

City of Gaithersburg  
**PARKS,  
RECREATION  
AND CULTURE**  
A Master Plan Element

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# **CITY OF GAITHERSBURG 2019 MASTER PLAN**

## **PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE ELEMENT**

Planning Commission Approval: July 3, 2019, Resolution PCR-1-19

Mayor and City Council Adoption: August 5, 2019, Resolution R-46-19

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**PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE DEPARTMENT**

# CITY OF GAITHERSBURG 2019 MASTER PLAN

## CHAPTER PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The mission of the City of Gaithersburg Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture is to provide quality parks, well-planned sustainable facilities, and diverse cultural, artistic and recreational opportunities to promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors. This Master Plan Element advances the Department's mission by providing sustainable recommendations for future development, programs and actions to meet the leisure, fitness, cultural, and other quality-of-life needs of Gaithersburg residents. The Plan is visionary and provides foresight; it also emphasizes immediate and short-range actions that will help make recreation in Gaithersburg even better than it is today.

The City's active and passive parks, which are among the City's most visible assets, provide opportunities for all citizens to experience the joy, beauty, and health benefits of the outdoors. Active parks include formal athletic venues and play areas while passive parks are undisturbed, natural settings that support conservation and the ecosystem. As of 2019, a total of 893 acres of active and passive parklands reside within the 10.3 square miles of Gaithersburg. Maps created by the City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division demonstrate that 74% of City residents live within one quarter mile of a City park and 93.6% live within one half mile. All City residents live within 0.78 miles of a City park, 96.7% live within one quarter mile distance of a publically accessible park, and 98.5% live within one half mile distance of a publically accessible park. All City residents live within 0.63 miles of a publically accessible park. This information is displayed in proximity maps on pages 28 and 29.

As you will see in this Master Plan Element, some of the primary goals of our park-related efforts over the next decade include continuing the development of a trail system that links homes, schools, parks, and commercial areas and monitoring future land acquisition opportunities in collaboration with our Planning and Code Administration. Recommended actions include increasing trails and trail/park connectivity, enhancing the trail user experience, creating digital maps with well-marked distances, and developing unique and interesting artist-made trail markers through the Art in Public Places program. Potential land acquisition opportunities include the redevelopment and repurposing of new and existing properties.

The City's recreation services provide unique opportunities for individuals to engage in purposeful endeavors that provide physical, social and psychological benefits. Our programs and facilities contribute specifically to our community image and a sense of social well-being, health and wellness, inclusivity, social equity, positive youth development, healthy aging, education, economic vitality, and community safety. By providing a comprehensive program of activities adjusted to meet the physical, cognitive and psychological needs of all residents, we strive to ensure that all communities have accessible, safe, functional, and engaging recreational facilities and amenities. Recommended actions include providing accommodations that meet or exceed those outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, offering or facilitating therapeutic recreation services to reduce or eliminate the effects of illness or disability, offering inclusion services and providing inclusivity training for coaches, volunteers, camp counselors, and others, and providing recreational opportunities that test personal limits, improve self-confidence and self-esteem, and develop leadership and cooperative skills.

Cultural arts bring people together through concerts, festivals, arts centers, theaters, galleries, public art, museums, schools, libraries, and community centers. Through its cultural arts programming, the City of Gaithersburg fosters artistic expression, celebrates the richness of our community's history and heritage as part of our contemporary identity. Because the City weaves cultural arts into the fabric of our community, the lives of our citizens are richer, more tolerant and embracing of differences. A primary

goal of the cultural arts program is to create opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts for people of all ages, cultures and abilities through vibrant, accessible and affordable cultural arts programs.

As the fastest growing age group in the nation, the need for increased older adult programming is apparent. Throughout this Master Plan, you will see how we aim to provide this growing and changing older adult population with cultural opportunities that empower participants to learn, improve their health, make social connections, travel, and engage in the world around them. Participation in the arts can improve health, mental well-being, cognitive functioning, and social cohesion and positively contribute to recovery from injury, illness, and trauma. Recommended actions to increase older adult participation include providing programs that challenge, entertain, educate, engage, and excite, providing purposeful intergenerational programming with a focus on a higher quality of life for all ages, and working in partnership with the members of the Benjamin Gaither Center, our senior center, to educate the broader community about our opportunities.

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan Element develops a plan and vision for the role of our department now and in the future. We have studied the City's current and evolving demographics as well as trends over time to anticipate the needs of our community and how we can best meet those needs through free and fee-based programs and amenities. The results of these considerations are woven throughout this entire document. As we implement this Plan, we will continually measure our successes and reevaluate our challenges by soliciting feedback from staff, participants, and the community.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

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Recreation is more important to Gaithersburg residents and to the comprehensive development of the City than ever before. Recreation is part of the City's "quality of life," which makes Gaithersburg an attractive place in which to live, work, learn, and play. This quality of life does not occur automatically. It must be carefully planned and protected to serve the needs of current and future residents.

The City of Gaithersburg, as expressed in the annual Strategic Plan, has established a direction to, "Provide quality parks, well-planned, sustainable facilities, and diverse cultural, artistic, and recreational opportunities for all ages and interests to promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors." The Parks, Recreation, and Culture (PRC) Element of the Master Plan is intended to respond to the diverse needs of the City's residents seeking ways to better deliver services in a manner where all feel welcome and are equitably served by the City's parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, and programs.

This Master Plan Element was derived from input from various City Committees, online surveys, interdepartmental work-groups, Planning Commission public work sessions, and other outreach initiatives. The PRC Element organizes each of the three facets—parks, recreation, and culture—into separate chapters. These chapters discuss the inherent importance of these elements to the community, how these elements are addressed within the City, including both the strengths and the deficiencies, and offer a collection of recommendations and actions to carry these facets over the coming decade. Needs identified in this plan are also addressed in various Montgomery County documentation, including the FY19 Annual Program for Open Space.

This Plan provides an update to the City's last comprehensive plan for parks and recreation completed in 1999. It serves as a guide for making decisions about places and programs that will meet the leisure, fitness, cultural, and other quality-of-life needs of Gaithersburg residents. The Plan is visionary and provides foresight; it also emphasizes immediate and short-range actions that will help make recreation in Gaithersburg even better than it is today.

## **II. BACKGROUND FOR THE PLAN**

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### **A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE:**

The City's first park, Lee Street, got its start in 1955 with a donation of land to the City by the Casey family. The Lee Street Park opened to the public in 1960 and is now known as Constitution Gardens Park. By 1970, the City had two more parks—Civic Center (now Griffith Park) and Duvall Park, for a total of nine acres that served the City's 8,344 residents—1.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. As of 2019, the City has 28 parks and 13 recreation facilities that cover nearly 900 acres of parkland—a total of 12.64 acres per 1,000 residents at the City's current population of approximately 69,000. That represents approximately 13% of the City's 10 square miles.

This dramatic increase in parkland since 1970 underscores the City of Gaithersburg's growing commitment to provide more parks. The growing diversity of parkland in the City is also significant. Today, approximately one-third of the park acreage in Gaithersburg is active parkland while the remaining two-thirds is passive. The City's conservative fiscal policy, which precludes bonding and debt service in favor of a "pay-as-you-go" philosophy, sets the stage for land to be acquired primarily through the site plan review and land dedication process. A rare exception to this was the \$3.3 million 1982 purchase of the 57-acre Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm Park, which was paid for with a five-year note.

In addition to parkland, the City has a long history of providing recreational programs to the community. The first annual City Hall Holiday Tree Lighting in 1926 is the oldest City event. The first annual Labor Day Parade marched not long after in 1937. The department's first year-round director was hired in 1965 to provide programs such as teen club, basketball, and a variety of classes. Today, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture operates City-owned athletic fields, an indoor aquatic center, a Water Park, a cultural arts center, an outdoor performance center, a historic mansion event center, two community centers, two youth centers, a miniature golf course, skate facilities, trails, and a wide range of events, programs, and activities.

## **B. PURPOSE AND NEED:**

The City of Gaithersburg is empowered under the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to exercise autonomous planning and zoning powers. Land Use establishes the requirements of a municipal comprehensive Master Plan and its required elements as well as the procedures for approving said Master Plan. Codified in Land Use Division I, §3-102(a)(1)(i) Elements-Municipal Corporations requires the development of a Community Facilities Element as part of the City's comprehensive Master Plan. The PRC Element is an update to and amends the 2003 City of Gaithersburg Community Facilities Element. This 2018 Element addresses specific contents allowed under a Community Facilities Element per §3-108(b) Permissive contents. It will serve as an informational and policy document to the Mayor and City Council, the Planning Commission, other boards and committees of the City, and the residents of Gaithersburg.

This Element presents recommendations for the City's continued effort to ensure all communities have accessible, safe, functional, and engaging recreational facilities, amenities, and cultural arts while being consistent with the 12 Maryland Planning Visions and City's Mission & Vision and Guiding Principles as laid forth in the City's Strategic Plan. The PRC Element contains goals, objectives, principles, policies, and implementation strategies that are designed to provide quality parks; well-planned, sustainable facilities; and diverse cultural, artistic, and recreational opportunities for all ages and interests to promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors. The Element also guides future development, programs, and actions within the City in a sustainable manner that supports the visions, policies, strategic directions, and principles of the City, as well as the other Master Plan Elements.

## **C. DEMOGRAPHICS:**

A City's parks, recreation, and culture program provides a unifying element that nourishes a community's body, mind, and soul. A successful program brings together all facets of society regardless of economic status, physical ability, gender, age, or ethnic and cultural background. Parks, recreation, and culture teaches children important life lessons such as teamwork and dedication, helps seniors be engaged and active rather than isolated, reconnects urban dwellers with natural landscapes, and celebrates the diversity of personal expression.

The City of Gaithersburg is a growing community with an increasingly diverse population. As of July 2018, the City had an estimated population of 69,769<sup>1</sup>. This is an increase of almost 10,000 residents from the 2010 decennial census population of 59,933; greater than 1,000 new persons per year. The City is almost evenly split by gender, with 48.9% of the population being male and 51.1% female, and

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<sup>1</sup> City of Gaithersburg Planning and Code Administration. (2018). Dwelling Units and Estimated Population. Retrieved from <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=3112>

exhibits an overall median age of 35.7, with 14.2% of the population aged 62 and over<sup>2</sup>. The following chart reflects the increasing diversity found within the City<sup>3,4</sup>:

	2010	Percent	2017 5-yr ACS	Percent
White, not Hispanic	23,961	40.0%	23,617	35.0%
Black, not Hispanic	9,307	15.5%	12,011	17.8%
American Indian, not Hispanic	129	0.2%	111	0.2%
Asian, not Hispanic	10,099	16.9%	12,124	18.0%
Hawaiian/Pacific Isl., not Hispanic	28	0.0%	4	0.0%
Other/Multiple Races, not Hispanic	1,910	3.2%	2,128	3.2%
Hispanic (of any race)	14,499	24.2%	17,422	25.8%

The growing racial diversity is coupled with a sizable percentage of the City’s population being either foreign-born or not a U.S. citizen<sup>5,6</sup>:

	2010 5-yr ACS	Percent	2017 5-yr ACS	Percent
Foreign-born	23,390	40.2%	26,296	39%
Not a U.S. Citizen	13,382	23.0%	14,674	21.8%

Almost half of the City’s households speak a language other than English at home:

LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates<sup>7</sup>

Population 5 years and over	62,372	92.5%
English only (5+)	31,207	50.0%
Language other than English	31,165	50.0%

As will be discussed, while an ethnically and culturally diverse population enriches the greater community and a city’s identification, it also presents differing needs and expectations for a parks and recreation program.

The desires and expectations of a city’s parks and recreation program may also be influenced by other social and demographic profiles. Gaithersburg has an increasingly educated population, with 50% of its residents having a Bachelor’s and/or Graduate/Professional degree:

<sup>2</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2017). *ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates* [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]. Retrieved from

[http://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17\\_5YR/DP05/1600000US2431175](http://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17_5YR/DP05/1600000US2431175)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> United States Census Bureau (2010). *Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010* [2010 Census Summary File 1]. Retrieved from

[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10\\_SF1/SF1DP1/1600000US2431175](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/DEC/10_SF1/SF1DP1/1600000US2431175)

<sup>5</sup> United States Census Bureau (2010). *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States* [2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]. Retrieved from

[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/10\\_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/10_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175)

<sup>6</sup> United States Census Bureau (2017). *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States* [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]. Retrieved from

[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17\\_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates<sup>8</sup>

Population 25 years and over	45,730	67.8%
Less than 9th grade	3,518	7.7%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	2,390	5.2%
High school graduate (includes GED)	6,710	14.7%
Some college, no degree	6,534	14.3%
Associate's degree	2,211	4.8%
Bachelor's degree	12,171	26.6%
Graduate or professional degree	12,196	26.7%

Moreover, while considered affluent, with a median household income of \$85,773, 9.5% of all people and 7.1% of all families in the City have incomes below poverty level, which creates very different roles for City programming<sup>9</sup>. These statistics reflect the City of Gaithersburg today, but what about in the future? The City is predicted to exceed 70,000 residents by 2020 and approach 80,000 by 2030:

City of Gaithersburg Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) Round 9.0 Forecasts<sup>10</sup>

Year	Population	Households	Jobs	Jobs/HH
2010*	59,933	22,000	42,217	1.92
2015	67,099	24,651	46,429	1.88
2020	70,676	26,036	47,574	1.83
2025	74,594	27,548	50,010	1.82
2030	78,718	28,884	52,653	1.82
2035	82,416	30,479	56,120	1.84
2040	86,128	32,082	61,134	1.91
2045	89,258	33,409	65,684	1.97

\* Population and Households from Census 2010

Using the cohort-survival projection, Gaithersburg will not only grow in population size but also in age. The population of those 70+ will approach 10,000 individuals by 2024.

This methodology, using 2014 City and County data sources, is a linear projection tool and a simple method for forecasting what the future population will be based upon the survival of the existing population by sex and the births that will occur. It does not take into account things such as development pipelines and new housing starts or annexations. The cohorts are in five-year blocks. In reality, the rates used fluctuate from year to year; however, for this document's purposes, the City continued to use the baseline 2014 rates for each future five-year projection. The methodology is:

$$\text{cohort for each sex} \times \text{survival rate} \times \text{net migration rate}$$

<sup>8</sup> United States Census Bureau (2017). *Selected Social Characteristics in the United States* [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]. Retrieved from

[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17\\_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17_5YR/DP02/1600000US2431175)

<sup>9</sup> United States Census Bureau (2017). *Selected Economic Characteristics* [2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates]. Retrieved from

[https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17\\_5YR/DP03/1600000US2431175](https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/17_5YR/DP03/1600000US2431175)

<sup>10</sup> City of Gaithersburg Planning and Code Administration. (2018). Dwelling Units and Estimated Population. Retrieved from <https://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=3112>

Age in Yrs. in 2019	Male Population
Under 5	2,573
5-9	3,006
10-14	2,561
15-19	2,054
20-24	1,263
25-29	1,939
30-34	2,925
35-39	3,482
40-44	2,604
45-49	1,796
50-54	2,274
55-59	1,830
60-64	1,571
65-69	1,464
70-74	1,040
75-79	582
80-84	411
85+	586
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,961</b>

Age in Yrs. 2019	Female Population
Under 5	2,451
5-9	2,620
10-14	2,272
15-19	1,893
20-24	1,764
25-29	1,386
30-34	2,689
35-39	3,276
40-44	2,820
45-49	2,010
50-54	2,141
55-59	2,419
60-64	2,179
65-69	1,566
70-74	1,135
75-79	935
80-84	578
85+	1,210
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,344</b>

Age in Yrs. in 2024	Male Population
Under 5	2,317
5-9	2,616
10-14	3,056
15-19	2,604
20-24	2,088
25-29	1,284
30-34	1,971
35-39	2,974
40-44	3,537
45-49	2,645
50-54	1,822
55-59	2,307
60-64	1,851
65-69	1,589
70-74	1,472
75-79	1,046
80-84	571
85+	974
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,724</b>

Age in Yrs. in 2024	Female Population
Under 5	2,207
5-9	2,492
10-14	2,664
15-19	2,310
20-24	1,925
25-29	1,793
30-34	1,409
35-39	2,734
40-44	3,331
45-49	2,867
50-54	2,041
55-59	2,175
60-64	2,452
65-69	2,209
70-74	1,579
75-79	1,145
80-84	924
85+	1,679
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,936</b>

Age in Yrs. in 2029	Male Population
Under 5	1,928
5-9	2,356
10-14	660
15-19	3,107
20-24	2,647
25-29	2,123
30-34	1,305
35-39	2,004
40-44	3,021
45-49	3,592
50-54	2,684
55-59	1,849
60-64	2,334
65-69	1,872
70-74	1,598
75-79	1,480
80-84	1,026
85+	1,422
<b>Total</b>	<b>39,008</b>

Age in Yrs. 2029	Female Population
Under 5	1,837
5-9	2,244
10-14	2,534
15-19	2,708
20-24	2,349
25-29	1,957
30-34	1,823
35-39	1,433
40-44	2,780
45-49	3,387
50-54	2,912
55-59	2,073
60-64	2,205
65-69	2,485
70-74	2,228
75-79	1,592
80-84	1,131
85+	2,451
<b>Total</b>	<b>40,129</b>

These changes in growth to both number and age forecast over the coming decade only tell part of the story. Interpolating from what has been experienced over the past decade, the City can expect its population to reflect an ever-growing diversity of culture, race, and economic and educational backgrounds. The Parks, Recreation, and Culture Element is intended to plan for a future where a “one size fits all” programming strategy will not address the needs, wants, and expectations of this community.

**D. PUBLIC SURVEY**

The City of Gaithersburg Parks, Recreation, and Culture Department administered a public survey in 2016. It was completed by 447 people. When asked what types of additional recreation and/or cultural facilities are most needed in the City of Gaithersburg, respondent’s replies were<sup>11</sup>:

- 58% Jogging, walking, bike trails, lanes
- 48% Nature areas and trails
- 45% Indoor swimming pools

- 28% Children’s playgrounds
- 25% Visual arts center/artist studios
- 22% Fitness Center/Health Club

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<sup>11</sup> City of Gaithersburg Parks, Recreation, & Culture. (2016). City of Gaithersburg Parks, Recreation, & Culture Master Plan Survey, Q6. Gaithersburg, MD.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE

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### Mission

The City of Gaithersburg Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture provides quality parks, well-planned sustainable facilities, and diverse cultural, artistic, and recreational opportunities and interests to promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors.

### Vision

Aspire to provide a high quality lifestyle, and to promote wellness and diversity by fostering the physical, mental, and social well-being of all.

### Philosophy

Be an adaptive organization that serves our greater, diverse community with vigor, energy and compassion. Our character does count!

### Inclusion

Commit to actively fostering diversity, inclusion and cultural competency throughout our programmatic, research, development and operational efforts.

### Core Values

Health and Wellness

*Promote healthy and enriching lifestyles for all ages, abilities and incomes*

Inclusiveness

*Celebrate our diverse community*

Community Engagement

*Provide effective communications and opportunities for involvement*

Stewardship

*Preserve and conserve natural, cultural and historical resources*

Excellence

*Offer high-quality, innovative programs*

Exemplary Customer Service

*Deliver positive, responsive customer service*

Safety

*Operate safe facilities and programs*

Life Long Learning

*Offer engaging educational opportunities*

# Parks Chapter



*Top to bottom, left to right: Bohrer Park Playground; Constitution Gardens Park; Olde Towne Plaza Sign; Christman Park; Lakelands; Olde Towne Plaza Fountains; and Blohm Park*



## I. INTRODUCTION: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

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Parks are often a community's largest geographic and most visible asset. This is true in the City of Gaithersburg. They come in a variety of sizes and are designed to serve different functions and purposes. Parks range from hundreds of acres to nestled "pockets" occupying a small lot. They may be active or passive, hardscaped or in an ecologically untouched state, and owned and maintained by public agencies or private associations. Each help in creating an urban environment conducive for living, working, and playing.

The City park system was established in the mid 1950's with a donation of land formerly known as Lee Street and presently known as Constitution Gardens. The desire to expand the parkland inventory with active and passive lands was supported by the City government. Land donations, City purchases and the support of funding through the State of Maryland Program Open Space funding supported the desired goal.

**The City parks system is the foundation that provides space for all citizens to experience the joy, beauty, and freshness of the outdoors. The park acreage is classified into two categories: "Active" and "Passive." Active areas encompass formal athletic venues and play areas. Passive areas include the undisturbed, natural settings supporting conservation and the ecosystem. A total of 893 acres of active and passive parklands rests within the 10.3 square miles of Gaithersburg.**

Parks located throughout the City serve the community by providing bastions of play space or quiet settings for walks and thought. Parks not only enhance the community but also serve as a key component of Environmental Stewardship.

The City of Gaithersburg 2009 Environment & Sustainability Element discussed the benefits of the "urban forest." A city's park and open space system confers those same "urban forest" benefits and provides further benefits for other facets. In 2002, the American Planning Association (APA), in coordination with other agency and advocate stakeholders, conducted the City Parks Forum to explore the urban parks of the future. A collection of briefing papers with key points was developed as part of that forum, defining the benefits of parks to a community. These APA papers entitled "From Recreation to Re-Creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning" identified the following as being enhanced by a comprehensive park system<sup>1</sup>:

- Community Revitalization
- Community Engagement
- Economic Development
- Safe Neighborhoods
- Green Infrastructure
- Childhood Education
- Public Health Benefits
- Arts and Cultural Programs
- Tourism
- Smart Growth
- Climate Change Management



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<sup>1</sup> American Planning Association. (2007). *City Parks Forum Briefing Papers*. Retrieved from <http://people.tamu.edu/~sshaffer/Readings%20Topic%201/1%20-%20APA%20Briefing%20Papers%20on%20Roles%20of%20Urban%20Parks.pdf>

These above-noted issues affect all segments of a community: young and old, low-income and wealthy, residential and commercial, and all racial and ethnic populations. Parks are fundamental to a community's physical, social, and economic prosperity. As evidenced by countless academic and professional papers, the study of parks and their beneficial role in society is gaining in importance. The following are noted to provide a brief reflection of these studies:

- Counties with greater recreation opportunities (existence of parks, number of facilities, acres of recreation lands) also had higher rates of physical activity, lower health care expenditures, and lower obesity rates<sup>2</sup>
- People living in areas without sufficient public outdoor recreation facilities are more likely to be overweight<sup>3</sup>
- Residents in low-income areas whose community included park-like settings were more likely to socialize with neighbors and had a stronger sense of belonging and safety than those without such spaces<sup>4</sup>
- Organized events held in public parks—art festivals, athletic events, food festivals, musical, and theatrical events—often bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities<sup>5</sup>
- A 2001 survey by the National Association of Realtors (NAR) found that 57% of voters would choose a home close to parks and open space and would be willing to pay 10% more for a house located near a park or protected open space<sup>6</sup>
- Knowledge workers prefer places with a diverse range of outdoor recreational activities, from walking trails to rock climbing<sup>7</sup>
- There is a 20% increase in property values for homes that face or abut passive parks and a 10% increase in those two to three blocks from a heavily used, active recreational park<sup>8</sup>
- Increases in property value are found up to 500–600 feet from a park<sup>9</sup>
- Contact with nature results in significant improvement in children with attention disorders and in teens with behavioral disorders<sup>10</sup>
- The benefits of outdoor play enhance children's healthy development and are maximized when developmentally appropriate equipment and materials are provided<sup>11</sup>
- Older people who bicycle, jog, or walk in parks are significantly healthier than those who don't<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Rosenberger, R., Sneh, Y., Phipps, T., & Gurvitch, R. (2005). A Spatial Analysis of Linkages between Health Care Expenditures, Physical Inactivity, Obesity, and Recreation Supply. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 37(2), 216-236.

<sup>3</sup> Catlin, T.K., Simoes, E.J., & Brownson, R.C. (2003). Environmental and Policy Factors Associated with Overweight among Adults in Missouri. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Kuo, F.E., et al. (1998). Transforming Inner City Landscapes: Trees, Sense of Safety, and Preference. *Environment & Behavior*, 30(1).

<sup>5</sup> Sherer, P. M. (2003). *The Benefit of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*. University of Minnesota: Trust for Public Land.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, M. (2002). From Recreation to Re-Creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning. *03 Economic Development*, American Planning Association.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Crompton, J. L. (2001). The Impact of Parks on Property Values: A Review of the Empirical Evidence. *Journal of Leisure Research* 33(1),1-31.

<sup>9</sup> McConnell, V. & Walls, M. (2005). *The Value of Open Space: Evidence from Studies of Nonmarket Benefits*. Washington: Resources for the Future.

<sup>10</sup> Frumkin, H. (2001). Beyond Toxicity: The Greening of Environmental Health. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 20, 234-40.

<sup>11</sup> Sawyers, J. K. (1994). The Preschool Playground. *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 65(6), 32-33.

- Proximity to public parks and tree-lined streets appear to have the greatest impact on the age span of older adults, even when taking into account factors known to affect longevity, including gender, marital status, income, and age<sup>13</sup>

### A. PARK TYPOLOGIES

Parks take on a variety of forms and functions in providing the aforementioned benefits. People with access to recreational facilities are two times more likely to get the recommended level of physical activity than those without access<sup>14</sup>. The following chart defines the different park typologies—their function, size, and service area:

CLASSIFICATION	DESCRIPTION	SIZE	SERVICE
Regional	Includes lands or facilities administered by other agencies	50+ acres	0-25+ miles
Community	Contains multiple uses: Attracts users City-Wide	10 to 50 Acres	0-25 miles
Neighborhood	Both active and passive recreation: Serves the residents who live within walking distance of the park	0.5 to 10 Acres	0- 5 miles
Pocket	Small open space; mainly single use for immediate residents	Up to 0.5 acres	Up to 1 mile
Conservation / Greenway	To preserve natural resources and open space & provide enhanced buffering: use for recreation is a secondary goal	Varies	Citywide
Special Use / Destination	Areas intended for specialized or single-purpose recreation activities: Aquatic, senior center, historic parks	Varies	0-100 miles
Shared Use	Includes parks that share facilities with schools	2-20 Acres	0-25 miles

An ancillary yet equally important facet to parks is the connectivity to, within, and among these features. Trails/paths are the non-roadway tool designed to provide walking, bicycling, and other non-motorized recreational opportunities and connectivity. These modes of connectivity can determine the success and use of a particular park. They provide linkages in a safe, non-vehicular option for travel throughout the community. Paths can be designed for single or multiple types of uses. There are three primary types of paths:

<sup>12</sup> Payne, L., Orsega-Smith, B., Godbey, G., & Roy, M. (1998). Local Parks and the Health of Older Adults: Results of an Exploratory Study. *Parks & Recreation*, 33.

<sup>13</sup> Takano, T., et al. (2002). Urban Residential Environments and Senior Citizens' Longevity in Megacity Areas: the Importance of Walkable Green Spaces. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 56, 913-918.

<sup>14</sup> Huston, S., Evenson, K., Bors, P., et al. (2003). Neighborhood Environment, Access to Places for Activity, and Leisure-time Physical Activity in a Diverse North Carolina Population. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 18.

**Paved Paths:** Paved (or shared use) Paths are intended for multiple uses (bicycling and pedestrian); are ADA accessible wherever possible, and typically 8-12 feet in width. These paths are most efficient at connecting facilities, neighborhoods, and parks. Research shows that shared use paths encourage more of the moderate physical activity recommended by health experts.

**Unpaved Paths:** Unpaved Paths are appropriate for pedestrians or off-road bicycle use. Typically “soft surface” consisting of native soil, wood chips, or crushed rock, these paths are 4-6 feet wide. Unpaved trails are best used in natural areas or to connect neighborhoods.

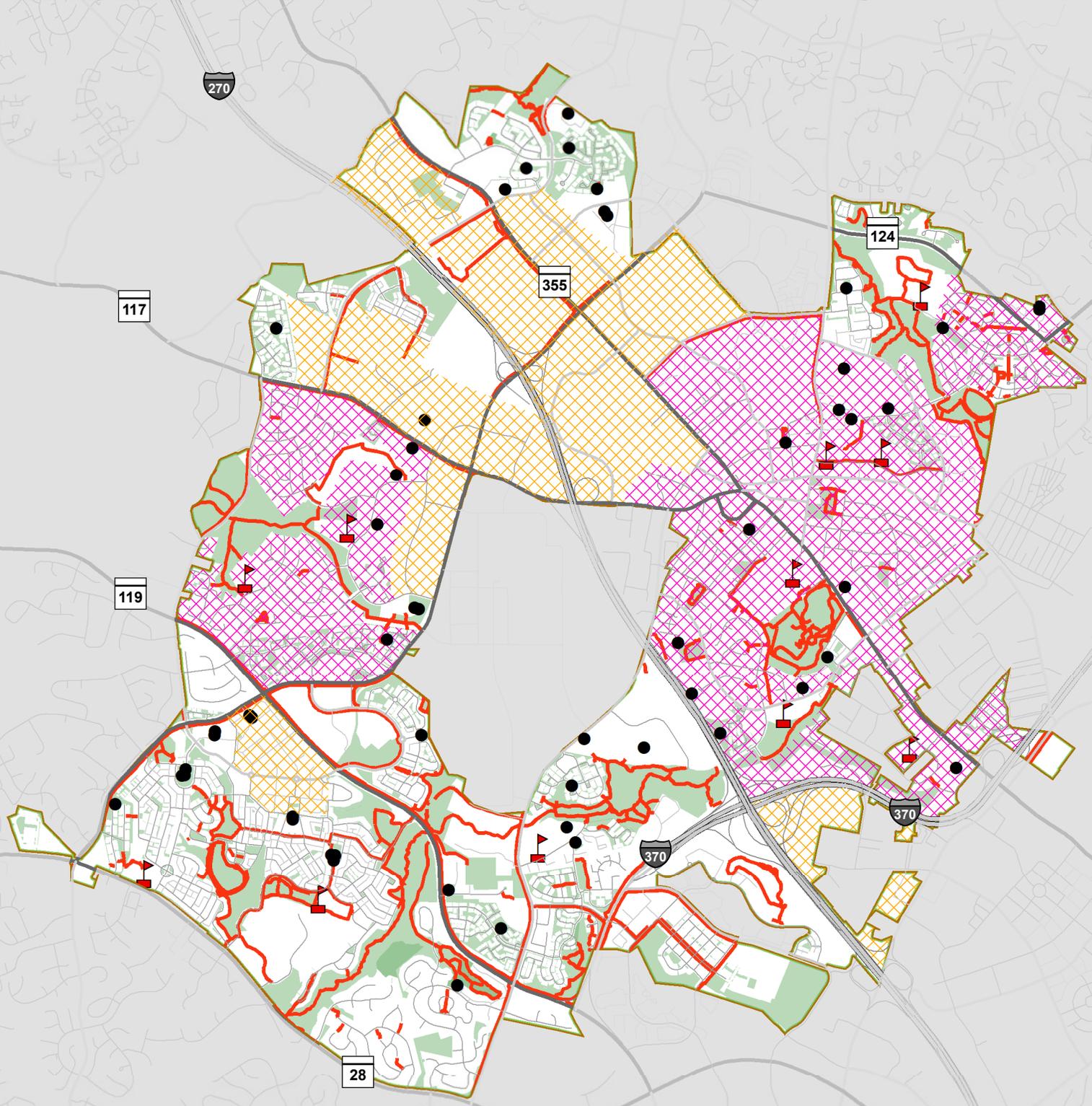
**Legacy Trails:** Legacy Trails are unplanned paths that have been organically developed either through wildlife use and passage or human exploration. These trails are typically found in natural areas and are not programmed. Legacy trails may be between 2-4 feet in width. These trails may be converted to formal Unpaved Paths given the appropriate environmental context.

The following maps identify the geographic extent of the various trail types within the City. The maps illustrate the connection between land ownership, land use type, and period of development and the presence of paths. City-owned facilities, parks, and open spaces have established internal trail/path systems. Many of the gaps found in the trail/path network are located within areas dominated by large-lot commercial properties (orange hatching) such as office parks, shopping centers, and auto dealerships whose connectivity is auto-centric or dependent upon public rights-of-ways providing pedestrian connections via sidewalks with little access to recreation-based paths and trails.

Trail/path network gaps in residential areas reflect when development occurred. While the vast majority of pedestrian connections in the City are largely provided through sidewalks, paths are typically found in more recent residential developments (last 30 years) such as Kentlands, Hidden Creek, Quince Orchard Park, Parklands, and Crown. These neighborhoods exhibit smart growth principles that emphasize bicycle/pedestrian connectivity in their designs. The residential area gaps (pink hatching) align with the City’s oldest (often auto-centric) neighborhoods. As development and redevelopment occurs in both instances, the City must work with private property owners to strengthen the connectivity of the City’s path and trail network in order to bridge gaps locally and regionally. In doing so, paths and trails may also link the City with the regional recreation network and provide safer routes to schools and community facilities.



# Paths & Trails Network Connectivity, 2019

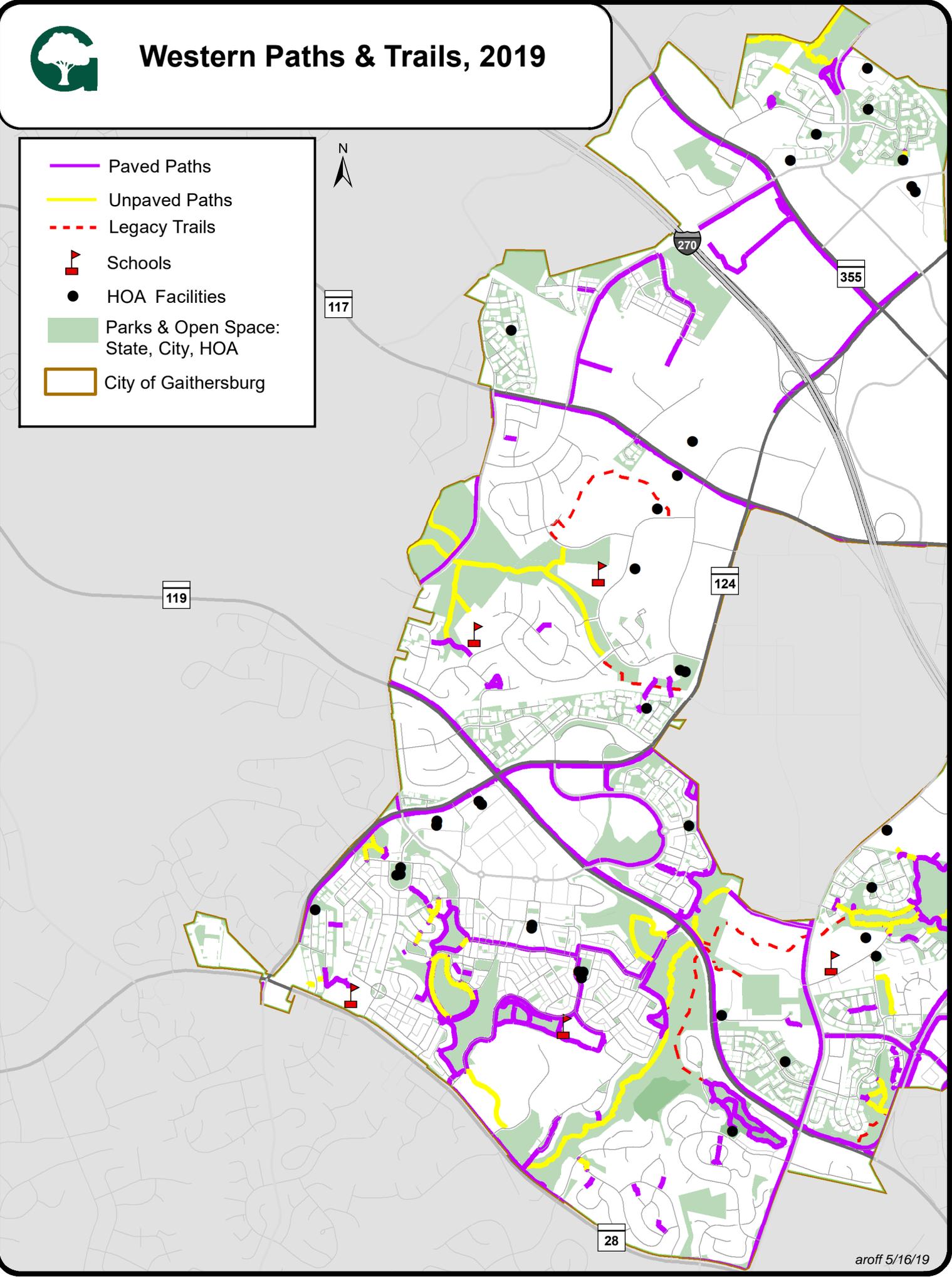


 Commercial Areas with Limited Connectivity	 Schools	 Parks & Open Space: State, City, HOA
 Residential Areas with Limited Connectivity	 HOA Facilities	 City of Gaithersburg
	 Paths and Trails	



# Western Paths & Trails, 2019

-  Paved Paths
-  Unpaved Paths
-  Legacy Trails
-  Schools
-  HOA Facilities
-  Parks & Open Space:  
State, City, HOA
-  City of Gaithersburg

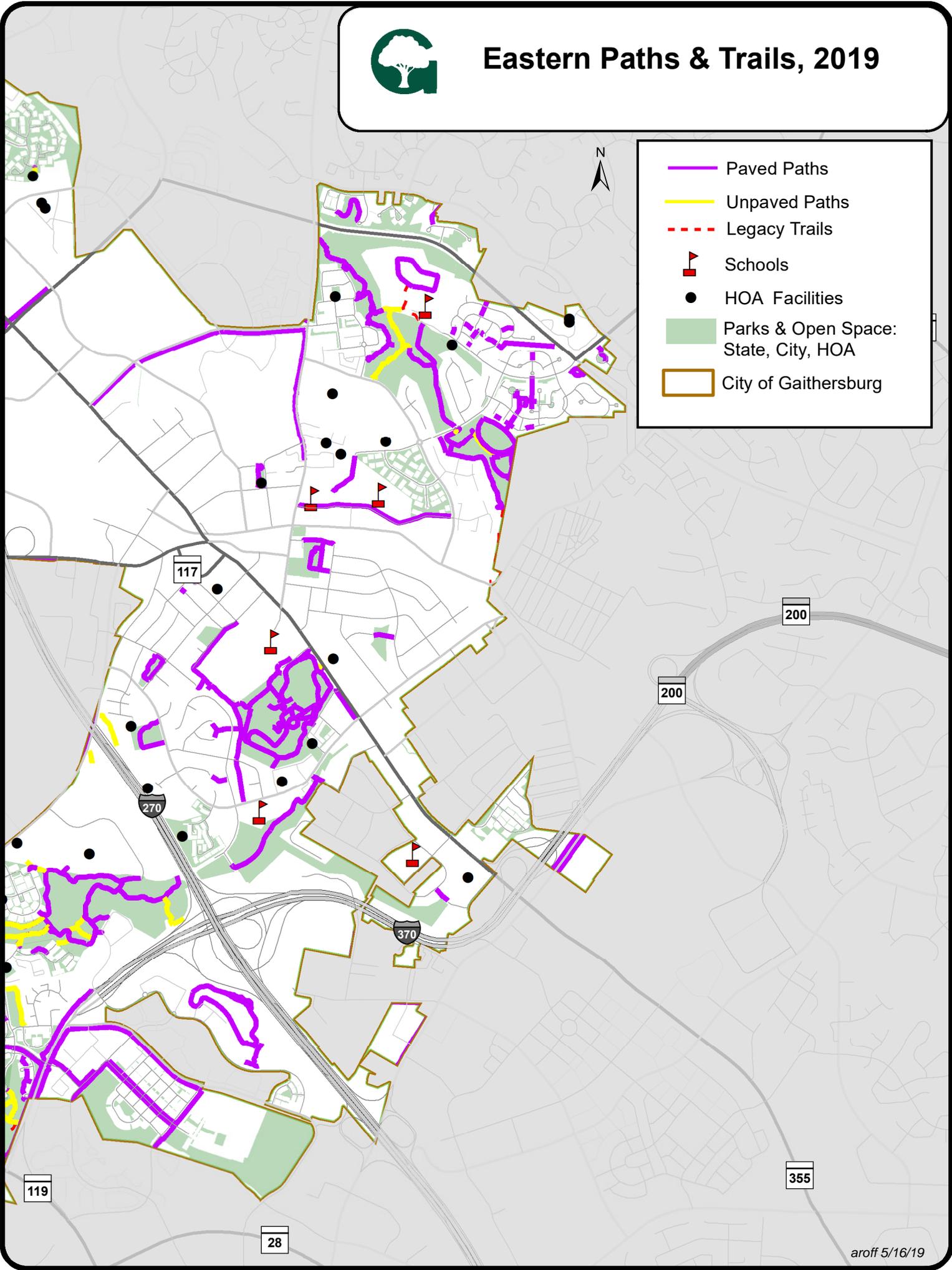




# Eastern Paths & Trails, 2019



-  Paved Paths
-  Unpaved Paths
-  Legacy Trails
-  Schools
-  HOA Facilities
-  Parks & Open Space:  
State, City, HOA
-  City of Gaithersburg



## **B. PARK PROGRAMMING AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) *2016 NRPA Field Report*<sup>15</sup> defined the ideal ratio of one park for every 2,396 residents in jurisdictions with populations between 50,000 to 99,999, or 9.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents based upon reporting agencies. While benchmarks are aspirational goals, in order for a community to truly achieve the benefits discussed, more than just number or acres of parks are needed.

