



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
 THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
 Item: 9
 Date: 10/6/11

September 22, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary R. Bradford, Director of Parks *Mary R. Bradford*
 Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director *M*
 Mitra Pedoeem, Chief, Park Development Division *Mitra*

FROM: Patricia McManus, Design Section Supervisor, Park Development, 301-495-3580 *pm*
 Ching-Fang Chen, Landscape Architect/Project Manager, 301-495-2557 *CFC*

SUBJECT: Facility Plan for the Renovation of Woodside Urban Park

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE the Recommended Facility Plan, including cost estimate, with the following condition:

- 1) Obtain approval of the Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan, as well as a variance for impacts to trees 30 inches or larger in diameter. The Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan and variance is currently under review and will be presented to the Planning Board by Planning staff at a later date.

Note: The facility plan is presented at this time, in order to meet the schedule for inclusion of the project in the FY13-18 Department of Parks Capital Improvements Program.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to prepare a facility plan for the renovation of Woodside Urban Park located at 8800 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring. The 2.62 acre park, located at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street, is situated prominently between a residential neighborhood and the north end of the Silver Spring Central Business District (CBD). The land was acquired in the early 1970's, and the park was constructed in the late 1970's. Land uses adjacent to the park include the Montgomery County Government Center (Department of Health and Human Services) to the north, the single family residential neighborhood of Woodside (zoned R-60) to the west, transitional mixed use development (zoned CBD-2) to the south, and townhouses in the Woodside Station neighborhood (zoned RT-12.5) and the M-NCPPC Montgomery Regional Office to the east. The park was originally designed to buffer residential neighborhoods from commercial development and to offer a variety of recreational

opportunities. The park now serves both the business community and the surrounding residential areas and is identified as the northern gateway to the Silver Spring CBD.

The existing park site consists of 2.28 acres owned by the M-NCPPC and 0.34 acres owned by Montgomery County. The Montgomery County Government Center to the north of the park is the site of the former Woodside Elementary School. In cooperation with the school, the M-NCPPC built a gym addition to the school and a basketball court on 0.34 acres of school property as part of Woodside Park. In 1991, the Board of Education conveyed the school property to Montgomery County, and a plat was prepared to transfer the 0.34 acre property with recreation facilities from Montgomery County to the M-NCPPC. The M-NCPPC has continued to maintain these facilities as part of the park since 1991 and re-developed the former basketball court into a tennis court around that time. The land was never formally transferred to the M-NCPPC.

The existing park was designed to provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. It includes a decorative fountain, lighting, seating areas with trellis structures, pavilions, and picnic areas for passive use. Active facilities include playgrounds, a basketball court, handball court and a temporary skate spot. Additional active facilities located on county property include a tennis court and an indoor gym. The park also includes many mature specimen trees and changes in grade, which are significant assets that contribute to the beauty and character of the park but also present challenges for renovation. Although it has served the community well over the years, the park is deteriorating and facilities are in need of renovation. The fountain no longer functions, the lighting is inadequate, understory vegetation is overgrown and contributes to issues with security, space is inefficiently used, and the park infrastructure is generally in poor condition with outdated facilities. Refer to Attachment A for the Facility Plan Report.

Project Funding

The facility planning study was funded with \$300,000 from the FY 2010-2011 Capital Improvements Program in the Facility Planning: Local Parks PDF. Facility planning represents thirty percent complete construction documents, including a proposed design, cost estimate and determination of regulatory feasibility. This project was designed in-house by a staff landscape architect in a collaborative effort with support from engineering and specialty consultants. The prime consultant hired in May 2010 was A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc. for civil engineering, survey, natural resources inventory, forest conservation, geotechnical work, stormwater management and cost estimating services. If approved the project would be proposed for design and construction in the Fiscal Year 2013-2018 Capital Improvements Program (CIP.) The schedule of the project would be determined during review of the CIP.

Facility Planning Process

The facility planning process includes the following sequence of work:

1. Collect data, prepare site survey, and perform geotechnical investigations.
2. Analyze existing site conditions.
3. Prepare and obtain approval of Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation Summary Map.
4. Meet with the community to discuss existing concerns and ideas for the park.
5. Identify program of requirements.

6. Prepare park design alternatives.
7. Present design alternatives to the community and stakeholders.
8. Develop preferred alternative based on input received.
9. Prepare stormwater management concept submission and obtain approval from the Department of Permitting Services.
10. Coordinate recommended plan with the community and stakeholders.
11. Finalize plan based on input received.
12. Prepare preliminary forest conservation plan submission.
13. Coordinate any outstanding issues with stakeholder groups and regulatory agencies.
14. Prepare facility plan report, cost estimate, and operating budget estimates.
15. Present facility plan recommendations and costs to the Montgomery County Planning Board for approval.

MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

North and West Silver Spring Master Plan, Approved and Adopted August 2000

Woodside Urban Park is located on the border of two master plan areas, and both plans include recommendations which inform the renovation of the park. The park falls within the boundary of the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan. This planning area is almost completely built with well-established, compactly developed residential neighborhoods and local services to support community life. The plan includes a number of recommendations to improve transit, as well as provide pedestrian and bicycle connections from neighborhoods to public facilities. It makes the following recommendation on page 72:

Improve transit and reliability along Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. Improvements to passenger accessibility to transit such as sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle racks and passenger shelters will be very important if goals of increased ridership are to be met.

One goal of the plan is to connect the Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail and the Sligo Creek Hiker-Biker Trail through North Silver Spring. Woodside Park is located between these two trails. Map 25 on page 77 shows a proposed on-road bikeway (Class III signed shared roadway) on Spring Street south of the park. This segment of bikeway provides an important connection from neighborhoods on the east side of Georgia Avenue to the Silver Spring CBD, Transit Center and the Sligo Creek Hiker-Biker Trail. Specific bikeway recommendations are explained further in the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan.

The master plan makes the following additional recommendations for parks and open space on pages 83 and 86:

- *Renovate existing facilities and provide new facilities and recreational programs for a wide range of ages, backgrounds and interests.*
- *Examine all parks in the Master Plan area to promote design refurbishing and possible physical modifications consistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.....Many of the parks in North and West Silver Spring are some of the Commission's earliest holdings; they should*

be assessed from the perspective of visibility and street surveillance to ensure public safety. Each park design should be consistent with the CPTED principles.

Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan, Approved and Adopted February 2000

Woodside Urban Park is the northern gateway that marks the entrance to the Silver Spring Central Business District. The Silver Spring CBD Sector Plan envisions a revitalized downtown that serves the surrounding residential communities, as well as a broader regional market, including the District of Columbia and western Prince George's County. The CBD will be a focal point for community life, offering a variety of activities where residents and visitors can work, live, play and socialize. Community goals include creating an active place with mixed uses that will attract people at all times, and creating an upgraded urban environment that will attract private investment.

Map 29 on page 75 of the plan identifies Woodside Urban Park as the northern gateway to the CBD and envisions Georgia Avenue as an urban boulevard. On page 74, the vision for urban boulevards and gateways is described as follows:

Through the CBD, Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road should be envisioned as urban boulevards linking the downtown's revitalization areas while balancing the needs and demands of public transportation, bicyclists, pedestrians, and car traffic. As wide, tree-lined corridors, made safer and more pleasant with improved signs, streetscaping, landscaping, and signal timing, these corridors will link redevelopment projects in the Core, Ripley District, Fenton Village, and South Silver Spring. CBD gateways and nodes will also be defined by landscaping, streetscaping, signs, public art, and buildings, all designed to signal the entrance and change to an active urban area.

Specific gateways are described on page 78, as follows:

Woodside Park, at the corner of Spring Street and Georgia Avenue is outside the CBD boundaries, but still marks the entrance into downtown Silver Spring as the buildings and streetscape change character at this point. Intersection improvements should be made here.

Recommendations for civic and cultural facilities include the following, on page 126:

Develop an art theme for revitalization projects. Include art spaces, programming, and objects whenever possible in new development and in existing buildings and parks. Use the arts to add value, character and amenity to the CBD and explore groups and techniques that could help Silver Spring compete effectively for arts funding and programming.

The plan describes urban parks as community nodes and places that define their surroundings and gather people, becoming centers of community life. The plan identifies two purposes for urban parks and open spaces on page 127:

- *Supporting the recreation needs and desires of the employees and surrounding residential communities*
- *Contributing to downtown revitalization by providing another convenient and interesting reason to come to Silver Spring.*

On page 128, the plan further describes Woodside Park:

Woodside Park and Jesup Blair Park – Located at the northern and southern ends of the Silver Spring CBD are Woodside Park and Jesup Blair Park. These major public parks were built at a time when the CBD was a suburban residential community with a commercial center. These parks, and the more recently created Fairview Park at the CBD's northeast edge, were located and designed to buffer residential communities from commercial development and to offer active recreation opportunities – tennis, soccer, and basketball. These parks now serve both the business community and the surrounding residential areas.

On pages 129-131, the plan describes urban recreation opportunities and the need to respond to new recreation trends such as skateboarding as well as provide other unique play features in parks. In the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Recommendations on page 134, the plan recommends “Explore relocating a skateboard park within the Silver Spring CBD.”

Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, Approved and Adopted March 2005

The Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan was developed with the goal of providing connectivity to major park destinations and the major park trail corridors. Woodside Urban Park is located within 2-4 miles of two major park trail systems, the Sligo Creek Hiker-Biker Trail and the Rock Creek Hiker-Biker Trail. Figure 2-9 on page 36 of the plan identifies three bikeways that provide direct connections from Woodside Urban Park to the countywide bikeway and park trail system. The routes are described on pages 47 and 48 and summarized below.

