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Chapter 7: Community Facilities: Recreation, Parks and Open Spaces

Summary of Recommendations

- Develop and implement a ~~Recreation and Parks~~ Recreation and Open Space Long Range Plan for all City-~~owned parks~~ facilities.
- Continue to ~~Develop and implement a permanent~~ protection mechanisms for City-owned parkland and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Provide funding for the Park Land Acquisition Fund.
- Create a system of conservation easements for properties identified as suitable (see Chapter 6 – The Environment).
- Explore the feasibility of expanding the Twinbrook Community Center.
- ~~Consider building community amenities in currently under developed neighborhood parks, such as ...~~ Determine whether changing use patterns and changing demographics in the neighborhood warrant changes in park amenities.
- Consider leasing commercial or institutional space in order to provide amenities and programs for residents in the Twinbrook area:
 - Expand activities for seniors within the Twinbrook neighborhoods.
 - Expand activities for teens, with free and low cost activities for teenagers, in the Twinbrook neighborhoods.
- Promote the City of Rockville Recreation and Parks Scholarship Program that encourages individual and corporate giving.
- Fully fund the improvements in the Civic Center Long Range Plan to ensure that the property is sustainable and accessible for current and future residents.
- Continue to monitor and ~~Undertake a~~ review ~~of~~ the City's Recreation and Parks Cost-Recovery policy to determine what adjustments might be required to meet the needs of all residents of the Twinbrook community.
- Review ~~whether using~~ the use majority of the space at the Rockcrest Recreation Center ~~for ballet is as part of any related CIP project to determine~~ the most appropriate use ~~that~~ meets the community's current and future needs.
- Consider a review of the Montgomery County Twinbrook Library to determine if this heavily utilized facility is meeting the community's needs, and when additional space will be needed.
- Montgomery County should move the social service programs out of the former Broome Middle School.
- Do not locate any additional Montgomery County service centers, such as those at Lone Oak and Broome, in the Twinbrook neighborhoods.

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Analysis of Issues

The City provides the majority of the public services and facilities in the neighborhood. Responsibility for services such as education, fire/rescue, and libraries lies with Montgomery County, which is also responsible for a network of human service agencies and programs situated in the study area.

Demographic indicators show that the area is becoming increasingly multi-cultural. This change has an impact on both the kinds of social services that are required, and also on the kinds of recreational activities that appeal to a changing population. Flexible space is required – both indoors and outdoors - that can be programmed to serve the needs of different population groups.

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~~indoors and outdoors – that can be programmed to serve the needs of different population groups.~~

The total parkland for the City is approximately 928 acres, including Redgate Golf Course. Using the 2000 census data, the population for the entire City (47,388), which equates to 16.7 acres of parkland per 1000 population. One-quarter of the City's parkland is located in Planning Areas 7 and 8. The two planning areas have approximately 200 acres of public open space: approximately 21 acres in Planning Area 8, south of Veirs Mill Road, and around 180 acres, including the 153 acres Civic Center Park, in Planning Area 7. Ball fields, playing courts, and picnic areas are located throughout the planning areas. In addition, two large cemeteries provide some measure of open space.

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Planning Area 7 – Parks and Recreation Facilities:

Facility	Area	Owner
Broome Athletic Park and Gym 751 Twinbrook Parkway	7.5 acres Park (19.49 acres total)	Montgomery County. Park area leased by City of Rockville.
Calvin Park 1248 Gladstone Drive	5.9 acres	City of Rockville
Civic Center Park 603 Edmonston Drive Climbing Gym Croyden Creek Nature Center F. Scott Fitzgerald Theater Glenview Mansion	153 acres	City of Rockville
Lone Oak Park Grandin Avenue at Woodburn Road	4.5 acres Park (6.53 acres total)	Park: City of Rockville Facility: Montgomery County
Meadow Hall Elementary School 951 Twinbrook Parkway	8.4 acres	Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville High School 2100 Baltimore Road	30.3 acres	Montgomery County Public Schools
Silver Rock Park Claggett Drive and Maple Avenue	2.5 acres	City of Rockville
Tweed Park Tweed Street	1.4 acres	City of Rockville

Planning Area 8 – Parks and Recreation Facilities

Facility	Area	Owner
Hillcrest Park 1150 Crawford Drive	4.4 acres	City of Rockville
Rockcrest Ballet Center and Park 1331 Broadwood Drive	7.4 acres	City of Rockville
Twinbrook Community Recreation Center and Annex 12920 Twinbrook Parkway	9.2 acres	City of Rockville
Twinbrook Elementary School 5911 Ridgeway Avenue	10.15 acres	Montgomery County Public Schools

Please see Appendices 7 and 8 for additional information on Parks and Recreational facilities in Twinbrook.

