



MCPB Item # _____

March 19, 2015

MEMORANDUM

March 12, 2015

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MGF*
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director for Administration

Michael Ma, Acting Division Chief, Park Development Division (PDD) *mm*

Dr. John Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *JHench*

FROM: Brooke Farquhar, Supervisor, Park and Trail Planning, PPSD *Brooke Farquhar*

Mark S. Wallis, Planner Coordinator, Park and Trail Planning, PPSD *(MSW)*

REF: Mandatory Referral Case Number MR2015013

Tear down, onsite relocation and expansion of the Montgomery County Recreation Department's (MCRD) Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center (NRC) located at M-NCPPC's Good Hope Local Park, 14715 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring MD. Construction of new recreation building, new environmentally compliant parking lot, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) site improvements, and relocated playground.

Basis for Review

All County development projects are submitted to the Planning Board as Mandatory Referrals under Section 7-112 of the Regional District Act for review and comments. Comments are advisory in that the statute allows the applicant to overrule the Planning Board's decision and proceed. However, as the Montgomery County Recreation Department's Good Hope Neighborhood Recreation Center is located on M-NCPPC park property, and the project is co-funded with the Department of Parks, the applicants must comply with any and all conditions before obtaining a Park Construction Permit.

This proposal includes demolition of the existing building; construction of an expanded building onsite; and reconfiguration of parking, playground and other site elements. **(Figure 1)**

Because the property is in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area, the Planning Board's responsibility is to determine if environmental buffer protection, SPA forest conservation and planting requirements, and site imperviousness limits have been satisfied. This is addressed in the Staff Memos in Items 2a and b, to be reviewed before the Mandatory referral.

Staff Recommendation

Approval to transmit the following Conditions and Comments back to the Montgomery County Department of General Services (DGS)

Conditions:

1. This project must obtain a Park Construction Permit from the Department of Parks prior to commencement of any demolition and construction activities on parkland.
2. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between The Department of Parks and the County must be developed for maintenance responsibilities and security prior to the opening of the Center. The MOU will be similar in scope, detail, and agency responsibilities to similarly functioned and recently opened MCRD buildings on parkland.
3. The project shall adhere to the approved Forest Conservation Plan and the Water Quality Plan.
4. The final design must include a round-the-clock dedicated emergency and maintenance vehicular access to safely accommodate emergency responders and maintenance vehicles. The maintenance vehicles will be at a minimum a 16-foot truck pulling a 24-foot trailer to the ballfield. Asphalt, concrete or reinforced turf may be provided along the drive path for both emergency and maintenance vehicles.
5. The dumpster service area must be deleted from the plans.
6. Final storm water management plans must be approved by the Department of Permitting Services (DPS). DGS and the Department of Parks (DOP) will work together to mutually revise plans to meet DPS requirements.
7. The existing ballfields at the Good Hope Local Park will remain open during building and site construction period. This project must provide necessary protection measures to ensure safe use of the park facilities and pedestrian access to the ballfields during its construction period. Parking will be provided along Twig Road.
8. The proposed driveway to Twig Road must be approved by MCDOT. Ramps installed on the existing sidewalk across the proposed driveway must also be reviewed and approved by MCDOT.

Cloverly Master Plan Conformance Comments

Provide good pedestrian access and compatibility with the adjacent properties by:

1. Providing crosswalks across Twig Road and Good Hope Road
2. Considering asphalt paving for the sidewalks (as opposed to concrete) to maintain Cloverly's rural character
3. Meeting the impervious surface limitations imposed by the Upper Paint Branch SPA

General Background

The Montgomery County Recreation Department (MCRD) operates two types of recreation centers -- a Community Recreation Center (CRC) and a Neighborhood Recreation Center (NRC). The difference between the two types of centers is building size and subsequent program offerings. The CRC ranges from 20,000 square feet to 33,000 square feet. The NRC is generally less than 10,000 square feet. The Good Hope building is of the NRC building type. MCRD has been strategically planning and upgrading a number of NRC buildings.

Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area (SPA)

As part of the requirements of the Special Protection Area law, a SPA Water Quality Plan should be reviewed in conjunction with a mandatory referral. Under the provision of the law, the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) and the Planning Board have different responsibilities in the review of a water quality plan. DPS has reviewed and conditionally approved the elements of the Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan under its purview. The Planning Board responsibility is to determine if environmental buffer protection, SPA forest conservation and planting requirements, and site imperviousness limits have been satisfied. These issues will be brought to the Planning Board in separate Water Quality Plan and Forest Conservation Plan items in conjunction with this Mandatory Referral.

The Good Hope Local Park is located in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area (SPA) (**Figure 2**). The Upper Paint Branch stream system is a unique, nationally recognized cold-water fishery that is the only suburban stream system in Montgomery County with a long-term self-sustaining brown trout population. As such, it has been designated as one of the five (5) Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the County, along with Clarksburg, 10-Mile Creek, Piney Branch, and the Upper Rock Creek. The 10-Mile Creek, Upper Rock Creek and the Upper Paint Branch SPAs have development restrictions outlined in the Overlay Zone for each area.

Impervious surface restrictions for development projects in the Upper Paint Branch SPA are set forth in the Upper Paint Branch Overlay, which restricts development to an 8 percent imperviousness limit for new projects. There is also a provision for projects with impervious surfaces lawfully existing before July 1, 2007 that exceed the 8 percent limit and are proposing to construct features within the project area.

Good Hope Local Park was built in the early to mid-1970s and on July 1, 2007 had 13.18% onsite impervious surfaces. *Taking into account the imperviousness in the right of way, the total existing project area imperviousness cannot be increased over 13.52%.*

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Site Description

The Good Hope Local Park and MCRD Neighborhood Recreation Center is located at 14715 Good Hope Road, north of Twig Road and south of Briggs Chaney Road, in Cloverly. It is a 13.19 acre property in the RE-2C zone within an established residential area (**Figure 3**). The Property is bound by Good Hope Road to the north, Twig Road to the west, and residential neighborhoods to the east and south. The Property is located in the 1997 Cloverly Master Plan area and the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area. The Property is owned by the Maryland National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and was acquired on June 13, 1973. M-NCPPC's Department of Parks operates and maintains the park including all exterior play areas, while the Neighborhood Recreation Center is operated by Montgomery County.

The Property is currently developed with a Neighborhood Recreation Center with parking for 69 cars shared between the NRC and Parks. The outside recreation components include a splash park and a gazebo operated as part of the Recreation Department, 2 lighted basketball courts, 2 lighted tennis courts, 1 playground, and 2 diamond fields with a rectangular overlay operated by the Department of Parks.

Purpose for the Project

The existing building, constructed around 1978, is not up to current standards. The building is not fully ADA compliant, the gym is a substandard size, and many of the structural and mechanical systems are at the end of their life cycle. The park components also are not ADA accessible and the playground needs to be moved out of a wooded area. The Upper Paint Branch Special protection Area (SPA) regulation needs to be followed. It was decided to solve all this site's problems at once with a co-designed SPA compliant project concurrently.

Project Description

The project proposes to demolish the existing 6,305 Square foot recreation building, relocate and construct a new 2 story 13,136 square foot building, and create a new environmentally-compliant parking lot. The new NRC will be constructed to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guideline for Silver Certification and will be placed on the site of the existing parking lot in the northwest corner. This new layout will result in a more centrally located parking lot, providing closer access to the park's many offerings. The existing playground will be relocated to a more central location, away from the existing forest. Additionally, the park will receive improvements to its ADA accessibility to provide access to existing ball fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, and the relocated playground. The parking lot and tennis courts will have the latest Storm-Water Management treatments. Access to the site is currently provided off Good Hope Road and will remain so in approximately the same location after construction.

