

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2022 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 11

Resolution No. 112-2022

Introduced by: The Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

A RESOLUTION adopting the 2022 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.

Introduced and read first time _____, 2022.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Read for a second time at a public hearing on _____, 2022.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted____, Adopted with amendments____, Failed____, Withdrawn____, by the County Council
on _____, 2022.

Certified By _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment

1 **WHEREAS**, Section 5-905(b)(2) of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated
2 Code of Maryland requires a local governing body to prepare a local land preservation and
3 recreation plan and to submit the plan to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources
4 (“DNR”) and the Maryland Department of Planning (“MDP”) for their approval; and
5

6 **WHEREAS**, a local governing body shall revise its local land preservation and
7 recreation plan at least every five years and submit the revised local plan to the DNR and to the
8 MDP for their approval; and
9

10 **WHEREAS**, by passage of Council Resolution No. 95-2017, the County adopted the
11 2017 Land Preservation, Recreation and Parks Plan (the “2017 Plan”); and
12

13 **WHEREAS**, pursuant to criteria and goals set forth in guidelines prepared by DNR and
14 MDP, updates have been proposed to the 2022 Plan, substantially in the form of the attached
15 2022 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan; and
16

17 **WHEREAS**, the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board has been briefed on the 2022
18 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan; and
19

20 **WHEREAS**, the Planning Board reviewed the 2022 Howard County Land Preservation,
21 Parks and Recreation Plan and, after public notice and a public hearing, recommended approval
22 at its meeting of June 16, 2022; and
23

24 **WHEREAS**, the County Executive has reviewed and approved the 2022 Howard County
25 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan.
26

27 **NOW, THEREFORE**
28

29 **BE IT RESOLVED**, by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland this ____ day
30 of _____, 2022 that the County Council adopts the 2022 Howard County Land

1 Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, substantially in the form attached to this Resolution;
2 and
3

4 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Director of the Department of Recreation and
5 Parks may correct obvious errors, capitalization, spelling, grammar, headings and similar matters
6 and may publish the 2022 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan by
7 adding or amending covers, title pages, table of contents, and graphics to improve readability;
8 and
9

10 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that upon the adoption of this Resolution, the 2022
11 Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan shall be sent to the Maryland
12 Department of Planning and the Department of Natural Resources in accordance with Section 5-
13 905 of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.



HOWARD COUNTY

Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Draft Plan Update₁

Final Plan
June 2022

HOWARD COUNTY

Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Draft Plan Update

Final Plan

June 2022

Under development, cover letter for County Executive.

**Under development, cover letter for Director of
Recreation and Parks.**

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Introduction

Introduction

Howard County residents have a strong connection and devotion to the natural environment. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, reinvigorated interest in parks and open space reinforced the role of Howard County's system of parks and open space in building community. Additionally, the County's over 8,519 programs and 25,925 acres of parks and green space provide essential support to residents' health and wellbeing. Howard County's parks are the places where residents and visitors come together to exercise and fuel their bodies, to enjoy nature, to wander and play, and to clear their minds.

Beyond its local role in supporting residents and visitors, the county's natural systems provide vital infrastructure that supports the health and performance of a much larger ecosystem. The mature trees, woodlands, wetlands and watercourses, are home to a rich and diverse ecology that extends well beyond the boundaries of the county. Beyond the county, critical global issues such as climate change and environmental health present threats and challenges that impact local ecosystems. As such, these issues must be addressed at the local level as well, through strategic planning efforts. This plan will be

an important tool to ensure Howard County and the State of Maryland contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, welcoming, and healthy future.

Every five years, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (the Department), prepares a Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) to comprehensively understand the County's system of open spaces, natural resources, agricultural lands, and recreational amenities. Required of all Maryland counties and Baltimore City, the LPPRP is an important resource to guide statewide decision-making and appropriately allocate public open space funds. For the Department, this document is also a road map to implement its Capital Improvement Plan and reaffirm the vision and goals for the State of Maryland, the County, and, most importantly, Howard County residents.

A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Located in the Mid-Atlantic region and situated almost equidistant between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, Howard County continues to be one of the most well-educated, affluent, and diverse counties in the nation. Howard County is frequently lauded

for its high quality of life and has experienced significant and sustained population growth since the 1950s. According to the 2020 Census, the county recently surpassed 328,200 people.¹ People continue to be drawn to the same county assets as they were in 2017, including well-performing school districts, accessible open spaces, diverse recreational amenities, employment centers, historical heritage, and a mixture of urban, suburban, and rural communities. The County is dedicated to sound planning for the public realm and natural systems to sustain this high quality of life amid the development pressures of a growing community.

With no incorporated municipalities, Howard County is divided into five planning areas: Ellicott City, Columbia, Southeast, Elkridge, and the Rural West. While the majority of the population is concentrated in Ellicott City and Columbia, new development continues to expand elsewhere. Although there have been efforts to focus on infill development, development over the past several decades has reduced the amount of undeveloped areas and critical habitats. However, the County has continued to protect important and valuable natural resources and lands in support of a county-wide connected infrastructure and trail system.



Figure 1.1 Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the County took extra measures to ensure important programs for youth could continue safely.

The County has protected 39% of its land area, including a significant acreage of farmland, through environmental, historic and agricultural easements, parkland and open space. This protected land contributes to the health of local and regional natural resources, and helps provide ecosystem services such as food production, clean water and flood control. The county's continued population growth and resulting need for active recreation amenities must be balanced with the need to ensure the county's natural resource amenities continue to be available for future generations.

Parks and Recreation Facilities

Today, there are 59,555 acres of parks and green space within the county. About 25,925 of these acres are for public use and include properties owned by the County, the State of Maryland, and private lands that permit general public access. These spaces include the following:

- County parks and facilities - these include playgrounds, fields, natural resource areas, as well as community, athletic, and nature centers.
- State lands - State lands are important natural resources with limited access for

visitors. The Patuxent River State Park along the southwest edge of the county and the Patapsco Valley State Park in the northern part of the county are the largest state-owned lands in Howard County.

- School-permitted program and activity spaces - this partnership with the Howard County School System includes space sharing for summer camps and after school programs.
- Historic/cultural properties - some County-owned historic sites exist within parks, such as the Blandair Historic Farm, and others are stand-alone properties like the Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park.
- Private lands permitting public access - these include open space and parks owned by Columbia and private subdivisions.
- Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) Open Space along the Patuxent River.

The most recent Maryland Department of Natural Resources DNR Land Acreage Report from 2020 determines 9,248 acres within Howard County are Department of Natural Resources owned parkland.²

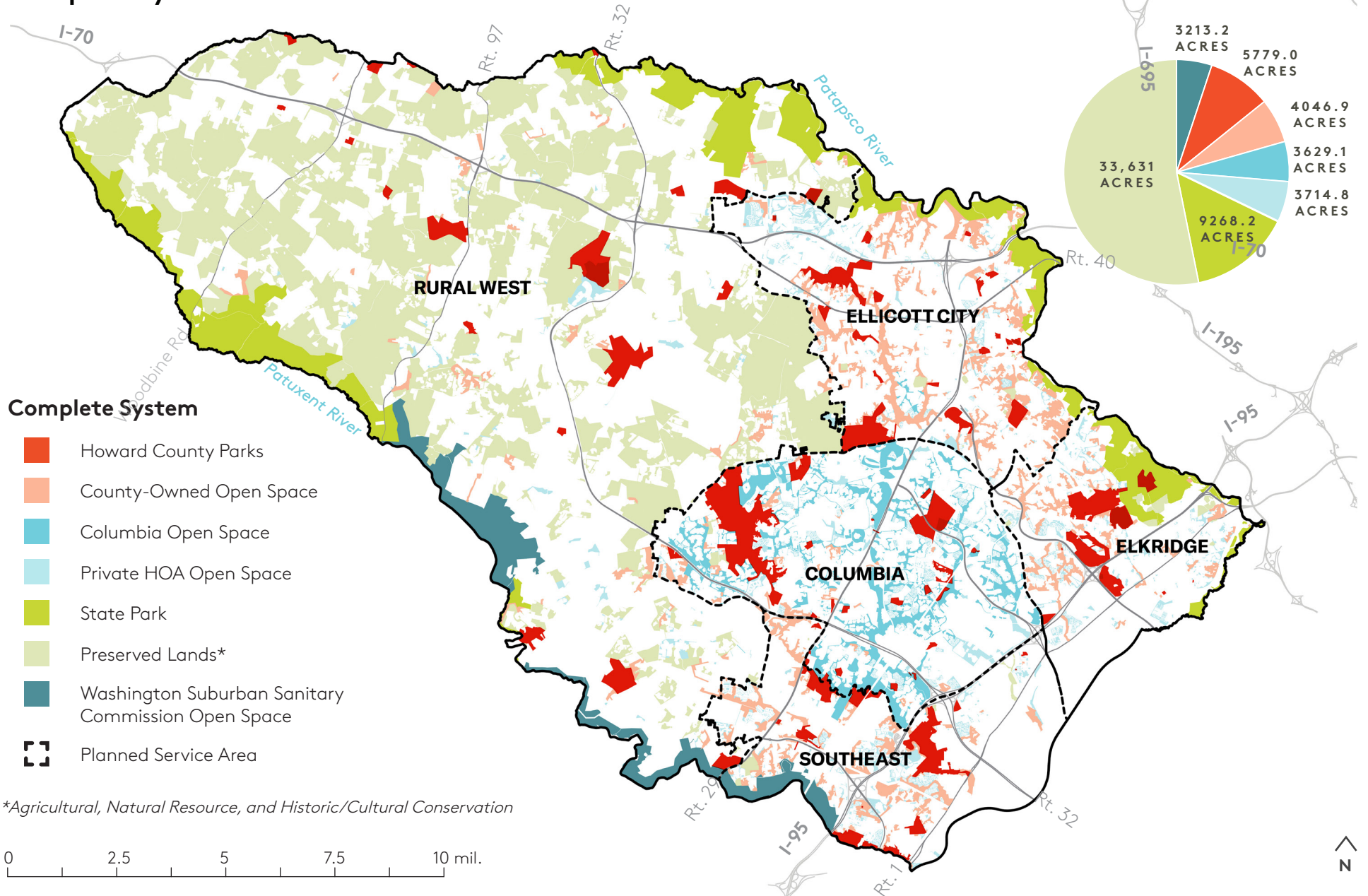
Other Preserved Lands

The remaining 33,630 acres are preserved lands not intended for public use, comprised of the following easement and parcel types:

- Maryland Conservation Easements
- Howard County Conservation Easements
- Environmental Preservation Parcels
- Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels
- Howard County Purchased Agricultural Easements
- Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements
- Maryland Environmental Trust Easements
- Maryland Environmental Trust Easements/ Rockburn Land Trust
- Maryland Historic Trust Easements
- Neighborhood Preservation Easements
- Rural Legacy Trust Easements

See Resource Conservation and Historic Resources + Agriculture for more information.

Complete System in 2022



*Agricultural, Natural Resource, and Historic/Cultural Conservation

Figure 1.2 Howard County boasts a diverse and rich system of public parks, recreation facilities, and preserved land.



Figure 1.3 *Howard County boasts a diverse and rich system of public parks, recreation facilities, and preserved land.*

PLAN PROCESS

A Plan Driven By Resident Voices

The Department is committed to a plan that is driven by the community. In the wake of COVID-19, the Department adapted the LPPRP engagement process to continue to receive community input in safe and socially distanced ways. Residents learned about the plan process and ways to contribute through email newsletters from their schools and neighborhood groups, in the program guide mailed to every household, seeing flyers in

community centers and signs in parks, through County partners like the Howard County Public School System, or by staying in touch via the Department’s website, social media, and email correspondence.

Over a thousand voices have contributed to the LPPRP so far, helping to understand what is loved, what needs improvement, and where key opportunities reside. All of these ideas for the Department’s programs, indoor and outdoor spaces, and land preservation policies directly informed the goals and recommendations of this document. The

following methods of outreach contributed to the plan:

Public Engagement Events

The LPPRP process included three public engagement events. In September, members of the Department staff and the consulting team attended the Robinson Nature Center Anniversary Open House in order to generate project interest and increase awareness of the plan. More than 200 attendees stopped by to learn about the plan, share their favorite parts of the recreation and open space system, and

give feedback about their visions for the future of the County's parks, programs, and centers. In early November, the planning team hosted a workshop pop-up at Centennial Park to share preliminary plan goals and solicit feedback about plan priorities. About sixty people stopped by and "voted" for their favorite goals, drew pictures of their dream parks, and asked questions about the plan's outcomes. From July 2021 to January 2022 the Department also asked residents to share memories and aspirations for the future of the system online. About 216 people participated in that online questionnaire.

Statistically Valid Survey

In August 2021, the Department administered a mail survey to 800 households across the county to better understand user satisfaction and community needs. The statistically valid survey captured responses across the county. This high degree of confidence ensured that the survey captured a snapshot of the county's diverse population across geographic area, income, race, and age, among other factors.

Staff Interviews

The consulting team conducted a series of interview sessions with employees who have direct contact with customers and leadership staff involved in managing programs

and services. Staff shared insight on the Department's overall strengths and areas for improvement.

Focus Groups

The Department held six focus group sessions throughout the course of the LPPRP process, covering the topics of similar providers, active adults, land conservation, historic resources, athletics and recreation, and youth concerns. These sessions included more than 20 local stakeholders.

Advisory Board Presentations

In September, the consultant team presented to the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board to garner feedback and general guidance on the analysis and visioning phases of the LPPRP. During this meeting, the team also engaged the public in-person activities to understand their priorities for the plan.

97%

of residents rated the physical condition of **parks** as "excellent" or "good"

+23%

percentage points better HoCo scored on park quality than the national average

Howard County residents told us...

57%

of residents **used MD state parks for recreation + sports** in the last year; 36% used Columbia Association, and 17% used private gyms.

The one thing that **kept my family and I sane during quarantine** was getting to **be outside in the peace**

Love the pickle ball lines at Schooley.

Let's keep going. How about Blandair?

...annual clearing of invasive species and planting of native plants and trees...

Can we also involve Indigenous voices in land use decisions?

More **programs** aimed at **teaching** about **climate resilience and home sustainability practices!**

History

A SHORT HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT IN HOWARD COUNTY

Indigenous Life

The earliest records of human civilization within Howard County can be traced back to Native American tribes that were drawn to the region's lush landscape, fertile soils, proximity to water, and temperate weather conditions. The land around the Patapsco, Patuxent, and Middle and Little Patuxent River valleys was stewarded by the Piscataway tribe of the Algonquin and the Susquehannock tribe of the Iroquois. These tribes lived in a symbiotic relationship with the land, returning to the waters to fish and forested lands for an abundance of food sources.

At the time of European arrival in 1608, the land which would become Howard County was greatly appealing to colonizers due to the natural beauty and bounty of its dense oak-hickory and mixed deciduous forests. Open wetlands and rich soils drew settlers to establish settlements, creating tensions with both the Native American tribes and the rich landscape itself. After conflicts, disease, wars, and the 1652 Peace Treaty of the Susquehannock, the Indigenous Peoples conceded land to the European colonizers. Subsistence agriculture flourished under

European development. By 1680, pressing agricultural needs required large-scale land clearing and significant deforestation.

Plantations

Agriculture continued to expand into the next century. By the 1740s, land clearing efforts were intrinsically linked to the growing slave trade economy. As the slave trade expanded, so did large scale agricultural needs leading to the creation of plantations. Plantations cleared even greater swathes of forested land and expanded the use of wood as fuel.

Mixed Agriculture

By the 1800s, farming philosophies and community needs transitioned agriculture to a mixed system. Multiple crop types were rotated, allowing the soil time to restore itself and support a diversifying human diet. The Industrial Revolution transformed farming, mechanizing daily procedures, amplifying crop yields, and increasing the acreage each farmer could successfully manage.

In 1830, the Baltimore & Ohio's (B&O) Railroad came to Howard County, laying the first 13 miles of track connecting Baltimore with the thriving community of Ellicott's Mills.³ America's first railroad terminal was then built in 1831, and resulted in the Ellicott City Station,

which became the heart of the industrial and agricultural community and now exists as a National Historic Landmark.

Suburbanization

In the 1900s, development patterns within Howard County were influenced by mechanical inventions, growing leisure time, increased educational opportunities, and the notion of the suburbs. As industrialized agriculture grew more compact and efficient, farming as a profession began to decline. This led to some forest regrowth in developed areas and fallow fields. Despite this period of regrowth, ecological imbalances still occurred. The introduction of invasive species and deadly pathogens through commercial operations were on the rise. For example, in the early 1900s, the introduction of Japanese chestnut trees for commercial use caused The Chestnut Blight, which caused the extinction of native chestnut trees within the county as well as nationally.

The middle of the 20th century saw the advent of the suburban concept. Automobiles, modern philosophies about architecture, and a post-war generation saw white-flight from city centers and the expansion of single family homes into once rural land. Howard County, conveniently located between Washington D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland,

A Short History of Howard County



Figure 1.4 Howard County's history follows a trajectory that have similarities to many east coast colonial settlements.

was a favorable location. However, Howard County was unique in that some real estate decision makers were actively involved in alternative ideologies. With suburbanization came environmental degradation, and by the 1960s, ecological responsibility merged with modern philosophies into new urban planning approaches. James Rouse believed developers were responsible for creating environments that were both beneficial to humans and

nature. Howard County was his testing ground, and led to the creation of Columbia, Maryland in 1967.

While the history of Columbia, Maryland may be old news for Howard County residents, its creation is a vastly important and monumental moment for the County. This settlement championed and formalized a commitment to ecological stability that

continues to influence the high quality of life in Howard County.

Growth and Conservation

The county's high quality of life continued to draw residents into the 21st century. As the cost of living continued to rise in neighboring cities and counties, Howard County continued to see greater migration. The county has

grown since the last LPPRP was issued in 2017, and continues to sustain population growth, although the pace of growth has plateaued in recent years.

Population growth puts pressure on existing land use and infrastructure, requiring the County to scale accordingly. Prospective real estate and economic development gains must be balanced with the land use needs of the profitable agricultural industry and protection and preservation of natural resources, most notably the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. As such, the County has sought directed growth approaches to curb the intrusion of urban sprawl onto existing agricultural and environmental land.

In order to limit development's impact on rural and agricultural resources, the County has introduced and implemented several tools, including strategies to protect certain parts of the county that have environmental or agricultural significance. Through zoning ordinances, The County has prioritized the preservation of large parcels in the Rural West portion of the County in order to help protect farmland. In addition, the County has introduced mechanisms to keep agricultural work profitable in the region.

As suburbanization continues throughout the county, unplanned sprawl poses a threat to unprotected open space and the ecosystems

they house. Previously, suburbanization caused a decrease in farmland and livestock and a simultaneous increase in impervious cover. Invasive plants and deer populations also continued to rise, impacting the future health of understories and tree canopies. The preservation of The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is critical to the overall environmental health of the region: human

activity has led to negative outcomes, such as erosion. Interventions to protect both soil and water quality of the watershed focus on stream restoration and reforestation to protect this vulnerable and valuable natural resource. As with agricultural land, many natural resources are protected for the benefit of the region at large.



Figure 1.5 *Howard County's natural resources, like forests, streams, and soils are integral to protect and strengthen natural habitats, air quality, water quality, and mental health.*



Figure 1.6 Balancing ecological needs, the climate crisis, recreation opportunities, and development pressures will require strategic thinking, environmental care, and creative thinking.

A SHORT HISTORY OF RECREATION + PARKS

Forestry Origins

The history of parks and open spaces within the United States has developed in direct response to changing development patterns, population increases, and cultural attitudes about the natural world. In Maryland, the effects of the logging and agricultural industries, as well as the urban growth of nearby cities like Baltimore and Washington, D.C., ushered in some of the first legislation aimed at addressing ecological decline.

Maryland's Department of Natural Resources shepherded an era of forest conscious preservation that preceded the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, but helped to frame natural resources as core to the Department's mission and values.

In the early 1900s, the state's first forestry laws decreased forest exploitation through the creation of a Department of Forestry that strove to protect these resources. Maryland was the third state in the nation to create such an agency, and the state's oldest parks developed from these preserves.

At the beginning of the 1900s, the concept of leisure had yet to take hold and these forest preserves did not yet consider the beneficial effects of recreation and time spent in nature. Years later, as labor movements and child labor legislation swept the nation, these ideas became more common in public discourse. Maryland's forest preserves became natural settings for early recreational programming like camping. The first public park in the state was created within the Patapsco Forest Reserve. At this time, forest management and conservation was done at the state level.

Workforce Development through Conservation and Stewardship

As the decades continued and America strove to get people back to work after the Great Depression, the role of forestry departments changed. New Deal programs, such as the Civilian Conservation Corps, sought to turn these preserves into employment opportunities. Forest management, trail creation, and the building of facilities, infrastructure, and recreational spaces all became steady jobs. Simultaneously, the advent of the automobile and its growing accessibility made it easier for people to visit preserves and recreational facilities for day or weekend sojourns.

Creation of the Department

By the 1960s, the role of open spaces, parks, and preserves had once again changed, and these spaces were seen as integral elements of the human experience. In 1963, the first Park, Watershed, and Open Space Plan was adopted by Howard County Commissioners and spearheaded by a volunteer group, the Watershed Board. Four years later, this group would become formalized, consisting of volunteers appointed by the governor. The Board of Parks for Howard County then instituted a paid Executive Director position, and utilized the state Open Space Bill to acquire land.

In 1967, Columbia was founded with the intention of connecting residents to nature. These values extend to the larger scale of Howard County as a whole, which utilized strategic planning to preserve open space and provide opportunities for residents to interact with the environment. By the next year, the Board of Parks had officially become the Department of Recreation and Parks. Other landmark activity in 1968 included the establishment of summer recreational programming, and the amendment of the Park, Watershed, and Open Space Plan to facilitate the purchase of parkland as well.

A Short History of the Department of Recreation and Parks

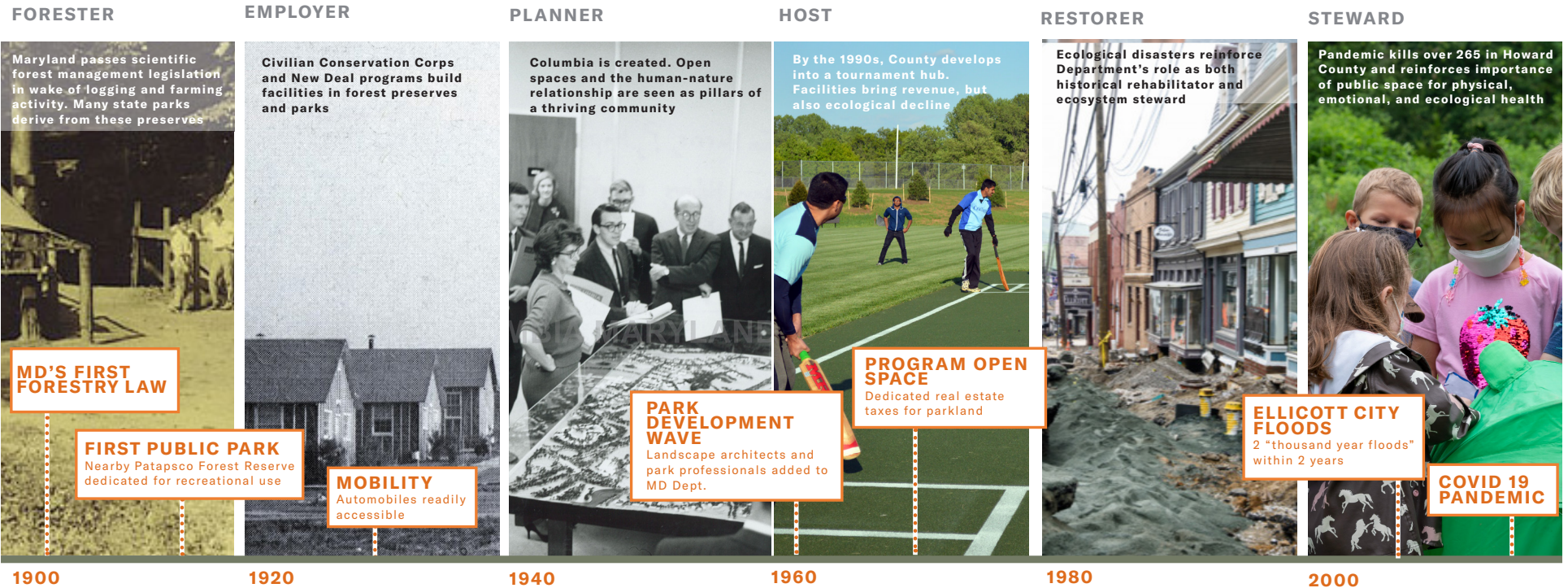


Figure 1.7 The Department of Recreation and Parks was born from a state-led ommitment to forest preservation and ecological stewardship.

The creation of the statewide Program Open Space provided valuable funds for the acquisition and conservation of park and recreational spaces. Begun in 1969 by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Program Open Space uses taxes from the sale of property to devise a steady

stream of income for these pursuits. This legislation directly linked the planning and parks professions. The structure of the fund required the creation of parks to be in direct conversation with planning and development outcomes. Additionally, the consistent funding provided a clear expectation that the park

and recreation system was to expand to ensure a high quality of life for Howard County residents.

The Department purchased its first historical landmarks in 1969. A year later, the Historical Landmarks division was created, although

it operated initially without staff or funding. As programming and Department divisions expanded, so did the need for additional staff to accommodate all of the responsibilities of the Department. By 1973, the number of permanent staff had increased significantly as school and summer recreation programs expanded and neighborhood parks and recreation centers were created.

Expansion of Programming and Facilities

In the latter half of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, the Department's growth included the County's first school recreation center, in 1993, the creation of the Park Ranger Program in 2000, and the construction of Howard County's first indoor athletic center in 2009 and first nature center in 2011.

Howard County used many Program Open Space funds to develop major sport facilities and tournament spaces, building a reputation as a local and regional athletic tournament hub. This strategy has had clear financial benefits, providing the Department with a strong revenue source. The Department has prioritized the building of synthetic fields which require less maintenance while providing for all seasonal programming.

Restoration of Natural Resources

While the goal of the Department of Recreation and Parks has always been to provide healthy spaces for both the planet and people, the effects of the climate crisis and suburbanization have made this mission all the more important on a local level. Recent events reinforce the Department's role as both a rehabilitator of historical buildings yet also a steward of valuable ecological resources.

It is critical that future projects not only prioritize gray infrastructure, but also blue-green infrastructure that uses the county's natural resources to maximize resiliency while strengthening ecological systems. Howard County and the Department also understand the value of its tree canopy in mitigating climate change impacts, like the role of street trees in reducing temperature in neighborhoods on hot days, or the role that trees play in improving our air quality.

Efforts are currently underway to reforest land through public programs. The Forest Conservation Act provides mitigation for forest cleared during the development process, but not on an equal area basis. Easements created through this regulation undergo a three-year inspection process. This mitigation effort compliments more

direct reforestation programs. To facilitate reforestation, The County has instituted several initiatives, ranging from volunteer efforts and incentivization programs, such as Stream ReLeaf, Turf to Trees, and Students Branching Out.

Forest conservation is particularly important when considering the larger ecological framework. The Maryland Forest Conservation Act (FCA) of 1991 sought to reduce the loss of forests across the state as land was developed by identifying and protecting environmentally significant or ecologically sensitive forests and natural areas⁴. Often, forest conservation easements overlap with open space containing sensitive natural resources such as streams and wetlands. This means that the health of forests directly relates to the health of other natural systems. Soil conservation efforts and environmental and development regulations are important in all green space, be it open space, preservation parcels, or agricultural land. Restoring one system often restores others, creating a powerful positive multiplier effect. The FCA enabled development regulations to support the protection of open spaces and easements of high ecological value like wetlands, riparian buffers, and forests. These lands are typically granted to the County, and often managed by DRP.

Existing Conditions

THE COUNTY IS GROWING AND CHANGING

The county's population is growing larger, older, and more diverse. These key shifts provide a unique opportunity to improve, preserve, and align Howard County's future community with the parks and recreation resources that will support it. Howard County's population is growing at an annual rate of two percent. In 2017, the population was 312,495. By 2020 the population grew to 332,317, with County residents concentrated within the Eastern parts of the county. As the population grows, development opportunities are becoming increasingly scarce. Development is slowing at an annual rate of 7.85 percent. In 2017, there were 718 newly submitted development plans for commercial, institutional, and residential projects. In 2020, there were 549 newly submitted plans.

Aging in Place

As noted in the 2017 LPPRP, Howard County's population is projected to become older - as residents who were part of the wave of new development in the 1970s and 1980s retire and decide to age in place. The population over 65 years of age is growing at an annual rate

of 5.6 percent. In 2017, 12.6 percent of the population was over 65 years old. In 2020, that number increased to 14.7 percent. Despite this increase, the largest age group in Howard County continues to be 35-39 years old, who represent 7.3 percent of the total population.

Increasing Diversity

The County is becoming increasingly more diverse. In 2017, the population of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) residents was 41 percent of the total population. In 2020, that percentage increased by 12 percent, to 53 percent of the total population. Howard County's demographic changes are reflective of changes happening at the state level. This can be seen when examining the Census Diversity Index (DI).⁵ The DI measures the probability that two people chosen at random will be from different racial and ethnic groups; Howard County's DI has grown 10.1 percent in the past decade, from 59.5 percent in 2010 to 69.6 percent in 2020. In comparison, this increase is much lower at the state level, where the DI increased by 6.6 percent in the past decade, from 60.7 percent in 2010, to 67.3 percent in 2020. The state of Maryland is now the third most diverse state in the country, after California and Nevada.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

SINCE THE 2017 PLAN

+ 2 %	+ 12 %
annual population growth rate	BIPOC population increase
- 8 %	+ 6 %
annual rate of development	growth of population over 65

STATEWIDE

61 %

2020 Diversity Index Score

+ 7 %

Diversity Index increase since 2010

COUNTY-WIDE

70 %

2020 Diversity Index Score

+ 10 %

Diversity Index increase since 2010

RELEVANT PLANS AND PROJECTS

Since 2012, Howard County has undergone a multitude of planning efforts. These past plans span scales and focus areas. Focus group conversations and Steering Committee participants represented many of these recently completed or ongoing plans and helped to guide plan decision making as it relates to their own experiences.

Plans include specific initiatives such as the 2015 Bike Howard plan,⁶ which promotes sustainable transportation options and an integrated bike system, to the 2018 Downtown Columbia Monitoring Report,⁷ which provides an update on the implementation of the Downtown Columbia Plan.

Current plans address a wide number of issue areas, including flooding, (2020 Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan) the climate crisis (2015 Climate Action Plan), and a holistic approach to farmland preservation (2017 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan). Howard County is currently undergoing an update to the County's general plan, known as HoCo by Design.⁸ This plan includes a robust community engagement effort that launched in July 2020, and also builds upon the last general plan adopted in 2012, known as PlanHoward 2030.⁹ While the 2022 LPPRP responds to the HoCo by Design process, it is also working in tandem with the plan to share data, mapping, and other necessary resources that will ensure both plans share similar implementation objectives. Other plans that have informed the development of the LPPRP include those in Figure 1.7.

Previous Planning Efforts

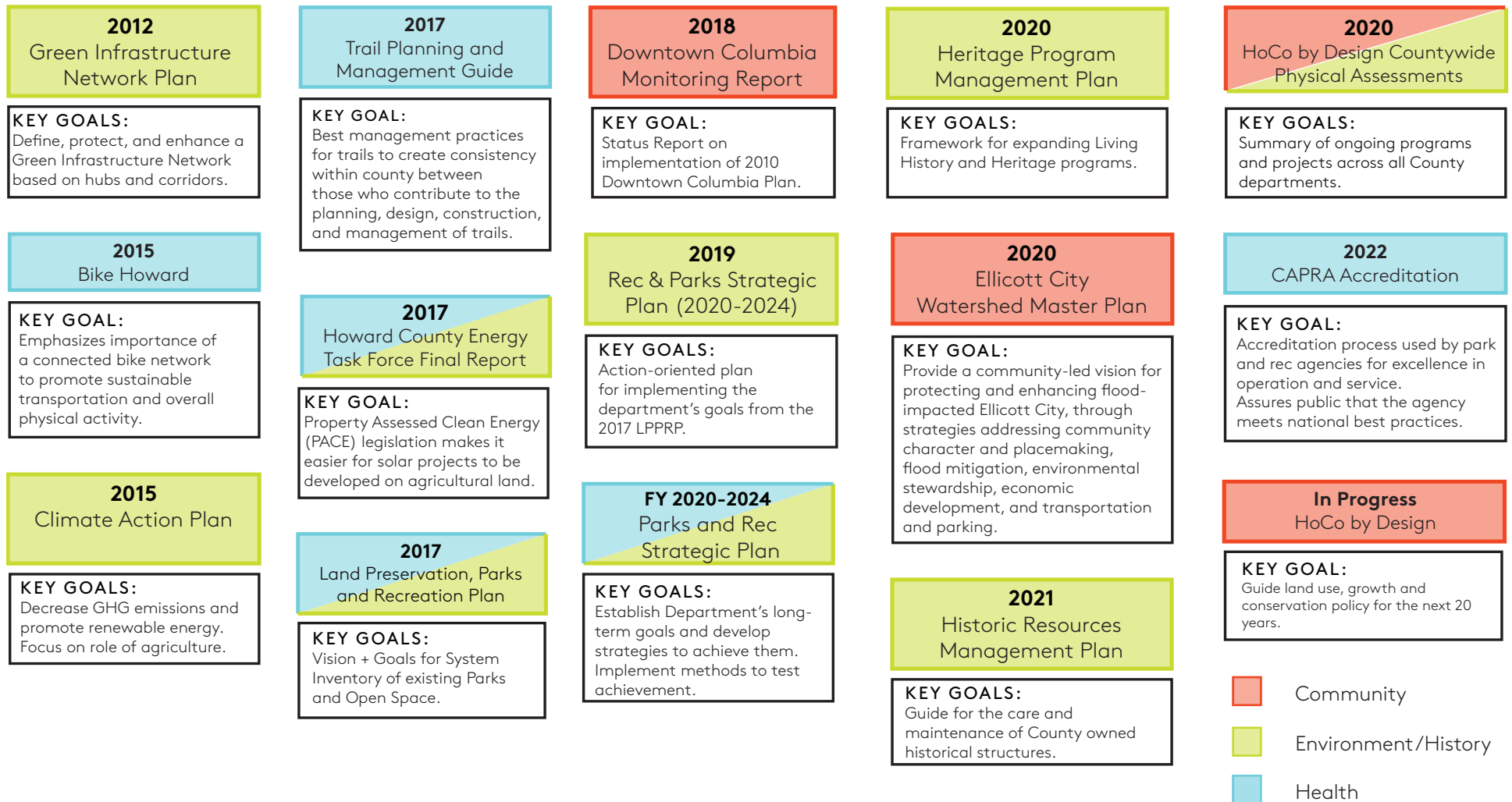


Figure 1.9 Past plans span scales and focus areas. Current plans aim to address issues of climate, agriculture, transportation, and open space and recreation.

One Howard: Reinforcing the 2017 Vision in 2022

The vision for Howard County's system continues to be founded on how much the County has achieved over the past decade, and importantly, within the past five years. Since the last plan, the County's parks, programs, natural resources and agricultural lands have weathered significant economic, environmental, and public health challenges. The global pandemic, economic fluctuation of agricultural resources, and major flood events in the County have tested the Department and the framework of the LPPRP. Through these moments, the vision has held up. The One Howard vision established in 2017 continues to shepherd new innovations and successes in recreation and parks, natural resource conservation, and agricultural land preservation to maintain access for its residents in its densest neighborhoods and preserve undeveloped land where development pressures are greatest.

As the system grows, the LPPRP celebrates unique places to interact with the natural environment, recreation programs, the County's rich historic legacy, and farming. Fostering many of the goals and objectives developed by the ongoing general plan, the LPPRP imagines a sustainable system that celebrates the diverse needs of a growing and evolving community.

The LPPRP is structured around five aspirations which incorporate both County and State goals and articulate strategies and actions for future potential capital improvements that align with the goals. They represent both the aspirations the Department has for itself in combination with aspirations the public has for the Department. Per state guidelines, three of the five plan aspirations also respond to the three themes of the LPPRP, parks and recreation, natural resource conservation, and agricultural land preservation. The plan aspirations and their related LPPRP themes are identified below:

- The Department delivers accessible experiences to all members of the community. [Parks and Recreation]
- The Department is a trusted steward for natural resources. [Natural Resource Conservation]
- The Department acknowledges and amplifies all cultural histories. [Agricultural Land Preservation]
- The Department maintains functional and financial responsibility.
- The Department maintains high quality spaces.



2022 LPPRP Goals

The following state goals provide a framework for Howard County to protect, enhance, and expand its recreation and open space amenities, natural resources, and agricultural and historic places. Through the LPPRP process, the County identified strategies and actions to deploy the state goals with approaches that are unique to the County. This document also includes additional County goals to reflect outputs from the analysis and assessment, community aspirations, and stakeholder conversations.

Figure 1.10 *Howard County African drumming circle event, an example of the thousands of events and programs the Department either provides or supports.*

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE GOALS

2022 State Goals

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, play 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.

2022 County Goals (an update to the 2017 goals)

Promote programs and spaces that are accessible to all people.

Improve connectivity of people to recreation and park resources through all modes of travel, including walking, biking and transit.

Stay at the forefront of trends in recreation and park facilities, recreation programs and park design.

Instill flexibility to adapt to shifts in community needs and meet future growth.

Provide a range of recreation programs and inclusive park and facility designs to facilitate a diversity and cultural awareness.

Build partnerships within County government and across the County to efficiently share resources and provide the best customer service.

Use best practices to continue to provide sustainable parks, open spaces and recreation facilities that are safe and secure for users of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

Integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness, supporting the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of the diverse Howard County community.

RESOURCE CONSERVATION GOALS

2022 State Goals

Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

- Public land acquisition and stewardship;
- Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
- Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;
- Incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;
- Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and
- Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.

- Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).
- Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.)
- Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.
- Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.

Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:

- Expand and connect forests, farmland 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 protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions;
- Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
- Support a productive forestland base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

2022 County Goals (an update to the 2017 goals)

Protect and restore natural resources through habitat improvements and restoration efforts.

Continue to improve water quality through county-wide stream restoration and reforestation efforts, benefiting local waters and the greater Chesapeake Bay Estuary.

Enhance implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network Plan.

Encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

2022 State Goals

Few goals within the 2022 LPPRP directly speak to historic preservation. Instead, mention of these resources is inferred and suggested within agricultural goals. The most applicable goal is:

Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.

2022 state goals for agriculture include:

Permanently preserve the County's 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;

Ensure good return on public 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 achieve the following:

- 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;
- 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 public-at-large.

2022 County Goals (an update to the 2017 plan)

Goals within the 2017 plan that were related to the historic resource system are restated as 2022 county goals. These goals include:

- Integrate County-owned historic and cultural resources into park programming and facilities in a way that encourages and promotes the stewardship of these resources.

Goals within the 2017 plan that were related to agriculture are restated as 2022 county goals. These goals include:

- Integrate the preservation of the county's

agricultural land and activities with natural resource protection.

- Connect the county's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.
- Incorporate farming across all scales – from large land preservation to support for efficient use of small farms to community gardens.



Recreation + Parks

Aspiration

The Department delivers accessible experiences to all members of the community.

Recreation and Parks

Since 2017, Howard County has consistently grown older and more diverse.¹⁰ This sustained population growth has created two very different and unique conditions for the Department. Not only has population growth made large land parcels increasingly hard to acquire as the county becomes more built out, but the demographics of this population have encouraged new ways of thinking about the County's provision of amenities and programs. As a result, the County has evolved to respond to these shifting demands for parks and facilities against an increasingly limited number of affordable places to create new spaces to support these activities.

Regarding land acquisition, the Department has shifted to acquiring smaller parcels of land (25 acres or less) over the last decade. It is likely that this trend will continue into the future, and that the County will shift towards gaining smaller parcels and projects in denser parts of the county. This movement provides opportunities to prioritize investments that would increase equitable access to outdoor spaces in underserved urban areas. It also creates opportunities for linked open spaces between neighborhoods and their destinations, including schools, parks, and commercial districts. Small parcels will play a critical role in connecting various unconnected segments of greenways and trails where legacy patterns of development left many

neighborhoods without easy access to parks, trails, and natural areas. However, this also poses challenges. The uneven access to parks and open space between the Rural West and urbanized east could grow even wider. It will be important to balance recreation investments where they are needed with where they are possible.

Howard County is positioned to become one of the wealthiest and most diverse counties in the country. As young families and foreign-born individuals continue to flock to the County for its high quality schools, range of retail and cultural destinations, and appealing places to raise a family, the County is also prepared to respond to the diverse needs of its newest residents, whether they differ in race, ethnicity, age, income, or ability. As Howard County's population over the age of 65 continues to grow, the Department provides for older adults in active-aging and therapeutic recreational programming. The Department already provides programs and physical infrastructure that support the recreational desires of resident Korean, Indian, and African American populations and continues to maintain excellence in those program areas by expanding outreach to communities of color to better understand specific desires for future program investments.

County-wide Recreation, Parks and Preservation System

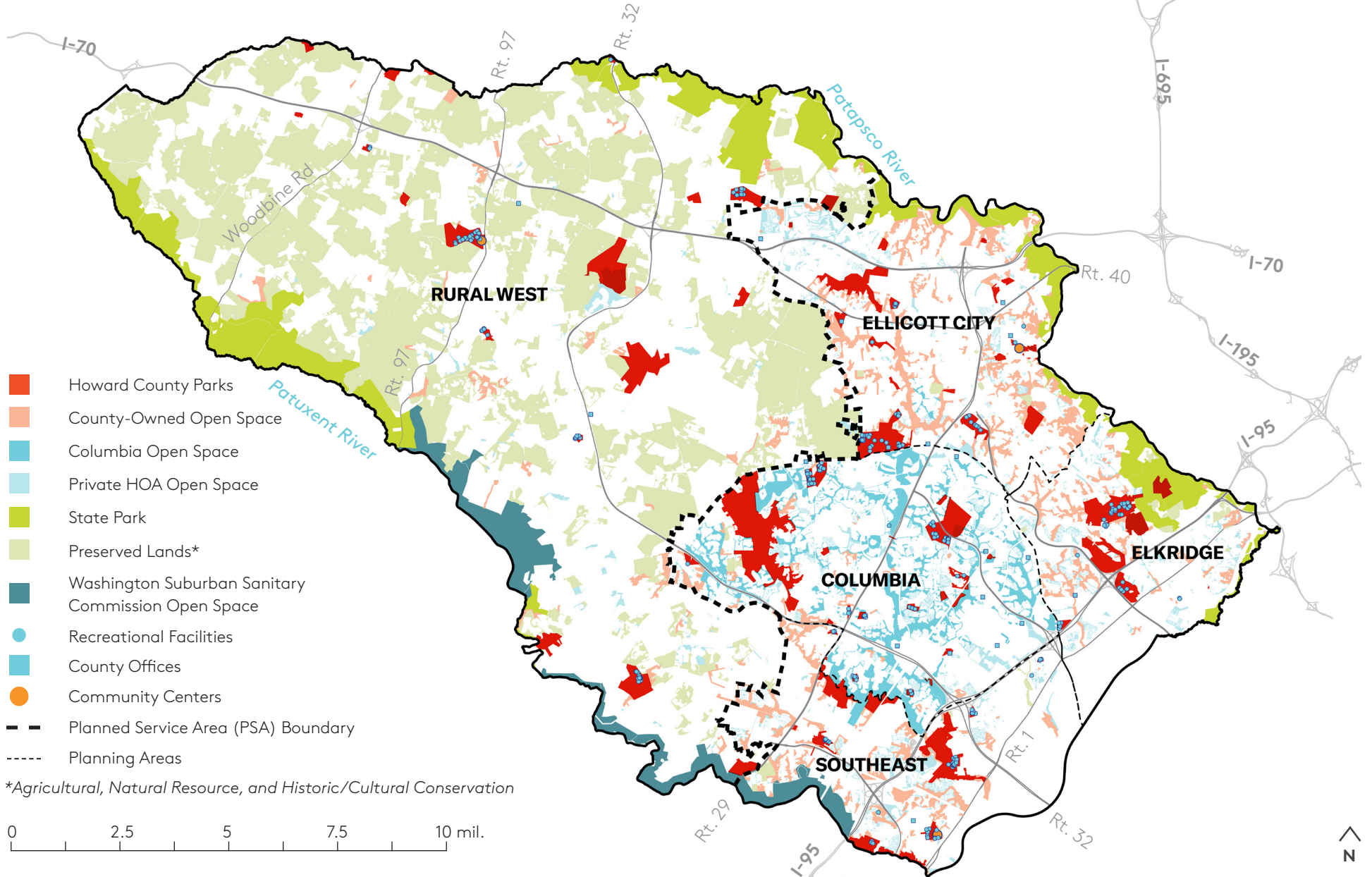


Figure 2.1 The Department of Recreation and Parks manages a multitude of offices, community centers, and parks. These assets are in addition to other privately owned, but publicly accessible, park and recreation amenities.



TRAILS NETWORK

The county is also supported by a growing trail system. This system consists of trails and pathways within parks and open spaces maintained by the Department, Columbia Association pathways, and state trails within Maryland state parks. The county maintains a total of 112 miles of trails and pathways within County Parks and while opportunities to expand the network between parks and other destinations are limited, the County continues to focus investments on safe access to parks in communities that need access most.

Figure 1.12 *Howard County residents enjoy county park trails for various events throughout the year, such as Bird ID walks at Font Hill Wetland Park.*

County-wide Trails System

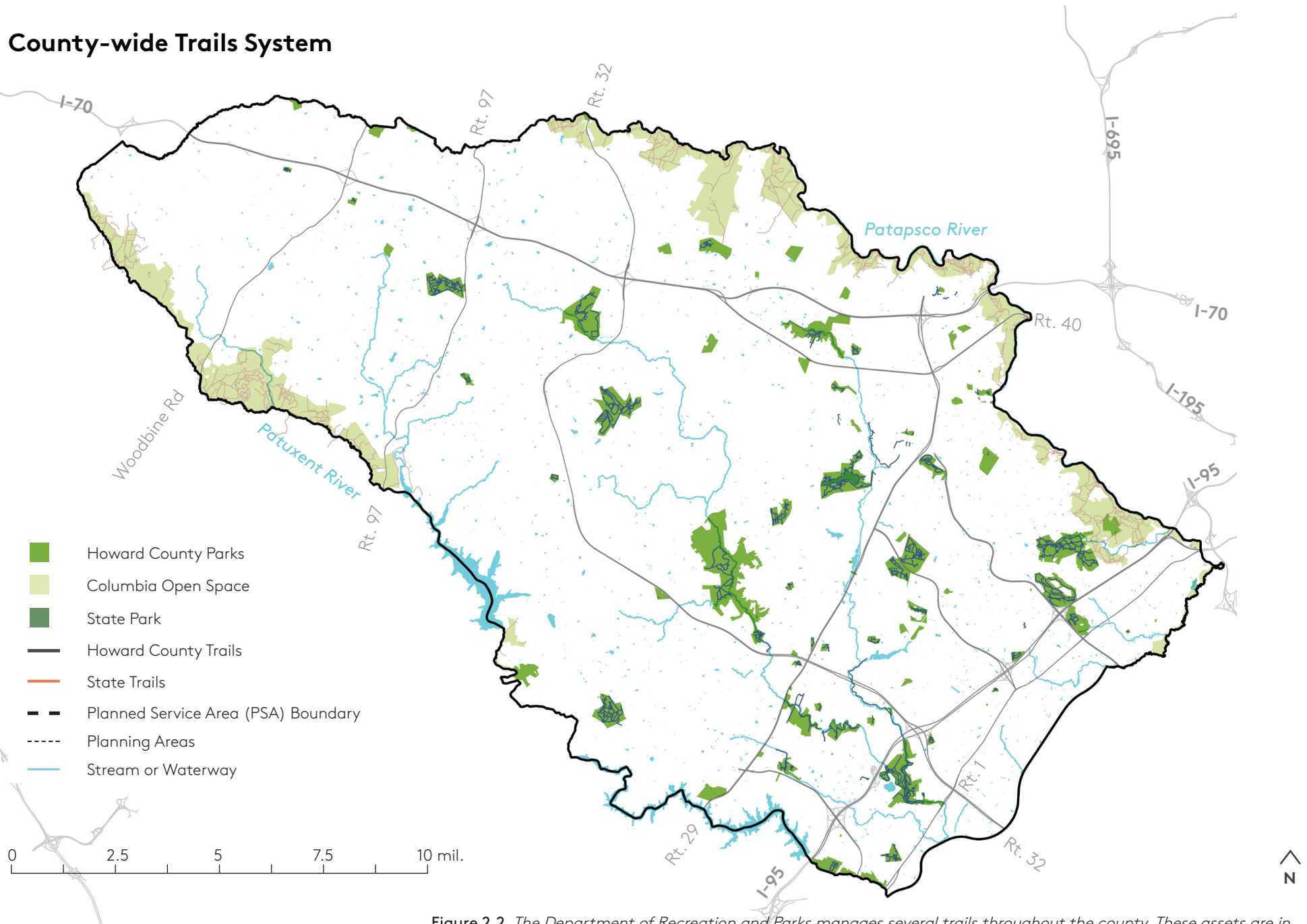


Figure 2.2 The Department of Recreation and Parks manages several trails throughout the county. These assets are in addition to other privately owned, but publicly accessible, trail amenities.

Overview of Parks + Open Space system

2022 STATE GOALS

Recreation and Open Space goals from the State's 2022 plan are as follows:

- 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, play 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.

Recreation and Open Space in Howard County continues to be a model for neighboring counties and within the state of Maryland. Howard County continues to offer a range of programs and recreational spaces that meet community needs.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 GOALS)

- Promote programs and spaces that are accessible to all people.
- Improve connectivity of people to recreation and park resources through all modes of travel, including walking, biking and transit.
- Stay at the forefront of trends in recreation and park facilities, recreation programs and park design.
- Instill flexibility to adapt to shifts in community needs and meet future growth.
- Provide a range of recreation programs and inclusive park and facility designs to facilitate diversity and cultural awareness.
- Build partnerships within the County government and across the County to efficiently share resources and provide the best customer service.
- Use best practices to continue to provide sustainable parks, open spaces and recreation facilities that are safe and secure for users of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

- Integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness, supporting the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of the diverse Howard County community.

Both the Department and the State of Maryland's goals for recreation and parks are rooted in similar system principles including accessibility, equity, strong planning, collaboration, and recreational open space protection. Therefore, implementation of the Department's goals supports implementation of the statewide goals at the local level. Both County and State goals advocate for high-quality recreational environments that are readily accessible and conveniently located relative to population centers. Additionally, the State goals specify that accessible spaces should be accessible without reliance on the automobile. These goals are well informed by the County's analyses, specifically where the County has measured user demand and level of service, which has indicated opportunities and gaps in the existing recreational system across the county.



Figure 2.3 Centennial Park North Ribbon Cutting for Sensory-Friendly Playground

Parks and Open Space

THE SYSTEM TODAY

Equitable access to parks and programs for residents is a core element of the Department of Recreation and Parks' mission and values. The Department and the County seek to align with the State of Maryland's approach to park equity and investment as well.

Park Equity Access

The Park Equity Analysis Tool allows the state of Maryland to quantitatively measure and increase equitable access to green spaces across the state.¹¹ Developed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the University of Maryland, the tool combines United States Census Block Group data with spatial data of statewide public and local parks to identify areas in need of parks and recreation facilities. Using this method, the tool prioritizes underserved areas of Maryland by analyzing factors such as park distance, population density, income, walkability, access to transit, linguistic isolation, and demographic characteristics such as percent of non-white population, percent of children under 18 years old, and percent of adults over 65 years old. Access to park space is then evaluated on proximity to state, regional, and local parks and trailheads, and includes parklands outside of the Census Tract Block Groups and county boundaries. These factors are then scored and added together to produce a final combined

Park Equity Score for each Census Block Group in the state of Maryland. A lower score represents a lower need (high equity exists) while a higher score represents higher need (low equity exists).

The Park Equity Tool and resulting scores provide a helpful starting point for the County to evaluate where investments are needed most. The County will continue to work with the State to evolve the Park Equity Tool so that it incorporates additional metrics including the inclusion of the disability community, county spending on programs, range of programs, and private, publicly accessible open space.

There are more pockets of low equity in the eastern part of the county compared to the Rural West. This distinction informed the Level of Service Analysis for parks and recreation amenities for this effort. Using this metric, "access" in the eastern part of the county was defined as having an open space or recreation amenities within either a 10-minute walk or five-minute drive of one's home. In the Rural West "access" was defined as one being within a fifteen-minute drive of an open space or recreation amenity. This analysis is in accordance with the 2017 State goals which focus on ensuring that parks and recreational facilities are conveniently located relative to population centers and accessible without reliance on the automobile.

PARK EQUITY DATA LAYERS
LAYERS & WEIGHTING OF MODEL

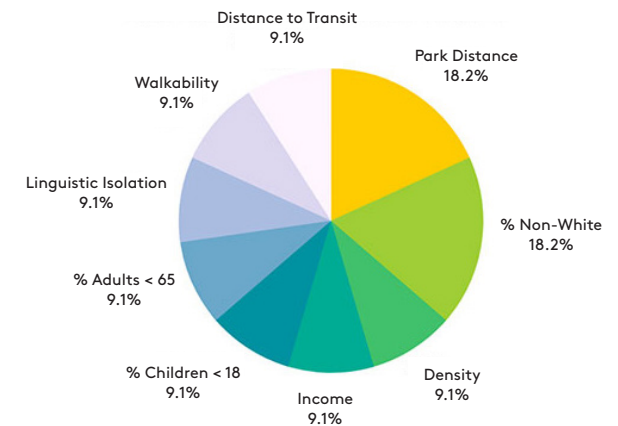


Figure 1.13 The Park Equity Tool uses a variety of metrics to determine if particular areas within Maryland are well served by park and recreation facilities. Attributes are weighted in varying proportions. Distance from a park and the percent of non-white population are weighted the heaviest.

Park Equity in Howard County

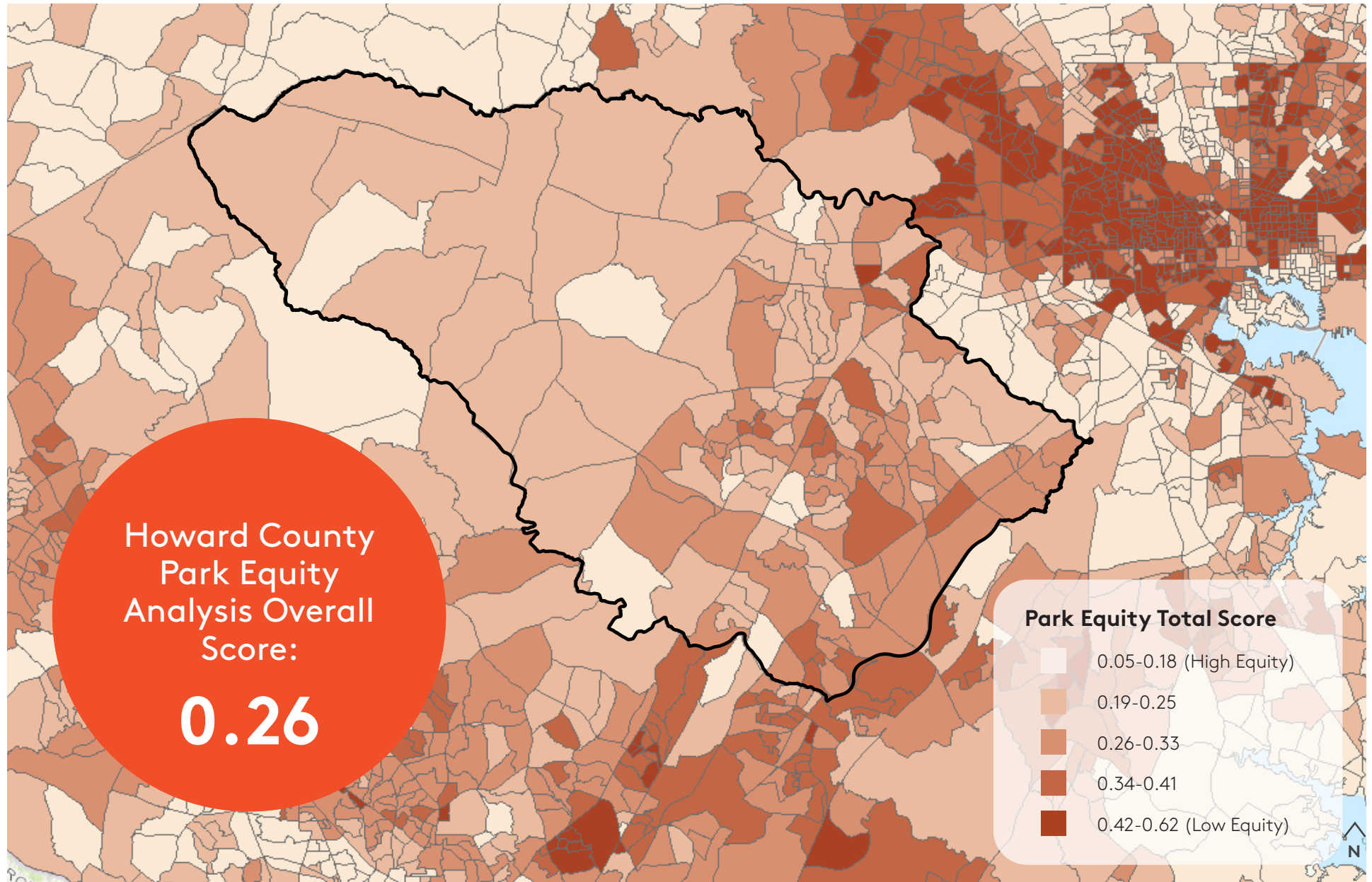


Figure 2.4 While Howard County generally has a Park Equity Score that is in the middle of possible ranges, there are great differences between the Rural West and the eastern areas of the county.

New Properties since 2017

Since the last plan, the County has grown the system by adding a cumulative 37.2 acres of park land. These acquisitions include Savage Properties (4.93 acres) in the Southeast planning region, Cole Properties (aka Shipley Park, 25.19 acres) and Downey Property (3.47 acres) in the Rural West planning region, Bailey Park (0.6 acres) in the Columbia planning region, and Johnson Property (3.01 acres) in the Elridge planning region.

In the past decade, land investments have been smaller in size, as larger land parcels are less available than in the past. Trends show that since 1970, the average parcel acquired by the Department of Recreation and Parks has dramatically decreased in size. This reflects how large continuous tracts of land are growing more rare as the County develops. Many large parcels may also be in the hands of private entities and single land owners.

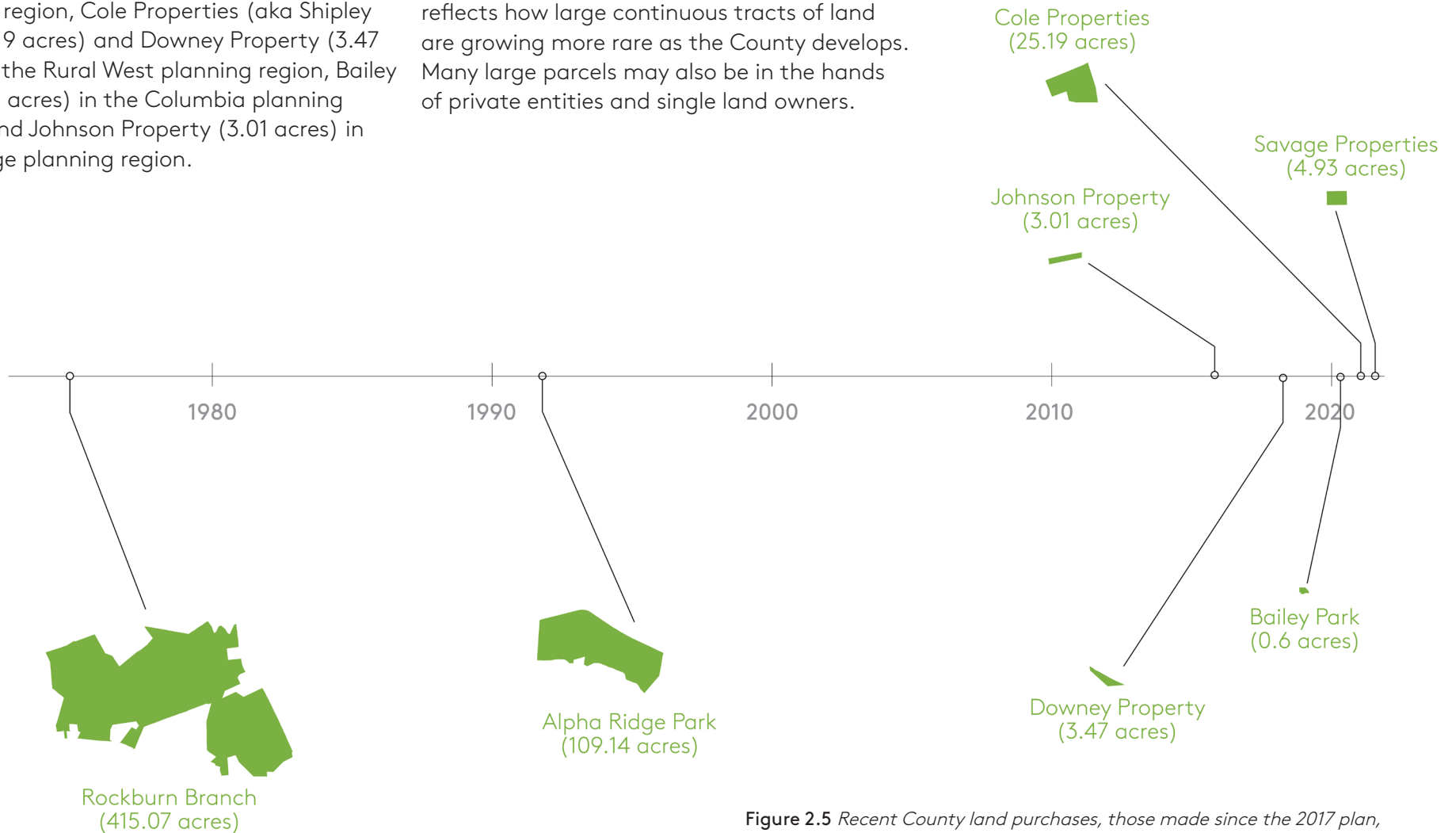


Figure 2.5 Recent County land purchases, those made since the 2017 plan, are smaller in size than previous decades.

Parks Added Since 2017

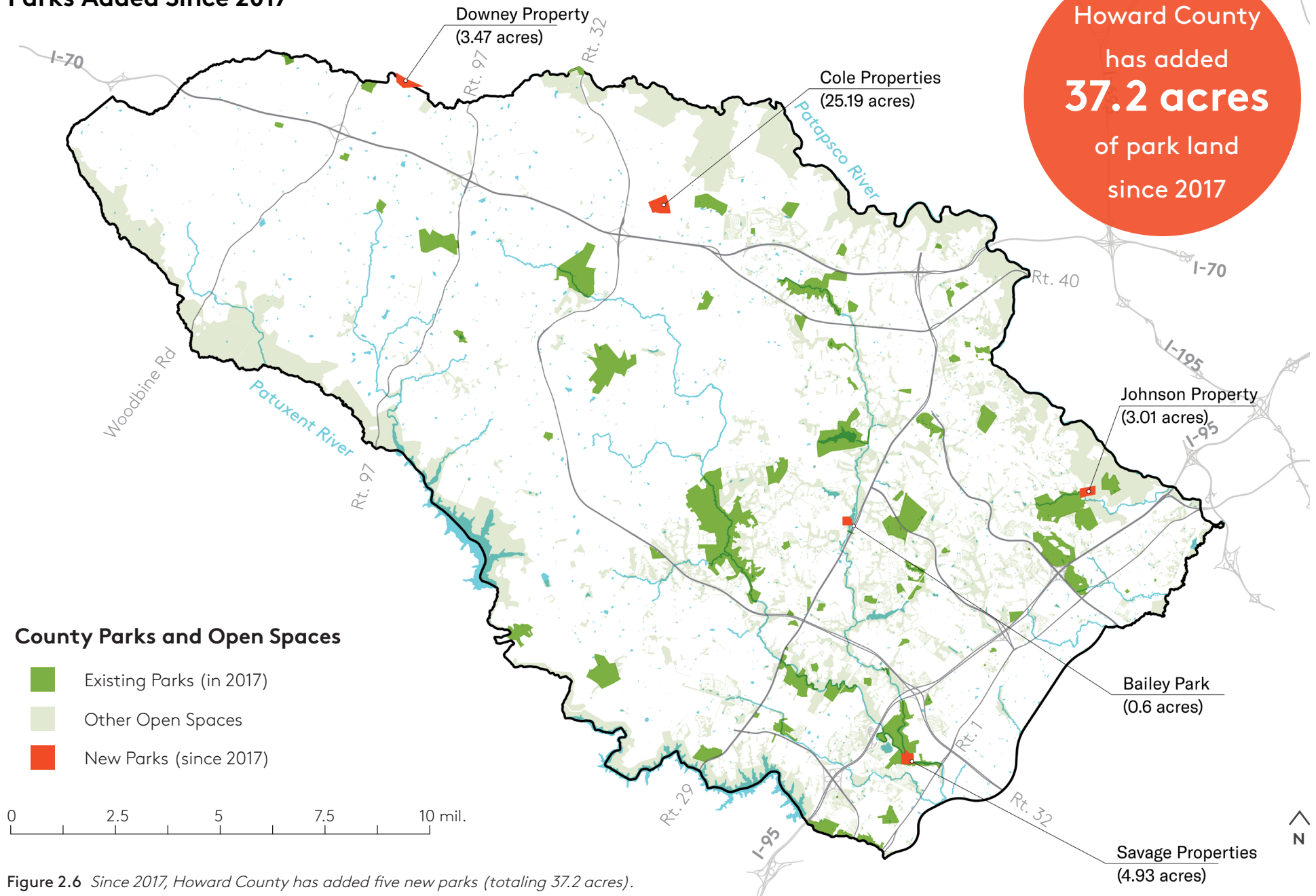


Figure 2.6 Since 2017, Howard County has added five new parks (totaling 37.2 acres).

2022 Land Acquisition Goals

The 2017 LPPRP land acquisition goals directly correlated to user demands for more trails and the urgent need to acquire land in the rural west ahead of growth pressures there, the land acquisition goals for 2022 are to provide no less than 25 acres per 1,000 residents. The County currently exceeds this goal by providing 29.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Although the County has met its goals for land acquisition, the current land acquisition goals support increased equity and access to parks for all Howard County residents in the following ways:

- Promote western land acquisition if it enhances connectivity across County-owned parcels
- Address the lack of parks in the growing northwest area of the county
- Acquire land adjacent to parks and open spaces where appropriate to expand the ecological function of parks
- Prioritize land acquisition along the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers
- Prioritize land acquisitions, amenities and facilities in areas with dense or growing populations, especially along I-95 and Route 32 corridors

Between FY23 and FY27 Howard County shall acquire new parkland in each of the five existing planning areas within the county with an awareness and effort to prioritize land acquisition within census tracts in the greatest need of improved park equity and connectivity.

County-owned recreation amenities

Amenity Counts

The Department of Recreation and Parks has been working hard to grow recreation amenities. The largest increase in amenities in the County was in Tennis and Pickleball (+9 courts), Handball (+4 courts), and Lawn Games (+21 games). Changes in amenities since the last plan are as follows:

Department of Recreation and Park Owned Amenities



Figure 2.7 The Department has increased access to amenities since 2017.

Peer Analysis

The LPPRP conducted a peer analysis in order to compare the Department's system to similar departments. Investigation into the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) database identified 125 agencies across the nation with a similar population size and budget to Howard County.¹² Populations in each agency ranged from 150,000 to 750,000 (compared to Howard County's population of 332,317 in 2020) with five-year capital budgets ranging from \$100,000 to \$305,000,000 (compared to Howard County's five-year capital budget of \$38,675,000 in 2020). When comparing against these national peers, Howard County scores at or above the national median for the number of fields, courts, and miles of trails, for the number of each amenity per 100,000 residents. There is an abundance of overlay fields, adult baseball fields, adult softball fields, and tennis courts. Howard County is particularly well-served by multi-use courts and multi-purpose fields. It has roughly double the number of these amenities than the national average.

However, there is still room to grow. The same peer analysis revealed that Howard County has a deficit in recreation centers, community centers, and indoor swimming pools. Youth soccer and softball fields also had a big deficit, however, it should be noted that this deficit is

Comparison to National Peers

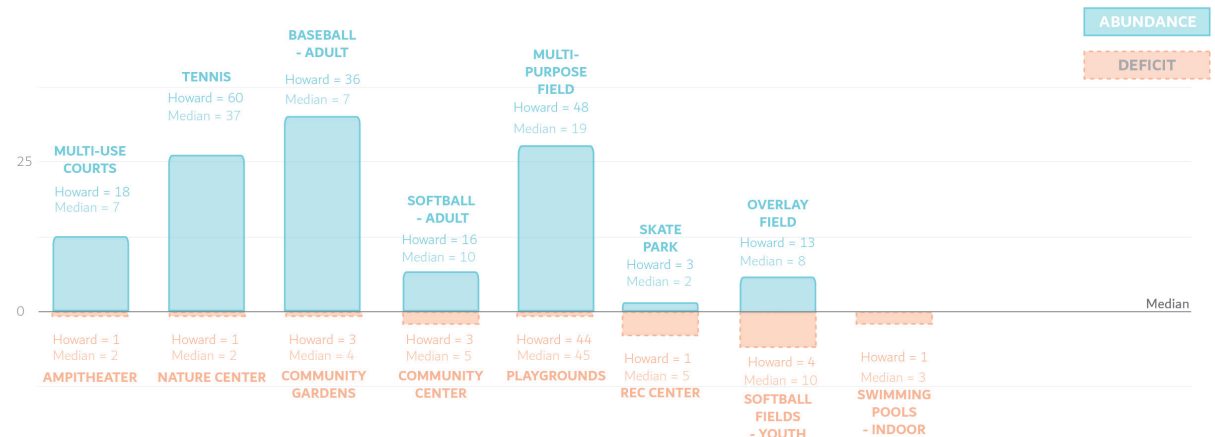


Figure 1.14 When comparing the Department to 125 agencies with similar populations and capital budgets, Howard County often had an abundance of amenities. The largest deficits remain in youth soccer and softball fields.

Comparison to Similar Peers

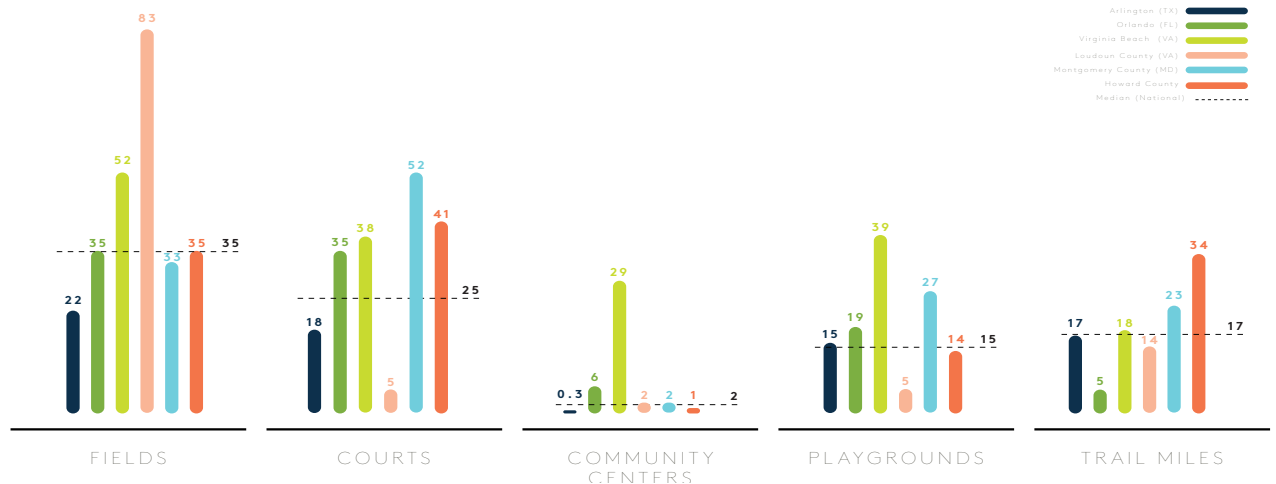


Figure 2.8 The charts above compare the top five most desired amenities across systems similar to Howard County. Counts are displayed in number of amenity per 1,000 residents. Howard County meets the median in all amenities but community centers.

partly made up by the several fields permitted through Howard County Public Schools which also contribute to the system.

While national averages are helpful to ground comparisons, it is also beneficial to include local peers and systems that are similar to Howard County in more nuanced ways. Arlington, Texas, Orlando, Florida, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Loudoun County, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland were selected as these peers.

When compared to these agencies, Howard County offered the second greatest number of acres per 1,000 residents and third largest median park size. However, it ranked last in the rate of residents that live within a ten minute walk of a park. This indicates that Howard County's system may rely on larger parks that are further from residences.

Fields, courts, community centers, playgrounds, and increased miles of trails are some of the most desired amenities within a park and recreation system. When scrutinizing the rate of each of these amenities (amenity per 100,000 residents) Howard County offered more access to courts and miles of trails. It provided roughly the median amount of fields, playgrounds, and community centers. Howard County is doing a good job providing these five amenities, as none are well below the national median.

Non-County Owned Recreation Amenities

Seasonally, the Department provides hundreds of recreation programs and events, a wide variety of services, and a number of high-quality facilities to both residents and visitors of the county. In addition to the Department, there is a very large number of other providers of these types of services within the county. As part of the five year update to the Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, this report summarizes the public, nonprofit, and private organizations that also provide a variety of recreation programs, events, and leisure services in and around Howard County. The goal of this effort is to ensure that Department staff are aware of the many opportunities that exist, to fill obvious gaps, to seek out partners when appropriate, and to reduce (or eliminate) the potential duplication of efforts.

Table 1 was originally created in 2011 as part of a study to determine duplicate services or service gaps related to recreation programming within the county. This information has been updated to depict the current programming of all of these organizations. The amenity and program types are listed in the first column with Howard County Recreation and Parks programs and services listed in the second column. The following organizations are included in this table:

Key	
HCRP	Howard County Recreation & Parks
CA	Columbia Association
HCC	Howard Community College
CCBC	Community College of Baltimore County
HCPSS	Howard County Public School System
TA	Terrapin Adventures – Adventure park located in Savage, MD
REI	Located in Columbia, MD
YMCA	Located at 4331 Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD
LF	Lifetime Fitness: Located at 7220 Lee Deforest Drive, Columbia, MD.
HC Library	Howard County Library System: multiple branches: Columbia (4), Ellicott City (2), Elkridge, Glenwood, Laurel
MC	Montgomery County
CC	Carroll County

Figure 2.9 Organizations in Similar Service Providers Report

	Howard County Recreation Programming Inventory											
Program Type	HCRP	CA	HCC	CCBC	HCPSS	TA	REI	YMCA	LF	HC Library	MC	CC
Pre-K Classes & Activities (0-4 years)	X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X
Camps (0-4 years)	X							X	X		X	X
Youth Classes & Activities (5-10 years)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Camps (5-10 years)	X	X		X		X		X	X		X	X
Tweens & Teens Classes & Activities (11-17 years)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Camps (11-17 years)	X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X
Adults Classes & Activities (18+ years)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adults Classes & Activities (55+ years)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Aquatics	X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
Fitness Centers	X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
Child Care	X	X						X				
Special Events & Family Activities	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Therapeutic Recreation & Inclusion Services	X										X	X
Trips & Tours	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X
Volunteer Opportunities	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X

Figure 2.10 Table 1: Howard County Recreation Programming Inventory in Similar Service Provider Report

In addition to the organizations listed in Table 1, there are a number of other public and private organizations throughout the county that provide recreation programs and services. These organizations include nonprofits and private organizations. Unlike the organizations included in Table 1, these organizations typically offer one or two specific opportunities or target a specific age group or interest. Importantly, this review included an assessment of external swimming amenities, which ranked as the most desired amenity by residents as part of the statistically valid community survey conducted in 2021.

Nonprofits

One of the largest providers of recreation and leisure opportunities within the county is the nonprofit Columbia Association (included in Table 1). Following Maryland State parks at 57%, a total of 36% of survey respondents indicated that they utilized the Columbia Association for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months. Located in Columbia, MD, this organization offers its residents the following:

- Three full-service fitness centers
- Five tennis clubs
- Four indoor swimming pools/one hot water therapy pool

- 23 outdoor swimming pools (including two mini water parks)
- An art center
- A dog park
- An ice rink
- A sports park
- Two golf courses: Fairway Hills Golf Club and Hobbit's Glen Golf Club
- A volunteer center
- Youth & teen center
- 3,600 acres of open space that include parks, lakes, tot lots, basketball courts, and 95 miles of pathways

In addition to providing the facilities listed above, the Columbia Association also provides a number of programs including youth programs, camps, before and after school care, school's out programs, martial arts, teen programs, programs for mature adults, fitness, swimming, art, tennis, ice skating, adults sports leagues (basketball, racquetball, and volleyball), special events, sustainable initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and an international exchange program. These programs are also available to non-residents for a higher fee.

Other notable nonprofit providers of recreation type services within the county are divided into five categories including:

- Early childhood and camps
- Programs for people with disabilities or dealing with serious illness
- Youth sports and general recreation
- Performing Arts
- STEM/environmental education programming

Private Organizations Providing Recreation in the County

In addition to the many nonprofit organizations, there are a number of private entities in the county that provide recreation and leisure opportunities to residents. For the purposes of this report, these organizations are divided into childcare, fitness and youth sports. Table 7 includes all of the private organizations offering childcare services to county residents.

There are a wide range of private fitness facilities within Howard County. Although many of these facilities changed their operations due to COVID-19 (less offerings

and smaller classes), they are all open and providing services. Table 8 includes the listing of private fitness facilities within the county. It should be noted that 14 out of the 23 opportunities (nearly 61%) are located within Columbia and this does not include the facilities of the Columbia Association.

Swimming Opportunities

Based on the results of the statistically valid community survey, more indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities are desired. Table 10 provides a listing of indoor swimming pools and table 11 provides a listing of outdoor swimming pools in Howard County. This information does not include the 23 outdoor pools and four indoor pools owned and operated by the nonprofit Columbia Association (Columbia Athletic Club, Columbia Gym, Columbia Swim Center, and the Supreme Sports Club).

HOA Amenities

There are various amenities owned by Homeowners Associations (HOA) across Howard County that are accessible to some Howard County residents and fulfill a recreational need in certain areas. These amenities include the pools at the Maple Lawn Community Center and Fairway Hills Apartments, the fitness centers at Supreme Sports Club and LifeTime Columbia, and the Cattail and Turf Valley Country Clubs.

State-owned amenities

In addition to County-owned parks, Howard County residents have access to two major state parks, the Patapsco Valley State Park and the Patuxent River State Park. Within these state parks, there are several trails and water access points, such as the Daniels Area on the Patapsco River. There is also the Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area managed by the Wildlife and Heritage Services Division of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources that contains trails available for use by hikers and hunters.



Figure 2.11 There are a wide variety of amenities offered throughout the County from similar providers.

Access

Methodology

While it is telling to examine the number of each amenity the system provides, it is equally important to analyze how easy it is to access these amenities. Barriers like a lack of public transportation, amenities located far away from residences, and long drive times between amenities can make these attributes difficult to access. In order to analyze the accessibility of amenities, two different metrics were used. In denser areas of the county, such as Elkridge, Columbia, Southeast, and Ellicott City an amenity, park, open space, or facility was deemed accessible if it is within either a ten minute walk or a five-minute drive. The ten minute walk metric was determined using walksheds based on park access points, such as entrances or exits. In the Rural West Planning District, where farmland creates less density and rates of vehicle access are higher, an amenity, park, open space, or facility was deemed accessible if it is within a five to fifteen-minute drive.

County + State Parks

Howard County's system is very accessible if a resident has access to a car. In the county, 73% of land area is within a five-minute drive to a park. However, accessibility greatly decreases on foot. Only 10% of Howard

County's land area is within a ten minute walk to a County park. It is also prudent to analyze the accessibility of specific amenities that Howard County residents wish to be close to, such as playgrounds, fields, grills, or swimming facilities. Examining the location and accessibility of highly desired amenities also reveals if access is equitable across the system, and can inform where the County may want to invest in new amenities in

geographic areas where there is higher need. It should also be noted that while this analysis primarily concerns County Parks, there are other privately-owned parks and trails that are publicly accessible across the county and contribute to the system, especially in Columbia.

Access Methodology

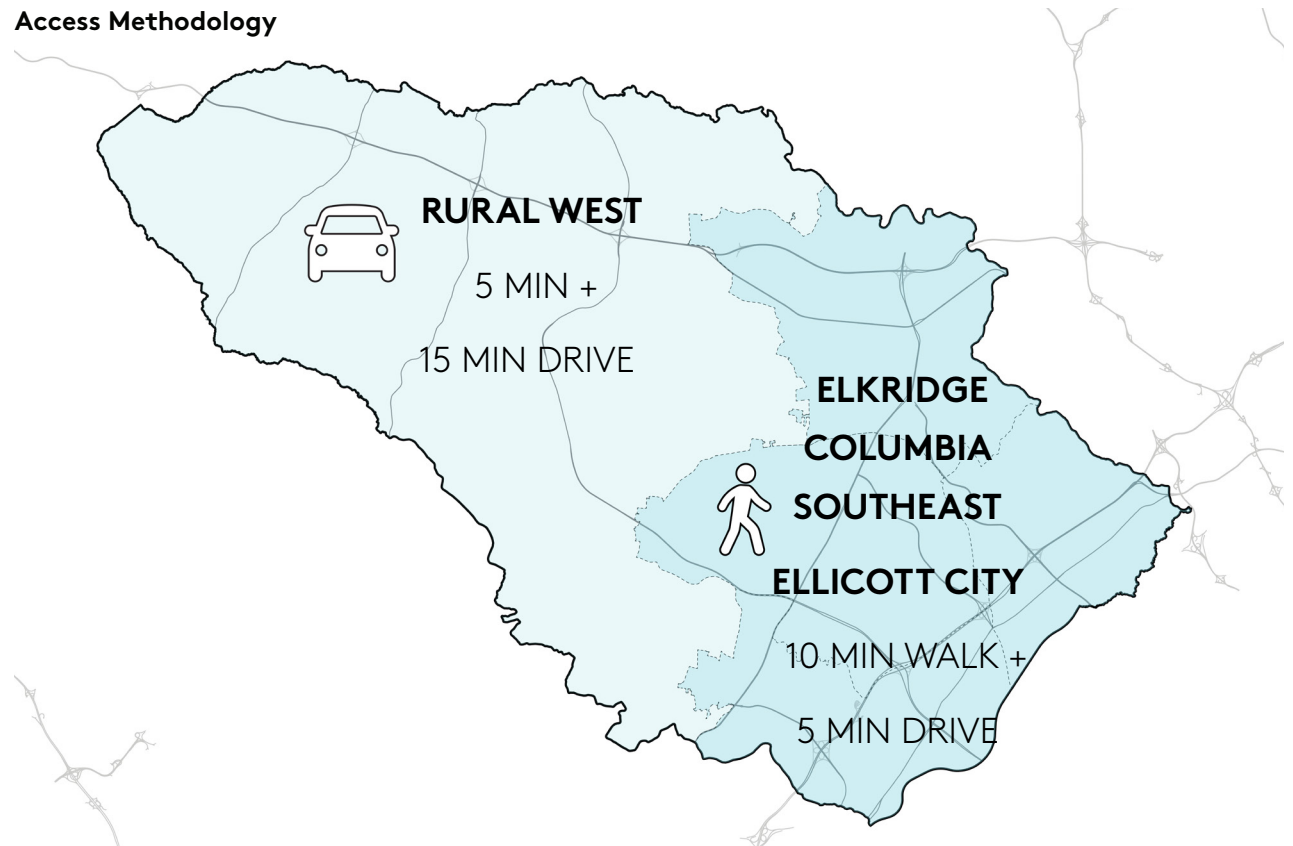


Figure 2.12 Due to a large number of farms in the Rural West, different definitions of “access” were used to determine if amenities are located in equitably accessible locations.

Access to Howard County's Parks

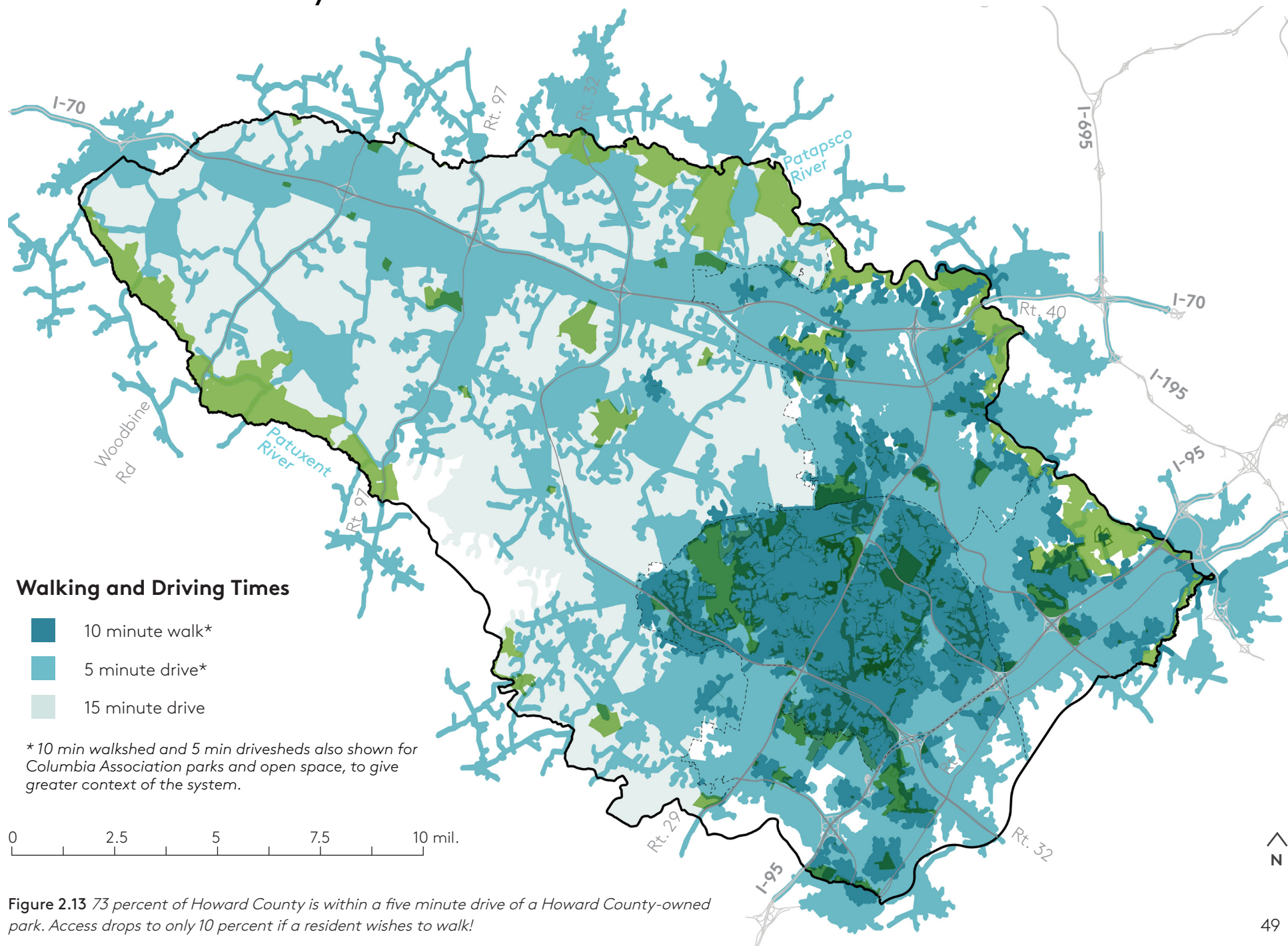


Figure 2.13 73 percent of Howard County is within a five minute drive of a Howard County-owned park. Access drops to only 10 percent if a resident wishes to walk!

Playgrounds

In Howard County, 34.8 percent of land area is within a five-minute drive of a playground. Columbia offers the highest access, with 65 percent of land area within a five-minute drive of a County-owned playground. It should be noted that Columbia also has access to 15 playgrounds and 170 tot lots provided by the Columbia Association which are available for public access.¹³ Additionally, playgrounds provided by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and mostly located at Howard County Elementary Schools also contribute to the system.

Ellicott City has the lowest access when compared to other planning areas in the East, with 47.2% of land area being within a five-minute drive to a County-owned playground.

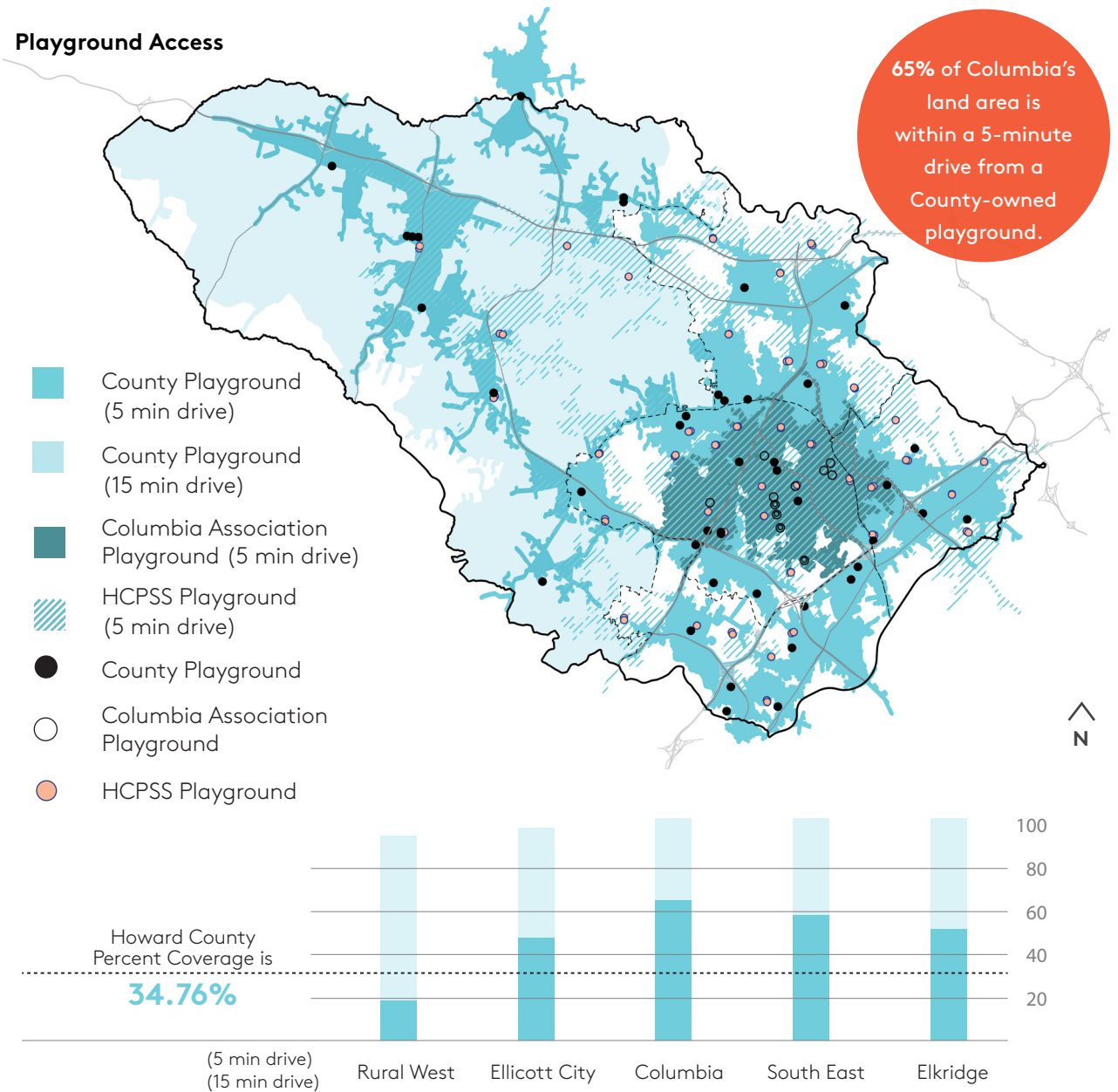


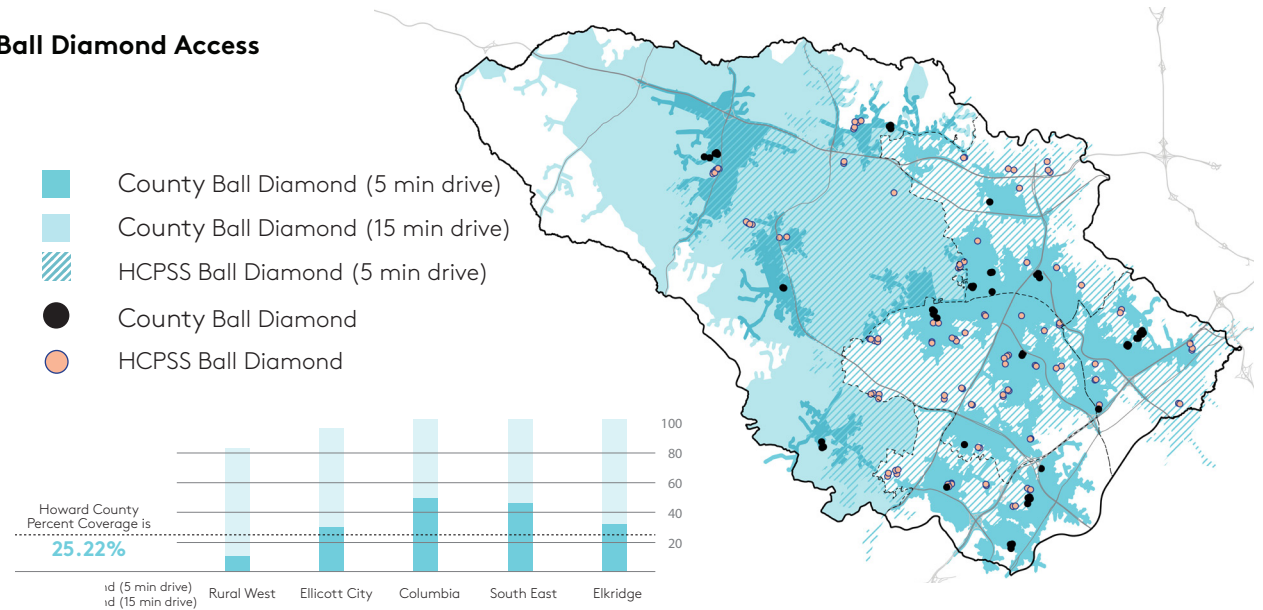
Figure 2.14 Playground access in the County.

Fields

Howard County is almost equally served by both multi-purpose fields and ball diamonds. Within the county, 23.7 percent of land area is within a five-minute drive to a multi-purpose field, while 25.2 percent of Howard County's land area is within a five-minute drive to a ball diamond. Columbia has the highest access to ball diamonds and multi-purpose fields, where 50 percent of the planning area's land area is within a five-minute drive from a ball diamond, and 62 percent of the planning area's land area is within a five-minute drive from a multi-purpose field.

The Southeast has the lowest access to multi-purpose fields, where only 11.8 percent of its land area is within a five-minute drive of a multi-purpose field. It should be noted that there is partial general access to fields provided by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Ball Diamond Access



Cricket + Multipurpose Field Access

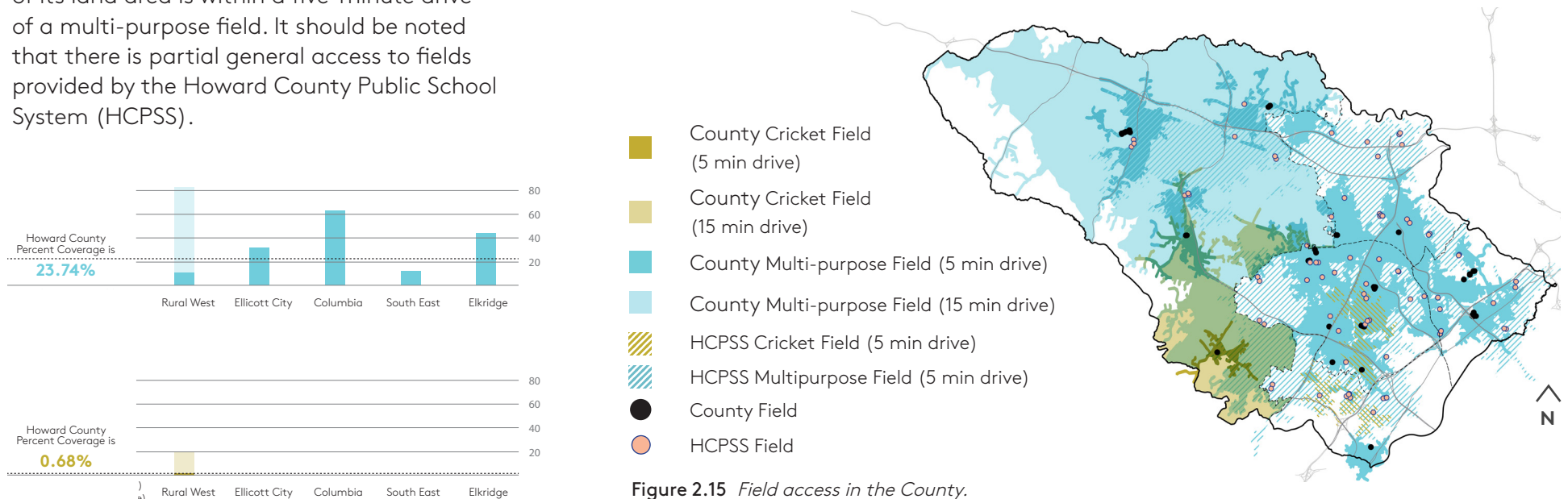


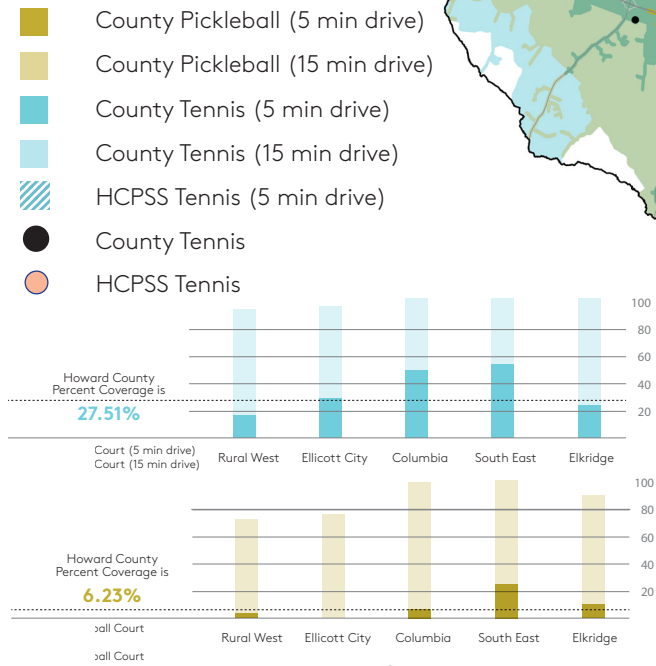
Figure 2.15 Field access in the County.

Courts

Pockets of Howard County are well served by courts. Within the Southeast, 73 percent of land is within a five-minute drive from a tennis or pickleball court. In comparison, 64 percent of land area within Columbia, is within a five-minute drive from a basketball, racquetball, or handball court. Others are less served. For example, there are no pickleball courts in Ellicott City. It should be noted that there is partial general access to courts provided by Howard County Public Schools, which also contribute to the system.



Court Access



- County Handball (5 min drive)
- County Handball (15 min drive)
- County Racquetball (5 min drive)
- County Racquetball (15 min drive)
- County Basketball (5 min drive)
- County Basketball (15 min drive)
- HCPSS Basketball (5 min drive)
- County Basketball
- HCPSS Basketball

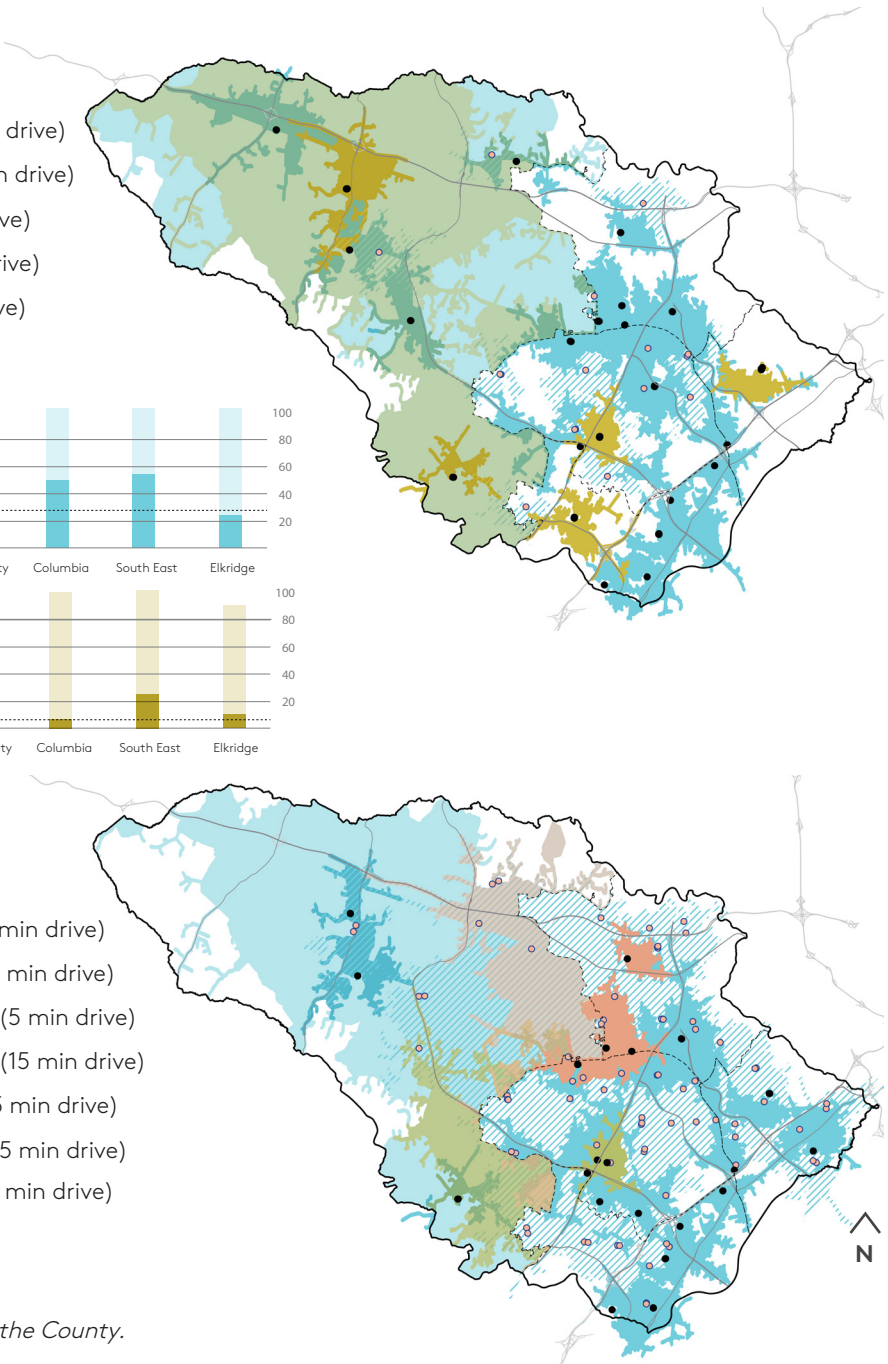


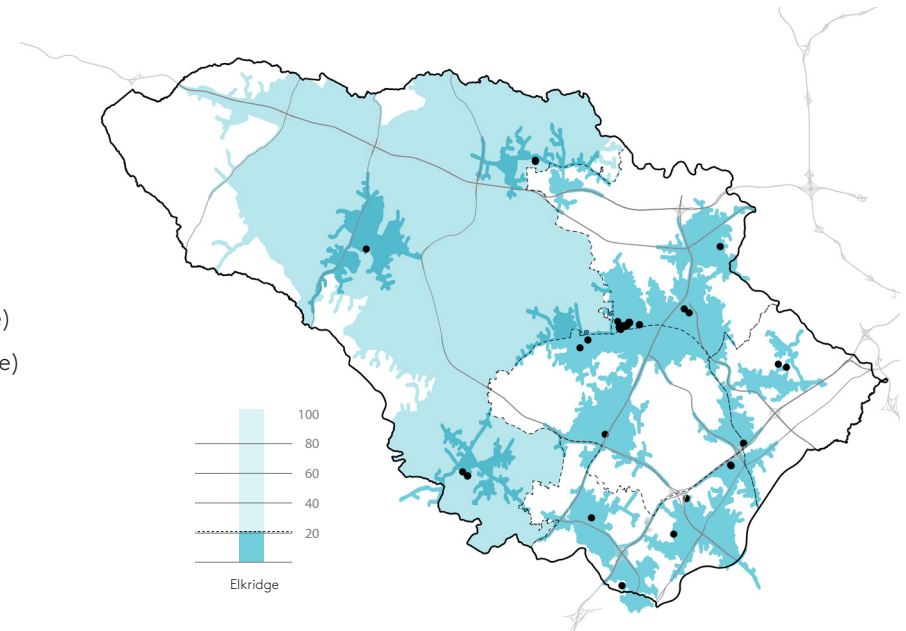
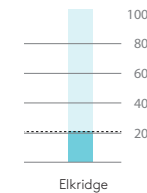
Figure 2.16 Court access in the County.

Leisure Activities

Leisure activities consist of lawn games and places to grill. Columbia is best served in accessibility to lawn games, where 58 percent of its land area is within a five-minute drive of amenities like a croquet field, bocce court, and horseshoe court. Southeast and Elkrige have the least amount of access, as they do not have any bocce courts or croquet fields. Columbia and Southeast have the best access to grill areas, where 38 percent of Columbia's land area is within a five-minute drive from a grill, and in Southeast, 51 percent. Elkrige has the lowest access to grills, where 22 percent of Elkrige's land area is within a five-minute drive from a grill.

Grills

- County Grill (5 min drive)
- County Grill (15 min drive)



Lawn Games

- County Croquet (5 min drive)
- County Croquet (15 min drive)
- County Boccee (5 min drive)
- County Boccee (15 min drive)
- County Horseshoe (5 min drive)
- County Horseshoe (15 min drive)

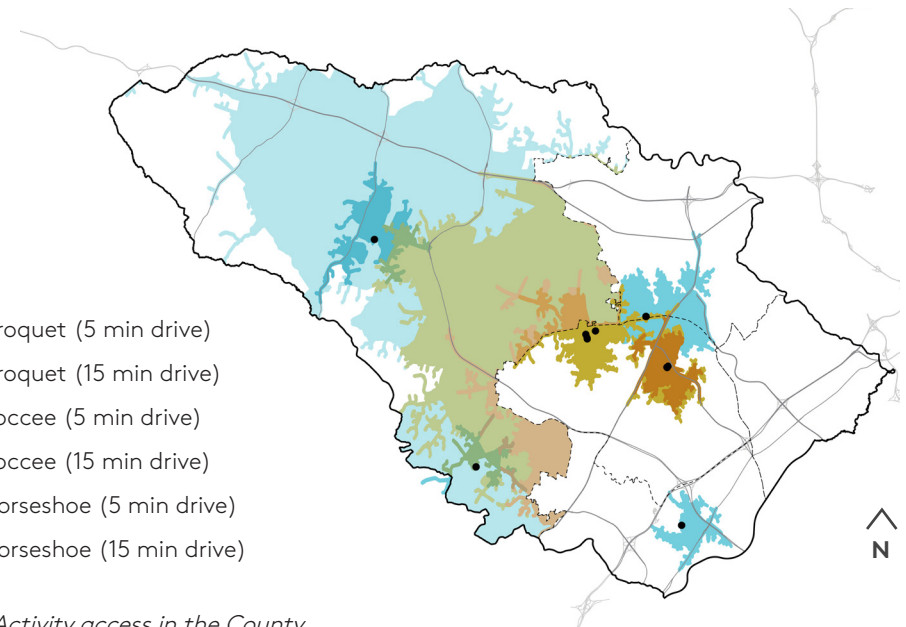
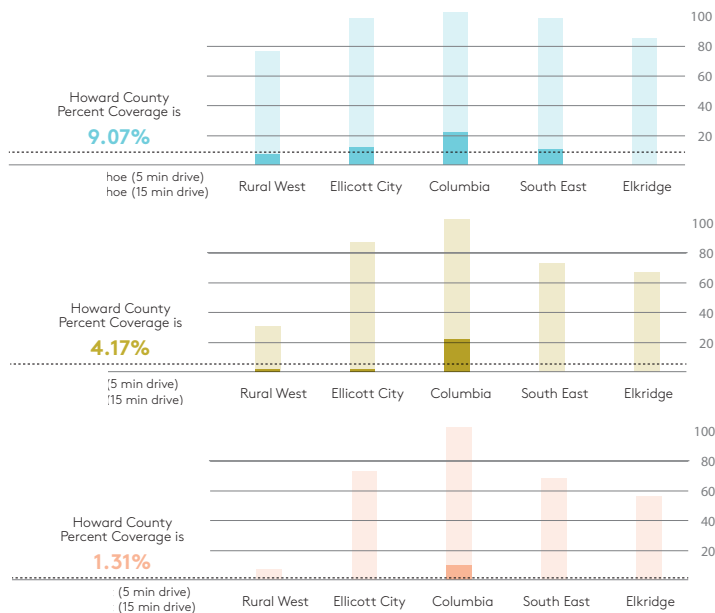


Figure 2.17 Leisure Activity access in the County.

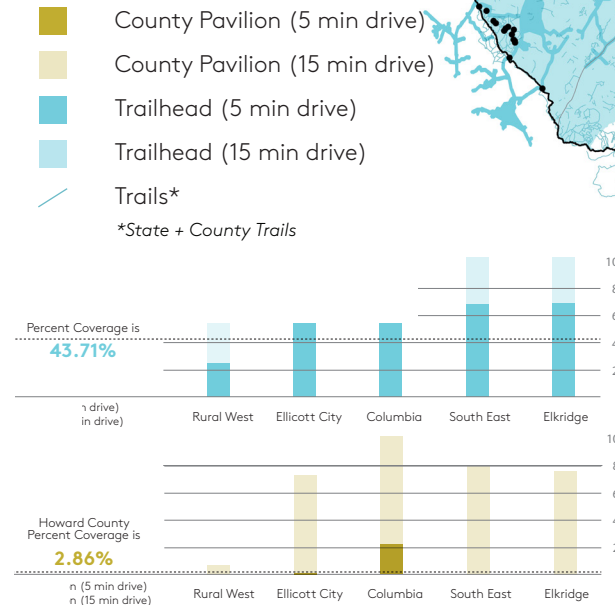
Trails and Water Access

Access to both trails and water are highly sought after in Howard County, and trails ranked as the second most desired amenity by residents in the statistically valid community survey. Over 43.7 percent of Howard County's land area is within a five-minute drive of a trail head. Accessibility increases within Ellicott City, Columbia, Southeast, and Elkridge, where 65 percent of land is within a five-minute drive of a trailhead.

Ellicott City is the most accessible to boat ramps and fishing areas, where 31 percent of its land area is within a five-minute drive. Elkridge has no boat ramps or fishing areas. It should be noted that all fishing areas require a state fishing license.¹⁴ It should also be noted that in Columbia, the Columbia Association allows public fishing access at Lake Elkhorn, Wilde Lake, and Jackson Pond. State waters and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission waters also allow public access for fishing with a state license.



Trail + Pavilion Access



Water Access

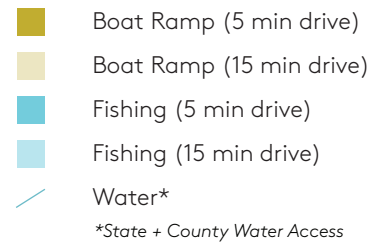


Figure 2.18 Trails, Pavilion, and Water Access in the County.

Swimming

Swimming pools and splash pads are the least publicly accessible amenities in Howard County. This is often the case, as these facilities are expensive to create and upkeep over time. In Howard County, only two percent of the land area is within a five-minute drive of a swimming pool or splash pad. Ellicott City has the highest coverage, with 16.3 percent of the district within a five-minute drive of the one swimming pool in the county which is at Roger Carter Community Center.

While there aren't currently any County-provided swimming pools or water play opportunities in Columbia, Southeast, Elkridge, or the Rural West, there are a number of privately-owned pools that contribute to the system. In Columbia, the Columbia Association allows its residents access to 4 indoor pools and 23 outdoor pools.¹⁵ Additionally, across Howard County, various private organizations offer access to 4 indoor pools and 7 outdoor pools.

Swimming Access

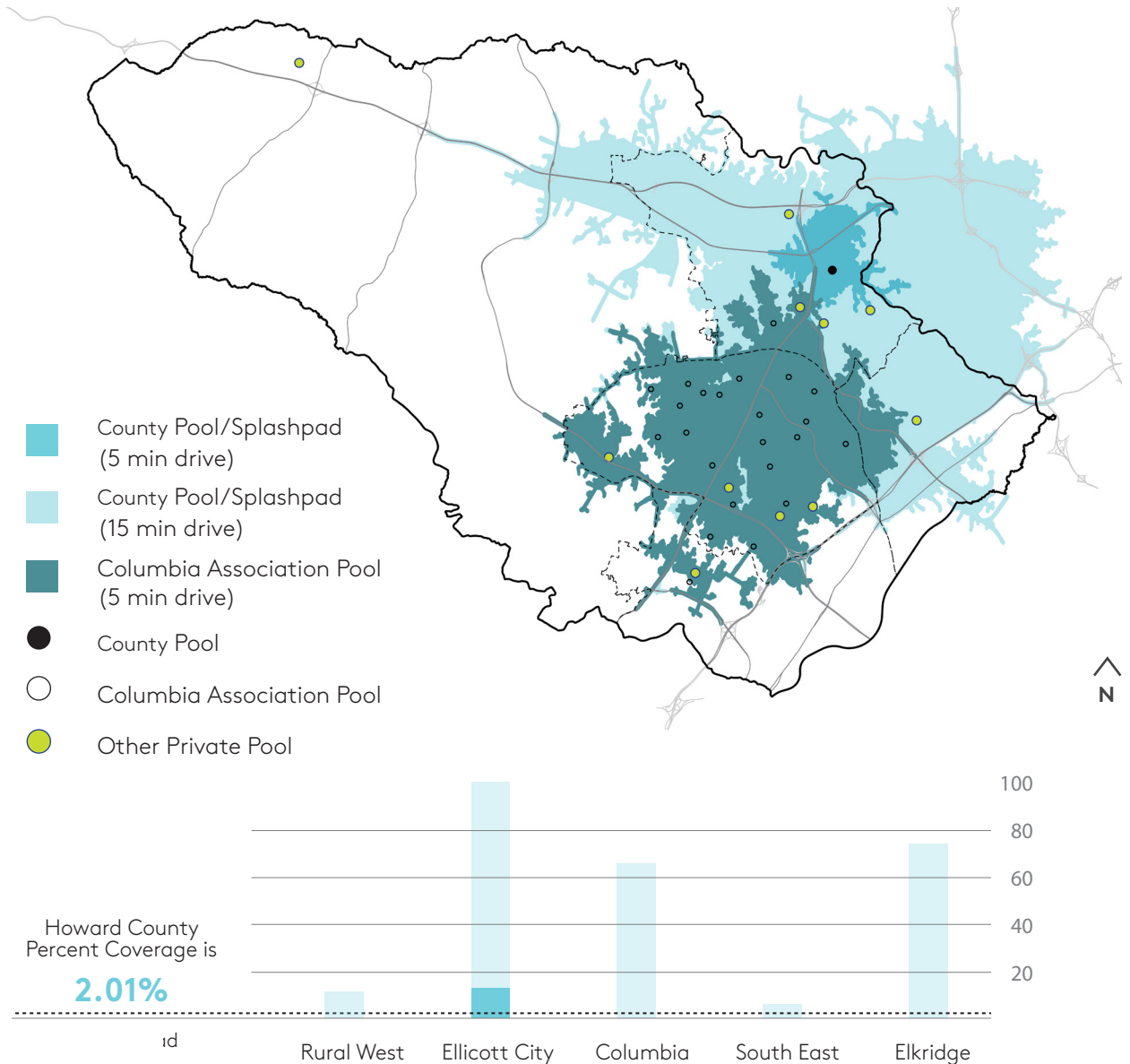


Figure 2.19 Swimming access in the County.

Implementation

Addressing the challenges and supporting the strengths of Howard County's open space and park system will require the utilization of as many tools as possible. The following list includes some of Howard County's most powerful and meaningful resources:

IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS

Programs and funding sources used by the County to help achieve land preservation, parks and recreation goals include:

Program Open Space

Created in 1969, Program Open Space (POS) is a state-level initiative that aims to finance the acquisition of land for open space and recreation purposes.¹⁶ When a home is purchased, 0.5% of the transfer tax collected at the sale of a property is allocated to the Maryland Program Open Space fund, which is then disbursed to the counties each fiscal year. The system was created to directly tie development to available funding for open space and recreational facilities. While this system is the major funder of open space acquisition in the State, and specifically within the County, there is an opportunity to increase

available funds with a county-specific tax that could be channeled into county-specific agricultural and land needs.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

This is a federally funded program that provides 50 percent matching grants to state and local governments for acquiring and/or developing public outdoor recreational areas and facilities.¹⁷ Municipalities and counties are eligible for up to a 50 percent matching fund assistance from the LWCF, with Program Open Space or Community Parks and Playground grants used as the match. Development and acquisition projects must be completed within three years from the provided start date.

Sustainable Communities designation

Established in 2010, this designation promotes efficient use of scarce state resources based on local sustainability and revitalization strategies.¹⁸ It is a place-based designation that offers resources to support projects focused on community development, revitalization, and sustainability, such as pocket parks or environmentally sustainable building development. Sustainable Community Areas are designated as places that achieve the following:

- Development of healthy local economy
- Protection and appreciation of historical/cultural resources
- A mix of land uses
- Affordable and sustainable housing, employment options
- Growth and development practices that protect the environment, conserve natural resources, encourage walkability and recreational opportunities, and create access to transit

To participate, municipal and county governments submit an application defining a geographic area in need of revitalization, along with a sustainable community action plan.



Figure 2.20 Aerial View of Schooley Mill Park.

Programs

THE SYSTEM TODAY

For decades, the Department of Recreation and Parks has been dedicated to protecting the health of the County's residents and visitors. As a part of the LPPRP process, an assessment of the Department's recreation program menu has identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future direction, establishing goals for the next five years based on recent insights and findings.

It is clear that the Department has consistently created a myriad of opportunities for leisure activities that pull participants from across the region. This regional draw creates a competitive market for public and private entities. Despite this, engagement in programs among underrepresented age groups and demographics remains uneven and has the potential to be greatly improved in the future.

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

The Recreation Bureau is made up of three divisions that provide recreation programming, with each focusing on the following services:

- Recreation Services (RS): recreation programs and services that relate to

arts, crafts, dance, special events, and children and adult leisure classes, camps, and programs. Oversee volunteer and community center management.

- Sports and Adventure Services (SAS): promotes active lifestyles through instructional programs and community partnerships. It offers programs such as sports instruction and leagues, hikes, camping and campfires, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, skiing and tubing, boating classes, nature programs, and rock climbing.
- Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services (RLCCS): childcare programs from ages 3 to 11 (licensed through Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care), teen programs for 13 to 18 year olds, therapeutic recreation and accommodation services, community outreach, and trips and tours and sports and fitness for the active adult community ages 55 and up.



Figure 2.21 Laura's Place "Play-For-All" Playground at Blandair Regional Park.

ASSESSMENT OF RECREATION PROGRAMS

Strengths

There are various strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that we have identified by analyzing Howard County's recreational programs. As seen in Figure 2.27, over the past 3 years, 11 of the 19 categories increased program offerings between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2019-2020. The categories with the largest percent increase were drop-in activities, trips & tours, and lifelong learning (75.0%, 66.7% and 61.2% increase respectively).

There has been a steady incline in Recreation Services and Sports and Adventure Services over the past three years. Additionally, there is a clear diversity of program categories that are offered within the program menu. Therapeutic Recreation programming variety is very strong, as are opportunities in nontraditional programming such as challenge courses and extreme sports.

The Department of Recreation and Parks provides a robust menu of programming. DRP staff have identified special events, therapeutic recreation, active aging, and summer camps as specific programmatic strengths. These programs, along with aquatics and swimming, fitness, outdoor

Annual Program Offerings by Activity Category

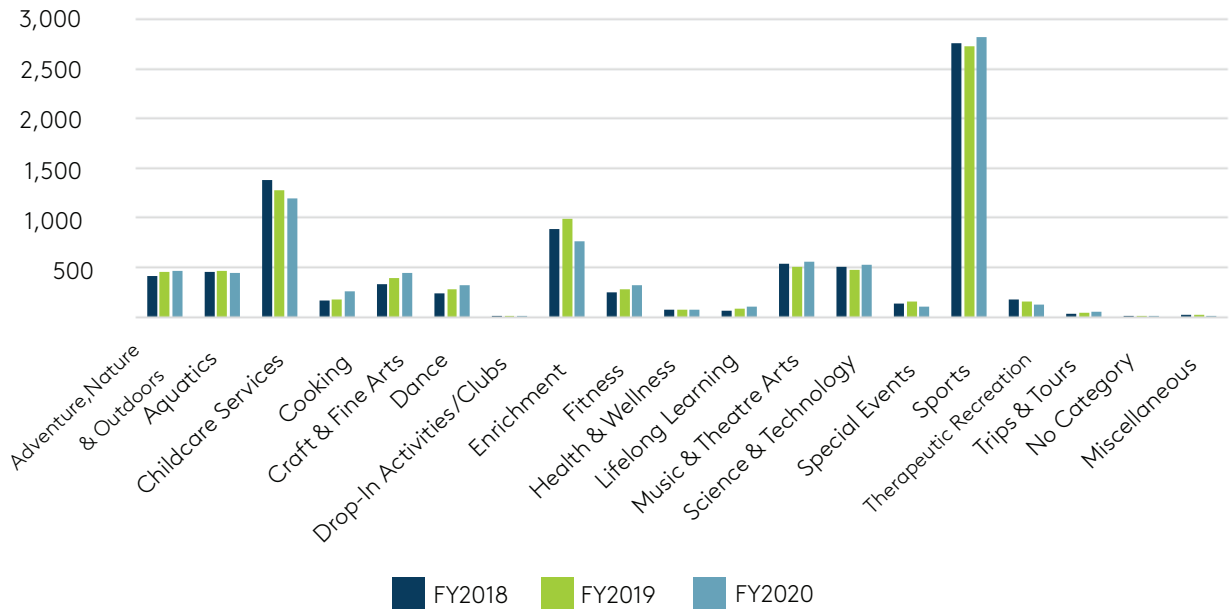


Figure 2.22 Program Categories and Number of Offerings, FY 2019

adventure, arts and culture, and life skills can be capitalized and expanded upon as they perform well.

Lastly, the program guide remains a clear strength within the department, as it is informative, clear, and remains the most popular way residents stay informed about programs and registration. When asked whether they used the seasonal program guide, 68% of survey respondents replied "yes",

reflecting a percentage that is 34 percentage points higher than the national average.

Weaknesses

Despite the strength of programs and activities, DRP surveys show that unmet programmatic needs remain in therapeutic recreation, active aging, and special events and summer camps. Survey participants expressed the desire for more aquatic

programming and that programming should be more affordable overall.

Opportunities

Based on a graph of program offerings by day of week, it is clear that programs are not as evenly distributed on the weekends, and there is an opportunity to increase these programs on Saturdays and Sundays in order to reach households who prefer to participate on the weekend or cannot attend programs during the week.

There are also specific program categories that represent opportunities for program menu expansion, such as horseback riding, e-sports, and ice skating/hockey. Programming for older adults can also be expanded. Additionally, while the program guide remains a strong tool for creating awareness of seasonal recreational programs at County facilities, it could also be valuable for the program guide to help promote opportunities at the County's park sites and trails.

Measuring User Demand

As part of the Recreation Program Assessment, it was critical to understand program performance. Data was collected on registration, total enrollment, participation rates, and types of programs offered over

Number of Recreational Licensed Childcare (RLC) Activities Offered

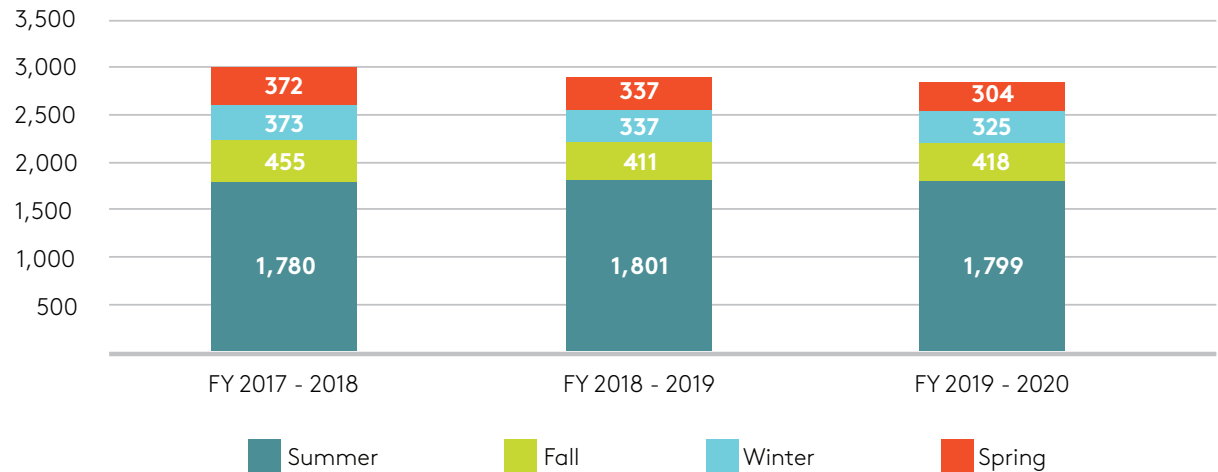


Figure 2.23 The number of Recreational Licensed Childcare courses decreased slightly from 2017.

2019 Opportunities for Program Expansion by Day of Week (Non-Child Care)

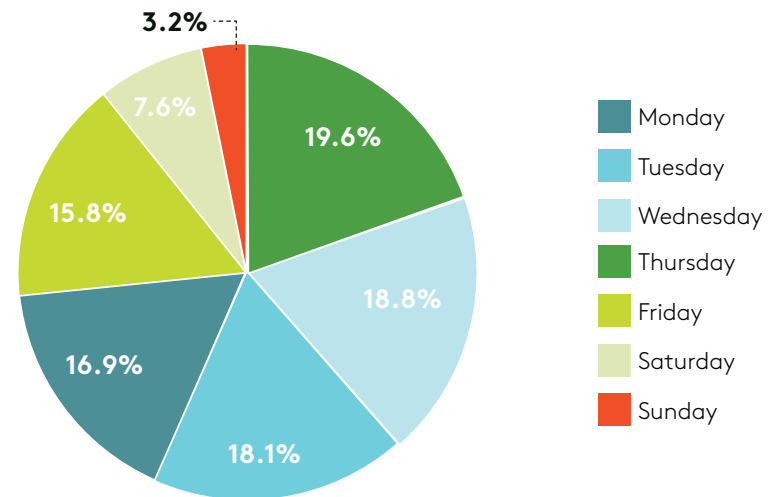


Figure 2.24 Program offerings could be increased over the weekend to increase access to households who cannot attend programs during the week.

the past three years. As shown in Figure 2.30, total enrollment decreased in 2019-2020 for Recreation Services (RS) and Sports and Adventure Services (SAS) and Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services (RLCCS). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DRP suspended Spring 2020 recreation programming, resulting in lower enrollment rates for the year overall. The facilities that house DRP recreation programming, such as public school building and community centers, were temporarily closed per physical distancing mandates, and DRP was unable to host its recreation programming. As a result, total enrollment for the 2019-2020 fiscal year decreased significantly due to the suspension of programming and enrollment rates may not fully capture user demand due to these extenuating circumstances.

Overall, the Departments' total enrollment from all three divisions decreased from 107,842 in 2018-2019, to 84,746 in 2019-2020.

The most notable shift between seasons was an increase of nearly 2,000 participants in Fall 2019 for RS and SAS compared to the previous fall season.

In discussions with the community during the Public Steering Committee Presentation, there was much discussion around needs for additional swimming pools and aquatic

Total Enrollment: RS and SAS

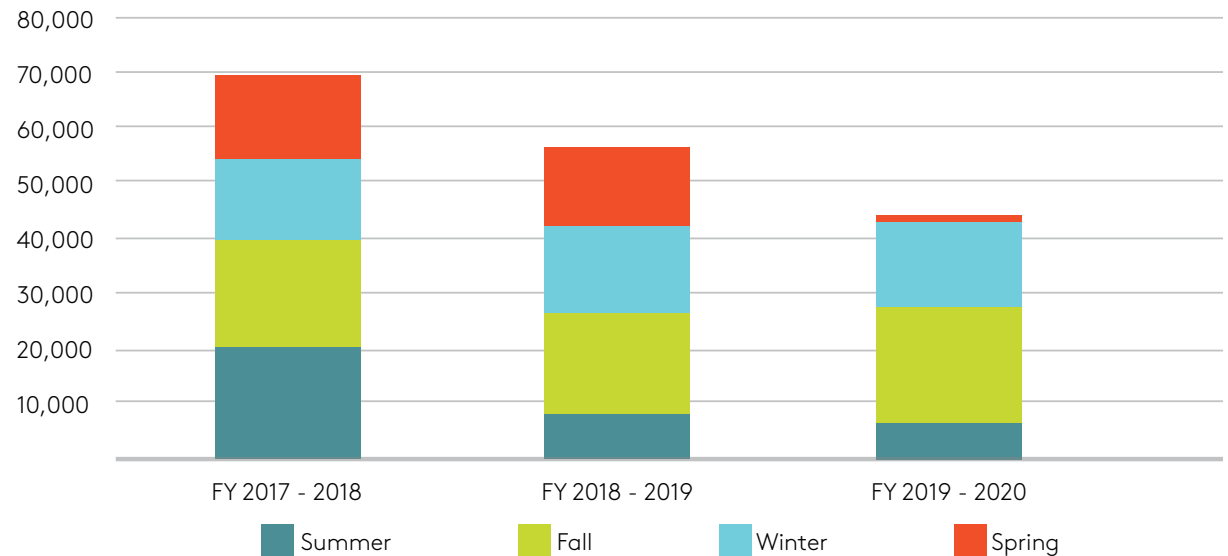


Figure 1.15 Total Enrollment for Recreation Services and Sports and Adventure Services over 2017-2020. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the Department's ability to provide recreation services in Spring 2020.

