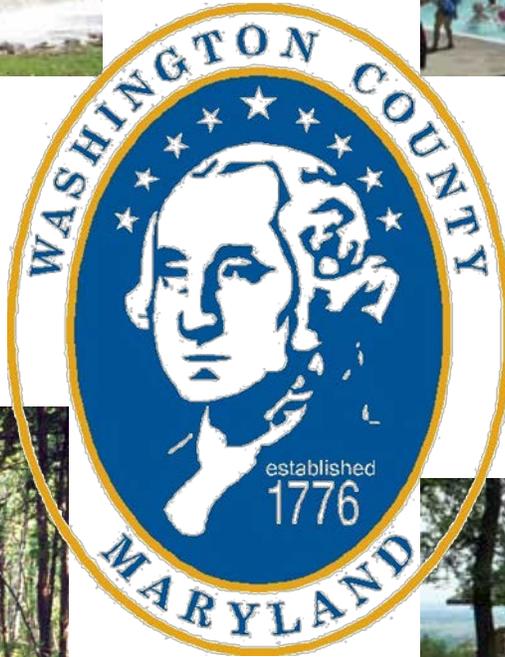


# Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

## Washington County, Maryland



Prepared by:  
Washington County Department of Planning and Zoning  
Adopted: December 17, 2013

## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

There is a wide range of recreational opportunities available to residents and visitors to Washington County. Facilities and sites are well spaced throughout the county, and currently meet the acreage requirements established by state and local policies.

The challenge lies in the future; rising land prices, limited public monies at all levels and changing recreational demands may appear to present an insurmountable set of obstacles to park planning and acquisition; however, these factors can lead the planners, volunteer and professional, to broaden their definition of allowable activities on recreational sites, and indeed, change their definition of 'recreation'.

Twenty or more years ago; park planning was in its infancy. Most participants were primarily interested in facility based recreation; tennis courts, ball fields, general purpose fields, basketball courts, playground equipment, picnic pavilions, and the like. Now, Rails to Trails are a reality; the Western Maryland Rail Trail draws thousands of riders annually; and the Allegheny Passage Trail completes the connection between Pittsburgh and Washington DC, utilizing the C & O Canal, with the resultant positive effect on local economies. Dog Parks and Horse Trails were widely supported by the attendees at the three public hearings conducted in preparation for the update of this plan.

Throughout this plan, there are references to shortfalls in the availability of county owned recreational facilities in the four different planning areas. These shortfalls must be tempered by noting the availability of venues owned by others. For example, a shortage of walking trails in the Western Planning Area must certainly take into consideration the presence of the federally owned C & O Canal with its towpath, and the state owned Western Maryland Rail Trail.

More aggressive promotion of the use of Board of Education outdoor facilities will inform residents of the availability of locally sited recreation areas. Many of these are walkable; reducing green house gas emissions generated by driving to more remote locations, and improving the general fitness of the participants, and possibly, having a positive impact on the sense of neighborhood and belonging of the residents.

Sports associations, soccer programs, and softball and baseball leagues, among others, recognized the need for more fields and have developed their own sites throughout the county. Civic, service, and social clubs have built picnic pavilions, often with playground equipment which are made available to the general public at costs competitive with the county fees.

Planning in a vacuum could result in the duplication of facilities in a given area. Planning should also recognize that some of these private facilities may become available as the associations change their focus, or dissolve, and provide the possibility of developed sites at a significant savings in terms of acquisition and development expense.

The park planning team of Recreation Commission members, elected officials, planners and citizens must be quick to respond to new opportunities for funding, expanded use of existing

facilities, and opportunities for acquisition of appropriately sited land to meet the changing recreational needs of the next generation.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Section 1.1 – Purpose of the Plan**

The purpose of the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) is to evaluate current open space opportunities, analyze future impacts from growth, and develop a coordinated plan to address future open space needs. This is important for several reasons:

**Public Investment:** Due to limited funding and high demand for open space and recreation areas, it is imperative that investments made in park lands and recreation programs be as cost effective as possible.

**Resource Protection:** Recreation and resource protection can be mutually supportive activities. There are ways to integrate passive and active recreational activities into areas that also serve as resource protection such as the C & O Canal Towpath. This area provides opportunities for active recreation while serving as an invaluable buffer to the Potomac River in terms of flooding and bank erosion.

**Social Integration:** Recreational activities provide an outlet for people with similar interests to come together and socialize. Long range park plans should contain suitable flexibility to respond to changing social and economic demographics; while not losing sight of long range established goals.

**Health and Wellness:** More and more people within the United States are becoming overweight. With health issues like heart disease and diabetes on the rise, it is important to provide open space areas and recreational programs for people to play and exercise.

**Access and Functionality:** Increasing traffic congestion and rising gasoline prices place special emphasis on park accessibility to and from residential neighborhoods; changing interests over time have been reflected in changes in the expectations of park users. Parks with passive uses, playgrounds, tennis courts and athletic fields meet some user's needs, while other users expect dedicated walking and fitness paths, bicycle trails, dog parks, and horse trails.

The Maryland Program Open Space (POS) laws and the Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 require that all Counties in the State of Maryland produce and maintain an Outdoor Recreation and Open Space Plan. As noted in these laws, all land acquisition and park development funded through these programs must be consistent with the approved State and County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plans. The County's use of POS funding requires such a plan to be updated every six (6) years. The previous plan was prepared and adopted in 2005.

### **Section 1.2 – Maryland Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan 2009**

During the process of developing this Plan for the County, attention was duly given to the Statewide LPPRP released in 2009. As noted in the State LPPRP: *“The over-arching purpose of this plan is to ensure good long-term return on public investment in parks, outdoor recreation, agricultural land preservation, and the conservation of natural resources”*. In order to implement the purpose of the State LPPRP, several guidelines were established and are outlined below.

**State Guidelines:**

- Review goals and objectives of State and local programs for parks and recreation, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation.
- Identify where these goals and objectives are essentially the same, where they are complementary or mutually supportive, and where they are simply different;
- Evaluate the ability of implementation programs and funding sources for each element to achieve related goals and objectives;
- Identify desirable improvements to policies, plans, and funding strategies to overcome shortcomings, achieve goals, and ultimately ensure good return on public investment;
- Identify the needs and priorities of current and future state and local populations for outdoor recreation;
- Determine what would be necessary to achieve the goals of State and local land preservation programs; and
- Ensure that public investment in recreation, agricultural land preservation, and natural resource conservation supports and is supported by State planning policy, local comprehensive plans, and associated State and local implementation programs.

**Section 1.3 – Relationship to the County Comprehensive Plan**

The County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2002 and provides an analysis of long and short term planning needs for a variety of resources. Specific to the topic of land preservation, parks and recreation planning, the Comprehensive Plan Community Facilities Element in Chapter 9 analyzes base year (2002) conditions and makes recommendations for future needs and policies. The County is currently in the process of updating the Comprehensive Plan which conveniently provides the opportunity for congruency between the two documents. Additional information regarding the relationship of the Comprehensive Plan to the LPPRP is provided in Section 2.3 of this document.

**Section 1.4 – Definitions**

Park and open space area include a variety of recreation areas and facilities to meet the various recreational needs of residents and visitors. Parks and open spaces can also be established to

preserve, conserve, and manage natural resources and habitats. The definitions below are derived from the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation Sites (MEIRS) guidance document revised in January 2003 that defines the difference between areas used for recreation vs. those used for resource management.

**Recreation Land:** Land and/or related water areas that support recreation as a primary use. This land may also contain cultural, agricultural, or other resources related or incidental to its recreational purpose. There are two sub-categories of recreational land:

- a. Non-resources based recreational land: Land on which the primary recreational activities do not depend on the presence of natural resources. This land supports activities that can occur in the absence of intact natural resources, and are generally more dependent on site improvements than on natural resources (i.e. public swimming pools, basketball courts, and baseball fields).
- b. Natural Resource based recreational land: Land on which the primary recreation activities depend on the presences of natural resources. Activities generally do not occur without the presence of natural resources (i.e. public beaches, backpacking, camping, and hiking).

**Resource Land:** Land and/or related water areas for which natural resource protection, conservation, or management is of primary importance. This land may support agricultural, recreational, economic, or other uses to the extent that they do not conflict with protection or preservation of the natural resource.

To further refine the classification of lands in the parks system, recreation and resource lands are classified as follows:

**Neighborhood Park:** The primary function is to serve as the recreational and social focus of a neighborhood. They are developed for both active and passive activities, accommodating a wide variety of age groups. Sites are generally small; in the two to five acre range, and are usually within one half mile or less of potential users.

**Community Park:** The purpose is larger and broader than neighborhood parks. Their focus is on meeting the recreational needs of several neighborhoods or larger sections of the community as well as preserving unique landscapes, open spaces, and natural resources. Sites can range in size from ten to fifty acres depending on rural or urban settings and the number of potential users. These parks are generally intensely developed to provide both passive and active recreational opportunities to potential users within a distance of two to three miles.

**County/Regional Park:** Like the community park, the focus is on recreation as well as preserving natural landscapes, open spaces, and natural resources. Sites are generally fifty acres or more and provide both active and passive recreational opportunities to potential users throughout the County and/or region.

**School Recreational Land:** are sites owned and maintained by the Board of Education and serve to provide for the school's recreational needs as well as limited community needs. The school recreational land consists of formal athletic fields and playground equipment with the primary focus on scholastic sports and in-school recreational activities. An agreement between the Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Education allows additional funds to be provided to build an expanded gym, storage areas, recreation rooms and offices to support Recreation Centers which are open to the general public when school is not in session. These Centers are managed by the County's Department of Parks and Recreation.

**State Park:** Areas with natural resources or geographic, topographic, or physiographic characteristics that are suitable for recreational development and use. These areas are managed with the primary objective of providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the public in a natural setting.

**Special Use Park:** Areas that are generally oriented toward a single purpose use such as public golf courses, including protection of unique features such as historic or cultural sites, stream access, wetland areas, and habitat management areas.

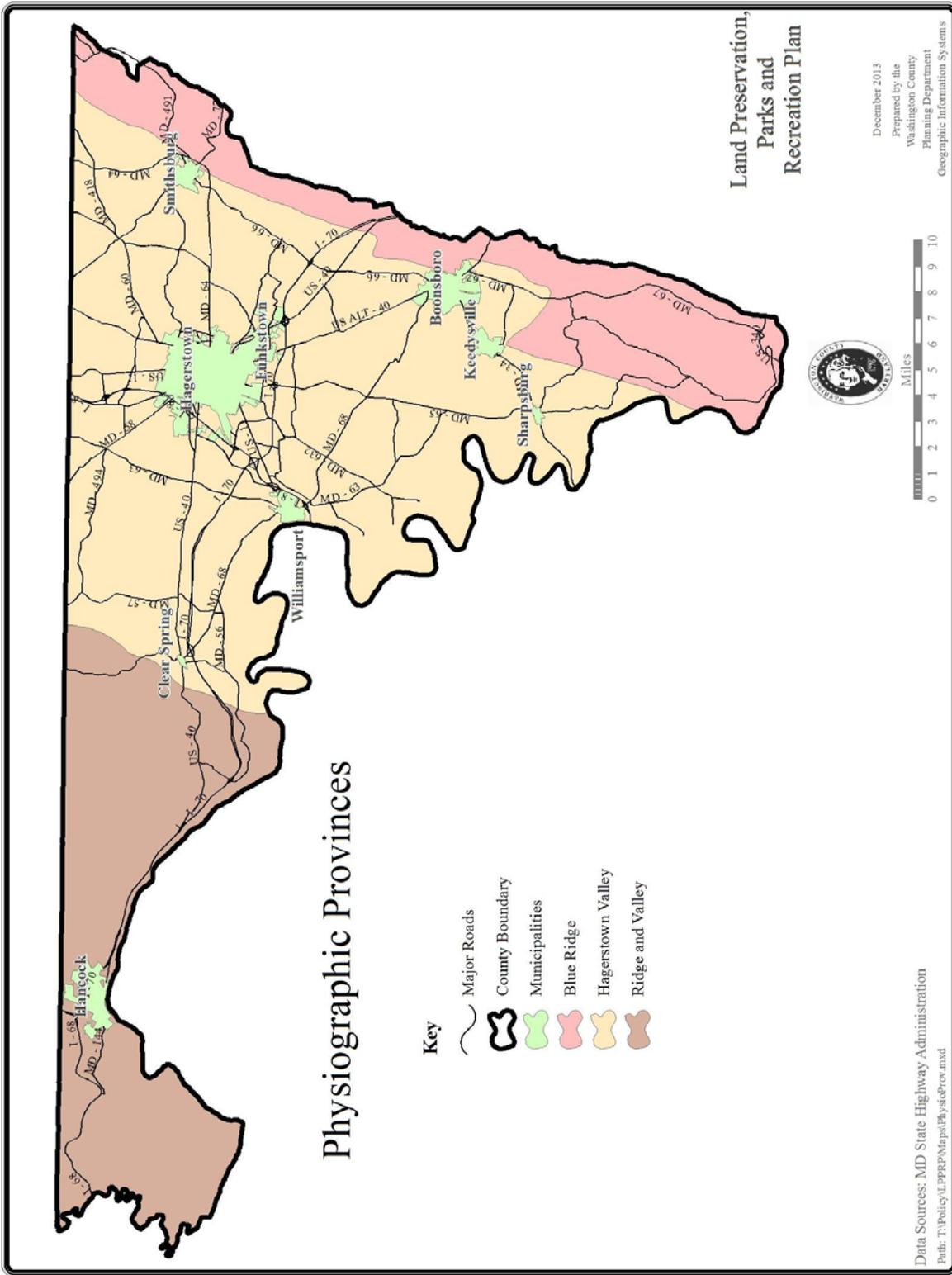
## Chapter 2: Local Planning Framework

### **Section 2.1 – Physical Characteristics**

#### **Location and Physiographic Information**

Washington County contains approximately 298,800 acres, in the west-central part of the state 5,000 acres of which are in the Potomac River, and includes the narrowest part of Maryland’s “panhandle”. The northern boundary of the County is shared with Pennsylvania along the Mason-Dixon Line. The Potomac River forms the southern boundary, and is shared with West Virginia except for a two mile section shared with Virginia. From east to west, the county stretches from the crest of South Mountain marking the boundary with Frederick County to the Sidling Hill Creek boundary with Allegany County.

**The Great Valley**, also called the **Great Appalachian Valley** or **Great Valley Region**, is one of the major landform features of eastern North America. It is a gigantic trough—a chain of valley lowlands—and the central feature of the Appalachian Mountain system. The trough stretches about 1200 miles from Quebec to Alabama and has been an important north-south route of travel since prehistoric times. Washington County contains the Maryland part of the Great Valley, and is geologically diverse, including parts of two physiographic provinces – the Blue Ridge, and Ridge and Valley. South Mountain and Elk Ridge, extending north to south along the eastern boundary of the county, are the westernmost extent of the Blue Ridge province. The Hagerstown Valley extends from the west base of South Mountain to Fairview Mountain west of Clear Spring, where the small ridges and valleys begin and run to the west as part of the Ridge and Valley physiographic province (See Map). Elevations range from Quirak Mountain at 2,145 feet in the northeast corner of the county, to 300 feet above sea level in the southern end of the Hagerstown Valley near the Potomac River.



### Geology and Soils

The surface rock strata and most of the subsurface rock in the county consists of limestone, shale and sandstone. The Hagerstown Valley is underlain mostly by relatively soluble limestone and shows evidence of the sinkholes and caverns associated with karst geology. As a result, the County has the largest number of known caves in Maryland. The narrower valleys are underlain mostly by shale, while the ridges are formed by resistant sandstone or quartzite.

The topography of the County varies greatly due to its physiographic location. The Hagerstown Valley, which includes over half the land area of the County, is primarily flat with gently rolling hills. The eastern border of the County along South Mountain, as well as the beginning of the Ridge and Valley system starting at Fairview Mountain west of Clear Spring contain the steepest slopes in the County. Slopes are also steep along most of the creek beds in the County due to years of erosion as the streams meandered.

