
7 • Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks, trails, and other open space resources compose an area's "green infrastructure," together forming a network that provides public spaces for recreation, community beauty, animal habitat, and stormwater management. This green infrastructure differs from a community's "gray" infrastructure, which includes roads, utilities, and public facilities. The open space network is not just confined to parkland or trails: it also encompasses portions of a community's public realm, such as the tree-lined streets and sidewalks that connect open space resources.

An open space network can be thought of as a fundamental framework for a community, providing attractive and comfortable "natural" connections between open spaces that support and enhance the community's built environment. As such, parks, pedestrian/bike trails, stream corridors, and tree-lined streets should be understood as a system, not as a collection of isolated green areas.

As interest in walkable communities has been renewed, the importance of parks and open space has grown in community estimation. The post-World War II suburban model of development featured single-family homes with large green yards; this model essentially substituted private yards for public open space. Often beyond comfortable walking distance for neighborhood residents, suburban parks frequently were not built as neighborhood-serving amenities. Today, more individuals recognize the health benefits of recreational activities and seek comfortable, accessible open space facilities. Networked open spaces bring multiple benefits: they provide places for active and passive recreation; encourage community users to walk to other destinations, such as commercial/employment areas, schools, or transit centers; and add value to adjacent neighborhoods, improving the entire community's quality of life.

KEY FINDINGS

- Park and recreation facilities are evenly distributed throughout the plan area.
- The plan area has a small overall parkland deficit, based on standards defined by the 2002 *Prince George's County Approved General Plan*.
- Under these standards, the plan area has a surplus of regional parkland, but a deficit of local parkland.
- Stream valley parks and trails are major open space amenities in the plan area.
- Prince George's County has a range of tools for open space acquisition, including direct purchase, environmental mitigation, and mandatory dedication as part of the subdivision development process.

MAJOR CHALLENGES

- Much of the plan area has been developed, and few large tracts of land exist for future parkland development.
- The widespread existence of stream valley wetlands makes the creation of trails difficult, due to location and potential destruction of wetland environment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Prince George's County contains almost 26,000 acres of M-NCPPC parkland, with almost one-third of the holdings developed for active or passive recreational uses. Just over four percent of this public open space lies within the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area. Over 600 acres of open space have been added since the 1993 master plan, although one-third of this total can be attributed to including the former Glenn Dale Hospital site on the list of park facilities. The other large parkland development since 1993 is the Folly Branch Stream Valley Park, which increased from slightly over four acres in 1992 to almost 308 acres in 2008.

Public open space within Prince George's County is categorized by size and function. Classifications are shown in Table 20.

Table 20.
Park Classifications

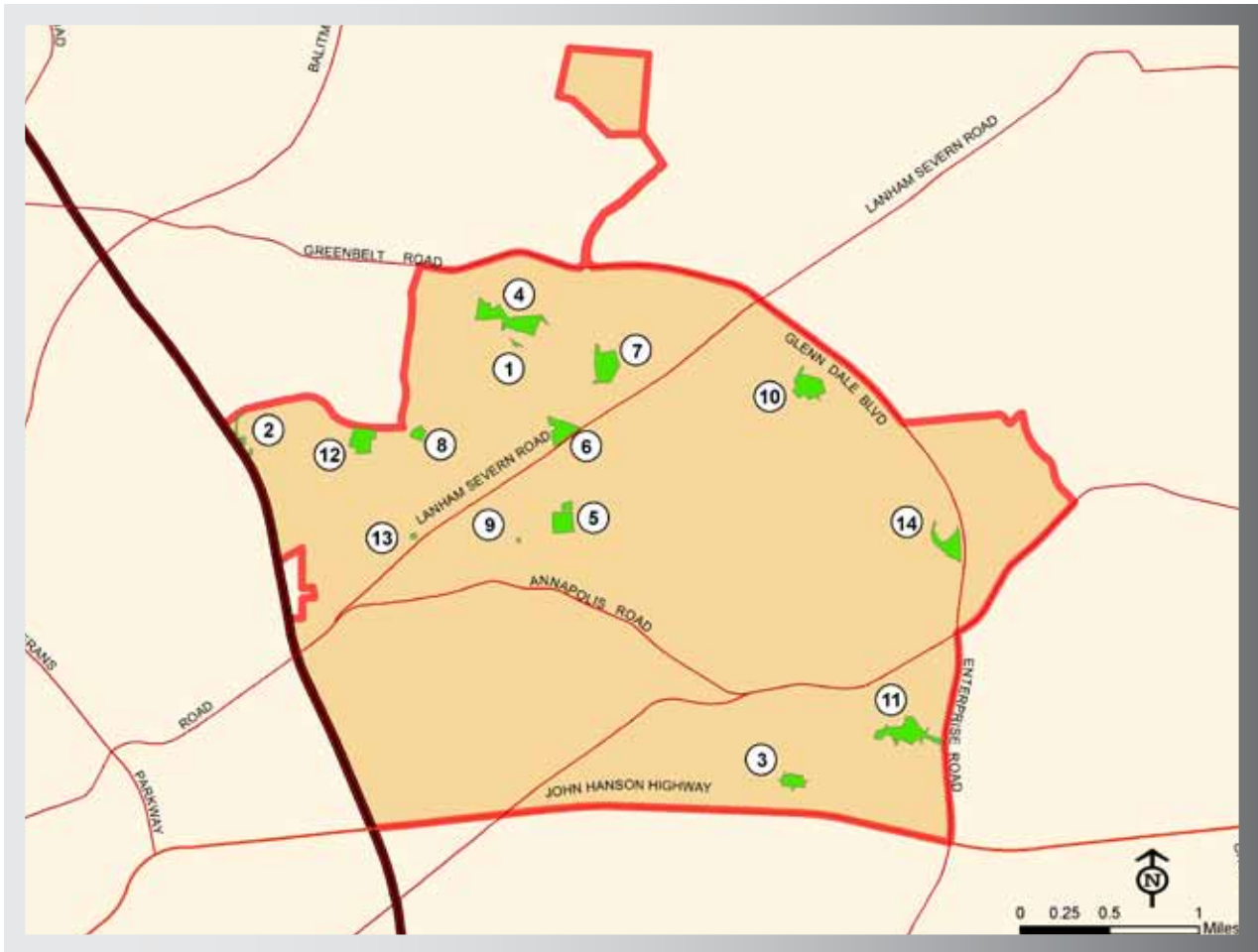
<i>Name</i>	<i>Facility Types</i>	<i>Service Area</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
Neighborhood Park and Recreation Areas	Mini-parks, playgrounds, parks, recreation centers, and park/schools	Serve immediate vicinity	Less than 20 acres
Community Park and Recreation Areas	Community centers, parks, recreation centers, and cultural centers	Serve a larger area, but are still considered to be “local parks”	Between 20 and 200 acres
Regional Park and Recreation Areas	Stream valley parks, regional parks, cultural arts centers, and service facilities	Serve an entire region of the county	More than 200 acres
Countywide Park and Recreation Areas	River parks, historic sites/landmarks, hiker/biker/equestrian trails, unique natural features, conservation areas, and service facilities	Serve the entire county	N/A
Urban Park and Recreation Areas	Urban parks and urban nature centers	Serve residents with severely limited access to outdoor nature areas	N/A
Special Park and Recreation Areas	Aquatic facilities, ice rinks, golf courses, shooting centers, athletic complexes, equestrian centers, airports, marinas, and reclamation areas	Serve the entire county	N/A

Neighborhood Park and Recreation Areas

Neighborhood parks are the smallest parks in the M-NCPPC system, ranging from mini-parks under an acre in size to parks just under 20 acres. These parks serve as their name implies, providing open space and recreational opportunities for their immediate communities. Facilities found in neighborhood parks typically include playground equipment, athletic fields/areas for open play, picnic shelters, and landscaping. The Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area contains 14 neighborhood park facilities.