Total Enrollment: RLCCS

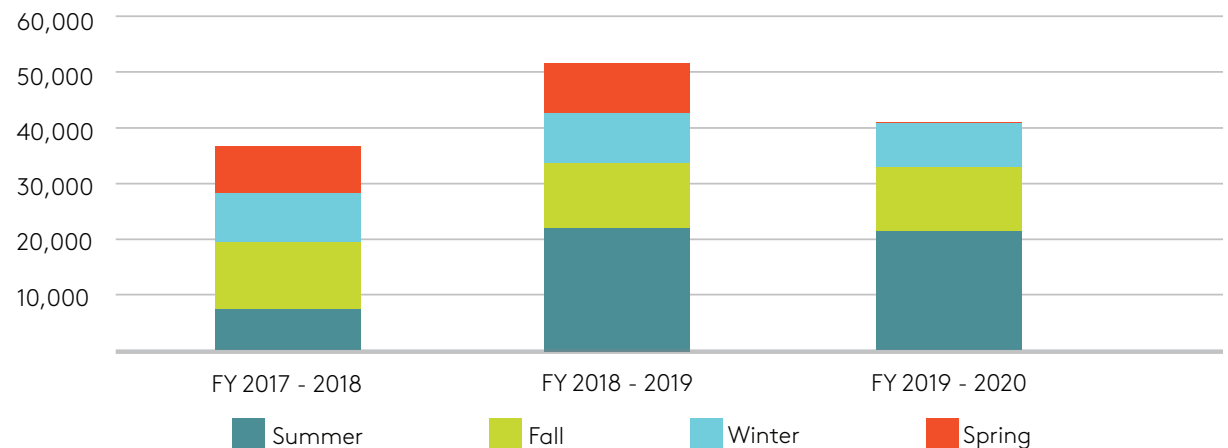


Figure 2.25 Total Enrollment for Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services over 2017-2020. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the Department's ability to provide recreation services in Spring 2020.

Resident Demand for Facilities

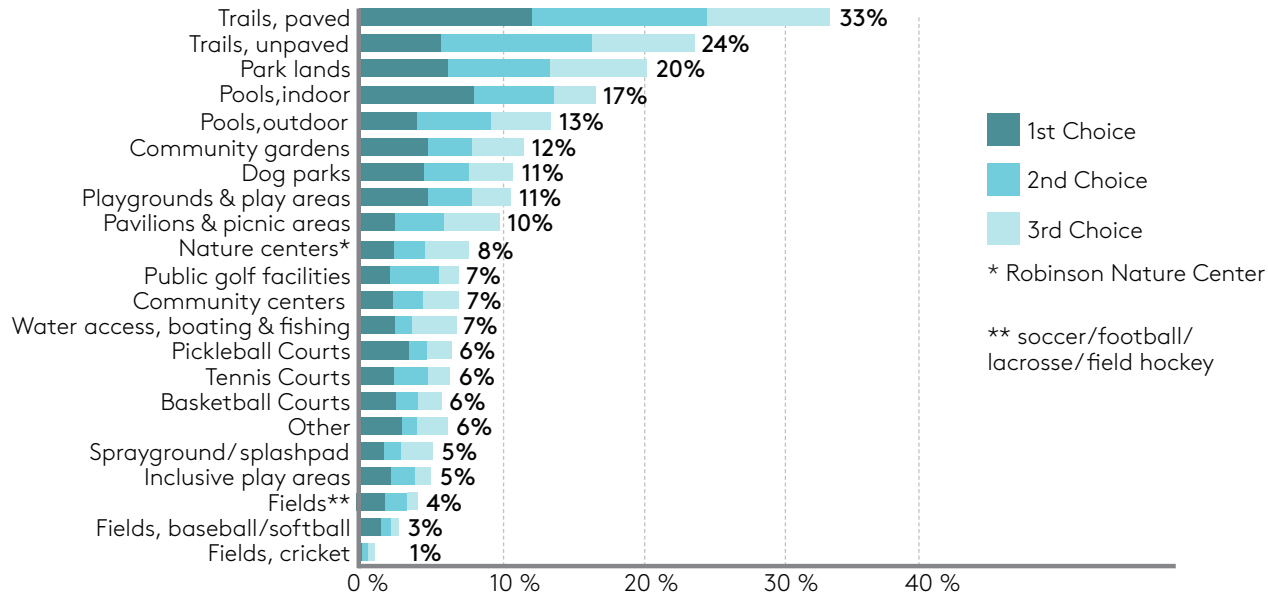


Figure 1.16 Residents would like to see more investment in paved and unpaved trails, parklands, and indoor pools.

Resident Demand for Programs

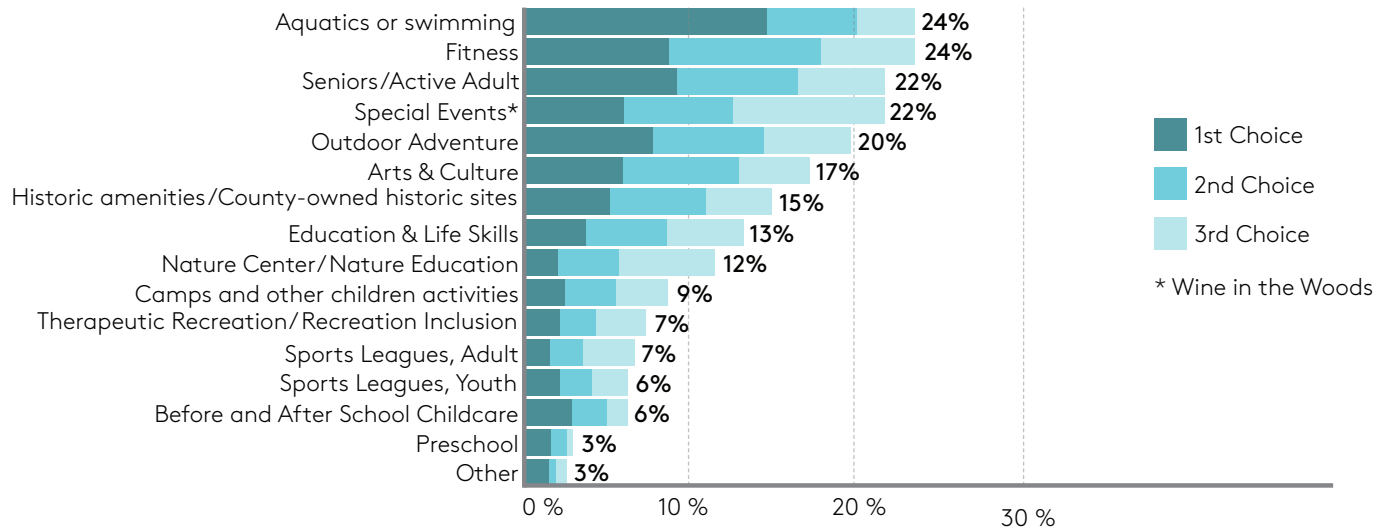


Figure 2.26 Residents would like more aquatics, fitness, seniors/active adult, and special events programming.

facilities. There is high demand and long waitlists for swimming lessons, therapeutic recreation, and the childcare program.

Additionally, according to results from the Statistically Valid Survey, the four parks and recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: paved trails (80%), park lands (71%), unpaved trails (61%), and pavilions and picnic areas (59%). ETC Institute also estimated a total of 24,316 households in Howard County that have unmet needs for indoor pools.

NATIONAL TRENDS

Understanding trends can allow Howard County to plan for current and potential participants and determine where to direct additional resources. The following types of trends were explored in this report, and can be used by staff when planning for new programs, parks and recreation amenities, and making updates to the annual budget and capital improvement plan.

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental stewardship remains an important general trend to 80% of agencies nationwide, with agencies providing education and awareness opportunities.

Technology

Embracing the use of technology remains important for parks and recreation agencies, from charting data on invasive species to the creation of Wi-Fi enabled smart parks that allow visitors to remain connected while still being outdoors. The use of technology can also help increase park usage, through visitor sharing of images, events and activities through social media. Additionally, digital displays and mobile apps accessible in parks can serve as environmental or historic education tools, and can even be used in ways to assist park staff with reporting maintenance issues from a geotagged location when visiting parks.

Outdoor Adventure

Outdoor Adventure Activities remain a strong trend. As of June 2020, bicycle sales increased 63% nationally compared to June 2019. Additional outdoor activities remain popular, including paddle sports, camping, bird watching and outdoor walking and running clubs.

Partnerships

Partnerships between public, private and interdepartmental partners remain crucial to meeting the programming needs of

a community. These types of partners include public libraries, school districts, non-profits, and other private entities which can oftentimes fulfill a gap in specific, niche program areas.

Niche Programming

Recreation agencies are focusing on a more holistic approach to program offerings, and starting to offer programs and services targeted at specialty audiences. Some of these audiences include people in the LGBTQIA+ community, retirees, military veterans, cancer patients, people needing mental health support, and individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. In addition to this kind of niche programming, there has been an increase in the number of offerings for families with children of all ages, with a focus on programming for families with teens. This trend represents a departure from previous trends that focused almost entirely on younger children, and encourages more multigenerational play experiences.

Animal-Friendly Facilities

With 90 million dogs residing nationwide, Animal-Friendly Facilities such as dog parks continue to be the fastest growing type of park, especially in urban areas.

Fitness Playgrounds

Fitness Playgrounds are becoming a recent trend that can be used by children and adults, offering experiences for beginner, intermediate and advanced visitors.

Fitness Trends

Each year, the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) conducts a survey of worldwide fitness trends. Now in its 15th year, the ACSM circulates an electronic survey to thousands of fitness professionals around the world to determine health and fitness trends. The COVID-19 outbreak certainly impacted the results of the survey with the top trend now Online Training, which was number 26 in 2020. Wearable technology, body-weight training, outdoor activities, and High-Intensity Interval Training continue to be among the top fitness trends.

Aquatic Trends

Pool Design

Municipal pools have shifted away from the traditional rectangle shape, and instead have shifted to facilities that include zero-depth entry, play structures that include multiple levels, spray features, small to medium slides, and separate play areas segmented by age/ability.

Indoor warm water therapy pools continue to grow in popularity with the aging population. Warm water therapy pools create a shallow space for low-impact movement at a comfortable temperature, which enables a number of different programming options. “Endless” or current pools that are small and allow for “low impact, high intensity movement” are becoming popular, as well.

Water Fitness

The concept of water fitness is a huge trend in the fitness industry, with many new programs popping up such as aqua yoga, aqua Zumba, aqua spin, aqua step, and aqua boot camp. Whether recovering from an injury, looking for ease-of-movement exercise for diseases such as arthritis, or simply shaking up a fitness routine, all demographics are gravitating toward the water for fitness. Partnerships can be important for parks and recreation agencies, such as working with hospitals to accommodate cardiac patients and those living with arthritis or multiple sclerosis.

Youth Programming

Swim lessons generally include the most significant number of participants and revenues for public pool operations. Programs can be offered for all ages and levels, including private, semi-private, and group lessons.

Access to swimming pools is a popular amenity for summer day camp programs, too.

Aquatics was identified by Howard County staff as a core program area and analyzed in the Recreation Assessment. The Department currently offers a robust menu of aquatic programs including swim lessons, swim teams, aquatic fitness, and water safety.

Spray Parks

Spray parks (or spray grounds) are now a common replacement for aging swimming pools, particularly because it provides the community with an aquatic experience without the high cost of traditional pools. Spray parks do not require high levels of staffing, require only minimal maintenance, and offer a no-cost (or low-cost) alternative to a swimming pool. A spray park typically appeals to children ages 2–12 and can be a stand-alone facility in a community or incorporated inside a family aquatic center.

NRPA Trends

Each year in January, the NRPA publishes the top trends in recreation and parks.¹⁹ The top trends for 2021 from that report reflect predictions that COVID-19 will continue to exist and impact recreation and parks, and are as follows:

- Expansion of pedestrian spaces and outdoor dining on urban streets, the conversion of bike lanes and trails, and the installation of parklets in parking spaces and former travel lanes.
- State and local municipal budgets will continue to be impacted as revenues continue to decline.
- Focus on health and health equity, and how parks can support necessary services such as food distribution, food pantries, COVID-19 testing, daycare for children of essential workers and first responders, and safe spaces for learning.
- Community mental-health and well-being and cooperation with social service agencies, public health departments, and school systems.
- Social and racial equity, addressing gaps in services, and hiring health, equity, trauma-informed, and community engagement specialists.

- Technology, data privacy, and social media
- Climate change and racial justice, including the effect of rising temperatures on low-income communities with little access to green space.
- Virtual programming such as e-sports



Figure 1.17 The E-sports Stadium in Arlington, Texas has become a popular destination in recent years.

Age-Related Trends

The following trends highlight growing demand for different age groups. In Howard County, there are opportunities to grow programming for seniors and youth over the age of 13, to ensure these growing cohorts have access to the wide variety of programs enjoyed by youth under 13 and families.

Youth age 13 and younger

- Traditional Sport Programming
- STEM Programs
- Nature-Related Programming
- Youth Fitness

Teens/Younger Adults Ages 13-24

- E-sports
- Parkour
- Outdoor Active Recreation
- Bicycling
- Life Sports
- Holistic Health

Adults ages 25-54

- Aerobic Activities

- Fun Fitness
- Group Cycling
- Yoga
- Outdoor Fitness
- Cornhole (or Bags)

Adults ages 55 or older

- Lifelong Learning
- Fitness and Wellness
- Encore Programming
- Specialized Tours
- Creative Endeavors
- Pickleball

COVID-19 Effects & Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted the day to day operations and management of recreational programming. Physical distancing provisions necessitated temporary restrictions on enrollment numbers. Many youth programs, youth sports and child care in particular have experienced low registration numbers, which will require continued strategic planning to anticipate challenges stemming from the pandemic such as smaller participant-to-instructor ratios and reduced operating budgets. This “new normal” to

accommodate COVID-19 safety measures puts additional pressure on DRP to provide local, affordable, equitable, and quality programming for children.

- Youth Sports
- Child Care

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Agencies across the County have begun to establish data-driven equitable investment strategies to address existing gaps in parks and recreation systems which disproportionately impact low-income residents and communities of color. In order to drive equitable investment, the following are strongly recommended:

- Leverage strong leadership that advocates for equitable approaches, focusing on local foundations and nonprofits
- Define equity goals and maintain updates to data that is collected and analyzed
- Educate and engage the community on equity data
- Establish equitable funding practices
- Establish an oversight committee to consistently track and evaluate procedures

COUNTY-RUN RECREATION AMENITIES

Program Inventory and Distribution

An assessment of the Department's programs was conducted using FY 2019 data to fully understand and analyze the most recent fiscal year outside of pandemic impact and the number and type of programs that were offered. Creating an inventory of the Department of Recreation and Park's programs displays a willingness to test out new ideas that reflect community change and recurring trends. While it may take some time for new innovative programs to be successful, it is encouraged that the Department investigate what disconnects may exist in programming while still remaining open to new ideas.

Based on the program catalogue which lists the number of programs in FY 2019, the largest number of offerings was in the sports, childcare services, and enrichment categories. The 2,734 sports programs accounted for nearly 31.9% of all the Department's programs, followed by childcare services at 14.9%, and enrichment at 11.6%. While these were the strongest programs, there are other programs that should be viewed as opportunities for expansion, such as special events, Therapeutic Recreation (TR), active aging, and summer camps.

FY2019 Program Distribution

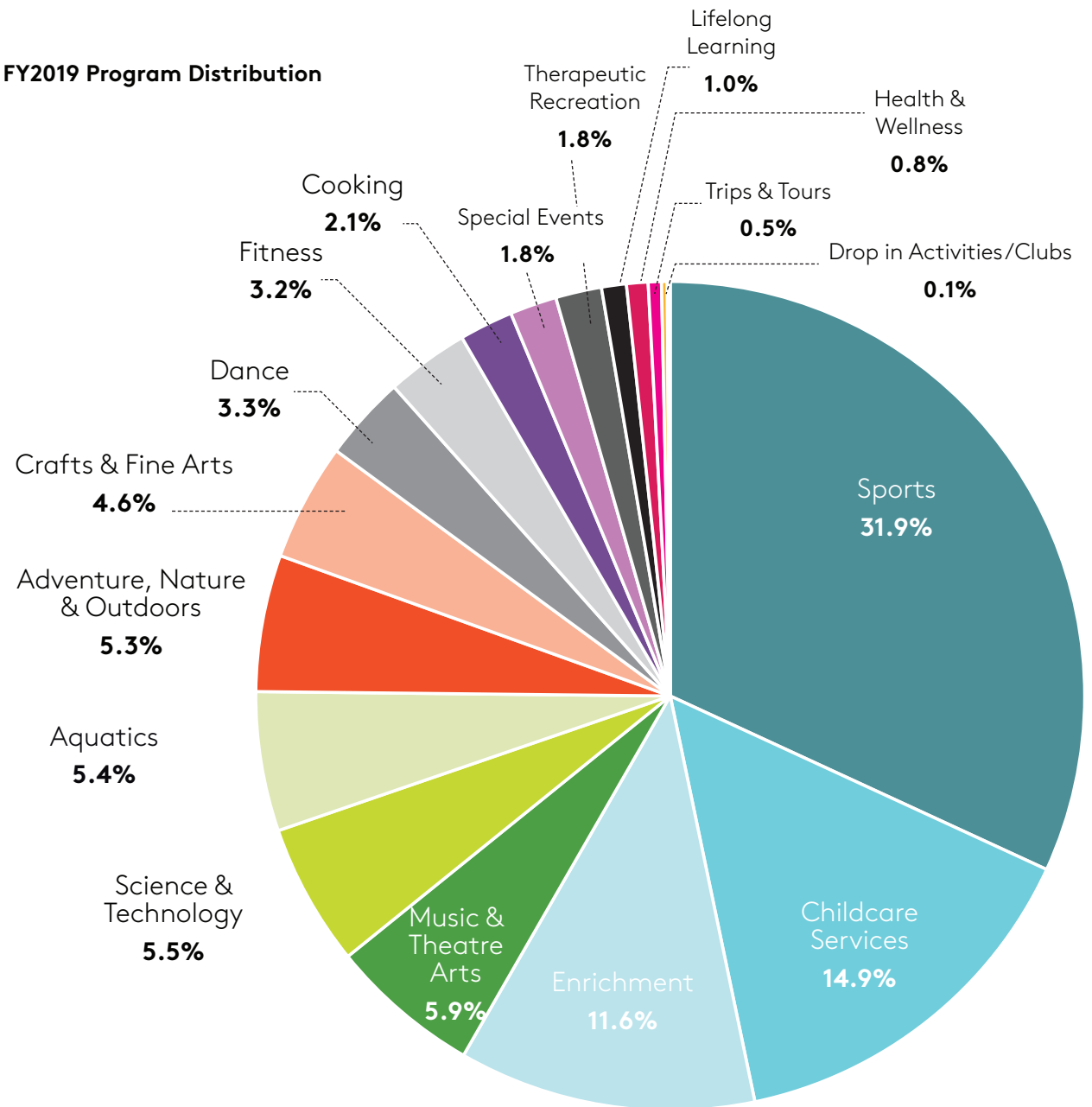


Figure 2.27 Sports, childcare services, and enrichment accounted for 58.4% of the 2019 program menu

Total Enrollment by Activity Category

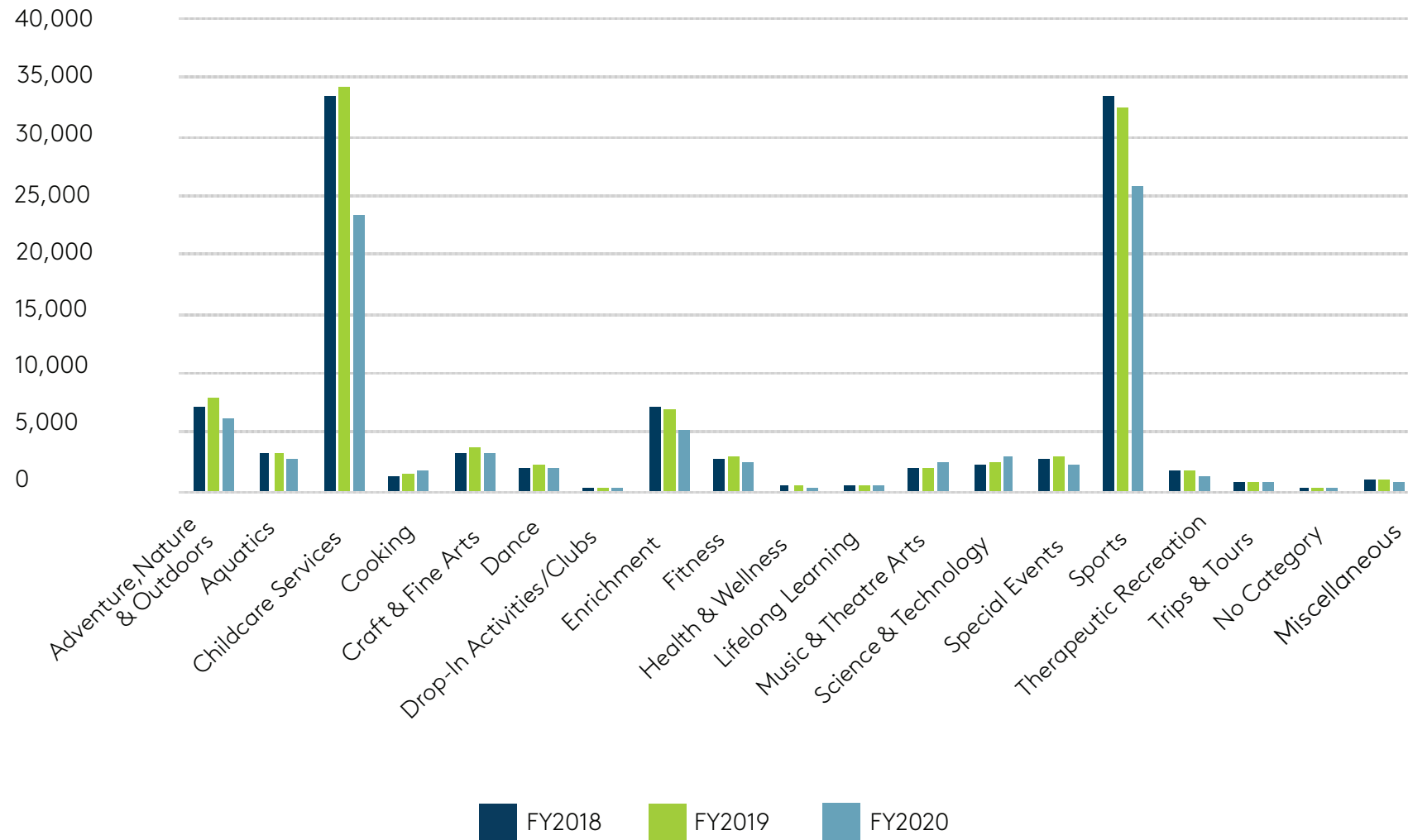


Figure 2.28 *The Department of Recreation and Parks offers an extremely wide variety of programming with high levels of enrollment. The highest levels of enrollment are for childcare services and sports.*

Program Participation and Evaluation

Currently, most of the County's programs require pre-registration to participate. Participants may register by phone, fax, mail-in, walk-in, as well as online through the County's registration software, which also offers assistance with English, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish language interpreters. Additionally, there is information gained through the registration process to measure customer satisfaction. According to the Department's 2015 Program Plan, there is an informed approach to measuring customer satisfaction where upon completion of each program season, program coordinators distribute Program Evaluations and Customer Service Surveys to participants of their programs. Results of these evaluations are tabulated and reports are compiled, and these evaluations stimulate adjustments to program offerings as well as input for new program offerings.

Activity categories with the largest growth in participation were cooking (37.9%), science & technology (34.7%), and music & theatre arts (21.4%), and the largest decline was health & wellness (-33.4%) and childcare services (-30.3%). As seen in Figure 2.37, registration for athletic events and tournaments was also tracked over the past three years. The COVID-19 pandemic affected participation for indoor basketball tournaments and softball.

Athletic Tournaments and Event Participation

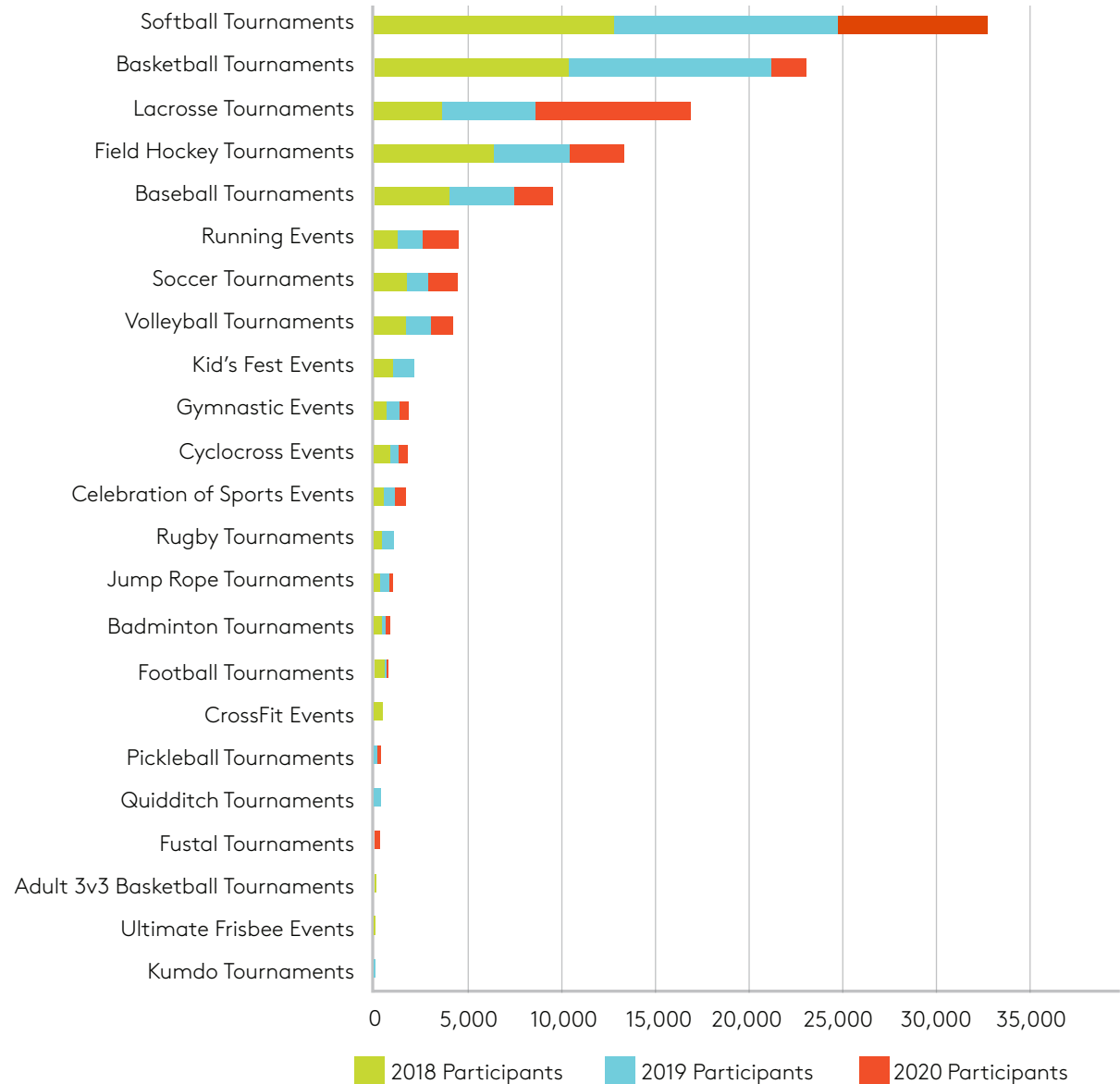


Figure 2.29 Since 2018, softball, basketball, and lacrosse tournaments have received the greatest participation.

As a part of the County's mission of serving the community, it is important to understand how programs serve both residents and nonresidents, and how this influences participation. As seen in Figure 2.36 which depicts 2019 Enrollment by Residency, 93% of enrollment was from residents in 2019. While only 7% of enrollment was from nonresidents, this percentage was further explored to identify what types of programs nonresidents were enrolling in, as shown in Figure 2.37. In 2019, the vast majority of nonresidents participated in sports (43.6%) followed by special events (9.5%).

In addition to tracking participation, program performance can be measured according to the number of programs offered as compared to those that ran.

Comparing the data in Figures 2.38 and 2.39 results in what is called a cancellation rate, a measure commonly tracked in the recreation services industry. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of programs that did not run by the total offered, resulting in the cancellation rate. The County's cancellation rates were 23.3%, 21.0%, and 31.8%, respectively over the three years studied.

A higher rate will generally indicate one of two things: either a) the programming team has been charged with trying new, innovative

2019 Enrollment by Residency

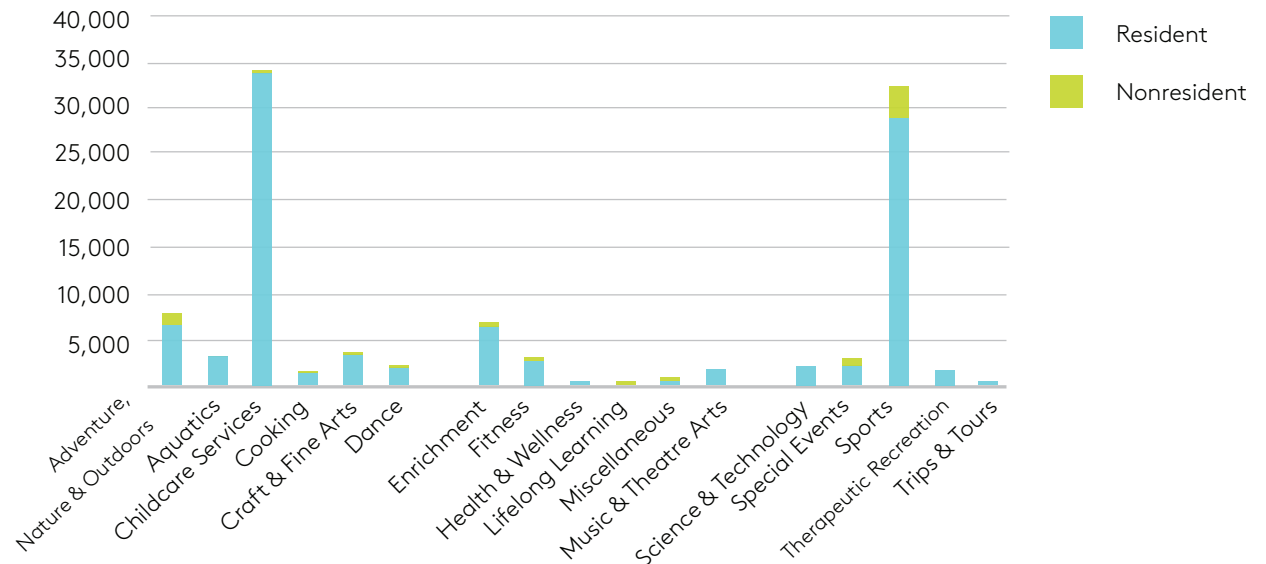
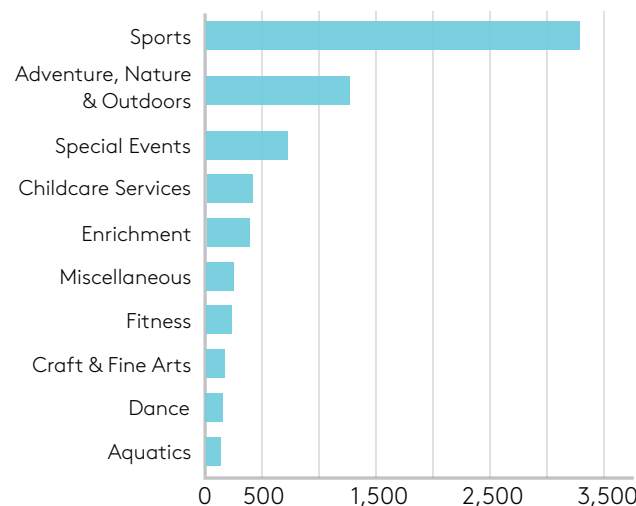


Figure 1.18 In 2019, 93 percent of enrollment was from residents of Howard County.

2019 Nonresident Enrollment: Most Popular



2019 Nonresident Enrollment: Less Popular

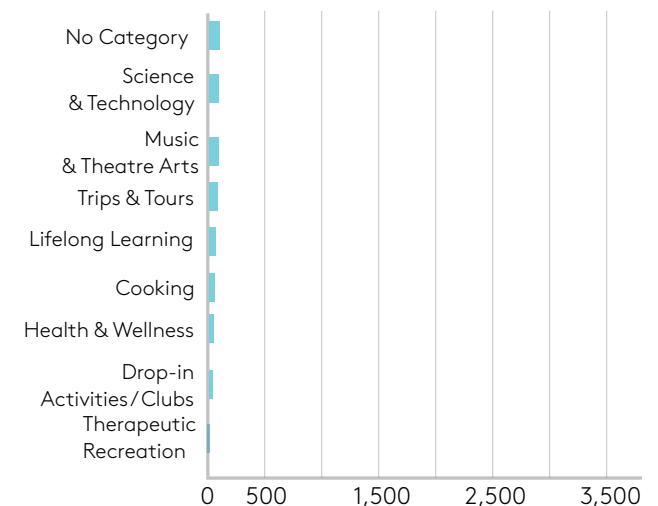


Figure 2.30 Nonresidents enrolled most in sports, adventure/nature/outdoors, and special event programs.

programs that have not been successful yet; or b) the programs being offered simply are not meeting the needs of the community. The first scenario requires patience and perseverance to allow time for exploration and to push communication efforts. The second scenario requires research to understand what factors contributed to the program cancellations (e.g., instructor performance, child aged-out, or other barriers such as time, day, or transportation).

Typically, the target range of a “desirable” cancellation rate is between 10%–20%, with 12%–15% being most ideal. Any higher than 20 percent indicates the staff are doing a lot of work preparing for and marketing courses that do not run. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic caused an anomaly in FY 2019–2020, the other two years were a bit higher than desirable. The Department’s staff should work to reduce its cancellation rate to a more ideal percentage, perhaps by one percent over the course of the next five years.

Number of Program Offered

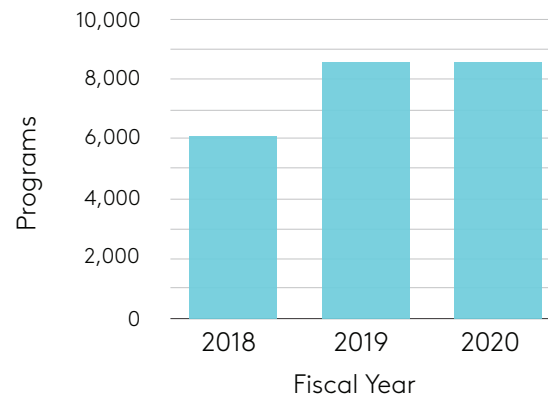


Figure 2.31 A lack of programs in Spring 2020 resulted in a plateau for program offerings from 2019 to 2020, but an increase from 2018 levels.

Number of Programs That Ran

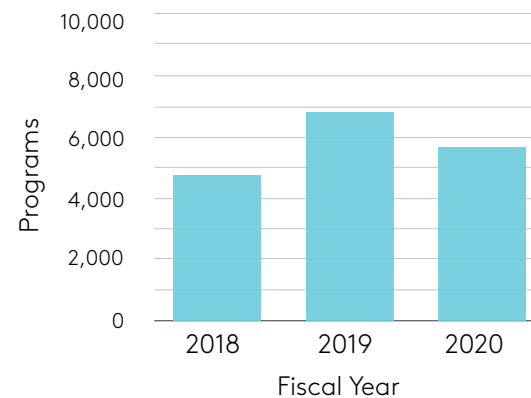


Figure 2.32 COVID-19 resulted in a decrease in programs in 2020. These program offerings were an increase from 2018 levels.

Program Category	FY 2019 Number of Offerings
Sports	2,734
Childcare Services	1,274
Enrichment	994
Music & Theater Arts	504
Science & Technology	476
Aquatics	466
Adventure, Nature & Outdoors	457
Crafts & Fine Arts	393
Dance	284
Fitness	277
Cooking	180
Special Events	157
Therapeutic Recreation	154
Lifelong Learning	83
Health & Wellness	72
Trips & Tours	44
Miscellaneous	19
Drop-In Activities/Clubs	7

REPORT THEMES

Digging into the program offerings of the Department of Recreation and Parks presents the following opportunities:

Places

- **An aging population has different needs:** The average population is growing older and more diverse, and amenities may need to adjust accordingly.
- **Specific planning areas have specific needs:** The Western and Eastern areas of the County vary in population size, demographic details, and access to the system. These differing needs should be met accordingly.
- **Flexible program offerings:** Parks and recreation programs need to be nimble and anticipate evolving community needs for differing ages, abilities, and skill levels.
- **Partnerships can be strengthened:** The Department of Recreation and Parks, County government, and schools can share resources to provide better customer service.

- **Elkridge and the Southeast are particularly unequal in their access to amenities:** While the Southeast has the highest access to tennis or pickle ball courts, these areas consistently have lower levels of access to amenities. In particular, playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, leisure activities, and boat ramps are lacking.

Programs

- **Build offerings strategically:** There is a need to plan the comprehensive program menu more intentionally and holistically across divisions. This will eliminate redundancies and find areas of overlap that can be strengthened through teamwork.
- **Strengthen what is working well:** While sports and childcare remain strong, it may be beneficial to add additional programming in areas identified by staff as strengths. This includes therapeutic recreation, active aging, special events, and summer camps.
- **Stimulate community health:** Encourage activities that promote

the individual's feeling of being engaged, connected, and active.

- **Address barriers to participation:** Establish goals to bring programs to residents in local settings, create short registration commitment options, increase marketing support, outreach efforts, and peak capacity times
- **Begin program performance tracking by program category:** Track enrollment and financial performance of each core program area seasonally, reduce cancellation rate, and increase participation percentages.

Goals + Actions

In order to meet state and county goals, while addressing emerging themes and recommendation drivers, the Department of Recreation and Parks can take the following actions:

State Goal 1.1

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.

ACTION: Expand outreach and wayfinding efforts to include multilingual resources and signage.

ACTION: Focus on expanding the impact of financial programs, specifically communicating about them to residents who could use the services.

ACTION: Continue reaching out to marginalized communities to learn about different perceptions of parks and programs.

State Goal 1.2

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.

ACTION: Apply for grant funding through the NPS Urban Parks Fund to increase access to parks and recreation in urban areas.

ACTION: Increase creation of neighborhood parks and pocket parks, especially in commercial areas with little access to open space.

ACTION: Identify areas where there are gaps in amenities and implement needed facilities.

ACTION: Identify new access points to existing parks to connect adjacent neighborhoods and increase walkability.

County Goal 1.1

Promote programs and spaces that are universally accessible.

ACTION: Support competitive athletic swim options and community pools.

ACTION: Continue to lead in providing programs and places for all ages and abilities (active aging, therapeutic recreation, universal design).

ACTION: Minimize barriers in park designs when possible (stairs, walls, hazardous paving materials, poor wayfinding) and ensure that spaces in parks are able to be accessed easily by people of all ages and abilities.

ACTION: Subsidize membership fees to similar pool providers to increase accessibility to all income levels.

County Goal 1.2

Improve connectivity of people to recreation and park resources.

ACTION: Expand trails within parks and to parks and recreation amenities.

ACTION: Apply for funding through the Neighborhood Access + Equity Grant Program to facilitate shuttles or alternative transportation options to parks and facilities from underserved neighborhoods.

ACTION: Partner with other County departments to link parks, facilities, and open spaces to active transportation improvements.

County Goal 1.3

Stay at the forefront of parks and recreation trends.

ACTION: Incorporate recreation and activity trends that emerged during the pandemic and shifted community behaviors.

ACTION: Continue to provide virtual programming that allows more people to be involved (at non-traditional times and from convenient locations).

ACTION: Respond to the increasing desire for more individual sports/programming (ex: fishing, archery).

County Goal 1.4

Provide a range of recreation programs that emphasize inclusivity.

ACTION: Continue to provide a mix of virtual and in-person programming.

ACTION: Provide group exercise classes or outdoor adventure programs that explicitly state they are inclusive of all members, especially those in the LGBTQIA+ community.

ACTION: Enhance the recreational experience of individuals with disabilities and ensure they have the necessary accommodations that allow them to participate in the same community activities as individuals without disabilities.

County Goal 1.5

Instill flexibility to adapt to shifts in community needs.

ACTION: Design multi-use spaces when possible, and minimize new single-use spaces.

ACTION: Create systems to ensure program development continues to be nimble to change and reflective of enduring trends.

ACTION: Design and plan new parks and facilities that are flexible and adaptable to future community and environmental changes.

County Goal 1.6

Provide safe parks and recreation spaces for all ages and backgrounds.

ACTION: Conduct engagement and research to ensure all nationalities and identities feel safe and welcome in parks and public spaces.

ACTION: Increase lighting and evening programming in parks that may allow age groups such as teenagers safe access to recreation outside of busy daytime tournament hours.

ACTION: Install adequate signage and wayfinding to create visibility, raise awareness and clarify access and ownership.

County Goal 1.7

Integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness.

ACTION: Provide programs for holistic wellness (physical, behavioral, social, financial wellness).

ACTION: Continue to provide family programs through the division of Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services, focusing on before/after-school and out-of-school programs, summer camps and early childhood education.

ACTION: Create outreach programs, youth groups and mentoring services to support communities in need.

Resource Conservation

Aspiration

The County is a trusted steward for natural resources.

Natural Systems

The County's rich and diverse existing natural resource system consists of stream valleys, forested land, wetlands, meadows, and mineral resources. Many of these lands are next to the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers and provide Howard County residents with opportunities to enjoy a diverse system of outdoor recreational opportunities such as birdwatching, fishing, walking along trails, and kayaking. These recreational options offer a myriad of opportunities for people to connect with nature, with associated economic and public health benefits, and learn about environmental conservation.

In 2012 the Maryland General Assembly adopted The Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012, which required local jurisdictions to adopt Growth Tiers. These Growth Tiers designate certain areas for different types of development depending on characteristics, such as sewerage service, agricultural use, forest and green space, and locally designated growth areas. These in turn dictate land use, which can affect the natural resources' availability and quality in the county.

Centuries of agricultural and urban development, transformed the county from a wooded Piedmont and lush Coastal Plain to a developing urban and suburban landscape. The forest canopy is changing

due to development, invasive species, an overabundant deer population, and climate change. Forest health in the county has been in decline, resulting in losses of wildlife habitat and biodiversity. These factors also degrade water quality and increase flooding by interfering with natural absorption of stormwater, which can contribute to erosion. Connecting fragmented ecosystems

through strategic land acquisition and land management strategies not only addresses existing ecological health issues but also creates recreational spaces. Howard County has taken positive steps towards alleviating these issues and is committed to restoring the health and resilience of natural resources and managing them well in the future.

Howard County Growth Tiers

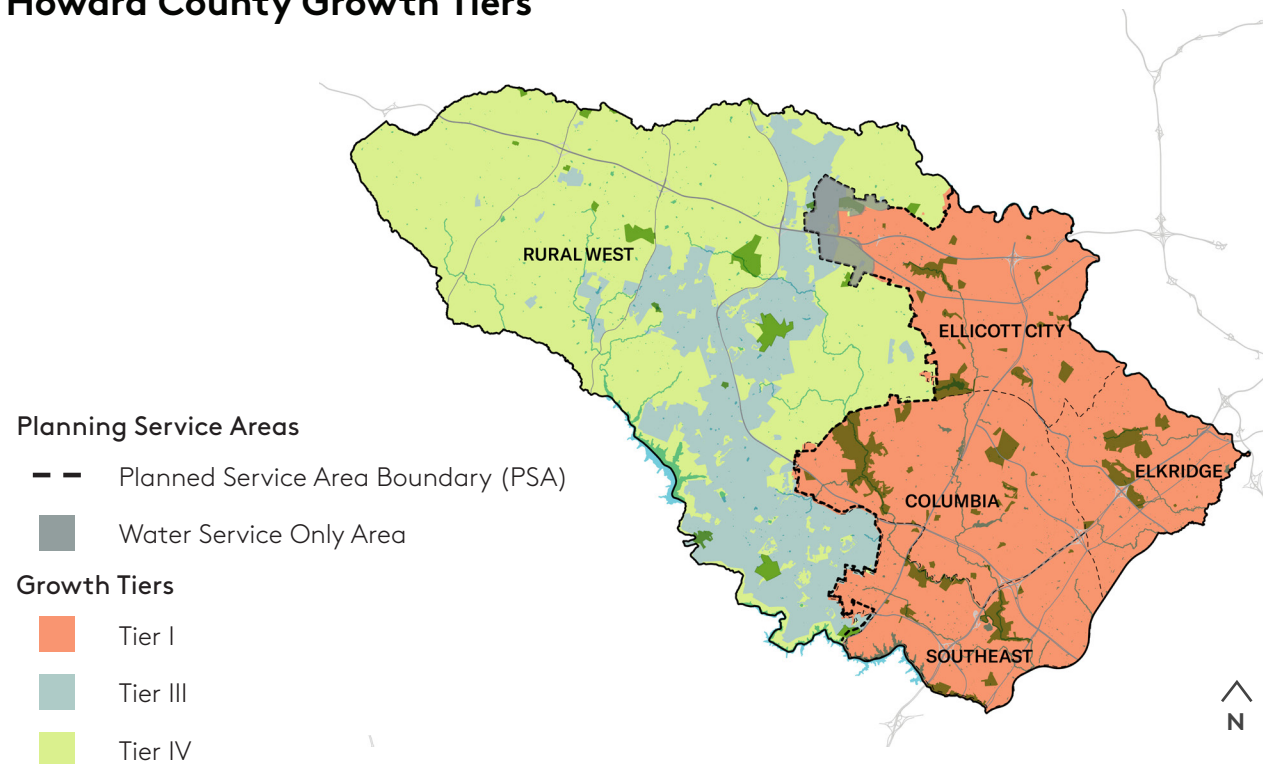


Figure 3.1 Growth Tiers within Howard County's planning areas. As required by state legislation, Howard County established Growth Tiers as a mechanism to control development. Different Growth Tiers have varying restrictions on sewerage extensions and other services that encourage development.

2022 STATE GOALS

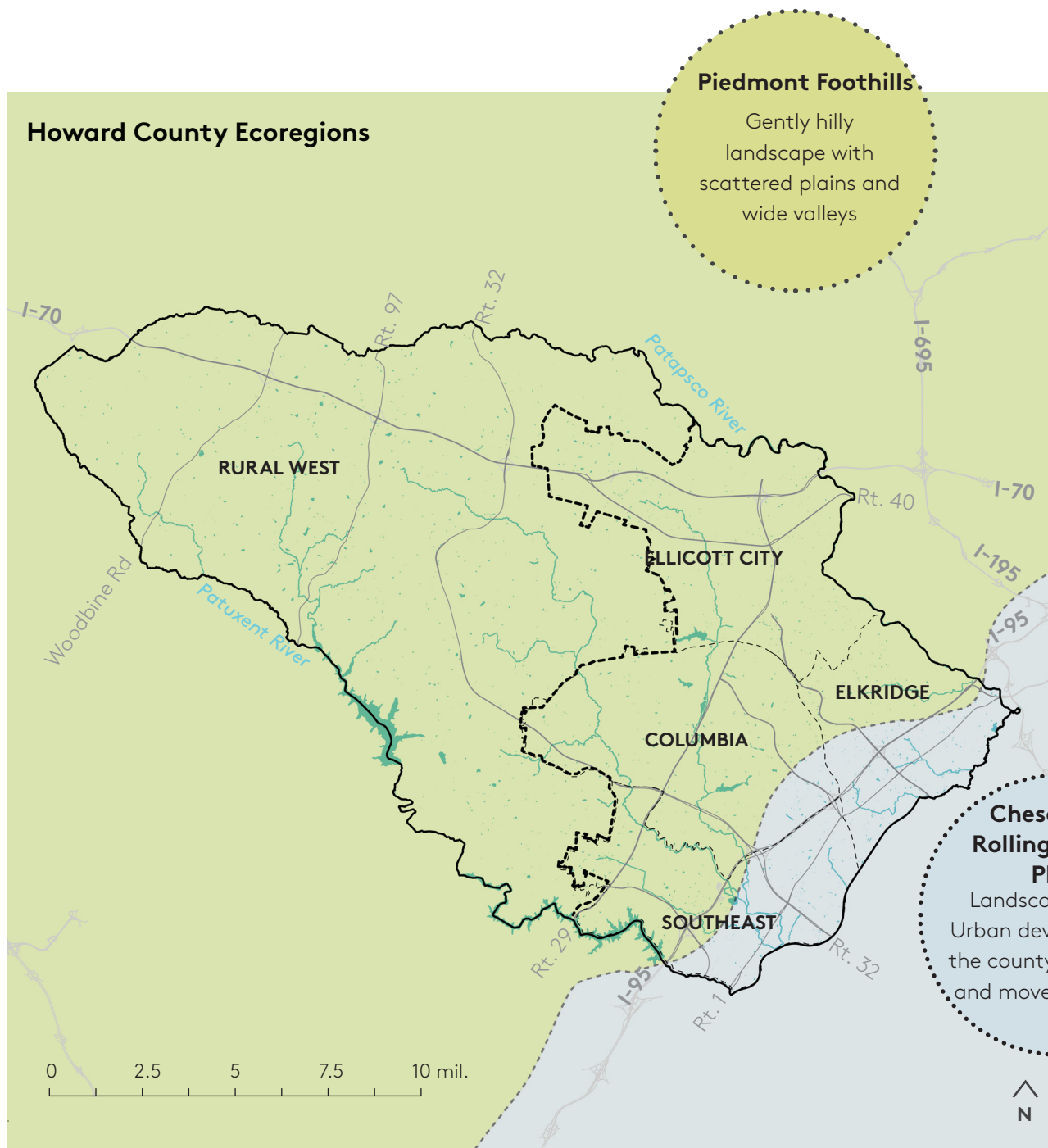
1. Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:
 - Public land acquisition and stewardship;
 - Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;
 - Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;
 - Incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;
 - Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and
 - Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.
2. Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as the Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs) in GreenPrint (which is not to be confused with the former easement program also called GreenPrint).
3. Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure (examples include: rock outcrops, karst systems, caves, shale barren communities, grasslands, shoreline beach and dune systems, mud flats, non-forested islands, etc.)
4. Develop a more comprehensive inventory of natural resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas to assist state and local implementation programs.
5. Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.
6. Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:
 - Expand and connect forests, farmland 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 protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions;
 - Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production; and
 - Support a productive forestland-based and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 GOALS)

- Protect and restore natural resources through habitat improvements and restoration efforts.
- Continue to improve water quality through county-wide stream restoration and reforestation efforts, benefiting local waters and the greater Chesapeake Bay Estuary.
- Enhance implementation of the Green Infrastructure Network Plan. Expand and protect the Green Infrastructure Network, while incorporating the plan as a tool for the decision-making process.
- Encourage individual efforts to enhance biodiversity and environmental stewardship beyond park boundaries.



Figure 3.2 Birdwatching class at Font Hill Wetland Park.



THE SYSTEM TODAY

Ecoregions

Howard County is located within the Piedmont Foothills and Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plain ecoregions. The rolling hilly landscape and wide valleys of the Piedmont Foothills occupy most of the county. However, because of the level and fertile land of the Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plain, development historically started in the eastern region of the county and then moved westward into the Piedmont Foothills. Today, the County is focused on development and redevelopment within the Planned Service Area (PSA), which includes both the Piedmont Foothills and Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plain regions.

Figure 3.3 Howard County encompasses the Piedmont Foothills in the central and western region, and Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plan to the east.

Soils and Development

Soils are living ecosystems which support the natural resources of Howard County. Healthy soils provide widespread ecological services, including water absorption, filtration, nutrient cycling and carbon sequestration. Soils can be disturbed by natural events such as flooding during heavy rain events, which moves and deposits soil elsewhere. Human activity impacts soil structure as well. The county's soils have been impacted by human development and land use over the past 300 years. Agricultural activity has led to some soil disturbance, loss of soil structure, erosion, and nutrient degradation. Development, including the construction of roads, homes, and buildings, can destroy the soil profile by completely covering it with impermeable surfaces, obstructing oxygen from the soil. The process of construction can compact soils, reducing pore space and making it more difficult for some plants to live in the soil. In order for environmental conservation efforts to preserve the landscape character and natural resources of Howard County, soil ecosystems must be considered as well.

Howard County Soils

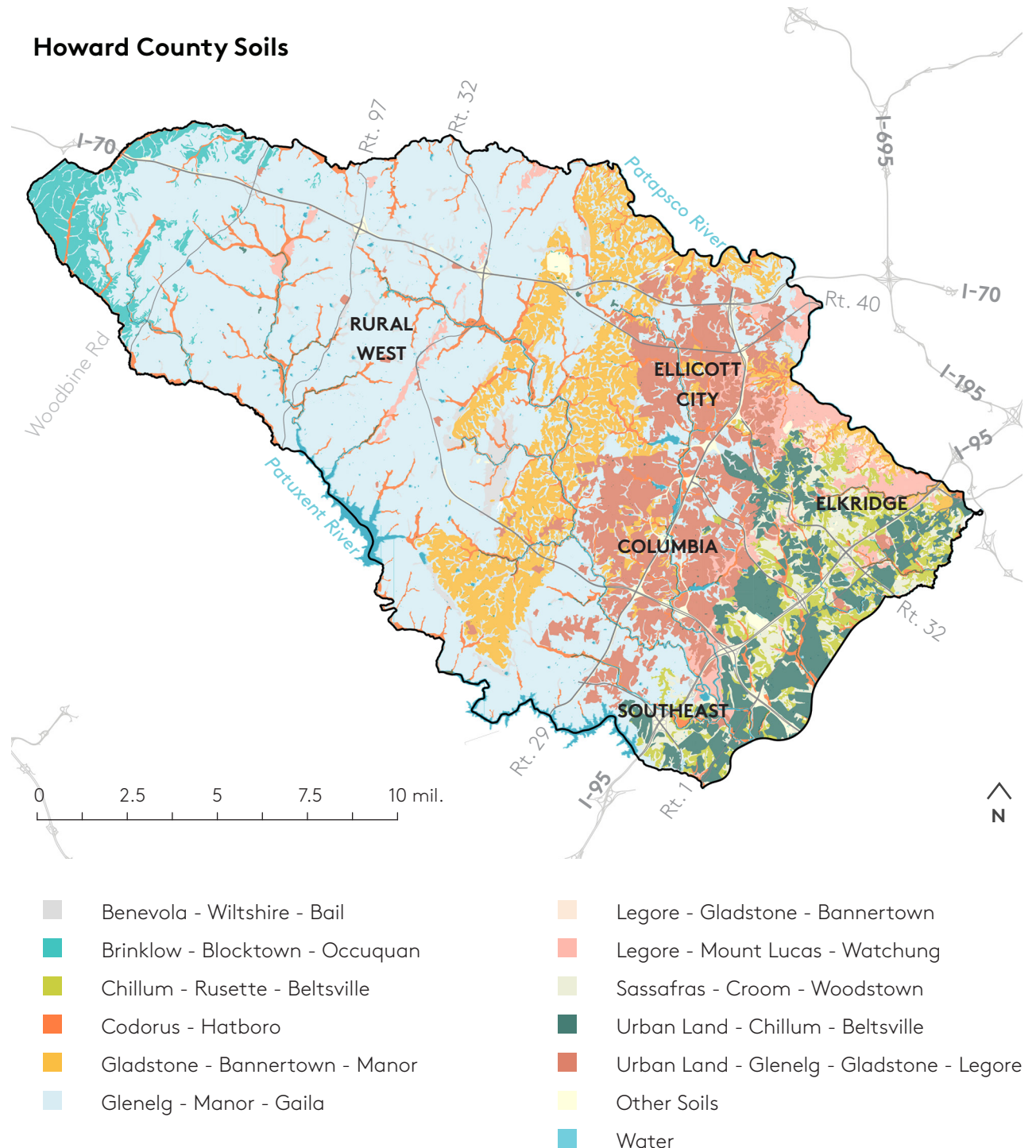
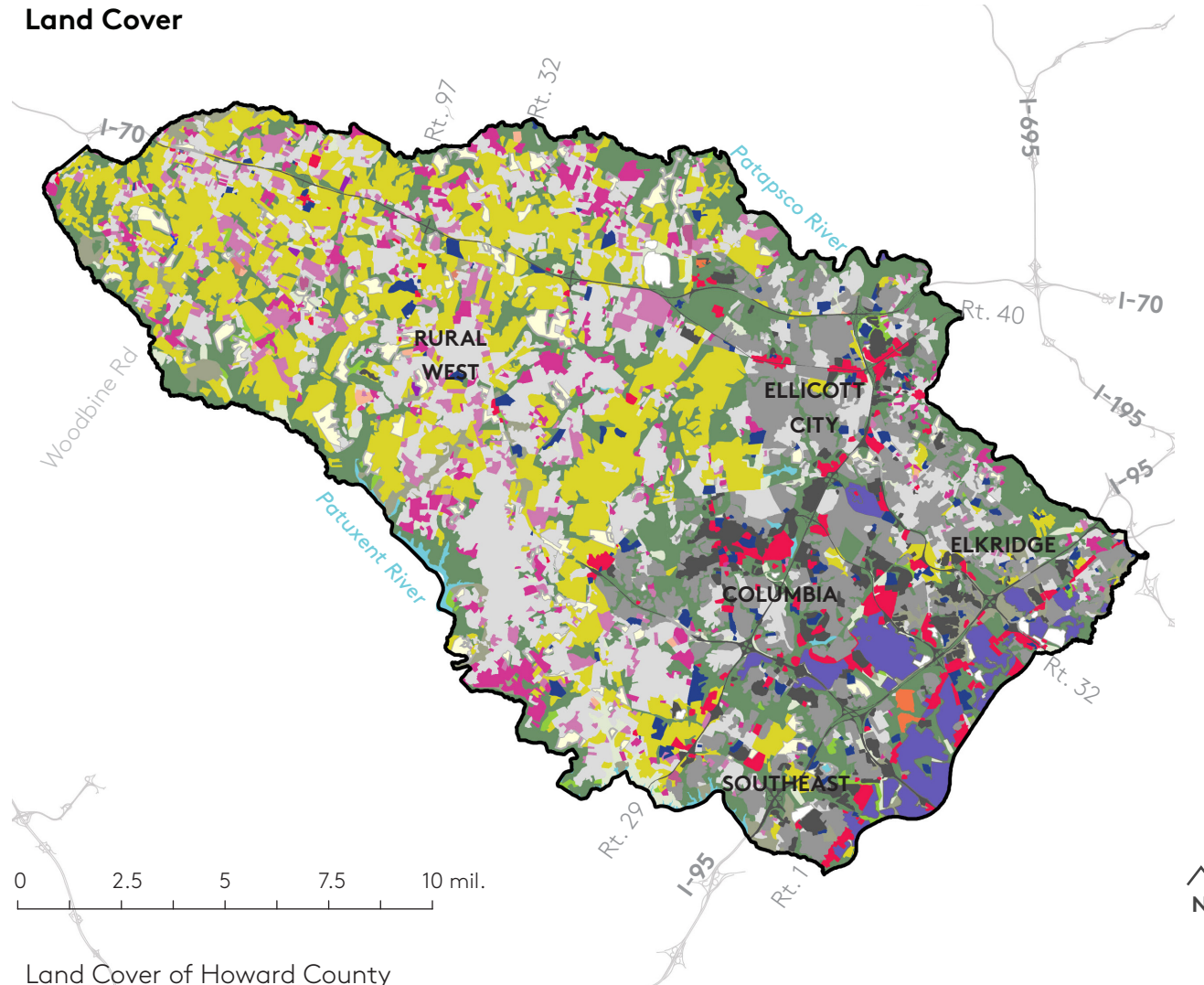


Figure 3.4 Soils of Howard County

Land Cover



Land Cover of Howard County

* Source Data: 2010 Land Use and Land Cover, National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial imagery

Along with other factors, soils played a role in human settlement patterns within the county. The more level, well-drained soils in the east coincide with the earliest settlements, which are today the more developed areas

of the county. Land use in turn impacts soil, where construction, infrastructure and the use of impermeable materials for roads and buildings, leads to issues in the soil profile.

Land Cover Classification

- 11- Low Density Residential
- 12- Medium Density Residential
- 13- High Density Residential
- 14- Commercial
- 15- Industrial
- 16- Institutional
- 17- Extractive
- 18- Open Urban Land
- 21 - Cropland
- 22- Pasture
- 23- Orchards/Vineyards/Horticulture
- 25- Other Soils
- 41- Water
- 42- Deciduous Forest
- 43- Mixed Forest
- 44- Brush
- 50- Water
- 60- Wetlands
- 73- Bare Ground
- 80- Transportation
- 191- Large Lot Subdivision (agriculture)
- 192- Large Lot Subdivision (forest)
- 241- Feeding Operations
- 242- Agricultural Facilities

Figure 3.5 Land cover of Howard County, 2010

Hydrology

Howard County's dynamic hydrological location was established by its seven subwatersheds and two major tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay, the Patuxent and Patapsco Rivers. Because water flows eastward through Howard County to the Chesapeake Bay, management of the county's natural resource areas helps protect water quality in both the county and the Bay. Watersheds in the eastern region of the county have the most impervious cover due to historical development and the presence of the Planned Service Area boundary, which separates the Rural West from eastern planning areas. Impervious cover of asphalt, concrete and rooftops prevents water infiltrating into the soil, increases stormwater runoff across the land, and decreases water quality because pollutants are not removed along runoff flow paths. Consequently, the watersheds with the greatest impervious cover (Patuxent River Upper, Little Patuxent River, and Patapsco River Lower North Branch) also have the lowest Stream Health scores. The County recognizes that high population density and related development has led to high impacts in the Little Patuxent Watershed and is currently developing strategies to remediate erosion and lack of tree buffers.²⁰

Howard County Hydrology and Impervious Cover

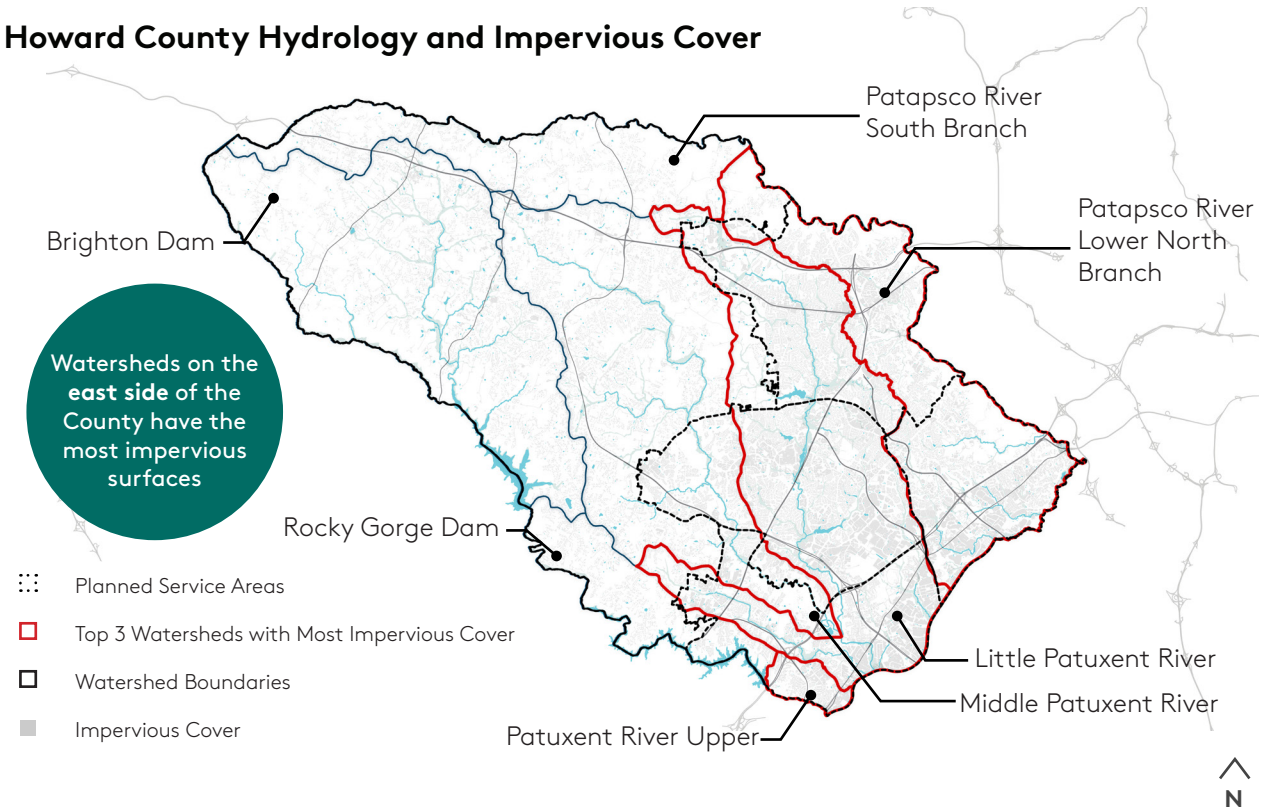


Figure 3.6 The three watersheds with highest impervious cover are Patapsco River Lower North Branch, Little Patuxent River, and Patuxent River Upper.

Stream Health

A healthy stream includes vegetated streambanks with little to no erosion. Erosion is characterized by the presence of exposed roots or bare ground. The root systems of an established canopy with native understory plants aid water infiltration, lowering nutrients and algae growth in waterways. The dappled

light of overstory vegetation also shades micro-habitats for aquatic species that need cool and shaded conditions. In contrast, active erosion is evident in the banks and beds of an unhealthy stream as a result of too much surface runoff. This causes systemic issues, such as large pulses of sediment delivered with each storm to downstream waters, like Centennial Lake, where a vast sediment plume is building up.

Howard County Stream Health

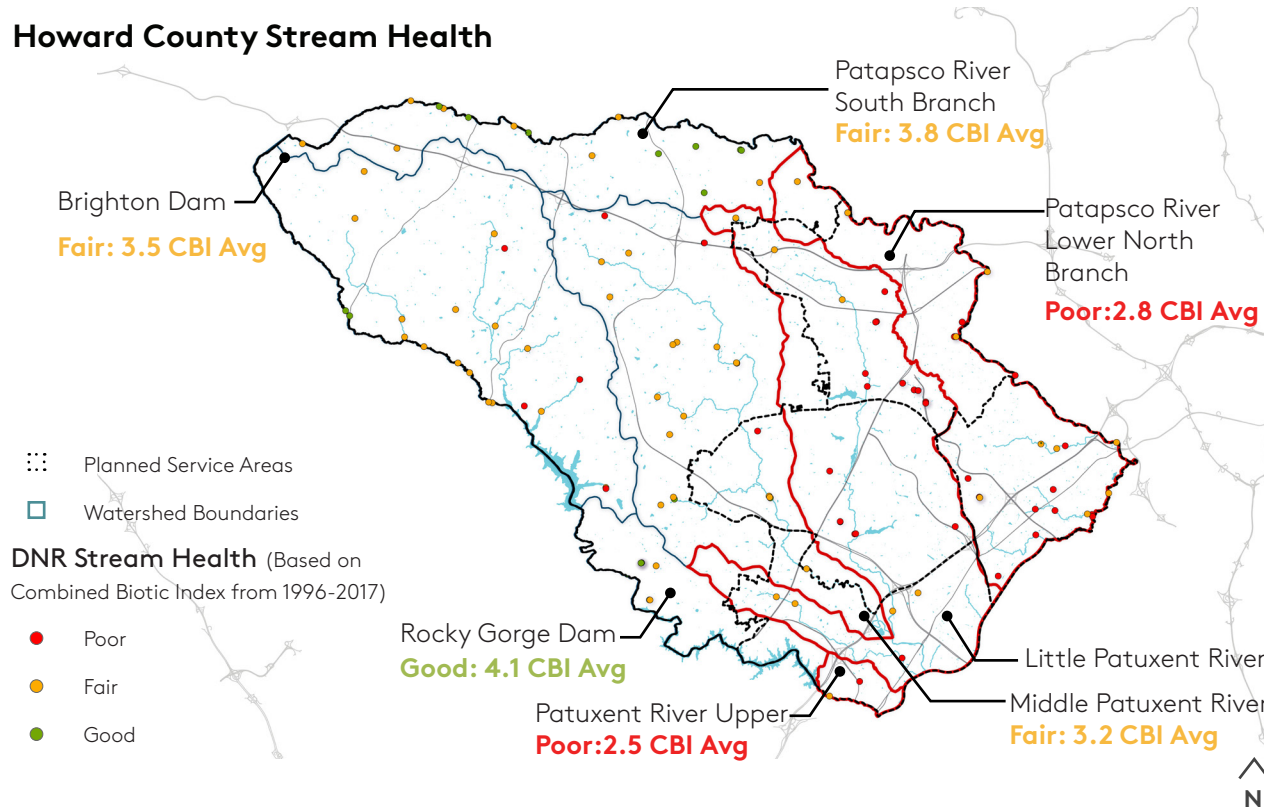


Figure 3.7 The three watersheds with highest impervious cover also show the poorest stream health scores. Averages calculated from the MD DNR CBI rating.

Due to climate change, a possible outcome for the future is that high-intensity, short-duration storms occur more frequently, increasing the risk of greater property damage and disruption. The county's agricultural inheritance and sixty-year development pattern have reduced the capacity of the landscape and its soils to manage these storms. Furthermore, the polluted streams and lakes will continue to affect fish and aquatic

invertebrate populations while making the county's waters less pleasant, fun, and safe for humans to use.

Most streams in Howard County are in fair health. Stream health is monitored through a Combined Biotic Index (CBI) rating, provided by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources.²¹ This rating gives streams a score for overall community biological health. Water

bodies with an excellent health rating of five have the highest fish and invertebrate diversity, while those with a score of one have the lowest. Streams in the eastern county have an average 2.7 CBI rating. Streams in the West or at the edge of the county boundaries have an average rating of 3.8 CBI. One of the highest quality watersheds in Howard County is Rocky Gorge Dam, which has a CBI rating of 4.1.

Over the last 60 years the County has introduced programs to help improve stream health, conducting watershed assessments for each watershed followed by watershed restoration programs throughout the county. For example, Watershed Restoration Action Strategies (WRAS) in the Little Patuxent and Patapsco watersheds have received financial resources to plan and implement water quality and habitat restoration to improve stream health. These efforts have allowed the County to plant trees along stream edges on County parkland and provide free trees for eligible residents who live near a stream as a strategy to include private lands in stream quality restoration.

Climate change is producing larger and perhaps more frequent storms. NOAA's Maryland State Climate Summary (2022), projects impacts in Maryland from climate change will include increased average annual precipitation, especially

during the winter and spring, and more frequent and intense rainfall events.²² The County understands these challenges. Following the deadly 2016 floods and subsequent 2018 floods in Ellicott City, the County introduced the Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan.²³ The community-led plan introduced measures to adapt to future storms, since the city's location at the confluence of multiple tributaries that feed into the Patapsco River will render it vulnerable to future events. Furthermore, the County created the EC Safe and Sound plan, a multi-phase plan built around the need for public safety, supporting business and property owners, preparing the county for a changing climate, and creating a more inclusive, community-driven process for decisions regarding Ellicott City's future.²⁴ Continued efforts and investments to the problem of water management and water quality will strengthen the county's resilience in the face of future climate impacts and additional development.

Howard County Tree Canopy

Healthy forests provide many ecological services, including filtering pollutants from the air, cooling the air which reduces the urban heat island effect, reducing atmospheric carbon by storing it in trunks and roots, providing habitat for half of the county's wildlife and plant species, building soils and stabilizing soils. Young subcanopy trees play a vital role, capturing more atmospheric carbon by weight than mature trees, providing ecological niches for a wider range of wildlife, and putting down finer roots that stabilize soil on slopes and streambanks. The latest and most accurate estimate for tree canopy shows that, as of 2018, 49.1% (79,495 acres) of Howard County is covered by tree canopy, including trees of all age groups and canopy

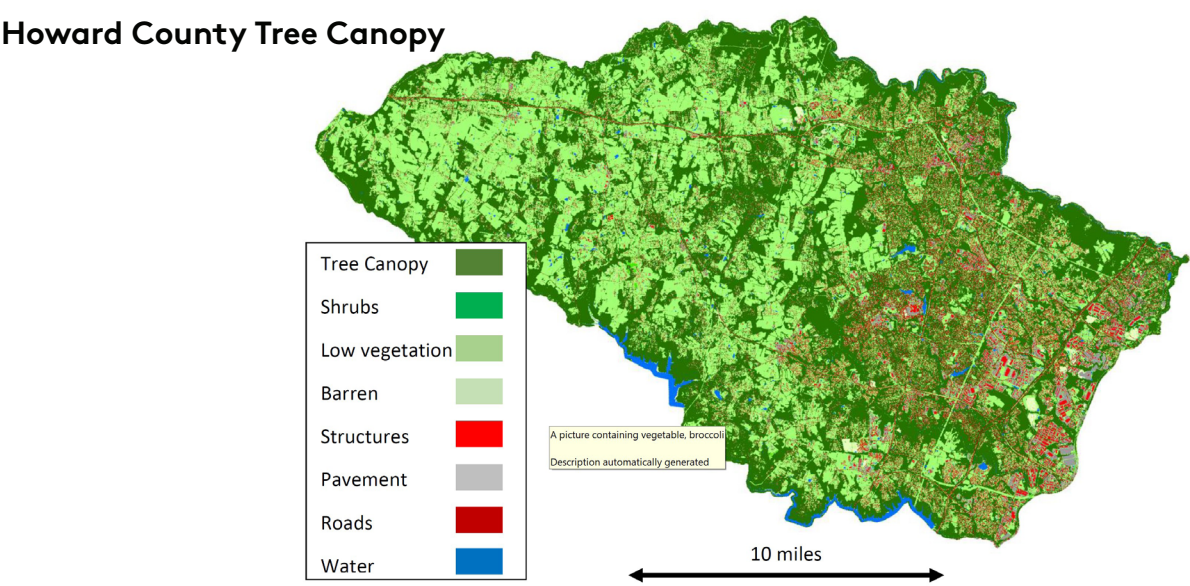


Figure 3.8 High-resolution land cover for Howard County, Maryland from 2013 imagery . Source: UMBC Assessment of Howard County, Maryland's Tree Canopy and Forest Cover (April 2022)

Howard County Forest Conservation Easements

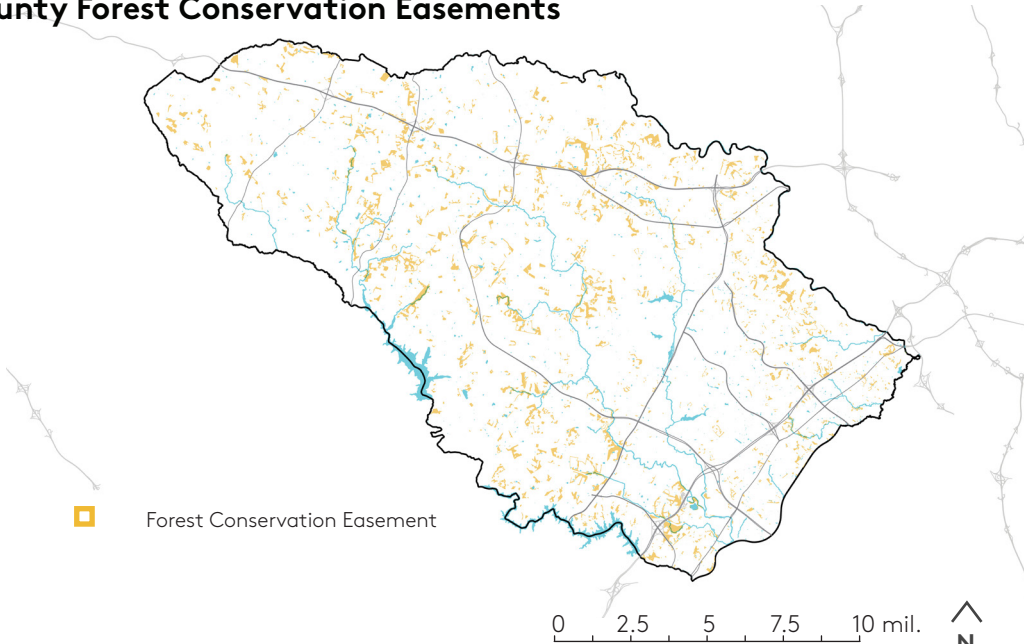


Figure 3.9 Forest Conservation Easements from the Private Conservation Easement Program (PFCE).

over structures, roads, and other impervious cover (from UMBC's Assessment of Howard County, Maryland's Tree Canopy and Forest Cover²⁵ using imagery collected in 2018).

Howard County understands the value of its canopy. Efforts are currently underway to reforest county land through public programs including providing free trees to residents to be planted within stream buffers on public and private lands. In 1993, the County passed the Forest Conservation Act (FCA), to establish and to enforce controls on the disturbance of wooded areas when properties are developed.²⁶ Last updated in 2020, the FCA sets priorities and requirements for forest retention, reforestation and protecting forests under forest conservation easements. The 2020 FCA update expanded the two-year post-development forest conservation period to three years for the active monitoring of forest conservation easements for planting survival and public encroachments with subsequent monitoring and inspections limited to complaint-driven enforcement and restoration.

Deer and the Understory

Deer populations in Howard County have boomed in the last century, due to their high adaptability to the habitat changes brought by urban sprawl, a loss of agricultural land use and an increase in the "edge habitat" deer prefer, a loss of natural predators, and a decrease in hunting.²⁷ Preferring to browse on native understory, deer feed on tree seedlings,

especially oaks, and herbaceous plants while often ignoring invasive plants in the ground layer, such as Japanese honeysuckle and stilt grass. Deer-browsing severely impacts the health of forest ecosystems, preventing forest regeneration and reducing diversity of the understory.

Unhealthy forests in the county often exhibit bare ground devoid of a healthy understory layer, which impacts the process of natural succession. This foretells a less diverse tree canopy layer in 50-100 years and is often a telling symptom of an over-abundant deer population. By contrast, healthy forests have a diverse native understory layer, including multiple generations of tree canopy species that will replace mature individuals when they die. The absence of tree saplings in most of the county's forests makes them particularly vulnerable to future climate change, disease, and other stressors since the less species and individuals are present, the less likely a forest or individual tree will be resilient to negative impacts. Furthermore, the best adapted species or individuals to these stressors may be missing from the canopy. To anticipate these future negative effects, building upon the county's existing deer management strategies will be integral to forest management and conservation efforts.

Current deer management efforts in Howard County include population regulation through hunting, educating landowners about



Figure 3.10 A visual comparison of a typical healthy forest understory in Howard County vs an unhealthy understory.

deer populations (most of deer habitat in Howard County is on private land), installing fencing and other structural methods, and planting vegetation that is unattractive to deer. Hunting and trapping of all wildlife is prohibited on parkland except for research or management purposes, but the Department of Recreation and parks may propose to reduce deer populations on specific park properties, with participation by the surrounding community in its implementation.⁷ This method is regarded as most effective in controlling overabundant deer populations, but the County should continue to look at restoring its ecological system holistically, to achieve a natural equilibrium within the food chain, including managing for deer predators and a diversity of plants. Additionally, deer management legislation enables private landowners to manage deer populations on private property, which slows repopulation in nearby public property. A recent change to this legislation places restrictions on bow hunting.

Tree Canopy Loss

Large scale development, incremental tree removal and death on public and private property (in part due to invasive species), and limited or slow regrowth (due in part to deer browsing) have contributed to a small drop in tree canopy acreage across Howard County. The Assessment of Howard County, Maryland's Tree Canopy and Forest Cover²⁸,

which interpreted existing tree canopy as canopy not over unpaved surfaces, found that between 2013 and 2018, there was a 0.5% loss of tree canopy. In addition to death and removal, tree canopy has been greatly affected by the Emerald Ash Borer, a non-native invasive species. This beetle has decimated the region's Ash trees and will continue to be a major issue for the county's natural areas. Current efforts have included spending \$400,000 per year in Ash tree removal as well as efforts to identify swatches of Ash forest for underplantings. Planting of young and diverse trees ensure forests will not be bare after Ash tree death. In 2020, the FCA

increased maintenance time for new plantings from two to three years. The Department of Recreation & Parks often extends maintenance beyond three years for tree plantings done on county land. In 2018, the areas not suitable for tree planting had slightly increased due to an expansion in impervious cover, and the areas suitable for planting had slightly decreased as well. However, there is no set long-term management plan to maintain a healthy forest, and without designated funding, management will continue to be limited.

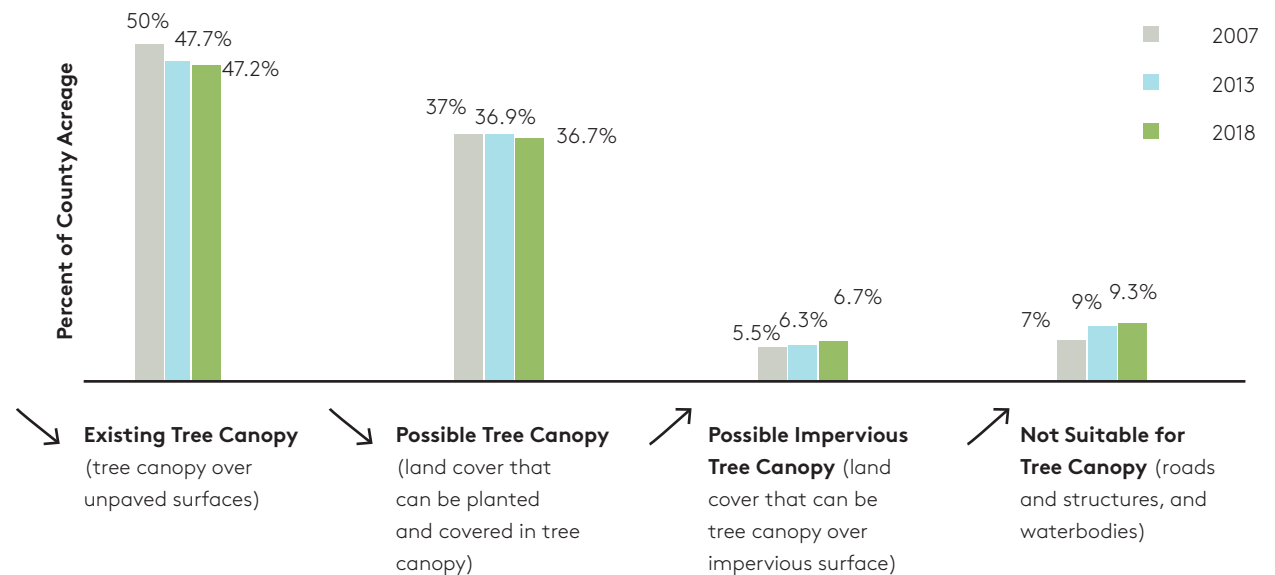


Figure 3.11 Comparison of Tree Canopy in Howard County between 2007, 2013, and 2018. Existing tree canopy has decreased overall but part of the difference shown between 2007 and 2013 was due to a change in definition of Tree Canopy as canopy over pervious surfaces, starting in 2013. Source: UMBC Assessment of Howard County, Maryland's Tree Canopy and Forest Cover, (April 2022)

Land Preservation Acreage

One of the strategies Howard County has used to protect its natural resources is to purchase, preserve, and protect land through easements. Currently, there are 59,555 acres of green space within the county (37 percent of the land base), 33,630 acres of which are within preserved lands (21 percent of the land base). Preserved lands are not intended for public use and are divided into two types, natural systems and agricultural land. Agricultural easements are explained in detail in the following Historic Resources and Agriculture Chapter. Natural systems easements account for 10,281 acres (6.4 percent) and include properties designated under Conservation Easements, Environmental Preservation Parcels, and Maryland Environmental Trust Easements. Most natural resource land exists within Environmental Preservation Parcels, totaling 8,788 acres. Maryland Environmental Trust Easements account for 1,372 acres and Conservation Easements total 206 acres.

Easements, open space, and parks (both County- and State-owned) can interact to provide essential conservation acreage of high ecological value. With adequate land management, they can also connect important habitats as delineated by the Green Infrastructure Network.

	Natural Resource Preservation Acres		
	2017	2021	Change
Conservation Easement	206	206	+ 0
Environmental Preservation Parcels	7,475	8,788	+ 1,313
Maryland Environmental Trust Easements	1,225	1,372	+ 147
TOTAL	8,906	10,366	+ 1,460

Figure 3.12 Since 2017, Howard County has increased the acreage of natural resource easements by 1,460 acres.

Easements are agreements that specified land uses or rights are voluntarily waived, sold or gifted to a party other than the land owner for enjoyment, monitoring and/or enforcement. Natural resource easements conserve land by permanently restricting the ability for it to be developed. Agricultural easements allow the landowner to remain on the property and continue farming. Agricultural easements prohibit industrial, commercial and most residential uses of the land, and allow for a wide variety of agricultural and related accessory uses. The natural resource system and agricultural system

work together to protect land from further development by limiting the scale and scope of development allowed (if at all) on these parcels. Preservation strategies recognize the importance of both natural ecosystems and Howard County's rural legacy. This rural legacy will be further explored in future report sections.

Land Conservation in 2022

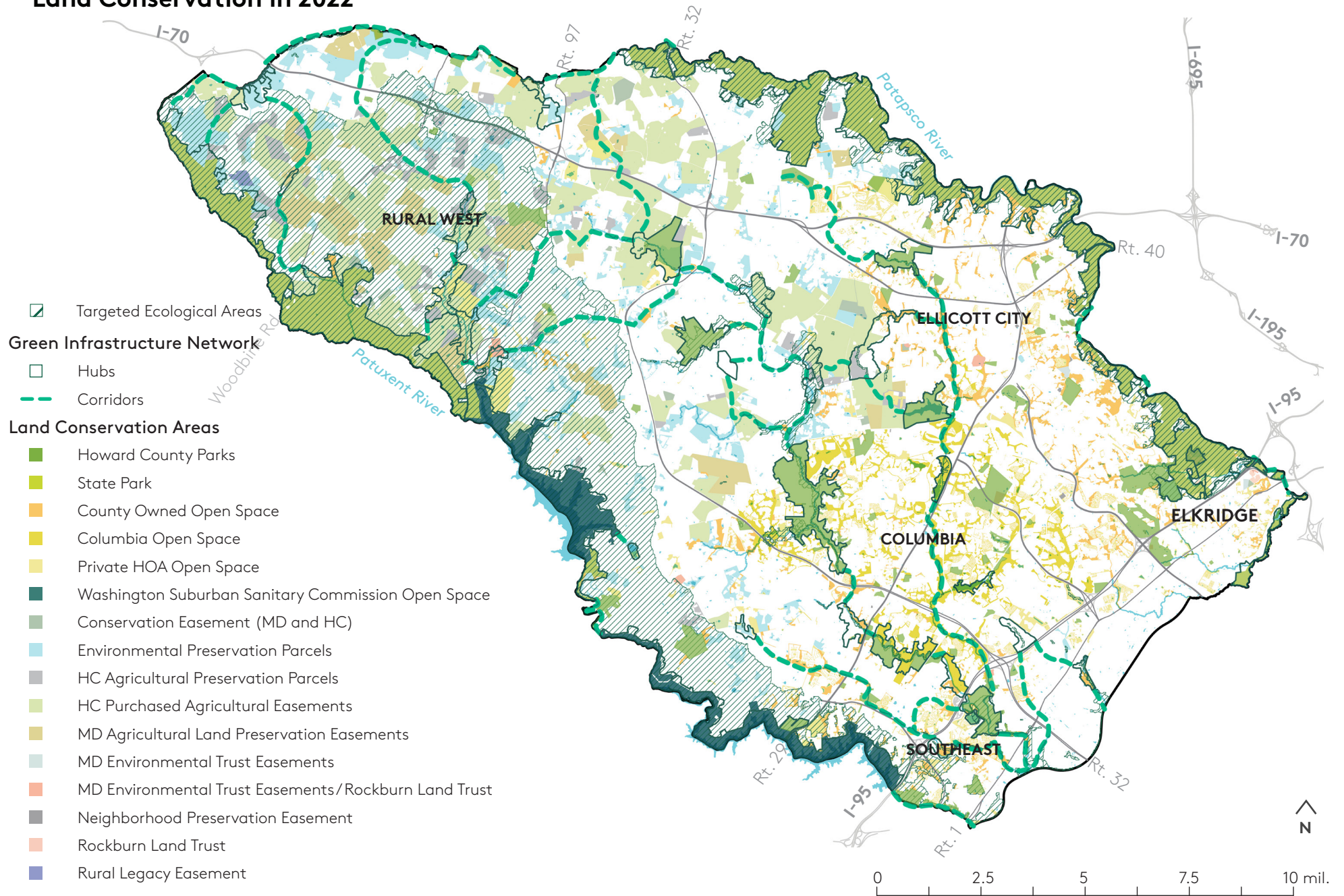


Figure 3.13 Public and private preserved spaces can help protect the County's Green Infrastructure Network.

REPORT THEMES

As Howard County looks to the future of natural resource management and preservation, it will be important to acknowledge and address current trends and key findings:

- **It is time to act:** Changes in the landscape are accelerating due to climate change, development pressure, and invasive species. These changes jeopardize environmental health and food security.
- **Howard County's ecosystem is in need:** Development patterns and human settlement damage water quality, stream health, and other essential ecological systems. These actions, in addition to the effects of the climate crisis, result in more frequent degradation, such as severe flooding. Through redevelopment there are opportunities to retrofit sites with essential stormwater infrastructure.
- **The County needs to be intentional and strategic with acquisitions:** Widespread residential encroachment on conservation areas is occurring

fast. Quickening the pace of land acquisition requires a long-term conservation and natural resource management vision. Many land acquisition successes are reactive and opportunistic, instead of intentional and strategic.

- **A fragmented swatch of opportunities:** The amount of land available for park purchase is diminishing greatly and availability for conserved lands happens in pockets of small land grabs. Fortunately, the Green Infrastructure Network, mapped based on existing (2009) conditions, provides a framework to create a connected network of remaining undeveloped land containing important natural resources. However, connectivity is critical to its function in protecting ecosystem services. A consistent vision needs to be established to protect and implement connectivity within a fragmented system.
- **Protected land favors agricultural uses:** It is undeniable that any type of preserved land has a positive effect on

Howard County's ecology. However, only 30.8 percent of Howard County's protected land serves natural resource conservation aims. The remaining 67.7 percent of protected land is represented by agricultural easements, while 1.5 percent is protected under cultural easements.

- **Individual actions matter:** Personal choices like tree removal or heavy use of fertilizers and pesticides on private property have large system wide effects. The public should be better educated about the effects of individual decisions on the ecology of Howard County.
- **Balancing form and function:** As Howard County looks to the future, it will likely need to modernize to suit the needs of a growing population while respecting historic and natural character. Site investments in parks and open spaces should account for the diverse systems found in the county, creating typologies that respond to site-specific identities.

Implementation

Addressing the challenges and supporting the strengths of Howard County's natural systems will require the utilization of as many tools as possible. The following list includes some of Howard County's most powerful and meaningful resources:

IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCES AND PROGRAMS

Natural and Historic Resources Division of the Department of Recreation and Parks has been instrumental in helping to create numerous policy and management guidelines that support Howard County's goals. Those policies and guidelines are identified in detail below:

ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Department Policy and Procedures

The role of the Department is to ensure the Department's philosophy, goals and policies are appropriate; they will be reviewed by the director and designated staff at least yearly in accordance with HCDC Policy A-003, Policy and Procedure and Post Order review. Staff are encouraged to participate, to the maximum degree possible, in recommending changes as needed.



Figure 3.14 Family Volunteer Day at Robinson Nature Center

Open Space Acceptance Policy

The County receives fee simple ownership of lands that have been approved through the County's subdivision review process. This policy provides direction for inspecting and accepting these lands into the Department's system.

Open Space Land Acquisition

The State of Maryland's Program Open Space is a grant program which provides financial and technical assistance to local

jurisdictions for the planning, acquisition, and/or development of recreation or open space areas. Occasionally, land is acquired through exchanges with owners for land of greater area while satisfying a need of another party. This particular action requires County Council approval. There are also stateside Program Open Space acquisitions, but these properties are retained by the State within the jurisdiction.

In this program, Open Space is parkland set aside to remain in a natural state and conserved for environmental protection and

for limited, passive recreational use. Thus, some parcels acquired through Program Open Space have restrictions on public outdoor recreation uses based on covenant deeds in compliance with the Sections 5-906(e) (7) and (8) of the Natural Resources Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, which states that land use conversions can only be approved after the County acquires land of equal area or recreational value as a replacement. The appraised value of the replacement must be of equal or higher value than the converted land.

Together, the LPPRP, the Parks and Open Space Plan and Plan Howard 2030 recognize the environmental importance of undisturbed natural vegetation and the Department places a high priority on protecting such areas. These natural vegetation areas provide wildlife corridors, aquifer recharge, habitat and passive recreational/educational opportunities and are protected by law under Title 19, Subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code.

Parkland Development

The Department of Recreation & Parks is charged with the development of the Howard County Parks system. The main function of the body is to assist in the development of parkland, related amenities and resource protection. The Plan helps the Department

carry out its mission and vision by guiding the Department's policy decisions and day-to-day operations. One major goal of this Plan is to comply with the State of Maryland mandate that all local jurisdictions update their land preservation, parks and recreation plans to continue qualifying for Maryland Program Open Space funds. A second major goal is to guide the development of Recreation and Parks services, and help direct the County's efforts to conserve and protect its natural environment and farmland.

Parkland Rules and Regulation Enforcement

The Department is responsible for the management of Parkland within Howard County as set forth in Title 19, subtitle 2 of the Howard County Code. An adaptive management approach to conservation practices is used for management purposes. In this approach, implemented procedures are regularly monitored and changes in procedure are adapted according to the result. From 1992 onwards, stronger focus was towards natural resources protection. Emphasis is on compliance through education rather than enforcement. Whenever needed, enforcement measures are taken by Park Rangers, regulation inspectors or County litigators when educational efforts prove ineffective.

Trail Management Policy

This policy provides direction for the design, construction and maintenance of County trails. Best management practices for the Department, as well as for other county departments, are outlined in a trail planning and management guideline document that ensures sustainable standards. The Department is working to expand trail design,

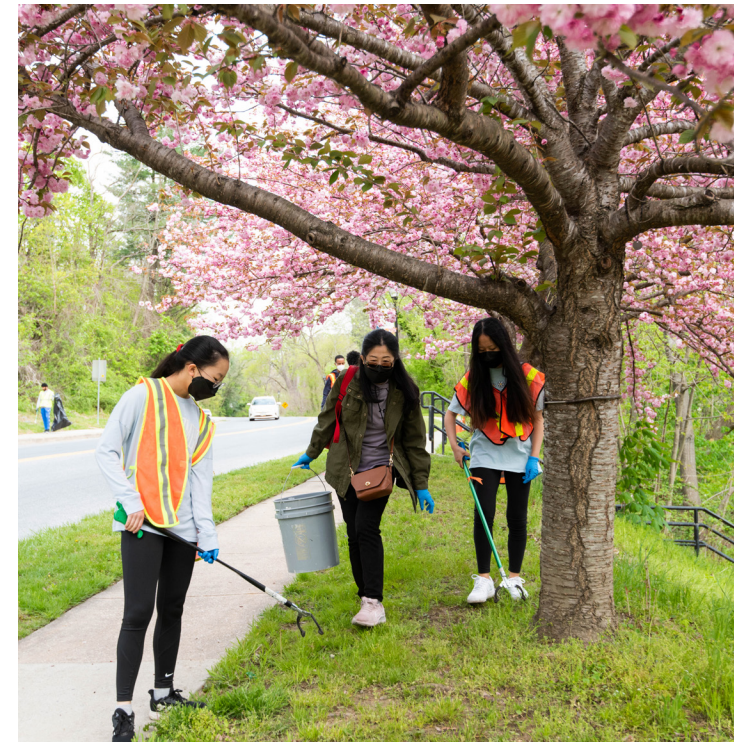


Figure 3.15 *Earth Day 2022 clean-up volunteer event*



Figure 3.16 Tree planting for Earth Day 2022

construction, realignment, and maintenance efforts through the training and assistance of volunteer groups.

Utility Crossing on County Parkland

This policy set forth the requirements for allowing developers and the Department of Public Works (DPW) to cross parkland for the purpose of public improvements such as sewer, water, and other utility easements. A restitution fee is mandatory to be paid to the County for tree and habitat loss.

CANOPIES AND FORESTS

Forest Conservation Easements

Forest Conservation easements were established pursuant to the Forest Conservation Act of Howard County. In this program, there is an agreement between the “developer” and the “County,” where the developer is required to retain existing trees, plant trees to replace trees cleared during the course of development, or plant trees

to create new forests. The area dedicated for the required retention, reforestation or afforestation is shown on the plan’s plat of the Forest Conservation Easement and is described in the Deed of Forest Conservation Easement.

Digitize

Easements recorded in plats, plans, and deeds are digitized into the GIS system.

Inspect

The Department of Recreation and Parks, as per an agreement with the Department of Planning and Zoning is responsible for the inspection of any forest conservation easement (FCE) established under a Forest Conservation Agreement between a land developer and the County during land development. A land developer is required to submit to the County a Deed of Forest Conservation Easement, a land records plat depicting the easement, and a Forest Conservation Plan for all FCE areas created during land development. The County will perform a minimum of two inspections of FCE areas to verify that the land developer has met its obligations. A land developer is required to complete a three-year survival and maintenance period (increased from a two year review in 2020) for all FCE areas created.

Accurate posting of protective signs along easement perimeters is carried out. Assessment of forest cover, plant survival and invasive species is performed. Threats like encroachments and deficiencies are reported.

Private Forest Conservation Easements

Though no longer in existence, this program was designed to create forest conservation easements on private properties with

environmentally sensitive features. The Department of Recreation and Parks was responsible for site selection, planning and preparation, plantings, and management for 2 years. Reforestation was given priority over retention.

In 2017, under this program, 58 acres had been planted, 17,657 trees had been planted and 23,657 feet of stream had been buffered.

Reforestation Tree Planting on Public and Private Lands

This policy establishes guidelines for the afforestation or reforestation program within Howard County. The Department is the lead agency within the County for afforestation and reforestation financed by the forest conservation fund. The Natural and Historic Resources Division of the Department plans, designs, plants, maintains, and monitors the planting of the trees. The County benefits from this program through increased forested buffers that act as filters, stabilize stream channels, shade streams, and increase biodiversity.

Stream Re-Leaf Program

This program is designed to enhance riparian stream buffers by providing native trees and shrubs to property owners. The County

provides trees and shrubs for the property owner to plant within 75 feet of a stream. Large orders of at least 75 plants may qualify for planting services as well. Since its implementation, tens of thousands of trees have been planted.

Turf to Trees Program

The Turf to Trees program was created to increase tree coverage throughout the county in order to help alleviate the damaging effects of stormwater runoff. The program provides trees and planting services to Howard County property owners with lots of 1.5 to 10 acres in size, free of cost. Since the project started in 2015, over 3,100 trees have been planted.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Beaver Management

In its role as a steward of Howard County's natural resources (Howard County Code Title 19, subtitle 2, Section 19.200-211), it shall be a goal of the Department of Recreation and Parks to practice an attitude of acceptance of, and tolerance for, beaver activity as part of the county's natural environment and it will foster this attitude among the public through education. The Department recognizes beavers as a natural and desirable component of the environment because of their contribution to



Figure 3.17 *Insect Extravaganza at Robinson Nature Center*

flood control, water quality and diversity of natural habitat.

Insect Collection Policy

The Department of Recreation and Parks prohibits the collection or harvesting of organisms from County property without prior evaluation and written approval of requests from amateur, professional, government, and university-based research projects to survey and study specific organisms. The Natural

and Historic Resources provides for the coordination, oversight, guidance, and where applicable, public notice and enforcement of all activities related to allowing amateur, professional and university-lead research projects involving the collection of organisms/ insects within County-owned properties. Formal written request for permission should be approved to carry out the collection. The Department will not permit the collection of rare, threatened, or endangered insect species.

Invasive Plant Policy

The Department plays an active role in controlling invasive plants to improve overall habitat management, including the Conservation Stewardship and the Weed Warriors department programs. Volunteers contribute to the removal of non-native, invasive plant species and replanting of native trees and shrubs. Habitat restoration efforts include monitoring, invasive species control, including innovative mechanical means such as using goats as a new management tool, and conducting survival counts on planted trees and shrubs.

Policy 100.18: Integrated Pest Management on Parkland

The purpose of this policy is to protect and enhance both natural and developed landscapes with integrated pest management and limiting the use of pesticides. Following Howard County becoming a member of "Bee City USA," a coalition committed to protecting pollinators, use of Neonicotinoid and Glyphosate have been restricted on parkland. Neonicotinoid is a class of insecticides related to nicotine with a common mode that affects the central nervous system of insects. The use of neonicotinoids are prohibited on all County parkland including sports fields, garden plots, golf course and open space, with



Figure 3.18 *Geese populations lead to algae growth in waterways because they are a major source of phosphorus.*

few exceptions. Glyphosate has been shown to inhibit the production of melanin, which insects often use as part of their immune defenses against bacteria and parasites, therefore rendering them more vulnerable to pathogens. Howard County has severely restricted the use of Glyphosate on County-owned land.

Nuisance Wildlife Management

Over population of certain species can create nuisance for humans and the environment. The white-tailed deer population is one such example where their presence has caused environmental damage, human illness, and traffic accidents. Howard County's comprehensive deer management plan

addresses actions that can help reduce deer-human conflicts but cannot eliminate them. Howard County's forests are also severely impacted by the deer population. Because deer browse the understory layer a majority of the forests do not have tree saplings to replace mature specimens following tree death. Consequently, the existing canopy acreage in the county is vulnerable to further significant loss. Furthermore, the forest bare ground increases negative impacts from stormwater runoff, exaggerating erosion and poor stream health quality.

Resident Canada Goose Management

This program manages and develops mitigation solutions to address the county's large Canada goose population, which has resulted in the degradation of lake and pond waters, and shorelines at several park properties. Geese are a major source of phosphorus in water bodies, and hence a driver of algae growth. The Department focuses on reducing damage at park properties, such as Centennial Park, as well as reducing the number of illegally released domestic waterfowl.

Goals + Actions

In order to meet state and county goals, while addressing emerging themes and recommendation drivers, the Department of Recreation and Parks can take the following actions:

State Goal 2.1

Concentrate preserved land in large, relatively contiguous blocks to effectively support long-term protection of resources and resource-based industries.

ACTION: Acquire properties to protect known natural resource areas or critical wildlife habitats, including at-risk properties and buffers identified as part of the Green Infrastructure Network, guided by past and future county-wide natural resource inventories.

ACTION: Acquire properties for passive recreation that can connect to existing parks and open spaces (linear parks and gardens, walking trails) to create large continuous networks of preserved open space.

ACTION: Strategically conduct restoration activities (like tree plantings and forest maintenance) in large, preserved lands and connected corridors to promote long term ecological health.

State Goal 2.2

Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries.

ACTION: Focus land acquisition on future forest protection areas to preserve tree canopy. Use the Green Infrastructure Network as a framework for strategic land acquisition.

ACTION: Continue to use land use policy tools, including regulations and incentives, that protect agricultural land, forest and other important rural resources, and support the agricultural and forestry industries.

ACTION: Monitor implementation of the recently updated Forest Conservation Act and modify the Act as necessary to ensure adequate protection of forest resources.

State Goal 2.3

Identify, protect and restore lands and waterways in Maryland that support important aquatic and terrestrial natural resources and ecological functions, through combined use of the following techniques:

- **Public land acquisition and stewardship;**
- **Private land conservation easements and stewardship practices through purchased or donated easement programs;**
- **Local land use management plans and procedures that conserve natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas and minimize impacts to resource lands when development occurs;**
- **Incentives for resource-based economies that increase the retention of forests, wetlands or agricultural lands;**
- **Avoidance of impacts on natural resources by publicly funded infrastructure development projects; and**
- **Appropriate mitigation response, commensurate with the value of the affected resource.**

ACTION: Prioritize public land acquisition and private land conservation and stewardship practices within the County's Green Infrastructure Network, which includes and links the most significant habitat areas in the county.

ACTION: Continue to seek federal and State funds for land acquisition and environmental restoration.

ACTION: Explore creation of a local Resilience Authority program, to generate funding for large-scale infrastructure projects to better adapt to the effects of climate change

ACTION: Continue and expand the use of ecologically-aware maintenance practices on Department lands to support natural resource management.

State Goal 2.4

Focus conservation and restoration activities on priority areas, according to a strategic framework such as Targeted Ecological Areas (TEAs).

ACTION: Use the County's Green Infrastructure Network, which includes and links the most significant habitat areas in the County, and designated greenways to establish priorities for conservation and restoration activities.

ACTION: Continue native tree planting efforts to increase tree canopy and forest cover.

ACTION: Control non-native invasive species so as to increase native species diversity in forests, meadows, wetlands, and stream riparian zones.

State Goal 2.5

Conserve and restore species of concern and important habitat types that may fall outside of designated green infrastructure.

ACTION: Develop a county-wide conservation plan that addresses species of concern and their habitat on both public and private lands.

ACTION: Prepare materials and provide technical assistance for conservation on private lands, focused on protecting stream hydrology, stream and wetland restoration, increasing native tree canopy diversity, and control of non-native invasive species.

ACTION: Prepare and disseminate in multiple ways the essential conservation messages about the county's ecological systems and species of concern.

State Goal 2.6

Develop a comprehensive inventory of natural resources, natural areas, and sensitive species to assist state and local implementation programs.

ACTION: Complete a county-wide natural resources inventory and conservation plan for terrestrial and aquatic communities and sensitive species. To develop the inventory, the County should partner with other governmental agencies, such as the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), organizations, academic institutions, and citizen scientists to utilize data from existing inventories and aggregate findings. The plan should prioritize, describe, and estimate costs for areas where protection, restoration and management will secure the county's ecological health and resilience.

ACTION: Adapt and expand existing parkland and open space acquisition and land management programs to implement the County Conservation Plan over ten years.

ACTION: Explore the creation of new easement programs to protect natural resources.

ACTION: Create a management and implementation plan for non-native invasive species control and species of concern protection that can be used across private and public natural resource areas.

ACTION: Revise existing deer management regulations to increase hunting opportunities on public and private land as a means of improving biodiversity and forest ecology.

State Goal 2.7

Establish measurable objectives for natural resource conservation and an integrated state/local strategy to achieve them through state and local implementation programs.

ACTION: Establish ten highly revealing programmatic metrics to evaluate success in implementing a ten-year County conservation plan. For land acquisition, see Water Quality Protection Lands and Piedmont Foothills.

ACTION: Establish ten highly revealing biological metrics to evaluate success in implementing a ten-year County conservation plan. These will include increasing forest coverage (analyzed by satellite classification of land cover) and achieving target stream IBI score of Fair or better across all of the County's watersheds. For further biological metrics see University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science's Chesapeake Bay indicators.

State Goal 2.8

Assess the combined ability of state and local programs to achieve the following:

- **Expand and connect forests, farmland 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 protect, conserve and restore stream corridors, riparian forest buffers, wetlands, floodplains and aquifer recharge areas and their associated hydrologic and water quality functions**
- **Adopt coordinated land and watershed management strategies that recognize the critical links between growth management and aquatic biodiversity and fisheries production and**
- **Support a productive forest land base and forest resource industry, emphasizing the economic viability of privately owned forestland.**

ACTION: Complete a comprehensive Conservation Plan that: (1) documents needed acquisitions and restoration and management work to complete a county-wide conserved lands network, (2) document costs to achieve over 10 years, (3) integrates with CIP and O&M budgets and (4) Identifies funding mechanisms and implementation.

ACTION: Establish Howard County as a viable county within the Family Forest Carbon Program, developed by the American Forest Foundation and The Nature Conservancy. The program encourages the growth of mature forest to provide water quality and habitat benefits while increasing carbon storage on the land. This program is not yet available in Howard County.

State Goal 2.9

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.

ACTION: Use the parkland acquisition program to acquire an average of 25 acres of parkland per year over the 5-year term of the 2022 LPPRP. The County currently exceeds this goal by providing 29.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Although the County has met its goals for land acquisition, the current land acquisition goals support increased equity and access to parks for all Howard County residents.

ACTION: Continue to implement PlanHoward 2030 policies that address the creation of open space and protection of natural resources during the development process and continue these policies in the General Plan update.

ACTION: Recognize the need for passive recreation in natural areas as being equally important (for ecosystems and mental health benefits) as structured park land.

County Goal 2.1

Promote sustainability throughout the Department of Recreation and Parks.

ACTION: Continue to support staff training in ecologically-based land management practices and BMPs.

ACTION: Increase investment in staff who restore and maintain County lands and waters.

ACTION: Tie facility planning and development to secured budgets for staff and operating support.

ACTION: Increase sustainability within departmental practices—such as reducing waste (at events, camps, etc.), installing solar panels on pavilions, utilizing gray water for toilets, providing garden plots incorporated into parks in socially vulnerable areas, or other innovative sustainability measures

ACTION: Increase sustainable landscaping practices spanning from reduced mowing to alternative fueled lawn equipment.

ACTION: Continue to collaborate with other departments on sustainability initiatives and innovative solutions, projects, and programs.

County Goal 2.2

Encourage citizens to improve the environment.

ACTION: Collaborate with the marketing division on campaigns to increase public awareness for conservation efforts and “behind the scenes” ecology work.

ACTION: Expand volunteer opportunities for citizens to participate in restoration and conservation efforts.

ACTION: Leverage the trail system to increase passive recreation and public experience/awareness of natural resource areas.

ACTION: Increase signage along trails to educate citizens about local ecologies and the overall parks and open space system.

ACTION: Expand education and outreach about the importance of sustainable land management, such as sustainable landscaping, reduced mowing areas, native plantings, “natural looking” areas, reducing pesticide use and increasing manual weed control so residents and visitors to the parks can appreciate the non-manicured look of our parks.

County Goal 2.3

Improve water quality.

ACTION: Continue current initiatives in the County Watershed Implementation Plan and County Implementation Strategy in addition to creating a pollution reduction initiative that addresses the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

ACTION: Use the findings of citizen-science groups and nonprofit water conservation organizations that actively monitor stream water quality to target locations for water quality improvements.

ACTION: Establish policies that value the benefits provided by ecological processes or functions in wetlands and riparian areas.

ACTION: Continue native tree planting efforts within stream buffers and wetland restoration to increase water quality.

County Goal 2.4

Improve tree health, quantity, and resilience.

ACTION: Prioritize forest health and overall forest diversity (including preserving mature trees as well as saplings) in management and restoration efforts, focusing on deer management, integrated pest management, and outreach events.

ACTION: Shift planting strategies beyond canopy trees to regenerating tree seedlings and saplings representing the future forest canopy.

ACTION: Encourage landowners to receive and implement forest stewardship plans prepared by the Maryland DNR Forest Service for a nominal fee.

Historic Resources + Agriculture

Aspiration

The County acknowledges and amplifies its agricultural and cultural histories.

Historic Resources

Howard County holds a unique and distinctive history. Its productive natural resources, agricultural legacy, and historic communities comprise a system that intrinsically links ecological preservation and community development. In this system, it is not only single sites that are historic, but entire communities and landscapes. Due to this complexity, historic preservation is a highly necessary and important discipline for Howard County. Through the work of historic preservation, past stories can be illuminated and deep connections with place can be maintained.

Howard County owns 24 historic sites. The Department of Recreation & Parks has a Living History and Heritage team that manages historic properties that are owned by Howard County and generally accessible to the public, supported by the Department's own Construction Division and the Department of Public Works as needed.

In addition, the County's Historic Preservation Commission, staffed by the Department of Planning and Zoning, conducts historic preservation tasks in cooperation with owners of locally designated historic districts and individual structures (including the Department). The County's two local historic districts are Ellicott City and Lawyers Hill in

Elkridge. These districts, as well as Savage and Daniels Mill, are National Register Historic Districts.

Howard County was designated a Preserve America Community in 2013 by the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Preserve America Communities "recognizes communities that celebrate their heritage; use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization; and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs."²⁹ While this designation is primarily honorific, the County would be eligible for grants if Congress appropriates funds; and can erect attractive signs at entrances to the County and major communities. They have already made use of this designation to erect a sign on Rogers Avenue.

The Department of Recreation and Parks has a Historic Resources Management Plan that includes maintenance and management strategies for each of its 24 properties. The Department of Recreation and Parks, however, is solely responsible for these sites' maintenance and operation. The Department of Planning and Zoning employs an architectural historian on staff, who serves as a great resource for Living History and Heritage.

The County's process of acquiring historic properties has been more opportunistic than strategic. Sometimes, potential properties have come to the County when a historic property comes up for sale or when an engaged member of the public contacts the County about a property. In other cases, historic properties come with open space purchased predominantly for other reasons – often parkland and open space. Properties located in town centers with historic uses are more likely to be managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks. Properties located in headwaters and with stormwater management potential are often purchased by the Department of Public Works.

OVERVIEW OF HISTORIC RESOURCE SYSTEM

2022 STATE GOALS

In the 2022 plan, historic preservation goals and resources are inferred and suggested within agricultural goals. The most applicable goal is:

1. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 PLAN)

Goals within the 2017 plan that were related to the historic resource system included:

1. Integrate historic and cultural resources into park programming and facilities in a way that encourages and promotes the stewardship of these resources.
2. Share and promote the Department's numerous accomplishments.
3. Build sustainability goals into operational and departmental culture and functions.
4. Reflect Howard County's natural heritage while making open space a priority equal to its impact on the quality of life for future generations.

The Living History and Heritage team has done a great job in moving these goals forward in the Department. This is most clearly reflected in the Heritage Programs Strategic Plan Goals of 2019, a document that builds upon and adds detail to the 2017 LPPRP goals. According to the Living History and Heritage team, four of the seven strategic planning goals have been completed since 2019. The three remaining goals are in progress.



Figure 4.1 Blandair, the Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park, and Harriet Tubman Cultural Center are all part of the DRP's historic assets.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

County Historic Preservation

Department of Recreation and Parks Historic Sites

Within the Department, the Living History and Heritage section under the Natural and Historic Resources Division as well as the Heritage Conservation Construction Section within the Bureau of Capital Projects, Park Planning & Construction Division manage, protect, and enhance the historic and cultural resources of the County. The Living History and Heritage team is tasked with maintaining, operating, and protecting the Department's historic assets spread across many parks. The mission of this program is to "benefit a diverse audience by utilizing our historic resources in various ways that promote good stewardship of the County owned historic resources, artifacts and archives. This is accomplished by staying current with technology and heritage tourism trends, by providing historically accurate information to our visitors, and maintaining a sense of place through the built environment and the intangible heritage associated with the region."

The Department of Recreation and Parks manages 24 sites ranging from museums to historic homes, ruins to historic districts. The standards for maintaining the character of

the Department's historic resources depend, in part, on restrictions imposed through the use of State funding for the acquisition of the properties that included various historic buildings, and in part on self-imposed restrictions. In quite a few cases, properties owned by Howard County and managed by the Department are protected by preservation easements held by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT). These easements were imposed

at the time of the properties' acquisition through Program Open Space. MHT requires such easements when it determines that the property is of sufficient significance to require a great deal of care in its long-term management, including both rehabilitation and adaptive use. The Department's policy in these cases – and in others where no easements are held by MHT – is to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for the Treatment of Historic Properties.



Figure 4.2 Sheep to Shawl Event at the Living Farm Heritage Museum

COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCES	ACREAGE
B&O Ellicott City Station Museum	0.34
Belmont Manor and Historic Park	72.64
Bernard Fort House (Heine Property)	5.56
Blandair Historic Farm (BLA)	n/a
Bollman Truss Bridge	2.21
Clover Hill Farm House (RBP)	n/a
Doyle Spring House (RBP)	n/a
Ellicott City Colored School, Restored	13.49
Firehouse Museum	0.04
Harriet Tubman Cultural Center	n/a
Hebb House (WFP)	n/a
The Original Courthouse of the Howard District*	0.19

COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC RESOURCES	ACREAGE
James Marlow House (SMP)	n/a
James Sykes House (WFP)	n/a
Lt. Col. Ephraim Anderson Grave Site (CAM)	.16
McKenzie Barn (RBP)	n/a
Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park	9.74
Pfeiffer's Corner Schoolhouse (RBP)	n/a
Poplar Springs Park	7.04
Guilford Quarry Pratt Through Truss Bridge	0.20
Simpsonville Mill Ruins (RNC)	n/a
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin	0.16
Troy House (TP)	n/a
Waverly Mansion	3.44

Figure 4.3 *Current list of County-owned historic resources.*

*Destroyed in May 27, 2018 flood

County-level designations are important for the maintenance of these sites. Other designations matter rather less to the Department's daily operations. Sites listed in the federal National Register of Historic Places (which can be of local, state, or national significance) acquired by the County with state funds are likely to be under an MHT easement. Listing in the National Register largely confers greater public recognition without real restrictions on the Department's operations (but since MHT does impose restrictions, what the federal listing does or does not do matters little in this context). See more discussion of the National Register in the following sections.

The Living History and Heritage team's Historic Resources Management Plan, 2020-2021, classifies the 24 sites according to a tier system based on how actively programmed and visitor-friendly each site is - including some, in Tier IV, that are not open to the public in any form due to safety or accessibility issues. There is also category suggesting the removal of three resources from the list. These are resources that either do not have any kind of historical context to be interpreted by Living History and Heritage staff or are part of another property operated by another entity including the Baldwin Commons, Ryan Property Well and the Savage Mill Dam Ruins.

The Living History and Heritage section offered highly successful summer camps and tours and manages historic homes, sites, and artifacts. COVID-19 has required a nimble rethinking of how best to connect residents and visitors with these resources. The pandemic has challenged the Department's ideas about the future of historic resources programming and the importance of integrating historic resources with opportunities to interact with integrating historic resources with opportunities to interact with them, in person and virtually. During the pandemic, the Living History and Heritage section offered virtual programs for the first time, including a Behind the Scenes tour of the B&O, history-themed storytimes with an at-home craft activity for kids, an archaeology lecture series, and a virtual field trip tour of the Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park.

Even before the pandemic, the Living History and Heritage team was attempting to reimagine how to connect residents and visitors with sites not applicable for standard programming. Historic sites unable to support traditional programming or events can still be interactive. Better linking historic sites to one another, as well as to their ecological and agricultural contexts, opens more opportunities for engagement. Now is the time to combine Heritage Section's recent virtual

and at home programming with renewed interest in outdoor recreation to bring such programs into parks and open spaces.

Historic resources in the Department's portfolio are valued and well-maintained. The Department has invested in both creating maintenance and preservation plans for individual resources and maintaining the system as a whole. In addition to noting how best to care for the structure of sites, the plans also outline opportunities for public engagement. The Living History and Heritage section offers a wide range of interpretive history programs, lectures, events, public archaeology, field trips and summer camps that allow opportunities for all ages to interact with these resources.

Not all historic sites managed by the Department of Recreation and Parks are open to the public, however. Some are unsafe and in need of larger renovation efforts and funding before they can be fully utilized. The risk of flooding presents a threat to the condition of these sites, although there are several remediation projects that have taken place or are in the works to assuage these concerns. Currently, funding for both physical renovations and program operations is limited. An additional need for The Living History and

Heritage section is to create more interpretive and wayfinding signage at all County owned historic sites. Many sites are without these elements, limiting the ability for residents and visitors to interact with these properties even if from afar. Efforts to address this issue are currently in progress.

Howard County Historic Sites

In addition to the historic properties owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks, Howard County boasts many other historical assets which are privately owned. Howard County's Historic Sites, seen in Figure 4.6, are a collection of over 1,000 properties that hold significant historic value at the count- level. While this designation does not automatically protect sites through historic preservation legislation, it does make property owners (both public and private) eligible for property tax credits.

The Department of Planning and Zoning also works to maintain, regulate, and protect historic resources at the county-level. It uses zoning regulations and a design review process to ensure changes by both private and public entities are appropriate to the character of designated historic resources.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has a significant role in this task. The Commission provides advice to Howard County agencies (including the Department), Boards, Commissions, and property owners regarding historic sites and historic districts. It is also the steward of a long-range work plan, the Historic Preservation Plan, adopted in 2014. The HPC is staffed by the Department of Planning and Zoning's Resource Conservation Division, which covers Agricultural Preservation, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation in Howard County. HPC advisory comments are reviewed and considered by DPZ during site plan review.

The HPC determines if exterior changes to a local historic district comply with their adopted Guidelines and County Code, and issues certificates of approval for all exterior changes, including new construction, historic building relocation or demolition, and repair or alteration of any structure and other changes that impact the appearance of a structure, per the HPC's code requirements. The Commission also assists with identifying historic resources on sites and provides advice regarding the design of development.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

2

County-owned National
Historic Landmarks

43

Properties Listed in the National
Register, according to the
Maryland Historic Trust

293

Properties Evaluated for
National Register Eligibility

24

County-owned
Historic Sites*

24

Properties under MHT
Preservation Easement

Figure 1.19 Data acquired from the Medusa Database and is current as of April 17, 2020.

**count of MIHP properties sourced from Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) Architectural Historian, 2021.*

State of Maryland Historic Preservation

A number of state-operated programs support the basic preservation responsibilities maintained by Howard County as described above.

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties

Historic properties or assets included in the statewide database known as the Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) are generally at least fifty years old and can include standing structures or archaeological resources. Sites in the MIHP have undergone a review process to verify events or elements of the site that have historical significance. There are no regulatory restrictions or reviews needed for these properties; the MIHP is an instrument for research and documentation. It is worth noting that restrictions and review policies and procedures occur at the local and federal levels. As of July 2021, there were nearly 90,000 resources with this designation statewide.

Howard County has more than 1,100 properties entered in the MIHP, accounting for roughly 1 percent of all MIHP statewide.

Howard County has adopted a county-level Historic Sites Inventory to note historic resources at a local level. These sites have been adopted by County Council Resolution



Figure 4.4 *The Thomas Isaac Log Cabin is an example of a site that is listed as a Howard County Historic Site and is cared for by the Department of Recreation and Parks.*

and are subject to Advisory Comments for certain activities like subdivision and site plan development. They are also eligible for tax credit programs.

The Historic National Road is a federally-designated National Scenic Byway, consisting of Route 144 and Frederick Road in Howard

County. As it has evolved in Maryland since the 1991 passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the federal program has funded the acquisition of conservation easements protecting views from scenic roads. Such views are delineated in formal corridor management plans that qualify roads for such public support.

Howard County Historic Assets

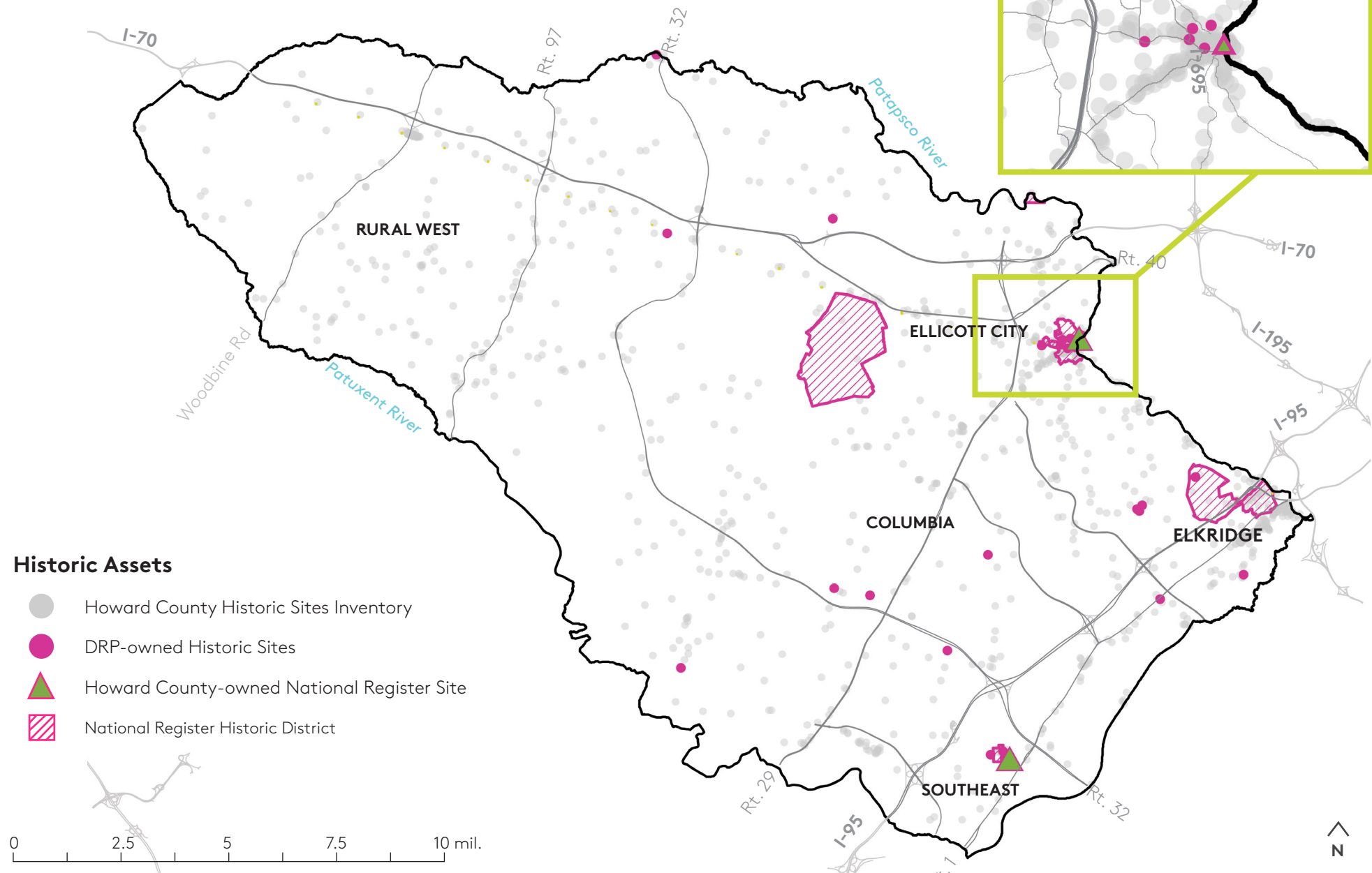


Figure 4.5 Howard County contains over 1,000 historic sites. 24 of these sites are owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

Federal Historic Preservation

There are two primary programs for recognizing important historic properties at the national level:

National Register of Historic Places

According to the National Park Service, which administers this program, “the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service’s National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America’s historic and archaeological resources.”³⁰ Listings include districts, buildings, structures, objects, and sites that are recognized for their significance in American history, archeology, architecture, engineering, or culture.

The program is administered at the State level by MHT. In Maryland, the register includes more than 1,500 listings, including approximately 200 districts. MHT notes that “listed properties span a wide variety of types and periods, ranging from prehistoric archaeological sites to buildings of the recent past, and include rural landscapes, urban and suburban.” This distinction does not restrict

private property owners from the use of their property.

Listing in the National Register provides access to the federal rehabilitation tax credit for qualified expenditures on commercial historic properties, as discussed below. The law furthermore protects both listed and eligible properties from unthinking actions by federal agencies or those receiving federal funding or licensing in a process commonly known as “Section 106 review” (named for the section in the original 1966 law).

Howard County has 65 sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places, seven of these sites are owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks.

National Historic Landmarks

National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are also listed in the National Register but meet a much higher standard of documentation and hold particular significance to the heritage of the United States. There are about 2,600 landmarks nationwide. Howard County boasts four National Historic Landmarks, two of which are owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks (B&O Ellicott City Station Museum and the Bollman Truss Bridge). Matching-grant funding through the federal Save America’s Treasures (SAT) program, administered by the National Park Service, is available for NHLs.

Permanent Preservation of Historic Buildings and Lands

Maryland offers multiple programs for protecting land upon which a historic site is located or in entire historic districts, including important historical landscapes, through preservation or conservation easements (there is little difference between the two legally, with the former more generally applied to structures and the latter to land, sometimes in combination). Easements permanently restrict lands in the county to preservation uses, limiting such changes as new development or excavation. Howard County uses preservation easements held by the Maryland Historical Trust and the local Rockburn Land Trust to support the preservation of historic spaces.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Historic Tax Credits

This program provides a tax credit of 20 percent of qualified expenses required to rehabilitate an “income-producing” property. The property must be listed individually in the National Register or located in a National Register-listed historic district and specifically identified as a “contributing property.” While this qualification is helpful for rehabilitating offices, commercial spaces, farms, rental houses, or industrial spaces, it does not include private residences.

State Historic Assets in Howard County

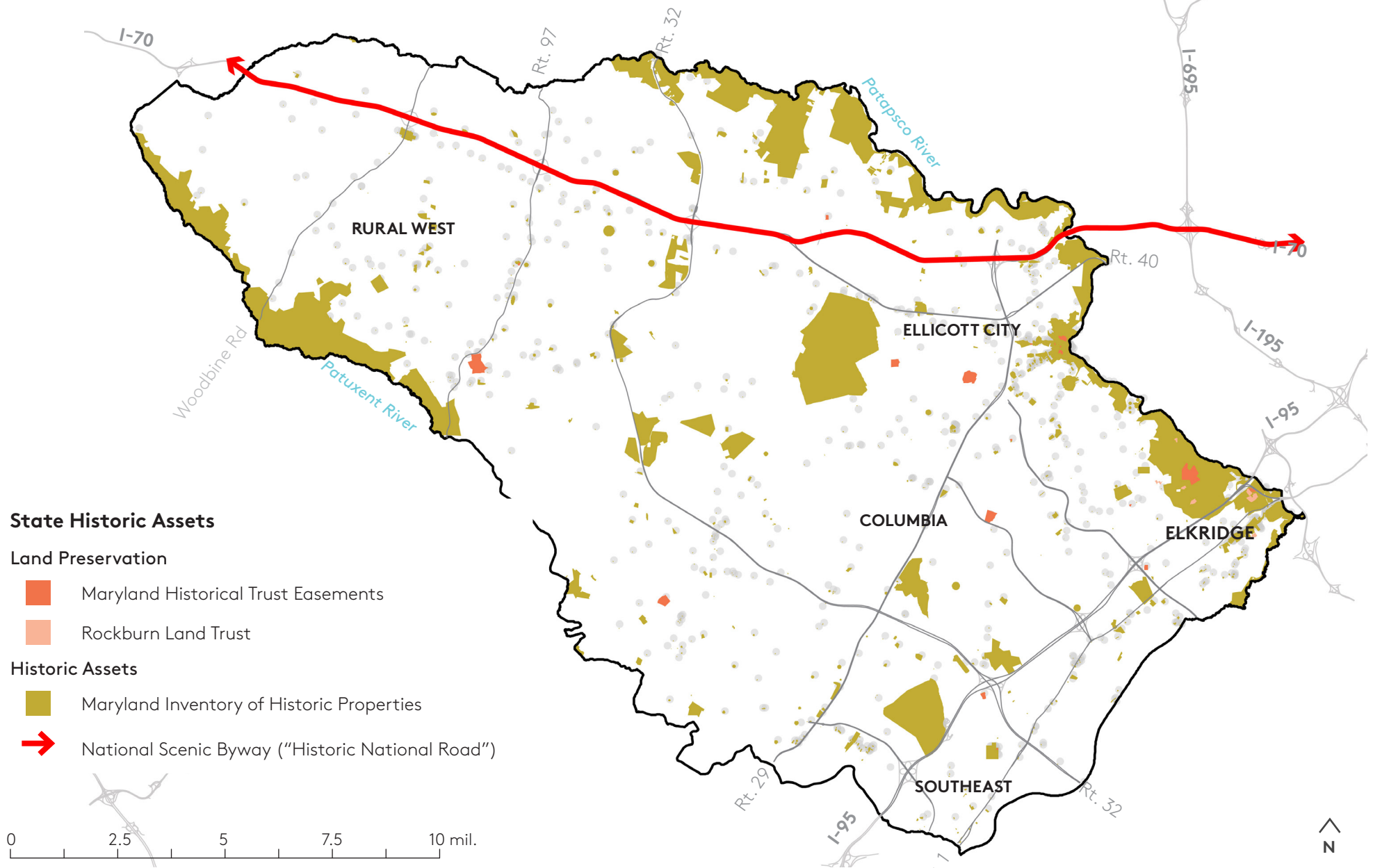


Figure 4.6 Howard County has many historic assets at the state level. This includes historic land preservation easements, historic properties, and a National Scenic Byway.



