

SECTION SEVEN PARKS & RECREATION



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PARKS AND RECREATION

The parks and outdoor recreation resources found in town and throughout the greater Shepherdstown area play a key role in enhancing the quality of life for both residents of the area and visitors who come to visit and take advantage of the abundant opportunities that exist in the area. The variety of the locally available parks and recreation resources is extensive given the size of the community. The town's location next to the Potomac River, the C&O Canal Towpath and the presence of Shepherd University in the community contribute greatly to the availability of recreational resources that would not otherwise be available in a community of Shepherdstown's size.

Moving forward, the community should continue to leverage these assets to maintain and expand the types of parks and recreational activities that are available to residents and visitors. Promoting these assets to visitors will help to strengthen the town's position as a regional recreational tourism destination, particularly given the nexus between the river, the towpath and the accommodations available in the community.

At a smaller scale, the local parks and recreational facilities, such as the Princess Street boat launch on the Potomac, Morgan's Grove Park and the Rumsey Monument park help to provide local residents with convenient and diverse opportunities for recreation, leisure and sports. Combined, these assets help to make Shepherdstown a more livable community and foster an active lifestyle that contributes to the overall health of its residents.





This map shows the location of parks in the greater Shepherdstown area. While the largest parks and recreation facilities are outside of the corporate limits of the town, the short distance to the C&O Canal Towpath and Morgan's Grove Park provide residents with easy access to an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities.

 Parks

Public Parks and Recreation Facilities

PR GOAL 1

Excellent park facilities and abundant recreational programs will be available to meet the needs of all residents of the community, regardless of age or physical ability.

1.1 Town – University Recreation Partnership

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to partner with Shepherd University to allow residents of Shepherdstown to access on-campus recreational facilities and programs.

JUSTIFICATION: Community access to the recreational facilities and programs offered on the Shepherd University campus would allow the town to leverage these extensive facilities to provide recreational opportunities that would not otherwise be publically available in a town of its size. Access to facilities, such as the university's pool, could also play a significant role in the health of the community given that low impact exercise opportunities, such as swimming or water aerobics, are frequently prescribed as part of physical therapy programs. The extensive facilities, in general, would provide more opportunities for a host of activities

that would help local residents maintain a healthy lifestyle, particularly during winter months when the indoor facilities on campus could provide recreation opportunities that would not otherwise be feasible using outdoor facilities. Community access to campus recreational facilities will also provide more opportunities for social interaction between residents and university students, thereby helping to strengthen the relationship between the town and the university.

1.2 Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan

STRATEGY: Prepare and implement a parks and recreation master plan to identify community needs for park facilities and recreational programs.



JUSTIFICATION: A parks and recreation plan that is based on detailed surveys of the needs of the community and extensive public involvement will help the town to determine the needed investments in its park and recreation infrastructure and programs. This will allow the town to identify goals for land acquisition and the construction of facilities to meet the needs identified in the plan and develop funding sources to finance the desired infrastructure. Without a clear plan in place, limited resources can be mismatched with the needs and desires of the community, and potentially lead to the development of facilities that will see little use. Having a plan in place can also assist with grant funding from outside sources to fill gaps in local funding, if clear needs are demonstrated in the plan.

1.3 Formally Establish Morgan's Grove as a Public Park

STRATEGY: Work with the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission, the Shepherdstown Community Club and other local sports and community groups to permanently establish Morgan's Grove as a public park.

JUSTIFICATION: Morgan's Grove Park, which is located outside

of the town's corporate limits, plays a major role in providing community access to outdoor recreation opportunities in the local area. The park is currently operated by Jefferson County under a lease agreement with the Shepherdstown Community Club, who owns the site. Transitioning this arrangement in the future to public ownership of the park would allow for a greater investment of public funds to improve the property, and open up more opportunities for grant funding.

1.4 Improve Princess Street River Access

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a plan to make better use of the Town's Potomac River access on Princess Street as a public park facility, including accessibility upgrades and dedicated funding for maintenance and upkeep of the access.

JUSTIFICATION: The town-owned river access and park at the foot of Princess Street is a unique and vitally important asset in the town's park and recreation portfolio. Improving this area to provide better accommodation to paddlesports participants, as well as generally improving the appearance and functionality of the property for passive public recreation opportunities will



provide the town and its residents with a significant multiplier effect in terms of quality of life compared to the investments that would be required to improve the property. The Potomac River is a key element in the historic and cultural legacy of the

community, and providing enhanced access to this unique and vital asset will help the entire community to embrace its heritage and enjoy the beauty of the river.