Table 21.		
Neighborhood Park and Recreation Areas		
	<i>Name</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
1	Good Luck Heights Neighborhood Mini-Park	0.45 acres
2	Dresden Green Neighborhood Playground	2.45 acres
3	Glenn Dale Estates Neighborhood Park	5.34 acres
4	Presley Manor Neighborhood Park	17.82 acres
5	Thomas Seabrook Neighborhood Park	9.73 acres
6	Gaywood Neighborhood Park and School	8.87 acres
7	Woodstream Neighborhood Park	13.16 acres
8	Cipriano Neighborhood Park	3.04 acres
9	Seabrook Neighborhood Recreation Center	0.34 acres
10	Glenn Dale Neighborhood Park	11.96 acres
11	Holmehurst Neighborhood Park	11.96 acres
12	Hynesboro Neighborhood Mini-Park	0.52 acres
13	Gabriel's Run Neighborhood Park	10.02 acres
14	Tabbs Neighborhood Park	7.15 acres
15	Holmehurst West Neighborhood Park	2.33 acres
16	Glenwood Park Neighborhood Park	8.14 acres
Total neighborhood park acreage: 113.28 acres		

Map 13 shows the distribution of these neighborhood parks within the plan area. Numbers of park facilities are keyed to Table 21. Most neighborhood parks are located in the northern and eastern portions of the plan area.



Map 13: Neighborhood Parks



Community Park and Recreation Areas

Community parks are larger than neighborhood parks and are intended to serve multiple neighborhoods. Community centers and recreation centers also fall within this category. Sizes range from 20 acres to 200 acres per facility. Like neighborhood parks, these facilities typically include playground equipment, athletic fields/areas for open play, picnic shelters and facilities. Typically, though, there are more of these amenities at a community park than at a neighborhood park. The plan area includes six community parks, four of which are connected to other recreation amenities: Lanham Forest Community Park is adjacent to Bald Hill Branch, Camelot Community Park and Glenn Dale Community Center Park lie along the WB&A Trail, and Lincoln-Vista Community Park is adjacent to the large Folly Branch Stream Valley Park. Most of the community parks in the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area are relatively small and are located in the southwestern and eastern portions of the plan area.

Map 14, keyed to Table 22, illustrates the location of community parks in the plan area.

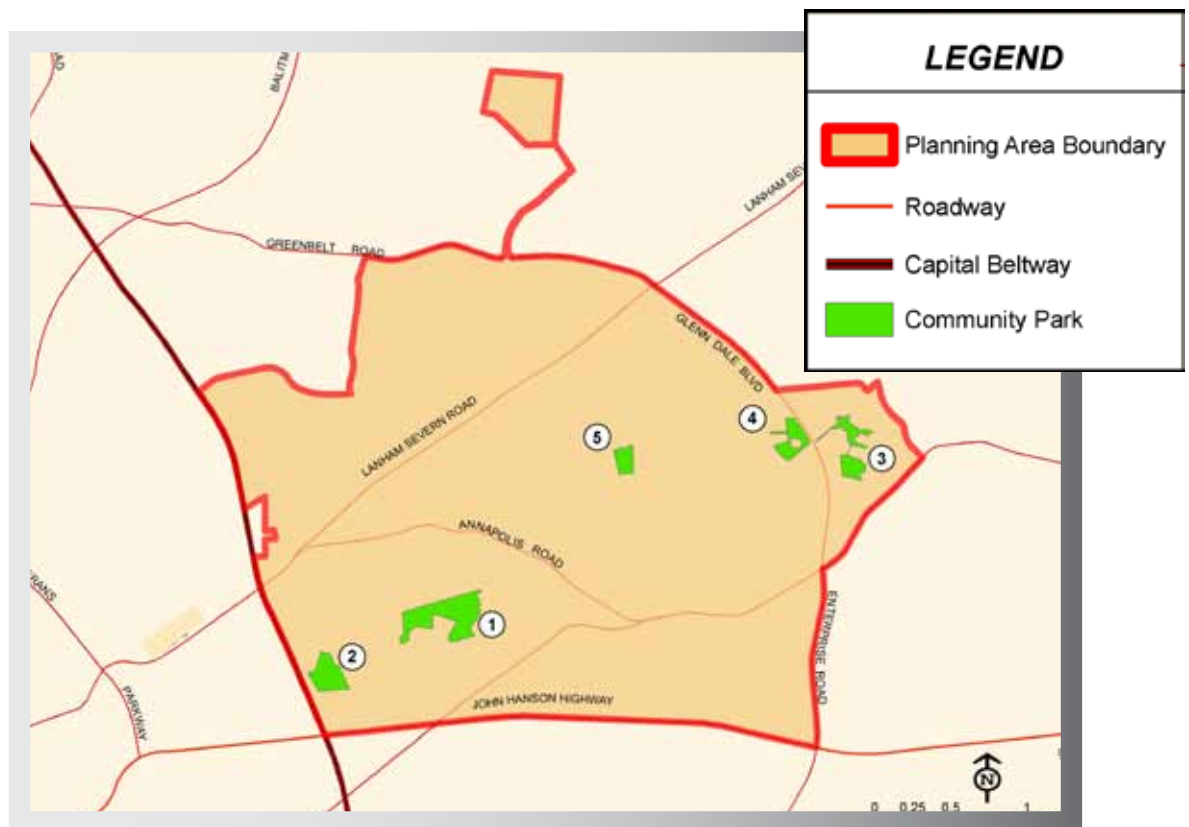


Table 22.
Community Park and Recreation Areas

	Name	Location	Acreage
1	Lanham Forest Community Park	Bald Hill Branch	64.94 acres
2	Whitfield Chapel Community Park		26.71 acres
3	Camelot Community Park	WB&A Trail	23.83 acres
4	Glenn Dale Community Center Park	WB&A Trail	22.21 acres
5	Lincoln-Vista Community Park	Folly Branch Stream Valley Park	36.0 acres
6	Good Luck Community Center Park		10.14 acres
Total Community Park Acreage: 183.83 acres			

