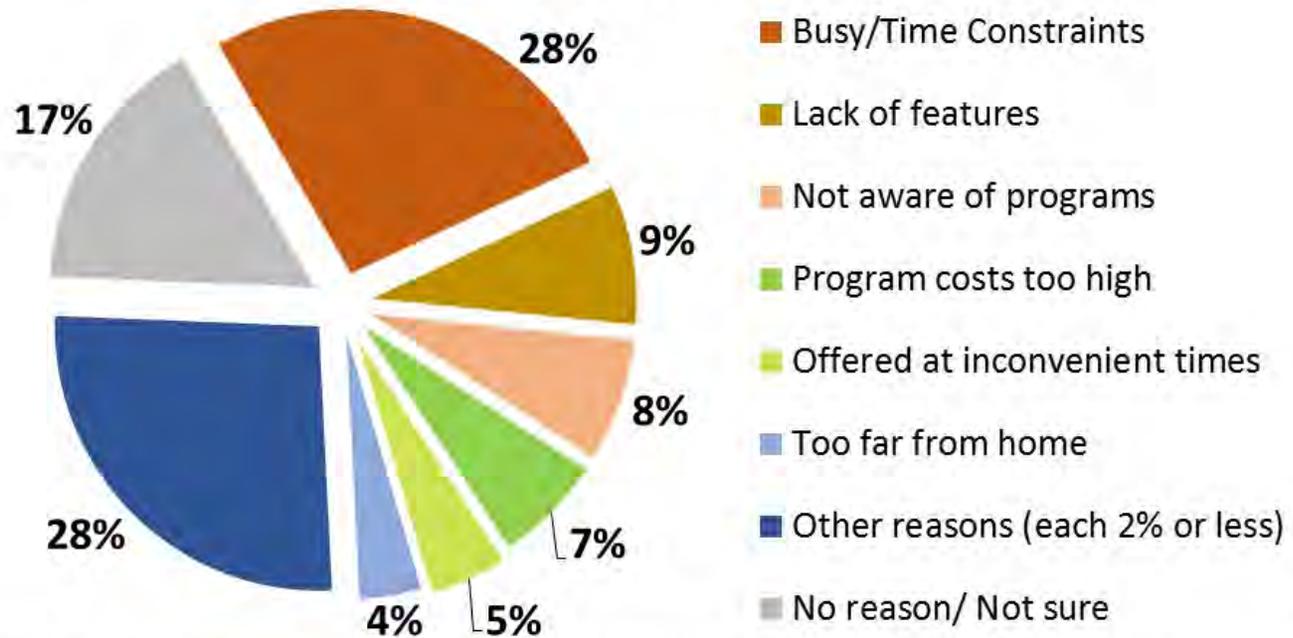


4. What are one or two main reasons you did not make more use of Howard County parks and trails during the past 12 months?

As a barrier to recreational programs, lack of specific programs of interest to them was mentioned by 9%, lack of awareness by 8%, program costs by 7%, inconvenient scheduling by 5%, and distance from home by 4%.

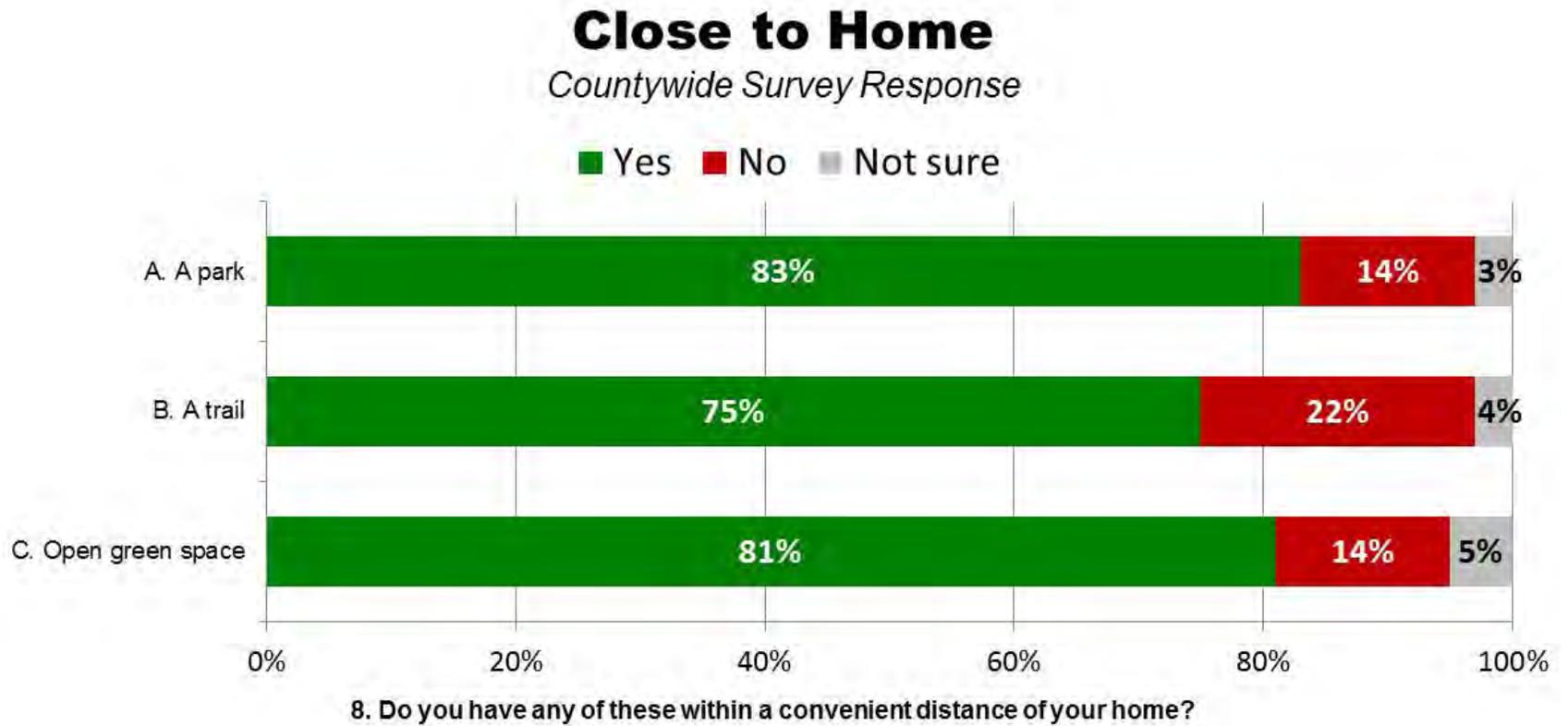
## Reasons for Non-Usage – Recreation Programming

Countywide Survey Response



5. What are one or two main reasons you did not make more use of Howard County recreation programming during the past 12 months, in other words things like classes, sports and fitness activities, camps for kids, senior activities, or special events?

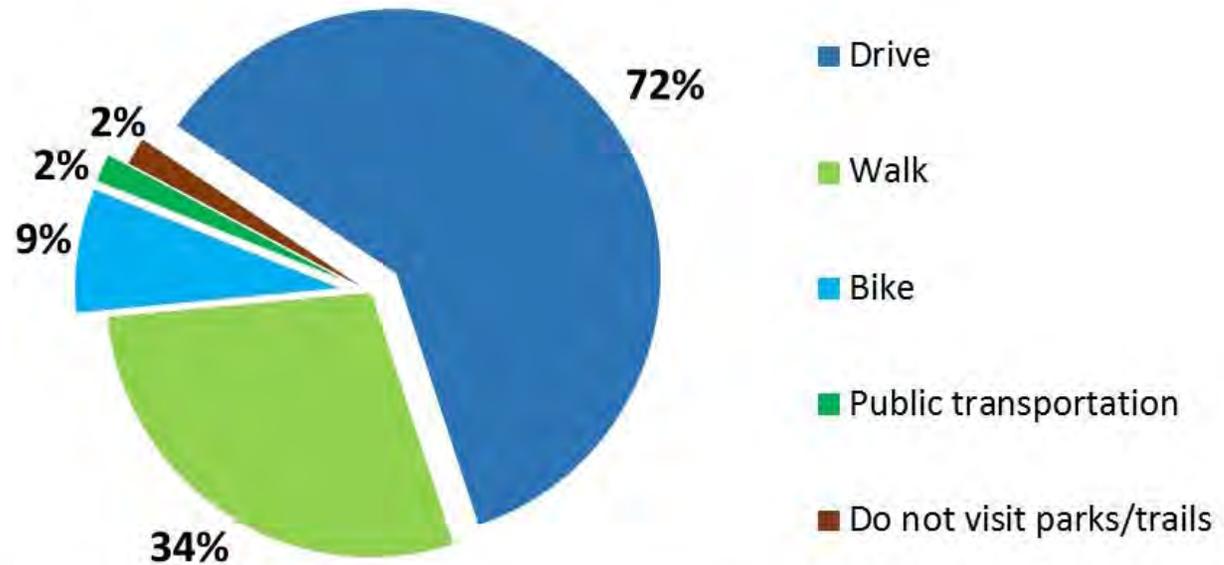
When asked whether they had a park, a trail, or open green space a convenient distance from their home, between 75% and 83% of residents said they did. Only 14% of residents said they did not have a park within a convenient distance of their home, 22% said they did not have a trail that was convenient to their home, and 14% said that open green space was not within a convenient distance.



When accessing the parks, trails or green spaces in Howard County, most residents (72%) usually drive to the location. A significant number (34%), though, usually walk to the location, while 9% bike and 2% use public transportation.

## Method of Transportation

*Countywide Survey Response*

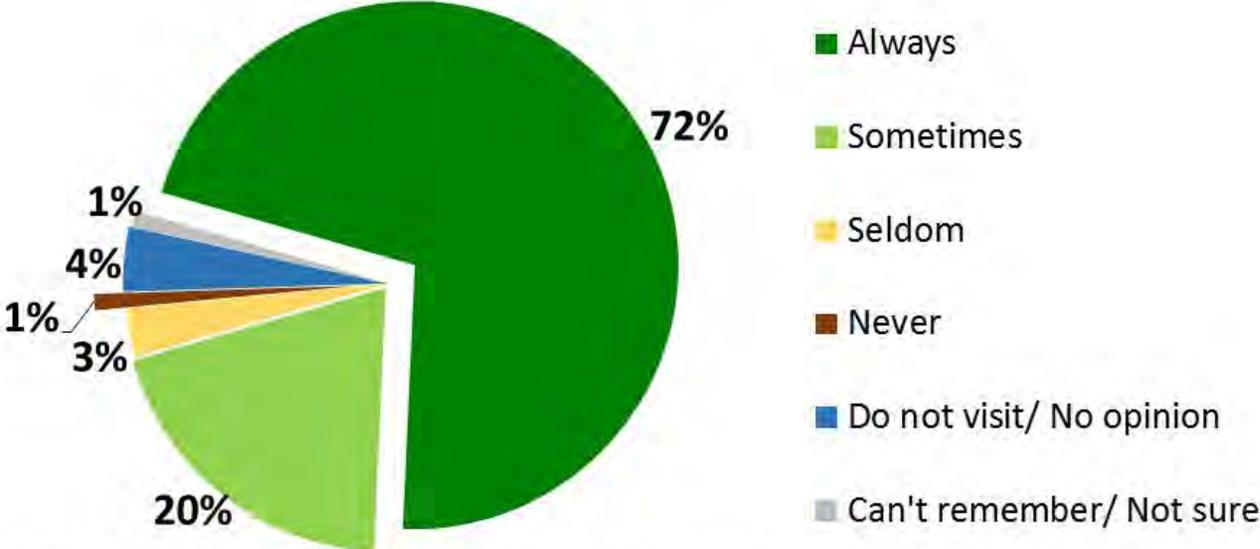


9. Do you usually walk, drive, bike, or take public transportation when you visit the parks, trails, or open green spaces in Howard County?

Satisfaction is evident throughout the survey. As an example, 72% of County residents find the recreation facilities, parks and trails to be always clean and well-maintained.

## Cleanliness and Maintenance

Countywide Survey Response

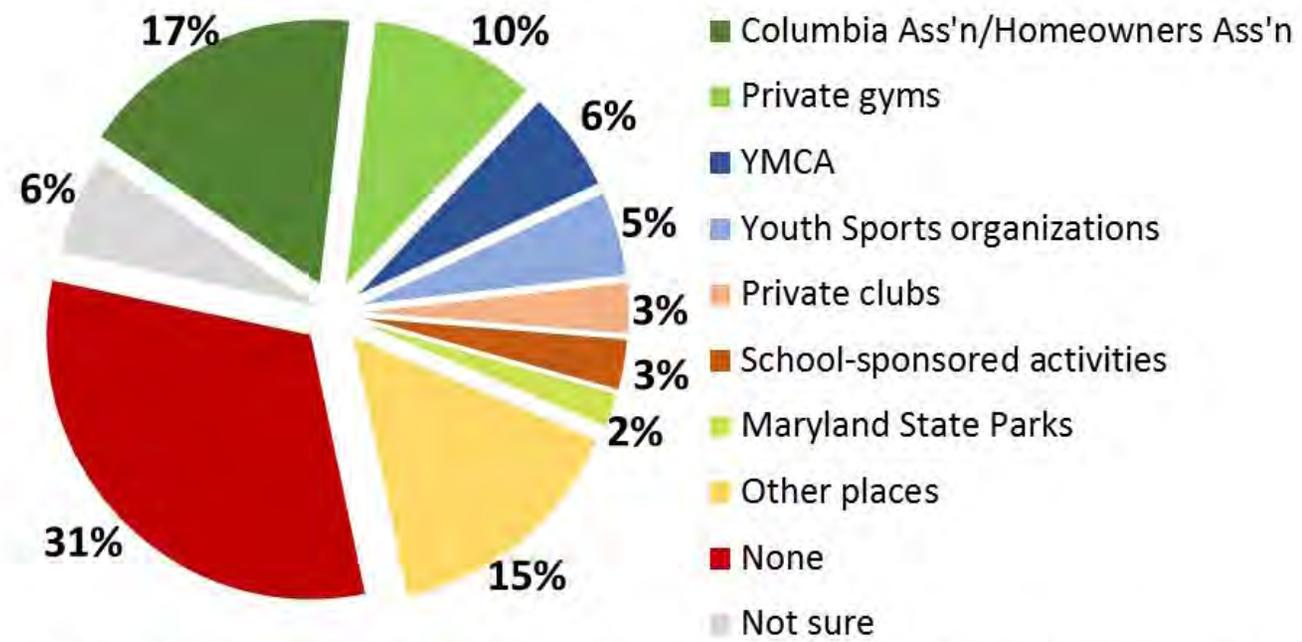


7. Are the County recreation facilities, parks and trails you visit always, sometimes, seldom, or never clean and well-maintained?

The top non-County organizations that residents had used for recreation activities were the Columbia Association or homeowners' associations (17%), private gyms (10%), YMCA (6%), and youth sports organizations (5%).

## Other Recreation Organizations Used

Countywide Survey Response

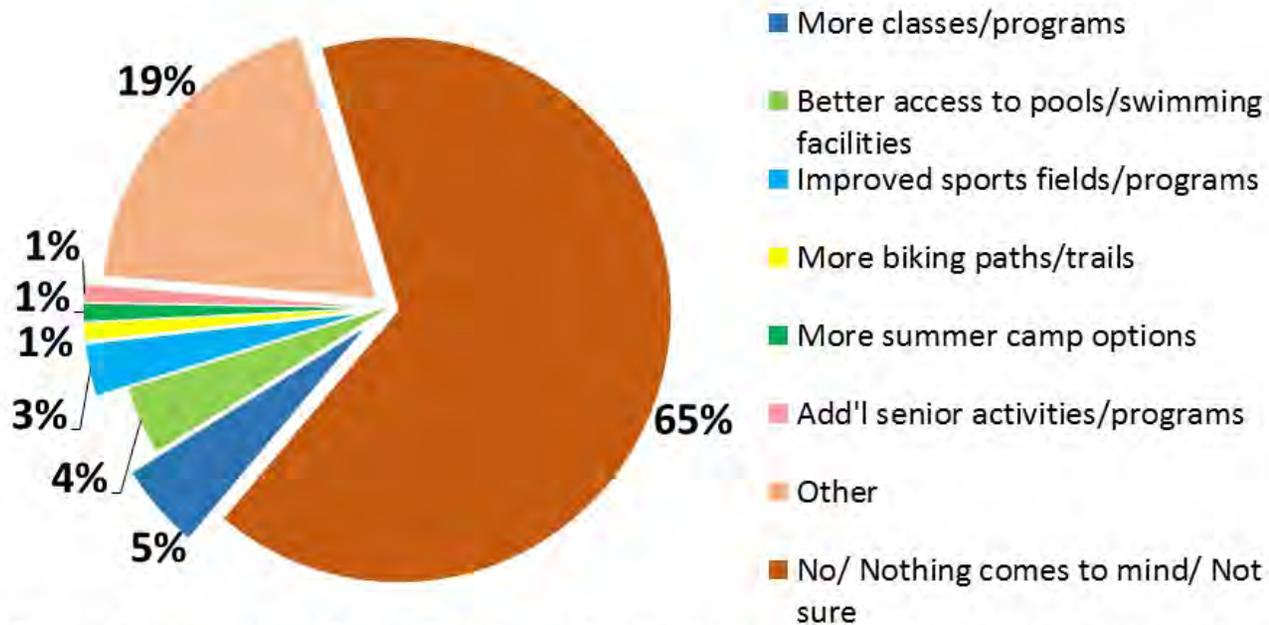


6. Besides Howard County, what other organizations has your household used for indoor and outdoor recreation activities during the past 12 months, in other words, things like classes, sports, and other activities?

When asked what new programs and facilities the County should concentrate on providing, only one-third of residents had specific suggestions. Five percent suggested more classes and programs, 4% wanted better access to aquatic facilities, 3% mentioned improved sports fields or sports programs, with other responses registering at very low levels. Nearly two-thirds (65%) had no specific suggestions for change.

## Desired Offerings

*Countywide Survey Response*



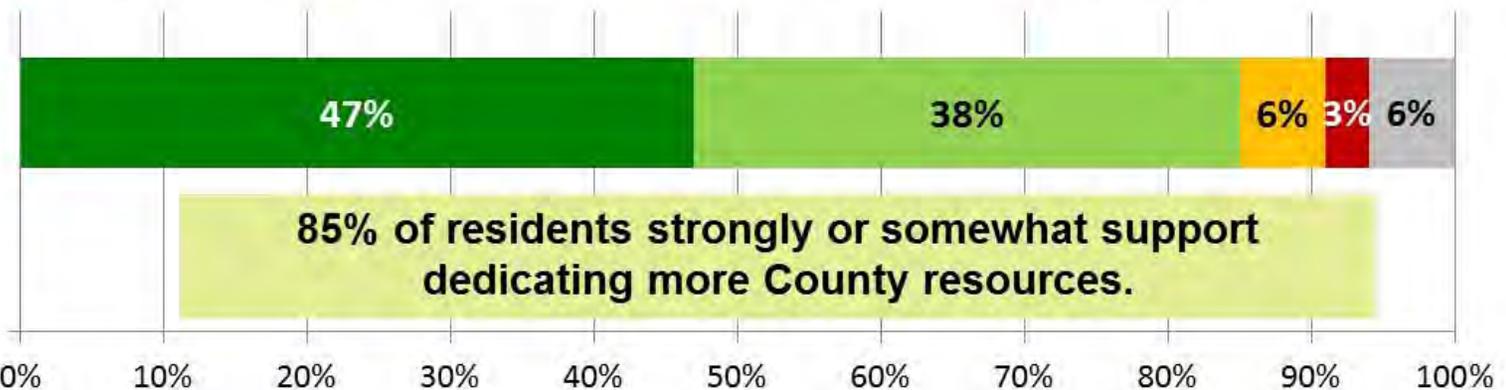
13. Of these Recreation and Parks offerings, are there one or two that the County should concentrate on providing more of, or new programs or facilities that Recreation and Parks should be offering?

Despite their lack of specificity about new programs and facilities, there is resounding support among residents for dedicating more County resources to improving the park, recreation, and open space system in Howard County. Eighty-five percent of residents support dedicating more resources to this priority, with nearly half of residents (47%) *strongly* supporting this.

## Dedicating County Resources

*Countywide Survey Response*

■ Strongly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Somewhat oppose ■ Strongly oppose ■ Not sure

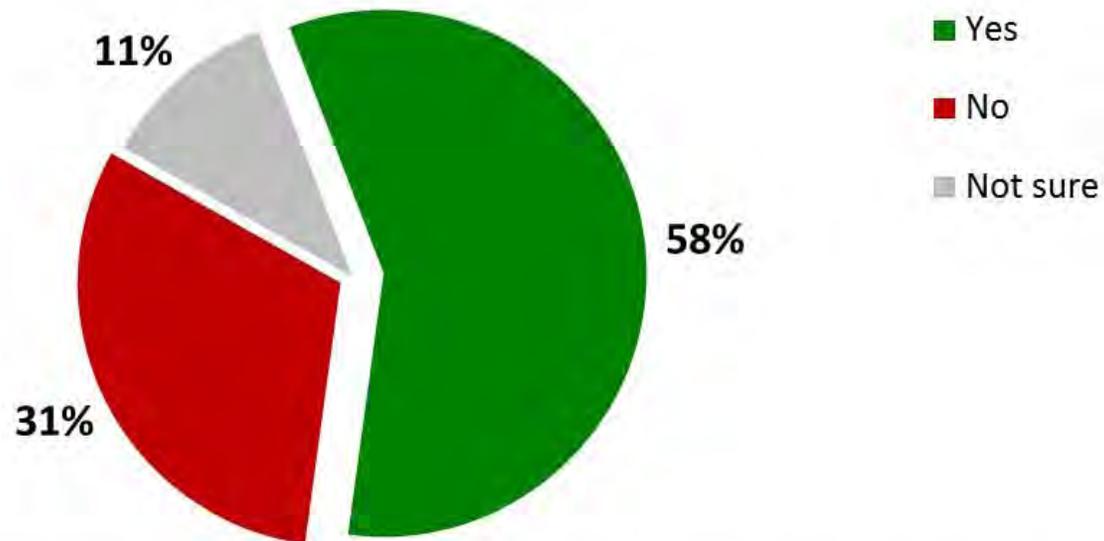


15. Overall, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose dedicating more County resources to improving the park, recreation, and open space system in Howard County?

A majority of residents (58%) would like to see Howard County acquire more open space for active use like sports fields or recreation centers. Thirty-one percent do not believe the County should do that, while 11% are not sure.

## More Space for Active Use

*Countywide Survey Response*

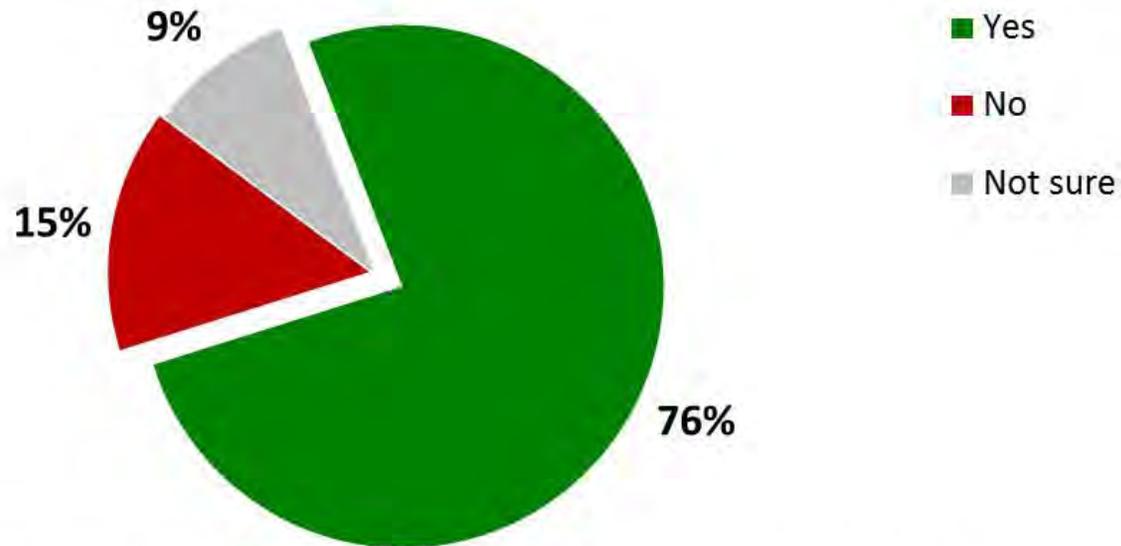


16. Should Howard County acquire more open space for active use like sports fields or rec centers?

There is more widespread support for acquiring open space to leave it undeveloped for conservation, with 76% of residents supporting that priority, and only 15% saying the County should not do that. Nine percent of survey participants were not sure.

## More Space for Conservation Use

*Countywide Survey Response*

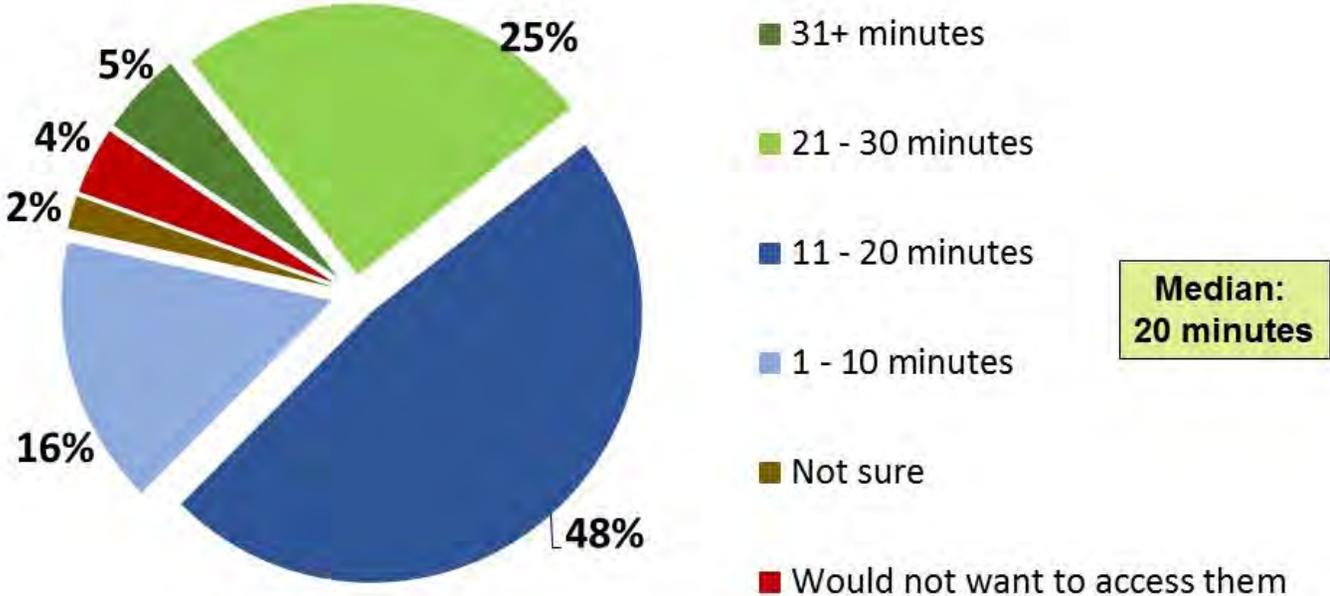


17. Should Howard County acquire more open space to leave it undeveloped for conservation?

Sixteen percent of residents said they would not be willing to travel more than 10 minutes to reach Recreation and Parks facilities or programs. Another 48% would be willing to travel 11 to 20 minutes, and 25% would travel between 21 and 30 minutes for a program or facility. Only 5% of residents said they would travel farther than 30 minutes.

## Willingness to Travel

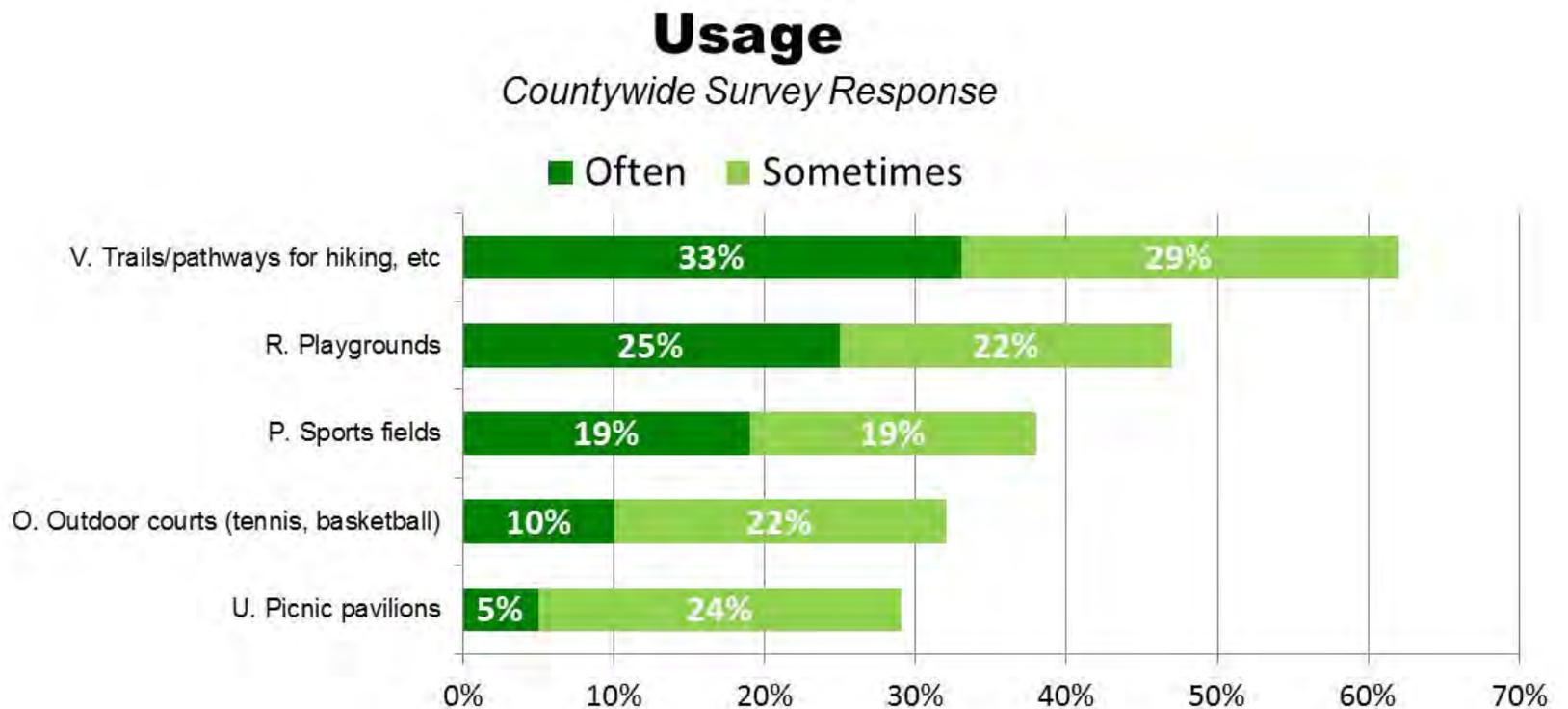
*Countywide Survey Response*



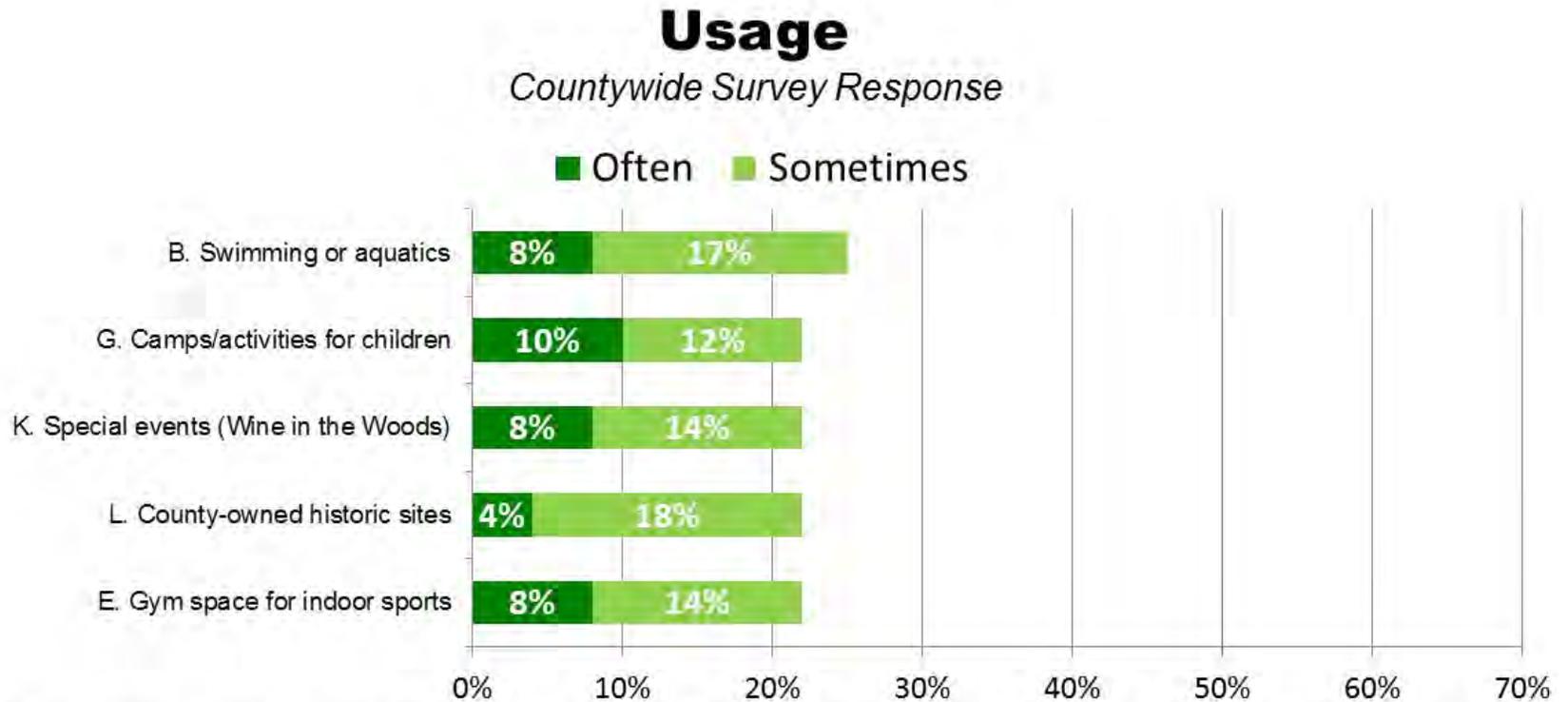
**12. Considering the recreation and parks facilities and programs we have been discussing, what is the farthest that you would be willing to travel, in minutes, to access these offerings?**

Residents were asked to rate the frequency of their usage of specific Recreation and Parks offerings, using the scale often, sometimes, seldom, or never. The charts below rank that usage, based on the number who said they often or sometimes use each program or facility.

Topping the list as the most used are trails and pathways, with 33% using them often and 29% sometimes. Next most used are playgrounds (25% often, 22% sometimes), sports fields (19% often, 19% sometimes), outdoor courts (10% often, 22% sometimes), and picnic pavilions (5% often, 24% sometimes).

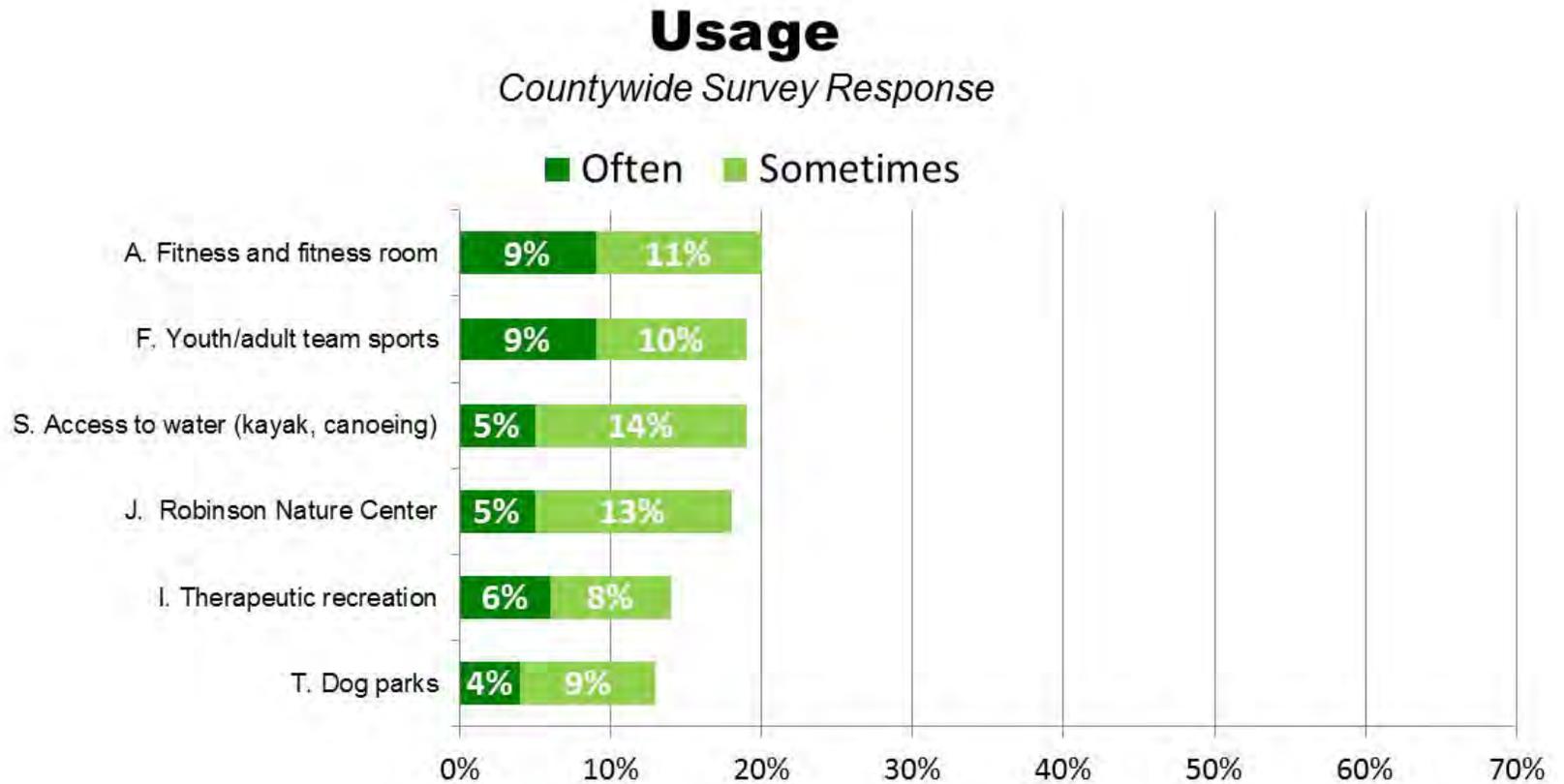


Following in order are swimming or aquatics, camps and other activities for kids, special events like Wine in the Woods, County-owned historic sites, and gym space for indoor sports.

