



MEMORANDUM

July 10, 2009

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board *M Bradford*

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks for Administration
John Hench, Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division *MR Hench*

FROM: Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning,
Park Planning and Stewardship Division *Brooke Farquhar*

SUBJECT: Public/Private Partnership for Miracle League Baseball Fields in South Germantown Recreational Park

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVAL:

1. of a Public/Private Partnership between M-NCPPC and the Miracle League of Montgomery County (Miracle League) to construct two Miracle League Baseball Fields (Miracle Fields) in South Germantown Recreational Park;
2. of the site design concept;
3. to amend the South Germantown Recreational Park Master Plan to accommodate the Miracle League Field; and
4. to amend the Parks Capital Improvements Program for the South Germantown Recreational Park: SoccerPlex Facilities Project (Project Description Form #998712).

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this partnership project is to develop one Miracle Field for children and adults with varying abilities, in concert with a publically funded youth baseball field in a first phase, and possibly a second Miracle Field in a future phase. The location of the proposed fields is on the site of the temporary soccer field in the southwest quadrant of Schaeffer Road and Germantown Park Drive in Germantown Recreation Park (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Miracle Field Site Location within South Germantown Recreational Park



This site is currently approved and funded in the Parks CIP for an adult softball field and expanded parking. The applicant's proposed concept plan includes the two Miracle Fields, a standard youth baseball field to be constructed by the Parks Department, and associated parking, pathways, plaza area with concession area and restrooms, lighting, and relocated and reconfigured playground and basketball courts. All fields are proposed to be lighted. Approval of the proposal would amend the South Germantown Recreational Park Master Plan, (see Attachment 1) amended in 1999, and would require amendment of the Parks Capital Improvements Program (Project Description Form #998712).

Miracle League and the Kiwanis Club of Bethesda

Miracle Fields exist in over 170 sites across the country. The fields closest to Maryland are located in York, Pennsylvania and Richmond, Virginia. The Kiwanis Club of Bethesda has created a 501-C3 Non-profit Corporation, the Miracle League of Montgomery County. One of their missions is to provide opportunities for all children to play Miracle League baseball, regardless of their varying abilities.

Site Selection

After the proposal was formally submitted, staff performed a site selection analysis of all potential regional and recreational parks located within the applicant's fundraising area. The South Germantown Recreational Park was selected by staff as the most suitable site for the proposal, based on site size and topography, ease of implementation, availability of infrastructure, compatibility with surrounding uses, access, synergy with other park facilities, and alignment with approved park plans. The site was considered by staff to be superior because the proposal will not cause the loss of any approved/planned facilities (other than the conversion of an adult softball field to a youth baseball field) and because the existing infrastructure will allow for quick implementation (see Attachment 2).

Existing Site Conditions

The site for the Miracle Fields, currently an open and unconstrained area with a temporary soccer field, has a slope of approximately 2-4%. Locating the Miracle Fields here will not result in any loss of the surrounding facilities, including three diamond fields, a basketball court, playground, ADA-accessible restrooms and pathways, and parking, or require removal of any significant plant material.

