



# Vision 2030 Strategic Plan

for Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County, MD

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Executive Summary | JUNE 2011

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks, Montgomery County  
[MontgomeryParks.org](http://MontgomeryParks.org)

Montgomery County Department of Recreation  
[MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec](http://MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec)



**Vision 2030**

Montgomery County  
**RECREATION**  
DEPARTMENT

# Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County, Maryland

Executive Summary | June 2011

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## Vision

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan will guide the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation in the provision of:

- Stewardship of natural and historic resources.
- Opportunities for active life-long learning, leisure, and recreation.

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## Values

The M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation are committed to:

- Promote healthy living through diverse recreation and leisure activities
- Protect natural, historical, and archaeological resources
- Promote the economic competitiveness of Montgomery County as a place for businesses to locate through a robust parks and recreation system that attracts knowledge workers and families
- Promote a sense of community and civic pride
- Nurture an appreciation for our natural, cultural legacy
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities
- Shape healthy, safe, green communities
- Collaborate with partners to provide sustainable, accessible, and diverse leisure opportunities
- Engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends
- Acquire, maintain, and manage the parks and recreation built environment



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## Abstract

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<b>Abstract</b>	This document, based on the Vision 2030 project research and outreach, summarizes the recommendations that will address current and future park and recreation needs for the next 20 years in Montgomery County, Maryland.



## Introduction

Montgomery County, Maryland is nationally recognized for an extensive parks, recreation, and open space system that greatly contributes to the high quality of life in the County.

In order to maintain the high quality of this valuable parks and recreation system into the future, The M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation have collaborated on the development of a long-term strategic plan to guide parks and recreation services for the next 20 years. This plan is called the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan is to:

- Develop a shared vision for the parks and recreation system in Montgomery County.
- Articulate clear strategies to address current and future needs.
- Collaboratively provide parks and recreation facilities and services.

Through this plan, we seek to address the following questions:

- How do we maintain the appropriate level of service for people who live, work, and engage in recreation in Montgomery County now and in the future?
- How do we most effectively and efficiently deliver the parks and recreation services that are most important to the residents of Montgomery County?

### Why is this Plan important?

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan will help the M-NCPPC Department of Parks, Montgomery County and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation respond to:

- The need for greater dependence on revenue generation and alternative funding
- Growing population and service demands
- Aging infrastructure
- Growing environmental awareness
- Emerging trends in parks and recreation
- Shrinking tax support
- Organizational sustainability



By focusing on key strategic areas including policy, programming, facilities, operations, maintenance, management, and marketing, this plan will also provide the guidance necessary to:

- Make strategic, defensible decisions about programming, services offered, fees, and cost recovery.
- Be more transparent in our operations and more accountable for the results of our work.



## Challenges and Opportunities

Throughout the Vision 2030 planning process, members of the community repeatedly voiced their support for the value and benefits of Montgomery County’s parks and recreation system.

As our county becomes more urbanized it is even more important to realize the benefits of parks, recreation and open space. The Trust for Public Land’s report titled, “The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space,” states:

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community through economic development and tourism.
- Trees improve air quality, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Growing demand and shrinking resources will continue to be a challenge for parks and recreation services in this county. With strong leadership and a guiding vision, both departments have a unique opportunity to maximize operational sustainability by:

- Prioritizing tax resources to focus on core services.
- Balancing new construction with the maintenance and repair of existing facilities.
- Proactively responding to changing demographics, emerging trends, and changing priorities.
- Strengthening the stewardship of natural and historical resources.
- Continuing to “green” the park system – including facilities, equipment, and operational programs.
- Maintaining the emphasis on customer service and public safety.
- Collaborating to more efficiently deliver quality services.
- Planning for future growth.



## Recommendations

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan recommendations are organized by five broad vision themes:

- **Theme 1: Programs & Experiences**  
*Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure.*
- **Theme 2: Planning & Development**  
*Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing county.*
- **Theme 3: Operations, Maintenance & Safety**  
*Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system.*
- **Theme 4: Management**  
*Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability.*
- **Theme 5: Marketing & Outreach**  
*Informing and engaging a diverse community.*

The specific goals, objectives and highlights of implementation for each theme are detailed on the following pages.

### Theme 1: Programs & Experiences

*Strategically providing parks and recreation services for health and leisure.*

#### GOAL 1

Provide a variety of high-quality programs that meet community needs and interests.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Enhance, expand, or add high-demand programs and services.  
**Implementation:** Align priorities with the top 10 programs and services —exercise and fitness, community events and festivals, aquatics, out-of-school, seniors, health and wellness, outdoor nature, children and youth, community gardens, and youth league sports.
- 1.2 Enhance planning methods.  
**Implementation:** Evaluate the success and effectiveness of programs, activities, or events in planning future programs.
- 1.3 Optimize program and facility utilization through balanced service provision.  
**Implementation:** Strategize marketing to populations most likely to attend programs.



