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## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element



### OVERVIEW <sup>800</sup>

This Element addresses the future of parks, recreation, and open space in the District of Columbia. It recognizes the important role parks play in recreation, aesthetics, neighborhood character, and environmental quality. It includes policies on related topics such as recreational facility development, the use of private open space, and the creation of trails to better connect the city's open spaces and neighborhoods. <sup>800.1</sup>

The District has benefited from a legacy of far-sighted master plans that recognized the importance of parks and open space to the future of the city. The McMillan Plan of 1901 was prepared in part to beautify and better organize the District's open spaces—the National Mall that we know today and much of Rock Creek Park are among its legacies. Many of the early plans prepared by the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission placed a similar emphasis on improving the city's open spaces and parkways. <sup>800.2</sup>

These historic plans have resulted in 7,600 acres of permanent open space and parkland in the District of Columbia, and one of the highest ratios of park acreage per resident in the country. Nonetheless, when the District achieved Home Rule and set about developing its first Comprehensive Plan, a “park and open space element” was not included. This responsibility was left to the federal government, primarily because over 85 percent of the District's parkland is managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and is not under the city's jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> <sup>800.3</sup>

Many of the policies within this Element express the District's perspectives on the federally-owned parks that serve city residents. While the District has limited jurisdiction over these parks, the Comprehensive Plan acknowledges and supports the essential role that these lands play in meeting the recreational needs of District of Columbia residents, employees, and visitors. <sup>800.4</sup>

Including a chapter on parks, recreation, and open space in the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan is important for a number of reasons:

- First, the District itself owns over 900 acres of parkland and there is a need for a coordinated set of policies for their management.
- Second, access to quality parks and open space is a top priority for District residents—regardless of who owns the land. The fact that most of the city's open space is federally controlled suggests that joint policy planning for these assets is essential.
- Third, the city is changing, which means recreational needs also are changing. Policies are needed to make sure that new park and recreational opportunities are provided and existing parks are improved to meet the needs of a changing and expanding population. <sup>800.5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Policies for the Park Service lands are contained in individual General Management Plans prepared by the NPS, and are also included in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. There have also been several joint District/Federal park planning initiatives launched since the 1960s.

## DISTRICT ELEMENTS

### **Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

The overarching goal for parks, recreation and open space is as follows:

Preserve and enhance parks and open spaces within the District of Columbia to meet active and passive recreational needs, improve environmental quality, enhance the identity and character of District neighborhoods, and provide visual beauty in all parts of the national capital.

The Comprehensive Plan is supplemented by a more detailed Parks Master Plan prepared by the District Department of Parks and Recreation in 2005-2006. That document should be consulted for more detailed guidance on facilities, recreational programming, and direction for specific District parks. Key data from the Parks Master Plan, including “benchmarking” data that compares the District to peer cities and the findings of a 2005 resident survey, are cited in this Element to provide context for the policies and actions. <sup>800.6</sup>

### **PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE GOAL <sup>801</sup>**

The overarching goal for parks, recreation and open space is as follows:

*Preserve and enhance parks and open spaces within the District of Columbia to meet active and passive recreational needs, improve environmental quality, enhance the identity and character of District neighborhoods, and provide visual beauty in all parts of the national capital. <sup>801.1</sup>*

