

Appendix D: Parks



Appendix D – Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Plan Analysis

POLICY GUIDANCE: 2017 PROS PLAN & 2018 ENERGIZED PUBLIC SPACES FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN

The 2017 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan introduced a new policy document that focuses on the delivery of parks and open spaces in higher density areas of the County - the [2018 Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan \(EPS Plan\)](#) and its associated [2019 Designing Public Spaces Design Guidelines](#). The EPS Plan applies an innovative methodology and framework to identify areas with the highest need for parks and open spaces and recommends opportunities to increase the amount and quality of parks and open space in those communities. This Plan promotes public spaces as platforms where people can share experiences and build a sense of community. As participants noted during the listening and visioning sessions, Silver Spring needs more parks for physical activity. The EPS Plan implemented data analysis, a new user-friendly metric, and scenario testing layers to support this need and enhance our park planning analysis during the planning process.



Figure 1 - EPS Functional Master Plan & associated Design Guidelines

Park Planning Analysis during the Sector Plan

With the introduction of the EPS Plan Analysis, additional steps were added to park planning in a sector plan process as shown in figure 2.

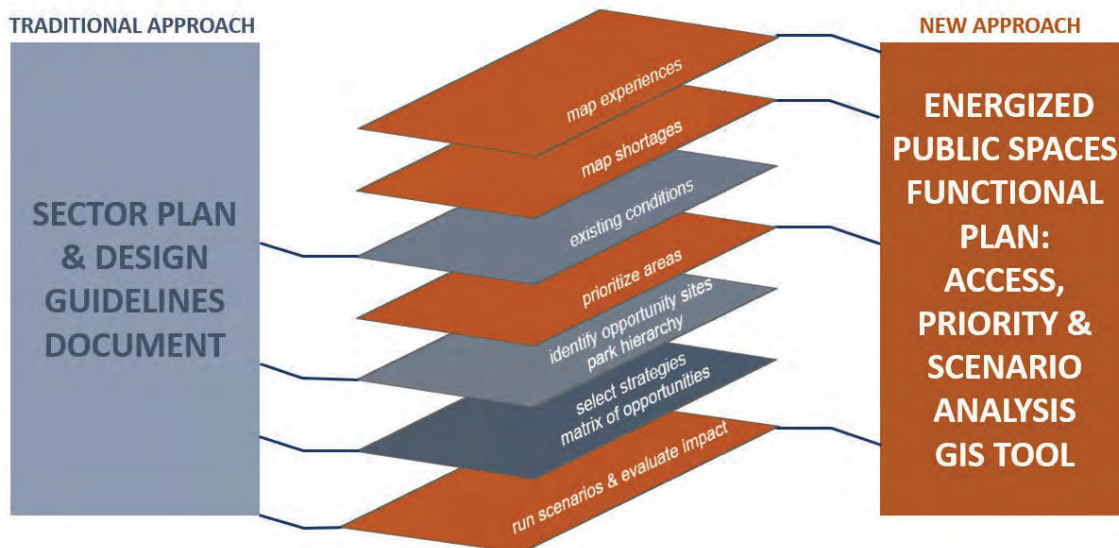


Figure 2 - New Approach to Park Planning Analysis

Data-Driven Methodology and Tool

The EPS Plan will map and score the community’s access to parks and open spaces by identifying and quantifying what we have, where we have it, and how to get more of what we need. The tool measures how accessible a variety of public space amenities are from a given spot in the plan via walking. The plan’s methodology and approach to mapping outdoor experiences will contribute to this sector plan as well as park-specific plans and park planning studies in the Study Area. By further prioritizing parks implementation selection combining the mapping of our Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs) with the overlay of the Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) this Plan will also contribute to the efforts initiated by County Council on Racial Equity and Social Justice.

