



THRIVE

MONTGOMERY 2050

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Montgomery Planning

2/11/2021
Agenda Item 5

Worksession #7 Parks and Recreation

Thrive Montgomery 2050 Public Hearing Draft



Agenda

1. Parks, Recreation and Health Related Themes from the Public Comments
2. Proposed Parks and Recreation Chapter
3. Preview of Complete Communities Chapter
4. Revised Drafts (Redlined) of Introduction, Housing and Transportation Chapters

Themes from the Public Comments

Themes from the Public Comments

- Active living is healthy living
- Healthy environment for better human health
- Role of public parks and open spaces
- Environmental justice issues
- How will more parks be funded?
- Other comments

Proposed Parks and Recreation Chapter:

Parks and Recreation for an
Increasingly Urban and Diverse
Community: Active and Social

Organization

- Part 1: What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- Part 2: What policies solve the problem?
- Part 3: How will these policies further the key objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050?
- Part 4: How will we evaluate progress?

Part 1. What is the problem?

- The history of the Montgomery Parks Department closely tracks the ways in which American suburbs have changed



**Stream Valley Parks
Water Protection**

1930-1940s



**Regional Parks &
Athletic Fields**

1950-1960s



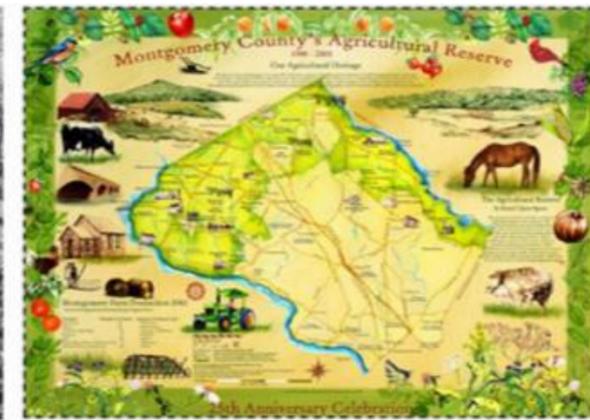
Neighborhood Parks

1970s



**Environmental
Awareness**

1960-1970s



**Smart Growth
Open Space Preservation**

1980-1990s

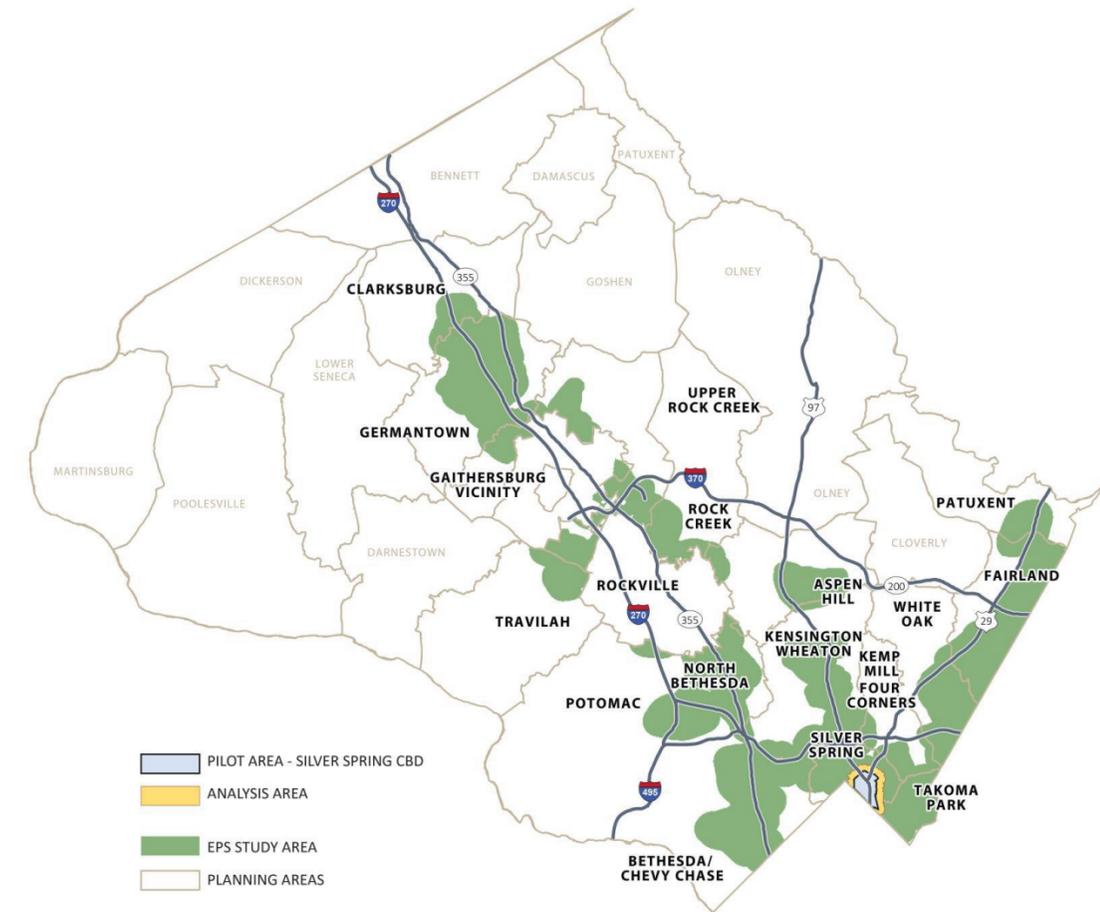


**Urban Parks
Shortage**

2000-2000s

Part 1. What is the problem?

- Our highest density areas are far from places where the most acreage of parkland exists in the county, with lack of alternatives to accessing such parks other than driving.
- Many conservation-oriented parks lack trails and are inaccessible to walkers, cyclists, and transit users, limiting their availability to the greater public.
- Parks conceived as buffers often act as separators rather than gathering places for people.
- Park facility standards and acquisition strategies conceived during a period of greenfield expansion are incompatible with infill development and adaptive reuse of sites.



Part 1. What is the problem?

- The role of land conservation and stewardship in addressing the county's environmental sustainability goals is as important as ever
- The environmental performance of green infrastructure on public land must keep getting better to improve water quality, limit property damage and erosion from flooding, and add tree and forest cover.



Part 1. What is the problem?

- The Parks Department must continue to take on new roles:
 - Serve residents of downtowns, town centers, and other intensively developed areas
 - Focus on social engagement and community building as a central role of parks and recreation
 - Encourage vigorous physical activity for people of all ages, abilities, and cultures



Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Focus on creating high quality urban parks
 - Prioritize acquisition of land for parks in urban centers and other intensively developed places along growth corridors and in complete communities **by utilizing Legacy Urban Space.**
 - Offer programs in urban parks to encourage usage, extend time spent in parks and make these spaces centers of activity.