Cities continue to experience growing population diversity in terms of income, age, and race/ethnicity. These changing demographic characteristics create a more vibrant and less homogenous community; however, they also pose a challenge for cities to continue meeting the recreational needs and desires of its residents. Many parks simply do not offer enough programming to address certain demographic populations. Well-planned programming can increase park use and make the use experience more enjoyable.

Studies into park use based upon various demographic characteristics are a growing field in leisure studies. As to income based populations, it has been reported that those with higher incomes were significantly more likely to report lack of time, busy with other activities, family responsibilities, and pursuing recreation elsewhere as the primary constraints to park use. Lower income groups were more likely to report that fear of crime, no one to go with, no way to get to parks, lack of public transportation, parks too far away, and not liking outdoor recreation as their primary constraints to park use<sup>16</sup>. These perceptions reflect personal (lifestyle) rather than external factors influencing park use depending upon economic status.

Age-based reviews were similar to income. Younger adults were more likely to again claim a lack of time, busy with other activities, busy with family responsibilities, pursuing recreation elsewhere, and lack of information as the primary constraints. Older adults, however, were more likely to report no one to go with to parks, poor health, no way to get to parks, and lack of public transportation<sup>17</sup>. People aged 50 years and older were less likely to have visited a park in the last year, consistent with numerous studies that indicate park use decreases with age. Furthermore, older residents were less likely to identify a need for additional parkland than their younger counterparts<sup>18</sup>.

A growing number of studies are focusing on park trends based upon race. Oft cited studies indicate that African Americans generally prefer parks with higher levels of maintenance, more open, formal tree plantings, and higher levels of facility development (programmed recreation) than Whites who are inclined to natural environments and solitary-based activities. Latino groups show a preference for development and site arrangements that promote higher levels of social interaction within and among groups of users and age groups. Latinos and Asians tended to put more emphasis than Whites on the scenic views, open space, trees, water, and other natural attributes<sup>19</sup>. Another difference noted between racial/ethnic group use patterns was social group size and composition: “Whites tended to use

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<sup>15</sup>National Recreation and Park Association. (2016). 2016 NRPA Field Report. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Field-Report.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Field-Report.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Mowen, A.J., et al. (2005). Change and Stability in Park Visitation Constraints Revisited. *Leisure Sciences*, 27, 191–204.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>Payne, L.L., et al. (2002). An Examination of Park Preferences and Behaviors among Urban Residents: The Role of Residential Location, Race, and Age. *Leisure Sciences*, 24, 181–198.

<sup>19</sup> Gobster, P. H. (2002). Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele. *Leisure Sciences*, 24, 143–159.

the park as individuals or couples, with an average group size of 1.6. Minority groups in contrast averaged 3.7 for Blacks, 4.4 for Latinos, and 5.0 for Asians.<sup>20</sup> This group size comparison correlates to the following results observed in the same study<sup>21</sup> conducted in Chicago in Lincoln Park:

- “1. Passive activities—Minority groups were more likely to engage in passive, social park activities. As mentioned, picnicking was a frequent activity of Latinos and Asians; other frequent passive social activities included talking and socializing by Blacks, engaging in organized festivals and parties by Asians, and watching organized sports by Latinos.
2. Active-individual sports—Whites were the most involved in active-individual sports. Walking and bicycling have already been mentioned; other activities in this category with high participation included jogging and walking the dog.
3. Active-group sports—All groups participated in active-group sports, but differed in some specific activities. Sports with high relative participation for different groups included basketball for Blacks; soccer for Latinos; volleyball and golf for Asians; and golf, tennis, and game playing for Whites.
4. Water-oriented activities—Participation in water sports among groups varied by activity. As previously mentioned, Whites and Latinos were more active in swimming; Asians were more active in fishing, and Whites were more active in boating activities than were other groups.”

In short, developing a successful park system entails more than acquiring land. While there is still much to learn and current studies are ongoing, parks must be programmed to address the diverse populations within a community. The more facilities, distinct “places,” and amenities that are incorporated into a park, the more use it can get from the varied groups it is trying to serve and attract. Perceptions of safety, actual accessibility and connectivity/proximity, publically available information regarding facilities, and a clear understanding of the various concerns, needs and wants of a multi-generational, multi-income, and multi-cultural community must be understood and reflected in any comprehensive park program.

## II. PARKS IN THE CITY OF GAITHERSBURG

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### A. HISTORY

The Parks system was established in the mid-1950s with a donation of land once known as Lee Street, presently known as Constitution Gardens. The City government actively supported the initiative to increase active and passive parcels for parkland. The park inventory increased through additional donations of land and City purchases, utilizing funding through the State of Maryland, Program Open Space. Beginning in the 1960s through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Gaithersburg energized the acquisition of parkland. Parks are scattered throughout the City, serving the community with play spaces and quiet areas to reflect and enjoy the solitude of green space. City parks contribute to the protection of natural tree umbrellas, environmental stewardship, and “Green” practices. In 2019, the City had 893 acres of active and passive parkland.

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<sup>20</sup> Gobster, P. H. (2002). Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele. *Leisure Sciences*, 24, 143–159.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

City parks serve as teaching zones for the young and encourage America's youth to get outdoors. Active parklands serve as venues for sports, concerts, special events and numerous health and wellness initiatives. The passive land serves as a protection of the environment and represents the future.

The Gaithersburg Parks, Arts, and Recreation Corporation (G-PARC) is a 501(c)(3), tax exempt, charitable organization whose mission is to heighten the awareness of revitalization, parks, arts, and recreation initiatives within the City of Gaithersburg and to raise funds to support those programs, projects, facilities and initiatives. G-PARC expanded out of the Gaithersburg Arts and Monuments Funding Corporation, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization that was established by the City in 2005 to serve as a fundraising vehicle to support arts efforts in the City of Gaithersburg. In 2018, G-PARC was formed by an ordinance that amended Chapter 6B of City Code. The amendment expanded the scope to include parks and recreation.

## **B. PARKS AND PARK AMENITIES**

The City's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Division maintains a growing collection of web maps and GIS-based and web-based mapping applications. This online gallery is available on the City's website and offers a built-in map viewer for searching and displaying a variety of maps, including a Park Finder that allows users to select a map point, or provide an address to see nearby parks and facilities. Park Finder comes with a very detailed map, making it easy to browse the features and amenities of each park.

GIS has also provided the capability of collecting and analyzing data to provide such things as the two Parks Proximity maps located at the end of this section. The maps on pages 28 and 29 demonstrate that 74% of City residents live within one quarter mile of a City park and 93.6% of City residents live within one half mile.

All City residents live within 0.78 miles of a City park, 96.7% live within one quarter mile distance of publicly accessible park, and 98.5% live within one half mile distance of a publicly accessible park. All City residents live within 0.63 miles of a publicly accessible park. Various objectives throughout the plan support future actions based on the maps. These objectives include Parks Objective 6 and Recreation Objective 5.



### **C. PARTNERS AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS & VENUES**

The efforts of the City are complemented by the contributions of private nonprofit and for-profit entities that significantly enhance recreational opportunities offered in the Gaithersburg community. Parkland is often donated to the City by residential and/or business property developers as part of their site plan process.

Staff in the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture work with a variety of organizations to leverage efforts and resources, and to use expertise otherwise not available, including:

- Community partners for conservation efforts, including the Muddy Branch Alliance and the Izaak Walton League
- Community partners and residents for park enhancements and maintenance
- Community organizations, both private and public
- Homeowner Associations
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Area colleges and universities
- Private health and fitness organizations and businesses
- Sports organizations and clubs, including the Gaithersburg Sports Association and the Gaithersburg Giants, an affiliate of the Cal Ripken Collegiate Baseball Program
- State and County Departments of Natural Resources
- Authorities and experts in stormwater management, environment and other relevant fields
- University of Maryland Extension Master Gardener program
- National Recreation and Park Association
- Maryland Recreation and Parks Association

Staff also meets regularly with colleagues from a variety of regional organizations to participate in workshops and events. Organizations include:

- G-PARC
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Maryland Recreation and Parks Association
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- Maryland State Arts and Humanities Council
- Maryland Historical Trust
- Heritage Montgomery
- Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council
- Montgomery County Historical Society
- Arts Associations and Partner Entities
- Surrounding municipalities and unincorporated communities such as Takoma Park, City of Rockville and the Montgomery Village Foundation

### III. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

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The following goals, objectives and actions have been developed to ensure that the park-related efforts of the City of Gaithersburg meet the changing needs of the community, providing excellent and effective park amenities to Gaithersburg residents.

#### A. GOALS

The following goals guide the park efforts of the City of Gaithersburg:

- Preserve and expand opportunities for “Green Spaces”
- Develop connectivity between communities through the development of trail systems
- Promote health and wellness for all ages and abilities
- Utilize sustainable practices in the preservation and acquisition of park land
- Develop education and learning opportunities

#### B. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives support the aforementioned goals of the City of Gaithersburg:

##### **OBJECTIVE 1: Manage the City’s parks to meet the current and future needs of our community.**

#### ACTIONS

##### **1. Preserve, protect, maintain, improve, and enhance natural resources, parkland, and recreational opportunities.**

- a. Provide a high level of park maintenance and operations for maximum visitor enjoyment and safety
  - Reduce maintenance backlog
  - Develop asset priority index that emphasizes adequate operational and maintenance needs
  - Evaluate and remove, repair, or replace perimeter fencing
  - Evaluate existing play equipment for on-going maintenance and replacement
  - Conduct routine playground inspections through a Certified Playground Safety Inspector
- b. Provide an appropriate balance between stewardship and recreation
- c. Improve maintenance of lawn areas to lessen the presence of weeds without the use of harmful chemicals
- d. Consider other permeable, environmentally friendly, low maintenance, and safe surfacing and sub-surfacing materials to facilitate multipurpose use

##### **2. Anticipate the needs of the changing community and structure the park system accordingly.**

- a. Provide and preserve parks, open green spaces, and facilities within close proximity (i.e., within 0.5 miles) to residents to encourage improved quality of life
- b. Protect and improve the existing system of parks/open spaces throughout the City through capital rehabilitation, maintenance, programming, and other operations to meet existing and new challenges placed on them as the City changes and grows
- c. Strengthen community image and sense of place as verified by feedback from public opinion polls and other survey methods

**OBJECTIVE 2: Continue the development of a trail system that links homes, schools, parks and commercial areas.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Increase trails and trail/park connectivity to improve connections to City trails, Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) park trails, and state trails outside the City boundaries.**
- 2. Enhance the trail user experience through safety and comfort features, including:**
  - a. Informational kiosks at trail heads
  - b. Uniform directional signage
  - c. Interpretive signage
  - d. Appropriately placed restrooms
- 3. Create downloadable maps with well-marked distances.**
- 4. Create an Art in Public Places program that provides unique and interesting artist-made trail markers.**

**CONNECTION TO MALCOLM KING PARK**

“The idea that the Muddy Branch Alliance has discussed is that WSSC property off Muddy Branch Road eventually be accessed by the City to provide a natural surface trail to connect to Malcolm King Park trails. This would hopefully enable someone to park in that area and access the trail or someone who lives there to do so, and go the entire 11 miles to the C&O Canal.”

—Paul Hlavinka, Muddy Branch Alliance

**OBJECTIVE 3: Promote park use as a means of developing healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the environment.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Develop promotions that educate and involve residents in City Parks based on their health value, with the following premises:**
  - a. Exposure to nature can improve psychological and social health
  - b. Access to parks increases the frequency of exercise and general physical activity
  - c. Staying active can help reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and other health problems
    - Parks provide opportunities for all people to be socially engaged, cognitively stimulated, and offer a place to relax and revitalize
  - d. Parks provide a refuge of safety for at-risk youth, which, in turn, can help reduce juvenile delinquency
  - e. Parks provide opportunities for community involvement, volunteer work, and therapeutic recreation.
- 2. Create events and programs that bring people to the City Parks and engage them in the experience.**
- 3. Encourage residents of all ages to participate in outdoor activities, wellness initiatives, and nature programs.**

- a. Continue free outdoor fitness classes and expand the variety and scope of the program to include all sectors of the City
- b. Create classes that connect participants with the natural world in practical and applied methods such as nature photography, birdwatching, organic horticulture, preservation of natural habitat, green approaches to daily problems such as recycling and repurposing, solar power, rain, and wind capturing
- c. Leverage a broad interest in pets to bring people outdoors for programs such as dog parks, walks, agility courses, and obedience training

**OBJECTIVE 4: Improve access to parks and park amenities.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Provide barrier-free access to pavilions, picnic and seating areas, parking spaces, playgrounds, and other amenities.**
- 2. Provide barrier-free play apparatus and surfacing that meets all applicable safety standards.**
- 3. Systematically upgrade all parks to provide barrier-free access when considering new or replacement facilities.**
- 4. Advocate and promote transportation services to City parks and improve walking and bicycling access so that all residents have adequate access.**

**OBJECTIVE 5: Promote community awareness and appreciation of our City's parks/natural and historical resources and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Develop a comprehensive public relations plan for City parks and park amenities.**
  - a. Develop programs that target specific interest groups
  - b. Facilitate feature articles in media outlets
  - c. Work with the City's Public Information Office to develop programs about the City's recreational offerings
  - d. Partner with local, state, and national organizations and use these resources to develop awareness campaigns
  - e. Use the City website to update and promote City recreational opportunities
  - f. Offer online virtual tours of City parks to inform and encourage people to explore and use park trails and other park amenities
- 2. Develop and maintain participation through effective and diverse marketing.**
  - a. Identify best practices for reaching target markets
  - b. Develop dynamic and innovative marketing strategies to reach all parts of our diverse community
  - c. Be a trend watcher and capitalize on trends that are efficient and effective
  - d. Expand the use of technology to reach audiences
- 3. Encourage the participation of other organizations and businesses to effectively promote the City's parks as a valued asset.**
  - a. Identify potential business and corporate partners that can help promote City parks
  - b. Work with other parks and recreation-based organizations to maximize resources and marketing opportunities

**OBJECTIVE 6: Acquire appropriate land to expand existing parks and park amenities.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Strategically create or take advantage of opportunities to advance the open space/park system:**
  - a. Identify land areas adjacent to existing parks that provide logical expansion opportunities
  - b. Close gaps to increase interconnectivity of parks and park trails
  - c. Protect natural and cultural landscape resources
  - d. Protect scenic areas and create buffer zones
  - e. Respond to demand
  - f. Time land acquisition so as to take advantage of lowest possible purchase price
  - g. Respond to trends and changing community interests
- 2. Provide adequate and appropriate open spaces that are equitably distributed throughout the City to meet the varying needs of all residents.**
- 3. Identify existing sites that are underutilized and could be converted to recreation/park use.**
- 4. Identify and maintain funding sources for land acquisition.**

**OBJECTIVE 7: Develop a nature center and provide wildlife habitat and interpretive use areas.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Identify and secure a site for a possible nature center.**
- 2. Seek funding for the designated nature center.**
- 3. Design a state-of-the-art, sustainable facility that incorporates interactive indoor and outdoor features.**
  - a. Build utilizing industry best practices and recommendations for green buildings
  - b. Develop artful, nature-themed exhibits that display the flora and fauna of our area
  - c. Plan for an elevated observation deck
  - d. Design nature trails for hiking and outdoor exploration, with paved portions for wheelchair and stroller accessibility
  - e. Create an outdoor classroom
- 4. Implement programs that attract visitors of all ages.**
  - a. Design access to facilitate school field trips, birthday parties, and summer camps for children
  - b. Provide adult trainings and workshops for educators and interested adults
- 5. Consider including unique elements such as:**
  - a. An indoor rainforest complete with hanging bridges for participant use. Possibly include an “adventure” element with zip lines and obstacles, which could also be for outdoor or indoor use
  - b. Vaulted ceilings for the use of projection mapping and/or a planetarium with the projections shown directly onto the ceiling, without the use of a screen to see the night sky

- c. Virtual reality components that include sensory elements to explore the natural environment in a way you cannot do in reality
  - d. An amphitheater for special events
  - e. An indoor or outdoor camping experience that will allow visitors to spend a night experiencing camping in a controlled environment
  - f. Sensory rooms for people with limited communication skills to experience nature in a therapeutic way
- 6. Form community partnerships with local groups and organizations to improve visibility for both the center and partners.**

**OBJECTIVE 8: Engage in sustainable practices and create opportunities and incentives for individuals, organizations and businesses to follow suit.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Serve as a leader in using and promoting sustainable practices in every aspect of providing parks and program services.**
- 2. Offer programs to inspire and teach sustainable practices.**
- 3. Enhance the livability and quality of life in Gaithersburg through environmental improvements in the park system.**
- 4. Seek resources to offer or encourage composting services, use of rain barrels, tree plantings, the development of stormwater management areas, rain gardens, and other options.**
- 5. Encourage inclusion of usable open or recreational spaces for the public in private development projects.**
- 6. Pursue increased open or recreational spaces for the public along the Frederick Avenue Corridor**
- 7. Design parks that respond to the changing demographics of the City.**

**OBJECTIVE 9: Provide excellent stewardship of natural and historical resources.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Protect City-owned urban wilds and other natural areas from development, encroachment, and uses that degrade natural character.**
  - a. Enhance the public knowledge and appreciation for the natural beauty of open space and the environmental and historical significance of one's surroundings
  - b. Manage and maintain city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas to facilitate public access and promote ecological values
  - c. Promote the use of city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas for passive recreation, environmental education, and other uses in keeping with their natural character
  - d. Develop administrative, fiscal, and programmatic resources to ensure ongoing, long-term maintenance and management of city-owned urban wilds and other natural areas
  - e. Educate visitors regarding the appropriate use of natural areas as recreational areas

- f. Partner with M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and the State of Maryland to protect and interpret natural resources in the City and on adjoining/surrounding lands
2. **Conduct a City-wide tree inventory and design a planting and maintenance program to replenish and add to it.**
    - a. Coordinate with other agencies that have impact on tree care and longevity
    - b. Plant additional trees to provide shade, improve overall aesthetics, and replace dead or dying trees
  3. **Evaluate/use grass/permeable pavers in parking areas.**
  4. **Identify key areas of environmental/ecological importance such as wetlands, flood plains, watercourses, steep slopes, and areas of natural scenic beauty and protect such areas, and incorporating them into the parks and recreation system as open space.**
    - a. Create open space as a balance to man-made development; preserve and protect areas of important environmental consideration, and to incorporate such areas into the park and recreation system
  5. **Reclaim areas of environmental/ecological deterioration using available resources from the public, quasi-public, and private sectors.**
  6. **Increase environmental awareness and conservation ethics among youth. Balance nature play and developed areas in parks to improve youth exposure to the outdoors.**
  7. **Protect and preserve critical wildlife habitat.**

**OBJECTIVE 10: Improve safety and sense of security for park users.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Provide a high level of park maintenance, management and operations for maximum visitor enjoyment and safety.**
  - a. Evaluate and remove, repair or replace perimeter fencing
  - b. Evaluate existing play equipment for on-going maintenance and replacement
  - c. Install additional trash and recycling receptacles, including screened enclosures for trash dumpsters
  - d. Install “no parking” signage and enforce rules to keep non-park users from misusing parking lots
2. **Add soft-fall surfacing around play equipment.**
3. **Replace select equipment and facilities to maintain functionality.**
4. **Consider installation of additional lighting at high-use park areas and along pathways.**
5. **Consider installation of temporary or permanent cameras as necessary.**

**OBJECTIVE 11: Seek funding sources and offsets to acquire, maintain, and enhance City parks.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Actively promote a comprehensive sponsorship program.**
  - a. Build sustainable sponsor commitment
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward donor support
  - c. Employ a Sponsorship Coordinator to cultivate relationships and seek monetary and in-kind donations
  
- 2. Work with the Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corporation, Inc. (G-PARC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, to develop, promote, and/or financially support recreation programs, projects, initiatives, and facilities.**
  - a. Organize “Friends of” groups in support of specific parks and park programs
  - b. Create events and programs that encourage and acknowledge park support
  - c. Partner with the G-PARC Alliance for Parks to focus on the enhancement of City parks and common green spaces and to support park development, preservation, and acquisition
  
- 3. Seek out grants, bond bills, other federal, state, and county grants, and other funding sources to assist the City’s efforts to provide parks and park amenities.**
  - a. Apply for the Maryland State “Community Parks & Playgrounds” grant program; utilize the annual Maryland State grant disbursement from “Program Open Space”
  
- 4. Conduct an active and organized volunteer program that builds and celebrates community support and resources.**
  - a. Develop programs that attract the volunteer efforts of individuals, groups, scouts, faith-based and educational organizations, and others
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward volunteers
  
- 5. Work to offset the cost of providing affordable programs to City residents through the development of revenue-share programming, partnerships, sponsorships and other similar opportunities.**

**OBJECTIVE 12: Promote use of park trails.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Continue the development of an interconnected trail system that links homes, schools, parks, and commercial areas.**
  - a. Conduct thorough studies prior to trail development/construction including potential surfaces, user acceptance and satisfaction, accessibility, costs of construction and maintenance, life expectancy, availability of material, and environmental impact
  - b. Work with organizations, associations, individuals, and groups to improve trail conditions and enhance the trail connectivity throughout the City
  - c. Create an internal review process to consider community suggestions for trail connectivity, evaluating the impact on conservation areas, the benefits and potential detriments, and considering and defining the notification process based on the proximity of a trail project to residences
  - d. Provide guidance for trail projects including the scope/design of the project, tree inventory, caliper of impacted trees, number of new/replacement trees to be

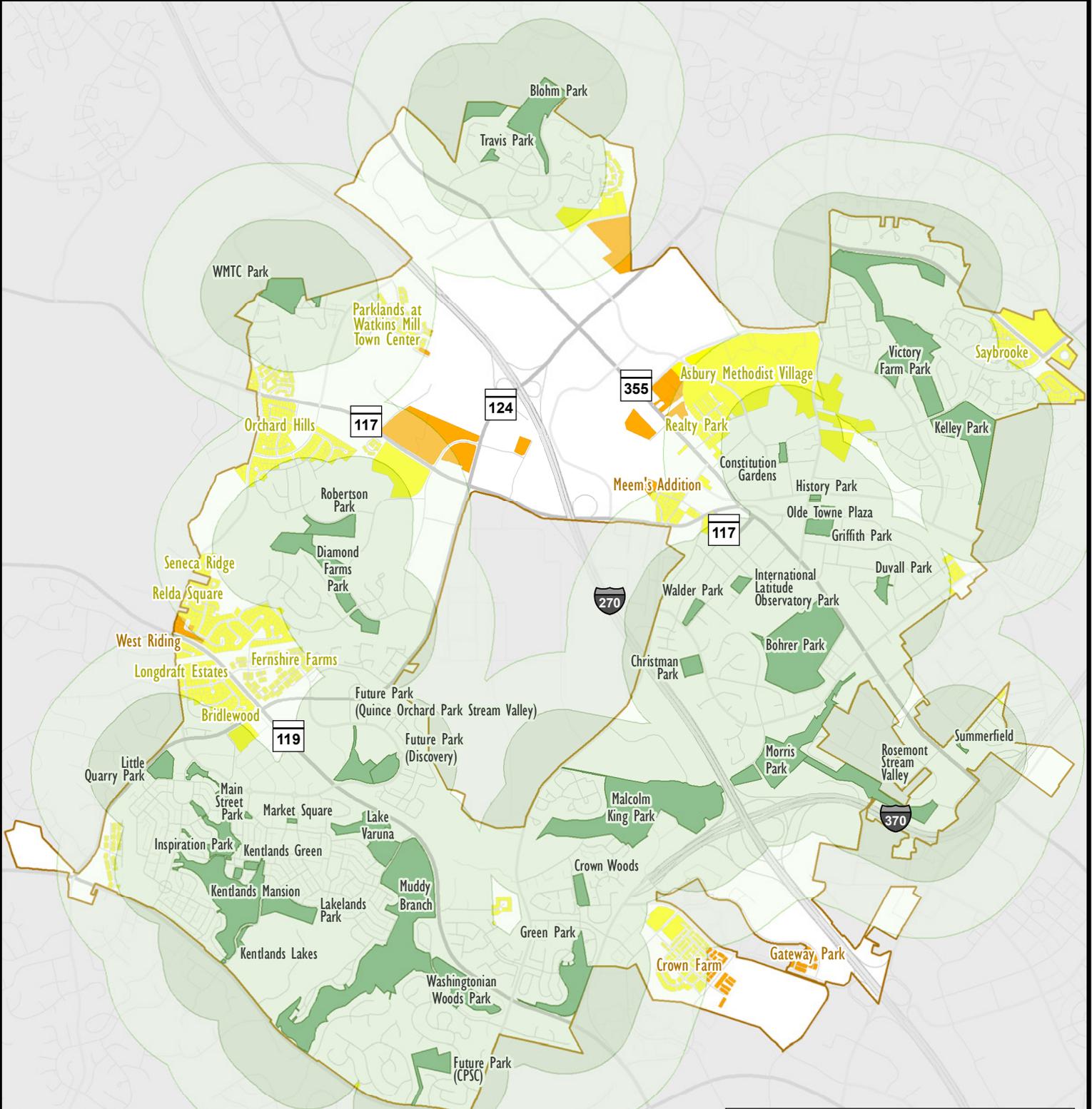
- planted, backfill of abandoned trails, invasive species removal, signage criteria, and create a tool kit to assist volunteer organizations
- e. Explore and secure appropriate funding sources such as nonprofit organizations, the City's operating budget, City contingency funds, and federal resources such as Recreational Trails Program, state grants /bonds, and capital campaigns and/or fundraising events like "Trail for Sale"
  - f. Use GIS database to map all trails and work with stakeholders to create an accurate and complete inventory
  - g. Use sustainable design in developing park trails that include ecologically sound approaches, foster a sense of individual responsibility for stewardship, and retain structure over many years of use and natural forces
  - h. Work with surrounding jurisdictions and utilities to resolve easements
  - i. Work with surrounding jurisdictions to improve overall park trail, bikeway, and sidewalk connectivity
  - j. Develop and implement a trail monitoring system for maintenance and weather considerations, including closing trails as needed

**2. Promote trail use as a means of developing healthy lifestyles through exercise and enjoyment of the environment.**

- a. Create programs that utilize the large interconnected trail system such as City marathons, fun walks, or bike-a-thons
- b. Hold events to raise awareness and facilitate enjoyment of the individual trail systems such as family hikes, organized runs, and dog walks
- c. Work with volunteers to hold park and trail clean-up events in conjunction with nationally recognized programs such as Green Week, Arbor Day and Earth Day. Use these events to emphasize stewardship and conservation of parks



# Proximity to City Parks & Open Spaces, 2018



- City parks & open space
- Resident parcels beyond 1/4 mile buffer
- Resident parcels beyond 1/2 mile buffer
- Quarter-mile buffer of parks
- Half-mile buffer of parks
- City of Gaithersburg

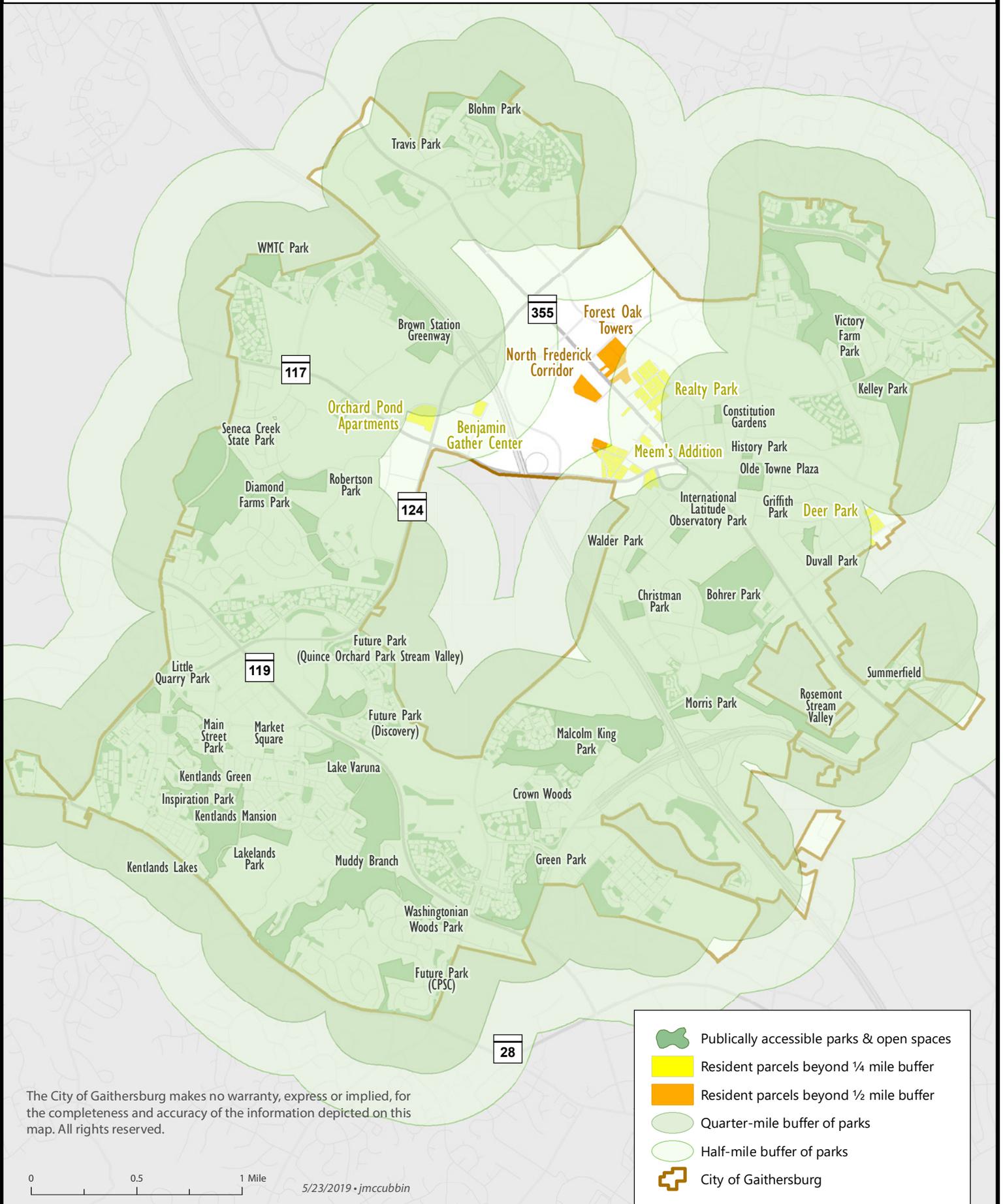
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5/23/2019 · jmcubbin



# Proximity to Publically Accessible Parks & Open Spaces, 2018



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0 0.5 1 Mile

5/23/2019 • jmccubbin

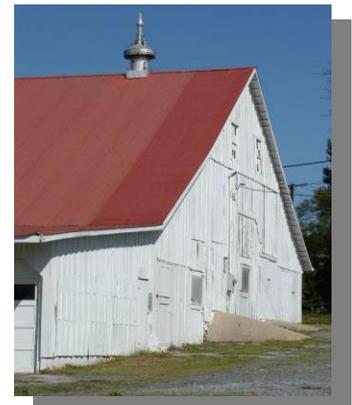


# Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm

Type of Park: Regional  
 Address: 506 South Frederick Avenue  
 Size of Park: 57.7 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1.3 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 3 Pavilion Shelters
- 1 Playground
- 2 Ponds
- Grills and Picnic Tables
- Restrooms
- Parking
- Public Art
- 3 sets of Volleyball Net Poles



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This 57-acre park was acquired by the City in 1982, but Summit Hall Farm originated circa 1810. The park currently includes the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture administrative offices and seasonal facilities that include the Water Park, Miniature Golf, Skate Park and Picnic Pavilions. Two ponds, walking paths and a Manor House are located on the site. This site is used for regional and community events. The building that previously housed the Department's headquarters is currently being used by a nonprofit hospice organization. Bohrер Park at Summit Hall Farm is also located on the historic Maryland Civil War Trails route. For additional information about the historic importance of this property, please see page 19 of the City of Gaithersburg 2018 Historic Preservation Master Plan Element.

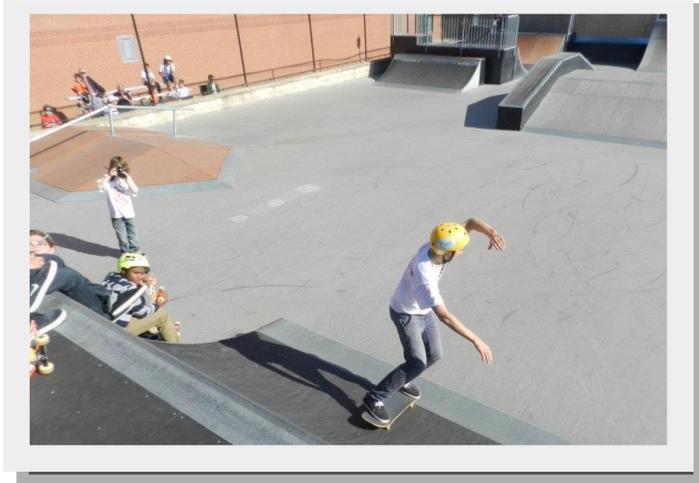
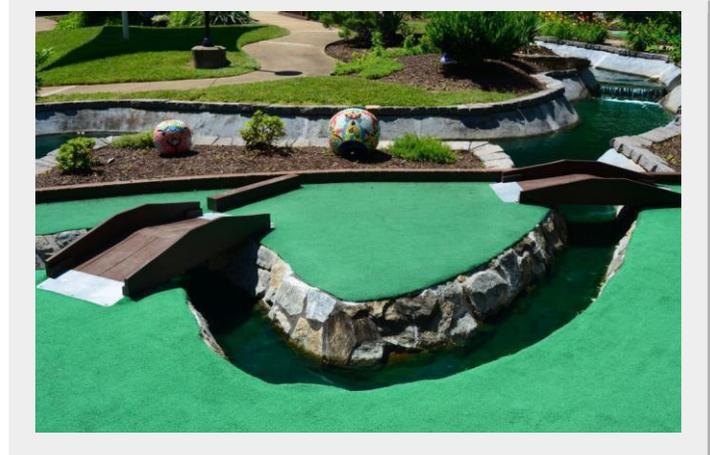
Additional improvements are required throughout the park. The pavilions and the comfort station are in need of upgrades. The barn needs to be stabilized. The function of the barn and Manor House needs to be determined. The southwest corner of the path needs to be paved. A lighting assessment for security purposes should be completed. Playground and ponds require routine maintenance and replacement. See Appendix for details.



### Bohrer Park Features

Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm has amenities for all ages. The park contains several open fields, a playground area, horseshoe pits, volleyball net poles, and two ponds. Within the park are three distinct picnic areas. There are two large picnic pavilions that have 15 tables and three grills each. Each pavilion accommodates approximately 225 people. The third area is hillside and includes a pavilion, 13 picnic tables, and two grills. The hillside picnic area can accommodate approximately 125 people. Bohrер Park is an ideal location for a large summer gathering. Use of Bohrер Park picnic areas requires a reservation and has a use charge.

A paved path, great for walking, jogging, in-line skating, and bicycling, circles the park. Also located within Bohrер Park is the Miniature Golf Course, the Activity Center, Skate Park and the Water Park. Bohrер Park contains the oldest standing building in the City of Gaithersburg, the log Smokehouse.



