

SPRING 2017 **PARKS + PLANNING SEMIANNUAL REPORT**

# EXCELLENCE

M-NCPPC 90

CELEBRATING **90 YEARS** OF THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

 MONTGOMERY COUNTY (M-NCPPC)

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# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

## **PRESIDENT BERLINER AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL:**

I am pleased to present the Spring 2017 Semiannual Report on the work of the Planning Board, Planning Department and Department of Parks. As in past reports, we remain focused on connecting policies, plans and projects to the county's goals for multi-modal transportation, affordable housing and economic and environmental sustainability.

This year holds special meaning for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission as we celebrate the 90th anniversary of our founding. Over the past 90 years, we have built a legacy of preserved open spaces, vibrant communities and innovative land use and park management programs to meet the high and diverse expectations of our residents. Today, our county is known for smart planning policies and a world-class park system.

But what will Montgomery County look like in the next 90 years? How will change be managed and directed? This report considers those question and outlines a number of broad efforts aimed at improving our quality of life for tomorrow.

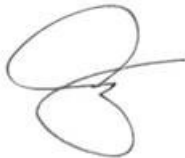
New suburbanism, a term used to represent how the county is rapidly changing from auto-oriented sprawl to compact, walkable communities, is one of those initiatives. Our Bicycle Master Plan, Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan and new plan for Energized Public Spaces lay the groundwork for this shift through recommendations for safe and convenient cycling, development around bus rapid transit stations and more open spaces in dense neighborhoods.

Strengthening economic competitiveness is another of our top goals. Studies of rental housing and retail trends are helping to inform future plans, and a new Parks app allows data to be quickly collected about needed improvements to county athletic fields.

Much of our role is to look into the distance and manage our county's growth. We try to balance the needs of today's residents with future plans and programs so that there is a place for everyone. Achieving this balance requires engaging with all segments of our community, and we continue to develop effective outreach and communication tools to improve our ability to do so.

I am proud of the recent work of our staff and pleased to provide you with this semi-annual update on our collective efforts. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you in service to our county's residents and its future.

Respectfully submitted,



**Casey Anderson**  
Planning Board Chair  
Vice Chair, M-NCPPC



# M-NCPPC CELEBRATES 90 YEARS

Since it was founded in 1927, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission has developed many influential policies directed toward preserving farmland, creating open spaces and zoning for affordable housing. A summary of these accomplishments from Montgomery County is highlighted below. Learn more at [montgomeryplanningboard.org/mncppc90](https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/mncppc90).

**1927**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission was established to protect waterways and provide a comprehensive park system within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

**1973**

The Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) Program and the first Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, which served as Montgomery County's growth policy, were adopted.

**1960s**

Regional parks were established in Montgomery County, starting with Wheaton and Brookside Gardens.

**1957**

M-NCPPC established two Planning Boards, one for Montgomery County and another for Prince George's County.

**1964**

The General Plan on Wedges and Corridors was adopted to designate areas for protected open spaces and development in Montgomery County.



**1927 PLANNING COMMISSION**

# EXCELLENCE

## M-NCPPC 90

**1980**

The Agricultural Reserve was established to preserve open space and limit development within the northern and northwestern parts of Montgomery County.

**2001**

The Legacy Open Space Program was adopted to preserve open space, watersheds and historic properties through the purchase of land or easements.

**1979**

The Master Plan for Historic Preservation and the Historic Preservation Ordinance were adopted.

**1990s**

The Capital Crescent Trail was developed.

**2014**

Montgomery County's new zoning ordinance was enacted.

**2017 PLANNING BOARD**



# NEW SUBURBANISM

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New Suburbanism is a concept now being implemented by Parks and Planning staff to transform the suburban sprawl of the past into compact, urban-style, walkable communities. Initiatives to create urban parks in densely populated districts have gained new momentum. Plans to transform aging office parks, strip-mall corridors and Metrorail station areas into mixed-use neighborhoods are well underway. These efforts are fueled by new transportation policies for increasing cycling, walking and transit, and inspired by strategies for placemaking through public art.

## URBAN PARKS

Montgomery Parks continues to encourage dynamic and interactive public engagement by hosting pop-up events at urban parks across the county. Events include Touch-A-Truck, movie night, rock wall climbing, Climb-A-Tree and a mobile bike track. These activities foster a sense of community and provide residents with new opportunities to explore and use park spaces.

In addition to such programming, we propose vibrant urban parks in areas of high population density in all area master plans and in our Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan. This winter, Parks launched a consolidated outreach initiative named “Parks and Recreation of the Future.” The initiative seeks community input on how to improve our parks. The community’s opinion informs three strategic plans; the Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Plan and the Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan.