Figure 4.8 *The Belmont Manor & Historic Park ribbon cutting and open house on April 11, 2015*



Figure 4.7 *Bollman Truss Bridge is one of the two National Historic Landmarks owned by the Department of Recreation and Parks.*

The State of Maryland also offers its Historic Revitalization Tax Credit program. There are three at the State level: (1) a 20% tax credit for homeowners (capped at \$50,000 in a 24-month period with a minimum of \$5,000 of eligible expenses to qualify; (2) a 20% competitive tax credit for small commercial properties (for “Main Street” type projects that do not exceed \$500,000 in qualified expenditures), and (3) a 20% competitive tax credit for larger commercial properties.

In addition to Federal and State tax credits, there are local county-level tax credit programs for historic preservation efforts. The Historic Tax Credit Programs under 20.112 and

20.113 of the county code provide: (1) a credit for “qualified expenses” up to 25 percent of the cost of the eligible work. This credit applies to projects costing \$500 or more; (2) provides a tax credit to offset any “increase in property tax that would result from increased assessed value due to the restoration work done.”³¹ It can be applied to projects valued at \$5,000 or more and “granted annually for ten years after the work is completed.”³² These incentives are available for historic sites throughout the County or properties located within local historic districts.

While Howard County has seen positive numbers, even more economic benefit is

possible. State tax credit criteria requires sites to be a contributing resource within a National Register district, individually listed on the National Register, or contributing within an area that the Maryland Historic Trust determines is eligible to access the state tax credit. This requirement means that most historic properties listed on the Howard County Historic Sites Inventory are not eligible for State tax credits. These limitations display the importance of the County’s own 20.112 and 20.113 Historic Tax Credit Programs, which are less strict and more personalized to the needs of the County.

EASEMENTS	2017 Acres	2021 Acres	Change
Maryland Environmental Trust Easements / Rockburn Land Trust	62	62	+ 0
Neighborhood Preservation Easement	33	75	+ 42
Rockburn Land Trust	47	46	0
Rural Legacy Easement	81	81	0
TOTAL	223	261	+ 42

Figure 4.9 *In addition to historic designations for structures and districts, easements can also be historic in nature. Howard County has 42 acres protected in perpetuity for historic and cultural conservation.*

COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS

The 2017 LPPRP included several goals to expand the adaptive reuse of historic properties and to better integrate agricultural histories and the natural environment into the Department's recreational programming. To achieve this aim, this document looks to a novel approach that many cities and counties have embraced, known as "using the city (sic. county) as a living lab." The aim is to create an environment that is a place for people not only to learn more about the many histories of the places they visit, but also to immerse themselves in an understanding of how these histories have shaped the cities and counties today.

Beyond traditional programming that the Living Heritage and History section provides, the County could support the section's efforts and incorporate signage, wayfinding, and educational campaigns that amplify unique moments that are significant to Howard County's development. Columbia is not the only community in Howard County to represent important changes in city patterns. Agricultural land, land along water ways, and scenic roads are all historic examples of how humans have viewed the creation of settlement patterns and defined ideal communities. Linking self guided programming, like walking, biking or driving tours, to podcasts and audio programming would allow residents and visitors to explore

untold stories while exploring their own neighborhoods.

Within this effort, there is also an opportunity to better link preservation of historic resources with preservation of agricultural land. The Maryland Resident Curatorship Program, run at the State level, provides such an example. In this program, residents are provided lifetime tenancy in a historic property in exchange for restoring, maintaining, and periodically opening the property to the public. There are currently 27 homes within the program. As of April 2022, none of the three properties available for residency were located in Howard County, as DRP currently does not have any historic properties that are eligible for curatorship. The County could participate, or greatly increase participation in this state-wide program or create a county-specific version. Such a program could also help to mitigate demolition by neglect issues by providing incentives to upkeep historic homes.

A county-specific program could also provide alternative incentives (beyond tax credits) for property owners to undergo historic renovations. Perhaps property owners who regularly engage in hosting historic programming could receive a tax credit or financial contribution.

This idea of using the neighborhood, district, farmland, or environment actively also allows the County an avenue into current community issues. As an example, the Mahoning Historical Society in Youngstown, Ohio actively changed their strategy to one focused on archiving the past to serving as an community convener. This meant hosting “community conversations” about the community’s “tough histories” and providing space for residents to discuss issues like social justice. The society also hosts cooking series and food-centric gatherings that reflect diverse resident



Figure 4.10 *Cookie Table and Cocktails is a favorite event put on by the Mahoning Historical Society.*

backgrounds. This can build on initiatives the County is already engaged in, like the scavenger hunts hosted by the Sports and Adventure Division, which targets youth and teen engagement.

While historic preservation serves to protect the past for future generations, it must also simultaneously anticipate what current sites and resources will be deemed historic in the future. The County must ask “what will Howard County need in 2100 to tell an accurate and complete story?” This requires an honest analysis of the histories currently told and a strategy for amplifying, uplifting, and preserving the stories of marginalized groups and communities. As the Department and the Living Heritage and History section consider the future of this work, it will be important to continue to add a choir of differing voices, sites, experiences, and histories to the historic resources catalog.

SUCCESSES SINCE 2017

Since the last plan, County staff have worked hard to accomplish many of the goals listed in the 2017 plan. The first major goal was in the securing of more protected land under easement. Since 2017, the Department of Planning and Zoning has acquired nine additional agricultural easements, totaling roughly 287 parcels. As of spring 2022, 15,955 acres were preserved under the ALPP-

purchase program (an increase of 237 acres since 2017) and 3,024 acres under the ALPP-dedication program (an increase of 42 acres since 2017). This count does not include the 127.7 acres Dickey/Sharp property that was approved by the County on November 1, 2021. This includes the relatively recent acquisition of the Dickey/Sharp property, which was approved by the County on November 1, 2021. This property is particularly notable, as it is the largest remaining farm in the Rural West that was eligible through the ALPP.

The ALPP stopped approving applications in 2018 due to budget concerns. In 2019, the program was able to reopen after collaboration between County Executive Calvin Ball, the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Finance Department, and the Agricultural Preservation Board led to an update of the scoring system used to determine easement pricing. As of April 2022, there are two additional properties, representing 55 acres, currently working through the application process.

Other goals included increasing access to fresh food and creating greater connections between farms and urban residents. The Roving Radish program, begun in 2014, connects residents to healthy meal kits with ingredients sourced from local farms. The program is government run and low-income residents receive subsidized meals. Since the

last plan, the Roving Radish program has continued to grow. In 2020, it opened its first storefront, a location of more than 4,000 square feet in Columbia. The expansion of this program shows a commitment to integrating county-grown products more cohesively into daily life.

CHALLENGES SINCE 2017

Despite these many successes, the Department's work within historic resources management and operations has faced challenges since 2017. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic halted many funding streams and ongoing renovations to structures and paused programs and historical site admissions as programming and admissions to historical sites were suspended.

The Department plays a vital, but often subtle role in achieving its overall mission to protect land and amenities for future generations. It lies at a complex, but critical, intersection. It often straddles multiple worlds as it addresses issues intertwined with Urban Planning and Zoning, the Historic Preservation Commission, land preservation, and heritage. Within the Department, the Natural and Historic Resources Division and the Living History and Heritage section engages many partners to help maintain historic sites. Partners include Capital Projects, which handles preservation-related repairs; the Horticulture Division

which addresses mowing, gardens, tree maintenance, and other grounds needs; and the Bureau of Facilities in the Department of Public Works which maintains building systems and controls (like HVAC systems). The keeping of properties is a collaborative team effort.

Many structures, such as historic farmhouses and architecturally significant residences, are facing demolition by neglect. The Department has previously received the resources for property acquisition, which would provide the necessary maintenance to prevent demolition by neglect from occurring. However, the Department plans to prioritize the preservation of its own properties and not use this tool to monitor or enforce the upkeep of private property that falls into disrepair. As development pressure increases throughout the county, many private landowners are incentivized to sell land for newer housing developments. Even if the Department of Recreation and Parks had the budget to purchase these private residences, it would lack the staff to restore and maintain such properties. Because most privately owned structures are not on the National Register list or have certain required designation, they receive state funding. Privately-owned structures are usually do not have the necessary required designations and are not eligible for Federal historic tax credits. Alternative mechanisms are needed to incentivize reinvestment in these historic

properties. Other federal programs, or county-specific education campaigns and initiatives, may fill these gaps.

Extreme weather events, such as the 2016 and 2018 floods in Ellicott City, may pose a threat to historic structures as these natural disasters become more frequent due to climate change. A number of historic sites and structures are located in places that are impacted by climate change, making them more vulnerable to a number of potential threats. As a result of these events, the Historic Preservation Commission, Department of Planning and Zoning, and the Department of Inspections, Licenses, and Permits have established processes to assist rebuilding efforts and amended Code and Rules of Procedure to facilitate these processes.

Finally, Howard County is not immune to national conversations critically re-examining history and legacy. Questions about whose history is being told within historic systems is a meaningful one. While the county has a multitude of rich histories, it is often the stories attributed to colonial, agricultural, or urban planning that are most often amplified. Eighty-eight percent of the Department's 24 sites are dated back to the mid-1700s, even though the history of the Algonquin, Iroquois, and Susquehannock tribes pre-dated these historic landmarks and sites.



Figure 4.11 Fully acquiring the B & O Ellicott City Station Museum allowed the Living History and Heritage team to increase the number of full time programming and administration positions.

There are current efforts to tell more diverse, nuanced, and holistic stories and represent a more complete historical picture. Howard County's Network to Freedom and Underground Railroad sites are such programs. The Living History and Heritage section provided a site and related exhibit at the Original Courthouse of the Howard District and a dedication to the building. Unfortunately, the building was lost in the 2018 flood. What is left of exhibition material is now located at the B&O Ellicott City Station Museum.

The 2020 Heritage Program Management Plan contains specific goals to address unheard histories. Some goals of this plan include "interpreting the history of the enslaved population as accurately as possible...", creating "accurate portrayals of inhabitants and sites for eras spanning Native American through Civil Rights," and sharing an "inclusive history of all races and backgrounds of people who contributed to the historical significance" of the county. These are positive steps to tell complete histories and better reflect the diversity of Howard County's population. Supporting initiatives that highlight contemporary Howard County history, such as culturally themed food events, creating history curriculum for schools, including Native American voices in wayfinding and signage, or other heritage based programming would further support these goals in an action-oriented way.

REPORT THEMES

The Department provides creative programs in tandem with thoughtful maintenance plans. Emerging themes point towards future actions:

- **Historic Sites can be made resilient to climate change:** Some County-owned historic sites were damaged during natural disasters, and climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of these severe weather events. As a result of the major flooding in 2016 and 2018 for example, mitigation and rehabilitation measures were implemented by the County. The County should continue to anticipate the resources required to make repairs after damage and create plans that help mitigate and prevent further damage.
- **Historic programs are thriving:** The Living History and Heritage staff has been doing a great deal of work with a small staff and less financial resources than other sections. Since 2017, staff has grown, multiple historic sites/museums have been acquired, and management and preservation plans have been created.
- **Partnerships are valuable tools to protect historically significant places:** The Department's role in maintaining and preserving structures will need to consider the growing threat of more frequent extreme weather events such as flooding and extreme heat and their impact on historic structures. Within the larger context of Howard County, demolition by neglect is also a growing concern. The Department should leverage Living History and Heritage team to save, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources.

Agriculture

Howard County has long been defined by a thriving agricultural tradition. Agriculture is both a major economic driver and a reflection of history and cultural identity. Since the 2017 LPPRP plan, which used the 2012 USDA Census, the number of farms in the county has grown in number, but decreased in acreage.³³ Most farms continue to be family-owned entities. Trends in Howard County have seen a shift from produce production to protein production, which has led to a current shortage of protein processing plants. Agritourism is a strong industry, but can bring conflict with neighbors due to parking, noise, and other land use issues. Agritourism has been able to remain such a strong economic driver due to the ongoing County support through zoning and regulation. The Department of Planning and Zoning, reflecting larger county-wide strategies, has diversified uses acceptable on farmland to provide farmers with additional revenue streams from such activities as breweries, event permits, and Community Sponsored Agriculture.

2022 STATE GOALS

1. Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production;
2. Protect natural, forestry, and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland;
3. 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;
4. Limit the intrusion of development and its impacts on rural resources and resource-based industries;
5. Ensure good return on public 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;
6. Work with local governments to achieve the following:
 - 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;
 - 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 public-at-large.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 GOALS)

- Integrate the preservation of the County's agricultural land and activities with natural resource protection.
- Connect the County's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.
- Incorporate farming across all scales – from large land preservation to support for efficient use of small farms to community gardens.

2022 County goals are similar to state goals in that they both aim to unite agricultural, historic heritage, and natural systems and maintain land preservation as a driver with community-wide economic benefits. There is much room for innovative and creative integration of agriculture with the greater park and recreation system, whether on new parcels, within existing facilities, or through collaborative programming. Institutional and state partnerships, local food markets, sustainable land management, and community garden and new farmer support programs are all areas for possible intersection.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

Agriculture is a powerful force both in the State of Maryland and within Howard County. Statewide, agriculture is the largest commercial industry, with a market value of \$2.2 billion dollars (2019). It employs 350,000 people. As of 2017, 96 percent of farms remained family owned.

Within Howard County, agriculture remains a major industry, creating roughly \$200 million in sales.³⁴ According to the Howard County Economic Development Authority, there are 335 farms within the county. According to the 2017 Census of Agriculture, these farms total 32,436 acres. Farms in Howard County are predominantly family operations, with 94 percent of farms family owned. Since 2012, the number of farms in Howard County has increased in number, but decreased in size. The average farm size in Howard County is 100 acres. Within the State of Maryland, farms are an average of 161 acres.

Agricultural Trends

There has been a county-wide trend to shift from produce production to protein production, a previous gap that is largely seen as beneficial to the county's agricultural community. The growth in protein production in the county will require both evaluation of environmental impact as the amount of

protein processing plants increase to meet demand of production. There has also been an increase in the equine industry, which includes horse riding for recreation as well as boarding, and has provided additional income for farmers who grow hay.

Howard County, like many regions of the country, has seen a resurgence of interest in food and food systems from the general public. More residents are interested in how their food is grown and the environmental impacts of agricultural production, and are even curious about starting micro-enterprises that focus on locally grown products. Howard County farmers have responded by diversifying their operations to meet the public's interest in and desire for locally grown product. This is evidenced through thriving farmers markets, pick-your-own's, community supported agriculture and other on-farm sales mechanisms.

PlanHoward 2030

PlanHoward 2030, Howard County's general plan, has established priority preservation areas through the use of a Planned Service Area boundary (PSA) and Priority Funding Area/PSA for water and sewer. While parks and open space are dotted throughout the county, the majority of agricultural preservation and open space easements lie to the west of the PSA boundary.

Zoning and Subdivision

Howard County has been able to remain a thriving agricultural center due to decades of favorable zoning policies and a county-wide commitment to integrating everyday life with nature. While there are currently no specific agricultural zoning districts within Howard County, there are residential zoning categories that serve farmers and protect farmland.

The Rural Conservation (RC) and Rural Residential (RR) zoning districts are aimed at protecting natural resources and agricultural land. These districts are within the Rural West, on the western side of the PSA boundary and allow low-density, clustered residential development that protects farmland. The Density Exchange Overlay (-DEO) is an overlay district for both the RC and RR zoning districts, which helps protect agricultural land in the West by creating environmental preservation parcels through the DEO. The Overlay District incentivizes landowners in the RC and RR zoning districts to preserve large blocks of farmland and cluster residential development in areas that do not adversely effect farmland. The main mechanism for this preservation is density exchange, in which density in the RC and RR districts are exchanged between parcels, preserving large parcels and directing residential development towards more appropriate parcels. Previously, the RC-DEO permitted sending and receiving within the RC.



Today, RC zoned properties cannot receive parcels unless they were grandfathered in. RC-zoned properties can send density to RR zoned receiving parcels.

In addition to zoning districts, Howard County incorporated Growth Tiers in response to the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act adopted by the State in 2012. Tiers aim to further control the rate of development. They range from I to IV and separate areas planned for sewerage expansion and development from areas not planned for sewerage expansion and to be directed into resource protection. The intent of these tiers is to prohibit major subdivisions of five or more lots in Tier IV areas, while prioritizing sewerage funding in Tier I areas. Growth Tiers were incorporated into PlanHoward 2030, the current general plan (adopted in 2012).

The County has worked to keep its zoning regulations and allowable uses current with both trends in farming and economic realities. These updates strive to support the changing face of the farming industry and open up farms to various funding streams. Uses like Community Sponsored Agriculture, wineries, breweries, and “pick your own” programs only require permits as accessory uses. Conditional uses, which require Hearing Authority approval before being allowed, include commercial solar facilities, animal hospitals, protein processing, and even small hair salons. The success of this

diversity of uses was made clear during the COVID-19 crises, when public health standards guided people toward activities offered by many farms that could be done outside with safe social distancing measures. Howard County has also upheld right-to-farm laws and intends to do so into the future.

However, there is still room to reimagine farming beyond the Rural West. While the large historic farms in that region are cornerstones of Howard County history and culture, farming trends suggest the integration of technology and urban farming as an important part of the future. The local food movement, coupled with growing urbanization throughout both the nation and Howard County, is changing food systems and access. The American Farmland Trust notes that “the majority of food sold directly to consumers comes from small farms in urban counties.” While Howard County takes positive steps to secure rural living in the Rural West, it cannot discount the agricultural possibilities of its eastern regions. Planning for agriculture to the east of the Planned Service Area may entail the installation of local procurement policies and ordinances related to agricultural businesses, and conditional use approval for structures such as livestock hoop houses.

THE SYSTEM TODAY

STATEWIDE

96%
family owned
(2017 census)

\$2.2 B
market value
(2019)

32%
of land used for
farming

12,400
farms

161 acres
average size

COUNTYWIDE

94%
family owned

\$200 m
yearly sales

25%
of land used for
farming

335
farms

100 acres
average size

Figure 1.21 Howard County’s agricultural system reflects larger state wide trends.

PlanHoward 2030 and HoCo By Design

During the creation of the 2022 LPPRP, Howard County was undergoing an engagement effort to inform an update to PlanHoward 2030, the County's general plan. The County's Department of Planning and Zoning is leading a community outreach effort to create a new General Plan, called HoCo By Design. HoCo by Design launched in July 2020 and will continue into 2022 after LPPRP adoption. While the 2022 LPPRP responds to PlanHoward2030, it also considers preliminary recommendations put forth by the HoCo by Design effort.

Currently PlanHoward 2030 divides the county into four "Designated Places." These place types aim to reflect the social fabric, development patterns, and needs of different Howard County communities. Policies, procedures, and resources may be manipulated slightly to best suit each corresponding place type. Currently, the Rural West is classified as either the "Rural Resource" or "Low Density" place types.

EASEMENTS

In Howard County, preservation of agricultural and open land also preserves culture and heritage. Farming is viewed as a positive and steadfast mechanism to preserve land. As of April 1, 2022, agricultural easements have preserved 23,100 acres of farmland.

Land Preservation Strategies

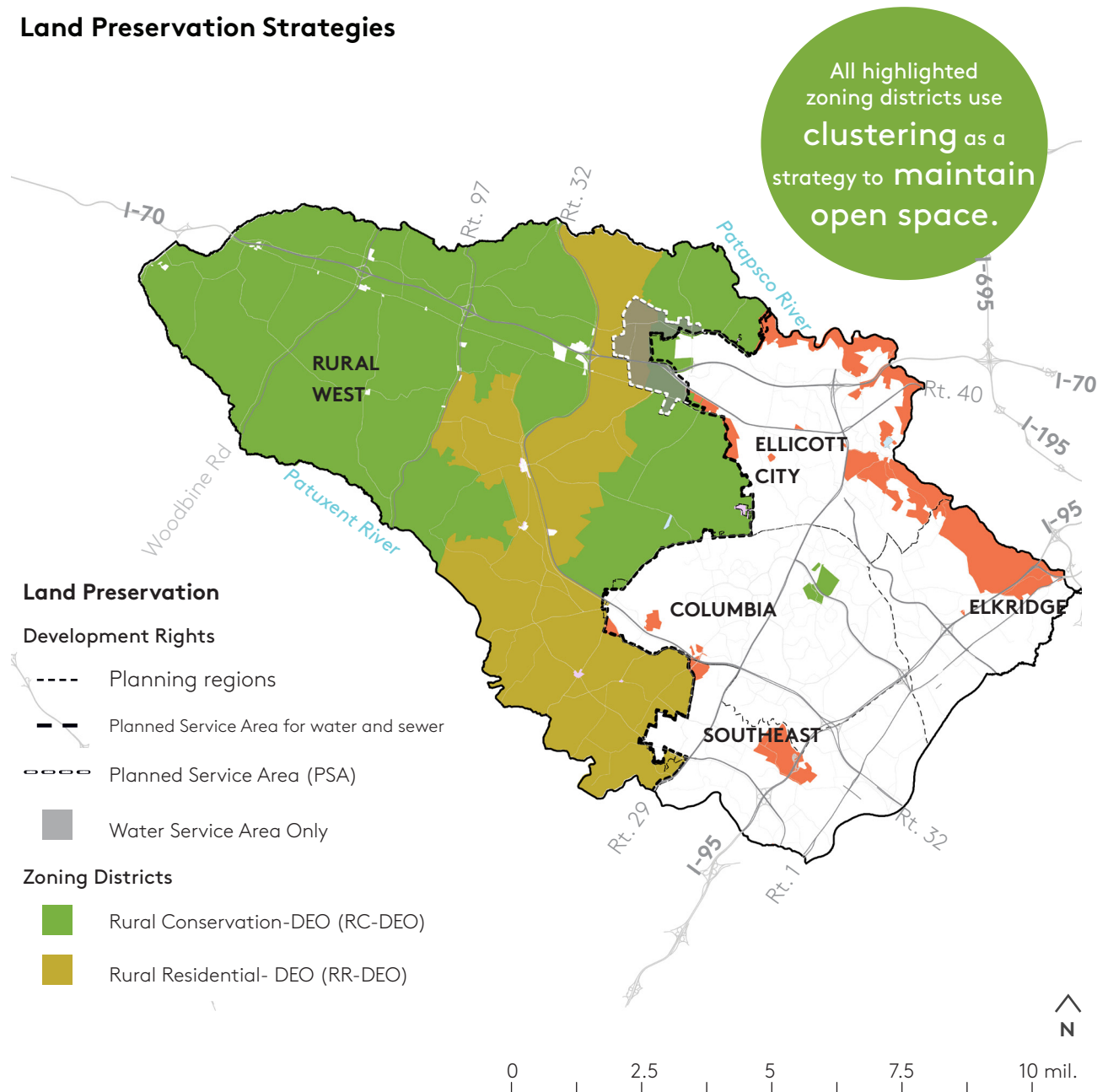


Figure 4.12 Howard County uses a combination of strategies to preserve farmland, such as the Density of Exchange Option (a County specific version of Transfer of Development Rights) and zoning.

PlanHoward 2030 Designated Places

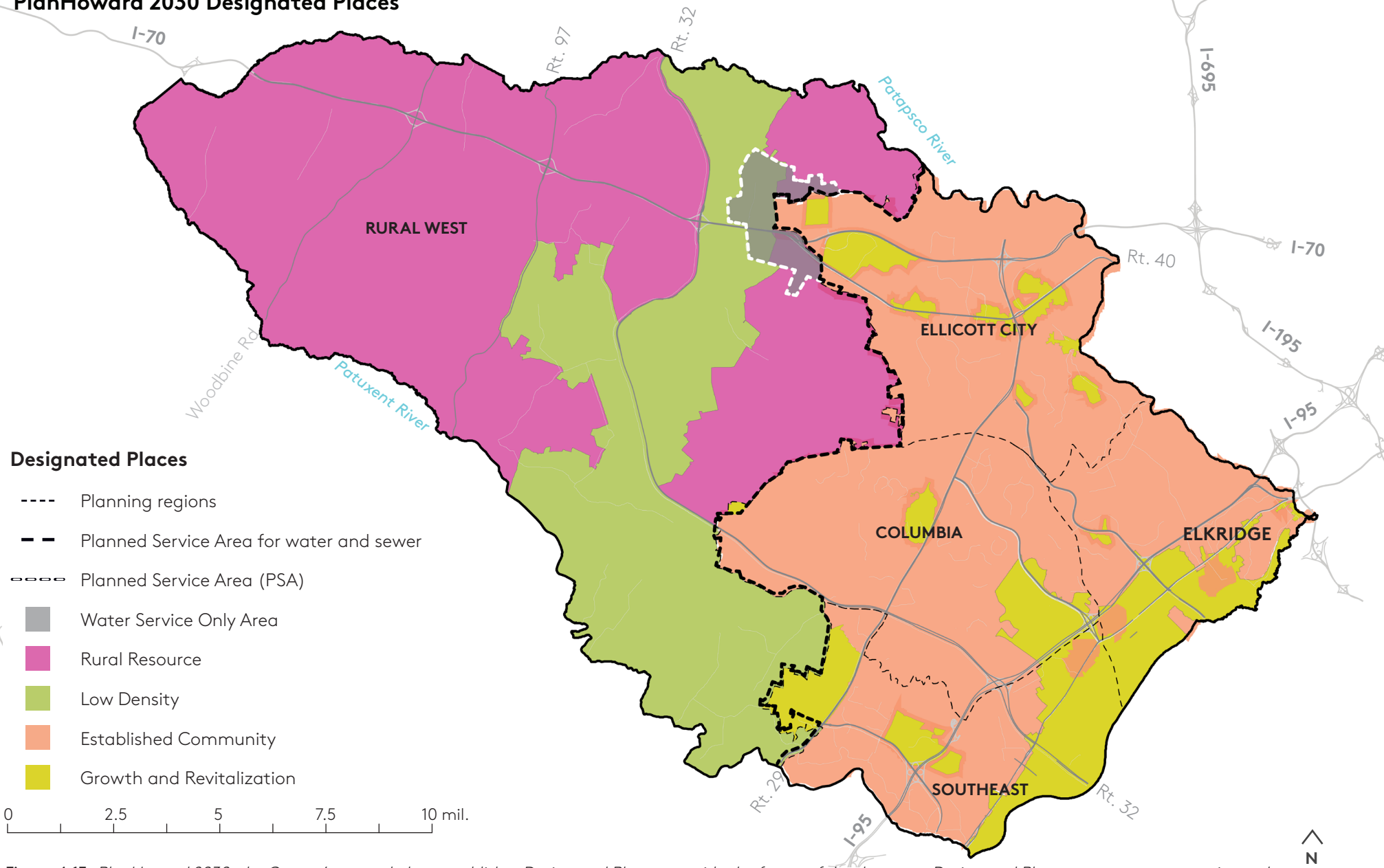


Figure 4.13 PlanHoward 2030, the County's general plan, establishes Designated Places to guide the future of development. Designated Place types serve to organize and coordinate State and local growth policies and resources.

Agricultural easements make up roughly 68 percent of all easements within Howard County, natural resources account for roughly 31 percent, and cultural or historic easements represent about two percent. Currently, about 25 percent of Howard County's land area is farmland, most of it under protected status. However, 77 farms still remain uncommitted to such programs creating an opportunity for additional easement acquisition.

Easements have been the largest drivers for land conservation. Agricultural easements are one of three general types in Howard County. In addition to protecting farmland through agricultural easements, natural or environmental resources are protected through conservation easements, and historic properties are protected through historic easements. Although the names may vary, they all function in essentially the same way: The landowner maintains the fee simple title to the land and continues to enjoy the benefits of ownership, but with restrictions as to development or other adverse changes. If the land is sold to a new owner, the development restrictions remain binding, "with the land." A variety of different programs use these easements for land preservation, each with their own qualifications and requirements at both the state and county scale.

	AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS IN HOWARD COUNTY					
	PARCELS			ACRES		
	2017	2022	Change	2017	2022	Change
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels (ALPP, County purchased)	163	168	+5	15,718	15,955	+237
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels (ALPP, County dedicated)	75	77	+2	2,982	3,024	+42
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALPF)	36	38	+2	4,017	4,046	+29
Rural Legacy Easements	4	4	0	81	81	0
TOTAL	278	287	+9	22,798	23,106	+308

Figure 4.14 Since 2017, nine parcels totaling 117 acres have been added to the agricultural land preservation easement network. These numbers are updated as of April 1, 2022.

State Agricultural Easements

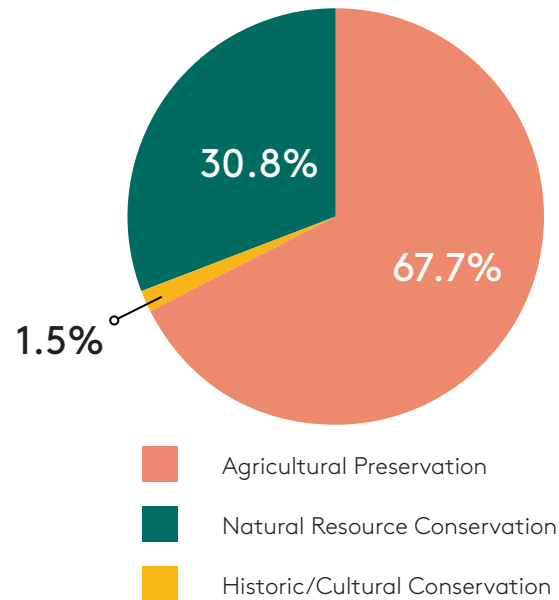
Easement programs conducted by the State of Maryland include the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the Rural Legacy Program. These programs utilize the purchase of easements, meaning landowners sell development rights to these entities. MALPF was one of the first easement-

purchase programs in the country. It is the third largest preservation program in the county, representing more than 4,000 acres. Farmers make a per acre offer to MALPF as to the price they are willing to sell their development rights for. The MALPF will pay the lesser of a property owner's offer or a calculated easement value. The program involves a local advisory body, the Howard

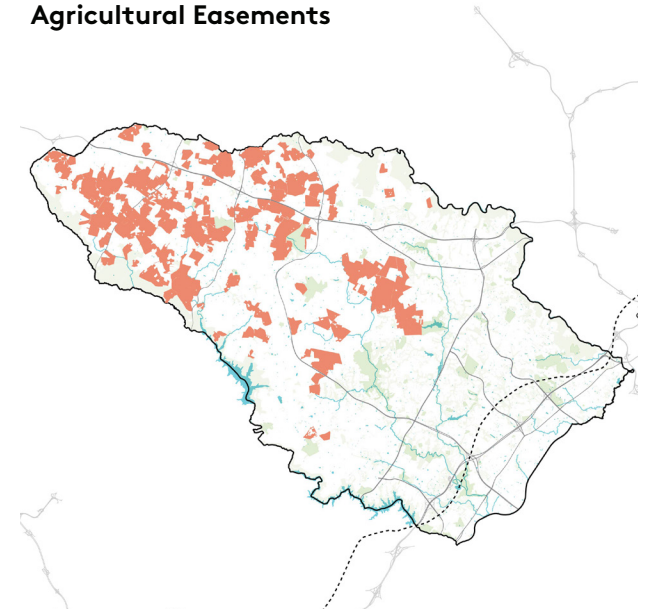
County Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board.

The Rural Legacy Program is unique in that it prioritizes preserving both farmland and environmental resources. It aims to protect large, continuous tracts of “working lands” (farms and forests) by supporting acquisition of easements in areas where much land protection is already in place by other means (including conservation and historic easements). Easements under this program involve cooperative efforts among state and local governments and land trusts. Howard County has just 81 acres of the Upper Patuxent Watershed preserved within this system.

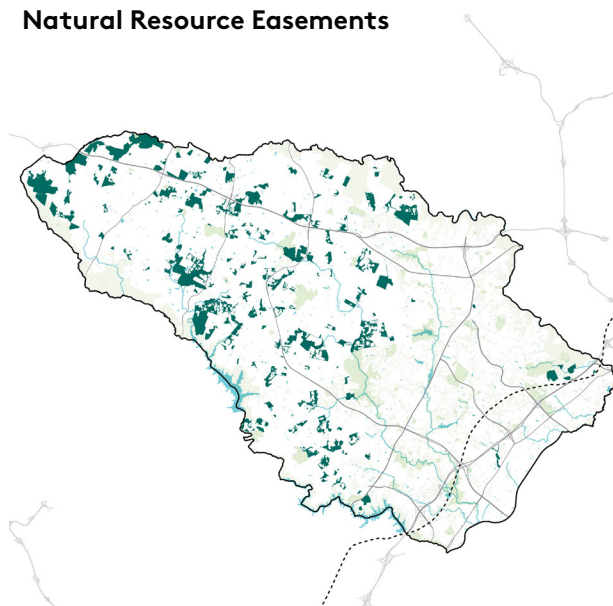
The Maryland Environmental Trust (MET) is a third state-level easement program. One of the nation’s oldest land trusts, MET encourages landowners to donate easements to preserve the “aesthetic, natural, health and welfare, scenic, and cultural qualities of land....” This program has thus far conserved 1,372 acres within Howard County. MET frequently steps in as a backup to local land trusts, illustrated in Howard County by the 62 acres that are preserved under both the MET/Rockburn Land Trust programs.



Agricultural Easements



Natural Resource Easements



Historic/Cultural Easements

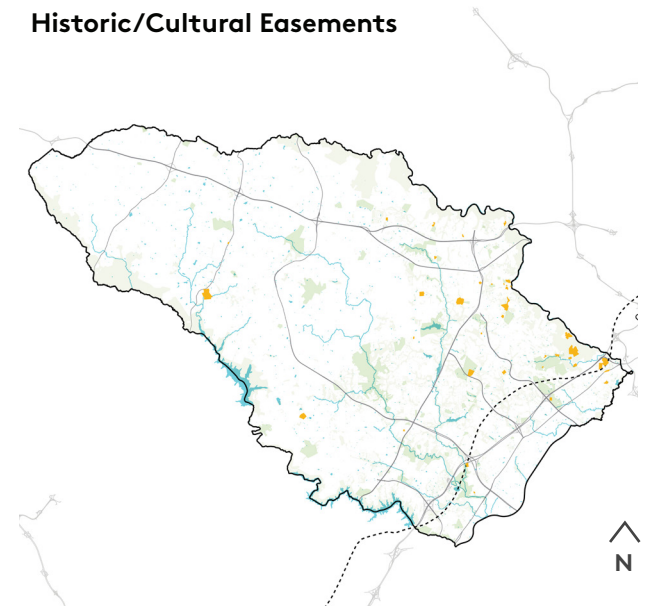


Figure 4.15 About 70 percent of Howard County’s easements preserve agricultural land. Natural resources and historic/cultural easements represent about 30 percent of remaining easements.

County Agricultural Easements

Howard County has been a leader in agricultural land preservation since the late 1970s. Only one year after the creation of MALPF at the state level, Howard County launched the Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP). In this program, easements can be either purchased from or dedicated by landowners. In the purchasing program, land must meet acreage and soil capability class standards. In the dedication program, parcels come to the program through the subdivision process as either cluster subdivision residue parcels or density sending parcels.

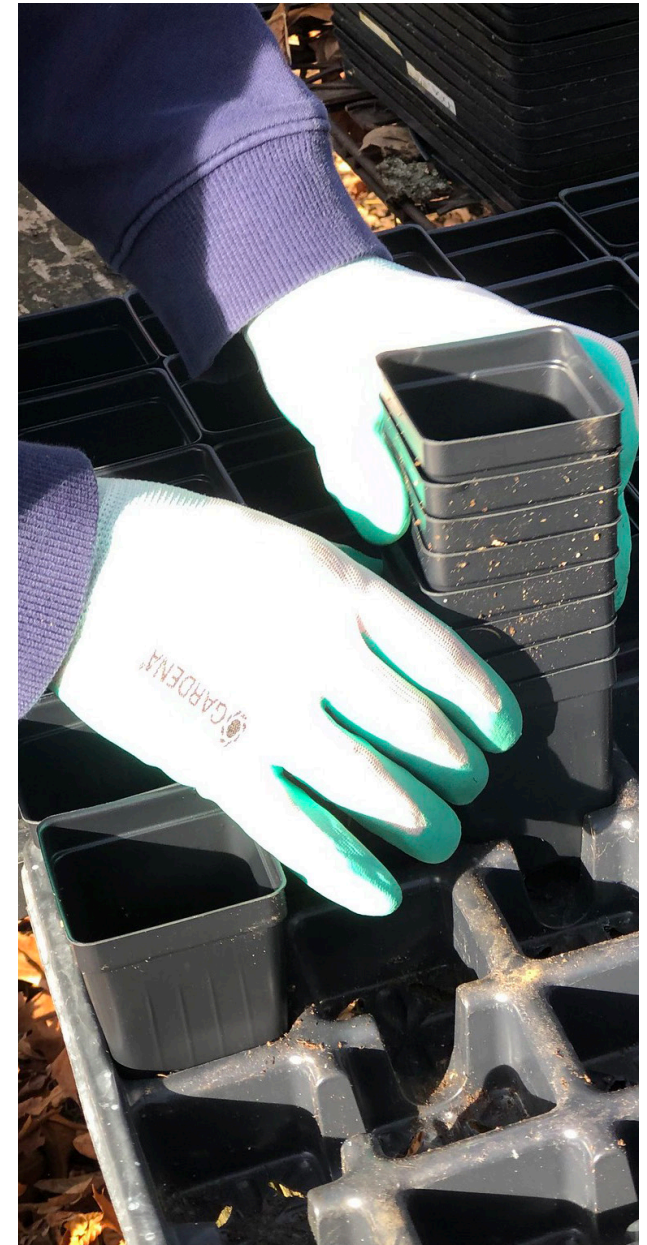
Parcels with agricultural benefits are adopted as dedicated agricultural easements. These dedicated agricultural easements, whether cluster subdivision remainders or density senders, are always held only by the County through the ALPP. Parcels with ecological benefits, or those that are deemed unsuitable for agricultural pursuits, are adopted into dedicated environmental easements. Dedicated environmental easements, both cluster and density, are most often co-held between the County (but not the ALPP) and either a local land trust or a homeowners association (HOA). In previous years, environmental preservation parcels always required two easement holders. Due

to regulatory changes in recent years, two easement holders are no longer required.

About 82 percent of Howard County's agricultural easements fall under the ALPP program. As of April 2022, 18,979 acres of the County's 23,106 agricultural easement acres are from the ALPP program (15,955 acres are purchased easement, while 3,024 are dedicated easements). As of 2021, 18,788 acres of the County's 22,915 agricultural easements are from the ALPP program (15,764 acres are purchased easements, while 3,024 are dedicated easements).

Another County easement program is the Conservation Easement program. This program promotes the acquisition of development rights on smaller parcels, usually under 50 acres. Generally, these transactions are conducted through a local land trust such as the Howard County Conservancy.

Currently, Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP) easements represent almost half of all easements within Howard County (46 percent). The next two most common easements include Environmental Preservation parcels and Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) Easements. Together, these three easement types account for 85 percent of the County's easements.



Land Preservation Easements

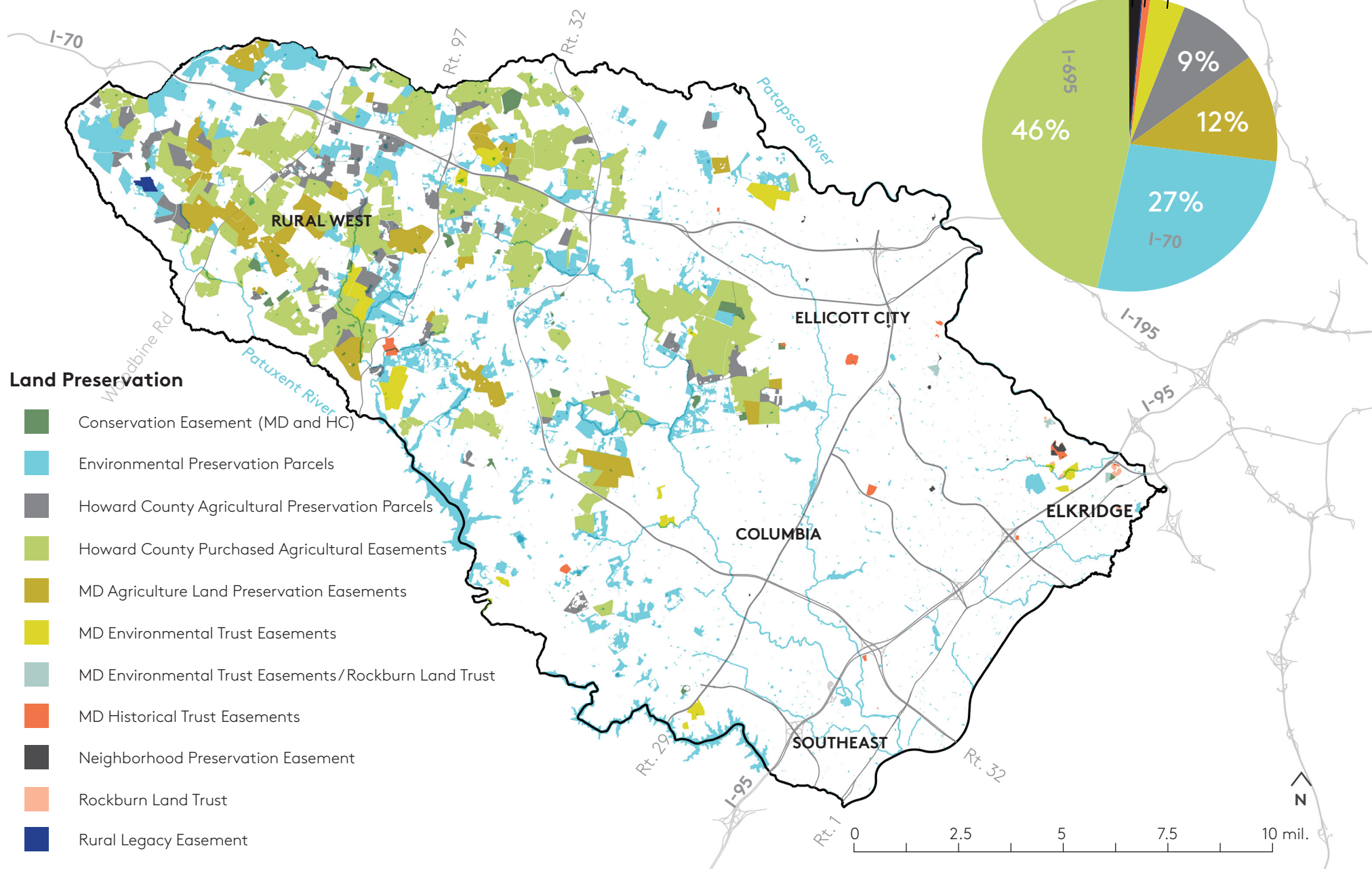


Figure 4.16 Easements have been helpful in protecting land, but are often disconnected.

Private Sector Preservation Tools

The private sector is required to dedicate easements during the cluster subdivision process that can flow into either agricultural or environmental easement. The private sector uses the same aforementioned processes to preserve land at the county level. However, the quality of cluster subdivision residue dedicated parcels is of some concern: developers provide low quality or oddly shaped parcels that are not clearly tied to strategic Department of Planning and Zoning goals.

The private sector also utilizes a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) mechanism. In Howard County, this process is called the Density Exchange Option (DEO) and is Section 106 of the Zoning Code. In the Density Exchange Option, land is divided into parcels that are “senders” and “receivers.” Parcels that are senders are placed under easement, and allowed to sell their rights to develop to landowners within “receiver” areas.

Zoning Regulations as Farmland Protections

As of 2021, the Density Exchange Option allows sending sites to be approved on parcels within the DEO Overlay District zoned Rural Conservation (RC) that are capable of accepting a conservation easement of at least 20 acres in size.

This structure allows developments in the receiver areas to increase density. This is a voluntary, incentive-based system that provides choice to individuals, while channeling density into appropriate areas. See Figure 4.19 for a map of these parcel locations and zoning areas.

Advantages of Easements

Easements are seen as mutually beneficial conservation tools. Most easements restrict development on land, with the goal being to preserve and conserve acreage. This allows the easement entity, be it the State, County, or non-profit trust, greater control over the land. The Department of Recreation and Parks previously acquired easements through the Private Forest Conservation Establishment (PFCE) program. When these programs operate as intended, this control allows for strategic planning and more efficiency for achieving goals like preserving tree canopies, combating invasive species, or protecting soil quality. The relationship between ecosystem conservation and agricultural conservation is deeply and intrinsically linked. Land under agricultural easement often provides extremely critical ecosystem services and benefits to the natural environment, such as supporting pollination and groundwater replenishment.

Conversely, when environmental degradation



Easements Added Since 2015

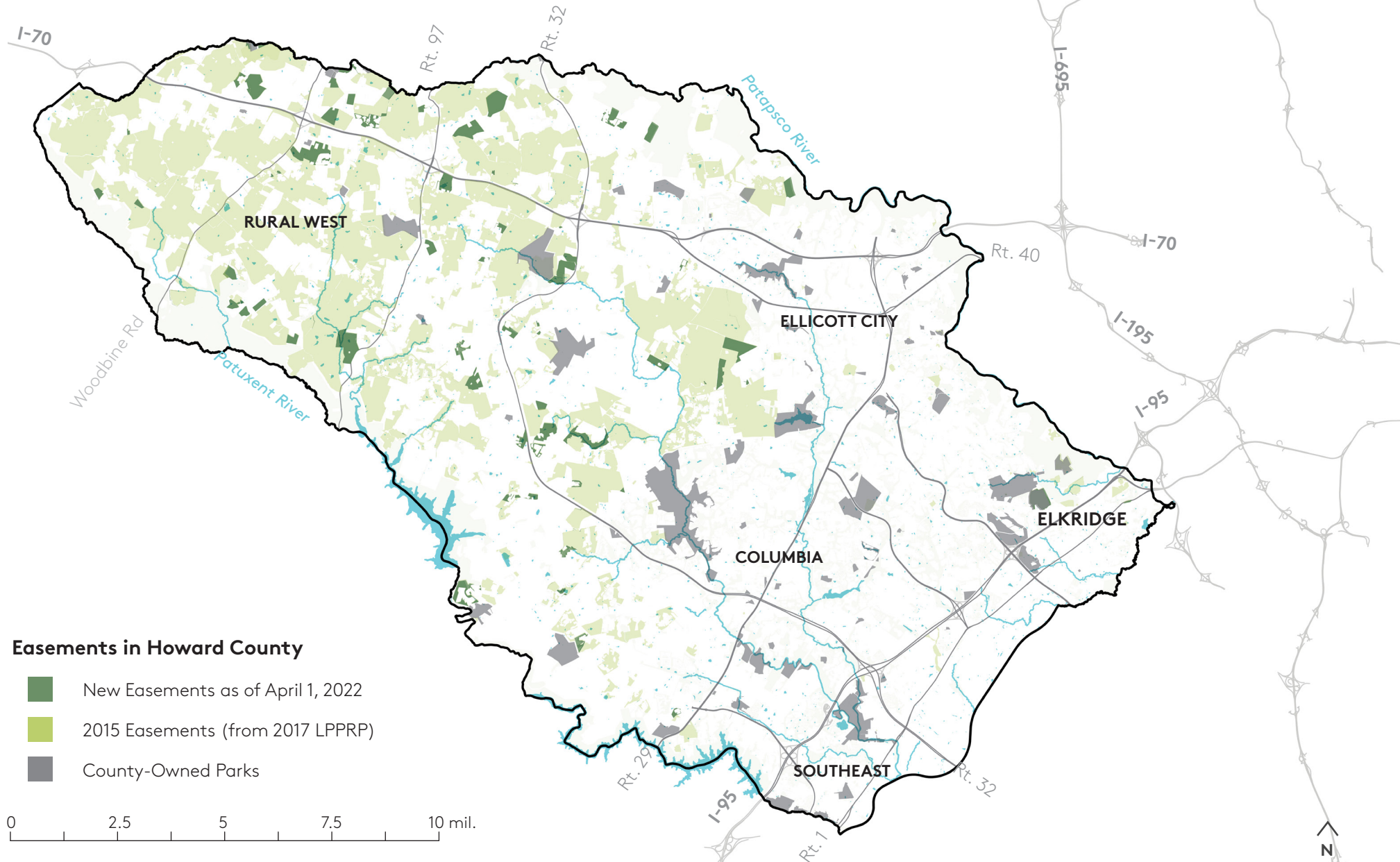


Figure 4.17 The 2017 LPPRP presented easement data from 2015. Since then, Howard County has added over 2,000 acres to its easement network. This includes agricultural, natural resources, and historic/cultural easements.

occurs on natural lands, farming also suffers.

Donated easements allow altruistic property owners to act out their values, creating a direct, personal contribution to land preservation and ecological restoration. Easement donors may also be eligible for a charitable contribution tax deduction.

Connection with Historic Resources

There are ample opportunities to better connect agricultural land with historic resources and cultural heritage sites. West Friendship Park is an example of where this integration is happening, but where more can be done. Currently, West Friendship Park has a multitude of programming. There are over 4.5 miles of trails frequented by birders and hikers plus the Living Farm Heritage Museum, operated by the Howard County Antique Farm Machinery Club, Hebb House, a historic farm house, and a replica of the Daisy one-room schoolhouse. It is also located on the old National Road, a National Scenic Road.

While this site is active and hosts archeology camps, among other programs, there is opportunity for a more focused connection to historic resources and traditions. This could include completing the partially constructed exhibition hall, offering curated shows and other events, and increasing signage and branding efforts.

The 2017 LPPRP plan recommended working with the Living Farm Heritage Museum to “identify potential expansions of multi-use trails and passive uses” and highlighted the location as a potential place for a natural resources facility. While these changes were noted as a long-term priority with a timeline spanning from 2028 - 2032, there may be a desire to begin some of these modifications at an earlier date.

Easements and Open Space

There are challenging aspects in how easement programs currently operate. First, acquisition: because programs rely on landowners to sell, donate, or dedicate through the subdivision process, the system is reactive instead of proactive. Easements are acquired ad hoc and one by one; gaps like missing puzzle pieces are unavoidable. Thus, it



Figure 4.18 *Little History Explorers meet to learn about Howard County's history and earn skills.*

Opportunities for Agricultural and Recreation Connections

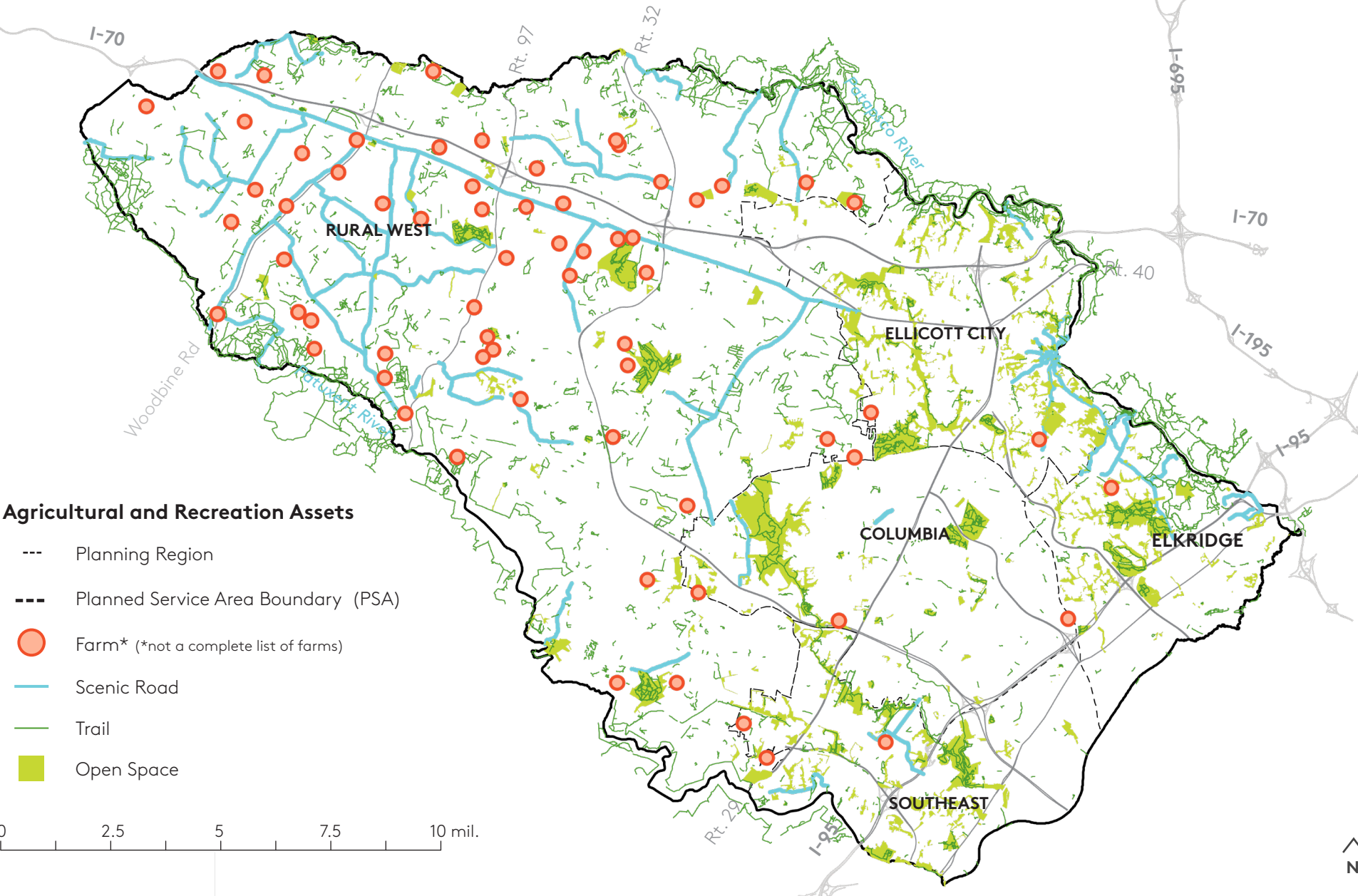


Figure 4.19 Farms and agritourism businesses are often located near recreational trails and scenic roadways, presenting opportunities to better connect these assets.

is difficult to acquire large integrated areas of land strategically solely through easements.

Reliance on easements or land contributed by developers can make it difficult to achieve additional departmental goals. Land received from developers tends to be lowland parcels, often wet or flood prone. While such land may be ecologically beneficial, it is not always usable for the Department's needs; it can be costly to mitigate the limitations. Within the Department, there is a strong desire to acquire and protect greater amounts of upland forests.

Open space in Howard County is owned primarily by the County, the State, and private homeowner's associations. The County owns a significant amount of undeveloped open space, 3,628 acres, independent of the 5,750 acres of land considered programmable park space. Open space preservation has been a consistent value throughout the history of the County's planning and development, allowing the County to grow in a sustainable fashion and defining its unique sense of place. In addition, the County faces a unique challenge in that it inherits all typologies categorized as open space, such as historic cemeteries. These unique space types must be cared for as well, adding additional maintenance responsibilities and expenses that the County is responsible for.

The Open Space Acceptance Policy facilitates

the transfer of land that has been approved through the County's subdivision review process to then be inspected and accepted into the receiving system. The three methods for open space land acquisition through the Open Space Acceptance Policy are as follows: dedication under the Department of Planning and Zoning, fee simple purchase, and Program Open Space. Established in 1969, Program Open Space is a funding mechanism and technical assistance program that continues the preservation of open space in Maryland, and has contributed to the planning, acquisition, and subsequent preservation of open space in the County.

Rural Legacy Program

The Maryland Rural Legacy Program is a natural and agricultural land preservation tool that was previously used by the County. A state-level easement program, the Rural Legacy Program is no longer utilized as a mechanism for land preservation in Howard County; it has been about 20 years since new parcels were added under this program. The Rural Legacy Area in Howard County is primarily located in the Upper Patuxent Watershed. 81 acres of the total 11,200 acres in the watershed constitute Rural Legacy Program protected land, in addition to other protected land within the boundary of the Rural Legacy Area. Although no longer in active use, land preserved through the Rural Legacy Program is still reported to the State for inventory purposes.

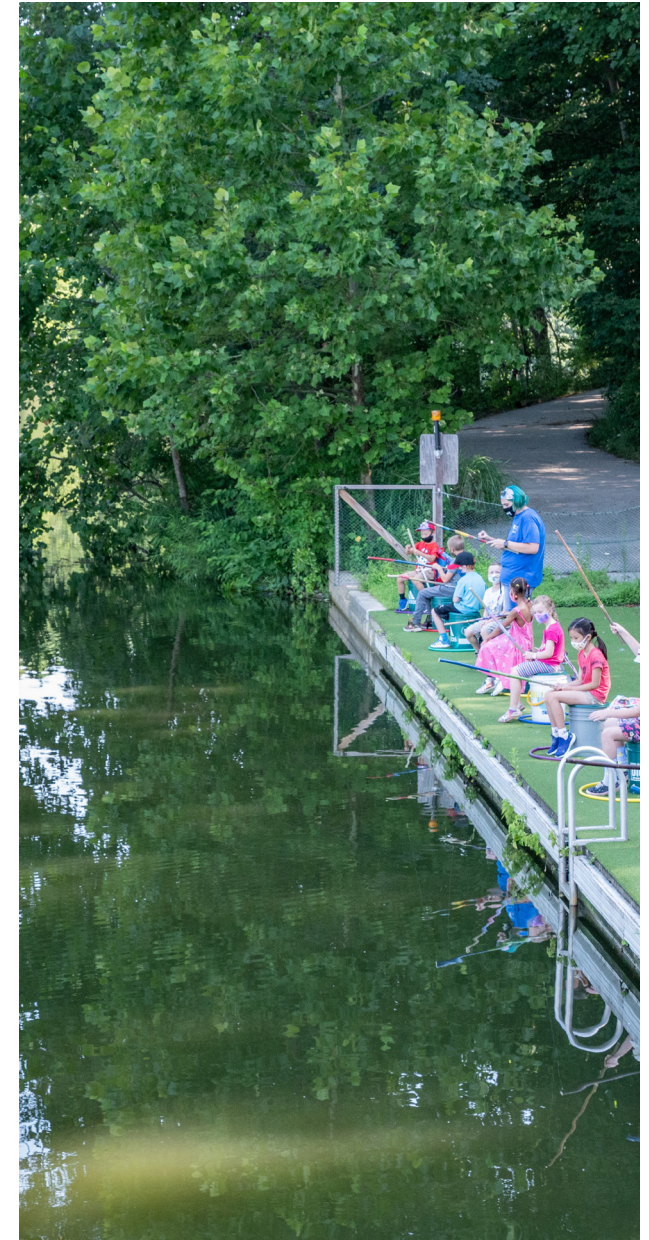


Figure 4.20 *DIY Fishing Camp in Howard County*

Easement Details

LAND PRESERVATION MECHANISM	ACREAGE INCREASE SINCE 2017?	PROGRAM MANAGER?	CONSERVATION INTENT?	REINFORCE AG. + ECOLOGICAL PRESERVATION?	REQUIRE ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP?	REQUIRE HIGH SOIL QUALITY?	REQUIRES SALE?	RESTRICTS DEVELOPMENT?	BEST FOR CONTIGUOUS TRACTS OR INDIVIDUAL PARCELS?
Conservation Easements		DRP	Natural Resources				No		Individual
Environmental Preservation Parcels		DPZ	Natural Resources				No		Individual
HoCo Forest Conservation Easements		Natural + Hist. Resources Div.	Natural Resources				No		Individual
MD Environmental Trust Easements		MD Dept. Natural Resources	Natural Resources				No		Individual
HoCo Agricultural Land Preservation Parcels (ALPP, dedicated)		Howard County (DPZ)	Agriculture				No		Contiguous
HoCo Agricultural Land Preservation Parcels (ALPP, purchased)		Howard County (DPZ)	Agriculture				Yes		Contiguous
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALPF)		MD Agricultural Land Pres. Fnd.	Agriculture				Yes		Contiguous
Maryland Historic Trust Easement		MD Historical Trust	Historic				No		Individual
Neighborhood Preservation Easement			Historic				No		Individual
Rockburn Land Trust		Rockburn Land Trust	Historic				No		Individual
Rural Legacy Easement		MD Dept. Natural Resources	Historic				Sometimes		Contiguous

Figure 4.21 Easement programs do a great deal of good to protect, preserve, and conserve land in perpetuity. However, different easement programs have varying metrics of success and standards. While this diversity is beneficial to serve varying types of parcels, it can also lead to a lack of cohesion between different programs. Many easements do not reinforce both agricultural and ecological preservation.

Alternative Options

There are opportunities for the County to think more nimbly about current land preservation programs and to encourage the private sector and non-profits to contribute more directly to larger agricultural and natural system preservation goals.

First, Howard County could combine programs that are already working well or add modifications to successful existing tools. For example, Program Open Space, which is currently the most powerful tool for open space conservation and recreation programming within Howard County should continue to be a source of funding. Howard County could create a scenic easement program that aims to preserve vistas. In contrast to other easements, scenic easements usually only apply to a portion of a property, most often the few hundred yards of a highway or roadway. Farms that remain undedicated, but abut the scenic road system, may have interest in this system.

Another is to establish one or more agricultural community land trusts. Local non-profit partners, community development corporations, and private residents may partner to create this system. Agricultural community land trusts, as non-profit institutions, are often eligible for funding and resources that municipalities are not. Additionally, agriculturally focused community

land trusts could allow farmers to have more flexibility in how their agricultural land is used, while still protecting it in some capacity. This flexibility could further entice uncommitted farmers. DRP could work with existing land trusts, like the Howard County Conservancy, or with existing County programs like HoCo Fresh, the Roving Radish and HoCoFarms.

com (within the Office of Community Sustainability). Additionally, DRP could initiate new programs to fit its specific needs.

Land trusts can also be more targeted and specific in mission, such as in the cultivation of new farmers. The Peconic Land Trust in Long Island, New York has a farm incubator



Figure 4.22 *Belmont Manor*

program that addresses this issue. The land trust will lease farmland to new farmers for five years, during which the farmers build skills and search for a long term property. During the lease, farmers must agree to using sustainable farming practices and have access to shared barn and greenhouse spaces with other new farmers. The American Chestnut Land Trust in Maryland has similar innovative programs where farming and public access are combined.

Another option is cooperative farming and succession programs. Cooperative ownership models can take many forms, placing ownership within the hands of individuals, customers, or workers. Through these models, farmers can join together to share land and resources while building experience and lowering individual financial risk. Worker-owned farms can increase the attractiveness of farming as a career. According to the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, the closest cooperative farm to Howard County is the Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative Association, located in Laurel, Maryland.

In terms of connecting farm owners with beginning farmers, New Jersey's LandLink program is designed to help connect farmers and landowners to farming opportunities sought and available, including certain employment opportunities. The site covers

leasing and other topics for beginning and established farmers and farm owners. Selling to a succession program may also be a more attractive option to aging farmers. In Wyoming, the Wyoming Stock Growers Land Trust, through its Ranchland Succession Program, specifically looks to ensure agricultural land within the program is granted to young agricultural producers. It also provides these new farmers with accountants, attorneys, and estate planners.

SUCSESSES SINCE 2017

Since the last plan, County staff have worked hard to accomplish many of the goals listed in the 2017 plan. The first major goal was in the securing of more protected land under easement. Since 2017, the Department of Planning and Zoning has acquired six additional agricultural easements, totaling roughly 221 acres. As of fall 2021, 15,788 acres were preserved under the ALPP- purchase program (an increase of 46 acres since 2017) and 3,024 acres under the ALPP- dedication program (an increase of 42 acres since 2017). This count does not include the 127.7 acres Dickey/Sharp property that was approved by the County on November 1, 2021. Settlement on this property is expected to occur in early 2022. This property is particularly notable, as it is the largest remaining farm in the Rural West that was eligible through the ALPP.³⁵

The ALPP stopped approving applications in 2018 due to budget concerns. In 2019, the program was able to reopen after collaboration between County Executive Calvin Ball, the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Finance Department, and the Agricultural Preservation Board led to an update of the scoring system used to determine easement pricing. As of April 2022, there are two additional properties, representing 55 acres, currently working through the application process.

Other goals included increasing access to fresh food and creating greater connections between farms and urban residents. The Roving Radish program, begun in 2014, connects residents to healthy meal kits with ingredients sourced from local farms. The program is government run and low-income residents receive subsidized meals. Since the last plan, the Roving Radish program has continued to grow. In 2020, it opened its first storefront, a location of more than 4,000 square feet in Columbia.³⁶ The expansion of this program shows a commitment to integrating county-grown products more cohesively into daily life.

CHALLENGES SINCE 2017

The Rising Cost of Land

While the agriculture industry has seen successes since the last plan, there have also been mounting challenges. With the continued growth of the nearby major urban centers of Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, the price of land in Howard County is increasing.

According to Social Explorer, 2020 Census data shows Howard County has only 3.6 percent of housing units listed as vacant. This makes for an extremely competitive housing market. For comparison, the top ten most competitive housing markets throughout the nation are between 2.7% and 3.5% vacancy rate. The Rural West is not immune to this market pressure, and it is becoming exponentially more expensive for the Department of Recreation and Parks and other public agencies to purchase land for protection. This is especially true when considering the waning supply of “uncommitted” land in the West. While it is great that most land in the West is committed within a preservation system, roughly 77 parcels remain uncommitted. The price of these final parcels will most likely increase as the supply further dwindles and the cost of land increases.



Figure 4.23 *The Washington Farm Land uses both a cooperative model and an agricultural land trusts to support sustainable land practices and food production.*

Other Financing Mechanisms Should Be Explored

The most common way DRP acquires parcels for preservation is by purchasing land in fee. Program Open Space is how Howard County most significantly finds the funds needed to purchase land. This state-level initiative continues to provide funding for open space and facility development each time a home is sold. While this program continues to be strong, the availability of land is dwindling. DRP must focus on continuing to find fee purchases to buy parcels as they become available.

One solution could be to investigate voter approved bonds. Currently, Howard County does not utilize local voter-approved bond options to fund land preservation. According to LandVote, a policy tracker and database created by the Trust for Public Land, Baltimore County has been the only county in Maryland to use local voter approved bond options for funding rural land/agricultural preservation, farmland development easements, or open space initiatives. Since 1996, 13 measures have been put on the ballot in Baltimore County. All 13 have been approved, with an average of 70 percent of the vote. This has provided Baltimore County with \$42,277,000 in approved funds for these initiatives. There is hope that Howard County residents, proud of their rural legacy, would support similar policies.

A case study to provide direction is Minnesota's Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. In 2008, Minnesota voters passed an increase to sales tax by 3/8th of one percent from 2009 to 2034. Clean water initiatives receive 33 percent of the funds, 33 percent goes to the outdoor heritage fund, 19.75 percent to the arts and culture heritage fund, and 14.25 percent to the parks and trails fund. Minnesota also places 40 percent of the net proceeds from the State

Lottery in an Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund, which provides stable and long term funding for "activities that protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations." This fund may receive other contributions. The lottery funds are guaranteed until the end of 2024. These programs have helped to safeguard significant financing that allows



Figure 4.24 The Roving Radish program opened its first storefront in 2020

for long-term visioning, strategizing, and implementation across decades.

Effect on Amenities

In addition to the rising cost of land, the combination of agricultural conservation land and developer-owned land holdings do not leave many unencumbered options for new parks and recreation spaces. Providing equitable access to recreation and leisure spaces is more difficult in the Rural West where a larger percentage of available land is restricted or unavailable.

The rising cost of land is even complicating such smaller plots like community gardens. Within the 2017 LPPRP effort, one goal was to “incorporate farming at all scales,” with special attention given to increasing the number of community gardens within the county. According to National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) data, the number of publicly accessible community gardens has stayed the same in Howard County since 2017. There still remain only three community gardens reflected in this database. In comparison, the national median of community gardens in peer cities has increased from one to four. Thus, while Howard County has kept its community garden program consistent, the program has not grown in line with its goals and does not keep pace with other peer communities. For example, the East region of the county has

high potential for adding community gardens.

Supporting New Farmers

A lack of various land types can also prove difficult when trying to encourage and support new farmers. Often, new farmers trying to “break in” to the industry find it difficult to procure land of an appropriate size. New farmers are often looking for smaller sized parcels, which can be difficult to find. Those that are available can be prohibitively expensive, especially without an existing farm to leverage. In the past plan, this predicament was noted, but has grown more pressing since the last plan.

Exploring new ways to support beginning farmers, such as through temporary leases on Recreation and Park owned land, may be helpful. Such a strategy could both revitalize nutrient depleted parcels while providing experience to new farmers. This effort would also support 2017 LPPRP goals to incorporate farming at all scales. Supporting the next generation of farmers is a critical issue to address not only within Howard County, but across the nation. According to the 2017 Agricultural Census, 35 percent of Howard County farmers are over the age of 65. This number was comparable with national averages, which found that 34 percent of all farmers nationwide were over the age of 65. However, the lack of farmers under the age of 35 was more telling. The 2017 Census

of Agriculture found that only 4 percent of farmers in Howard County were under the age of 35, compared to 8 percent nationwide. A farmer’s age is only one indicator of the future of farming. In 2017, the Census of Agriculture identified 27 percent of farmers as “beginning farmers,” or those with ten or fewer years of experience. In Howard County, 21 percent of farmers were classified as beginning producers. These numbers could indicate that younger Howard County residents may see farming as a less viable career path than past generations. A deeper analysis into this data would guide more specific recommendations.

While the Department of Planning and Zoning has been friendly to the agricultural industry, this has come with challenges. Innovation around expanding allowable uses on farmland has caused heartburn with neighbors. Farms that draw visitors from across the region or engage in larger scale events have caused increased traffic.

Finally, one of the largest challenges facing Howard County’s agricultural industry is the increasing severity of the climate crisis. Warming temperatures, increasing precipitation and flood events, and ecological degradation will only continue to change the nature of farming in Howard County. Steps taken to protect the environment will also protect the farming industry, stabilizing not only food systems but also a major economic driver in the county.

REPORT THEMES

As Howard County looks toward the future of agriculture, it will be necessary to address the following themes:

- **Development pressure continues to compete for agricultural land:** Residential encroachment on working farmland and conservation areas has a direct impact on the preservation of agricultural land. Development pressure expands beyond Howard County itself, as the Washington, D.C., area in particular experiences development pressure through high housing demand. The need to balance both growth and the preservation of farmland is of increasing importance, and must be reinforced through the LPPRP process.
- The time to act is now: Changes in the landscape are accelerating due to climate change, development pressure, and invasive species, all of which jeopardize food security and

environmental health. Environmental issues are agricultural issues.

- The future of farming is unclear: Zoning and regulations try to anticipate farmers' needs but change the standard idea of "farming" in the process. While this is not inherently a negative, it poses questions about what farming may look like in the decades to come. This most likely includes greater integration with technology and the urban environment. Policies will need to respond to these changes. Additionally, farmers represent an aging population, and interventions should be made to support new farmers.



Figure 1.22 *Howard County is dedicated to retaining agriculture as a strong economic driver and way of life while modernizing to meet the future.*

Implementation

Addressing the challenges and supporting the strengths of Howard County's historic and agricultural systems will require the utilization of as many tools as possible. The following list includes some of Howard County's most powerful and meaningful resources:

IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Education

Regular processes like general plan and the LPPRP effort continue to craft policies that respond to the needs of residents while evaluating and monitoring land preservation programs.

Within the last few years, the Agricultural Land Preservation Program has created an approach for periodically visiting and assessing easement properties. This additional level of care is important not only to verify the condition of parcels, but to foster personal connections with farmers and their families. The ALPP has also begun to increase efforts to transition farms through new ownership and educating land owners about the uses and constraints of the ALPP program.

The Agricultural Preservation Board

also supports the ALPP by proposing recommendations for the acquisition of new agricultural easements, reviews proposals for land already under ALPP easement, and assists the ALPP with the creation and implementation of policy. Since 2018, the Agricultural Preservation Board has been given a broader scope by the passing of CB 63-2018 by the County Council, the Howard County Agriculture Sustainability and Land Preservation Act. The new law now asks the Agricultural Preservation Board to look beyond land preservation to larger sustainable agriculture solutions that will bolster the local economy. The board also provides outreach and education to the public, be they farming professionals or otherwise, about high-level county initiatives and programs. Finally, the board can receive citizen concerns related to farming and be a liaison between the agricultural community and policy makers.

Another entity providing educational support is the Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program. The program assists farmers in business planning, and grant writing efforts, as well as food safety regulations. The Agricultural Marketing Program offers training courses for new farmers on topics including business licensure. Additionally, the Agricultural

Marketing Program advocates for farmers and agricultural interests on agricultural-related legislation and economic development proposals.

The county agency essential to working with farmland property owners is the Howard Soil Conservation District. HSCD works with farmers to plan and install best management practices to maintain farm production, control soil erosion, improve soil health, manage nutrients, safeguard water quality, provide wildlife habitat, and improve air quality. HSCD also helps farmers access federal, State and local cost-share funds for installation of these practices.

Financial Support

Howard County's 2018 Agriculture Sustainability and Land Preservation Act (CB 63-2018) also provides technical assistance and financial support for agribusiness research and development, and developing future market opportunities.

Grants and loans are also available to farmers at the federal, state, and local level. Examples of state level financial entities include the Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation, which offers grants and loans for equipment, land,

and value-added products. There are also federal Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) grants that fund projects for commercial producers who want to test new ideas in the field. Projects must seek to discover new knowledge and be "directly linked to improved profits, better stewardship, and stronger rural communities."

Grants offered by Howard County also support curiosity. The Howard County Agricultural Innovation Grants encourage business expansion and diversification. It provides matching grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 for research and development. The purpose of this grant is to encourage Howard County's agricultural producers to expand or diversify their business operations and seek innovative ways to farm.

Goals + Actions

In order to meet State and County goals, while addressing emerging themes and recommendation drivers, the County can take the following actions:

State Goal 3.1

Ensure good return on public 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.

ACTION: Continue the Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program, including its Agricultural Innovation Grants, business planning, and other financial and technical assistance.

ACTION: Continue the Office of Community Sustainability efforts to connect local producers to local consumers.

ACTION: Diversify options and complement agricultural easements by establishing agricultural community land trusts and cooperative farms.

ACTION: Continue to implement PlanHoward 2030 policies that maintain the current Planned Service Area boundary and Rural Conservation and Rural Residential zoning in the Rural West.

State Goal 3.2

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.

ACTION: Research and develop innovative and flexible financial systems, like voter approved bond options, that can finance a wider variety of open space initiatives.

ACTION: Continue to implement PlanHoward 2030 policies that support agricultural land preservation in the Rural West.

State Goal 3.3

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 public-at-large.

ACTION: Continue the Economic Development Authority's Agricultural Marketing Program, in addition to its business courses and resources.

ACTION: Create a grant and funding liaison that is well versed in public and private grants opportunities. Connect directly with farmers. Look to the Rural Business Cooperation for an example.

ACTION: Continue favorable planning and zoning codes that diversify income streams for farmers and anticipate future needs.

State Goal 3.4

Protect natural, forestry and historic resources and the rural character of the landscape associated with Maryland's farmland.

ACTION: Continue to advocate and partner for easements and land acquisition.

ACTION: Work with the private sector to increase historic and architectural documentation of historic structures on agricultural land and encourage the rehabilitation of these structures.

ACTION: Encourage and incentivize participation in the County's historic building tax credit programs.

ACTION: Explore ways to strengthen historic preservation programs to prevent demolition and demolition by neglect, and to better incentivize restoration and adaptive reuse.

State Goal 3.5

Permanently preserve agricultural land capable of supporting a reasonable diversity of agricultural production.

ACTION: Partner with other agencies to educate, incentivize, and create programs that reward agricultural diversity. Howard Innovation Grants and Howard County Agricultural Innovation Grants are good examples.

ACTION: Partner with other agencies to craft policies that respond to the trend of growing protein production.

State Goal 3.6

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.

ACTION: Continue to support the work of the Agricultural Preservation Board as a convener between farmers and the County.

ACTION: Hold periodic and regular meetings between farmers, residents, and Agricultural Preservation Board to discuss goals and strategies.

ACTION: Explore the creation of a land preservation program that allows property owners to deed land to conservation efforts. Prioritize land that contains stream buffers.

ACTION: Invite and involve volunteers and local landowners to be actively involved in invasive species removal in parks, neighborhoods, and their own property.

ACTION: Continue educational efforts aimed at reducing tensions between farmers and their non-farming neighbors over land use issues.

State Goal 3.7

Work with local governments to achieve the following:

Establish preservation areas, goals and strategies through local comprehensive planning processes that address and complement state goals;

ACTION: Continue educational efforts aimed at reducing tensions between farmers and their non-farming neighbors over land use issues.

ACTION: Investigate the creation of an inter-governmental ad-hoc work group between various departments working with historic buildings, such as, Recreation and Parks, DPZ Resource Conservation Division and DPW Bureau of Facilities.

State Goal 3.8

Use local land use management authority effectively to protect public investment in preservation by managing development in rural preservation areas.

ACTION: Partner with other County departments and plans, such as the County's current General Plan, to realize shared visions for land use and management.

ACTION: Consider updates to the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations that would require new residential development to provide increased buffers for adjacent farmland.

County Goal 3.1

Reflect natural heritage and prioritize open space.

ACTION: Continue to implement the goals, objectives, and action items of the Historic Resources Management Plan and the Heritage Program Management Plan.

ACTION: Systemically integrate Department of Planning and Zoning's architectural historian into Department of Recreation and Parks' processes to ensure alterations to buildings are historically accurate.

ACTION: Preserve all histories

- **ACTION:** Support in-progress audits of historic sites to reveal previously-excluded stories and histories. Dedicate resources to filling in missing voices.
- **ACTION:** Crowdsource, research, and protect sites that are significant to Howard County's diverse population. This includes Hispanic, LatinX, African American, LGBTQIA +, Asian American, and immigrant histories.
- **ACTION:** Consult Monument Lab's Interactive Database.
- **ACTION:** Participate in the Maryland Resident Curatorship Program.
- **ACTION:** Look forward to look back -- document, discuss, and preserve moments, spaces, places, and events that are important to current events. These places are future historic resources.

ACTION: Integrate agritourism with historic storytelling and natural resource exploration.

- **ACTION:** Create a general plan for West Friendship Park
- **ACTION:** Combine wayfinding and signage with audio guides/podcasts to create passive program opportunities like driving, biking tours, and walking tours.
- **ACTION:** Integrate nature preserves, trails, and even tournament facilities with cultural or historic signage.

County Goal 3.2

Integrate the preservation of agricultural land with natural resource protection.

ACTION: Continue to support the Howard Soil Conservation District's efforts to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners for planning and installing conservation practices to control erosion and improve water quality.

ACTION: Encourage landowner participation in the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Conservation Grants, examples of which include the Cover Crop Program and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

ACTION: Work with the agricultural community and the Howard Soil Conservation District to increase implementation of best management practices on agricultural lands to infiltrate and slow runoff, reduce runoff volume entering water bodies, and retain sediment and other pollutants.

County Goal 3.3

Incorporate farming across all scales - from large land preservation, to small farms, to community gardens.

ACTION: Create opportunities for new farmers through leasing Department of Recreation and Park's land to beginning farmers

ACTION: Establish a program where farmers establish farm spaces in urban backyards. Look to The Backyard Farm Company as an example.

ACTION: Reimagine hardscapes. Promote and support the transformation of hardscapes and interstitial spaces into growing areas. Look to urban farming practices as examples.

Organizational Health

Aspiration

The Department maintains functional and financial stability.

Organizational Health

Since the 2017 Plan, Howard County has continued to grow its acreage and staff capacity. The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks also pivoted to an organizational model that aims to build awareness in the community and meet both the recreational needs of residents and the conservation needs of the County's natural resources. Parks and recreation agencies across the country have been challenged with understanding the needs of their community through a different post-pandemic lens. While other organizations have struggled to effectively respond, this new paradigm underscores Howard County's strengths as an agile and innovative system.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Howard County continued to expand and develop other innovative programs, special events, and marketing approaches to keep the community engaged with each other and excited about the future. The strength of the organization's nationally renowned leadership, the strength of its mission and vision, and the commitment of team members all contribute to an extraordinary experience for the Howard County community.

While sustaining the current excellent level of services is the baseline for Howard County's future, the County needs support from its

residents and County leadership to ensure it can continue to provide high quality spaces and programs residents expect, while supporting its mission to provide low cost experiences that all can enjoy.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 PLAN)

Goals within the 2017 plan that were related to bolstering Department best practices and functions included:

1. Amplify and communicate the Department's leadership.
2. Build partnerships across the County.
3. Grow awareness of Department offerings and programs by bolstering marketing efforts and capacity.
4. Support the expansion of non-revenue generating areas of the Department in the short-term through grants and partnerships.
5. Strengthen recruitment and retention practices
6. Develop a customer service framework to ensure consistent service and support uneven staff capacities.

REVENUES AND PRICING

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a severe financial strain and has dramatically reshaped the Department's budget in a number of ways since mid-March 2020. And while the effects of the pandemic have impacted programs and services disparately, most core activities, programs and services experienced record low attendance rates, leading to significant declines in revenue. Furthermore, for those activities, programs, and services provided by the Department that have been less affected, such as child care, the pandemic has made it difficult to recruit and retain the necessary staff to service the demand. As a result, the Department has experienced a

decline in revenue more significant than any decline in recent memory. At the same time, the pandemic has affected the economy throughout the County. Major revenue sources experiencing declines include tax collection, external funding support, and many other major revenue sources all County departments typically rely on for additional funding support.

Unlike various downturns in previous years, the COVID-19 pandemic is a major revenue loss event. In many cases, this loss will not be recaptured for several years. Prior to experiencing the full-effects of the pandemic, the Department operated on a growth trajectory for many of the programs and

services it offers with a consistent focus to drive innovative program development, increased service levels, revenue generation, and efforts to maintain a sufficient fund balance. To further illustrate the pre-pandemic growth trajectory and to underscore the severity of the pandemic's impact on the Department's budget, the following table (Figure 5.1) contains aggregate Recreation and Park Fund revenue and expense data.

In order for the Department to return to pre-pandemic revenue levels, it is clear a one-size-fits-all solution is not the best approach. It will be important for the Department to leverage its very capable management and staff experience and service delivery experience in order to begin to work toward returning to a pre-pandemic fiscal environment. This may require a return to focusing on core service delivery and prudent fiscal management in the near-term while keeping a strategic focus on a return to program development and growth, enhanced service delivery, and increased revenue generation in the coming years.

FISCAL YEAR	REVENUE	EXPENSE	NET
2017	\$19,847,013	\$19,168,379	\$678,634
2018	\$19,656,774	\$19,470,157	\$186,617
2019	\$21,103,679	\$20,000,218	\$1,103,461
2020	\$16,840,513	\$18,483,234	(\$1,642,721)
2021	\$8,174,735	\$12,586,637	(\$4,411,902)

Figure 5.2 Department Revenues and Expenses 2017 to 2020

COMPARISONS TO PEERS

The process also worked to understand how the Department's investments and spending compared to similar-sized municipalities and departments, which included Virginia Beach, Virginia, Orlando, Florida, Montgomery County, Maryland, Loudoun County, Virginia, and Arlington, Texas.³⁸

Capital Investments: 12-18 months

When compared to the average capital investments of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's planned capital investments over the next 12 to 18 months are 47.5% of what peers have planned to invest.

Capital Investments: 5+ years

When compared to the average capital investments of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's planned capital investments for the next five years and beyond are 51.5% of what peers have planned to invest.

Annual Operating Budget

When compared to the average annual operating budgets of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's operating budget for FY 2022 is 11.3% more than the average budgets of peers.

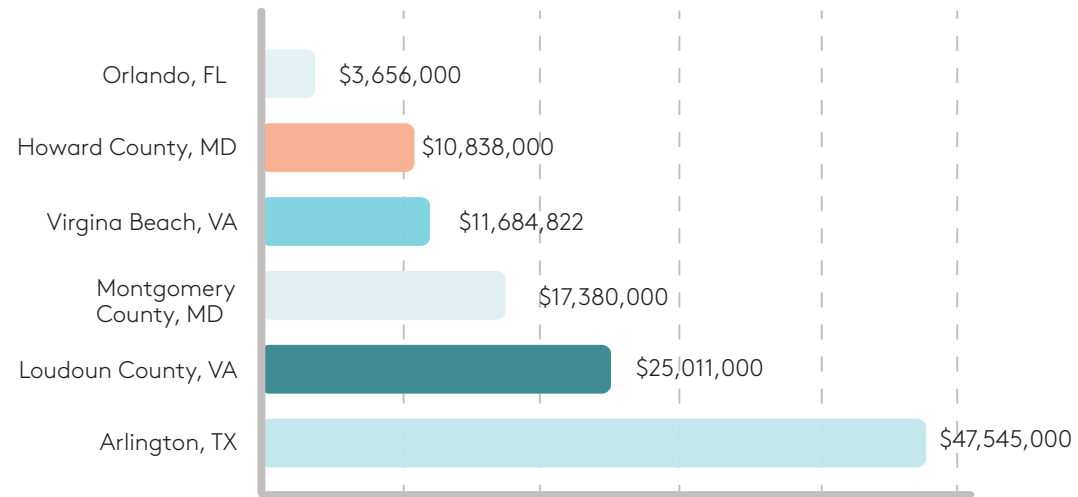


Figure 1.23 Planned Recreation + Park Capital Investments FY 2022

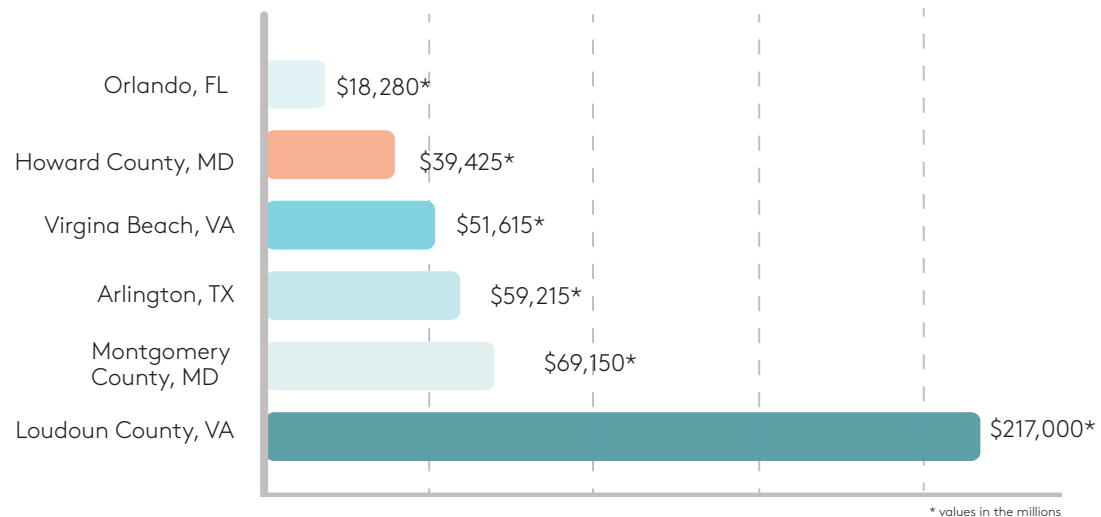


Figure 5.3 Planned Recreation + Park Capital Investments 5+ Years

Operating Budget as a Percent of General Fund

When examined as a percent of the County's general fund, the Department's operating budget represents an estimated 4.2% of all general fund expenditures, compared to an average of 4.5% of peers surveyed.

Budget per Capita

The Department's estimated operating budget per capita is \$162.77, the highest amongst all peer agencies surveyed.³⁹

Median Household Income

When compared to peer agencies surveyed, the County's annual median household income of \$121,160 is 137.8% of the average annual median household income of peers surveyed.⁴⁰

The Department accounts for fees, charges, and revenue, and expenses related to the provision of Departmental programs and services in two main operating budget categories: the Recreation and Parks Fund and the General Fund. The Department utilizes over 140 unique cost centers for more detailed budgeting, and expense and revenue tracking.

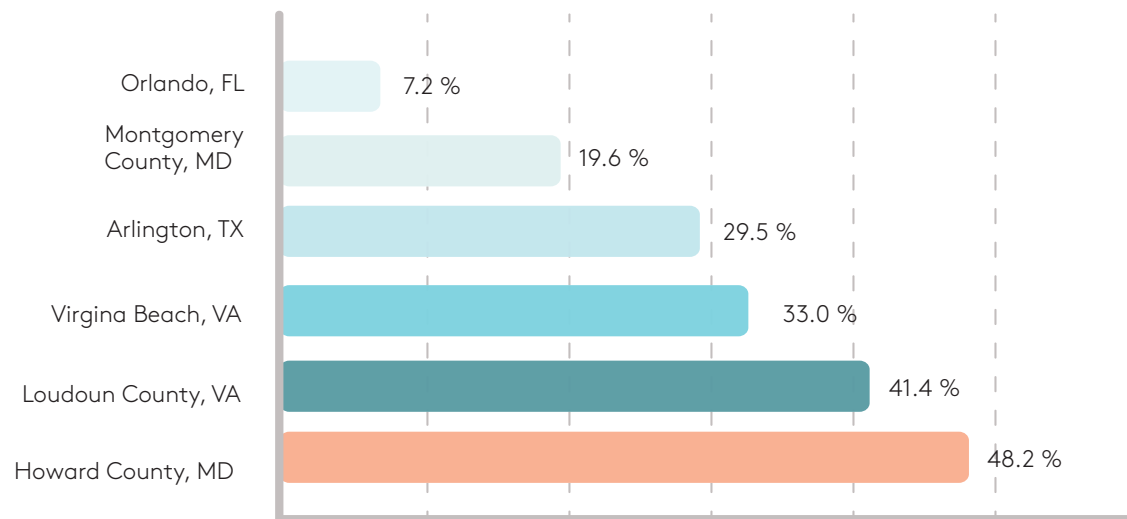


Figure 5.4 Cost Recovery as a Percent of Operating Budget

REPORT THEMES

As the Department of Recreation and Parks looks toward the future functionality and financial stability of the system, the following themes emerged:

- **Partnerships can be strengthened:** The Department and Howard County Schools can share resources to provide better customer service.
- **Alternative funding streams should be explored:** Federal support, under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), may help the Department bridge some of the revenue gaps experienced due to the pandemic; however, it is clear that the county-wide requests for allocation of these funds will be greater than the total federal allocation to the County. There will not be enough funding to cover all county-wide revenue losses for each department.

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The Department maintains eight regional parks, ten community parks, 12 neighborhood parks, four natural resource areas, 24 historic sites, three community centers, one nature center, one athletic center, and two community buildings and offers approximately 7,000 programs (including leagues, classes and camps) each year. In 2021, volunteers donated over \$1.5 million in labor hours costs. Many of the parks also host local and national tournaments and events. To maintain such a high functioning system, the Department relies on a multifaceted approach to support its operations, which are pulled from two funding sources, the Recreation and Parks Fund and the General Fund.

Capital Improvement Budget

The Capital Improvement Budget provides funding and appropriation for the construction or acquisition of physical assets and covers many different projects, including land acquisition and construction or renovation of community centers, parks, and trails. The Department has access to transfer tax funds and grants (which include Program Open Space) which make up almost half of

the Capital Budget each year. It also has limited access to General Obligation (GO) bonds. To guide spending for these funds, the Department creates a Capital Improvement Plan, which identifies short-, medium-, and long-term capital spending priorities.

General Fund

Howard County's General Fund is funded by property and income taxes. It is the principal operating fund for the County and is used to fund most County services such as education, public safety, public facilities and health and human services. The Department is funded substantially by General Fund revenue, with revenue generated from user fees and charges projected to be 48.2% of total funding for FY 2022.

Recreation and Parks Fund

The Recreation and Parks Fund is supported primarily by program and facility fees, or revenues. The Department experienced robust activity and program participation, which resulted in significant revenue gains and funded balance contributions to the Recreation and Parks Fund over the past few years. However, several major macroeconomic related impacts, mainly the COVID-19

pandemic, have severely impacted core services participation over the last few years and have resulted in a significant revenue decline for the Department. Furthermore, because of the unique nature of programs and services provided by the Department, many core service revenues are cyclical, tend to fluctuate widely on an annual basis, and are dependent on macroeconomic trends that are beyond the control of the Department.

Pricing and Revenue Policy

The Department's fees and revenue policy, updated in May 2015, fulfills the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) required standard 5.1.1 Comprehensive Revenue Policy that relates to fees and charges. The policy includes philosophies, guidelines, and cost determination structures to manage fees and charges, and includes three levels of financial sustainability: direct costs, program administration, and institutional costs. Moving forward, the policy must include cost-recovery goals for the 10 major program categories, and for the various facilities used. Having these goals will create accountability for program staff and help to generate lost revenue due to the pandemic's impact.

Revenue Opportunities

The American Rescue Plan of 2021 provides \$1.9 trillion dollars in federal funding for states and communities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the plan, there are specific funds applicable to parks and recreation agencies, such as \$350 billion for investment in trails, parks, and open spaces within communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and \$240 million in investment in cultural, arts, and tourism facilities, nature-based infrastructure, and outdoor recreation.⁴¹



Goals + Actions

In order to meet State and County goals, while addressing the plan's themes and recommendation drivers, the Department of Recreation and Parks can take the following actions:

County Goal 4.1

Amplify and communicate the Department's leadership.

ACTION: Increase communications with staff during the pandemic and after to address the COVID-19 pandemic's impacts on the budget, on revenue priorities, and on the protection of staff positions.

ACTION: Explore efficiencies in administrative processes that can reduce costs (like changes to credit card fees and charges).

ACTION: Communicate the importance of different roles that enable revenue, operations, and mission-oriented functions to balance one another.

ACTION: Eliminate programs with low or no enrollment.

ACTION: Maintain and increase staff levels by holding vacancies as needed.

County Goal 4.2

Build partnerships across the County.

ACTION: Encourage the creation of "Friends of" park groups.

ACTION: Continue scholarship programs, cross-training staff programs, and open communication across bureaus.

ACTION: Partner with other departments or social service agencies to strengthen expertise in certain areas (community health).

County Goal 4.3

Grow awareness of Department offerings and programs by bolstering marketing efforts and capacity.

ACTION: Grow full-time staff in the Marketing Division, including a team member with competencies in data analytics.

ACTION: Continue activity guides and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

ACTION: Explore creation of an internal marketing process team to identify ways of strengthening the division's support to the Bureaus.

ACTION: Develop an ongoing system of self-examination to support growth and marketing success.

ACTION: Develop metrics for measuring the effectiveness of marketing.

County Goal 4.4

Strengthen recruitment and retention practices

ACTION: Create an employee recruitment and retention task force consisting of a cross-functional team from all levels of the organization.

ACTION: Work closely with Howard County's Human Resources Department to ensure recruitment and retention alignment with County policies.

ACTION: To address the increased childcare demands, consider creating a consortium of providers to tackle the recruitment and retention of childcare staff in a County-wide approach.

County Goal 4.5

Support the expansion of non-revenue-generating areas of the Department in the short-term through grants and partnerships.

ACTION: Consider creating seasonal staffing incentives such as end-of-season incentive bonuses.

ACTION: Seek youth employees through collaborations with schools, creative marketing, and flexible hours.

ACTION: Outsource functions that can be done by other providers.

ACTION: Partner with local providers for nature-based programming in-lieu of direct organization programming.

ACTION: Partner with local organizations to expand the volunteer base and provide community service hours.

County Goal 4.6

Develop a customer service framework to ensure consistent service and support uneven staff capacities.

ACTION: Assign responsibilities to determine who is accountable for the overall customer service system.

ACTION: Continue deploying the existing customer service standards.

ACTION: Create an overall customer satisfaction measurement system that outlines and documents types, frequency, and data collection processes. This information should be documented and shared with the rest of the organization.

ACTION: Develop approximately five key customer requirements of key services and programs by identifying the service attributes most important to customers.

ACTION: Develop service mapping for key programs and services. Service mapping is one way to improve service system design.

ACTION: Complete a similar provider evaluation on an annual basis.

ACTION: Strengthen internal customer service support. Internal customer satisfaction is critical to effective delivery of excellent external customer service.

ACTION: Develop a service recovery process.

ACTION: Encourage customers to provide feedback about their experiences and make it easy for them to do so.

Respond quickly and personally. Organizations often take too long to respond to unhappy customers, and then respond impersonally.

Develop a problem resolution system. Service employees need specific training on how to deal with angry customers and how to help customers solve service problems.

ACTION: Develop key performance indicators for service quality.

Implementation Strategy

Aspiration

The County maintains high quality spaces.

Implementation Strategy

The 2022 LPPRP (or, the Plan) aims to provide Howard County residents and visitors greater access to programs and amenities, expand and preserve protected agricultural land, and enhance the long-term benefits of natural resources and open space – ensuring that the system will prosper for future generations.

The 2022 LPPRP is timely; its implementation is timed with the County's General Plan Update. The LPPRP responds to waning available land and resources for significant new projects and land acquisition opportunities, and provides a snapshot of the current state of the County's system during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is now entering its third year.

The Plan requires committed community engagement and the investment of citizens, state and local governments, and private partners to successfully implement the ambitious goals and strategies set out by the vision. A critical first step in implementation will be to leverage existing partnerships and cultivate new collaborative relationships with groups invested in the future of the system, so as to ensure that funding aligns with community needs and the Plan's guiding principles.

2022 STATE GOALS

Three goals within the 2022 LPPRP directly relate to organizational health. Mention of these resources is inferred and suggested within the Recreation and Parks, Resource Conservation, and Agricultural Lands Preservation chapters. The most applicable goals are:

1. Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties and the State more desirable places to live, work, play and visit.

2022 COUNTY GOALS (AN UPDATE TO THE 2017 PLAN)

Goals within the 2017 Plan that were related to bolstering Department best practices and functions included:

1. 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.
2. Use State investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.
3. Connect the county's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.
4. Encourage future stewardship by connecting culture, history and programming.

LOCALLY-RESPONSIVE SITE INVESTMENTS

As Howard County and the Department of Recreation and Parks looks to steward the future of its natural and cultural resources, opportunities exist to tie together the County's unique history and diverse communities and celebrate its natural places, parks, and facilities. Today, Howard County's parks and facilities are unparalleled in their amenities and in the care that is taken to manage these important community spaces. Consistency has been a priority and has resulted in high quality spaces, but also in a sense of sameness or homogeneity across identity, character, and image of the system. With such a diverse ecological, historic, and cultural foundation, there is tremendous opportunity to amplify difference and celebrate unique attributes through park and open space design choices.

One notable case study in Howard County is the recent opening of Laura's Place because it introduced new and unique park elements and investments. The amenities in Laura's Place in Blandair Park, which were embraced by residents, made it a destination. With this plan and the next capital improvement cycle, the Department of Recreation and Parks can mimic this approach to other capital investments to one that reflects and amplifies the County's ecological systems, shares its historic legacy, and responds to local community desires. While Howard County's

general plan process drives development, this ecologically-driven framework can structure site investments, specifically parks. In this section, the plan will explore opportunities

to shift investment and maintenance to a district approach that is structured around the ecological and development makeup of that particular area of the county.



Figure 6.1 Western Regional Park in Cooksville contains open lawn fields for active recreation, a typical park typology found across the county.

Character Zones for Site Investments

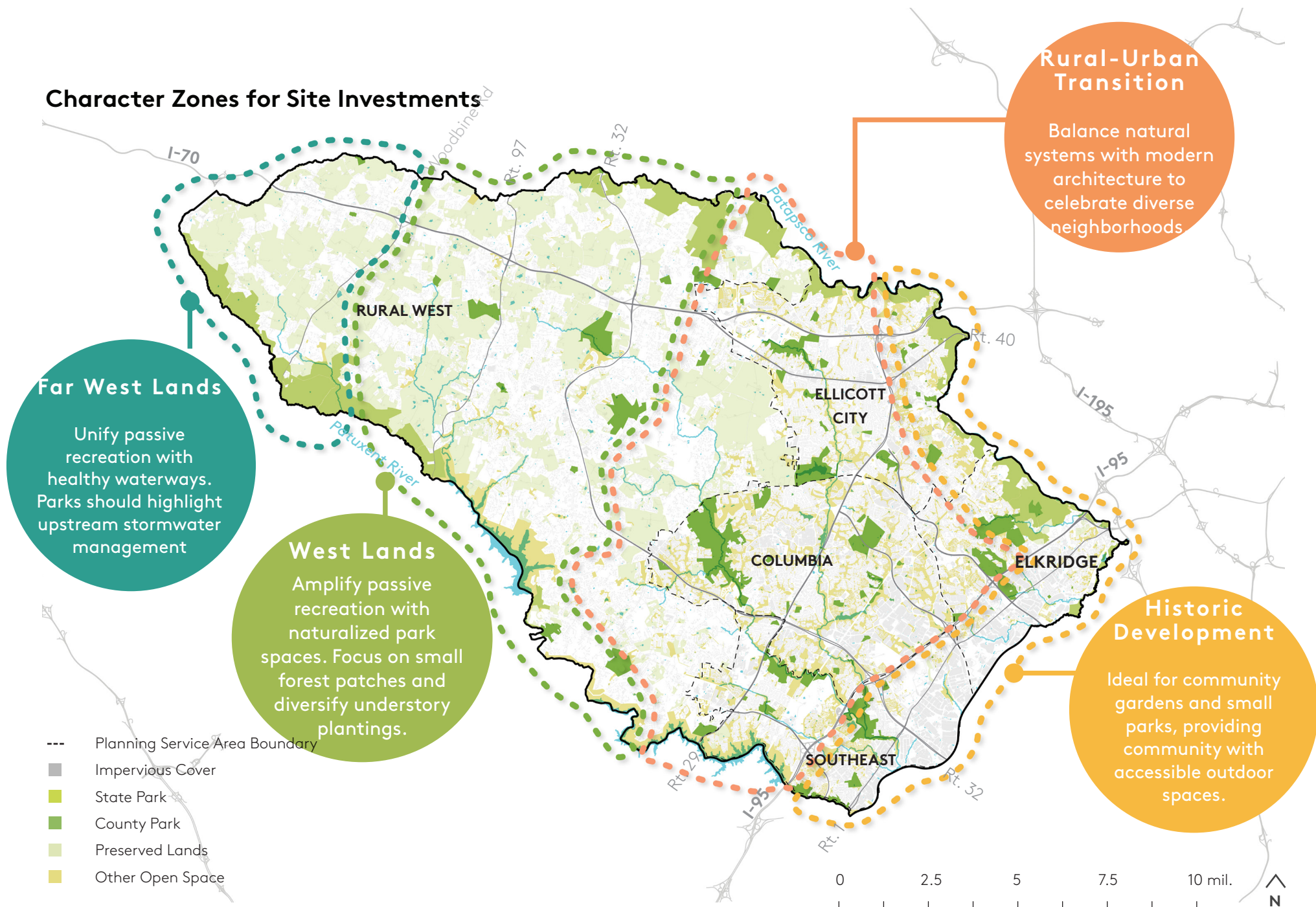


Figure 6.2 The proposed site investments can be framed by four character zones that reflect relationships between ecological and cultural systems, to diversify park typologies across the county

Defined by varying patterns in Howard County's natural and cultural resources, the locally-responsive site improvement framework identifies four zones across for the County to draw inspiration from and guide investments:

Eastern Development

Home to the County's the earliest settlements, this area includes steep river valleys and is mostly developed with small forest patches and more urban areas. Stream health is lower and stream banks are more eroded, especially to the east. There is very little agriculture in this area. Parks are likely smaller in scale.

Rural-Urban Transition

A rolling, partially developed landscape, with larger forest patches and streams. Robinson Nature Center exemplifies the typology of this landscape, where nature meets modern architecture to create a destination for the larger community to learn about Howard County's local wildlife and plant communities.

West Lands

A mostly agricultural landscape interspersed with rural residential and limited commercial development, with streams that are generally in fair to good condition. Most of Howard County's agricultural and conservation easements are in the West Lands. The Howard County Living Farm Museum represents a typology that can be replicated across this zone, providing a space where visitors can learn about the County's agricultural legacy.

Far West Lands

A landscape with steep slopes, this is one of the least densely populated areas in the county. Soils are very well drained and prone to drought. Passive recreation and trails can shine in this area, where visitors can immerse themselves in nature. Signage should educate the public about the local wildlife and plants of the area.



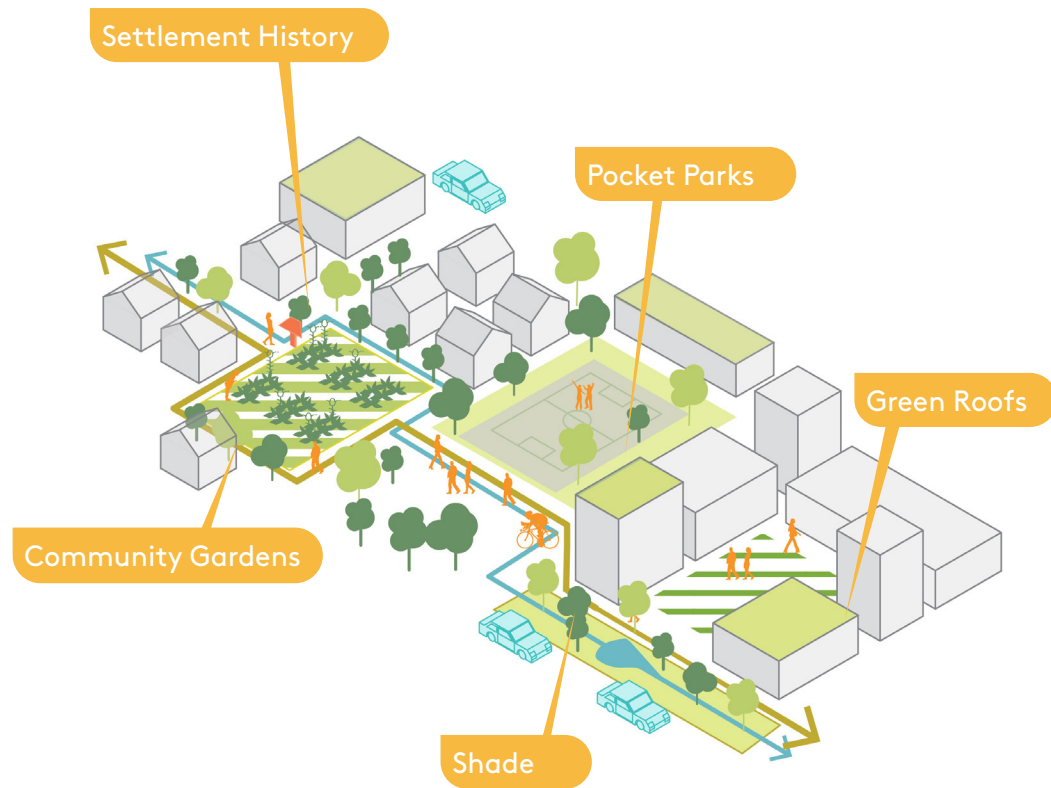
EASTERN DEVELOPMENT

Interpretation

Interpretative signage in Eastern Development parks should highlight history of human settlement and development. Humans (indigenous, then colonists, then modern community growth) were attracted to this land due to its stable soils and natural resources, which included water access and wildlife for hunting. This prime location for human use led to early dense settlement. Proximity to major travel routes and ports allowed communities to grow within the broader region. Signage should educate the public about this local geography, natural history, and human history with broader impact across the county. This is also an opportunity to educate the public about downstream resilience and flooding in low lying, flood-prone areas, such as in Ellicott City.

Uses

This area is ideal for community gardens which residents identified as a desired facility in the statistically valid community survey conducted in 2021. Small parks could include unique activities such as pickleball courts, providing the community with accessible active spaces within walking, biking, or public transit distance, prioritizing neighborhoods with low park equity.



Design Guidelines

Design should focus on providing comfortable shaded experiences within multi-use small city parks. Ecological practices in this area include creating green roofs on park buildings, implementing bird-friendly design practices for buildings, and amplifying the urban canopy with urban tolerant-plants. Design should focus on resilience, such as incorporating floodable landscapes and other blue-green infrastructure.

Management

Focus should be to reduce edge effects and invasive plant cover. The County should plant urban-tolerant native trees and shrubs to replace future canopy and insulate forest edges. Remove the most destructive invasive plants following integrated pest management principles.

Investment Potential

Investments should focus on areas with limited access to parks and high community need, such as south of Elkrige, as demonstrated by the State's park equity map tool.

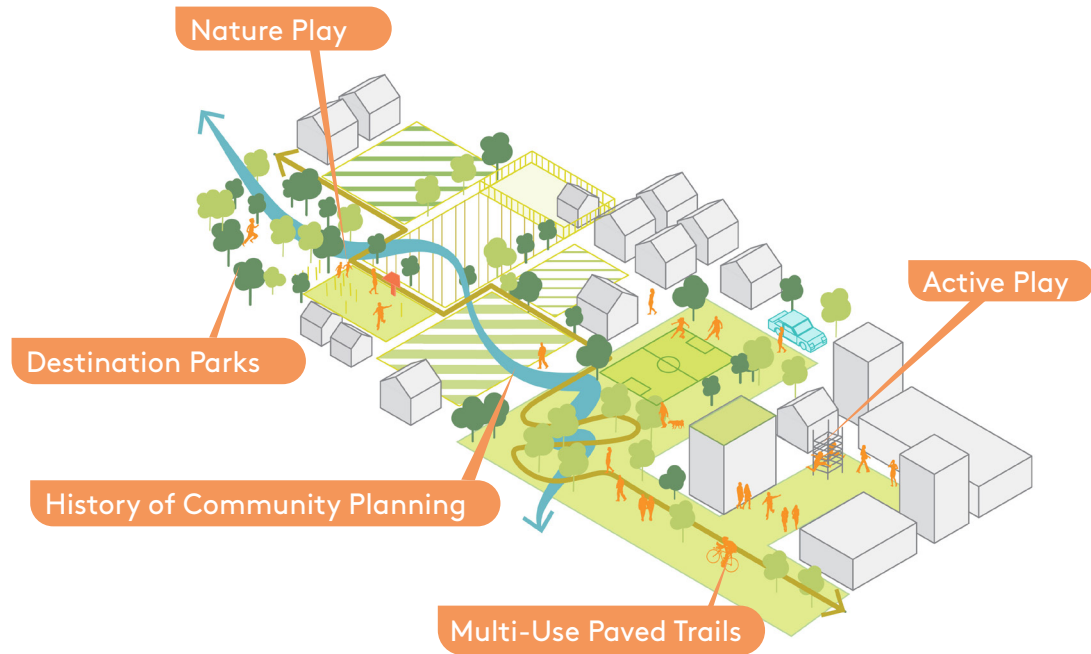
RURAL-URBAN TRANSITION

Interpretation

Signage in the Urban-Rural Transition parks should highlight the County's history of park development and suburbanization. Interpretive signage should focus learning objectives around early farming, early industrialization, community planning that supported park development, and the differentiation of vegetation apparent between the east and western edges of the county. Through this area's agricultural history and prominent suburban character, observers can learn about the relationship between soil health, vegetation, and development drivers.

Uses

This area is suitable for multi-use trails and destination parks for active recreation. Investments in paved trails should be prioritized, as it was the most important facility identified by residents as part of the statistically valid community survey. The connection between parks and neighborhoods is a priority, providing communities with accessible outdoor spaces within short driving distance, and blue-green infrastructure to support parking and other vehicular needs.



Design Guidelines

Elevate park experience with different play typologies from naturalized play to colorful playscapes based on neighborhood character. Low density open spaces within residential areas can be easily adapted to provide small habitat stepping stones and stopovers for many types of birds and small mammals.

Management

The goal within this region is to elevate forest health, restore stream health, and improve resilience. Gaps in the canopy and uneven forest edges should be filled with native or adapted tree and shrub plantings. Investments

should prioritize protecting new planting and manage the deer population. Management plans should focus on most destructive invasive plants. Finally, stream banks should be stabilized using natural channel design principles including planting a robust native understory.

Investment Potential

Investments should preserve large natural areas where possible to maintain rural character, prioritizing communities where park equity and accessibility is low, such as west of Ellicott City.



WEST LANDS

Interpretation

Signage in the West Lands should highlight the history of human settlement interwoven with local geology. The geology story is complex, distinct and visible so park users will be more aware of it, which creates an opportunity to focus on the connection between geology and its effect on farming. While the Ice Age did not drive glaciers this far south, some soils may have originated in wind-blown soil from glaciated areas farther north. Learning objectives should focus on geology and the formation of soils, farming, and how the physical form of the county's roads, farms, and communities evolved in response to geology and topography. Furthermore, due to the preserved natural character of this region, the role of the Green Infrastructure Network on the greater landscape should be highlighted.

Figure 6.3 *The native wildlife and plant communities of Howard County are on display along passive-use trails in Font Hill Wetland Park*

Uses

The West Lands should highlight passive-use recreation for visitors to enjoy Howard County's agricultural and geological legacy. Passive unpaved trails, one of the most important features ranked by residents in the statistically valid survey, will help protect sensitive areas and preserve landscape in its natural condition. Where possible, trails should follow the Green Infrastructure Network corridors, involving parks in its implementation and elevating their role in providing both an ecological and accessible connection to healthy natural spaces.

Design Guidelines

Due to its location and character, the West Lands act as a wildlife passage within the county. Corridors defined by the Green Infrastructure Network should therefore be prioritized. Rivers and stream banks should be stabilized with diverse vegetation. To promote healthy upstream stormwater management, hardscapes within parks should include natural and permeable materials to capture and infiltrate stormwater before it reaches the eastern region of the county. Passive trails of natural fines or compacted crushed gravel will aid in water infiltration and complement ecological areas. Buildings and other structures should highlight local natural materials such as stone, mortar, and wood. Diverse native plantings should be prioritized - rather than

favoring manicured lawns - to provide wildlife habitat and preserve the natural character of Howard County.

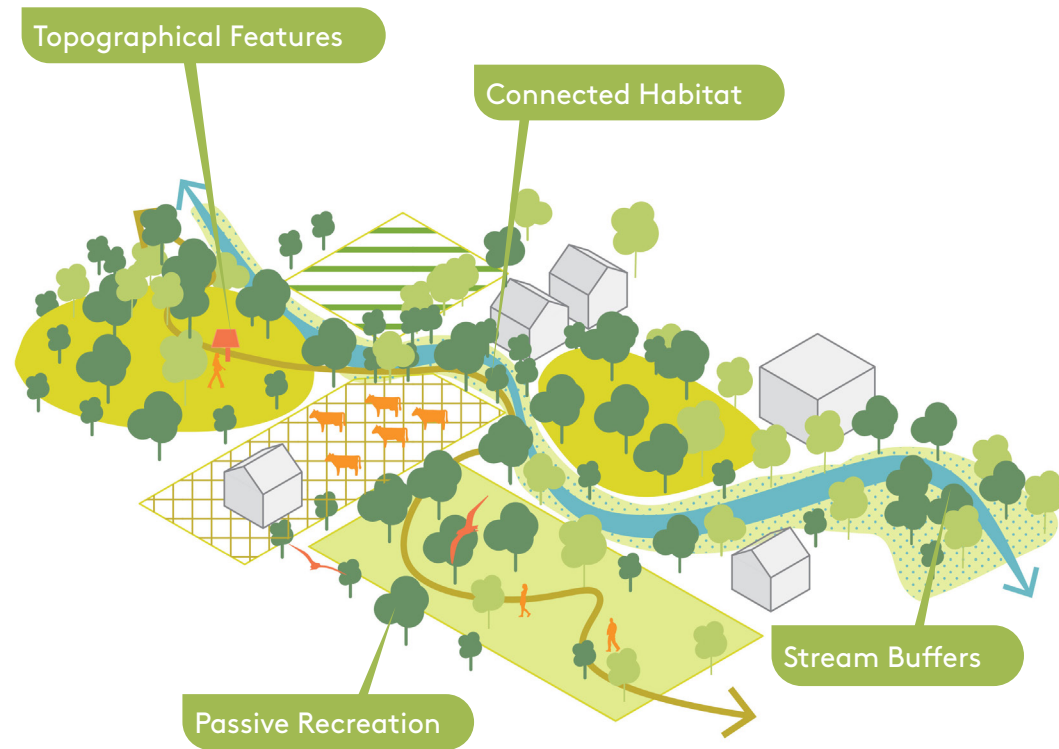
Management

Focus on improving water quality and connecting habitat patches. Plant native vegetation to buffer all streams and waterways on public land and easements; plantings should be compatible with setting. Plant steeper land into native vegetation

on public land and easements. Expand size of designated core meadow habitat by converting adjacent forest to savanna.

Investment Potential

Investments should prioritize natural areas to maintain rural character, focusing on communities where park equity is low. The center of this region requires a 15 minute drive to a playground, therefore parks within this area should include nature-inspired playgrounds.



FAR WEST LANDS

Interpretation

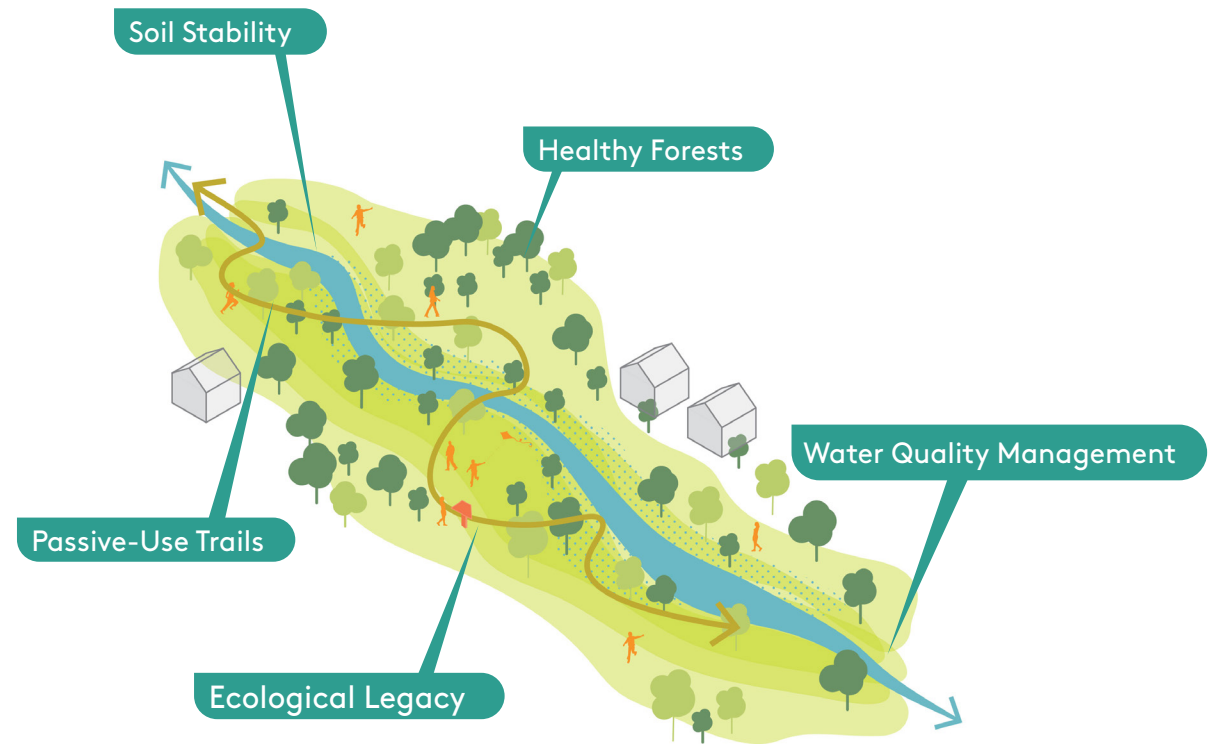
The Far West Lands tell a story of ecology: The forest trees, steep slopes and drought tolerant soils co-occur and combine to form a unique ecology, different from the rest of the county. Furthermore, lower human density tends to allow more species of wildlife to persist, resulting in a thriving diverse ecological community. Some streams are in good quality in the Far West Lands. Interpretive signage should educate park visitors on local wildlife, the forest ecology, and the importance of healthy waterways - beginning with streams high in the watershed of the Far West Lands to the other watersheds farther downstream of the county.

Uses

The Far West Lands should highlight passive-use recreation for visitors to enjoy Howard County's agricultural and ecological legacy. Passive trails will help protect sensitive areas, particularly around waterways.

Design Guidelines

Stabilize stream banks with diverse understory plantings, which can complement passive recreational use.



Management

Focus on protecting soil and slope stability. Plant native vegetation in cropland on public lands. Reduce cropland on easements by planting steepest ground to native vegetation.

Investment Potential

Park access currently mostly involves a 15 minute drive based on a watershed analysis, therefore investments should improve accessibility to parks for local communities. Streams and blue-green infrastructure should be prioritized to promote resilience across all watersheds of the County.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The implementation process will also involve prioritizing improvements based on the Plan's evaluation of the system's existing assets, needs, accessibility, and community demands, as well as future trends within the industry. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), included in the following pages, will serve as the tool to strategize, prioritize and appropriately time these community improvements. The CIP identifies priority projects within a short-, medium- and long-term time frame and aligns project development with the 2022 State and County goals.

Reflecting on the County's 5-year Recreation and Parks Capital Improvement Plan, the Department proposes to allocate \$39,425,000 over the next five to six years for recreation and parks related infrastructure improvements.

Howard County continues to work with Columbia to ensure the private, yet publicly accessible amenities in Columbia like parks, playgrounds, and trails continue to contribute to State and County goals for a connected, thriving, and sustainable system. Today, Columbia does not have plans to expand its own park and recreation system, but continues to update and maintain its existing system.



Figure 6.4 Implementation of the plan includes large capital projects like park improvements and systemwide investments like tree planting.

Capital Improvement Plan

Systemwide Improvements

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Park Systemic Improvements	Repair and replacement of existing park amenities are assessed annually and funded as needs arise. Prior Capital Improvement Plans did not identify most parks within the overall system and lumped funding in this category as it appears in County Capital Budgets.	Necessary park systemic improvements not anticipated within this Capital Improvement Plan will draw funding from other expenses listed in this CIP, whether within the park or another park based on the priority and public need for the repair or replacement.	0.00										
Greenway Infrastructure Network Systemic Improvements	not included	In alignment with the GIN Plan, protect, enhance and restore the habitat and natural areas within the Green Infrastructure Network to support a diversity of plant and animal life.	0.00										
Park Resurfacing	Repair and replacement of existing park roadways, parking, paths, and courts are assessed annually and funded as needs arise. Prior Capital Improvement Plans did not identify most parks within the overall system and lumped funding in this category as it appears in County Capital Budgets.	Necessary resurfacing improvements not anticipated within this Capital Improvement Plan will draw funding from other expenses listed in this CIP, whether within the park or another park based on the priority and public need for the repair or replacement.	0.00										
Historic Structures Rehabilitation	Maintenance of historic structures is assessed annually and funded as needs arise. Prior Capital Improvement Plans did not identify most parks within the overall system and lumped funding in this category as it appears in County Capital Budgets; however, most historic structures are located outside parks.	Proposed maintenance to include annual maintenance of various historic structures not already identified within a park based on need. Renovation of the Bernard Fort House is not referenced elsewhere, is in design, and construction is anticipated to begin within the short-term.	4.00				2.50			0.75			0.75
Pathway and Trail Rehabilitation	Proposed improvements to the Savage Mill Trail are referenced with Savage Park.	Continue to maintain, improve and expand the Spinal Pathway as well as other public pathways and trails.	4.00				2.00			1.00			1.00

Systemwide Improvements

Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Parkland and greenway acquisition	No change; however, the parkland acquisition category shall now include acquisitions that enhance and expand the County's Green infrastructure Network, which includes and is not limited to, the Patapsco Greenway, the Patuxent Greenway, and the Howard County Interior Greenway	The County's land acquisition goals for 2022 are to provide no less than 20 acres per 1,000 residents. The County currently exceeds this goal by providing 29.5 acres per 1,000 residents. Although the County has met its land acquisition goals, the Department will continue to purchase land in support of increased equity and access to parks for all residents.	0	0									

Columbia Region

Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Atholton Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider new benches and shading for athletic courts. Proposed maintenance items to include roadway and parking lot repaving as well as pathway and drainage improvements.	0.41			0.06	0.20			0.15			
Bailey Park	Not included	Newly opened park should not require capital maintenance or equipment replacements within the next 15 years.	0.00										
Blandair Regional Park	The 2017 LPPRP recommendations for this park were constructed with the exception that two synthetic turf baseball diamonds were constructed instead of two additional synthetic turf multipurpose fields and a single baseball diamond.	Phase 6 development of pickleball courts, basketball courts, a skatepark, and additional parking are ongoing. An athletic center proposed for Phase 6 is postponed as a long-term priority. Historic buildings rehabilitation can proceed. Phase 4 postponed until FY28 Phase J bridge construction begins. Phase 5 and Phase 7 are also recommended as long term investments.	29.65			3.50	2.85		8.30			15.00	

Columbia Region, cont'd

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Cedar Lane Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider new pathway construction at this regional park. Proposed maintenance to repave roadways, parking lots, and pathways; sports fencing and backstop replacements are needed; and a pavilion replacement.	1.42			0.20	0.95						0.27
Clarks Glen	Not included	Proposed development to consider development of a neighborhood park adjacent to the existing Clarks Glen playground and pathway. Proposed maintenance to include replacement of playground equipment and safety surfacing.	0.55						0.15				0.40
Columbia Garden Plots	Not included	The County will pursue the development of additional garden plot sites in the Southeast and either Elkrige or Ellicott City regions on County property and expansion of the Long Reach site. New sites require access, parking, and water as well as maintenance and replacement of existing raised planters as needed.	0.70			0.30	0.20			0.20			
Dickinson Park	Not included	Park owned by the Board of Education and maintained by the County. Proposed maintenance to include athletic court improvements.	0.20							0.20			
East Columbia Library Park	Design of the site has not changed since the 2017 LPPRP; however, prior funding was deferred to support Ellicott City flooding recover efforts.	Pursuing acquisition of the property from the Howard Hughes Corporation. Proposed construction remains the same as previously designed. Proposed maintenance to include pathway repaving.	4.70	16.60	0.50				4.00				0.20
Elkhorn Park	This property is now owned by the County. Development of this park was not initiated between 2017 and 2022.	Proposed development to consider development of this park as a pickleball complex to include numerous courts, a loop trail, outdoor exercise equipment, a playground with safety surfacing, parking and other ancillary features. The County may collaborate with the neighboring Columbia Association.	2.30			0.30			2.00				

Columbia Region, cont'd

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Hawthorn Park	Not included	Park owned by the Board of Education and maintained by the County. No capital improvements or maintenance are planned at this time and will be reassessed in subsequent plans.	0.00										
Huntington Park	Not included	Park owned by the Board of Education and maintained by the County. Proposed development to consider realigning an existing pathway, relocate existing athletics courts, and make SWM improvements. Proposed maintenance to include replacing playground equipment and surfacing.	0.80			0.40							0.40
Martin Road Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletics courts and pathway resurfacing and playground equipment and safety surfacing replacement.	0.60				0.05						0.55
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	Not included	The County is pursuing the acquisition of properties adjacent to the MPEA to create opportunities for additional programming and connections to neighboring communities. Proposed development to consider construction of a storage building, trail improvements, and an amphitheater.	1.00		0.80	0.20							
Robinson Nature Center	Not included	Proposed development to consider the design and construction of an amphitheater and installation of shade structures. Proposed maintenance to include improvements to the Simpsonville mill ruins and resurfacing of the roadway and parking lot.	0.83			0.50	0.08			0.25			
Sewells Orchard Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include playground equipment and safety surfacing replacement, observatory deck replacements, pedestrian bridge replacement, and dredging of the ponds.	3.00							0.30			2.70

Elkridge Region

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Belmont Manor & Historic Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider a new access road and connections to public water and sewer. Proposed maintenance to provide additional fencing, improve overflow parking, pond dredge and pier improvements, and to repave the roadway and parking.	3.10				1.20		1.50				0.40
Harwood Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include pathway and athletics court resurfacing.	0.14				0.14						
Rockburn Branch Park	A conservation easement was placed over a large portion of the park and a community center is no longer being considered. Restoration of the Clover Hill House has been postponed. Realignment and expansion of pathways were delayed to focus on realignment of the disc golf course.	Proposed development to consider the construction of a restroom facility near the tennis courts, the construction of a playground on the Landing Road side of the park, and explore and construct drainage and surfacing improvements for ball diamonds in the midterm. Proposed maintenance for roadway, parking lot, and pathway resurfacing.	3.20			2.50				0.70			
Timbers at Troy Golf Course	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include repairs to the clubhouse, renovations to the existing pavilion, and replacement of the maintenance building.	0.14				0.14						
Troy Regional Park	Development of Phase 2B improvements to Field #1 continues. All other improvements to this site are postponed by the consideration of the park as a site for Howard County High School #14.	Proposed development to include design and construction of an indoor athletics facility. Proposed maintenance to include renovations to the Troy Mansion and synthetic turf field scheduled replacements. Proposed construction of a maintenance facility to support upkeep.	21.70	5.00		0.30	0.50	1.00	17.50	0.60			1.80
Waterloo Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletic field drainage improvements, playground equipment and safety surfacing replacement, and roadway, parking lot, and pathway resurfacing.	0.75				0.50			0.25			

Ellicott City

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
B&O Ellicott City Station Museum	Not included	Proposed development to consider ADA ramp access improvements at the site. Proposed maintenance items to include caboose stairs replacement and turn table area improvements.	0.21			0.10	0.11						
Centennial Park	Lake dredging funding remains in the Capital Improvement Plan and has progressed into the mid-term priority category with an estimated price increase from \$6M to \$8M. Forebay dredging should become budgeted and completed every ten years.	Proposed development to consider West Area field, lighting, road way, and parking renovations; South Area boat area and overflow parking renovations; and an inclusive North Area playground. Proposed maintenance to include sign replacements, pavilion repairs, forebay and lake dredging, and various paving.	20.48	3.00	0.50	7.02	3.26	0.50		8.00	0.50		0.70
Cypressmede Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletics court amenity replacements and resurfacing; roadway, parking lot, and pathway repaving; and playground equipment and safety surface replacement.	3.49				0.29			3.20			
David Force Natural Resource Area	Trail improvements are ongoing and pedestrian bridges are being replaced. At this time the County is not pursuing development of any portion of this park for active recreation.	Continue trail improvements throughout the park.	0.30			0.30							
Dunloggin Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include a stream restoration project with grant funding under other agency's budget and pathway resurfacing.	1.95				1.80						0.15
Font Hill Wetlands Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include ongoing stream restoration following damage from the 2016 and 2018 floods, pedestrian bridge replacements, boardwalk replacements, and pond dredging.	2.19				0.39			1.50			0.30

Ellicott City Region, cont'd

Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Kiwanis Wallas Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider the redesign of existing and new park amenities. Proposed maintenance to include the replacement of existing ball diamond lighting.	1.38				0.18		1.20				
Meadowbrook Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include roadway, parking lot, and pathway repaving and playground equipment and safety surfacing replacement.	0.90			0.10				0.30			0.50
Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park	2012 and 2017 LPPRP recommendations for this site remain the same and are being pursued, but were delayed.	Proposed development to consider redevelopment and renovation of the PFI chapel area are in design and proposed for construction. Proposed maintenance to include road and parking resurfacing, basement drainage and pavers, and improvements to walking paths and landscaping.	1.03			0.80	0.23						
Roger Carter Community Center	Not included	Proposed development to consider the alignment and construction of a pathway from the RCCC to the neighboring County office complex. Proposed maintenance to be managed and funded by the Bureau of Facilities in the Department of Public Works.	0.11						0.11				
Tiber Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider the expansion of the existing Tiber Park pocket park on Main Street in Historic Ellicott City to be initially managed and funded by the Department of Public Works.	0.00										
Waverly Mansion	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include fencing replacements	0.08							0.08			
Worthington Dog Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider the construction of a pavilion at the park. Proposed maintenance to include parking lot resurfacing.	0.28						0.08				0.20

Rural West Region

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Alpha Ridge Park	Future trail system to be studied.	Proposed development to consider new pickleball courts and a loop trail. Proposed maintenance items to include a new inline hockey surface, replacement entrance sign, and roadway and parking lot repaving.	0.73			0.25	0.48						
Benson Branch Park	Recommendations from the 2017 LPPRP remain similar but budget restraints delayed work on the proposed parking and trail improvements. Consideration and planning for active development of the site has been postponed but may be renewed as a long-term priority.	Proposed development to consider construction of a new parking lot, equestrian trails, and planning and design of additional trails and active recreation improvements at the park.	0.60			0.25			0.15			0.20	
Clarksville Park	Pursuing nearby acquisition opportunities in the Rural West and Columbia regions. The availability of 20-acre parcels in the County is now extremely limited.	Continue to pursue acquisition opportunities in and near Clarksville. Consider multiple smaller parcels.	4.00	20.00	1.00			3.00					
Dayton Oaks Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletic courts resurfacing, paving of the roadway, parking, and pathway, and replacement of the pavilion, playground equipment and safety surfacing.	0.55				0.02			0.15			0.38
Gary J. Arthur Community Center	Not included	Proposed maintenance to be managed and funded by the Bureau of Facilities in the Department of Public Works.	0.00										
Haviland Mill Park	Development of the ADA-accessible pathway and boardwalk to the river was delayed by budget constraints but work recently began. Development of the site for other recreational uses has been delayed.	Proposed development of an ADA-accessible pathway and boardwalk should continue. Development of additional parking will be considered based on park popularity once opened. Further planning for improvements to the park will be a long-term priority.	1.00			0.80			0.10			0.10	

Rural West Region, cont'd

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Lisbon Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include pergola and paver replacements, pathway resurfacing, and playground equipment and safety surfacing replacements.	0.40				0.05						0.35
Manorwood Park	Proposed design and development of this park has been postponed to a long-term priority within this LPPRP.	Proposed development to initiate planning and design of a community park at this site.	0.30									0.30	
Poplar Springs Park	Not included	No capital improvements or maintenance are planned at this time and will be reassessed in subsequent plans.	0.00										
Schooley Mill Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include horse rink drainage improvements; roadway, parking lot, and pathway repaving; athletics courts resurfacing; and trail improvements.	0.66				0.10			0.56			
Shipley Park	Not included	Newly acquired park property. Proposed development to consider development of a community park at this site. Masterplanning and design of the proposed park are short-term priorities.	6.82			0.32			6.50				
South Branch Park	Design and renovation of the historic buildings at this park as well as the development of public water and sewer connections have been initiated and will continue. Improvements and use of the warehouse building have to be consistent with Maryland Program Open Space regulations.	Proposed development to consider collaboration with the Town of Syskesville on designing and constructing gateway improvements between the park and the town as well as to continue to consider renovations and reuse of the historic structures.	0.40			0.20				0.20			
South Fulton Park	No change to 2017 LPPRP recommendations for this park; however, design and development of the park were delayed and may change between the 2022 and 2027 LPPRP.	Proposed development to consider the design and construction of a community park at this site.	0.70			0.20			0.50				

Rural West Region, cont'd

Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Warfield's Pond Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include playground equipment and safety surfacing replacements, athletic courts renovations, parking lot and pathway resurfacing, pond decking replacement, and pond dredging.	2.66				0.30			0.36			2.00
West Friendship Park	Considering master planning of this park for heritage, natural resource, and outdoor adventure programming uses.	Proposed development to consider the completion of construction of the main exhibit building, the relocation of archery programs from elsewhere in the County, and the renovation of a modern house on the property into County office space. Proposed maintenance for trails and resurfacing.	1.10			0.80							0.30
Western Regional Park	Infill development of the park to provide additional athletics courts.	Proposed development to consider the construction of additional tennis and pickleball courts with lighting. Proposed maintenance to include various resurfacing, playground shade replacement, athletics courts resurfacing, and synthetic turf field replacements.	2.26			0.30				1.31			0.65
Woodstock Park	Design and development of this site into a community park was delayed. This site may not be eligible for the development of a community center due to an existing easement.	Proposed development to consider the design and development of this site into a community park.	0.10						0.10				

Southeast Region

					Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Cedar Villa Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include mid-term athletic courts maintenance and pathway surfacing and long-term playground equipment and safety surfacing replacements.	0.48							0.08			0.40
Guilford Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletic courts resurfacing, pond pier replacement, playground equipment and safety surfacing replacement, pavilion replacement, sports fencing replacement, and pathway resurfacing.	2.50							2.50			
Hammond Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include an upgraded pavilion, repaving roadway, parking, and pathway areas, athletic courts resurfacing, and playground equipment and surfacing replacement.	0.78				0.08			0.70			
High Ridge Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletics court and pathway resurfacing and playground equipment and safety surfacing replacements.	0.62				0.02			0.40			0.20
Holiday Hills Park	Not included	Proposed maintenance to include athletics court and pathway resurfacing, pond maintenance, and fencing replacements.	0.30							0.05			0.25
North Laurel Community Center	Not included	Proposed maintenance to be managed and funded by the Bureau of Facilities in the Department of Public Works.	0.00										
North Laurel Park	Design and construction of an indoor swimming pool at the North Laurel Community Center is no longer a Department of Recreation and Parks capital project and is now a Department of Public Works capital project.	Proposed maintenance to include roadway, parking lot, and pathway repaving.	0.30							0.30			

Southeast Region

Park or Planning Area	Description from 2017 LPPRP	Description of 2022 LPPRP Recommendations	Estimated Total Cost (\$ in Millions)	Acres to be acquired	Short Term Priority			Mid Term Priority			Long-term Priority		
					Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.	Acquisition	Capital Develop.	Rehab.
Savage Park	Not included	Proposed development to consider an addition to the existing maintenance building, redesign of exist athletics fields, and the construction of a bridge over the river to connect to pathways. Proposed maintenance to Savage Mill Trail improvements, a pavilion replacement, and various resurfacing.	2.41			0.20	0.40		1.40	0.41			

Will be updated to reflect FY23 budget

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Sustainability and eco-friendliness have become a priority in park design. Parks provide ideal opportunities for green infrastructure, as sites are often already highly visible, multi-functional public spaces that typically include green elements. The use of green infrastructure has increased over the last decade as knowledge of its benefits has grown. High-performance landscapes with green infrastructure provide the maximum amount of benefits to communities, including:

- Green jobs
- Opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation
- Economic growth
- Improved water quality
- Community resilience
- Lower urban heat island effects
- Manage flood risks
- New and improved wildlife habitat

The implementation of green storm water infrastructure duplicates a natural process to prevent, capture, and/or filter storm water runoff. A survey by the Trust for Public Land found that more than 5,000 acres of parkland in 48 major cities have been modified in some way to control storm water.⁴² With community parks containing thousands of acres across the country, there is a multitude of opportunities for integrating green infrastructure into park systems nationwide.