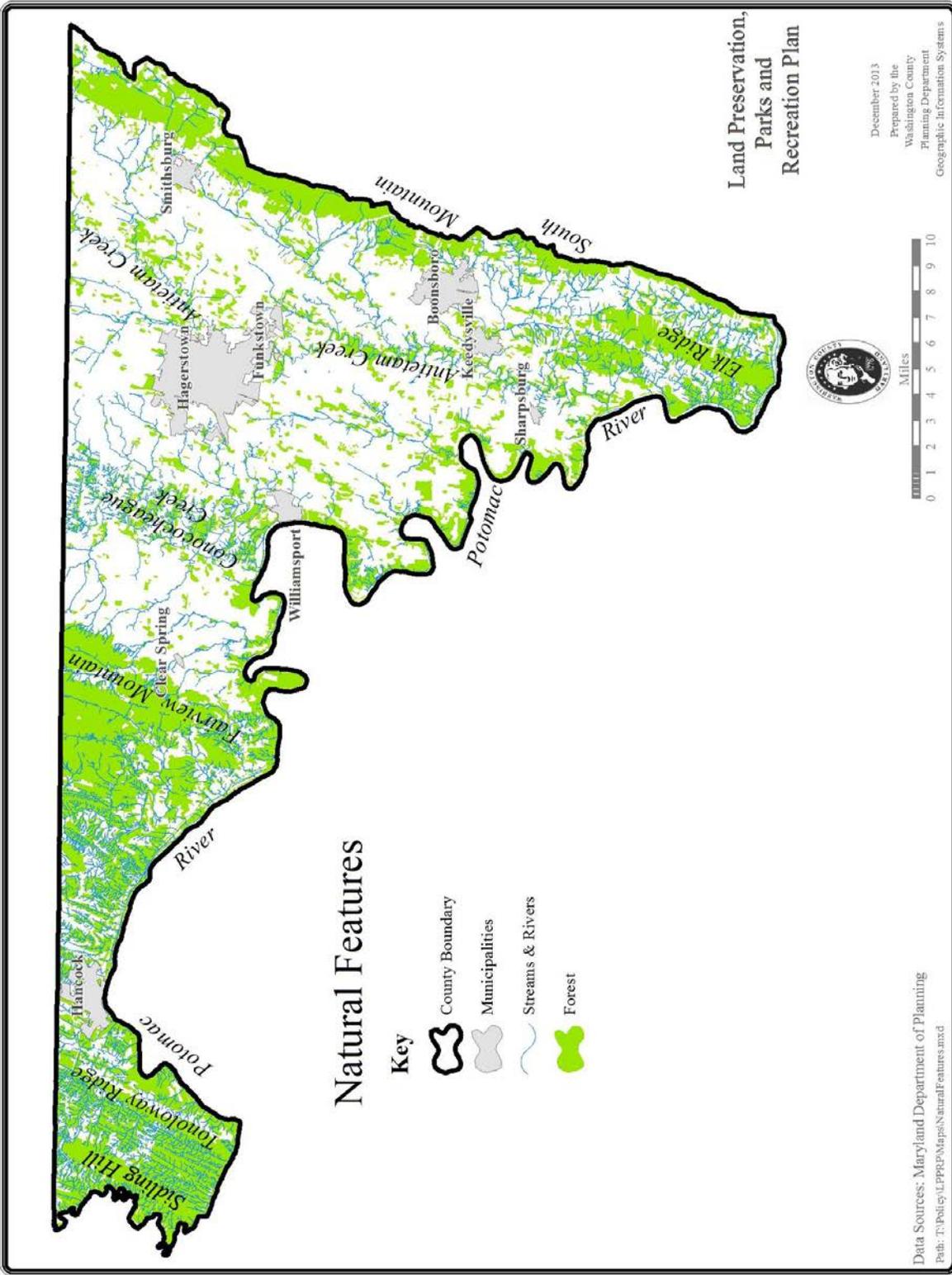
The best quality soils for agriculture are primarily located in the Great (Hagerstown) Valley region of the county extending from the base of South Mountain west to Clear Spring (See Map). Areas of high quality soils near Clear Spring and in the Southern part of the county east and south of Sharpsburg have also been targeted for protection through a variety of agricultural preservation easement programs.

### Forest Resources

Before settlement and farming began, most of the County was covered with hardwood forest. Now, the significant remaining forested areas are along South Mountain and in the western portion of the County. Forests are primarily located on steep slopes including the Elk Ridge and Red Hill areas in the south end of the County, the ridges north and west of Clear Spring, and the ridges west of Hancock. Additional forested areas are located in the Hagerstown Valley where the land is too rocky or steep for development or farming.

Bottomland forests are found along the fertile floodplains of Conococheague and Antietam Creeks, and along the Potomac River. The majority of the forest (75 %) is the Oak-Hickory type. Remaining forest is classified as Oak/Pine (12.5%), Elm/Ash/Red Maple (6.7 %) and northern hardwoods (5.6 %).

Forested resource land, including commercial forest, and local, State, and Federal forest preserves comprises 35.9% of the County or approximately 107,300 acres. State owned forest land is extensive; over 9,000 acres are located along South Mountain protecting the Appalachian Trail corridor, and containing several state parks. Significant areas of state owned forest are also located in the western end of the county, including 6,300 acres in the Indian Springs area, and over 3,000 acres in the Sidling Hill WMA (See Natural Features Map). The City owned areas of the Edgemont Watershed on South Mountain preserve approximately 2,040 acres of woodlands for water supply, open space, and limited recreational uses. Approximately 7,800 acres are protected along the east bank of the Potomac River, within the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Park.



## Cultural Features

### *Urban Areas:*

Nine incorporated municipalities located within the county are shown on the Land Use Plan Map. With the exception of Clear Spring, which has a county owned park, each municipality provides and maintains park and recreation facilities for its residents. Details of the local public parks and facilities provided are listed in the Maryland Electronic Inventory of Recreation sites (MIERS) database and the listing in Appendix A of this document.

### *Civil War Heritage Area:*

Washington County is part of a larger Heritage Area; The Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (HCWHA), that also includes parts of Frederick and Carroll Counties. The county has received recognition for its Civil War Heritage Areas and Civil War Heritage Routes, which encompass a significant area of the county, and includes all of the municipalities. A rail to trail route has been identified and may provide a connection to those sites near the abandoned railroad bed which runs through the great valley from Hagerstown to Weverton. The Special Program Areas Map in the Comprehensive Plan depicts the routes and areas. The HCWHA received certification and approval of a Management Plan in 2006, which created eligibility to receive funding for development of a detailed plan to increase heritage tourism and preservation opportunities.

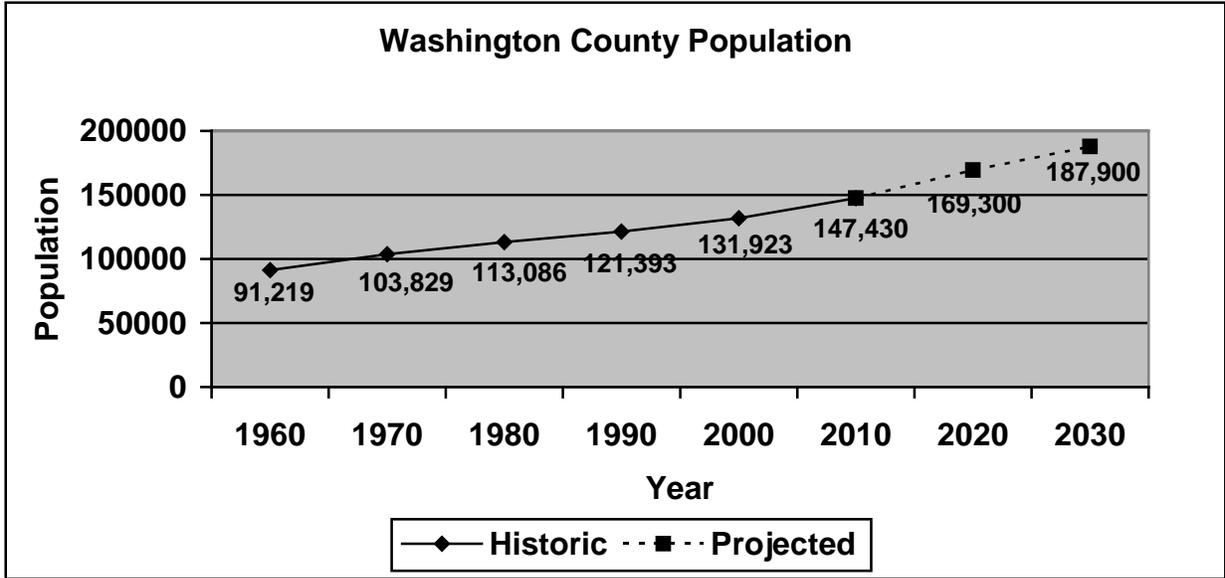
## **Section 2.2 – County Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics**

While Washington County has experienced a continued increase in population and households since the 2005 plan, there has been a lull in the construction of new housing in the last several years due to the recent economic downturn. This cycle is the downside of the economic boom which occurred during the middle of the first decade of this century. While it skewed some demographic and socioeconomic data when compared to historic trends, history will show it to be a short term ‘blip’ in the historic pattern of growth and development in the county. Provided in the information below is a breakdown and analysis of past, present, and future demographic and socioeconomic population characteristics.

### Population

#### *Washington County*

Over the last 50 years, Washington County has continued to grow at a slow but steady rate of approximately 0.76% per year. Since the adoption of the last LPPRP in 2005, the County has grown by an estimated 0.85%. Using projections provided by the Maryland Department of Planning, the County is anticipated to grow by another 40,470 people (1.08% per year) by 2030.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 & Maryland Department of Planning

*Incorporated Municipalities in Washington County*

There are nine (9) incorporated municipalities located within Washington County. The City of Hagerstown serves as the County seat and is the largest municipality within the County. Table 2.1 depicts the historic population data for each of the incorporated municipalities.

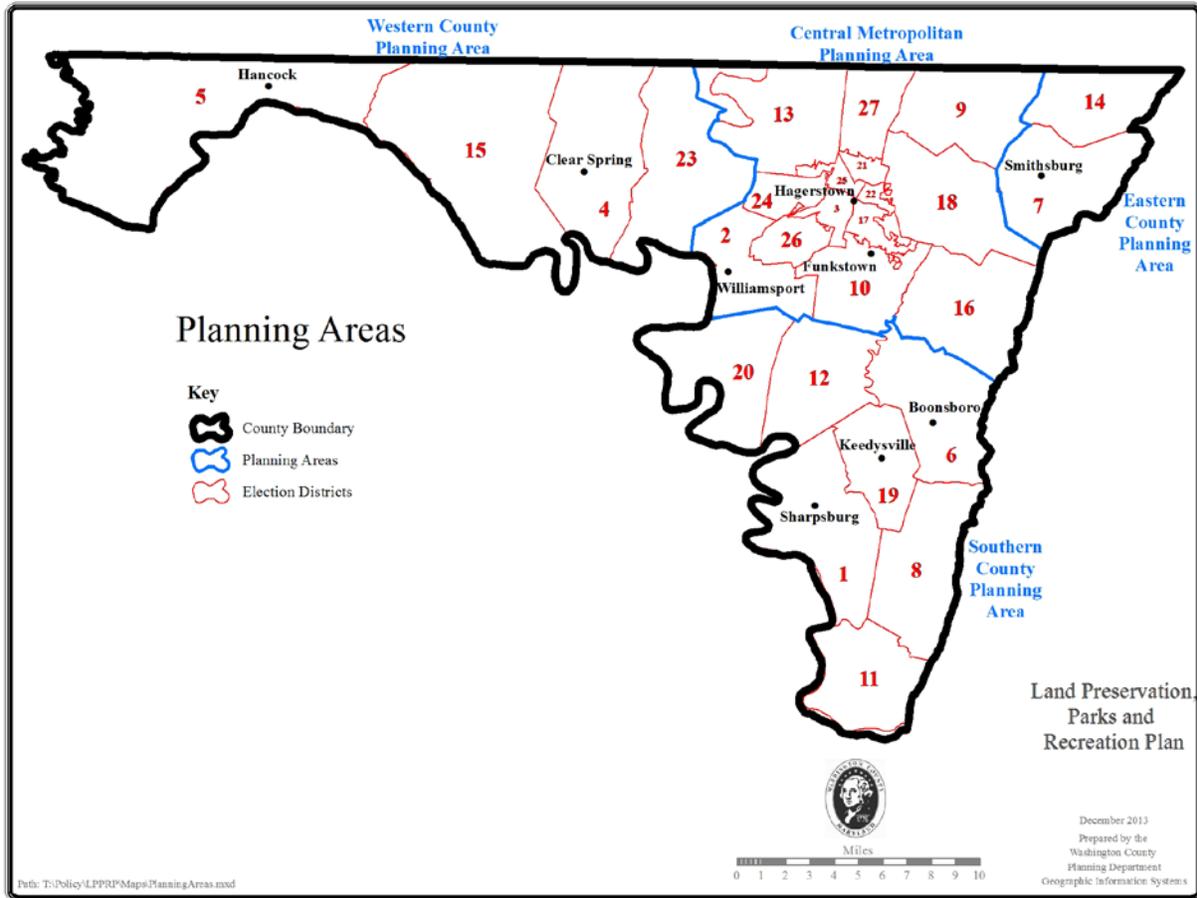
**Table 2.1 : Municipal Populations**

Municipality	Population					
	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Washington County	91,219	103,829	113,086	121,393	131,932	147,430
City of Hagerstown	36,660	35,862	34,132	35,445	36,687	39,662
Boonsboro	1,211	1,410	1,908	2,445	2,803	3,336
Clear Spring	488	499	477	415	455	358
Funkstown	968	1,051	1,103	1,136	983	904
Hancock	2,004	1,881	1,887	1,926	1,725	1,545
Keedysville	433	431	476	464	482	1,152
Sharpsburg	861	833	721	659	691	705
Smithsburg	586	671	833	1,221	2,146	2,975
Williamsport	1,853	2,270	2,153	2,103	1,868	2,137
<b>Total Municipal Population</b>	<b>45,064</b>	<b>44,908</b>	<b>43,690</b>	<b>45,814</b>	<b>47,840</b>	<b>52,774</b>
% of County Population	49.4%	43.3%	38.6%	37.7%	36.3%	35.8%

Source: US Census Bureau

### Planning Areas

For the purposes of park and recreation planning, the County is divided up into four areas: Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern Planning Areas (See Map). Population projections are extrapolated from Maryland Department of Planning data. It is important to note that there is an institutionalized population in the Southern Planning area, with 7,731 individuals (2010 Census); mostly males age 18 – 40, which should be considered when considering demand for recreational facilities.