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## PROGRESS ON ROCK SPRING AND WHITE FLINT 2 PLANS

Planning Board work sessions were held in early 2017 for the Rock Spring Master Plan and White Flint 2 Sector Plan. Once revised, the plans will be reviewed by the County Council in summer or fall 2017.

## GROSVENOR-STRAETHMORE METRO AREA MINOR MASTER PLAN

Launched in July 2016, this plan seeks ways of creating a cohesive, walkable neighborhood near the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Station area and Strathmore Music Center. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority is redeveloping the Metro station parking lot and the plan recommends ways to better connect this site to surrounding uses and new public spaces within the area.





PUBLIC ART AT PIKE AND ROSE IN WHITE FLINT



### ARTOMATIC/PLACEMAKING PRESENTATION

Public art and placemaking were the focus of several events sponsored by the Planning Department in late 2016. The Department was one of the sponsors of Artomatic, the arts festival held in November 2016 at Park Potomac. The event transformed empty office spaces into vibrant displays for discovering new art and artists. In December 2016, Seattle-based designer Paula Rees drew a huge crowd to her public presentation on mixed-use developments that have realized positive economic outcomes due to dynamic streetscapes, vibrant retail and memorable public art.





## BICYCLE MASTER PLAN

The **award-winning Bicycle Stress Map** is a digital document showing stress levels on county roads. This cutting-edge methodology is being used to help develop the Bicycle Master Plan, which will be presented to the Planning Board in November 2017.

Learn more at [montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan](http://montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan)



## BETHESDA PEDESTRIAN/ BICYCLE MEETING WITH COUNCILMEMBER HANS RIEMER

In January 2017, bicycle and pedestrian improvements recommended in the **Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan** were discussed at a community forum co-sponsored by the Planning Department and **Councilmember Hans Riemer**. The County Council is continuing its review of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan during spring 2017.

Learn more at [montgomeryplanning.org/bethesdadowntown](http://montgomeryplanning.org/bethesdadowntown)





## MOBILITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

This monitoring of transportation modes within Montgomery County is aligned with the county's commitment to increasing travel options. The Mobility Assessment Report assesses transit, bike, pedestrian and roadway performance, along with vehicle traffic. Consistent with the county's land use decisions, these transportation options ensure that Montgomery County is a thriving place serving all communities and generations.



**3 PERCENT**

Decrease in average weekday boardings and exits at Metro stations in Montgomery County between FY10 and FY15.



**10 MINUTES OR LESS**

The peak period frequency of bus service available to the majority of central business districts (CBDs) and Metro station policy areas.



**40 PERCENT**

Approximate percentage of roadway miles inside the Capital Beltway that had moderate to severe levels of congestion during evening peak periods.



**21,668 TRIPS**

The Takoma bikeshare station serviced the most trips in and out of Montgomery County, twice as much as the next closest station.



**11 PERCENT**

Decrease in the amount of vehicle miles per capita traveled in 2015 compared to 2005.



**6.3 PERCENT**

Increase in boardings at the Glenmont Metro Station between FY10 and FY15. Bethesda, Forest Glen and Medical Center also saw increases.

# TRAILS

Trails remain among our most popular amenities, for both recreation and transportation. With the 2016 Countywide Park Trails Plan now complete, we are working on limited area trail plans for the 2016 Cabin John and Upper Paint Branch trails. Our goal is to bring additional sustainable, multi-use, unpaved trails into the system and improve connectivity to park facilities and destinations. Since fall 2016, we built more than 5.5 miles of new natural surface trails and renovated more than 1.5 miles of existing trails in various parks throughout Montgomery County.

## CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL USAGE

*USAGE FROM JANUARY 2016 THROUGH DECEMBER 2016*

### BETHESDA COUNTER (COUNTER #1)

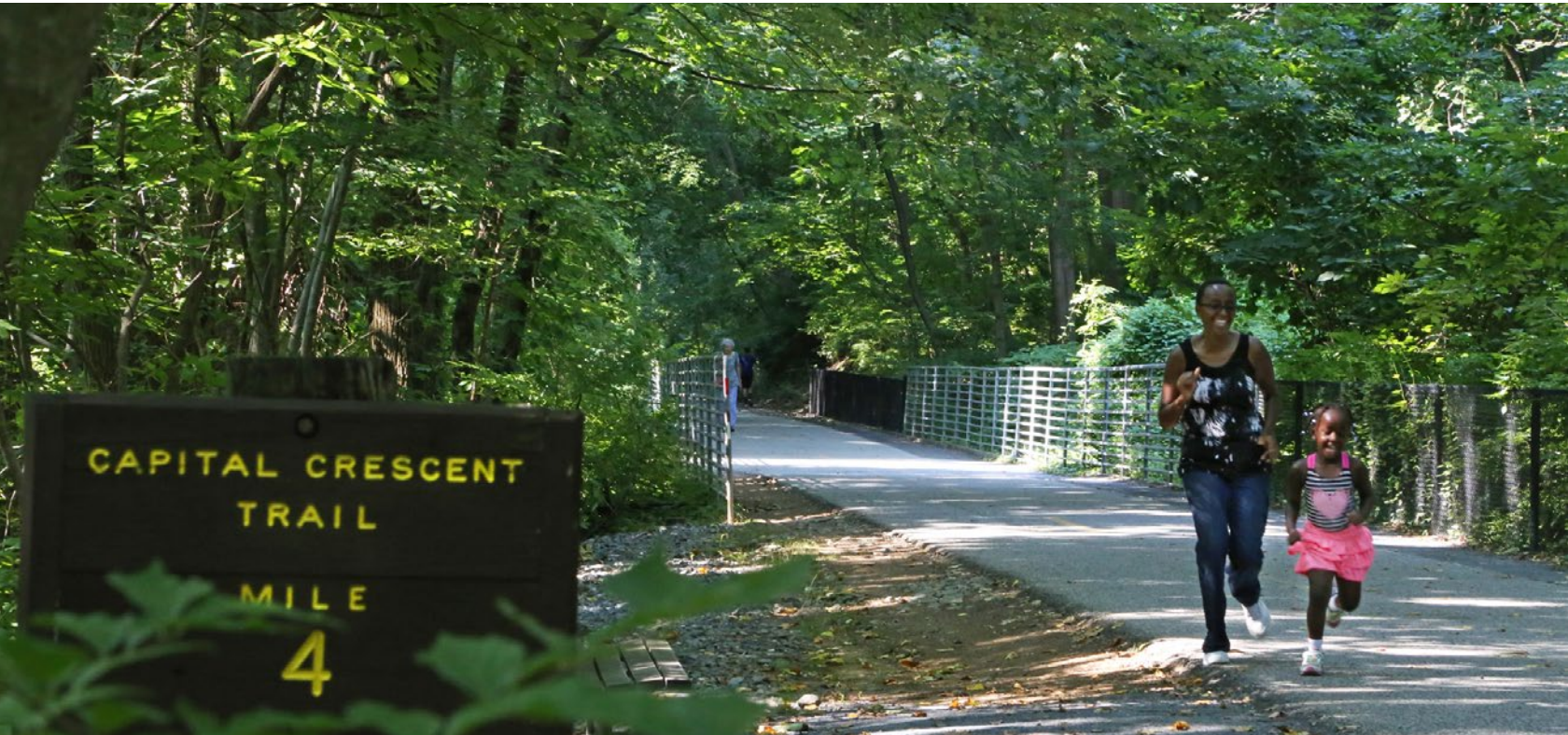


**847,527** TOTAL USERS

### DALECARLIA TUNNEL COUNTER (COUNTER #2)



**661,618** TOTAL USERS



# ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCILMEMBER TOM HUCKER  
SPEAKS AT THE GREEN MATTERS SYMPOSIUM**

Encouraging county residents from different cultures to participate in our processes and programs is a high priority for the Planning and Parks Departments. Diversity outreach, photo contests and a new communication system for notifying the public about athletic field conditions are some of the tools recently developed for increasing community engagement. The Program Access Office, ADA compliance training and website upgrades have improved our services for people with disabilities. Efforts to be more inclusive of diverse audiences provide greater collaboration and insight into meeting all the needs of the Montgomery County community.



### ATHLETIC FIELDS

The “Rainout Line” is our newest communication system that notifies players, coaches, and parents when Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Public Schools’ athletic fields are open, closed or experiencing inclement weather delays. The new and convenient system, which launched in fall 2016, notifies field users in real-time through the Montgomery Parks website, a smartphone app and a phone line. Never miss a game by using Rainout Line today!



### VEIRS MILL CORRIDOR MASTER PLAN

Diversity outreach to engage area residents from different ethnic backgrounds is a part of this planning effort. Potential methods include translation and interpretation services, community partnerships, media outreach, events geared to specific audiences and collaboration with local religious institutions.

Find out more about the plan at [montgomeryplanning.org/veirsmill](http://montgomeryplanning.org/veirsmill).



## BICYCLE MASTER PLAN PHOTO CONTEST

In September and October 2016, the Planning Department held the bike photo contest to engage the public and choose winning images for the **Bicycle Master Plan** and other planning documents. The public voted on the winners using an online poll. View the winners at [montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan](http://montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan).