- 1.4 Expand or develop tracking system to consistently monitor non-registered and drop-in visitation to assess total impact and use.

**Implementation:** Track visitation at targeted sites.

## GOAL 2

Promote awareness, appreciation, and understanding of Montgomery County’s natural and historical resources.

### OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Implement the cultural/historic interpretation plan based on "From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks" and the prioritization system in the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory.

**Implementation:** Use volunteers, grants, and partnerships and create exhibits, signage and interpretive messages for 8-10 sites that best tell the County’s history.

- 2.2 Develop and implement interpretive master plans to guide educational and interpretive programs.

**Implementation:** Develop a strategic and cutting edge interpretive plan. Prioritize park sites for implementation of interpretive messages.

- 2.3 Develop a multi-age environmental literacy program to raise fundamental understanding of the natural systems of Montgomery County, the relationships and interactions in the living and non-living environment, and how to deal sensibly with complex issues that involve weighing scientific evidence, uncertainty, and economic, aesthetic, and ethical considerations.

**Implementation:** Expand ongoing training in environmental stewardship for all Parks staff and create public programming that supports Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and Maryland State environmental literacy standards.



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### GOAL 3

Enhance health, wellness, and active living in Montgomery County.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Incorporate concepts of healthy and vital living into all facilities, programs, and services throughout the parks and recreation system.

**Implementation:** Coordinate health, wellness, and active living initiatives with other key agencies in the County.

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## Theme 2: Planning & Development

*Planning for recreational, natural, and cultural resources in an urbanizing county.*

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### GOAL 4

Provide adequate and appropriate public lands and facilities that are equitably distributed across the County to meet the needs of residents.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Use population density information to set standards for Level of Service (LOS) based on composite-values methodology to include assessing the quantity, quality, and mix of parks and recreation facilities and services.

**Implementation:** Apply Level of Service targets when evaluating needs for any area of the County.

- 4.2 Prioritize projects to increase the Level of Service in the areas where data shows the highest needs.

**Implementation:** Seek funding for new or renovated park and recreation facilities and lands based on lowest LOS.

- 4.3 Refine and clarify priorities for planning and acquiring parklands.

**Implementation:** Strengthen tools for developer funding of public spaces, especially in urban areas.

- 4.4 Provide an appropriate balance between stewardship and recreation.

**Implementation:** Using national and local benchmarks, apply a balance of stewardship and recreation to all plans for new or renovated parks.



**GOAL 5**

Create a high-functioning system of parks, recreation, trails, and open space that is responsive to changing community needs and interests.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1 Prioritize planning and development projects under a streamlined process.

**Implementation:** Standardize processes and products for park master plans, CIP evaluation, programs of requirement, and design and construction details. Coordinate work program scheduling of planning and development.

- 5.2 Create flexible spaces and “green” facility designs.

**Implementation:** Examine all plans for “green” attributes. Evaluate components or features under LEED®, SITES and other “green” policies. Create more un-programmed, flexible spaces.

- 5.3 Provide a variety of parks and recreation facilities that address current needs and emerging trends (e.g., dog parks, community gardens, cricket, ice facilities, tennis facilities, etc.).

**Implementation:** Formalize criteria and decision process for specialty facility requests. Identify potential partnerships. Create permanent adult-sized cricket field with supporting infrastructure. Identify opportunities for under-served volleyball, futsal, soccer, tennis, etc., and for larger tennis court groupings (indoor and/or outdoor.) Study need for another ice arena. Provide skateboarding facilities, dog parks and community gardens, especially in urban areas.

- 5.4 Ensure that the quantity and type of parks, programs, facilities, trails, and open space are adequate for the users.

**Implementation:** Apply composite-values approach to Level of Service in conjunction with other tools such as Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) to identify priorities. Update PROS plan to address needs for popular facilities and emerging trends identified in surveys, Vision 2030 findings, etc.

- 5.5 Improve the comfort and convenience of park and recreation users by providing adequate facilities such as accessible restrooms, drinking fountains, signage, parking, and other convenience features.

**Implementation:** Add comfort and convenience features to facilities that scored low in the inventory.

- 5.6 Re-balance the existing mix of athletic fields to better fit current needs for rectangle and diamond fields.