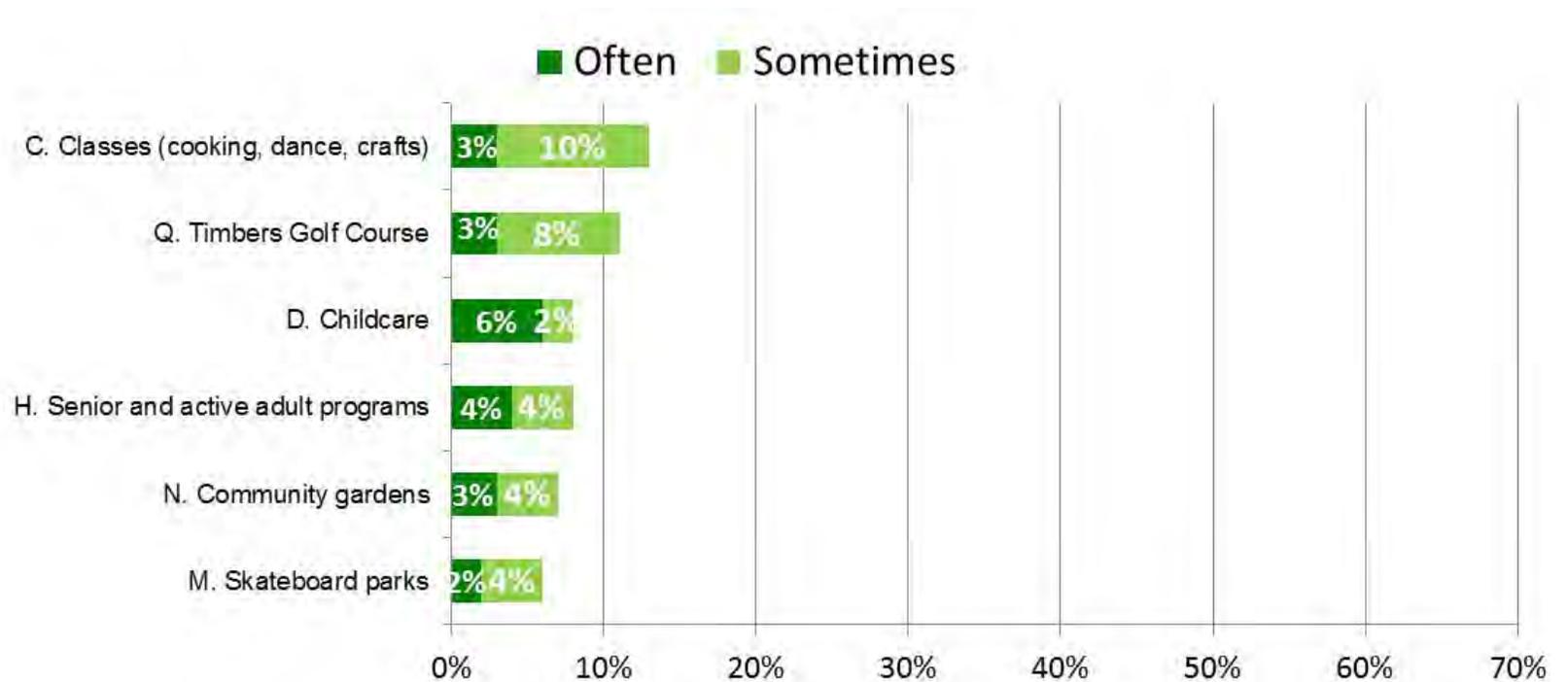


**10. In the past year, have you used these County Recreation and Parks offerings often, sometimes, seldom, or never? Remember, we are talking only about offerings from Howard County Recreation and Parks, not other places you may have experienced these services.**

Somewhat lower levels of usage are reached by fitness programs and fitness rooms, team sports, water access, Robinson Nature Center, therapeutic recreation, and dog parks.



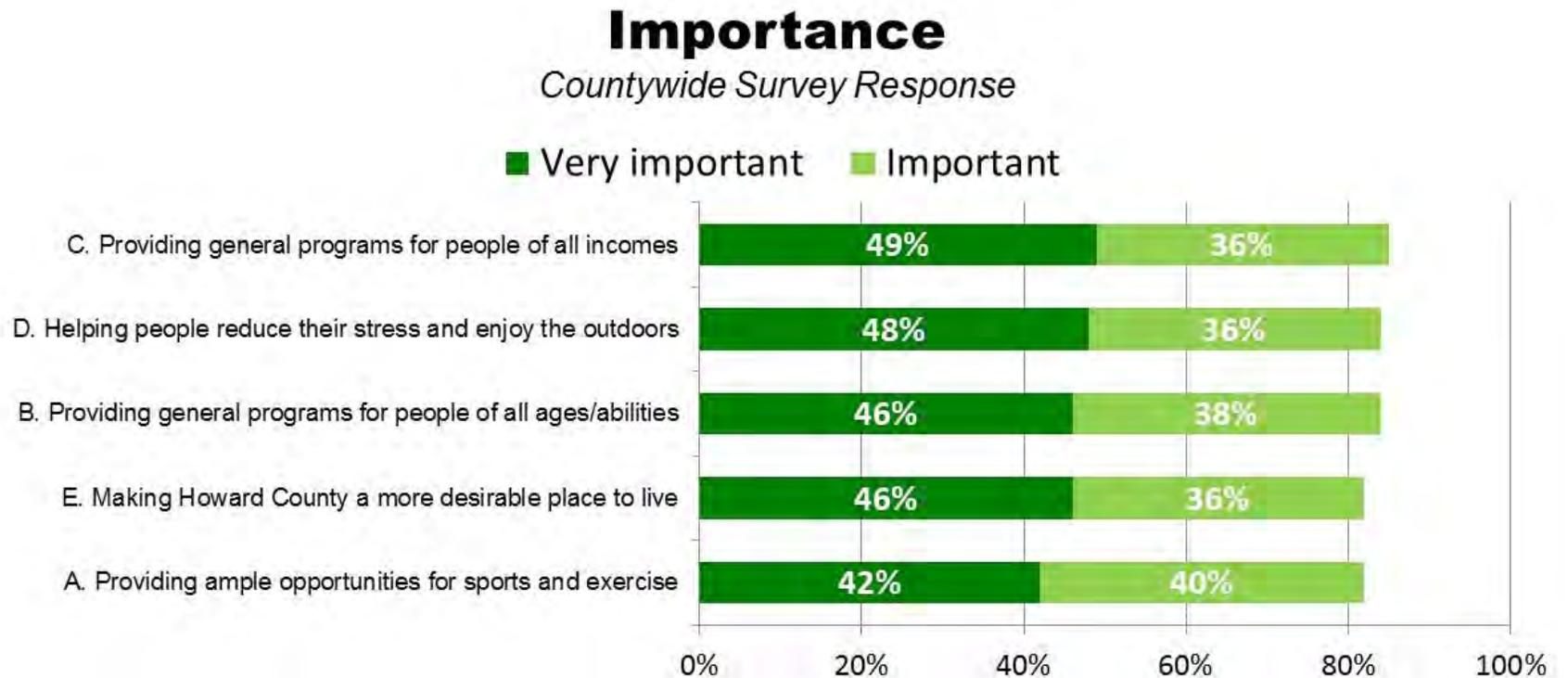
Reaching a smaller share of the public are classes such as cooking, dance, or crafts; Timbers Golf Course; childcare; senior and active adult programs; community gardens; and skateboard parks.



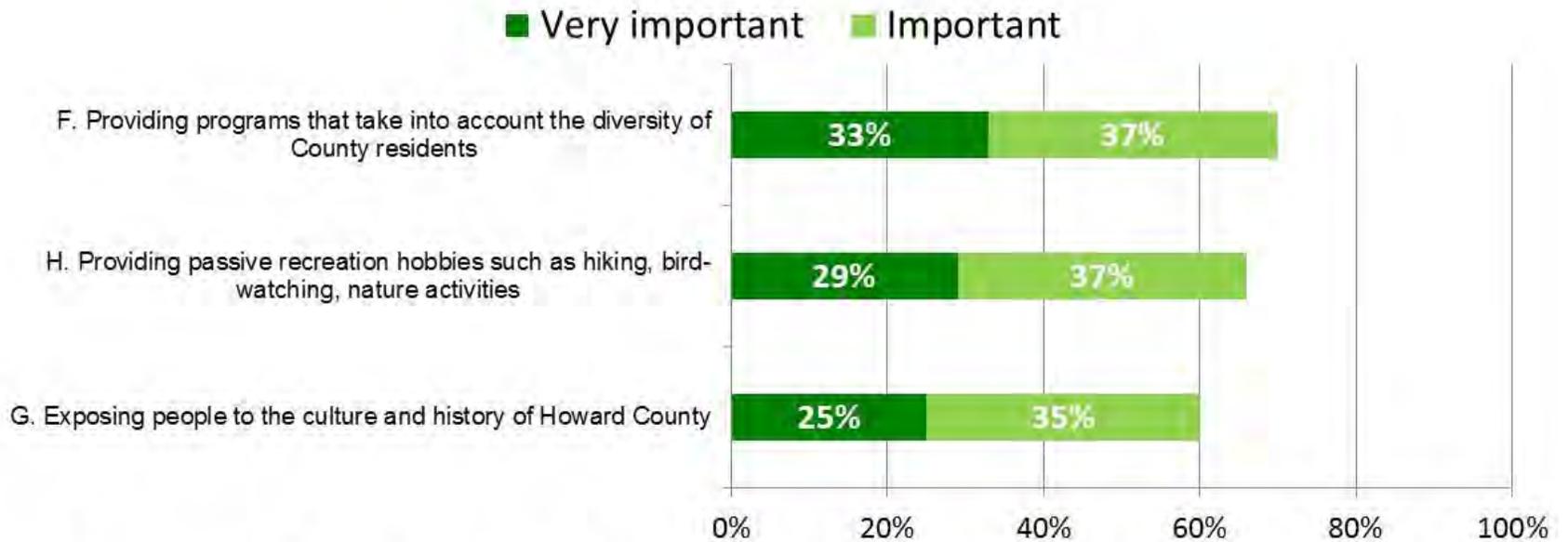
**10. In the past year, have you used these County Recreation and Parks offerings often, sometimes, seldom, or never? Remember, we are talking only about offerings from Howard County Recreation and Parks, not other places you may have experienced these services.**

When asked about the importance to them personally of eight attributes or benefits of a good parks and recreation system, residents clustered five of the eight attributes in a top tier of importance. At the top, slightly higher than the others, is providing general programs for people of all income levels, with nearly half (49%) saying that is very important to them personally, and another 36% saying it is important.

Following very closely behind is helping people reduce stress and enjoy the outdoors (48% rated this as very important), providing general programs for people of all ages and abilities (46% very important), making Howard County a more desirable place to live (46% very important), and providing ample opportunities for sports and exercise (42% very important).



Scoring slightly lower in importance are these three priorities: providing programs that take into account the diversity of County residents; providing passive recreation opportunities such as hiking, bird watching, and nature activities; and exposing people to the culture and history of Howard County.

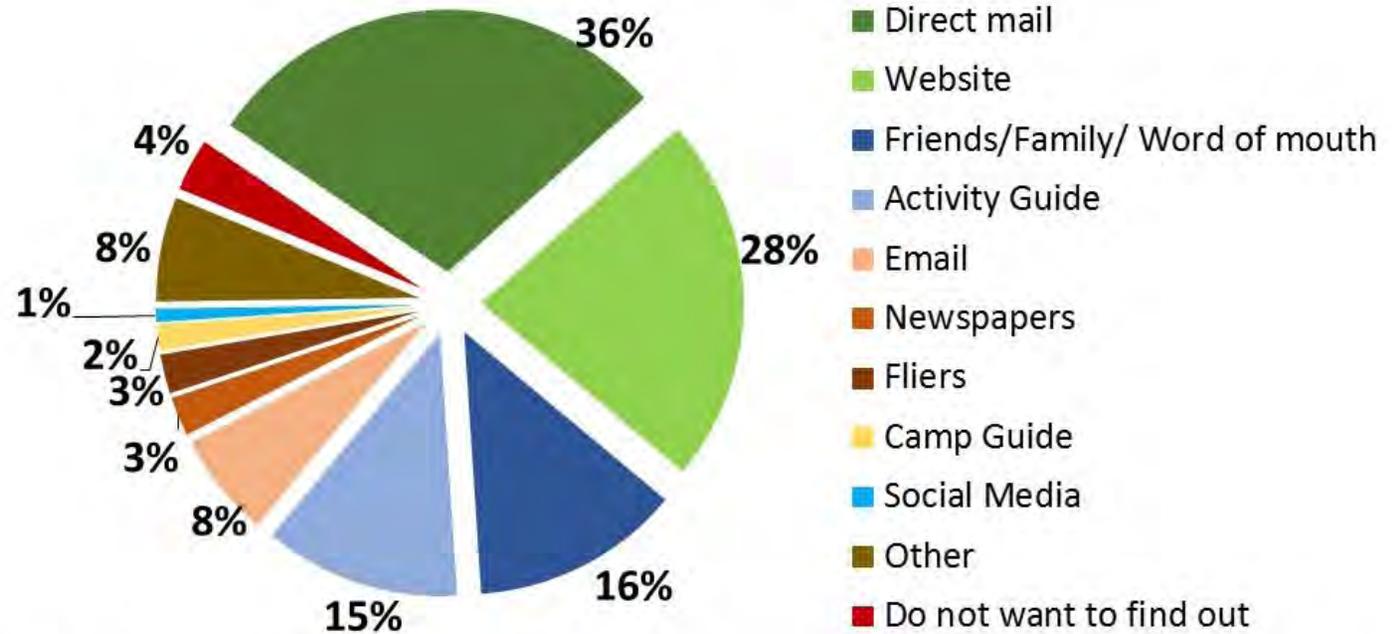


**14. People appreciate different things about having a good system of parks and recreation facilities. How important are each of these things to you personally, using the scale not important, only somewhat important, important, or very important to you personally?**

When residents were asked how they usually found out about Recreation and Parks offerings, the top sources of information were direct mail (36%) and the website (28%), followed by friends/family/word of mouth (16%), the activity guide (15%), and email (8%). Other sources of information were mentioned by 3% of residents or fewer.

## Sources of Information

*Countywide Survey Response*



11. How do you usually find out about programs and facilities offered by Howard County Recreation and Parks?

# Appendix G.

## Trends and Innovation

### RECREATION TRENDS

The data in the following section reflects national, state, and local trends derived from the recognized industry resources such as the Physical Activity Council, and Environmental Services Research Institute (ESRI). The Physical Activity Council (PAC) is a partnership of six major trade associations in US sports, fitness, and leisure activities. Each year, the PAC produces a report summarizing data about U.S. leisure activity. The report provides participation, inactivity levels, spending, aspirational and projection information from 2006 through 2015. This report identifies level of activity in various age groups/generations and provides information about key sports, fitness and recreation participation trends. Detailed reports incorporated into this summary include the Outdoor Industry Association and The Sports and Fitness Industry Association Topline Reports. Other trends research and reports incorporated into this summary include the annual trend forecast from the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and Learning Resources Network (LERN).

The Howard County Recreation and Parks Department has an ongoing commitment to incorporating trends in the delivery of services. In 2011, the Department created a Trends Analysis Plan. The Plan outlines an eight step process in continuously using trend research as part of program and service development. This includes discussion of trends at staff meetings, the identification of organizations that provide trend information such as the National Recreation and Park Association and the Maryland Recreation and Parks Association Newsletter, and needs assessment information.

Standard 10.5.1 of CAPRA includes a process relating to Recreation and Leisure Trends Analysis. This standard is defined as periodically assessing societal and local recreation and leisure trends and determining how those trends impact existing and projected user populations. The Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan provides evidence of meeting this standard.

### PARTICIPATION & ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Overall, leisure activity participation in the United States has fluctuated over the last six years, and while there was a decrease in activity for 2015, racquet, team, and water sports all had participation increases. This may indicate that those particular categories added activities to their repertoire, such as pickle ball. Outdoor and fitness sports participation remained relatively flat from 2012 to 2014, while individual sports have experienced steady decline. Indoor sports participation dropped almost 1% between 2013 and 2014.

The PAC Overview Report also broke down participation by generation. Regardless of age, over half of each generation participates in fitness sports. Team sports are primarily a Gen Z (born 2000+) activity while water and racquet sports are dominated by Millennials (born 1980-1999). Gen Z also dominates individual and outdoor sports participation. Participation in team, individual, and outdoor sports tends to decrease with age, while fitness increases slightly with age.

Fitness-related activities were eight of the 10 Core Participation Activities identified in the PAC Overview Report. Core participants are those who participate in a sport or activity on a regular basis. According to the Overview Report, the Top Ten Core Participation Activities, by number of participants, are:

*Activity (definition of core), total number of core participants*

- » Walking for Fitness (50+ times per year), 76.8M
- » Running/Jogging (50+ times per year), 28M
- » Treadmill (50+ times per year), 27.7M
- » Stretching (50+ times per year), 26M
- » Free Weights (hand weights) under 15 lbs. (50+ times per year), 24.8M
- » Weight Resistance Machines (50+ times per year), 21.2M
- » Bicycling (Road/Paved) (26+ times per year), 20.4M
- » Free Weights (dumbbells) over 15 lbs. (50+ times per year), 24.8M
- » Fishing (freshwater/other) (8+ times per year), 17.9M
- » Stationary Cycling (recumbent/upright) (50+ times per year), 17.4M

The Overview Report reveals Core Participation Activities and insight into the fastest growing sports and activities through the US. The top five percentage growth activities include adventure racing, mixed martial arts (MMA) for competition, off-road triathlons, lacrosse, and traditional triathlons. While this information is helpful, the actual growth activities, based on quantity of participants, provide more insight into what Americans are becoming more interested in for their health, wellness, and fitness needs. The Top Ten Actual Growth Activities are:

- » High Impact Aerobics
- » Swimming for Fitness
- » Yoga
- » Adventure Racing
- » Mountain Biking
- » Traditional Triathlons
- » Lacrosse
- » Archery
- » Off-Road Triathlons
- » BMX Bicycling

These trends reveal that active people are looking for non-conventional health and fitness experiences. More Americans are looking for activities that provide a fun physical, emotional, and mental experience. This reveals that while many Americans enjoy watching team sports like football,

basketball, the Olympics, and national championship events, they aren't necessarily interested in participating in those types of events for their fitness needs. While watching competitive sports is popular and continues to increase in popularity, Americans don't necessarily look to traditional competitive sports for their personal fitness. Finally, team sports are still popular among Gen Z, but aren't experiencing growth like HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training), Pilates, and Cardio Dance. Many of these activities are categorized as "fun" fitness activities. Exercises like "P90x," "Insanity," or "Crossfit" have proven that one does not need a lot of equipment to be fit. These types of classes have been and will continue to grow in popularity. Though, of all the programs mentioned above, Pilates shows the least increase in program participation.

Fitness class activities and the use of various cardio and fitness equipment experienced an increase in participation over the last two years. Swimming for fitness is increasing in popularity. Strength training activities, like such as free weights and weight/resistance machines, have seen a slight decline in participation.

For fitness related activities, the top 2015 trends identified by the American College of Sports Medicine include:

1. Body Weight Training
2. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)
3. Strength Training
4. Personal Training
5. Exercise and Weight Loss
6. Yoga, including Power Yoga, Yogalates, Bikram, Ashtanga, Vinyasa, Kripalu, Anurara, Kundalini, Sivananda and others
7. Fitness Programs for Older Adults
8. Functional Fitness.
9. Group Personal Training

Racquet sports that have maintained popularity over the last two years include squash and cardio tennis. A growing trend in the recreation industry is pickleball. Reports on pickleball participation were new in the 2015 SFIA Topline Report, so growth trends are not currently available. Pickleball courts can be constructed specifically for pickleball or the striping can be overlaid onto existing tennis or badminton courts for multi-use opportunities.

Football has seen as consistent decline in participation since 2009, and this is expected to continue throughout the coming years. Ultimate Frisbee, an activity popular on college campuses, hit its peak participation

numbers in 2012, but has experienced a consistent decline each year since.

The Outdoor Industry Association's 2015 Topline Report indicated that nearly half of all Americans (48.8%) participated in at least one outdoor activity in 2014. This is the lowest participation has been since 2006. 141.4 million participants make up this 48.8% of active Americans, and these participants went on a collective 11.8 billion outings. An "outing" is defined as an outdoor activity. This equates to 83.4 outings per participant, per year, on average. When outdoor participation is broken down by region, the top three most active regions outdoors are south Atlantic, east north central, and middle Atlantic, including Maryland.

The most popular adult (age 25+) outdoor activities, determined by participation rate, were:

- » Running, Jogging, and Trail Running, 15.8% or 33.0M
- » Fishing (Fresh, Salt, Fly), 15.0% or 31.4M
- » Bicycling (Road, Mountain, BMX), 12.8% or 26.8M
- » Hiking, 12.4% or 25.9M
- » Camping (Car, Backyard, RV), 12.2% or 25.5M

The top five favorite adult activities based on frequency of participation were running,

jogging, and trail running, bicycling, birdwatching, wildlife viewing, and hunting. Positive outdoor recreation participation trends have been seen in racing, triathlons, paddling, kayaking, and fishing.

Three year growth trends indicated the following top ten activities have seen increasing participation, and may provide opportunities to engage more people in the future.

- » Adventure Racing
- » Non-traditional off-road triathlon
- » Stand Up Paddling
- » Kayak Fishing
- » Traditional Road Triathlon
- » BMX Bicycling
- » Traditional Climbing
- » White Water Kayaking
- » Boardsailing/Windsurfing

The golf industry has been declining over the last several years. During 2013, approximately 25 million people played golf, 18% fewer than did so in 2006, although the population grew by 6%. Golf does not hold the same appeal for the young, women, and minorities, groups that will determine its future health. Golf has lost five million players in the last decade, according to the National Golf Foundation, with 20 percent of the existing 25 million

golfers apt to quit in the next few years. People under 35 have especially spurned the game, saying it takes too long to play, is too difficult to learn and has too many tiresome rules. The number of young people, aged 18 to 30, playing the game has sagged nearly 35 percent over the last decade.

According to the National Golf Foundation, almost 650 18-hole golf courses have closed since 2006. In 2013 alone, 158 golf courses closed and just 14 opened, the eighth consecutive year that closures outpaced openings. Between 130 and 160 courses are closing every 12 months, a trend that the foundation predicts will continue “for the next few years.” Fortunately for Howard County, there is only one 18 hole course, Timbers at Troy Golf Course, so the Department is not overly reliant on golf.

## ***Inactivity***

An “inactive” person is defined as one who does not participate in any of the 120 sports/activities covered in the PAC Overview Report, which includes everything from individual and team sports to fitness machines, camping, walking, and stretching. 2014 saw that highest percentage of inactivity in the last six years. At 28.3%, this equates to 82.7 million inactive Americans.

Only one age group, 18 to 24, experienced a decrease in inactivity since 2013. All other age

groups experienced an increase. Even those ages 45 and older, which decreased in activity in 2013, were more inactive in 2014. Overall, the trends indicate that as American’s age, their rates of inactivity increase.

## ***Engaging Inactives***

Swimming for fitness remains the top aspirational activity for inactive Americans. For youth, camping and bicycling also top the list of aspirational sports and activities they would like to try. For adults, 25-64, camping hiking and bicycling are some of the top aspirational activities they would like to try, while for adults 65 and older prefer more passive activities such as birdwatching /wildlife viewing and walking. Adults over 65 also aspire to try working out with machines, hiking, and fishing. Providing programs categorized as “aspirational” are effective when trying to engage inactives.

The US population is getting older, and while there are more adult, active adult, and senior individuals within communities, many recreation providers have not expanded their adult programming base. Active adults are vitally interested in social program areas, which can include walking and biking clubs. Active Network suggests the following 40 activities for active adult recreation programs compiled from various recreation industry resources, such as program consultants, fitness trends, and recreation guides:

- » Sports - Broomball, inner tube water polo, pickleball, Wally ball
- » Exercise - Zumba Gold, Dance Buffet, kettlebells, outdoor fitness
- » Technology - Beginner’s Guide to iPad, Social media, digital photography
- » Entertainment - Karaoke, improv, Murder Mystery dinners, speed dating, Wii for seniors
- » Art - Drawing/painting, jewelry making, mixed media arts, pottery, quilting
- » Professional/Other - Estate planning, self-publishing, brain fitness, voice-overs, memoirs

According to Recreation Management Magazine, in a recent survey of recreation professionals, agency staff were asked about their top 10 recreation program trends. Holiday events and other special events were the top programs offered by respondents in this category. Youth sports teams, which were third on the previous year’s survey, moved to the number 2 spot. Youth sports teams replaced day camps and summer camps, which ranked as the third highest recreation program trend. The complete list includes:

- » Holidays and special events (76.1 percent)
- » Youth sports teams (66.9 percent)
- » Day camps and summer camps (65.6 percent)

- » Adult sports teams (62 percent)
- » Arts & crafts (61 percent)
- » Education (60 percent)
- » Sport-specific training (55 percent)
- » Swimming (54.3 percent)
- » Active older adults (54.3 percent)
- » Sports Tournaments or races (54.2 percent)

When asked what new program areas agencies offer, environmental education topped the list. It is the most commonly planned new program addition for agency respondents. When asked which programs they were planning to add in the next three years, agency respondents indicated the following were their top planned programs:

- » Environmental education
- » Day camps and summer camps
- » Education
- » Holidays and special events
- » Teen programs
- » Mind-body balance
- » Fitness
- » Adult sports teams
- » Arts and crafts
- » Active older adults

LERN's programming trends include: health and fitness, generational programming, mommy fitness, and life sports.

The *Wall Street Journal* recently published an article detailing the drop in participation in the four most-popular U.S. team sports — basketball, soccer, baseball and football. The author examined data from youth leagues, school sports groups and industry associations from 2008 to 2012. Participation declines include:

Combined participation in the four most-popular team sports listed above fell among boys and girls aged 6 through 17 by about 4 percent.

The population of 6- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. fell just 0.6 percent during that same time period, according to the U.S. Census.

Participation in high school football was down 2.3 percent in 2012-2013 compared to the 2008-2009 season, according to the National Federation of State High School Associations.

Participation in high school basketball was down 1.8 percent.

Little League baseball reports U.S. participation in its baseball and softball leagues was down 6.8 percent.

A new survey by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association and the Physical Activity Council, a non-profit research agency funded by seven trade groups, found that 2012 participation in organized football by players

aged 6 through 14 was 4.9 percent below that in 2008.

Basketball participation fell 6.3 percent in the 6-to-14 group during that period, according to the survey of nearly 70,000 households and individuals.

The percentage of inactive 6- to 12-year-olds — youths involved in no physical activities over a 12-month period — rose to near 20 percent in 2012 from 16 percent in 2007, according to the SFIA/Physical Activity Council survey.

Inactive 13- to 17-year-olds rose from 17 to 19 percent.

Some good news reported in the *Wall Street Journal* article includes:

Participation in youth lacrosse was up 158 percent according to the SFIA/Physical Activity Council Survey.

Participation in hockey was up 64 percent among 6- to 18-year-olds.

## MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR HOWARD COUNTY

The following recreation trend information was derived from ESRI from a report entitled *Sports and Leisure Market Potential*. These data are based upon national propensities to use and participate in various activities, applied to the local demographic composition of Howard County. Usage data were collected by Growth for Knowledge Mediamark Research and Intelligence, LLC. (GfK MRI) in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. This data was collected in December, 2015.

MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average. For example, the MPI in Howard County for aerobics is 142. This is significantly higher than the US average of 100; therefore, aerobics programs should do well in Howard County. The Market Potential Index is one tool to use in determining the likelihood of residents participating in a variety of activities.

Based on projected population, the top recreational activities Howard County residents will participate in (based on

percentage of population as well as above the national average with an MPI over 100) include:

The list includes 25 activities that scored above the U.S. average, which demonstrates Howard County residents' significant propensity to participate in leisure and sports activities. In our database of approximately 100 agencies around the country, the average number of activities scoring above 100 is 15. The results for Howard County speak to high participation rates in recreation and sports pursuits. The 10 highest scoring activities for Howard include:

- Skiing 188
- Pilates 149
- Yoga 148
- Hiking 143
- Aerobics 142
- Skating 142
- Road bicycling 139
- Mountain biking 139
- Jogging/running 137
- Weight lifting 135

The activity that may be the most surprising is the 188 number for skiing and probably relates to higher income levels in Howard County than the typical United States community.

## MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR HOWARD COUNTY

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults/HHs	Percent	MPI
Participated in aerobics in last 12 months	29,445	12.70%	142
Participated in archery in last 12 months	4,072	1.80%	64
Participated in auto racing in last 12 months	3,608	1.60%	78
Participated in backpacking in last 12 months	8,167	3.50%	120
Participated in baseball in last 12 months	9,278	4.00%	89
Participated in basketball in last 12 months	18,722	8.10%	97
Participated in bicycling (mountain) in last 12 months	12,914	5.60%	139
Participated in bicycling (road) in last 12 months	31,645	13.70%	139
Participated in boating (power) in last 12 months	13,905	6.00%	114
Participated in bowling in last 12 months	25,174	10.90%	111
Participated in canoeing/kayaking in last 12 months	14,657	6.30%	118
Participated in fishing (fresh water) in last 12 months	23,654	10.20%	82
Participated in fishing (salt water) in last 12 months	9,196	4.00%	98
Participated in football in last 12 months	9,459	4.10%	82
Participated in Frisbee in last 12 months	11,098	4.80%	104
Participated in golf in last 12 months	28,484	12.30%	130
Participated in hiking in last 12 months	33,109	14.30%	143
Participated in horseback riding in last 12 months	6,007	2.60%	106
Participated in hunting with rifle in last 12 months	5,822	2.50%	55

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults/HHs	Percent	MPI
Participated in hunting with shotgun in last 12 months	6,127	2.60%	65
Participated in ice skating in last 12 months	8,474	3.70%	142
Participated in jogging/running in last 12 months	40,531	17.50%	137
Participated in motorcycling in last 12 months	5,959	2.60%	84
Participated in Pilates in last 12 months	9,663	4.20%	149
Participated in skiing (downhill) in last 12 months	12,463	5.40%	188
Participated in soccer in last 12 months	10,340	4.50%	119
Participated in softball in last 12 months	7,765	3.40%	98
Participated in swimming in last 12 months	47,224	20.40%	129
Participated in target shooting in last 12 months	8,302	3.60%	79
Participated in tennis in last 12 months	14,323	6.20%	145
Participated in volleyball in last 12 months	8,102	3.50%	99
Participated in walking for exercise in last 12 months	78,064	33.70%	120
Participated in weight lifting in last 12 months	33,263	14.40%	135
Participated in yoga in last 12 months	24,572	10.60%	148
Spent on sports/rec equip in last 12 months: \$1-99	15,094	6.50%	109
Spent on sports/rec equip in last 12 months: \$100-\$249	17,079	7.40%	113
Spent on sports/rec equip in last 12 months: \$250+	21,603	9.30%	133
Attend sports events	69,829	30.10%	128

## MAJOR PROGRAM AREA TRENDS

The previous section of the Trends Report focused primarily on sports and fitness activities. This section supplements this information with trend research in Howard County's other Major Program Areas. This section also includes trend information about aging adults, inclusion services, and licensed childcare.

### **Active Adults**

The UCLA Complete Streets Initiative Luskin School of Public Affairs published a report: *Placemaking for an Aging Population: Guidelines for Senior Friendly Parks, June 2014*. Some of their findings included:

- » Parks need to have good signage with large fonts to help way-finding; they should not have colors with little contrast.
- » Restrooms, shade, and drinking fountains easily available and accessible in parks.
- » Park placement should be carefully considered in relation to other facilities often used by seniors such as churches, libraries, and community centers.
- » Creation of spaces that provide older individuals with the opportunity for socialization.

The Environmental Protection Agency initiated the Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging Program that rewards communities that demonstrate the incorporation of smart growth and active aging approaches at the local, county, regional, or state levels.

Recognition of cultural differences and other demographic differences among seniors is important. Filipino seniors enjoy public places to dance. Latino seniors like to go to parks with their families.

Providing safe parks and facilities has heightened importance for seniors.

Senior-specific open space facilities and programming is a burgeoning issue with local, state and national agencies, as well as other countries around the world. There are park spaces in the USA, Europe and Asia, whether called senior parks, geriatric parks, wellness parks or nursing care prevention parks, have the common goal to serve the needs of seniors for outdoor recreation, participation in programs, physical activity, and socializing.

In a very few places there are parks designated only for seniors. Most commonly, however, there are designated senior sections, and parks are retrofitted with exercise equipment for seniors and arranged equipment in a cluster. Some locations offer pieces of exercise apparatus for different skill levels. For the most part, they are

designed more as playgrounds for active recreation rather than as gardens for aesthetic enjoyment. Some park spaces focus exclusively on fitness and exercise, while others incorporate facilities for chess, bocce, and outdoor programs.

In some countries such as Germany, planners have created senior only spaces while other locations offer outdoor recreation areas and exercise equipment for interactive intergenerational use. Others have separate but side-by-side equipment and facilities for seniors and non-seniors. Some hosted organized outdoor programs for seniors in these spaces, with yoga classes, tai chi, aerobics and dance as well as training on how to use the equipment by professional trainers or physical therapists. In some places activities were free for those over 60.

When seniors were surveyed on what they wanted from a park they listed the following:

1. Natural beauty: open spaces with flowers, trees, fresh air that feel peaceful and relaxing and tranquil.
2. Physical Health opportunities such as tai chi or line dancing or other arthritis combating activities and low impact exercise machines.
3. Mental health promotion via group exercises or activities that encourage social interactions like gardening

opportunities and related programs, plus spaces where seniors can congregate and interact. Some seniors prefer places with no children because of safety concerns and the disrespect they sometimes feel from the young.

4. Concerned about safety, older adults desire surfaces to be smooth and capable of handling wheelchairs and canes but also wanted not to be vulnerable to kids running or playing with balls that might make them fall, or homeless people that they found threatening and unpleasant.
5. Also important was clear signage with large print, and places to walk with railings and a rubbery non slip surface, and wooden instead of metal benches that get hot in the summer or cold in the winter. They also wanted benches with armrests and good support for backs.
6. Safe unobstructed restrooms and more of them are desired.
7. Lastly, older adults are concerned about protection from weather elements and like having rain shelters, shade via trees or gazebos or umbrellas.

Findings from a 2015 National Homebuilders Association Conference for older adult communities included the following:

- » Provision of aspirational and holistic lifestyle amenities and programs that support longevity and healthy living are most important.

- » Most requested amenities in adult communities include: trails, aquatics, state of the art fitness facilities, open space, and multi-purpose space.
- » Trends in amenity planning and design include: massage rooms, anything related to food, indoor gardens/greenhouses, meditation and healing gardens, resistance pools, senior playgrounds, and dog parks.
- » The International Council of Active Aging, based in Vancouver, British Columbia has developed a checklist to assist potential users in identifying and locating age-friendly fitness facilities ([icaa.cc/facilitylocator.htm](http://icaa.cc/facilitylocator.htm)). The checklist includes questions such as:
  - Is the facility easy to get to?
  - Are parking lots and paths well-lit and close to the entrance?
  - Do classes have different levels of intensity?
  - Do interior and exterior doors open automatically?
  - Is there extra room between machines to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs?
  - Does marketing material come in large print?
  - Are there free trial periods to give those afraid to join a way out?
  - Is the type of music appealing to older adults?

A large portion of the checklist is devoted to equipment, which some manufacturers are

now gearing toward older users by providing larger, easier-to-read and easier-to-operate display panels, lower resistance levels, and increased comfort in the form of larger seats, longer handrails and wider footrests. Recent cardio innovations include machines that combine the benefits of an elliptical cross-trainer with the safety and stability of a semi-recumbent body position, and recumbent steppers that boast large seats and walk-through access. Manufacturers are also making available pieces of equipment stripped of most bells and whistles, leaving little more than an "on/off" switch to simplify the workout process.

A community center in CA eschews using dumbbells in favor of creating exercises to which older adults can relate, such as putting free weights into suitcases and walking with them. The rationale? Many seniors love to travel but need the strength to carry their luggage.

Other national trends related to older adults:

- » Brain fitness classes for older adults with increasing interest in offering activities that promote memory and balance.
- » As society continues to age, the recreation and park industry will play a larger role in providing recreation for dementia patients. Those suffering from dementia find running water and bright colors reassuring and calming.
- » Second career courses and programs are popular.

- » Playgrounds and outdoor fitness stations for seniors.
- » Rather than learning how to use computers, older adult programs have evolved more toward social media applications.
- » Trips remain popular for older audiences.
- » Partnerships with universities in offering educational opportunities for older adults.
- » Creating a brand for the active adult program and creating target marketing approaches. A good example is the Park District of Oak Park that regularly emails an active adult newsletter. Some agencies have a dedicated program guide for older adults.
- » Identifying different needs of programs and services for various ethnic groups.
- » Recreation center spaces that create socialization for seniors. This includes a café like approach to food service in centers.
- » Warm water therapy pools and water resistance (lazy river) facilities.
- » Recreation centers dedicated to the 50 or 55 and over population. Henderson, NV has two multigenerational centers. Another noteworthy example is the Summit, in Grand Prairie, TX.
- » Developing relationship with doctors in the community to assist the agency with the development of programs for active adults and seniors.

## **Special Events**

Some of the recent trends in special events include offering programs geared toward ethnically diverse audiences. Examples include: international dinners, cultural awareness, ethnic holiday events, ethnic food events, dances from various cultures such as Greek, Israeli, etc., showing movies from various countries of the world, and art fairs representing art from around the world.

In a *BizBash* July 16 blog, a blog for events management, nostalgia events, retro music, and games are popular. Josh Murray, creative director of Extraordinary Events in Los Angeles, is currently working on an event with a Back to the Future theme. "The great thing about nostalgia is that it can target any generation," he says. "It's safer than picking a demographic. If you choose, say, the '80s [as a general theme], that stirs nostalgia in nearly everyone alive, whether they lived it or not."