- Route SR-15, Sligo Creek Trail-Silver Spring Metrorail Connector: This is a signed, shared roadway (Class III bikeway) that travels along Columbia Boulevard, Woodland Drive, and Spring Street at Woodside Park. It connects neighborhoods on the east side of Georgia Avenue, north of Spring Street, to the west side of Georgia Avenue. This route is the same as Routes 11 and 14 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan.
- Route SR-52, Forest Glen-Silver Spring CBD Connector: This is a signed, shared roadway (Class III bikeway) on Second Avenue that extends from the Forest Glen metro station to Spring Street and the Silver Spring CBD. This route is the same as Route 12 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan.
- Route SP-10, Wayne Avenue Green Trail/2nd Avenue: This is a shared use, off-road bikeway (Class I) that provides a significant connection from Spring Street to the Silver Spring CBD, the Silver Spring Transit Center, and the Sligo Creek trail. This route is the same as Route 7 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan.

2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan

The 2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan (LPPRP) includes a park classification system and provides quantitative estimates of future recreational facility needs to the year 2020. Urban parks are classified under the category of Community Use Parks, which provide everyday recreation needs for residents close to home. On page III-23, the Silver Spring planning area shows a need for one additional basketball court and no need for additional tennis courts or playgrounds by the year 2020. Additional facilities that are needed countywide are identified on

page III-28 and include skate parks, dog exercise areas, regional trails, picnic areas and natural areas within parks. The plan further describes countywide needs for tennis on page III-24:

There are approximately 410 tennis courts currently available for community use in public parks and schools in Montgomery County. Local park tennis court usage observed in our 2000 user survey declined by nearly half from that observed in 1995. At these parks where there are usually only 2 courts, they are generally used informally by the adjacent community and use is often low. It is estimated that only 4 new park courts will be needed at local parks by 2020, primarily to serve new development in the upcounty area.

Vision 2030: The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

Vision 2030 is a strategic plan for park and recreation services in Montgomery County for the next twenty years. The current draft plan, dated June 2011, shows Woodside Urban Park located in the South Central planning area. Volume 2 of the current draft (page 63) indicates that the South Central area has the lowest level of service of all planning areas for parks and recreation compared to the density of population, even though this area shows a relatively high concentration and access to recreational facilities.

A summary of survey results is outlined on page 16 of Volume 2. The results identify program areas rated as high priorities to improve or expand, including health and wellness, outdoor nature programs, children and youth activities, community gardens, and youth league sports. On page 22 surveys identified additional facilities that rated high in importance, including trails, playgrounds and natural areas. In the table on page 75 (Appendix E), survey results from the South Central planning area show increasing demand for community gardens, dog parks, picnic shelters, and playgrounds.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Woodside is one of three urban parks in the North and West Silver Spring planning area. Fairview Road Urban Park and Royce Hanson Urban Park are located within immediate proximity to Woodside and serve the same residential neighborhoods. Fairview Park is a 1.1-acre park which includes open lawn and a playground, and the 0.2-acre Royce Hanson Park includes a small plaza and picnic area. Woodside is one of the most significant and visible green spaces in the Silver Spring urban area. The park includes many mature canopy trees, which are its primary asset. Large specimen trees are heavily concentrated along the southern and eastern portions of the park, and the critical root zones of these trees cover most of the park site. Protecting and preserving these trees will be a high priority and critical component of the park renovation.

The park is currently used for active and passive recreation, and the program elements focus primarily on specific recreational activities. There are inefficiently programmed spaces, and there are no large open spaces for flexible use. Park entrances are inconvenient for visitors and disengaged from street crosswalks. Sidewalks are narrow and without street trees to buffer the busy traffic. There is no stormwater management on the site, and the overall park infrastructure is deteriorating.

The high point of the park is located near the corner of Spring Street and First Avenue within the existing playground area, and the elevation drops by approximately 14 feet to the northeast

corner of the site. The park was designed as a series of rooms with intricate pathways and grade changes, making the circulation disjointed and inaccessible in some areas. Some spaces in the interior and north end of the park feel secluded and unsafe, due to overgrown evergreen understory vegetation, inadequate lighting, and significant grade changes that visually and physically separate these areas from active areas of the park. The adjacent Health and Human Services Building has no windows that look out onto the park, which further contributes to the isolation of these areas.

To address current needs while the facility planning study is underway, the playground at the southwest quadrant of the site was renovated in 2010. A temporary skate spot was built adjacent to the gym and basketball court in summer 2010 to help meet the skating demand in the Silver Spring area. This element of the plan was installed on a trial basis and will be evaluated by the Department of Parks to determine whether the facility should remain or be relocated in the future. In addition, a xeriscape demonstration garden was planted with a local business and community volunteers at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street in fall of 2010. Though the existing park facilities are in need of renovation, the park continues to be a popular place for people to spend their leisure time.

PROGRAM OF REQUIREMENTS

Community Outreach During Programming Phase – Meeting 1

A meeting was held with the community on May 17, 2010 to obtain public input and ideas for the renovation of the park. Existing park conditions, recommendations from area master plans and examples of successful contemporary urban parks were presented. Participants were asked how they currently use the park, what are their concerns with the existing park, and what are their interests and preferences for the renovated park.

