

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The previous chapters discuss needs and recommendations for park and recreation facilities, as well as natural and cultural resource protection, through the year 2010. This chapter describes how these generalized needs are implemented and translated into specific park proposals, and describes the PROS Plan Implementation Study. It also discusses the PROS Plan implementation process as it relates to community master plans, park master plans, subdivision development plans and the Capital Improvements Program proposals.

The PROS Plan proposals are implemented in a variety of ways, including:

- PROS Plan Implementation Study
- Community Master Plan Park Proposals
- Park Master Plans
- Subdivision Review Process
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Park Proposals
- Planning and Coordination with Other Public Agencies or Private Entities
- PROS Plan Implementation Through Environmental Guidelines and Regulations

The following section further discusses how each of the implementation methods above are used to implement needs and recommendations in the PROS Plan.

PROS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

The first step in the implementation of the PROS Plan is the preparation of the PROS Plan Implementation Study which translates the generalized facility needs identified by the Plan into site specific proposals for each planning area. The Implementation Study will:

- Determine how many of the needed facilities could be met by new parks or schools on currently owned sites,
- Consider where future facility needs would be met by currently proposed park sites that are on master plans,
- Identify where additional parks may be necessary in planning areas with older area master plans.

It may not be possible to meet recreation facility needs projections for each planning area in all cases. Where current proposals will not meet future facility needs, consideration should be given to fulfilling needs in adjacent planning areas whenever feasible.

The PROS Plan Implementation Study will also consider opportunities for dedication of new parks through the subdivision process and long term-lease, acquisition, or land exchange of vacant County land, particularly school sites that are not proposed for development. It will examine ways of implementing natural and cultural resource proposals in the Plan, including consideration of new funding sources, and educational programs. Additionally, it will include an update of planning processes and criteria for park acquisition, location and development.

The PROS Plan Implementation Study will also consider innovative ways of meeting recreation needs particularly in urban areas