Stream Valley Park and Recreation Areas

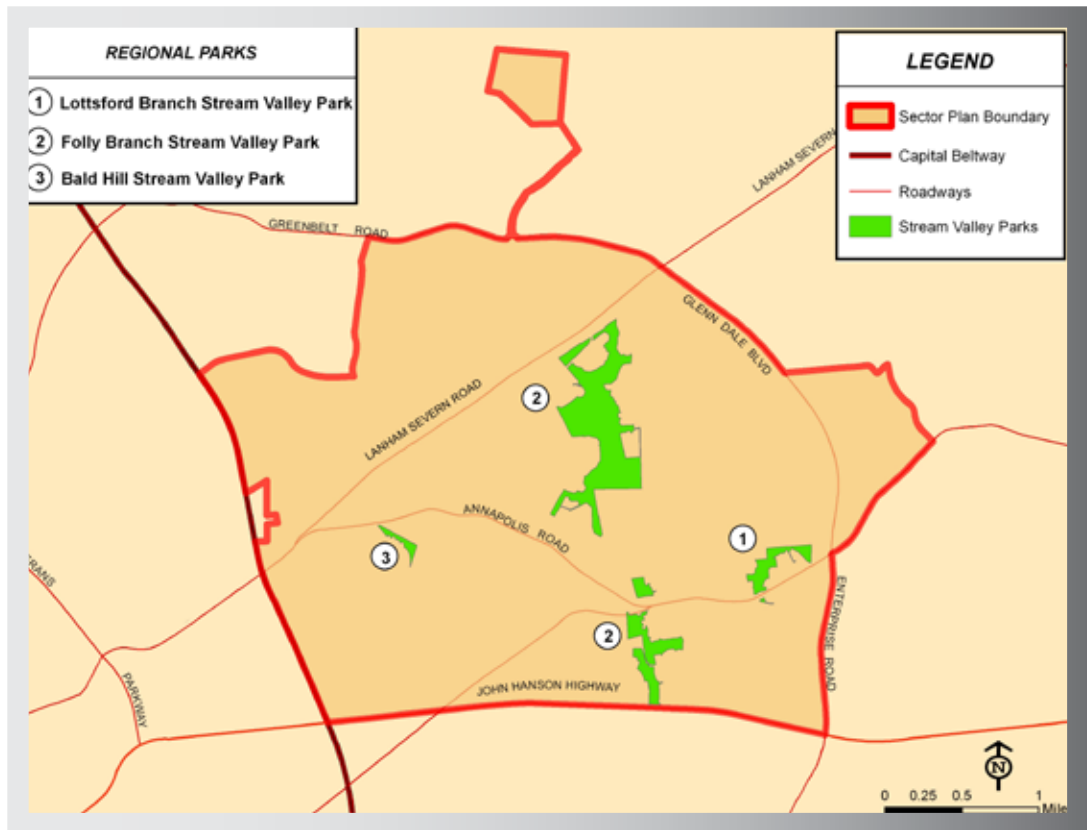
Stream valley parks include M-NCPPC-owned lands over 200 acres in size, cultural centers, and/or stream valley parks. Stream valley parks are designed to serve large portions of Prince George's County and typically contain a variety of unique facilities, such as campgrounds, nature centers, boating areas, and trails. These parks usually include large amounts of undeveloped land left open for passive recreation and natural resource preservation.

The county has five developed 200-acre-plus parks; none is located within the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area. However, three stream valley parks can be found in the eastern portion of the plan area. The former Glenn Dale Hospital site qualifies as a regional park due to its acreage, but it contains no park facilities currently accessible by the public.

Stream valley parks located in the plan area are shown in Figure Map 15 (keyed to Table 23). The majority of this acreage is located within the Folly Branch Stream Valley Park, where M-NCPPC has been acquiring acreage for the past two decades.

Countywide Park and Recreation Areas

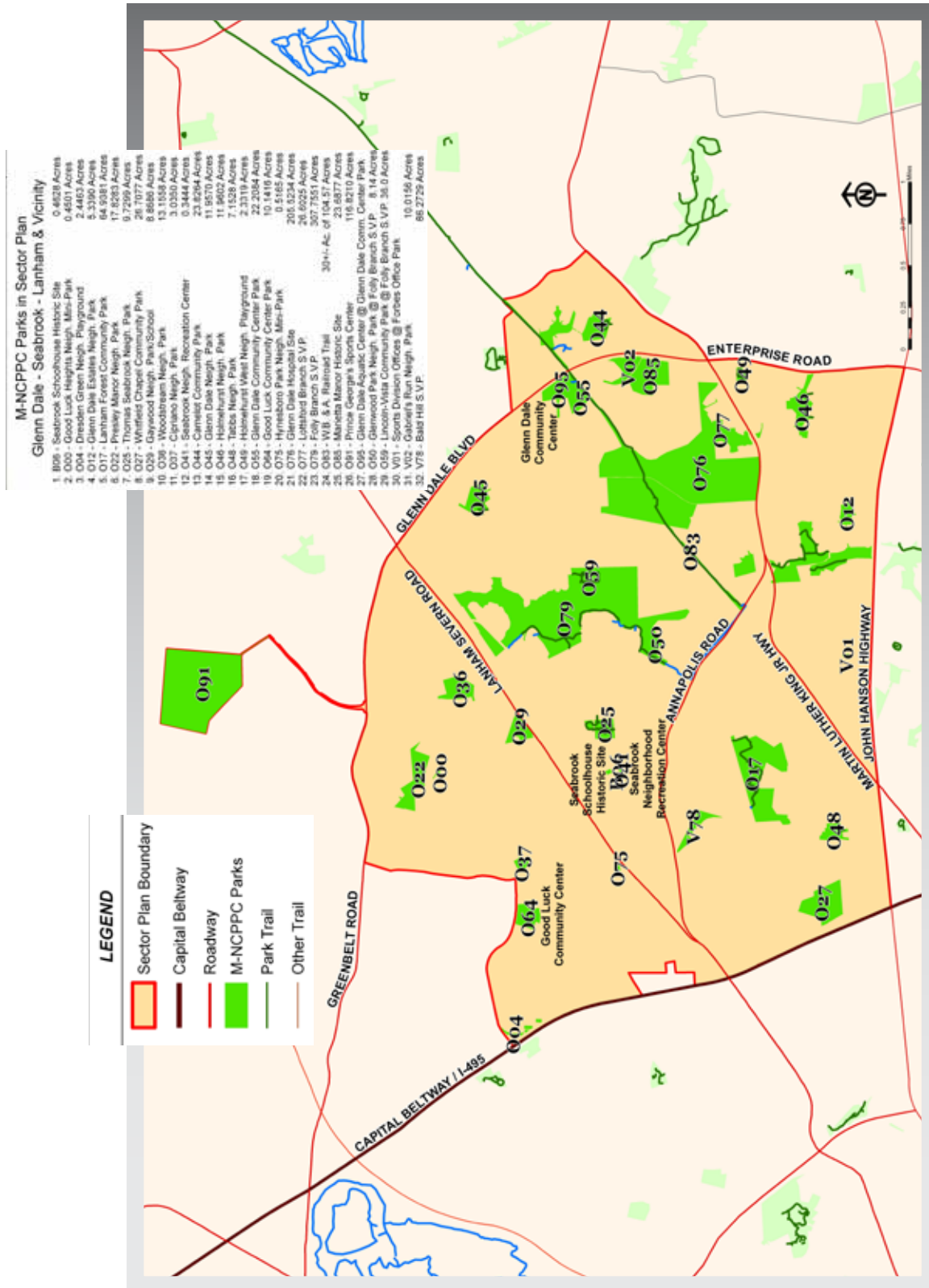
Countywide parks contain special features and facilities designed to serve all county residents. These may be river parks, historic sites/resources, trails, unique natural features, conservation areas, or service facilities. Three countywide park



Map 15: Stream Valley Parks

	Name	Acreage
1	Lottsford Branch Stream Valley Park	26.60 acres
2	Folly Branch Stream Valley Park	307.76 acres
3	Bald Hill Stream Valley Park	86.27 acres
	Total Stream Valley Park Acreage	420.63 acres

Map 16: Existing Park and Recreation Resources



resources are located within the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area: the Marietta Historic Site, the Seabrook Schoolhouse Historic Site, and the WB&A Trail.