Planning Area	Census 2010	Projected 2015	Projected 2020	Projected 2025	Projected 2030
Central	99174	106530	113886	120142	126398
Southern	25389	27272	29155	30757	32358
Eastern	9095	9770	10444	11018	11592
Western	13772	14793	15815	16684	17552
Washington County	147430	158365	169300	178600	187900

Socio-Economic Characteristics

*Male vs. Female*

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Male – County	50.5%	51.1%	50.8%	51.1%	51.3%
Female – County	49.5%	48.9%	49.2%	48.9%	48.7%
Male – State	48.5%	48.3%	48.4%	48.3%	48.4%
Female State	51.5%	51.7%	51.6%	51.7%	51.6%

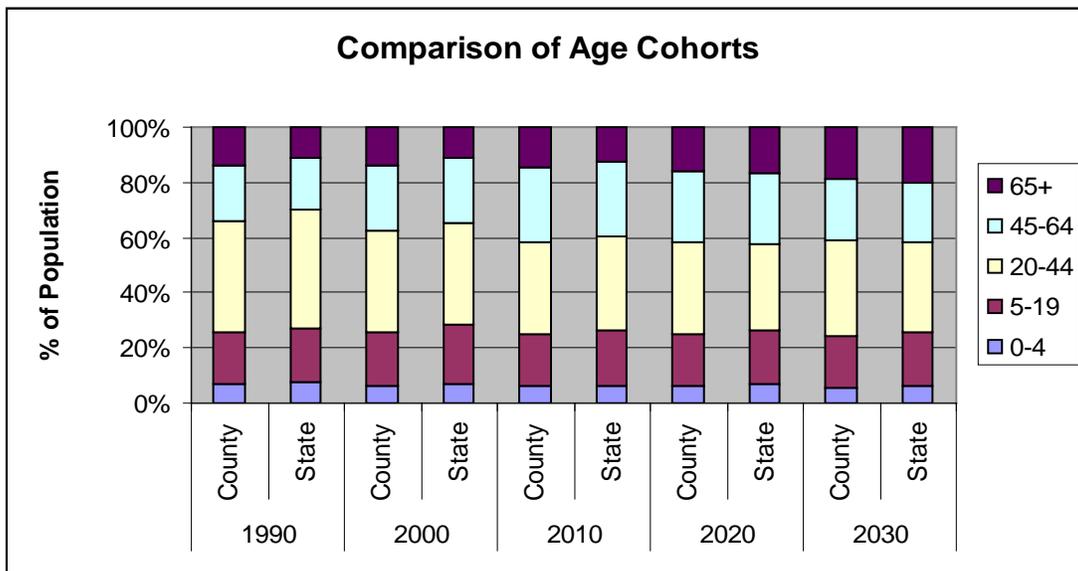
Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 & Maryland Department of Planning

*White vs. Non-White*

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
White – County	93.1%	90.2%	87.4%	84.7%	82.7%
Non-White – County	6.9%	9.8%	12.6%	15.3%	17.3%
White – State	71.7%	66.0%	60.4%	60.5%	58.5%
Non-White - State	28.3%	34.0%	39.6%	39.5%	41.5%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 & Maryland Department of Planning

*Age Cohorts*



Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 & Maryland Department of Planning

*Per Capita and Household Income Characteristics*

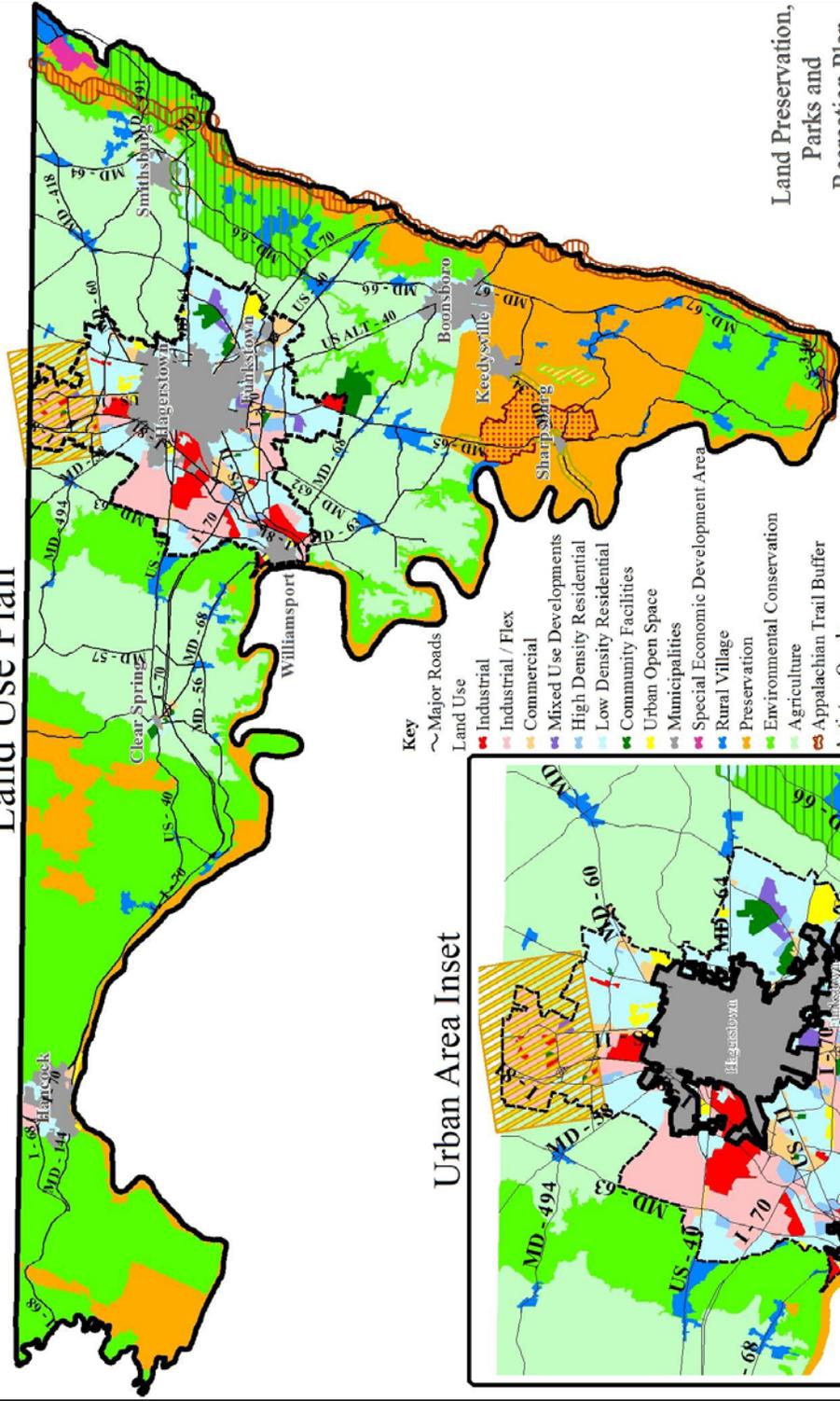
Household Income Characteristics for Washington County and Maryland				
	Washington County		Maryland	
Total Households	55,524	100.0%	2,092,538	100.0%
Income Range				
Less than \$10,000	3,109	5.6%	102,534	4.9%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2,887	5.2%	73,239	3.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	5,941	10.7%	144,385	6.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5,941	10.7%	165,311	7.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,000	9,050	16.3%	255,290	12.2%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11,271	20.3%	385,027	18.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7,662	13.8%	299,233	14.3%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	6,441	11.6%	366,194	17.5%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,888	3.4%	159,033	7.6%
\$200,000 or more	1,333	2.4%	142,293	6.8%
Median Household Income	\$51,962		\$69,475	
Per Capita Income	\$35,257		\$48,247	
Source: US Census Bureau & MD Dept of Planning, 2009 estimates				

**Section 2.3 – Comprehensive Plan Framework**

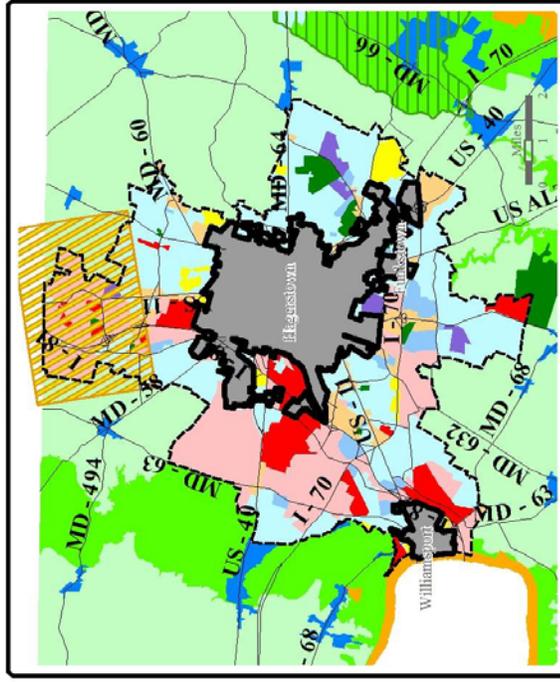
The 2002 Washington County Comprehensive Plan is a data and policy document that is a foundation for the preparation of several “functional plans” and related documents including the LPPRP. The Comprehensive Plan presents and analyzes historic and projected population and land use information in support of establishing goals that encourage controlled and orderly development in the County.

Since the adoption of the County Comprehensive Plan in 1980, the primary concept of delineated urban and rural development has been updated and refined into the current goals and policies we have in today’s Plan. Areas of developable land surrounding the incorporated towns, served by existing infrastructure, but at present outside of municipal boundaries are defined as “Urban/Town Growth Areas”. All unincorporated areas outside of the Urban/Town Growth Areas are designated as “Rural Areas”. As shown on the Land Use Plan Map, there are fourteen (14) land use policy areas defined by the County which provide a guide for future land use decisions. Based on these land use policy areas, the Comprehensive Plan lists goals and objectives for development and preservation efforts across the County. Listed below are the general goals and objectives outlined with the Comprehensive Plan; goals related to land preservation, parks, and open space are highlighted.

# Land Use Plan



## Urban Area Inset



- Key**
- ~ Major Roads
  - Land Use
    - Industrial
    - Industrial / Flex
    - Commercial
    - Mixed Use Developments
    - High Density Residential
    - Low Density Residential
    - Community Facilities
    - Urban Open Space
    - Municipalities
    - Special Economic Development Area
    - Rural Village
    - Preservation
    - Environmental Conservation
    - Agriculture
    - Appalachian Trail Buffer
    - Antietam Overlay
  - AO1
  - AO2
  - AO3
  - Special Planning Areas
  - Airport Overlay
  - Current Growth Boundaries



**Land Preservation,  
Parks and  
Recreation Plan**  
Adapted from the 2002  
Comprehensive Plan for  
Washington County, MD  
(amended in 2012)

December 2013  
Prepared by the  
Washington County  
Planning Department  
Geographic Information Systems

Data Source: MD Department of Planning & MD State Highway Administration  
Path: T:\Policy\LRPP\Map\landuseplan.mxd

## **GOAL 1: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL CHOICE AND SELF FULFILLMENT**

### **Objectives:**

- Establish a variety of residential housing types, densities and locations.
- Identify and promote the development of sites for economic development that have the ability to generate a variety of employment opportunities.
- Provide recreational locations and sites that will create the opportunity to pursue various active and passive leisure activities.
- Promote the location of public safety, emergency service and health care facilities to foster accessibility to all residents.
- Encourage the use of different modes of transportation by providing facilities that allow for different transportation options.

## **GOAL 2: PROMOTE A BALANCED AND DIVERSIFIED ECONOMY, INCLUDING AGRICULTURE**

### **Objectives:**

- Maintain at least 50,000 acres of land in the County in agricultural production by expanding current agricultural land preservation initiatives with an emphasis on preserving farming as a way of life and promoting the agricultural support industry.
- Preserve mineral resource areas for continued and future production.
- Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industry while encouraging the development of new manufacturing and hi-tech industries to broaden the employment base.
- Provide locations for new industry that encourage the use of existing infrastructure facilities and that take advantage of the interstate transportation system.
- Encourage and expand opportunities for recreational, leisure and educational tourism with particular emphasis on development of heritage tourism attractions as destinations.
- Promote educational opportunities that develop and improve the labor force.
- Maximize opportunities for using the airport and railroads in promoting economic development.
- Continue transformation of the former Fort Ritchie military base to the new Lakeside Corporate Center.

## **GOAL 3: ENCOURAGE THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE COUNTY'S HERITAGE**

### **Objectives:**

- Balance future growth with the need to preserve the historical, cultural and

- scenic beauty of the County for future generations.
- Promote the compatibility of the built and natural environments by ensuring that the scale and character of developments are harmonious with existing conditions.
- Target development away from lands with quality agricultural soils; thereby, maximizing agricultural potential and limiting conflicts with existing agricultural operations.
- Limit the amount of development in sensitive areas.
- Safeguard the unique environmental character of designated special planning areas.
- Promote Rural Legacy initiatives in all rural areas of the County.
- Maintain, and where feasible, expand forest conservation efforts.
- Protect surface and ground water quality through storm water management, on lot sewage disposal, and wellhead protection regulations.
- Encourage recycling and resource conservation.

#### **GOAL 4: ESTABLISH PARAMETERS FOR MANAGING GROWTH**

##### **Objectives:**

- Concentrate development in designated growth areas and coordinate development to occur in an orderly manner.
- Encourage opportunities where infill development can take place.
- Promote the reutilization of brownfield sites.
- Limit expansion of public water and sewer facilities outside of designated growth areas to only those extensions necessary to address health issues.
- Locate and time growth so that it does not exceed the capacity of public roads, schools, parks and utilities or so that facilities can be upgraded to accommodate development as needed.
- Promote policies that attribute costs for new services to new users.
- Implement policies that avoid the premature conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.
- Where feasible develop incentives to encourage development in designated growth areas or disincentives to discourage development in areas not designated for growth.
- Encourage the efficient use of energy and water resources.
- Ensure that the Capital Improvement Plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- Promote intergovernmental and interagency cooperation in land use decision making.

Beyond the general goals and objectives, the Comprehensive Plan also includes specific goals, objectives, and policies related to land preservation, parks, and open space planning. Because of the broad influence parks and recreation planning has on all facets of government, goals for implementation are found throughout all the chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. Listed below is a sampling of the numerous recommendations found in the Comprehensive Plan.

## Forest Land and Natural Resource Conservation

1. Establish a minimum targeted threshold of the total land area of the County to remain in long term forest cover. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
2. Continue use of Forest Conservation Funds for the purpose of obtaining easements around priority locations as identified in the Forest Conservation Ordinance. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
3. Use Rural Legacy funding as another means of purchasing easements on forested land to support long-term forest cover retention goals. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
4. Develop a program to inform private forest owners of the benefits of establishing forest management plans. Plans can aid in long-term forest, wildlife habitat, and watershed protection, and may assist property owners in qualifying for a lower agriculture use tax assessment. (Chapter 9 – Environmental Resource Management)
5. Best management practices that promote native plants or animals, create or restore streamside habitats and hedgerows, and protect caves and wetlands should be encouraged to help improve the habitat and timber value of larger forest areas. (Chapter 9 – Environmental Resource Management)

## Land Preservation

1. Agriculture: Use Rural Legacy Program and Agricultural Preservation Program to reserve large blocks of agricultural land to sustain agriculture as a viable economic activity in the County. (Chapter 4 – Economic Development)
2. Agricultural Support Industries: Promote agricultural support industries (equipment repairs, supplies and markets, banking, etc.) by promoting preservation of farm acreage sufficient to sustain their viability and the promotion of land use regulations that provide for the location of these types of industries. (Chapter 4 – Economic Development)
3. Establish a minimum target threshold of the total land area of the County to remain in agricultural production. Continue efforts to develop permanent funding sources that can sustain agricultural easement and development rights acquisition program. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
4. Continue the Agricultural District program as an interim program to support agricultural preservation until agricultural easements can be acquired. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
5. Develop setbacks, screening and buffering for residential development proposed adjacent to agricultural preservation districts or easements that would require mitigation to protect the integrity of the agricultural property and not the proposed residential development. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)

## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

1. Infrastructure Improvements: Target infrastructure improvements such as road widening to areas where there is a need to facilitate the movement of farm equipment or to facilitate recreational or heritage tourism promotion. (Chapter 4 – Economic Development)
2. Continued development of an urban sidewalk system on State roads utilizing the State Highway Administration’s statewide sidewalk program should remain a priority. (Chapter 5 – Transportation Element)
3. Linkage between greenways and facilities for bicycle and pedestrian movement needed to optimize the use of these resources. (Chapter 5 – Transportation Element)
4. A needs assessment should be done to see if more swimming facilities are needed in the western and southern portions of the County. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resource Management)
5. Assessments should be done along local waterways to determine the possibility of adding more boat launches along the smaller waterways for non-motorized boating. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resources Management)
6. Specific recommendations for recreational water facilities promoting swimming, boating and fishing should be incorporated in future Land Preservation and Recreation Plan updates. (Chapter 8 – Environmental Resources Management)
7. Interconnectivity, accessibility, and safety should be foremost among the guiding principles for the detailed study necessary to establish specific greenway trail locations. (Chapter 9 – Community Facilities)
8. A variety of recreation facilities and programs should be offered to citizens in the county, regardless of sex, age, or race. Both public and private recreation service providers should coordinate to the extent possible so as to insure efficiency of services and to avoid duplication. (Chapter 9 – Community Facilities)
9. If an opportunity arises, consider development of a County park with historical aspects or theme or incorporate historic resources into an existing park where available and appropriate. (Chapter 10 – Historic and Cultural Resources)

## Chapter 3: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

### **Section 3.1 – Goals for Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

#### State of Maryland Goals for Parks and Recreation

As noted in the 2009 Maryland Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, the State and local jurisdictions across Maryland must work together to achieve practical and fiscally responsible parkland resources for all residents of the State. To this end, the State of Maryland has set a minimum State recreation goal of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. The following goals from the state plan expand on how we should achieve this standard through planning and implementation.

- Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all of its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well-being.
- Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the state more desirable places to live, work and visit.
- Use State investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
- To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
- Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
- Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

#### County Goals

The following goals, objectives and policies were adopted by the Washington County Parks Board as part of the development of this document. These goals, objectives and policies will continue to guide the Board in its planning, deliberation and decision making of current and future open space and recreational needs.

#### *Goals and Objectives for Parks, Facilities, and Recreation Programs*

**Goal #1: The County Park system shall consist of a balance of Neighborhood, Community and Regional parks.**

#### Objectives

- Acquisition of parkland shall be guided by the following ratios:  
Neighborhood Parks: 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons of population;  
Community Parks: 7.5 acres per 1,000 persons of population; Regional Parks: 5.0 acres per 1,000 persons of population. These standards were

drawn from research of jurisdictions with growth and development similar to Washington County locally, and nationwide.

- The County should continue to cooperate with local jurisdictions in the location, acquisition and development of parkland in order to avoid duplication.
- Coordination with special interest groups such as historical societies, preservation groups, non-profit organizations, etc. should be emphasized to serve the dual purpose of resource conservation and parkland acquisition.

**Goal #2: Efficiently locate and plan recreational facilities for the convenience and benefit of the most people.**

Objectives

- Locate parks and recreational facilities consistent with known population distribution, with transportation accessibility, and with anticipated future growth reflected in the Comprehensive Plan for the County.
- Whenever practical and possible, parkland and open space should be linked by a system of pedestrian/bicycle trails, greenways, and/or waterways.
- Consider the adequacy of existing parkland and recreational facilities and their consistency with generally accepted standards.
- Locate parkland by means of a site selection process which is responsive to the physical requirements of the development program.

**Goal #3: Provide a safe and secure environment for the users of the County Parkland System.**

Objectives

- Whenever practical and possible, walkways, trails and parking areas should be well lit to deter illicit activity.
- Whenever practical and possible, emergency call boxes should be installed in remote areas of parks to assist patrons in case of emergency.
- Local law enforcement officials should be included in the development of new parkland facilities to provide insight into potential hazards.
- Playground equipment shall be installed to factory specifications with the most technologically advanced safety mechanisms in place to prevent injury.
- Equipment should be labeled with recommended age ranges that can use the equipment.
- Safety information should be displayed within the area of the playground equipment to inform its users of proper usage.

**Goal #4: Coordinate recreational programming to meet the diversified needs of County Citizens.**

- Program County recreational facilities to meet the needs of the general public and of organized recreation.
- Promote central coordination and direction of organized recreational programs to avoid duplication of services and encourage the common use of all available resources.
- Promote recreational opportunities for all ages, sexes, skill levels, and special groups, such as the physically and mentally handicapped.

**Goal #5: Provide an efficient and economic strategy for acquisition, operation and maintenance of recreational facilities.**

- Locate and develop planned facilities with a strong concern for continual operation and maintenance costs.
- Develop regulations that would seek to require parkland dedication by developers of major residential subdivisions in the County. Alternatives to requiring a dedicated amount of land could be tax incentives, fee reductions, or partial donations with some fee simple acquisition made by the County.
- Pursue "sharing" or "host" operation and/or maintenance agreements with special interest groups, leagues, and other organizations.
- The park/school concept shall be given high priority in order to more efficiently meet local park and recreation needs. Joint use agreements between the Board of Education and municipal officials (where appropriate) should continue to be established and refined to make all County schools available for recreation use.

*Policies*

In addition to the goals and objectives for parks and recreation planning, the Washington County Parks Board has also adopted specific policies that clarify and strengthen the decision making process for usage and development of County parks. The adopted policies are as follows:

1. Whenever possible, recreational facilities should be designed to competition standards to allow for league and tournament use.
2. County recreational facilities should be programmed for maximum use by groups and organized leagues. Provisions must also be made for use by the general public on a demand basis.
3. The proportion of Program Open Space funds allocated to municipalities is recommended by the County Commissioners on an annual basis. Historically, community parks and playground funding has been distributed entirely to the towns.

However, some consideration should be given to utilizing the POS funds for larger projects which benefit a wider spectrum of users.

4. A standardized system should be used to rank all projects in a given year on a priority basis. Municipalities and organizations requesting County assistance should submit applications with sufficient information so as to allow the Parks Board to compare and prioritize projects.
5. A revolving loan fund should be considered to provide low interest loans for municipal recreation projects.
6. Maximum public use should be made of recreation facilities at all public school sites. Supervision and maintenance assistance should be provided to the Board of Education by the Board of County Commissioners in order to implement this policy.

### **Section 3.2 – Programs and Procedures**

This section describes the framework of programs and procedures currently implemented in Washington County to plan, develop, acquire, and maintain park and recreation programs.

#### **Organization and Planning Procedures**

Ultimately, any regulatory or policy documents developed in the County must receive approval from the Board of County Commissioners for Washington County (BoCC). To assist them in analyzing detailed information relating to land use planning for the County, the BoCC appoints a seven member Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Land Use Article of the Maryland Annotated Code. In addition, for planning specific to parks and recreation facilities in the County, the BoCC appoints a seven member Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. These members are tasked with the responsibility of evaluating existing parks and recreation programs and facilities, and recommending goals, policies, and procedures to the BoCC to implement and advance recreation opportunities for the citizens of the County. During the development of this plan; the Advisory Board reviews comments gathered from citizens at public information meetings, which may be the first time county representatives hear about new uses expected by the public. In the 2012 hearings, for example, the need for dog parks and equine riding trails was raised for the first time.

The Department of Planning and Zoning is responsible for providing Staff assistance to the Planning Commission; examples of Staff responsibilities include development, analysis and maintenance of regulatory and guidance documents such as the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and the LPPRP. The Comprehensive Plan provides a ‘big picture’ analysis of planning programs such as growth analysis, infrastructure planning, environmental protection, and economic development. The LPPRP narrows the focus of Comprehensive Planning recommendations related to parks and recreation into a long term planning document directed specifically at planning for future recreational needs.

### **Section 3.3 – Parkland Needs Analysis**

#### **Parkland Acreage Standards**

Parks are a special kind of open space. They enable people to experience both passive activities such as nature appreciation and picnicking or active pursuits such as softball, tennis or swimming. As described in the Comprehensive Plan, parklands in Washington County are classified as Neighborhood, Community, County or Regional serving facilities. The basis of these classifications is the differences in function, service area and service population as defined in Section 1.4.

The purpose of parkland acreage standards, both at the County and Statewide level, is to provide a quantifiable and consistent way to measure the adequacy of the County and State’s park acreage to meet the needs of the jurisdiction’s population. As stated in previous sections of this Plan, the default State Recreation Acreage Goal in Maryland is set at 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons in the population. The table below illustrates the default acreage goal for Washington County both currently and projected into the future.

**Table 3.1: Default State Recreational Acreage Goals for Washington County (2010-2030)**

	Census 2010	Projected 2015	Projected 2020	Projected 2025	Projected 2030
Washington County Population	147430	158365	169300	178600	187900
Population by 1,000	147.4	158.4	169.3	178.6	187.9
Acreage Goal (population per 1,000 multiplied by 30 acres)	4423	4751	5079	5358	5637

#### *State Standards*

As provided in the *Guidelines for State and Local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Planning, October 2010*, “If needed, up to 15 acres per 1,000 persons of State and federal lands present in the County, in excess of 60 acres per 1,000 persons, can be used to meet the default recommended acreage goal.”

There are approximately 22,449 acres of State owned and managed parkland areas and 10,351 acres of Federally owned and managed parkland areas in Washington County. According to State guidelines, not all State and Federal parklands may be used in calculating the default recommended parkland acreage goal. After eliminating all non-qualified State and federal lands there are approximately 17,913 acres of qualified parkland. This means there are approximately 121.5 acres of State and federal parkland per 1,000 people in Washington County (17,913 acres/147.43 persons per thousand population = 121.5). As stated before, the State guidelines only allow for that portion in excess of 60 acres per 1,000 to count toward the default acreage goal. Therefore, Washington County has approximately 61.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. When added to the 15.32 acres of parkland the local municipalities manage, there is approximately 76 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons in the County.

While it is good that there are large amounts of parkland available at the higher levels of government, it is important to realize the opportunities and limitations these large regional parks

have in serving the needs of our community. In Washington County, significant state lands are committed to the state parks of Fort Frederick, and Greenbrier, and the historic Woodmont properties. Each of these facilities has limitations on the activities allowed there. Greenbrier State Park offers opportunities for beach swimming, camping and other day uses, with a variety of programs for exploring nature and the out of doors. Fort Frederick has more limited camping facilities; with its primary function tied to the historic French and Indian War fort on site. It offers access for fishing to Big Pool, and to the C & O Canal. Activities at Woodmont are limited to various opportunities to visit this historic site. Little, if any field sports are available at any of these locations. More land is dedicated to the Western Maryland Rail Trail, a very popular, but limited use facility that extends for over 20 miles from Fort Frederick to Pearre along an abandoned rail road bed.

On the national level; The Antietam National Battlefield protects this hallowed ground by limiting activities to tours of the site. The C & O Canal provides access for hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, and primitive camping. The Maryland portion of the Appalachian Trail offers hiking and primitive camping opportunities for thousands each year, but other activities are not available.

In general, while these assets can not be discounted, many of the activities allowed are more 'destination' sites, attracting participants from the entire region; and are not designed to meet the regular, even daily, needs of county residents for recreation.

### *County Standards*

As a subset of the default State Recreational Goal it is also required by the State that locally owned recreational lands must make up at least 15 acres of the 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 people of population goal. Locally owned recreational lands are defined as lands under public ownership consisting of neighborhood, community, county and regional parks, educational recreation areas (up to 60% of total area provided there is a joint use agreement with the County), and local natural resource areas (up to 1/3 of the total acreage) including natural resource areas, historic cultural areas, and private open space.

The County standards outlined in this section have been developed and adopted by Washington County in previous Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plans. These standards are used to assess current parkland needs and future needs based on the County's projected population. For the purpose of this section of the Plan the parkland standards are being applied on a countywide basis rather than by planning region. A full inventory of all known public park land in Washington County is provided in Appendix A.

### *County Parkland Inventory and Needs Analysis*

As shown in Table 3.2 below, the County currently provides 15.32 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons of population, which is slightly above the minimum goal of 15 acres/1,000 persons. It appears that there is a gap in the amount of parkland provided vs. what the County goal is in the area of neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks serve the community by providing a common gathering area for members of a community or neighborhood to socialize and enjoy leisure

activities with their friends and neighbors. These types of parks also provide recreational areas for otherwise densely populated residential areas with small lot sizes.

There also appears to be a small gap, which has grown larger over time, in the area of community parks. More and more outdoor sports such as baseball, softball, football, and soccer are gaining in popularity with increased participation in organized leagues and conferences. Regional and community parks provide the most logical locations for sports fields; they are typically larger and have the large open flat areas necessary for field development. While community parks house some of these athletic fields, usually they also contain some feature with environmental, historic, or cultural significance.

**Table 3.2 - County Parkland Inventory and Needs Analysis**

2010						
Parkland Type	Acreage Standard	Acreage	Population	Ratio	Acreage Needed to Meet Standard	Acreage Deficit/Surplus
Neighborhood	2.5 acres per 1,000 Population	263	147430	1.78	369	(106.00)
Community (including Educational Facilities)	7.5 acres per 1,000 Population	1020	147430	6.92	1106	(86.00)
Regional	5.0 acres per 1,000 Population	975	147430	6.61	737	238.00
<b>2010 Subtotal</b>		<b>2258</b>		<b>15.32</b>		
2020						
Parkland Type	Acreage Standard	Acreage	Population	Ratio	Acreage Needed to Meet Standard	Acreage Deficit/Surplus
Neighborhood	2.5 acres per 1,000 Population	263	169300	1.55	423	(160.00)
Community (including Educational Facilities)	7.5 acres per 1,000 Population	1020	169300	6.02	1270	(250.00)
Regional	5.0 acres per 1,000 Population	975	169300	5.76	846	129.00
<b>2020 Subtotal</b>		<b>2258</b>		<b>13.34</b>		
2030						
Parkland Type	Acreage Standard	Acreage	Population	Ratio	Acreage Needed to Meet Standard	Acreage Deficit/Surplus
Neighborhood	2.5 acres per 1,000 Population	263	187900	1.40	470	(207.00)
Community (including Educational Facilities)	7.5 acres per 1,000 Population	1020	187900	5.43	1409	(389.00)
Regional	5.0 acres per 1,000 Population	975	187900	5.19	939	36.00
<b>2030 Subtotal</b>		<b>2258</b>		<b>12.02</b>		

1. As depicted in Table 3.2, and assuming population projects are accurate, the County will need to acquire or convert approximately 560 acres of additional parkland over the twenty year period of this plan to park and recreation use in order to continue to meet the default State Recreational land goal of 15 acres per 1,000 persons. This deficit averages out to approximately 28 acres of land each year in order to maintain the minimum standard. Financial restraints affecting government agencies over the last several years will increase the importance of the County's use of alternative and innovative funding methods to obtain

additional recreational lands. Additionally, the type of parkland needed will predictably be community parks with facilities for a variety of recreational uses, and neighborhood parks serving densely populated areas.

### **Section 3.4 – Recreational Needs Analysis**

A needs analysis is an evaluation which estimates the amount of land and facilities needed, over and above those currently available, to meet the demand for recreational activities or categories of use. Four components of the analysis are described and discussed below.

1. Supply is an inventory listing of the lands and facilities available to support specific recreation activities.
2. Demand is an estimate of the demand for recreation lands and facilities. Demand information can be subjective. While measuring local demand according to surveys can be costly, a well designed local survey can provide data to keep planners on track to meet actual community needs. Some demand data cited is from the Western MD region (Garrett, Allegheny, Washington, and Frederick Counties) sampling results in the state survey “Participation in Local Park and Recreation Activities in MD” by the Center for Urban Environmental Research and Education, University of MD, dated May, 2003. Demand is also based on land and facility requests from elected representatives of municipalities in the County.
3. Needs determination is based on a comparison of the demand for recreational activities with the supply of parkland and facilities to meet the demands. Washington County has utilized an acreage goal based approach in previous Plan documents and will again use the default state recommended Goal in this Plan.
4. Priorities are land, facilities, and programs that meet identified needs in a way that supports achievement of state and local goals.

