Watkins Regional Park - Master Park Development Plan

Stakeholder Group
Analysis of Existing Conditions
Level of Service
Vision Key Words
January 24, 2017

M-NCPPC Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

- Operates and maintains more than 27,000 acres of parkland
- "Best in the Nation" - Awarded 6th National Gold Medal Award for excellence in Parks and Recreation Management in 2015
- Watkins Nature Center and Old Maryland Farm certified as a Sustainable Maryland Green Center in 2016

Why plan now?
Plans have been done in the past...

Demographics are changing.
Increasing population in the Central Region
Population is aging and the size of a yard diminishing

Recreation interests are changing.
New activities, changing demographics

Balance natural resources and farmland with recreation and active uses.

Framework Plans
- Formula 2040 (2013)
- Connectivity
- Health & Wellness
- Economic Development
- Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2012)

Limited Expansion Space in the North
- Much of the park is protected
  - Western Branch - a Wetland of Special State Concern
  - Rare and Endangered Species throughout the north
  - Steep Slopes greater than 25%
- TCP2 sites (woodland/forest land protection)
Interactive Survey Question #1
What are the main reasons you visit Watkins Regional Park? (choose all that apply)
- Gather with family/friends
- Personal fitness/exercise (walking, jogging)
- Organized or group sports
- Relax outdoors
- Experience nature
- Activities or features at a specific site (the Carousel, The Green, Nature Center)
- Develop my skills/abilities
- Take children to the playground
- Dog walking
- Picnic
- Special Events
- Other

Interactive Survey Question #2
Of the following destination types, in which are you most interested in seeing improvements made?
- Campgrounds
- Sports fields and courts
- Play areas
- Picnic grounds
- Group picnic shelters
- Train ride
- Carousel
- Mini-golf
- Nature Center
- Agriculture Education Center/Old Maryland Farm
- Natural Areas
- Trails

Interactive Survey Question #3
Are you interested in bringing more of the following activities to Watkins Regional Park?
Arts and Culture Programming
- Concerts, Plays, Performances
- Outdoor Movies/Film Festival
- Photography/Art Classes
- Art Exhibits and Festivals (indoor and outdoor)
- Food and Wine Festivals
- Other

Interactive Survey Question #4
Are you interested in bringing more of the following activities to Watkins Regional Park?
Educational and Recreational Programming
- Kids programs
- Kids day camps
- Teen programming
- Programs for seniors
- Fitness and wellness programs and classes
- General education programs (computers, cooking, babysitting)
- Other

Interactive Survey Question #5
Are you interested in bringing more of the following activities to Watkins Regional Park?
Active Recreation
- Add health and fitness programs
- Improve trail network; add more walking and running routes
- Add a mountain biking course
- Add an archery range
- Add a skateboard park
- Add outdoor fitness equipment
- Add horseshoes
- Add badminton/volleyball
- More playground equipment
- Add disc golf
- Add more outdoor courts (pickleball, tennis, basketball)
- Add more outdoor multi-purpose fields
- Add indoor athletic fields and courts
- Add an indoor or outdoor pool
- Other

Watkins Regional Online Survey Results
Existing Site Features
Most Time Spent Sites (59%)
- Wizard of Oz Playground
- Nature Center
- Old Maryland Farm
- Miniature Golf
- Chesapeake Carousel
- The Green

Most Desired Improvements (46%)
- Trails (26%)
- Nature Center (21%)
- Picnic grounds (17%)
- Old Maryland Farm (17%)
- Play areas (16%)

Least Desired Improvements (13%)
- Carousel (11%)
- Sports fields and courts (11%)
- Campgrounds (8%)
### Watkins Regional Online Survey Results