Additional trending events include anything food related, such as events showcasing local chefs and food, food trucks, and cooking events. Events related to environmental and sustainable practices, such as the event already in place, Greenfest, are trending well around the country. Canine events are also popular. Arlington, TX has developed a new dog park that has a segregated area for dog events such as dog birthday parties.

Family oriented events in which the entire family can spend time together is another

important trend, which isn't new, as special events historically have targeted family activities. These events have become even more important as family time together has become more and more important with family members' busy schedules.

## **Volunteering**

In 2014, According to the National Council of Nonprofits, more than 62 million Americans volunteered (about a quarter of the population, 25.3 percent). Women and individual ages 35-44 years were most likely to volunteer. Volunteer rates were lowest among 20-24 year olds (18.7 percent). According to a white paper published by Linda Graff and Associates, Inc., some emerging trends in volunteerism include the following:

Episodic volunteering is growing more than longer term volunteer opportunities. This plays well to the Department's need for special events volunteers. Across the country more and more park and recreation agencies are having difficulty finding volunteer coaches for youth sports because of the time commitment.

Corporate volunteering has grown in popularity. Having a robust corporate sponsorship program may create greater opportunities for corporate volunteers.

Family volunteer events are growing in popularity, to provide families with the opportunity to spend time together.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) produced a study "Volunteering and Civic Life in America." The annual study noted the following highlights from 2012:

Generation X (those born between 1965 and 1981) had the highest volunteer rate of any age group. The volunteer rate for Generation X has trended upward for the last 11 years, increasing more than 5 percent.

Americans 65 and older donated nearly two times as many hours per volunteer than the population as a whole: A median 90 volunteer hours last year, compared to 50 hours for the general population. Expansion of the active adult programs could result in a greater market of volunteers.

Volunteering among teenagers is up almost 3 percent since 2007.

## **Outdoor Recreation**

According to the *2014 Paddlesport Report* by the Outdoor Foundation, paddling has grown in popularity. Paddling includes activities such as kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding, and white water rafting. The number of Americans paddling represents 7.4% of the population. The most popular form of paddling is kayaking. Kayaking participation has increased slightly since 2010. Canoeing is the second most popular

paddlesport, and has been decreasing in popularity. Participation in rafting, the third most popular type of paddlesport has remained stagnant. The most popular user group are teens, aged 13-17, most of whom are male. Stand up paddling continues to increase in popularity. Only one percent of the US population participates in stand up paddling, but the sport is growing in all age groups.

The 2014 American Camper Report by the Outdoor Foundation showed that 40.1 million Americans, or 14 percent of the US population over age six, camped in 2013. There was a 400,000 person drop in actual participants from the previous year. During the last several years, the number of campers has remained relatively flat. Some trends include urban camping, glamping (glorious camping), and treehouses, such as Dakota County MN parks department.

Overall 2009 participation in rock climbing, including bouldering, sport climbing, indoor climbing, traditional climbing, and mountaineering was 6,148,000 Americans or 2.7% of the population six years and older. There are 4,313,000 participants in bouldering, sport climbing, and indoor climbing, and 1,835,000 participants in traditional climbing and mountaineering.

The 2010 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report by The Outdoor Foundation reported that climbing attracted the fifth highest number of new participants in 2010, a

significant 24.4% of new participants, which ranks behind only whitewater kayaking, sea kayaking, non-traditional or off-road triathlon, and traditional triathlons. Triathlons led with 43.5% of new participants. Fishing tops the list as the most popular outdoor pastime with 17% of Americans age 6 or older or 48 million participating.

While climbing attracted many new participants since 2010, an interesting statistic is that climbing participation among children ages 6 to 17 has dramatically decreased since 2006. In 2006, 2,583,000 children or 5.1% of that population participated in climbing, including sport climbing, indoor climbing, and bouldering, but in 2010 that number dropped to 1,446,000 or 2.9% of the 6 to 17 population climbed. Young adult participation in climbing, ages 18 to 24, also decreased from 2006 to 2009, going from 993,000 or 3.5% of that population to 769,000 or 2.7%.

Looking at this data indicates that climbing has passed its peak, at least for now. The sport grew considerably from 1990 when indoor climbing gyms became popular and served as an introduction to climbing. Now it appears there is a lessening of recreational climbers as the ones who came of age in the last 15 to 20 years have begun to settle down to careers and family responsibilities.

In addition to these areas, agencies are creating more bike parks, zip lines, alpine slides, and corporate team building and adventure courses, such as a ropes course.

## ***Licensed Childcare***

Elementary aged after school care costs at Howard County Recreation and Parks are below the national average of \$114 per week, approximately 35% less. This is especially significant considering cost is one of the top two obstacles to after school care enrollment both nationally and in Maryland. The cost of childcare is predicted to grow in Maryland; therefore, municipal attention should be given to costs to provide the program and keep fees as affordable as possible.

A recent report released by the Afterschool Alliance focused specifically on the role of afterschool programs to promote healthy eating and physical activity. Key findings include:

80% of parents say their program offers opportunities for physical activity

81% of parents are satisfied that the food served is healthy

The Afterschool Alliance also found that 69% of parents report that their children are offered STEM learning opportunities at their after school program; however, the Alliance describes a lack in STEM programming in after school settings and encourages providers to increase partnerships with the STEM education community and increase parent education on the benefits of STEM learning in afterschool.

The Maryland Family Network's Trends in Child Care 2016 report predicts that there will be a decline in child care providers in Maryland by the year 2020 (approximately 16%), and yet an 11.6% increased need for childcare in the same timeframe. This could indicate an opportunity for growth. Based on this information, childcare will remain as a significantly important program for the Department.

Quality in early childhood child care and education is a repeated theme in both federal and state documents. The Maryland Family Network suggests agencies take steps beyond licensing and consider accreditation and/or credentialing. The National Institute for Early Education Research's (NIEER) also has a ten-point quality standards checklist helpful in benchmarking local and state agencies:

- » Early Learning Standards
- » Teacher Degree
- » Teacher Specialized Training
- » Assistant Teacher Degree
- » Teacher In-Service
- » Maximum Class Size
- » Staff-Child Ratio
- » Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health
- » Meals
- » Monitoring

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance predicts that states will "be making even more significant changes to their licensing requirements and monitoring policies to come into compliance with the federal statute" (i.e. the CCDBG Act of 2014). The health and safety requirements will likely become more stringent in upcoming years.

## ***Inclusion Services***

Park and recreation agencies throughout the United States have experienced increasing demand for inclusion services. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education released a policy statement on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs in September 2015, whereby the agencies jointly set a vision and provided recommendations for "increasing the inclusion of infants, toddlers, and preschool children with disabilities in high-quality early childhood programs." The agencies' stance is based on the data that "more than half (54.3%) of preschool children with disabilities received early childhood special education services in settings separate from their peers without disabilities." High quality learning for children of all abilities has been a focus of federal, state, and local early childhood programming; the agencies suggest that high-quality learning be proportionately extended to children of all abilities.

Because of the push federally to increase early childhood programming, it is highly likely that there will be a push towards increased quantity and continued demand for low-cost, high quality services. Federal funding has increased; however, there has been a disproportionate “expansion of inclusive early learning opportunities for young children with disabilities”. Families have a difficult time finding and keeping quality child care for their children’s special needs.

Partnering to build a nationwide culture of inclusion is at the forefront of the agencies’ vision. It is recommended that local providers take action by:

- » Partnering with Families
- » Adhering to Legal Provision of Supports and Services in Inclusive Settings
- » Assess and Improve the Quality of Inclusion in Early Childhood Programs
- » Review and Modify Resource Allocation
- » Enhance Professional Development
- » Establish an Appropriate Staffing Structure and Strengthen Staff Collaboration
- » Ensure Access to Specialized Supports
- » Develop Formal Collaborations with Community Partners

## **Arts**

The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has recently released new research that offers a long-term perspective of US adult art participation in both arts appreciation activities as well as personally performing various art formats.

### **Visual and Performing Arts Attendance**

Despite a declining attendance at performing events over the decade between 2002-2012, in 2013-2015, U.S. performing arts attendance was stable. There was modest increase in the number of adult visits to buildings, neighborhoods, parks, or monuments for historic or design value, up three percentage points between 2012 and 2015.

Adults reading literature continues to drop, from 47% in 2012 to 43.1% in 2015.

### **Personal Performance or Creation of Artworks**

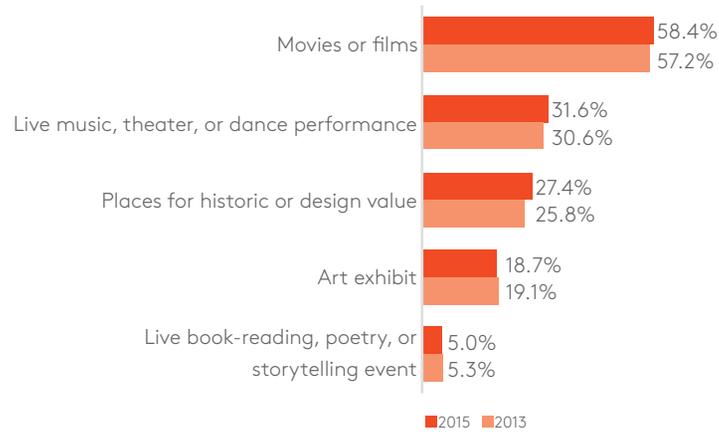
In general, the percentage of U.S. Adults who personally performed or created artworks remained stable; however, there are areas like social dancing and textile arts that saw a decline, see charts at right.

## **Dance**

As the world of dance continues to evolve, two leaders in the field have discussed what the future of modern dance will look like. Heather Vaughan-Southard has examined how the classification of dance methods into specific genres has become increasingly difficult due to blurred traditional lines between styles. Dancers used to focus on a single dance style, like ballet or jazz; however, as time passed they have cross-trained between the genres, and now “we are fusing styles, ideologies, cultures, and genres so seamlessly that it can be difficult to know where one ends and where another begins.”

It is predicted that modern dance will focus less on the force of energy and more on body weight creating movement. Millennial dancers have already defied gravity with more aerial acrobatics and body contortions. There will also be a heightened focus on creativity, with more messaging, acting, and expression of emotion that will drive future modern dance. According to Staff, it may be difficult for modern dance instructors “to translate this trend into a course of dance technique class or group instruction.”

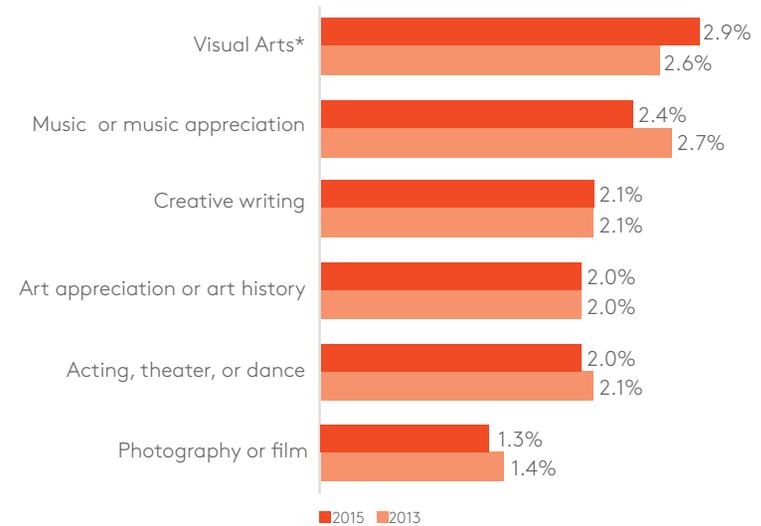
## PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS WHO ATTEND OR VISIT VARIOUS ART EVENTS: 2013-2015



Note: None of the differences in attendance reported for 2013 and 2015 are statistically significant at 95 percent confidence.

Data source: Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

## PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS WHO TOOK ART CLASSES IN THE PAST YEAR: 2013-2015

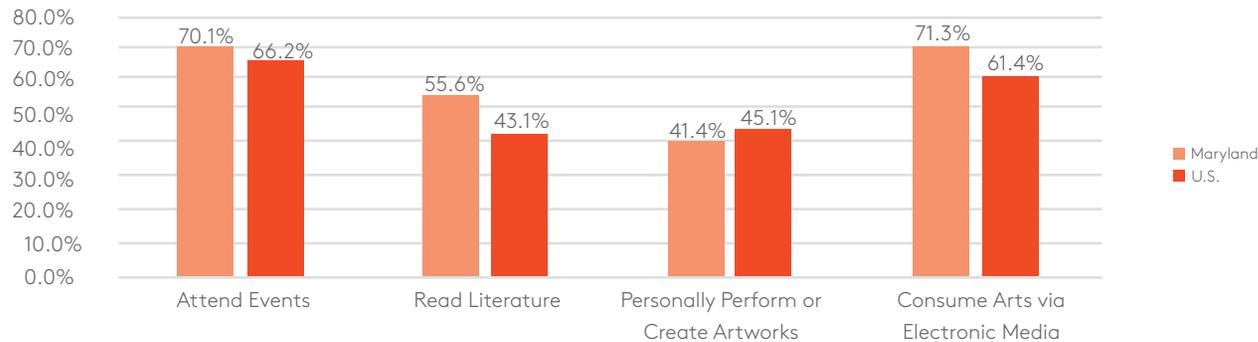


\*Included classes in drawing, painting, pottery, and design

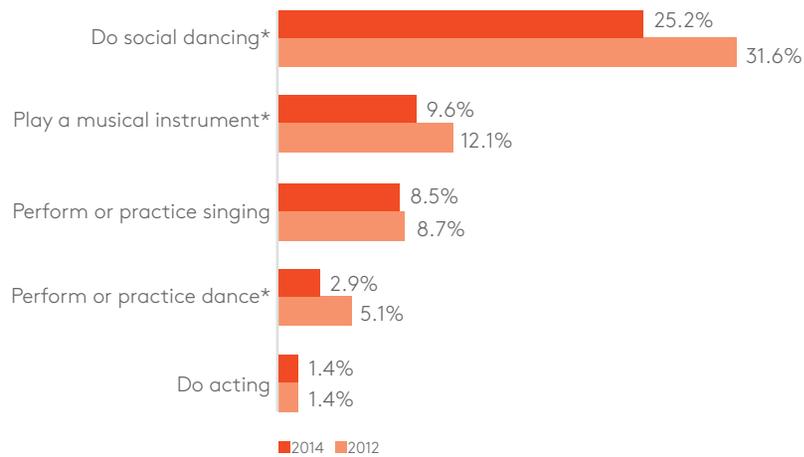
Note: None of the differences in attendance reported for 2013 and 2015 are statistically significant at 95 percent confidence.

Data source: Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

## ARTS PARTICIPATION



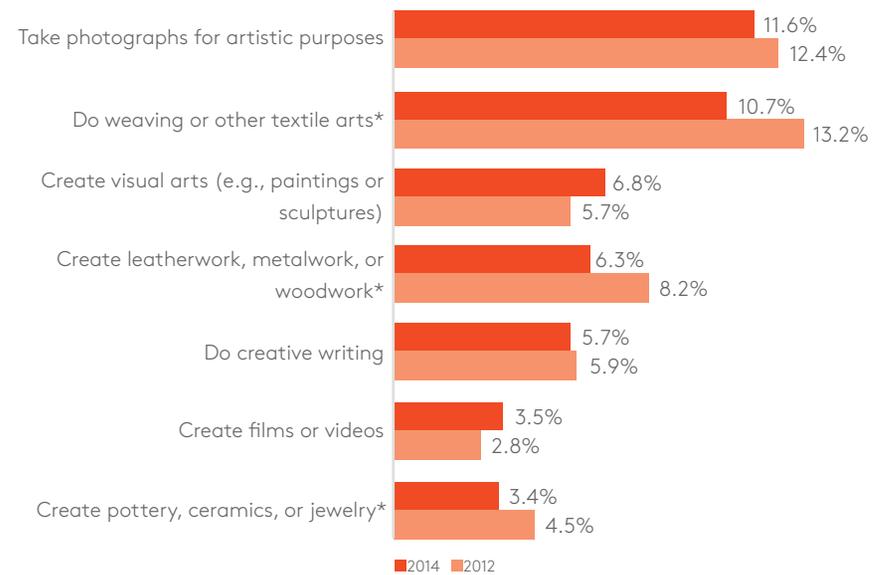
## PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS WHO PERSONALLY PERFORM ARTWORKS: 2012-2014



\*Indicates statistically significant difference at 95 percent confidence

Data source: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

## PERCENT OF U.S. ADULTS WHO PERSONALLY CREATE ARTWORKS: 2012-2014



\*Indicates statistically significant difference at 95 percent confidence

Data source: Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) and Annual Arts Basic Survey (AABS), National Endowment for the Arts

## Music

A notable trend to watch in the music lesson industry is the increasing number of do-it-yourself apps that teach users how to play musical instruments (i.e. Jellynote). The benefit to the user is learning is on his/her own schedule. Marketing in-person, personalized instruction and integrating a more flexible learning schedule may reduce any impact to traditional music learning.

## Theatre/Drama

According to the Educational Theatre Association, arts education programs are limited in schools with highly diverse populations, and “recognizing, understanding, and including those students in meaningful theatre education experiences is one of the most important issues facing our field today.”

Embracing technology in theatre, like: 3D projections, virtual-reality masks for actors, stop-motion camerawork and computer animation is filtering into smaller productions, according to Dougal Shaw. “The trend appears to be towards ever more interactive sets, with effects triggered by actors live on stage.”

In 2012 the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards (NCCAS) created the National Core Arts Standards for five key areas: Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts to “embody the key concepts, processes and

traditions of study in each subject area”. The four categories, Creating, Performing/Presenting/Producing, Responding, and Connecting, in each of the five arts areas are broken down by grade level in charts for the practitioner. Though created for the education field, direction and insight for recreational level teaching can be realized. Best practices in the field can also be gleaned from the *College Board’s Child Development and Arts Education: A review of Current Research and Best Practices* report, which links “current developmental research with recommended best practices for educators of dance, music, theatre, and visual arts students from grades PreK-14.”

## GENERAL PROGRAM TRENDS

### (Cognitive, Literary, STEM and Computer Gaming/Self-Improvement, Hobbies and Leisure Education)

The following are examples of efforts other agencies are offering for programs in this area. It is worth noting that Howard County Recreation and Parks does offer a robust list of offerings in these areas.

*“Read and Go” Raleigh, NC Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources:* Launched in 2009, *Read and Go* combines reading and travel to create a unique book club experience for residents. Each month, participants alternate between reading books and traveling to the places that they just read about. The books — all either set in North Carolina or written by someone from the state — are selected from a list compiled by a local, independently owned book store, Quail Ridge Books. The program offers at least eight trips a year, totaling more than 24 trips to date. Destinations have varied over the years, from a CSI lab in Raleigh to a country farm in Johnston County and Cape Hatteras in the Outer Banks.

Many cities maintain community recreation centers in parks, public housing buildings, libraries, or other neighborhood-based sites, and with the right mix of human capital and

equipment, many of these recreation centers could be activated anew as makerspaces and tech labs—in other words, going from ‘Rec Center’ to ‘Tech Center, or Rec2Tech.

Rec2Tech is characterized as: “inspiring people of all ages for careers and opportunities that they didn’t know existed utilizing ambassadors and instructors that reflect themselves. With the technology industry clamoring for employees, bringing making and technology into facilities that are accessible to the city residents increases the likelihood of economic success and independence of citizens in an urban environment. Forward-thinking agencies that are interested in helping to close the digital divide are adding STEM-related curricula to summer and afterschool programming, which Howard County has been pursuing.

In Pittsburgh, the Remake Learning Network is expanding equitable access to powerful experiences related to digital learning. The City of Pittsburgh and The Sprout Fund, together with partners from the Remake Learning Network, are working to develop a community-informed plan for Rec2Tech along with site-specific curriculum and administration programming for kids at multiple recreation centers across the city. While these efforts are just getting underway, they signal what is possible when educators, youth-serving nonprofits, and municipal leaders come together to make deep investments in community assets for learning.

### ***Trips and Tours, Local Tourism, and Sport/Eco/Heritage/Tourism***

There are many cities/counties around the US that have strategically positioned themselves for sports tourism opportunities.

Rock Hill, South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism developed an \$11 million outdoor center, including a 250-acre park with a cycling velodrome, BMX/supercross, cyclocross and mountain biking trails. Rock Hill’s outdoor center provides a complex example of diversification by leveraging multiple financing mechanisms, including hospitality taxes, sponsorships and federally backed private loans. The unique and creative aspect of this project was Rock Hill’s use of the New Markets Tax Credits and stimulus fund monies. This diversified financing approach allowed the city to extend the scope of the project by adding features and amenities for approximately the same financial investment as a velodrome alone would have cost.”

North Myrtle Beach Parks and Recreation developed a \$15 million sport tourism and recreation park. The park includes amenities such as baseball, softball, soccer/lacrosse fields, batting tunnels, dog park, trails, playgrounds, concessions, and a lake.

Waukegan, IL converted an 18 hole golf course into an outdoor sports complex with soccer and baseball fields and attracts a regional audience.

All of these examples represent intentional, strategic direction by the agency of using facilities for regional and national tournaments. This is a strategy that requires in-depth analysis as this strategy comes with the need to ensure facilities are available for resident use.

### **Other National Trends**

The following information lists other trends the consulting team has seen based on experience with agencies around the country. These include:

Outdoor gyms, the latest weapon in fighting the nation's obesity epidemic, are sprouting up in city parks across the country. Clusters of traditional fitness equipment from elliptical machines to leg press and sit-up benches are being installed in city parks, often in poorer neighborhoods that may not have access to healthful options.

Another recent trend includes "functional fitness," as reported in the April 22, 2013 *New York Times* article "Gyms Move from Machines to Fitness Playgrounds." Sandbags, ropes and climbing areas are taking over fitness center and gym floor space as part of this functional fitness movement. Companies such as Lifetime Fitness are removing weight machines and are replacing them with open areas of space for people to use as more free- or body-weight strength training, rather than being locked into a machine.

Play options for youth playgrounds, including theme based playgrounds, destination regionally based play areas, nature based playgrounds, and fitness oriented play spaces. Mecklenburg County, NC worked with the Playcore Company to design a fitness play space for older youth based on the NFL Combine and Adult Ninja Warrior television show.

Pop up parks, tactical urbanism, converting parking spaces to parks, etc.

Outdoor programming in parks. Many systems lease space for private providers to offer programs or agencies themselves are offering these programs.

Unique Sports Leagues, changing the norms (*Parks & Recreation Magazine* – August '13), i.e. lower basketball hoops, shorten base paths, change rules, play 3-on-3, reduce field lengths, limit softball game times, and smaller tennis courts.

Golf Course Ideas:

- » Charge by the hour, not by the round
- » Have one fee, regardless of the number of holes played
- » Partner with a local fitness club
- » Partner with nearby hotels for discounts for hotel guests
- » Offer Foot Golf, which is playing golf with a soccer ball; American FootGolf League oversees the sport

- » Change demand pricing from weekday and weekend to a change of price hour per hour seven days a week based on demand.
- » More attention given to ethnic minority participation such as cricket pitches.
- » Packaged wedding venues.
- » Multi-generational community centers and active adult centers. Examples exist in the Multi-generational Center in Henderson, Nevada and the Summit, in Grand Prairie, TX.
- » Food concession and food trucks in parks.
- » Community Gardens and Urban Agriculture Plans, particularly in lower income areas.
- » Capitalizing on community center space as rental space. Rather than managing programs, leasing space to program providers.
- » Smart phone applications for nature walks that provide information along the trail.
- » Park benches equipped with data mechanisms that capture user information.
- » Blurring of responsibilities between recreation and park agencies and libraries.
- » Ice hockey rinks are being built as a result of an increased interest in hockey.

## SUMMARY

The Department has relied on an ongoing process to build programs and services that are aligned with industry trends. In reviewing the program inventory offered by Howard County Recreation and Parks, it is apparent the staff members have relied on trend information to continue to grow programs according to changing consumer interests.

This section of the Plan provides information for future positioning of programs and identifies ways to strengthen the trends process. The CAPRA standard suggests identifying a frequency of updates.

The implication of the trend information includes the need for a continued focus on active adult programming as a result of a growing aging population. This should include programming opportunities as well as park design with older adults in mind. Fitness and wellness activities and features such as outdoor fitness stations should be considered, as well as all attempts to improve connections for walking and biking.

As the population grows more diverse, staff members should correspondingly reflect the ethnic diversity of the county. Specific outreach to minority audiences should be developed, as well as offering cultural competency training for staff. For example, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board is

an industry leader in developing better service and outreach to a variety of cultures. The agency offers cultural competency training for staff. Cultural competency refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, particularly for agencies whose employees work with persons from different cultural/ethnic backgrounds.

Cultural competence comprises four components:

- » Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- » Attitude towards cultural differences
- » Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- » Cross-cultural skills

Increase events based on cultures and ethnicities:

- » Meetup.com - There are currently many Meetup groups in the Howard County region. Utilizing this Website may be a tool to build events, adult programming or increasing other opportunities.
- » Work cooperatively with community-based groups that may already have successful events.
- » Include cultural diverse activities at all special events.

It appears as though the participation levels in the traditional youth sports will continue to plateau or decline, which will have an impact on athletic field usage. Lacrosse is projected to continue to grow, particularly in the lacrosse hotbed in the state of Maryland. For the first time, lacrosse participation topped 800,000 participants during 2015. This compares to 250,000 participants in 2001.

While participation in traditional sports of basketball, football and baseball will continue to decline, there may be opportunities to grow active adult athletic teams, particularly with the aging population.

On the other hand, programs related to childcare, camps and early education programs will continue to have a strong demand.

In addition, the Department should continue its efforts on continuously refreshing programs. It may be useful to have a Trends Team, or a cross functional staff group that researches trends and oversees the entire process of driving innovation in programming, park and facility design, and services. This provides accountability to a group of employees to strengthen the Department's commitment to incorporating trends.

## SOURCES

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# Appendix H.

## Recreation Program Assessment

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF PROCESS

This assessment includes an analysis of Howard County's program and service offerings. The report offers a detailed perspective of recreation programs and helps to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future program direction. It also assists in identifying program categories, potential program gaps within the community, and future program offerings for residents based on staff input and trends. Howard County Recreation and Parks Department is performing at a very high level. An intended outcome of this Assessment is to build upon the existing strengths of the Department and to ensure alignment with community need.

A review of program information, interviews, and meetings with the staff were conducted. A series of reports and data were also

reviewed, including Monthly and Seasonal Reports, Recreation Program Plans, Marketing Plan, Revenue and Fees Policy, program guides, and website review. In addition, staff members completed information related to Major Program Areas and the MacMillan Matrix, which reviews programs according to organizational fit as well as other attributes.

The Howard County Recreation and Parks Department has two bureaus involved in recreation programming. The Bureau of Recreation includes three divisions:

**Recreation Services:** is comprised of recreation programs and services that relate to arts, crafts, dance, special events and children and adult leisure classes and programs. The division also manages recreational summer camps for all ages of children. This division includes reporting areas of: Volunteers, Community Center Managers, Youth Programs and Classes, Adult

and Cultural Arts Programs and Camps, and Timbers at Troy Golf Course.

**Sports and Adventure Services:** promotes active lifestyles through instructional programs and community partnerships. It offers programs such as sports instruction and leagues, hikes, astronomy, camping and campfires, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, skiing and tubing, boating classes, nature programs, and rock climbing. Reporting areas include: Fitness, Lifetime Sports and Sports Instruction; Adventure, Natures and Outdoors; Sports Events and Health Campaigns; Adult Leagues and Sports Camps, Community Sports and Partnerships; and Meadowbrook and County Youth Leagues.

**Recreational Licensed Childcare & Community Services Division:** provides programs for youth from ages two and a half through middle school, offering a wide variety of child care programs, all licensed

through the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. There are six Early Learning Centers during the school year. Before and after care during the school year is available at 27 locations: 21 at elementary schools, four at middle schools (Can-TEEN) and two serve therapeutic recreation extended care centers (TREC). The Division includes Childcare, Therapeutic Recreation and Accommodation Services, Senior Programs and Facilities, and Youth and Teen Programs.

The Bureau of Parks Natural and Historic Resources Divisions also manages recreation programming and events.

**Natural Resources Division:** includes such programs as Ranger Walks, stream and pond volunteer clean-up days, Greenfest, volunteer efforts in maintaining trails, conducting wildlife and stream surveys, controlling invasive exotic vegetation, planting native trees and shrubs and assisting with managed deer hunts. The Robinson Nature Center is a part of the Division, which offers a wide variety of nature related programs. It also includes the Heritage Division which conveys the history of Howard County through educational programs and historic preservation. Staff members manage 25 heritage sites and offer a variety of educational programs, special events, tours of its museums and parks and opportunities for people of all ages.

The report is organized as follows:

- » CAPRA Requirements related to Recreation
- » Demographic Summary
- » Community Survey Results
- » Community Input Highlights
- » Program Inventory
- » Age Segment Analysis
- » Major Program Categories
- » Program Lifecycles
- » Facility Space
- » Seasonal Reporting
- » Marketing Review
- » Pricing and Revenue Policy
- » Additional Program and Service Observations
- » Program Best Practices
- » Recreation Program Positioning and Recommendations

## CAPRA REQUIREMENTS

Within the CAPRA Standards, multiple standards relate to recreation program and services. Three fundamental standards include:

- » Recreation Program Plan
- » Program Objectives

- » Outreach to Diverse Underserved Populations

The Department does have a Recreation Program Plan and Program Objectives. The Program Plan not only covers the fundamental standards, but also many of the non-fundamental standards.

The Department also performs outreach to diverse, underserved populations. The standard includes “encouragement of participation in programs and services through identification of barriers that may limit access including physical, social and mental abilities and financial geographic and cultural barriers.” The Department offers a scholarship program to assist families and individuals with financial assistance. The Therapeutic Recreation division is well established and offers a variety of programs for participants as well as inclusion services, in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Facilities and parks are developed to ensure equity and access for all residents of the county. The Department is also working on strengthening efforts to provide more outreach to a diverse population.

CAPRA non-fundamental standards include the following:

Program and Service Determinants, which includes offering programs based on conceptual foundations of play, recreation

and leisure and five other attributes including adherence to mission, vision, goals and objectives. This information is included in the Recreation Program Plan FY 2015.

- » Participant Involvement
- » Self-Directed Programs and Services
- » Leader Director Programs and Services
- » Facilitated Programs and Services
- » Cooperative Programming
- » Scope of Program Opportunities
- » Community Education for Leisure Process
- » Community Health and Wellness Education and Promotion
- » Participant and Spectator Code of Conduct

The Department complies with all of these standards, mostly through the Recreation Program Plan 2015. Participants are involved in program offerings and their satisfaction measured in an ongoing basis through program evaluations and surveys. The Plan includes a Nature of Program Services Matrix that lists program categories according to self and leader facilitated programs and services. Participant involvement is accomplished through various methods,

including program evaluations and customer satisfaction measurement systems. Community Health and Wellness programs are prevalent throughout the Department's program inventory and is designated as one of the Department's major program area. The Department also has a code of conduct.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

Demographic data used for the analysis were obtained from the State of Maryland Department of Planning. All data reflect actual numbers as reported in the 2010 US Bureau of the Census and demographic projections for 2020 through 2040 as estimated by the State of Maryland Department of Planning.

Howard County population is projected to increase by 28% between 2010 and 2040, as follows:

It will be a challenge for the Department to continue to grow services with corresponding growth in demand.

Age segment comparisons are listed in the following chart. The most significant age segment population change is indicated in the 55 and older categories. Nationally, 21%

of the population is 55 and older, based on 2010 US Census Data.

In Howard County, the 2010 55+ population was 22.2% of the total population and is projected to be 28.9% in 2020. By 2040, the 55+ population is expected to represent 33.7% of the total county population. This obviously will impact future services, from park design to program offerings.

The national median age is 37.6 and is closely represented by Howard County's median age of 37.9. The age segments between 25 and 64 represent 56.6% of total residents for Howard County, which shows a healthy percentage of middle aged residents.

Race and ethnicity for Howard County, according to the 2010 Census, was 59.2% white, projected to decline to 36.6% in 2040, a 38.2% decrease. Therefore, in planning for program positioning in the future, it will be important to develop communication outreach strategies to minority populations, including Black, Asian, and Hispanic Origin residents as well as identifying programs of interest to various ethnic groups.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY AND FORECAST

Howard County Population	Census 2010		2020		2030		2040	
	287,085		332,253		357,103		366,345	

	Census 2010		2020		2030		2040	
Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	169,972	59.2%	164,588	49.5%	149,655	41.9%	133,946	36.6%
All Other	117,113	40.8%	167,665	50.5%	207,448	58.1%	232,399	63.4%

	Census 2010		2020		2030		2040	
Population by Age	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	17,363	6.0%	19,724	5.9%	21,317	6.0%	19,487	5.3%
5 - 9	20,557	7.2%	20,740	6.2%	22,225	6.2%	21,403	5.8%
10 - 14	22,451	7.8%	22,735	6.8%	22,921	6.4%	23,213	6.3%
15 - 19	20,352	7.1%	22,066	6.6%	21,581	6.0%	22,002	6.0%
20 - 24	14,727	5.1%	18,861	5.7%	18,157	5.1%	17,750	4.8%
25 - 34	35,361	12.3%	44,785	13.5%	45,269	12.7%	41,993	11.5%
35 - 44	42,873	14.9%	42,610	12.8%	49,189	13.8%	48,014	13.1%
45 - 54	49,585	17.3%	44,474	13.4%	43,005	12.0%	48,804	13.3%
55 - 64	34,771	12.1%	46,212	13.9%	41,107	11.5%	40,114	10.9%
65 - 74	17,616	6.1%	30,513	9.2%	39,396	11.0%	36,465	10.0%
75 - 84	8,277	2.9%	14,750	4.4%	24,648	6.9%	32,370	8.8%
85+	3,152	1.1%	4,783	1.4%	8,288	2.3%	14,730	4.0%

## COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

As part of the LPRPP process a statistically valid survey managed by OpinionWorks was completed. The following section highlights the survey results as they relate to programs and services, and provides information for future program positioning.

Fifty-four percent of residents are very satisfied with the parks, recreation facilities, and programs provided by Howard County Recreation and Parks. This is an excellent result. In addition, 26% of residents are somewhat satisfied, which together, results in an overall 80% satisfaction rate. Generally speaking, there is much stronger repurchase intent from very satisfied, rather than merely satisfied customers. A best practice rule of thumb is to aim for at least 50% of very satisfied customers, which Howard Recreation and Parks has achieved and exceeded.

The Department's customer satisfaction rate should be measured on a regular basis and trend charted.

The survey asked respondents about their reasons for not participating in programs. The top reasons included:

- » Not aware of programs 6%
- » Lack of features we want to use 5%
- » Program costs are too high 5%

- » Programs are not offered at the times when I need them 4%

These four attributes are typically the most significant reasons for a lack of participation, based on needs assessment results from around the country. However, for Howard County, these percentages are much lower than what is usually found. Most of the time, these elements have percentages in the 10 and 20 percentile ranges. The results indicate successful marketing approaches, sufficient program amenities, costs that are not too high for residents, and programs that are offered at convenient times. Cleanliness and maintenance are important customer requirements. Survey results show high satisfaction toward cleanliness and maintenance, with 72% stating facilities are always clean and maintained.

In the database of systems we have worked with, the program guide is typically the most important advertising tool. Approximately 50% of residents nationwide find out about information from the program guide. For Howard County, residents find out about programs:

- » 36% through direct mail
- » 28% from the website
- » 15% from the activity guide (This is misleading as the direct mail percentage undoubtedly includes the activity guide. These two responses together are 50%, which is the benchmark)

A survey question asked if there were one or two programs the county should concentrate on providing more of or adding new programs. Fully 65% of respondents could not think of a suggestion for additional programming. Only 5% of survey respondents mentioned a need for more programs. These results speak to the variety of programs currently offered, and their alignment with community needs. It may be useful to develop a statistically valid survey at a future time that focuses solely on recreation programming in order to delve deeper into resident need for more specific program types, as well as to identify how well the Department serves various areas of the county and various ethnic and income groups.

An additional survey question related to usage of Recreation and Park offerings. The results show the percentage of residents participating in programs and activities often or sometimes:

- » Trails 62%
- » Playgrounds 47%
- » Sports Fields 38%
- » Outdoor Courts 32%
- » Swimming or aquatics 25%
- » Camps/activities for children 22%
- » Special Events 22%
- » Gymnasiums for indoor sports 20%

- » Fitness and fitness rooms 20%
- » Water access for kayak and canoeing 19%
- » Robinson Nature Center 18%
- » Therapeutic Recreation 14%
- » General Classes 13%
- » Timbers Golf Course 11%
- » Childcare 8%
- » Senior and active adult programs 8%

Investments in trails, playgrounds and sports fields are important based on usage. An agency goal, given the aging population, is to have greater market penetration for older adults as a result of the low number of program participation of eight percent in the senior and active adult programs.

Another area related to programming included a question asking respondents about their frequency of use of various facilities and programs. For all the programs listed, there were many that had very high response of never participating in the program, such as:

- » Camps/Activities for Children 69%
- » Fitness and fitness rooms 67%
- » Youth/Adult Team Sports 72%
- » Swimming or Aquatics 63%
- » Childcare 87%
- » Senior and Active Adult Programs 84%

In a question asking if the county should concentrate on providing more of, or new programs or facilities that Recreation and Parks should be offering, there were more than 40 different program categories mentioned. The most frequently mentioned programs included more programs in general for youths, senior programs, and adult fitness and wellness.

There is significant support for the dedication of resources to the Department as 85% of survey respondents would strongly or somewhat support dedicating more resources to the system.

In reviewing survey demographics there is higher satisfaction toward the Department from white residents, with Hispanic residents 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 recreation and parks system at least weekly.

## COMMUNITY INPUT

As part of the LPPRP process community input sessions were held in April, July, and September. In addition, residents had an opportunity to post online comments. Many comments related to recreation services, which is helpful in developing program recommendations for the future.

In April 2016, 221 surveys were completed as part of Greenfest. One of the questions asked residents for suggestions about what would make the recreation system better. Twenty-two percent of respondents mentioned the need for more program choices, such as more weekend programs, more daytime programs, and more senior and intergenerational activities.

Comments from the July public meetings at the North Laurel and Roger Carter Community Centers included many comments related to recreation services. Eighty residents participated in the meetings. Comments included:

- » More indoor and outdoor pickleball courts
- » Indoor basketball courts
- » Multi-purpose fields
- » Indoor swimming pool
- » Indoor ice and track
- » Climbing walls or rock climbing areas

- » Programs for low income families
- » Intergenerational programs
- » Kayaking
- » Meetup and educational events at Savage
- » Outdoor fitness, yoga, and tai chi in parks
- » Bocce courts
- » An active adult facility similar to Meadowbrook
- » Trails and connectivity
- » Community gardens and agro tourism

Comments from the September public meeting, in which 18 residents attended, but also included the Department of Recreation and Parks Advisory Board, reiterated the need for pickleball courts and swimming facilities.