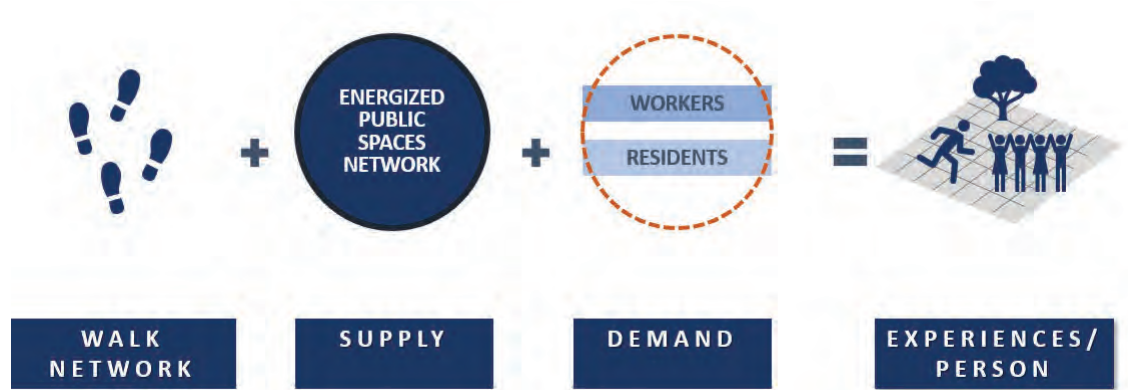


Figure 3 - Summary Illustration of Methodology Elements

WALK NETWORK:



Creating a flexible and adaptable grid system – A regular grid system allows an equal comparison of supply and demand relationships for the many different areas of the county and different districts within the same sector plan. Accessibility is defined as within a 10-minute walkshed from each one-acre cell in the County, and the number of people is determined by how many people live and work in each one-acre cell in the County.

SUPPLY:



Supply of all publicly accessible parks and public space independently of ownership. The methodology evaluates how each recreational amenity within the open space network provides for three outdoor experiences show in Figure 4.

The tool applies a 3-value system focused on accessibility to outdoor experiences that benefit our overall health. An experience value is applied to all amenities based on 3 major categories of recreation:



Figure 3 - EPS Experiences Classification

Active Experiences: physical activities that promote physical health

- Play sports or games; run, walk, or bicycle; climb or mountain bike; other outdoor exercises
- Trails, athletic fields, open spaces/lawns, sport courts, playgrounds, interactive elements, natural areas

Contemplative Experiences: improve exposure to nature, history and culture, and provide opportunities for education and stewardship

- Enjoy nature, read a book, or learn something new; relax/meditate/reflect.
- Include natural areas, historic sites, benches, shade trees, community open spaces, gardens, small green spaces, or trails

Social Gathering Experiences: opportunities for social gathering and interaction

- Community festivals, concerts, outdoor movies, parades, farmer's markets, historic sites
- Use plazas with seating, small sport courts, amphitheaters/stages, picnic tables, large community open spaces, dog parks

DEMAND:



The demand data is a sum of single-family and multi-family residents and daytime population estimates within each square grid.

NEW METRIC: EPS EXPERIENCE INDEX RESULTS

An experience value, measured as points-per-person, is assigned based on how each amenity ranks as an active, contemplative, or social gathering experience. Experience scores were determined by calculating the ratio of accessible public space experiences to the number of people capable of accessing them from a specific location. A high ratio, meaning a high rate of walkable experiences per person results in a high score for a cell, while a low ratio results in a low score.



SILVER SPRING SCENARIO TESTING RESULTS:

Silver Spring, along with other downtown areas, has a high supply of walkable recreational experiences. However, due to the physical character/size/location of most of the public spaces, social gathering experiences inside the Plan’s boundary are higher, but active experiences, are lower. Access to active experiences increases out of the center of downtown since most of the larger parks that contain traditional active facilities are located at the periphery of the Plan. That index – experience points per person – in a downtown area has a different context than in suburban and/rural areas. In downtown areas such as Silver Spring, access to parks also means walkable access to shops, restaurants, businesses and schools. One experience point per person can mean access to multiple experiences which are shared with more people than a similar experience would be in a more suburban area. This is expected since public spaces are platforms for social connection, especially in urban areas. This index allows us to check a balance of supply and demand as development continue to happen in this area.

Results – When the proposed recommendations for Silver Spring were tested against the existing conditions, there was a significant improvement in the overall park needs, and an increase on the supply of much-needed active recreational experiences. Overall, the plan recommendations will improve the distribution of active, contemplative, and social gathering experiences across the downtown and the Plan.

