



Long Branch Parks Initiative Plan Report

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PARKS



Montgomery Parks
Montgomery County, MD



SEPTEMBER 2024





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Left: The joy of discovering new heights at Latino Conservation week in Long Branch Arliss Neighborhood Park.



Introduction

Connecting communities to parks provides a host of benefits. Parks foster a sense of belonging, promote active recreation, and provide access to the outdoors and support environmental stewardship. The Long Branch Parks Initiative is a comprehensive examination of the existing parks and lays out a plan to make systematic improvements in this dynamic community.

The Long Branch community is fortunate to have 10 parks, including the Long Branch Stream Valley Park, in close proximity to one another, but these parks are in need of renovation and fresh thinking. The Long Branch Parks Initiative (LBPI) is a holistic examination of the 10 parks that provides comprehensive recommendations to improve the quality of the parks. The aim is to improve quality of life in the area by delivering a rich and well-connected network of parks for the residents of, and visitors to, this growing urban community.

The objectives of the LBPI are to support connectivity in three ways:

1. Connecting people to high quality parks with play areas, active recreation amenities, community gathering spaces, and natural environments.

2. Connecting people to each other in safe and welcoming parks with inviting events and programs.
3. Connecting habitats and environmental resources in the area through restoration of streams and forests.

By planning and designing all the Long Branch parks at the same time, Montgomery Parks has opportunities to assess the existing conditions and community experience in the parks and make plans based on community desires for park amenities and functions. Each park may fulfill a specific neighborhood need while the larger park network provides a collection of activities and amenities (described in the vision for each park in *The Parks* section of this report, p.19) that enhance the whole of the system.

Left: A comedy performance at Long Branch Arliss Neighborhood Park unites the community through laughter and shared experience.

In addition to the objectives described above, as part of the LBPI, this report and overall planning effort will help direct resources to Long Branch parks to significantly improve the quality of parks in the area in the near term. These resources include capital investments, grant funding, staff time, partnerships, and public attention.

The Long Branch Parks Initiative is consistent with Montgomery Parks' emphasis on making equitable investments in the parks system. Most of the Long Branch community is in a disadvantaged area as identified in the Community Equity Index developed by Montgomery Planning. The community has been historically underserved by a variety of public services. There are real opportunities to make improvements in Long Branch through this comprehensive park improvement effort.

This report is an explanation of the planning and outreach processes for the Long Branch Parks Initiative and the resulting recommendations that will guide future work on Long Branch Parks as the LBPI continues.



Sunset yoga: A contemplative moment joins friends and neighbors in the park's natural setting.

Scope of Project

Ten Parks

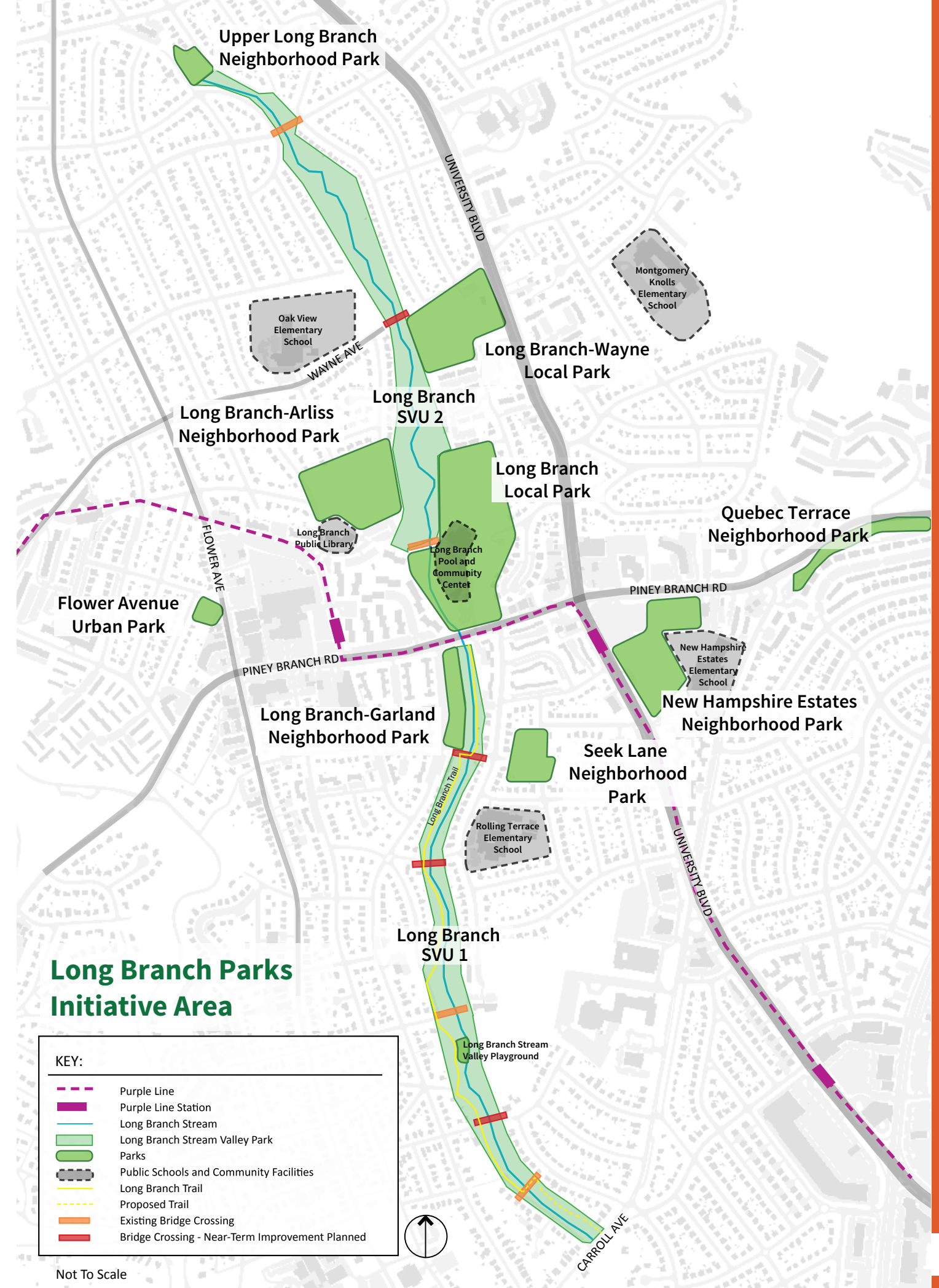
The Long Branch Parks Initiative evaluates and provides recommendations for 10 parks that are mainly grouped along the Long Branch Stream Valley. The geographic parameters include parks from Flower Avenue to New Hampshire Avenue, and between the headwaters of Long Branch at Upper Long Branch Park to Carroll Avenue. While the Long Branch Stream Valley continues to its terminus at Sligo Creek, this report focuses on the stream valley and parks north of Carroll Avenue.

The 10 Parks are:

- Long Branch Stream Valley Park (Units 1 and 2);
- Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park;
- Long Branch-Wayne Local Park;
- Long Branch-Arliss Neighborhood Park;
- Long Branch Local Park;
- Flower Avenue Urban Park;
- Long Branch-Garland Neighborhood Park;
- Seek Lane Neighborhood Park;
- New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park; and
- Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park. See exhibit 1.

With the goal of connecting people in Long Branch to the rich parks system at the heart of their community, this plan makes recommendations for improvements to park design and amenities, environmental enhancement, and ongoing community relations through park programming and activation.

Right: Map of the Long Branch Parks Initiative Area.



Long Branch Parks Initiative Process

To deliver improved parks in Long Branch quickly, Montgomery Parks undertook three concurrent efforts:

1. Community Engagement. The Long Branch Parks Initiative provided an opportunity to deepen existing relationships with community groups and residents. Due to the scope and complexity of the multi-park project in this diverse and multilingual community, Montgomery Parks used various engagement tools to ensure we heard from a representative cross-section of the community.

This effort included door-to-door canvassing to speak with neighbors, conducting surveys at park events, and hosting an online survey. The combination of methods resulted in a group of respondents that more closely represented the racial and ethnic demographics of the community than would have been achieved by any one method alone.

Montgomery Parks also convened stakeholder focus groups, tabled at the Long Branch Festival, visited on-site with neighbors and staff from various Montgomery Parks divisions, spoke to community stakeholders, and held a public meeting to present preliminary recommendations.

2. Park Planning. The Long Branch Parks Initiative used a comprehensive project approach that engaged staff from a variety of disciplines to work with the community to develop a shared vision for all ten parks.

Park planners reviewed the following data to build a picture of the community the parks serve:

- ▶ Existing-conditions data
- ▶ Survey data
- ▶ Focus group transcripts

- ▶ Previous plans
- ▶ Demographics
- ▶ Land-use conditions
- ▶ Transportation issues
- ▶ Level-of-service analyses

From this information, they developed recommendations that will make relevant and lasting change to the parks both individually and holistically.

3. Park Design. Even as the Long Branch Parks Initiative was being generated in the Parks Department, several park improvements were already underway. These included a number of bridge and trail projects, as well as the design for Long Branch-Garland and Long Branch-Wayne parks. To build on these projects, planning and design staff coordinated with the broader engagement and planning effort to develop specific park plans.

Existing Conditions Findings

To better understand the Long Branch area and the relationship of its parks to the community, the LBPI planning team reviewed existing park conditions, previous park plans, transportation agency plans, sector plans, land-use conditions, safety data, demographic data and the results of community engagement efforts. For the purposes of this study, data were collected from census tracts within a 10-minute walk of each of the 10 parks.

This examination of existing conditions in the area revealed a complex and diverse community grappling with issues of equity, infrastructural and urban challenges, and environmental damage. The role of parks in connecting people to better public spaces for active recreation, social connection, and outdoor experiences in nature presents an opportunity for improvement in each of these areas.

Urban Conditions

Major roads serving the Long Branch community include Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard. Local business and retail centers are located along these transportation corridors, as well as along Flower Avenue. Unfortunately, these roads and the natural geography of the Long Branch Stream Valley present barriers to pedestrian connectivity and in turn, barriers to park access.

