



MCPB Item #   9  

Date: May 27, 2010

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** May 20, 2010

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *M Bradford*  
Gene Giddens, Acting Deputy Director for Park Operations *Gene Giddens*  
John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *J Hench*

**FROM:** Charles Kines, Planner/Coordinator, Park Planning and Stewardship Division  
Brooke Farquhar, Park and Trail Planning Section Supervisor, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *Brooke Farquhar*

**RE: Potential Agricultural Incubator on Parkland**

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### Parks staff asks the Planning Board to review and comment on:

- Small farm/agricultural incubator concept on parkland
- Preliminary program of requirements
- Site Selection Criteria
- Ranking of "hubs"
- Guidance on next steps

### Summary Overview

Montgomery County's [Green Economy Task Force Report](#) – publicly released on March 25, 2010 – includes a recommendation for a small farm incubator in the County to support the growth of local organic farms. Exhibit A includes the pages from the report that discuss this new program. The small farm/agricultural incubator could be generally modeled after the [Intervale Center](#), a farm incubator in Burlington, Vermont, that has been in operation for more than 20 years. The County Executive is asking the Planning Board and Montgomery Parks to identify potential parkland that could be suitable for a pilot agricultural incubator. The Task Force report recommends that the Department of Economic Development provide other financial, technical and business assistance to new farmers who would participate in this incubator program. The report is silent on funding sources for this proposed program.

According to the report, the County and region have a huge unmet demand for locally grown, organic produce and the County's agricultural economic potential will not be fully realized until entrepreneurial farmers are given affordable access to land, equipment, training and marketing assistance. Not only would an agricultural incubator provide a boost to local farmers and the local economy while supporting the Agricultural Reserve, it would help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, dependence on fossil fuels and harmful effects of pesticides in the County.

Over the past several months, Parks staff attended meetings with local farmers interested in this new program. After establishing a preliminary program of requirements and site selection criteria, staff analyzed and ranked groupings of suitable sites for locating a pilot agricultural incubator on parkland. These groupings, or "hubs" would be located to take advantage of available housing and office space for the program. During the roundtable discussion, Staff will present the analysis and ranked options for the Board's review and guidance.

Park staff also has consulted with several stakeholder groups, including the Audubon Naturalist Society (ANS), Montgomery Countryside Alliance (MCA) and West Montgomery County Citizens Association (WMCCA). Specifically, staff would like to thank Dolores Milmoe (ANS), Caroline Taylor (MCA) and Ginny Barnes (WMCCA) for sharing their views and expertise during our study.

## Background

On March 25, 2010, the County Executive released the final report from the Green Economy Task Force. The Green Economy Task Force was established in 2009 to provide expert guidance and input as the County develops a comprehensive "green economic development strategy." The Task Force consisted of representatives from a wide array of public and private interests. The report includes recommendations for many new programs as well as ideas to modify existing programs in order to promote a more sustainable future for the County while also greening its economy.

Among the recommendations is a small farm or agricultural incubator to encourage new farmers to produce local, organic "table food" closer to the County's population centers and markets. The cost of land is considered by many to be the largest barrier to new farmers developing new, locally-focused enterprises in Montgomery County. The County Executive, therefore, is asking M-NCPPC to provide free or subsidized land for this new incubator.

The Department of Parks currently leases 935 acres of its parkland to farmers growing commodity crops such as corn and hay. Under Commission Practice 6-51, *Leasing Commission-Owned/Controlled Parkland for Agriculture*, originally adopted in 1978 and amended in 1983, the agricultural use of parkland is considered an interim use, rather than a core mission of the Department. See Exhibit B.

Lease agreements are primarily with large-scale, federally-subsidized commodity farmers who use heavy modern machinery. These farmers, although "local" (they own large tracts of farmland elsewhere in the County), are not growing table food. The notable exception is Butler's Orchard – a large pick-your-own farm that leases 70 acres of Goshen Recreational Park. Additionally, the Red Wiggler Farm at Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park is a local CSA (community supported agriculture) that grows organic table food while providing jobs and training to developmentally disabled adults. Lease agreements are not currently with small, organic farmers using smaller-sized parcels of land.

## What is an incubator?

An incubator is a government-sponsored program designed to provide new entrepreneurs with some or all of the elements below, with the goal of creating jobs and stimulating the economy:

- Free or subsidized office space
- Information and Education
- Technical and Legal Assistance
- Advocacy and Marketing Assistance
- Financial start-up costs for new companies

Montgomery County currently has an incubator (aka “business innovation”) program for start-up companies specializing in life sciences and advanced technology.

A small farm or agricultural incubator would likely include all the standard or typical services above as well as some additional specialized services for new farmers:

- Free or subsidized land, and associated buildings and infrastructure
- Free or subsidized farming equipment and machinery
- Technical assistance on specialized farming techniques

As previously noted, the Green Economy Task Force Report is silent on funding sources for this proposed program.

Similar to Intervale, new farmers would “incubate” for a predetermined number of years to learn local organic farming practices, establish their enterprise and brand, build market-share, earn and save income and establish credit. After incubating, these farmers then would set off on their own, purchase or lease private farmland, ideally in Montgomery County, with a particular focus on local, organic table food. Local restaurants and grocers would purchase their foods and related products, thus creating a sustainable cycle of local investment in organic farming in the County. An additional benefit of the incubator might be the creation of “green jobs”, related industries (e.g., canneries), and the reduction of pesticide use, of carbon emissions resulting from shorter shipping distances for produce, and the re-establishment of larger-scale produce and dairy farming in the County, while contributing to the protection of the County’s Agricultural Reserve.

## Intervale Center

The Green Economy Task Force envisions that Montgomery County would consider the Intervale Center in Vermont as a model for its new small farm incubator. The Intervale Center is a 350-acre farm located along the Winooski River just outside the municipal boundaries of Burlington, Vermont. Since 1988, this non-profit farming enterprise has been supporting viable farms, increasing access to local and organic food, improving soil fertility, protecting water quality through stream bank restoration, and educating young people about agriculture and healthy food. Of the 350 acres, 120 acres are tillable farmland while the remaining 220 acres include forest, wetlands, a compost facility, a tree nursery and an at-risk youth farm. Approximately 30 of the 120 acres of tillable land are leased from the City of Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation, 60 acres from a local farmer, and the remainder is owned by the Center.

The Center nurtures and strengthens community food systems, and serves as a farming incubator for up to 12 farms as well as up to 150 community garden plots. It provides local, organic produce for 500 households and numerous local restaurants. The Center also provides low-income households with



access to sustainably grown food, supports new farms for recent immigrants, and annually recycles 30,000 tons of waste which is used to create and sell compost.

The Center's "Farms Program" removes start-up barriers that typically challenge new farmers. Key components of this program include:

- Providing access to training, land and capital
- Mentoring (sharing farmers' experience and expertise)
- Fostering a farming community (to reduce social isolation)
- Helping farmers establish a unique identity (branding)
- Producing and selling food to local markets

Each year, between one and three new farm businesses join the program as incubators, receiving subsidized rental rates, business planning support and mentorship from established growers. Farms range in size from 1 acre to 50 acres, with 8.7 acres the average size. Since the Center's inception, 32 farmers have incubated. Sixteen moved on successfully to independent operations nearby, and 16 have failed (but all were on-site when they failed, not after they left). Farmers do not live on-site, but Burlington is less than one mile away. Farmers share all equipment.