Common green storm water infrastructure projects include bio-retention, bioswales, constructed wetlands, impervious surface disconnections, green roofs, permeable pavements, rainwater harvesting, stream restoration, urban tree canopy, land conservation, vegetation management, and vegetated buffers.

Inclusive Playgrounds

Well-designed inclusive parks and inclusive playgrounds welcome children of all abilities to play, learn, and grow together. An inclusive playground takes away the barriers to exclusion, both physical and social, providing a “sensory rich” experience for all. Accommodating physical disabilities is one component of an inclusive playground—this refers to providing wheelchair-accessible

routes and ramp transfers points. Customized equipment, such as special swings, allow all kids to enjoy the playground as it is meant to be enjoyed.

An inclusive playground also provides a number of different opportunities for children to explore. They are able to integrate all the senses, and the amenities encourage social play. A true inclusive playground does not mean that there is a special piece of equipment in a separate area off to the side, but rather that the space is designed as a cohesive community where play opportunities are integrated throughout. These types of park facilities stress the importance of inclusion in daily activities, regardless of ability level. More and more parks and recreation agencies across the country are installing inclusive playgrounds to better meet the needs of all constituents. The Department has several inclusion friendly parks and playgrounds, and the addition of the Savage Park inclusive playground and new Centennial North playground sensory-friendly playground continue a tradition of offering spaces for all to enjoy.

From an educational perspective, the Department should do its part in educating residents about the impacts of climate change on the local economy and how residents can make a difference.

Alignment with State Goals

Park or Planning Area	Recreation + Parks	Resource Conservation	Historic Resources + Agriculture
Alpha Ridge Park	1	1	
Atholton Park	1-5	1	
B&O Ellicott City Station Museum	1-5	1	
Belmont Manor & Historic Park	1	1-6	6
Benson Branch Park	1,5	1	2,4
Blandair Regional Park	1-6	1,3	
Cedar Lane Park	1-6	1	
Cedar Villa Park	2-4	1	
Centennial Park	1-5	1	6
Clarks Glen	1-6	1	
Clarksville Park	6	1-6	
Columbia Garden Plots	1-6	2	1-4
Cypressmede Park	1-5	1,3	
David Force Natural Resource Area	1-5	1-6	
Dayton Oaks Park	1	1	
Dickinson Park	1-5	1	
Dunloggin Park	1-5	1-6	
East Columbia Library Park	1-6	1	
Elkhorn Park	1-6	1	
Font Hill Wetlands Park	1-5	1	
Gary J. Arthur Community Center	1,4-5		
Greenway Infrastructure Network Systemic Improvements	1-4,6	1-6	2
Guilford Park	1		
Hammond Park	1		
Harwood Park	1-4	1	
Haviland Mill Park	4-5		
Hawthorn Park	1,3		
High Ridge Park	1,3		
Historic Structures Rehabilitation	1-3		6
Holiday Hills Park	1,3,4		
Huntington Park	1-5	1	
Kiwanis Wallas Park	1-5	1	

Park or Planning Area	Recreation + Parks	Resource Conservation	Historic Resources + Agriculture
Lisbon Park	1,5		
Manorwood Park	1,6	1,6	
Martin Road Park	2,3	1	
Meadowbrook Park	1-5	1	
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	1-5	1-6	
North Laurel Community Center	1,4		
North Laurel Park	1,4		
Park Resurfacing	1-2,5	1,6	
Park Systemic Improvements	1-6	1-6	3
Parkland and greenway acquisition	1-6	1-6	2,4
Patapsco Female Institute Historic Park	1	1,3	
Pathway and Trail Rehabilitation	1-4,6	6	2
Robinson Nature Center	1-5	1-6	
Rockburn Branch Park	1-5	1,3	
Roger Carter Community Center	5		
Savage Park	1-6	1,3	
Schooley Mill Park	1	1,3	
Sewells Orchard Park	2,3	1,3	
Shipley Park	1-6	1,3	
South Branch Park	1-5	1-4	6
South Fulton Park	1-6	1,3	
Tiber Park	5,6		
Timbers at Troy Golf Course	1	3	
Troy Regional Park	1-5	1,3	6
Warfield's Pond Park	1-5	1	
Waterloo Park	1-5	1	
Waverly Mansion	5	1	
West Friendship Park	2-5	1	2,4
Western Regional Park	1-5		
Woodstock Park	1-6	1,3	
Worthington Dog Park	4		

Goals + Actions

In order to meet state and county goals, while addressing the plan's themes and recommendation drivers, the Department of Recreation and Parks can take the following actions:

State Goal 5.1

Recognize and strategically use parks and recreation facilities as amenities to make communities, counties and the State more desirable places to live, work, play and visit.

ACTION: Use empty retail spaces in mixed-use housing for community centers and facilities.

ACTION: Increase investment in aquatic facilities and build a 50 m pool.

ACTION: Allow recreational facilities the opportunity to function as flexible-use spaces, available for community uses.

County Goal 5.2

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.

ACTION: Build new housing or facilities in close proximity to one another so that access is prioritized.

ACTION: Identify funding opportunities available through state and federal sources.

ACTION: Invest in creative maintenance strategies for existing parks and recreational facilities.

County Goal 5.3

Use state investment in parks, recreation and open space to complement and mutually support the broader goals and objectives of local comprehensive/master plans.

ACTION: Identify potential sites for land acquisition, especially if sites represent opportunities to connect to state lands.

ACTION: Identify sources of State grants that could contribute to the funding of County recreation and parks projects.

County Goal 5.4

Connect the county's agricultural heritage to its recreational goals, through the incorporation of community gardens, healthy eating resources, and educational programs.

ACTION: Promote recreational programming that supports health and local food education (community gardens, co-ops, CSAs).

ACTION: Support learning through programming and partnerships that build community knowledge about the importance of healthy living.

ACTION: Use passive recreation to increase public education about ecology.

County Goal 5.5

Encourage future stewardship by connecting culture, history and programming.

ACTION: Expand the natural character of parks.

ACTION: Improve the identity of the system through enhanced wayfinding and impactful communication that is clear and visible.

ACTION: Use technology and mobile apps in parks and cultural sites to educate residents about history.

Endnotes

- 1 Data provided by the 2020 Decennial Census. "[United States Census Bureau: Howard County Maryland QuickFacts Dashboard.](#)"
- 2 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Fiscal Year 2020: DNR Lands Acreage Report.](#)"
- 3 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Forest Conservation Act.](#)"

Maryland Natural Resources Code. "[Natural Resources Article 5-1601-1613.](#)"
- 4 Howard County, Maryland. "[Howard County's History.](#)"
- 5 US Census. "[Measuring Racial and Ethnic Diversity for the 2020 Census.](#)"
- 6 Howard County, Maryland. [2015 Bike Howard Plan.](#)
- 7 Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning. "[2018 Downtown Columbia Monitoring Report.](#)"
- 8 Howard County, Maryland. [HoCo by Design.](#)
- 9 Howard County, Maryland. [Plan Howard 2030.](#)
- 10 Data provided by the 2019 American Community Survey and 2020 Decennial Census
- 12 [NRPA Park Metrics Database.](#)
- 13 Columbia Association. "[Tot Lots.](#)"
- 14 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Maryland Sport Fishing and Crabbing Licenses.](#)"
- 15 Columbia Association.
- 16 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Land Acquisition and Planning: Program Open Space.](#)"
- 17 National Park Service. "[Land and Water Conservation Fund.](#)"
- 18 Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. "[Sustainable Communities: Enhancing Maryland Communities by Prioritizing Investment.](#)"
- 19 NRPA. "[Top Trends in Parks and Recreation 2021.](#)"
- 20 Howard County, Maryland. [Watershed Management](#)
- 21 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Results from Round 3 of the Maryland Biological Stream Survey \(2007-2009\)](#)"
- 22 NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information. [State Climate Summaries 2022: Maryland and The District of Columbia](#)
- 23 Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning. "[Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan.](#)"
- 24 [Ellicott City Safe and Sound Plan.](#)
- 25 Dr. Matthew Baker, University of Maryland Baltimore County "Assessment of Howard County, Maryland's Tree Canopy and Forest Cover," April 2022
- 26 Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "[Land Acquisition and Planning: Program Open Space.](#)"
- 27 Howard County, Maryland. "[Comprehensive Deer Management Plan](#)"
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, "Howard County, Maryland." February 2013. <[Hyperlink](#)>
- 30 National Register of Historic Places. Last Updated: December 10, 2021. <[Hyperlink](#)>

- 31 Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, "Howard County Historic Property Tax Incentives." 2015. <[Hyperlink](#)> compare to those park and recreation operations which operate in similar environments with similar characteristics
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 <https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/index.php>
- 34 National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Historic Preservation Solutions to Build Back Better." March, 2021. Pg. 14. <[Hyperlink](#)>, 2021.
- 35 Miller, Mark, "Howard County to Add Nearly 128 Acres to Agricultural Land Preservation Program." Office of Public Information, Howard County Government New Release. October 6, 2021.
- 36 Legg, Heather, "Howard's Roving Radish Program Opens First Storefront." Maryland Association of Counties. September 2, 2020. <[Hyperlink](#)>
- 37 Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, "Howard County Historic Property Tax Incentives." 2015.<[Hyperlink](#)>
- 38 In Fall 2021, BerryDunn surveyed the FY 2022 proposed operating and CIP budgets of five peer cities/counties in order to gain greater insight into how the Department's financial and demographic metrics
- 39 U.S. Census Bureau (2021). Selected demographic characteristics, 2014-2018 and 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from <http://factfinder2.census.gov/>
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1319/text>
- 42 Trust for Public Land.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

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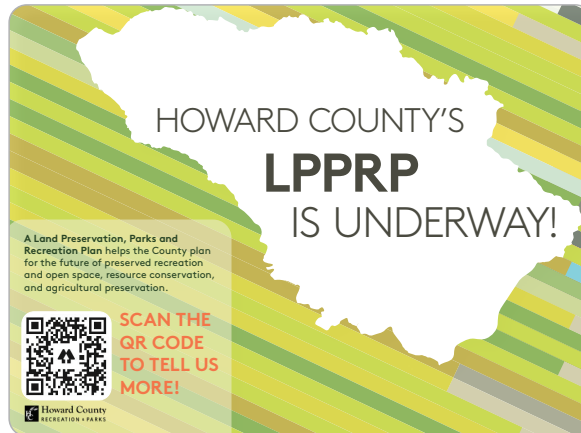
APPENDIX A

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The following methods were used to collect public input throughout the plan timeline:

Public Engagement Events

The LPPRP process included three public engagement events. On September 22, 2021, Agency L+P staff presented the LPPRP process at an advertised special meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board at the Meadowbrook Athletic Complex. This presentation included opportunities for attendees to speak with Department and consultant staff about their parks and programming use and needs as well as utilize engagement resources to provide written feedback. Several members of the public participated and shared their visions for the plan effort. On September 26, 2021, Agency L+P staff attended the Robinson Nature Center 10th Anniversary Open House where they spoke with hundreds of attendees to build awareness of the plan and obtain feedback around vision boards. On November 13, 2021, Agency L+P staff held a pop-up event at Centennial Park to interact with park patrons through discussion along with interactive banners and other resources to get input on the goals and initial actions. Dozens of participants weighed in on additional improvements that could be made to the County's system of preserved lands, leisure services, and park amenities. Activities in all events facilitated youth engagement as well, and included prompts like "Design your future park".



Statistically Valid Survey

In July 2021, ETC Institute administered a statistically valid survey of County residents to understand user satisfaction, barriers to access, and community needs. Survey questions were developed with the input of the LPPRP Steering Committee, Agency L+P staff, and the ETC Institute. Thousands of surveys were mailed at random to County residents with over 800 households providing responses. The statistically valid survey captured responses from over two percent of the County population with a 95 percent confidence level. This high degree of confidence ensured that the survey captured a snapshot of the County's diverse population across geographic area, income, race, age, and other factors, aligned with the 2020 census. For the full Statistically Valid Survey report, see Appendix D.

Staff Interviews

The team conducted various meetings and interview sessions with employees who have direct contact with customers and leadership staff involved in managing programs and services. Staff shared insight on the Department's overall strengths and areas for improvement.

Focus Groups

Agency L+P coordinated several focus and technical group sessions throughout the course of the LPPRP process to cover topics

relating to land conservation, agriculture, historical resources, and a variety of programming issues.

Online Engagement

County and Agency L+P staff recognized that COVID-19 precautions and wariness meant that public engagement would be more challenging. There was a clear need to engage the public where it was convenient and safe for participation. Agency L+P developed a Linktree virtual survey based on key questions from the statistically valid survey. This virtual survey was promoted through social media, the County website, the Ball Bulletin, the Department's activity guide, cooperation with HCPSS, and signage placed in each of the Department's parks and centers. The virtual survey received over 900 views and 318 responses.

Advisory Board Presentations

The team presented to the eight-member Recreation and Parks Advisory Board on two separate occasions to get feedback and general guidance during the drafting and refinement phases of the LPPRP. Presentations to the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board were advertised in three local newspapers for two consecutive weeks prior to each meeting. The County's website and social media were also utilized to inform the public of these meetings.

Coordination with HoCo by Design

Throughout the development of the LPPRP, Department and Agency L+P staff consulted with staff in the Department of Planning and Zoning to consider and incorporate related public feedback gathered during the HoCo by Design effort to ensure consistency between the General Plan and LPPRP.

The LPPRP is compatible with Plan Howard 2030 and has been reviewed by the Department of Planning and Zoning for compatibility with numerous other plans prepared by the County in the past ten years. The LPPRP has been reviewed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) for compatibility with all State plans, regulations, and guidelines. The County and the consultant team submitted a draft of the LPPRP to MDNR and MDP in December 2021, incorporated recommendations from MDNR in March 2022, and have now presented the current version of the LPPRP to the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board and the Howard County Planning Board without additional requests for changes. Further State changes are not anticipated but remain a possibility.

At the end of each engagement milestone, the team synthesized the community engagement results and presented them in an easily digestible and clear format to the steering committee. The high level numbers of engagement are shared on the following page.



Bi-weekly
DRP Calls



(4) Steering
Committee
Meetings



(2) Meetings
with the
Rec+Parks
Board



(8) Techni-
cal Groups and
one-on-one
conversations



(3)
Community
Pop-ups



Statistically
Valid Survey
with 800
people



Webpage and
Linktree with over
900 views and 318
additional surveys



Awareness
building through
news outlets
and schools

APPENDIX B

PRICING AND REVENUE POLICY

Introduction

This section of the report provides a high-level background of the project, as well as key terms and their definitions.

Project Background

BerryDunn completed a recreation and parks pricing and revenue analysis and peer cities /counties comparison analysis in support of Howard County's Department Recreation and Parks (Department) Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) efforts. The pricing and revenue analysis was conducted by reviewing the Department's fiscal year (FY) 2021 operating and select capital improvement plan (CIP) expense and revenue data. Furthermore, BerryDunn surveyed the FY 2022 proposed operating and CIP budgets of five peer cities/counties in order to gain greater insight into how the Department's financial and demographic metrics compare to those park and recreation operations which operate in similar environments with similar characteristics. In addition to reviewing readily available budget and financial information, BerryDunn met with Department staff to gain insight on financial policies and trends at the Department level, as well.

This report provides the County with an overview of Department revenue generated by way of user fees and charges and associated

operational expenses for FY 2021. The report also documents the estimated percentage of full costs recovered by way of programs and services for which user fees and charges are currently assessed. This information will allow the Department to make informed policy decisions regarding future adjustments to fees and charges, if so desired. Finally, this report also describes BerryDunn's approach to the analyses and understanding of the Department's organizational structure and services provided, technical findings, and peer city and county comparisons.

Abbreviations and Terms

For purposes of clarity when discussing this project, BerryDunn will use the following terms and related definitions.

Table 1.2: Project Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARP	American Rescue Plan Act
BerryDunn	Berry Dunn McNeil & Parker, LLC
CAPRA	Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
County	Howard County, Maryland
Department	Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent (staff position funded for 2,080 hours per year)
FY	Fiscal Year
LPPRP	Land Preservation, Park and Recreation Plan
SME	Subject Matter Expert
State	State of Maryland

Approach and Work Performed

This section of the report outlines how BerryDunn approached the analysis and summarizes the major tasks that were performed within each phase of the analysis.

Work Performed

BerryDunn's approach to complete this analysis involved three phases: Phase 1 – Project Management and Initial Planning; Phase 2 – Pricing and Revenue Analysis, and Peer City / County Comparisons; and Phase 3 – Final Report Findings. Central to the approach was the use and review of publically available financial and statistical data, Department specific financial information and data, and information gathered from discussions with Department subject matter experts (SMEs), all which was used to calculate the Department's cost recovery level and to estimate capital funding levels. Furthermore, the Department's FY 2022 operating and select capital budget information and data was used to perform comparison scenarios against select peer cities / counties to further assess the Department's revenue generation and funding levels compared those of similar parks and recreation operations throughout the country.

After an initial project planning call with Department staff to clarify goals and objectives, identify known project constraints, and refine

dates and/or tasks as appropriate, BerryDunn requested and reviewed documentation and data to get a better understanding of the current services and financial environment. BerryDunn scheduled a series of follow-up meetings with County SMEs directly involved in the Department's budget development and management and service delivery functions. BerryDunn also followed up with Department staff on multiple occasions throughout the course of the project to confirm BerryDunn's understanding of the data and information provided, and to request follow-up information. The aim of these meetings and conversations was to discuss the level of revenue generated by way of user fees and charges, to better understand the Department's unique budget and special funds structure, and to discuss the associated expenses incurred to provide Department programs and services.

BerryDunn reviewed the Department's FY 2021 financial and program data and guided County staff through discussions to consider adjustments and recommendations that might better align revenue generated and the cost of services the Department commonly provides.

Summary of Technical Findings

This section of the report provides a general overview of the Department's organizational structure and the major technical findings BerryDunn identified.

Preface: Impacts of COVID-19

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a severe financial strain and has dramatically reshaped the Department's budget in a number of ways since mid-March 2020. And while the effects of the pandemic have impacted programs and services disparately, most core activities, programs and services are continuing to experience record low attendance rates leading to significant declines in revenue. Furthermore, for those activities, programs and services provided by the Department that have been less affected, such as child care, the pandemic has made it difficult to recruit and retain the necessary staff to service the demand. As a result, the Department has experienced a decline in revenue more significant than any decline in recent memory. At the same time, the pandemic has affected macroeconomic elements throughout County with major revenue sources experiencing declines: tax collection, external funding support, and many major revenue sources all County departments typically rely on for additional funding support.

Federal support, under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), may help the Department bridge some of the revenue gaps experienced due to the pandemic; however, it is clear that the county-wide requests for allocation of these funds will be greater than the total federal allocation to the County. There will not be enough funding to cover all county-wide revenue losses for each department.

Unlike various downturns in previous years, COVID-19 is a major revenue loss event. In many cases this loss will not be recaptured for several years, if ever completely. Therefore it is important to note that the financial findings outlined below are not indicative of pre-pandemic operations, poor leadership, or poor financial management. Prior to the experiencing the full-effects of the pandemic, the Department operated on a growth trajectory for many of the programs and services it offers with a consistent focus to drive innovative program development, increased service levels, revenue generation, and efforts to maintain a sufficient fund balance.

In order for the Department to return to pre-pandemic revenue levels it is clear a one-size-fits-all solution is not the best approach. It will be important for the Department to leverage its very capable management and staff experience and service delivery experience in order to begin to work toward returning to a pre-pandemic fiscal environment. This may require a return to focusing on core service delivery and prudent fiscal management in the near-term while keeping a strategic focus on a return to program development and growth, enhanced service delivery, and increased revenue generation in the coming years.

Departmental Overview

The Department of Recreation & Parks delivers recreation and leisure opportunities that improve the health and well-being of the community, and serves as stewards of the environment by managing, protecting, and conserving resources. The Department maintains about 9,815 acres and 98 parks and open spaces; and offers approximately 7,000 programs (including leagues, classes and camps) each year. In 2021, volunteers donated over \$1.5 million in labor costs. The parks also host local and national tournaments and events. Table 3.1 summarizes the departmental structure and operations as they are currently organized.

Table 3.1: Departmental Overview

Name/Function	Function Description
Recreation and Parks Department	The Department has broad responsibilities including organizing and operating recreation programs throughout the County, and providing childcare services. The Department maintains parks, playgrounds and other facilities. It is responsible for planning and coordinating parkland development and implementing natural resource protections and management practices. Preserving historic sites, providing environmental education opportunities to the community and administering the Middle Patuxent Environmental Area also come under the purview of the Department. Over 300 funded personnel positions work together to accomplish these goals and to provide services.
Programs and Activities	The Department offers a full-range of recreational and therapeutic recreation programs and services for participants of all ages including, but not limited to: aquatics, arts, dance and theater, athletics, camps, special events, health and fitness, nature, and trips.
Parks and Outdoor Facilities	The Department operates and maintains a number of parks and open spaces encompassing thousands of acres throughout the County. This diverse offering allows residents and visitors alike to participate in a wide-range of activities ranging from wildlife and plant observation to more active pursuits such as fishing, hiking, biking, tennis and pickleball, basketball and other outdoor recreational opportunities.
Facilities and Rentals	The Department operates and maintains facilities used for recreational activities and programs, community and resident use, special events, and private rentals.
Technology	The Department uses Active.Net to manage in-person, phone and online registrations for recreation programs and activities, and rentals.
Budget and Funding Structure	The Department accounts for fees and charges revenue, and expenses related to the provision of Departmental programs and services in two main operating budget categories: the Recreation and Parks Fund and the General Fund, and utilizes over 140 unique cost centers for more detailed budgeting, and expense and revenue tracking.

Pricing and Revenue Policy

The Department's fees and revenue policy, updated in May 2015, fulfills the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) required standard 5.1.1 Comprehensive Revenue Policy that relates to fees and charges. The policy includes philosophies, guidelines, and cost determination structures to manage fees and charges, and includes three levels of financial sustainability: direct costs, program administration, and institutional costs. Moving forward, the policy must include cost recovery goals for the 10 major program categories, and for the various facilities used. Having these goals will create accountability for program staff.

Recreation and Parks Fund

BerryDunn reviewed all Recreation and Parks Fund fees and charges revenue and expenditures for FY 2021. Expenditures were estimated to be \$19,647,388 to provide programs and services accounted for within the Fund. The identified and assigned revenue is estimated to be \$10,123,945. BerryDunn calculated the percentage of costs recovered by way of current fees and charges, finding that the Fund is recovering an estimated 51.5% of the costs of providing programs and services. While this overall cost-recovery percentage may seem sufficient when compared to peer city and county park and recreation operations across

the country that recover less than two-thirds of the costs associated with providing park and recreation-related services, a number of factors should be considered when assessing the current cost-recovery percentage compared to peers, historic Department cost recovery levels, or when assessing current fee levels. Prior to this study, the Department experienced robust activity and program participation, which resulted in significant revenue gains and fund balance contributions to the Recreation and Parks Fund over the past few years. However, several major macro-economic related impacts, mainly the COVID-19 pandemic, have severely impacted core services participation over the last few years and have resulted in a significant revenue decline for the Department. Furthermore, because of the unique nature of programs and services provided by the Department, many core service revenues are cyclical, tend to fluctuate widely on an annual basis, and are dependent on macro-economic and socio-economic trends well beyond the control of the Department.

The Department is increasingly aware, despite some recent gains in participation and revenue generation that expenses continue to significantly outpace revenues. In order to ensure that all Department programs and services continue at current levels, and that increased program delivery and service levels can be achieved to accommodate the robust County development activity and customer demand,

fees may need to be systematically increased. For these reasons, BerryDunn does not believe that immediate increases to all fees and charges would result in significant revenue gains, but does recommend that the Department begin to assess and discuss an approach to adjust select fees in the near-term.

The Department should develop a cost-recovery percentage policy, specific to the Department's Recreation and Parks Fund, which would guide staff in setting fee levels in alignment with desired cost-recovery levels. A cost recovery policy embodies a philosophy of decision to generate revenue by charging fees for programs and services in relation to the total operational costs to provide them. In most cases undertaking cost recovery as part of business practice does not imply that the goal is 100% recovery of the cost; however, a target cost recovery goal is established according to a variety of organizational and community values. Typical cost recovery goals may range from 0% to more than 100% of costs, and are often associated with a community's service delivery mission and values. Adoption of conventional, industry benchmarks are often the choice of many organizations, but it is generally not the most effective way to establish cost recovery goals. Given that each community's economic conditions and communal make-up including demographics are vastly different, benchmarking solely against other communities can create inaccurate comparisons and

may lead to arbitrary fee level setting. Having an agency specific cost recovery policy can assist staff with identifying programs and services for which a fee should be assessed and at which levels. Department staff should also take care to monitor local indicators related to market conditions and similar service providers. Staff should track in detail the number of programs and services offered, number of participants, and revenue generated for the most common programs and services provided. This information should be used to continue to assess the necessity of fee adjustments for specific programs and services on a fiscal year basis to determine the level of impact any adjustments might have on revenue generation and to offset applicable costs.

It is evident from the analysis that, despite large gains in some revenue categories post-pandemic, expenditures are continuing to outpace revenues year-over-year with the most common financial indicators pointing to the continuation of this trend. Left unchecked, these trends might have consequential effects on fund balance levels and, ultimately, the ability for the Department to continue delivering services at current levels.

Fund Balance / Reserves

The Department needs a fund balance sufficient to help ensure business and service continuity if a downturn in the economy, or some other unforeseen event or circumstance, occurs. The use of the reserve balance funds for specific expenditures and the maximum allowable fund balance (fund balance ceiling) is generally determined by State legislative statute, local law and policy, or a combination of both.

Specific to this study, BerryDunn did not identify or calculate an existing fund balance designated specifically for Department use. However, conversations with key Department staff indicated that at the start of FY 2021, the Department maintained a negative fund balance after having declined significantly over the past two FYs, mainly due to the severe impact to participation levels brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this significant decline, BerryDunn does not recommend considering any immediate fee adjustments based on Department fund balance until the close of FY 2022, at which point the actual fund balance will be calculated once again. Throughout, FY 2022, BerryDunn does recommend that the Department monitor the Recreation and Park fund balance periodically. Furthermore, fund balances can fluctuate daily, and actual balance amounts reflect the point in time when calculated. For this reason,

BerryDunn does also recommend monitoring the fund balance consistently to identify any large fluctuations should they be evident, as dramatic changes may be indicative of longer-term trends pertaining to revenue or expenditure increases or decreases.

General Fund

The Department's total proposed operating budget for FY 2022 is \$53,012,554 representing a 4.7% increase from the prior FY. The Department is substantially funded by General Fund revenue with revenue generated from user fees and charges projected to be 48.2% of total funding for FY 2022.

Revenue generated from charges for services have, or are projected to, increase significantly to greater than 50% of total funding for FY 2022. Overall, when compared to national averages for parks and recreation operations across the country that attempt to maintain levels of cost recovery in the 25% to 50% range, the Department remains on the high end of that range. All Department revenue generated from user charges is accounted for in the Recreation and Parks Fund. And while it is evident that revenue generated by the Department do not fully fund its operations, with the Department relying on General Fund revenue to provide the remaining funding, it appears that this is driven more macro-economic factors than by poor financial management.

Parks and Recreation Department – CIP Investments

The Department continues its commitment towards community-centric quality services with over \$10 million in capital investments planned for FY 2022 for a variety of parks and recreation neighborhood projects. Specific, major projects include the replacement of several synthetic turf fields, playgrounds, pedestrian bridges, and other park infrastructure; the construction of a new synthetic turf field at Cedar Lane Park; and, the completion of field improvements at Troy Park and the replacement of aged park infrastructure at multiple sites. The Department also continues to enhance its capabilities to pursue parkland acquisition opportunities as they arise.

Summary of Technical Findings

Table 3.8 provides a summary of the key technical findings of BerryDunn's analysis of the Department's revenues and expenditures.

Table 3.8: Summary of Technical Findings

Category	Findings
Current Overall Department Operating Budget	BerryDunn identified and assigned \$10,120,020 of revenue and \$50,612,307 of estimated operation expense for FY 2021.
Recreation and Parks Fund Cost Recovery	BerryDunn identified and assigned \$10,120,020 of revenue and \$19,647,388 of estimated operation expense for FY 2021. The Department's current cost-recovery rate for all programs and services accounted for in the Recreation and Parks Fund is 51.5%. A comparison of how the projected FY 2022 rate of cost recovery compares to peer cities and counties across the country can be found in section 4.0 below.
Operating Budget as a Percent of the County's General Fund.	The Department's operating budget represents 4.2% of the County's General Fund budget for FY 2022. A comparison of how this value compares to peer cities and counties across the country can be found in section 4.0 below.
Operating Budget per Capita	The Department's operating budget for FY 2022 allows for an estimated \$162.77 of budget per capita. A comparison of how this value compares to peer cities and counties across the country can be found in section 4.0 below.
Population per FTE	The Department's FY2022 budget has authorized funding for one staff position for every 1,078 residents.
Planned CIP Investments	This study revealed that the Department proposes to allocate \$39,425,000 over the next five to six years for recreation and parks related infrastructure improvements.

Peer City & County Comparisons

This section of the report outlines the summary findings BerryDunn identified and compiled to develop peer city and county comparisons. Peer agencies were identified with the guidance of Department staff and the 2017 LPPRP document.

Peer Comparison Selections

Peer comparisons can provide useful insights into how Howard County's recreation and parks funding compares with similar cities across the country. And while Howard County's CAPRA accredited recreation and parks system is unique in many ways with regards to demographics, funding, and community characteristics, the selection of peers for comparison attempts to reflect as closely as possible the unique elements found throughout the Howard County community including: a well-educated population, well-performing schools, accessible open spaces, diverse recreational amenities, employment centers, historical heritage, and the County's dedication to sound planning for the public realm and natural systems to sustain a high quality of life.

City of Virginia Beach, VA

The City of Virginia Beach serves an estimated population of 449,974 people, within its 245 square miles, an area similar to the size of Howard County. Virginia Beach's population density is slightly higher than that of Howard County's with an estimated 1,837 people per square mile. The City's median household income is estimated to be \$76,610, roughly 63.2% of the median household income in Howard County.

The Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department is a full-service operation offering all indoor and outdoor recreation and park operations and programs, operation of community recreation centers, out-of-school time programs, golf course lease management, therapeutic recreation programs, and inclusion services to accommodate those with varying abilities. The Department also manages the construction and replacement of parks and recreation facilities, the city's open space program and implements the Virginia Beach Outdoors and Bikeways and Trails Plans.

The Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund comprises the majority of operations for the Parks and Recreation Department. Funding is derived from user fees, charges for the use of Parks and Recreation facilities and sponsored activities, and a dedicated portion of real estate tax to support recreation center operations, with additional support from the General Fund utilized to support park operations. The City makes significant capital funding commitments on an annual basis. Typically, the Department transfers \$1 million of fund balance from the Parks and Recreation Special Revenue Fund to parks and recreation capital improvement projects, annually.

Planned capital investments include major repairs and renovations of the City's Sportplex mechanical, electrical, and HVAC systems. Also committed is \$1 million in General Fund support for park and playground renovation projects in coming years. This funding will be used to address the backlog of playground maintenance needs throughout the City. The City has committed capital improvement fund totaling \$11.7 million in FY 2021-22 and \$63.3 million over the six-years.

Demographic Summary of Findings

City/County	Population	Jurisdiction (sq. mi.)	Population Density (sq. mi.)	Median Household Income
Howard County ¹	325,690	253	1,287	\$121,160
Virginia Beach ¹	449,974	245	1,840	\$76,610

1) United States Census data 2019 & 2020 <www.census.gov>

Budget Summary of Findings

City/County	City/County General Fund (\$000's)	P&R Operating Budget (\$000's)	P&R % of General Fund	Budget per Capita	CIP Investment 5 + Years (\$000's)	% of Cost Recovered from Charges
Howard County ¹	\$1,260,494	\$53,013	4.2%	\$162.77	\$39,425	48.2%
Virginia Beach ²	\$2,300,000	\$58,544	2.5%	\$146.29	\$63,300	33.0%

1) Howard County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.howardcountymd.gov>

2) City of Virginia Beach Operating Budget and Capital Budgets FY 2022 <www.vbgov.com>

Loudoun County, VA

Located roughly 65 miles southwest of Howard County, Loudoun County serves an estimated 439,000 residents. Encompassing approximately 522 square miles, Loudoun covers an area roughly twice as large as Howard County. With an estimated population density of 841 people per square mile, Loudoun County is significantly less dense than Howard County. The County's median household income is estimated to be \$142,000 slightly less than that of Howard County households, making it the wealthiest community surveyed.

With an annual operating budget of more than \$64 million and employing 721 full-time staff, the County's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services provides recreational, educational, wellness, cultural, and supportive opportunities to County residents. Facilities are located throughout the County and include recreation centers, community centers, athletic fields, swimming pools, senior centers, adult day care centers, parks, trails, historic properties, and after school care programs. Activity and program offerings include sports activities for youth and adults, instructional and interpretive classes, programs for senior citizens, visual and performing arts, childcare, preschool, after school activities, trips, camps, special events, volunteer opportunities, educational and prevention programs for youth, and programs for individuals with

disabilities.

The County is currently making significant investments in its parks and recreation system countywide. Major capital programming highlights with committed funding include: initial planning for Broad Run Stream Valley Park, Potomack Lakes Sportsplex, Western Loudoun

Recreation Center; in the near future and Goose Creek Stream Valley Linear Park; and a Teen Center in the coming years. Moreover, committed capital investments to address maintenance and expansion needs throughout the County total over \$25 million in FY 2021-22 and over \$217 million over the six-years and beyond.

Demographic Summary of Findings

City/County	Population	Jurisdiction (sq. mi.)	Population Density (sq. mi.)	Median Household Income
Howard County ¹	325,690	253	1,287	\$121,160
Loudoun County ¹	439,000	522	841	\$142,000

1) United States Census data 2019 & 2020 <www.census.gov>

Budget Summary of Findings

City/County	City/County General Fund (\$000's)	P&R Operating Budget (\$000's)	P&R % of General Fund	Budget per Capita	CIP Investment 5 + Years (\$000's)	% of Cost Recovered from Charges
Howard County ¹	\$1,260,494	\$53,013	4.2%	\$162.77	\$39,425	48.2%
Loudoun County ²	\$2,300,000	\$64,096	3.1%	\$146.01	\$217,000	41.1%

1) Howard County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.howardcountymd.gov>

2) Loudoun County Operating Budget and Capital Budgets FY 2022 <www.loudoun.gov>

City of Orlando, FL

The City of Orlando serves an estimated 293,858 residents spanning 119 square miles. With an estimated 2,469 people per square mile, Orlando boasts the highest population density among peers surveyed. With a median household income \$51,757, Orlando households generate about 42.7% less than households throughout Howard County.

The mission of the City's Families, Parks and Recreation Department is to support and strengthen livable neighborhoods through the provision of well-maintained and inviting parks and a healthy tree canopy; high quality recreational, cultural and educational facilities; and comprehensive, innovative children's programs. The Recreation Division manages the City's community centers, gymnasiums, pools, and ball fields, as well as myriad programs that operate at these sites. Major system highlights include: 61 ball fields, and 44 basketball, 35 tennis and 10 volleyball courts, 17 recreation centers, 9 fitness centers, and 11 pools.

Additionally, the Department maintains 118 parks/green spaces, requiring mowing, irrigation, restroom maintenance, landscaping, flower beds care, and amenity repairs. Furthermore, the Department supports the City's tree canopy care and expansion priority by planting over 700 trees, trimming approximately 2,950 trees, removing 417 trees; and distributing

(free to residents) approximately 235 trees at special events throughout the year. The Department also manages a successful volunteer program with volunteers logging over 6,054 volunteer hours at 45 events over the past 12 to 18 months helping to augment services, build community pride, and reduce invasive species, and labor costs.

To account for the ongoing acquisition, rehabilitation, maintenance and construction of parks and capital facilities throughout the city, as well as, investments that support programmatic expansion capital investments totaling more than \$18 million over the next five years and beyond have been planned (estimated based on FY2021 planned capital investments).

Demographic Summary of Findings

City/County	Population	Jurisdiction (sq. mi.)	Population Density (sq. mi.)	Median Household Income
Howard County ¹	325,690	253	1,287	\$121,160
Orlando ¹	293,858	119	2,469	\$51,757

1) United States Census data 2019 & 2020 <www.census.gov>

Budget Summary of Findings

City/County	City/County General Fund (\$000's)	P&R Operating Budget (\$000's)	P&R % of General Fund	Budget per Capita	CIP Investment 5 + Years (\$000's)	% of Cost Recovered from Charges
Howard County ¹	\$1,260,494	\$53,013	4.2%	\$162.77	\$39,425	48.2%
Orlando ²	\$545,273	\$45,689	8.4%	\$155.48	\$18,280	7.2%

1) Howard County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.howardcountymd.gov>

2) City of Orlando Operating Budget FY 2021 & FY 2022 <www.orlando.gov>

Themes and specifics or planned projects include:

- Completion of the 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plan;
- Implementation of planned park/play-ground/facility maintenance and improvement projects;
- Continue to provide critical input in the City planning process as it relates to the impact of development on parks, tree canopy, and demand for recreational amenities;
- Advise City planners to help mitigate development impact on parks, tree canopy, and demand for recreational amenities; and,
- Expand access to park and recreation amenities in alignment with park impact fees.

City of Arlington, TX

The City of Arlington serves and estimated 395,477 residents throughout its 99 square miles, making it the least expansive jurisdictionally peer surveyed. To that end, Arlington has a population density of 3,995 people per square mile making the City the densest peer surveyed, and a median household income estimated to be \$60,571, about half of households throughout Howard County.

The Parks and Recreation Department is Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accredited agency responsible for most of the City's recreation programs and resources offering a diverse range of programs, projects and services to residents and visitors. The Department also operations and maintains more than 4,700 acres of parks, open spaces and natural trails, as well as a number of recreation facilities and playgrounds.

The Department's planned capital investments include funding for numerous park development and renovation projects, parkland acquisition efforts, construction of swimming pools, and other park and recreation related construction, as well as various other park and

recreation related projects. Three major capital projects recently planned to get underway include the Beacon Recreation Center, the East Library and Recreation Center, and the clubhouse at Texas Rangers Golf Club. These capital projects align with the City Council priorities to champion great neighborhoods and support youth and families throughout the City. Finally, the City has planned for a significant investment in its active adult population as well. Funding of over \$40 million was secured in 2017 through a debt issuance and the new construction of a \$40 million active adult recreational facility is planned to begin in FY2022. Finally, the Department plans to invest over \$15 million over the next five to six years in various system wide improvements.

Demographic Summary of Findings

City/County	Population	Jurisdiction (sq. mi.)	Population Density (sq. mi.)	Median Household Income
Howard County ¹	325,690	253	1,287	121,160
Arlington ¹	395,477	99	3,995	\$60,571

1) United States Census data 2019 & 2020 <www.census.gov>

Budget Summary of Findings

City/County	City/County General Fund (\$000's)	P&R Operating Budget (\$000's)	P&R % of General Fund	Budget per Capita	CIP Investment 5 + Years (\$000's)	% of Cost Recovered from Charges
Howard County ¹	\$1,260,494	\$53,013	4.2%	\$162.77	\$39,425	48.2%
Arlington ²	\$272,328	\$21,141,827	7.8%	\$53.46	\$59,215	29.5%

1) Howard County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.howardcountymd.gov>

2) City of Arlington Operating Budget FY 2022 and CIP FY 2022 <www.arlingtontx.gov>

Montgomery County, MD

Sharing a border, and Howard County's neighbor to the southwest, Montgomery County is home to an estimated 1.05 million residents encompassing over 500 square miles, an area nearly twice the size of Howard County. The County has a population density of 2,073 people per square mile and a median household income of \$108,820, the third highest among peers surveyed and nearly 90% of the median household income throughout Howard County.

The County's Department of Recreation provides recreational, social, cultural, and physical programs to the community. Major programmatic areas and facility types include: aquatics, camps and playgrounds, classes, community recreation centers, senior adult programs, special events, sports, and teen and therapeutic recreation. The Department operates 23 recreation centers throughout the County. These facilities provide affordable programs featuring leisure activities, social interaction, family participation, and community civic involvement, as well as promote community cohesion and identity for all ages.

The parks system includes over 37,000 acres of park land and of open space across 421 parks, and major aquatic features including four lakes and 490 mile of streams. And while separate from the Recreation Department from a budget standpoint, the Parks Department also provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities throughout nature centers, miniature trains, indoor tennis facilities, boat rental facilities, indoor ice rinks, event centers, and public gardens.

The Department's robust CIP plays an important role in providing funding for new facilities and addressing deferred capital of existing facilities, and to continually invest in capital improvements in order to keep park facilities safe, available, and accessible for recreational activities

Over the next six years, the County has planned investments for the design and construction of a community and neighborhood recreations center, aquatic centers capital improvements, and various system wide facility refurbishments and modernizations.

Demographic Summary of Findings

City/County	Population	Jurisdiction (sq. mi.)	Population Density (sq. mi.)	Median Household Income
Howard County ¹	325,690	253	1,287	121,160
Montgomery County ¹	1,051,000	507	2,073	\$108,820

1) United States Census data 2019 & 2020 <www.census.gov>

Budget Summary of Findings

City/County	City/County General Fund (\$000's)	P&R Operating Budget (\$000's)	P&R % of General Fund	Budget per Capita	CIP Investment 5 + Years (\$000's)	% of Cost Recovered from Charges
Howard County ¹	\$1,260,494	\$53,013	4.2%	\$162.77	\$39,425	48.2%
Montgomery County ²	\$6,000,000	\$48,7143	0.8%	\$46.35	\$69,150	19.6%

1) Howard County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.howardcountymd.gov>

2) Montgomery County Operating Budget FY 2022 & CIP Program FY 2022 <www.montgomerycountymd.gov>

Non-Resident Pricing – Peer Comparisons

All of the peers surveyed utilize some form non-resident surcharge pricing. None of the peers surveyed had an identifiable formal non-resident pricing policy available for review via their department websites outlining how non-resident fees were calculated and for which activities, programs, or services non-resident fees would be applicable. Nonetheless, non-resident pricing was evident for many programs and services offered by peers, presumably to offset activity, program and service tax dollar support, managed enrollments or demand, or to allow for residential priority.

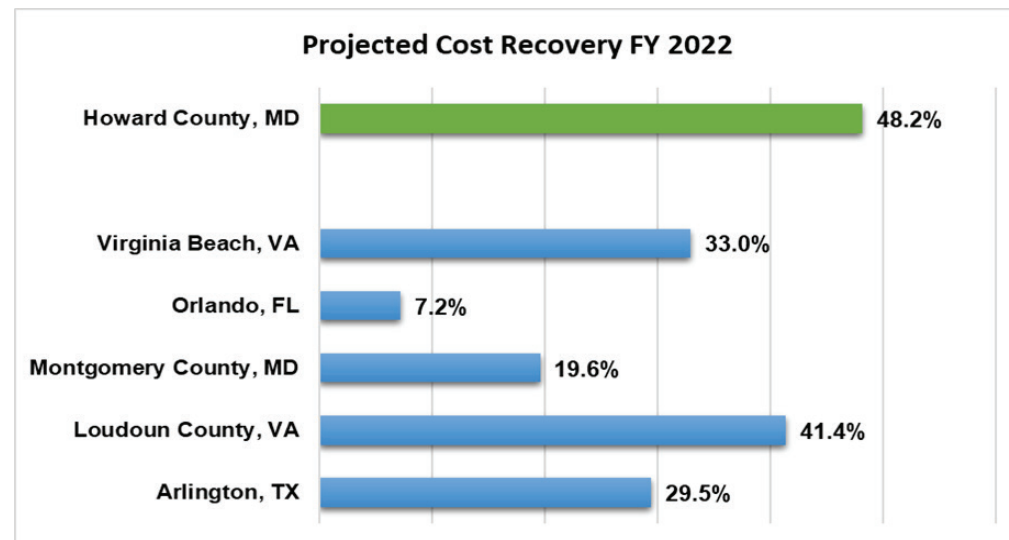
The non-resident pricing observed consisted of a mix of percent surcharges and flat-fee surcharges. Without formal policies to review it appears on the surface from examining peer fee schedules that non-resident prices are set arbitrarily, based on unique criteria per activity, program, or service offering, or are calculated at the time of activity, program, or service development to reflect the current participant environment.

Cost Recovery Estimates – Peer Comparisons

Departmental cost recovery, the percentage of costs covered by revenue, was surveyed across five peer cities and counties selected by identifying revenue generation associated with user fees and charges for park and recreation programs and services, and identifying all operational costs associated with, and applicable to program and service delivery. Graphic 4.8 depicts user fees and charges revenue as a percent of operating expenditures for the cities and counties depicted, specifically for FY 2022.

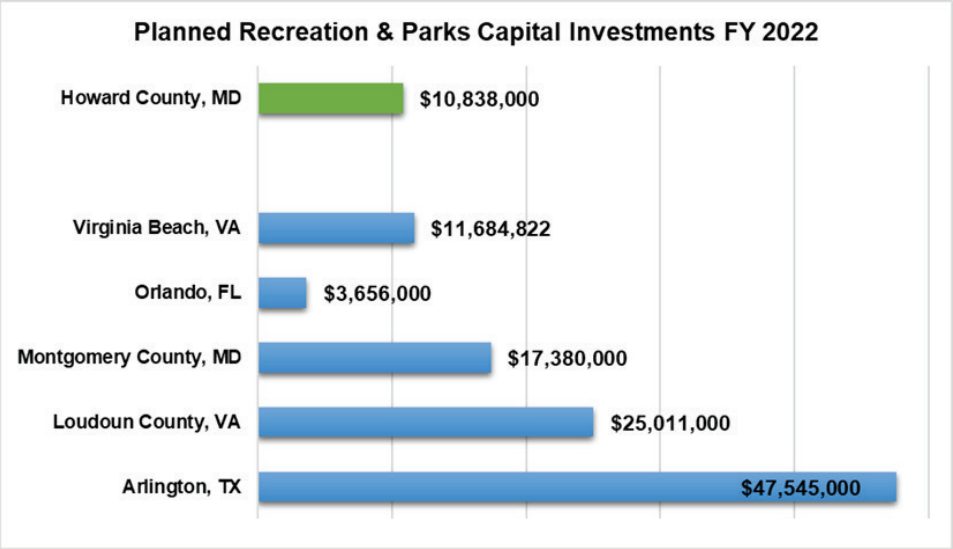
Capital Investments – Peer Comparisons

In order to understand how the Department's planned CIP investments for FY 2022, as well as planned CIP investments over the next five years and beyond, compare to that of similar, large, parks and recreation operations across the country, planned capital allocations were compared to other agencies in Maryland, Florida, Virginia, and Texas with similar demographics and growth patterns, economic development activity, and departmental organizational structures. The graphics below compare the Department's planned FY 2022 CIP investments and beyond to that of peer cities and counties surveyed, beginning with FY 2022.

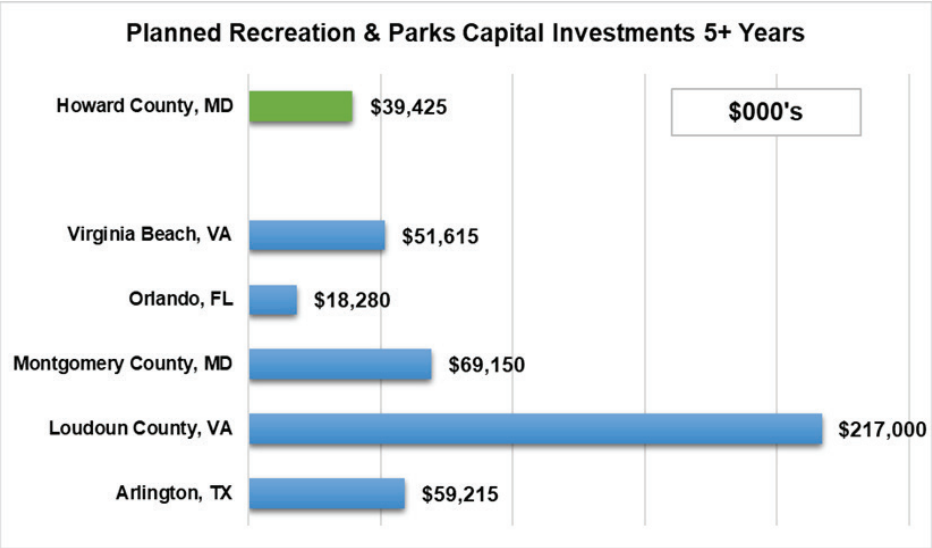


Graphic 4.8: Summary of Comparative Findings

In addition to the planned CIP investments for FY 2022, also surveyed were planned capital investments for the next five years and beyond, to give further insight into the longer term investments peer agencies are committing to their parks and recreation capital infrastructure. The graphic below compares the Department's planned CIP investments over the next five years and beyond to that of peer cities and counties surveyed.



Graphic 4.9.1: Proposed CIP Investments FY 2022



Graphic 4.9.2: Proposed CIP Investments Five Years and Beyond

Table 4.8: Summary of Comparative Findings

Summary of Comparative Findings

It is evident that Howard County continues to make significant investments in its recreation and parks operations, and capital infrastructure. And while every peer city and county is unique, when considering options for strategic capital investment, it is helpful to examine what other agencies with similar characteristics are choosing to invest in and to what levels.

Table 4.8 provides a summary of the key technical findings of BerryDunn's analysis of the Department's operating and capital metrics compared to peers surveyed. Additionally, comparative demographic metrics are included as well.

Category	Findings
Capital Investments: 12 – 18 Months	When compared to the average capital investments of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's planned capital investments over the next 12 to 18 months are 47.5% of what peers have planned to invest.
Capital Investments: 5+ Years	When compared to the average capital investments of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's planned capital investments for the next five years and beyond are 51.5% of what peers have planned to invest.
Annual Operating Budget	When compared to the average annual operating budgets of peer agencies surveyed, the Department's operating budget for FY 2022 is 11.3% more than the average budgets of peers.
Operating Budget as a Percent of General Fund	When examined as a percent of the County's general fund, the Department's operating budget represents an estimated 4.2% of all general fund expenditures, compared to an average of 4.5% of peers surveyed.
Budget per Capita	The Department's estimated operating budget per capita is \$162.77, the highest amongst all peer agencies surveyed.
Median Household Income	When compared to peer agencies surveyed, the County's annual median household income of \$121,160 is 137.8% of the average annual median household income of peers surveyed.
Non-Resident Pricing Policy	All peer agencies surveyed utilized a non-resident pricing surcharge for select activities, programs, or services. No formal policies were identified specifically related to non-resident pricing calculation or applicability.

APPENDIX C

PEER BENCHMARKING

	MEDIAN	Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks	Albuquerque/ Parks (City of) and Recreation	Alexandria Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities Dept. of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities	Amarillo Parks and Recreation Department	Arlington Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		325,690	568,918	159,428	206,876	398,854
Total number of parks	67	101	294	142	65	99
Total park acres	3043	5,779	32,697	1,017.56	1,862.07	4,714
Water Access		7				
Recreation centers	4	1	1	11	1	5
Community centers	5	3	21	4		1
Nature centers	1	1	2	1		1
Playgrounds	44	44	182	41	68	61
Community gardens	3	3	3	3		77
Skate Park	2	3	6		2	3
Dog Park	3	1	14	7	3	2
Multi-purpose Field	22	40	0	54	4	6
Aquatic Center	2		5		1	1
Swimming Pools	9	1	14	4	3	7
Baseball Fields	40	55	27	26	19	17
Athletic Courts	72	107	276	65	78	73
Rectangular Fields	39	21	0	0	19	33

	MEDIAN	Atlanta (City of) Dept of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs	Bakersfield Recreation and parks Department	Baltimore City Recreation & Parks	Boise Parks and Recreation	Buncombe County Parks Greenways and Recreation Services
Jurisdiction Population		486,290	389,211	621,849	236,310	261,191
Total number of parks	67	414	61	267	97	17
Total park acres	3043	4,665	642	4,878	6,716	677
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	36	2	52	1	
Community centers	5	3	1		9	
Nature centers	1	1		1	1	
Playgrounds	44	135	53	121	49	6
Community gardens	3	23	1	572	7	1
Skate Park	2			2	3	
Dog Park	3		8	4	15	
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	1	165	29	4
Aquatic Center	2	4			1	
Swimming Pools	9	15	5	22	7	5
Baseball Fields	40	0	9	79	21	0
Athletic Courts	72	242	89	202	138	4
Rectangular Fields	39	0	2	59	33	8

	MEDIAN	Cabarrus County Active Living and Parks Department	Cape Coral Parks & Recreation	Cary (Town of)	Charlotte County Community Services	Cherokee Recreation & Parks Agency
Jurisdiction Population		221,309	194,495	167,316	188,910	254,149
Total number of parks	67	4	37	34	63	23
Total park acres	3043	560	851	1,171	5,170.76	2,443
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4			3	6	1
Community centers	5		5		1	1
Nature centers	1		1	1	1	
Playgrounds	44	13	21	20	25	17
Community gardens	3	3	1	1	2	
Skate Park	2		1		2	1
Dog Park	3		1	2	2	1
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	4	6	1	11
Aquatic Center	2		1			1
Swimming Pools	9	1	1	0	4	3
Baseball Fields	40	8	22	19	14	15
Athletic Courts	72	7	26	83	60	24
Rectangular Fields	39	11	14	20	33	16

	MEDIAN	Chesapeake (City of)	Chesterfield County Parks and Recreation	Cincinnati Park Board	City of Las Vegas Department of Parks and Recreation	CityOfDesMoines
Jurisdiction Population		242,634	359,342	301,301	662,000	214,237
Total number of parks	67	79	62	125	84	76
Total park acres	3043	2,832	5,165.2	5,025	1,773.77	5,618
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	8	3		6	2
Community centers	5	8	3		2	2
Nature centers	1	2	1	6	2	
Playgrounds	44	83	56	54	84	60
Community gardens	3	1	4		6	3
Skate Park	2	1			13	1
Dog Park	3	5	2	3	25	3
Multi-purpose Field	22	190	126	1	10	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	0	1	4	0
Baseball Fields	40	18	71	0	22	20
Athletic Courts	72	420	189	6	145	74
Rectangular Fields	39	12	1	0	65	17

	MEDIAN	Clarksville Parks and Recreation	Colorado Springs	Columbus Parks and Recreation	Davidson County	Delaware County Parks and Recreation Department
Jurisdiction Population		153,205	472,688	199,997	164,000	558,979
Total number of parks	67	34	242	52	10	17
Total park acres	3043	888	15,482	1,912	409	676
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	3	3	4	1	1
Community centers	5		5	4		
Nature centers	1		4			1
Playgrounds	44	25	133	44	5	7
Community gardens	3	2	6	3	1	1
Skate Park	2		10	1		
Dog Park	3	2	7	1		1
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	127	0	2	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	4	6	6	0	0
Baseball Fields	40	7	312	32	9	0
Athletic Courts	72	20	198	93	4	20
Rectangular Fields	39	10	3	18	3	0

	MEDIAN	Denver Parks and Recreation (City and County of)	Durham Parks and Recreation	East Baton Rouge Parish (BREC) Recreation and Park Commission	El Paso (City of), Parks and Recreation	Families, Parks and Recreation Department/City of Orlando
Jurisdiction Population		727,211	278,993	443,763	681,728	288,981
Total number of parks	67	302	69	181	315	111
Total park acres	3043	6,333		6,627	3,646.5	4,584
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	30	7	59	17	
Community centers	5		2			16
Nature centers	1		2	1	1	1
Playgrounds	44	166	52	125	283	54
Community gardens	3	8		4	123	22
Skate Park	2		1		12	1
Dog Park	3	13	4	5	6	3
Multi-purpose Field	22	195	20	20	116	21
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	30	5	3	13	11
Baseball Fields	40	131	13	39	65	32
Athletic Courts	72	265	115	241	136	100
Rectangular Fields	39	0	15	87	0	31

	MEDIAN	Five Rivers MetroParks	Forest Preserve District of Kane County	Forsyth County Parks and Recreation	Fort Collins Parks Department	Frederick County Division of Parks & Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		532,258	532,403	244,252	174,871	259,547
Total number of parks	67	18	103	27	52	25
Total park acres	3043	12,057	22,789	2,819.58	970	2,282.66
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4			3	5	8
Community centers	5			4	7	2
Nature centers	1		1	1		2
Playgrounds	44	7		22	45	24
Community gardens	3	886	2		128	1
Skate Park	2			1	6	
Dog Park	3		3	4	4	3
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	0	32	51	33
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	0	0	6	0
Baseball Fields	40	0	0	4	37	22
Athletic Courts	72	0	0	50	87	15
Rectangular Fields	39	0	0	0	0	43

	MEDIAN	Frisco (City of)	Garland Parks, Recreation & Cultural Arts	Gilbert Parks and Recreation	Glendale Parks and Recreation	Grand Prairie (City of) Parks, Arts, and Recreation Department
Jurisdiction Population		200,361	239,730	266,971	252,381	194,543
Total number of parks	67	75	61	29	95	60
Total park acres	3043	1,971	3,362	998	2,180	5,073.2
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	3	6	3	1	4
Community centers	5			1	5	
Nature centers	1	1			3	1
Playgrounds	44	38	41	26	64	30
Community gardens	3	88	1			1
Skate Park	2	1			2	1
Dog Park	3	3	1	2	3	1
Multi-purpose Field	22	34	0	28	12	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	5	4	7	2	8
Baseball Fields	40	9	8	2	13	8
Athletic Courts	72	35	53	26	145	33
Rectangular Fields	39	3	28	0	48	25

	MEDIAN	Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation	Greensboro (City of)	Greenville County Parks, Recreation, & Tourism	Henderson (City of)	Henrico County Recreation and Parks
Jurisdiction Population		201,013	290,222	523,542	317,660	333,100
Total number of parks	67	78	159	48	67	55
Total park acres	3043	1,317.9	3,013.03	1,691	1,631.82	3,346
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	3	11	1	6	2
Community centers	5	4		8		10
Nature centers	1					1
Playgrounds	44	39	105	30	65	47
Community gardens	3	2		4		
Skate Park	2	3			7	
Dog Park	3	2	3	3	16	2
Multi-purpose Field	22	8	36	54	47	33
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	3	5	7	12	0
Baseball Fields	40	17	0	40	21	54
Athletic Courts	72	141	84	59	108	35
Rectangular Fields	39	11	21	0	0	1

	MEDIAN	Johnson County Park and Recreation District	Kansas City, Missouri Parks and Recreation	Kenosha County Division of Parks	Killeen (City of)	Lake County Park & Trails
Jurisdiction Population		610,097	495,327	169,561	151,666	367,118
Total number of parks	67	22	221	8	23	53
Total park acres	3043	9,622	12,242	1,500	509.9	4,060
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4				2	
Community centers	5		10		1	2
Nature centers	1		1			2
Playgrounds	44	24	109	13	23	27
Community gardens	3		12		2	
Skate Park	2		2		2	
Dog Park	3	4	4	3	1	4
Multi-purpose Field	22	3	6	0	6	14
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	2	10	0	1	0
Baseball Fields	40	23	122	8	12	20
Athletic Courts	72	3	168	5	11	21
Rectangular Fields	39	31	31	5	9	0

	MEDIAN	Lakewood (City of) Community Resources	Lane County Parks	Lexington Parks and Recreation	Little Rock Parks and Recreation	Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Jurisdiction Population		158,660	382,067	328,152	197,992	423,953
Total number of parks	67	110	68	91	63	59
Total park acres	3043	7,240	4,364	4,416	4,201	3,427
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	4		5	4	2
Community centers	5			13	5	7
Nature centers	1	1		2	2	
Playgrounds	44	76	5	62	43	23
Community gardens	3	3		8	4	
Skate Park	2	2		4		
Dog Park	3	1	3	6	3	
Multi-purpose Field	22	37	0	11	0	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	7	0	2	3	5
Baseball Fields	40	55	0	15	28	116
Athletic Courts	72	52	9	109	80	21
Rectangular Fields	39	37	0	48	33	199

	MEDIAN	Louisville Metro Parks	Madison (City of) Parks Division	Marin County Parks	Marion County Parks and Recreation Department	Martin County Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		617,638	259,680	250,000	365,579	160,912
Total number of parks	67	118	275	45	51	76
Total park acres	3043	5,878.37	5,738	1,100	3,393	1,941.85
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	10	1			
Community centers	5	16			2	11
Nature centers	1	1				
Playgrounds	44	91	24	6	19	26
Community gardens	3	3	11			
Skate Park	2	1	1	1		
Dog Park	3		9	2		
Multi-purpose Field	22	30	112	0	4	24
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	5	1	1	0	2
Baseball Fields	40	126	125	2	17	29
Athletic Courts	72	103	233	4	14	57
Rectangular Fields	39	6	99	2	16	0

	MEDIAN	McHenry County Conservation District	Memphis (City of) Parks & Neighborhoods Division	Mesa Parks, Recreation and Commercial Facilities Department	Miami (City of) Parks and Recreation	Milwaukee (City of)
Jurisdiction Population		308,570	650,618	518,012	497,924	594,833
Total number of parks	67	42	180	225	145	62
Total park acres	3043	25,600	5,600	2,559	1,404.65	89.5
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4			6	5	
Community centers	5		25		30	
Nature centers	1	2	1		1	
Playgrounds	44		102	67	72	52
Community gardens	3		5	1		
Skate Park	2		2	2		
Dog Park	3		4	3	5	1
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	37	20	31	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	17	0	16	0
Baseball Fields	40	0	54	37	30	0
Athletic Courts	72	1	50	86	132	0
Rectangular Fields	39	0	0	1	15	0

	MEDIAN	Milwaukee Public Schools Dept. of Recreation and Comm. Services	Monmouth County Parks System	Nashville (Metro) Parks and Recreation	Norfolk Department of Recreation, Parks & Open Space	Oklahoma City Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		587,721	640,000	692,587	247,087	655,057
Total number of parks	67	53	43	186	164	171
Total park acres	3043	319	17,816		1,400	6,287
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	17	1	28	16	12
Community centers	5			27	10	4
Nature centers	1	1	316	4		1
Playgrounds	44	29	16	158	113	110
Community gardens	3			3	4	
Skate Park	2		1		1	5
Dog Park	3		2	6	13	2
Multi-purpose Field	22	106	15	83	49	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	14	4	14	3	2
Baseball Fields	40	83	2	258	7	32
Athletic Courts	72	134	32	208	343	167
Rectangular Fields	39	19	0	70	7	66

	MEDIAN	Onslow County Parks and Recreation	Palmdale (City of) Department of Parks and Recreation	Pasco County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources	Peoria Community Services Department	Pinal County Open Space and Trails
Jurisdiction Population		198,000	155,079	539,630	171,751	430,237
Total number of parks	67	7	16	35	36	8
Total park acres	3043	790	309.13	10,951.89	445	349
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4		3	3	1	
Community centers	5		1	6		2
Nature centers	1	1		1		
Playgrounds	44	10	8	36	34	3
Community gardens	3			2		2
Skate Park	2		2	1	1	
Dog Park	3		1	2	5	
Multi-purpose Field	22	5	8	53	37	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	4	2	3	0
Baseball Fields	40	18	12	32	33	0
Athletic Courts	72	25	10	74	76	3
Rectangular Fields	39	31	18	0	4	0

	MEDIAN	Plano (City of) Parks & Recreation Department	Polk County Conservation	Polk Parks and Natural Resources	Port St. Lucie (City of) Parks & Recreation Department	Porter County Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		286,057	430,631	724,777	202,908	167,688
Total number of parks	67	85	27	102	46	7
Total park acres	3043	4,718	15,000	3,867.92	1,534.62	625
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	4		5	2	
Community centers	5				1	1
Nature centers	1	1	1	1	1	
Playgrounds	44	71	6	51	21	1
Community gardens	3			1	1	
Skate Park	2	1		1		
Dog Park	3	3		3	4	
Multi-purpose Field	22	108	1	57	7	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	9	0	0	0	0
Baseball Fields	40	138	0	58	19	0
Athletic Courts	72	146	0	47	38	0
Rectangular Fields	39	219	0	63	15	0

	MEDIAN	Portland Parks & Recreation	Rancho Cucamonga (City of) Community Services Department	Reno (City of)	Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities	Riverside (City of) Parks, Recreation & Community Services Dept.
Jurisdiction Population		654,741	178,119	244,612	228,783	331,360
Total number of parks	67	329	31	87	188	62
Total park acres	3043	11,670	346.43	2,699	2,381.8	2,983
Water Access						
Recreation centers	4	4	1	3	15	7
Community centers	5	7	4	3	19	16
Nature centers	1			1	2	1
Playgrounds	44	138	30	73	48	46
Community gardens	3	59		1	14	229
Skate Park	2	8	1			2
Dog Park	3	38	1	3	2	2
Multi-purpose Field	22	125	0	24	31	1
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	7	0	3	7	7
Baseball Fields	40	22	33	27	33	27
Athletic Courts	72	179	49	94	202	73
Rectangular Fields	39	0	27	0	0	53

	MEDIAN	Salt Lake City Natural Lands	San Diego County Parks And Recreation	San Luis Obispo (County of), Parks and Recreation	Santa Clarita (City of) Parks Recreation and Community Services	Santa Cruz Co Parks & Rec Dept
Jurisdiction Population		200,567	513,123	280,101	225,000	273,213
Total number of parks	67	81	141	50	35	44
Total park acres	3043	735	53,553	14,000	420	1,333
Water Access	NA					
Recreation centers	4		2		1	1
Community centers	5		3		2	5
Nature centers	1		3	1		1
Playgrounds	44	73	66	22	30	24
Community gardens	3	3	6	2	1	4
Skate Park	2	3	2		1	4
Dog Park	3	9	4	5	3	3
Multi-purpose Field	22	25	24	5	12	2
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	3	7	8	3
Baseball Fields	40	18	24	4	25	0
Athletic Courts	72	96	48	34	29	21
Rectangular Fields	39	22	2	2	0	16

	MEDIAN	Santa Rosa (City of)	Sarasota County Government	Seattle Parks and Recreation	Seminole County Leisure Services	Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation
Jurisdiction Population		171,000	438,816	724,305	462,659	190,750
Total number of parks	67	109	152	489	33	80
Total park acres	3043	1,036	54,102.54	6,441	7,253	3,349
Water Access	NA					
Recreation centers	4	6	6	33		
Community centers	5	3	3	44	1	5
Nature centers	1		4	4	1	1
Playgrounds	44		45	151	15	74
Community gardens	3		5	1494		3
Skate Park	2			11		2
Dog Park	3		4	14		4
Multi-purpose Field	22	0	2	25	23	14
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	5	2	13	0	6
Baseball Fields	40	0	39	10	15	0
Athletic Courts	72	0	83	203	54	93
Rectangular Fields	39	0	34	51	14	60

	MEDIAN	Spartanburg County Parks Department	Spokane (City of) Parks & Recreation Dept	Springfield-Greene County Park Board	St. Petersburg (City of) Parks and Recreation Department	Stark County Park District
Jurisdiction Population		310,000	219,190	287,000	266,076	373,612
Total number of parks	67	30	110	104	155	15
Total park acres	3043	1,000	3,888	3,043	2,460	8,200
Water Access	NA					
Recreation centers	4			7	13	
Community centers	5	7	5	4	1	1
Nature centers	1	1	1		2	2
Playgrounds	44	21	60	47	78	3
Community gardens	3		3	2	1	
Skate Park	2		2	1	3	
Dog Park	3		2	1	6	
Multi-purpose Field	22	21	38	1	24	0
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	0	9	8	0
Baseball Fields	40	40	13	17	18	0
Athletic Courts	72	27	80	146	102	3
Rectangular Fields	39	3	13	18	11	0

	MEDIAN	Summit County	Tacoma (Metro) Parks	Tampa Parks & Recreation	Toledo Area Metropolitan Park District	Tucson Parks and Recreation Department
Jurisdiction Population		541,013	215,000	399,700	435,286	548,073
Total number of parks	67	16	69	179	19	180
Total park acres	3043	14,761	2,905	672	9,920	3,862.4
Water Access	NA					
Recreation centers	4		4	11		12
Community centers	5		4	28		5
Nature centers	1	2	1		6	
Playgrounds	44	2	46	81	14	185
Community gardens	3	1	8	1		112
Skate Park	2			3		5
Dog Park	3	1	4	15	1	7
Multi-purpose Field	22	7	81	28	7	65
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	0	5	24	0	41
Baseball Fields	40	12	0	59	0	72
Athletic Courts	72	2	0	136	6	171
Rectangular Fields	39	5	0	1	0	36

	MEDIAN	Tulsa (City of) Parks and Recreation	Virginia Beach Department of Parks and Recreation	Washoe County Department of Regional Parks and Open Space	Wichita (City of) Park and Recreation Department	Williamson County Parks & Recreation Dept
Jurisdiction Population		401,190	449,974	471,519	389,255	238,412
Total number of parks	67	133	296	56	144	38
Total park acres	3043	6,426.53	7,099	4,111	5,007	1,500
Water Access	NA					
Recreation centers	4	7	7	2	8	5
Community centers	5	7	131	4	8	3
Nature centers	1	2		2	1	2
Playgrounds	44	70	175	45	87	28
Community gardens	3	2		1	1	1
Skate Park	2	2	2	2		
Dog Park	3	3	4	2	5	2
Multi-purpose Field	22	98	45	0	1	10
Aquatic Center	2					
Swimming Pools	9	5	11	1	10	9
Baseball Fields	40	72	142	27	56	23
Athletic Courts	72	165	169	42	146	16
Rectangular Fields	39	61	44	25	54	47

APPENDIX D

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY SUMMARY



Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Community Interest and Opinion Survey Findings Report

Presented to the Howard County
Department of Recreation and Parks

September 2021



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Executive Summary

Executive Summary



PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

ETC Institute conducted a Parks and Recreation Survey for the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks during the summer of 2021. The purpose of the survey was to help guide government allocation of resources, funding, and future decision making on parkland, trails, community centers, and the types of programs offered to Howard County residents.

The survey was administered by mail and online to a random sample of households in Howard County. A total of 805 households completed the survey. The results for the sample of 805 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision rate of at least +/- 3.4%.

This report contains the following:

- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 1)
- Priority Investment Rating (PIR) that identifies priorities for facilities & programs (Section 2)
- Benchmarking analysis comparing Howard County's results to national results (Section 3)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 4)
- A copy of the survey instrument (Section 5)

VISITATION AND RATINGS OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

Park Visitation: Most (93%) of the households indicated they have visited the park lands or other facilities offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks during a typical year. Half of the respondents (50%) who visited parks did so at least weekly prior to March 2020. Since that time, 33% have visited the parks with the same frequency as before, 36% have visited more often, and 31% have visited less often than before March 2020.

When residents were asked how often they visited Roger Carter, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or Robinson Nature Center prior to March 2020, 14% indicated they visited at least monthly; 40% visited once or twice a year, and nearly half (46%) indicated they never visited these facilities.

Rating of Parks and Facilities: Forty-four percent (44%) of respondents who visited parks rated their overall condition as "excellent;" 53% gave the parks a "good" rating, and only 3% rated the overall condition of Howard County parks as "fair."

Nearly all (95%) of the respondents who visited facilities in Howard County rated their physical condition as "excellent" or "good," and 5% gave a rating of "fair."

Executive Summary



FACILITIES USED FOR INDOOR AND OUTDOOR RECREATION/SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Organizations Used for Recreation and Sports Activities During Past 12 Months: Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents indicated their household used the Maryland State Parks for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months. Other organizations used include: Columbia Association (36%), private gyms (17%), places of worship (16%), and homeowners associations (12%).

FACILITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 22 recreation facilities and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

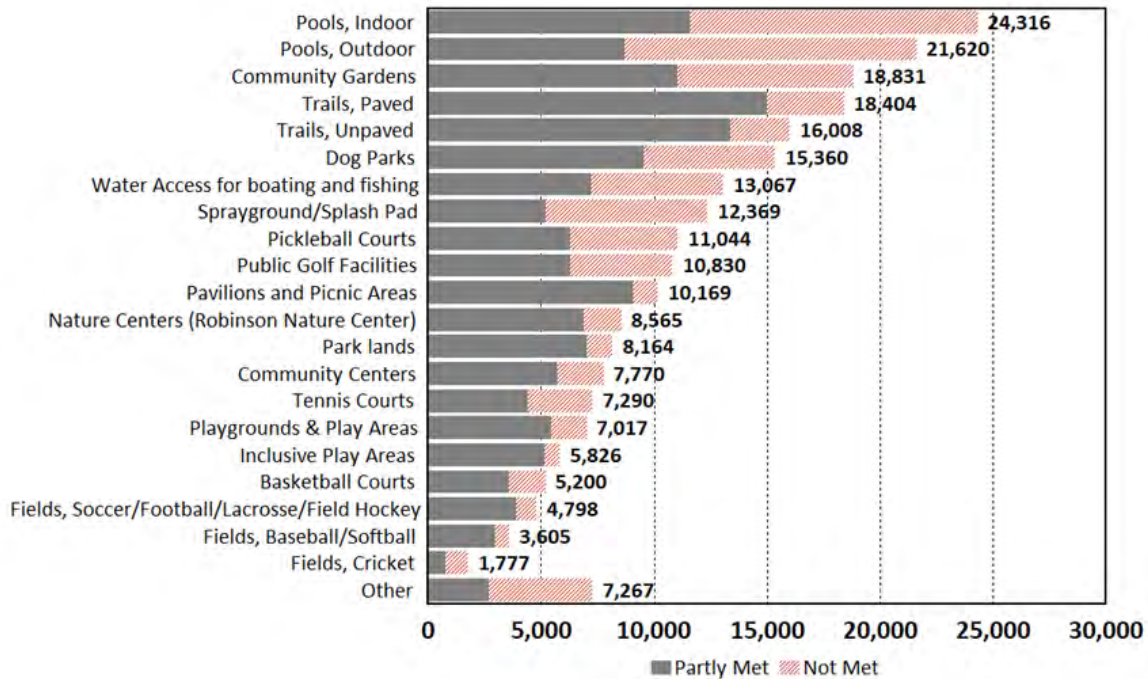
The four parks and recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: paved trails (80%), park lands (71%), unpaved trails (61%), and pavilions and picnic areas (59%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, these same four facilities had a need that affected more than 65,000 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 24,316 households in Howard County that have a need, have unmet needs for indoor pools. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 22 facilities that were assessed is shown on the following page.

Executive Summary



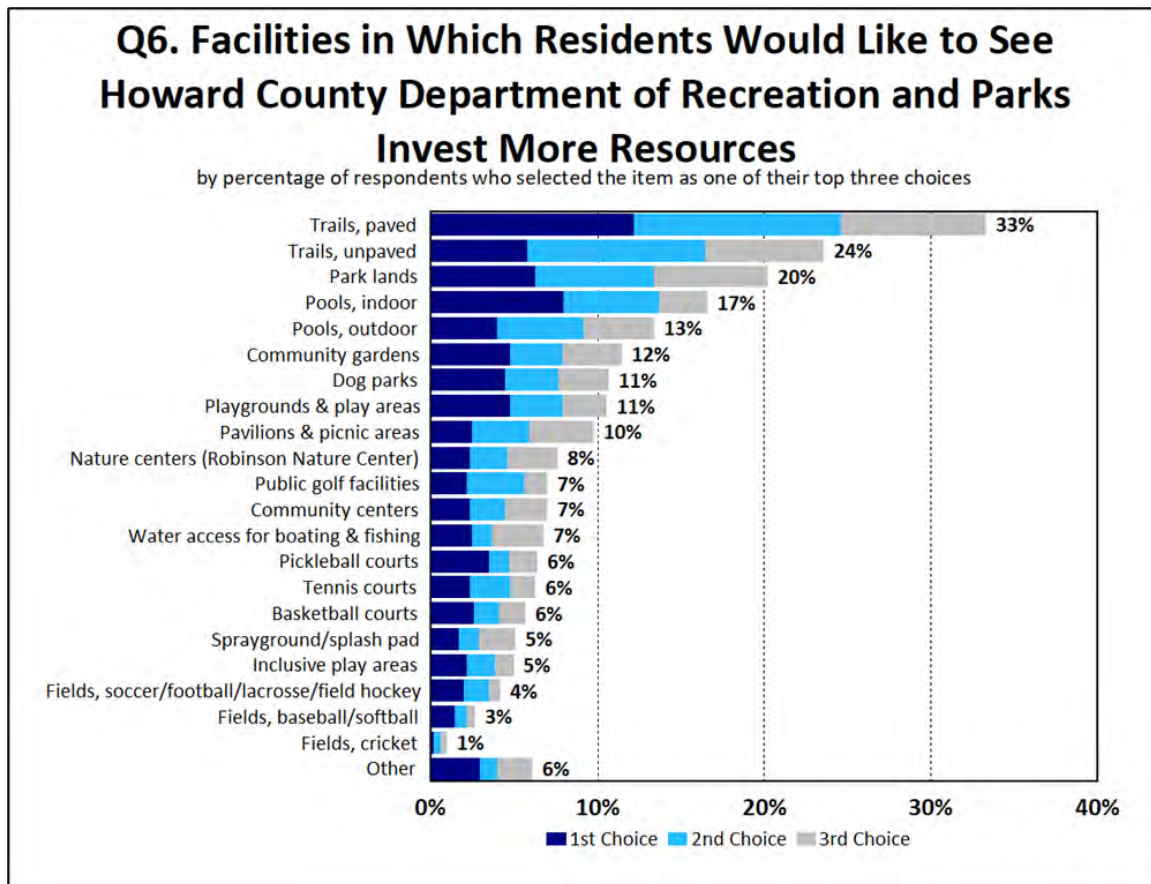
Q5[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



Facility Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each. Based on the sum of respondents' top three choices, the most important facilities to residents were: paved trails (33%), unpaved trails (24%), and park lands (20%). The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top three choices is shown in the chart on the following page.

Executive Summary



Priorities for Facility Investments: The Priority Investment Rating (**PIR**) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks, trails, recreational facilities, and services. The PIR equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

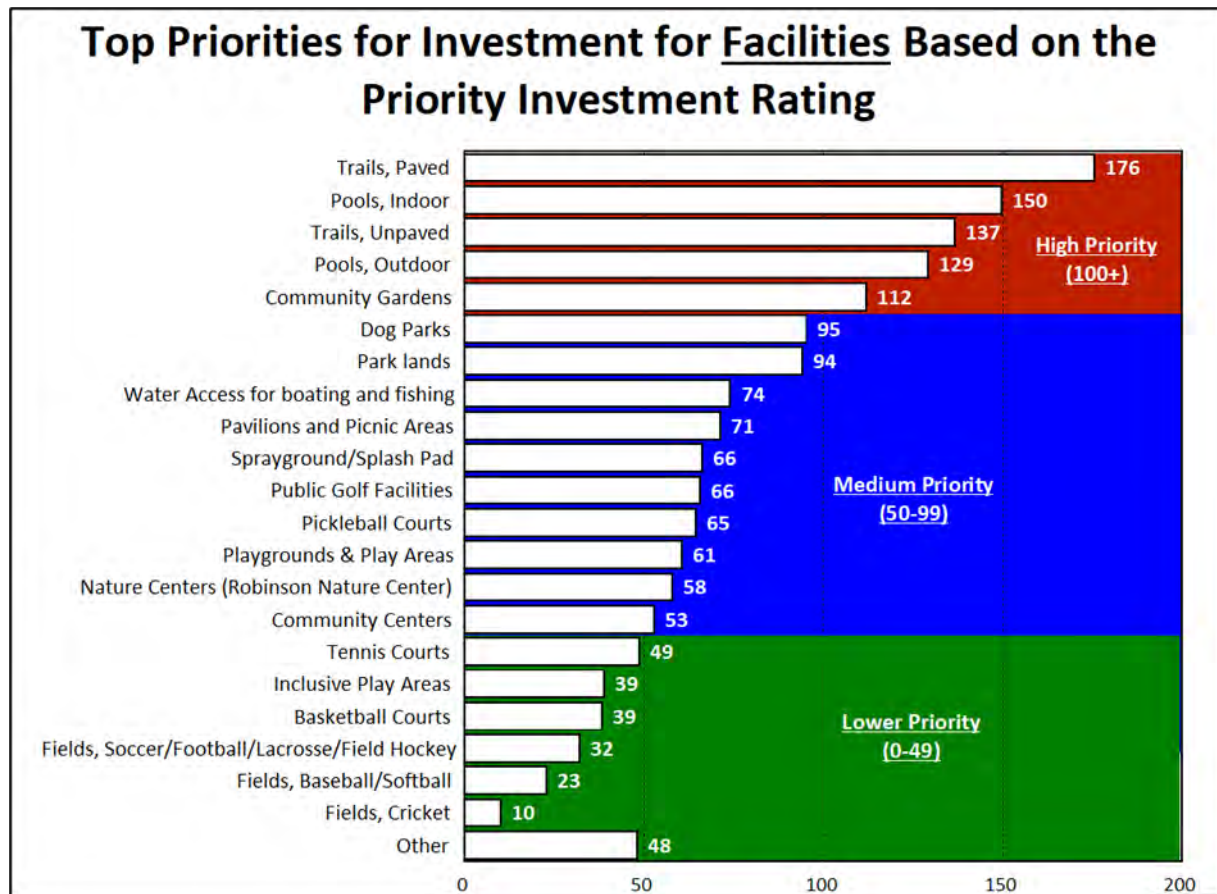
Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following five facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Paved trails (PIR=176)
- Indoor pools (PIR=150)
- Unpaved trails (PIR=137)
- Outdoor pools (PIR=129)
- Community gardens (PIR=112)

Executive Summary



The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 22 facilities that were assessed on the survey.



PROGRAMMING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Programming Needs. Respondents were also asked to identify if their household had a need for 16 recreation programs and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had “unmet” needs for each program.

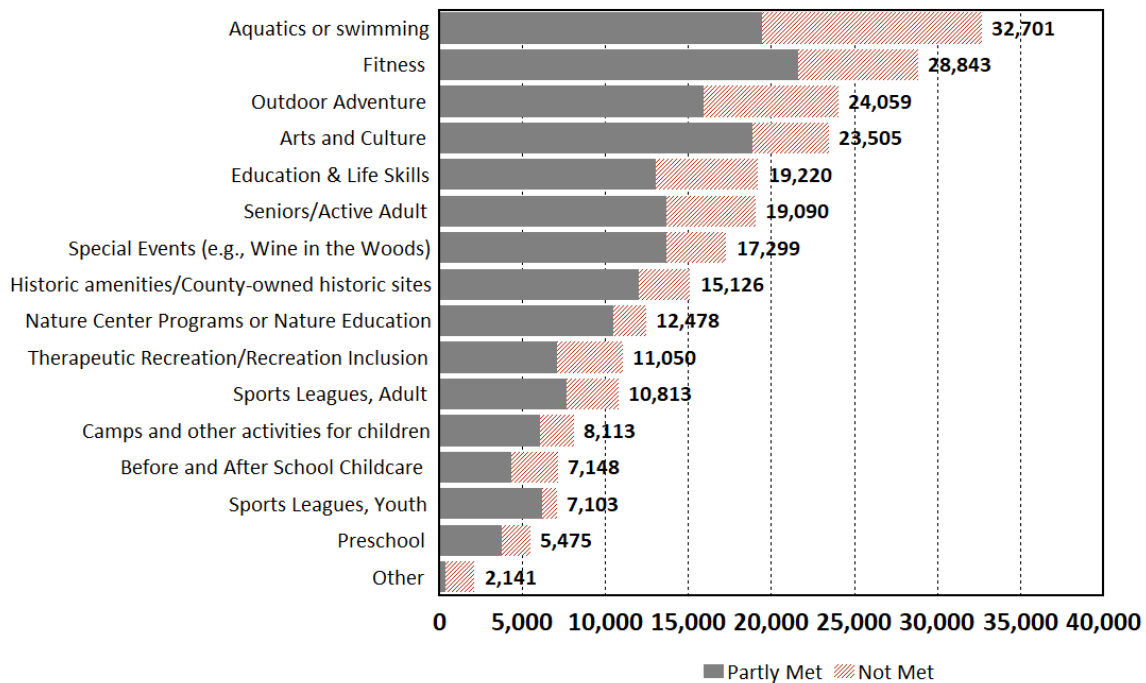
The four programs with the highest percentage of households that had needs were: fitness (55%), aquatics or swimming (50%), special events (48%), and outdoor adventure (41%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, all four of these programs had a need that affected more than 47,000 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 32,701 households in Howard County that have a need, have unmet needs for aquatics or swimming programs. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 16 programs that were assessed is shown on the following page.

Executive Summary



Q12[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County Whose Needs for Programs Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



Program Importance. In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each program. Based on the sum of respondents' top three choices, the most important programs to residents were: aquatics or swimming (24%), fitness (24%), and seniors/active adult (22%).

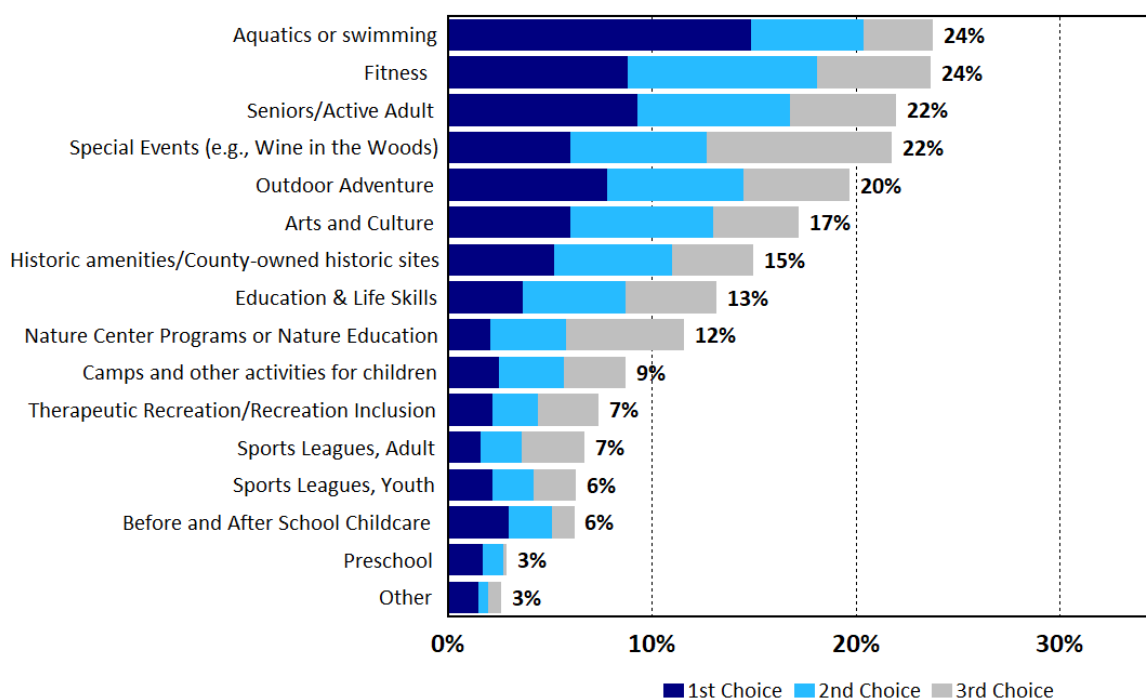
The percentage of residents who selected each program/activity as one of their top three choices is shown in the chart on the following page.

Executive Summary



Q13. Programs in Which Residents Would Like to See Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Invest More Resources

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



Priorities for Programming Investments. Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page v of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following eight programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

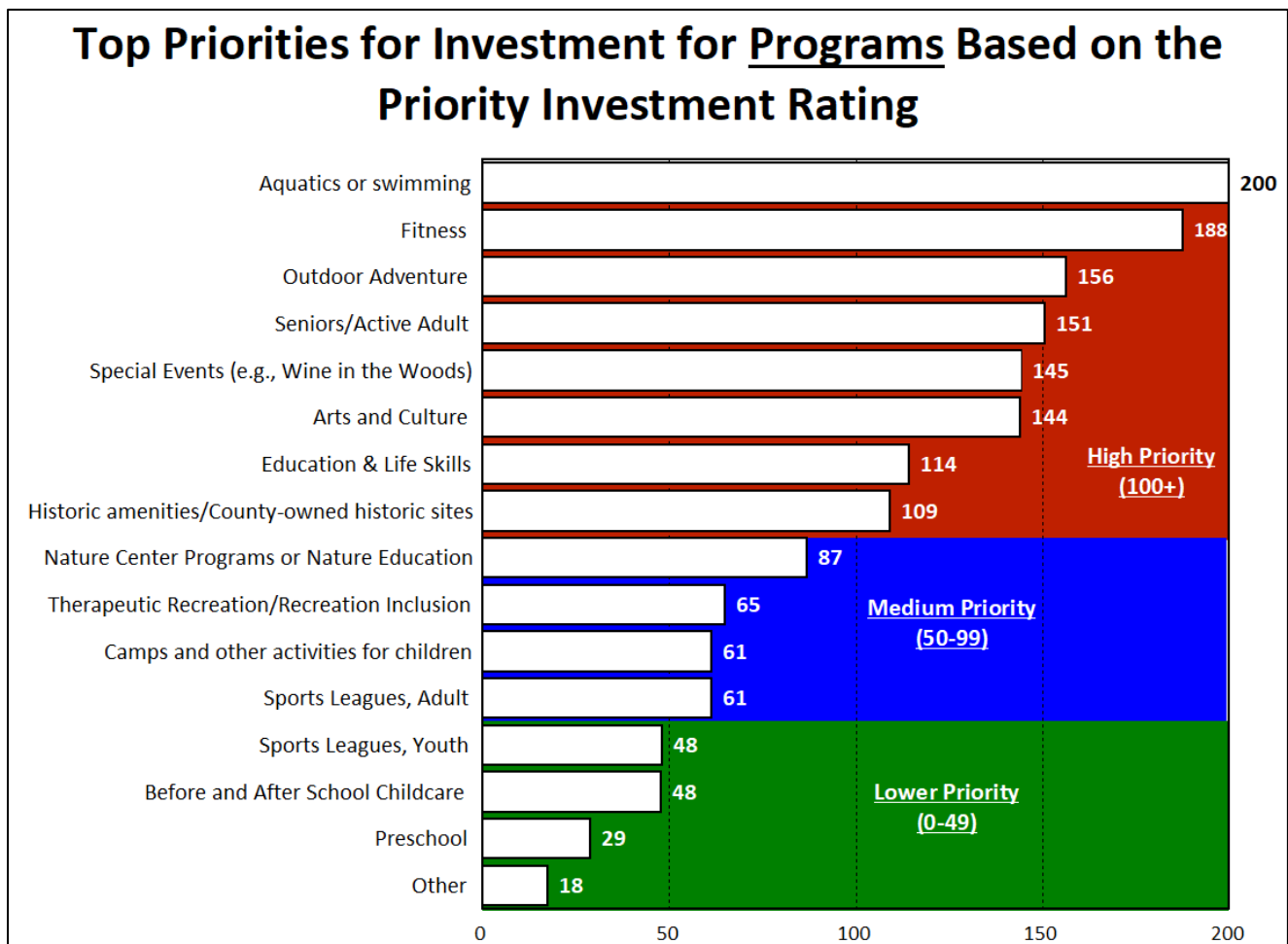
- Aquatics or swimming (PIR=200)
- Fitness (PIR=188)
- Outdoor adventure (PIR=156)
- Seniors/active adult (PIR=151)
- Special events (PIR=145)
- Arts and culture (PIR=144)

Executive Summary



- Education and life skills (PIR=114)
- Historic amenities/County-owned historic sites (PIR=109)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 16 programs that were rated.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When analyzing the facilities and programs offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, paved trails, aquatics and swimming and fitness programs were the items for which the highest number of residents had a need. These facilities were also the most important to households. Focusing on these items would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within the County.

Executive Summary



Making certain the County's availability of facilities and programming encompasses the greatest number of households ensures funding is appropriately allocated to give the community the greatest benefit possible.

In order to ensure that Howard County continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that the County sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as "high priorities" by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

Facility Priorities

- Paved trails (PIR=176)
- Indoor pools (PIR=150)
- Unpaved trails (PIR=137)
- Outdoor pools (PIR=129)
- Community gardens (PIR=112)

Programming Priorities

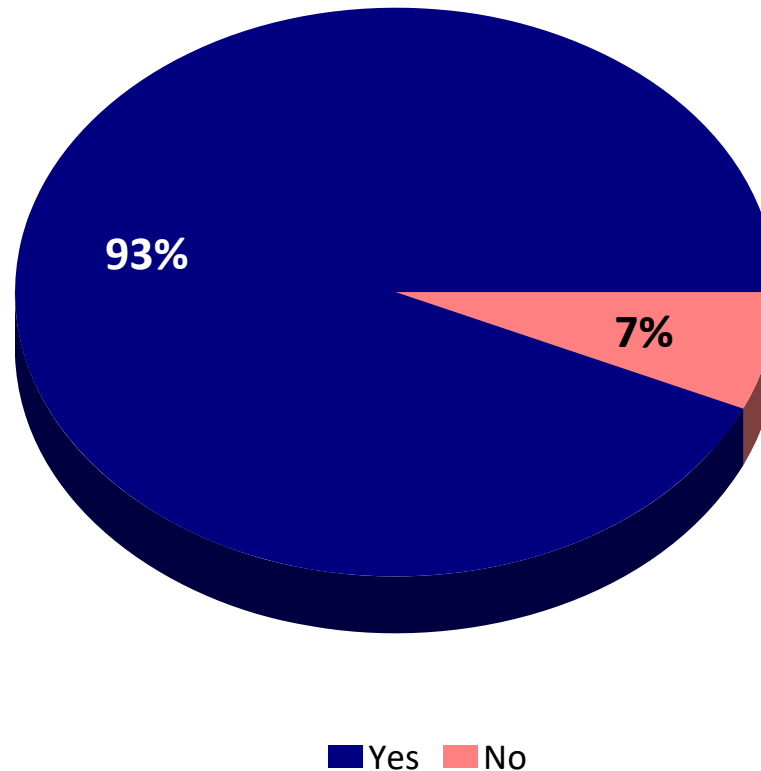
- Aquatics or swimming (PIR=200)
- Fitness (PIR=188)
- Outdoor adventure (PIR=156)
- Seniors/active adult (PIR=151)
- Special events (PIR=145)
- Arts and culture (PIR=144)
- Education and life skills (PIR=114)
- Historic amenities/County-owned historic sites (PIR=109)



Charts and Graphs:

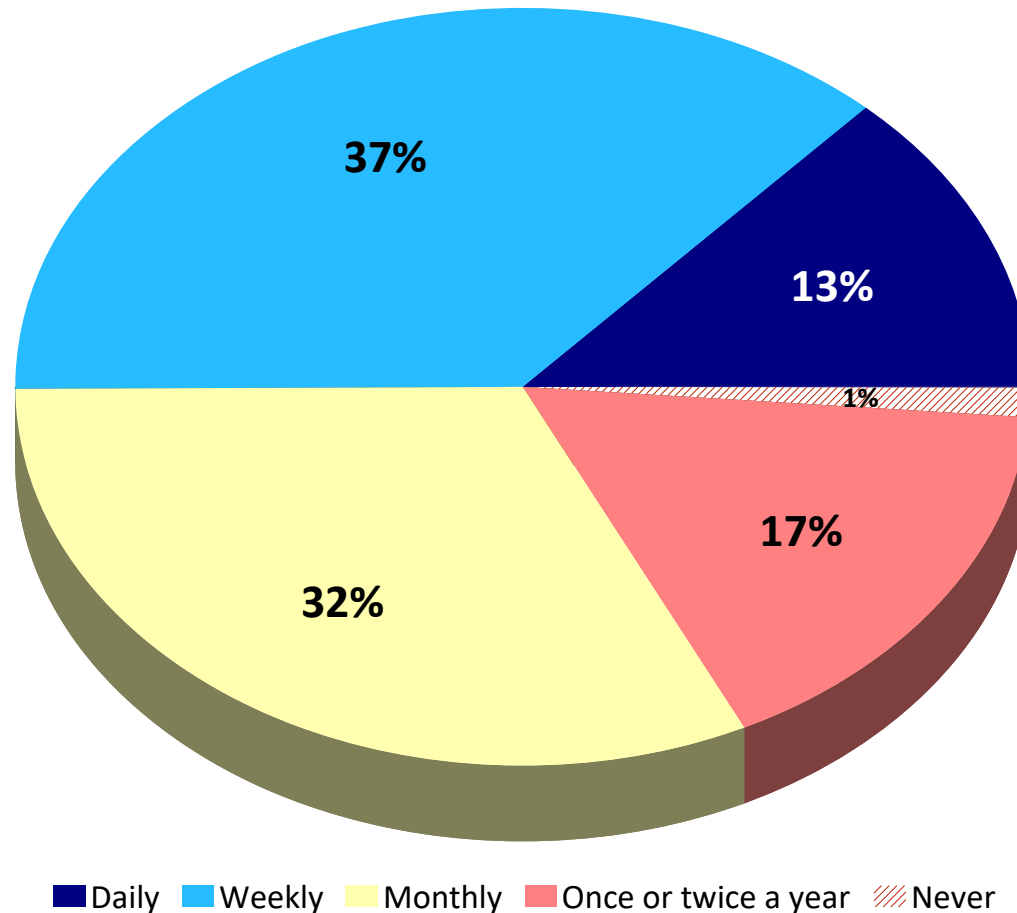
Q1. During a typical year, do you or anyone in your household visit the park lands or other facilities offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks?

by percentage of respondents



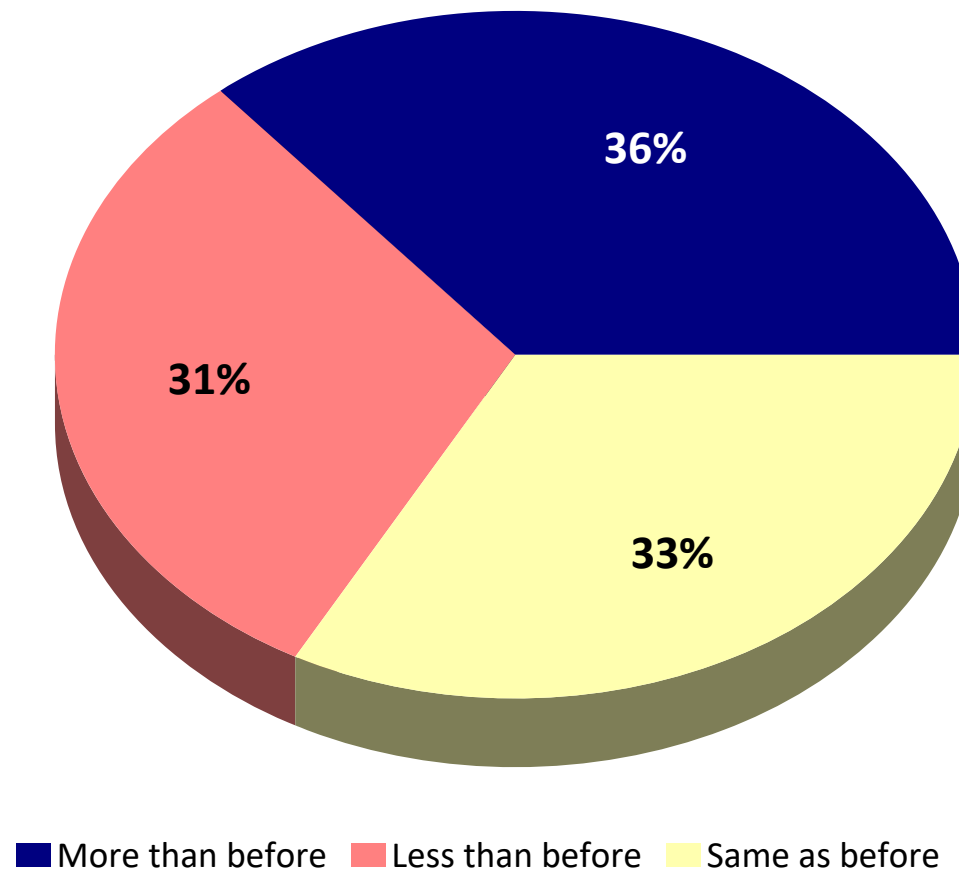
Q1a. How Often Residents Visited Howard County Parkland Before March 2020

by percentage of respondents who visited parklands (excluding “not provided”)



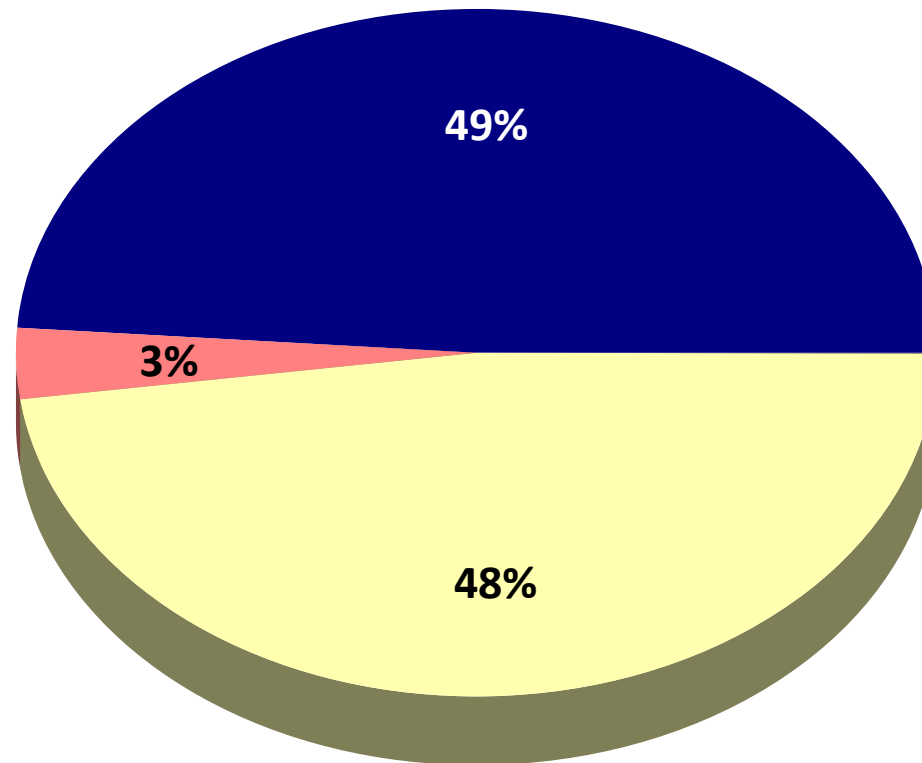
Q1b. How Often Residents Have Visited Howard County Park Lands Since March 2020

by percentage of respondents who visited parks (excluding “not provided”)



Q1c. How Often Residents Plan to Visit Parks in the Future Compared to the Time Since March 2020

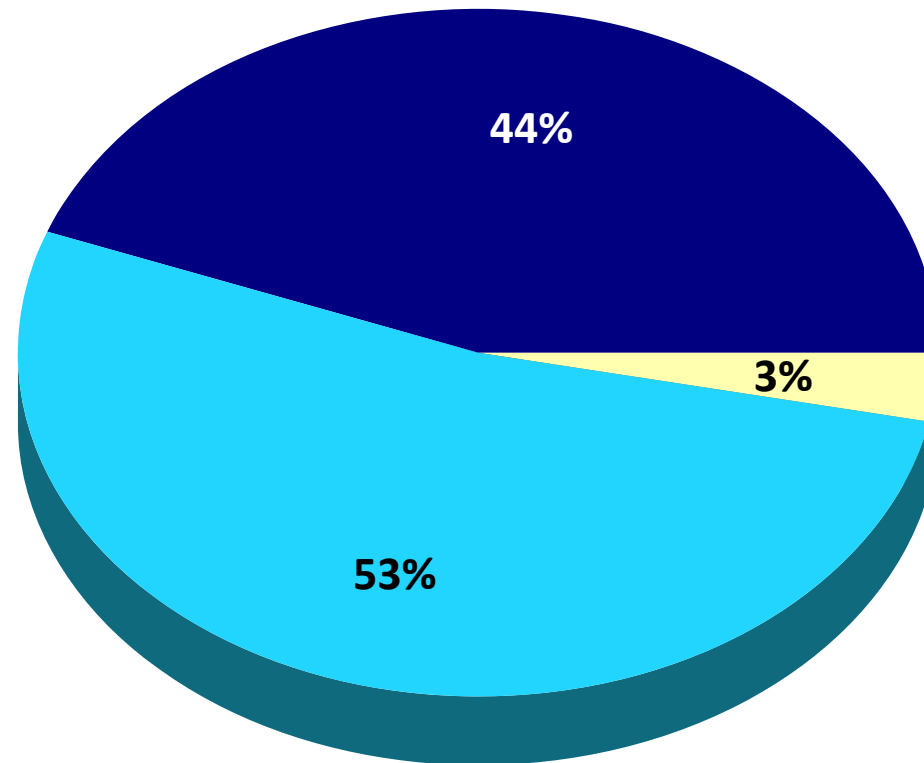
by percentage of respondents who visited parks (excluding “not provided”)



■ More ■ Less ■ Same

Q1d. How Residents Rate the Overall Condition of Howard County Park Lands Visited

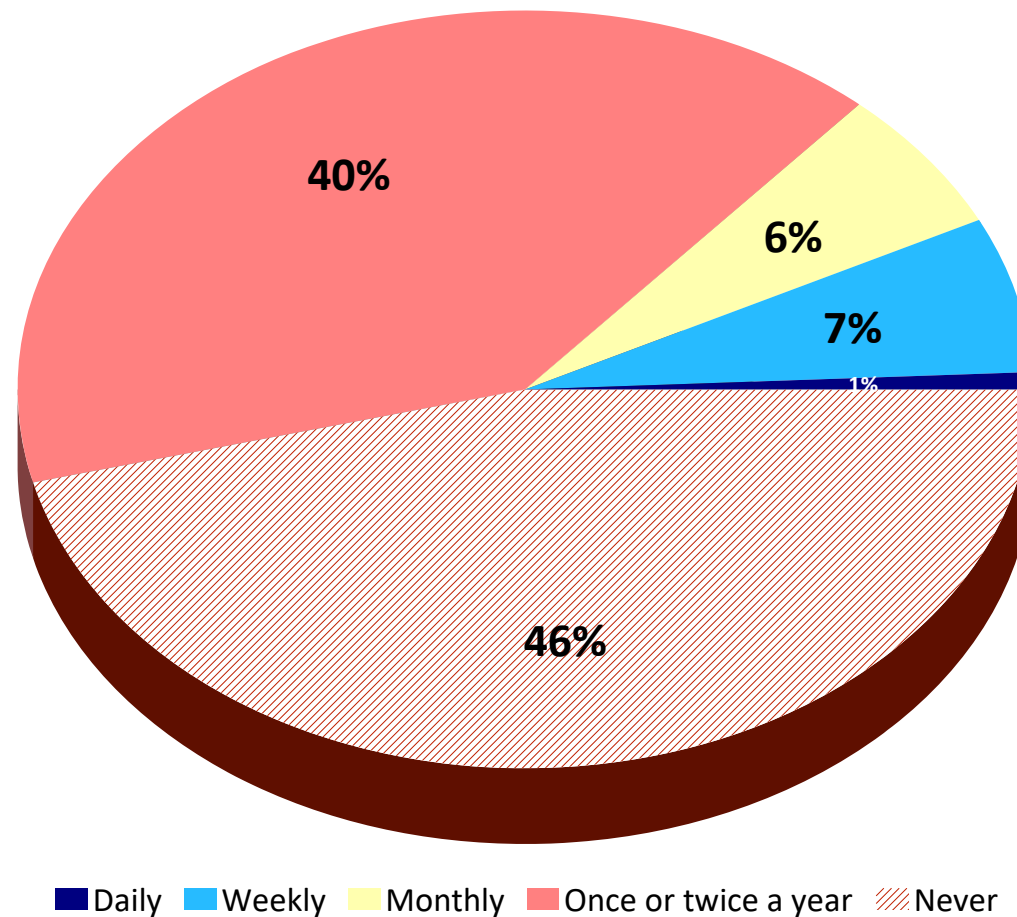
by percentage of respondents who visited parks (excluding “not provided”)



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair

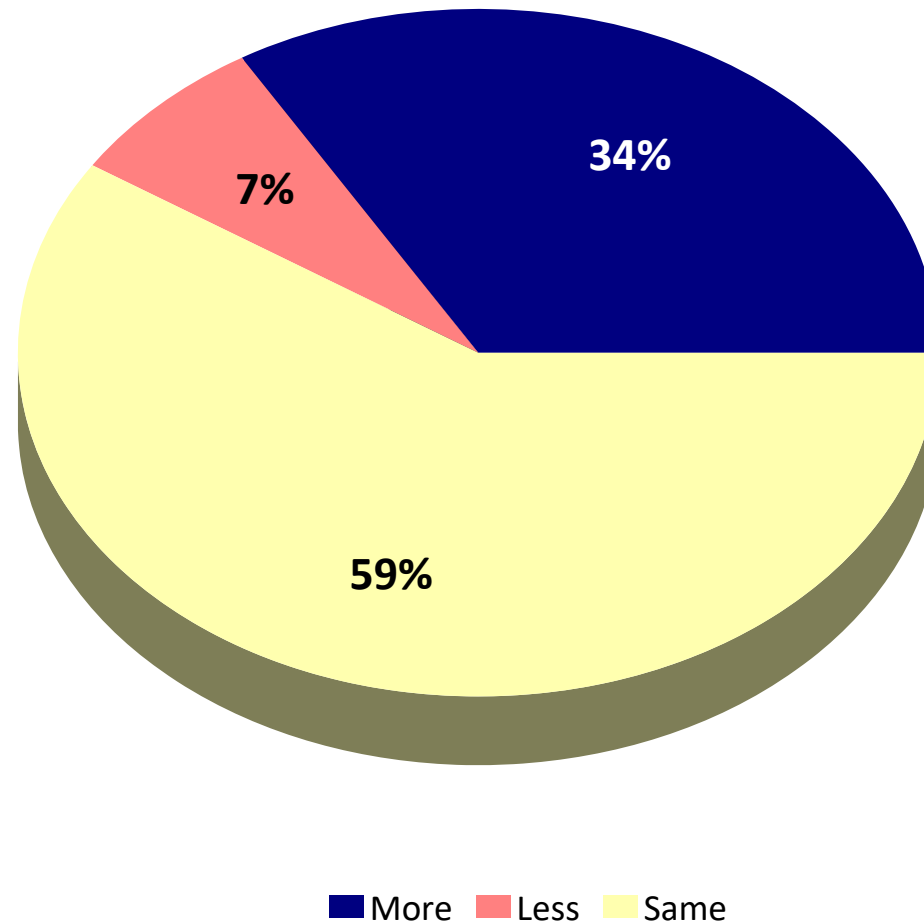
Q1e. How Often Residents Visited Roger Carter, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or Robinson Nature Center Before March 2020

by percentage of respondents who visited parklands (excluding “not provided”)



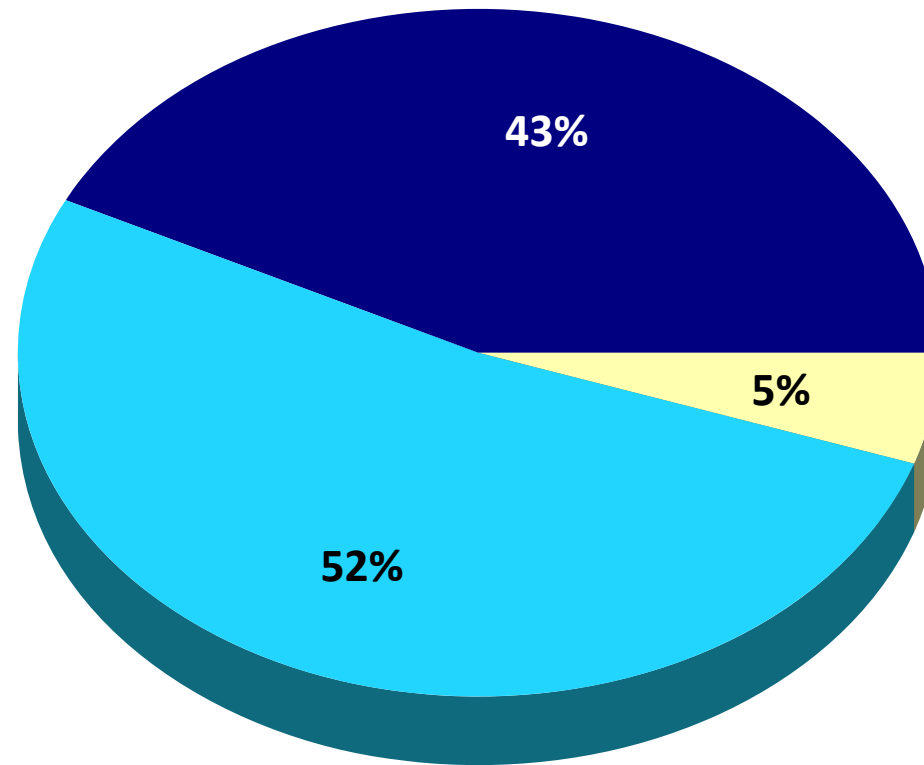
Q1f. How Often Residents Plan to Visit Howard County Facilities in the Future Compared to the Time Prior to March 2020

by percentage of respondents who visited parks (excluding “not provided”)



Q1g. How Residents Rate the Physical Condition of Howard County Facilities Visited

by percentage of respondents who visited park facilities (excluding “not provided”)

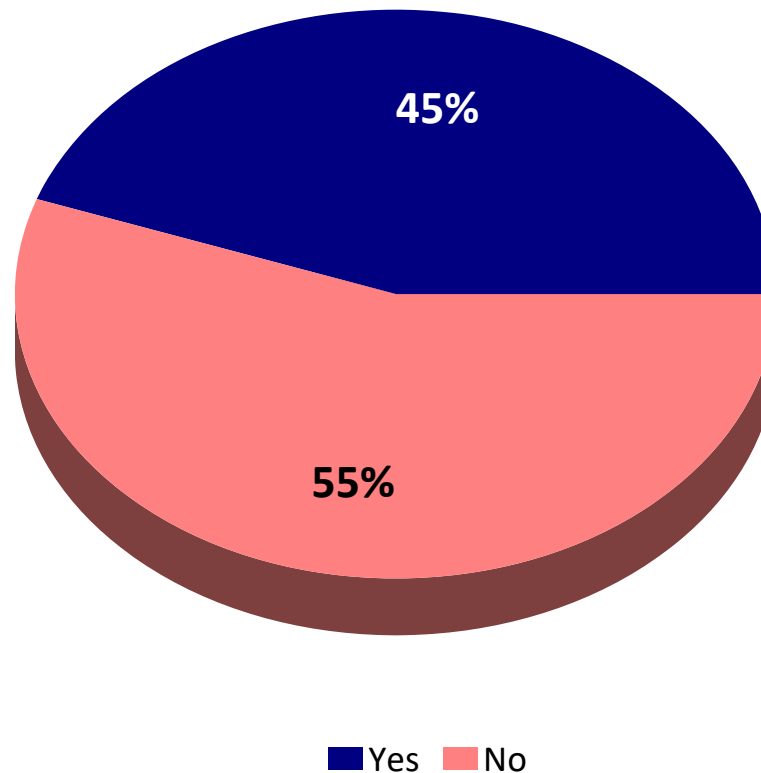


0.3% rated the facilities as “poor”

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Fair

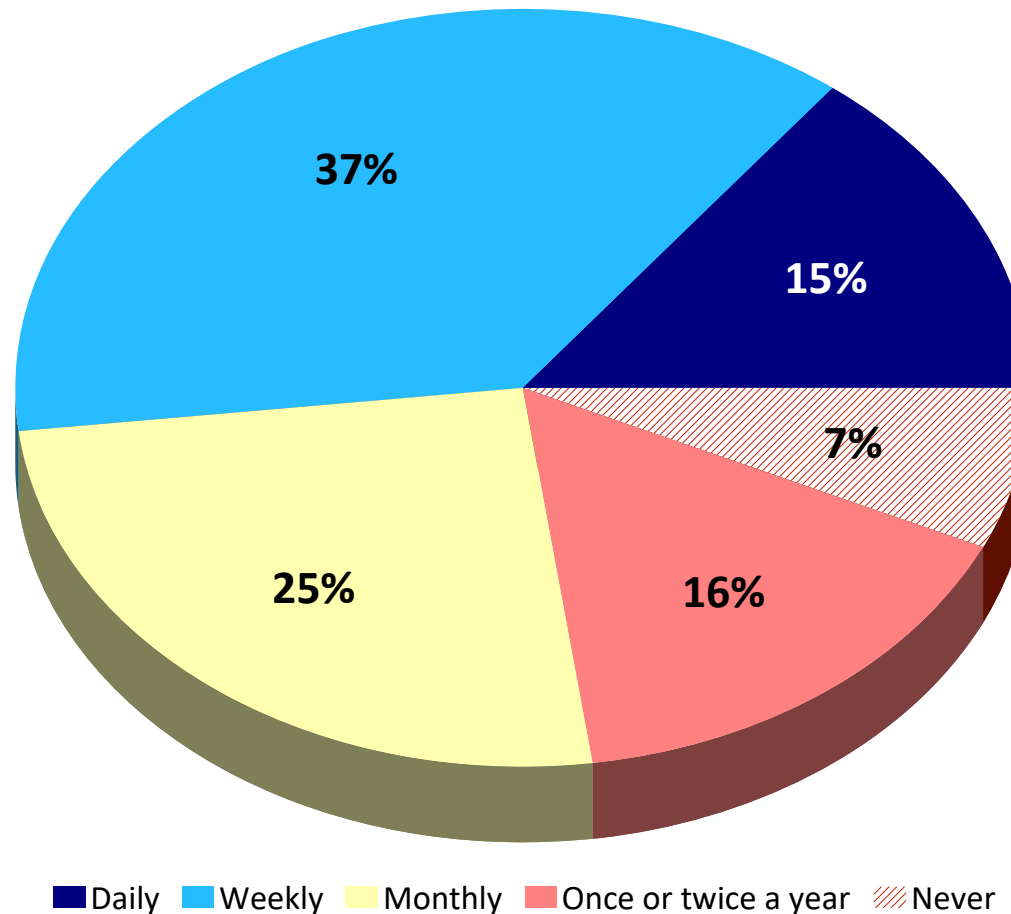
Q2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home?