Urban Park and Recreation Areas

Urban park facilities function as their name implies: they serve county residents with limited access to outdoor nature areas. These facilities are located primarily within the Capital Beltway, in the Developing Tier, where higher-density development creates a more urban setting. No urban parks are found in the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area.

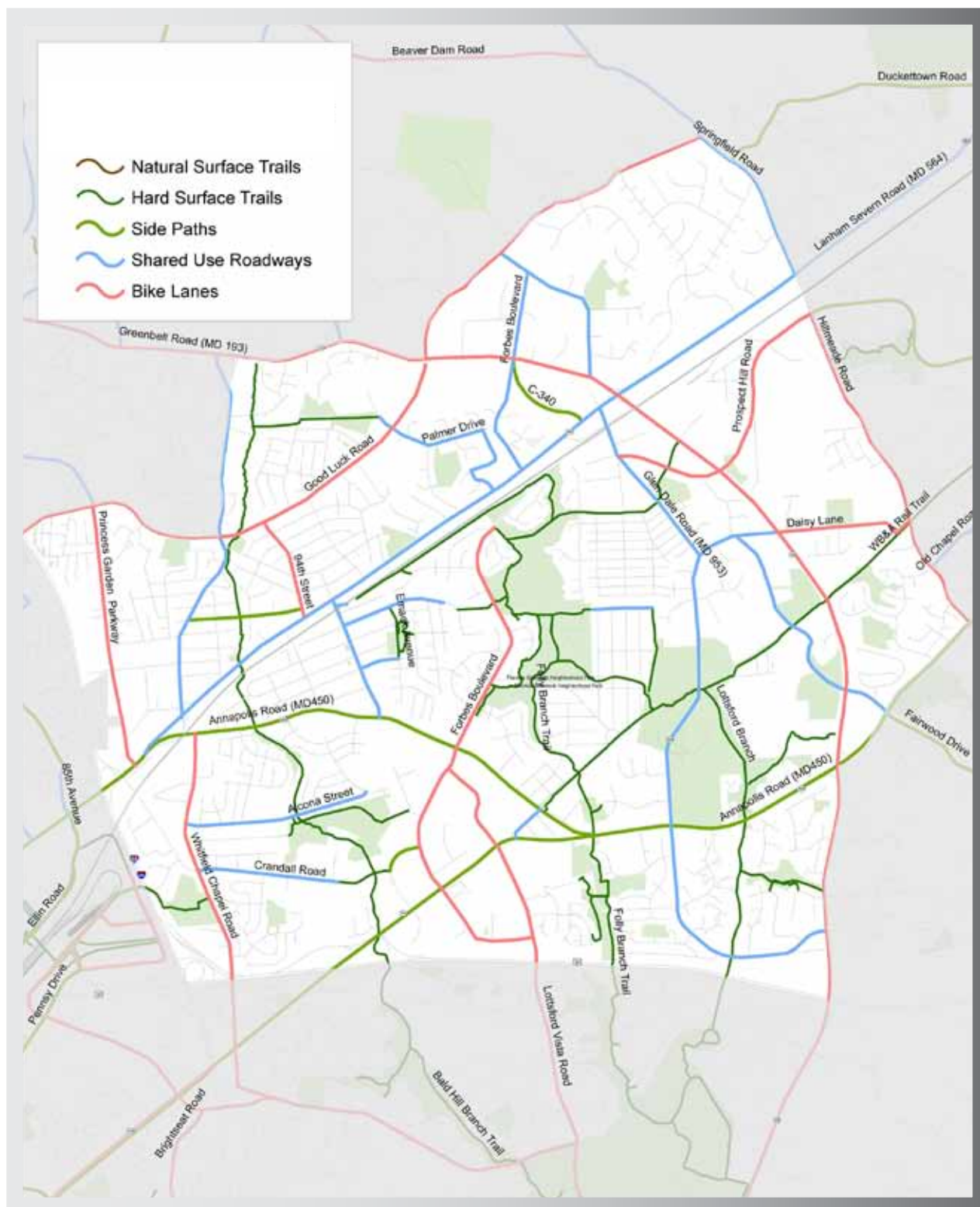
Special Park and Recreation Areas

This park facility classification serves all county residents and includes unique resources such as aquatic facilities, ice rinks, golf courses, shooting centers, athletic complexes, equestrian centers, airports, marinas, and reclamation areas. The plan area contains two of these special resources: the Glenn Dale Aquatic Center at the Glenn Dale Community Center Park and the Prince George’s County Trap and Skeet Center, a public shooting facility located north of Glenn Dale Boulevard (MD 193) off Good Luck Road.

Trails

Trails form an important part of an area’s green infrastructure, offering opportunities for recreational activities separated from automobile interference, such as walking and biking; for preservation of open space that enhances community character, helps link wildlife habitats, and aids in stormwater filtration; and for nonvehicular transportation corridors. The plan area contains the beginnings of an extensive trails network that eventually will link public open space, neighborhoods, and commercial/employment areas together, a unique opportunity that will bring a high degree of connectivity to the community.

The 1993 master plan recommended the development of several major east/west trails through the area, including the 5.6-mile WB&A Trail, which has been constructed along an abandoned rail line between the Patuxent River and the intersection of Annapolis Road (MD 450) and Martin Luther King, Jr. Highway (MD 704) in the south central portion of the plan area. This trail connects to the MD 450 sidepath (pedestrian and bicycle trail) and two equestrian trails (see Map 17). Additionally, it is adjacent to the Glenn Dale Hospital site and the former Glenn Dale Community Center and Splash Park. The WB&A Trail is the area’s best-known trail and is seen as a community amenity. Plans exist to extend this trail across the Patuxent River into Anne Arundel County.



Map 17: Trails Map—Existing and Planned

Stream valley park trails also constitute a major component of M-NCPPC's planned trails network. In 1993, the Folly Branch Stream Valley Park included only four acres of open space; between 1993 and 2009, over 300 acres were added to this park. Linear parks along floodways and drainageways play important environmental and recreational roles in the park system and provide opportunities for the creation of extensive trails running alongside or near the waterways. Additional stream valley parks have been created, such as the Lottsford Branch Stream Valley Park and the Bald Hill Stream Valley Park, and future trails are planned through these important open spaces.