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The 2000 U.S. Census puts the total population of Planning Areas 7 and 8 at 10,847, which equates to 18.2 acres of parkland per 1000 population. This exceeds the national standard of 10 acres per 1000 population as set by the National Recreation & Park Association guidelines. But these statistics can be misleading. In Planning Area 8 alone, the 5,414 residents (2000 U.S. Census) share 21 acres, or approximately 3.8 acres per 1000 population, while in Planning Area 7, with a similar population (5,433 - 2000 U.S. Census) there are more than 33 acres per 1000 population.

The Twinbrook ~~Station~~ ~~Commons~~ development will provide some measure of open space, but not recreational open space, such as ball fields, and there are very few opportunities within the area to create additional open space. The City and the neighborhood associations should investigate possible open spaces of whatever size for pocket parks, especially near the Twinbrook Metro Station.

~~The City recently adopted a Park Zone as a permanent protection mechanism for City parkland. such Alternative means, such as a system of conservation easements or an enhanced Open Space Zone would also add an additional layer of protection to both City parkland and other open space resources, because it would have to be re-zoned in order for building to proceed. Consideration should be given to the creation of a mechanism to protect City-owned parkland so that future residents may continue to enjoy it.~~

The Park Land Acquisition Fund in the City's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) has been assigned "placeholder" status and is not funded. This gives the City little ability to act quickly should suitable open space become available.

Cost of Services

The City implemented a system of Recreation and Parks cost recovery in 2004. All City owned facilities are expected to recover a certain portion of their costs, with the exception of places such as City ~~Hall and the passive~~ parks. In the Twinbrook area there is a five-year cost recovery target of approximately 75% for Civic Center costs, and 50% for Twinbrook Community and Recreation Center costs. By contrast, the five-year goal for the Lincoln Park Community Center is 20%.

~~The City's City's target for overall cost recovery within the Department of Recreation and Parks Department's overall cost recovery target is 36%. target is 50%.~~ While managing the City's expenditures is a laudable goal, recreation and parks programs serve a social and community purpose, which may not be met if programs are too expensive for a majority of citizens in the area. However, reducing cost recovery in Twinbrook would have a fiscal impact on the revenue produced in Recreation and Parks programs.

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~~The City's cost recovery targets appear to be are also higher than other jurisdictions in the metropolitan area. For example, Arlington County recently conducted a review of its Public Spaces that found that their total cost recovery for the management of public spaces is 16%. This figure is estimated to be relatively low compared to agencies nationwide, which average between 25-50%, but within the middle range of the larger urban communities surveyed. These figures indicate that the City of Rockville's targets in Twinbrook are is on the high end of the average. Of larger communities surveyed, the target range for cost recovery was 25-50%, placing the City's target of 36% within this range. Nonetheless, some community members have expressed concerns about whether prices at the TCRC are beyond the means of some neighbors. The City should periodically evaluateconsider whether continuing at this high level is desirable if the social and community needs of all the City's residents are to continue to be met.~~

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~~For more information see the Arlington, Virginia Public Spaces Master Plan: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/ParksRecreation/forums/openspace/ParksRecreationForumsOpenspaceOpenSpaceMain.aspx>~~

Youth Services

The City offers a wide range of activities for children from pre-school childcare to teen activity events. ~~There is a demand for pPre-school and childcare programs and these es~~ should be expanded if space ~~wai~~s available and demand is warranted.

In Planning Area 7 the Civic Center complex offers specialized programs and camps at the Nature Center, the Climbing Gym, and the Theatre. These activities are for children from all parts of the City and the surrounding areas. Planning Area 8 features a Summer Playground program that serves approximately 130 children, and The Kidz Club After School program serves approximately 90 children. In addition, approximately 13% of the registrants in the after school program for middle school children in the CHAT Room are from the Twinbrook area. The Twinbrook Community and Recreation Center (TCRC) offers a supervised after school program for children attending Twinbrook and Meadow Hall Elementary Schools and a Literature Class in the summer. Organized programs are offered in the afternoons during the summer for TCRC members.