## **POLICIES AND ACTIONS**

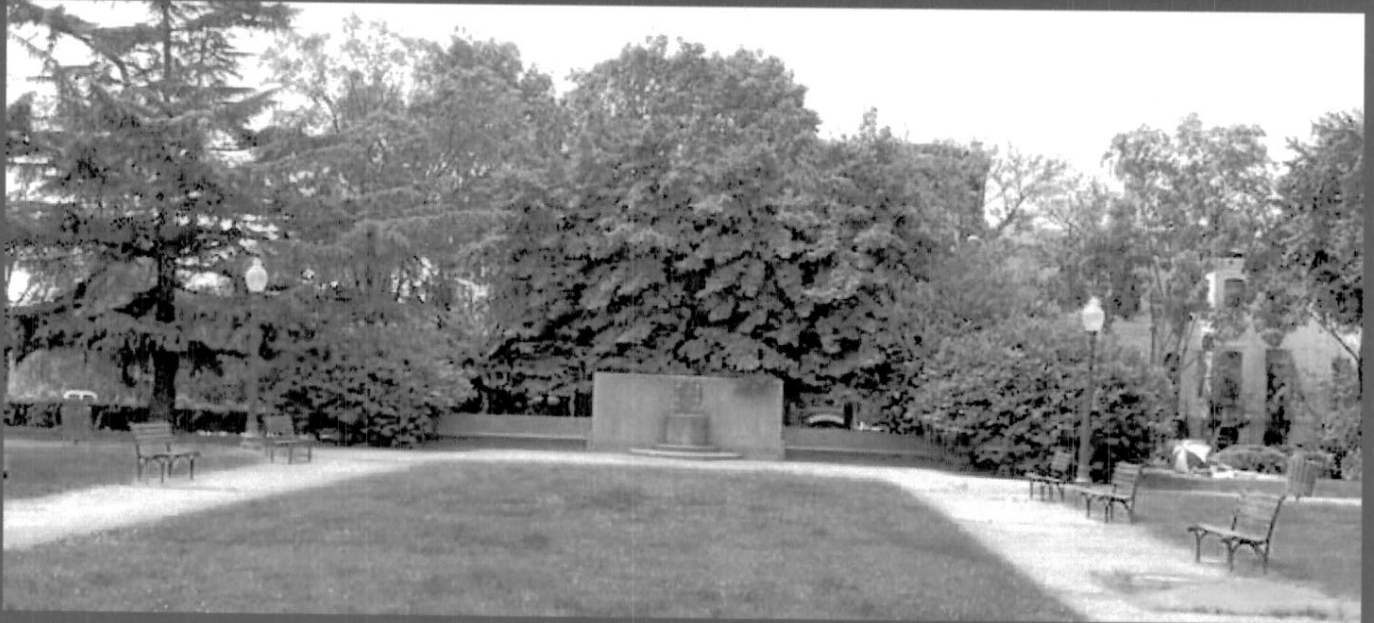
### **PROS-1.0. Park Planning and Land Management <sup>802</sup>**

This section of the Element focuses on parks that are owned and operated by the District of Columbia. Policies also express the District’s perspectives on the federally-owned parks that serve city residents. <sup>802.1</sup>

The District manages an inventory of 359 properties, comprising 917 acres. More than two-thirds of these properties are small open space triangles formed by the intersection of diagonal avenues and the city street grid. The remainder includes 69 recreation center grounds, 50 neighborhood parks, and four large natural areas. <sup>802.2</sup>

For planning purposes, park activities are usually divided into two categories: active recreation and passive recreation. Active recreation is associated with sports or play activities and requires facilities such as playgrounds, ballfields, tennis courts, and swimming pools. Passive recreation emphasizes the open space aspect of a park and includes activities like hiking and picnicking. In Washington, the presence of District-owned parks and National Parks provides a unique blend of active and passive recreational opportunities. <sup>802.3</sup>





## The Parks Master Plan <sup>803</sup>

In 2006, the District Department of Parks and Recreation drafted its first Comprehensive Master Plan since its establishment in 1942. Over the past 60 years, aspects of the park system have been addressed in strategic plans and other District reports, but there has been no overarching guide.

The Draft Parks Master Plan sets the stage for a new and exciting future for park and recreation services and facilities in Washington. It provides strategic direction to address the public's core issues and is intended to improve park management and operations in the city. It includes a detailed assessment of recreational needs in each of the District's 39 neighborhood clusters, along with an assessment of the facilities serving each cluster. These assessments are intended to serve as tools for prioritizing future capital improvement projects.

Specific outcomes of the Draft Parks Master Plan include:

- New service standards for parks, recreational programs, and facilities
- Comprehensive information on the recreational needs of DC residents
- Projections of expected future needs, based on growth and demographics
- Information on customer usage and satisfaction
- Identification of current and potential shortfalls
- Strategies for overcoming shortfalls, including land acquisition and programming changes

The Draft Parks Master Plan includes seven strategic policy directives to guide park planning and programming during the coming years. These directives call for an enhanced identity for the District's park system, new programs to serve a diverse community, improvements to facility condition, better communication, more effective financial management, improved partnerships, and greater accessibility and connectivity. It also includes specific action steps and priorities for implementing these directives.



## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element

Most of Washington's parkland consists of passive Natural Resource Areas. Neighborhood and community parkland is much more limited and amounts to less than one acre per 1,000 residents in many parts of the city.

### ▪ *Action PROS-1.1-B: Parks Master Plan*

Implement the Master Plan for the District of Columbia Parks System. Update the Plan at least once every five years, or as needed to reflect changing conditions and needs. Use the Parks Master Plan as the basis for the annual capital improvements program request for park and recreational facilities. 804.11

### ▪ *Action PROS-1.1-C: Master Plans for Individual Parks*

Prepare master plans for individual parks as funding allows, and implement capital improvements that are consistent with these plans. 804.12

## PROS-1.2 Closing the Gaps 805

At first glance, the District of Columbia appears to have a more than adequate supply of parkland. There are 12.9 acres of parks per 1,000 residents, compared to 9.0 acres per 1,000 in Baltimore; 7.2 acres per 1,000 in Philadelphia; and 7.0 acres per 1,000 in Boston (*Trust for Public Land, 2004*). However, most of Washington's parkland consists of passive Natural Resource Areas. Neighborhood and community parkland is much more limited and amounts to less than one acre per 1,000 residents in many parts of the city. By contrast, suburban communities typically set standards of 4 or 5 acres of active parkland per 1,000 residents. 805.1

Even neighborhoods with abundant parkland may lack access to recreational amenities and facilities. Other neighborhoods have parks that are too small to meet local needs. These neighborhoods include areas where significant growth is taking place, straining the ability of the facilities to meet neighborhood needs. Improved access to parks is also needed through improvements to bus service, enhancement to pedestrian and bicycle routes, as well as better security. 805.2

Recreational needs are also a function of demographics and density. The need for parks may be more critical in some areas of the city due to:

- Limited mobility due to low rates of auto ownership
- Larger numbers of children
- Larger numbers of apartment dwellers living in housing without useable open space
- Denser development patterns without the aesthetic amenities afforded by open space
- Larger concentrations of "at-risk" youth who may benefit from programmed recreational activities 805.3

These factors suggest that special attention be given to increasing useable open space in the city's densest neighborhoods, even where parks already exist. 805.4

### **Policy PROS-1.2.1: Closing the Gaps**

Achieve a better distribution of parks in all neighborhoods of the city. This will require a priority on improving or expanding parks in: (a) more densely populated neighborhoods with limited open space; (b) areas that are more than ½ mile from a neighborhood or community park (or a federal park that serves an equivalent function); (c) areas where substantial new housing growth is expected, based on the forecasts of the Comprehensive Plan; and (d) areas where the existing recreation centers and parks are in poor condition. 805.5

## DISTRICT ELEMENTS

A park can be a symbol of a neighborhood's vitality and character, or an emblem of its disorganization and lack of spirit. Too often, our parks have not been treated as the resource for revitalization and community empowerment that they should be.

### **Policy PROS-1.2.2: Improving Access**

Improve access to the major park and open space areas within the city through pedestrian safety and street crossing improvements, bike lanes and storage areas, and adjustments to bus routes. <sup>805.6</sup>

### **Policy PROS-1.2.3: Responding To Community Change**

Update and improve existing parks in response to changing demographics, cultural norms, and community needs and preferences. Parks should reflect the identity and needs of the communities they serve. <sup>805.7</sup>

#### ▪ *Action PROS-1.2-A: Bus Routing*

Consult with WMATA to locate more bus stops on neighborhood and community parks, particularly those with recreation centers. Currently only 28 percent of the city's recreation centers have a bus stop; the District has set a target of increasing this percentage to 50 percent by 2014. <sup>805.8</sup>

#### ▪ *Action PROS-1.2-B: Public Involvement*

Consult with ANCs and local community groups on park planning and development to understand and better address resident priorities. <sup>805.9</sup>