See Chapter 8 for more information about the plan area's trails system.

Private Open Space and Recreation Facilities

The plan area also contains open space and recreation facilities that are available to residents of particular subdivisions. Owned by homeowners' associations, these facilities offer recreation alternatives to public open space within the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area. Most of these private open spaces are limited in size, and recreational amenities range from simple playgrounds and open areas to more elaborate facilities containing a clubhouse, athletic courts, and a pool. User fees in the form of homeowners' association dues are required for access to these private spaces.

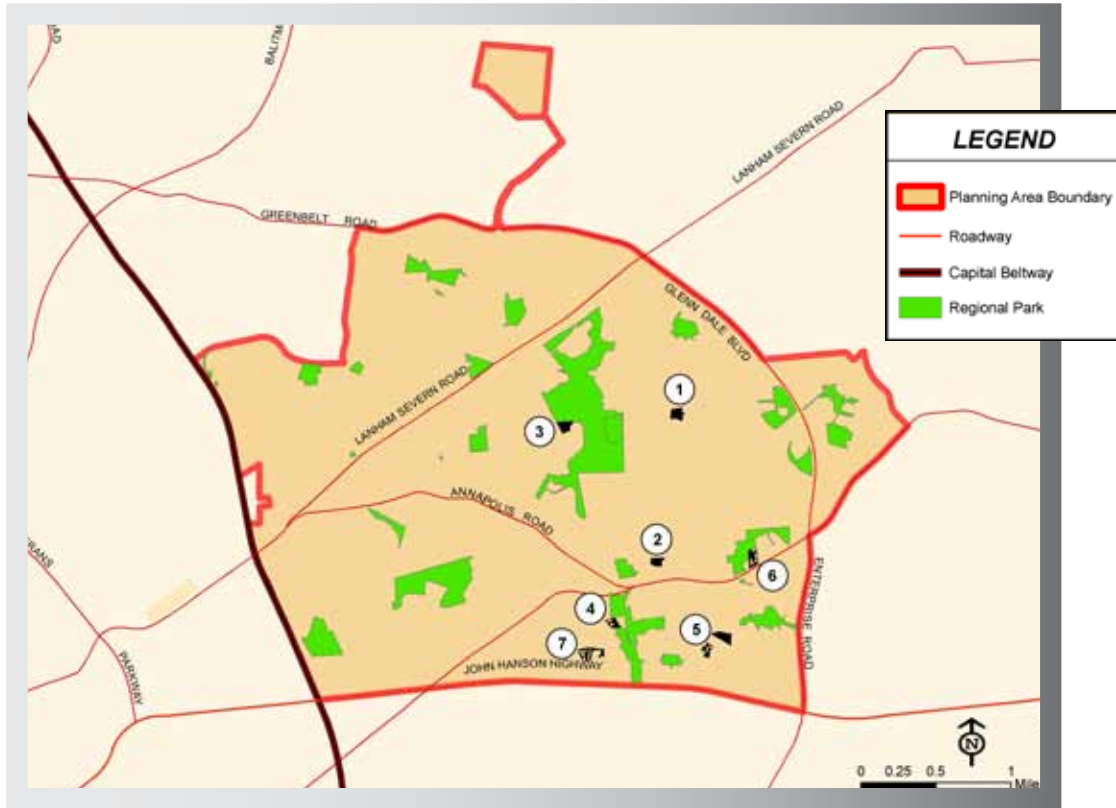
Map 18 (keyed to Table 24) depicts these private recreational facilities. These are located mainly in the eastern portion of the plan area in more recent subdivision development. A notable feature of several of these private recreational spaces is their proximity to existing public open space in the form of stream valley trails.

Recreation Programs

Plan area recreation facilities offer a variety of programs for all age groups. At the Glenn Dale Community Center and the Good Luck Community Center, residents may use the gyms, work out in the fitness centers, or use facility meeting spaces. Fee programs are divided by age group (adults/young adults, children/youth, seniors, and mixed ages) and include the following:

■ Glenn Dale Community Center

- ☐ *Arts and crafts classes*
- ☐ *Fitness and dance classes*
- ☐ *Sports lessons*
- ☐ *Summer camps*



Map 18: Private Recreational Space

Table 24.
Private Open Space and Recreation Facilities

	<i>Name</i>	<i>Amenities</i>	<i>Acreage</i>
1	Glenn Dale Greens Homeowners Association Facility	Playground	4.16 acres
2	Glendale Woods Homeowners Association Facility	Playground	2.51 acres
3	Glenn Estates Community Association Facility	Clubhouse, 2 tennis courts, pool	3.08 acres
4	Heather Glen Manor Homeowners Association Facility	Basketball half court	2.08 acres
5	Lottsford Homeowners Association Facility	Clubhouse, 2 tennis courts, basketball full court, basketball half court, pool	3.92 acres
6	Sinclair Woods Homeowners Association Facility	Playground	3.03 acres
7	Vista Gardens Homeowners Association Facility	2 playgrounds	2.44 acres

Total private open space acreage: 21.22 acres

- ☐ *Swimming at the Glenn Dale Splash Park*
- ☐ *Martial arts classes*
- ☐ *Special senior programming*
- ☐ *Preschool programming*

■ **Good Luck Community Center**

- ☐ *Fitness and dance classes*
- ☐ *Sports lessons*
- ☐ *Cheerleading classes*

In addition, the Prince George's Sports Center off Good Luck Road offers trap and skeet shooting, and the M-NCPPC sponsors tours, exhibits, and war reenactments at Marietta Manor, a historic property on Bell Station Road.

Level of Service

Level of service (LOS) standards are one method of measuring the adequacy of parkland resources. Prince George's County identified the following standards as part of the 2002 General Plan:

- **Local parks:** Minimum of 15 acres per 1,000 people, or the equivalent amenity in parks and recreation service
- **Regional, countywide, and special parks:** Minimum of 20 acres per 1,000 people

Using M-NCPPC's 2005 plan area population estimate of 33,278 persons (see Chapter 3) to calculate existing LOS, the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham plan area fails to meet the service standard for local parks. Under General Plan standards, the plan area has a deficit of 246 acres of local parkland. This, however, is mitigated to some degree by the surplus in the plan area of regional and countywide recreational facilities—particularly the stream valley parks and the WB&A Trail. In total, the plan area in 2005 had only a 58-acre deficit in parkland under the standards adopted by the 2002 General Plan (see Table 25).

The General Plan standards also can be used with population projections to determine how much parkland will be needed to accommodate future residential development. If current General Plan standards are applied to the M-NCPPC sector plan area population projection of 33,406 persons in 2030 (assuming no new parkland is added), a deficit still will exist. This deficit of 62 acres is a very small increase from current totals due to the limited projected rate of growth in the plan area within the next two decades (see Chapter 3).