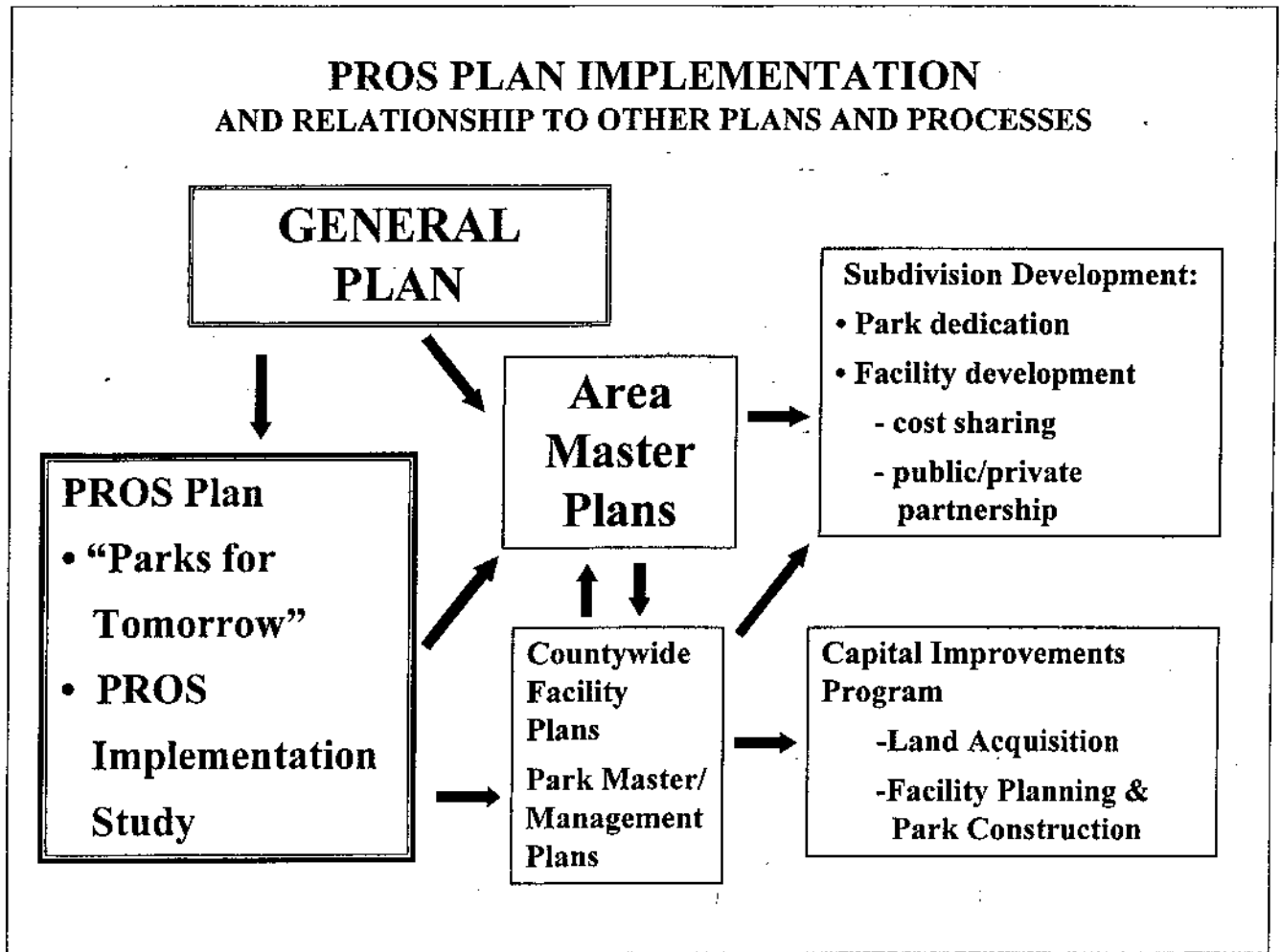


Figure 7.1

where parkland is scarce. For example, roller hockey courts, and multi-use courts should be considered for the top of parking garages; basketball hoops could be provided in employee parking lots for residents' use on weekends and evenings; and small paved areas could be turned into skateboard areas.

Converting PROS Facility Needs into Specific Park Proposals

In converting the PROS facility need estimates into specific park proposals the PROS Plan Implementation Study will consider: the number of new parks or new recreation areas that are needed; and general

and specific locations where new parks will be needed.

Determining the Number of New Parks or New Recreation Areas That Are Needed.

The number of new County-wide parks needed is based on recreation facility needs projections and identification of specific natural and historic resources to be protected. Current County-wide parks are assessed to determine their desirability to include needed facilities based on site size, vegetation, natural features, and existing nearby recreation facilities.

In the case of community-use parks, a similar procedure is followed. Currently owned parkland and proposed new schools are considered for their potential to provide additional new park facilities. The number of facilities that can be accommodated at each site is determined and adjacent planning areas with no unmet needs are also looked at for their potential to provide new park development. Special consideration will be given to potential sites for the proposed new type of local park "community recreation complexes," which cluster ballfields and other park facilities in larger park sites to facilitate efficient programming and maintenance and reduce community impacts.

Selecting General and Specific Locations Where New Parks Will Be Needed

New parks are needed where there are existing or anticipated concentrations of people that are not adequately served by nearby existing park facilities. Following analysis and selection of unserved areas, specific new park acquisition and development proposals will be incorporated into future community master plans and park master plans.

Selection of specific sites for parks to provide future recreation facility needs generally gives consideration to the following:

- Establishing the geographic area where the park is needed with respect to population to be served.
- Determining the needed site size and potential facilities to be accommodated.
- Examining the potential of existing undeveloped park (or school sites) to provide needed facilities including identification of sensitive environmental areas and analysis of natural resource impacts.
- Locating other potential sites, evaluating existing natural and cultural resources and the ability of those sites to provide needed facilities without excessive clearing and grading.

- Providing safe and convenient pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access.

The park location process also takes into account requests by the Recreation Advisory Boards and area residents when they are consistent with the PROS Plan. The County has four Recreation Area Advisory Boards that provide input on the implementation of park and recreation matters proposals. They provide a liaison between area citizens and Recreation Department and Department of Parks staff. They also make recommendations on the CIP and budget.

COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN PARK PROPOSALS

Community master plans provide an important vehicle for implementation of PROS Plan proposals. During the community master planning process, needs for future public facilities, including parks, are given careful consideration. The importance of protecting significant natural areas such as stream valleys is also identified and incorporated into proposed land acquisition proposals and included in community master plans. Land use considerations, topography, vegetation, access and projections of future population are given particular weight. A floating park symbol may be placed on a master plan map where future needs are apparent but it is desirable to defer selection of a specific site. Parks identified in community master plans are implemented through the development of park master plans, through the subdivision process, and through the Capital Improvements Program.