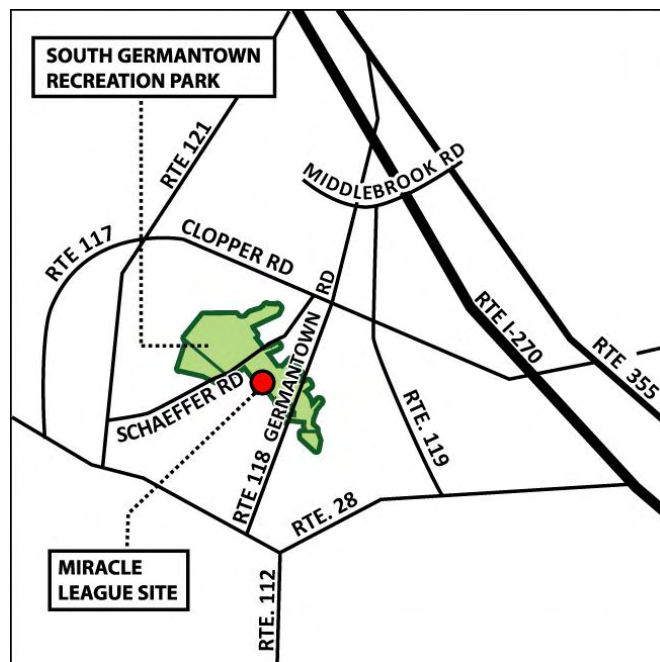


Figure 2: Locator Map

Figure 3: Miracle League Concept Plan



PROPOSAL

Program and Conceptual Design

The proposed layout will create a synergy among park uses. It clusters the three new fields around a central plaza that will serve players and spectators for the Miracle Fields and the Youth Baseball field. A dedicated drop-off lane will provide safe and convenient access for park users. The Miracle Fields have a 125-foot baseline and are constructed with a soft surface. The first and third base sides have shaded protected dugouts. Bleachers wrap the first and third base sides. Lighting will consist of state-of-the-art, glare-controlling fixtures. The proposal includes additional parking to accommodate the facilities, by adding to the existing parking area. New trails connect the site to the existing trail system. The existing basketball courts and playground will be relocated to achieve an improved, safer relationship among park facilities. The new youth baseball field (225-foot baseline) will be located adjacent to the Miracle Fields. Stormwater management and Forest Conservation requirements will also be addressed (see Figure 3).

The proposal adds sufficient parking spaces to the existing parking areas to meet Parks Department standards. At the time of final design, staff will work with the applicant to achieve a layout that provides improved landscaping. Parking needs for the Miracle Fields are based on experience at other Miracle League facilities around the country and are estimated to be 20 accessible spaces per field. This number was added to the total number of spaces required by Parks Department standards for the other existing and planned facilities on the site, including the field across Germantown Park Drive to the east. The parking may be constructed in phases, based on observed need (see table below).

Table 1 - Parking Table

PARKING REQUIRED FOR EXISTING FACILITIES	QUANTITY	SPACES	TOTAL REQUIRED
Playground	1	5	5
Tennis Court	2	4	8
Basketball Court	2	20	40
Softball Field	2	50	100
Baseball Field	1	50	50
			Subtotal 203
PARKING REQUIRED FOR PROPOSED FACILITIES	QUANTITY	SPACES	TOTAL REQUIRED
Miracle Field	2	20	40
225' Youth Baseball Field	1	50	50
			Subtotal 90
TOTAL PARKING REQUIRED			293
TOTAL PARKING PROVIDED			293

Phasing

The proposal is to construct one Miracle Field in Phase I and a second Miracle Field in the future if funding is available. The essential elements that must be constructed in Phase I include:

- grading for full build-out
- stormwater management for full build-out
- paving and restriping of portions of existing parking
- additional parking to accommodate Phase I
- conduits for lighting of fields
- first Miracle League Field
- Youth Baseball Field
- plaza
- landscaping
- access road with drop-off
- pathways and trail connectors
- relocation of basketball courts and playground

The following elements that might be included in either Phase I or a future phase, if funding becomes available are:

- a second Miracle Field
- additional parking as needed
- concession area
- field lighting

Partnership Terms and Funding

This is a lease, design, build and operate partnership proposal. The Miracle League of Montgomery County proposes to assume the full cost of constructing and operating the Miracle Fields and associated infrastructure. The Department of Parks will use the appropriation from its approved CIP to fund the youth baseball field and associated infrastructure. Since much of the supporting infrastructure and site work for construction of the Miracle Field and youth baseball field is shared, each party will pay for its proportional share. If the partnership is approved, staff will prepare development and lease agreements detailing the respective parties' obligations for design, construction, maintenance, and operations of the site.

The Miracle League has received a favorable response from the Montgomery County Recreation Department to participate in the programming of the Miracle League Field.

Miracle League is not asking for exclusive use of the Miracle Fields. The fields can serve as facilities for other sports for people of varying abilities such as wiffleball, AWE (Achieving Wheelchair Equality)

Games, Badminton, Tennis, Kickball, or Volleyball for seniors. The site would potentially accommodate programs of the nearby Spark Matsunaga Elementary School, which houses the Longview School and its special programs.

Operating Budget Impact

Since Parks was already maintaining a temporary soccer field in this location, and now will be constructing a youth baseball field instead, operating costs should be less than anticipated due to the smaller size of the field. Miracle League will cover operating costs of the Miracle Fields, with programming support from the Montgomery County Recreation Department.