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



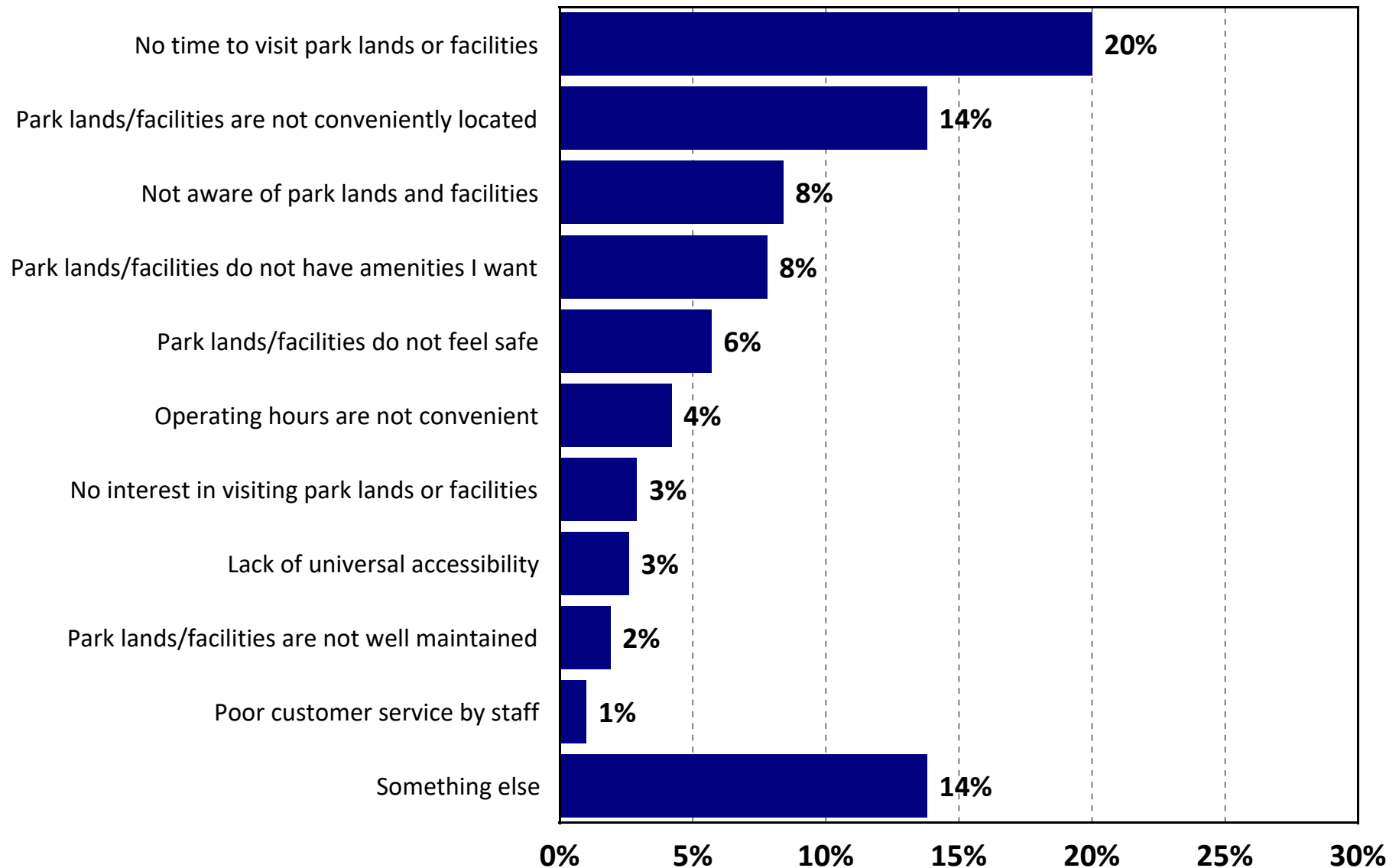
Q2a. How Often Residents Visited Their Nearby Park or Facility Over the Past Five Years

by percentage of respondents who have a park/facility within walking distance of their home (excluding “not provided”)



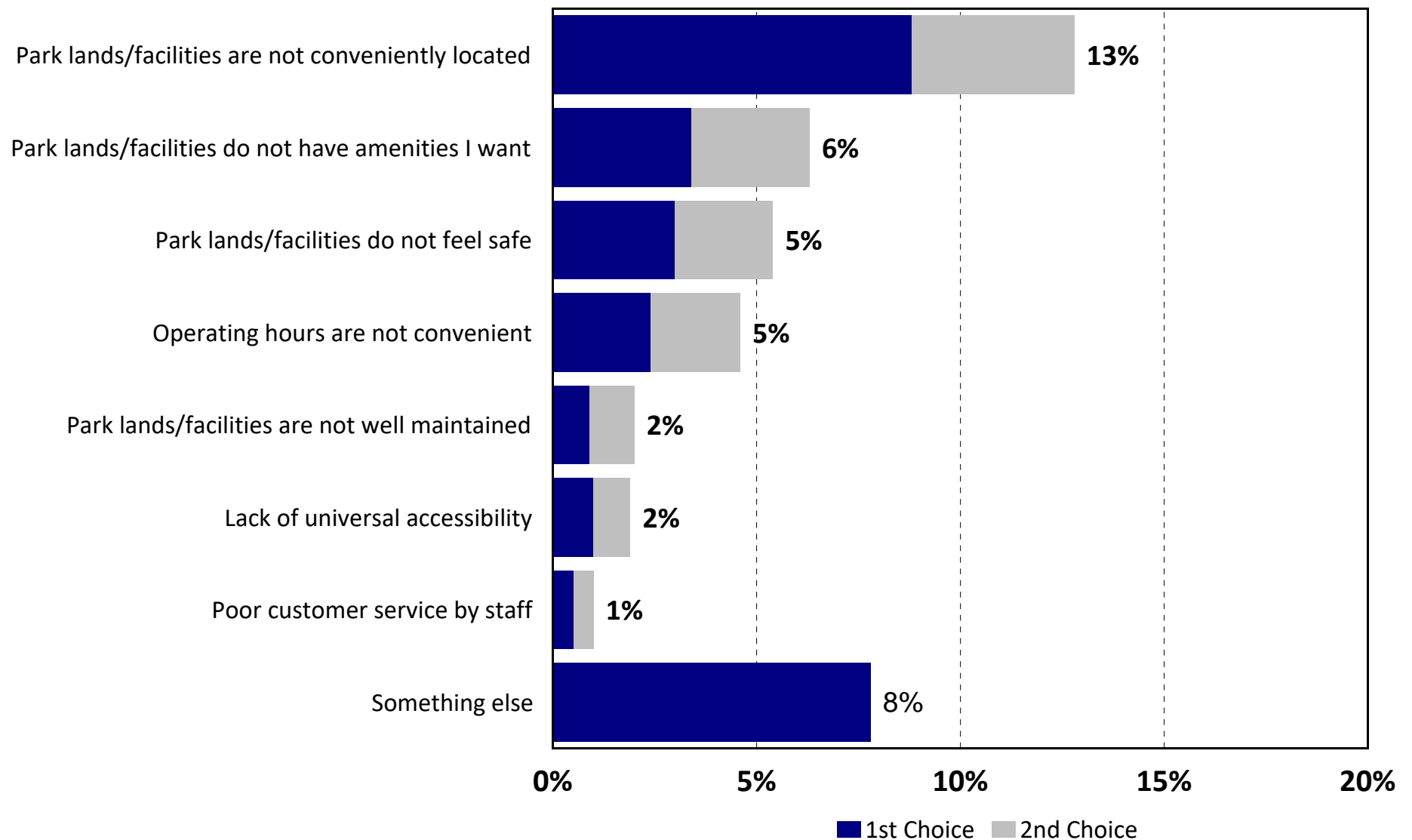
Q3. Barriers to Household's Usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Park Lands or Facilities

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



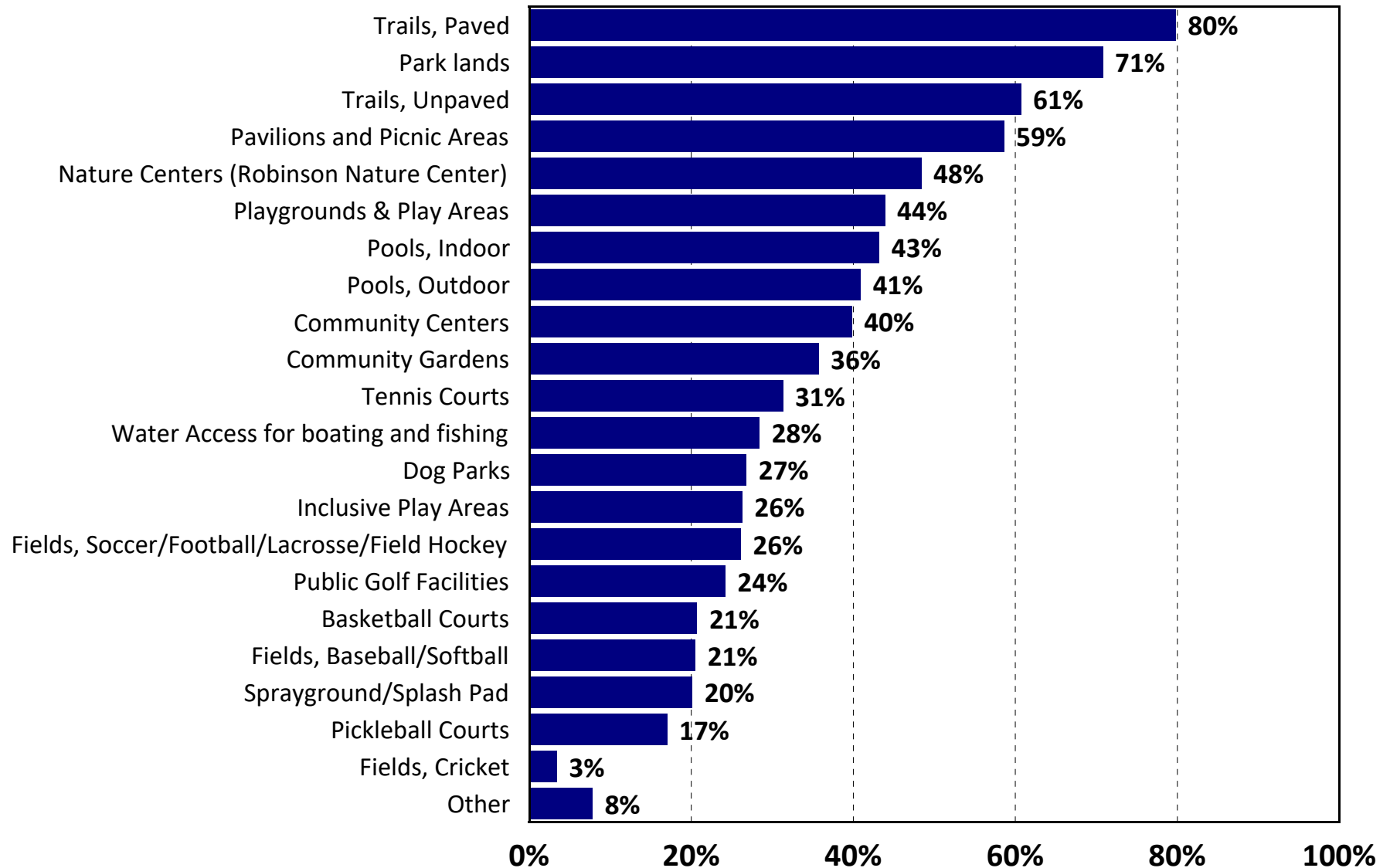
Q4. Biggest Barriers to Household's Usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Park Lands or Facilities

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



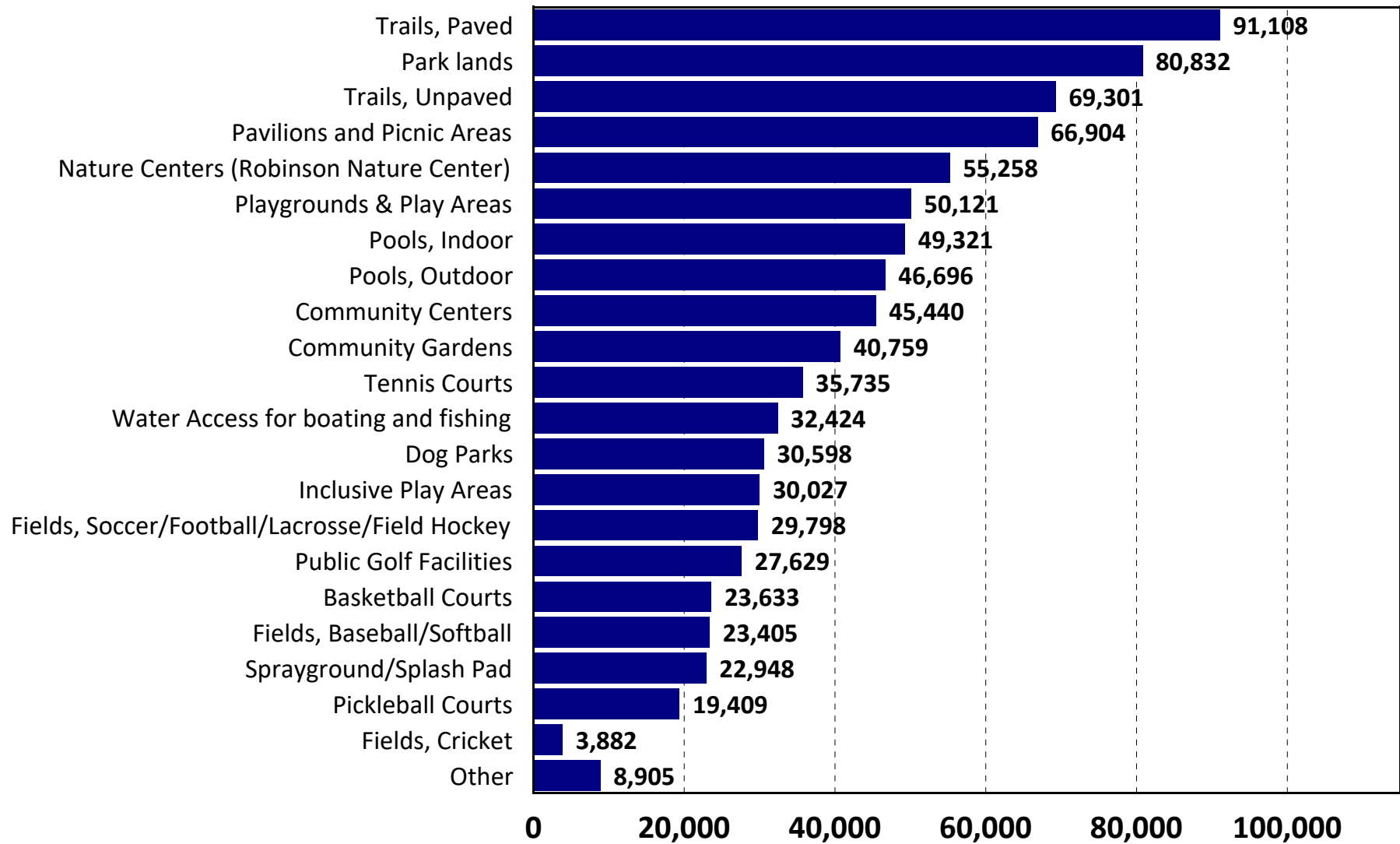
Q5[1]. Households That Have a Need for the Following Facilities

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



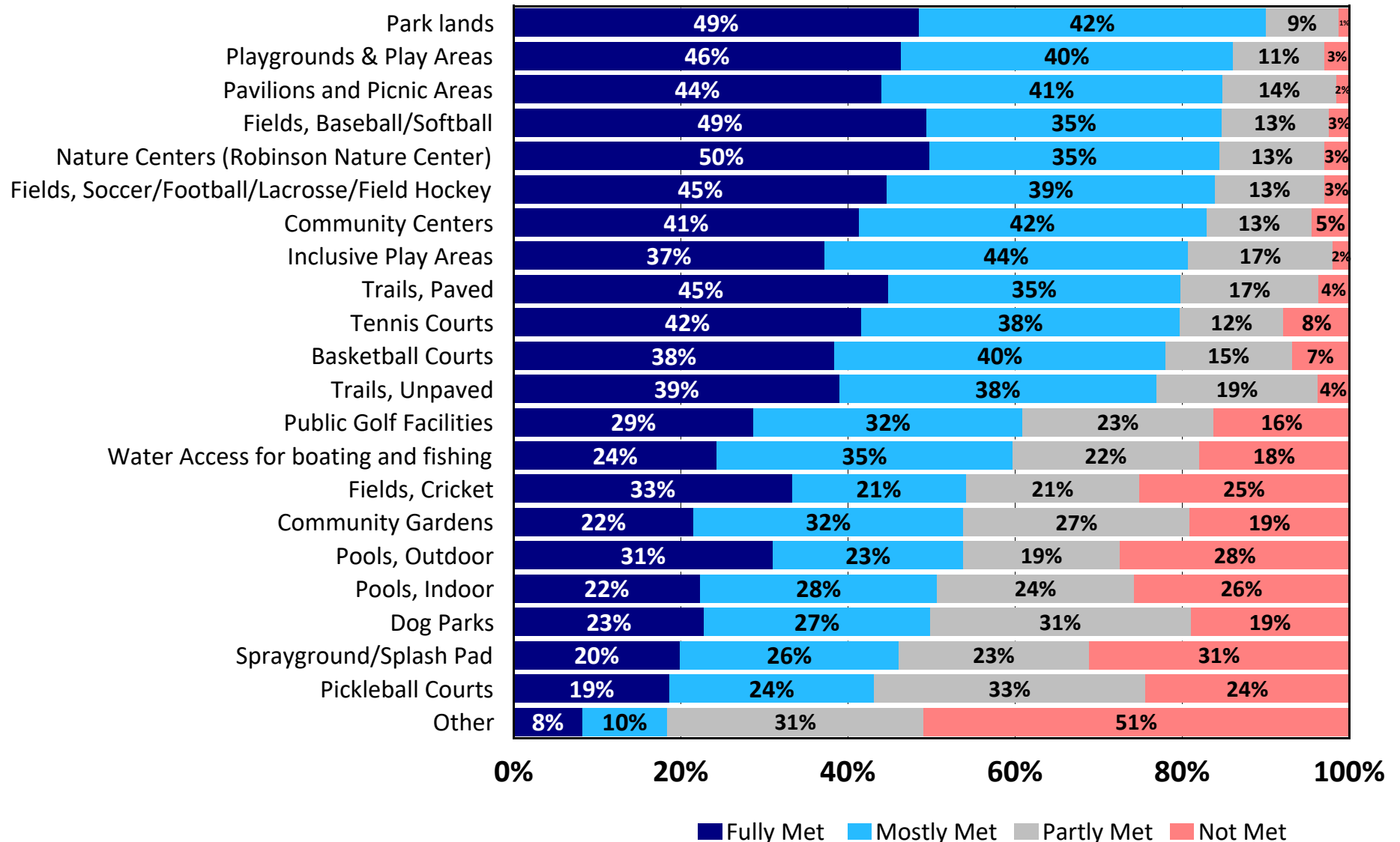
Q5[1]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County That Have a Need for Facilities

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



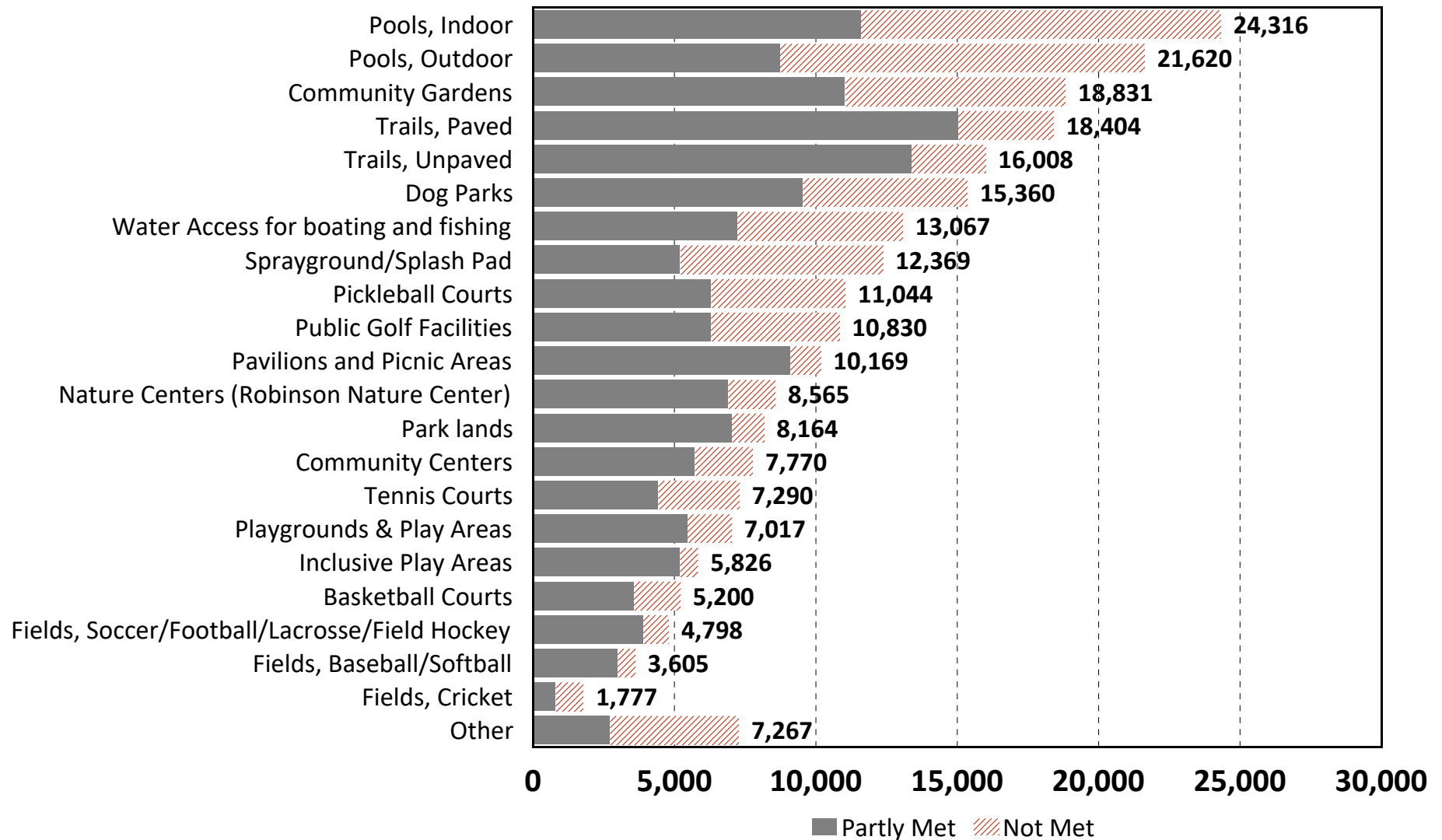
Q5[2]. How Well Facilities in Howard County Meet the Needs of Households

by percentage of households that have a need for facilities



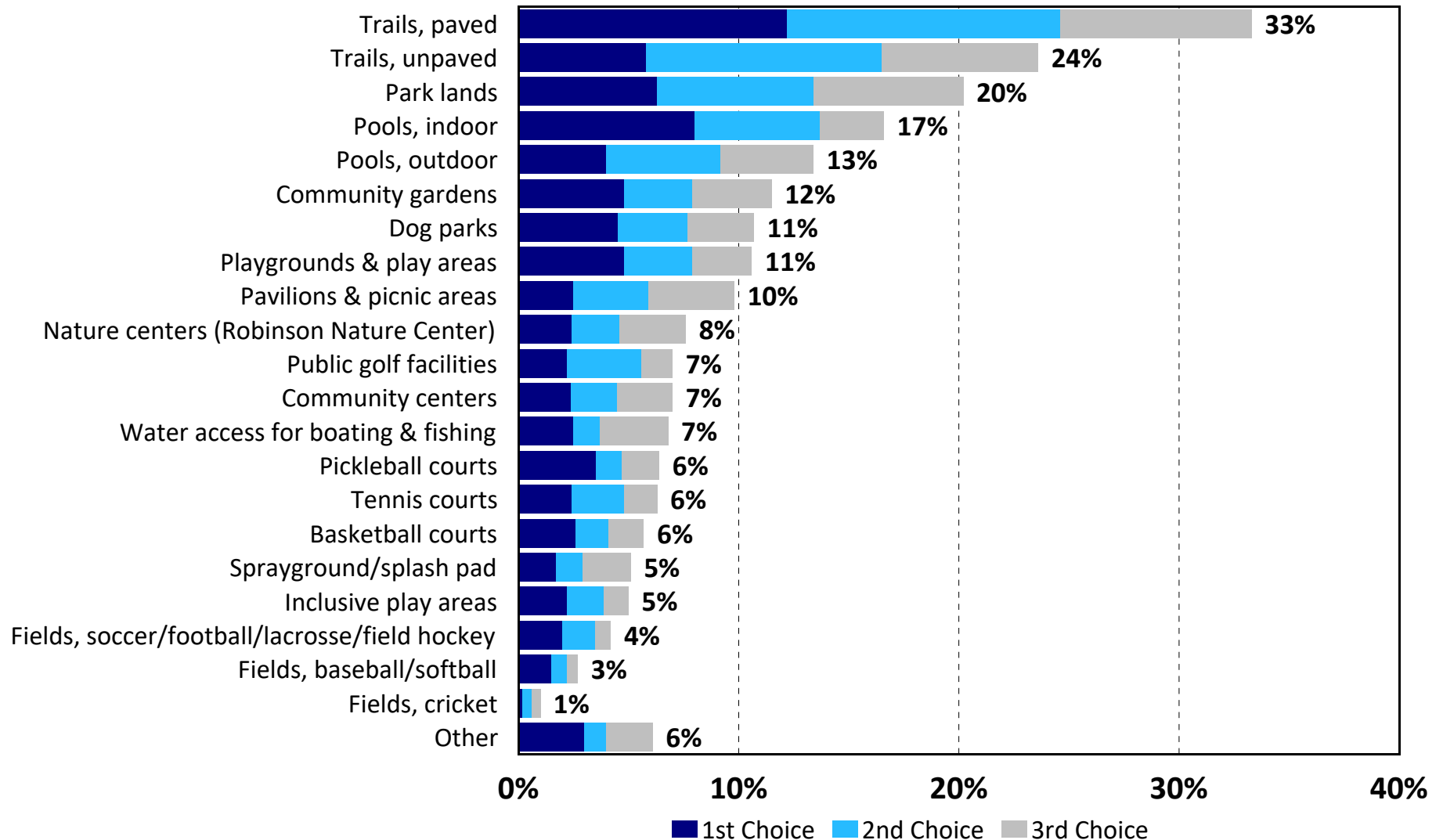
Q5[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



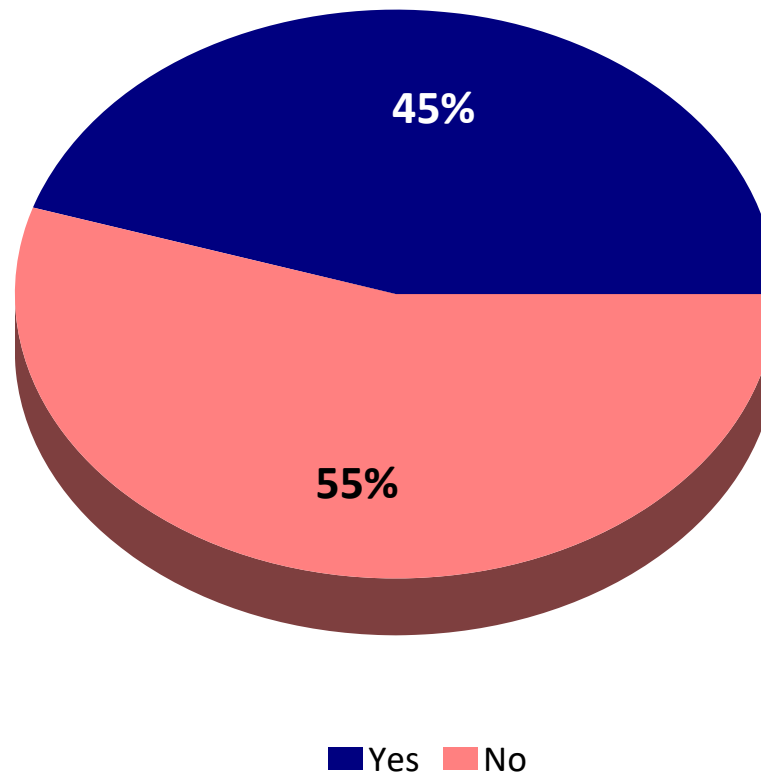
Q6. Facilities in Which Residents Would Like to See Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Invest More Resources

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



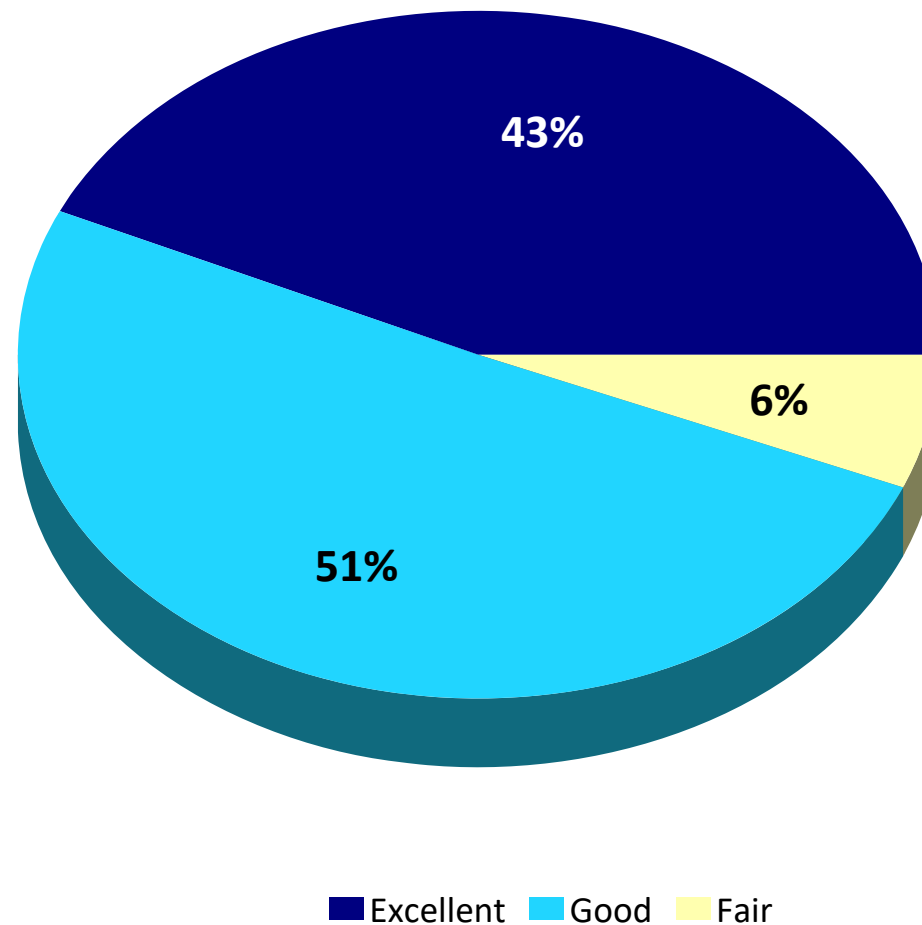
Q7. Did you participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Before March 2020?

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



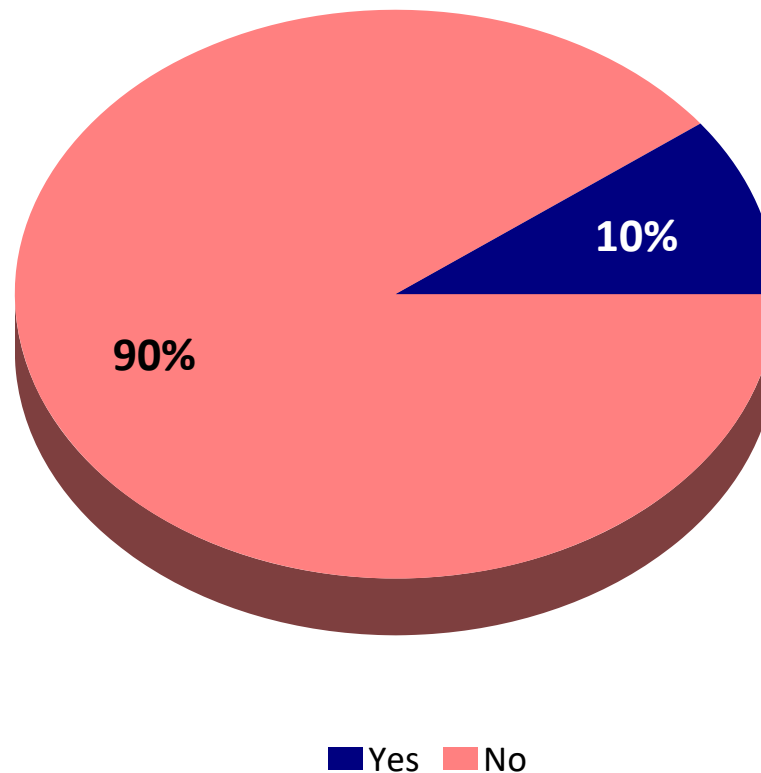
Q7a. How Residents Rate the Overall Quality of Programs in Which They Participated Before March 2020

by percentage of respondents who participated in programs (excluding “not provided”)



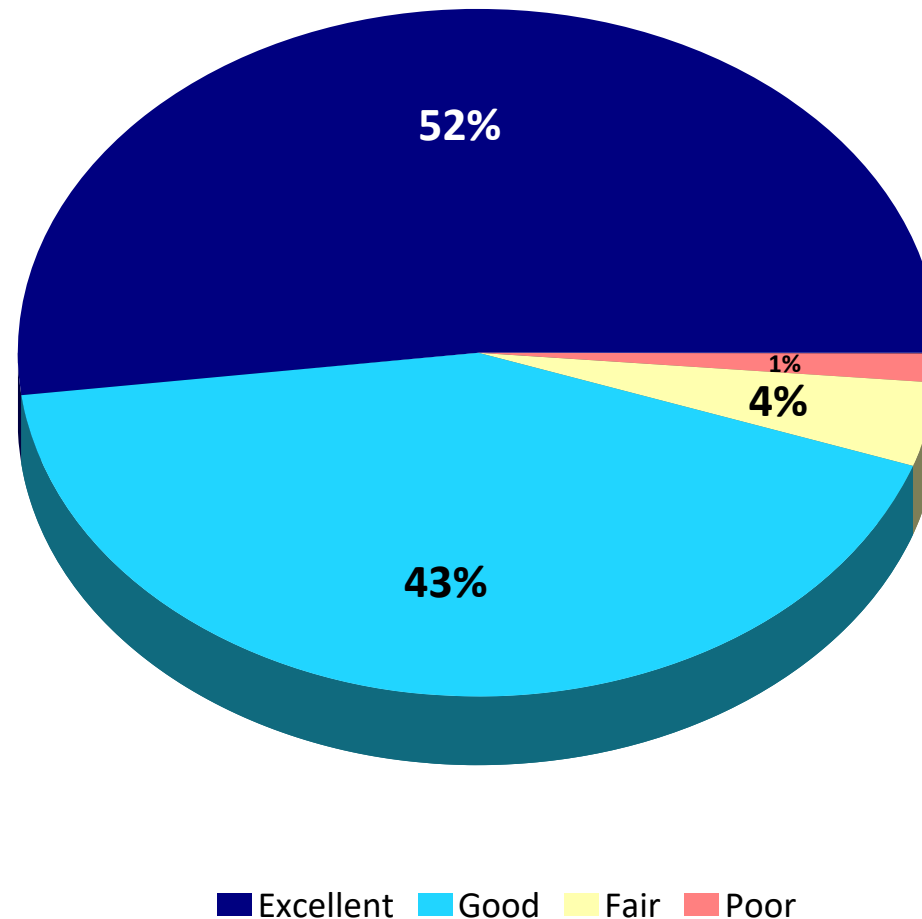
Q8. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household participated in any Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programs or activities virtually or remotely?

by percentage of respondents



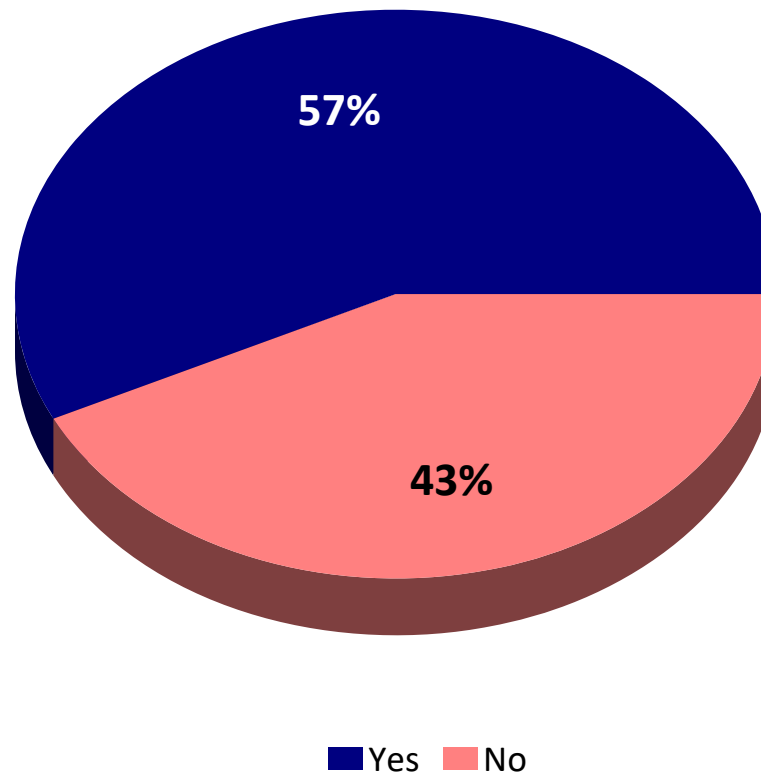
Q8a. How Residents Rate the Overall Quality of the Virtual Programs in Which They Participated After March 2020

by percentage of respondents who participated in virtual/remote programs (excluding “not provided”)



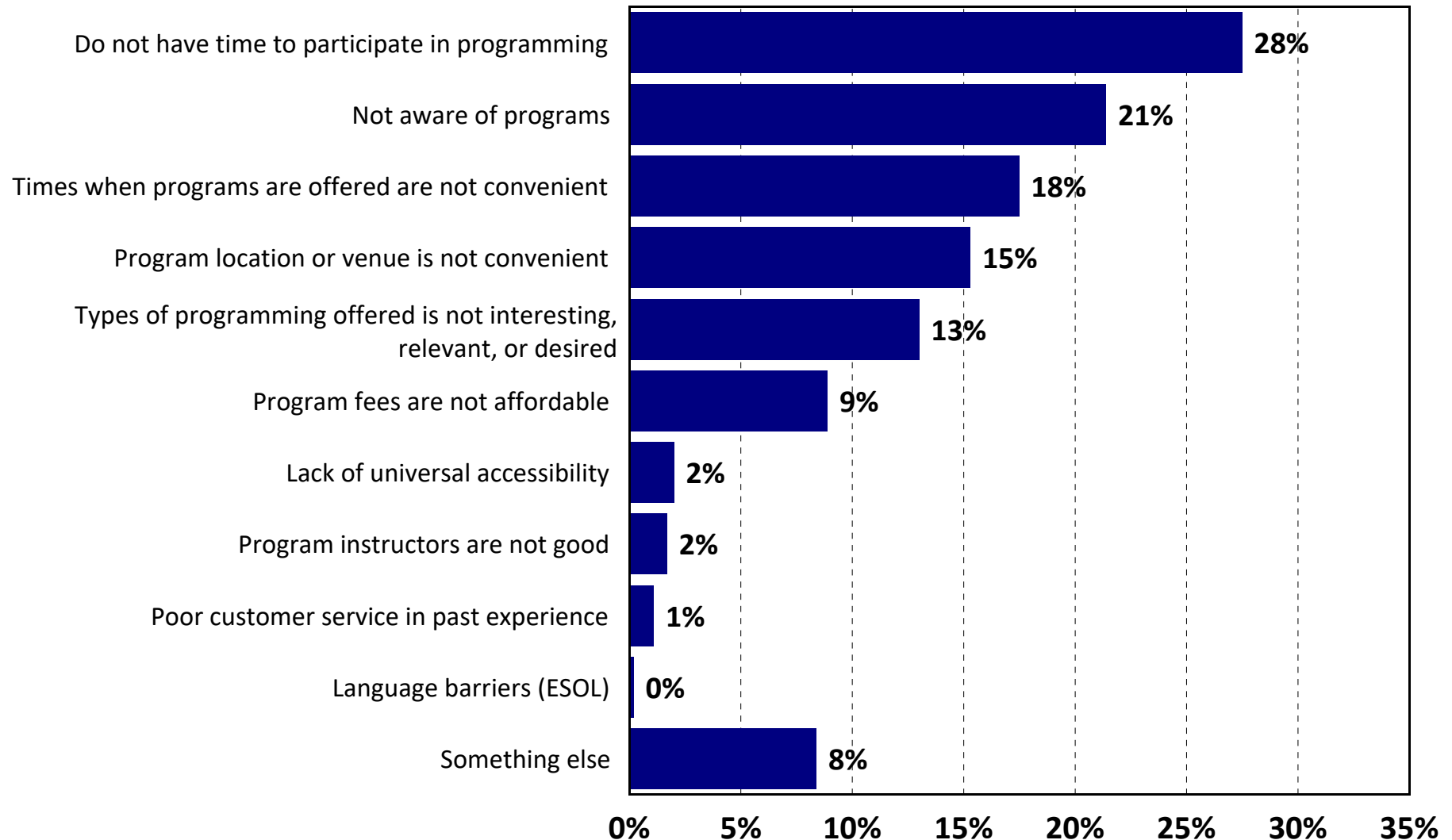
Q9. Would you or members of your household like the County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future?

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



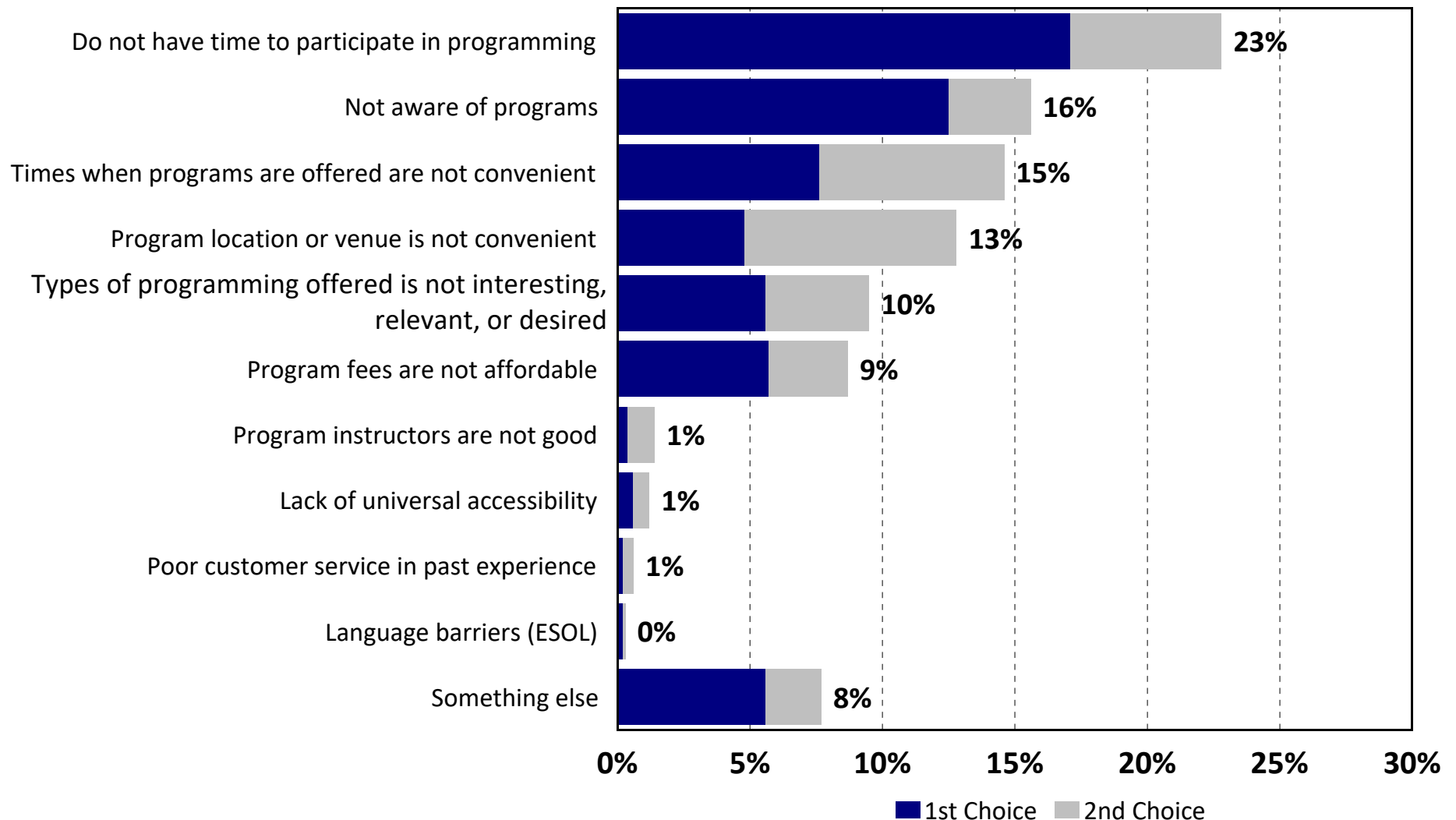
Q10. Barriers to Household's Participation in Howard County Department of Recreation Programming

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



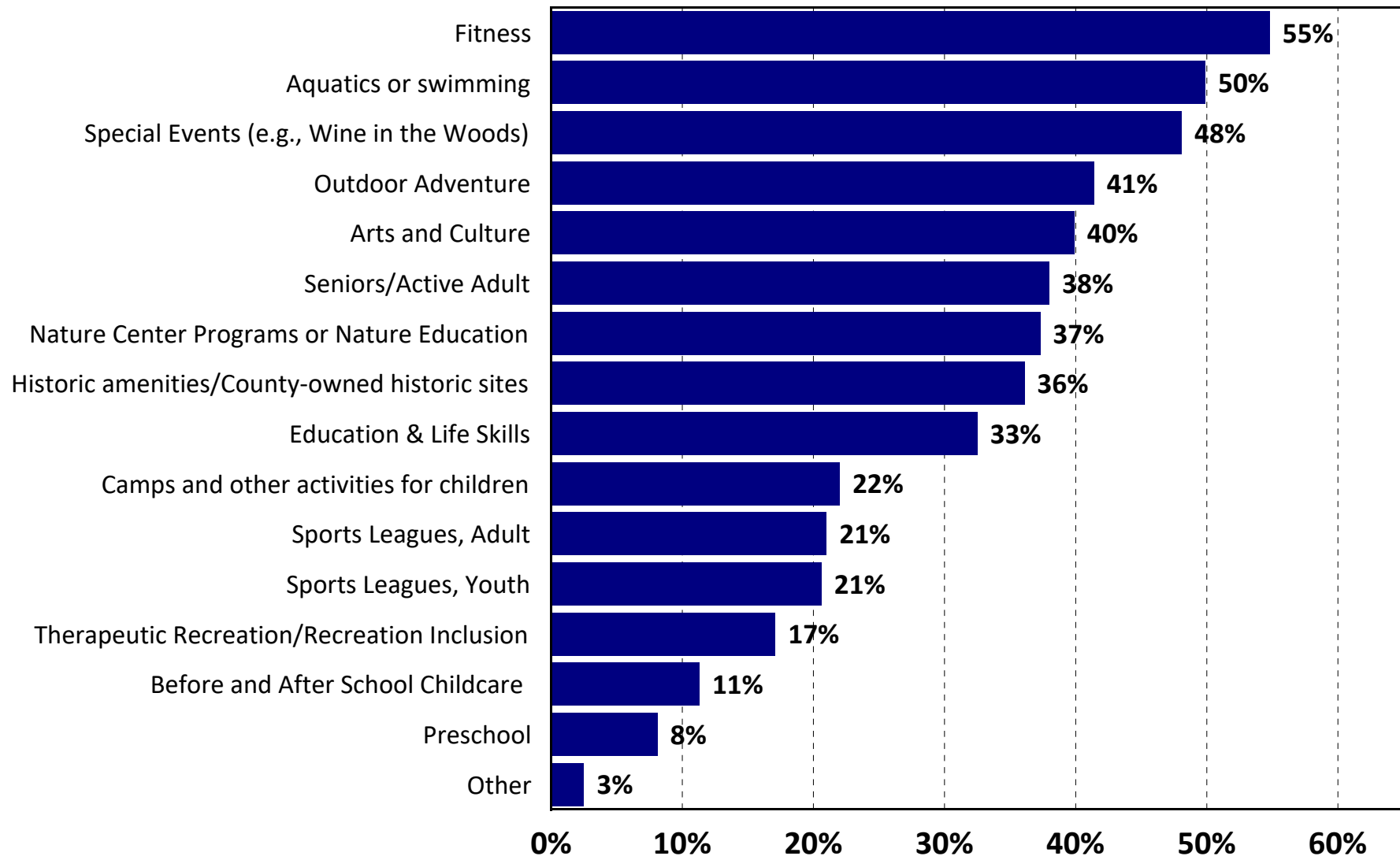
Q11. Biggest Barriers to Household's Participation in Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Programming

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



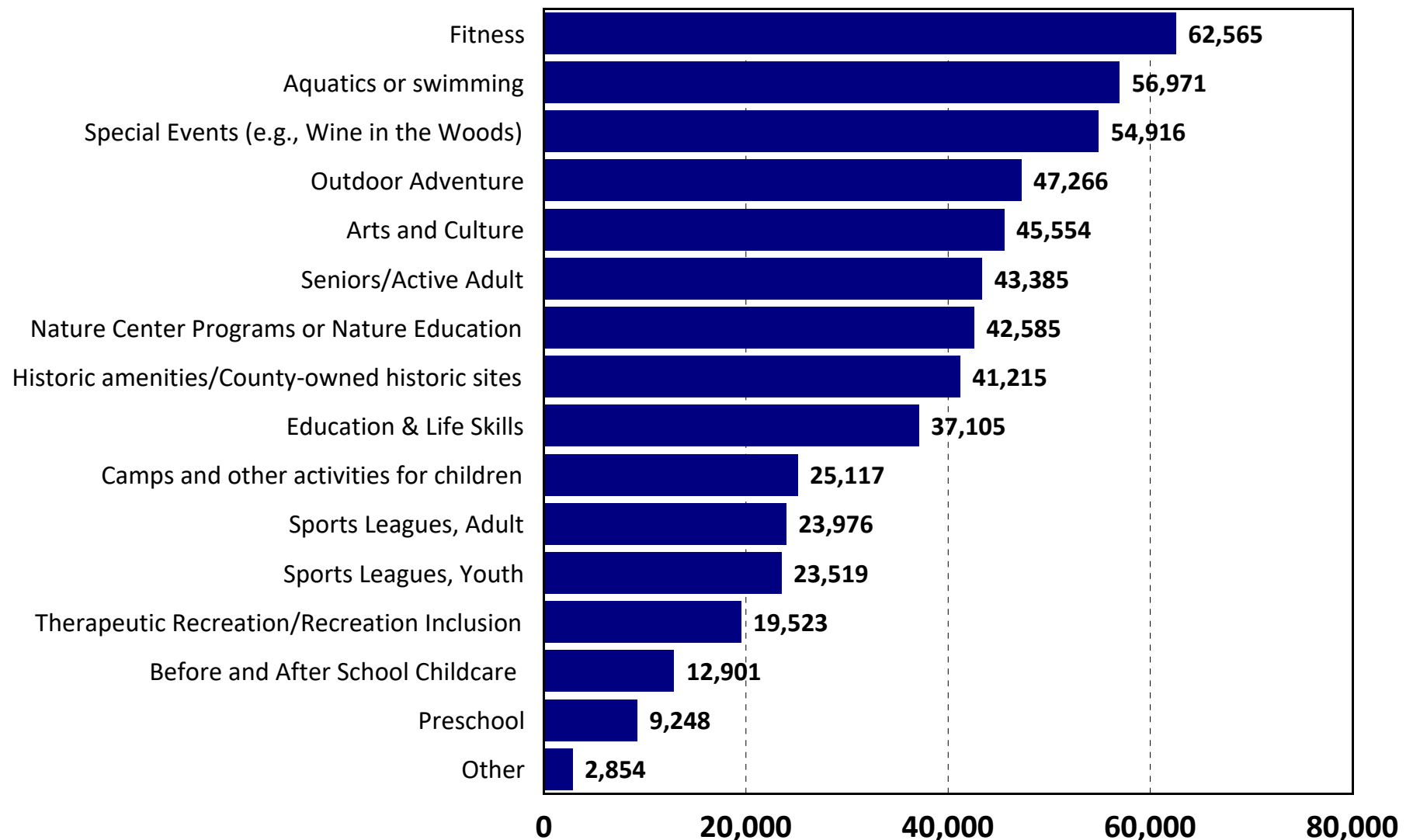
Q12[1]. Households That Have a Need for the Following Programs

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



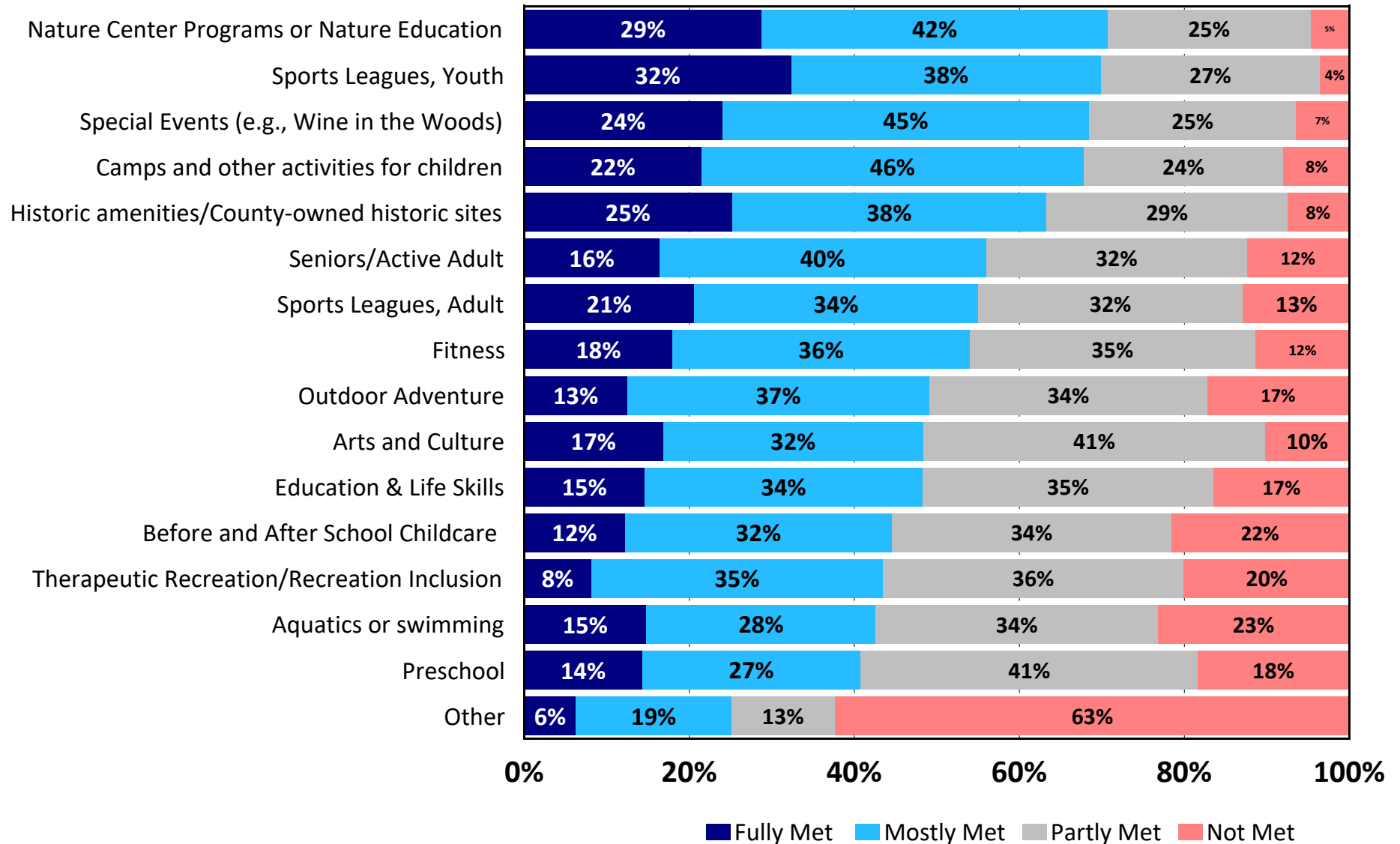
Q12[1]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County That Have a Need for Programs

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



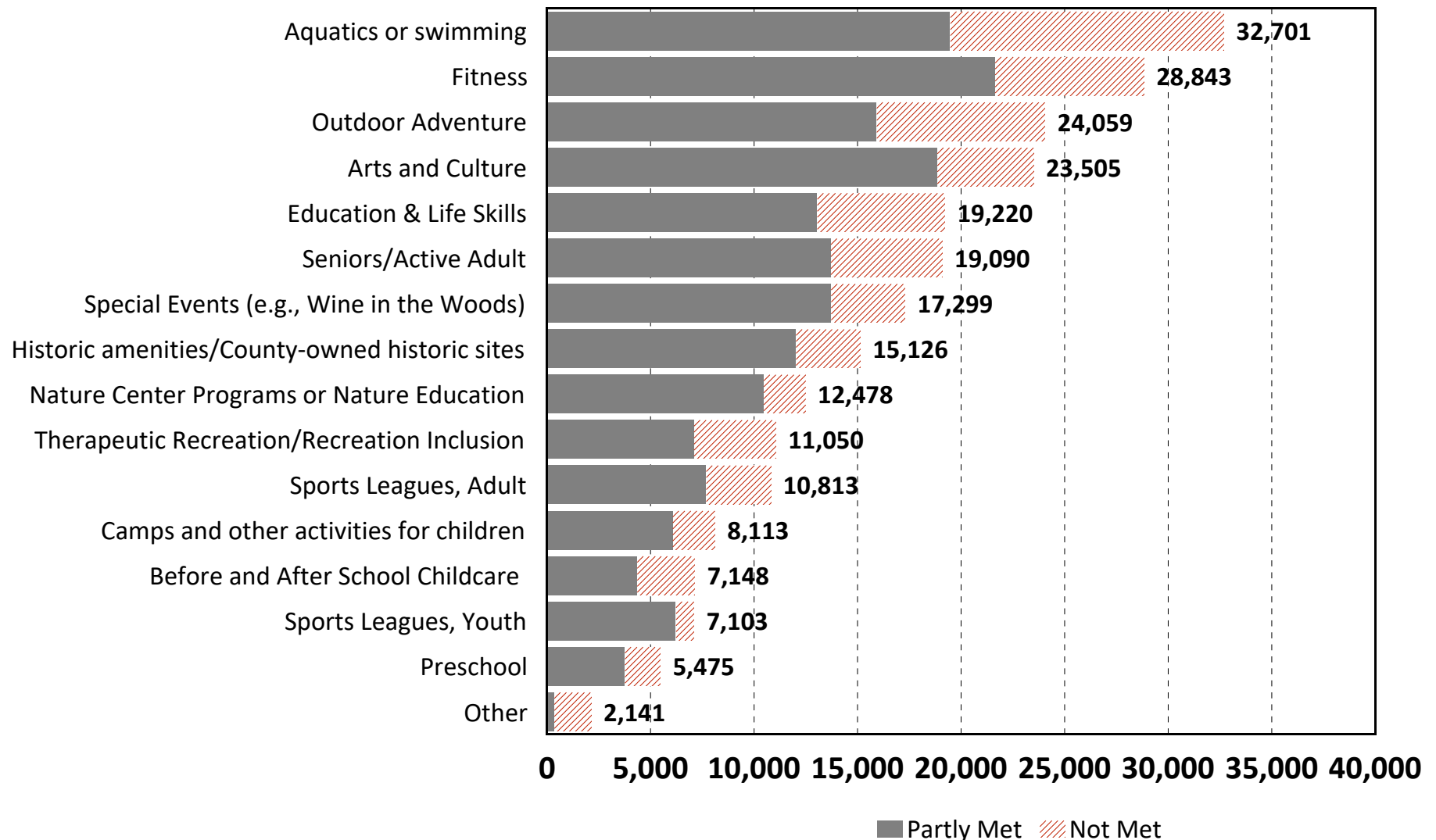
Q12[2]. How Well Programs in Howard County Meet the Needs of Households

by percentage of households that have a need for facilities



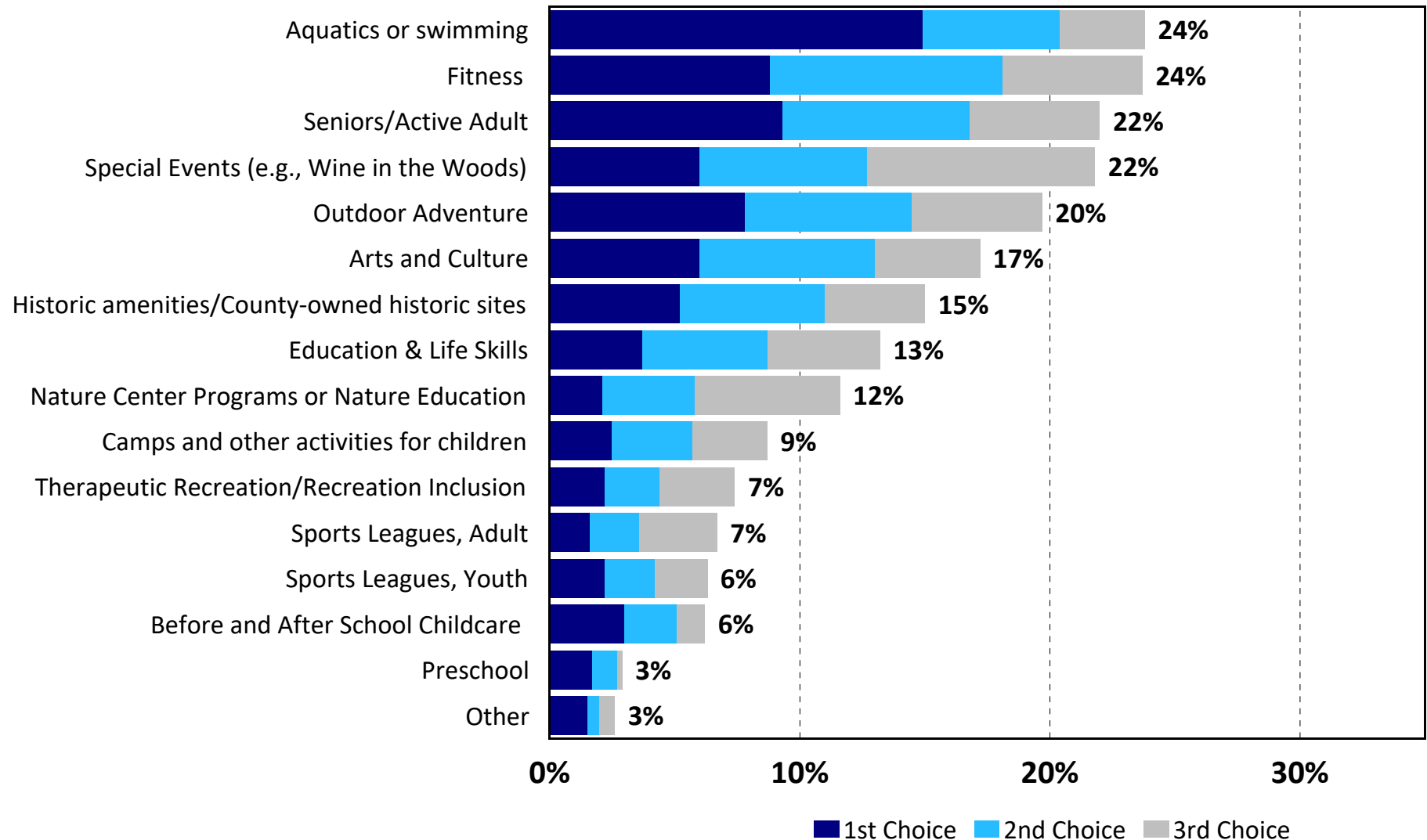
Q12[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Howard County Whose Needs for Programs Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 114,170 households in Howard County



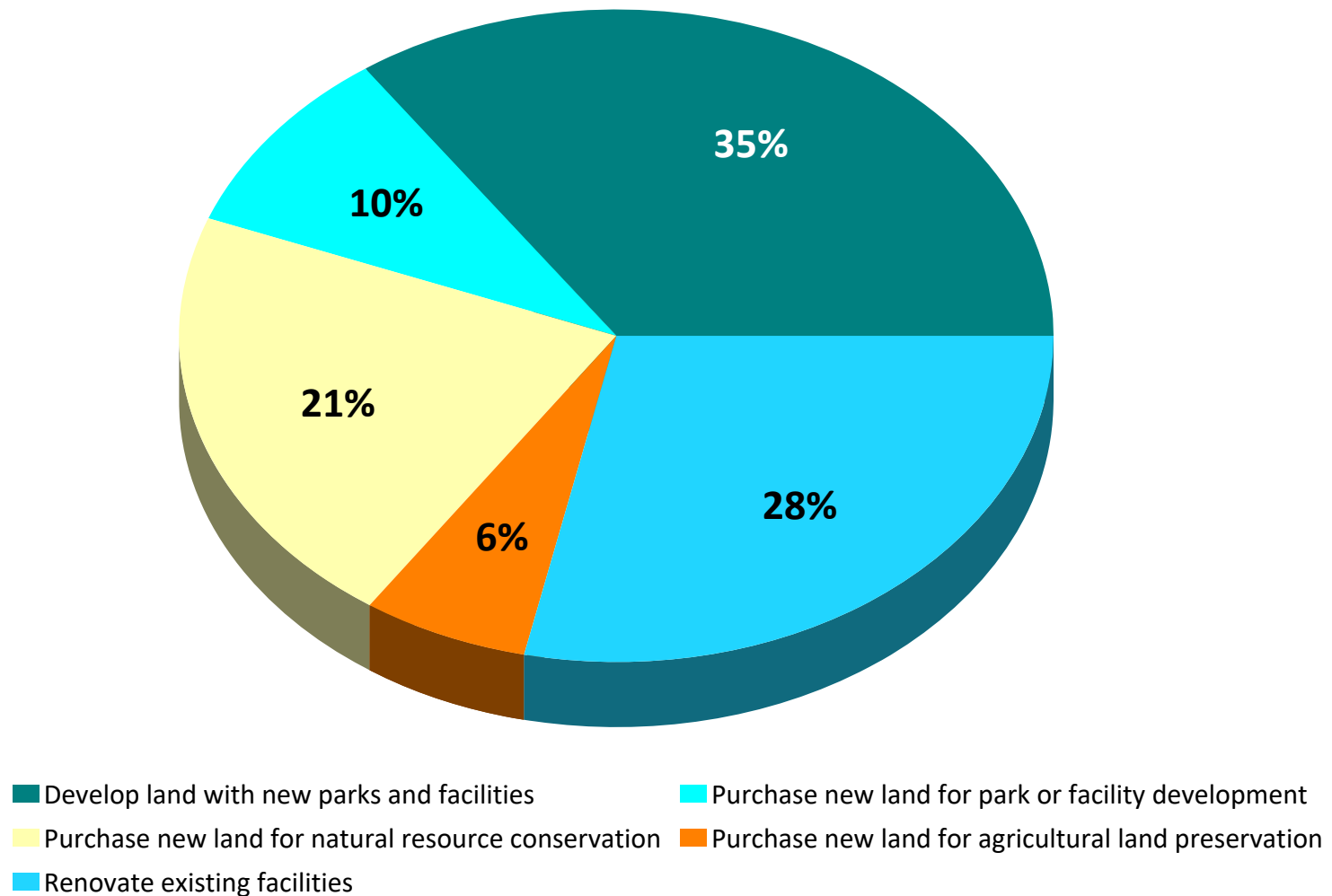
Q13. Programs in Which Residents Would Like to See Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks Invest More Resources

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



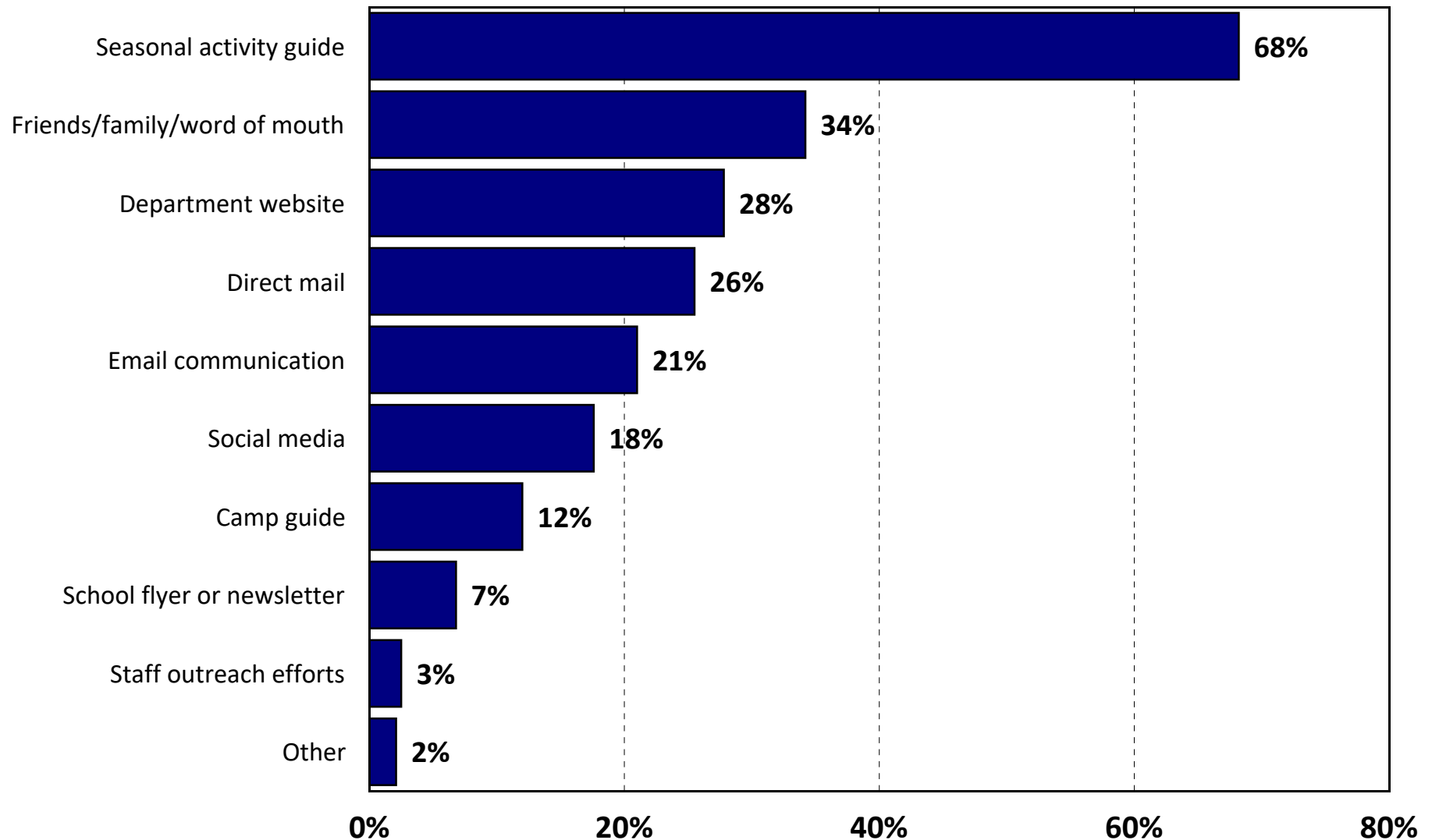
Q14. How Residents Would Prioritize Recreation and Parks Funding

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



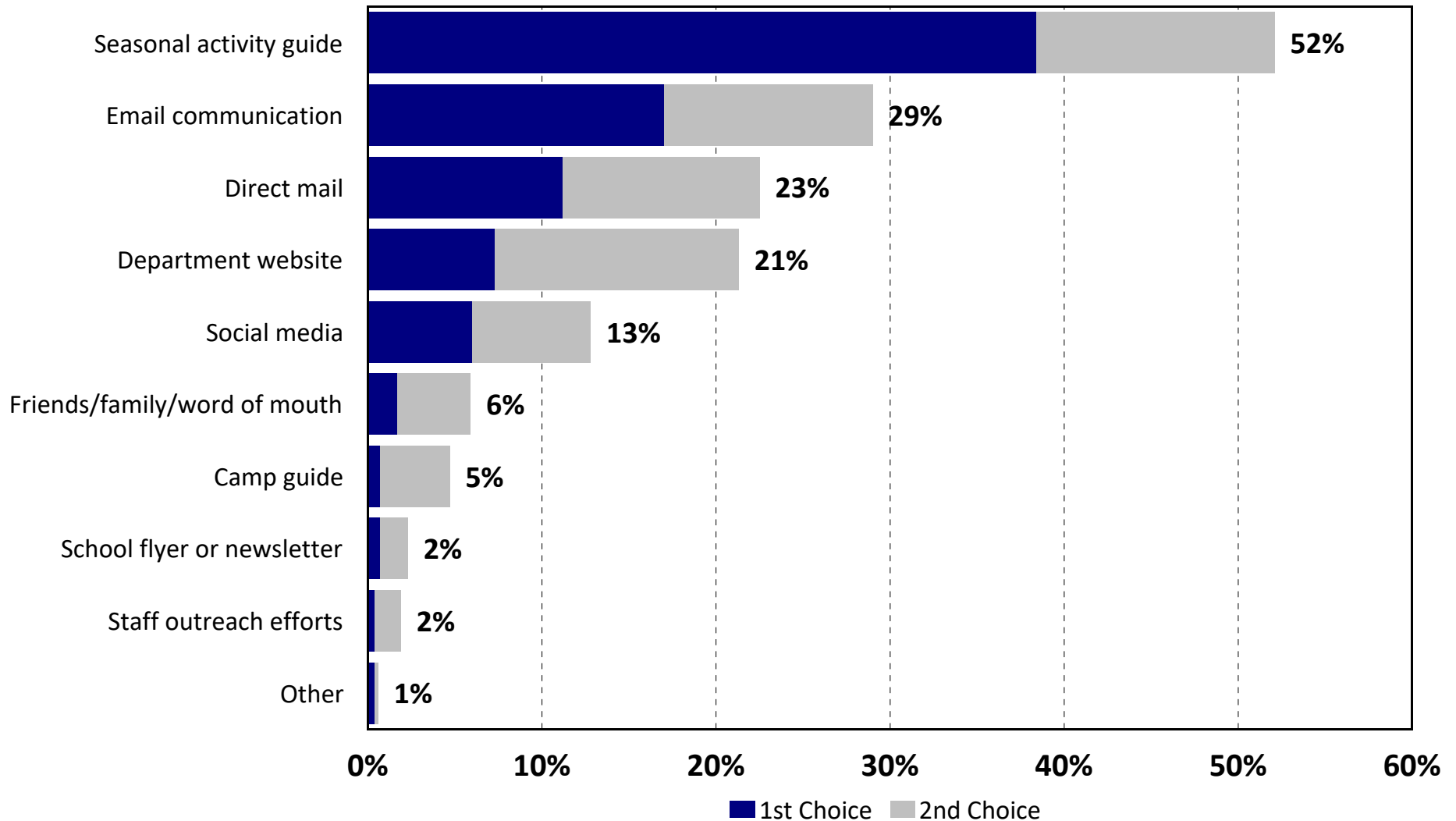
Q15. Ways Residents Learn About Programs and Facilities Offered by Recreation and Parks

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



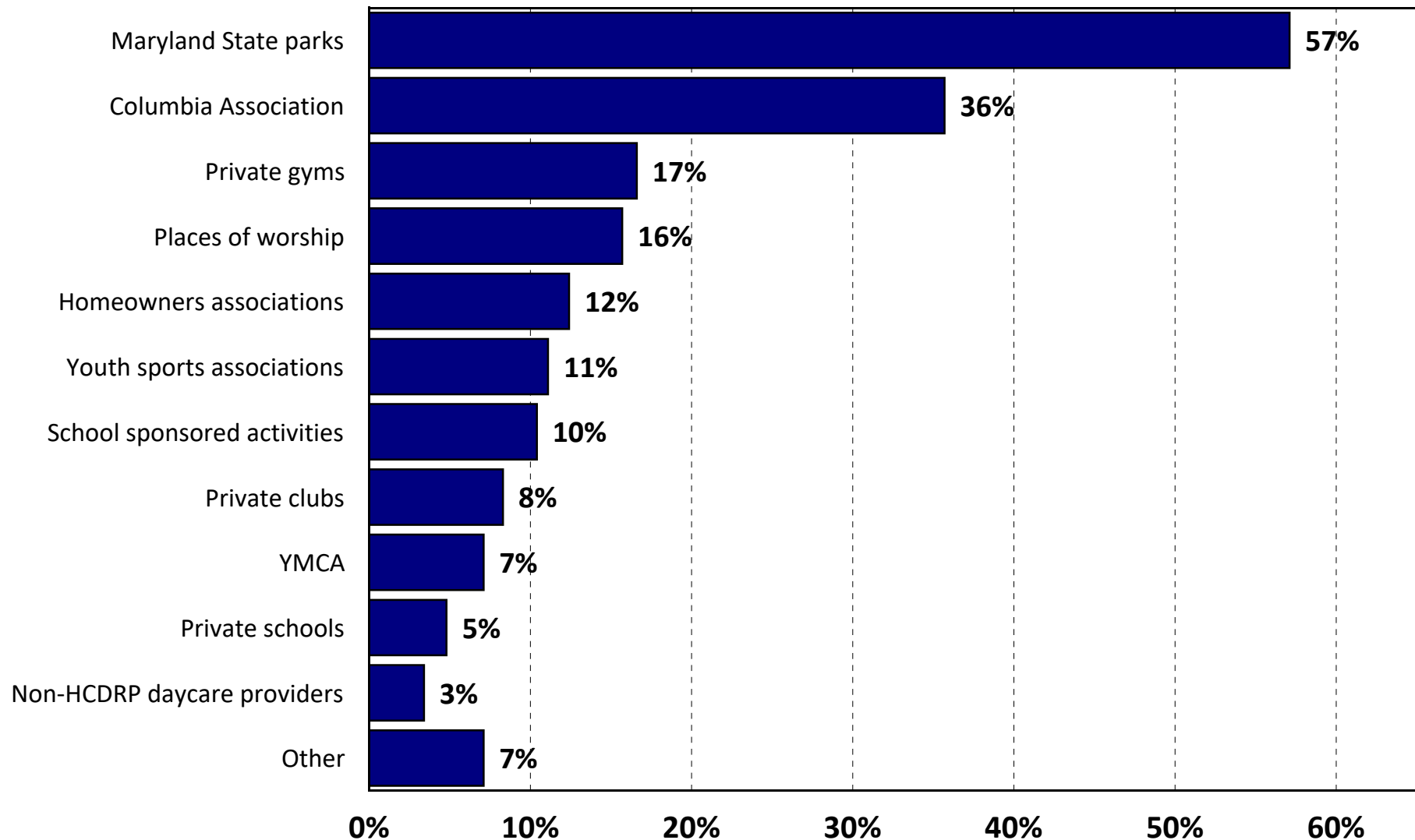
Q16. Methods of Communication Residents Prefer to Receive Information from Recreation and Parks

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top two choices



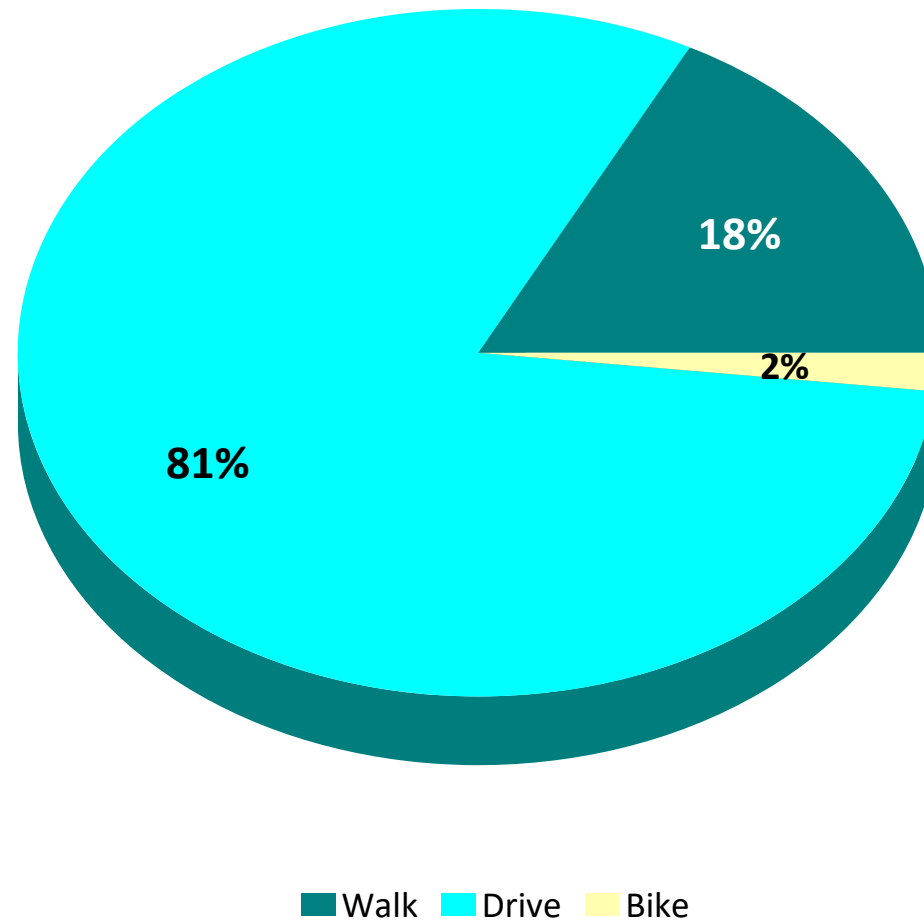
Q17. Facilities Used by Households for Indoor and Outdoor Recreation and Sports Activities During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



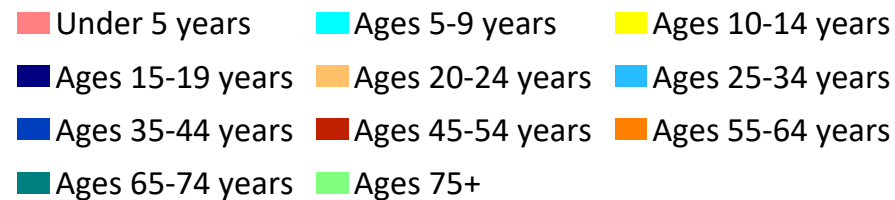
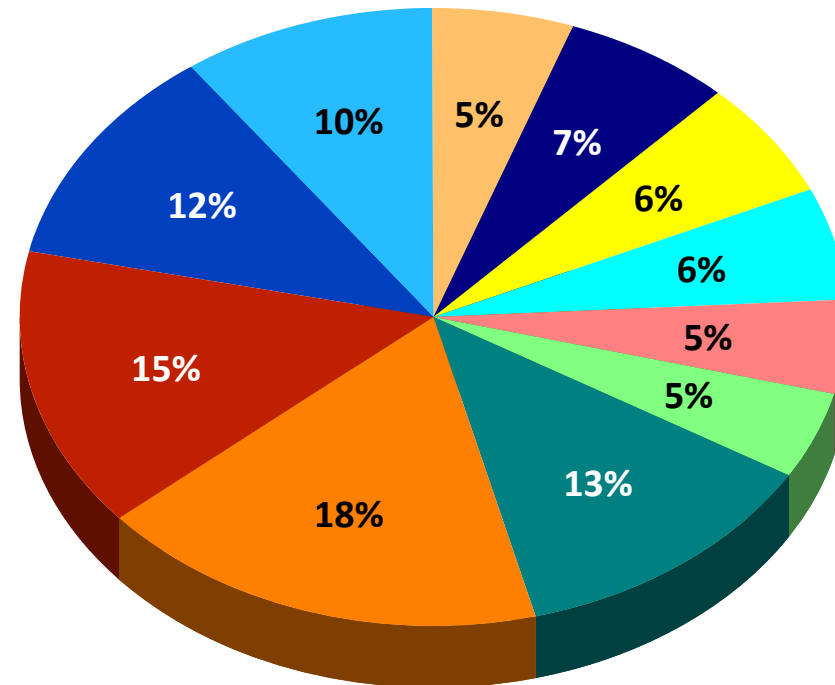
Q18. How Residents Usually Travel to Park Lands, Trails, or Facilities

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



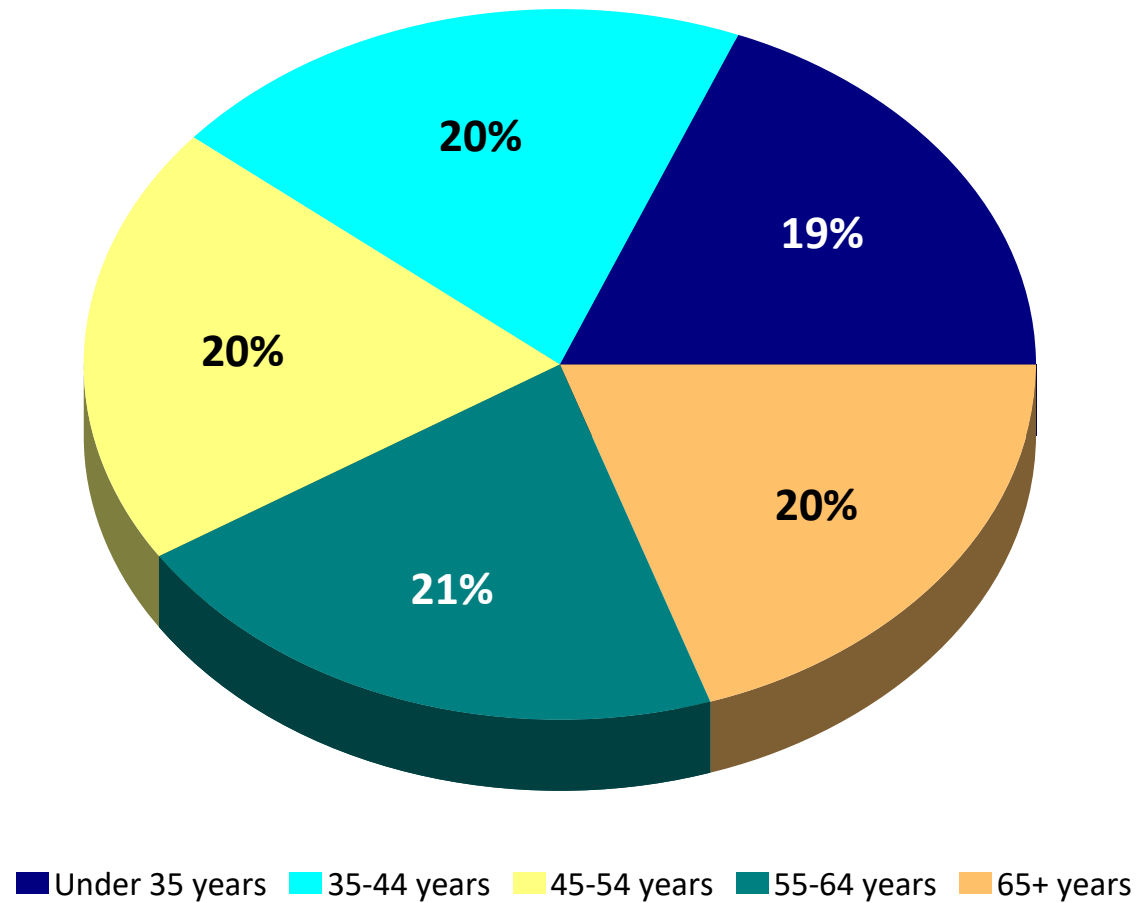
Q19. Demographics: Ages of Household Members

by percentage of persons in household



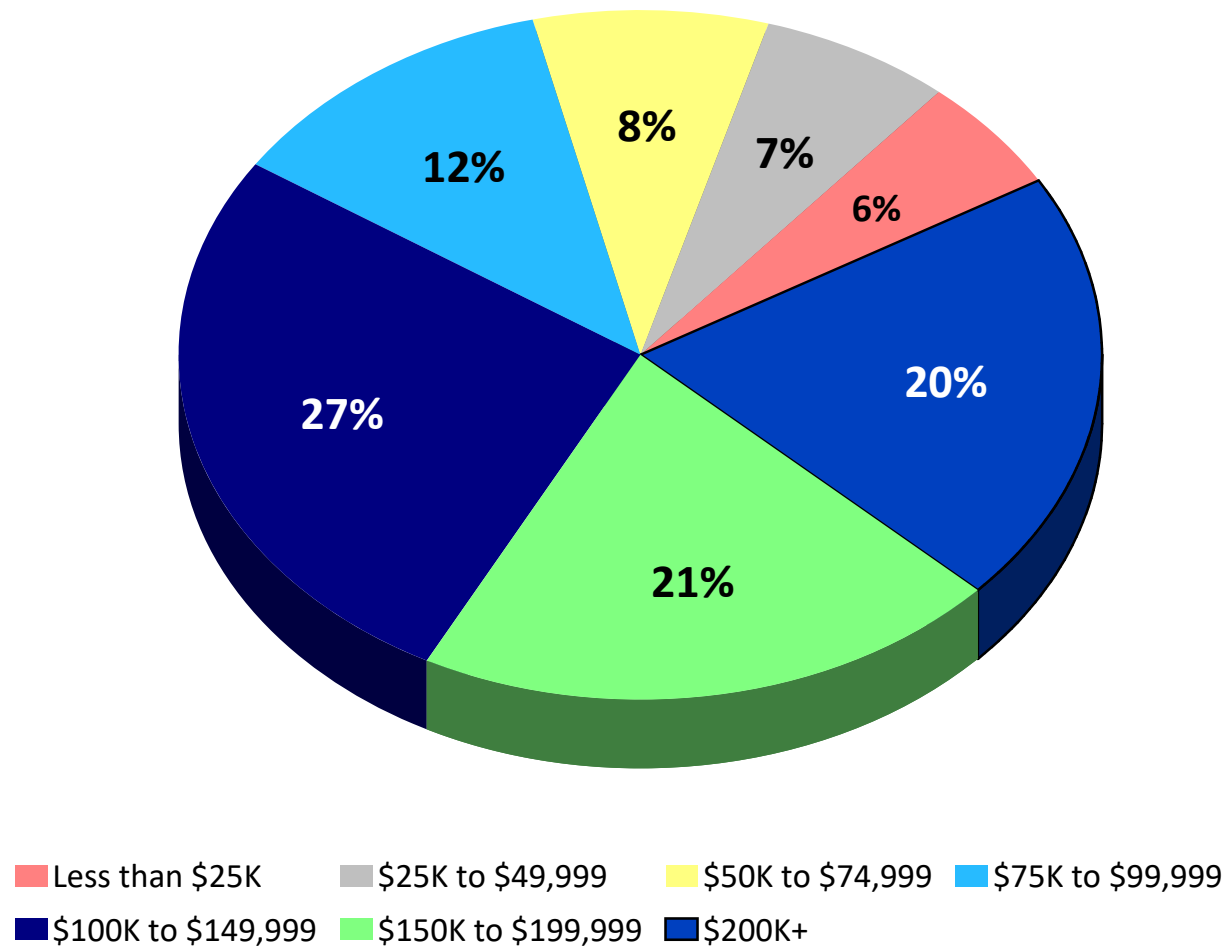
Q20. Demographics: Age of Respondent

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



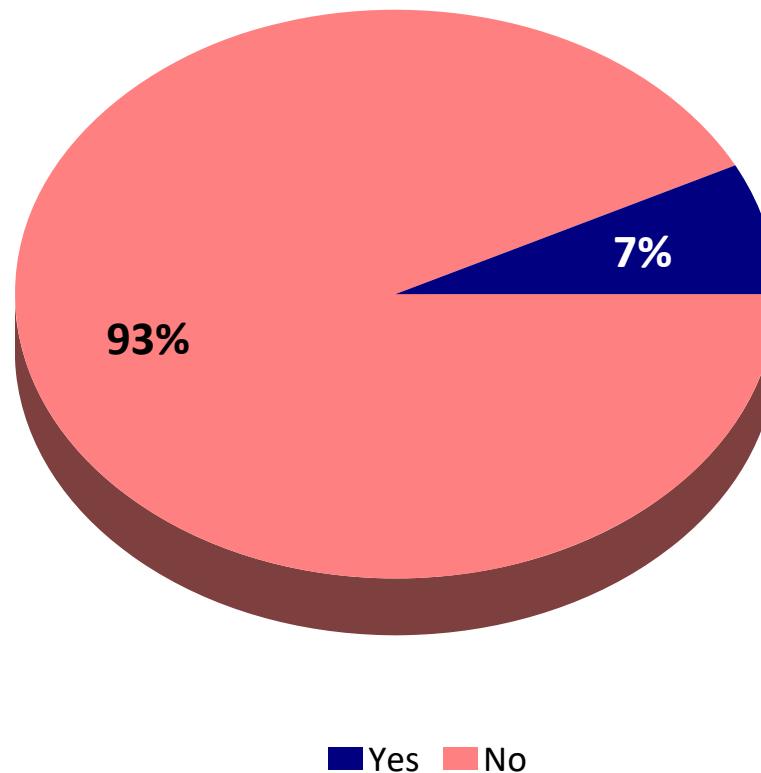
Q21. Demographics: Total Household Income

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



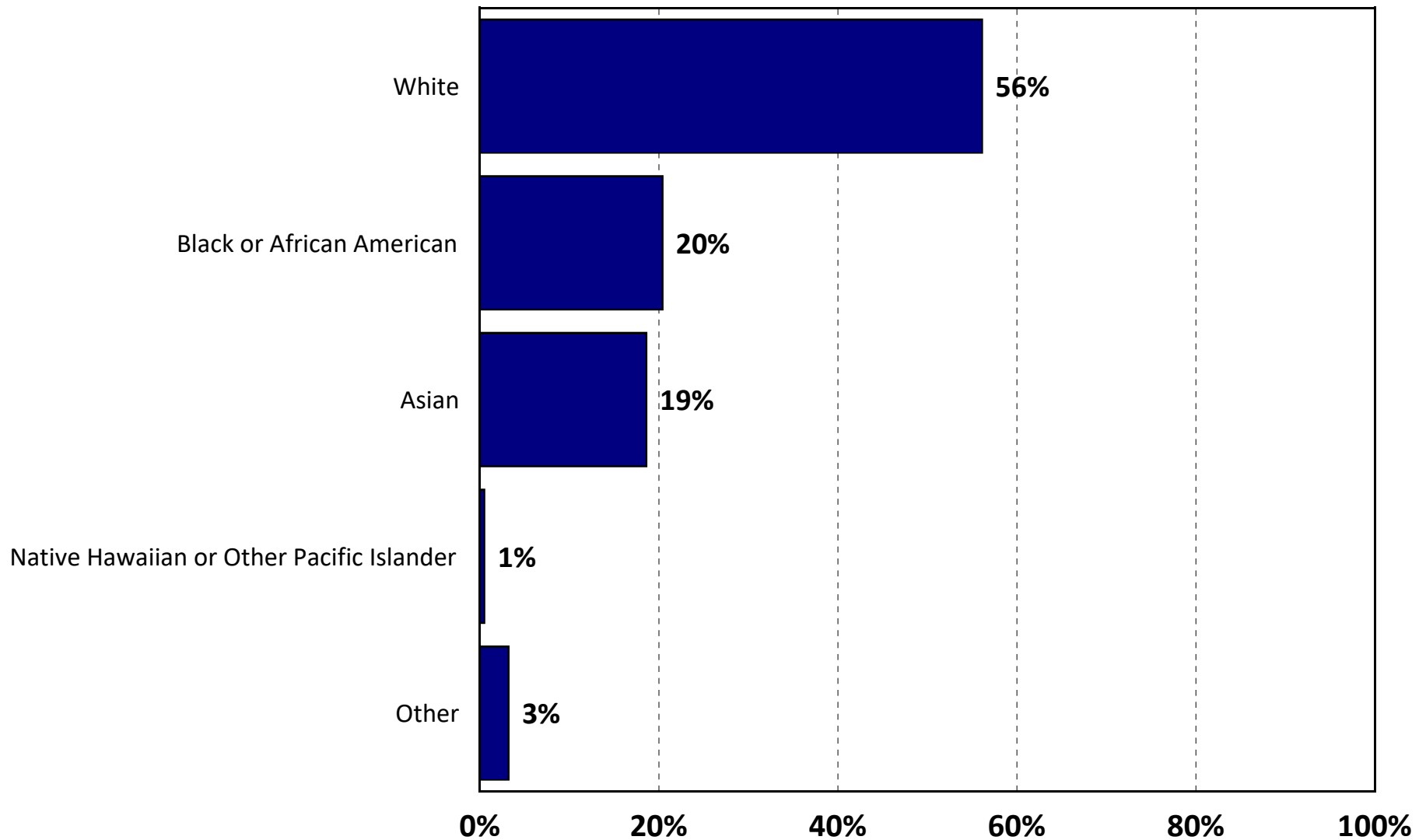
Q22. Demographics: Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Ancestry?

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)



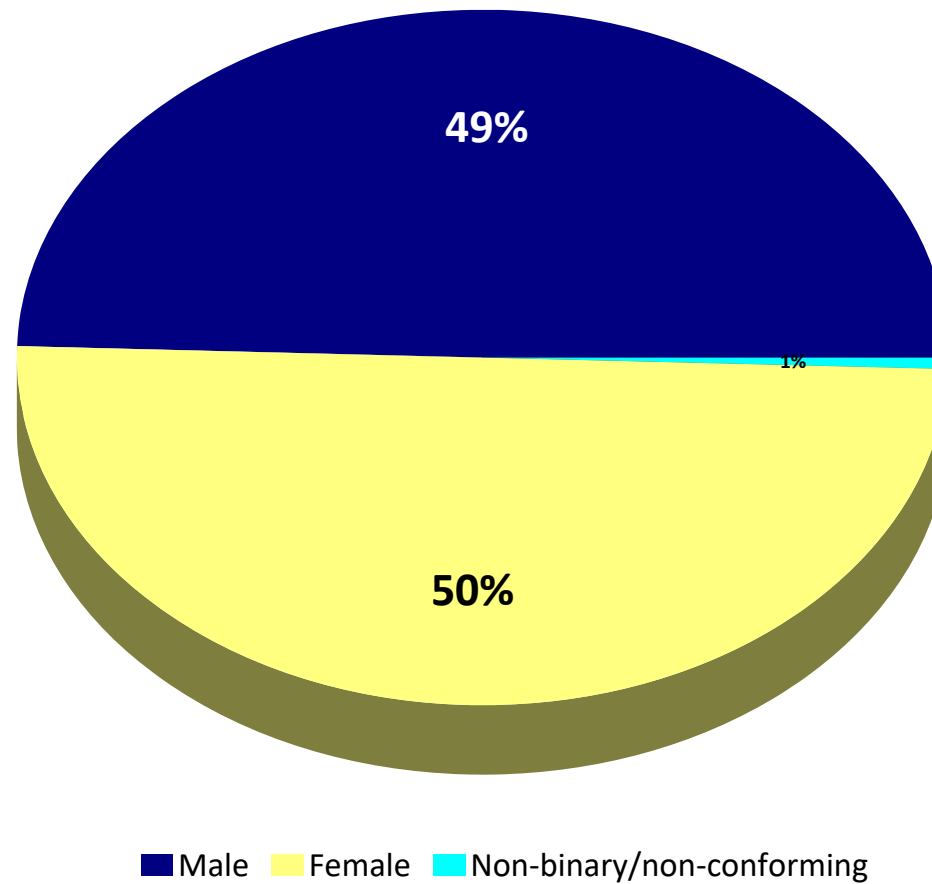
Q23. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



Q24. Demographics: Gender

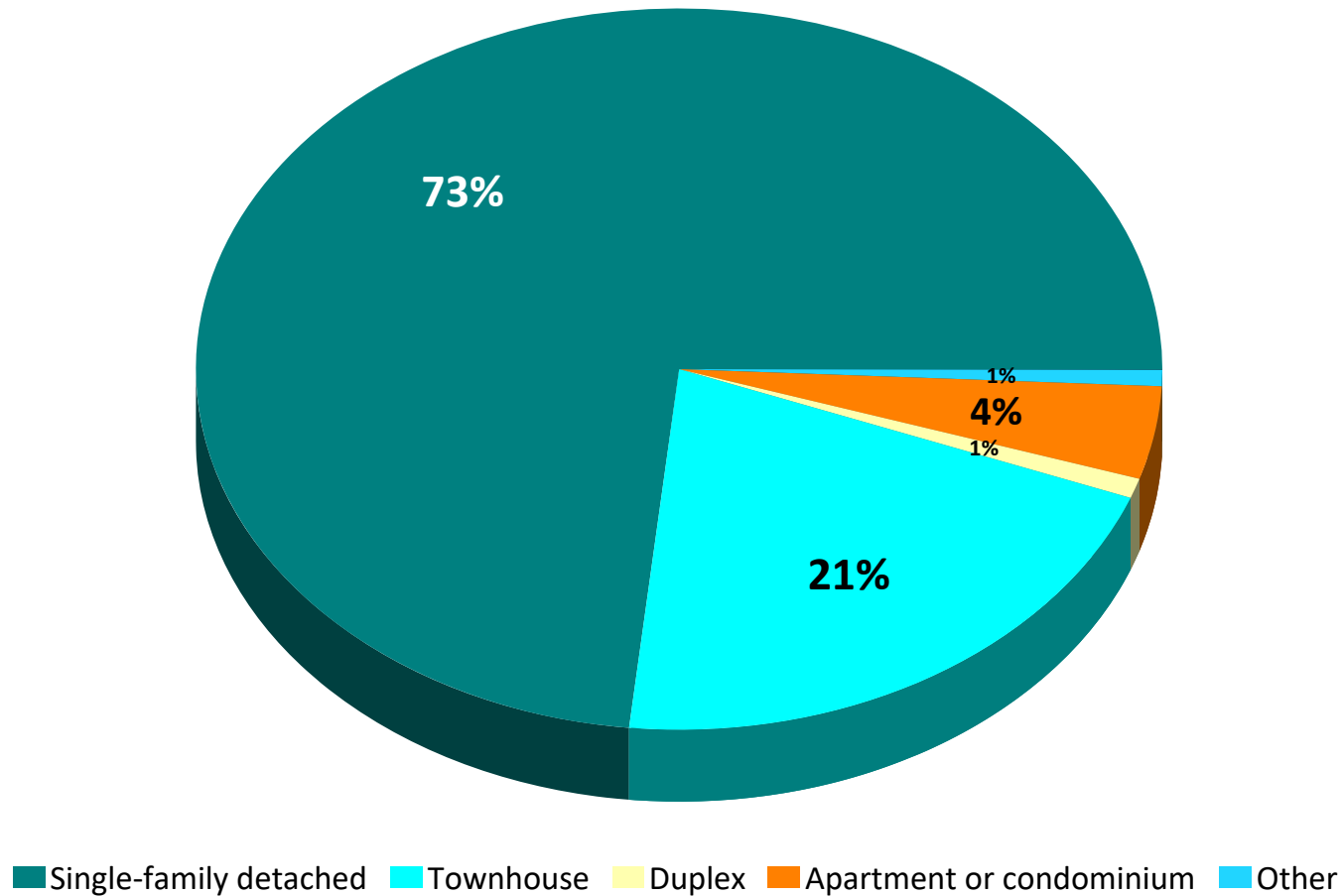
by percentage of respondents



0.1% preferred to self-describe

Q25. Demographics: Type of Home

by percentage of respondents (excluding “not provided”)





2 Priority Investment Rating

Priority Investment Rating (PIR)



Overview

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide governments with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating was developed by ETC Institute to identify the facilities and programs residents think should receive the highest priority for investment. The Priority Investment Rating reflects the importance residents place on items (sum of top 3 choices) and the unmet needs (needs that are only being partly met or not met) for each facility/program relative to the facility/program that rated the highest overall. Since decisions related to future investments should consider both the level of unmet need and the importance of facilities and programs, the PIR weights each of these components equally.

The PIR reflects the sum of the Unmet Needs Rating and the Importance Rating as shown in the equation below:

$$\text{PIR} = \text{UNR} + \text{IR}$$

For example, suppose the Unmet Needs Rating for playgrounds is 26.5 (out of 100) and the Importance Rating for playgrounds is 52 (out of 100), the Priority Investment Rating for playgrounds would be 78.5 (out of 200).

How to Analyze the Charts:

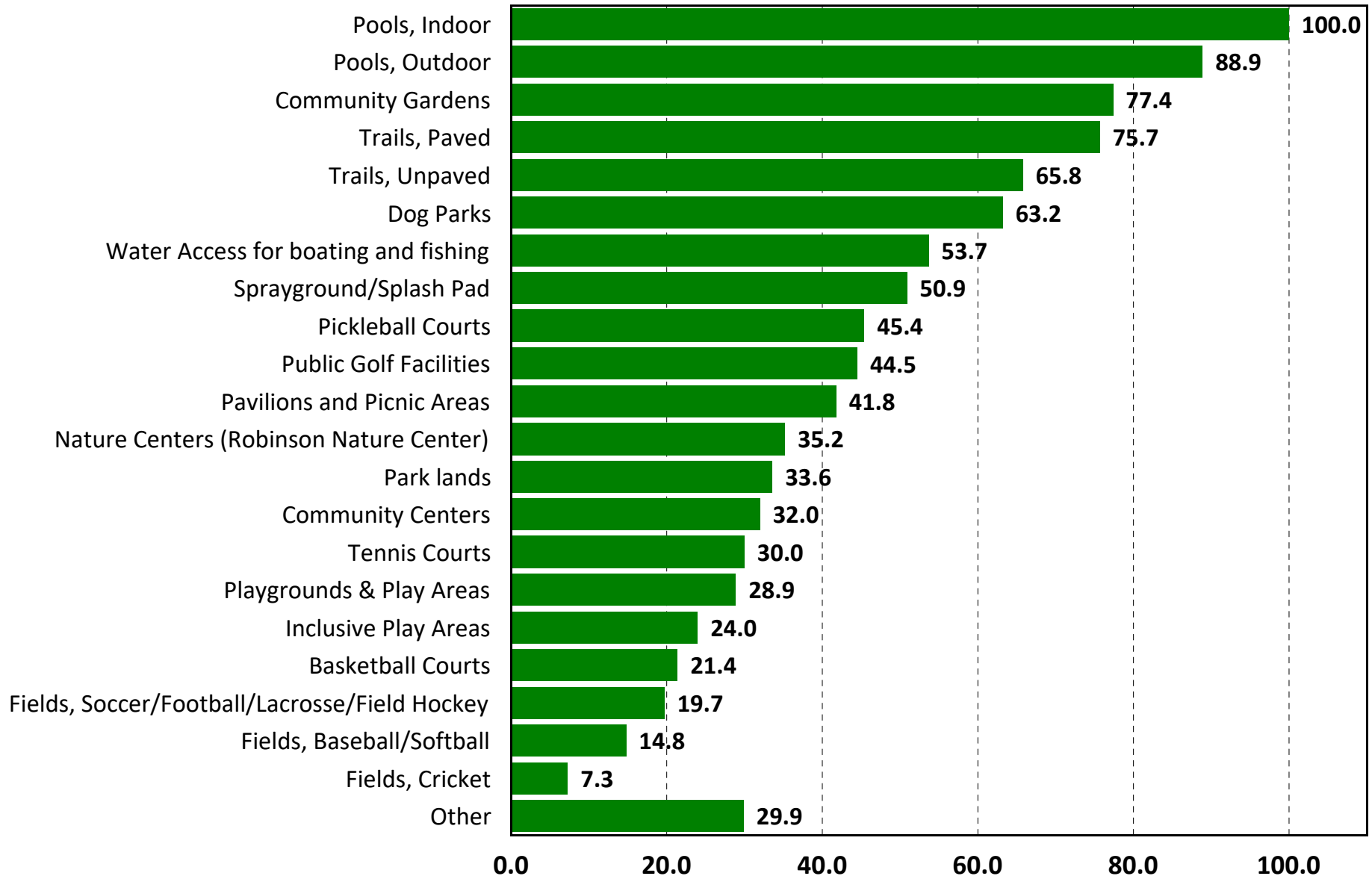
- High Priority Areas are those with a PIR of at least 100. A rating of 100 or above generally indicates there is a relatively high level of unmet need and residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements in this area are likely to have a positive impact on the greatest number of households.
- Medium Priority Areas are those with a PIR of 50-99. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a medium to high level of unmet need or a significant percentage of residents generally think it is important to fund improvements in these areas.
- Low Priority Areas are those with a PIR below 50. A rating in this range generally indicates there is a relatively low level of unmet need and residents do not think it is important to fund improvements in these areas. Improvements may be warranted if the needs of very specialized populations are being targeted.

The following pages show the Unmet Needs Rating, Importance Rating, and Priority Investment Rating for facilities and programs.

Unmet Needs Rating for Facilities

the rating for the item with the most unmet need=100

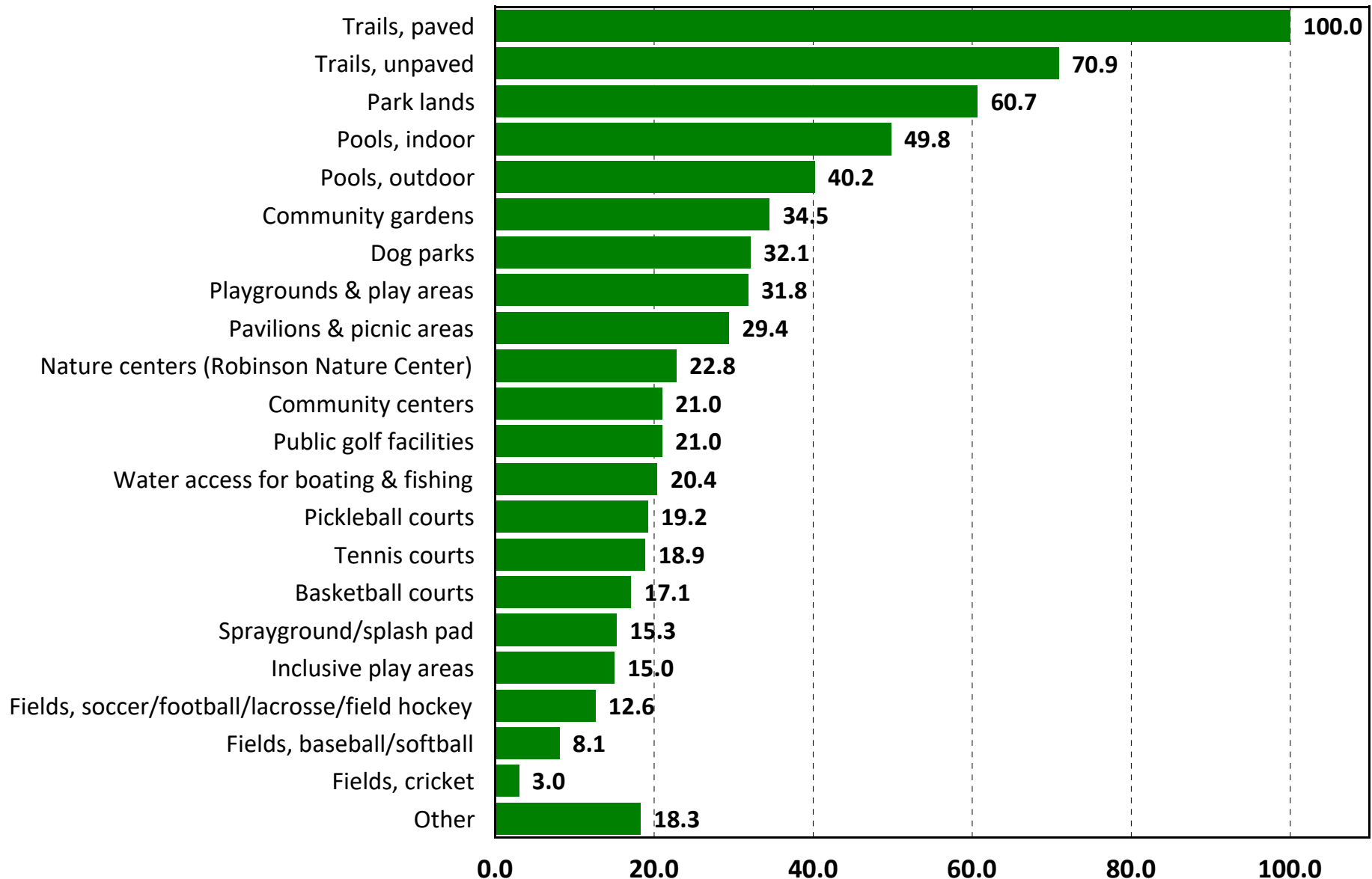
the rating of all other items reflects the relative amount of unmet need for each item compared to the item with the most unmet need



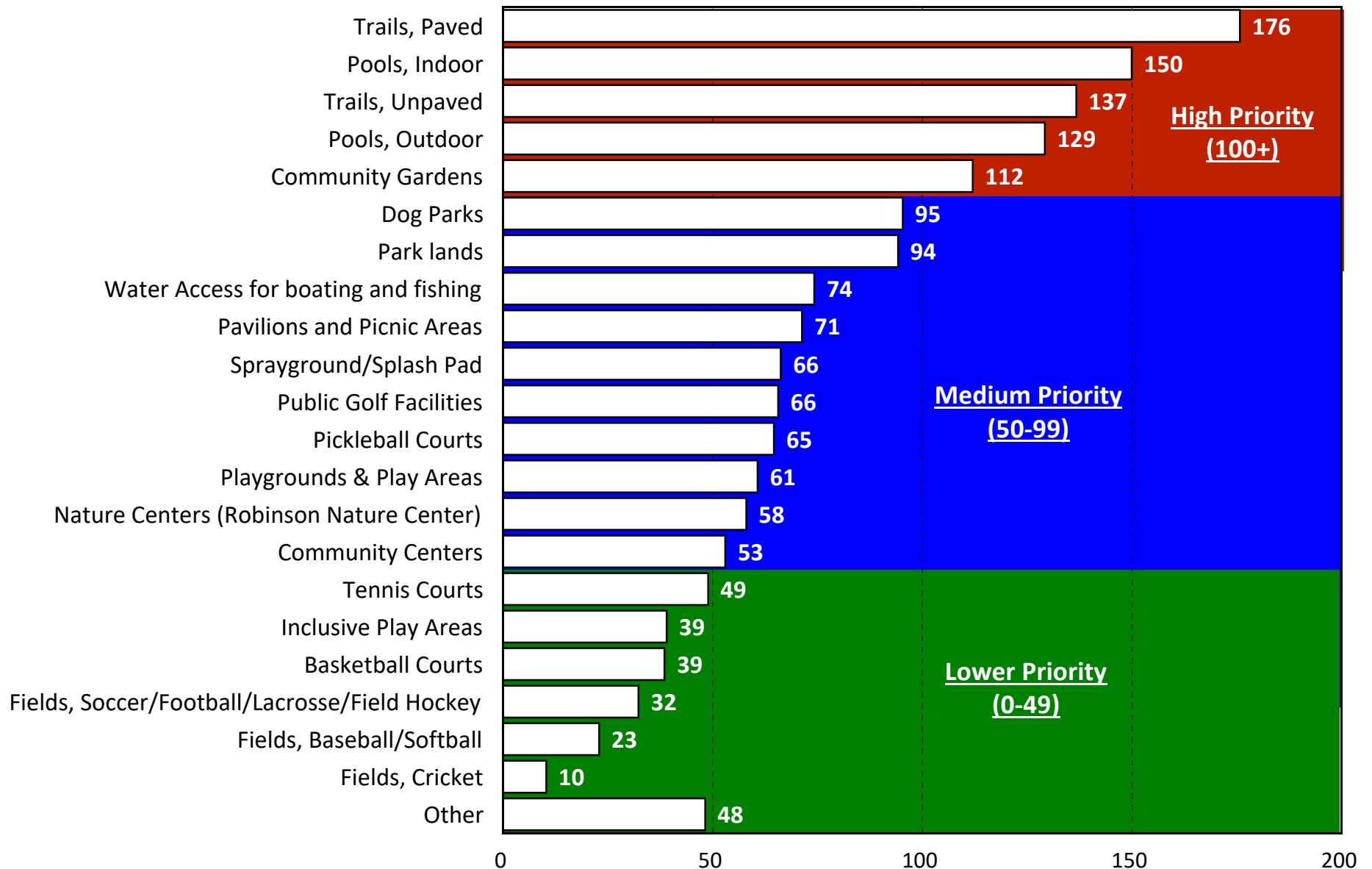
Importance Rating for Facilities

the rating for the item rated as the most important=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative level of importance for each item compared to the item rated as the most important



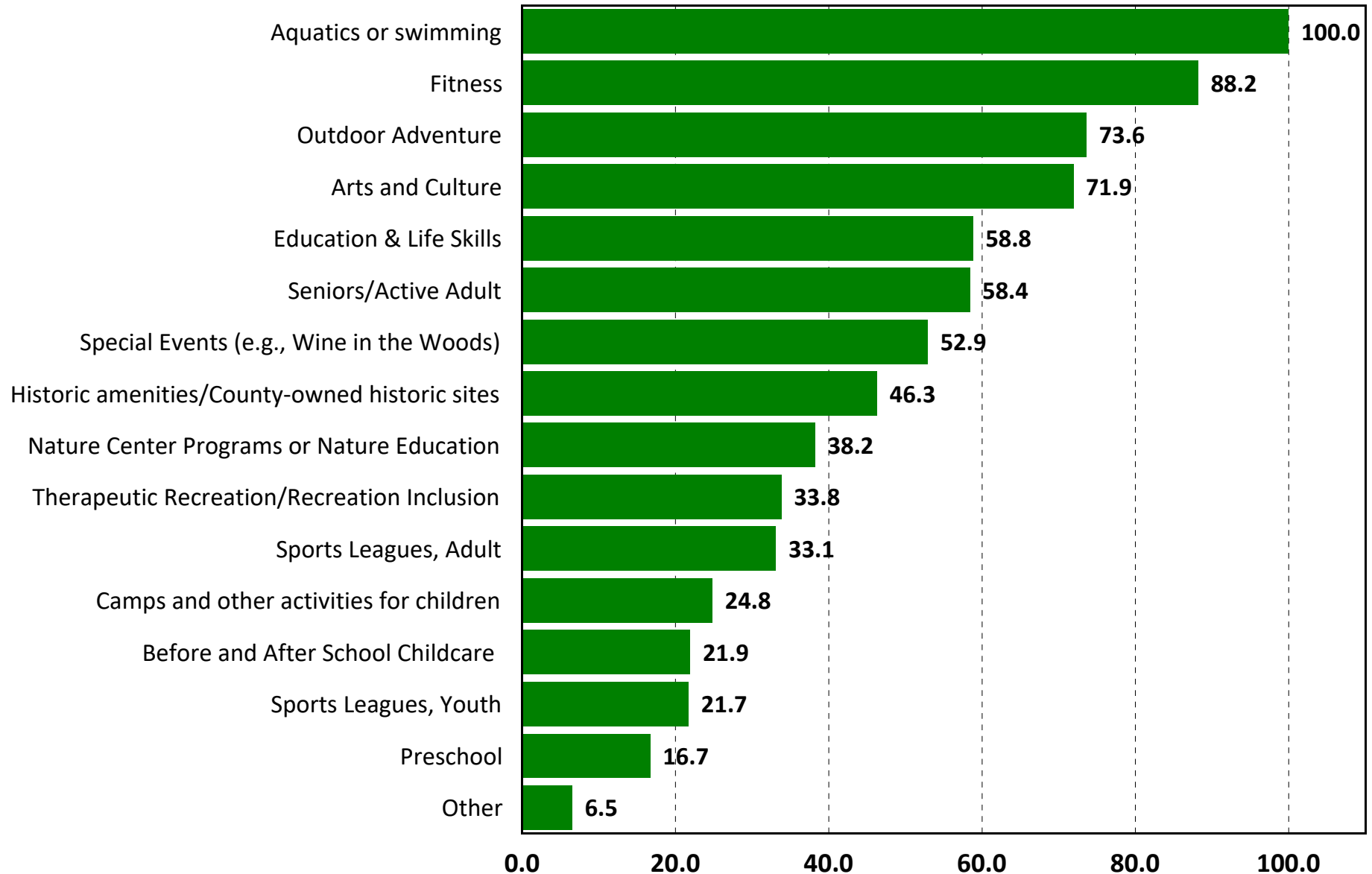
Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating



Unmet Needs Rating for Programs

the rating for the item with the most unmet need=100

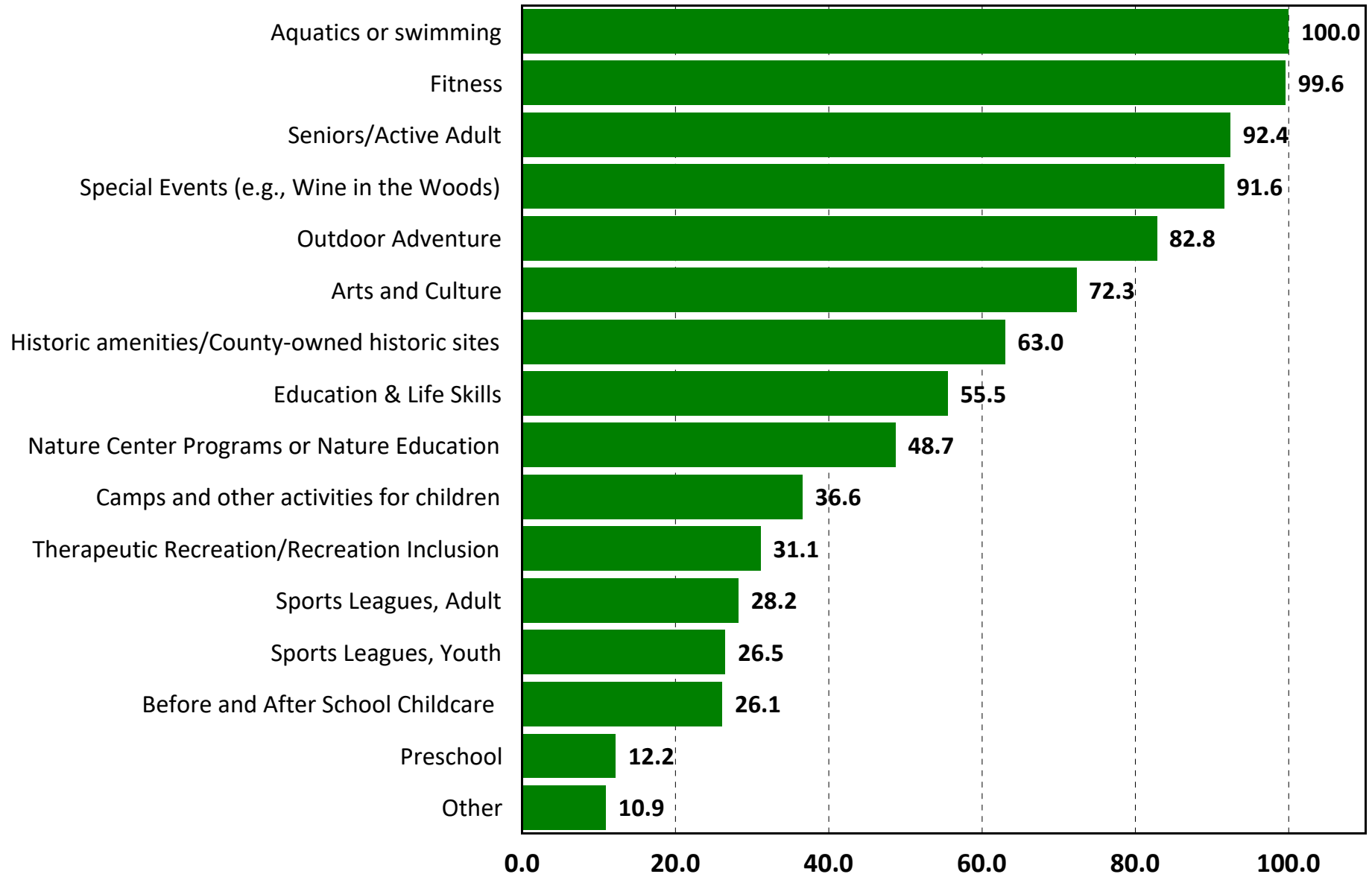
the rating of all other items reflects the relative amount of unmet need for each item compared to the item with the most unmet need



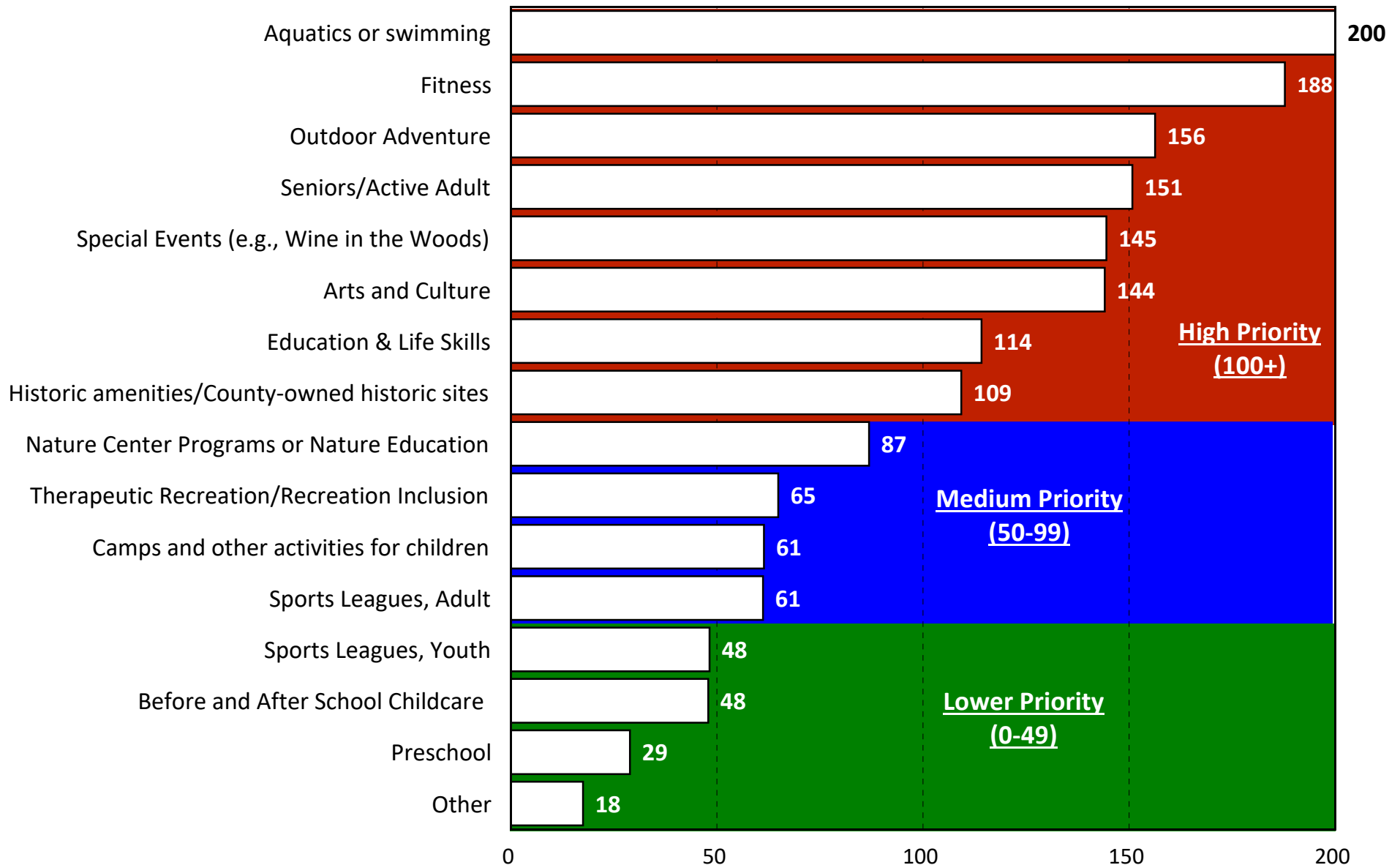
Importance Rating for Programs

the rating for the item rated as the most important=100

the rating of all other items reflects the relative level of importance for each item compared to the item rated as the most important



Top Priorities for Investment for Programs Based on the Priority Investment Rating



3 Benchmarking Analysis

Benchmarking Analysis



Overview

Since 1998, ETC Institute has conducted household surveys for needs assessments, feasibility studies, customer satisfaction, fees and charges comparisons, and other parks and recreation issues in more than 400 communities in 49 states across the country.

The results of these surveys have provided an unparalleled database of information to compare responses from household residents in client communities to “National Averages” and therefore provide a unique tool to “assist organizations in better decision making.”

Communities within the database include a full-range of municipal and county governments, with populations ranging from 20,000 to over 1 million residents. They include communities in warm weather and cold weather climates, mature communities, and some of the fastest growing cities and counties in the country.

“National Averages” have been developed for numerous strategically important parks and recreation planning and management issues, including: customer satisfaction and usage of parks and programs; methods for receiving marketing information; reasons that prevent members of households from using parks and recreation facilities more often; priority recreation programs, parks, facilities and trails to improve or develop; priority programming spaces to have in planned community centers and aquatic facilities; potential attendance for planned indoor community centers and outdoor aquatic centers, etc.

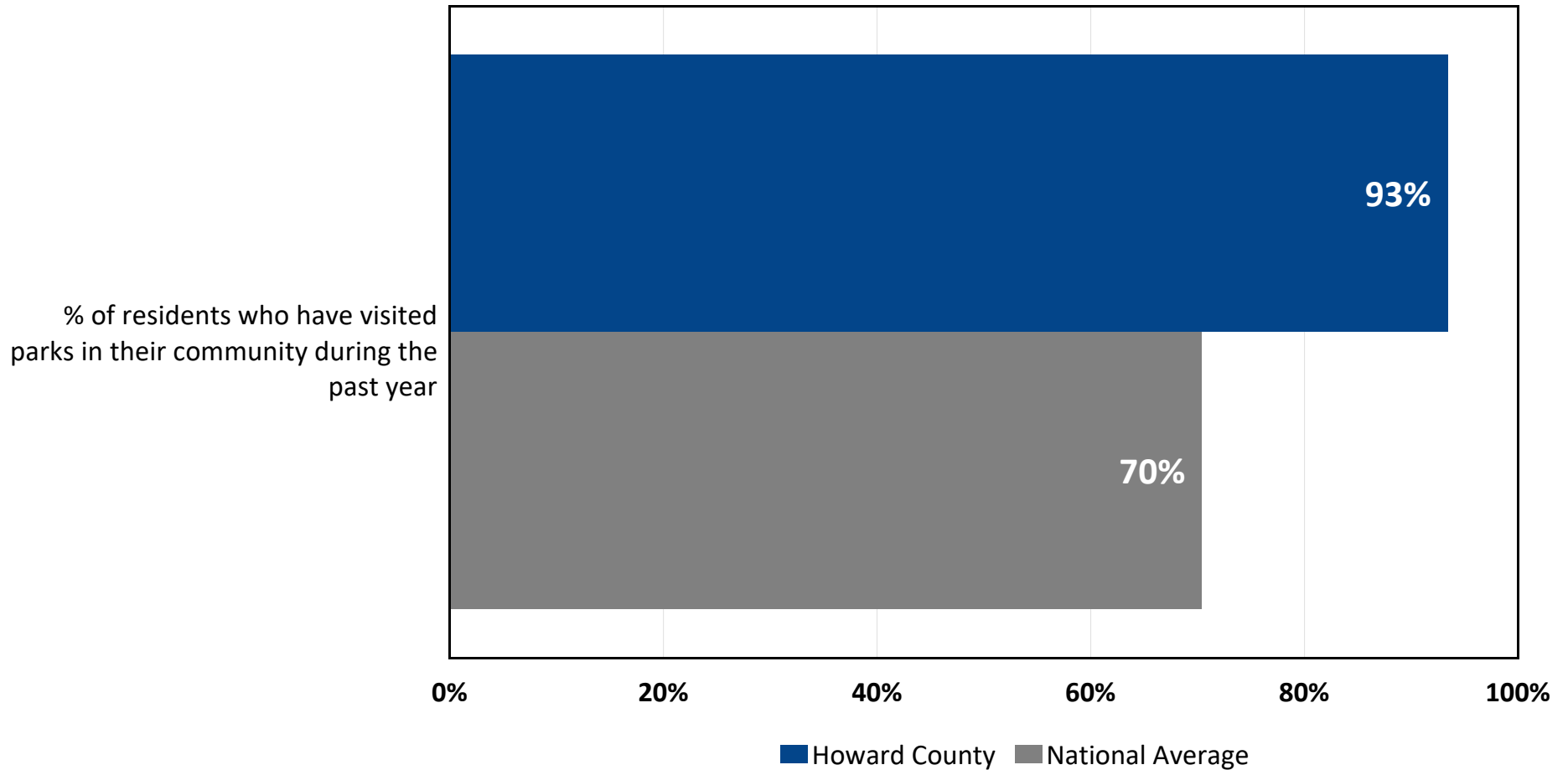
Results from household responses for Howard County were compared to National Benchmarks to gain further strategic information. A summary of all comparisons are shown in the graphs on the following pages.

Note: The benchmarking data contained in this report is protected intellectual property. Any reproduction of the benchmarking information in this report by persons or organizations not directly affiliated with Howard County, Maryland is not authorized without written consent from ETC Institute.