There were differing opinions about the park from the attendees, the majority of whom live in the surrounding neighborhood. There were several nearby property owners who were strongly opposed to the skate spot and expressed concerns about noise, trash and the potential negative impact to their property value. Several others expressed support for the skate spot as an opportunity to provide teens with a recreational facility. Some like the park as it is and feel it's successful with minimal changes. Others thought the park was successful when it was originally built, especially when it included programming such as concerts, but indicated that the park has changed over thirty years. They commented that the park does not provide enough seating and tables, the facilities are deteriorating and outdated, and the park does not feel secure, especially for the aging population. A summary of community comments is outlined below. A complete record of the meeting minutes is included in the appendices of the facility plan report.

How is the park currently used:

- Passage to the CBD and local neighborhood
- Active recreation: basketball, tennis, playground, skating
- Passive recreation: sitting, resting, watching children, walking dogs

Concerns with the existing park:

- The space is over-programmed and not flexible
- There is poor visibility from the street and within the park
- The lighting is poor and the park feels unsafe
- There are outdated and under-utilized recreational facilities (such as the handball court)

- Lighting is not clustered evenly throughout the park
- Facilities are deteriorating, hardscape is broken and water feature does not operate
- Site is inaccessible with too many steps

Interests and preferences for the renovated park:

- Improve visibility from the street and within the park
- Improve pedestrian connections and ease of access
- Community garden
- Skate spot
- Open play area
- Game tables
- More green space
- More benches, picnic tables and trash receptacles
- Well-maintained vegetation
- Passive park with some active play
- Provide flexible spaces
- Accommodate different age groups and activities

Program Elements

The following program of requirements was developed for the park based on input received from the community, guidance from master plans, and input from the staff team.

- Improved pedestrian crossing and gateway entrance at Georgia Avenue
- Accessible connections into the park from Spring Street and First Avenue
- Improved bus access, shelter and/or concession
- Loop walkways within the park, including boardwalks if necessary to preserve trees
- Large, flexible, open green space
- Multi-age play area
- Fitness stations along walkways
- Tennis court
- Community gardens
- Demonstration garden
- Active recreation facilities for teens (basketball court and/or skate spot)
- Terrace areas for seating and relaxation
- Upgraded furnishings including seating, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, drinking fountain, picnic and game tables
- Attractive and well-integrated stormwater management features
- Preservation of existing specimen and canopy trees
- Upgraded, safe, artful lighting
- Incorporation of artistic elements throughout the park
- Educational or interpretive features
- Vehicle access for park maintenance
- Attractive, low maintenance, carbon surplus landscape
- Unique sustainable design materials and features

- Improved visibility and incorporation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles

FACILITY PLAN DESIGN STUDY

Alternative Plans Considered

Three alternative concept plans were developed based on the feedback from the first public meeting. The vision of the plans is to develop a successful 21st Century urban park, incorporating urban connectivity, experiential complexity, environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and cultural vibrancy. Each alternative included similar program elements in a different site layout.

The preliminary concept plans did not include a tennis court. Staff conducted an analysis of the number of tennis facilities in the surrounding area. Currently, there are three courts within one-half mile radius of the park, nine courts within a one-mile radius, and 39 courts within a two-mile radius of the park. The analysis of tennis needs in the 2005 LPPRP did not show a demand for tennis, so the preliminary alternatives recommended reclaiming the space of the tennis court and adjacent steep slope for play and additional open space.

A brief description of each alternative is outlined below.

- Concept A configures passive uses, play areas, seating and community gardens near the residences on First Avenue. It reconfigures the park to create a large, flexible, open space in the center of the park. Active recreation uses are located near Georgia Avenue, and a gateway entrance is created at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street.
- Concept B retains the existing configuration of the park with minor changes. The plan creates a spine of activity through the center of the park. Common spaces are smaller and located at the edges of the park. The play area is relocated to the site of the existing tennis court, and active recreation uses are located near Georgia Avenue.
- Concept C creates a common central open space with play areas located near Spring Street. It proposes an amphitheater in the location of the existing tennis court to utilize the existing slope. It proposes active recreation and passive uses near Georgia Avenue and a gateway entrance at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street.

Community Outreach During Design Phase – Meeting 2

The second public meeting was held with the community on December 12, 2010 to present the design alternatives for public feedback. The majority of attendees were from the surrounding neighborhood. There was a general preference for Concept A and satisfaction with the overall quality of the design concepts presented. The primary concerns expressed were to decrease the size of the paved pedestrian entrance at Georgia Avenue, increase the amount of open space in the park, and to include a tennis court. Community members stated that tennis courts are used by all ages, while the skate spot accommodates a limited age group. They stated that their preference for tennis should be accommodated, since they accepted the skate spot. They also reiterated that the skate spot was intended to be temporary and not necessarily a permanent feature within the park.