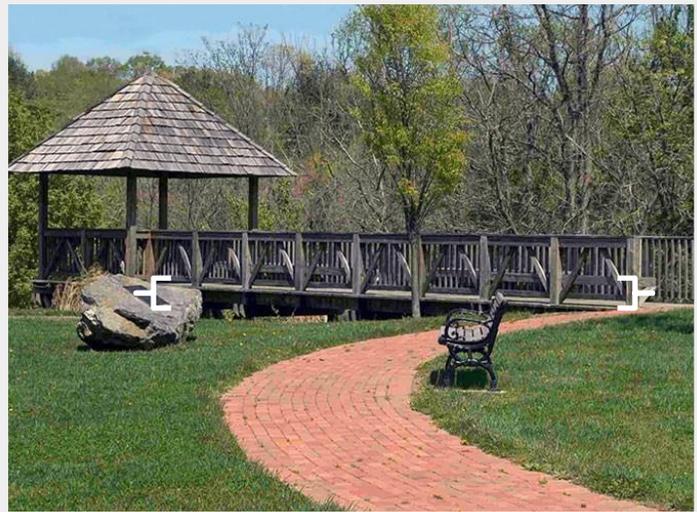
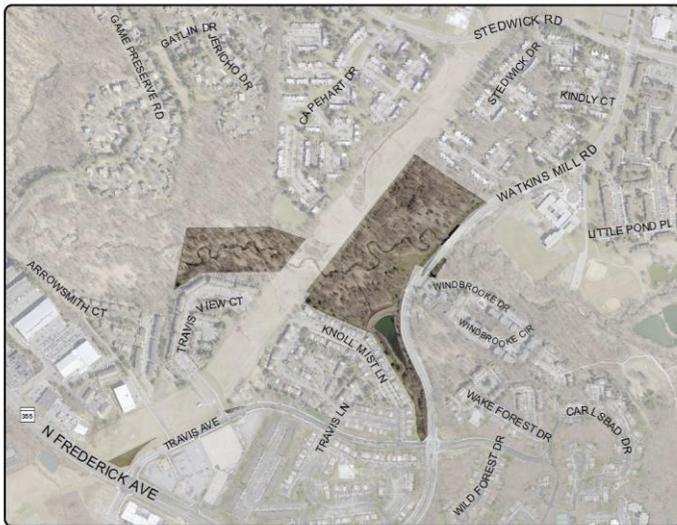


# Blohm Park

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
 Address: 18900 Watkins Mill Road  
 Size of Park: 25 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

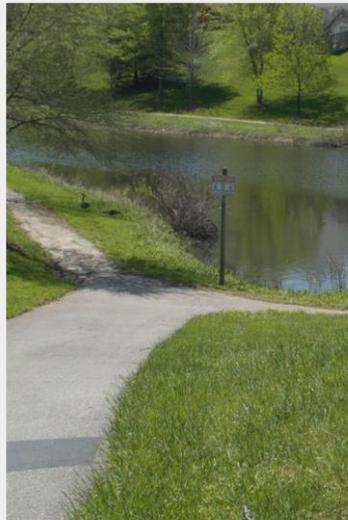
- .5 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 1 Pond
- 1 Gazebo



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This passive area is located in the vicinity of the Watkins Mill Road Bridge. The park includes numerous natural legacy trails, .5 miles of hard path trails and bridges that provide connectivity. A pavilion provides a panoramic view of the park.

Improvements are needed for this park. The gazebo is aging and weathered. Tree roots are coming up through the paths. The pond and upstream require dredging. See Appendix for details regarding pond maintenance.



### [ Stormwater Management Insights ]

In order to stabilize stream banks, **proposed improvements** include reducing shear stress on the banks, minimizing stream incision, and improving aquatic habitat. This can be achieved by realigning the channel in at least four locations to emulate prior channel conditions.





# Brown Station\*

Type of Park: Conservation/ Greenway  
Size of Park: 26.5 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- .5 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 1 Pond



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This natural, non-programmed area includes a large developed forest stand and stream system and a parcel adjacent to the unimproved section of Metropolitan Grove Road north of the railroad.

\*The State of Maryland has currently identified this site for acquisition to facilitate the Corridor Cities Transitway, Watkins Mill Interchange, and a potential access ramp to possible express toll lanes along I-270. No Access Deed Restriction. The City's 2009 Land Use Element's recommendation for this area is to retain the open space designation for the stream valley buffer along I-270, and designate the remaining property as either commercial-office-residential or commercial/industrial-research-office. Pond requires routine maintenance. See Appendix for details.

# Christman Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood  
Address: 304 West Deer Park Road  
Size of Park: 4.3 acres



### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Pond
- Paths / Trails
- Picnic Tables



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This passive 4 acre park was deeded to the City in 1967 and was recently renovated. The former farm pond was reconstructed in 1972-73 and includes a pond surrounded by green space. A path runs around the perimeter of the park. Pond requires routine maintenance. See Appendix for details.



# Constitution Gardens Park

Type of Park: Pocket  
Address: 112 Brookes Avenue  
Size of Park: .5 Acres

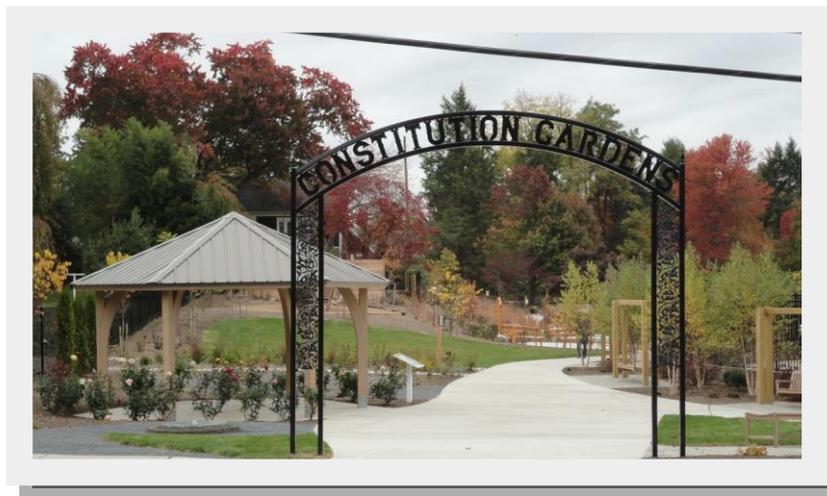


## Overview

Constitution Gardens celebrates the past, present, and future of Gaithersburg with unique interactive play spaces that have been inspired by the cultural, economic, and natural history of the area.

The park entrance welcomes visitors with a bubbling millstone fountain, gazebo, peony garden, an herb garden spiral walk, and swinging wooden benches. The Children's Gate public art piece was installed in 2019.

Native plants are showcased throughout the entire park, from dedicated pollinator gardens to hilltop oaks that honor the memory of Gaithersburg's lost Forest Oak tree, the inspiration for the City's logo.



Winner of the 2015 Grand Award in the Commercial Landscape (Design/Build) category from the Landscape Contractors Association of Maryland, DC and Virginia.



#### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Gazebo
- 3 Picnic Tables
- 5 Swing Benches
- 4 Play Areas with Elements for Ages 2-12 Including:

**The Lost Library**, a story circle featuring log benches, an over-sized storyteller's chair, and a lending library box, harkens back to when the Gaithersburg Library was located on this site into the early 1980s.

**Bird's Nest Hill** is home to the "Bird's Nest," a jumble of logs posts for climbing and pretending, and the garden's insect hotel.

**Sliding Hill** features a stump scramble, embankment slides and stepping stones.

**Log Town** includes natural climbing elements, a sand play area, log playhouses and tables, stump stools, log flumes, and a sensory garden. It's also home to Bella, Penelope and Wooley, a hand carved wooden cow, pig and sheep that help remind us of Gaithersburg's agricultural past. This area of the park is fenced-in and has stroller parking.

**The Great Seneca Creek** area features picnic tables, a giant, sculptural fallen tree for climbing, and a dry creek with a hand pump. The creek bed is lined with leaves stamped into the concrete and decorative pebbles that sparkle as the water runs over them.

#### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This 0.5 acre park was the site of the former Gaithersburg Library. The park was repurposed in 2015 to incorporate a "Natural Play Space" including play areas suitable for ages 2 – 5 and 5 – 12. There is a hardscaped path throughout the park. The path will require future maintenance and the natural elements require frequent maintenance and replacement. In order to maintain the integrity of the natural elements throughout the park, a replacement budget is needed.



# Former Consumer Products Safety Commission Site

Type of Park: Community– Under Design

Address: 10901 Darnestown Road

Size of Park: 9.54 Acres



### Existing Facilities:

The City acquired a 9.54 acre park, formerly known as the Consumer Product Safety Commission, through the Federal Lands to Parks Program of the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service. An Ad Hoc Committee, appointed by the Mayor and City Council, met for six months to recommend redevelopment for the grounds. The City will develop the land while preserving and enhancing the environment for current residents of the site and provide additional habitat through stormwater management. The majority of the site will remain passive parkland. This project will be developed in phases. Phase One amenities may include a nature play space, tot-lot, amphitheater, community garden, covered picnic pavilions, outdoor fitness equipment, open space and a paved walking trail. Phase Two may include indoor facilities such as a multi-purpose gym, arts and crafts rooms, dance studio, multi-purpose activity rooms, a sensory room for therapeutic recreation, and storage.

Additional infrastructure must be completed in order for this project to be successful, including relocating the transformer, designing and building a new road for access to the park and indoor facilities, as well as designing and building stormwater management in order to comply with federal and state regulations.

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities:

This site is located on 9.5 acres of land that was recently deeded to the City from the National Parks Service. The property is in the design stage for repurposing into a park. Parking limitations and staffing needs will impact programming.

# Crown

Type of Park: Special Use/ Destination

Address: 403 Decoverly Drive

Size of Park: 5 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- Corn Crib - Mid to Late 19th Century
- 2 Silos – 1930s-1960s
- Metal Grain Bin – 1970s
- Machine Shop – 1980s

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park, created under the X-182 Annexation Agreement, is divided into two sections separated by Decoverly Drive. One section, located behind the Crown Homeowners Association amenity facility, is required to be used as a Category I forest conservation easement. The other section is currently designated as “Historic” and contains four structures. The historic designated portion has not yet been programmed, nor are there plans for the structures. The historic “environmental setting” should be reviewed. Once programming is decided, this park’s typology may be changed to “Neighborhood.” For more information on the property, please see page 36 of the City of Gaithersburg 2018 Historic Preservation Master Plan Element.



## Crown School Site \*

Type of Park: Community  
 Address: Fields Road and Omega Drive  
 Size of Park: 32 Acres

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This area, dedicated to the City, is proposed to be a future high school site under terms defined by the X-182 Annexation Agreement (Crown Farm).

\* Should Montgomery County Public Schools determine not to proceed in their construction program by 2025, the site is to be used as a City Park. The available acreage not encumbered by environmentally sensitive areas would afford multiple opportunities for various types of programming within one park.



## Crown Woods

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
 Address: 30 Story Drive  
 Size of Park: 4.2 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- Paths / Trails



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This 4.2 acre park is passive in nature and was dedicated to the City in 2003. It is an appropriate location for legacy trails and requires tree management.



# Diamond Farms Park

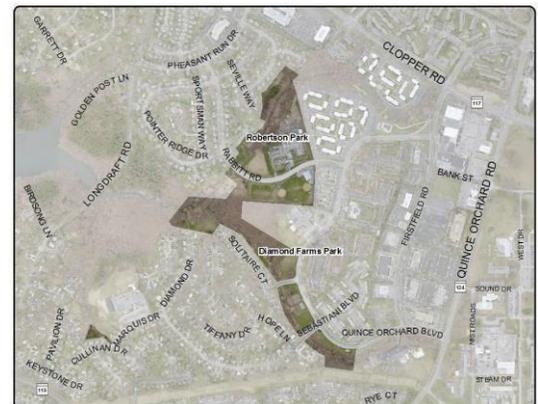
Type of Park: Community  
 Address: 857 Quince Orchard Boulevard  
 Size of Park: 23.4 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1.5 Basketball Courts
- .3 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 1 Playground
- 3 Tennis Courts
- 1 Handball and Tennis Practice Wall
- 1 Skate Spot

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The park was deeded to the City in 1974 as a part of a development agreement. Covenants on the property restrict the use to open recreation and playgrounds. The park includes active and passive components. Active areas include tennis and basketball courts, and a skate spot. Two of the park's tennis courts are already lighted; a third needs lighting. All of the incandescent lights need to be replaced with LEDs. The courts require replacement and regular maintenance. It would be ideal to create a path connecting this park to Robertson Park. Playgrounds require replacement every 15 years. See Appendix for details.



### Stormwater Management Insights

In order to stabilize severe stream bank erosion, channel incision, and large in-stream sediment deposits, **proposed improvements** include stream restoration techniques such as grade control structures to stabilize stream flow and reduce future in-stream degradation.



# Discovery Park

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway

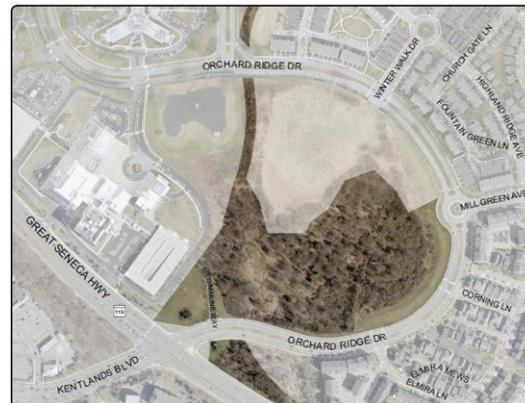
Address: 601 Orchard Ridge Drive

Size of Park: 6.5 Acres

## Existing Facilities:

This parcel of land was deeded to the City of Gaithersburg by MedImmune for parkland development in 2013. It is located at 601 Orchard Ridge Drive and is adjacent to the MedImmune campus and Quince Orchard Park community.

The Mayor and City Council approved the name for this site, Discovery Park, at their July 16, 2018 meeting.



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park is currently non-programmed and includes numerous environmentally sensitive areas including forest conservation easements, wetlands, and a stream with associated floodplain. The City Council voted to approve the development of a City park with three walking trails, two playgrounds, and a butterfly garden on October 1, 2018.

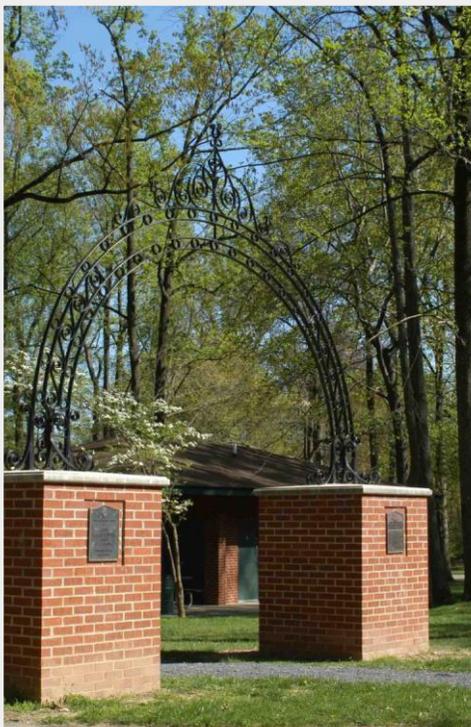
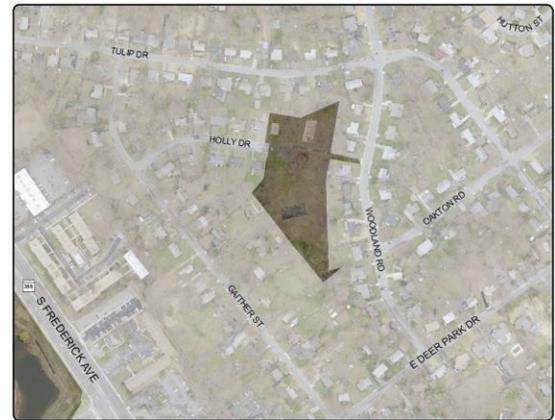


## Duvall Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood  
Address: 14 Holly Drive  
Size of Park: 3.3 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Basketball Court
- 1 Pavilion
- 1 Playground
- 1 Set of Volleyball Net Poles
- Restrooms



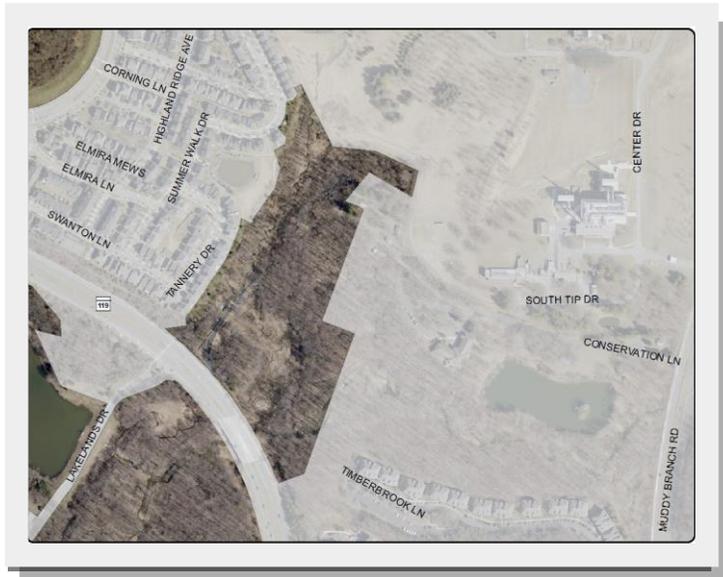
### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This 3.0 acre park was deeded to the City in 1963. The park is located in the community adjacent to Holly Drive and Gaither Street and was refurbished in 2003. The restroom and pavilion need to be replaced. Playgrounds require replacement every 15 years. See Appendix for details.



# Eagle's Head

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
 Address: 10881 Great Seneca Highway  
 Size of Park: 20.1 Acres



**Assessment of Existing Park Facilities**

This park connects Quince Orchard Park (QOP) and has bicycle egress. Eagle's Head is a passive park with trails connecting QOP with Great Seneca Highway. It is also part of the NIST bike path loop connecting Muddy Brank Road to Great Seneca Highway.

# GE Tech Park

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
 Address: Edison Park Drive  
 Size of Park: 7.49 Acres



**Assessment of Existing Park Facilities**

This is a passive park that serves as a forest conservation area.



# Green Park

Type of Park: Special Use / Destination  
 Address: 151 Bickerstaff Way  
 Size of Park: 17.3 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- .5 Basketball Courts
- 2 Playgrounds
- 1 Tennis Court
- 1 Set Volleyball Net Poles
- 1 Dog Park
- Public Art
- Paths / Trails



### Stormwater Management Insights

Issues with the dry pond have resulted in poor stormwater infiltration at the existing facility. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the existing dry pond into a wet pond and incorporating water filtration practices into the preexisting facility to improve water quality treatment for the surrounding area. This includes the use of flow splitters to redirect portions of runoff into a newly constructed bioretention facility to meet environmental site design (ESD) design criteria.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park was dedicated in 1992 and includes a play area, tennis courts and a hiking/bicycling trail. In 1998 it became the location of the City's first Dog Exercise Park. The courts require continued maintenance. The Dog Park requires extensive maintenance. From November through April, the grass areas are closed for seeding and aeration. Research is required to consider other surfaces. A dog agility course is a recommended addition to enhance the park's offerings. Playgrounds require replacement every 15 years. See Appendix for details.



# Griffith Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood / Community  
Address: 29 South Summit Avenue  
Size of Park: 7.8 Acres



### Existing Facilities:

- 2 Half Basketball Courts
- 2 Tennis Courts
- .4 Miles of Trails / Paths
- 1 Pavilion
- Restrooms
- Picnic Tables
- 1 Playground
- 1 Concert Pavilion Stage
- Public Art



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The forenamed park was originally known as Civic Center Park. The park was purchased in 1958. Amenities include tennis courts, playground equipment, covered pavilion and practice wall. The playground was replaced in 2017. This park is well-used by the public and as a destination for City events. The bathrooms are aging and need replacement. The basketball courts need to be resurfaced and the tennis courts need LED lighting. The tot playground is also scheduled for replacement.



# Inspiration Park

Type of Park: Pocket  
Address: 905 Inspiration Lane  
Size of Park: .12 Acres



## History and Existing Facilities

Inspiration Park was dedicated by the City on September 11, 2002 to those who gave their lives on 9/11/01. This land has become a special place to the many residents who enjoy walking throughout Kentlands, using it as a place for rest, reflection and solitude. Its location at a corner where one can view both Lake Helene and Lake Inspiration affords the ability to view the many different species of birds that use the lakes as a migratory “flyway” throughout all seasons. The park consists of two permanently anchored benches, a winding brick path with rose covered trellises at either end, and assorted trees, shrubs and perennials. It is located at the intersection of Firehouse and Inspiration Lanes in the Old Farm section of the Kentlands community.



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

Dedicated in 2002, the park serves as a destination for residents seeking solitude and reflection. A winding brick pathway featuring trellises and assorted trees and shrubs creates a tranquil and relaxing environment. The flagstone and brick surfaces require general maintenance.



# Kelley Park

Type of Park: Community  
 Address: 400 Victory Farm Drive  
 Size of Park: 27.7 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 3 Baseball Fields
- .5 Basketball Court
- 1 Sand Volleyball Court
- 1 Playground
- 2 Tennis Courts
- Paths / Trails



### Stormwater Management Insights

Stormwater runoff drains into a nearby tributary of Great Seneca Creek and discharges into a grass field where it can infiltrate into the ground or drain into the adjacent stream. **Proposed improvements** include implementing both sediment control and stormwater filtration practices that meet ESD criteria to improve water quality. Applicable practices include the use of bioretention cells near the tennis court outfall, stabilization of gravel paths, and an underground hydrodynamic separator at the stormwater inlets near the baseball field.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park was formally deeded in 1980 and officially dedicated in 1986. The park includes three fields suitable for rectangular sports and baseball. In addition, the park includes three tennis courts, a children’s play area and a sand volleyball court. The pathway that traverses Kelley Park is comprised of a variety of textures that include paved asphalt, gravel, and natural surfaces. The park has been home to the Gaithersburg Giants since the team’s founding in 2006. The tennis courts need to be replaced. The athletic fencing throughout the park needs replacement and the lighting at Field 2 should be changed to LED.



# Kentlands Green

Type of Park: Pocket  
 Address: 117 Kent Square Road  
 Size of Park: .5 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

Green lawn amidst towering shade trees. The Green adjoins historic Kentlands Mansion and the charming Arts Barn, a renovated stable.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The property includes a one-room deep single story designated historic outbuilding built circa 1900. It might have been used as a privy, pump house, or office. The Green is used for City events.

# Kentlands Lakes

Type of Park: Conservation/ Greenway  
 Address: 501 Firehouse Lane  
 Size of Park: 40 Acres



### Existing Facilities:

- 1.5 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 5 Lakes Including Varuna, Nirvana, Lynette, Inspiration, and Helene

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park includes the lakes around Kentlands as well as a series of trails bordering the lakes and some neighboring properties. Lakes and high-risk dams require maintenance and inspection. See Appendix for details.

## Stormwater Management Insights

Stormwater from the dry pond drains into several adjacent ponds that flow into the Muddy Branch tributary. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the dry pond in order to meet modern ESD standards and using strategies including micropool design or shallow wetland plantings to improve water quality by absorbing nutrient pollution.





# Lakelands Park

Type of Park: Community  
Address: 1368 Main Street  
Size of Park: 11.6 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Synthetic Turf Field
- 2 Baseball Fields
- 1 Multi-Use Field
- 1 Pavilion
- 3 Picnic Tables
- 1 Playground
- Paths / Trails
- Bathrooms



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park features the City's first synthetic turf field with organic in-fill. Two youth baseball fields, a pavilion with picnic tables and "Billy's Playground" add to the park experience. Turf requires maintenance and replacement. The organic in-fill needs to be replaced every 10-15 years.



# Market Square Plaza

Type of Park: Pocket  
 Address: 40 Market Street  
 Size of Park: .45 acres

**Existing Facilities:**  
 This plaza is surrounded by retail and dining venues. It contains a brick walkway and benches.



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This plaza is used for a variety of events and serves as the grand entrance of the City's Oktoberfest. It is a passive area. As Market Square shopping is redeveloped, the use of this plaza should be reviewed.

# Main Street Park and Pavilion

Type of Park: Pocket  
 Address: 301 Main Street  
 Size of Park: .38 Acres

**Existing Facilities:**

- 1 Pavilion Shelter
- Public Art



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This passive park is located on .38 acres in the center of the Kentlands community. It includes a pavilion on a brick laid area that is surrounded by pieces of art work. Twelve cement chairs shaped like Acanthus leaves add a unique aesthetic element and practical seating arrangement.



## Little Quarry Park

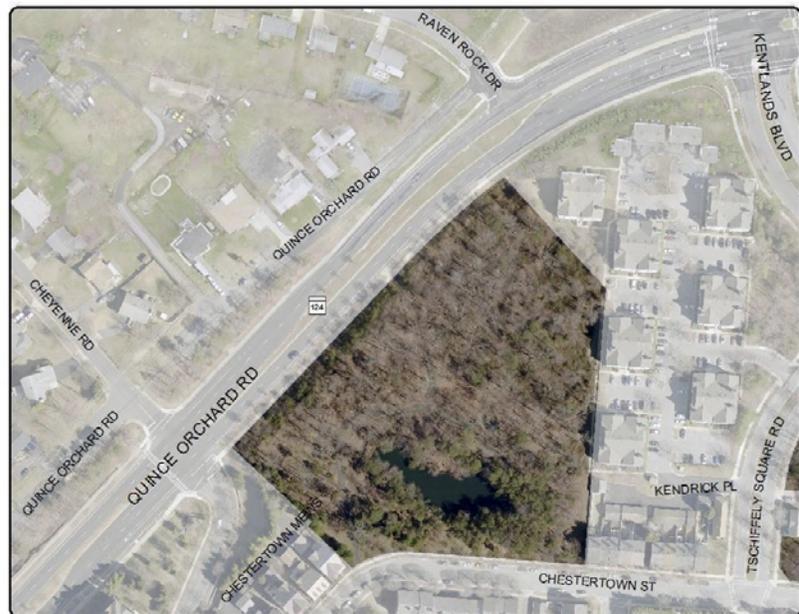
Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
Address: 540 Chestertown Street  
Size of Park: 5.8 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 3 Picnic Tables
- 1 Pond
- Paths / Trails

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park's 5.8 acres include a series of trails and a small pond with adjacent picnic tables. The property was conveyed to the City in 1992. The pond requires maintenance. See Appendix for details. This is a prime example of a "pocket park", tucked into a secluded wooded area located in a residential neighborhood. A short gravel path runs through the park.





# Malcolm King Park

Type of Park: Community  
 Address: 1200 West Side Drive  
 Size of Park: 72.9 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Basketball Court
- 2.1 Miles of Paths / Trails
- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Playground
- 2 Tennis Courts

### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The majority of the park remains in its natural wooded state. Between 1969 and 1973, the City purchased 69 acres. The park contains a 1.25 hiking trail, basketball and tennis courts, and open play areas. The park was rededicated in 1993. The basketball and tennis courts require renovation and dead trees and limbs need removal.



### Stormwater Management Insights

Stormwater runoff drains into Muddy Branch stream, which is degraded due to channel incision, bank erosion, and overgrown woody vegetation. **Proposed improvements** include the use of multiple stream restoration techniques to reduce shear stress on the stream banks, remove debris from channel, restore lateral stability, and minimize stream incision for improved aquatic habitat.

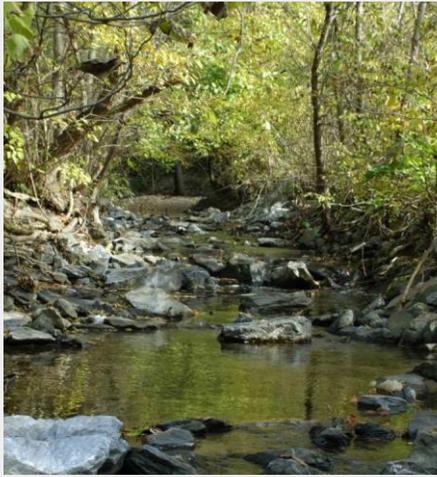




# Morris Park

Type of Park: Community  
 Address: 520 Summit Hall Road  
 Size of Park: 37.7 Acres

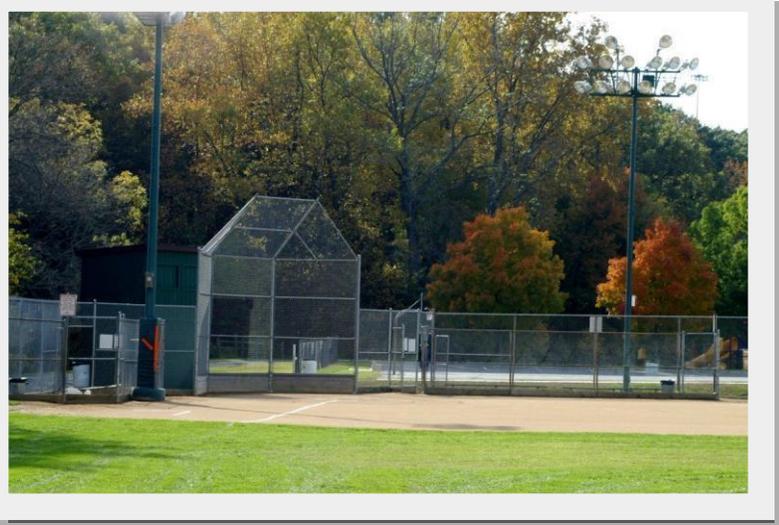
- Existing Facilities:**
- 2 Baseball / Softball Fields
  - 1 Basketball Court
  - 1 Pavilion
  - 10 Picnic Tables
  - 1 Playground
  - 1 Multipurpose field
  - 2 Tennis Courts
  - 1 Futsal Court
  - Restrooms



## Stormwater Management Insights

Runoff flows directly into Muddy Branch stream through an existing storm drainpipe. The park has poor surface water infiltration due to impervious surfaces.

**Proposed improvements** include the use of stormwater filtration practices to meet environmental site design (ESD) to enhance the stormwater treatment.



## Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park encompasses both active and passive park land. The park land was deeded to the City between 1967 and 1971 and was originally known as Summit Hall Park. It was rededicated in 1995. It includes two ball fields, tennis courts, a futsal court, hitting wall, storage facility, and pavilion. The parking lots need to be repaved. The pavilion needs to be replaced and expanded, omitting the former snack bar. Morris Field basketball lighting needs to be replaced with LED bulbs.



## International Latitude Observatory Park

Type of Park: Special Use / Destination  
Address: 100 DeSellum Avenue  
Size of Park: 2 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

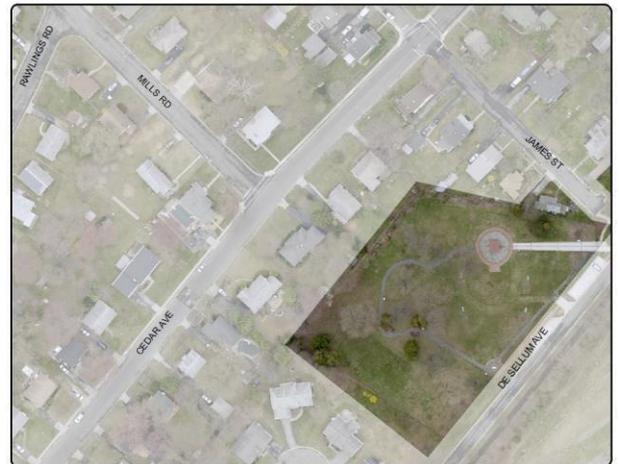
- Path / Trail

### Overview and History

The Gaithersburg Latitude Observatory, which includes the observatory building, the meridian mark pier, and five geodetic monuments scattered throughout the park, was fully restored in the 1980s and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The International Latitude Observatory Park was thoughtfully constructed to reflect the science that took place there. An ellipse representing the Earth's motion is created between the observatory and the meridian pier, denoted by benches and landscaping. The path itself, when viewed from above, represents the Earth's wobble.

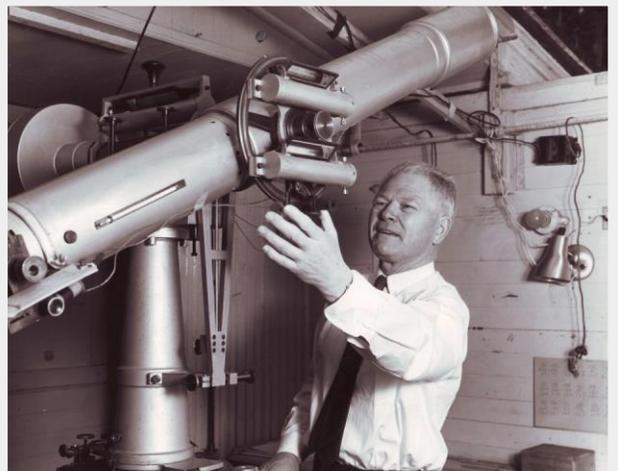
The City of Gaithersburg and five other cities around the globe are linked by a unique scientific endeavor that began more than 100 years ago. They are all home to latitude observatories that tracked the wobble of the Earth on its polar axis through star readings, thus aiding in navigation. Other observatories can be found in Cincinnati, Ohio; Ukiah, California; Mizusawa, Japan; Kitab, Uzbekistan; and Caligari, Sardinia, Italy.

The Gaithersburg Latitude Observatory operated from 1899 to 1982, when satellites replaced human observers. It is still active, however, with GPS systems using survey markers installed on these grounds to make periodic course corrections.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The City purchased the Latitude Observatory in 1987. The park includes the original observatory structure, benches and landscaped walkways. The park was rededicated in 2011. The building needs to be assessed to preserve its integrity and historical significance.





# Olde Towne Plaza

Type of Park: Pocket  
 Address: 1 South Summit Avenue  
 Size of Park: 1.5 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

The City's first urban park is a tree-lined plaza adjacent to the B&O Railroad Station Complex and the Gaithersburg Community Museum. In 2018, an Interactive Water Fountain was installed. This is the first park to have WiFi installed.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

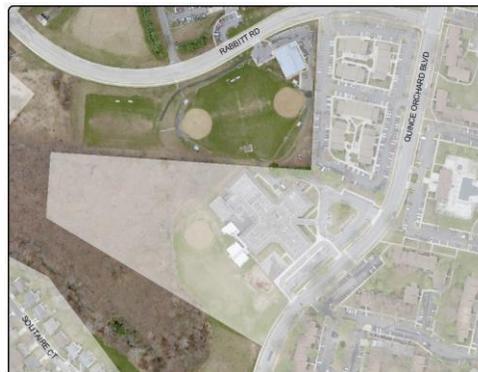
This plaza includes the train station and museum rolling stock.

# Robertson Park

Type of Park: Community  
 Address: 801 Rabbitt Road  
 Size of Park: 8.7 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- 1 Baseball Field
- 2 Multipurpose Fields
- 1 Playground
- Restrooms



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This park was formally dedicated in 1982. The multi-purpose use fields are lighted and suitable for youth soccer and baseball/tee ball. In 2004 the park was repurposed to include a Youth Center.



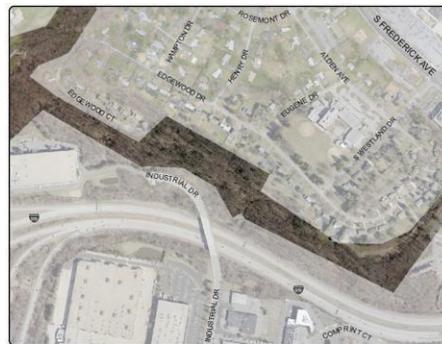
# Rosemont Stream Valley Park

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
Size of Park: 18.75 acres

**Existing Facilities:**  
A natural setting with trees and a meadow, adjacent to a residential neighborhood.

## Stormwater Management Insights

Stormwater runoff from adjacent properties flows through Rosemont Stream Valley Park and drains into a tributary of Muddy Branch stream causing channel degradation, right-of-way fence failure, and ineffective vegetation for channel stabilization. **Proposed improvements** include the use of multiple stream restoration techniques to stabilize the eroding stream banks, reduce channel incision, reduce the discharge of sediment and associated nutrients downstream, and improve aquatichabitat.



**Assessment of Existing Park Facilities**  
The City's Student Union program participants planted more than 100 trees in this greenway park. It connects Morris Park to the Casey Community Center.

# Summerfield Park

Type of Park: Pocket  
Address: 100 Skidmore Boulevard  
Size of Park: .4 Acres

**Existing Facilities:**  
A tree-lined pass with 2 benches



**Assessment of Existing Park Facilities**  
Summerfield is a "pocket park" accessible by walking and located in a passive environment. The park was established in 2001.

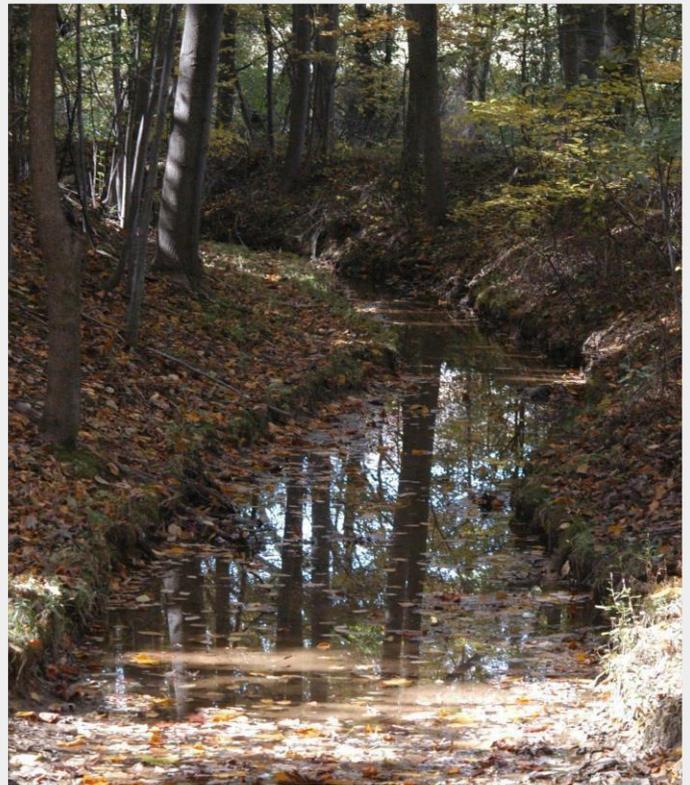


# Travis Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood  
Address: 220 Travis Avenue  
Size of Park: 1.4 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- Paths / Trails
- .5 Basketball Courts
- 2 Playgrounds
- 1 Gazebo



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This small park is located on 1.4 acres that include basketball, two playground areas, a gazebo with picnic tables, 10 benches and a paved pathway. The park was dedicated in 2002.

Overall, the park is aging and needs replacement / repair. The benches require maintenance and replacement, the path needs repaving, and the Gazebo and playground need replacement. See Appendix for details about playground replacement.



