

East County Science Center Master Plan Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space- Issues and Opportunities



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M-NCPPC, Department of Parks, Montgomery County, MD

CAC Discussion

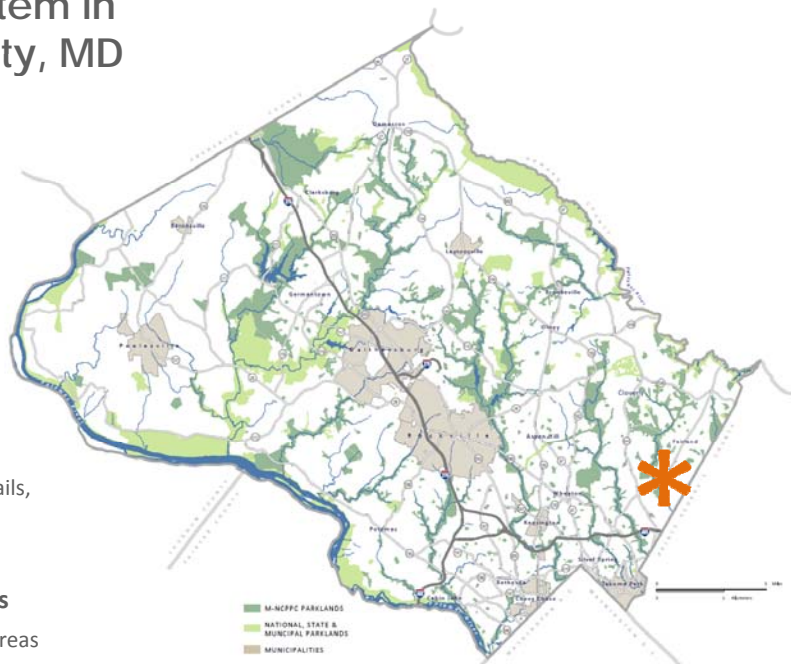
October 18, 2011

Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning Section



M-NCPPC Park System in Montgomery County, MD

- 410 Parks on 34,600 acres
- 14,000,000 Annual Visitors
- 9,018 Developed Acres
 - 299 athletic fields,
 - 207 basketball courts,
 - 291 playgrounds,
 - 106 historic structures,
 - 76 picnic shelters,
 - 73 miles of hard surface trails,
 - 128 miles of natural surface trails,
 - and more
- 25, 582 Unprogrammed Acres
 - 15,360 acres (60%) Sensitive Areas
 - 8,327 acres (32.5%) Best Natural Areas
 - 10,138 acres (39.6%) Biodiversity Areas



M-NCPPC Department of Parks Mission:

"Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources; balance the demand for recreation with the need for conservation; offer a variety of enjoyable recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles; and provide clean, safe, and accessible places for leisure-time activities."



STEWARDSHIP

"Manage the county park system so it best meets the needs of current and future generations"

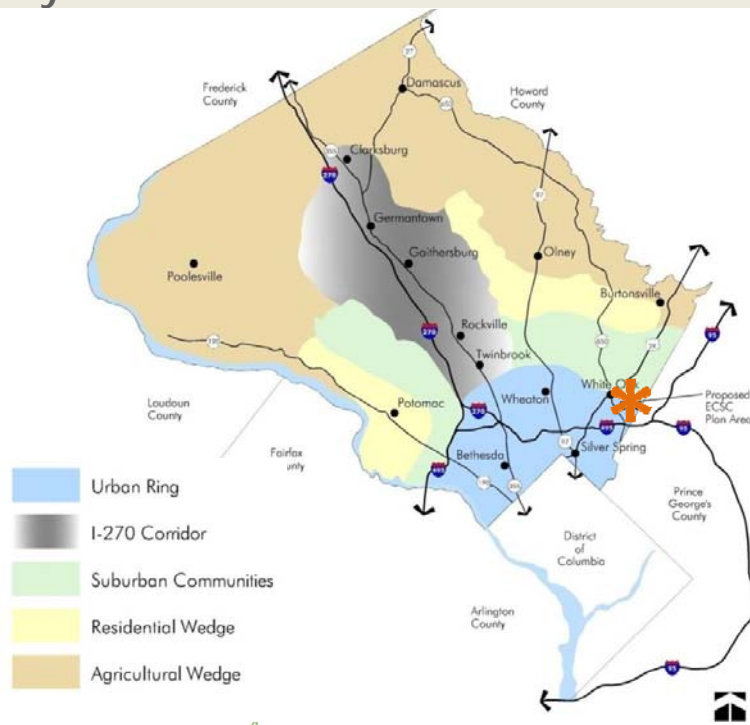
RECREATION

"Offer a range of leisure activities that strengthen the body, sharpen the mind, and renew the spirit"