PARK MASTER PLANS

Park master plans also serve an important role in implementation of the PROS Plan. PROS County-wide recreation facility needs and preservation of natural and historic resources are

most often provided by regional and recreational Parks. Park master plans and management plans are prepared for these parks and include proposals that meet recreation needs while providing stewardship of the park's natural resources.

SUBDIVISION REVIEW PROCESS

Acquisition and development of new parks through the subdivision process is an increasingly important method of implementing PROS Plan needs and will become even more critical in the future. Cost-sharing or public/private partnership proposals with developers will become a key way of meeting recreation needs in an efficient manner with minimal impact on County taxpayers.

Each subdivision plan for new development should be reviewed with respect to park and recreation needs and consider the following:

- The need for a community-use park to serve the development as evidenced by PROS Plan or Area master plan proposals. If a park is needed, an easily accessible, level site of at least 15 acres should be chosen. If at all possible, the site should be located on a main road and not adjacent to homes. In the case of cluster or planned-unit developments, the site should generally be conveyed to M-NCPPC free of charge.
- The need for preservation of natural areas or historic and cultural sites. Stream valley areas are frequently dedicated to park use during the subdivision process when their preservation is important for conservation and watershed protection or to provide connectors to existing or proposed parkland (particularly where trail connectors are needed). Drainage areas or storm water management ponds should only be accepted in dedication when they will provide a significant public benefit.

- The need for trails or access paths to existing or proposed parkland. Need for new trails or access paths to existing or proposed parkland trails should be given careful consideration during the subdivision process. It is essential that developers dedicate and construct pathways to allow residents access to adjacent parks, schools, or other public facilities. Pathways should be carefully located so that they are convenient and eliminate the perceived need to "cut through" neighbors' yards to reach the adjacent parkland. Wide access strips or setting homes farther from the pathways should be encouraged to minimize impact on adjacent residents.
- The need to provide private recreation areas. The *Recreation Guidelines* approved by the Planning Board in 1992 include requirements for developers to provide private recreation areas to fulfill the need for informal neighborhood facilities for new residents. Walk-to facilities such as playgrounds, multi-use courts, and informal playfields are some of the types of private facilities that are needed to serve new residential developments.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM (CIP) PARK PROPOSALS

The Capital Improvements Program implements the PROS Plan by including proposals for land acquisition and construction of recreation facilities identified in the Plan. Following the identification of park needs and specific site proposals in the PROS Plan Implementation Study or community or park master plans, individual park projects may then be considered for inclusion in the six-year Capital Improvements Program: first for facility planning and site design, and second for construction. The CIP is submitted every two years and includes all acquisition and

**Year 2010 PROS Plan Minimum Facilities and
Proposed CIP Projects**

PARK TYPE (Countywide & Local Use)	BALLFIELDS			TENNIS COURTS			PLAYGROUNDS			BASKETBALL CTS.		
	PROS Needs	Parks CIP	MCPS CIP	PROS Needs	Parks CIP	MCPS CIP	PROS Needs	Parks CIP	MCPS CIP	PROS Needs	Parks CIP	MCPS CIP
COUNTYWIDE PARKS	18	30	-	9	6	-	3	1	-	0	3	0
LOCAL USE PARKS												
SILVER SPRING												
PA 36 Silver Spring	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0
PA 37 Takoma	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
PA 32 Kemp Mill-Portion Sou Of Beltway Only	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area 1 Total	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0
BETHESDA												
PA 30 North Bethesda	4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
PA 35 Bethesda	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area 2 Total	20	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
I-270 CORRIDOR												
PA 13 Clarksburg	7	0	0	1	0	0	6	0	0	3	0	0
PA 19 Germantown	20	3	8	6	2	7.2	18	2	0	15	2	9
PA 20 Gaithersburg	12	6	0	0	4	0.0	11	3	0	5	1	0
PA 26 Rockville	Not Applicable			Not Applicable			Not Applicable			Not Applicable		
Area 3 Total	39	9	8	7	6	7.2	35	5	0	23	3	9
POTOMAC												
PA 24 Darnestown	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA 25 Travilah	11	2	0	0	2	0	4	1	0	7	0	0
PA 29 Potomac	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area 4 Total	12	2	0	0	2	0	4	1	0	7	0	0
GEORGIA AVENUE												
PA 22 Rock Creek	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	2	0	0	0	0	0
PA 23 Olney-Southern Half	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
PA 27 Aspen Hill	2	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0
PA 31 Kens/Wheaton	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA 32 Kemp Mill-Portion Nort Of Beltway Only	0	0	6	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	3
Area 5 Total	9	3	6	0	2	4.8	7	1	0	1	0	3
EASTERN MONTGOMERY COUNTY												
PA 28 Cloverly	0	0	2	0	0	4.8	0	0	0	0	0	3
PA 33 White Oak	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PA 34 Fairland	3	3	0	0	1	0	3	4	0	6	1.5	0
Area 6 Total	5	3	2	0	1	4.8	3	4	0	6	1.5	3
RURAL												
Damascus PA's 10,11,14	3	0	0	2	0	0.0	5	0	0	0	0	0
Poolesville PA's 12,16,17,18	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	0	0	0	0
PA 23 Olney-Northern Half	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Area 7 Total	3	0	0	2	0	0.0	6	0	0	0	0	0
LOCAL USE PARK TOTALS	101	17	16	9	11	16.8	56	11	0	48	4.5	15
TOTAL FOR ALL PARKS	119	47	16	18	17	16.8	59	12	0	48	7.5	15