The 2013 Long Branch Sector Plan called the transportation circulation pattern “disjointed and lack[ing in] alternatives.” Improved trail and path connections, new and renovated bridges, and road-crossing improvements are needed to provide safe and efficient pedestrian routes, adequate access to community resources, and increased access to recreation, nature, and outdoor public space.

The area is poised for change with the upcoming opening of the Purple Line light rail and two new Purple Line stations, which have been under construction for several years at the time of this writing. While the Purple Line is a potential barrier to pedestrian connectivity, it will also provide benefits to the community including safer pedestrian road crossings, increased access to transit,

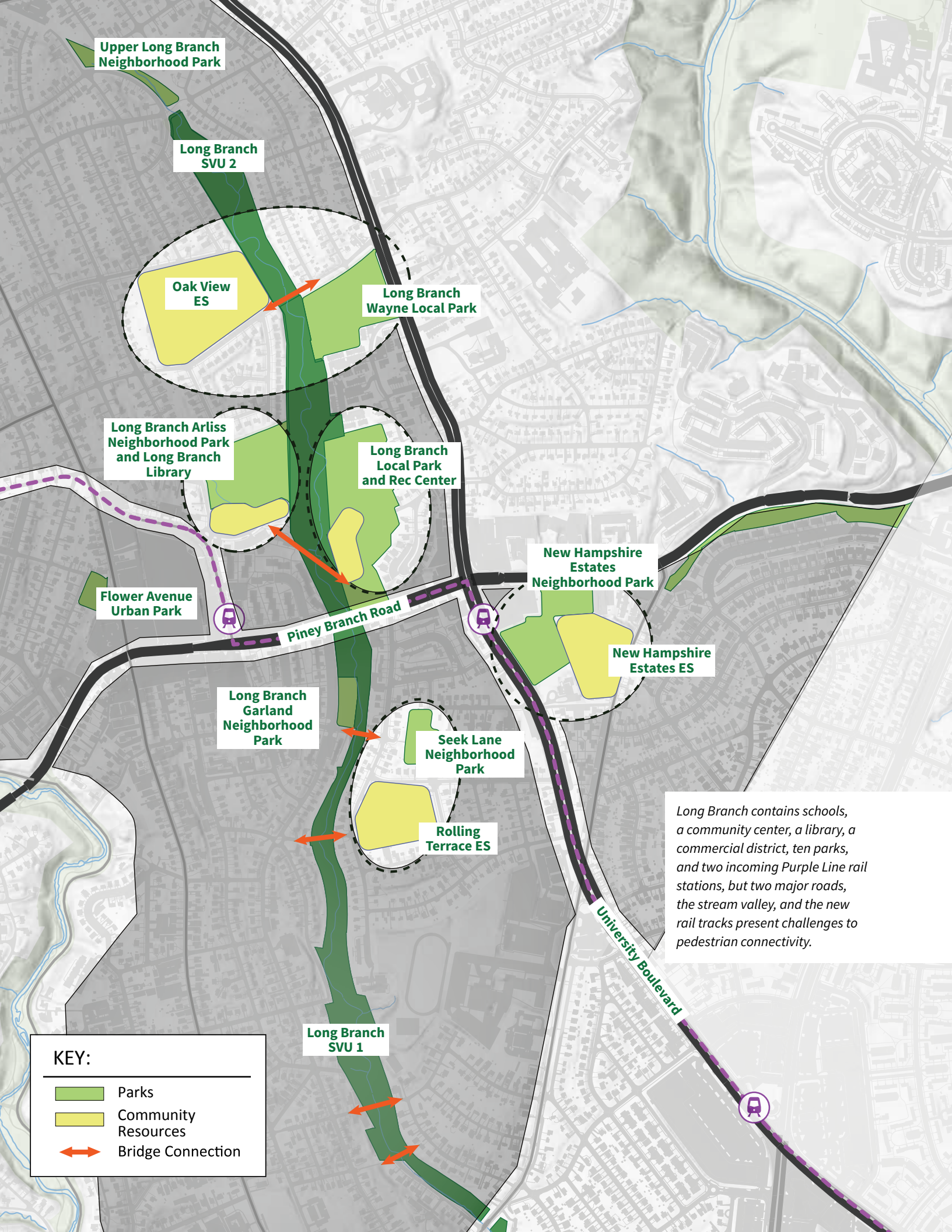
and transit-accessible parks (specifically Long Branch Arliss Park and New Hampshire Estates Park). At the time of this writing, the Purple Line is scheduled to be fully operative by Winter 2027, according to the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

On-road bicycle lanes will be constructed on Piney Branch Road as part of the Purple Line corridor construction by MDOT, and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is undertaking a project to provide additional connected pedestrian and bicycle connectivity along Piney Branch Road from the Sligo Creek Trail to New Hampshire Avenue. The existing Long Branch Trail extends from the end of Long Branch Parkway to Piney Branch Road, with a major stream valley crossing at Domer Avenue. This provides access to—and connections across—the stream valley south of Piney Branch Road.

Many Long Branch area parks are adjacent to important community resources including public schools, the Long Branch Community and Recreation Center, Long Branch Public Library, and the Flower Avenue commercial district. These public resources provide valuable synergy with parks, and their connections to and through parks can have a positive influence on community function.



Parks adjacent to important public resources, such as Flower Avenue Urban Park near the Flower Avenue business district provide spaces for this vibrant community to gather and celebrate together.



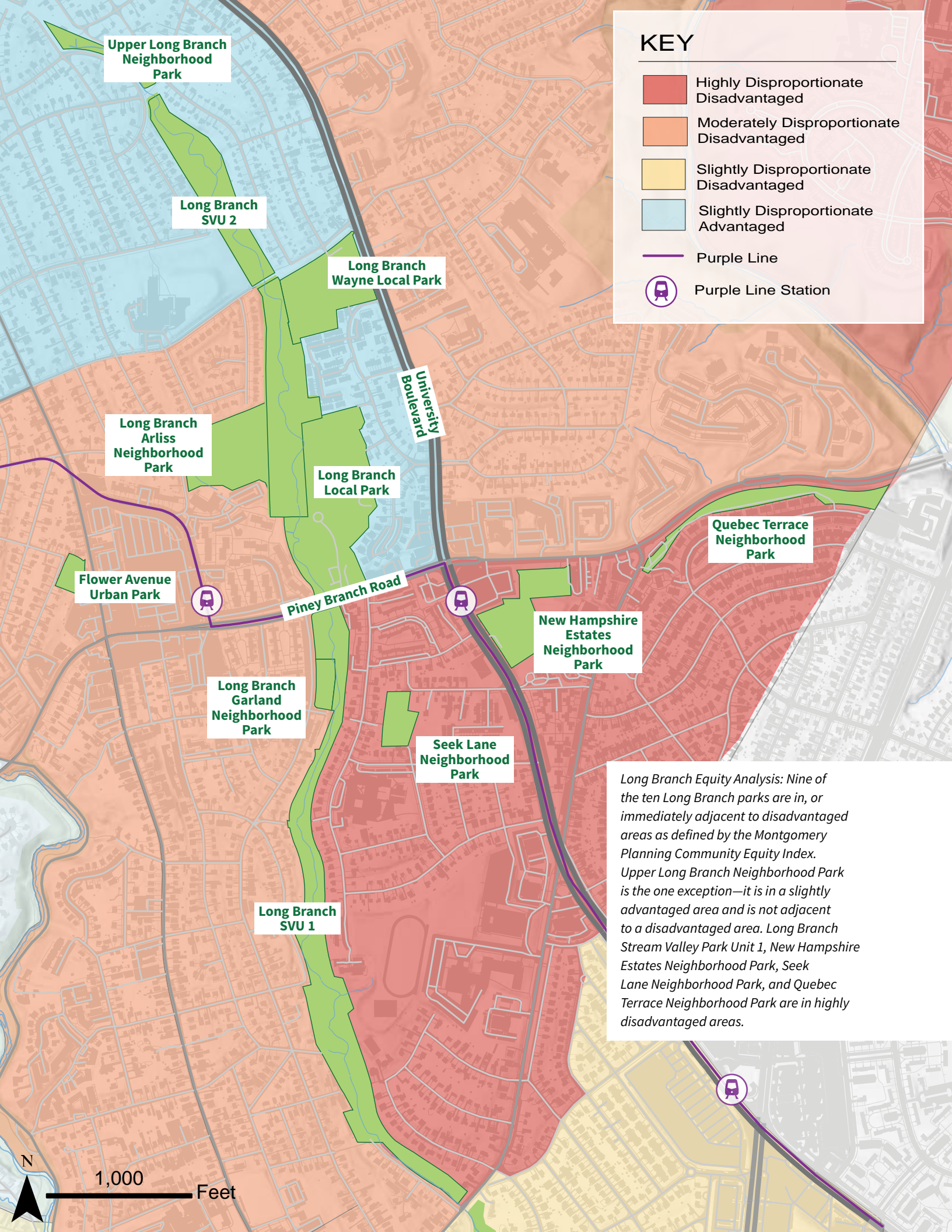
Environmental Conditions

While the stream valley may act as a barrier to pedestrian and vehicular access from east to west and vice versa, it is a vital connection to nature for residents and visitors to the area. It also acts as a connecting framework for many of the parks within Long Branch. The stream valley offers a natural environment in the midst of a dense urban area, a cool respite from summer heat, plant and wildlife habitats and corridors, and a naturalized stream channel. It is also a functional amenity, accepting the surrounding neighborhood stormwater runoff, helping clean and cool local air and water, and accommodating an extensive network of sewer, water, and storm drain infrastructure.

However, the stream valley contains many unstable slopes and degraded stream banks because of prior land uses, more recent development, and untreated stormwater runoff. The system’s overall biological health is impaired by poor water quality, fragmented stream buffers, and degraded riparian corridors. Furthermore, the effects of urban land use, disturbance, and fragmentation have negatively impacted the overall ecology of the area.



Degraded stream channel (left) and non-native invasive plants (right) in the Long Branch Stream Valley Park.



A Focus on Equity

The majority of parks in the Long Branch community are in a disadvantaged area as defined by the Montgomery Planning Community Equity Index, an equity analysis tool that studies socio-economic conditions to establish an equity continuum from highly advantaged to highly disadvantaged within Montgomery County. The designations are defined by population characteristics including income, education, housing tenure, poverty rate, and English language proficiency.