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Montgomery County's General Plan



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Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

Parks Within Study Area

- Martin Luther King Jr Recreational Park
- Calverton-Galway LP
- Galway Drive LP
- Tanglewood NP
- Valley Mill SP
- West Fairland LP (220 acres)
- Paint Branch SVP (300 acres)
- Northwest Branch SVP (200 acres)

Parks Adjacent To Study Area

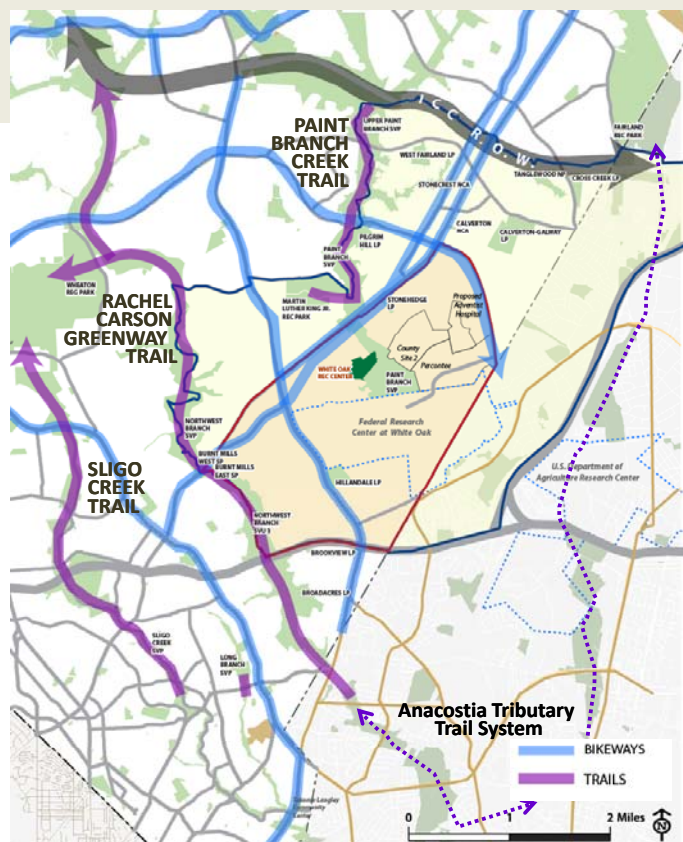
- Fairland Recreational Park
- Cannon Road LP
- Meadowood LP
- Others total: 375 acres



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Trail and Bikeway Network

- Rachel Carson Greenway
- ICC Trail
- Paint Branch Trail
- Anacostia Tributary Trail System and PG Paint Branch Trail
- On-road Bikeways



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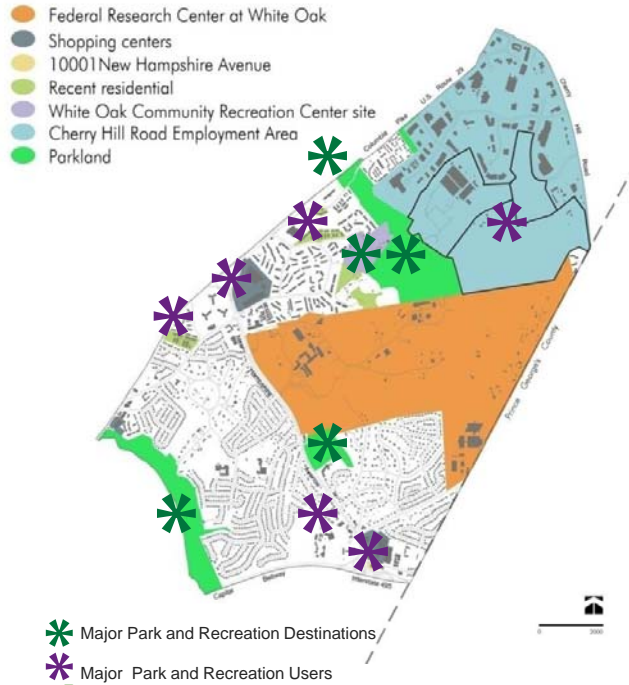
Opportunities

