



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

February 26, 2015

REQUESTS: Comprehensive Master Plan/ Parks Master Plan Component- Repeal and Replace
For the purpose of repealing and replacing the Parks Master Plan component of Live Earn Play Learn with a new digital Parks Master Plan that authorizes the maintenance and periodic updating of the parks master plan in a digital format that can include a geographic database and mapping. (Citywide)

RECOMMENDATION: Approval

STAFF: Tamara Woods

PETITIONER: Department of Planning

OWNERS: Mayor and City Council (Department of Recreation & Parks)

SITE/GENERAL AREA

General Area: The parcels included are all Mayor and City Council parcels that are currently assigned to the Department of Recreation & Parks. They are throughout the City and include uses such as parks, recreation centers, pools, and playgrounds.

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

The proposed development plan is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan, specifically: PLAY Goal 3, Objective 1: Maintain Objective 1: Maintain a Well-managed System of Parks & Open Spaces.

HISTORY

- On February 2, 1968, the Plan of Parks & Recreation Facilities Part of The Master Plan for the City of Baltimore was adopted by the Planning Commission.
- On November 21, 2006, Ordinance #06-019, was approved by the Mayor and City Council for the creation of the Baltimore City Comprehensive Master Plan.

ANALYSIS

The Baltimore City Charter establishes the Department of Planning and the Planning Commission, as well as, outlines the powers and duties. The Planning Department is purposed with creating and maintaining a Master Plan for the City. Within the Charter, the

scope of the Master Plan is to consist of a series of component plans that can address among other things “the extent of publicly owned places of recreation, such as playgrounds, squares, and parks”. Though the Master Plan was created by ordinance, the City Charter allows for revision after the adoption of the Master Plan, or any part thereof, to be revised by resolution of the Planning Commission or by ordinance.

In 2007, when the City adopted LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN as the Citywide Master Plan, all previously adopted master plans were grandfathered in as part of the adoption. LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN includes general language that reads “All master plans, SNAPs, Small Area Plans/Area Master Plans that have already been adopted by Planning Commission are grandfathered. All new plans and amendments to adopted plans shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan”. With that adoption the 1968 Parks Master Plan was grandfathered.

On February 2, 1968 the City of Baltimore Planning Commission adopted the Plan of Parks & Recreation Facilities Part of The Master Plan for the City of Baltimore. This adopted plan included information on existing, redesigned and proposed playgrounds, playfields, community centers and recreation centers, as well as existing parkland and proposed facilities. This adopted version was the last in a series of adopted Parks Master Plans dating back to May 5, 1967. Though there were other plans completed after this, none were adopted. The Department of Recreation and Park's last strategic plan, though not formally adopted by the Planning Commission, was completed in 1991.

The PLAY section of the Comprehensive Plan very clearly states the strategy to “Draft and adopt a City-wide plan for parks and open space”. This strategy is under Goal 3: Increase the Health of Baltimore’s Natural Resources and Open Spaces for recreation and to Improve Water Quality and to Improve Neighborhood Social, Economic, and Environmental Well-Being; Objective 1: Maintain a Well-managed System of Parks & Open Spaces. Arguably, the grandfathered plan from 1968 and Recreation & Parks strategic plan from 1991 do not accurately reflect the existing inventory within the Department of Recreation & Parks or serve as an adequate basis for Citywide open space and recreation planning.

Periodically the Department of Recreation and Parks needs to review and make modifications to its land inventory. These plan amendments must be approved by the Planning Commission as amendments to the Parks Master Plan. With the understanding that the City will embark upon Citywide open space strategic planning in the near future and the necessity of the Parks Master Plan to accommodate modifications to The Department of Recreation & Parks inventory, Planning Staff determined that a digital Parks Master Plan would serve the needs of the Department of Recreation & Parks and best fit the implementation of the plan.

To that end, Staff has modeled the new digital Parks Master Plan from the digital zoning maps adopted by ordinance in 2006. The move to a digital map allowed for the ease of tracking of zoning changes and capturing updated information as new parcels were being created through subdivision or modified through consolidation. This model, met the needs of the Department of Recreation & Parks and the Department of Planning for tracking the changes to the parks inventory.

This new digital plan component will replace the 1968 adopted Parks Master Plan that was grandfathered in as a component of LIVE EARN PLAY LEARN, The City's Comprehensive Master Plan. This digital plan component authorizes the maintenance and periodic updating of the Parks Master Plan in a digital format, that can include a geographic database and mapping. The updates to the inventory of the plan will be accomplished through Planning Commission amendments to the Parks Master Plan by either adding or delisting properties to the plan. The adoption establishes the mechanism to create and maintain the digital files.

This application allows for the inclusion of the following:

- A printed map of all parks property inventory;
- Digital formatting that can be updated as the inventory is modified;
- Database components that can be uploaded to Cityview and shared with the public; and
- The ability to track Planning Commission actions, such as addition or deletion from the Parks Master Plan and the date of action.

Though the Plan may be modified through such actions as subdivision, disposition, agency transfers, private acquisitions and private easements, this adoption only includes a current property inventory and will be used as the basis for future strategic recreation and open space planning and Planning Commission actions.

Notifications:

In advance of a hearing on this matter, staff discussed this item with the Parks Board on January 22, 2015 and February 19, 2015. Also, staff did a Citywide notification.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director