

## Appendix 3: Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, and Cultural Resources

For more information: Contact Brooke Farquhar at [brooke.farquhar@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:brooke.farquhar@mncppc-mc.org)

Public parkland, open space, and trail connections play an important role in the well-being of a community. In urban areas, parkland enhances quality of life by providing visual relief from the built environment, an opportunity to experience nature, and space to gather, play, and celebrate community life. In addition, open space contributes to the natural environment by providing wildlife habitat, improving air quality, and preserving water quality.

### Park Planning Context

The existing pattern of parks in White Flint and the surrounding area reflects the 1992 Plan's land use proposals for White Flint (Figure 1 and Table 1). The new vision for the area includes a more urban pattern and a greater mix of uses. The existing patterns and parks proposals have been reevaluated in light of this urban vision. White Flint's open space system should support a vibrant and sustainable urban center by creating open spaces that will be comfortable, attractive, easily accessible, and provide a range of experiences.

To that end, the public park recommendations support the Plan's proposed typology of open spaces:

- for the Corridor: An active park for White Flint and surrounding areas at Wall Local Park
- for all of White Flint: a central civic green
- for each neighborhood: a neighborhood green
- for each block: an urban square
- for each building: recreation space
- for each residence: private outdoor space.

### Park Planning Recommendations

This Plan recommends improvements to Wall Local Park, inclusion of a new civic green urban park, and additional parkland at White Flint Neighborhood Park. These three park recommendations will help implement the plan's Green Space concept (Figure 2), and are summarized in Table 2.

1. Update the master plan for Wall Local Park to reflect its role as the key urban recreation destination in an urbanizing area.

Wall Local Park is approximately 11 acres and within one half mile of the Metro station. The Montgomery Aquatic Center and a large surface parking lot (250 spaces) occupy almost half the site. If the surface parking were to be relocated, Wall Local Park could include more outdoor recreational options for the surrounding community and the future residents.

As White Flint becomes more urban, Wall Local Park should emerge as a major park. The park should be improved as a multipurpose recreation destination for the increasing population of White Flint and surrounding areas and as a link between the Josiah Henson Site (formerly called Uncle Tom's Cabin) and White Flint's civic core. With the park's location only two blocks from the White Flint Metro, connectivity to the station is critical.

The 1992 North Bethesda Plan recommended expanding the park by acquiring two adjoining parcels to the north. This Plan envisions a public/private partnership with adjacent properties to relocate the surface parking within a parking structure built in conjunction with new residential development such as a public/private agreement. This would help redirect public sector funds from building structured parking on-site to improving Wall Local Park. The addition of residential development near the park would provide constant surveillance, enhance park use, and help animate the park.