Table 25.
Levels of Service

<i>Year</i>	<i>Projected Area Population*</i>	<i>Existing Parkland (in acres)</i>	<i>Public School Acreage Counted as Parkland</i>	<i>Total Existing Park Resources (in acres)</i>	<i>Parkland Needs per General Plan Standards (in acres)</i>	<i>Parkland Surplus or Deficit *in acres)</i>
2005	33,278	1,038	69	1,107	1164	(-58)
2030**	33,406	1,038	69	1,107	1169	(-62)

*Population projections from M-NCPPC data

**2030 figures assume no new parkland has been acquired and put into service between 2005 and 2030

For decades, service standards such as those in the General Plan were accepted as the sole measure of parkland level of service. However, recent planning thought has begun to focus more on questions of local and regional parkland accessibility, especially in urbanized/developed areas. People will readily walk five minutes (approximately one-quarter mile) to access an open space amenity, and if this walk is safe and comfortable, many are willing to walk ten minutes or so (approximately one-half mile). Many larger parks contain unique facilities that typically are reached only by bicycle or automobile.

When service radii of one-quarter mile and one-half mile are mapped for public and private parkland and recreational amenities in the plan area, it becomes clear that the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area contains a variety of facilities that provide good service to area residents. If a one-quarter mile service radius for all park/recreation facilities is overlaid on areas with residential zoning, only the following areas are not within a short walk to an existing park or trail:

- Princess Garden Parkway between Annapolis Road (MD 450) and the Washington Bible College area
- The northern portion of Whitfield Chapel Road
- The Vista Gardens area
- Portions of the Lincoln Vista neighborhood
- Portions of the residential subdivisions in the southeastern corner of the plan area

- Portions of Good Luck Road and 96th Avenue down to Lanham-Severn Road (MD 564)
- Portions of Glenn Dale Road (MD 193) south of Prospect Hill Road
- Greenbelt Road (MD 193) east of Good Luck Road and west of the Eastgate Shopping Center

However, if a one-half-mile service radius is applied, only four residential areas can be seen as underserved by park and recreation facilities:

- Whitfield Chapel Road at the Whitfield Chapel Apartments
- The residential area north of Vista Gardens
- Princess Garden Parkway north of MD 450
- Greenbelt Road (MD 193) east of Good Luck Road and west of the Eastgate Shopping Center

Mapping these service radii does not take into account any barriers to park access. Some users may be discouraged by having to cross busy arterials or collectors, or find the streetscapes near the open space facilities uncomfortable (e.g., no street trees for shade, discontinuous sidewalks, and so on). Another barrier may be lack of street connections across natural features or drainage areas. These barriers to access may reduce park use or encourage vehicular travel to these open space amenities.

Demand for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Children and senior citizens usually constitute the largest groups of park and recreation facility users. The plan area's high number of children under 17 (over 28 percent of the population in 2000) suggests a widespread need for parks containing facilities for active recreation. Although the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham's suburban character provides many private spaces for play (i.e., residential yards), many youth group sports require larger playing areas and/or formal recreation programs. The plan area does not contain a large percentage of senior citizens (only 7.2 percent of the population was age 65 or older in 2000), but as the large "baby boomer" generation reaches retirement, the percentage of adults 65 years and older will grow in the next decade. This increase may lead to additional demand for park and recreation facilities but of a different kind: senior citizens tend to search for passive recreational amenities, such as walking trails, parks with seating areas, and programs targeted to older adults. These demographic trends create the challenge of balancing the needs of a wide range of users in future parks planning.

Providing New Park and Recreation Resources

The plan area's developed nature generally precludes the acquisition of large parcels of open space for new park resources throughout the plan area. Land for new parks and trails typically is acquired by direct purchase through the county's capital improvements program or through mandatory dedication under the county's Zoning Ordinance and through environmental mitigation projects.

Direct Purchase

Direct purchase is the most well-known method of acquiring new parkland. In order to purchase a parcel, the Department of Parks and Recreation must have funds programmed in M-NCPPC's capital budget as part of a six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) (see Chapter 9). Once funded, a project goes into the department's work program for future construction/development.

Mandatory Dedication of Parkland

Section 24-134 of Subtitle 24 of the Prince George's County Code requires developers of residential subdivisions to dedicate a percentage of land to M-NCPPC for open space. The amount of land required for dedication varies according to the density of the proposed subdivision. Some exemptions are given for cluster subdivisions, townhouse developments, or recreational community development. This land dedication may be used for passive or active recreation.

The state legislature also has authorized Prince George's County to impose a fee-in-lieu of mandatory parkland dedication if a developer is unable to meet the ordinance requirements due to topographical/physical constraints of the property (i.e., its physical features render it unsuitable for parkland) or if the subdivision already is adequately served by open space.¹ The fee-in-lieu of dedication equals five percent of the land's market value.

It also is possible to provide recreational facilities instead of land dedication or a fee. Section 24-135 of the Prince George's County Code permits this as long as the facilities will be superior to what would have been provided under mandatory land dedication and restrictive covenants will ensure access to the facility for future residents.

¹ Subtitle 24, Section 24-135 of the Prince George's County Code.

Environmental Mitigation

Open space also may be obtained under the county's Nontidal Wetland Protection

Table 26	
Mandatory Parkland Dedication*	
<i>Project Density</i>	<i>Required Land Dedication</i>
1–4 dwelling units per net acre	5%
4–7.5 dwelling units per net acre	7.5%
7.5–12 dwelling units per net acre	10%
More than 12 dwelling units per net acre	15%
*Under Subtitle 24, § 24-134 of the Prince George's County Code	

Ordinance.² Development that will impact regulated wetland areas is required to submit a mitigation plan that provides for off-site "replacement" of the disturbed wetland.³ Mitigation activities include the creation of new wetlands or the enhancement of existing wetlands through the preservation of buffer areas, wildlife ponds, or farmed areas.

Required mitigation can add passive open space to the county's park system, creating or enhancing areas vital to local ecosystems and providing a range of environmental benefits. Additional information on wetlands mitigation can be found in Chapter 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

GOAL: Protect and enhance the area's open space system and recreational opportunities.

POLICY 1:

- Continue to identify opportunities to acquire new open space in the plan area to meet the needs of existing residents and future development.

STRATEGIES:

Continue to seek opportunities for direct purchase of new parkland in the plan area.

Although the plan area overall contains an evenly distributed system of public open spaces, a parkland deficit exists under the General Plan standards. This is particularly pronounced for local parkland. M-NCPPC should continue to identify important parcels that could be purchased to enhance the existing park system. Priority should be given to properties that lie adjacent to existing park resources and/or help complete connections within the open space network.

- 2 Subtitle 4, Sections 4-356 through 4-379 of the Prince George's County Code.
- 3 According to Subtitle 4, Section 4-371, wetland replacements should be done in kind and at a 1:1 ratio.