Intervale's annual budget is approximately \$1 Million. Fifty percent of income/revenue is derived from earned income (farmer leases, produce sales via CSAs, conservation nursery sales, etc), while the other 50 percent comes from grants, divided equally between foundations and individual donors.

## **Potential Agricultural Incubator on Montgomery County Parkland**

The Green Economy Task Force recommends that the County Executive create a small, organic farming incubator in Montgomery County similar to Intervale. To minimize program costs, the County is asking the Department of Parks to identify and dedicate suitable parkland to use as the incubator site. Since the Department currently administers 13 leases with farmers who grow commodity crops such as high quality hay, corn and soybeans, the replacement of some of that land with an agricultural incubator would be consistent with current practices. 935 acres of parkland are currently under some sort of agricultural lease. Sites range in size from a few acres to over 100 acres. See Exhibit C, a map showing all agricultural leases on parkland.

When the Commission acquires land, it often does not have resources to develop planned facilities for several years. Agricultural leases allow the land to remain undeveloped while generating modest income for M-NCPPC. Leases are negotiated at market rates and customarily are comprised of a five year lease with our option to renew for 3 additional five year terms (total of 20 years). Among other provisions, lessees are required to respect stream buffers, limit pesticide use, and meet other environmental standards. Leases are managed by the Property Management office.

Many of these sites are located in the Agricultural Reserve. In some cases an agricultural lease is a temporary use of parkland until such time the Department is ready to implement or construct a master planned facility. In other cases, an agricultural lease may be a long-term venture (such as Butler's Orchard). Most of the lease agreements include clauses that allow the Department to terminate the lease with reasonable advanced notice.

## Preliminary Program of Requirements

After meeting with farmers and key agency staff, Park Planning staff developed a preliminary program of requirements (PPOR) for a small farm incubator on parkland. The requirements can be divided into two categories: 1) land or site issues; and 2) infrastructure and facility improvements.

**Site requirements.** The land should be tillable, unforested, and environmentally unconstrained. Although in some cases tillable land may not be needed, for example produce grown in greenhouses, raising free range chickens, and growing produce hydroponically, generally it is highly desirable. The land should ideally have prime agricultural soils, although soil can be reconditioned (3-5 years). The land should be unprogrammed with no conflicts with existing master plans. Finally, the existing zoning for the site should allow farming and the surrounding land uses should not conflict with active farming.

**Infrastructure requirements.** The site should have adequate access to water (surface or ground) and electricity, with approvable septic. Ideally, it should also have paved access to a public road, or at least the ability to accommodate a future paved road. The agricultural incubator will need a pole barn, an additional shed or barn (lockable) for equipment storage, and ideally a building for administrative offices with a meeting room and housing for the administrator and a few farmers. Farmers stressed that this last requirement is highly desirable not only to reduce commute times for farmers traveling to the site (and minimized the carbon impacts resulting from emissions), but also to nurture the social community of farmers and to increase site security. Additionally, the tillable acres will require deer fencing to protect the crops.

## Site Selection Criteria

Using the preliminary program of requirements, the Department conducted a GIS-based land assessment to identify suitable parkland for the agricultural incubator. We initially attempted to pinpoint a large 300 acre site similar to Intervale, or a series of smaller sites that could be grouped into farming clusters. Our analysis did not reveal any large sites similar to Intervale, however, we identified many smaller to medium size sites between 18 and 127 acres that could be grouped into clusters or hubs.

Our analysis started by highlighting parkland with a current agricultural lease. As mentioned previously, 935 acres of parkland are under some sort of agricultural lease. We then filtered those parks to isolate those that are located in the Agricultural Reserve. The Agricultural Reserve was established to protect the rural character of the County as well as preserve local farming. The Agricultural Reserve contains most of the best farmland in the County in terms of overall acreage as well as prime soils. It also is where most of the existing agricultural economy and farming infrastructure are located.

We then filtered all sites to evaluate parkland that is tillable (prime soils), unforested, and environmentally unconstrained. Sites with existing infrastructure were then identified including any existing underutilized cultural or historic buildings that might serve as offices or housing. We also wanted to dwindle down the list to find sites with access to public water.

Finally, we evaluated potential agricultural incubator sites to determine if it would eliminate a programmed or needed facility, is compatible with surrounding land uses, conforms to existing park master plan and area master plan and whether an incubator could be implemented relatively quickly based on condition of cultural or historic buildings.

## Hub Concept

The draft program of requirements and site selection criteria identified a number of sites, which were grouped into a series of 3 hubs. Each hub features an underutilized cultural or historic buildings owned by the Department that could serve as administrative offices and/or housing for farmers with a five mile radius drawn around it. The five mile radius represents the maximum distance farmers would feel comfortable sharing farming equipment and driving the equipment along roads. See Exhibit D, the site selection and decision making matrix for potential agricultural incubators on parkland, Exhibit E, a map showing the geographic distribution of potential sites roughly grouped into clusters or hubs, and Exhibits F, G and H that show detailed maps of the proposed hubs. Although each hub features hundreds of acres of potential agricultural lease sites, the Department recommends a measured approach to implementation, by starting with a few dozen acres and seeing how things go before broadening the program to include more acres.

The following hubs are in priority order for potential quick implementation.

### 1. **Darby Hub**

This hub is the only one in the Agricultural Reserve. It would utilize approximately 127 acres of existing parkland with agricultural leases in the western-most portion of Woodstock Special Park near Wasche Road. It would also use the historic Darby House and Store at the corner of MD 109 and MD 28 in the locally designated Beallsville Historic District for the administrative offices and/or housing.

The Woodstock Special Park Master Plan (1998) does not recommend any specific improvements for this area of the park. Figure I depicts the general land use recommendations for the park in relation to the potential location for an agricultural incubator. This area of park is proposed to remain agricultural, with natural surface equestrian trails going around the farmland.

The County recently unofficially agreed to use septic for no more than three bedrooms in the Darby House and a toilet and sink in the Darby Store. Stabilization drawings for the store are complete. Legacy Open Space (LOS) funding is earmarked to stabilize the structures and move the store out of the intersection right-of-way, which has been approved by the Historic Preservation Commission and also could be funded with LOS funding. In order to be habitable, the house needs heat, electricity, plaster repair and plumbing. There is currently no money earmarked for any improvements to the house.

The Darby Hub ranks first among the three hubs because it is located in the Agricultural Reserve, has numerous large parcels available with prime soils, could be implemented relatively quickly and conforms to zoning and the park master plan. The Owens Park Activity Building – recently closed for budget reasons – could be used as an interim location for the administrative offices while work on the Darby House and Store are completed.

### 2. **Holland Hub**

This hub is located in the eastern part of the County near Sandy Spring. It would utilize an existing 63-acre agricultural lease site in Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and the historic Holland/Red Door Store at the intersection of Layhill Road and Ednor Road. There is no master plan for this section of Northwest Branch Park, except the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail and historic Underground Railroad Experience Trail pass nearby. A potential agricultural incubator in this park would not conflict with existing master plans though.

The Holland/Red Door Store is an individual site in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. It needs major repairs and complete restoration in order to be habitable and it also requires septic perc testing. If septic is not viable, the site would require a water/sewer category change and related construction that will cost in the ballpark of \$150,000. The small amount of money that was spent on the structure was removed in the current revenue reductions.

The Holland Hub ranks second among the three hubs. It is not located in the Agricultural Reserve, which is a primary goal of this program. However, it has good soils and could be implemented relatively quickly.