## **PROS-1.3 Protecting the Value of Parkland <sup>806</sup>**

A park can be a symbol of a neighborhood's vitality and character, or an emblem of its disorganization and lack of spirit. Too often, our parks have not been treated as the resource for revitalization and community empowerment that they should be. Some suffer from deferred maintenance, illegal dumping, and crime—others struggle to accommodate competing needs within limited space. A lack of consistent policies on park management has led to use conflicts within some parks and in some cases, land use between parks and the neighborhoods around them. <sup>806.1</sup>

Washington's parks should be viewed as a limited and precious resource, no less valuable than the neighborhoods they serve. This requires that a consistent set of principles be followed for park design, programming, and planning. The following policies provide guidelines for systematically managing the District's parks to protect their long-term value. They are supplemented by more detailed park management guidelines in the Parks Master Plan. <sup>806.2</sup>

### **Policy PROS-1.3.1: Balancing Competing Needs**

Manage the District's parklands to protect and enhance their open space character while also accommodating a range of recreational activities. Park activities and facilities should be designed in a way that makes the best possible use of each space while minimizing conflicts between different recreational uses. <sup>806.3</sup>

### **Policy PROS-1.3.2: Parks and Environmental Objectives**

Use park improvements to achieve environmental objectives such as water quality improvement, air quality improvement, and wildlife habitat restoration. <sup>806.4</sup>





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### **Policy PROS-1.3.3: Protecting the Triangle Parks**

Maintain the District's open space triangles as neighborhood amenities supporting a range of activities. These activities should vary based on the setting of each triangle, and should range from planted "islands" to more active spaces. The triangles should be designed in a way that mitigates stormwater runoff and air pollution from adjacent corridors. 806.5

### **Policy PROS-1.3.4: Conversion of Parkland / Open Space**

Protect the basic function of District parks as public open spaces and prevent parkland conversion to other uses. In the event that there is no other viable alternative to conversion, require that an equivalent or greater area of parkland is acquired and improved in the vicinity of the impacted site. 806.6

### **Policy PROS-1.3.5: Park Buildings**

Require any new structure on District-owned parkland to be sited to minimize impacts on existing recreational activities and facilities, avoid encroachment onto athletic fields, and to retain as much of the site as possible as useable open space. Public buildings that do not relate to recreational needs should be discouraged from locating on city parkland, especially in areas with parkland deficiencies. 806.7

### **Policy PROS-1.3.6: Compatibility with Adjacent Development**

Design and manage park activities and facilities including recreation centers in a way that is compatible with nearby residential and commercial uses. 806.8

*See also the Historic Preservation and the Urban Design Elements for additional policies and actions related to historic natural areas and the squares, circles and triangles associated with the L'Enfant Plan. See the Infrastructure Element for policies on the siting of communication towers (in parks and elsewhere)*

#### ▪ *Action PROS-1.3-A: Open Space Zone*

Establish an Open Space zone district to cover District-owned parks, community gardens, and other lands where long-term open space preservation is desired. Develop limits on lot coverage and impervious surface coverage in this zone that recognize and protect the basic value of parkland as open space. The zoning provisions should ensure that any future construction within parks is limited to park-related uses and facilities. 806.9

#### ▪ *Action PROS-1.3-B: Transfer of Triangles to DPR*

Consider the transfer of maintenance responsibilities for triangle parks from the District Department of Transportation to the Department of Parks and Recreation to recognize their primary function as parkland. 806.10

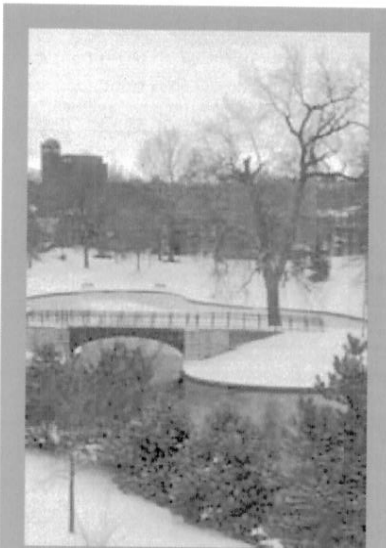
*See also the Environmental Protection Element for policies related to preventing development on land adjacent to parks that would hinder access, destroy views, or otherwise compromise the value of parkland.*

#### ▪ *Action PROS-1.3-C: Site Plan Review*

Require that plans for the redesign of individual parks or the development of park facilities are reviewed by appropriate District agencies to ensure that they advance the city's goals for better public recreation facilities, environmental protection, open space preservation, historic preservation, public safety, and accessibility. 806.11



## DISTRICT ELEMENTS



“Make bigger parks truly useable, safe, attractive, for residents.”