 - Implement the Energizing Public Spaces master plan to ensure that densely populated parts of the county enjoy walkable access to a full range of park experiences.
 - Integrate privately-owned public spaces (POPS) with the park/recreation system to supplement publicly-owned and managed gathering spaces and athletic facilities, using a range of ownership and management approaches to public space.
 - Coordinate land use and park planning to ensure complete communities have access to a range of park types through a combination of public and privately-owned facilities.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Use park and recreation facilities/programs to promote active lifestyles
 - Include active recreation as an integral element in park planning and design.
 - Encourage active recreation as a key component of POPS in all parts of the county.
 - Provide park/recreation facilities and programs designed to encourage residents of all ages/cultures to engage in vigorous physical activity.
 - Integrate park trails and paths into transportation planning and better use them to connect residents to jobs and centers of activity.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Ensure that parks and recreation opportunities are accessible and equitably distributed
 - Amend the EPS study area to incorporate more refined analysis of equity in its methodology.
 - Use equity measures in developing capital budgets for park and recreation facilities.
 - Gather data on – and address – barriers to participation in park and recreation programs
 - Improve accessibility of park and recreation facilities via walking, biking and transit.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Make social connection a central objective for parks and recreation
 - Design park, recreation, and related infrastructure and services around building community, creating opportunities for interaction, and making parks and recreational amenities a central element of complete communities.
 - Connect neighborhoods and people to parks with a world-class trail network.
 - Include food/beverage in planning and programming parks and recreational facilities.
 - Provide park amenities that appeal to visitors with different interests/physical abilities.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Update park facility standards and acquisition strategies to align with infill development and adaptive reuse. Encourage co-location of other public facilities and programs with parks and combine uses of public land to encourage the simultaneous accommodation of multiple needs, including recreation, community-building, and resource stewardship.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Maintain high standards of environmental stewardship in park management and operations
 - Reaffirm the Parks Department's commitment to resource conservation, stewardship, and sustainability practices such as innovative stream and habitat restoration projects.
 - Selectively acquire additional land where needed to protect sensitive natural resources, improve water quality, increase tree cover, enhance wildlife corridors, curb invasive species, and achieve other environmental goals.
 - Create a resiliency plan to improve the ability of park and recreation facilities and natural resources to withstand the effects of climate change.