61 PHOTOS  
SUBMITTED



400+  
VOTES



5 WINNING  
SELECTIONS

WINNER - BEST RECREATION CATEGORY  
PHOTO BY SCOTT WILETS



## GREENBRIAR PARK OPENING

### PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE

Parks has launched a consolidated outreach initiative named “Parks and Recreation of the Future.” Three plans within the agency have similar planning schedules:

- Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, 2017
- Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Plan, 2019-2024
- Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan (EPSFMP), 2017

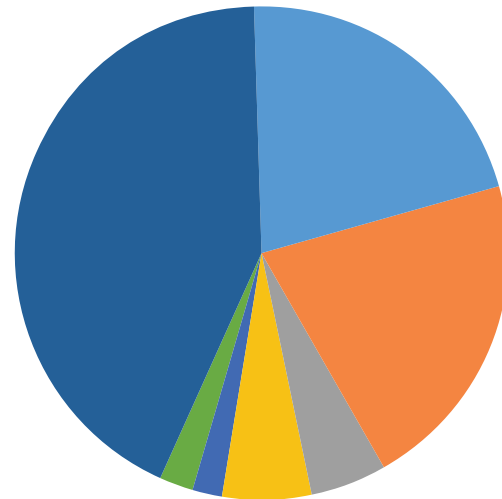
The campaign’s goal is to engage members of the community who traditionally have not participated in park development initiatives. Outreach tools include flyers, newsletters, community meetings, media campaigns and intercept interviews in several languages at recreational facilities, grocery stores and places of worship. Focus groups and community meetings are conducted in areas of the highest densities of racial and ethnic minority populations in Montgomery County. Residents who participate have numerous opportunities to provide input at meetings, events and online through an interactive website.

# PROGRAM ACCESS

Our Program Access Office coordinates inclusion services for individuals with disabilities, ensuring programs and activities are accessible to all park users. Our accomplishments include the following:

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- Coordinated and managed 206 direct, reasonable modifications for individuals with disabilities to be successfully included in parks programs, including classes, events and camps.
- Developed and conducted 12 diverse educational and training sessions to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other disability awareness programs. More than 800 career and seasonal Parks employees have participated in these educational programs.
- The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center's Leadership Network program accepted our Program Access staff. Our staff is nationally certified to train and educate the rest of our staff and the public in 50 educational components of the ADA.
- Staff participated in seven community outreach events to promote Parks' inclusive services and programs.



- **43%:** Consultation Request/Unknown
- **21%:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- **21%:** Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- **5%:** Developmental Disability
- **6%:** Multiple Disabilities
- **2%:** Physical Disability
- **2%:** Speech Disability

## ADA COMPLIANCE

In compliance with United States Department of Justice regulations, the Planning Department held mandatory training sessions in October and December 2016 to familiarize staff with the full extent of the Americans with Disability Act. In addition, the M-NCPPC has completed a major upgrade of our websites to assure ADA compliance.





## VOLUNTEER EFFORTS

The exceptional quality of our parks, trails, streams and programs would not be possible without our volunteers. Their extensive work not only impacts our parks environmentally, but also economically by saving tax dollars.

### TRAIL OR STREAM CLEAN UP STATISTICS (JULY 2016 - DECEMBER 2016)



**38,000 HOURS**  
VOLUNTEERED



**30,287 POUNDS**  
OF TRASH



**9,494 POUNDS**  
OF RECYCLABLES



# STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

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Attracting residents and businesses to Montgomery County, and retaining major employers, such as Marriott International, are important to the work of the Planning and Parks Department. Helping this effort is new research with a strong, data-driven approach, including the study of rental housing, retail trends and information related to athletic fields, applied to our plans and programs. New regulatory cases, including large developments in Bethesda and Silver Spring, evidence continuing growth in the densest areas of the county.

Bethesda Station

Bethesda Station

RED LINE  
BETHESDA



ACCESSIBLE  
ENTRANCE  
LOCATED AT  
WISCONSIN AVE  
AND MONTGOMERY  
LANE



**BETHESDA IS THE NEW HOME TO MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL**

Marriott International announced its new corporate headquarters will be built north of the Bethesda Metro Station between Wisconsin and Woodmont Avenues. This regulatory case will be reviewed after the County Council's vote on the **Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan** in spring 2017. Learn more about the plan at [montgomeryplanning.org/bethesdadowntown](http://montgomeryplanning.org/bethesdadowntown).

## ATHLETIC FIELDS

New technology enhanced our efforts to improve the quality of park and school athletic fields with the app “Athletic Field Collector.” This app allows us to quickly assemble data on field conditions during routine inspections and analyze the effect of maintenance and renovation efforts on field performance. We use the data to determine and prioritize needed improvements to fields.