### **3. Watkins Hub**

This hub is located in Clarksburg, utilizing the 86 acres currently leased in the eastern most part of Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park adjacent to and including Red Wiggler Farm. The Oliver Watkins House, located adjacent to Red Wiggler, could serve as housing and/or administrative offices. The 86 acres currently leased are identified for park development (upcounty arboretum, carousel site, and other facilities) under the 1996 Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park Master Plan. A master plan amendment, therefore, would be required to make an agricultural incubator work here.

The Oliver Watkins House is designated on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. During planning for a previous tenant, the house was completely gutted several years ago. It therefore requires major restoration and rehabilitation work to make it habitable. There is insufficient CIP funding to work on this structure, although it may be painted out of the FY 11 Major Maintenance operations. Septic for the house is limited and requires more work. It has a well, but may no longer be usable. Public water is nearby. Additionally, the Red Wiggler Farm has a new administrative building/residence planned nearby that will be located outside the Oliver Watkins House's historic "environmental setting."

The Watkins Hub ranks third of three hubs because it requires a park master plan amendment and it is located (albeit just barely) outside the Agricultural Reserve. It also does not feature prime soils.

## **Program Administration**

The business side of the potential incubator program has not yet been worked out. However, the Green Economy Task Force recommends that the Department of Economic Development designate a business development specialist to develop and work on the program and provide technical assistance to farmers. It also recommends that a non-profit organization (not specified) manage the day-to-day operations once it is up and running.

If the incubator is located on parkland, the Department of Parks might be in the best position to administer it since the Department already manages the land. The Department of Economic Development could provide business/technical support. There are many ways to look at this issue and we look forward to the Planning Board's comments and guidance.



## Funding

Neither the County Executive nor the M-NCPPC has earmarked any CIP or operating budget money for an agricultural incubator program. On the other hand, grant funding could be pursued. See Exhibit J for a list of potential sources, compiled by Montgomery Countryside Alliance. Public funding sources include:

- USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program
- USDA Community Foods Program
- Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education (SARE)

Potential private funding sources include:

- Wallace Genetic Foundation
- Abell Foundation
- The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

According to Andrea Tursini, Director of Consulting and Land Stewardship, in 2009 the Intervale Center was funded in the following way:

- 46% Grants
- 41% Program Product and Service Sales
- 12% Community Support (individual donors)
- 1% Other

Some grants are government, some private foundations. Community support includes large and small donors. Sales income is significant, which includes rent and payment for services that Intervale offers to farmers. See their [2009 Annual Report](#)

CC: John Nissel, Facilities Management  
Mitra Pedoeem, Park Development  
David Vismara, Horticultural Services  
Christine Brett, Enterprise  
Mike Horrigan, Northern Region  
Brian Woodward, Southern Region  
Terry Brooks, Special Programs  
Mary Ellen Venzke, Management Services  
Kate Stookey, Public Information and Customer Service  
Darien Manley, Park Police  
Al Astorga, Central Maintenance  
Dolores Milmoie, Audubon Naturalist Society  
Ginny Barnes, Western Montgomery County Citizens Association  
Caroline Taylor, Montgomery Countryside Alliance  
Jeremy Criss, Montgomery County Department of Economic Development, Agricultural Services

## List of Exhibits

**Exhibit A** - Excerpt from Montgomery County's Green Economy Task Force Report regarding this new program

**Exhibit B** - Commission Practice 6-51, Leasing Commission-Owned / Controlled Parkland for Agriculture

**Exhibit C** - Distribution of Parkland with current Agricultural Leases

**Exhibit D** - Site Selection and Decision Making Matrix

**Exhibit E** - Proposed Agricultural Lease Hubs

**Exhibit F** - Vicinity Map of the Darby Hub

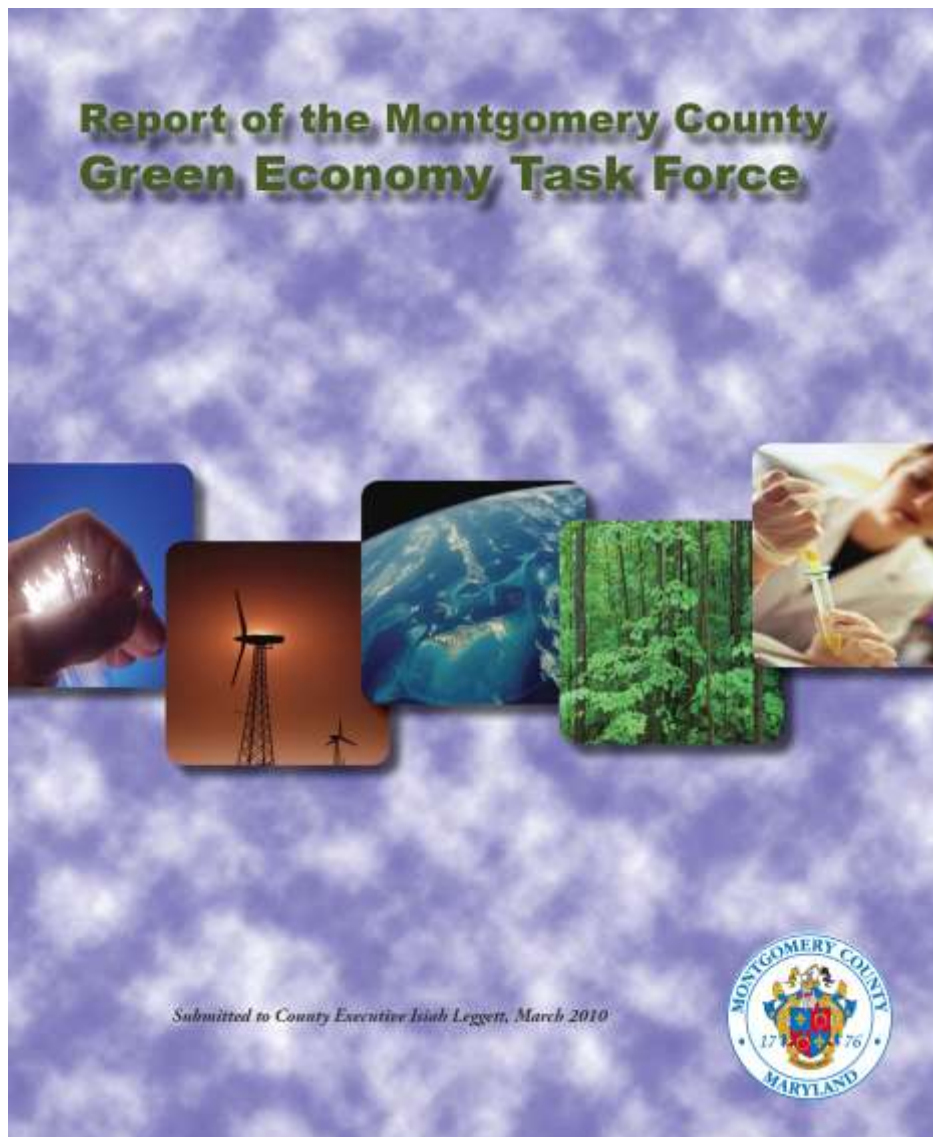
**Exhibit G** - Vicinity Map of the Holland Hub

**Exhibit H** - Vicinity Map of the Watkins Hub

**Exhibit I** - Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan Map

**Exhibit J** - Possible Funding Sources for the Montgomery County Small Farm Incubator Project

**Exhibit A** - Excerpt from Montgomery County's Green Economy Task Force Report regarding this new program



*A-5) Create a small farm incubator*

Supporting the growth of local organic farms is the cornerstone of a vibrant local economy and a healthy environment. Locally grown organic products satisfy two important goals: 1) reducing the harmful effects of pesticides; and 2) reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the dependence on fossil fuels.<sup>18</sup> According to a University of Michigan study, 40 percent of the climate-changing fossil fuels used in industrial food production are attributed to the production of fertilizers and pesticides.<sup>19</sup> This is before the 1,200-1,500 miles the average piece of packaged produce travels to a consumer.

