



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

CONFIDENTIAL




MCPB Item # 5


Date: 7/11/2019

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 1, 2019

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks 
Jai Cole, Acting Deputy Director, Administration 
John Nissel, Deputy Director, Operations
Patricia McManus, Acting Division Chief, Park Development Division (PDD) 

FROM: Brenda Sandberg, Real Estate Management Supervisor, PDD 

SUBJECT: Land Acquisition Recommendation for Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park
SHA-Former Otis Kent Property
Darnestown Road (MD 28) at American Way, Gaithersburg, MD 20878
1.41 acres, more or less, unimproved

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests the following action by the Montgomery County Planning Board:

Approve Resolution 19-098 for acquisition of the 1.41-acre SHA-Former Otis Kent Property for a negotiated price of \$7,000 to be funded from the Local Acquisition PDF.

The SHA-Former Otis Kent Property is outlined in red on Figures 1 to 3.

SUMMARY

This property acquisition is being recommended as an addition to Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park Unit 1. The property includes an existing driveway with access to MD 28 that will make possible a critical trailhead into the Muddy Branch Trail system. This acquisition is recommended in the 2002 *Muddy Branch Trail Corridor Plan*, supported by recommendations in the 2016 *Countywide Park Trail Plan Amendment*, and is supported by the Northern Region and Park Planning and Stewardship Divisions, among others.

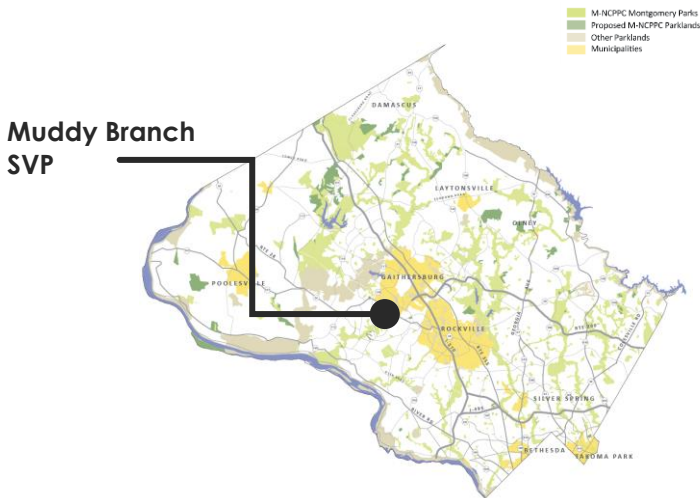
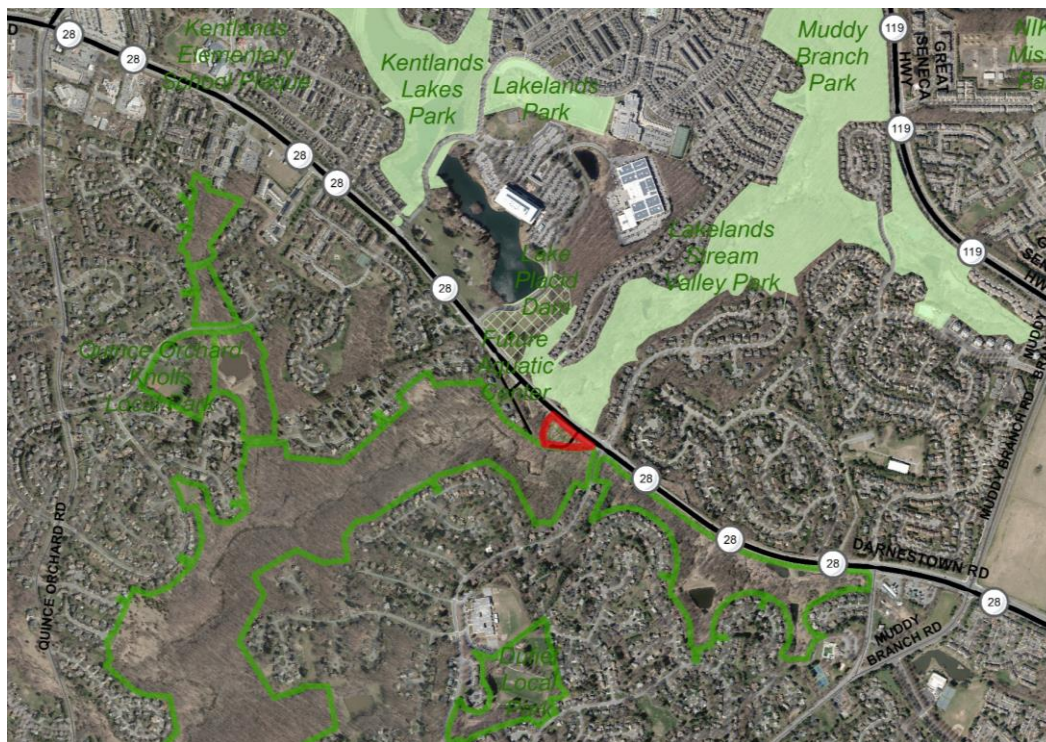