Community members also favored the concept of a community garden, walking trail, inclusion of fitness equipment, preservation of the tree canopy, a consolidated central open space for flexible uses, and proposed improvements to increase visibility from the street. They expressed the importance of ensuring an adequate width of sidewalk along Spring Street, as well as the potential for improving bicycle lanes on Spring Street. The possibility of installing a single parking meter device that would allow for the elimination of the existing meters directly adjacent to the parking stalls was also discussed as a method to increase the efficiency of sidewalk space.

Staff agreed to develop a design alternative that retains the tennis court and to solicit additional public comment. Staff prepared a revised alternative that refined Concept A, added a tennis court, reduced the size of the pedestrian plaza at Georgia Avenue and maintained the large central open space. The revised concept was posted on the project website on March 4, 2011, and e-mail notification was sent to meeting attendees and the Woodside Civic Association. Feedback was generally positive and several individuals voiced appreciation that the community had been heard.

Coordination with Montgomery County Department of General Services

Park staff met with staff from the Montgomery County Department of General Services (MC-DGS) and the Department of Health and Human Services on May 10, 2010 to discuss the scope of the upcoming park facility plan project and the potential to coordinate design for both facilities. At that point in time the MC-DGS was conducting an assessment of county properties and programmatic needs and was uncertain about the future of their site and the timing of any potential future project. Park staff continued to keep MC-DGS apprised of the status of the facility plan and coordinated park recommendations on November 19, 2010 prior to the second public meeting.

On May 9, 2011, park staff met with MC-DGS for a briefing on the final recommended park facility plan, in anticipation of taking the facility plan to the Planning Board in summer 2011. At this meeting MC-DGS staff indicated that they had made a decision to redevelop their site for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The intent of the project is to consolidate the existing and off-site HHS program at the 8818 Georgia Avenue location by constructing a new four or five story facility fronting on Georgia Avenue. The preliminary program recognized the deficiency of property and the possible need for reclaiming the 0.34-acre park parcel owned by Montgomery County or swapping this parcel for another park parcel fronting on Georgia Avenue. MC-DGS is beginning facility planning to develop a program of requirements for their facility in FY12 along with a test fit of their program on the site, in order to request funding for design and construction in the FY13-18 Capital Improvements Program (CIP.) They requested that park staff delay the facility plan for the park. Park staff indicated that the facility plan needed to be presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board by fall 2011, in order for additional funding to be requested for the park project in the FY13-18 CIP.

On June 28, 2011 a meeting was held with the Directors, supervisors and project managers of Montgomery County Parks and the Montgomery County Department of General Services to coordinate both agency projects. It was agreed that there would be a collaborative effort to integrate the design of both projects and that there was a need for a public meeting to inform the community of the upcoming County project and potential future changes to the park project. It was agreed that the park facility plan would be completed in order for future funding to be

requested and that the two projects would come back to the Planning Board together during the Mandatory Referral stage for the county facility.

Community Outreach for Final Design - Meeting 3

A third public meeting was held on July 25, 2011 to notify the community of the proposed county project and to discuss potential implications to the Woodside Urban Park project. Park staff and MC-DGS staff indicated our intention to work together on an integrated design for the park and the county facility and that we would come back to meet with the community during the design phase of both projects. Most of the community questions and discussion focused on the county project. A summary of comments on the county project is outlined below.

- The community would prefer that parking remain on Georgia Avenue and not adjacent to residences. Structured parking was discussed. There was a suggestion that the parking lot at the Methodist church might be available for use.
- There were questions about the size of the building footprint and height of the building
- Concerns were expressed about the increased program, size and occupancy of the facility
- Alternative uses for the property were proposed – library, school, recreation facility
- There were recommendations to activate the building at night, either by offering meeting rooms for civic organizations or providing recreation use in the building
- Integration of the park and building will be important
- There were questions regarding phasing during construction
- There were questions regarding opportunities for additional public review and comment, as well as the timing of the project

Staff also presented the final recommended plan for the park. Additional public comments on the park design are outlined below.

- There was a request for the community demonstration garden to remain at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street
- There were questions regarding public safety and the incorporation of CPTED principles in the design
- There was a comment that a concession element in the park would not be desirable for the neighborhood as it would create trash
- There was a request for a dog park and a restroom
- There was a suggestion that a dog park could possibly be located in Fairview Park.

Additional Coordination and Regulatory Approvals

Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services

The stormwater management concept plan for the park was approved on September 19, 2011 (File #239870.)

M-NCPPC Department of Planning / Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

A Simplified Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) was approved on May 4, 2010 (File #42010181E) for the renovation of the playground and temporary skate spot. A detailed Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) was approved for

the park on June 23, 2011 (File #420111910.) A preliminary forest conservation plan was submitted in September 2011 and is currently under review. An application for a variance was submitted to DEP on August 29, 2011 for impacts to the critical root zones of 17 trees having a diameter of 30 inches or greater. All trees are proposed to be protected and preserved. The application is currently under review.

