



Chapter 1.

1. Introduction

Purpose

This document describes the vision for the future growth and management of Watkins Regional Park in Upper Marlboro, MD. Framed in the form of a master park development plan for future renovation, development, and investment within the park, this document lays out the choreography required to achieve these changes in three phases over the next twenty years.

What is a Master Park Development Plan?

Watkins Regional Park has grown organically over the past 40 years; infrastructure has been added and extended, new activities incorporated, and programs expanded as opportunities presented themselves. However, a more holistic approach is now necessary to integrate the community's desires and recognize the limitations in resources while enhancing the role of Watkins Regional Park as a jewel in the county's park system. This master park development plan, the first following the approval of the *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space* (Formula 2040), will guide future investment within the park and identify priorities and phasing recommendations for resource expenditures, choreographing the improvements so that they build upon each other in an orderly and responsible manner.

The park has grown in acreage since the 1970's due to user demand for recreational offerings. Frequented by more than one million visitors a year, which is 300,000 vehicle visits, the park continues to face demands for additional recreational offerings. Park visitation continues to increase due to renewed interest and new attractions as the county and regional population continues to expand. Prince George's County is projected to have 992,701 residents by 2040. Demographics within the county and its Central Region are also changing, as noted in the *2010 Needs and Resource Assessment*, and Formula 2040.

The master park development plan recognizes these changes and lays out a road map for responsive and responsible future development and park renovation over the next 20–25 years. Shaped by a robust civic engagement process, an assessment of existing site conditions, an inventory of the park's natural resources, a recreation program, and a level of service standards assessment, the plan establishes a comprehensive vision for the park. It delineates a means to integrate the undeveloped, protected, western third of the park—rich in natural resources—and the proposed development in the southern section of the park, with its cultural and historic resources.

A master park development plan is conceptual in nature and identifies locations and spatial allocations for future renovations and improvements. Plan concept drawings incorporate considerations of topography, soils, tree preservation, stormwater, and other elements in siting future renovations and improvements. Final facility design and engineering is still required for many or most of the recommended elements in the plan.

Guiding Documents

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation has embraced a complex and proactive planning process for its entire park and recreational system. A framework plan was completed in 2014 for the entire system, and as a result of that process, four master park development planning efforts were funded. The Watkins Regional Park Master Park Development Plan was one of those funded and is the first such effort ever launched for a specific park. Historically, the parks in Prince George’s County have grown in an organic fashion. However, as the county has grown and become more diverse, with competing recreational and leisure demands, a more systemic planning process is needed to successfully align opportunities and funding with documented needs and demands.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is recognized nationally for its superior system, having received more National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Management—6 in total—by the National Recreation and Park Association than any other jurisdiction in the country. Operating and maintaining more than 27,000 acres of parkland, the Department of Parks and Recreation continues to work in partnership with the community to provide high quality, diverse, and comprehensive park and recreation programs.

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation Mission Statement

“In partnership with our citizens, the Department of Parks and Recreation provides comprehensive park and recreation programs, facilities, and services which respond to changing needs within our communities. We strive to preserve, enhance, and protect our open spaces to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations in a safe and secure environment.”

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation Vision Statement

The Department of Parks and Recreation pledges to:

- Provide stewardship of our county’s natural, cultural, and historical resources
- Foster the need of our citizens for recreational pursuits in a leisure environment
- Provide the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership with our diverse community



Formula 2040 (2013) Connectivity, Health & Wellness, Economic Development

The *Formula 2040: Functional Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Open Space* is the foundational framework and vision intended to serve as a reference point for determining the composition of the parks and recreational programs available to residents. The master plan has a timeline projected to the year 2040 and is formulated to meet the criteria of a functional master plan. It will be updated every 5 years in accordance with the re-accreditation requirements of the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). Upon adoption by the Prince George’s County Council (District Council), the Plan became a part of the County’s General Plan.¹

¹ The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County. *Formula 2040*. January 2013. Page 14.

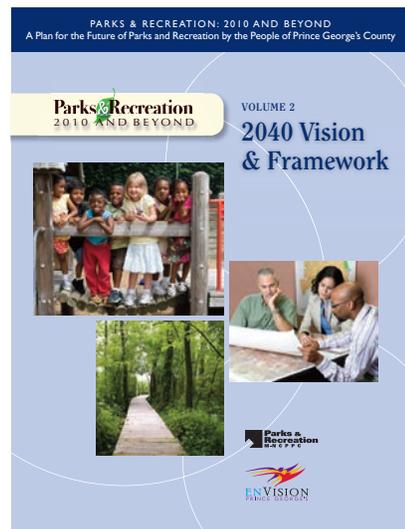
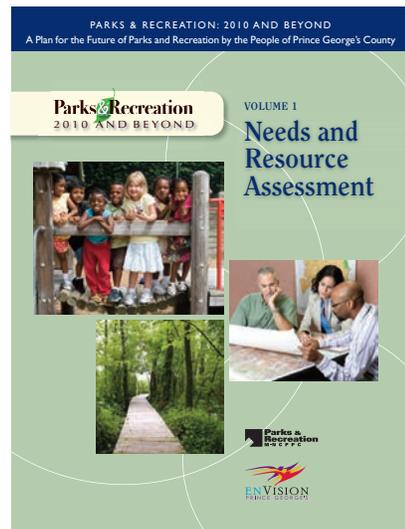
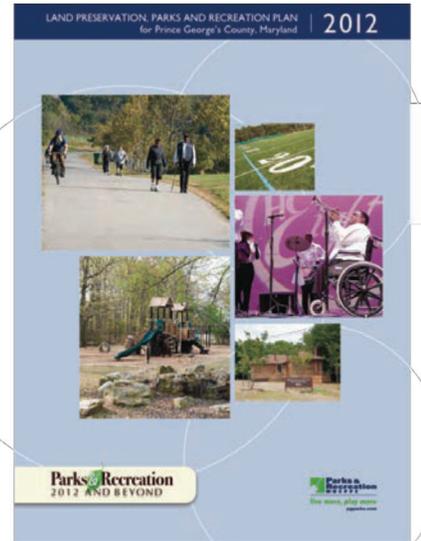
Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2012)

The 2012 *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* for Prince George’s County is a compilation of information from adopted plans, primarily driven by a major planning process undertaken by the Department of Parks and Recreation known as the “2010 and Beyond Plan”, that will be used to guide Prince George’s County in areas related to parks, recreation, land preservation and resource protection. This *Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan* uses current statistical data, demographic information, and needs assessments to address park and recreation planning issues.²

Needs Assessment and 2040 Vision & Framework (2010)

The *Parks & Recreation: 2010 and Beyond* is a two-volume document. Volume 1 identifies Prince George’s County’s recreation programs, parks, trails, and open space needs - now, and for the future. The document provides a strategic focus for the provision of future parks, recreation services, and facilities to meet the needs of a diverse and growing county. The needs assessment and corresponding strategic planning documents will provide a pro-active guide for staff and policy-makers to equitably plan and provide parks and recreation facilities and services throughout the county.³

Volume 2 provides a vision for the future of the parks and recreation system in Prince George’s County as well as a strategic focus for how to make that vision a reality. This volume guides the development of the parks and recreation system for the next 30 years, when the county is anticipated to be largely-built out.⁴



- 2 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan. 2012. Page iii.
- 3 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Volume 1 Needs and Resource Assessment. 2010. page 1.
- 4 The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Volume 2 2040 Vision & Framework. 2010. page 1.