#### **Supply**

As defined in the *Guidelines for State and Local Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Planning, October 2010*, “Supply is generally the total number of occasions/uses provided by the given recreation facility in a single year.” In choosing which recreational activities and facilities to be evaluated, the County first included the 4 mandatory categories (baseball/softball, field sports, basketball, and tennis) as well as a few other facilities that have been increasing in demand according to State and Local public surveys. Table 3.3 below defines the supply and capacity of recreational facilities in the County<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Season length and capacity numbers were determined in consultation with the Director of Recreation, Director of Parks, and the Facilities Coordinator. Season length was estimated based on Parks and Recreation Staff experience. ‘Users’ were assumed to be the number of legal positions or players on the field or court during a game. Games per day are an average based on weekend games and weekday evening games.

Table 3.3: Recreational Facilities Supply and Capacity

Activity	Facility Types	Number of Facilities	Season Length (Days)	Daily Carrying Capacity per Facility	Annual Carrying Capacity per Facility	Total Supply All Activities
<b>Field Sports</b>						
Baseball/Softball	Diamonds	85	150	54	8,100	688,500
Football	Field	22	90	88	7,920	174,240
Soccer	Field	5	180	88	15,840	79,200
Multi-purpose	Field	28	180	88	15,840	443,520
<b>Court Sports</b>						
Basketball	Indoor Courts	5	300	40	12,000	60,000
	Outdoor Courts	51	270	40	10,800	550,800
Tennis	Outdoor Courts	66	270	16	4,320	285,120
Volleyball	Indoor/Outdoor Courts	14	140	96	13,440	188,160
<b>Fitness Activities</b>						
	Walking/Jogging	15	140	180	25,200	378,000
<b>Family or Group Activities</b>						
	Picnic Pavilions	62	240	80	19,200	1,190,400
	Playgrounds	85	270	70	18,900	1,606,500
<b>Water Sports</b>						
	Swimming Pools	4	95	400	38,000	152,000

### Demand

Increasing populations in the coming years will mean the demand for easily accessible and well-maintained recreation facilities will be at an all time high in Washington County. Overuse and overcrowding of existing facilities will not only diminish the recreational experience for the individual, but lead to the deterioration of the park itself.

To determine the estimated demand on recreational facilities, the County used the State recreational survey, *2003 Participation in Local Park and Recreational Activities in Maryland*. Results were based upon a survey of 400 randomly chosen households in the Western region (Garrett, Allegany, Washington, and Frederick Counties) of the State. Additional information on demand was provided through the LPPRP public participation process, including personal interviews with County and town staff and recreation providers regarding the supply. Public information sessions were held in three geographically separate areas to gather citizen input. A summary of the facility demands is outlined in Table 3.4. Detailed calculations can be found in Appendix B of this document.

**Table 3.4: Projected Activity Demand 2012-2025**

Activity	Facility Types	Activity Demand			
		2012	2015	2020	2025
Field Sports					
Baseball	Diamonds	275,918	296,383	316,848	334,253
Softball	Diamonds	239,043	256,773	274,503	289,582
Field Sports	Field	217,944	234,109	250,274	264,023
Court Sports					
Basketball	Indoor/Outdoor Courts	399,264	428,878	458,491	483,677
Tennis	Outdoor Courts	241,313	259,212	277,110	292,332
Volleyball	Indoor/Outdoor Courts	110,002	118,161	126,320	133,259
Fitness Activities					
	Walking/Jogging	8,663,671	9,306,262	9,948,854	10,495,365
Family or Group Activities					
	Picnic Pavilions	262,720	282,206	301,693	318,265
	Playgrounds	451,932	485,452	518,972	547,480
Water Sports					
	Swimming Pools	696,111	747,743	799,374	843,285

\*Combination of three field sports (Baseball, Football, and Soccer) since the multi-purpose field can and are used for the activity needed.

### Needs Analysis

The needs analysis is a comparison of supply vs. demand of recreational facilities within the County to evaluate the current and future surplus and/or deficit of specific recreational uses. As depicted in Table 3.5, the County has two (2) primary areas of deficiency: walking/jogging and swimming pool facilities. There also appears to be a long term deficiency with regard to court activities such as basketball, tennis, and volleyball. At least for the short term, field sports such as baseball and softball appear to be meeting current needs, but eventually facilities will be needed to meet future population demand.

It should be noted that while there appears to be a severe deficit of public swimming pool facilities in the County, there are several private entities (i.e. YMCA, Mt. Lena Recreation Area, private clubs, and multiple home owner associations) that provide this type of service to assist in meeting the needs of County citizens. Also not included in these calculations but available to the public are surface water recreational areas such as Greenbrier Lake and the Potomac River.

Similarly, the apparent shortage of walking and jogging facilities does not include all of the streets in our very walkable communities; the ARCC at Hagerstown Community College, parks with pathways; and private organizations such as the Valley Mall and the Robinwood Medical Center where walkers can meet their needs.

Table 3.5: Projected Needs 2012-2025					
Activity	Facility Types	Facility Surplus/(Deficit)			
		2012	2015	2020	2025
Baseball	Diamonds	3	1	(1)	(3)
Softball	Diamonds	30	28	26	25
Field Sports	Field	13	12	10	9
<b>Court Sports</b>					
Basketball	Courts	(17)	(20)	(24)	(28)
Tennis	Courts	(16)	(22)	(28)	(33)
Volleyball	Courts	(9)	(8)	(9)	(10)
<b>Fitness Activities</b>					
Walking/Jogging		(59)	(64)	(70)	(74)
<b>Family or Group Activities</b>					
	Picnic Pavilions	32	31	30	30
	Playgrounds	(50)	(59)	(68)	(75)
<b>Water Sports</b>					
	Swimming Pools	(14)	(16)	(17)	

To assist in evaluating more specific needs across the County, the following section, Priorities and Recommendations, further breaks down the needs analysis into the 4 planning regions of the County.

## Priorities and Recommendations

### *Countywide*

#### **1. Participation Survey:**

During the update of this document, it became apparent that the survey conducted by the State (*Participation in Local Park and Recreational Activities in Maryland, May 2003*) contained somewhat unrealistic depictions of park use in Washington County. Public comments offered during listening sessions while developing this plan brought out the need for dog parks, and equine riding trails. The discovery of these unmet needs, and the probability of dwindling funding, emphasizes the need to create and conduct a survey among as broad a base of county residents as possible; rather than limiting surveys to current users of the various facilities or a generalized survey of western Maryland Counties.

## 2. Joint Use of School Facilities:

Coordinating recreation and education activities at schools is an important part of the facilities plan. Utilizing the buildings and surrounding grounds as joint school-recreation centers, provides indoor and outdoor facilities for neighborhood activities and interaction, and allows the center to serve as a focal point for education, recreation and related activities for the surrounding community or town. This multiple use concept is strongly endorsed in the Comprehensive Plan for the County and is consistent with several of the State Visions discussed in the Introduction. In practice, the Washington County Board of Education, (BOE), has joint use agreements with the Parks and Recreation Department with regard to tennis courts and track use and maintenance, and utilizes a School Facility Use Agreement to help coordinate use of buildings and scheduling of fields on school property.

Cooperation between the BOE and the Parks and Recreation Department should be continued and increased where feasible. This has proven to be a practical and cost-effective method for helping to meet short term needs for indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, particularly in the Town Growth Areas of the County. For example, the Hancock High School gymnasium which serves the school and the community with after school activities, was constructed with POS, BOE and donated funds. In addition, coordination with other departments within the county, such as Planning and Zoning, and Public Works, among others, is essential to utilize programs like Safe Routes to School to improve community access to these facilities.

## 3. Bicycling and Pedestrian Activities:

Bicycling has been demonstrated to have numerous health benefits for all ages of riders. Washington County has an excellent road network, connecting historic towns and points of interest, while passing through a scenic, pastoral landscape, which attracts recreational bicyclists from the tri-state and nearby metropolitan areas. The C & O Canal towpath and the Western MD Rail Trail are additional attractions making the county a well known destination for bicycle tourists. Bicycle club organized and promoted events have increased in the recent past. Maintaining an updated bicycling map is essential in promoting the County's scenic assets to local and regional bicyclists.

For children, learning riding skills is the first step in encouraging proper bicycle use. The Parks and Recreation Department and the schools should consider providing appropriate classes or training to reach older children, building on programs offered by Children's Village which serve as a good first contact for bicycle safety education directed at young children.

Expansion of routes available for safe riding not only afford riders the opportunity to benefit from the exercise of the ride, but increase usage rates at any of the recreational facilities located at the destination. State and national programs such as Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School offer education and some funding to aid local communities. Coordination among school, health, planning, and engineering officials, as well as community groups, all contribute to the awareness of the many benefits of

improving facilities and access to them thereby increasing opportunities for bicycling and walking.

In a similar way, safe walking routes are available in the small towns throughout the county, in many of the parks and recreation areas, and at school facilities. State and Federal Parks feature miles of hiking trails, including the Appalachian Trail, C & O Canal, and network of trails along South Mountain.

#### 4. Greenways/Rail Trails/Water Trails:

Local abandoned rail corridors have potential for conversion to accessible walking and bicycling paths, with possible links to existing trail networks in adjacent states. A Civil War Rail to Trail, stretching from Weverton to Roxbury, south of Hagerstown, along a state owned abandoned rail line has opened discussions on this topic again. Proponents cite the economic benefits and the recreational aspects of this route along with its proximity to a number of Civil War sites in the county. Opponents are concerned about losing their privacy, land access, and the cost. The City, County and State have shown support for this concept, however, county planning activities regarding the trail are dormant at this time.

A new emphasis has arisen concerning the potential for water trails along the creeks and waterways within the county. Enthusiasts are concerned specifically about access to the Antietam and Conococheague Creeks for canoes and kayaks.

Other conceptual greenways routes identified on the Comprehensive Plan Special Programs Map should be prioritized and evaluated for easement, connectivity, dedication, and public accessibility potential.

#### 5. Recreation Center:

Washington County and the City of Hagerstown share a long range goal of providing a recreation complex (to include an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, multipurpose rooms, and outdoor fields) located within the Urban Growth Area. This goal has to be re-evaluated by the relevant departments of both jurisdictions in view of the rehabilitation of the U.S. Army Reserve Armory that is currently underway to provide a new Senior Center, current financial conditions, and the results of a current, local participation survey.

### *Area Plans*

#### 1. Western Area Plan

The western planning area consists of the four (4) western most election districts of Hancock (ED #5), Indian Springs (ED #15), Clear Spring (ED #4) and Wilson (ED #23). Historically, this area contains about 9% of the county population. It is

projected to maintain this percentage through the planning period covered by this document.

This area contains approximately 377 of the 2,258 acres of parkland toward the County acreage goal of 15ac/1,000 population. This is a ratio of 27.32 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons of population for this region. According to the regional area detailed breakdowns in Appendix C, the western region should have a sufficient supply of land to last well into the future.

Analysis of recreational facilities also reveals a deficit in soccer fields, walking/jogging areas, and swimming pool facilities in the western region. While there is a deficit specifically for soccer fields, there is an excess of multi-purpose fields that often fill the needs of soccer participants. There also appears to be a small deficit related to swimming pool facilities, although this is somewhat mitigated by the existence of several miles of the Potomac River available for swimming and other water related recreation activities. Finally, there is a large deficit in the area of walking and jogging facilities. This is common all across the County and development priorities should include construction of new fitness trails and walking paths within existing parks in the western region and any new residential development. This shortfall is partially met by the nearby C & O Canal Towpath and the Western Maryland Rail Trail. (Appendix D contains more specific recommendations for park and recreational facilities.)

## 2. Central Area Plan

The central planning area is the largest and most populated of the four planning areas, containing the City of Hagerstown, Town of Williamsport and Town of Funkstown. It also contains the Urban Growth Area, a Comprehensive Plan designation encompassing unincorporated areas around the three municipalities, that directs, through zoning and land use regulations, future growth into these areas where infrastructure already exists or can be easily extended. The fourteen election districts (Williamsport, ED #2; Leitersburg, ED #9; Funkstown, ED #10; Maugansville, ED #13; Beaver Creek, ED #16; Chewsville, ED #18; Cedar Lawn, ED #24; Halfway, ED #26, Fountainhead, ED #27, and Hagerstown, ED #3,17,21,22,& 25) within this planning area contain 99,174, or 68%, of the 2010 census population. It is anticipated that this percentage will increase through the planning period of this document due to the emphasis on directing development into the growth areas.

The approximately 1,514 of the 2,258 acres of parkland included in meeting the County acreage goal of 15ac/1,000 population translates to a ratio of 15.27 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons in this planning area. As detailed in Appendix C, the central region currently meets this minimum standard. However, it is evident that additional parkland will need to be acquired to maintain the minimum standard in the near future, and through the years covered by this plan. Additional land may be acquired through fee simple acquisition, developer dedication and donation, or through adaptive reuse of existing County lands such as airport buffer zones or closed landfill parcels.

The current deficits in football and soccer fields in the central planning area are mitigated by the inclusion of multi-purpose fields that can be used for a variety of field sports. Long term deficits however, are anticipated to be filled by the future development of Kemps Mill Park in Williamsport and the addition of a North End Park along MD 60 on land subject to long term lease from the Holcim Cement Company property. Tennis court facilities are also showing long term deficits but, similar to the football and soccer facilities, tennis courts are anticipated to be added as part of the North End Park along MD 60.

Two other facilities are showing extreme deficits in supply; walking/jogging facilities and swimming pools.

Deficits in walking/jogging facilities in county parks are common all across the County and it is accepted that development priorities should include construction of new fitness trails and walking paths within existing parks in the central region. Adaptive reuse of existing County and municipal properties are also being explored for potential use such as developing the buffer land at the Hagerstown Regional Airport with a fitness trail and/or walking loop.

The central planning area shortfall for walking trails is somewhat lessened by the walkability factor inherent in our developed areas. Many neighborhoods have broad, tree lined streets, and a variety of traffic calming devices which are perfect for the recreational walker. Anecdotal evidence can be gathered by the casual observer in many growth area neighborhoods by noticing the number of individuals who are 'just out for a walk.'

Foul weather can deter all but the hardiest of outdoor walkers; the Washington County area has a number of facilities which offer 'walking clubs' in space made available in their facilities. Chief among these is the Hagerstown Community College ARCC which opens the indoor track at regular times for use. Other venues include the Robinwood Medical Center, and the Valley Mall, who encourage walkers to utilize their interior open spaces and corridors.

Swimming pool facility deficits are currently being addressed by private entities such as homeowners associations and non-profit organizations with membership fees. The City of Hagerstown, and the Town of Williamsport have community pools which charge a modest fee; Washington County provides swimming opportunities at Halfway Park, located in this planning area. It is anticipated that more swimming pool facilities will be added during the horizon period to meet the demand of County citizens. County Park and Recreation long range plans include development of a community recreational complex with an indoor pool.

Unprotected swimming areas along the Potomac River, and some of the larger streams continue to meet some of the water based activity needs of local residents and visitors. While the concept of creating guarded swimming areas may be considered by some to be worth discussing; water quality issues and annual flooding have made

this kind of development impractical. (Appendix D contains more specific recommendations for park and recreational facilities.)

### 3. Eastern Area Plan

Two election districts (Smithsburg ED #7 and Ringgold ED #14) form the eastern planning area. According to the 2010 census, the population for this area is approximately 9,095 people, which is about 6% of the total population. It is anticipated that this percentage will remain the same through the horizon period of this document.

This area contains approximately 125 of the 2,258 acres of parkland delineated as meeting the County goal of 15acres per 1,000 population. This translates to a ratio of 13.74 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons in this region. According to the regional area breakdowns in Appendix C, the slight deficit of parkland in this region will be compounded over the long term without the acquisition of new parkland.

Analysis of recreational facilities reveals a deficit in football and multi-purpose fields in the eastern planning area in the long term. There also appears to be a small deficit related to swimming pool facilities. This is somewhat mitigated by the existence of two nearby State Parks (Greenbrier and Cunningham Falls) with lakes available for swimming and other water related activities. Finally while there is a deficit in the area of walking and jogging facilities, there is the nearby Appalachian Trail, and a large network of trails in the state and federal forest lands along South Mountain. The shortfall in fitness trails and walking paths on county facilities in the eastern region will eventually be cured through their construction within existing parks. (Appendix D contains more specific recommendations for park and recreational facilities.)