**Proposed Site Features**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Recreation</th>
<th>Arts and Cultural Programming</th>
<th>Educational and Recreational Programming</th>
<th>Community - Building/Social Features</th>
<th>Picnic Facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More walking and running trails (26%)</td>
<td>• Concerts, plays, performances (46%)</td>
<td>• Arts and Pottery classes (33%)</td>
<td>• Food and drink vendors (21%)</td>
<td>• Picnic facilities (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More health and fitness programs (24%)</td>
<td>• Food and wine festivals (22%)</td>
<td>• Programs for kids (29%)</td>
<td>• Outdoor cafes with plaza seating (20%)</td>
<td>• Casual family picnic facilities (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Indoor or outdoor pool (21%)</td>
<td>• Outdoor movies (30%)</td>
<td>• Kids day camps (19%)</td>
<td>• Rentable wedding or event venues (10%)</td>
<td>• Disc golf (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mountain biking (12%)</td>
<td>• Archery range (12%)</td>
<td>• More directional signage (21%)</td>
<td>• More community small events (20%)</td>
<td>• Nature feature (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multi-purpose fields (5%)</td>
<td>• More playground equipment (12%)</td>
<td>• Nature centers and botanical features (31%)</td>
<td>• Agriculture feature (20%)</td>
<td>• Rentable wedding or event venues (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Survey conducted online between May 24th and August 31st, 2016; 319 Respondents

### Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

#### Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>National Trends</th>
<th>Prince George's Co.</th>
<th>Watkins Demand</th>
<th>Cost Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature Center and Old Maryland Farm</td>
<td>Trend for STEM and Nature Based Activities</td>
<td>Priority for Environmental and Nature Centers</td>
<td>Continued support; find new site where two can leverage space for elementary, middle school, adult learning</td>
<td>Somewhat low, within reason for types of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>Trend encouraging outdoor play in structured and unstructured settings</td>
<td>Strong preference for high quality play areas</td>
<td>High; recommend creating nature-based playground in natural setting</td>
<td>Non-fee activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### New Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aquatic Features</th>
<th>Indoor Pool</th>
<th>High demand in survey results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Splash Pad</td>
<td>No national trend data; evolving trends</td>
<td>High preferences regionally for aquatic activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Gardens and Botanical Features | Desire pleasant natural setting for contemplating beauty |

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For a detailed analysis of the survey results and park LOS conclusions, please refer to the relevant sections of the document. The tables and figures above provide a summary of the findings and recommendations based on the survey data and park usage trends.
Watkins Regional Park Should Support

- **Family Fun.** Activities, spaces, and features that support family togetherness and fun for a whole day in the park—rain, shine or heat of summer.
- **Sense of Place.** Preservation of the landscape, stewardship and sustainability, incorporation of cultural landscape features and elements that express Prince Georges County character and identity, including its African-American heritage.
- **Community Connections.** Park facilities, activities and scheduled events that are predictable in schedule and regularly draw the community together.
- **Personal Health and Fitness.** Trails for running and walking, fitness and health programming.
- **Education and Environmental Learning.** Nature and environmental center, historic farm, wetland and nature trails and works, day camps, natural play, interpretation and environmental science, heritage farmland.
- **Habitat and Wildlife.** Protection and explanation of special features found within the Western Branch, Intact Mature Forest, Farmlands.

Watkins Regional Park Existing Conditions Diagram

**Water Play**

- Two water features proposed for the northern portion of the park
- It is hot in the park in the summer

**Re-purpose the Barns**

- Farm equipment display
- Art and lighting installations
- Community event space
- Concerts
- Weddings
- Park programs
Flexible Green Space
- Event-ready (drainage, anchors for tents and shade, drive-on areas, power)
- Offer concerts and performance space
- Use for festivals, movies, food and wine events
- Outdoor classes
- Dancing/Yoga/Tai Chi/Exercise Programs
- Frisbee playing
- Reading, day dreaming and play

Nature Playground/Play Area
- Getting kids to connect to the nature that surrounds them at Watkins
- As simple as a few woodland elements
- A destination playground symbiotic with the very successful cluster of family attractions
- Incorporate water

Add and Expand Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails
- Trails well-signed for distances and interpretation
- Connect adjacent neighborhoods and the Community Center to the park with paved trails
- Connect new points of interest within existing trail system
- Provide viable alternative to driving
- Provide water and restrooms
- Incorporate runs and other events
- Add bike share and rentals
- Develop farm lanes as bike trails

Next Steps
- Stakeholder Meeting #2 - Discuss Master Park Development Plan program elements week of February 13 (date and time TBD – what works best for everyone?)
- Distribute DRAFT Master Park Development Plan document for review – mid-April 2017
- Stakeholder Meeting #3 - Discuss DRAFT Master Park Development Plan document – early May 2017

Watkins Regional Park
Master Park Development Plan 2016 - 2017
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