Figure 2 Green Space Concept

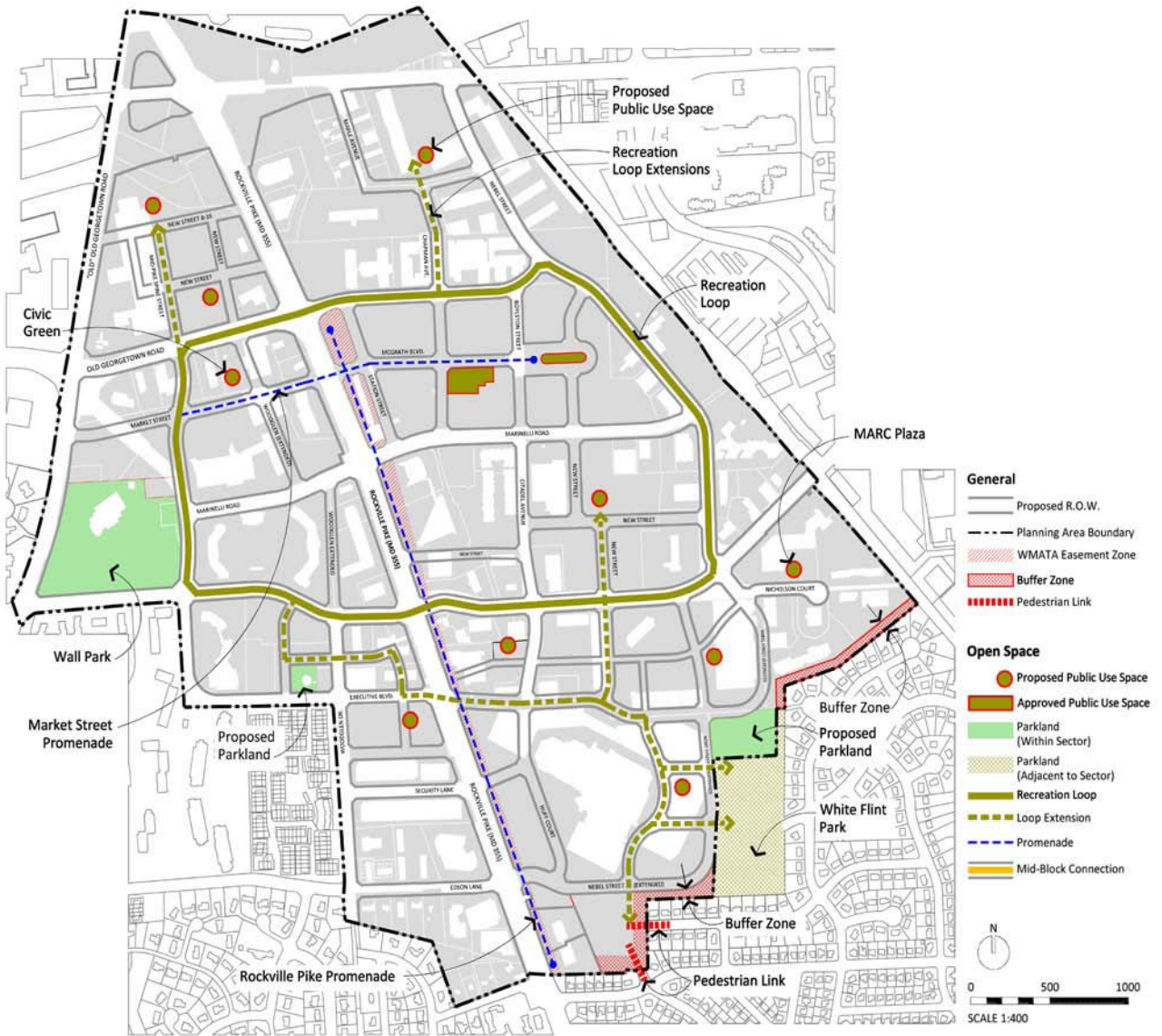


TABLE 1: EXISTING PARKS SERVING WHITE FLINT RESIDENTS

Inventory of all Facilities & Parkland Owned, Leased and/or Maintained by M-NCPPC																
Park Status	Park Name	Acreage	Park School	Play-ground	Soft Ball Field	Baseball Field	Basketball/ Multi-Use	Lighted Basketball Ct	Tennis Court	Lighted Tennis Courts	F_S_OVERLAY	F_S_FIELD	Play Field	Picnic Shelters	Open Shelter	Rec Building
<b>PARKS IN WHITE FLINT SECTOR PLAN</b>																
D	WALL LOCAL PARK	12.1405	0	1			1	1								
D	WHITE FLINT NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	8.7194	0	1			2		2							
Subtotal		20.8599														
<b>PARKS IN NORTH BETHESDA PLANNING AREA SERVING WHITE FLINT RESIDENTS</b>																
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b>																
D	DRUID DRIVE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	0.4105	0	1												
D	GARRETT PARK-WAVERLY NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	1.221	0				1		2						1	
D	WAVERLY-SCHUYLKILL NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	5.7756	0													
D	WELLS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	1.34	0	1											1	
Subtotal		8.7471														
<b>LOCAL PARKS</b>																
D	FARMLAND DRIVE LOCAL PARK	6.6799	1		2						1					
D	FLEMING LOCAL PARK	12.8	0	1	2			2		2					1	
D	GARRETT PARK ESTATES LOCAL PARK	3.6187	1	1	1						1				1	
D	LUXMANOR LOCAL PARK	6.4932	1		2						1				1	
D	RANDOLPH HILLS LOCAL PARK	18	0	1	2			2	2			1			1	
D	STRATTON LOCAL PARK	11	0	1	1		1		2		1	1			1	
D	TILDEN WOODS LOCAL PARK	7	0	1	1		1			2	1				1	1
D	TIMBERLAWN LOCAL PARK	12.3501	0	1			1					2			1	
Subtotal		77.9419														
<b>NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREA</b>																
U	OLD FARM NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION AREA	0.7756	0													
Subtotal		0.7756														
<b>STREAM VALLEY PARKS</b>																
U	CABIN JOHN STREAM VALLEY UNIT #6	21.2062	0													
U	ROCK CREEK STREAM VALLEY UNIT #3	312.5319	0	3			0.5									
U	ROCK CREEK STREAM VALLEY UNIT #5	30.5611	0													
U	ROCK CREEK STREAM VALLEY UNIT #6	193.2718	0													
U	TILDEN WOODS STREAM VALLEY PARK	65.4976	0													
Subtotal		623.0686														
TOTAL		731.3931	3	13	11		7.5	5	8	4	5	4			7	1