Approximately 200 comments were submitted online. The vast majority of comments included the need for a 50 meter indoor pool and pickleball. Approximately 125 comments requested a 50 meter indoor pool and close to 50 comments addressed the need for more pickleball courts.

## PROGRAM INVENTORY

Based on completing a significant number of recreation program assessments from around the country, the following is a listing of major program categories that agencies commonly provide. This list helps to identify if there are any common program areas not offered by an agency. Most agencies offer the majority of programs. In matching Howard County's inventory of programs against this master list, all program areas are represented in Howard County.

- » Gymnastics/tumbling
- » Self defense
- » Adult fitness/wellness
- » Youth fitness
- » Adult aquatics and youth aquatics
- » Running/biking/walking
- » Environmental/nature programs
- » Outdoor adventure Recreation/extreme sports
- » Sustainability/green programs
- » Day camps/school break camps
- » Sports camps
- » Specialty camps
- » Before/after school
- » Early childhood/preschool
- » Childcare

- » Youth arts
- » Adult arts
- » Active Adults
- » Therapeutic recreation
- » Adult lifelong learning
- » Youth general learning
- » Teen programs
- » Youth sports
- » Adult sports
- » Golf
- » Tennis
- » Birthday party services
- » Historical programs
- » Cooking
- » Pets
- » Language
- » Youth homeschool
- » Trips
- » Special/Community Events
- » Seniors

The challenge for the Department is to accommodate the demand for these programs with sufficient program space. Therapeutic recreation, active adult, adult softball, and swim lesson programs, are examples of programs challenged with demand for adequate space.

## AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

One of the elements of the Recreation Program and Services Assessment is a review of the distribution of program offerings according to the age segments serviced. Typically, recreation and park systems provide a majority of programs for youth 12 and under. In fact, according to a database of approximately 100 agencies nationwide, 70% of programs are typically offered for youths 12 and under. For the purposes of this assessment, age categories are segmented as follows:

- » Youth ages 12 and under
- » Youth ages 13-17
- » Adults 18-54
- » Adults 55+

While park and recreation systems nationwide focus programs on the youth market, with an aging population, it is imperative to grow programs for older residents.

The following chart shows the age segment percentages of program offerings. This information was developed by reviewing the fall 2015, winter 2016, summer/summer 2016 and camp guide 2016 program guides and counting the number of programs offered for each segment. A significant number of programs offered included both the 12 and under and the teen age segments;

these programs were included in both age categories. The age distribution of programs is as follows:

### ***Age Segment Distribution***

Age Segments	Program Breakdown
0 to 12	4242
13 to 18	1609
18+	718
55+	56

This distribution above reflects that programs are most geared toward individuals under age 12, with 64% of total programming in this area. A large part of this is due to large number of before and after school and summer day camp programs. Previously completed recreation assessments in the database typically have an average of approximately 70% of program offerings geared toward youth 12 and under which doesn't position agencies well for an aging population. Howard County has a better distribution of programs across all age segments as compared to other agencies. It is also worth noting that Howard County senior programs are offered by the Office on Aging. These programs are not included in the numbers listed above.

## MAJOR PROGRAM AREAS

The ability to align program offerings according to community need is of vital importance. At the same time, it is important to deliver recreation programs with a consistent level of quality, which results in consistent customer experiences. Core programs are generally offered each year and form the foundation of program offerings. In assessing the categorization of these programs, many criteria are considered. A list of the criteria includes:

The program has been provided for a long period of time

- » Offered three to four sessions per year or two to three sessions for seasonal programs
- » Wide demographic appeal
- » Includes tiered level of skill development
- » Requires full-time staff to manage the program area
- » Has the ability to help solve a community issue
- » High level of customer interface exists
- » High partnering capability
- » Facilities are designed to support the program
- » Evolved as a trend and has resulted in a “must have” program area

- » Dominant position in the market place
- » Great brand and image of the program, based on the experience of offering the program over a period of time

Department of Recreation and Parks staff members reviewed their existing major program categories and developed the following list:

Staff members completed a version of the MacMillan Matrix as part of the exercise related to the top program categories. The Matrix was developed by Ian MacMillan and was designed to help nonprofit organizations assess their programs for sustainability, particularly in light of scarce resources. The matrix includes an assessment of programs according to four criteria:

Organizational Fit is the degree to which a program “belongs” or fits within an organization. Criteria for “good fit” include: congruence with the purpose and mission of the organization, ability to draw on existing skills in the organization, ability to share resources and coordinate activities with programs, and

assessing if the agency has existing skills and competencies to offer the program.

Financial capability describes the degree to which the program is attractive to the organization related to an economic

perspective, as an investment of current and future resources. However, it should be taken into account that some programs still have a good fit but do not have a good economic return on investment. Its value is in providing a valuable community service, such as therapeutic recreation.

Alternative coverage relates to the degree of similar provider of services.

Competitive position is the degree to which the organization has a stronger capability and potential to deliver the program than other agencies – a combination of the organization’s effectiveness, quality, credibility, and market share or dominance.

## TOP TEN MAJOR PROGRAM AREAS

1	Volunteerism and Service Opportunities	Serving on boards, participating in service learning, or serving as coaches, docents and program volunteers
2	Special Events and Social Recreation	Including parties, dances, large and small special events
3	Music and Dance	Through performance, instruction, and attendance of all types of music/dance
4	Sports, Fitness and Games, Health and Wellness	Through competitions, in leagues, individually, and in team sports, from martial arts to fitness classes and room use
5	Visual Arts and Arts and Crafts	-
6	Outdoor Recreation, Adventure, Nature, and Environmental Activities	Including camping, nature crafts and activities, environmental education, teambuilding courses, boating, rock climbing and skateboarding
7	Drama	Experienced through film viewings, puppet shows, reenactments, and drama clubs
8	Self-Improvement, Hobbies and Leisure Education	Including stress management, how-to classes, collecting, and gardening tutorials
9	Cognitive, Literary, STEM and Computer gaming	Through game creative writing, book clubs, museum visits, and computerized game programs
10	Trips and Tours, local Tourism and Sport, Eco, Heritage and Tourism	Via day trips, field trips, adventure tourism and sports tourism activities, ghost tours, and heritage programs

The Major Program Categories were scored 1-5 for each of the criteria, the higher the score, the better the Department's capability for that criterion. The ranking of the top program areas by staff members include:

1. Sports, Fitness, Games and Health and Wellness	19
2. Volunteerism/Service Opportunities	18
3. Special Events and Social Recreation	17
4. Outdoor Recreation, Adventure, Nature, and Environmental Activities	17
5. Self-Improvement, Hobbies, and Leisure Education	17
6. Cognitive, Literary, & Computer Gaming, and STEM	17
7. Music and Dance	16
8. Visual Arts and Arts and Crafts	15
9. Trips and Tours, Local Tourism, and Sports & Eco Tourism	15
10. Drama	14

### **Department Mission**

To responsibly manage natural resources; provide excellent parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities for the community; and ensure the highest quality of life for current and future generations. The mission is supported by the variety of offerings by the Department. The program area that has the greatest amount of importance based on the rankings of programs within the MacMillan Matrix includes sports, fitness, games, and health/wellness opportunities. The community has a significant amount of demand for youth sports and adult health and wellness activities, which creates the need for multiple providers of these services. Howard County fulfills the important need for offering fitness and sports activities for youth. Howard County's programs provide the service of introducing thousands of youth participants to various sports such as lacrosse, soccer, football, basketball, and baseball.

The following chart shows the inventory and distribution of programs in the Major Program Categories. The programs include those offered in fall 2015, winter 2016, spring/summer 2016, and the separate camp guide 2016. Programs that included multiple major program areas were counted multiple times. For example, if a youth outdoors camp included sports activities, the program was counted in both sports and outdoor categories.

Programs offered as a total percentage include:

- » Sports, Fitness and Games, Health and Wellness represent 40% of total program offerings
- » Music and Dance programs 14% of total programs
- » Self-Improvement/Hobbies and Leisure Education 11% of total programs

Drama related programs and trips have the lowest number of offerings. The inventory of program offerings is generally well aligned with the MacMillan Matrix ranking completed by staff.

In the Needs Assessment Survey, a question was asked if household members have used County Recreation and Parks offerings: often, sometimes, seldom, or never. Camps/activities for children, fitness, and sports programs were the three most frequently used/participated programs, so again, this is well aligned with program offerings. This was followed by swimming, special events, therapeutic recreation and childcare.

Considering all of these programs, the most challenging issue facing the Department is a lack of programming space. Demand for therapeutic and active adult programs continues to grow. The therapeutic recreation program is a regional provider of services as it attracts customers from Baltimore City/County.

The Department currently has a financial assistance program for residents who qualify. Requests for financial assistance will continue to grow as well along with the population growth. This may be an area to target for sponsorship to augment the amount budgeted for this service to the community. Additionally, the registration form could include an opportunity for registrants to donate to the program.

Programs	
Special Events/Social Recreation	133
Music and Dance	496
Sports, Fitness and Games, Health and Wellness	1445
Visual Arts/Arts and Crafts	260
Outdoor Recreation/Adventure/Nature/Environmental	298
Drama	115
Self-Improvement/Hobbies/Leisure Education	409
Cognitive, Literary and Computer gaming	376
Trips and Tours, local Tourism and Sport/Eco Tourism	77

## Program Lifecycles

The Recreation Assessment process included a lifecycle analysis of programs. This work was completed by staff. The programs represent the top 10 program areas for the three Recreation Divisions and Parks programs:

- » Sports and Adventure Services Division
- » Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services Division
- » Recreation Services Division
- » Parks

This assessment helps to determine if the Department needs to develop newer programs, reposition programs that have been declining, or continue the current mix of lifecycle stages. This assessment was based on staff members' perspectives of how their core programs were categorized according to the following areas.

- » Introduction Stage (Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing)
- » Growth Stage (Moderate and interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing)
- » Mature Stage (Steady and reliable performer, but increased competition)
- » Decline Stage (Decreased registration)

The following chart shows the distribution of programs throughout the four program divisions.

The total percentage distribution of programs according to lifecycle categories includes:

- » Introductory programs: 2.6%
- » Growth programs: 44%
- » Mature programs: 51%
- » Decline programs: 2.6%

Program Lifecycles	I	G	M	D
Sports and Adventure Services		4	6	
Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services		7	2	1
Recreation Services		5	4	
Parks	1	1	8	
Total	1	17	20	1

I= Introduction  
M=Mature

G=Growth  
D=Decline

According to work completed in other recreation program assessments nationally, the recommended distribution of programs is 55% introductory/growth and 45% maturation/decline. For Howard County, the distribution is approximately 46.6%/53.6%. It is always ideal to have few programs in the decline stage. For Howard County, there was only one program designated in the decline category. Conversely, the introductory category had only one program. The number of introductory programs should be monitored in the future.

There are many programs designated in the mature category, in part, because of a lack of space. For example, the following programs are limited by space/field availability:

- » Adult softball
- » Adult soccer
- » Recreational wrestling
- » Summer Blast
- » Cultural arts drama camps
- » Wine in the Woods

Boys' lacrosse is designated as mature as a result of participants participating in higher level club participation. In addition, many of the events offered by the Recreation Services Division are in the mature category only because they have been offered for many years, but still remain popular.

### **Facility Space**

A recurring theme throughout the LPPRP process is the identification of a lack of indoor recreation space. The NRPA PRORAGIS database only uses number of recreation centers as a comparative tool to determine adequate amount of indoor space. This has limitations as it does not take square footage into account. A 20,000 square foot center is much different than a 120,000 square foot center. There is no national standard for square footage recommendations for communities. However, based on extensive work in communities around the country, the

consulting team uses a standard of 2.0-2.5 square feet per person for indoor space. This number includes general indoor space and not historical sites.

**Meadowbrook Athletic Complex**  
40,000 square feet

**North Laurel Community Center**  
60,000 square feet

**Gary J Arthur Community Center**  
50,000 square feet

**Robinson Nature Center**  
28,000 square feet

**Roger Carter Community Center**  
40,000 square feet

**Total**  
218,000 square feet

Blandair and Belmont historic properties add another 22,230 square feet of space. Future plans of 40,000 sq.ft. for Blandair Athletic Complex and 130,000 sq.ft. for Troy Community/Athletic Center will result in an additional 170,000 square feet of space, for a total of 410,230 square feet for the county. With a projected population of 330,000 in 2020, an additional 249,770 or a total of 660,000 square feet indoor space would be required using the 2.0 to 2.5 square feet guideline. However, this guideline does not take into account other facilities such as Columbia Association facilities.

### **Seasonal Reporting**

Upon the completion of each programming season, the Bureau of Recreation compiles a seasonal report that analyzes how each division performed. Categories of consistent analysis include: successful programs, areas for improvement, significant changes, outcome of planned changes, and evaluation ratings.

Revenue and expenses are summarized concisely at the front of each report, breaking out each program division and facility. The report offers staff the opportunity to reflect on what went well that season, what factors may have impacted performance, and how well targets were met. The reporting below summarizes key points in the Recreation Bureau's reports from winter 2015 through fall 2015, as more recent reports were not available.

### **Revenue & Expense Summary**

The HCRP Division Seasonal Report Forms consistently provide the same measurements each season, which allows for trend comparisons. The seasonal data were compiled into a single modified analysis in the table to the right.

## 2015 HCRP BUREAU OF RECREATION ANNUAL SUMMARY: Programs

	SASD	RLC-CSD	RSD
Revenue	\$ 5,266,938	\$ 7,414,458	\$ 3,774,119
Expense	\$ 4,917,018	\$ 5,989,833	\$ 3,505,266
Net Income	\$ 349,920	\$ 1,424,625	\$ 268,853
Margin	7%	19%	7%
# of Programs	2,700	770	2,069
# of Registrants	87,446	41,113	36,064
Average cost per registrant*	\$ 60.23	\$ 180.34	\$ 104.65
# of Successful Programs	2,260	658	1,375
# of Cancelled Programs	440	92	714
% of Successful Programs	84%	85%	66%
% of Cancelled Programs	16%	12%	35%
Expense per Registrant**	\$ 58.77	\$ 147.73	\$ 156.04
Scholarship \$ amount	\$ 129,096	\$ 481,343	\$ 26,668

SASD: Sports and Adventure Services Division

RLC-CSD: Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services Division

RSD: Recreation Services Division

(\*amount registrants pay)

(\*\*cost to HCRP per registrant)

### Notable items:

The Recreation Services Division has the highest expense per registrant (\$156) and highest cancellation rate (35%).

The Recreation Bureau has a cancellation rate goal of 25%, which is exceeded by SASD and RLC-CSD.

Margins are consistent between SASD and RSD at 7%; RLC-CSD had a much higher margin, at 19%, in 2015.

Two-thirds of scholarship dollars awarded (76%) were utilized in the Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services Division.

## **Facilities**

The performance of four facilities' performance is measured each season. General comments about the reporting can be found below; individual facility comments follow.

The GO50+ fitness membership package was implemented with positive and negative reactions; negatives related to price increase.

Plans to cross-train facility leaders between the facilities were mentioned to be "in the works," which is effective from a customer perspective.

Revenue and expense figures between the facility seasonal reporting chart and the divisional seasonal report form do not always match. For consistency, the divisional seasonal report form was used for the net revenue analysis in this report.

### **Gary J Arthur Community Center**

Experienced success with various special events, hosted professional development training and crafting events.

Selected as an ArtSite; new sculpture installed.

Consistent through all four seasons was the desire to re-format and re-brand personal training, increase ongoing rentals, and adjust the Friday Fun Zone program.

Building satisfaction was high.

According to the Division Seasonal Report Form, the GJACC had a negative net revenue of -\$25,857 in 2015.

### **North Laurel Community Center**

Events were highlighted as successful programs; two new programs – Mommy-Son Valentine Dance and Birthday Bash.

Selected as an ArtSite; new art piece installed.

Building satisfaction was high.

According to the Division Seasonal Report Form, the NLCC net revenue was \$137,006 in 2015.

### **Roger Carter Community Center**

Throughout the reporting seasons, private/semi-private swim lessons were touted as the most successful program area. As additional instructors were able to be hired and trained, even more success was realized.

Membership sales in 2015 were consistently higher than those in 2014.

The adjustment of pool scheduling and pool rental procedures seems to have provided balance among all pool user groups and ultimately user satisfaction. Despite initial losses in revenue, long-term gains achieved through responsible scheduling is a strong business choice.

Service levels were increased with the addition of birthday party leaders and a fitness coordinator, resulting in increased customer satisfaction.

Staff members are responsive to customer suggestions and comments, showing swift response (as appropriate).

According to the Division Seasonal Report Form, the RCCC net was approximately \$159,000 in 2015.

### **Meadowbrook Athletic Complex (MAC)**

"Utilize additional weekday and weekend time" was identified as an area for improvement each season. "We will strive to fill weekend times with internal programs and/or rentals" was identified as a significant change each season. It is useful to create an occupancy rate metric by individual building space to determine planned and actual use.

Facility-specific evaluations were not completed in any of the seasons. A process for measuring customer satisfaction of the facility should be done at least annually, preferably more frequently and consistently by all facilities.

Reporting of "successful programs" seems to have undergone an evolution through the progression of the four reporting seasons. The move away from reporting non-MAC generated programs is a sound decision.

A dashboard of financial indicators could be developed, showing a snapshot of the facility's core revenue sources:

- » Court Use Charges (perhaps separate programs from tournaments)
- » Facility-specific Programming Revenue
- » Rentals
- » Memberships

According to the Division Seasonal Report Form, the MAC has lost net revenue for the past four seasons, nearly \$52,000 in 2015.

### ***Sports and Adventure Service Division***

The Division seems to have identified success with “payroll” courses, in other words, the classes and camps that are led and managed by internal staff, as opposed to contracted providers.

An annual review of the four seasons into a consolidated annual report would help the staff identify trends in programs cross-seasonally, for example the increased registration in winter indoor field hockey and fall floor hockey.

SASD staff have identified more automation opportunities: online rosters and non-resident registration online.

Strategic scheduling of facilities to optimize usage was demonstrated across seasons (i.e. archery, badminton, stadium camps, etc.).

### **2015 HCRP BUREAU OF RECREATION ANNUAL SUMMARY: Facilities**

	<b>NLCC</b>	<b>GJACC</b>	<b>RCCC</b>	<b>MAC</b>
Revenue	\$ 318,004	\$ 250,051	\$ 759,308	\$ 21,687
Expense	\$ 180,998	\$ 275,908	\$ 600,436	\$ 73,597
Net Income	\$ 137,006	\$ (25,857)	\$ 158,872	\$ (51,910)
Margin	43%	-10%	21%	-239%

Staff seems to be able to identify when courses are at their various stages within their lifecycle and adjust accordingly.

Adaptations to continuous changes in outside/affiliate sports group leadership were good and will likely continue to be a necessity.

### ***Recreation Services Division***

#### **Adult Programs, Youth Camps & Cultural Arts Programs**

Successful programs were listed by title with numbers of registrants in the current year.

A continued desire to improve social media presence and adjust programming according to low success rates was expressed throughout 4-season assessment period.

According to the testimonials provided, evaluation respondents are generally satisfied with their instruction.

Testimonials are great when used strategically; summarize evaluation feedback and use one to two key testimonials for higher impact.

#### **Preschool & Youth Programs**

Staff show a desire to decrease cancellation rate, increase registration and success rates; music was mentioned more than once in this manner.

Bricks4Kids Lego courses are highlighted as successful in regards to finances and feedback, and have been capitalized upon.

Feedback for these program areas was consistently positive.

Staff compared income and participation levels seasonally between 2014 and 2015. Both were shown to set records.

Winter 2015 is of particular interest; participation dropped yet income increased. An identification of the “high-performing” courses could be useful in determining where to continue to allocate resources so as to continue that trend.

### **Special Projects and Volunteers**

The continuous improvement efforts shown are commendable. This includes; new volunteer database, revamped forms, improved processes, and file management were highlighted projects.

The junior counselor program efforts proved fruitful if 6 of 17 were hired for summer camp positions; perhaps investigate how that percentage could be increased, i.e. different training topics, longer training length, etc., to take advantage of this pool of prospective employees.

Volunteers are generally happy with their participation.

An event in May had 21,000 participants; name and elements of this large two-day event should be highlighted in the future.

July 4th celebration report explained operational adjustments between the 2014 and 2015 events and that those adjustments were key to the event’s success in 2015.

The County’s volunteer registration website

inauguration with the Family Volunteer Day demonstrates a commitment to utilization of technology and an empowerment of volunteers to select their desired volunteer activities.

### ***Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services Division (3 reporting seasons)***

Teens day out has been listed both as a successful program as well as one that needs improvement; inconsistent registration has been identified.

Modeling and babysitting were listed as successful in several reports.

Can-Teen club’s expressed need for improvement included a marketing plan and staff costs.

A marketing plan for RLC has been listed in all season reports as an area for improvement.

Based on the ELC evaluation feedback, further exploration of the concerns is needed.

Fashion show and trips received excellent ratings.

More TR Aquatics programs were requested; no report on whether more were offered.

The division showed the best financial performance of the three recreation programming divisions; most notably in net revenue results.

### ***Administrative Services Division***

The Administrative Services Division has consistently reported on the same measurements each season, which results in the ability to measure trends year to year. Charting these performance measures across time would be a good next step, to better-identify seasonal and annual trending.

The quantity of refunds being processed seems high. If not doing so already, steps to ascertain the reasons why should be taken. If the established business practice is to encourage flexible registration and subsequent withdraw/transfer as needed, then a high refund number is desirable. On the other hand, if there are high levels of dissatisfaction, action can then be taken to rectify.

The program cancellation rate is extremely consistent, between 18 and 19%. Benchmark comparisons of cancellation rate is 20-25%.

Fall courses had a much higher “fill rate” than winter courses –18% and 11% respectively.

HCRP was able to capture the most “dollars per participant” in the winter season, \$174 on average, as compared the other seasons (\$139-\$148 average).

## **Overall comments and suggestions:**

It's commendable the divisions are generally using the same reporting structure and criteria between divisions and seasonally. Formatting the seasonal reports the same way each season is highly recommended. A qualitative executive summary each season could be helpful for the reader to understand the data.

Define what makes a program "successful"; the term is used loosely throughout the reporting.

Consider identifying the significance of the number of registrants reported. For Example, "Up by X% as compared to Y" or "A declining trend each season".

Throughout the analysis of whether or not to continue a program due to low enrollment, responses usually went one of two ways: to either completely cancel or completely change the time/dates/location/fees... From an outside perspective, it seems like an analysis step is missing – an attempt to investigate why the course didn't run. Review of previous evaluations, phone calls to former participants for feedback, and/or focus groups for that particular age group, could all be considered prior to initiating changes.

There were a few comments spread through the reporting about the need to evaluate costs for specific programs and/or participant evaluations that expressed concern about a program's cost.

Overall, the seasonal reporting consistently emphasizes the same core criteria, which is an effective way to keep a large organization focused on the same vision. Next steps would be to consider some of the fine-tuning mentioned in this report as well as the creation of a consolidated annual report based on the seasonal information. Use graphics and visual representation of the data and significant accomplishments to make it reader-friendly. The final result would be a great tool to communicate the multitude of achievements to the community. The reporting process would also be improved through a shortened cycle time between the end of the season and when the report is completed.

## **MARKETING REVIEW**

The LPPRP community engagement efforts provided results related to marketing efforts. As an example, the Greenfest Survey included a question about how residents find out about the Department's services. The results from 219 responses showed that more residents find out about information from the activity guide than any other method, with the website being the second most frequently

referred to source of information. In addition, the Community Survey showed that only eight percent of residents mentioned a lack of awareness as a reason for not participating in programs. The Community Survey indicated that 79% of households receive information from the website, direct mail and the activity guide.

The Marketing Department is staffed by three full-time employees. Marketing departments of similarly sized agencies typically have three to four full-time staff. However, Howard County's marketing group oversees a much more robust approach to marketing than the typical recreation and park agency. The full-time group is supplemented by contingent employees who provide support. The marketing group uses sophisticated approaches to its work, including the use of analytics for decision making, system wide branding efforts, managing and improving marketing processes for efficiency and effectiveness, monitoring cycle times for projects, and utilizing green marketing approaches.

CAPRA requirements include marketing related standards. The prescribed standard: the agency shall have an established marketing plan, based on market research that is evaluated periodically for effectiveness. The fundamental principle of marketing is to gain an understanding of customer needs, wants, concerns, and behaviors. Additionally,

CAPRA has a standard that includes ensuring marketing staff person responsibility, which the Department has.

In support of these standards, the Marketing Department develops an annual marketing plan that supports the Department's mission and vision. The 2015 plan included eight strategic initiatives:

- » Continuing to improve HCRP branding
- » Enhancing the Department's website
- » Maintaining a strong a customer focus
- » Providing marketing resources to Department staff
- » Increasing process efficiency/effectiveness
- » Increasing our social media presence
- » Providing the public with effective and informative information in a timely manner from a consistent source within the department
- » Increasing research on and knowledge of current trends to processes

There is evidence these initiatives being successfully deployed. The 2015 Marketing Plan included over 30 strategies, many of which are tactical. A suggestion for improving the plan would be creating a more focused, strategic framework for the plan. According to Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Organizational Excellence, strategic plans should have both a short term and longer

term set of strategies, goals, and objectives. Therefore, an additional recommendation would be to continue a one year short term plan, supplemented with a longer term plan of three years.

It may be useful to utilize a Balanced Scorecard for a strategic framework. The Balanced Scorecard aligns strategy with four perspectives: customer, financial, internal business support, and learning and growth. The Marketing Plan will need to be aligned with the LPPRP upon its completion and can serve as a starting point for a longer term marketing plan.

According to the statistically valid household survey results, only eight percent of households did not participate in programs as a result of lack of awareness and only two percent of households did not use trails or parks because they did not know where they are located. This shows good performance by the marketing group's efforts in "creating a positive Departmental presence in the community and effectively and efficiently informing County residents and others of the resources and opportunities HCRP makes available." (From the 2015 Marketing Plan's support of mission and vision).

Strategically, the Marketing Department aspires to increase its efforts in the use of data for decision making as well as assisting staff in determining if efforts are yielding

the best return of investment of marketing dollars. Ideally, marketing could develop a dashboard of key metrics and communicate results internally as well as to Howard County residents.

Currently, marketing tracks performance through:

- » Purchase of ads
- » Coupons
- » Social media analytics
- » Program registration
- » People who call
- » Programmers send out surveys
- » New park app

Asking the question, where did you hear about this as part of the program?

Another use of data will result in the Department's ability to market differently to market segments. As was mentioned in the User Demand Narrative, best practice organizations have a well-conceived approach to identifying different marketing methods among various customer groups and market segments, as appropriate. The staff is currently working on more fully deploying ActiveNet's reporting and data capabilities.

Some of the Marketing Department's use of green marketing techniques includes using paper from recycled material and soy ink for the activity guides, apps for smart phones,

QR codes, emails to 14,000 households in the Active database, websites, NotifyMeHoward, and social media venues.

Social media currently includes the use of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr. Some agencies have experienced success creating greater awareness by having users of the system augment the Department's marketing efforts through volunteer bloggers. For example, in Arlington, TX, there are preschool moms who regularly write blogs.

An impressive element of the staff's work is its commitment to continuously improving processes in order to gain efficiency improvements, as well as improving the work produced by marketing staff. Some examples of the work completed related to process management include deploying a Google docs marketing form, a checklist for guide review, and tracking cycle time of work. Marketing staff utilize quality control/quality assurance techniques by the creation of branding and internal communication standards.

The Department has a well-conceived approach to branding. This is evidenced by signage throughout the system, the look and feel of the program guide and marketing material, and internal communication standards.

Based on a review of the Department's marketing efforts, an area of improvement relates to securing corporate sponsorships. Corporate support success results from significant efforts in relationship building with possible donors or sponsors. Agencies with great success in sponsorships typically have a staff person who oversees this area and creates a system-wide, strategic approach to garnering sponsorships. This assists with relationship building. In the absence of a system-wide approach, securing corporate support typically is more random, rather than strategic and becomes the responsibility of individual program and facility managers that may not have the necessary skill set needed for corporate support efforts.

Marketing supports its internal customers in a variety of ways. Internal programming staff are one of the primary internal customer groups of the Marketing Department. As a result of marketing staff's time commitment to corporate functions, including support to the county Executive's office, the time allocation devoted to recreation programs and services is reduced. Marketing provides photography, video, press and media releases for the county. The program staff would like additional support for the marketing of their programs. One solution to this challenge is to have a part-time marketing person whose primary responsibility includes promotion of the Department's programs and services. This could be supplemented by a marketing intern.

Marketing needs to be tightly connected to the customer satisfaction results of programs and services. In the User Demand Narrative, it was recommended to develop a cross functional team, representing core services and facilities, responsible for the overall service system. Marketing staff should be a member of this team. In addition, it was recommended to consider developing a trends team for the Department. Marketing representation should occur for this team as well.

## **PRICING AND REVENUE POLICY**

The Department has a Fees and Revenue Policy that was revised in May of 2015. The Policy fulfills the CAPRA required standard, 5.1.1. Comprehensive Revenue Policy that relates to fees and charges. The Policy includes philosophies, guidelines, and cost determination structures to manage fees and charges. Flexibility is built in to respond to new programs, changing demographics, and unique situations. There is a County Council provision that allows the Department to raise fees without having County Council approval. This results in staff's ability to increase fees, which allows staff flexibility and the ability to react quickly to changing pricing dynamics. The Policy includes three levels of financial sustainability: direct costs, program administration, and institutional costs.

The Policy also outlines standards of service according to level of subsidy. The standards of service are categorized according to: basic public service, special public service, private benefit service, and enterprise service.

The Policy does not include cost recovery goals for programs. As a follow up to the existing Policy, a recommendation includes the development of cost recovery targets for the sub categories of the 10 Major Program Categories. Cost recovery goals should also be developed for the various indoor facilities as well. The cost recovery targets can be calculated from the last three to five year averages. Having targets is helpful for staff and creates accountability.

Budget worksheets exist for pricing of services, as part of the budget process. In addition, it is helpful to document the pricing process through a flowchart or simply a list of steps involved in pricing to ensure common understanding among staff. Fees for programs are not a barrier to participation, as indicated in the Community Survey results. Fees throughout the system are very affordable. Examples include:

- » Fit4U pricing of \$25/month for an annual membership
- » 50+ memberships for \$75 per year
- » Community Center membership for \$25/year

### **Non-Resident Pricing Information**

As part of the Recreation Assessment, the following information details comparisons related to non-resident pricing as staff members desired information related to current non-resident pricing. The following details Howard County’s non-resident fee approaches and provides information about other regional agencies’ approaches. It is worth noting that the NRPA PRORAGIS database in previous years assessed whether or not agencies charged non-residents higher fees. In 2012, the sample of agencies entered in the PRORAGIS database showed that 60% of agencies charged non-residents rates. The amount of non-resident fee differential was about 20-25% above resident rates.

#### **Howard County, Maryland:**

Non-residents register a week later for classes

Classes do not have non-resident fees

Memberships to community centers do have non-resident pricing, which is double what resident’s pay.

A Fitness Center membership has a different non-resident differential as memberships, and is generally 20-20% more than residents.

### **North Laurel Community Center Membership**

	Resident	Non Resident
Annual Youth (5 yrs +)	\$25	\$50
Annual Adult (16 yrs +)	\$25	\$50

### **Robinson Nature Center Membership**

	Resident	Non Resident
Senior (50 yrs +)	\$20	\$40
Student (with valid school ID)	\$20	\$40
Individual	\$25	\$50
Family	\$50	\$100

### **Roger Carter Community Center Membership**

	Resident	Non Resident
12 Months	\$85	\$105 (24% more)
6 Months	\$55	\$70
3 Months	\$35	\$45
1 Month	\$15	\$20
Ages 13-49**		
12 Months	\$300	\$360 ( 20% more)
6 Months	\$180	\$225
3 Months	\$105	\$135
1 Month	\$40	\$50
50+		
50+ Centers*	FREE	FREE
Go50+ Fitness**	\$75/year	\$100/year
Go50+ Pool***	\$175/year	\$225/year

The Golf Course uses a different approach to non-resident pricing as the terminology includes resident discounts, instead of resident/non-resident fees. The differential between the resident discount and the regular fee is about 14%.

### Timbers at Troy Golf Course Fees

Monday-Thursday Non Senior	Walk	Ride
18 Holes	\$40	\$57
Mid Day 18-Holes (Times Seasonal)	\$35	\$52
Pre-Twilight (Times Seasonal)	\$30	\$47
Twilight (Times Seasonal)	\$25	\$42
9 Holes	\$24	\$34
Seniors (60 & Better)	Walk	Ride
18 Holes	\$35	\$52
Mid Day 18-Holes (Times Seasonal)	\$30	\$47
Pre-Twilight (Times Seasonal)	\$25	\$42
Twilight (Times Seasonal)	\$20	\$37
9 Holes	\$20	\$30
Howard County Resident Discounts	Walk	Ride
18 Holes	\$35	\$52
Mid Day 18-Holes (Times Seasonal)	\$30	\$47
Seniors (60 & Better)	\$30	\$47
Senior Mid-Day (Times Seasonal)	\$25	\$42

### Pavilion and Facility Rentals

Pavilion rentals vary from \$130 to \$900. Non-residents pay \$30 more for each rental, whether it is a \$130 rental or a \$900 rental. This simplifies the pricing process for staff.

The following information lists comparative information from other agencies in the region and around the United States. As can be seen from the information, each agency develops its own unique approach to the philosophy of charging non-residents more than residents.

### Mecklenburg County, North Carolina:

The County charges a variety of non-resident fees. It is interesting to note that youth aquatics passes are discounted at a higher percentage than adults. For example, the youth annual pass for non-residents is only 14% higher than residents, but for adults the non-resident rate is 50% higher than residents.

### Greensboro, North Carolina:

Greensboro generally has a 25% non-resident fee, but it varies according to the program, the level of tax subsidy and the demand for the program. There is not a unilateral non-resident fee for all services.

### Anne Arundel County, Maryland:

Classes do not have non-resident fees

Family Swim pass of 20 swims for AA families only

Annual Vehicle Permit \$40 for non-residents and \$30 for residents

### Fairfax County, Virginia:

The following information provides residency requirements for athletic teams and outdoor park entrance fees.

Residency Requirements

Adult Requirements: At least 75% of the participants in an adult sports organization or group of individuals must be Fairfax County residents and each team within the organization must be comprised of at least 67% Fairfax County residents.

Youth Requirements: At least 90% of participants in a youth organization must be Fairfax County residents. At least 75% of participants from applicants that represent a single team not participating in any other organization receiving facility allocations must be County residents.

Non-County Resident Fee

Out-of-County Team(s), Scheduling, Fees and Reciprocity.

Application and out-of-county fees may be waived when the team provides to the sponsoring county organization the equivalent of at least 50% of its use space in their "home" jurisdiction (not Fairfax County). For example, if an out-of-county team plays 10 games in a league sponsored by a Fairfax County organization, the application and out-of-county fees may be waived for that team if the team contributes to the Fairfax County organization at least 5 game slots in a comparable location in their "home" jurisdiction.

A \$30 non-county resident fee is assessed for each participant who is a non-county resident. This fee is assessed for every non-county resident on every roster during every NCS scheduling season. (e.g., If a non-county participant is on two teams in a single season, that individual would be assessed the non-county fee twice.)

*Outdoor Park Fees*

**Entrance Fees: Burke Lake Park**

	<b>County Resident</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>
Passenger vehicles and vans	FREE	\$ 10.00
Motorcycles	FREE	\$ 5.00
Busses	FREE	\$ 40.00

**Prince Georges County Maryland National Park and Planning Commission:**

Fees are different for residents and non-county residents.

For some programs residents register a week earlier so get preferential treatment.

Fees for pool admissions are a dollar or two more for non-residents although monthly passes are between 25 and 40% higher for non-residents. Same percentages are true for use of the fitness center.

*Resident Registration and Fees*

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission policy gives priority to Prince George's County residents during program and class enrollment; it also increases registration fees by approximately 20 percent for non-residents, or those living outside Prince George's and Montgomery Counties.

**Montgomery Department of Recreation, Maryland:**

"TOTAL REC" ALL RECREATION PASS

The pass provides access to all Montgomery County Recreation facilities and is discounted 10% from the customer purchasing separate memberships for services. An adult non-resident pays only 10% more than a resident for the pass.

<b>Terms and Fees</b>	<b>County Resident</b>	<b>Non-Resident</b>
Adult 18+	\$500 for one year	\$550 for one year
Pair - one person 18+, one any age	\$725 for one year	\$785 for one year
Family - up to 2 adults and 4 children	\$775 for one year	\$875 for one year
Senior 55+	\$430 for one year	\$490 for one year
Senior Pair - one person 55+, one any age	\$700 for one year	\$760 for one year
12 Admission Punch Pass - Adult 18+	\$60/12 visits	\$75/12 visits
12 Admission Punch Pass - Senior 55+	\$45/12 visits	\$60/12 visits

### Arlington County, Virginia:

The County does charge non-resident fees for various services as follows. Non-registration is delayed a few weeks.

For softball games \$770 per team plus \$30 per non-Arlington resident.

Permit Fees for basketball courts: \$20/hour for Arlington County residents and \$40/hour for non-residents.

Same for community room rentals, more for non-residents, e.g. multipurpose room \$55 for residents \$110 non-residents.

Fitness Membership	Residents	Non-Residents
Annual membership	\$195/year	\$558
Senior Adult (55+)	\$60	\$90
55+ Gold Pass	\$90	\$135
Guest Pass (18-54)	\$8	\$16/day
Guest Pass (55+)	\$4	\$16/day
3 Month Pass	\$56.25	\$160.50
6 Month Pass	\$102.50	\$293
10 Visit Pass	\$64	\$144

### Vancouver, Washington:

Classes are 15% higher for non-residents

Annual Resident Card (for non-residents): An annual resident card is available by paying a one-time non-refundable \$70 fee. This provides you with resident rates on all activities for everyone in your household for 12 months.

### Somerset County Parks Commission, New Jersey:

Residents receive a 50% discount with a purchased ID card for swim lessons.

Resident ID cards for golf: \$55 for resident, \$340 for non-resident. The ID card provides discounted green fees.

Classes do not have non-resident fees.

### Summary of Non-Resident Pricing

As can be seen by the random sample of agencies included in the information above, there is no standard approach to addressing non-resident fees. In addition, non-resident fees are more customary in some parts of the country than others. For example, agencies in Illinois almost always charge non-resident fees. In the Dallas-Fort Worth region, non-resident fees are not as pervasive. In the MD/VA/DC region, the general approach includes assessing non-resident fees for memberships and passes, but not for classes.

