

MCPB Item #1
July 17, 2003

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeff Zyontz, Chief, Countywide Planning Division

FROM: Tanya Schmieler, Park Planning Coordinator *TKS*
Rachel Newhouse, Landscape Architect *RN*

SUBJECT: Broadacres and Brookview Local Parks

Purposes of the Item: This item was placed on the Planning Board Agenda for two reasons:

1. To inform the Board about the innovative joint partnership efforts with the Broad Acres school and community to plan the renovation of Broadacres Local Park.
2. To discuss the return of the Brookview Local Park property to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for new school construction and to consider the potential for utilizing the \$560,500 reimbursement from MCPS to fund the Broadacres Local Park renovation.

1. BROADACRES LOCAL PARK RENOVATION

Background Information

The Renovation of Broadacres Local Park is proposed to coordinate with the addition and renovation of the Broad Acres Elementary School. Broadacres Local Park is in the Silver Spring/Takoma Park Area and located adjacent to Broad Acres Elementary School, St. Camillus Church and School, and Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. (Attachment 1) It is the only park within walking distance of thousands of lower income apartment residents. The Park does not have its own entrance or separate parking, and there is no park sign, thus the site looks like a regular elementary school. The 3 park fields are used by the school, as there are none on the school property. There is also a small old park playground.

The Broad Acres School will undergo a major renovation beginning in FY05, and portions of the park will be used as a construction staging area. (Attachment 2). The

Planning Board approved a mandatory referral for this renovation on June 6, 2002. A very small part of the park will also be acquired by BOE. An amended mandatory referral was recently submitted for four additional classrooms and is being handled administratively. The school and community have requested a renovation of the park in coordination with the school renovation. Completion of the School renovation is anticipated by July 1, 2006.

A joint effort between the park, school and the community is underway to achieve a total renovation of Broadacres Local Park. This represents a prime example of how we can involve community residents in local park planning as recommended in Strategic Planning's document "Looking Ahead" which was presented to the Planning Board last February.

Park Renovation Planning Process

About three years ago Park and Planning Staff started working with the Broad Acres School, the community, and the Montgomery Dept. of Health & Human Services to alleviate safety problems that were occurring at this park school. Participating staff included: Park Police, Southern Region, and Community Based Planning, Silver Spring Team. Total Park renovation was suggested and staff from Park Planning and Resource Analysis and Park Design and Development met with the group.

The Park Renovation Planning Process is underway. The Natural Resources Inventory is being updated and Rachel Newhouse from PPRA, the designer for the Park Renovation, will be surveying the community and students this summer to determine what they would like to have at the park. She has developed a program and a design charette for the Broadacres summer school session. Margaret Rifkin from Community Based Planning will join her in working with the students. The adjacent St. Camillus Church and school and community associations will also be contacted. The community outreach for this park is especially complex because adjacent apartment residents speak 23 different languages. Approximately 65% are Hispanic, 10% Asian, and 5% Black. Several different outreach techniques will be utilized.

A preliminary Program of Requirements (POR) is being developed based on previous input and an initial site visit with school, park staff, and community representatives. It includes paved walking paths, nature trails and nature study areas, and a multi use area. Activities are needed to serve the many children and teens that live near the park. There is a special need for youth soccer fields. The school and community have partnered to create a youth soccer league which has grown to include 170 kids, 17 coaches, and 25 parent volunteers. In addition to 12 teams serving the regular elementary school kids, there are 2 teams that include youth with special behavior problems. Montgomery Soccer Incorporated (MSI) has donated equipment and uniforms for the kids. This program has been incredibly beneficial and the park renovation must take their needs into account. Retention of a softball field (or fields) will also be considered as they are currently permitted by St. Camillus School.

Phase 1 of the park renovation will begin with replacement of the playground equipment, which will occur within the next few months. Funds are in the current CIP for this project and the playground area is not impacted by the school construction. Access to the park and playground will be left open during school construction.

A public meeting on the proposed plan with the community is anticipated in the fall and presentation to the Planning Board is tentatively scheduled for December.