Shepherdstown will be known as a community that embraces an active and healthy lifestyle built around outdoor recreation.

2.1 Increase Promotion of Local Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

STRATEGY: Work with tourism officials to promote the availability of outdoor recreational opportunities in the area as part of Shepherdstown's tourism marketing plan.

JUSTIFICATION: The wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities that are available in the local area give Shepherdstown a significant opportunity to promote itself as a destination for outdoor recreation. This growing segment of the tourism economy is a natural fit for the community given its location on the Potomac River and the nearby C&O Canal Trail. With easy

access to these assets, Shepherdstown can capitalize on its location to attract paddlesports enthusiasts, hikers and bicyclists to the town. This in turn can have a significant effect on the local economy, and simultaneously serve as an attractant for outdoor recreation enthusiasts looking to relocate to an area that has these types of assets.

2.2 Coordinate Promotion of the C&O Canal Towpath Trail

STRATEGY: Continue to work with the National Park Service and



the Canal Towns Partnership to identify opportunities to promote Shepherdstown to hikers and bicyclists traveling along the C&O Canal Towpath trail.

JUSTIFICATION: The partnership that has been established by communities along the C&O Canal offers an excellent opportunity for the town to participate in a coordinated marketing effort to attract outdoor recreation tourism. By leveraging the resources of the partnership, the town can multiply its investments in the partnership through the economies of scale that are created by the pooling of resources and coordination that takes place between the members of the organization.

2.3 Utilize the Tobacco Warehouse as a Paddlesports Support Facility

STRATEGY: Establish a public-private partnership to renovate and utilize the Tobacco Warehouse on Princess Street for a community oriented paddlesports facility.

JUSTIFICATION: The tobacco warehouse near the foot of Princess Street provides the community with an excellent opportunity to leverage its location adjacent to the Potomac River and utilize

the building as an outfitter's facility for paddlesports. Working with a nonprofit organization or business to establish the facility would allow the town to maximize the value of this asset while minimizing the necessary investment by the town in the facility. This type of facility would serve as a regional destination for casual paddlesports participants, tourists interested in a short float on the river, and could even serve as the base of operations for local paddlesports club, providing storage, maintenance and office space for the organization and its members.

2.4 Develop a Community Health and Wellness Program

STRATEGY: Work with local health and wellness agencies to adopt and implement a community-wide plan to improve health and increase physical activity.

JUSTIFICATION: A community based approach to improving community health and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles could provide the town and its residents with a wide range of benefits. Chief among the benefits of this type of effort is increased awareness of the value of exercise, good nutrition and other factors that contribute to healthy outcomes. This type of





program can help to build greater support in the community for additional parks, increase demand for recreational programs, promote walking and biking as alternatives to automobile transportation and heighten interest in locally grown agricultural products that support healthy eating.

2.5 Provide Community Access to Shepherd University Outdoor Recreation Activities

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities for the town to partner with Shepherd University to allow residents to participate in outdoor recreation clubs and similar campus groups.

JUSTIFICATION: Participation by local residents in on-campus clubs and groups that engage in outdoor recreation activities could provide the community with access to a greater variety of activities. Partnering with the university to allow residents to join these organizations would promote more social interaction between residents and students, and give residents with experience in outdoor activities to serve as mentors to these groups.

2.6 Bring Paddlesports Events to Town

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to partner with paddlesports oriented organizations to hold events on the Potomac that would use Shepherdstown as the starting or ending point of the events.

JUSTIFICATION: Leveraging its location on the Potomac River to attract paddlesports events to Shepherdstown's stretch of the river the town could attract a significant amount of additional outdoor recreation tourism to the community. Working with paddlesports organizations to map a course that would allow the town to serve as either the starting or ending point for races or similar events would help increase the prominence of the town in the regional paddlesports community, which could then lead to repeat visits from event participants who might return for recreational visits to the local stretch of the river.

2.7 Improve Accommodations for Bicycle Tourism

STRATEGY: Encourage local lodging establishments to provide enhanced accommodations for long distance bicyclists traveling through the area.

JUSTIFICATION: If the number and types of accommodations for bicycle tourists in the community was expanded, the town could benefit from an increase in the choice of bike tourists on the C&O Canal Towpath to overnight in Shepherdstown. Improved accommodations could include dedicated indoor storage space for bicycles in lodging establishments, setting aside ground floor rooms for bicycle tourists, offering shuttle service, or even onsite bike repair stations.