While the number of parks in the community is high (the 10 parks are within a half-mile of one another), the overall condition of the parks is poor. Most of the parks have aging or inadequate amenities and infrastructure, lack stormwater management or environmental improvements, and are difficult to see or access from neighboring communities and major thoroughfares.

Improvements to existing park conditions will offer better public spaces to this community in need of outdoor experiences and connection to natural areas.

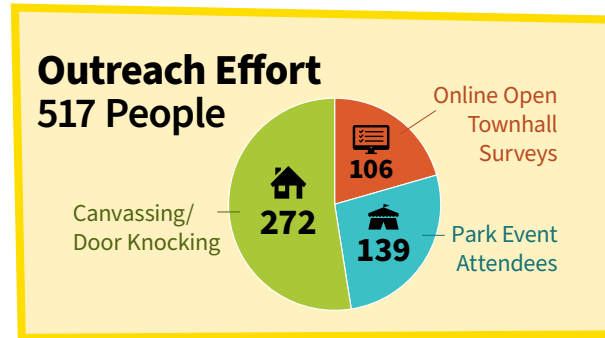


Playground at Long Branch Wayne Local Park.

Community Engagement

Process

Because of the Long Branch community's considerable diversity, the planning and public engagement team used a variety of methods to solicit feedback about the current conditions and future desires for the parks in the area.



Pie chart of survey responses by outreach technique.

Community Outreach Strategies



Snapshot of the English version of the Long Branch Parks Initiative promotional video used to advertise the survey that was used to gather input on what amenities the community wants to see at parks in the Long Branch area.



Door-to-door canvassing to solicit feedback from residents of multi-family apartment buildings in the Long Branch community.



Elementary students indicate which amenities they would most like to see in Long Branch parks.



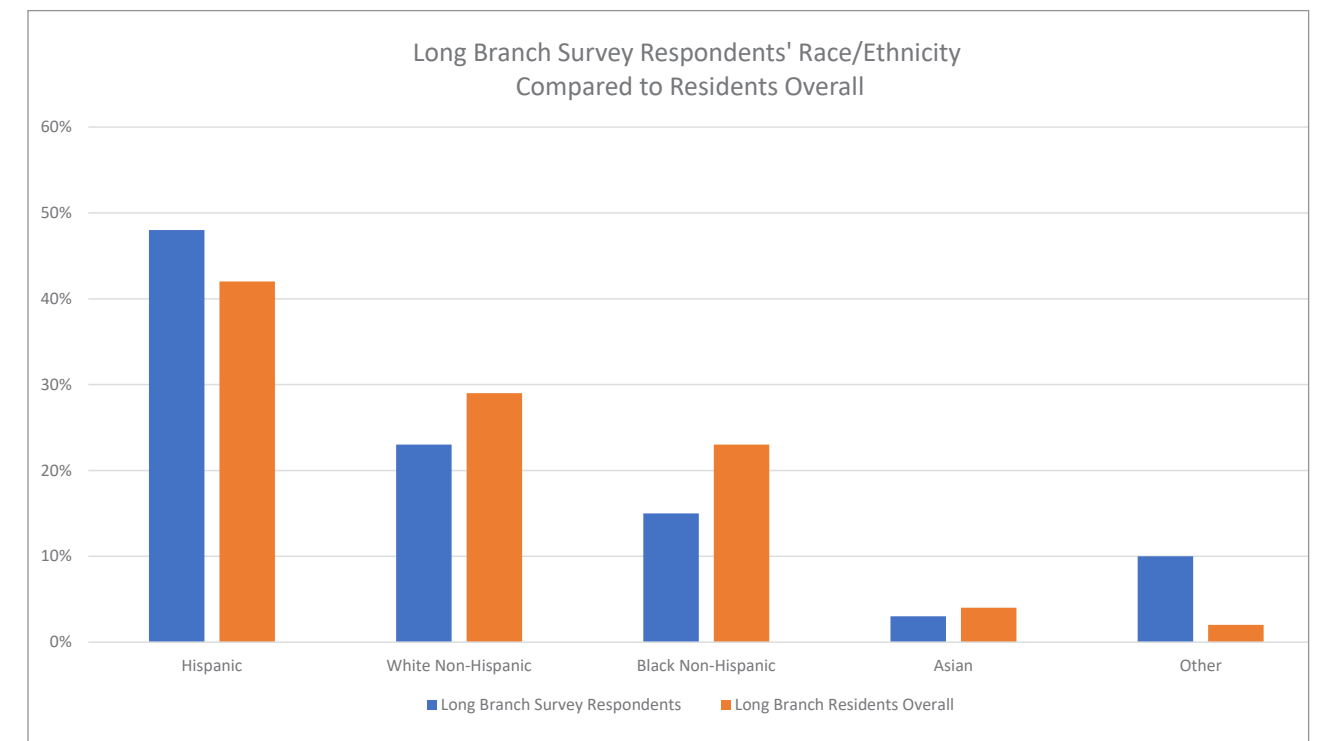
Right: Festival outreach.

Initial community outreach began in April 2022 with door-to-door canvassing of nearly 300 participants in multi-family housing, followed by a kick-off picnic in May. A focus group for teenagers and one for parents and caretakers were both held in August 2022. In total, through the canvassing effort and in-park and online surveys, more than 500 people offered feedback to Montgomery Parks.

An online meeting was held in February 2023 to share and get feedback on proposed concepts for Long Branch-Arliss Neighborhood Park and Long Branch Local Park. Continued community engagement occurred at various local events and student outreach in New Hampshire Estates Elementary School and Oak View Elementary School. Community engagement for Quebec

Terrace Neighborhood Park included installing temporary soccer goals to pilot the idea of a soccer court in the park, surveys about longer-term improvements, and free ice cream provided during an in-park public meeting.

Many residents in Long Branch speak Spanish as a first language. Flyers, postcards, and web pages providing information about meetings and the survey were written in English and Spanish. Translation services were provided at public meetings and for in-park surveys. As a result of this effort to reach varied members of the community, the racial and ethnic composition of the participants closely matched the racial and ethnic composition of the neighborhood.



A combination of door-knocking at multi-family apartment buildings, an online survey, and in-park surveys resulted in a demographic profile of survey respondents that more closely reflects the actual demographics of the neighborhood than many prior engagement efforts.

Findings

Throughout many community conversations, surveys, and focus groups, several themes emerged. There was a general desire among participants for improved and renovated parks. Many community members reported they do not feel safe in area parks, and some noted the parks do not feel welcoming.

Regarding the condition of parks, respondents noted the presence of trash, a lack of signage, and a general need for park upgrades. At least one survey respondent used the word “shabby” to describe Long Branch parks.

The most-used existing amenities included playgrounds, trails, natural areas, picnic shelters, and soccer fields. There is demand for new amenities and activities in the parks as well. Community members wanted large picnic areas for events and gatherings, more swings, basketball courts, and opportunities to play soccer.

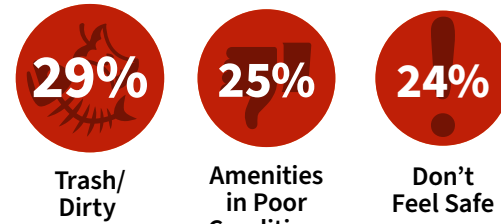
Participants in the teenager focus group and the parent/caregiver focus group talked about the parks providing social spaces and community building areas. Both groups talked about parks as places to spend time with family. Teenagers want places to spend time with friends, parents and caregivers safe places for kids to run around and get exercise.



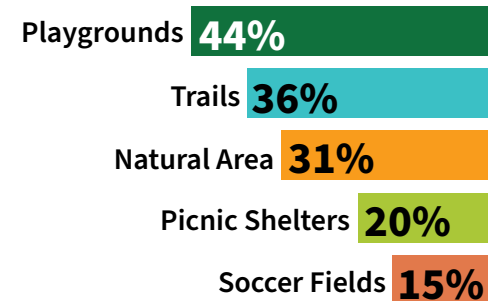
Kids play soccer with newly installed goals at Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park.

Additionally, Montgomery Parks asked survey respondents about two specific sets of parks that may share upgraded amenities because of their proximity to each other: 1. Long Branch Local and Long Branch-Arliss and 2. New Hampshire Estates and Quebec Terrace.

Top 3 Concerns About How Parks Look and Feel



Top 5 Most Used Amenities



Right: Responses to amenity preferences for Long Branch Local & Long Branch-Arliss and New Hampshire & Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park.

Outreach Feedback / Comentarios de Divulgación

What park facilities would you like to see?
¿Qué instalaciones le gustaría ver en el parque?

Long Branch Local & Arliss

Playground	30%
Picnic Shelters/Tables	28%
Soccer Fields	21%
Community Garden	20%
BBQ Grills	19%
Basketball Courts	10%
Dog Park	10%
Soccer Courts	9%
Pickleball Courts	4%
Baseball/Softball Fields	2%

New Hampshire Estates & Quebec Terrace Park

Trails	26%
Picnic Shelters/Tables	26%
Playground	22%
Splash Pad	22%
Community Garden	21%
Soccer Fields	21%
BBQ Grills	21%
Basketball Courts	13%
Dog Park	12%
Soccer Courts	9%
Skate Park	8%
Tennis Courts	6%
Pickleball Courts	5%
Baseball/Softball Fields	3%
Volleyball Courts	3%

“ I would like full-size basketball courts, murals, art, skate parks, more picnic spots and BBQ spots.”
—From 13 yr old resident

“ Me gustaría canchas de baloncesto de tamaño completo, murales, arte, parques de patinaje, más lugares para hacer picnic y lugares para barbacoa.”
—De residencia de 13 años

MontgomeryParks.org



The Parks

Recommendations: Park Vision, Improvements, and Amenities

The goal of the following recommendations is to increase opportunities for outdoor recreation and community gathering for Long Branch-area residents and visitors by providing updated, well-designed parks and walkable neighborhood amenities. Environmental recommendations improve the quality of the valuable natural resources in the neighborhood and provide the opportunity for area residents to experience natural settings.