In addition to the environmental benefits of growing local organic produce, the positive economic impacts are even more significant. On-farm sales let farmers “recapture ninety-two cents of a consumer’s food dollar that now typically winds up in the pockets of processors, middlemen, and retailers.”<sup>20</sup>

The D.C. metropolitan region has a huge unmet demand for locally grown produce and products.<sup>21</sup> This includes Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, native plants, Victory Garden plants, food for restaurants, “truck farms” supplying the existing network of farmers markets, plants for community gardens, and the ability for growers to create value-added products. A recent Baltimore Sun article confirmed that the demand for local products outweighs the supply, and that buying local products is even more important to some consumers than buying organic products.<sup>22</sup>

Montgomery County’s agricultural economic potential will not be realized unless entrepreneurial farmers are given access to land, equipment, training and marketing. This scenario is nearly identical to the development of other industries in the region, including the County’s early days of biotechnology.

One solution to growing the County’s agricultural cluster to meet the current demand is to use what has worked so successfully already—the County’s award-winning business incubator network.<sup>23</sup> At present, the County manages five business incubators to assist local entrepreneurs. The incubator network can evolve to meet the needs of the green economy by going outside of traditional labs and office space, and onto the farm.

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<sup>18</sup> Montgomery County’s Climate Protection Plan recommends expanding the production of locally grown produce and products as a way to reduce green house gas emissions.

<sup>19</sup> Heller, Martin C., and Gregory A. Keoleian. “Life Cycle-Based Sustainability Indicators for Assessment of the U.S. Food System.” Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Sustainable Systems, University of Michigan, 2000: 42.

<sup>20</sup> Pollan, Michael “The Omnivore’s Dilemma.” Penguin Press, NYC, 2006. p. 242

<sup>21</sup> 2007 Policy Choices Survey by the University of Baltimore [http://scpp.ubalt.edu/pdfs/SCPP\\_Fall\\_07\\_12607.pdf](http://scpp.ubalt.edu/pdfs/SCPP_Fall_07_12607.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.baltimoresun.com/entertainment/dining/bal-te.fo.local09jul09,0,4752289.story>

<sup>23</sup> An incubator is a facility or program designed to help entrepreneurs succeed by providing targeted support, networking, services/equipment and other relevant programs (payroll, government contracting, intellectual property, etc.).

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***Model Programs:***

The Intervale Center – Burlington, VT  
www.intervale.org

Intervale is a 350-acre, not-for-profit farm incubator that provides organic produce for 500 households in Burlington, VT. There are 12 small farms operating at the Intervale, as well as 150 community garden plots. Intervale also provides low-income households with access to food, and recycles 30,000 tons of waste each year to make compost

There are three levels of farms at Intervale:

- Incubator Farms are the newest farms, and receive business planning support, mentoring and reduced prices for land and equipment;
- Enterprise Farms have operated for at least three years; and
- Mentor Farms are mature farms who have been operating in the Intervale for at least five years and take on the role of mentoring incubator farms.

***Montgomery County's Strategic Advantage:***

Montgomery County's farm incubator will have a high percentage of success, because it is the only county in the region that has both dense urban areas with high, unmet demand for local produce and enough agricultural land to satisfy that demand—made possible through the nationally recognized Agricultural Reserve.<sup>24</sup> The incubator farms will build on the existing local Farmers Market infrastructure, and benefit from educational opportunities associated with the University of Maryland—a land grant university.

Initially, the incubator will also benefit from a strong market from local organizations, like food banks, which are presently in search of local growers with the capacity to produce tens of thousands of dollars worth of vegetables each year.<sup>25</sup> In order for the incubator to be as successful as possible, the County will need to be proactive in connecting this existing demand with the incubator's new supply.

***Implementation:***

The farm incubator would start as a three-party partnership between the County government, Park & Planning and an existing non-profit. Park & Planning would provide the land. The County would provide a staff person, who would coordinate grant applications (USDA, philanthropic grants, etc.), provide grant administration services to ensure compliance, assist farmers with licensing requirements for organic certification, added-value production permits and other regulatory issues, and manage any capital projects on the property. The non-profit component would run the day-to-day operations of the incubator, assisting farmers with marketing and sales opportunities and outreach/community activities.

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<sup>24</sup> Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is made up of 93,000 acres, half of which is preserved through transfer of development rights and easement purchase initiatives.

<sup>25</sup> According to Red Wiggler Farm's data.

In addition, the non-profit would ensure that the incubator is run according to triple-bottom line business practices:

- Economic – farms are run in a way that maximize profits while minimizing risk
- Environmental – all participants must work towards USDA Organic Certification, and sell the majority of their products to local consumers
- Social – all participants will provide social value to the community. This could be accomplished by providing a percentage of their yield to low income residents, hosting interpretive tours to transfer knowledge, or working to meet other needs in the community (education, nutrition, etc.)

In the long term, Montgomery County Public Schools could provide a substantial market for the incubator farmers. The Department of Economic Development should work with the school district, the Maryland Department of Education and the incubator to develop policies and procedures that promote using local food in local schools.<sup>26</sup>

***Resources & Financial Impacts:***

The County should contribute at least one Business Development Specialist dedicated to assisting with funding and other technical issues described above. If Park & Planning dedicates the land, the non-profit management group will need to work with the County to raise operational and capital funds. Several philanthropic organizations and federal funding programs can be tapped including the USDA's Community Food Project grants and the Kellogg Foundation. In some cases, the land can be used to meet certain matching requirements.

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<sup>26</sup> According to Red Wiggler Farm's data.

Exhibit B - Commission Practice 6-51, Leasing Commission-Owned/Controlled Parkland for Agriculture

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**PRACTICE** approved by The Commission **no. 6-51**

**subject** Rev. 4 May 1983 effective date

**LEASING COMMISSION-OWNED/  
CONTROLLED PARKLANDS FOR AGRICULTURE**

**AUTHORITY** This practice was originally approved by the Commission at its meeting September 20, 1978. It has been updated, after appropriate coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Parks and the Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation, to permit leasing parklands for agriculture on the basis of bidding rather than formal appraisal; to give authority to the respective County Parks Directors to select lessees; and to clarify earlier language.

This revised practice was approved by the Commission May 4, 1983.

*Thomas H. Countee, Jr.*  
T. H. Countee, Jr.  
Executive Director

**PURPOSE** To assure compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations and equitable treatment for lessees in the management and leasing of Commission-owned and controlled parklands for agricultural purposes.

**POLICY**

1. Lands acquired by the Commission designated for park development and preservation of open space and stream valley protection may be leased for crop production and livestock grazing prior to planned development.
2. The respective Planning Boards may establish advisory committees to make recommendations to the staff on proper utilization of Commission-owned parklands for agriculture.
3. Leases shall be set at rates reflecting fair market value.