Part 2. What policies solve the problem?

- Integrate parks/rec/public spaces into economic development strategies and land use planning to attract employers and workers, build social connections, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create vibrant places, especially as part of complete communities

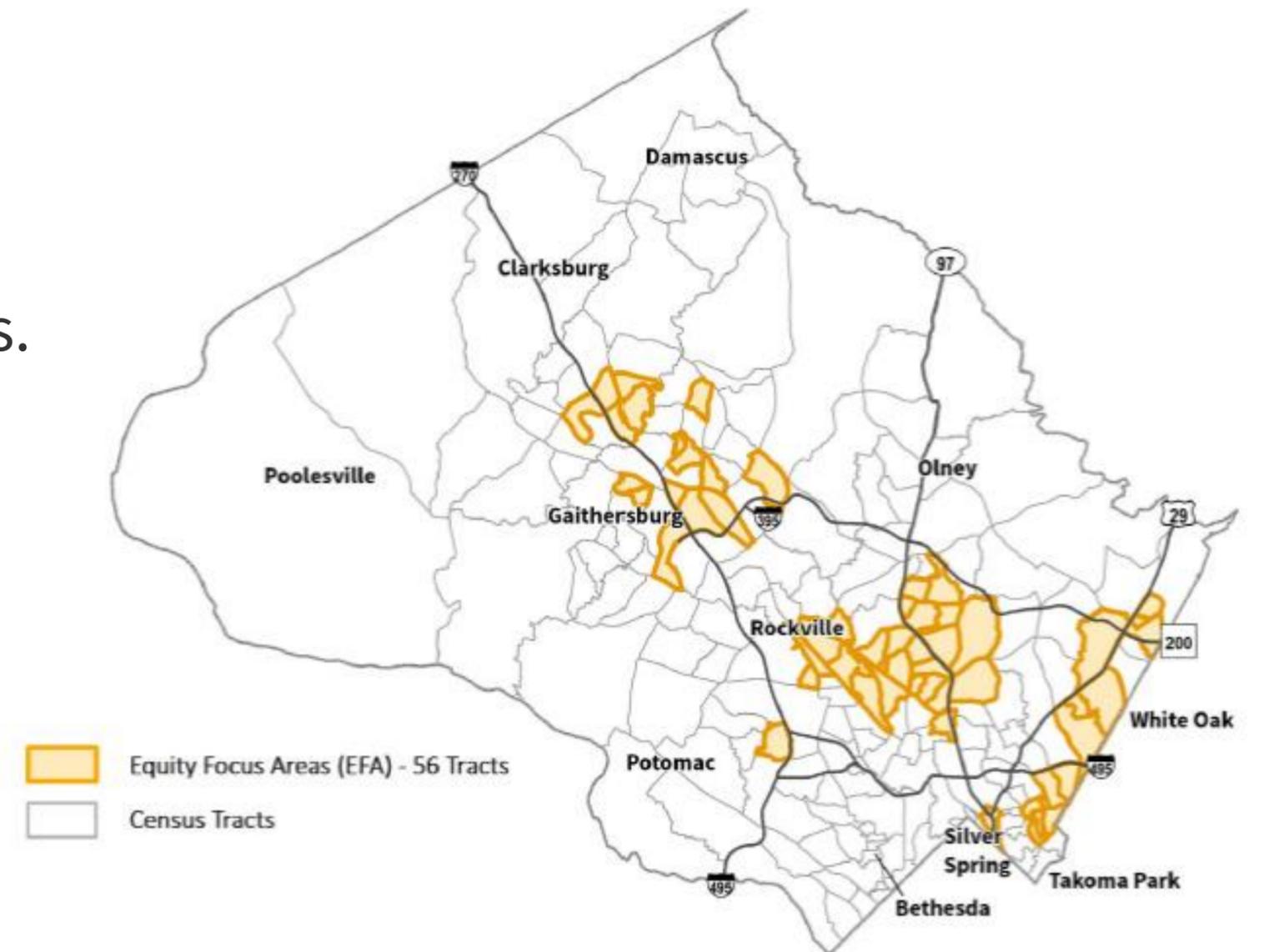
Part 3. How will these policies further the key objectives

- Parks are essential to creating vibrant, **economically competitive** places. In fact, parks and the amenities they provide are regularly cited as among the most important factors influencing decisions by businesses about where to relocate or expand.
- Parks increase adjacent property values from 5% to 20%, providing incentives for property owners to contribute to the creation of public parkland or to build privately-owned public spaces (POPS) as part of their development projects.