— Participant at a Comprehensive Plan workshop

### PROS-1.4 Meeting the Needs of a Growing City <sup>807</sup>

The addition of thousands of new jobs and households over the next 20 years will increase demand for programmed parks, open space, and recreational activities. Existing parks will accommodate more users, particularly in neighborhoods where high-density infill development is planned. New parks will be needed to serve new and growing communities. Given the built out character of the city, finding land for such parks will be difficult and expensive. The District must seize opportunities for parkland dedication on its largest redevelopment sites and take steps now to ensure that parks are provided elsewhere as the city grows. <sup>807.1</sup>

Presently, the District Department of Parks and Recreation operates approximately 3.5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 households in the city. If 55,000 households are added in the next 20 years, almost 200 acres of new parkland would be needed to sustain this ratio. The 100 acres of new parks planned at the Southwest Waterfront, the near Southeast, Poplar Point, Hill East, and elsewhere along the Anacostia River will meet some of this demand. Substantial areas for new parks should also be designated in the reuse plans for any large federal sites that are transferred to the District or used for private development in the future. <sup>807.2</sup>

Creating new parks in built-up neighborhoods will be more challenging. There is competing pressure to use public land for other purposes, particularly revenue-generating uses like housing and office development. The city does not have a dedicated funding source for parkland acquisition (such as an impact fee) and capital improvement funds are typically used for new facilities rather than to buy vacant land. Acquisition may occur through a variety of means, such as donations and grants. Open space may also be set aside within new projects through development agreements and planned unit development amenity packages. Such open space should be usable and accessible and address open space needs of the area. <sup>807.3</sup>

#### Policy PROS-1.4.1: Park Acquisition

Acquire and improve additional parkland to meet the recreational needs of existing and future residents. This should occur both through the expansion of existing parks, and the development of new parks. <sup>807.4</sup>

#### Policy PROS-1.4.2: Acquisition Methods

Use a variety of methods to acquire and improve parkland, including easements, donations, land purchases, and park set-asides on new development sites. Recognize the impacts of new development on the need for additional park and recreational facilities, and mitigate impacts through dedication of parkland or in-lieu payments. <sup>807.5</sup>

#### Policy PROS-1.4.3: Parks on Large Sites

Include new neighborhood and/or community parks on large sites that are redeveloped for housing and other uses that generate a demand for recreational services. <sup>807.6</sup>

#### Policy PROS-1.4.4: Parks on Surplus Land

Acquire and convert abandoned or tax delinquent land, surplus rail or road rights of way, and other land not in productive use into recreational use where feasible and appropriate, particularly in parts of the city that lack adequate access to parkland. <sup>807.7</sup>





## Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element

### The 2005 Parks Survey

808.4

One of the outcomes of the city's 2006 Parks Master Plan was a resident survey that assessed the demand for recreational facilities in the city. A total of 421 responses were tabulated, including representative samples from each of the city's eight wards. Key findings were:

- 61 percent of the respondents had visited a DPR park in the last 12 months; 46 percent had visited a recreation center
- 37 percent of the respondents rated the condition of DPR parks as good or excellent; 46 percent rated them as fair or poor
- Half of the respondents (50%) indicated they use the city's National Parks for recreation
- 17 percent of the respondents spent more than 8 hours a week on recreation activities
- The most popular recreational activities were walking/jogging (43%), playground use (23%), swimming (24%), and picnicking (23%)
- About 56 percent of respondents indicated they walked to their local park; however, even more respondents said they drove (68%)
- Only about 16 percent of the respondents indicated they had participated in a DPR program during the last 12 months. The reasons residents gave for not participating included lack of information (36%), lack of time (18%), and concerns about personal safety (16%).
- The highest priority expressed by respondents was the maintenance of existing parks, fields, and playgrounds. Maintenance of recreation centers was also a top priority. Lower priorities were the development of new play fields, new recreation centers, and small neighborhood parks.