TCRC is open to adults and teens over 15 years old after 7:00 p.m. (8:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and during the summer). The Rockcrest facility is devoted solely to ballet, leaving teenagers without a “neutral” place to meet with their friends and neighbors. The City's Recreation and Parks Department has established programs to serve teenagers, and these could be expanded in the Twinbrook area, if additional facility space could be made available.

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Senior Citizen Services

According to the 2000 U.S. census there are 1,839 people over 60 (809 men and 1,030 women) in the 20851 zip code area. In Twinbrook, 219 seniors are Senior Center members.

Senior services available to Twinbrook residents include free bus transportation to and from the Senior Center; a resident annual discount membership of \$25 for Senior Center membership; active and passive activities at the Twinbrook Community Recreation Center, especially during the day for seniors with a TCRC membership; Twinbrook Park, Civic Center Park; FSF Theatre; and Glenview Mansion. However, based on community input, some members of the community feel that there is a lack of “neutral” unprogrammed enclosed space within the community for senior residents to meet and interact with their neighbors.

City Owned and Managed Facilities

The Civic Center

The historic Glenview Mansion and the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theater are located on the Civic Center site, and provide cultural and recreational amenities for City residents, and others from surrounding communities. In previous years CIP modifications on the Civic Center property focused on enhancements to specific buildings. Now, as programs have increased, the Civic Center property should be considered as a whole, rather than in isolated parts. A Task Force, consisting of representatives of the Recreation and Park Advisory Board, the Cultural

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Arts Commission, The Historic District Commission, The Mansion Docents, as well as City Staff, was set up to create a comprehensive plan to address the Civic Center issues. The City retained John Milner Associates, Inc. and OCULUS to prepare a Long Range Plan for the Glenview Mansion and Grounds. The Plan was completed in July 2002 and has served as a decision-making tool on the future management and use of the property. The Task Force developed a list of issues that needed attention and assisted in the development of the Request for Proposal to hire an engineering consultant.

In April of 2004, the City contracted Apex Engineering to:

- Modify existing parking lots to potentially increase capacity and to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- Examine and redesign entrance road for more direct access to main parking lot and regulate traffic flow.

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- Examine alterations of existing traffic flow with options of restricting access on main road to Glenview Mansion and creating new two-way traffic in another location.
- Develop better internal pedestrian access to park facilities.
- Design functional drop-off and service areas.
- Develop a phased approach for construction/modifications to each area and present a detailed cost estimate for each.

Apex has worked with City Staff, the Task Force and neighborhood residents to examine the issues. Design options and modifications have been developed that respect historical and significant landscaping issues, storm water management and traffic requirements. Once the Mayor and Council have approved the final designs, the City will address the phasing in of modifications. Funding has been set aside in the CIP starting in 2010 to address ADA issues first, and then modify other areas in subsequent years.

Twinbrook Community and Recreation Center

The Twinbrook Community and Recreation Center (TCRC) was established in October 1999 to provide a variety of activities for residents and space for community events; offering classes, special events, and fitness opportunities; complimenting the school curriculum for youth; and providing information and registration for City programs. The Center is not open to unsupervised youths of 14 years old and younger after 7:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, after 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday and during school breaks and the summer.

There are approximately 70,000 user visits to the center each year. TCRC operates on a membership basis and is open to City of Rockville residents and non-residents. There are a variety of membership options available. In 2005 there were 1,100 individuals with Annual [\(All numbers will be updated\)](#)

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Center Memberships, just over half of whom, 555, are City Residents

- 500 members are 18 years and under
- 570 members are 19 years to 64 years
- 30 members are 64 years and older

In 2005 there were 200 individuals with Annual Fitness Memberships, 138 of whom were City residents:

- 20 members are 18 years and under
- 155 members are 19 years to 64 years

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- 25 members are 64 and older

As of May 2005 there were 120 individuals with Monthly Fitness Memberships. TCRC offers a full range of facilities: a full size gymnasium, computer lab, two multipurpose rooms, fitness center, lobby area, annex building – used as a child care center and for evening meetings, City Police office and an outdoor playground, together with tennis and basketball courts. Issues currently facing the TCRC include: unsupervised children in the Park, the difficulty of motivating and involving teenagers in activities and homework, an increasing number of rentals and activity during the day, damage to the facility, and patrons stealing from other patrons.