**Implementation:** Create internal ballfield use committee to continually formulate, implement, and evaluate options to deliver better-quality playing experiences on park athletic fields.



Identify opportunities to increase existing field capacity by adding irrigation and converting some fields to synthetic turf. Identify opportunities to increase the number of rectangular athletic fields.

- 5.7 Provide enough playgrounds to meet the need for convenient access to healthy play opportunities.

**Implementation:** Continue to prioritize playgrounds in highest need of replacement or renovation. Remove playgrounds when the need is met by other playgrounds or they are in environmentally sensitive areas. Incorporate nature/environmental education into the playground experience.

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## GOAL 6

Expand and enhance opportunities for recreational trail experiences to promote health and wellness.

### OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Expand the distribution of multi-use trails.

**Implementation:** Identify new multi-use natural and hard surface trails, particularly in currently or projected underserved and high-density areas with limited trail access.

- 6.2 Increase trail connectivity.

**Implementation:** Fill gaps in the regional trail system and create linked series of loops. Re-examine the feasibility of proposed regional trail alignments and community connectors, and identify alternatives as necessary.

- 6.3 Address the needs of specialty trail users, including hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

**Implementation:** Establish certain trails as limited-user trails, based on the terrain and environment.

- 6.4 Enhance trail safety and comfort by including standardized informational kiosks at trail heads, uniform directional signage, standardized interpretive signage, and appropriately placed restrooms.

**Implementation:** Continue creating downloadable on-line maps, and directional, wayfinding and interpretive signage per Departmental standards. Add waysides, rest areas, and improve connections to parks and other public restroom facilities when feasible.

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**GOAL 7**

Expand park and recreation facility accessibility.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 Enhance access to parks, recreation facilities and programs, trails, and open space by setting measurable standards for different areas of the County.  
**Implementation:** Apply standards for walkability and access to public transportation according to population densities when locating future parks and recreation lands and facilities.
- 7.2 Collaborate to provide safe and accessible facilities.  
**Implementation:** Work with other agencies to ensure safe ADA and pedestrian access to park and recreation facilities.
- 7.3 Incorporate the 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design into planning and development of new and renovated park and recreational facilities.  
**Implementation:** Assess and upgrade existing facilities subject to 2010 regulations. Apply 2010 standards recreation to new facilities.




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**GOAL 8**

Provide an equitable distribution of public indoor recreation spaces in Montgomery County that is sustainable.

Refine recreation and aquatic service model to allow for larger regional centers to serve more residents in highly accessible locations, such as those along public transportation routes, trails, and major roadways. Co-locate indoor recreation centers with other institutional facilities (e.g., schools, libraries, park facilities, or other leisure service providers etc.), when appropriate.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 Refine the level of service model for indoor recreation and aquatic centers.  
**Implementation:** Prioritize public indoor recreation centers in the North Central and South Central sub-areas where lower per capita LOS exists and is projected. Incorporate flexible spaces and industry trends into recreation/aquatic center designs.
- 8.2 Conduct feasibility studies, including public input, and operating/business plans prior to the design and development of new community recreation/aquatic facilities. Develop corresponding Program of Requirement (POR) descriptions.  
**Implementation:** Include public process and current planning tools in feasibility studies. Develop Program of Requirement (POR) descriptions for combined community recreation and

aquatic facilities. Use feasibility studies and POR for design and operating business plans.

- 8.3 Use the Service Assessment to evaluate renovations and modernization of recreation centers and potential consolidation/repurposing the older smaller community and neighborhood facilities.

**Implementation:** Identify which facilities should receive renovations or should be considered for potential consolidation, repurposing, or divestiture. Incorporate all findings (service assessment and public vetting) into POR.

- 8.4 Assess needs and opportunities for specialized county-wide facilities (e.g., arena, event center, indoor sports complex) including public/private partnership opportunities.

**Implementation:** Establish a multi-agency review committee to evaluate unique recreation and parks opportunities (e.g., water park, arenas, sports complex, ropes course, paint ball, etc.).

### Theme 3: Operations, Maintenance & Safety

*Maintaining a safe, accessible, quality parks and recreation system*

#### GOAL 9

Maintain quality park and recreation lands and facilities for efficiency, safety, attractiveness, and long-term sustainability.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 9.1 Develop a comprehensive “green” operations and maintenance initiative.

**Implementation:** Apply Sustainable Sites Initiative to areas wherever possible. Train employees in green operations. Recycle and compost Parks green materials.

- 9.2 Expand the Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement Program (PLAR).

**Implementation:** Develop cycles for standard replacement items, annual refurbishment task lists for each facility, etc.