### Policy PROS-1.4.5: Park Amenities on NPS Land

Where consistent with other policies in the Comprehensive Plan and NPS plans, and where supported by nearby neighborhoods and needs assessments, encourage federal government projects that would provide new recreational amenities such as soccer fields, picnic areas, and trails serving District residents on national parkland. 807.8

### Policy PROS-1.4.6: Parks in Employment Growth Areas

Provide new parks and open spaces in areas of expected employment growth. Small pocket parks, plazas, and other open spaces should be created in the vicinity of the New York Avenue Metro Station, the Southeast Federal Center, the east end of Downtown, and the South Capitol Street Corridor to provide visual relief and space for outdoor seating and passive recreation. 807.9

#### ▪ Action PROS-1.4-A: Park Impact Fee

Study the feasibility (including potential fiscal and economic effects) of adopting a park impact fee that would require residential developers to help cover the cost of parkland acquisition and improvement. Such a fee would be based on a standard amount per dwelling unit or square foot, with the proceeds used to acquire or improve nearby parkland. 807.10

#### ▪ Action PROS-1.4-B: Mixed-Use Zones

As part of the review of the city's zoning regulations, revise the provisions for mixed-use zones to consider requirements for useable recreation space or payments in-lieu to meet recreational needs. 807.11

*See also the Educational Facilities Element for policies on the use of school recreational facilities and lands.*

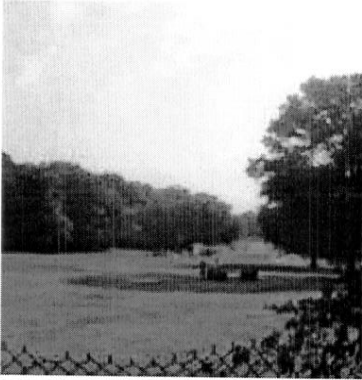
## PROS-2.0 Recreational Facilities 808

While the previous section of this Element focused on park planning, this section focuses specifically on park facilities. 808.1

The District currently operates 69 recreation centers, four specialty recreational facilities, 74 playgrounds, 99 athletic fields, 138 tennis courts, 31 swimming pools, and hundreds of basketball courts. These facilities are used to provide recreational services to residents in all parts of the city. Department of Parks and Recreation activities range from aquatics, quilting, and environmental education to martial arts, personalized weight training, and even poetry slams. Many of the programs are targeted toward specific age groups, such as seniors and teens. Others are designed for persons with special needs or for families. 808.2

Demand for recreational programs—and the facilities that accommodate them—is expected to grow in the future as population grows. Demand will also be affected by cultural changes, new technology, sports and entertainment trends, and demographic shifts. The growth of the senior population, in particular, will influence future recreational needs in the city over the next 20 years. The text box at left provides an indication of current recreational habits and trends in the city, based on a 2005 resident survey. 808.3





*Langston Golf Course is part of an open space network that spans both banks of the Anacostia River*

### PROS-3.0 Open Space Networks <sup>811</sup>

The District of Columbia is characterized by four outstanding and distinct networks of open space:

- The Monumental Core, including the National Mall and adjacent areas in East and West Potomac Parks
- Rock Creek Park and the linear parks along its tributary streams, extending from the Potomac River to the Maryland border
- The Fort Circle Parks, forming a “ring” of open space approximately five miles out from the city center
- The Anacostia and Potomac parklands, including linear parks along tributary streams <sup>811.1</sup>