# Victory Farm Park

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
 Address: 401 Victory Farm Drive  
 Size of Park: 58.6 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

This mostly wooded property contains a stream valley and paved trails.



### Stormwater Management Insights

Existing stormwater controls permit higher flow rates than desired and provide minimal water quality treatment. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the dry pond to reduce the pond release rate and lengthen stormwater detention time for improved water quality treatment. Additional recommendations include the addition of a trash rack on the retrofitted outfall to reduce trash and debris in the system.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The park is a wooded stream valley and regional SWM facility. It contains a weir. See Appendix for details regarding weir and dam maintenance.



# Walder Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood  
 Address: 302 Cedar Avenue  
 Size of Park: 2.7 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- .5 Basketball Courts
- .3 Miles of Hiking Trails
- 1 Pavilion
- 3 Picnic Tables
- 1 Playground



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The park land was purchased between the years 1973 and 1976. In 1998 the park was formally developed, assisted by funding associated with Program Open Space. The park contains halfcourt basketball, a gazebo, children’s play area, and open space.

# Washingtonian Woods Park

Type of Park: Neighborhood  
 Address: 341 Upshire Circle  
 Size of Park: 22.3 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- .5 Basketball Courts
- 1 Mile of Paths /Trails
- 1Playground
- 1 Pavilion
- 2 Tennis Courts

### Stormwater Management Insights

Storm drains and a dry pond are underperforming, resulting in poor surface water dispersal and inadequate water quality treatment. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the dry pond into a wet pond and incorporating a new bioretention cell in the adjacent open space. The introduction of flow splitters will divide current drainage between the new bioretention cell and the retrofitted wet pond for improved water quality.



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

The park is 22.5 acres. 11.5 are City owned and 11.05 are HOA land. The park includes nature trails, tennis courts, playground and half- court basketball., which was recently repaved. The park was formally dedicated in 1995. The proposed CCT (Corridor Cities Transitway) proposal may impact this park.



## Watkins Mill Town Center

Type of Park: Conservation / Greenway  
Address: 308 Forest Preserve Drive  
Size of Park: 12.86 Acres

### Existing Facilities:

- Mature forest stand



### Assessment of Existing Park Facilities

This site, dedicated to the City as part of the Watkins Mill Town Center approvals, is a mature forest stand. The site is encumbered with steep slopes and large rock outcroppings. The ability for formalized future programming may be limited given the physical feature constraints.



## Foreseeable Park Facilities

Below are parks, park facilities and/or amenities that are being considered for development in the foreseeable future.

- **HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** Potential uses for City-owned historic properties not currently in use will be evaluated and determined based on community input, feasibility, resources and identified needs. Properties include the historic buildings in Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm (the Manor House, Smoke House, Caretakers House and Barn), and the historic Crown Farm buildings. Many of these properties will require extensive renovations, and maintenance concerns need to be considered. Potential uses include programming activities, exhibits and events that celebrate and interpret the City's heritage and historical significances, as well as recreational opportunities.
- **NIKE MISSILE SITE:** This site is currently owned by the Federal government and was previously used as a launch site for NIKE missiles and then activities of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), including the development of robotic rescue equipment. If the City were to take ownership of the site, its development would be determined based on community input, feasibility, environmental impact, resources and identified needs.
- **DOG PARKS:** Potential sites for dog parks on private and/or public land such as HOA property, private or commercial development, redevelopment and City-owned open spaces/parks will be considered based on community input, environmental impact studies and desirability of this amenity versus alternative uses.

## Visionary Ideas

The following is a compilation of ideas, both new and restated, from this Parks Chapter that have been identified by City staff to be further explored within the next decade.

- Create a "Walk About" experience along City park trails to include public art, pollinator gardens, flowering trees and bushes, a children's garden, interactive and reflective areas, interpretive signage, and more.
- Create a state-of-the-art Nature Center that includes outdoor educational components.
- Develop amenities and programs that foster the community's use of Bohrer Park so it becomes Gaithersburg's own Central Park.
- Acquire land so as to connect all City parks by trails and greenways.
- Strategically improve lighting and install emergency call button stations in City parks and facilities.
- Consider the use of artificial turf on new and existing public spaces.

Name	Acreage	Baseball Fields	Lighted Fields	Basketball Courts	Paths/ Trails (miles)	Pavilions / Shelters	Grills	Picnic Tables	Playground	Ponds	Soccer/ Football Fields	Tennis Courts	Handi-capped Accessibility	Rest-rooms	Private Rentals	Park-ing
Blohm Park	32				0.5					1						
Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm	57.7				1.3	3	Y	Y	Y	2			Y	Y	Y	Y
Christman Park	4.3							Y		2						
Constitution Gardens	0.2					1										
Consumer Product	9.54															
Crown Woods Park	4.2															
Diamond Farms Park	23.6			1.5	0.3			Y	Y			3	Y			Y
Discovery Park	14.95					Y		Y	Y							
Duvall Park	3.3			1		1		Y	Y					Y	Y	
G.E. Tract	4.70															
Green Park	17.3			.5					Y			1				Y
Griffith Park	7.8			.5	0.4	1	1	Y	Y			2	Y	Y	Y	
Inspiration Park	0.12															
International Latitude Observatory Park	2.3															
Kelley Park	28	3	Y	.5	1				Y		1	2	Y	Y		Y
Kentlands Lakes	40				1.5					2						
Kentlands Green	0.5															
Lakelands Park	11.6	2	Y			1		Y	Y		2		Y	Y	Y	Y
Little Quarry Park	5.8							Y		1						
Main Street Pavilion	0.38					1							Y			
Malcolm King Park	78.4			1	2.1			Y	Y			2	Y			
Market Square	0.45							Y								
Morris Park	45	2	Y	1		1	Y	Y	Y		1	3	Y	Y		Y
Olde Towne Park	1.5												Y			Y
Robertson Park	8.9	2	Y						Y		2		Y	Y		Y
Summerfield Park	0.4												Y			
Travis Park	1.4			.5		1		Y	y							
Victory Farms	58.6				0.6											
Walder Park	2.7			.5	0.3	1		Y	y				Y			
Washingtonian Woods Park	22.3			.5	1.1	1			Y	1		2				

**TOTAL PARK ACREAGE: 893.44**  
**ACTIVE PARK ACREAGE: 487.94**  
**PASSIVE PARK ACREAGE: 405.50**

# Recreation Chapter



*Top to bottom, left to right: Miniature Golf; Olde Towne Youth Center; Gaithersburg Sports; Mini Golf Participants; Pavilion at Bohrer Park; Summer Camp Participants; Gaithersburg Aquatic Center*



## I. INTRODUCTION: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

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The City’s recreation services foster a sense of community, develop healthy lifestyles and provide life-enriching experiences. They are vitally important to establishing the health of families and youth and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region.

As stated by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), “There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment.”<sup>1</sup>

Recreation services provide a unique opportunity for individuals to engage in a purposeful endeavor that provides physical, social, and psychological benefits. From keeping bodies healthy and developing cognitive functions to creating a means to socialize with others of similar interests, recreation brings people together in a safe and supportive environment.

In communities, recreation programs and facilities contribute specifically to:

- Community Image and Sense of Social Well-Being
- Health and Wellness
- Social Equity
- Positive Youth Development
- Healthy Aging
- Education
- Economic Vitality
- Safe Communities



**Recreational services demonstrate a community’s priorities and values as well as its commitment to quality of life for its residents.**

### A. COMMUNITY IMAGE AND SENSE OF SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Recreation services are key factors in creating social cohesion, strengthening a community’s image and fostering a sense of well-being. Effective recreation services have an active role in creating community through people—professional staff and committed volunteers connecting with residents to improve lives. It is this personal contact that reduces the stress and isolation of senior citizens and working adults, facilitates health and wellness, and inspires and teaches youth to become productive community members.

According to the NRPA, “Recreational services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are, they provide an identity for citizens, and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life. Recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are

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<sup>1</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2010). Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>.

accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities. They provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.”<sup>2</sup>

**Recreation Centers offer a common site for residents to congregate and recreate. They bring people together, foster a sense of community and can revitalize the neighborhoods they serve.**

## **B. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

Public recreation departments are leaders in improving the overall health and wellness of our country and are essential partners in combating the complex challenges of poor nutrition, obesity and physical inactivity. Through the services provided, recreation helps reduce obesity and incidence of chronic disease through rigorous physical activity; provides a connection to nature which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels; tightens interpersonal relationships through organized sports and other activities; and fosters overall healthful habits and balanced lifestyles.

Recreation services support and promote good health for people of all abilities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds and cultures; foster change through collaborative programs; and advocate for public policies that facilitate physical and mental health and wellness.

### **FACTS from the NRPA<sup>3</sup>:**

- A 2011 study conducted on Seattle’s park and recreation system revealed that Seattle’s residents were able to save \$64 million in medical costs as a result of getting physical activity in the city’s parks.
- According to NRPA Park Metrics, more than 50 percent of agencies administer community garden programs and nearly 25 percent of agencies administer or manage farmers’ markets.
- Scientists in the Netherlands found that people who lived in residential areas with the least green spaces had a 44 percent higher rate of physician-diagnosed anxiety disorders than people who lived in the most green residential areas.
- People who lived in close proximity to natural space had significantly improved mental health up to three years after their move. Compared to pre-move mental health scores, individuals who moved to greener areas had significantly better mental health recorded three years after the move.
- Children today experience record levels of obesity and preventable diseases like hypertension and Type II Diabetes, caused in part by a decrease in physical activity and an increase in processed food consumption. Using recreational programming to help children move more and eat healthily can help children fight these diseases and live longer.

## **C. SOCIAL EQUITY**

Recreation exceeds all boundaries, enabling a community rich in cultural and socio-economic diversity to experience a broad inclusion through classes, sports, activities, and cultural engagements. The NRPA states that the very philosophy of the field is that the nation’s public parks and recreation services should be equally accessible and available to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. The provision of equal access to these services connects people more deeply to their communities and makes communities more livable and desirable.

<sup>2</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2010). Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/three-pillars/health-wellness/parksandhealth/fact-sheets/parks-improved-mental-health-quality-life/>.

The benefits of social equity and universal access to public parks and recreation are many and include:

- Public enjoyment and engagement—Where parks and recreation services are strong, residents enjoy the closest engagement within their communities. Studies indicate higher levels of local gross domestic product and economic well-being.
- Quality recreation time with family and friends—Parks and recreation services provide a space and a reason to enjoy quality time among family members and friends, thus strengthening the social and familial bonds that provide life balance and satisfaction.
- Improvement of mental and physical health—Parks and recreation can reduce the impacts of chronic diseases, especially in vulnerable populations such as children, seniors, and the underserved.
- Measurable decreases in rates of crime and other detrimental activities—Communities are safer as a result of healthy activities and programming for all people in a wholesome atmosphere created by well-managed parks and recreation services.

**“Social equity is a critical responsibility. Through the provision of equal access to parks and recreation, community ties are cultivated and people feel more deeply connected. This sense of connectedness makes communities livable and desirable.”<sup>4</sup>**

***--National Recreation and Park Association***

#### **D. POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Researchers link early childhood education and supportive out-of-school youth programs to a reduction in teen pregnancy, crime, drug abuse, school dropout rates, and increased earning power. A society with productive, healthy, contributing members depends on a community where youth can thrive from cradle to career. Investment in today’s youth defines the success of tomorrow’s community.

Community violence occurs less frequently among youth who live in neighborhoods rich in youth-serving organizations. Students who participate in at least one hour of extracurricular activities per week are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents. Just one hour a week can provide a positive impact on the life of a teen.<sup>5</sup>

**“We can invest now in our children and families and enjoy long-term savings and benefits: a more vibrant nation of healthy, achieving children and more stable families. Or, we can fail to make the investment and pay the price: increased delinquency, greater educational failures, lower productivity, less economic competitiveness, and fewer adults prepared to be effective, loving parents to the next generation of children.”<sup>6</sup>**

***--National Association for the Education of Young Children***

<sup>4</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). Social Equity and Parks and Recreation. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/social-equity-and-parks-and-recreation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Witt, P.A., Caldwell, L. L. (2010). The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach. *National Recreation and Park Association Research Series*. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Papers/Witt-Caldwell-Full-Research-Paper.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Witt-Caldwell-Full-Research-Paper.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children. (n.d.) NAEYC Advocacy Toolkit. Retrieved from <https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/NationalAssociationForTheEducationOfYoungChildrenToolkit.pdf>.

Making positive youth development programs available to residents from birth to emerging adulthood (ages 0-21), or “Cradle to Career”, is vital to a sustainable society. Healthy growth and development is most likely to occur when protective factors are present and sustained throughout all areas of a youth’s life: family, community, school, and out-of-school time programming.<sup>7</sup>

Out-of-school time (OST) is a comprehensive term that refers to the periods before and after school, during the summer, on the weekends, and during school year breaks. OST programs support social development and foster relationships with adults and peers<sup>8</sup>. It is essential to provide programs that are appropriate to differing ages, individual needs, and cultures. An individual’s development is best understood and supported within the sociocultural context of the family, educational setting, community, and broader society. These various contexts are interrelated, and all have an impact on the developing child.

Research has shown that participation in OST programs leads to:

- Improvements in a youth’s educational outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, school behavior, attitudes toward school, attendance, and educational expectations)
- Enhances his/her social and emotional development (e.g., self-esteem, positive social behavior)
- Reduces the likelihood that he/she will engage in risk-taking behavior



The quality of a program is principally determined by having professional staff that is qualified and prepared, participates in ongoing professional development, and receives compensation commensurate with accreditations and experience<sup>9</sup>.

A safe environment, quality of care, and a knowledgeable and well-trained staff are among the top reasons for choosing an after school program and among the most highly rated in parent satisfaction<sup>10</sup>. Although successful programs should be available to all residents, they often primarily serve high percentages of minority and low-income youth, thereby playing an important role in helping close the opportunity gap.

The ideal OST program model provides safe, structured activities that convene on a regular basis and makes opportunities available for youth to learn new skills, ranging from physical activity to developing academic and social competencies from cradle to career (ages 0-21). Best practices include access to support services for both youth and their families, such as quality early childhood development, parenting classes, education services (ESOL, GED), accessible and comprehensive physical and mental

<sup>7</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand. Retrieved from: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM\\_National\\_Report.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> National Institute on Out-of-School Time. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.niost.org/>.

<sup>9</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2017). NAEYC Program Standards and Accreditation Assessment. *NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs*. Retrieved from [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/Standard%206\\_Sept%202017\\_0.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/accreditation/early-learning/Standard%206_Sept%202017_0.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2014). America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand. Retrieved from: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM\\_National\\_Report.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf).

health coverage, housing support services, workforce development training and internships, community service/volunteer, and mentoring opportunities.

The successful implementation of these OST programs provide many developmental assets including support from nonparent adults promoting a caring school and community environment and ensuring that youth perceive that their community values them. Positive youth development programs encourage service to others; provide other adult role models, set high expectations, and offer constructive use of time to instill optimism in youth about their future<sup>11</sup>.

The positive impact cradle to career OST programs have on a community can be seen by the decreased rate of risk-taking and violent behavior, increased academic interest and success, and improved physical and mental well-being.

- **RISK TAKING AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOR:** As stated in the *National Juvenile Justice Action Plan*, “Providing children with the opportunity to develop positive behaviors is the foundation of most efforts to prevent youth crime and violence. Effective strategies include comprehensive approaches that provide opportunities for education, mentoring, conflict resolution training, and safety; engage youth and their families; and are community-based and integrated.”<sup>12</sup> According to the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP), participation in OST programs has been associated with reduced drug use and criminal behavior.<sup>13</sup> Also stated in the *National Juvenile Justice Action Plan*, “Serious delinquency and youth violence are most likely to occur in youth exposed to multiple risk factors, multiple deficits of protective factors, and multiple concurrent problem behaviors. Consequently, prevention strategies need to deal simultaneously with a host of problems and require comprehensive strategies. Moreover, because risk factors and concurrent problem behaviors tend to interact with one another, it is important that prevention strategies deal with all of these factors in an integrated fashion. Even high-risk youth can avoid involvement in delinquency if they experience many protective factors.”<sup>14</sup>
- **ACADEMIC INTEREST AND SUCCESS:** Teens who do not participate in after school programs are nearly three times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate.<sup>15</sup> Taken from the IWGYP website youth.gov, a national evaluation found that more than 40% of students attending 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center programs improved their reading and math grades, and those who attended more regularly were even more likely to make gains. Effective after school programs can improve classroom behavior; school attendance, academic

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<sup>11</sup> Witt, P.A., Caldwell, L. L. (2010). The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidenced Based Approach. *National Recreation and Park Association Research Series*. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Papers/Witt-Caldwell-Full-Research-Paper.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Witt-Caldwell-Full-Research-Paper.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1996). Provide Opportunities for Children and Youth. In *National Juvenile Justice Action Plan* (4). Retrieved from <https://www.ojdp.gov/action/sec4.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. (n.d.) Benefits for Youth, Families, & Communities. Retrieved from <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities>.

<sup>14</sup> Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. (1996). Provide Opportunities for Children and Youth. In *National Juvenile Justice Action Plan* (4). Retrieved from <https://www.ojdp.gov/action/sec4.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2004). Afterschool Alliance Factsheet. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Fact%20Sheet\\_Afterschool%20Essential%20stats%2004\\_08%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Fact%20Sheet_Afterschool%20Essential%20stats%2004_08%20FINAL.pdf).

aspirations, and can reduce the likelihood that a student will drop out.<sup>16</sup> Researchers have found that successful elementary schools in Maryland were seeing academic improvements due to extended day programs.<sup>17</sup>

- **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL BEING:** OST programs play an important role in encouraging physical activity and good dietary habits, and contributing to stable mental wellness. Participation in OST programs has been associated with positive health outcomes, including reduced obesity<sup>18</sup>. The current “indoor” trend for children impacts their health and well-being. This is not just a lost connection with our natural world, it’s a serious public health issue. According to the National Wildlife Foundation, in the last two decades, child obesity rates have more than doubled; more children are vitamin-D deficient; the United States has become the largest consumer of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medications in the world; and the use of antidepressants in pediatric patients has risen sharply.<sup>19</sup> Studies point to sedentary and indoor lifestyles as contributing factors in these alarming trends. A report by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice shows that students in OST programs have fewer behavioral problems and more self-confidence, and can handle conflicts better than students who are not involved with these programs. According to the Harvard Family Research Project, OST programs help students from low-income families overcome the inequities they face in the school system. Children who regularly participate have better school behavior, have more developed social skills, and show more self-confidence as a result of the relationships they develop with others in the program.<sup>20</sup>

**FACTS:**

- Students who do not spend any time in after school activities are 57% more likely to drop out, 49% more likely to have used drugs and 37% more likely to become teen parents.<sup>21</sup>
- Teens who do not participate in after school programs are three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs and are more likely to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity.<sup>22</sup>
- Kids are at the highest risk of juvenile crime and experimentation between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. and 90% of Americans think youth should have access to some type of after school organized activity or safe place to go.<sup>23</sup>
- Approximately 19.4 million children in the U.S. are not participating in OST programs but would be enrolled if one were available.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. (n.d.) Benefits for Youth, Families, & Communities. Retrieved from <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities>.

<sup>17</sup> Thirteen Ed Online. (2004). Afterschool Programs-From Vision to Reality [Concept to Classroom]. In P. Producer (Thirteen Ed Online). New York, New York: Educational Resources Center at Thirteen/WNET. Retrieved from [https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/afterschool/index\\_sub3.html](https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/afterschool/index_sub3.html).

<sup>18</sup> Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs. (n.d.) Benefits for Youth, Families, & Communities. Retrieved from <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities>.

<sup>19</sup> National Wildlife Foundation. (n.d.). Health Benefits and Tips. Retrieved from <https://www.nwf.org/en/Kids-and-Family/Connecting-Kids-and-Nature/Health-Benefits-and-Tips>.

<sup>20</sup> Thirteen Ed Online. (2004). Afterschool Programs-From Vision to Reality [Concept to Classroom]. In P. Producer (Thirteen Ed Online). New York, New York: Educational Resources Center at Thirteen/WNET. Retrieved from [https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/afterschool/index\\_sub3.html](https://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/afterschool/index_sub3.html).

<sup>21</sup> Zill, N., Nord, C. W., & Loomis, L.S. (1995). Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/execsum/adolescent-time-use-risky-behavior-and-outcomes-analysis-national-data>.

<sup>22</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2004). Afterschool Alliance Factsheet. Retrieved from [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Fact%20Sheet\\_Afterschool%20Essential%20stats%2004\\_08%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/Fact%20Sheet_Afterschool%20Essential%20stats%2004_08%20FINAL.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

## E. HEALTHY AGING

In 2014, the City of Gaithersburg ranked eighth among the top 15 fastest growing cities in the United States and was one of the top 25 locations to retire.<sup>25</sup> The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments *Growth Trends to 2045*, released in November 2016, estimates Gaithersburg's population growth percentage will outpace Montgomery County during the next 30 years.<sup>26</sup> As Gaithersburg's population increases, it will also grow older, with 18.6% of its residents already over the age of 55.<sup>27</sup>



Recreation is beneficial for all ages. It can build family unity by providing opportunities to share leisure time together. It can help those with disabilities enhance their health, independence and well-being. It can provide valuable respite time for caregivers. For older adults, it can facilitate friendships, teach new skills, promote continued education, encourage healthy lifestyles and promote civic engagement.

One of the most important attributes of recreation is that it can reach the “hard to reach”. Those who have lost a spouse, serve as a caregiver, or no longer drive can experience feelings of social isolation and loneliness which can contribute to serious health risks and have even been linked with a higher incidence of dementia.<sup>28</sup>

Recreation programs are mentally and physically stimulating. They encourage active lifestyles associated with long-term health benefits including the reduction of risks associated with many avoidable diseases. Even those with current health related conditions can achieve benefits, including easing symptoms of anxiety and depression.<sup>29</sup>

Communities across the country including Montgomery County are rethinking the concept of building separate facilities for youth, adults, and seniors. Why not bring people of all ages together so they can interact, learn from each other, and remove ageism barriers? Within the next few decades, it is anticipated that approximately 50% of the City's population will be youth and older adults. Traditional

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<sup>24</sup> Afterschool Alliance. (2014). *America After 3PM: Afterschool Programs in Demand*. Retrieved from: [http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM\\_National\\_Report.pdf](http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/documents/AA3PM-2014/AA3PM_National_Report.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> City of Gaithersburg. (2014, May 22). *Gaithersburg Among Top 15 Fastest Growing Cities in the U.S.* [Press Release]. Print.

<sup>26</sup> Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. (2016). *Growth Trends to 2045: Cooperative Forecasting in Metropolitan Washington*. Retrieved from

<https://www.mwcog.org/file.aspx?&A=%2f1GBj0%2fMK8xR48iX2j5ob2XJfi%2fy2epYTRHW3h%2bVk4Y%3d>

<sup>27</sup> City of Gaithersburg Planning and Code Administration. (2018). *Dwelling Units and Estimated Population*. Retrieved from

<http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/about-gaithersburg/profile-and-history/demographics>.

<sup>28</sup> Singer, C. (2018). Health Effects of Social Isolation and Loneliness. *Journal of Aging and Life Care*, Spring 2018.

Retrieved from Harvard Health Publishing. (2014). *Exercise and Aging: Can You Walk Away from Father Time*.

*Harvard Medical School*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/exercise-and-aging-can-you-walk-away-from-father-time>.

<sup>29</sup> Harvard Health Publishing. (2014). *Exercise and Aging: Can You Walk Away from Father Time*. *Harvard Medical School*. Retrieved from <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/exercise-and-aging-can-you-walk-away-from-father-time>.

funding often is age segregated, but if sources come together with a shared agenda fewer dollars might be needed and more services could be provided.

An intergenerational recreation center can be economically valuable, with health and environmental benefits for all it serves. Built for capacity as well as flexibility, it can be a facility that offers programs that demonstrate how much people have in common versus what may be different and to promote an appreciation for life's various stages.

**Everyone needs to have fun. Fun is powerful, therapeutic, and can help us balance the other aspects of our lives. Through this process, we can become better spouses, parents, friends and coworkers. Gaithersburg recreation can build relationships that result in a more engaged, stronger knit community that is proud of its heritage and looks forward to a promising future.**

## F. EDUCATION

Recreation services benefit cognitive skills, such as concentration and the ability to deal with major life challenges. Numerous studies demonstrate that access to green views and environments can improve cognitive functioning, impulse control, resilience to stressful life events, and overall mental health. Conversely, studies report a link between low nature access and increases in attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), clinical depression, stress, and anxiety. The NRPA's *Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers* states, "In a large-scale study conducted in the Robert Taylor Houses in inner-city Chicago, researchers found a variety of cognitive advantages among residents whose buildings had nearby trees and grass."<sup>30</sup>

Also stated in the *Synopsis*, "One of the most significant groups to benefit from greenery are individuals with ADHD, particularly children. In one study, researchers found that a 20-minute walk in an urban park benefited concentration performance of children with ADHD. The performance boost was at least as large as the peak performance boost shown for two widely prescribed ADHD medications. Researchers are not the only ones who have tracked these benefits. In a nationwide survey, parents of kids with ADHD rated after school activities in outdoor settings as significantly more helpful than those not in these settings."<sup>31</sup>



Through the benefits of effective recreation programs for youth, improvements in educational outcomes including academic achievement, school behavior, attitudes toward school, attendance and educational expectations can be realized. Recreation programs provide safe environments with caring adults who help young people develop vital skills, build self-esteem, positive social interactions and a sense of their value to the community.

<sup>30</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2010). *Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers: The Key Benefits*. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Papers/Synopsis-of-Research-Papers.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Synopsis-of-Research-Papers.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

## G. ECONOMIC VITALITY

Recreation services and facilities have a substantial impact on the economy of communities, both immediate and long-term. Recreation services and events attract people who spend money in nearby hotels, shops, and restaurants. Excellent recreation and park services improve property values of nearby homes, which can help increase tax revenues.



Recreation can play a large role in youth development, which has the long-term economic benefit of helping adolescents grow into productive taxpayers. Positive effects on physical and mental health, social well-being, and the environment because of parks and recreation services have real, immediate, and long-term monetary benefits.

By promoting physical activity, recreation programs and parks can put a dent in the approximately \$147 billion direct and indirect costs of the obesity epidemic. Recreation services can ease the effects of ADHD in children and potentially reduce the overall number of such diagnoses and the nearly \$30 billion spent annually on ADHD treatment and medication.<sup>32</sup>

### FACTS:

- The outdoor recreation sector alone contributes \$730 billion annually to the U.S. economy and generates 6.5 million jobs.<sup>33</sup>
- A 2011 study from the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts Amherst highlighted that the construction of cycling infrastructure creates an average of 11.4 jobs per \$1 million spent, versus construction of road infrastructure which creates an average of 7.8 jobs per \$1 million spent.<sup>34</sup>
- An economic study conducted in Long Island, New York, revealed that the development of a new residential area is eight times more costly to the public than conserving Long Island's parks and public space.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2010). Synopsis of 2010 Research Papers: The Key Benefits. Retrieved from [https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications\\_and\\_Research/Research/Papers/Synopsis-of-Research-Papers.pdf](https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Publications_and_Research/Research/Papers/Synopsis-of-Research-Papers.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Rechner, S. (2010, August). Outdoor Recreation Stimulates the Economy [Letter to the editor]. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/mar/11/outdoor-recreation-stimulates-the-economy/>.

<sup>34</sup> Garrett-Peltier, H. (2011). Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. *Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts Amherst*. Retrieved from <https://www.peri.umass.edu/publication/item/427-pedestrian-and-bicycle-infrastructure-a-national-study-of-employment-impacts>.

<sup>35</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). Social Equity and Parks and Recreation. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/social-equity-and-parks-and-recreation/>.

## H. SAFE COMMUNITIES

Recreation services connect people to their communities. When people feel connected to—and valued by—their community, they are happier, more productive, and more active in preserving and protecting their neighborhoods. As stated by the NRPA, “Research by the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods indicates that community involvement in neighborhood parks and recreation is associated with lower levels of crime and vandalism.”<sup>36</sup>

### **FACTS from the NRPA<sup>37</sup>:**

- “In 2011, the Summer Night Lights program, an anti-gang initiative in Los Angeles that involves keeping parks open at night with extensive programming and free food, has led to a reduction in gang-related homicides in areas surrounding these particular parks by 57 percent. Furthermore, gun fire has decreased by 55 percent, and the number of victims shot has decreased by 45 percent.”
- “The Kansas City Police Department reported that in 2008 crime decreased by 74 percent in Kansas City’s Kessler Park when 2.6 miles of Cliff Drive, a state scenic byway located in the park, was turned car-free on weekends.”

## II. RECREATION HISTORY, FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND PARTNERS

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### A. HISTORY

The City has continuously adapted to the needs of a changing community and programs have been initiated to accommodate the interests and goals of residents. In 1961, the City hired its first Recreation Director for the summer playground program, and in 1965 recreation efforts were expanded to provide residents with year-round activities including an after school play center, teen club, Saturday basketball league and a variety of classes. As these programs became more established, the City began to focus its efforts on expanding facilities in order to further enhance programming and provide residents with a variety of new opportunities.

In 1971, the City acquired the Casey Barns property and converted it into a community center. In 1975 the Gaithersburg Aquatic Center was opened in conjunction with the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and is jointly operated to this day. Throughout the 1990s, Gaithersburg underwent tremendous construction of new facilities. In 1991, Summit Hall Farm Water Park opened. Later that year, the Gaithersburg Upcounty Senior Center (now called the Benjamin Gaither Center) opened its doors. In 1993, a Miniature Golf Facility opened, featuring 18 holes of beautiful landscaping, waterfalls, streams and ponds. In 1998, the Activity Center at Bohrer Park began to serve the public, followed by Robertson Park Youth and Olde Towne Youth Centers in 2005 and 2009 respectively. Numerous other athletic fields, skate facilities, and more have followed in response to the growing and evolving community.

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<sup>36</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2010). Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpa.org/Advocacy/Resources/Parks-Recreation-Essential-Public-Services-January-2010.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). Social Equity and Parks and Recreation. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/social-equity-and-parks-and-recreation/>.

The Gaithersburg Parks, Arts, and Recreation Corporation (G-PARC) is a 501(c)(3), tax exempt, charitable organization whose mission is to heighten the awareness of revitalization, parks, arts, and recreation initiatives within the City of Gaithersburg and to raise funds to support those programs, projects, facilities and initiatives. G-PARC expanded out of the Gaithersburg Arts and Monuments Funding Corporation, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization that was established by the City in 2005 to serve as a fundraising vehicle to support arts efforts in the City of Gaithersburg. In 2018, G-PARC was formed by an ordinance that amended Chapter 6B of City Code. The amendment expanded the scope to include parks and recreation.

## **B. RECREATION FACILITIES**

The City of Gaithersburg Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture operates a variety of recreational facilities in which the public may participate in leisure activities, athletic events, classes, camps, programs, and events. The public may also rent facilities for meetings and social occasions. An Inventory and Assessment of recreational City facilities is provided in the back of this section.

## **C. CURRENT RECREATION PROGRAMS**

The City of Gaithersburg's recreation services offer a wide range of programs for adults and children of all ages, abilities, genders, income levels, and cultures. Offerings include individual and team sports, personal fitness, youth and senior services, aquatics, farmer's markets, rental opportunities, dance and cultural enrichment. The City's regular programs are augmented by a comprehensive array of special events for children, adults, and the whole family.

## **D. YOUTH AND TEEN PROGRAMS:**

Programs are designed to promote a spirit of fun, personal growth, health and fitness, achievement in school, character and social development, and community involvement.

**Cradle through Preschool (ages 2-6):** We offer many programs for this age group, including recreational dance, gymnastics, music, gardening, and martial arts classes. In addition to these recreational classes, we also have programs that are more specific. Creative Tot Time is a warm, loving environment for children ages 3 – 5 to enjoy music, science, community service, story time, arts and crafts, and show and tell. Guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture's My Plate resource is utilized to help children find and build a sustainable healthy eating style. Through this program young participants are given a solid foundation to grow socially, healthfully, emotionally, and intellectually.

Another program for this age group is the Start Smart Program. Developed by the National Alliance for Youth Sports, the program offers participants an opportunity to develop sports skills in a fun and safe environment while working and spending quality one-on-one time with their parent/guardian. All Start Smart programs feature age appropriate equipment and developmentally appropriate exercises.

**Elementary Out-of-School Programs (ages 6-11, grades 1-5):** Programs are offered at various locations, including Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) facilities, and include arts and crafts projects, science experiments, homework assistance, gym games, outdoor play, and special visitors to the program. Staff mentor participants through positive youth development

techniques. The City works in partnership with MCPS and other entities to broaden the curriculum offered in these programs.

**Middle School Gaithersburg Youth Club and Gaithersburg Youth Centers (ages 11-14, grades 6-8):**

Programming includes trips and activities during after school hours. The Gaithersburg Youth Club is year-round and operates out of the Olde Towne Youth Center and Robertson Park Youth Center. Each facility has an array of amenities including game tables and consoles, an activity room for classes and programs, outdoor basketball, and a dedicated computer area. The Olde Towne Youth Center contains a recording studio and mixing lab for members, while the Robertson Park facility houses an indoor rock climbing wall. Daily programming is offered to the members of the Youth Club and includes cooking classes, art projects, dance clinics, STEM-focused activities, tutoring, gaming tournaments, sports, community service and mentoring groups.



**High School Student Union and Forever Sisters (ages 14-18, grades 9-12):** The Student Union is a club for high school students that offers fun, engaging, and educational activities to keep them involved and active in the community. Membership includes after school intramural sports, field trips, workshops, fundraisers, volunteer programs, and access to the Youth Centers and amenities. A core aspect of the Student Union is community engagement and volunteer opportunities. Forever Sisters is a girls' mentoring group that is based at Gaithersburg High School.

**Summer Camp Programs (ages 5-14, grades K-8):** Summer camp programs provide a variety of affordable, recreational-based summer programs throughout the City. Camp programming includes trips, arts and crafts, nature, sports, a STEM program, music recording and sound mixing, filmmaking, and editing. The City also partners with MCPS to provide aftercare for students enrolled in morning summer school programs. City Residents are eligible to apply for financial assistance. Programs are currently offered for ages 4-14, at a variety of partial and full day camps. One-on-one services are offered for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities so they may partake in the overall camp setting. Children who have aged out of the camp programs can participate in the Counselor in Training program, the Ascending Leadership Academy, and a week-long volunteer camp (GCorps).

#### **E. HEALTHY AND ACTIVE AGING – BENJAMIN GAITHER CENTER (BGC):**

Membership to the BGC can begin at age 55 and offers participants access to a wide array of amenities, activities, and programs, including a state-of-the-art fitness center and computer lab.

**Trips and Activities:** Among the Center’s most popular activities are day trips to museums, historical sites, and cultural performances. Other activities include outdoor adventure, discussion groups, art classes, wellness programs, educational lectures, cards, crafts, billiards, bingo, and dancing.

**Fitness:** Group fitness classes are the Center’s largest program and are led by certified instructors who design classes to meet the interests and needs of participants with varied abilities. Over the past decade the Center has been recognized with a number of awards including Maryland State Advisory Council Physical Activity Excellence Award, MRPA Service Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field, and the State of Maryland Governors Citation—Older Americans Group Activity Award. The Center is also home to a 1,000 square foot state-of-the-art Fitness Center featuring strength and cardiovascular equipment.

**Nutrition:** The facility serves as a Montgomery County Nutrition site and contracts a licensed caterer to prepare the meals in its full service kitchen to the specifications of the County Nutritionist. Any Montgomery County resident age 60 and better may participate in the federally funded program for an anonymous, voluntary donation of what the person can afford. Membership is not required. The Center served nearly 8,000 meals in FY 2016 and the number of participants continues to increase.

**Wellness:** The County provides a staff person one day a week to help members and non-members with Medicare, Medicaid, housing, and other important issues. Through a Suburban Hospital grant, the “HeartWell in Action” program provides a nurse one day a week to offer wellness information, conduct blood pressure checks, and discuss medical questions and make referrals when appropriate.

**Computer Training:** Volunteers provide instruction for those who want to learn basic or more advanced technology skills. For many, especially those who live a distance from their family, use of email is a very important way of staying in touch and the Center’s Computer Lab provides this ability.

**“Early efforts to remake senior centers to fit the changing population’s desires indicate that viable centers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be integrated into the heart and soul of a community. Community cannot be defined as just a community of older adults, but what people most want is to be part of a full community that includes people of all ages and abilities. Vibrant, active and inclusive centers are in fact, places people want to be. They are the gathering spot, the focal point and a critical element to a successful, lively and livable community that facilitates a high quality of life for residents of all ages.”**  
**--Transforming Senior Centers into 21<sup>st</sup> Century Wellness Centers, AARP, 2011<sup>38</sup>**

<sup>38</sup> Lawler, K. (2011). *Transforming Senior Centers into 21<sup>st</sup> Century Wellness Centers*. AARP Louisiana. Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/act/civic/transforming-senior-centers-into-21st-century-wellness-centers-louisiana-aarp.pdf>.

## F. SPORTS PROGRAMS

Sports provide a unique opportunity for individuals to engage in a purposeful endeavor that provides physical, social, and psychological benefits. It keeps our bodies healthy, develops cognitive functions, and creates a means to socialize with others of similar interests. Most importantly, sports moves across socio-economic and cultural borders and brings communities together in a positive and safe environment.

**Youth and Teen Sports:** The goals of participation are to be active, have fun, and to gain a positive experience through the learning and practice of fundamental skills. The program format of one game and one practice a week is constructed from the philosophy of participation as the most important aspect of the program. A financial aid program has supported hundreds of youth who participate in our programs.

**Adults:** Programs provide for the development of skills, both physical and mental, while allowing downtime from the stresses of the day-to-day working world, which has a positive impact on participants' daily lives. Sports trends vary from year-to-year and staff adapt programs to the changing needs of our community. The fastest growing segment of the population seeking sports programs in the last five years has been our active aging adult population. To meet this need program offerings of Pickleball and PinBusters (bowling) have increased.

**Sports Leagues:** Organized sports leagues offer a more competitive experience for program participants. As with other recreation programming, trends dictate the types of leagues formed. In recent years, outdoor and indoor volleyball and coed softball leagues have been the most popular.

**Sports Trips:** Trips to professional sporting events, including the Baltimore Orioles, Washington Nationals, Washington Capitals, and Washington Kastles, provides an opportunity for residents to socialize in a conveniently packaged, economical excursion.