Picnic shelters like this one at Long Branch Wayne Local Park are community gathering areas where people connect with each other and their parks.



Stream restoration and trail improvements on the Long Branch Trail increase opportunities for people to enjoy natural areas in their community.

Left: Playing at Seek Lane Neighborhood Park.

Long Branch Stream Valley Park

E. Schuyler Rd. to Sligo Creek, Silver Spring, MD ● Park Size = 41 Acres

Existing Conditions

The Long Branch Stream Valley Park is central to the Long Branch area and is a valuable natural resource contributing to quality of life for Long Branch residents. It is a linear park from the headwaters of the Long Branch Tributary near Franklin Avenue to its confluence with Sligo Creek near New Hampshire Avenue. The park is partitioned into three stream valley units (SVUs): SVU 2 north of Piney Branch Road, SVU 1 south of Piney Branch Road to Carroll Ave, and SVU 1A south of Carroll Avenue. The LBPI concentrates on parks north of Carroll Ave. and does not include SVU 1A (The Long Branch Tributary) which feeds Sligo Creek and is part of the Anacostia Watershed system. The paved Long Branch Trail extends from Piney Branch Road to the end of Long Branch Parkway and includes multiple stream crossings. In addition to the paved Long Branch Trail, there are numerous unpaved, informal “people’s choice” trails throughout the stream valley park.

The Long Branch watershed encompasses an area from Montgomery Blair High School to New Hampshire Avenue and from Flower Avenue to University Boulevard. In this highly urbanized area, impervious surfaces cover 40% of the watershed, only 15% of which are treated by stormwater management facilities. Biological monitoring of stream health in Long Branch indicates highly impaired natural communities and poor water quality due to watershed stressors including a lack of sufficient stormwater management, illicit pollution discharges, piped streams and outfalls, and aging water and sewer infrastructure.

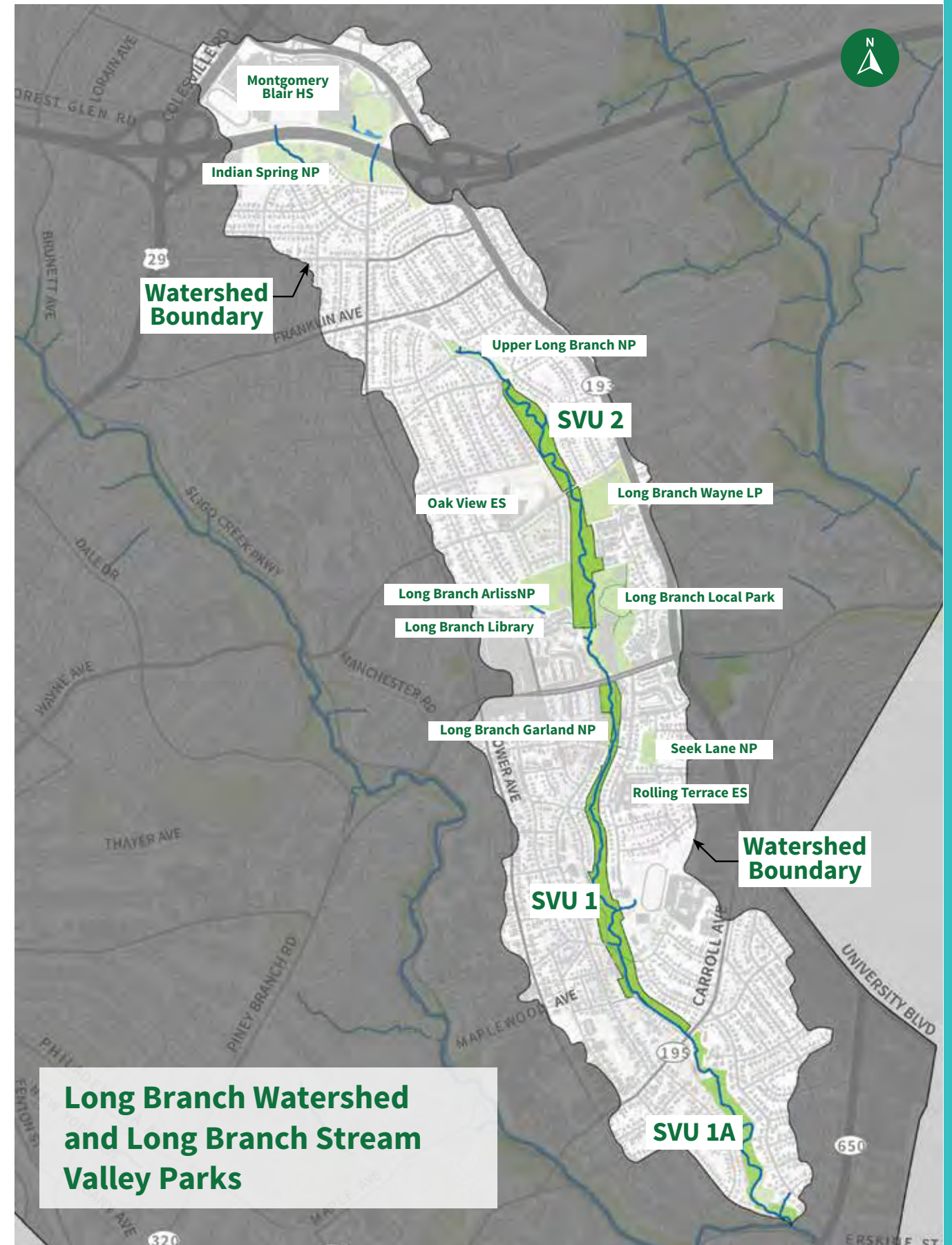
In addition, the forests and terrestrial habitats of the park also demonstrate impairment resulting from fragmentation, persistent pollutants, stormwater runoff, stream channel erosion and flooding, unfavorable growing conditions, soil compaction, and non-native invasive (NNI) plant colonization.

To improve stream health, Montgomery Parks and their agency partners have designed or completed over 3,000 linear feet of stream improvement and restoration along Long Branch over the past decade. This work includes habitat restoration, utility repair and replacement, native plantings, stormwater management, stream crossings that promote aquatic passage, stream restorations that provide better floodplain access, and outfall restoration. In addition, recent upgrades to the trail and trail access points have been completed south of Domer Avenue, including repaving, new bridge crossings, accessibility improvements, and grading improvements.

Public Input

The existing people’s choice trails in the stream valley highlight the desire for connection with nature and walkable connections throughout the community. Public outreach reinforced this finding as trails and natural areas were two of the top three most-used existing amenities and were among the most desired new amenities indicated by participants in the survey about Long Branch parks.

VISION Connecting people to nature, schools, and other community resources.



Long Branch Stream Valley Park

(SVU 2 – North of Piney Branch Road)

Recommended Improvements

Trails and Bridges

- ▶ **(NS-1)** Formalize the existing people's choice natural surface trail on the east side of the creek between Wayne Avenue and E. Melbourne Avenue
- ▶ **(B-1)** Wayne Avenue Bridge—Replace the existing bridge and stair with a new elevated bridge and ADA-compliant pedestrian trail across the Long Branch Stream Valley to connect East Wayne Avenue with the Long Branch-Wayne Local Park
- ▶ **(NS-2)** Formalize the existing people's choice natural surface trail on the west side of the creek between the Long Branch Public Library parking lot and Wayne Avenue/E. Schuyler Road
- ▶ **(NS-3)** Formalize the existing people's choice natural surface trail on the east side of the creek between Wayne Avenue and Long Branch Local Park

Stream Restoration

- ▶ **(S-1)** Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park Outfall Restoration: Daylight approximately 200' of piped headwater stream, cut back the Mintwood Street outfalls to slow and infiltrate stormwater discharges, and restore the Dearborn Avenue outfall to provide for groundwater recharge, dissipate energy generated by storm flows, enhance the stream buffer, and improve instream habitats by stabilizing channel banks

Forest Stewardship

Combat key non-native invasive (NNI) plant areas focusing on trail corridors, areas of natural value and community value, and promote Weed Warrior efforts. NNI removal is expected to be accomplished in three phases as noted below and in the SVU 1 recommendations.

- ▶ **NNI Phase 1** — Wayne Avenue south to Piney Branch Road including Long Branch-Arliss Neighborhood Park (NP), Long Branch Local Park (LP), and Long Branch-Wayne LP
- ▶ **NNI Phase 2** — See SVU 1
- ▶ **NNI Phase 3** — Wayne Avenue north to Upper Long Branch NP



VISION Connecting people to nature, schools, and other community resources.

Long Branch Stream Valley Park

(SVU 1 – South of Piney Branch Road)

Recommended Improvements

Playground Renovation

- ▶ **(P-1)** Renovate playgrounds at Haddon Drive and Houston Avenue

Trails and Bridges

- ▶ **(HS-1)** Renovate Long Branch Trail from Piney Branch Road to Domer Avenue
- ▶ **(B-3)** Replace Domer Avenue Bridge with a wider bridge with lighting
- ▶ **(B-4)** Replace Clayborn Avenue Bridge to improve access across the stream valley and to Rolling Terrace Elementary School
- ▶ **(B-5)** Replace Prospect Avenue Bridge
- ▶ **(NS-4)** Formalize the existing people's choice natural surface trail on the east side of the creek between Houston Avenue and Prospect Street
- ▶ **(HS-2)** Extend Long Branch Trail south to Carroll Avenue
- ▶ **(B-6)** Provide a new bridge at Long Branch Parkway to complete the east-west connection from the Long Branch Trail extension. Remove the mid-block crossing.

Stream Restoration

- ▶ **(S-2)** Piney Branch Road to Domer Avenue: Restore stream channel from Domer Avenue to Piney Branch Road including fish passage improvements, flood prone benches, channel sinuosity, and stabilization of instream habitat features including riffles, pools, glides, runs, eddies, etc. Reconstruct eroded outfalls at Domer Avenue and Gilbert Street to improve stormwater capacity and increase

infiltration and filtering of stormwater runoff.