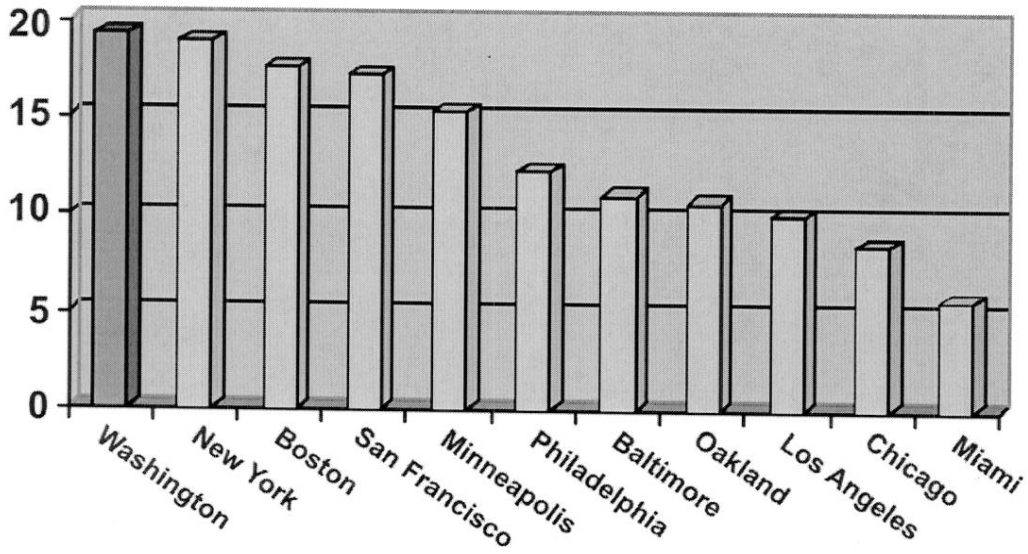
Each of these areas is profiled in more detail below. Together, they comprise 6,700 acres of parkland, or about 18 percent of the city’s land area. Because almost all of this land is under the control of the National Park Service, the policies presented here are intended to express the District’s aspirations for their long term management. They are statements of the District’s values and priorities, to be consulted by our federal partners as they plan and manage these important properties. <sup>811.2</sup>

This section of the Comprehensive Plan also includes a special focus on park and open space planning for Washington’s waterfronts. The need to improve connectivity between our open spaces through trails and greenways also is addressed. Policies on these topics are supplemented in Section PROS-4.0 with a discussion on “functional” open spaces that may augment this network, further contributing to community needs, environmental quality, and economic value. <sup>811.3</sup>

Figure 8.2 compares the total parkland acreage within the District of Columbia to other high density US cities, using data from a recent analysis by the Trust for Public Land. <sup>811.4</sup>

DISTRICT ELEMENTS

Figure 8.2: Parkland Open Space, DC Compared to Other Cities 811.5



*The District ranks first among the 11 cities shown in terms of parkland acreage as a percent of total land area. Despite the apparent abundance of parkland, however, this resource is not evenly distributed across the city. Many residents still lack access to parks and natural areas.*





**PROS-3.1 Sustaining and Enhancing the Federal Open Space Systems** <sup>812</sup>

**The National Mall and Environs**

Although the District of Columbia does not have jurisdiction over the National Mall and the adjoining open spaces in East and West Potomac Parks, these are arguably the most visible and high profile parklands in the city. They project the image of Washington to the world and attract millions of visitors each year. The future of the landscaped glades between the US Capitol and the Potomac River is the focus of national debate as the need for new monuments and memorials is balanced against the need to retain the Mall's historic form, sight lines, and open quality. The National Capital Planning Commission has prepared several important plans on these issues, including the Legacy Plan and the Monuments and Memorials Master Plan. Both plans seek to preserve the historic proportions of the Mall and expand the open space network to new areas along South Capitol Street and the Anacostia River. <sup>812.1</sup>

Several planning initiatives for the National Mall have been completed or are underway. In 2000, the National Park Service completed a Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park. The approved plan provides the management framework and flexibility needed to manage and protect the site for the presidency, and the public. In addition, in 2004, the non-profit organization National Coalition to Save Our Mall launched the National Mall Third Century Initiative (3C Initiative). The mission of the 3C Initiative is to renew the vitality of the Mall through creative public use and wise stewardship for the next century. Finally, the National Park Service, as managers of the National Mall, will be preparing a plan for its future over the next three years. <sup>812.2</sup>