The proposed schedule anticipates construction commencing in Fall of 2015 and lasting for 24 months. The Project will be constructed in 2 Stages. The first Stage will be 6 months in duration starting in the Fall of 2015 and include:

- Existing Recreation Center closed
- Pre -Demolition Activities
- Permitting (DPS)
- Splash park closed
- Parking open for Park access

The second stage will be the next 18 months in duration and include:

- Demolition of Existing Recreation Building and Parking Lot
- Construction of new Facility and Site Work
- Fields to remain open
- Periodic Closure of Tennis Court
- Splash park remains closed
- Playground open while new one built.

The new building will open in the fall of 2017.

New Neighborhood Recreation Center

The proposed new recreation center's Floor Plan will expand on the existing center's programs by providing the following (**Figure 4**):

- Full - Size Gymnasium,
- 2 Activity Rooms that can be combined into 1 Social Room
- Kitchen to serve the Social Room
- Game Room
- Fitness Center
- Storage, Staff Offices, Bathrooms, Lobby, and Mechanical.

Playground Relocation and Replacement

The existing playground, constructed in 1997, does not meet current Department standards:

- It covers approximately 2,500 square feet, thus is significantly smaller than the 3,500 to 5,000 square-foot playgrounds typically constructed in local parks.
- It consists of one composite play structure, one ground-level play element and a swing set with four swings, all nearing the end of their 20 year life expectancy and in the queue for replacement as part of Montgomery Parks' regular Countywide Playground Renovation Program.
- Typical playgrounds consist of distinct play areas for two-to-five year-olds and for five-to-twelve year olds, but the single composite play structure is too difficult for the younger age group, yet does not provide enough of a challenge to keep the older age group engaged.
- The equipment does not meet playground accessibility requirements set forth in Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The playground's location beneath existing forest cover is in conflict with current forest conservation requirements.

A new, 4,000 square foot playground would be installed in the open space just to the south of the tennis courts and behind the backstop of the northern baseball field. The new location would be approximately 200 feet closer to the parking lot than the existing playground, improving access for all individuals to this amenity. This shorter route also results in the reduction of approximately 600 square feet pavement which will help offset the additional impervious cover created by the enlarged playground size.

The proposed playground includes two age-appropriate composite structures, three pieces of standalone equipment and a swing set with four swings, all of which are fully ADA-compliant. Two benches and two picnic tables will provide caregivers places to sit and watch their children. The playground's safety surface will be an engineered wood fiber system. While not considered a pervious surface for the purposes of the SPA impervious cover calculation, the engineered wood fiber system allows for infiltration and below-grade storage of storm water, allowed as a storm water management facility by the Department of Permitting Services.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

The proposed improvements will rectify all of the deficiencies found in Parks' ADA consultant's reports and the proposed plan entirely supports the strategy outlined in the 2014 Interim Transition Plan. The combination of an ADA-compliant new Neighborhood Recreation Center building as well as fully accessible amenities will yield a fully compliant park. This area of the County lacks accessible facilities; this park will benefit all individuals regardless of ability.

In accordance with Settlement Agreement, an ADA Assessment of Good Hope Local Park was made in August 2013 by EMG, M-NCPPC's consultant. The assessment was prepared in accordance with DOJ guidelines and also included Maryland Accessibility Code Requirements. All assessments follow the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. The report indicated that all recreational components within the park including pathways, the tennis courts, basketball courts, all fields, the gazebo as well the playground were deemed to be non-accessible. The splash park was found to be fully-accessible and the existing parking had limited accessibility. The primary obstacles to accessibility primarily involved accessible routes or lack thereof, slopes, insufficient access widths, signage, parking, and insufficient surfacing materials. These issues are rather typical of those found in most parks in Montgomery County.

When completed, Good Hope Local Park and Neighborhood Recreation Center will be the only fully compliant park and facility within the SPA and is one of the first fully compliant parks in Montgomery County.