Key on reverse side.

Key:  
 Park Status D - Developed  
 Park Status U - Undeveloped  
 Park School 1 - Park School  
 Park School 0 - Not park school

The redesign of Wall Local Park should incorporate the sizable trees and include a pedestrian connection to the Josiah Henson Site, a cultural site of international significance, about one quarter mile south on Old Georgetown Road and one half mile from the Metro station. The facility plan for Wall Local Park should consider:

- an outdoor splash park
- an expanded indoor pool area
- skateboarding facilities
- playgrounds
- level grass areas for leisure and informal play to serve people of all ages
- flexible space for adults, children, teens, and young adults
- paths
- a pedestrian connection to the Josiah Henson Site.

The areas of highest quality trees along Old Georgetown Road should be retained and enhanced in the park's redesign. Park programming and design will occur as part of the facility plan, with public input, overseen by the Department of Parks and coordinated with the Department of Recreation, and potentially funded by developers through an amenity fund project.

## 2. Designate a new urban park to serve as the civic green for all of White Flint.

The civic green is proposed to be White Flint's central public place for outdoor community-wide activities and events. It should be located within the Conference Center Block and under Parks Department ownership because of its important role as a focal point of community life for the entire planning area. There are two ways to obtain the land for the civic green: through dedication, if there is assemblage of properties within the Conference Center Block, or through acquisition with public funds.

Whether acquired or dedicated, the civic green should be large enough and appropriately designed to:

- accommodate major outdoor activities, public events, gatherings, and celebrations
- allow for local street closures to provide more event space
- draw people from surroundings to participate in local events
- encourage people to walk, informally gather, eat lunch, etc.
- provide informal grass play space.

If assemblage is not possible, there are properties within the Conference Center Block large enough and appropriately located to function as the civic green and should be acquired with public funds. After public acquisition occurs, adjoining property owners may become interested in redevelopment. They may wish to enter into a public/private venture to better accomplish the public purpose of the civic green. In that event, it may be prudent to consider land swaps or other options to achieve the desired outcome.

## 3. Obtain through dedication, approximately 2.5 acres of property from the White Flint Mall property owners, for park use.

The property abutting the White Flint Neighborhood Park to the north currently serving as surface parking should be dedicated for public park use. The level area is of sufficient size to provide active recreation facilities such as a rectangular field, which would help to offset the estimated needs for the Bethesda Team Area as cited in the 2005 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* (PROS).