**Rock Creek Park**

Rock Creek Park is the largest contiguous open space within the District, encompassing over 2,000 acres along the Rock Creek Valley and its tributary streams. The park's scenic landscapes provide a respite from the cityscape of Washington. Each year, more than two million people visit the park to hike, picnic, play, and enjoy its rugged beauty. More than 12 million people a year use the park roads for commuting or scenic driving. In 2005, the National Park Service completed a General Management Plan for the largest unit of Rock Creek Park, providing guidance on how to best protect natural resources and manage visitor services. The goals of the GMP are to preserve and perpetuate the ecology of the Rock Creek Valley, protect archaeological and historic resources, provide for education and exploration, and create opportunities for recreation that are compatible with the park's natural and cultural setting. The GMP itself includes management "prescriptions" that will guide future land use decisions and issues regarding road closures and traffic management. <sup>812.3</sup>



**The future of the landscaped glades between the US Capitol and the Potomac River is the focus of national debate as the need for new monuments and memorials is balanced against the need to retain the Mall's historic form, sight lines, and open quality.**

## DISTRICT ELEMENTS

### **The Fort Circle Parks**

At the start of the Civil War in 1861, a series of fortifications was built around Washington to protect the nation's capital from a Confederate invasion. Among the fortifications were Fort Stevens—site of an 1864 battle; Fort Reno—the highest point in the District of Columbia; and Fort Dupont—the largest park east of the Anacostia River. After the Civil War, most of the 68 forts and 93 batteries were dismantled and the land was returned to its pre-war owners. Before they disappeared completely, a number of fort sites were purchased by the federal government and developed as parkland. The Fort Circle greenbelt featured prominently in the McMillan Plan of 1901, and with the advent of the automobile was proposed for a 23-mile circumferential parkway around the growing city (the Fort Drive). <sup>812.4</sup>

A General Management Plan (GMP) for the Fort Circle Parks was prepared in 2003. The GMP's primary objectives include protection of ecological and historical values while accommodating local, recreational interests. The GMP seeks to remedy issues such as the deteriorated state of the parks' historical earthworks, concerns about visitor safety, and the lack of visitor services and interpretive facilities. Among the planned improvements are a new hiking trail linking the forts through existing parkland, new recreational features, coordinated signage, and new public access points. <sup>812.5</sup>

### **The Potomac and Anacostia Parklands**

The two rivers and their associated tributaries such as Watts Branch and Pope Branch provide an important link in the District's open space network. They provide protection for sensitive natural habitat, scenic beauty, and water-oriented recreation for District residents and visitors. Washington's waterfront open spaces actually encompass an area larger than all of Rock Creek Park. However, a lack of continuity between the waterfront parks hinders their ability to function as an open space "network". Many of the parks are disconnected or are cut off from one another by highways, railroads, industry, and other barriers. As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Plan, a riverwalk linking the individual Anacostia Parks into a system has been proposed and partially funded. <sup>812.6</sup>

Policies for the waterfront are presented in the section 3.2 of this Element. <sup>812.7</sup>

#### **Policy PROS-3.1.1: Monumental Core**

Preserve the integrity of the National Mall open space, and advocate for federal plans and programs that protect this area from inappropriate or excessive development. <sup>812.8</sup>

#### **Policy PROS-3.1.2: East and West Potomac Parks**

Work with the federal government to protect and enhance the great open spaces of the monumental core beyond the National Mall, such as Hains Point and the Tidal Basin parklands. Consistent with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, support the use of these areas for outdoor cultural events and celebrations, and for recreational activities and amenities that serve District residents and visitors. <sup>812.9</sup>

#### **Policy PROS-3.1.3: Rock Creek Park**

Ensure that the District's land use and transportation decisions support the conservation of Rock Creek Park as a national scenic resource. Actively participate in discussions about the management of park resources, including roadways, recreational facilities, and environmental quality. <sup>812.10</sup>

#### **Policy PROS-3.1.4: Tributary Parks**

Maintain the scenic open space qualities and ecology of the city's stream valley parks, including tributaries to the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers as well as tributaries to Rock Creek. Ensure that development adjacent to stream valley corridor parks does not compromise visual and ecological values and access to natural and forested areas. <sup>812.11</sup>

*See the Environmental Protection Element for additional policies on stream protection.*