Usage of Parks

Howard County vs. National Average

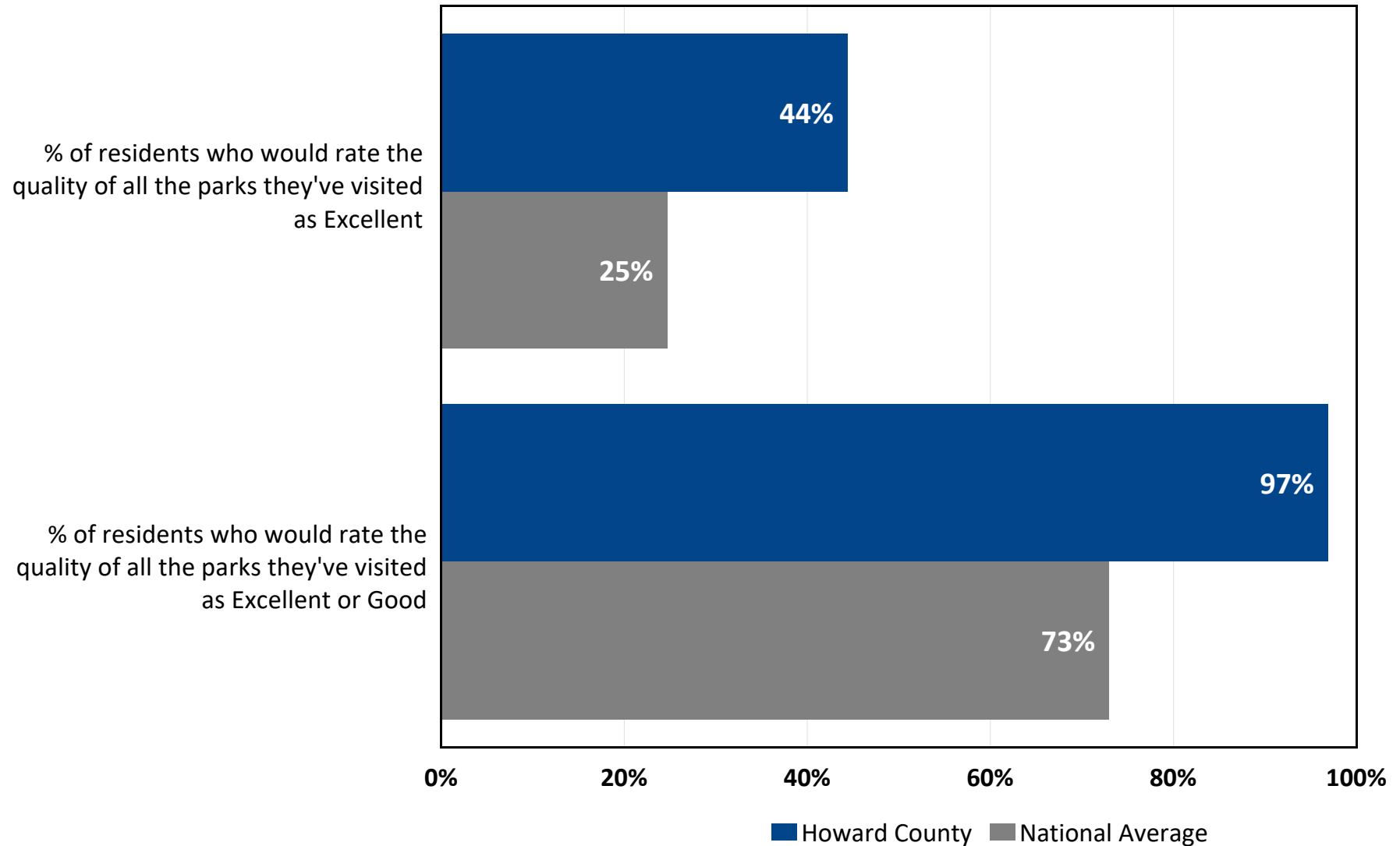
by percentage of respondents (without "don't know")



Overall Ratings for Parks

Howard County vs. National Average

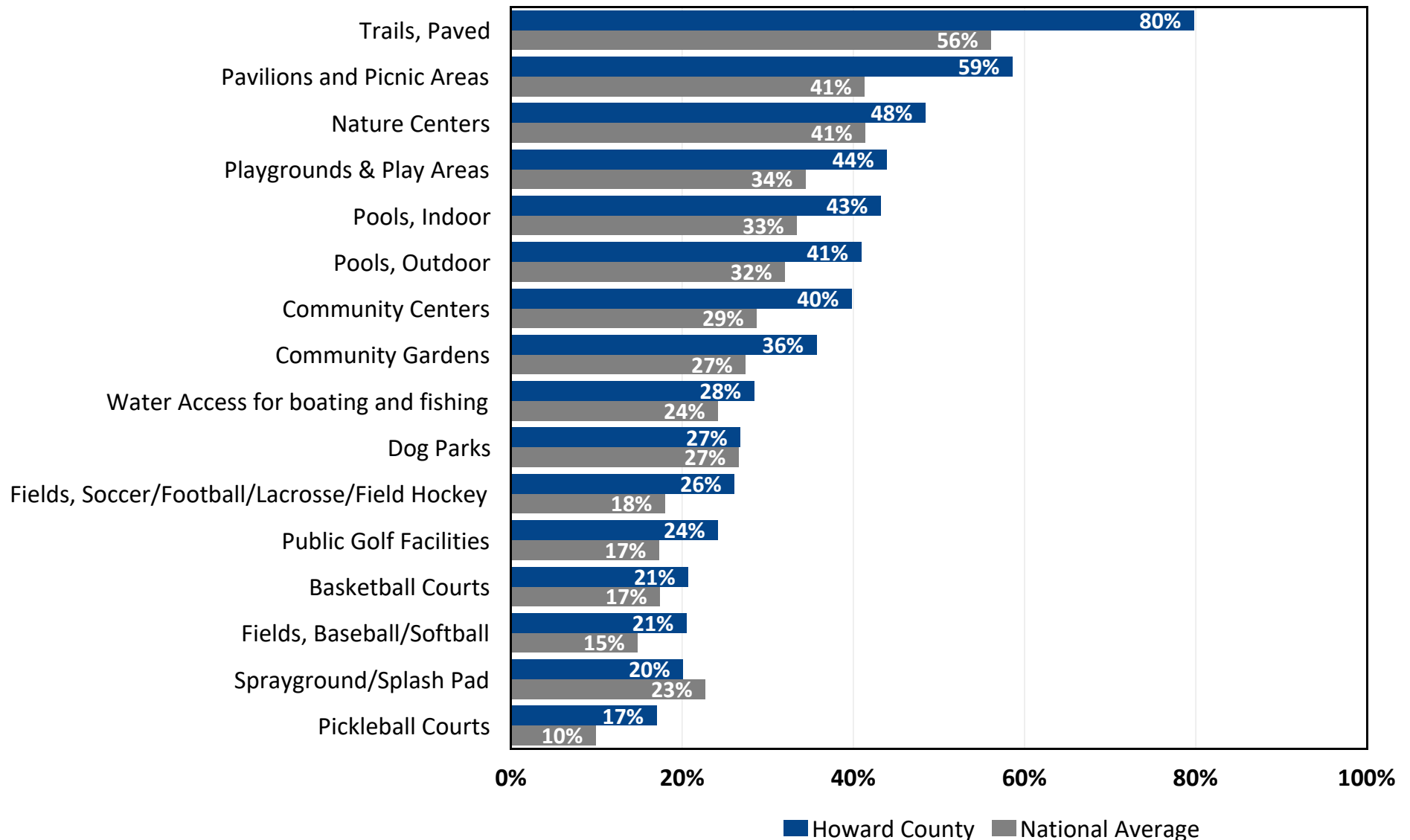
by percentage of respondents (without "don't know")



Households with Needs for Parks and Recreation Facilities

Howard County vs. National Average

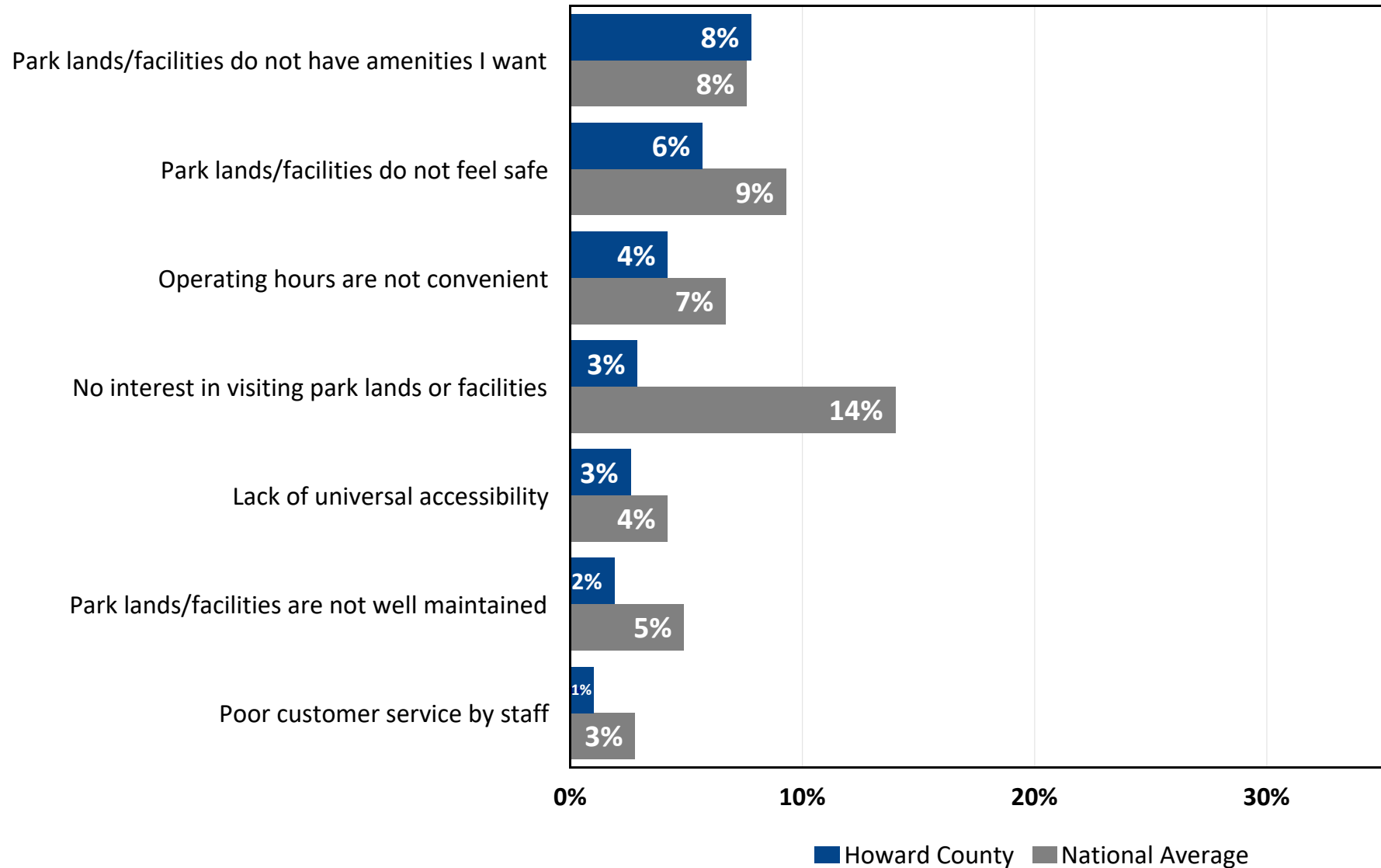
by percentage of respondents with a need for facilities



Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks & Recreation Facilities

Howard County vs. National Average

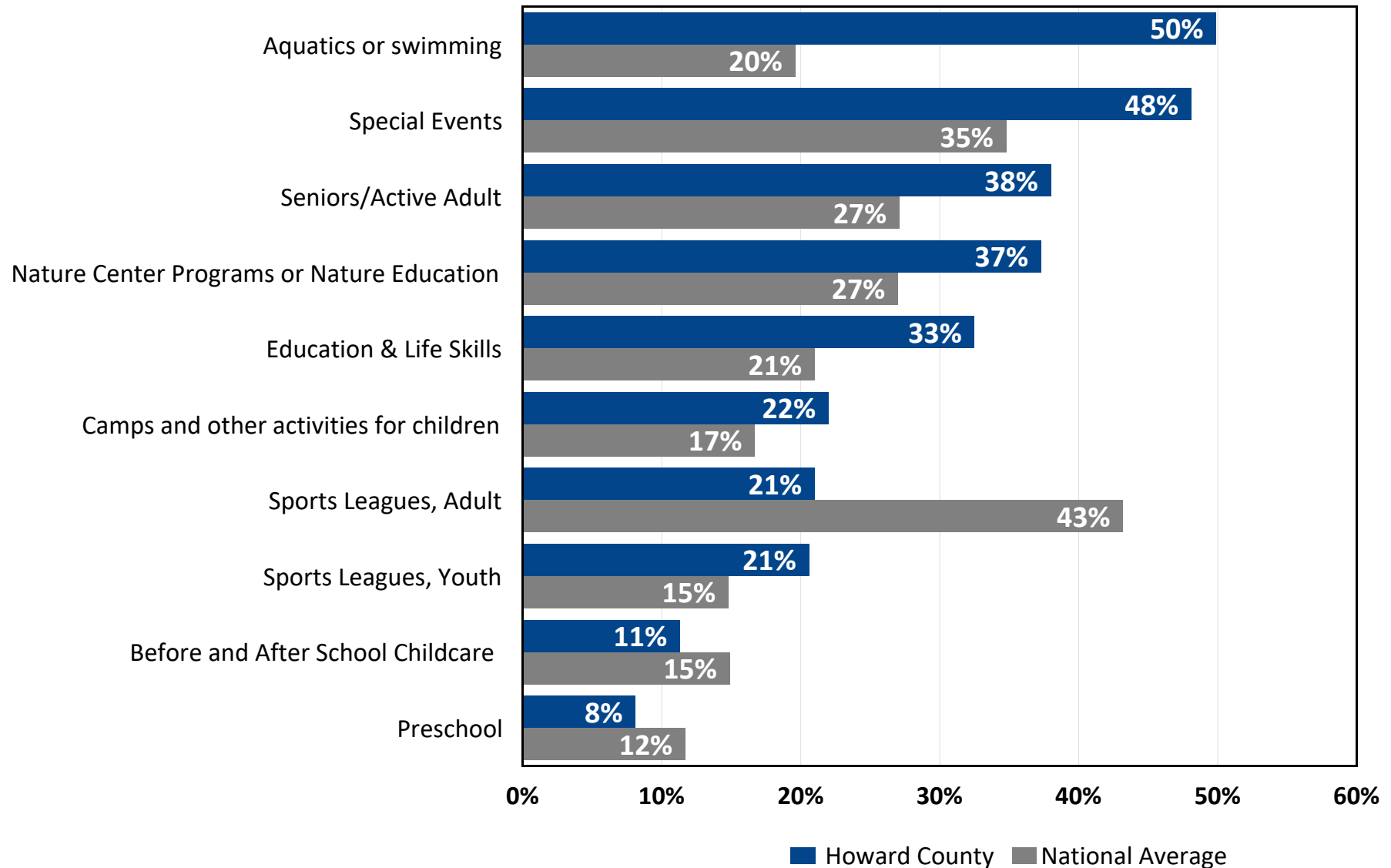
by percentage of respondents



Households with Needs for Recreation Programs

Howard County vs. National Average

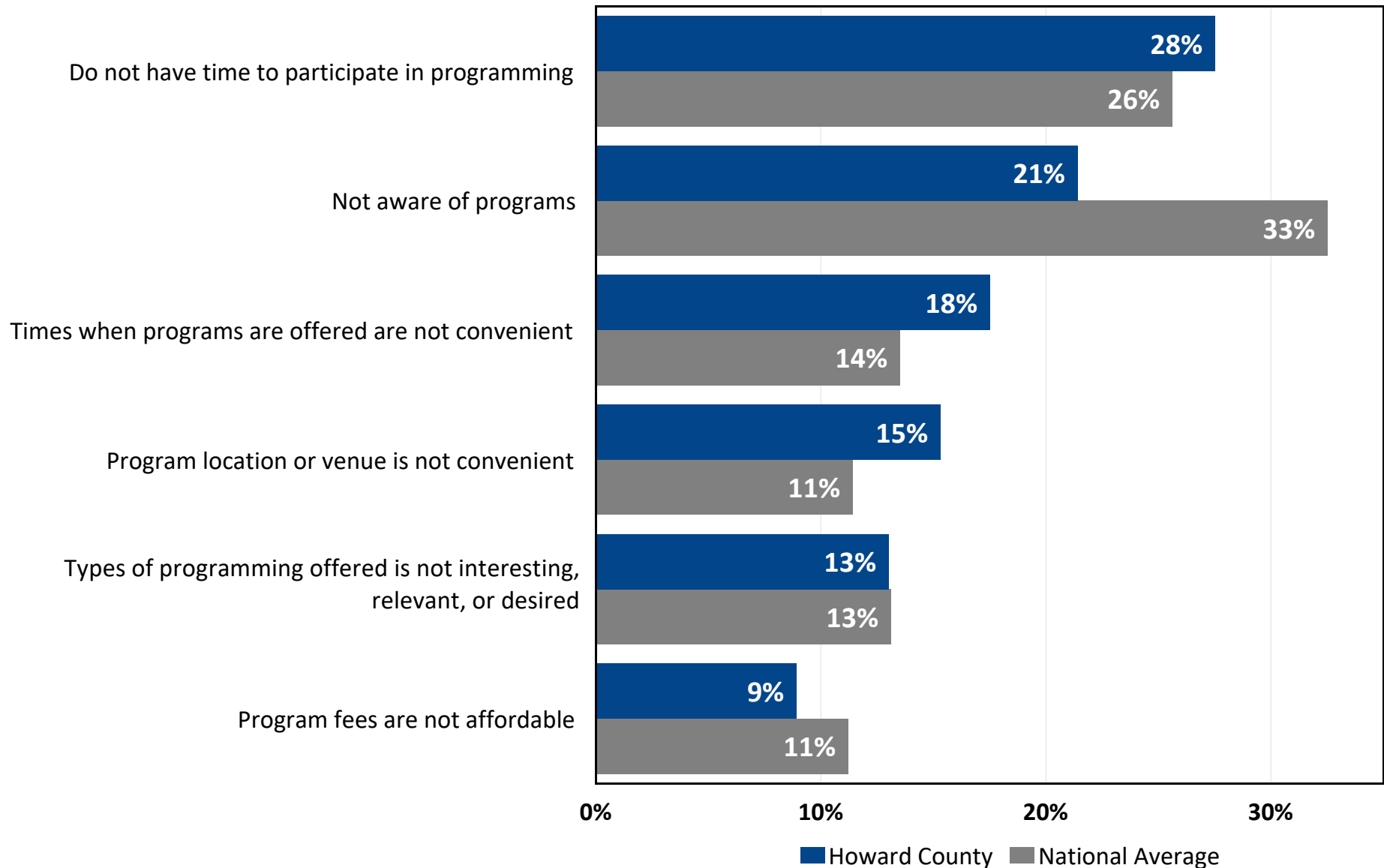
by percentage of respondents with a need for sports programs



Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks & Recreation Programs

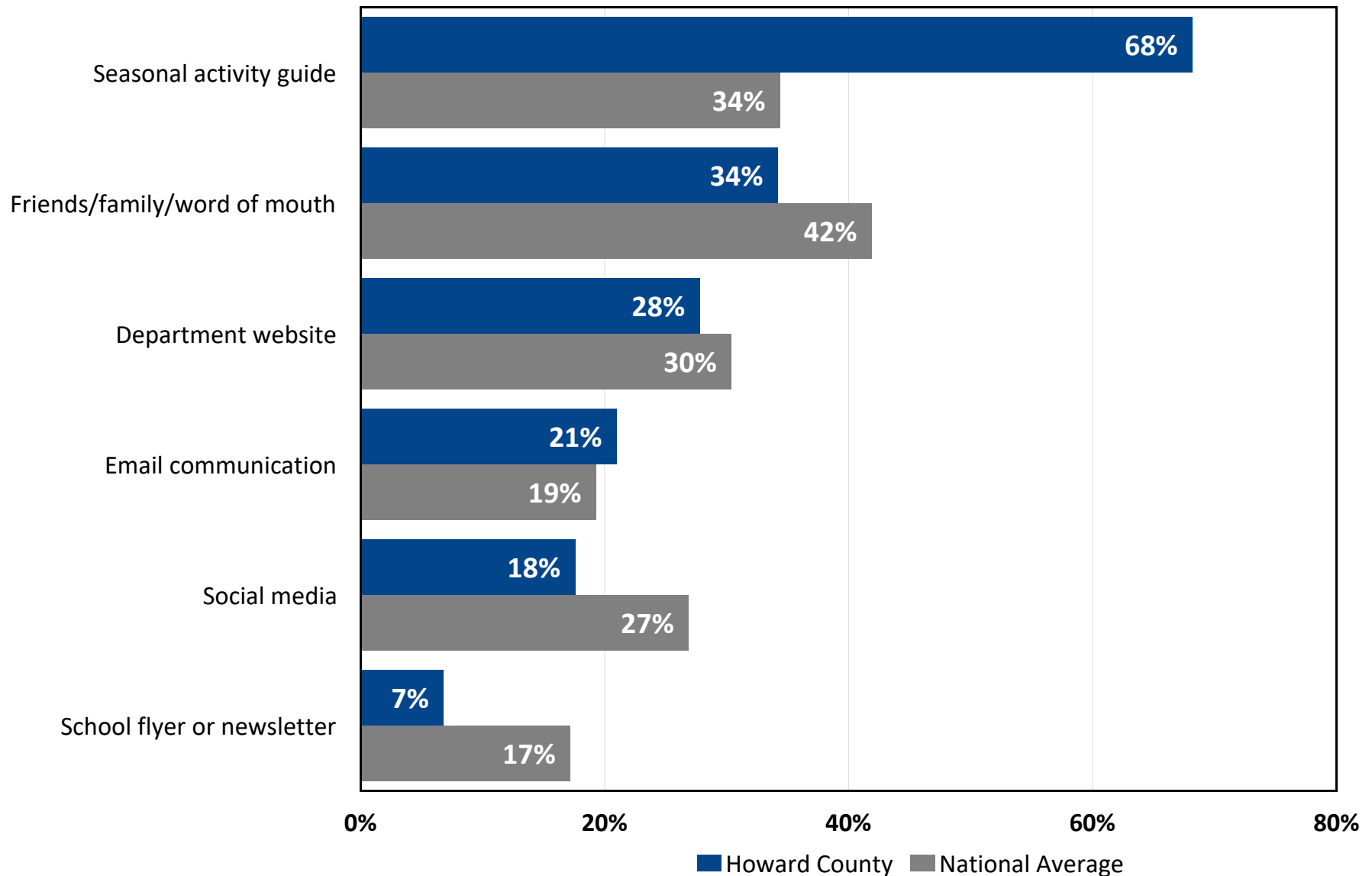
Howard County vs. National Average

by percentage of respondents



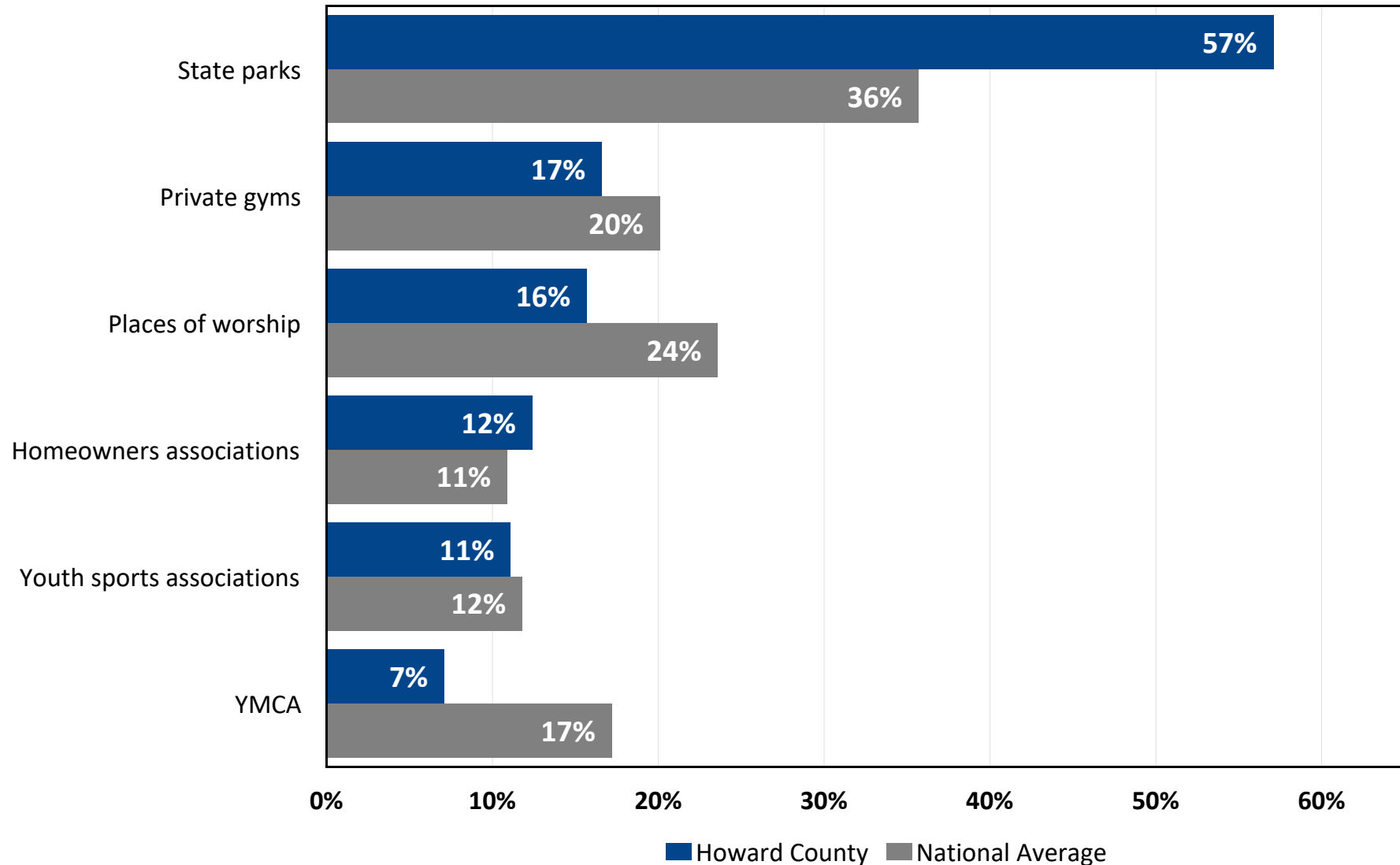
Ways Residents Learn About Programs and Facilities Offered by Recreation and Parks

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



Facilities Used by Households for Indoor and Outdoor Recreation and Sports Activities During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)





Tabular Data

Q1. During a typical year, do you or anyone in your household visit the park lands (e.g., playgrounds, parks, fields, natural resource areas, community center, historic sites, trails) or other facilities offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks?

Q1. Does your household visit park lands or other facilities offered by Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks during a typical year

	Number	Percent
Yes	752	93.4 %
No	53	6.6 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q1a. How often did you or others in your household visit a Howard County parkland (includes parks, natural resource areas, and County-owned open space lots) before March 2020?

Q1a. How often did your household visit a Howard County parkland before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Never	9	1.2 %
Once or twice a year	125	16.6 %
Monthly	239	31.8 %
Weekly	276	36.7 %
Daily	99	13.2 %
Not provided	4	0.5 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q1a. How often did you or others in your household visit a Howard County parkland (includes parks, natural resource areas, and County-owned open space lots) before March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q1a. How often did your household visit a Howard County parkland before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Never	9	1.2 %
Once or twice a year	125	16.7 %
Monthly	239	32.0 %
Weekly	276	36.9 %
Daily	99	13.2 %
Total	748	100.0 %

Q1b. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household visited Howard County park lands more or less than you did before?

Q1b. Have your household visited Howard County park lands more or less than you did before since March 2020	Number	Percent
More	270	35.9 %
Less	233	31.0 %
Same	246	32.7 %
Not provided	3	0.4 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q1b. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household visited Howard County park lands more or less than you did before? (without "not provided")**

Q1b. Have your household visited Howard County park lands more or less than you did before since March 2020	Number	Percent
More	270	36.0 %
Less	233	31.1 %
Same	246	32.8 %
Total	749	100.0 %

Q1c. In the future, do you plan to visit parks more or less than you did between March 2020 and today?

Q1c. Does your household plan to visit parks more or less than you did between March 2020 & today in the future

	Number	Percent
More	366	48.7 %
Less	24	3.2 %
Same	359	47.7 %
Not provided	3	0.4 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q1c. In the future, do you plan to visit parks more or less than you did between March 2020 and today? (without "not provided")**

Q1c. Does your household plan to visit parks more or less than you did between March 2020 & today in the future

	Number	Percent
More	366	48.9 %
Less	24	3.2 %
Same	359	47.9 %
Total	749	100.0 %

Q1d. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County park lands you have visited?

Q1d. How would you rate overall physical condition of Howard County park lands you have visited

	Number	Percent
Excellent	332	44.1 %
Good	392	52.1 %
Fair	23	3.1 %
Not provided	5	0.7 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q1d. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County park lands you have visited? (without "not provided")**

Q1d. How would you rate overall physical condition of Howard County park lands you have visited

	Number	Percent
Excellent	332	44.4 %
Good	392	52.5 %
Fair	23	3.1 %
Total	747	100.0 %

Q1e. How often did you or members of your household visit Roger Carter, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or Robinson Nature Center before March 2020?

Q1e. How often did your household visit Roger Carter,
Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or
Robinson Nature Center before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Never	345	45.9 %
Once or twice a year	301	40.0 %
Monthly	47	6.3 %
Weekly	49	6.5 %
Daily	5	0.7 %
Not provided	5	0.7 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q1e. How often did you or members of your household visit Roger Carter, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or Robinson Nature Center before March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q1e. How often did your household visit Roger Carter,
Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or
Robinson Nature Center before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Never	345	46.2 %
Once or twice a year	301	40.3 %
Monthly	47	6.3 %
Weekly	49	6.6 %
Daily	5	0.7 %
Total	747	100.0 %

Q1f. In the future, do you plan to visit these Howard County facilities more or less than you did before March 2020?

Q1f. Do you plan to visit these Howard County facilities more or less than you did before March 2020 in the future

	Number	Percent
More	244	32.4 %
Less	54	7.2 %
Same	430	57.2 %
Not provided	24	3.2 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q1f. In the future, do you plan to visit these Howard County facilities more or less than you did before March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q1f. Do you plan to visit these Howard County facilities more or less than you did before March 2020 in the future

	Number	Percent
More	244	33.5 %
Less	54	7.4 %
Same	430	59.1 %
Total	728	100.0 %

Q1g. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County facilities you have visited?

Q1g. How would you rate overall physical condition of Howard County facilities you have visited

	Number	Percent
Excellent	294	39.1 %
Good	358	47.6 %
Fair	35	4.7 %
Poor	2	0.3 %
Not provided	63	8.4 %
Total	752	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q1g. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County facilities you have visited? (without "not provided")

Q1g. How would you rate overall physical condition of Howard County facilities you have visited

	Number	Percent
Excellent	294	42.7 %
Good	358	52.0 %
Fair	35	5.1 %
Poor	2	0.3 %
Total	689	100.0 %

Q2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home?

Q2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home	Number	Percent
Yes	356	44.2 %
No	440	54.7 %
Not provided	9	1.1 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home? (without "not provided")**

Q2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home	Number	Percent
Yes	356	44.7 %
No	440	55.3 %
Total	796	100.0 %

Q2a. Over the past five years, how often do you typically visit that park or facility?

Q2a. How often do you typically visit that park or facility over past five years	Number	Percent
Never	24	6.7 %
Once or twice a year	57	16.0 %
Monthly	90	25.3 %
Weekly	132	37.1 %
Daily	52	14.6 %
Not provided	1	0.3 %
Total	356	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q2a. Over the past five years, how often do you typically visit that park or facility? (without "not provided")**

Q2a. How often do you typically visit that park or facility over past five years	Number	Percent
Never	24	6.8 %
Once or twice a year	57	16.1 %
Monthly	90	25.4 %
Weekly	132	37.2 %
Daily	52	14.6 %
Total	355	100.0 %

Q3. Please indicate which of the following are barriers to you or anyone in your household's usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities.

Q3. What are barriers to your household visiting

Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks park

lands or facilities

	Number	Percent
I am not aware of Howard County Department Recreation & Parks park lands & facilities	68	8.4 %
I do not have any interest in visiting park lands or facilities	23	2.9 %
I do not have the time to visit park lands or facilities	161	20.0 %
Park lands & facilities are not conveniently located	111	13.8 %
Park lands & facilities are not well maintained	15	1.9 %
Park lands & facilities do not feel safe	46	5.7 %
Park lands & facilities do not have amenities I want	63	7.8 %
Operating hours of park lands & facilities are not convenient	34	4.2 %
Poor customer service by staff	8	1.0 %
Lack of universal accessibility	21	2.6 %
Something else	111	13.8 %
Total	661	

Q4. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 3 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities?

Q4. Top choice	Number	Percent
I am not aware of Howard County Department Recreation & Parks park lands & facilities	44	5.5 %
I do not have any interest in visiting park lands or facilities	11	1.4 %
I do not have the time to visit park lands or facilities	119	14.8 %
Park lands & facilities are not conveniently located	71	8.8 %
Park lands & facilities are not well maintained	7	0.9 %
Park lands & facilities do not feel safe	24	3.0 %
Park lands & facilities do not have amenities I want	27	3.4 %
Operating hours of park lands & facilities are not convenient	19	2.4 %
Poor customer service by staff	4	0.5 %
Lack of universal accessibility	8	1.0 %
Something else	63	7.8 %
None chosen	408	50.7 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q4. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 3 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities?

Q4. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
I am not aware of Howard County Department Recreation & Parks park lands & facilities	16	2.0 %
I do not have any interest in visiting park lands or facilities	10	1.2 %
I do not have the time to visit park lands or facilities	33	4.1 %
Park lands & facilities are not conveniently located	32	4.0 %
Park lands & facilities are not well maintained	9	1.1 %
Park lands & facilities do not feel safe	19	2.4 %
Park lands & facilities do not have amenities I want	23	2.9 %
Operating hours of park lands & facilities are not convenient	18	2.2 %
Poor customer service by staff	4	0.5 %
Lack of universal accessibility	7	0.9 %
None chosen	634	78.8 %
Total	805	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 2 CHOICES

Q4. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 3 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities? (top 2)

Q4. Sum of top 2 choices	Number	Percent
I am not aware of Howard County Department Recreation & Parks park lands & facilities	60	7.5 %
I do not have any interest in visiting park lands or facilities	21	2.6 %
I do not have the time to visit park lands or facilities	152	18.9 %
Park lands & facilities are not conveniently located	103	12.8 %
Park lands & facilities are not well maintained	16	2.0 %
Park lands & facilities do not feel safe	43	5.3 %
Park lands & facilities do not have amenities I want	50	6.2 %
Operating hours of park lands & facilities are not convenient	37	4.6 %
Poor customer service by staff	8	1.0 %
Lack of universal accessibility	15	1.9 %
Something else	63	7.8 %
None chosen	408	50.7 %
Total	976	

Q5. Please indicate if YOU or any members of your household have a need or desire to use the following facilities.

(N=805)

	Yes	No
Q5-1. Basketball courts	20.7%	79.3%
Q5-2. Community gardens	35.7%	64.3%
Q5-3. Dog parks	26.8%	73.2%
Q5-4. Fields, baseball/softball	20.5%	79.5%
Q5-5. Fields, cricket	3.4%	96.6%
Q5-6. Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	26.1%	73.9%
Q5-7. Inclusive play areas	26.3%	73.7%
Q5-8. Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	48.4%	51.6%
Q5-9. Park lands	70.8%	29.2%
Q5-10. Pavilions & picnic areas	58.6%	41.4%
Q5-11. Pickleball courts	17.0%	83.0%
Q5-12. Playgrounds & play areas	43.9%	56.1%
Q5-13. Pools, indoor	43.2%	56.8%
Q5-14. Pools, outdoor	40.9%	59.1%
Q5-15. Public golf facilities	24.2%	75.8%
Q5-16. Community centers	39.8%	60.2%
Q5-17. Sprayground/splash pad	20.1%	79.9%
Q5-18. Tennis courts	31.3%	68.7%
Q5-19. Trails, paved	79.8%	20.2%
Q5-20. Trails, unpaved	60.7%	39.3%
Q5-21. Water access for boating & fishing	28.4%	71.6%
Q5-22. Other	7.8%	92.2%

Q5. If "YES," please answer the questions regarding how well your need for each type of facility is currently being met in Howard County.

(N=778)

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q5-1. Basketball courts	38.4%	39.6%	15.1%	6.9%
Q5-2. Community gardens	21.5%	32.3%	27.1%	19.1%
Q5-3. Dog parks	22.8%	27.0%	31.2%	19.0%
Q5-4. Fields, baseball/softball	49.4%	35.3%	12.8%	2.6%
Q5-5. Fields, cricket	33.3%	20.8%	20.8%	25.0%
Q5-6. Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	44.7%	39.2%	13.1%	3.0%
Q5-7. Inclusive play areas	37.2%	43.5%	17.3%	2.1%
Q5-8. Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	49.7%	34.8%	12.5%	3.0%
Q5-9. Park lands	48.5%	41.5%	8.7%	1.4%
Q5-10. Pavilions & picnic areas	44.0%	40.8%	13.6%	1.6%
Q5-11. Pickleball courts	18.7%	24.4%	32.5%	24.4%
Q5-12. Playgrounds & play areas	46.3%	39.8%	10.9%	3.1%
Q5-13. Pools, indoor	22.3%	28.4%	23.5%	25.8%
Q5-14. Pools, outdoor	31.0%	22.8%	18.7%	27.6%
Q5-15. Public golf facilities	28.7%	32.2%	22.8%	16.4%
Q5-16. Community centers	41.3%	41.6%	12.6%	4.5%
Q5-17. Sprayground/splash pad	19.9%	26.2%	22.7%	31.2%
Q5-18. Tennis courts	41.6%	38.1%	12.4%	8.0%
Q5-19. Trails, paved	44.8%	35.0%	16.5%	3.7%
Q5-20. Trails, unpaved	39.0%	37.9%	19.3%	3.8%
Q5-21. Water access for boating & fishing	24.3%	35.4%	22.3%	18.0%
Q5-22. Other	8.2%	10.2%	30.6%	51.0%

Q6. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question 5 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

<u>Q6. Top choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Basketball courts	21	2.6 %
Community gardens	39	4.8 %
Dog parks	36	4.5 %
Fields, baseball/softball	12	1.5 %
Fields, cricket	2	0.2 %
Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	16	2.0 %
Inclusive play areas	18	2.2 %
Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	19	2.4 %
Park lands	51	6.3 %
Pavilions & picnic areas	20	2.5 %
Pickleball courts	28	3.5 %
Playgrounds & play areas	39	4.8 %
Pools, indoor	64	8.0 %
Pools, outdoor	32	4.0 %
Public golf facilities	18	2.2 %
Community centers	19	2.4 %
Sprayground/splash pad	14	1.7 %
Tennis courts	19	2.4 %
Trails, paved	98	12.2 %
Trails, unpaved	47	5.8 %
Water access for boating & fishing	20	2.5 %
Other	24	3.0 %
<u>None chosen</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>18.5 %</u>
Total	805	100.0 %

Q6. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question 5 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

<u>Q6. 2nd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Basketball courts	12	1.5 %
Community gardens	25	3.1 %
Dog parks	26	3.2 %
Fields, baseball/softball	6	0.7 %
Fields, cricket	3	0.4 %
Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	12	1.5 %
Inclusive play areas	14	1.7 %
Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	18	2.2 %
Park lands	57	7.1 %
Pavilions & picnic areas	27	3.4 %
Pickleball courts	10	1.2 %
Playgrounds & play areas	25	3.1 %
Pools, indoor	46	5.7 %
Pools, outdoor	42	5.2 %
Public golf facilities	27	3.4 %
Community centers	17	2.1 %
Sprayground/splash pad	10	1.2 %
Tennis courts	19	2.4 %
Trails, paved	100	12.4 %
Trails, unpaved	86	10.7 %
Water access for boating & fishing	10	1.2 %
Other	8	1.0 %
<u>None chosen</u>	<u>205</u>	<u>25.5 %</u>
Total	805	100.0 %

Q6. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question 5 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

<u>Q6. 3rd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Basketball courts	13	1.6 %
Community gardens	29	3.6 %
Dog parks	24	3.0 %
Fields, baseball/softball	4	0.5 %
Fields, cricket	3	0.4 %
Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	6	0.7 %
Inclusive play areas	9	1.1 %
Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	24	3.0 %
Park lands	55	6.8 %
Pavilions & picnic areas	31	3.9 %
Pickleball courts	14	1.7 %
Playgrounds & play areas	22	2.7 %
Pools, indoor	23	2.9 %
Pools, outdoor	34	4.2 %
Public golf facilities	11	1.4 %
Community centers	20	2.5 %
Sprayground/splash pad	18	2.2 %
Tennis courts	12	1.5 %
Trails, paved	70	8.7 %
Trails, unpaved	57	7.1 %
Water access for boating & fishing	25	3.1 %
Other	17	2.1 %
<u>None chosen</u>	<u>284</u>	<u>35.3 %</u>
Total	805	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 3 CHOICES**Q6. Which THREE of the FACILITIES from the list in Question 5 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in? (top 3)**

Q6. Sum of top 3 choices	Number	Percent
Basketball courts	46	5.7 %
Community gardens	93	11.6 %
Dog parks	86	10.7 %
Fields, baseball/softball	22	2.7 %
Fields, cricket	8	1.0 %
Fields, soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey	34	4.2 %
Inclusive play areas	41	5.1 %
Nature centers (Robinson Nature Center)	61	7.6 %
Park lands	163	20.2 %
Pavilions & picnic areas	78	9.7 %
Pickleball courts	52	6.5 %
Playgrounds & play areas	86	10.7 %
Pools, indoor	133	16.5 %
Pools, outdoor	108	13.4 %
Public golf facilities	56	7.0 %
Community centers	56	7.0 %
Sprayground/splash pad	42	5.2 %
Tennis courts	50	6.2 %
Trails, paved	268	33.3 %
Trails, unpaved	190	23.6 %
Water access for boating & fishing	55	6.8 %
Other	49	6.1 %
None chosen	149	18.5 %
Total	1926	

Q7. Did you or anyone in your household participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks before March 2020?

Q7. Did you participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Yes	362	45.0 %
No	439	54.5 %
Not provided	4	0.5 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q7. Did you or anyone in your household participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks before March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q7. Did you participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Yes	362	45.2 %
No	439	54.8 %
Total	801	100.0 %

Q7a. How would you rate the overall quality of the programs that you and members of your household participated in before March 2020?

Q7a. How would you rate overall quality of programs your household participated in before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Excellent	154	42.5 %
Good	180	49.7 %
Fair	22	6.1 %
Not provided	6	1.7 %
Total	362	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q7a. How would you rate the overall quality of the programs that you and members of your household participated in before March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q7a. How would you rate overall quality of programs your household participated in before March 2020

	Number	Percent
Excellent	154	43.3 %
Good	180	50.6 %
Fair	22	6.2 %
Total	356	100.0 %

Q8. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household participated in any Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programs or activities virtually or remotely?

Q8. Has your household participated in any Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks programs or activities virtually or remotely since March 2020

	Number	Percent
Yes	82	10.2 %
No	723	89.8 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q8a. How would you rate the overall quality of the virtual programs that you and members of your household participated in after March 2020?

Q8a. How would you rate overall quality of virtual programs your household participated in after March 2020

	Number	Percent
Excellent	40	48.8 %
Good	33	40.2 %
Fair	3	3.7 %
Poor	1	1.2 %
Not provided	5	6.1 %
Total	82	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q8a. How would you rate the overall quality of the virtual programs that you and members of your household participated in after March 2020? (without "not provided")

Q8a. How would you rate overall quality of virtual programs your household participated in after March 2020

	Number	Percent
Excellent	40	51.9 %
Good	33	42.9 %
Fair	3	3.9 %
Poor	1	1.3 %
Total	77	100.0 %

Q9. Would you or members of your household like the County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future?

Q9. Would you like County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future	Number	Percent
Yes	394	48.9 %
No	296	36.8 %
Not provided	115	14.3 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q9. Would you or members of your household like the County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future? (without "not provided")

Q9. Would you like County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future	Number	Percent
Yes	394	57.1 %
No	296	42.9 %
Total	690	100.0 %

Q10. Please indicate which of the following items are barriers to you or your household's participation in Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming.

Q10. What items are barriers to your household's participation in Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks programming	Number	Percent
I am not aware of programs offered by Howard County Recreation & Parks	172	21.4 %
I do not have the time to participate in programming	221	27.5 %
Program fees are not affordable	72	8.9 %
Program instructors are not good	14	1.7 %
Times when programs are offered are not convenient	141	17.5 %
Types of programming offered is not interesting, relevant, or desired	105	13.0 %
Poor customer service in past experience	9	1.1 %
Lack of universal accessibility	16	2.0 %
Language barriers (ESOL)	2	0.2 %
Program location or venue is not convenient	123	15.3 %
Something else	68	8.4 %
Total	943	

Q11. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 10 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's participation of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming?

<u>Q11. Top choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I am not aware of programs offered by Howard County Recreation & Parks	101	12.5 %
I do not have the time to participate in programming	138	17.1 %
Program fees are not affordable	46	5.7 %
Program instructors are not good	3	0.4 %
Times when programs are offered are not convenient	61	7.6 %
Types of programming offered is not interesting, relevant, or desired	45	5.6 %
Poor customer service in past experience	2	0.2 %
Lack of universal accessibility	5	0.6 %
Language barriers (ESOL)	2	0.2 %
Program location or venue is not convenient	39	4.8 %
Something else	45	5.6 %
None chosen	318	39.5 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q11. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 10 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's participation of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming?

<u>Q11. 2nd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I am not aware of programs offered by Howard County Recreation & Parks	25	3.1 %
I do not have the time to participate in programming	46	5.7 %
Program fees are not affordable	24	3.0 %
Program instructors are not good	8	1.0 %
Times when programs are offered are not convenient	56	7.0 %
Types of programming offered is not interesting, relevant, or desired	31	3.9 %
Poor customer service in past experience	3	0.4 %
Lack of universal accessibility	5	0.6 %
Language barriers (ESOL)	1	0.1 %
Program location or venue is not convenient	64	8.0 %
Something else	17	2.1 %
None chosen	525	65.2 %
Total	805	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 2 CHOICES**Q11. Which TWO of the items listed in Question 10 are the biggest barriers to your or your household's participation of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming? (top 2)**

<u>Q11. Sum of top 2 choices</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
I am not aware of programs offered by Howard County Recreation & Parks	126	15.7 %
I do not have the time to participate in programming	184	22.9 %
Program fees are not affordable	70	8.7 %
Program instructors are not good	11	1.4 %
Times when programs are offered are not convenient	117	14.5 %
Types of programming offered is not interesting, relevant, or desired	76	9.4 %
Poor customer service in past experience	5	0.6 %
Lack of universal accessibility	10	1.2 %
Language barriers (ESOL)	3	0.4 %
Program location or venue is not convenient	103	12.8 %
Something else	62	7.7 %
<u>None chosen</u>	<u>318</u>	<u>39.5 %</u>
Total	1085	

Q12. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your household have a need or desire to use the following programs listed below.

(N=805)

	Yes	No
Q12-1. Aquatics or swimming	49.9%	50.1%
Q12-2. Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	39.9%	60.1%
Q12-3. Before & after school childcare	11.3%	88.7%
Q12-4. Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	32.5%	67.5%
Q12-5. Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	54.8%	45.2%
Q12-6. Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	36.1%	63.9%
Q12-7. Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	41.4%	58.6%
Q12-8. Preschool	8.1%	91.9%
Q12-9. Seniors/active adult	38.0%	62.0%
Q12-10. Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	48.1%	51.9%
Q12-11. Sports leagues, adult	21.0%	79.0%
Q12-12. Sports leagues, youth	20.6%	79.4%
Q12-13. Camps & other activities for children	22.0%	78.0%
Q12-14. Nature center programs or nature education	37.3%	62.7%
Q12-15. Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	17.1%	82.9%
Q12-16. Other	2.5%	97.5%

Q12. If "YES," please answer the questions regarding how well your need for each type of program is currently being met in Howard County.

(N=742)

	Fully met	Mostly met	Partly met	Not met
Q12-1. Aquatics or swimming	14.8%	27.8%	34.2%	23.2%
Q12-2. Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	16.8%	31.6%	41.4%	10.2%
Q12-3. Before & after school childcare	12.2%	32.4%	33.8%	21.6%
Q12-4. Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	14.6%	33.7%	35.2%	16.6%
Q12-5. Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	18.0%	36.0%	34.6%	11.5%
Q12-6. Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	25.2%	38.1%	29.2%	7.5%
Q12-7. Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	12.5%	36.6%	33.7%	17.2%
Q12-8. Preschool	14.3%	26.5%	40.8%	18.4%
Q12-9. Seniors/active adult	16.4%	39.6%	31.6%	12.4%
Q12-10. Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	24.0%	44.5%	25.0%	6.5%
Q12-11. Sports leagues, adult	20.6%	34.4%	32.1%	13.0%
Q12-12. Sports leagues, youth	32.4%	37.5%	26.5%	3.7%
Q12-13. Camps & other activities for children	21.5%	46.3%	24.2%	8.1%
Q12-14. Nature center programs or nature education	28.8%	41.9%	24.6%	4.7%
Q12-15. Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	8.1%	35.4%	36.4%	20.2%
Q12-16. Other	6.3%	18.8%	12.5%	62.5%

Q13. Which THREE of the PROGRAMS from the list in Question 12 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

Q13. Top choice	Number	Percent
Aquatics or swimming	120	14.9 %
Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	48	6.0 %
Before & after school childcare	24	3.0 %
Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	30	3.7 %
Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	71	8.8 %
Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	42	5.2 %
Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	63	7.8 %
Preschool	14	1.7 %
Seniors/active adult	75	9.3 %
Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	48	6.0 %
Sports leagues, adult	13	1.6 %
Sports leagues, youth	18	2.2 %
Camps & other activities for children	20	2.5 %
Nature center programs or nature education	17	2.1 %
Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	18	2.2 %
Other	12	1.5 %
None chosen	172	21.4 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q13. Which THREE of the PROGRAMS from the list in Question 12 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

Q13. 2nd choice	Number	Percent
Aquatics or swimming	44	5.5 %
Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	56	7.0 %
Before & after school childcare	17	2.1 %
Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	40	5.0 %
Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	75	9.3 %
Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	47	5.8 %
Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	54	6.7 %
Preschool	8	1.0 %
Seniors/active adult	60	7.5 %
Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	54	6.7 %
Sports leagues, adult	16	2.0 %
Sports leagues, youth	16	2.0 %
Camps & other activities for children	26	3.2 %
Nature center programs or nature education	30	3.7 %
Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	18	2.2 %
Other	4	0.5 %
None chosen	240	29.8 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q13. Which THREE of the PROGRAMS from the list in Question 12 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in?

<u>Q13. 3rd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Aquatics or swimming	27	3.4 %
Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	34	4.2 %
Before & after school childcare	9	1.1 %
Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	36	4.5 %
Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	45	5.6 %
Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	32	4.0 %
Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	42	5.2 %
Preschool	2	0.2 %
Seniors/active adult	42	5.2 %
Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	73	9.1 %
Sports leagues, adult	25	3.1 %
Sports leagues, youth	17	2.1 %
Camps & other activities for children	24	3.0 %
Nature center programs or nature education	47	5.8 %
Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	24	3.0 %
Other	5	0.6 %
None chosen	321	39.9 %
Total	805	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 3 CHOICES

Q13. Which THREE of the PROGRAMS from the list in Question 12 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in? (top 3)

<u>Q13. Sum of top 3 choices</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Aquatics or swimming	191	23.7 %
Arts & culture (e.g., dance & painting)	138	17.1 %
Before & after school childcare	50	6.2 %
Education & life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, & computer skills)	106	13.2 %
Fitness (i.e., Group fitness classes & personal training)	191	23.7 %
Historic amenities/county-owned historic sites	121	15.0 %
Outdoor adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, & camping)	159	19.8 %
Preschool	24	3.0 %
Seniors/active adult	177	22.0 %
Special events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	175	21.7 %
Sports leagues, adult	54	6.7 %
Sports leagues, youth	51	6.3 %
Camps & other activities for children	70	8.7 %
Nature center programs or nature education	94	11.7 %
Therapeutic recreation/recreation inclusion	60	7.5 %
Other	21	2.6 %
None chosen	172	21.4 %
Total	1854	

Q14. Of the following ways in which Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks could allocate funding, which should be the top priority?

Q14. Way of top priority in which Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks could allocate funding	Number	Percent
Develop land that has already been purchased with new parks & facilities	253	31.4 %
Purchase new land for later park or facility development	70	8.7 %
Purchase new land for natural resource conservation	155	19.3 %
Purchase new land for agricultural land preservation	45	5.6 %
Renovate existing facilities	206	25.6 %
Not provided	76	9.4 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"

Q14. Of the following ways in which Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks could allocate funding, which should be the top priority? (without "not provided")

Q14. Way of top priority in which Howard County Department of Recreation & Parks could allocate funding	Number	Percent
Develop land that has already been purchased with new parks & facilities	253	34.7 %
Purchase new land for later park or facility development	70	9.6 %
Purchase new land for natural resource conservation	155	21.3 %
Purchase new land for agricultural land preservation	45	6.2 %
Renovate existing facilities	206	28.3 %
Total	729	100.0 %

Q15. How do you find out about programs and facilities offered by Recreation and Parks?

Q15. How do you find out about programs & facilities

offered by Recreation & Parks	Number	Percent
Seasonal activity guide	549	68.2 %
Camp guide	97	12.0 %
Department website	224	27.8 %
Email communication	169	21.0 %
Direct mail	205	25.5 %
Social media	142	17.6 %
Staff outreach efforts	20	2.5 %
Friends/family/word of mouth	275	34.2 %
School flyer or newsletter	55	6.8 %
Other	17	2.1 %
Total	1753	

Q15-10. Other

Q15-10. Other	Number	Percent
Online search	2	11.8 %
50 PLUS FACILITY NEWSLETTERS	1	5.9 %
At the center-get information on upcoming classes	1	5.9 %
LOCAL HOWARD CO PAPER	1	5.9 %
Notice facilities while traveling around the county	1	5.9 %
Other websites	1	5.9 %
Google maps for playgrounds	1	5.9 %
Advertisements	1	5.9 %
MOSTLY JUST SEE FACILITIES AND CHECK THEM OUT	1	5.9 %
MEET WITH FRIENDS	1	5.9 %
CALLING FACILITY	1	5.9 %
GOOGLE DIRECT TO REC AND PARKS	1	5.9 %
Local library	1	5.9 %
LIBRARY	1	5.9 %
Driving around	1	5.9 %
HCAS	1	5.9 %
Total	17	100.0 %

Q16. Which TWO methods of communication from the list in Question 15 would you prefer to receive information from Recreation and Parks?

<u>Q16. Top choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Seasonal activity guide	309	38.4 %
Camp guide	6	0.7 %
Department website	59	7.3 %
Email communication	137	17.0 %
Direct mail	90	11.2 %
Social media	48	6.0 %
Staff outreach efforts	3	0.4 %
Friends/family/word of mouth	14	1.7 %
School flyer or newsletter	6	0.7 %
Other	3	0.4 %
None chosen	130	16.1 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q16. Which TWO methods of communication from the list in Question 15 would you prefer to receive information from Recreation and Parks?

<u>Q16. 2nd choice</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Seasonal activity guide	110	13.7 %
Camp guide	32	4.0 %
Department website	113	14.0 %
Email communication	97	12.0 %
Direct mail	91	11.3 %
Social media	55	6.8 %
Staff outreach efforts	12	1.5 %
Friends/family/word of mouth	34	4.2 %
School flyer or newsletter	13	1.6 %
Other	2	0.2 %
None chosen	246	30.6 %
Total	805	100.0 %

SUM OF TOP 2 CHOICES**Q16. Which TWO methods of communication from the list in Question 15 would you prefer to receive information from Recreation and Parks? (top 2)**

Q16. Sum of top 2 choices	Number	Percent
Seasonal activity guide	419	52.0 %
Camp guide	38	4.7 %
Department website	172	21.4 %
Email communication	234	29.1 %
Direct mail	181	22.5 %
Social media	103	12.8 %
Staff outreach efforts	15	1.9 %
Friends/family/word of mouth	48	6.0 %
School flyer or newsletter	19	2.4 %
Other	5	0.6 %
None chosen	130	16.1 %
Total	1364	

Q17. From the following list, please check ALL of the facilities that you and/or members of your household have used for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months.

Q17. All the facilities members of your household have used for indoor & outdoor recreation & sports activities during past 12 months	Number	Percent
Columbia Association	287	35.7 %
Homeowners associations	100	12.4 %
Private schools	39	4.8 %
Youth sports associations	89	11.1 %
YMCA	57	7.1 %
School sponsored activities	84	10.4 %
Non-HCDRP daycare providers	27	3.4 %
Maryland State parks	460	57.1 %
Places of worship	126	15.7 %
Private clubs	67	8.3 %
Private gyms	134	16.6 %
Other	57	7.1 %
Total	1527	

Q18. How do you usually travel to park lands, trails, or facilities?

Q18. How do you usually travel to park lands, trails, or facilities

	Number	Percent
Walk	132	16.4 %
Drive	609	75.7 %
Bike	13	1.6 %
Not provided	51	6.3 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q18. How do you usually travel to park lands, trails, or facilities? (without "not provided")**

Q18. How do you usually travel to park lands, trails, or facilities

	Number	Percent
Walk	132	17.5 %
Drive	609	80.8 %
Bike	13	1.7 %
Total	754	100.0 %

Q19. Counting yourself, how many people are living with you in your household (roommates, spouses, children, etc.) that are:

	Mean	Sum
number	2.8	2122
Under age 5	0.1	101
Ages 5-9	0.2	123
Ages 10-14	0.2	133
Ages 15-19	0.2	142
Ages 20-24	0.2	115
Ages 25-34	0.3	209
Ages 35-44	0.3	250
Ages 45-54	0.4	309
Ages 55-64	0.5	374
Ages 65-74	0.4	269
Ages 75+	0.1	97

Q20. What is your age?

<u>Q20. Your age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-34	146	18.1 %
35-44	148	18.4 %
45-54	153	19.0 %
55-64	159	19.8 %
65+	154	19.1 %
Not provided	45	5.6 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q20. What is your age? (without "not provided")**

<u>Q20. Your age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
18-34	146	19.2 %
35-44	148	19.5 %
45-54	153	20.1 %
55-64	159	20.9 %
65+	154	20.3 %
Total	760	100.0 %

Q21. What is your household income?

Q21. What is your household income	Number	Percent
Less than \$25K	36	4.5 %
\$25K to \$49,999	44	5.5 %
\$50K to \$74,999	52	6.5 %
\$75K to \$99,999	79	9.8 %
\$100K to \$149,999	174	21.6 %
\$150K to \$199,999	134	16.6 %
\$200K+	132	16.4 %
Not provided	154	19.1 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q21. What is your household income? (without "not provided")**

Q21. What is your household income	Number	Percent
Less than \$25K	36	5.5 %
\$25K to \$49,999	44	6.8 %
\$50K to \$74,999	52	8.0 %
\$75K to \$99,999	79	12.1 %
\$100K to \$149,999	174	26.7 %
\$150K to \$199,999	134	20.6 %
\$200K+	132	20.3 %
Total	651	100.0 %

Q22. Are you or the members of your household of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Ancestry?

Q22. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ancestry	Number	Percent
Yes	59	7.3 %
No	741	92.0 %
Not provided	5	0.6 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q22. Are you or the members of your household of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Ancestry? (without "not provided")**

Q22. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish ancestry	Number	Percent
Yes	59	7.4 %
No	741	92.6 %
Total	800	100.0 %

Q23. Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?

<u>Q23. What best describes your race/ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
White	452	56.1 %
Black or African American	164	20.4 %
Asian	150	18.6 %
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	0.5 %
Other	26	3.2 %
Total	796	

Q23-5. Self-describe your race/ethnicity:

<u>Q23-5. Self-describe your race/ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Hispanic	4	15.4 %
Mixed	3	11.5 %
Indian	2	7.7 %
European American	2	7.7 %
Latino, Black, White	1	3.8 %
Bolivian	1	3.8 %
More than one	1	3.8 %
African Indian	1	3.8 %
PERSIAN	1	3.8 %
WEST INDIAN	1	3.8 %
LATINO	1	3.8 %
Puerto Rican	1	3.8 %
Sicilian/Italian American	1	3.8 %
INDIAN	1	3.8 %
Asian Indian	1	3.8 %
Multi ethnic	1	3.8 %
Native American	1	3.8 %
Pakistani	1	3.8 %
Haitian	1	3.8 %
Total	26	100.0 %

Q24. Your gender:

<u>Q24. Your gender</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Male	398	49.4 %
Female	402	49.9 %
Non-binary/non-conforming	4	0.5 %
Prefer to self-describe	1	0.1 %
Total	805	100.0 %

Q25. Is your home single-family detached, a townhouse, a duplex, or in a multi-family building like an apartment or condo?

Q25. Is your home single-family detached, a townhouse, a duplex, or in a multi-family building like an apartment or condo

	Number	Percent
Single-family detached	560	69.6 %
Townhouse	159	19.8 %
Duplex (2-unit multi-family)	7	0.9 %
Apartment or condominium (3+ unit multi-family)	31	3.9 %
Other	5	0.6 %
Not provided	43	5.3 %
Total	805	100.0 %

WITHOUT "NOT PROVIDED"**Q25. Is your home single-family detached, a townhouse, a duplex, or in a multi-family building like an apartment or condo? (without "not provided")**

Q25. Is your home single-family detached, a townhouse, a duplex, or in a multi-family building like an apartment or condo

	Number	Percent
Single-family detached	560	73.5 %
Townhouse	159	20.9 %
Duplex (2-unit multi-family)	7	0.9 %
Apartment or condominium (3+ unit multi-family)	31	4.1 %
Other	5	0.7 %
Total	762	100.0 %

Q25-5. Other:

Q25-5. Other	Number	Percent
Quad	1	25.0 %
Rental	1	25.0 %
Mobile home	1	25.0 %
Small farm	1	25.0 %
Total	4	100.0 %



Survey Instrument



Howard County

RECREATION & PARKS

A. Raul Delorme, Director
rdelorme@howardcountymd.gov

Phone: 410-313-4640 Fax: 410-313-1699
www.howardcountymd.gov/rap Voice/Relay: 410-313-7275

7120 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia, Maryland 21046

Dear Howard County Resident:

Your response to the enclosed survey is extremely important...

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is beginning a new Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) process and we need your help to develop a roadmap for the future!

The Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks is embarking on a plan that strives to meet the recreational and land preservation needs of our community. As part of the plan, we want to **hear from you** to understand existing community needs and how these needs are changing. The data from this survey will help guide government allocation of resources, funding, and future decision making on parkland, trails, community centers, and the types of programs we offer. Your household was one of a limited number selected at random to receive this survey, therefore, it is very important that you participate.

We appreciate your time...

We realize that this survey will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, but each question is important. The time you invest in completing this survey will aid Howard County in taking a resident-driven approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of our community and positively affect the lives of its residents.

Please complete and return your survey within the next two weeks...

We have selected ETC Institute, an independent consulting company, as our partner to administer this survey. They will compile the data received and present the results to the County.

Your responses will remain confidential.

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope addressed to ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, KS 66061.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Bryan Moody in the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks at 410-313-4685 or bmoody@howardcountymd.gov. The survey is a tool that will benefit all residents. Please take this opportunity to let your voice be heard.

Sincerely,

Raul Delorme, Director of Recreation and Parks

The following lines are intended to assist community members requiring translation services.

Si tiene preguntas acerca de la encuesta y no habla inglés, por favor llame al 1-844-811-0411.

यदि सर्वेक्षण के बारे में आपके कोई प्रश्न हैं और आप अंग्रेजी नहीं बोलते हैं, तो कृपया 866-991-5275 पर कॉल करें

설문 조사에 대한 질문이 있고 영어를 할 수 없는 경우 844-247-8189로 전화하십시오.

如果您对调查有疑问且不会说英语，请致电 844-872-2562

Community Interest and Opinion Survey: Let your voice be heard today!

This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. When you are finished, please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid, return-reply envelope. If you prefer, you can complete the survey online at howardcountysurvey.org. We greatly appreciate your time.

- 1. During a typical year, do you or anyone in your household visit the park lands (e.g., playgrounds, parks, fields, natural resource areas, community center, historic sites, trails) or other facilities offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks?**

____(1) Yes [Answer Q1a-h.]

____(2) No [Go to Q2.]

- 1a. How often did you or others in your household visit a Howard County parkland (includes parks, natural resource areas, and County-owned open space lots) before March 2020?**

____(1) Never

____(3) Monthly

____(5) Daily

____(2) Once or twice a year

____(4) Weekly

- 1b. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household visited Howard County park lands more or less than you did before?**

____(1) More

____(2) Less

____(3) Same

- 1c. In the future, do you plan to visit parks more or less than you did between March 2020 and today?**

____(1) More

____(2) Less

____(3) Same

- 1d. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County park lands you have visited?**

____(1) Excellent

____(2) Good

____(3) Fair

____(4) Poor

- 1e. How often did you or members of your household visit Roger Carter, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel Community Centers, or Robinson Nature Center before March 2020?**

____(1) Never

____(4) Weekly

____(2) Once or twice a year

____(5) Daily

____(3) Monthly

- 1f. In the future, do you plan to visit these Howard County facilities more or less than you did before March 2020?**

____(1) More

____(2) Less

____(3) Same

- 1g. Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of Howard County facilities you have visited?**

____(1) Excellent [Go to Q2.]

____(3) Fair [Answer Q1h.]

____(2) Good [Go to Q2.]

____(4) Poor [Answer Q1h.]

- 1h. If you rated the physical condition of all Howard County parks and facilities you have visited as being less than good, is there a specific improvement to parks and facilities that you wish to see?**

- 2. Do you have a park within walking distance of your home?**

____(1) Yes [Answer Question 2a.]

____(2) No [Go to Q3.]

- 2a. Over the past five years, how often do you typically visit that park or facility?**

____(1) Never

____(4) Weekly

____(2) Once or twice a year

____(5) Daily

____(3) Monthly

3. Please indicate which of the following are barriers to you or anyone in your household visiting of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities. [Check all that apply.]

- ☐ (01) I am not aware of Howard County Department Recreation and Parks park lands and facilities
☐ (02) I do not have any interest in visiting park lands or facilities
☐ (03) I do not have the time to visit park lands or facilities
☐ (04) Park lands and facilities are not conveniently located
☐ (05) Park lands and facilities are not well maintained
☐ (06) Park lands and facilities do not feel safe
☐ (07) Park lands and facilities do not have the amenities I want
☐ (08) Operating hours of park lands and facilities are not convenient
☐ (09) Poor customer service by staff
☐ (10) Lack of universal accessibility
☐ (11) Something else: _____

4. Which TWO of the items listed above are the biggest barriers to your or your household's usage of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks park lands or facilities? [Using the numbers in Question 3, please write in the numbers of the barriers that are your 1st and 2nd choices, or circle "NONE."]

1st: _____ 2nd: _____ NONE

5. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your household have a need or desire to use the following facilities by circling "YES" or "NO" to the right of each type of facility. If "YES," please answer the questions to the right of the facility regarding how well your need for each type of facility is currently being met in Howard County. For example, if you indicate you use or would like to use paved trails, but there are not any paved trails near your home then your need may only be mostly or partly met.

Type of Facility		Need or Desire to Use?		How well are your needs met in Howard County?			
				Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
01. Basketball Courts		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
02. Community Gardens		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
03. Dog Parks		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
04. Fields, Baseball/Softball		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
05. Fields, Cricket		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
06. Fields, Soccer/Football/Lacrosse/Field Hockey		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
07. Inclusive Play Areas		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
08. Nature Centers (Robinson Nature Center)		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
09. Park lands		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
10. Pavilions and Picnic Areas		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
11. Pickleball Courts		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
12. Playgrounds & Play Areas		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
13. Pools, Indoor		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
14. Pools, Outdoor		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
15. Public Golf Facilities		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
16. Community Centers		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
17. Sprayground/Splash Pad		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
18. Tennis Courts		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
19. Trails, Paved		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
20. Trails, Unpaved		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
21. Water Access for boating and fishing		Yes	No	4	3	2	1
22. Other, please specify: _____		Yes	No	4	3	2	1

6. Which **THREE** of the **FACILITIES** from the list in Question 5 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in? *[Using the numbers in Question 5, please write in the numbers of the facilities that are your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices, or circle "NONE."]*
- 1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ NONE
7. Did you or anyone in your household participate in any recreation, athletic or nature programs offered by the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks before March 2020?
- ____(1) Yes *[Answer Q7a-b.]* ____ (2) No *[Go to Q8.]*
- 7a. How would you rate the overall quality of the programs that you and members of your household participated in before March 2020?
- ____(1) Excellent ____ (3) Fair
____(2) Good ____ (4) Poor
- 7b. If you rated the quality of programs you and members of your household participated in as less than good, is there a specific improvement to programming that you wish to see?
- _____
- _____
8. Since March 2020, have you or others in your household participated in any Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programs or activities virtually or remotely?
- ____(1) Yes *[Answer Q8a-b.]* ____ (2) No *[Go to Q9.]*
- 8a. How would you rate the overall quality of the virtual programs that you and members of your household participated in after March 2020?
- ____(1) Excellent ____ (3) Fair
____(2) Good ____ (4) Poor
- 8b. If you rated the quality of virtual/remote programs you and members of your household participated in as less than good, is there a specific improvement to programming that you wish to see?
- _____
- _____
9. Would you or members of your household like the County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming in the future?
- ____(1) Yes ____ (2) No
10. Please indicate which of the following items are barriers to you or your household's participation in Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming. *[Check all that apply.]*
- ____(01) I am not aware of the programs offered by Howard County Recreation and Parks
____(02) I do not have the time to participate in programming
____(03) Program fees are not affordable
____(04) Program instructors are not good
____(05) The times when programs are offered are not convenient
____(06) The types of programming offered is not interesting, relevant, or desired
____(07) Poor customer service in past experience
____(08) Lack of universal accessibility
____(09) Language barriers (ESOL)
____(10) The program location or venue is not convenient
____(11) Something else: _____

11. Which TWO of the items listed on the previous page are the biggest barriers to your or your household's participation of Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks programming? *[Using the numbers in Question 10, please write in the numbers of the facilities that are your 1st and 2nd choices, or circle "NONE."]*

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ NONE

12. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your household have a need or desire to use the following programs listed below by circling "YES" or "NO" to the right of each type of program. If "YES," please answer the questions to the right of the program regarding how well your need for each type of program is currently being met in Howard County. For example, if you indicate you use or would like to attend sports leagues, but you are not aware of any open sports leagues near your home then your need may only be mostly or partly met.

Type of Program	Need or Desire to Use?		How well are your needs met in Howard County?			
			Fully Met	Mostly Met	Partly Met	Not Met
01. Aquatics or swimming	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
02. Arts and Culture (e.g., dance and painting)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
03. Before and After School Childcare	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
04. Education & Life Skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting, and computer skills)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
05. Fitness (i.e., Group Fitness Classes and Personal Training)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
06. Historic amenities/County-owned historic sites	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
07. Outdoor Adventure (e.g., kayaking, canoeing, and camping)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
08. Preschool	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
09. Seniors/Active Adult	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
10. Special Events (e.g., Wine in the Woods)	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
11. Sports Leagues, Adult	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
12. Sports Leagues, Youth	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
13. Camps and other activities for children	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
14. Nature Center Programs or Nature Education	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
15. Therapeutic Recreation/Recreation Inclusion	Yes	No	4	3	2	1
16. Other, please specify: _____	Yes	No	4	3	2	1

13. Which THREE of the PROGRAMS from the list in Question 12 would you like to see Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks invest more resources in? *[Using the numbers in Question 12, please write in the numbers of the programs that are your 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices, or circle "NONE."]*

1st: ____ 2nd: ____ 3rd: ____ NONE

14. Of the following ways in which Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks could allocate funding, which should be the top priority? *[Check only ONE.]*

- ____ (1) DEVELOP land that has already been purchased with new parks and facilities
 ____ (2) PURCHASE new land for later park or facility development
 ____ (3) PURCHASE new land for natural resource conservation
 ____ (4) PURCHASE new land for agricultural land preservation
 ____ (5) RENOVATE existing facilities

15. **How do you find out about programs and facilities offered by Recreation and Parks?** *[Check all that apply.]*
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Seasonal Activity Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> (06) Social Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Camp Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Staff Outreach Efforts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Department Website | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Friends/Family/Word of Mouth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Email Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) School flyer or newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) Direct mail | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Other: _____ |
16. **Which TWO methods of communication from the list in Question 15 would you prefer to receive information from Recreation and Parks?** *[Using the numbers in Question 15, please write in the numbers of the communication methods that are your 1st and 2nd choices, or circle "NONE."]*
- 1st: _____ 2nd: _____ NONE
17. **From the following list, please check ALL of the facilities that you and/or members of your household have used for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months.** *[Check all that apply.]*
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) Columbia Association | <input type="checkbox"/> (07) Non-HCDRP daycare providers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Homeowners associations | <input type="checkbox"/> (08) Maryland state parks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Private schools | <input type="checkbox"/> (09) Places of worship |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Youth sports associations | <input type="checkbox"/> (10) Private clubs |
| (Specify: _____) | <input type="checkbox"/> (11) Private gyms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (05) YMCA | <input type="checkbox"/> (12) Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (06) School-sponsored activities | |
18. **How do you usually travel to park lands, trails, or facilities?** *[Check only ONE.]*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Walk | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Bike |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Drive | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Public transportation |

Demographics

19. **Counting yourself, how many people are living with you in your household (roommates, spouses, children, etc.) that are:** *[Please write the total number of household members in each age category on the line following it.]*
- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Under age 5: _____ | Ages 15-19: _____ | Ages 35-44: _____ | Ages 65-74: _____ |
| Ages 5-9: _____ | Ages 20-24: _____ | Ages 45-54: _____ | Ages 75+: _____ |
| Ages 10-14: _____ | Ages 25-34: _____ | Ages 55-64: _____ | |
20. **What is your age?** _____ years
21. **What is your household income?**
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Less than \$25,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> (5) \$100,000 to \$149,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) \$25,000 to \$49,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (6) \$150,000 to \$199,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (3) \$50,000 to \$74,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> (7) \$200,000 or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (4) \$75,000 to \$99,999 | |
22. **Are you or the members of your household of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Ancestry?**
- ☐ (1) Yes ☐ (2) No
23. **Which of the following best describes your race/ethnicity?** *[Check all that apply.]*
- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (01) White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (02) Black or African American |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (03) Asian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (04) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (99) Other: _____ |

24. Your gender:

____(1) Male
____(2) Female

____(3) Non-Binary/Non-conforming
____(4) Prefer to Self-Describe: _____

25. Is your home single-family detached, a townhouse, a duplex, or in a multi-family building like an apartment or condo?

____(1) Single-family detached
____(2) Townhouse
____(3) Duplex (2-unit multi-family)

____(4) Apartment or condominium (3+ unit multi-family)
____(5) Other: _____

This concludes the survey. Thank you for your time!

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed return-reply envelope addressed to:
ETC Institute, 725 W. Frontier Circle, Olathe, Kansas 66061

APPENDIX E

TRENDS

This Trends Report was compiled as part of the Howard County Parks and Recreation (Department) Master Plan. Trends can allow an organization to peer into the minds of current and potential participants, making the organization aware of challenges and opportunities. Understanding trends can also help an organization reach new audiences. Trends can also help determine where to direct additional resources within an organization. A wide variety of sources were used in gathering information for this report, including:

- American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)
- American Council on Exercise (ACE)
- Forbes
- Harris Poll Results/The Stagwell Group
- Impacts Experience
- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)
- The Aspen Institute
- The Learning Resource Network (LERN)
- The New York Times
- The Outdoor Industry Association
- The Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE America)
- USA Pickleball website

In addition, the BerryDunn Parks, Recreation, Libraries team consists of six consultants with a combined total of over 130 years working in the field as practitioners. We speak and attend

conferences regularly, and we have a wide network of professionals who help shape our body of trends knowledge.

The information contained in this report can be used by staff when planning new programs, considering additions to parks and new park amenities, and creating the annual budget and capital improvement plan. The following information details parks and recreation industry trends grouped according to categories, including:

- General
- Fitness
- Aquatic
- NRPA Trends
- Age-Related
- Park Design
- COVID-19 Response
- Best Practices
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Along with these trends, it is also important to note the significant impact COVID-19 currently has and will have in the future in parks and recreation. The design of parks and facility spaces and the management and offering of recreation programs has already significantly changed the way services are offered as of the summer of 2020. COVID-19 will continue to impact the way parks and recreation agencies will operate in the future.

General Trends

Environmental Stewardship

Parks and recreation officials embrace their roles in environmental leadership, and according to the NRPA, most believe they should be the environmental leader within municipal government and encourage members of the community to be better environmental stewards. In the past five years, environmental stewardship has become more important to 80% of agencies nationwide, and there is a national trend toward providing education and awareness opportunities (classes and special events) that encourage conservation and environmental stewardship.

Environmental education activities are the most commonly planned new program additions for parks and recreation departments, with over 60% of organizations reporting that they will offer additional services to meet the need in their communities.

Recycling has traditionally been a cornerstone of conservation efforts in parks and recreation agencies, but it is becoming much more difficult with China's recycling plants closing off access to recycle paper waste materials. What happens when recycling is no longer a viable option? Parks and recreation agencies will need to reexamine the messaging that has become an important and long-standing part of the park experience to encourage stewardship in other ways. (NRPA 11/2019)

Technology

Parks and recreation agencies are consistently embracing the use of technology for a variety of purposes, including the utilization of wearable technology for fitness class instruction, monitoring park visitors, biometric identification at entrances to public facilities and programs, and scientific uses, such as surveying fire-prone landscapes and charting the spread of invasive species. Facial recognition software might be coming to parks and recreation sooner than one might think, as it already has for retail businesses and law enforcement.

Wi-Fi-enabled smart parks are popping up all over the nation in municipalities of all sizes. The smart park allows citizens to remain connected to their critical applications while still being outdoors. Not only do municipalities benefit from higher attendance by investing in smart parks, but connected visitors are more

likely to share and post photos, videos, and messages of their time at the park to their social followers, which serves as free marketing and third-party validation and can further help to increase park usage.

Some smart parks also provide on-site digital displays and mobile apps that promote park and facility features and allow guests to register for upcoming events and activities while such offerings are top-of-mind. Such conveniences are both revenue generators and attendance boosters. These types of kiosks and apps can also serve as education tools, as they can provide area history or fun facts about local flora and fauna. At a time when it feels as if every coffee shop and airport terminal is increasing the availability of charging stations, it should be no surprise that some communities are adding solar-powered charging benches to their parks.

Mobile-based games, such as Pokémon Go and other geocache and digital treasure-hunting applications, encourage socialization and outdoor recreation by challenging people to search for collectable digital tokens that they can find in their local park or preserve through geolocation technology. By engaging young people in games that are a combination of technology and outdoor recreation, parks and recreation agencies can help engage the next generation of leaders and demonstrate the importance that parks play in the community.

A technology solution created by CivicPlus called "311" is a citizen request management system that assists park staff with maintenance issues. This tool allows guests to report observed maintenance needs from any connected device. A photo can be taken and geo-tagged and then sent with the request, streamlining the repair process.

Outdoor Adventure Activities

Consumers are seeking activities to help them stay occupied and healthy as Covid-19 necessitates social distancing. As a result, a number of outdoor activities have experienced growth. Many sought out family-based activities in order to keep everyone safe and increase health. A Harris Poll from October 2020 found that 69% of Americans reported a heightened appreciation for outdoor spaces during the pandemic, with 65% sharing that they try to get outside of the house as much as possible. The results of the statistically valid survey in Howard survey indicate that the use of parks and open spaces is important to the community with 77% of households reporting that they visited their nearby park or facility at least once per month.

Outdoor cycling tops the list of popular outdoor activities as bicycle sales increased 63% nationally (as of June 2020) compared to the same time period the year prior. For the first several months of the Covid-19 outbreak, the

growth in bicycle sales was from family-friendly bikes. Then the growth in sales shifted to higher-end bicycles (including road bikes and full suspension mountain bikes). This was likely due to a shortage of family-friendly bikes as well as from cyclists more willing to invest in the activity for the future. Connecting local bike trails in Howard County and marketing these opportunities should be a priority. Paddle sports (including kayaks, paddleboards, rafts, and canoes) have also increased in popularity as the sale of equipment rose 56% in 2020 over the prior year. Inflatable versions of kayaks and paddleboards have gained in popularity due to their cost and the ability of the consumer to store these bulky pieces of equipment. Adding instructional paddle boarding or kayaking may be advantageous for the Department in an existing water body in Howard County. Oftentimes, people are interested in a brief lesson before going out on their own. Camping has surged in popularity due to the Covid-19 outbreak as well. Consumers looking for a break from home life pitched tents in their yards or at a local destination. The sale of recreational tents increased in 2020 two times faster than backpacking tents that are favored by serious campers and hikers. Offering camping opportunities in local parks and providing opportunities to try the activity before investing money in the equipment would be a good step for Howard County.

The New York Times published an article (May 2020) regarding the increase in bird watching during the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak. To aid in their sightings, many purchased binoculars, which saw a 22% increase in sales in June 2020 over the prior year. Unique bird species can be found in rural areas and urban areas, which has contributed to the appeal of this activity. Many people will not flock back to fitness centers to exercise following the Covid-19 outbreak. With the desire to keep moving, however, people are walking and running outdoors when the weather is suitable. Outdoor walking and running clubs will continue to be a popular way for people to exercise with others in a safe manner. Results of the Survey showed that 57% of the community would like the County to continue to offer virtual or hybrid programming in the future.

Partnerships (public, private, and intradepartmental)

Burgeoning populations require access to facilities outside of the current inventory in typical parks and recreation agencies, and the ability to partner with other departments within a municipality is crucial to meeting the

programming needs of a community. Forming healthy partnerships with public libraries and school districts to utilize facilities and collaborate on programs is one of the top priorities for agencies that do not currently have agreements in place. Additionally, offering cooperative, consortium-based programs with existing nonprofit and private entities allows several organizations to join partnerships to collectively offer programs in specific niche areas. For example, if one organization has the best computer labs, facilities, and instructors, then they offer that program for the consortium. If another organization has the largest aquatic center with trained staff, then they offer aquatics programs for the consortium, potentially eliminating duplication in programming. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for partnerships due to budget and staff cuts.

Niche Programming

Decades ago, recreation agencies focused on offering an entire set of programs for a general audience. Since that time, market segments have been developed, such as programming specifically for seniors. Recently, more market segments have been developed for specialty

audiences, such as the LGBTQ community, retirees, military veterans, cancer patients, people needing mental health support, and individuals with visible and invisible disabilities. Organizations are taking a much more holistic approach to program and service offerings, beyond what is typically thought of as a recreation program.

Generational Programming

There has been an increase in the number of offerings for families with children of all ages. This is a departure from past family programming that focused nearly entirely on younger children and preschoolers. Activities such as Family Fossil Hunt and Family Backpacking and Camping Adventure have proven very popular for families with teens. This responsiveness to the Generation X and Generation Y parents of today is an important step, as these age groups place a high value on family. GameTime's "Challenge Course" is an outdoor obstacle course that attracts people of all ages and backgrounds to socialize with family and friends while improving their fitness. This type of playground encourages multigenerational experiences.

Animal-Friendly Facilities

A dog park is a great way to give people an opportunity to get some fresh air, enjoy time with their dog, and bring communities together. With 90 million dogs residing in the United States, dog parks continue to be the fastest growing type of park (according to NRPA)—especially in urban areas. Not everyone wants to live next door to a dog park, but dog parks are desired in nearly every community.

Fitness Playgrounds

Some municipalities are installing fitness playgrounds that can be used by children and adults, such as Burke Playground's "ELEVATE® Fitness Course." With three levels of challenge and multiple options within each level, ELEVATE® offers experiences for beginner, intermediate, and advanced visitors to improve fitness and have fun.

Fitness Trends

Each year, the ACSM conducts a survey of worldwide fitness trends. Now in its 15th year, the ACSM circulates an electronic survey to thousands of fitness professionals around the world to determine health and fitness trends. The Covid-19 outbreak certainly impacted the results of the survey with the top trend now Online Training, which was number 26 in 2020. The list below includes the top 10 fitness trends for 2021.

Online Training

Virtual online training was first included in the survey in 2019 and was number three before dropping to number 26 in 2020 when the word “virtual” was eliminated from the title. The big changes within the fitness industry as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak resulted in the temporary closure of fitness centers around the world, forcing innovation in the way classes are delivered. Online training was developed for the at-home exercise experience. This trend uses digital streaming technology to provide group or individual fitness programs online. Online training is available 24/7 and can be a prerecorded or live class.

Wearable Technology

Wearable technology, which includes activity trackers, smartwatches, heart rate monitors, GPS tracking devices, and smart eyeglasses (designed to show maps and track activity), has been one of the top three trends since 2016. Examples include fitness and activity trackers such as those from Misfit, Garmin, Pebble Time, Samsung, Basis, Jawbone, Fitbit, and Apple. These devices can track heart rate, calories, sitting time, and much more. It is estimated that wearable technology is a \$95 billion industry.

Body Weight Training

Body weight training uses minimal equipment, which makes it an inexpensive way to exercise effectively. Although most people think of body weight training as being limited to push-ups and pull-ups, it can be much more than that. This type of training first appears in the trends survey in 2013 at number three.

Outdoor Activities

Likely because of the Covid-19 pandemic, outdoor activities such as group walks, group rides, or organized hiking groups are gaining in popularity. These can be short events, daylong events, or planned weeklong excursions.

Typically, people meet at a local park, hiking area, or bike trail with a designated leader. This trend for health and fitness professionals to offer outdoor activities to clients began in 2010 and has been in the top 20 ever since 2012. This has become much more popular the past several months as agencies work to offer fitness programs outdoors that help to ensure physical distancing.

High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

HIIT involves short bursts of high-intensity exercise followed by a short period of rest or recovery and typically takes fewer than 30 minutes to perform (although it is not uncommon for these programs to be much longer in duration). HIIT has been a top-five trend since 2014. Despite warnings by some fitness experts of the potential for increased injury using HIIT, this form of exercise is popular in fitness centers all over the world.

Virtual Training

This is the first time that virtual training has appeared separately from virtual online training. Virtual training is defined as the fusion of group exercise with technology, offering workouts designed for ease and convenience to fit a variety of schedules and needs. Typically, virtual workouts are played in gyms or fitness centers on a big screen, attracting a smaller number of participants compared with live classes while providing people of all fitness levels and ages with a different group fitness experience. Participants in virtual training can work at their own pace, making it ideal for those new to the class. As with online training, virtual training may be in the top 10 now due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Exercise is Medicine (EIM)®

EIM ® is a global health initiative that is focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other healthcare providers to include physical activity when designing treatment plans for patients and referring their patients to exercise professionals. In addition, EIM ® recognizes fitness professionals as part of the healthcare team. EIM ® was number 10 in 2019, jumping up to number 6 in 2020.

Strength Training With Free Weights

Strength training remains popular in all sectors of the health and fitness industry and for many different kinds of clients. Free weights, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, and medicine ball classes do not just incorporate equipment into another functional class or activity. Instructors begin by teaching the proper form and technique for each exercise and then progressively increase the resistance. New exercises are added periodically, starting with proper form and technique. Many younger clients of both community-based programs and commercial clubs train almost exclusively using weights. In today's gyms, however, there are many others (men and women, young and old, children, and patients with stable chronic diseases) whose main focus is using weight training to improve or maintain strength.

Fitness Programs for Older Adults

This trend continues to stress the fitness needs of the baby boomers and older generations. People are working longer, living longer, and remaining active much longer. Fitness professionals should take advantage of the growing market of older adults now retiring by providing age-appropriate and safe exercise programs for this once-ignored sector of the

population. The highly active older adult can be targeted to participate in more rigorous exercise programs, including strength training, team sports, and HIIT when appropriate. Even the elderly who are frail can improve their balance and ability to perform activities of daily living when given appropriate functional fitness program activities.

Personal Training

Personal training is a one-on-one workout with a trainer that begins with fitness testing and goal setting. The trainer then works with the client and prescribes workouts specific to their needs. The profession of personal training is becoming more accessible online, in clubs, in the home, and in worksites that have fitness facilities. Many fitness centers continued to offer personal training during the Covid-19 outbreak. Since this survey was first published in 2006, personal training has been ranked in the top 10.

Aquatic Trends

Pool Design

Municipal pools have shifted away from the traditional rectangle shape, and instead have shifted to facilities that include zero-depth entry, play structures that include multiple levels, spray features, small to medium slides, and separate play areas segmented by age/ability. Indoor warm water therapy pools continue to grow in popularity with the aging population, creating a shallow space for low-impact movement at a comfortable temperature enables programming options to multiply. “Endless” or current pools that are small and allow for “low impact, high intensity movement” are becoming popular, as well.

Water Fitness

The concept of water fitness is a huge trend in the fitness industry, with many new programs popping up such as aqua yoga, aqua Zumba, aqua spin, aqua step, and aqua boot camp. Whether recovering from an injury, looking for ease-of-movement exercise for diseases such as arthritis, or simply shaking up a fitness routine, all demographics are gravitating toward the water for fitness. Partnerships can be important for parks and recreation agen-

cies, such as working with hospitals to accommodate cardiac patients and those living with arthritis or multiple sclerosis.

Youth Programming

Swim lessons generally include the most significant number of participants and revenues for public pool operations. Programs can be offered for all ages and levels, including private, semi-private, and group lessons. Access to swimming pools is a popular amenity for summer day camp programs, too. Aquatics was identified by Howard County staff as a core program area and analyzed in the Recreation Assessment. The Department currently offers a robust menu of aquatic programs including swim lessons, swim teams, aquatic fitness, and water safety.

Spray Parks

Spray parks (or spray grounds) are now a common replacement for aging swimming pools, particularly because it provides the community with an aquatic experience without the high cost of traditional pools. Spray parks do not require high levels of staffing, require only minimal maintenance, and offer a no-cost (or low-cost) alternative to a swimming pool. A spray park typically appeals to children ages 2–12 and can be a stand-alone facility in a community or incorporated inside a family aquatic center.

NRPA Top Trends

Each year, the NRPA publishes an article about industry trends and predictions in the Parks and Recreation Magazine. In the January 2021 edition of the Parks and Recreation Magazine, an article titled Top Trends in Parks and Recreation for 2021, (written by Richard Dolesh—former Vice President of Strategic Initiatives for NRPA)—acknowledged that the changes caused by the COVID-19 outbreak are here for the foreseeable future.

Dolesh’s list for 2021 includes:

- With a renewed interest in parks, trails, and walkable environments, many positive changes will continue, including the expansion of pedestrian spaces and outdoor dining on urban streets, the conversion of bike lanes and trails, and the installation of parklets in parking spaces and former travel lanes.
- State and local municipal budgets will continue to be impacted as revenues continue to decline; the cost of responding to the pandemic will continue to rise; and help from the federal government might be limited.
- There will be a strong focus on health and health equity in 2021 as many park and recreation agencies look for ways to support food distribution, food pantries, COVID-19 testing, daycare for children of

essential workers and first responders, and safe spaces for learning.

- Due to the increasing rates of social isolation and loneliness, community mental health and well-being will become a focus area for park and recreation agencies. There will be more cooperation with social service agencies, public health departments, and school systems.
- Social and racial equity will become more important as park and recreation agencies will do more to address disparities in services and to transform the workforce by hiring health, equity, trauma-informed, and community engagement specialists.
- Technology trends being embraced by park and recreation systems include robotic cleaning, self-cleaning toilets, line-painting vehicles, autonomous-mowing equipment, and semi-autonomous drones for a variety of tasks. Guests to our parks expect Wi-Fi access and have become accustomed to charging stations and downloadable content, such as reality walks, games, and exhibits. Another aspect of technology that will be important is data privacy. Park and recreation agencies collect a lot of data from our users, such as photos, financial data, biometric data, and personally identifiable medical data. In addition, data collected from cellphones can be easily obtained to learn where people are and for how long they stay in each park location. Some park and recreation agencies will

start to leverage this data to learn more about customers. What information is collected, what is done with that information, and how it is secured will remain important questions to answer.

- The impacts of climate change have become a racial justice problem as low-income communities and people of color are disproportionately affected. High temperatures in many parts of the country impact the ability of park and recreation agencies to conduct day camps, after-school programs, fitness classes, and outdoor activities. The need for more green space in low-income communities far outweighs the funds available to purchase new land. Climate change has also degraded our natural resources, leading to a loss of wildlife. According to a recent scientific study conducted by the Smithsonian, nearly a third of all birdlife in North America has been lost since 1970.
- As parks, trails, and beaches became high-priority destinations during the COVID-19 outbreak, many park and recreation agencies stayed open and provided places for physical activity. In addition, many agencies became creative with programming, offering grab-and-go and take-it-with-you programs, which provided kits or bags of activities that people could perform on their own at home. Organizations across the country started offering a wide variety of virtual programming for

children and adults. Esports (also known as electronic sports, e-sports, or Esports), which are forms of competition using video games, were popular before the pandemic, and participation continues to increase—especially with the decrease in participation in traditional team sports due to the Covid-19 outbreak. One of the benefits of Esports is that they are more inclusive than many other activities because participants do not need to be able-bodied to play. In addition, Esports are moving toward team competitions.

- Creating parks that are “Insta-worthy” will become more important as people look for great places to take photos to share on social media with family and friends. These places can also be used to promote visitation and to attract local photographers.

Age-Related Trends

Trends for Youth ages 13 and Younger

Traditional Sport Programming

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, the number of youth involved in team sports was beginning to decline. From 2008 to 2018, the participation rate of kids between the ages of 6 and 12 dropped from 45% to 38% due to the increasing costs, time commitments, and the competitive nature of organized sports leagues.

According to the Aspen Institute, after most athletic programs were shut down in the spring of 2020, 30% of children who previously played team sports now say that they are no longer interested in returning. It is estimated that up to 50% of the private travel sports clubs will fold following the pandemic, putting pressure on municipal recreation programs to fill the gaps for those children who do want to continue playing organized sports. There is a heightened need to save and build affordable, quality, community-based sports programs that can engage children of all abilities in large numbers.

Howard County offers a wide array of athletic programming including rowing, pickleball, basketball, swim teams, cricket, flag football, softball, soccer, football, volleyball, and street hockey, among others. It will be interesting to

see when these programs return to pre-pandemic numbers. Many agencies across the country are seeing a sluggish return to youth athletics (particularly those that are held indoors, such as basketball and volleyball).

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM, STEAM) Programs
STEM, STEAM programs—including arts programming—are growing in popularity. Some examples include: learn to code, design video games, Minecraft, create with Roblox (an online gaming platform and game creation system), engineer robots, print 3D characters, and build laptops.

During the Recreation Assessment portion of the Master Planning process, STEAM programming is not a core program in Howard County. When staff are adding programming, this would be a good area to consider for new programs to meet the needs of the population who are not drawn to athletics.

Summer and School Break Camps

Participation in parks and recreation youth camp programs continues to be very strong. For some agencies, these programs are the most significant revenue producers. This is true for the Department as the County offers summer camp at multiple sites throughout the County for children ages 5–12 years. Summer camps are considered a core program in Howard County, with many general and specialty

camp opportunities offered throughout the season.

Nature-Related Programming

There is an international movement to connect children, their families, and their communities to the nature world called the New Nature Movement, and it is having an impact. In addition to new nature programming, nature-themed play spaces—such as the nature-inspired playground at Debbie Curtain Park in Miami, FL—are becoming popular. Over 5,000 households indicated that they had participated in nature enjoyment activities indicating that there is a solid base of residents who are interested. Nature-related recreation is not a considered a core program for the Department. When adding future new programs, this would be another good area of focus.

Youth Fitness

The organization Reimagine Play developed a list of the top eight trends for youth fitness. The sources for this information include the ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, ACE Fitness, and SHAPE America. The top eight trends are:

- Physical education classes are moving from sports activities to physical literacy curriculums that include teaching fundamentals in movement skills and healthy eating
- HIIT classes that involve bursts of high-intensity exercise followed by a short period of rest with classes ranging 30 minutes or less
- Wearable technology and digital fitness media, including activity trackers, smart-watches, heart rate monitors, GPS tracking devices, and smart eyeglasses and virtual headsets
- Ninja warrior training and gyms as a result of NBC's premier shows American Ninja Warrior and Spartan Race
- Outdoor recreational activities including running, jogging, trail running, and BMX biking
- Family (intergenerational) fitness classes such as family fitness fairs, escape rooms, and obstacle races are gaining in popularity among Gen X and Gen Y families who place a high value on family time
- Kids' obstacle races in conjunction with adult obstacle races such as the Tough Mudder, Spartan Race, and Warrior Dash
- Youth running clubs that also teach life skills such as risk-taking, goal-setting, and team building

Trends for Teens/Younger Adults Ages 13 – 24

Esports

Esports (also known as electronic sports, e-sports, or Esports) is a form of competition using video games. Forbes reported in December 2019 that Esports audiences exceed 443 million people across the world, and the International Olympic Committee is considering it as a new Olympic sport. Local recreation offerings can include training classes, open play, tournaments, and major competition viewing. A new recreation center in Westerville, Ohio includes a dedicated Esports room, and college campuses across the country are also launching Esports programs. Of note is that Maryland is among the states in the country that hosts eSports events and tournaments. On April 30th, 2019, Maryland governor, Larry Hogan approved eSports Act (House Bill 48). The act defined the sport as a competition that involves video games, strategy games, multiplayer online battle arenas, and first-person shooters.

This is a program area that the Department is exploring with a few offerings. Due to the popularity, the County could expand further, and may consider seeking a contractor to hire

to offer this program to Howard County youth. This can be done at a low cost with little risk with no investment into the equipment needed.

Parkour

Parkour is a physical training discipline that challenges the participant to move their body through obstacle courses, similar to military training. Using body movements such as running, jumping, and swinging, the participant moves through static indoor courses or outdoor urban environments.

Outdoor Active Recreation

This includes activities such as kayaking, canoeing, stand-up paddleboarding, mountain biking, and climbing. Rentals for those who want to "try before they buy" are popular in many areas. All of these types of activities have experienced an increase since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. A survey by Civic Science found that those between 13 and 25 years old were the most likely age group to indicate that they planned to participate in more outdoor activities as a result of Covid-19-related shutdowns.

Bicycling

According to the Aspen Institute, bicycling became the third most popular sport for kids in 2020. Skate park usage surged as well.

Life Sports

According to the Learning Resources Network "Top Trends in Recreation Programming, Marketing and Management" article, "life sports" are a new priority in the recreation world, where the focus is on developing youth interests in activities that they can enjoy for a lifetime, such as biking, kayaking, tennis, golf, swimming, and jogging/walking.

Holistic Health

Parks and recreation's role in maintaining a holistic lifestyle will continue to grow. People are seeking opportunities to practice mindfulness, authentic living, and disconnection from electronic media. Programs to support mental health, including those that help to combat anxiety, perfectionism, and substance abuse in youth and young adults, are increasingly needed. The United Nations has urged governments around the world to take the mental health consequences of COVID-19 seriously and help to ensure the widespread availability of mental health support to constituents.

Trends for Adults ages 25 – 54

Aerobic Activities

For most age groups, swimming for fitness and weight training are the two most frequently mentioned activities in which people indicate interest. Running, walking, and biking for fitness continue to show strong and consistent growth. A good balance of equipment and classes is necessary to keep consistent with trends. Fitness and wellness classes rated very high on the priority investment rating in the Howard County survey results. The priority investment rating is a combination of the number of households who have a need for a specific activity combined with the number of households whose needs for this type of activity are not being met.

Fun Fitness

"Fun" fitness is a current trend. Exercises such as "P90x," "Insanity," and "CrossFit" have proven that a lot of equipment is not required to get fit. Since these programs have become popular, newer versions have become available, some cutting the time it takes to look and feel fit in half. These types of classes have been growing and will continue to grow in popularity at recreation departments and fitness centers.

Group Cycling

Group cycling continues in popularity as the younger fitness enthusiasts embrace this high-performance group exercise activity as well as program variations that are developed to attract the beginner participant.

Yoga

While Pilates has shown an incredible 10-year growth trend, the past three years have seen a decline in participation. Perhaps participation migrated to yoga, as participation is up across all levels for the year. Yoga is more class based, while Pilates is more of an individual activity. The millennial fitness participants (ages 25 – 39) are showing a higher propensity to go with group-oriented programs.

Outdoor Fitness

Many agencies around the country have added fitness equipment in parks. The Miami-Dade County, FL park system refers to these areas as Fitness Zones and has added this type of equipment in 30 of its parks. The exercise equipment is permanently installed in a specific area of the park designed for exercise. The survey showed that this was also an area of interest for residents. While several parks throughout the County have equipment already installed, when renovating, upgrading, or creating new parks, outdoor fitness equip-

ment should be included in the mix of amenities.

Cornhole (or Bags)

Cornhole is a low-impact, low-cost activity that can be played by people of all ages. Young adults are signing up for leagues (that can be held indoors or outdoors and are offered all year long). It does not take any skill, and it is a social activity. Although it can be offered recreationally, some competitive leagues are offered, as well. This would be a great addition to adult programming during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Trends for Adults ages 55 and over

Lifelong Learning

A Pew Research Center survey found that 73% of adults consider themselves lifelong learners. Do-it-yourself project classes and programs that focus on becoming a more “well-rounded” person are popular. Phrases such as “how to” can be added to the agency website’s search engine optimization as consumers now turn to the internet as their first source of information regarding how-to projects. Safeguarding online privacy is also a trending course. Providing classes that teach residents how they can be more sustainable in their own homes might be a good addition for Howard County.

Fitness and Wellness

Programs such as yoga, Pilates, tai chi, balance training, chair exercises, and others continue to be popular with the older generation. Fitness is another core program area for Howard County. With fitness center memberships available at several of the Department’s facilities there are many fitness options for residents. A wide variety of group exercise classes are also offered throughout the County.

Encore Programming

This is a program area for baby boomers who are soon to be retired and focuses on a broad range of programs to prepare people for transitions into retirement activities. Popular programs for 55+ market include: fitness and wellness (specifically yoga, mindfulness, tai chi, relaxation, personal training, etc.), drawing and painting, photography, languages, writing, computer and technology, social media, cooking, mahjong, card games, volunteering, and what to do during retirement.

Specialized Tours

Participants are looking for more day trips that highlight unique local experiences or historical themes. For example, a focus on authentic food, guided night walks, bike tours, concentration on a specific artist’s work, and ghost walks are among the themes being sought out.

Creative Endeavors

Improv classes are specifically targeting age groups with classes called “Humor Doesn’t Retire.” Workshops and groups help seniors play, laugh, and let loose while practicing mental stimulation, memory development, and flexibility.

Pickleball

With 2.8 million people in the country playing Pickleball, it is a trend not to be taken lightly. Though not at its peak, Pickleball is still trending nationwide as the fastest growing sport in America with the active aging demographic, as 75% of core players are age 55 or older. It can be played as singles or doubles, indoors or out, and it is easy for beginners to learn but can be very competitive for experienced players. The game has developed a passionate following due to its friendly, social nature, and its multigenerational appeal.

Park Design Trends

Sustainability

Sustainability and eco-friendliness have become a priority in park design. Parks provide ideal opportunities for green infrastructure, as sites are often already highly visible, multi-functional public spaces that typically include green elements. The use of green infrastructure has increased over the last decade as knowledge of its benefits has grown. High-performance landscapes with green infrastructure provide the maximum amount of benefits to communities, including:

- Green jobs
- Opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation
- Economic growth
- Improved water and water quality
- Community resilience
- Lower urban heat island effects
- Manage flood risks
- New and improved wildlife habitat

The implementation of green storm water infrastructure duplicates a natural process to prevent, capture, and/or filter storm water runoff. A survey by the Trust for Public Land found that more than 5,000 acres of parkland in 48 major cities have been modified in some way to control storm water. With community parks containing thousands of acres across the

country, there is a multitude of opportunities for integrating green infrastructure into park systems nationwide.

Common green storm water infrastructure projects include bio-retention, bio swales, constructed wetlands, impervious surface disconnections, green roofs, permeable pavements, rainwater harvesting, stream restoration, urban tree canopy, land conservation, vegetation management, and vegetated buffers.

Inclusive Playgrounds

Well-designed inclusive parks and inclusive playgrounds welcome children of all abilities to play, learn, and grow together. An inclusive playground takes away the barriers to exclusion, both physical and social, providing a “sensory rich” experience for all. Accommodating physical disabilities is one component of an inclusive playground—this refers to providing wheelchair-accessible routes and ramp transfers points. Customized equipment, such as special swings, allow all kids to enjoy the playground as it is meant to be enjoyed.

An inclusive playground also provides a number of different opportunities for children to explore. They are able to integrate all the senses, and the amenities encourage social play. A true inclusive playground does not mean that there is a special piece of equipment in a separate area off to the side, but

rather that the space is designed as a cohesive community where play opportunities are integrated throughout. These types of park facilities stress the importance of inclusion in daily activities, regardless of ability level. More and more parks and recreation agencies across the country are installing inclusive playgrounds to better meet the needs of all constituents. The Department has several inclusion friendly parks and playgrounds, and the addition of the Savage Park inclusive playground continues a tradition of offering spaces for all to enjoy.

From an educational perspective, the Department should do its part in educating residents about the impacts of climate change on the local economy and how residents can make a difference.

COVID-19 Response

The “new normal” in the parks and recreation world will be vastly different from recent history. As parks and facilities reopen with new guidelines and programming resumes with physical distancing and smaller participant-to-instructor ratios, operational budgets will continue to take a hit. Many parks and recreation agencies that are starting to resume programming are experiencing low registration rates, as parents are hesitant to send their children to public places. Although all areas of programming will be affected, two areas that are likely to be hit very hard by the pandemic are youth sports and child care.

Youth Sports

There are many private, travel sports organizations in Howard County serving children in region. The Aspen Institute estimates that many of these clubs will not survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Sponsorships are likely to diminish, many coaches who went without a paycheck for many months might have moved on, and 50% of parents fear that their children might get sick if they resume youth sports when restrictions are lifted. A total of 46% of parents fear they will become ill watching a youth sports event. Financial concerns are also a factor when considering a return to youth sports, as 54% of sports parents’ finances have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

It appears from the research that families might be looking to scale back, stay closer to home, and spend less money on youth sports experiences. All of these factors will likely put pressure on public parks and recreation agencies to provide local, affordable, equitable, and quality sports options for all children, regardless of ability.

Child Care

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the value of the child care sector in the United States was \$99 billion prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, this is one of the industries that will be hit the hardest, as it relies on the ability of customers to safely show up day after day and to be able to pay for the privilege. It has been estimated that nearly 20,000 day care facilities may have closed across the country due to the pandemic. Those that remain open will likely have to increase tuition. In a study by the NAEYC, 47% of programs indicated that they have raised tuition and taken on new debt to stay open and serve families.

The United States had a child care crisis before COVID-19, and the pandemic is making it much worse. Currently, child care providers receive no meaningful public investment and essentially operate as small businesses. Child care providers are treated like private enter-

prises, similar to private gyms, as these small businesses rely solely on tuition fees. While there are public subsidies available to child care providers to support the enrollment of children from low-income families, federal and state government support is minimal.

Most child care providers operate on very thin margins with little cash reserves, and the complete loss of revenue has forced many of these businesses to close their doors.

Once child care facilities are allowed to reopen, these businesses are likely to remain unstable due to under-enrollment as many parents will not feel safe sending their child back to a group care setting. Constituents might put pressure on parks and recreation agencies to bridge the gap and provide safe, affordable child care options for residents. This is a service that the Department is currently offering. Due to high demand and staffing challenges felt across the county, the Department maintains a waitlist of over 400. In a separate best practice analysis of benchmarked communities, several ideas were offered about addressing the current needs for childcare.

Best Practices

In June 2020, NRPA reported on the results of a national survey that was conducted during the pandemic, and the following practices were prioritized by park and recreation practitioners:

- In-person and virtual programs will continue to coexist. More than 60% of agencies have launched some type of virtual programs. As in-person programs restart, there will be opportunities to continue virtual offerings to serve those who are unwilling to or unable to return to in-person participation due to health, transportation, or other issues.
- People will view access to parks and the outdoors as a right and not a luxury. During the pandemic, the only places available to maintain physical health and well-being were parks, trails, and open space. This increased usage should result in increased advocacy and, hopefully, more funding support. Natural parks and preserves are at the very top of the list of parks and recreation facilities that are most important to Howard County households with 100% of those that responded to the ETC survey indicating that the paved trails were important spaces to invest resources. Unpaved trails (71%) and park lands (61%) were in the top three Priority Investment rating scores as well.
- Virtual meetings are here to stay as the past year has proven that not every meeting needs to be done in-person. This is especially true for public engagement where virtual meetings will be a requirement for future planning efforts.
- Basic personal hygiene and public sanitation requirements will increase significantly. In addition to increased handwashing, public sanitation requirements and community expectations will be significantly higher. Agencies will implement new cleaning guidelines, resulting in increased staffing and additional time in between programs to help ensure compliance. There may be new opportunities to partner with local healthcare companies and hygiene and sanitizer companies to provide approval for disinfecting practices.
- Park and recreation professionals will be viewed as essential workers due to the many pandemic-related tasks being performed including the distribution of masks, providing emergency health services, serving meals, hosting drive-through Covid-19 testing sites, and all of the virtual recreation programs provided. It is imperative that park and recreation agencies do a better job of telling our story to attract and recruit the Generation Z audience (born 1997 to 2002)—a group that is not just interested in earning money, but also making an impact.
- Permanent offices will shrink as working remotely from home becomes an expecta-

tion and not a perk. Although a number of parks and recreation staff will be required on-site, the Covid-19 outbreak has proven that it is not required that every staff person be in the office every day of the week.

- Customer experiences will become more faceless and/or touchless. From online registration to making digital payments, this trend is already occurring in parks and recreation agencies across the country. The fear of contact that many immunocompromised individuals have will accelerate this experience. In addition, job loss from artificial intelligence and automation will make experiences more faceless.
- Esports will continue to grow exponentially. As sports events and leagues started getting canceled, playing and watching Esports began to accelerate. Every major sport has started to participate in Esports—NASCAR has been one of the most successful, attracting over 1.3 million viewers for one race.

As the country continues to evolve during and after the pandemic, trends will continue to change. What was popular a year ago might never return. Parks and recreation professionals will need to stay current on trends and experiment with new programming in their community to see what works and what constituents most need.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak, there is growing recognition that access to parks and recreational spaces is not equitable. According to the Urban Institute, in many cities across the United States, there are fewer quality parks in close proximity to low-income residents and communities of color. As a result, many large cities have started to establish data-driven criteria to guide investment in public recreation to improve equity. The City Parks Alliance identified five common elements that are critical to developing, implementing, and evaluating a data-driven equitable investment strategy.

1. Leverage leadership from one or more sectors. Strong leadership is critical for making the case for creating and implementing an equitable approach. In addition to various governmental bodies, involving local foundations and those from the nonprofit sector can help to bring the need for equity into focus.
2. Define equity goals, and collect data to support the goals. Data collection and analysis must be reliable, consistent, and transparent, and guided by agreed-upon equity goals. The data collected in each city may vary but often includes statistics on poverty, crime, health, youth population, unemployment, past capital and maintenance investment, and access to parks.

3. Educate and engage the community on equity data. Educating all levels of government, residents, nonprofits, foundations, and the private sector on data findings is important for building awareness and buy-in, as well as a commitment to implementation. Extensive outreach and engagement is critical to help ensure the data aligns with reality and that the process builds ownership of the results.
4. Establish and sustain equitable funding practices. A variety of strategies can be implemented to help ensure that equity becomes a reality, including new ordinances, voter-approved measures, strategic plans, and internal reorganization.
5. Institute consistent tracking and evaluation procedures. Tracking new funding initiatives with an oversight committee that is required to produce an audit, reports, or study results helps to ensure consistent implementation over time.

APPENDIX E

BEST PRACTICES

Customer Service

In reviewing customer service practices and techniques for Howard County Recreation and Parks, there is evidence of a strong customer culture throughout the Department. The existing customer service system includes customer service training, policies and procedures related to customer service, deploying customer service standards, needs assessments, surveys, and program evaluations. The commitment to customer service has existed for many years. The Department has made great efforts in continuously improving its service delivery. It is obvious the Department highly values the provision of excellent service, both internally and externally.

The commitment to external customer service resonates through all levels of the Department. This is no small feat, given the large numbers of part-time and seasonal staff, in addition to the regular full-time work force.

Reviewed documents include:

- Customer Service Guidelines
- Workplace Etiquette Guidelines
- Program Evaluation Policy
- Surveying Customers Policy
- Systematic Evaluation Plan
- Performance Appraisal Form
- Customer Service Standards
- Reward and Recognition Program (both County-wide and Department-wide)

Having developed these plans, policies, and guidelines represents best practices in of itself.

Following a review of current practices, this narrative also includes information about best practice approaches to customer service, developing a customer service system framework, and information from other agencies that demonstrate excellent customer service practices.

A meeting was held with staff to glean additional information about training, customer satisfaction measurement, and use of service standards. In reviewing the Department's commitment to service, the Department offers ongoing customer service training for full-time staff every two to three years. Seasonal employees such as summer camp staff receive

customer service training as part of the seasonal orientation each year. The orientation process for new employees includes a focus on service.

The performance appraisal process includes an evaluation criterion of customer service, as follows: *Promotes customer service focus. Uses feedback to improve customer services. Develops new ways to meet customer needs. Displays courtesy and sensitivity to customers face-to-face, on the phone, via computer and all other communication modes. Manages difficult or emotional customer situations. Responds promptly to customer needs.*

The County and the Department offer reward programs that recognize staff for excellent service. All of these mechanisms reflect ways to reinforce the commitment to service.

Following CAPRA standards, the Department does an excellent job managing the program evaluation process. Five key program areas are surveyed each quarter to identify any areas of improvement. Needs assessments are developed on a regular basis, to determine customer priorities. The website provides contact information for the leadership team members, which makes senior leaders very accessible to the public.

Service Quality Framework

An aspirational goal for the Department is to continue to strengthen the customer service system. An excellent framework to use to assess overall service quality is based on the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria for Organizational Excellence.

Many park and recreation agencies make the mistake of assuming that good customer service is achieved by merely providing customer service training. Yet, excellent service requires much more. Requirements include an organizational culture that espouses employee empowerment and provides front service employees with authority for decision making on behalf of customers. Other requirements include the use of technology to improve service, such as efficient registration systems. Customer service also extends to internal customers from support areas of the Department including finance, human resources, marketing, park maintenance, and technology.

Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria for Organizational Excellence

As mentioned previously, the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Criteria offer a blueprint for the establishment of a best practice service system. The criteria include a Customer Focus, which assesses how an organization engages its customers for long-term marketplace suc-

cess, including how the organization listens to the voice of the customer, builds customer relationships, and uses customer information to improve and to identify opportunities for innovation.

The Customer Focus area includes two elements:

- Voice of the Customer
- Customer Engagement.

These are outlined below and include the two elements that support each of the two criteria.

Voice of the Customer: Obtaining Information from Customers

a. Customer Listening Criteria: How do you listen to, interact with, and observe customers to obtain action-able information? How do you seek immediate and actionable feedback from customers on the quality of services, customer support, and transactions? How do you try to engage non-customers? How do you find out information about similar providers of services to determine any improvements you can make to services?

b. Determination of Customer Satisfaction and Engagement Criteria: How do you determine customer satisfaction and engagement? How do you obtain information on your customers'

satisfaction relative to their satisfaction with your competitors?

Customer Engagement: Engaging Customers by Serving Their Needs and Building Relationships

a. Product Offerings and Customer Support Criteria: What is the process for decisions related to program offerings? How do you determine customer needs? How do you identify and adapt service offerings to meet the requirements and exceed the expectations of your customers? How do you adapt services to attract new customers, and to create opportunities to expand relationships with current customers.

b. Building Customer Relationships Management (CRM) Criteria: How do you market, build, and manage relationships with customers to acquire customers and build market share; retain customers, meet their requirements, and exceed their expectations and increase their engagement with you? How do you manage customer complaints? How do you resolve complaints promptly and effectively?

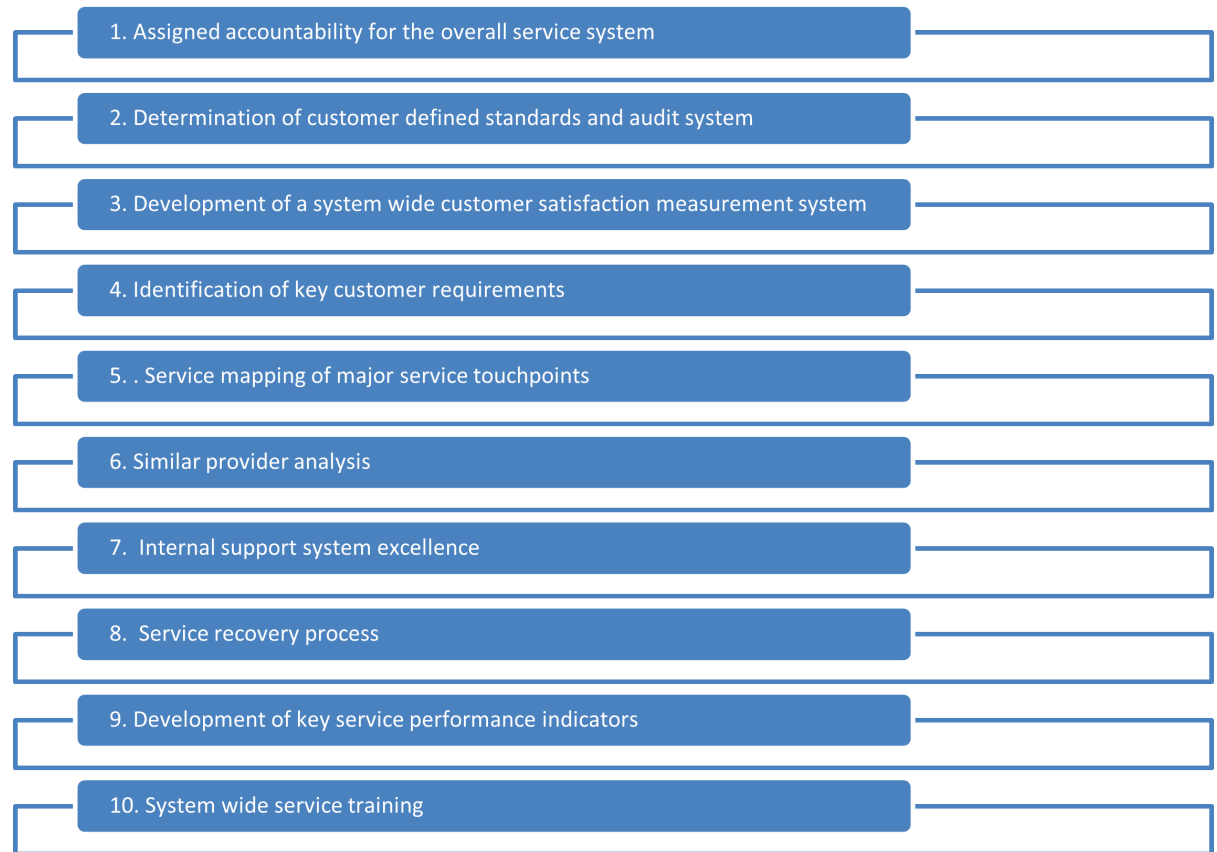
Based on these criteria, some recommendations for building best practices for customer service include the development of a framework for the service quality system. This includes an over-arching approach to strengthening service and ensuring adherence to established standards. In absence of an overall framework, program coordinators and facility managers design their own level of effort and approaches to service. This results in inconsistent service provision . A framework assists in “smoothing” the variation among customer experiences.

Customer Service Framework

The following diagram shows the 10 elements needed to develop a customer service framework. This is followed by a narrative that explains each of the elements.

Details for each of these elements include the following:

1. Assign responsibilities to determine who is accountable for the overall customer service system. Many park and recreation agencies have a cross functional team that oversees the overall customer service system. This team can be responsible for all phases of service and include all areas and levels of the Department. It may also be good to have this as a part of a staff person’s job responsibility. The framework



can include site/program specific service quality systems, in support of the overall organization's goals.

2. Continue deploying the existing customer service standards. The Department currently uses standards. The use of service standards can reduce service variation. The deployment of standards also requires an audit system to determine overall effectiveness of the use of the standards.

3. Create an overall customer satisfaction measurement system that outlines and documents types, frequency, and data collection processes. This information should be documented and shared with the rest of the organization. The Department deploys many different types of customer satisfaction measurement tools. It is important to ensure follow up to the results. The results should be centralized with assigned accountabilities for making improvements. The results, in turn, can be a part of the Department's key performance indicators. This information should be shared with all employees and should be a major focus of the Department's leadership team.

4. Develop approximately five key customer requirements of key services and programs by identifying the service attributes most important to customers. As an example, for a fitness center operation, the key custom-

er requirements can include items such as: availability and condition of equipment, facility cleanliness, staff knowledge, price of membership, and facility safety. Staff training can then focus on the requirements most important to the customer. In order to identify the most important requirements, administer an importance/performance survey or facilitate a focus group with front line staff to identify the most important requirements.

5. Develop service mapping for key programs and services. Service mapping is one way to improve service system design. A service map is a visual definition of a service system, displaying each sub-process of the system in the sequence in which it appears. This can be represented simply as a sequential listing of steps involved in a service process or drawing a flow chart of the steps. In effect, the service map depicts the chronology and pattern of performances that make up a service. If drawn explicitly, it answers the questions: "What is the service?" and "How does it work?" This is particularly useful for new staff as well as young staff who are just learning how to deliver good service. The mapping process should include steps involved in the program registration process as it was called out as an area of needed improvement in the customer focus groups.

6. Complete a similar provider evaluation on an annual basis. This is an important

criterion of the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence, related to customer listening as was detailed earlier in the narrative. This involves a comparative analysis of program and service attributes of providers that offer similar services, such as pricing, programs and services offered, information about their customer base, value propositions, and marketing efforts. In addition, an ongoing survey question should include, "if you took this program or experienced this service elsewhere, is there anything we can learn to improve our service." Similar provider analysis is most important for those services that exist within a competitive environment, such as child care, youth sports, and fitness center services. Consider completing this every two years or so.

7. Strengthen internal customer service support. Internal customer satisfaction is critical to effective delivery of excellent external customer service.

8. Develop a service recovery process. When a service problem occurs, the customer's confidence in the District hangs in the balance. The agency can make things better with the customer—at least to some extent—or make things worse. Research consistently shows that organizations receive the most favorable service quality scores from customers experiencing no recent service problems with them, and, by far, the worst scores from customers whose problems were not resolved

satisfactorily. In effect, organizations that do not respond effectively to customer complaints compound the service failure; they fail the customer twice.

Many dissatisfied customers do not complain directly to the organization—to avoid a confrontation, or because they perceive no convenient way to complain, or do not believe complaining will do much good. Customers' reluctance to complain even when they are faced with serious problems has been well documented. The District can overcome some of this reluctance and improve recovery service in three ways:

a. Encourage customers to complain and make it easy for them to do so. Managers who wish to improve problem-resolution service must overcome the common customer perception that organizations do not really care when things go wrong. Many organizations rely exclusively on reactive recovery strategies in which customers must initiate contact. Comment cards available in the service facility is an example of a reactive system. This approach is useful but it precludes customers unwilling to take the first step. Thus, proactive strategies, in which the organization makes the first contact, should be considered.

The Toyota Company is highly regarded for its approaches to handling customer dissatisfaction. They consider complaints to be a

gift, or, in other words, providing ways the company can improve. Customers checking out of the Harvey Hotel in Plano, Texas, may be approached by a "Lobby Lizard," a member of management, who asks: "How can we do better?" This proactive feedback method gives management the opportunity to recover with an unhappy guest and provides ideas for service improvement.

b. Respond quickly and personally. Organizations often take too long to respond to unhappy customers, and then respond impersonally. By responding quickly, an organization conveys a sense of urgency. Quick response demonstrates that the customer's concern is the District's concern. By responding personally, with a telephone call or a visit, the organization creates an opportunity for dialogue with the customer—an opportunity to listen, ask questions, explain, apologize, and provide an appropriate remedy. North Carolina's Wachovia Bank has a "sundown rule"—the bank must establish contact with an unhappy customer before sunset on the day the complaint is received.

c. Develop a problem resolution system. Service employees need specific training on how to deal with angry customers and how to help customers solve service problems. In some cases, they need access to information systems that will tell them more about the customer, the situation causing the problem, and possible solutions. When American Express

card holders telephone the company's toll-free number listed on their monthly statement, they speak to a highly trained customer service representative with the authority to solve eighty-five percent of the problems on the spot.

9. Develop key performance indicators for service quality. The American Customer Satisfaction Index, an organization involved in measuring customer satisfaction in multiple industries, uses the following benchmark information:

- Customer Satisfaction
- Customer Expectations
- Perceived Quality
- Perceived Value
- Customer Complaints
- Customer Loyalty (retention)

Other possible measures include:

- Customer retention
- Amount of money refunded from customer dissatisfaction
- Repurchase intent percentage
- Referral rate
- Compliance to standards
- Gross revenue growth

10. Continue customer service training for all staff.

Information from Other Agencies

Three agencies that represent best practices related to customer service approaches include Metro Parks Tacoma, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, and Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department. Some of the approaches used by these three agencies may provide new ideas for Howard County Recreation and Parks.

VA Beach uses a Net Promoter Score (NPS) as an important performance metric that measures customer experiences and satisfaction. NPS measures the loyalty of customers. NPS scores are measured with a single-question survey and reported with a number from the range -100 to +100. The higher the score, the better.

Respondents give a rating between 0 (not at all likely) and 10 (extremely likely) and, depending on their response, customers fall into one of 3 categories to establish an NPS score:

- Promoters respond with a score of 9 or 10 and are typically loyal and enthusiastic customers.
- Passives respond with a score of 7 or 8. They are satisfied with your service but not happy enough to be considered promoters.
- Detractors respond with a score of 0 to 6. These are unhappy customers who are unlikely to buy from you again, and may even discourage others from buying from you

VA Beach also provided information about their approaches and points of emphasis with internal customer service through staff empowerment, role definition, and employee appreciation/recognition. If team members feel valued, we'll naturally provide better external customer service to our patrons. Workforce morale remains top of mind for us. Some of the items that reflect our efforts for internal customer service includes:

- Empowerment Roles & Responsibilities: work is focused on identifying primary and secondary responsibilities/duties specific to each role within the department. We then categorize them into functional areas (e.g., customer service, operations). The goal is to use this information to better describe and more accurately capture employees' roles and responsibilities, leverage this information to support staff, and provide employees with guidance for decision-making. This effort impacts everyone in the department. It fosters greater transparency for each role, supports job postings, and hones training opportunities for staff.
- PT & FT orientation/staff onboarding process
- Staff appreciation and recognition via:
 - Morale committee
 - Community committee
 - Service awards
 - PAR Excellence: Addressing issues identified in member/cultural surveys to improve employee satisfaction (and, hopefully, retention)

Agency	MetroParks Tacoma, WA	Virginia Beach, VA	Northern Virginia Regional Parks, VA
Customer Service Efforts	Trainings, manuals & guides have been created to assist with onboarding and on-going training. Nearpod is used for training within the Enterprise fund. A new Visitor Services Unit evaluates the effectiveness of training tools. Nearpod is used for training within the Enterprise fund.	Care principals were created and are shared during onboarding. A "Data Democracy" is in place as all information collected is shared with those that make decisions. Automated survey process shares Net Promoter Score with appropriate staff.	The 2007 Strategic Plan included the creation of a Customer Service Initiative. In 2010 Customer Service Experts (Baltimore) were hired to work with staff to create the Service Purpose and Three Service Standards. Staff enhanced these efforts.
Responsible Staff	All are responsible but facility managers take the lead. Visitor Services Supervisor takes the lead, while facility supervisors ensure consistency across attractions.	Agency-wide focus and decentralized across the organization. Good customer service is everyone's responsibility.	The ED has created a culture that empowers staff to solve problems and satisfy customer needs. Facility Managers have a budget for "on the spot bonuses" to reward staff for good customer service in a timely manner.
Customer Service Team	Visitor Services Supervisor works with the Customer Experience Team made up of appointed managers and supervisors from across all facilities.	When an issue arises, an ad hoc committee is formed for a static, specific purpose. The agency also focuses efforts on internal customer service.	The Customer Service Team includes a dozen staff from each type of facility. The Team provides all of the customer service training across the agency.
Customer Service Measurement	Comment cards, online Community Action Request forms, active engagement and outreach of a diverse collection of local stakeholders, customer withdrawal information and social media messaging.	Surveys measure "uplifts" and "hassles" and results are shared with appropriate staff in a very timely manner.	Comment cards are available and tracked.
Metrics used to Measure	Customer Retention, attendance data, and survey results.	3 Key Performance Indicators are tracked: Net Promoter Score, Member Retention and Market Penetration.	Retention rates for aquatics and golf are tracked and shared.

Recommendations

- The Department should identifying one staff person's area of responsibilities to include oversight and management of the customer service system and processes.
- HCRP should consider forming a customer service team comprised of internal staff that would review practices and strategically plan for improvements. Creation of a team would help to spread the further development of a positive and creative customer service culture amongst all areas of the Department and provide needed feedback to customer service management (above).
- A ten step framework has been outlined in the Best Practice Report to help guide strategic development of a system of customer service that will allow for continued growth and improvement of customer service practices. HCRP should consider creating a strategic plan to develop and implement all of the ten steps of the customer service framework provided.
- Howard County's demographic makeup is evolving year to year, and the approach to customer service should be agile and responsive to the changing community. Opportunities to review innovation are plentiful in the private, public and non-profit sectors. HCRP's delivery of customer services practices would benefit greatly with an ongoing best practice review of other similar provider customer service approaches every two to three years
- Internal customer service is often overlooked, but integral to the department's success. HCRP should strengthen internal customer service, starting by measuring internal customer service satisfaction through survey or evaluation and create a roadmap for implementing improvements
- Customer service is an area of focus that can benefit greatly and immediately from development of Key Performance Indicators. To better gauge challenges and success of their customer base, the Department should identify key metrics related to customer satisfaction and measure on an ongoing basis

Natural Resources

Howard County Recreation and Parks Department (Department) environmental resources. This is accomplished by developing and implementing management plans, regulations, and outreach programs designed to preserve and protect Howard County's natural resources to further their public utilization and enjoyment. The County's amenities include 68 miles of natural trails and 50 miles of paved trails, which are heavily utilized and enjoyed by the public. A trail management plan was recently completed by the County to guide management of the trail system. Staff requested BerryDunn conduct research on the following areas related to natural resource management:

- Staffing
- Funding for Projects
- Advocacy
- Volunteers
- Trends

Currently, public organizations across the country are advancing efforts in the Natural Resources area due to the significant increase of public demand for natural resources and ways to reconnect with nature. This is further impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to more individuals wishing to spend increasing amounts of time outside.

Staffing Resources

Research in this area focused on organizational staffing models and innovative ways organizations are addressing staffing resource deficiencies. Staffing natural resource efforts most commonly include a focus on three core areas: Acquisition of Lands and Land/Real Estate Management; Stewardship and Maintenance; and Activation.

Management Staffing Recommendations
Best practice recommendations for staffing a natural resource management area include consideration of the following roles to be included in the Department. These roles can be newly created or adapted from existing positions.

- Manager of Natural Resources (or Open Space or similar) to provide strategic oversight of the efforts of the Department
- Superintendent of Acquisitions and Planning to
 - Forrester overseeing Assistant Forrester and Arborist Technical Staff
 - Supervisor (program/activation) overseeing Programming Specialist, Trails Specialist, Programming Technician/GIS
 - Maintenance Foreman overseeing Maintenance Specialists and Parkworkers/ Groundskeepers (this team is often capable of natural resource management construction related endeavors)

- Senior Park/Natural Resource Ranger overseeing Rangers (focus on public safety and ambassadorship of natural resources)
- Special Facility Coordinator (if a special facility (e.g. reservoir, regional park, mountain park, etc.) is identified by the organization)

Included in the appendices of this report, BerryDunn has provided organization charts for some of the highest performing natural resource organizations in the country. These include the City and County of Boulder, CO, the City of Austin, TX, the City of Westminster, CO, the City of Seattle, WA, and the City and County of Denver, CO.

Staffing Resources

Public organizations across the country are being challenged with staffing resources for a variety of reasons and these challenges certainly exist in the management of natural resources. Organizations attribute challenges to budget reductions, lack of available or interested hiring pool, public demand outpacing budgeted funding, public health concerns from employees, and other reasons. Every public organization that BerryDunn has worked with in the past six-months has reported similar challenges. To address these concerns, natural resource service providers are doing whatever they can to keep up with the significant increase in demands.

Natural resource service providers are addressing staffing shortages using a multitude of approaches. Of note is that wage increases are occurring as a fairly regular practice, however surprisingly, many organizations report that this is marginally effective at recruiting or sustaining staff.

Staffing Resources Recommendation

- The Department should consider creating seasonal staffing incentives, such as paying a bonus for service for a target number of hours or period of time
- The Department has an existing healthy relationship with Howard County Public Schools. Targeting youth employees through collaborations with schools, creative marketing programs, flexible hours and partnership funding support (such as Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Generation Wild program: <https://goco.org/programs-projects/grant-programs/generation-wild>)
- Outsourcing functions that can be done by other providers, such as general trail maintenance is a way to mitigate stress on staff resources. Entertaining this option should be thoughtful and take into consideration management of contractual services, and annual return on investment, as well as other important factors.
- As a way to create efficiencies and to eliminate duplication of community efforts, partnering with local providers to provide nature-based programming in-lieu of direct organization programming or to increase programming to meet demand should be a focus in the future
- Agencies often form relationships with non-profit organizations and make a practice of hiring AmeriCorps, YouthCorps or similar organizations for natural resource maintenance
- Utilization of volunteers by partnering with local organizations to provide community service hours for those in need and where appropriate is a way to offset human capital costs within the Department.
- Using non-traditional maintenance practices like the City of Westminster's (CO) goat program for addressing weeds and invasive plants (<https://www.cityofwestminster.us/News/goats-hard-at-work-destroying-weeds-at-standley-lake>)
- The Department should consider expanding its volunteer program to provide both focused direction and resources to support it

Funding for Projects

There are a variety of approaches that natural resource service providers are funding their capital projects. The successful natural resource providers utilize a hybrid of capital budget direct funding, dedicating taxing (such as an open space sales tax), policies such as public land dedication or cash-in-lieu for certain types of developments, funding through donations or donated lands, state or local grant and federal funding, such as Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).