2.8 Provide a Public Bike Repair Station

STRATEGY: Establish a public bike repair and maintenance station in downtown Shepherdstown.

JUSTIFICATION: Installing a public bike repair station in the downtown area will help to demonstrate the community's support for bicycling. These types of facilities, perhaps coupled with a nearby vending machine that dispense common replacement parts, help to support the needs of both local bicyclists as well as tourists travelling by bicycle. If located near, and perhaps sponsored by, a local bicycle shop, this could generate additional business for more complex repairs than can be accomplished by a casual rider.



PR GOAL 3

Parks will be located throughout the community in a manner that ensures accessibility for all residents.

3.1 Require Recreational Space in New Development

STRATEGY: Continue to require the development of active and passive recreation spaces in conjunction with the residential development.

JUSTIFICATION: Requiring the inclusion of both passive and active open spaces for recreational purposes in conjunction with new development will help to support the town's needs for public parks with only limited investments (perhaps ongoing maintenance) in acquiring or developing new park properties. Requiring their inclusion within new developments also supports the town's goal of locating parks in close proximity to residents and promoting easy access to park facilities.

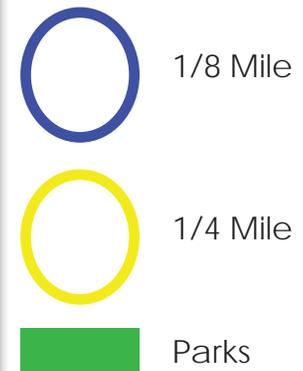
3.2 Develop Additional Neighborhood Parks

STRATEGY: Work with Jefferson County and other stakeholders in the community to identify and acquire strategically located properties to develop parks and other recreational amenities for both active and passive recreation so that such facilities are located within 1/8 to 1/4 mile of each home in the greater Shepherdstown area.

JUSTIFICATION: Closely spaced neighborhood parks located in close proximity to residences helps to support a high quality of life. Developing these facilities within a short walk or bike ride of their primary users also promotes more frequent outdoor recreation activity, particularly among children who may not have the ability to travel greater distances on their own to visit a larger community or regional park facility. Locating these facilities in neighborhoods also helps to guarantee their safety by increasing



This map depicts the spatial distribution of town parks and their proximity to each other and areas within the town. The reference distances used are based on the recommended distance of between 1/8 and 1/4 mile between park facilities.



Distribution and Proximity of Town Parks



their visibility and limiting opportunities for casual criminal activity, like loitering or vandalism, which can plague parks located in more remote locations.

3.3 Improve Bike and Pedestrian Connections Between Parks and Neighborhoods

STRATEGY: Develop and implement a plan to connect all parks in the area so that they are in convenient walking and bicycling distance from residential neighborhoods, and develop a signage system to identify the locations of parks and preferred walking and biking routes to access them.

JUSTIFICATION: Establishing safe and efficient connections between neighborhoods and parks will help to ensure that they are accessible to residents of all ages, particularly young residents and older residents who may not have access to vehicular transportation or the ability to drive. Encouraging walking or biking to parks also limits the need to provide onsite parking, thereby making more of park land available for recreational activities.

3.4 Partner with Shepherd University to Develop the Proposed River Overlook

STRATEGY: Partner with Shepherd University to develop the planned river overlook park area on the campus adjacent to the Potomac and work to ensure public access to the overlook park.