- 9.3 Implement the existing prioritized deferred maintenance plan.

**Implementation:** Develop a process for deciding whether to repair, renovate, replace, repurpose, or remove a facility or piece of equipment.

- 9.4 Continue to refine current maintenance levels of service and standards based on industry best practices (e.g., maintenance, health, and safety standards) and update standards (e.g.,

mowing frequency for different park types, natural resources management, routines to maintain clean parks and recreation facilities, etc.).

**Implementation:** Revise and develop as necessary standards for park maintenance, custodial work, tree maintenance and natural resources management. Communicate with policy-makers and the public if changes to maintenance routines are required due to resource limitations.

- 9.5 Continue to identify operating budget impact (OBI) needed for new capital improvement projects and acquisitions and allocate adequate resources (e.g., program staff, maintenance, supplies and materials, other services and charges, etc.).

**Implementation:** Improve collection and consistency of OBI data for new parks and park facilities approved in the CIP. Identify new operation funds or change maintenance frequency / practices to reflect reallocation of existing operational resources (endowments, volunteers, sponsorships).



- 9.6 Standardize the maintenance and management of athletic fields.

**Implementation:** Update athletic field use and maintenance standards and procedures (field capacity and usage, field rest criteria, cancellation criteria, priority use policies, monitoring of field permits, user group partnerships, etc.).

- 9.7 Expand SMARTPARKS applications to park planning, natural resources management, and historic resources management, etc.

**Implementation:** Enhance SMARTPARKS capabilities and efficiency. Incorporate Maintenance and Operations Manual into SMARTPARKS.



- 9.8 Establish and utilize Furniture, Fixture, and Equipment (FFE) standards for park and recreation amenities (e.g., basketball hoops, restroom fixtures, etc.) for parts inventories and enhanced maintenance efficiency.

**Implementation:** Create standards for selected FFEs. Institute cross departmental purchasing to maximize efficiencies.

- 9.9 Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and guidelines into parks and recreation site design and ongoing maintenance practices.

**Implementation:** Train staff in maintenance requirements for CPTED.



- 9.10 Evaluate future maintenance needs and identify potential maintenance yards and related locations.

**Implementation:** Analyze the distribution of maintenance yards to most effectively and efficiently meet the maintenance needs

of a growing park and recreation system. Consider a satellite facility for Facility Management to reduce drive times.

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## GOAL 10

Provide for the protection, security, and safety of natural areas, historic resources, archaeological sites, and park and recreation facilities, including playgrounds, athletic fields, pools, community centers, and trails.

### OBJECTIVES

- 10.1 Ensure continued dedicated personnel and resources for the specialized requirements of both agencies.

**Implementation:** Provide enough staff for safe parks and recreation facilities (both natural and built). Ensure adequate funding to engage necessary policing for special events and programs.

- 10.2 Expand enforcement of unauthorized encroachments on parkland.

**Implementation:** Modify park rules and regulations to allow compounding of fines for non-compliance. Educate the public on encroachment policies and reporting procedures.

- 10.3 Expand and encourage participation by Police Agencies in youth programs, both in and out-of-school.

**Implementation:** Allocate resources for police participation in youth programs at Commission and County facilities.

- 10.4 Expand the use of Park Rangers as appropriate for natural resource and cultural resource stewardship and interpretive duties.

**Implementation:** Relocate the Park Rangers from the Park Police to a program focused on stewardship and education. Train the Rangers to accomplish the additional duties.



**GOAL 11**

Inventory, conserve, restore, and enhance ecologically healthy and biologically diverse natural areas with a focus on Park Best Natural Areas, Biodiversity Areas, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas as defined in the "Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan" (M-NCPPC, 2005).

**OBJECTIVES**

- 11.1 Develop a protocol and schedule for routine inventory and analysis of natural resources like the "Montgomery County Stream Protection Strategy."

**Implementation:** Standardize and schedule the inventory of parkland natural resources. Use staff and volunteers to inventory park natural areas. Update and maintain a GIS inventory database.

- 11.2 Develop a county-wide natural resources management plan.

**Implementation:** Finalize draft Natural Resources Management Plan to include Vegetation Management Plan and Appendices; Plans and Guidelines for the management of white-tailed deer, beaver, and Canada geese; and county-wide Stream Protection Strategy.

- 11.3 Prioritize Best Natural Areas and Biodiversity Areas based on their ecological value and biological diversity.

**Implementation:** Develop criteria and select sites. Use the Cultural Resources Asset Priority Index as a model for prioritization.