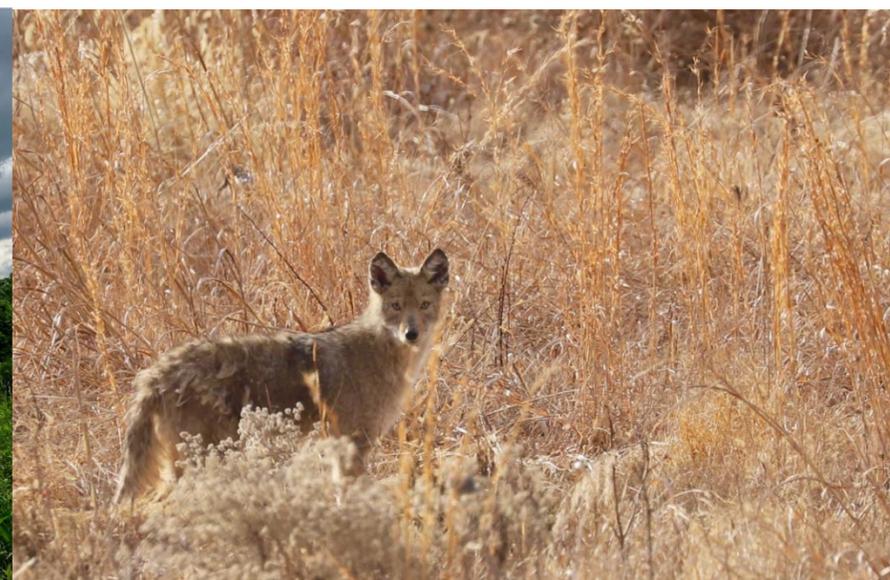
Part 3. How will these policies further the key objectives

- The quality and accessibility of urban parks is a basic component of **equity** in the delivery of public services.
- The Parks Department has made major strides in recent years in incorporating quantitative measures of equity in its capital budget recommendations, and this approach should be expanded



Part 3. How will these policies further the key objectives

- Parks and natural areas help address the effects of climate change and enhance **environmental resiliency** through:
 - Stream restoration and stormwater management
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Urban tree canopy
 - Habitat restoration



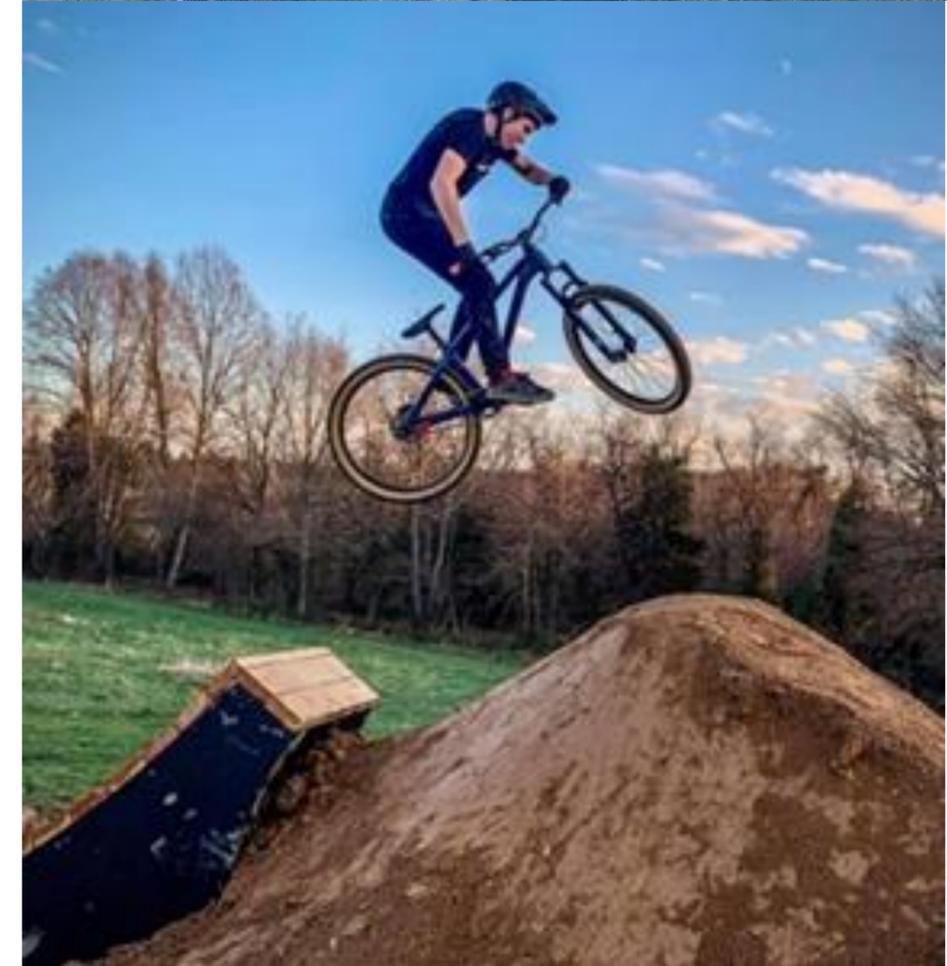
Part 3. How will these policies further the key objectives