**Table 2: Summary of Park Recommendations Proposed Parks in the White Flint Sector Plan Area**

Park	Status	Issues	Recommendations
Wall Local Park	Existing facilities on 11.7 acres of parkland include the Montgomery Aquatic Center, playground, trails, racquetball and basketball courts, and 250 parking spaces. The 1992 North Bethesda Master Plan recommended: Extend the existing Wall Local Park at Old Georgetown Road and Executive Boulevard through parkland dedication to include the parcel to the north currently used as an automobile dealership parking lot.	Surface parking occupies most of the open flat area of the site. With White Flint developing as a compact, mixed use community, the parking area would be better utilized as a central open space for outdoor recreation.	Through a public/private partnership, relocate the existing surface parking within a parking structure built in conjunction with new residential development, instead of acquiring the parcel to the north. This solution gains 2.5 acres of usable parkland in a central location. The addition of residential development near the park would provide constant surveillance, enhance park use, and help animate the park.
Civic Green Urban Park.	The 1992 North Bethesda Master Plan recommended an urban amenity space to be located at the White Flint Metro.	A publically owned, programmed, and maintained open space to serve as the central gathering space for the community is needed.	This plan recommends a public civic green within walking distance of the White Flint Metro, to function as the central gathering space for the White Flint area. Specifically, it is recommended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodate major outdoor activities, public events, gatherings, and celebrations.</li> <li>• Allow for local street closures to provide more event space.</li> <li>• Draw people from surroundings to participate in local events.</li> </ul>
White Flint Neighborhood Park	Existing park includes tennis, basketball, playground, a trail, and unprogrammed open space.	Areas for active recreation such as rectangular playing fields are scarce in the planning area.	Achieve approximately 2.5 acres in dedication to M-NCPPC for active recreation such as a rectangular playing field.

## Park Planning Background

The following park planning issues were addressed in formulating the Plan's recommendations:

- assessing recreational needs in light of a high density, mixed-use environment
- the future of Wall Local Park
- designation of a new urban park
- connectivity between park trails, walking routes, and bikeways
- the relation of public parks and urban open spaces
- a new emphasis on historic and cultural resources.

1. Assessing recreational needs in light of a high density, mixed-use environment.

White Flint is a very small urban area and some of its active recreation needs will be served by parks in adjacent neighborhoods. Providing connections to these parks for White Flint residents is an important Plan objective. Residents have access to many large or specialized recreation facilities such as ice rinks, nature centers, lighted athletic fields, and large picnic and playground areas at Cabin John Regional Park. Rock Creek Stream Valley Park is also nearby and provides opportunities for nature study, and a trail that extends from the District Line north to Rock Creek Regional Park. Within the boundaries of the White Flint Sector Plan area itself, there is currently one local park, Wall Local Park. Luxmanor Local Park, Garrett Park Estates Local Park, Tildenwood Local Park, and White Flint Neighborhood Park are within one mile of the area (Figure 1).

2. The future of Wall Local Park.

This is the only public park in the Plan area and is the location of the Montgomery County indoor Aquatic Center, operated by the Montgomery County Recreation Department. This park should be redesigned to serve an area planned for more intense urban development.

3. Designation of new urban park.

A new urban park, the civic green is needed to serve as the central open space for the White Flint area in the Conference Center block. This would become White Flint's central public place for outdoor community-wide activities and events, near Metro and the highest density mixed-use development.

4. Connectivity between park trails, walking routes, and bikeways.

The Plan area is between two major north-south park trail systems: Rock Creek to the east and Cabin John to the west. Linking these key regional trail and bikeway systems is critical to providing residents greater opportunities to walk and cycle in the area and reduce automobile dependency. The connection will be provided by a planned bike path along Montrose Parkway and a north-south bikeway (a former trolley right-of-way converted to bike use) that is proposed to be extended through the Plan area.

The Plan's proposed loop system is designed to link all proposed neighborhood open spaces, and to provide pleasant walking routes from residences and businesses to open space destinations throughout the Plan area. The proposed east-west promenade traverses the White Flint core. Destinations along the promenade will include Wall Local Park, the Aquatic Center, a civic green in downtown White Flint, and other open space areas on the east side of Rockville Pike.

5. The relation of public parks and urban open spaces.

The Plan's proposed open space system integrates public amenity space with parkland to create a cohesive and logical pattern of open space. Not all open space can or should be publicly owned and managed parkland. Public amenity spaces in new developments will provide a great deal of needed recreation and open space in White Flint.

6. Reflecting new park planning emphasis on historical and cultural interpretation and outreach.

Historic interpretation is an important element of this Plan, particularly in light of the area's proximity to the Josiah Henson Site near Wall Local Park. Connectivity from the Metro through Wall Local Park to the site is an important plan component. More detailed discussion of historic elements is included in the Historic Resources section.

## Policy Background

In analyzing the needs for the Plan area, existing plan policies were reviewed, including the North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan (1992), the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (PROS) (2005), and Parks for Tomorrow (1998), a staff supplementary document to the PROS Plan.