- 11.4 Develop and implement natural resources management plans for all Best Natural Areas and Biodiversity Areas by 2016 and update each of them every five years.

**Implementation:** Create product and plan schedule with management plans.

- 11.5 Develop comprehensive restoration plans for down-county stream valley parks including Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, Little Falls Branch, Cabin John Creek, and Northwest Branch.

**Implementation:** Use current Rock Creek study as pilot program. Conduct studies of select stream valley parks. Select focus areas. Establish CIP projects and maintenance plans for sites selected.

- 11.6 Expand the current white-tailed deer management program into down-County areas if consistent with public demand, natural resource management needs, and public safety.

**Implementation:** Determine where additional management is required. Assess whether current staffing levels are adequate to conduct additional management. Publicize, create, and fund program if warranted.



- 11.7 Develop natural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.  
**Implementation:** Use available training programs, including webinars, and develop and present training on an approved schedule.
- 11.8 Develop new volunteer-based programs to assist with the inventory and management of natural resources in County parks (e.g., Forest Stewards).  
**Implementation:** Review and update existing programs (e.g., Weed Warriors). For the new Forest Stewards Volunteer Program -- Prepare a volunteer job description, recruitment strategy, training and certification program, work schedule, strategy for coordinating with operations staff, reporting structure for work performed, and performance measures.
- 11.9 Determine staffing levels required to accomplish all objectives of Goal 11.  
**Implementation:** Track staffing levels and adjust as needed to accomplish all objectives of Goal 11.
- 11.10 Expand control of non-native invasive plants (NNIs) particularly in Best Natural Areas, Biodiversity Areas, and Environmentally sensitive areas of parkland.  
**Implementation:** Expand identification, mapping, prioritization, and monitoring according to all natural resource priorities, using volunteers where possible. Increase replanting of NNI treatment areas. Develop and apply quantitative measures of success.
- 11.11 Review and revise "Nuisance Wildlife Guidelines for Beaver and Canada Geese".  
**Implementation:** Annually assess status of nuisance wildlife including beaver and Canada geese and expand proactive management efforts where problems exist. Standardize protocols for assessing on an annual basis, the nuisance status of wildlife populations; train park staff on strategies for avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts of nuisance wildlife and permitted techniques for population control; apply reporting structure and related performance measures.

**GOAL 12**

Identify, stabilize, preserve, maintain, and interpret historic and archaeological resources on parkland.

**OBJECTIVE:**

- 12.1 Implement existing plan "From Artifact to Attraction: A Strategic Plan for Cultural Resources in Parks" and use the Cultural Resources Section's "Asset Inventory" to prioritize the restoration and interpretation of the highest value historic and archaeological resources in County parks.

**Implementation:** Divest resources that do not qualify as significant on the Cultural Resources Asset Inventory. Resist acquisitions that include historic buildings without a maintenance endowment. Make archaeological investigation part of park development and interpretation. Identify adequate capital and maintenance funding to ensure the preservation of historic structures.

- 12.2 Schedule restoration for the highest value historic resources and stabilize the highest value archaeological resources in County parks.

**Implementation:** Submit Major Maintenance historic building priorities as candidate projects, including new acquisitions or vacated resources. Follow through on work performed.

- 12.3 Develop cultural resources-based stewardship training for park staff.

**Implementation:** Use available training programs, including webinars, to train Parks staff on preservation and archaeology practices and regulations on an approved schedule.

- 12.4 Ensure adequate staffing to achieve restoration and interpretation of historic resources in County parks.

**Implementation:** Fund a preservation architect and general contractor specializing in historic structures to enable the rehabilitation of numerous failing historic structures in the park system.



## Theme 4: Management

*Maximizing efficiencies and sustainability*

### GOAL 13

Ensure long-term sustainability by focusing taxpayer funding on those services that produce the widest community benefit, using a cost recovery pyramid.

#### OBJECTIVES

- 13.1 Ensure that cost-based or activity-based budgeting principles are used to determine the cost to provide a service.

**Implementation:** Develop and train staff in use of cost-based budgeting methods. Expand use of existing budgeting and project and time management tools to track actual costs.

- 13.2 Increase cost recovery to meet targets through pricing strategies and/or alternative funding sources as appropriate to specific services.

**Implementation:** Identify obstacles to increasing cost recovery and analyze how to overcome them. Identify efficiencies and create recommendations to implement them.

- 13.3 Review all rentals, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), and long-term lease agreements to ensure consistency with the cost to provide the service and the category of service level on the cost recovery pyramid.