- Well-designed and sited parks are one of the most straightforward ways to establish a clear sense of place and foster **social connectedness**.
- Parks can act as community hubs and focal points for response and recovery during natural disasters and other emergencies.



Part 3. How will these policies further the key objectives

- Parks and recreation are vital to **improving health** outcomes for all our residents.
- 60% of U.S. adults do not engage in the recommended amount of activity and approximately 25 % of U.S. adults are not active at all.
- 90% of outdoor experiences happen close to home, so parks - particularly in urban areas - play an important role in outdoor recreation.



Part 4: How will we know we are making progress?

- Number of urban parks: **Up**
- Miles of streams restored, and stormwater runoff treated: **Up**
- Childhood obesity: **Down**
- Stream water quality: **Up**
- Urban Tree Canopy: **Up**
- Additional miles of trails built: **Up**
- Participation in vigorous physical activity: **Up**
- Park and recreation patronage/participation by race/ethnicity, language spoken and age: **Up**
- Awards and other recognition of excellence in urban parks and trails: **Up**
- Patronage at community gatherings: **Up**
- Proportion of population within 15-minute walk of three park experiences: **Up**

Outline of Complete Communities Chapter

Organization

- Part 1: What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- Part 2: What policies solve the problem?
- Part 3: How will these policies further the key objectives of Thrive Montgomery 2050?
- Part 4: How will we evaluate progress?

Part 1: What is the problem?

- The county's land use plans and policies focused on the separation of land uses, required transitions between different uses and established uniformity in development standards, such as lot sizes, lot coverage and setbacks.
- These practices resulted in the inefficient use of land, increased reliance on cars, encouraged creation of standalone services and amenities and discouraged connections among people and places.

Part 2: What policies solve the problem?

- Identify and integrate elements needed to complete centers of housing, retail, and office development.
- Encourage co-location and adjacency of all essential and public services, especially along growth corridors and complete communities.
- Retrofit centers of activity and large-scale single-use developments to include a mixture of uses and diversity of housing types and to provide a critical mass of housing, jobs, services and amenities for vibrant, dynamic complete communities.

Part 3: How do polices further objectives?

- The integration of housing, jobs, services, amenities and opportunities for social gathering and interaction will retain and attract employment, advancing our **economic performance and competitiveness**.

Part 3: How do polices further objectives?

- A variety of uses, lot sizes, building types and development standards enable a diverse range of housing and employment types. Supporting a broader range of housing and employment increases residential and commercial diversity as well as **racial equity and social inclusion** in neighborhoods.

Part 3: How do polices further objectives?

- Complete communities will create long-term sustainability for both human and environmental health. The mixture of uses and forms allow more trips to be completed by walking, biking, rolling and transit, thereby reducing automobile reliance, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions and increasing **environmental resilience** and opportunities for social interaction.

Part 4: How will we evaluate progress?

- Several relevant measures will be used to evaluate the successes and failures of the recommended policies, as well as the ability of future plans, projects and proposals to achieve complete communities.

Revised Drafts (Redlined) of Introduction, Housing and Transportation Chapters