Figure 1: Vicinity Map, SHA-Former Otis Kent Property and Muddy Branch Park



PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property consists of 1.41-acre wooded stream valley, unimproved except for an existing driveway that creates a vehicle access point south of MD 28 (see Figure 2). The property is located entirely in the stream valley buffer and the FEMA 100-year floodplain (see Figure 3). The 2002 *Muddy Branch Stream Valley Trail Corridor Plan* points out that while the property is in the flood plain, “a trailhead would be highly desirable at this locale and no other location appears feasible...special care should be taken to design the parking area, as it is in a floodplain.” A small stormwater management facility is located in the eastern portion of the property, filled with emergent vegetation and treating some stormwater from MD 28 and Turnham Court. Park staff will coordinate with SHA prior to implementation of this acquisition to ensure that regular maintenance accommodates the requirements of this stormwater facility.

Figure 2: SHA-Former Otis Kent Property adjacent to Muddy Branch Park and MD 28

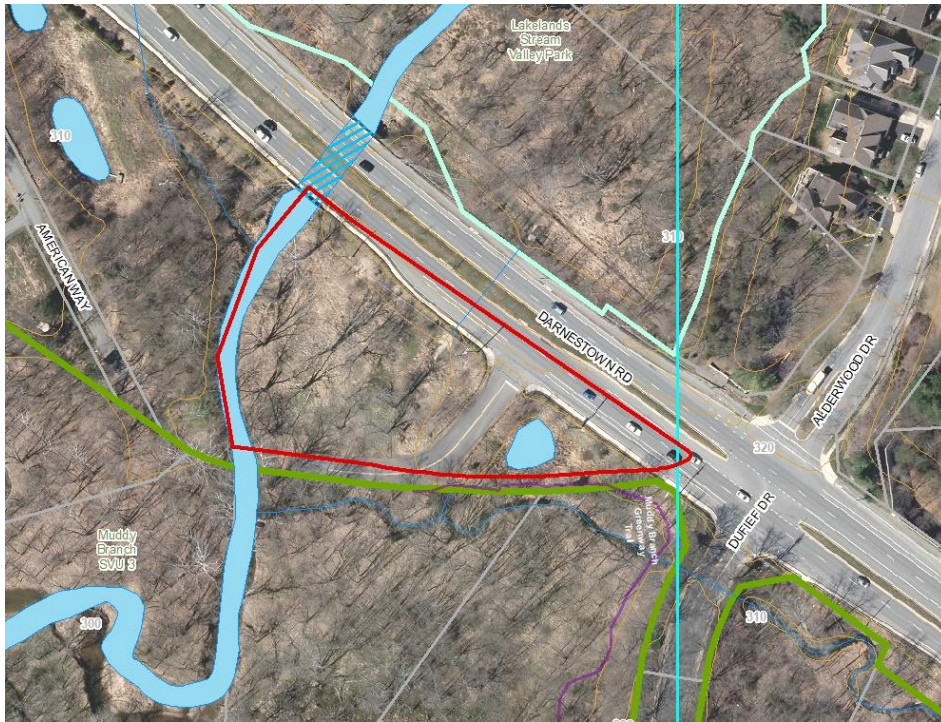
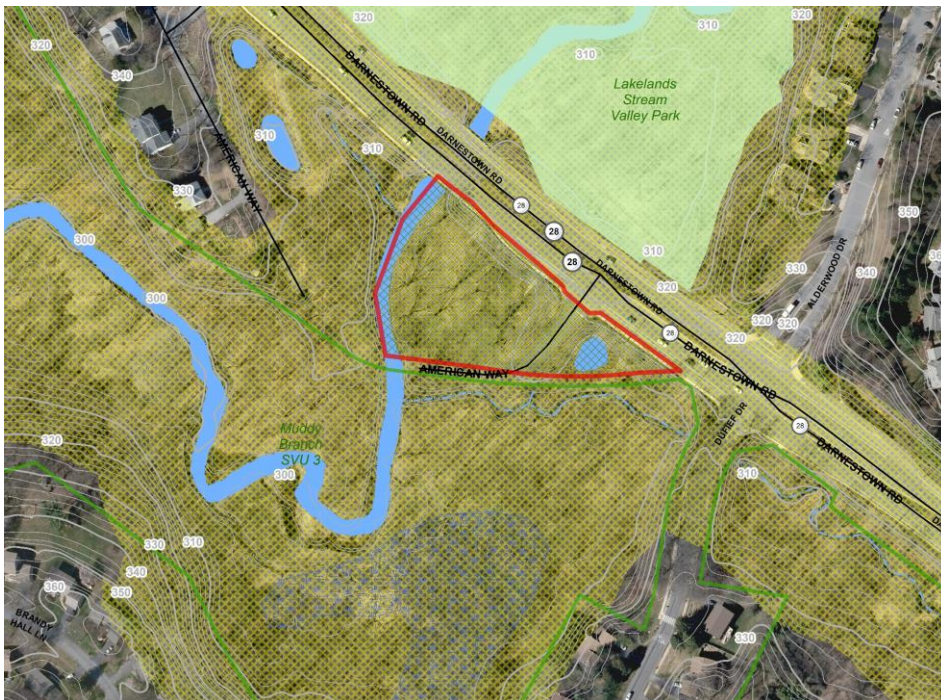