**Implementation:** Inform current renters, MOU partners, and long-term lease holders on a financial and service sustainability plan, the cost recovery goals, and the service assessment and provision analysis. Develop specific and measurable action steps for each rental, MOU, and lease holder including alternative funding strategies.

- 13.4 Review all instructor agreements in relation to the agency costs and adjust to match the category of service level on the pyramid.

**Implementation:** Inform current instructor agreement holders on a financial and service sustainability plan, etc. Develop specific and measurable action steps for each rental, MOU, and lease holder including alternative funding strategies.

#### **Cost Recovery Pyramid:**

*The pyramid below illustrates the method used in this plan to guide cost recovery philosophy and policies.*

*The base level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation system—those services that benefit the largest portion of the community. Services appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid are those that provide mostly individual benefits.*



- 13.5 Identify funding sources or partnership/collaborations to continue the provision of social service programming by the Montgomery County Department of Recreation as current funding is reduced and eliminated.
- Implementation:** Inform current social service providers or partners on a financial and service sustainability plan, and work with them to efficiently and effectively provide services in a way that complies with the plan.
- 13.6 Pursue alternative funding for efficiency measures to reduce the costs to the tax payer of operations, maintenance, and safety.
- Implementation:** Research return on investment for green practices. Jointly procure goods and services between the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation where feasible.
- 13.7 Identify the cost of emergency services (e.g., providing shelter in an emergency, water main breaks, flooding, hurricanes and major storms, etc.) and pursue remuneration where appropriate or possible.
- Implementation:** Continue to track direct and indirect costs to provide emergency services. Pursue reimbursement from FEMA and other agencies when possible.
- 13.8 Identify selective opportunities for Montgomery County Department of Recreation to use or create self-sustaining funds as appropriate.
- Implementation:** Identify self-sustaining programs and services (those that are revenue positive or neutral over direct costs) to convert to a Self-sustaining Fund.
- 13.9 Implement service provision strategies identified through the Service Assessment.
- Implementation:** Further refine the definition of “Partner” and re-categorize rentals or leases that do not fit this definition. Complete the transfer of the permitting and maintenance of Woodside Gym from M-NCPPC Department of Parks to Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), subject to Council approval.

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## GOAL 14

Ensure services are accessible for those who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

### OBJECTIVES

- 14.1 Review and refine scholarship and fee reduction/waiver policies and align them across both departments, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

**Implementation:** Align the scholarship or fee reduction/waiver policies between the two departments, focusing on financial support for participation in those categories of service on the "Mostly or Considerable Community Benefit" levels of the Pyramid – thus ensuring access for all to those services with the greatest community benefit.

- 14.2 Seek funding sources for each agency, M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation, to fund the scholarship or fee reduction/waiver program.

**Implementation:** Create a donation and/or an endowment program, a round-up program, and a “workreation” program (for individuals to use volunteer hours toward payment/credit for future programs in which they would like to participate).

- 14.3 Expand targeted efforts to reach socio-economically disadvantaged populations.

**Implementation:** Identify socio-economically disadvantaged populations and their locations using recent Census and other tools. Identify grant opportunities and collaborate with other agencies to reach the targeted populations.



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## GOAL 15

Increase alternative funding sources.

### OBJECTIVES

- 15.1 Utilize non-profit 501(c)(3) funding organizations to help generate alternative funding.

**Implementation:** Identify opportunities for collaborative funding with the Parks Foundation and Friends of Recreation. Develop a framework for organization of Friends Groups. Partner with targeted non-profit organizations to meet specific funding gaps.

- 15.2 Expand sponsorship and naming rights opportunities.

**Implementation:** Clarify naming rights and sponsorships policies for each department and opportunities for collaboration. Bundle sponsorship opportunities and market to targeted businesses. Identify opportunities for naming rights.

- 15.3 Expand alternative funding through grants.

**Implementation:** Pursue and obtain grants and bond bills for healthy and active living initiatives, trail development, cultural resource projects, etc.

- 15.4 Support programs and operations through volunteerism.

**Implementation:** Actively engage volunteers where appropriate as an alternative funding resource. Evaluate and continue to use mandated service programs and stipend service programs (i.e., AmeriCorps, Civic Justice Corps, etc.).



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**GOAL 16**

Be leaders in sustainable “green” practices.

**OBJECTIVES:**

- 16.1 Develop a coordinated cost-effective program to incorporate sustainable “green” planning, design, construction, and operational practices at all levels, including education, administration and procurement, in order to improve human health and reduce negative impacts on the natural environment.

**Implementation:** Create a Sustainability Plan. Create and coordinate information gathering and reporting for existing efforts and new initiatives. Include metrics for measuring success.