- ▶ **(S3)** Upstream of Clayborn Avenue: Restore the stream channel to prevent erosion, improve channel sinuosity, provide floodplain connection, and improve aquatic habitat. Tie into the 2015 stream restoration project near the Clayborn Avenue crossing.
- ▶ **(S4)** Upstream of Kennebec Avenue: Restore stream channel to improve aquatic habitat, maintain deep pools, and establish root wad to provide complex cover. Improve floodplain connection and rehydrate historic floodplain wetlands. Restore outfall from Kennebec Avenue to improve stormwater capacity and increase infiltration of stormwater runoff. Remove excess impervious asphalt at the end of Kennebec Avenue.
- ▶ **(S5)** Outfall Restoration, Carroll Avenue/ Anne Street (south of map area): Daylight approximately 100' of storm drainpipe. Enhance the outfall channel to provide additional stormwater capacity, dissipate energy and improve infiltration. Plant native tree species to provide shade, long-term bank stability, and nutrient uptake.

Forest Stewardship

Combat key non-native invasive (NNI) areas. Focus on trail corridors, areas of natural and community value, and promote Weed Warrior efforts. NNI removal is expected to be accomplished in three phases as noted below and in the SVU 2 recommendations.

- ▶ **NNI Phase 2** — Piney Branch Road to Carroll Avenue

VISION Connecting people to nature, schools, and other community resources.



Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park

9335 Wilmet Street, Silver Spring, MD 20901 • Park Size = 1.3 Acres

Existing Conditions

Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park is a linear slice of land at the head of the Long Branch Stream Valley Park. The developed area of the park is heavily used by residents of the neighborhood and includes a playground, picnic tables, a half basketball court, and a small, flexible lawn. Local users call the park “Fire Engine Park” after a beloved existing play structure. A Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT) right of way on the northern border of the park functions as park space but is not currently park land.

Public Input

Neighbors report that the park is heavily used and the fire engine play structure is beloved.

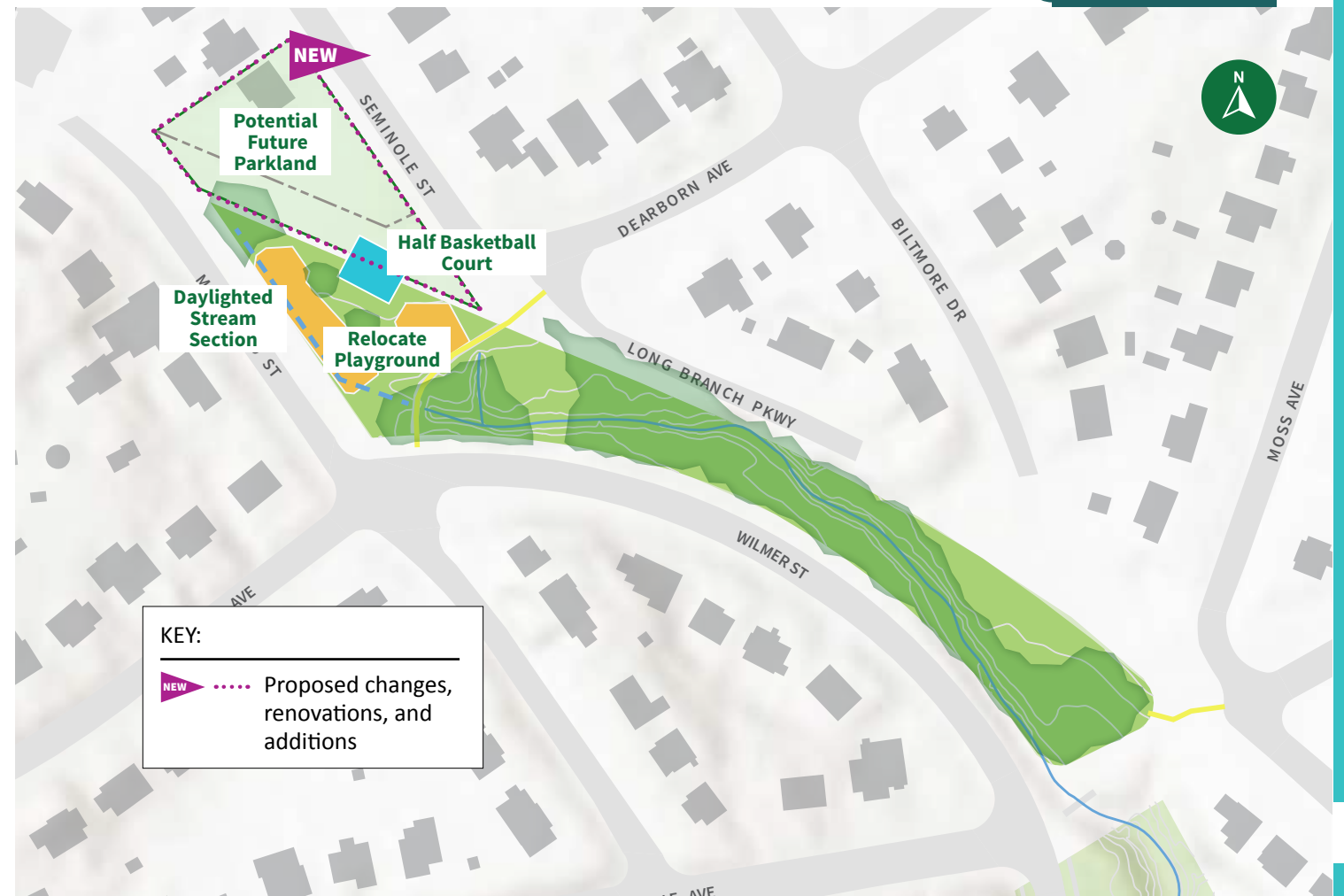
Recommended Amenities and Program



- ▶ Consider acquisition of 9400 Seminole Street if property owner is a willing seller in the future. Work with Montgomery County Department of Transportation to incorporate the right of way into park.
- ▶ Enlarged park area could include new amenity such as sport court, picnic, shelter, dog run, or relocated playground
- ▶ Relocate and update playground as part of stream restoration effort
- ▶ Provide on-road trail connections to the stream valley



EXISTING 

 PROPOSED



KEY:
 NEW
 Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

VISION Playful neighborhood-serving park.

Long Branch Wayne Local Park

509 E. University Blvd., Silver Spring, MD 20901 • Park Size = 6.1 Acres

Existing Conditions

Long Branch Wayne Local Park is adjacent to the busy corridor of University Boulevard, with the main entry and parking area along Wayne Avenue. This popular park currently has the only picnic shelter in the Piney Branch area. The shelter may be permitted, and it is heavily used for special events and community gatherings such as birthday parties and other celebrations. There is a high demand for parking in the undersized parking lot, overuse of the soccer field has resulted in poor field conditions, other existing amenities need upgrades, and the 40 feet of grade change from University Boulevard to the lower part of the park presents challenges for park access.

A detailed design for this park is currently underway.

Public Input

Public input during the Facility Planning process in 2016 showed a preference for improving existing amenities over adding new facilities.

Amenities and Program

- Relocated and expanded parking area
- Updated playground
- Renovated picnic pavilion
- Renovated soccer field
- Basketball court and fitness area
- Stormwater management
- ADA accessible toilet with enclosure
- Drinking fountain
- Improved circulation—ADA accessible pathways and maintenance access



VISION Community gathering for competitive soccer, active play, and events at the picnic shelter.



EXISTING

PROPOSED



KEY:
 NEW
 Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

Long Branch Arliss Neighborhood Park

8810 Garland Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901 • Park Size = 6.25 Acres

Existing Conditions

The Long Branch Arliss Park is tucked behind the Long Branch Public Library and is adjacent to the Long Branch Stream Valley. Long Branch Arliss Park is underused. The park is accessed via the library parking lot adjacent to multi-family housing to the south and via informal footpaths that connect to the community of single-family homes to the north and west of the park. A large outdoor library terrace overlooks the park. The Montgomery Parks Activation team has used this park for special events including Salsa in the Park and yoga. The park has a shady woodland edge to the north and west with towering trees and a core of active recreation near the parking area.

Existing amenities include a small, outdated playground, two tennis courts, a handball court, a half basketball court, and grassy areas punctuated by mature trees.