Montgomery County Department of General Services, Office of Real Estate

The M-NCPPC Land Acquisition Specialist sent a letter to the Office of Real Estate on September 21, 2009 to follow up on the transfer of the 0.34-acre park parcel. A copy of a memorandum from January 1988 to E. James Sayer, formerly of the Office of Real Estate regarding conveyance of the land at the former Woodside Elementary School was attached to this request. On February 4, 2010, the M-NCPPC sent another letter to the Office of Real Estate regarding this matter. Montgomery County did not reply to either letter.

Montgomery County Silver Spring Regional Services Center

A meeting was held on November 15, 2010 with the Director of the Silver Spring Regional Services Center to review concept alternatives prior to the public meeting. The Director supported the concept and suggested that the program at Woodside should be considered in context with other civic spaces in the Silver Spring CBD.

Development Review Committee (DRC)

Staff presented the project informally to the Development Review Committee after their regular meeting on March 30, 2011. The Committee was interested in the green street approach on Georgia Avenue for bio-filtration and stormwater management, but indicated that it would require approval by multiple agencies and would need to include a management plan. They indicated that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) would need to be involved with review of any proposed stormwater management facilities in the state right-of-way on Georgia Avenue, since MDE maintains stormwater facilities on state property.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MC-DOT), Traffic Engineering and Operations Division

On April 5, 2011, staff coordinated proposed streetscape improvements for lighting, sidewalks and stormwater management with the MC-DOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Division. The MC-DOT recommended enhancing the lighting on Georgia Avenue based on their pedestrian safety audit and provided input including illumination standards, fixture details and specifications. They also provided a plan with a recommended spacing of light fixtures on Georgia Avenue and Spring Street. With respect to any proposed alterations to the sidewalks for the park project, MC-DOT confirmed that the sidewalk along First Avenue should be at least five feet wide. They requested that existing signs along Spring Street and First Avenue should remain in their current locations. MC-DOT suggested that planters could be used for bio-filtration along Georgia Avenue and Spring Street to discourage jay-walking, provided SHA agrees with the park concept.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MC-DOT), Parking Operations Division

On April 6, 2011, staff coordinated proposed streetscape improvements for a bus shelter and parking meters with the MC-DOT, Parking Operations Division. MC-DOT confirmed that there is significant bus ridership in this area, and a shelter is justified. They indicated that they do not typically install master meters for on-street parking. They recommended that the park project could minimize street clutter with individual meters on Spring Street by installing two meter heads on each post.

Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Access Management Division

On April 7, 2011, staff coordinated the idea for integrated stormwater management bio-filtration facilities in the Georgia Avenue right-of-way. SHA indicated that they are opposed to the idea and would not approve them. This idea was not pursued further.

Potomac Electric and Power Company (PEPCO)

On April 6, 2011, staff requested information on the feasibility and cost of removing electric poles along Georgia Avenue and installing approximately 375 linear feet of service lines underground. PEPCO estimated the cost would be approximately one million dollars. Due to the high estimated cost, staff did not include this proposal in the recommended plan.

Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC)

On May 10, 2011, staff presented the project to the Public Arts Trust Steering Committee of the AHCMC as a potential candidate for public art. Given the park's important location in the neighborhood and the Silver Spring CBD, high level of use and high public visibility, the Public Arts Trust supports the inclusion of public art in this project.



Recommended Facility Plan

The Recommended Facility Plan for Woodside Urban Park envisions a forward thinking urban park that is ecologically sound, culturally significant and aesthetically pleasing. The plan intends to protect and enhance the existing specimen trees and to create a flexible framework for multi-purpose recreational and leisure activities. The plan advocates a sustainable approach and best management practices in all aspects of design, construction, operations and management. The renewed park will promote a healthy life style of urban living as well as provide educational opportunities related to water, energy, food and biodiversity. The recommended plan incorporates themes of urban connectivity, experiential complexity, environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and cultural vibrancy.

Urban Connectivity

The park serves as a gateway and connection between the Silver Spring CBD and adjoining communities and includes the following elements:

- *Gateway Terrace* - provide a gateway entrance at the corner of Georgia Avenue and Spring Street that is visible, accessible and welcoming.
- *Crosswalks* - improve signage and crosswalks to offer safe connections to the park.
- *Streetscape* - enhance Georgia Avenue as an urban boulevard, and improve the park frontage on both Georgia Avenue and Spring Street.
- *Sidewalks* - allocate a ten-foot wide sidewalk on Georgia Avenue to match the CBD design guidelines, upgrade the sidewalk on Spring Street to six feet wide to improve accessibility and accommodate street parking meters. Coordinate sidewalk recommendations on Spring Street with bikeway master plan recommendations.
- *Accessible Entrances on 1st Avenue* - provide an entrance to welcome visitors at Spring Street and 1st Avenue; and provide an accessible entrance at mid block to provide access to the tennis court, community garden and the lower play area.
- *Bus shelter/bike racks* - provide a bus shelter and bike racks for commuters.
- *Path network* - provide approximately 850 yards of an accessible, interconnected primary and secondary path system throughout the park. Elevated boardwalks are proposed to provide access while protecting critical root zones of existing trees.