# BUILDING ON OUR PLANNING LEGACY

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## WINTER SPEAKERS SERIES

In January, February and March 2017, three presentations celebrated 90 years of planning achievements since the M-NCPPC was founded in 1927. Speakers presented strategies for the future that build on past accomplishments in preserving farmland, creating parks and open spaces, and zoning for affordable housing. Learn more at [montgomeryplanning.org/speaker17](http://montgomeryplanning.org/speaker17).

1

### FROM FARMLAND TO AGRITOURISM

The 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve in Montgomery County is one of the most studied and emulated programs of its kind. This session addressed current efforts to expand agritourism and support farm-to-table businesses within the land conservation area.

2

### FROM PARKS TO ENERGIZED OPEN SPACES

Montgomery County has established a rich variety of parks for recreation, relaxation and civic engagement. This session presented new ways of activating and programming public open spaces in urban, mixed-use areas of the county.

3

### FROM INNOVATIVE ZONING TO HOUSING FOR ALL

Montgomery County's moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) program is believed to be the nation's first inclusionary zoning law that gives a density bonus allowance to builders for providing affordable housing. This session examined innovative approaches and tools that will provide more affordable housing options for all county residents in the future.



## RENTAL HOUSING STUDY

The Rental Housing Study, due to be completed in spring 2017, reveals the rental market supply is short about 20,000 units for households earning less than 30 percent of area median income. This information will help future planning efforts as planners seek to ensure that the housing stock is meeting demand in the county.



## RETAIL TRENDS STUDY

The ongoing Retail Trends Study, due to be completed in late 2017, is examining national and regional trends affecting shopping environments, such as the growing use of e-commerce, and will propose recommendations for future plans involving retail.





## VISITATION AND REVENUE

Montgomery Parks' facilities and events connect people to nature and activities that promote education as well as healthy and active lifestyles. Nature centers, public gardens and historic sites offer year-round programming and seasonal festivals. Ice rinks, tennis centers, campgrounds and athletic fields are affordable and accessible to ensure a healthy community.

### PARK VISITOR STATISTICS (FEBRUARY 2016 - FEBRUARY 2017)



**141,186** BROOKSIDE  
GARDENS VISITORS



**124,903** NATURE  
CENTERS VISITORS



**529,473** ICE  
RINK VISITORS



**111,290** TENNIS  
CENTER VISITORS



**9,118** HISTORIC  
SITES VISITORS

# NEW PARKS, RENOVATIONS AND ACQUISITIONS

Parks connect communities in a multitude of ways. Not only do they provide environmental benefits, neighborhood connections and recreational opportunities, they play an integral role in economic activity of local communities. According to a 2015 National Park and Recreation Association economic impact report, parks lower health care costs, create higher property values and boost standards of living.

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**\$14,863,000**  
MAJOR PARK  
RENOVATIONS