-Space constraints limit the availability of “neutral space” for residents (of all ages, but youth and seniors particularly) to drop in and meet their neighbors. In addition, the cost recovery system ~~potentially could~~ ~~may~~ lead to an increase in activity fees, further reducing the number of residents who can afford to enjoy them. Further cost-savings might require a reduction in the Center opening hours and staff and additional rentals to private groups. Scholarships are available ~~to low-income residents on an ad hoc basis~~, and these can meet the needs of ~~residents~~ ~~youths~~ who wish to participate in a particular program. The City always welcomes donations to the Recreation Fund “People Helping People” and more information on how to make a donation can be found at <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation> or by calling 240-314- 8620.

Events such as Halloween, Valentines and Mother’s Day parties are offered at a low cost and are very well attended. TCRC staff is seeking sponsors for special events to keep costs to a minimum. Telephone 240-314-8830.

The Rockcrest Ballet Center and Park (Rockcrest Recreation Center)

The Rockcrest Ballet Center and Park (Rockcrest Recreation Center) is centrally located within the community at 1331 Broadwood Drive. The Park is available to the public at large, but the Center is used solely for ballet lessons and practice. Starting in FY2011¹⁰, the City plans to renovate and expand the Center in order to make it into a multi-use facility, and provide space for the expansion of the dance facilities. [Plans call for adding a multi-purpose room and/or converting the facility to a general Community Center.](#) Both senior citizens and teenagers appear to feel underserved in the Twinbrook neighborhoods and the City may wish to consider whether ballet is the most appropriate use of the facility, or whether it might be put to a use that would serve the needs of the community that surrounds it, rather than the City as a whole.

(Please see Appendix 7 for a listing of Recreation and Parks facilities and programs offered in Twinbrook.)

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Montgomery County Owned and Operated Facilities**Schools:**

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has established a set of objective criteria and a transparent process to handle the expansion and/or modernization of schools:

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The “over-capacity” trigger is 92 seats, or four classrooms.

- The MCPS Demographer looks at the school grade-by-grade and year-by-year to determine growth patterns.
- A Feasibility Study is scheduled into the 6-year CIP. This study is conducted to determine the needs.
- Planning and construction money will then be allocated through the CIP.
- The County Council has instructed MCPS not to announce an expansion date until the Feasibility Study is completed and the planning and construction money have been allocated.

There are two elementary schools, one high school and one special needs school within the planning area.

Twinbrook Elementary
5911 Ridgeway Avenue
Site size 10.15 acres.
Zoned R-60 residential.

Twinbrook Elementary School was built in 1956, renovated in 1986 and includes a gym, which is also used for community activities. The School’s 10.15-acre site offers the option of adding an addition.

- The City uses the school for a wide range of recreational programs for both youth and adults.
- MCPS plans to retain the site as a school for the life of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan.

Meadow Hall Elementary
951 Twinbrook Parkway
Site Area 8.37 acres.
Zoned R-90 residential.

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The City of Rockville's CIP [has](#) allocated \$200,000 as a contribution towards construction of a "community sized" gym at Meadow Hall. This [haswill](#) funded a larger main court, space for a small bleacher section and other amenities that will allow for a greater level of community use programming.

- The City uses the school field for recreational programs.
- MCPS plans to retain the site as a school for the life of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan.

Rockville High

2100 Baltimore Road

Site area 30.32 acres:

Zoned R-90 residential.

- The City uses the school field for recreational programs.
- MCPS plans to retain the site as a school for the life of the Twinbrook Neighborhood Plan.

Carl Sandburg Learning Center

451 Meadow Hall Drive

Site area 7.6 acres:

Zoned R-60 residential.

The Carl Sandburg Learning Center is scheduled for modernization. A Feasibility Study has been completed and planning is scheduled for FY 2010.

- The Learning Center provides services for disabled children and does not have gymnasium or classroom space that are suitable for community use.
- MCPS plans to retain the site as a school.