Storm water management

The storm water management plan for this site will provide full Environmental Site Design (ESD) treatment for all site improvements and existing site features which are to remain (such as the tennis courts). This will improve the condition of the site considerably, as the existing property contains no storm water management treatment. Proposed facilities include seven micro-bio retentions and an alternative surface for a total of eight (8) facilities. The micro-bio retentions treat roof-top runoff from the building, the new parking lot, the existing tennis court, and the existing basketball court. The alternative surface serves as treatment in the playground area.

Parking

The new parking lot will have the same number of spaces as the existing lot. Parking is also available along Twig Road. Peak demand times for the indoor facilities do not generally overlap with the peak demand for ballfields, which have the highest parking demand. Ballfield peak demand time is Spring/Fall Monday through Friday after school for practices and Saturday mornings for games. Building peak demand time is summer when school is out, winter for indoor basketball, Saturday afternoons and evenings for social events. Playground demand is during the day, tennis and basketball courts do not generate large parking demands. Both operating entities agree that the current supply of parking between the on-site lot and overflow on Twig Road will be sufficient.

During the building and site construction period, the ballfields at the Park will remain open and park patrons will park along Twig Road. The spring season Saturday games, approximately 12-15 will generate the highest temporary parking demand from mid-morning to mid-afternoon. The permits office will write into the ballfield permits that carpooling is encouraged during the construction period.

Conformance with the Cloverly Master Plan

The Good Hope Local Park Recreation Center is referenced in the Suburban Communities section of the Cloverly Master Plan (1997). Other than being identified as a park and recreation facility on page 65, no specific recommendations were made for the community center or the Local Park. The recommendation in the 1997 Plan was to provide appropriate public facilities and strengthen the links between Cloverly residents and community facilities (p. 65). The Plan reinforces the rural character of the area and encourages pedestrian circulation and improvements to the visual appearance of the community.

The 1997 Plan recommends connecting all existing sidewalks to public facilities such as this park/recreation center. Crosswalks along Good Hope Road and Twig Road are necessary to allow safe pedestrian connectivity to the facility. The Plan recommends providing “adequate and accessible recreational opportunities for Cloverly’s residents” (p. 68). The Plan also recommends using asphalt paths, where practical, to help maintain Cloverly’s rural character (p. 62). The Plan acknowledges that the use of concrete sidewalk may be appropriate to maintain safety where paths are located directly adjacent to open section roads or where connections are made to other concrete sidewalks.

Along the eastern edge, the Property contains over 4 acres of forest. A tree-lined edge also exists along the southern and western edge (along Twig Road) providing additional buffer and a compatible transition to the single-family house adjacent to the recreation center and park. The proposed site plan achieves compatibility with the surrounding residents with the existing and proposed landscaping.

The Cloverly Master Plan recommends low-density residential and parkland use designations consistent with the 1981 Plan throughout the Suburban Communities in the Northwest Branch and Paint Branch watersheds (p. 28). The Paint Branch has been identified in the 1997 Plan as a watershed requiring extraordinary protection to maintain water quality (p. 28). The proposed building footprint will be increased to meet the recreational programming needs, but the parking area, while maintaining the current number of spaces, will be reduced in size by a more efficient design. This approach allows for an improvement in programming while still meeting the impervious surface limitations imposed by the Upper Paint Branch SPA Overlay Zone. The proposed storm-water management facility will meet current standards within the Upper Paint Branch SPA.

Staff finds that the Good Hope Local Park Recreation Center is consistent with the Cloverly Master Plan (1997).

Community Outreach

The Department of General Services, Montgomery County Recreation Department, and the Department of Parks co-hosted, presented and answered questions at two community meetings held on May 22, 2014 and January 28, 2015 at the existing Good Hope NRC.

Conclusion

Staff recommends approval of the Mandatory Referral subject to the conditions included in this memorandum.