Recommendations for Funding of Projects

- Dedicated sales tax funding may provide funding for land acquisitions, projects and maintenance (including staffing). The City of Westminster, CO has such a dedicated tax. Westminster's Parks, Recreation and Libraries Department is a three-time national gold medal award winning organization and is a champion for natural resources. Westminster was the second city in Colorado to create an open space tax in 1986. The voter approved tax is one-fourth of one percent of sales tax and generates over \$5m annually for the City. Sales tax measures to support natural resources typically receive favorable voter support with many organizations across the state recently creating or renewing their taxing through significant voter support.

Like many other cities, Westminster also funds natural resource projects through public land dedication requirements for residential and business developments. Westminster's policy is specific to land acquisitions or growth impacts and many of these projects relate to natural resources. Westminster Municipal Code: W.C. 11-6-8, Section B requires twelve acres per every one thousand persons as a minimum. If the City determines a land dedication in accordance would not serve the public interest, the City may require payment of a fee in lieu of the dedication based on fair market value. The full policy is located in the appendices of this report.

- Grant funding and partnership funding to support natural resource management related endeavors is another important funding source for public agencies to meet stakeholder demands for services and lands. Fortunately, grants, partnerships, and other alternative funding opportunities are also being developed to help make these projects more attainable. As an example, Iowa Confluence Water Trails (ICON), is a current and industry model project, which will provide more than 80 connected improvements over 150 miles of rivers and creeks in Central Iowa. A large portion of this legacy project is funded through alternative revenue and is being created to meet the demand for outdoor adventure and environmental sustainability. More information about the ICON project is online: <https://iconwatertrails.com/>

- The LWCF grant funding program is another source of funding for natural resource projects. The program provides matching grants to state and tribal governments for the acquisition and development of public parks and other outdoor recreation sites. Grants have funded projects in every county in the country, over 40,000 projects since 1965. Number of projects = 41,999. Funding provided = \$3.9 billion. More information about LCWF is online: <https://www.doi.gov/lwcf>

- The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) is another national funding source. They help raise funds for conservation; to protecting and restoring natural spaces; to collaborating with communities to plan, design, and create parks, playgrounds, gardens, and trails; they work with communities to ensure that development happens for them, and not to them. TPL is already active in Maryland and information about their national and state specific work is online: <https://www.tpl.org/>

- State lottery programs are also utilized to fund natural resource projects. One of the largest programs is Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). GOCO has funded over 5,300 projects in the areas of trails, parks, playgrounds, land protection, river restoration, wildfire recovery, youth programming and more. GOCO also provides information and resources

that can be accessed online: <https://www.goco.org/>. For Howard County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides a number of direct grants and project grant programs as well as reimbursement programs and low to no-interest loans. The County has been a recipient of funding through this source, such as for Environmental Literacy for Student Stream Studies. More information about these grant programs can be found: <https://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/grantsandloans.aspx>

Advocacy:

One of the most recognized advocacy sources for natural resources is the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). NRPA has established three pillars of focus and guidance to include conservation, health and wellness and equity at the center. All of their pillars include an advocacy focus, with the conservation pillar providing the most resources for natural resources.

Through NRPA's conservation focus, park and recreation professionals are considered champions in addressing our most pressing environmental challenges; the parks and open spaces (natural resources) they manage maximize the benefits of nature to achieve positive and equitable health and economic impacts at the community level.

Park and recreation professionals must ensure all people benefit from parks and open spaces that are not only resilient and regenerative, but also transformative at the community level. Park and recreation professionals are one of the largest land managers in the nation and are key to climate change solutions. As leaders in building community resilience, park and recreation professionals connect community members to environmental programming, ensure healthy ecosystems, advocate for the benefits of nature, and implement sustainability practices. These efforts must focus on communities most impacted by poor environmental conditions and the effects of climate change, including people of color and people living in low-income communities, and invest in efforts that support holistic community resiliency. NRPA provides many advocacy resources online: <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/conservation/>

The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) provides significant data supported advocacy. Online resources include their ParkScore Index which compares a city's park accessibility. Other online resources include articles and stories supporting the importance of the outdoors. TPL implements special reports, like The Economic Benefits of Denver's Park and Recreation System, and these reports are rich in data and information. Denver's report includes informa-

tion on economic benefits, health, community cohesion, air pollution removal, stormwater retention and other measures. This information and other advocacy resources are located online: <https://www.tpl.org/> The Outdoor Industry Association's Outdoor Foundation is another resource for advocacy. They are dedicated to getting people outside for their health, the health of communities and the health of the outdoor industry. Their resources are online: <https://outdoorindustry.org>

Cities Connecting Children to Nature (joint initiative of National League of Cities and Children and Nature Network) facilitates free and easy to implement services for youth focusing on the outdoors: <https://www.childrenandnature.org/resource-hub/resources/>. This effort provides best practices and regularly updated tools for advocacy.

Other advocacy tools for natural resources include a focus on equity, with online data available such as the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index, EPA Environmental Justice Screening Tool, Urban Heat Island Effect and Health Impact Assessments.

In addition to advocacy, natural resource management best practices have been progressing steadily over recent years due to the increasing demands on resources. The City of Westminster's Open Space Stewardship Plan is regarded as a leading plan for natural resource management and has been presented on a national level. The plan is located online here: [City of Westminster's Open Space Stewardship Plan](#). Another plan that is considered a model for natural resource management is the City and County of Boulder's Open Space Master Plan and is available online: [Boulder Open Space Master Plan](#).

Volunteers

Nature based volunteer efforts are growing nationally, along with the desire to connect with nature, be healthy in the outdoors (especially due to pandemic impacts), and to give-back to communities. Nature based volunteer groups are often the largest volunteer groups in any community and generate a sense of pride and support for their communities. Jefferson County, CO, has one of the most successful and recognized natural resource volunteer programs in the field. In 2020, Jefferson County Open Space reported the following highlights:

Jefferson County Open Space provides many great resources related to natural resources. Their volunteer handbook and volunteer proj-

ect opportunity documents are included in the appendices of this report. Additional information is available online: <https://www.jeffco.us/814/Open-Space>

While volunteer nature-based programs are growing across the country and can be a service provided for anyone, significant growth is occurring in specific populations. For instance, blending some nature based volunteer opportunities with teen recreation programs can be a successful method to achieve program growth. For example, teen specific Paddle Sport activities and nature programs (e.g. junior ranger programs, nature based scavenger hunts and outdoor volunteer cleanup or tree planting programs are very successful in this age group across the country).

The City of Westminster, CO, provides the largest volunteer program within the city's boundaries through their Open Space Volunteer Program. This program is highlighted with projects provided one to two times every month for the program. There are also individual, family, business and non-profit group opportunities throughout the year.

One of the most significant highlights in Westminster's program is the Honor the Land and Stream Event which takes place annually with thousands of volunteers working throughout the City followed by a community celebration. Another important highlight of Westminster's

volunteer program is their dedicated efforts for recognition and celebration. Every year, the city provides an informal banquet to honor their volunteers, some of whom have contributed over 30-years of volunteer service to open space. This is a pride-filled group who have become some of the strongest advocates for natural resources. The Westminster program features a full-time dedicated staff member and a budget to provide services. More information about the Westminster Volunteer Program is available online: [Volunteer Westminster](#)

Like any volunteer program, natural resource volunteer programs are successful when people know about their volunteer opportunities. Most of these successful programs are supported by outreach and marketing efforts. Some of the successful efforts, such as the City of Westminster, utilize online tools such as volunteermatch.org and social media as often as possible. Organizations that provide successful volunteer programs report on the importance of storytelling by volunteers to showcase efforts but to also attract other volunteers. This is typically done via marketing and outreach and sometimes includes video testimonials of volunteers.

One of the most innovative outreach and engagement efforts identified for volunteers is the City of Westminster and their dog waste cleanup event. This four-hour event features

volunteers cleaning up over a half-ton of dog waste in the city's 400+ acre, off-leash dogpark. Staff created a weigh-in for a competition of dog waste and provided prizes as well as hot dogs for everyone. Staff report, in 2019, of the 71 volunteers that participated on the cold day, 69 of the volunteers had never previously volunteered with the organization. Staff also took the opportunity to highlight the importance owners cleaning up after dogs and the entire event was covered by local news outlets.

Trends in Natural Resources:

The demand for nature-based recreation has notably increased across the country over the past two-years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This demand has helped create highly innovative programming and services. Some of the trends that natural resources providers are experiencing include:

- Increased focus on mobility of trail systems as a response to more usage including commuter usage (emphasis on trail connectivity as well as wayfinding on trails)
- Maximizing limited resources through support of highly dedicated and engaged volunteer groups
- Ensuring that a plan is in place for equity and access to natural areas as it is com-

mon for underrepresented populations to have less access to natural areas.

- Facilitating programs and amenities like community gardens to provide the community the ability to connect to outdoor recreation while minimizing staff/operating investments
- Removing barriers to existing nature-based opportunities (e.g., ADA transition plans, transit, etc.)
- Providing greater focus on public safety for patrons to feel more comfortable and safe in the outdoors (e.g., solar powered lighting, park rangers, off-duty police officers, appropriately maintained vegetation to increase visibility, etc.)
- Developing strategic partnerships to advance nature-based recreation goals
- Providing more opportunities for individuals to enjoy local natural resources, such as rivers, reservoirs, mountains, etc. by addressing policy and creating new partnerships to keep up with patron demands (e.g. watercraft use, zip line courses, etc.)
- Developing local experiences for people to participate in nature-based recreation such as providing portable climbing walls in parks and building nature playgrounds

- Providing nature-based special events to create unique, outdoor experiences for people like mud-runs and pole-pedal-paddle events
- Collaborating with libraries and museums to provide outdoor story boards along trail system and outdoor explorer backpacks filled with gear to be checked out at no cost from libraries

Parks and recreation organizations across the country have been very successful in creating new and innovative ways to activate natural areas and open space while advancing the conservation efforts in their communities in alignment with NRPA's Pillar of Conservation.

Some examples of established high-quality programs include:

Five Rivers Metroparks, Dayton OH

Conservation Kids program in which there are four levels of programs for youth:

GREEN LEVEL: DISCOVER

Focus: Discover what's out there in nature and become comfortable outdoors

Activities: Interact with wildlife, play in creeks, go on owl walks and hold crawdads

Programs: Fossil Fun, Tree Exploration, Spider Search, Creepy Creatures, Owl Prowl

BLUE LEVEL: ACT

Focus: Learn to protect the parks, develop ownership, become citizen scientists and give back to nature

Activities: Participate in frog surveys, monitor bluebird boxes, plant seeds

ORANGE LEVEL: SHARE

Focus: Share knowledge with the community and become a conservation leader among peers

Activities: Serve as a naturalist with peers and host an event, such as a spider party or backyard bird count, that rallies other kids around conservation and challenges them to get out in nature

YELLOW LEVEL: PROTECT

Focus: Build conservation into daily activities

Activities: Report results from orange level activity and continue such conservation efforts as creating backyard habitats at home

Other types of programs include: backpacking, horse trail rides, photography classes related to nature, birding, paddle sports, backpacking, camping and camping gear rentals, school engagement with nature, outdoor vacation passports, mindfulness walks, family fishing, access to nature financial assistance program, service Saturdays, geocaching and many others.
Chicago Botanic Garden, Chicago, IL

The Chicago Botanic Garden offers a nature-based preschool. This program is different from a traditional preschool in the following ways:

- The natural world is the catalyst for the curriculum.
- Daily time spent outdoors in all-weather allows for discovery in an ever-changing environment.
- Discovery-based learning includes a hands-on approach to education.
- Time is built in for children to observe, explore, discover, and reflect in learning activities.

These types of preschools are becoming popular with parent especially in light of Covid-19.

City of Westminster Parks, Recreation and Libraries Department, Westminster, CO

Led by their recently adopted Open Space Stewardship Plan, Westminster has implemented nature-based programming on a trend setting level with programs replicated throughout the United States and Canada:

- The Standley Lake Monster Program (<https://www.cityofwestminster.us/News/calling-all-treasure-hunters-mysterious-egg-laying-creature-returns-to-standley-lake>)
- The Growing Home Community Garden and Program (run by a local non-profit for their community food kitchen)
- Standley Lake Eagle Camera
- Goat invasive weed control
- Hard as Nails outdoor adventure event
- Immersive outdoor theater experiences in open space
- Tree limb recycling programs (to also include Christmas trees) with mulch from these trees provided free to the community and utilized in the parks system
- “Glamping” experiences for camping and outdoor equipment rental services (e.g. watercraft, tents, yurts, etc.)
- Outdoor classrooms in small outdoor gathering areas and yurts

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) www.goco.org

Great outdoors Colorado partners with park and recreation organizations across Colorado to provide some of the most innovative nature-based programs in the United States. GOCO provides grassroots grant funding, through state lottery funds, to support the launch of innovative efforts. Financial and operational sustainability beyond grant funding is core to GOCO’s beliefs. Hundreds of trend-setting nature-based efforts have resulted from GOCO’s leadership. Some highlights include:

- Community based (free) outdoor equipment “lockers” to help reduce the barrier of equipment access and cost to participants. The lockers exist at school sites as well as park and recreation organizations including the City and County of Denver and the City of Westminster Parks, Recreation and Libraries Department.
- Nature-based afterschool and summer camp programs targeted to underrepresented individuals. This program contains unique features such establishing Spanish speaking parent groups to help lead greater connection to the community and the services to transport youth to regional nature destinations.
- Innovative virtual programs

Staff Recruitment and Retention

One of the areas of exploration for industry best practices includes what has become a monumental challenge for agencies around the country: the recruitment and retention of staff. This includes not only full-time staff, but part-time staff positions (contingent positions) as well. Part-time recruitment and retention is an even more acute problem than the recruitment of full-time staff, particularly for child care staff. This narrative includes information about strategies for general recruitment and retention of full-time staff and additional analysis about part-time staff, focusing on childcare staffing.

The process included identifying information about current practices of the County Human Resources Department and the Recreation and Parks Department, developed from meetings with staff as well as a review of documents, such as the Howard County and Recreation and Parks Recognition Program and Part-time Employment Recruitment and Application Process. Recreation and Parks must follow the overall policies and guidelines of the County's Human Resources Department, but there are opportunities to augment the County's efforts.

The following information details practices of local governments from around the country, describing their efforts in improving recruit-

ment and retention challenges. Also included is a brief summary of information from an interview with BerryDunn's Recruiting Manager. This narrative also includes retention strategies developed by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Center for State and Local Government Excellence (SLGL). SLGL conducts a national survey every year: State and Local Workforce 2021, in partnership with the International Public Management Association for Human Resources and the National Association of State Personnel Executives.

The following section provides details of efforts by cities and agencies across the country to improve recruitment and retention.

City and County of Denver Office of Human Resources

A few years ago, the Denver Office of Human Resources recognized the need to change its recruiting practices, knowing that they compete against many private sector companies for talent. They knew that traditional ways of acquiring talent needed to change, particularly as a result of half of their workforce coming from private sector companies. The department has produced a YouTube video that provides details about the benefits of working for the city/county.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0_9M-KRwJR0

They also recognized the importance of appealing to the values of applicants considering employment with the city/county. Their website includes the following value propositions:

- Why Work Here: Working for the City and County of Denver (CCD) is so much more than a job. It's a chance to make a difference in your own life and in the lives of people around you.
- Balance Work and Life: specifies time off opportunities, disability benefits, and employee volunteer program
- Build a Career: We encourage employees to develop their careers within the city. Multitude of training and development opportunities.
- An Engaged Workforce: There is a belief that employees are the city's most important asset.
- Get to Work and Back: Employees receive a discounted RTD EcoPass.
- Align with your Values: The city respects the natural world and the people in it. Sustainability goals include 100 percent use of renewable energy by 2025 for all city operations.
- Take Care of Yourself and Your Family: We are dedicated to helping employees be the best they can be through benefit plans that keep them well and to prepare for a secure future.
- Celebrate Uniqueness: Diversity and inclusion are cornerstones of the city's values.

- **Invest in Your Future:** Employees are empowered to make their money work for them now and for their future.

From *Governing Magazine*, “Government Is Hiring, But Faces Tough Competition for Workers,” Denver has focused on better branding for competition of talent. “If government recruiters want to compete with the private sector, they need to adopt the same strategies, says Denver’s Karen Niparko.” This starts with branding, brand recognition and “brand promise” — the value or experience in every interaction. Companies such as coffee chains reap fortunes based on brand promise, but encounters with government aren’t likely to have the same appeal as a coffee run.

Several years ago, Denver HR went through a branding effort, aimed at current employees as well as recruits. The brand that resulted, “Be part of the city that you love,” was promoted online, in printed marketing brochures and through social media. These materials include photos of employees, who are enlisted as brand ambassadors.

Niparko has found that millennials want to learn, to grow and to make a difference in the world. “Purpose is what government is all about, and it is very attractive to them if we can also meet their needs for things such as work flexibility,” she says. Seventy to eighty percent of hires are from the millennial gener-

ation, she says, and they are strong performers.

Chicago Park District

Like all other agencies researched, the Chicago Park District has experienced difficulty in attracting employees. In order to develop a pipeline of future candidates, the District has used a Park Kids Program as a way of building an inventory of candidates eligible for junior counselor positions. The junior counselors shadow recreation leaders to learn the responsibilities of camp counselors and after school program staff. The district also implemented a sports related program called Sports 37 apprenticeships. This is geared toward high school students to assist with after school sports programs for younger kids. The high school students receive a stipend for their time worked. Chicago has a minimum wage of \$15.00. Even with this, the district is having a hard time retaining part-time staff.

City of North Las Vegas

The recruitment of new staff has been challenging. They have initiated bonuses for part-time staff, based on the number of hours worked. For example, childcare staff receive an initial \$250 bonus. Then they get an additional \$250 during the midway of the school year. They do the same type of structure for lifeguards, but even with the bonuses, they

had to close aquatics facilities. The city is currently researching bonuses of \$1,000 to \$1,500 for full-time positions. North Las Vegas competes against all of the casino and entertainment venues of Las Vegas. They continue to raise salaries, but even with increased pay, they experience challenges in attracting candidates.

The city benefits from membership in the International Public Management Association, an organization that represents the interests of human resource professionals at the federal, state and local levels of government. A group of human resource managers from neighboring cities meet regularly to discuss strategies related to employee recruitment and retention.

BerryDunn, Sarah Olson, Director of Recruiting

While the private sector has greater flexibility in the recruitment and retention of employees, there are areas that can apply to the public sector. Sarah discussed the overwhelming success of the employee referral program. For BerryDunn, if an employee refers someone for hiring, and they ultimately get hired, the referring employee receives a \$5,000 bonus, half given after three months, and the other half at the end of the employee's first year with the firm. While handing out bonuses in this amount may not be realistic for a public agency, a smaller amount or nonmonetary incentives may work successfully, such as time off with pay.

BerryDunn taps into every available network such as LinkedIn, Career Building, Indeed, Monster, and others. Sarah uses the software platform, iCIMS for recruiting and applicant tracking. Signing bonuses have been used judiciously, and they have also proved to be successful in attracting good talent. She feels local governments could benefit from establishing a branding campaign for positions, particularly part-time positions. Municipalities should answer the question, how do we make ourselves attractive to candidates? One way of identifying how to make the agency more attractive includes interviewing recent hires and asking them for suggestions and

ideas.

Sarah feels it is very important to allocate money to fund recruiting efforts. As an example, the City of North Las Vegas has four human resources staff dedicated toward recruiting activities.

Best Practices for Employee Retention from the Society for Human Resource Management

According to SHRM's Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: The Doors of Opportunity are Open research report, employees identified these five factors as the leading contributors to job satisfaction:

1. Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels
2. Compensation/pay
3. Trust between employees and senior management
4. Job security
5. Opportunities to use their skills and abilities at work

Managing employee retention involves strategy and time. The benefits of a comprehensive employee retention program plays a vital role in both attracting and retaining quality employees and reducing turnover related costs. Fairness and transparency are fundamental and powerful concepts that lead to increased

employee morale, performance, productivity, and quality work.

Turnover

Turnover is costly, affects organization's performance and as the availability of skilled employees continues to decrease, may become increasingly difficult to retain sought after employees, with the exception of a new replacement hire who may turn out to be more productive and skilled than their predecessor. An organization can determine whether turnover is a problem through turnover analysis, benchmarking, and a needs assessment (both external and internal), establishing a plan of action, implementing a retention plan, and evaluating implementation results.

Why Employees Leave

Voluntary turnover is more likely to take place when an employee finds a different job, relocates with a spouse, retires, quits on impulse, no longer needs a job, goes back to school, is dissatisfied, has better alternatives, and/or a negative experience. Furthermore, studies have shown that employees typically follow four primary paths to turnover:

- Quality of the employee-supervisor relationship
- Role clarity
- Job design
- Workgroup cohesion

Why Employees Stay

Studies have suggested that employees are more likely to stay in an organization by being embedded in their professional and community life that ultimately develops a web of connections and relationships, both on and off the job. Organizations can increase employee commitment by:

- Providing mentors
- Designing team-based projects
- Fostering team cohesiveness
- Encouraging employee referrals
- Providing clear socialization
- Offering flexible work opportunities such as remote work and flexible scheduling
- Recognizing employee's achievements
- Providing opportunities for growth
- Paying competitive salary and benefits
- Opportunity to move to a different department
- Re-designing a position
- Providing promotional opportunities
- Communicating the company's values and culture
- Offering financial incentives based on tenure or other unique incentives

Key Retention Strategies and Best Practices

As a result of the research, SHRM has identified the following six key retention strategies and best practices. All levels and areas within an organization need to work together to implement an employee retention program.

These areas include:

- Recruitment
- Socialization
- Training and development
- Compensation and rewards
- Supervision
- Employee engagement

These effective practice areas are especially powerful in enabling the organization to meet their retention goals.

Targeted strategies are based on data from several key sources, including auditing and evaluating employees through exit interviews, post-exit interviews, stay interviews, employee focus groups, predictive turnover studies, and other qualitative studies. Having a management team is key to an effective and efficient administration. Leadership's awareness about employee motivation, retention strategies, benchmarking and best-practices is critical to the success of the program.

Miscellaneous Ideas for Recruitment

Conversations with agencies around the country generated additional ideas, including:

- Work with AARP in recruiting older adults for various recreation and park jobs
- Attend high school job fairs and developing programs to hire high school students
- Contract with a lifeguard management such as Pool Pros who assume responsibility for the hiring and training of staff
- Reimbursement for certifications
- Increased pay
- Award interns the opportunity to earn college credits
- Provide resources for employees physical and mental health and well-being, which is easy to do for a recreation and parks department
- Display job recruitment information at recreation and park facilities
- Offer benefits to part-time staff (Howard County already offers PTO and health insurance for qualifying contingent employees)
- Offer job skills programs to high school students as a way of increasing the applicant pool to be well positioned to land a job
- Provide bonuses (signing on or after staying a certain duration)
- Promote the ability to work remotely, hybrid, and/or flexible work schedules
- Targeted advertisements on LinkedIn and other job sites
- Share a database of applicants with other municipalities for part-time positions
- Maintain relationships with strong candidates for future opportunities
- Rekindle or create new relationships with universities for job placement
- Work with high schools to foster future employees and leaders, in areas like sustainability, for career paths in natural resource management (City of Westminster funded by GOCO)
- Increase “perks” like free golf, free fitness center use for employees and their family members and “fun money” which is money that employees can use as a “credit” toward things like concessions or apparel or fees for services (examples include the Hyland Hills Park District – and the City of Westminster CO)
- Increase the use of AmeriCorps or similar youth and job skill development groups
- Develop performance profiles rather than job descriptions. While job descriptions attract task-oriented doers, performance profiles attract goal-minded achievers. Customize each performance profile to attract the ideal candidate.

Miscellaneous Ideas and Recommendations for Retention

- Post-exit interviews are superior for finding the real causes of turnover — standard exit interviews usually produce misleading causes of turnover because they occur on an employee’s final day when they are most likely to need a positive reference. In fact, departing employees give false answers around 40% of the time. A superior alternative is a post-exit interview. The exit interview is delayed until three to six months after the employee has departed. The most common turnover causes in descending order are a lack of career development, opportunities for growth, achievement, and security. Also, a bad work environment, management behavior, and job characteristics. (Source: Work Institute survey).
- As a result of the importance of the supervisor/employee relationship, evaluate employee satisfaction toward their direct supervisors. Ensure that supervisors’ performance evaluation includes criteria about the leadership effectiveness.
- Consider implementing a formalized mentoring program.

- Make work more compelling with simple job redesign — for top performers, having compelling work and doing “the best work of their life” is often the number one retention factor.

- Develop an individualized learning and development plan — a primary indicator of a top performer is continuous learning.

- Leadership calls and visits can be powerful— top performers are happy to learn that their work is known among leadership.

- Management by Walking Around — expanding daily face-to-face contact with your employees builds loyalty and it will likely make employees more open to sharing their issues. Develop an MBWA schedule and keep to it. Make sure that no retention target feels isolated.

- Realize that one key employee leaving may cause others to follow — managers should realize that once a key employee leaves, that can immediately increase the chances that others will follow.

- Develop a diversity retention plan — the impact of diversity recruiting efforts can be limited if the Department doesn’t have a corresponding diversity retention plan. So, periodically hold “stay interviews” with your diverse

employees. Reinforce their “sticky factors” and minimize most of their frustration factors.

- Include retention as a team goal — teammates are often the first to know when a key member is considering leaving, and they are also most persuasive in convincing them to stay. Encourage teammates to help each other work through barriers and other factors that might cause turnover.

- Proactively reinforce the Department’s image — pride increases retention rates. Pride of their work, their agency, and their community can be proactively increased among retention targets when they are educated on the factors that make their job attractive.

- Track retention rates and compare year to year.

- Calculate the cost of turnover to determine and quantify the cost of turnover.

- Exert accountability throughout the entire organization. Morale of high performers is negatively impacted when there is no penalty to pay for underperforming employees.

Childcare Recruitment and Retention

In a September 21, 2021 article in the New York Times titled “Can’t Compete: Why Hiring for Child Care is a Huge Struggle” indicates the seriousness of the problem in recruiting and retaining child care workers. The Times article referenced a survey completed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children of 7,500 providers of child care services, including for profit, non-profit, and government agencies. Of those that responded, 78% said low wages is their main recruitment challenge. Eight in ten providers are experiencing staffing problems according. This has consequential effects on other industries as it contributes to labor shortages when parents can’t find child care.

As examples, the San Antonio YMCA had a wait list of 200 families. The YMCA raised salaries from \$10 to \$12.50, but still can’t find people. Ann Arbor had to turn 1,000 children away for after school programs because of lack of staff. Many programs around the country have cancelled programs in places such as Portland, OR and Virginia Beach, VA. In Northbrook, IL and many other locations, administrative and management staff have had to step in to

provide direct supervision to before and after school programs. Across the country, child care for kids not old enough for school or before and after school care is operating at 88% from pre-pandemic capacity. The median hourly pay in the child care industry is \$12. Ninety-eight percent of all industries pay more.

Child care centers have not responded the way other industries have by significantly increasing wages and expanding benefits. Sixty percent of families are already paying more than what they can afford. As a result, simply raising fees ends up deterring families from enrolling. (Department of Health and Human Services considers child care affordable if it costs families no more than 7% of their income). Child care costs increased by half during the pandemic because of new regulations and adding additional staff to keep small groups.

The Biden administration is trying to offer free preschool starting at age 3 and subsidizing child care before then and raising minimum wage to \$15/hour. This may help alleviate the existing staffing challenges.

Insights:

The following information includes insights from an interview with Gina Tzizik – Early Childhood Specialist and Consultant, a 35 year professional, with a MEd and PhD.

- There is a mass exodus of teachers in the 50’s and older, because of health restrictions – lots of mature wisdom was lost. Cannot replace experience
- Hard time across the country for recruiting and retaining staff
- Experienced people left the field – teachers are leaving due to insecurity, mismanagement
- Many agencies are trying to load their classrooms with more kids to make up for revenue losses from last year
- The hourly wage is not an attractive
- Parents and staff fall under two camps: 1) terrified of COVID or 2) anti-vaccers, with majority of parents just wanting to keep their kids safe
- Parents are looking at the choices made, how the provider handled challenges
- and how the provider has course corrected
- Messaging and communication needs to be clear, concise, directive and connected to emotional and social damage that is occurring
- Nationwide, early childhood teachers are tired of being understaffed, underappreciated and overworked. Park and recreation

agencies are competing against private sector companies like Target or Starbucks, paying \$15/hour, which sounds less stressful than dealing with a classroom full of children for the same amount of pay.

COVID allowed a break from the classroom and teachers had another lens to view work, decided that they had better choices

- Clear communication about direction.
How are we educating and dealing with children? Normal things are still part of what parents need – normalcy to their life
- When living in an overwhelmed state constantly, you need to provide consistent comfort; competency, articulation
- Smaller groupings or pods with fewer kids provides a greater sense of safety

Best Practice Recommendations

As mentioned previously, agencies around the country have experienced significant challenges in staffing childcare programs. In talking to several agencies, they had no magic bullet to offer in solving this crisis. However, there is a model of success offered by Denver.

The following section includes information about Denver's approach to childcare/after school care through the Mayor's Office of Children's Affairs (OCA). This Office develops strategies and builds partnerships to ensure young people have access to nutritious food, high-quality childcare and afterschool programs, early learning and literacy resources, youth transportation, mentorship opportunities, cultural experiences and pathways to post-secondary education and careers.

Programs included as part of OCA include:

- Denver Afterschool Alliance: detailed further below
- Denver Great Kids Head Start: providing early education programs, support services, and parent training to qualified families with children 0 to 5
- My Brother's Keeper: removing barriers and providing opportunities that ensure boys and young men of color reach their potential

- My Denver Card: giving youths ages 5-18 free access to recreation centers, swimming pools, libraries, and free or discounted admission to various cultural facilities. This initiative is funded by a tax that Denver voters approved in 2012

- Road to Reading: promoting early literacy, in partnership with Denver schools

- Tasty Food: providing free meals and snacks to youth ages 1-18

- Youth violence prevention
OCA includes the Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA). The Denver Afterschool Alliance (DAA) builds the capacity of afterschool programs and professionals to provide high-quality, diverse afterschool programs. Part of the funding for DAA comes from the \$1.5 million received from a marijuana tax.

The Alliance offers three lines of service:

DAAlearn, DAAconnect, and DAAadvocate with a mission of ensuring that all Denver children have access to afterschool programs that keep them safe, inspire them to learn, and prepare them for the future. DAA operates as a clearinghouse and consortium of all non-profit providers of out of time school programs. Details about the DAA programs comes from an interview with Maxine Quintana, OST (Out of School) Initiatives Director/DAA Lead.

DAAlearn provides custom support and learning opportunities that build the capacity of youth-serving organizations to improve program quality and integrate social, emotional, and academic learning into their structures and practices. DAAlearn's offerings include: The DAA Collective, Quality Counts and the Afterschool Incubator. The DAA Collective brings together all of Denver's youth-serving professionals to engage in professional learning and networking. The Incubator serves as an idea generator of best practices. DAAconnect unites the afterschool community around the power of quality, youth programming through a free-to-use, online platform. The DAAconnect information management system helps providers more easily track and report on youth outcomes, while the Youth Program Locator helps families find quality afterschool programs that best fit their needs. This results in the ability to use good data for decision making.

DAAadvocate purpose is to collaborate with policymakers, community leaders, and afterschool providers to create more equitable outcomes for youth.

The OCA provides a holistic support system for all youth related needs, from childcare and after school programs to nutrition and mental health needs. The DAA facilitated focus groups with high school and college kids to

find out about their interests and needs for finding employment in the youth services field.

One of their key findings was to develop very flexible schedules for employees who are in school. For example, if a high school student works in an after school program but is on the high school softball team, she can work flexibly to accommodate her sports schedule. DAA has implemented hiring bonuses. They also are looking at converting some part-time positions to full-time status. They are also in the process of doing a competitive analysis to determine who they are losing applicants to and how to better recruit candidates for employment.

Summary and Recommendations

HCRP staff can create an employee recruitment and retention task force to review all of the suggestions mentioned in this white paper. This should consist of a cross functional team, from all levels of the organization. Develop priorities and timeframes for implementing strategies to meet the hiring challenge. This will also require working closely with Howard County's Human Resources Department to ensure alignment with County policies. As for childcare, consider using the approach that Denver is using in creating a consortium of providers to tackle the recruitment and retention of childcare staff in a County wide approach.

Howard County Recreation and Parks Best Practices

Marketing

One of the areas of exploration for best practice approaches includes a review of Howard County Recreation and Parks Department (Department) marketing efforts. This narrative provides details of the Department's current marketing efforts and also provides details of how best practice agencies support marketing efforts. Two agencies were identified as best practice comparisons: Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department and Milwaukee County Parks. Each agency received a questionnaire to complete that details current practices. The Department also completed a questionnaire. The responses represent the comments from the staff members who lead their marketing department.

Howard County Recreation and Parks

1. Provide an overview of what marketing responsibilities you are responsible for:
 - The Superintendent of Public Information and Marketing's responsibilities include overseeing the marketing and public information division. This division assists the entire department (Recreation, Parks, Childcare, Therapeutic Recreation, Natural Resources, and more).
 - Signs: "step-in" signs, banners, wayfinding, informational, safety, entrance signs, trailer and car wraps, and more
 - Market programs and services through all methods available
 - Organize and run ribbon cuttings and ground breaking
 - Assist with special events
 - Maintain websites' design and update
1. Howard County website: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/rap> my group maintains this site
2. HCRPSports website: <https://www.hcrpsports.org/> - my group researched contractors for this site and designed the entire site, including all the photos and backgrounds,
3. Belmont website: <https://www.belmontmanormd.com/> - my group bought the domain name host, designed the site and maintain it
4. WIW website: <https://www.wineinthewoods.com/> my group bought the domain name host, designed the site and maintain it
 - Manage and post on 11 social media sites Photography- for social media, trainings, and classes
 - Videography- for social media, trainings, and classes (some of which are then part of a paid program)
 - Write scripts, help develop stories, assist with background, provide closed captioning, edit videos, etc.
 - Fliers
 - Create logos
 - Design 4 activity guides each year
 - Design fliers, booklets, leaflets, etc. daily
 - Maintain and manage Constant Contact account- including the writing and designing of monthly newsletters for various groups
 - Write media releases, speaking/talking points, event briefs, media advisories
 - Work with the media - answering questions plus providing information and photography
 - Assist all employees with creating marketing plans for special events, programs, recruitment, informational, and more
 - Design and order giveaway materials, tablecloths and more for special events
 - Assist with T-shirt and other apparel designs and orders
- Communicate daily with HCRP staff on upcoming needs
- Assist with other outreach needs such as PowerPoint presentations, speaking at special events or board meetings, etc.
- Hold meetings to train others in latest marketing methods
- Speak at conferences
- Belong to HCRP, county, state and national meetings and committees
- Work with Howard County Public Information Office and the County Executive's office
- Work with other county departments on a variety of events and sometimes in an advisory capacity.
- Create and manage new department-wide sponsorship program: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/recreation-parks/sponsorships-memorials>
- Assist in emergencies through dissemination of information: media, photography, videography, social media posts, web updates, press releases, on-site assistance, etc.
- Write and edit large reports including, but not limited to the annual report, CAPRA certification, award nominations throughout the year, manuals, and more.
- Research current trends in marketing and communication.
- Maintain video screens in lobbies for the 3 community centers, nature center, B&O, Meadowbrook, and headquarters

2. Staffing: What are the positions included in marketing, and designate their job title and whether or not they are part time or full-time.

- Superintendent of Public Information and Marketing – full time
- Art Director – full time
- Graphic Designer – full time – vacant as of 10/25
- Graphic Designer – contingent (may go full time soon)
- Graphic Designer – contingent (may go full time soon)
- Editor and social media coordinator – contingent (may go full time soon) – vacant as of 10/25

3. What are the greatest needs as a department/what do you wish to accomplish with your marketing? Is the focus cost recovery, participation, inclusion, promoting specific facilities, event attendance, general awareness, or brand/image?

All of the above, from promoting specific facilities and event attendance to general awareness and brand/image.

4. How do you create good teamwork among staff; challenges with recreation/programming staff needing more support than what you can provide?

We work very collaboratively and speak constantly. We have to work as a team to accomplish the many tasks in very short timeframes.

Our two greatest challenges are (1) need more staff and they should all be full-time as they are treated as such – they are asked to create items during off-work hours without complaint (2) department needs to adhere to their deadlines and understand that we receive an average of 80 projects a month, so it is difficult when asked to do things on short notice.

5. Do you track website and social media engagement data? What do you track? What is important?

Yes, we track our social media engagement through each platform's built-in analytics. We use this to see what type of information our customers most enjoy engaging with. For example, our Facebook followers enjoy historic posts and special events and items with a video.

6. Do you capture community feedback on programs, services, or your communication? How often?

Yes. Programmers constantly ask their customers for feedback.

7. Do you have a marketing plan? Do you have a social media plan?

Yes to both. The marketing plan provides directions for all HCRP bureaus and divisions and includes:

- HCRP marketing objectives and strategies
- a tactical action plan
- a review of specific responsibilities
- a list of available tools and resources
- for staff to use in carrying out the marketing plan

This plan builds upon each year's previous plans (starting with the January-December 2014 plan). The plan includes improvements that enhance cost effectiveness, reflect technology upgrades and social media trends, and other marketing strategies.

8. What efforts do you undertake for brand and image development?

The response to the first question covers this.

9. How do you capture knowledge about your customers?

The Department markets to all County residents.

Milwaukee County Parks

1. Provide an overview of marketing responsibilities:

- Branding is very important at a corporate level as well as branding for 20 sub-businesses
- Marketing – digital, social & out-of-home marketing
- Communications & media relations
- Providing content for a main website; design and development of microsite websites and apps

2. What are the positions included in marketing, and designate their job title and whether or not they are part time or full-time?

- Seven full-time staff including the Marketing and Communications Manager
- Digital Marketing Coordinator
- Field Marketing Coordinator who oversees non-digital marketing
- Engagement Manager (community outreach, capital projects)
- Community Manager (incoming inquiries, social media)
- Graphic Designer
- Marketing assistant
- Seasonal paid interns

3. What are the greatest needs as a department/what do you wish to accomplish with your marketing? Is the focus cost recovery, participation, inclusion, promoting specific facilities, event attendance, general awareness, or brand/image?

The focus is on revenue generation as 50-60% of the budget is based on earned revenue. The Beer Gardens and Golf Courses are the most substantial revenue generators. Golf brings in \$8 million. Another primary focus is on the brand community and brand experiences. For instance, our brand community for beer gardens (customers, partners etc.) provide so many reviews and recommendations that we are now doing minimal marketing for these services.

4. How do you create good teamwork among staff; challenges with recreation/programming staff needing more support than what you can provide?

We use a lot of software as a service (SAAS) and no-code design tools to improve communication and efficiency. This includes project management software, online forms (which we use for internal marketing requests), knowledge banks, templated design tools like Canva and tools like Webflow and Glide to build web-

sites and apps. To be effective, it is important our team members are involved with strategy and long-term planning, and not just viewed as a group to 'create awareness' of a product or service.

5. Do you track website and social media engagement data? What do you track? What is important?

We try to understand general patterns and trends, predicting future trends. We get involved at the initiation of a project and do not operate from a reactive position. We use analytics; would like to have an analytics person. We have six micro sites.

6. Do you capture community feedback on programs, services, or your communication? How often?

Yes, we use net promoter score. We do annual surveys. We have a public service team that does this work. We do need help on the analysis side.

7. Do you have a marketing plan? Do you have a social media plan?

Not really, we do have a strategy, but we move so fast and things change quickly.

8. What is the percentage of marketing budget to total operating budget?

One percent of the operating budget. We do have friends group that provides financial support to help augment our efforts.

In addition, Milwaukee County Parks develops an Annual Marketing Review and includes information about marketing efforts, marketing highlights, case studies, key insights, national marketing trends, operating revenue information, and marketing plans for the next year. It is an impressive tool that quantifies the agency's marketing efforts.

Virginia Beach Parks and Recreation Department

1. Provide an overview of marketing responsibilities:
 - Marketing programs and services that generate revenues: swim lessons, recreation center memberships, event room rentals, childcare registrations, sport leagues
 - Communicating new developments, amenities at parks, piers, boat launches, etc. changes to operations, responding to issues
 - Design projects from flyers to park signage to assistance with power point presentations
 - Participation in other citywide and department wide committees.
2. What are the greatest needs as a department/what do you wish to accomplish with your marketing? Is the focus cost recovery, participation, inclusion, promoting specific facilities, event attendance, general awareness, and brand/image?

Staffing shortages are limiting the capacity of our programs, putting marketing goals in a constant state of reacting, rather than planning.

Normally, we would put substantial amount of resources into cost recovery --

marketing recreation center memberships and other recreation center programs and services, i.e. swim lessons, personal training, group fitness, some sports leagues, etc.

Our value proposition is the concept of the "community" versus just a gym and we have been doing a branding campaign called "Find Your Community" at a Virginia Beach Rec Center.

We would normally do a substantial fall and winter campaign, along with gift cards during the holidays.

This year, we are focusing on member retention since our capacity for group fitness and even hours of operation are still limited by staffing shortages. We are offering recreation center t-shirts for those who complete a fitness challenge.

We would also normally be marketing childcare services and sports leagues. This year, we are having service disruptions because of staffing.

We also counterbalance that with a lot of promotion of outdoor programs, environmental programs, adopt a spot, new amenities, etc., and encourage use of parks and park amenities.

3. How do you create good teamwork among staff and challenges with so many recreation programming staff requests?

This is a constant struggle and requires constant communication about what can reasonably be expected for small programs in a specific recreation center versus a large free event or a larger campaign aimed at revenues. We are offering tools and templates for flyer designs for people who have the desire to create their own materials, provided they get them approved by our brand manager first. We do our best to meet everyone's needs, though.

4. Do you track website and social media engagement data? What do you track? What is important?

We use Google analytics to track website traffic, mostly to gauge the effectiveness of marketing campaigns that we have run. Our email marketing is able to provide reports on how many people clicked through to a page or a registration site and our social posts are measured by engagement and clicks as well. Many residents use the social platforms to stay current on what is happening and we also monitor their comments and critiques and use the opportunity to correct wrong information or to provide context.

5. Do you capture community feedback on programs, services, or your communication? How often?

Automated surveys are sent to evaluate program effectiveness for every program. This process includes regular surveys of recreation center members during their journey with us. The Department also conducts a comprehensive community survey with a consultant every four years. There are many opportunities for community input when a new park is being designed. We also monitor online review sites. Marketing has been doing an internal customer service survey annually, though we missed this year. We have done a survey of our members about what ads they have seen and how they view them, but it isn't statistically valid of the community. We would like to figure out another way to do this in the future.

6. Do you have a marketing plan?

Yes, we have an overall marketing plan for the department.

7. Do you have a social media plan?

We have a city social media plan and just recently developed one for the department because of new CAPRA guidelines.

8. What is the percentage of marketing budget to total operating budget?

Our marketing budget is approximately \$950,000. Close to half of the budget includes salaries for seven full-time employees. We budget for about \$17 million annual revenues generated by fees and charges, making marketing about 5-6 percent of total revenues. Total budget around \$68 million makes it around 1.2% of total budget.

9. How many and what type of staff?

- Marketing Manager
- Public Relations and Content Manager
- Digital Marketing Manager
- Email Marketing Manager
- Creative Brand Manager
- Graphic Designer
- Administrative Technician (production manager)

10. What efforts do you perform for brand and image development?

We do this mostly through stories and testimonials, videos, etc., shared throughout our communications channels

11. How do you capture knowledge about your customers?

Automated surveys are sent to evaluate program effectiveness and gather feedback for every program and include regular surveys of recreation center members during their journey with us. We also have access to demographic information about the community and about our members from our registration database.

There are links to two recent annual reports.

<https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/about-us/Documents/Annual%20Report%2019-20.pdf>

<https://www.vbgov.com/government/departments/parks-recreation/about-us/Documents/annual-report.pdf>

Additional Best Practice Agency Information

In addition to information from these two agencies, Westminster, CO Parks, Recreation and Libraries also performs some best practice work, particularly in the management of processes. They have worked on internal marketing processes. Marketing staff identify optimal solutions for marketing requests. For example, when a staff member approaches marketing staff with a request, rather than a staff person saying we need a flyer for this program, the marketing staff will ask why questions... why is this needed? Marketing staff's job then is to identify a solution. As another example, when a staff person would like a flyer made for the driving range, marketing will ask why is it needed, and they in turn work on the best solution.

Marketing staff meet with recreation staff individually before the year starts in listening sessions to hear what plans each staff member has for the upcoming year. Priorities are developed. Marketing then develops a plan for the year that is shared.

Best Practices Marketing Observations

Based on information provided by other agencies, the following are key areas for consideration for Howard County Recreation and Parks.

- The staffing complement for marketing support varies among the three agencies. Population size for the three agencies include:
 - o Howard County 325,690
 - o Milwaukee County 943,240
 - o Virginia Beach 450,224
- Based on the population size:
 - o Howard County has one full-time marketing employee per 162,845 population
 - o Milwaukee County has one full-time marketing employee per 134,749 population
 - o Virginia Beach has one full-time marketing employee per 64,318 population

- While Howard County currently has two full-time staff and one vacant position, the other two agencies have seven full-time staff. However, the Department is hoping to move three part-time employees to full-time positions, which will bring the full-time staffing complement in line with Milwaukee County and Virginia Beach.
- HCRP has more labor resources dedicated toward graphic design, while the other two agencies dedicate greater labor resources toward branding.

Recommendations

- Human capital investment is needed in HCRP's Marketing Division. A full time vacancy has been recently filled, providing much needed help with deferred projects and daily tasks. A priority is to develop competencies in data analytics related to marketing, either with existing staff or with newly hired personnel focused on analytics
- Similarly to Westminster, CO Parks, Recreation and Libraries, HCRP should consider creating an internal marketing process team to identify ways of strengthening support to the Bureaus.
- Development of ongoing system of self-examination is an important step in continued growth and success of the marketing division. It is recommended that HCRP consider publishing an annual report or annual marketing review, similar to Milwaukee County and Virginia Beach
- HCRP's marketing plan is very lengthy. It may be helpful for staff to include a high level executive summary that outlines the major strategies and includes many tactics. Strategy should also cover a timeframe for short term, mid-term and long term recommendations, which makes the plan more strategic and less tactical.
- HCRP would benefit from developing a set of metrics for measuring the effectiveness of marketing. This can include areas such as:
 - Total earned revenues
 - Ratio of earned revenue to marketing dollars
 - Labor hours of marketing staff as compared to best practice agencies
 - Internal customer satisfaction toward marketing support
 - Cycle time for marketing requests
 - Output measures such as social media numbers and website traffic
 - Brand awareness measured through needs assessment surveys

APPENDIX F

RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

BerryDunn assessed the Howard County Recreation and Parks Department's (Department's) recreation program menu to help identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future program direction. The overarching goal of the program assessment is to help establish a direction for the next five years, as a part of the overall Howard County Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). Members of the consulting team conducted the recreation program assessment as a part of the 2017 LPPRP. Because of this, new assessment insights were conducted to help glean additional insight and findings.

The Recreation Department is still organized in the fashion it was in 2017, with three divisions that all provide recreation programming. The assessment reviewed the program outputs of all three divisions.

Recreation Services (RS) is composed of recreation programs and services that relate to arts, crafts, dance, special events of all sizes, and children and adult leisure classes, camps, and programs. Moreover, recreation services oversee volunteer, pre-school, and community center management.

Sports and Adventure Services (SAS) promote active lifestyles through instructional programs and community partnerships. It offers programs such as sports instruction

and leagues, hikes, astronomy, camping and campfires, fishing, kayaking and canoeing, skiing and tubing, boating classes, nature programs, and rock climbing.

Recreational Licensed Childcare and Community Services (RLCCS) provides programs for youth from ages two and a half through middle school, offering a wide variety of child care programs, from campus to therapeutic recreation, all licensed through the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care.

Data gathered for this assessment originated from staff survey results, community survey results, staff interviews, program guide reviews, and program-specific reports pulled from the County's registration software database.

A major challenge in assessing the Department and Divisions' programmatic evolution since the 2017 assessment is that nearly two of the four years were directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite strong goals, outcomes, and initiatives established in 2017, progress on them halted in March of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the Department to quickly re-think and re-calibrate the way it delivered services.

The following sections analyze the Department's program menu, participation, and performance. Staff and community insights

are then reviewed. The data from those analyses are combined to identify gaps and then formulate suggestions for future goals, outcomes, and final recommendations.

Table 1: Number of Programs in FY2019

Program Category	FY2019 Number of Offerings
Sports	2,734
Childcare Services	1,274
Enrichment	994
Music & Theater Arts	504
Science & Technology	476
Aquatics	466
Adventure, Nature & Outdoors	457
Crafts & Fine Arts	393
Dance	284
Fitness	277
Cooking	180
Special Events	157
Therapeutic Recreation	154
Lifelong Learning	83
Health & Wellness	72
Trips & Tours	44
Miscellaneous	19
Drop-In Activities/Clubs	7
No Category	3

Program Menu

To take stock in what types of programs are offered to the community, the following section reviews the program categories, quantity of programs offered, and program distribution.

Program Inventory

In 2017, the Department's programs were assessed according to a MacMillan matrix to determine the list of the top program categories. The 2021 assessment used all program categories as outlined in the registration software. By doing so, the total quantity and distribution of programs across planning-based categories are a reflection of exactly what has been offered. Fiscal year 2019 data was used so the most recent full fiscal year of non-pandemic impact could be analyzed.

The program category with the largest number of offerings was, by far, sports. The 2,734 sports programs were more than double of the next-highest category, childcare services (1,274). Enrichment, music & theater arts, and science & technology rounded out the top five.

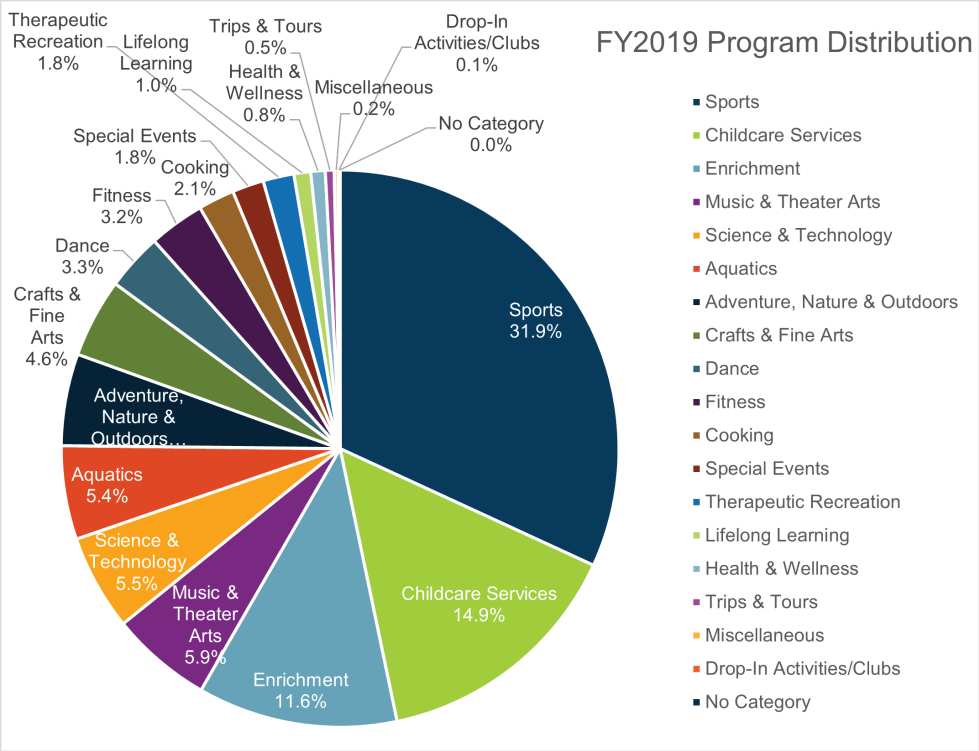
Program Distribution

Figure 1 captures the quantity of total registration-based programming offered by the Department during the year examined and depicts how the programming was distributed across program area categories. The most

notable observation is that sports accounted for nearly one-third (31.9%) of all the Department's programs. Childcare services (14.9%) and enrichment programs (11.6%) were the second- and third-highest of total program offerings.

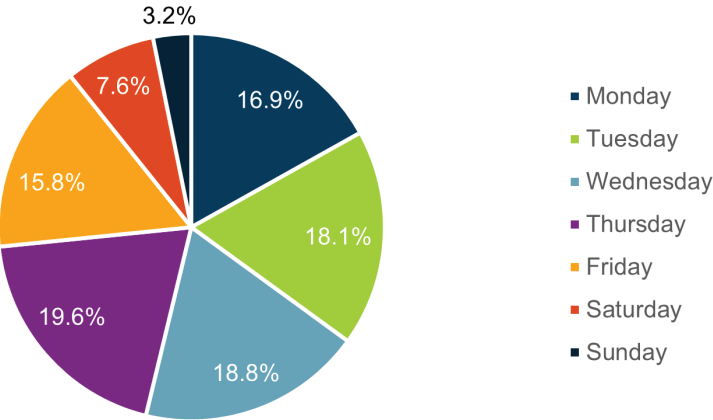
The data gleaned from the registration software also allowed the consulting team to assess the quantity of program offerings by day of the week, as depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 1: FY2019 Program Distribution



The low percentage of programs offered on Saturdays and Sundays was a bit atypical compared to what the consulting team sees in other agencies’ analyses. Typically, Saturdays are a peak recreation day. The consulting team intentionally ran the data seen in Figure 2 without childcare programs, to remove the large program that traditionally occurs Monday through Friday. Even with the child care programs removed, programs were not as evenly distributed on the week-ends. There is opportunity to increase program offerings on Saturdays and Sundays, to reach households who prefer to participate on the weekend and to accommodate those households that cannot get to programs during the week.

Figure 2: 2019 Opportunities by Day of Week (non-child care)



The consulting team also reviewed the quantity of courses offered over the course of three fiscal years. The seasonality of the offerings was also reviewed. Figure 3 demonstrates the number of RS and SAS courses and Figure 4 demonstrates the number of RLCCS courses.

The total number of RS and SAS courses steadily increased between the three years (5,478, 5,693, and 5,743 respectively). Fall and spring saw steady increases between the three years, whereas winter steadily decreased in courses offered. Summer of FY 2018-2019 saw a jump from the previous year, then slightly declined.

There has been a steady decline in total number of RLC programs between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2019-2020, from 2,980 to 2,846. Winter and spring showed steady declines between fiscal years, fall dipped a bit in FY 2018-2019 then showed a slight increase, and summer increased in the first two years and remained steady the third.

Figure 3: Number of RS and SAS Courses Offered

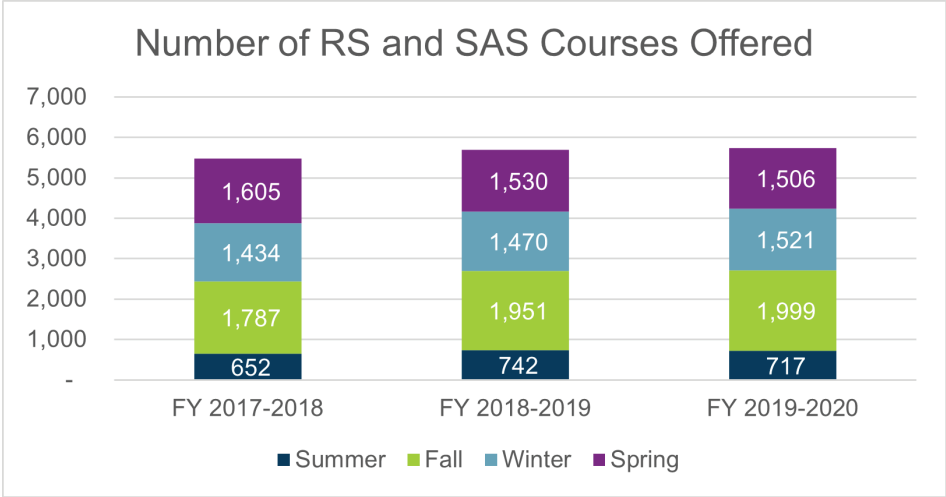
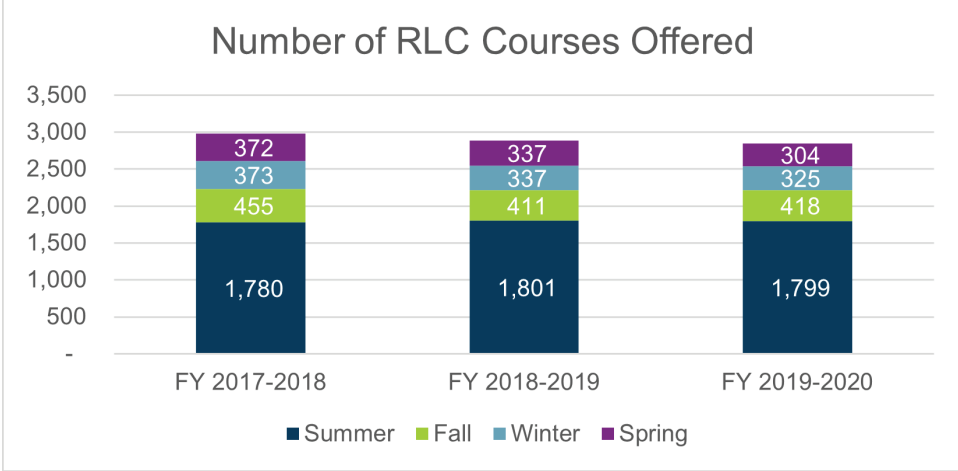


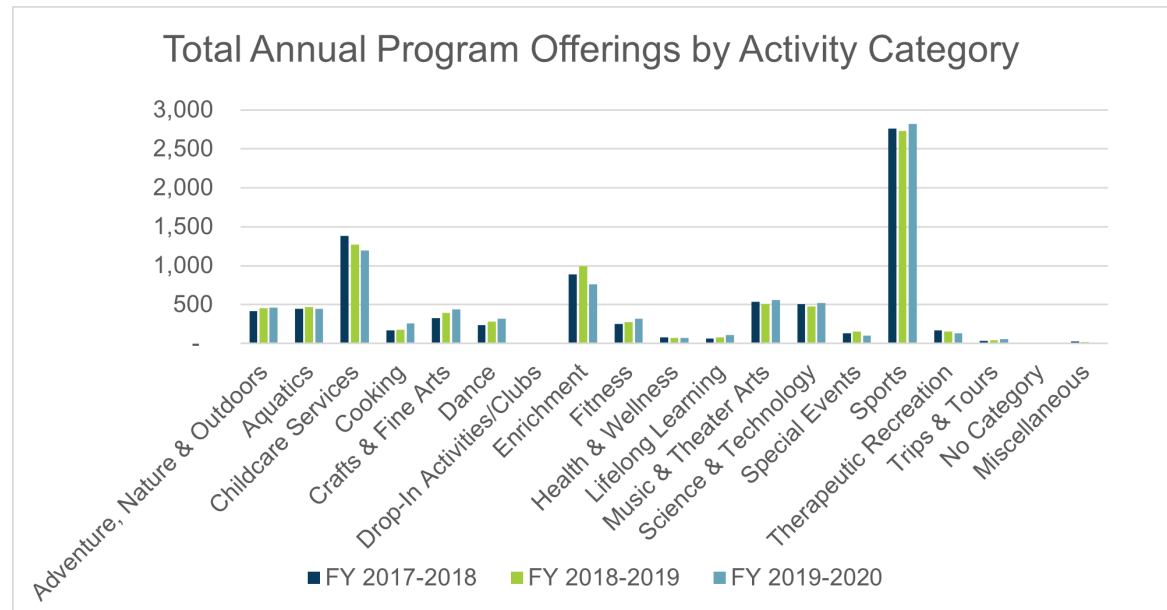
Figure 4: Number of RLC Courses Offered



The final look at overall program opportunities is demonstrated in Figure 5, where total number of programs offered in each activity category was reported across the three fiscal years. The result is a comprehensive view of program offerings across time, in each individual category.

Eleven of the 19 (57.9%) categories increased program offerings between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2019-2020. The categories with the largest percent increase between the years were drop-in activities, trips & tours, and lifelong learning (75.0%, 66.7% and 61.2% increase respectively). The categories with the largest percent decrease between the years were miscellaneous, no category, and therapeutic recreation (-83.3%, -71.4% and -25.4% decrease respectively). The top two decreases represent programming team's diligence in its more accurate categorization of programs.

Figure 5: Total Annual Program Offerings by Activity Category



Common Program Categories

The following is a list of major program categories that park and recreation agencies throughout the country commonly provide. This list helps to identify if there are any common program areas not offered by an agency. Most agencies offer a majority of programs. In matching the Department's inventory of programs against this list, a majority of the program areas, 93.3% are represented. (Purple text represents programs not offered.)

Active Adult
Aquatics
Arts
Before/After School
Biking
Birthday Party Services
Child Care
Cooking
Dance
Day/School Break Camps
E-Sports
Early Childhood
Environmental/Nature
Extreme Sports
Fitness
General Interest
Golf
Gymnastics/Tumbling
Historical Programs
Homeschool
Horseback Riding

Ice Skating/Hockey

Language Arts
Lifelong Learning
Martial arts
Music
Open Gym
Outdoor Adventure
Pets
Pickleball
Preschool
Running/Walking
Seniors
Special/Community Events
Specialty Camps
Sports
STEM/STEAM
Summer Camp (day-long)
Sustainability/Green
Teen
Tennis
Theatre/Acting
Therapeutic Recreation
Trips
Wellness

For comparison purposes, 93.3% is the highest percentage the consulting team has ever worked with, across recreation agencies and systems nationwide. This shows tremendous diversity in the Department's provided opportunities. The three program categories depicted with purple text represent opportunities for program menu expansion; however, any new categories should first consider the associated need, based on community feedback.

Program Guide

As often seen in recreation agencies nationwide, the most common communication methodology used to generate awareness of, and encourage participation in, recreation programs is a seasonal program guide. Due to its high rate of connectivity between residents and program opportunities, and its rank as the primary information source, the following section reviews the Department's program guide and provides observations, insights, and recommendations.

The program guides observed were all very well organized, from cover to cover. The beginning of each season's program guide started with a welcome message from the County Executive and/or Department of Recreation & Parks Director, then promoted "5 Easy Ways to Register." The registration information was informative and clear, and provided a helpful statement regarding financial assistance information. The table of contents demonstrated how the guides were neatly arranged by program category and age group. A listing of location-based after school recreation opportunities followed the table of contents as well as a chronological list of things to do when the schools are closed. The beginning of the program guide also provided direction as to how the registrant can go about asking for a guide printed in a larger font size, as well as translation services. The last few pages of the guide

provided more detailed registration, procedural, and policy information.

The first edition printed in full color was Fall 2019. Full color photos and the use of color to direct the reader's eye and separate sections was an effective design addition. The guides retained a similar layout and structure from season to season, which helps the reader navigate the document more quickly and easily.

The guides did promote pavilion and facility rentals as well as other historic County sites to visit. A missing element was a connection to the County's outdoor recreation facilities, such as parks, trails, and amenities. Promotion of recreation opportunities at the park sites and trails is strongly encouraged. Additionally, the adventure & outdoors section referenced many more drop-in and one-day program information available on the website; consider adding a few teaser program titles to draw more interest.

A significant amount of time and effort is required to create a program guide that is as visually appealing, organized, and information-rich as the Department's. Agencies often wonder if the time and effort is "worth it." Based on the recent community survey results, the Department should most definitely continue designing and distributing a seasonal program guide.

When asked how residents learn about programs, 68% of survey respondents used the seasonal activity guide. This response was 34 percentage points higher than the national average, which indicates a higher than average reliance on the communication tool. The second- and third-most frequent means to learn about programs was word of mouth (34%) and Department website (28%). Investment into the seasonal activity guide should continue, as 52% of survey respondents rated the guide as their first or second preferred method of communication.

The program guide is the mechanism by which program details can be advertised comprehensively to County residents as a whole. The benefit of continuing this marketing format is it reaches residents who either do not have electronic communication access or do not prefer electronic communication. For those that do prefer electronic communication, specific, target marketing is recommended. Email and social media distribution lists can be used to reach target groups of people, differently than the guide. A well-rounded and balanced marketing approach is always recommended; therefore, the program guide should be continued.

Programming Observations

Overall, the Department's program menu is interesting, full of variety, and timely. For example, the cooking classes not only explore cultural cuisine (e.g. Indian Breads) but also cuisine based on dietary restrictions (e.g., Gluten Free Breads). In addition to the variety of program categories, the program areas within each category is comprehensive. For example, not only does the department offer adult dance, it offers multiple dance modes, such as tap, jazz, modern, contemporary, pop-cardio, hip hop, belly dance, Bollywood, and line dancing. The consulting team does not often see this level of variety.

The sports and childcare program areas are more robust than most agencies nationwide. Additionally, the quantity of programs offered for adults is impressive. After review, three program areas resulted in further observations:

Therapeutic Recreation (TR) programming:

The variety of TR programming is strong, and the inclusion services commendable. The Prisms program, designed for adults over 50 with dementia, is the first recreation-based program for that demographic the consulting team has seen. One opportunity for consistency is that of the programs' advertised age ranges; the ages seem to be haphazard, as some programs start at age 24, others at 34,

and some end at age 39, others at 48. It was nice to see that the TR programs were combined into its own program guide section in later 2019, which is a much easier way to navigate the program options.

Older adult programming:

Staff expressed an opportunity to grow the active adult programming area, but that it would need to do so in a way that did not duplicate services for the senior population. More and more agencies are recognizing the need to differentiate between active adults and seniors, as their leisure needs are not the same. The Encore programs appeared to be a branded way to indicate that the programs were for active aging demographic. One point of confusion that may benefit from more consistency is that some programs and the Go 50+ memberships were advertised for 50+ years, while others were for 55+ years.

Nontraditional programming:

It was refreshing to see recreation opportunities in areas such as jump rope and obstacle courses. Parkour, challenge courses, and extreme sports are gaining popularity and acceptance nationwide. Providing support for growing program areas such as these through the Outdoor & Adventure team will be increasingly important, even more so as people are seeking outdoor activities post-pandemic.

Look to places like Denver, Colorado for trends and best practices in outdoor adventure programming. Additionally, skateboarding is a new Olympic sport; a review of the 2019 program menu revealed no skateboarding classes/clinics/camps.

Program Participation

An organization can measure the extent to which its programs perform well by reviewing the number of people that participate in them. The following section will help the Department review its offerings from a global, Department-wide perspective.

Registration

Most of the County's programs require pre-registration in order to participate. This is true for many of the events as well, regardless of whether there is a fee to participate or not. The front of the program guide very clearly articulates five different ways by which to register. The County uses a very robust registration software that is designed for online recreation services, and also offers phone, fax, mail-in, and walk-in registration. The registration information page also notes that in addition to English, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish language interpreters are available to assist with registration.

Registration-Based Participation

Activities that require the participant to preregister are considered registration-based. Events, classes, special programs, and trips are all examples of registration-based activities. Generally, these types of activities are advertised with a specified date, time, location, and price (if applicable), along with any other information needed to register (e.g., gender, shirt size, emergency contact information). Examining enrollment into registration-based activities over time can inform overall participation trends.

Total Enrollment

Figures 6 and 7 demonstrates the Department's total enrollment between FY 2017-2018 and FY 2019-2020, by season.

**The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the Department's ability to provide recreation services in Spring 2020.*

A shift in summer reporting between FY 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 accounts for the discrepancy for both RS and SAS (Figure 6) and RLCCS (Figure 7). The most notable shift between seasons was an increase of nearly 2,000 participants in the fall of 2019 for RS and SAS as compared to the previous fall season.

Figure 6: Total Enrollment: RS and SAS

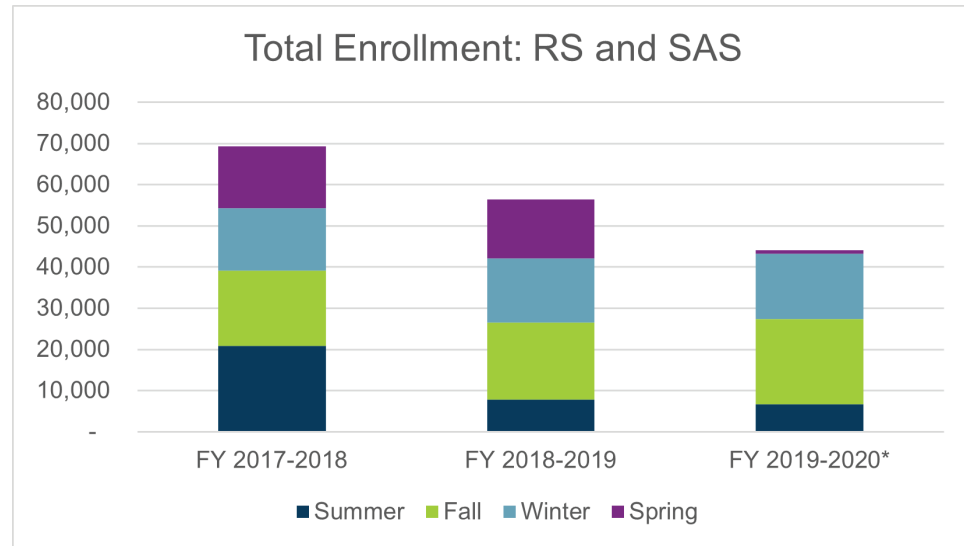


Figure 7: Total Enrollment: RLCCS

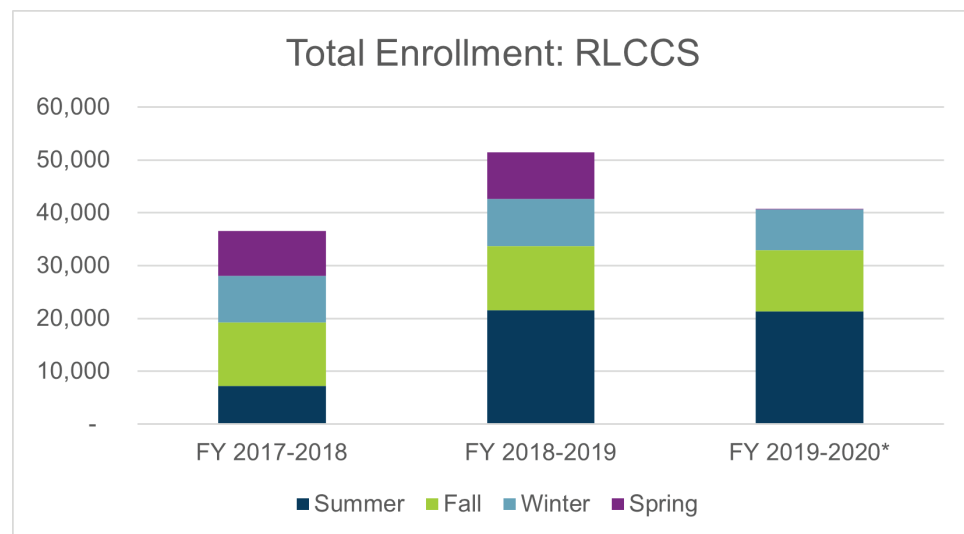


Figure 8: Total Enrollment by Activity Category

**The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the Department's ability to provide recreation services in Spring 2020.*

To review the enrollment data on a more granular level, Figure 8 demonstrates total enrollment broken down by activity category and the same three-year timeframe.

The activity categories that saw the largest growth in participation between FY 2017-2018 and 2019-2020 were trips & tours (853.9%), therapeutic recreation (79.4%), and cooking (37.9%). The categories that saw the largest decline in participation in the same timeframe were health & wellness (-33.4%) and childcare services (-30.3%).

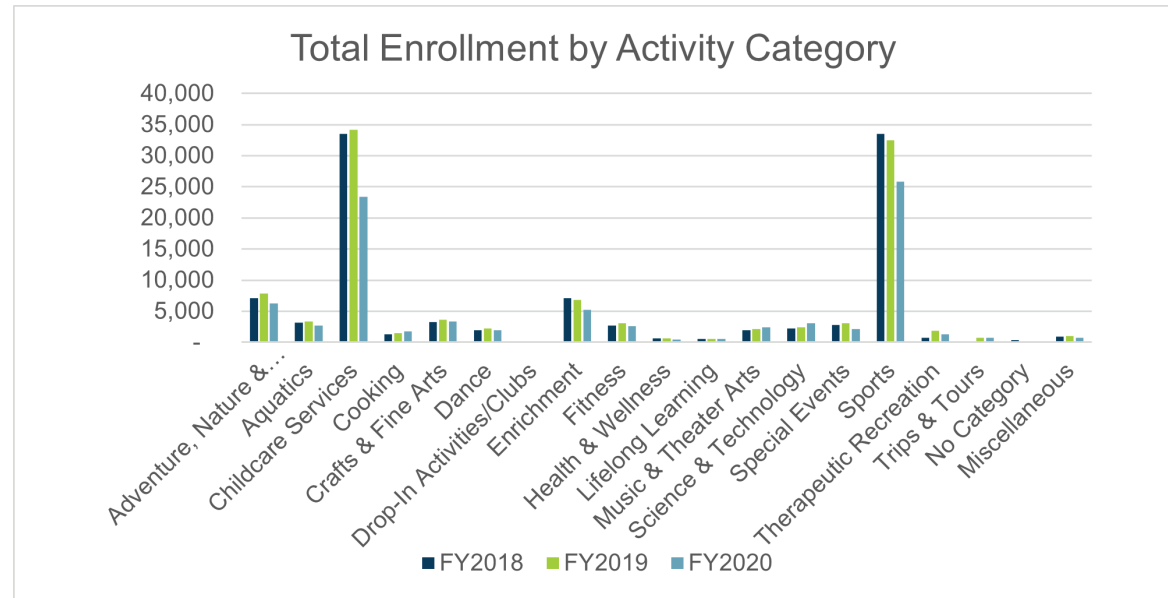


Table 2: Athletic Tournaments and Events

Athletic Events and Tournaments

Registration for athletic events and tournaments is not tracked in the registration software, and is therefore tracked and reported separately. Table 2 demonstrates the number events and participants for the past three years.

Athletic Tournaments/Events	2018		2019		2020		Total
	Events	Part	Events	Part	Events	Part	
Kumdo Tournaments	0	0	1	100	0	0	100
Ultimate Frisbee Events	1	108	0	0	0	0	108
Adult 3v3 Basketball Tourn.	2	172	0	0	0	0	172
Futsal Tournaments	0	0	0	0	2	326	326
Quidditch Tournaments	0	0	1	375	0	0	375
Pickleball Tournaments	0	0	1	228	1	188	416
Crossfit Events	1	500	0	0	0	0	500
Football Tournaments	2	635	1	72	1	72	779
Badminton Tournaments	1	486	1	200	1	185	871
Jump Rope Tournaments	4	384	5	470	2	214	1,068
Rugby Tournaments	1	516	1	576	0	0	1,092
Celebration of Sports Events	1	563	1	600	1	600	1,763
Cyclocross Events	2	958	1	452	1	445	1,855
Gymnastics Events	1	706	1	734	1	450	1,890
Kid's Fest Events	1	1,116	1	1,053	0	0	2,169
Volleyball Tournaments	17	1,800	17	1,346	13	1,140	4,286
Soccer Tournaments	2	1,800	4	1,180	4	1,548	4,528
Running Events	3	1,314	3	1,320	4	1,932	4,566
Baseball Tournaments	7	4,022	10	3,527	5	2,030	9,579
Field Hockey Tournaments	8	6,488	10	4,034	4	2,867	13,389
Lacrosse Tournaments	5	3,618	9	5,103	12	8,292	17,013
Basketball Tournaments	14	10,490	14	10,888	4	1,620	22,998
Softball Tournaments	24	12,894	22	12,013	14	8,012	32,919
Totals	97	48,570	104	44,271	70	29,921	

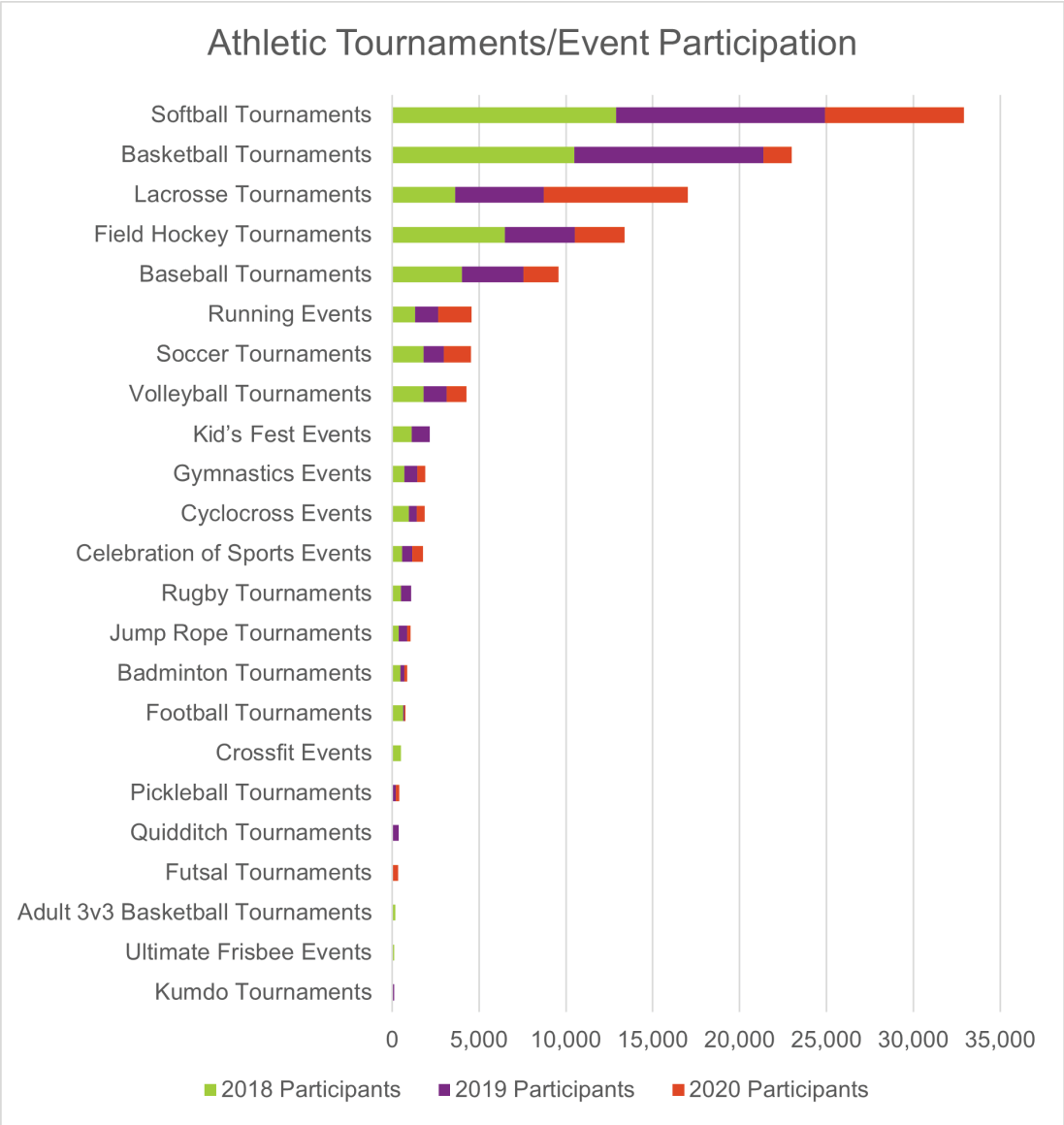
Figure 9: Athletic Tournaments/Event Participation

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the number of events, and subsequently participation – especially for indoor tournaments (i.e. basketball). In typical years, the County hosted the largest quantity of events or tournaments for softball. The corresponding high number of participants in softball tournaments across all three years examined makes it the top former over time. Figure 9 helps to visualize the total athletic tournament/event participation with all three years combined.

Residency

The County’s mission and vision both include reference to serving the community. The County’s primary market is therefore the defined as residents that live in the County. The secondary market are people who do not live in the County, or nonresidents. As a means to understand who the County is serving, an analysis of enrollment by residents and nonresidents is depicted in Figure 10.

The vast majority, or 93.0%, of enrollments were by residents in 2019. To better understand what activities the nonresident were enrolling in, Figure 11 was generated for comparison purposes.



In 2019, the vast majority (43.6%) of non-residents participated in sports, followed by special events (9.5%). When the individual activity categories were examined, 67.1% of no category, 40.8% of drop-in activities, 24.2% of miscellaneous, 23.5% of special events, and 16.1% of adventure, nature & outdoors participants were nonresidents in 2019. One way to help ensure that residents have primary access to programs and events is to hold a residents-only registration timeframe, which the Department does offer. Additionally, to account for the fact that nonresidents do not pay County taxes, a nonresident fee structure can be established. Nonresident fees can also help reserve County program and event slots for more residents. The consulting team recommends that the Department examine nonresident fees for programs with high percentage of nonresident enrollment – especially those without nonresident price structures.

Figure 10: 2019 Enrollment by Residency

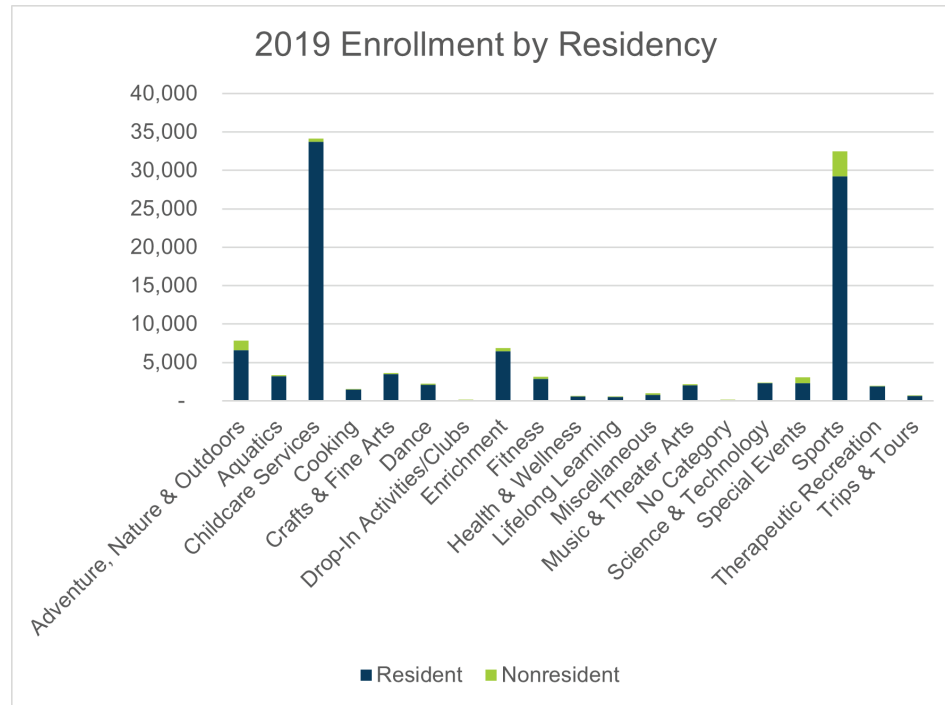
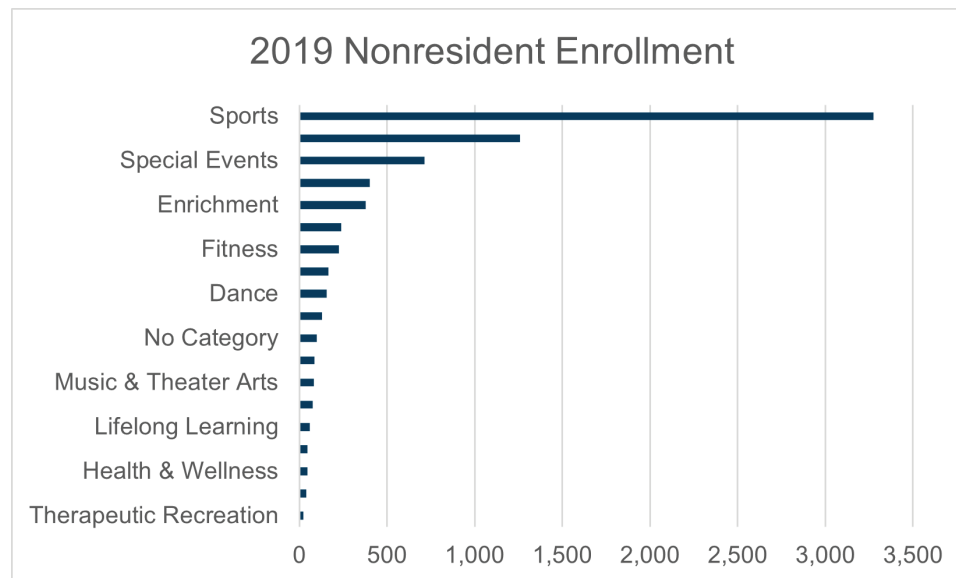


Figure 11: 2019 Nonresident Enrollment



Program Performance

In addition to tracking participation, program performance can be measured according to the number of programs offered as compared to those that ran.

Comparing the data Figures 12 and 13 results in what is called a cancellation rate, a measure commonly tracked in the recreation services industry. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of programs that did not run by the total offered, resulting in the cancellation rate. The County's cancellation rates were 23.3%, 21.0%, and 31.8%, respectively over the three years studied. A higher rate will generally indicate one of two things: either a) the programming team has been charged with trying new, innovative programs that have not been successful yet; or b) the programs being offered simply are not meeting the needs of the community. The first scenario requires patience and perseverance to allow time for exploration and to push communication efforts. The second scenario requires research to understand what factors contributed to the program cancellations (e.g., instructor performance, child aged-out, or other barriers such as time, day, or transportation).

Typically, the target range of a "desirable" cancellation rate is between 10%–20%, with 12%–15% being most ideal. Any higher than 20% indicates the staff are doing a lot of work

preparing for and marketing courses that do not run. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic caused an anomaly in FY 2019-2020, the other two years were a bit higher than desirable. The Department's staff should work to reduce its cancellation rate to a more ideal percentage, perhaps by one percent over the course of the next five years.

Figure 12: Number of Programs Offered

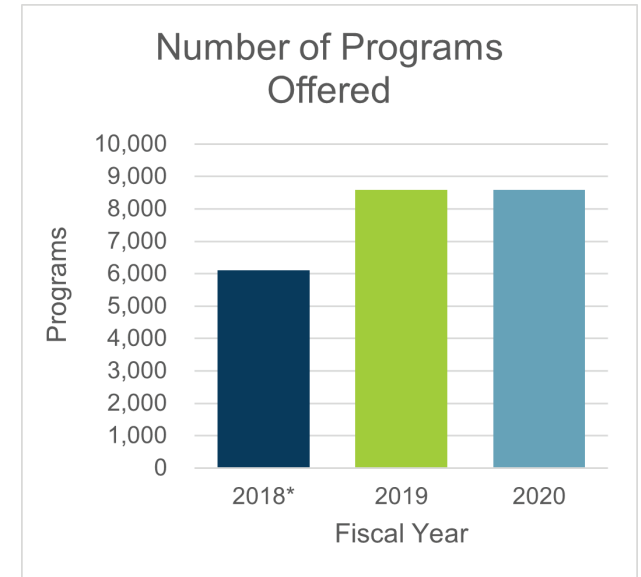
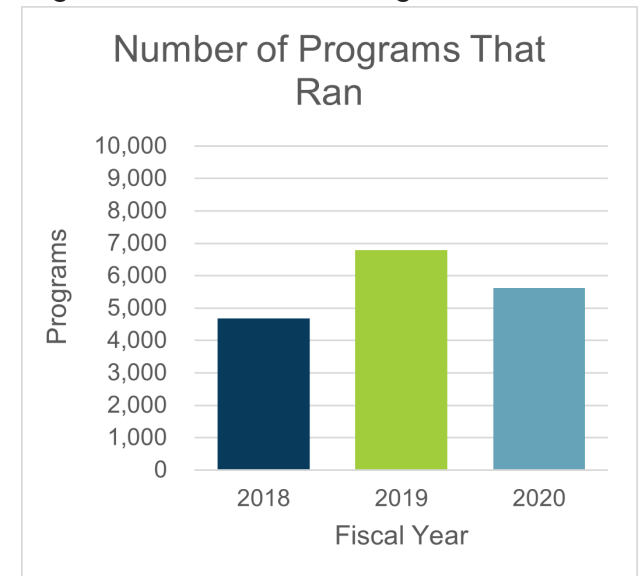


Figure 13: Number of Programs That Ran

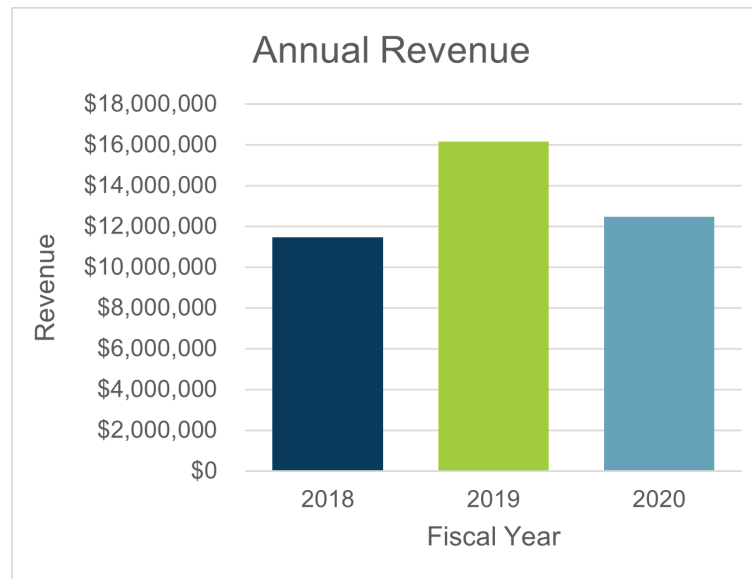


Fiscal Performance

The financial review conducted in this recreation assessment is an overview of the Department's programmatic fiscal performance over three years. A larger fiscal analysis was conducted as a separate component of the plan's analysis. Fees and charges account for the revenue source depicted in Figure 14.

The full breakdown of revenue and expenses by activity category and facility was not available as a part of this study. Analyzing gross revenue only tells a portion of the fiscal story. A full analysis would involve an account for each activity category's expenses as well as each facility's expenses. Program expenses include costs for instructors, supplies, and/or vendor fees (e.g., tickets), which account for the direct expenses. Indirect expenses—such as administrative salaries, utilities, and capital expenses—can also be included in a full analysis. The result would be the net revenue amount for each program area and facility, which is a more accurate depiction of fiscal performance. The net revenue metric provides insight into how effectively the Department is managing the program's finances. The metric also simultaneously allows analysis of fiscal success across program areas and facilities on an equal basis.

Figure 14: Annual Revenue



Staff Insight

Staff insight is an integral component of the program analysis. Staff often have the greatest awareness of strengths, opportunities, and the current environment; therefore, the consulting team conducted a qualitative assessment with recreation leadership and programming staff.

Staff Survey

As a means by which to jumpstart recreation programs and services conversations with the staff, the consulting team offered the opportunity for staff to participate in an electronic survey. Responses were collected from leadership and program staff separately, to see if there were any similarities or differences between the answers.

When asked how the staff felt the community feels about the County's recreation services, 81.8% of the program staff and 69.2% of leadership staff felt the services were awesome or great. Staff were asked to list the top five programs or services offered; the programs with the top frequency of mentions are listed in Table 3.

When asked about facility space, 56.3% of program staff and 33.3% of leadership staff indicated the facility space was fantastic or good. Staff were asked to describe their program evaluation process; results were evenly split for both the programmers and leaders, in that the majority responded either their program evaluation process was good (each program had an evaluation) or okay (feedback was gathered every once and a while). Program planning efforts had more of a mixed result, as depicted in Figure 15.

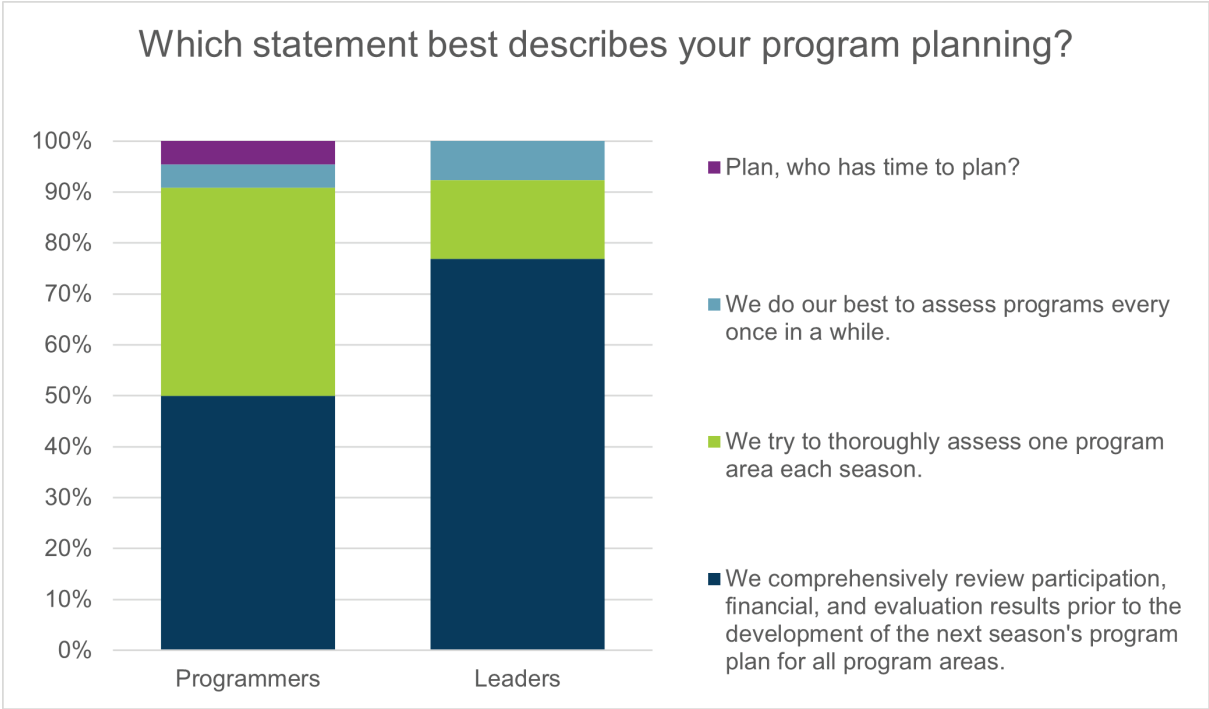
Table 3: Staff's Top Five Services

Program	Total Mentions
Special Events	10
Parks	8
Summer Camps	8
TR/Inclusion	8
Child Care	7
Sports	5
Active Aging/55+	4
Adaptive Sports	4
Fitness/Health/Wellness	4
Variety	4
Volunteer Opportunities	4
Arts Programs	3
Community Centers	3
Facilities	3
Lacrosse	3
Virtual Programs	3

Overall, leaders generally felt there was more program planning effort than program staff. Program staff were slightly more optimistic than leaders when it came to whether or not programs were meeting the recreational needs of all community segments; 77.3% of programmers felt either fantastic or good about meeting community needs, as compared to 61.5% of leaders. A refreshing surprise was observed in the answers to the staff's budget knowledge; 90.9% of program staff felt that they either knew exactly how their area was performing or that they had enough financial information to perform their job as opposed to 84.6% of leaders with the same sentiment. The percentage point differential is not very large, and yet it was nice to see the data disprove the general assumption that leaders know more about program budgets than the program staff.

Staff provided insightful feedback to an open-ended question that asked what programming roadblocks they faced. In order of most frequency, the top answer was staffing, followed by facility space (indoor, outdoor, and parking), and COVID-19 restrictions. There were also frequent references to funding, marketing, partnership with the schools and the rut of repeat programs. Additionally, single comments regarding support software, lack of leadership, the community's awareness of programs, and the need to create programs that meet community needs were shared.

Figure 15: Staff's Program Planning Assessment



Qualitative Analysis

Using the survey feedback as a springboard, the consulting team met with staff from the three divisions. The meetings were designed to understand strengths, opportunities, internal support functions, and program planning. Overarching themes and messages are described in this section.

Although a number of strengths were identified in the staff conversations, one of the strengths mentioned the most frequently was the team's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff was very adaptable in its shift to virtual programming. One quote from a staff member summarized the sentiment nicely, "Recreation didn't end with COVID." The overarching sentiment throughout staff conversations was a feeling of pride in their accomplishments. The Department should take what it learned from that "forced" change and apply it to a concerted effort to become more nimble and agile in the future.

In addition to virtual programming, the following strengths were frequently mentioned:

- Variety of programs
- Teamwork among immediate colleagues
- Special Events
- Therapeutic Recreation/Inclusion
- Lacrosse
- Child care/Out of school time
- The tenure, dedication, and adaptability of full time staff

Conversely, service duplication was identified as a weakness between the Divisions. Multiple staff expressed a desire for more collaboration between teams and for collaboration to become normalized. There was also a suggestion for a more comprehensive oversight of the whole program menu. Staff indicated they meet with staff outside of their division less than one time per year.

Additional strengthening opportunities:

- Information Technology: Wi-Fi at all facilities, audio visual equipment, equipment to support virtual programming and communication (i.e., webcams, updated hardware)
- Data-driven decision making: Base program menu and marketing reach decisions on data.
- Proactive Preparedness: Better-prepare for weather-related emergency preparedness and large-scale responses to things such as pandemics.
- Marketing: Program staff are very appreciative of having a (relatively new) marketing team. They feel it is hard for marketing to fulfill all their requests, as there are so many of them and subsequently the response time is slow. The newly centralized process has taken the staff's ability to assist and make quick updates/adjustments unavailable. Staff felt they get out-competed by other providers who post to social media daily; marketing is only able to post once every few weeks due to the pace of the process.
- Internal customer service: Better internal communication and internal service was seen as an opportunity for improvement, both top-down and inter-divisional. More information sharing, transparency in processes, and department-wide decisions was desired.

- Partnerships: Strengthen school partnership so schools can be utilized, which will result in enhanced geographic equity. Nearly every group mentioned this current pain point.
- Outreach: Identify barriers through better community outreach; presumed barriers include technology, transportation, and language. Outreach was mentioned several times throughout conversations; bringing information and programs to where people are will be key in achieving program equity.
- Human Resources: Several staff expressed needing additional assistance with new hire paperwork and onboarding support.
- Leadership development: Staff expressed desires for additional professional development and training opportunities and a mentorship program to develop young talent.
- Programming Space: To support programmatic growth, an increase of facility space and the support spaces (e.g. parking for large events) is needed. Indoor space was specifically mentioned for adventure programs, turf for athletics, and another pool for expanded aquatic programming.
- DEI emphasis: Staff felt diversity, equity, and inclusion was an area for strengthening.

Specific program area opportunities, in no particular order:

- Teens
- Multicultural
- Latino population
- Expanded TR programs: youth sports, mental health
- Youth fitness
- Active Aging – careful development that is separate from senior programming, without duplication
- E-Sports
- More aquatic programming (beyond swim lessons)
- Female adult sports
- Translation services throughout

An overarching, major theme woven throughout staff conversations centered around the concept of staffing – not having enough and that staff are difficult to find staff. The Department is not immune to the challenge being felt nationwide.

Gap Identification

Service gaps can be identified by comparing the previous analyses' results with community survey results, staff feedback, and national benchmarks.

Community Need

ETC Institute conducted a statistically valid community survey in 2021. The results of the survey that specifically pertaining to programs were reviewed as support for the recreation programs and services assessment. Overall, the survey respondents who participated in programs rated the quality of programs in a positive light, with a majority receiving favorable ratings of excellent (43%) and good (51%). When asked specifically about the quality of virtual programs 95% rated virtual programs as either excellent (52%) or good (43%).

As a means to understand what held survey respondents back from participating, they were asked what barriers inhibited them from participating in programs. The top survey responses pertained to convenience. The highest percentage (28%) indicated they did not have time to participate, 18% indicated the times were not convenient, and 15% indicated the location or venue was not convenient. These responses point to the need for programs that are brought to the community (rather than

expecting them to come to County facilities) as well as a program structure that supports short-term and flexible time commitments.

Additionally, 21% of survey respondents indicated their lack of program awareness was a reason preventing them from participating. Although this percentage is 12 percentage points below the national average of 33%, it is an increase of 13 percentage points from the Greenfest Survey (as reported in 2017).

The survey asked respondents to rate the program areas that they have a need for, then asked which program areas were most important. The results of those two questions were then combined to generate a Priority Investment Rating (PIR). Program areas with the highest PIR were:

- Aquatics or swimming (PIR=200)
- Fitness (PIR=188)
- Outdoor adventure (PIR=156)
- Seniors/active adult (PIR=151)
- Special events (PIR=145)
- Arts and culture (PIR=144)
- Education and life skills (PIR=114)
- Historic amenities/County-owned historic sites (PIR=109)

Fitness programs scored both the highest need and the second-highest importance rating; aquatics or swimming had the second-highest need and the highest importance rating. The estimated number of households in the County whose needs for programs were being partly met or not met were 32,701 for aquatics and 28,843 for fitness. Answers to a question regarding investment solidified the respondents' desire for more aquatic and fitness programming: 24% of respondents chose aquatics or swimming and 24% chose fitness as their top three areas for additional investment of resources, both of which were the top program investment areas.

Following COVID-19, the staff conducted surveys to gauge participants' interest and willingness to participate in open play pickleball, before and after school tennis, outdoor sports and adventure programs, adult basketball league, and yoga. Overall, results indicated that respondents appreciated the Department's efforts to continue programming through the pandemic. Respondents generally wanted to participate as long as safety protocols were used.

Gaps

The community survey helped identify program areas that had unmet needs. Coupled with staff and consultant observations, the community feedback helps to solidify which programs areas should receive attention over the next few years. Comparatively speaking, the County's variety of program offerings is so robust that it makes finding traditional gaps a bit more difficult. That said, there are always opportunities to grow and strengthen the current program menu.

Staff identified special events, therapeutic recreation, active aging, and summer camps as areas of strength. The next step with strong programs is to capitalize on their strengths to grow them, using the strong base to expand current offerings and to try new offerings. Survey data showed that 56% of respondents had an unmet need for therapeutic recreation, 44% for active adult programs, and 32% each for special events and summer camps. In addition to the top PIR and staff's desire to offer a broader array of aquatic programs,

when benchmarked against national averages, survey respondents had a 30 percentage point higher need for aquatics or swimming than the national average.

The survey did not ask about the specific program areas that the consulting team identified as opportunities commonly seen in recreation agencies across the country: E-sports, horseback riding, and/or ice hockey/figure skating. Staff also identified E-sports as a possible new program opportunity, as well as skateboarding and adult camps. Equestrian and ice-related activities should be vetted against the similar provider listing before pursuing.

From a content and format perspective, it will be important to consider and incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into all future programmatic efforts. Program content that celebrates a variety of cultures and experiences, welcomes participants of varied backgrounds, and offers opportunities to participate in an equitable manner will need to be woven into each program area. Renewed pro-

gram planning and assessment methodologies can help provide structure and standardization to incorporate DEI initiatives.

The team may want to explore the opportunity to highlight a value menu concept, where free and/or low-cost options are listed or highlighted in a special way. Some of the staff were proud of how the programs have been able to cover costs more efficiently in recent years, whereas others felt that the pay-to-play model left out portions of the community. The fact that 9% of survey respondents indicated that program fees were not affordable (their first or second choice in the barrier to participation question) is a strong indicator that approximately 10,250 County households are in need of affordable programs.

Goals

This section briefly reviews existing Departmental goals and outlines the consulting team's recommended program outcomes.

Departmental Goals

In August of 2019, the Department established departmental goals and strategic plan implementation initiatives to help achieve the departmental goals. Thirty two initiatives, supporting nine core goals, were slated for completion in 2020. Of all the planning efforts observed by the consulting team, the Department's plan is one of the most comprehensive, thoughtful, and progressive plans observed. The initiatives dive deep into tactical ways in which to achieve continuous improvement efforts. As the years 2020 and 2021 demonstrated, the best-laid plans can be significantly impacted and/or disrupted by life events such as pandemics and unexpected losses in leadership. The consulting team encourages the Department to revitalize its pursuit of achieving the existing goals, as there has been a delay in the initiatives' completion due to more pressing issues, but to also carefully set realistic, achievable deadlines. Viewing the plan as a dynamic work in progress will continue to promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Program Outcomes

Instead of focusing on new, better, and different programs, the focus for the next five years should be on increasing participation. Using the 2019 enrollment data, approximately 39% of the County's population participated in registration-based programs. The reason for the estimated percentage is because not all programs track resident/non-resident participation (e.g., athletic tournaments). That said, the 39% could be a goal by which to benchmark future progress. For example, a goal could be to increase the total participation rate (using total enrollment and current population estimates) by 1% each year. The percentage may seem small, and yet realistically it will take quite a lot of effort to increase the participation by three thousand people (or more).

The County already has a solid structure from which to build. Instead of seeking to expand the breadth of an already-robust program menu, the goal can be to increase the depth. Depth in this context can be defined as: growing the reach, fostering quality, and focusing on intentional outcomes.

1. Growing the Reach
 - a. Increase participation. Identify markets that are either not participating or do not have a high presence in each program area and create strategies to encourage new par-

ticipants to try programming. Program area leaders can help identify strategies that would best-work within their program area's context, such as discounts, bring a friend campaigns, incentives, outreach, and more.

- b. Reduce barriers. Discover why residents do not participate and then create an action plan to reduce barriers. First, this is done on a global scale for the whole program menu, using community survey data. Then dig into each specific category to determine why people can not, will not, and/or do not want to participate.

2. Fostering Quality

- a. Adopt continuous quality management methodologies. First, define customer expectations of quality. Then, create processes and procedures to support quality execution. Finally, develop an assessment process.
 - b. Provide more training. Fund and facilitate more professional development training for front line staff.

3. Focus on Intentional Outcomes

In 2012, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) announced the adoption of three pillars: conservation, health and wellness, and social equity. These cornerstone concepts helped to establish a framework for the association and its members to use when articulating the mission of park and recreation services. In that same year, Indiana University's School of Health, Physical Education, and Rec-

recreation – one of the leading providers of parks and recreation higher education – became the School of Public Health-Bloomington. Both of these decisive events in the history of parks and recreation represented a philosophical shift and commitment to the park and recreation industry’s role in community health and wellbeing.

Since 2012, communities have adopted the concept of recreational programs and services as a driver for community health and wellness improvement at varying degrees and intentions. The pace of this evolution has varied by community and region. In the Department’s FY2020-2024 Strategic Plan, Goal 8 seeks to “Integrate a multi-faceted approach to health and wellness, supporting the mental, physical, social and emotional well-being of the diverse Howard County community.

In a similar fashion, the Department’s Goal 1 seeks to “Promote Programs and Spaces Accessible to All People,” and Goal 5 seeks to “Provide a range of recreation programs and inclusive park and facility designs to facilitate diversity and cultural awareness.” Both of these goals support NRPA’s three pillars, paying particular attention to two: health and wellness and social equity.

- a. Equity: Conduct an equity audit of each program area, to identify key improvement areas.
- b. Health: Create measures by which the degree of community health is improved through participation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations summarize the opportunities to strengthen the Department's performance.

Program Administration

- Begin program performance tracking by program category. Track enrollment and financial performance of each core program area seasonally, so annual trends can be tracked outside of the registration software. (Due to the size of the Department, running annual figures directly from the software froze the system.)
- Examine nonresident fees for programs with high percentage of nonresident enrollment – especially those without nonresident price structures.
- Work to reduce the cancellation rate to a more ideal percentage, perhaps by one percent over the course of the next five years.
- Increase participation percentages

Program Menu Direction

- Centralize the oversight of the entire program menu. Ensure proper teams are leading programs and avoid duplication; assign a single person or a core team responsible for decision-making.

- Explore gaps as opportunities to expand the current program menu.
- Capitalize on strong programs' success, using the strong base to expand current offerings and to try new offerings (e.g., special events, therapeutic recreation, active aging, and summer camps).
- Explore E-sports, horseback riding, ice hockey/figure skating, skateboarding, and/or adult camps as possible new program opportunities.
- Consider broadening the reach and/or expanding programs with the highest Priority Investment Rating: aquatics or swimming, fitness, outdoor adventure, seniors/active adult, special events, arts and culture, education and life skills, and historic amenities/County-owned historic sites.
- Increase program offerings on Saturdays and Sundays, to reach households who prefer to participate on the weekend and to accommodate those households that cannot get to programs during the week.
- Develop structured cross-divisional collaboration opportunities. Individual programming teams and community center staff should meet regularly (i.e. quarterly) for seasonal planning meetings to discuss facility use and scheduling.
- Continue virtual and hybrid programming for the foreseeable future. More than half (57%) of survey respondents indicated

- that they would like the County to continue offering virtual or hybrid programming.
- Strengthen the internal support functions that are essential to programming success. Semi-annual meetings should be conducted with marketing, human resources, and information technology staff to review processes, answer questions, discuss mutual needs, and plan for the upcoming six months.
- Increase program depth: grow the reach, foster quality, and focus on intentional outcomes.

Barriers to Participation

Establish goals to address each “top barrier,” including:

- Bring programs to residents into local settings, not necessarily County-owned (Barrier: Park lands/facilities are not conveniently located)
- Create short registration commitment options, with one-time sessions/programs (Barrier: Do not have time to participate in programming)
- Increase dedicated recreation marketing support (Barrier: Not aware of programs)
- Increase outreach efforts (Barrier: Not aware of programs)
- Ensure 100% of peak capacity times are filled (Barrier: Times when programs are offered are not convenient)

Role in Community Health

Stimulate community health by encouraging activities that promote the individuals’ feeling of being engaged, connected, and active.

- Continue to survey the community, both using statistically valid methods and also quick surveys as recently conducted for post-COVID-19 planning.
- Consider establishing advisory groups whose sole focus is to help determine the programmatic future.
- Consider an outreach plan that establishes continuous engagement and feedback efforts and stays connected to the pulse of the community (i.e., visit community group meetings, parent teacher associations, places of worship)
- Incorporate a model of programming that brings recreation to where people are, not expecting residents to always come to County facilities

In conclusion, the Department is a very strong, park and recreation industry leader. The recommendations listed in this report will help the Department on its quest for continuous improvement and to maintain its CAPRA accredited status.

APPENDIX G

COMMUNITY INVENTORY

The following document is a complete and current inventory of parkland and recreation facilities, programs and services available in Howard County, including those provided by the Department of Recreation and Parks and those offered by similar local providers. This inventory is updated every five to seven years in conjunction with the LPPRP process. Howard County's robust recreation and park system includes the following elements described in greater detail below:

- » County-owned parkland, natural resource areas and facilities
- » Non-County-owned parkland, facilities and natural resources
- » County-owned open space
- » County-owned historic sites
- » County programs and services

COUNTY-OWNED PARKLAND, NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS AND FACILITIES

Ranging in scale and amenities, the Department maintains a diversity of parks. While the Department owns 4036 acres, only 5,779 acres are programmed open spaces, parks, natural resource areas, and facilities. All spaces and facilities and their associated amenities are included in the attached comprehensive list.

COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC SITES

The County owns and operates a total of 27 historic sites.

NON-COUNTY-OWNED PARKLAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In addition to the county-owned park system, there are several parks and natural resources owned and maintained by the State of Maryland and Columbia Association. The Patapsco Valley State Park is approximately 16,043 acres and the Patuxent River State Park is approximately 6,700 acres. Columbia Association also operates the following ten parks and natural resource areas within the county:

- » Lake Elkhorn
- » Wilde Lake
- » Jackson Pond
- » Symphony Woods
- » Kennedy Gardens
- » Lake Kittamaquundi

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACE

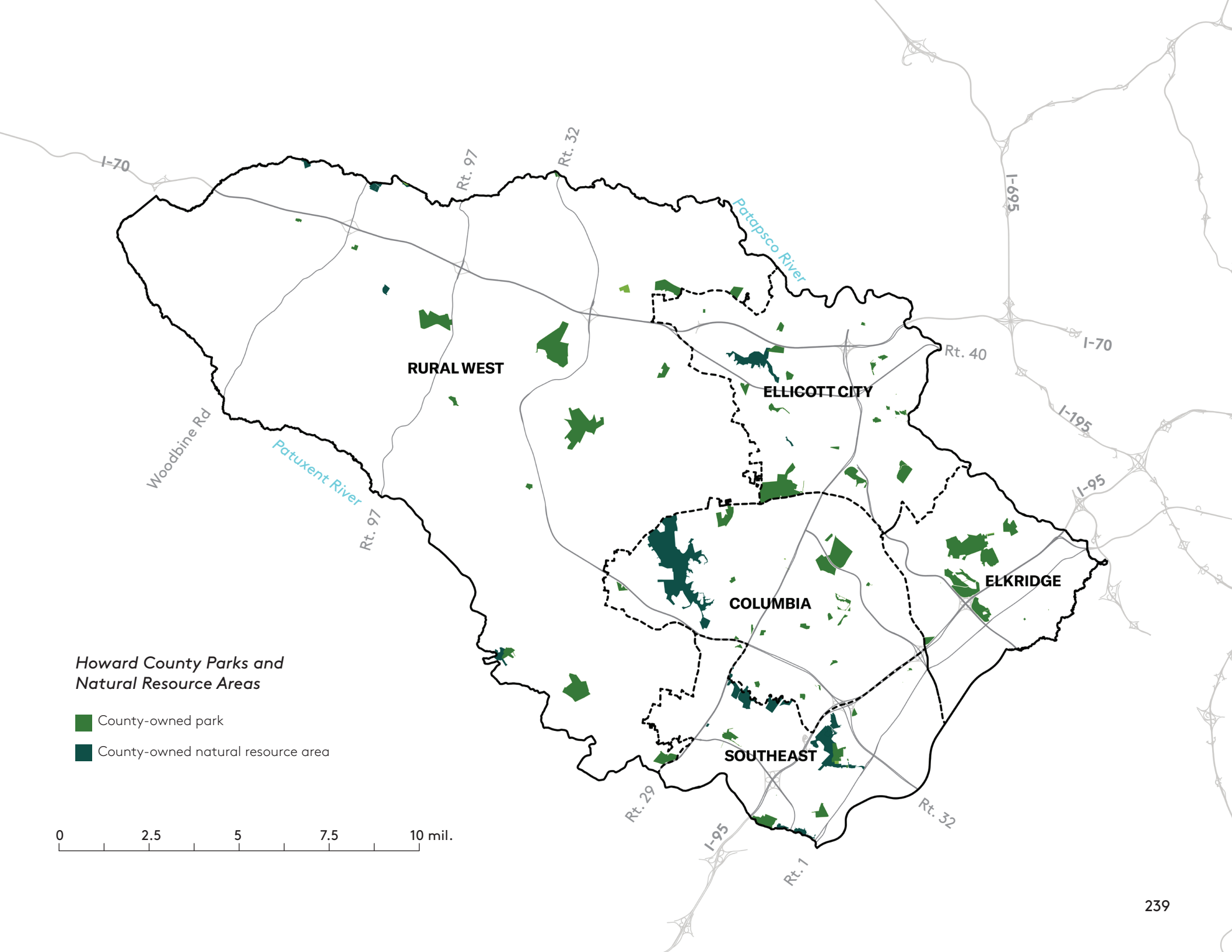
The County owns a total of 4,036 acres of open space within privately-owned subdivision developments.

COUNTY-OWNED PARKS

The following list identifies county-owned parks, their respective acreages, planning area, and the types of amenities offered within each park. This list is based on the County-led inventory taken in the summer of 2021.

The map at right also identifies all county-owned parks.

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Atholton Park	9.5	Columbia	9				3	4							2	
Bailey Park	0.6	Columbia	1												1	
Blandair Regional Park	298.1	Columbia	16	2				5		3	1				2	3
Cedar Lane Park	93.2	Columbia	34	4		4		4	2	12			2		2	4
Dickinson Park	10.7	Columbia	5	1		1							1		1	1
East Columbia Library Park	16.6	Columbia	3													3
Elkhorn Garden Plots	10.2	Columbia	0													
Elkhorn Park	10.1	Columbia	0													
Hawthorn Park	10.0	Columbia	3			1										2



*Howard County Parks and
Natural Resource Areas*

- County-owned park
- County-owned natural resource area

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Headquarters	0.0	Columbia	0													
Heritage Heights Park/ Clarks Glen Playground	19.6	Columbia	1												1	
Huntington Park	11.0	Columbia	5	1		1							1		1	1
Long Reach Garden Plots	4.4	Columbia	0													
Martin Road Park	6.0	Columbia	4			1							1		1	1
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	1021.0	Columbia	0													
Pratt Truss Bridge Historic Site	0.4	Columbia	0													
Pratt Truss Bridge/Murray Hill Stream	2.8	Columbia	0													
Robinson Nature Center	18.4	Columbia	0													
Rt. 29 Pedestrian Bridge	0.4	Columbia	0													
Sewells Orchard Park	25.3	Columbia	2									1			1	
West Side Garden Plots	10.0	Columbia	0													

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Belmont Manor and Historic Park	68.2	Elkridge	0													
Col. Anderson Memorial	0.2	Elkridge	0													
Drell Property	4.00	Elkridge	0													
Harwood Park	1.8	Elkridge	2										1		1	
Johnson Property	3.01	Elkridge	0													
Rockburn Branch Park	415.1	Elkridge	35	10		10		5	1		1		2		1	5
Timbers At Troy Golf Course	202.0	Elkridge	0													
Troy Park (Troy Park at Elkridge)	100.9	Elkridge	5												1	4
Waterloo Park	21.6	Elkridge	7	1		1		2					1		1	1
Willowwood Playground	0.1	Elkridge	1												1	
Allenford/ North Farm Park	18.8	Ellicott City	0													
B & O Railroad Museum	0.6	Ellicott City	0													
Centennial Park	337.5	Ellicott City	46	6	1	6		9	5	8		2	3		4	2

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Centennial Park Access Pathway	2.0	Ellicott City	0													
Cypressmede Park	20.8	Ellicott City	6	1		1		2					1		1	
David Force Community Park	36.9	Ellicott City	0													
David Force Stream Valley NRA	221.3	Ellicott City	0													
Dunloggin Park	7.2	Ellicott City	0													
Ellicott City Colored School House	13.8	Ellicott City	0													
Font Hill Park	26.2	Ellicott City	1									1				
Governors Run Playground	0.2	Ellicott City	1												1	
Granite Mansion (Heine Property)	5.88	Ellicott City	0													
Gwynn Acres NRA	10.3	Ellicott City	0													
Heritage Orientation Center (Little Court House)	0.0	Ellicott City	0													
Hollifield Station Park	4.4	Ellicott City	3	2		1										

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Howard County Center for the Arts/ Rockland Arts Center	12.7	Ellicott City	2												1	1
Kiwanis Wallas Hall and Park	25.2	Ellicott City	12			12										
Meadowbrook Park	84.2	Ellicott City	12	3		3		2					2		1	1
Old Firehouse Museum	0.0	Ellicott City	0													
Patapsco Female Institute	9.8	Ellicott City	0													
Roger Carter Community Center	2.0	Ellicott City	1											1		
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin	0.5	Ellicott City	0													
Tiber Park	0.1	Ellicott City	0													
Town and Country Park	13.0	Ellicott City	0													
Waverly Mansion	3.4	Ellicott City	0													
Worthington Dog Park	83.8	Ellicott City	0													
Alpha Ridge Park	109.1	Rural West	12	3		3		2							2	2
Benson Branch Park	340.6	Rural West	0													

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Carrs Mill NRA	20.2	Rural West	0													
Chaconas Property	19.1	Rural West	0													
Cole Property	25.22	Rural West	0													
Dayton Park	12.7	Rural West	9	2		2		2							1	2
Downey Property	3.47	Rural West	0													
Fulton South Area Park	71.7	Rural West	0													
Haviland Mill Park (Masback Property)	46.91	Rural West	0													
Haviland Mill Park (Salas Property)	6.05	Rural West	0													
Haviland Mill Park (Zirn/Collins Property)	38.06	Rural West	0													
Lisbon Park	9.3	Rural West	3					2							1	
Manor Woods Park	40.5	Rural West	0													
Patapsco Greenway (Houchens)	37.7	Rural West	0													
Patapsco Greenway (Lewis)	6.1	Rural West	0													

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Poplar Springs Park	7.1	Rural West	0													
Schooley Mill Park	192.1	Rural West	22	3		3		8	1	4			2		1	
South Branch Park	10.5	Rural West	2		1										1	
Warfields Pond Park	19.9	Rural West	10					2	1	4		1	1		1	
West Friendship Park	350.7	Rural West	0													
Western Regional Park	189.7	Rural West	29	5		5		8					2		3	6
Woodstock Park	45.1	Rural West	0													
Baldwin Commons Park	1.2	Southeast	0													
Bollman Truss Bridge	0.5	Southeast	0													
Cedar Villa Heights Park	3.0	Southeast	3					1					1		1	
Collins Property	5.0	Southeast	0													
Ganon-Bahl Property	3.22	Southeast	0													
Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA	227.7	Southeast	0													
Guilford Park	11.3	Southeast	7	1		1		2				1	1		1	

Park Name	Acres	Planning Area	Recreation Amenity Count	Ball Field	Skate Park	Fitness Circuit	Racquetball/ Handball	Tennis/ Pickleball	Volleyball	Lawn Games	Skills Park/ Challenge	Fishing/ Boat Ramp	Basketball	Swim	Playground	Multi-Purpose Field
Hammond Park	43.2	Southeast	11	1		1		8							1	
High Ridge Park	88.4	Southeast	3					1					1		1	
Holiday Hills Park	6.5	Southeast	4					1					2		1	
Lash Property	16.6	Southeast	0													
North Laurel Park and Community Center	40.3	Southeast	11	4	1	1		1					2		1	1
Patuxent Basin NRA	35.4	Southeast	0													
Pleasant Chase Playground	0.1	Southeast	1												1	
Savage Park	92.4	Southeast	24	5		5		4	2	4		1	2		1	
Teeter Property	2.5	Southeast	0													
Thompson Property	0.6	Southeast	0													
Wincopin Trails/Murray Hill Stream Valley	263.6	Southeast	0													
Wyndermere Playground	0.1	Southeast	1												1	
TOTAL	5779		369	55	3	63	3	75	12	35	2	7	29	1	44	40

HOWARD COUNTY HUNTING AREAS IN COUNTY PARKS + NATURAL AREAS

The following list identifies hunting areas that are owned by Howard County Recreation and Parks that are available for private use only.

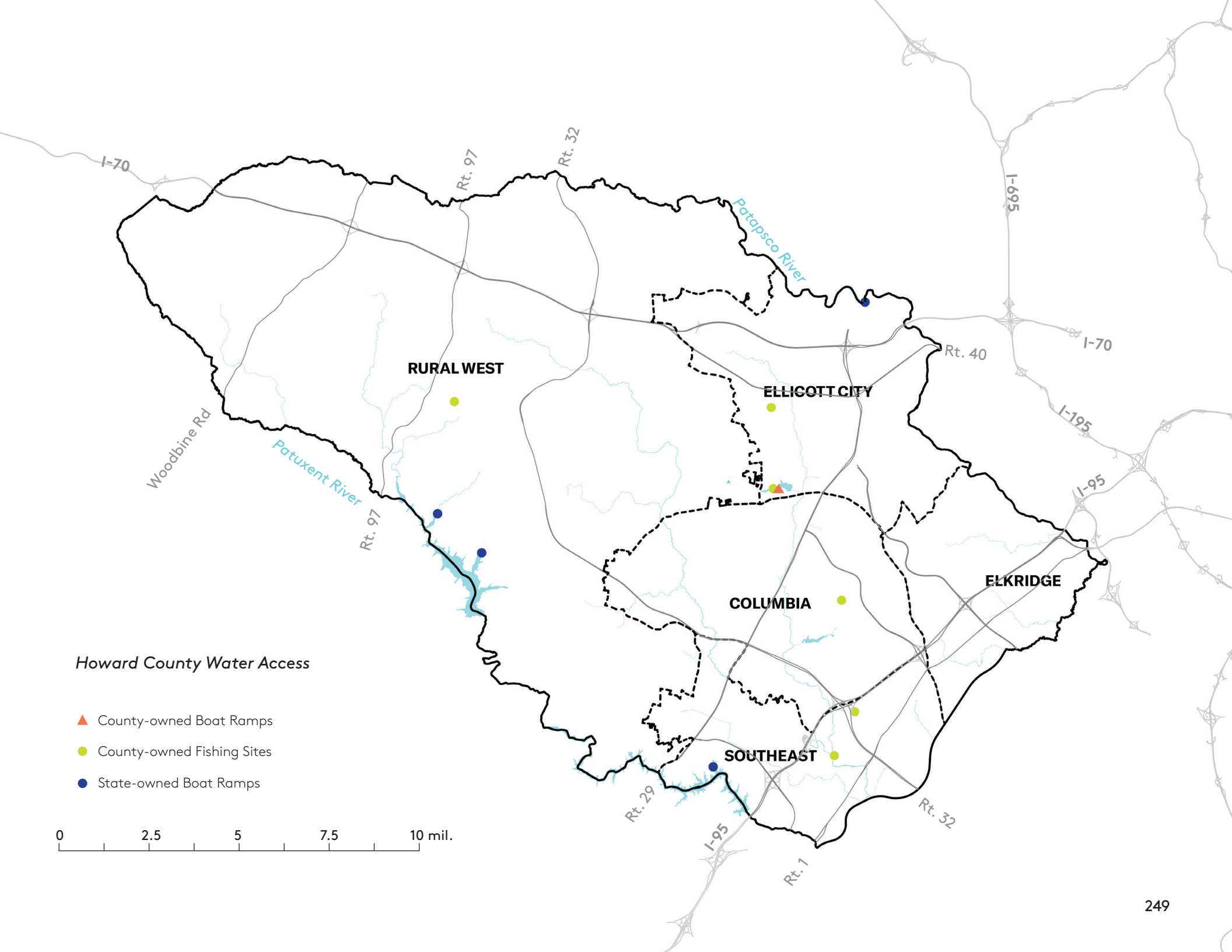
Park or Natural Area Name	Hunting Type	Use Type
Alpha Ridge Park	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
Blandair Park	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
High Ridge Park	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
Middle Patuxent Environmental Area	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
West Friendship	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
Wincopin Trails	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
Benson Branch	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE
Schooley Mill Park	Managed hunts 2021-22 season	PRIVATE

Park or Natural Area Name	Hunting Type	Use Type
Worthington Dog Park	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Timber At Troy	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Rockburn Branch Park	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Robinson Nature Center	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Dorsey Hall Open Space	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Blandair Park	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Belmont	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE
Alpha Ridge Landfill	Sharpshooting 2021-22 Season	PRIVATE

HOWARD COUNTY WATER ACCESS: BOAT RAMPS + FISHING SITES

The following list identifies water access amenities that are owned by both Howard County Recreation and Parks as well as the State of Maryland.

Park Name	Planning Area	Amenity Type	Owner
Centennial Park	Ellicott City	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Warfield Pond Park	Rural West	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Savage Park	Southeast	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Guilford Park	Southeast	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Font Hill Park	Ellicott City	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Sewells Orchard Park	Columbia	Fishing Site	COUNTY
Centennial Park	Ellicott City	Boat Ramp	COUNTY
Scotts Cove Recreation Area	Southeast	Boat Ramp	STATE
Pig Tail Recreation Area	Rural West	Boat Ramp	STATE
Big Branch Recreation Area	Rural West	Boat Ramp	STATE
Daniels Area Soft Access	Ellicott City	Boat Ramp	STATE



Howard County Water Access

- ▲ County-owned Boat Ramps
- County-owned Fishing Sites
- State-owned Boat Ramps

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

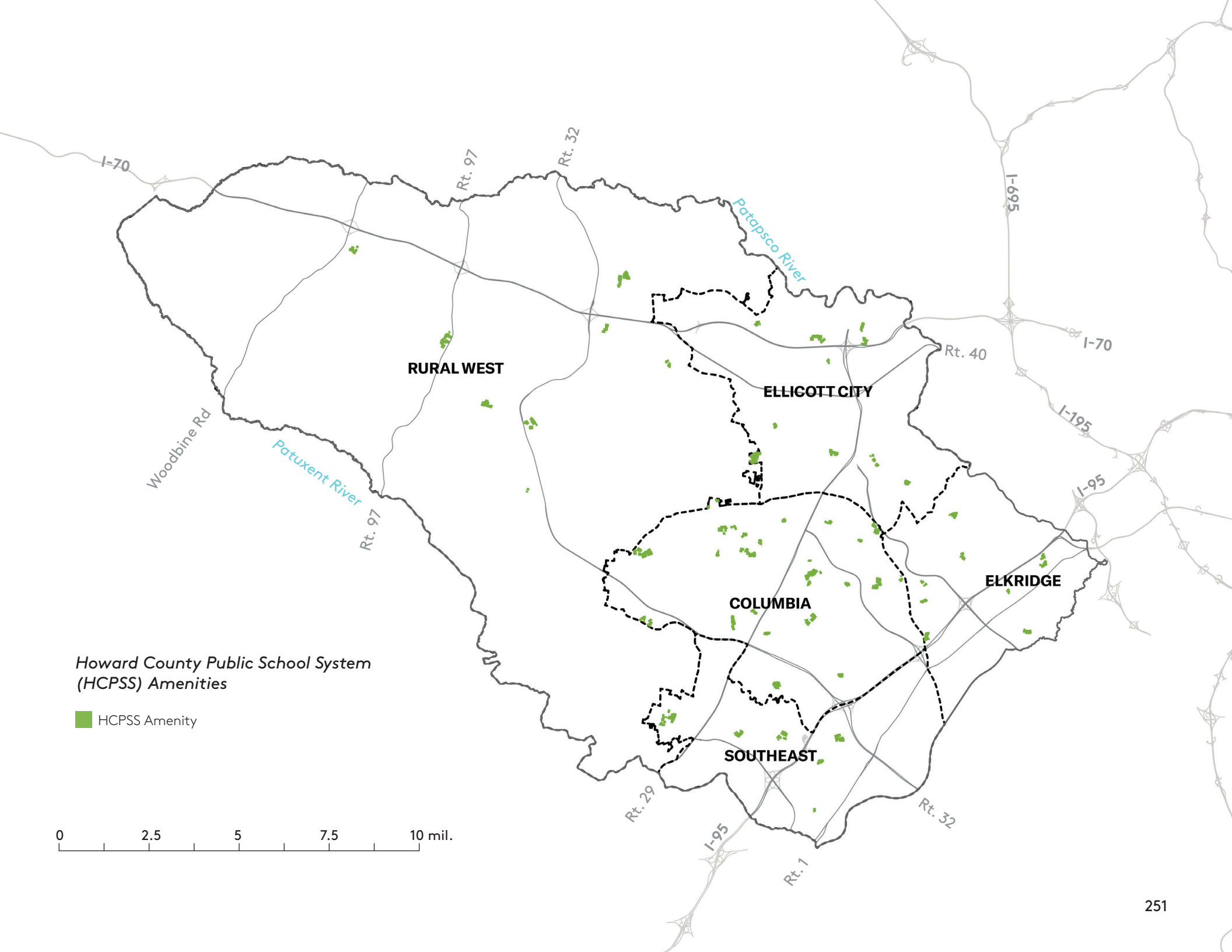
HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM (HCPSS) AMENITIES

The following list identifies amenities owned by the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) that Howard County Recreation and Parks uses and that contribute to the existing system.