Currently identified opportunities include:

- ☐ *The Kovar Parker property located along the WB&A Trail (5.3 acres)*
- ☐ *The Heilig property adjacent to the Glenn Dale Splash Park (15 acres)*
- ☐ *The Dudley property near the former Glenn Dale Hospital site (15.51 acres)*
- ☐ *The USDA Plant Introduction Station (70 acres) that will be surplussed by the federal government*
- ☐ *The Sampson property adjacent to the former Glenn Dale Hospital site (4.5 acres)*
- ☐ *A parcel within Bald Hill Branch, owned by Prince George's County, which would connect Lanham Forest Community Park with Bald Hill Stream Valley Park (9.5 acres)*

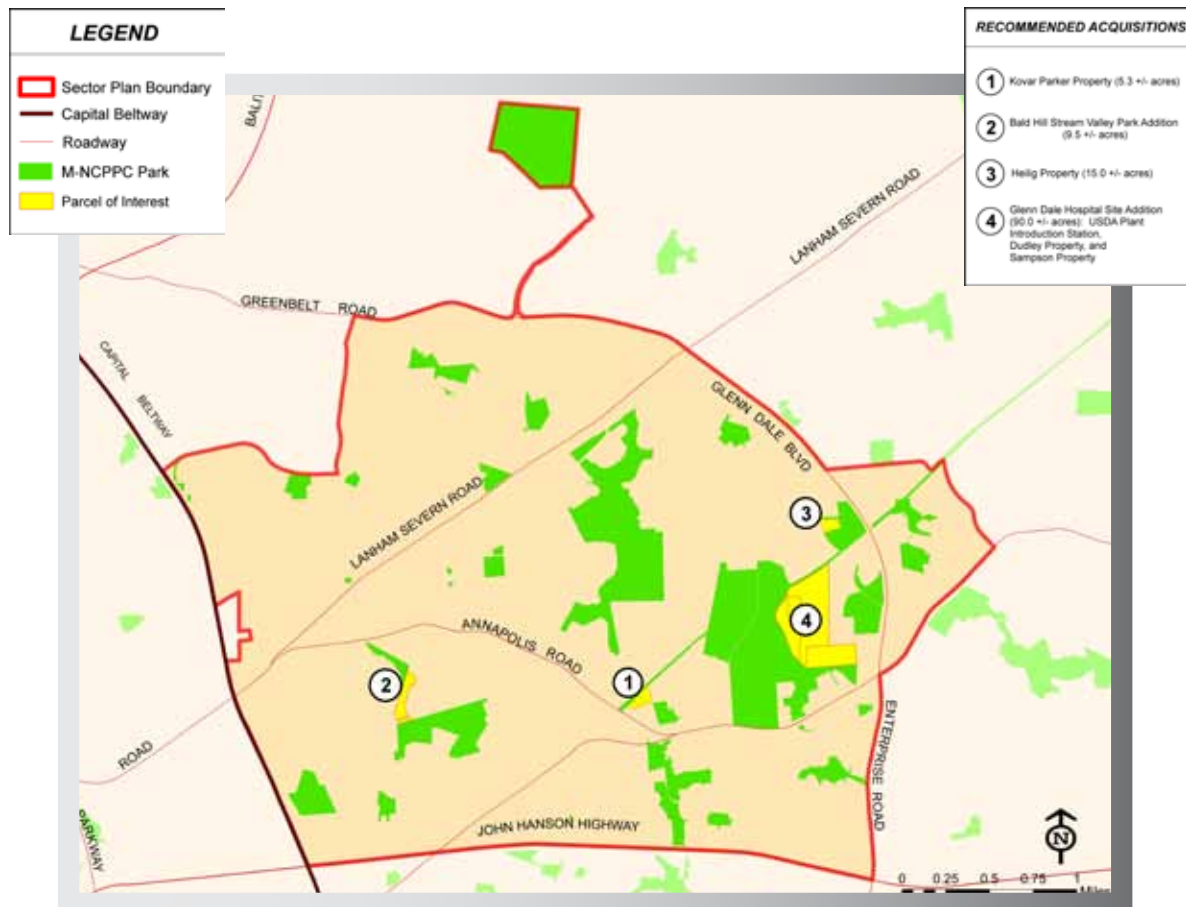
Identify publicly held properties that may be appropriate for future parkland.

Existing M-NCPPC-owned properties offer potential for contributing to the open space network. Creating a new park or recreation facility on land already in public ownership is much easier than finding suitable land to purchase. Review of M-NCPPC- and county-owned property already occurs, but outside agencies own several parcels within the plan area that could become important components of the park system. If these properties are surplussed in the future, M-NCPPC should consider acquisition. Special attention should be paid to parcels that are located in underserved areas or which connect to existing open space facilities.

One opportunity exists in the immediate future: the USDA Plant Introduction Station, which, due to its proximity to the Glenn Dale Hospital site, could help create another major regional park amenity. An additional long-term opportunity may be acquisition of the county-owned property adjoining Lanham Forest Community Park and Bald Hill Stream Valley Park.

Identify potential parkland or recreational facilities that can be obtained through mandatory dedication during the development review process.

The county's Zoning Ordinance currently requires open space dedication for proposed subdivisions. If dedication is infeasible, the developer may pay a fee-in-lieu of this requirement or provide an equivalent or superior recreational facility. M-NCPPC shall identify important parcels that could be added to the system through this subdivision requirement, whether as direct land dedication or purchase through fees obtained from this requirement. In addition, the M-NCPPC should identify portions of the plan area with a deficit of recreational facilities that could be addressed through this ordinance requirement and provide developers with this information for subdivision planning.



Map 19: Potential Park/Open Space Acquisitions

Create a master plan of recreation for the former Glenn Dale Hospital site.

The former Glenn Dale Hospital site is an important open space asset in the plan area. Although currently unused, 150 acres of its open space are available for park use under Maryland House Bill 113 (see Chapters 5 and 11). This property offers the potential for a major regional park amenity, especially if combined with the purchase of the USDA Plant Introduction Site. An updated master plan for this site will include a variety of recreational opportunities and focus on creating key connections to nearby neighborhoods and the adjacent WB&A Trail.

POLICY 2:

- Expand existing recreational facilities and develop new facilities to serve user needs.

STRATEGIES:**Expand the Glenn Dale Community Center.**

The Glenn Dale Community Center serves the eastern part of the plan area, providing a 22-acre park, recreation center, and splash pool facility adjacent to the WB&A Trail. This center offers a variety of programming, including sports and fitness activities, day camps for children, and cultural events. Funding is projected in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outer years for a 1,500-square-foot addition to the heavily used center.

Identify alternative sources of funding for land acquisition, facility development, and recreational programming.

Funding for park and recreation development and programming currently comes from the county's general fund and annual capital budget. Land acquisition and facility development must be programmed within a six-year CIP, and in FY 2010, no new parks projects are being added to the CIP due to the current economic climate. M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation should investigate alternative sources of capital and operational funding, including public-private partnerships, relevant grants, and private donations.

Encourage residents and community organizations to submit recommendations for facilities and programming.

During 2008 and 2009, the Department of Parks and Recreation has been conducting a system needs assessment. This ongoing effort will identify and prioritize needs for facilities and programming throughout the county. Residents have a voice in this evaluation effort through public forums scheduled throughout the county, at which input is being solicited. Plan area residents and community groups can contribute to this needs assessment by submitting recommendations for new and/or expanded facilities and programming to M-NCPPC. Although not all statements of need can be addressed, these recommendations will help the Department of Parks and Recreation better understand user desires and expectations.

POLICY 3:

- Provide regional facility maintenance to ensure ongoing quality.