**\$4,957,000**  
MAJOR PARK  
PROJECTS



**\$4,050,499**  
ACQUIRING  
217 ACRES OF  
PARKLAND

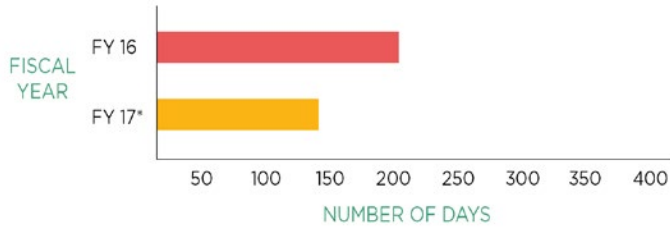
GREENBRIAR PARK RIBBON CUTTING



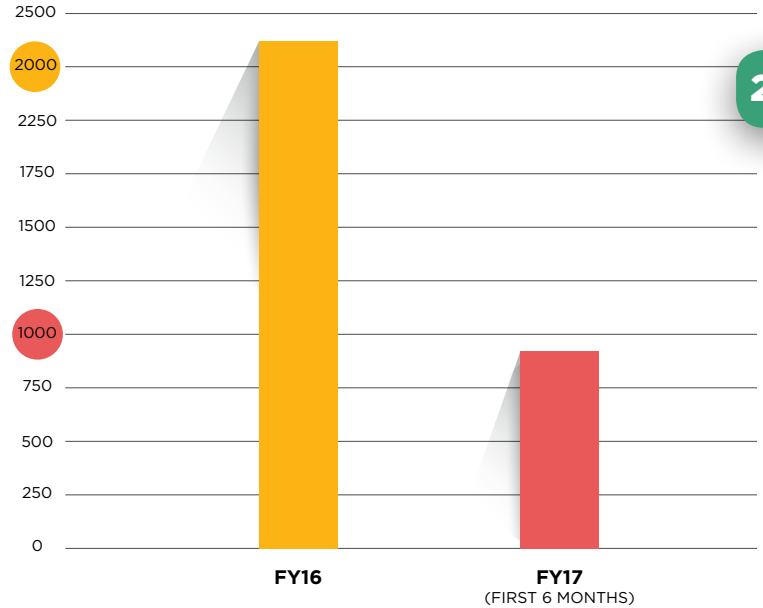


# REGULATORY STATISTICS

AVERAGE RECORD PLAT REVIEW TIME

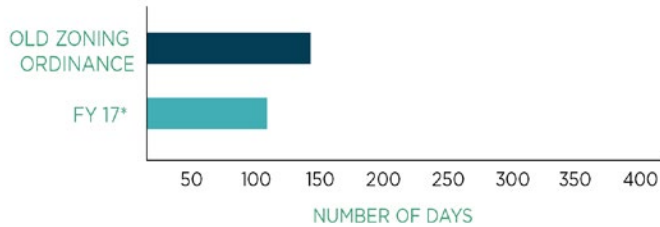


ALL PLANS TYPES ACCEPTED BY FISCAL YEAR



25

AVERAGE SITE PLAN REVIEW TIME



\* FIRST 6 MONTHS

## NOTABLE REGULATORY CASES

In addition to Marriott International's new corporate headquarters in downtown Bethesda, other regulatory cases of note are the Apex Building in Bethesda (right), Elizabeth House in Silver Spring (far right) and the Brownstones at Chevy Chase Lake, a project undertaken by EYA in partnership with the Housing Opportunities Commission.



A photograph of two people riding bicycles through a long, arched tunnel made of green metal mesh. The person in the front is wearing a yellow helmet and a brown jacket, while the person behind is wearing a blue helmet and a yellow jacket. The tunnel is set outdoors on a paved path, with trees and a clear blue sky visible through the mesh. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

## OTHER PROJECTS + ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Both the Planning and Parks Departments continue to win regional and national awards for our innovative plans and policies. Yesterday's efforts are also influencing the projects of tomorrow. Assessments of plans from the 1980s and 1990s and revisions to rules for county parks have been undertaken to build on the past and inform future efforts. Recent watershed restoration projects are repairing erosion and damage of streams in county parks. These projects help to keep Montgomery County sustainable and thriving as we work on the parks and plans of the future.



## MASTER PLAN REALITY CHECK

The Master Plan Reality Check aims to gauge how well the goals of past plans have been carried out and evaluate why expected outcomes were or were not met. In February 2017, the Research and Special Projects Division presented analyses of the 1997 Fairland Master Plan and 1998 Friendship Heights Sector Plan to the Planning Board. These studies followed the study of the 1989 Germantown Master Plan. Consolidated findings across all three plans will be presented in spring 2017.



## BICYCLE MASTER PLAN BICYCLE STRESS MAP HONORED

The **American Planning Association (APA)** honored the Planning Department's Bicycle Stress Map with the **Outstanding Tool Award** from its National Capital Area Chapter. National APA awards honoring Planning Department achievements will be announced in May 2017. Explore the tool at [mcatlas.org/bikestress](http://mcatlas.org/bikestress).



## PARKS AWARDS

- In February 2017, the Brookside Gardens Garden Gateway project won a National Recognition Award in the American Council of Engineering Companies 2017 Engineering Excellence Awards competition.
- In December 2016, MontgomeryParks.org and Brink Media, Inc. received the Gold award for website design from W3 Awards. The company recognizes creative excellence in websites, videos and marketing programs.
- The Washington Area Bicyclist Association awarded Montgomery Parks “Best Improvement for Biking in 2016 Maryland” for the improvements in the Capital Crescent Trail crossing at Little Falls Parkway.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS

Montgomery County Parks and Prince George’s County Parks and Recreation worked to propose revisions to the Park Rules and Regulations applicable in both counties. After several presentations to the Planning Board and M-NCPPC, and a series of meetings with citizens, the final draft is scheduled for adoption by the full Commission in March 2017.

Highlights of the revised rules include:

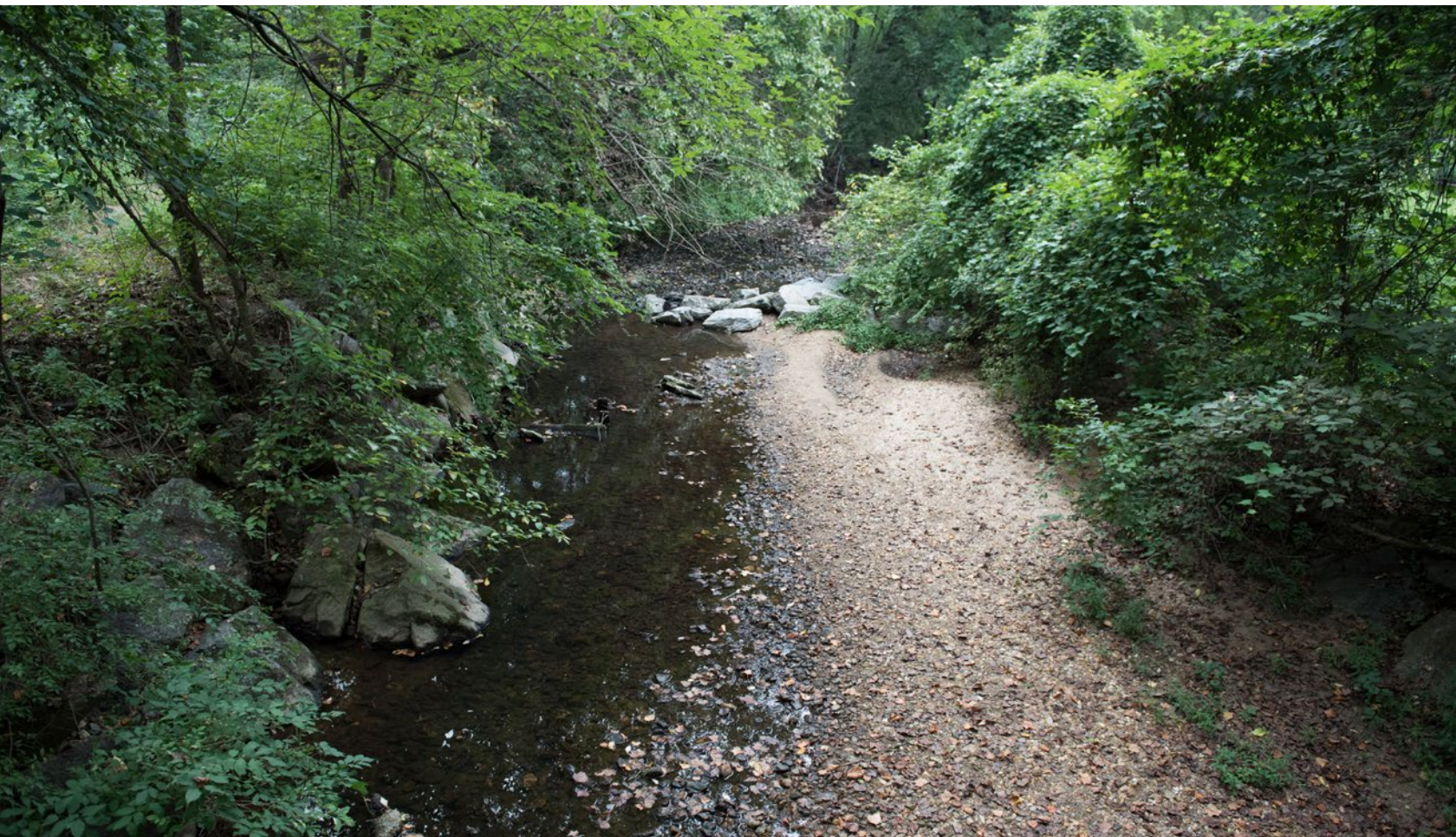
- Clarifying that a Parks Director can establish alternate hours of operation for a park by issuing a Park Directive, which could include opening certain urban parks to use before dawn and after dusk, as appropriate.
- Adding a formal mechanism for the Planning Boards to review proposed Park Directives before they become effective.
- Defining “organized play” as including an assemblage of 35 or more people.
- Clarifying the regulation of assemblies on park property and increasing the threshold for the number of people constituting a group needing a permit to assemble and picnic.
- Requiring a permit for the use of amplified sound equipment and lighting equipment.
- Updating the rules on remote-controlled and similar aerial devices, such as drones.
- Allowing all paved trails to be used for transient bicycle traffic between the hours of 5 a.m. and 12 a.m., in addition to the more general dawn to dusk hours of operation;
- Clarifying that electric bicycles are to be regulated independently from mechanical bicycles.
- Additional changes to the rule on bicycling on Park property.