Community-Level Human Services

Lone Oak Center

1010 Grandin Avenue

The Lone Oak Center is owned by Montgomery County but offers community support through a number of non-profit groups. Lone Oak Center is well maintained, offers services to the community, and appears to be well run.

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The adjacent Lone Oak Park is [leasedowned](#) by the City of Rockville and is programmed for recreational use.

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- MCPS has no plans to return the site to school use.

Broome Middle School (former)**751 Twinbrook Parkway****Site area 19.49 acres:****Zoned R-90 residential.**

MCPS closed Broome Middle School more than twenty years ago. The site is now owned by Montgomery County, which uses it as office space for the Montgomery County Board of Elections and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). A number of community services are provided.

- The gymnasium and field are leased to the City of Rockville for recreational use.
- MCPS has no plans to return the site to school use.

(Please see Appendix 8 for a full list of human service programs located in Twinbrook)

The community has expressed continuing concern over activities at the Broome site and Montgomery County should move the social service programs out of this location, as they are not compatible with a residential community or an adjacent elementary school. ~~Moving the social service programs out would open up additional space for the Board of Elections, who have been “good neighbors” and do not generate an unacceptable amount of traffic.~~

This Plan supports the existing County service center at Lone Oak, but recommends that no additional County service centers be located in the Twinbrook neighborhoods.

Twinbrook Library:**202 Meadow Hall Drive**

The Twinbrook Library, one of two County libraries located within the City, is situated at the intersection of Meadow Hall Drive and Veirs Mill Road. It was renovated in 1999 – 2000.

The Library offers books and media as well as a wide range of community activities, from children’s story times to workshops and classes for all ages. It is well used and often crowded. This Plan recommends that a review be conducted to determine if it is meeting the community’s needs and when additional space will be needed. The Library’s location, adjacent to the Twinbrook Shopping Center, means that activity in one area tends to spill over to the other. Library staff echoes the concerns of area business owners about loitering and security. (Please see Chapters 4 and 8 for recommendations about the area.)

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Twinbrook Swimming Pool
13027 Atlantic Avenue
Site area 4.62 acres.
Zoned R-60 residential.

The Twinbrook Swimming Pool Corporation is a private organization that owns a pool complex on approximately 4.62 acres that are adjacent to Twinbrook Park. It operates as a private swimming pool and members of the community may purchase a membership. This Plan recommends that the base zone remain R-60 and confirms the recommendation made in the City's Comprehensive Master Plan. Confirm City Master Plan recommendation:

“Maintain the R-60 zone for single family housing on the Twinbrook Swimming Pool Corporation site if it is developed or acquire the site for additional park and green space to increase the size of the park.” Should the City acquire the property for

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parkland, steps should be taken to permanently protect it as parkland. Consideration should be given to retaining the swimming facilities for public use (funded by the City of Rockville or by the City in partnership with Montgomery County).

Churches

There are eightseven church sites within the Twinbrook planning areas, all of which lie on residentially zoned land. (See Chapter 2: Neighborhood Land Use, and Chapter 3: Housing.) Several of the church sites cater to more than one congregation. The churches have proved to be “good neighbors” in the past and none of them have presented a problem to the neighborhood in terms of excess traffic. This plan therefore supports the churches continued presence in the area, and recommends that their sites continue in their present use.

Emergency Services, Fire and Rescue

The City of Rockville Police provides police response to the two Planning areas. The Rockville Volunteer Fire Department provides fire and rescue services from their Station 23 on Rollins Avenue and Station 3 on Hungerford Drive.

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Crime and Public Safety

The population of the Twinbrook neighborhood will increase over the coming years with the development of Twinbrook [Station Commons](#) and the possible redevelopment of smaller [er](#) areas such as [industrially zoned properties on the I-2 properties on](#) Lewis Avenue, [the Taylor property on Halpine Road](#) and [the the I-1 property on](#) Ardennes Avenue/[Halpine Road sites](#). In the short term, additional police patrols must be planned for to keep the community safe and secure. In the long term, as Twinbrook [Station Commons](#) builds out, the City should consider establishing a Police substation in the Veirs Mill Road commercial area, as currently there is no substation in the eastern portion of the City. (See Chapter 4.)

The City offers a Mediation Service to help resolve issues at the neighbor-to-neighbor level.