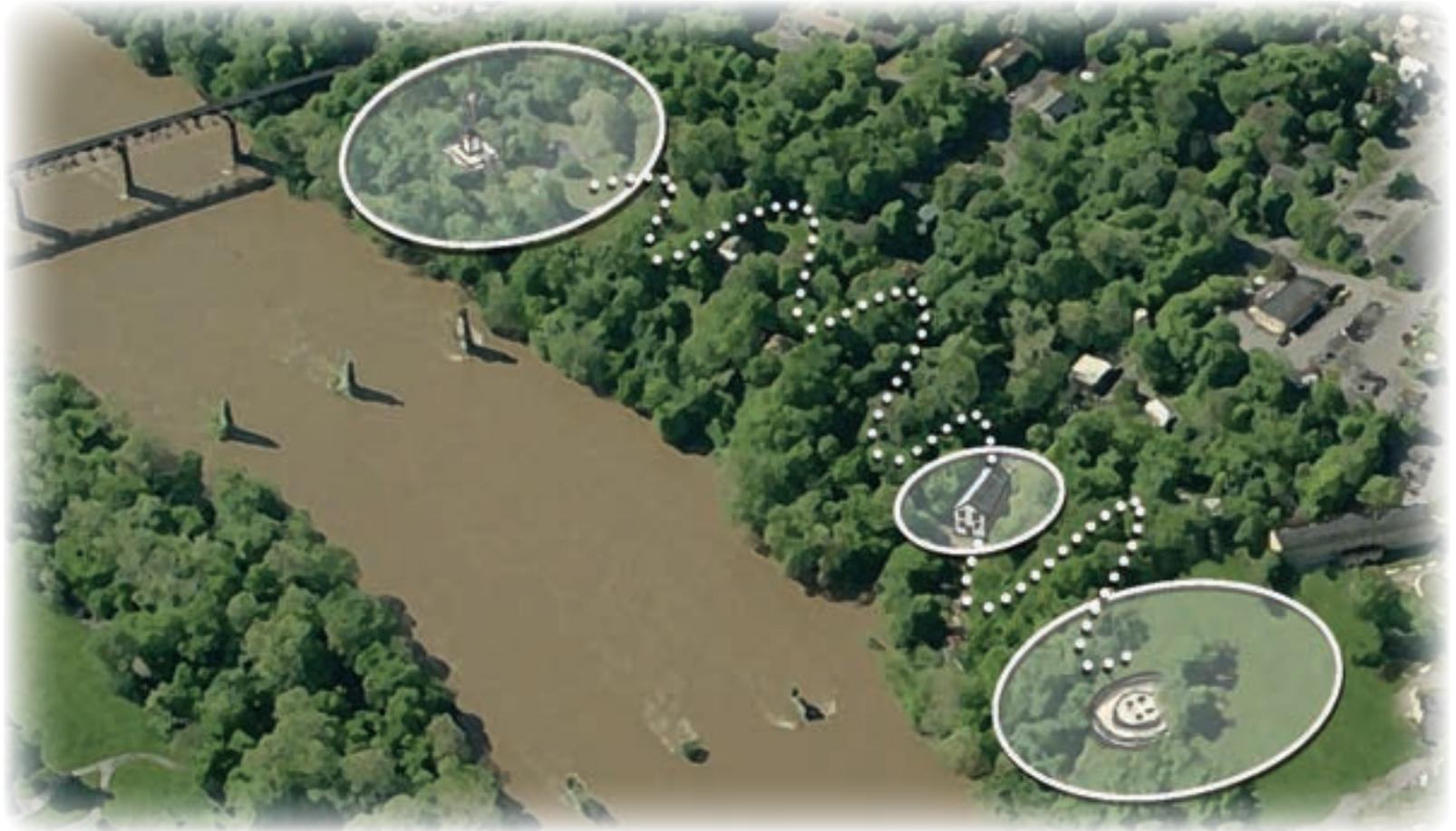
JUSTIFICATION: The overlook park proposed in the recently completed Shepherd University Master Plan provides a significant opportunity to develop a unique and valuable facility that would provide the public with a signature feature along the river. Given that much of the land along the river is privately owned, or otherwise inaccessible, a facility along the river close to downtown would help to better connect the community to this important aspect of its cultural and natural heritage. If the town were to partner with the university in the development of the site, which would come after the demolition of the residence hall that currently occupies the site, then it may be able to leverage its participation to secure the overlook and adjacent proposed terraced amphitheater for community events. This would serve as an excellent location for concerts or other community events, particularly during summer months when there is less activity on the campus.

3.5

Develop Connections Between Park Facilities on the River

STRATEGY: Explore opportunities to provide more direct pedestrian connections between the planned Shepherd University river overlook park, the town’s river access on Princess Street and the Rumsey Monument.

JUSTIFICATION: Connecting the proposed overlook park on the Shepherd University campus to the Princess Street river access and park, and finally the Rumsey Monument and Cullison Park with a walking trail would provide a unique recreational opportunity for residents and give tourists better access to these three important sites along the river without having to make individual trips to each site. Connecting these sites would also help to reinforce the town’s identity as a river town, which has been somewhat diminished by the limited access opportunities that now exist on the West Virginia bank of the river. It is recognized that a trail linking the sites would necessarily have to cross private property, and the support of the owners of those properties that a trail might cross would be critical to the development of this proposed connection.



This illustration depicts a potential trail connection between the planned river overlook park at Shepherd University, the tobacco barn and boat launch area on Princess Street and the Rumsey Monument.