The tables below list the school locations of these amenities, as well as their respective acreages. The map at right identifies these amenity locations.

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Baseball Field	Thomas Viaduct MS	1.13
Baseball Field	Waverly ES	0.66
Baseball Field	Patapsco MS	1.30
Baseball Field	Centennial HS	3.03
Baseball Field	Lisbon ES	0.96
Baseball Field	Lisbon ES	1.09
Baseball Field	Old Bushy Park	0.75
Baseball Field	Old Bushy Park	0.60
Baseball Field	Glenwood MS	0.65
Baseball Field	Glenwood MS	0.71
Baseball Field	Glenwood MS	0.69

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Baseball Field	Glenelg HS	1.40
Baseball Field	Glenelg HS	0.88
Baseball Field	West Friendship ES	1.29
Baseball Field	West Friendship ES	1.06
Baseball Field	Bushy Park ES	0.75
Baseball Field	Thomas Viaduct MS	1.14
Baseball Field	Bushy Park ES	0.75
Baseball Field	Veterans ES	0.67
Baseball Field	Wilde Lake HS	2.27
Baseball Field	Clemens Crossing ES	0.95
Baseball Field	Oakland Mills HS	2.26
Baseball Field	Oakland Mills HS	1.05
Baseball Field	Cradlerock ES	1.01
Baseball Field	Wilde Lake MS	0.98



Howard County Public School System
(HCPSS) Amenities

■ HCPSS Amenity

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Baseball Field	Cradlerock ES	1.40
Baseball Field	Long Reach HS	2.71
Baseball Field	Hammond HS	1.73
Baseball Field	Guilford ES	0.60
Baseball Field	Guilford ES	0.60
Baseball Field	Murray Hill MS	1.38
Baseball Field	Murray Hill MS	1.29
Baseball Field	River Hill HS	1.63
Baseball Field	Mt. Hebron HS	1.18
Baseball Field	Atholton HS	2.87
Baseball Field	Oakland Mills MS	0.74
Baseball Field	River Hill HS	2.92
Baseball Field	River Hill HS	1.21
Baseball Field	Reservoir HS	2.36
Baseball Field	Mount View MS	2.63
Baseball Field	Centennial Lane ES	0.66
Baseball Field	Patapsco MS	0.27
Baseball Field	Bryant Woods ES	0.26
Baseball Field	Atholton ES	0.33
Baseball Field	Clarksville ES	0.64

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Baseball Field	Folly Quarter MS	0.59
Baseball Field	Fulton ES	0.52
Baseball Field	Harper's Choice MS	0.41
Baseball Field	Howard HS	1.63
Baseball Field	Ilchester ES	0.65
Baseball Field	Lime Kiln MS	0.39
Baseball Field	Marriotts Ridge HS	0.22
Baseball Field	Northfield ES	0.49
Baseball Field	Phelps Luck ES	0.45
Baseball Field	Running Brook ES	0.41
Baseball Field	St. John's Lane ES	0.23
Baseball Field	Swansfield ES	0.39
Baseball Field	Stevens Forest ES	0.62
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Patapsco MS	0.37
Blacktop/Basketball Court	St. John's Lane ES	0.26
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Hollifield Station ES	0.32
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Waverly ES	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Ellicott Mills MS	0.41
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Dunloggin MS	0.88
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Burleigh Manor MS	0.46

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Folly Quarter MS	0.44
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Triadelphia Ridge ES	0.33
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Lisbon ES	0.26
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Manor Woods ES	0.34
Blacktop/Basketball Court	West Friendship ES	0.41
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Mount View MS	0.42
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Bushy Park ES	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	St. John's Lane ES	0.06
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Longfellow ES	0.18
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Harper's Choice MS	0.88
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Clemens Crossing ES	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Cradlerock ES	0.33
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Lake Elkhorn MS	0.43
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Stevens Forest ES	0.27
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Jeffers Hill ES	0.33
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Gorman Crossing ES	0.31
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Hammond ES/MS	0.64
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Hammond ES/MS	0.38
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Forest Ridge ES	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Murray Hill MS	0.30

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Bollman Bridge ES	0.29
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Patuxent Valley MS	0.42
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Lime Kiln MS	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Fulton ES	0.35
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Dayton Oaks ES	0.29
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Clarksville MS	0.36
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Worthington ES	0.29
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Ilchester ES	0.31
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Bonnie Branch MS	0.43
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Elkridge Landing MS	0.71
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Elkridge ES	0.35
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Rockburn ES	0.28
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Waterloo ES	0.30
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Mayfield Woods MS	0.42
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Laurel Woods ES	0.26
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Veterans ES	0.32
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Atholton ES	0.27
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Laurel Woods ES	0.11
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Mt. Hebron HS	0.21
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Centennial HS	0.25

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Howard HS	0.40
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Long Reach HS	0.39
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Oakland Mills MS	0.55
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Clarksville ES	0.48
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Ilchester ES	0.12
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Northfield ES	0.29
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Glenwood MS	0.75
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Deep Run ES	0.31
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Bellows Spring ES	0.32
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Centennial Lane ES	0.18
Blacktop/Basketball Court	St. John's Lane ES	0.10
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Pointers Run ES	0.23
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Stevens Forest ES	0.25
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Thunder Hill ES	0.41
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Thunder Hill ES	0.07
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Bryant Woods ES	0.25
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Running Brook ES	0.40
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Swansfield ES	0.54
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Guilford ES	0.54
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Marriotts Ridge HS	0.38

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Phelps Luck ES	0.20
Blacktop/Basketball Court	River Hill HS	0.31
Blacktop/Basketball Court	River Hill HS	0.31
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Thomas Viaduct MS	0.06
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Thomas Viaduct MS	0.06
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Thomas Viaduct MS	0.06
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Hanover Hills ES	0.33
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Ducketts Lane ES	0.20
Blacktop/Basketball Court	Homewood Center	0.13
Cricket Pitch		1.15
Cricket Pitch	Murray Hill MS	1.31
Field Hockey	Glenelg HS	1.67
Field Hockey	Long Reach HS	1.42
Field Hockey	Hammond HS	1.18
Field Hockey	Reservoir HS	1.26
Field Hockey	Centennial HS	3.18
Field Hockey	Wilde Lake HS	1.02
Field Hockey	Atholton HS	1.34
Field Hockey	Howard HS	0.43
Field Hockey	Marriotts Ridge HS	1.06

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Field Hockey	Mt. Hebron HS	1.19
Field Hockey	Oakland Mills HS	1.36
Field Hockey	River Hill HS	1.63
Grassy Area	Bonnie Branch MS	0.50
Grassy Area	Burleigh Manor MS	0.48
Grassy Area	Centennial HS	0.49
Grassy Area	Clarksville MS	0.70
Grassy Area	Dunloggin MS	0.20
Grassy Area	Hammond HS	0.50
Grassy Area	Harper's Choice MS	0.47
Grassy Area	Lime Kiln MS	0.06
Grassy Area	Mount View MS	0.43
Grassy Area	Patapsco MS	0.45
Grassy Area	Patuxent Valley MS	0.29
Grassy Area	Bryant Woods ES	0.26
Grassy Area	Bushy Park ES	0.68
Grassy Area	Cradlerock ES	0.76
Grassy Area	Deep Run ES	0.13
Grassy Area	Elkridge ES	0.24
Grassy Area	Faulkner Ridge Center	0.65

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Grassy Area	Faulkner Ridge Center	1.13
Grassy Area	Faulkner Ridge Center	0.50
Grassy Area	Forest Ridge ES	0.33
Grassy Area	Fulton ES	0.46
Grassy Area	Guilford ES	0.74
Grassy Area	Hammond ES/MS	0.24
Grassy Area	Ilchester ES	0.41
Grassy Area	Jeffers Hill ES	0.14
Grassy Area	Laurel Woods ES	0.14
Grassy Area	Lisbon ES	0.46
Grassy Area	Manor Woods ES	0.21
Grassy Area	Northfield ES	0.10
Grassy Area	Bollman Bridge ES	0.48
Grassy Area	Pointers Run ES	0.16
Grassy Area	St. John's Lane ES	0.06
Grassy Area	Swansfield ES	0.12
Grassy Area	Thunder Hill ES	0.17
Grassy Area	Triadelphia Ridge ES	0.58
Grassy Area	Veterans ES	0.12
Grassy Area	Waverly ES	0.08

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Grassy Area	Worthington ES	0.13
Grassy Field	Centennial Lane ES	0.46
Lacrosse Field	Long Reach HS	1.27
Lacrosse Field	Howard HS	1.37
Lacrosse Field	Reservoir HS	1.37
Lacrosse Field	Folly Quarter MS	1.52
Lacrosse Field	Ellicott Mills MS	0.69
Lacrosse Field	Glenwood MS	1.49
Lacrosse Field	Harper's Choice MS	1.91
Lacrosse Field	Reservoir HS	0.82
Lacrosse Field	Marriotts Ridge HS	1.35
Lacrosse Field	Mt. Hebron HS	1.36
Lacrosse Field	Mt. Hebron HS	1.12
Lacrosse Field	Oakland Mills HS	1.37
Lacrosse Field	Patuxent Valley MS	0.96
Lacrosse Field	River Hill HS	1.28
Lacrosse Field	Wilde Lake HS	1.25
Misc	ARL	1.04
Multipurpose Field	Mount View MS	1.38
Multipurpose Field	Long Reach HS	0.91

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Multipurpose Field	Elkridge Landing MS	1.18
Multipurpose Field	Bonnie Branch MS	1.48
Multipurpose Field	Patuxent Valley MS	0.98
Multipurpose Field	Burleigh Manor MS	3.97
Multipurpose Field	Clarksville MS	2.12
Multipurpose Field	Dunloggin MS	2.29
Multipurpose Field	Dunloggin MS	0.62
Multipurpose Field	Dunloggin MS	0.76
Multipurpose Field	Ellicott Mills MS	0.52
Multipurpose Field	Folly Quarter MS	1.55
Multipurpose Field	Glenwood MS	2.51
Multipurpose Field	Hammond HS	1.13
Multipurpose Field	Harper's Choice MS	1.58
Multipurpose Field	Lake Elkhorn MS	1.58
Multipurpose Field	Lime Kiln MS	1.35
Multipurpose Field	Mayfield Woods MS	0.79
Multipurpose Field	Mt. Hebron HS	1.38
Multipurpose Field	Murray Hill MS	0.86
Multipurpose Field	Oakland Mills MS	1.15
Multipurpose Field	Patapsco MS	1.30

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Multipurpose Field	Patuxent Valley MS	1.14
Multipurpose Field	River Hill HS	1.69
Multipurpose Field	Wilde Lake MS	1.86
Multipurpose Field	Thomas Viaduct MS	0.84
Multipurpose Field	Hollifield Station ES	0.40
Multipurpose Field	Cradlerock ES	1.64
Multipurpose Field	Guilford ES	1.53
Multipurpose Field	Gorman Crossing ES	0.62
Multipurpose Field	Deep Run ES	1.71
Multipurpose Field	Deep Run ES	1.32
Multipurpose Field	Bellows Spring ES	0.80
Multipurpose Field	Waverly ES	0.84
Multipurpose Field	Bryant Woods ES	1.11
Multipurpose Field	Running Brook ES	0.82
Multipurpose Field	Lisbon ES	1.65
Multipurpose Field	Veterans ES	0.87
Multipurpose Field	Atholton ES	0.44
Multipurpose Field	Bushy Park ES	1.13
Multipurpose Field	Centennial Lane ES	1.07

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Multipurpose Field	Clarksville ES	0.71
Multipurpose Field	Elkridge ES	1.17
Multipurpose Field	Forest Ridge ES	1.28
Multipurpose Field	Fulton ES	0.99
Multipurpose Field	Hammond ES/MS	2.01
Multipurpose Field	Hollifield Station ES	2.57
Multipurpose Field	Homewood	1.53
Multipurpose Field	Ilchester ES	0.98
Multipurpose Field	Longfellow ES	0.46
Multipurpose Field	Longfellow ES	0.25
Multipurpose Field	Manor Woods ES	0.84
Multipurpose Field	Manor Woods ES	0.85
Multipurpose Field	Northfield ES	0.70
Multipurpose Field	Old Bushy Park	2.13
Multipurpose Field	Bollman Bridge ES	0.91
Multipurpose Field	Phelps Luck ES	0.30
Multipurpose Field	Phelps Luck ES	0.37
Multipurpose Field	Pointers Run ES	0.92
Multipurpose Field	St. John's Lane ES	0.15

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Multipurpose Field	Stevens Forest ES	0.36
Multipurpose Field	Swansfield ES	0.47
Multipurpose Field	Talbott Springs ES	0.66
Multipurpose Field	Thunder Hill ES	0.40
Multipurpose Field	Triadelphia Ridge ES	1.53
Multipurpose Field	Triadelphia Ridge ES	1.59
Multipurpose Field	Waterloo ES	1.02
Multipurpose Field	West Friendship ES	0.93
Multipurpose Field	Worthington ES	0.81
Multipurpose Field	Worthington ES	1.24
Multipurpose Field	Clemens Crossing ES	0.47
Multipurpose Field	Hanover Hills ES	0.99
Multipurpose Field	Ducketts Lane ES	0.89
Playground	Patuxent Valley MS	0.08
Playground	Lake Elkhorn MS	0.06
Playground	Lake Elkhorn MS	0.03
Playground	West Friendship ES	0.18
Playground	Pointers Run ES	0.09
Playground	Triadelphia Ridge ES	0.08

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Playground	Jeffers Hill ES	0.14
Playground	Stevens Forest ES	0.09
Playground	Phelps Luck ES	0.05
Playground	Dayton Oaks ES	0.13
Playground	Deep Run ES	0.09
Playground	Elkridge ES	0.10
Playground	Waterloo ES	0.08
Playground	Bellows Spring ES	0.08
Playground	Worthington ES	0.05
Playground	Forest Ridge ES	0.07
Playground	Gorman Crossing ES	0.08
Playground	Centennial Lane ES	0.07
Playground	Manor Woods ES	0.10
Playground	Northfield ES	0.08
Playground	Northfield ES	0.03
Playground	St. John's Lane ES	0.06
Playground	St. John's Lane ES	0.04
Playground	Waverly ES	0.10
Playground	Bushy Park ES	0.13

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Playground	Clarksville ES	0.07
Playground	Clarksville ES	0.06
Playground	Fulton ES	0.07
Playground	Thunder Hill ES	0.08
Playground	Thunder Hill ES	0.04
Playground	Bryant Woods ES	0.04
Playground	Bryant Woods ES	0.10
Playground	Longfellow ES	0.06
Playground	Running Brook ES	0.11
Playground	Swansfield ES	0.08
Playground	Swansfield ES	0.03
Playground	Guilford ES	0.10
Playground	Guilford ES	0.03
Playground	Lisbon ES	0.10
Playground	Lisbon ES	0.05
Playground	Veterans ES	0.12
Playground	Laurel Woods ES	0.10
Playground	Atholton ES	0.09
Playground	Clemens Crossing ES	0.14
Playground	Atholton ES	0.04

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Playground	Bellows Spring ES	0.04
Playground	Bollman Bridge ES	0.05
Playground	Hanover Hills ES	0.10
Playground	Hanover Hills ES	0.10
Playground	Bushy Park ES	0.07
Playground	Centennial Lane ES	0.04
Playground	Dayton Oaks ES	0.06
Playground	Deep Run ES	0.02
Playground	Ducketts Lane ES	0.15
Playground	Ducketts Lane ES	0.06
Playground	Fulton ES	0.07
Playground	Gorman Crossing ES	0.03
Playground	Hammond ES	0.05
Playground	Hollifield Station ES	0.03
Playground	Hollifield Station ES	0.08
Playground	Ilchester ES	0.04
Playground	Laurel Woods ES	0.03
Playground	Longfellow ES	0.03
Playground	Phelps Luck ES	0.03
Playground	Pointers Run ES	0.04

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Playground	Rockburn ES	0.06
Playground	Rockburn ES	0.02
Playground	Running Brook ES	0.03
Playground	Triadelphia Ridge ES	0.05
Playground	Veterans ES	0.12
Playground	Waterloo ES	0.04
Playground	Waverly ES	0.03
Playground	Worthington ES	0.04
Soccer Field	Long Reach HS	1.67
Soccer Field	Wilde Lake HS	1.68
Soccer Field	Marriotts Ridge HS	1.64
Soccer Field	Burleigh Manor MS	1.77
Soccer Field	Folly Quarter MS	0.94
Soccer Field	Harper's Choice MS	2.09
Soccer Field	Lime Kiln MS	0.53
Soccer Field	Mayfield Woods MS	0.63
Soccer Field	Mt. Hebron HS	1.00
Soccer Field	Oakland Mills HS	0.96
Soccer Field	Oakland Mills MS	2.02
Soccer Field	Patapsco MS	1.16

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Soccer Field	Patuxent Valley MS	1.06
Soccer Field	River Hill HS	0.63
Soccer Field	Thomas Viaduct MS	1.26
Soccer Field	Bryant Woods ES	0.47
Soccer Field	Rockburn ES	1.18
Soccer Field	West Friendship ES	1.33
Soccer Field	Stevens Forest ES	0.30
Soccer Field	Atholton ES	0.46
Soccer Field	Centennial Lane ES	0.64
Soccer Field	Clemens Crossing ES	0.51
Soccer Field	Elkridge ES	0.75
Soccer Field	Faulkner Ridge Center	0.96
Soccer Field	Hammond ES/MS	1.36
Soccer Field	Jeffers Hill ES	1.05
Soccer Field	Longfellow ES	0.37
Soccer Field	Thunder Hill ES	0.63
Softball Field	Centennial HS	0.62
Softball Field	Centennial HS	0.88
Softball Field	Burleigh Manor MS	1.73
Softball Field	Glenelg HS	0.93

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Softball Field	Glenelg HS	0.96
Softball Field	Mount View MS	0.86
Softball Field	Mount View MS	0.85
Softball Field	Wilde Lake MS	1.55
Softball Field	Hammond HS	0.95
Softball Field	River Hill HS	1.00
Softball Field	Bonnie Branch MS	1.15
Softball Field	Elkridge Landing MS	1.76
Softball Field	Elkridge Landing MS	1.87
Softball Field	Long Reach HS	0.90
Softball Field	Atholton HS	0.94
Softball Field	Howard HS	0.70
Softball Field	Reservoir HS	0.53
Softball Field	Mt. Hebron HS	0.99
Softball Field	Mayfield Woods MS	0.33
Softball Field	Mayfield Woods MS	0.31
Softball Field	Patuxent Valley MS	0.56
Softball Field	Patuxent Valley MS	0.80
Softball Field	Clarksville MS	0.52
Softball Field	Clarksville MS	0.44

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Softball Field	Harper's Choice MS	0.44
Softball Field	Lake Elkhorn MS	0.72
Softball Field	Lake Elkhorn MS	0.92
Softball Field	Marriotts Ridge HS	0.20
Softball Field	Reservoir HS	0.15
Softball Field	Waverly ES	0.57
Softball Field	Hollifield Station ES	0.69
Softball Field	Lisbon ES	0.86
Softball Field	Thunder Hill ES	0.20
Softball Field	Clemens Crossing ES	1.01
Softball Field	Hammond ES/MS	0.58
Softball Field	Hammond ES/MS	0.46
Softball Field	Hammond ES/MS	0.59
Softball Field	Hammond ES/MS	0.62
Softball Field	Forest Ridge ES	1.19
Softball Field	Pointers Run ES	0.22
Softball Field	Worthington ES	1.42
Softball Field	Deep Run ES	0.62
Softball Field	Bellows Spring ES	0.46
Softball Field	Deep Run ES	1.85

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Softball Field	Rockburn ES	0.19
Softball Field	Rockburn ES	0.25
Softball Field	Running Brook ES	0.31
Softball Field	Atholton ES	0.36
Softball Field	Bollman Bridge ES	0.64
Softball Field	Clarksville ES	0.37
Softball Field	Elkridge ES	0.46
Softball Field	Elkridge ES	0.40
Softball Field	Forest Ridge ES	0.64
Softball Field	Jeffers Hill ES	0.61
Softball Field	Jeffers Hill ES	0.79
Softball Field	Manor Woods ES	0.56
Softball Field	Pointers Run ES	0.55
Softball Field	Swansfield ES	0.32
Softball Field	Triadelphia Ridge ES	0.57
Stadium	Howard HS	2.37
Stadium	Oakland Mills HS	2.37
Stadium	River Hill HS	2.57
Stadium	Wilde Lake HS	2.38
Stadium	Marriotts Ridge HS	2.52

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Stadium	Mt. Hebron HS	2.50
Stadium	Reservoir HS	2.52
Stadium Field	Long Reach HS	2.51
Stadium Field	Atholton HS	2.35
Stadium Field	Centennial HS	2.34
Stadium Field	Glenelg HS	2.25
Stadium Field	Hammond HS	2.36
Tennis Court	Centennial HS	0.61
Tennis Court	Glenelg HS	0.73
Tennis Court	Howard HS	0.57
Tennis Court	Howard HS	0.42
Tennis Court	Wilde Lake MS	0.54
Tennis Court	Atholton HS	0.46
Tennis Court	Oakland Mills HS	0.58
Tennis Court	Reservoir HS	0.86
Tennis Court	Long Reach HS	0.56
Tennis Court	Mt. Hebron HS	0.68
Tennis Court	Atholton HS	0.33
Tennis Court	Marriotts Ridge HS	0.85
Tennis Court	River Hill HS	0.84

Amenity Type	School Name	Acreage
Tennis Court	River Hill HS	0.31
Tennis Court	Lisbon ES	0.31
Tennis Court	Thunder Hill ES	0.29
Tennis Court	Atholton ES	0.30
Tennis Court	Hammond HS	0.58
Tennis Court	Atholton ES	0.09
Track	Wilde Lake HS	0.78
Track	Mt. Hebron HS	0.82
Track	Atholton HS	0.84
Track	Centennial HS	0.89
Track	Glenelg HS	0.81
Track	Hammond HS	0.88
Track	Howard HS	0.80
Track	Long Reach HS	1.01
Track	Oakland Mills HS	1.02
Track	River Hill HS	1.02
Track	Reservoir HS	1.05
Track	Marriotts Ridge HS	1.08
TOTAL ACREAGE		352.98

LOCAL SIMILAR PROVIDERS

The following list identifies local similar providers to Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks.

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
12 Labours CrossFit	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
American Fitness Express	RURAL WEST	PRIVATE		X									
Atholton Swim Club	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE						X					
Ballet Mobile Howard County Center for the Arts	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE										X	
Brickhouse Cardio Club	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE		X									
Bryant Woods	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Camp Attaway	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE							X				
Cattail Creek Country Club	RURAL WEST	HOA		X	X	X		X					
Central Maryland Youth Ballet	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE										X	
Champions Sport Academy	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X				X		
Childtime of Columbia	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Chiseled Life Gym	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X			X						
Clary's Forest Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Clemens Crossing Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Colosseum Gym	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Columbia Art Center	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION										X	
Columbia Athletic Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION		X				X					
Columbia Center for the Theatrical Arts	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE										X	
Columbia Dog Park	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
Columbia Gateway KinderCare	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						
Columbia Gym	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION		X				X					
Columbia Skate Park	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X								X		
Columbia Sports Park	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X								X		
Columbia Swim Center	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Coreworks Fitness at Maple Lawn	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Dickinson Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Dorsey Hall Swim Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Elite Boxing and Fitness	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Elkridge Athletic Club	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE		X									
Ellicott City Health and Fitness	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE		X									
Extra Innings Elk Ridge	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE									X		
F45 Training	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Fairway Hills Golf Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION			X								
Fairway Hills Pool	COLUMBIA	HOA						X					
Faulkner Ridge Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Fit4Mom	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Fitness 19	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE		X									
Forest Hill Swim & Tennis Club	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE				X		X					
Goldfish Swim School	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE						X					
Growing Stems Childcare	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE					X						
Hawthorn Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Hickory Ridge KinderCare	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						
Hobbit's Glen Golf Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION			X								
Home4Kidz	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						
Hopewell Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Huntington Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Jackson Pond	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
Jeffer's Hill Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Joy in Learning	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						
Kendall Ridge Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Kennedy Gardens	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
Kiddie Academy of Columbia	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE					X						
KidSpace	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION					X						
Kinetics Dance Theatre Inc.	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE										X	
Lake Elkhorn Park	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
Lake Kittamaqundi	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Laurel KinderCare	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE					X						
Laurel Knowledge Beginnings	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE					X						
Laurel Roller Skating Center	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE									X		
LeCheval Stable	RURAL WEST	PRIVATE								X			
LifeTime Columbia	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Locust Park Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Long Reach Tennis Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION				X							
Longfellow Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Macgills Common Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Maple Lawn Community Center	RURAL WEST	HOA		X				X					X
Marshalee Drive KinderCare	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE					X						
Maryland Juniors Sports Center	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE									X		
Maximum Fitness 24/7 Jessup	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE		X									
MaxxFit Sports Performance	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X							X		
My Gym	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
North St John's Swim & Tennis Club	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE				X		X	X				
Orangetheory Fitness	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Owen Brown Community Center	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					X
Owen Brown Tennis Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION				X							
Phelps Luck Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Planet Fitness	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE		X									
Recharge Modern Health and Fitness	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE		X									
River Hill Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Running Brook Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Russet KinderCare	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE					X						
Savage Boys & Girls Club	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE									X		
Silhouette Stages	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE										X	
Soccerdome	SOUTHEAST	PRIVATE									X		
Soldierfit The Fort	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Sports World	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE									X		

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Sterling Stars Basketball Academy	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE									X		
Stevens Forest Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Supreme Sports Club	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION		X				X					
Suzuki Music School of Maryland	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE										X	
Swansfield Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Symphony Woods	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
SynergyFX	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
Talbott Springs Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Taylor Village Pool	ELLCOTT CITY	HOA						X					
The Little Gym	COLUMBIA	PRIVATE		X									
The Therapeutic & Recreational Riding	RURAL WEST	PRIVATE								X			
The Y in Ellicott City	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE		X			X	X					
Thunder Hill Pool	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION						X					
Turf Valley Golf Club	ELLCOTT CITY	HOA			X	X		X					
Vantage Point Park	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										

LOCATION	PLANNING AREA	OWNER	Park	Gym	Golf	Tennis	Child Care	Aquatics	Camp	Equestrian	Sports	Cultural/ Arts	Event
Volleyball House	ELLCOTT CITY	PRIVATE									X		
Watermont Swim Club	ELKRIDGE	PRIVATE						X					
Wilde Lake	COLUMBIA	COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION	X										
TOTALS			10	28	4	6	15	37	2	2	12	7	2

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACES: COLUMBIA

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces and their respective acreages within the planning area of Columbia. The map at the end of this section also identifies all county-owned open spaces for all planning areas.

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Arrow Head	1.279
Beech Creek	5.983
Brightview Columbia	1.52
Bryant Square	0.259
Bryce Overlook II	1.26
Caroline Estates	2.261
Carriage Hills	3.017
Cedar Manor	1.015
Cedar Acres	6.2177
Clarks Glen	19.983
Clarks Glen North	4.181
Clemens Square	3.18
Clenens Corner Rec 1 Area 1	0.1
Columbia Open Space	5.594
Cricket Creek	3.48

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Duggan Property	1.6358
Eckers Hollow	2.167
Enclave At River Hill	24.223
Enclave At Tierney Farm Phase 1	7.469
Gill Property	0.2634
Huntington South	3.489
Joseph's Courtyard	0.3016
Kings Meade	3.996
Laisla	0.984
Maple Side	10.8309
Owen Brown Estates	4.455
Owen Brown Woods	5.571
Owen Brown East	0.507
Owen Brown Woods	0.1377
Pass Property	0.6183
Patuxent Run	25.925
Preserve At River Hill	2.3334

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Rettger Property	10.313
River Hill Overlook	1.686
Scott Acres	4.807
Semon Property	0.5364
Sewells Orchard	0.244
Simpson Mill	9.38
Spring Lake Gardens	1.2492
The Boarman Estate	1.761
Towers Property	1.3649
Trotter Crossing	0.8316
Trotter Hills	1.258
Trotter Ridge	2.08
Trotter Wood	5.01
Vetick Property	0.166
Village Of Harpers Choice	0.007
Village Of River Hill	2.5848
Woodlot	26.879
TOTAL	

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACES: ELKRIDGE

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces and their respective acreages within the planning area of Elkridge. The map at the end of this section also identifies all county-owned open spaces for all planning areas.

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Abbey Field Estates	3.478
Amylynne Dorsey	0.97
Arborwoods	7.013
Belmont Station	6.463
Bonnie Brae	1.903
Bright Field	16.9489
Calvert Ridge	5.1268
Carter's Crossing	1.082
Cascade Overlook	14.51
Catterton Property	0.55
Claremont Overlook	24.0492
Crystal Springs Estates	4.513
Cypress Springs	10.1815
Deeprun \ Park \ Village	2.074
Dennis Preserve	8.994

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Dorsey Glen	0.9798
Dubin Property	6.16
Dunteachin Farm	10.607
Elkdale Glenn Property	0.2858
Elkhill	8.95
Elkridge Town Center	7.37
Elkridge Woods	1.586
Ema's Manor	0.0784
Enclave At Forest Park Open	5.12
Fisher Property	3.231
Fox Hunt Estates	0.6762
Furnaca Ave.	0.219
Glenmar	3.915
Glynchester Farm	6.663
Grovemont	11.2
Harwood	1.089
Hawk's Watch	0.693

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Hunt Country Estates	5.286
Hunters Ridge	7.809
Ilchester Woods	4.287
Ilchester Heights	1.928
Ilchester Hills	2.55
Ilchester Oaks	3.66
Ilchester Oaks II	0.644
Landing Meadow	2.58
Lyndwood Manor	4.9995
Marble Hill Development	1
Marbuck Estates	0.78
Marshalee Woods	17.9844
Marshalee Estates	0.735
Mayfield Manor	16.761
Meadow Land	2.403
Michael L Pfau Property	0.187
Montgomery Meadows	34.3102

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Nottingham Village	14.6116
Overlook At Blue Stream	12.7457
Owens Property	9.815
Patapsco Ridge	10.8787
Pine Ridge	2.432
Pine Acres	2.74
Rausch Property	2.58
Rebecca Dorsey	0.4361
Rockburn Township	22.618
Rockburn Estates	0.63
Rockburn Manor	1.303
Rockburn Run	2.6812
Rockburn View	7.984
Rsey Glen	1.2786
Samuel's Grant	11.934
Shady Lane Crossing	2.03985
Sherwood Crossing	4.657
Steven Curran Property	0.77
Strawberry Fields	11.437
Summer Haven	4.225

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Sunny Field Estates	7.276
Talbots Woods	2.396
Talbots Woods 2	4.045
The Bluffs At Whitetail Woods	0.29
The Wexley At 100	6.63
Thomas Purchase	0.029
Thompson`s Purchase	9.773
Tiber Woods	0.136
Travis Landing	0.406
Trotter's Knoll	6.225
Village Of Montgomery Run	3.467
Walter & Laverne Brown Property	0.5
White Tail Woods	0.81
Willowood	34.3639
Woodbrook	7.5
Woodcrest	5.352
Woodcrest 2	0.295
Woodland Park	10.587
Woodland Village	7.368

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACES: ELLICOTT CITY

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces and their respective acreages within the planning area of Ellicott City. The map at the end of this section also identifies all county-owned open spaces for all planning areas.

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Alta At Regency Crest	0.689
Amber Meadow	2.13
Angela Valley	1.853
Annapolis Station	0.421
Autumn Manor	10.637
Autumn Overlook	5.9896
Autumn River	37.1944
Autumn View	118.86
Bageant Property	1.572
Bedford Square	2.114
Bethany Brook	1.209
Bethany Woods	4.849
Bishop Property 1	0.435
Bishop Property 2	0.411
Blues Building 8085 Main Street	0.106

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Bluffs At Ellicott Mills	4.445
Bluffs At Pine Orchard	4.071
Bock Property	1.013
Bonnie Branch Overlook	5.88
Bonnie Branch Point	3.62
Bonnie Branch Woods	3.19
Boone Farm	6.334
Boone Subdivision	0.161
Bounty Vista	0.87
Brae Brooke	1.237
Brampton Hills	34.2
Brampton Hills West	2.813
Bridge Water	9.862
Brinkleigh	6.117
Brittany Manor	8.715
Brook View Estates	1.778
Brookfield	1.406
Burleigh Manor	57.868

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Cahill Overlook	0.3432
Caplans Property\Autumno	15.614
Carlee Manor	0.081
Centennial Lake	4.249
Centennial Lake Overlook	3.293
Centennial Lake Overlook Sec 2	10.18
Centennial Lake Overlook Sec. 2	0.483
Centennial Manor	35.29
Chatham	0.47
Chatham, Section 3	3.0187
Chestnut Crest	1.727
Chestnut Farm	5.987
Chestnut Ridge	0.952
Childs Property	0.7108
College Farm	3.27
Columbia Hills	1.98
Columbia Woodland /Woodland	2.504
Columbia Woodlands	0.8869

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Cornell Property	0.94
Costel Property	2.192
Daniels Mill Overlook	69.484
Dorsey Hall	172.987
Dunloggin 2	15.246
Dunloggin Square	0.103
Eagles Point Landing	0.932
Ellicott City Floodplain	0.22
Ellicott City Floodplain 1809 8113	0.119
Ellicott City Floodplain 8061 Main	0.1131
Ellicott City Floodplain 8069 Llc	0.0517
Ellicott City Floodplain 8095	0.064
Ellicott City Floodplain 8101	0.047
Ellicott City Floodplain Caplans	0.199
Ellicott Mills Overlook	8.98
Enchanted Forest Estates	21.924
Estates At Patapsco Park	74.86
Faad	4.585
Fairways	11.768
Feaga Property	3.395

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Fels Lane Open Space	0.509
Fincham Property	0.999
Floodplain Bean Hollow	0.045
Font Hill Village	4.016
Frederick Rd Floodplain	1
German Property	3.652
Gibson Property	1.0206
Glen Brook	7.96
Governors Run	54.605
Gray Rock Farm	56.2346
Green Briar Manor	0.246
Gtw S Waverly Woods	19.396
Gtw's Waverly Woods	6.503
Gwynn Acres	7.661
Harry Holiday Property	0.368
Hidden Valley	2.987
Hogg Property	9.864
Hollifield Estates	5.9098
Hollifield Estates 1	6.48
Hollifield Estates 2	1.73

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Hollifield Hills	5.657
Linwood	0.075
Little Patuxent Ridge	49.797
Long Gate Overlook	0.2458
Longgate\ Wheatfield	16.749
Maisel Tract	1.193
Makowski Property	0.857
Manors Of Oakwood	1.353
Martin Meadows	2.069
Mary Oaks	2.367
Mckenzie Discovery	15.115
Mckenzie Meadows	12.088
Meadowbrook	0.94124
Mill Towne Overlook	2.67
Montgomery Estates	4.411
Montgomery Knolls	0.351
Moon Shine Hollow	0.059
Mount Joy Farm	19.15689
Mt. Hebron	84.3004
New Cut Branch Property	0.112

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Nottingham Way Acres	4.541
Oak Hill	1.22
Oakwest	11.664
Old Mill Overlook	2.8073
Oldmill	1.273
Orchard Hill	4.229
Orchard Park	1.39
Palmer Hill 2	1.7948
Palmer Hill Property	1.035
Papillon	9.684
Patapsco Crossing	6.2899
Patuxent Valley Overlook	1.991
R Taylor Property	2.7555
Red Fox Estates	2.12
Red Hill Branch Overlook	2.878
Rich Glow Acres	3.215
Riverwalk At Patapsco Park	14.39
Rockland Square	2.157
Rockland At Rogers	24.5
Ruppert Property	3.607

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Saddle Ridge	1.286
Schneider Subdivision	1.5322
Sewells Property	0.239
Southview Rd	0.5773
St. John'S Green	3.7
Stone Manor	21.5335
Stonefield 2	0.35
Stricker Property	0.46
Taylor Farm	14.74
Taylor Property	1.974
The Overlook @ Centennial Park	2.151
The Woods Of Park Place	6.6899
Tiber Ridge	1.36202
Toliver Property	0.924
Tollhouse	21.448
Townhomes Of Timberland	23.862
Treyburn	15.41
Turfvalley Overlook	34.156
U.S. Rte. 29	2.3551
Valley Meade	0.771

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Valley Mede	0.891
Valleymeade	12.346
Walter Davis Property	1.15
Waverly Grove	0.569
Waverly Overlook	2.144
Waverly Woods	1.24
Westgate Woods	1.53
Westmount Phase 1	18.9161
Westmount Phase 2	16.3723
Westmount Phase 3	9.6094
Willows	10.28
Winter Oaks	3.044
Woodberry	3.005
Woods Of Tiber Branch	5.4944
Woods Of Tiber Branch 2	15.49651
Worthington Addition	1.31
Worthington Fields	34.98383
Worthington Reserve	23.227
Zanti Property	3.06

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACES: Rural West

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces and their respective acreages within the planning area of Rural West. The map at the end of this section also identifies all county-owned open spaces for all planning areas.

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Amberwoods	13.009
Ashleigh Green	2.514
Benson Branch Estates	12.247
Burleigh Manor	21.27
Cabin Branch Farm	23.106
Cabin Branch Farm	9.76
Carriage Mill Farm	26.61
Chaconas Property	19.086
Clarks Meadows	3.15
Crawford Subdivision	12.424
Eastern View	4.417
Edgewood Farm	40.84
Estates At Schooley Mill	24.575
Fairlane Farm Phase 1	36.705
Fox Chase Estates	7.7

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Fulton Manor	9.701
G Roscoe Property	0.778
Green Hill Manor	1.357
Guilford Rd & Sanner Rd Property	5.26
Heyn Property	4.02
Hunterbrook	9.661
Kalmia Farms	8.69
Lime Kiln Valley	9.77726
Lisbon Manor	2.139
Malcolm Property	2.091
Mckendree View	7.21
Mooresfield	9.57712
Paddocks East, The	25.78
Park Estates	1.64
Pindell Chase	3.349
Pindell Crossing	2.938
Prince Property	1.623
Riverwood	72.75

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Route 97 Forest Mitigation Bank	12.4772
Roxbury	28.163
Saddlebrook Farms	10.604
Saglimbeni Properties, LLC	4
The Chase	16.295
The Chase 2	2.505
The Estates At River Hill	20.48
The Preserve At Clarksville	42.44
The Woodland	4.674
Triadelphia Crossing	12.3
Vineyards At Cattail Creek	3.96
Wellington	7.094
Westcliff Manor	2.405
Westmount Phase 1	36
Willow Pond	4.788
Willowshire	13.797
Windy Knolls	12.99
Woodfords Grant	18.567

COUNTY-OWNED OPEN SPACES: Southeast

The following list identifies county-owned open spaces and their respective acreages within the planning area of Southeast. The map at the end of this section also identifies all county-owned open spaces for all planning areas.

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
A. H. Smith Property	11.1832
Aspenwood	1.511
Autumn Woods	4.206
Beechcrest Apartments	0.044
Blough Property	0.683
Bowling Brook Farm	33.792
Butterfield Grove	0.78
Cardinal Forest	3.251
Cedar Ridge	0.195
Cherry Creek	4.853
Cherry Creek Overlook	4.915
Cherry Tree Farm	32.026
Cherry Tree Park	4.7495
Cherrytree View	0.188
Curry Property	0.507

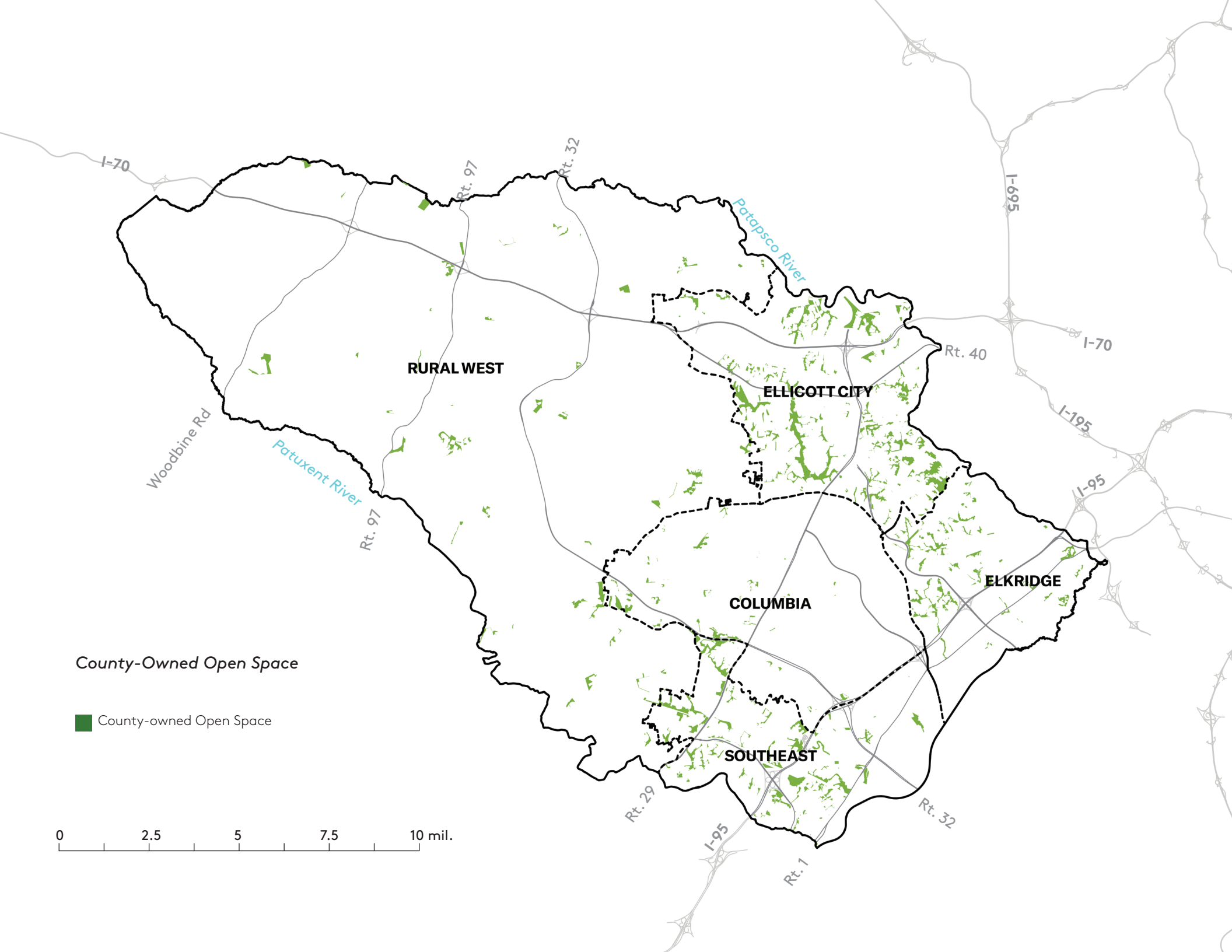
SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Dorsey Woods	31.818
Emerson	116.582
First Ridge	11.948
Forest	5.729
Fox Wood Manor	1.021
Free State	14.039
Garber Property	0.269
Gorman Woods	1.754
Graeloch Woods	0.444
Guilford Overlook	2.53
Hammond Village	8.251
Hammond Hills	12.27
Hammond Overlook	25.266
Hammond Hills	0.499
Hammond Park	3.816

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Hammond Village	0.041
Hammonds Promise	1.492
Hammonds View	0.4241
Harding Woods	6.25
Harmony Lane Housing	4.3
High Ridge Meadows	6.175
Holiday Hills	0.091
Honeysuckle Ridge	2.09
Hunters Creek Farm	14.34
Jamestown Landing	3.43
Kindler Overlook	3.603
Kindler Overlook 2	1.65
Kindler Overlook 3	6.61
Kings Woods	18.824
Kings Arms	3.24

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Kings Arms Sec 4	0.04
Lakeview	3.59
Larenas Property	0.1507
Laurel Park Station Phase 1	6.63
Leishear Knolls	2.013
Lilly Property II	0.203
Lilly'S Addition To Lakeview	3.112
Lyons Hill	1.053
Magnolia Manor	5.0545
Maple Lawn Fams	30.8933
Maple Lawn Farms	69.2207
Maple Lawn Farms (Westside)	17.4983
Maple Lawn Farms, Garden	17.2217
Maple Lawn South	20.25
Margaret Tillman	0.765
Montpelier Research Park	20.847
Morgans Landing	1.2127
Murray Hill	8.1573
North Ridge	3.228
North Laurel Park	1.692

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
Northgate Woods	1.221
Park Overlook	1.47
Parkside Estates	0.349
Patuxent Heights	4.358
Patuxent Springs	5.426
Patuxent Overlook	2.9
Patuxent Ridge	3.04
Reservoir Estates	2.735
Reservoir Overlook	15.96
Revitz Property	14.011
Riverside	11.372
Riverside Estates	16.7655
Riverside Overlook	17.793
Riverwalk	1.1135
Settlers Landing	2.177
Shank Property	1.129
Shipley Meadows	4.643
Stone Lake	21.1454
Storch Woods	6.04
Stratford Down's	1.089

SUBDIVISION	ACREAGE
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge	1.76
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 2	0.9843
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 3	0.41
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 4	1.373
The Hillside At Rocky Gorge 6	0.94
Twin Oaks	5.483
US 1 Joint Venture	1.39
Vil Hickory Ridge\Rivglen	17.684
Village King Contrivance	4.603
Village Of Cedar Ridge	46.75
Village Of Hickory Ridge	1.199
Village Of King Contrivance	4.624
Vine - Buch Apartments	2.0629
Warfields Range	1.0592
Warfields Range 2	1.207
Whiskey Bottom Point	0.078
Willows Of Rocky Gorge	5.999
Wincopia Farms	51.3829
Winterbrook	12.935
Wyndemere	25.739



County-Owned Open Space

County-owned Open Space

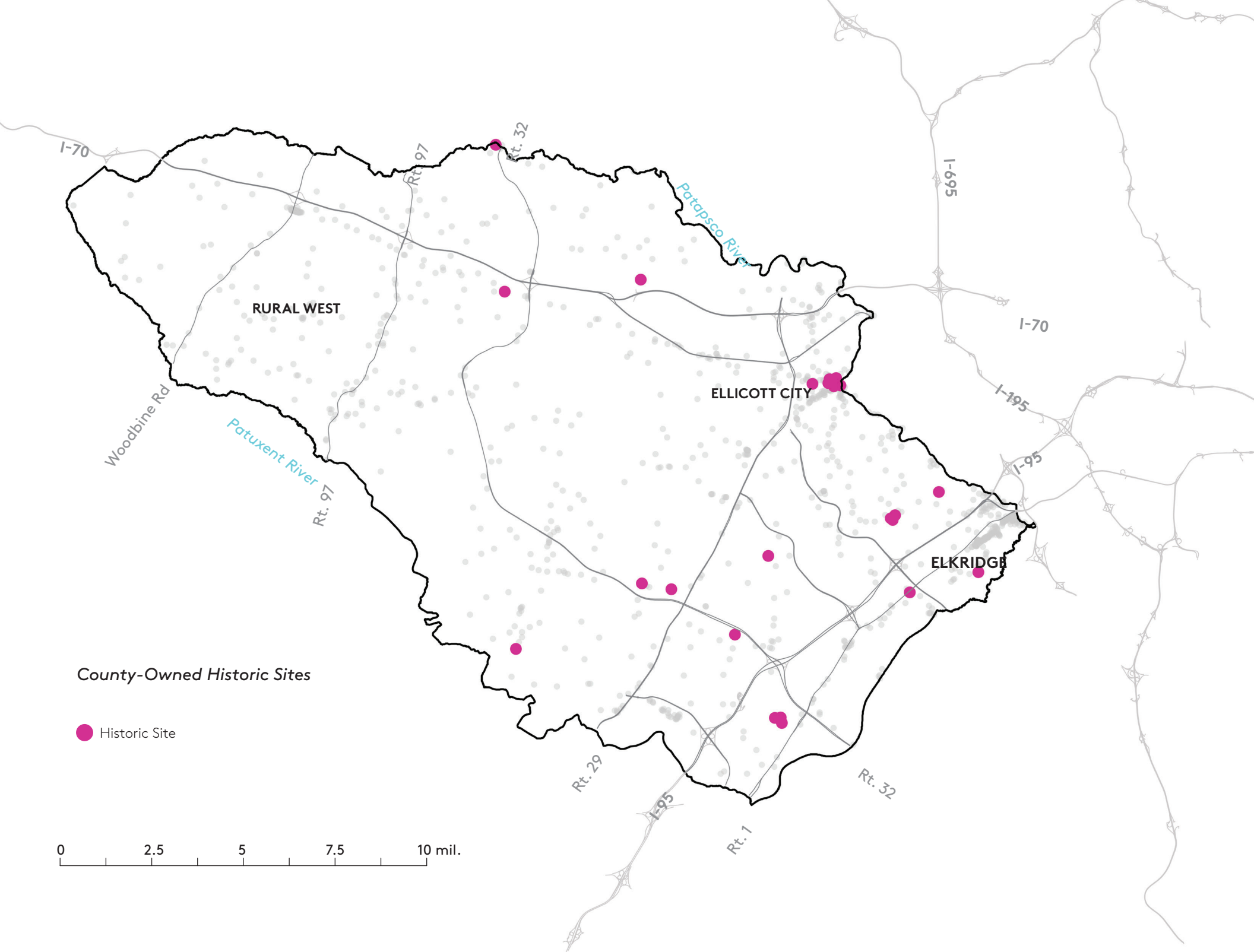
0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

COUNTY-OWNED HISTORIC SITES

The following list identifies county-owned historic sites.

Property	Total Acreage
B&O Ellicott City Station Museum	0.17
Belmont Manor and Historic Park	68.26
Blandair	28.36
Bollman Truss Bridge	0
Clover Hill	n/a
Doyle Spring House	n/a
Ellicott City Colored School, Restored	0.838
Firehouse Museum	0.04
Granite Mansion (Heine Property/Barnard Fort House)	5.56
Guilford Quarry Pratt Truss Bridge	n/a
Harriet Tubman Cultural Center (High School)	n/a
Hebb House	n/a
James Marlow House	n/a
James Sykes House	n/a
Lieutenant Colonel Ephraim Anderson Gravesite	n/a
McKenzie Bank Barn	n/a
Original Courthouse of the Historic District	n/a
Patapsco Female Institute	8.231
Pfeiffer's Corner School House	0.5854

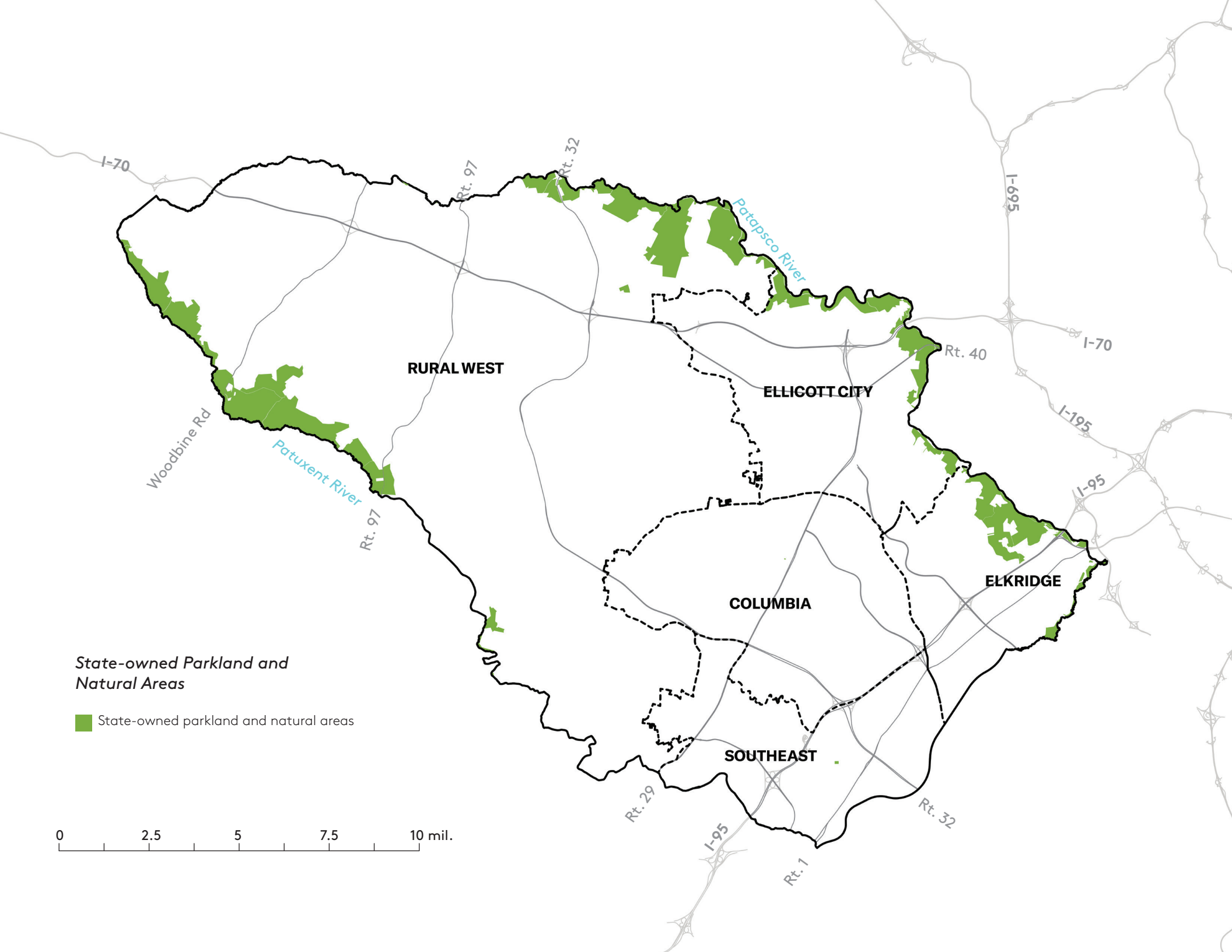
Property	Total Acreage
Poplar Springs Site	7.04
Ryan Property Well	n/a
Savage Hill Remainer Property	n/a
Savage Mill Dam Ruins	n/a
Simpsonville Mill Ruins	n/a
Thomas Isaac Log Cabin	0.16
Troy Hill Mansion	4.68
Waverly Mansion	3.44



STATE-OWNED PARKLAND AND NATURAL AREAS

The following list identifies state-owned open spaces, their respective acreages, and owners. All information was provided by the *Maryland Department of Natural Resources Current Acreage Report*. 2021

PARK/SPACE NAME	OWNER	ACREAGE
Patapsco Valley State Park	State of Maryland	5,480
Patuxent State Park	State of Maryland	3,500
Hugg-Thomas Wildlife Management Area (WMA)	State of Maryland	268



*State-owned Parkland and
Natural Areas*

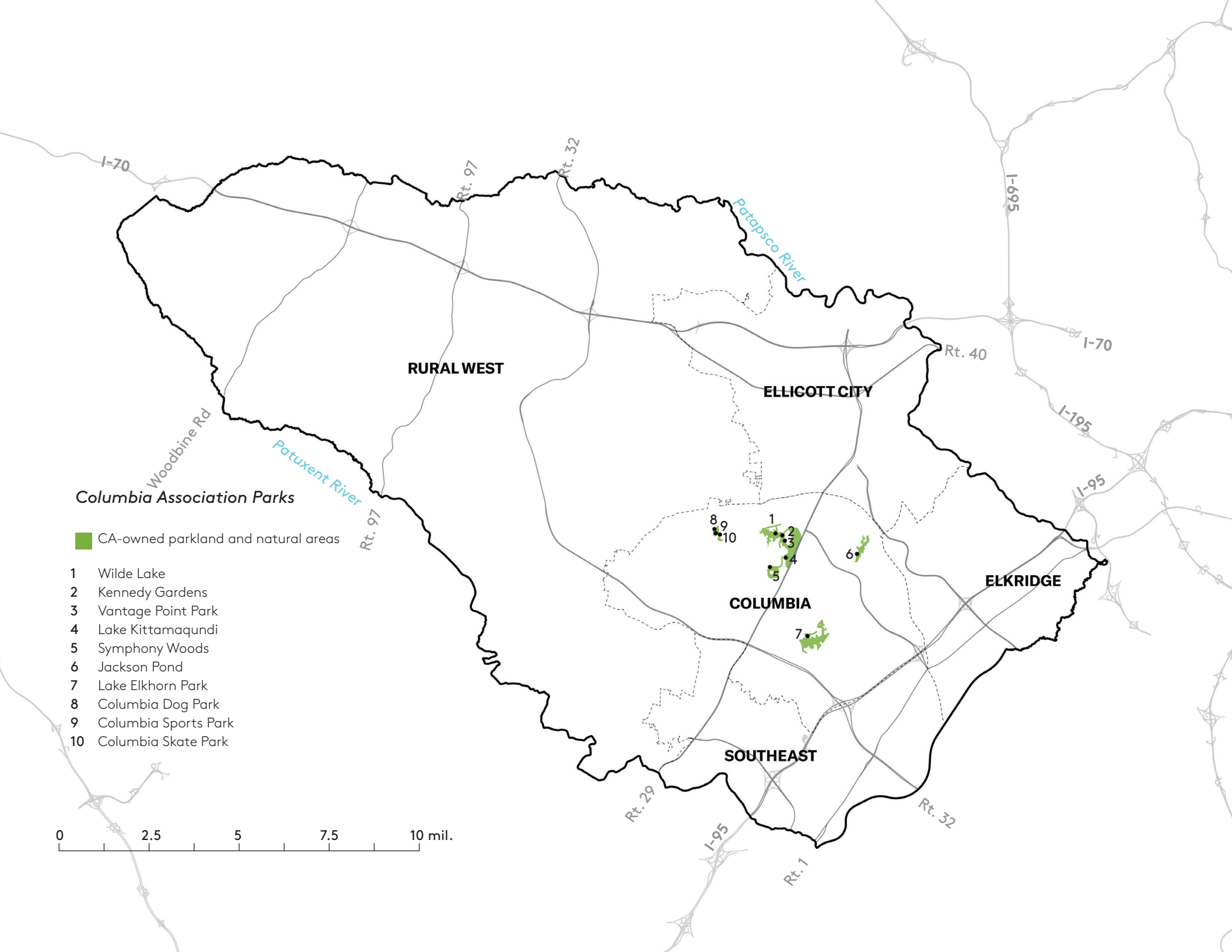
■ State-owned parkland and natural areas

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION PARKS

The Columbia Association (CA) owns and maintains the following ten parks:

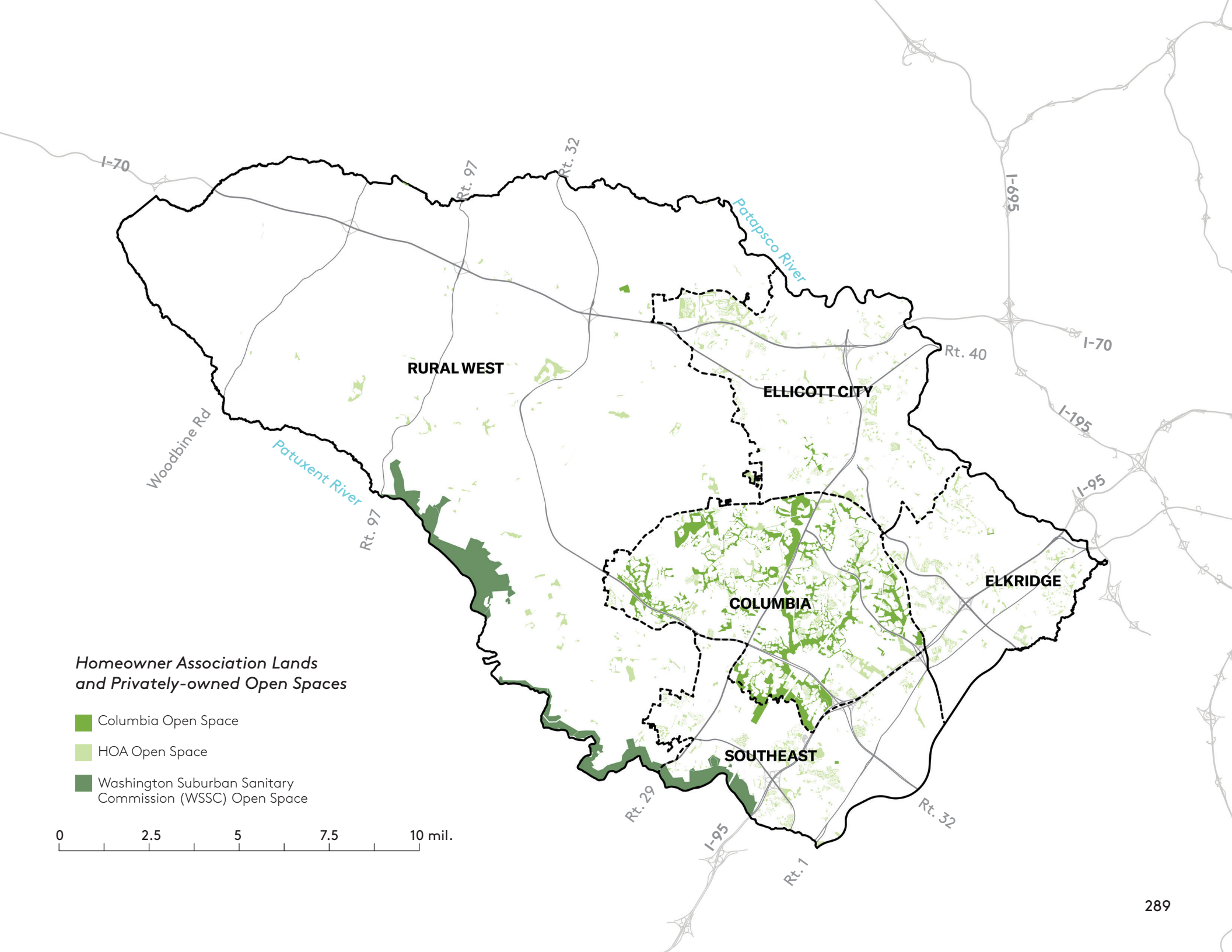
- » Wilde Lake
- » Kennedy Gardens
- » Vantage Point Park
- » Lake Kittamaqundi
- » Symphony Woods
- » Jackson Pond
- » Lake Elkhorn Park
- » Columbia Dog Park
- » Columbia Skate Park
- » Columbia Sports Park



HOMEOWNER ASSOCIATION
LANDS AND OTHER
PERMANENTLY PRESERVED
PRIVATE OPEN SPACES

Within the county, there is a total of approximately 10,557 acres of private open space. These lands consist of homeowner association lands and other permanently preserved private open spaces by the Columbia Association and by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC).

Owner	Total Acreage
Columbia Association	3,629
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)	3,213
Private HOA	3,715
TOTAL	10,557



*Homeowner Association Lands
and Privately-owned Open Spaces*

- Columbia Open Space
- HOA Open Space
- Washington Suburban Sanitary
Commission (WSSC) Open Space

0 2.5 5 7.5 10 mil.

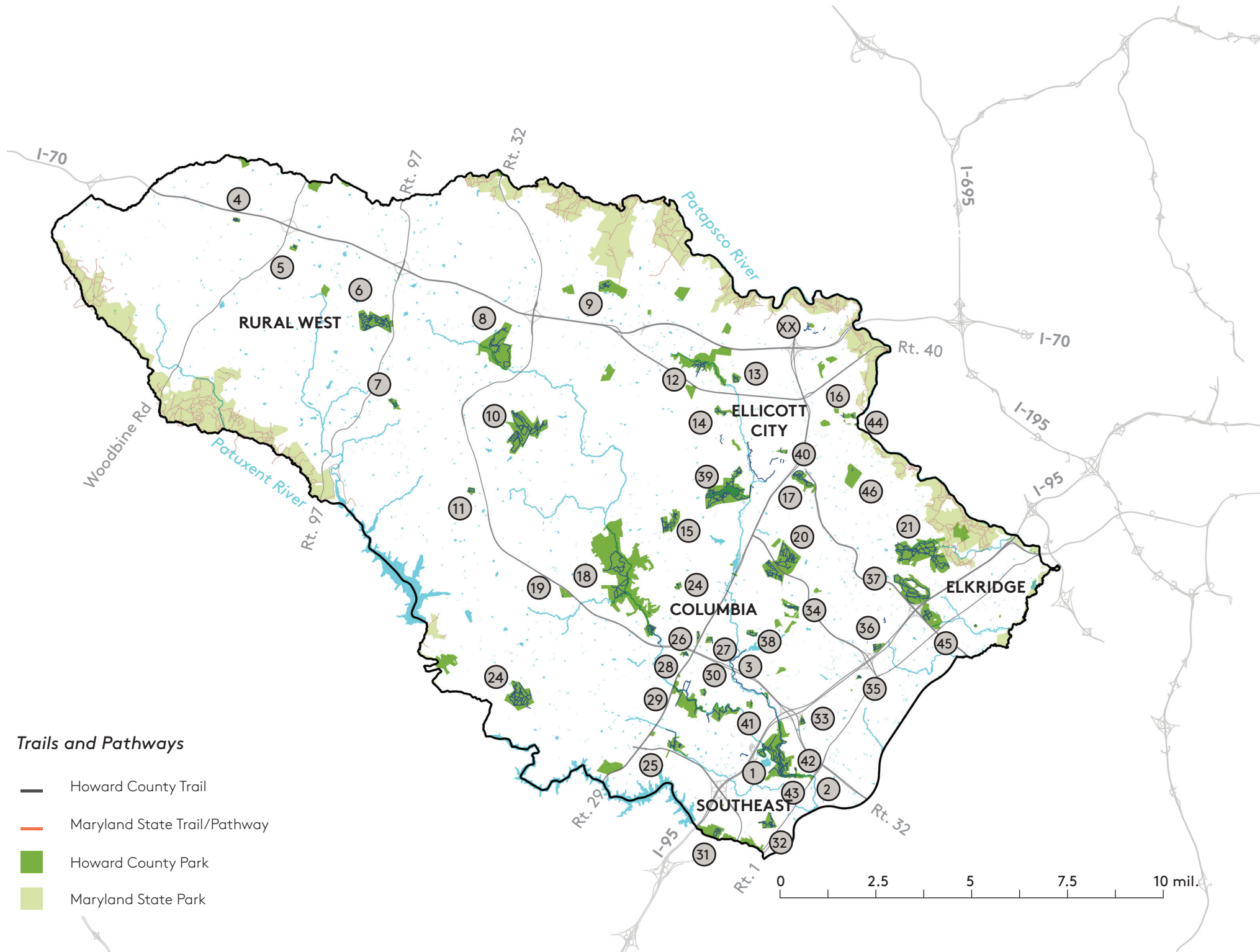
TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

The county trail system consists of trails and pathways within parks and open spaces maintained by the Department, Columbia Association pathways, and state trails within Maryland state parks. The county maintains a total of 112 miles of trails and pathways within County Parks, including three major trails: Patuxent Branch Trail (4.3 miles), Savage Mill Trail (1 mile), and Wincopin Trail (3.72 miles). The following chart and map highlight the trail system within County parks.

MAP NUM- BER	MAJOR TRAIL
1	Wincopin Trail
2	Savage Mill Trail
3	Patuxent Branch Trail

MAP NUM- BER	COUNTY PARK WITH TRAIL OR PATHWAY
4	Poplar Springs Park
5	Lisbon Park
6	Western Regional Park
7	Warfields Pond Park
8	West Friendship Park
9	Alpha Ridge Park
10	Benson Branch Park
11	Dayton Park
12	David Force Community Park
13	Cypressmede Park
14	Font Hill Park
15	Cedar Lane Park
16	Patapsco Female Institute
17	Meadowbrook Park
18	Middle Patuxent Environmental Area
19	Heritage Heights Park
20	Blandair Regional Park
21	Rockburn Branch Park
22	Hawthorn Park
23	Robinson Nature Center
24	Schooley Mill Park
25	Hammond Mill

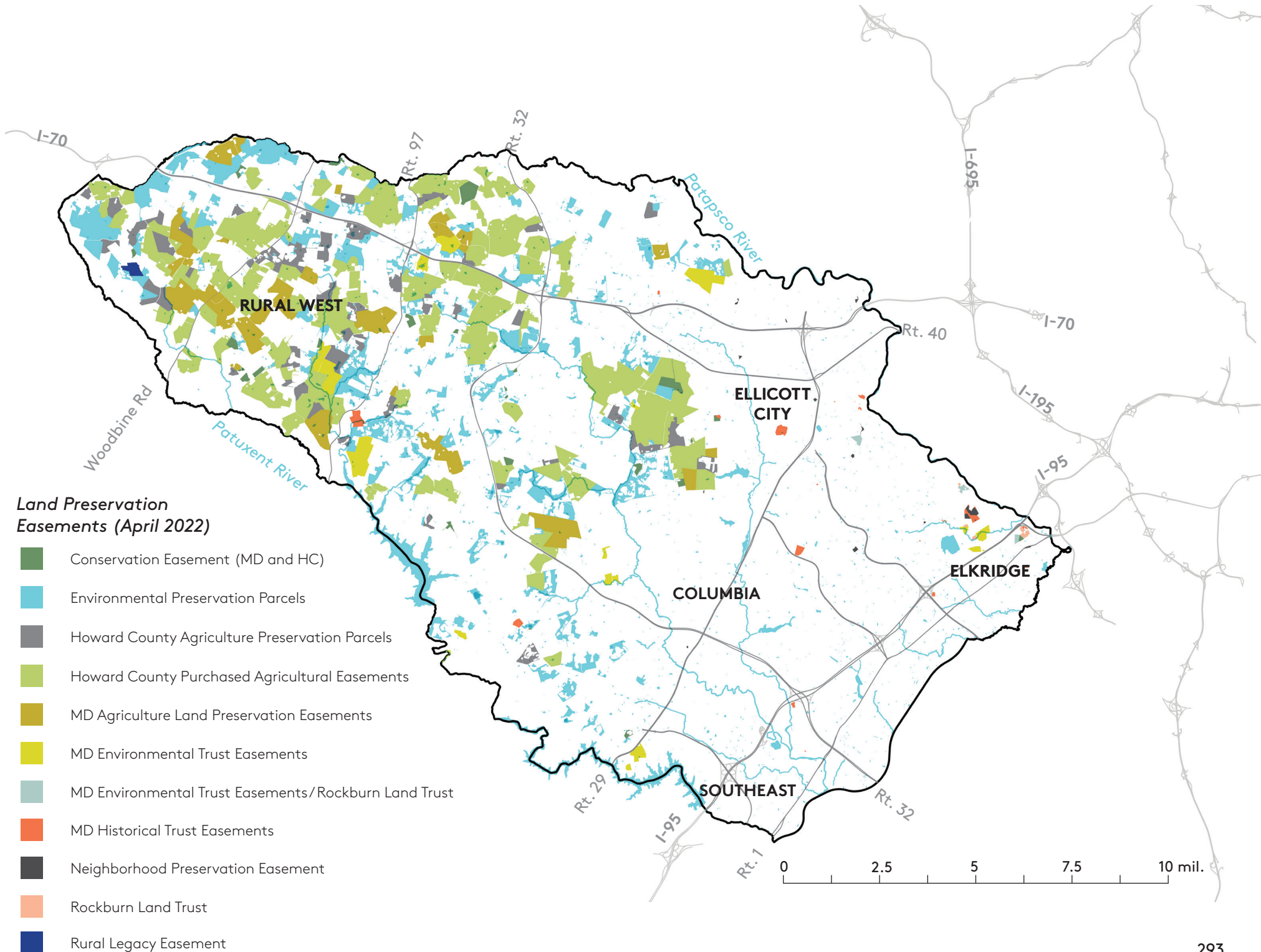
MAP NUM- BER	COUNTY PARK WITH TRAIL OR PATHWAY
26	Martin Road
27	Atholton Park
28	Holiday Hills Park
29	Gorman Stream Valley Park
30	Dickinson Park
31	High Ridge Park
32	North Laurel Park
33	Guildford Park
34	Sewells Orchard Park
35	Cedar Villa Heights Park
36	Waterloo Park
37	Timbers at Troy Golf Course
38	Harwood Park
39	Centennial Park
40	Dunloggin Park
41	Huntington Park
42	Baldwin Commons Park
43	Bollman Truss Bridge
44	Tiber Park
45	Troy Park
46	Worthington Dog Park



AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS

The county utilizes a variety of programs to purchase and preserve working agricultural land. Dedicated agricultural easements account for 3,024 acres in the county and purchased agricultural easements make up a significant majority of the total protected agricultural land; 207 properties and 19,891 acres. Property details and programs are detailed on the following pages. These numbers are updated as of April 1, 2022.

AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS IN HOWARD COUNTY						
	PARCELS			ACRES		
	2017	2021	Change	2017	2021	Change
PURCHASED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels (ALPP)	163	168	+5	15,718	15,955	+237
Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALPF)	36	38	+2	4,017	4,046	+29
Rural Legacy Easements	4	4	0	81	81	0
Subtotal Purchased Agricultural Easements	203	210	+7	19,816	19,891	+75
DEDICATED AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS						
Howard County Agricultural Preservation Parcels (ALPP)	75	77	+2	2,982	3,024	+42
Subtotal Dedicated Agricultural Easements	75	77	+2	2,982	3,024	+42
TOTAL	278	287	+9	22,798	23,106	+308



Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP - Dedicated)

Throughout data collection phases, GIS data appeared less up to date than data held by various County/State departments. Agency utilized numbers from Joy Levy, ALPP Administrator, in counts of agricultural easement totals. Listed to the left is data from GIS shapefiles, with though incomplete, provide more detail. Missing parcels are noted at the bottom of each list.

Source: HoCo GIS Department, Data retrieved Summer - Fall 2021

	GIS Table Totals	County Department Totals	Difference
Total Acres	2999.6	3024	24.357
Total Count	74	77	3

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Penn Shop Property Sending Plat	32.2	2017-06-21
Crowder Property Sending Plat	37.1	2017-06-21
Moore Property	57.9	2017-10-05
David R. Mullinix	95.01	
Belmont Farm	48.87	
Mundy, Leon a. & Betty M. Breault	22.27	
Bridlewood, Sec1	35.49	
Coles; Cattail Woods	43.72	2020-08-17
Brewer; Cattail Woods, Sec2	32.9	
Jobson & Wildner-Jobson; Cattail Woods,	59.25	
Schroyer, Charles; Walnut Springs	28.11	
Rutley, Brent;Walnut Springs	50	2017-06-28
Katheryn H. Richards	41.39	
Nickel; Hay Meadow	50	
David R. Mullinix Sending Plat	80.74	
Groden; Warfields Grant	70.92	
Brendel Farm	47.49	
Ridge View Hunt	14.41	
Ridge View Hunt	28.85	

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Wellington West	25.83	2017-06-28
Gwyndyl Oak Estates	50.01	
Riggs Meadow	37.05	
Riggs Meadow	36.86	
Ridge View Hunt	19.05	
Pulte, Wellington West, 2/1	18.28	2017-06-28
Sycamore Valley II	7.11	2017-06-28
Adams Family Property	56.75	2017-06-28
Joseph Zoller, Quarterfield, S2	9.1	
Joseph Zoller, Quarterfield, S1	13.81	
Joseph Zoller, Quarterfield, S1	25	2016-06-22
Joseph Zoller, Quarterfield, S1	25	2016-06-22
Donald E. Souder, Twist & Turn Estates	31.44	2016-03-24
Covenant Baptist Church of W. Columbia	62.97	
Scheidt, Peter; Paternal Gift Farm	74.16	
Payne Property	56.72	2017-06-22
Jeff Harrison, Jeff Harrison Property	51.99	2017-06-22
Pulte, Wellington West, 2/1	2.14	
Scrivner; Cavey Property	81.53	
Garcia; Cavey Property	62.82	
Talley Property	53.68	
Talley Property	52.73	2017-06-22
Waterford Farm	21.24	2017-10-04
Keyes Property	20.43	2017-06-28
Waterford Farms	51.011	
Erdman Property	25.11	
Harwood Owings Property	125.09	2019-10-16
Talley Property	20.94	2017-06-22
Waterford Farm	20.18	2021-04-26

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Property of Charles & Denise Sharp	29.088	2017-05-30
Donna L. Shipiro Property	64.84	2016-02-10
Mattingly Property	41.12	2018-01-24
Waterford Farm	26.39	2021-04-26
Carroll	43.94	
Rivercrest	34.617	2015-07-02
Parker Property	51	
Lapinski Property	20.56	
Rose Hill Farm. LLC	72.896	
Clemens, Charlotte S	57.49	
Shapiro	20.398	2017-06-28
Miller Property	20.548	2017-05-30
A.E. MULLINIX ROAD PROPERTY	20.004	2014-09-02
Property of William L. Pugh	18.461	2017-05-30
Davis Property	38.25	2017-09-19
MBW Properties, LLC	39.085	
Andrew Property	60.775	
Smith	35.68	2016-04-05
Taylor, Lois S	25.84	
Carroll-Ziegler Property	8.1	2019-11-19
Carroll-Ziegler Property	34.43	2019-11-19
Carroll-Ziegler Property	102	2017-05-09
Carroll-Ziegler Property	25.36	2019-11-19
Carroll-Ziegler Property	21.25	2017-05-09
Lawson	21.131	2020-10-08

Agricultural Land Preservation Program (ALPP - Purchased)

Throughout data collection phases, GIS data appeared less up to date than data held by various County/State departments. Agency utilized numbers from Joy Levy, ALPP Administrator, in counts of agricultural easement totals. Listed to the left is data from GIS shapefiles, with though incomplete, provide more detail. Missing parcels are noted at the bottom of each list.

Source: HoCo GIS Department, Data retrieved Summer - Fall 2021

	GIS Table Totals	County Department Totals	Difference
Total Acres	15689.6	15764	74.354
Total Count	167	165	-2

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
1359 Saint Michaels LLC	240.24	
Abb, Paula	67.52	2016-03-21
AFS, LLC	58.7	2016-03-18
Alexander, Duane	33.16	
Anthony, Alan	104.21	
Asbury	20.76	
Barnes, William E.	141.97	
Bauer, Ricky	121.56	2020-12-21
Becker, William & Joan	48.92	
Becraft, Larue	90.41	2019-02-13
Becraft, Raymond J.	60.43	
Bell, Robert B.	92.36	
Berman	50.12	2016-07-25
Blackert	0.22	2015-04-06
Blackert	0.08	
Blackert	138.532	2017-11-14
Blackert, Wm. & Eliz.	10	
Bowling Green Farm	73.29	2019-01-15
Boyer, George M.	52.74	
Brendel, Bruce	50.92	

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Brigante, John	120	2020-08-17
Britten, John S.	29	
Brown, James F.	85.18	2016-02-03
Browning, Charles	51.24	2019-07-16
Burnett, William R.	59.12	
Carroll	54.01	
Carroll, Genevieve	52.95	2019-07-03
Carroll, John L. Jr & Et. Al.	330.52	2015-02-04
Carroll, Phillip & Camilla	241.638	2017-01-13
Carroll, Phillip & Camilla	258.362	2017-04-28
Castro, Stephen	23.06	
Cattail	166.82	2017-07-20
Cedar Lane Farm II, LLC	59.68	
CEEW, LLC	142.26	2016-03-31
Cissel	50.11	2014-07-07
Clark, James	163.69	2014-10-15
Clark, James	156.01	2014-09-17
Clark, James	60.25	2014-09-17
Clevenger, Clifton	103.89	
Colvin, Earnest	49.27	2015-02-04
Congedo, John & Linda	134.76	
Cooke Forsythe, LLC	61.47	
Costello, James	18.89	
Damato, Donald & Theresa	21.84	
Day, Calvin	54.87	
de Fries, Grace, et al.	35	2016-03-21
DeBernardo, David	120.24	2014-09-02
Dickey, Jean	291.36	2017-05-26
Doetsch, George Rev. Trust	99.25	2019-07-18
Dorsey, Elizabeth	139.25	

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Dorsey, Melanie	132.75	2014-10-29
Dove, Wilber	201.94	2018-07-17
Dowd, R. Timothy	129.6	2015-02-04
Dunn Edward K., Jr & Quartz Hill III LLC	50	2021-04-27
Dunn, Edward K, Jr	50	2021-04-27
Dunst, Joseph W.	61.3	
Feaga, Bernard	106.47	2015-02-03
Ferguson	69.89	
Frey	109.07	2017-07-27
G. Lawrence Moore Family, LLLP	132.34	
Garratt, David	90.25	
Giangrandi, Judith	59.7	
Grimes	53.45	2018-03-13
Haines, David	55.24	
Hobbs	51	2016-04-05
Holly House Farm., LLC	717.17	
Holweck, Edmond & Etta	23.26	
Holweck, James	25.75	2019-07-26
Hough, William D.	55.94	
Howes, Elaine Z.	179.25	
Hudson, James	97.11	2017-09-11
Hurt, Gerald F. and Kendra L.	42.38	2016-06-16
Hurt, James and Arlette Z.	55.14	2016-06-16
Iglehart Property	29.62	2017-07-20
JJM, Inc.	41.8	
Johnson, Robert	78.73	2015-12-04
Jones, Helen	345.14	2019-01-15
Kelley, Truman L.	97.52	
Kelley, Truman L.	93.84	
Kittleman, Robert H.	111.26	2015-03-31

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Kreider, John	26.58	
L Meadow II, LP	174.15	
Larriland Farms	142.33	
Lewis Farm LLC	105.78	
Lewis Fred	98.22	2019-07-26
Lewis, Robert	99.89	2017-06-28
Lloyd, Thomas	82.34	
Litt, Larry	59.28	2017-11-21
Lundy, Robert	66.11	2017-10-30
Mannarelli	106.8	2015-02-04
Manor Lane Farm, LLC	53.25	
Manufuso, Robert	194.31	
Mariani, Theodore	175.41	2016-06-28
Martin, William B.	133.1	
McCarron, Gregg	96.6	
McCracken, Albert	44.07	
McCuan Farms LLC	50.01	
McCuan Farms LLC	66.9	
McManus, Mary Ellen	61.1	
MHGH & SLLC	83.22	
Mihm, Phyllis	121.98	2020-08-17
Miller Jeanette	58.3	
Mobberly, John	132.64	2017-05-09
Moxley Family Farm, LLC	114.46	2017-10-25
Moxley Family Farm, LLC	55.72	2015-03-16
Moxley, James R.	200.58	2015-02-02
Mullinix, Gene	50.29	2015-07-14
Mullinix, Gene	64.91	2015-08-24
Mullinix, Gene	123.7	
Mullinix, J. David	72.2	

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Murray, Calvin M.	162.33	2020-10-19
Murray, Calvin M.	52.67	
Muth Family, LLC	100.217	2020-12-17
Muth Family, LLC	50	2018-03-29
Olde Home Farm	150.52	2017-06-28
Our Forsythe, LLC	29.38	2016-03-21
Patrick, David	144.81	2017-11-06
Pfefferkorn	49	2015-02-04
Pfefferkorn	54.4	2016-04-01
Pfefferkorn, LLC	78.12	2017-10-25
Phelps, James	70.81	2015-07-13
Pickett, Evelyn	53.657	
Pue	0	2015-03-02
Rea	162	2020-05-22
Reinhardt, Harry	56.89	
Richard & Jayne Nessif	58.62	
Ridgley, Brice	170.77	2017-08-17
Ritter, David C.	24.49	
Sachs	20.56	2020-08-17
Schmorhun, John G.	91.9	2017-10-26
Schrivener, Thomas	52.68	
Schulze, Albert	77.88	2015-02-04
Scrivener, Thomas	132.78	
Sharp	57.26	2016-03-21
Sharp, Charles A. & Denise D.	50	2021-04-27
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	50	2021-04-27
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	50	2021-04-27
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	50	2021-04-27
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	50.5	2021-04-27
Sharp's Wild Horse Meadow LLC	50	2021-04-27

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Parcel Acreage	Last Edit
Spicknall, William	75.33	
Stedding	87.98	2014-09-24
Stewart-Moore, Victoria	30.11	
Streaker, Howard	120.77	
Streaker, M. Davis	71	2015-07-02
Sullivan, Mary Jane, Et Al	84.3	
Swartz, Edward & Lynette	53.87	
Taro Investment Corp.	94.99	2014-10-16
Tate, Debbie	31.66	
Theraputic Riding Cntr.	54.23	
Trust FBO Thomas Lee Carroll	61.5	2018-01-10
Vechery, Robert	39.02	
Walker, Robert	134.9	
Warfield, E. Donald	66.24	
Warfield, Jean N.	113.32	2019-07-26
Warfield, Samuel	145.69	
Way Back Farm, LLC	140.89	
Weems, Walter	12.32	
Welling, James H.	122.23	
Wilson, George A.	70.27	
Woodford Farms, LLC	141.03	2016-06-03
Zepp, Wilbur & Lille Mae	186.18	
Ziegler Family Trust	50.09	2018-01-10
Ziegler, Natalie C. & Jessica	350.51	2019-11-19
Zimmerly-Sziaz, Nancy	131.27	2020-08-17
Zimmerly-Sziaz, Nancy	32.93	
Zirkle, Robert	33.5	

Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Easements (MALP)

Throughout data collection phases, GIS data appeared less up to date than data held by various County/State departments. Agency utilized numbers from Joy Levy, ALPP Administrator, in counts of agricultural easement totals. Listed to the left is data from GIS shapefiles, with though incomplete, provide more detail. Missing parcels are noted at the bottom of each list.

Source: HoCo GIS Department, Data retrieved Summer - Fall 2021

	GIS Table Totals	County Department Totals	Difference
Total Acres	3952.9812	4046	93.019
Total Count	36	38	2

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Acreage	Last Edit
Barrow Family, LLC	70.66	2016-03-21
Barrow, Katherine F.	115	
Becraft, Raymond J., Jr.	99.07	2015-06-04
Breeden, Stephen K.	95.02	
Cissel, Steven	43.287	
Clark, James	114	
Clark, Martha A.	46.37	
Clevenger, Clifton L.	188.68	2015-11-09
Conrey, Richard N.	96.61	
Coyne, Robert J.	78.19	
Daly, Henry K. & Betty A.	21.25	
Estes, Robert D. & Patricia A.	15.29	
Fleming, Donald E.	126.41	2019-10-25
Gentle Giants	50	2019-10-25
Hanson, James C. & Lavine, Elizabeth M.	21.22	2015-02-04
Hobbs, Elizabeth R.	53.79	2015-03-31
Idiot's Delight Corp. 2	102.59	
Idiot's Delight, Inc.	89.96	
Kenney, William D.	28.21	

Current Owner by Parcel	Current Acreage	Last Edit
Long, Robert P. Jr.	189.33	
Mullinix Bros. Ptshp.	200.04	2018-04-06
Mullinix Brothers Partnership	166.09	
Mullinix J. David & Elizabeth L.	115	2019-07-08
Mullinix, J. David	142.32	
Newsome, Wayne	130.219	
Nichols, Marshall	256	
Patrick, James M. & Mary	91.5	2016-10-06
Reuwer, Donald	81.27	2015-11-09
Reuwer, Donald	214.16	2015-11-09
Robb	24.8782	2020-04-15
Shoffeitt, Paul G.	69.64	
Warfield, Barbara L.	342	2019-07-18
Welling, James H.	102.2	2017-05-30
Wessel, Henry L.	114.791	
Winkler, Jeff & Rhonda	239.61	2014-10-29
Witty, Stephen P.	18.326	

Rural Legacy Easements

Source: HoCo GIS Department, Data retrieved Summer - Fall 2021

Current Owner	Current Acreage	Last Edit
Radue Property	20.1	
Radue Property	20.25	
Landau Property	27.32	2015-12-04
Hosford, Michael R	12.64	
TOTAL	80.31	

APPENDIX H

CAPRA SIMILAR PROVIDER SURVEY

Seasonally, the Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks (the Department) provides hundreds of recreation programs and events, a wide variety of services, and a number of high-quality facilities to both residents and visitors of the County. In addition to the Department, there is a very large number of other providers of these types of services within the County. As part of the five year update to the Howard County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan, this report summarizes the public, nonprofit, and private organizations that also provide a variety of recreation programs, events, and leisure services in and around Howard County, MD (County).

The goal of this effort is to ensure that Department staff are aware of the many opportunities that exist, to fill obvious gaps, to seek out partners when appropriate, and to reduce (or eliminate) the potential duplication of efforts. Table 1 (on the next page) was originally created in 2011 as part of a study to determine

duplicate services or service gaps related to recreation programming within the County. This information has been updated to depict the current programming of all of these organizations. The age breakdown is in the first column with Howard County Recreation and Parks programs and services listed in the second column. This table then includes the programming of the following organizations:

- Columbia Association
- Howard County Community College
- Community College of Baltimore County
- Howard County Public School system
- Terrapin Adventure
- REI
- YMCA
- Lifetime Fitness
- Howard County Library
- Montgomery County
- Carroll County

In addition to the organizations listed in Table 1, there are a number of other organizations throughout the County that provide recreation programs and services. These organizations include nonprofits and private organizations. Unlike the organizations included in Table 1, these nonprofits and private organization typically offer one or two specific opportunities or target a specific age group or interest. Lastly, based on the results of the needs assessment survey, indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities are included in this report.

HCRP – Howard County Recreation & Parks
CA – Columbia Association
HCC – Howard Community College
CCBC – Community College of Baltimore County
HCPSS – Howard County Public School System
TA – Terrapin Adventures – Adventure park located in Savage, MD
REI – Located in Columbia, MD
YMCA – Located at 4331 Montgomery Road, Ellicott City, MD
LF – Lifetime Fitness: Located at 7220 Lee Deforest Drive, Columbia, MD.
HC Library – Howard County Library System: multiple branches: Columbia (4), Ellicott City (2), Elkridge, Cooksville, Laurel,
MC – Montgomery County
CC – Carroll County

Table 1: Howard County Recreation Programming Inventory

HOWARD COUNTY RECREATION PROGRAMMING INVENTORY												
	HCRP	CA	HCC	CCBC	HCPSS	TA	REI	YMCA	LF	HC Library	MC	CC
Pre-K Classes & Activities (0-4 years)	X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X
Camps (0-4 years)	X							X	X		X	X
Youth Classes & Activities (5-10 years)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Camps (5-10 years)	X	X		X		X		X	X		X	X
Tweens & Teens Classes & Activities (11-17 years)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Camps (11-17 years)	X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X
Adults Classes & Activities (18+ years)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Adults Classes & Activities (55+ years)	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Aquatics	X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
Fitness Centers	X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
Child Care	X	X						X				
Special Events & Family Activities	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Therapeutic Recreation & Inclusion Services	X										X	X
Trips & Tours	X	X	X			X	X		X		X	X
Volunteer Opportunities	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X

Nonprofits

One of the largest providers of recreation and leisure opportunities within the County is the nonprofit Columbia Association (included in Table 1). Following Maryland State parks at 57%, a total of 36% of survey respondents indicated that they utilized the Columbia Association for indoor and outdoor recreation and sports activities during the past 12 months. Located in Columbia, MD, this organization offers its residents the following:

- Three full-service fitness centers
- Five tennis clubs
- Four indoor swimming pools/one hot water therapy pool
- 23 outdoor swimming pools (including two mini water parks)
- An art center
- A dog park
- An ice rink
- A sports park
- Two golf courses: Fairway Hills Golf Club and Hobbit's Glen Golf Club
- A volunteer center
- Youth & teen center
- 3,600 acres of open space that include parks, lakes, tot lots, basketball courts, and 95 miles of pathways

In addition to providing the facilities listed above, the Columbia Association also provides a number of programs including youth

programs, camps, before and after school care, school's out programs, martial arts, teen programs, programs for mature adults, fitness, swimming, art, tennis, ice skating, adults sports leagues (basketball, racquetball, and volleyball), special events, sustainable initiatives, volunteer opportunities, and an international exchange program.

Other notable nonprofit providers of recreation type services within the County are divided into six categories including:

- Early childhood and camps
- Programs for people with disabilities or dealing with serious illness
- Youth sports and general recreation
- Performing arts
- STEM/environmental education programming

The nonprofits included in Table 2 provide the County with early childhood programming and youth camps.

Table 3 includes nonprofit organizations in Howard County that provide programs and services for residents with disabilities or those battling serious illnesses.

There are several nonprofits in the Howard County that provide a variety of youth sports opportunities and general recreation. These nonprofits are summarized in Table 4.

A number of nonprofits provide performing arts opportunities within the County. These organizations are summarized in Table 5.

The last grouping of nonprofits in Howard County in Table 6 includes those organizations that offer STEM programming or environmental education courses.

Table 2: Nonprofits Offering Early Childhood and Camp Programs

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Camp Attaway	9770 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia	http://campattaway.org	Summer camps for children with emotional and behavior disorders
Community Action Council of Howard County	9820 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia	https://cac-hc.org	Early childhood education (Head Start and Pre K)
Children & Company Co-operative Preschool	5355 Phelps Luck Dr., Columbia	http://www.childrenandcompany.org	Licensed preschool for 2 through 4 years olds
Mid-Atlantic Burn Camp Fund	5430 Harris Farm Ln., Clarksville	https://midatlanticburncamp.org	Provides a residential summer camp for young burn survivors
Community Action Council of Howard County	6751 Columbia Gateway Dr., Columbia	https://cac-hc.org	Provides a Head Start preschool program for low-income children ages 3 to 5 years

Table 3: Nonprofits Offering Programs for People with Disabilities or Those Dealing with Illness

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
The Arc of Howard County	11735 Homewood Rd., Ellicott City	https://www.archoward.org	Programs for people with disabilities
Special Olympics Maryland	8970 MD-108, Suite 1A, Columbia	https://somedhc.org	Seasonal athletic competition for youth and adults with disabilities
Howard County Autism Society	9770 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia	https://howard-autism.org	Serves individuals on autism spectrum with a programs including Yoga for children, teens, and adults
LeCheval Stable	3244 Danmark Dr., Glenwood	https://lechevalstable.org	Therapeutic horseback riding
The Therapeutic & Recreational Riding Center, Inc.	3750 Shady Ln. Glenwood	https://www.trrcmd.org	Therapeutic horseback riding for children and adults
Carole Jean Cancer Foundation	10718 Cleos Ct., Columbia	None	Provides recreation programs to children with cancer
Team Inspiration Inc.	6319 Hampton Place, Elkridge	https://teaminspiration.org	Promotes nutrition, exercise, and yoga for those dealing with illness

Table 4: Nonprofit Sports and General Recreation Organization

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Elkridge Youth Organization	PO Box 8012, Elkridge	https://www.eyosports.org	Youth baseball, softball basketball, softball, and soccer
United Basketball Club of Maryland	7476 New Ridge Road, Hanover	https://www.ubcmd.org	Travel AAU basketball for boys grades 4–8 and girls grades 4–10
Soccer Association of Columbia	4560 Centennial Lane, Ellicott	https://www.sackick.com	Instructional and competitive soccer for boys and girls ages 3–18 years
Howard County Youth Program, Inc. (HCYP)	PO Box 172, Woodstock	https://hcypbasketball.org	Youth basketball, baseball, and softball for youth in kindergarten through high school
Factory Athletics Foundation	9212 Berger Road, Columbia	www.factoryfoundation.org	Promotes youth baseball and softball education
Girls on the Run of Central Maryland	9150 Rumsey Road, Columbia	https://www.gotrcentralmd.org	Encourages preteen girls to develop healthy lifestyles and boost self-esteem through running
The Leon Day Foundation, Inc.	20 S. Madeira St., Baltimore	http://www.leondayfoundation.org	Connects kids to baseball
Howard County Striders Inc.	PO Box 563 , Columbia	https://www.striders.net	Promotes lifetime fitness through running by sponsoring races and training for youth and adults

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
We Promote Health	Not found	http://www.wepromotehealth.org	Encourages healthy lifestyles through community programs
Horizon Foundation	10331 Wincopin Circle, Columbia	https://www.thehorizonfoundation.org	Provides grants to support health and wellness initiatives in Howard County
Columbia Ravens	Not found	https://www.columbiaravens.com	Youth football, camps, and cheer for ages 5 – 14 years
Howard County Lacrosse (in conjunction with	Not found	https://hclacrosse.org	Lacrosse leagues for boys & girls ages 5 – 14 years

Table 5: Nonprofit Sports and General Recreation Organization

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
The Pick Me Up Foundation	10451 Twin Rivers Rd., Columbia	https://thepickmeupfoundation.com	Provides instruments and music lessons to needy kids
Ballet Mobile Howard County Center for the Arts	8510 High Ridge Rd., Ellicott City	https://balletmobile.org	Brings ballet to those who otherwise would not be able to experience it
Candlelight Concert Society	9030 Red Branch Rd., Columbia	https://candlelightconcerts.org	Offers music outreach programs to children
Columbia Center for the Theatrical Arts	6655 Dobbin Rd., Columbia	https://cctarts.org	Offers theatre classes, workshops and camps for children and teens
Central Maryland Youth Ballet	9570 Berger Rd., Columbia	http://www.centralmarylandyouthballet.com	Offers American Ballet training
Howard County Arts Council	8510 High Ridge Rd., Ellicott City	https://www.hocoarts.org	Fosters the arts in Howard County
Howard County Poetry and Literature Society	10901 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia	https://hocopolitso.org	Produces readings and other literary events for the public
Kinetics Dance Theatre Inc.	3280 Pine Orchard Ln., Ellicott City	http://kineticsdance.org	Provides contemporary dance to ages 8–18 years

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Silhouette Stages	10400 Cross Fox Ln., Columbia	https://www.silhouette-stages.com	All volunteer performing arts organization
Suzuki Music School of Maryland	PO Box 1284, Columbia	https://suzukimusic-school.com	Provides music lessons for all instruments and voice

Table 6: Howard County Nonprofit Providers of STEM and Environmental Education

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
USRA STEM Education	7178 Columbia Gateway Dr., Columbia	https://stemaction.usra.edu	Offering youth STEM programs to interest youth in space
Howard County Conservancy	10520 Old Frederick Rd., Woodstock	https://www.howardnature.org	Conducts environmental education on 300-acre farm
Koolhof Earth	10245 Old Columbia Rd., Columbia	http://koolhofearth.org	To inspire and educate people to reverse the effects of human activity on the earth
The Patapsco Heritage Greenway	PO Box 96, Ellicott City	https://patapsco.org	Conducts stream cleanup, tree plantings, environmental education to protect the Patapsco River valley

Private Organizations Providing Recreation in the County

In addition to the many nonprofit organizations, there are a number of private entities in the County that provide recreation and leisure opportunities to residents. For the purposes of this report, these organizations are divided into childcare, fitness and youth sports. Table 7 includes all of the private organizations offering childcare services to County residents.

There are a wide range of private fitness facilities within Howard County. Although many of these have changed their operations due to Covid-19 (less offerings and smaller classes), they all appear to be open and providing services. Table 8 includes the listing of private fitness facilities within the County. It should be noted that 14 out of the 23 opportunities (nearly 61%) are located within Columbia and this does not include the facilities of the Columbia Association.

There are many opportunities for youth sports in Howard County—Table 9 includes all of the private youth sports organizations.

Table 7: Private Organizations Offering Childcare Services in Howard County

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Home4Kidz	Wesleigh Drive, Columbia	www.home4kidz.com	Childcare for ages 2 years and up
Joy in Learning	8991 Lambskin Lane, Columbia	https://joyinlearningchildcare.com/	Childcare for ages 8 weeks to 10 years – also offers camps
Childtime of Columbia	6905 Oakland Mills Road, Suite D, Columbia	https://www.childtime.com	Infant and preschool care, drop-in care, and summer camps
Columbia Gateway KinderCare	7195 Columbia Gateway Drive, Columbia	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years, school break programs, and specific learning programs
Hickory Ridge KinderCare	6185 Sunny Spring, Columbia	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years
Marshalee Drive KinderCare	6080 Marshalee Drive, Elkrige	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years
Laurel Knowledge Beginnings	7551 Montpelier Road, Laurel	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Russet KinderCare	3504 Russett Cmn, Laurel	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years
Laurel KinderCare	14225 Park Center Drive, Laurel	https://www.kindercare.com/our-centers/columbia/md	Childcare for ages 6 weeks to 12 years
Growing Stems Child-care	9650 Susies Way, Ell- icott City	http://growingstemschildcare.com/	Licensed childcare for ages 4 months and older
Kiddie Academy of Co- lumbia	5550 Sterrett Place, Columbia	https://kiddieacademy.com/academies/columbia	Providing infant care, toddler care, early preschool, preschool, Pre-K, and summer camp for ages 5 – 12 years

Table 8: Private Fitness Facilities within Howard County

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Colosseum Gym	9159F Red Ranch Rd., Columbia	https://colosseumgym.com	17,000 SF fitness center, equipment to meet a range of workouts with emphasis on athletic training and bodybuilding
Life Time Columbia	7220 Lee DeForest Dr., Columbia	https://www.lifetime.life/life-time-locations/md-columbia	111,000 SF facility providing group classes, personal training, classes, sports leagues, private coaching, and athletic classes
Chiseled Life Gym	9309 Snowden River Pkwy A, Columbia	https://chiseled-life.com/about	Sports rehab, personal training, physical therapy, massage therapy, meal prep service, tanning, saunas, nutrition support, childcare
Elite Boxing and Fitness	9017 Red Branch Road, Columbia	https://www.elitesfn.com	Boxing, kickboxing, cycling, and personal training
Ellicott City Health and Fitness	9449 Baltimore National Pike, Ellicott City	https://echealthandfitness.com	CrossFit training with group classes, personal training, and nutrition coaching
My Gym Columbia	6905-C Oakland Mills Road. Columbia	https://www.mygym.com/Columbia	Various fitness classes for youth in ages 3 months – 9 years, private parties, camps, and events

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Orangetheory Fitness	6181 Old Dobbin Lane, Suite 700, Columbia	https://www.orangetheory.com/en-us	Total body group workout that combines science, coaching, and technology for maximum results
Planet Fitness	8450 Baltimore National Pike, Ste 175, Ellicott City	https://www.planetfitness.com/gyms/ellicott-city-md	Free weights, cardio, strength machines, tanning, massage
Fitness 19	6030 Marshalee Dr., Elkridge	https://www.fitness19.com/centers/elkridge	Group classes, circuit training, personal training
Recharge Modern Health and Fitness	5136 Dorsey Hall Dr. , Ellicott City	https://www.rechargexfit.com	Group classes and online coaching with an emphasis on rehab training
American Fitness Express	3881 Ten Oaks Road, Suite B, Glenelg		Personal training
F45 Training	10960 Grantchester Way, Columbia	https://f45training.com/columbiamd/home	Functional Training - a mix of circuit and HIIT style workouts

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Elkridge Athletic Club	6802 Douglas Legum Dr., Elkridge	https://www.elkridgeathletic-club.com/explore	Focus on weight loss, athletic performance, body building, and rehabilitation
SynergyFX	8815 Columbia 100 Parkway, Columbia	https://synergyfxfit.com	Personal Training, Virtual training, Pilates, Nutrition, Mindfulness, Functional Fitness, Buddha Camp, Bungee Boot Camp, and Rowing
Coreworks Fitness at Maple Lawn	9160 Rumsey Rd., Columbia	https://coreworksfitness.com	Group Ex classes, private or small group, workshops and events, wellness services
MaxxFit Sports Performance	9009 Mendenhall Court, Columbia	https://www.maxxfitsportsperformance.com	Personal, group, and team training, combat, strength and conditioning, mature adult training, sport specific, rehab, and women's fitness
12 Labours CrossFit	9017 Red Branch Rd., Columbia	https://12labourscrossfit.com	CrossFit, yoga, group classes, Olympic lifting, personal training, events, clinics, and nutrition.
Soldierfit The Fort @ Columbia, MD	7175 Oakland Mills Rd., Columbia	https://soldierfit.com/soldierfit_location/columbia-maryland	Boot camp classes, personal training, athletic specific training, Kids Kadets fitness.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Maximum Fitness 24/7 Jessup	7351 Assateague Dr., Jessup	https://www.maximumfitness24.com/maxfit-jessup	Yoga, health & wellness, rehab training, injury prevention, athletic training, massage, cross, core, HIIT, and circuit training.
Brickhouse Cardio Club	3419 Plumtree Dr., Elliott City	https://www.brickhousecardio-club.net	Yoga, strength training, Aerial yoga, Zumba, sculpt, step, kickboxing, Barre, and Fitness on Demand.
Fit4Mom	10300 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia	https://howardcounty.fit4mom.com	Providing fitness classes and a network to support every stage of pregnancy
Mid Maryland Triathlon Club		https://www.midmdtriclub.org	Triathlon training and racing.

Table 9: Private Youth Sports Organizations in Howard County

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
i9 Sports	9505 Berger Rd. Co-lumbia	https://www.i9sports.com/venues/3583/howard-county-columbia-sports-world-youth-sports-programs	Flag Football Leagues for boys & girls ages 4–7 years and instructional soccer for boys & girls ages 3–9 years.
i9 Sports	9411 Whiskey Bottom Rd. Laurel	https://www.i9sports.com/venues/6706/laurel-north-lau-rel-community-center-sun-days-youth-sports-programs	Soccer leagues for boys & girls ages 3–10 years basketball leagues for boys & girls ages 5–13 years
i9 Sports	5470 Hesperus Dr. Co-lumbia	https://www.i9sports.com/programs/83320/howard-county-columbia-longfellow-elementary-school-basketball-league-november-2021	Basketball leagues for girls and boys ages 5–12 years.
i9 Sports	TBD	https://www.i9sports.com/venues/2178/howard-county-columbia-howard-county-tbd-youth-sports-programs	Basketball leagues for boys & girls ages 5–12 years.
Maryland Juniors Sports Center	8221 Preston Ct. Jessup	http://mdjrssportscenter.com/index.php	43,000 sf facility with 11 volleyball courts offering Leagues & camps/ Badminton, basketball, soccer and a 70' long batting cage.
Soccerdome	7330 Montevideo Road, Jessup	https://www.soccerdome.com	Indoor soccer leagues and clinics for males & females youth through adult

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Brickhouse Cardio Club	Jessup	https://www.i9sports.com/venues/2178/howard-county-columbia-howard-county-tbd-youth-sports-programs	Yoga, strength training, Ariel yoga, Zumba, sculpt, step, kickboxing, Barre, and Fitness on Demand.
Atholton Youth Recreation Association (ARYA)	PO 226 Simpsonville	https://www.ayra.com/Default.aspx?tabid=329840	Baseball (ages 4–15 years) & softball (ages 7–13 years). Leagues, travel & tournaments.
Extra Innings Elk Ridge	6684 Santa Barbara Elkridge	https://www.extrainnings-elkridge.com	23,000 sf Indoor baseball & softball training facility for ages 5 to 18 years. 7 batting & pitching tunnels, 3 batting cages, and parties
Kangaroo Kids Precision Jump Rope Team	Not found	https://www.kangarookids.org	Instruction and travel teams for boys & girls ages 6–15 years and adults 18 and over
The Little Gym	10101 Twin Rivers Road Columbia	https://www.thelittlegym.com/ColumbiaMD https://www.thelittlegym.com/ColumbiaMD	Youth gymnastics (6–12 years) classes, parties, camps, drop-ins, and events
My Gym	6905-C Oakland Mills Road Columbia	https://www.mygym.com/Columbia	Gymnastics, pre-ballet, and ninja training
The Crusader Nation Basketball Program	Not found	http://crusadernation.org	Competitive basketball leagues for young boys

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
WHC Baseball & Softball	Not found	https://www.leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=whcsports	Baseball & Softball leagues for ages 6–18 years.
Soccer Shots	Not found	https://www.soccershots.com/howardcounty	Youth soccer for ages 2–8 years
Sports World	9505 Berger Road	https://sportsworldmd.com	2 indoor turf fields and futsal courts for soccer, lacrosse, baseball, and volleyball – offering leagues, camps, and clinics for youth & adults
Sterling Stars Basketball Academy	Columbia	https://www.sterlingstarsacademy.com	Competitive Basketball training & leagues for boys & girls ages 7–18 years
Champions Sport Academy	10453 Sternwheel Place Columbia	https://championssportacademy.com	Youth wrestling, soccer, basketball, after school sports programs (grades 1–5), and childcare for 3–5 years
Soccer Association of Columbia & Howard County	4560 Centennial Lane, Ellicott City, MD 21042	https://www.sackick.com	Soccer training, clinics, camps, recreational and travel leagues for youth 3–18 years
Volleyball House (opening in 2022)	4560 Centennial Lane Ellicott City	https://www.vbhouse2.com	150,000 sf facility with 8 volleyball courts for fun, training and competition. May include turf, rock climbing and pickleball.
Brickhouse Cardio Club	Not found	https://www.i9sports.com/venues/2178/howard-county-columbia-howard-county-tbd-youth-sports-programs	Yoga, strength training, Aerial yoga, Zumba, sculpt, step, kickboxing, Barre, and Fitness on Demand.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Fit4Mom	10300 Little Patuxent Parkway, Columbia		Providing fitness classes and a network to support every stage of pregnancy
Mid Maryland Triathlon Club		https://www.midmdtriclub.org	Triathlon training and racing.
Laurel Roller Skating Center	9890 Brewers Ct. Laurel	https://laurelskatingcenter.com	
Savage Boys & Girls Club	PO Box 1003 Savage	https://www.savagebgc.org/Default.aspx?tabid=1914580	
Western Howard County Soccer	PO Box 279 Glenwood	http://www.whcsoccer.org	
West Howard Warhawks	Not found	https://www.gowarhawks.com	

Swimming Opportunities

Based on the results of the ETC Needs Assessment survey, more indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities are desired. Table 10 provides a listing of indoor swimming opportunities within the County. This information does not include the four indoor pools owned and operated by the nonprofit Columbia Association (Columbia Athletic Club, Columbia Gym, Columbia Swim Center, and the Supreme Sports Club).

Outdoor swimming pools in Howard County are summarized in Table 11. This does not include the 23 outdoor pools owned and operated by the nonprofit Columbia Association.

Table 10: Indoor Swimming Facilities in Howard County

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Columbia Athletic Club	5435 Beaverkill Road, Columbia	https://www.columbiaassociation.org/facilities/fitness-clubs/columbia-athletic-club/	Co-ed whirlpool, saunas, a warm water therapy pool.
Columbia Gym	6151 Day Long Lane, Clarksville	https://www.columbiaassociation.org/facilities/fitness-clubs/columbia-gym/	Lap lanes for both lap and recreational swimming, baby pool with beach entry, hot tub, saunas.
Columbia Swim Center	10401 Cross Fox Ln, Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaassociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/columbia-swim-center/	Two full-sized, ADA-accessible, 25-yard indoor pools, a wading pool and a 1-meter springboard for recreational swimming. Aqua fitness and water aerobics classes, locker rooms, sauna, and a new ADA-accessible large family changing room. Programs include Columbia Clippers swim league, swimming lessons, facility rentals, and various types of parties.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Supreme Sports Club	7080 Deepage Drive, Columbia	https://www.columbiaassociation.org/facilities/fitness-clubs/supreme-sports-club/	Eight-lane lap and recreational pool, children's wading pool, co-ed whirlpool, saunas.
Goldfish Swim School	9315 Snowden River Parkway, Columbia	https://www.goldfishswim-school.com/columbia	Swim lessons for ages 4 months to 12 years and swim team for ages 5 – 12 years.
Taylor Village Pool	Taylor Village Pool	http://taylorvillage.net/ameniti2.htm	Taylor Village is a planned community with single family homes, townhomes, and an active adult community.
Life Time Columbia	7220 Lee Deforest Drive, Columbia	https://www.lifetime.life/life-time-locations/md-columbia.html	Indoor lap and leisure pools.
The Y in Ellicott City	4331 Montgomery Road Ellicott City	https://ymaryland.org/locations/dancely/amenities	6 lane lap pool, warm water therapy pool.

Table 11: Outdoor Swimming Facilities in Howard County

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Atholton Swim Club	6731 Seneca Drive Columbia	https://atholtonswimclub.com/about	This member-owned community club offers open swims, lap swims, lessons, swim team, and pool rentals.
Bryant Woods Pool	10451 Green Mountain Circle Columbia MD, 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/bryant-woods-pool-bw/	Six-lane main pool, hot tub.
Clary's Forest Pool	11615 Little Patuxent Parkway Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/clarys-forest-cf-pool/	Six-lane pool with lift, mushroom fountain in beach entry, sand volleyball, hot tub.
Clemens Crossing Pool	6400 Martin Road Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/clemens-crossing-cc-pool/	Eight-lane pool with lift, slide.
Dasher Green Pool	6805 Cradlerock Way Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/dasher-green-dg-pool/	Eight-lane main pool, hot tub, wading pool, slide, sand volleyball court, bathhouse.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Dickinson Pool	7425 Weatherworn Way Columbia, MD 21046	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/dickinson-pool/	Lap pool with two water slides, zero depth entry and a baby pool.
Dorsey Hall Pool	4649 Columbia Road Ellicott City, MD 21042	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/dorsey-hall-dh-pool/	ADA Beach entry wading pool with water features, slide, eight-lane main pool with lift, sand volleyball.
Faulkner Ridge Pool	10518 Marble Faun Court Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/faulkner-ridge-fr-pool/	Six-lane main pool with diving board, beach entry wading pool with water features.
Forest Hill Swim & Tennis Club	4310 Columbia Road Ellicott City	None	Lap pool with grill. Public swim and lessons.
Hammond Park Pool	8034 Helmart Drive Laurel	https://www.swimhammond.org	Private, nonprofit, community swim club offering open swim, lap swim, lessons, and swim team.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Hawthorn Pool	6175 Sunny Spring Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/hawthorn-ha-pool/	ADA beach entry wading pool with water features & slide, ADA bathroom, six-lane main pool with lift, beach entry with mushroom fountain, hot tub.
Hobbit's Glen Pool	11130 Willowbottom Drive Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/hobbits-glen-hg-pool/	Six-lane pool with a maximum depth of five feet.
Hopewell	9200 Rustling Leaf Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/hopewell-mini-waterpark-hw/	Large slide in deep end & splashpad, eight-lane main pool with lift.
Huntington Pool	7625 Murray Hill Road Columbia, MD 21046	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/huntington-hu-pool/	Eight-lane main pool, hot tub, large deck area, slide in baby pool.
Jeffers Hill Pool	6031 Tamar Drive Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/jeffers-hill-jh-pool/	Eight-lane pool, climbing wall in deep end, sand volleyball.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Kendall Ridge Pool	8245 Tamar Drive Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/kendall-ridge-kr-pool/	ADA wading pool with water feature & slide, eight-lane main pool with lift, hot tub with lift, sand volleyball, water feature in beach entry.
Locust Park Pool	8995 Lambskin Lane Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/locust-park-lp-pool/	Eight-lane pool, pool basketball hoop and water slide.
Longfellow Pool	5267 Eliot's Oak Road Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/longfellow-lf-pool/	ADA wading pool with water features, six-lane main pool.
Macgill's Common Pool	10025 Shaker Drive Columbia, MD 21046	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/macgills-common-mc-pool/	Six-lane main pool, volleyball (grass, Howard County Autism Society sensory friendly pool.
North St John's Swim & Tennis Club	9200 Marydell Road Ellicott City	https://nsjswimtennis.org	Private, membership- based facility. Facility includes a lap pool, diving well, wading pool and snack bar offering swim and dive lessons (youth & adult), master's swim, sports camp, and tennis.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Phelps Luck Pool	5355 Phelps Luck Drive Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/phelps-luck-pl-pool/	Eight-lane main pool.
River Hill Pool	6330 Trotter Road Clarksville, MD 21029	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/river-hill-rh-pool/	ADA beach entry wading pool with water features & slide, eight-lane main pool with lift, beach entry, hot tub with lift, water feature in beach entry.
Running Brook Pool	5730 Columbia Road Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/running-brook-rb-pool/	Six-lane main pool (meters), shade structures, S.T.E.M. splashpad play area.
Stevens Forest Pool	6061 Stevens Forest Road Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/stevens-forest-sf-pool/	Eight-lane main pool with lift, heated main pool, shade structures, hot tub with lift, fitness pavilion.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Swansfield Mini WaterPark	5659 Cedar Lane Columbia, MD 21044	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/swansfield-mini-water-park-sw/	Six-lane main pool with lift, large slide in deep end, splash pad, heated main pool, bathhouse & family changing room.
Talbott Springs Pool	9660 Basket Ring Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/talbott-springs-ts-pool/	Eight-lane pool with slide, wading pool with water features, shade structures with picnic areas, charcoal grill.
Thunder Hill Pool	9205 Log Chain Road Columbia, MD 21045	https://www.columbiaas-sociation.org/facilities/indoor-swimming-pools/pool-locations/thunder-hill-th-pool/	Six-lane main pool, wading pool, sand volleyball.
Watermont Swim Club	5819 Bellanca Drive, Elkridge	https://www.watermont.org/membership	Nonprofit, membership-based pool accepting 350 families per season. The waitlist currently includes 119 families. Facility includes lap pool with diving boards and toddler pool. Youth swim team.

Organization Name	Address	Website	Programs Offered
Western Howard Swim Club	16131 Old Frederick Road, Mount Airy	https://westhowardswimclub.org/	
Taylor Village Pool	Ellicott City	http://taylorvillage.net/ameniti2.htm	Taylor Village is a planned community with single family homes, townhomes, and an active adult community.
Life Time Columbia	7220 Lee Deforest Drive, Columbia Columbia	https://www.lifetime.life/life-time-locations/md-columbia.html	Lap and leisure pool with waterlides and zero depth entry

APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Access

The proximity of a park, greenway trail, nature preserve, or recreation facility to the public with safe means of getting there (walking, biking, transit, or driving). Equitable access is defined as a ten-minute walk or 5-minute drive to a park or facility in the Eastern part of the County, and a 15-minute drive to a park or facility in the Western part of the County.

Accessibility

Usable by people with the widest possible range of abilities, operating within the widest possible range of spaces. See also, Universal Design.

Adaptive Use or Reuse

The process of renovating and reusing an older, often historic, building by changing its function and maximizing the reuse and retention of existing materials and structures.

Afforestation

The establishment of new forest on an area presently without forest cover, by planting in accordance with the practices specified in the Forest Conservation Manual.

Agritourism

Any activity that allows members of the general public to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming; ranching; wineries; historical, cultural or harvest-your-own activities; guided or self-guided tours; bed and breakfast accommodations; or temporary outdoor recreation activities. (Sourced from Delaware's Agritourism statute)

Amenity

An object or offering that contributes to the enjoyment of a space and benefits its location. Within parks and open space, there are generally 4 categories of amenities: active recreation, passive recreation, natural areas, and site amenities. Types of amenities may include:

- » Active recreation: Playgrounds, fields, sport courts, and swimming pools
- » Passive recreation: Trails, lawn games, gathering spaces, gardens, boat or fishing access points, and pavilions
- » Natural areas: Bird watching and butterfly watching stations, meadows, and stream corridors
- » Site amenities: Benches, bike racks, grills, charging stations, and wi-fi

Blue-Green Infrastructure

This is an approach to urban flood resilience that relies on functional urban green-spaces, like rain gardens, and natural water corridors to hold or divert water after floods.

Canopy

The layer of leaves, branches, and stems of trees that cover the ground when viewed from above. Tree canopy metrics are obtained through high resolution aerial imagery.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

A spending plan for physical improvements to various County assets. The Capital Improvement Plan is a multi-year approach that is approved by the County Council.

Capital Projects

Projects that are funded through the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget. The CIP funds significant investment projects like the creation of new recreation centers, updating facilities, and expanding the park, open space, and trail system.

Chesapeake Rolling Coastal Plain

Ecoregion mostly located within central Maryland with mostly well-drained loam soils and historically covered mostly by Oak-Hickory-Pine forest

Combined Biotic Index

The average of Fish and Benthic Indices of Biotic Integrity scores used by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources for rating biological stream condition

Conservation Easement

A legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust which restricts the future uses of the landowner's property, and binds all future owners of the property. Often specifies such things as the amount of subdivision that is allowed on a property or the number of houses that may be built

Contributing Property

For the purpose of designating historic districts, a "contributing property" is anything that adds to the historic significance of an area that is under consideration for historic district status. A contributing property can be a building or structure of architectural or archeological significance that gives the site historic value and merit. Properties within a historic district are labeled either contributing or non-contributing. Alternatively,

a property within a historic district that is not historically significant is "non-contributing." A property can transition from contributing to non-contributing if it loses architectural or archeological significance. One example of this is if the property receives extensive renovations that significantly alter its historic characteristics.

Corridors

The linear features of the Green Infrastructure Network that tie hubs together and are usually located along rivers and streams.

Deferred Maintenance

Troubleshoots more significant or deferred maintenance needs, including the conversion of underutilized amenities to requested amenities.

Design Review

The Design Advisory Panel (DAP), established in 2008, is a regulatory approval board tasked with reviewing development proposals and plans for architectural character and compatibility with surrounding urban fabric, to promote projects that enhance and revitalize the county, and increase property values. The process in which the DAP assesses these projects for viability is known as design review. Design review provides an advisory assessment of land uses, zoning districts, and plan areas.

Equity

A proactive and strategic approach that aims to alleviate the differences in opportunities, burdens, and needs to improve outcomes for all. Referencing the Maryland Park Equity Analysis Tool, underserved communities in Maryland oftentimes do not have access to parks and recreation facilities due to factors such

as park distance, population density, income, walkability, access to transit, linguistic isolation, and demographic characteristics. In this context, equity is achieved once underserved communities in need of parks and recreation facilities attain sufficient access that is within a 10-minute walk, and 5 or 15-minute drive. Additionally, equity is achieved when everyone in a community has contextual or responsive investment and choice in their parks, open spaces, facilities, programs, and services regardless of skin color, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, income, or social class.

Ecological Services

The services provided to humans by nature such as flood mitigation, pollination, pest control, and beauty, benefit our economy and environment.

Environmental Areas

Sites in Howard County where no sports or organized athletic activities are allowed to protect and conserve natural resources

Environmental Preservation Parcel Easement

A permanent easement that prohibits a preservation parcel from subdivision and most types of development, as specified in the requirements for the Rural Conservation and Rural Residential zoning districts.

Facility

Refers to physical structures owned, operated, and managed by Howard County. These fall into five general categories: (1) administration and maintenance facilities, (2) aquatic facilities, athletic facilities, and golf courses (3) event spaces and pavilions (4) community and nature centers, and (5) historic sites.

Forest Conservation Easement

Established as part of the Forest Conservation Act of Howard

County as an agreement between the developer and the County, where the occupants of a new development, whether owners or tenants, must avoid activities that destroy or degrade protected forest resources that have been placed under the public forest conservation easement

Forest Conservation Plan

Plan required for subdivision and land development projects as condition of approval for development to protect and preserve trees and other natural vegetation in Howard County by promoting environmentally sensitive design

Forest Conservation Program

Law enacted by Howard County in 1993, pursuant to the requirements of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act of 1991, that requires local governments to be the guardian of the public trust in protecting and maintaining forest resources.

Forest Conversation Act (FCA)

Law enacted in 1991 by the state of Maryland to minimize the loss of Maryland's forest resources during land development by making the identification and protection of forests and other sensitive areas an integral part of the site planning process. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Forest Service administers the FCA, but it is implemented on a local level

General Fund

Howard County's General Fund is funded by property and income taxes. It is the principal operating fund for the County and is used to fund most County services such as education, public safety, public facilities and health and human services.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure helps support native plant and animal species while helping human populations by cleaning air and water resources, maintaining natural ecological processes, and

contributing to everyday quality of life

Green Infrastructure Network

Howard County's Green Infrastructure Network maps "hubs" - the most ecologically valuable forests, wetlands, meadows, waterways, and other natural areas - as well as the lands that connect them together, known as corridors

Green Infrastructure Network Plan

Howard County's Green Infrastructure Network Plan (GI Plan) refines and expands on the State of Maryland's Green Infrastructure Network to include areas of local ecological significance.

GreenPrint

Program to identify Maryland's most ecologically significant lands and to target them for preservation

Growth Tiers

Areas designated for different types of development depending on certain characteristics such as sewerage service, agricultural use, forest and green space, and locally designated growth areas

Habitat Management Plans (HMPs)

Implementation priorities defined in the Green Infrastructure Network Plan, including developing habitat management plans for the hubs and corridors, to be implemented by the Department of Planning and Zoning. The habitat management plans include information on existing conditions and recommendations for landowners who would like to maintain or improve the habitat on their property.

Hubs

Ecologically significant natural areas within the Green Infrastructure Network that provide habitat for plant and animal life. They include large protected areas, such as state and regional parks that are managed for natural and recreational

values; community parks and natural areas where natural features and ecological processes are protected and/or restored; and private wetlands and forests that remain in a mostly undeveloped state. Large contiguous blocks of interior forest (forest at least 300 feet from the forest edge) are an essential component of the Green Infrastructure Network as they form the majority of Howard County's hubs.

Index of Biological Integrity (IBI)

A tool of diverse biological information which numerically defines the impact of human influence and biological attributes within water systems

Interpretive and Wayfinding Signage

Interpretive signage is signage that contains information which creates a narrative so that users can more broadly understand the context of the place they are within. Wayfinding signage is intended to provide directional information for moving around a route or locating a destination.

Land Acquisition

The process of gaining ownership of land. The LPPRP often uses this term to address the purchase of land. However, strategies like partnerships, gifting, and land leasing are other mechanisms for land acquisition.

Level of Service

A form of analysis for understanding defined areas of inequity and low access throughout the County. The Level of Service illustrates the overall coverage of County land area that is within a 10-minute walk and 5 or 15-minute drive to a park or recreation amenity. The analysis also considers spatial barriers to access,

including a lack of public transportation, sidewalks or pedestrian-friendly streets, and long drive times.

Maryland Environmental Trust Easement

Easements under the Maryland Environmental Trust to protect Maryland's most treasured landscapes and natural resources for future generations.

Natural Resource Easement

Land where development activity is permanently restricted to preserve natural resources and character

Open Space (*from Program Open Space*)

Parkland set aside to remain in a natural state and conserved for environmental protection and for limited, passive recreational use, as delineated by Maryland's Program Open Space. Have restrictions on public outdoor recreation uses.

Partnership

In the context of the LPPRP, this term describes joint projects, responsibilities, ownership, and implementation duties between the Howard County Department of Rec and Parks, and other groups and organizations. Before becoming formal agreements, successful partnerships would articulate clear expectations and outcomes.

Piedmont Foothills

Ecoregion typically with rolling hills with broad ridges that are irregularly and frequently dissected by drainages. Key link between ecoregions and supports several endemic species and communities

Planned Service Area (PSA)

Established in the 1987 Master Plan for Water & Sewage, the Planned Service Area (PSA) denotes an area planned for public water and sewage.

Priority Funding Area

The state of Maryland's 1997 Planning Legislation introduced laws to help direct state funding to key geographic areas that are slated for future development, growth, and increased investment. These geographies, known as Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), meet the following criteria: all Maryland municipalities, areas between both the Washington and Baltimore Beltways, and lastly, enterprise zones, neighborhood revitalization areas, heritage areas, and existing industrial land. Priority Funding Areas can be county-designated based on state guidelines, and are eligible for funding as long as they are existing communities that are seeking increased industrial and/or economic development. Counties can designate new proposed residential areas that are served by water and sewage through the PFA process, given that they meet density requirements.

Priority Communities

Defined as a community with a higher rate (often the Top 10% of Census Data) of renters, income below the poverty line, more youth under the age of 18, more seniors over the age of 65, limited access to a car, and greater proportions of communities of color. Communities that lie in the Top 10% of multiple categories are more likely to be negatively affected by public health emergencies, natural disasters, or economic downturns. The LPPRP uses these indicators, but also adds open space specific indicators like distance from a park by both driving and walking. All these data points are layered to identify priority communities for investment and intervention.

Private Forest Conservation Easements

Easements on private properties with environmentally sensitive features as selected, planned and managed for 2 years by Howard County's Department of Recreation and Parks

Program Open Space

A State of Maryland program administered under the

Department of Natural Resources, Program Open Space provides financial and technical assistance to areas across the State for planning, acquisition, and/or development of recreation land or open space areas.

Programming

Leisure and recreation events or activities, that may or may not require particular amenities. For example, programming can vary from a self-guided walking tour to a fitness class held at a recreation center.

Peer analysis

A form of analysis which compares one Department's system to similar departments of similar population size and budget, in order to compare assess national medians of Howard County in order to determine the future goals and aspirations

Recreation and Parks Fund

The Recreation and Parks fund is supported primarily by program and facility fees, or revenues.

Reforestation

The establishment, in accordance with the Howard County Forest Conservation Manual, of new forest cover to replace forest resources lost because of development activities.

Scenic Road

A public road or road segment that is included in the scenic roads inventory adopted by the County Council in accordance with section 16.1403

Special Use

Special facilities that have a singular or limited purpose. This includes golf courses, large scale water-related play (aquatic facilities, etc), or other large-scale recreation-related activities.

Stormwater management

Stormwater management consists of the various methods and measures to mitigate the negative impacts of runoff caused by precipitation collecting on impervious surfaces. Stormwater runoff can lead to erosion, flooding, and can cause damage to natural habitats and manmade infrastructure. In order to combat this, stormwater management allows for the infiltration of rainwater and snowmelt through pervious surfaces to replenish natural water systems. See also: Blue-Green Infrastructure.

Stream ReLeaf

Program that helps property owners plant riparian buffers. In order for a property owner to be eligible for this program, they must commit to planting a minimum of a dozen trees or shrubs, and the area to be planted must be within 75 feet of a stream (but not in a utility right-of-way)

SWOT Analysis

A form of analysis that compares and contrasts strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Statistically Valid Survey

A survey sent out to a random sample size of Howard County residents, conducted at a 95% level of confidence that that is large enough to accurately represent the population being surveyed in terms of race and ethnicity, age, gender, and location.

Targeted Ecological Area

Limited number of areas that rank exceptionally high for ecological criteria and that have a practical potential for preservation as defined by the Maryland GreenPrint

Turf to Trees

The Turf to Trees program was created to help alleviate the damaging effects of stormwater runoff by increasing tree coverage throughout the County. The program provides trees and planting services to Howard County property owners with lots of 1.5 to 10 acres in size, free of cost. Since the project started in 2015, over 3,100 trees have been planted. To qualify for the program, property owners must commit to receiving and maintaining a minimum of 50 trees. The property owner must care for the trees provided by the County.

Universal Design

The design of facilities, playgrounds, and open spaces to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, ability, or background.

Under-Served

Neighborhoods, facilities, communities, or populations that have not historically received significant investment, lack amenities, and/or services provided to others.

Urban Canopy

Tree canopy inside the planned service area for water and sewer that does not meet the definition of forest but does provide air quality, water quality, and habitat benefits (As part of Title 16 Subtitle 12)

Walkability

A measure of how friendly an area is to walk. Leading parks, recreation, planning, and design organizations advocate improving access to safe and high-quality parks, green spaces, recreation facilities, and programs that are located within a 10-minute walk to all residents.

Zoning

Zoning is a process by which land is divided and designated for specific uses in order to determine future development decisions. Howard County utilizes zoning ordinances, as enacted by the County Council, to enforce which land uses are permitted, permitted given specific stipulations, or prohibited in certain zoning districts. The Howard County Zoning Regulations are a guiding document that identifies the County's zoning districts based on future development goals and to carry out development and the General Plan.