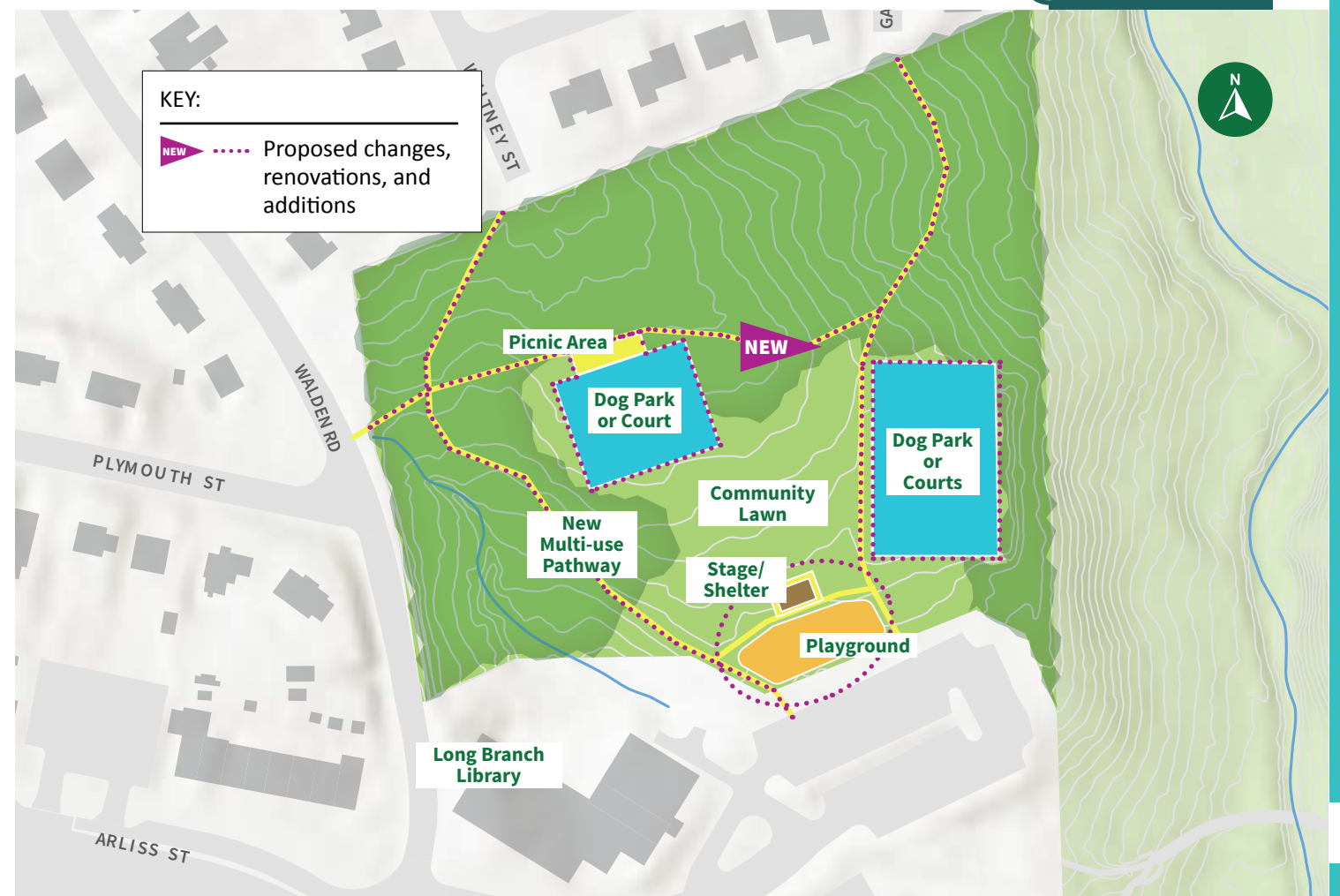
Public input

A primary concern here was safety, due to low park use and the lack of visibility into and throughout the park. Community meeting participants shared strong interest in a larger playground, dog park, pickleball, and community event spaces to encourage greater park use, complement activities at the library, and provide outdoor spaces for recreation, education, and community gatherings.

VISION Transit-accessible event, education, and play space for people and pets next to the public library.

Recommended Amenities and Program

- Improved, enlarged playground
- A flexible community stage/picnic pavilion sized for performers: approximately 15'x30' with minimum 10' height clearance
- Event lawn/flexible community lawn to accommodate approximately 300 people standing
- Dog Park with drinking fountain for dogs, shade structure, and separate areas for large and small dogs if possible
- Court or Courts—Tennis court with pickleball striping and/or basketball court
- New accessible paved pathway network with connections to the community at Walden Road, Whitney Street, and Garland Avenue for Long Branch Trail connectivity through the park, with a trail connection through the Library parking lot
- ADA accessible toilet and enclosure
- Drinking fountain
- Visible and physical connections to library terrace
- Tree stewardship—consider tree preservation in path alignment and construction method, remove trees in poor condition in the main amenity area of the park and near the library parking lot, and plant new trees as appropriate around planned improvements
- Tree preservation, particularly at the north and east sides of the park
- Stormwater management



Long Branch Local Park

700 Langley Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20901 • Park Size = 14 Acres

Existing Conditions

Situated behind the Long Branch Community Recreation Center, the central feature of this park is a large rectangular field accessed by a long stairway from the Recreation Center parking lot. Soccer games are often played on the field despite its poor condition. Additional amenities include a backstop fence, tennis courts, a playground, a half basketball court, a community garden, and a loop path. The playground is on multiple levels and is in need of renovation. The existing tennis courts are obscured in places by overgrown vegetation and is in poor condition. The small parking area and main entry to the park are on Langley Drive at the end of a narrow neighborhood street with no outlet.

In response to recommendations in the 2013 Long Branch Sector Plan, Montgomery Parks purchased the property at 8820 Glenville Road in Spring 2023 with the goals of improving visibility to the park and providing a more open, inviting entry from the neighborhood.

Public Input

Survey respondents reported they do not know the park is there because it is neither visible from the Community Center parking lot nor from the adjacent neighborhood. The park is difficult to access because of the large grade changes. Respondents also expressed concerns about trash, safety in the park, and low park use. The loop path is a popular amenity, but respondents complained about its poor condition.

VISION Exciting, active outdoor recreation and social gathering area next to the Long Branch Community Recreation Center.

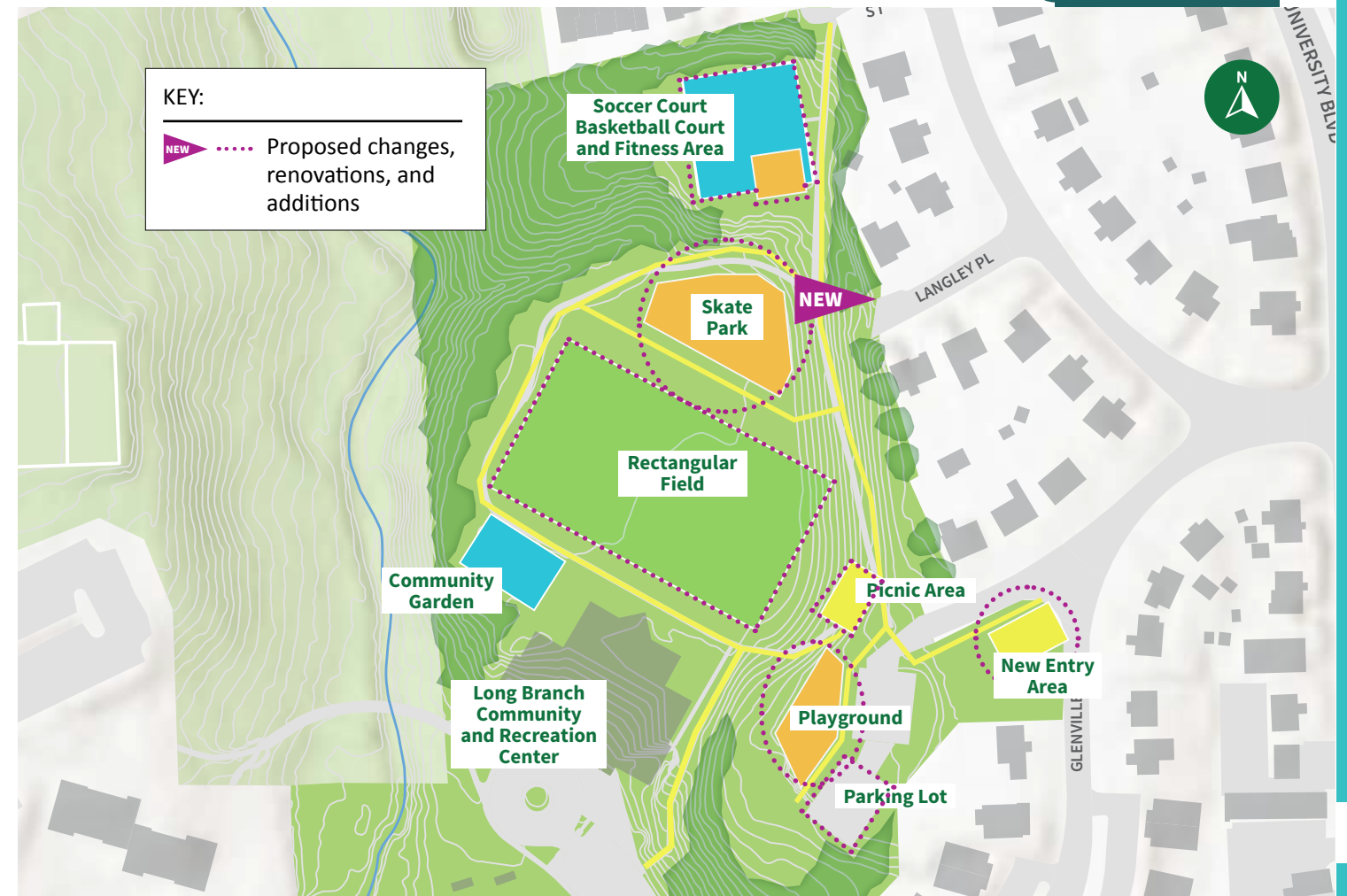
Recommended Amenities and Program

- ▶ New, welcoming entry, signage, and parking at the corner of Langley Drive and Glenville Road
- ▶ Improved access and entry from Plymouth Street
- ▶ Updated playground
- ▶ Picnic areas and social areas with grills and shade structures
- ▶ Upgraded, enlarged soccer field
- ▶ Skate park
- ▶ Parkour or fitness area
- ▶ Basketball court and soccer court to replace tennis courts
- ▶ Accessible loop walk and maintenance access
- ▶ Drinking fountain
- ▶ Long-term: Long Branch Trail extension from Piney Branch Road and accessible route from the Recreation Center parking lot to Long Branch Local Park in conjunction with any future improvements to the Recreation Center and parking area



EXISTING

PROPOSED



Flower Avenue Urban Park

8746 Flower Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910 • Park Size = 0.4 Acres

Existing Conditions

Flower Avenue Urban Park provides meaningful public space at the bustling Long Branch business district on Flower Avenue. This busy park hosts community events where the diverse residents of, and visitors to, Long Branch enjoy time together outdoors. It functions as a play space and natural area for the neighborhoods to the west, and as respite for those frequenting the businesses and transit stops along Flower Avenue. The passage from Hartwell Road to Flower Avenue is an important pedestrian thoroughfare for residents.

In 2021 and 2022, renovations to Flower Avenue Park included new picnic tables, bike racks, benches, hardscape, and a swing bench along the passage between Hartwell Road and Flower Avenue. Overhead string lighting and a pavement mural brought color and light to this popular pedestrian route.

In Summer/Fall 2023, the adjacent property at 8721 Geren Road was incorporated into Flower Avenue Park, significantly increasing the size of the park. Improvements to the new property at that time included demolition of the existing residential house, site cleanup, and grass seeding. A temporary pilot project tested the addition of a portable flush-toilet restroom.

Public Input

Public outreach revealed concern among residents about safety in the park. Neighbors expressed a desire for more lighting, more seating along pathways, more elaborate and aesthetic plantings, and new amenities that

could serve various age groups including teens and seniors. Residents worry about amenities that might create noisy conditions near neighboring homes. The restroom pilot met with overall satisfaction and interest in a long-term solution for a publicly accessible restroom.