## G. RECREATION CLASSES

Recreation classes offer fitness, skill-building, cultural enrichment, personal development and social interaction for all ages and abilities in our community. Classes can be a way to sample new trends and develop new interests. Recreation classes are affordable, non-competitive, convenient and inclusive. The majority of our classes are held in City-owned facilities; however, we also offer classes in Montgomery County Public Schools and in the facilities of contractors.

**All Ages/Abilities/Interests:** A wide variety of classes are offered throughout the year (between 100– 140 each season). Many classes remain popular year to year, such as ballet and gymnastics, and others are new and on-trend offerings. Classes include fitness, dance, crafts, music, writing, STEM, and personal development.



## H. AQUATICS

Gaithersburg offers a variety of aquatic opportunities at the outdoor Water Park in the summer and year round at the indoor Aquatic Center.

**Aquatic Center:** Lap and recreational swimming, adult and youth swim lessons, water exercise classes, swim meets and practices, American Red Cross lifeguard training, and rental opportunities are offered in this year-round indoor pool.

**Water Park:** This outdoor facility serves approximately 80,000 patrons annually who enjoy multiple water slides, a children's splash pool, floatable animals, tumble bucket, zero-depth entry—making it accessible to all—locker rooms, and an on-site food concession facility.

## I. FARMERS MARKETS

Farmers Markets provide residents with locally grown products throughout the growing season. Regular Market e-newsletters provide information on a list of currently available products and recipes. Both markets accept WIC. The Main Street Market only accepts FVC and FMNP checks. In addition to the two City-operated markets, the City also offers permits for other farmers markets within the City.

**Main Street Farmers and Artist Market:** Products available for purchase include a vast assortment of fruits and vegetables, jams and jellies, various herbs, cut flowers and potted plants, baked goods, dog treats, meat, eggs, and honey. Seasonal arts and craft vendors sell health and beauty products, knitted items, quilts, woodworking items, and more.

**Fulks Corner Farmers Market:** Available products include a wide assortment of fruits and vegetables, jams and jellies, herbs, flowers and plants, honey, cider, fruit butters, baked goods, and a variety of meats. Participating farmers grow produce specific to the cuisines of the many cultures of the people who frequent the market.

## J. PARTNERS AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS & VENUES

The efforts of the City are complemented by the contributions of private nonprofits and for-profit entities that significantly enhance recreational opportunities offered in the Gaithersburg community.

The City's Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff work with a variety of organizations to leverage efforts and resources, and to use expertise otherwise not available including:

- Local health care organizations such as hospitals, physicians, and nurses
- Community partners for food programs, including food banks
- Community organizations, both private and public
- Child Service organizations, both private and public
- Montgomery County Public Schools
- Area colleges and universities
- Private health and fitness organizations and businesses
- Sports organizations and clubs
- Travel opportunities
- State and County Department of Natural Resources

- Master Gardener, University of Maryland Extension
- Maryland Recreation and Parks Association, National Recreation and Parks Association

The City’s Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff meet regularly with colleagues from a variety of regional organizations to participate in various workshops and events. Organizations include:

- G-PARC
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Maryland Recreation and Parks Association
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- Maryland State Arts and Humanities Council
- Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council
- Arts Associations and Partner Entities
- Surrounding municipalities and unincorporated communities such as Takoma Park, City of Rockville and the Montgomery Village Foundation

### III. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

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The following goals, objectives, and actions have been developed to ensure that the efforts of the City of Gaithersburg in recreation services will meet the changing needs of the community and will provide excellent and effective recreation services to Gaithersburg residents.

#### A. GOALS

The following goals guide the recreation efforts of the City of Gaithersburg:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the central role recreation plays in quality of life
- Ensure that people of all ages and abilities in our community have access to a system of high quality programs, meaningful activities, and opportunities that foster active lifestyles to support a healthy community
- Utilize citizen input and recreational trends to promote positive personal development and lifetime engagement
- Ensure all communities have accessible, safe, functional, and engaging recreational facilities and amenities, creating social equity
- Seek opportunities to acquire open space and foster conservation of natural resources, implement sustainable practices, and preserve green space for passive and active recreation

#### B. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives support the aforementioned goals of the City of Gaithersburg:

##### **OBJECTIVE 1: Foster a healthy community and promote active and enriching lifestyles.**

##### **ACTIONS**

- 1. Provide residents high quality and affordable recreational opportunities that meet the current and changing needs of our community.**
  - a. Continue to offer a well-managed and on-trend series of organized sports programs that:
    - increase participants’ physical and psychological well-being

- reduce risks of weight-related health issues
  - instill the value of teamwork
  - encourage a sense of responsibility and respect for self and others
  - develop friendships and a sense of social well-being
  - builds self confidence
- b. Continue to offer innovative classes, programs, and memberships that promote health, wellness, and personal development for all ages and abilities including:
    - intergenerational classes
    - dance and fitness classes
    - arts and craft and global cultural arts classes
    - tactile skill-building programs
    - continuing education
  - c. Utilize Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) educational tools and outdoor educational offerings in youth activities at all age and skill levels
  - d. Act as a resource for older adults who would benefit from programs and services that help them to stay healthy, engaged in their community, feel valued, and age in place
  - e. Offer a comprehensive selection of aquatic classes for fun, fitness, life-saving skills, and therapeutic benefits
  - f. Provide out-of-school activities for City students that promote health, wellness, and enriching experiences
  - g. Create outdoor education opportunities and adventure activities within the City or via City sponsored trips
  - h. Recognize and meet the needs of varied individuals and groups, and address their varied expectations based on their age, ability, income, and background
- 2. Utilize customer feedback as a means of measuring recreational trends and ensuring programs are relevant to the audience.**
    - a. Create surveys and make them available online, and at events, programs and facilities
    - b. Incentivize survey participation by offering rewards and giveaways
    - c. Conduct program evaluations with participants and instructors
  - 3. Provide a comprehensive program of recreational activities that offers a variety of experiences adjusted to meet the physical, cognitive, and psychological needs of all residents.**
    - a. Provide accommodations that meet or exceed those outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines
    - b. Offer or facilitate therapeutic recreation services to reduce or eliminate the effects of illness or disability
    - c. Offer inclusion services in programs
    - d. Provide detailed training in inclusivity to coaches, volunteers, camp counselors, and others who would lead these programs
    - e. Provide recreational opportunities that test personal limits, improve self-confidence and self-esteem, and develop leadership and cooperative skills
  - 4. Encourage residents of all ages to participate in outdoor activities, wellness initiatives, and nature programs.**
    - a. Continue free outdoor fitness classes and expand the variety and scope of the program to include all geographical sectors of the City

- b. Create classes that connect participants with the natural world in practical and applied methods such as nature photography, birdwatching, organic horticulture, preservation of natural habitat, green approaches to daily problems such as recycling and repurposing, composting solar power, rain and wind capturing
  - c. Leverage a broad interest in dogs to bring people outdoors for programs such as dog parks, walks, agility courses, and obedience training
- 5. Engage the community through City, state, and national initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles.**
- a. Actively participate in Let's Move Cities and Towns Gold Medal Program using the program's goals as a strategy for developing activities and initiatives including:
    - Encouraging early childcare and education providers to incorporate best practices for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time into their programs
    - Providing and/or promoting healthy food in schools
    - Increasing access to play
  - b. Actively participate in Let's Move Cities and Towns All-Stars Program using the program's strategies as a guide for developing activities and initiatives including:
    - Creating and promoting a Bicycle Friendly Community
    - Developing and implementing healthy design guidelines to encourage physical activity
    - Establishing or enhancing slow zones and employing traffic calming measures near schools, parks, after school programs, and recreation centers
    - Creating a healthy meeting policy for city facilities, events, and meetings
    - Offering a recognition program for area businesses that implement certain wellness policies
    - Expanding access to farmers markets
    - Supporting community gardens and urban agriculture
    - Maintaining and supporting a breastfeeding policy for City facilities and employees in accordance with or going beyond state/federal law
  - c. Actively participate in the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Program, using the program's guidelines to promote relevant activities in Gaithersburg
- 6. Track trends in social media and technology-based activities that have valued recreational applications to develop programs that leverage these interests.**
- a. Create Apps for mobile devices that facilitate engagement in events, park use, and recreation
  - b. Offer online virtual tours of City parks to inform and encourage people to explore and use trails and other amenities
  - c. Utilize technology, such as drones, to document construction progress and film regional events to create videos
- 7. Recruit parent volunteers of children enrolled in programs to encourage positive family involvement in achievement of goals.**

**OBJECTIVE 2: Strive to ensure that the young people in our community have access to a system of high quality programs, activities, and opportunities that promote positive personal development.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Provide young people with access to high quality early childhood education programs that foster positive development and promote physical and emotional health and wellness.**
  - a. Cultivate a developmentally appropriate curriculum that supports health, nutrition, and social well-being in an environment that respects and supports diversity
  - b. Encourage programming that gives parents opportunities to increase their own educational attainment and participate in educating their children
  - c. Implement year round play based programs in parks during the summer and in City facilities during the winter
  - d. Provide resources that support healthy habits, healthy living, and healthy initiatives to fight obesity
  - e. Develop knowledgeable, well-trained staff and volunteers that are supported with ongoing professional development
  - f. Complete risk-management assessments of all facilities and parks
  
- 2. Promote safety and healthy lifestyles; academic and vocational success; cultural competency and connection; emotional security and resiliency.**
  - a. Create a screening system to identify youth in crisis and develop an outreach program to respond to crisis situations; work closely with the City's Community Services Division to facilitate social services when necessary
  - b. Offer opportunities for youth to participate in meaningful service to the community
  - c. Provide resources that support healthy habits and active living
  - d. Offer safe, indoor play spaces for younger children
  - e. Increase STEM or STEAM programs to foster creativity and innovation
  - f. Offer dedicated space for high school age programming
  - g. Facilitate a summer jobs program with a strong effort towards workforce development and offer mentor and internship programs
  
- 3. Provide mechanisms to ensure that young people will have opportunities to have their voice heard, to have a positive impact on their community, and experience social and civic engagement.**
  - a. Create youth-in-government programs that offer opportunities to participate in local government
  - b. Establish a City-wide survey to be conducted regularly by youth that will determine gaps in needs and services
  
- 4. Ensure that school age youth have access to, and participate in, quality programs that will facilitate their current and future success and promote physical and emotional health and wellbeing.**
  - a. Offer affordable, safe places for recreation where young people feel welcomed and supported by positive adult relationships and engaging programs
  - b. Offer affordable programs and financial assistance to participate in recreation programs
  - c. Provide safe transportation to activities, youth centers and services

5. **Collect and analyze data/trends to affirm program strengths, detect areas of improvement, recognize staff training needs, and identify gaps in services to continually assure the overall quality of all out-of-school time programs.**
  - a. Develop and regularly implement an assessment tool to measure youth program quality and impact
  - b. Track and analyze retention rates in program participation
  - c. Use tools such as GIS data mapping to ensure that youth of all demographics and in all areas of the City are equally served
  - d. Enhance data collection to ensure the integrity of the data
  - e. Monitor and adapt to appropriate nation-wide trends in youth programming

**OBJECTIVE 3: Provide older adults with meaningful and relevant recreation and wellness programs that address the needs of socialization, leisure activities, continuing education, health empowerment, and lifetime engagement.**

#### **ACTIONS**

1. **Provide a growing and changing older adult population with new, challenging, and innovative recreational opportunities that empower participants to learn, improve their health, make social connections, travel and engage in the world around them.**
  - a. Create supportive intergenerational programs and activities that foster cooperation and promote interaction and the sharing of talents and resources
  - b. Offer outdoor adventure outings to build health and personal confidence
  - c. Organize local and long distance trips to a variety of cultural, historic, culinary, gaming, natural, and educational destinations
  - d. Offer active, organized activities such as sports and fitness programs
  - e. Work with regional organizations to provide training and continuing education opportunities
  - f. Plan special events with other similar facilities to encourage socialization and broaden the base of friendships
  - g. Create opportunities for individuals to share their skills and talents with others
  - h. Offer meaningful volunteer opportunities
  - i. Meet the program needs and interests of a diverse community
  - j. Provide purposeful intergenerational programming with a focus on a higher quality of life for all ages
  - k. Plan programming that involves volunteers from the City's Youth Services Division who can benefit from the experience of the community's older adults
2. **Incorporate programs with structured group activities and enhanced socialization designed to have a positive impact on physically frail or cognitively impaired older individuals.**
  - a. Create a program for those no longer appropriate for a senior center but not ready for adult day care. Hire credentialed staff to meet or exceed nationally benchmarked participant/staff ratio
  - b. Offer drop-in care so family member caregivers may participate in recreation programs
  - c. Offer/host therapeutic recreation programs for people with mental and physical disabilities
  - d. Provide cognitive games and educational opportunities

3. **Assist older residents to age in place by being a resource for individuals and families in need of services and assistance.**
  - a. Use national and regional models for aging in place as a guide to develop communities, such as Age Friendly Communities, Commission on Aging, and Village Models
  - b. Create programs and resources that will establish Gaithersburg as a great place to retire
  - c. Partner with the County to provide assistance with issues related to Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and housing
  - d. Create a system to provide information on affordable and reliable services such as home repair, aides, house cleaning, yard work, snow removal, transportation to appointments
  - e. Be a resource for communities that have adapted the Village Model or are emerging Villages
  - f. Provide programs that improve and support quality of life and mental health issues
  - g. Work with nonprofit organizations that provide services to assist individuals to better age in place
  - h. Offer support services for caregivers, respite, retirement, and estate planning
  - i. Host preventive health screenings
  - j. Provide transportation to and from the Benjamin Gaither Center as well as to shopping and medical appointments

**OBJECTIVE 4: Promote community awareness of the recreational programs and facilities available; and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Develop a comprehensive public relations plan for City recreation opportunities that includes facilities, programs, and initiatives.**
  - a. Develop programs that target specific interest groups
  - b. Facilitate feature articles in local news outlets
  - c. Work with the City's video productions staff to produce programs on the City's recreational offerings
  - d. Partner with local, state and national organizations and use these resources to develop awareness campaigns
  - e. Use the City website to update and promote recreational opportunities
2. **Develop and maintain participation through effective and diverse marketing.**
  - a. Identify best practices for reaching target markets
  - b. Develop dynamic and innovative marketing strategies to reach all parts of our diverse community
  - c. Be a trend watcher and capitalize on trends that are efficient and effective
  - d. Expand the use of technology to reach audiences
3. **Encourage organizations and businesses within the City to promote the City's recreational opportunities to their employees and customers through reward programs and awareness campaigns.**
4. **Increase awareness of how recreation enhances health and wellness, social well-being, positive youth development, active aging, and quality of life.**

**OBJECTIVE 5: Provide recreational facilities that meet the recreational needs and interests of all individuals.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Continually evaluate recreational amenities relative to needs within existing communities; balancing existing amenities with demand.**
- 2. Provide facilities for both passive and active recreation.**
- 3. Provide multi-functional, flexible facilities that can accommodate a variety of ever-changing needs and trends in recreational uses.**
  - a. Track trends and existing or developing gaps in services to determine priority needs
  - b. Obtain and track stakeholder feedback
- 4. Facilitate opportunities to meet the recreational facility needs of our community through redeveloping or expanding existing City-owned properties.**
  - a. Evaluate park properties for repurposing or redeveloping opportunities (e.g., Skate Park)
  - b. Evaluate facilities for repurposing or redeveloping (i.e., Bohrer Park Manor House, building expansions such as the Activity Center, former police station)
- 5. Work with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to provide recreational opportunities.**
  - a. Continue the joint operation of the Gaithersburg Aquatic Center
  - b. Use school facilities to house programs, particularly classes and camps
  - c. Work with Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) to optimize a mutually beneficial relationship for the use of MCPS properties.
- 6. Seek opportunities to acquire new property or work with landowners in developing properties to meet or fill gaps in needed services.**
  - a. Work with developers to ensure optimal use of recreation space within new developments
  - b. Work to ensure that shared-use trails, bike lanes, and bike infrastructure are considered in the planning of road and infrastructure projects
  - c. Seek opportunities for recreational amenities in redeveloping or newly developed properties as part of the Site Development Approval process
  - d. Consider opportunities to acquire available properties (i.e., Nike site, Izaak Walton League properties, WSSC sites, shopping centers or malls, abandoned or unused MCPS sites, Agricultural Center)
- 7. Maintain safe and reliable facilities in an efficient and effective manner.**
  - a. Provide for a system of regular safety inspections and maintenance of all equipment and facilities
- 8. Create a multi-functional, multi-generational facility to broadly support the recreational needs and opportunities of our community.**
  - a. Create flexible space that easily adapts to a variety of uses
  - b. Offer year round day and evening programs and accessible amenities for all ages, including wellness checks, social services, fitness center, library, kitchen/cafeteria, computer lab, and class/performance space

- c. Ensure adequate outdoor space for programs and leisure activities
- d. Provide credentialed staff to meet the specialized needs of the community
- e. Assist older residents to age in place by serving as a resource for individuals and families in need of services and assistance

**OBJECTIVE 6: Encourage an effective, efficient working relationship with organizations, schools, businesses, and foundations to leverage efforts and resources for the benefit of the community's recreational needs.**

**ACTIONS**

1. Leverage partnerships with health providers and allied agencies that contribute essential components to the overall health of our community.
2. Increase participation in all forms of recreation, sport, outdoor activities, and play by working with agencies and organizations that serve all sectors of the community.

**OBJECTIVE 7: Build and encourage building of sustainable sites using industry standards for sustainable building or equivalent qualified agencies.**

**ACTIONS**

1. Work with the City's Environmental Affairs Committee to develop environmental programs.
  - a. Conduct and encourage good environmental practices in daily activities
  - b. Implement a composting program at City events
  - c. Promote recycling at all facilities, parks, and events
  - d. Participate in the Sustainable Maryland program
  - e. Use green products in maintaining buildings and grounds
2. Use and encourage best environmental practices in building and maintaining sports fields, including those with artificial turf surfaces.
3. Offer opportunities for individuals to contribute to the community through Student Service Learning, civic involvement, skills training, mentoring and internship opportunities, inclusion programs, and volunteer opportunities for adults—through sports, docents, special events, and more.

**OBJECTIVE 8: Encourage, celebrate and support cultural diversity and similarities in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.**

**ACTIONS**

1. Develop programming and initiatives that create and nurture a welcoming environment of civility and respect for differences in an inclusive manner.
  - a. Identify impediments to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, offer solutions to overcome those impediments, and measure progress
  - b. Weave the principles of diversity and inclusion into all aspects of recreation programs
  - c. Hire additional multilingual leadership who share language and cultural similarities to non-native residents

- d. Create safe environments for vulnerable populations to recreate
  - e. Use the six pillars of the CHARACTER COUNTS!® program to educate young people on living a value-based life
  - f. Cultivate opportunities for programs and events to reflect the City's diversity and continue to recruit volunteers of ethnicity for committees, programs, and events
  - g. Provide print materials and interpreters in a variety of languages
  - h. Develop programs that respect cultural sensitivities
  - i. Seek methods to increase participation of under-represented groups
2. **Seek connections with diverse communities through contacts with individuals, businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other diverse associations.**
  3. **Work with the City's Multicultural Affairs Committee to develop diversity outreach programs and events.**
    - a. Hold events to celebrate the world cultures
    - b. Conduct student competitions in writing, visual arts, design, and music that commemorate the cultures and achievements of people throughout the world

**OBJECTIVE 9: Engage in sustainable practices and opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to contribute to the City's efforts to provide recreational programs and facilities.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Systematically and efficiently provide for the recreational needs of all residents through the use of both public and private resources.**
2. **Seek funding from federal, state, and county grants, bond bills, foundations, public/private partnerships, corporate gifts, and community based fundraising events.**
3. **Actively promote a comprehensive sponsorship program.**
  - a. Build sustainable sponsor commitment
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward donor support
4. **Work with the Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corporation, Inc. (G-PARC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, to develop, promote, and/or financially support parks and recreation programs, projects, initiatives, and facilities.**
  - a. Organize "Friends of" groups in support of specific programs, initiatives and facilities
  - b. Partner with the G-PARC Alliance for Recreation to support programs to meet the community's recreational needs
5. **Conduct an active and organized volunteer program that builds and celebrates community support and resources.**
  - a. Develop programs that attract the volunteer efforts of individuals, groups, scouts, faith-based and educational organizations, and others
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward volunteers
6. **Work to offset the cost of providing affordable programs to City residents through the development of revenue-share programming, partnerships, sponsorships and other similar opportunities.**

**OBJECTIVE 10: Promote park use as a means of developing healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the environment.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Develop promotions that educate and involve residents in City parks based on their health value, including:**
  - a. Exposure to nature can improve psychological and social health
  - b. Access to parks increases the frequency of exercise and general physical activity
  - c. Staying active can help reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, depression, and other health problems
    - Parks provide opportunities for all people to be socially engaged, cognitively stimulated, and to relax and revitalize
  - d. Parks provide refuges of safety for at-risk youth, which in turn can help reduce juvenile delinquency
  - e. Parks provide opportunities for community involvement, volunteer work, and therapeutic recreation



## Activity Center at Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm

Address: 506 South Frederick Avenue  
Size: 49,000 Square Feet  
Type: Community / Sports / Rentals

### Description

Built in 1998, the 49,000 square foot Activity Center is located within the 57.7-acre Bohrer Park. The facility features two large gymnasiums with basketball courts and bleacher seating, three multi-purpose rooms, the Fitness Zone, and serves as the headquarters for the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture. Numerous programs, events and rental opportunities are available at the Activity Center such as athletic leagues, classes, camps, open gym, fitness programs, special events and art exhibits. On the surrounding property, are expansive picnic pavilions, two fishing ponds, and the City's outdoor Water Park, Skate Park and Miniature Golf Course.

### Components

- 2 Gyms -15,500 sq. ft.
- 3 Multi-purpose Rooms -3,060 sq. ft.
- Fitness Zone- 1,700 sq. ft.
- Business Offices
- Restrooms
- Locker Rooms
- Lobby / Art Gallery





### Assessment of Existing Facility

The Activity Center serves a wide variety of purposes in the community and consists of a vast array of structures. The main building was designed to capacitate the addition of a second floor. If built, this could provide an opportunity for more intergenerational programming.

#### Interior Improvements Needed:

- Gyms– Install new roof in the next 5 years and new flooring in the next 10 years
- Buildingwide ADA Assessment-Complete periodically to ensure compliance

#### Exterior Improvements Needed:

- Patio Area–Address and remediate water attenuation
- Outdoor Lighting–Assess for safety and security
- Parking Lot–Regrade, resurface, and restripe
- Landscaping Assessment–Identify and install the best plants for visual appeal but also consider the safety of drivers and pedestrians
- Alternative Fuel Stations–Install additional facilities
- ADA Assessments–Complete periodically to ensure compliance for all outdoor facilities and parking lots





## Gaithersburg Aquatic Center

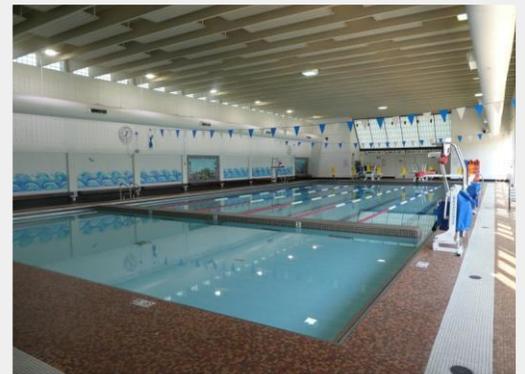
Address: 2 Teachers Way  
Size: 9,453 Square Feet  
Type: Aquatics/ Community

### Components

- 25 yard main pool with diving board
- Shallow “teach” pool
- Lockers rooms
- Restrooms
- Showers

### Description

Built in 1975, the Gaithersburg Aquatic Center is owned by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and operated jointly with the City of Gaithersburg. The Aquatic Center consists of a six-lane, 25-yard main pool with a one-meter diving board as well as an adjacent shallow water “teach pool” area. Lockers and showers are available for use. The City operates, programs and staffs the pool for community use after school hours, on weekends and during summer vacation. MCPS operates, schedules and staffs the facility for its use during school hours.



### Assessment of Existing Facility

This facility can only be used on a limited basis due to parking restrictions during school hours and other factors. It has outgrown the needs of the community and the City should assess the best way to serve the demand for an indoor swimming facility. The building itself is more than 40 years old and has major issues, including an outdated and faltering cast iron plumbing system. The tile around the pool deck and in the locker rooms needs to be replaced. Additional features would enhance the facility including an enclosure around the current patio, a rental area for parties, and a deck viewing area. The City needs to determine a process to identify aquatic community recreation needs and opportunities to develop a facility with modern style and capabilities.





# Benjamin Gaither Center

Address: 80A Bureau Drive  
 Size: 12,000 Square Feet  
 Type: Community

## Components

- Fitness Center
- Computer Lab
- Billiard Area
- Full Commercial Grade Catering Kitchen
- Library
- Lecture Room
- 3 Large Multipurpose Flex Spaces
- 1 Green Vehicle Charging Station

## Description

Opened in 1991, the Benjamin Gaither Center serves residents of Gaithersburg and the surrounding area by offering a variety of classes, trips, special events, activities, and a lunch program for those 55 years of age and older. A 1,000 square foot state-of-the-art Fitness Center featuring strength and cardiovascular equipment is available to help older adults live healthier lives.



## Assessment of Existing Facility

The 2015 renovation maximized the present building footprint while adding an additional 1,000 square foot fitness room. Upgrades were made to the flooring and lighting, and a dedicated computer lab was created. As the senior population in Gaithersburg continues to grow, a larger facility will be needed to meet their needs. Additional class and meeting rooms and a gymnasium will be needed. An ideal center would ideally have outdoor facilities for seniors to enjoy.





## Casey Community Center

Address: 810 South Frederick Avenue  
Size: 10,000 Square Feet  
Type: Community / Rental

### Components

- Dance Studio
- Multipurpose Rooms (for meetings, classes, and events)
- Full Service Catering Kitchen
- Restrooms
- Tot Lot

### Description

Built in 1938, this facility was originally used as a dairy barn. In 1969, Casey Community Center was annexed to the City and it now offers a dance studio, kitchen and a variety of multi-purpose rooms to hold classes, meetings, wedding receptions and other special occasion parties. Major renovation to the kitchen occurred in 2015-2016. Bright and cheerful rooms and a playground are used for the Creative Tot Time Program for preschoolers.



### Assessment of Existing Facility

This building is in need of many replacements. The kitchen stove and the floor in Room E need to be replaced in the next year. In the next 5 years, the tot lot and the sprung floor in the Dance Studio need to be replaced. The reception area needs to be renovated in the next 5-10 years. The electrical wiring system and junction box need to be upgraded.

### Stormwater Management Insights

The parcel's existing stormwater control measures provide little to no water quality treatment due to inadequate filtration. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the park facility with stormwater filtration practices for improved water quality treatment such as a bioretention cell with an underdrain and yard outfall. Redesign of existing curb and concrete channel will be required to redirect the runoff into the bioretention cell.





## Olde Towne Youth Center

Address: 301 Teachers Way  
Size: 7,374 Square Feet  
Type: Community / Youth / Rental

### Components

- Multipurpose Room
- Game Room
- Audio Recording and Production Studio
- Outdoor Half Basketball Court
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station

### Description

The Olde Towne Youth Center is Gaithersburg's second "green" municipal building, and opened as a Platinum LEED certified facility (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) by the U.S. Green Building Council. Using the most up-to-date technologies and earth friendly building techniques during its construction, the building's green features include a vegetated roof, photovoltaic panels to help offset the electrical load, a geothermal heating and cooling system, insulation made of soybeans, floors made of recycled tires, and cabinetry made of wheatboard. The Center offers middle school students a creative, enriching and fun after school experience. Activities include a computer lab, volunteer service projects, arts and crafts, video games, exercise and nutrition programs, homework time, and an outdoor half basketball court. The Center also features a state-of-the-art studio where both middle and high school students can learn audio and video production using the latest equipment.



### Assessment of Existing Facility

The grade of the back portion of the building needs to be corrected to mitigate flooding. A patio with outdoor seating should be added when completing this project. The front desk location prevents staff from seeing incoming guests. The layout of this area should be redesigned. Other recommended improvements include a study room and library addition, age appropriate outdoor play space, relocation of the crosswalk to reflect natural pedestrian traffic flow, a lighting assessment for safety, and regular security and safety assessments. Moving forward, research and data suggests that the City needs to create a youth center that exclusively serves high school students.





## Robertson Park Youth Center

Address: 801 Rabbitt Road  
Size: 7,400 Square Feet  
Type: Community / Youth / Rental

### Components

- Climbing Wall
- Computer Lab/ Study Room
- Art Room
- Outdoor Half Basketball Court

### Description

Built in 2006, the Robertson Park Youth Center is the City's first "green" municipal building. From the initial site location to the chemical make-up of the paint, the building is designed to be innovative and environmentally friendly. Achieving the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification status, the building's green features include a geothermal heating and cooling system, cabinetry made of wheatboard, floors made from recycled tires and rubber, ENERGY STAR® windows, light sensors to control lighting, forest certified wood to promote sustainable forestry techniques, and insulation made from recycled blue jeans. The Center features an indoor climbing wall and a computer lab and serves middle school students as a place to congregate after school for social interaction, study groups, field trips, and a host of other activities.



### Assessment of Existing Facility

The entire building floor needs to be replaced in the next 5 years. A sound attenuation study should be completed. The basketball court needs to be regraded. The bathrooms and office need to be more accessible from inside and outside of the building and the layout should be modified to improve flow between these key areas. In order to enhance programming, skate park components should be added to the exterior of the facility and a bus pull-off needs to be installed.



## Miniature Golf Course

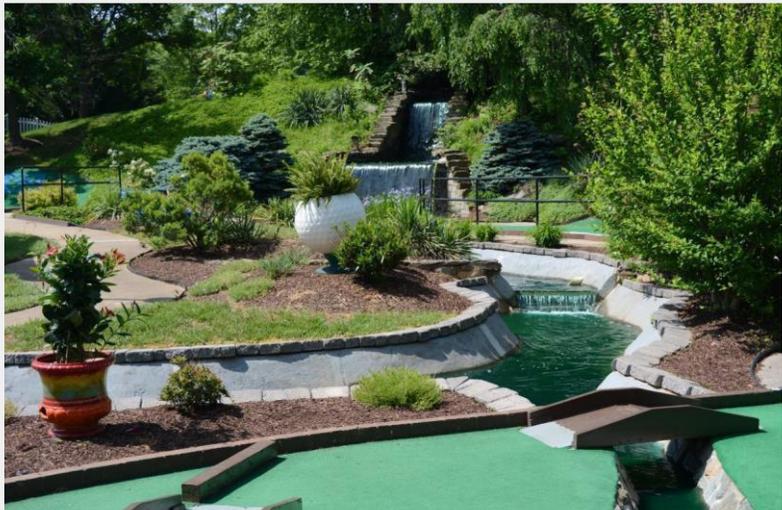
Address: 514 South Frederick Avenue  
Size: 95,039 Square Feet  
Type: Seasonal

### Components

- 18 Holes
- Waterfalls
- Ponds / Streams

### Description

Located in Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm, the 18 hole Miniature Golf Course offers a fun and challenging course, with hole locations changed daily. Patrons enjoy beautiful landscaping features including waterfalls, streams, and ponds.



### Assessment of Existing Facility

Ponds need to be rebuilt due to leakage and drainage issues. A party area with a permanent shelter would improve the facility and maximize its functionality. The fencing will need to be replaced.



## Water Park at Bohrer Park

Address: 512 South Frederick Avenue  
Size: 82,765 Square Feet  
Type: Seasonal / Aquatics

### Description

The outdoor Water Park, located within the 57-acre campus of Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm is used by families, summer camps and day care providers. Intended for recreational swimming, the main pool is designed to be an island-like resort with palm trees, multiple slides, floatable animals, and a “tumble bucket” water feature. The pool also has a zero-depth entry, making it accessible to all. The Water Park’s major attraction is the double water slide that is 250 feet long and twists and turns into the main pool. One half of the slide offers a fast ride, while the other offers a tamer, slower water journey. The children’s splash pool includes a custom in-water play structure with open and closed flume slides that pays homage to the State of Maryland with Black-Eyed Susan and Blue Heron play features. In 2014, both pools were gutted and renovated. In 2019, a new slide tower and flumes will be installed.

### Components

- Main Pool
- Slides
- Splash Pool
- Concession Stand
- Office / Ticket Booth
- Locker Rooms
- Restrooms
- Lounge Areas
- 2 Playgrounds
- 8 Rental Pavilions



### Assessment of Existing Facility

In addition to routine maintenance of the pools, the Water Park pump and filter room is to be renovated. As the City considers the future of the Skate Park, it should also consider the popularity and space needs of the Water Park. Additional adjacent space could be utilized to accommodate more visitors and add new facility features.



## Skate Park

Address: 510 South Frederick Avenue  
Size: 12,300 Square Feet  
Type: Seasonal

### Description

The 12,300 square foot Skate Park opened in 2000 and is designed for skateboards, inline skates and BMX bikes. Its construction was spearheaded by local youth who enjoyed the sport. The park includes ramps and structures suitable for a wide range of skill levels. Some obstacles include an A-frame ramp and rail, mini-half pipe, 7-6' escalator, stairs, pyramid wedge, fun boxes, wall ride, and several quarters and banks of varying heights. All ramps are constructed with a wood frame and Skatelite surface. Other amenities include vending machines, coin-operated lockers, helmet/pad rentals, and an outdoor stereo system. The park offers lessons and clinics. The City is considering repurposing this site in the future.

### Components

- A Frame Ramp and Rail
- Mini Half-Pipe
- 7-6" Escalator
- Stairs
- Pyramid Wedge
- Fun Boxes
- Wall Ride
- Quarters and Banks
- Lockers and Rentals
- Outdoor Stereo System



### Assessment of Existing Facility

The Skate Park will need to be renovated in the next 5 years and all surfaces should be replaced with concrete. A security audit needs to be done and the fence should be expanded or removed to prevent fence-jumping. A wall should be installed between the park and pool to increase safety, which would also present an opportunity to create a public art mural. A general painting schedule should be established. Other recommendations to improve programming include lights for night-skating, bathrooms, and a water fountain. This area is being discussed and data is being collected to analyze current use and determine if a Skate Park is the best type of facility for this location.



## Foreseeable Recreation Facilities

Below are recreation facilities that are being considered for development in the foreseeable future.

- **HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** Potential uses for City-owned historic properties not currently in use will be evaluated and determined based on community input, feasibility, resources and identified needs. Properties include the historic buildings in Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm (the Manor House, Smoke House, Caretakers House and Barn), and the historic Crown Farm buildings. Many of these properties will require extensive renovations, and maintenance concerns need to be considered. Potential uses include programming activities, exhibits and events that celebrate and interpret the City's heritage and historical significances, as well as recreational opportunities.
- **SKATE PARK:** Repurposing of the Skate Park at Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm is to be considered as use of this amenity decreases and the facility ages. A study has been conducted on alternative uses. Next steps will be determined after further evaluation.
- **NIKE MISSILE SITE:** This site is currently owned by the Federal government and was previously used as a launch site for NIKE missiles and then activities of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), including the development of robotic rescue equipment. If the City were to take ownership of the site, its development would be determined based on community input, feasibility, environmental impact, resources and identified needs. Recreational uses could include sports courts, ball fields, trails, fitness equipment, skate spot, bike course and community gardens.
- **ACTIVITY CENTER AT BOHRER PARK AT SUMMIT HALL FARM:** As use of the facility increases and the needs of the community evolve, consideration should be given to adding a second floor above the administrative office portion of the building. This could provide options for multi-generational programming and expanded office space.
- **LOT 4, BLOCK C OF SPECTRUM AT WATKINS MILL:** This parcel was set aside for the construction of a new senior center.

## Visionary Ideas

The following is a compilation of ideas, both new and restated, from this Recreation Chapter that have been identified by City staff to be further explored within the next decade.

- Build a dynamic, state-of-the-art Nature Center.
- Create an innovative multi-generational and/or senior center.
- Add unisex bathrooms and showers at the Benjamin Gaither and Gaithersburg Aquatic Centers.
- Build new sports facilities including a new indoor aquatic center, an 8-lane track field and various outdoor sports courts with timed lighting.
- Increase the use of artificial turf on new and existing sports fields.
- Renovate Bohrer Park historic buildings into a historic farm park with heritage and cultural programming, as well as unique rental opportunities.
- Construct a multilevel parking garage at Bohrer Park.
- Develop multi-purpose indoor play spaces including sensory amenities and accessible equipment for children with disabilities, and play equipment/playgrounds for inclement weather days and for children with health issues that prevent outdoor play.
- Celebrate the diversity of Gaithersburg and heighten awareness of cultural similarities and differences through purpose-designed programs that enlighten, rejoice and educate.
- Support and celebrate the City's LGBTQ+ community with programming and events.
- Provide individual room temperature controls in all facilities to regulate temperatures appropriate for various sedentary to highly active uses.
- Renovate Casey Community Center so as to accomplish the goals of a 21st Century Community Center, including increasing electrical capacity.
- Install solar-powered electronic signs to replace banners at key entryways to the City.
- Renovate existing picnic pavilions and construct additional one.
- Renovate restrooms and add access timers so these amenities can be more convenient for public use; consider (temporary) restrooms in other parks where there is a high level of scheduled activity.
- Consider marketing opportunities on appropriate platforms that encourage running as a family sport, which might include the promotion of area races and running-related programs.

# Cultural Arts Chapter



*Top to bottom, left to right: Kentlands Mansion; Gaithersburg Community Museum; Asian Pacific Heritage event; Labor Day Parade dancers; Arts Barn; Winter Lights Festival; and City Hall Concert Pavilion*



## I. INTRODUCTION: WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO

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Arts and culture bring people together through concerts, festivals, arts centers, theaters, galleries, public art, museums, schools, libraries, and community centers. When a community fosters artistic expression and embraces its history and heritage, it enhances its citizens' ability to achieve academically, grow intellectually, interact socially, and value diversity.

Arts and culture give us hope and a vision for the future, help us to interpret the present, and allow us to comprehend and preserve our past. The arts enable us to freely pursue creative expressions that are as varied and diverse as the people who comprise our community and our nation.