## POLLUTANT DISCHARGE PERMIT

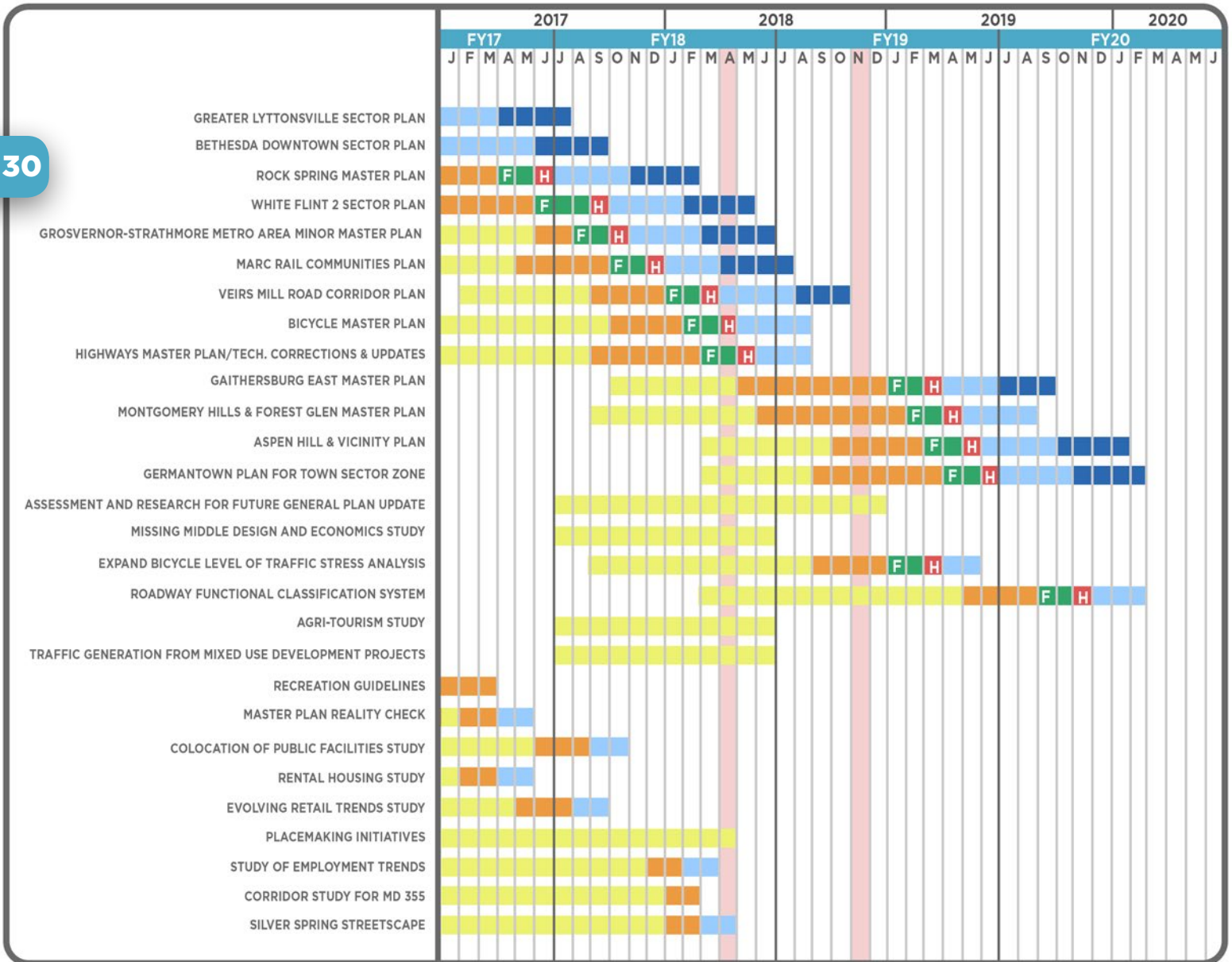
Montgomery Parks received a Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit in late 2009. Parks staff has worked to improve water quality through the implementation of best management practices under the permit control measures. These practices serve to reduce or eliminate sources of stormwater pollution on parkland.

In conjunction with our NPDES permit, the Department of Parks directly implements a variety of watershed restoration projects via Parks' capital budget to support development of park facilities and address specific erosion and watershed damage in new and existing parkland, and improve water quality and overall natural resources conditions. This level-of-effort project in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is typically funded at a level of \$500,000 per year, enough to annually fund one to two stream restoration projects and approximately 5 to 10 smaller improvement projects.

A complete stream restoration project will typically address multiple erosion and related issues for a designated stream reach, often including reforming and stabilizing the channel and banks, providing fish passage and replanting riparian vegetation. Smaller watershed restoration projects may include riparian restoration after bridge or culvert construction, repair of erosion associated with storm drain outfalls, small wetland or floodplain improvements, or forest planting along stream edges.



# FY18 PROPOSED MASTER PLAN + MAJOR PROJECTS SCHEDULE



## CONNECT WITH US

### MONTGOMERY PARKS

301.495.2595

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### MONTGOMERY PLANNING

301.495.4500

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# M-NCPPC 90

[MONTGOMERYPLANNINGBOARD.ORG/MNCPPC90](http://MONTGOMERYPLANNINGBOARD.ORG/MNCPPC90)

SPRING 2017 **PARKS + PLANNING SEMIANNUAL REPORT**

 MONTGOMERY COUNTY (M-NCPPC)