PROS Master Plan. Parks CIP = M-NCPPC Proposed FY 1999 - 2004 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and MCPS CIP = Montgomery County Public Schools Proposed FY 1999 - 2004 CIP.

Chart and the PROS Plan do not include outdoor recreational facilities provided by private developers.
Subtotals and totals may not add up because some areas have met or exceeded the minimum facilities needed.
See Community Based Planning Area map for locations of Areas 1 - 7 and small planning areas (PA) 10 - 37.
Revised December 6, 1997.

Figure 7.2

development to be completed within the following six years.

Implementation of the specific recreation facility needs projected in the 1998 PROS Plan will be primarily provided by CIP proposals for parks and schools. The table entitled "Year 2010 PROS Plan Minimum Facilities and Proposed CIP Projects." shows the relationship between PROS Plan facility need estimates and current CIP proposals.

CIP projects in other agencies can often assist in the Implementation of the PROS Plan. For instance, needs for bikeways, and safe road crossings, including bridges and underpasses, should be incorporated into transportation CIP projects at early planning stages so that they can be included in facility designs and cost estimates. Trail construction is also often feasible in conjunction with water or sewer line projects.

PLANNING COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES OR PRIVATE ENTITIES

Planning coordination with other agencies or jurisdictions will be important in the implementation of the PROS Plan. Implementation of PROS Plan proposals will occur through partnerships with other public agencies or private organizations or groups. Joint recreation facility, natural or historic resource preservation projects that are achieved cooperatively with another public agency or cost shared with private developers will become more important in the future. "Friends" groups and volunteers can also greatly expand M-NCPPC resources in providing and maintaining park facilities.

Close coordination must occur with several County Departments and agencies on new park development projects or major renovations. The Recreation Department and the Recreation Advisory Boards under their jurisdiction, provide essential input on proposed park development plans and projects that will meet needs identified in this Plan. Working with the Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Permitting Services, and the Department of Public Works and Transportation is essential to facilitate park construction permits as well as for consideration of potential joint projects.

Partnerships with Montgomery County Schools could greatly increase the usability of school fields and other facilities. Placing additional facilities at school sites or lighting school facilities at middle and high schools would expand the capacity of ballfields and should be considered where possible. Agreements between M-NCPPC and schools to improve school field maintenance is important to maximize the use of existing ballfields. Additionally, the new coordinated County-wide permitting system will facilitate utilization by user groups and eliminate duplicate permit requests.

At the State level, coordination with departments such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Office of Planning is particularly important as it relates to park and trail issues and grant programs such as Program Open Space and Rural Legacy. It is also necessary to coordinate with the U.S. Department of Interior regarding the C&O Canal and the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park and trail system is important to facilitate access to these important trail areas for County residents.