**"The arts and culture field encompasses the performing, visual, and fine arts, as well as applied arts including architecture and graphic design; crafts; film, digital media and video; humanities and historic preservation; literature; folklife; and other creative activities."**

**--American Planning Association<sup>1</sup>**

In communities, arts and culture contribute specifically to:

- Social Well-Being
- Economic Vitality
- Identity and Sense of Place
- Education
- Health and Wellness
- Social Inclusion and Cultural Diversity
- Safe communities



### A. SOCIAL WELL BEING

Arts and culture directly influence a community's well-being through social cohesion, community pride, engagement, and civic action. Involvement in community-based arts and culture as a participant and/or observer facilitates the:

- Increase of awareness of others and realization of one's own role in the community.<sup>2</sup>
- Involvement and investment in a community, engendering confidence in the ability to make a difference.<sup>3</sup>
- Exploration of mediums that transcend language, bridging barriers among varied cultural groups.<sup>4</sup>
- Sense of identity and pride, leading to positive community attitudes, such as diversity, tolerance and free expression.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hodgson, R. (2011). Overview. *American Planning Association Arts and Culture Briefing Papers, 01*. Retrieved from <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9147991/>.

<sup>2</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Why Public Art Matters (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/why-public-art-matters-2018>

<sup>3</sup> Creative City Network of Canada. (2005). Making the Case for Culture: Arts and Positive Change in Communities. Retrieved from [https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts\\_positive\\_change\(1\).pdf](https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts_positive_change(1).pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

In “Why Public Art Matters (2018),” Americans for the Arts writes that public art reduces stress and provides a sense of belonging.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, public art actually encourages people to slow down while walking in public areas and experience positive emotions at the same time.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. ECONOMIC VITALITY**

Arts and culture impact a community's economic vitality in a number of ways: by creating hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, generating thousands of dollars in government and business revenue, serving as a destination for residents and visitors, helping to attract/retain businesses, and attracting a creative 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce.<sup>8</sup>

### **FACTS from *Arts & Economic Prosperity V*<sup>9</sup>:**

- This U.S. study of the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations and their audiences found that the nonprofit arts and culture industry pumped an estimated \$166.3 billion into the economy in 2015 as employers, producers, consumers, and promoters.
- An average arts attendee in Montgomery County in 2016 spent \$22.53 per event, not including the cost of admission. These purchases included meals, parking, shopping, hotel stays and souvenirs.

As local communities strive for sustainability, they understand that arts and culture create economic value. Arts and culture, like great schools and greenways, are key quality of life indicators. When businesses evaluate a community for possible relocation, they look for quality of life attributes that will help them attract and retain innovative workers. According to Richard Florida, author of the best-selling book *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), communities are now using their arts and culture as a way to attract the best and brightest workers today.<sup>10</sup> Americans for the Arts reports that 49% of college-educated people say they would consider how rich a community is in the arts before relocating for a job. This includes both Millennials and Gen Xers.<sup>11</sup> As such, a robust cultural environment can give a community a competitive edge for attracting new residents.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Guetzkow, J. (2002). How the Arts Impact Communities: An Introduction to the Literature on Arts Impact Studies. *Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies Working Paper Series, 20*. Retrieved from <https://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap/WP20%20-%20Guetzkow.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Why Public Art Matters (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/why-public-art-matters-2018>

<sup>7</sup> Cathey, K. (2018) The Impact of Public Art Projects on Human Health. *PolyVision*. Retrieved from <https://polyvision.com/about/news/the-impact-of-public-art-projects-on-human-health/>

<sup>8</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2012). Arts & Economic Prosperity IV. *Americans for the Arts*. Retrieved from [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information\\_services/research/services/economic\\_impact/aepiv/NationalStatisticalReport.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/aepiv/NationalStatisticalReport.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Arts & Economic Prosperity V. *Americans for the Arts*. Retrieved from [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF\\_Files/NationalFindings\\_StatisticalReport.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/aep5/PDF_Files/NationalFindings_StatisticalReport.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Fullman, A. R. (2009). Topic Brief: The Role of the Arts in Strengthening and Inspiring the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Community. *National Arts Policy Roundtable: A Program of Americans for the Arts*.

<sup>11</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Americans Speak Out About The Arts in 2018: An In-Depth Look at Perceptions and Attitudes About the Arts in America. Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/101584>

<sup>12</sup> Murray, D. (2011). How the Arts and Culture Sector Catalyzes Economic Vitality. *American Planning Association Arts and Culture Briefing Papers, 5*. Retrieved from <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9148001/>

The City recognizes that the arts are a potent force in its economic life and play an important role as direct and indirect contributors to the economy. Gaithersburg's thriving cultural life generates income, jobs, and tax revenue, and creates visibility for the community.

### **C. IDENTITY AND SENSE OF PLACE**

Arts and culture strategies help to reveal and enhance the underlying identity, unique meaning, value, and character of the physical and social form of a community. This identity is reflected in the community's character or sense of place. Sense of place evolves and develops over time, reflecting the spectrum of social values within and around the community. In this way, the character of a city can be seen as the narrative of a place. As stated in an American Planning Association report, "Planners and members of a community come together to reveal and burnish this narrative through:

- an articulation of the historic, cultural, economic, and cultural context of the community;
- a commitment to the reinforcement and enhancement of the community's identity; and
- the implementation of policies, regulations, and incentives that support and enhance this evolving identity."<sup>13</sup>

Planners use arts and culture to achieve economic, social, environmental, and community goals.

Artists offer an interpretation of a community's identity. Museums and cultural institutions provide a record and a telling of a community's history and evolution. Public art and monuments mark the trail of community development like touchstones to its character and history.

Access to community arts activities not only offers insight to historical identity, but also reduces isolation through participation. As stated in a Creative City Network of Canada report, "Parents with youth involved in sustained, structured community-based arts programs show a positive increase in the perception of their neighbourhoods."<sup>14</sup> Through the arts, families are able to change their entire perception of the community they live in for the better.

### **D. EDUCATION**

According to Fiske's *Champions of Change: the Impact of the Arts on Learning*, students participating in the arts outperform their peers academically. The study found that sustained learning in the performing arts is linked to greater success in math and reading. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds actually see the most academic benefits.<sup>15</sup> Other studies found that arts participation helps develop important skills and attitudes. Playing in a band or singing with a choral group helps children develop collaboration, creative thinking, problem solving, communication, and leadership skills as well as tolerance and empathy. These skills translate later in life to civic engagement and civic values.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hodgson, K. (2011). Community Character. *American Planning Association Arts and Culture Briefing Papers, 03*. Retrieved from <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9147999/>.

<sup>14</sup> Creative City Network of Canada. (2005). Making the Case for Culture: Arts and Positive Change in Communities. Retrieved from [https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts\\_positive\\_change\(1\).pdf](https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts_positive_change(1).pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Fiske, E. B. (1999). *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*. *Arts Education Partnership President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED435581>.

<sup>16</sup> Creative City Network of Canada. (2005). Making the Case for Culture: Arts and Positive Change in Communities. Retrieved from [https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts\\_positive\\_change\(1\).pdf](https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts_positive_change(1).pdf).

The arts are a key component of establishing an innovative workforce. According to the 2006 Conference Board Report, “Are They Really Ready To Work?,” creativity and innovation are considered among the top skills employers believe critical to success. In a 2008 study, “Ready to Innovate: Are Educators and Executives Aligned on the Creative Readiness of the U.S. Workforce?,” creativity and innovation were rated among the top five workforce skills that will become even more important within five years.<sup>17</sup>

**“The arts can provide effective learning opportunities to the general student population, yielding increased academic performance, reduced absenteeism, and better skill building. An even more compelling advantage is the striking success of arts-based education programs among disadvantaged populations, especially at-risk and incarcerated youth.”<sup>18</sup>**

**--The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation**

## **E. HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

The arts are good for people. Studies indicate that participation in the arts can improve health, mental well-being, cognitive functioning, and social cohesion. Exercising one’s creativity can be not only fun, but can also relieve stress. Current research has measured the natural substances bodies produce while listening to music, viewing a painting, reading poetry, or being otherwise engaged in the arts. Other research has studied what happens during the creative process and how the arts can help recovery from injuries, illness, or trauma.

Dr. Daniel Levitin of McGill University in Montreal states, “There is a reward system in place for learning music.”<sup>19</sup> Music can activate the brain’s pleasure centers. Singing releases substances in the brain that serve as natural pain-killers and increase the “bonding hormone” that helps create a sense of trust among individuals. When people listen to music, the body produces molecules that are important in fighting infection. Levitin says that music “may be the last thing to go” in those with severe memory loss from Alzheimer’s disease and that, “Even if they don’t know their own spouse, they can sing the songs of their youth.” Creating art—a painting, music, or creative writing—can help improve mental and physical health, as well as coping behaviors.<sup>20</sup>

When participating in group arts activities, such as taking an art or dance class, individuals receive the added benefit of widening and strengthen social bonds, meeting new and diverse people, and engaging actively in life. This is particularly important for children, youth, and the elderly.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Fullman, A. R. (2009). Topic Brief: The Role of the Arts in Strengthening and Inspiring the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Global Community. *National Arts Policy Roundtable: A Program of Americans for the Arts*.

<sup>18</sup> Psilos, P. (2002). The Impact of Arts Education on Workforce Preparation. National Governor’s Association. Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/100867>.

<sup>19</sup> Waring, B. (2008). Goosebumps in G Major: Levitin Reveals Your Brain on Music. *NIH Record*, 60(6). Retrieved from [https://nihrecord.nih.gov/newsletters/2008/03\\_21\\_2008/story3.htm](https://nihrecord.nih.gov/newsletters/2008/03_21_2008/story3.htm).

<sup>20</sup> Waring, B. (2008). Goosebumps in G Major: Levitin Reveals Your Brain on Music. *NIH Record*, 60(6). Retrieved from [https://nihrecord.nih.gov/newsletters/2008/03\\_21\\_2008/story3.htm](https://nihrecord.nih.gov/newsletters/2008/03_21_2008/story3.htm).

<sup>21</sup> Guetzkow, J. (2002). How the Arts Impact Communities: An Introduction to the Literature on Arts Impact Studies. *Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies Working Paper Series*, 20. Retrieved from <https://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/workpap/WP20%20-%20Guetzkow.pdf>.

While creative experiences enhance quality of life and nurture overall well-being, research indicates that arts experiences have broader impact. Dr. Barbara Bagan writes, “Less well known is the effectiveness of incorporating expressive arts into programs for older adults and patients who are diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and other chronic degenerative diseases.”<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Bagan also writes that, “Recent clinical research validates what some professionals and others who work with older adults have known for years—that making art is an essential, vital component of activities that offer a wide range of health benefits. Several studies show that art can reduce the depression and anxiety that are often symptomatic of chronic diseases. Other research demonstrates that the imagination and creativity of older adults can flourish in later life, helping them to realize unique, un-lived potentials, even when suffering from debilitating diseases.”<sup>23</sup>

## F. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, 12.9% of the U.S. population is foreign born—meaning they are not U.S. citizens at birth. This number is likely to increase as time goes on.<sup>24</sup> Many individuals already have dual citizenship or affiliations with multiple ethnic, religious, and cultural communities. As such, it is inevitable that our community includes people from many different cultures and with many different customs. According to Americans for the Arts, public art allows “the individual to better understand strangers and neighbors alike.... By reinforcing the culture of a community, public art acts as a catalyst for unity and social engagement.”<sup>25</sup> The City of Gaithersburg’s display of public art as well as its festivals, performances, exhibits, and other art offerings provides opportunities to build social cohesion and inclusion.

### **FACT from WalletHub:**

In 2018, WalletHub named Gaithersburg the 6<sup>th</sup> overall most diverse city in America and the 2<sup>nd</sup> most culturally and socioeconomically diverse. The list had 501 total cities.<sup>26</sup>

The arts can serve a vital role in promoting harmony between the various groups that comprise a community. Artistic endeavors can serve as vehicles to foster empathy and understanding. A dramatic production, an expressive image, or a powerful piece of music can immerse an audience in new experiences and emotions. Through creative expression, a better understanding of the lives and cultures of others can be achieved.

The arts encourage empathy, intercultural exchange, and respect of differences. In fact, the *Arts, Culture and the Social Health of the Nation Report* published in 2005 found that “Americans believe that attending arts events helps them to see things from other people’s perspective.”<sup>27</sup> As stated by the

<sup>22</sup> Bagan, B. (n.d.) Aging: What’s Art Got To Do With It? *Today’s Geriatric Medicine*. Retrieved from [http://www.todaysgeriatricmedicine.com/news/ex\\_082809\\_03.shtml](http://www.todaysgeriatricmedicine.com/news/ex_082809_03.shtml).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2011). The Foreign-Born Population in the United States-CSPAN Presentation. Retrieved from [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/cspan\\_fb\\_slides.pdf](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/pdf/cspan_fb_slides.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Why Public Art Matters (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/why-public-art-matters-2018>

<sup>26</sup> McCann, A. (2018). 2018’s Most Diverse Cities in the U.S. *WalletHub*. Retrieved from <https://wallethub.com/edu/most-diverse-cities/12690/>.

<sup>27</sup> Miringoff, M. & Opdycke, S. (2005). Arts, Culture, and the Social Health of the Nation. *Institute for Innovation in Social Policy Vassar College*, 8. Retrieved from <http://iisp.vassar.edu/artsculture.pdf>.

Creative City Network of Canada, “Participation in multicultural arts allows people to retain contact with their roots, enhancing feelings of community and building understanding with disparate groups.”<sup>28</sup>

When arts and culture are interwoven into the fabric of our community, the lives of our citizens are richer, more tolerant and embracing of differences.

### G. SAFE COMMUNITIES

The arts can enrich communities, creating a sense of pride, ownership, expression, and unity. In the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) 2018 Arts Vibrancy Index, the Washington D.C. region ranked third out of the top 20 arts-vibrant large cities in the U.S. The report “incorporates multiple measures under three main rubrics [to assess arts vibrancy across America]: supply, demand, and public support for arts and culture on a per capita basis.” It defines “vibrancy” using “Merriam-Webster’s definition of the word to mean ‘pulsating with life, vigor, or activity.’”<sup>29</sup> The City contributes to this vibrancy through its events, performance venues, exhibits, classes, cultural institutions, public art projects, and other endeavors. Gaithersburg’s arts culture may even reduce crime because it fosters so many positive social experiences for residents.



Although the City’s crime rate is relatively low<sup>30,31</sup>, there is room for improvement—and public art could be a piece in that puzzle. The collaborative process of creating public art can target specific safety challenges that plague communities and foster negative attitudes. For example, Americans for the Arts reports that public art can “address negative stigma issues towards another culture or group by providing another perspective when considering people of different backgrounds.”<sup>32</sup> If people feel accepted and surrounded by understanding rather than prejudice, they are bound to feel safer in their community.

The process and presence of public art has immense value within communities and has the capacity to draw attention to outside forces that can assist with health and safety concerns. Strategically executed public art can raise awareness of issues such as racism, gang violence and environmental degradation.

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<sup>28</sup> Creative City Network of Canada. (2005). Making the Case for Culture: Arts and Positive Change in Communities. Retrieved from [https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts\\_positive\\_change\(1\).pdf](https://www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts_positive_change(1).pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Voss, Z. G., Voss, G., Awtry, B., & Armstrong, J. (2018). NCAR Arts Vibrancy Index IV: Hotbeds of America’s Arts and Culture. In *The Top 40 Most Vibrant Arts Communities in America (2018)* (SMU Data Arts). Retrieved from <http://mcs.smu.edu/artsresearch2014/arts-vibrancy-2018>

<sup>30</sup> Montgomery County Government. (2019). *Crime* [Data Montgomery]. Retrieved from <https://data.montgomerycountymd.gov/Public-Safety/Crime/icn6-v9z3>

<sup>31</sup> Neighborhood Scout. (n.d.). Gaithersburg, MD Crime Rates. *Neighborhood Scout*. Retrieved from <https://www.neighborhoodscout.com/md/gaithersburg/crime>

<sup>32</sup> Americans for the Arts. (2018). Why Public Art Matters (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/reports-and-data/legislation-policy/naappd/why-public-art-matters-2018>

For example, according to Jack Becker with Americans for the Arts, “The *AIDS Memorial Quilt*, featuring over 70,000 individual quilts, has been displayed on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Beyond the spectacle of a colorful, monumental folk art installation, the quilt raises awareness of the AIDS epidemic, generates significant media attention, and leverages increased support for research and education.”<sup>33</sup> Art can serve as a visual reminder of the value of community and heal neighborhoods when crime or widespread health issues arise.

## II. ARTS & CULTURE IN THE CITY OF GAITHERSBURG

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### A. HISTORY

Arts and culture were formally incorporated into the City of Gaithersburg with the formation of the Council for the Arts, a volunteer committee of residents, in 1989. With guidance from the Council, the City formally embarked on a mission to promote a cultural, social, and economic climate in which artistic expression and creative excellence could flourish.

Since the Art Council’s inception, the City’s programs have grown exponentially. In 2001, the Council for the Arts was replaced with the newly formed Cultural Arts Advisory Committee (CAAC). The CAAC operates as a cultural arts advisory body to the Mayor and City Council and works with City staff to provide direction on cultural arts program development. It is the charge of this committee to:

- Develop and periodically update a long-range plan for the cultural arts in Gaithersburg.
- Serve as arts advocates by developing presentations, letters, or other communications along with the Mayor and City Council, county and/or state arts councils, agencies or officials to advocate or oppose studies, plans, budgets and/or legislation that benefit or are a detriment to the City with respect to the cultural arts.
- Support and develop opportunities for the artists and arts patrons in our community.
- Evaluate current and future cultural arts programs and/or facilities to determine if they meet the needs of our residents, are consistent with the CAAC mission and charge, and fulfill the goals and objectives of the cultural arts plan.
- Provide guidance to the City’s Arts in Public Places Program

Over time, other City committees and boards have developed to address specific needs and intersections with arts and culture:

**Gaithersburg Parks, Arts, and Recreation Corporation (G-PARC):** G-PARC is a 501(c)(3), tax exempt, charitable organization whose mission is to heighten the awareness of revitalization, parks, arts, and recreation initiatives within the City of Gaithersburg and to raise funds to support those programs, projects, facilities and initiatives. G-PARC expanded out of the Gaithersburg Arts and Monuments Funding Corporation, a 501(c)(3), nonprofit organization that was established by the City in 2005 to serve as a fund raising vehicle to support arts efforts in the City of Gaithersburg. In 2018, G-PARC was formed by an ordinance that amended Chapter 6B of City Code. The amendment expanded the scope to include parks and recreation.

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<sup>33</sup> Becker, J. (2004). Public Art: An Essential Component of Creating Communities. *Americans for the Arts Monograph*. Retrieved from [https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtMonograph\\_JBecker.pdf](https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtMonograph_JBecker.pdf)

**Gaithersburg Book Festival Committee:** The Gaithersburg Book Festival is a celebration of the written word and its power to enrich the human experience. The mission of the committee is to foster an interest in reading, writing and literary conversation.

**Multicultural Affairs Committee:** This committee seeks to promote understanding, respect and appreciation for the many cultures in Gaithersburg by serving as a liaison to the Mayor and City Council on diversity issues. While cultural and ethnic diversity affects people in many aspects of their lives, the Multicultural Affairs Committee strives to heighten awareness of cultural similarities and differences in order to improve interactions between and among members of the communities.

## **B. CULTURAL PROGRAMS**

Today, Gaithersburg has a lively arts and cultural community that is continually growing. Through its Cultural Events and Services Division, the City provides its residents with a variety of enriching arts events and develops new arts audiences through educational experiences. The City also provides artists and arts organizations with a cultural environment and valued opportunities that enable them to grow creatively and economically and allows them to develop to their fullest potential.

## **III. City of Gaithersburg Programs, Venues & Partners**

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The City plans and executes countless community and local events each year while managing 13 facilities and cultural venues. The City's Cultural Events and Services Division works with area artists and arts organizations as well as private for-profits to create a flourishing arts and cultural environment.

### **A. CITY PROGRAMS & VENUES:**

**Art in Public Places (AIPP):** The projects of the Art in Public Places Program are funded by the Capital Improvement Project process of the City budget and/or by developers as part of the site plan approval process. Since its inception, the Art in Public Places Committee has facilitated the installation of more than a dozen works of public art. It is the mission of the AIPP to foster vitality through the arts in developing and redeveloping areas in the City of Gaithersburg and to promote the arts and educate the public. By developing public works of art throughout the City, the Art in Public Places Program works to create a sense of place and pride for the Gaithersburg community. A map of Public Art Installations is located at the end of this section.

**Arts Barn:** An historic structure in the Kentlands now houses the Gaithersburg Arts Barn, a cultural arts center. The first floor features an exhibition gallery, artists in residence studios, the City Shop with handmade works of art available for retail sale. It also features studios for classes, workshops, drop-in studio hours and lectures. The second floor houses an intimate, state-of-the art theater with 99 fixed-tiered seats.

**Arts on the Green:** Through this collaborative effort between the Kentlands Mansion and the Arts Barn, patrons enjoy concerts, magic shows, and professional and community theater in the Arts Barn's theater while music lovers delight in unique chamber performances held in the elegant Mansion. The Green provides a park-like setting for outdoor events and festivals.

**City Art Galleries:** The City's three galleries and City Shop provide professional exhibits and sales space for hundreds of artists to exhibit and sell their work.

**Community Museum:** The Community Museum is located in the restored 1884 B&O Railroad Station complex. It features educational exhibits and programs designed to spark interest and imagination in our City's history. The Museum comprises the historic Freight House, the History Park and the rolling stock, historic trains that are part of the Gaithersburg Railway Museum.

**City Hall Concert Pavilion & Grounds:** Located in historic Olde Towne, the Concert Pavilion at City Hall and surrounding grounds serve as the venue for a number of festivals and concerts throughout the year. The Pavilion's free season of music and entertainment is presented several days of the week throughout the summer.

**Regional Events:** Large regional events attract thousands of people from around the area allowing us to showcase Gaithersburg as a destination city. These events are held for each season of the year. Winter Lights runs throughout the month of December and treats visitors to a drive-through light show filled with festive illuminations. Spring is the season for the Gaithersburg Book Festival where attendees can connect with more than 100 notable authors and thousands of fellow book lovers. SummerFest occurs on the Saturday before July 4th, uniting people for a magical evening filled with fireworks, entertainment, activities, arts experiences, and the amenities of Bohrer Park. Oktoberfest at the Kentlands is a street festival that reveres Bavarian customs and the fall harvest while providing visitors with modern festival entertainment, vendors, and arts experiences. Each event is held in a different location, inviting people to view a variety of parks and neighborhoods.

**Community Events:** Scores of community events are held throughout the year, reflecting the interests of a variety of demographic groups in Gaithersburg. Large parades on Labor Day and St. Patrick's Day treat audiences to exciting floats, dancers, and marchers, and give residents the opportunity to connect with politicians and community groups. Free concerts occur throughout the summer and fall with performances that appeal to toddlers, teens, and adults alike. Seasonal and year round farmers markets offer fresh, local produce and natural foods. Other community events include those organized by the Multicultural Affairs Committee, which highlight the wide variety of ethnic traditions that are celebrated throughout the Gaithersburg community. There are also themed events to highlight specific parks or initiatives, plus annual observances of Memorial and Veterans Day.

**Gaithersburg Chorus:** Participation is open to the entire community with no audition. Members pride themselves in providing outstanding quality concerts for the Gaithersburg community. Under the professional leadership of the director and accompanist, the Chorus enjoys the challenge of learning various types of music and continues to expand their repertoire, which includes classical, opera, Broadway, pop, and patriotic. They have sung in French, German, Hebrew, Latin, Spanish, and Yiddish.

**Latitude Observatory:** The Gaithersburg Latitude Observatory was built in 1899 as part of an international project to measure the earth's wobble on its polar axis. The Gaithersburg Observatory and others in Japan, Italy, Russia and the United States gathered information that is still used by scientists today, along with information obtained from satellites, to determine polar motion; the size, shape, and physical properties of the earth; and to aid the space program through the precise navigational patterns of orbiting satellites. The Gaithersburg station operated until 1982 when computerization rendered the manual observation obsolete.

**Young Artist Award Competition and Concert:** In partnership with the Kentlands Community Foundation, the annual Young Artist Award Competition and Concert (YAA) began in 2004, and continues to expand in scope and prestige. The YAA is a juried competition culminating in a concert of the top prize winners. The Award provides young instrumental and vocal musicians with an enriching artistic experience and resume building opportunity.

We have many facilities that also offer cultural programs in addition to providing recreational programs and functions. Examples include the music and audio production studio at the Olde Towne Youth Center, use of the Activity Center and Montgomery County Public School buildings for our Gaithersburg Chorus, and use of our public parks for cultural festivals like Oktoberfest.

A map of City-owned venues and facilities is located at the end of this section.

## **B. PARTNERS AND PRIVATE PROGRAMS & VENUES**

The City of Gaithersburg partners with many arts and cultural organizations to enhance the cultural experience for City and county residents. Partnerships include:

- Fine arts associations
- Arts education partnerships
- Theater arts partnerships
- Theater companies
- Writing centers
- Music academies
- Libraries

The City's Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff meet regularly with colleagues from a variety of regional organizations to participate in workshops and events. Organizations include:

- G-PARC
- Montgomery County Department of Recreation
- Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
- Maryland Recreation and Parks Association
- National Recreation and Parks Association
- Maryland State Arts and Humanities Council
- Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Council
- Montgomery County Historical Society
- Arts Associations and Partner Entities
- Surrounding municipalities and unincorporated communities such as Takoma Park, City of Rockville and the Montgomery Village Foundation

The efforts of the City are also matched by the contributions of many private nonprofit and for-profit entities that significantly enhance the cultural climate including:

- Retirement communities
- Cultural arts and wellness centers
- Neighborhood-based public communities
- Dance academies

#### IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

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The following goals, objectives, and actions have been developed to ensure that the efforts of the City of Gaithersburg in cultural arts programs, facilities, and initiatives will serve to enhance the quality of life in our City and afford the members of our community with opportunities that enrich their daily lives.

##### A. GOALS

The following goals guide the cultural arts efforts of the City of Gaithersburg:

- Create opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts for people of all ages, cultures, and abilities through vibrant, accessible and affordable cultural arts programs
- Celebrate the richness of our community's heritage as part of our contemporary identity
- Advocate excellence in the creation, presentation and preservation of artistic achievement
- Build our cultural arts program into an economic engine for the City
- Increase awareness and understanding of the central role the arts play in expressing our community's identity and character

##### B. OBJECTIVES

The following objectives support the aforementioned goals of the City of Gaithersburg:

**OBJECTIVE 1: Infuse the visual and performing arts into City programs, facilities and events in a manner that addresses the needs and interests of our broad and diverse community.**

##### ACTIONS

###### 1. Attract, support, and nurture visual and performing artists.

- a. Facilitate affordable opportunities for artist studio space
- b. Increase access to exhibition, performance and business opportunities at City facilities and events and other traditional and non-traditional venues
- c. Foster an artist group or alliance that supports creative and professional development
- d. Provide artist-in-residence opportunities
- e. Offer artists opportunities to teach in City-sponsored educational programs, master classes and workshops
- f. Incorporate visual and performing arts experiences in City arts and events
- g. Increase the scope and opportunities for performance partnerships with area theater companies, musicians, dancers, magicians, and other performing artists

**2. Cultivate patrons for the visual and performing arts.**

- a. Facilitate programs that draw visitors and residents to experience and participate in the arts
- b. Establish a large, multi-purpose performing arts center that can accommodate touring performances and includes education, exhibition and meeting spaces
- c. Establish a mid-size venue of approximately 250 seats
- d. Encourage professional and non-professional artists to participate in visual and performing arts programming in the City
- e. Attract patrons by offering programs featuring notable regional artists and arts specialists
- f. Provide visual and performing arts classes, lectures, and events for people of all ages, skill levels and socio-economic backgrounds
- g. Provide programs for the City Hall Concert Pavilion to reflect the demographic, economic and commercial environment of Olde Towne

**OBJECTIVE 2: Promote and create literary arts opportunities, programs, and events.**

**ACTIONS**

**1. Build national recognition for the Gaithersburg Book Festival (GBF).**

- a. Present top-selling authors and other literary artists at GBF
- b. Develop a year-round program of readings and lectures by renowned literary artists
- c. Provide writing workshops at GBF and through other City programs
- d. Encourage local book clubs, highlighting upcoming authors
- e. Add use of social media to promote the GBF throughout the year

**2. Cultivate patrons for the literary arts in Gaithersburg.**

- a. Program literary activities to attract families with children to GBF
- b. Incorporate literary arts opportunities across City programming and events

**3. Advocate for a literacy initiative in Gaithersburg.**

- a. Promote student writing opportunities
- b. Establish links to existing literacy programs like Reading Buddies
- c. Partner and collaborate with other county and state literacy programs at Montgomery County Public Schools, Montgomery County Public Libraries and Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy

**OBJECTIVE 3: Contribute to our community's identity, beautification, quality of life, and economic vitality through Public Art.**

**ACTIONS**

**1. Encourage inclusion of public art in public and private development.**

- a. Create regulations for City Planning and Code Administration and private property owners regarding the many types of public art, the optimal processes and timeline for including public art (including community involvement), art selection process, and, finally, ownership and maintenance
- b. Involve City Arts staff in City planning meetings

- 2. Engage City residents in the public art process and promote a greater awareness of the public art collection.**
  - a. Ensure public art installations are visible, accessible and within the City of Gaithersburg corporate limits
  - b. Develop tours of the public art collection and provide opportunities to explore the collection and learn about the artists and art works
  - c. Seek diversity among public art artists
  - d. Engage stakeholders in the public art process
  - e. Use public art to reinforce Gaithersburg's diverse identity and rich history
  
- 3. Seek opportunities to form strong partnerships that result in new or expanded public art projects and promotion.**
  - a. Partner with individual neighborhoods
  - b. Partner with other jurisdictions
  - c. Partner with private companies
  - d. Pursue potential projects that will facilitate financial and other support from the private and/or public sector for public art
  
- 4. Create an Art in Public Places Program that will provide unique and interesting works of art throughout the City.**

**OBJECTIVE 4: Continue and expand efforts to promote the City's cultural, commercial, and political history in ways that engage a multigenerational and diverse citizenry.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Use the City's historic resources (International Latitude Observatory, Community Museum Complex, Arts Barn, Mansion, Summit Hall, and additional sites) to present interesting and stimulating experiences for visitors.**
  - a. Use interactive interpretive methods in programming and exhibition development exploring Gaithersburg's rich, diverse and evolving history
  - b. Use online tools to make the Museum programs, exhibits, and collections accessible
  - c. Continue to build artifact and archival collections through acquisition and preservation reflecting Gaithersburg's diverse community history
  
- 2. Cultivate a multi-generational, diverse audience that is engaged with local history.**
  - a. Provide programs that are accessible to every age, ethnic and socioeconomic background
  - b. Encourage children and youth to engage in history with a variety of programs
  - c. Provide programs for adults and older adults that challenge, entertain, educate, engage, and excite
  - d. Develop programs in partnership with organizations within Gaithersburg and the surrounding community that celebrate the diverse history of the City's communities

**OBJECTIVE 5: Celebrate the diversity of Gaithersburg and heighten awareness of cultural similarities and differences in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Coordinate diverse arts and cultural events, exhibitions and festivals.**
  - a. Explore opportunities for programs that reflect the City's diversity
  - b. Provide multicultural experiences at City events, programs and facilities
  - c. Curate exhibitions at City galleries to coincide with heritage celebrations
  
- 2. Seek connections with diverse communities through contacts with individuals, businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other diverse associations.**
  - a. Build a database of diverse artists, arts groups and cultural associations
  - b. Ensure diverse artists and arts groups are included in, and encouraged to participate in, City events and programs
  - c. Include the story of Gaithersburg's diverse community in the Community Museum's collection and interpretation
  - d. Continue to recruit volunteers for committees, programming and events who reflect the City's demographics
  - e. Hire additional leadership staff with multilingual capabilities reflective of the City's cultural diversity.
  
- 3. Provide young people with access to high quality early childhood education programs that foster positive cultural development.**
  - a. Cultivate a developmentally appropriate cultural curriculum that supports cultural and social well-being in an environment that respects and supports diversity
  - b. Encourage programming that gives parents opportunities to increase their own educational attainment and participate in educating their children

**OBJECTIVE 6: Develop and implement new and innovative arts and cultural programs for people of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and levels of experiences.**

**ACTIONS**

- 1. Strengthen the educational focus of existing arts and cultural programming.**
  - a. Recognize and meet the needs of varied individuals and groups, and address their varied expectations based on their age, ability, income, background, and other socioeconomic factors
  - b. Develop an engaging "conversation on arts and culture" program
  - c. Expand arts and cultural workshops, master classes and classes
  - d. Develop guided local, regional, and national arts and cultural tours
  - e. Use educational programs to challenge and broaden the perceived definition of the arts
  - f. Bring arts and cultural programs to underserved neighborhoods
  - g. Recruit volunteers as docents to provide tours, lead programs and assist with interpretation and creation of exhibits

2. **Collect and analyze data/trends to affirm program strengths, detect areas of improvement, recognize staff training needs, and identify gaps in services to continually assure the overall quality of all out-of-school time programs.**
  - a. Develop, and regularly implement, an assessment tool to measure youth program quality and impact
  - b. Track and analyze retention rates in program participation
  - c. Use tools such as GIS data mapping to ensure that youth of all demographics and in all areas of the City are equally served
  - d. Enhance data collection to ensure the integrity of the data
  - e. Monitor and adapt to appropriate nation-wide trends in youth programming
  - f. Work with other local government agencies and nonprofits to share information
  
3. **Provide a growing and changing older adult population with cultural opportunities that empower participants to learn, improve their health, make social connections, travel, and engage in the world around them.**
  - a. Create supportive intergenerational programs and activities that foster cooperation, promote interaction, and share talents and resources
  - b. Organize trips to a variety of cultural, historic, culinary, gaming, natural, and educational destinations
  - c. Create opportunities for individuals to share their skills and talents with others
  - d. Offer meaningful volunteer opportunities
  - e. Meet the program needs and interests of a diverse community
  - f. Provide purposeful intergenerational programming with a focus on a higher quality of life for all ages
  - g. Work in partnership with the members of the Benjamin Gaither Center to educate them about opportunities

**OBJECTIVE 7: Promote community awareness of the City's arts and culture programs and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Develop a comprehensive public relations plan for the City arts and culture programs that includes facilities, programs and events.**
  - a. Develop programs that target specific audiences or interest groups
  - b. Facilitate feature articles in local media outlets
  - c. Work with the City's video production staff to produce programs about the City's arts and cultural programs
  - d. Partner with local, state, and national organizations and use these resources to develop awareness campaigns
  - e. Use the City website and other social media platforms to update and promote City-wide arts and cultural programs
  
2. **Develop and maintain audiences through effective and diverse marketing.**
  - a. Identify best practices for reaching target markets
  - b. Develop dynamic and innovative marketing strategies to reach all parts of our diverse community
  - c. Be a trend watcher and capitalize on those that are efficient and effective
  - d. Expand the use of technology to reach audiences

3. **Encourage the participation of other organizations and businesses to effectively promote arts and cultural programs as valued assets.**
  - a. Identify potential business and corporate partners that can help promote the arts and culture program
  - b. Work with other arts and cultural organizations to maximize resources and marketing opportunities
  - c. Work in tandem with the City's Economic Development Department and the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce

**OBJECTIVE 8: Offer opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to contribute to the City's efforts to provide arts programs, events, and facilities.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Actively promote a comprehensive sponsorship program.**
  - a. Build sustainable sponsor commitment
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward donor support
  - c. Employ a Sponsorship Coordinator to cultivate relationships and seek monetary and in-kind donations
2. **Work with the Gaithersburg Parks, Arts and Recreation Corporation, Inc. (G-PARC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, to develop, promote and/or financially support cultural arts programs, events, projects, initiatives, and facilities.**
  - a. Organize "Friends of" groups in support of specific programs, events, and facilities
  - b. Partner with the G-PARC Alliance for Arts and Culture to offer professional development and business opportunities for artists and to support City projects, programs, initiatives, facilities, and funding committees to advance arts and culture in the community
3. **Conduct an active and organized volunteer program that builds and celebrates community support and resources.**
  - a. Develop programs that attract the volunteer efforts of individuals, groups, scouts, faith-based and educational organizations, and others
  - b. Create opportunities to celebrate and reward volunteers
4. **Work to offset the cost of providing affordable programs to City residents through the development of revenue-share programming, partnerships, sponsorships and other similar opportunities.**

**OBJECTIVE 9: Include arts and cultural programs in City economic development initiatives.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Build partnerships that stimulate the local economy and promote arts and culture.**
  - a. Seek to develop partnerships that promote the arts and culture program and generate income for local businesses
  - b. Package opportunities like "dinner and show," gallery walks, First Night, festivals, and other programs that promote the arts and culture program and generate income for local businesses
  - c. Engage with local businesses and business associations

- d. Work in tandem with the City's Economic Development Department and the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce
2. **Use the arts and culture as a catalyst for economic growth.**
    - a. Develop and maintain data that demonstrates how the arts and culture:
      - acts as a magnet to attract new businesses and a skilled and innovative workforce to the City
      - draws cultural tourists to the City and boosts the local economy
      - can improve business' success and stimulate new ways of thinking, encourage innovation, and develop new skills, competences and behaviors amongst employees.