**SELECTION OF LESSEES**

1. Interested parties may contact either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Park Property Manager for information regarding location and availability of parkland for leasing for agriculture, and will be required to submit a brief application detailing farming experience, financial stability, and other pertinent information.

**NOTE:** Although the Commission leases its parklands for other uses deemed appropriate, this practice deals solely with leases for agricultural purposes.

Practice 6-51  
LEASING COMMISSION-OWNED/  
CONTROLLED PARKLANDS FOR AGRICULTURE  
Effective 4 May 1983  
App. The Commission

SELECTION OF  
LESSEES  
(Continued)

2. a. Incumbent lessees shall have the right of first refusal to continue leasing of parklands for agriculture. In the event the option is not exercised by an incumbent, then either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Property Manager will advertise the availability of parkland for lease with a general statement of terms and conditions of the lease, and may accept bids.
- b. Commission employees are eligible to participate in the competitive bidding process.
3. Residents of the Metropolitan District have priority over non-residents except where other specific requirements must be set for a particular parcel.
4. Selection of lessees will be made after due consideration by the respective county Parks Directors.

RESPONSI-  
BILITIES

1. The Montgomery County Parks Director and the Prince George's County Director of Parks and Recreation are responsible for implementation of leasing of Commission-owned and controlled parklands for agricultural purposes.
2. The Executive Director is responsible for executing leases.
3. Lessees are responsible for maintenance of improvements on the land to standards contained in the terms of the lease.

PROCEDURES

1. Leases will be processed in the same manner as contracts. (See Practice 4-14, Preparing and Processing Contracts.)
2. Leasing of Commission-owned and controlled parklands for agriculture shall include consideration of the following:
  - a. Rental rates may be established by advertising land for rental and accepting the highest bid submitted by responsible qualified bidders.
  - b. Available parkland may be rented for agricultural purposes for periods of one or more years provided that the parklands are adequately maintained. An annual on-site inspection shall be conducted by appropriate staff to assure proper maintenance. Inadequate maintenance is grounds for discontinuance of any agricultural lease regardless of the original terms of the lease.

Practice 6-51  
LEASING COMMISSION-OWNED/  
CONTROLLED PARKLANDS FOR AGRICULTURE  
Effective 4 May 1983  
App. The Commission

PROCEDURES  
(Continued)

- c. Leases shall be specific as to buildings, acreage, and other improvements included in the rental, and an aerial photo or facsimile shall be attached to each lease clearly delineating boundaries and the location of improvements.
- d. No residential trailers or other temporary housing shall be moved onto leased properties; no additional buildings, sheds or other improvements are to be constructed by the lessee, nor any existing improvements removed, without prior written approval of either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Park Property Manager, as appropriate. The Commission reserves the right to demolish or remove any building or other improvements deemed to be a health or safety hazard, after notice to the tenant.
- e. Structures deemed to be of historic value or importance are to be protected and remain unaltered, and are to be specifically noted in the lease.
- f. Lessees will be required to engage in good farming and conservation practices, will cut no standing timber or permit woodland grazing, except with written permission of either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Park Property Manager, as appropriate, and must comply with all regulations with respect to health, sanitation, and use of pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides.
- g. Where the U.S. Soil Conservation Service has developed a specific plan for a particular property, the lessee will be bound by the plan.
- h. Subleasing of improvements or acreage of parklands is prohibited unless approved in writing by either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Park Property Manager, as appropriate.
- i. As provided by law, the Commission reserves the right of entry to all leased properties for inspection after reasonable notice to the lessee.
- j. To protect the public interest, the lessee will be required to carry proper insurance as specified by the Commission and agreed to in the lease.



Practice 6-51  
LEASING COMMISSION-OWNED/  
CONTROLLED PARKLANDS FOR AGRICULTURE  
Effective 4 May 1983  
App. The Commission

PROCEDURES  
(Continued)

- k. Leases shall permit grazing and cropping for food production, but shall not permit horseback riding or other recreational activities by non-lessees on public parkland. The Commission reserves the right to establish easements on leased parkland for approved riding trails.
- l. Before termination of a lease for agriculture, the lessees will be required to seed all open crop land with a pasture mixture specified by the Commission, unless otherwise notified by either the Montgomery County or Prince George's County Park Property Manager.
- m. The lease may provide that parklands under lease for agriculture will be available for limited use visitation and guided interpretive programs, managed hunting in season, and other proper uses of parkland that do not interfere with the agricultural operations of the lessee.
- n. In those instances where it is deemed to be in the Commission's best interest, the Montgomery County Director of Parks and the Prince George's County Director of Parks and Recreation may provide that in lieu of a fee per-acre charge for lands, the Commission will receive a share of the crops.