### 4. Southern Area Plan

The southern planning area consists of the county's seven (7) southern most election districts; Sharpsburg (ED #1), Boonsboro (ED #6), Rohrsville (ED #8), Sandy Hook (ED #11), Fairplay (ED #12), Keedysville (ED #19) and Downsville (ED #20). Historically, this area of the County contained about 17% of the overall citizenry; however it became a rapidly growing segment during the first decade of this century, due to its proximity to Frederick County and commuter rail services. It is projected to continue a slightly higher growth rate through the horizon period of this document.

This area contains approximately 242 of the 2,258 acres of parkland needed to meet the County acreage goal of 15ac/1,000 population. This translates to a ratio of 9.53 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons for this region, which represents a marked shortfall from the 15 acre goal, and may be projected to fall further behind without additional acquisition of parkland.

The analysis of recreational facilities reveals a deficit in football and soccer fields, tennis courts, walking/jogging facilities and swimming pool facilities. The deficit in field sports is currently being offset with multi-purpose fields but future projections predict a higher demand that will necessitate the development of more fields, with,

much of the deficit for the field sports and tennis courts will be made up with the continued development of Shafer Memorial Park in Boonsboro. The deficit in walking and jogging facilities is common all across the County and development priorities should include construction of new fitness trails and walking paths within existing parks in the southern region. The Civil War rail/trail could also address this deficit. The shortage of swimming facilities could be met by community pools installed by the County, municipalities in the area, or possibly through a joint agreement with non-profit organizations. (Appendix D contains more specific recommendations for park and recreational facilities.)

## **RECOMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations have been developed from the needs identified above to meet or exceeding the minimum standards:

1. Conduct a survey of all county residents to determine local needs for recreational facilities; develop priorities based on those needs; incorporate specifics into the Capital Improvement Plan.
2. Complete the evaluation of County owned properties for potential reuse for recreational purposes. For example, lands at the airport and closed landfills could provide areas for recreational activities that would not deter from the principle purpose of the property.
3. Pursue acquisition of additional parkland for active and passive recreational activities:
  - a. adjacent to Clear Spring Park
  - b. in the Jefferson Boulevard area
  - c. near Williamsport
  - d. near Ft. Ritchie and Smithsburg
4. Develop and implement strategies during the development review process to acquire additional land and/or financial support for park acquisition and development. Strategies could include land dedication, incentives for land donation, land swaps, and/or impact fees.
5. Create a study group to work with the Washington County Board of Education in the review of BOE facilities with the express purpose of developing and promoting “school parks”.
6. Develop and conduct a community wide marketing program to make the general population more aware of the recreational assets in the county, and the benefits of adopting a more active lifestyle.
7. The Comprehensive Plan Special Programs Map should be prioritized and evaluated for easement, connectivity, dedication, and public accessibility potential for linear parks and greenways.
8. The county should support grass roots efforts to develop rail trails and water trails throughout the county if the proposed activity falls within the needs list developed as a result of the survey.
9. If survey results continue to support the need for a large scale community recreation complex including an indoor pool then planning for its financing should begin.

## Chapter 4: Agricultural Land Preservation

### **Section 4.1 – State and Local Goals**

#### State Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation

- Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.
- Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland’s farmland.
- To the greatest degree possible, concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long term protection of resources and resource-based industries.
- Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource based industries.
- Preserve approximately 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2020.
- Ensure good return on investment by concentrating state agricultural land preservation funds in areas where the investment is reasonably well supported by both local investment and land use management programs.
- Work with local governments to:
  - Establish preservation areas, goals, and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement State goals;
  - In each area designated for preservation, develop a shared understanding of goals and the strategy to achieve them among rural landowners, the public-at-large, and State and local government officials;
  - Protect the equity interests of rural landowners in preservation areas by ensuring sufficient public commitment and investment in preservation through easement acquisition and incentive programs;
  - Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas; and
  - Establish effective measures to support profitable agriculture, including assistance in production, marketing, and the practice of stewardship, so that farming remains a desirable way of life for both the farmer and the public-at-large.

#### Local Goals for Agricultural Land Preservation

The agriculture industry plays a major role in the economy, sustainability, and overall character of Washington County. Recognizing this fact, the County has developed several goals and objectives in the Comprehensive Plan to help support sustainability and growth of the industry. Primarily, Comprehensive Plan Goal #2 states the County’s priority in supporting the agriculture industry by “*Promote[ing] a balanced and diversified economy, including agriculture.*” The main agricultural objective to this end is to “Maintain at least 50,000 acres in the county in agricultural production by expanding current agricultural land preservation

initiatives with an emphasis on preserving farming as a way of life and promoting the agricultural support industry.”

Listed below are excerpts of goals and objectives from the Plan (including a parenthetical reference of the State vision they support) to demonstrate the County’s desire and commitment to promote the agricultural industry.

#### Chapter 8: Environmental Resource Management

- Continue efforts to develop permanent funding sources that can sustain (an) agricultural easement and development rights acquisition program. (Visions 1,3,7)
- Continue the Agricultural District Program as an interim program to support agricultural preservation until agricultural easements can be acquired.(Visions 1,3,5,6)
- Develop setbacks, screening and buffering for residential development proposed adjacent to agricultural preservation districts or easements that would require mitigation to protect the integrity of the agricultural property and not the proposed residential development. (Vision 3)
- Work with the Washington County Soil Conservation District and the Agricultural Extension Agency to enhance current regulatory requirements that address animal waste collection and disposal processes to insure balance with environmental concerns. (Visions 5,6)

### **Section 4.2 – Implementation Programs**

#### Land Preservation and Easement Acquisition Programs

The County participates in several agricultural easement purchase programs including the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program (MALPP), Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP), Maryland Environmental Trust (MET), Transportation Equity Act Funds (TEA), Rural Legacy, Installment Payment Purchases (IPPs) and most recently the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The County has also discussed the possibility of a Transferrable Development Right (TDR) program but has yet to adopt implementing regulations.

The majority of easement acquisitions come from the MALPP and Rural Legacy Programs. The MALPP is a joint easement program between the State and the County to protect highly productive agricultural land by purchasing easements that extinguish development rights on a property. The Rural Legacy Program works much the same way but this program broadens the scope of easement purchase to environmentally sensitive properties. Other tools used by the County to assist in the protection of farmland are preferential tax treatment for agriculturally assessed land, agricultural zoning and the Agricultural District Program.

The Agricultural District Program encourages landowners to voluntarily enter into an Agricultural Land Preservation District in which it is agreed that the land will not be developed for a period of at least ten years. In return for that restriction, the landowner receives protection from nuisance complaints and becomes eligible to sell a Development Rights Easement. The

owner may exercise the option of selling an easement to the Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation provided that the offer to sell is recommended by the County's Advisory Board and the County Commissioners. Locally, the Agricultural Advisory Board reviews and ranks easement applications, assigning point value to items such as farm size, soil quality and development pressure. If purchased by the State, the easement will remain in effect in perpetuity. Participation in the Agricultural Preservation District also provides property tax credits.

### Assistance Programs

In 2008 the County hired an Agricultural Marketing Specialist to assist in promoting the agricultural industry in Washington County. The Agricultural Marketing Office, an arm of the Business Development Department, is responsible for developing, marketing, and managing economic development strategies and implementing marketing programs to attract, retain, preserve and grow agricultural enterprises and related industries in Washington County. Since its inception, the Agricultural Marketing Office has enhanced the visibility of the agriculture industry in the County by promoting farmers markets, ag expos, farm tours, agri-tourism events, and educational and safety courses.

Another important project the County Commissioners have supported for several years is the Agriculture Education Center. Owned and operated by the County, with financial assistance from the State, the Education Center holds events year round to promote and educate people about the agricultural industry. Also included at the Center is the Rural Heritage Museum that provides citizens a view of history about how people used the land to survive.

Finally, the County adopted a Right to Farm Ordinance in 2004 to help educate the general public about agricultural operations and the potential impacts of development. Efforts include notification of all new property owners of the impacts of farming operations such as odor, dust, spray, etc. via a notification, signed by the purchaser, at the time of settlement. The Ordinance also provides a process by which to handle the occasional nuisance complaints that can result from incompatible uses.

### Land Use Management

Washington County land management tools are guided by the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, and Forest Conservation Ordinance. In addition, State and Federal regulations driven by nutrient management goals to protect the water resources in the State have created additional open space and impervious surface requirements relating to stormwater and wastewater management.

The most prominent tools used in the County are the Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. While the Comprehensive Plan assists in promoting long term planning goals for all aspects of development, the Zoning Ordinance is used to implement development regulations that helps achieve those goals. Most recently, the County implemented recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan to reduce density in the rural areas of the County. In 2005, the Board of County Commissioners adopted new rural area zoning districts that reduced the amount of

potential development allowed outside of designated Growth Area boundaries. Four primary zoning districts are now designated in the rural areas of the County:

*Agriculture Rural Zoning:*

The purpose of this District is to provide for continued farming activity and uses which do not require public water and sewerage facilities and are more suitably located outside of the denser growth in and near the larger communities of the County. The Agriculture Rural zoning district has been drawn to enclose large blocks of the best soils and topography for intensive agricultural production. Most of the operating farms as well as the largest blocks of farmland preserved through the Agricultural Preservation Program are located in this area. In 2005, the residential density allowances for the Agricultural Rural zoning district were reduced from one (1) dwelling unit per acre to one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acres of land owned.

*Environmental Conservation Zoning:*

The purpose of this District is to prescribe a zoning category for those areas where, because of natural geographic factors and existing land uses, it is considered feasible and desirable to conserve open spaces, water supply sources, woodland areas, wildlife and other natural resources. This District may include extensive steeply sloped areas, stream valleys, water supply sources, and adjacent wooded areas. In 2005, the residential density allowances for the Environmental Conservation zoning district were reduced from one (1) dwelling unit per acre (or three (3) acres in some areas) to one (1) dwelling unit per twenty (20) acres of land owned.

*Preservation Zoning:*

The purpose of this district is to prescribe a zoning category for those areas where, because of natural geographic factors and existing land uses, it is considered feasible and desirable to conserve open spaces, water supply sources, woodland areas, wildlife and other natural resources. This District includes the County's designated Rural Legacy Area, federal lands, state parks, state wildlife management areas, county parks, Edgemont Watershed, most of the mountaintops, and the Potomac River. The density allowances for the Preservation zoning district were reduced from one (1) dwelling unit per three (3) acres to one (1) dwelling unit per thirty (30) acres of land owned.

*Rural Village Zoning:*

The Rural Village district is provided to preserve the unique historic or rural character of existing villages by encouraging compatible development within a defined village boundary. It also identifies clusters of existing development in the rural areas that may be candidates for public facilities in the future. Permitted development in Rural Villages will be generally of a similar density, scale, use and mixture as that which exists in the village. The zone is designed to prevent large amounts or inappropriately scaled development or uses that would detract from the existing rural or historic character of the village. It is expected that development will be residential and contain a limited amount of mixed rural services.

In addition to the density changes made in the 2005 rural area rezoning, building setback increases were instituted on newly created residential parcels that abut existing active farms. This action was anticipated to reduce the typical incompatibility issues between farms and residential uses such as spray drift, dust, etc. The above referenced changes to rural zoning categories were intended and in fact do have a significant effect on the protection of agricultural lands and encouragement of agricultural industry.

The Forest Conservation Ordinance and the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance are also used to help manage the impact of growth in the rural areas of the County. The Forest Conservation Ordinance was adopted in response to the 1991 State Forest Conservation Act which intended to slow the loss of forested lands across the State. As a result of the implementation of the Forest Conservation Act, forest conservation easements have been established throughout the County creating de facto open space areas and preserving the natural resources of the County. In addition, developments that were unable to provide forest mitigation areas on site have contributed to the permanent preservation of several hundred acres of land through forest conservation easements using payment-in-lieu-of-planting funds.

The Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance was originally adopted in 1990 to ensure that the public facilities and services needed to support development are available concurrently with the impacts of the new development. These public facilities include roads, schools, water & sewer service, and fire protection.

The APFO regulates development based on the availability of the infrastructure used by the new development. In the rural areas, the most affected facilities are roads and schools. If new development is found to exceed the capabilities of the surrounding infrastructure, the developer becomes responsible for the upgrade of the affected facilities. This can render a project fiscally impractical or reduce the overall intensity of development. Alternatively, the local legislative body can reject infrastructure expansion based on other factors such as the long term financial impact on the public.

Another tool used by the County to reduce development pressure is the 10-year agricultural district program. In exchange for the landowners' agreement not to develop the property for a period of ten years, the County provides a property tax break on the land and its improvements. This program does not extinguish development rights but does provide an extension of time to allow for permanent preservation efforts to be put into place.

### **Section 4.3 – County Program Assessment**

#### **Preservation Strategy**

It is the goal of Washington County to support a diversified system of agricultural operations that includes but is not limited to dairy, livestock, crop, orchards, vineyards, and timber. As stated in Chapter 2 of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the goals is to, “promote a balanced and diversified economy, including agriculture.” One of the specifics in obtaining this goal is to maintain at least 50,000 acres of land in agricultural production. This acreage goal was developed in the early 1990s in coordination with the Agricultural Extension Office and the University of

Maryland based on an evaluation of critical land mass needed to support the agriculture industry. Through 2010, Washington County has permanently preserved approximately 23,000 acres of farmland and woodlands through various preservation programs. In addition, approximately 17,000 acres of land are in short-term preservation districts.

A key component in the success of an agricultural preservation program is the efficient spending of funds to maximize the community benefit. Since the inception of agricultural preservation programs in Washington County, a priority ranking system has been used to determine the optimum use of preservation funds. This system was recently amended to incorporate the MALPF goals by including open space lands in the definition of “contiguous” and by increasing the penalties for excluding lots for future development. To continue this practice, and in order to remain consistent with State preservation goals, the County recently adopted amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to establish Priority Preservation Areas (PPAs) in accordance with the requirements of the Agricultural Stewardship Act of 2006.