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**Theme 5: Marketing & Outreach**

*Informing and engaging a diverse community*

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**GOAL 17**

Proactively market parks and recreation services and facilities and communicate the benefits to the community.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 17.1 Develop and implement a county-wide strategic marketing and outreach plan to expand awareness and use of programs and services offered by the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Department of Recreation.

**Implementation:** Seek and secure funding to implement joint marketing and outreach plan.

- 17.2 Transition communications from printed to electronic media where feasible.

**Implementation:** Use e-newsletters, text messaging, social media, smart phone applications, and enhanced websites. Fund staff to manage electronic media marketing efforts.

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**GOAL 18**

Effectively communicate with and engage diverse groups.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 18.1 Augment staff training in multi-cultural competency and outreach. (Utilize expertise and resources of the Gilchrist Center for Cultural Diversity and M-NCPPC Diversity Council.)

**Implementation:** Promote and expand staff training in multi-cultural competency and outreach.

- 18.2 Increase opportunities for engagement with diverse groups and those that serve these populations.

**Implementation:** Collaborate with the County’s Office of Community Partnerships and other agencies to promote parks and recreation programs, activities, and services to targeted populations. Develop programming that celebrates multi-culturalism. Make information about ADA compliant facilities and programs easily accessible on both websites. Expand volunteer opportunities that appeal to diverse groups.

- 18.3 Strive to make parks and recreation advisory groups representative of the demographic diversity of Montgomery County (e.g., ethnic, age, physical disabilities, income, etc.).

**Implementation:** Develop diverse recruitment and retention campaign for existing recreation advisory boards to attract representatives from all communities.

- 18.4 Increase collaboration on community-wide events and festivals.

**Implementation:** Enhance or expand existing and develop new community events and festivals, and develop a calendar to promote them.



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**GOAL 19**

Provide meaningful opportunities for public support, input, and engagement.

**OBJECTIVES**

- 19.1 Provide a variety of input opportunities on parks and recreation service issues and concerns in Montgomery County.

**Implementation:** Provide online forum or blog, automate online surveying tied to database systems, and on-line suggestion box. Standardize public notification of and involvement in parks and recreation plans and designs.

- 19.2 Expand volunteer opportunities.

**Implementation:** Promote volunteer opportunities through all available methods, including online and promotional signage. M-



NCPPC Department of Parks formalize Friends group program, and Montgomery County Department of Recreation develop a fully functioning volunteer program.

- 19.3 Conduct a statistically-valid county-wide survey every five years to determine community interests and needs.

**Implementation:** Fund statistically-valid survey focused on both customer and non-customer needs, usage trends, and satisfaction levels, if existing survey opportunities (e.g. Census) are not adequate.

- 19.4 Leverage relationships with existing “Friends Groups,” staff, and volunteers to promote parks and recreation.

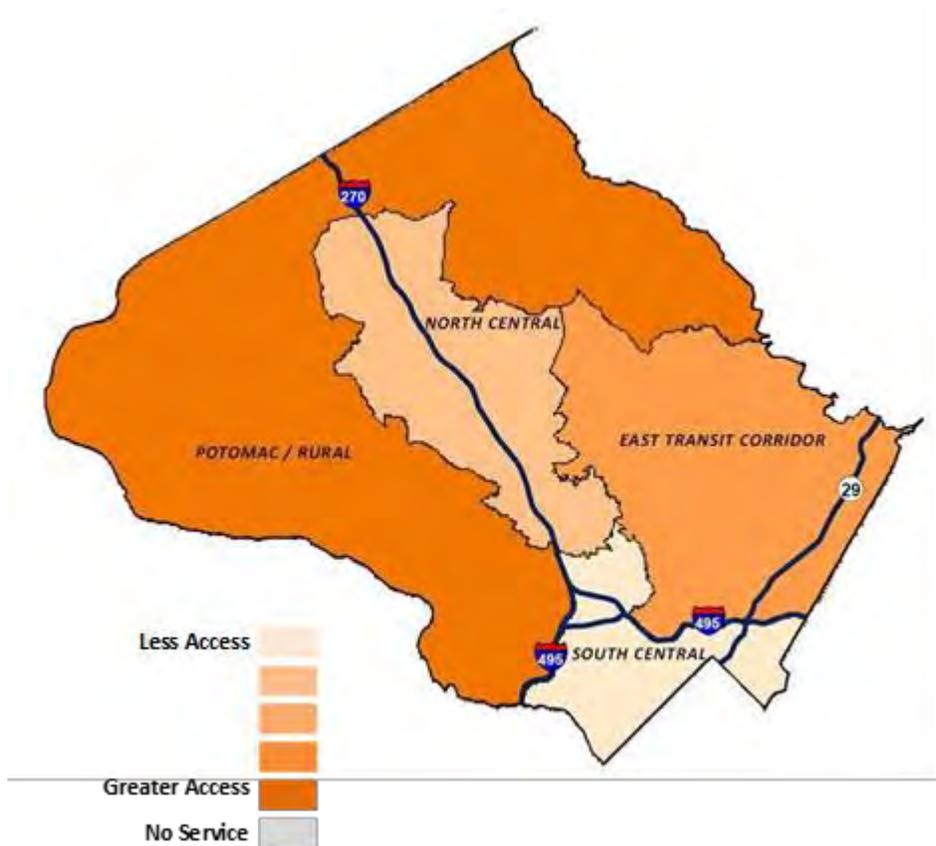
**Implementation:** Expand existing communication (e.g., place parks and recreation information in existing groups’ newsletters and on websites). Develop training program for outreach. Expand existing communication venues with newsletters, websites and networks managed by Friends Groups to promote awareness of and participation in programming.