- *Full Build-Out Demand* – projected demand of key development sites added
- *Full Build-Out Supply* - supply of proposed parks and public spaces and also accounting for connectivity improvements such as the proposed pedestrian bridge + projected demand

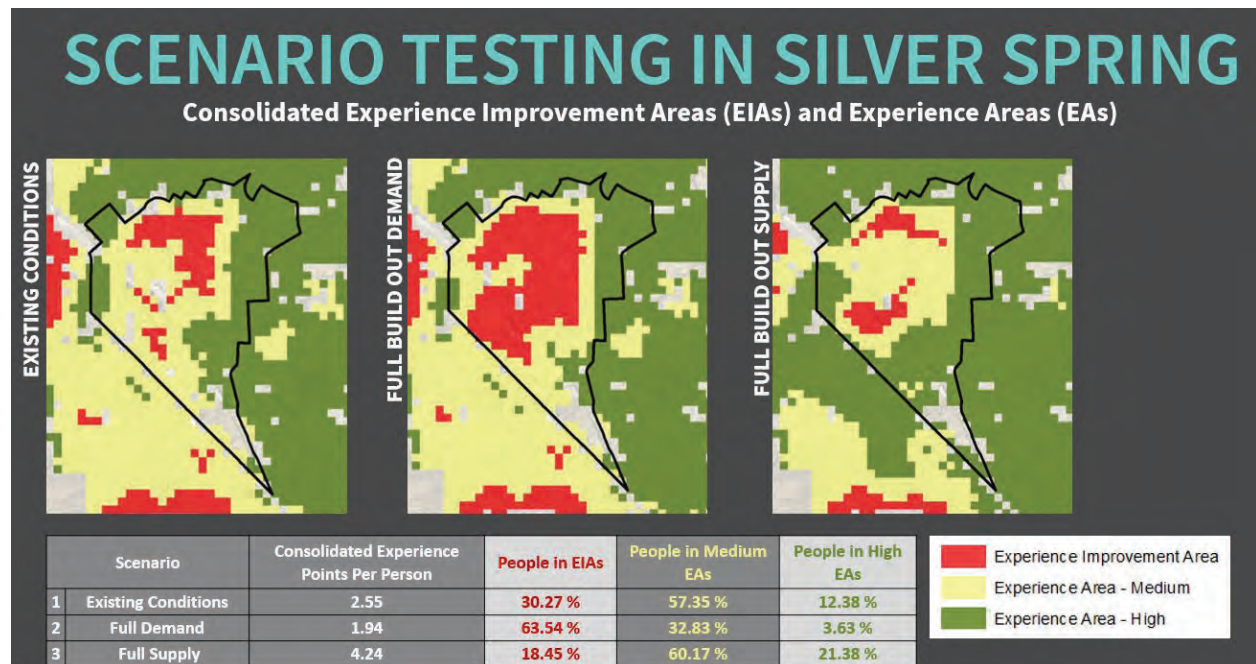
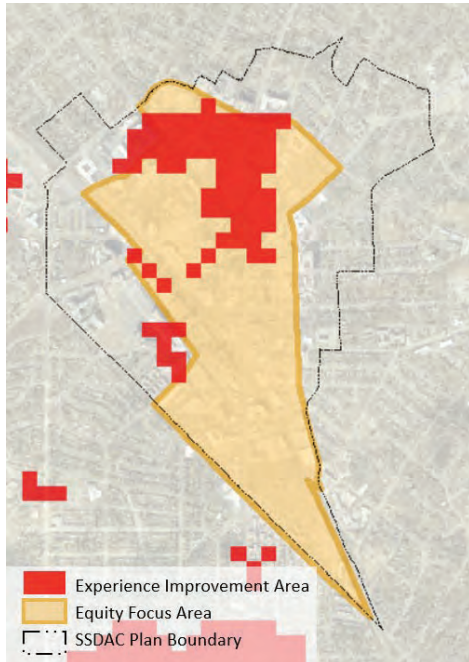


Figure 4 – Scenario Testing with all three experiences consolidated (active, contemplative, social).

PRIORITIZATION BASED ON EQUITY FILTERS:



Silver Spring was identified as an implementation priority area through the mapping of *Experience Improvement Areas (EIAs)* of the *Energized Public Spaces (EPS) Plan* with the overlay of the *Equity Focus Areas (EFAs)* from the *Thrive 2050*. Recommendations described in this Plan will help prioritize where and how to spend limited public funds where the highest need is identified.

Experience Improvement Areas: The EIA map shows areas where low experience scores are spatially clustered.

Experience scores were determined by calculating the ratio and scoring of accessible public space experiences to the number of people capable of walking to them from a specific location. See more information on this map on Appendix D.

Equity Focus Areas: The EFA map identifies census tracts that have high concentrations of lower-income people of color, and those residents who also have limited English language skills.