2. BROOKVIEW LOCAL PARK TRANSFER TO BOARD OF EDUCATION

Brookview Local Park is located less than a mile north of Broadacres. (Attachments 4&5). On December 21, 2001 the Board of Education (BOE) alerted the Planning Board that they would be requesting the return of the 7.8 acre former Brookview Elementary School site for construction of a new elementary school. (See attachment 6) The site was surplused and deeded to M-NCPPC in 1992 as an addition to Brookview Local Park. Improvements made to the site include a new soccer field, large playground, double basketball court, and a paved trail system, parking lot and storm water management.

The deed contained the condition that if MCPS determines that the property is again needed for educational purposes, M-NCPPC shall re-convey the property and that the County shall reimburse the documented costs of recreational improvements and for the cost of demolishing and removing the former school building. MCPS staff has indicated that they plan to request these funds in the upcoming CIP as part of the school construction project. This request should be approved by the BOE by November 2003 for inclusion in MCPS's proposed FY05-10 CIP. Parks Staff expect that funds will be conveyed to M-NCPPC in FY05 when the land is conveyed to MCPS prior to beginning school construction in March 2005 (fy05).

The remaining 4.58 acres of the local park were originally titled to M-NCPPC and include part of a softball field. This field area will serve the new school. MCPS is to coordinate development plans with M-NCPPC staff to ensure that any new school design is compatible with the park recreational facilities and accessible to the community. (See attachment 7 for potential new school design.) A final design which will include a playground and multi-use court will be submitted to the Planning Board for mandatory referral.

Future Capital Improvements Program Funding

As was indicated in the Planning Board's July 3, 2003 CIP Strategy session memorandum, this project offers a leveraging opportunity to partner with MCPS to renovate Broadacres Local Park. Written testimony was received in conjunction with the CIP worksession for renovation of this park, including a letter signed by 55 community residents (Attachment 8). As previously mentioned, M-NCPPC staff is coordinating with MCPS to make requested park improvements to complement the school addition/renovation MCPS will complete at Broad Acres School by July 2006. At the same time, we are anticipating a \$560,500 reimbursement from MCPS for park improvements we made at the Brookview school site. We expect to receive the reimbursement in FY05 because MCPS plans to start construction in March 2005 (FY05). Staff is considering how the reimbursement could be used to fund Broadacres design in FY06 and construct improvements there in FY07 so that our park construction immediately follows the completion of the school construction project. Staff is working to complete a

facility plan by January 2004 (FY04)

Use of the MCPS reimbursement is complicated by the fact that our expenditure at the Brookview school site was funded by \$137,000 in Program Open Space (POS) funds, as well as \$424,000 in Park and Planning bonds. The State requires that the \$137,000 reimbursement be used to restore the inventory for the facilities they paid for that are being removed, as contrasted to replacing existing facilities. Staff will complete work needed to confirm that this reimbursement can be accomplished at Broadacres Local Park as part of the facility plan. State regulations indicate that 6-12 months should be allowed for them to approve our conversion request. We will initiate the process with the State and work with them to resolve all details as the Program of Requirements for the Broadacres site is finalized.

The facility plan and cost estimate will be completed in January 2004. Staff realizes that you must consider this project in the context of the many other projects that will compete for funds in the FY05-10. In the meantime, staff hopes that the Planning Board will approve continued work with MCPS and the State to direct as much of the reimbursement as possible to this needed project. In this way, we can leverage funds for the project and reduce or eliminate reliance on Park and Planning bonds.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 - Broadacres Local Park Site Maps
- Attachment 2- Broad Acres School Renovation Map
- Attachment 3- Broadacres Local Park Renovation Schedule & Draft Charrette Program
- Attachment 4- Broadacres and Brookview Local Parks Vicinity Map
- Attachment 5- Brookview Local Park Site Maps
- Attachment 6- Correspondence with MCPS on Brookview Local Park and School
- Attachment 7- Potential New Brookview School Design
- Attachment 8- Community correspondence on Broadacres Local Park renovation