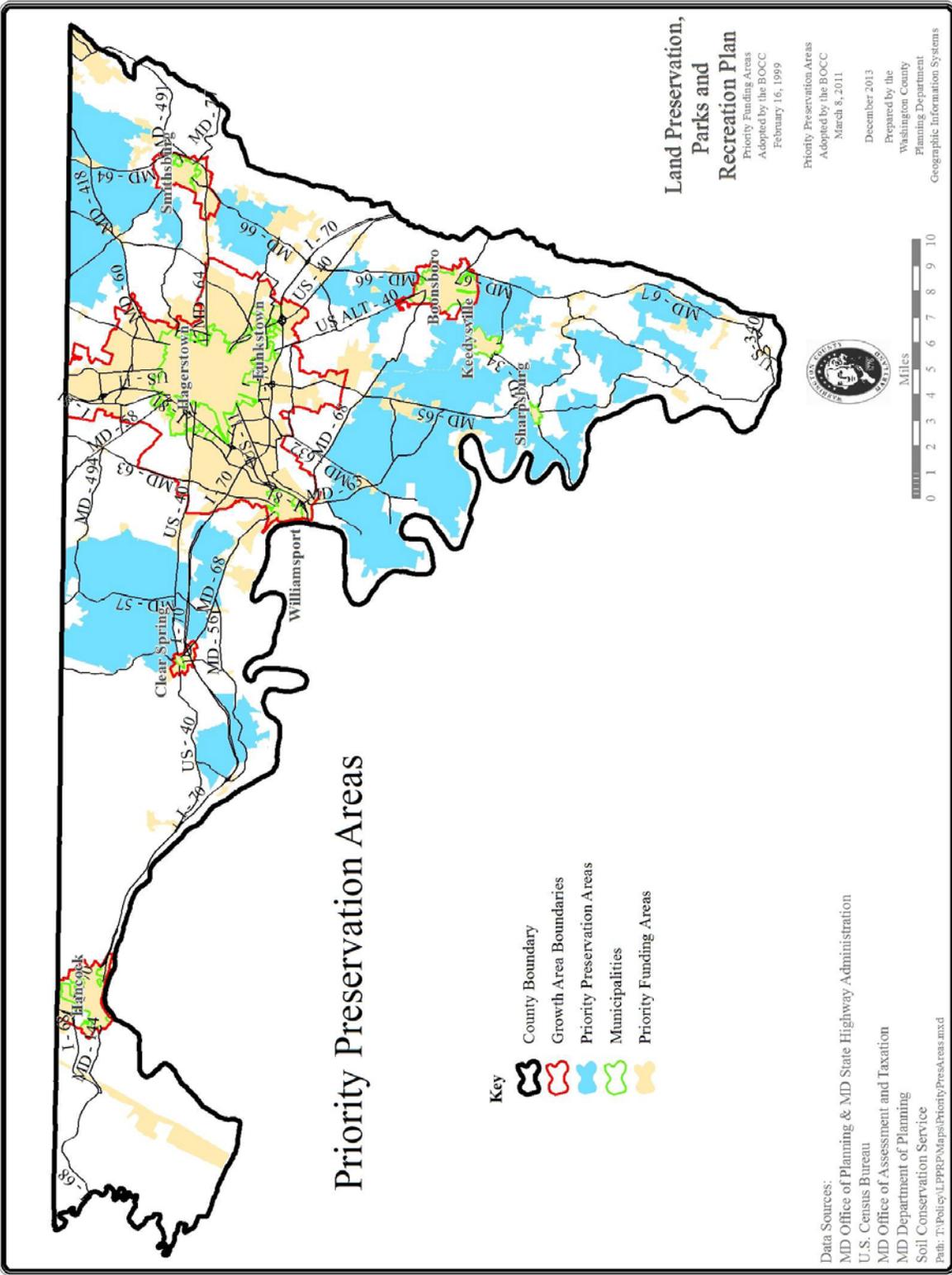
### Funding

The local revenue for land preservation comes from a variety of sources including general revenue funds, agricultural transfer tax funds, recordation tax funds, and excise tax funds. The combined land preservation effort in Washington County has resulted in 22,765 acres of land being preserved through perpetual land preservation easements at a total cost of \$56.3 million.

The breakdown of funding shown in Table 4.1 for land preservation programs over the last five years indicates that funding to the MALPF program has exceeded the local funding expenditures for any of the other land preservation programs. However, the recently adopted Installment Payment Purchase program has gained significant support over the last few years and will provide an important alternative funding source for land preservation.

**Table 4.1: Land Preservation Expenditures FY 2006-2010**

	Program	Acres	Farms	Amount
2006	MALPF	705.73	4	\$1,790,096
	Rural Legacy	75.49	1	\$286,066
	MET			
	CREP			
	IPP	368.60	2	\$1,324,907
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,149.82</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>\$3,401,069</b>
2007	MALPF			
	Rural Legacy	155.52	1	\$959,011
	MET			
	CREP			
	IPP	475.16	4	\$2,392,393
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>630.68</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$3,351,404</b>
2008	MALPF	1,585.37	7	\$7,245,461
	Rural Legacy	408.70	2	\$938,360
	MET			
	CREP			
	IPP	269.22	3	\$2,392,700
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2,263.29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>\$10,576,521</b>
2009	MALPF	792.97	7	\$5,019,499
	Rural Legacy	163.12	2	\$716,000
	MET			
	CREP			
	IPP			
	<b>Subtotal</b>			
2010	MALPF	79.30	1	\$399,047
	Rural Legacy	142.70	1	\$151,640
	MET	28.97	4	\$0
	CREP	102.49	3	\$335,338
	IPP			
	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>353.46</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>\$886,025</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>4,397.25</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>\$18,215,018.9</b>



# Priority Preservation Areas

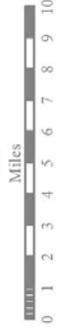
- Key**
- County Boundary
  - Growth Area Boundaries
  - Priority Preservation Areas
  - Municipalities
  - Priority Funding Areas

## Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan

Priority Funding Areas  
Adopted by the BOCC  
February 16, 1999

Priority Preservation Areas  
Adopted by the BOCC  
March 8, 2011

December 2013  
Prepared by the  
Washington County  
Planning Department  
Geographic Information Systems



Data Sources:  
MD Office of Planning & MD State Highway Administration  
U.S. Census Bureau  
MD Office of Assessment and Taxation  
MD Department of Planning  
Soil Conservation Service  
Path: F:\Policy\LEPP\Map\Map\PriorityPresAreas.mxd

## Assessment of Performance in Achieving Goals

Even though the development analysis projections show trends toward low growth potential in the Rural Areas of the County, development pressures are still one of the largest challenges to overcome for land preservation programs. Prior to 2005, Washington County had two prevailing zoning classifications labeled as Agriculture and Conservation outside of the growth areas for the urban and town centers. The zoning in these two classifications allowed dwelling unit to acreage densities of 1:1 and 1:3. This left the County susceptible to large amounts of sprawl development and threatened the resources the community found most important. In 2005, the County, based on recommendations in the 2002 Comprehensive Plan for the County, adopted zoning densities in the rural areas that reduced development potential from dwelling unit per acreage ratios of 1:1 and 1:3, to ratios of 1:5, 1:20 and 1:30. These changes have significantly reduced development potential on rural land an average of 60 to 70 percent and have consequently reduced the number of dwelling units and their potential to create incompatible uses next to existing agricultural operations. These changes have also allowed more time for local officials to explore and produce mechanisms for land preservation. Exemption lots were also made available, subject to some provisions, in these areas for farmers who may wish to provide lots to family members or need to sell lots to help finance the operation of the farm.

### *Challenges*

Washington County and the State of Maryland have had varying degrees of success in funding land preservation programs due to the fact that funding for land preservation is primarily derived from property taxes and agricultural transfer taxes, and tends to follow the fluctuations in the overall economy. This has made funding a significant challenge in trying to obtain permanent preservation easements. Regardless of these fluctuations, the amount of funding needed to meet the goals of these land preservation programs continues to escalate and exceed the availability of funding in County and State budgets. Alternative means of funding such as TDRs, IPPs, and donated easements continue to be analyzed as options. However, the efficiency of these types of programs tends to be difficult to predict.

Real estate market factors have also had an influence on the interest of landowners in participation in these programs. When the housing market is in decline, landowners are generally more receptive to these programs to generate revenue for the farm. However, during a housing boom, the value of developable land usually exceeds the value of incentives to preserve land. This will continue to be an issue in the land preservation program as the supply and demand of the housing industry continues to fluctuate. Some landowners simply do not wish to participate in these programs for a variety of reasons, but simply preserve the land based on their own principles of land stewardship.

### *Opportunities*

One way to overcome the challenges of land preservation is to help promote profitability in the industry. Recently, the County hired an Agricultural Marketing Specialist to assist in promoting the agricultural industry in Washington County. This person acts as a lobbyist and liaison for the agriculture community.

The Agriculture Education Center, owned and operated by the County, with financial assistance from the State, holds events throughout the year to promote and educate people about the agricultural industry. It includes a Rural Heritage Museum featuring exhibits depicting early rural life in Washington County prior to 1940. A second museum building houses larger pieces of farm equipment and farm implements. It shows the progression from human powered and horse drawn equipment to the motorized era.

The Rural Heritage Farmstead began in 1999 when a windmill was relocated to the upper portion of the property. Since then, there have been many additions including two log homes, an outdoor drying shed, a brick wood fired bread oven, and a pavilion to house a sawmill.

The gardens include a German Four-Square garden filled with heirloom plants including vegetables, herbs, and flowers; a large garden for planting potatoes for the museum's annual Spud Fest, was recently expanded to include rye, wheat, and a berry patch.

Located on the lower grounds, adjacent to the museum buildings is the Rural Heritage Village which continues to grow. Currently, there is a log church, a log home, and a Doctor's Office. Future plans for the village include a cobbler and broom makers shop, a carpenters shop, and a blacksmith shop. This exhibit will serve to educate the visitor about life in Washington County in the decades surrounding the Civil War.

The County adopted a Right to Farm Ordinance in 2004 to preserve, protect, enhance and encourage Agricultural Operations and the development and improvement of its Agricultural Land for the production of food and other agricultural products. It recognizes that when non-agricultural land uses extend into agricultural areas, normal agricultural operations may become the subject of nuisance complaints and lawsuits, often due to the lack of information about such operations. As a result, agricultural operators are sometimes forced to cease or curtail their operations, perhaps discouraging others from making investments in agricultural improvements and resulting in negative impacts on the economic viability of the County's agricultural industry as a whole. It is the purpose of this Ordinance to reduce the loss to the County of its agricultural resources by clarifying and limiting the circumstances under which Agricultural Operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance, trespass or other interference with the reasonable use and enjoyment of land.

It is in the public interest to promote a clearer understanding between Agricultural Operations and non-agricultural neighbors through a good neighbor policy of advising purchasers and users of property near agricultural operations of the inherent conditions as a result of living in rural areas. It is intended that, through mandatory disclosures, such as the "Right to Farm Notice and Real Estate Transfer Disclosure" purchasers and users will better understand the impact of living near Agricultural Operations.

## Chapter 5: Natural Resource Conservation

### **Section 5.1 – Goals for Natural Resource Conservation**

#### State Goals for Natural Resource Conservation

- Identify, protect, and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
  - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
  - Preservation and stewardship on private lands through easements and assistance; and
  - Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs
- Focus conservation and restoration activity on priority areas within the statewide green infrastructure.
- Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist the State and local implementation plans. Accomplish this by synthesizing local inventories with DNR's inventory of green infrastructure in each county.
- Assess the combined ability of the State and local programs to:
  - Expand and connect forests, farmlands, and other natural lands as a network of contiguous green infrastructure.
  - Protect critical terrestrial and aquatic habitats, biological communities, and populations.
  - Manage watersheds in ways that respect, conserve, and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions.
  - Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing economic viability of privately owned forestland.
- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated State/local strategy to achieve them through State and local implementation programs.
- Preserve the cultural and economic value of natural resource lands.
- Encourage private and public economics activities such as eco-tourism and natural resource based outdoor recreation, to support long-term conservation objectives.

## County Goals for Natural Resource Conservation

The County Comprehensive Plan states a broad array of environmental and natural conservation goals throughout the document. The primary goal of the Comprehensive Plan related to resource conservation is listed as Goal #3 in Chapter 2 and reads, “*Encourage the stewardship of the environment and the County’s heritage*”. Objectives supporting these goals are as follows:

- Balance future growth with the need to preserve the historical, cultural and scenic beauty of the County for future generations.
- Promote the compatibility of the built and natural environments by ensuring that the scale and character of development are harmonious with existing conditions.
- Target development away from lands with quality agricultural soils; thereby, maximizing agricultural potential and limiting conflicts with existing agricultural operations.
- Limit the amount of development in sensitive areas.
- Safeguard the unique environmental character of designated special planning areas.
- Promote Rural Legacy initiatives in all rural areas of the County.
- Maintain, and where feasible, expand forest conservation efforts.
- Protect surface and ground water quality through storm water management, on lot sewage disposal, and wellhead protection regulations.
- Encourage recycling and resource conservation.

## **Section 5.2 – Implementation Programs**

### Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan

As stated in other sections of this document, the County designated new rural area zoning classifications as part of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan update. These new zoning designations; Agricultural Rural, Environmental Conservation, and Preservation were developed with the specific intention of protecting rural lands from sprawl development. The intent of these designations is described as follows:

Agricultural Rural – “The agricultural policy area has been purposely drawn to enclose large blocks of the best soils for intensive agricultural production as well as gently rolling topography for agriculture.”

Environmental Conservation – “This policy area is associated with locations in the County where environmental sensitivity issues are prominent enough to warrant constraints in development. It includes steep slopes and forested areas on mountainsides as well as the steep slopes, floodplains and forested areas along the Potomac River, Conococheague Creek, lower Antietam Creek and Beaver Creek.”

Preservation – “This policy area will become the foundation upon which land preservation efforts in the Rural Area will be anchored. It is proposed to include the County’s designated Rural Legacy Areas, federal lands, state parks, state wildlife management areas, county parks, Edgemont Watershed and most of the mountaintops as well as the Potomac River.”

### Comprehensive Plan Special Planning Areas

In addition to recommending land use controls for specific rural areas in the County, the Comprehensive Plan also designated Special Planning and Program Areas. These are applied as overlays to the land use policy areas to indicate the existence of a feature which warrants a higher degree of review and protection. As shown on the Special Program Areas Map some of the designated areas include; the Edgemont and Smithsburg Reservoir Watersheds, Appalachian Trail Corridor, Upper Beaver Creek Basin and Beaver Creek Trout Hatchery, Antietam Battlefield Overlay, Civil War Heritage Areas, National Scenic Road designations, American Heritage River designations, rail trails, greenways, and blueways.

### Easement Acquisition, Funding, Planning and Land Use Management Authority

Easements and fee simple purchases of natural resource land have been the main strategies of the State Green Print and State funded Rural Legacy programs. Washington County has designated the southern area of the County around the Antietam Battlefield as a preservation zoning area, and targeted it for Rural Legacy easement purchases.

The County Comprehensive Plan includes narrative and maps showing proposed special program areas and Environmental Conservation Policy areas. Policies and techniques for further detailed identification, evaluation, and protection of these areas will be developed with the assistance of consultants and/or natural resource agencies. The County requires identification of natural resource features on Forest Stand Delineations and development plans as part of the subdivision process, and encourages private sector protection or mitigation measures. These may include buffers or setbacks, BMP’s, storm water detention or retention structures, or other appropriate measures.

### Watershed Management

The cooperative Forest Conservation Act Program managed by the Washington County Soil Conservation District (SCD) provides stream buffering and protection by means of easement purchase of existing forest or planting of new forest. Efforts are focused on the most sensitive areas along streams, steep slopes, and those areas providing wildlife habitat or other environmental benefits. The SCD locates willing landowners, then manages the various stages of forest conservation or tree planting and monitors the sites for 20 years after the establishment of the forest conservation areas. It is funded using money placed in the Forest Conservation Fund by developers.

The SCD has been the lead agency in the Beaver Creek-Antietam Creek targeted watershed project. In 1992, Little Antietam Creek and Marsh Run sub-watersheds were selected to be in this program which was expanded in 1996 to include the Beaver Creek watershed. A Soil Conservation Planner was hired to complete a watershed assessment and to begin educational efforts in the targeted sub-watersheds. This was funded by an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Nonpoint Source grant from Section 319 of the Clean Water Act and was obtained through the MD Department of Agriculture. A conservation technician was hired to help install best management practices (BMP) identified by the planner in Soil and Water Conservation Programs. This program has continued in the Beaver Creek and Marsh Run sub-watersheds.

#### Other Regulatory and/or Management Programs

In addition to the policy documents discussed earlier in this section, Washington County maintains several regulatory documents that codify the stated goals and policies. The primary regulatory documents are: the Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Floodplain Management Ordinance, Forest Conservation Ordinance, and the Stormwater Management, Grading Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance. These documents require a comprehensive review of development and its impacts on local resources, and in some cases, mechanisms to reduce negative impacts such as setbacks, easements, and tree planting.

#### Eco-tourism and Resource Based Recreation

The Washington Convention and Visitors Bureau provides information and brochures on the wide variety of County, State and Federal parks and private natural resource/recreation areas in the County. An update of the County Bicycle Tourism Map was completed in FY 2006. Bicycle tour routes guide the cyclist through areas of the County that are adjacent to or within view of various scenic natural areas such as the Woodmont area, Blair's Valley, and South Mountain.

