Upper Paint Branch Trails – Staff Recommendations
Requested Planning Board Action

Provide guidance and feedback on staff recommendations for a natural surface trail network in the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park system.
People generally prioritized the same 3 top experiences:

- Natural surface trails
- Paved multi-use trails
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats
Natural Resource-Based Recreation, 2017 PROS Plan

“... any leisure activity conducted outdoors that is dependent on a particular element or combination of elements in the natural environment. These elements cannot be easily duplicated by human effort.”

Includes a vast range of pursuits including bicycling, hiking, running, and horseback riding, bird watching, nature photography, wildlife viewing, kayaking, rowing, canoeing, and fishing.
Upper Paint Branch Trails

Study Area Boundary

- The plan area is located in eastern Montgomery County, near Burtonsville, Fairland, Cloverly, and White Oak.
  - South of MD 198
  - East of New Hampshire Avenue
  - North of Fairland Road
  - West of Old Columbia Pike

Area Master Plans

- Cloverly
- White Oak
- Fairland

Functional Plans

- 2016 Countywide Park Trails Plan
- 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan (and Bicycle Master Plan update currently in-progress)
- 2009 ICC Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment
Study Area Boundary
Special Protection Area (SPA)

A part of the County that has high-quality or unusually sensitive water resources

- (i.e. high quality streams, sensitive wetlands, and soil prone to erosion) or other environmental features)
- An impervious cap of 8% for entire area, both public and private land
Best Natural Areas (BNA)

Contain the best examples of park natural resources in Montgomery County.

- Large areas of contiguous, high quality forest
- Rare, threatened, endangered or watch-list species
- Unique plant communities
- Aquatic communities rated good or excellent
- Special Trout Management Areas (COMAR Title 8)
- High quality wetlands (COMAR Title 26)
- Exceptional scenic beauty
Objectives

1. Provide a sustainable, multi-use natural surface trail network in the Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park

2. Link new park trails to community destinations and also to the larger countywide park/trail system

3. Offer loop experiences where possible

4. Provide wayfinding and interpretive signage to encourage easy access to the future natural surface trail system and showcase outstanding natural resources
Sustainable Natural Surface Trails

- Support current and future use with minimal impact to the area’s natural systems
- Produce negligible soil loss or movement
- Sheds water efficiently
- Recognize that pruning or removing of certain plants may be necessary for proper maintenance
- Require little re-routing and minimal long term maintenance

Above – Example “Maximum Sustainable Grade” trail building guideline for sustainable natural surface trails.

*Image credit: Managing Mountain Biking; IMBA’s Guide to Providing Great Riding*
Methodology

Evaluate existing people’s choice/unsanctioned trails
- Ones that are or can become sustainable, and thus included in sanctioned park trail network
- Ones that should be left alone, not included in sanctioned park trail network

Identify key community destinations for connectivity opportunities
- Parks and park trails
- Regional bikeways
- Schools, libraries and recreation centers

Conduct field walks, natural and cultural resource inventory and analysis

Develop phasing based on quick service delivery
All Recommendations
Existing Conditions

Existing sanctioned trails
Existing Conditions

Desirable destinations

- Columbia Local Park including the Marilyn Praisner Community Center and Library.
- Other destinations
  - Maydale Nature Center
  - Dr. Charles R. Drew Elementary School
  - Cloverly Elementary School
  - Cloverly Local Park
  - Briggs Chaney Middle School
  - Benjamin Banneker Middle School
  - Fairland Elementary School
  - Paint Branch High School
Staff Recommendations

Trail Access Points

- Neighborhood street connections without using private property.
Staff Recommendations

Phase 1 Trail Planning, Design and Construction
(Fall 2018)

1. Cloverly Parcel trail loop
2. Peachwood Parcel trail loop
Staff Recommendations

Phase 2 Trail Planning, Design and Construction
(2-5 years)

3. Fairland Rd to Countryside NP
   Estimated 1.6 miles

4. Bradshaw to Columbia Local Park
   Estimated 1.8 miles

5. Temporary on-street bypass
   Estimated .7 miles

6. Columbia LP to Peach Orchard Rd
   Estimated 1.5 miles

7. Left Fork trail to Maydale CP
   Estimated 1.2 miles
Parkland Ownership Gap

5 Phase 2

- Trail gap on-street bypass
  
  *Estimated .7 miles*

- Parkland constraints require a temporary on-street route around the gap using neighborhood streets
Staff Recommendations

Phase 3 Trail Planning
(5+ years)

8. Countryside NP to Briggs Chaney Community Garden

9. Land acquisition or easement

10. Maydale CP to New Hampshire Ave

11. Patuxent connector
Parkland Ownership Gap

9. Phase 3

- Parkland Ownership Gap
  - Land acquisition or easement
  - Study for a permanent trail that will require:
    - Acquire enough private land to accommodate the through-trail connection; or
    - Seek an easement across private land to allow trail users to link the two areas of parkland to the north and south.
Staff Recommendations

Phase 4 Trail Planning
*(Timing TBD)*

- Briggs Chaney underpass
Phase 4

Briggs Chaney Rd Safety Concerns

Sightline issues due to horizontal curve in road

North side view facing west

South side view facing looking east

South side view facing west
Phase 4

Briggs Chaney Road Culvert
- April 2017 – Inspected by MCDOT
- “Satisfactory Condition”
- MCDOT says no improvements along road are planned within next 5 years

Explore alternative ways to go under road
Phase 4

Briggs Chaney Rd underpass

Aerial view
Staff Recommendations

Remove from 1997 Cloverly Master Plan due to insufficient parkland ownership to construct sustainable trail and avoid stream.
Staff Recommendations

Interpretive Opportunities

A. Spencerville Camp Meeting Interpretive Signage
B. Prehistoric Camps and Quarries Interpretive Signage
C. Conservation and Nature Center Interpretive Signage
D. Add to Existing Mill Signage
All Recommendations

Phase 1 (Fall 2018)
1. Cloverly Parcel trail loop
2. Peachwood Parcel trail loop

Phase 2 (2-5 years)
3. Fairland Rd to Countryside NP
4. Bradshaw Dr to Columbia LP
5. Temporary trail gap on-street bypass
6. Columbia LP to Peach Orchard Rd
7. Left Fork trail to Maydale CP

Phase 3 (5+ years)
8. Countryside NP to Briggs Chaney Rd
9. Land acquisition or easement
10. Maydale CP to New Hampshire Ave
11. Patuxent connector

Phase 4 (Timing TBD)
- Briggs Chaney Rd crossing

Remove from Plan
- Cloverly Master Plan
Project Schedule

- **January-June 2017**: Project team conducts background research & analysis, develops project scope
- **June 22, 2017**: Community Meeting #1
- **June-October 2017**: Project team uses community input to develop and shape preliminary recommendations
- **November 8, 2017**: Community Meeting #2
- **December 2017 – July 2018**: Project team uses community input to refine recommendations
- **Planning Board Work Session – July 26, 2018**
Public Comments – Broad Themes

- Proximity to houses, loss of privacy
- Crime and illegal activities
- Stormwater management
- Safe access from public roads, safe road crossings
- Safe parking
- Public process
Next Steps

**TODAY**
- Feedback and guidance from the Planning Board

**Fall 2018**
- Initiate Phase 1 loop trails
- Begin evaluating a sustainable trail alignment between Fairland Road and Countryside Neighborhood Park
Thank you.

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