* Major Park and Recreation Destinations

- Paint Branch Stream Valley Park
- White Oak Recreation Center
- Martin Luther King Recreational Park
- Hillandale Local Park

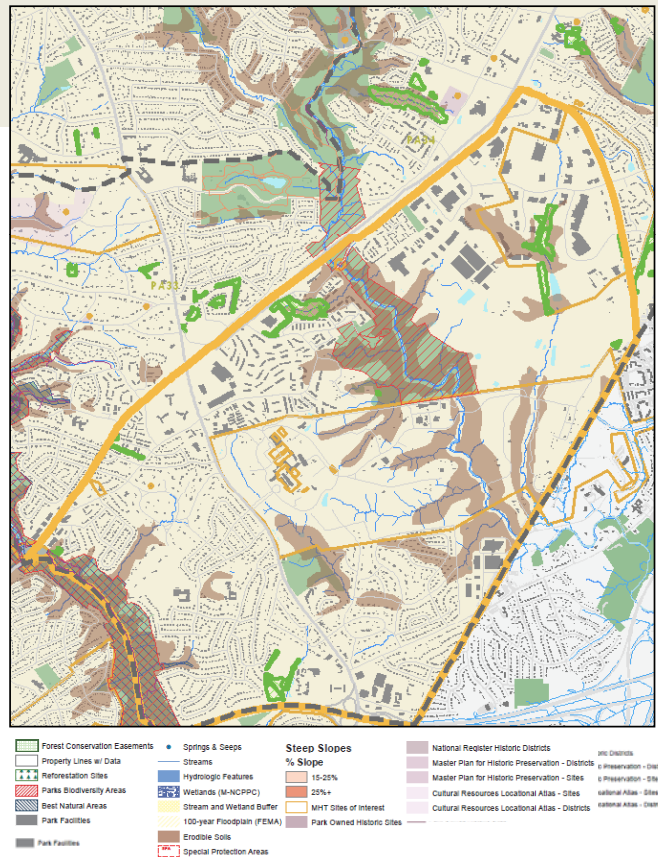
* Major Park and Recreation Users

- Existing high rise residents in area west of Paint Branch (4,000 existing)
- FDA employees (9,000 at buildout)
- Future residents, employees, visitors of Percontee, Washington Adventist Hospital, and County Site II
- Future Mixed Use at White Oak Shopping Center
- Hillandale Neighborhood



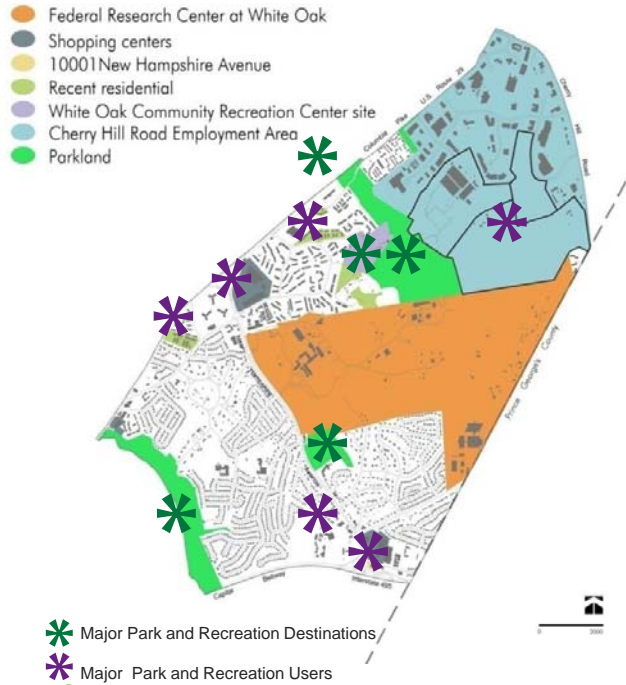
Constraints

- Stream Valley Parks: steep and sensitive
- Pedestrian Restrictions
 - Colesville Road/Rte 29
 - New Hampshire Ave/Rte 650
- FDA / GSA: no public access
- Traffic Congestion
- Lack of Transit
- Lack of Street Connectivity