### **Section 5.3 – Program Evaluation**

Natural resource conservation efforts have primarily succeeded through the comprehensive planning process and subsequent changes in zoning/subdivision regulations. County planning staff works to keep long range and resource planning issues in front of the various volunteer commissions while continuing to review development and subdivision plans. A variety of public agencies provide assistance to property owners who wish to voluntarily manage, conserve and restore natural resources on their property. At this time, State and Federal programs are the primary means of large scale natural resource protection in Washington County.

Cultural and economic values of a wide range of forest land, streams and rivers are well preserved by the National Park Service and the Maryland Forest, Parks and Wildlife Services. As described in the Parks section of the Plan, nearly 40,000 acres of Federal and State owned park and forest land are protected in the County. In addition to the protection they have received, these areas offer a valuable resource for outdoor recreation and nature and wildlife appreciation, and contribute to the variety of tourism opportunities available in the County

# Appendix A:

## Inventory of Parkland in Washington County

PROGRAM OPEN SPACE County and Municipal Parkland Acquisition and Acreage 1998-2012					
Planning Area	Property Description	Status	Size	Facilities / Improvements	
Central	French Lane Property Donation	Undeveloped linear county park site	37 acres	None	
Southern County	King Parcel	Expansion of Boonsboro's Shafer Park	40 Acres		
FEDERAL AND STATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES					
Planning Area(s)	Name	State or Federal	Park Classification	Acres	Activities and Facilities
Southern	Antietam Battlefield	Federal	Special	1,748	Visitors Center, Drive tour Hiking, Camping
Western Central Southern	Chesapeake & Ohio Canal	Federal	Special	7,840	Pic, BR, Hik, CMP, Horseback Riding, Cycling, Fishing, Dog Walking, History
Southern	Harpers Ferry (MD Heights)	Federal	Regional	763	Hik, History
Southern Eastern	Appalachian Trail Corridor	Federal		702	Hik, CMP
Southern	AT Corridor Parks: Gathland, Washington Monument, S. Mountain	State	Special	7950	Pic, Hik, CMP, Visitors Center History
Central	Albert Powell Hatchery	State		75	Supports Regional freshwater fishing activities
Southern	Brownsville Pond	State	Community	4	Pic, Fishing
Western	+Fort Frederick	State	Special	585	Pic, BR, Hik, CMP, Horseback Riding, Cycling, Fishing, Dog Walking, History
Western	Fort Tonoloway	State	Special	26	Pic (closed)
Central	Greenbrier State Park	State	Regional	1,251	Pic, BR, Hik, CMP, Fishing, Swimming
Western	Indian Springs Wildlife Management Area	State	Regional	6,300	Pic, BR, Hik, Fishing, Hunting, Horseback Riding
Southern	Roxbury – Weverton Rail Trail	State	Regional	178	Landbank (currently under consideration for development)
Southern	South Mountain Recreation Area	State	Regional	100	Hik, Camp
Western	Sidling Hill Wildlife Management Area	State	Regional	3,000	Fishing, Hunting
Western	+Western Maryland Rail Trail	State	Regional	250	Hik, Cycling, Roller Blade

<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES</b>				
<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Activities and Facilities</b>
Central	Hagerstown Community College	School	112	2 BAB, 6 TC, 1 FB, Gym, XC Trail
Central	Martin Luther King Center	Neighborhood	2	PE, BB, 1 TC, Pool
<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION</b>				
<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Activities and Facilities</b>
Southern	Agricultural Education Center	County	54	PE, History, Pavs,
Central	Black Rock golf Course	Regional	301	Golf Course
Western	Camp Harding	Community	19	PE,SB,PIC,BR, BV, Fishing
Southern	Chestnut Grove	Community	16	PE, Bb, SB, Pic Pav, VB
Western	Clear Spring	Community	15	Pe, Bab, SB, BB, 2 TC, FB, Pic Pav, VB
Southern	Devil's Backbone	County	9	PE, Pic, Hik, Fishing, Canoe/ Kayak
Central	Doub's Woods	County	27	PE, Pic, Performing Arts Pav, VB
Central	French Lane Property	County	37	Undeveloped
Central	Kemps Mill Park	Neighborhood	12	3 SB
Central	Marty Snook Park	County	78	PE, Bab, 3 SB, BB, 2 TC, FB, 3 Pic Pav, Pool, VB, Dog Park
Southern	Mt. Briar Wetland	County	30	Nature Study – Access to Proposed Rail Trail
Eastern	Pen Mar	Regional	47	PE, pic, 2 Pav, Multi-Purpose Pav, VB
Central	Pinesburg Ballfields	County/Regional	42	4SB
Central	Piper Lane	Neighborhood	1	PE, Pic
Western	Wilson Bridge	Special	1	Pic, BR, History, Fishing
Central	Woodland Way	Neighborhood	4	PE, SB, TC, Pic, Pav
<b>WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION AREAS</b>				
<i>60% OF Gross Site Acreage</i>				
<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Activities and Facilities</b>
Central	North High	School	34	2 Bab, 1 BB, 2 FB, 8 TC, Track
Central	South High	School	47	Bab, 1 BB, 1 FB, 8 TC, Track
Central	Williamsport High	School	38	1 Bab, 2SB, 3 FB, TC, Track
Central	Springfield MS	School	38	1 SB, 1 FB
Central	E. Russell Hicks MS	School	37	4 SB, 3 FB, PMP
Central	Western Heights MS	School	15	1 SB, 1 FB, 2 TC, PMP
Central	Northern MS	School	10	1 SB, 1 FB, 1 BB, PMP
Central	Bester Elementary	School	7	PE, 1 BB, GFS, PMP
Central	Emma K. Doub Elem	School	(SH)	PE, 1 BB, GFS, PMP
Central	Fountaindale Elem	School	9	PE, 1 SB, 1 FB, 1 BB, PMP
Central	Funkstown Elem	School	9	PE, 1 FB, PMP
Central	Greenbrier Elem	School	5	PE, GFS, PMP
Central	Hickory Elem	School	8	PE, 1 SB, PMP
Central	Lincolnshire Elem	School	8	PE
Central	Maugansville Elem	School	5	PE
Central	Old Forge Elem	School	9	PE, 1 BB, 1 Bab
Central	Pangborn Elem	School	6	PE, 1 Bab, BB
Central	Paramount Elem	School	6	PE
Central	Williamsport Elem	School	30	PE, GFS
Central	Potomac Heights Elem	School	6	PE, GFS
Central	Salem Avenue Elem	School	8	PE, Bab, 1 BB
Southern	Boonsboro Ed Complex	School	59	PE, 2 Bab, 3 BB, 2 FB, 6 TC, Track
Southern	Fountain Rock Elem	School	1	PE, Bab, 2 BB

Southern	Sharpsburg Elem	School	3	PE, PMP
Southern	Pleasant Valley Elem	School	7	PE, 2 BB, PMP
Eastern	Smithsburg High/ MS	School	41	1 Bab, 2 SB, 4 BB, 6 TC, 1 FB, Track
Eastern	Smithsburg Elem	School	8	PE, 1 SB
Eastern	Cascade Elem	School	5	PE, PMP
Western	Clear Spring High	School	111	1 Bab, 3 SB, 5 TC, 2 FB, Track
Western	Hancock High, MS	School	31	1 Bab, 1 BB, 1 FB, 2 TC
Western	Outdoor Center	Special	100	Cabins, Hik, Nature Study
Western	Clear Spring Middle	School	5	1 SB, 1 BB, 1 TC
Western	Clear Spring Elem	School	5	PE, SB, PMP
Western	Conococheague Elem	School	8	PE
Western	Hancock Elem	School	10	PE
<b>MUNICIPAL RECREATION FACILITIES</b>				
<b>HAGERSTOWN</b>				
<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Park Classification</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Activities and Facilities</b>
Central	City Park – Hager House	Community	65	PE, 4 SB, 1 TC, Pic, Pa, Fine Arts Museum, Lake, Hager House, Steam Engine, Walking
Central	Elgin	Neighborhood	3	PE, SB, BB
Central	Fairgrounds Park	Neighborhood/Regional	68	3 SB, FB, PE, BMX, Ice Rink, Walking GFS
Central	Funkhouser	Neighborhood	5	PE, SB
Central	Georgia Ave Playground	Neighborhood	5	PE
Central	Hager Park	Neighborhood	6	PE, SB, Pic, Pav
Central	Hamilton Park Playground	Neighborhood	2	PE, Pav
Central	Hellane	Neighborhood	17	PE, 3 Bab
Central	Municipal Stadium	Regional	12	Lighted, 6,000 seat baseball stadium
Central	North End Mills Park	Neighborhood	8	PE, Pic
Central	Pangborn Park	Neighborhood	7	PE, SB, 2 TC, Pond, Gardens, Bocce
Central	Potterfield Pool	Community	5	Olympic Size Pool
Central	Reed Park	Neighborhood	4	PE, SB, BB, Pav
Central	Noland Drive Playground	Neighborhood	3	PE
Central	Rockwillow Playground	Neighborhood	8	PE
Central	Ridge Ave. Playground	Neighborhood	2	PE
Central	Staley	Community	3	PE, SB, Pav
Central	University Plaza	Special	<1	Landscaped plaza, sitting areas, pub events
Central	Wheaton	Neighborhood	3	PE, SB, TC, BB, Pav
Central	Oswald	Neighborhood	1.63	Dog Walking, sitting areas
Central	Rotary Club Park	Neighborhood	.67	Landscaped, sitting areas
Central	Bloom Park	Special	.235	Historic Marker
Central	Hagerstown Greens	Regional	53	9 Hole Golf Course, Disc Golf
Central	<i>Kiwanis Park (under Dev)</i>	Regional	7.6	Sitting areas, Kayak, Canoe launch
<b>Boonsboro</b>				
Southern	Shafer Memorial Park	Community	54	PE, 1 Bab, Pic, 3 Pav, Exhibit Bldg. Community Fairs, Carnivals
Southern	Kinsey Hgts Rec Area	Neighborhood	3	
<b>FUNKSTOWN</b>				
Central	Funkstown Community Park	Community	35	PE, 1 Bab, Pic, 2 Pav
<b>HANCOCK</b>				
Western	Gerber Recreation Area	Community	3	BB
Western	Kirk Woods	Community	150	2 SB, Pic, Pav
Western	Widmyer Park	Community	25	PE, BB, TC, Pic, 2 Pav, Pool

KEEDYSVILLE				
Southern	Taylor Park	Community	5	PE, BB, Pic, 2 Pav
Southern	Slo-Pitch Field	Community	3	SB
SHARPSBURG				
Southern	Community Park	Community	6	1 Bab, Pic
Southern	Community Pond	Community	3	Pic, Fishing
SMITHSBURG				
Eastern	Community Park	Community	14	PE, SB, BB, TC, Pic, 2 Pav
Eastern	Veterans Park	Community	30	PE, Pav, FB
WILLIAMSPORT				
Central	W. D. Bryon Park	Community	23	PE 1 Bab, Pic, 2 Pav, Pool
Central	Springfield Farm	Special	4	Museum, Historic Barn
Central	Riverbottom Park	Community	27	Soccer, BR
Central	Bill Daub Park	Community	4pe, Bab, 2 TC	
COMMUNITY AND RURITAN PARKS (Private ownership, not included in acreage calculations)				
Southern	Rohrersville	Community	9	PE, SB, TC, Pic, 2 Pav
Southern	Antietam Dargan	Community	3	SB, BB
Southern	District 12 Ruritan	Community	6	PE, SB, Pic, Pav
Southern	Downsville Community	Community	3	PE, SB, Pic, Pav
Eastern	Ringgold Community	Community	3	Pic, Pav, Center
Central	Leitersburg Community	Community	12	PE, Pic, Pav, Center
Central	Chewsville Lions Park	Community	7	PE, GFS, Pic, Pav, Center
Central	Valley Little League	Special	8.5	4 Bab
Central	Maugansville Ruritan	Community	10	2 BAB, Pic, Pav, 2 TC, PE
Central	Maugansville Little League	Special	2.6	BAB
Western	Wilson Ruritan	Community	11.12	2 Pav, GFS



## Appendix C: Appendix C - Acquisition, Development, and Rehabilitation Priorities

Project Name	Planning Area	Description of Land Preservation and Recreation Recommendation	Estimated Total Cost	Current Acres	Acres to be Acquired or Developed	Estimated Short Range (2015) Cost			Estimated Mid-Range (2020) Cost			Estimated Long-Range (2025) Cost		
						Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation
Agricultural Education Center	Southern	Build out the Rural Heritage Village, construct additional restrooms, install Ag themed Playground Structure	\$300,000	54			\$150,000		\$150,000					
Black Rock Golf Course	Central			301										
Camp Harding	Western	Resurface Tennis and Basketball Courts	\$40,000	19			#####			\$20,000				
Chestnut Grove	Southern	Resurface Tennis Courts, Replace Playground Equipment	\$90,000	16			#####			\$70,000				
Clear Spring	Western	Acquire 30 acres additional park land, resurface basketball court, tennis courts, replace playground equipment	\$1,000,000	15	30	\$350,000	#####		\$280,000	\$80,000		\$280,000		
Devil's Backbone	Southern	Replace Playground Equipment	\$80,000	9						\$80,000				
Doub's Woods	Central	Develop Multi-purpose Fields, Replace Playground Equipment	\$200,000	27					\$150,000	\$50,000				
French Lane Property	Central	Build Walking Trails connecting French Lane to Halfway Blvd Extended	\$60,000	37					\$60,000					

Kemps Mill Park	Central	Build Primitive Campsites, Boat Launch, Nature Center, Multi-purpose Fields, Restrooms	\$750,000	12	60-70				\$400,000					\$400,000
Project Name	Planning Area	Description of Land Preservation and Recreation Recommendation	Estimated Total Cost	Current Acres	Acres to be Acquired or Developed	Estimated Short Range (2015) Cost			Estimated Mid-Range (2020) Cost			Estimated Long-Range (2025) Cost		
						Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation	Acquisition	Capital Development	Rehabilitation
Marty Snook Park	Central	Replace Playground Equipment, Install Artificial Turf on Football Field	\$1,000,000	78					\$850,000					\$150,000
Mt. Briar Wetland	Southern	Rebuild Walkway	\$20,000	30						\$20,000				
Pen Mar	Eastern	Relocate Sand Volley Ball Court, Overlay Parking Area, Update Concession Stand and Museum	\$150,000	47						\$50,000				\$100,000
Pinesburg Ballfields	Central	Level and Redo Parking area	\$70,000	42						\$70,000				
Piper Lane	Central	Redo Parking Area, Add More Playground Equipment	\$70,000	1					\$50,000	\$20,000				
Wilson Bridge	Western			1										
Woodland Way	Central	Overlay Parking, Basketball Court, Tennis Courts, Replace Playground Equipment	\$170,000	4						\$100,000				\$70,000
<b>Acquisitions</b>														

North County Park	Central	design and build park	\$3,000,000				\$3,000,000
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**State Goals**

1. Make a variety of quality recreational environments and opportunities readily accessible to all its citizens, and thereby contribute to their physical and mental well being.
2. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties, and the State more desirable places to live, work, and visit.
3. Use State investment in parks, recreation, and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
4. To the greatest degree feasible, ensure that recreational land and facilities for local populations are conveniently located relative to population centers, are accessible without reliance on the automobile, and help to protect natural open spaces and resources.
5. Complement infrastructure and other public investments and priorities in existing communities and areas planned for growth through investment in neighborhood and community parks and facilities.
6. Continue to protect recreational open space and resource lands at a rate that equals or exceeds the rate that land is developed at a statewide level.

**Local Goals**

7. Acquire and develop those resources most important to area residents in their search for fulfilling recreational activities; based on an in-depth survey of Washington County Citizens.
8. Emphasize acquisition and/or development of park facilities that are well served by existing or planned infrastructure.
9. Emphasize development of facilities that connect to dense residential areas via safe walk and bikeways.