## Background and Methodology

### Population Trends

The population of Montgomery County is forecast to grow by 17 percent over the next twenty years. By the year 2030, Montgomery County is projected to have approximately 1,134,400 residents.

Most of this growth is projected to occur in the central part of the County, including the I-270 corridor. Proactive planning to address parks and recreation needs in these urbanizing areas is a focus of the Vision 2030 Plan.



#### **Level of Service per Population by Sub-area**

*Due to the size and diversity of the County, the Vision 2030 process projected park and recreation needs in four geographic sub-areas of the County: Potomac/Rural, East Transit Corridor, South Central, and North Central.*

*The Level of Service (LOS) analysis of the parks and recreation inventory shows that when population density is considered, the current overall LOS per capita is lower in the I-270 corridor (indicated by the lighter shades in the South Central and North Central sub-areas on this map).*

*The increased growth projected in the next twenty years along the I-270 corridor will create increased demand for parks and recreation facilities and services.*



## The Outreach Process

*The Vision 2030 Plan resulted from an extensive, collaborative planning process that engaged over 1,000 people, including residents, community leaders, stakeholders, staff, and county leadership over a period of 14 months.*

*Both agencies conducted extensive outreach by email, posters, e-newsletter, the project website and press releases.*

*The process included:*

- Eight public meetings
- Three summits
- Twenty-five community focus groups
- Statistically-valid, county-wide mail survey of parks and recreation needs and interests

Because the Vision 2030 Plan reflects a broad consensus among the public, staff, and county leadership, it will help to ensure that Montgomery County’s parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping the high quality of life enjoyed by county residents.

## Next Steps

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan provides goals and objectives that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This plan positions both the M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Montgomery County Department of Recreation to collaboratively meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing and diverse community.

Based on the goals and objectives outlined in this Plan, an implementation plan to guide staff work programs has been developed by staff of both agencies. This implementation plan consists of detailed implementation matrices for each of the Strategic Plan Objectives with specific action steps that include timeline, budget impacts, and responsibility. These guiding documents should be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs and interests, and resources.



## Deliverables

### Vision 2030 Strategic Plan Products

In addition to this Executive Summary document, Vision 2030 includes the following documents:

- **Volume 1:** Needs & Resource Assessment
- **Volume 2:** Vision 2030 Strategic Plan
- **Volume 3:** Implementation Plan – Staff Work Program Guide

Following is a brief description of each the Vision 2030 documents and how they relate to each other.

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#### VOLUME 1: NEEDS & RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The document identifies key parks and recreation issues and needs in Montgomery County based on analysis in the following areas:

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



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#### VOLUME 2: VISION 2030 STRATEGIC PLAN

The Vision 2030 Strategic Plan provides a vision to guide the development of the parks and recreation system for 20 years to 2030. It also lays out recommended goals, objectives and implementation strategies to achieve the 2030 vision and address the key issues identified in Volume 1: Needs & Resource Assessment.



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#### VOLUME 3: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan is a staff-level work plan that identifies action steps to achieve the strategic goals, objectives, and implementation strategies along with the sequence/timeframe and financial and staff resources needed to implement the plan recommendations.





Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation in Montgomery County, Maryland  
Executive Summary | June 2011



**Vision 2030**

Montgomery County  
**RECREATION**  
DEPARTMENT

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks, Montgomery County  
*MontgomeryParks.org*

Montgomery County Department of Recreation  
*MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/rec*