**OBJECTIVE 10: Promote Public Safety and Accessibility**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Offer art classes/training programs to provide life-long, concrete skills to those who may otherwise not have an opportunity to learn them.**
  - a. Offer various art classes at our Youth Centers to reach young people during out-of-school time
  - b. Offer opportunities for youth to participate in meaningful service to the community
  - c. Provide classes in different art forms (painting, sketching, sculpture, etc.) at multiple facilities throughout the City
2. **Offer public art competitions open to the local population to place public art in our community by those who live in our community, thereby promoting civic engagement.**
  - a. Identify additional locations where public art could be installed around our community to promote aesthetic quality and sense of community
3. **Increase awareness of how the arts enhance learning, teach job skills, deter juvenile crime, strengthen family relationships, and spur economic vitality.**
  - a. Strengthen a network of contacts within educational institutions, public safety agencies, and social service organizations to foster student participation in the arts
  - b. Package this information to inform a variety of audiences

**OBJECTIVE 11: Encourage, celebrate, and support cultural diversity and similarities in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.**

**ACTIONS**

1. **Develop programming and initiatives that create and nurture a welcoming environment of civility and respect for differences in an inclusive manner.**
  - a. Identify impediments to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, offer solutions to overcome those impediments and measure progress
  - b. Weave the principles of diversity and inclusion into all aspects of recreation programs
  - c. Create safe environments for vulnerable populations to recreate
  - d. Use the six pillars of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program to educate young people on living a value-based life
  - e. Cultivate opportunities for programs and events to reflect the City's diversity

- f. Provide print materials and interpreters in a variety of languages
- g. Develop programs that respect cultural sensitivities
- h. Seek methods to increase the participation of under-represented groups

**2. Seek connections with diverse communities through contacts with individuals, businesses, civic and faith-based organizations, and other diverse associations.**

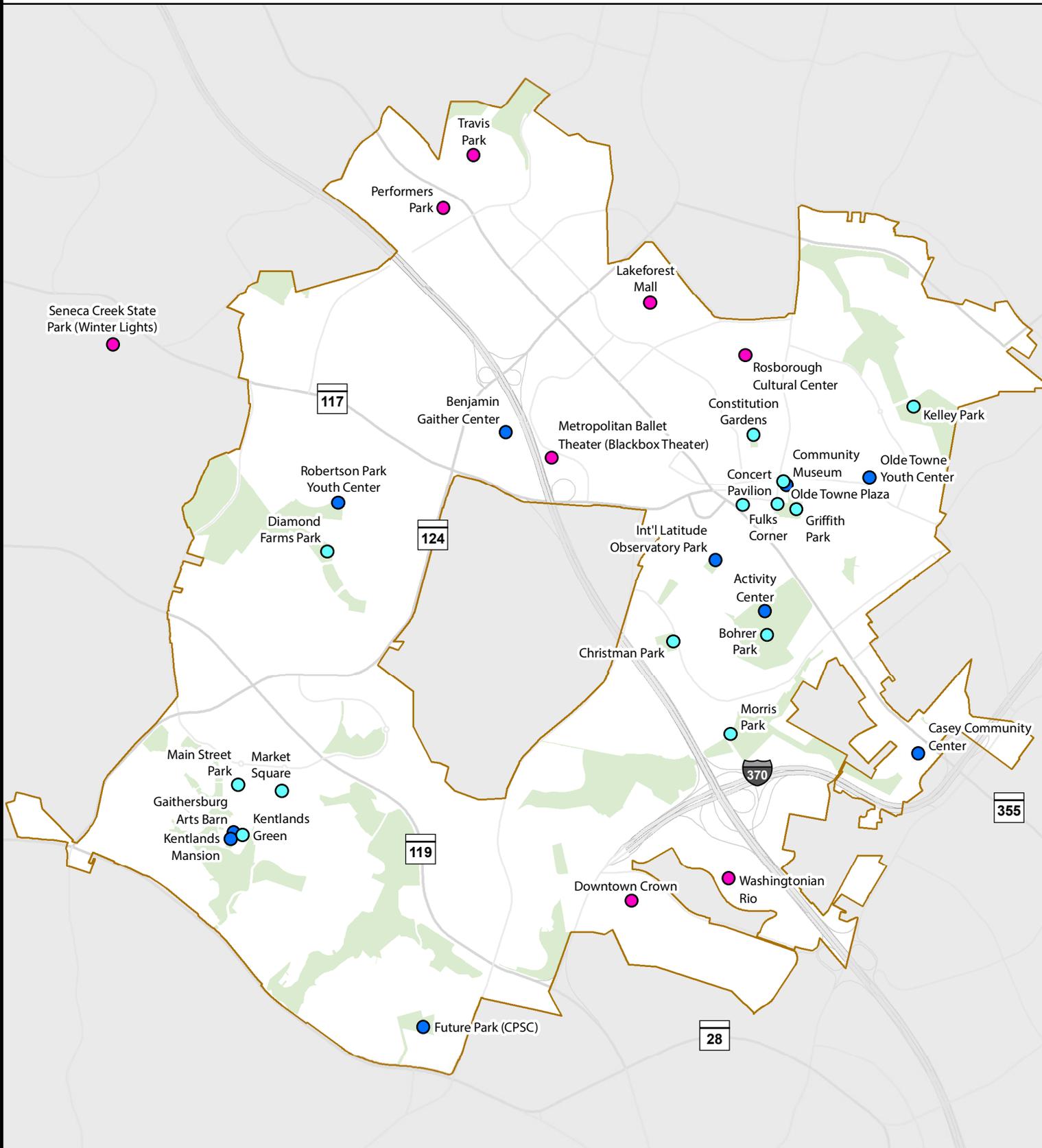
- a. Facilitate meetings with various members of the community and/or City Committees that foster understanding and create opportunities to build a sense of connectedness

**3. Work with the Multicultural Affairs Committee to develop diversity outreach programs and events.**

- a. Hold events to celebrate the cultures of countries and regions of the world
- b. Conduct student competitions in writing, visual arts, design, and music that commemorate the cultures and achievements of people throughout the world



# Arts and Culture Inventory, 2018



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### City-owned parks and open space



### Venues and facilities

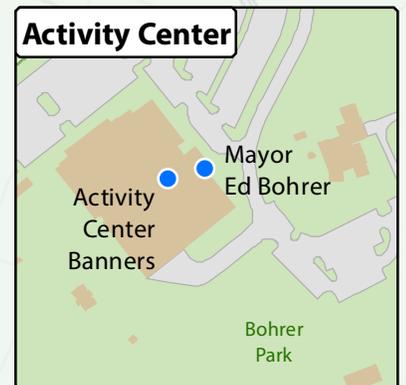
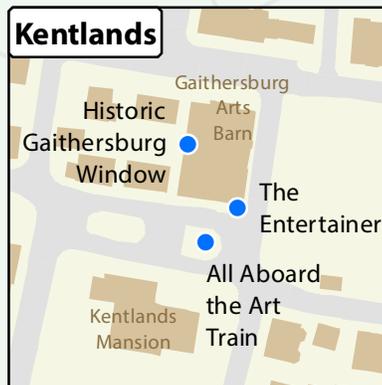
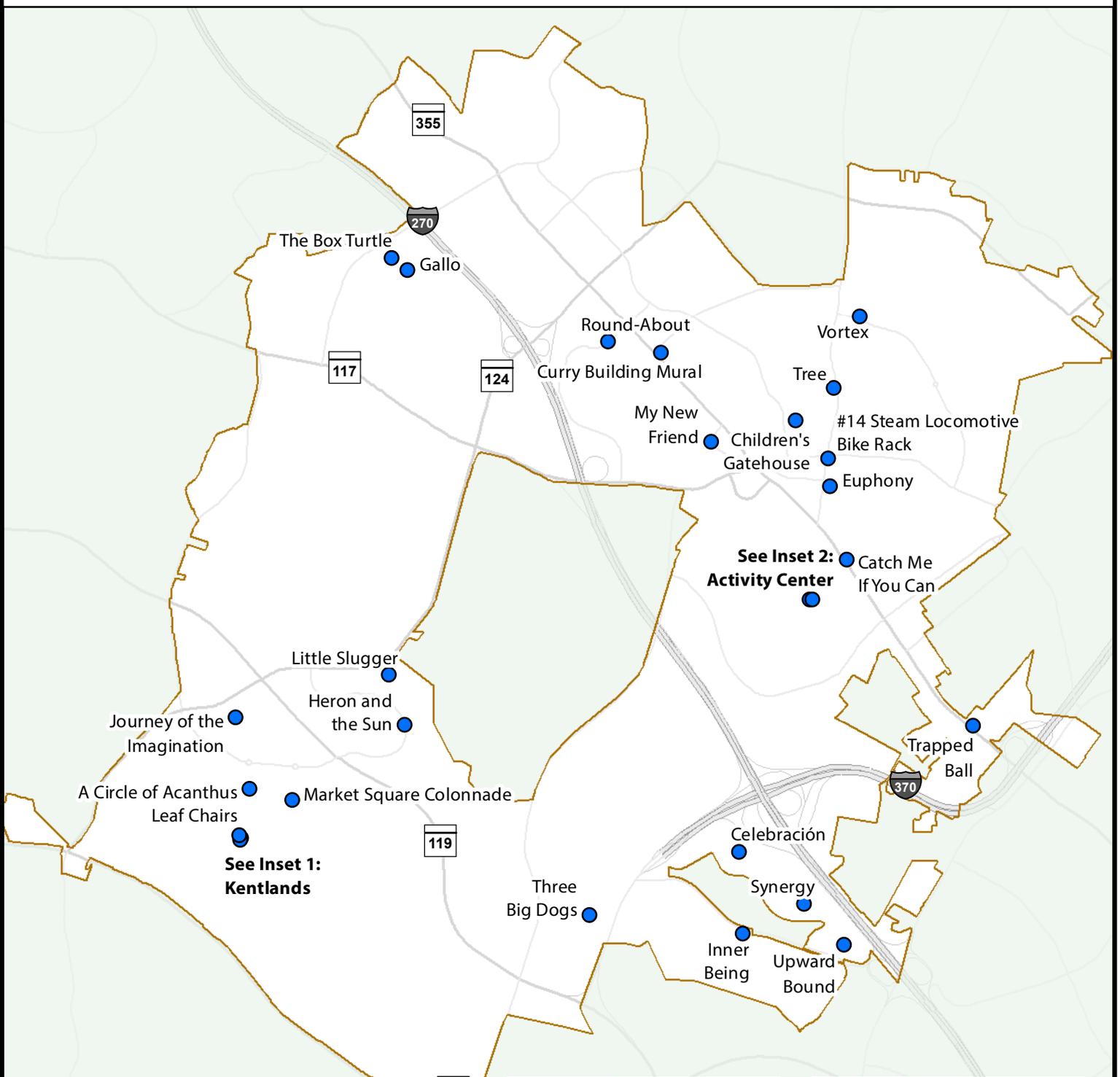
- City Outdoor Venue
- City Facility
- Other Venues (not City-owned)

0 0.5 1 Mile

12/7/2018 - jmcubbin



# Public Art Installations, 2018



9/21/2018 · jmccubbin

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## Bohrer Park Historic Buildings

Address: 502 South Frederick Avenue

Type: Community / Historic

### Components

- Barn
- Manor House
- Log Smoke House

### Description

The cluster of buildings found on Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm forms the oldest collection of antique sites in the City. This site was home to the original Logtown Settlement (1769), billeted Confederate forces during the Civil War, and in the 1940s became the country's first commercial turf farm. The main Manor House was first constructed around 1783 and reconstructed in 1840. Additions were built in 1886 and 1937. The Manor House features architectural elements from the three different periods of ownership including the original log structure, incorporated into the larger house. The tenant house dates from the mid- to late-1800s and was originally built as a pair of one-over-one duplex styled residences, an unusual structure for this period. The log Smoke House is believed to be the oldest structure in Gaithersburg. Approximately 14 square feet and built during the early 1700s, the Smoke House was restored by the City in 1988.



### Recommendations for Future Use

The buildings on the grounds of Bohrer Park represent a wealth of culture and history. In their current state they can be viewed by the public, but there is great potential for them to function as thriving historical resources and destinations. With thorough renovation and an emphasis on programming, these buildings could comprise a living history park, haunted tours, event spaces, and usable facilities for City staff and the community. Renovation would also provide opportunities for increased revenue.



### Assessment of Existing Facilities

#### Barn

The white barn was once used as a granary and is currently used for storage. It could be significantly renovated to become an event space, especially appealing as a site for rustic weddings. This approach would preserve the barn's historic aesthetic while making it usable for a wider variety of purposes.



#### Manor House

This unique facility represents a range of architectural styles, beginning as a log cabin and later becoming a large Victorian home. Since its last renovation in 1937, the building has become significantly weathered and lacks the ability to be safely occupied. However, with significant renovation it has great potential. Possible future uses may include space for offices, conferences, and special events.



#### Tenant House and Log Smoke House

These smaller buildings add cultural value and provide a quaint, pastoral atmosphere to Bohrer Park. They should continue to be preserved and maintained.



#### Building at 518 S. Frederick Ave

##### Currently Occupied by CaringMatters

This facility is not historic and is currently leased to CaringMatters, a nonprofit organization that offers hospice-related services, for one dollar per year. The building could become a more significant source of revenue in the future.





# City Hall Concert Pavilion

Address: 31 South Summit Avenue  
Size: 1,329 Square Feet  
Type: Cultural / Community

## Components

- Covered stage pavilion

## Description

Built in 1998, the City Hall Concert Pavilion is home to dozens of free outdoor performances each summer. Programs include fitness classes, entertainment for children, a gospel celebration, family concerts featuring jazz, blues, rock and roll, and more, and occasional theatrical performances. It is also used during regional events such as the Gaithersburg Book Festival.



## Stormwater Management Insights

The property is highly impervious and lacks stormwater storage and the runoff controls vital for improving water quality and reducing downstream pollution. **Proposed improvements** include the removal of vestigial infrastructure to make way for stormwater filtration practices that meet environmental site design (ESD) criteria for improved water quality. Appropriate infiltration practices include the use of flow splitters for runoff



## Assessment of Existing Facility

Performances at this facility undergo many disruptions due to ambient noise from cars and passing trains. This could be improved with the installation of barriers between the road and the Concert Pavilion. Summer events could better serve the public with the addition of more shaded areas. The existing ramp railing needs to be assessed for safety due to patrons swinging on rails; the inclusion of vertical bars would prohibit this. The diminished parking availability due to development in Olde Towne will need to be addressed.





## Gaithersburg Community Museum

Address: 9 South Summit Avenue  
Size: 1,626 Square Feet  
Type: Cultural

### Components

- Freight House
- Rolling Stock
- History Park
- Railroad Station Waiting Room and Restroom

### Description

The Gaithersburg Community Museum is located in the restored 1884 B&O Railroad Station complex in Olde Towne. The museum bridges Gaithersburg's past and present through exhibits and programs for visitors of all ages. The Freight House, the Caboose and the Budd Car feature permanent and changing exhibits exploring Gaithersburg's rich history and hands-on learning centers for children that spark the imagination. The Station is an active commuter stop and houses the complex's dining and restroom facilities. History Park, an outdoor interpretive space, and the ever-popular rolling stock, with a 1918 Buffalo Creek and Gauley #14 Steam Locomotive, a 1950s Budd Car and a C&O Railroad Bay Window Caboose, along with the newly renovated Olde Towne Plaza complete the complex.





### Assessment of Existing Facilities

The Museum and its surrounding complex serve a wide variety of customers from toddlers to older adults during regular hours of operation and through special events, programs, field trips and rentals. The complex consists of an array of facilities from brick buildings to rail cars to park spaces.

#### Interior Improvements Needed:

- An IT audit is needed to maximize functionality. Internet connectivity is a consistent issue.
- Original unfinished wooden floors in the Freight House and RR Station need to be preserved and regularly maintained.
- A storage space assessment is needed and may require redesign.

#### Exterior Improvements Needed:

- The decking and boardwalk around the Museum Complex will need to be replaced in the next 5-10 years.
- The newly redesigned Olde Towne Plaza with its water feature may overwhelm the limited restrooms in the RR Station. An opportunity exists to address Museum storage needs and restrooms simultaneously by creating a small multipurpose building.
- The property at 315 East Diamond Ave. is scheduled for development, creating potential parking limitations.





# Gaithersburg Arts Barn

Address: 311 Kent Square Road  
 Size: 9,350 Square Feet  
 Type: Cultural

## Components

- 4 Studios
- Green Room
- 99 Seat Theatre
- Administrative Offices
- Lobby/ Art Gallery
- Restrooms
- Parking

## Description

Recalling the charm of a bygone era, the Arts Barn is a beautifully-renovated stable that once housed horses and other animals on the former Tschiffely estate. Today, the Arts Barn is a thriving performing and visual arts center with an intimate 99-seat theater. The Arts Barn offers rotating art exhibits; artists-in-residence studios; visual and performing arts classes for children and adults; professional and community theater; concerts; magic shows; children’s programs; and a gift shop featuring artist-made items. Free parking is available.



## Stormwater Management Insights

The parcel’s existing stormwater control measures provide little to no water quality treatment due to inadequate infiltration. **Proposed improvements** include retrofitting the park facility with stormwater filtration practices for improved water quality treatment such as a bioretention cell with an underdrain and yard outfall. Redesign of existing curb and concrete channel will be required to redirect the runoff into the bioretention cell.





### Assessment of Existing Facility

The Arts Barn is a large barn of brick masonry construction built circa 1900 to include a second story ballroom, stalls for animals and a loft for pigeons on the first floor. In 1999, the building was extensively renovated by the City to serve as a performing and visual arts center. It opened to the public in May, 2002. The ballroom was transformed into a 99-seat auditorium for concerts, live theater, business meetings and film screenings. An art gallery was established on the first floor along with four studios and a box office. Since then, the City has conducted routine building and equipment maintenance and the only major facility project was the 2014 exterior door replacement project. Upgrades are planned for both the facility and its equipment over the next four years to ensure the Arts Barn keeps pace with comparable facilities in the area.

#### Facility

- FY17: Explore LED light replacement program as part of City-wide project
- FY18: Brick repointing and replacement of cooling tower and HVAC units slated for FY18
- FY19: Roof replacement with composite shingles. A cedar shake roof was installed in 1999

#### Equipment

- FY17: Replace sound equipment in theater
- FY18: Replace visual equipment in theater
- FY19: Replace theater lighting and light board
- FY20: Replace theater seats

Programmatically, the Arts Barn is experiencing growing pains and would benefit from a larger performance space, expansion of storage space, and more programming spaces for exhibitions and classes. Some of these needs could be met by creating a performance space in the plaza between the Arts Barn and Kentlands Mansion. This would provide a large programming/rental space, better connectedness between the two buildings, improved pedestrian safety, and increased revenue opportunities. The proposed Kent Square project would meet the demand for larger rental space by connecting the two buildings, providing a large outdoor rental space and creating a new location for City events, programs and initiatives.





## Kentlands Mansion

Address: 320 Kent Square Road  
Size: 11,032 Square Feet  
Type: Cultural / Community

### Description

The Tschiffely-Kent property has been a landmark along Darnestown Road since 1900. The stately mansion was built by Frederick Tschiffely and was sold to Otis Beall Kent in 1942. The elegant property now belongs to the City of Gaithersburg and is an ideal venue for weddings, receptions, social functions and business meetings.

Kentlands Mansion reflects the beauty and grandeur of the early 1900s, with 22-foot ceilings, dark wooden paneling, polished hardwood floors, and crystal chandeliers. In 2018, a beautiful side garden was completed.

### Components

- 8 Rooms
- Caterer's Kitchen
- Dressing Rooms
- Business Offices
- 2 Conference Rooms
- Side Garden





### Assessment of Existing Facility

The side garden was renovated in FY18. Window replacement and storm window installation have been recommended for the past 10 years and the building is overdue. As rentals continue to increase, so does the wear and tear on wood floors, which require refinishing every 2-3 years. The third floor contains areas that require wall repairs and mold remediation. Years ago, plans were generated for a ramp entrance and improvements to 1<sup>st</sup> floor restrooms. Exterior lighting needs to be improved for safety and security for staff and patrons.

With its current layout, the Mansion can accommodate a maximum of 150 guests with cocktail tables or 110 guests seated. There is significant demand for venues that can accommodate 200 people or more. If the building's layout were to be redesigned to increase capacity, it could compete with other local venues and bring in more revenue.

Ideas for expansion include:

- Enclosing the canopy porch area with temperature-controlled heat and air conditioning allowing for more seating and a higher guest count for events.
- The third floor could be converted to staff offices and client meeting space. This would create space on the second floor that could be redesigned and used for rentals and events.
- The proposed Kent Square project would further maximize this facility's potential. Creating a plaza between Kentlands Mansion and the Arts Barn would expand space for rentals and special events. The programming connection between these buildings has increased since the inception of the Arts on the Green marketing campaign and a plaza would benefit both facilities.





## Foreseeable Cultural Arts Facilities

Below are cultural arts facilities that are being considered for development in the foreseeable future.

- **HISTORIC PROPERTIES:** Potential uses for City-owned historic properties not currently in use will be evaluated and determined based on community input, feasibility, resources and identified needs. Properties include the historic buildings in Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm (the Manor House, Smoke House, Caretakers House and Barn), and the historic Crown Farm buildings. Many of these properties will require extensive renovations, and maintenance concerns need to be considered. Potential uses include programming activities, exhibits and events that celebrate and interpret the City's heritage and historical significances, as well as recreational opportunities.
- **MULTI-PURPOSE CULTURAL ARTS AND CIVIC CENTER:** As new and/or repurposed sites arise, consideration will be given to the development of a facility(s) for cultural arts spaces. This could include large performance amenities for concerts, theater, graduation ceremonies and more, as well as classes, exhibits and studio spaces.
- **NIKE MISSILE SITE:** This site is currently owned by the Federal government and was previously used as a launch site for NIKE missiles and then activities of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), including the development of robotic rescue equipment. If the City were to take ownership of the site, its development would be determined based on community input, feasibility, environmental impact, resources and identified needs. Cultural arts uses could include classrooms, art and performance studios.
- **SKATE PARK:** Repurposing of the Skate Park at Bohrer Park at Summit Hall Farm is to be considered as use of this amenity decreases and the facility ages. A study has been conducted on alternative uses. Next steps will be determined after further evaluation.

## Visionary Ideas

The following are a compilation of ideas, both new and restated, from this Cultural Arts Chapter that have been identified by City staff to be further explored within the next decade.

- Hold a City-wide arts festival with performances and exhibits staged at private and public venues throughout the City over an extended period of time such as a week or a month.
- Provide affordable opportunities for artist studio space and artist-in-residence programs at community and senior centers, schools and other facilities.
- Develop programming and facilities to make Bohrer Park Gaithersburg's Central Park. Build an outdoor performance venue within the park.
- Create a "Walk About" along park trails that includes public art, butterfly and pollinator gardens, flowering trees and bushes, a children's garden, reflective areas and more.
- Renovate/refurbish the Bohrer Park historic buildings into a historic farm park with cultural programming and rental opportunities.
- Develop a City that Reads initiative. Promote and create literary arts opportunities, programs, and events that enhance the mission of the Gaithersburg Book Festival. Advocate for a literacy initiative in Gaithersburg by partnering and collaborating with other regional literacy programs.
- Add public restrooms and dressing rooms at the City Hall Concert Pavilion.
- Support and celebrate the City's LGBTQ+ community with interactive programming and events.
- Celebrate the diversity of Gaithersburg and heighten awareness of cultural similarities and differences through purpose-designed programs that enlighten, rejoice and educate.
- Ensure diverse artists and arts groups are included in and encouraged to participate in City events and programs.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Parks, Recreation and Culture**

#### **APPENDIX A**

##### **PARTNERS AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS & VENUES**

The efforts of the City are complemented by the contributions of private nonprofit and for-profit entities that significantly enhance recreational opportunities offered in the Gaithersburg community. The City's Recreation staff works with a variety of organizations to leverage efforts and resources, and to use expertise otherwise not available. Organizations and activities include:

- Health and wellness foundations, organizations, and advocacy groups (i.e., Alzheimer's Foundation)
- Local health care organizations such as hospitals, physicians/nurses
- Organizations that provide long distance travel opportunities
- Community partners for food programs (Manna, MCPS, Nourish Now, Gaithersburg HELP)
- Agencies and organizations that provide community services
- Formalized partnerships with MCPS to enhance positive relationship between school system and City, allowing for exchange of specific resources to improve common goals (i.e. busses and use of facilities)
- Formalized relationships with programs that assist high school students to obtain high school diploma or GED and attend Montgomery College, such as ACES and Future Link.
- Partnership with the Macklin School of Business to create a young entrepreneurs program.
- Partnership with local colleges to provide year-round interns whose field of study is related to youth development.

#### **APPENDIX B**

##### **POND MAINTENANCE FOR PARKS**

Ponds are important elements of Gaithersburg's urban landscape. They provide serene beauty for residents to enjoy and habitats for flora and fauna. Additionally, they play an integral role in stormwater management. Proper maintenance of ponds is necessary to ensure that they can continue to serve these purposes.

The largest threat to ponds and lakes is eutrophication, defined as the process by which a body of water becomes enriched with dissolved nutrients (such as phosphates) that stimulate the growth of aquatic plant life usually resulting in the depletion of dissolved oxygen. Ponds suffer from eutrophication when they become saturated with algae and rooted aquatic plants. Poor water quality and improper maintenance are commonly causes this problem. A pond may receive runoff from landscaping containing a variety of fertilizers and pesticides. Runoff may also contain oil washed from streets, tire rubber particles, antifreeze, paint and other household chemicals that make their way to the pond. In order mitigate eutrophication, Public Works manages aquatic weeds, algae growth, buffers and shorelines, water quality, and water temperatures. Contractors conduct biometric studies and treat each pond to restore optimal health. Both ponds at Bohrer Park, Mini Golf, Bloom Park, Lake Varuna, Lake Helene, Lake Lynette, Lake Inspiration, and Lake Nirvana have undergone recent treatment.

Ultimately, dredging can significantly improve the condition of Gaithersburg’s pond and lakes, although this process has not yet been budgeted in the City. Other local jurisdictions pursue dredging when water quality is extremely poor and sometimes even toxic to residents and pets. The necessity of dredging can be determined by a bathymetric study. This technique uses integrated depth-sensing technology to generate a detailed, three-dimensional model of a waterbody based on thousands of data points that are plotted across the surface of the water using a GPS device. Each of the surface points corresponds with the particular water depth at that plotted location. The resulting model exhibits highly accurate information about the waterbody’s depths, bottom contours and volume calculations. For most waterbodies, a bathymetric and sedimentation study is recommended every three to five years to record the rate at which sediment accumulates over time. The bathymetric data can target small areas of concern before they become significant and quantify the current maximum storage capacity of the waterbody. It can also be compared to the structure’s original design plans to analyze how much water has been displaced over time by accumulated organic materials, and predict when and how much must be removed in order to restore the waterbody’s original volume.

**APPENDIX C**

**PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT SCHEDULE**

Replacement based on 15-year life cycle; Constitution Gardens based on 5-year life cycle

*=Exceeding expected life span	Date Installed	Manufacturer	Original Cost	Anticipated Life Span	Estimated Cost (increase 3% per year)	Install Cost (30% of total)	
<b>Playground</b>							
	Robertson	5/98	Park Structures	\$7,555 2-5	2013*	11,600 (\$50,000*)	\$4,000 (\$15,000*)
	City Hall	6/98	Little Tykes	\$21,248 2-5	2013*	\$31,000	\$9,300
	City Hall	2017	Park Structures	\$23,000 5-12	2032	\$34,000	\$10,000
	Diamond Farms	5/2008	Gametime	60,000 5-12	2023	\$87,000	\$25,000
	Diamond Farms	11/99	Little Tykes	\$15,431 2-5	2014*	\$24,000	\$7,200
	Duvall	6/00	Park Structures	\$12,350 2-5	2015*	\$19,000 (\$45,000*)	\$5,700 (\$14,000*)
	Duvall	6/00	Park Structures	\$17,535 5-12	2015*	\$26,000 (\$60,000*)	\$8,000 (\$18,000*)
	Travis Ave	5/01 5/01	Landscape Structures	\$17,000 2-5 \$39,500 5-12 \$56,500	2016*	\$25,000 \$58,000 \$83,000 (\$121,000*)	\$7,500 \$17,000 \$25,000 (\$36,000*)
			<b>TOTAL</b>				

Walder Park	2/02	Playworld Systems <b>TOTAL</b>	\$23,275 2-5 \$10,175 5-12 \$33,450	2017*	\$35,000 \$15,000 \$50,000	\$10,000 \$4,500 \$15,000
Lakelands	2003	Gametime	\$70,000	2018*	\$102,000	\$31,000
Morris Park	7/03	Gametime Playworld Miracle Krausscraft <b>TOTAL</b>	\$7,749 2-5 \$6,064 2-5 \$4,996 5-12 \$47,000 5-12 \$32,215 5-12 \$51,024	2018*	\$12,000 \$9,000 \$7,500 \$47,000 \$76,000 <b>(\$100,000*)</b>	\$3,600 \$3,000 \$2,250 \$14,000 \$23,000 <b>(30,000*)</b>
Casey	3/2004	Miracle Miracle stand alone Gametime SA Sunports <b>TOTAL</b>	\$5,175 2-5 \$4,821 \$1,458 \$5,689 \$17,143	2019	\$7,500 \$7,500 \$2,200 \$9,000 \$27,000	\$2,250 \$2,250 \$660 \$2,700 \$8,100
Kelley	2/2006	Playworld Systems	\$23,871 5-12	2021	\$35,000	\$10,500
Kelley	7/2011	Playworld Systems	\$42,000 2-5	2026	\$61,000	\$18,000
Malcolm King	7/2006	Miracle Recreation	\$75,000 2-5 & 5-12	2021	\$109,000	\$33,000
Bohrer Outdoor Pool	3/2007	Miracle Recreation	\$51,790 5-12 & 2-5	2022	\$76,000	\$23,000
Bohrer Outdoor Pool		Pour in Place	Safety Surface	2022		\$50,000
Green	7/2010	Playworld Systems	\$150,000 5-12 & 2-5	2025	\$218,000	\$65,000
Washingtonian Woods	7/2011	Playworld Systems	\$76,000 5-12	2026	\$110,000	\$33,000
Bohrer Picnic Area	8/2012	Miracle	\$150,000 2-5 & 5-12	2027	\$218,000	\$65,000
Constitution Gardens	7/2015	Natural Play Space	\$10,000	2020	\$11,500	\$3,500

Prices includes add-on pieces. Installation costs will be more if PIP safety surface is used.

## APPENDIX D

### PROGRAM REGULATORY AUTHORITY AGENCIES

**Certified Playground Safety Inspection (CPSI)**—A Certified Playground Safety Inspector is a trained professional with knowledge of playground safety issues including hazard identification, equipment specifications, surfacing and risk management methods. The inspector follows the most recent guidelines outlined by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards and guidelines.

**Program Open Space (POS)**—Established under the Department of Natural Resources in 1969, POS symbolizes Maryland's long term commitment to conserving its natural resources while providing exceptional outdoor recreation opportunities for its citizens. POS is a nationally recognized program with two components, a local grant component often called Localside POS and a component that funds acquisition and recreation facility development by the state. The Localside component provides financial and technical assistance to local subdivisions for the planning, acquisition, and/or development of recreation land or open space areas. In Maryland, more than 6,400 park and conservation area projects have been assisted through Program Open Space Local and Community Parks & Playgrounds grants. When a person buys a house or land, a percentage of the State Real Estate transfer tax goes into a special fund for Program Open Space. In this way homebuyers help improve the quality of their neighborhoods and the entire state. The support of Maryland homeowners and landowners in this effort has resulted in the acquisition of more than 334,000 acres of open space for state parks and natural resource areas and more than 46,000 acres of local parkland<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Declaration of Adherence to Award Conditions/Requirements to POS include:**

1. All projects must be consistent with National Playground Safety Standards and with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. All projects must envision a minimum twenty (20) year life span. Conversions of project use will require replacement with a project of equal or greater recreational use, acreage (in the case of acquisition projects) and equal or greater monetary value approved by the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program. The final conversion is subject to approval by the Maryland Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, and the Secretary of the Department of Planning.
3. All projects are within the applicant's jurisdiction and the applicant holds the right to develop on the property.

**Disabled Accessibility—Article 78A, §51 of the Annotated Code of Maryland** requires structures or improved areas owned or constructed by the State of Maryland or its political subdivisions as public parks and recreation centers to provide facilities for people with disabilities. This law specifically concerns toilet facilities, ramps, building entrances, drinking fountains, parking and walks. Such facilities should be suitably marked by a symbol denoting accessibility.

**Public Law 101-336, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** was enacted on July 26, 1990, with most of the ADA requirements becoming effective by January 26, 1992. This powerful legislation is intended to eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of life, including a person's

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. (n.d.). Program Open Space: An Overview. *Land Acquisition and Planning*. Retrieved from <http://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/Program-Open-Space-101.aspx>

recreation and leisure pursuits. Nondiscrimination by State & Local Government - Title II, applies to the provision of programs and facilities. This is in addition to other public laws that traditionally have required government agency compliance (i.e., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) to accommodate individuals with disabilities. ADA is more comprehensive.

**The Forest Conservation Act**—Local POS grant assistance must be consistent with the Forest Conservation Act of 1991 (Natural Resources Article, Sections 5-1601 through 5-1613, Annotated Code of Maryland). This law was enacted to protect the forests of Maryland by making forest conditions and character an integral part of the site planning process. The law is administered by DNR but implemented primarily by local governments. Local POS projects should be reviewed for conformance with the appropriate Forest Conservation Law Programs prior to submission for state review. All POS projects are subject to review of applicability under the Forest Conservation Act.

**Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act of 1992**—This Act (State Finance and Procurement Article, Title 5, Subtitle 7A, Annotated Code of Maryland) established primary responsibility for managing growth at the local government level. It requires state agencies funding major capital development projects to review such projects for conformance with the seven "visions" of the Act, and with local comprehensive plans. To expedite this review, the project description on the application includes a reference to alignment of the project to the visions of the State's Growth Policy.

**The Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article §5-906(e)(7) and (8)** provides that land acquired or developed under a state grant from Program Open Space may not be converted from outdoor public recreation or open space use to any other use without written approval of the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources, the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management, and the Secretary of the Department of Planning. Any conversion in land use may be approved only after the local government body replaces the land with land of at least equivalent area and of equal recreation or open space value. For any conversion of land acquired or developed under a state grant from Program Open Space, the appraised monetary value of the land proposed for acquisition shall be equal to or greater than the appraised monetary value of the land to be converted, under the proposed new use of the converted land.

**Community Parks and Playgrounds (CP&P)**—Maryland's CP&P program is designed to enhance the livability of communities by creating, restoring or enhancing parks, playgrounds and other open spaces. Applicants are encouraged to emphasize those projects that offer public benefits enhancing quality of life in existing population centers and demonstrating the use of low impact development techniques, materials and management. Maryland's CP&P invests in the future of established communities by developing and revitalizing parks and playgrounds statewide. With the support of the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly, a total of \$62.4 million has been approved since program establishment in FY02 for 650 parks & playground projects for our communities across Maryland<sup>2</sup>.

**Maryland Bond Bills**—The Maryland capital budget is funded through several sources, including bond bills, general funds, special funds, and federal funds. Bond bills include the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan, revenue bonds and legislative initiatives. Legislative initiatives are used to fund individual bond bill requests. They are bond authorization bills filed by members of the General

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. (n.d.). Community Parks & Playgrounds Program Accomplishments. *Land Acquisition and Planning*. Retrieved from <http://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/CP&P-Accomplishments.aspx>

Assembly to support specific local or non-state-owned capital projects. These projects include, but are not limited to, health facilities, historic preservation projects, museums, and sports and recreational facilities. Legislative initiatives are not submitted as part of the Governor's capital budget. However, as they have an impact on state finances, the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) reviews them in accordance with procedures established by the Governor and the General Assembly.

**Motion Picture Licensing Corp. (MPLC)**—An MPLC Umbrella License provides the right to show films/DVDs under defined circumstances without violating the Federal Copyright Act. The Umbrella License grants permission to organizations and companies to show any legally obtained film without a requirement to report titles, dates or times of exhibition.

**Society of European Songwriters, Artists and Composers (SESAC)**—SESAC, Inc. is a performing rights organization representing songwriters and publishers and their compensation for public performances of their music. Songwriters and publishers are paid royalties based on many factors, including state-of-the-art monitoring and computer database information. SESAC currently licenses the public performances of more than 400,000 songs on behalf of its 30,000 affiliated songwriters, composers and music publishers.

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)**—NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy, and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. NFPA sets codes and standards governing items including building operations, vendor requirements and fireworks displays.

**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**—Through Licensure and Regulatory Services, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services licenses and inspects, under both County and State regulations, food service facilities (including restaurants and mobile food trucks) and swimming pools.

**Montgomery County Department of Liquor Control (DLC)**—The Board of License Commissioners is responsible for licensing and regulation, and its office shares enforcement responsibility with the Police Department. DLC handles distribution to all alcoholic beverage outlets.

**Montgomery County Code Enforcement and City of Gaithersburg Code Enforcement**—Inspects and monitors neighborhoods, individual residential and commercial properties, and outdoor events to bring them into compliance with City or County Code requirements for property maintenance, fire code regulations, zoning enforcement, sign and noise ordinances, and current licensing of rental facilities and oversize vehicles.

**Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC)**—MSAC provides unrestricted general operating support to nonprofit and tax-exempt organizations, as well as units of government, that produce or present arts programming open to the public. If awarded a MSAC grant, recipient organizations must file an interim and a final report by deadlines as specified by MSAC. Failure to submit reports by the specified deadlines may jeopardize current and/or future MSAC grants being received by the organization and may result in requiring repayment of grant funds.

**Maryland Department of the Environment**—Regulates and monitors pond and lakes regulations and aquatics discharge/chemicals.

**Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)**—COMAR is the official compilation of all administrative regulations issued by agencies of the State of Maryland. While the Maryland Legislature enacts statutes, it is the administrative agencies that adopt, amend and repeal regulations under the authority granted to them by statutes. Unless the Legislature has created an exemption, agencies must follow the procedures in the Administrative Procedure Act when adopting, amending or repealing regulations.

**Chapter 10.16 of Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for Summer Camps**—The purpose of this chapter is to enact regulations that protect children attending youth camps in Maryland from injury and illness and to promote public health and safety at camps. Camps include day camps, residential camps, and travel camps. This chapter adopts health and safety standards pertaining to the operation of youth camps, standards for overnight or residential housing, and health and medication requirements, including the administration of emergency epinephrine.

**Chapter 51 of Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for Aquatics**—The purpose of this chapter is to enact regulations that protect and promote the public health and safety of individuals at aquatic facilities and venues in Maryland. Public aquatic facilities and venues include limited public-use pools, recreational pools, semipublic pools, public spas, semipublic spas and spray grounds. This chapter adopts construction standards, updates disinfection standards, recognizes certain new technologies and design concepts, and establishes minimum standards for public aquatic facilities and venues.

**Connor's Law**—A state law went into effect on October 1, 2013 requiring that all counties or municipalities that own or operate swimming pools shall develop and implement an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Program that ensures that an AED is provided on-site and an individual trained in its operation is present at each location. Additionally, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems jointly adopted regulations that establish guidelines for periodic inspections and annual maintenance of AEDs and provide assistance to each county or municipality to carry out the law's provisions.

**Federal Nutrition Grant Guidelines**—The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) awards grants to states, U.S. territories and federally recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers markets, roadside stands and community-supported agriculture programs.

**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services Senior Nutrition Program**—The Program provides meals in group settings where activities and services for older adults are available. Nutrition education, screening and counseling are also available. Meals are nutritious and suitable for persons with diabetes, heart disease and hypertension. They meet federal standards that include each meal providing at least 1/3 of the recommended dietary allowances for older adults and they comply with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

**Mid-Atlantic Recreation, Parks and Sports Alliance (MARPSA)**—This consortium of recreation and parks departments, officials organizations and youth sports associations develops and communicates a consistent message that organizations and their players, coaches and spectators will be held accountable to a code of conduct that promotes sportsmanship and keeps recreational competitive and non-competitive sporting activities in proper perspective.