Experience & Cultural Vibrancy

The park space is designed to promote a sense of community. Activities are layered and linked to respond to the needs of a diverse range of users. Design features encourage social interaction, and the park is designed to be a desirable place to meet people, share ideas, and observe activities. Opportunities are provided for both active and passive recreation for all ages. Key elements include the following:

- *Great Lawn* accommodates programmed or unprogrammed activities. The half-acre common space at the heart of the park is transparent, accessible and visible from all parts of the park and sidewalks. This space invites participation in an open and safe manner.
- *Picnic Alee* is a place to socialize and to observe fun activities on the Great Lawn and in the play area. At the high point of the park and away from the busy Georgia Avenue, this comfortable gathering space takes advantage of shade from the existing canopy trees. With ample furnishings and moveable tables and chairs, people can create their own seating arrangements and social groups.
- *Rain Garden/Water Feature* is a focal feature and amenity for the park. The integrated chain of rain gardens, runnels, infiltration facilities and water tanks provide stormwater management, visual enjoyment and offers an opportunity for play and environmental education. People will experience the gardens both when they are wet and dry and will observe variations in the plants year round. Interpretive signage would be incorporated.
- *Climb & Play* area makes use of the topographic changes and creates challenging activities for sliding down and climbing up. The rock climbing wall offers challenges for older kids.
- *Play Path* engages children with activities along a walkway at the southwest quadrant of the park. The experience will culminate at a themed play structure at a focal point near the 1st Avenue and Spring Street entrance.
- *Art & Play* provides a setting for public art and an overflow play space from the Play Path. It offers opportunities for free interpretation and creative play. Children can be easily supervised from the picnic area. It's a safe alcove for younger kids to run around and have fun.
- *Senior Play* area includes fun fitness equipment that offers a range of exercises to improve strength and flexibility and help all adults continue active and healthy lifestyles.
- *Community Garden* provides 15 plots for gardeners, each with 200 square feet. Each plot will be defined with reused granite from the existing water feature. The garden will provide a meaningful leisure activity for families, a place to play and learn for children, and a spot to relax for office workers and senior citizens.
- *Demonstration Garden* - the volunteer garden will showcase sustainable native plants and provide year-round interest for the park.
- *Overlook* provides a resting place viewing into the lower play and garden area. The space underneath will serve as a utility and storage room.

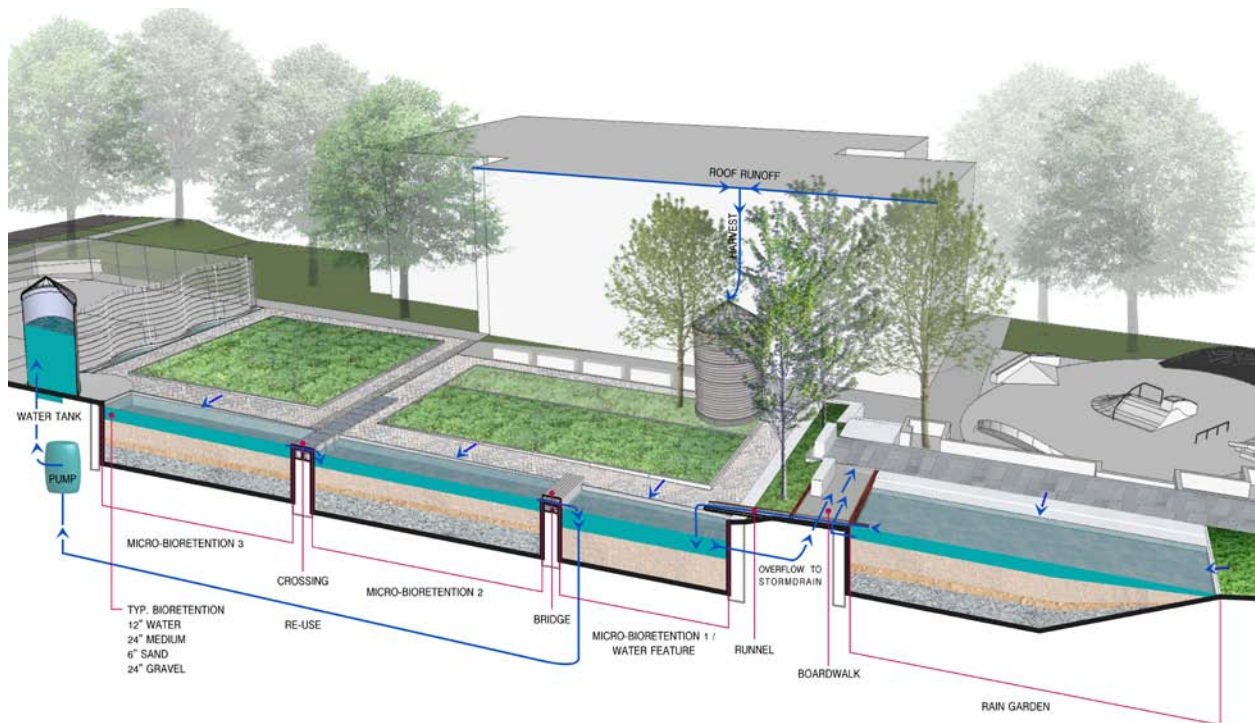
- *Active Recreation* includes tennis, and retains the basketball court and skate spot. The curved modular fence and water tank at the tennis court offers an aesthetic transition to the garden and play area. The reconfigured tennis court provides better orientation and can be used for multiple purposes.