Preliminary Objectives

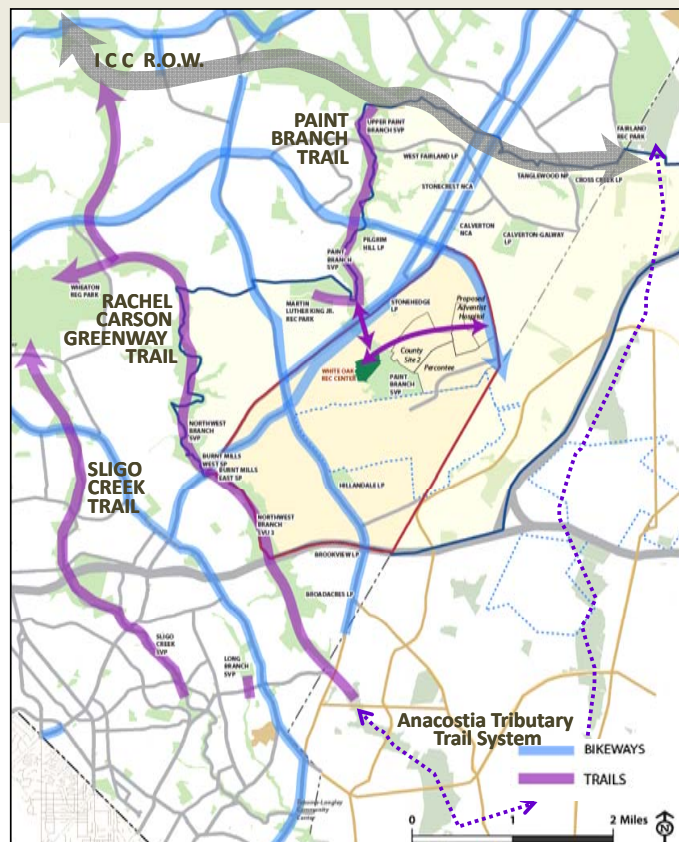
- Provide park and recreation opportunities in areas of highest density
 - FDA
9,000 employees
 - Cherry Hill Rd Employment Area
 - Redeveloping Shopping Centers
- Create Walking and Cycling Connectivity
 - Link two sides of Paint Branch stream valley
 - Link Planning Area to Martin Luther King Recreational Park
 - Link Planning Area to regional trails and bikeways
 - Create loop systems in areas of highest density



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Trail and Bikeway Objectives

- Link two sides of Paint Branch
- Link to Martin Luther King Park and trails
- Link to Cherry Hill Road bikeway



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Policy Guidance

1997 White Oak and Fairland Master Plans: Accomplished or Underway

- Recreation Center and April-Stewart Lane Local Park.
- Martin Luther King Recreational Park – Outdoor Pool.
- Designate the Northwest Branch and Paint Branch stream valley parks as greenways that provide continuous north-south corridors for humans and wildlife.
- Evaluate the potential to expand and improve the recreation facilities at Hillandale Local Park.
- Acquire second building and encourage renovation and reuse of Northwest Branch/Morse Historic Complex (WSSC Building and its twin at Northwest Branch and US 29)
- Acquire and develop Stonehedge Local Park with youth soccer field, basketball court, and playground. Seek direct connections to Industrial area and Paint Branch.
- Improve the trail network in the Northwest Branch stream valley south of Randolph Road to protect the sensitive and high quality natural resources in the area and to provide for recreation use.

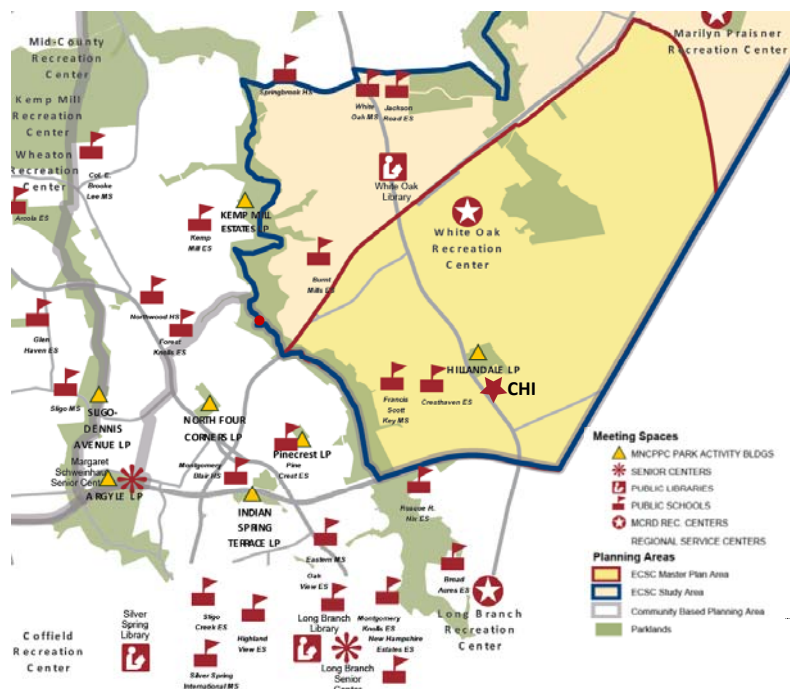


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Meeting Spaces Near Hillandale Local Park

