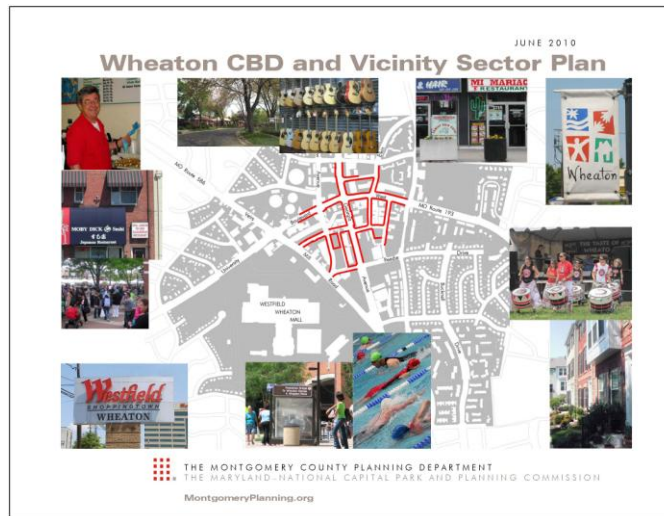


Appendix 4

Park, Trail, and Recreation Facilities

For more information, contact the Park and Planning and Stewardship Division, 301-650-4380



Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan

Existing Park, Trail, and Recreation Facilities

Parks

Wheaton Veterans Park is the only park within the Sector Plan boundary. This 0.7-acre Urban Park, completed in the early 1990s, serves the surrounding area and provides a site for Veterans' and Memorial Day celebrations.

The 1990 Wheaton Sector Plan noted that the Central Business District was urban with no unimproved land available for park development. That Plan proposed creating a new open space in the Wheaton Triangle area for community activities and an attractive setting in which shoppers and employees might relax, read, and eat. The Plan noted that small privately developed public open spaces could be developed as part of the zoning amenity requirements, and recommended that as projects were submitted, staff look at possible locations for such areas, particularly as redevelopment established new patterns of pedestrian concentration and movement.

The Plan area is near some of the earliest examples of M-NCPPC park development, yet the pedestrian connections to them from downtown Wheaton are not well marked. Parks outside the immediate area include the 535-acre Wheaton Regional Park acquired and constructed in the early 1960s to provide a wide range of recreation activities for area residents, including an ice rink, athletic fields, large picnic/playground area with carousel and miniature train, dog park, and Nature Center and Botanical Gardens.

The area is also served by the linear Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park, acquired to protect fragile natural environments and provide visual green relief from suburban development patterns. Smaller parks near the Plan area include Wheaton Forest, Newport Mill, and Pleasant View Local Parks and the Kensington Forest Neighborhood Park.

Several existing trails, sidewalks, and bikeways link the Wheaton CBD to the regional park system to the east, some of which need accessibility and safety improvements. Wheaton Regional Park and Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park are major destinations which CBD residents should be able to reach safely and efficiently by bicycle and on foot.

Recreation

The Wheaton Neighborhood Recreation Center is convenient to the Wheaton Plan area and accessible by public transportation. The Center is a small multi-purpose recreational facility that serves people of all ages. It includes a gymnasium/multi-purpose room with a small stage, weight and exercise room, art room, and billiards room. The Center is about 13,000 gross square feet, roughly half the size of other County recreation



centers. In 1997, this facility was first designated for replacement with a larger, full service facility. Funded in the FY07-12 CIP, the current proposal is to remodel and upgrade the Center and build a full service community recreation center at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Mason Street, approximately one half mile north of the Plan area. This facility is in the early Facility Planning Stage.

Wheaton residents are served by three regional indoor pools: the Montgomery Aquatic Center (MAC) in White Flint, the Olney Aquatic Center (OAC), and the Martin Luther King Athletic Club Aquatic Center (MLKAC) on New Hampshire Avenue in Cloverly. There is one outdoor pool, the Wheaton/Glenmont Pool. Both the outdoor and indoor pools are minutes from Wheaton by car. The MAC, OAC, MLKAC, and Glenmont pools are also served by transit. This Plan supports adding a fourth indoor pool available to Wheaton residents if the Recreation Department's *Comprehensive Facilities & Services Master Plan, 2010-2030* identifies the need for one.

Trails

Several trails, sidewalks, and bikeways link the Wheaton CBD to the regional park system, particularly Wheaton Regional Park and Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park. These parks are major destinations to which Wheaton CBD residents should have access to by bicycle and on foot and some of these connections need improvements to make them safer and easier to find.

Park and Trail Plans and Policies

The *Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS)* for Montgomery County guides the countywide pattern of parkland and recreation needs and projects recreational needs in broad planning areas, rather than by small sub-areas such as Wheaton. Plans in urban areas have distinct challenges and opportunities to provide park and recreation resources.

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. The 2005 PROS Plan indicated that the Georgia Avenue Corridor, which includes Wheaton, needs eleven additional playing fields by 2020, mostly for large multi-purpose rectangular fields. Five fields have been built in the Corridor since PROS was published, resulting in a net need of six fields. In down-County urban areas, playing field users, who normally drive to fields, often have to use fields in other areas. Staff will continue to assess opportunities for new fields within the Corridor. The PROS Plan estimates some local recreation facilities for each planning area. The estimates for the Wheaton Planning area indicate the existing numbers of playgrounds, and basketball and tennis courts are sufficient.

A staff supplement to the PROS Plan, *Parks for Tomorrow* (1998), 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. The document recommends using non-park public space in innovative ways to meet recreational demands.