Recommended Amenities and Program

- ▶ Add a new community amenity in the expanded park—a picnic pavilion or additional play area
- ▶ Upgrade existing walks and provide new ADA-accessible routes to the new park area
- ▶ Add woodland groundcover planting in areas less prone to trampling and compaction during events
- ▶ Preserve trees and plan for new canopy planting—plan for species and size class diversity improvements
- ▶ Update playground and playground surfacing
- ▶ Explore opportunities for coordination with MCDOT to incorporate the Harwell Avenue right of way into parkland
- ▶ Improve park entry at Flower Avenue in coordination with new bike lane improvements currently planned by MCDOT for Flower Avenue: Montgomery County Flower Avenue Separated Bikelanes
- ▶ Renovate in the future to elevate the quality of the park as an event venue and urban green space

VISION Celebrating community character through events, play, retail opportunities, and enjoyment of the outdoors.



EXISTING

PROPOSED



KEY:
 Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

Long Branch Garland Neighborhood Park

8601 Garland Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20912 • Park Size = 3.8 Acres

Existing Conditions

Surrounded by multifamily residences, Long Branch Garland Neighborhood Park offers green space for a neighborhood where very few homes have access to outdoor areas. This park is an important community connector across the stream valley: Many families travel twice-daily by foot across the Domer Avenue Bridge between their residences and Rolling Terrace Elementary School.

Current amenities include a basketball court, picnic tables with grills, an aging playground, and a flexible lawn. The existing park facilities are in poor condition and the narrow Domer Avenue Bridge is inadequate for the heavy foot traffic it receives.

Long Branch Garland Neighborhood Park is currently in detailed design.

Public Input

Concern about excess trash from littering and feelings of discomfort because of intimidating behavior from people gathering in the park. Outreach participants valued the shade at the playground and the rocker feature for smaller children. They expressed interest in an updated playground, more picnic and grilling opportunities, soccer, fitness equipment, and a public bathroom.

Amenities and Program

- ▶ New 12'-wide bridge with lighting across the stream valley at Domer Avenue
- ▶ New plaza at intersection of bridge, trail, and playground with seating and bike racks
- ▶ New plaza on east side of bridge to connect the bridge and paved trail
- ▶ Improved trail access from neighborhood
- ▶ Updated playground
- ▶ Playground patio
- ▶ Multipurpose court for basketball and soccer
- ▶ Fitness area
- ▶ Picnic shelters with grills
- ▶ ADA-accessible portable toilet and enclosure
- ▶ Drinking fountain
- ▶ Stormwater management
- ▶ Bilingual educational signage about littering and stream valley health
- ▶ Flexible play lawn

VISION Connecting community through gathering, play, and access to natural areas.



EXISTING

PROPOSED



KEY:
 NEW Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

Seek Lane Neighborhood Park

701 Seek Lane, Takoma Park, MD 20912 • Park Size = 1.75 Acres

Existing Conditions

Seek Lane Neighborhood Park, tucked into the neighborhood north of Rolling Terrace Elementary School, is not visible from surrounding streets. Existing amenities, which include a playground and small, flexible lawn surrounded by mature trees are in fair condition, but safety is a concern because of the difficult access and lack of visibility into the space. The new Domer Avenue Bridge will improve access to this park from the Goodacre and Pine Ridge communities on the other side of the stream valley.

Recommended Amenities/ Program of Requirements:

- ▶ Per the 2013 Long Branch Sector Plan recommendations, if the owners are willing sellers in the future, acquire properties south of the park on Bayfield Street. This potential park expansion could provide better connection to Rolling Terrace Elementary School and a welcoming entry to the park.
- ▶ Picnic shelter
- ▶ Updated playground at lifecycle replacement





EXISTING 

 PROPOSED

VISION Family-friendly neighborhood park next to an elementary school.



KEY:
  Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

New Hampshire Estates Local Park

8825 Piney Branch Road, Silver Spring, MD 20903 • Park Size = 4.9 Acres

Existing Conditions

New Hampshire Estates Local Park is a 5-acre park facing University Boulevard and partially bisected by New Hampshire Estates Elementary School. A towering tree canopy on the slope next to Piney Branch Road offers a shady respite and connection to nature in this largely paved area. Purple Line construction along University Boulevard and aging park features have contributed to the park's deterioration over time and have made park access and visibility difficult.

The 2013 Long Branch Sector Plan recommends an extension of Gilbert Street as part of the planned development adjacent to the park, but at the time of this writing the Gilbert Street extension is not expected to move forward. The Sector Plan also recommends incorporating the county-owned parcel south into the park into New Hampshire Estates Park. While this recommendation is also supported by the Long Branch Parks Initiative, the timeline is uncertain, and the additional parkland may not be available when the park is redeveloped following Purple Line completion.

Existing amenities include a rectangular field, playground, and courtyard with planters.

Public Input

According to local children surveyed, soccer is a top amenity choice for this park. Other survey respondents were most interested in trails, picnic areas, and an upgraded playground. Some park users enjoy the existing playground for its elements that serve children under two.

VISION Lively, transit-oriented urban public space with active recreation, picnic and play opportunities, and a healthy natural retreat.

Recommended Amenities and Program

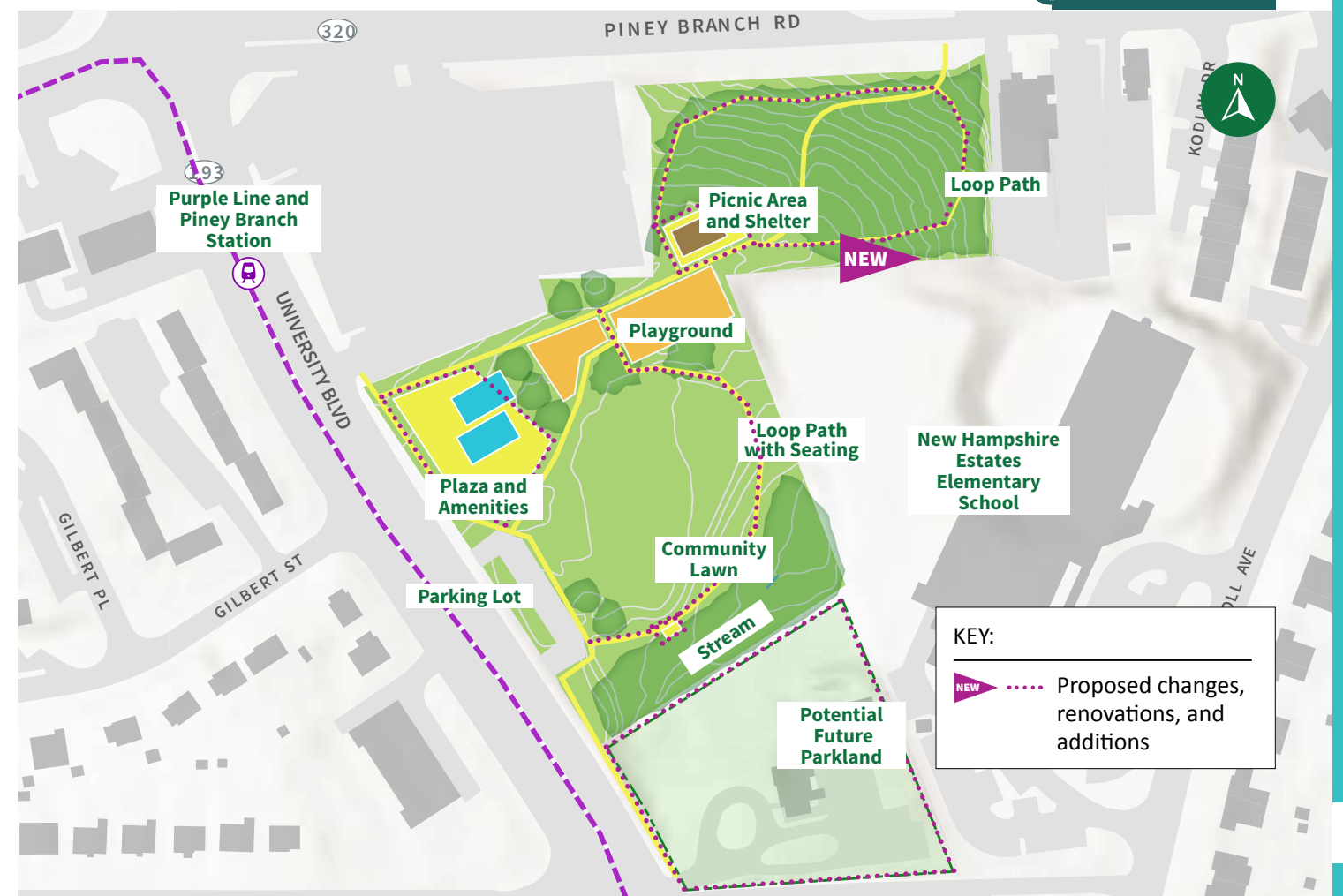
This park will be influenced by the new construction and final configuration of the Purple Line and Piney Branch Station on University Boulevard. The following recommendations are intended to be flexible to account for unforeseen conditions and the potential for future park expansion. It is anticipated that there will be limited parking at this park to maximize open space.

- ▶ Reclassify park to New Hampshire Estates Urban Park
- ▶ Urban Plaza facing University Blvd., provide shade, seating, public art, special planting (habitat demonstration gardens), and socializing opportunities
- ▶ Event lawn for community gathering, flexible play and/or soccer field
- ▶ Update playground
- ▶ New picnic shelters with grills
- ▶ Provide ADA-accessible loop walk and additional trails through natural areas of woodland and adjacent to stream
- ▶ Native meadow or understory planting in existing wooded area
- ▶ Tree planting—plan for species and size diversity in existing wooded area
- ▶ Maintain the existing stream as a natural park element with seating areas. Supplement existing native plantings.
- ▶ Provide maintenance access from University Blvd.
- ▶ Consider possibilities for soccer court, basketball court, and community garden



EXISTING

PROPOSED



KEY:
 Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park

1040 Quebec Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20903 • Park Size = 3.4 Acres

Existing Conditions

Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park consists of several parcels at the Quebec Terrace Apartments above Piney Branch Road. The central area of the park property is the focus of this plan and has a small, two-level playground surrounded by large trees. The upper portion of the playground shares space with an access drive, which is partially used as a play space. Existing conditions include significant grade changes, concrete stormwater channels, and widespread mature tree root zones. Two long staircases from the apartment complex traverse the park and connect the apartments with bus stops and other amenities along Piney Branch Road.