Based on this research, it appears that Howard County is using reasonable approaches to non-resident fees. Suggestions include:

Continue the delayed registration period for non-residents.

Continue the approach to demand pricing for non-residents. Specifically, allow flexibility within core program areas to assess different non-resident fees, according to program demand. Aim for a targeted increase of 10-15% increase rather than 20-25%.

Consider an out of County pass for non-residents, similar to Vancouver Washington, in which the average tax bill for a Howard County resident is calculated and developed

as an annual pass fee which allows the non-resident to participate at resident rates.

Develop a standard age for senior discounts. As the population continues to age, there will be continued increased number of customers using senior discounts, which is a form of customary pricing, not as a result of economic hardship. Park and recreation agencies typically use 55 or 60 as the senior age. The recommendation is to increase the senior age to 62 and then years down the road, increase to 65. Private sector companies typically use 65 and higher as the standard senior age.

## ADDITIONAL PROGRAM AND SERVICE OBSERVATIONS

There is a dedicated staff person overseeing volunteers. Volunteer activities has its own page in the Activity Guide, which is good practice and important for the Department. According to the Department's 2015 Annual Report, in Fiscal Year 2015, volunteers assisted with events, programs, park and facility maintenance, guiding tours, coaching, and many other capacities. The Department was assisted by 6,440 volunteers who donated approximately 123,396 hours, which amounts to roughly \$2,846,746 in labor costs. This compares to a median number of 432 volunteers contributing 8,215 hours in the

NRPA PRORAGIS database of county agencies of 250,000-500,000 population. The Department exceeds the use of volunteers by a large margin of 267%.

In reviewing the 108 page *Summer Activity Guide*, the number of programs and events offered is incredible. This supports the survey results that showed a majority of resident not having any suggestions for additional programs. There are no gaps in program offerings compared to community need. The challenge is the availability of space.

Birthday party services could be more prominently promoted within the program guide. The seven party locations are listed on a quarter page of the program guide. Many agencies offer a variety of packages and themed parties and are a major sub brand of the agency.

Drop-In Fun programs are great to offer as there is typically a large need for unstructured programs, particularly for teens. The Department offers a wide variety, which is significant, given the balance of time that is required for fee based programming opportunities.

Home school programs are offered at Robinson Nature Center. There were some thoughts from recreation staff during the staff workshop that suggested a need for additional home school programs. During fall

of 2016, new home school programs for early childhood aged residents are being offered.

Offering discounted amusement park tickets is a nice service.

Offering the activity guide in large print is a good courtesy to offer.

Urban campgrounds are gaining popularity throughout the US.

The information about Child Care, Early Learning Center, and Before and After School programs gives a great sense of confidence that the program is well-run and of high quality. This is true of all programs, but this is called out specifically because it is an enormously important customer requirement for parents who are thinking about enrolling their child in the programs.

The activity guide is well organized and intuitively cross references programs to help customers find the program area they are looking for.

The therapeutic recreation area offers aquatics, after school programs, arts, dance, enrichment and sports. A trend in therapeutic recreation to consider includes programs for wounded warriors as well as offering fitness and wellness programs for this population of participants.

Convert the online program guide into a “flip-book” magazine style to enhance the user experience and increase ease of use (can then create links directly into registration system to encourage point-in-time sales).

Consider removing the credit card information collection section from the registration form as a way to more safely manage customer data and comply with EMV (EuroPay, Master Card and Visa) and PCI (Payment Card Industry) standards. EMV standards were created by the coalition of the major credit card companies to ensure merchants were being as safe as possible. The new chip and pin implementation is the “face” of this initiative.

Consider more flexible attendance/drop-in opportunities in fitness.

Define “inclusion services” and how to go about securing the service in the TR section. Communicate the availability of inclusion services more clearly and prominently throughout program categories.

## RECREATION PROGRAM BEST PRACTICES

The Department currently has many best practice approaches to recreation program and services delivery. This section outlines a few approaches to build upon the existing best practices. These are intended to strengthen the Department’s already effective programs and services. The best practice areas outlined below include:

- » Quality standards
- » Customer requirements
- » Key performance indicators

### **Quality Standards**

A key to developing consistent services is the use of service and program standards. The Department currently uses standards related to written communication, email, oral communication, and staff standards. Having standards provides a more consistent service experience and results in. The use of standards can be expanded to include instructor standards, program development standards, and customer satisfaction standards. Additionally, the Department could deploy the Gaps Model of Service Quality, developed by Parasuraman and Zeithaml. This measures the gap between customers’ expectations and perceptions of the service as it is actually delivered.

The Model goes further in the deployment of standards to include methods to audit conformance to the standard. The Gap Model is described as:

The Customer Gap: The difference between customer expectations and perceptions

The Listening Gap: Not knowing what customers expect

The Design and Standard Gap: Not having standards or the right standards

The Service Performance Gap: Not delivering service to standard

The Communication Gap: Not matching performance to promises

The development of standards is very important for achieving high levels of customer satisfaction. The Department should now focus on expanding the standards and identifying a process to audit the standards.

### **Customer Requirements**

Another area of best practice involves the use of customer requirements for major program and service areas. Given the complexity of recreation services with numerous facilities, programs, and hundreds of contingency and seasonal staff, it is difficult to maintain consistent service delivery. One suggestion

is to identify the five most important attributes to customers and reinforce these through documentation, training, and customer satisfaction measurement. Key requirements should be identified by customers and can be included as part of an importance/performance matrix. This determines how important a requirement is to the customer and how the Department is delivering. Surveys and program evaluations should include questions that assess customer satisfaction in these areas. As an example, for the use of a fitness center, the key requirements may be:

- » Types and availability of equipment
- » Facility cleanliness
- » Staff knowledgeability
- » Membership fee
- » Hours of operation

Therefore, these five areas are reinforced in staff training and are included as part of surveys to determine how well the Department is delivering the service.

### ***Key Performance Indicators***

Another area of strengthening includes the development of key performance indicators. There are some measurements in place, such as financial, registration numbers, and cancellation rates. Organizations that measure performance also have a

documented process in place to ensure follow through on results. Dashboards are increasingly being used to provide real time information about organizational performance. Additional measures may include:

- » Number of programs per age segment
- » Customer satisfaction
- » Facility utilization rate
- » Cost recovery rates by core program area
- » Household percentage of program participation
- » Market penetration by age group
- » Customer retention, repurchase intent, and referral

## RECREATION PROGRAM POSITIONING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for strengthening recreation program and services as well as information to position the Department for the future. One of the goals for the Department included in the LPPRP process is for the Department to integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness, supporting the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of the diverse Howard County community.

### **Program Strategic Plan**

The Recreation Program Plan includes a listing of strategic initiatives for all recreation program and service areas for FY15-FY19. Each core program area includes a matrix of tactics to accomplish over the five year period, and includes approximately 200 tactics. Having strategic initiatives is excellent. The initiatives included in the plan encompass virtually every type of program offering.

The development of strategic direction results in more purposeful allocation of staff time and resources. As a suggestion, the strategic plan should include an overview of the process, who is involved, and identification and narrative of influencers of strategy.

(Influencers of strategy include a SWOT... strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, human resource requirements, the ability to sustain the Department given the strategies, leveraging technology, and identification of changes in consumer preferences and requirements). For example, what are the overarching themes the Division would like to accomplish?

When strategy is established in individual business units rather than as the entire population of programs, this results in equal weight being placed in all areas, when in fact, there are priorities among the core program areas according to challenges, issues, demographic changes, and staff's ability to offer the programs. The intent is to create a macro oriented approach to strategy in addition to the micro Major Program Area.

The strategic plan should also address competitor/similar provider analysis. The recommendation is to complete a summary of the Major Program Area competitive environment, and what changes are needed based on the competitive environment every two years or so.

The final part of the Plan includes successful deployment including monitoring and measuring progress of the initiatives, as well as how adjustments are made year to year based on the ever changing environment.

### **Program Space and Program Participation**

While on one hand, the Department is challenged with a lack of space for programs, on the other hand, a majority of residents do not participate in programs. The percentage of households that have participated in the following program categories include:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Percentage of household participation</b>
Camps/Activities for Children	31%
Fitness and fitness rooms	33%
Youth/Adult Team Sports	28%
Swimming or Aquatics	37%
Childcare	13%
Senior and Active Adult Programs	16%
General Interest Classes	24%

Therefore, a couple of strategic moves to for consideration include:

Complete a series of focus groups of non-users to identify specific feedback about the households' lack of participation in programs due to a program or facility not being offered. It is a difficult to get non-users to participate in focus groups. As a result, it may be beneficial to meet with non-users at non

Recreation and Park events, such as library or school related or senior citizen events.

As a result of the lack of programming space, the Department may want to offer more programs in parks to augment existing program space. This can include developing semi-permanent structures, such as three sided shelters, to protect customers from the sun and rain.

Complete a business plan for gaining additional indoor space from other organizations. This can include working in tandem with the school district, library, and developers to add space future building plans.

Consider offering offsite fitness and wellness programs to other the corporate and non-profit organizations.

Consider combining the Office on Aging senior centers with the Department's services as a way of providing consistent service and programming experiences.

## Changing Demographics

The youth age segments are projected to grow only slightly through 2020 in Howard County. Therefore, the potential market of youth participants in programs will not be growing much in the next few years. This is noteworthy for childcare, early childhood, and youth programs.

A repeated theme throughout the LPPRP is the aging demographic. Many agencies are challenged in growing active adult programs because many residents think of their public recreation and park agency as a youth oriented service provider. There may be benefit to creating a brand, complete with mission, logo, and continuous community input. This can also include a brief strategic direction narrative that outlines goals and objectives specifically related to serving this market.

One method of engaging active adults in programs is to develop a "launch group," or a group of connectors in the community that can work on engaging more active adults in programs. The group can help to develop program and socialization ideas. Meetup groups can be a part of this initiative. The group can also form the basis of a park design group that works with the Department in the development of design standards for older adults. Engaging older adults in multi-generational programs is also an important strategy. Programs for grandparents with their grandchildren are growing in popularity.

Along with an aging population, a growing minority population and special needs population continue to grow. It could be useful to geocode registrations throughout the county to determine if there is equity in participants' geographical representation.

## Augment Marketing

Sponsorship development works best when one individual is responsible for this area. Currently no staff person or group is responsible for sponsorship development. As a result of the importance of developing relationships, consider having sponsorships included within a staff person's responsibility, or create a development position within marketing. If it is not feasible to add a staff position for this, another alternative is to initiate this through a contractual position.

Marketing support for programming staff was mentioned as an area of concern from recreation programming staff as a result of marketing staff having to spend significant time completing corporate functions. Consider diverting/adding marketing support solely focused on programing/facility marketing. As an example, the City of Denver has a position dedicated to recreation marketing.

## Additional Program Positioning

The following are other suggestions for future positioning of the Department.

- » The Similar Provider survey reflected a high level of satisfaction toward partnerships with the Department. It may be useful to have a similar provider roundtable discussion every year or two to discuss

future programs and ways to jointly satisfy customer demand or areas of duplication.

- » Develop specific cost recovery goals for Major Program Areas and facilities.
- » Develop an over-arching framework for recreation programming that includes a system wide set of strategic initiatives.
- » According to trend research, the number of participants engaged in camping activities is holding steady, but not growing. Yet, most agencies that operate campgrounds do very well financially. Camping may be an area to target for expansion.
- » Review the age segment distribution on an annual basis. As the community continues to age, it's important to ensure growing participation from older age segments.
- » Continue monitoring the lifecycle of programs on an annual basis. Rather than adhering to a standard of 20% new programs annually, consider assuring a good balance between introductory/ growth and mature/declining programs.
- » Expand the use of standards beyond communication standards and develop an audit system to determine how well the specifications of standards are being followed.
- » Work with staff and customers in developing key customer requirements for Major Program Areas to ensure staff members are providing service and

evaluating service according to the most important requirements.

- » Develop a recreation program dashboard of key performance indicators.
- » Develop on ongoing recreation program and services trend process, a small team of employees responsible for keeping informed of industry trends and ensuring nimble approaches to future program offerings.
- » The rentals could be promoted more in the program guide. The information currently includes a listing of parks, pavilions, and facilities. It may be helpful to create a separate rental section on the website, supplemented by a separate guide to rental facilities. Virtual tours would be helpful for the website. Online registration should be a goal for reservations.

# Appendix I.

## Community Inventory

The following document is a complete and current inventory of parkland and recreation facilities, programs and services available in Howard County, including those provided by the Department of Recreation and Parks and those offered by similar local providers. This inventory is updated every five to seven years in conjunction with the LPPRP process.

Howard County's robust recreation and park system includes the following elements described in greater detail below:

- » County-owned parkland, natural resource areas and facilities
- » Non-County-owned parkland and natural resources
- » County-owned open space
- » County-owned historic sites
- » County programs and services

### COUNTY-OWNED PARKLAND, NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS AND FACILITIES

Ranging in scale and amenities, the Department maintains a diversity of parks. While the Department owns 9,378 acres, only 5,750 acres are programmed open spaces, parks, natural resource areas, and facilities. Of the 89 individual open spaces, parks, natural resources areas and facilities, 41 (46%) have recreation amenities. All spaces and facilities and their associated amenities are included in the attached comprehensive list.

### NON-COUNTY-OWNED PARKLAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In addition to the county-owned park system, there are several parks and natural resources owned and maintained by the State of Maryland and Columbia Association. The Patapsco Valley State Park is approximately 16,043 acres and the Patuxent River State Park is approximately 6,700 acres. Columbia Association also operates the following six parks and natural resource areas within the county:

- » Lake Elkhorn
- » Wilde Lake
- » Jackson Pond
- » Symphony Woods
- » Kennedy Gardens
- » Lake Kittamaqundi

## COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACE

The County owns a total of 3,628 acres of open space within privately-owned subdivision developments.

## COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC SITES

The County owns and operates a total of 25 historic sites that cover a total of 115.2 acres. Of these 25 sites, 12 sites are located within County-owned parks.

## COUNTY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Department offers more than 1,700 recreation-based programs and services per season, and 10,340 programs per year, that fall within the following 20 categories. These categories include programs and services for both youth and adults. The majority of Department offerings fall within the Sports category, with Childcare Services and Camps as the second most common programs types.

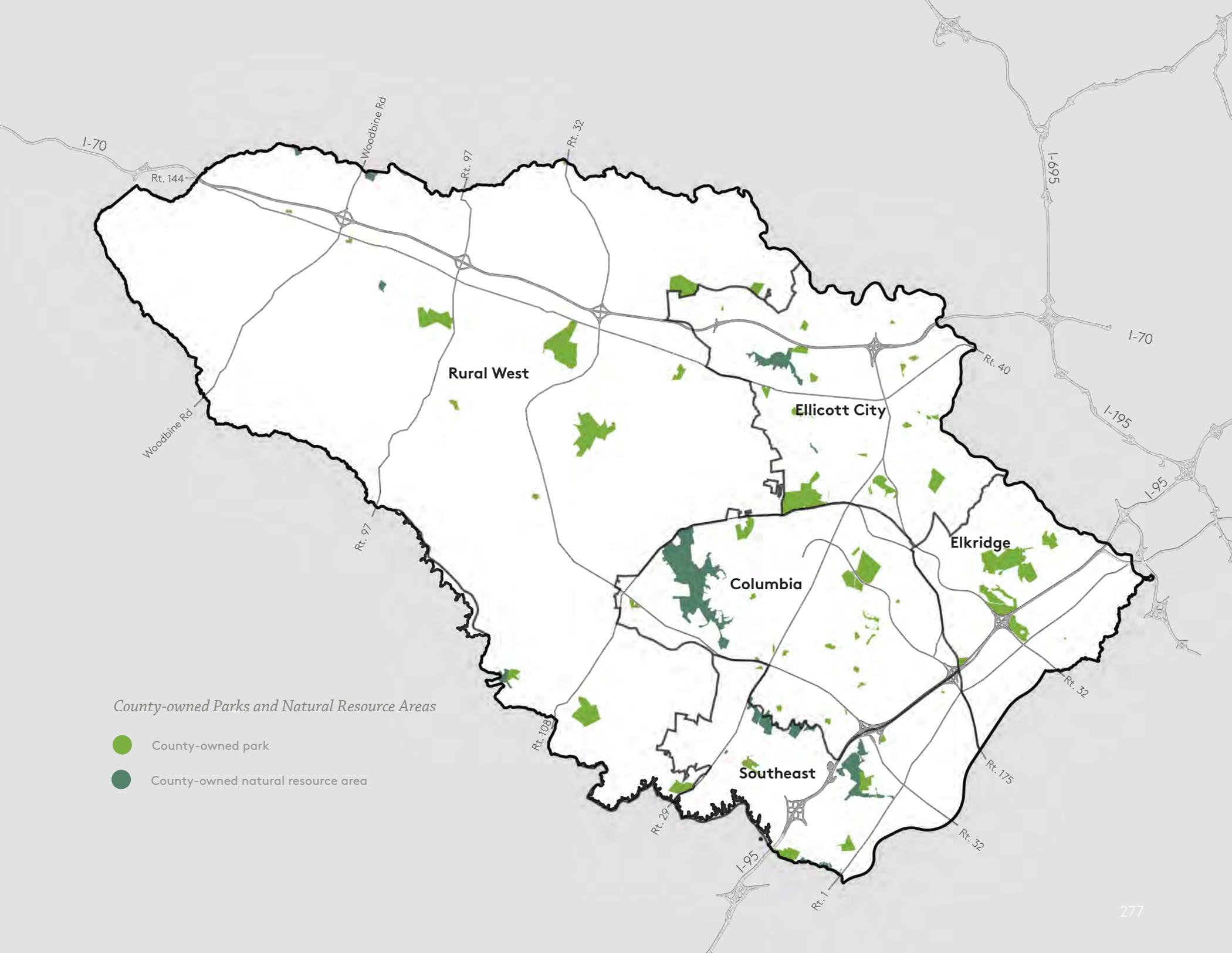
### COUNTY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Program/Service Type	Number of Offerings (per year)	Percent of Total
Sports	2,960	28.6%
Childcare Services	1,280	12.4%
Camps	1,285	12.4%
Enrichment	1,223	11.8%
Adventure, Nature and Outdoors	682	6.6%
Music & Theater Arts	629	6.1%
Aquatics	452	4.4%
Crafts & Fine Arts	449	4.3%
Dance	298	2.9%
Fitness	254	2.5%
Cooking	200	1.9%
Therapeutic Recreation	138	1.3%
Science and Technology	127	1.2%
Special Events	98	0.9%
Health & Wellness	90	0.9%
LifeLong Learning	89	0.9%
Trips & Tours	69	0.7%
Miscellaneous	10	0.1%
Drop-In Activities/Clubs	6	0.1%
Senior Day Services	1	0.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10,340</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## COUNTY-OWNED PARKS AND NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS INVENTORY

The following list identifies county-owned parks their respective acreages, and the types of amenities offered within each park. The map at right also identifies all county-owned parks. All information was gathered as part of the inventorying process which took place in April, 2016.

PARK/NATURAL RESOURCE AREA NAME	PLANNING AREA	ORIGINAL ACREAGE	Recreation Amenity Count	Tennis Court	Playground	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Baseball/ Softball	Multi-purpose Rectangular Field	Soccer/ Football/ Lacrosse	Basketball	Volleyball	Raquetball/ Handball
Atholton Park	COLUMBIA	9.5	5	2	2							1	
Blandair Regional Park	COLUMBIA	298.1	4		1			3					
Cedar Lane Park	COLUMBIA	93.2	21	4	2		4	4	3	2	2		
Dickinson Park	COLUMBIA	10.7	5		1		1	1	1	1			
East Columbia Library Park	COLUMBIA	16.6	3					3					
Elkhorn Garden Plots	COLUMBIA	10.2	0										
Elkhorn Park	COLUMBIA	10.1	0										
Hawthorn Park	COLUMBIA	10.0	5		1		1	1	2				
Headquarters	COLUMBIA	7.9	0										
Heritage Heights Park/ Clarks Glen Playground	COLUMBIA	19.6	1		1								
Huntington Park	COLUMBIA	11.0	5		1		1	1	1	1			
Long Reach Garden Plots	COLUMBIA	4.4	0										
Martin Road Park	COLUMBIA	6.0	5		1		1	1		1	1		
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	COLUMBIA	1021.0	0										
Pratt Truss Bridge Historic Site	COLUMBIA	0.4	0										



*County-owned Parks and Natural Resource Areas*

- County-owned park
- County-owned natural resource area

PARK/NATURAL RESOURCE AREA NAME	PLANNING AREA	ORIGINAL ACREAGE	Recreation Amenity Count	Tennis Court	Playground	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Baseball/ Softball	Multi-purpose Rectangular Field	Soccer/ Football/ Lacrosse	Basketball	Volleyball	Raquetball/ Handball
Pratt Truss Bridge/Murray Hill Stream Valley	COLUMBIA	2.8	0										
Robinson Nature Center	COLUMBIA	18.4	0										
Rt. 29 Pedestrian Bridge	COLUMBIA	0.4	0										
Sewells Orchard Park	COLUMBIA	25.3	1		1								
West Side Garden Plots	COLUMBIA	10.0	0										
Belmont Manor and Historic Park	ELKRIDGE	68.2	0										
Col. Anderson Memorial	ELKRIDGE	0.2	0										
Drell Property	ELKRIDGE	4.0	0										
Harwood Park	ELKRIDGE	1.8	2		1					1			
Rockburn Branch Park	ELKRIDGE	415.1	26	4	2		10	5	2	2	1		
Timbers At Troy Golf Course	ELKRIDGE	202.0	0										
Troy Park (Troy Park at Elkridge)	ELKRIDGE	100.9	5		1			2	2				
Waterloo Park	ELKRIDGE	21.6	6	2	1		1	1		1			
Willowwood Playground	ELKRIDGE	0.1	1		1								
Allenford/North Farm Park	ELLCOTT CITY	18.8	0										
B & O Railroad Museum	ELLCOTT CITY	0.6	0										
Centennial Park	ELLCOTT CITY	339.4	31	9	4	1	6	2		3	5	1	
Cypressmede Park	ELLCOTT CITY	20.8	6	2	1		1			1		1	
David Force Community Park	ELLCOTT CITY	258.3	0										
Dunloggin Park	ELLCOTT CITY	7.2	0										
Ellicott City Colored School House, Restored	ELLCOTT CITY	13.8	0										
Font Hill Park	ELLCOTT CITY	26.2	0										
Governors Run Playground	ELLCOTT CITY	0.2	1		1								
Granite Mansion (Heine Property)	ELLCOTT CITY	5.9	0										
Gwynn Acres NRA	ELLCOTT CITY	10.3	0										

PARK/NATURAL RESOURCE AREA NAME	PLANNING AREA	ORIGINAL ACREAGE	Recreation Amenity Count	Tennis Court	Playground	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Baseball/ Softball	Multi-purpose Rectangular Field	Soccer/ Football/ Lacrosse	Basketball	Volleyball	Raquetball/ Handball
Heritage Orientation Center (Little Court House)	ELLCOTT CITY	0.0	0										
Hollifield Station Park	ELLCOTT CITY	4.4	3				1	2					
Howard County Center for the Arts/Rockland Arts Center	ELLCOTT CITY	12.7	3		1			1	1				
Kiwanis Wallas Hall and Park	ELLCOTT CITY	25.2	13		1		12						
Meadowbrook Park	ELLCOTT CITY	84.2	10	2	1		3	2		2			
Old Firehouse Museum	ELLCOTT CITY	0.0	0										
Patapsco Female Institute	ELLCOTT CITY	9.8	0										
Roger Carter Community Center	ELLCOTT CITY	2.0	2		1					1			
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin	ELLCOTT CITY	0.5	0										
Tiber Park	ELLCOTT CITY	0.1	0										
Town and Country Park	ELLCOTT CITY	13.0	0										
Waverly Mansion	ELLCOTT CITY	3.4	0										
Worthington Dog Park	ELLCOTT CITY	83.8	0										
Alpha Ridge Park	RURAL WEST	109.1	13	2	2		3	4	2				
Benson Branch Park	RURAL WEST	340.6	0										
Carrs Mill NRA	RURAL WEST	20.2	0										
Chaconas Property	RURAL WEST	19.1	0										
Dayton Park	RURAL WEST	12.7	7	2	1		2	2					
Fulton South Area Park	RURAL WEST	71.7	0										
Haviland Mill Park	RURAL WEST	91.0	0										
Lisbon Park	RURAL WEST	9.3	3	2	1								
Manor Woods Park	RURAL WEST	40.5	0										
Patapsco Greenway (Houchens)	RURAL WEST	37.7	0										

PARK/NATURAL RESOURCE AREA NAME	PLANNING AREA	ORIGINAL ACREAGE	Recreation Amenity Count	Tennis Court	Playground	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Baseball/ Softball	Multi-purpose Rectangular Field	Soccer/ Football/ Lacrosse	Basketball	Volleyball	Raquetball/ Handball
Patapsco Greenway (Lewis)	RURAL WEST	6.1	0										
Poplar Springs Park	RURAL WEST	7.1	0										
Schooley Mill Park	RURAL WEST	192.1	16	4	1		3	2	2	2	1		1
South Branch Park	RURAL WEST	10.5	2		1	1							
Warfields Pond Park	RURAL WEST	19.9	5	2	1					1	1		
West Friendship Park	RURAL WEST	350.7	0										
Western Regional Park	RURAL WEST	189.7	15		2		5	6		2			
Woodstock Park	RURAL WEST	45.1	0										
Baldwin Commons Park	SOUTHEAST	1.2	0										
Bollman Truss Bridge	SOUTHEAST	0.5	0										
Cedar Villa Heights Park	SOUTHEAST	3.0	4	1	1					2			
Collins Property	SOUTHEAST	5.0	0										
Ganon-Bahl Property	SOUTHEAST	3.2	0										
Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA	SOUTHEAST	227.7	0										
Guilford Park	SOUTHEAST	11.3	5	2	1		1			1			
Hammond Park	SOUTHEAST	43.2	6	4	1		1						
High Ridge Park	SOUTHEAST	88.4	3	1	1					1			
Holiday Hills Park	SOUTHEAST	6.5	4	1	1					1	1		
Lash Property	SOUTHEAST	16.6	0										
North Laurel Park and Community Center	SOUTHEAST	40.3	7	1	1	1	1	1		2			
Patuxent Basin NRA	SOUTHEAST	35.4	0										
Pleasant Chase Playground	SOUTHEAST	0.1	1		1								
Savage Park	SOUTHEAST	351.1	15	4	1		5	1		2	2		
Teeter Property	SOUTHEAST	2.5	0										
Thompson Property	SOUTHEAST	0.6	0										
Wyndermere Playground	SOUTHEAST	0.1	1		1								
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>5,749.7</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

## COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces, their respective acreages, and the associated planning regions. All information was provided by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks.

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Arrow Head	1.279	Columbia
Beech Creek	5.983	Columbia
Bryant Square	0.259	Columbia
Bryce Overlook li	1.26	Columbia
Caroline Estates	2.261	Columbia
Carriage Hills	3.017	Columbia
Cedar Manor	1.015	Columbia
Cedar Acres	6.2177	Columbia
Clarks Glen	19.983	Columbia
Clarks Glen North	4.181	Columbia
Clemens Square	3.18	Columbia
Columbia Open Space	5.594	Columbia
Cricket Creek	3.48	Columbia
Duggan Property	1.6358	Columbia
Eckers Hollow	2.167	Columbia
Gill Property	0.2634	Columbia
Huntington South	3.489	Columbia
Kings Meade	3.996	Columbia
Laisla	0.984	Columbia

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Maple Side	10.8309	Columbia
Owen Brown Estates	4.455	Columbia
Owen Brown Woods	5.571	Columbia
Owen Brown East	0.507	Columbia
Owen Brown Woods	0.1377	Columbia
Patuxent Run	25.925	Columbia
Preserve At River Hill	2.3334	Columbia
Rettger Property	10.313	Columbia
River Hill Overlook	1.686	Columbia
Scott Acres	4.807	Columbia
Semon Property	0.5364	Columbia
Sewells Orchard	0.244	Columbia
Simpson Mill	9.38	Columbia
Spring Lake Gardens	1.2492	Columbia
The Boarman Estate	1.761	Columbia
Towers Property	1.3649	Columbia
Trotter Crossing	0.8316	Columbia
Trotter Hills	1.258	Columbia
Trotter Ridge	2.08	Columbia

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Trotter Wood	5.01	Columbia
Trotters Run	1.02	Columbia
Vetick Property	0.166	Columbia
Village Of River Hill	2.5848	Columbia
Woodlot	26.879	Columbia
Abbey Field Estates	3.478	Elkridge
Amylynne Dorsey	0.97	Elkridge
Arborwoods	7.013	Elkridge
Belmont Station	6.463	Elkridge
Bonnie Brae	1.903	Elkridge
Bright Field	16.9489	Elkridge
Calvert Ridge	5.1268	Elkridge
Carter' S Crossing	1.082	Elkridge
Cascade Overlook	14.51	Elkridge
Catterton Property	0.55	Elkridge
Claremont Overlook	24.0492	Elkridge
Crystal Springs Estates	4.513	Elkridge
Cypress Springs	10.1815	Elkridge
Deeprun \ Park \ Village	2.074	Elkridge
Dennis Preserve	8.994	Elkridge
Dubin Property	6.16	Elkridge
Dunteachin Farm	10.607	Elkridge
Elkhill	8.95	Elkridge
Elkridge Town Center	7.37	Elkridge
Ema'S Manor	0.0784	Elkridge
Enclave At Forest Park Open Space	5.12	Elkridge
Fisher Property	3.231	Elkridge

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Fox Hunt Estates	0.6762	Elkridge
Furnaca Ave.	0.219	Elkridge
Glenmar	3.915	Elkridge
Glynchester Farm	6.663	Elkridge
Grovemont	11.2	Elkridge
Harwood	1.089	Elkridge
Hawk'S Watch	0.693	Elkridge
Hunt Country Estates	5.286	Elkridge
Hunters Ridge	7.809	Elkridge
Ilchester Woods	4.287	Elkridge
Ilchester Heights	1.928	Elkridge
Ilchester Hills	2.55	Elkridge
Ilchester Oaks	3.66	Elkridge
Ilchester Oaks li	0.644	Elkridge
Landing Meadow	2.58	Elkridge
Lyndwood Manor	4.9995	Elkridge
Marble Hill Development	1	Elkridge
Marbuck Estates	0.78	Elkridge
Marshalee Woods	17.9844	Elkridge
Marshalee Estates	0.735	Elkridge
Mayfield Manor	16.761	Elkridge
Meadow Land	2.403	Elkridge
Michael L Pfau Property	0	Elkridge
Montgomery Meadows	34.3102	Elkridge
Nottingham Village	14.6116	Elkridge
Overlook At Blue Stream	12.7457	Elkridge
Owens Property	9.815	Elkridge

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Patapsco Ridge	10.8787	Elkridge
Pine Ridge	2.432	Elkridge
Pine Acres	2.74	Elkridge
Rausch Property	2.58	Elkridge
Rebecca Dorsey	0.4361	Elkridge
Rockburn Township	22.618	Elkridge
Rockburn Manor	1.303	Elkridge
Rockburn Run	2.6812	Elkridge
Rockburn View	7.984	Elkridge
Shady Lane Crossing	2.03985	Elkridge
Sherwood Crossing	4.657	Elkridge
Steven Curran Property	0.77	Elkridge
Strawberry Fields	11.437	Elkridge
Summer Haven	4.225	Elkridge
Sunny Field Estates	7.276	Elkridge
Talbots Woods	2.396	Elkridge
Talbots Woods 2	4.045	Elkridge
The Bluffs At Whitetail Woods	0.29	Elkridge
Thomas Purchase	0.029	Elkridge
Thompson'S Purchase	9.773	Elkridge
Tiber Woods	0.136	Elkridge
Travis Landing	0.406	Elkridge
Village Of Montgomery Run	3.467	Elkridge
Walter & Laverne Brown Property	0.5	Elkridge
White Tail Woods	0.81	Elkridge
Willowood	34.3639	Elkridge
Woodbrook	7.5	Elkridge

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Woodcrest	5.352	Elkridge
Woodcrest 2	0.295	Elkridge
Woodland Park	10.587	Elkridge
Woodland Village	7.368	Elkridge
Forest Creek	0.85	Ellicott City
Alta At Regency Crest	0.689	Ellicott City
Amber Meadow	2.13	Ellicott City
Angela Valley	1.853	Ellicott City
Annapolis Station	0.421	Ellicott City
Autumn Manor	10.637	Ellicott City
Autumn Overlook	5.9896	Ellicott City
Autumn River	37.195	Ellicott City
Autumn View	118.86	Ellicott City
Bageant Property	1.572	Ellicott City
Bedford Square	2.114	Ellicott City
Bethany Brook	1.209	Ellicott City
Bethany Woods	4.849	Ellicott City
Bishop Property 1	0.435	Ellicott City
Bishop Property 2	0.411	Ellicott City
Bluffs At Ellicott Mills	4.445	Ellicott City
Bluffs At Pine Orchard	4.071	Ellicott City
Bock Property	1.013	Ellicott City
Bonnie Branch Overlook	5.88	Ellicott City
Bonnie Branch Point	3.62	Ellicott City
Bonnie Branch Woods	3.19	Ellicott City
Boone Farm	6.334	Ellicott City
Boone Subdivision	0.161	Ellicott City

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Bounty Vista	0.87	Ellicott City
Brae Brooke	1.237	Ellicott City
Brampton Hills	34.2	Ellicott City
Brampton Hills West	2.813	Ellicott City
Bridge Water	9.862	Ellicott City
Brinkleigh	6.117	Ellicott City
Brittany Manor	8.715	Ellicott City
Brook View Estates	1.778	Ellicott City
Brookfield	1.406	Ellicott City
Burleigh Manor	79.138	Ellicott City
Cahill Overlook	0.3432	Ellicott City
Caplans Property\Autumno	15.614	Ellicott City
Carlee Manor	0.081	Ellicott City
Centennial Lake	4.249	Ellicott City
Centennial Lake Overlook	3.293	Ellicott City
Centennial Lake Overlook Sec 2	10.663	Ellicott City
Centennial Manor	35.29	Ellicott City
Chatham	0.47	Ellicott City
Chatham, Section 3	3.0187	Ellicott City
Chestnut Crest	1.727	Ellicott City
Chestnut Farm	5.987	Ellicott City
Chestnut Ridge	0.952	Ellicott City
Childs Property	0.7108	Ellicott City
College Farm	3.27	Ellicott City
Columbia Hills	1.98	Ellicott City
Columbia Woodland/Woodland Rd Property	1.252	Ellicott City
Columbia Woodlands	0.8869	Ellicott City

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Cornell Property	0.94	Ellicott City
Costel Property	1.668	Ellicott City
Daniels Mill Overlook	69.484	Ellicott City
Dorsey Hall	172.987	Ellicott City
Dunloggin 2	15.246	Ellicott City
Dunloggin Square	0.103	Ellicott City
Eagles Point Landing	0.932	Ellicott City
Ellicott Mills Overlook	7.368	Ellicott City
Enchanted Forest Estates	21.924	Ellicott City
Faad	4.585	Ellicott City
Fairways	11.768	Ellicott City
Feaga Property	3.395	Ellicott City
Fels Lane Open Space	0.509	Ellicott City
Fincham Property	0.999	Ellicott City
Font Hill Village	4.016	Ellicott City
German Property	3.652	Ellicott City
Gibson Property	1.0206	Ellicott City
Glen Brook	7.96	Ellicott City
Governors Run	54.605	Ellicott City
Gray Rock Farm	56.2346	Ellicott City
Green Briar Manor	0.246	Ellicott City
Gtw S Waverly Woods	19.396	Ellicott City
Gtw'S Waverly Woods	6.503	Ellicott City
Gwynn Acres	7.661	Ellicott City
Harry Holiday Property	0.368	Ellicott City
Hidden Valley	2.987	Ellicott City
Hogg Property	9.864	Ellicott City

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Hollifield Estates	5.9098	Ellicott City
Hollifield Estates 1	6.48	Ellicott City
Hollifield Estates 2	1.73	Ellicott City
Hollifield Hills	5.657	Ellicott City
Journey'S End	0.827	Ellicott City
Linwood	0.075	Ellicott City
Little Patuxent Ridge	49.797	Ellicott City
Longgate\ Wheatfield	16.749	Ellicott City
Maisel Tract	1.193	Ellicott City
Makowski Property	0.857	Ellicott City
Manors Of Oakwood	1.353	Ellicott City
Martin Meadows	2.069	Ellicott City
Mary Oaks	2.367	Ellicott City
Mckenzie Discovery	15.115	Ellicott City
Mckenzie Meadows	12.088	Ellicott City
Meadowbrook	0.94124	Ellicott City
Mill Towne Overlook	2.67	Ellicott City
Montgomery Estates	4.411	Ellicott City
Montgomery Knolls	0.351	Ellicott City
Moon Shine Hollow	0.059	Ellicott City
Mount Joy Farm	19.15689	Ellicott City
Mt. Hebron	84.3004	Ellicott City
Nottingham Way Acres	4.541	Ellicott City
Oakwest	11.664	Ellicott City
Old Mill Overlook	2.8073	Ellicott City
Oldmill	1.273	Ellicott City
Orchard Hill	4.229	Ellicott City

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Orchard Park	1.39	Ellicott City
Palmer Hill 2	1.7948	Ellicott City
Palmer Hill Property	1.035	Ellicott City
Papillon	9.684	Ellicott City
Patuxent Valley Overlook	1.991	Ellicott City
R Taylor Property	2.7555	Ellicott City
Red Fox Estates	2.12	Ellicott City
Red Hill Branch Overlook	2.878	Ellicott City
Rich Glow Acres	3.215	Ellicott City
Riverwalk At Patapsco Park	14.39	Ellicott City
Rockland Square	2.157	Ellicott City
Rockland At Rogers	24.5	Ellicott City
Ruppert Property	3.607	Ellicott City
Saddle Ridge	1.286	Ellicott City
Sewells Property	0.239	Ellicott City
Southview Rd	0.5773	Ellicott City
St. John'S Green	3.7	Ellicott City
Stone Manor	21.5335	Ellicott City
Stonefield 2	0.35	Ellicott City
Stricker Property	0.46	Ellicott City
Taylor Farm	14.74	Ellicott City
Taylor Property	1.974	Ellicott City
The Overlook @ Centennial Park	2.151	Ellicott City
The Woods Of Park Place	6.6899	Ellicott City
Tiber Ridge	1.36202	Ellicott City
Toliver Property	0.924	Ellicott City
Tollhouse	21.448	Ellicott City