STRATEGY:**Continue to provide regular maintenance to park and recreation facilities.**

Developing new facilities and programming is one way to meet user needs, but creating an excellent park system also involves maintaining existing facilities. Funding often is easier to obtain for highly-visible capital improvements; however, regular park maintenance is an important component of the parks system. The

Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to the ongoing maintenance of area parks and will continue to evaluate and prioritize maintenance practices to ensure high quality parks and recreation facilities.

GOAL: Provide an open space system that is accessible to all residents and serves a variety of users.

POLICY 1:

- Work toward a long-term goal of providing a park amenity convenient to all plan area residents.

STRATEGY:

Pursue a long-term goal of providing public open space convenient to all plan area residences.

The General Plan standards for parkland level of service consider the total acreage provided per 1,000 persons. These standards fail to account for park access, which strongly influences level of park use. Parks that are located close to neighborhoods and that can easily be accessed by pedestrians along safe, comfortable streets typically will see more everyday use. The ability of residents to reach open space and recreational facilities on foot enhances a park's value, as good pedestrian access means that more users who do not have access to a vehicle can use the park on a regular basis. This is especially important for children and for senior citizens. Walk-to park facilities also can devote less acreage to parking and more to green space, as it can be assumed that many users will choose to access the park on foot.

Overall, parks within this plan area are well distributed, and most lie within one-half mile of residential neighborhoods (the maximum distance that individuals typically are willing to walk). Under General Plan standards, however, the plan area suffers from a deficit of local park space, which is the type of park that generally sees the most daily use. Neighborhood and community parks typically contain playground equipment, athletic fields, shelters, and passive recreation areas that serve a variety of users. These types of walk-to parks function as neighborhood recreation centers and play a major role in creating neighborhood identity.

POLICY 2:

- Ensure comfortable pedestrian connections to all parks, recreation, and open space facilities.

STRATEGY:**Create comfortable pedestrian routes to all parks and recreation facilities.**

Creating walkable park facilities also includes consideration of routes that pedestrians use to access the parks. Facilities may be within walking distance for residents when radii are drawn on a map, but conditions on the ground should be checked for actual barriers to access, such as arterials or collectors that are difficult to cross, lack of sidewalks, railroad tracks, poor connections across drainage areas, and so on. M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation should continue to work with the Transportation Section of Countywide Planning and the county's Department of Public Works and Transportation to ensure that transportation planning takes special parks access needs into consideration in their respective work programs.

POLICY 3:

- Provide a balance between passive and active open space.

STRATEGY:**Provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation throughout the plan area.**

Parks serve a variety of user groups through a range of recreational opportunities. Some user groups, such as children and young adults, expect parks to provide active recreation, whereas older users often visit parks for more passive experiences (e.g., walking, picnics, socializing, and so on). As park space is limited, the needs of these user groups can conflict at some facilities. Demand for playing fields, courts, and equipment also competes against the environmental benefits that passive open space provides, such as water filtration, wildlife habitats and corridors, wetlands protection, environmental education, and aesthetic enhancement of the community. These interests must be balanced in facilities and program planning. All parks should, to the degree feasible, contain both passive and active recreational opportunities, and management practices should be adopted that allow use of existing active facilities to be maximized.

POLICY 4:

- Develop a variety of recreational options based on community needs and interests.

STRATEGY:**Survey residents and parks users to help provide a variety of recreation options based on community needs and interests.**

Parks programming should respond to the needs of plan area residents. These needs will be assessed by regular parks and recreation surveys. Parks program users may be asked to complete surveys at program completion, and Internet-based surveys may be administered for specific plan areas or general system issues. Additionally, a formal, comprehensive survey should be professionally administered at least once every decade. Survey results should be shared with MNCPPC and county transportation and environmental staff to help with trails and other joint planning efforts.

GOAL: Ensure that the open space network links to neighborhoods and community destinations.**POLICY 1:**

- Create new connections between open space and neighborhoods, schools, commercial centers, and employment areas.

STRATEGY:**Identify opportunities to complete trail connections between existing open space facilities and between open space facilities and neighborhoods.**

The plan area contains a number of trails that, when expanded in the long term, will form a green network between community destinations. M-NCPCC's Transportation Section and the Department of Parks and Recreation already have developed plans for an extensive trails network within the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area (see Figure 7-). Many of the Department of Parks and Recreation's planned land acquisitions will help complete this network, providing strategic connections between existing open spaces. Trails planning also should consider connections between open space and neighborhoods, commercial centers, and transit centers to encourage walking and reduce the number of automobile trips within the plan area.

POLICY 2:

- Improve access to existing trails.

STRATEGY:**Improve access to existing trails through direct purchase of strategic parcels and acquisition of conservation easements.**

Many existing trails in the plan area need improved access, especially for pedestrians coming from residential neighborhoods. Although some of these connections may be created through direct purchase, it also may be possible to work with property owners to obtain conservation easements that will allow small paths across private parcels to link with the greater trails system.

POLICY 3:

- Ensure that planning considers connections to regional recreational amenities.

STRATEGY:**Create connections to regional recreational amenities.**

M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation and Transportation Section's long-term goals for the trails network involve connections to regional recreation facilities. While some of the trails within the plan area are considered to be local, they are also links to existing and future regional trails within the county and the greater Washington area. M-NCPPC continues to work together with other county governments, community partners, and regional recreation nonprofit groups to develop these connections to other open space systems in Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Charles, and Calvert Counties.

GOAL: Promote efficiency in park system operations.**POLICY:**

- Expand park and open space resources without acquiring additional land.

STRATEGIES:**Seek opportunities for colocation with other public facilities.**

As discussed above, acquiring private parcels for new park and recreation amenities typically is more costly than seeking to locate these new facilities on land already owned by M-NCPPC or Prince George's County. The 2002 General Plan advocates colocation of public facilities to achieve capital and operational efficiencies. Siting new parks and recreation facilities with other public facilities can create complementary groups of public space and help reduce acquisition and development costs.

Continue to pursue opportunities that will enable joint planning and use of educational and recreational facilities.

Many community parks and recreation departments have addressed increased playing field and playground needs by forming partnerships with area school systems to allow for joint use of school facilities. M-NCPPC's Department of Parks and Recreation works in partnership with the Prince George's County Board of Education to plan and construct facilities that jointly serve the county's education, park, and recreation needs. Continuation of this partnership will enable both M-NCPPC and the Board of Education to develop both cost effective and complementary facilities.

GOAL: Ensure that the planning and provision of park and recreation facilities support county development policies and priorities.

POLICY:

- Coordinate parkland acquisition and facilities planning with ongoing county plans.

STRATEGY:

Continue to coordinate parkland acquisition and facility planning.

Open space and recreation planning intersects with a number of different plan areas: natural resources/environment, transportation, urban design, housing, public facilities and services, historic preservation, and, to some degree, economic development. M-NCPPC is in a unique position to continue to coordinate multijurisdictional facility planning, design, and land assembly. All parkland acquisition and facilities planning for the Glenn Dale–Seabrook–Lanham area will continue to benefit from this ongoing coordination as the sector plan recommendations are implemented.