**Hazardous Materials Certification**—All facilities using, processing, transferring, storing, or manufacturing hazardous substances that exceed a minimum threshold of five gallons or 50 pounds must report to Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Chemicals that fit into the definition of hazardous materials are commonly used in businesses, including swimming pools. All hazardous materials, including, but not limited to, solids, liquids or gases that can harm people, other living organisms, or the environment, and their locations, must be reported.

**AED Law**—The use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Maryland is governed by Education Article Section 13-517 of the Annotated Code of MD. The statute establishes an AED Program that has as its purpose “a means of authorizing a facility to make automated external defibrillation available to an individual who is a victim of sudden cardiac arrest if physician services or emergency medical services are not immediately available.”

**Maryland State Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulations on Hiring Youth**—This regulation determines the restrictions and requirements for youth labor, including:

- Work permits are required for all minors under the age of 18 to work in the State of Maryland.
- Work permits are not issued to minors under the age of 14.
- Work permits are issued by the Division of Labor and Industry.
- Work permits are not issued until the minor has been offered a job.
- If the minor changes jobs, a new work permit must be obtained.
- Employers are strongly encouraged to keep work permits on file for three years.
- Minors 16 and 17 years of age may not spend more than 12 hours in a combination of school hours and work hours each day; must be allowed at least 8 consecutive hours of non-work, non-school time in each 24 hour period; and may not be permitted to work more than 5 consecutive hours without a non-working period of at least 30 minutes.

**Maryland State Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulations on Amusement Rides**—Since 1976, Maryland’s Amusement Ride Safety Inspection Program has worked together with the Amusement Ride Safety Advisory Board, Maryland Association of Agricultural Fairs and Shows, The Maryland State Showmen’s Association, and individual ride owners to ensure safe rides and attractions within Maryland. Rides and attractions at parks are inspected annually, at a minimum. Rides and attractions at carnivals and fairs are inspected at each location. Inspections include all mechanical rides, all inflatable amusement attractions, ski lifts, go-kart operations, and water slides.

## APPENDIX E

### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FOR PARKS AND FACILITIES

Gaithersburg parks contain many of the City's most enjoyable landscapes, from the sporting athletic fields of Lakelands Park to the tranquil green space found throughout Bohrer Park. Municipal parklands offer recreational opportunities, provide wildlife habitat, and facilitate active lifestyles for improving intellect, longevity and the overall wellbeing of local residents. Just as parks provide respite from daily pressures, stormwater management strategies protect and stabilize parkland across Gaithersburg. Stormwater facilities like bioretention areas, wet ponds and grassed swales are controls used within parks to retain sediment and control erosive surface water runoff. Maintaining and improving upon these stormwater facilities is essential not only for ensuring park longevity but also environmental compliance.

Gaithersburg currently operates under a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit as required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Maryland. According to this permit, the City is obligated to implement pollution control measures directed at the public, including pollution prevention, education and outreach, involvement and participation, illicit discharge management, and construction site management. Given its status as an urban area, Gaithersburg has a high concentration of impervious surface, which creates runoff and contribute to stormwater pollution. This pollution can erode the landscape, degrade habitats, and decrease biological integrity. Research has shown that sensitive stream elements are lost when impervious cover exceeds 10% or more of the land's surface.<sup>1</sup> Further research shows that once imperviousness reaches 25% to 30%, most streams become poor in quality due to the impacts of erosion from stormwater. The picture on page 150 illustrates the link between high levels of imperviousness and impacts to local waters. On average, Gaithersburg is approximately 40% impervious surface, which is reflected by recent stream health indicators ranging from fair to poor.<sup>2</sup>

### EXISTING PARKS INVENTORY

#### BLOHM PARK

Project Title: Blohm Park Stream Restoration  
(*Watershed: Middle Great Seneca Creek*)

#### Existing Conditions:

- Blohm Park contains a portion of highly degraded stream reaches with very unstable banks and little vegetation on straight sections or on meander bends. The unstable banks are due to the high flows received from three stormwater pipes that discharge at the site's headwaters.

#### Proposed Improvements:

- Restoration goals include reducing shear stress on the stream banks, minimizing stream incision, and improving aquatic habitat. Restoration targets will be accomplished by realigning the channel in at least four locations to emulate prior channel conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Watershed Protection, Inc. (CWP), *Watershed Treatment Model (WTM) 2001 User's Guide*, 2001, [http://www.stormwatercenter.net/monitoring%20and%20assessment/watershed\\_treatment\\_model.htm](http://www.stormwatercenter.net/monitoring%20and%20assessment/watershed_treatment_model.htm)

<sup>2</sup> URS Corporation, *Middle Great Seneca Creek Watershed Study* (Germantown, MD: URS Corporation, 2013). <http://www.gaithersburgmd.gov/services/environmental-services/watershed-planning>

## WASHINGTONIAN WOODS PARK

Project Title: Washingtonian Woods Retrofit  
(*Watershed: Muddy Branch*)

### Existing Conditions:

- Storm drains and a dry pond at Washingtonian Woods Park collect runoff from the surrounding residential areas and drain directly to a tributary of Muddy Branch. These existing facilities are underperforming, resulting in poor surface water dispersal and inadequate water quality treatment. The existing conditions have prompted further exploration for enhanced stormwater control measures in an adjacent open space located on park property.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include retrofitting the dry pond into a wet pond and incorporating a new bioretention cell in the adjacent open space. The introduction of flow splitters will divide current drainage between the new bioretention cell and the retrofitted wet pond for improved water quality.



Existing Open Space at Washingtonian Woods Park

## GREEN PARK

Project Title: Green Park Retrofit  
(*Watershed: Muddy Branch*)

### Existing Conditions:

- The park's existing stormwater dry pond provides water quantity control for drainage originating from rooftops and parking lots located in the surrounding high density residential area. Channel compaction and outfall characteristics have resulted in poor stormwater infiltration at the existing facility.

### Proposed Improvements:

- The proposed stormwater control measures include retrofitting the existing dry pond into a wet pond and incorporating water filtration practices into the preexisting facility to improve water quality treatment for the surrounding area. This includes the use of flow splitters to redirect portions of runoff into a newly constructed bioretention facility to meet environmental site design (ESD) design criteria.



Existing outfall to Green Park dry pond shows evidence of sediment and trash debris

### **MORRIS PARK**

Project Title: Morris Park Retrofit

*(Watershed: Muddy Branch)*

#### Existing Conditions:

- Runoff from Morris Park flows directly into Muddy Branch stream through an existing storm drainpipe. The park has poor surface water infiltration due to impervious surfaces at the parking lot and adjacent basketball court.

#### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include the use of stormwater filtration practices to meet environmental site design (ESD) to enhance the stormwater treatment.

### **Malcolm King Park**

Project Title: Malcom King Park- Brighton Village Stream Restoration

*(Watershed: Muddy Branch)*

#### Existing Conditions:

- Stormwater runoff originating in Malcolm King Park drains into Muddy Branch stream. The stream is centrally located on park property and flows beneath several trails via culverts. The stream reach is degraded due to channel incision, bank erosion, and overgrown woody vegetation. Large deposits of sediment as well as limited in-stream cover have created poor fish habitat.

#### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater recommendations include the use of multiple stream restoration techniques to reduce shear stress on the stream banks, remove debris from channel, restore lateral stability, and minimize stream incision for both improved aquatic habitat and downstream water quality.



Stream bank erosion and woody in-stream debris at Malcolm King Park

### **Rosemont Stream Valley Park**

Project Title: Rosemont Stream Valley Park - Outfall Stabilization Stream Restoration  
(*Watershed: Muddy Branch*)

#### Existing Conditions:

- Stormwater runoff from adjacent properties flows through Rosemont Stream Valley Park and drains into a tributary of Muddy Branch stream. Just prior to entering the park, the unnamed tributary is fed by two culverts in the I-370 right-of-way. This area is experiencing channel degradation, right-of-way fence failure and ineffective vegetation for channel stabilization.

#### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater recommendations include the use of multiple stream restoration techniques to stabilize the eroding stream banks, reduce channel incision, reduce the discharge of sediment and associated nutrients downstream, and improve aquatic habitat.

### **KENTLANDS LAKES**

Project Title: Kentlands Dry Pond Retrofit  
(*Watershed: Muddy Branch*)

#### Existing Conditions:

- The existing Kentlands Lakes dry pond provides water quantity control for roughly 26 acres, including the local community and adjacent parks. Stormwater from the dry pond drains into several adjacent ponds that flow into the Muddy Branch tributary.

#### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include retrofitting the dry pond in order to meet modern environmental site design (ESD) standards. Proposed retrofit strategies include micropool design or shallow wetland plantings to improve water quality by absorbing nutrient pollution.



Inlet storm drain pipe and outlet riser structure at Kentlands stormwater dry pond facility.

## KELLEY PARK

Project Title: Kelley Park Retrofit.  
(Watershed: Middle Great Seneca Creek)

### Existing Conditions:

- Stormwater runoff leaving Kelley Park enters the storm drain system and drains into a nearby tributary of Great Seneca Creek. Additional runoff from surface flow discharges into a grass field where it can infiltrate into the ground or drain into the adjacent stream. The park's tennis courts, baseball fields, gravel paths, and adjacent parking lot each contribute to poor surface water infiltration and the property's high rate of sediment runoff.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include implementing both sediment control and stormwater filtration practices that meet environmental site design (ESD) criteria to improve water quality. Applicable practices include the use of bioretention cells near the tennis court outfall, stabilization of gravel paths, and an underground hydrodynamic separator at the stormwater inlets near the baseball field.



Gravel and sediment entering a storm drain at Kelley Park

**Lakelands-Still Creek Lane Stream Restoration**  
(*Watershed: Muddy Branch*)

Existing Conditions:

- Stormwater runoff from the Lakelands community and Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park drain into a highly degraded tributary of Muddy Branch. The stream reach instability is caused by a combination of channel incision, erodible bank material, and overgrown woody debris.

Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater recommendations include the use of multiple stream restoration techniques to stabilize the eroding stream banks, reduce channel incision, and replace overgrown woody debris with adequate vegetation for floodplain stabilization.



Overwidened channel with cutoff meander bend caused by upstream debris jam. Current channel alignment directs flow into the downstream bank, causing erosion.

## VICTORY FARM PARK

Project Title: Victory Farm Park Retrofit  
(Watershed: Middle Great Seneca Creek)

### Existing Conditions:

- Victory Farm Park has an existing stormwater management dry pond located north of Victory Farm Road between the neighborhoods on Rock Lodge Road and Belle Grove Road. The facility provides water quantity control for a large drainage area of approximately 461 acres. Existing stormwater controls permit higher flow rates than desired and provide minimal water quality treatment.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include retrofitting the dry pond to reduce the pond release rate and lengthen stormwater detention time for improved water quality treatment. Additional recommendations include the addition of a trash rack on the retrofitted outfall to reduce trash and debris in the system.



Stormwater dry pond at Victory Farm Park.

## DIAMOND FARMS PARK

Project Title: Solitaire North Stream Restoration  
(Watershed: Lower Great Seneca Creek)

### Existing Conditions:

- Solitaire North Stream runs parallel to Solitaire Court and receives stormwater runoff from the surrounding neighborhoods and Diamond Farm Park. The reach is highly degraded with severe stream bank erosion, channel incision, and large in-stream sediment deposits.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include utilizing stream restoration techniques to stabilize the eroding stream banks, reduce channel incision, reduce the discharge of sediment and associated nutrients downstream, and improve aquatic habitat. Applicable techniques include the use of grade control structures to stabilize stream flow and reduce future in-stream degradation.



Severe stream bank erosion along the Solitaire North stream reach.

**Solitaire Court Outfall Repair and Retrofit Project**  
*(Watershed: Lower Great Seneca Creek)*

Existing Conditions:

- Solitaire Court outfall provides stormwater control for Quince Orchard Boulevard as well as the Solitaire Court neighborhood. The 54-inch reinforced concrete pipe is positioned adjacent to Solitaire Court Road and drains into Solitaire North stream near the proposed Solitaire North Stream Restoration project. The existing outfall is functioning at less than optimal levels and provides minimal water quality treatment.

Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include retrofitting the outfall and implementing new stormwater facilities to improve treatment of surface water runoff entering Solitaire North stream. Emulating the existing geomorphology, the outfall retrofit includes replacing the headwall and using stone for in-stream armoring. The retrofit will mitigate future degradation for both the outfall and the nearby Solitaire North Stream Restoration project. New stormwater facility recommendations include the construction of a flow splitter and wet pond in the available green space. These additional stormwater facilities will serve to maximize the retention and residency of sediments and soluble pollutants for improved water quality.

**EXISTING FACILITIES INVENTORY**

**CASEY COMMUNITY CENTER**

Project Title: Casey Community Center Retrofit  
*(Watershed: Muddy Branch)*

Existing Conditions:

- The park-owned property consists of the Community Center building, a large parking area, a playground, and a walking trail adjacent to a stream. Stormwater controls for the property capture runoff via two pipes that outfall into a nearby drainage ditch. Additional controls include the use of both an asphalt channel and grassed swale to direct surface water into a nearby tributary of Muddy Branch. The parcel's existing stormwater control measures provide little to no water quality treatment due to inadequate infiltration.

Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include retrofitting the park facility with stormwater filtration practices for improved water quality treatment. Appropriate practices include the implementation of a bioretention cell with an underdrain and yard outfall. Redesign of the existing curb and concrete channel will be required to redirect the runoff into the bioretention cell.

## GAITHERSBURG ARTS BARN

Project Title: Gaithersburg Arts Barn Retrofit  
(Watershed: Muddy Branch)

### Existing Conditions:

- The Arts Barn property, located in the Kentlands community, is highly impervious with an approximate drainage area of 0.2 acres.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations consist of implementing green infrastructure techniques. Modification of the existing concrete alley to a pervious alternative such as reinforced turf could provide water quality treatment and an opportunity for the arts community to interact with the system.



Arts Barn alleyway

## CITY HALL CONCERT PAVILION

Project Title: Gaithersburg City Hall Stormwater Retrofit  
(*Watershed: Lower Great Seneca Creek*)

### Existing Conditions:

- City Hall, Griffith Park, and the City Hall Concert Pavilion are all located on the same municipally-owned parcel. Existing stormwater controls for the property include a single storm drain inlet that collects runoff from the shared parking lot. The property is highly impervious and lacks stormwater storage and the runoff controls vital for improving water quality and reducing downstream pollution.

### Proposed Improvements:

- Stormwater management recommendations include the removal of vestigial infrastructure to make way for stormwater filtration practices that meet environmental site design (ESD) criteria for improved water quality. Appropriate infiltration practices include the use of flow splitters for runoff redirection to several micro-bioretenention cells.



Existing stormwater drainage collection inlet for City Hall Parking lot.

## Stormwater Glossary

**Best Management Practice (BMP):** Any schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other structural or nonstructural management techniques to prevent or reduce pollution to waters of the state. BMPs may include, but are not limited to, treatment requirements, operating procedures, or practices to control site runoff, spillage, leaks, sludge or waste disposal, or drainage from material storage.

**Environmental Site Design (ESD):** A comprehensive design strategy for maintaining predevelopment runoff characteristics and protecting natural resources. ESD objectives include preventing soil erosion from development projects; inhibiting new nonpoint source pollution; capturing and treating stormwater to minimize pollutants entering watercourses; and maintaining public safety through the proper design and operation of stormwater management facilities.

*Example:* ESD utilizes an array of stormwater management practices, nonstructural techniques, and better site planning to mimic natural hydrologic runoff characteristics and minimize the impact of land development on water resources.

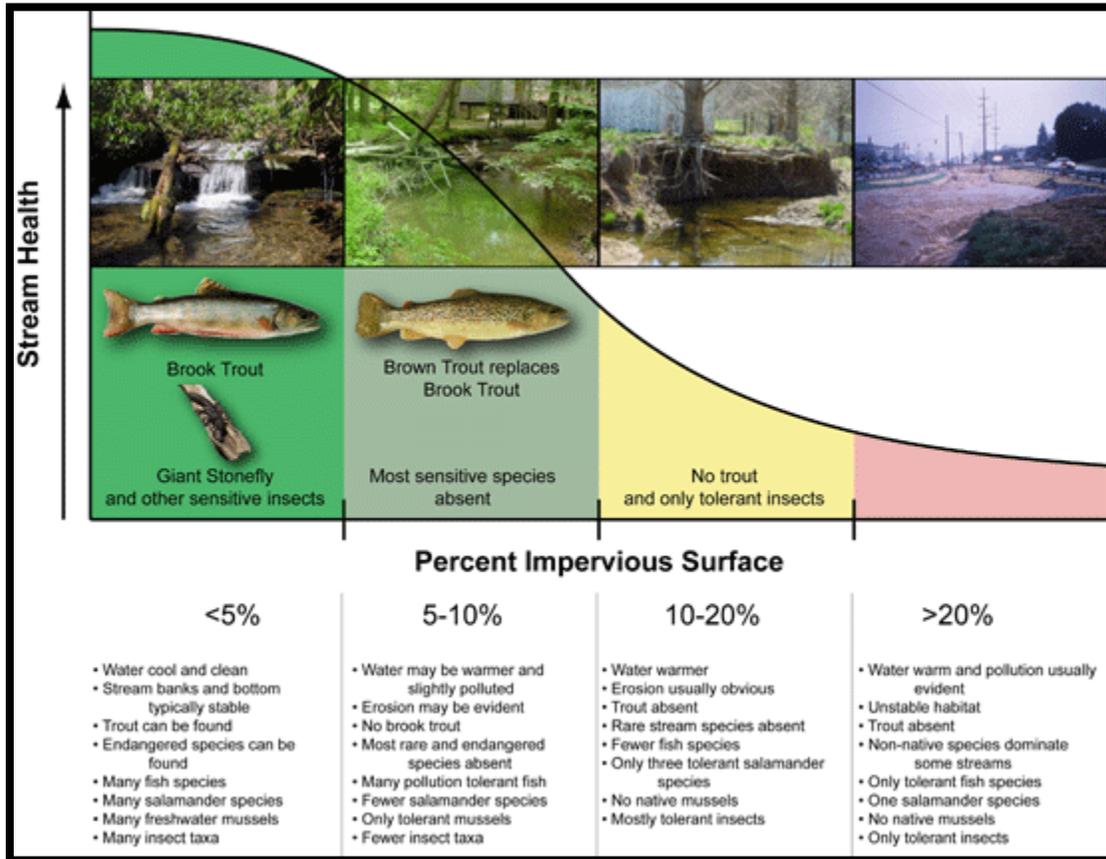


Construction site runoff controls to prevent soil loss and nutrient pollution

**Flow Splitter:** An engineered hydraulic structure designed to divert a percentage of storm flow to a BMP located out of the primary channel, direct stormwater to a parallel pipe system, or bypass a portion of base flow around a stormwater facility.

**Impervious Surface:** A surface that has been covered with a layer of material so that it is resistant to infiltration by water, including semi-pervious surfaces such as compacted clay, gravel used as travelways, most conventionally surfaced streets, roofs, sidewalks, parking lots, and other similar surfaces.

*Example:* Rooftops, roads and driveways, parking lots and sidewalks, patios, basketball and tennis courts.



Courtesy of Maryland Department of Natural Resources<sup>3</sup>

**Infiltration:** The passage or movement of water into the soil surface.

**Rain Gardens and Bioretentions:** A landscape or design technique used to filter rainwater and improve water quality. These practices utilize landscaping and soils to treat urban stormwater runoff by collecting it in shallow depressions before filtering through a fabricated planting soil media. Rain gardens are saucer shaped and rely solely on soil infiltration, while bioretention facilities often have underground pipes that tie into the storm drain system to alleviate ponding water.

<sup>3</sup> Maryland Department of Natural Resources. (n.d.). Stream Health. Retrieved from <https://dnr.maryland.gov/streams/Pages/streamhealth/How-Impervious-Surface-Impacts-Stream-Health.aspx>



**Retrofit:** The implementation of ESD practices, the construction of a structural BMP in a previously developed area, or the modification of an existing structural BMP, in a previously developed area to improve water quality over current conditions.

*Example:* A pond retrofit includes the repair or modification of the facility's structural components. Alteration to pond embankments, control structures, and outlet pipes are examples of pond retrofits that ensure the capture and treatment of stormwater runoff.

**Sand Filters:** A type of stormwater management facility designed to filter rainwater through sand to remove pollutants.



Sand filter located in Gaithersburg.

**Stormwater Management Facility:** A structural or nonstructural practice designed to temporarily store or treat stormwater runoff in order to mitigate flooding, reduce pollution and provide other amenities.

**Stormwater Runoff:** Occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Most of Gaithersburg's stormwater is generated from impervious surfaces, such as paved streets, parking lots and rooftops, with a smaller amount originating from pervious surfaces (such as grass) during large storms. Impervious surfaces seal the soil surface, preventing rainfall from naturally soaking into the ground. The excess water runs off and flows into the storm drainage system before reaching local waterways.

**Watercourse:** Any natural or artificial stream, river, creek, ditch, channel, culvert, drain, or waterway, in and including any adjacent area that is subject to inundation from overflow or flood water.

**Water Quality:** The condition of water, including chemical, physical, and biological characteristics, usually with respect to its suitability for a particular purpose such as drinking, swimming, or wildlife habitat. Water quality is measured by several factors, such as the concentration of nutrient pollution, dissolved oxygen, bacteria levels, the amount of salt (or salinity), or the amount of material suspended in the water (turbidity).

**Wet Pond:** A type of stormwater management facility designed to collect rainwater and pollutants and prevent downstream flooding. Wet ponds are permanent structures that provide for the storage of runoff by means of a permanent pool of water.

**Dry Pond:** A type of stormwater management facility designed to collect rainwater and pollutants and prevent downstream flooding. Dry ponds are permanent structures that provide temporary storage of runoff and are designed to hold water for a temporary period after a rainfall.



Wet and dry pond examples

### Summary

As the state and federal governments work toward improving the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, the City anticipates more stringent requirements and will need to consider creative approaches. Gaithersburg's MS4 permit includes new requirements for the restoration of existing developed lands that have little or no stormwater management. The City will need to provide additional stormwater treatment to 20% of impervious surface that is not treated to current regulatory standards. Restoration must be accomplished using environmental site design (ESD) and other nonstructural techniques, retrofits to existing structural practices, and stream restoration. Gaithersburg will need to identify water quality improvement opportunities and develop an implementation schedule to show that the 20% impervious area restoration will be achieved by 2025.

The City's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture can play a role in protecting our local environment by mitigating stormwater pollution. Outreach is key. Partnerships with environmental organizations have great potential to spread the word about stewardship of the watershed. For example, the Izaak Walton League has a facility with features that could be conducive to the creation of

a nature center. A nature center could be used to educate the public and could house camps and field trip groups. Other jurisdictions in the vicinity, including the City of Rockville, have nature centers and it would be beneficial for Gaithersburg to offer this option as well. Programming would directly inform visitors about how they can make decisions that protect local species and their aquatic habitats. Increasing environmental education offerings is as an important goal for Gaithersburg's future. Programs that encourage sustainability and engage residents in the needs of their communities would enhance the offerings of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture and simultaneously bolster the outreach and educational goals of the Stormwater Management Division within the Department of Public Works.

Meeting the mandatory impervious restoration goal will be a challenge, and the City's parks system will play a vital role in realizing its achievement. Gaithersburg's recent watershed studies evaluated the City for restoration opportunities and identified potential improvement projects, many of which are proposed in City parks and stream corridors. Implementation of any project in a City park will need to balance existing uses and stakeholder needs to develop projects that provide benefits far beyond water quality—stormwater projects with a holistic view will contribute to a high quality of life for Gaithersburg residents.

The latest stormwater management design standards focus on vegetated practices that are aesthetically pleasing and can serve as public amenities. These stormwater features provide further opportunities for public outreach and education. Interpretive signage can help tell the story of stormwater and detail the City's efforts to improve our local waters and the Chesapeake Bay. Outdoor education programming focused on water quality can enrich existing youth services programming and support the state's environmental literacy requirements. By incorporating stormwater initiatives in our parks and programming, we can foster an informed community that is supportive of water quality initiatives.



Summaries of the potential stormwater improvements identified by the watershed studies and located in City parks are included with the Parks and Facilities inventories. Look for the symbol of a raining cloud throughout the inventories for more information on proposed stormwater improvements within City park properties.

Modifications to City-owned parks will benefit the local watershed and support alignment with EPA standards. When replacements need to be made or new projects are proposed, staff should consult the MS4 Permit or comply with the most recent regulations for stormwater management as delineated by the EPA. This approach has the potential to merge environmental priorities with innovative urban design efforts that can engage, attract, and satisfy the needs of residents. Inventive redesigns could improve the connectivity of the City as a whole for cyclists and pedestrians while also promoting the City's stormwater management compliance goals. For instance, Bohrer Park could become a more central venue where hiker/biker paths can converge. These pervious paths could incorporate more forested buffers, wildlife corridors and natural greenways thus creating a scenic atmosphere while also reducing runoff zones. Paths alongside waterways would connect constituents with nature and bring the beauty of flora and fauna into the increasingly developed City of Gaithersburg.

Appendix F: Objectives Matrices

Parks Objectives	Preserve and expand opportunities of "Green Spaces"	Develop connectivity between communities through the development of trail systems	Promote health and wellness for all ages and abilities	Utilize sustainable practices in the preservation and acquisition of park land	Develop education and learning opportunities
1: Manage the City's parks to meet the current and future needs of our community.	●				
2: Continue the development of a trail system that links homes, schools, parks and commercial areas.		●			
3: Promote park use as a means of developing healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the environment.			●		●
4: Improve access to parks and park amenities.					
5: Promote community awareness and appreciation of our City's parks/natural and historic resources; and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.					●
6: Acquire appropriate land to expand existing parks and park amenities.	●				
7: Develop a nature center and provide wildlife habitat and interpretive use areas.		●			●
8: Engage in sustainable practices and create opportunities and incentives for individuals, organizations, and businesses to follow suit.				●	●
9: Provide excellent stewardship of natural and historic resources.	●			●	●
10: Improve safety and sense of security for park users.					
11: Seek funding sources and offsets to acquire, maintain and enhance City parks.					
12: Promote use of park trails.		●	●		

# Recreation Objectives

	Increase awareness and understanding of the central role recreation plays in quality of life	Ensure that people of all ages and abilities in our community have access to a system of high quality programs, meaningful activities, and opportunities that foster active lifestyles to support a healthy community	Utilize citizen input and recreational trends to promote positive personal development and lifetime engagement	Ensure all communities have accessible, safe, functional, and engaging recreational facilities and amenities, creating social equity	Seek opportunities to acquire open space and foster conservation of natural resources, implement sustainable practices, and preserve green space for passive and active recreation
1: Foster a healthy community and promote active and enriching lifestyles.	●	●	●	●	
2: Strive to ensure that the young people in our community have access to a system of high quality programs, activities, and opportunities that promote positive personal development.	●	●	●	●	
3: Provide the aging population with meaningful and relevant recreation and wellness programs that address the needs of socialization, leisure activities, continuing education, health empowerment, and lifetime engagement.		●		●	
4: Promote community awareness of the recreational programs and facilities available; and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.	●				
5: Provide recreational facilities that meet the recreational needs and interests of all individuals.		●	●		
6: Encourage an effective, efficient working relationship with organizations, schools, businesses, and foundations to leverage efforts and resources for the benefit of the community's recreational needs.	●				
7: Sustain and strengthen the community by promoting environmental quality and civic investment.	●				●
8: Encourage, celebrate, and support cultural diversity and similarities in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.	●			●	
9: Engage in sustainable practices and opportunities for individuals, organizations, and businesses to contribute to the City's efforts to provide recreational programs and facilities.	●				●
10: Promote park use as a means of developing healthy lifestyles and enjoyment of the environment.	●				

# Culture Objectives

	Create opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts for people of all ages, cultures, and abilities through vibrant, accessible and affordable cultural arts programs	Celebrate the richness of our community's heritage as part of our contemporary identity	Advocate excellence in the creation, presentation and preservation of artistic achievement	Build our cultural arts program into an economic engine for the City	Increase awareness and understanding of the central role the arts play in expressing our community's identity and character
1: Infuse the visual and performing arts into City programs, facilities and events in a manner that addresses the needs and interests of our broad and diverse community.			●	●	
2: Promote and create literary arts opportunities, programs and events.	●		●	●	
3: Contribute to our community's identity, beautification, quality of life, and economic vitality through Public Art.		●	●	●	●
4: Continue and expand efforts to promote the City's cultural, commercial, and political history in ways that engage a multigenerational and diverse citizenry.	●	●			●
5: Celebrate the diversity of Gaithersburg and heighten awareness of cultural similarities and differences in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.	●			●	●
6: Develop and implement new and innovative arts and cultural programs for people of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and levels of experiences.	●				●
7: Promote community awareness of the City's arts and culture programs and encourage involvement and participation in every aspect thereof.			●		●
8: Offer opportunities for individuals, organizations and businesses to contribute to the City's efforts to provide arts programs, events and facilities.	●			●	●
9: Include the arts and cultural in City economic development initiatives.				●	
10: Public Safety and Accessibility	●				●
11: Encourage, celebrate, and support cultural diversity and similarities in order to advance interactions between and among members of the community.	●				

## Appendix G: Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture Timeline

1926	First City Hall Holiday Tree Lighting
1937	First Labor Day Parade
1951	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holiday Tree Lighting
1955	Lee Street Park (Constitution Gardens) donated to the City by Eugene Casey
1958	Civic Center Park (Griffith Park) purchased
1960	Lee Street Park opens
1961	Thomas Robertson becomes Recreation Director for the summer playground program
1962	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Labor Day Parade
1963	Duvall Park deeded to the City
1965	Thomas Robertson becomes year-round Recreation Director (part-time). Programs include: After school play center, teen club, Saturday basketball, and a variety of classes
1967	Land on West Deer Park (Christman Park) deeded to the City
1968-71	Morris Park deeded to the City. Several parcels
1969-73	Muddy Branch Park deeded to the City. Several parcels
1969	Gaithersburg has three parks: Civic Center, Duvall Park and Lee Street  Sharon Benn serves briefly as Director of Parks and Recreation
1970	Richard L. Blohm named Director of Parks and Recreation
1971	Casey Barns property donated to the City by Eugene B. Casey. The City purchased the building parcel in 1971 and obtained two additional parcels in 1974.
1972-73	Walder Park (Cedar Avenue Park) property purchased
1973	Ground breaking ceremonies held at Morris Park (Summit Hall Park). The land was deeded to the City between 1967-1971.  Christman Park named for William John Christman III
1974	Diamond Farms property deeded to the City as part of a development agreement

- Thomas Robertson retires from City service
- 1975 Formal dedication of Morris Park (Summit Hall Park)
- Ground breaking ceremonies for Gaithersburg Aquatic Center
- 1976 Casey West Property (Parklands) purchased  
Citizens Advisory Committee established to develop guidelines and plans for future recreation services
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holiday Tree Lighting
- 1977 Gaithersburg Aquatic Center opens
- Casey Community Center opens (Rosedale I & II)
- Lee Street Park developed utilizing Community Development Block Grant Funding, would eventually be renamed Constitution Gardens
- City completes its first comprehensive plan for Parks and Recreation
- 1978 Cedar Avenue Park (Walder Park) opens
- Diamond Farms Park opens
- 1980 Kelley Park deeded to the City
- Future Robertson Park property purchased
- 1982 Robertson Park formally dedicated
- First Olde Towne Day Festival
- Acquisition of Summit Hall Turf Farm (Bohrer Park)
- 1985 Cedar Avenue Park rededicated as Walder Park
- 1986 Kelley Park formally dedicated
- 1987 Observation Park property purchased
- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Labor Day Parade
- Gaithersburg Chorus founded
- 1988 Lee Street Park rededicated as Constitution Gardens
- Christman Park War Memorial dedicated

- 1989 Arts Barn, Kentlands Mansion, Firehouse and the Kentlands Green deeded to the City to create an arts campus
- Council for the Arts, a volunteer committee, established through resolution R-73-89
- Multicultural Affairs Committee established through resolution R-38-95
- 1990 Teen Center opens in leased property on Girard Street.
- Formal dedication of the Water Park at Bohrer Park, Summit Hall Farm
- Green Park formally dedicated
- 1991 Gaithersburg Senior Center opens
- Summit Hall Farm Park Pool opens on Memorial Day
- First Oktoberfest at the Kentlands
- 1992 Little Quarry Park in Kentlands is conveyed to City
- Teen Center on East Diamond Avenue opens
- Green Park dedicated
- 1993 Malcom King Park (Muddy Branch Park) formally dedicated
- Miniature Golf facility at Bohrer Park, Summit Hall Farm formally dedicated
- 1994 Muddy Branch Park rededicated as Malcolm King Park
- 1995 Summit Hall Park rededicated as Morris Park
- Washingtonian Woods Park formally dedicated
- Future Lakelands Park property, lakes, and stream valley acquired
- 1996 Senior Center renovations completed
- The Helz Music Room at the Kentlands Mansion formally dedicated
- First Winter Lights Festival at Seneca Creek State Park
- 1998 Activity Center at Bohrer Park, Summit Hall Farm formally dedicated
- Bohrer Park public art Banner Installation
- Victory Farm Park purchased

City-owned Parks total: 522.4 acres

Olde Towne Park property added at 1 South Summit Avenue

Gateway Commons (Summer field Suites) purchased

First Bark in the Park Canine Festival

Cedar Avenue Park renamed Walder Park after the City purchased and added an adjoining property destroyed by fire

1999 Staff completes Parks and Recreation and Open Space Plan for the 21st Century

Richard L. Blohm, Director of Parks and Recreation, announces retirement

Land that will become Blohm Park purchased

Arts Barn renovated

2000 Skate Park at Bohrer Park opens

Expansion of the Olde Towne Youth Center

CaringMatters moves into former recreation offices

Celebración public art installed at Washingtonian Center Plaza

Center Plaza Round-About public art installed at Perry Parkway Traffic Circle

Michele Potter appointed Director of Parks, Recreation & Culture

Senior Center switches from the Police Department to the Department of Parks, Recreation & Culture

First St. Patrick's Day Parade presented in partnership with the Harp and Shamrock Society of Gaithersburg and the Rio Washingtonian Center

2001 Blohm Park dedicated

A Circle of Acanthus Leaf Chairs public art installed at Kentlands Main Street Park & Pavilion

Euphony public art installed at City Concert Pavilion

Eagles Head Property purchased

Gateway Commons (Summer field Suites) work completed

- Crown Woods purchased
- Cultural Arts Advisory Committee (CAAC) established
- 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holiday Tree Lighting
- 2002 Inspiration Park rededicated
- Travis Ave Park – Park developed through an agreement with Montgomery Meadows HOA
- Acanthus Leaf Fountain with Colonnade public art installed at Lakelands Office Building
- My New Friend public art installed at The Oaks at Olde Towne
- Heron and the Sun public art installed at Quince Orchard Park Traffic Circle
- The Gaithersburg Arts Barn officially opens to the public.
- 2003 Crown Woods dedicated
- Catch Me If You Can public art installed at Holbrook Shopping Center
- 2004 History Park opens
- Synergy public art installed at Two Washingtonian Center
- 2005 Lakelands Park dedicated
- Trapped Ball public art installed at E-Z Storage on North Frederick Avenue
- Journey of the Imagination installed at The Colonnade
- The Entertainer public art installed at Arts Barn
- Young Artist Award (YAA) established in partnership with the Kentlands Community Foundation
- Robertson Park Youth Center opens
- Gaithersburg Arts and Monuments Funding Corporation (GAMFC) established
- 2006 Three Big Dogs public art installed at the Green Park Dog Park
- First Jubilation Day Gospel Extravaganza
- Annual Bridal Show at the Kentlands Mansion

- 2007 Victory Farms Park (Hidden Creek)  
All Aboard the Art Train public art installed at multiple sites  
25<sup>th</sup> Annual Olde Towne Day Festival
- 2008 Winter Lights introduces its first special event, Walk Under the Lights  
Tree public art installed at Bozzuto in Olde Towne
- 2009 Civic Center Park rededicated as Griffith Park  
Olde Towne Youth Center on Teachers Way reopens after full reconstruction  
C&O Caboose # 904145 acquired
- 2010 First Gaithersburg Book Festival  
Hillside Pavilion built  
Community Museum reopens following renovation and redesign  
First Breakfast with Santa at the Kentlands Mansion
- 2011 Historic Gaithersburg Window installed at Arts Barn  
Latitude Observatory dedicated  
First Run Under the Lights, a Winter Lights special event in partnership with Montgomery County Road Runners Club  
Partnership with Montgomery County Humane Society converts Bark in the Park to Paws in the Park
- 2012 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Labor Day Parade  
First S'more Lights, a Winter Lights special event  
First Leashes 'n' Lights, a Winter Lights special event
- 2013 Curry Building Mural public art installed at Curry Automotive on North Frederick Avenue  
Vortex public art installed at Residences at Hidden Creek, Allied Place  
Upward Bound public art installed at Washingtonian South-Pocket Park  
Oktoberfest at the Kentlands layout expanded. City takes over all event programming  
Olde Towne Day renamed Celebrate! Gaithersburg in Olde Towne

- 2014 Budd Car at Community Museum installed
- Inner Being public art installed at Crown
- Gaithersburg Aquatic Center reopened and dedicated
- Organic Synthetic Turf Field at Lakelands Park installed and dedicated
- Activity Center Gymnasium Floor refurbished (poured surface)
- First annual Wine Under the Lights, a Winter Lights special event
- 2015 Upcounty Senior Center expanded, renovated, and rebranded as the Benjamin Gaither Center
- #14 Steam Locomotive Bike Rack installed at Community Museum Plaza
- Gallo and The Box Turtle public art are both installed at Parklands at Watkins Mill Town Center
- Constitution Gardens reopens as a Nature Play Space park. Receives Excellence in Landscape Grand Award in 2016
- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kentlands Mansion as a rental venue.
- 2016 Little Slugger public art installed at Vistas at Quince Orchard Park
- Mayor Ed Bohrer public art installed at Bohrer Park Activity Center
- 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Oktoberfest at the Kentlands
- Fourth of July fireworks and festivities moved from Fairgrounds to Bohrer Park
- 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Water Park
- 2017 First Summerfest at Bohrer Park. Combines Celebrate! Gaithersburg and Fourth of July into a large, outdoor festival
- 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Opening of the Casey Community Center
- 2018 Olde Towne Plaza and Interactive Splash Fountain opens to the public
- Children's Gatehouse public art installed at Constitution Gardens
- 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Labor Day Parade
- 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Holiday Tree Lighting

2019

10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Gaithersburg Book Festival

20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Gaithersburg Arts Barn

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