- CHI
- Cresthaven ES
- Francis Scott Key MS
- Burnt Mills ES
- Nix ES
- White Oak Recreation Center
- Pinecrest Park Activity Building



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Policy Guidance

1997 White Oak and Fairland Master Plans: Still to do

- Enhance the Paint Branch and Northwest Branch Stream Valley Parks trail system to provide better access and connection to the adjoining communities and neighborhoods.
- Expand recreational access between natural areas and neighborhoods while protecting and restoring stream valley habitat.
- Extend Paint Branch trail from Martin Luther King Park to Old Columbia Pike. An additional spur connection from the new bridge to the public easement off of Cedar Hill Drive (Rolling Acres).

Status – Amendment to Countywide Park Trails Plan currently underway will develop methodology for deciding when the need for a trail is great enough to outweigh the environmental and financial costs of trail construction in sensitive areas.



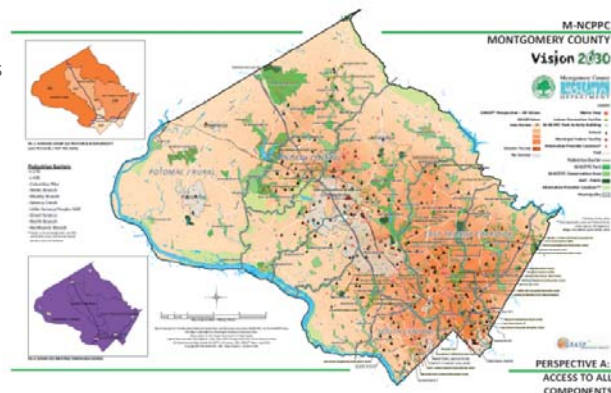
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Policy Guidance

Vision 2030 Strategic Plan (2010)

- East County area has higher level of service overall than North Central and South Central when normalized for population.
- Top 10 Priorities to add, expand or improve*: Trails, Natural Areas, Playgrounds, Community Recreation Centers, Indoor & Outdoor Aquatic Centers, Fitness Space, Performing Arts Space, and Athletic Fields.
- Amenity Recommendations:
 - Consider repurposing underutilized tennis courts
 - Maintain high level of service for playgrounds
 - Strategic potential to add picnic shelters, athletic fields, skate parks, dog parks, volleyball.
 - Expand trails in densely populated areas



* per Statistically Valid Survey

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Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Service areas map

Recreation Service Areas

- Planning Areas
- Community Based Team Areas
- Countywide

Planning Areas

- ECSC Master Plan Area
- ECSC Study Area
- Community Based Planning Area

- Community Based Team Areas
- Planning Areas



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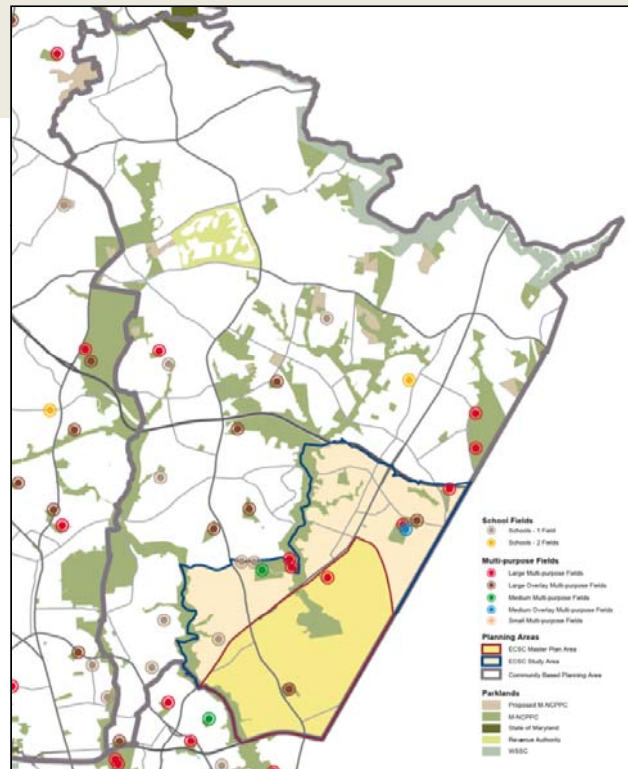
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Team Area Athletic Fields