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Figure 2: Site Location within SPA

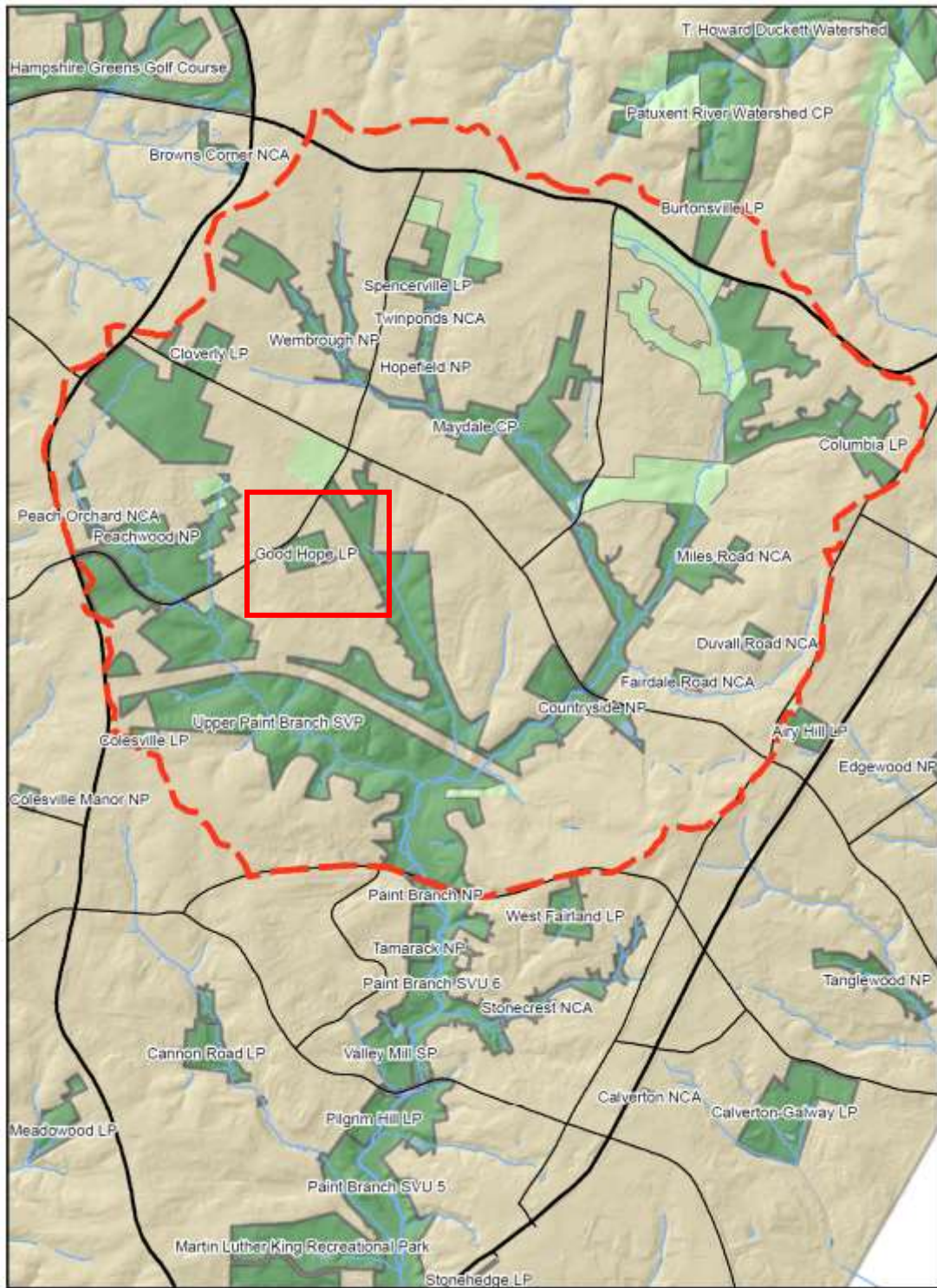


Figure 3: Existing Site Conditions



Figure 4: Proposed Building Floor Plan (Source: SORG Architects)