The other parcels owned by Montgomery Parks contain parking, which serves the building residents. Ownership and management of these parcels are under review.

Public Input

Community feedback showed a strong interest in improving lighting and play equipment and adding picnic tables and a soccer court. Small soccer goals were piloted at the park and were well-received by the community: 89% of survey respondents said they would like to see a permanent soccer court in the park. Survey respondent concerns included safety, lack of amenities, poor condition of amenities, and trash in the park. Spending time with friends and family at the park was the top choice of

survey respondents answering the question “What do you currently like about this park?” Respondents slightly favored keeping the existing large trees even if it meant limiting improvements to the park.

Recommended Amenities/ Program of Requirements

- New fenced soccer court with goals
- Picnic area with shade structure and grill if possible
- Trash receptacles
- ADA-accessible walk and maintenance access where possible
- Vehicle access to building entries
- Updated playground with play elements for a range of ages
- Reconfigure stairs and walk to Piney Branch Road
- Colorful placemaking elements that may include shade structures, furnishings, pavement painting, etc.
- Stormwater management
- Tree preservation, NNI treatments, and new tree plantings


VISION Neighborhood gathering space with a small, vibrant play area.



EXISTING

PROPOSED



KEY:
 Proposed changes, renovations, and additions

Major Project List + Status

(as of September 2024)

Project	Status	Anticipated Construction Timeline
Clayborne Avenue Bridge	Bridge Construction Complete	Construction Start: Spring 2024 Project duration: 6 months
Long Branch-Garland Neighborhood Park and Domer Avenue Bridge Renovation	In Process: Design	Construction Start: Fall/Winter 2024 Project duration: 12 months
Long Branch Paved Trail Renovation and Stream Restoration from Domer Ave. to Piney Branch Road	Future Planning (Near Term)	Construction Start: 2025 (in coordination with LB-Garland) Project duration: 9 months
Long Branch Wayne Local Park Renovation	In Process: Design	Construction Start: 2025 Project duration: 12+ months
Prospect Street Bridge and Stream Restoration	In Process: Design	Construction Start: Winter 2024 Project duration: 6 months
Wayne Avenue Bridge	In Process: Design	Construction Start: TBD based on Federal Aid Project duration: 8 months
Long Branch Paved Trail Extension to Carroll Ave.	In Process: Design	Construction Start: 2026 Project duration: 6 months
Stream Valley Park Natural Surface Trails	Future Planning (Near Term)	Construction Start: Summer 2025 Project duration: 9 months
Long Branch Local Park	In Process: Design	Construction Start: Fall 2025 Project duration: 12+ months
Quebec Terrace Neighborhood Park	In Process: Concept Planning	TBD based on Federal Aid

Project	Status	Anticipated Construction Timeline
New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park	In Process: Concept Planning	2026/2027 following Purple Line construction on University Blvd. Project duration: 12+ months
Haddon Houston Playground Renovation	Future Planning	2025-2026
Long Branch Arliss Neighborhood Park	Future Planning (Near-Term)	2027-2028
Flower Avenue Urban Park	Future Planning	Future
Seek Lane Neighborhood Park	Future Planning	Future
Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park Outfall Restorations	Future Planning	Future
Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park Renovation and Environmental Restoration	Future Planning	Future



Beloved play structures like this fire engine at Upper Long Branch Neighborhood Park often become part of the identity of a park.



The Community and Parks

Recommendations: Engagement, events, and positive park experiences

Proposed programmatic and operational recommendations could provide opportunities for more community engagement, events, activities, and positive park experiences leading to greater connection for community members with the parks.



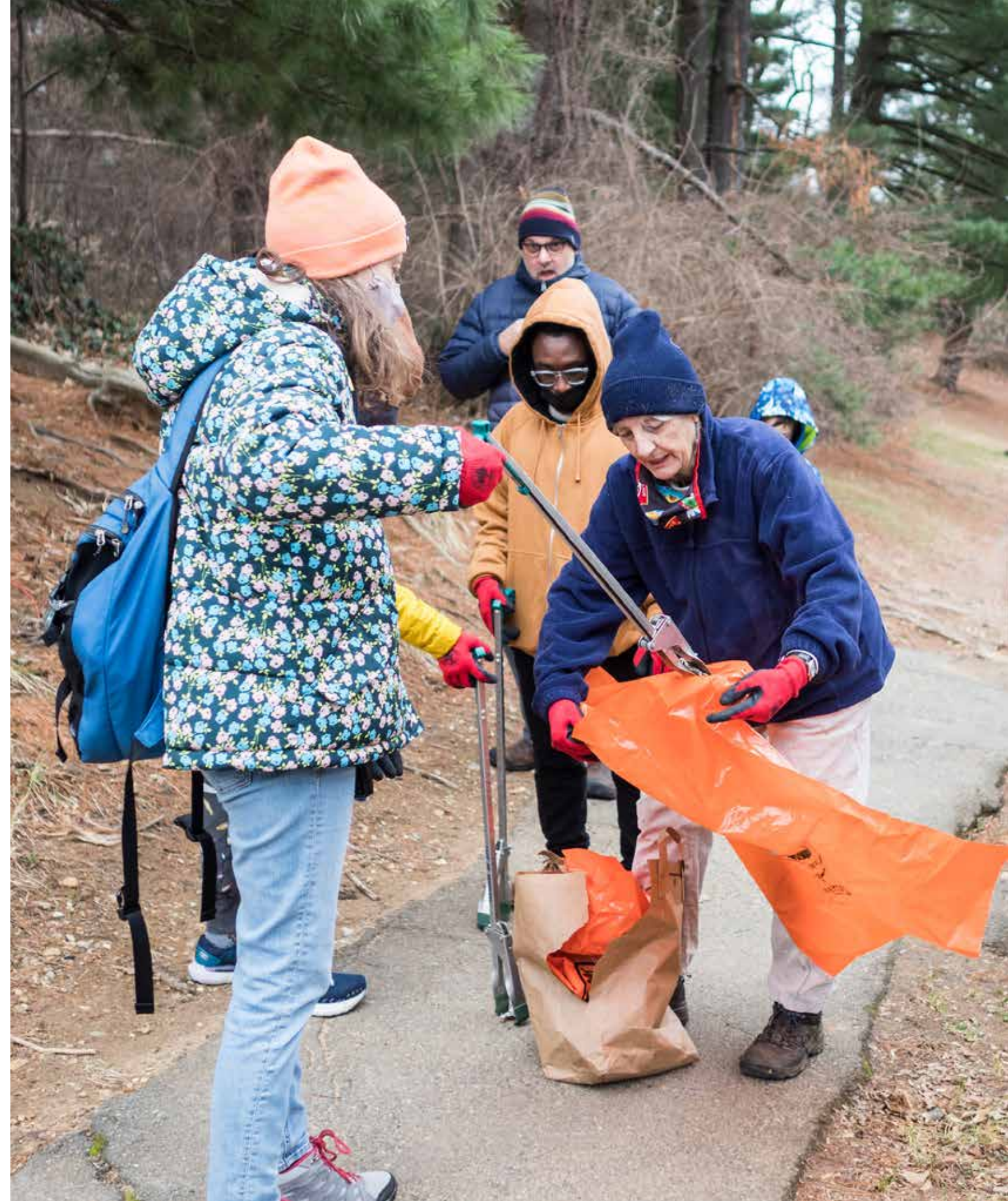
Celebrating the dynamic and diverse Long Branch community at the annual Long Branch Festival at Flower Avenue Urban Park.

Left: "Salsa in the Park" at Long Branch Arliss Neighborhood Park.

Programmatic and Operational Recommendations

Project	Description
<p>Park Activation: Continue to expand opportunities for park activation in Long Branch parks</p>	<p>Successful park activation events in Long Branch have included Salsa in the Park, yoga, Parks Playhouse Jr., concerts, and comedy shows, among others. Continue to provide park programming in new park spaces with special attention to multilingual, inclusive, and family-friendly programming. Continue successful partnerships and community-group coordination on events such as the Long Branch Festival and others.</p>
<p>Volunteering: Continue to secure the Parks Volunteer Coordinator position for Long Branch</p>	<p>In 2023, Montgomery Parks created a dedicated volunteer coordinator position to work with the community in Long Branch to facilitate additional volunteer cleanup and environmental education opportunities. This role is an important part of continued community engagement and should be maintained in the long term.</p>
<p>Volunteering: Weed Warriors</p>	<p>Promote volunteer Weed Warrior efforts to engage the Long Branch community, either as stand-alone NNI activities or in collaboration with park clean-up events.</p>
<p>Partnerships: Continue productive partnerships and collaboration in the community</p>	<p>Continue productive partnerships and collaboration with local community organizations to enhance parks, support environmental stewardship efforts, and provide educational opportunities.</p>
<p>Stewardship and Operations: Consider installation of multilingual and/or pictograph signs in parks to communicate the importance of positive park stewardship</p>	<p>Public input in Long Branch indicated a need for improved park stewardship among park users including responsible disposal of trash, environmental stewardship, and courteous behavior in parks. Signage with educational reminders about positive stewardship could help improve the condition of parks.</p>
<p>Trail Programing:</p>	<p>Consider new trail programming in Long Branch to include Long Branch trail ambassador program, Bike Rodeos, teen night rides or other creative trail-related activities</p>

Right: Volunteers clean up trash at Long Branch Local Park.





Concluding Remarks

Making the plan a reality and connecting people to parks

In developing this vision for the parks in the Long Branch area, Montgomery Parks has created both a roadmap and a springboard for ongoing and future improvements to Long Branch area parks. It was our pleasure to engage with this community, work with community partners, and interact with many of the people who call it home. With several projects completed or underway and design plans, funding applications, and other project-related efforts in the works, Montgomery Parks is moving forward with the recommendations and goals set out in these pages.

Left: Learning about the Long Branch Stream and connecting with nature while helping at a volunteer clean up event.



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