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Townhomes Of Timberland	23.862	Ellicott City
Treyburn	15.41	Ellicott City
Turfvalley Overlook	34.156	Ellicott City
U.S. Rte. 29	2.3551	Ellicott City
Valleymeade	12.346	Ellicott City
Walter Davis Property	1.15	Ellicott City
Waverly Overlook	2.144	Ellicott City
Waverly Woods	1.24	Ellicott City
Westgate Woods	1.53	Ellicott City
Willows	10.28	Ellicott City
Winter Oaks	3.044	Ellicott City
Woodberry	3.005	Ellicott City
Woods Of Tiber Branch	5.4944	Ellicott City
Woods Of Tiber Branch 2	15.49651	Ellicott City
Worthington Addition	1.31	Ellicott City
Worthington Fields	34.98383	Ellicott City
Worthington Reserve	23.227	Ellicott City
Zanti Property	3.06	Ellicott City
Amberwoods	13.009	Rural West
Ashleigh Green	2.514	Rural West
Benson Branch Estates	12.247	Rural West
Cabin Branch Farm	32.866	Rural West
Carriage Mill Farm	26.61	Rural West
Chaconas Property	19.086	Rural West
Clarks Meadows	7.06	Rural West
Eastern View	4.417	Rural West
Edgewood Farm	40.84	Rural West

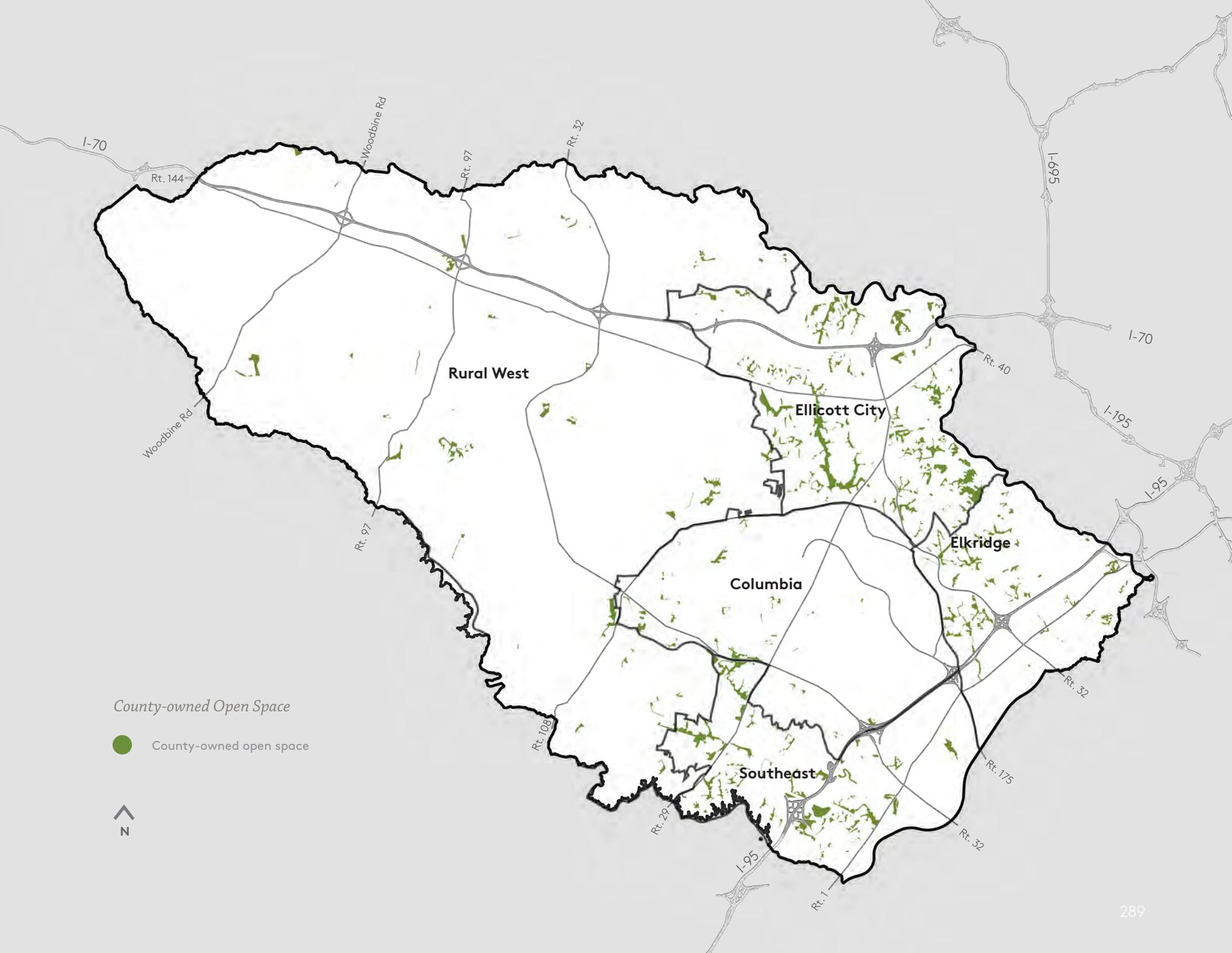
SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Fox Chase Estates	7.7	Rural West
Fulton Manor	9.701	Rural West
G Roscoe Property	0.778	Rural West
Green Hill Manor	1.357	Rural West
Guilford Rd & Sanner Rd Property	5.26	Rural West
Heyn Property	4.02	Rural West
Hunterbrook	9.661	Rural West
Kalmia Farms	8.69	Rural West
Lime Kiln Valley	9.77726	Rural West
Lisbon Manor	2.139	Rural West
Malcolm Property	2.091	Rural West
Mckendree View	7.21	Rural West
Mooresfield	9.57712	Rural West
Paddocks East, The	25.78	Rural West
Park Estates	1.64	Rural West
Pindell Chase	3.349	Rural West
Pindell Crossing	2.938	Rural West
Prince Property	1.623	Rural West
Riverwood	57.79	Rural West
Route 97 Forest Mitigation Bank	12.4772	Rural West
Roxbury	28.163	Rural West
Saddlebrook Farms	5.302	Rural West
Saglimbeni Properties, Llc	4	Rural West
The Chase	16.295	Rural West
The Chase 2	2.505	Rural West
The Preserve At Clarksville	42.44	Rural West
Triadelphia Crossing	12.3	Rural West

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Vineyards At Cattail Creek	3.96	Rural West
Wellington	7.094	Rural West
Westcliff Manor	2.405	Rural West
Westmount	36	Rural West
Willow Pond	4.788	Rural West
Windy Knolls	12.99	Rural West
Woodfords Grant	18.567	Rural West
A. H. Smith Property	11.1832	Southeast
Aspenwood	1.511	Southeast
Autumn Woods	4.206	Southeast
Beechcrest Apartments	0.044	Southeast
Blough Property	0.683	Southeast
Bowling Brook Farm	33.792	Southeast
Cardinal Forest	3.251	Southeast
Cedar Ridge	0.195	Southeast
Cherry Creek	4.853	Southeast
Cherry Creek Overlook	4.915	Southeast
Cherry Tree Farm	32.026	Southeast
Cherry Tree Park	4.7495	Southeast
Cherrytree View	0.188	Southeast
Curry Property	0.507	Southeast
Dorsey Woods	31.818	Southeast
Emerson	130.502	Southeast
First Ridge	11.948	Southeast
Forest	5.729	Southeast
Fox Wood Manor	1.021	Southeast
Free State	14.039	Southeast

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Garber Property	0.269	Southeast
Gorman Woods	1.754	Southeast
Graeloch Woods	0.444	Southeast
Guilford Overlook	2.53	Southeast
Hammond Village	8.251	Southeast
Hammond Hills	12.27	Southeast
Hammond Overlook	25.266	Southeast
Hammond Hills	0.499	Southeast
Hammond Park	3.816	Southeast
Hammond Village	0.041	Southeast
Hammonds Promise	1.492	Southeast
Hammonds View	0.4241	Southeast
Harding Woods	6.25	Southeast
Holiday Hills	0.091	Southeast
Hunters Creek Farm	14.34	Southeast
Jamestown Landing	3.43	Southeast
Kindler Overlook	3.603	Southeast
Kindler Overlook 2	1.65	Southeast
Kings Woods	18.824	Southeast
Kings Arms	3.1	Southeast
Kings Arms Sec 4	0.04	Southeast
Lakeview	3.59	Southeast
Larenas Property	0.1507	Southeast
Leishear Knolls	2.013	Southeast
Lilly Property li	0.203	Southeast
Lilly'S Addition To Lakeview	3.112	Southeast
Lyons Hill	1.053	Southeast

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Maple Lawn Farms	95.1485	Southeast
Maple Lawn Farms (Westside)	17.4983	Southeast
Maple Lawn Farms, Garden District	17.2217	Southeast
Montpelier Research Park	20.847	Southeast
Morgans Landing	1.2127	Southeast
Murray Hill	8.094	Southeast
North Ridge	3.228	Southeast
North Laurel Park	1.692	Southeast
Northgate Woods	1.221	Southeast
Park Overlook	1.47	Southeast
Parkside Estates	0.349	Southeast
Patuxent Heights	4.358	Southeast
Patuxent Springs	5.426	Southeast
Patuxent Overlook	2.9	Southeast
Patuxent Ridge	3.04	Southeast
Reservoir Estates	2.735	Southeast
Reservoir Overlook	15.96	Southeast
Revitz Property	28.541	Southeast
Riverside	11.372	Southeast
Riverside Estates	17.0995	Southeast
Riverside Overlook	17.793	Southeast
Riverwalk	1.1135	Southeast
Settlers Landing	2.177	Southeast
Shank Property	1.129	Southeast

SUBDIVISION NAME	ACREAGE	PLANNING AREA
Shipleigh Meadows	4.643	Southeast
Stone Lake	21.1454	Southeast
Storch Woods	6.04	Southeast
Stratford Down'S	1.089	Southeast
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge	1.76	Southeast
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 2	0.9843	Southeast
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 3	0.41	Southeast
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 4	1.373	Southeast
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 6	0.94	Southeast
Twin Oaks	5.483	Southeast
Us 1 Joint Venture	1.39	Southeast
Vil Hickory Ridge\Rivglen	17.684	Southeast
Village King Contrivance	4.603	Southeast
Village Of Cedar Ridge	46.75	Southeast
Village Of Hickory Ridge	1.199	Southeast
Village Of King Contrivance	4.624	Southeast
Vine - Buch Apartments	2.0629	Southeast
Warfields Range	1.0592	Southeast
Warfields Range 2	1.207	Southeast
Willows Of Rocky Gorge	5.999	Southeast
Winterbrook	12.935	Southeast
Wyndemere	25.739	Southeast
<b>TOTAL COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACE ACREAGE</b>	<b>3,628.69</b>	



County-owned Open Space

● County-owned open space

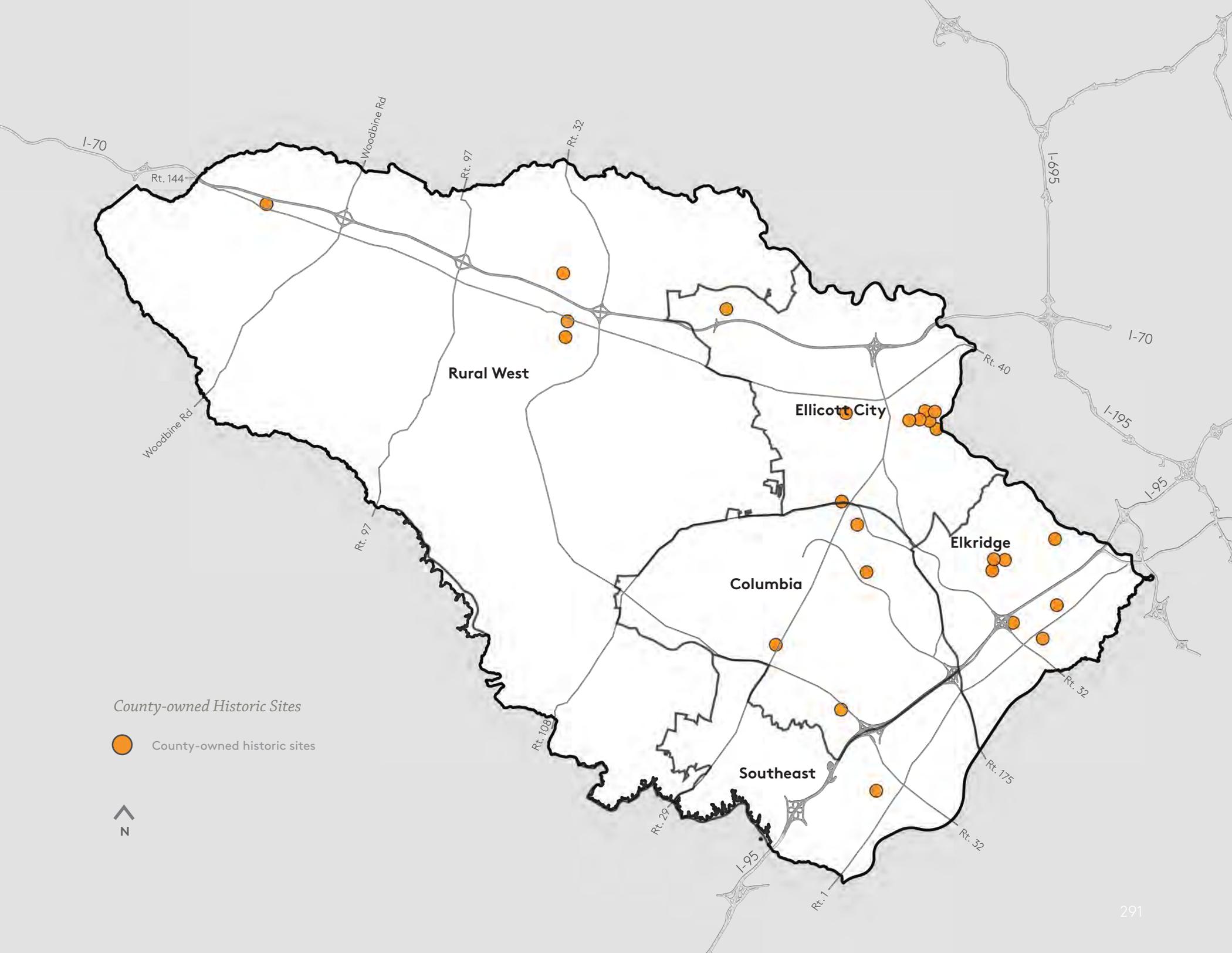


## COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC SITES

The following list identifies county-owned historic sites. The historic sites marked with an asterisk are also included as part of the park inventory.

HISTORIC SITE NAME	ACREAGE
B & O Railroad Museum*	0.34
Belmont Manor and Historic Park*	72.64
Blandair Historic Farm (BLA)	n/a
Bollman Truss Bridge*	2.21
Clover Hill Farm House (RBP)	n/a
Col. Anderson Memorial*	0.16
Doyle Spring House (RBP)	n/a
Ellicott City Colored School House Restored*	13.49
Old Firehouse Museum*	0.04
Granite Mansion (Heine Property)*	5.56
Hebb House (WFP)	n/a
Heritage Orientation Center (Little Court House)*	0.19
James Marlow House (SMP)	n/a

HISTORIC SITE NAME	ACREAGE
James Sykes House (WFP)	n/a
Lt. Col. Ephraim Anderson Grave Site (CAM)	n/a
McKenzie Barn (RBP)	n/a
Patapsco Female Institute*	9.74
Pfeiffer's Corner Schoolhouse (RBP)	n/a
Poplar Springs Park*	7.04
Pratt Truss Bridge Historic Site*	0.20
Ryan Property Historic Well (ECSHR)	n/a
Simpsonville Mill Ruins (RNC)	n/a
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin*	0.16
Troy House (TP)	n/a
Waverly Mansion*	3.44



*County-owned Historic Sites*

● County-owned historic sites



## STATE-OWNED PARKLAND AND NATURAL AREAS

The following list identifies state-owned open spaces, their respective acreages, and owners. All information was provided by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources *Current Acreage Report*.

PARK/SPACE NAME	OWNER	ACREAGE
Patapsco Valley State Park	State of Maryland	6,025
Patuxent State Park	State of Maryland	3,500
Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area (WMA)	State of Maryland	268
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>State of Maryland</b>	<b>9,793</b>



*State-owned Parkland and Natural Areas*

- State-owned parkland and natural areas
- 1** Patapsco Valley State Park
- 2** Patuxent State Park
- 3** Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area (WMA)



## COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION PARKS

The Columbia Association (CA) owns and maintains the following six parks:

- » Jackson Pond
- » Kennedy Gardens
- » Lake Elkhorn
- » Lake Kittamaqundi
- » Symphony Woods
- » Wilde Lake



*Columbia Association Parks*

 CA-owned parkland and natural areas

1 Wilde Lake

2 Kennedy Gardens

3 Lake Kittamaqundi

4 Symphony Woods

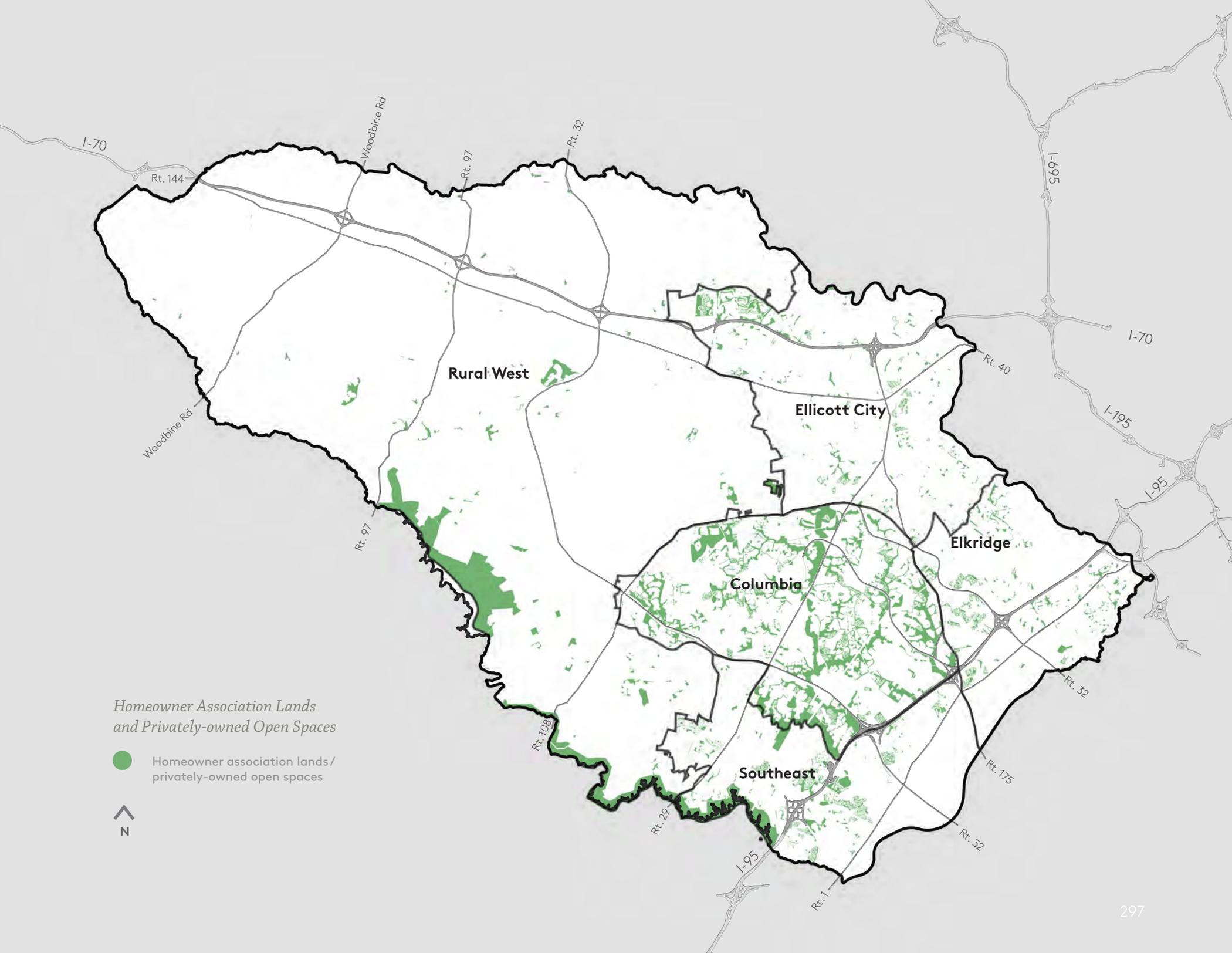
5 Jackson Pond

6 Lake Elkhorn



## HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION LANDS AND OTHER PERMANENTLY PRESERVED PRIVATE OPEN SPACES

Within the county, there is a total of approximately, 11,398 acres of private open space. These lands consist of homeowner association lands and other permanently preserved private open spaces by the Columbia Association and by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).



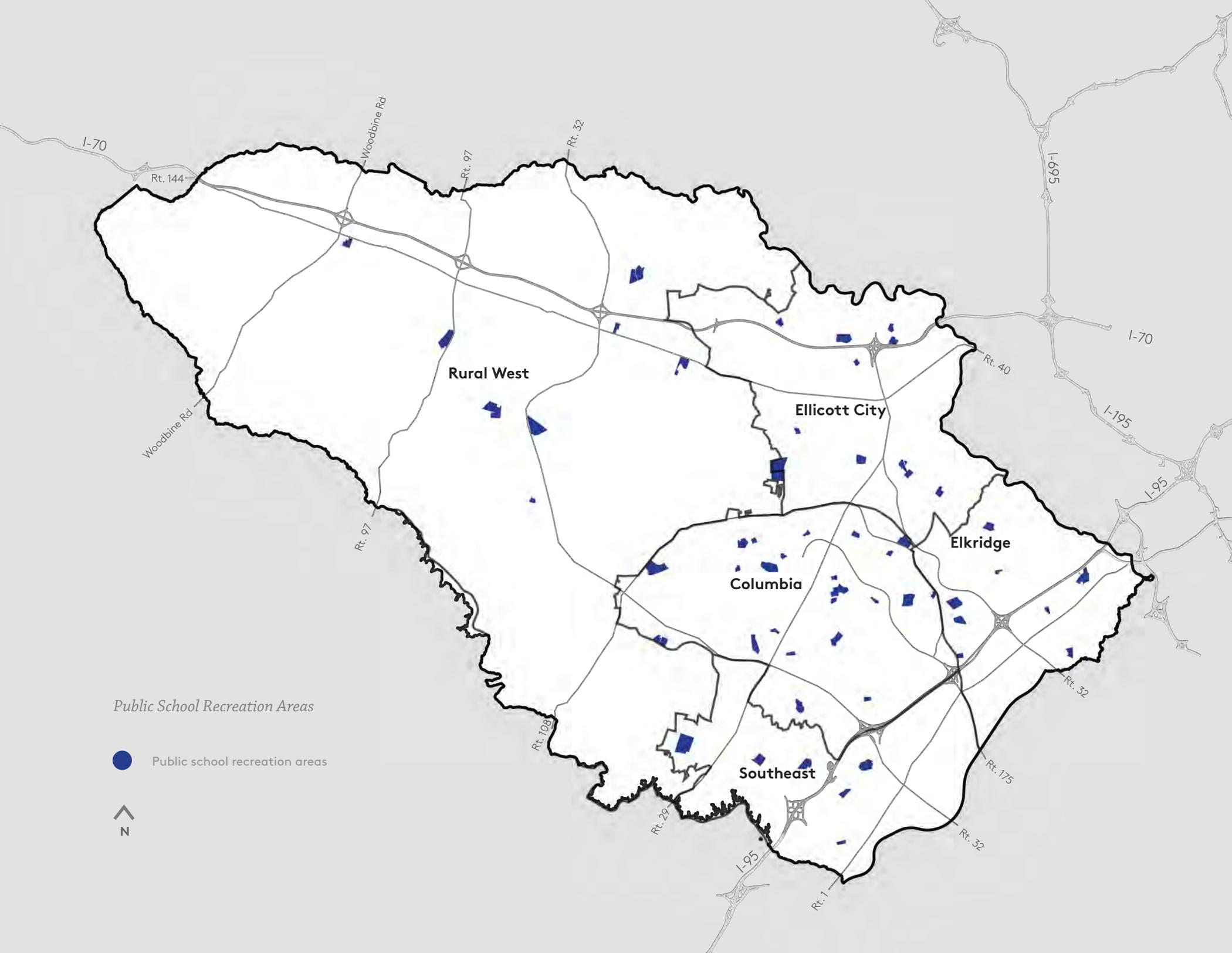
*Homeowner Association Lands  
and Privately-owned Open Spaces*

● Homeowner association lands/  
privately-owned open spaces



## PUBLIC SCHOOL RECREATION AREAS

Within the county, there is a total of 1,897 acres of accessible, public school recreation areas.



*Public School Recreation Areas*

● Public school recreation areas



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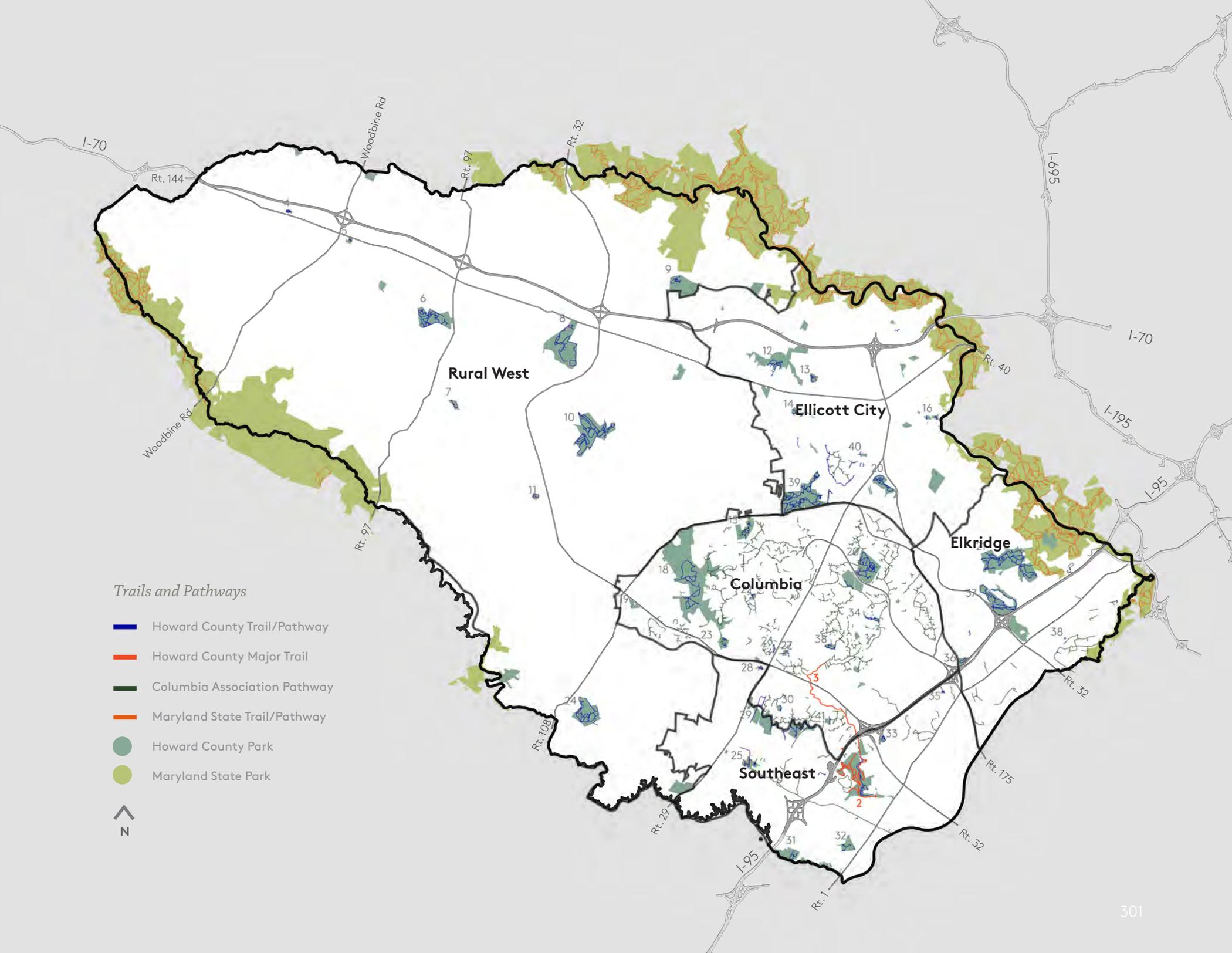
## TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

The county trail system consists of trails and pathways within parks and open spaces maintained by the Department, Columbia Association pathways, and state trails within Maryland state parks. The county maintains a total of 104 miles of trails and pathways, including three major trails: Patuxent Branch Trail (4.3 miles), Savage Mill Trail (1.16 miles), and Wincopin Trail (5.07 miles).

MAP NUMBER	MAJOR TRAIL
1	Wincopin Trail
2	Savage Mill Trail
3	Patuxent Branch Trail

MAP NUMBER	COUNTY PARK WITH TRAIL OR PATHWAY
4	Poplar Springs Park
5	Lisbon Park
6	Western Regional Park
7	Warfields Pond Park
8	West Friendship Park
9	Alpha Ridge Park
10	Benson Branch Park
11	Dayton Park
12	David Force Community Park
13	Cypressmede Park
14	Font Hill Park
15	Cedar Lane Park
16	Patapsco Female Institute
17	Meadowbrook Park
18	Middle Patuxent Environmental Area
19	Heritage Heights Park
20	Blandair Regional Park
21	Rockburn Branch Park
22	Hawthorn Park

MAP NUMBER	COUNTY PARK WITH TRAIL OR PATHWAY
23	Robinson Nature Center
24	Schooley Mill Park
25	Hammond Mill
26	Martin Road
27	Atholton Park
28	Holiday Hills Park
29	Gorman Stream Valley Park
30	Dickinson Park
31	High Ridge Park
32	North Laurel Park
33	Guildford Park
34	Sewells Orchard Park
35	Cedar Villa Heights Park
36	Waterloo Park
37	Timbers at Troy Golf Course
38	Harwood Park
39	Centennial Park
40	Dunloggin Park
41	Huntington Park



*Trails and Pathways*

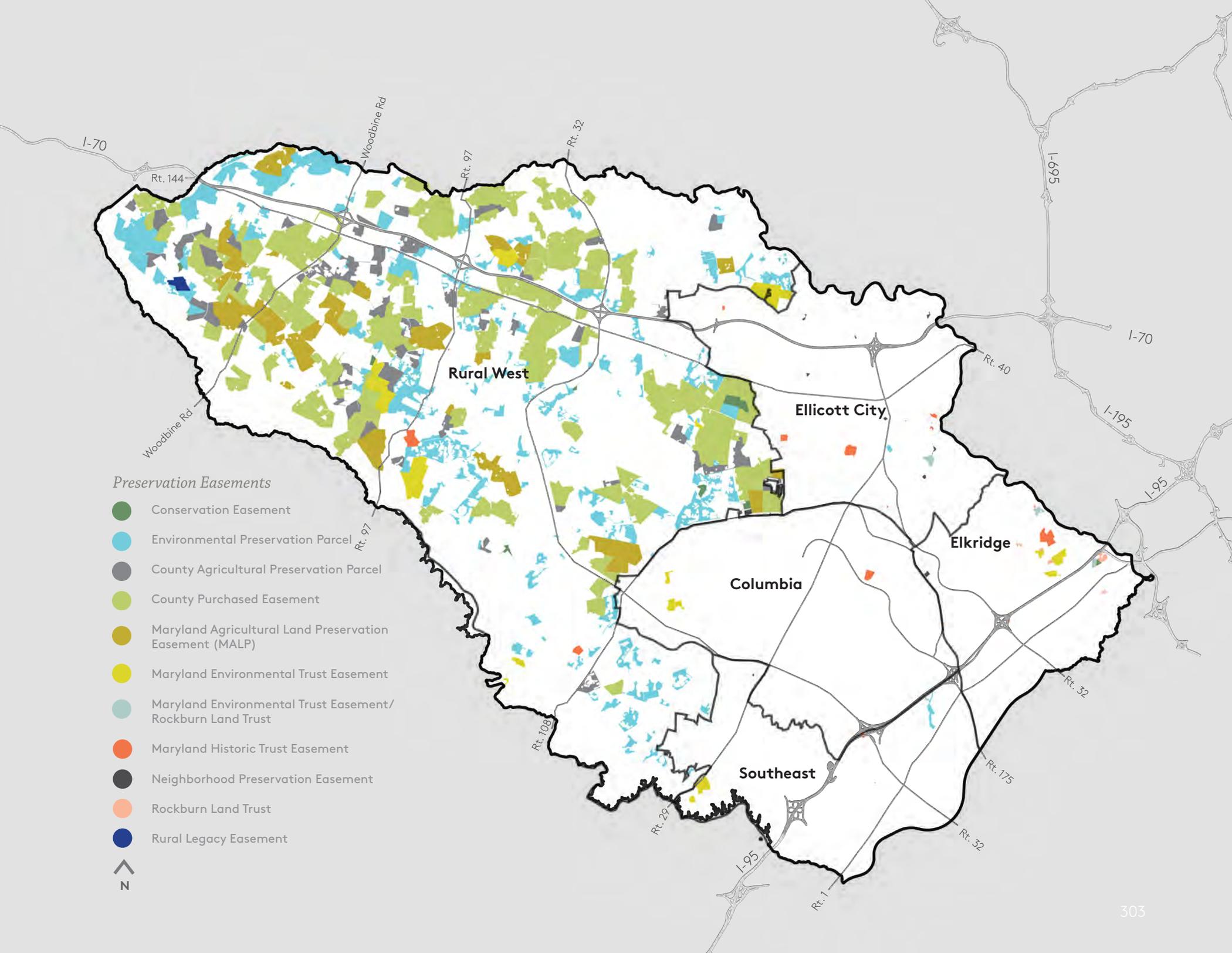
- █ Howard County Trail/Pathway
- █ Howard County Major Trail
- █ Columbia Association Pathway
- █ Maryland State Trail/Pathway
- █ Howard County Park
- █ Maryland State Park



## AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS

The county utilizes a variety of programs to purchase and preserve working agricultural land. Dedicated agricultural easements account for 2,972 acres in the county and purchased agricultural easements make up a significant majority of the total protected agricultural land; 198 properties and 19,377 acres. Property details and programs are detailed on the following pages.