Exhibit C - Distribution of Parkland with current Agricultural Leases

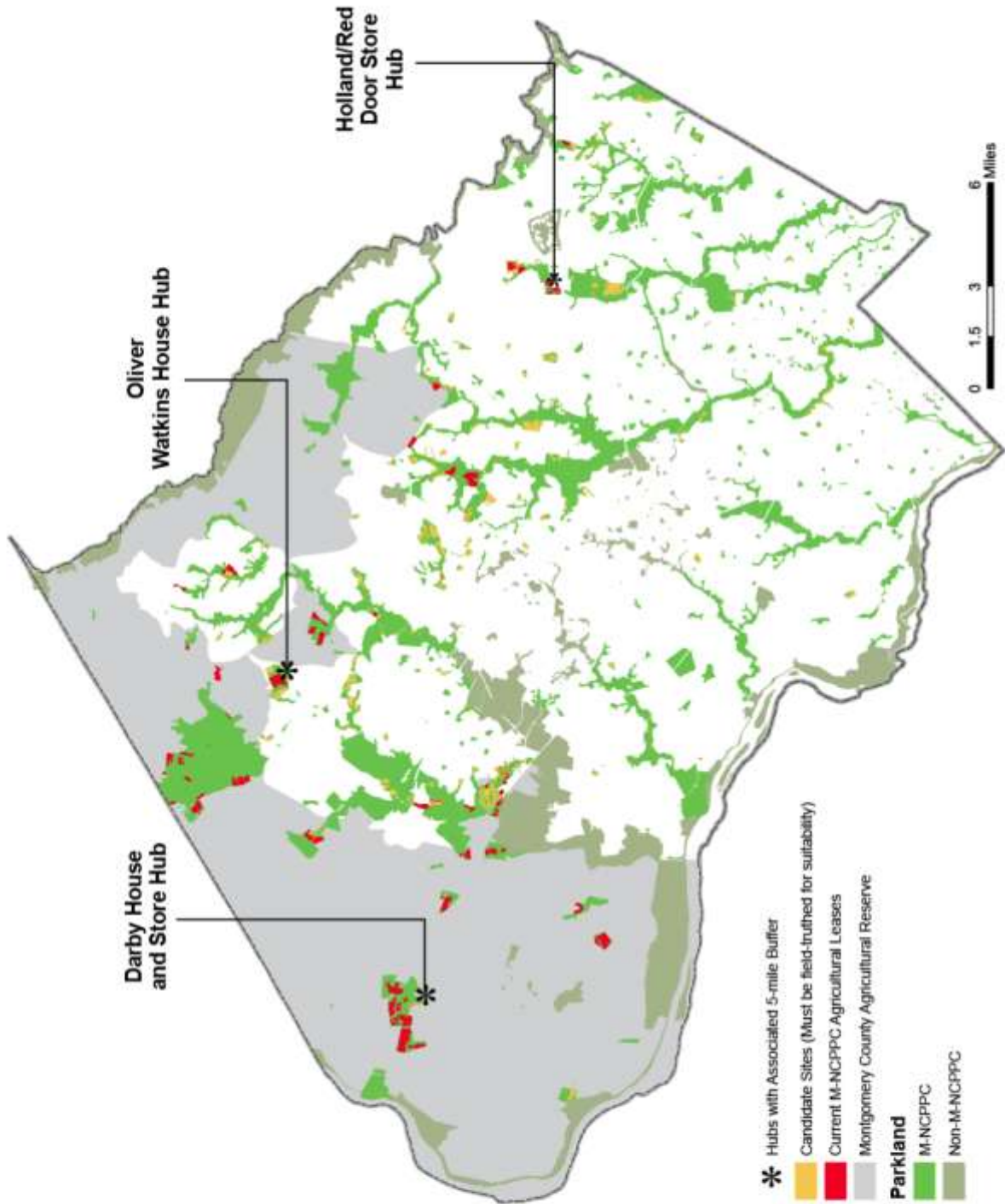
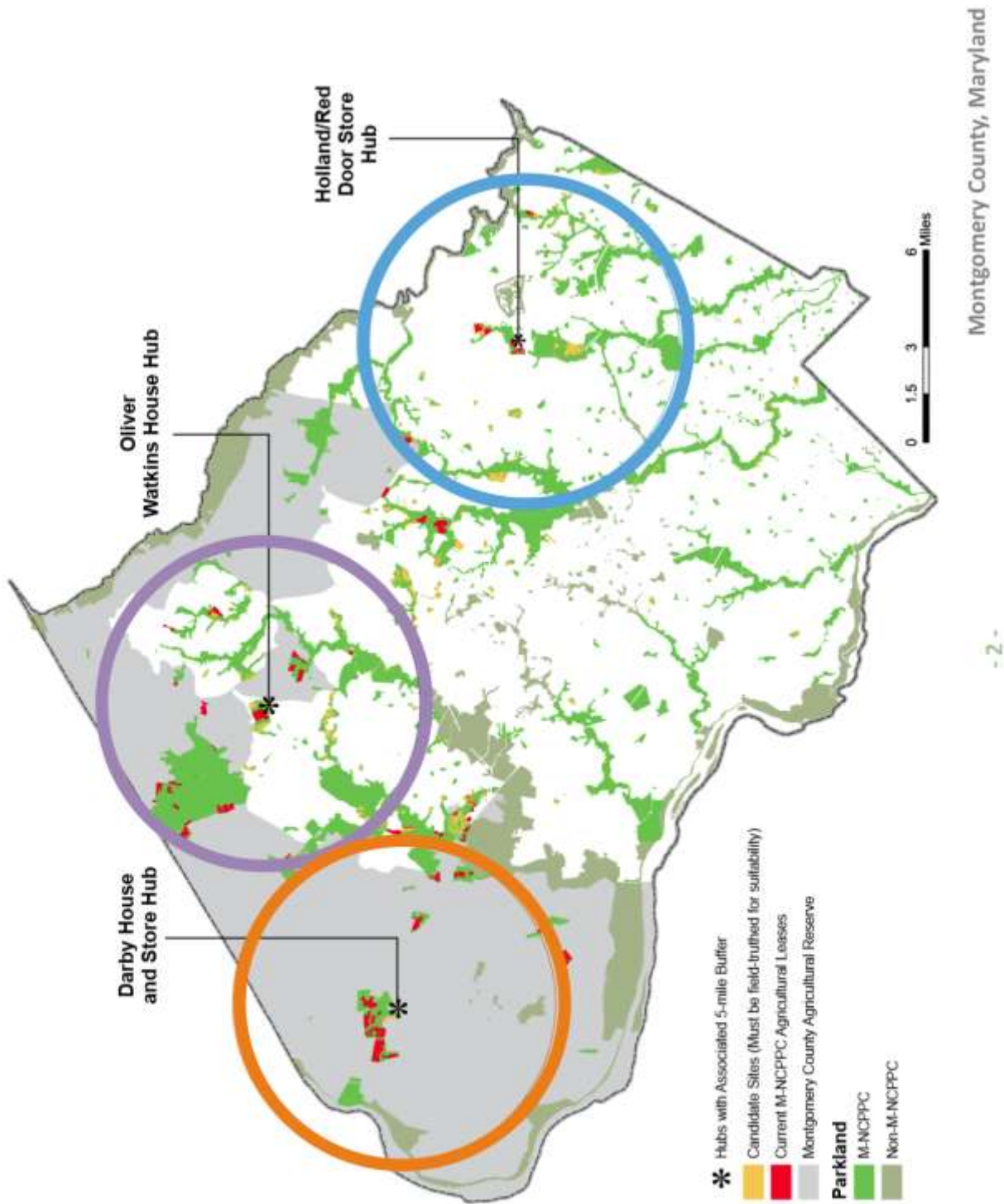


Exhibit D - Site Selection and Decision Making Matrix - April 30, 2010 (Park Planning and Stewardship Division)

Agricultural Incubator Decision Making Matrix	Located in the Agricultural Reserve	Conforms with Park Master Plan	Acres of land currently leased for agricultural use (approx)	Suitable Soils for farming (presence of prime soils)	Access to public water source	Proximity to potential market (jobs and housing density)	Quick Implementation based on renovating cultural/historic properties	Pros/Cons and Raking Explanation	Comments
<b>1. DARBY HUB</b>								This hub ranks #1 out of 3 because it is located in the Ag Reserve, has numerous large parcels available with prime soils. It could be implemented relatively quickly and conforms with the park master plan for Woodstock Special Park	The County recently unofficially agreed to allow septic at Darby House, which could accommodate the administrative office OR a 3-bedroom residence. The house could be upgraded to a 4-bedroom residence if no plumbing will be required in the store. Until Darby House is operational, the recently closed Owens Park Activity Building could serve as the administrative offices.
Darby House and Store			2						
Woodstock Special Park/ Equestrian Park (N-BH)	YES	YES	127	YES	NO				
Sugarland Special Park (N-BH)	YES		73	YES	NO				
Thompson Farm (aka Ten Mile Creek Conservation Park) (N-BH)	YES		50	YES	NO				
Little Seneca SVU #1 (N-BH)	YES		32	YES	NO				
Rickman Farm (N-BH)	YES		50	YES	NO				
Boyds LP (N-BH)	YES		30	YES	NO				
Dry Seneca SVU (N-BH)	YES		24	YES	NO				
<b>Hub Summary</b>	<b>ALL YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>ALL YES</b>	<b>ALL NO</b>	<b>LOW</b>	<b>HIGH</b>		
<b>2. HOLLAND HUB</b>								This hub ranks #2 of 3 primarily because it is not located in the Ag Reserve. It could also be implemented quickly, has good soils and many acres of land	
Holland/Red Door Store			20						
Sandy Spring - Northwest Branch SVU#7 (N-OM)	NO		63	YES	YES				
Ag. History Farm Park (N-RC)	NO	YES	89	YES	YES				
Muncaster Recreational Park (N-RC)	NO		18	YES	YES				
<b>Hub Summary</b>	<b>ALL NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>ALL YES</b>	<b>ALL YES</b>	<b>MODERATE TO HIGH</b>	<b>HIGH</b>		
<b>3. WATKINS HUB</b>								This hub ranks #3 of 3 because only half the sites are in the Ag Reserve and the largest site requires a master plan amendment. It also does not have good soils.	
Oliver Watkins House & Ned Watkins House									
Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park/Red Wiggler Farm (N-LB)	NO	NO	86	NO	YES				
Goshen Recreational Park (Butlers Orchard) (N-LB)	YES		70	NO	NO				
Huynh Property (N-LB)	YES		30	NO	NO				
Lois Y. Green Conservation Park (N-SG)	NO		29	YES	YES				
<b>Hub Summary</b>	<b>HALF IN, HALF OUT</b>	<b>ALL NO</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>MOSTLY NO</b>	<b>HALF/HALF</b>	<b>MODERATE TO HIGH</b>	<b>MODERATE</b>		