Economic Efficiency

The park is designed as a cohesive system, and each element is designed to fulfill multiple functions. Stormwater management facilities provide aesthetic amenities, the physical framework of the park is designed to maintain unobstructed views to provide visual surveillance for safety and crime prevention, and education and environmental stewardship is embedded within play areas. The plan explores the potential to include enterprise or sponsorship opportunities such as the following:

- *Concession/Bus Shelter* - revenue from leases of a seasonal or permanent concession could contribute to the funding for maintenance of the park.
- *Rain Gardens* – possible element to seek partnership with business or environmental organization in the Silver Spring CBD or as an open space alternative for optional method development.
- *Solar Canopy*- possible element to pursue corporate sponsorship for product demonstration.
- *Corporate Sponsorships, Friends Groups, Naming Rights* – potential opportunities to cultivate private partners and volunteers.



Environmental Sustainability

Strategies were explored to manipulate water, soil, and vegetation into design solutions to ecologically manage stormwater, sequester carbon, re-introduce native plants, restore biodiversity, alleviate the urban heat island effect, restore horticultural soil properties, prevent erosion, and filter noise and air pollutants.

- *Tree Preservation* – develop tree protection strategies to guide design, future construction, and long-term tree care.
- *Water* - protect and restore site hydrology; ecologically manage stormwater by harvesting, conveying, infiltrating, filtering, storing and reusing water.
- *Soil* - provide comprehensive soil testing; reuse and rejuvenate existing soil; use engineered soils to fulfill program needs; improve permeability; and provide a soil management plan.
- *Vegetation* - protect existing vegetation; enhance habitat; design water efficient and low maintenance landscapes; reduce turf grass on slopes and within critical root zones of existing trees.
- *Lighting* - design a smart lighting system that is enticing, adaptable and safe, responding visibly to stimuli such as user presence, activity, and time. Provide security level LED lighting with motion sensors to allow safe passage through the park at dark.
- *Habitat* - enhance and restore urban habitat by restoring native plants to the park, creating balanced communities, and gardening for insect diversity.
- *Materials Recycling* - reuse granite cobble from the existing water feature for the community garden and bluestone paving for path surfacing.

COST ESTIMATES

Construction Costs

A summary of construction costs is outlined in the table below. A detailed cost estimate is included in the appendices of the facility plan report.

Item	Subtotal
Site Preparation and Demolition	\$160,000
Tree Protection	\$235,000
Stormwater Management, Sediment and Erosion Control	\$314,200
Earthwork (grading, horticultural soil preparation)	\$295,000
Utilities & Fencing (water, electric service, lighting, street lighting)	\$785,100
Paving (walkways, terraces, tennis court, basketball resurfacing)	\$635,800
Structures (seat walls, retaining walls, bridges, steps, railings, shelter)	\$867,300
Landscaping (includes 2 years maintenance for plant establishment)	\$252,800
Site Amenities (furnishings, playground, fitness equipment, public art)	\$527,500
Construction Subtotal	\$4,072,500
Construction Contingency (30% of Construction Subtotal)	\$1,221,800
Construction Total (Subtotal plus Contingency)	\$5,294,200
Design Contract with Contingency (15% of Construction Total)	\$794,200
Staff Chargebacks for Design (20% of Design Contract)	\$158,900
Construction Management & Inspections (4% of Construction Total)	\$211,800
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$6,458,900

Operating Budget Impact

The operating budget impact was not completed at the time of this report and will be presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board at the meeting on October 6, 2011.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends approval of the Facility Plan and associated cost estimate. The proposed plan provides an ecologically sound, culturally significant and aesthetically pleasing park for future generations. It enhances the notion of the park as the gateway entrance to the Silver Spring CBD and provides a cohesive and flexible framework to support recreational needs and cultural activities for the CBD and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Staff recommends that the timing of funding for design and construction of the park should be coordinated with the Department of General Services' Health and Human Services project, in order to ensure that the design of both facilities is well integrated. The facility plan for the park will likely be amended and presented to the Montgomery County Planning Board at the time of Mandatory Referral for the Health and Human Services facility.

Attachments

- Attachment A: Facility Plan Report
- Attachment B: Appendices