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%	-
<b>Subtotal Purchased Agricultural Easements</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>18,651</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>19,377</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>726</b>
DEDICATED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels	74	2,972	74	2,972	0.0%	0
<b>Subtotal Dedicated Agricultural Easements</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>2,972</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>2,972</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>21,623</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>22,349</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>726</b>



*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



## ***Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP)***

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
1359 St. Michaels, LLC & 1359 St. Michaels No 2, LLC	12/22/86	240.24
2149 LLC (c/o Jesse & Savannah Case)	10/05/90	170.77
Abb, Paula M.	08/23/91	67.52
Adams, E. Alexander & Betty S. (trustees)	04/19/91	113.32
AFS Farm, LLC	01/27/16	58.70
Alimujiang, Wumaier	12/29/87	33.16
Anthony, Alan H. , Jr. & Hol C. H.	03/16/90	105.21
Argeroplos Estates, LLC	11/27/89	66.90
Asbury, Carole S. & Ronald S.	07/31/90	20.76
Banfield, Joseph P.	06/06/84	31.50
Barnes, William E. & Merhlyn P.	12/21/90	141.97
Bauer, Ricky M. & Leslie A.	07/16/90	121.56
Becker, William R. & Joan M.	07/16/90	48.92
Becraft, Larue	02/28/91	91.54
Becraft, Raymond J., Jr.	12/23/92	60.43
Bell, Robert B. & Doris E. (trustees)	09/22/94	92.36
Berman, Robert A. & Nancy L.	12/10/15	50.12
Blackert, William J. & Elizabeth H.	10/02/85	0.00
Blackert, William J. & Elizabeth H.	11/14/89	138.83
Bowling Green Farms, Inc.	05/15/85	78.03
Boyer, George M. & Buxton, Alicia R.	07/31/90	52.74
Brendel, Bruce B. & W. Philip, Jr.	08/01/91	50.92

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Brendel, Joseph Z.	07/11/90	24.50
Brigante, John P. & Cynthia A.	05/23/91	87.07
Britten, John S. & Lafever, A. Marianne (trustees)	05/23/91	29.00
Brown, James F. & Linda A.	10/30/84	85.18
Browning, Charles H., Jr. & Patricia L.	12/14/90	52.44
Carroll, Camilla & Philip D.	07/20/11	500.00
Carroll, Genevieve A.	12/17/15	52.95
Carroll, John L., Jr.	11/23/10	54.01
Carroll, John L., Jr., Genevieve A. & Thomas T.	10/03/96	330.52
Castro, Stephen J. & Maureen L.	06/08/92	23.06
Cedar Lane Farm II, LLC (c/o Rand Griffin)	04/19/91	59.68
CEEW, LLC	09/22/94	142.26
Cissel, Willis L., Jr & Marjorie S.	08/13/13	50.11
Clark, Martha A. & Mark T. (trustees)	12/03/87	156.01
Clarkland Farm, LLC	12/03/87	163.69
Clevenger, Clifton L., III (trustee)	02/28/91	103.89
Coldspring Farm, LLC	11/20/89	119.10
Colvin, Ernest J.	11/19/91	49.26
Cooke Forsythe, LLC	02/02/87	61.47
Crist, Nora F.	12/03/87	60.25
D'Amato, Donald W. & Theresa A.	12/31/90	21.84
Day, H. Calvin & Eileen M. (trustees)	11/20/89	54.77

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Days End Farm Horse Rescue, Inc.	12/05/91	58.30
DeFries, Grace A & Patricia C et al. (trustees)	06/23/09	34.84
Dickey, Jean R. (c/o James W. Dickey)	09/13/84	285.14
Doetsch, George L. Revocable Trust	06/15/90	99.25
Dorsey, Melanie S. & Standish, Daniel J (trustees)	08/01/91	132.75
Dove, Georgia E., & Ziehm Georgia W. et al. (trustees)	08/01/91	201.94
Dowd, Robert T., Jr.	08/02/90	126.60
Dunn, Edward K., Jr.	06/12/02	50.00
Dunn, Edward K., Jr. & Pierce B.	06/12/02	50.00
Dunn, Pierce B.	06/12/02	50.50
Dunn, Pierce B.	06/12/02	50.00
Dunst, Joseph W. & Elaine L.	06/17/85	61.30
EDW Partnership	08/23/91	61.10
Feaga, William H.	12/17/89	102.91
Ferguson, Dianna	12/21/10	69.88
G. Laurence Moore Family, LLP	04/14/86	132.34
Garratt, David G. & Mary K.	01/20/86	90.25
Gratia Plena, LLC	08/31/10	162.07
Grimes, H. Thomas, Dorothy L (trustees)	11/01/07	51.85
Haines, David E. (trustee) & Linda D.	05/25/88	55.24
High Bank Farms, LLC (c/o David Costello)	10/21/94	131.50
Hobbs, John M. & Jamie G.	11/14/89	51.00
Holly House Farm, LLC	03/16/95	717.17
Holweck, Edmond C. & Etta J.	07/13/90	23.26
Holweck-Mulreany, Karen & Mulreany, Timothy J.	07/13/90	25.75
Horner, Ann S.	07/11/90	53.66
Hough, William D.	12/05/91	55.94
Howard County Farm LLC (c/o Sabrina Dowd)	10/21/94	179.25
Hurt, Gerald F. & Kendra L. (trustees)	12/01/89	42.39
Hurt, James P., Jr. & Arlette Z.	12/01/89	55.14
Indian Cave Farm LLC	12/01/86	345.14

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Jagwood Farms LLC (c/o John Norman)	12/05/91	59.70
JBRK, LLC	08/15/91	100.22
JBRK, LLC	08/15/91	50.00
Johnson, Robert E.	12/23/92	78.73
Kelley, Truman L. & Lavinia W. (trustees)	10/08/92	93.84
Kelley, Truman L. & Lavinia W. (trustees)	10/08/92	97.31
Khademi, Abbas	12/10/84	59.12
Kittleman, Trent M.	10/08/92	111.26
Kreider, John R. & Elizabeth A.	12/01/95	26.58
L Meadow II, LP	10/29/91	174.15
Larriland Farm, Inc.	04/14/86	142.33
Lewis Farm, LLC	09/22/94	104.78
Lewis, Frederick T. & Thomas S. (trustees)	12/14/90	98.22
Lewis, Robert J. Jr. & Mary L.	12/17/91	99.89
Liker Family Farm LLC (c/o David Liker)	12/23/14	81.40
Litt, Larry B. & Patricia H.	01/20/87	58.28
Lloyd, Thomas E. (trustee) (c/o Robert Lloyd)	04/22/85	83.42
Lundy, Robert T. & Schmitt, Barbara	10/24/91	67.11
Manfuso, Robert T & Voss, Katharine	03/21/86	194.31
Mannarelli, Mario F, Sr. & Serafina, et al	08/04/11	106.80
Marriner Family Irrevocable Trust	01/09/88	52.68
Martin, Matthew (trustee)	09/19/95	133.05
McCarron, Gregg P. & Darlene	01/03/96	96.60
McCracken, Albert D.	09/19/96	44.07
McCuan Farms, LLC	11/27/89	50.01
MGM Descendants Trust (c/o Mark Moxley)	12/14/90	114.46
MHGH & S, LLC	10/05/90	83.22
Mihm, Phyllis	01/20/87	121.98
Mobberley, Jennifer J.	08/03/90	132.64
Mullinix, Gene W.	06/28/91	121.70
Mullinix, Gene W. & Charlotte A.	06/28/91	64.91

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Nessif, Richard J. & Jayne L.	07/16/90	58.62
Oakdale Farm, LLC (c/o Theodore Mariani)	01/31/92	175.41
Old Home Farm, LLC	09/22/94	150.52
Our Forsythe, LLC	11/19/15	29.38
P64 & P70-RNS, LLC and P64 & P70-BAS, LLC	11/19/10	52.67
Patrick Family Limited Partnership c/o B David Patrick III	05/21/97	144.81
Patrick Family Limited Partnership II	07/11/07	166.33
Pfefferkorn, James W., et al	05/05/14	49.00
Pfefferkorn, LLC	05/05/14	78.12
Pfefferkorn, Louis C & Mary S.	05/20/14	54.40
Phelps, James L. & Cora S.	03/08/96	70.81
Reinhardt, Harry W. & Christine	12/21/90	56.89
Reuwer, Megan L.	01/09/88	53.25
Rhodes, Frank E. Jr.	07/16/10	87.98
Rose Hill Farm, LLC	07/03/84	72.21
Schulze, Albert V.	05/19/92	77.88
Scrivener, Thomas J., Mary S. et al	11/20/91	132.78
Shaffers Mill Road, LLC (c/o Mark D. McFall)	10/08/92	41.80
Sharp, Charles A. & Denise D.	06/12/02	50.00
Sharp, Charles A., Denise D. & Charles A.	01/27/15	57.26
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	06/12/02	50.00
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	06/12/02	50.00
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	06/12/02	50.00
Shields, Rodney L. & Emily C.	01/16/92	18.89
Shmorhun, John M. (trustee)	05/21/92	91.90
Spicknall, William T.	12/31/86	75.33

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Stewart-Moore, Victoria	11/17/95	30.11
Stonesifer, Teresa K. & Dixon, Denise A.	12/01/89	93.71
Streaker, Howard F., Jr.	08/04/86	120.77
Streaker, M. Davis	08/06/91	71.00
Sullivan, Herbert H., Kimberlie J.	12/31/86	84.30
Swartz, Edward L. & Lynette P.	12/21/90	53.87
Szlasa, Nancy M. (trustee)	05/23/91	32.93
Szlasa, Nancy M. (trustee)	05/23/91	131.27
Taro Investment Corporation	05/15/14	94.99
Tate, Debbie	04/22/87	31.67
TDH Farms LLC	11/16/89	71.29
The Kennard Warfield Jr. Family LLLP	05/24/90	139.25
The LK Trust	12/14/90	55.72
The Moore Farm, LLC	06/28/91	50.29
The Rob and Ann Moxley Descendants Trust	06/18/84	200.58
Therapeutic and Recreational Riding Center Inc.	11/19/91	54.23
Vechery, Robert D.& Diann K.	12/13/90	39.02
Walker, Robert & Florence	01/03/90	134.90
Warfield, Eldred D. & Mary Jane (trustees)	07/11/90	66.24
Warfield, Samuel L. (trustee)	10/29/85	145.69
Way Back Farm, LLC	05/22/97	140.89
Weems, Walter R. & Lisa G.	10/08/92	12.32
Welling, James H. & Ruth W. (trustees)	06/27/84	122.21
Woodford Farms, LLC & Rhine, John Lee III	09/22/94	141.03
Zepp, William W. & David A. (trustees)	08/23/11	186.18
Ziegler, Natalie C. & Jessica (trustees)	10/03/96	350.51
<b>TOTAL COUNTY Purchased Easements</b>		<b>15,277.00</b>

## **Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALP)**

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Barrow Family, LLC	03/04/15	70.66
Becraft, Raymond J., Jr.	07/03/84	99.07
Breeden Family, LLC	09/18/84	96.02
Clark, Martha A.	03/08/84	46.37
Colmont, LLC	08/14/81	188.68
Colmont, LLC	08/14/81	142.32
Conrey, Richard N. & Roberts, Carmen C.	01/03/84	92.61
Covered Bridge Farms, (II, III & IV) LLC	01/31/84	130.20
Coyne, Robert J. & Eileen M.	12/05/84	78.19
FAL Properties, LLC	04/05/82	81.27
Ferley, Evelyn E. (trustee) & Sims, Jane F.	01/19/83	114.97
Fleming, Donald E. & Shirley L. (trustees)	05/27/84	176.41
Floyd, Barbara A. (trustee)	03/05/04	21.13
Hanson, James C. & Lavine, Elizabeth M.	10/22/03	21.22
Hobbs, John M. & Blackert, Elizabeth H.	09/14/81	53.79
Hunt, Clyde E. & Susan K.	03/09/87	28.21
Idiot's Delight Corporation II	10/26/81	90.96
Idiot's Delight, Inc.	10/26/81	100.59
Limestone Valley Farm	08/10/82	342.00

Current Owner	Recorded	Current Acreage
Long, Robert P., Jr. & Leslie P.	09/11/80	192.88
Mullinix Brothers Partnership	01/10/84	201.04
Mullinix Brothers Partnership	05/22/85	166.09
Mullinix, Michael D., Stephen L., et al	07/03/84	111.42
Never Sell The Land, LLC	07/17/86	114.00
Nichols Family Cherry Grove Trust (Marshall Nichols W, trustee)	06/29/85	256.00
Oak Ridge Farm, LLC	01/31/84	43.29
Oak Ridge Farm, LLC	09/11/80	39.67
Oakland Farms Associates II, LP	05/11/84	115.00
Patrick, B. David, III & James M.	05/31/83	92.84
Reuwer, Deborah L. & Meghan L. (trustees)	04/05/82	214.16
Shoffeitt, Paul G. & Lynn R.	09/25/81	67.09
Terry, Marc I. & Kelly L.	10/29/02	15.29
Welling, James H. & Ruth W.	02/06/84	102.20
Winkler, Jeffrey W. & Rhonda L.	10/15/82	239.61
Winkler, Jeffrey W. & Rhonda L.	04/13/88	55.90
Witty, Stephen P. & Kathleen L.	01/17/06	18.33
<b>TOTAL MALPF State Purchased Easements</b>		<b>4,019.48</b>

# Appendix J.

## CAPRA Similar Provider Summary

Within the county, there are a total of 316 additional providers of similar programs and services. The most common services and programs being offered by other providers are educational programs, cultural/arts programs, and parks/facilities and event venues. The following table outlines the breakdown of these types of services and programs:

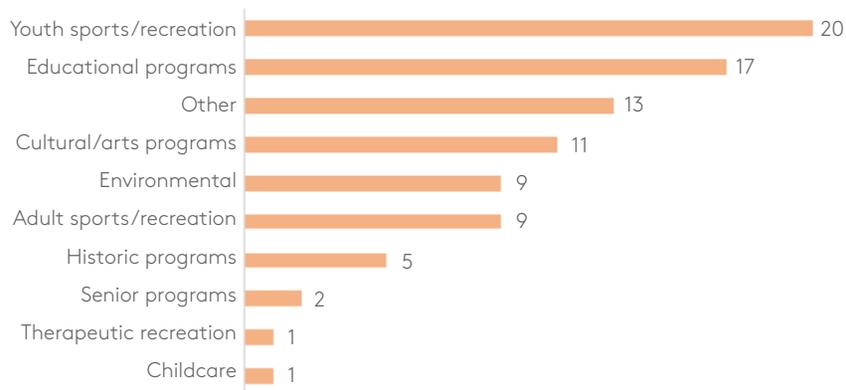
Type of service/ program	No. of similar providers offering this service	% of similar providers offering this service
Educational programs	204	27%
Cultural/Arts programs	202	26%
Parks/Facilities/ Event Venues	193	25%
Youth sports/ recreation	50	7%
Adult sports/ recreation	49	6%
Child care	25	3%
Senior programs	12	2%
Environmental programs	10	1%
Historic programs	8	1%
Other	6	1%
Therapeutic recreation	5	1%

As part of the CAPRA accreditation process, the county also conducted an online survey to identify similar providers within the county. The survey captured 48 responses and represented 42 individual agencies/organizations. The similar providers that responded to the survey are identified below:

- » AYRA Baseball
- » Backstage Dance Studio
- » Ballet with Cindee Velle
- » Baltimore County Parks
- » Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- » Chinese Language School of Columbia
- » Club Sci Kidz
- » Columbia Volleyball Club
- » Educational Enrichment Program
- » Elkridge Youth Organization (EYO)
- » Genesis Arts LLC
- » Howard County Youth Program (HCYP)
- » Howard County Youth Basketball Alliance (HYBA)
- » Heros Lacrosse, Inc.
- » Howard County Arts Council
- » Howard County Bird Club
- » Howard County Center of African American Culture, Inc.
- » Howard County Forestry Board
- » Howard County Historical Society
- » Howard County Officials, Inc.
- » Howard County Public School System (HCPSS)
- » Howard County Youth Hockey Club
- » Hurricanes Rugby
- » Kidera Designs
- » Maryland Independent Football Officials
- » MORE
- » Mountain Club of Maryland
- » None (Dog Obedience Provider)
- » Port Discovery Children’s Museum
- » Preservation Howard County
- » Race Pace Bicycles
- » Silver Knights Enrichment
- » Soccer Association of Columbia
- » Special Olympics Howard County
- » Trout Unlimited
- » University of Maryland Extension Bay-Wise and Master Naturalist Programs
- » University of Maryland Extension Howard County
- » Volunteer Center Serving Howard County
- » Warhawks Club Field Hockey
- » Western Howard County Soccer

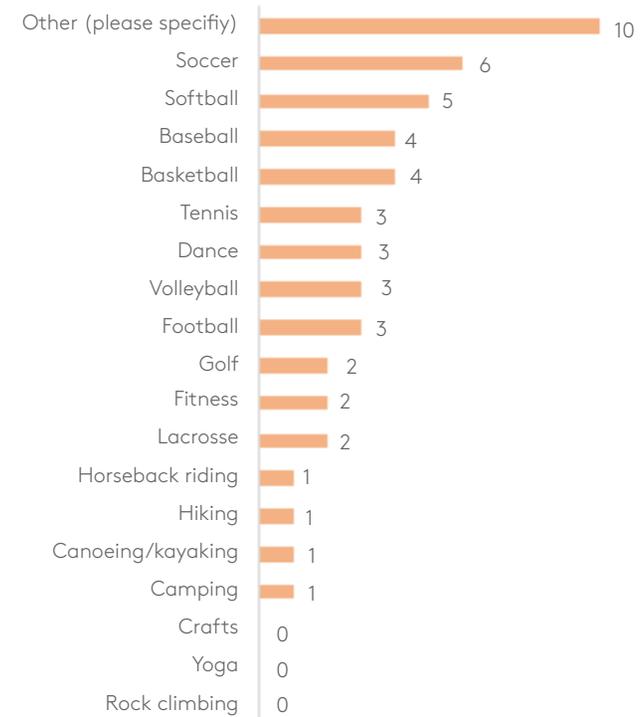
Similar providers self-reported the following program offerings in their survey responses:

### What programs or services do you offer? (select all that apply)



If similar providers identified either youth sports/recreation, or adult sports/recreation, therapeutic recreation, the survey prompted a specific response to the type of recreation offered.

### What recreation programs/leagues do you offer? (select all that apply)



Youth sports and recreation and educational programs are highly present in the similar providers' services. Traditional sports are highly represented recreationally. Alternatively, Senior programs, Therapeutic Recreation, and Child Care are each offered by less than two percent of similar providers.

These results parallel the gap analysis Howard County completed in 2011, in which Therapeutic Recreation and Child Care were the services least offered by local providers. At that time, it was reported that there was "a tremendous gap in service on the presence of therapeutic recreation and inclusion services (TREC) in and around Howard County." With only one of the 42 providers currently reporting TREC services, this signifies a continued gap in local service. The survey results also show a gap in child care services as compared to the 2011 survey. This is explained by two players in the market, Lifetime Fitness and the YMCA were not represented in the 2016 survey.

When respondents were asked to identify their core programs, over forty specific areas were identified. Their consolidated responses show that the majority of the program offerings can be categorized in the sports/fitness genre (38%).

Thirty survey respondents shared that their programs do not have the capacity to satisfy

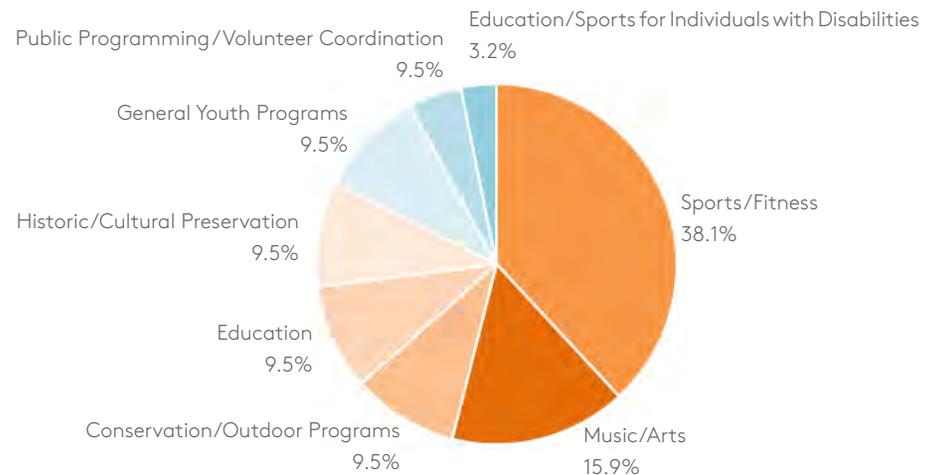
customer demand; however, their answers more often concentrated on facility-related constraints (40%) rather than programmatic constraints as suggested in the question. Examples included the desire for more field space, court time, and ice time as well as activity room size/capacity. Access and exposure to nature in various forms, including birding, hiking, community gardens and horticultural programs, was also an area expressed as not meeting customer demand.

Overall, the providers' future vision was highly positive and optimistic. The sentiment of

'continuing to grow' their respective program areas was repeated throughout 40% of the feedback. The words "grow", "expand", "add", and "more" stood out as indicators of predicted future success.

Half (50%) of the respondents to Question 6 cited that they do not have programs they are "not offering that they would like to offer". Those who did have programs that they are not currently offering listed expansion of their current offerings, to either new demographics (i.e. girls) or ability levels, as a priority.

### What do you consider to be your core program(s)?



When asked about duplication of service, respondents were mixed on their opinions: one-third (33%) stated "yes", while two-thirds (67%) stated either "no", "not sure", or provided no answer. Several of the respondents stated that the duplication of service is important, as there is ample demand for programs.

As far as respondents' impression of the quality of Howard County Recreation and Park programs, 88% had an impression score of 80 or better, which indicates an opinion of high quality.

Over two-thirds of the respondents (71%) currently have a partnership with Howard County Recreation and Parks:

Virtually all respondents (97%) were satisfied with their partnership and had no suggestions for improvements. Those who did make suggestions concentrated on facility based improvements and programming suggestions. Relationship building and funding were also mentioned as important to a few of the respondents.

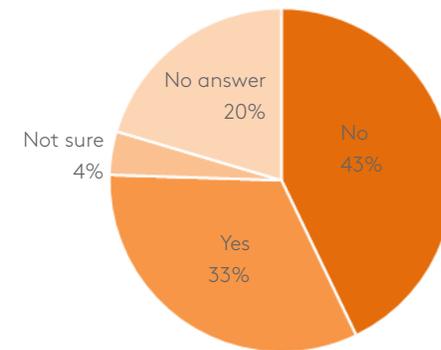
When asked for the provider's partnership ideas, they varied based on individual provider's programmatic perspective. Fourteen specific events, joint programming, and administrative suggestions were offered. These included comments such as improved efforts in getting fields ready after

inclement weather, field allocation process improvements, ensuring proper field size and locations, and more co-sponsored programs and advertising.

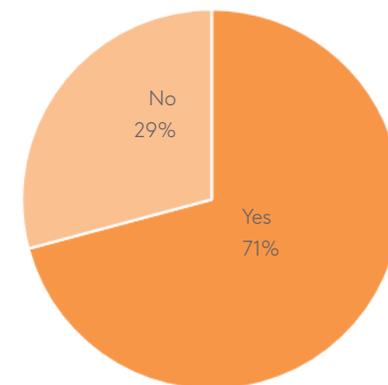
Howard County Recreation and Parks is generally held in high regard, with a majority of providers expressing complimentary and positive opinions:

Positive sentiments towards specific Howard County Recreation and Parks staff were scattered throughout the survey responses. There were a handful of respondents who felt strongly that Howard County Recreation and Parks should not duplicate services that community groups already offer; others seemed to feel the demand for duplicate programs is high enough where the duplication is necessary. Respondents expressed gratitude at the end of the survey for specific staff efforts and for the provision of the survey.

### When you think about recreation programs in Howard County, are there any program areas that you feel are being duplicated with your services?



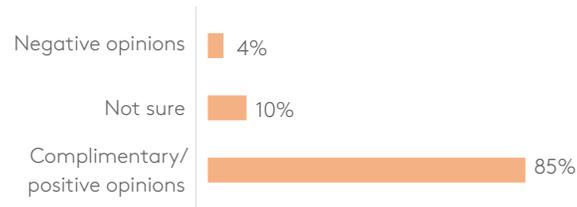
### Do you have a partnership with Howard County Recreation and Parks?



## SUMMARY

The interest and desire by the similar providers to engage in future partnership opportunities appears strong. Based on the expressed vision to continue to grow and specific requests for calls back to discuss partnership opportunities further, it is recommended that Howard County Recreation and Parks tap into the individual strengths of each organization to provide an enhanced level of service to the community. Specific attention should be paid to developing child care, therapeutic recreation and senior programming. Consideration should also be given to the specific ideas shared in the open-ended provider responses. Howard County Recreation and Parks is in an excellent place – the providers perceive an overall positive public image, are satisfied with Howard County Recreation and Parks, and have a general desire for growth; these factors favorably position the organization for future strategic partnership opportunities.

### How would you assess Howard County Recreation and Parks' brand and image in the community?



## LOCAL SIMILAR PROVIDERS

The following list identifies local similar providers to Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks.

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
4H				X		X			X		
50+ centers - Bain Center, Glenwood Center, North Laurel, Ellicott City, Elkridge, Savage							X				
Abiding Savior Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Action Worship Ctr				X		X				X	
Agape Mission Church				X		X				X	
Alberta Gary United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Arabesque Dance Studio		X				X					
Asbury United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Atholton Seventh-Day Adventist Church				X		X				X	
Atholton Youth Recreation Association (AYRA)		X									
Autobahn Indoor Speedway		X	X							X	
Backstage Dance Studio						X					
Ballet with Cindee Velle		X	X			X					
Baltimore County				X	X	X			X		
Baltimore First Seventh Day				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum				X	X						
Bet Aviv				X		X				X	
Beth Shalom				X		X				X	
Bethany Lane Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Bethany United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Bethel Assembly of God				X		X				X	
Bethel Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Bethel Korean Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Blessed Sacrament Old Catholic				X		X				X	
Bridgeway Community Church				X		X				X	
Brown's Chapel United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Brunswick Columbia Lanes and Brunswick Normandy Lanes		X	X								
Caitlin Dunbar Nature Center				X					X		
Calvary Chapel Ellicott City				X		X				X	
Calvary Community Church				X		X				X	
Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Calvert County		X	X			X	X	X		X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Carrolton Hall				X	X						
Cattail Creek Country Club			X								
Celebration Church				X		X				X	
Central Maryland Christian Church				X		X				X	
Channing Memorial Church				X		X				X	
Chapelgate Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Children of America Child Care	X										
Children's Learning Center at Howard Community College	X										
Children's Manor Montessori School	X										
Child's Garden Learning Center	X										
Childtime of Columbia	X										
Childtime of Columbia	X										
Chinese Bible Church Of Howard				X		X				X	
Chinese Language School of Columbia				X		X					
Christ Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
Christ Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Christ Memorial Presbyterian				X		X				X	
Christ Memorial Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Christ United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Christadelphians Of Baltimore				X		X				X	
Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter Day Saints				X		X				X	
Church Of Life In Jesus				X		X				X	
Church Of Philippi				X		X				X	
Church Of Religious Science				X		X				X	
Church of the Resurrection				X		X				X	
Circle D Farm				X					X	X	
City Of Hope Intl Worship Ctr				X		X				X	
City Of Hope Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
City of Laurel		X	X			X	X			X	
Clarks Elioak Farm				X							
Clarlen Nursery	X										
Club Sci Kidz				X							
Columbia Art Center						X					
Columbia Association	X	X	X	X		X	X			X	
Columbia Church Of Christ				X		X				X	
Columbia Church Of God in Christ				X		X				X	
Columbia Clippers Swim team		X									
Columbia Community Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Columbia Family Worship Ctr				X		X				X	
Columbia Festival of the Arts						X					
Columbia Four Square Church				X		X				X	
Columbia Gymnastics		X									
Columbia Horse Center		X	X								
Columbia Ice Rink		X	X								
Columbia Jewish Congregation				X		X				X	
Columbia Laurel Society				X		X				X	
Columbia Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Columbia Ravens		X									
Columbia School of Music						X					
Columbia Sports Park		X	X								
Columbia Volleyball Club		X									
Community Baptist Church of Jessup				X		X				X	
Community Bible Church				X		X				X	
Community Foundation of Howard				X		X					
Conference Columbia Union				X		X				X	
Congregation Ahavas Israel				X		X				X	
Cornerstone Church				X		X				X	
Cornerstone Community Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Countryside Fellowship Church				X		X				X	
Cradlerock Childrens Center	X										
Crossroads Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Crossroads Church-The Nazarene				X		X				X	
Cub Scout 9X4 Pack		X							X		
Cycle2Health			X								
Dar-al-Taqwa				X		X				X	
Dorsey Emmanuel United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Drama Learning Center & Red Branch Theatre Company						X					
Earth Forum of Howard				X							
Earth Treks Climbing Gym		X	X								
Educational Enrichment Program				X							X
Elkridge Athletic Club		X	X								
Elkridge Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Elkridge Christian Community Church				X		X				X	
Elkridge Heritage Society				X	X						
Elkridge Youth Organization		X									
Ellicott City Assembly of God				X		X				X	
Emmanuel Temple Church				X		X				X	
Emmanuel United Methodist Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Emory United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Emory United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Epiphany Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Fairland Aquatics and Gym		X	X								
Fairway Hills Golf Course			X								
Faith Bible Church				X		X				X	
First Baptist Church of Elkridge				X		X				X	
First Baptist Church of Guilford				X		X				X	
First Baptist Church of Savage				X		X				X	
First Christian Community Church				X		X				X	
First Evangelical Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
First Macedonia Baptist Church				X		X				X	
First Presbyterian Church of Howard County				X		X				X	
Fit4Mom			X								
Four Square Gospel Church				X		X				X	
Frederick County		X	X	X		X	X		X		
Friendship Hot Air Balloon Company		X	X								
Full Gospel Baptist Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Full Gospel Pentecostal Church				X		X				X	
Gaines Ame Church				X		X				X	
Gary Memorial United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Genesis Arts LLC				X		X					X
Gethsemane Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Gethsemane Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Glen Mar Methodist				X		X				X	
Glenelg United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Glenwood Country Day School	X										
Good Hope Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Grace Church Child Care Center	X										
Grace Community Church				X		X				X	
Grace Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
Granite Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Great Room at Savage Mill										X	
Greater St John's Church-Laurel				X		X				X	
Gymboree	X										
Gyung Hyang Garden Presbyterian				X		X				X	
Hammond Park Pool		X	X								

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Hampshire Greens golfcourse		X	X								
Harvester Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Harwood Park United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Haven on the Lake			X								
Hebron House										X	
Hero's Lacrosse		X									
Hickory Ridge Community Association				X		X				X	
High Point Independent Baptist				X		X				X	
Hilltop Child Care Center	X										
Hobbit's Glen Golf Club			X								
Hope Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Hope Bible Church				X		X				X	
Hopkins United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Horowitz Visual and Performing Arts Center				X		X					
Hosanna Baptist Church				X		X				X	
House Father's				X		X				X	
Howard Astronomical League				X							
Howard County Center for the Arts Council				X		X	X				X
Howard County Center of African American Culture, Inc.				X	X	X					X

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Howard County Cycling Club			X								
Howard County Fairgrounds										X	
Howard County Lacrosse Program		X									
Howard County Officials, Inc.		X	X				X				
Howard County Public Libraries (HCPL)				X		X	X				
Howard County Public Schools (HCPS)	X			X							
Howard County Striders			X								
Howard County Youth Program (HCYP)		X		X							
Howard County Youth Sports (HCYS)		X									
Iglesia De Dios Pentecostal Mi				X		X				X	
Jehovah's Witnesses				X		X				X	
Jessup Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Kiddie Academy of Elkridge	X										
Kidera Designs						X					
Kids Time Out	X										
Kingdom Hall-Jehovah Witnesses				X		X				X	
Kings Contrivance Community Association				X		X				X	
Kiononia Fellowship Ministries				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Kittamaqundi Community Inc				X		X				X	
LA Fitness			X								
La Petite Academy of Columbia	X										
Laurel Korean Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Leadership Howard County Inc.				X							
Liberty Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Lifetime Fitness			X								
Linden-Linthicum United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Lisbon United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Little Builders Learning Center	X										
Little Patuxent KinderCare	X										
Living Hope Orthodox Presbyterian				X		X				X	
Locust United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Long Reach Community Association				X		X					
Longfellow Nursery School	X										
Lornwood Day Care and Gifted Center	X										
Lutheran Church of the Living Word				X		X				X	
Martin Luther King Jr Community Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Maryland Historical Society				X	X						
Maryland Independent Football Officials		X	X								
Melville Chapel United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Merriweather Post Pavilion										X	
Mid-Maryland Triathlon Club			X								
Montgomery County		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Mt Gregory United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Mt. Hebron Presbyterian Church				X		X				X	
Mt. Pisgah A.M.E. Church				X		X				X	
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
National Curling Center - Atomic Curling Club (Fairlane Regional Park)			X								
New Generation Church-Nazerene				X		X				X	
New Heritage Church				X		X				X	
New Hope Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
New Hope Seventh-Day Adventist				X		X				X	
New Life Community Church				X		X				X	
New Life Mennonite Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
New Macedonia Baptist Church				X		X				X	
New Zion Ctr Of Hope United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Nixon's Farm										X	
Oak Ridge Community Church				X		X				X	
Oakland Manor										X	
Oakland Mills Church Of God				X		X				X	
Oakland Mills Church Of God				X		X				X	
Oakland Mills Interfaith Center				X		X				X	
Olenka School of Music						X					
Open Bible Tabernacle				X		X				X	
Open Door Bible Church				X		X				X	
Orthodox Church Of St Matthew				X		X				X	
Our Lady of Perpetual Help				X		X				X	
Our Shepherd Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Owen Brown Interfaith Center										X	
Patapsco Friends Meeting				X		X				X	
Payne African Methodist Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
Prince George's County	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Public School Employees' Child Development Program	X										

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Race Pace Bicycles		X	X								
Reapers Den										X	
Redeemed Christian Church of God				X		X				X	
Restoration International				X		X				X	
Ridgeley Run Community Center										X	
River Hill Community Association				X		X	X				
River's Edge Community Church				X		X				X	
Rockland United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
Rocky Gorge Golf Fairway			X								
Rolling Hills Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Savage Boys and Girls Clubs		X									
Savage United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
School of Rock Columbia						X					
Shalom Miracle Church				X		X				X	
Sharon Missionary Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Shepherd of the Glen Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
Shepherd's Life				X		X				X	
Shulchan Adonai				X		X				X	
Silver Knights Enrichment		X									X
Slayton House (CA)						X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Soccer Association of Columbia (SAC)		X									
Soccer Dome		X									
South Columbia Baptist Church				X		X				X	
Special Olympics Howard County		X	X					X			X
Special Olympics Howard County		X	X					X			
Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Howard County				X		X				X	
St Andrew's Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
St Augustine Catholic Church				X		X				X	
St James United Methodist Church				X		X				X	
St. Alphonsus Rodriguez R.C. Church				X		X				X	
St. Francis of Assisi Church				X		X				X	
St. John Baptist Church				X		X				X	
St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
St. John the Evangelist, United Methodist/ Presbyterian				X		X				X	
St. John's Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
St. Louis Catholic Church				X		X				X	
St. Louis School		X		X		X					
St. Mark's Episcopal Church				X		X				X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
St. Paul Catholic Church				X		X				X	
St. Paul Lutheran Church				X		X				X	
St. Peter's Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
State Land - Patuxent and Patapsco State Parks										X	
Supreme Sports Club			X								
Temple Isaiah				X		X				X	
Ten Oaks Ballroom										X	
Terrapin Adventures		X	X								
That's Dancing Ballroom and Dance Sport Center						X					
The Church at Covenant Park				X		X				X	
The Club at Turf Valley			X								
The Meeting House (CA)										X	
The Other Barn (CA)										X	
The Sky Zone		X	X								
The Young School	X										
Thunder Soccer Club of Howard County		X									
Toby's Dinner Theatre						X					
Town Center Community Association			X	X		X	X				
Triadelphia Reservoir Lake		X	X								
Triadelphia Seventh-Day Adventist Church				X		X				X	
Trinity Episcopal Church				X		X				X	
Trout Unlimited		X	X	X					X		
Turf Valley Resort										X	

AGENCY	CHILD CARE	YOUTH SPORTS/ RECREATION	ADULT SPORTS/ RECREATION	EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS	HISTORIC PROGRAMS	CULTURAL/ ARTS PROGRAMS	SENIOR PROGRAMS	THERAPEUTIC RECREATION	ENVIRON. PROGRAMS	PARKS/ FACILITIES/ VENUES	OTHER
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia				X		X				X	
United Social Sports (USS)			X								
University of Maryland Extension Bay-Wise and Master Naturalist Programs				X					X		
Upper Patuxent Archeology Group				X							
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission - Scott's Cove Park										X	
Watershed Stewards Academy				X							
Waverly Woods Golf Club			X								
West Howard Swim Club		X	X								
West Liberty United Methodist				X		X				X	
Western Howard County Soccer		X									
Western Howard County Warhawks		X									
Western Howard Field Hockey		X									
Wilde Lake Community Association						X				X	
Willow Springs Golf Course			X								
Y of Central Maryland Childcare	X										
YMCA		X	X		X						
Yoga Center of Columbia			X								

# Appendix H.

## Design Recommendations

The following recommendations serve as design guidelines for the planning and implementation of county goals. The opportunity sites identified are used to illustrate strategies that could be applied throughout the county.

### MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE AND DRIVING INNOVATION

In order to maintain excellence and drive further innovation within the Department, the Plan puts forth several recommendations for recreation and park services. These recommended improvements are based on the Plan analysis and community input and are represented through the following seven categories, all of which correspond to specific department goals:

- » Recreation
- » Education
- » Ecology
- » Connectivity
- » Placemaking
- » Visibility and Communication

At the countywide level, the Plan recommends the following:

**Recreation:** Celebrate the uniqueness of Howard County's diverse community through recreational opportunities that support multigenerational play, evolving trends, and diverse programming that are accessible to everyone. These opportunities should maintain a healthy balance of facility and park supply to support growing demand.

**Education:** Support lifelong learning through programming and partnerships that build community knowledge around the importance of healthy living and wellness.

**Ecology:** Celebrate the significance of Howard County's watershed system and diverse open space types. Invest in sustainable spaces and practices throughout all parks, recreation and natural spaces.

**Connectivity:** Create strong physical connections within and between parks, facilities and open spaces. Imagine Howard County as a connected green infrastructure system that supports people and the greater natural system and provides linkages between the community and neighboring counties.

**Placemaking:** Create inspiring public spaces that focus on local community assets to enhance human relationships, reinforce park identity and promote overall wellbeing.

**Visibility and Communications:** Improve the identity of the system through enhanced wayfinding and impactful communication that is clear and visible. Continue to build meaningful partnerships outside of the Department to enhance visitor experience and community outreach.

**Department Operations:** Cultivate a strong workforce under the tenets and mission and vision of the Department. Enhance operational sustainability, efficiency, and the user experience.

Appearing across the three themes of this Plan, these categories are used to ground the countywide recommendations in Howard County's recreation and park system, specifically within identified opportunity sites. For example, Western Regional Park, a highly amenitized 189-acre park located in the county's Rural West, is highlighted as one of these opportunity sites with great potential. Although recommended improvements to these sites may be specific, they are only meant to serve as examples to illustrate the greater principle behind each recommendation. Ultimately, these principles and ideas can be deployed across the system.

*Western Regional Park*  
Opportunity Site

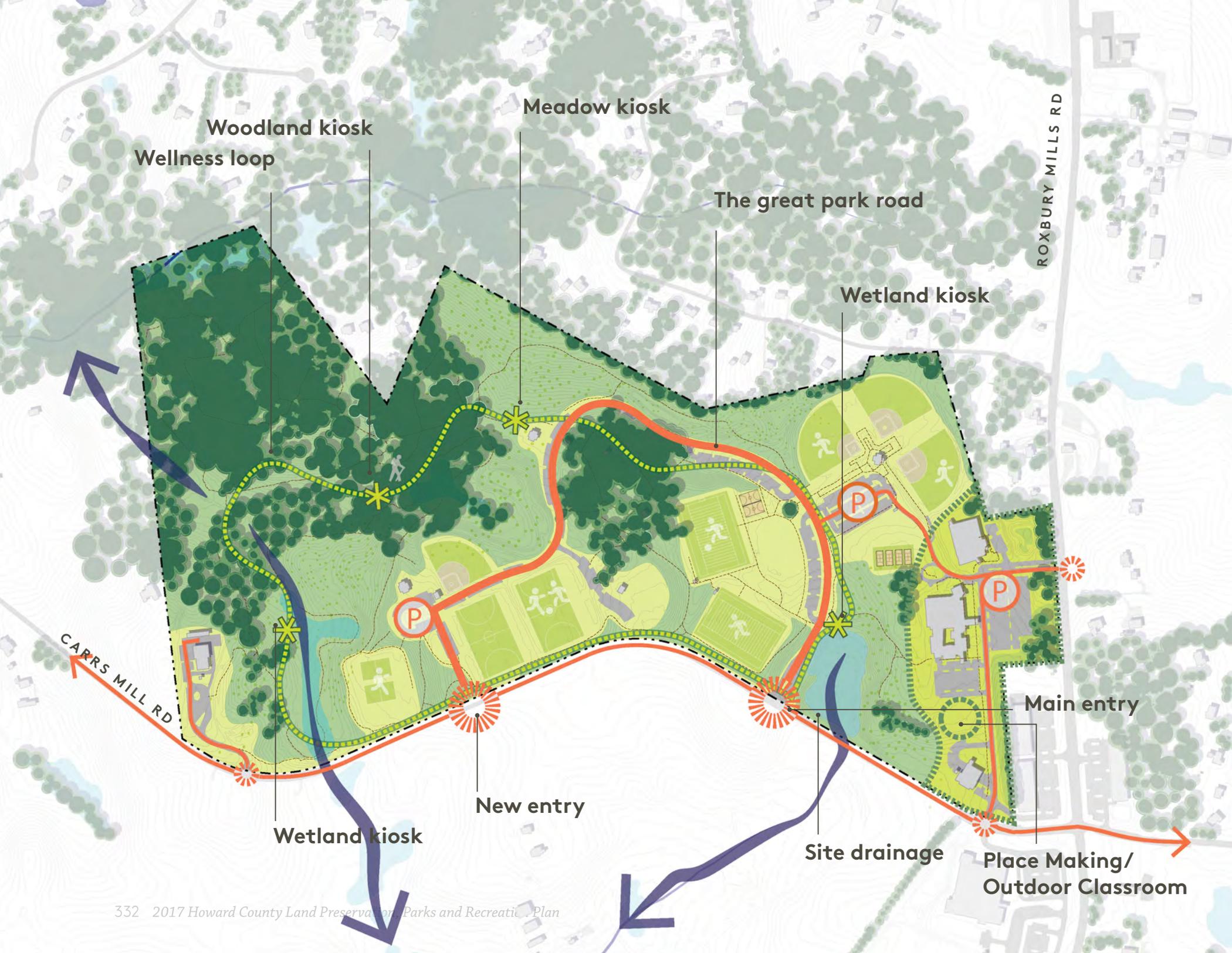
## Recreation



Western Regional Park currently contains numerous recreation spaces, such as athletic fields, courts, and playgrounds, which primarily serve children. To encourage multi-generational play, the recreation recommendation and site identify a variety of outdoor opportunities that support accessible and inclusive programming and facilities. Playgrounds should cater to a variety of age groups. Various high-low impact exercising

equipment and multi-use play courts appeal to groups interested in non-field sports and pick-up sports. The recommendation promotes multi-generational play to allow various age groups to come together to socialize, inspire each other, and promote the sense of a stronger diverse community. The recreational loop trail meanders through the park and allow walkers, joggers, and bikers to measure their achievements through mile markers.