Exhibit E - Proposed Agricultural Lease Hubs



- 2 -



Exhibit F - Vicinity Map of the Darby Hub



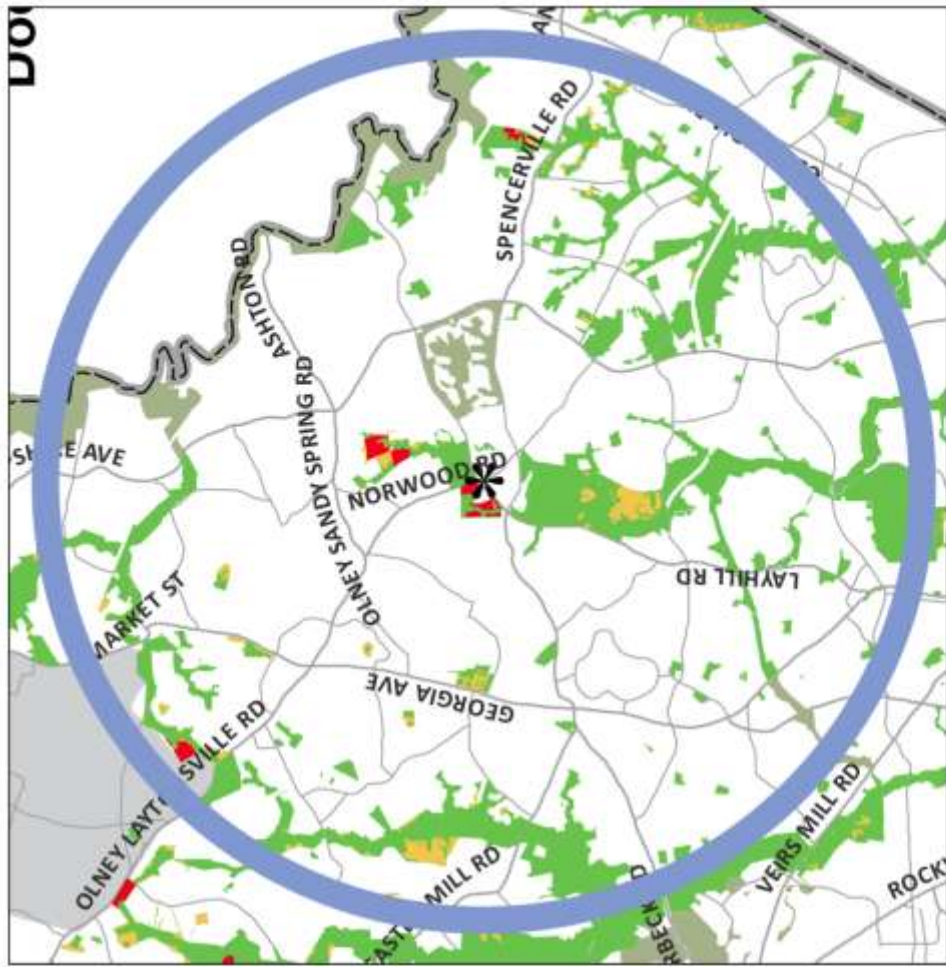
Service area hub and 5 mile radius

- 3 -

- Darby House and Store = 2 acres
  - Woodstock Equestrian Park = 127 acres
  - Sugarland Special Park = 73 acres
  - Ten Mile Creek Conservation Park = 50 acres
  - Little Seneca SVU#1 = 32 acres
  - Rickman Farm = 50 acres
  - Boyds Local Park = 30 acres
  - Dry Seneca SVU = 24 acres
- Total potential acreage = 388**



Exhibit G - Vicinity Map of the Holland Hub



Service area hub and 5 mile radius

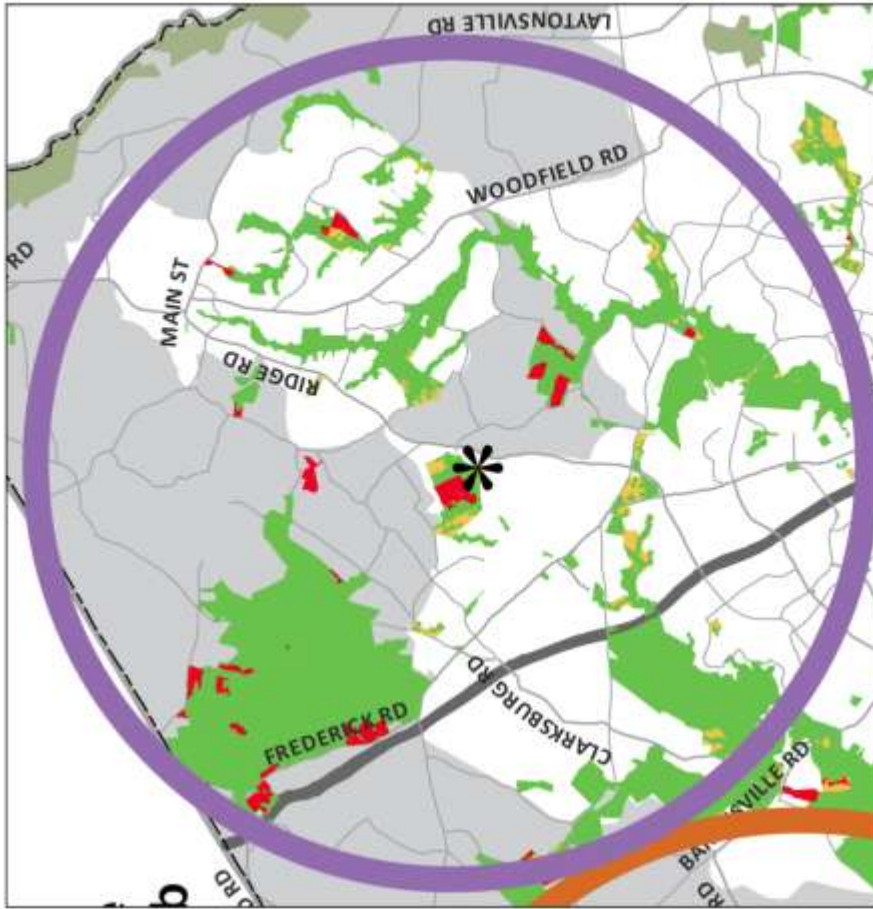
- 4 -

- Holland/Red Door Store
- Northwest Branch SVU #7 = 63 acres
- Ag. History Farm Park = 89 acres
- Muncaster Mill Rec. Park = 18 acres