PROS PLAN IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Environmental regulations and guidelines are important in the implementation of the PROS Plan. The overriding objective of the Plan is to achieve a balance between the provision of recreation facilities and the preservation of important environmental areas. Environmental guidelines and regulations are the key to providing this balance and are important factors in the determining the ability of specific sites to meet PROS Plan needs and obtain park construction permits. An environmental analysis is the first step when considering what development is feasible and desirable and should give consideration to the regulations and guidelines cited below.

State and Local Environmental Regulations

Tree Preservation Regulations

Regulations involving forest conservation and tree preservation have had a profound effect on the park planning process. Maryland's Forest Conservation Act, passed in 1991, requires forest and tree retention and replanting as part of the approval of development. The county's program, mandated by this state legislation, requires a natural resources inventory, forest stand delineation, and forest conservation plan for all new development projects as well as all park rehabilitation projects that result in the removal of 5,000 square feet or more of tree cover of 40,000 square feet of land disturbance.

Public park land development under the regulations will be required to retain a minimum of 20% of existing forest and provide reforestation for trees removed, or to afforest 15% of the site if there is sufficient existing forest. Under some circumstances, replanting will be allowed away from the development site.

Wetlands Regulations

Wetland regulations, adopted by the State in 1991, have also had an effect on the future development of park land. The important role of wetlands as natural filters in maintaining water quality is acknowledged at the Federal, State, and local levels. It is recognized that loss of wetlands mean decreased water quality protection, flood control, and wildlife habitat. The intent of wetland guidelines is to first, avoid impacts; second, minimize and mitigate impacts; and third, replace wetlands lost through development. The creation of functional and sustainable replacement wetlands is both land intensive and expensive. The impacts of wetland avoidance and mitigation play a critical role in the development of public facilities and private projects.

Wetlands are defined by the Planning Board's guidelines for Environmental Management of Development in Montgomery County, Maryland as "an area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation." Information on the location of major wetland areas in the county is available through Maryland Department of Natural Resources maps, but a more detailed delineation is required as part of the subdivision and permit review processes.

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has identified twelve areas in Montgomery County as non-tidal wetlands of special state concern. These include the

Germantown Bog, Canal Bottomland, and McKee-Beshers West Swamp and are identified in state regulations and on DNR wetland maps. Wetlands of special state concern are protected from excavation, filling, or other modification within a buffer of 100 feet. Disturbance within these wetland areas or their buffers requires state permits. In contrast, disturbance of other non-tidal wetlands requires state permits only within a 25-foot buffer. Both cases require water quality certification by the Maryland Department of the Environment as required by the Federal Clean Water Act.

Stormwater Management and Sediment Control Requirements

Stormwater management requirements have become increasingly stringent for our future park developments. Stormwater Management (SWM) refers to a variety of active and passive techniques provided at the time of development, or later in previously developed areas, to reduce the amount of sediment and pollutants entering the stream system and to keep stormwater flows at non-erosive levels. These measures are designed to reduce the peak flow of streams, to minimize erosion, and to complement normal flood protection. Recently, there has been an increased emphasis on storm water management for our urbanized areas.

Discharges into waters and wetlands require permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Permits are issued based on compliance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) and state statutes. The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection regulates stormwater management, erosion, and sediment control.

State and county regulations identify infiltration as the preferred stormwater management (SWM) technique, where it is feasible. Infiltration allows stormwater run-off

to be detained in an area so that it can percolate into the soil to recharge groundwater as well as filter pollutants which would otherwise be transported directly to streams. SWM techniques, in order of preference, are: infiltration, flow attenuation by use of vegetated areas and swales, retention (wet ponds) and detention (dry ponds), or combinations of these. Wet ponds are usually not allowed in watersheds where stream systems are characterized by cool or cold-water conditions (e.g., use Class III, natural trout waters).

M-NCPPC's Environmental Guidelines

M-NCPPC's Environmental Guidelines were approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board in 1983, revised in 1997, and should be considered during the review of proposed park developments. The revised document sets out a procedure for identification and protection of natural resources potentially affected by construction activities for both public and private development projects. The guidelines are intended to ensure that development plans give adequate consideration to the following environmental management objectives: protection of stream water quality, water supply reservoirs, steep slopes, treed areas, wildlife habitat and exemplary natural communities including rare, threatened, and endangered species; maintenance of biologically, viable and diverse streams and wetlands; reduction of flood problems; protection against development hazards on areas prone to flooding, soil instability, etc.; and provisions of visual amenities and areas for recreation and outdoor education activities.