Woodland kiosk  
Wellness loop

Meadow kiosk

The great park road

ROXBURY MILLS RD

Wetland kiosk

CARRS MILL RD

P

P

P

Main entry

Wetland kiosk

New entry

Site drainage

Place Making/  
Outdoor Classroom

## Education



The proposed trail loop through Western Regional Park also serves as an educational tool. The trail winds through various ecosystems including meadows, woodlands, and wetlands. The educational kiosks in each of the ecosystems will educate trail users about the significance of each and the relationship of those systems to the community. Various creative and interactive learning opportunities exist at each kiosk to foster and encourage young curiosity.

Western Regional Park is located across Carrs Mill Road from Bushy Park Elementary School and adjacent to a fire station, library and the Gary J. Arthur Community Center. The recreation recommendation proposes leveraging those inherent civic synergies through new or enhanced physical connections between each institution. Using Western Regional Park as an example, opportunities exist to create connected sidewalks from the middle and elementary schools across Carrs Mill Road to a currently undeveloped parcel between the fire station and community center. The space is large enough for flexible, educational programming including outdoor classrooms and community gardens.

### *Western Regional Park*

Potential Outcomes for Opportunity Site

## Ecology



The passive, more natural area of Western Regional Park would benefit greatly from a series of mini-ecosystems that could both educate visitors and improve the overall ecological health of the park. These mini-ecosystems would strengthen and build on the existing conditions within the park, such as the low-lying wetland and forested areas. With the park's existing topography, all water currently drains into the low-lying wetlands. The proposed mini-wetland ecosystem would include a network of wetlands that would combine into the existing Little Cattail Creek system. The woodland ecosystem would densify and promote forest protection through various conservation measures. Nature play areas would be located throughout this woodland area to help foster a community that actively participates in conservation and sustainable measures.

A proposed natural trail throughout the park would serve to tell the story of the various ecosystems and better connect park visitors with the surrounding wildlife. By communicating the importance of various ecological systems to the public and by creating an accessible natural experience, Western Regional Park could build on previous county efforts to better bridge the gap between human and nature.

## Connectivity



Today, the road through Western Regional Park is functional for circulation, but has room for improvement. Park design has a long history of integrating beautiful roads and circulation into the park and recreation experience. The idea of a great park road would help improve connectivity for all modes of transportation within Western Regional Park. Building on the existing network of roads, the great park road would serve as a continuous loop entering and exiting on Carrs Mill Road. This road would not only improve circulation by extending the existing road to connect with Carrs Mill Road, but also would create a distinct, formal entrance for the park. The entrance from Roxbury Mill Road would become the formal point of entry for the school and community campus. The great park road would also integrate secure walking and biking infrastructure, so as to accommodate all forms of transportation on this continuous loop.

A single, continuous main recreational trail is also proposed for the park. This main trail would connect to the great park road and to the existing recreation trails, allowing visitors to diverge from the main path and explore smaller trails. Educational kiosks, mile markers, and interactive wayfinding hubs would be located throughout the trail to enhance the overall user experience. As a continuous loop, this trail would form a closed system and improve overall connectivity.

## **Placemaking**

The eastern edge of Western Regional Park is characterized by several civic and community institutions including the Glenwood Branch Howard County Library, Gary J. Arthur Community Center, Bushy Park Elementary School, and Mt. Gregory United Methodist Church. This grouping of institutions forms a campus-like setting and would benefit from additional amenities that would strengthen this sense of community, such as an outdoor classroom. Intended for users of all ages and backgrounds, an outdoor classroom would promote interactive learning in a new, informal environment. This classroom would serve a wide array of social and educational activities and contribute to the campus identity of this park and its adjacent institutions.

Several key partnership opportunities exist with the park's adjacent institutions. These opportunities could help the Department leverage the park's existing amenities, as well as improve community outreach efforts. Western Regional Park plays a significant role in communicating to the public the importance of both health and wellness and natural resource conservation, and new partnerships would only advance this effort.

## **Visibility and Communication**

In order to increase visibility and the overall user experience, all parks should have well-identified entrances and wayfinding signage. Western Regional Park would benefit from two well identified entrances along Carrs Mill Road, as well as one or two smaller entrances along Roxbury Mills Road and Carrs Mill Road that define the edges of the institutional campus-like eastern edge. The Department has recently completed a set of signage and wayfinding standards that it will begin to implement throughout the recreation and parks system.

## ENHANCING HEALTH AND RESILIENCE OF NATURAL SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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.

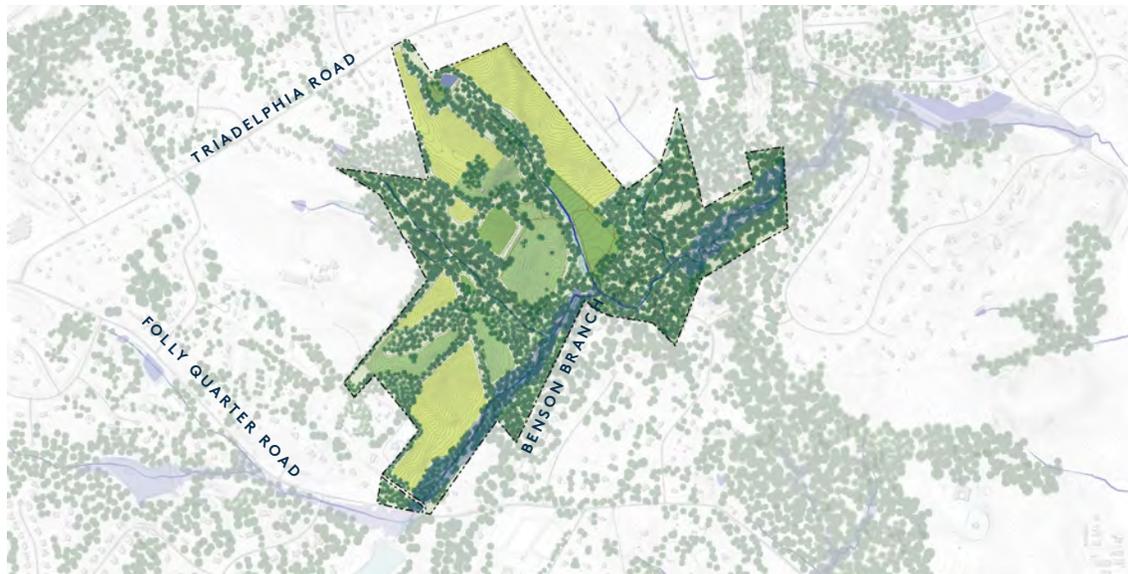
**Connectivity:** imagine Howard County as a connected ecological system with a mix of wildlife and shaded recreation trail corridors.

**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.

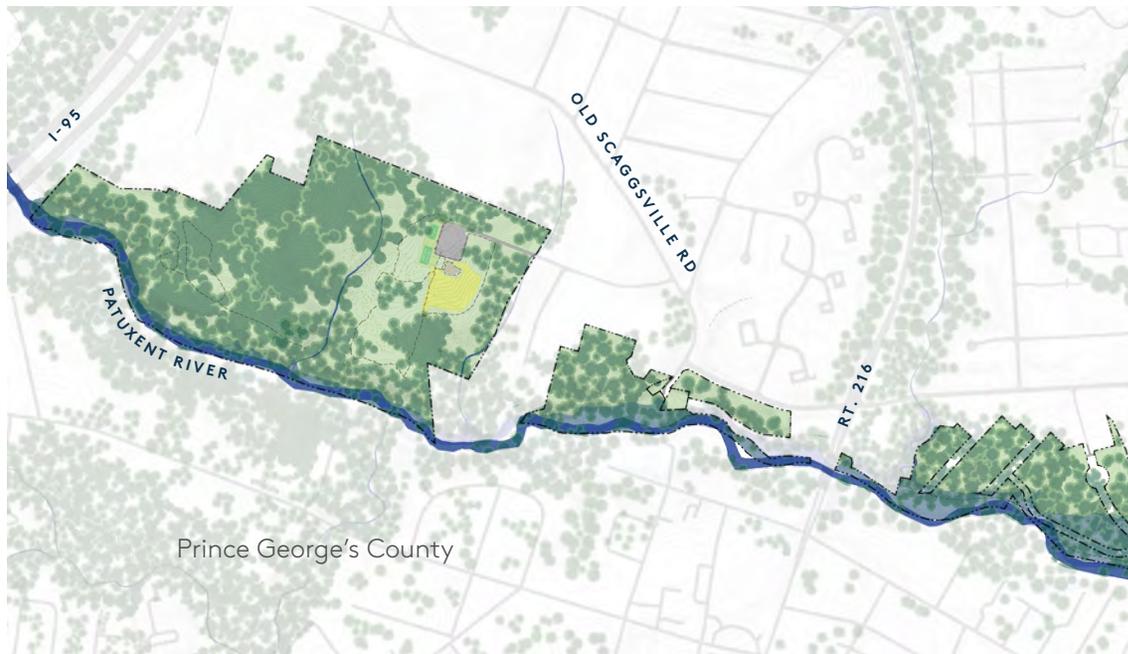
**Visibility and Communication:** foster communication and visibility of physical spaces, programming, and County conservation efforts to the public and continue to build meaningful partnerships within and outside of the Department to enhance visitor experience and community outreach.

**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



*Benson Branch Park*  
Opportunity Site



*High Ridge Park*  
Opportunity Site

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 Through 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.

Appearing across the three system themes of this plan, these categories ground the countywide recommendations in Howard County’s recreation and park system, specifically within identified opportunity sites. For example, High Ridge Park, a neighborhood park with several amenities and trails located along the Patuxent River, is highlighted as one of these opportunity sites

with great potential. Although recommended improvements to these sites may be specific, they are only meant to serve as examples to illustrate the greater principle behind each recommendation. Ultimately, these principles and ideas can be deployed across the system.

### Recreation

Today, High Ridge Park offers a playground, several athletic courts, a picnic area and approximately one mile of trails. Although in good condition, the park would benefit from a combination of active and passive trails, including connections to the adjacent neighborhoods. The proposed park trails would have various mile markers and informational health and wellness kiosks. These trails would also encourage visitors to engage in more passive uses, as opposed to jogging or biking, in order to appreciate the scenic views of the river. Offshoots of the trails would provide deck viewpoints for visitors to interact with water and partake in fishing activities.

### Education

The park’s proposed interpretive trails would educate visitors about wildlife and forest conservation, the ecological measures taken to prevent erosion along Patuxent River, and the importance of water corridors as a means for wildlife migration.

Apart from ecological education, the proposed trails would inform visitors about the importance of mental and physical health by promoting active and passive activities for all ages. While various adult education programs would allow neighbors and park visitors to participate in the conservation and management of the park, surrounding property owners along the Patuxent River would also be able to learn from the ongoing measures to enhance riparian buffers and protect and improve water quality. The ongoing habitat restoration program would also educate visitors about habitat creation to benefit pollinator species.

### Ecology

The proposed recommendations for High Ridge Park are primarily intended to address slope erosion control along the Patuxent River. As opposed to a hardscape engineering approach, softscape landscape infrastructure through differing planting strategies would help develop a more resilient slope.

In addition to erosion mitigation efforts, this park would bring greater awareness to the role of sustainable landscape strategies in addressing various ecological issues. The proposed trails would meander along the resilient slope to enhance the visitor experience, as well as pass through other areas to allow interaction with other ecological conditions. Because the park

is densely forested, various biodiversity enhancement measurements could address invasive species management, wildlife management and habitat restoration. In addition, the park would benefit from various watershed and storm water management practices that could serve to educate visitors on the merits of improving water quality and preserving water corridors.

### Connectivity

Wayfinding is a key element for High Ridge Park given the park's location nestled within the neighborhood context. Proposed signage at strategic locations along Route 216 would guide visitors to the park entrances, and proposed pedestrian entrances would allow for easy access from the bordering residential neighborhood. In addition to strengthening connections to the neighborhood, the proposed recommendations also focus on connecting open space along the riverfront. The proposed trail along the water corridor would connect High Ridge Park to the two other disconnected open spaces, further south along the river, owned by the Department. In addition to providing visitors with a wider view of erosion preservation and more direct access to the river, this continuous trail would allow for more opportunities for wildlife movement both upstream and downstream.

### Placemaking

With the proposed recommendations, High Ridge Park could serve as an example for sustainable and resilient practices within parks, as well as community engagement with natural resource management. Programs like stream buffer planting, invasive species management, and habitat restoration would benefit from engaging the surrounding neighborhoods and local volunteers, in order to better educate the community on environmental impacts and the importance of stewardship of the county's natural assets. Community engagement would also be a crucial part of extending the proposed trail to the two southern parklands across the adjacent non-county-owned lands. This would require clearly communicating the benefits of implementing conservation measurements along a continuous riverfront stretch, as opposed to on three individual sites.



Interpretive Signage

Create Pedestrian Connections  
Between Parks

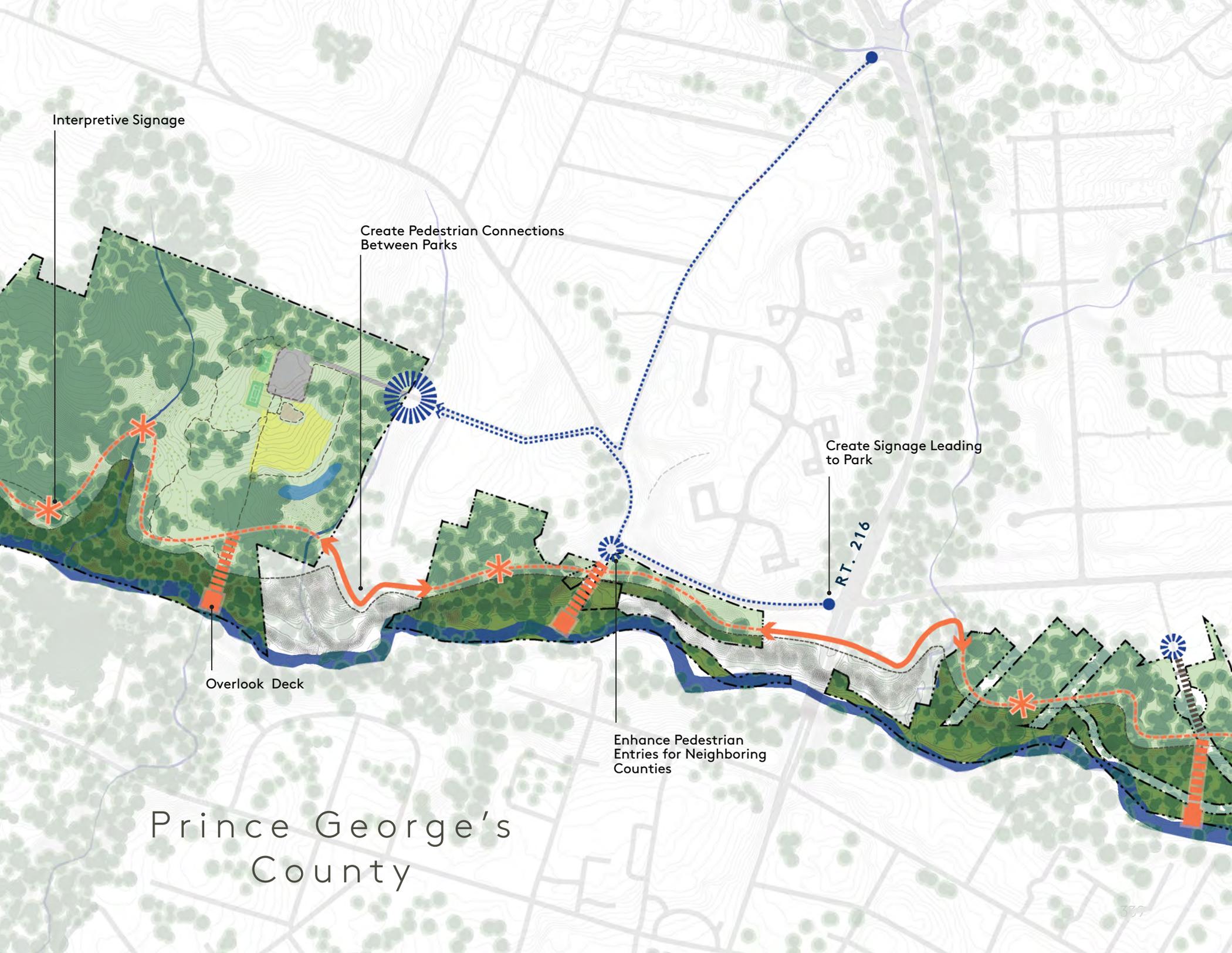
Create Signage Leading  
to Park

Overlook Deck

Enhance Pedestrian  
Entries for Neighboring  
Counties

Prince George's  
County

RT. 216



## VISIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION



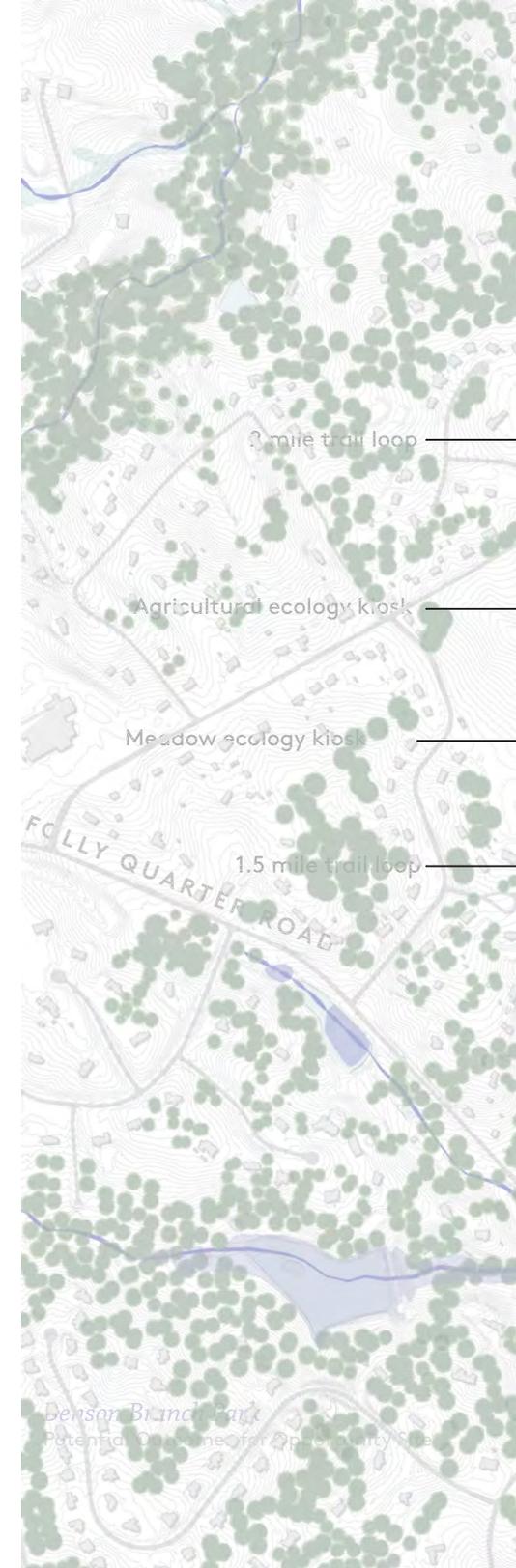
With Prince George's County located on the other side of the Patuxent River, High Ridge Park offers as a key partnership opportunity for both counties. Both Howard and Prince George's Counties could collaborate with local community organizations and stakeholders to develop resilient slope strategies for both sides of the river. This site has the potential to serve as a successful public-private collaboration with strong community engagement to conserve one of the region's most valuable resources.

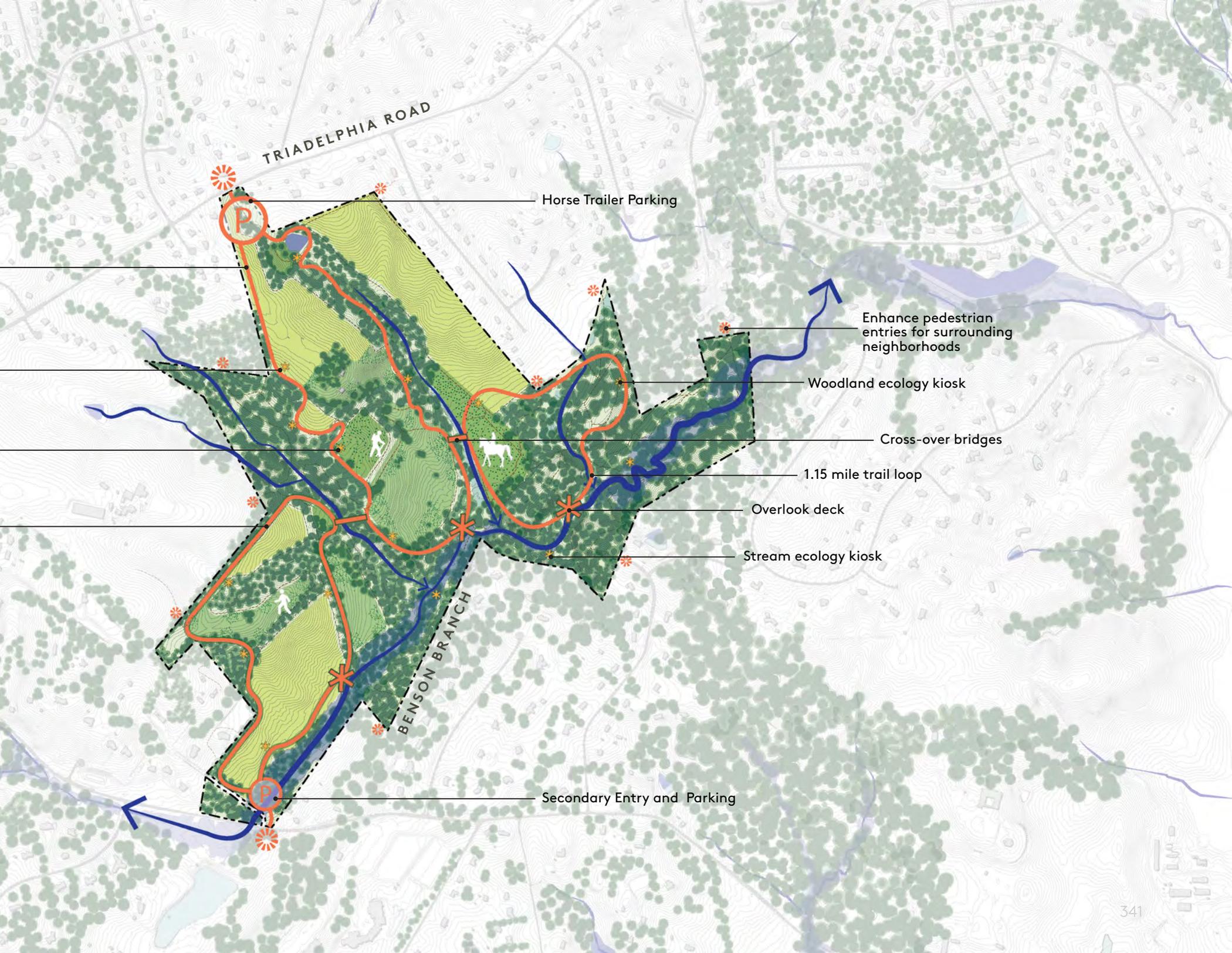
## CULTURAL HERITAGE



The six-phase transformation of Blandair into a world-class regional park provides rich opportunities to utilize and celebrate the historic resources located on site. The existing concept for an environmental education area within the park, potentially including a living farm, can educate visitors about the agricultural heritage of the county through the interpretation of Blandair's historic agricultural resources. Blandair also provides a potential site for an innovative preschool program that is based on a growing national trend of using agritourism sites and parks for farm-based and nature-based preschools, as illustrated by Farm to Preschool and the Natural Start Alliance. A

pilot program that builds a curriculum around Blandair's environmental education area and natural resources could provide a viable use for historic buildings and structures while cultivating a new generation of stewards of the county's natural and cultural heritage. Such a use would build on the popularity of the Department's existing childhood education program to further the mission of Heritage Programming.





TRIADELPHIA ROAD

Horse Trailer Parking

Enhance pedestrian entries for surrounding neighborhoods

Woodland ecology kiosk

Cross-over bridges

1.15 mile trail loop

Overlook deck

Stream ecology kiosk

BENSON BRANCH

Secondary Entry and Parking

## LAND STEWARDS

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

Two sites, one in a densely populated area and another embedded in the Rural West, ground the state and county goals into a series of potential future outcomes. Although recommended improvements to these sites may be specific, the ideas are meant to serve as examples to illustrate the greater principle behind each recommendation.

### Recreation

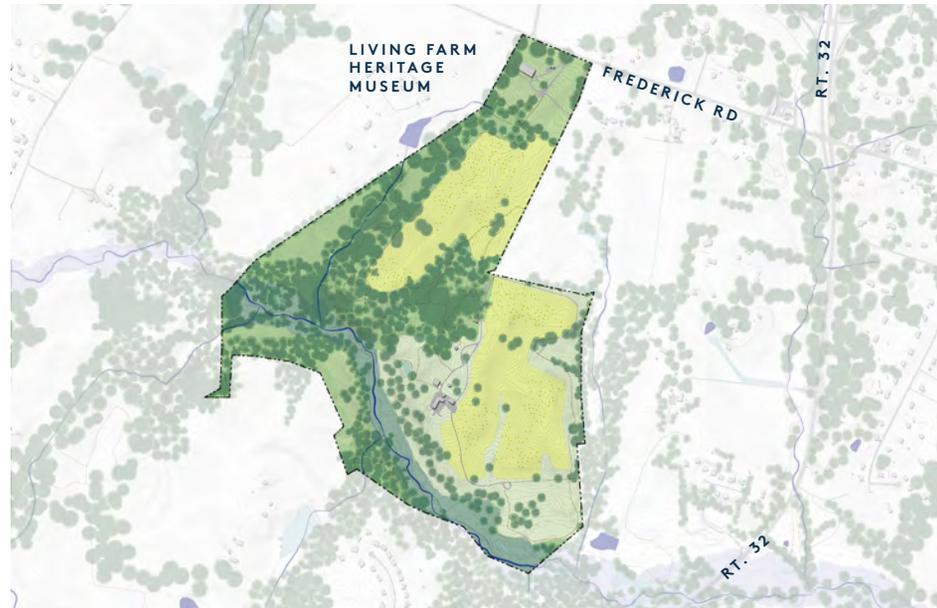
**Opportunity Site 1:** While recreation is not typically associated with the preservation of agricultural land, the county continues to reinforce linkages between natural resources, recreation and parks, and agriculture. The 2017 LPPRP uniquely positions Howard County to think about the three themes holistically as a system. West Friendship Park is a county-owned facility run through a partnership with the Howard County Living Farm Heritage Museum, a non-profit organization. Opportunities exist to develop a strong educational opportunity for visitors to experience the county's agricultural legacy in a range of engagement levels. Active and passive programming allows many age groups the opportunity to interact with farm animals, experience gardening and harvesting, and understand the farm-to-table concept. As shown in this example, large parks can take advantage of their size to consider a variety of trail types that support diverse uses, including horseback riding, health trails with mile markers, and

interpretive kiosks to learn more about the agricultural legacy and other uses.

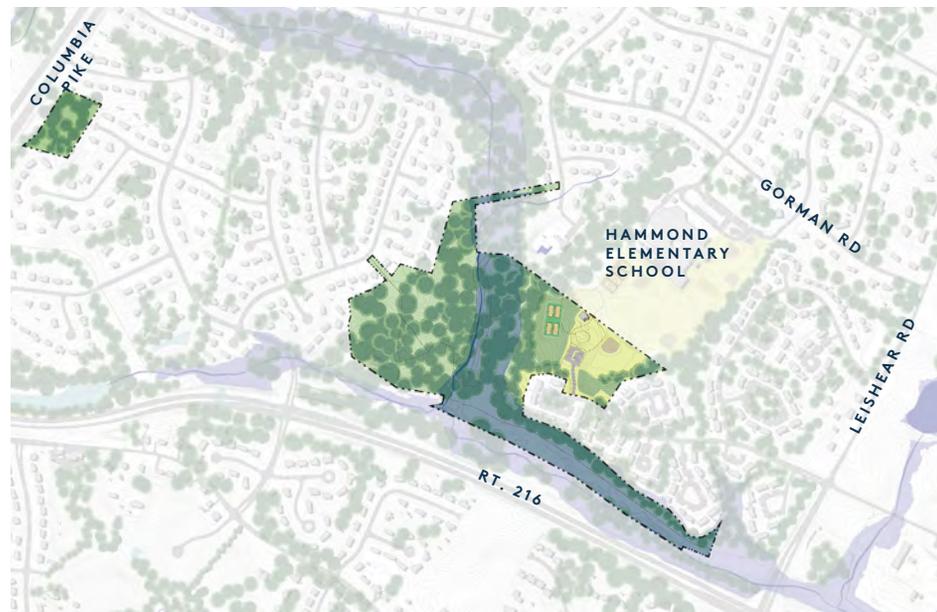
**Opportunity Site 2:** Hammond Park is located next to Hammond Elementary School. Enhanced partnerships with the Howard County School System will enable crosspollination of programming and facilities for both organizations. Opportunities also exist for parks like Hammond to consider connections to neighborhood attractions like the adjacent swimming pool and neighborhoods.

### Education

**Opportunity Site 1:** The county stewards the preservation of many historic and legacy properties. Heritage Programming manages the programming, use, and/or maintenance of most of the 25 properties under the Department's purview. West Friendship Park is a Heritage Programming site; the programs run by the Living Farm Heritage Museum provide key educational benefits related to the agricultural and historic legacy of the county. The partnership between the Living Farm Heritage Museum and the Department represent cooperative programming through outside party management. Expansion of this type of programming both in West Friendship Park and in many other parks around the county would foster a deeper understanding of the county's agricultural history and promote greater understanding of the value of agriculture in the county in the future.



*West Friendship Park*  
Opportunity Site 1



*Hammond Park*  
Opportunity Site 2

**Opportunity Site 2:** Hammond Park is surrounded by dense housing and a number of neighborhood amenities. With parks like Hammond, an opportunity exists to increase education immersion in sustainable farming practices and health and wellness through the act of doing. Physical adjacencies between the school and gardening plots in the park will further bridge the county goals for a healthy community.

## Ecology



**Opportunity Site 1:** West Friendship Park is situated along three creeks that feed into the Patuxent watershed and eventually into the Chesapeake Bay. The park is also embedded in the Rural West, where most agricultural preservation easements and other farming activities are located. Parks and facilities in the Rural West should incorporate similar landscape practices as the handful of organic farms in the county. Best practices that could be incorporated into all county-owned or maintained open spaces include sustainable fertilizing practices to reduce the impact on riparian corridors and water quality, mowing restrictions to limit mowing to heavily trafficked areas and recreational fields, and the incorporation of pollinator meadows to support and build up the native pollinator species.

**Opportunity Site 2:** Almost half of Hammond Park is within the 100-year floodplain. Opportunities exist for flood management strategies that restore and protect the shoreline and make it less prone to erosion, thereby reducing silt and contaminants from entering the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In county-owned open spaces along tributaries leading to the bay, adjacent drainage corridors planted with native plant species would strengthen the corridor bank. The adjacent powerline corridor could also support the movement of native vegetation and wildlife. Sustainable growing practices promoted within the community garden include the use of natural composting and fertilizing as well as crop rotation, and will have positive externalities on water and soil quality. Pollinator gardens are easily implementable projects that have profound effects on pollinator species in the county, and support higher crop yields and strong populations of native plant species.

## Connectivity



**Opportunity Site 1:** Today, West Friendship Park has an extensive trail system that supports a variety of uses. The trail network is internal to the property boundaries which are bounded by farms and new development. To expand and connect the disjointed trail network in the county, West Friendship Park and other county properties should consider opportunities for trail connections through

agricultural easements, along riparian corridors, and through county-dedicated easements. With limited undeveloped or available and continuous tracts of land, the county should consider connections through publicly owned land and easements to create a green infrastructure network that supports agribusiness and wildlife migration, and benefits community activity and wellness.

**Opportunity Site 2:** In densely populated communities like Columbia, walkable pathways and trails from home to different amenities need to take precedence over cars. A goal of the LPPRP is to increase walkability to parks from home and school and reduce the number of car trips, especially to neighborhood parks within a five to ten minute walk. Hammond Park exemplifies moments for creating new trails and paths to provide safe and walkable connections both to and through the park.

# Living Farm Heritage Museum

FREDERICK RD

RT. 32

Group camping site

New Upland Trail

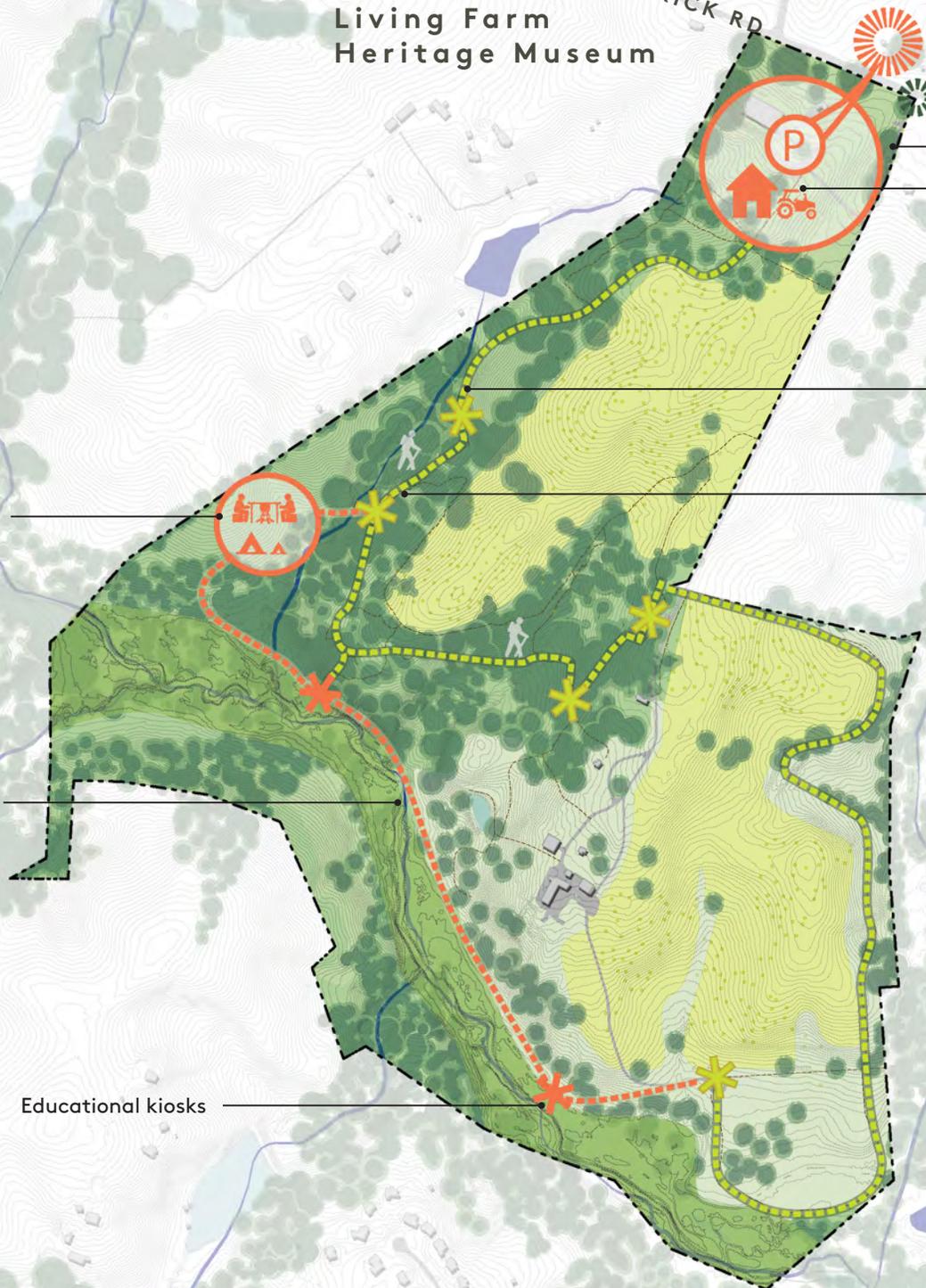
Educational kiosks

Gateway opportunity

Enhanced Visitor Center and Wayfinding

Existing Trail

Existing Educational Elements



## Visibility and Communication



**Opportunity Site 1:** The agricultural land preservation programs in Howard County at the state and local level have successfully secured over 22,000 acres of farmland and reduced sprawl efforts since the 1970s. The successes of preservation programs in the county are not always communicated in a way that is easily absorbed by the public. Agricultural preservation easements, the farming economy, and the legacy of agriculture should be celebrated. West Friendship Park curates the message and history of farming in the county, which can be enhanced and replicated throughout areas in the Rural West. Beyond communication and branding, there are many examples of successful programs and special events that highlight advancements made by the farming community that have positively benefited the community at large.

**Opportunity Site 2:** Partnerships with the Howard County School System and other education-focused institutions are important methods for educating young generations about the benefits of local agriculture. In parks like Hammond Park, interpretive signage and impactful communication should identify the benefits of community gardening, composting, and space for growing.



COLUMBIA PIKE

HAMMOND BRANCH

Drainage corridor

HAMMOND  
ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL

GORMAN RD

Connecting the parks  
with trails

Partnership with school

Educational kiosks

Community garden

Upland Trail with  
interpretive signage

Signage

Ecological corridor  
alongside utility corridor

RT. 216

LEISHEAR RD

# Acknowledgements

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