The North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan included several park recommendations, two of which are located in the Plan area. The first recommendation was to add land to Wall Local Park by extending it to

include a parcel to the north. This Plan recommends an alternative solution: to gain additional parkland at Wall Local Park by relocating the surface parking offsite. The second recommendation, to provide an urban amenity open space at the White Flint Metro, is replaced in this Plan by a recommendation to provide the civic green urban park within the Conference Center Block, which would locate it within walking distance of Metro.

The PROS Plan guides the County wide pattern of parkland and recreation needs. It projects recreational needs by broad planning areas, rather than by small sub-areas such as White Flint. This Plan's recommendations recognize that urban areas present distinct challenges and opportunities to provide park and recreation resources and strive to incorporate and create those resources with redevelopment.

As shown on the Green Space Concept (Figure 2), proposed facilities are provided through a combination of public and private efforts. Those open spaces that rise to the level of serving as a focal point of community life for the planning area are recommended to be public parks. The neighborhood greens, those open spaces serving each district, are proposed to be provided and managed by the private sector.

Local and neighborhood recreation facility needs are projected by the PROS Plan based on residential population. Its assumptions are suburban—that housing will be built on large tracts of land and that desired facilities are playing fields and courts. While locating new parkland for rectangular fields is desirable in the Plan area, it is difficult to find available land. The 2005 PROS Plan indicated that the Bethesda/North Bethesda planning area, which includes White Flint, needs additional baseball fields, rectangular (soccer fields), and playgrounds. Ballfields are estimated for the entire Bethesda/North Bethesda area which is estimated to need approximately 25 additional fields by 2020, the majority of which are large multi-purpose rectangular fields.

In down-County areas such as White Flint, there is insufficient land on which to locate these fields. Playing field users, who normally drive to fields, will have to use fields in other areas and make more efficient use of existing fields through artificial turf, innovative scheduling, and lighting to increase hours of use. PROS recreation facility estimates for North Bethesda indicate there will be 1.8 additional playgrounds needed by 2020 but that the number of basketball and tennis courts are sufficient. Parks for Tomorrow indicates that urban residential areas need several types of recreation including trails, bike paths and community connectors, neighborhood recreation for new residential areas, and urban recreation and open space for mixed-use development. It recommends using non-park public space in innovative ways to meet recreational demands.

## **Historic Resources in Parks**

As previously mentioned, the future public use and interpretation of the Josiah Henson Site is the Plan's major historic issue. Although outside the Plan's boundaries, this recent acquisition will become a key cultural park, a draw not only for the County, but for national and international visitors. The site is significant because of its association with Reverend Josiah Henson, whose 1849 autobiography inspired Harriet Beecher Stowe's landmark novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

The Josiah Henson Site, featuring a frame house (possibly early 19th century) with a log wing (1850-51), was lived in by Isaac and Matilda Riley, whom Henson identifies as his owners. It commanded a 500-acre plantation where tobacco, potatoes, barley, and corn were grown by over 20 enslaved African Americans, including Henson. From tree-ring dating, it is now known that Henson did not live or sleep in the log wing.

Oral histories record that the log wing functioned as a kitchen for the Riley family in the early 20th century. The plantation's main house is the only tangible structure associated with Henson's many years of enslavement. There is perhaps no property in Montgomery County that conjures up images of slavery as much as this resource.

This heritage tourism site is enhanced by its proximity to Metro. Wall Local Park is also near the Josiah Henson Site and it should be part of an attractive pedestrian connection from Metro to the site. Already, tours are being given to large audiences. Since there is currently no parking on site, public transit and nearby public

parking are essential.

A second and related historic resource is within Ken-Gar Local Park outside the Plan's boundaries, but nearby in Garrett Park. The site of the former Newport Mill along Rock Creek, is where Josiah Henson "found religion" by attending the sermon of a visiting minister. Since Henson went on to become a famous preacher and abolitionist, this is a significant part of his life experience. The relationship of this site to the Josiah Henson Site will be interpreted at the Josiah Henson Site, and the historic connection between the two will also be explained at the mill site. The Parks Department's Cultural Resources Stewardship Section will place a new interpretive sign in Ken-Gar Local Park that focuses on Henson's religious conversion.