



## Watkins Regional Park - Master Park Development Plan

### Stakeholder Group

Analysis of Existing Conditions  
Level of Service  
Vision Key Words

January 24, 2017

**Parks & Recreation M-NCPPC**  
live more, play more  
pgparks.com

**watkins**  
RECREATION CENTER

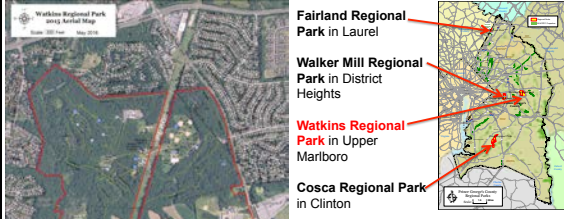
**L/KLA** Watkins Regional Park Master Park Development Plan

## 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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



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**Fairland Regional Park** in Laurel

**Walker Mill Regional Park** in District Heights

**Watkins Regional Park** in Upper Marlboro

**Cosca Regional Park** in Clinton

**One of 4 Regional Parks in the County**

Regional Parks offer unique experiences to County residents while providing neighborhood park experiences to adjacent communities

- 839 acres in size
- Busiest park in the system
  - ~300,000 vehicles annually
  - ~1,000,000 visitors annually
- Acquisition 1964-1996
- Named after Robert M. Watkins, former Chairman of the M-NCPPC

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## 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.

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## Framework Plans


- Formula 2040 (2013)**
  - Connectivity
  - Health & Wellness
  - Economic Development
- Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (2012)**
- Needs Assessment and 2040 Vision & Framework (2010)**



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## 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)



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### 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

7

### 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

8

### 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

9

### 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

10

### 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

11

### 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

- Trails (26%)
- Nature Center (21%)
- Picnic Grounds (17%)
- Old Maryland Farm (17%)
- Play Areas (16%)

#### Least Desired Improvements

- Carousel (11%)
- Sports Fields and Courts (11%)
- Campgrounds (6%)

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



12

## Watkins Regional Online Survey Results

Proposed Site Features

### Active Recreation

- More walking and running trails (28%)
- More health and fitness programs (24%)
- Indoor or outdoor pool (21%)
- Mountain biking course (12%)
- Archery range (12%)
- More playground equipment (12%)
- Multi-purpose fields (5%)
- Disc golf (5%)

### Community - Building/Social Features

- Food and drink vendors (21%)
- More community small events (20%)
- Outdoor café with plaza seating (20%)
- Rentable wedding or event venues (10%)
- Beer garden (10%)

### Picnic Facilities

- Improve shelters (20%)
- Casual family picnic facilities (23%)

### Arts and Cultural Programming

- Concerts, plays, performances (40%)
- Food and wine festivals (32%)
- Outdoor movies (30%)

### Educational and Recreational Programming

- Fitness and wellness classes (33%)
- Programs for kids (29%)
- Kids day camps (19%)

### Service Facilities

- Restrooms (30%)
- Expanded parking (23%)
- More directional signage (21%)

### Cultural and Natural Facilities

- Gardens and botanical features (31%)
- Natural and environmental programs (22%)

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

13

## Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

Feature	National Trends	Prince George's Co.	Watkins Demand	Cost Recovery
<b>Sports</b>				
<b>Athletic Fields</b>	Soccer declining	High interest/demand	Peak months – strong demand	Low level
	Soccer increase; football decrease	Lower priority than softball	Strong demand weeknights in November	Low level
<b>Camping</b>	Slight decline	Low priority	Low use, except a peak fall event tied to softball	Very low level
<b>Tennis</b>	Favorable	Medium desire	Favorable usage	Good level

14

## Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

Feature	National Trends	Prince George's Co.	Watkins Demand	Cost Recovery
<b>Agriculture</b>				
<b>Trails</b>	Favorable	High desire	Qualitative assessment – high demand	Non-fee activity
<b>Nature</b>				
<b>Picnicking</b>	No measureable standards	High desire – individual and group use	Substantial for both (desire more individual)	High level on group rentals

15

## Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

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

16

## Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

Feature	National Trends	Prince George's Co.	Watkins Demand	Cost Recovery
<b>Play</b>				
<b>Summer Ops: Train, Golf, Carousel</b>	Lacking data	Lacking data	Focus groups – priority; solid use	Favorable contributors
<b>Food and Drink Facilities</b>		Desire	Vending provided and well used; food truck site, kiosk structure	
<b>Outdoor Festival and Event Area</b>	Trend for special events and community events	Desire for more events to occur in comfortable settings	Recommend several special event places that can serve multi-purposes and include power to location	

17

## Watkins Regional Park LOS Conclusions

Feature	National Trends	Prince George's Co.	Watkins Demand	Cost Recovery
<b>New Opportunities</b>				
<b>Aquatic Features</b>				
<b>Indoor Pool</b>			High demand in survey results	
<b>Splash Pad</b>	No national trend data; evolving trends	High preferences regionally for aquatic activities	High element on park survey; water-based feature be added, potentially up to two sites to expand distribution w/in park	Non-fee
<b>Gardens and Botanical Features</b>			Desire pleasant natural setting for contemplating beauty	

18



Vision Statement: Key Words		
2040 Goals: Connectivity	2040 Goals: Health and Wellness	2040 Goals: Economic Development
Stewardship	Stewardship	Stewardship
		Middle School
		Education
		Sustainability
		African American
Heritage Farmlands	Heritage Farmlands	Heritage Farmlands
Active Recreation	Active Recreation	Active Recreation
	STEM	STEM
	STEM	STEM
	Environmental Science	Environmental Science
	Agricultural Science	Agricultural Science
Water Play	Water Play	Water Play
Cultural Landscape	Cultural Landscape	Cultural Landscape
History	History	History
Natural Resources	Natural Resources	Natural Resources
	Wellness Zone Park	
Events and Programs	Events and Programs	
Socializing Places	Socializing Places	
Healthy Food and Drink	Healthy Food and Drink	
Family Fun	Family Fun	

20

### 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 farm land.
- **Habitat and Wildlife.** Protection and explanation of special features found within the Western Branch, Intact Mature Forest, Farmlands.

21

### Watkins Regional Park Existing Conditions Diagram



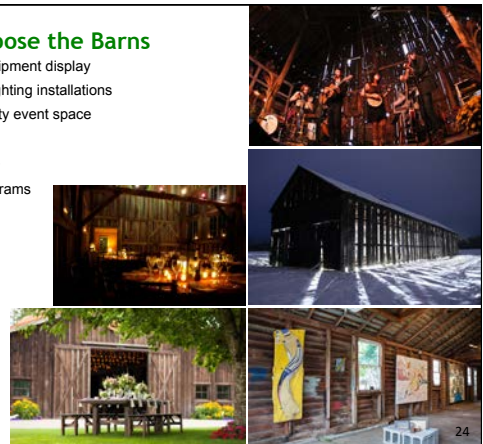
### Water Play

- 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



25

### 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**



26

### 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



27



28

**L/KLA** Thank you for your time today!

### 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**

29

**L/KLA** Contact Information

### Watkins Regional Park Master Park Development Plan 2016 - 2017

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30

**L/KLA** Contact Information