Figure 3: Resource Atlas Map, SHA-Former Otis Kent Property

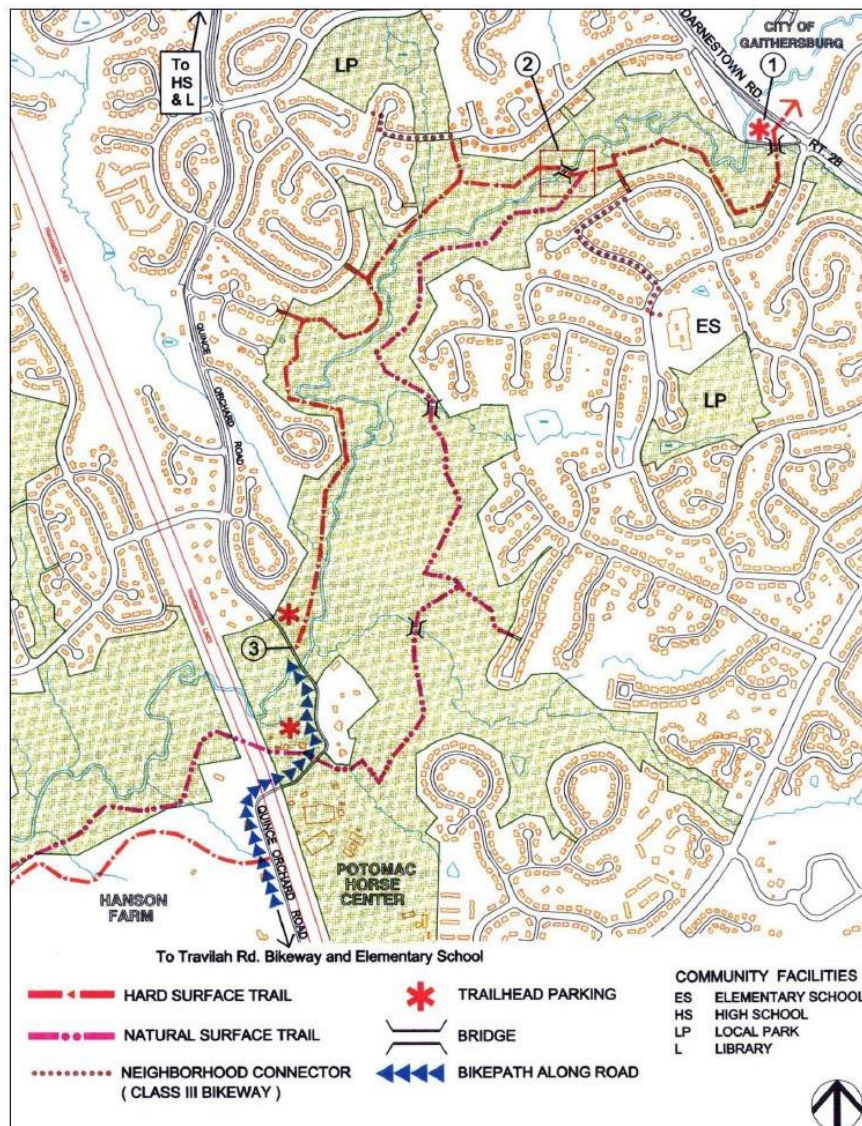


MASTER PLAN AND POLICY RATIONALE

The acquisition of this property supports the goals and objectives in the *2017 PROS Plan, Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation*, and the recently updated *Countywide Park Trails Plan*. All these planning documents highlight the importance of parks and open space needs for urban and dense suburban communities to promote healthy living through diverse recreation and leisure activities. These plans also indicate the importance of natural surface and hard surface trails to the citizens of Montgomery County, and the importance of providing easy access to the trail network through proper trailheads.