**Total potential acreage = 170**



Exhibit H - Vicinity Map of the Watkins Hub



Service area hub and 5 mile radius

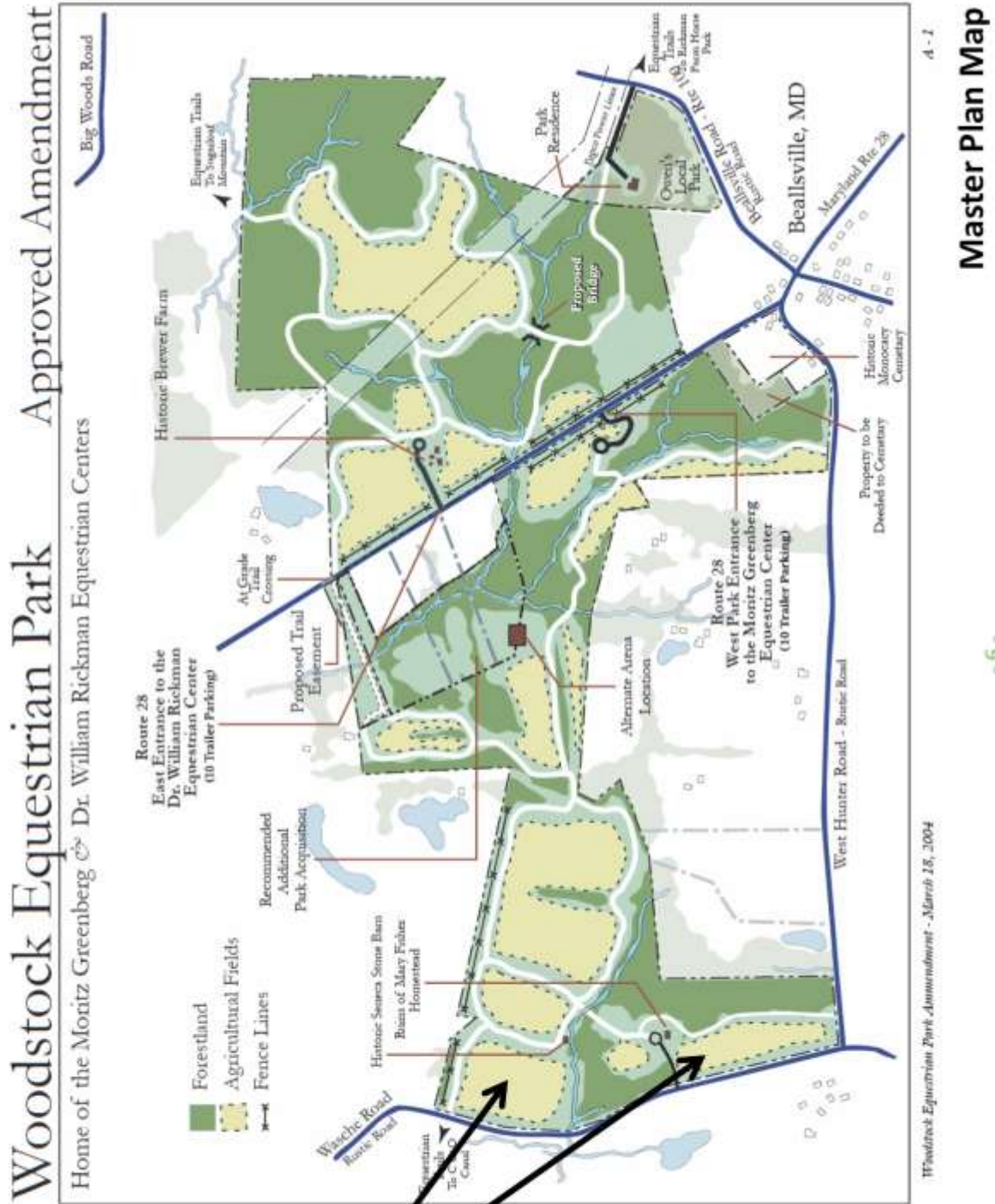
- 5 -

- Ovid Hazen Recreational Park = 86 acres
- Goshen Recreational Park (Butler's Orchard) = 70 acres
- Huyhn Property = 30 acres
- Lois Green Conservation Park = 29 acres

**Total potential acreage = 215**



Exhibit I - Woodstock Equestrian Park Master Plan Map



Proposed locations for incubator farms





**Exhibit J - Possible Funding Sources for the Montgomery County Small Farm Incubator Project**

**Prepared by Montgomery Countryside Alliance 5/5/2010**

**Public Funding**

USDA- Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program - National

- **Relevant Focus:** A grant funding cooperative development to improve the economic conditions in rural areas.
- **Similar Recent Grants:** Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund used this grant to establish a vegetable processing and marketing cooperative, a regional goat processing and marketing cooperative, a timber cooperative, and for updating business plans and training for community development credit unions.
- **Grant Levels:** \$200,000 max

USDA- Community Food Projects - National

- **Relevant Focus:** Funding proactive approaches to maintaining food systems while addressing food, nutrition and farm issues. Multipurpose community food projects.
- **Similar Recent Grants:** Red Wiggler Community Farm, Garden Harvest, a nonprofit in Glydon, MD that establishes community gardens to feed the hungry. A plethora of local food incubator projects across the country.
- **Grant Levels:** 10,000-300,000 from 1-3 years. Requires a dollar-for-dollar match.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education - Sustainable Community Grant (SARE)

- **Relevant Focus:** An emphasis on model projects that others can emulate that address community development and sustainable agriculture. Projects should bring about systematic change on more than one farm.
- **Similar Recent Grants:** Microfinance for new farmers, restaurant-farmer partnerships, and beginning farmer round tables.
- **Grant Levels:** capped at \$15,000 for 2010
- **Notes:** SARE staff has told MCA that they would like to fund more projects in Maryland.

**Private Funding**

Wallace Genetic Foundation - Washington DC

- **Relevant Focus:** Sustainable agriculture, preserving farmland near cities
- **Similar Past Grants:** American Farmland Trust, Takoma Park Farmers Market, Farm to School, Audubon Naturalist Society, The Growing Farmers program of the Stone Barn Center in New York
- **Grant Levels:** \$25,000-\$40,000

Abell Foundation, Baltimore MD

- **Relevant Focus:** Conservation, protection of farmland, watershed protection, job training, economic development.
- **Similar Past Grants:** Harry Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology in Queenstown, MD, The Patuxent 20/20 program to stem unchecked growth, a virtual farmers market website at the University of

MD, an open space campaign with 1000 Friends of Maryland, a grant to the Chester River Association to aid in collaboration between environmental groups and farmers.

- **Grant Levels:** Not specifically stated, \$5,000-\$75,000 in past grants.
- **Notes:** Funding priorities include seed money for projects that address recalcitrant problems and planning grants for large programs. Operation expenses will not be funded. Some past multi-year grants.

[The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation](#) - Metro Area (PG, MC, DC, NOVA)

- **Relevant Focus:** Environmental Conservation as a subset of Community Services
- **Similar Past Grants:** Red Wiggler Community Farm, Earth Conservation Corps
- **Grant Levels:** Past grants seem to fall between \$10,000-\$60,000

[W.K Kellogg Foundation](#) – National

- Relevant Focus: Healthy Kids, Civic Engagement
- Similar Recent Grants: Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons, NE, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Ag (PASA), Appalachian Sustainable Ag Project, many projects funded to increase the supply and value of locally grown food
- Grant Levels: hundreds of thousands for similar projects
- Notes: current focus on the role local food can play in combating childhood obesity.