Community Outreach

A public meeting was held on June 18, 2009 at the Soccerplex's Discovery Center in South Germantown Recreational Park to present two alternative concept plans for the proposed project to the community. Prior to the meeting, notices were hand-delivered, mailed or emailed to civic and homeowners associations in the area as well as adjacent property owners. Questions were raised related to lighting, hours of use, and parking. The Miracle Fields are expected to have less light spillover than standard softball or baseball fields because of ongoing improvements in lighting technology and because there is less field area to light. The hours of use could be as late as 11:00 pm during the season, which runs from spring to fall. One meeting participant questioned the need for the number of parking spaces. Staff recommends the plan be approved with standard number of spaces per facility because all the facilities on the site share a peak hour of use. However, staff recommends that the parking area needed for a second Miracle Field be reserved for future development rather than constructed in the first phase. At the time of review of the second field, staff may elect to decrease the total number of spaces required, if full use of the park facilities demonstrates at that time there is adequate parking for the additional field.

NEXT STEPS

If the Planning Board approves the project and the County Council approves the amended South Germantown Recreational Park Project Description Form, Parks staff will work closely with the partner's consultant and contractor to design and build the facilities. The final design of the project and regulatory requirements, including stormwater management and forest conservation, may necessitate modifications to the design concept. The specific approvals and agreements that must be executed in order to implement the proposal are:

1. Planning Board approval of the partnership, design concept, amendment of the Park Master Plan and amendment of the CIP PDF
2. Council approval of the CIP amendment
3. Parks staff approval of a development agreement and lease
4. Parks staff approval of a Park Construction Permit

CONCLUSION

The proposed Miracle Field will be a new type of facility for the park system that will complement existing facilities in the park and provide recreational opportunities for an underserved segment of the population of Montgomery County and beyond. Parks staff believe this innovative proposal fits perfectly within the Department's mission.

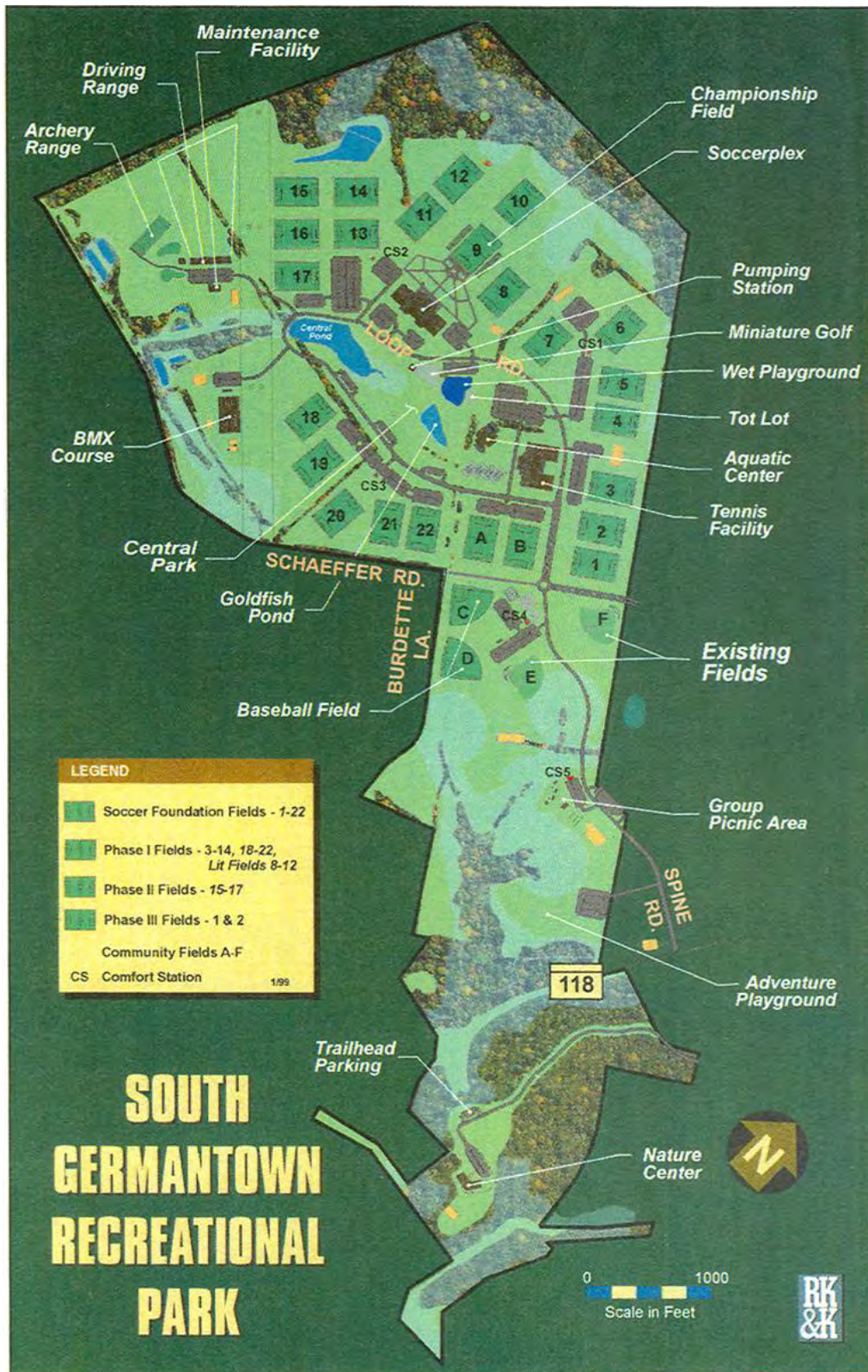
Attachments:

1. South Germantown Recreational Park Master Plan, amended 1999
2. Site Selection Matrix

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Attachment 1

South Germantown Recreational Park Master Plan Amended 1999



PARKS ANALYZED	WITHIN APPLICANT GEOGRAPHIC FUNDRAISING AREA	ADEQUATE SIZE	CONVERT EXISTING OR PLANNED FIELD VS CONSTRUCT NEW	PLANNED/EXISTING FUNCTION EASILY RE-LOCATABLE	QUICK TO IMPLEMENT	FUNDS AVAILABLE	SITE READY F:FLAT TOPO S:SEWER W: WATER L: LIGHTING P: PARKING	UN-CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENTALLY	COMPATIBLE W/ SURROUNDING USES	EASY ACCESS TO MAJOR ROADS	SYNERGY W/OTHER FACILITIES/ ACTIVITIES	CONCLUSION
Bauer Drive LP	Yes	Yes	Convert	NO: Rec Dept programs	No		Yes: FSWP	Yes	NO: houses close, we don't light LP's	Yes: 28		NO
Damascus Rec P	NO											NO
E Norbeck LP	Yes	Yes	Convert	Maybe	No, must redesign	70% DD	Yes: FSWP No: L	Some	NO: we don't light LP's	Yes:28		NO
Fairland Rec Pk	NO											NO
Little Bennett RP	NO											NO
Laytonia Rec Pk	Yes	Yes	Convert	Yes	No, must redesign		Yes: All	NO: SPA	Yes	Yes:124	Yes	NO
LLewelyn Fields	Yes	Yes	Convert	NO: ICC ROD	NO: ICC ROD i		Yes: F Ph II: W,S, L	Yes	Yes	Yes: ICC	Yes	NO
Martin Luther King Jr. Rec Pk	Yes	Yes 3.6	New	Yes	Yes		Yes: All	Yes	Yes: 150' tree buffer to resi lots	Yes: 650/29	Yes: ADA Plygrd	YES
Olney Manor Rec P	Yes	NO room	Convert	NO: all full	NO		Yes: All		Yes	Yes: ICC	Yes	NO
Ovid Hazen Wells Rec Pk	NO											NO
Ridge Rd Rec P	Yes	Yes	Convert	NO: Planned for Ice rink	Yes		Yes: All	Yes	Yes	Yes: 270	Yes	NO
Sligo Golf Course Reuse MP	Yes	Yes	New	Yes	NO: MP due 12/09			No	Yes	Yes: 29	Maybe	NO
S Germantown Rec P: Barmakian	Yes	Yes	New	N/A	NO: don't own			Yes	Yes	NO: Rustic	Yes	NO
S Germantown Rec P: Hondros	Yes	Yes 8.2	New	N/A	Maybe		Yes: S,W, No: F	Yes	Maybe: houses close	Yes: 270/118	Yes: School	YES
S Germantown Rec P: "Play Area"	Yes	Yes 5.2	New	No need to relocate	Yes	Yes	Yes: F,S,W,P No: L	Yes	Yes	Yes: 270/118	Yes	YES
Wheaton RP	Yes	NO:1.5	Convert	NO: all full	No		Yes: F,S,W,L No: P nearby	Yes	Yes	Yes: 97	Yes	NO