Park Recreation and Open Space (PROS) – 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP)

- Estimated Needs to 2020
 - Countywide: 21 picnic shelters, 2.3 nature centers, 16 skate parks, 15 dog parks, 11.5 community recreation centers, 4 aquatic facilities, trails per Countywide Park Trails Plan
 - Team Area: 4.8 large multipurpose rectangular fields
 - Community: 0 basketball or tennis courts, 0 playgrounds



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Paint Branch Stream Valley

- Stream valley and tributaries eroded and steep



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Paint Branch Stream Valley

- Existing old road bed a potential location for a natural surface trail.
- High flat ground with meadow and sparse young forest a potential area for picnicking and trailhead.



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FDA Providing Onsite

Recreation and Open Space Facilities and Programs

- Fitness center – 10,000sf
- Picnic areas throughout
- Landscaped central commons
- Walking path
- Soccer / Softball field
- Bicycle lockers, showers
- Clubs: softball, soccer, tennis, basketball, bowling, flag football, kickball, volleyball.
- Bicycle commuter group
- Farmers market



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Other Developing Areas

Potential Recreation and Open Space Facilities

- Trails, walking paths, bikeways
- Picnic areas
- Central gathering areas
- Rectangular athletic fields
- Skate parks
- Dog parks
- Community gardens
- Volleyball

- Federal Research Center at White Oak
- Shopping centers
- 10001 New Hampshire Avenue
- Recent residential
- White Oak Community Recreation Center site
- Cherry Hill Road Employment Area
- Parkland



★ Major Park and Recreation Destinations

★ Major Park and Recreation Users

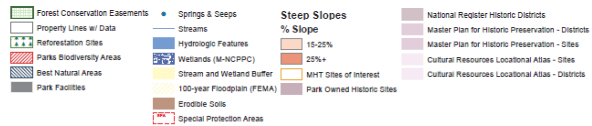
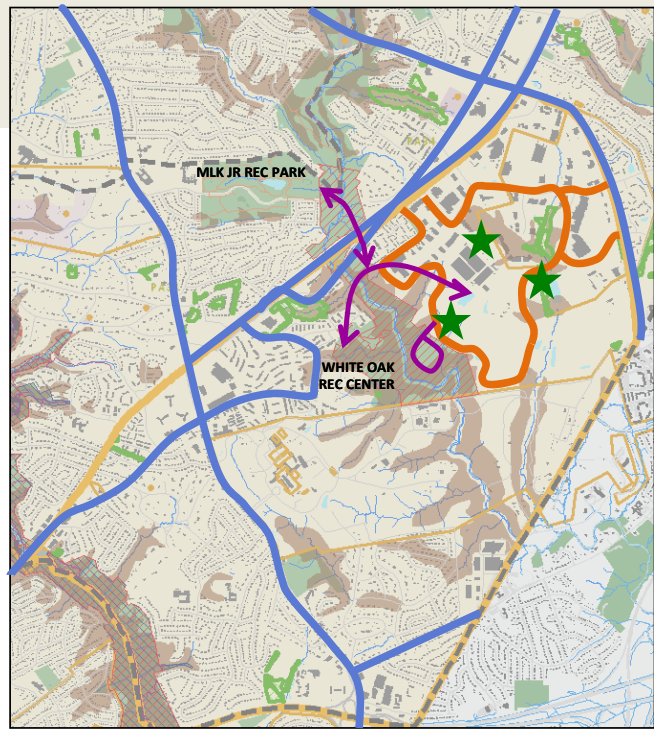
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Preliminary Trails and Parks Ideas

Enjoy but not destroy
environmentally sensitive areas

- Locate hard surface routes
 - ☐ Outside of sensitive areas
- Locate natural surface trails
 - ☐ With loops and spurs
 - ☐ In less constrained areas
 - ☐ In existing impacted areas
- Connect to bikeways
 - ☐ Locally
 - ☐ To PG County system
- ★ Locate new parks and open spaces
 - ☐ Adjacent to existing parkland
 - ☐ Central to areas of highest density
 - ☐ Where there are opportunities



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Thank You!