In addition, the acquisition of this property directly implements the recommendations in the 2002 *Muddy Branch Stream Valley Trail Corridor Plan*. The Plan identifies the property as the preferred site for trailhead parking at the northernmost end of the Muddy Branch trail system. Acquiring this property is identified among the key issues in the upper stretch of the Muddy Branch Trail (Segment 1), labeled as Circle 1 in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: 2002 Muddy Branch Trail Corridor Plan, Segment 1 illustration



More recently, the 2016 *Countywide Park Trails Plan Amendment* reaffirmed the 2002 Trail Corridor Plan's recommendations about the importance of this location to serve as a trailhead for two trails:

- 1) The existing natural surface Muddy Branch Greenway Trail is identified as a Major Regional Link (U-11) that connects the City of Gaithersburg to the C&O Canal Towpath.
- 2) The planned hard surface trail (U-11.01) that will extend from MD28 south to Quince Orchard Road. The future hard surface trail in this segment will connect across MD 28 to the Lakelands Trail Bike Path in Gaithersburg, creating a key link in the hard surface trail network.

Currently, parking for the upper section of the Muddy Branch Trail is located at Potomac Horse Center. Since trail parking is located on a portion of the horse center parking lot, trail parking is sometimes unavailable during heavy use periods at the facility. Providing dedicated trail parking at MD 28 will ensure more consistent parking availability for this trail network.

Finally, the 2016 *Countywide Park Trails Plan* prioritized all proposed hard surface trails, and the Muddy Branch Trail is the third highest priority for implementation. Provision of adequate off-street trail parking at this location is key to the future implementation of this hard surface trail.

PROPOSED USE AND BENEFITS

The benefits of this acquisition to the Muddy Branch Trail system is well described in the 2002 *Muddy Branch Trail Corridor Plan*, excerpted here:

In addition to being part of the regional trail system, the trail system in Segment #1 will serve the residents in the adjacent North Potomac neighborhoods. Although North Potomac is geographically the smallest area in the Potomac Subregion, it has the second largest population and, on average, has more school age children and larger households than the rest of the Subregion and the County as a whole. Within the densely populated neighborhoods close to the Muddy Branch SVP, there are several community facilities and destinations - including schools, local parks, a public library and the Potomac Horse Center. With so many people and facilities nearby, the trail in Segment #1 will be the most heavily used and will likely attract the most diverse range of users. To support this demand, this Plan recommends building both a hard surface trail and a natural surface trail in this segment. Building two trails will separate users and make the trail experience more enjoyable for everyone.

This acquisition will provide the critical trailhead to support the existing natural surface trail and the future hard surface trail.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends that the Montgomery County Planning Board preliminarily approve the acquisition of the SHA-Former Otis Kent Property as an addition to Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park for the negotiated price of \$7,000.

CC: Doug Ludwig
Jai Cole
Darryl McSwain
Kristi Williams
Megan Chung

Attachment

MCPB No. 19-098

Acquisition of the SHA Property as an Addition to the Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission ("Commission") is authorized by Md. Code Ann., Land Use §17-101 (formerly Article 28, Section 5-101), to acquire, develop, maintain and operate a public park system within the Maryland-Washington Metropolitan District; and

WHEREAS, the Montgomery County Planning Board received and considered a recommendation from staff of the Commission, in closed session on June 27, 2019, that it approve the acquisition of 1.41 acres of land, more or less, unimproved, (the "Property") from the Maryland State Highway Administration as an addition to Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park; and

WHEREAS, there are sufficient Program Open Space (POS) monies available in the Commission's FY-19 Local Acquisition Program CIP to pay the \$250,000 negotiated purchase price for the Property; and

WHEREAS, the Property meets parkland acquisition criteria as an addition to Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the acquisition of the Property from the Seller as described above, for a purchase price of \$7,000, is hereby approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board on this 11th day of July, 2019 and the Executive Director is authorized to issue payment on behalf of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

* * * * *

This is to certify the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Montgomery County Planning Board of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission on motion of Commissioner _____, seconded by Commissioner _____, with Commissioners _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ voting in favor of the motion at its regular meeting held on Thursday, July 11th 2018 in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board